

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!