

New Year's Resolutions: The Purification of Motivation

by Sat Siri Singh Khalsa

Once we become conscious of our consciousness, after our innocent early childhood, we realise that we have needs, urges, dreams, and desires on many levels; we start to strive, plan, visualise, make agendas, work hard and pray for achieving our multiple and changing goals. This seems to be a natural feature in human life.

However, sometimes, when some of these goals are achieved, the inner sensation and experience, maybe the hidden hopes we had attached to them, don't manifest in the expected way, or don't last very long. We can find that there seems to be more to this than just straightforward satisfaction, fulfilment and success, but maybe a learning process.

New Year's resolutions are no exception to this.

Popular techniques of getting what you want, like described in the best-selling book *The Secret*, or sometimes also suggested in some of our Kundalini Yoga kriya and meditation textbooks, seem to delve deep into the possibilities of the human mind and use its efficiency. Within the human mind lies the power to participate in the process of creation and destruction, and to influence the future (and the past).

On the other hand, Guru Nanak writes in raag Asa:

ਤੂੰ ਕਰਤਾ ਕਰਣਾ ਮੈ ਨਾਹੀ ਜਾ ਹਉ ਕਰੀ ਨ ਹੋਈ ॥੧॥

"You are the Creator, I can do nothing, if I try, nothing happens." (p 469)

And the Bhagavad Gita teaches:

"Those who are deluded by the operation of the gunas [qualities of creation: tama (inert), raja (moving), sat (balanced, light)] become attached to the results of their action." (3.29)

"The truly wise person sees that there is action in the midst of inaction and inaction in the midst of action... Arjuna, truly wise persons are in the world, but not of it... Those who are ignorant to the True Self (Sat Naam), thinking instead that they are the body and the doer, may attempt to renounce worldly actions, but at the inner level they still have the turmoil resulting from their attachments and desires. That inner turmoil is itself action, and thus they are still incurring karmic consequences even while supposedly not acting." (4.18)

As the crown of creation, the human being encompasses both ends of duality, but also both ends of the verticality of creation (the ladder of subtlety): the unborn and undying, unspeakable, transcendent spirit consciousness, and the transient, immanent creature of matter and energy in time and space. One of the essential teachings of the Dharma of the student (the Sikh Dharma) is, that these two are an inseparable pair: Akaal-Moorat, Karta-Purkh, Miri-Piri, Bana-Bani, Seva-Simran.

The sensations we are having during the crucial moments on our way to manifest our goals, or when we actually arrive at this final destination, carry great information about the process of our life and karma: The disguises of the motivation. Do we really know what we want, and what we ultimately want to achieve with our goals? How much are we in contact with our deepest motivations and driving forces? How clear can we see all the influences, our individual and collective karma? And how honest can we be with all of this towards ourselves? Is there really something that would make us more happy or a better person?

Yogi Bhajan once suggested this prayer: “God, please give us what we need, we don’t know what we need.” And we all try to live by his famous saying: “It doesn’t matter what you do in life, what matters is the courage you bring into it.”

In case we feel and decide that it is right and important to strive for our resolution, goal or mission statement, we should also create opportunities to look and feel deeper into the motivations that power them, take all the funny (and not so funny) sensations we harvest along our days into our meditation moments at sunrise and sunset, and face it gently, but honestly.

Like this, we might be able to drop all aspects of compensation, revenge, demonstration, competition, self-punishment and self-betterment, and find the core of all of our thinking, wanting, doing and communicating in the expression of the inviolable goodness of our simple, pure and perfect existence, of love.

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Resources:

Siri Guru Granth Sahib, translation by Sant Singh, <http://www.gurbanifiles.org/>
The Bhagavad Gita, translation by Eknath Easwaran, Penguin Books
or by Jack Hawley, New World Library