

Slow and Steady Wins the Race



Sometimes you are running like a hare, then sleeping, then again turning your head some other way. It's better to go regularly like a tortoise, step by step, step by step, every day, not turning but going ahead. So you are on the way. God is waiting for you, each one of you.

(Sant Kirpal Singh)

(The Light of Kirpal, 217)



There is a portion of Master Kirpal Singh's account of the first time He met His Master in His physical form that I believe resonates with every disciple on a spiritual path. The selection is taken from Master's talk "How I Met My Master."

"Master was sitting upstairs; He was taking his meal. I went out and sat outside. After half an hour or so, He came out. I was wonderstruck: He was the same man who had been appearing to me for seven years before, from 1917 to 1924. I paid homage to Him: 'Why so late?'"

He said, "That was the most opportune time that you are to come."

(http://www.ruhanisatsangusa.org/indian/sant_kirpal_singh/how_i_met_my_master.htm)

"Why so late?" is a question I'm sure a lot of us have asked at one time or another during our spiritual journey.

Master Kirpal Singh addresses this question many times over the course of His mission. In the book *Spiritual Elixir*, Master states, "Most seekers want quick results. They want miracles and sudden transformations. But the seed generates rapidly only in thin soil and then withers away. The seed that must grow into the life-giving tree must grow more slowly." (page 298)

A disciple who expects quick results sets him or herself up for disappointment and discouragement. This may result in a loss of passion for the practice and a slackening of effort, or the abandonment of one's practice altogether. This is most unfortunate.

The following is an example from the letters of Master Kirpal's Guru, Hazur Baba Sawan Singh, to a disciple:

"You say in eight weeks since your initiation you have made no progress. Sant Mat does not fix any time limit... This detaching the attention from the external connections is a slow affair. Habits become second nature. It takes time to form new habits. But slow and steady wins the race, and practice makes perfect." (Spiritual Gems, letter 157)

This disciple was complaining of lack of progress after two months!

In another letter to a disciple, Baba Sawan Singh wrote: "Regarding the time limit to reach the first stage, no time limit can be fixed for an individual, nor is there an average. It is entirely a path of love. I have known cases where, at the very time of initiation, people have conversed with the Master within. And there are cases as well where, even after thirty years, the attention is still wandering out. This much is certain, that after initiation, there is no going down the scale of evolution below human life. The rise up is bound with the past record of karmas." (Spiritual Gems, letter 25)

Baba Sawan Singh explains further: “It is not difficult for the Master to take a soul upward, but premature uplifting causes harm. Just as fine silk cloth, when spread upon a thorny hedge, is torn to pieces if suddenly pulled away, so the soul, entangled in the thorns of karma, which penetrate every cell in the body, must be gradually purified by the Master’s love. By his grace the soul is freed from these thorns and the karma is slowly sifted out from every cell in the body. (Spiritual Gems, letter 171)

Our attention is sticking to the body and the world like a fine silk cloth entangled in a prickly, thorny shrub. If one were to pull the cloth forcibly the cloth would be torn to pieces. But if one sits patiently and disentangles it from pricks or thorns, bit by bit, one can succeed in removing the cloth intact. If you pull out a single hair from the body, you feel the pain or the pull because the attention is there. No violent act will withdraw the attention. Withdrawal should be done gently. (Spiritual Gems, letter 145)

The following excerpts from the letters of Baba Sawan Singh address the need for patience and perseverance.

Though your spiritual progress is not according to your expectation, yet there is not the least doubt that you are steadily, though slowly, advancing towards the goal on the right path. Your speed will become gradually quicker as the burden of karma becomes lighter. (The Dawn of Light, letter 22)

Your spiritual progress may be slow but it is sure and steady, and one day you will reach the goal. It is better to progress slowly. Different persons have different rates of progress. Those whose lives have been quite pure in previous births need simply a hint and their progress is quick. Others see the Light and hear the Sound soon after initiation, but the burden of karma subsequently comes in their way and hinders their further spiritual progress. Usually spiritual progress is slow up to the first stage because the traveler has to combat serious difficulties and troubles. The reason is that this is the stage where matter reigns supreme. But as soon as the first stage is reached, a devotee’s progress becomes sure and quick. (The Dawn of Light, letter 27)

No definite time limit can be laid down which will apply to every soul. The revelation time depends on the lightness or heaviness of the past karmas. There are certain souls who do not get it even after twenty years, while there are others to whom it is granted to see the form of the Master within on the very first day of initiation. Rest assured that the revelation will come one day. Please do not let the spiritual exercises become mechanical, but keep up your zeal and interest. (The Dawn of Light, letter 35)

For bringing the attention back into the eye-center, the simplest method is the repetition of the five names, thereby keeping the attention engaged in repetition at the eye-center. It is a slow affair, and slow and steady wins the race. So with faith and perseverance, continue this work. (Spiritual Gems, letter 26)

Progress must be slow as the mind has been accustomed to wander out for ages, and it is not easy to make it sit still and give up its old habit. (Spiritual Gems, letter 29)

You say the progress is at a snail's pace. That which is acquired slowly and after effort is permanent, and that which is acquired quickly and without effort is transitory and subject to loss. Slow and steady wins the race. (Spiritual Gems, letter 37)

The separation from matter is a slow process which requires constancy and determination. It is only a question of time. There is no room for disappointment. (Spiritual Gems, letter 46)

By and by the mind will go inward and sit in the eye-center, the attention will begin to be withdrawn from the limbs, and in time the whole body will be vacated. Light will appear and the spiritual journey will commence. It is a slow affair in the beginning. (Spiritual Gems, letter 72)

It is true, therefore, as you say, that in preliminary stages the progress is slow. To give up worldly pleasures, to control the senses, and bring the attention in one center by controlling the wild runs of the mind while still alive and kicking, is not an easy task. (Spiritual Gems, letter 115)

To remain connected with the outside world has become second nature by habit. To loosen this connection or to change this habit requires time and effort. It is a slow process. Violent methods do not succeed here. The attention is to be diverted, and second nature is to be altered. (Spiritual Gems, letter 146)

Old habits are given up slowly, and new habits are not formed quickly either. Consequently the spiritual uplift is a slow affair, and "slow and steady wins the race" applies here most appropriately. (Spiritual Gems, letter 198)

The training of the mind, like the training of a horse or like the training of a child in making them useful, is a slow affair. It is a lifelong work. Slow and steady wins the race. (Spiritual Gems, letter 198)

You must remember that you should not expect spiritual realization all at once. The Adepts call this path Sahaj Yoga, that is, a path on which you can walk slowly, and slowly only. The reason is that, from ages past, our soul has been kept aloof from the Father by the cruel deception of mind and matter. By association with the body and its senses for a long time, the mind's tendency is downward and it has altogether forgotten that its real home is upward. The mind has acquired so much control over the soul that it keeps the soul always entangled in the enjoyments of senses. This is the reason why a person cannot rise above the world all at once. It is a difficult task but you need not lose heart. Our Master is all-powerful and certainly one day he will release us from the bondage of mind and senses, through his infinite mercy, provided we turn not from his door, and practice bhajan and simran to the best of our ability, according to his orders. (The Dawn of Light, letter 2)

Mind is not a thing that can be switched off and on at will. It cannot be taken away from its routine course in spite of one's best effort in a day, a month, or a year. It is a lifelong struggle. Those who have undergone this struggle, or who are engaged in it, understand what it is to conquer the mind. It is son, daughter, wife, husband, friend, wealth and poverty, attachment, greed, lust, anger, pride, and whatnot. It is attached to the outside world with ropes, double ropes, triple ropes, and manifold ropes, and has been held by these chains so long that it does not feel the irksomeness of its bonds. It likes them instead...If it were an easy affair, Guru Nanak would not have sat on pebbles for twelve years. Christ would not have spent nineteen years in the Tibetan hills and Soami Ji himself would not have contemplated in a solitary, dark, back room for seventeen years. I need not write more. You know the struggle. (Spiritual Gems, letter 143)

The first stage is a bit difficult, for it is crossed with struggle. The journey beyond is pleasant. The karma and the struggle are interdependent. When the karmic debt becomes light, the progress will be rapid. (Spiritual Gems, letter 41)

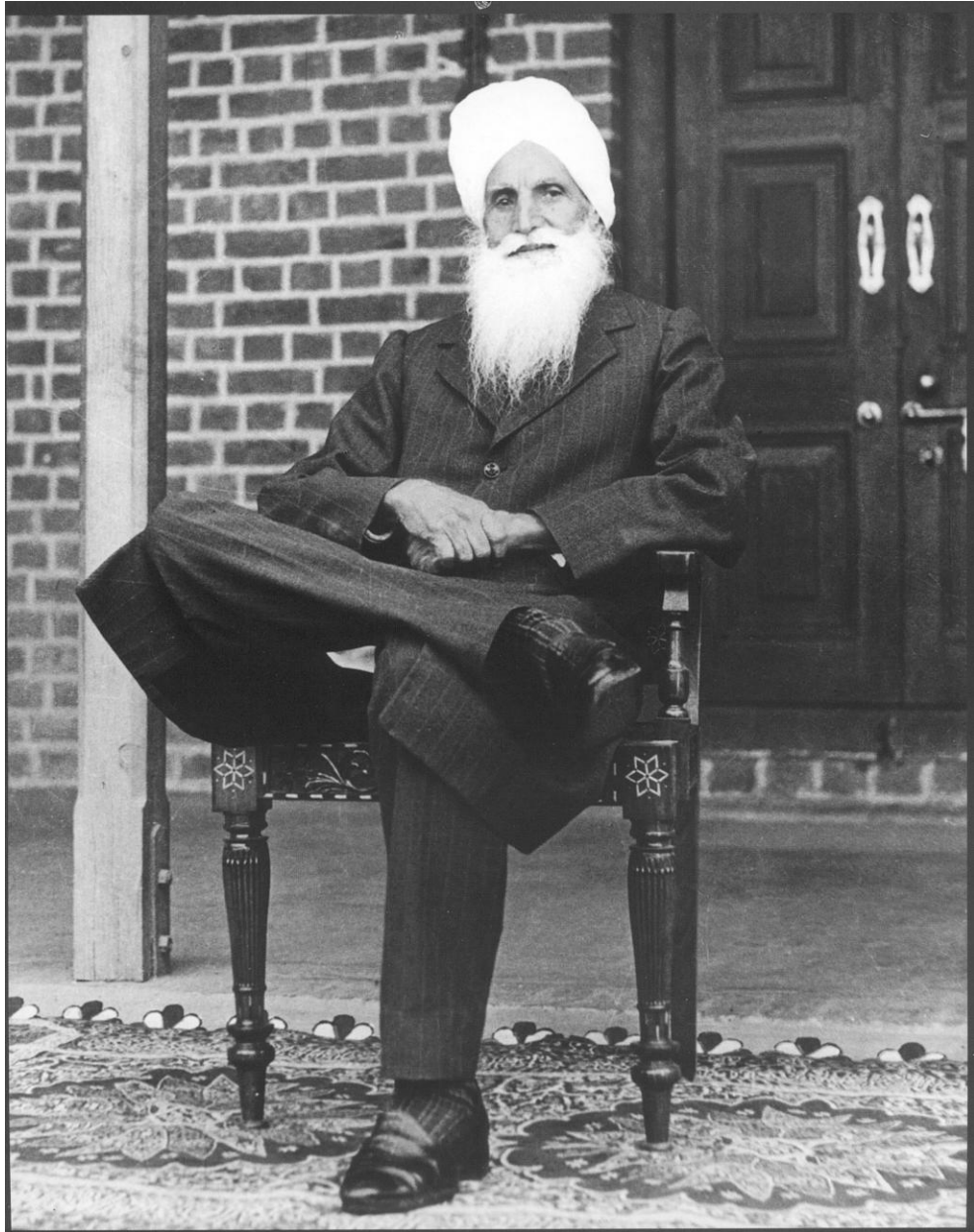
Progress on the spiritual path depends upon purity of conduct and, secondly, upon persevering labor to still the activity of the mind by means of repetition. Until the mind is made motionless, it cannot perceive the Light within. But there is no reason to despond. It takes time to overcome the habits of the mind. (Spiritual Gems, letter 90)

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." The Saints put the maximum at four births, and the four births are only for those disciples who actively oppose the Saints. This much is certain, however, that once the Saints have placed the seed of the Word in the bosom-soil of a person, the seed sooner or later will germinate, will form a plant and bear fruit. It cannot perish. (The Dawn of Light, letter 69)

Please be not in a hurry. With patience and perseverance, complete the course of concentration. Going within takes time. The rise within is comparatively easier. This part of the course is tasteless. Taste comes with concentration. Slow but steady wins the race. That which is acquired after struggle is valued, and that which comes easily is often not valued. (Spiritual Gems, letter 147)

Just as a trace of acid spoils milk and it is not wise to put milk in an acid basin, so the Truth, the Sound Current, the Master, does not appear as long as there is a trace of low karmic dirt in the mind. The process of cleaning is going on, and after all, what is a ten or twelve years' period, or even one lifetime, in which the karmic account of all the previous innumerable lives has to be settled! (The Dawn of Light, letter 53)

Gradual progress is to be preferred...Stilling the wild mind and withdrawing the attention from the body and concentrating it in the eye-focus is a slow affair. A Sufi says: "A life-period is required to win and hold the Beloved in arms." (Spiritual Gems, letter 210)



The Great Master – Hazur Baba Sawan Singh
1858 - 1948

Sant Kirpal Singh

Is God first or is world first? We take world first and God to help us in the world, that's all. Everybody must decide what he wants to do. We are adrift. Sometimes we want God, sometimes the world. So decide first what you want to do. Sometimes I tell people, "Decide what you want to do from this day on." You must have something before you; and work. Work for it, maybe only a step is taken but it will take you closer to the goal. Sometimes you are running like a hare, then sleeping, then again turning your head some other way. It's better to go regularly like a tortoise, step by step, step by step, every day, not turning but going ahead. So you are on the way. God is waiting for you, each one of you. (<http://www.ruhanisatsangusa.org/lok/firstsee.htm>)

Again, most of the dear souls crave for spectacular results and complain of slow progress. But, be it known that the time factor is an essential element and it differs with different individuals, depending on so many factors: each one's background, mental development, present environments and the degree of receptivity acquired. The spiritual Path is an arduous up-hill journey and requires steadfast patience and perseverance. Slow and steady wins the race in the long run. The Master Power is more anxious to pull us up than we are prepared to repose in Him. He knows our needs more than we do and is ever ready to extend His helping hand to us if we care to grasp it. Instead of completely giving ourselves to the healthier, higher and holier influence coming from above, we remain, for the most part, hide-bound or mind-ridden and thus we stand in the way of the Divine Power which comes down like a gentle dove if we are but ready to receive Him. On the contrary, we stand between God and ourselves and keep surveying the process of withdrawal instead of engaging in the spiritual practices with all our heart, mind and soul. (<http://www.ruhanisatsangusa.org/receptiv.htm>)

Every Saint has His past and every sinner a future. There is hope for everybody. The pity is, you see, a strong man revels in his strength and the weaker man wonders how he got it. Questions can be cleared up, with very few words, very simple words. But for man who is on the Way, well, Master simply leads him, you see. Others say, "How can that be done?" Time factor is a necessity. I tell you, when I was a child, I was reading in the third primary. I saw one man giving a lecture. "How he words it! Where do all his words come from, from where is he speaking?" I was just thinking from the level of a third primary child. I thought, "very wonderful." Now it seems very ordinary, doesn't it? So time factor is a necessity. Those who are more ready will develop quicker. As I told you yesterday, even those who are not ready, have only to start now and remain regular: obey the commandments of the Master, live up to what he says, and he can go ahead of the man who has got background but is not fully abiding by the words of Master, that's all. So there's no hard and fast rule for that. But this is the highest thing that we have to do. Main ideal, highest idea is know God - to see Him. In man-body you can see God. (http://www.ruhanisatsangusa.org/lok/your_work.htm)

"Rome was not built in a day." Time factor is necessary. When you develop from day to day you will become conscious of that Light and Music of the Spheres that is reverberating throughout all creation. It will come like that in due course, but we have to work for that. Mind that, one does not become a Satsangi, truly an initiate, simply by being given an inner contact. Of course, some experience is necessary to start with. If you have no experience, it cannot be developed. (<http://www.ruhanisatsangusa.org/truelive.htm>)

Apparently, and in generalities, all men look alike, though each differs from the other in inner development. It is this background that helps each individual on the spiritual path and determines the measure of every step he takes, and, consequently, each one has his own time factor. (http://www.ruhanisatsangusa.org/godman/godman_1.htm)

Perfection walks slowly. Time factor is necessary. Go on, regularly; after some time you'll find that you are on the way up. Sometimes you advance a little, then recede, then again you get some advancement. So diary is meant for that purpose. Keep your diary very strictly, like a hard task master. Don't spare yourself. As you criticize others, so you must criticize your own self. By leading such a life, in two or three months you'll change, sure and certain. We spare our self. We see we have something wrong, but think, "Don't tell it. Who knows it?" But the God in you knows it. You cannot deceive Him. So that is why I always say, *Be true to your own self*. God is within you and the Master Power is there. You cannot deceive Him. Be sincere to your own self. I don't say, "Be sincere to me." That God Power is within you already. You cannot deceive Him.

(<http://www.ruhanisatsangusa.org/lok/or-God.htm>)

So first of all know yourself, be able to rise above body consciousness at your will, and transcend. And that is not also the end-all and be-all, but where the ABC starts. That requires time factor. A strong man revels in his strength and the weaker man wonders how he got it. Well, he did not get it in one day. When I was at Lahore, I was very fond of rivers, this and that thing. I used to go to the riverside at night, even in the cold winter. There was a wrestler there. His father wanted to make him a wrestler. He turned him out of his house in cold weather all naked except with one pair of knickers on. The whole night he was exercising to keep warm. When I was there I used to meet him. He was doing exercises all the time till morning - then he turned out to be a strong wrestler. People would say, "Oh, he's a wrestler - he defeats everybody!" How did he become a wrestler? That took time. So regular practice makes a man.

(<http://www.ruhanisatsangusa.org/lok/noworld.htm>)

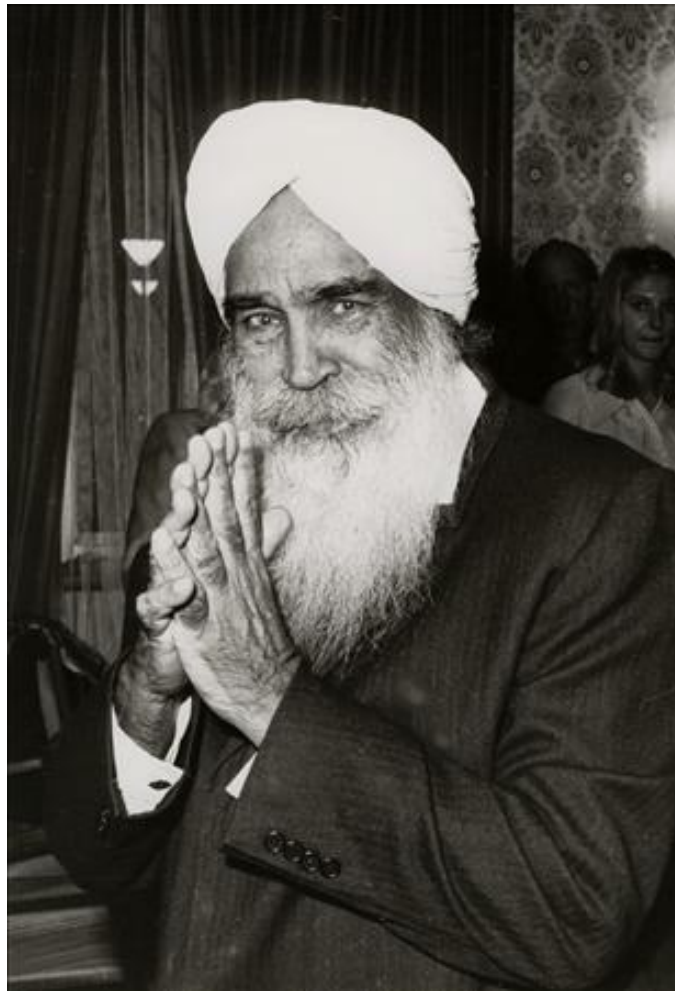
There are no windfalls as a general rule. You have to work your way up. Every one reaching the top step has ascended the steps below. ([ruhanisatsangusa.org/msg-xmas.htm](http://www.ruhanisatsangusa.org/msg-xmas.htm))

The true Godman has been made, for at one time He was just like us.

([ruhanisatsangusa.org/poison.htm](http://www.ruhanisatsangusa.org/poison.htm))

Every Saint has had his past, and every sinner has a future. There is hope for everybody. What a man has done, another can do, provided there is proper guidance and help. Whosoever would tread the Path of the Masters is sure to get inner awakening. Some people have regarded the inner science as a wild-goose chase, a figment of the human brain, a will-of-the-wisp, but this is not so. It is a science -- definite, certain and solid. It yields results as definite as the mathematical statement that two and two makes four. Rome was not built in a day. There is always a time factor involved for success on the Path. The Saints do not claim any special privileges for themselves. They speak to us as man to man, on a level of equality, and they hold out the possibility of our becoming like them in the course of time, provided we work with patience and single-minded devotion. (<http://www.ruhanisatsangusa.org/ekonkar.htm>)

There are different stages through which one has to pass. To attempt to bypass any stage would make one short of development in that particular stage and eventually prolong final attainment. Let every one develop steadily and slowly. ([ruhanisatsangusa.org/drops.htm](http://www.ruhanisatsangusa.org/drops.htm))



Param Sant Kirpal Singh
1894 – 1974

From: The Path of the Masters

Julian Johnson

The attitude of the Master toward the offender ought to be an example to us. We must always scrupulously avoid laying the blame either upon the disciple or upon the system itself. No matter what anyone does, initiation itself carries no instant and radical change of character. It alone confers no perfection of character. Perfection, requiring possibly years of hard work and close application to the task, is a matter of slow growth.

Still another point, if properly understood, may help us to be more charitable toward our erring brothers. It is a fact of common experience, well known to the Masters and other careful students, that among thousands of people who appear for initiation, many otherwise very noble souls will have a one-sided mind. That is, one side will be highly developed, trained, of a noble quality, while the other side may still be under the sway of the vilest of the passions. This fact has often proved a great stumbling block to observers.

Remember, the mind is a part or an agent of the negative power. The negative power is the universal mind. But the soul is a spark from the Supreme One. Every mind is what it is from ages of past experiences. It is rare that any person has an all-round development. Nearly all are one-sided to some extent, and not a few are terribly warped. These are to be pitied, not blamed. Negative traits will appear so long as there is not an all-round and well-advanced disciplinary training.

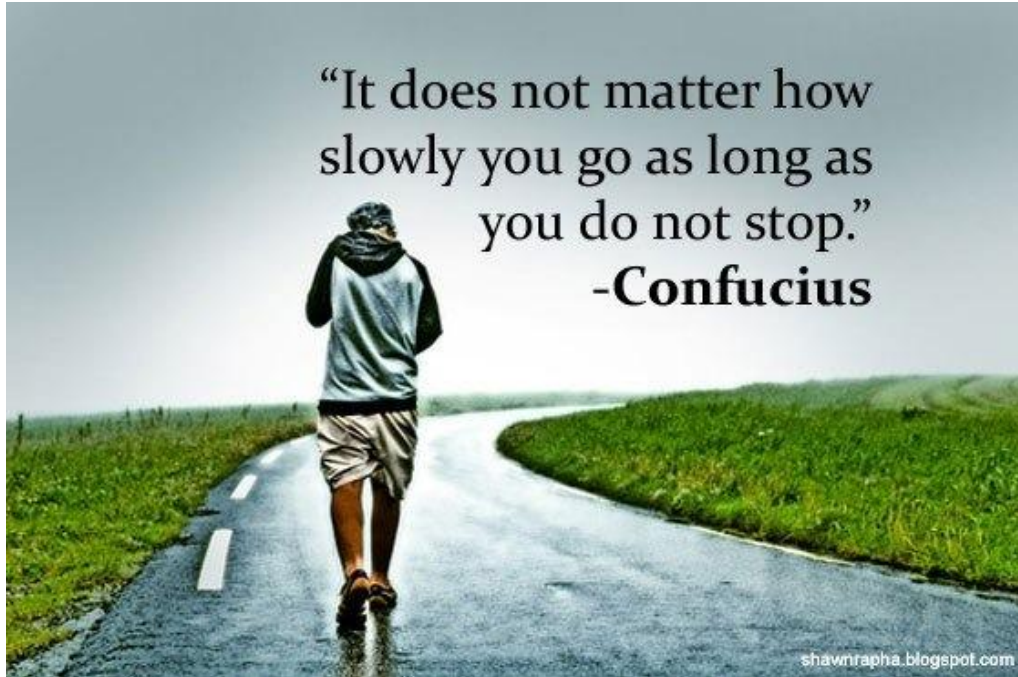
In the meantime, the divine spark in each one, always struggling for freedom, striving hard against adverse currents, reaches out a feeble hand toward the Master. In great kindness the Master takes that hand, unclean though it may be. After that, it may require years of patient study and hard work to build up the character, to strengthen the will and throw off the evil passions.



A Sant Mat Disciple Describes the Path

Whereas simran draws and dhyān holds the mind's attention, it is bhajan which takes awareness on its upward ascent back to the Supreme Abode, Sach Khand. Naturally, mastery of Surat Shabd Yoga is not an overnight affair, but involves years of consistent application and struggle. The desired results, adepts in the tradition agree, being largely due to the earnestness and day to day practice of the seeker.





Good-humored patience is necessary with mischievous children and your own mind.
(Buddha)

What has been long neglected cannot be restored immediately.
Fruit falls from the tree when it is ripe. The way cannot be forced.
(Buddha)

There are only two mistakes one can make along the road to Truth:
not going all the way, and not starting.
(Buddha)

A bucket is filled drop by drop.
(Buddha)

The greatest prayer is patience.
(Buddha)



Those who seek the easy way do not seek the True Way.
(Dogen)



Meher Baba

The Man-God helps the soul in bondage by sowing in him the seed of God-realization, but it always takes some time to attain God-realization. Every process of growth in the universe takes time. (discoursesbymeherbaba.org/v3-41.php)

In normal cases the advancement of the aspirant has to be gradual. The distance between the limited life of the ego and the limitlessness of the ego-life has to be covered by gradual stages of ego-transformation, so that egoism is replaced by humility, surging desires are replaced by steadily growing contentment, and selfishness is replaced by selfless love. (discoursesbymeherbaba.org/v2-181.php)

The growth of the physical body is worked out by the operation of natural laws, and the progress of the aspirant towards self-knowledge is worked out by the operation of spiritual laws pertaining to the transformation and emancipation of consciousness. The physical body of the child grows very gradually and almost imperceptibly, and the same is true of the spiritual progress of the person who has once entered the Path. The child does not know how its physical body grows; in the same way the aspirant also is often oblivious of the law by which he makes headway towards the destination of his spiritual progress. (discoursesbymeherbaba.org/v2-27.php)

The progressive evolution of consciousness beginning with the stone stage culminates in man. The history of evolution is the history of a gradual development of consciousness. Concurrent with this gradual shifting of the center of interest there is progressive dissolution of the ego and motion towards the Truth. (discoursesbymeherbaba.org/v2-80.php)

When the healthy qualities of human nature are allowed to develop naturally and slowly, they unfold the knowledge of relative values. (discoursesbymeherbaba.org/v1-75.php)

The difficulties in the Path can be overcome only if the aspirant has one-pointedness. If his psychic energies are dissipated in worldly pursuits, the progress he makes is very slow. One-pointedness implies dispassion concerning all the allurements of the phenomenal world. The mind must turn away from all temptations and complete control be established over the senses. Hence control and dispassion are both necessary to attain one-pointedness in the search for true understanding. (discoursesbymeherbaba.org/v3-122.php)



To the disciples, Yogananda often said, “Be patient in your yoga practice. A plant won’t grow the moment you plant the seed. ‘Make haste slowly,’ as the saying goes. It may take time to achieve the results you long for, but the more you practice, the more you will see your life changing. The day will dawn at last when you won’t even recognize yourself as the person you were.”

From: Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind Shunryu Suzuki

After you have practiced for a while, you will realize that it is not possible to make rapid, extraordinary progress. Even though you try very hard, the progress you make is always little by little.

It is not like going out in a shower in which you know when you get wet. In a fog, you do not know you are getting wet, but as you keep walking you get wet little by little.

If your mind has ideas of progress, you may say, "Oh, this pace is terrible!"

But actually it is not. When you get wet in a fog it is very difficult to dry yourself. So there is no need to worry about progress.

It is like studying a foreign language; you cannot do it all of a sudden, but by repeating it over and over you will master 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.

There is no Nirvana outside our practice.



"How long will it take me to master aikido?" a prospective student asks. "How long do you expect to live?" is the only respectable response.

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 – bruises of the ego as well as of the body, mind, and spirit – 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.
(George Leonard)



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. (Shunryu Suzuki)

There's Only One Way to Change: Slowly, Over Time

Published on September 21, 2011 by Jennifer Kunst, Ph.D. in
A Headshrinker's Guide to the Galaxy
Reprinted in Psychology Today

Speak to any quality psychotherapist, fitness trainer, nutritionist, financial advisor, organizational consultant, or AA sponsor—anyone in the change business—and they will tell you that the chief complaint of those trying to change their ways is, "*Why does it have to take so long?*" And the answer is: it just does. There are no shortcuts. Quick and easy may be appealing, but slow and steady win the race.

I think that one of the reasons why lasting change takes so much time is that there is an enormous pressure in the human psyche to maintain the status quo. The mind is like a rubber band; you can easily stretch it temporarily, but it snaps back to its resting position. We resist change.

People crave the familiar; we take refuge in what we know. There is a basic principle in the deep layers of the unconscious mind that sameness=safety and change=danger. This is why it is so hard to break a habit, even if we know it is not good for us.

So the work of change requires us to overcome a misconception. We believe that we need the very thing we are trying to give up. This could be as obvious as the alcoholic believing he needs the drink or the abused woman believing she needs the abusive man. It can be more subtle, though, such as the depressed man believing he needs the depression to be cared for, or the worried woman believing she needs to worry in order to keep herself or her loved ones safe. Often, these beliefs are misconceptions, but they are held onto very tightly. And we can only detach from them, bit by bit, as we find a better reality to attach to—also, bit by bit.

Freud likened the change process to the successful work of mourning the death of a loved one. He observed that grief work does not happen overnight, all at once. Day by day, bit by bit, and painfully, the mourner works through each and every memory of his loved one. We naturally picture a future with our loved ones; when we lose them, we must let the picture of that future go, too. It is a slow, painful process. But if we are to recover from the loss and move forward, we go through this process. We don't want to do it. Sometimes we don't think we can do it. But we do it, one step at a time. Sometimes it feels like it will never end. But if we stick with it—if we keep facing the reality of our loss and the feelings that go with it—we are able to move forward.

In the work of changing ourselves, we must mourn the loss of our relationship to the old self. As in any love relationship, we have very strong ties to our old self. The old self is the center of our identity—it is all we have known. Even if we recognize that there is something problematic that needs to change in this old way of being, we resist giving it up. Sometimes we shake our heads in the process. "Why am I doing this? This is insane. I can't handle my life without - insert dysfunctional version of old self here. A bad day in the known is better than a good day in the unknown. I just can't move forward. It's a bad idea. I don't want to make things worse."

If we try to hurry up the change process, we don't work through these foundational struggles. We must go through a process of "buying in" to the value of the change. This idea is at the heart of many successful change strategies. Long-term success in weight loss includes small steps in the direction of "eat less and exercise more" so that the body and mind can adapt to a new equilibrium over time. Long-term successful organizational change involves incremental change in which members of the organization at every level are consulted and involved. Long-term financial success involves smart investing over time and the patience to stay engaged through the ups and downs. Long-term success in sobriety includes detaching from the drug and attaching to a new kind of support, one day at a time.

A quality psychotherapist, coach, or partner will hang in there with you through this slow, two-steps-forward, one-step-back process. We understand it is the nature of change. There is no other way to do it. Each step forward is a loss of the old way, and it involves grief and pain. Each step forward is a defiance of the misconception that sameness=safety. Each step forward is an act of faith in the idea that change might actually be a good thing.

And all of this takes determination, encouragement, and time.

<http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/headshrinkers-guide-the-galaxy/201109/theres-only-one-way-change-slowly-over-time>



There are plenty to follow our Lord half-way, but not the other half. They will give up possessions, friends, and honors, but it touches them too closely to disown themselves.

(Meister Eckhart)



All changes, even the most longed for, have their melancholy; for what we leave behind us is a part of ourselves; we must die to one life before we can enter another.

(Anatole France)



From: Awakening the Buddha Within

Lama Surya Das

In Tibet, the term renunciation did not imply a sacrifice, or any notion of penance. Instead it meant the relief of finally dropping and getting rid of excess baggage through an arising of inner certainty about the illusory nature of created things. If we get even the smallest glimpse of liberation and what it means to experience freedom from want, we see where our happiness truly lies. This is the arising of inner certainty. When that occurs we begin to renounce and give up the unfulfilling thoughts and behaviors that create negative karma.

Renunciation refers to opening the tight fist of grasping and relinquishing our weighty burden of accumulated excess baggage. The heart of renunciation implies allowing rather than controlling. It requires letting go of that which is negative and harmful while opening up to sanity and wholeness.

The question is: Can we let go of holding back? Can we relinquish our fears and defenses? Can we forgive? Can we surrender and learn to better accept things as they are?

Typically, this is accomplished in small gradual steps.

We grow up, and we adopt a more mature attitude. When we do this, we leave the homeland of our childhood. We give up our childish ways. We depart from the nest of our family of origin and free ourselves from frozen behaviors. We stop telling ourselves stories; we stop spinning fantasies. We're all carting heavy baggage that is not helping us get where we want to go or do what we want to do. Once we realize that we no longer need this baggage, we can relinquish it; once we have inner certainty, we can leave our old habits and negativities behind.



When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child.

When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me.

(Saint Paul)



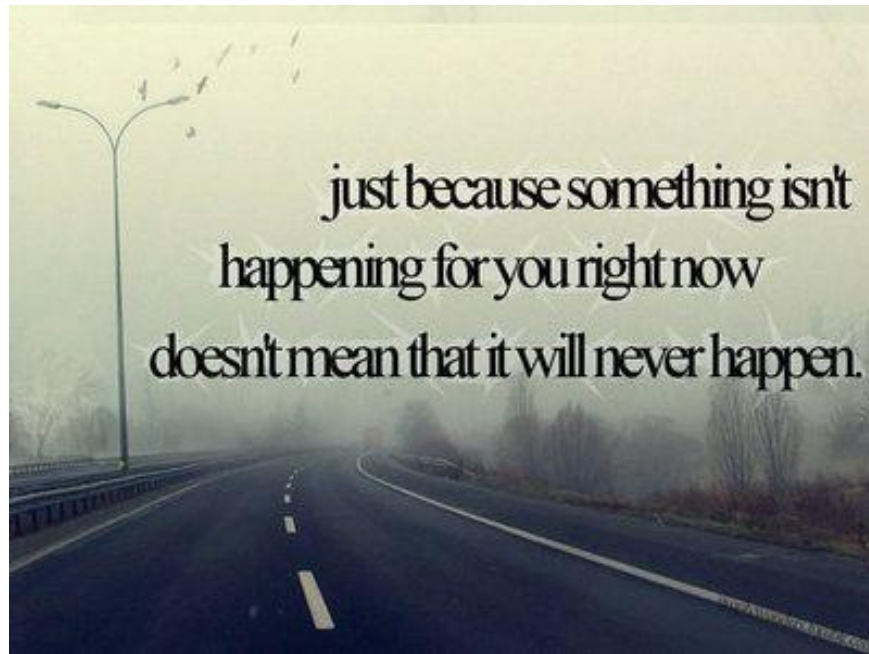
The sacrifice which causes sorrow to the doer of the sacrifice is no sacrifice.
Real sacrifice lightens the mind of the doer and gives him a sense of peace and joy.
The Buddha gave up the pleasures of life because they had become painful to him.

(Mahatma Gandhi)

Keep strenuously toiling along this Path, do not rest until the last breath;
for that last breath may yet bring the blessings from the Knower of all things.
(Rumi)



All I can do is engage with complete sincerity.
Then, whatever happens, there is no regret.
(The Dalai Lama)



The worst thing one can do is not to try, to be aware of what one wants and not give in to it, to spend years in silent hurt wondering if something could have materialized – and never knowing.
(David Viscott)



For of all sad words of tongue or pen, the saddest are these: "It might have been."
(John Greenleaf Whittier)



We must all suffer from one of two pains: the pain of discipline or the pain of regret.
The difference is discipline weighs ounces while regret weighs tons.
(Jim Rohn)

Hafiz

Sant Kirpal Singh called Hafiz “a great mystic poet” and “a great saint.” Hafiz was born about 1320 and died about 1389. He was born in Shiraz, a city in southern Persia.

The relationship between Hafiz and his master was not always an easy one. In many accounts, Muhammad Attar is presented as a stern and demanding figure who sometimes appeared to show no compassion at all for Hafiz. Often Hafiz is portrayed as running to Attar in despair, pleading for spiritual liberation after decades of frustration. Each time, Attar would tell Hafiz to be patient and wait, and all would be revealed. At about the age of sixty, after forty years of discipleship, Hafiz attained the goal of God realization.

Hafiz’s poems express every nuance and stage of his growing understanding of love. He wrote of the game of love, the beauty of the Beloved, the sweet pain of longing, the agony of waiting, the ecstatic joy of union.

The following are some of Hafiz’s poems of longing and frustration.

O Master, I know You taught us that we couldn’t get to You without much effort and without Your help, but all this silence is leading me astray.

As your lover, all I’ve ever asked for is a glance. If I could only breathe one breath with the Beloved, that would be enough. I have been Your lover and been with You a thousand times; yet each time You see me, Your question is always, “Who is he?”

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?

O Friend, at this banquet You have set before us, how long must we sit here with an empty plate?

What else is there for me to do but to sit here and cry? I wouldn’t wish this sadness on even my worst enemy. You are far away, and day and night I lie grieving. And why shouldn’t I, when my heart says there is no hope? O Beloved, where are You? Since You left, my heart has become a fountain, and blood is pouring from my eyes. From the root of every eyelash trickles a hundred drops of blood, and from my heart pour gallons more! Hafiz has become a slave to this grieving.

What have I done that was so bad that You won’t even accept my gifts or recognize my name? This is Hafiz, and I am standing at Your door. Where else is there for me to go? Where will I go, what will I do, what will I be, what will be my plan? I’m sick of all this sorrow and deceit.

Flowers do not force their way with great strife. Flowers open to perfection slowly in the sun. Don't be in a hurry about spiritual matters. Go step by step, and be very sure.
(White Eagle)



Do not get excited or impatient in your efforts to find God. Be wholehearted, but not anxious about getting results. Be patient. Move toward your divine goal ever calmly, with tranquility.
(Yogananda)



If we have ideas about how our practice should unfold, these will often get in the way, preventing us from honoring the phase that is actually with us.
(Jack Kornfield)



We must be willing to get rid of the life we've planned, so as to have the life that is awaiting us... The old skin has to be shed before the new one is to come.
(Joseph Campbell)



With time and patience the mulberry leaf becomes a silk gown.
(Oriental proverb)



Nothing great is created suddenly, any more than a bunch of grapes or a fig.
If you tell me that you desire a fig I answer you that there must be time.
Let the tree first blossom, then bear fruit, then ripen.
(Epictetus)



Perfection is attained by slow degrees; it requires the hand of time.
(Voltaire)



No road is too long to the man who advances deliberately and without undue haste,
and no honors are too distant for the man who prepares himself for them with patience.
(Bruyere)



Have patience with all the world, but first of all with yourself.
(Saint Francis de Sales)



It is a grave error for anyone to imagine he will attain anything or that anything will be
revealed to him of the Path without persistent striving on his part.
(Abu Uthman Al-Hiri)



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)



The beautiful path is patient, always waiting for you to come back, that path that is so
familiar to you, and so faithful. It knows you will come back one day, and it will
welcome you back. The path will be as fresh and as beautiful as the first time.
Love never says that this is the last time.
(Thich Nhat Hanh)



Should a traveler while traveling fall down, there is nothing to wonder and cavil at.
One who sits and starts not on the journey, has an immeasurable distance yet to traverse.
(Kabir)



Come, come, whoever you are - wanderer, worshiper, lover of leaving.
It doesn't matter. Ours is not a caravan of despair.
Come, even if you have broken your vows a thousand times.
Come, yet again, come, come.
(Rumi)

Spirituality is not something difficult to achieve; but it requires a proper receptivity of mind, willing cooperation to abide by the Holy Commandments, and patient effort in the right direction.

(Sant Kirpal Singh, ruhanisatsangusa.org/follow.htm)



You have to decide what your highest priorities are and have the courage - pleasantly, smilingly, non-apologetically - to say “no” to other things. And the way to do that is by having a bigger “yes” burning inside.

(Stephen Covey)



There is no doubt we are weak and have neither faith nor love, but there is also one hope to sustain us – that he may take pity on us and forgive our sins. We have taken refuge at his holy feet and, deservedly or undeservedly, we are his children.

(Baba Sawan Singh, *Spiritual Gems*, letter 171)



But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.

(Saint Paul)



You imagined that you would accomplish this task through your own strength, activity, and effort. This is the rule that has been established: Expend everything you have in journeying on the Way. Then the bounty will come to you.

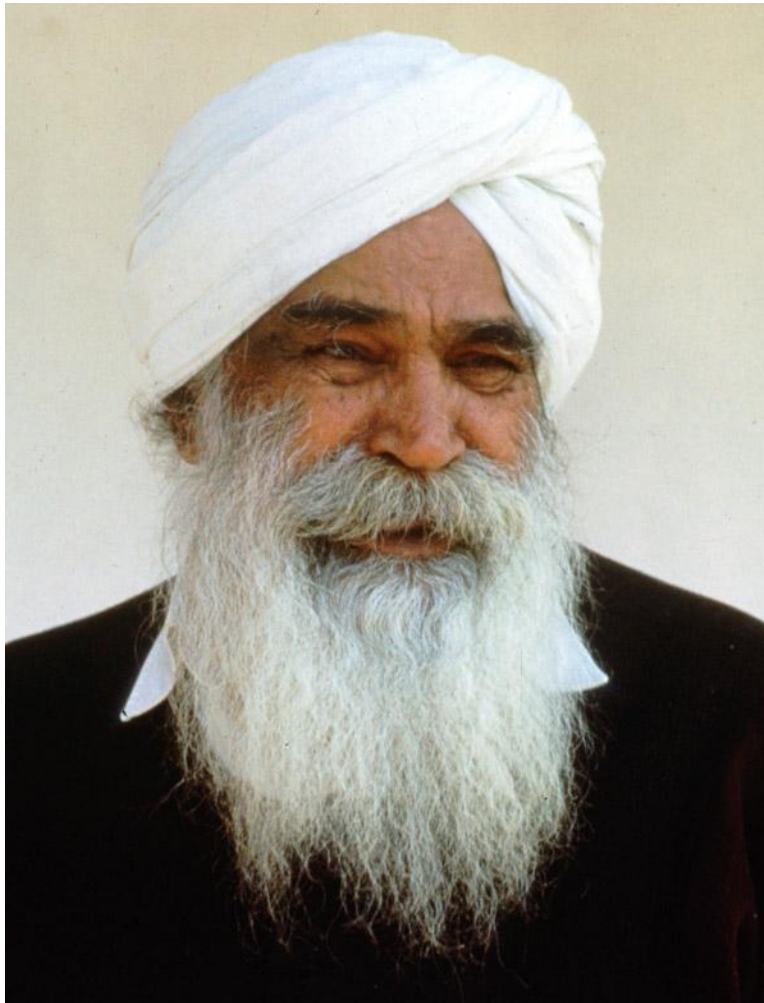
On this endless road, you are commanded to travel with your own feeble hands and feet. God knows that you cannot traverse this Way with feet so feeble. Indeed, in a hundred thousand years you will not arrive at the first way station.

However, when you travel this road until your legs are exhausted and you fall down flat, until you have no more strength to move forward, then God’s grace will take you in its arms.

(Rumi)



I am your father, I have you by the hand
and I shall never let you go.
(Sant Kirpal Singh)



Sant Kirpal Singh
“The Beloved Master”

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For more booklets go to: kirpalsingh.org
(Spiritual Quotations for Lovers of God)