

SPIRITUAL READING

We have moved now into a week of safeguarding, preparing ourselves as a group for the Wesak festival which takes place on Saturday, May 18th at 5:15 pm EDT. The Lucis Trust will be live streaming this event as part of our annual Arcane School conference here in New York which we encourage you all the join in if you can.

Wesak as you know is a high point of the spiritual year, it is the Festival linked with the highest spiritual center on the planet, the center Shamballa and each year at this time, at great sacrifice to himself, the Lord Buddha returns to bring a blessing to humanity.

To help us prepare for this event I wanted to share a few thoughts about the practice of spiritual reading which is highlighted in the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, one of the key principles whereby the seeker after truth is able to achieve the goal of union with the soul, or as it is expressed in the sutras -- AUM.

We all need roadmaps to tread the path, techniques we can follow when starting on our journey. We need direction from those who have followed this way before us so we, too, can find our way and then become as light to those who follow. For until we find the path we lack direction and all too often wander aimlessly, distracted]from our goal, pulled in many directions which too often lead to cul-de-sacs, dead ends, or to seeming super highways that promise quick and fast results, for a hefty price but which in the end often lead to wasted time and sometimes danger.

The practice of spiritual reading helps us gain clarity, helps us to step off the treadmill, going round and round in the web of personality wanderings and place ourselves instead under the guidance and the direction of the soul.

To read spiritually is accomplished through the use of the mind, by making that mind into an instrument of light leading to awareness of those things that concern the soul's realm.

The concept of spiritual reading, is taken from the first sutra in the second book of the sutras. The first book lays out the goal & the obstacles to be overcome in the raja yoga system of training. But in book ii students are presented with the steps to be taken whereby union with the soul can be achieved and Patanjali taught that one of the key means for this realization is through the cultivation of spiritual reading.

As the commentary in *The Light of the Soul* states, "spiritual reading... has reference to the capacity of the mental body to see back of a symbol or to touch the subject lying back of the object,"

Eventually every form comes to be understood as a symbol or the veil of a thought. An astrologer is someone who uses the symbol of an astrological chart to translate that which is the essence of a person into words that will serve to help the individual in his or her journey. So, too, the goal of spiritual reading is to help us cease identifying with the outer symbols and to identify instead with the inner reality, our essence, the true idea that contains our spiritual potential.

Clearly this reading is not an easy thing to do, particularly as we move into a seventh ray age when the form can easily take on too much importance, distracting us from the underlying meaning. But just like learning any new skill, with practice and discipline, new ways of seeing and understanding eventually can become possible.

To become a spiritual reader we must first come to the understanding that we live in this world of unreality and that all that we see and experience is distorted by our own perceptions which are part and parcel of that unreality.

So we work at the harnessing and the eventual illumination of the mind with the light of the soul so that the underlying reality can come to be revealed. And as that soul illumination occurs there naturally ensues the ability to read that which lies around with an increasing fluidity and accuracy, freed from lower disturbances and the separating veils of the astral and lower mental planes.

To free ourselves from distractions is a challenge however in today's world. But it does appear that many people are beginning to make time for it, time for soul culture. They are learning to be present, to be mindful, to fast from technology, to share with others and as a result some are becoming stream-enterers-- the name given by the Buddha to those among his followers who through discipline and a keen willingness to learn we able to rise above the choppy waters of the astral sea and enter into the stream of water blue where soul and mind unite.

Other hindrances that stand in the path to reading spiritually as listed by Patanjali include the sense of personality; desire, hate and attachment. The hindrances have for aeons of time prevented us from realizing that we are in reality sons of god. But when we view these hindrances dispassionately -- we might wonder why they are so difficult to cast aside for clearly these states are not desirable. Why have we allowed them to send us blindly into the far country, as the Tibetan wrote, "to eat of the husks of mortal existence?"

it would seem the answer to why we are bound and not free can only be found far back in the annals of our ancient planetary history wherein certain abrogations of spiritual law which have cast our planet into a situation that has resulted in much hardship and suffering to all life forms. It is through the ability to recognize the hindrances for what they are, to see through them, that we can begin to see more clearly and come under the guidance of our soul.

Spiritual reading is a practice which moves the seeker through all levels of development -- from the reading of symbols within the physical world of effects, to the ability to penetrate into the world of meaning, of causes, and to come to know the reality underlying the form, and eventually at some point it leads as well into an ability to move eventually into the higher world of significance.

As spiritual reading is cultivated we learn how to live the dual life, as did the sannyasins of old. Perhaps at this preparatory period for Wesak, we could all benefit from following the sanyassin path for a time. In days past the sannyasin was he who having fulfilled the duties of the scholar, of the householder, of the family man, or business man—was now called to other purposes and goals. In the olden times, such a man left his home and went out into the world, seeking the Master, and ever teaching as he went. Today, in the life of our Western cities, the jungles of the west, the sannyasin has a different mandate. He or she is not asked to leave home, leaving behind all the familiar scenes behind and negating his or her outer usefulness. Instead the seeker remains to fulfil his or her duty, but within himself there is accomplished a great change and re-orientation within consciousness. He "stands free whilst surrounded; he works in the subjective world whilst active in the exterior world of affairs; to achieve true detachment whilst rendering to all that which is due (Discipleship in the New Age, Vol.I, pp. 314-15). And as we can travel, during this sacred period within the annual cycle, let us keep in mind the Tibetan's counsel to "Stay within the radius of the light and wander not down the accustomed by-ways. "

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