Virtues

The Finest Fruits of the Human Spirit
Key Points

* When the human spirit bears fruit they look like the Virtues.

* In every culture the stories told and the character traits honoured are manifestations of the Virtues.

* The Virtues are the fruits of Faith -- they are never a substitute for Faith but rather a result of understanding who each of us is in reality.

* Each of God’s Messengers have caution Their followers that is not acceptable to believe and have it mean nothing. They called Their followers to the Virtues.

* They also reminded Their followers that a tree that bears no fruit is only fit for the fire.

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Virtues: The Fruits of Faith
Key Points

* Virtues are more fundamental than values.
* You can value anything -- money, education or success.
* The virtues -- the spirits that motivate the highest expressions of the human spirit are universally valued.
* Often values are concerned with how something is done -- Virtues are always concerned with the spirit that motivates the behavior.
* The practice of the Virtues vary from culture to culture. Often one culture fails to acknowledge the valued Virtue in another because the practice of the Virtue is different.
* Values are found in the achievement -- Virtues are found in the spirit, the intent behind the behaviours that result in the achievement.
Why Virtues?

Why Not Values?
Key Points

* Virtues are quality of the human spirit.
* The capacity for the Virtues is present from the beginning.
* Some of the Virtues like Love are awakened at birth -- Others like Justice become turned on later in life.

* The Virtues are there in potential only -- they must be developed before they can truly called virtues. If the necessary conditions are there the virtues will be developed.

* Virtues undeveloped are their opposites -- in this way a child can be seen as at the dividing line between light and darkness.

* In every religious system sin is taken to mean behaviour that is outside of God’s will for each of us -- it is to miss the mark -- in this sense we are all sinners for no person has always made the best choice for the highest reasons.
Virtues Are Present In Potential

From the Beginning
Key Points

* Every child is endowed with the capacity to develop the virtues.

* Each child is different from every other child right from the very beginning.

* One of the ways in which each child is different from every other is in the capacity for each of the virtues.

* Some will have a great capacity for patience, for example, it will be relatively easy for them to acquire it. Others will have a small capacity and try as they might, always find patience a challenge.

* While each mix is unique -- each mix of capacities for the virtues is good. Small capacity for patience may be balanced by a large capacity for determination, for example.

* It is not the amount of any of capacities we develop that matters but rather how much of the capacity we develop of what we were given. “God looks at the gauge on the tank.”
Capacity For Each Virtue Varies from Person to Person

- Determination
- Contentment
- Patience
- Love
When we are overwhelmed we protect ourselves -- if possible, we become tough -- numb to the pain -- if not possible, we become damaged.

Strengthening requires that the challenges remain manageable for the child -- too little challenge and no progress occurs -- too much overwhelms.

The challenge is to awaken the gifts and make them strong.

Key Points

* We are exquisitely sensitive beings -- destined to maintain that sensitivity throughout our lives.

* The spiritual difference between a mature adult and a child is the strength of the adult -- the wonder, sensitivity, and simplicity remain intact.

* Strengthening requires that the challenges remain manageable for the child -- too little challenge and no progress occurs -- too much overwhelms.

* When we are overwhelmed we protect ourselves -- if possible, we become tough -- numb to the pain -- if not possible, we become damaged.

* In both cases, our sensitivity remains intact.

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AWAKEN

Strengthen

Avoid Toughness

Exquisitively Sensitive

Do not damage
Key Points

* After a certain point in our development, the lessons we have learned fade from conscious memory.

* While the early years of our lives fade from memory, they become the inner balance with which we weigh our later experiences.

* These experiences become our inner sense of who we actually are -- all of our later experiences are unconsciously compared to that inner sense.

* If our foundation is shaky -- we will doubt and dismiss later successes -- if firm, challenges to the inner sense will be dismissed.

* Our inner foundation consists of things we actually know about ourselves -- the things that belong to us -- the most enduring of which are our virtues.
Parents are the first educators of their children. Their focus is on character development through the acquisition of Virtues. The Virtues form an individual's character -- the foundation for the remainder of her/his life. On this foundation an individual builds and lives her/his own life.

Our foundation - Our inner core
Who we are - way down deep
Key Points

* When a Virtue is developed it can be relied upon when the need for it arises.

* Situations we find ourselves in call on our virtues -- when they are developed, we draw on our virtues.

* The first step is to recognize that the virtues we have acquired are available to us when we need them -- if we have ever shown courage we can do so again.

* Recognizing the virtue that the situation calls for is more than recognition -- it begins the process of summoning up the virtue.

* Power is the ability to get work done -- to influence interactions and relationships -- the application of the virtues is the basis of the success of any endeavour.
The Virtues
Are Powers
Inner Resources
We Can Draw on for Strength
The Only Sure Basis for Self-Esteem

Key Points

* Authentic self-esteem is based on the accurate, positive things that we know of ourselves.

* The Virtues are the surest basis for that form of self-esteem for they are among the most enduring characteristics of an individual.

* Most people define themselves in terms of the work that they do or their accomplishments. These definitions suffice until work is lost or accomplishments diminished.

* Yet others tie their sense of self-worth to the opinions or valuation of others. They thus become dependent on the whims of the others in their world.

* Virtues developed do not change or become diminished -- they just become used.
Only Sure Basis for Self-Esteem
Key Points

* In all Sacred traditions the Virtues are the Names of the Creator and direct emanations of the Divine.

* They are referred to as Angels -- Divine Beings who intercede with humanity to promote the best within the human spirit.

* We are created in the image of our Creator -- among the meanings of this statement is our ability to mirror the Divine qualities into the world.

* When we acquire the Virtues in the world we invite the Divine into our lives -- we align ourselves with the realm of Spirit.

* Alignment with the Virtues permits them to work with us and through us to mirror the Divine into the world.
Human Virtues &
Spiritual Qualities

Mirror
of the
Divine
Key Points

* At the heart of every success will be found one or more of the Virtues.

* At the heart of any failure will be found the absence of one or more of the Virtues -- Virtues that if they had been there would have turned failure to success.

* Like the ingredients used in baking we tend to forget some are so common like water as to be forgotten in the process of describing the recipe.

* The Virtues are such ingredients underlying the success of any human endeavor -- you even need the Virtues to do the wrong thing successfully.

* Virtues lie at the heart of any personal endeavour -- their absence the source of failure.
Virtues

Essential For Success!

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Key Points

* In any human endeavour or enterprise the Virtues are the keys to success in both the outcome and process.

* They both open the doors and make success possible as well as predisposing any endeavour or enterprise to success.

* Within organizations the Virtues are needed for those involved in the organization to thrive in the performance of their work.

* Without the Virtues the participants may survive but they could never thrive -- the same could be said for the organization itself.

* Each organization has a spirit -- a spirit born of the virtues central to organizational processes.
Virtues: The Keys to Success
Key Points

* A community is a special form of human enterprise -- one dedicated to the development and well-being of its members.

* The virtues are the principles around which communities are organized -- they decide how the Virtues are put into practice.

* Systems of justice, the role of generosity, the place of love and mercy, etc. -- these are the forces binding communities together and make them work.

* Communities become known for the Virtues that play a central role in the community.

* Culture is concerned with how the Virtues are practiced within the community -- these are the social practices taught from one generation to another.

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Nature of the Virtues Within the Community

Ordering Principles
Spiritual Force
Basis for Distinction
Source of Culture
Key Points

* What does it mean to be good -- the Virtues provide the job description for what it means to be good.

* The Virtues are the job description for what it means to be a good father, mother, son or daughter -- employer or employee.

* When we tell a child to be good we are not providing any hint of what it would take to respond to the demands of the moment -- be it helpfulness or obedience. Naming the Virtues needed provides the specifics a child requires to respond appropriately.

* Being good -- acting on the Virtues necessary -- is much more than pleasing others -- it is offering your best to the moment just because it is your best.
Virtues Are What It Means To Be Good
Key Points

* The Virtues involve doing the right thing for the best of reasons with the highest of motivations.

* Virtues have to do with the intent behind the behaviour rather than the behaviour itself.

* Behaviour can be legislated -- compliance can be forced but the spirit needed to make it truly virtuous can only come from within.

* Our behaviour is complex and motivations elusive at times -- but it is axiomatic that both behaviour and motivation are subject to choice. This is basis of holding someone accountable.

* At its highest expression to recognize the need for Virtues is to respond with the Virtues needed -- “With confusion there is choice -- with clarity comes certainty.”
Acting On The Virtues Is Always a Matter of Choice
Key Points

* Just as light banishes the darkness -- the Virtues banish their opposites.

* Just as darkness is the absence of light -- the opposite of each of the Virtues is the result of absence of that Virtues.

* In one sense -- darkness is not a “real” thing -- it is the light that is “real” -- remove it and you have darkness. In the same way -- Virtues are real -- their opposites not.

* It you want to banish the opposite all you have to do is add the Virtue. Patience banishes impatience. Generosity banishes want brought on by greed.

* Rather than fighting the shadows we have to do is add the light -- rather than fighting the absence of the Virtues -- all we have to do is develop the Virtues.
Virtues Banish Their Opposites
Key Points

* We are not human doings -- we are human beings. The Virtues are not found in the deeds by the spirit behind the deeds.

* The Virtues are found in the realm of spirit -- the attitude -- the spirit in which the deed is done.

* When we act on the Virtues we find our selves in a state of Grace in which the Virtues dwell within -- the Holy Scriptures call on us to be patience, loving, kind, etc.

* Regardless of what you do it can be done in the spirit of love or tolerance or any of the other Virtues.

* When we set out to be loving or kind -- to acquire the Virtues we work on ourselves to develop the state of being in which the Virtue(s) dwells within.
Virtues are States of Being

Not Doings
Key Points

* The Virtues themselves are spiritual realities that emanate from the Divine -- they can never be fully encapsulated or understood completely.

* We never possess the Virtues -- they can not be checked off on a list of things that you own.

* While they can not be possessed they can not be lost either. While they can not be possessed they can be acquired.

* Just like radio and television signals are always around the Virtues are always present -- we only have to attune ourselves to their presence.

* When we develop the Virtues we learn to bring ourselves into alignment with them -- when we call on them we attune our spirit to theirs.
Virtues Can Be Acquired

But Never Possessed
Key Points

* The Virtues are spiritual realities that emanate from the Divine -- a single source. They are each manifestations of a single reality.

* One is not better that the other even though one may be required more than another at the moment.

* You can never be too strong in any of the Virtues -- but you can become unbalanced and rely too much on single aspect when another is called for.

* Fully developed any Virtue includes all the others -- just as all rays come together as the approach the single source.

* Choose any Virtues and develop all of its aspects and in the final analysis you will have them all -- Justice will always contain the Truth. Love will always hold Mercy.
Perfecting One Virtue Perfects Them All