

How Knowledge Becomes Wisdom

Soul, God, self-realization – many can talk about these terms, but to experience them as a reality – to realize them – is not so easy. For example, if one realizes that God is the only source of real happiness, one will give up seeking happiness through self-destructive means like intoxication, gambling, illicit sex, meat-eating.

The Bhagavad-gita (5.17) describes how to realize the spiritual truths, “By investing one’s intelligence, mind, faith and goal in the Supreme, one becomes cleansed of all impurities by spiritual knowledge and proceeds straight on the path of liberation.”

Let’s discuss these four aspects of spiritual investment:

1. **Intelligence:** A fanatic may be very showy about his beliefs, but his inability to rationally explain his beliefs exposes their shallowness. Often his only response to questions is aggression – verbal and physical – against those who don’t agree with his beliefs. Such pseudo-spiritual practice without investment of one’s intelligence cannot lead to any tangible spiritual advancement. The Bhagavad-gita (18.64) urges Arjuna to deliberate deeply on the message spoken and then choose his course of action. Devotional service based on intelligence leads to firm yet sensitive practice.
2. **Mind:** A ritualistic worshiper may use his intelligence to expertly recite memorized verses, but his mind may well be fixed on the adoration that he hopes to get for his religious performance. Only when his mind is fixed on the Lord whom he is praising with the verses will his recitation lead to internal spiritual growth.
3. **Faith:** A salesman may use his intelligence and mind to sell a medicine, but he may have no faith in the potency of the medicine due to suspecting that it may be counterfeit. When a devotee exhorts others to chant the names of God, he has complete faith that God will bless and heal those who start chanting His names.
4. **Goal:** A software engineer may fix his intelligence and mind on his software programs and he may also have faith that the software programs will work, but his goal is not the software program, but the money that the programming is going to earn. A devotee’s goal is not any material gain that God is going to



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bestow on him; his goal is God Himself. He wants to love and serve God eternally.

Thus serious spirituality is not just a part of life; it is life itself – what we really deliberate, contemplate, believe and aspire in our life. When we invest all these faculties of our life in God, Krishna, then we can reap the rich returns of positive transformation and lasting fulfillment.



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