

# WHAT IS NOT SPIRITUALITY



A Journey Beyond Rituals, Labels,  
Beliefs, Gurus and Ego's Traps



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PRESENTS

WHAT NOT  
IS NOT  
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A Journey Beyond Rituals, Labels,  
Beliefs, Gurus and Ego's Traps

*Authored By,*  
Murali Sundaram



To all true seekers

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## **Part 1**

# Foundations of the Journey

## **Warning - This book is for brave hearts only**

Namaste!

This book is for open minded individuals only.

Don't read any further if you are deeply happy with every part of your life, every moment, every day, and don't want any more peace, understanding, or fulfilment. If you're not, the author is not responsible for any mental, social, or spiritual harm you may suffer by reading on.

This book is for YOU

- If you are someone juggling with the fast-paced, techno-driven way of life, whether you live in the East or the West, striving to be proactive, goal-oriented, and a responsible citizen of your country.
- You are committed to the supremacy of your logical mind and are ready to grow, evolve, and move forward in life.
- You believe in God, follow rituals, visit temples or places of worship, pray daily, practice kindness and generosity, and extend help to others.
- You do not believe in God or organized religion but focus on living a happy, successful, and healthy life guided by reason and personal values.
- You are spiritually curious—questioning the nature of existence, consciousness, and the deeper purpose of life beyond material success.
- You seek inner peace and emotional balance amid the chaos of modern living, wondering if there's something beyond the relentless pursuit of achievement.
- You have experienced moments of stillness, synchronicity, or deep insight and wish to understand them more profoundly.
- You feel a pull toward self-discovery, questioning whether there is more to life than what society has conditioned you to believe.
- You are searching for clarity—not from external sources but from a deeper, more authentic understanding of yourself.
- You want to move beyond blind belief or disbelief and cultivate direct experience of truth, awareness, and fulfilment.

If any of these resonate with you, then this book is already yours.

There are many parts of this book that will make you question your current views, ideas, and standards.

A lot of things in this book will make YOU think.

There are many parts of this book that will make you seriously question the spiritual path you are currently following.

If you don't agree with me, don't understand fully or don't want to consider what I say out of this book, instead of rejecting, you can say *"It's fascinating. That's another way to look at it"*.

To some of you, it may take a lifetime to understand this book/subject. So, be patient, read this

book slowly, allow your mind to swallow small bites, chew it for some time and then digest it.

If you want you can read this book from any specific sections, but if you want to understand from the basics, then I recommend you read chapter by chapter as presented.

I am going to apply the 3 Cs of the corporate world in this book.

**C** - Convince you, if not;

**C**- Confuse you, if not;

**C** - Corrupt you

With a big **C** - Compassion with fellow humans I am attempting a bold step in writing this book to install a software called "Clarity" of who you truly are!

I personally learned more about myself as I started writing this book. I had no clue what to write in the beginning on this topic, but since I submitted myself to the flow of nature, great masters and sages emerged from nowhere!

The following chapters are a confluence of some of the greatest souls who lived in this earth to guide us to understand our true nature.

Not even a word in this book, belongs to me - it belongs to the world and hence this work is hundred percent **uncopyrighted**. If you feel any part of this book, makes little sense to you and you want to share it with others, please feel free to do so without asking for any permission. Who am I to claim the ownership on my thinking and ideas - whether I like it or not, it just flows and I am only witnessing it in my life.

At the outset, my heartfelt gratitude and thanks to you for buying this book and reading further. I humbly submit this book to all those spiritual aspirants who wants to seek the truth - nothing but the truth!

So, are you ready to jump?

Just ask - "how deep?" or "how high?"

## **Introduction - Why this Book**

*Infinite words appear and disappear in the vast expanse of my consciousness, lie motes of dust  
dancing in the beam of light  
- Ancient Vedic Saying*

A rich businessman was terrified to see the fisherman lying next to the boat, looking up at the clear blue sky and being happy.

"Why are you lying here?" "Why are you not fishing?" - the businessman asked.

The fisherman answered, "Because I caught enough fish for the day."

"But instead of wasting your time, why don't you catch some more?"

"What would I do with it?"

"Get more money by selling all that fish. After that, you could add a motor to your boat to go deeper and catch more fish. You'd make more money that way. That means more money and fish. Soon, you'll have enough to buy at least two more boats, or even a whole fleet. You could then be rich like I am."

"What would I do then?"

"Oh! Then you could really enjoy life, chill out, and stay calm and happy."

The fisherman asked, "What the hell do you think I'm doing right now?"



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Does it make sense to you?

Vedanta starts with the question, “What is the point of living?” Everyone here seems to have different life goals. Some of us want to be doctors, some want to be software engineers, some want to win an Olympic gold medal, some want to be businessmen, some want to be actors, and most of us want to get rich.

It’s always “To become happy” when someone asks why they want more money or fame.

When did the need to be happy start in us? We’re sure we were happy when we were born.

Being happy is what makes life worth living. If you’re looking for happiness, it means that you are unhappy or upset with your life right now.

As I’m sure many of you have, you would have taken a moment to ask yourself the following questions while you were going about your busy lives:

Is it worth all this work?

-What’s the point of everything?

-Why am I not truly happy and satisfied?

You might figure out why I started by talking about happiness instead of the book’s topic as you read it.

Would you rather be happy today, tomorrow, or a year from now? We don’t want to be unhappy at any time, starting now and always. Is that why every fairy tale ends with “And they lived happily ever after”?

The current generation of human race openly admits that we right now live in the most technologically advanced era when compared to our ancestors.

But are we really, really Happy in spite of all these technological marvels when compared to our father, grandfather or our ancestors?

**NO!**

We have fallen victim to the top 3 industries in the world. Do you know what are they?

1) Arms & Ammunition

2) Health Care

3) Alcohol

Though they are the largest, still they have to do their marketing bit to stay in the rat race.

Do you know their secret marketing strategy?

**FEAR!**

Installing FEAR in every one’s mind, makes them more profitable and richer.

They do this successfully by gluing us to the Screens, Social Media, TV & Newspaper.

Instead of seeking your true happiness inside you, you tend to or get addicted to seek it through an outside medium.

Look at your own self now - you are constantly seeking to change the following, in order to gain more happiness in life.

**1) Place** - keep travelling to various places, holiday resorts etc. When the novelty of the place wears out or we run out of money, we return.

**2) Time** - We have habituated to wait for better times to come in our life.

**3) Objects** - We change our houses, cars, TVs, gaming regularly, with the hope that the new model will give us more happiness/joy or lesser trouble.

**4) Status/Circumstances** - Married one wants divorce, bachelor wants to get married, some want to renunciate, in order to become happy. We change jobs in search of satisfaction, but often we find that we have jumped into a deeper frying pan than the earlier one.

**5) People** - We make or break human relations. Keep changing our partners in life, we fire the driver or our maid or colleague to keep someone else happy

**6) Body** - Beauty salon business and cosmetic surgery is a thriving industry today - many dislike or disapprove their own body.

We believe that by changing any or all the above, our desire for happiness ends. You know by this time, that we are looking for it in the wrong place.

Currently the world is dominated by economic leadership and hence everyone is looking out for a way to make money out of every situation.

Some smart fellows understood your need – your constant pursuit of happiness and even converted spirituality and the spiritual process into a business model now.

Yes, we will discuss in the forthcoming chapter - What is NOT spirituality and What is Spirituality. But,

You can see too much rubbish happening in this world in the name of Spirituality.

**“I am Spiritual”** is one commonly used word without even knowing the meaning or the deeper essence of it. *“I am a family man”* and *“I am spiritual”* has becoming a marketing gimmick to attract many followers and milk money out of them.

Spirituality has become a highly profitable business - nowadays we call it as Spiritual Entrepreneurship, Spiritual laws of Money-Making, Spiritual Millionaires, etc. Many great speakers, trainers, coaches & religious organizations are exploiting people’s hard earned money in the name of Spirituality or in the name of some “GOD”.

There is a huge need to clear the misunderstanding of the word “Spirituality” since it is the most commonly abused word to convince, confuse or corrupt the human mind and achieve money, fame or power.

***“The Human mind is not a vessel to be filled in,  
but a flame to be kindled”***

Currently many are being filled with rubbish right from a very young age. Once they become adults, they do not know why they are doing certain things in the name of religious acts or rituals.

Personality development classes/seminars are nowadays portrayed as Spirituality courses and even many courses are offering crash course on enlightenment or awakening of Kundalini Shakti.

The gullible, naive and even intellectual audience buy this BS also.

Let us understand what is NOT Spirituality, What is Spirituality and why personality development seminars/sermons/teachings or classes cannot and will not lead in the right direction.

***“Good People have caused maximum harm to the world. We don’t need good people, we need more joyful and sensible people”***

- Jaggi Vasudev

# What is NOT Spirituality

*It is strange that though all must travel the path of life,  
few care to know where they are going. We wander from  
cradle to the tomb, yet know not our true destination.*

*It's not in the tomb, but our own true self*

*- Paul Brunton*

Let's not beat around the bush. Let's get straight to the point. Read the list below. Initially I too believed these are part of spiritual process but realised it is not. Your mind is going to fight with you, will question my words, who is this guy confusing me, he is wrong etc. Just read the list without any prejudices or judgements. You will understand in subsequent parts of this book.

Spirituality is NOT

1. A practice, not a method, not even a way
2. It has nothing whatsoever to do with vows and torturing one's body and mind in the name of austerities
3. It is not a discipline - in the usual sense of the word
4. It is neither organized religions nor philosophy
5. It is not a superstitious escapism
6. It is neither a mystery nor a secret something
7. It is not intellectual gymnastics, not ideals and idealisms
8. It has absolutely nothing to do with morality and conduct according to any religious, social or ethical laws or tenets
9. It is not creed; it is not belief;
10. It is not an emotional overindulgence or imagination
11. It has nothing to do with thought and its self-perpetuating mechanisms
12. Spirituality does not belong to any country, race or culture
13. It is not a goal to be reached somewhere and sometime;
14. It is neither an illusion nor hallucinatory nonsense
15. It is neither concentration nor mind control nor suppression of desires or passions
16. It has nothing whatsoever to do with deliberate, natural, thought-induced sexual continence and repressions
17. It is not a feverish restlessness born out of boredom and hope
18. It is neither sacrifice nor renunciation

19. It has nothing whatsoever to do with man's mental ways, techniques, methods and projections.
20. It is not a bargain; it is not a search that is born out of fear and its hidden roots
21. It is not self-hypnotism or a state of trance
22. It has nothing to do with will power or magic; it is not performing miracles - miracles as we understand it
23. It is not a superimposition or a character building exercise
24. It is neither the practice of virtues nor piousness
25. It is not charity or "doing" good
26. It is not an achievement, not an end result
27. It is not imitation
28. It has nothing to do with rituals, worship or prayer
29. It has nothing to do with regularly going to temples, churches or mosques etc
30. It is not undertaking pilgrimages
31. It is neither a reward nor a punishment
32. It is not a gift bestowed on the 'elite' do-gooders by the gods and goddesses
33. It is certainly not an activity born out of loneliness and its varied masks
34. It is not a "personality" development gimmick or a modified and condensed version of "how-to-manage-oneself" procedural kit
35. It has nothing to do with experiences induced by the stimulation of centres in the brain or nervous system through psychedelic, mind altering drugs and chemical substances or physical and physiological denials, suppression of needs, drives and impulses
36. It is not an accumulation of merits or good karma;
37. It is not a journey from a sinner to a saint, from immorality to morality, from atheism to theism, from bad to good and so on
38. It is neither a destination nor a heavenly abode 'up' there
39. It is not trying to become somebody, other than what one is, in reality
40. It is not 'practicing' selflessness or trying to subdue or eliminate a non-existent ego
41. It has nothing to do with fighting and struggling with oneself in order to attain an ever-peaceful utopian life hereafter

- 42. It is neither conceptualization nor spinning words and theories for philosophical debates and vain arguments
- 43. It is not knowledge or acquiring of more and more knowledge
- 44. It has nothing to do with sannyas or “going away from the world”
- 45. It is neither change of clothes and costumes nor putting on coloured robes or adorning oneself with riches and external paraphernalia
- 46. Spirituality has nothing to do with organizations, whether religious, social or otherwise.

# What is Spirituality

1. Spirituality is an aspiration, an urgency to discover, to know directly and to realize - actually, our very own true self; that which we already are!
2. Spirituality is a state, an existential reality, forever beyond all thought, description, explanation, words, concepts, formulas and systems, beyond all experiences and imagination.
3. Spirituality is, in its essence, the awakening of the inquiry into oneself, into the nature of the self and the universe. It is to awaken to the reality of one's own Being, one's own nature, whose very nature is "peace that passeth all understand" and as the great Rishis declare: "your very nature is happiness, peace and bliss".
4. Spirituality is the awakening of a deep, intense, inner desire to see directly, understand and come face to face with the realities and mysteries of the great, grand universe.
5. Spirituality is our very nature, is the very ground of our life and existence. It is Life and everything - EVERYTHING.
6. Spirituality is to realize the Oneness and interconnectedness of all life and everything in the universe, including oneself.
7. Spirituality is a tremendous longing to attain the ultimate fulfilment of life. It is for this ultimate fulfilment that we do all that we do, and go about here and there in search of this absolute-end-all, in people, things, experiences etc.
8. Spirituality is uninhibited, supreme flowering, blossoming of all the inherent potentialities and possibilities of a human person, and all life.
9. Spirituality is "seeing the one who sees".
10. Spirituality IS, and the language of spirituality is Silence eternal.

Sri Aurobindo beautifully puts it across that Spirituality is in its essence an awakening to the inner reality of our being, to a spirit, Self, soul, which is other than your mind, life and body.

Spirituality cannot be explained or interpreted. It is an experience. In fact, to really, actually know spirituality, all interpretations and explanations should end. All interpretations are ideas borrowed or ideas woven out of some other ideas. They are all repetitions. Spirituality can be experienced in stillness and silence. It is the dropping of all information gathered from the outside world.

## **Part 2**

# **Myths, Dogmas & Beliefs That Trap Seekers**



## Spirituality in the name of Personality Development Seminars

Have you attended any personality development seminars or workshops?

Have you attended those eye catchy seminars on “how to become a millionaire” - crash course in 3 days etc.

Every weekend you are exposed to loads of such courses/seminars/workshops all around you.

I am sure you would have either attended it or know someone who would have attended.

The meaning of the word “persona” - root word of personality means “mask” - more you attend these personality development course, the higher is your masking.

A human being has two aspects - Personality and Individuality.

The word “individuality” comes from the word “indivisible” meaning that which cannot be divided, fragmented, oneness; whole; unbroken, complete etc.

Individuality is the inner being of man, the real person and personality is the outer.

Individuality is one’s own, whereas personality is not his own - meaning what has come from outside, what he has learned; images, impressions, memory, sensations, feelings and emotions acquired- all that is not own, all this is personality.

To understand this, let us observe a small child, who is yet to be “pushed” into a formal school. You will find that the child has no personality as yet. He is what he really is. The child expresses his individuality as it is through all his desires, tastes, likes, dislikes etc. But as soon as the so-called education (or headucation) begins, personality begins to develop.

Personality is created by social influences and interactions with other people.

Individuality is real, Personality is unreal

Individuality cannot be lost, but personality, since it is a product, it can easily be lost.

A human is born with individuality but personality is created by culture which in-turn is created by personality.

Individuality is strength and personality is actually a weakness, a constant pressure on the individuality.

Individuality grows when one is close to Nature and when begins to become more self-aware.

Individuality is silent, has understanding and is the spiritual dimension of human being whereas personality is noisy and is the outer, gross or material dimension of a human being.

In the study of human being, we discover that man is just not the outer personality, but actually, has different layers or dimensions of existence, according to the great sages and Seers of India. It’s like the lamp with different layers of lampshades - each shade with different colour, vibration, intensity & luminance.

These 5 sheaths/layers/koshas are

- 1) Physical Body (Annamaya Kosha - Food sheath)
- 2) Vital Body (Pranamaya Kosha - Energy Body)
- 3) Mental Body (Manonmaya Kosha - Mind)
- 4) Intelligence Body (Vignanamaya Kosha - Wisdom)
- 5) Bliss Body (Anadamaya Kosha )

All these 5 surround the inner core - Pure Self - the eternal centre of consciousness.

Individuality	Personality

Inner	Outer
Grows when one lives closer to nature	Develops through education, environment
Real	Unreal
Cannot be lost	Can be easily lost
A human is born with it	Culture creates and in turn is created
Sees Objectively	Sees Subjectively
Original	Mask
Strength	Weakness
Understanding	Knowledge
Subtle	Gross
Silent	Noisy
Spiritual	Material
Existential	Social
Authentic	Deceptive
Perceives	Conceives
Tranquil	Troubled
Ever free	Conditioned
Awareness	Mechanical
Love	Attachment
Infinite	Finite
Self-luminous	Shadow
Eternal	Time-bound

By this time, you would have understood what they teach in a personality development seminar. They are good and some of them are super good - I love Tony Robbins seminars, I like my mentor Brian Tracy's workshops and I recently attended the Millionaire Mind Intensive by Harv Eker.

If your focus is to achieve success & wealth - then you go and attend these seminars, apply the principles in your daily life and earn lots of money. There is nothing wrong in earning lots of money. If more sensible and joyful people earn more money, they will do more good to the society.

The problem is that good people are not striving towards making lots of money and hence lesser peace and unhappiness prevailing in the society.

Whether we like it or not, our ancestors have created a monster called "Money" and our whole life from birth to death, depends on this transacting tool.

I am not proposing in this book, that you should renounce all money for the sake for understanding true self. You should learn how to balance both the dimensions of your existence - Individuality & Personality.

When you attend such personality development seminars, classes or workshop - be clear that they serve only the outer dimension of you to become more productive, prosperous, successful and cannot quench your thirst for a deeper knowing of your true self.

As I have coached (and continue to coach) millionaires, entrepreneurs, senior management executives, professionals, managers or housewives on the path towards their true self, I can humbly suggest you, that their millions or billions earned through personality development are not giving them the true happiness what they are searching for.

***Happiness is TRUTH; Money is REALITY - Murali Sundaram***

## Knowledge and Half Knowledge

There were four frogs sitting on a log that was floating in a river. All of a sudden, the log was swept down the stream by the water. The frogs were happy and interested because they had never been on a boat before.

“This is truly the most wonderful log,” the first frog said after a long pause. It looks like it’s living because it moves. This kind of log had never been seen before.”

Then the second frog spoke up and said, “No, friend, the log doesn’t move. It’s just like any other log.” The river walks to the sea and carries us and the log along with it.

The third frog spoke up and said, “Neither the log nor the river is moving.” The moving is in our minds. Because nothing moves without thought.”

There was a fight among the three frogs over what was really moving. They fought more and harder, but they still couldn’t come to an agreement.

Then they turned to the fourth frog and asked him what he thought. He had been listening carefully but not speaking up until this point.

The fourth frog said, “You are all right. None of you are wrong.” The moving is in the log, the water, and our minds as well.

The three frogs got very angry because none of them were ready to admit that their story wasn’t completely true or that the other two weren’t completely wrong either.

Then the strange thing took place.

The other frog was pushed off the log and into the river by the other three.

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In life, everything changes or moves towards what it is naturally. For instance, if you put a block of ice somewhere at room temperature, it will start to melt and keep melting until it turns into water, which is its normal state.

What do we want in life: happiness or sadness? Have you ever thought that being happy is a burden? Sadness weighs us down, not happiness. Unconditional Objectless Happiness is who we really are. Our lives have been planned without proper understanding or spiritual learning that has been tainted.

In the world, there are two kinds of accomplishments:

1) Get the things you already have: Let’s say I have nothing and need money badly. I need to learn how to make money, work hard to get it, and then learn how to keep it. That’s why Knowledge + Action = Gain

2) Getting back things you already have: If I’m looking for my lost keys and someone tells me they were in my pocket the whole time, do I need to do anything else to get them back? Not at all. I didn’t know they were always with me, so I thought I had lost them. I “gained” them once I knew where they were. So, knowledge equals gain. Nothing needs to be done.

The self is always with us, no matter where we are or what time it is. Happiness only seems out of reach because people don’t know who they really are. Being self-aware can help you get it.

But how?

We’ve learnt that what we do or have done makes us who we are.

For example,

I am the father of two girls

I am a Happyness Coach

I am the author of this book

I am an Entrepreneur

I can add more to this list. And so can you about yourself.

Our lives consist of citing names, dates and lists to prove all those things we have done. But who is this “I” in all this restless doing. How do I define my true “Self”.

During my college exams, there used to be Multiple choice question. There would be 4 answers and we would have to choose the best answer for a question.

Sometimes, when I don’t know an answer I follow a simple strategy. I just negate the wrong answers to get the right answer.

Many a times in life, if we don’t get the right answer, just by negating the wrong answer you can get the right one.

Vedanta prescribes the same strategy to find the answer to one of the toughest question in life – “Who am I”? “Who is this true self”?

I am not Murali Sundaram,

I am not a Happyness Coach

I am not an Author,

I am not a Trainer,

I am not a husband,

I am not a father,

I am not a son,

I am not....

I will not guarantee you that you will find the answer immediately, but 10mins of such contemplation daily increases your compassion, gratitude & happiness levels. Above all, it clears the mask/filters you have created so that you can become aware of your true identity.

In the next chapter, let us understand deeper about the word “Spirituality” in the same process of negation.

*Believe Nothing,  
Take Nothing Personally,  
Pay Attention.  
- Cheri Huber*

## 12 Dogmas, Beliefs, Myths about Spirituality that hold you back

A lot of people become spiritual because they want to be wiser, happier, or more enlightened. But instead of moving forward, they often get stuck in fixed ideas and views that stop them from growing. These myths, which have been passed down from generation to generation, can make you feel confused and stop you from reaching true spiritual freedom.

Today, we're going to bust 12 popular spiritual dogmas, beliefs, myths and find the deeper truth behind them.

### 1. Religion is spirituality

A lot of people think that faith and spirituality are the same thing.

- ☒ "To be spiritual, you must follow a particular religion."
- ☒ "If you don't believe in God, you are not spiritual."
- ☒ "Spirituality is about going to temples, churches, or mosques."

✦ Truth: Spirituality is about exploring your own awareness, finding the truth, and becoming aware of yourself. Religion gives people a way to follow, but you can be deeply spiritual even if you're not religious.

### 2. Religion is set up with rules and rituals

Many people think that certain actions describe spirituality.

- ☒ "Chanting, fasting, and performing rituals make you more spiritual."
- ☒ "You must wake up at 4 AM and meditate to be spiritual."
- ☒ "Reading holy scriptures is the only way to attain enlightenment."

✦ Truth: Rituals aren't the most important part of being spiritual, but they can be helpful. Not mindlessly following routines is the only way to really grow spiritually. You need to be aware, ask yourself questions, and have direct experiences.

### 3. You must have a Guru or Master

A lot of people think that you can't grow mentally without a teacher.

- ☒ "You need a guru to find the truth."
- ☒ "Without a master, you will get lost on the path."
- ☒ "A spiritual teacher is always enlightened and never wrong."

✦ Truth: A teacher can help, but you can only really learn from your own inner journey. Blindly following a master without asking can make you dependent instead of free.

### 4. Sacrifice and separation are needed for spirituality

A lot of people believe that giving up the material world is the way to spiritual growth.

- ☒ "To be truly spiritual, you must renounce the world."
- ☒ "Money, ambition, and success are against spirituality."
- ☒ "You cannot enjoy pleasures and be spiritual at the same time."

✦ Truth: Being spiritual doesn't mean going away. It means living a balanced and aware life. You can be spiritual and still enjoy your life, work, and relationships.

### 5. You reach enlightenment right away and magically

A lot of people think that waking only takes one moment.

- ☒ “One moment of realisation can permanently transform you.”
- ☒ “After enlightenment, you will have no suffering, no problems.”
- ☒ “There are secret shortcuts to enlightenment.”

✦ Truth: Enlightenment is a slow process of changing who you are on the inside. Even evolved beings face problems in life and know how to deal with them clearly.

## **6. Good vs. Bad Thoughts**

Some people think that being spiritual means being perfect, which is not true.

- ☒ “Spiritual people must always be kind, peaceful, and forgiving.”
- ☒ “Anger, sadness, and fear mean you are not truly spiritual.”
- ☒ “A spiritual person never experiences negative emotions.”

It's not true that controlling your feelings is part of spiritual growth. That means you understand and control them instead of letting them control you.

## **7. Spirituality is a way to escape the real world**

Some people think that being spiritually wise means separating from the world.

- ☒ “The world is an illusion (Maya), so nothing matters.”
- ☒ “Pain and suffering don't exist if you are truly spiritual.”
- ☒ “A spiritual person should not engage in politics, business, or worldly affairs.”

Reality: The world changes all the time, but what you do in it matters. Spirituality is not about running away from life, but about living it fully.

## **8. Doing certain things will make you spiritual right away**

Some people think that doing certain things makes them holy.

- ☒ “If you do yoga, you are spiritual.”
- ☒ “Eating vegetarian food makes you more enlightened.”
- ☒ “If you meditate daily, you will reach enlightenment.”

✦ Truth: Practice by itself does not promise spiritual awakening. Spirituality that is real is about changing and becoming more aware of yourself, not about changing your habits.

## **9. Spiritual awakening is only for a select few**

A lot of people think that only certain types of people can reach wisdom.

- ☒ “Only monks, saints, or gifted people can achieve spiritual realisation.”
- ☒ “You need past life karma or divine blessings to be spiritual.”
- ☒ “Not everyone is meant to awaken in this lifetime.”

✦ Truth: Everyone has the ability to become spiritually awake. It's not about luck or fate; it's about choice, hard work, and getting to know yourself.

## **10. Spiritual people need to be poor and humble**

Some people think that being spiritual means giving up on financial success.

- ☒ “A true spiritual person does not seek wealth or success.”
- ☒ “Spirituality means living simply, without luxury.”
- ☒ “If a guru or teacher has money, they must be fake.”

There is no right or wrong way to be wealthy; it depends on how it is made and used. Being

spiritual means being detached on the inside, not being poor on the outside.

### **11. Things happen for a reason**

A lot of people think that the world plans everything that happens.

- ☒ “If something bad happens, it must be your karma.”
- ☒ “Everything that happens is part of a divine plan.”
- ☒ “You must accept your suffering without questioning it.”

✦ Truth: There are causes and effects, but not everything is set in stone. Being spiritual means taking charge of your life and not just letting things happen as they may.

### **12. Being spiritual means trusting in miracles**

Miracle skills are seen by many as a sign of enlightenment.

- ☒ “A true guru can perform miracles.”
- ☒ “Spirituality gives you supernatural powers.”
- ☒ “If you are spiritual enough, you can heal diseases or predict the future.”

✦ Truth: Miracles can happen, but they’re not what faith is all about. To be truly spiritual, you need to understand yourself, not use fancy tricks.

### **Breaking the Myths and Discovering Real Freedom**

Spirituality isn’t just accepting things without question; it’s about asking questions, having experiences, and growing. For many years, these myths have kept people stuck, but the moment you ask, “Is this really true?” you take a step towards real freedom.

Which of these ideas has made you think the way you do?

Are you ready to learn more about faith than these myths tell you?

# Comparing the Top 5 Religions with Spirituality

Religion and faith are not the same thing, even though a lot of people think they are. Religion is based on beliefs, traditions, and set lessons. Spirituality, on the other hand, is a direct inner experience of truth that goes beyond dogma. Here are the main ideas of the five most important religions in the world. I am not going to explain in depth about religion and religious process but in quick bullet points for easy digestion.

## 1. Spirituality vs. Hinduism

Hinduism (Sanatana Dharma) – Though there is no religion called Hinduism, but it I have mentioned it for easy understanding.

- Based on the Vedas, Upanishads, and Bhagavad Gita, it is one of the oldest faiths.
- It believes in many gods and divine forms, such as Shiva, Vishnu, Devi, and others.
- The main ideas are karma, dharma (duty), and moksha (freedom).
- A lot of importance is given to rituals, temple worship, holidays, and holy books.

### Spirituality Beyond Hinduism

- Hinduism is a way to become spiritual, but being spiritual doesn't depend on rituals, gods, or texts.
- According to the Upanishads and Advaita Vedanta, religious rituals are not as important as asking yourself, "Who am I?" Spirituality says that freedom comes from directly realising the Self, which goes beyond religious identity.

## 2. Spirituality vs. Christianity

Christianity is based on what Jesus Christ taught and what the Bible says.

- It stresses faith in God, sin, and redemption through Christ.
- Things like prayers, going to church, baptism, and confessing your sins.
- Strong faith in hell, heaven, and judgement after death.

### Spirituality Beyond Christianity

- You don't have to believe in a personal God or an outside saviour to be spiritual. Jesus' lessons were about changing yourself and realising who you are, not just your religious identity.
- Spirituality doesn't focus on sin and salvation; instead, it focusses on becoming self-aware and free from ego.

## 3. Spirituality vs Islam

Islam: It is based on the Qur'an, the lessons of the Prophet Muhammad, and the Five Pillars,



which are faith, prayer, charity, fasting, and pilgrimage.

- A strict form of monotheism says, “There is no God but Allah.”
- A lot of focus on following God’s rules and the future.

#### Spirituality Beyond Islam

- To be spiritual, you don’t have to follow strict rules. Instead, you should look for the truth.
- The religious school of thought called Sufism focusses on divine love and inner experience rather than strict rules.
- Spirituality says that truth is not based on beliefs, but on a direct experience of God.

#### **4. Spirituality vs. Buddhism**

Buddhism was started by Gautama Buddha and is based on meditation and Dharma (truth).

- No personal god; focusses on getting to know oneself and becoming enlightened.
- The Four Noble Truths explain suffering, why it happens, how to end it, and the way to freedom.
- The Eightfold Path explains how to live a good life through meditation, wisdom, awareness, and right living.

#### Spirituality Beyond Buddhism

- Buddhism is more of a spiritual path than a faith, but it has become a religion with rules and laws.
- True faith doesn’t require living like a monk—everyone can awaken in their daily life.
- Spirituality says that freedom is not giving up on the world, but realising who you really are beyond pain.

#### **5. Spirituality vs. Judaism**

Judaism is one of the oldest monotheistic faiths.

- It is based on the Torah and the teachings of the prophets. It stresses a promise with God, laws, and traditions.
- It also puts a lot of emphasis on practices, ethics, and the Jewish identity as a whole.

#### Spirituality Beyond Judaism

- You don’t have to follow religious rules or laws to be spiritual.
- Jewish mysticism (Kabbalah) goes beyond rituals to study higher consciousness.
- Spirituality says that God is not a ruler outside of us, but the source of all things.

#### **Key Differences Between Religion & Spirituality**

#### **Conclusion- Beyond Religion and Into Real Spirituality**

- Religion isn't the only way to find the truth; it can help you find it.
- Spirituality is not about rituals, gods, or labels; it's about having a direct view of the real world.
- Real faith isn't limited to Hinduism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, or Judaism. It's for everyone.
- The Real Question: Don't ask "Which religion is right?" Instead, ask "Who am I beyond all beliefs?"

### **Part 3**

## **Understanding the Path & the Role of a Guru**

## Who Am I

*Silence is of four kinds:  
Silence of speech,  
Silence of the eye,  
Silence of the ear,  
And Silence of the mind.  
Only the last one is pure Silence.  
And the most important.  
- Sri Ramana Maharishi*

Have you heard of this great sage who lived in India? Paul Brunton, the Author of “In the Search of Secret India” has written a lot about him. Sri Ramana Maharishi hardly spoke, but he encouraged his disciples to go deeper and contemplate within themselves on “Who Am I”.

He beautifully narrates that our problems in life is that we identify with all that is happening in the mind, with all the varying moods of the mind. When we are angry, we become the anger.

The same is true for happiness, sadness, fear, joy, and so on. In truth, none of these feelings are who you are. You have a house, a family, a dog, a cat, a car, and so on.

Suppose somebody asks you, “Whose house is this?”, what will you answer? You will say, “It is my house”. And you will say the same about your car, cat or dog etc. They are all yours. But, whatever is *yours* is not **you**!

It is different from you. The house is yours, but it is not you. Your body is yours, but it is not you. It is the same with your mind, thoughts, feelings, emotions, intellect and everything. They are yours, but they are NOT you.

Not knowing that you are the power behind the entire universe, not realizing that you are its very life force, the totality of all existing energy, you identify with the mind, with its different thoughts and feelings. The source of that power is the infinite power of the self; it is not some power that is outside, it is right within you.

When the mind is no more, when the ego is no more, you are one with the whole of existence, one with the whole universe - you ARE that!

Who Am I - The Self is that where there is absolutely no “I” thought. That is called Silence. The Self itself is the world; the Self itself is “I”; the Self itself is God; all is Shiva, Christ, Krishna, Allah, Buddha or Rama - the Self.

## Who is a Guru and Do I Need One?

Now that you've come this far in the book, you've navigated a complex subject with an open mind. The key is not to reject ideas outright but to embrace them with confidence.

At some point in your life, you will step onto the path of spirituality—whether by choice or by the force of inner awakening. It is not a road you can avoid forever, and once you enter, there is no turning back. This journey is a one-way path leading only forward.

As the New Testament says:

*“Ask, and you shall receive; knock, and the door shall be opened.”*

When the longing for truth becomes intense—when you say, *“I must know, I cannot wait another moment”*—the spiritual time capsule opens, and a guide appears. This is not coincidence; it is a law of the universe.

### **The Guru: A Spiritual GPS**

A guru is like a GPS navigation system. He guides you to your destination through the shortest and safest path.

- You can choose to drive your own bus, navigating the road with trial and error.
- You can let someone else drive, surrendering your direction to external influences.
- Or you can place your trust in an enlightened master, allowing him to take you where you need to go with wisdom and grace.

Many seekers have reached their destination without a guru, but those who follow an enlightened master often reach faster, with fewer obstacles.

Yet, you cannot “shop” for a guru. A real teacher is not someone you choose with logic; they appear when your longing is pure and deep enough. That is how it works.

### **The Guru's Role: Turning You Inward**

A guru does not give you something external; rather, he points you back to yourself. He does not add to your beliefs but helps you drop them. The modern world conditions you to look outward—towards success, validation, and possessions—but a guru turns your gaze inward.

No matter how deeply conditioned you are by materialism or skepticism, your inner being will one day pull you onto this road. It is inevitable.

### **The Danger of Clinging to Teachings**

Do you follow a teacher? Do you read their books or attend their courses?

Understand this: Any teaching, after a certain point, becomes a limitation. Initially, it impacts you because it is new, because you have no framework to distort it. But over time, the mind begins twisting teachings to suit its own convenience.

- When teachings challenge your ego, you resist them.
- When teachings no longer serve your desires, you manipulate them.
- If teachings only support survival and not transformation, they become useless.

The greatest mistake seekers make is worshiping the teacher instead of embodying the teaching.

A true master shows you the door to self-realization, but he does not force you through it. He

waits patiently, ready to guide you should you hesitate or turn back. His **grace** remains with you, whether you acknowledge it or not.

I do not say you should reject teachers. But I do object to blind dependence on one. Let's explore both perspectives.

### **Why Some Believe a Guru is Essential**

- 1) **A Guide for the Unknown** – Like a teacher helps a student understand mathematics, a guru helps navigate the intricate path of self-discovery.
- 2) **Shortcut to Wisdom** – Instead of spending years in trial and error, a guru accelerates your learning by guiding you efficiently.
- 3) **Transmission of Realization** – Many traditions hold that enlightenment is transmitted through the presence and teachings of a realized master.
- 4) **Correction of Ego Illusions** – A guru acts as a mirror, revealing your blind spots and preventing self-deception.
- 5) **Spiritual Texts Endorse It** – Scriptures across cultures emphasize the necessity of a master for self-realization.

### **Why a Guru May Not Be Necessary**

- 1) **The Truth is Already Within** – No external teacher can “give” you realization. It is an internal discovery.
- 2) **Beware of False Gurus** – Many self-proclaimed spiritual leaders exploit seekers for power, money, or control. How do you discern the real from the fake?
- 3) **Direct Experience Over Belief** – Blindly following a guru can trap you in beliefs rather than direct realization.
- 4) **Self-Inquiry is the Key** – Great masters like Buddha, Ramana Maharshi, and J. Krishnamurti emphasized questioning everything—even the teacher.
- 5) **Life Itself is a Teacher** – If you are truly open, everything around you—people, events, nature—becomes a guru.

### **The Balanced Approach**

A true guru does not impose authority; he empowers you to find your own truth. One day, you have to let go of your guru too.

Do not worship the teacher—learn from them, but never surrender your ability to think.

Your highest guru is your own awareness. A teacher can point the way, but you must walk the path.

### **To Understand, ACT**

Knowledge alone does not liberate. Action does.

ACT to acquire Self-Knowledge.

## How to Acquire Self Knowledge Without Blindly Following Others

You can't learn about yourself from someone else. Nobody can teach you how to know yourself. No one else can tell you; you have to find out for yourself.

To get to know yourself, you have to pay attention to what you do, say, and how you act in everyday situations. If you start with that, you'll see how hard it is to be aware. Pay attention to how you talk to your coworkers, your boss, your family, and even people you don't know. Pay attention to how you feel about other people, thoughts, and things you own.

Imagine that you are looking at your whole self in a mirror. Not just your looks, but also your deeds and feelings. Can you picture yourself without being judged, condemned, or given a reason? It is possible to understand that the very act of awareness changes things. In that moment, you begin to understand yourself.

Knowing yourself is the first step in meditating. If you don't know yourself, you might still be connected to your beliefs, family, property, ideas, and ego, even if you do so-called meditation. Real meditation is not a method; it is becoming aware of who you are.

Meditation is just self-hypnosis if you don't know yourself. You project your own ideas and desires onto the meditation cushion. A phrase or your breath is not enough to help you meditate. You also need to be able to see your own mind clearly, moment by moment.

To Get It, **ACT!**

Just knowing something doesn't set you free. Taking action is the best way to learn about yourself.

**Here are some useful steps:**

- **Daily Self-Observation:** At the end of each day, take five minutes to think about how you interacted with others and how you felt. Note them down. What set you off? What made you glad?
- **Silent Retreats:** Being alone with your thoughts for even a short time can help you understand them better.
- **Think about how you're reacting** – What caused you to act that way? What thought or fear made it happen?
- **Leave Behind Labels**—Don't tell yourself that you are good or bad, great or unsuccessful. Just look around.

You will start to see that the best teacher is already inside you if you keep asking yourself questions.

## **Part 4**

# The Modern Challenges to Spirituality



# **The Illusion of Instant Enlightenment: Spirituality in the New Age and Social Media**

Spirituality used to be an inner journey of self-discovery, but in the last ten years it has become a marketable lifestyle brand. With the rise of social media, a new kind of “New Age Spirituality” has appeared. In this type of spirituality, real self-inquiry is replaced by affirmations, beauty, and quick fixes.

A lot of these things are on sites like Instagram, Facebook, X and YouTube:

- Picture-perfect “high-vibe” leaders in faraway places.
- One-line statements that promise wealth right away.
- “3 Steps to Enlightenment” or “How to Manifest Your Dream Life Overnight” movies that go viral.
- Messages that aren’t very deep, like “Good vibes only,” as if being spiritual means avoiding problems.

These posts might make you feel good, but they often oversimplify and change the meaning of true faith.

## **1) What’s the Difference Between the Law of Attraction and Real Spirituality?**

The Law of Attraction (LOA) is one of the most used ideas in New Age philosophy. Some people on social media say this idea is the key to success and tell them:

- “Think good thoughts, and good things will come to you.”
- “Picture money coming to you easily,” they said.
- “Cheer up, and the universe will give you something good.”

Positive thought is very helpful, but it doesn’t take the place of work, action, or karma. True faith teaches letting go of wants, but New Age ideas promote obsessing over wants in the name of “manifestation.”

This leads to:

1. Spiritual bypassing means ignoring your own problems in favour of fake happiness.
2. You feel guilty and ashamed when you don’t get what you want because you think you’re not “spiritual enough.”
3. Commercial Exploitation: Coaches who charge a lot of money for classes on “manifesting wealth” are really just taking advantage of people who are desperate to get rich.

Wishful thinking won’t get you material happiness; real spirituality is about changing yourself on the inside.

## **2) The Scam of “Feel-Good Spirituality”**

A lot of influential people sell a faith that is all about happiness, comfort, and peace. But real spiritual growth means being uncomfortable, asking questions, and facing your darkest feelings.

- That’s not all real faith is; it’s also about letting go of false beliefs.
- It’s not about getting what you want; it’s about knowing what you want.
- It’s not about always being happy; it’s about accepting that happiness and sadness are both parts of life.

Social media encourages a faith that only sees one side, which avoids conflict. But insight isn’t about staying away from pain; it’s about getting past it.

## **3) False Teachers and Social Media Gurus: The Guru Culture**

Another problem with faith on social media is the rise of “gurus” and influencers who:

- Sell easy ways to become enlightened without having done any deep practice themselves.
- Charge a lot of money for classes that say they will awaken your kundalini in seven days.
- Give advice that goes against what other people say, often based on their own ideas instead of traditional wisdom.

You can use fancy words like “higher consciousness,” but your ideas don’t go very deep.

Being spiritual is not something that a real Guru sells like a product. Instead, they:

- Show others how to do things instead of selling yourself.
- Don’t make wild claims about getting results quickly.
- Lead people who are looking for something to self-inquiry and knowledge, not just blind faith.

People who are spiritual on social media sites tend to worship people rather than ideas. It’s not important to follow someone, but to follow the truth.

## **4) When awakening is turned into a product, this it becomes a business of spirituality.**

Making money off of faith is now a billion-dollar business, with:

- Retreats, classes, and coaching programs that cost a lot of money.
- You can get paid to become a “life coach” or “healer” in just one weekend.
- Fake spiritual experiences/kundalini awakening that are sold as high-priced packages.

A lot of people mix up faith and business success. But getting spiritually awake has nothing to do with money, power, or position. You can't buy, sell, or brand real knowledge.

Not fancy classes or certificates, but quiet time, self-reflection, and daily practice are what lead to real spiritual growth.

### **5) What real spirituality looks like: The True Path**

We need to go back to ancient knowledge to tell the difference between real spirituality and social media trends:

1. Asking yourself, "Who am I?" is an important part of spirituality. What's real? Just what is illusion?
2. Mindfulness, self-control, and a sense of separation are all parts of self-discipline.
3. Stillness and silence: Real knowledge comes from meditating, not from scrolling through social media.
4. Living with Less – Being spiritual isn't about showing off your status; it's about finding peace within yourself.

Spirituality that is real is not a show. It's not necessary for it to be written down, shared, or approved by other people. An inner change takes place that is private and unique.

### **6) Finally, pick depth over hype.**

This chapter's purpose is not to criticise, but to make people aware of the differences between real faith and trendy ideas that are made to make money.

- If spirituality on social media helps you get started on your path, that's great, but don't think it's the real road.
- The real way isn't about showing other people you're spiritual; it's about getting to know yourself well.
- Real faith isn't about getting things from the outside world; it's about finding the truth inside.

# Ancient Wisdom and Modern Research Meet in the Middle of Science and Spirituality

*Are science and spirituality at odds with each other?*

For hundreds of years, people thought that science and spirituality were two different, even opposing, areas. Spirituality is based on inner experience, self-inquiry, and wisdom, while science is based on experiments, facts, and logic. But new studies in brain, psychology, and quantum physics are starting to back up what spiritual masters have been saying for a very long time.

The important question:

- Is it possible for science to understand spiritual experiences?
- Is there a link between being aware and the universe?
- Can scientists prove that mindfulness, meditation, and self-awareness are good for you?

This chapter talks about how modern science is now backing up the timeless ideas found in spiritual traditions.

## **1) Neuroscience and Spirituality: How the Mind Works with Enlightenment**

Neuroscience, the study of the nervous system and brain, has given us some very interesting information about how spiritual practices change our bodies.

### **A. How meditation affects the brain**

Sages from long ago said that meditation can help you find inner peace and your true self. MRI scans and EEG brainwaves have been used in studies today to prove that:

- Regular meditation makes the grey matter denser in parts of the brain that help with remembering, focus, and controlling emotions.

The “ego centre” of the brain, the Default Mode Network (DMN), shuts down during deep meditation. This makes it easier to stop thinking too much about yourself and focussing on the present moment.

Gamma waves, which are connected to greater awareness and happiness, get stronger in the brains of meditators who have done it for a long time.

### **B. How practice changes the way the brain works**

Being mindful means being in the present time. This idea comes from Buddhism and Vedanta. This is now proven by science:

- Mindfulness-based techniques lower the stress hormone cortisol, which in turn lowers stress, anxiety, and depression.
- The prefrontal cortex gets stronger, which helps you handle your emotions better. This part of the brain is in charge of self-awareness and making decisions.
- Being mindful makes neuroplasticity stronger, which means that the brain can

change how it works to achieve higher levels of awareness and inner peace.

*Wisdom from the past:*

As Krishna says in the Bhagavad Gita, “A person who is steady in meditation remains unshaken like a lamp in a windless place.” Brain studies on meditators have now shown that this is true.

## **2) Quantum physics and consciousness: the mysterious field of study**

Quantum physics, the study of subatomic particles, has revealed strange, almost magical truths about the world that have shaken the foundations of traditional science.

### **A. Reality changes when you watch it, this is called the “observer effect.”**

- Scientists found that particles act differently when they know they are being watched in quantum tests.
- This backs up the idea that awareness shapes reality, which is similar to the idea that “the world is a projection of the mind.”

*Wisdom from the past:*

As the Upanishads say, “As is the observer, so is the observed.” This fits with what we know about how observing can change reality today.

### **B. Science backs up the Vedantic view that everything is energy.**

It has been taught for a long time in Vedanta and Buddhism that the world is not made of matter but of pure energy and vibration.

- Quantum physics proves that atoms are 99.99% empty space, which means that the world we live in is just a trick.
- Our bodies and thoughts are made up of vibrating energy fields that are in tune with what spiritual masters call “cosmic consciousness.”

*Wisdom from the past:*

Adi Shankaracharya said that the world is an illusion, or Maya, and that everything that seems real is actually just energy moving around.

## **3) The Study of Spiritual Experiences: Is It Possible to Measure Enlightenment?**

People who had deep spiritual realisations in the past, like Buddha, Ramana Maharshi, and Rumi, wrote about feelings of oneness, happiness, and transcendence.

Modern neuroscience has tried to measure these kinds of experiences:

- Advanced meditators have more gamma waves, which is connected to “non-dual awareness,” a state where the ego fades away and a sense of oneness with the universe appears.
- Scientists have looked into Near-Death Experiences (NDEs), in which people say

they feel light, bliss, and oneness with the universe. These experiences suggest that consciousness may live outside of the brain.

- Scanners of the brains of monks and yogis in deep meditation show states that are beyond normal waking consciousness. This supports the idea that awakening is a change in awareness, not a set of beliefs.

*Wisdom from the past:*

What the sages knew from direct experience is now being backed up by science. The Vedas say, *“The knower of the Self sees no separation in anything.”*

#### **4) The Middle Path: Bringing Science and Spirituality Together**

- Scientists can describe how things work very well, but they have a hard time explaining why things exist.
- Spirituality answers the question “why,” giving us meaning, purpose, and inner knowledge.
- They are not rivals; instead, they work well together.

What You Need to Know:

- Science helps us figure out how awareness works.
- Spirituality gives people a direct experience of being aware.
- They paint a full picture of life when put together.

#### **5) The Path of Integration in Conclusion**

There is no need to pick either science or faith. The future lies in combining them.

- Science without faith leads to being materialistic and empty.
- Spirituality that doesn’t take into account science can lead to blind faith and myth.
- The wisest people use both, like the yogis did in the past when they looked at the mind, body, and world as a single system.

#### **Last Thought:**

You are not separate from the universe; you are the universe knowing itself. This is the most important finding in both religion and science.

## **Part 5**

# Common Pitfalls & Manipulations on the Spiritual Path

## Common Mistakes People Make on the Spiritual Path

People often think of spirituality as a way to find peace, wisdom, and freedom. But many people who are on this road fall into subtle ego traps and illusions that stop them from growing.

This chapter looks at 11 common mistakes/traps that people make on their spiritual journey so that you can spot them and stay on the right path.

### **Trap 1. The Spiritual Ego (also known as the “I Am More Spiritual Than You” Syndrome)**

A big ego that looks like knowledge is one of the biggest threats on the spiritual path.

Signs of the Spiritual Ego:

- Thinking you’re better than other people because of the spiritual things you do.

Being sure that you are “awakened” while others are not aware of this.

- Using faith to criticise or judge people who aren’t spiritual.

The truth:

Real faith doesn’t make you feel better than other people; it makes you humble. If your practice makes you feel proud instead of compassionate, it’s an ego trap.

**Trap 2: Spiritual Bypassing** (Running away from reality in the name of spirituality) People spiritually skip problems in their everyday lives when they use religion to avoid them.

Some examples of Spiritual Bypassing are:

- Instead of healing emotional scars, people use meditation or affirmations to block them out.
- Not taking blame and saying “Everything happens for a reason”
- Not having tough talks because you need to “stay positive.”

The truth:

Real spirituality includes both good and bad things. Ignoring your feelings in the name of spirituality only makes you hold them back, not change.

**Trap 3 - The superiority complex** (thinking your way is the only right one).

In search of spirituality, many people think their road is the best, highest, or only way to go.

Signs that someone has a spiritual superiority complex:

- Being rude to people who follow different customs.
- Think that your Guru or way is better than all others.
- Not considering the wisdom of other faiths without exploring them with an open mind.

The truth:

There is only one truth, and all the paths lead to it. Holding on to one tradition and rejecting others stops mental growth.

**Trap 4: Loving the Guru more than following the teachings**

You can find the truth with the help of a real Guru, but many people who are looking for it get caught in the trap of blind devotion.

How to Spot False Guru Worship:

Treating the Guru like a famous person or a god who can’t make mistakes.



Spending too much time thinking about the Guru's personal life instead of following the lessons.  
Defending the Guru even when they act unethically.

The truth:

If a teacher encourages people to rely on them and follow their every word, they are not a real Guru.

**Trap 5: Focussing on rituals instead of changing yourself**

Many people who are looking for spirituality think that rituals are the same thing as real faith.

Example of an Obsession with a Ritual:

- I believe that chanting or fasting alone can lead to knowledge.
- Being set in your ways about astrology, prayers, or external routines while ignoring work you need to do on yourself.
- Making assumptions about people who don't follow your religious rules.

The truth:

Rituals should be used as stepping stones, not as crutches. If they are used instead of deep reflection, they have lost their point.

**Trap 6: Looking for enlightenment right away (the "quick fix" illusion)**

Modern faith encourages quick awakening by saying that you can reach enlightenment in seven days or at a weekend retreat.

Things that show you're thinking like this:

- Thinking that a single book, retreat, or method will magically make your life better hopping from one practice to the next to save time.
- Spiritual growth is judged by things like money, fame, and fans.

The truth:

Spiritual growth is a process that lasts a lifetime, not a short time. You need to be patient and persistent.

**Trap 7: Getting attached to spiritual experiences (looking for mystical highs)**

A lot of people get hooked on mystical experiences and think they are the real awakening.

Signs of Attachment to an Experience:

- Seeking visions, states of bliss, or changes in awareness instead of realising oneself.
- Doubting that one peak experience is enough to make you wise.
- When you don't feel spiritual highs, you might feel empty or lost.

The truth:

There are feelings that come and go, but real enlightenment is awareness that lasts.

**Trap 8 - Avoiding material life (the false belief that money and success are "not spiritual")**

A lot of people who are looking for spirituality start to dislike money, desire, and material success.

Signs of avoiding material things:

- Some people think that money is bad and that spiritual people should be poor.
- Feeling bad about having success, wealth, or pleasures.
- Using spirituality as an excuse to avoid responsibilities and job growth.

The truth:

Real spirituality isn't about giving up on life; it's about finding balance in it. Money isn't important; what counts is how you earn and spend it.

### **Trap 9: Making spirituality about thinking (Knowing vs. Being)**

Some spiritual seekers learn about it for a long time but never put it into practice.

What to Look for in Intellectual Spirituality:

- I read a lot of books but never meditated or asked myself questions.
- Using hard-to-understand spiritual words without living by what they mean.
- Getting into arguments instead of changing themselves.

The truth:

Spirituality isn't about what you know; it's about what you feel.

### **Trap 10: Confusing thinking positively with being aware**

A lot of people who are looking for spiritual wisdom think that positive thought is the same thing.

Toxic Positivity Shown Here:

- Not dealing with bad feelings instead of meeting them and working through them.
- Saying affirmations instead of doing deeper mending work.
- Thinking "high vibes only" means ignoring the hard things in life.

The truth:

Real faith includes both happiness and pain, not just good feelings.

### **Trap 11: Thinking You've "Arrived"**

Thinking you're done with the trip is the last trap.

This is a sign of "I Have Arrived" Syndrome:

- Being sure you don't need to learn anything else.
- No help for beginners, just looking down on them.
- Not being open to new ideas and becoming set in your ways of thinking.

The truth:

The real master is always a student, and even the wisest people are always growing.

### **Finally: Staying on the Right Path**

These mistakes/traps happen a lot, but they don't last forever. If you know about them, you can stay on track with real spiritual growth.

- Be humble and know yourself.
- Think about what you think and do.
- Trust your own judgement instead of what other people say.

The real road isn't about getting somewhere; it's about becoming more aware every moment.

# **Misuse of Spirituality to gain power, money, or control**

## **The Dark Side of Spirituality**

It is supposed to free, educate, and bring peace, but throughout history, people have also used it wrongly to control, trick, and get what they want.

The main question:

- How does something that was meant to awaken become something that is used to trick people?
- Why do people believe in spiritual claims that aren't true?
- What can we do to tell the difference between real faith and misusing it?

This chapter looks at how faith, business, politics, the media, and self-help culture use spirituality for their own gain.

### **1) The Business of Spirituality: How to Make Money Selling Enlightenment**

These days, meditation is a huge business worth billions of dollars, and awakening is seen as a product.

#### **A. Expensive Gurus and Teachings Made for Profit**

- Expensive classes and retreats that promise “instant enlightenment”
- It's thousands of dollars for “exclusive spiritual secrets.”
- Classes that say they can open your chakras or kundalini in 7 days.

#### The truth:

You can't buy enlightenment like a luxury thing; spirituality is about working on yourself.

### **2) Scams about the law of attraction and manifesting**

- A lot of “spiritual coaches” say that positive thought will make you rich and successful.
- They charge a lot of money for courses on how to manifest things, but their followers, not the world, pay them.
- If someone doesn't get what they want, they are told, “You didn't believe hard enough,” which puts the blame on them.

#### The truth:

True faith teaches inner peace, not being obsessed with money and wants.

### **3) Political Abuse: Using Religion to Gain Power**

Politicians have used religion to control people throughout history.

#### **A. Nationalism and religion**

- Politicians work with religious leaders to get people to back them.
- Religious identities are used to separate people, which leads to fights.
- Speech based on fear: “If you don't support us, you're against our faith.”

#### The truth:

As far as politics go, real faith doesn't divide; instead, it brings people together through wisdom.

## **B. The Myth of the “God-Ordained Leader”**

- Some leaders say they were picked by God to cover up dictatorship or crime.
- They follow without question because they think that “resisting the leader means resisting God.”
- Politicians throughout history have used divine power to keep people in line.

### The truth:

A real spiritual leader gives people the freedom to think for themselves instead of just following orders.

## **4) Fake spiritual trends and the media**

Spirituality is made to look cool and business by the media.

### **A. The Rise of Instagram Experts**

- A lot of influential people say they are spiritual leaders but don’t really know much about it.
- They post encouraging quotes and simple tips, but they don’t really know what they’re talking about.
- Their main goal is to get more sales, likes, and fans.

### The truth:

Real faith isn’t a show for likes and comments; it’s a change on the inside.

## **B. The New Age Scam Trick**

- A lot of advertising is done for “spiritual” items like healing stones, crystals, and tarot cards.
- People are told that these things will make them happy and at peace.
- Spirituality is reduced to getting things instead of realising oneself on the inside.

### The truth:

Real happiness doesn’t come from things outside of yourself; it comes from knowing yourself.

## **5. Mind Control and Cults: When Spirituality Turns Dangerous**

Cults and other manipulative groups are some of the worst places where faith is used wrongly.

### **A. How cults use religion to keep people in line**

- They say they are the only ones who can tell you the truth.
- Those who follow are told, “Only we can save you; outsiders are lost.”
- People are cut off from friends and family, which makes them dependent.

### **B. Controlling people’s minds**

- Control based on fear: “Something bad will happen to you if you leave.”
- Financial abuse: followers are made to give away or gift things they own.
- Following orders without questioning them: having doubts about the guru/boss/head is seen as a sign of spiritual weakness.

### The truth:

Being spiritually free doesn't require you to obey, be afraid, or be in charge.

## **6. Claims of Miracles and Fake Healers**

Some spiritual leaders lie about having magical powers to get people to follow them.

### **A. Scam gurus and magic shows**

- Some “healers” say that touch, water, or prayers can cure sickness.
- Fake “miracles” are made possible by stage tricks like hidden microphones and watching how the crowd reacts ahead of time.
- People who follow them are told, “Donate more, and you will be healed.”

### **B. Taking advantage of weak people**

- People who are sick or having a hard time are easy targets.
- They accept without question and spend all their money on fake spiritual solutions.
- Instead of sound advice, they get fake hope and lose money.

### The truth:

Healing comes from a mix of knowledge, alchemy/medicine, and self-awareness. Those who have the real healing power for miracles, they don't advertise, they don't have any expectations, they don't want any money, fame, power. You will not even know when or how they performed the miracle.

## **Real Healing vs Fake Healing: The Key differences**

Factor	Real Healing	Fake Healing
Source	Rooted in deep knowledge, self-awareness, and natural/higher energies.	Based on tricks, illusions, and psychological manipulation.
Intention	Selfless, with no expectation of money, fame, or control.	Motivated by financial gain, power, or blind devotion.
Process	Involves natural methods, energy work, meditation, self-discipline, and sometimes medical science.	Uses staged performances, dramatic effects, and emotional manipulation.
Results	Subtle and long-term transformation, sometimes beyond scientific explanation.	Instant but temporary "miracles" that fade after some time.
Effect on People	Empowers individuals to heal themselves through awareness and inner work.	Creates dependency on the healer, making people feel powerless without them.
Secrecy vs. Publicity	Silent, humble, and private. Real healers rarely advertise themselves.	Heavily promoted, often involves mass gatherings and dramatic claims.

## **7. The Promise of Getting Enlightened Right Now**

There are a lot of people who say they are teachers but really just sell “shortcuts” to knowledge.

### **A. Spirituality For Quick Fix**

- “Go to this retreat, and in three days you'll reach samadhi!” “
- “One mantra will remove all your karma instantly.”
- “Pay for this initiation, and you'll be enlightened.”

### The truth:

Deep self-inquiry, not a weekend workshop, is what it takes to reach true wisdom.

## **8. How to Tell If a Spirituality Is Real**

Ask these three things to keep yourself safe from spiritual deception:

1. Does this message make people afraid or free?

Real spirituality frees your mind, but fake spirituality makes you afraid and dependent.

2. Does the teacher want power or is he/she humble?

That's not what a real teacher does; they lead you to your own truth

3. Are the requests for money reasonable?

Spiritism shouldn't be used as a way to make money—fair trade is fine, but taking advantage of people is not. Fair trade is not always about taking money and it is done to cut the chord between and dissolve the karma.

### **9. Conclusion: What spiritual seekers need to do**

People keep misusing faith because they are easily fooled. The answer?

- Be aware of fake claims and question them.
- Choose knowledge over faith.

Remember that real faith is not a set of beliefs; it is an experience of the truth.

Spirituality is a way to free yourself, not a way to control other people. False spirituality will lose power as more people become aware of true self-inquiry.

## Case studies: real-life stories of spiritual awakening and getting lost

### The Two Ways to Find Spirituality

When spirituality is handled honestly, it can help people become deeply self-aware and free. However, many people who are looking for spirituality fall for fake versions that are not what they seem to be.

This part tells five powerful true stories, some of which are about real change and others of spiritual loss, to help readers find their own way. To maintain privacy, I have purposefully changed the characters. You may be able to resonate with yourself or with a known friend from your life.

### **CASE STUDY #1: The Business Leader Who Found Spiritual Peace**

Rajesh, a 42-year-old business executive, had a high-paying job, a fancy lifestyle, and a high social status, but he felt empty and stressed inside.

#### The Point of No Return

- He spent a lot of money on spiritual vacations in the hopes of finding peace.
- He fell for New Age marketing and started buying crystals, going to workshops, and following so-called teachers who said they could give him “instant enlightenment.”
- He looked for years outside of himself before he found Ramana Maharshi’s way of self-inquiry.

#### What he realised

- Instead of looking for events outside of himself, Rajesh looked inside himself.
- He worked on “Who am I?” by asking himself questions, he realised that he wasn’t his job, his money, or his accomplishments; he was just awareness.
- He gave up empty spiritual consumerism and started a simple daily practice of being still and aware of himself.

### **Important Lesson:**

Real spirituality isn’t about looking for events outside of yourself; it’s about finding the truth inside of you.

### **CASE STUDY #2: The Woman Who Got Out of the Cult and Won Her Freedom**

A 30-year-old yoga teacher named Maya was drawn to a charming spiritual leader who said he could help her become enlightened quickly.

#### How She Went Astray

- Everyone had to follow the group’s rules without question.
- She was told to cut ties with family and friends who “weren’t spiritual.”
- She felt like she had to give money to show how much she cared.

#### The Escape and the Awakening



- She began to wonder why the lessons seemed to be contradictory.
- A former member showed her how she was being lied to.
- She left and spent months going against her programming. Eventually, she found a balanced spiritual road through self-inquiry and meditation.

***Important Lesson:***

Spirituality that is real sets you free; it doesn't bind you, separate you, or use you.

**CASE STUDY #3: The “Fake Guru” Who Turned Out to Be a Real Teacher**

Vikram, who was smart and driven, began teaching meditation before he really understood it.  
How He Became a “Guru”

- He learnt spiritual terms and texts by heart but had never experienced them himself.
- He got a lot of followers by using expensive classes and social media.
- He began to believe his own lie, which was that he was “enlightened.”

The Alarm Clock

- While on a quiet retreat, he had a deep realisation: he was lying to himself and other people.
- He accepted that he wasn't very wise and stopped teaching in public.
- He used to sell “shortcuts to enlightenment,” but now he leads people to self-inquiry without making empty claims.

***Important Lesson:***

Real spiritual leaders are humble and say when they don't know something.

**Case study #4: The businessman who used religion to control other people**

As a businessman, Prakash learnt that people trust religious leaders more than businesspeople.  
How he made money with religion

He changed his name to “Spiritual Coach” and began selling classes on “Manifesting Wealth through Energy Alignment.”

- People who followed him thought he knew secret things that could bring him wealth.
- He had a lot of money, but his personal life was sad and empty.

The Fall and Transformation

- Some people who followed him lost all of their money after believing in his ways.
- A former follower told everyone about how he was cheating them.
- He felt terrible guilt and sorrow when he quit his spiritual business. He chose to be honest instead of lying.

***Important Lesson:***

Spirituality should never be used to get what you want; its real goal is inner truth, not making money for other people.

### **CASE STUDY #5: The Monk Who Quit the Ashram to Discover Real Freedom**

Arun gave up his life in the world and joined a spiritual ashram because he was a serious seeker.

#### **The Unexpected Battle**

- He did strict routines, but he didn't really feel at peace with himself.
- The ashram was more about discipline with other people than with oneself.
- He saw some top monks who were interested in power, status, and being in charge.

#### **His Enlightenment and Freedom**

- He left the ashram and meditated deeply while living alone for a year.
- He finally found the peace of mind he was looking for—not through practices but through direct awareness.
- He now says that giving up false ties is what renunciation is all about, not leaving the world.

#### ***Important Lesson:***

Spirituality isn't about names like "monk," "seeker," or "teacher." It's about realising things inside yourself.

#### **The lesson we can learn from these stories**

These case studies show important lessons:

- Being spiritual isn't about having a lot of events; it's about knowing yourself.
- You can't get enlightenment from gurus, retreats, or classes; you have to find it inside yourself.
- When spiritual seekers give up their own judgement, they are more likely to be manipulated.
- Not power or money, but freedom, simplicity, and telling the truth are what real faith is all about.

#### **Reminder:**

Real spiritual wisdom isn't something you have to look for, buy, or show. It's already inside you, waiting to be realised.

## **Part 6**

# Measuring Your Own Spiritual Growth

# Spiritual Awakening Self- Assessment Questionnaire

Spiritual awareness is a very personal and life-changing process that happens in a way that is unique to each person. Following a strict path or a single ideology is not what it's about. Instead, it's about getting to know yourself, questioning your beliefs, and finding deeper truths about life.

This Spiritual Awakening Self-Assessment Questionnaire is meant to help you think about your spiritual journey and where you are now. There is no way to tell how "spiritual" you are, and you are not put into stages. It's more like a mirror that helps you see your ideas, feelings, and awareness more clearly.

Because you did this self-evaluation, you will:

- Find out what your mental state and readiness are right now.
- Figure out what you want to learn or grow more about.
- Find trends in the way you think, feel, and experience life.
- Figure out what spirituality means to you besides religion and custom.

There are no right or wrong answers; only thoughts that can help you learn more about yourself.

Have an open heart and an honest mind as you fill out this form.

Let it help you awaken on the inside.

For each question, rate yourself from 1 to 5, based on how strongly you resonate with the statement:

Rating	Meaning
1 - Never	This statement does not describe me at all.
2 - Rarely	I experience this occasionally, but not often.
3 - Sometimes	I relate to this statement moderately.
4 - Often	This describes me most of the time.
5 - Always	This is a deep truth for me—I fully resonate with it.

Rate each statement from **1 (Never) to 5 (Always)** based on your experience.

## Stage 1:

1. I think that money, power, or success are the main things that make people happy.
2. I don't think much about big questions like "Who am I?"
3. I don't think faith is important or necessary in my life.
4. I mostly judge my own worth by what other people say about me.
5. I try to stay away from deep self-reflection and meditation.
6. A lot of my time is spent on fun things, hobbies, or social media.
7. I never do self-awareness, meditation, or silence.
8. I think that pain has no greater meaning or purpose.
9. I don't trust people who talk about spiritual or intellectual things.

10. My personality, body, and thought are the only things I fully identify with.

**Stage 1 – Total Score:**

**Stage 2:**

11. I don't question the religious things I do because that's how I was taught.

12. I think that my religious path is the only real way to become wise.

13. It makes me feel bad if I don't do a religious activity, walk, or pray.

14. I never look into spiritual teachings that aren't part of my faith or tradition.

15. I think you can only learn about spiritual things from books, the Bible, or masters.

16. It makes me feel bad to question religious beliefs.

17. I don't think there is any way to question the truth of heaven, hell, or fate.

18. I think that rituals and acts that affect the outside world are important for spiritual growth.

19. I think that only monks, saints, or people with a lot of discipline can reach truth.

20. I think badly of people who have different religious or spiritual views.

**Stage 2 – Total Score:**

**Stage 3:**

21. I've begun to question how religion and society have shaped me.

22. I find spiritual information in books, talks, and classes that I take.

23. I try to be more consistent with my meditation or mindfulness practice, but it's hard for me.

24. I want to know more about what awareness and the self are.

25. I think there is more to life than money or following religious rules.

26. I am open to different spiritual views and don't have a strong preference for one.

27. I'm moved by great spiritual leaders, but I haven't had a direct experience with them.

28. I like talking about faith, but I still think of it as information.

29. I've begun to question my ego and my conditioned identity

30. I think knowledge is possible, but I'm a long way from it.

**Stage 3 – Total Score:-**

**Stage 4:**

31. I have felt deep stillness or presence that goes beyond thinking.

32. I'm becoming less and less dependent on praise or validation.

33. I don't look for happiness outside of myself as much as I used to.

- 34. Instead of responding automatically, I pay attention to my thoughts.
- 35. There have been times when I felt one with life, nature, or awareness.
- 36. I am aware of how my ego causes me to suffer.
- 37. I've started doing deep meditation or self-inquiry every day.
- 38. I believe that spirituality is more than just having ideas.
- 39. For me, spiritual growth means changing on the inside, not doing things on the outside.
- 40. The ups and downs of life don't bother me as much.

**Stage 4 – Total Score:**

**Stage 5:**

- 41. There are times when my old personality doesn't make sense.
- 42. I feel separate from the person I was in the past.
- 43. I have existential fear or misunderstanding about who I am from time to time.
- 44. I can see that everything changes, even my feelings and thoughts.
- 45. On my spiritual path, I feel both calm and uneasy at the same time.
- 46. I'm no longer interested in success from the outside, material things, or social approval.
- 47. My pride seems to be coming apart, and I don't know what to do next.
- 48. I have begun to let go of deeply held views.
- 49. I don't care as much about my own pain because I think it's all in my head.
- 50. I'm afraid of "losing myself completely" sometimes.

**Stage 5 – Total Score:-**

**Stage 6:**

- 51. My feelings and thoughts are like moving clouds to me, not solid facts.
- 52. My views and opinions no longer make me feel very attached to them.
- 53. I truly feel at peace, no matter what is going on around me.
- 54. I feel like life is happening to me, not through me.
- 55. I don't really notice a change between spiritual and non-spiritual times.
- 56. I have a strong sense of freedom, even when things are hard.
- 57. I no longer need to "seek" something outside of myself.
- 58. I feel one with everything and don't feel different from it.
- 59. I think that pain is a choice that is made by attachment and resistance.

60. I don't think there is a separate "I," just awareness feeling itself.

**Stage 6 – Total Score:-**

**Stage 7:**

61. I always feel a deep feeling of ease and peace.

62. I have given up all of my wants, fears, and ties.

63. I don't feel like there is a gap between me and the world.

64. Everything is holy to me, and there are no good or bad things.

65. Being spiritual is no longer a journey for me; it's who I have always been.

66. I experience the world without judging it or getting involved with it.

67. I don't fight anything that happens to me in life.

68. I no longer need any ideas or lessons to understand anything.

69. There is no longer a "person" in me; there is only presence.

70. As for my spiritual questions, I have no more. The only answer is silence.

**Stage 7 – Total Score:-**

Stage	Description	Score
Stage 1	Unconscious Living (Survival Mode)	
Stage 2	Conditioned Spirituality (Blind Faith & Rituals)	
Stage 3	Intellectual Awakening (Seeking Truth)	
Stage 4	Experiential Awakening (Direct Experience Begins)	
Stage 5	Dissolution of Ego (The Dark Night of the Soul)	
Stage 6	Non-Dual Awareness (Seeing Beyond Illusion)	
Stage 7	Self-Realization (Enlightenment)	

**How to Make Sense of Your Results**

Add up your scores for each stage:

- ✓ **Below 20** → You are not fully in this stage.
- ✓ **21-35** → You are transitioning into this stage.
- ✓ **36-50** → You are deeply experiencing this stage

**Final Insight:**

- Most people do well in more than one stage, which shows they are changing.
- You are starting your spiritual journey if your best score is Stages 1–3.

- You are in deep change if you score high in Stages 4–5.
- If your highest score is Stage 6-7, it means you are living in non-dual awareness or realisation.

Now, let us understand what are these stages in a simple way.



# The Spiritual Progression Spectrum

The spiritual journey goes through stages, just like the school system takes kids through structured levels of learning. A child starts out in school learning how to read and write, and then they move on to higher levels of knowledge and critical thought. Spirituality, on the other hand, starts with blind acceptance and goes through deeper levels of self-awareness before ending with self-realization.

Using the Self-Assessment Questionnaire, you looked at your current level of spiritual awareness in the last part. Now, we'll look more closely at the 7 Stages of Spiritual Progression, which are like a road map that show you how to get from living an ego-driven life to awareness. These steps are similar to those in Advaita Vedanta, Zen, Sufism, and Buddhist taught, so they can be used as a general guide to growing inside.

Most people stay in the early stages because of what society says and what other people say about them. But just like students who question what everyone else thinks go on to become scholars, scientists, or innovators, spiritual seekers who question their limiting views can grow in their understanding of themselves. You can see where you are in your spiritual journey and what you need to do to move forward after reading this chapter.

Are you ready to go beyond what you've learnt in school about faith and have your own spiritual experience?

Let's look at the 7 Stages of Spiritual Progression and find out how to really awaken.

Stage 1: Unconscious Living (Survival Mode)

Stage 2: Conditioned Spirituality (Blind Faith & Rituals)

Stage 3: Intellectual Awakening (Seeking Truth)

Stage 4: Experiential Awakening (Direct Experience Begins)

Stage 5: Dissolution of Ego (The Dark Night of the Soul)

Stage 6: Non-Dual Awareness (Seeing Beyond Illusion)

Stage 7: Self-Realization (Enlightenment)

Education System	Spiritual Journey
Kindergarten (Blind Acceptance)	A child-like belief in religion, following rituals and traditions without question.
Primary School (Basic Understanding)	Beginning to understand spiritual concepts but still relying on external authority.
High School (Critical Thinking Begins)	Questioning religious teachings, exploring different perspectives, and seeking deeper meaning.
University (Independent Exploration)	Deep introspection, personal spiritual experiences, and exposure to different spiritual philosophies.
Postgraduate Research (Direct Experience)	Meditation, contemplation, and inner realization become primary sources of knowledge.
Mastery & PhD (Self-Realization)	Transcendence of ego, deep spiritual awakening, and direct experience of truth beyond concepts.

From kindergarten to high school, most people stay there, and only a few make it to self-realization by going beyond training.

## 1) Education System vs Spiritual Journey

You move through different levels of knowledge as you grow spiritually, just like you do in

school. Most people stay in the early stages and mindlessly follow social or religious rules. But some people break free and become more self-aware.

### **1. Kindergarten (Acceptance Without Question)**

- A lot of people start their spiritual journey by believing what they are told without question, just like a kid believes what they are taught in school.
- They follow rituals, traditions, and doctrines without trying to understand them better because that's how they were taught.
- For instance, someone might take part in religious ceremonies just because their family does, without really knowing what they mean.

### **2. Primary school (basic understanding):**

- At this stage, people start to understand basic spiritual ideas, but they still depend on outside sources like books, priests, and religious leaders.
- They start to understand things like fate, heaven and hell, and the power of prayer, but they don't really think about themselves yet.
- Someone believes in the rule of karma because they've heard about it, but they haven't thought about how it works in their own life yet.

### **3. High school (where critical thinking starts):**

- This is where you start to ask questions. People start to ask more profound questions, like: Why do we do these rituals? What happens after death? Is there a greater truth than what I have been taught?
- They might start to learn about different spiritual or religious groups.
- For example, someone who grew up in a very religious home might start reading about Buddhism, Vedanta, or other ideologies to broaden their view.

### **4. University (Independent Exploration):**

- At this point, spirituality is more of a personal journey than just following a road set by someone else.
- People start to meditate, write in a journal, or think about the deeper facts of life.
- They stop trying to get other people to agree with them and are open to different points of view.
- For instance, someone could make their own practice by combining parts of yoga, meditation, and mindfulness from different schools.

### **5. Research after college (direct experience)**

- Now, faith moves from being something you understand intellectually to something you feel.

- Reading or following outside experts becomes less important than meditation, reflection, and self-inquiry.
- Some people don't read about inner peace; instead, they go on quiet retreats or do deep meditation to feel it for themselves.

## 6. Mastery & PhD (Self-Realization):

- At this level, you are deeply aware of yourself and can go beyond religion labels, dogma, and your own ego-based identity.
- At this point, spiritual facts are no longer ideas; they are felt and known.
- So the person knows they are more than just their body or mind; they are part of a bigger consciousness.
- This is the level that enlightened masters like Buddha, Ramana Maharshi, and Rumi reached. At this level, they lived in peace, love, and deep knowledge.

### Key Point:

- Most people stay in kindergarten through high school and believe in spiritual lessons without really looking into themselves.
- Very few people reach the level of self-realization, where they can break free from their training and directly experience truth.

## The 7 Stages of Spiritual Progression: From Ego to Enlightenment

This model maps out the spiritual journey from ego-driven existence to full self-realization. It aligns with various mystical traditions (Advaita Vedanta, Zen, Sufism, Buddhism) and integrates modern spiritual psychology.

Stage	Description	Key Characteristics
1. Ego & Identity	Life is centered around personal identity, material success, and societal validation.	Fear, desires, attachments, pursuit of success, and external validation.
2. Questioning & Doubt	Start questioning life's purpose, religious beliefs, and deeper meanings.	Existential crisis, searching for answers, exposure to spiritual ideas.
3. Seeking & Exploration	Actively exploring various spiritual teachings, meditation, and self-inquiry.	Learning from books, gurus, and experiences; experimenting with different practices.
4. Awakening & Insight	A profound shift in awareness—realizing the impermanence of the ego and illusion of separation.	Moments of deep insight, stillness, increased presence, and detachment from conditioned thinking.
5. Surrender & Inner Work	Letting go of old beliefs and surrendering to the inner transformation process.	Ego resistance, emotional purging, solitude, and deep contemplation.
6. Integration & Embodiment	Living with clarity and aligning actions with deep spiritual understanding.	Compassion, wisdom, and seeing life as a flow rather than a struggle.
7. Self-Realization & Liberation	Transcending the personal self and merging with universal consciousness.	No attachment to identity, deep peace, bliss, and oneness with existence.

Most people operate within **Stages 1-3**, while only a few progress toward the final stages of **awakening and self-realization**.

## The Seven Stages of Spiritual Growth: From Ego to Enlightenment

This framework shows the path from living for yourself to fully realising who you are. Insights

from Advaita Vedanta, Zen, Sufism, and Buddhism are all in line with it.

### **Stage 1 - Identity and ego (materialistic awareness)**

- At this point, identity, financial success, relationships, and social approval are the most important things in life.
- People think that money, fame, relationships, and social rank are things that can make them happy.
- Either people don't care about spirituality or only do it on the surface (for example, going to religious events without really knowing them).
- For example, a businessman who only rates success by money and is always looking for approval from others without taking the time to think about himself.

### **Stage 2 - Doubt and questioning (Looking for Meaning)**

- At some point, things start to change: people start to wonder what life is all about and what it all means.
- They might be unhappy with their financial success or be going through a personal crisis, like loss, failure, or depression.
- They become interested in spiritual things and start reading spiritual books, thinking about spiritual ideas, or going to spiritual talks.
- For example, a business who is doing well starts to wonder, "Is there more to life than work and money?"

### **Stage 3 - Looking for and exploring (looking for the truth)**

- As people reach this stage of learning, they start to study different spiritual practices, try meditation, and ask themselves questions.
- They might look for teachers, read holy books, or join spiritual groups.
- It's easy to get lost in too much information if you don't have any real experience.
- Someone reads books about Advaita, Buddhism, and mindfulness, but they haven't changed on the inside yet.

### **Stage 4 - Awakening and Insight (A Shift in Awareness):**

- A person has a big experience or insight. They realise that their ego is not their true self.
- This could happen through deep meditation, thought, or an event that changes your life.
- There is a sudden understanding of how life changes, how difference is only an illusion, and how everything is linked.
- In deep meditation, a person feels connected to the world and knows that their thoughts are just

clouds that will pass.

#### **Stage 5 - Giving up and doing work on yourself (breaking ego attachments)**

- At this time, it's hard because you have to face your ego, old beliefs, fears, and attachments.
- Many people have trouble with this because their egos don't want to give up power.
- To truly submit, you have to accept life as it is and let go of your old selves.
- When someone is going through a personal loss, they give up and let the pain turn into knowledge.

#### **Stage 6 - Living the Truth: Integration and Embodiment**

- It stops being a habit and turns into a way of life.
- The person no longer has mental problems and can go through life without any problems.
- There is deep kindness, peace, and knowledge.
- For example, a Zen master stays cool and focused no matter what is going on around them.

#### **Stage 7 - Self-Realization and Freedom (Enlightenment)**

- This is the real waking stage, when a person realises they are a part of everything.
- No longer is there association with the ego or pain.
- Being present, joyful, and at peace are all ways of life.
- People like Ramana Maharshi and Nisargadatta Maharaj, who are saints, teachers, and enlightened beings, live in this state.

#### **Remember:-**

- Being ego-driven, questioning, and wanting are the stages that most people stay in.
- Not many people make it past Stage 4 (awakening and deep change).
- Self-realization is not common, but it is possible for those who really give up their ego.

What questions are popping up in your mind after reading this chapter? Write that down for deeper analysis and Inquiry.

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

## **Part 7**

# Applying Spirituality in Daily Life

# How to Use Spiritual Wisdom in Your Everyday Life (Practical Spirituality)

Many people think of spirituality as something separate from everyday life, like religious practices, meditation, or prayer. But being spiritual isn't just what you do when you're alone; it's how you live every day.

The real question is:

- How can I stay spiritual when life is so busy and crazy?
- How can my faith help me make choices, deal with people, and build relationships?
- Is it possible to have a deep spiritual life and also be drive and successful?

This chapter talks about easy ways to bring faith into every part of your life, without going to the Himalayas.

## 1) How to Connect Spiritually in Relationships: The Art of Being Present

How we treat other people is where our biggest problems and most important moral lessons lie. Real faith isn't about getting away from people; it's about getting to know them better.

### A. Being present while listening

A lot of people listen to answer, not to understand. Being spiritual teaches us to

- Pay full attention when someone talks.
- Let go of the need to correct, judge, or move quickly.
- Learn to listen with kindness, as the Buddha said.

### Do this:

Wait three seconds before you answer the next time someone talks to you. This little space will help you think about and give a better answer.

### B. Letting Go of Your Ego in Conflicts

"I am right; you are wrong," says ego. The spiritual saying goes, "Truth is bigger than both of us."

- Don't try to prove your point; instead, try to understand.
- When there is a disagreement, ask yourself, "What part of my ego is reacting?"
- Being wise means knowing when to speak up and when to be quiet.

### Wisdom from the past:

The Bhagavad Gita talks about equanimity, which means keeping calm no matter what people say about you. When used in relationships, this stops 90% of fights that aren't necessary.

### C. Love without getting attached

A lot of people mix up love and ownership. Detachment is something that spirituality teaches.

- Loving without holding on.
- Giving without expecting anything in return.

We need to accept people for who they are, not how we want them to be.

Love people for what they do for you or for who they are? Love is not the second one; it is connection.

## **2) Spirituality and Business Success:**

### **A New Way to Think About Wealth**

A lot of people think that faith and making money are opposites. This is not true. The real question is:

- Are you working out of greed or because you want to?
- Does your success only help you, or does it help other people too?

### **A. Going to work as a way to worship**

Work is not just a way to make money, according to ancient knowledge; it is a sacred offering.

- If you do your job with love, honesty, and service, it turns into a spiritual practice.
- Real personal fulfilment comes from achieving success in an honest and thoughtful way.

Morals for Spiritual Work:

- Do your job, but don't care about how it turns out (Karma Yoga).
- Do your best work, not your self (Bhagavad Gita).
- Think about wealth in terms of more than just money.

### **B. Making Choices Based on Spiritual Knowledge**

Spiritual wisdom teaches people how to make choices based on their intuition and their morals instead of their fears.

- Wait before you respond. Solutions are easy to see when you're calm.
- Check: "Does this align with my values?"
- Pick Dharma over desire rather than short-term gain for the long term.

### **Remember:**

A business deal that hurts people may make quick money. By balancing success with ethics, a spiritually-aligned choice is made.

### **C. Being a leader with humility and service**

Real leaders don't want power; they give others power.

- Leading doesn't mean ruling; it means helping.  
"How can I lift my team up?" is what a spiritual leader asks themselves.
- Being humble doesn't mean thinking less of yourself, it means thinking more about other people.

*Wisdom from the past:*

In the Mahabharata, Krishna was not a king, but a kingmaker. He led others without wanting praise for himself. Serving, not ruling, is what real leadership is.

## **3. Spirituality in Everyday Life: Easy Ways to Find Peace Within**



Spirituality is found in the little things we do every day, not in big traditions.

**A. Begin the day in silence**

- Be quiet for five minutes before you check your phone.
- Set a goal for the day, like “Today I will be patient and kind.”

**B. Mindfully Eating and Walking**

- Be aware, be grateful, and don’t do anything else while you eat.
- Take your time and feel every step and breath.

**C. Letting Go Before Going to Sleep**

- Think about your day without judging it before going to sleep.
- Forgive others and yourself; don’t take bad feelings to bed with you.

**Easy Question:**

Peace or chaos in the world because of what you did today? Make the necessary changes tomorrow.

**4. Spiritual Wisdom to Get Through Everyday Problems**

Here are few daily challenges and a practical approach in handling them

**Stress and Anxiety:** Take deep breaths, be aware, and let go of the past and the future.

**Ego and anger:** Stop, think, and then react calmly.

**Stuck on a decision?** Trust your gut and not your fears.

**Relationship Problems:** Try to understand, not win.

**Lack of Drive:** Your work should have value for you, not just give you rewards.

**Overthinking:** Separate yourself from your thoughts; watch them, don’t become them.

Ask yourself:

“Did I act from ego or wisdom today?” ask yourself every night.

**5. In the end, real spirituality is lived, not preached.**

Being spiritual doesn’t mean running away from life; it means living it with knowledge, wisdom, and kindness.

- Enlightenment is not a time; it’s a way of living.
- The decisions you make every day affect your spiritual growth.
- How you treat other people, especially when things are hard, is the best spiritual exercise.

“*How spiritual are you?*” is not the question. “*How much peace, love, and wisdom do you bring into the world?*” is.

# Spiritual Practices for Inward Journey

*“Who am I?” a monk asked his teacher. “*

*“Who are you asking?” the master answered. “*

*At that very moment, the monk woke up.*

Have you any day observed the non-stop nonsense chatter running inside your head.

If you observe little closely, you will be surprised that the noise level inside your head is far more intense than the noise in the external environment.

To progress and evolve further in the spiritual dimension start with Self-Awareness.

It is possible to become more aware of what’s happening around you and within you only when we take control over the inner noise.

## **What Is The Most Important Question?**

“Who am I?” is the most direct and deep philosophical question there is.

Belief-based spirituality is focused on rituals or outside gods. Self-inquiry, on the other hand, looks inside yourself to the source of all life.

The great Advaita master Sri Ramana Maharshi said that the fastest way to realisation is to directly investigate oneself. This means not reading philosophical texts or doing difficult practices.

Who or what is the “I” that lives?

This chapter’s goal is not to give you intellectual answers, but to show you a direct way to feel your true nature.

## **What You Think You Are Is Not Who You Really Are**

Labels and jobs help most people figure out who they are:

- “I am a business owner.”
- “I am a parent.”
- “I am an Indian.”
- “I am successful.”

But all of these identities are outside of you, temporary, and always changing.

- Are you still “you” if you get a new job?
- Do “you” change if your relationships do?
- Are you no longer alive if you lose your memory?

This is all the fake “I” (ego) is made up of:

- Thoughts
- Recollections
- Life Events
- Thoughts and feelings

But who is aware of all these thoughts?

Do people see them come and go?

The real “I” is the one who sees everything but is not part of it.

### **Self-Inquiry Method with 5 Steps**

#### **Step 1:**

Look for the “I” thought.

Just be still and watch your mind.

- Where does the idea “I” come from?
- Who says, “I am thinking”?
- What is “I” if it’s not the body or the mind?

That’s not philosophy; that’s straight self-study.

Always question what you think you know about yourself.

#### **Step 2:**

Getting rid of the fake “I”

Every time you have a thought, ask yourself:

Who does this thought come from?

That’s right, “to me.”

What do I belong to? Where is this “me”? “

Just wait in quiet. Don’t answer with your mind; just notice the space between the question and your answer.

As you work at it, you’ll see:

- Thoughts come up on their own, but you are not them.
- You are not your emotions, even though they show up.
- The “I” thought isn’t in one place; it just floats in awareness.

#### **Step 3:**

Going back to being aware of nothing

Look at the awareness that sees “I” once you know it’s just a thought.

Think about it:

◦ Do I know?

Don’t answer; just be aware that you are aware. Being aware of something is not a thought, a feeling, or a thing.

It is the setting of everything we do.

The main idea:

You are NOT your thoughts.

You are NOT your feelings.

Your body is NOT you.

You are the awareness that makes these things show up and go away.

#### **Step 4. The Mind’s Trap:**

The “I” That Never Finds Itself

Distractions will keep the mind from asking questions about itself:

- “This is too easy!” “
- “I understand the concept, but I don’t feel different.”
- “Maybe I need a mantra or ritual instead.”

This is the mind trying to keep from going away.

Don’t let these thought distractions hold you back; instead, just watch them go by like clouds.

### **Step 5. The Last Thought:**

There Was Never a “I”

When you ask yourself, “Who am I?” more deeply, you see that:

- The ego was never a real thing; it was just a collection of thoughts.
- The real “I” is not a person, an identity, or a name; it is just awareness.
- You are already free, so there’s nothing you need to do.

You can fall into the silence of truth as soon as you stop looking for an answer.

### **Self-Inquiry with Two Meditative Practices**

Self-inquiry is something you can do every day—you don’t have to be in meditation to do it.

When you feel upset, ask yourself, “For whom is this happening?”

If you feel like your ego is taking over, ask yourself, “Who is this “I” that wants to be right?”

Ask yourself, “Am I acting from ego or pure awareness?” before you make a choice. “

The look for “Who am I? “ is not about changing who you are; it’s about finding out who you have always been.”

The truest thing is easy to understand:

- Really, you’re not a person who is aware.
- You are awareness having a temporary experience of a person.

The point of this chapter is not to give you an answer, but to help you find your own.

When you ask yourself, “**Who am I?** “— sit with the question and listen to what it says.

Here are two simple, yet powerful mind centering or mind stilling Inner Silence exercises which you can practice daily, anywhere, any time.

### **Inner Silence Exercise #**

1. Find a quiet moment during the day. It’s best to find a time that’s good for you every day after your shower in the morning, before your breakfast, before your lunch break at noon or before going to bed at night.
2. Sit down in a comfortable position away from any distractions and preferably removed from family or office noise. Close your eyes.
3. Take in and release slow & deep breaths - at least five times.
4. Every time, you exhale, relax all the muscles in your body from head to toe. Increase the

intensity of your relaxation with each out-breath. Simultaneously become aware of each breath coming in and going out.

5. Now shift your attention to your eyebrow centre. You can sometimes see your mental screen. Start watching the mind. Thoughts will keep popping up one after another. Don't latch on to any of them. Pretend as if you are standing on the Bus Station/Bus Stop, and you are merely witnessing the thought-traffic passing by.
6. Just as you wouldn't jump into the high speed traffic because you like a couple of cars passing by, just witness the thoughts. Allow them to stream by. Remember, since you can see them, they are not you. You are separate from your thoughts. You are just their witness.
7. Try the above exercise for 5 to 10 minutes at a time until you get used to it. Later you can increase the time. The more you do this exercise, the better you will become in detaching your thoughts, whether during a formal exercise session or in the middle of a stressful chaotic day.
8. The more you detach yourself from your thoughts, the sooner you will discover a sense of joy and freedom inside yourself. You will start noticing the misbehaving mind less seriously and over time, it will misbehave less. You will find that you can return back to that quite centre within yourself anywhere and anytime.
9. You can be stuck in traffic, waiting for your public transport or standing in a line to buy your popcorn in the cinema hall. Instead of jumping into the heap of worrisome, fretful thoughts, you will begin watching them, possibly even with tongue in cheek. The relief you will find will surprise you.

### **Inner Silence Exercise # 2**

1. This exercise starts in the same way like the first exercise.
2. Find a quiet moment during the day. It's best to find a time that's good for you every day after your shower in the morning, before your breakfast, before your lunch break at noon or before going to bed at night.
3. Sit down in a comfortable position away from any distractions and preferably removed from family or office noise. Close your eyes.
4. Take in and release slow & deep breaths - at least five times.
5. Every time, you exhale, relax all the muscles in your body from head to toe. Increase the intensity of your relaxation with each out-breath. Simultaneously become aware of each

breath coming in and goes out.

6. Now, watch your thoughts for a while. Once the flow of thoughts has subsided a little, turn to focusing the mind on one thought alone. The best way to do this is to choose a phrase that you repeat over and over again in your mind. If you come from a religious tradition, choose a phrase from that tradition that is meaningful to you and has peaceful effects such as “Om Nama Shivaya”, “Hail Mary, full of grace”, “Allah O’ Akhbar”, “God, my-Heavenly father”, “Om Mani Padme Hum” etc.
7. If you have no tradition to choose from, find a phrase from a contemplative book or poem or just make one up yourself, such as “I am peace” or “I am filled with joy”, “I am heavenly guided and protected”. Repeat this phrase slowly in your mind. Try not to move your tongue or your throat muscles as you do this.
8. Keep the repetitions going until you find a natural rhythm. The rhythm of your repetition may fall in naturally with your deep, peaceful breaths. As you repeat the phrase, witness the part of the mind repeating the phrase. Become aware also, of the silence between each phrase.
9. In time, the silent phrase between the repetitions will increase in length. In those silent spaces, you will be tapping the centre within you - Consciousness - which is your true self in an unadulterated form.

As you continue the above two exercise on a daily basis, your mind will become calmer and more loving. Your thoughts will no longer run wild, pulling you helplessly with them. As your mind becomes calm, your awareness level increases, you will start seeing the world in a new way. You will begin to see how thought and feeling dramas play in other people’s mind. You will realize, empathize and become compassionate with fellow human beings. You will become more tolerant and more understanding.

You can use the 108 days Self Enquiry Activity at the end of this book to help you deepen your understanding.

# **Frequently Asked Questions About Religion and Spirituality**

## **1. Can I have faith and want money at the same time?**

Yes, money is neither good nor bad; it's just a tool. To be truly spiritual, you don't have to refuse money; you just have to use it wisely and without attachment. The Bhagavad Gita teaches balance: be honest, enjoy your money, but don't let it control you.

## **2. Do I have to give up my goals because I'm spiritual?**

No, ambition is normal. Being spiritual doesn't mean giving up your dreams; it means going after them with honesty, awareness, and not caring about how they turn out.

## **3. Why is knowledge impossible for most people?**

Yes, enlightenment is not just for monks. The Buddha, Krishna, and Ramana Maharshi all taught that anyone can find the truth; they just needed to be aware and ask questions of themselves.

## **4. To be spiritual, do I have to practice every day?**

Meditation does not make you more spiritual, but it does help. Being spiritual is more than just sitting with your eyes closed; it's about being aware of everything in your life all the time.

## **5. If I don't follow a faith, can I still be spiritual?**

Yes, spirituality is about having a direct experience of truth, while religion is mostly about having beliefs. For example, the Buddha and Ramana Maharshi both stressed the importance of asking yourself questions over following rules.

## **6. How can I tell if a guide or guru is real?**

Your real guru gives you the tools to think for yourself. A fake guru wants your complete trust, power, or money.

What makes a good teacher:

- They lead you to yourself, not to worship them.
- These people don't say things like, "Only I have the truth."
- They show by being humble, smart, and out of the way.

## **7. Is being spiritual all about being happy all the time?**

Real faith isn't just about feeling good. Facing your fears, letting go of your ego, and breaking free from attachments can be hard, but they lead to lasting peace.

## **8. Is it possible to be spiritual and still want things?**

Yes, wants are a normal part of life. The important thing is not to let them rule you. It's okay to want things like success, love, or health, but don't get attached to them as you seek them.

## **9. Is karma a way of being punished for things I did wrong in the past?**

Karma is not punishment; it's just cause and effect. What you did in the past affects what you do now, but you can change your future karma if you are aware of it.

## **10. How do I find my way to God?**

You should learn about different religions, teachers, and practices, but in the end, you should listen to your own inner wisdom. The real way isn't outside, it's inside.

## **11. Can I be spiritual and have friends and family at the same time?**

In fact, relationships are one of the best ways to learn about our ego, our attachments, and our expectations. They help us grow in love and understanding.

**12. What is the best way to grow spiritually quickly?**

Deep change can't be rushed, but these three keys can help:

1. The question "Who am I?"
2. Two ways to calm the mind are meditation and awareness.
3. Being aware of your life every day.

**13. Do you have to go through pain to grow spiritually?**

No, but it can help. Pain often makes people want to find deeper truths, but it's also possible to be awake without pain.

**14. Do I have to give up everything to become wise?**

No, true resignation means letting go of things inside, not pulling away from the world. In the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna says that a person can be free while still living in the world.

**15. Does spiritual awakening only happen once?**

No, awakening is not a single event; it's a process. Many people have glimpses of awakening, but it takes time to make it a part of their daily lives.

**16. How can I get over my pride?**

Just notice your ego instead of "destroying" it. Whenever you feel pride, anger, or attachment, stop and ask yourself, "Who is experiencing this?" "—this awareness naturally breaks down the ego.

**17. Can I have spiritual moments even if I don't meditate?**

Yes. Spiritual discoveries can happen in silence, in nature, in deep love, or even in terrible pain. Meditation can help, but it's not necessary for awakening.

**18. Why do spiritual people act badly sometimes?**

Knowing a lot about spiritual things doesn't always mean being spiritually mature. Some people get wise but don't live it. How you treat other people shows how spiritual you really are.

**19. Is it wrong to follow more than one religion?**

There are many ways to find the truth, but it can be hard to keep track of them all if you jump from one practice to another without giving them much thought.

**20. What's the difference between getting spiritual and getting better at yourself?**

The goal of self-improvement is to make your mind, body, and habits better.

Spirituality is all about finding your true self, which is different from your ego.

**21. Can faith help me deal with stress and worry?**

Yes. Spirituality teaches mindfulness, detachment, and presence, all of which naturally lower worry and fear. However, therapy or counselling for mental health issues can also be helpful.

**22. What part does silence play in spirituality?**

There is more to silence than just not speaking. It is the place where true awareness can be found. All spiritual realisations happen when the mind calms down.

**23. If everything is just a dream (Maya), then why do we still suffer?**

Maya doesn't mean that suffering is "fake." What it means is that the way we see reality isn't full. The illusion is our attachment and wrong perception. When we wake up, suffering turns into wisdom.

**24. Is knowledge open to everyone, or is it just for certain people?**



It is not true that only monks, saints, or gifted people can become enlightened. Everyone has the same inner truth that is waiting to be realised.

**25. What's the easiest way for me to begin my spiritual journey today?**

Start with one strong habit:

Every day, ask yourself, "Who am I?" "and notice what thoughts come up.

Be present—watch life without thinking about it all the time.

Spirituality isn't about getting more; it's about finding out what you already have.

In the end, there is no external answer that can match first-hand experience. The real question is:

Do you feel ready to look inside and see for yourself?

Even though the road is easy, it takes bravery, patience, and honesty to walk it.

**Part 8**

Deepening the Journey  
Journal – 108 Days  
of Self-Inquiry

# 108 Days of Self-Inquiry: A Daily Sadhana for Inner Awakening

Spirituality isn't just reading about it; it's also about having real experiences. This 108-day journey of self-inquiry is meant to:

- Change your attention from things going on around you to what's inside you.
- Help you question ideas that hold you back and get rid of false identities.
- Use direct self-inquiry to help you reach a deep spiritual understanding.

## How to Make Use of This Activity

- Every day, take 10 to 15 minutes to be quiet and think seriously about one question. Close your eyes and think about that question for few minutes.
- Open your eyes and write what comes from your mind. Use the space given to write down your ideas, thoughts, or experiences. Some answers may be very short and some may be long.
- There are no right or wrong answers; only ways to learn more about yourself.

## Week 1: That Big Question: “Who Am I?”

Day 1: Who am I besides my name, my body, and my mind?

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Day 2: Would I still be “me” if I lost everything I owned?

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Day 3: What about me stays the same throughout my life?

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Day 4: Where does the thought “I” come from?

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Day 5: What do I really want out of life?

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Day 6: Do I pay attention to my thoughts or do I think them?

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Day 7: What's there when my thoughts stop?  
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**Week 2: How reality works**

Day 8: Is what I experience of reality objective, or is it just how I see it?  
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Day 9: Can I see the world without words, ideas, or beliefs?  
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Day 10: What if everything I think I know about life is just a lie?  
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Day 11: Where do things come from and go?  
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Day 12: Am I experiencing the world, or am I making it?  
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Day 13: Why do I hold on to things if nothing lasts?  
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Day 14: What will be left when everything I know is gone?  
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**Week 3: Breaking Ego Patterns**

Day 15: What do I most fear losing, and why?  
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Day 16: What makes me feel the most emotional?

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Day 17: Do I get upset about what happens or how I see it?

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Day 18: Can I stop having to be “right”?

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Day 19: Who is this “me” that needs other people to like me?

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Day 20: Am I connected to who I was in the past?

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Day 21: What if I quit letting my past define who I am?

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#### **Week 4: The Illusion of Control**

Day 22: What in my life do I try to control but actually can't?

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Day 23: What would happen if I surrendered instead of resisted?

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Day 24: Do I trust the flow of life, or do I resist it?

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Day 25: Am I living in the past, future, or present?

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Day 26: What emotions arise when I completely let go?

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Day 27: Can I sit in stillness without needing to fix or change anything?

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Day 28: Who is the one trying to control life?

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Week 5: Love & Relationships

Day 29: Do I love people for who they are or for how they make me feel?

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Day 30: Can I love without attachment?

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Day 31: What expectations do I impose on others?

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Day 32: Do I listen to others fully present, or am I thinking of my response?

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Day 33: What fears hold me back from expressing love fully?

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Day 34: Can I forgive without needing an apology?

Day 35: Am I giving love or seeking it?

## Week 6: Materialism & Detachment

Day 36: What am I afraid to lose, and why?

Day 37: If money didn't exist, what would I be doing?

Day 38: Does external success define my self-worth?

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Day 39: How much of my happiness depends on material things?

Day 40: Can I enjoy wealth without being attached to it?

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Day 41: What would I still have if everything external was taken away?

Day 42: Am I chasing things that won't matter in the end?

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## Week 7: The Fear of Death

Day 43: What does death mean to me?

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Day 44: Am I afraid of dying, or am I afraid of not living fully?

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Day 45: If I had 24 hours to live, how would I spend it?

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Day 46: What is truly eternal in me?

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Day 47: Where was I before I was born?

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Day 48: Can I live in a way where I am at peace with death?

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Day 49: If I had no fear of death, how would my life change?

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Week 8: Awareness & Presence

Day 50: Am I fully present in this moment?

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Day 51: Can I observe my thoughts without identifying with them?

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Day 52: How often do I lose awareness in daily life?



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Day 53: Can I be content without external stimulation?  
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Day 54: What happens when I just watch my breath?  
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Day 55: Who is aware of my awareness?  
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Day 56: What is the space between two thoughts?  
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Week 9: The Nature of Happiness

Day 57: What truly makes me happy?  
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Day 58: Is my happiness dependent on external events?  
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Day 59: Can I find joy in simply being?  
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Day 60: What is the difference between pleasure and true happiness?  
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Day 61: Do I seek happiness, or do I remove what blocks it?  
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Day 62: What if happiness is my natural state?

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Day 63: What would my life be like if I stopped seeking happiness outside?

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Week 10: Mindfulness in Daily Life

Day 64: How often am I lost in my thoughts?

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Day 65: Can I eat one meal with full awareness?

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Day 66: Can I walk without rushing, just fully present?

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Day 67: What happens when I do daily tasks with complete awareness?

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Day 68: Can I do one thing at a time with full presence?

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Day 69: Who is observing my experiences?

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Day 70: What if I treated every moment as sacred?

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Week 11: The Illusion of the Separate Self

Day 71: If I look deeply, where is this “self” located?

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Day 72: Can I separate myself from the universe?

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Day 73: What if everything is interconnected and not separate?

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Day 74: Am I the ocean or just a wave passing through?

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Day 75: What happens when I stop identifying as “me”?

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Day 76: Is there really an individual “I,” or is it just a thought?

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Day 77: Who is asking this question?

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Week 12: Surrender & Liberation

Day 78: What if I stopped trying to control life?

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Day 79: Can I let go of my need to know all the answers?

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Day 80: What if surrender is the key to true freedom?

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Day 81: If I let go of resistance, what remains?  
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Day 82: What is beyond thoughts, beyond the mind?  
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Day 83: What does it mean to be truly free?  
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Day 84: What happens when I let everything be as it is?  
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Week 13: Final Realization

Day 85: What if I am already what I am searching for?  
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Day 86: Who is the witness of all my experiences?  
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Day 87: If I dissolve all labels, what remains?  
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Day 88: Can I see myself in everything and everything in me?  
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Day 89: What is the ultimate truth that does not change?  
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Day 90: What if the answer to all questions is silence?  
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91 – 108 Sit in stillness with no question—just be.

In the end, the path beyond questions

You may have figured it out by now: No, the answer is not in your head; it's in your heart.

Being wise doesn't mean adding more, it means letting go.

What is the real answer to "Who am I?" " is not an idea; it is silence itself.

**Last Practice:**

Don't ask any more questions for a whole day. Just be still and be.

"We already know the truth. It's only necessary for the mind to be still to see it.

## **Part 9**

Conclusion – You have arrived already!

## Conclusion – The Illusion of Seeking

To reach self-realization, you don't need to find something new. You just need to see what is already there. There are many ways to get to the truth, like Bhakti, Karma, and Kriya Yoga. But non-duality (Advaita) reminds us that the seeker, the road, and the goal are all the same thing.

### **Beyond Yogic Traditions: The Truth for Everyone**

All spiritual paths agree on what self-realization is all about:

- Sufism: Fana, which means “dissolution of the self,” means merging into divine love.
- The idea of union with God is at the heart of Christian mysticism.
- Zen Buddhism: A sudden awakening, also known as Satori (direct realisation of nothingness).
- Taoism: Flowing easily (Wu Wei, which means giving up on the Way).
- Go back to the infinite (Ein Sof, meaning “boundless light”) in Kabbalah.
- Native American Wisdom: Seeing everything as holy (Mitákuye Oyás’iŋ, which means “All is one”).

Each religion has its own name, but they all lead to the same realisation: there is no separate self, only pure awareness.

### **The Illusion of Being Apart**

- A wave in the ocean may think it's on its own, but it was always part of the ocean.
- Every clay pot is made of the same clay, even though it might think it is different.
- The air inside and outside of a bubble in the air have always been the same, even though the bubble thinks they are different.

In the same way, you are not different from God. When the ego (Ahankara) goes away, there is only pure life left.

The same way, we think we are separate people when, in fact, we are one with life itself.

You're already there.

Put down the search and the trying. You already have what you want.

It's not about getting something new on the spiritual path. It's about getting rid of all the fake things in your life, like beliefs, ideas, and egoic identifications, until only pure awareness is left.

### **The lesson is simple in the end:**

You don't need anything from me; I'm just a stranger who wants to tell you to look inside.

- You can't get the truth on a silver platter from a teacher, a book, or a theory.
- You can't borrow or receive truth; you have to realise it for yourself.
- You don't need another guru, method, or outside source to confirm what you already know.

Being aware and having the courage to look past the conditioned mind, past fear, and past the self you thought you were are all you need.

What you want is already there, just waiting for you to see it.

You have nothing to gain because you were never apart in the first place.

You are what you are looking for; you are the one who is looking.

I don't have any beliefs, doctrines, or rituals that I want to incept on you. I can't give you any answers because I don't know how to do it. They've always been inside you.

After reading this book, you probably haven't learnt anything new, but you may have started to unlearn the lies that stopped you from seeing clearly.

It's not about prayer, practice, or miracles to be spiritual. It's about getting rid of the false self and resting in pure awareness.

You have already arrived.

Now, like all words must, I fade away into silence. You, your journey, and the huge, unbounded presence that has always been there, waiting to be seen, are all that are left.

**Look inside. It's always been there.**

Namaste!



## About Author

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He watches one movie/day and reads 200 pages/day.

He teaches FREE Breathing Session online and you can scan the QR code and register for his class.

## On a lighter note

Allow me to conclude this heavy subject with some lighter moments of smile in your face. But I would request you to ponder over each of these lighter moments, because there is a deeper truth hidden beneath every parable or a short story.

“Is the path to Enlightenment difficult or easy?”

“It is neither.”

“Why?”

“Because it isn’t there!”

“Then how does one travel to the goal?”

“One doesn’t. This is a journey without distance. Stop travelling and you have arrived!”

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“How shall I help the world?”

“By understanding it” said the master.

“And how shall I understand it?”

“By turning away from it.”

“How then shall I serve humanity?”

“By understanding yourself”, replied the master

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The disciple of a Guru had grown spiritually so much that the Guru thought the disciple didn’t need any more help and left him alone in a small hut by a river.

The student would hang his loincloth out to dry every morning after he washed. It was the only thing he owned! He was upset to find it torn apart by rats one day. People in the village had to help him get another one. He got himself a kitten when rats chewed holes in this one too. When the rats were gone, he no longer had any problems, but now he had to beg for both food and milk.

“Too much trouble begging,” he thought. “And too much for the villagers to handle.” I’m going to keep a cow. He had to beg for feed when he got the cow. He thought, “Easier to work the land around my hut.” So he hired people to work the land for him. Now that it was a job to keep an eye on the workers, he married a woman who would do it with him. He soon had more money than anyone else in the village.

After many years, his Guru happened to stop by, and he was shocked to see a huge house built where there had been a hut. “Isn’t this where one of my disciples used to live?” he asked one of a helper.

Before he could answer, his pupil came out. “My son, what does all of this mean?” asked the Guru.

“You are not going to believe this, master,” he said, “but there was no other way I could keep my loin-cloth!”

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Asked the disciple, “All these mountains, rivers and earth and stars and everything, where do they come from?”

Said the Master, “Where does your question come from?”

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A friend found Mullah Nasruddin down on his hands and knees on the street under a brightly glowing lamppost, looking for something.

“What are you searching for Mullah?” - asked the friend.

“My key”

The friend joined him and both men got on their knees to search. After a while, the friend asked, “By the way where did you lose the key, Mullah?”

“At home”

“Good Lord, Then why, for heaven’s sake are you searching here?”

“Because there is more light here,” answered the Mullah.

(Many are searching their true self and happiness just like Mullah too...)

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For thirty years, a beggar had been sitting on the side of the road. A stranger walked by one day.

“Do you have any spare change?” asked the beggar.

The man said, “I have nothing to give you.” Then he asked, “What are you sitting on?”

The beggar said, “Nothing.” “Just an old box, I have been sitting on it for as long as I can remember.”

“Ever looked inside?” the stranger asked.

“No,” the beggar replied. “What’s the point, there is nothing in there.”

The stranger said, “Take a look inside.”

The poor finally got the lid open, but it was hard for him. He was shocked, shocked, and thrilled when he saw that the box was full of gold.

























































































