

TRANSFORMATION

The time for change



B.K. SHEILU

There is a well-known passage in the Bible about the importance of time:

“There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens: a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot...”

The truth of these words becomes evident when we hear or read about well-intentioned actions done in vain, or backfiring. Even the best of seeds will

not produce much if sown in the wrong season. Similarly, a medicine taken at the wrong time may prove ineffectual, or even harmful. When the time is favourable or appropriate, even a little effort can produce good results. ‘Make hay while the sun shines’, exhorts an old proverb.

In Indian philosophy, time is said to move cyclically, with each cycle divided into four ages that occur one after the other.

In the beginning is the Golden Age, also referred to as heaven or paradise, because everything was in its perfect form during that period. Human souls were free from evil influences and nature was in its pristine state. Pain and sorrow were unknown. As time goes by, souls gradually lose their purity and power, and consequently the quality of their actions deteriorates. As a result,



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they start experiencing sorrow. This decline accelerates over time, and the world that

was once heaven comes to be called hell.

Our way of thinking changes so much that things that would have been shocking or unthinkable in an earlier age come to be accepted as normal. But the majority of people choose to swim with the tide, adopting the prevalent notions of right and wrong, good and bad. Few have the inclination or courage to stand up for values that have become old-fashioned.

At such a time, those with good intentions find their efforts are all in vain or even land them in trouble. Today, a good Samaritan offering to help a stranger is likely to be greeted with suspicion, or even falsely accused of causing harm. Charitable acts are as likely to win appreciation as they are to invite insinuations of a hidden motive. Sometimes, those who want to do good find their hands

tied by circumstances and they have to acquiesce in decisions that go against their conscience.

All too often, the conscience is unable to resist the negative forces prevailing everywhere. Just one lapse of judgement can ruin a life or forever stain a person's reputation.

The truth is that goodness can flourish only in good times. No one can be pure when there is impurity everywhere, one can only be relatively less impure.

This is why God has to eventually intervene, when evil reaches extreme proportions, to usher in good times. He awakens us souls, His children, to our true identity, reminding us that we are not bodies but souls – tiny, sentient points of light that give life to the body.

He also tells us that purity, peace, love and truth are our natural qualities. It is when

we see ourselves as bodies that vices such as ego, anger, lust, and greed arise and the soul begins to act under their influence.

God then tells us to remember Him, because remembrance is the subtle link by which we can draw power from the Almighty. This power enables us to overcome the temptations, deceptions, and force of the vices and become clean once again.

When a critical mass of people brings about this inner transformation, the positive energy emanating from them changes the atmosphere of the world. A new era dawns, in which goodness is the order of the day. It is the time for this inner transformation, now.

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LOOK WITHIN

MASTERING YOUR MIND



PRATIBHA PATEL

It is often said that our mind is our best friend, but it can equally be our worst enemy. It all depends on the thoughts we hold in our mind. Currently many people are finding that their minds are in a state of great fluctuation. One moment bright and sunny and the next moment, gloomy and overcast, or even stormy. Hardly surprising that the weather is reflecting all this fluctuation and seems to be constantly unstable. Of the four living entities in our world, the human beings, the animal kingdom, the plants and vegetation, and the salts, minerals and elements, only the human being has the benefit and opportunity to be spiritual. It is this ability which, if enough human beings turn to it, will affect the other three living entities and bring about a change to stability and beauty in our world.



The superconscious mind is where all treasures of true knowledge and awareness are to be found.

In fact, the world situation at this time is such that unless I find a way to access my real inner self, the spiritual being that I am, and connect deeply with that, I will not be able to help myself and no-one else will be able to help me. Of course, on the external level, medicine, possessions, and friends will certainly be able to do so, but only for a short time. I need to

master my mind, access the highest part of me, so that I can not only see clearly what to do for myself, but am also able to help others around me.

Mastering the mind has nothing to do with control. Just as if I try to help and guide a small child who is yearning for independence, my hand will be pushed aside when offered. The child wants to run

and explore, charge around on impulse and often meet with a mishap. However, reasoning and gentle discipline works wonders, with small children and also with my mind that is constantly running around.

The mind is an organ of the soul, in the same way that the eyes are organs of the physical body. The eyes are created to see. However, I can choose

what I see and give attention to. I do not control my eyes, I discipline them for my own well-being. In the same way, I must learn to choose what I think and gently discipline the mind to think in the most beneficial way for my own well-being and that of others. The three faculties of the mind are, the conscious mind, which is concerned with the

five senses. The subconscious mind, which records everything I think and do and never forgets, remains hidden to a certain extent, but has a great influence on my present moment, and the superconscious mind.

The superconscious mind is at a level of awareness beyond the physical and material reality, and it is where all spiritual experiences are to be found. It is in this realm of consciousness that all treasures of true knowledge and awareness are accessible and when I know how, I can tap into this awareness whenever I wish, and bring the light of understanding to my everyday life. It is through the silence of meditation that we access our super consciousness. Each day can begin with calm and before I begin the tasks and activities, I can sit quietly, and become silent inside. This is how I create a relationship with my own true self, and experience the wealth of love, purity, and peace within and recharge the spirit. When I practise this daily, for as many moments throughout the day as I can, I will see how the impossible becomes possible.

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A THOUGHT FOR TODAY

Optimism is the lens through which I look at the world. Like a kaleidoscope that arranges bits of coloured glass into a pleasing view, I can choose to organize the bits of my life into a view that pleases. The energy of optimism is the organizing principle of positivity. Today let me apply the lens of optimism to arrange the bits of my life into a pleasing view.

WISDOM

UNDERSTANDING TOLERANCE



B.K. SURYA

Tolerance is defined as the quality of being willing to accept somebody or something, especially opinions or behaviour that we may not agree with, or people who are not like us.

It is undoubtedly a virtue that fosters peaceful coexistence, understanding, and respect in a diverse and interconnected world. Tolerance serves as a foundation for social cohesion, harmony, and progress.

By promoting acceptance and understanding, tolerance enables individuals from various cultural, religious, and social backgrounds to coexist peacefully, reducing social divisions and conflicts, and paving the way for cooperation and collaboration.

When we embrace tolerance, we open our minds to new perspectives and experiences. Engaging with different viewpoints and ideas enables us to expand our knowledge and develop critical thinking skills. Tolerance may often be accompanied by introspection, which leads to enhanced self-awareness and personal growth in terms of greater adaptability, open-mindedness, and empathy.

But tolerance is fruitful only when it is practised willingly, and not out of compulsion – to look good, conform to social norms, or be politically



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correct. When someone is forced to tolerate something against their wishes, it leads to impatience, irritation, and ill feeling.

Tolerance is voluntary and natural only when it stems from understanding, kindness, and/or empathy. We are willing to tolerate a dis-

agreeable situation when we understand the reason behind it. If someone's behaviour or lifestyle does not conform to our idea of what is normal or proper, we may still be able to tolerate, and even be friends with them, if we know why they are the way they are, and wish them well.

But there needs to be a source for such good wishes – they will not arise out of nowhere. Such wishes are based on love for our fellow human beings.

We all love some people, who may be our relatives, friends, good neighbours, colleagues, or the amiable shopkeeper. Our relations

with them are characterised by pleasant interactions, cooperation, and positive feelings. For this reason, we would be willing to tolerate unexpected behaviour from them – we would brush it off as an aberration and give them the benefit of the doubt.

Why cannot we do the same with everyone? Because we see them as ‘others’. Our love and concern are restricted to a circle of people and places we relate to in some way. People outside that circle are viewed warily, with suspicion, fear, or even loathing. Why? Because we do not know much about them, and so do not understand why they are different from the people we are used to dealing with.

It is not possible to know the story of each and every person on this planet in order to understand them a little. But knowing some universal

truths vastly broadens our mind, helping us develop empathy and unconditional tolerance. These truths are spiritual.

We are all souls, sentient points of light composed of the energies of love, peace, truth, and purity. These qualities are innate to us, that is why we like to experience them. All souls are children of the Supreme Soul. In other words, each and every person in the world is part of one spiritual family. Someone may look very different from us, with a different complexion, funny hair, and an odd face. They may speak a strange language and have religious beliefs we cannot make sense of, but still, they are a part of the same human family that I belong to. They are just playing a role different from mine, as are countless other people. The

souls playing various roles are fundamentally like me – they want peace, love, and respect. Like me, they would like to be accepted for what they are, and not judged or labelled according to the role they are currently playing in the drama of life.

Once we know these truths, reflect on them, and understand their universality and significance, our point of view changes. Then tolerance comes naturally. It is not having to put up with something; rather it is respect for the differences that add variety to our human family. I can enjoy the differences, marvelling at the huge diversity of my spiritual family. Then I will not even feel that I am tolerating anything.

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