

Chapter 16

When Thy Will Be Done Becomes My Will Be Done

Topics in this Chapter:

- * Using spiritual principles in the right way
- * Defining your greater goals
- * Trusting divine spirit to do what is best

It's not difficult to see that most people in today's world are more interested in increasing their material possessions than in achieving spiritual greatness. Even religious people often have a difficult time focusing, for example, on Jesus' teaching to "*Seek ye first the Kingdom of Heaven, and all things will be added unto you,*" or Buddha's declaration that one of the main causes of suffering is desire. Most people today find it difficult to take the leap of faith required to move beyond materialistic obsessions. Such is the nature of living in an overly commercialized society.

In response to some of the current spiritual fads that guide you to focus your attention on achieving materialistic goals, I offer this chapter. Here, I give tools and suggestions that will help you to sort through some of these fads, so that you can make intelligent and powerful decisions on your spiritual journey.

Spirituality and Worldly Desires

Some of today's spiritual teachers give presentations that appeal to people's desires to get more and better stuff — whether good stuff, such as happiness, creativity, and positive relationships, or the usual stuff, such as a more expensive car, house, or watch. Certain modern-day "prophets" are even willing to bend the highest spiritual and religious teachings to get more profits.

Some metaphysical prosperity teachers take valid belief systems — such as the idea that that whatever you focus on expands — and turn these spiritual principles into infomercials that focus on triggering and gratifying people's lower desires.

I've even received email solicitations from "spiritual" companies and teachers who are offering courses on how to bypass customers' conscious minds through hypnotic techniques to make them want to buy your wares on subconscious levels, even if they don't really need or want your products consciously. For spiritual people to use metaphysical or hypnotic techniques to fool people into buying things is, as they say, all kind of wrong.

Today's prosperity teachers may guide people to use spiritual principles to satisfy material desires with different positive or negative intentions.

Some teachers may teach prosperity for positive reasons, assuming that once you fulfill your worldly desires, you'll be in a better position to seek the "higher Kingdom." After all, if you're hungry and worried about how to feed your children or pay this month's electricity bill, these concerns may keep you too preoccupied to give you the freedom to focus on spiritual matters.

Although conversely, times of need can also encourage you to stay even more focused on connecting and conversing with God in a very raw and real way through prayer and paying attention to your thoughts and actions. For someone who understands metaphysical laws, living on the edge can be somewhat like being in a spiritual marathon or on probation for a job – you may become extra vigilant about your thoughts and actions when there is no visible security net below to catch you if you were to fall over that edge (although of course the big divine universal safety net is always there).

An Indian sage named Sai Baba of Shirdi was famous for giving blessings that helped improve people's outer lives, although his deeper purpose was to guide people to spiritual liberation. When asked about his methods, Sai Baba of Shirdi said, "I give people what they want so they'll want what I have to give."

Others who teach people how to use spiritual principles for material desires may mostly be "seeking first" the best approach for ensuring their own mass-marketing financial success.

Don't Forget

Regardless of what anyone else's approach is, you are responsible for your own spiritual journey. Just because people you know may be jumping up and down over the latest fad doesn't mean you have to jump with them. Respect that everyone is in a different place on their spiritual journey, requiring different kinds of teachings and incentives to entice them to grow.

You are the one who can keep your spiritual approach free from lower pulls such as greed and jealousy. You are the one who can discern the difference between useful empowerment techniques and methods that are designed to hook your mind and your wallet.

Does God want you to be rich?

Well, I'm not in a position to speak for the almighty, but based on historical research into His saints and sages, I would say that a lot more spiritual stars have lived simply than in huge mansions and palaces, although exceptions do exist.

My guess is that God is more concerned with the state of your heart and spirit than the numbers in your bank account, and that He (She) is just fine with you being either poor or wealthy, as long as you take care of what's more important — your soul's journey.

You are the one who can cut through the rinds of materialism to get to the delicious fruit of authentic spirituality.

After you have read all the books and heard all the lectures, you must still be the judge of what is for you. Only if something within you says, "This is truth - this is for me" does it become a part of your experience.

—Peace Pilgrim

Clarifying what spirituality is by describing what it's not

Here are some clarifications about what spirituality is not that may help you to understand what spirituality is:

- Spirituality is *not* about trying to bend the universe to conform to your desires.
- Rather than striving to bend the universe to conform to your desires, spirituality guides you to be in tune with the great universal Will, which always moves toward the greatest good.
- Spiritual principles are *not* just tools for getting the universe to give you what you want.
- Spiritual principles are better used as tools for preparing yourself to receive and give to the universe the best of what you're here to give and receive.
- Spirituality is *not* about reducing God to a nice daddy who gives you what you want so that you can say, "I wanted a car, and He gave me a car!"

If you ignore something, does it go away?

Some new age teachers tell you that pretending something isn't there makes it go away. I used to have a cat who thought that if she couldn't see me, I couldn't see her. After all, she was only a cat. But you're not a cat; you're a human being with human intelligence and knowledge.

Yes, from the highest philosophical views, it is true that our beliefs create and limit the scope of our reality. This is why spiritual study can be so helpful in expanding our belief systems as well as the world as it manifests around us. And yes, what we focus on tends to expand so that, for example, if you want to get rid of a habit, you are better off focusing on positive results that would come from releasing the habit than to direct too much attention toward the habit itself.

Still, if you know that something exists and are just putting some positive frosting on top by pretending it is not there, you may be ignoring useful signs and information that would help you to make better decisions in your life. For example, choosing to ignore potentially uncomfortable aspects of your thinking or behavior may end up creating an environment of denial that allows those negative aspects to seep more deeply into your life, as they tiptoe by your closed eyes like harmful viruses sneaking past your immune system.

Using manifestation techniques

Of course, adding more positive images and affirmations to your thoughts is great; however you don't want to slip into thinking that you're going to use metaphysical principles to "put one over" on your destiny or to sneakily overturn God's will. Without a deeper understanding of the relationship between the individual soul and the universal soul, your use of metaphysical and spiritual laws of manifestation could be but a step away from cheap parlor tricks that may amaze your friends, but also reduce you to being somewhat of a *karmic* thief.

Be Careful

Here's the thing about metaphysical manifestation techniques: If you already have spiritual maturity, then these techniques and theories offer some interesting ideas and useful tips. However, if you don't have spiritual maturity, then focusing too much on certain manifestation techniques can make you more greedy, materialistic, or uncaring.

The Indian scriptures say that through the practices of yoga — which lead toward union with the divine — a person's thoughts can be controlled to produce a state of concentration that naturally gives powers that are meant to be used for the person's ultimate enlightenment. Supernatural powers come naturally as a person follows yoga paths that lead to their evolution of consciousness. My guru used to say that these supernatural powers, called *riddhis* and *siddhis*, "sweep the doorstep" of a yogi. He doesn't have to grab them. All he has to do is uplift his own consciousness into greater spiritual realms, and these powers come naturally, along with the spiritual maturity to use them properly.

Jesus gave another example of how true spiritual practices bring supernatural powers when he said, *“Truly I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you.”* Of course, once someone has attained this level of faith, they also have faith that the mountain is where it is for a reason!

Be Careful

Most yoga scriptures and gurus add big warning flashes about not getting stuck in supernatural powers. Many look at metaphysical manipulations as a low-class form of spirituality. These metaphysical powers can become obstacles to your attainment of higher realms, because they tempt you to be distracted by outer pleasures and keep you from reaching the precious gems of divine self-knowledge that exist in the inner sanctum of life.

Without knowing what to want, you could put forth a lot of effort, use all sorts of metaphysical techniques, and go down all kinds of roads, just to find a lot of disappointing accomplishments and dead ends.

Spiritual Wisdom

Visit not miracle workers. They are wanderers from the path of truth. Their minds have become entangled in the meshes of psychic powers, which lie in the way of the pilgrim towards Brahman (the absolute universal being), as temptations. Beware of these powers, and desire them not.

—Sri Ramakrishna

Can materialistic prosperity be compatible with spiritual fulfillment? Yes! The key is to keep your spiritual qualities of trust, higher awareness, and surrender strong even as you create an abundant life in this world.

Discovering how to interact with the universe is a very good thing. However, using this precious gift of communication with the universe just to ask for more stuff is like meeting God and asking for a watch, or like receiving priceless jewels and using them to play a game of marbles.

Spiritual Wisdom

It is not wrong to tell the Lord that we want something. But it shows greater faith if we simply say: “Heavenly Father, I know that thou dost anticipate my every need. Sustain me according to Thy will.” If a man is eager to own a car, for instance, and prays for it with sufficient intensity, he will receive it. But possession of a car may not be the best thing for him. Sometimes the Lord denies our little prayers because He intends to bestow on us a better gift. Trust more in God. Believe that He who created you will maintain you.

—Paramahansa Yogananda

It's not nice to fool Mother Nature

Once, a man found a butterfly's cocoon. He saw that a small opening had appeared, and as he watched, the butterfly inside the cocoon struggled on and on, trying to force its body through that little hole. Eventually, the man felt sorry for this poor little butterfly-to-be and used a small pair of scissors to snip through the remaining part of the cocoon.

The butterfly then emerged easily, but with a swollen body and small, shriveled wings. The man waited for the butterfly to enlarge its wings and fly away, but it never happened. The butterfly could only crawl around, because this man had, in his kindness, removed the very obstacle that was intended to strengthen the butterfly's wings and fill them with the fluid they'd need to be ready for flight.

Sometimes struggles are exactly what you need to grow, so an approach that teaches you to avoid all obstacles may be also limiting your potential for spiritual and personal growth. In early 2007, I watched Oprah Winfrey jump up and down on her show in support of the metaphysical manifestation teachings of *The Secret*, but thought it ironic to consider that if Oprah had used metaphysical techniques to avoid all the traumas of her early years, she would certainly not be Oprah as she is today. Oprah herself is an example of how approaching challenges properly can uplift you into untold realms of freedom, blessings, wisdom, grace, service, and greater understanding.

How would you like to watch a movie where everything is harmonious and there are no challenges? You'd probably ask for your money back.

If you use metaphysics to create a boring life movie of constant ease and no challenges for yourself, the universal audience may ask for *their* money back!

Distilling the mysterious secrets of the universe down into personal creation tools is fine if what you're wanting to create is in your best interest. But people don't always want what is in their best interests. They want to fulfill animalistic urges and desires that are being generated by the old, primitive reptilian and mammalian parts of their brains; or they want to accomplish things that a limited society has told them to want. This is one reason why looking beyond current societal fads and into teachings of ancient cultures can give you a bigger picture view and helpful guidance on not only how to create, but more importantly, *what* to create.

The cloak of positive thinking

Positive thinking can bring great positive results to your life. However if you're faking positive thinking or covering things up with a cloak of denial or wishful thinking, you may actually be blocking the positive gifts that would have otherwise come to you. Or you could work hard to tap into your creative power and discover that the ending of your "power to create" story looks like most "three wishes from a genie" stories and has become a metaphysical manifestation disaster.

Seriously, how many wish-granting genie stories have you heard that really have happy endings? Usually the person who has received the wishes is lucky if he still has one wish left that he can use to undo all the damage done by his ill-considered previous wishes.

Are you really ready to drive this thing?

Do you really think you're ready to hold the reins that control this universe if you haven't yet managed to hold back from shouting an angry obscenity to someone who cuts you off in traffic, or if you still wish harm to those you don't like?

The law of attraction is based on a higher spiritual principle that connects your thoughts with the divine universal creative mind, and is best used to attract higher spiritual qualities into your life. The law of attraction is not only about getting, but is also a law of allowing, contentment, gratitude, and satisfaction.

When people learn metaphysical creation techniques without having the spiritual maturity, integrity, honesty, and generosity to use these creation powers properly, then they may very well create problems that will bring themselves and others down. In such cases, ignorance of these manifestation laws can actually be a good thing.

Spiritual Wisdom

There are only two tragedies in life: One is not getting what one wants, and the other is getting it.

—Oscar Wilde

Clarifying Your Intentions and Goals

Before using metaphysical principles to achieve your desires, put some time and effort into clarifying your greater intentions and goals. Three efforts that can help prepare you to use metaphysical manifestation principles properly are

- Weeding out any desires that are not in harmony with your greater spiritual goals.
- Asking for spiritual gifts above asking for more expensive material gifts.
- Accepting the inevitable, because even if you're a skilled co-creator or practitioner of the secret laws of attraction, things won't always happen exactly as you've planned — and that's often a good thing!

In the next few sections, I describe these three efforts in a bit more detail.

Weeding your desires

The purpose of weeding your desires is to make sure you want what *you* want, and not just what the commercial world wants you to want. Using metaphysical principles just to create more outer attachments is a misuse of spiritual laws. As Proverbs 16:16 says, *“How much better to get wisdom than gold, to choose understanding rather than silver.”*

Therefore, it is worth your while to sort through your desires and weed out ones that are unnecessary or incompatible with your higher spiritual goals.

One way to weed your desires is to imagine that you are in your last moments of life. Your time in this world is about to come to an end, and you're looking back to consider what was most important in your life. Who have you helped? What good have you done? What do you wish you'd spent more time doing?

Everything works for some people

People are always looking for magic fixes — which is why snake oil hustlers have thrived throughout history, whether in the form of preachers soliciting contributions by promising “God’s grace” in return, or health proponents pitching the latest liquid wonder for your physical health, or financial success stories of how a book or course gave people the prosperous life of their dreams.

The truth is that you can probably find success stories for nearly any idea you put forth with enough planning and passion. That’s because everything works for some people.

Millions of medical studies have shown that the placebo effect — where patients improve based on their belief that a sugar pill is actually helpful medicine — is strong and well in human psyche-land. Sometimes, just thinking that something may be helpful gives those who are ready to improve themselves the nudge they may need to turn around some of the negative factors in their lives.

Asking for the highest

The best things in life aren’t things.

—Art Buchwald

What would happen if, instead of only asking God and the universe to improve outer things like relationships, finances, health, or career, you began asking instead to become free?

Jesus’ teaching to “*Seek ye first the kingdom of Heaven and all things will be added unto you*” is not just a religious statement, but also a metaphysical law of the universe. Keeping your eyes on the highest prize helps you attract experiences that are clear, uplifting, good, and strong.

Once you rise above the limited levels of illusions, lower emotions, and low self-esteem, blessings come to you more easily — even when you’re not actively seeking them. You don’t have to grab, but simply receive. You begin to experience a taste of heaven even in the midst of your life on earth.

Here is an example of how to ask for blessings in an open-ended way: I ask for divine grace, ultimate fulfillment, deeper meaning, positive growth, reverence and awe, imminence and transcendence, a blazing life and a glorious death, all in harmony with the Highest Good and filled with unexpected and unfathomable blessings, as I shed layer after layer of illusion, and move into ever new, ancient, exciting and restful waves of life as a divinely inspired human being on this earth and a pure soul beyond this earth. May a benevolent universe fulfill my highest aspirations and release the lower ones in a harmless, appropriate fashion. May everyone in this world and beyond be blessed with everything they deserve in a kindly, forgiving, and loving way.

Empowering your good desires

Once you've uncovered and clarified your greater goals and aspirations, then you can use metaphysical tools to envision and empower those goals. Become aware of how you think and speak about your goals. Imagine how you will feel once you've achieved your aspirations. Some like to create inner or outer visualizations or collages to bring a positive vision of their highest goals into all the layers of their mind.

Always be sure to keep the door open for results that may be greater than what you've chosen to envision and create. Trust that if something doesn't happen according to your desires, it still may be a positive blessing in the long run. The universe has a much bigger canvas upon which to paint your life than you do. Therefore, instead of coming up with a very tight description of what you want, your best bet is to focus on the essence of your greater goals.

Accepting the inevitable

Okay, so sometimes you don't get exactly what you want, no matter how many collages you make or how many times you affirm that you have it. The house mortgage you wanted falls through, your new car gets damaged, the university doesn't accept your application, or your money at hand doesn't add up to the stack of bills on your desk.

Here's another not-so-secret of life: Don't expect things to be what they're not, or you'll be disappointed. Feeling disappointed can also lead to feeling disheartened, which can have even more detrimental effects on your ability to achieve your goals. Therefore, you should always keep the door open for the possibility that the universe could respond to your petitions and affirmations with a clear and concise "No." Just assume that something even better is in the works and do your best to stay light-hearted and positive while enjoying your present moment as it is, warts and all.

An example of accepting the inevitable

Even though the validity of the following story has been disputed by the U.S. Navy, this urban legend so well-demonstrates the importance of accepting the inevitable that I'll share it with you here. These words are said to be from a radio conversation between a U.S. naval ship and Canadian authorities off the coast of Newfoundland:

Americans: "Please divert your course 15 degrees to the North to avoid a collision."

Canadians: "Recommend you divert *your* course 15 degrees to the South to avoid a collision."

Americans: "This is the captain of a U.S. Navy ship. I say again, divert *your* course."

Canadians: "No, I say again, you divert *your* course."

Americans: "This is the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln, the *second largest ship* in the United States' Atlantic fleet. We are accompanied by three destroyers, three cruisers, and numerous support vessels. I *demand* that you change your course 15 degrees north — that's one-five degrees north — or counter measures *will be undertaken* to ensure the safety of this ship."

Canadians: "This is a lighthouse. Your call."

Even as you make physical and metaphysical efforts to achieve your goals, keep a note of trust and acceptance playing beneath the surface of your awareness. The best way to accept the inevitable is to keep your eyes focused on the highest eternal reality, within which all your temporal desires and goals are not so very important, after all.

The Supreme Surrender

Supreme surrender is like a drop merging into the ocean. The drop surrenders its smallness and becomes one with the great ocean. Supreme surrender is a combination of inner faith and letting go. With supreme surrender, you're not giving up or waving a white flag, nor are you feeling weak or inferior when you truly surrender.

Surrender helps your spiritual journey in many ways, including:

- Surrender helps you remember you that you're here to grow.
- Surrender helps you accept that sometimes you need challenges to grow.

- Surrender helps you understand that spiritual principles are not about making sure everything in your life is always perfectly comfortable and easy, but to help you be in greater harmony with the great divine universal nature so you can achieve your highest potential.

Supreme surrender is a magic salve that allows you to more easily remove the layers of wrong understanding, fear, anger, limited desire, and all those other not-so-goodies that you and I know all too well. In fact, many people think they *are* all those false layers and therefore want to hold on to them that much more tightly. This is where supreme surrender comes in. You release the grasp of your small self and fall into the hand of God.

Spiritual Wisdom

Break the wine glass and fall into the glass blower's breath.

—Jelalud'Din Rumi

The law of allowing

Even better than the law of attraction is the law of allowing.

With the law of allowing:

- You enter into a trusting and harmonious relationship with the universe.
- You enjoy each moment and feel an ever-present sense of contentment.
- You move spontaneously and in the flow with whatever you do.
- You act without attachment and express with freedom.

Spiritual Wisdom

I said to my soul, be still, and wait without hope

For hope would be hope for the wrong thing; wait without love

For love would be love of the wrong thing; there is yet faith

But the faith and the love and the hope are all in the waiting.

Wait without thought, for you are not ready for thought:

So the darkness shall be the light, and the stillness the dancing.

—T.S. Eliot

The importance of divine guidance

The best way to move forward in any endeavor is to use your knowledge, determination, and reasoning abilities in combination with the great divine guidance that's available to you. Divine guidance is an especially important part of the positive creation equation because:

- Intelligence alone doesn't guarantee that you're making the right choices in life. There's no way to figure it all out with your mind, because "it all" is way beyond anybody's ability to comprehend. There are times when divine guidance alone can lead you safely even through life's gnarly jungles.
- Earnestness or will power won't guarantee that you're taking the right paths in life. Many people earnestly strive, yet find they have gone the wrong direction. Divine guidance makes good use of your enthusiasm and helps keep your energy focused on positive, uplifting efforts.
- Friends may offer you a helping hand along the way, but where are they really helping you to go? Divine guidance won't steer you in the wrong direction or make you go against your better judgment. Divine guidance won't be jealous of your good fortune. Divine guidance is an expression of your friendship with the creator of this universe.

The sages describe this world as being like a deep ocean that's wide and difficult to cross. They also allude to something on the other side that's well worth the effort — an attainment that is called by terms such as realization, enlightenment, liberation, salvation, and nirvana (see Chapter 17).

Here you are, swimming in the vast waters of worldly life. You want to get there — to that divine state of liberation on the other shore — but there's no map! The way is tumultuous and fraught with distractions and illusions. How are you going to achieve your goal?

You may swim with great fervor, but how do you know you're going the right way? There is no land visible as far as your eyes can see. At times, the sun disappears behind some clouds, and you're not even able to see waters that are right in front of you.

All around you, illusions spring forth, enticing you into thinking that your time could be better spent in stopping to groom some of the sea plants or in going deep into one of many undersea worlds. However, if you fall for these enticements, you won't be able to reach the other side — which was the real goal of your entering this ocean in the first place.

As you swim forward, you have no way to know whether a hand being extended to you is going to help you move toward your goal or take you deeper into the waters of illusion. How can you possibly make it across?

You can cross this ocean of worldliness in only one way. There is only one hand you can trust — the divine hand of God, the great guiding force of grace. After you accept even for the sake of argument that this grace, this God, these angels, this inner soul, or these celestial beings exist and are ready to help you along your way, then your next task is to recognize, receive, and respond to their guidance.

In a way, it doesn't matter whether your image of divine guidance is accurate or not. Divine guidance doesn't care if you think it looks like a man with a beard, a woman with breasts, an elephant-headed boy, a five-headed god, a blue point of light, or a formless presence. What's most important is for you to find some way to relate to graceful guidance so that you can open the door to receiving its blessing.

For example, you don't need to know all the biological and chemical processes that go into creating a stream of water in order to drink from it. However, you do have to have some way of knowing that the water is there and available for you to enjoy. In the same way, you have to discover how divine guidance manifests for you:

- Does your guidance come from within?
- Do you feel that celestial beings are watching over you and whispering hints?
- Is an all-powerful Lord revealing your steps as you walk on your path of life?
- Is this conscious universe teaching you through symbolic hints?

What's most important in receiving guidance is your attitude — your stance of receptivity, humility, trust, and love, along with your pure intentions of serving and bringing greater good to your life and the whole world. These spiritual qualities automatically draw divine guidance to you because the universe likes working with those who are in harmony with its highest good — just like you do!

Consider

Trust your inner voice, and it will speak to you more distinctly.

When you're considering a particular decision, you can use the following contemplation to ask for guidance. As always, feel free to adjust the words to suit your own beliefs and personal nature.

Spirituality in Action

Sit quietly, calm your mind, and ask or state the following:

- God, is there anything you want to tell me?
- Universe, is there any guidance you wish to offer me?
- I am open and receptive to learn.

After repeating these phrases, you may choose to sit quietly and listen for an inner guidance, or open a spiritual book and see what message may be there for you. I've even experienced good results from fortune cookies and the astrology page in *TV Guide*! Truthfully, the universe can speak through anything. Divine messages can come through television shows; via songs on the radio; by walking by and hearing just the right snippet from a nearby conversation; or as a small, still voice in your own heart and soul.

Don't Forget

After you ask for guidance, listen!

Understanding to whom you're surrendering

Spiritual Wisdom

Trust in the LORD with all thy heart, and lean not upon thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct thy paths. —Proverbs 3:5,6

Surrendering to just anybody isn't necessarily going to fulfill all your greatest dreams. In fact, if you surrender to someone who wants to take advantage of your openness, you may lose a great deal. Therefore, surrender must come with discernment and an awareness of who and what you are truly surrendering to.

True surrender is always to God, in whatever form or formlessness you relate to. Remember that God is far beyond any human concept that has or ever will be thought. Therefore, whatever face and name you have placed on this nameless, faceless Lord — surrender to that and let it guide your steps.

Consider

The secret of powerful surrender is to be strong to the world and vulnerable to God.

Bringing strength together with vulnerability

One aspect of surrender is to give up lesser goals for the sake of greater goals — to allow the darkness of your lower desires to dissolve in the light of your higher aspirations.

You surrender the rat-race, accomplishment, proving-yourself, commercialism-based mentality, and rise into a more spiritually mature goal — such as serving God and humanity, unfolding your personal or creative excellence, bringing greater love and comfort into people's lives, or attaining a spiritual state of mind, heart, and soul.

Some forms of surrender may not even sound like surrender. Several times, I've been pushed by challenging circumstances to the point where all I could do was say, "God. You do it." Sometimes I'll say it nicely, like when I realized while writing these words that this chapter is due in a few days. Once or twice, I've even gotten upset with some turn of events and shouted inside myself — "God! You do it!"

I don't think God minds how you say it, as long as you're being sincere and communicating with faith — although it's probably still a good idea to ask nicely!

Welcoming “Thy will be done”

The theme song of surrender is “Thy will be done.” This statement can be analyzed from a couple different angles, depending on your understanding of how this universe works.

- **From a duality point of view:** “Thy will be done” is an offering of submission and servitude. There is a little you and a big God, and you agree to do whatever God tells you to do, whether you want to do it or not.
- **From the view of oneness:** The second way to interpret this line involves a deeper, more esoteric meaning. In this case, “Thy will be done” isn’t so much an intention to surrender as a declaration of fact and an assertion of the unity of all creation. “Thy will be done” means that even if I try really hard not to do God’s will, His will is nevertheless always done, in spite of my intentions. In this view, even your trying hard *not* to do God’s will would still be God’s will.

Surrendering into a higher understanding of the omnipotence of God’s will takes the immense burden of personal responsibility off your shoulders. This unburdening is like someone who has spent his entire life frantically trying to keep his heart beating, who then finds out that it would have kept beating perfectly well even if he had focused his efforts on more important matters.

If you look at those who have achieved great spiritual accomplishments in this world, most had significant hardships to bear. Still, they continued on their journey with a feeling of “Thy will be done.”

Saint Frances was a great healer, yet was often ill himself. Saint Paul was despised by orthodox religious authorities who spoke against him and even had him put in prison. Yet Paul played a significant role in spreading Christianity as a world-religion. As Jesus said in Luke 6:26, “Woe to you when all men speak well of you.” In this quote, Jesus is acknowledging the often-necessary place of outer hardships in the process of spiritual evolution.

Consider

Therefore, as you grow spiritually, instead of trying to eliminate all discomforts or striving to please all the people who may not understand you or who want to limit your growth, you can look up to the unknowable divine nature and let go, saying, “Thy will be done.”

How to be optimistic

To be optimistic, just look for the good in everything. Be like the folks who write those movie ads: A critic will write something like “This movie is a magnificent piece of garbage,” and you know that some clever advertiser will have a photo from the movie next to the quote “. . . a magnificent piece . . .” from that critic!

Now, obviously, I’m not suggesting that you be deceptive in any way — with yourself or others. The trick is to see every situation in both a realistic light and a positive light at the same time. Here are some efforts that can help you be a happier person:

- 1. Hope for the best.**
- 2. Shoot for the best.**
- 3. Expect the best.**
- 4. Be perfectly content with whatever comes.**

Understanding that everything happens for the best

One of the most helpful understandings you can gain on the spiritual journey is to know that everything always, always, always happens for the best. Not necessarily for the short-term best of getting what you want right now, but for the ultimate, perhaps unknowable, best. This understanding gives you the great blessing of optimism. Because your thoughts are so powerful in creating your experience, optimism is a great and magical force for creating and experiencing a fulfilling life. Optimism is the spoonful of sugar that makes even bitter medicine go down more easily.

Here’s a story that may help you to stay optimistic and remember that truly, everything happens for the best:

Once upon a time, there was a king, whose prime minister had a habit of saying, “Everything happens for the best.” Whether someone gave him good news or bad news, his response was the same: “Everything happens for the best.”

This oft-repeated phrase irritated the king a bit, but not enough to warrant action. However, one day, the king cut his hand on a wineglass that had shattered. It was a rather serious cut that was bleeding profusely and certainly prone to infection in those pre-Neosporin days.

When the prime minister arrived at the King’s quarters to prepare for that day’s hunting trip, he saw the king’s bandaged finger and said, “Well, sire, you know, everything happens for the best.”

This statement really made the king angry. His finger was throbbing with pain, and this idiot who was supposed to be a wise prime minister was repeating the same insensitive line. How dare he!

The king decided to teach his prime minister a lesson. He had the guards take him to the dark dungeon of the castle, where the lowliest criminals were kept. Not only would the prime minister have to miss the magnificent hunting trip, but he would also be sitting alone in a cold dark cell from morning until night. “Let’s see him say ‘Everything happens for the best’ to that!” grumbled the king.

Later that same day, the king was hunting in the deep forest, when suddenly his party was overtaken by a large group of local natives who didn’t know or care who the king was. As the invaders began to surround them with poisoned arrows drawn, the king’s party began to scatter out of fear. “You just can’t get good subjects these days,” the king thought as his “protectors” abandoned him in their fearful flight. If only the prime minister had been there, he would have surely helped rescue the king — but he was back in the castle, sitting quietly in a dark, stone cell. The kidnappers surrounded the king, bound his hands and feet, and carried him off to their stone temple, intending to offer the king as a religious sacrifice.

The king didn’t understand what the group was chanting; however, when they tied him to the stake and began rubbing sticks together to get a spark, he quickly got the picture. The natives began decorating the king with colored dyes as a kind of gift-wrapping for their gods, when they noticed his bandaged finger. One of the men unwrapped the cloth and inspected the cut. Then he yelled out something that made all the preparations stop.

It was considered disrespectful to offer a defective offering to their gods. If they offered this man with the bleeding finger, their gods would be displeased and would hurl wrath upon the land. The kidnappers angrily put down their instruments and released the king by cutting the reeds that were tied around his hands and feet. The king’s heart was pounding as he ran as fast as he could away from the tribal village. The royal servants spotted him and carried the king back to the caravan, where he was fed and soothed.

As the king lifted the third leg of turkey to his mouth, he suddenly remembered his prime minister. Oh my. He had said that everything happened for the best, and here it was true. It was the cut on the king’s finger that had saved his life. The king felt terrible. He had locked up his friend and confidante in the grungiest dungeon cell. The king put his food down and commanded his men to return their caravan to the castle at once.

The king ran down to the dungeon, and with great remorse, approached the prime minister. The king told him the whole story. “O, prime minister, I was terribly wrong, and you were right. Everything does indeed happen for the best. If not for that cut on my finger, I would be a pile of ashes right now. O prime minister, can you ever forgive me for locking you up in this hellish place for so long?”

The prime minister looked at the king, paused for a moment, and then spoke. “Everything happens for the best.”

The king was shocked. “How can you say that? Without good cause, I have locked you up in this awful, rat-infested cell. If you had been with me on the hunt, you surely would not have abandoned me as the others did. I wouldn’t have had to go through that whole ordeal!”

“Yes, my king,” the prime minister agreed, “I would surely have stayed by your side. But remember, I do not have a cut. I would have been the perfect sacrifice!”