

CHAPTER 2

Seven Characteristics of a Spiritual Person

Spirituality is related to your beingness and actualization, not to your knowingness. You can belong to any religion, church, or group and fulfill your religious duties but not be a spiritual person. Spirituality is the practical demonstration of certain characteristics which appear in your life.

A spiritual person is a very normal person. He does not need to use artificial makeup to appear spiritual. You feel and see his spirituality in his manners, in his relationships, and in his solemnity and simplicity. He does not try to impose his image on others by praying in the marketplace or showing others that he is fasting or helping others. His life has no artificiality but, rather, a radiation of inner richness. He does not stand on the street corner and preach, or knock on doors to bring a “divine message” to people. But wherever he goes, he radiates the fragrance of wisdom and beauty.

The spiritual person is a very balanced person. He is in harmony with both spiritual and human values; with Higher Worlds and the world of human affairs. He is just like a tree

whose roots have penetrated into all fields of human endeavor and labor. He receives his nourishment from the daily life of the world, and he fills the treasury of his experience from life as a whole; but in the meantime he has branches extending high into the sky. Branches nourish the tree with the rays of the Sun and even with the rays of the stars. Thus the tree, the spiritual person, nourishes himself from the earthly life and from the energies of space and produces his fruits, his creative labor and service. He gathers the honey of experiences from life and the ideas, inspirations, and impressions from the Higher Worlds. He lives a balanced life between these two worlds.

A spiritual person is not lost in space, nor is he lost in matter. With his greater values, he enriches his life and makes his material values manifest the values of spiritual realms.

Spirituality is a natural tendency of the human soul to aspire toward perfection, beauty, and light. Spirituality is right relationship with Higher Worlds and higher principles. Spirituality is the blooming of the seed of the human spirit. It is only spiritual people who bring the future to humanity; who bring vision and direction to humanity. Spiritual people are the vanguard of life on the planet. Without them, the world would end in chaos.

To be spiritual means to grow toward light, beauty, and wisdom. One cannot be spiritual without having fruits on his branches. One is more spiritual if his fruits serve people, helping them transform their lives and make themselves spiritual. This is what Christ said: "By their fruits you will know what they are."

A spiritual person is not suspended in space. He is rooted on earth and has branches extending into Higher Worlds. To be rooted on earth means that you have a rich harvest of individual, family, group, national, and international experiences

gathered through moments of crisis, conflicts, stress, and strain; through moments of labor and rest; through moments of success, failure, joy, and achievement. To have branches extending toward Higher Worlds means that you have enough sensitivity to receive light and guidance from sources in space.

If you are not grounded “above and below,” you are floating in space, and you cannot be a spiritual person, a practical and idealistic person. If you are only grounded on earth, your fruits will be poisonous. They will be fruits of crime, exploitation, fabrication, forgery, self-interest.... The world is full of such criminals.

If you are only grounded in space, you are useless and an object of ridicule. You must be grounded on earth and in heaven in order to be a Path from darkness to Light, from the unreal to the Real, from chaos to Beauty.

Once a criminal told me that he was a fruitful tree. He was a drug dealer. He said, “Everywhere I have fruits. I nourish people.” He did not realize what a future he was preparing for himself, filling his pockets with dollars and wasting them on gambling tables or to further his crimes.

Those who are grounded above and below are pillars of light, leading humanity to its spiritual destiny.

Once a young man told me a very sad story. He said, “I went to buy a car, and I noticed that the seller had religious books in his garage and pictures of saints on the walls. I figured that he was a spiritual man and a safe person to buy a car from. So when he named his price I agreed to it.

“I took the car and drove away. After one mile, the car — which was supposedly in ‘excellent condition’ — stopped in the street and I had to have it towed to my home. I went to his house and told him what happened. He became very angry and

told me that what happened to me, happened because I had no faith....

“Later, when I pressured him, he admitted that he had put certain other liquids into the gas tank to make it run temporarily despite a serious problem with the engine.

“I said to him, ‘I feel so bad that you showed yourself to be a religious person, when in your essence you are a liar.’”

This is the difference between a religious person and a spiritual person. A religious person may be grounded only in matter, but a spiritual person is grounded above and below, and all his activities are guided and controlled by the above.

Spirituality has seven main characteristics:

1. A spiritual person demonstrates continuous striving toward perfection, and perseverance and stability in his own *dharma*.

A spiritual person is a person who always, everywhere, and in everything tries to be perfect. In all his thinking, speech, and actions he tries to be accurate, precise, clear, and perfect. This applies to everything he does. He tries his best when he is writing or typing a letter, when he is preparing a speech, when he is cleaning his kitchen, bedroom or yard. He tries to be perfect in his duties and responsibilities at work in the factory or office. He has an urge to improve all that he does — cooking, ironing, shaving, dressing, relationships, business....

If your relations at home are in a mess, no matter how many face-lifts you have, your ugly spirit will always appear.

Once three boys came to see me and talk about religion. They were members of a certain religious cult. When they approached, I smelled a very bad smell around them. They were so busy spreading “the good news” that they had no time to wash away their bad smell.

I said to them, “I do not drink water from a dirty cup. Go and wash yourself, change your clothes, and then let’s talk about noble ideas.”

Let us consider “perseverance and stability in your own *dharma*.” Dharma is the field of action chosen by your Soul. Once you find it, be steady and stable in it. Some people jump like rabbits from one field to another, with many logical excuses to justify their lack of perseverance and stability. Whether you are a doctor, lawyer, dentist, or engineer, that is your dharma. Try to perform your duty in the best way you can, without jumping from one dharma to another. You can free yourself from your dharma when you perform it with all your heart and carry it to a state of relative perfection.

2. A spiritual person has a wholehearted dedication to his labor, without counting hours and days, without holding various expectations in his heart, and without giving up in front of difficulties.

Your labor must be done for the sake of doing it, with love and dedication, without counting the time. All dedicated people have surpassed this limitation. If it is necessary, they work until morning; they work at breakfast, lunch, and dinner; they work on vacation. For them, time is not important; the work is important.

Some people know that they must work eight hours, but even within that limit of eight hours they continuously look at their watches, as if they were in prison and were going to be freed in eight hours. Labor reaches perfection only when time is forgotten and expectation about the labor no longer exists.

When time and expectations control our actions, we become the slaves of time and reward, and the labor cannot reach perfection — which means that we cannot perfect ourselves. Life is progressed by those people whose labor is not con-

trolled by time and various expectations related to their personal interests.

The labor of great leaders, educators, philosophers, artists, religious leaders, scientists, and financiers changed the world because they did not limit their labor in time and because they carried on their work even if their labor was rejected. The strange thing is that such people had great abundance and the greatest fun in life. Life acts in righteousness, and not even a penny is lost in the computer of life. You can see that without such giants, we would not have culture, beauty, law, and order in the world.

Abraham Lincoln, H.P. Blavatsky, Helena Roerich, and many other thousands of dedicated souls throughout centuries carried the torch of labor without expectation and without counting the time. Can you imagine Jesus limiting His work to five days weekly, six or seven hours daily? Can you imagine Him having expectations for the healings and wisdom He offered?

Dedication and commitment are two powerful forces which either destroy any obstacle or make the obstacles assist the labor. A spiritual person progresses in spite of difficulties. Difficulties nourish his soul and make him invincible.

3. A spiritual person lives by his conscience, in the light of the Teaching, and in the presence of the Hierarchy.

Once I asked a judge, “Do you really believe that laws can transform people?”

He said, “That is a very sensitive question....”

No one can transform himself without following the voice of his conscience, without following a sublime Teaching, without living in the presence of the Hierarchy. Laws are formulated possibly to catch those who do not obey their conscience, who do not follow certain lofty principles, and who

do not have any sense of the presence of Great Ones. If your conscience is not active, no matter how many Bibles are read over your head, you will remain the same sneaky person.

The conscience is the inner law that unfolds and develops when you have a Teaching and when you live in the presence of the Hierarchy. Hierarchy is formed by all those liberated Souls who anxiously watch the members of humanity and try to inspire them with Beauty, Goodness, Righteousness, Joy, and Freedom.

To live in the light of Hierarchy means to think, to speak, and to act as if thousands of eyes are watching you. If for one day we lived in such a state of consciousness, our lives would change substantially. For example, tomorrow morning make a decision to live in the light of the Hierarchy and see if you can do it. This means that you will do your labor in the best way you can; you will think right, speak right, and behave right in all your relations.

In the presence of Great Ones, you will at least hesitate to lie, cheat, or use malice, slander and gossip as your weapons. You will avoid treason. You will withdraw from any plan to harm or hurt people. You will be more dedicated in your labor, and you will try to live a life that will be pleasant in the eyes of Great Ones.

4. The spiritual person has an inclusive and expanding approach to all issues of life. This means that he is broad-minded and tolerant and that he looks at all issues of life from many viewpoints. He has no religious, dogmatic, traditional, ideological, racial, or national barriers in his mind. He respects the freedom of religion. He respects the rights of people who are trying to perfect themselves in their own ways.

He tries to observe the issues of life not as events but as results or effects of certain hidden or subjective causes or

energies. He does not jump to hasty and narrow conclusions but waits until all the evidence is accumulated and analyzed. He does not judge by the measures given to him by his traditions or education, but he uses various measures to understand the issues.

People measure things by what they are themselves. For many people, a mountain is the size of their thumb because they can hold their thumb in front of their eyes and cover a mountain....

Fanatics have played many games throughout centuries. They have said, "Because you are a woman, you have no rights.... Because you are black, you have no rights.... Because you are not Christian, you have no rights.... Because you do not obey our ideology, you are a witch." This psychology continues under many covers in high places, and we miss the essence, the substance, and do not allow others the freedom to grow. Instead we waste time, energy, and lives to bring people into the confines of our measures.

A spiritual person can belong to any race, tradition, religion, or ideology, but he has a deep understanding of the race, traditions, religion, and ideologies of others. This is because he does not live as a separated human being but as a soul who can identify with all human beings.

It is not your religion that leads you to God; it is your spirituality that takes you to God.

5. A spiritual person carries out all his activities, speech, and thoughts in the sphere of three major laws:

- a. the Law of Cause and Effect
- b. the Law of Reincarnation
- c. the Laws of Synthesis, Attraction, and Economy

He realizes that his every thought, word, and action will produce a similar thought, word, and action in his life. The reactions to his actions will follow, as night follows day. Because of this, he is extremely careful that he does not complicate his life by creating continuous obstacles on his path. He is always watchful. He thinks, “If I think this way, speak or act that way, what will be the effect upon my life now and upon my future?”

Remember that all that you are and all that happens to you are the fruits of your thoughts, words, and actions.

A spiritual person observes the Law of Reincarnation. In the *Bhagavad Gita*, we read:

Those who are full of hate and cruelty are the lowest of human beings. I hurl them into the wombs of evil ones through the cycles of birth and death.

Entering into the wombs of evil ones, these deluded beings, birth after birth, are unable to reach Me, and enter into even worse conditions.¹

On the other hand, we read:

Having reached Me, these great Souls have attained perfection. They are no more subject to incarnation, which is temporary and the womb of sorrow.²

You decide your future life-conditions by the way you lived your life in the past. Spiritual people will be born into those conditions in which they will gather wisdom, have the chance to develop their talents and be of service to people,

and intelligently pay their karma left from the past. Their lives will be a hard but joyful labor.

Some people do not believe in reincarnation. That is okay, but many still believe that they will live after they die. To die means to take an existence in the Other Worlds. That is the same as reincarnation. Instead of thinking about a worldly future, think about a future after death. Take it into consideration and think, “What will be my future after my body dies?”

The spiritual person lives under the Laws of Economy, Attraction, and Synthesis. He economizes time, energy, matter, and space. He attracts currents of Beauty, Goodness, Righteousness, Joy, and Freedom. He sees the unity in diversity. He sees the one goal in many diversities. He can collect unrelated objects and build a mechanism. He has the power to unify and synthesize. He creates focuses with diverse rays.

In the British Royal Air Force, I had a captain who was working in the control tower. One day he asked me to take his civilian jacket and put leather patches on the elbows because the elbows were worn out. I wondered why he was not buying a new jacket. I thought that maybe he was too stingy to buy a new jacket.

I took the jacket to a shop and had the patches sewn on. When I brought the jacket back to him, he looked in my eyes and said, “How much did it cost?”

“Two dollars.”

“How much would a new jacket cost?”

“Seventy-five dollars.”

“Well,” he said, “I have two students in college in London. I am paying their expenses for their education. Now they have another 73 dollars in credit.”

1. *The Bhagavad Gita* 16:19-20, trans. by H. (Torkom) Saraydarian.

2. *Ibid.*, 8:15.

“Don’t think that I am a cheap man,” he added. “But who cares how I am dressed in these deserts if two orphans are going to be graduated because of my savings?”

He was a spiritual man, although he never spoke about religion.

There was a heart surgeon in a certain group who was loaded with money. The group needed 10,000 dollars to pave their driveway in order to receive their license to operate a new center. I visited him and asked if he could do the group a favor. He thought for a few minutes and said, “I will call you next week.”

That week he went to Las Vegas and lost 50,000 dollars in one night. A week later I called him and asked if he had made a decision about the money. “Well,” he said, “I lost 50,000 dollars last week, and I cannot afford another 10,000 dollars.”

“Thank you,” I said.

Years passed, and he fell down and hurt his spine. I visited his home and wished him health. When I was leaving he said, “I know that I hurt your feelings by not helping you in the past, but I couldn’t do otherwise. One needs to be economical in order to survive.”

“Sometimes,” I said, “generosity saves us from future troubles.”

Wise people know how not to waste money and to use it for the need.

6. The spiritual person lives in the realization that he is an immortal spiritual being, charged with the power of unlimited creativity.

The spiritual person knows that he is an immortal, spiritual being who is not attached to the changes in life and to material values at the expense of higher values. Success and fail-

ure do not affect his course of action, or his dedication to the service of humanity.

For a mortal being, the only purpose of life is to enjoy life, no matter whether his behavior hurts other people or not. Such a person exploits other people for his self-interest, but a person who has the awareness of immortality is not blinded with earthly measures. Rather, he sees things and approaches life from worldly *and* spiritual angles and then uses his life-experiences to pave the way for spiritual victories.

The awareness of immortality gives you the sense of balance, fearlessness, detachment, strength, and courage. All great works are done by those who were not and are not attached to their shells.

7. The spiritual person is aware that his victory is measured by the joy that he has in his heart.

What is the joy that fills the heart of the spiritual person, whether he is in storms or in sunshine, whether he is beaten or victorious, whether he is healthy or sick? That joy springs from the memories in his heart that he did his best to serve, uplift, transform, and encourage pilgrims on the Path. It is the joy of sharing his love and wisdom. It is the joy of daringness and striving in spite of conditions.

One day my Uncle came home in great joy. “Uncle,” I said, “what happened?”

“You may laugh at me, but I will tell you,” he said. “I was buying a watermelon and a small boy came who didn’t have enough money to buy one for himself. I chose the biggest watermelon and gave it to him. It was so overwhelming to see both his joy and to see how hard he tried to roll it home.... Eventually I carried the watermelon to his home and I felt so happy....”

A spiritual person can enjoy life even in creating such events.

What will you feel if you help a person find the right way of living, or if you create a striving toward perfection in a soul, or if you wipe the tears falling from the eyes of one of your fellowmen?

A spiritual person has a deep well of memories of service, sacrifice, dedication, love, and the protection of those who are attacked...and he brings out of this well the joyful memories to enlighten his path every time he treads through dark nights.

A spiritual person is a normal and up-to-date person. He is not a fanatic or a show-off. His spirituality is not artificial, and he does not need to advertise it. His spirituality is known to others by the way he lives, creates, and relates to life in general.

Sometimes people think that the spiritual person is a soft, jellylike person who can fit into any condition without creating a noise. This is a false image of the spiritual person. On the contrary, the spiritual person is a fighter. He stands up and risks his life for the truth. He risks his life to protect the innocent. He fights against the spreading dangers of drugs, prostitution, and crime, as well as the misuse of the discoveries of science and technology. However, his fight is not to gain personal advantage or votes of popularity; it is a fight for the Common Good.

It is only a spiritual person who can stand against dark activities and help his fellowman enter the light. The spiritual person hates ugliness, crime, injustice, depression, and slavery. He does not hate them emotionally, but he sees in them the germs of decay and he fights like a physician to eliminate

the germs, even trying to save those who have been contaminated by the germs.

A spiritual person opposes things such as drug dealers, prostitutes, hypocrites, those who exploit, those who work for organized crime..., but in the meantime he tries to gain their souls and to defeat the weaknesses of their personalities.

A spiritual person stands against darkness and tries to dispel it with his light. A spiritual person is always enlightened by the light of compassion, without losing his measures of righteousness.