

Initiation: Is It The Key to Spiritual Awakening?

Taken from a workshop Reading with The Guides through Ron Scolastico, Ph.D.

QUESTION: A number of spiritual disciplines, particularly those with a master or guru, use *initiation* as a ladder to spiritual growth or enlightenment. What is initiation? If we don't have a human initiator, does spiritual initiation take place?

ANSWER: In earlier periods of human life, the *reality* that you are pointing to with the word "initiation" was quite different from the *conception* currently held by most human beings. For example, in a certain period of ancient Greece, an individual would be taken forth as a child and placed into a group of children who were initiated into an understanding of the "gods"—the spiritual realities as perceived by the priests at that time. In that period, "initiation" was a lifelong training of a human personality in the attainment of extremely dramatic experiences of realities that are not physical.

In a time of ancient Egypt, initiation involved the creation of a death-like state of the physical body.

Throughout human history, there have been many different processes of initiation. For your purposes at the present time, it is wise to consider initiation to be: A process of introducing your human personality *self* into a clearer, stronger, *conscious* experience of spiritual realities.

Currently, there are individuals who have a body of spiritual knowledge and experience that they believe is valuable. They have become teachers in order to share that knowledge with others. In so doing, they may create a *process* of initiation. They usually do that by: (1) referring to earlier writings, teachings, or traditions; or (2) by inventing the initiation process from their own experience and understanding of spiritual realities.

There are many ways in which an "initiation" can come about. What is important for you to know is: Initiation is *human*, not divine. Your soul does not say, "You must be initiated to know God." Initiation is created by human ideas, human thoughts, and human processes.

If you say, "I do not feel that I need initiation," then, you can assume that you do not need it. You, as a sensitive, intelligent human being, who is growing to the best of your ability, can make the decision: "I do not need this human-created process to find my way to truth, and to God. I have my own individual process of spiritual awakening." You might call that individual process your own *personal* initiation.

If you see evidence that a certain teacher has brought deep spiritual experiences to other people by putting them through a process of initiation, and you desire to experience that initiation, then you are free to go forth and achieve it. That is an area of human choice, desire, and interest.

There is a certain "natural" initiation that occurs for human beings. You could also call it *growth*. It can be focused upon mental and emotional blossoming. You could call that *personal* growth. It can also be focused upon knowing God, and your soul, and the spiritual realities. You could call that *spiritual* growth. Such growth is a personal process. It is a personal quest that all individuals can choose to make an important part of their life.

In your quest for *spiritual* growth, if you have a certain sequence of steps that you believe can bring about the growth, and you call those steps “initiation,” then rejoice. You have a clear map to guide your quest.

If you are more spontaneous and less organized, and you simply take a period of silence in each day to attune to the spiritual realms, and you do not call it initiation, you are still moving toward a greater conscious awareness of truth. What is involved in any spiritual practice, whether you call it initiation or spiritual growth, is simply *a change of your human conscious awareness*. You are becoming more *consciously* aware of the spiritual realities that *always* exist beneath your awareness.

If you desire to embark on a structured spiritual path of personal initiation, there are some important things that you can do in your daily life to become more consciously aware of the forces of God, of your soul, and of all spiritual realities. These are steps that you can take along your spiritual pathway.

The first step of your personal initiation process can be: Addressing your challenging thoughts and feelings. You might believe that initiation should begin with something ideal, like loving more fully. But, it is very difficult to love, or to have a spiritual experience, when you are frightened, troubled, confused, sad, or in pain. Therefore, the first step of initiation is the willingness to work creatively with your negative thoughts and feelings that have become *consistent* patterns. You do not need to give a great deal of attention to *fleeting* negative thoughts and feelings, but, you do need to work honestly with the consistent mental and emotional patterns that trouble you. You need to understand them, live through them, communicate them to other people, and eventually learn to release them.

The second step of your personal initiation can be: The patient willingness to *care* more, which eventually becomes a willingness to *love* more. Loving begins with caring. Care more about yourself and your human pathway through life. Care more about other people. Stir compassion, generosity, and kindness in yourself, to the best of your ability. That will lead to the creation of strong feelings of love, which will stimulate powerful *intuitive* capacities within yourself. The opening of those intuitive capacities will eventually lead you to deep spiritual experiences.

The third step of your personal initiation can be: Creating a holy “temple” to which you assign yourself and dedicate yourself. You can imagine that you are a priest or priestess in search of holy orders in a temple of your own creation. Your holy temple is created by taking time each day to step back from the human world and dedicate yourself to bringing your full consciousness to bear upon your soul, upon the forces of God, upon the wonderful eternal realities. This holy temple can become a wonderful retreat from your daily life, a place where you consistently go to attune to the loving spiritual forces. You can transform any physical place into your temple by your creativity and imagination. You can use various objects, such as a candle, incense, or a special photograph, to signal to your conscious mind that a spiritual opening is about to take place.

The fourth step of your personal initiation can be: A commitment to meaningful and beneficial activities in the physical world. Here, you can say to yourself, “It is not enough to simply feel the majesty of God *inside* myself. I need to do something in the outer physical world with other people after I have a private spiritual experience.” Some people, as part of their personal initiation process, might say, “I dedicate myself to being a teacher of kindness in the daily

world.” Others might say, “I will become a healer. I will help others heal their pain and suffering.” You will decide what activities to do in the physical world that will be personally meaningful to you, and beneficial to others.

This is a *general* way to carry out the steps of a path of *personal* initiation. You can create ways to extend any of these steps, to refine them, and adjust them to your own life. No matter what steps you take, the more understanding and *loving* you are in carrying out your personal initiation process, the more you will be able to bring your experience of the magnificence of the spiritual realms into harmonious alignment with a meaningful, joyful, and fulfilling life in the physical world.