

Summary of Kindle Life (From Chapter 1 to Chapter 23)

1. Freedom and License

People have grown from a primitive and barbarous state to be a civilized and intelligent society. The comforts and amenities provided are almost heavenly and man has been indulging in them without the least restraint. Uncontrolled and excessive indulgence in sensual enjoyments causes dissipation of one's personality and leads to sorrow and misery.

Freedom is essentially built on intelligent self-restraint and discipline. Scriptural texts provide an exhaustive science of better living and complete technique of self-development.

2. Art of right contact

The general complaint is that, the world is full of evil and imperfections, disturbances and despairs, and one often wonders how peace and tranquility could be found in their midst. Religious textbooks prescribe certain laws of living which define for us the modes of contact with the world of objects around us, so that we may have a more harmonious existence.

When we understand the "Art of establishing right contact" with the world, as prescribed by the scriptures, we can chasten and edify our subjective personality. The evils of the world, therefore are not great problems and impediments, but man's lack of dexterity in facing the challenges confronting him, is the real problem.

3. Man's Heritage

Independence is the very essence of manhood. However the sense objects of the world present to us a false glitter of joy. To resist this call of flesh, the all consuming onslaught of our senses, is the privilege and glory of man. Man being essentially divine by nature, but while facing the challenges of life, we don't know the right direction in which to turn.

The scriptures, like a true compass, always indicate the right direction. The secret of success lies in

- a) Using the faculty of discrimination and judgment (Intellect) and not to get disturbed by the rising tides of emotions. and
- b) Dedicating one's life to a higher ideal.

4. The Joy of Living

Our firm belief today is that the joys we experience through our senses lie in the objects of the world. If the joy is inherent in the sense-objects, then each object should provide the same quantum of joy to all those who come in contact with it. Obviously, this is far from truth. For instance, a cigarette fills one with joy and satisfaction, while it drives another mad with annoyance.

On a careful analysis we find that man's happiness is entirely a subjective phenomenon, for there seems to be a distinct and clear relationship between the state of his mind and the joy or sorrow that is experienced by him. When the mind is agitated, sorrow is experienced and when it is tranquil, there is joy. Happiness, therefore, is measured by the tranquility of one's mind.

5. The Dual Path

There are two distinct and separate paths in life, namely, the path of the pleasant (preyas) and the path of the good (sreyas). Man is confronted with the choice of taking to one of these paths at every single moment of his life.

The path of the pleasant which caters to man's self-gratification provides immediate pleasures, but ultimately, brings disappointment and sorrow.

The path of the good is detested in the beginning but, later on it leads to greater happiness and a sense of fulfillment.

6. Harmony of Existence

Life is defined as a series of continuous experiences. Analysing the experiences masters found that every experience constitute three factors – Experiencer (Subject), Experienced (object) and Process of experiencing.

On further analysis they found that Experiencer is composed of four different personalities – the physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual.

Each one of the four entities is differently constituted and has its own values and demands. Religious texts provide guidelines to bring all these four personalities into integration for a healthier and intelligent living.

7. Personality Rehabilitation

Our experiences are attributed to the difference in the texture and quality of the mind and intellect.

Mind is the seat of all emotions and feelings. Intellect is the discriminating faculty, the discerning, judging faculty.

Religion holds a mirror up to man's real nature within and also provides him with the 'ways and means for chastening his emotions' and 'edifying his thoughts', thereby enabling him to live a more dynamic and cheerful life.

8. Mind and Man

The mind is defined as a 'flow of thoughts' just as a river is a flow of water. The banks of the river guide and direct its flow and when the banks are not firm, the water runs amok. So too, when the intellect of man is not firm and determined, the mind

functions as it wants, and man is tossed hither and thither by the vicissitudes of his environment and circumstances.

The 'secret of success' behind all 'Men of achievement' lies in the faculty of applying their intellect in all their activities without being misled by any surging emotions or feelings.

9. Path of Perfection

The quality and texture of mind and intellect in us depend upon our inherent and innate tendencies or inclinations, which are called 'vasanas'.

We receive stimuli from the external world through our 5 senses, process them through our mind and intellect and respond through our 5 action organs. Our response to the world depends on our 'vasanas'.

By purifying and reforming the 'vasanas', the mind and intellect get properly tuned up and perfected and one is well armed to face any challenge in the world.

10. The Mechanism of Action

In the mechanism of human action, the propelling force behind our desires, thoughts and actions originates from our innate inclinations and tendencies, called by the term 'vasanas'. 'Vasanas' mean fragrance. Each individual has vasanas, distinct and peculiar to him and they define his individuality.

The heterogenous pattern of human beings is explained by the variety and differences in the texture of vasanas composing them. When man gets rid of his vasanas, he transcends mental agitation and attains a divine status. Man has this capacity to choose and exercise self-effort in choosing right action and can thus get rid of his vasanas.

11. The Law of Karma

Our actions -> leaves imprints in our personality as vasanas -> These vasanas gives rises to desires and actions. This action leading to vasanas and vasanas leading to desires and actions constitutes the karmic cycle. All our actions produces results following law of karma or cause and effect. Law of Karma is responsible for all our present situations, determined based on by our past actions.

Law of Karma does not mean we don't have a choice. We may not be able to change our present situations, but we have the ability to choose to respond to the situations.

'What' one meets in life is destiny and 'How' one meets it, is self-effort. Through our self-efforts we can modify the future.

12. The Play of Mind

‘Master the mind and you master the world’. The most fundamental of these eternal values are the three disciplines, namely Brahmacharya (Self-control); Ahimsa (Non-injury) and Satyam (Truthfulness), which are prescribed for regulation of our physical, mental and intellectual personalities respectively.

13. Fundamentals of Living

Three disciplines advised for reshaping our personality – Brahmacharya (self-control), Ahimsa (Non-injury), and Satyam (Truthfulness).

Brahmacharya means living in self-control with respect to all our sense enjoyments and does not mean their denial.

Second discipline Ahimsa means ‘non-injury’. Ahimsa is a mental attitude to our relationship with others in life. Physically a surgeon may appear cruel, but his heart means well.

Third disciple Satyam, a value of life on the intellectual plane. Satyam enjoins that one should live honestly with one’s own intellectual convictions. Each of us has ideals, but only few live up to them.

14. Harmony and Poise

Intelligent way of living is ‘To live in harmony’ with the situations in life and steadily work on to meet them with discretion and constant application.

The life of harmony can be lived by rising above our limited egocentric view of things and happenings, and expanding our mind to accommodate a constant awareness of the totality of the world, the entirety of mankind and the vastness and wholeness of the universal problems.

15. Science and Religion

Scientists continue to discover the secret powers of nature for blessing society. Whereas the religious masters try to understand what is the truth that binds all the laws of nature or in other words they are trying to understand and discover, The lawgiver, the controller and regulator of all laws.

16. What is Religion

True religion is a blend of philosophy and ritualism. Mere ritualism, bereft of philosophy is only superstition, while bare philosophy without ritualistic practices is tantamount to madness. Both the aspects must go hand in hand. Philosophy reinforces the external practices of ritual and gives them a purpose and a goal for realization. Ritualism does not mean mere physical performance of ceremonies but also embraces all modes of practical religion, applicable to mental and intellectual levels of our personality.

17. Vitals of a Nation

When the members of community/country live together with an integrated programme and strive with diligence and devotion for the achievement of a common goal, one sees the formation and glorious achievements of a nation.

A faithful adherence to religious precepts and doctrines develops a proper sense of integrity amongst individuals who go to constitute a healthy community. The coordinated and inspired efforts of such human beings alone can build up a nation.

18. What is Culture?

When a set of people live for a long period of time in a particular geographical area, respecting certain philosophical values is called their culture. The quality of such culture depends upon the type of values followed. The difference in culture lies in the values and virtues of life entertained by the people.

19. What makes a Man?

Human beings have the maximum capacity for emotion and their feelings can embrace the entire universe. Also, the faculty of intellectual discrimination in man knows no bounds; not only can he discriminate extrovertly in the realm of the gross world, but can also delve into the subjective layers of his personality until he reaches the recesses of the spiritual core in himself.

The rare few that develop a universal love and constantly engage themselves in activity under the guidance of their superior intellect are called Man and they alone can claim the prestige, dignity and glory of man.

20. Essence in Man.

The core of the human personality is the Consciousness, which is the 'Life-centre' around which all the activities of the body, mind and intellect revolve. It remains ever changeless and immovable like an axle in the wheel, but causes all changes and movements to occur. When man succeeds in identifying with this changeless, immovable conscious principle within him, he is no longer victimized by the changing phenomena of perceptions, emotions and thoughts, but becomes the Supreme Lord of them all. The intellectual pursuits, emotional attachments and physical cravings of such a man naturally withers and falls away like petals of a flower when the fruit emerges.

21. The Path of Divinity

A scientific analysis of the psychological being in man reveals three thought-conditions under which the human mind functions. They are called in Vedanta, as the Sattva - pure and the noble; Rajas – the passionate and agitated, and the Tamas, the dull and the inactive state. These three types of thoughts form the material with which the human mind and intellect are composed.

Religion helps us to chasten our desires and thoughts, so as to ultimately end them and man becomes God.

22. The state of Divinity

Divinity is the very nature and essence of man; but it lies covered under the encrustation of thoughts. A change in thoughts can be effected by three methods, namely, by reducing the quantity of thoughts, by improving the quality of thoughts and by giving a different direction to the thoughts.

When the mind is purified and when such a mind is absorbed in meditation, the last traces of thoughts die away, leaving the meditator in a state of Absolute Bliss.