**The Spiritual Struggle**

 When you chant for a goal you hope to achieve it quickly, but obstacles or one sort or another usually appear. This is when we engage in a spiritual struggle, one which we wage in our hearts and minds.

At the core of our lives exist two opposing forces. The first is fundamental enlightenment, where we can clearly see we have the Buddha nature, our universal connection, and experience being connected and one with the universe. We know we have the ability to create our lives as we wish them to be.

The second force is fundamental darkness, or delusion, which obscures our awareness that we have the Buddha nature. Fundamental darkness lays the foundation for all the other negative and destructive forces within us. This is said to be the most deeply rooted illusion in life. It is the inability to see the true nature of our life and is the underlying cause of our feeling of weakness and separation. When we lose our awareness that we have the Buddha nature, we suffer in the lower states of existence.[[1]](#footnote-1)

 This is not surprising when you consider that we all have been born into a world where we have been taught by parents and the culture to believe in limitations. We have been taught about limitations from babyhood. “Money doesn’t grow on trees.” “You must be realistic.” “You can’t have things the way you want them.” Etc etc etc.

We’ve been taught to believe that outside forces control. what we can do in life. You can’t find a job due to the bad economy, for example. Mass consciousness believes in these things so they appear to be so. But there have always been exceptions.

These opposing forces come into play when we take on the challenges and problems of everyday life through chanting. We might chant for something as concrete as finding a job or something sublime such as enlightenment. As we chant and take action do we doubt we have the Buddha nature and retreat in discouragement and fear?

 Or we can strengthen the conviction we have the Buddha nature, break through the darkness hiding this awareness, and reveal the life-state of Buddhahood. This means rejecting the evidence of the senses, and repudiating the cultural beliefs we’ve been taught, in order to rely on the infinite intelligence within us. The battle is always with ourselves.

We possess the power to face and overcome any obstacle. You are not a victim of circumstances unless you believe you are. The real issue is whether we believe this and can actually manifest the strength. Only by winning over our inner darkness and negativity can we be victorious in life and reveal our true potential. [[2]](#footnote-2)

**How Do You Build Faith?**

How can you build the faith that will allow you to win the spiritual struggle and manifest your Buddhahood?

**1.** The first step is to chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, Nam-myoho-renge-kyo is the name of the Mystic Law, that life force, wisdom and compassion at the core of our lives that governs the workings of the universe every moment.

Think of it this way. We have all watched waves rise out of the water of the ocean and crash on the shore. The ocean is like the underlying life force of the Mystic Law. Each of us is like a wave arising out of that ground and are one with it, even though we appear to be separated while living our lives.

This idea is supported scientifically through quantum mechanics. If you look through a microscope, the material world doesn’t look the way it does when we look around a room. It dissolves into atoms and electrons. The building blocks of creation get smaller and smaller until they turn into energy which seems to appear and disappear into an unseen unified ground.

This very life force resides at the core of our lives and also governs the workings of the universe from moment to moment. Each of us is one with it. In the core of your life, your Buddha nature, you are a manifestation of that Mystic law, that life force, in the way that a wave is a manifestation of the ocean.

When you chant and overcome one impossible obstacle after another, have one experience after another, you come to understand that the apparent limitations in life are not real. That’s why overcoming obstacles are the steppingstones to Enlightenment.

In “*On Attaining Buddhahood in this Lifetime*” Nichiren Daishonin says that we cannot achieve enlightenment unless we go through a profound inward change. Through engaging with negativity and obstacles and chanting about them, small and large, we build the deep faith and awareness that we are one with the universe and build the strong character that allows us to be victorious in life and enjoy fulfillment.

**2**. Study. Study is important for three reasons. First it teaches us the concepts which show us how life actually works, such as oneness of life and its environment and 3000 realms in a moment of life.

Second, study reminds us over and over that we are one with that infinite power and can rise out of the mass belief in limitations.

Third, our Buddhist training in how to set goals and take action is showing us how to put the new beliefs into action so we can be successful in life.

**3**. The third step to building faith, is to model the mentor-disciple relationship. We have an example in our mentors Nichiren and the three SGI Presidents who have done the impossible. Look at Ikeda’s life. So studying what they have done and how they’ve done it gives us examples of what we can do.

 **4.** Staying close to other practitioners allows us to reinforce these beliefs so that we don’t fall into our cultural beliefs of limitation again.

Through practice and study we gradually step out of the dream of limitation and come to understand our true power.

 As we chant then take action on daily life issues, we use those challenges and obstacles to build inconspicuous benefits, the incremental changes of awareness and character which will transform our lives. Chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo then taking action regarding our daily challenges is the direct path to manifesting the highest state of life or Buddhahood, where you know without doubt that you are one with the Mystic Law. [[3]](#footnote-3)

 **5**.The final step is to not only chant-Nam-myoho-renge-kyo ourselves but also teach it to others to the best of our ability, so that they can become happy. Making efforts for the happiness of others create profound effects in our own lives enabling us to overcome negativity and delusion so that we may become unshakably happy.

**Summary**:

Today we discussed the spiritual struggle that always occurs when we chant for a goal. It arises out of the beliefs we have been taught by parents and authority figures about life’s limitations.

In order to accomplish this profound transformation we take the following steps:

1. Chant and overcome one obstacle after another.
2. Study to learn how the world actually works and to be reminded that we have this power.
3. Model your life on our mentors who have accomplished the impossible.
4. Attend meetings to be supported in this change.
5. Teach others.

URL’s

1. How Can I Change my Limited Thinking? <https://wp.me/p3V1J9-10s>
2. Do You Know How You Set Up Barriers to What You Want? <https://wp.me/p3V1J9-XK>
3. Steps to Forge Your Faith https://wp.me/p3V1J9-VX
1. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. On Attaining Buddhahood, p. 8 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. On Attaining Buddhahood, p 17 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)