spirituality

infinite awakening

Our true destiny can often become buried beneath our daily existences. Jason Chan shows us how to liberate the creativity, power and wisdom which lies within each and everyone of us, to reclaim our true purpose.

In times gone by, spiritual seekers usually gave up all aspects of 'normal life' such as pursuing a career or raising a family to enter some kind of monastery or ashram, or to find a remote cave where they could sit in total isolation for years until they found enlightenment. Today, this type of 'all or nothing' spirituality holds little appeal to the Western developed world and, let's face it, is extremely impractical for the majority. Those brave souls who do yearn to discover a deeper meaning to life, often turn to ancient Eastern traditions, but they remain the minority.

Even if you are one of a small, but growing minority in the West who realises that owning more and more material possessions is not the route to lasting happiness or fulfilment, you still have to earn a basic living whilst you pursue more spiritual goals. It is not really acceptable here to put on orange robes, place a begging bowl out in front of you and ask passers-by to fund your quest for spiritual enlightenment. I have noticed over many years, that many more advanced students long to give up their paid employment so that they can pursue spiritual enlightenment on a full time basis. However, I have also observed that if my students do naively give up their day jobs without having any substantial savings, they can very quickly get into quite serious financial difficulties that once again distract them from their genuine spiritual quest.

On the other hand I have met many sincere spiritual seekers who tell me that they do not currently have any spare time or spare resources to go on a spiritual retreat, or to start some kind of spiritual training programme. I am a regular presenter at a number of Mind Body Spirit festivals, and the same beautiful individuals come up to me year after year, telling me that maybe next year they will have all the resources they need to give priority to their spiritual awakening.

So, here we have two very practical spiritual dilemmas that both amount to the same problem. How can we combine supporting ourselves financially with giving priority to our spiritual awakening? We also now have to consider how we can meet all of our material and spiritual needs, without consuming so many natural resources that the very future of our planet is endangered by.

free the mind of guilt

First of all, we need to understand that there is absolutely no contradiction between being spiritual and living a very comfortable life, with some material trimmings such as a nice home and a good car. In the past, many religious organisations tried to persuade good people, that in order to find favour with God, they had to embrace both poverty and chastity. Modern Westerners no longer believe that God will strike them down if they have sex before marriage, or that being poor is a virtue. But ironically, many of us can now feel guilt-ridden in connection with our lifestyles due to global-warming. However, this can warp our relationship with our material life and create unhelpful anger against the wealthy. Becoming overwhelmed with guilt, fear or anger never heals any situation.

I do not believe that greedy consumption, per se, is the core problem here. The real problem is our deep and very painful sense of inner lack and unworthiness that we try desperately to cover over by endless distractions, such as compulsive shopping or working too many hours. We have all been hypnotised into believing that economic growth and an increase in consumption is essential for our future happiness. We are now incredibly rich compared to even our most recent ancestors and yet there is no evidence that we are becoming happier and more fulfilled in our lives. If anything, we seem to be less happy than previous generations, despite our greater material wealth. Perhaps the time has come to look within rather than without for a lasting answer to our continuing sense of lack and insecurity.

create stillness

If we are brave enough to stop rushing about like headless chickens and to spend some time each day just sitting still and observing our own minds in some form of active meditation, we will, sooner or later, make a connection to a spiritual light, or higher wisdom, that has the power to transform every aspect of our lives. All we have to do is to make this a daily priority in our lives, regardless of our circumstances, and miraculously we will find the time to do it.

Once we experience even just a brief glimpse of this light, we will long for more, and material or physical pleasures and concerns begin to fade in comparison. We will then do our very best to keep reconnecting to this light until it becomes a natural part of our daily lives. This usually takes a lot of time and effort, but eventually all sincere spiritual seekers will illuminate themselves in this light. We can utilise this light to heal our deep down belief of unworthiness and lacking, and to ask the light to assist us to become truly abundant and free in this physical world.

Please do not misunderstand my message here. I am not suggesting that all you have to do to become truly abundant and free, is to sit and pray to the light to give you whatever you want in life. If what you want would ultimately harm you or any other sentient being on the planet, the light cannot help you. Moreover when we pray to the light for help, it will always give us what we truly need, rather than what we think that we need. But, if you are determined to have enough income so that you can pursue your highest purpose this lifetime and then selflessly assist your brothers and sisters to do likewise, the light will be delighted to move heaven and earth to enable your plans to come to fruition.

connect with the light

So first, we learn how to connect to the light, and then we learn how to utilise this all-powerful higher wisdom to manifest our most ambitious dreams. I now know, for example, that if my higher-self longed to set up a beautiful spiritual retreat centre where individuals could go to find true enlightenment, all the resources that I might need to create such a centre would manifest miraculously. Does this mean that I would just sit still and ask the light to create this retreat centre for me? Not at all! Having first connected to the light and prayed for help, I would then do everything in my own power to nurture my dream, and to create an energetic and physical momentum for my project to take wings. I would use all of my skills, talents and energy to work tirelessly to bring together all the pieces of the jigsaw. But at the same time, I would know that my own little efforts were being magnified a thousand times by the creative powers of the light. In other words, I would combine a very disciplined, dedicated spiritual practice with a very practical down to earth approach to gathering all the materials and resources I would need in this physical world to manifest my ideal retreat centre.

This planet can only be transformed from 'planet poverty' into 'planet plenty' when more and more human beings give ourselves the space for spiritual growth. Once we have experienced for ourselves the bliss of the spiritual light, we will quite naturally give up our neurotic over-dependence on physical or material comforts. We will experience an inner abundance that will transcend all our worldly fears of insufficiency, and help us uncover our true destiny. And, we will know without a shadow of a doubt that we deserve to live a truly beautiful life with no limits whatsoever.

Jason Chan, author of The Radiant Warrior (Hay House 2009), and creator of Infinite Tai Chi, has been teaching Tai Chi, Chi Kung and meditation in the UK and Europe for over 20 years. For information on Jason's retreats and courses, see www.lightfoundation.com.

"Utilise your physical body primarily as a wonderful vehicle that can assist you to transcend this dark world of endless sorrow and suffering"