MOST people think peace is the ultimate goal of spirituality. This is one of the great misconceptions of our times.

Peace and joy are the basic requirements for a life of wellbeing. If you want to enjoy your family, your work or your dinner tonight, you must be peaceful and happy. Peace is meant to be the basis of your life. If you consider peace to be the supreme goal, you will only ‘rest in peace’!

It is because most people are so deprived of peace that they consider it to be the ultimate aspiration. When I was in Tel Aviv some years ago, I was told that ‘Shalom’ was the highest form of greeting possible. I asked why. "Because it means peace," I was told. I said, "Why would peace be the highest aspiration unless you’re in the Middle East?"

If you were on a desert island without food for 10 days and suddenly God appeared before you, would you want Him to appear as a shining light or as bread? In India certain communities worship food as God because they have deprived of food for a long time. In California, love is God! Whatever you feel deprived of seems like the highest aspiration possible.

But none of these will settle you in any enduring way because human life is longing for unlimited expansion, and that is the only thing which will settle you for good. The spiritual quest is not a cultivated choice or an induced quest. It is a natural longing. But unless you handle it consciously, it will not yield.

When being peaceful, blissful and joyous are not an effort anymore, it is natural for you to start seeking the nature of life. Mysticism on this planet evolved only in those places where people learnt the technology of being ecstatic by their own nature. When you are blissful, you are in the highest state of receptivity, and ready to explore all aspects of life. Otherwise, if keeping yourself pleasant is a big challenge, where is the question of taking on other challenges?

It happened. An 85-year-old man went fishing in Louisiana. When he was winding up, he caught a frog. He was just about to release it into the marsh again, when the frog spoke. "Just kiss me passionately," it said, "and I will turn into a beautiful young woman."

The old man inspected the frog for a long time. The frog curled up its lips in anticipation. Then the old man put the frog into his fish bag.

The frog screamed, "Didn’t you hear me? Just one kiss and I will turn into a really beautiful young woman!

The old man said, "At my age, there’s not much I can do with a beautiful young woman. But a talking frog is a different game. Believe me, I can smell money!"

When you know nothing about the nature of your own existence, the simplest issues can drive you to distraction. Most people today live without paying any attention to the life process. They are preoccupied with the accessories of life—their work, their relationships, their homes, their cars, their clothes, their gods. The one thing they miss is life—the life process itself. Now their existence becomes an unnecessary struggle. The foundations of peace and bliss are not about attending to the external realities of your life, but in accessing and organizing your inner nature. This is something people unfortunately forget.

Being peaceful and joyful are not some esoteric principles. This is the way you are made. Enlightenment is not an achievement. It is a homecoming. You have lived until now with the idea that you are experiencing the ‘outside’. You have never experienced the outside. When you realize that all that you experience is within, that absolute homecoming is enlightenment. My life and work are just to evolve methods so that people can experience this inclusiveness. And it is well within the reach of every human being.