

Spirituality & Community

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www.spiritualityandcommunity.com

New Serial: *Jarvis the Duck*



**The Book of the Dead
Ancient Egyptian Religion**

Minding My Real Self
Bryan Walton

Wants and Ego
Uma Khemani

The Dance
You're Not Who You Think You Are
Laura

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Who We Are

www.spiritualityandcommunity.com

Welcome! Seeking spiritual fulfillment? True happiness and mental wellness? Well, that's what we're all about. Spirituality & Community is a magazine, web site, and online community for those seeking answers to life's deepest questions. ***We are dedicated to promoting spirituality, true happiness, mental wellness, and appreciation for a diversity of spiritual beliefs.***

A New Age of Light

Our focus is spirituality, which we view as an inner search for happiness and fulfillment. We are concerned with what lies within the heart. ***We believe that within everyone lies a pure love that we call the Light or the Lord within. We believe that one must open one's heart to the Light to attain spiritual fulfillment and that only this brings true happiness and mental wellness.*** The Light is the essence of humanity. ***Ultimately, we find our way by casting our gaze inward.*** We will search this inner world over until we find our home:

***We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.
T.S. Eliot, Little Gidding***

We believe that mankind is entering a new age, an Age of Light. We see a growing spiritual crisis in the world today. Our culture has brought us unprecedented material well being, but we seem further away than ever from true spiritual wholeness. We also perceive an increase in mental health issues in our society and believe this to be linked to spiritual detachment. Many wander endlessly in search of the material gratification that will bring them happiness. Many have lost faith in religions and traditions. Others sincerely believe in traditional religions but remain unfulfilled spiritually and unhappy. Unfortunately, too many are so close-minded they refuse to ask what is missing from their lives. Yet, many hunger for spiritual wholeness and are searching for answers. ***We believe that we are entering a new age of enlightenment in which genuine spiritual progress will be made and that spiritual development depends upon a genuine appreciation for a diversity of spiritual beliefs.*** An appreciation for diversity of belief provides us with a fresh view of the beliefs of others, allows us to take from each set of beliefs that which rings true, and enables us to synthesize a personal spirituality that makes sense for each of us. When we view the beliefs of others with our hearts, we see truth shine through. We look with the highest regard to traditional beliefs and religions for guidance, and we also look forward. ***We believe that the past is not the end but the beginning.***



What We Do

Spirituality & Community produces a magazine and encompasses an online community. Both aspects serve as the basis for bringing together those who share our aspirations and beliefs, to meet each other and exchange ideas. We provide many opportunities for exploring spirituality and communicating with others:

- Spirituality & Community magazine*
- Features on the site*
- Online chats* (as interest arises)

The magazine is based on a Reader's Digest® type model. It is comprised primarily of reader submitted material. It is the primary mechanism for a member to both explore spirituality and communicate his or her ideas to others. Features are also posted on the site. When interest is sufficiently high, we will hold chats online. *We sincerely hope that you will find truth within, and we wish you only the best on your own personal journey!*

The Book of the Dead

The Papyrus of Ani (1240 BC)

(excerpts)

Ancient Egyptian Religion

Translated by E.A. Wallis Budge (1895)
and Allen and Faulkner



The ancient Egyptians believed that when a person died, that person would go before Osiris, the god of the underworld, to have his or her heart weighed. Osiris was usually depicted wearing an atef headdress and holding a crook and flail. If the person was judged good, they could continue on to other challenges and if successful, ultimately join Ra, the sun god, in eternal afterlife. The book of the dead was a guide to navigating the challenges of the underworld and would be personalized with the name of the deceased, a man named Ani in the case of the surviving papyrus we have today. The weighing of the heart took place in the Hall of Maat, the goddess of truth. Thoth and/or Anubis were thought to have actually weighed the heart. Thoth is the god of wisdom and was usually depicted with the head of an ibis. Anubis is the god of embalming/ guardian of the underworld and was usually depicted with the head of a jackal. Horus is also mentioned in this excerpt. He is the son of Osiris and Isis. He is the lord of the earth and was usually depicted as a falcon or a man with the head of a falcon. He was closely associated with the pharaohs. For more, see: <http://interoz.com/egypt/bkofdead.htm>.

Hymn to Osiris

Homage to thee, Osiris, Lord of eternity, King of the Gods, whose names are manifold, whose forms are holy, thou being of hidden form in the temples, whose Ka is holy. Thou art the governor of Tattu (Busiris), and also the mighty one in Sekhem (Letopolis). Thou art the Lord to whom praises are ascribed in the nome of Ati, thou art the Prince of divine food in Anu. Thou art the Lord who is commemorated in Maati, the Hidden Soul, the Lord of Qerrt (Elephantine), the Ruler supreme in White Wall (Memphis). Thou art the Soul of Ra, his own body, and hast thy place of rest in Henensu (Herakleopolis). Thou art the beneficent one, and art praised in Nart. Thou makest thy soul to be raised up. Thou art the Lord of the Great House in Khemenu (Hermopolis). Thou art the mighty one of victories in Shas-hetep, the Lord of eternity, the Governor of Abydos. The path of his throne is in Ta-tcheser (a part of Abydos). Thy name is established in the mouths of men. Thou art the substance of Two Lands (Egypt). Thou art Tem, the feeder of Kau (Doubles), the Governor of the Companies of the gods. Thou art the beneficent Spirit among the spirits. The god of the Celestial Ocean (Nu) draweth from thee his waters. Thou sendest forth the north wind at eventide, and breath from thy nostrils to the satisfaction of thy heart. Thy heart reneweth its youth, thou producest the.... The stars in the celestial heights are obedient unto thee, and the great doors of the sky open themselves before thee.

Hymn to Ra

Hail to you, you having come as Khepri, even Khepri who is the creator of the gods. You rise and shine on the back of your mother the sky, having appeared in glory as King of the gods. Your mother Nut shall use her arms on your behalf in making greeting. The Manu-mountain receives you in peace. Maat embraces you at all seasons. May you give power and might in vindication – and a coming forth as a living soul to see horakhty – to the ka of N.

May you be gracious to me when I see your beauty, having departed from upon earth. May I smite the Ass, may I drive off the rebel-serpent, may I destroy Apep when he acts, for I have seen the abdu-fish in its moment of being and the bulti-fish piloting the canoe on its waterway. I have seen Horus as helmsman with Thoth and Maat beside him, I have taken hold of the bow-warp of the Night-bark and the stern-warp of the Day-bark. May he grant that I see the sun-disc and behold the moon unceasingly every day; may my soul go forth to travel to every place which it desires; may my name be called out, may it be found at the board of offerings, may there be given to me loaves in the Presence like the Followers of Horus, may a place be made for me in the solar bark on the day when the god ferries across, and may I be received into the presence of Osiris in the Land of Vindication.

The Declaration of Innocence

What should be said when arriving at the Hall of Justice, of Two Truths, purging N [the deceased] of all the forbidden things he has done, and seeing the faces of all the Gods.

Spell for descending to the broad hall of Two Truths:

Hail to you, great God, Lord of Justice! I have come to you, my lord, that you may bring me so that I may see your beauty, for I know you and I know your name, and I know the names of the forty-two gods of those who are with you in this Hall of Justice, who live on those who cherish evil and who gulp down their blood on that day of the reckoning of characters in the presence of Wennefer. Behold the double son of the Songstresses; Lord of Truth is your name. Behold I have come to you, I have brought you truth, I have repelled falsehood for you.

Hail Far-strider who came forth from Heliopolis, I have done no falsehood.

Hail Fire-embracer who came forth from Kheraha, I have not robbed.

Hail Nosey who came forth from Hermopolis, I have not been rapacious.

Hail Swallower of shades who came forth from the cavern, I have not stolen.

Hail Dangerous One who came forth from Rosetjau, I have not killed men.

Hail Double Lion who came forth from the sky, I have not destroyed food-supplies.

Hail Fiery Eyes who came forth from Letopolis, I have done no crookedness.

Hail Flame which came forth backwards, I have not stolen the god's offerings.

Hail Bone-breaker who came forth from Heracleopolis, I have not told lies.

Hail Green of Flame who came forth from Memphis, I have not taken food.

Hail You of the cavern who came forth from the West, I have not been sullen.

Hail White of teeth who came forth from the Faiyum, I have not transgressed.

Hail Blood-eater who came forth from the shambles, I have not killed a sacred bull.

Hail Eater of entrails who came forth from the House of Thirty, I have not committed perjury.

Hail Lord of Truth who came forth from Maaty, I have not stolen bread.

Hail Wanderer who came forth from Bubastis, I have not eavesdropped.
Hail Pale One who came forth from Heliopolis, I have not babbled.
Hail Doubly evil who came forth from Andjet, I have not disputed except concerning my own property.
Hail Wememy-snake who came forth from the place of execution, I have not fornicated with a child.
Hail You who see whom you bring who came forth from the House of Min, I have not misbehaved.
Hail You who are over the Old One who came forth from Imau, I have not made terror.
Hail Demolisher who came forth from Xoïs, I have not transgressed.
Hail Disturber who came forth from Weryt, I have not been hot-tempered.
Hail Youth who came forth from the Heliopolitan nome, I have not been deaf to words of truth.
Hail Foreteller who came forth from Wenes, I have not made disturbance.
Hail You of the altar who came forth from the secret place, I have not hoodwinked.
Hail You whose face is behind him who came forth from the Cavern of Wrong, I have neither misconducted myself nor copulated with a boy.
Hail Hot-foot who came forth from the dusk, I have not been neglectful.
Hail You of the darkness who came forth from the darkness, I have not been quarrelsome.
Hail Carrier-off of His Portion who came forth from the Silent Land, I have not blasphemed God in my city.

Texts Relating To The Weighing Of The Heart Of Ani

The Speech of Thoth

Thoth, the judge of right and truth of the Great Company of the Gods who are in the presence of Osiris, saith: Hear ye this judgment. The heart of Osiris hath in very truth been weighed, and his Heart-soul hath borne testimony on his behalf; his heart hath been found right by the trial in the Great Balance. There hath not been found any wickedness in him; he hath not wasted the offerings which have been made in the temples; he hath not committed any evil act; and he hath not set his mouth in motion with words of evil whilst he was upon earth.

The Speech of the Gods

The Great Company of the Gods say to Thoth who dwelleth in Khemenu: That which cometh forth from thy mouth shall be declared true. The Osiris the scribe Ani, whose word is true, is holy and righteous. He hath not committed any sin, and he hath done no evil against us. The devourer Am-mit shall not be permitted to prevail over him. Meat offerings and admittance into the presence of the god Osiris shall be granted unto him, together with an abiding habitation in the Field of Offerings (Sekhet-hetepet), as unto the Followers of Horus.

The Speech of Horus to Osiris

Horus, the son of Isis, saith: I have come to thee, O Un-Nefer, and I have brought unto thee the Osiris Ani. His heart is righteous, and it hath come forth from the Balance; it hath not sinned against any god or any goddess. Thoth hath weighed it according to the decree pronounced unto him by the Company of the Gods, and it is most true and righteous. Grant thou that cakes and ale may be given unto him, and let him appear in the presence of the god Osiris, and let him be like into the Followers of Horus for ever and ever.

Jarvis the Duck

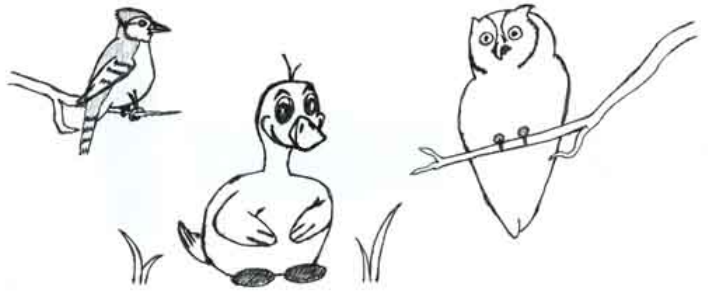
Kurt Venables

A Midsummer Night's Dawn

Jarvis is a young duck that lives on a small pond in The Great Poplar Forest. These are the chronicles of his adventures.

Jarvis and Jay were sitting in a clearing in the woods before dawn, just as eerie light was beginning to play across the sky. After their meeting that morning some weeks ago at the blackberry bush, Jarvis had gone back into the woods to find Jay. He had not been hard to find. As Jarvis approached that part of the woods, he had heard Jay's merry bird song. They had become good friends over the last month. Jay had been trying to teach Jarvis some tricky aerial maneuvers (without much luck), and Jarvis had been teaching Jay about astronomy and medicinal plants. Jarvis liked Jay because he was so down-to-earth. The other ducks at The Pond were so materialistic, arrogant, and self-centered. All they cared about was what they could get for themselves. The latest rage was lining one's nest with the softest moss and finest thistle down. "One must keep up appearances for the neighbors" was the general mindset.

Jarvis, however, loved to watch the sun rise. He had always thought that sunrise was so peaceful and beautiful. He was especially excited about this sunrise, for he knew this was the longest day of the year—the summer solstice. Jay was, perhaps, less excited. He had agreed to watch this sunrise with Jarvis the previous afternoon while snacking on blackberries. Jay, however, was a late sleeper and was definitely not singing a merry little bird song *this* morning.



Jarvis had pulled him out of his nice, warm nest despite his protests, and Jay was a little grumpy.

"I hope we don't get attacked by a black feathered doppelganger," announced Jay nervously after a few minutes of silence.

"A *what?*" asked Jarvis.

"A black feathered doppelganger," repeated Jay. "They hunt at night and can assume many different forms. They particularly like succulent young birds like myself."

"Are you succulent?" said Jarvis, "I didn't know." After a brief pause, Jarvis said, "Jay, I did pretty well in Fauna in school, and I'm sure there's no such thing."

They sat in silence for some minutes, then "Whooooo" rang out from a branch high on a tree.

Jay was petrified, unable to move or speak. Jarvis was a little anxious as well now. "Whooooo," came the sound again.

"Ummmm, I'm Jarvis. Hello! Whooo are you?" replied Jarvis, thinking they were being addressed and not wanting to appear rude.

“Oh, hey man,” came a voice, sounding rather surprised itself. What seemed like a huge form in the dim light flapped its wings several times and settled on a low branch near Jarvis and Jay. “What’s up?” said the shapeless form from the shadows, though it was a friendly sounding voice.

“Please don’t eat us ... Are you a black feathered doppelganger?” blurted out Jay in horror.

“A black feathered doggle ... banger? No, man, I’m an owl. You guys enjoying the sunrise?” said what was now clearly beginning to look like an owl. In fact, he was an old owl, brown and rather rumped, but good natured.

“Yes,” said Jarvis eagerly, “this is the solstice.”

“Indeed it is, though most don’t remember it anymore,” said the owl serenely. “I’m Sage.”

“I’m Jarvis, and this is Jay.”

“Glad to meet you guys,” replied Sage. The sun was coming up now, poking just above the tree line. Sage pulled a pair of dark sunglasses out from underneath his feathers and put them on. “Gotta have my shades,” explained Sage, “I *am* nocturnal.”

“Yes, don’t owls go to sleep at sunrise?” asked Jarvis.

“I wouldn’t miss dawn on the summer solstice,” replied Sage. “Besides, in my old age, I stay up late, usually ‘til noon.”

“When I was a duckling, my grandmother would tell me how animals used to revere the sun god, Ra, recognizing him as the *Lifegiver*,” said Jarvis. “Most ducks don’t care about the old gods now.”

“Yes, my grandmother taught me that without Ra, we wouldn’t have life,” agreed Jay, feeling more comfortable now that he could see that Sage was just a kind- if perhaps a little odd- old owl.

“When I was young, animals would bow for a moment of silence at sunrise,” said Sage. “At the solstice, the sun is at its most powerful, life at its fullest. Dawn on the solstice was a very special time to honor Ra, the Lifegiver.”

“I believe that Ra’s light shines on the inside of us as well as the outside,” said Jarvis, “the sun gives us spiritual life.” “We allow Ra to shine within by allowing love to fill our hearts; then, we experience the joy of the light. The sunlight within is what makes life worth living.”

“Very cool, man,” said Sage after a pause to reflect on Jarvis’s words. “Ya know, every once in a great while, an animal is born that just naturally possesses deep wisdom. That animal is a Seer. You may be a Seer, Jarvis,” said Sage.

The three bowed their heads in silence as the sun rose, then sat and wondered at the dawn for quite a while.

Minding My Real Self

Bryan Walton

The dense traffic was inching along the highway and once again I was resigned to being late home that night. In the rear view mirror I caught a glimpse of a vehicle, about six cars back, sneak out onto the shoulder and accelerate past the slowly moving convoy. As the SUV passed by I felt a wave of anger and resentment towards that inconsiderate driver. This was followed almost immediately by a twinge of guilt for having such intense negative feelings - you see I consider myself a nice guy, laidback, and tolerant. Anyway, the guilt must have done the trick, for within a couple of minutes the feelings dissipated and I was back to my normal self.

Maintaining my positive self-image is important to me; to not harbour negative thoughts. By trading the 'punishment of guilt' to assuage the 'pain of anger' I seem to have created a balance of sorts and avoided the anti-social act of expressing anger. But have I really let go? Or have I just suppressed the resentment and actually reinforced my belief that deep down, I am an angry person and need to control my negative self? If this is the case, my so-called positive image is a sham and a lie. This notion is underscored in *A Course in Miracles*, (lesson 21) which suggests:

"You will become increasingly aware that a slight twinge of annoyance is nothing but a veil drawn over intense fury."

I realize that my self-image is totally made up; an artificial creation of my mind. It is made up of a number of adopted attributes to which I have become rather attached and forms my identity. I certainly am proud when any of my achievements are publicly recognized. However when things don't go the way I planned, or reality doesn't follow my rules, it seems to be a threat to this identity for I find myself getting anxious, upset, and sometimes angry, as I try to get back in control.

It is interesting to notice how defense routines kick into place immediately when our identity is threatened, either by blaming circumstances or the person causing the upset. The neat thing about this strategy is that any counter attack would of course then be justified and it would be unfair to label it as vengeance. If external blame doesn't work, and since the idea of blaming myself would be an even bigger threat to my identity, the fallback position is to deny the problem exists, cover up the denial, and forget that I did. Perhaps Eckhart Tolle, the author of *The Power of Now*, is right when he said in a 2001 interview:

"All ancient teachings agree that the normal human state of consciousness is ...a state of insanity."

While this false way of being is not exactly a recipe for a life of peace and happiness, it has its compensations. When I am in a negative state of being annoyed at something; when the adrenalin is rushing through me, at least I feel very much alive. Vernon Howard counters in his book *The Power of Your Supermind*:

“A person refuses to give up his painful moods because he fears he would be empty without them. Notice how painful feelings, like sense of loss or indignation, provide a peculiar exhilaration. They induce a false sense of aliveness.”

Some people reinforce this view in defining their anger as a strength, innocently hidden by describing themselves as just outspoken; folks who call a spade a spade. Teacher and author Guy Finley adds:

“Negative emotions cannot exist without having something to blame for their punishing presence.”

If I am in the thrall of a pseudo self, a false identity, what am I supposed to do about it? I turn again to Howard’s solution:

“You can give up your pretentious picture of the anger without identifying with it; we must not call it our own. Simply watch it come and go, without shame or comment...”

This sounds like being a split-personality, but that is just the point. Rather than a futile fight to control this fearful part of ourselves – which is artificial anyway – we can stand aside and dispassionately observe. Count Leo Tolstoy echoes this thought with:

“But if men ... would only approach nearer to the phantoms which alarmed them, and would examine them, they would perceive that for them also they are only phantoms, and not realities.”

Experimenting with this new approach, at first I was disturbed to find out just how frequently I got irritated with little things, and how intense were those feelings that I had previously hidden. On the other hand, it was amazing how disowning these same feelings calmed me. Often I find myself inwardly chuckling at some of the foolish triggers to my rants. On realizing that I was no longer a victim of my own anger, then its handmaiden, guilt, disappeared. In addition, I am far less likely to be drawn in by other people’s anger. Now, I may be tolerant and nice guy, but does it really matter?

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Bryan Walton leads *“Oxygen for the Mind”* seminars on *Releasing Stress* and is the author of *“Dancing in the Mirror – Inspirations on Peace and Joy”* which can be explored at www.BryanWalton.com



The Dance

Laura

She danced and she danced and she...you get the idea. The slightest movement within her produced an electrifying movement in her limbs and torso. Twisting and turning, she was a product of the life force, the energy within and without. Moving through the white daisies, the gentle, nurturing spring sun caressed her silken body, and the look in her eye conveyed an innocence that could only be had from an eternity of raw experience. Twirling and spinning, she lost all sense of time until it became just another deposit in her memory bank. Arching her spine, she threw her head back like a long-necked swan or a wolf baying at the moon. Laughing with sheer glee, she skipped through the smiling flowers, falling on their bed of ecstasy.

"At least she looks peaceful," the golden-haired lady commented between sobs.

"That she most certainly does," said the tall, handsome man beside her with a faint smile.

They turned away while the coroner slid the white sheet over their grandmother's serene face. He picked a daisy off the sheet in wonder as the sad lady and handsome man left without another look.

You're Not Who You Think You Are

Laura

A small chinchilla was walking through a forest of wood scraps when a little bird started singing nearby. He craned his little neck to see who was making this beautiful music, but the bird was nowhere to be seen. He ran up onto a boulder, his little heart pounding so hard that he almost couldn't hear the beautiful music anymore.

Where was that darn bird?! Just then he felt the delicate touch of a feather brush his cheek, so he whirled around in that direction only to find... nothing. The music was getting louder now and the air was obviously being swished around by what must have been wings.

The aggravated chinchilla gave an emphatic sigh as he plopped down onto his rock. As he gave one last glance around, he sat up with a start as his eyes finally made contact with the bird! Ah ha! There she is! He moved slowly over to the bird so as not to scare her away, and peered into her beady little eyes.

"Why have you been hiding from me, Miss Canary?" His mouth opened in rage. "Hey, stop copying me! Would you please stop mimicking every word and move I make?!"

Now he was right up in her face; forget about being polite. "What's the big idea?!"

His nose was right up to hers. "I have half a mind to pluck every fea... TAP!!" went the mirror against his nose as he/she passed out in fright.

Wants and Ego

Uma Khemani

Once we learn to drop our unnecessary wants and false egos, and turn a little attention towards the sorrow of other human beings, we can progress at a fast pace. What should our understanding be--- How can we do this?

To lead a fruitful life, we really do not need much. Our desires of the materialistic goods has created a wall between us and our spiritual growth. We cannot seem to see beyond this wall. This wall is so thick that as soon as we satisfy one need, another crops up instantly like a growing fungus. One fungus doubles, then two to four, four to eight----- its an endless list of desires and wants. We get so much entangled in this wire and thorns of wants that a time comes when they start stifling and pricking us. If we build up enough courage in ourselves and climb over this self made wall, we will come to see the truth of life, how with the bare of necessities, we can lead a more fruitful and easy life.

I would like you to sit quietly for a while and see what you have attained for yourself in this span of life that you have lived. OK, you have spent 20,30, 40 years of your life. You have made a good academic career, a good standing as parents, and a good standing in society. Fine. Now spiritually where are you? Do you consider that all that is happening has been created and designed by you, or do you see God's hand in it? Does ego take over you and you can see only the I and Me, not beyond that.

I know it's hard to acknowledge somebody's presence, an energy or power, which you cannot see or feel. Through the various electronic appliances, we can feel the energy of electricity that we use. But how do we understand the energy of the power that controls us. Our journey from Me to He is a tough one. It's indeed a hard hit on our ego that something beyond yourselves controls your life for you consider yourself the supreme --- the ultimate.

We all do believe however that some energy created us. As a baby we are very close to this energy, the reason why a baby is always happily smiling even when alone by itself. But as we grow and become conditioned to this energy, we stop recognizing. Our elders condition us, to behave in a particular mannerism, as their parents had taught them. A child is not left alone to grow by itself.

Your life is a battery, which has been charged by a supreme energy-----cosmos energy. Until the battery gets discharged, your body will function. It's about how you use this energy. If you leave the battery unattended, rust will gather. Power, which had to come out with full force, is defused and lost. Our energy level dies a slow death, a meaningless machine of no use to anyone. But if we take proper care, the energy is used with full force, benefiting self as well as all around us.

Recondition your mind to become like a child. Let ego and I disappear. Remain in this world; for you will have to, as long as the energy that you have been build with does not get discharged. But remain detached. Always remember----- you brought nothing, you will take nothing. Put more time, more energy on the power that created you, whatever name you like to call it by----- God, Jesus, Krishna.

Meditation teaches you to live in this world with yourself, with full awareness. Earth is a planet you have visited, vacationed, and when the time comes to leave, you leave with no strings attached. You leave behind you only the songs and music of love, which you had spread, and which shall echo forever and forever.

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