

LIFT YOURSELF UP

# Happiness comes from within



DADI JANKI

The question that many ask is, ‘What are the virtues that bring happiness?’ and ‘What kind of happiness brings peace?’ Now, if you were to tour around India, Australia or Europe—indeed any part of the world—would there be happiness? Or if you were to visit all the different shopping centres in the country, would you be able to buy happiness? If you went to the cinema or the seaside, would you feel permanent happiness? See if you can find happiness somewhere in the world. Even if you go away on a pilgrimage, do you experience happiness as a result? Happiness comes from within. We need



True happiness comes by first knowing and understanding yourself.

a lot of power to be happy, and it is not easy in today’s world to remain positive and cheerful. The things that you think bring happiness are there for a moment, and

the next moment they are gone. We live in a world of impermanence. We work so hard to claim a position and to earn money, but do they remain with us?

True happiness comes by first knowing and understanding yourself, and then knowing who God is, and finally having that same friendship with eve-

ryone—through that, you can find real happiness. We are all members of one family, and it is not just a matter of knowing this as a fact; we have to understand this as an experience, and then the happiness of the experience comes to us in a very natural way, and brings power with it. Power comes when we end the weaknesses that lie within us. Think about these things and experience them. Then you will see for yourself whether it is true or not.

Let my life’s purpose be to be able to stay peaceful. To be able to always remain smiling and cheerful. Let me be such a human being that every single person in the world identifies with me and feels that I am their brother or sister.

When I focus clearly on God and experience the intense love He gives, then I know that everything about me (internally) and my life (externally) will get sorted out. Then my faith in God really begins to develop. *The late Dadi Janki was Administrative Head of the Brahma Kumaris.*

CHANGE IS CONSTANT

## UNDERSTANDING ETERNITY



B.K. ATAM PRAKASH

Many of us experience the fear of change at some point in our life. The fear may not be pronounced, and it may not last very long, fading away as we get used to the change that had triggered the fear.

This fear is often just fear of the unknown, as we feel uncomfortable, wary or afraid of how changed circumstances will affect us. We rarely fear what is known, as we are familiar with it, know what to expect and how to deal with it. But when faced with the unknown, such as when starting a new job or moving to a new place, we are uncertain, anxious or scared.

The idea of eternity inspires a similar fear in some people as it conjures up the image of a journey without end, to an unknown destination, through an uncharted path. One does not know what lies ahead and what one will encounter on such a journey. It is like entering

a dark tunnel with no idea of what is inside and where it leads.

But anything that is eternal is cyclical. This can be seen in nature. The cycle of seasons moves eternally. But it does not cause fear as we know that winter will be followed by spring, then summer, and autumn before it is winter again.

Knowing this, and recognising the fact that we are immortal souls who have played different roles in different bodies, life after life, in a cycle of birth, growth, death and rebirth, tells us that we have gone through the cycle of time earlier, so it is nothing new. There is nothing to fear. In a cyclical process, change always



The idea of eternity inspires fear in some people as it conjures up the image of a journey without end.

Knowing this, we prepare for the seasons in advance, airing our woollens before the weather gets chilly and taking out our cottons at the first hint of summer. Even birds and insects are aware of the cycles of nature and they collect food, build their home and tend to their offspring accordingly.

Just as the cycle of birth, growth, decay and renewal goes on eternally, the cycle of time, too, turns without end, with the world going through different stages in a process that is repeated cyclically.

leads to renewal; even the process of decay is just a passing phase. When we understand this, we can exercise the choice to be agents of change who create a better future for themselves and the world by thinking and doing good, instead of being the victims who are ignorant of their eternal identity and so feel helpless and fearful as they are carried along by the tides of time.

*B.K. Atam Prakash is a Rajyoga teacher at the Brahma Kumaris headquarters in Mount Abu, Rajasthan.*

OUTLOOK

## LIFE IS NOT HAPPENING TO YOU; IT IS RESPONDING TO YOU



YOGESH SHARDA

We all want more peace and happiness in our life, and we have a right to that. When we feel trapped or stuck in a situation or relationship, we tend to think, “Why am I stuck in this situation, with these people” and “I really want this to change”. Then, as time goes by and the situation continues in the same way, in our frustration, we wonder, “Why isn’t it changing?” This is because on one level, we do want things to be

different, but on another, more subconscious level, we are in fact sustaining the situation.

We sustain the status quo in two ways. The first is by continually complaining about it, especially if those complaints are internal, we reinforce it subconsciously. The second is by not recognising what it is that we are attached to in the situation, or the person.

The two most important things to work on, if we want things to change, are attitude and vision. There is a powerful statement which cannot be overstated; “As is your vision, so is your world.”

Change has to start within, it has to start with my own thoughts. A thought creates a vibration, or frequency. That frequency goes into my relationships and situations I find myself



The two most important things to work on, if we want things to change, are attitude and vision.

in. So, I need to ask myself, “What kind of energy am I putting into my relationships?”

What I think about will influence what I feel and that will drive how I behave. If I cultivate an attitude of gratitude, if I appreciate all that I have and all that those in my life contribute to my well-being, in one way or another, situations change in amazing ways. Even those who upset us are teaching us something. Gratitude and the application of virtues transform even the most hopeless of situations.

Rajyoga meditation, as taught by the Brahma Kumaris, could in fact be called the study and application of divine virtues. Meditation is a powerful way to understand what I really want from my life, and how I am contributing

to the outcomes I wish for. If I begin to apply virtues in my interactions and to the vision I hold, then whatever is happening hides treasures for me.

To see the treasure that is hidden, requires three specific virtues. Firstly, patience. Values travel slowly and may take some time to become visible. Secondly, tolerance. A situation may need to be tolerated for some time, for the good that is hidden to become visible. Thirdly, and very importantly, the virtue of introversion.

Rather than being occupied in thoughts of why or how or what or criticising and policing others, I need to check the attitude and vision I am holding, and correct it. Then I will be able to see the treasure hiding there. Being spiritually aware means that

anything I wish to improve must first begin with taking responsibility for how I feel and then to begin to upgrade the thoughts I have and how they are affecting my attitude.

The more moments of silence we can build into our lives the more the mind works in a better way. Take time each day to sit quietly, preferably early in the morning, and ask, what do I really want? How do I define a successful life? What is really important to me? These questions take you to the engine room of you, the soul. Live from there and then you become highly effective and everything that is the best in you begins to work for you—and life responds.

*Yogesh Sharda is the National Coordinator of the Brahma Kumaris’ services in Turkey.*

SACRIFICE

## RENUNCIATION IS FORTUNE



JUDY JOHNSON

It only hurts to give up something if there is no attainment in return.

Renunciation is a well-known concept on the path of religion and spirituality. Renunciation is the idea that by giving up aspects of the physical world, we receive the return of spiritual enlightenment and liberation. This has a powerful hold on the spiritual seeker. Yet for many of us, renunciation seems too hard. Not everyone would like to give up all the good things in life to live like a renunciate.

How, then can we take benefit from the enduring wisdom of this principle of renunciation and still live in the world, with our families and community?

Rajyoga offers a unique understanding of renunciation. Rather than moving away from the objects of our desire, we give up desire itself. We stay close to the world without desiring anything from it. This can only happen if our deep inner desires are being fulfilled in another way. It is a matter of consciousness and therefore, a deeply private and internal commitment made between the soul and God. The secret is to understand the great fortune hidden in this commitment.

Let us consider practical examples in our daily lives. If a person gives up (renounces) oil, fatty foods, sugar or alcohol, all things that cause harm to the body, and receives good health in return, this would be considered a fortune. If a person



The highest karma of all is for a person to give everything they have to God, to be used for Divine purpose as needed.

stops wearing expensive jewellery while out and about in the city, they will no longer become a target for thieves. This would give a person the feeling of safety. Feeling safe in a city of thieves would be a remarkable

fortune in return for the small renunciation. When a person gives up attachment and trying to control loved ones, they receive loving respectful two-way relationships in return. This is one of life’s greatest fortunes.

The highest karma of all is for a person to give everything they have to God, to be used for Divine purpose as needed. When a person does this, they receive a feeling of blessings, love, and safety like a canopy

of protection over their life. Of course, God needs nothing from us, so the fortune is for the renunciate alone.

The Rajyoga way to give everything to God is to consider oneself a trustee, caring for all that God has given without feelings of ownership. Then everything is used in a benevolent, worthwhile way, bringing benefit to others as well as to the renunciate in the form of positive karmic return. This renunciation is the greatest fortune because it brings the powerful return of protection from experiencing the pain of life’s ills and the troubles of this world. The mind and heart are fulfilled with Divine love, peace and power and the soul becomes free from desire.

The more renunciation, the greater the fortune.

*Judy Johnson coordinates the activities of the Brahma Kumaris in Atlantic Canada.*

## A THOUGHT FOR TODAY

The lotus flower sits royal and beautiful above the mud. Although the mud is not beautiful, it provides the ideal conditions for the lotus to grow. In the same way, it is possible that my present circumstances (including the not so beautiful aspects) are ideal for my spiritual growth. Today let me consider and appreciate my growth-supporting environment.