

BLISS

Understanding love and attachment



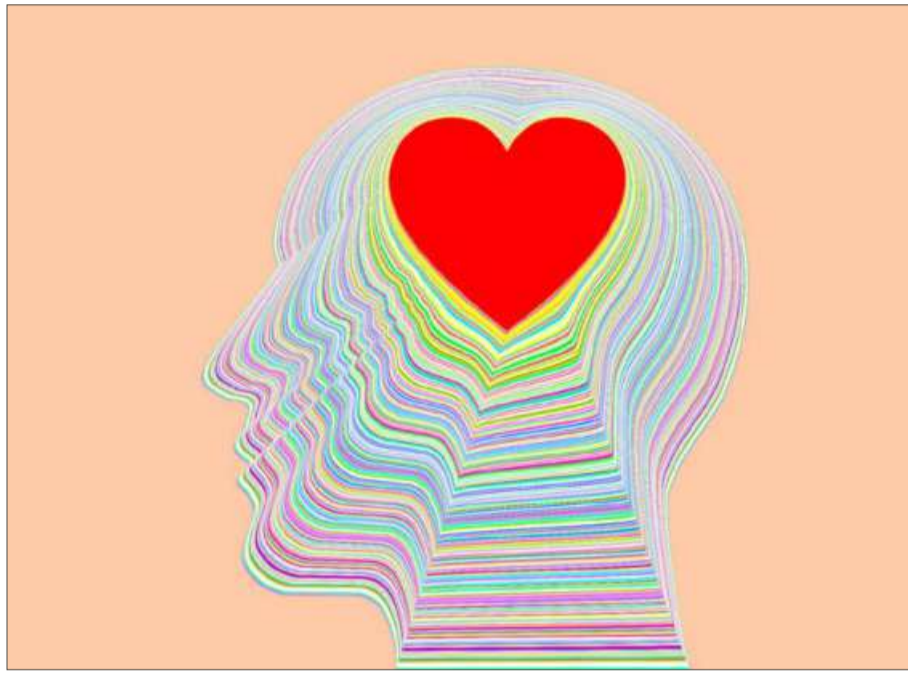
B.K. MEERA

Love, they say, is what makes the world go round. Yet, even though each human being searches diligently for love, and finds people or pets and things, to lavish their affection on, it is one of the most widely misunderstood virtues. All the love we experience is only second best. Spiritually speaking,

we are searching for the long-lost experience of love that each one has had for and from the Supreme Being, God.

In place of the real thing, we call attachment, love. Attachment is a perverted form of love. Paradoxically, when I am able to detach from those to whom I am attached, it is then that true love is experienced. Attachment is conditional love; detachment is unconditional love. God is never praised as attachment—He is always, in all religions, praised as love.

Attachment brings worry, burden and possessiveness. Love brings concern, responsibility and freedom. Love is giving, giving, giving—with no expectation



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of any kind of return. The more I detach, the more I will be loved. Love is not an emotional expression, it is acceptance and respect for each individual, based on an understanding that each soul has their own part to play here. If I am attached, then my mind will be affected by the suffering or the state of mind of the one to whom I am attached. If I love them, but am also detached, then my state of mind can fill them with hope, or courage or determination—whatever they really need at that moment. With attachment the two of us are suffering, with no way out.

The key to loving detachment is awareness. All life on Earth is based on aware-

ness. We are a combination of soul and body. If I live with the awareness of being simply the body, if I base my sense of worth on the body I occupy and the roles I play, then I live a life full of need, desires, based on the ego of the body. If, however, I develop the awareness of being the soul, consciousness, an eternal light and immortal energy, using the body I have received for spiritual service, then I am naturally detached, and no longer have the desire for love and attention, approval and acceptance from anyone. Just as a flower simply exudes its fragrance—it matters not if the fragrance is accepted or not.

This, however, is only the key. The key opens the door

to a relationship with the Supreme Soul. This is the real relationship of love. The love of the individual soul with the Supreme Soul. There is nothing sweeter. There is nothing more powerful. God is not affected by anything we are doing in our lives, yet keeps giving love, light and power to sustain. This relationship is deepened each time we turn our mind to that Soul, in meditation. Then we cannot be attracted, attached or influenced by anyone, anything or any place. We are free—free to live a life of unconditional, spiritual love.

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ROADMAP

THE POWERS NEEDED FOR SUCCESS



B.K. GEETA

Power is a key factor in achieving success in any task. The stronger we are, the more success we achieve. Power or strength can be physical, intellectual, financial or social in terms of one's relationships and social network. These powers are needed to varying degrees at different times. In the absence of even one of them, we may not attain complete or constant success. These four powers are essential for success in spiritual life as well.

A healthy body is a blessing and a healthy soul is even

more so. When the soul is healthy, it can take physical ailments in its stride. Then, there are no signs of illness or suffering on the face, nor do we talk to all and sundry about our illness, because doing so actually makes us feel worse. It is one thing to be physically ill and quite another to suffer because of it. Lamenting one's illness not only dampens our spirits, but it also spreads a wave of sorrow around us, affecting those who come in contact with us. Remaining calm and content, on the other hand, keeps us and others stable.

The powers to tolerate and to adjust to difficult situations help at such times. When we use these powers at the right time, the experience makes us wiser and better able to face difficult situations in future. They act like medicine as well as nourishing food that makes us stronger.

So, spiritual health helps us feel physically healthy as



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well. The higher the quality of our self-awareness, the better we feel about ourselves and others. If we think that we can easily cope with any situation, we will be able to do so.

On the other hand, if we just mope about our problems, we will always be looking to others for help and support. Can such a person be happy? They will always be com-

plaining about something or the other.

The power of wealth includes material wealth as well as knowledge. Knowledge, in fact, helps us earn material

wealth and use it wisely for the self and others, which in turn brings great satisfaction and goodwill.

The power of relationships or the ability to connect with others with genuine care and respect earns us their love and cooperation. Cooperation received during times of need makes even difficult tasks easy. But the basis of good relationships is having a healthy relationship with the self, in which one recognises one's true identity as a soul, a child of God and sees others in the same way. This spiritual awareness removes the barriers created by our physical identity—of race, nationality, religion and social status. Only one who has risen above these can attain self-mastery and serve others selflessly.

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A THOUGHT FOR TODAY

When a person lacks inner power they will seek a powerful position, often over others. It's not the position or title that makes me powerful, it is how I hold myself in that position. When I feel powerful inside, I hold my head high with humility and self-respect. I am able to be kind, gentle and generous because I have nothing to prove and no one to impress. Today let me hold myself in an inner position of self-respect and serve well in any position.

SIDE EFFECTS OF DESIRES

WE REAP WHAT WE SOW



CHIRYA YVONNE RISELY

Learning to be free from desires is learning how to stay peaceful. Desires are the cause of all conflicts. Desires cause peace to disappear. When we want something and cannot get it, we become frustrated. We think acquiring things will make us feel secure, but the reality is the more you have the more fear you have of losing it and the further you are from peace.

If I am not getting what I want or need, I may need to adopt a different approach. Instead of focusing on my own desires, perhaps I need to understand I am not getting what I want for a reason—perhaps I am not ready for it yet. Everything has its own time to happen. When I concentrate instead on giving to others, I will find what I need comes to me naturally. Patience



Patience teaches us to sow the seed in the form of right actions and to allow the fruits of those actions to ripen in their own time.

teaches us to sow the seed in the form of right actions and to allow the fruits of those actions to ripen in their own time. I do not need to think about the future benefits of what I am doing now, because I know I will receive what I need when the time is right. When I let go of expectations and allow things to develop in their own time, I enjoy what I am doing in the present, and the future automatically becomes good.

Most of us are now well-trained to perceive and

focus on the negative, the selfishness in others, and to follow it quickly with accusation and judgment. What we choose to see is usually what we get. We reap what we sow. We forget that what we see in others is what we empower within others. More importantly, what we perceive, we absorb and empower within ourselves at the same time. So how important is it to choose to see only the best, the highest, the greatest in another, even if it is only a half a percent? When you look at an-

other, do not look at their weakness or tell them what to do; see them with a vision of love. With spiritual love, no matter how socially distanced we may be, working together in mind and spirit can help us achieve great things. Spiritual love brings about a sense of equality and unity. Spiritual love heals us. This is what the world needs at this time.

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PERSONAL GROWTH

SELF-IMPROVEMENT BEGINS WITH HONEST REALISATION



B.K. SURYA

Among those who aim for self-improvement, some are able to bring about positive change in the self easily and quickly, while others think about it, make plans, but their old habits, weaknesses, and challenges get in the way and dampen their enthusiasm. Then there are those who lack courage for the task, so they go about it tepidly and find little success.

Self-improvement is not a goal that concerns just our individual life—it is also the foundation of our efforts to help others. Only one who has trodden this path can show others the way. If we merely theorise about it, that will not neither help us nor inspire anyone else. But when we speak from experience,

our attitude, vibrations, and words carry conviction and authority, which convince others.

Very often self-improvement does not take place at all or to the desired extent because there is no honest realisation that one needs to change certain things within the self. Such realisation is the basis of bringing about permanent change. Realisation makes clear where we have gone wrong, the harm that has done to us, and what we need to change. It brings urgency and seriousness to our efforts towards self-improvement. Without realisation we may change temporarily because of the influence of something we may have heard, read or seen, but once that influence

wears off, we will revert to our old ways. Realisation brings about easy and lasting transformation.

For fast and lasting progress, we first need to experience the elevated state that we wish to achieve—it may be being more compassionate, peaceful, or loving. Just thinking or speaking about it does not bring about change. But practising that change, becoming it—not just wishing to do so—brings experiences and results that carry us forward. This kind of realisation elevates and clarifies the mind, which then makes it easier to realise one's weaknesses.

Self-improvement is not just overcoming one's weaknesses; it is also about the way we deal with people and

situations. In this context, realisation of two things is needed: of one's own shortcomings, and of the situation, the desires and feelings in the minds of those involved in the situation, including their weaknesses or any influence they might be under. When we know the reason for a particular situation, we can understand what attitude, feelings and thoughts we need to have to resolve it. Recognising and understanding the desires of others and engaging with them accordingly becomes the basis of our own progress as it improves our maturity and brings us the blessings of others.

There is one more type of realisation—we know that something we have done was not right, our conscience tells us so, but in order to save our reputation and status we ignore the inner voice. This is a grave mistake. We may think, "What do others know? Such things happen all the time...." Persisting on this path stops our progress.

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