CONSCIENCE

Strengthening willpower

MAUREEN GOODMAN

"Every day I ask myself: Who am I? Who do I belong to? What do I have to do now?" -
Dadi Janki

Willpower is based on knowledge with understanding, conscience, determination, trust and faith. In a world that seems to be going in a direction completely opposite to the one most of us seem to wish for, having the willpower to navigate through those contrary currents seems to be essential right now.

Each of us is a spiritual being, but each one's destiny is not only unique, it is also beautiful. It is in the finding and understanding of that destiny that my willpower can flourish, grow and become a great strength, not only for me but for others, and ultimately for our world.

When we look within, deeply and with an understanding of who we really are, a living consciousness, a spiritual light, we can clearly see our original qualities. They are those of peace, love, joy, wisdom and purity. We not only see clearly, but our mind is not plagued with doubts or questions;we have clarity, we know what to do. This takes a little practice, but results are felt almost immediately, from the time we begin.

It is this kind of clarity of thought that is needed. Because, when we try to change or behave based on the influence of others, then we never feel quite comfortable, and the change or impetus is short-lived. I am the only one who knows what is right for me.

When there is a wave of new thinking, then society supports it. For example, in the west, vegetarianism and even veganism is a growing lifestyle change, and so suddenly there are products that support that change on the market, and restaurants are supporting it with a change of menu. It takes great courage and determination though, to do what we understand and believe to be right when we seem to be the only one waving the flag.

If I nurture my connection with God, I will experience a sense of security, support, and sustenance.

In fact, we need to wave the flag only after we have ourselves become a little of what we are hoping for. When others hear us just telling them what we believe is the right thing to do, but we ourselves are not quite doing it – then a great surge of resistance is likely. Because, relationships are full of complicated elements of control and gratification.If those around us feel that they will no longer have any influence over us, then they become afraid of losing part of us, and can become angry. Better to quietly set off with determination, insight and self-trust and then others will see beneficial transformation, and will be happy to see the flag flying.

Trust in the self is essential, and that comes with experience. However, the other most important element of trust, is trust in God. If I nurture my connection with God, I am going to experience a sense of security, support, sustenance and safety. With this trust and determination, I can do my best sincerely, with no selfish motive, but because I know it is the right thing to do.Then I have no need to worry about the outcome – God will take care of it.It may not be the way I expected or even immediately like, but with acceptance I will come to understand that what I did was not only right, but the outcome is ultimately for the best for everyone concerned.

It is worth reflecting on the quotation at the beginning of the article. The answers to the three questions that Dadi Janki asked herself every day, encapsulate the strength of willpower perfectly.

Who am I? I am a soul, a spiritual being ...

Who do I belong to? I belong to God in the first instance, and to humanity ...

What do I have to do now? The answers to the first two questions make answer to the third one crystal clear - I have to follow my destiny as a soul and a child of God.

Maureen Goodman is the Programme Director for the Brahma Kumaris UK, and BK NGO representative to the United Nations in Vienna.

SPLENDID

WHO IS TRULY ROYAL?

B.K. USHA

Magnificent, stately, and splendid are some of the adjectives used to define the word 'royal'. What is it that makes someone royal? Does aristocratic lineage, a title, abundant wealth, or polished manners make us royal? Someone may have one of these attributes and not the others; or they may have all these and still be unworthy of being called royal.

The one quality that makes a person genuinely royal is purity – the absence of any vice or defect. And the most notable sign of royalty is truth. Truth is not made up or mixed up with anything, whether in our words, behaviour or relationships. This is also called honesty. Being royal means to be honest in our attitude, vision, speech and behaviour. Someone who is royal will not behave in one way but have something else in their intentions. It is this genuineness that touches others and inspires respect in them.

If someone is good at making up stories to present a lie to be the truth and prove the truth to be false; they are one thing inside and something else outside, would they be considered royal? Someone with such a character wins neither trust nor respect. If there is any artifice or pretence, it indicates a lack of purity.

Another sign of truth and purity is happiness. Where there is truth, there is nothing to hide, so there is no fear, worry or heaviness that comes from living a lie. True souls are naturally light and happy, and for this reason they are also loved by all.

One more sign of royalty is the absence of neediness – not wanting or seeking anything, be it respect, love, or anything material. A royal soul is contented, so they do not feel that they lack anything. They may not be materially well off, but because they are contented, they remain happy. No matter how wealthy someone is, if their mind is not full, they will be discontented, restless because of wanting something or the other. "It should happen this way...", "This is what should be done...", "This has to change..." - such are the words of that person. In other words, they are always asking for something. The desire for praise, respect, love, to want to be consulted all these show neediness. A royal soul does not have even a trace of it.

The one quality that makes a person genuinely royal is purity – the absence of any vice or defect.

Finally, all the good qualities of a royal soul do not make them arrogant or judgmental. They are not harsh with those who have any kind of weakness, but discern the other person's shortcomings and inspire them, with genuine good wishes, so that they can become free from them.

B.K. Usha is a Rajyoga teacher at the Brahma Kumaris headquarters in Abu Road, Rajasthan.

A THOUGHT FOR TODAY

People go to temples, mosques and churches to experience sacred space. These places are sacred because they have been filled with thoughts of love, respect and attention to the highest in humanity and to the Divine. I can create a sacred space in my home by giving attention to the highest and best through cleanliness, quiet moments of reflection, meditation and connection to the sacred. Today let me create a sacred space in my home.

WAY OF LIVING

Seven principles for living a meaningful life

YOGESH SHARDA

We need to find a way of living a life full of meaning, in response to the current human condition. The root cause of all that is wrong in our world lies in the spirit. We have a consciousness problem, and this has manifested in the physical world. Therefore, the solution lies with us, in our consciousness. Spirituality investigates the invisible mechanisms and principles, working on the level of consciousness. There are many ways of categorising the spiritual principles involved, but here are seven principles that contribute to making life more meaningful.

1. Choose what you wish to see...sometimes a situation arises that is not to our liking. We then tend to focus on the situation and do not see all the other beneficial aspects on offer. There may be lessons, dividends, opportunities that the situation is bringing, which we will not notice if we only concentrate on how uncomfortable we are feeling. But as is our vision, so is our world, and so is our life. Instead of trying to change the situation or people involved, upgrade the vision, and see what happens. We may not have a choice of what comes in front of us, but we do have a choice of what we see. Let us not simply go through life, but grow through life.

2. Be aware of who you are...most people live in the doing and having zone. All their energy of consciousness is wrapped around the identities concerned with what they do and what they have. All this brings continualemotional ups and downs. To live as a being is very different; no longer identifying the self by a job label, nationality label, religion label, class/caste/sect/tribe label. When we practise being the soul, spiritual energy – then we move from the materialistic zone to the spiritual. Live as the being.

3. Keep the heart clean...to keep the heart clean we have to let go of temporary desires. Temporary desires are 'wants', and eternal desires are 'needs'. We may want praise, attention, appreciation, prestige, possessions, property, power, acceptance, approval, to be admired.Behind all of these, what the soul really wants are the eternal desires. These are love, peace, and happiness. These needs already exist in everyone, in seed form. The seeds need to be watered to germinate and grow and that is what happens in meditation; meditation waters the seeds of truth and lets them emerge. The more this happens the fewer external demands we will have. When we clean out the selfish temporary desires from the heart, the universe cooperates with us, and life delivers.

The cleanliness of the heart is what attracts the help and cooperation of God.

4. Have patience...the fruit of patience is very sweet. Impatience is like eating raw fruit. Patience allows the fruits of life to ripen. Patience, tolerance and introversion are needed to see the hidden treasures behind every situation. If we are willing to focus on self-improvement with maturity and patience, the fruit is always very sweet.

5. Understand and experience a deep relationship with the Divine Being – God ... God is pleased with an honest heart. The cleanliness of the heart is what attracts the help and cooperation of God. We need to keep checking the cleanliness of our motives. God is not in the business of fulfilling selfish desires, but with honesty in a relationship with God, we will find that life will unfold in the most unimaginable way, and bring me the deepest, pure desires of my heart.

6. Take the first step of courage... because then God gives 1,000 steps of help. It does not work if we say,'God help me and then I will try'. No, first I must take the initial step of courage to do the right thing, even if only in thought, and then help and cooperation comes from many directions. Our own courage activates the help and support of the Supreme Being. It is like magic. Never relinquish courage.

7. Nothing is mine! I can lose nothing. When we begin to live as a steward or trustee, not abandoning responsibilities, but taking care of all that is needed, there is a different mindset.When we understand that we have nothing to lose, it is so liberating, and everything that is meant for me will come to me at the right time.

Living a life of meaning, not only improves our own lives but those of others – in such a way that the whole of the human condition is finally transformed.

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