

# #1 - Break Trail & Stay True to Yourself

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

life, people, trail, true, truthfulness, material, world, spiritual, habits, success, feeling, nature, sensual pleasure, mountains, person, temporary, bhakti yoga, falls, soul, direction

## SPEAKERS

Balakhilya, Ruben

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- B

**Balakhilya** 00:00

So, the idea is to present truthfulness in this podcast, and the definition for truthfulnessâ€”I just ran across this in one of my readings of the Vedic teachingsâ€”truthfulness is speaking frankly about the nature of reality without distorting the facts to please others. And if truthfulness is one of the pillars of society, for society to be whole and strong and flourishing and nourishing to the citizens, then truthfulness is an absolute necessity.
- R

**Ruben** 00:52

Hi, and welcome to The Breaking Trail Podcast. This is where you learn how to navigate life's journey through ancient wisdom. All you have to do is sit back and tune in to the conversation between me, Ruben, and my friend, teacher and Vedic scholar, Balakhilya. In today's episode, we'll be speaking about the meaning of Breaking Trail, the importance of staying true to ourselves and how to follow our true calling.
- B

**Balakhilya** 01:22

So welcome, everybody. Nice to be with you, whoever is out there.
- R

**Ruben** 01:31

We're just gonna dive right onto it. I found that it's kind of interesting how the material standard goes up, and we get more access to more satisfaction through our senses, but still, we're not happier. So there seems to be something wrong with that idea.
- B

**Balakhilya** 02:01

We would call that a flawed philosophy.

R

Ruben 02:04

Exactly.

B

Balakhilya 02:05

Yeah. But as far as the podcast itself goes, sometimes people ask: what is the real bottom line purpose of this podcast? And we've talked about this on other podcasts before—the four principles of religion that actually hold society up, if they're present in society, have been eroded away and basically these principles don't exist. The only one left is truthfulness and it's so shaky and deteriorated that it's like an icicle hanging down from an old frozen waterfall that is just ready to break off at any moment. And you're trying to climb up this icicle. You're on shaky ground. So the idea is to present truthfulness in this podcast, and the definition for truthfulness—I just ran across this in one of my readings of the Vedic teachings—"Truthfulness is speaking frankly about the nature of reality, without distorting the facts to please others."

R

Ruben 03:33

Wow.

B

Balakhilya 03:34

So let's read that, again; "Truthfulness is speaking frankly about the nature of reality without distorting the facts to please others." So that's the foundation of this podcast. To present the facts of reality without distorting it because, "Oh, somebody won't like this," or, "This group of people might be offended" or, "Somebody might not like us because we say this." Then you don't get truthfulness. You just get all kinds of adjusted, fake—what do they talk about all the time? Fake news. It's not really what we need. And if truthfulness is one of the pillars of society, for society to be whole and strong and flourishing and nourishing to the citizens, then truthfulness is an absolute necessity.

R

Ruben 04:43

Even though you don't think that you offend someone I think most people speak because to some extent or another, they want followers, or they want money, or they want appreciation. They want something from the person that they're speaking to.

B

Balakhilya 05:02

Yeah, so you're controlled by them. You've already compromised yourself and sold out, basically, to the audience. And you may have an amazing number of followers. I mean, it might be thousands, millions, who knows? But what is the value? That's where this idea of the "Century of the self" has gone. It's taken us in that direction. And now it's just running full speed ahead. So we look the way we will think other people will like us to look, or we say what other people want to hear, or we play all kinds of compromised games—we compromise ourselves completely. We sell out our self, and therefore, we're totally feeling like that; "I'm not really me. I'm not really myself. I'm what everybody else wants me to be. I'm not really myself." And then there's the other whole movement of "Be yourself". But that means just blending in with what everybody else says you should be like, in a different way.

R

Ruben 06:25

Yeah, and if they don't want to know what the self isâ€”like that's a big philosophical question. What is the self? We have to know what the self is. How are we ever going to focus on the self if we don't know what that is?

B

Balakhilya 06:36

That's right.

R

Ruben 06:38

It just seems like it's taken for granted that we know that, "I'm this body. This is what I am. I am my senses," and whatever, I guess "My passport" like you say sometimes, "It's clearly stated!"

B

Balakhilya 06:51

Yeah, I am who my passport says I am and who society thinks I am. And now that's become so controversial that, "Okay, I got this self, but I'm going to change it to another self." And where does it end? It just keeps getting more and more confusing. And more and more unfulfilling because none of it is true. This truthfulness statement is not being applied to our lives. It sounds good on paper. Yes, yes. I agree. When you start applying that to your life it's not really played out. So, the purpose of this podcast is to present the truth as it is declared in these yoga teachings that we base all of our knowledge and vision and understanding on, and let it fall where it does. It will find fertile ground in some places, and other places it will not. The example given in the Vedas, oftentimes, is the rain cloud; it rains on everythingâ€”it rains on the rocks, it rains on desert, it rains on the fertile soil, it rains on the ocean. And it has different effects, depending on where it falls. So, obviously, this podcast will have different effects, depending on where it falls - from pushback to thank you to receptivity to, "Wow, this changed my life," to, "It's okay, but I'm not interested." I mean, it'll run the gamut. We know that. I mean, it's not any mystery here. But it's still going to be the way it is.

R

Ruben 08:56

Yeah. Is it possible to become more receptive then? I mean, on the receiver end?

B

Balakhilya 09:05

Well, yes, of course. And that's one of the ideas behind Breaking Trail. You may not like Breaking Trail. Breaking Trail kind of comes from a mountain background between Ruben and I really.

R

Ruben 09:25

I forgot to mention.

B

Balakhilya 09:27

Yeah, where did this name come from? Because when you're traveling in the mountains, there's trails that are well worn, and obviously, they're on the maps and it shows where you're going to go and what to expect ahead, etc, etc. And then there might be other unknown trails. And it's not on the map, or you don't really know what's coming up and so therefore, you take the chance. It's kind of "Take the adventure; let's see where this thing goes." Or in winter, it's even more obvious. You can be on an established route. But say there was a recent snowstorm and the trail had disappeared. And, therefore, you've got to break trail; you've got to make a new trail through the new snow and it could be deep. It increases the difficulty a lot. And the signs, the trail indicators and so on, that you used to rely on "because you've been down this trail many times" are gone! It disappeared. Well, where is the trail now? You're looking at such an unmarked landscape and so it becomes more challenging physically, mentally and orienteering-wise. And I know the person's going to hear it and say, "Well, you just get out your phone with your GPS, and it becomes very clear." Or your map and your compass, and all that's true, but it still doesn't make the deep snow any easier to go across just because you know that you're going in the right direction. But if you've got your goal, and you know where you're trying to go, and you just keep going, you're breaking new trail, and therefore it breaks into a new area of your abilities and your determination, etc. So that's kind of the concept behind this Breaking Trail name.

R

Ruben 11:41

And knowing that you have somewhere to go makes it so much easier. I just remember once when I was hiking, this was in February in north of Sweden. It's really, really dark all the time. And really cold; probably minus 25 or something. We'd been hiking for a long, long time. And we were looking for this cabin. And of course, we had our GPS watches. So we plotted in many of the cabin coordinates in the GPS watch. So it will tell us how far it is to go to the cabin. But there was one cabin we didn't, because we thought we were going to find it. So we're walking and walking and when you don't know where you're going! It's just so frustrating to keep walking. You're looking for this cabin, and we didn't have the watch. We didn't know, we had no clue where this is going to be. We were out there in the dark. And finally, we decided we're gonna put up the tents right here. Because it's very hard to make the decision when to put the tent up, when to just say, "No, enough is enough. I'm gonna camp here." So that's why we kept walking and walking. But eventually we said we're going to put our tents up. But that's when in the far, far distance, we saw something and we said "That's got to be the hut!" We saw like 10 'got-to-be-the-hut's before that, but this time we went for it. They were rocks, but this one was a hut finally and so! Just having that direction. Once we knew that that was a cabin and once we could see it, once the form of the cabin was there and we could see it, walking through the snow wasn't a hard thing. We didn't even think about it. A full day, so tired, so cold. We didn't even think about it. It was easy. Yeah, because we knew; that's the goal.

B

Balakhilya 13:46

Yeah, all those things come into play in life. We can talk about it; and examples of our trips and the mountains and so on. But really, life is that journey. And we have to break trail from beginning to end really; and we need some guidance, we need some direction, we need to know what the goal is. And that's why we have our scriptures, the maps, if you will, of life and we have the guides, the spiritual masters, that guide us. But we have to still have the determination inside to want to do this. And the more you do it, the more that is increased; "I really like this". And one success leads to another success. Success was defined as the accomplishment of an aim or a purpose. So you have an aim and if you achieve it, that gives you even more impetus to keep going and ultimately! Well let's back up a little bit, because you mentioned it a while back that this is the century of the self. But if we don't know who the self is, then what are we dealing with? We don't even know what we're dealing with. And so again, we've talked about this on various occasions that the self that we speak about is the spiritual self "the true self, our true identity, who am I really" not the temporary identity of the body we happen to be living in at this moment. And so if we don't know our true self, then what we do is falsely identify with the temporary bodily self. And there's two levels here, the physical and the mental. And our whole life revolves around that. So that's why this thing has caught on so much "the century of the self" because people are more and more able to present their material self to other

people with just a click of a button, or a post on the social media or something, and get some feedback. And so it just brings us more and more into a self-centered consciousness of, "Look at me. This is what I did. This is what I'm doing, this is what I'm going to do." And we present it like it's the best thing that's ever happened. And we're having so much fun doing it. And all it does is just make the other people who know they're not doing itâ€"and they probably won't ever have that same opportunityâ€"envious, because it looks like they're having more fun than I am. And I want to be them; I want to be having that fun. I want to be having more fun. So then if I'm on that end of the scale, then I've got to create an illusion to other people, that, "Well, you're doing this, but I'm doing this and look at me." And it just snowballs and snowballs and becomes people's lives.

R

Ruben 17:23

So because they identify in that way, it's having the effect that others are doing that, too.

B

Balakhilya 17:30

Yeah, so I am who people perceive me to be. And then they create whole movements behind these false identities and powerful movements that are affecting the lives of so many people. And it's just a fake world, really. And that's why out of this movement of self-centeredness comes increased signs that it's not workingâ€"with depression, the anxiety, the feeling of, "I don't even know who I am. I'm nobody, I'm ugly, I'm this, I'm that. I must change; I must become like they want me to be." We're so easily influenced by others anyway. And the more we're dependent on others for our personality and our feeling of success and worthiness, then the weaker I am. I don't really have anything that's me. It's all just a bunch of other people's opinions of me, that creates my identity. But all of it is fake, whether everybody likes me, or nobody likes me because of my material situationâ€"whether it's physical, mental, philosophical, political, whatever it isâ€"it's all not true. So therefore, there's no real strength there. And there's no real happiness and fulfillment there. Right?

R

Ruben 19:14

Yeah. I see totally. Because it's not real, it's not seeing you for what you really are. And you're not getting strength from what you really are.

B

Balakhilya 19:23

Yeah. So that's why the true spiritual personalities, those who are the realized souls, those who have actually traversed this pathâ€"that's another point about Breaking Trail. In Bhagavad-gita, the Lord is speaking, and He says many, many sages in the past have traversed this path and become successful. This is the path of self-realization. This is a path of self-discovery, the path of spiritual evolution and reestablishing our lost relationship with the Supreme Lord, based on the guidance and teachings of the yoga scriptures. And so the Lord Himself said, many, many sages in the past have traversed this path, broken this trail, and achieved success and happiness. So it works; the process works. See, yoga is not a process of failure. I was advocating bhakti yoga, because it's the highest platform of yoga as declared in the Vedic scriptures, and by the Supreme Lord Himself, and by those who have traversed this path and become fully realized. They all declare that bhakti yoga is the topmost yoga systemâ€"the summum bonum of the yoga process. So if the Lord says you can traverse this path and become successfulâ€"many, many others have, seeâ€"meaning it is a path that works, if you will. It does lead to where you want to goâ€"and that's true happiness and true satisfaction, and full strength and understanding of your true self: I am spirit soul, and

the body, it is temporary. And no matter what it looks like, and how much I change it, or dress it or present it to others in a way they want to see it, or whateverâ€”it's temporary, and it's gone in a flash. All of a sudden, you're not in that body anymore. It's just a false promise.

R

Ruben 21:55

Again, back to the Breaking Trail comparison, because I was thinking about that as well, maybe someone can relate to this. When you're skiing, and you sometimesâ€”! Especially this one time, I remember we were trying to follow a trail into the mountains, and there was a lost trail there. So the trail was there. There was just snow that had fallen on top of it, and you had to really feel your way, because you couldn't see it, but you could feel it when you're walking there. "This is the path that someone has gone before." So I guess that's the ideaâ€”that someone has walked there before on this lost trail. You're not breaking trail, like a completely new trail; you're not just making your own thing. But you're following in the footsteps of these realized souls that you say. And that trail is just a little bit more difficult to see. The snow has just come over it. The fresh snow has come over it a little bit.

B

Balakhilya 22:52

Yeah, that's exactly right. We're not saying just branch off on your own and make a new spiritual path. That's the opposite of what we're saying. You must follow this established path that's been given by the Supreme Lord Himself, and handed down through ages and ages. And the wise people are taking others across the same trail and achieving success. So, another point: We're always talking about mountains and snow. I wonder how that keeps coming back, but if somebody has walked before you on that snow-covered trail, and there's tracksâ€”might be kind of slightly covered, but there are still faint indications of where they walkedâ€”then it's much easier for you. And you know, "Well I'm on the right trail, because I'm following these tracks." Provided the tracks go in the right direction. You can follow somebody who's just lost and you're just following the person into his lost world. But we're talking about a person who's not lost, on this yoga path. There's nobody lost here. The masters are not lost. They're just saying, "Follow my footsteps." And the more closely we can do that the more successful we will be and the easier the route is and the safer it is. One time I was skiing in the mountains, back country skiing with a friend of mine, and, he was leading because he was basically my mountain backcountry mentor. And we made a deal when we met. He was quite well known in the area as one of the guys. He was on top of the hierarchy there. But he became interested in chanting and the teachings of bhakti yoga and so on. And so we made an agreement. He said, "You know what? I'll teach you about the mountains if you teach me about spiritual life." And I said, "Done deal. No problem."

R

Ruben 25:25

You were probably happy to do that anyway, whatever he was going to teach you.

B

Balakhilya 25:30

So anyway, one day we're out, he's in front and we're going up this place. And the idea is, "Always follow me. Follow me." So we go up, higher up, higher up. And then there was a dip in the snow, and his trailâ€”! He was far enough ahead that I couldn't see him, I was just following his tracks. And so this dip went down and up like that. So that's where he went, and then off to the right. And so my concept was, "Well, why go down and back up when I can just go around to the left and avoid this dip." I just took my own route. But as I got to the apex of this circle that I was going to make to come back to his trail, there was a cornice and the whole thing broke off. So, of course, I was okay. But

when I got to him, I told him and he said, "Yeah, see, I told you. Follow my tracks." I said "Okay, I get it." So that's the way it is in spiritual life. We don't go off on our own whim. We understand the master is the one who knows. And you follow his tracks, you can't go wrong.

R

Ruben 26:59

It's a dangerous game, there are so many pitfalls.

B

Balakhilya 27:07

Yeah. So if you've got faith in your guide, your spiritual guide, and you follow him, then you know you're safe. You know you're okay, walking through a minefield. You're not going to just go off on your own. You're following a person in front of you steps. Well, he stepped there, and it didn't blow up. So therefore, you step in the same place, and so on. And you get through the minefield. You don't just go off on your own, say, "Well, I like it over here! The flower's over there. Maybe this will be shorter and easier." Because that's a life and death situation. So in spiritual life, it's actually even more crucial as being a life and death situation.

R

Ruben 27:59

But there's an important point that people speak about a lot. Because you do find a lot of people who say all different kinds of things, but then it generally falls back to intuition. What is the role of intuition, or the gut feeling?

B

Balakhilya 28:17

Well, you know, intuition can be pure or it can be all very much contaminated, depending on the individual. So what I might feel in my gut may be very biased or prejudiced because of desire, or all kinds of different reasons—that I want something to be this way, so my gut tells me to go in this way. But the more pure we are, then the more that gut feeling, which is basically two things; our intelligence and the Lord in the heart revealing the truth to us. So that's why I can't always trust my intuition. Many people have found that they acted on their intuition, and it wasn't trustworthy. Many people—"again, back to the mountains"—one thing that the authorities on all this backcountry travel say is, "If it feels wrong, then don't group think." Because everybody else thinks it's okay, and you don't, doesn't mean it is. Basically they're saying, "Follow your gut." So, yeah, there's validity there. But when it comes to spiritual life, again, it's a little bit different. But if you're serious, if you're really serious about knowing the truth, then the more serious you are, the more that inner feeling is going to be correct. And if somebody's speaking some philosophy that's obviously not true, you're probably going to feel that—if you're serious. But if you're not serious, then it's going to sound correct. Because that's what you want to hear and it appeals to what you already believe and think. And so, "Oh, I like that guy. He says what I already think and feel." It's completely wrong, but you're completely wrong, too. And your thinking and feeling is wrong. So therefore, you find each other and support each other, in the wrong direction.

R

Ruben 30:44

But in a sense it really comes back to sincerity. You get what you want.



B

Balakhilya 30:52

Exactly. Sincerity and faith—that's a crucial factor in spiritual life. And at some point, a person might seriously decide that I want to change my life. I mean, seriously, decide; not just whimsically. "Oh, it'd be good to change my life, if it was easy and fit in with what I already like to do." No. Sincerely, seriously, decide to change your life, whatever it takes. And you know from the beginning, it might be difficult; "I'm going to be faced with many challenges, and I'm going to probably go in a direction that's not popular and whatever, but I'm going to do it." Well, that person will be guided properly. And he will be led to a true master, true teacher, who can actually truly help him traverse the material world, the ocean of material misery, as we've talked about many times. That's why you see so many people going in so many different directions, fully convinced that they're right. Because they're getting what they want. They're convinced because that's what they want to be convinced of.

R

Ruben 32:17

And that's, again, something that is kind of comforting. When you look at the world, you see that there's so much imperfections and things that you wouldn't like to have in the world. However you can change it—if people keep wanting what they want, then that will manifest in the world, and there will be weird things and wars and conflicts.

B

Balakhilya 32:39

Yeah. Imperfect people want imperfect things. And create imperfections.

R

Ruben 32:45

Exactly. It's been a huge thing for me, from the start, that my mom—she's really like a mountain goat or a mountain fox or something—she's really inspired me to be in nature a lot. And I really, really wanted to do something about the environmental problem. That started me into the spiritual path, so to say, so I started studying environmental engineering. I finished my studies, but then I felt like there had to be something more. Because you cannot—it comes back to what people want on the inside, and the inside will reflect on the outside—you can't just change technology and assume that everything's going to be good, because you have better technology. We're going to misuse it somehow.

B

Balakhilya 33:38

Of course, yeah. As long as the unfulfilled need of the soul is nagging us, then we're going to try to fulfill that from consuming. Because we think we're the body and we're going to consume in one way or another, whether we make our energy from fossil fuels or wind and solar, and etc, etc. It's still going to be the consuming consciousness that's driving the whole thing. And so it's not really the solution. EF Schumacher said—he was an economist from Britain in the 70s—"There's enough for everybody's need, but not enough for every man's greed." So nature provides for every man's need. Look at all the animals; they're provided for. Nature has provided this food for this species, that food for that species, and the plants and the aquatics, etc, etc. They have their needs met and their needs are much more simple. But when the soul gets the human form of life, the physical needs are there. And so nature provides all that. But when it comes to mental and psychological needs, that enters another realm because that's where the need of the soul manifests the most—these deep desires of fulfillment that aren't being met. So, with our intelligence and so on we figure out more and more ways to consume more readily, more easily, more conveniently—

R

Ruben 35:35

And try to fill that hole.

B

Balakhilya 35:36

â€¦ more globally to fill up the hole, but the hole is not being filled. So we just develop new technology to increase it. And then we see we've created a problem. So we try to keep the same emptiness and greed, but now try to adjust it with different types of energy or whatever, whateverâ€¦ environmental habits to improveâ€¦ but we haven't solved the problem. If you don't go to the root problemâ€¦ I'm spirit soul and I need spiritual foodâ€¦ then you just keep generating the same scenario in different ways. And you never really solve the problem. So you're not breaking any new trails here. It is the same old trail, with a new pair of shoes, or a new pair of pants, a new jacket. It's still the same trail and you're not really changing anything. You're just dressing up different.

R

Ruben 36:45

Or you're following the trail, but you're following it in the other directionâ€¦ you're going against the trail, but you're still going the trail.

B

Balakhilya 36:52

Yeah. So that's why we need to just stick to truthfulness, speaking the nature of reality. Reality is we're spirit soul. That's absolute reality. Absolute means it is eternally true, it never changes. That's what absolute means. Absolute Truth. It never changes. The world is a world of relative truth. It's changing all the time. It's true because of these certain set of conditions. If we'll change those conditions, that truth is no longer relevant. So it's not true anymore. I always give the example of water. It boils at 100 degrees Centigrade. Well, everybody that has been to any kind of physics class; "Yeah, yeah, that's true." But it's relative, because if you go to 4000 meters, water boils at a lower temperature and so therefore, it's no longer true. So if water is boiling at 4000 meters, you can't say, "Oh, it's 100 degrees"â€¦ because it's not. That's why it takes longer to cook food at higher altitude because the water is not as hot. Ninety degrees or 80 degrees is not as hot as 100 degrees. So if it took you 10 minutes at sea level, it takes you 15 minutes at altitude. So it's relative to the altitude, because the altitude is determining the atmospheric pressure, and therefore the water boils. Pressure's less at a higher altitude so water boils at a lower temperature, etc. Anyway, the point is the same: it's a relative truth because it's dependent on altitude, barometric pressure. So the material world truthsâ€¦ the material truthsâ€¦ are all in that category; relative. It used to be that a person lived 40-50 years, back in some previous times, and that was considered old age, "He lived a long time." He lived to be 50. Because at that time, due to conditions, that was an old lifespan. But now that the average age is 80, or 78, or whatever it is, and you think, "Well, 50, that's young." So it's relative to the time. It's all relative; whereas absolute truth is always true. So the absolute truth is, "I'm spirit soul. I'm not this material body." This time I'm in a human bodyâ€¦ that's true, if you want to identify me according to the body. But I'm not the body. Last lifetime, I may have been in a dog body. Next lifetime, I may be in a bird body. So, "Oh, he's a bird," or, "He's a human," or, "He's a dog." No. That's just the body. But the absolute truth is, I'm still the same spiritual person with a different set of clothes on, so to speak. So, "I'm spirit soul" is eternally trueâ€¦ that never, ever changes. The body is temporary, I'm eternal. That's always true. I'm an individual, I'll never become you, I'll never become someone else, I never become God. I'm the individual that I am today, that I was last time in another life, and I'll be in my next life. That's eternally true. I'm not going to be another person. That's all eternally the same. So this is absolute knowledge. And then you branch out to the material worldâ€¦ which is just another place that's temporaryâ€¦ made of material energy and on and on it goes. So if you learn to live your life on the absolute platform of truth, then you know you're going to be living correctly. That's the

teaching of the Vedas, especially the bhakti teaching. That's what the masters teach. And their trail that they're trying to encourage us to follow them on, is a trail through the journey of life in the material world, following the absolute knowledge. To go higher and higher in consciousness, to evolve spiritually, and come, more and more, to enlightenment about our true identity, the material world, the reality of the material world, the temporary nature of matter and the eternal nature of spirit. And ultimately knowledge of the spiritual world and our position in the spiritual world, our relation with the source of everything, the original person, Adi-purusha, the Supreme Lord. What is my relationship? How can I enhance that relationship? All of that; that is the trail that we're talking about breaking. That is the trail. And it's a trail that leads to absolute life, an absolute world and it's the trail of the soul. So, that's wonderful. And if a person wants to really change their life then that's how you do it. The point is that the absolute journey along the absolute trail of absolute knowledge, led by the absolute master is the trail to ultimate success in life. You got me?

R

Ruben 43:12

Yeah, I got it. That's all we want. We all want to be successful. We're just aiming for success in different ways. And many people are really, really going for it, going for the material success or the career.

B

Balakhilya 43:33

Yeah, we want a good outcome from an undertaking and that has to be a spiritually realized outcome for it to be really good. Ultimate good.

R

Ruben 43:46

And eternally good. Not just good for this lifetime. But how about the next one? And how about the next one after that? We're eternal.

B

Balakhilya 43:52

Yeah, absolutely. We're talking about eternal; eternal good, eternal success. And, yeah, all these material success stories, they're like, flashes in the pan. You can read about them in the news every day; about some amazing success story that ended just in nothing.

R

Ruben 44:19

That's true. And we've mentioned this many times, but like Russell Brandâ€”and there are many other artistsâ€”the fame doesn't cut it.

B

Balakhilya 44:30

I just read a story yesterday in the news. A Romanian cryptocurrency entrepreneur who got in very early and he was worth \$2 billion, and 41 years old. You'd say that was successful. For most people, that would be a success. But supposedly, the story goes, that he was swimming off the coast of Costa Rica and got caught up in a current and disappeared. Gone! And so of course, there's always the risk of, "Well, maybe it's not really true. And he just arranged

his disappearance for whatever reason," and whatever. But the point isâ€"whether he did or didn't, that's not the pointâ€"was that a success? And when he dies, if he's got \$200 billion accumulated through cryptocurrency or other means, he's still gone. It's like, what? You want to take that with you? And of course, no. So that kind of success is not success in the reality of the term.

R

Ruben 45:54

But why do we do that? It just seems so unreasonable to meâ€"why you would spend your life doing that? I mean, I can never make any money anyway. So I've just decided I've given up.

B

Balakhilya 46:20

Well, it's basically ignorance. If you bring it right down to it, it's ignorance. And we don't know all these things that we've been declaring to be true, the Vedas declare to be true, the masters declare to be true. If you don't know this, then you're going to try to fulfill those desires of success and fame, and falsely proud and whatever, any way you can. Any way you can. And some people's karma is such they just fall into a materially successful life. A lot of people have dabbled in cryptocurrency and lost all their money. And here's a guy that got in and made 2 billion. And that was his karma. That's what he had in store for him. And people look at that and say, "Well, if he can do it, I can do it." Not necessarily; depends on your karma. Some people try and try and try. Just like you said, you can't make any money. No matter what you do, money eludes you. And other people might do a very similar thing, and just line their pockets. Again, it's karma. It's not, "Oh, he did this. And he did that." It's karma. Of course, he did whatever he did, previously, to make it so that was his karma. It's not like he didn't do something. Because karma is just the results of our actions.

R

Ruben 48:13

Like when people win the lottery, you know? And they think like, "Oh, they did nothing toâ€"!

B

Balakhilya 48:17

Yeah, it was just their time to win the lottery. And other people, it wasn't their time. And this is absolute knowledge. This is the reality of the nature of the material world. And that's what we need to learn, you know? It is said that a person in the mode of goodness accepts what comes to him easily. So if a person is struggling, struggling, struggling, it should be obvious, isn't that your karma? It is not what you're going to get this time. So just relax.

R

Ruben 49:06

Exactly, exactly. And let go of control; that feeling of trying to control everything to the very end. It's really a suffering feeling. It's not a nice feeling. You feel like there's no one to protect you. There's nothing to protect you but your own power. And not just yourself, but your family. I don't even have kids. I just have a wife. But that's a strong feeling, that you want to protect them. You want to make sure that they have a good life. And you struggle, you struggle. You try to make it possible.

B

Balakhilya 49:46

Yeah, well we struggle, we try, and we think, "I can do it, I'm the doer." And this is part of the illusion of the material world. We're not the doer. It's the modes of nature that is the doer. We have to have another discussion on the modes of nature. This is so critical to understand. And then, without this knowledge that is so crucial to understanding life, we don't know what to do with life, and we come to all these false conclusions and realizations. And we accept false teachings, and it just keeps us in a very difficult position. A very difficult position. And then you go off on other areas of the illusion and the desire to be happy through sensual pleasures, and that never ends either. And we just become more and more depraved and degraded and remove any kind of obstacles and barriers to sensual experiences, thinking that it will make me more happy. And it's so obvious, it doesn't make anyone happy. But we can't see that. We can't see that. Or maybe, "It didn't make them happy. But it will make me happy."

R

Ruben 51:22

You're just walking that trail and pushing it to the limit.

B

Balakhilya 51:26

Yeah, that's another trail. But it's a trail that leads to the cliff, and eventually you're going to fall off that cliff. The rocky landing at the bottom is not comfortable. And another point—there's so many points. It just pops up. But whatever direction in life I take, it's not just me. Whatever direction in life I take, it's not just me. I'm not an island. I'm not an independent entity just going through life in whatever way I do, and not affecting other people. See, I affect other people, no matter what direction I take. I influence people, I create situations with people that affects them in one way or another way. And so if you've got a whole society following a philosophy of increased sensual pleasures, you're just a mass movement. And you're going to have leaders that stand out and say, "Everybody come this way. This will make you more happy." And you got another leader who stands up and he says, "Well, that's okay. But this is better." And everybody just follows the new one, the new direction, the new trendy thing. Along the way you see all these people who are the casualties, let's say, along the way. But people just keep going. They can't understand it doesn't work. The whole drug story, and fentanyl; the new drug of choice for many people. It's so easy to smuggle, and it's such a small quantity, does so much, and it kills people—and people are just jumping on board like, "It doesn't matter. It's worth it because the high is fantastic. And if it kills me it does, but I'll have a few moments of pleasure before I die." It's absurd when you look at it from the outside, but when you're in that consciousness, that's just where you're at. That's the captured consciousness that makes it so we just are victimized completely. So it's a sad story. And if we come back to truthfulness, and following the truth—see the world as it is, the nature of reality, don't distort the facts, don't try to please others, just embrace the truth. If it's painful, if it's not painful; the truth often hurts. It's not always comfortable. The truth is often very, very difficult. But if you're a seeker of the truth, you understand—that's just the reality of this path.

R

Ruben 55:10

And like Bhaktivedanta Swami—"one of your spiritual masters"—said, if I remember right, "Spiritual life may be hard, but material life is impossible."

B

Balakhilya 55:27

Yes, that is one of his statements.

R

Ruben 55:40

I was just thinking that for me, it wasn't likeâ€¦ I mean, of course, one says that, but when I reflected on it, on my coming to this processâ€”it's not like I changed my life. I came to life. And I guess it's the same thing like, "Okay, so spiritual life may be hard, but that's when you feel really alive." Okay, so it may be hard, but that's the only time that you are really aliveâ€”when you're pursuing that, and when you're doing that. You're following, like from our marketing, you're following your callingâ€”this inner yearning for something more. You're finally following that. And okay, so you might have to break trail and it may be hard, and you may have to repeat and stamp down or walk back a little bit and then try again. But you still know that you're on the right path, and you know that you're following this calling, and it's satisfying. You're on the way.

B

Balakhilya 56:35

Yeah, yeah. And I often explain to people when you know, when you know that you're doing the right thing with your life, that's huge. When you know that you're doing the right thing with your life, that's huge. Because most people don't know they're doing the right thing with their life. I mean, they're doing what they think they want to do, or they're trying to reach a point where they can do what they want to do, or whatever. But they don't really know, "I'm doing the right thing with my life." There's still some doubt there, "Maybe it would have been better if I had done this, or maybe I should do something different." But when you know that you're doing the right thing with your life, that in and of itself, just that alone, is amazing.

R

Ruben 57:34

And you can really cover that up a lot. That's what I feel I did. I covered that feeling up in so many layers of, "But I have this material asset," but this, but thatâ€”but deepest at the inside of my core I knew it, that "This is not it."

B

Balakhilya 57:55

Yeah, you do. Some people do.

R

Ruben 58:00

Some people do.

B

Balakhilya 58:01

The fortunate do. The fortunate do. And how you become fortunate is: start the journey. Start the journey. I think you said in your intro presentation or something, the longest journey starts with the first step. You got to start somewhere. And we talked about habits last week or somethingâ€”that you need to develop these spiritual habits because when something becomes a habit, it makes it so you do it when otherwise you might not even have done it. It's just a habit to do it, so you do it. And we're talking about spiritual habits now. Because the material influence on us is very strong, and some days you just don't want to do what you know you should do. I mean, it's just like the mode of ignorance is there, or the mode of passion is there, and you're either too lazy or too agitated or whatever. But because you've got this habit of practice, you do it. And that supersedes or trumps the influence of the ignorance or the passion that may be predominant at that time. So, habits lead to success. Spiritual habits are basically something that should be

seen as, "I need to cultivate these spiritual habits." And that's why the whole yoga processâ€"bhakti yoga and all the yoga teachingsâ€"are filled with practices. Do this, do this, do this. And it promotes regularity and therefore cultivation of habits.

R

Ruben 1:00:16

Because life goes up and down, and if you don't pursue those habits then you have nothing to hold on to when the waves of life come storming in. Like you said, you feel like it and then you do it, and you don't feel like it and you don't do itâ€"because there's no habit there.

B

Balakhilya 1:00:33

Yeah. I mean, look at the successful athletes. They got the Olympics coming up, and you're going to have the best athletes in the world go to Japan and show how good they are, really. Everybody's going there hoping to win or at least do good. And they're all going over there with a lot of training habits. All. They've done their training when they didn't want to, when it was very difficult to do it, pushing through injuries and mind conditions that weren't favorable, and on and on and on. But they did it. And therefore, they are now in the Olympics. So, if we can do it materially, which is temporaryâ€"You know, everybody that wins a gold medal, that's a temporary thing, and they're going to leave this world with a whole bunch of gold medals maybe, but it's a temporary achievementâ€"but spiritual habits go with you through death; right up to the end and beyond. When you leave the body, those habits, those achievements, those successes, that determination, goes with you.

R

Ruben 1:02:15

That's a very comforting idea right there. It's not in vain.

B

Balakhilya 1:02:19

There is no loss. The reality that the teachers are always telling us isâ€"there is no loss. In Bhagavad-gita, Arjuna asked Krishna, "What is the fate of a yogi who becomes unsuccessful?" Somehow he falls down, he doesn't achieve success. And Krishna describes, "There is no loss. In his next life, he will either take birth in a very favorable situation, aristocratic family, a good facility for continuation of his spiritual journey, maybe take place in a family of spiritualists, transcendentalist, and from the very beginning of his life, he will be trained in spiritual truths," etc. In other words, he won't lose anything. You can't lose. And every person would like to have an investment that was foolproof, that you couldn't lose in it, right? Well, you're investing your life in a foolproof investmentâ€"you can't lose. There is absolutely no possibility of losing. So that's the best assurance that this is the right thing to do. All the things we've referred to and discussed is about the self, but the century of the self is more and more, "I am the body. I'm the mind. This world is my home. I can be happy here. Sensual pleasure is the goal," etc, which is all untrue. Everything I just said is not true. None of it. I'm not the body. I'm not the mind. This world's not my home. Sensual pleasure will not make me happy. Material success is temporary and fleeting. It doesn't satisfy me, etc.

R

Ruben 1:04:40

All flipped upside down.

B

Balakhilya 1:04:43

It's completely upside down. And we invest our life in that. We invest our life in that which is absolute guaranteed failure. But as I said, somewhere back in this discussion, it's really about ignorance; we don't have the knowledge. We don't have the knowledge.

R

Ruben 1:05:08

And if we don't have another option, then we seem to rather go somewhere, than go nowhere. Like, at least we're going somewhere.

B

Balakhilya 1:05:17

Yeah. Yeah.

R

Ruben 1:05:18

Yeah, what can we doâ€

B

Balakhilya 1:05:22

You're going to go somewhere because the soul is active by nature. So everybody's going somewhere. So we need to learn where to go, and how to go. Where to go and how to go.

R

Ruben 1:05:44

But maybe this is gonna be upside down, because this is the end of the program. But maybe you can briefly mention what your background is, Balakhilya. I thought we were going to say that, but I forgot. You have been living this lifestyle for over 50 years now.

B

Balakhilya 1:06:12

If you've been to any of my other channels, like Happy Man, or different places where I have a presence on the internet, I've explained that, yeah, I was always a pleasure seeker. I never was an accumulator of wealth and fame. I just wanted to have a good time. That's all. I just wanted to have a good time. I had, in my mind, certain activities that I liked, and I did those, and I liked it. So it was always outdoor-oriented. I was raised on a farm, and the outdoors was everywhere. And I spent most of my timeâ€when I wasn't in school or somethingâ€outside. Even when I was working on the farm, I was outside working in the field, or whatever. It was outside. And my activities were hunting and fishing. And that's what farm boys did in the part of the world where I grew up. That's what I did, and so on, and so on. And then I became attracted to ocean sports, because I started working at the seaside during the summers to make money as a waiter to pay for my university education. And the sea was the nature there. That's what the nature was; it was the sea. So I became attracted to scuba diving. And then one day, I saw a friend surfing and I went, "Wow, what is that guy doing?" And he was actually a friend. This is a long story. Maybe we'll do it another time because we'll run out of time. But anyway, the background is nature and simple living to a degree, and not trying to

have a big profession and a lot of wealth and accumulated things. And it just led on and on to moving around and living in Hawaii, and so on. So we can go into it in more detail some time if anybody's interested. I don't like to talk about myself, other than the fact that it kind of makes a point of, "Anybody can do this." Definitely, if I can do it, anybody can do it, kind of thing. It's not some special thing. So yeah, if anybody's interested you can let us know. We can discuss it a little at some point. So Ruben, thank you very much. We'll be back next week. Like I say, you can invite your friends. Leave your comments, ask your questions.

R

Ruben 1:09:19

So that's it for today. Thank you so much for tuning in. Remember to stay true to yourself and dare to break trail.