

AWAKENING

How spirituality is a tonic for the mind



JUDY JOHNSON AND GOPI PATEL

The world is awakening to the importance of mental health. For too long the difficulties of anxiety, depression and other expressions of an unhealthy mind have been overlooked, and those who suffer, marginalised.

Anxiety and depression were declared a global mental health pandemic before Covid 19. Social distancing has left us alone with our minds by removing distractions we used to escape. This forced introversion is revealing and intensifying a plethora of mental health issues.

In the western countries, people are fortunate to have skilled mental health professionals available to offer expertise in managing these diseases of the mind. What can spirituality offer in this time of intense emotional and mental disturbance?

Understand: I am a soul that lives inside a body. When the spirit enters the human body, it provides the energy to make the brain and other or-



gans function. I am not my brain just as I am not my kidney. If the brain chemistry is out of balance, it can cause the experience of depression or anxiety. Sometimes medication is required. Understanding the difference between soul and brain allows me to detach from the experience of depression. When empowered with self-awareness, I, the soul, can support the healing process by creating positive thoughts that establish new pathways in the brain.

Reset to peace: Thoughts and feelings are experienced first in the mind. Just as I am not my brain, I am not my mind. My mind is influenced by many things, the external atmosphere, another person's energy or

even old memories. Over-attention to the thoughts and feelings in my mind causes distress. Through meditation I become familiar with the peaceful quality of my natural state of mind. I easily recognise when my peace has been eclipsed by another energy. Meditation helps me detach from my own mind and reset to my original state. This protects the mind from influence.

Loving settlement: Disturbances in the mind are caused by past actions. When I have caused harm to myself or another in some way, the memory is stored in my conscience and creates a disturbance in my mind. I cannot always identify the specific source of the disturbance as the original action

may have happened long ago (even possibly in another birth). A more powerful energy field can settle disturbed energy. A consistent connection with the Divine Source settles disturbances in the mind over time by stabilising the soul in a higher, more positive state.

Compassionate response to self: The soul is eternal. As an eternal being, I have had many experiences on my journey through time, some life-threatening. Fear was a sensible response. When a present situation triggers an old memory, my mind is flooded with fear and I feel anxious. Acknowledging the feelings brings relief and accepting their transience gives rise to compassion and the ability to let go. This puts the anxious feelings in perspective and stabilises my mind.

Spirituality empowers the soul with self-awareness, builds resilience and fortifies mental health, especially needed in these extreme times.

Judy Johnson studies Rajyoga meditation and coordinates the activities of the Brahma Kumaris meditation centre in Halifax, Canada.

Gopi Patel is a spiritual educator and senior Rajyogi meditator with the Brahma Kumaris, specialising in spiritual pragmatism in all areas of life.

DISCOURSE

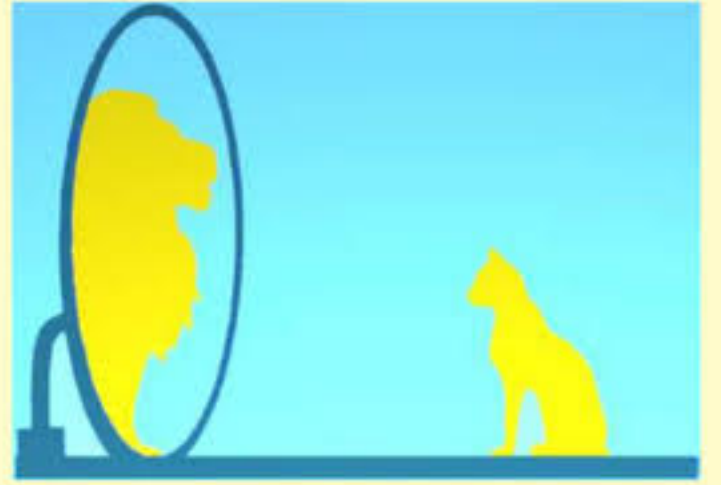
SPIRITUAL STUDY RESTORES YOUR COURAGE



DADI JANKI

You need courage to remain true to yourself in today's artificial world. This is not a small thing. However, the very purpose of a spiritual study is to restore

courage. The courage to stand for what you believe in. Your original, true nature is of peace and divinity. To experience this is to be convinced of the absolute value of your intrinsic worth. You can face any opposition with the strength of your convictions. Many people have difficulty believing in their higher self. Others simply no longer believe in the future. Self-realisation removes doubts. My original nature is peace. I am not a slave to my personality traits - I am their creator. I am a spectator as well as an actor in the Drama of life. Whatever is happening is beneficial. As you incorporate these truths into your life, your courage will never fail you.



BLISSFUL LIFE

MAKING YOUR SPIRITUAL PRACTICE MORE FRUITFUL



B.K. DR SAVITA

It is worthwhile for those aiming to live a fulfilling life through spiritual practices to check their inclinations: Do they like being surrounded by sounds or silence? In silence we can attain a powerful state that will serve many souls.

We need to see if we can make the mind silent in a moment or if it takes considerable time and effort to become stable in silence. The best way to end any upheaval in the mind is to go into silence.

It is easy to speak about meditation, but unless we

practise and experiment with it, we will be unable to experience an elevated life. Without practice, we cannot acquire the power that comes from regular meditation, and we will find it difficult to deal with challenging situations.

We will also be bereft of courage, which is essential for a spiritual life. The main weakness of many who take to the spiritual path is that they do not practise what they have learnt, and are content to just speak about it.

Just as those doing serious research remain deeply en-

grossed in their work, one needs to be busy experimenting with and experiencing the truth of what one has learnt.

What is the power of tolerance? What do we attain from this power? How do we use this power? What kind of problems do we face when we are devoid of this power? Which situations test our power to tolerate?

When we reflect in this way, we become mentally prepared to face tests in real life, and will not fail. Cultivating a habit of such reflection also frees us from

waste thoughts.

Yoga means connection with God. Remembering God is said to be easy, but do we find it easy or just say that it is so? Why is it easy? Do we know the answer to this? Applying spiritual knowledge in our life, and regular meditation, are what will bring clear understanding and power. One who has this power and deep love for God can easily face any problems.

When we just skim the surface of spiritual knowledge, virtues and powers, we feel happy and energised for a while, but to retain the vigour and joy all our life, we need deeper engagement. That will bring valuable insights and spiritual strength which will free us from self-made limitations and sorrows and enable us to live a life of bliss.

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



DRIVING FORCE

TRUE LOVE IS TRUE POWER



VALÉRIANE BERNARD

Love is the driving force for life everywhere; for individuals, for nations. Love is an amazing power. In our world at the moment, people have a love of power, but power with no love is not power. When people speak of power nowadays, they equate it with force, like a warrior. To be a force for good, power has to be fully merged with love.

When someone takes a spiritual path, it is to become something different from who they are. A spiritual path is for self-transformation. To make this transformation, they need to look at their own dharma—what they love

and what they believe.

They need to do this very deeply. They have to actually stop wanting to be 'them'. The ideas that have carried for a long time about what is right and what is wrong are now no longer of use, no longer serve them. This needs to be looked at very closely.

They need to look at how they are behaving, what they are thinking and find what is not filled with pure love. It is the only way to be happy, but it takes great humility to recognise what has to change.

Very often, their behaviour is not filled with love, and then there is dislike of the way they are reacting. A natural tendency is to project outwards and blame the situation or person who provoked that reaction.

What is really needed is acceptance, deep acceptance, that what is happening is a mirror. This mirror will reveal what needs to change. Just wanting to change does not make it happen. There needs to be knowledge of the



way to make it happen.

If they want a heart full of love, what do they have to do to make that happen? They have to look at what part of them is still small and demanding. What small heart-lessness are they displaying? They must do this with love for the self.

They need to accept the circumstances and the behaviour of others and the way life is going—especially if it is not going in the direction they were hoping it would—and just 'surf' the waves of life; accept they are

a student, they are learning. If they were learning a language, they would listen very carefully.

The only One without any defect is the Supreme Soul. If they connect to this Supreme Being and listen carefully to the power of that love, this will help them to slowly learn and change—to become who they want to be.

Valériane Bernard is one of the Brahma Kumaris' UN representatives in Geneva and one of the BK team members at climate change conferences.

INNER SANCTUARY

A sweet relationship of trust



MOIRA LOWE

The exceptional times we are living through, for all the difficulties they present, provide us with a wonderful opportunity. This is our chance to pause, connect, and finally find what we have been searching for. It is a moment for cleansing, letting go of the past and healing.

In normal circumstances we tend to be preoccupied with our daily lives, sometimes even making excuses to be

busy and "out there". We do not find either a moment or a way to stay still, embark on profound reflection, and explore our inner reality. Over time, we become depleted and drained of energy, like batteries that run down.

Now, with large parts of the world at a pause, we have an opportunity to change this.

Meditating in the early hours of the morning, I start the day in deep conversation with myself and with the Divine. Sitting quietly, totally open and receptive, I observe my inner world and discover the beauty of who and what I really am.

Old habits and weaknesses may appear as stray thoughts come up, and I let them pass.

This is a time for exploring the depth of my being, for connecting with the Divine



and being embraced by His love. The experience of deep meditation is a sweet relationship of trust in which I am able to open my heart completely to the Divine and

His love. I awaken to a higher level of myself as a spiritual being, seeing myself as pure spiritual energy rather than as a body with a material iden-

tity: This is what I am, what I have always been and what I will be forever. I become free, whole and light.

In essence, meditation is being awake and connected to the self, to meaning and to God. It recharges us with an energy that shines through everything we create.

And it transforms our relationships with other people. Where once we searched for love, acceptance and friendship from others, now we enjoy a feeling of being safe, secure and filled with peace. The neediness of the past fades away and we offer a higher energy in these relationships.

Our thinking becomes more open, receptive and positive. This is a big jump of consciousness, and we need to carry tools of power, discern-

ment, tolerance and adaptation to put it into practice. But there is always the possibility of reconnecting with the Divine to increase our capacity.

Regularly taking time out of daily activities allows me to reconnect for a few moments. As I return to my inner sanctuary, I tap into the original, pure energy that gives me so much power.

And before signing off at the end of the day, a final meditation allows me to check my spiritual pulse and bring the mind to rest by putting aside any worries or preoccupations.

By making God part of my life in this way, and sharing my heart with Him, I prepare for whatever may come. Moira Lowe is director of the Brahma Kumaris' services in Argentina.

A THOUGHT FOR TODAY

A deep thinker will probe beneath the words and listen behind the sound to 'catch' meaning. When I don't understand something, I use my intellect to analyse the problem in search of clarity. This can become intellectual or over-analytical. A deep thinker, on the other hand, will sit quietly and invite insight to reveal a solution. Today let me 'see' meaning and solutions by thinking deeply.