

Book Review

MAN'S SPIRITUAL JOURNEY UNDERSTANDING THE PURPOSE OF LIFE

**Balvinder Kumar, Prabhat Prakashan, New Delhi, Full Circle, 2014,
pp. 255, ISBN: 978-81-7621-265-6, Rs. 250/-.**

It was a pleasure for me to attend the book release function in which Sri Sri Ravi Shankar Ji released the book written by Shri Balvinder Kumar on Man's Spiritual Journey: Understanding the purpose of life. This book is an attempt to compile thoughts by way of snippets on man's spiritual journey. The book has been divided into 17 chapters.

The first chapter discusses the Relevance of God in the age of knowledge and reason. The most significant doctrine expressed in Vedas and the Upanishads, the first philosophical explorations of Hinduism, is that there is only one Supreme Reality, a reality called the Brahman, the Supreme Being. Brahman is infinite, omnipresent, and non-dual in nature. In other words, Reality is One, or Absolute. Buddhist philosophy also looks at the impermanence and interdependence of all things, observing that everything is in constant flux. Buddhist doctrine also holds that ultimate reality is pure consciousness. Now modern science, especially from the quantum perspective, has proved that there is a unified field of energy that directly links everything in the universe.

Chapter 2 highlights certain thoughts on the Rediscovery of Brahman – All is One. Is humanity still evolving? Many scientific studies have been carried out to observe and confirm whether collective human consciousness is progressively growing towards a better future.

Chapter 3 deals with the question – Is Humanity Growing for a better future? Crime, violence, and aggression persist among fellow beings and nations in this age of reason and rationality.

Chapter 4 highlights the aspects of Humanity on the Materialistic Path. Insecurity and fear lead to accumulation of material things and that is what is happening in this mechanistic and Newtonian world, where man's spiritual nature has been overshadowed by his own strong urge to become secure and successful by all means in life.

Chapter 5 is on We are the Architect of our Own Life. The New Thought Movement or the New Thought is a spiritual movement that started in the United States during the late 19th century. This movement places great emphasis on spiritual and metaphysical beliefs. One key tenet of this movement is the Law of Attraction, which maintains that everything that's coming into our life has been attracted to us by our dominant thoughts and feelings. Recent research on quantum mechanics shows that we humans are much more than simply the "observers" in this physical world, and we can directly affect the waves and particles of the universe.

Chapter 6 deals with the Mind-Body Intimate Connectivity. There is a deep and dynamic relationship between what is going on with our feelings and thinking patterns and what happens in our body. Constant and seamless two way communication between body and mind profoundly affects our physical, mental, and emotional health.

Chapter 7 is on the way we Think. Like universal laws of physical world, there is law of the mind – as the mind thinks, so we become. As we think, so we live.

Chapter 8 deals with Mind's In-built Tendency towards Negativity. Silent and impersonal observation of mind, without making judgments, is the key to inner stillness by countering the negative tendency of mind.

Ajay Kr. Singh

Chapter 9 explores the Untapped Potential of our Unconscious Mind. The unconscious mind, over which we would appear to have very little control, plays a leading role in making choices at crucial moments, which could in turn, change the course of life.

Chapter 10 investigates as to why people carry Emotional Baggage? If instead of living in the present moment, we carry the burdensome baggage of past negativities/unpleasant memories and recall them frequently, then hell is automatically created by us. For those who remain totally entangled in old and habitual patterns of thought, behaviour, reaction, and desire, the future is usually a replica of the past, says Eckhart Tolle. Unless such conditioning is dissolved and people become aware and ready to avail themselves of the opportunities surrounding them, real transformation is unlikely. Through awareness and receptivity, we can successfully address this self limiting thinking and behaviour.

Chapter 11 is about The World of Illusion. We deceive ourselves when we think that the reality we see is the true reality. When we lift the veil of illusionary reality, only then do we become aware and realize the true nature of reality. We feel that we are stationary, but the earth spins eastward on its axis once daily at a speed of 1040 miles per hour. As the earth orbits the sun, we are being carried along a 70,000 miles per hour. As the sun orbits the milky way galaxy, we are moving at 5,00,000 miles per hour. We all depend on our brain for construction of reality which looks so real and not letting us realize our incapability for knowing the true nature of reality.

Chapter 12 raises the question, Is Free Will an Illusion? When we realize that we have no responsibility for the decisions that we make, or for the outcomes of the imaginary “free will”, we get true freedom.

Chapter 13 is dealing with Conflict of Self with Inner Self/Soul. When true self starts exerting itself over our egoistical mind and once ego backtracks, journey takes a fast pace towards spiritual evolution.

Chapter 14 tells that The World is a Mirror – Reflection of Inner World. The universe has been designed like that, if we want happiness in our life and the surrounding world then create happiness inside.

Chapter 15 is about Man’s Inherent Nature. Life is unpredictable. Change is the only constant... The realization and acceptance of change is the biggest realization one can have in life. It is the echo of life itself. The more we love and accept ourselves by realizing the true nature of Inner Self, the more we are able to love and accept others. Love is the ultimate essence of life for which we all strive. The essence of spirituality is to know our true selves and discover the meaning of our life. Our quality of life depends on the quality of the seeds that lie deep within our mind. Some seeds we get from our ancestors (by way of genes) and some are sown by others like our parents and teachers during childhood; other seeds we sow and grow ourselves, as we age. Our life depends on the choices we make while growing and watering those seeds. If we water the seeds of love and compassion, we grow on a spiritual path, while enjoying inner peace. On the other hand, if we choose to water seeds of hatred and anger, we reap stressful moments eventually leading to pain and suffering.

Chapter 16 says We All are Destined to Grow Spiritually. The purpose of our life is the evolution of our Being from its present level to a higher level, while undertaking this journey on an often undulating and rough weathered road.

Chapter 17 concludes that Human Suffering is Avoidable. Suffering arises when our thinking mind takes us to unpleasant events/experiences of the past or makes us fearful and anxious about the future, which we can avoid and move towards the spiritual path.

This book has come out just as humanity is experiencing a period of transformation in almost every aspect of life. It is a time when the outside world, including all its institutions, is changing rapidly. On the one hand, collective human consciousness is growing exponentially, while on the other hand, due to its primarily materialistic values and pursuits, the suffering of humans has increased. We have become more intolerant and hostile toward our fellow beings, and we suffer more than ever from stress and tension. In many parts of the world, aggression and conflict at many levels are increasing. Fear and anger seem to rule our society in a way never before witnessed. Our burgeoning technologies have given rise to ever-greater complexities in the material world.

It was a delight to attend the release of this book, a treat to read this book, and privilege to write book review. I strongly recommend that it is a must read book for all human beings.

– Ajay Kr. Singh