

Searching for Truth in a World of Pretense

Spiritual Wisdom

I do not believe in the collective wisdom of individual ignorance.

—Thomas Carlyle

Today's world is an amazing time and place for seeking, discovering, and nourishing your spirituality. As they say, it's the best of times and the worst of times. Most people have the freedom to explore and seek higher spiritual truth in ways that were unavailable in previous times and cultures. Yet, at the same time, authentic spiritual teachings and practices can be hard to find amidst the busyness and noise of modern life.

Never before has this world seen anything like the massive scale of illusory commercialization and pretense that floods today's modern cultures. In recent years, the media have done their best to turn audiences into obsessive-compulsive gossipers, as they shamelessly pound out each salacious detail of celebrities' personal lives for hours, days, weeks, months, and even years — for what? Bigger ratings and more revenue.

Advertising and commercialism pervade every corner of today's urban landscape, with little care for the sanctity of people's right to a peaceful environment. Millions of dollars are spent to research how to trigger and draw your subconscious attention to all kinds of products you don't even need, without regard for the side effects of these mental manipulations. If advertisers could figure out how to beam their commercials directly into your head, you can be sure that many would jump at the chance.

Your calling is to find truth and spirituality in the midst of all this worldly pretense. However, to complicate things further, spirituality today also tends to be compromised by the same motives of greed, ignorance, and sensuality that pervade other areas of society.

Consider

In a way, today's world of pretense can actually benefit a spiritual seeker who is proceeding with open eyes. The glaring chaos of commercialized illusions can drive ripe spiritual seekers to become even more vigilant about absorbing themselves, mind, heart, and soul, into the peaceful presence of the divine. The key is to take full advantage of the spiritual benefits of this time (see Chapter 2) while steering clear of potholes along the way.



Consider

Tips for reading divine texts

Some religious followers insist that texts such as the Bible, Koran, Torah, or Bhagavad Gita are the actual, unblemished Word of God. Others see these scriptures as records put together by spiritually inspired but potentially fallible and culture-based human beings. Many religious records have been translated, edited, and retranslated by other perhaps not-as-divinely-inspired, fallible human beings through the centuries. To get the most when reading spiritual scriptures, you may want to:

- Give extra focus to the parts of a text that are supposed to be actual spoken or written expressions of the divine sage(s) who sparked that particular religion or philosophy. For example, if you're reading the New Testament, focus on the words of Jesus.
- Keep your attention on the parts of scriptures that make sense and resonate with your current interests and understanding. Putting other sections aside doesn't mean you are dismissing them forever, but that you are paying attention first to what connects with your soul's journey. Focus on the spiritual teachings you grasp, and they will take your hand and guide you from where you are now into greater awareness and understanding.