

Dry Spells in Meditation: Why They Happen & How to Survive Them



Greed for enlightenment and immortality is no different than greed for material wealth. It is self-centered and dualistic, and thus an obstacle to true attainment.

Therefore, these states are never achieved by those who covet them;
rather, they are the reward of the virtuous.

(Lao-tzu)



The spiritual journey does not unfold in a linear fashion, but rather is marked by a series of alternating states of Light and darkness, of feelings of receptivity with our Master alternating with feelings of absence and discouragement. The state of spiritual ennui is called dry spells or spiritual aridity.

Aridity may last for days, weeks, months, or years. They can produce feelings ranging from mild discouragement to severe depression, from sadness to despair.

If we understand why dry spells are a necessary part of our journey to God, we are less likely to be shaken and depressed when they occur. If we take the advice of the spiritual Masters, we can pass through these “negative” experiences unscathed.

Sometimes I am plunged to the depths, at other times raised on high.

Sometimes I experience the scar of separation, at others, the garden of union!

Your awesome majesty may threaten many of us, yet no lips will part in even a sigh of complaint!

(Sharafuddin Maneri – A Sufi Master, 1263-1381)

This booklet contains, among other writings, Sant Kirpal Singh and Baba Sawan Singh’s explanation of karma as a source of spiritual dry spells. Evelyn Underhill provides an in-depth explanation of aridity as an accompaniment to purification and eventual self-surrender. Sant Rajinder Singh emphasizes the importance of gratitude, acceptance and receptivity, and Sant Darshan Singh explains how patience and perseverance lead to the elimination of the ego and the achievement of perfect surrender.



Sant Rajinder Singh, Sant Darshan Singh, Sant Kirpal Singh

Sometimes I am intoxicated by the sweetness of union with You;

Sometimes I am crushed by the blow of Your departure!

As soon as I put aside the grief of separation from You,

Immediately I feel the urge to continue loving You!

(Sharafuddin Maneri)



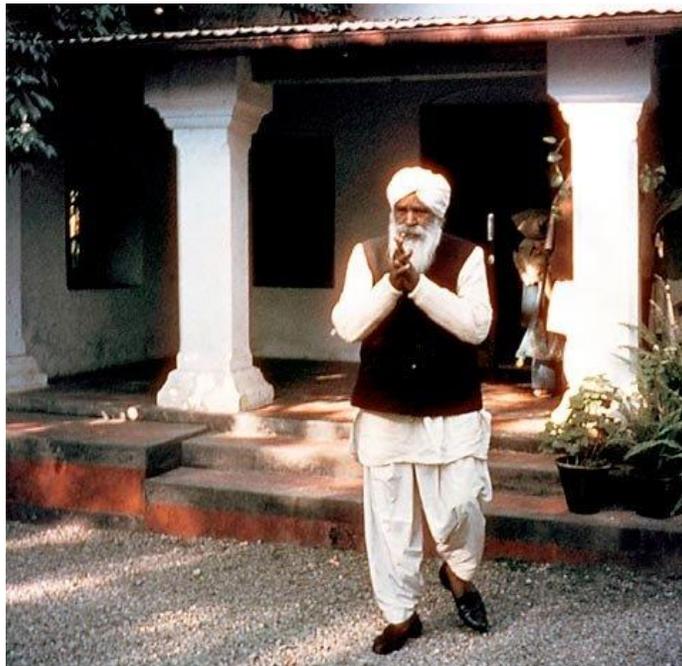
Reaction of Past Karma

I am glad to find that you are devoting some time for your holy meditations with the grace of the Master. The causal spells of dryness or vague feelings do intervene as a result of reaction of past Karma, when the child disciple should muster more of courage and determination in sticking to the sacred schedule or regularity. It should be pointed out for your information that during such periods the loving protection of the Master becomes more strong as you have felt with His grace. (Sant Kirpal Singh, *The Teachings of Kirpal Singh, book two Meditation, Dry Spells*)

When the time of very favorable karma comes, only then the mind feels inclined to go within, and only then the love for the Master and the sound current spring up and one spends some time in devotion. On the other hand, when the disturbing karma intervenes, mind feels dry and indifferent, runs away from Satsang and sinks back in the quagmire of the world. It takes time to remove the layers of karmic dirt deposited through innumerable births. Krishna in the *Bhagavad Gita* says, “Freedom from karma is attained after a long succession of lives spent rightly on the path.” (Baba Sawan Singh, *The Dawn of Light*, letter 69)

Although in our heart we may persuade ourselves that we have eliminated desire, yet it is not correct, because as long as the karma is not washed away, which happens at the second stage only, the spiritual progress is only by fits and starts and not uniform – just like an ant ascending a wall. Until those karmas are burnt, it cannot be said that the practitioner has abandoned desire. (Baba Sawan Singh, *The Dawn of Light*, letter 29)

Do your duty and expect nothing – leave the results to the Master.
(Baba Sawan Singh)



Sant Kirpal Singh Ji

Fosters Inner Devotion

The intervening dry spells in meditation which the spiritual aspirant finds sometimes are a blessing in disguise when the inner devotion is fostered for a higher step. You need not worry about it, but instead be earnestly devoted to your holy meditations with renewed zeal and vigor. The gracious Master-Power will be extending all feasible help, grace and protection.

(Sant Kirpal Singh, *Spiritual Elixir*, 164)

Ekhnath Easwaran

As meditation deepens, there are periods universally called “dry spells.” The feeling of deprivation can be so terrible that you feel you are trudging through a real Sahara. Whatever you get, whatever comes to you, only intensifies your longing. “My soul thirst for Thee,” King David lamented.

These periods are painful, but they are absolutely necessary, a spiritual experience cannot take place until there has been a certain strengthening of desire. Our love has to be so intense, irresistible, sustained all the time. It isn't just a question of time and regular effort, but of passion.

For the vast majority of ordinary people like us, it takes a long, long time to unify desires. We must be prepared for many years, even decades of taking the energy from old desires and pouring it into this new stream. It is painful. But that's the way it is in all training whether it is for tennis, or ballet or Self-realization. Don't you say, “No pain, no gain?” It is the capacity to hold out to the very end that enables us to grow to our full stature.

As we near the goal, our desires become more and more unified, the very strength of our yearning draws the Lord towards us. The Lord just cannot resist the yearning of someone who is deeply devoted, and from time to time, he reveals himself in the depths of that person's consciousness.

There is no avoiding these long stretches of aridity, because they are part of spiritual growth. But you can safeguard yourself against feeling overwhelmed or defeated when they come your way. The key is to train the mind from the earliest days not to get elated by victories or depressed by setbacks.

There is only one failure in meditation: the failure to meditate faithfully.
(Ekhnath Easwaran)



The Importance of Gratitude

Excerpts from *Silken Thread of the Divine: Keys to Better Meditation*
Sant Rajinder Singh Ji

The spiritual path should give us happiness and joy, yet there are many stages of the spiritual quest. Sometimes we are pulled to God, while at other times we experience difficulties. We have expectations of what we want, but our knowledge of what is good for us is limited. Whatever happens, though, is for our highest good and under God's will.

Our goal is to reunite our soul with God. First, the burdens of our karma must be wiped out. At certain times we pass through difficulties to eliminate these karmas. If we live in a state of "Sweet is Thy will," then we will find happiness and bliss. At the right time, everything happens.

For example, when Sant Kirpal Singh Ji Maharaj was searching for a Master, the radiant form of Hazur Baba Sawan Singh Ji Maharaj appeared within to him seven years before he actually met him physically. At the time, he took the form to be that of Guru Nanak Sahib. Then, one day, while Sant Kirpal Singh Ji decided to visit the river at Beas, he was asked by the station-master, "Have you come to see the great saint of Beas?" Sant Kirpal Singh Ji inquired where the saint lived and went to meet him. When Sant Kirpal Singh Ji Maharaj met Hazur physically for the first time, he realized it was the same form he had been seeing within for the past seven years. When Sant Kirpal Singh Ji asked Hazur why it had taken so long to meet him, Hazur replied, "This was the most opportune time!" This question of the delay in meeting him was the only complaint Sant Kirpal Singh Ji made to his Master in his entire life.

When we are in the early stages of the spiritual path, on some days we may complain, "I did not get this within! I did not get that in my meditations! Why is this not working?" even though on other days, we do see the Light, hear the Sound, and meet the radiant form of the Master.

As we experience the joy and bliss of the regions within, we realize what the Master is and what he is giving us. Then, our complaints change to words of gratitude. As Sant Darshan Singh Ji Maharaj has said in a verse:

*I was ashamed of my words of complaint
Because it has clouded the mirror of my heart.*

This attitude brings us to a second stage. Instead of complaining, we utter only words of gratitude. On the spiritual journey, we reach a point when we recognize the power of God. We find that our Master has led us to the throne of the Lord. At that stage, we experience happiness so great that no words can explain it. Then, the outer environment does not bother us. We are always in joy. Sant Darshan Singh Ji Maharaj has described this state in the following verse:

*You have awakened wave after wave of intoxicating
love in our hearts;
Where there were once thorns, you made flowers bloom.*

We may meditate and say we want a glance of grace, but it is not for us to demand it. Our job is to be receptive so that when grace comes in our direction we are ready to receive it deep within ourselves. Yet if it comes and we are not receptive, it bounces off and goes somewhere else. It is important to be receptive to the will of God and always be grateful for whatever we have in life. We are lucky, for we have received more grace than we could have ever dreamed was possible.

Acceptance & Receptivity

Excerpt from *Spark of the Divine*

Sant Rajinder Singh Ji

Acceptance does not come easily. At first we begin by praying for one thing or another. Prayer for something in particular has its pitfalls. Sometimes we may have our prayer answered right away, and other times not at all. If we do not get what we want, there is the danger of our becoming disappointed, disillusioned, and depressed. We lose faith and feel that God has not listened to us and is not responding. But when we do not pray for anything other than what God wants to give, there is no danger of disappointment. It takes time to develop to a point where we can pray in this manner. The faith and trust in God must first develop. That is born out of our experiences. Once that develops, then we relax and put ourselves into God's care. We have the confidence that God will act as our friend, benefactor, and protector.

“Sweet is Thy will’ is the highest state of receptivity. It is a condition in which our mind is stilled and our ego is at rest. It is best described by a formula: humans minus the mind equals God. In this condition, nothing stands between God and us. We become an empty cup, and the pure waters of divinity can flow unhampered into us. There are no distractions, no separation, and no duality. The Power of God permeates our entire being. In this state, we merge back in God.

Being receptive is like being an empty cup. This describes the attitude we should adopt in meditation and in our spiritual life. In meditation, pitchers of divine wine of spiritual love cascade into us from God. If we meditate like an empty cup, we can receive perpetually of the wine of ecstasy.

Meditation should be an effortless effort. We close our eyes and simply gaze at what lies in front of us, without any thought of what will or should appear. The sooner we sit in that state, the sooner we will have inner progress. It is for God to decide what to give us within.

For example, sometimes when meditating, we get distracted by thoughts such as wanting to see a particular colored light or inner experience. Our mind becomes so determined to see what it wants to see that it distracts us from concentration. In meditation, we should not be disturbed by thoughts generated from our mind. Even sitting with a preconceived idea of what we should see is considered a distraction of thought. If our mind is constantly thinking of what it wants to receive in meditation, it is blocking the way for the divine grace to enter. It is like a friend is knocking at our door, but he or she cannot enter because we are standing in the doorway. The very thought of what we expect to see in our meditation is an obstacle for it keeps our mind active and we cannot focus our attention on the inner light. We merely have to sit at the door and wait. God will fill us with more grace and blessings than we could ever have dreamed of. If we sit in humility and keep our hearts open for whatever God wants to give us, pitchers upon pitchers of the sweet waters of life will pour into us. The divine wine of the light and sound will flow into us. The divine wine of the light and sound will flow through and around us, and we will be satiated with bliss and inebriated with the wine of spiritual love.

You are to relax sweetly at the eye-focus and await with all patience and steadfastness. It does happen sometimes when the initiates grow more intense in desiring one thing or another, such periods of dryness intervene. You need not bother about it.

(Sant Kirpal Singh, *Spiritual Elixir*, 165)

The Threshold of New Growth

Paul Kowalewski

The other day I had a conversation with someone who told me that for the past 20 years he has been meditating every day and he has never before felt as spiritually dry as he does now. Every day he sits quietly, meditates, sometimes tries to pray, but he feels nothing - only boredom and dryness. He asked me if I had any thoughts about his predicament and my immediate response was, "Maybe you are at the threshold of some new spiritual growth in your life - just keep at it."

In his book, *Bread for the Journey*, Priest and author, Henri Nouwen, once offered this wise piece of advice:

*It is a great grace to experience God's presence,
but when we don't experience this presence it doesn't mean that God is absent.
It often means that we are being called to go deeper in our spiritual life.
It is precisely in times of dryness that we must hold onto our spiritual discipline
so that we can grow into new intimacy with God.*

We live in a culture of "instant gratification." We take a pill and expect the sickness to go away, press a button on a computer and all the answers are there, so my guess is that we may expect the same thing to happen on a spiritual quest in our lives. We expect that times of prayer, meditation or solitude should yield instant results - noble feelings, mystical experiences of transcendence. And while this does happen from time to time, there are many times when we may feel more absence than presence along the Way.

So I think Henri Nouwen gives some wise advice when he suggests that in times of dryness just keep doing what you have been doing. The dry times are often holy times when we are at a threshold of new growth and new life.

The desert in which I live is a great place to learn something about spiritual dryness - endless miles of dry sand and rocky stone and rarely a rainy day. I look out onto the dry parched land and wonder how it is even possible for palm trees to grow there or bushes to blossom. And yet just beneath the surface of this arid desert land, a great underground aquifer flows, springs of life-giving water flow.

Every once in a while, especially in springtime, I will walk out onto the desert floor and to my delight discover that the parched wilderness has gone into bloom overnight - spring flowers bursting out everywhere, blossoms on trees that seemed long-dead. When that happens, of course, it's a mystical moment, a thin place moment filled with a sense of Holy Presence.

But, of course, the desert doesn't bloom every day. In fact for the most part it's all pretty dry. So I just learn to embrace the dryness knowing that I am standing on a stream of living water.

(<http://desertretreathouse.blogspot.com/2015/01/dry-spells.html>)

O God, you seek those who hide from you, and hide from those who seek you!
(Saint Augustine)

Complete Self-Surrender

From: *Mysticism: The Preeminent Study in the Nature and Development of Spiritual Consciousness*

Excerpts from Chapter 9: The Dark Night of the Soul
by Evelyn Underhill

Psychologically considered, the Dark Night is an example of the operation of the law of reaction from stress. It is a period of fatigue and lassitude following a period of sustained mystical activity.

Each great step forward will entail lassitude and exhaustion for that mental machinery which he has pressed unto service and probably overworked. When the higher centers have been submitted to the continuous strain of a developed illuminated life, with its accompanying periods of intense fervor, lucidity, deep contemplation—perhaps of visionary and auditive phenomena—the swing-back into the negative state occurs almost of necessity.

This is the psychological explanation of those strange and painful episodes in the lives of great saints—indeed, of many spiritual persons hardly to be classed as saints—when, perhaps after a long life passed in faithful correspondence with the transcendental order, growing consciousness of the “presence of God,” the whole inner experience is suddenly swept away, and only a blind reliance on past convictions saves them from unbelief.

We are to expect, then, as a part of the conditions under which human consciousness appears to work that for every affirmation of the mystic life there will be a negation waiting for the unstable self. Progress in contemplation, for instance, is marked by just such an alternation of light and shade: at first between “consolation” and “aridity”; then between “dark contemplation” and sharp intuitions of Reality.

Rapid oscillations between a joyous and a painful consciousness seem to occur most often at the beginning of a new period of the Mystic Way: between Purgation and Illumination, and again between Illumination and the Dark Night: for these mental states are, as a rule, gradually not abruptly established. Mystics call such oscillations the “Game of Love” in which God plays, as it were, “hide and seek” with the questing soul.

The theory here advanced that the “Dark Night” is, on its psychic side, partly a condition of fatigue, partly a state of transition, is borne out by the mental and moral disorder which seems, in many subjects, to be its dominant character. When they are in it everything seems to “go wrong” with them. They are tormented by evil thoughts and abrupt temptations, lose grasp not only of their spiritual but also of their worldly affairs.

Thus Lucie-Christine says: “Often during my great temptations to sadness I am plunged in such spiritual darkness that I think myself utterly lost in falsehood and illusion; deceiving both myself and others. This temptation is the most terrible of all.”

Psychologically, then, the “Dark Night of the Soul” is due to the double fact of the exhaustion of an old state, and the growth towards a new state of consciousness. It is a “growing pain” in the organic process of the self’s attainment of the Absolute.

Such an interval of chaos and misery may last for months, or even for years, before the consciousness again unifies itself and a new center is formed. Moreover, the negative side of this new center, this new consciousness of the Absolute, often discloses itself first. The self realizes, that is to say, the inadequacy of its old state, long before it grasps the possibility of a new and higher state.

This realization will take two forms; (*a*) Objective: the distance or absence of the Absolute which the self seeks, (*b*) Subjective: the self's weakness and imperfection. Both apprehensions constitute a direct incentive to action. They present, as it were, a Divine Negation which the self must probe, combat, resolve. The Dark Night, therefore, largely the product of natural causes, is the producer in its turn of mystical energy; and hence of supernatural effects.

The Dark Night, then, is really a deeply human process, in which the self which thought itself so spiritual, so firmly established upon the super-sensual plane, is forced to turn back, to leave the Light, and pick up those qualities which it had left behind. Only thus, by the transmutation of the *whole man*, not by a careful and departmental cultivation of that which we like to call his "spiritual" side, can Divine Humanity be formed...

The self in its first purgation has cleansed the mirror of perception; hence, in its illuminated life, has seen Reality. In so doing it has transcended the normal perceptive powers of "natural" man, immersed in the illusions of sense. Now, it has got to *be* reality: a very different thing. For this a new and more drastic purgation is needed—not of the organs of perception, but of the very shrine of self: that "heart" which is the seat of personality, the source of its love and will.

In the stress and anguish of the Night, when it turns back from the vision of the Infinite to feel again the limitations of the finite the self loses the power to Do; and learns to surrender its will to the operation of a larger Life, that it may Be.

She sees clearly in herself the fruits of humility and patience, and feels her love ascending more purely and directly to God in proportion as she has realized the Nothingness of herself and all things.

We must remember in the midst of our analysis, that the mystic life is a life of love: that the Object of the mystic's final quest and of his constant intuition is an object of adoration and supreme desire.

Hence for the mystic who has once known the Beatific Vision there can be no greater grief than the withdrawal of this Object from his field of consciousness; the loss of this companionship, the extinction of this Light.

Therefore, whatever form the "Dark Night" assumes, it must entail bitter suffering: far worse than that endured in the Purgative Way. Then the self was forcibly detached from the imperfect. Now the Perfect is withdrawn, leaving behind an overwhelming yet impotent conviction of something supremely wrong, some final Treasure lost.

To those temperaments in which consciousness of the Absolute took the form of a sense of divine companionship, and for whom the objective idea "God" had become the central fact of life, it seems as though that God, having shown Himself, has now deliberately withdrawn His Presence, never perhaps to manifest Himself again.

“He acts,” says Eckhart, “as if there were a wall erected between Him and us.” The “eye which looked upon Eternity” has closed, the old dear sense of intimacy and mutual love has given place to a terrible blank.

“That which this anguished soul feels most deeply,” says St. John of the Cross, “is the conviction that God has abandoned it, of which it has no doubt; that He has cast it away into darkness as an abominable thing,...the soul feels now, for a terrible apprehension has come upon it that thus it will be with it for ever...”

So, too, Madame Guyon felt this loss of her intuitive apprehension of God as one of the most terrible characteristics of the “night.” “Thou didst begin, oh my God, to withdraw Thyself from me: and the pain of Thy absence was the more bitter to me, because Thy presence had been so sweet to me, Thy love so strong in me.”

Often combined with the “absence of God” is another negation, not the least distressing part of the sufferings of the self suddenly plunged into the Night. This is a complete emotional lassitude: the disappearance of all the old ardors, now replaced by a callousness, a boredom, which the self detests but cannot overcome. It is the dismal condition of spiritual *ennui* which ascetic writers know so well under the name of “aridity,” and which psychologists look upon as the result of emotional fatigue.

It seems incredible that the eager love of a Divine Companion, so long the focus of the self’s whole being should have vanished: that not only the transcendent vision should be withdrawn, but her very desire for, and interest in, that vision should grow cold.

All these forms of the Dark Night—the “Absence of God,” the sense of sin, the dark ecstasy, the loss of the self’s old passion, peace, and joy, and its apparent relapse to lower spiritual and mental levels—are considered by the mystics themselves to constitute aspects or parts of one and the same process: the final purification of the will or stronghold of personality, that it may be merged without any reserve “in God where it was first.”

The function of this episode of the Mystic Way is to cure the soul of the innate tendency to seek and rest in spiritual joys; to confuse Reality with the joy given by the contemplation of Reality.

The ascending self must leave these satisfactions; make its love absolutely disinterested, strong, and courageous, abolish all taint of spiritual gluttony. A total abandonment of the individualistic standpoint, of that trivial and egotistic quest of personal satisfaction which thwarts the great movement of the Flowing Light, is the supreme condition of man’s participation in Reality.

In Illumination, the soul, basking in the Uncreated Light, identified the Divine Nature with the Divine Light and sweetness which it then enjoyed. Its consciousness of the transcendent was chiefly felt as an increase of personal vision and personal joy. Thus, in that apparently selfless state, the “I, the Me, the Mine,” though spiritualized, still remained intact. The mortification of the senses was more than repaid by the rich and happy life which this mortification conferred upon the soul. But before real and permanent union with the Absolute can take place: before the whole self can learn to live on those high levels where—its being utterly surrendered to the Infinite Will—it can be wholly transmuted in God, merged in the great life of the All, this dependence on personal joys must be done away.

The various torments and desolations of the Dark Night constitute this last and drastic purgation of the spirit; the doing away of separateness, the annihilation of selfhood, even though all that self now claims for its own be the Love of God.

The self, then, has got to learn to cease to be its “own center and circumference”: to make that final surrender which is the price of final peace. In the Dark Night the starved and tortured spirit learns through an anguish which is “itself an orison” to accept lovelessness for the sake of Love, Nothingness for the sake of the All; dies without any sure promise of life, loses when it hardly hopes to find.

It sees with amazement the most sure foundations of its transcendental life crumble beneath it, dwells in a darkness which seems to hold no promise of a dawn. This is what the German mystics call the “upper school of true resignation” or of “suffering love”; the last test of heroic detachment, of manliness, of spiritual courage.

Though such an experience is “passive” in the sense that the self can neither enter nor leave it at will it is a direct invitation to active endurance, a condition of stress in which work is done.

The Dark Night, as we have seen, tends to establish itself gradually; the powers and intuitions of the self being withdrawn one after another, the intervals of lucidity becoming rarer, until the “mystic death” or state of total deprivation is reached. So, too, when the night begins to break down before the advance of the new or Unitive Life, the process is generally slow, though it may be marked by visions and ecstasies. One after another, the miseries and disharmonies of the Dark Night give way: affirmation takes the place of negation: the Cloud of Unknowing is pierced by rays of Light.

The act of complete surrender then, which is the term of the Dark Night, has given the self its footing in Eternity: its abandonment of the old centers of consciousness has permitted movement towards the new. In each such forward movement, the Transcendental Self, that spark of the soul which is united to the Absolute Life, has invaded more and more the seat of personality; stage by stage the remaking of the self in conformity with the Eternal World has gone on.

In the misery and apparent stagnation of the Dark Night—that dimness of the spiritual consciousness, that dullness of its will and love—work has been done, and the last great phase of the inward transmutation accomplished. The self which comes forth from the night is no separated self, conscious of the illumination of the Uncreated Light, but the New Man, the transmuted humanity, whose life is *one* with the Absolute Life of God.

Mystical prayer... is a supernatural intercourse between the soul and the divine, or some aspect of the divine, sometimes full of Light and joy, sometimes dark and bare.

In some of its degrees it is a placid, trustful waiting upon messages from without. In others, it is an inarticulate communion, a wordless rapture, a silent gazing upon God. The mystics have exhausted all the resources of all tongues in their efforts to tell us of the rewards which await those who will undertake this most sublime and difficult of arts.

(Evelyn Underhill)

While meditating, don't concentrate on the results of meditation. Meditate, rather to please God. If you seek results, you will be disappointed if they don't come. Meditate without attachment to the fruits of meditation.

(Yogananda)

Patience and Perseverance

Excerpts from: *The Secret of Secrets*
By Sant Darshan Singh Ji

This Path of the Surat Shabd Yoga is one of perfect hope. It is not a Path of dismay, disappointment and disillusion. But because of certain difficulties we have to overcome in the initial stages, sometimes we feel we are not making any headway, we are not progressing at the pace we desire. There are no shortcuts on the Path to perfection, and that is why we must develop patience and perseverance.

Patience is necessary because there is a time factor involved; and perseverance is necessary because of the difficulties that must be overcome during the spiritual journey. There should be constancy. To march forward on this Path we should develop patience and perseverance, and our efforts should be constant. They are an integral part of the divine journey we have undertaken; they are prerequisites if we wish to mold our lives according to the commandments of the Master and if we wish to surrender ourselves entirely to his sweet will. Constant endeavor in our efforts is only brought into play when there are patience and perseverance to support it.

It is the ego that makes us impatient. Everything happens at the preordained moment. As fruit ripens after having passed through the maturing process, so the soul's progress also depends on a period of preparation after a gradual shifting away of all ties with the mind and senses. But the ego wants everything to be done in the twinkling of an eye. However slow we feel we are progressing, if we have full faith in the Master, if we have fully surrendered ourselves to him, we will naturally have confidence in him, as our destiny lies solely in his hands.

Our Beloved Master [Sant Kirpal Singh Ji] always used to tell us that our destiny is controlled by the Master the moment he initiates us into the Mysteries of the Beyond. Our account with the Angel of Death is at that moment torn to pieces. From that moment on we are entirely in the care of the Master. One initiated into the Path of the Masters knows that henceforth the arbiter of his fate is the Master; the Master is his only benefactor. The Master is the Divine Light who alone serves the child initiate lovingly, selflessly and without fee.

So although we may at times become impatient with our progress on this path, although we lack perseverance and our efforts are not constant, we know it is only the Master who renders us help, guidance and protection at every turn.

The Master is therefore our true friend, philosopher and guide. The moment we start realizing that he is the arbiter of our destiny and that everything must happen at the proper time, then the question of impatience will not arise. We become impatient because we are still bound to the ego. Drop the ego and you will soar into ethereal regions. But many of us are not only egoists, but egotists as well.

So it is the ego in us that makes us impatient if things do not go according to our own wishes... In this state we become restless, and restlessness leads to impatience. If we were only to live up to the Master's commandments and leave the rest to him, then patience and perseverance would be restored to us. They are the gifts of the Master once we learn to have full faith in him. Impatience does not lead us anywhere, but if we strive to develop patience we are bound to progress in our meditations. On the other hand, once we give way to impatience and we cannot persevere with whatever difficulty might lie before us, that is bound to detract from our

concentration. To surrender to impatience means that instead of attaining the goal steadily under the Master's grace and guidance, we fall under the sway of ego, and it takes more time. Patience means perfect faith in the Master's competency while carrying out one's duties whether they are spiritual or worldly. Everything will come in its own good time.

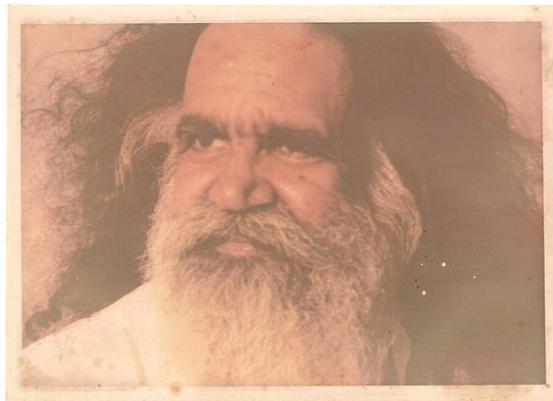
So the moment we realize that our destiny lies in the benign hands of the Master, in the hands of the Emperor of both the worlds, naturally, we will have full faith in him and patiently wait for the right moment when he will of his own accord bless us with a particular gift of his own choosing. Impatience on our part is an expression of lack of faith.

A person who has acquired perseverance, and practices it under all circumstances, will recognize the hand of his Master behind everything. He has reached the stage where the ego has been overpowered by humility. Where there is humility there is patience and perseverance; and where these three virtues flourish you will find a state of bliss and oneness with the Master.

So it is the ego which is the cause of our separation and makes it difficult to transcend the physical body and soar into the Beyond, to wing our way back to the source of all life. We have to remove all traces of the ego, because the ego is the last curtain – the last barrier – between the lover and the Beloved...

The moment we start to recognize our helplessness, the moment we see we are not capable of achieving anything on our own, are not capable of moving forward on this Path of the Surat Shabd Yoga by our own efforts, then the God Power in all its divine glory comes to our rescue. Once we resign ourselves in all humility to the will of the Master, he becomes the protector of the unprotected; he becomes the support of the unsupported.

So the qualities of patience and perseverance are the basic requirements of the Path of the Masters. They are most essential. You will find in all walks of life that an impatient person lacks humility, and one who is unable to persevere is the slave of his little self, his ego. Fortunate are those who have developed the two P's – patience and perseverance – for they get easy access to the third P – the Power of God. And those who have mastered patience and perseverance and have shed the ego in totality, become one with the double P – the Perpetual Power.



Sant Darshan Singh Ji

Love does all that is necessary: be patient!
Simply be a disciple! Let love be your master – that is all!
(Sharafuddin Maneri)

Mastery

Excerpts from: *The Keys to Success and Long-Term Fulfillment*
George Leonard

The author is an Aikido master, a form of martial arts, who provides helpful advice applicable to the spiritual journey.

Mastery is the mysterious process during which what is at first difficult becomes progressively easier and more pleasurable through practice.

If there is any sure route to success and fulfillment in life, it is to be found in the long-term, essentially goalless process of mastery.

As with all significant learning, learning is measured not in a straight line but in stages: brief spurts of progress separated by periods during which you seemed to be getting nowhere.

Learning any new skill involves relatively brief spurts of progress, each of which is followed by a slight decline to a plateau somewhat higher in most cases than that which preceded it.

To take the master's journey, you have to practice diligently, striving to hone your skills, to attain new levels of competence. But while doing so – and this is the inexorable fact of the journey – you also have to be willing to spend most of your time on a plateau, to keep practicing even when you seem to be getting nowhere.

How do you best move toward mastery? To put it simply, you practice diligently, but you practice primarily for the sake of the practice itself. Rather than being frustrated while on the plateau, you learn to appreciate and enjoy it just as much as you do the upward surges.

For one who is on the master's journey the word "practice" is best conceived of as a noun, not as something you do, but as something you have, something you are. In this sense, the word is akin to the Chinese word "tao" and the Japanese word "do", both of which mean, literally, road or path. Practice is the path upon which you travel, just that.

As a noun, a practice can be anything you practice on a regular basis as an integral part of your life – not in order to gain something else, but for its own sake...For a master, the rewards gained along the way are fine, but they are not the main reason for the journey. Ultimately, the master and the master's path are one.

The people we know as masters don't devote themselves to their particular skill just to get better at it. The truth is, they love to practice – and because of this they do get better. And to complete the circle, the better they get the more they enjoy performing the basic moves over and over again.

To practice regularly, even when you seem to be getting nowhere, might at first seem onerous. But the day eventually comes when practicing becomes a treasured part of your life. You settle into it as if into your favorite easy chair. It will still be there for you tomorrow. It will never go away.

“How long will it take me to master [meditation]?” a prospective student asks. The teacher replies, “How long do you expect to live?”

Ultimately, practice is the path of mastery. If you stay on it long enough, you’ll find it to be a vivid place, with its ups and downs, its challenges and comforts, its surprises, disappointments, and unconditional joys. You’ll take your share of bumps and bruises while traveling, but it might well turn out to be the most reliable thing in your life.

What is mastery? At the heart of it, mastery is practice. Mastery is staying on the path.

Pure Meditation Practice

From: *Zen Mind, Beginner’s Mind*

Zen master Shunryu Suzuki

In Hinayana Buddhism, practice is classified in four ways:

The best way is just to do it without having any joy in it, not even spiritual joy. This way is just to do it, forgetting your physical and mental feeling, forgetting all about yourself in your practice. This is the fourth stage, or the highest stage.

The next highest stage is to have just physical joy in your practice. At this stage you find some pleasure in practice, and you will practice because of the pleasure you find in it.

In the second stage you have both mental and physical joy, or good feeling. These two middle stages are stages in which you practice meditation because you feel good in your practice.

The first stage is when you have no thinking and no curiosity in your practice.

When you are tired of sitting, or when you are disgusted with your practice, you should recognize this as a warning signal. You become discouraged with your practice when your practice has been idealistic. You have some gaining idea in your practice, and it is not pure enough. It is when your practice is rather greedy that you become discouraged with it.

When we practice meditation we just practice it, and whether we find joy in our practice or not, we just do it.

We can say either that we make progress little by little, or that we do not even expect to make progress. Just to be sincere and make our full effort in each moment is enough.

Repetition, for no special purpose and without end, is the way to follow the cosmic order. The point is not to look for something, but to practice. Continue until you reach your coffin. If you practice every day, after a while you no longer have to think about practicing or decide or want to practice. So repetition is very important.

Meditation...is the expression of your true nature; it is the activity which appeases your inmost desire.

A person must love something very much to continue doing it
even when they are not particularly good at it.
(author unknown)

The sweetness and delights of the resting-place are in proportion to the pain endured on the Journey. Only when you suffer the pangs and tribulations of exile will you truly enjoy your homecoming.

(Rumi)

O Beloved, please come back. My heart is broken, and my body is a wreck and almost dead. Come back: for I've been blinded from the lack of Your Light, and only Light from Your window will open my eyes again. Grief has conquered my bleeding heart; only Your face will free me of this pain.

(Hafiz)

O Master, since You went away, Your lovers are drinking poison and are dying off like flies. Why have You abandoned us this way? Have our weeping and our prayers been too much for Your ears? Are there not tears in Your eyes, too?

(Hafiz)

Beware! Don't despair if the Beloved turns you down. If He sends you away today, might He not call you to Himself tomorrow? If He shuts the door on you, wait there and don't go away. After testing your patience, He will give you the seat of honor.

(Rumi)



Sant Darshan Singh Ji

He left me, and Himself He departed; what fault was there in me? Neither at night nor in the day do I sleep in peace; my eyes pour out tears! Sharper than swords and spears are the arrows of love! There is no one as cruel as love; this malady no physician can cure. There is no peace, not for a moment, so intense is the pain of separation! O Bulleh, if the Lord were to shower His grace, my days would radically change! He left me, and Himself He departed.

What fault was there in me?

(Bulleh Shah)





Sant Rajinder Singh Ji

One stage of our spiritual awakening takes place when we realize that God is near but we cannot see God. Another stage of awakening occurs when we realize that our true goal in life is to find God. Still another stage of awakening occurs when we shed tears for every moment that we do not come into the Lord's presence.

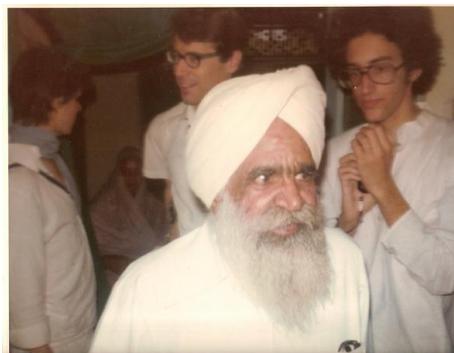
(Sant Rajinder Singh Ji)



Irene and Sant Kirpal Singh Ji

Kirpalct@yahoo.com

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Sant Darshan Singh Ji