

Tools for Self-transformation : From Individual to the Divine

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The topic of discussion is ‘Tools for Self-transformation’. That is to say, I want to talk about us, our life. For aeons, we have looked outside. We have tried to find God, we have tried to find gurus, we have tried to find, well, give it any name you like. But very rarely we have stopped to ask: Who are we and why are we here? So what I intend to do is to introduce ourselves to a greater reality that envelops us.

In this discussion I want to draw your attention to what I think are three very important spiritual laws that guide our transformation. I want to talk about the tools for bringing out this transformation and I will borrow heavily from the beautiful framework that Swami Vivekananda had left for us decades ago. They are universal and timeless truths. They are true today and they will be true for centuries to come as well. Nevertheless, what I am going to talk about is not just something which I have acquired from books, but from my own experiences that hopefully will be a framework and form a structure of what you may expect if you go on this journey yourself.

I want to begin by asking a very simple question: Who are we? Our life moves between two points, and these points are life and death. We come, and we go. But we never stop to ask the question who is it that is coming and who is it that is going?

This is a picture, but I think there is still another picture which tells even a better

story. We don’t live between *a* birth and *a* death. We live between multiple births and deaths. You see the circles. They are the starting and the end points of multiple lives that each and everyone of us goes through. But look at the lines that are looping around—that is, the beam, the individual self that is undertaking the journey over and over again. But why?

Pouring tea into a cup already full

Before I dive deeper I want to tell you a little story of a young monk who meets his guru. He is very excited and wants to meet his guru and start his lessons. So the guru invites him to tea that night. The disciple very excitedly goes to the guru’s house in the evening and finds two cups and a tea pot kept on the table. *The cups are half full.* The guru fills his own cup and then pours tea into the cup of the disciple. The disciple is obviously pleased because the guru is showing appreciation and love to the disciple. But the guru does not stop, he continues to pour and pour till it spills. The hot tea spills over the table and finally to the disciple’s lap. The disciple jumps up. He becomes afraid and asks: ‘Why are you doing this?’ The guru stops and only says: ‘Leave’. The disciple feels very upset. He says: ‘What wrong have I done?’ The guru again asks him to leave. He says, ‘I want you to go home tonight. I want you to empty your cup, because if you do not empty your cup I cannot give you new information. I

cannot pour tea into a cup that is already full.' The disciple got the message.

I hope fervently that you will empty your mind and suspend old beliefs because I am going to present some new information. I hope, with an open mind you will receive this and then do with it what you please.

I stand in front of you very humbly to remember and to remind all that we are not just human beings, we are beams of light undergoing a human experience. We are beams of pure energy. We come into our bodies and leave our bodies behind. But we are not bodies. At our very core we are pure energy. As you are sitting in your chairs right now, you are a pulsating, vibrating beacon of light embodied in physicality.

Our focus right now is on physical dimensions. We do not exist only here. We simultaneously are in multiple different places. Think yourself as a radio. But you are tuned in to only one channel and that channel is a physical reality although we are beams of light.

I studied physics as a young man, and if you pick up any book of physics and try to learn about energy, the first thing you will learn is that energy is vibratory. Energy vibrates. Energy has frequency. What does that mean? What does vibration look like? Imagine some beautiful ripples in a pond. If you look at them very carefully you will see every ripple has a centre and then the energy travels outward. As the ripples interact with each other, so we are constantly interacting with us and forces and vibrations—seen or unseen. And as we go through life, the sum total of all these vibrations constitute who we are. When the vibrations act destructively they annihilate each other. When they act constructively they amplify. So every time two waves interact, new states of consciousness are created and new beings come into play.

Concept of resonance

Here is another and a last concept that I present to you. This is the concept of resonance, an important concept of vibration. If you pick up again a book of physics there is something called a tuning fork. If you have two tuning forks and if you strike one, if the other fork matches the vibration and the frequency of the first one, then the vibration transfers one from the other. But for the vibrations to be transferred, there must be a match. It is only when there is a match and, I can phrase it differently, only when there is a readiness of one system to receive the vibration of the other, only then there is match, there is a sympathetic harmony. Please hold these ideas and concepts because they form the bedrock of the remainder of the discussion today.

So what are we? If we understand ourselves as vibratory states of energy we can begin to comprehend a lot of different things that were difficult to understand before. Here is where the cup really needs to be emptied. We are one—but at the same time we are many. If you consider the human body, it is a collection of billions of cells, each alive and conscious in its own right, each living and dying in its own way. But they form the totality of our body. Consider organs. Each organ has its own distinct function, but they operate harmoniously to create the whole. The lungs have their own purpose, so have the kidneys. One is not superior to the other and collectively they form our total physical being. Likewise our conscious energy-being. The body has organs, distinct and unique parts, and because they are organs of a conscious energy body, each organ is conscious and has its own unique agenda and personality, its own distinct flavour. But together, just like the cells, they come

together and collectively form who we are.

Let us now waken to the fact that our consciousness is that of a collection of parts working seamlessly—each with its own distinct function that works together and blends together to create the semblance of what we perceive to be our unique self.

This is the human consciousness that is talking and you are the human consciousness in your chairs that is listening. And ‘this’ that is speaking, and ‘this’ that is listening are merely surfaces of our greater being. We have our human consciousness which is outward-oriented. We all are looking outside. We are constantly looking, constantly absorbing information. Then behind our surface consciousness lies our human consciousness. We have also a sub-consciousness and the ego. If we ever wake up in the middle of the night and hear a train going on in your head with jealousies, anger, concerns, anxieties—that is the ego operating. And sometimes when you wake up and hear voices, sometimes you may even wonder—is that even me! There is a parallel being that resides and works in close conjunction with the surface being. It is this outward human consciousness and it is the inward ego that come together in the closest, tightest possible way to create who we are in our waking hours.

But the ego has a function. Its function is to guard and maintain our notion of assumed identity and to ensure its preservation. It listens intently to our outer conscious being and explicitly follows its closest thought and implicit emotional undertones. It has access to vast spiritual domains of knowledge. But it only allows that information to pass through that suits its notion and purpose of self-preservation and continuity. Behind the ego, there is the higher self, ie our soul self, and that soul self on one side interacts with the superconsciousness of the Divine, and on the

other side, interacts with the ego and our ordinary human consciousness. We can actually touch and feel our ego in moments of quietude. When we are taking a shower, for instance, sometimes we notice that there is a train of thoughts going through our heads. However, at that time our higher consciousness does not speak English or Bengali. Our higher consciousness speaks to us energetically and that is translated by the ego in our brains into a language and very often that is recognized as bursts of intuition. So, if you suddenly catch a bright idea when you are walking silently, or if you have deep insight at that time, it is your higher consciousness that cracks through your ego and makes its way to your surface consciousness. So, the question is: If we are divine beams of light, why do we choose to operate through the limited lens of human consciousness? Why do we do this? It is the basic question of everything. What is the meaning of life? Why we are all here? What is the purpose of life? These are not trivial questions. The soul goes through a journey in order to find out the answer.

Let us pause for a second here and imagine a five-year-old child. Do not imagine any five-year-old child. Imagine yourself as a five-year-old child. If you have an empty chair or space in front of you, imagine or put the child in front of you or next to you. Can you relate to the child? Does the child look like you? Does the child talk like you or think like you? It does not. But that was you. *Where has the child gone?* The child is very much alive. And I do not mean this figuratively. I mean this literally. That child—five or six or eight or ten or twenty, you can pick any age, is very much alive as a vibration within your inner being. You can tune in to it, fit into it, you can interact with the child. But what has happened in the intervening time is that our consciousness has expanded. We may not be

able to relate to the five-year-old child because through intervening time and through the experiences that we collected in our lives we have expanded.

Now take this example and put it in the context of the soul. If you go backward and forward in time, if you go through lifetimes, you will now begin to understand why the human soul goes through the journey. It goes through a journey as it desires self-expression, as it desires expansion and, most importantly, it desires creativity. Why are we here? Why this journey? The answer is, our higher self or the soul self is interested in attaining greater and greater awareness of the Self while experiencing new frontiers of creation.

This is the picture I like. Again, this is the picture that comes out of the physics text book. You can take this if you like and relate to the self and the process of transformation of the Divine into the individual and from the individual back into the Divine. If you look at the core, this is the energy structure called the toroid. At the very centre of this system the energy bursts forth and goes out, and as it goes out, the intensity of the energy dims but it makes loops and it returns to its core. It is an endless flow of energy that sprouts from the centre, goes out and then comes back to its own self. This then is the grand framework of our existence.

We are divine light dimmed into separation to experience the nature of human limitations and then to waken joyfully to realize that we are not limited. We return to the source. Therefore, human beings are nothing more than an experiment of the Divine.

Three laws of spirituality

So far I have expressed to you what I believe we are and why we are here. Now, I would like to talk about how this spark can go back and get unified with the source.

There are three important laws of spirituality that I have learnt. They have had profound transformative values in my life and hope they are meant for you as well. They are the law of attraction, the law of harmonious attunement, and the law of participation and surrender. These laws are as real as gravity, as real as the nuclear forces, and as real as the electricity operating in our lives. What is the law of attraction? The greatest faculty that human beings possess is thought. The law of attraction states that our thoughts create reality and it is not the other way round. What we think comes into existence. This is *māyā*. What is being experienced is actually created by the experiencer. Before anything manifests in the outer world, it takes form first in our mental and emotional world. Everything in our external life is first created internally. There is no external agency that is punishing us or rewarding us for our actions. It is our thoughts that create abundance, poverty, sickness or health. If you spend the time to analyse your thoughts and feelings you will see that your outer world closely reflects how you feel and think inside. Do you feel rich or do you feel poor? Do you feel good luck? Or do you think bad luck is constantly chasing you? Do you think you have good health or do you think you are not blessed with good health at all? These feelings and thoughts that you have form the core belief systems that operate within you like operating systems of a computer and, as these thoughts and emotions play within you, they energize the external reality that faces you every single day. If you put this to test you will immediately begin to recognize its veracity. If you have a joyful attitude, no matter where you live, whether you live in poverty or in the highest mansion, you will find joy constantly greeting you. If you feel that you have bad health and you are not blessed with good genetics, it is possible you will

constantly be in ailment. But there is a silver lining. It is our thoughts that create reality and not the other way round. If there is a thought that you do not like, you can change it. And the moment you begin to change it you will begin to see it is becoming an outer reality.

The second law is the law of harmonious attunement. Thought alone does not empower creation. Thought alone does not fuel material reality. There is something deeper than thoughts, which are emotions. In our world today we give a lot of primacy to our thought, and emotions are often put aside. But there is the primacy of emotions over thoughts because the way you feel, guide the way you think. And unless the way you feel and think are aligned harmoniously, the creation that you expect to get outside will not manifest itself as reality. So if you think you are unlucky and why you do not have plenty of money, and for the fulfilment of this desire you start praying for more money and still feel inside you are poor, then you are not in alignment. If you think you want to meet the Divine, but you feel wretched and godless, you have to analyse yourself, your deepest emotions, your own life and your connection with the Divine. If the two can be aligned, anything is possible. Reality manifests itself.

The last one is basically the law of participation and surrender. There are some basic belief systems like operating systems of a computer. For example, specially, we, the Bengalis, grow up with an attitude that money is the root of all evils. Then, we have also notions of health, intellect, ideal life, good and evils, and what is righteous and what is not. Each of these beliefs may be operating subconsciously or consciously. These belief systems in turn influence the way you think, which in turn will create reality. If you are able to analyse deeply your belief systems and if you can turn them around, you will instantly be able to change

reality. This is not a joke. You can put this into practice and experiment with it.

Take a piece of paper and write down things you believe in. What are your beliefs about love, relationships, health, wealth and spirituality. Be honest with yourself. Write them down as quickly as possible. You will find a series of thoughts keep pouring. Then you take basically your belief systems and marry them to your world and reality. Soon you will begin to notice that your belief systems are guiding the flow and the construct of your outer dimensions. We are not powerless creatures floating in this ocean of creation. We ourselves are creators. We are divine creators with our light dimmed and the dimming of the light is merely a dimming of its intensity. That does not mean that we do not possess the power of the creator. The moment we wake up to the realization that we are creator beings—immediately we begin to see how we are pushing the frontiers of creations individually, collectively and in higher and higher dimensions all the way to divinity, because there is a conjunction between our human self and the super-divine consciousness.

This picture is impressive. This is the totality of what we are. This is the totality of what is possible to attain when we awaken to the realization that we are not human, we are divine. Then you can come to a point when you can surrender yourself to the higher being. That does not mean you become passive. That basically means you are surrendering to a greater power that is in you. Let that inner power, intuition guide you and propel you back to the source. If you are able to let go and surrender yourself to your soul Self, then that divine light will flow right within you.

How to apply the laws

How do you apply these laws of self-transformation? We can apply these laws

through affirmations. Affirmations are things that you say to provide guidance to your higher self to structure what you want to receive and to freely receive that which is being asked for. You can begin to visualize what you want to create. And the moment you visualize and the deeper you visualize, that visualization anchors your thoughts into matter, into form. When you anticipate, when you know confidently that your inner truth is creating your external reality, that anticipation accelerates the materialization of your thoughts into things in the physical world. But to be able to do that, we must be able to identify and then remove the blocks of limiting belief systems.

The tools

Now, a few words about the tools of this self-transformation. And here I want to thank Swami Vivekananda for providing these tools, namely *Jnāna-yoga*, *Rajā-yoga*, *Karma-yoga* and *Bhakti-yoga*.

We have talked about energy before. We also talked about vibrations. Knowledge is vibrational energy. It remains with you and it can transform you. I think this is fairly obvious. If you watch a violent movie it stays with you. Again, when you hear a peaceful music you feel peaceful. What is really happening? The vibration of external energy binds with your inner being and creates a wave function within you. So what you put in your mind will stay there and play in your mind. We are very conscious these days about what we eat. Similarly, pause for a second and think what you are ingesting into your mind because external knowledge can raise or pull you down. So, read spiritual books. Start with whatever resonates with you. Because what resonates with you is what you are ready for. Every piece of knowledge has its own vibration and unless you are vibrating at the frequency of the knowledge that you wish to receive, you will not be able to receive that. As you imbibe

more and more knowledge into your system your vibrational state expands and more knowledge presents itself to you.

The importance of the second tool can hardly be overemphasized. Ask yourself: What is that I am interested to know? Unless you ask yourself, you will not receive the answer. You must ask and experiment with the question. Then you will begin to see that your higher self will joyfully begin to provide the answers to what you are looking for and they will begin to cascade in your direction. You must learn to receive, because if you have discord in your mind, if it is not quiet and ready, then no matter how much information comes to you, it will simply bounce off. So receive—learn to receive. As you learn to receive you will begin to see that the nature of knowledge is changing. Knowledge that you receive externally are springing up from within you. As you ask your question, somebody within you will respond with brilliant flashes of intuition. At times these bursts of intuition are so powerful that they seem like a dream. They come to you and you think—‘Wow! How did I think of this?’ And then in a flash they can disappear. So capture them in a journal. Your journal can be your best friend. You will be able to track your own evolution. Write them down. Because like dreams if you do not write them down, very often you won’t be able to recall what insights you had sometime ago.

Next I want to talk about work or *karma*. The word *karma* starts with *kri* which means ‘to do’. And when we think of *karma*, we think of things that we do with our hands and feet, with our words and actions. But remember, the law of attraction, the law of harmonious attunement. Before anything is put forth as a physical reality, it takes birth, shape and form in your thoughts and feelings. So I think your deepest inner work can start with your thoughts and feelings. Spend your time, think and

recognize what your internal reality looks like because that is the source of *karma*, and not the other way round.

A very powerful tool is something that I call a 'life review'. I have been told that when we die, one of the first things that we do is to review our life. We look at the beginning, we look at the end and we look at all the different things that happened in our life. We look at our lives and see what we did, what we could have done. I do not think we need to die in order to conduct a life review. All of us can conduct a life review right now. Take a look at your life. What were the biggest obstacles or challenges that you faced? What were the biggest distractors? As you go on thinking you will begin to notice that some patterns are emerging. You will find that there are things which have repeated themselves over and over again. That is your higher self basically trying to say—'This is what you need to learn, my friend!' And if you do not recognize it, it presents itself as a pattern and repeats itself over and over again. See the trajectory of your life; see your success as well as failures, see your inner deep desires whether they are realized or not. Then you will be able to understand the flow your higher self wants you to take. You will very quickly face a question—'Am I going with the flow or going against the flow?'

So if you see life is very difficult and you are constantly facing challenges and miseries and nothing seems to work for you, it is possible that you are going against the flow that your soul self wants you to move, and very easily you will be able to understand what the right flow for you is.

Everything is locked in your feelings. If you go deep into yourself and explore your feelings, your feelings will tell you that the career you have taken is not the right one for you. Therefore conduct a life review.

Finally, release karmic burdens. We are

beams of light. We have come here to experience limitations because that is what the worldly experience provides—a framework of limitations. But we must learn how to break these limitations. I firmly believe that we do not have to spend ten lives or hundred lives to reap our karmic burdens. Once we recognize what they are we can release them right away.

In this connection I want to say something about relationships. Relationships are feelings. It is how you make me feel or how I make you feel—no matter who you are and who I am. That is what we think it is. But it is not how someone makes us feel, but it is truly how we make ourselves feel as we hold somebody else or something else as an object of our attention. There are only two feelings—either a feeling of goodness or a feeling of badness. You feel either good or bad. If I say you make me feel bad, that is because my focus and attention is on you. And that feeling eventually returns to me because I am holding my feeling of attention on you. If I shift my focus that feeling disappears. Once we recognize this, we can begin to release the karmic burden of relationships that hangs on us during our lifetime and across our lifetimes. I have benefited significantly from this rule. Indeed, we have the capability and there are ways by which we can replace hurt by forgiveness, gratitude and understanding, for understanding creates empathy. When that happens you forgive the person. You can forgive him because you understand what made him do what he did.

Next, express your gratitude. Deeply reflect on the experiences and what you learned from them. Express gratitude for learning. That was possible because your higher self allowed it. The higher self really cares for the experience and the lessons derived therefrom. So if you understand what the lessons are and gratefully accept them, you can release them from your

system and move on. Do this as many times as you can, with as many people as possible and, by forgiving them, release the hurt. This releases the burden of *karma*.

I want to talk about love and a few words on *bhakti* also. Mind you, love is not a thing. It is not just an emotion. It is the highest transformation of force in nature. If you can truly embrace and understand love yourself, your self will get transformed into divine. I want to give you an example. Suppose, you experience negative emotions in your life and you feel frustrated. You are aware that these things are persisting in you. For instance, anger. You get angry at someone or something and this anger is coming over and over again and you try to control it. Yet you find it still comes back. You can think of negative emotions if you go back to the example of energy, where you are told to think of any energy as a spring. If you understand the object of your anger and you empathize and forgive and you send out vibrations of love to that person, what you do is to transform the spring into something different. Then the spring is not a spring anymore. It cannot pop up again. The vibration of love allows you to do that.

Divine love, however, is a deep desire to connect with the divine self and the divine will manifest within your heart. Then the divine will work, transform you, and take you back to your source.

It should be mentioned in this connection that meditation, *prānāyāma* are also extremely important as tools of spiritual journey. Meditation has many forms and techniques. Start your practice of meditation as advised by your spiritual guide. But one thing. It requires regular practice. If you try to quieten your mind you may not succeed on the first day. But if you stay with it you

will achieve certain qualities of mind, especially certain degree of calmness. In that quietude you allow the divine light to pour in. So far as *prānāyāma* is concerned, it is breathing. It is not just any breath. We have our natural form of breathing. We are energy and we have energy flowing within our body. What happens when we are angry? Our breathing changes. What happens when we are excited? Our breathing changes. What happens when we fall in love? You can immediately feel the difference in breathing. If you can take control of this breath you can control the energy flowing within your body. And when you begin to regulate the energy you can align it back to the divine. It is a practice. There are various forms of *prānāyāma*.

The next thing is basically *chakras*. Our body has multiple *chakras*. They are seven, starting from the base of our spine up to the crown of the head. Once you begin to meditate and do your *prānāyāma* I can assure you can begin to feel your *chakras*. You will begin to feel the vibrations. And if you persist in your practice gradually you will begin to experience that your heart is not a biological organ, but an organ of light. It will literally explode in light. But the key is practice.

The last thing that I say is—a promise. I hope that this is not something theoretical even though I have talked and talked. I hope you will take this home and I hope you will launch rockets with your strongest desire to connect yourself with your true Self, because if you launch the desire there is not a single power in this universe that will prevent your higher Self from uniting with you. It will surprise you, it will delight you, it will transform you mentally, emotionally, physically and spiritually. ■

* This article is the edited version of the lecture, Sri Supriyo Narayan Sen, Executive Vice-President, Optimal Strategix Group, U.S.A., delivered at the Institute on 27 December, 2016.