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## **Higher Knowledge & Spiritual Experience: What to Buy?**

By Dr. Stewart Bitkoff

*There are a thousand forms of mind.*

Rumi

The goal of the mystical process is to help complete human evolution. The Sufi asserts that humanity is evolving to a higher spiritual condition and this evolution is purposeful and directed. The end result of this process is more complete people who are better able to serve themselves and others. Travelers proceed toward this goal by entering a path to spiritual completion and are guided by a Master.

The complete person uses all their abilities, and through a course of guided study, has added a measure of latent spiritual capacity, to make the world and their community a better place. During this period of study, all human capacities are further developed so the individual becomes multi-faceted. This development and learning emphasizes physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual growth. This original process of completion was perfected a millennia ago and has been called the Science of Man. In past ages, this development wore different garb; one of which was alchemy. The lead to be altered was the human condition, and the gold was higher consciousness. Today, many systems of human development exist and are clothed in psychological, self-help, and personal development formats.

In our culture, many are familiar with systems that teach about physical, emotional, and intellectual development; however, there is less familiarity and growing curiosity with learning systems that develop our spiritual or higher nature. We have seen a proliferation of 'New Age' medicine, teachers, workshops, and gurus all who have something to teach us about our higher self and the inner world. This stream of inner experience and learning exists alongside our traditional religious systems. Sometimes there is friction between these systems and other times harmony. Some of these New Age systems have something to teach us and others want to take from us; how to tell the difference?

The focus of this discussion is to provide a yardstick, to help the serious student make intelligent choices, and answer some basic questions involved in a spiritual quest for higher knowledge.

*What is the Outcome?*

Before entering into any course of study or learning, one must be clear as to the outcome. When we go to college or technical school, we graduate with a degree that is

useful in our chosen field. It is similar in spiritual development. You enter into a system that is focused on an outcome. Genuine mystical schools seek to develop more complete people who are better able to serve by working in the world; using their added, latent, higher capacity.

Spiritual studies, in part, deal with states of consciousness and as the great Master, Rumi offered, ‘there are a thousand forms of mind.’ Often, most travelers are unclear about the outcome of spiritual development and seek higher powers, inner peace, emotional happiness, or perpetual harmony. It is exciting to expect to develop powers, read people’s minds, move objects with thought, heal the infirm, or never feel anxiety. Sadly, these are outcomes travelers expect and are disappointed when they are not forthcoming.

### *A Complete Person*

The purpose of any genuine mystical school is to help develop a more complete person; someone who has added a measure of latent, spiritual capacity. Through guided training, gradually, the traveler aligns with their own higher destiny and the higher destiny of the universe. They participate in the world and help make it better. Additional spiritual capacity, abilities, and insights develop to help guide and influence events according to a higher plan and are outgrowths of higher consciousness. A spiritual Master is not able to read thoughts to impress you, the Master does this to display who they are and help make you realize you have work to do. This capacity is a natural extension of consciousness and a purposeful, directed, learning experience intended to improve the student. The Master has this capacity because the student needs it and in most cases is transitory. As needed, higher capacity comes and goes.

Higher knowledge, or spiritual capacity, exists within everyone. This is our birthright and already part of us. For many, this capacity is never fully developed and lies dormant, sometimes, asserting itself in experiences that appear extraordinary. These might come in the form of a premonition or a dream that something will happen and it does. Or this experience may take the form of a shift in consciousness where the traveler feels connected to all living things. These expressions of the higher soul are like energy over runs that jump out, finding a way to express themselves. The higher soul forces its way into our ordinary consciousness; reminding us we are more than ideas, emotion and flesh.

### *What is Higher Knowledge?*

Higher knowledge is knowing or that knowledge which is tied to the inner workings of things. This knowledge is aligned with the higher destiny and is a by-product of higher consciousness. This knowledge is purposeful and directed. It exists to further the human condition. It is higher because it emanates from the higher plane; and

is holistic, integrating and resides in the corresponding, higher portion of the soul. Spiritual experiences are by-products of this awareness and knowledge.

After traveling the spiritual path, in time, the student becomes their own master and learns to direct their life from a worldly and spiritual perspective. Within a Sufi framework, students are not accepted into a mystical school unless they have prepared themselves and their inner motives are 'pure,' that is, relatively free of self-interest. This preparation includes a basic stabilization of emotional, physical, and intellectual health. Because at times, these capacities must be placed 'in a neutral state,' by the student or the spiritual impulse will not operate; and if the student does not have the capacity to accomplish this, will not be accepted. The student must bring this stabilization, then, they can be taught how to experience the spiritual.

Finally, as indicated above, before any of this can happen, the intention of the student must be 'pure.' What is meant by this is, is that spiritual capacity is not sought for personal gain. Sometimes, the student is unaware of their own inner motives and does not recognize a personal failing. Another aspect of purity is a burning need or hunger that can only be filled through this development. Some have termed this love or desire to be with the Beloved. It is tradition, only those who burn with love, are accepted.

#### *What is Spiritual Experience?*

Spiritual experience and higher knowledge are part of this form of learning. They exist for a purpose, are transitory, and are to be used in every day life to help self and others. Life is a multi-level experience and all our capacities are necessary for the journey. Spiritual experience is an enriching and enabling element, and forms the basis for complete living. We have a spiritual experience so it can help teach, make us a better person, and we are able to more fully participate in the world.

Spiritual experiences cannot accurately be described in words; they are comprised of an energy, or fabric, that is different than other forms of our awareness. Spiritual experiences are not felt like emotions, or thought out, like an idea- but may be attached to our ideas- providing wonderful insights. Spiritual experiences are perceived by another part of our consciousness, are holistic and integrating. A part of the student awakens, and this awareness, with its distinctive energy is unlike any other. Language cannot adequately describe what takes place, because like our experience of love, this dimension is beyond language. If you have to ask, have I had a spiritual experience, then, you probably have not had one. Spiritual experience and higher knowledge are their own measure. They are distinctively different than other forms of conscious energy and may be compared to high definition, cable television. The reception is stronger, brighter, and the colors are more intense. When viewing high definition television, you know you are not receiving the standard signal.

### *What the Master Offers*

When you go to a spiritual Master, if you are fortunate enough to have been called by one, the true Master will not offer mystical states, capacity to read minds or visions of the future. He/she will provide a system of learning and human development which is intended to make a better, more complete person. Your spiritual responsibilities will be in addition to other duties. If you meet someone and they offer mystical states, ability to see into the future, or ask for money in exchange for powers, you are not in the presence of a true physician of the soul. Sometimes, money will be requested to help the poor and support the Master's work. This is rare and voluntary; if you are in an authentic school, there will never be pressure to do this. Most often, it is up to the student to decide to give an offering. Never is money exchanged with the implication of spiritual attainment or favored treatment.

The true Master seeks the inner development of the student, and once the student is strong in their perception, the Master releases the student to travel alone. Spiritual development is not reading books, while books can inspire and be helpful. It is not having your questions answered by the Master, or attending workshops. Spiritual development is awakening and perceiving your own inner spark. This spark, or Light, is always aligned with the higher impulse. The inner development focuses on pushing aside every day concerns, suspending them for a time, so the spiritual impulse will come forward. In most, this impulse is asleep and must be awakened. The task of the Master is to awaken the inner capacity by showing it to the student.

In authentic schools, students are not taught to live apart for long periods; they are taught to participate in the world and contribute positively. The gift of awakening is conferred so every one can benefit.

### *What to Buy?*

In today's market, there are numerous spiritual potions and sweet smelling fragrances. One can learn to read palms or cards, see into the future or past, experience emotional tranquility, control bodily processes and thoughts, and gain an assortment of other skills. Many of these learning experiences have something to teach us, can be entertaining and fun, and help point toward something higher. However, the student must keep in mind, for the most part, these techniques and experiences are not higher knowledge; unless, these experiences show the student how to align their own inner spark with the higher impulse and contribute to spiritual evolution.

So, when you are signing-up to take a course at your local New Age Center or visiting the corner Palm Reader, remember to ask yourself the following questions.

- What is the outcome of this learning experience?
- Will it help make me a more complete person who is better able to serve others?

- Will it teach me to recognize my own inner spark and help align me with the higher destiny?
- If money is required in exchange for exciting and stimulating learning, consider if you were without financial resources, would the services be forthcoming? Without funds, would some favorable accommodation be offered?
- For the specific learning, who did the selecting? You or the Teacher?

And depending upon the answers you get, you will better understand what you are buying. Remember, many learning experiences can be useful, entertaining and help point in the right direction; however, few are higher knowledge and offered by true physicians of the soul.