
RESETTING THE MIND SERIES

2. LESSONS FROM THE PAST

Swami Suryadevananda

Some comments before we begin...

Lessons from the Past is the second in the series, 'Resetting the Mind'. Today, we must not only return the past, but to the past video, too, and have a closer look at the flow of life and what it enables. We can fix things with the right tools - but how do you fix the mind? There are no tools external to the mind and so we have to restore the mind with the mind itself. Fortunately for us, it is not possible to corrupt the mind beyond restoration because its substratum stays pure and beyond corruption. This pure mind shines through the clouds of ignorance and if we cultivate the pure - let us call it the good - we can with this, restore the rest.

With this in mind, it is very important to know how to first polish brighter areas in the mind where the light already shines, brightly or slightly dimly, - and then, how to with this, restore the mind to its pristine state. This is not vain thinking or mental jugglery but something very possible. The price is wanting to change wholeheartedly. In videos to follow, we will look into practical aspects of inner cultivation.

There are no short cuts, quick fixes or staying the same while having the button on the new – this, my friends, is just not possible. Restoring the mind is hard work, as we deal with the force of habit. At the same time, it is not struggle at all, as struggle implies someone and something to struggle with. If you are fully on board the train of change, who is to struggle with what? Struggle simply means straddling the fence, trying to have it both ways and we know that does not work.

The flow of life puts the focus on inner cultivation. This gives rise to certain qualities which bring mastery of mind and allow one's true nature to be seen.

Earlier, in 'From Habitual to Awakened Living' we discussed four things: habitual living; the 'I' fabric, or ego; some lessons from the past; and we closed with some practical tips for awakened living.

Today, we must go back to lessons from the past and get a lot more in-depth to see what the flow of life enabled, provided, that is the need of our life today. It may seem repetitive, but I feel it is necessary as we just did not have the time to go deep enough into the wisdom of the sages the last time.

The old system is now long gone, but its principles are sound and they were not rooted in a particular time or in social customs. When the principles are beyond time, the means are beyond time as well. They work today *exactly* as in days gone by.

Let us review, and go a lot more in-depth. The purpose: to purify the mind so one's true nature can be seen. For this, there were four stages, or the flow of life:

1. *Foundation*, which consisted of education and upbringing;
 2. *Outer experience*, which consisted of career, home, and any other experience thought necessary in one's evolution;
 3. *Disentanglement*: turning the tide, and seeking to know oneself;
- and last of all, 4. the *Quest for Inner Experience*, which is a wholehearted or dedicated effort towards self-realization.

In this **first stage**, one learned a good many things: they learned that the differences, *all* differences, are outer only; and that though we are placed differently, in different conditions, we share the same purpose. They learnt who one *is* in terms of someone quite distinct from the body and mind, as one is *aware* of them. They learnt to abide in this awareness while functioning in diversity, and that these two are not opposed to each other. In this way of living, they came *closer* to a feeling of unity amidst diversity. This made the blossoming of virtue *natural*, as otherness was seen in the outer only. They learnt that life is a field to experience - not as an indulgence, but to raise understanding of the truth of things. There is a big difference in how we approach experience when we start from indulgence and from gaining understanding.

When we started indulgence, we quickly register a like or dislike and increase conditioning and habitual living. When we start to gain understanding, we see things for how they are, experience them fully, *learn* from them, but without starting from a craving to indulge, or ending with a like or dislike. In short, this great lesson was a way to live without starting from karma or creating karma. It is sort of like walking on sand without leaving footprints.

This **second stage** was the stage of experience. Earlier lessons on how to gain understanding of life, the world, others, and our own selves - all without getting caught up in indulgence served them very well. In the earlier days, they usually entered family professions or other fields of which they had some working knowledge already while growing up. This may sound very strange today, but my friends, very many things sound strange today. The main reason for this was to get a means of livelihood or get into a means of livelihood with the need of years of academic overload, as the *goal* of life was cherished *far more* than that a livelihood could provide. They could get into work early and have more time to harness potential *fully*, as the mind and body were both in their prime without being *set* in ways of the system. Entering the

family life, they saw *others* and their needs as more important than their own, and discovered the gates of personality as they fulfilled their responsibilities while growing or evolving themselves. In society, they learnt to see *others'* points of view as valid as one's own, as all points of view are points of view only. Their harmony with each other was not under rule or imposition but the recognition that, placed differently, all have the same purpose, and those you help today may help you tomorrow. Other experiences mapped the same way: experiences to gain knowledge rather than satisfy indulge. As a result, while working through experiences, they were able to go *beyond* them and not crave for repetition, nor shun those that came along naturally. This is *very important* and very useful to us today. We see the same old experiences craved for *repeatedly* - till the last drop. A lighter mind was able to probe further into the truth of things; and there rose in people a natural wish to know the truth by *direct experience*.

In this **third stage**, they were able to downwind and continue things - like work, family, and other experiences, but at a *gradually diminishing rate*. Having started early, they rose to highs in their careers early and were able to set aside some money for later, while working less. At home, and in relationships, they saw a difference in love or being loved, and attachments and possessiveness. See, my friends, the sun does not do anything special to give light and heat. Luminosity and heat are part of its nature. In *the* same way, they discovered that love, compassion and other qualities were part of one's nature, and quite different from an act of doing; thereby, attachments and possessiveness fell away naturally as love and the other virtues blossomed, as part and parcel of who they were.

Other experiences were handled in the same broad way as a blossoming of understanding, which led to inner expansion and expanded ways of looking and dealing with all things. They saw conditioning as the enemy within, and ways of seeing things as the only self-imposed restrictions. And they put earlier lessons of, like, vigilance, into constant use. It is difficult to impossible to be eternally or constantly vigilant when one is heavily entangled unless it is a *conscious* effort from moment-to-moment. For it to be *natural*, there must be space - and inner and outer freedom as well. Vigilance is living an awakened life; vigilance is awareness - and this *itself* keeps conditioning from interfering with life, or thought from interfering with action. This thins the mind of its dross of conditioning by disuse. When dispassion, based on wisdom, blossomed within, an outer change was found both natural and necessary, as it provided a fresh start without obstructions from the past. One could now dedicate all efforts toward discovery of the truth.

Purification of mind started earlier could gain momentum, and there were no avenues of leakages and blockages. Existing conditioning was exhausted by disuse, as self-simplification led to simplification of lifestyle, and conditioning just did not have any application if this was done both intelligently and wholeheartedly. A spirit of inner detachment grew out of better

understanding of things, as one must see 'other' to attach to. When all is seen as one's own self, attachment and possessiveness do not find much ground to take root. The inner intelligence gets fully awakened and empowered when one does not *for any reason* rely on conditioning and thought. See, my friends, there is no problem with thinking determinately, which is in a fixed direction. But when thought starts thinking, it *is* a problem.

This fully awakened and empowered intelligence was then *turned on itself* in the quest of self-knowledge or self-realization. Having seen the flow of life, and the seven steps of inner ascent, let us pause just briefly and relook at these seven steps that came out of the flow of life, or the four stages, as we must gradually distill - out of each step and phase - the way that they lived, or wisdom they had until we have a *direct* feel for what is most important that we can use today in *our* quest for the truth.

The steps of inner ascent

Pure wish or intention	Arises naturally if one lives an awakened life
Unremitting vigilance	The spirit of enquiry by which the mind is observed without remission
Thinning of the mind	As one observes the rise and fall of thought without identification, conditioning exhausts itself and clarity increases
Purification of mind	Seeing things as they are without conditioning, one becomes established in the truth of things
Disentanglement	Directly seeing attachment and entanglement are subjective and not objective, there is psychological disentanglement
Awakened inner intelligence	The inner intelligence is fully awakened and empowered and one experiences tremendous inner freedom
Self-realization	The inner intelligence must now turn on itself, its source to know who it is or self-realization

Through the flow of life, or the four stages of life, they discovered seven steps of inner ascent. Holy aspiration, or a **pure wish** or pure intention, was the first - an urge for auspiciousness which arises *naturally* if one lives an awakened life. They questioned the purpose of living a mechanical life and repeating the same things, or same experiences, again and again.

This led to the second: **unremitting vigilance**. This is the spirit of inquiry by which the mind is observed *relentlessly*. The quest to know, or the quest for inner knowledge, *requires* unremitting vigilance.

Third was **thinning of the mind**. Unremitting vigilance thins the mind as one observes the rise and fall of conditioning, ideas, notions, tendencies - and in observing, one does not identify with them, *as one is the observer*. Conditioning exhausts itself, as it now runs on residual energy and this increases inner clarity. With this, there arises a spirit of non-attachment and the mind becomes subtle and transparent.

This brings them to the fourth state: **purification of mind**. When wisdom dawns as inner clarity increases, the mind gets purified of its dross of conditioning. Seeing things *as they are* - without interference of conditioning – one becomes established in the truth of things. There is a natural turning away from sense-pleasures and a natural dwelling in the truth. This is the fourth state.

Disentanglement is the fifth state. When one sees that the things that led to attachment and entanglement were not *objectives* or the things in themselves, but *subjective* - or the way we look and feel about things - there arose a clarity within one. Cessation of objectivity results when one sees all within, or subjective only. And there is an increased sense of non-attachment *at the same time* of conviction in the nature of truth. This is the fifth state.

The sixth is an **awakened inner intelligence**. This inner intelligence is *fully awakened and empowered* - and one experiences tremendous inner freedom! This inner freedom, or the *natural* me, rearranges the outer as natural to it. There is no feeling of loss at any step. One rejoices in one's own self. The perception of duality and diversity - both in *oneself* and others - ceases. And the efforts that one made earlier in their spiritual experience begin to bloom, or take seed.

Self-realization is the seventh step. The inner intelligence that is *so* active and fully functional must now turn on itself to know its source: who it is, or self-realization. After this, there is no support, ... no division, ... no diversity - and self-knowledge becomes spontaneous and *unbroken*. This is called the seventh state, also called the transcendental state.

All these great ones that have been there in the past have indicated in different ways stages of life, or phases of life, and certain steps that will be very helpful in our evolution. Each one of these steps also led to a blossoming of certain *qualities* within.

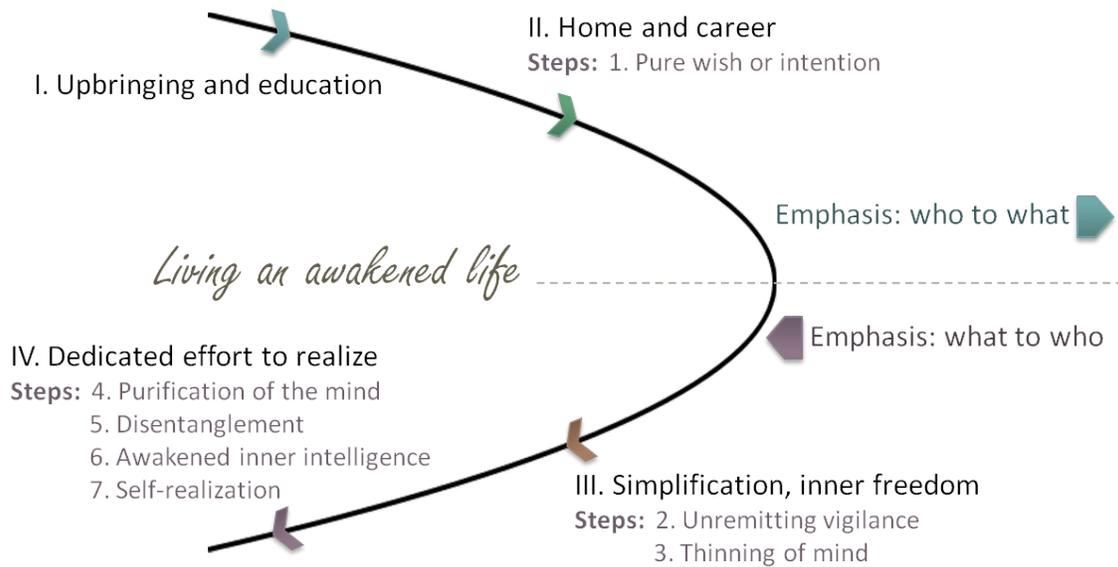
Now, my friends, let's go down even further, or even deeper, or even elemental, *into* these qualities and see *what* they generated that we should be able to generate in our lives today.

Before we move on, let us look at that little diagram we had of the flow of life chart in the last presentation and add to it, ... add to the stages the different steps that we have just reviewed.

Upbringing and education, which was the foundation; home and career, which is where, through intelligent living, of pure wish and intention to go beyond, arose in one. This led to

simplification, or inner freedom; and in this stage, one began observing, or unceasing, unremitting vigilance. This led to thinning of the mind, and there arose in one a deeper quest to know oneself. And this led them to the fourth stage of life: which was a dedicated effort to realize. It was here that the mind was purified *further* of its dross; there was further psychological disentanglement. The inner intelligence was *fully* awakened and empowered, and turned upon itself in the quest for self-realization.

The flow of life and the steps of inner ascent...



A few thoughts before we go on. The stages in the flow of life gave rise to inner evolution. One ascended through the steps of evolution, or the blossoming of one's true nature. This happened by the living presence of certain qualities that became part and parcel of one's being. Now, let's see what these qualities are.

Inner cultivation is requisite for self-discovery, as the means must represent the end in large measure. These **qualities** that must blossom within are not something that we *do*, but part and parcel of who we *are*. In the quest to know oneself, these are prerequisite. There are four of them, the third of which has six qualities.

Discriminative cognition is the first: the ability to discern between the real and the unreal, permanent and impermanent, and to choose the *real* each time.

Dispassion is the second, which is desirelessness or non-attachment – born of, and sustained by right discrimination.

Inner strength is the third, which is the living presence of these six:

tranquility
self-restraint
satiation
forbearance
faith
balance of mind

Unwavering drive for liberation is the fourth, which is deliverance from samsara, or the wheel of birth and death, with all of its suffering.

It doesn't make a difference which way you cut the pie on what is needed. These are *essential* because they change the very fabric of our being, and make it closer in nature to the goal which we aspire for.

Discriminative cognition is the ability to discriminate between the real and the unreal, unchanging and changing, good and pleasant, self and not-self. And though one makes effort through their journey or evolution to cultivate these qualities in awakened wisdom, this is also a *gift of grace*. One has to live a life *carefully*, as the means of purification - and *in* that, the doors of this higher mind are flung open and there is inner awakening, or the ability to discriminate. This ability to discriminate, or discriminative cognition, should not fail us when we are in trouble or surrounded by difficulties. We must be able to *respond from there* - and for that, it has to become part and parcel of our nature. We should be able to exercise discriminative cognition *at all times without any effort*. In the beginning, it comes and goes; and that is why it is *so* important for the aspirant to live in the company of the good, to live in the company of the wise. To live in good company or the company of sages for a *long time* till discriminative cognition burns in one like a big, steady flame. Otherwise, my friends, we would know this theoretically, and it would come and go and it would not be there for our steady use.

The second of four essential qualities is **dispassion**. Dispassion is desirelessness or non-attachment, and indifference to sensual objects. There is no hatred for sensual objects or pleasures, but there is a difference in being able to enjoy what comes *naturally* - *without* craving or desire - because craving or desire is a movement in consciousness towards something *else* that it feels will satisfy it. And as long as there is that movement within: movement of energy in consciousness within - *how* can we turn consciousness upon itself in the quest for self-inquiry, or to know who we *are*. We have to be able to love without attachment or possessiveness. We have to be able to live without craving or desire. We have to be able to work without concern for agency or fruition. We have to be able to give and share *equally* without any preference for 'ours' or 'mine'. This dispassion is the opposite of attachment, and it

is attachment and craving that *binds* us to this wheel of birth and death. And, therefore, dispassion becomes a master key towards liberation from bondage.

Inner strength consists of a set of six distinct virtues that the aspirant has to acquire. Tranquility, or inner peace, is the first. Inner peace comes about through eradication of desires. We spoke earlier that enjoying what comes naturally is not a problem, but desires and cravings sure is! And therefore, tranquility is also a means of calmness and refers to control of mind.

Self-restraint, or *natural* sense control, is the second. This refers to control of all the agencies of sense-perception.

Satiation, or full contentment, natural contentment, is the third. This can only be cultivated through renunciation and discrimination. Renunciation is *itself* peace.

Forbearance under all conditions of life is the fourth. This is mental as well as physical. The ability to endure all pairs of opposites, likes, dislikes, heat, cold, pleasure, pain, praise and censure - across the physical and mental spectrum - is forbearance.

Faith, unwavering faith in the Absolute Truth, is the fifth. And this includes the Absolute Truth of God - but *also*, in the words of the scriptures and the sages who have trodden this path before us.

Balance of mind is one-pointedness of mind, or mental concentration. The mind is centered on the idea *alone*, and therefore devoid of any external distraction.

Prerequisites for spiritual practice or sadhana

Discriminative cognition	Ability to discern between the real and the unreal, permanent and impermanent and to choose the real each time
Dispassion	Desirelessness or non-attachment born of and sustained by right discrimination
Inner strength	Living presence of: tranquility, self-restraint, satiation, forbearance, unwavering faith and balance of mind
Unwavering drive for liberation	Or deliverance from samsara or the wheel of birth and death with all its suffering

This set of six distinct virtues that the aspirant needs, or has to acquire, is what constitutes inner strength.

An unwavering drive towards liberation, or deliverance from samsara or the wheel of birth and death - with *all* of its suffering – is the fourth. This comes naturally if one has the other three

qualities: discriminative cognition, dispassion, and inner strength - with its six virtues that we have just discussed. And this is because the mind moves toward its source *naturally*, on its own accord, when it has lost its hold on external objects. It has no resting place outside, so it turns upon itself *naturally*. Therefore, purification of mind and self-discipline are essential, and they are the bedrock, or rock bottom and foundation, of yoga. Generally, most people have a sort of dispassion that comes and goes, and this is why success becomes very difficult. If one feels that one does not have this burning longing, or this feeling, or unwavering drive towards liberation, one should practice the other three *vigorously*, because it is *then* that one acquires this longing that stays, or is steady.

Since the goal is the same today as it was yesterday, the qualities needed, and the means, must be the same also. The means must reflect the nature of the goal and the qualities that are needed to universalize our being. We must ascend inwardly - from individual to universal, and then beyond that, too. A clear-cut goal guides the flow of life through its four stages, and these steps represent inner ascent towards the goal.

My friends, let's start pulling everything together. We've gone through the flow of life and looked at the seven steps in the flow of life. Let's bring that to memory or to mind once again - and go *from* those steps to see the qualities that are needed - and go from those qualities even further, as we come towards the end of this video to *what is needed now, or where do we start*.

So, once again, it may sound like a little bit of repetition, but it's essential to keep the flow going as we *gradually* tighten the noose to what is essential and where we begin - today.

With examining the wisdom of the sages in the past, we looked that it all started with a clear goal. From there, a flow of life - four stages of life: from education and upbringing, ... to outer experience, ... to turning the tide, or disentanglement, ... and then further towards *inner* experience, or self-realization. In that, the aspirant marched to certain steps. These steps are not black and white steps, as such in terms of 'why I am here and I should be there' - but general guidelines so we know which way we are flowing.

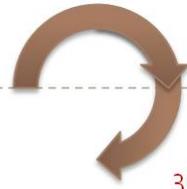
1st Stage: Upbringing and education
Living for a definite purpose

2nd Stage: Outer experience
Home, career, other

Steps: Pure wish or intention

Qualities: Discriminative cognition
Dispersion

An awakened life



Emphasis: who to what

Emphasis: what to who

4th Stage: Inner experience
Dedicated effort to realize

Steps: Purification of the mind
Disentanglement
Awakened inner intelligence
Self-realization

Qualities: Unwavering drive for liberation

3rd Stage: Disentanglement

Turning the tide, simplification, inner freedom

Steps: Unremitting vigilance
Thinning of mind

Qualities: Inner strength with these:
Tranquility
Self-restraint
Satiation
Forbearance
Faith
Balance of mind

Pure wish or intention, an urge for auspiciousness, which arises in one if one leads an awakened life is the first.

Unremitting vigilance is the second. And it is the spirit of inquiry by which the mind is observed without remission. The quest to know the inner *requires* this inner, unceasing vigilance.

Thinning of mind is the third – where vigilance *itself* thins the mind and increases clarity.

Purification of mind is the fourth. As the mind thins, existing conditioning weakens by disuse - and, this brings about purification of mind.

Disentanglement is the fifth. It is the spirit of detachment which arises in one *naturally* as the mind is purified - not because one pushes things, but because the 'otherness' of things that made them so alluring is not there!

Awakened inner intelligence is the sixth. One experiences inner freedom, and this inner feeling of freedom rearranges the outer, too, as the inner intelligence is fully empowered.

The seventh is **self-realization**. The inner intelligence is turned upon its source so one's true nature can be seen.

As one journeys through the stages and marches boldly through the steps in those stages, these qualities blossom within, as one transcends individuality or universality of being. The first of

them is **discriminative cognition**: the ability to discern between the real and unreal, permanent and impermanent - *and most important of all*, to choose the real each time. There's no point in just knowing and say, 'I know - *but...*'. It should be a *natural* ability to select what is good, what is real, what is unchanging, and what is permanent - *each time*.

The second is **dispassion**. Dispassion is *desirelessness*, or non-attachment - born of, and sustained by right discrimination. And here again, we have mentioned that dispassion is not a hatred for things, ... dispassion is the absence of craving, the absence of passion, the absence of that rushing outflow of consciousness which allows a rich inner life.

The third is **inner strength**, which constitutes a set of six distinct virtues. The living presence of these six: tranquility, self-restraint, satiation, forbearance, faith, and balance of mind.

And the last of all is an **unwavering drive for liberation** or deliverance from samsara or the wheel of birth and death, with all of its suffering. And as we mentioned earlier, that if this last one is not present, or is weak, it's very important to practice the other three, and this last one will blossom by itself.



Let us put it all together - and then simplify it even further for our start-point.

The most important thing is to have a **clear-cut goal of life** - and it is this goal that defines all the rest. The first stage is upbringing and education. it is here that they learned to live for a definite purpose; and understand the difference between means and purpose. Livelihood, things of that nature, they are the means, but the purpose is self-realization, or to see one's true nature. And the journey of life is a journey of self-purification. It is with *this* foundation that they moved into the second stage of **outer experience**: experience of home, career, and other things that one feels one needs. Here, *as* they experienced they experienced *wisely*, so they learned to experience without indulgence, or without registering a craving - positively or negatively - for more or against. And this gives rise to a pure wish or intention to know a little bit more about the truth that underlies all of this change. The qualities that blossom in the second stage are **discriminative cognition** and **dispassion**. It is with that that they moved into the third stage of disentanglement, which is turning the tide: self-simplification, which leads to simplification of life and inner freedom. The steps: unremitting or unceasing vigilance and thinning of mind which results when the mind is observed ceaselessly. The qualities are the fourth, which is **inner strength**, with these six distinct virtues: *tranquility, self-restraint, satiation, forbearance, faith, and presence of mind*. With this, there is a deepening inner quest, ... a wanting to know, ... and we have gone from a quest for outer experience to a quest for *inner* experience - and *all* experience is been seen to be subjective, and not objective. We enter the fourth stage: the quest for inner experience: a dedicated effort to realize. The steps:

purification of mind, psychological *and* physical disentanglement, an awakened inner intelligence that is not just *awake*, but *fully* empowered, and a full quest to know the truth. The qualities: unwavering drive for liberation. Without these, it is very hard to fulfill things in some kind of meaningful manner.

My friends, take from it what you will, but what I'd like to do now is to be able to simplify it *even further* and say: this is a tall order, ... this is what is required, and there is no changing that, but where do we start?

This is where we start, my friends. We've gone on a long journey to come down to what is essential and how to make our inner life, or spiritual life, *meaningful, purposeful, and free of suffering, pain and sorrow*. Well, we start with at least a couple of these, and then build on to it.

Today, I'm not going to go in-depth to them, but on the next show, ... the next video, ... *we are* going to talk not just about *these*, but we're going to talk about their actual cultivation *in our life* - and the practice of these until they become natural in us, because when the good becomes natural in us, that is an automatic eradication or leaving behind all that is not good, including conditioning.

Tranquility: and we'll talk about how we build tranquility, or how tranquility comes about, or how tranquility becomes natural in us. Going from sense-control to self-control - to control of mind. This **spirit of inquiry** - a mind that is observed *relentlessly, ceaselessly*, and how this practice comes about.

Contentment: and we have discussed earlier also,... contentment is the absence of craving and desires.

My friends, *if* we live life intelligently, we are able to see things for what they are, we are able to enjoy that which comes *naturally* - why should I *enjoy* something and be stuck with craving? ... or a rejection? ... or an indifference? ... or, even a hatred towards it? Why should I register this inner footprint *while I enjoy things that come naturally in life?*

And the last of all is **good company**. My friends, this is a very, very board term - good company, ... is not just the friends you hang out with and family. Good company is *everything* that supports the goal. The goal of life is purification of mind so one's true nature can be seen. We have the freedom to surround ourselves *constantly* with good thoughts, good feelings, good friends, good company, the company of the wise, the company of the enlightened - with everything good! We have this choice, and there is no compelling to do otherwise.

We'll talk about this a lot more in-depth the next time. We'll look at each one of these four, and we'll look at not just trying to break them up intellectually, but *how* do we practice this till they

become *natural* to us? - and change the tide completely, or change the very character of our inner fabric.

My friends, we've covered a good many things today, and I know that much of it seemed repetitive and seemed intertwined with one another. But I felt it was *essential* to thread this fabric so tight till we get down to the very core, the very strands, of what is needed and useful. A clear-cut goal in life, ... to live life for a purpose that is beyond the transitory, ... beyond things that come and go, ... beyond the changing, ... and beyond petty little means – a full quest to know the truth and one's own nature. It is this that guides the flow in life - the flow in life which has certain steps in it for our inner evolution or our inner ascent. And it is in those steps that certain *qualities* begin to reside in us, and there is an inner flowering in order to return to our true nature.

The next time, we're going to go a lot more in-depth into those things that we called our start-point: four essential things, ... and we're going to see how we can practice them till we bring about this inner revolution.

Friends, thank you very much for joining me today!

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