

PURIFICATION

Removing Blockages to the Soul's Light: An Essay

The path of spiritual growth takes different forms in different religious and spiritual traditions. But there is one requirement that is universal to all: the purification of the lower self. All paths begin with aspirants learning to build character, by controlling the thoughts, emotions, speech and actions that would hinder progress. What comes next is the self-imposition of disciplines that will transform the personality into the divine Self.

The initial stages of the path lead the soul to what has been referred to as the 'Outer Court of the Temple.'

*" . . . The position of an aspirant who has reached the Outer Court is very different from the position of the good and virtuous and religious man or woman who has not thoroughly seen the goal which "is before them, or has not thoroughly realized the magnitude of their task."*¹

Once the magnitude of the goal is realized and the aspirant's commitment is strong, the path gradually unfolds toward the 'Inner Court' [the Kingdom of Souls]. This path *begins* with cleansing the lower self of impurities accumulated over lifetimes. The requirement for revealing the soul's true purpose for incarnation is to transmute the selfish desires, motives, and ambitions governing the personality into an impulse to serve the Good.

In the Ageless Wisdom teachings, it is the path of discipleship that reveals the way to enter the realm of illumined souls. By treading this path, one's sense of identity shifts from the outer persona (the physical, emotional, and mental being) to the Soul, the true Self. As awareness grows, it becomes possible for the disciple to create a bridge of lighted consciousness to the realm of perfected souls—to Those who guide our evolution from the inner planes.

The need for self-purification runs like a silver thread through every stage of the discipleship path. Over time, as the lower self is

cleansed of impurities, the light of the soul enters further into awareness and allows the happenings of an individual's life to be seen from a higher perspective, the key to all healing.

The cleansing of the persona occurs by passing through the 'fires of purification'—the inevitable 'burning grounds' that arise from personal crises—with *conscious awareness*. When these fires serve their highest purpose, the soul is released from bondage to the deeply engrained patterning of the lower self. The fire of lighted consciousness dissipates the dross accumulated by the lower self over lifetimes, allowing the light, love and wisdom of the soul to shine forth.

There is a great array of methods of self-purification in the myriad spiritual traditions of our world. In the wisdom teachings, their purpose is to reveal the higher capacities of the Soul and to transform the lower self into its instrument of service. One such practice is to visualize the burning of all that hinders the soul's expression in a great flame of pure opalescent light, while recognizing the act as a service to humanity.

Combined with many other disciplines and forms of learning on the spiritual path, the eventual result of such practices is the transformation of a human being into a spiritual being—a conscious soul whose love, wisdom and joy flow freely into the world in service to the Greater Good.

"The cleansing of the personality and the attaining of more light upon one's way is ever the preparation for increased and more adequate service."¹

¹ Besant, Annie and Leadbeater, C.W., *Creating Character*