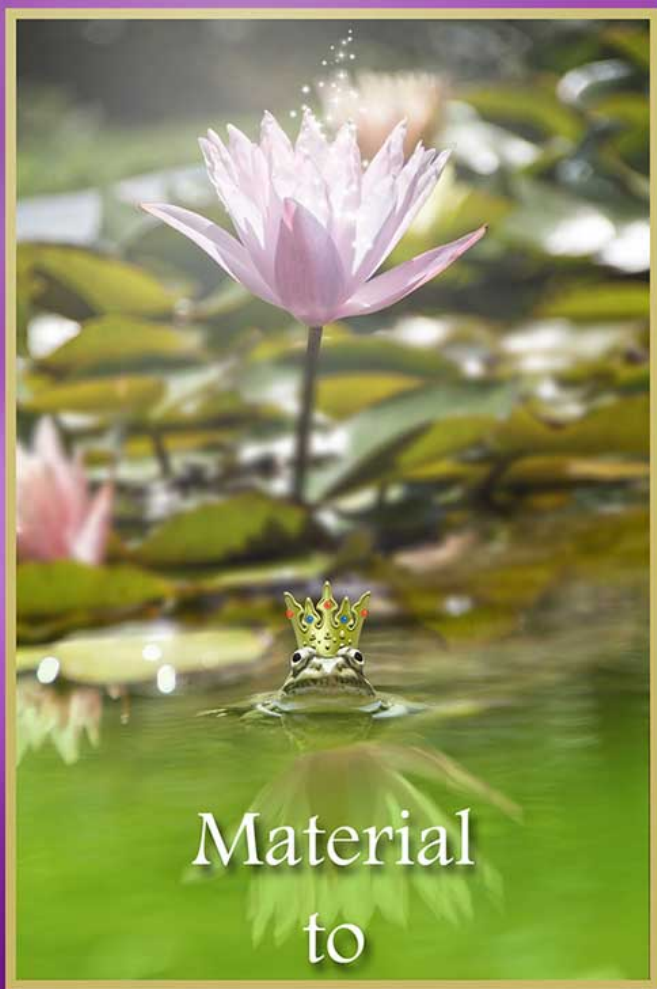


NALANIE HARILELA CHELLARAM



Material  
to

Spiritual

# From Material to Spiritual

Everything is temporary, including ourselves. Our bodies are temporary. One day we will leave our bodies behind on this planet. What never dies is our soul. Our yoga practices help us to shift from a material existence to a spiritual existence. What exactly does that mean? It's very easy to say: "I am Soul. I am Spirit." To really believe it, and to live it, is another matter. Just to come to this point of comprehension can be extremely challenging as we fluctuate through the material and spiritual realms.

The contradiction is that the outside world continually tells you what to do, what you need and what you should do. Internally there is another voice saying: "Hold on, everything you need is inside of you." But you don't believe it, because there are so many thousands of voices from the outside and there's one voice that says: "Find me. When you find me, you'll find everything." That's why all the yogis say that when you discover the microcosm you will understand the macrocosm. I never understood those words when I read them long ago. The microcosm refers to what is within you and this is reflected everywhere, in the world around you, the macrocosm. For example, if you really understand your own emotional downfalls, if you

really understand the make-up of your own physical body, you will understand the anatomy and physiology of all human bodies. If you take time to understand that you are spirit, then what will happen in time is that you will see the same spirit in everyone. You will begin to understand where all emotions come from and how they start. And if you can understand that, when you begin to heal yourself, everyone around you will start healing too.

When you are caught in the material world, even though you are practising spiritual practices like meditation, if you do not spend time in contemplation, in silence, recharging yourself, analysing who you are, you will not be able to deal with the challenges that life throws at you. So many people struggle with themselves unnecessarily: "I can't find peace. I'm working so hard - I pray, I meditate, but I can't get that peace. Why can't I find it?" They may be saying all the right things and they may be doing all the right things, but they haven't got in touch with their inner space. There's too much going on in their minds. And it's okay that there's so much going on in the mind, because that's quite normal for the mind, but when you're in an environment where there's so much going on already, it's very difficult to find that inner sanctuary- peace.

Think of this as an example: My friend called me this morning on my mobile. I was in a shopping centre and I couldn't hear her very well as there was so much outside interference, background noise and a bad signal. So I

walked outside in order to hear her more clearly. Once I left the noisy environment, we were both able to hear each other clearly without interference. As such, the outer, material interference affects our inner worlds. If we allow the material world to dominate our thoughts and we don't take the time out for our spirit, a time will come when we become totally imprisoned by our thoughts. This is the state of most minds when we have not understood the significance of spiritual living.

You will become stronger if you have some kind of spiritual practice and inner quiet time, when it's just you with your God within – whatever you want to call the God within. Try and have conversations with your God as Neale Donald Walsh did. When you have that time alone, many things will become clear to you as you focus on your soul power. You will experience many things, hear wonderful music and enjoy the warmth within.

So many people I've met in my life go on pilgrimages to India. In fact, I recently met someone who spent nearly two years roaming the world to find peace. She had been to a pilgrimage in India, she had been to ashrams in America, she'd been everywhere. But she came back totally depressed. She then decided to stay another six months in India to find the Spirit that she had not found the first time there. Again, she arrived home to Europe very sad and disillusioned. She met me at a talk I had given and asked me, "Why do I still have this pull from my spirit, it has not

served me in anyway?" I answered: "Because you are looking everywhere else but within. In the last two years you have used up all your money, you've used up all your resources thinking you could buy peace or get it from someone or something! You are angry that nothing has worked for you. Why don't you just stay still and find you? Stop expecting somebody else to bring God here and put him in front of you. It doesn't work like that."

Remember that the Divine Light lives in everyone, in every soul. While you're looking externally and expecting this ashram to give you something and that ashram to give you something else, you will never find peace and you will always be disappointed.

You will find saints in every ashram and you will find crooks – just as you will in the real world. It's just the way it is. So if you're expecting that just because you're in the yoga centre that everyone should be saintly, you may end up pretty disappointed. We're all here to make ourselves better. That's all we're doing. We're just really trying to focus on the fact that there is a way out of suffering, a way out of the pain that life sometimes brings. And guess what? It does work when you practise it. But in order for you to really practise you have to make the sacrifice of disengaging with the material world from time to time. You have to walk away from the pleasures that you love. They are physical pleasures that don't last long and yes, they will give you some joy – and there's nothing wrong with that, so

long as you are strong enough to deal with the pain that the material world also brings when those pleasures disappear. It is vital to understand that everything you own will be left behind when you leave this world. Or you may lose possessions whilst here. Most people aren't strong enough to deal with this. Most of us get engulfed by the material world. Fear surfaces at the thought of losing something or someone one loves. Trying to separate the spiritual from the material becomes almost impossible. So you struggle and you pretend – and this is what I call spiritual materialism. It's very easy to stay in the material realm and to think that you're actually doing well spiritually. But often you're fooling yourself. Many times, what happens with spiritual materialism is that you develop a huge ego when things start to work well for you. The sadhana (spiritual practice) stops because you think that you don't need to develop your spiritual qualities any further. You think you have reached the goal even though you haven't yet.

The sign of a truly spiritual person is one who can stay balanced in sorrow and joy, in pain and pleasure. Honestly, I haven't met many people who can do that, just a handful, and this small group of people are those who practise understanding life. They literally practise understanding life, goodness and compassion. Many of them do not need to practise the necessary disciplines that we do, such as hatha yoga. These are all tools for us to quicken the

process. They are not necessary, but they are great tools and when you practise them you get great help from it. But they are not absolute tools, the real tools are within you. This is where the tools are: in your body, in your mind and in your soul. When you can touch that, when you can feel the awakening of the kundalini (or as Catholics say, the holy spirit) in your consciousness, there is a shift in your consciousness, there is a shift of awareness. Then you keep up the good practices in a practical way. By this I mean knowing your own strengths, building up your courage, being truthful, being straightforward, loving, kind, generous, etc . Not being a hypocrite – because these are the things we may adopt when we think we are spiritual. We don't need any more hypocrisy in the world. There's too much of it. Enough of people-pleasing to obtain personal attention, you need to get away from all that. Instead, please people by developing the virtues. The goal is to get to the truth and live for the highest good.

All the greatest masters were not meek, they were strong. Look at Lord Jesus. Look at his example. He was actually Jewish and he broke every single Jewish tradition by healing on the Sabbath. And what did they tell him? That he shouldn't heal. Was he fearful? No. Why? Because when you are so well-grounded there is no fear. When you are so sure that the Father is in you (or the Mother is in you); when you are so sure, nothing can shake you. Whether you are wrong or you are right to the world is irrelevant,

because it's not about what's wrong or right but about living the truth. If you look at Lord Jesus, at that time of his preaching, he was wrong according to all the teachers and traditions. He was absolutely going against all of the laws and that's why they crucified him. But he knew himself that they were living under a religious, scriptural delusion because they did not understand the real meaning of what truth and God were actually about. Jesus understood, he learned and he went away. Many people believe that he didn't die, but just went away. There are many books and documentaries about Lord Jesus and the lost years where Lord Jesus did not die on the cross but instead used yogic powers like pranayama (which is controlling the breath) to imitate death. They suggest that he got up from his grave and went to a cave in India (in existence today and called the Isa cave), and it is said that he continued to live there with his family and that he continued to teach many great souls. True, false? Who really knows?

You are going to hear about so many different things from so many religions and traditions, including yoga, and what you must have is the discernment to decipher the information and go for the simple truth. Make it simple for yourself. Ask yourself: What shifts me? What makes me feel this ananda, this bliss? When are my truest moments? In those moments it's really you and the universe on your own. The great gift of life is meeting with a truly amazing Spiritual Teacher who can transmit His or Her love to you



via energy fields. If you are receptive to this it is a great, great blessing and quickens your insight into the realm within.

For me, it happened when I met my Guru Sri Swami Satchidananda Maharaj. When I first met him I was not ready, so I could not see. When I was a child he was like my grandfather, an older friend. At that time, I was suspicious of most religious persons as my father invited so many religious people home, and although some were beautiful, some were all about 'money, money, money'. Once I went to India with my father and met some devotees from a particular ashram. They bought this big book on Krishna and they presented it to my father who gave them a very reasonable donation. Instead of being grateful, the man said, "Is that all you're giving?" The donation was about £100. My father replied, "You know I support your organisation in Hong Kong. Our whole family just gave a huge donation there. The man replied: "In that case, I'm taking back my book. This book is worth a lot." And he left. I had heard him talking about spiritual matters before, heard him chanting to the masses and now suddenly he became a spoilt brat! I had seen many similar situations throughout my life. So I didn't trust too many people. As I went through my life, I found myself in a place where I was very angry with life and you know, anger doesn't sit well in us. People, when they get angry, cannot be happy at the same time. And at that point I was in a place of blame. I

didn't know better. I thought, I read all these books, I say all these prayers and I have all this faith in God . But these things don't seem to help. I had read so many books on psychology and still had no peace, still no joy. I was in a place of judgment. Yes, there are bad people in this world, but it is not our place to judge them. I was, however, caught in the world of good and bad and constantly judging. When you are always judging, you cannot be open to opportunities of learning in your life.

Many people get to a stage where they are in such a dark place and sincerely ask for help and then that help does come. That is what happened to me. In desperation, I cried for the truth and two days later I received a phone call. It was my master. At that point I had no idea that he was to become my master and teacher. He asked: "Nalanie, I'm going to Zurich to give a peace conference. Can I come and visit you in Gibraltar?"

When the student is ready the master will appear. That's the truth. You don't have to go and look for the master. He appears. Always, always. I've seen this happen in so many lives. When you are ready, when the call of desperation comes, it is always answered. Especially when you realise that you cannot continue the way you are.

Just the other day, I saw one of my patients. She'd been through hell as she was in an abusive relationship where horrible things had happened to her. She felt victimised

and was very weak and depressed. I asked her what she believed in and her answer was Mother Mary. She continued by saying that she felt Mother Mary had deserted her.

I prodded her by saying: "Or have you deserted Mother Mary?"

She fell silent and answered: " I used to visit her statue at a shrine dedicated to her and place flowers at her altar, but I have not done that for years."

I answered: "So why don't you do that today after you leave my office?" She went that day and offered the statue of Mother Mary flowers and with deep desperation she said: "Please give me the courage to leave this relationship ."

When her partner called her later that evening, with a sudden burst of courage , she said: "This is it. I refuse to be beaten up anymore. I am leaving you."

Her Teacher appeared in the form of a statue. It was her faith in it that gave her the strength she needed to do what she had long wanted to do. Do you see? It's really interesting when you hear of people's lives and how they deal with issues. I have seen that a sincere call is always answered. She was so stuck in fear. She was immobilised as she believed she had to live with being beaten and abused otherwise she would not be accepted by God or society..

She had forgotten that she was spirit and had a right to live beautifully.

When you are ready your master will appear. You have to honestly feel that you are tired of finding happiness only in the material world, tired of anger, tired of desires, tired of wants and needs! It is at this point you become open to receiving because you are letting go, because you are tired of holding on to anger and blame. So, when I speak to my patients and I hear their call of desperation, I know they are going to get their answer. All I do is pass them the spiritual tools and tell them how to use them. They have to do the work. However, many times people do get the help but then they don't want to work. They want a quick fix.

See what you're doing with your life. Analyse your life. Even if you don't want to meditate, analyse the way you are living. Analyse why you are so unhappy. Stop blaming. But you do need that time because if you don't want to take five minutes to save your own soul, you're going to live the rest of your life in anger and misery and blame. There's enough misery without us adding to it. The world gives enough. We're all going to face the deaths of fathers, mothers, spouses, children and loved ones. That's enough pain. We're all going to face diseases. We're all going to face natural disasters. Why do we need to add more misery into our lives? In order to live a more spiritual existence, you have to be peaceful. Spirituality and peace are synonymous: they mean the same thing. If you think you're

living the most spiritual existence but you are not at peace, then what's the point? You have to ask yourself: "What is it that I am attached to materially?" Most people are scared to ask that question. You know why? Because they think that they have to give up something. That's not the truth. You don't have to give anything up. You just have to make time for yourself. It's not about giving up , it is about finding what you already have.

I love the story of Job in the Bible. I'll tell it simply. Job was one of the greatest followers of God. He was a happy man and had complete faith in God. He had a big home, lots of wives, lots of children, and many cattle. One day, a demon approached God and challenged Him. He told God it was obvious why Job loved him. God had furnished Job with everything; material and spiritual. What if God should take everything away from Job? Would he still be so faithful and loving to God? God responded by saying that Job loved him unconditionally. The demon laughed and said the only way one could be sure of that fact was to test Job by taking everything away from him. Reluctantly, God agreed, but only on the condition that if Job passed the test, everything would be restored to him and much more.

Job was then tested. One by one, everything he had was taken away from him. It broke his heart and he could not understand why God had punished him when all he did was love God and His ways. However, he never lost faith. He lamented, and although all his friends made fun of him and

tormented him, laughing at his faith in God, Job never for a moment stopped believing. The demon accepted defeat and Job was returned all he had lost and much more.

Many of us go through losses in our lives. We lose our belief in life, love and dreams. The other day someone said to me: "I thought I had many friends but I've learnt a really hard lesson. Our manager at work was rude and obnoxious to all of us employees, who are also her friends. So, I got my co-workers together and they asked me to be the spokesperson for them and speak to the chairperson of the company to complain about the manager's behaviour. They all claimed they would back me up. I then made an appointment and spoke to the chairperson about our frustrations. He addressed all the co-workers to ask how they felt about the situation. Instead of telling the truth, they claimed that they really did not mind the manager and it was really me who was creating the situation. Can you imagine my shock and anger? After that, I had to leave the company."

My advice to her was to accept and forgive that situation. I truly believe in a higher plan and for some reason she had to leave that job. After all, wasn't it due to her leaving that job, and her disillusionment, that she came to Spain seeking spiritual knowledge? Love all, expect nothing. Everyone is on loan to us, including ourselves! Instead, you've got to build up your own power. Start to know that you are never alone. Learn to be independent. Learn to

trust your own strengths and to find the God within you. When you appreciate that the world does not owe you any favours, you are starting from a very strong foundation. Don't start from the position of being a victim because then you're at a disadvantage. Start from a position of: "Wow! I'm so blessed. Look how amazing life is. It literally pushed me out and landed me in an even better place!"

When you love yourself and are not wallowing in self-pity, then you are automatically in control and nobody can manipulate you. How does that feel to you? Doesn't it feel wonderful? Independence gives you that strength that comes from the Divine. Because now you're not leaning on anyone, you're leaning on God. When you discover that strength, then no one can manipulate you and there's no need to desperately try and please people in order to be liked. If they don't like you, it's their problem not yours. When that happens you can really, very truthfully, in your own soul, in your own life, live to the highest that you can expect yourself to be. Not only that, when you realise that goodness and light lives within you, you will realise that it lives in everyone else too. You'll no longer be angry with anyone. You'll realise that the only difference is that they haven't awakened their spiritual energies. How blessed are you that you went through this pain and that the spiritual energy was awakened in you? Everything is a gift. When you get that realisation, hold onto it and 'dig deep', as my Master Sri Swami Satchidananda, would say. If you have a

realisation dig deep and then you'll get answers to all your questions.

But be careful. A lot of people receive a few realisations and get very enthusiastic too quickly without getting a good grounding. They then start doing everything else apart from what they should do. They enrol for more courses, and become 'course junkies'. They do one yoga course then another and another and another. What happens is that they acquire a lot of knowledge, but if you don't have your head and your heart in the right place, the ego grows. So many of the teachers I've met throughout my life come back from courses more depressed than when they started. Why are they so depressed? Courses are supposed to make you feel happy and elevate you. 'Oh, I've realised this person speaks better than me and that person is smarter than I am...' If that's how you feel, then you haven't learnt the lessons. Why are you so worried about this one and that one? The whole idea of these courses is to bring you peace and you come back fearful that you're not a good enough teacher because you don't know enough. Even if you studied every single second of your life and never slept you would still not be able to read all the information that is out there.

Going through one's life from one course to another, from one teacher to another, constantly fickle, constantly worried is not what Yoga is about. I have seen people with so many diplomas on their walls and they still end up as



nervous wrecks! Lots of information is not always the answer. I look at my Master as an example: He never strived to obtain diplomas but he gives them all out and received many awards in his lifetime. He's got the highest diploma: the diploma of the Spirit; of living in the spirit, living life. Did you know he knew how to fly planes? Did you know that he was a great mechanic and he could fix any car? Did you know that he participated in the building of the LOTUS Temple by becoming the architect? He designed it with a few other architects. Did you know that he took a tractor and worked a crane and dug the trees up and dug up the lake at the LOTUS? And he had more energy than anyone else, because they were all exhausted and he kept working, while giving satsangs and talks. He was a super human being who loved the material but was never bound to it. For him, the material was just an expression of the Divine Consciousness. seeing it as such, he could enjoy all freely and losses were just part of the journey. His life example of Love and compassion have touched and changed millions around the globe.

I will give you an everyday example from my life:

I love art and sculptures and I used to collect lots of things. Of course, when you're raising children, it's very expensive so you don't indulge in luxuries. I used to go to stores and look at figurines and wish I could own some, I would even pine for them! I never even recognised this in me. I remember many years later, after practising yoga and

meditation, I went to a department store – they had the most beautiful figurines there. I could go there and look at every single one and not have one single desire (more things in my house? I really don't need it!). The enjoyment was so great as I could enjoy the beauty without owning the item! Some of the figurines especially were so delicate and perfect. I could appreciate the skill of those who made them. I could admire their gift and feel spiritually uplifted. There's none of that mind-stuff that disturbs our peace. It's just bliss to know that there are people in the world that can create such beautiful pieces and the world can look at it and enjoy it. For me that was a shift in consciousness and I understood the concept of "from material to spiritual". Don't get me wrong, I now own some beautiful pieces, the difference is I am no longer attached to them. They break or I give them away sometimes, I have understood they allow me the grace of enjoying them for the time I have them.

You don't need to have anything; you already have it all! The greatest gift is to know you are all but travellers on this earth and God wants to know God through you! It all belongs to you anyway and at the same time nothing belongs to you. Whenever someone else gets something they want, be happy for them! The happiness of others makes me happy. Unfortunately, people have become so competitive – mine is more, yours is less and everyone is fighting. Whose is better? Who's got more? Who's given

more? It's all about selfishness instead of being happy for someone else's good fortune.

Let us all enjoy our earth time by filling it with good thoughts. By charging each soul we see with what I call "Love vibes". Let us, each of us, work towards being a better person, living a better life by spreading goodness and kindness wherever we go. Our world needs that. Too many people are locked into the material world and have no peace! Let us be examples by practising non-attachment. Love all, but know nothing is ours. We are all family and when we make this spiritual shift, everything falls into place and makes sense. And then we can truly enjoy heaven on earth.



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*And to the most Revered Lord of Light and Love for all the blessings bestowed upon us... Om Shanti... Shanti... Shanti... Loves nalanie*

Nalanie was born in 1954 into a distinguished, leading family in Hong Kong, the Harilelas. In 1986 Nalanie formally became a disciple of His Holiness, Sri Swami Satchidananda and began her continuing study of the Science of Yoga.



She has been accredited by the Council of Teachers of the Satchidananda Ashram in Virginia, USA, to teach Asanas, Pranayama and Meditation. She is also an accredited teacher-trainer for Integral Yoga and a therapist under the British School of Yoga.

She is the Chairman of the Integral Yoga Centre in Gibraltar, where she runs regular weekly satsangs, teacher trainings, and counselling sessions.

Nalanie now lives in Spain, where she runs the George Harilela Yoga Hall. She frequently lectures on the Science of Yoga in Portugal, Spain, Germany, the UK, the USA and the Far East.

In 2008, she was presented with an award by the Governor of Gibraltar, on behalf of Her Majesty the Queen of England, for her service to humanity. The same year she was also awarded a Humanitarian Award from Yogaville, Virginia, USA.

Her example as a wife, mother, businesswoman, and now grandmother, who has devoted her life to God and His service, has been a beacon to her students. She shows that it is not necessary to withdraw from life in order to find the "Guru within." She is also deeply involved in many charities, one of the main one being Service in Satchidananda, [www.sisproject.org](http://www.sisproject.org).

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