

Spiritual Birth

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## Question::

*When does one takes his/her spiritual birth?*

(or)

*Why people search for “true happiness”? How can one attain “true happiness”?*

(or)

*What is “experience” for?*

(or)

*Why “spiritual enlightenment” is necessary for everyone?*

(or)

*What makes one venture into “inner life” or “spiritual life”?*

(or)

*What is the significance of “action,” from a spiritual point of view? Why should one act “wise”?*

(or)

*What is the significance of “Law of Karma” in the life of an individual?*

(or)

*Does “Karmic ties” augment spiritual progress or obstruct it?*

(or)

*What is the cause of suffering?*

## Answer:

*(Extracted from **Meher Baba’s literature**, which is a copyright of Avatar Meher Baba Perpetual Public Charitable Trust(©AMBPPCT), Ahmednagar, Maharashtra, Bharat/India)*

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**Truly happy people are rare in spite of the smiles, which are usually the brave front for varying degrees of internal misery. Yet, everywhere and in every walk of**

life, man is longing for happiness and searching desperately for some means of breaking out of the trap which his life has become.

**It is not his fault if he assumes that the solution to his deep dissatisfaction lies in a sensual life, or in achievement in business or the social world, or in a life of exciting experiences.** *Neither is it his fault if life is not usually long enough to teach him factually that he would find even more profound disillusionment if these goals were to be fulfilled to the hilt.*

*If he would suspect that his ideas of achieving a successful and happy life were wrong and that he must try some new way of living, then the stalemate might be broken.*

**A new line in the divine picture is sketched only when some individual takes life forcefully in his hands, breaks up the old patterns and insists on creating something new by his own inner vision.**

**Progress in the inner life of the individual is accomplished by such a breaking with the 'old' and venturing forth into 'new' ways.**

*True happiness can come only to one who will find the courage to strike free of the attachments which he has formed throughout a sterile lifetime.*

If he will not do this, then he is shackled endlessly to the treadmill of oppressive action in which happiness is so transient that it has almost disappeared the moment it is experienced. After it has disappeared, there is left only the persistent, bottomless vacancy of mind which strangles life regardless of repeated efforts to fill it with endless experiences.

**Such suffering comes from 'blunt ignorance' or 'persistent attachment to illusion'.** The average person plays with illusion as children play with toys.

*It is not easy for little children to give up their toys, and it is equally difficult for adults to relinquish the 'mental' and 'emotional' toys to which they have become habituated.*

**The 'mind' of the individual is very old, and through the ages it has become deeply engrossed in playing with 'illusion'.** It has become addicted to this self-created spectacle, and has had no thought other than to go on watching with fascination through cycles and cycles of creation.

**During this period of rebirth in cosmic illusion, the “individualized soul” becomes identified with the “physical body” due to the limitations imposed upon consciousness by the impressions (sanskaras). *Its knowledge of reality is therefore necessarily restricted to the 'products' and 'inferences' of sense-perception.*** Information so obtained is completely inadequate and even misleading insofar as the true nature of reality is concerned.

**The ‘quest for happiness’ is irretrievably enmeshed in the problem of the illusion of the world of form with which the ‘individual-self’ has become identified through the body.** If this 'illusion' can be shattered, the shackles which bind happiness are automatically shattered as well. But how to shatter the “illusion”?

An individual who mistakenly believes that he is a coward may live a lifetime of misery during which all his ‘actions’ are shaped by this incorrect belief. But if some event in his life challenges him so deeply that he unthinkingly strides forth with great courage, then the illusion will suddenly vanish and he will see himself as a different being.

***Often it takes real crisis to bring out a sure knowledge of the real inner self, and it is always a creative knowledge.***

Even as the individual can be wrong in his convictions regarding his own nature, so he is often quite wrong about the nature of the world around him. In reality, ***it is a world of illusion that separates him from his true birthright of ‘freedom’ and ‘happiness’ in oneness with the One.***

**Actually, no individual is entirely devoid of some real happiness in some form, for God— as an endless and fathomless ocean of bliss, is also within every person, and no one is entirely cut off from Him.**

***‘Pleasure sought in illusion’ inevitably results in endless perpetuation of that very same false life of the ego, which leaves the individual exposed to intense suffering.***

**The whole play of illusion and the suffering it engenders functions by the divinely established “law of karma” (cause and effect). Therefore suffering must be accepted with 'grace' and 'fortitude'.**

*It must be remembered that one's own actions are the cause of much of one's suffering, and therefore “wise action” can minimize it.*

But real alleviation of suffering requires ‘spiritual enlightenment’, and for that man must turn to the Perfect Masters and the God-man (Avatar).

*If the ‘world of form’ is only an illusion in reality and if its harvest is such a rich one of misery, then why should its experience be required of the soul?*

**Life in the world of matter is an unavoidable phase in the progress of the individual, inasmuch as it provides the field for *action*.**

*“Action” is the expression and therefore the focussing of the mental and emotional impressions (sanskaras), which impel the individual. As the individual acts, other motivating forces incompatible with that momentary effort are withheld.*

**“Action” is the paramount means through which the individual exercises ‘discrimination in choice’ and ‘adjustment between the many claims’ exerted upon his consciousness.**

*“Action” also links a large number of individuals together through the innumerable “karmic ties” which have arisen out of past service and bondage. The “material world” offers the necessary environment for this interchange and inter-dependence.*

**On one hand, these “karmic ties” trap the mind in a complex web. On the other hand, they facilitate collective life with all its opportunities for exercise of**

- love,
- sacrifice,
- service, and
- mutual help.

***Through the negative lessons of “hate” and “malice”, as well as the positive lessons of “love” and “service”, the individual finds himself compelled to participate in collective effort.***

*The mind's seeming isolation is continually invaded by the life-streams of other minds, ultimately enabling the individual to abandon entirely the illusion he had entertained of being separate. Thus he gradually comes to realize the unity of all life.*

**In spite of the suffering entailed, “experience” in the material world of action is thus not without compensating value.** It constitutes a necessary phase in purifying the ‘consciousness of the mind’ from all illusion in order that it may be transmuted into the ‘consciousness of the soul’.

**One sees then that the ‘material’ and ‘spiritual’ worlds of lower and higher illusion play an irreplaceable role in the divine game, which has as its goal that man shall become consciously aware of his own divinity.** The positive values derived from the divine sport in illusion cannot be harvested without simultaneous collection of the residual by-products of the coming-to-consciousness, termed “impressions” or “*sanskaras*”.

A newly constructed building is not considered to be really completed until the debris of construction has been cleared away. *Similarly, the fully developed individual consciousness is not available for union with the Divine, until these “residual products” have been cleaned away and there is left only the completely untrammelled, unitary nature of the 'individualized soul', now fully conscious of self.*

As discussed earlier, in the processes of both “sleep” and “death”—the individual returns unconsciously and briefly to the beyond-beyond state of God. In it, the soul achieves refreshment before it returns first to the subconscious state of “ordinary dreams” or the intense subconscious state of “heaven or hell”, and then to the ordinary conscious state of wakefulness or reincarnate life.

***The individual cannot remain in the 'beyond-beyond state of God' for long, for very important reasons. The goal is to achieve the full “awareness of consciousness”, which is fully achieved when all of the residual impressions have been dispelled.***

'Full consciousness' is achieved in the first human form, but remains captured, so to speak, by the residual impressions, which continue to exist regardless of the 'waking' or 'sleep state' of the individual mind. It is as if they continued to stand as the unpaid balance of the price of consciousness. It is due to the standing impressions or *sanskaras* that 'individual consciousness' must return again and again from oblivion to square its account with illusion, in illusion.

However, "consciousness" must eventually disengage itself from enmeshment in the material realm of action, for in the long run— all activities of the worldly man are like the movements of someone on the surface of the ocean. He develops some knowledge of the ocean of life through those activities, but only as much as is obtainable through exploration on the surface of the ocean. The time inevitably comes when he wearies of surface-wanderings, and makes up his "mind" to plunge into the depths of the ocean of life.

Thereupon he becomes deeply concerned with the riddles of "whither" and "whence", and this fact constitutes his spiritual birth, by which he is eventually ushered onto the path.

— Meher Baba

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