

AWAKENING

Nature's beauty is a reflection of our inner beauty



MIKE GEORGE

Some people believe that being in nature is a kind of spirituality in itself. They believe nature provides them with both the food they eat and the spiritual sustenance they often crave. Those who believe God or the divinity is omnipresent, also believe it is enough to be in and to commune with nature to connect with God, the creator, and enhance their spirituality. But is real spiritual sustenance to be found in nature?

Yes, there is beauty to be found in nature. There is a naturalness that can feel uplifting and therefore seem to be nourishing for the spirit. But without an understanding and awareness that body and consciousness are two distinct energies, it is easy to believe just being in nature is enough to restore your spiritual and mental capacities.

Only when there is the realisation that consciousness is what I am — call it the self, soul or spirit — and the physical body is what

I animate and occupy, can an accurate relationship with the natural, material world around us be restored.

The material and the spiritual are two different energies. This distinction can be proven by being more aware of one's own 'inspiration'. Notice, that to maintain the health and vitality of our body we need to consume water, food and light. There is an essential and continuous input. Our body is sustained by nature's gifts. But to maintain the well-being, vitality and enthusiasm of the self, which is spirit, we need to radiate outwards. There is an essential output. We need to give of our self in selfless ways.

The energy of form is tangible and visible while the energy of consciousness is intangible and invisible. While these energies are intertwined and they do 'influence' each other, they cannot be 'sourced' in each other. Spiritual energy cannot be acquired from matter and material energy cannot be acquired from the spiritual energy that is consciousness.

When most people take a walk in nature, they are often awed by its spectacular beauty and may even say, "Isn't it just magnificently beautiful? It makes me feel so good." What they may not be aware of is they are attempting to 'take' from that world. They are using the natural world 'out there' to induce good feelings 'in



here'. But it won't be long before they return to energising the habit of thinking and feeling not so good about themselves. Nature cannot cure that or any self-image with any distortion or darkness within it. If it could, we would all probably be permanently lying on a beach or walking in the mountains.

The enlightened soul knows they are designed to 'give' to the natural world. They give the gift of their own beauty. They give the kind of vibrations that can help to heal and encourage the growth of nature's variety. And it is only as they do, that they may notice they are uplifted and healed in them-

selves. They know that nature's outer beauty is only a reminder of one's own inner beauty.

The natural world out there is the ultimate metaphor for the inner world of the conscious beings that we are. Mountains and valleys are the highs and lows of our feelings. Flowers and trees represent the beauty and strength of the human spirit. The gentle animals and the violent creatures remind us of our propensity to swing either way within our own nature.

But the greatest metaphor is the sun. It shines and nourishes every material entity on the planet. But it does not nourish conscious-

ness. For that there is an invisible spiritual sun or source. But we are unaware of its presence. Unaware of its availability. We know to take off our material clothes to feel the warmth and absorb the light of the physical sun. Few of us, it seems, have realised that we need to take off the clothing of our consciousness, which are our attachments and myriad identities, to allow our 'self' to be touched and healed by the love and wisdom of the spiritual source.

Mike George is an author of 16 books on self-awareness, spiritual intelligence and personal 'undevelopment'. To subscribe to 'Clear Thinking', go to www.relax7.com.

DISCOURSE

TRUST OTHERS TO WIN THEIR TRUST



DADI JANKI

Trust is essential if you want to help people. There are two aspects of trust -- your own trust in others and their trust in you. People will naturally start trusting you when they see you overcoming problems in a reliable and constant way.

However, a more powerful and long-term way of gaining people's trust is to give them the experience of your trust in them.

This is an art which can be cultivated as follows: Never listen to gossip and never foster it yourself; form neither judgements nor opinions; rather, be spiritual and clean in your feelings. Learn to develop good wishes for others. This will be the ultimate measure of your ability to trust.

Dadi Janki was the chief of the Brahma Kumaris for many years. She left her mortal coil in March 2020 at the age of 104.



ETERNAL TRUTH

To live a happy life, know and use your powers



B.K. BRIMOHAN

It is said that truth is God. That which is true is eternal. The first truth is that we are immortal spiritual beings, or souls. All material things, including our body, are resources used by the soul. Our powers come from the soul, not the body. Just as an electrical appliance works only when it is supplied with power, the body functions only if there is a soul residing in it.

The quality of our life is determined by the quality of the soul, or the mind, which is a faculty of the soul. If there is a defect in the mind, it will be manifest in our life. One may have a pile of weapons at home, but if one is weak-minded, one will live in fear. This is why they say that victory or defeat first occur in

the mind.

The soul has some innate powers, of which eight are prominent. The first of these is the power to withdraw from external situations. We use this power every day when we go to sleep, detached from the rest of the world. When this power is lacking, one is unable to step back from situations and gets trapped, which stops one's progress. One may become attached to a task due to one's success and hold on to it, instead of delegating it and moving on.

The second power is the power to pack up. Just as a traveller packs up his things before his train reaches his destination, one needs to be ever-ready for the end of life's journey, which may come at any time. For that it is best not to have desires and expectations, which lead to sorrow if they are not fulfilled, spoiling the joy of life's journey and causing regret at the end.

The third is the power to accommodate. The ocean accepts everything that goes into it; it does not reject anything. Humility teaches us to do likewise and accommodate everyone, even if



they are very different from us. Everything and everyone exist for a reason; they are all a part of the drama of life. Understanding this helps us accommodate all kinds of people without much fuss, making life's journey easier.

Next is the power to discern, which enables us to tell right from wrong. Correct discernment requires a clean mind, as

the clutter of various thoughts will not allow us to think clearly. Patience is also needed, as it helps us derive wisdom from knowledge. This power resolves dilemmas and aids decision-making.

Another power, of judgment, comes from a clean intellect. If the intellect has been subverted by a weakness, say, ego or greed,

it will make the wrong decision. Criminals too have an intellect, but instead of guiding them to a life of honesty, it helps them plan and commit crimes because it is corrupted by vices. A clean intellect means having no trace of any vice. I may be good to nearly everyone, but if I detest some people, I will be unable to make the right decision about anything

involving them. The power to face any situation requires courage, which comes from realising the truth that I am an immortal soul, playing my part in the drama of life with other souls. If one lives by the soul's innate virtues of purity, peace and truth, one can face anything, because nothing can harm such a soul.

The power of tolerance arises from humility and accepting people and situations as they are. When we are humble and accepting, we will not even feel that we have to tolerate something. Ego, on the contrary, causes pain — the bigger the ego, the stronger the pain.

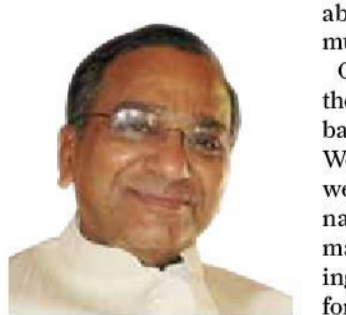
The eighth is the power of cooperation. Cooperation happens when there is humility, mutual respect, and goodwill. It helps achieve seemingly impossible tasks. The whole world is functioning by cooperation between people, and lack of cooperation leads to animosity and conflict.

All these powers can be developed by living by five principles: Truth: I am a soul, not a body. Purity: Freedom from vices, which are at the root of all sorrow. Patience: Everything happens at the right time. Understanding this prevents worry and hopelessness. Humility: It smoothens relationships. Sweetness: It fosters love and cooperation.

B.K. Brimohan is the Additional Secretary General of the Brahma Kumaris

SPIRITUAL PATH

HOW TO CHECK AND SPEED UP SELF-TRANSFORMATION



B.K. ATAM PRAKASH

On the spiritual path, we can measure our progress by checking three things: (1) to what extent do we reflect on our true, spiritual self, the soul; (2) how pure and positive are our thoughts

about others; and (3) how much do we serve the world.

Our feelings for others and the service we do are, in fact, based on the first practice. We need to check how long we are aware of our original self during the day. We may be very keen on serving others and make plans for that, but are we equally enthusiastic about our own spiritual growth, and do we look for new ways to move towards our goal of attaining perfection?

It has been observed that spiritual aspirants are usually eager to serve others, but their interest in self-



development fluctuates — sometimes it is there, and at other times circumstances fire it up, but its intensity is short-lived. Their attention on having positive thoughts about others is also greater than that on the self. However, to become perfect one needs to speed up self-transformation. For that one has to make a plan for oneself — for self-analysis, identifying what needs to change, and making that change.

Just thinking of making spiritual effort will not do; what is required is genuine concern for that effort. Concern does not mean worry,

but a zeal that consumes all other interests. Having this concern, and the results of it, make one content and happy when one starts experiencing success.

Many aspirants recognise the fact that their spiritual effort is not what it should be. They think: "It should be like this; I should do this; this is how I should do it." Merely thinking in this manner does not bring results. The thoughts have to be translated into action.

Why does one become careless some time after starting something? The main reason is not having a

deadline. Just as one is not casual about one's work once a deadline is set for its completion, one needs to fix a time limit for one's effort — that by such a date I will be free of this weakness. This will bring quicker results.

Unless you become your own teacher and bind yourself to certain rules, you will not develop into someone who is able to help others live a fulfilled life.

B.K. Atam Prakash is a senior Rajyoga teacher and the headquarters coordinator of the Youth Wing of Rajyoga Education and Research Foundation