

Quotations

Kahlil Gibran

The Prophet

Work is love made visible.

Florence Nightingale

Florence Nightingale, who lived between 1820 and 1910, is famous for establishing modern nursing. She came to prominence training and managing nurses in the terrible conditions of the Crimean war. The working surfaces there would have included extremely poor sanitary conditions, a lack of equipment and trained staff and terrible wounds to deal with. Her notes on nursing include trying to ensure:

1. Fresh air for patients to breathe
2. Cleanliness
3. As quite an atmosphere as possible
4. Beautiful objects such as flowers
5. Good quality food
6. Good bedding
7. Good amount of light
8. Close observation and care of the patients

Philippe Petit

To Reach the Clouds

The gods in my feet. They are so knowledgeable, so talented.

If they allowed the soles of the feet to land flat on the cable, they would colour the walk with inelegance and danger. Instead they ask the sole – and the sole complies – to land delicately on the steel, toes first. And to slide down an alert sole, not a dormant one, so that the sole feels the cable is not a flat surface but a curve. And the sole asks its flesh to find as much of the cylindrical cable as possible, to embrace it, to hang on to it. It is a safe embrace.

The gods in my feet know how not to hit the cable, how not to make it move when each foot lands. How do they know? They worked that out during their endless days of rehearsals. They know the slightest addition to the vivacious dance of the catenary curve would mean peril for the wire-walker. They ask the feet to land on the steel rope in such a way that the impact of each step absorbs the swaying of the cable, its vertical oscillations, and its twisting along the axis of the walk; the feet answer by being gentle and understanding, by conversing with the wire-rope, by enticing the huffing and puffing living entity above them to let go of his rage to control.

Wire-walker, trust your feet!

Let them lead you; they know the way.

Practice

Practise contentment. Use the Awareness Exercise to connect with this.

Attend to the working surfaces.

Trust the instrument to do the job.

Ask the question,

How would a wise man or woman increase happiness now?

Note on Patanjali's Eightfold Yoga

1. Yama

Yama means restraint. Here it refers to external restraint. Patanjali gives 5 aspects to this, namely:

- Non–violence
- Truth
- Not stealing
- Chastity
- Absence of greed

2. Niyama

This means inner restraint or observance. Again 5 aspects are given, namely:

- Purity
- Contentment (santosha)
- Austerity
- Spiritual study
- Devotion to the Lord

3. Asana

This means posture. In Hatha Yoga there are many prescribed physical postures. All that Patanjali says is that the posture should be straight i.e. the spine should be straight, and that it should be easy.

4. Pranayama (pronounced praanaayaama)

This means control of the breath.

5. Pratyahara (pronounced pratyahaara)

This means withdrawing the senses from the sensory world.

6. Dharana (pronounced dhaaranaa)

This means concentration on a single object.

7. Dhyana (pronounced dhyaana)

This means meditation.

8. Samadhi (pronounced samaadhi)

This means union.