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SPIRITUAL FOUNDATIONS FOR DAILY LIVING

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Artistic Genius Has a Spiritual Source

Scientific Genius Has a Spiritual Source

Spiritual Voices

The Spirit and the Body

The Goal of Spiritual Growth

Conclusion

Affirmation

BELOVED PERFECTOR:

The spiritual realities in our world are just as real as the material realities, but they have a different foundation. The material world may be seen with the eye, felt with the hand, and heard with the ear. The spiritual world is known only through our emotions, our feelings, our intuitions, and the quiet messages that come to the human soul. A contemporary translation of an ancient truth summarizes the essential difference between our material and spiritual worlds in these words:

"For the things which are seen are material, but the things which are not seen are spiritual."

If you are aware of this basic distinction then you are a spiritual person, for to be spiritually minded means much more than to be subject to mystical experiences. It is to be aware of the spiritual foundation for daily living. It is through our spiritual natures that we appreciate the beauty of nature, the majesty of great music, the perfection of art, and the enduring value of the unseen.

A well-balanced approach to life involves a struggle to attune our natures to the finer impulses. Just as a seismograph records the faintest tremor of the earth thousands of miles away, so our spiritual natures are sensitive to the beauty and truth that feeds the inner life.

This area of our lives is as yet almost unexplored territory. Man is in his swaddling clothes as he approaches this adventure. Emerson declared that the philosophy of six thousand years has not searched out the chambers of the soul. Steinmetz, one of the wizards of our age in the discovery of the miracles of electricity, was once asked to prophesy the great discoveries that would be made in the remainder of the twentieth century. To the surprise of his listeners he declared that the greatest discoveries of the future would be in the realm of the spirit, and would relate to a larger knowledge of, and use of, the unseen spiritual energies of the universe. As our rivers are reservoirs of unused power, so our

spiritual selves contain vast unused treasures of spiritual power.

You possess a full measure of these unearthed possibilities. To discover them is not easy. It requires discipline and an eager desire to receive a greater portion of spiritual power. In your nobler moments you have sensed again and again that there is more to God's creation than the material and the physical. The quest that leads to spiritual treasure begins with that awareness. From such a starting point you can begin the slow but triumphant acceptance of the spiritual victory God is eager to give you.

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PRAYER

Gracious God, kindle our sensibility to the spiritual realities. Enable us to look beyond the material world to the undergirding forces that are a part of Thy creation. Prepare us to both understand and to use the power of the spirit. Lead us to the truth that is the source of all power. In Jesus' name. Amen.

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ARTISTIC GENIUS HAS A SPIRITUAL SOURCE It is important to remember that the finest examples of man's artistic genius originate in needs that have been inspired by a spiritual motive. Sousa, the great band-leader, was once asked by a music critic why our present era produces fewer great artists and musicians than did the long ago. The critic wondered why those who seek to learn great symphonies and oratorios go back and search for masterpieces of artists who lived one hundred, two hundred, five hundred, and even one thousand years ago. Sousa replied, "The art produced in generations gone by was the result of a spiritual as well as an artistic preparation. Those who composed the oratorios and the hallelujah choruses which move the minds and stir the hearts of men were artists who wrote under Divine inspiration, who felt that the heavens were opened and that God Himself whispered in their ears the notes which have lifted the souls of men heavenward."

The artist in any field of endeavor who inspires us to leave our low-vaulted past and dwell in more stately mansions is always the one with a deep sense of spiritual values. This principle applies to you. Everyone who seeks to utilize his creative impulse in whatever area of interest he plans to pursue should never ignore Divine promptings. Spiritual understanding becomes a powerful drive to efforts that are worthy and enduring.

Too frequently we are ignorant of our own spiritual needs. Literature gives us numerous reminders of this fact. In Shakespeare's "Macbeth" the walking scene will always be unforgettable. With hands bloody and a soul in agony, Lady Macbeth vainly strives to find peace within. When a physician comes to visit her, his quick announcement is: "More needs she the divine than the physician." It is the prescription that may well be written for a weary world.

Many of us need Divine truth and undergirding, more than we need anything else in our harried lives. So take time to consider the eternal verities. You will neither achieve your highest goals nor reach your highest potential without the power that comes from spiritual understanding.

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SCIENTIFIC GENIUS HAS A SPIRITUAL SOURCE Most of the men and women whose discoveries and inventions have enriched our lives pay tribute to Divine inspiration as the source of their victories. They recognize that more than human diligence is involved in man's progress. Psychologists often think of this plus-element as "intuition", but the researchers themselves refer to a spiritual source to explain the discovery.

John Steinback revolutionized the concept of physical health when he found Vitamin D. But he refused to accept any financial benefits from his work. "It is a gift of God", he said; "the insight came to me when I was not looking for it, and did not expect it. How can I honestly profit from it?"

In spite of her endless toil which led to the discovery of radium, Madame Curie regarded the final victory as having come from an Intelligence beyond her own. Professor Selmas Wakeman looked upon the miracle drug streptomycin as something that came from a source beyond himself. Louis Pasteur counselled a group of scientists: "Never fail to pay tribute to the Divine forces in the Universe. I have recognized that I am the instrument of the Divine, but the source is in God."

Consider how such Divine inspiration works in the life of the researcher. The late George Washington Carver gave clear expression to the concept. "I take a handful of peanuts into the laboratory", he said. "Then I say, 'Lord, this is your creation. Show me its mysteries.' Of course I work. But again and again I have felt that the key to unlock the treasures of the peanut was not my discovery. It came when I was alert and ready to receive what God was so willing to give."

The principles that lead the pioneers in scientific research to pay tribute to Divine sources for their achievements are no less valid in your life. You can receive guidance as you face your daily problems; you can receive Divine inspiration to transform the drab and discouraging present into what may become a full and satisfying tomorrow. The question all of us face is whether we can disassociate ourselves from the human arrogance that leads us to assume that our strength and our diligence have gained for us what we desired. Cultivate the spirit that is evident in many scientific pioneers. They are certain that the treasures of research have a spiritual source.

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SPIRITUAL VOICES Jack London, in "The Call of the Wild", tells of an animal that was part wolf and part dog. The creature was content to live as a dog until he heard the cry of a wolf in a far-away pack. Then he was restless until he joined them. There are voices all of us must

hear, and to which we must respond, if we are to escape the bondage of our humanity.

The first of these spiritual voices comes from beauty in the world around us. Nature often provides a satisfying food for depressed human spirits. Who has not been moved to a calmer life by the majesty of great mountains, or found peace in the beauty of a garden? As our bodies breathe a purer air on a mountaintop, away from the smokey city, so our souls find inspiration when we are lifted up by communion with the Divine.

Spinoza, usually thought of as a philosopher of nature, lived in the perpetual presence of the sublime. To him God and the processes of nature were one and the same. As he polished lenses, that men might more easily see the beauty of the material world, so his philosophy of nature polished his students' minds that they might more clearly see the face of God. He spurned the material, that the spiritual might be triumphant.

Take time to appreciate the spiritual forces that flow into human minds and hearts through the beauty of nature. A sense of the spiritual realities awaits your sensitiveness to these forces.

The second of the voices of the spirit is that of music. Few individuals fail to respond to some form of musical composition or expression. It may be the stately challenge of a Beethoven symphony, the soul-stirring music of a marching band, a human voice singing a Handel oratorio, or a folk song; or even the haunting sound of guitar or mandolin strings.

Music has inspired human courage on many occasions. Someone said that the strains of bagpipes were worth more than ten thousand soldiers when the Canadians battled against overwhelming odds at Vimy Ridge in France. Folk songs dispelled loneliness for the early settlers in Kentucky and Tennessee. The hymns of the ages have lifted countless thousands of men and women to an awareness of eternal truth.

Take time to listen to great music. The composers who are remembered, and who will be remembered, made everlasting values understandable through their works. When we appreciate their purposes, and recognize the soaring majesty of their music, we gain insights that escape us as we travel other pathways to certainty.

The voice above all others to which one should listen in the cultivation of spiritual understanding is the voice of God. Only a person of weakness believes and acts in a self-reliant and self-sufficient manner. Persons of real strength seek all possible help and are not ashamed to call Heaven to their aid. Homer, as he wrote, appealed to Zeus for strength. Seneca, a great Roman, prayed: "O Neptune!" Plato prayed, "All ye gods, who haunt this place, give me beauty in the inward soul and may the outward and inward man be one."

Every President of the United States has implored Divine guidance as he took up the duties of his great office. Men and women reared in homes where family devotions were a part of the daily program never cease to express their gratitude for such a blessing. These, and many others, declare that for them prayer forms the altar stairs on which they climb through darkness up to God. Likewise, it is essential for you to advance in spiritual understanding as you become more

familiar with the material world; otherwise the universe will appear hostile.

One of the grave defects of some of the pagan religions is the portrayal of an unfriendly universe. Lightning is said to be the flash from the eye of an angry Diety, and thunder to be an outburst of his rage. Men are encouraged to look for evil spirits on every hand. It is not surprising that those who live in pagan lands know but little of smiles and songs of joy.

Your spiritual awareness will increase as you see God as a Father whose friendliness reaches out to all His children. The Bible first pictured God as walking beside man in a garden in the coolness of the evening. Then man advanced in scientific knowledge and new conceptions of God arose. Some of these made God remote and impersonal; but some emphasized the reality of the "Other" or the "Holy Spirit".

You will be richer in understanding, and in the possession of power, if you hold fast to the certainty that there is a Divine Spirit at work in the universe. You will not stumble and falter if you accept the support of the One who is waiting to lead and strengthen you.

Spiritual understanding will enable you to observe beauty where others see only ugliness. Recall the familiar story of the three travelers who climbed to the top of a mountain and returned to report their experiences. One brought back a bit of rock picked up at the summit; another had a twig of spruce plucked from close to the top; the third exclaimed in ecstatic joy, "While I was there I saw the sea!"

You can accept the gift of spiritual understanding. You can see sublime purposes where there once was emptiness. You can find values that will become the source of true happiness.

LISTEN TO THE SPIRITUAL VOICES. THEY CAN BE HEARD BY ALL WHO ARE SENSITIVE TO THEIR MESSAGE.

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THE SPIRIT AND THE BODY Great souls have always recognized that they were something more than a collection of atoms. A university professor often declared, "I do not have a soul; I am a soul." Socrates was asked what should be done with his body after his untimely death. He answered, "You can do what you wish with my body; I won't be there."

John Quincy Adams, the sixth President of the United States, was a remarkable man. He, too, thought of himself as a soul. During his career he was a United States Senator, a great Secretary of State, and for four years the President. In his religious life Adams was as simple as a child. During his entire life he repeated at bedtime the prayer he had learned as a child: "Now I lay me down to sleep." Not long before his death a friend met him on the streets of Boston and, in response to a query about his health, the President said: "John Quincy Adams himself is fine, but the house in which he lives is all but ready to fall into decay. Its foundation is very insecure, the walls shake at every passing breeze, and the roof is a bit leaky, but John Quincy Adams, who lives within, is fine."

Whether a person lives in the eighteenth century, or in the twentieth, this attitude is an evidence of spiritual maturity. Unfortunately, man tends to lose this personal awareness of the spiritual as he advances in scientific knowledge. Helliare Belloc recently drew a picture of man's decline in spiritual power as his material interests were enlarged. This can happen if one allows an abundance of things to engulf him instead of using them to enrich his life.

Your challenge is not to return to something in the past, but to move forward to a new concept of spiritual reality. You probably will be unable to grasp this in one moment of rare insight. You will need to study day after day, and also to consistently give both your time and effort to those things that have enduring value.

In the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago there are interesting representations of primitive life. One group depicts man as he was supposed to have lived two hundred and fifty thousand years ago. Other groups show him as he is thought to have lived fifty thousand, thirty thousand, and finally ten thousand years ago. The last scene pictures man worshipping for the first time. A savage with a yet unawakened mind stands before the open sea and, with uplifted hands, worships the rising sun. Well may he have worshiped it, for the sun to him was the source of heat and light.

It is always a mark of progress for men to recognize the need for a higher power and for the presence of the spiritual. The untutored savage bowing in humility before the Unknown God is more worthy of our admiration than are the men who, as sophisticated products of our civilization, fail to give thanks for the great gifts of life, and who look upon the physical body as an end in itself.

Your body has no enduring quality apart from your spirit. However long your physical nature may endure it is only a drop in the ocean of time. You are wise if you seek the spiritual foundations for daily living. In the spirit there is life, both here and eternally.

It is always a sad experience to meet with a friend of former years who reveals something of the slow decay that has taken place in his own soul. The face that once lighted with anticipation now seems stolid and hard; the voice that rang with expectation and hope now is penetrating and rasping; the spirit that was generous and fine has become cynical and destructive.

These developments inevitably follow the loss of a spiritual center for life. Guard against them by dwelling upon the spiritual truths and living in accord with them. It is futile to think that the finer qualities in a face, a voice, or a spirit can be preserved by the use of cosmetics or vocal exercises, or the possession of things. The inner life holds the key to what happens to both your body and your mind.

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THE GOAL OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH The goal of spiritual growth is to possess a beautiful soul. Many contacts and experiences contribute to make this a reality. Someone has likened the process to the flow of a great river. It rises in an obscure place and, as it flows along, it takes to itself the accumulated resources of other streams.

Think of the Mississippi River. It begins its long journey in northern Minnesota as the small overflow of a tiny lake. It passes through four lakes and numerous valleys as it flows two thousand, five hundred and forty-six miles to the Gulf of Mexico. It is enriched by numerous streams such as the Missouri, the Ohio, and the Arkansas. The majestic grandeur of the Mississippi as it winds its way through Louisiana is the sum of many rivers which, in turn, have many sources.

Welcome the varied experiences that will enrich your life. Some may be turbulent and difficult, some may be beautiful and calm, but each will contribute to your spiritual strength if it is accepted gratefully and used wisely.

Beauty of soul is a continuing process. In the Twenty-third Psalm David proclaimed the power of God to revitalize his life when it seemed to be wilting or withering. He sang: "He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul."

Often beauty of soul comes as a result of a lifetime of spiritual growth. Emerson, when in his dotage, was taken to the funeral of Longfellow, and there, looking upon the fine face of his dear friend, said: "I cannot remember his name, but he must have had a beautiful soul." Indeed Longfellow did exemplify kindness, generosity and serenity.

We may allow our souls to shrivel and die, or we may continuously develop our essential personality until it becomes something of eternal grandeur. It is foolish for any of us to so harden our hearts to the finer things of life that our souls are unworthy of immortality.

Remember that a beautiful soul is another name for a beautiful character. We often confuse the terms "reputation" and "character". Reputation is what the world thinks you are; character is what the Creator knows you to be. Character is what your thoughts are when you find a lost valuable, and no one knows you have found it. Character is your mental attitude when you have another under the spell of your superior personality. Character is your humility when you are the giver and another is the receiver. It is the spiritual you, and it can triumph when all other attributes fail.

Character is the anchor that holds us when clouds hang low and we are swept by storms. It is the reward of a lifetime of devotion to high ideals, noble living, and lofty endeavor.

Most of us achieve more through our character than we do through our intellect. A delegation of Englishmen who opposed the policies of William Gladstone once visited him and invited him to lead in a public enterprise. When Gladstone reminded the men that they did not believe in his policies, their leader said, "But, Mr. Gladstone, we believe in you." They could trust the man who had given supreme evidence that he had a great soul.

A call to the highest comes again and again to the sensitive person. He will listen to the voices that lure him upward. He will hitch his chariot to a star - for low aim, not failure, is the greatest defeat.

If you want to develop a workable philosophy of life, look to your spiritual welfare. Strive to build a God-like character. Respond to the challenge when deep calls unto deep. In this quest you will find life's greatest joys.

CONCLUSION

The spiritual foundations for triumphant living are available to all who seek them. You can build firmly and well as you allow Divine forces to rule your thoughts and your actions.

It may take a lifetime to grow a noble soul, but the effort is worthwhile. You are one who is privileged to seek and to find the highest spiritual goals and satisfactions. The time to begin is now.

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AFFIRMATION

Affirming my belief in the spiritual foundations for daily living: I will listen to the voices of the spirit; I will seek always the highest and the best.

Blessings,

Your Instructor.