

THE UNIVERSAL SPIRITUAL BROTHER&SISTERHOOD, INC.

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CHALLENGES AND ADVERSITY: GREAT OPPORTUNITIES FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH

We are certainly living in challenging times due to the pandemic, but every cloud has a silver lining. The Universal Spiritual Brother&Sisterhood (USB) teaches that *everything* that comes our way is a challenge to us—and an opportunity to use it as a spiritual stepping-stone. It is not things in themselves, but the way we respond to them, that is important. For *how* we respond to things—whether we use them as milestones or millstones along the way—determines whether we advance or fall back spiritually.

We can grow in stature spiritually and raise the level of our consciousness from the way we respond to challenges that problems present us. We can either be bruised on the rocks, pick ourselves up, and resume the climb, or we can be bruised on the rocks,



relinquish the climb, and retrace our steps to the valley below.

It is up to us to decide how we respond to the challenges we face. That response can impoverish us or enrich us, embitter us or mellow us. *The choice is ours.* As an Illumined Inspirer of the USB puts it:

Many travel the pathway of disillusionment, the pathway of broken dreams. Some who travel that pathway become stronger of soul, richer of soul, more understanding of soul, more compassionate of soul.

If we remember that the key to our spiritual advancement is how we respond to the events in our lives, we will not be dispirited for long by anything we meet. We may bend, but we will not break. We will know that we can meet it well, with courage, and with the realization that it is only in the test that we can prove ourselves.

It will give us strength if we remember that the mountaintop is never reached at one bound; that what to *our* eyes seems perfection is never achieved in just a few score years; that heaven and hell are states of mind, states of our own making; and that all the great prophets, teachers, seers, and enlightened spiritual leaders of the ages encountered sorrow and hardship and difficulty during their stays on earth.

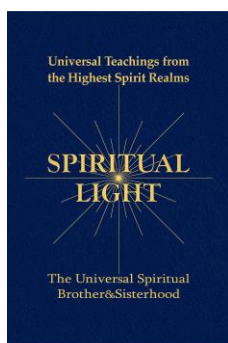
It is important to realize that no one can escape or resolve *all* problems. Not even the great spiritual leaders of the ages could do so. However, they overcame the problems they could, and lived with the rest bravely, cheerfully, and without bitterness. As an Illumined Soul counsels:

Correct what *can* be corrected. Accept *all* else gracefully, graciously, gratefully, and courageously.

To do so is to reveal spiritual strength—which is the right mental outlook and the ability to take in stride what each day has to offer, the so-called good and so-called bad alike. Spiritual strength can come from what we have learned from experience; and *this* life—our life on earth—is in almost all cases one of experience. It was not intended that we should be able to dispel distasteful situations in an instant by drawing upon our inner resources; but if those inner resources include spiritual strength, we can respond with a greater measure of tranquility, or a measure of comparative tranquility, to all that comes our way.

The USB teachings point out that adversity is one of the greatest tests we meet on earth. It is a test of our character, of our principles, of our spirituality. An Illumined Inspirer has said: “The earthly life is a testing ground of the soul.” In growing in stature spiritually, we set aside what no longer serves a noble purpose, however much it may at one time have been a part of our being and conducive to our growth, and replace it with other ideas, other ideals, and other visions. If we can be highly spiritual in a material world, we prove our spirituality and our worthiness to advance to higher spheres.

Adversities indeed provide us with opportunities to prove our worth. This does *not* mean that we should seek or invite illness or unhappiness or tragedy, but it *does* mean that we should live as nobly and as bravely as possible under *all* circumstances.



In closing: The full teachings of **The Universal Spiritual Brother&Sisterhood (USB)** are collected in its book, ***Spiritual Light***, of over 600 pages. It received **high praise** from Deepak Chopra, the Zammits, and numerous others. It is available from online booksellers and as a deluxe edition from the USB’s website, www.theusb.org, where you can greatly deepen your understanding of the USB. Or contact the USB at staff@theusb.org.

We plan to discuss more of these teachings, approximately monthly, in future posts.