

## ***Being here, now***

### **Spiritual Wisdom**

*Don't think about the future. Just be here now. Don't think about the past. Just be here now.*

— Ram Dass

Present-moment awareness is like resting in the eye of the storm or the center of a whirlpool. The entire universe swirls around you, but you remain centered in the power of *right now*.

Not only does present-moment awareness help calm your mind and allow you to make clearer decisions, it also brings you into harmony with spirit and opens you to divine guidance. When you're not always looking right or left, up or down, back or forward, past or future, you become more aware of who and where you are right now and can rest in the stillness of your own presence.

### **Consider**

Being completely focused and united with what you're doing is also the secret behind great skills. Rather than thinking about the outcomes or rewards that may come in the future from what you're doing, or rehashing factors from the past that are motivating your actions, you keep your focus trained on the Great Spirit that exists beyond all the ephemeral illusions, waves, and fluctuations of the world. From this expanded awareness, great skills flow naturally.

Being totally focused on the present moment also gives you an opportunity to squeeze through the bottleneck of time into the timeless realm I like to call the *eternal now*. This is the highest experience of being "in the moment," because in the eternal now there is only one moment to be in!

## The six stanzas of liberation

Sri Shankaracharya was considered to be one of the greatest sages of India. He expounded many scriptures, and began the tradition of ochre-robed swamis or monks. Shankaracharya wrote a popular Sanskrit hymn about the nature of liberation, called *Nirvana Shatakam: The Six Stanzas of Salvation*. Shankaracharya's hymn reveals the enlightened state of his identity with auspicious universal Consciousness (called Shiva) by paring away all the identifications that he is not (and that you are not):

1. I am not the mind, nor the intellect, nor the ego-sense, nor the storehouse of memories. I am not the ear, nor the tongue, nor the nose, nor the eyes. Nor am I the sky (space), or the earth, or fire, or air. I am supreme auspiciousness of the form of Consciousness-bliss. I am Shiva! I am Shiva!

2. I am not what is known as the life-breath, nor am I the five vital airs. I am not the seven constituents of the body. I am not the five sheaths. I am not speech, nor the hands, nor the feet. I am not the genital organ, nor the organ of excretion. I am supreme auspiciousness of the form of Consciousness-bliss. I am Shiva! I am Shiva!

3. I do not have any aversion or attachment, nor do I have greed, delusion, pride, or jealousy. I do not hanker after dharma, wealth, pleasures, or liberation. I am supreme auspiciousness of the form of Consciousness-bliss. I am Shiva! I am Shiva!

4. There is no such thing as merit or sin for me. Nor is there joy or sorrow. I have no need for mantras, or pilgrimage, or Vedas, or sacrifices. I am neither the enjoyed, nor the enjoyer, nor enjoyment. I am supreme auspiciousness of the form of Consciousness-bliss. I am Shiva! I am Shiva!

5. I have no possibility of death, nor distinction of caste. I have no father, nor mother. I have no birth. I have no relations, nor friend, nor guru, nor disciple. I am the supreme auspiciousness of the form of Consciousness-bliss. I am Shiva! I am Shiva!

6. I am all-pervading. I am beyond the organs. I am ever the same. There is neither bondage nor liberation for me. I am the supreme auspiciousness of the form of Consciousness-bliss. I am Shiva! I am Shiva!

These verses demonstrate how the process of spiritual evolution is not so much an adding of more things, but, in fact, a paring away of all the levels of unreal identifications.

## **Spirituality in Action**

### **Feeling this eternal moment**

Right now, use your will power to focus all your attention on the present moment. Be here right now. Feel yourself as you are in this very moment, naked from all the accoutrements and life experiences swirling around you. Be you. Be here. Be now. Repeat to yourself this contemplation:

This moment, right now, is eternal

Every moment is eternal.

You may want to synchronize these phrases with your breath. Mentally repeat "This moment, right now, is eternal" as you take a long, deep breath in, and repeat, "Every moment is eternal" as you breathe out.