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### Each breath as a step towards growth

Spiritual Straight Talk

Whatever the past karma, you can either squander it or make it grow. Let us say, by age 30 you have earned a million dollars. Now you can either squander it or make it grow. In the past, you might have created some riches within you. Because of your spiritual practices, those riches may manifest now in terms of material comfort, like a good house, the right kind of atmosphere, or maybe good people around you. In spite of all this, you may not make use of it and just become complacent. That is the whole cycle.

The reason I repeatedly say that life is like the Snake and Ladder game is: you climb the ladder and there you're happy. The very comfort that comes out of it, that comes out of good karma, may make you complacent and that is it: down through the snake you go. Then once suffering comes, you start looking and grow. You may squander it and go down again. This is the way of the fool, wasting his energy. But someone who has sufficient intelligence in him should even take each breath as a step towards growth. It is very much possible. Even after reminding a person hundreds of times, if he still does not wake up, if he is still lying down in his comforts, what can we do? He will be lost. He has to suffer once again, and then maybe seek growth.

This whole spiritual process is happening to hardly one percent of the population. For all others, when things are going well they are laughing, and when things go bad they are crying. There are very few people in the world who, whichever way it is, are okay and balanced. For them nothing is a great benediction, nothing is a problem. Everything is just another life situation through which they can become free. The rest will go the way the situation pushes them. They are like cattle. You have evolved into a human body, but otherwise there is no real difference. Is there any great difference qualitatively between the way animals live and generally the way people live? Maybe quantitatively there is a lot of difference. There is more variety to your activity; you drive a car, you watch television. All that nonsense you do, but qualitatively, where is the difference?

If the difference has to come, it can only come with awareness; there is no other way. Generally, mental alertness is mistaken for awareness, but awareness is a far deeper dimension than just mental alertness alone. When awareness arises within you, love and compassion will be the natural follow-up; then each breath becomes a step towards growth.

[Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev is an international spiritual teacher, author and authority on yoga, with profound spiritual and cultural insights on health and human values. Send your questions for Sadhguru to Isha Foundation, 10 Belcaro Circle, Nashville, TN 37215 or email: [info@ishafoundation.org](mailto:info@ishafoundation.org)]

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