

FORGIVENESS

Mercy makes us humane beings



B.K. DR. HIRNALA

When we think of mercy, some related words come to mind, such as pity, sympathy and compassion. Pity is to feel sorry for someone but not do anything about it. We look at the poor or those who are suffering and we pity them, but are unable to offer succour.

Mercy is to go a step further and lend a helping hand — we sympathise and understand others' feelings.

Compassion is a higher consciousness that includes sympathy and concern for the suffering of others. God, it is said, has compassion for all souls.

Pity can take the form of self-pity. We may be going

through difficult times and think, "No one loves me. No one cares for me. I'm so poor", and so on. This kind of self-absorbed unhappiness over one's own troubles does not help anyone.

Mercy can also be futile, even damaging if it is false mercy. We may think we are being merciful by helping others, but if we do it in such a way that the other person does not progress, they will become dependent on us.

Sometimes, those who have such mercy get trapped in the problems of others. Out of attachment or poor discernment, we may have mercy on someone who may not have the capacity to change for the better. We fail to see the long-term consequences of our actions and rush in to help. The results may not be what we intended. In fact, we may end up suffering in the process. So one needs to be careful before getting involved in helping others.

The first mercy we need to have is on the self, by looking after our own spiritual and physical well-being



This includes living by principles that will help me stay emotionally and physically healthy.

When we have mercy on others, we must watch our motives: Do I sincerely want to help the other person, or am I doing it because I have been asked to, or my role requires me to do it? If I am volunteering help, what is in my mind? Am I looking for acknowledgement, praise or some other return? Am I trying to show myself to be more merciful than others?

In a family, mercy born of attachment can cause parents to spoil their children. Where there is attachment we tend to ignore the other person's weaknesses, and there is no effort to make the other person realise their faults and remove them. Here, what is needed is a balance of love and discipline.

Our mercy cannot be limited to those we know or like. Can I be merciful towards someone who criticises or insults me? Do I have merciful feelings for terrorists and criminals, or

those who have harassed or cheated me? We tend to fear or hate such people.

These negative feelings can be transformed into a positive attitude through meditation, which helps us realise that every soul is on a unique journey, and there is a reason why people are the way they are and do the things they do. This is not condoning wrong actions, but understanding, with empathy and wisdom, how they came about. Only when we are positive towards such people can we help them live a better life.

Mercy also enables us to forgive others for their wrongs. Forgiveness is necessary to let go of the burden of an unhappy past and move on in life.

Mercy and forgiveness are not merely virtues that benefit others — they do much more good to me by freeing me from harmful thoughts and feelings, making me a truly humane being who can serve the world.

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DISCOURSE

DO NOT MAKE COMPARISONS WITH OTHERS



DADI JANKI

Comparing your progress in self-development with that of others will leave you vulnerable on three counts: You will feel inferior, superior, or impressed. All three of these states are dangerous because they disregard the underlying principle of our

true connection with each other — mutual love and regard, based on independent, self-generated self-esteem.

To protect yourself from this vulnerability, make sure that your attention remains turned within, towards the spiritual experience of pure pride. Staying centred in your elevated self-respect will help you remain undisturbed by others around you. Keep asking yourself, 'Who am I?' 'How would my spiritual personality respond to this event or person?' This will help centre you further, and allow you to enjoy the successful efforts of others.



MEDITATION

An invitation to experience sweet silence



MAUREEN CHEN

Meditation is to cultivate the mind. Just like a garden, the mind needs weeding, fertilising and nurturing in order to flourish. Here is an invitation to experiment with a 'diet' and 'exercise' to lighten the mind and to taste the sweetness of silence, for one week.

Start the day at dawn with a 'spiritual breakfast' of healthy thoughts. Step into the experi-

ence of oneness with nature... a slow morning walk, or sit on the rooftop or balcony. You can also simply use your imagination. Hold the word silence in the mind, savour the feeling and let that quietude spread throughout your body.

With the rays of the rising sun, detox the heart from any bitterness of resentment and blame. Close your eyes and feel the powerful Light of the Sun. Let those rays pass through you to the people you need to forgive, including yourself. Do not filter this light, let it flow. Forgiveness is not rational, it is an act of grace, of letting go, emptying the heart of pain and releasing it from tension.

'Fast' by abstaining from feelings and attitudes that injure health and well-being. Refrain



from waste thoughts and protect the heart from negative feel-

ings. Check the impact of any emotions arising in the mind.

Just as the body needs to be replenished with whatever it is made of, such as minerals, vitamins and liquids, we need to replenish the soul with whatever it is made of — peace, love, happiness and inner power.

Sit on the seat of the Master and practise replacing any negative feelings with courage, forgiveness and confidence.

Just as the body needs to be replenished with whatever it is made of, such as minerals, vitamins and liquids, we need to replenish the soul with whatever it is made of — peace, love, happiness and inner power.

Stop and 'smell the roses', create thoughts of gratitude and compassion. Connect with plants, birds, animals, and

small children, especially babies, if possible. Marvel at the intricacy of all creation. Slow down and match the pace of nature.

Focus on your inner world. Who am I? What is important for me to be doing right now in my life? Simple practices such as keeping a vase of flowers on your desk, or a beautiful stone or picture can act as a reminder of your special attention this week.

Sleep early. If possible, use

your bedroom only for sleeping. Avoid working, talking and 'busy-ness' in the late evening. The 'city sickness' of insomnia, stress and anxiety is due to not spending time winding down and clearing the mind before sleeping and from the habit of sleeping late.

Close the day with silent reflection so that I can learn from any mistakes I may have made throughout the day. Let them go. Forgive. Return to silence. The thoughts you sleep with will affect your dream state and morning mind set.

Maureen has established and sustained Brahma Kumaris meditation centres in Australia and Asia for over 40 years, as well as various charities in Hong Kong and Cambodia

POSITIVE ATTITUDE

THE IMPORTANCE OF HAVING GOOD WISHES



B.K. MRUTHUNJAYA

Good wishes, it is said, have the power to cool down burning situations. They keep the mind calm in challenging situations and touch the hearts of others, inducing positive feelings and a like response.

Often we do not have good wishes for others because we are ignorant of their value.

Good wishes help to end

ill will between people and bring us cooperation and love from others. In addition, they aid our spiritual progress by saving us from negative thinking.

The phrase, 'you reap what you sow', sums up the benefit of having good wishes—if you think good of others, the return will eventually be good.

When someone criticises or insults you, you may be able to have good wishes for them if you understand why they are doing that, but how do you receive good wishes from them? At that time, if you remember that they have lost their composure and are not in control of themselves, you will feel sorry for them, and also realise that the best response is to remain

peaceful. The other person will sense that peace and be thankful for it, even if they do not say so.

But first one has to have good wishes for the self. The way to do that is to be content — appreciate all that one has and be happy about it. For contentment, one also has to live by certain principles, as otherwise there will be the gnawing feeling that one is bad, or not good enough. The resulting despondency and low self-esteem can rob one of strength and happiness and will lead to nowhere. On the other hand, the higher the principles one lives by the more content, happy and hopeful one will be.

Going a step further, when we are grateful for

everything we have, not taking our good fortune for granted, we earn good wishes from God, which smooth the journey of life. On reflection we realise there is a lot in our life that calls for gratitude, but which we take casually. Gratitude teaches us to value even small things and share them with others, which earns us their good wishes.

Finally, it is important to have good wishes for nature, which provides us so much, and our body which is made of the five elements. Appreciating nature's gifts and serving nature create a bond with the five elements that enriches our life.

Having good wishes for the body is to give thanks for how it enables us to work and serve. In return, the body will remain active. This is not wishful thinking. A positive attitude triggers a beneficial hormonal response, which helps to keep the mind and body healthy. The more we use the body to serve others, the longer it will remain healthy.

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BEAUTIFUL WORLD

THIS IS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR TRANSFORMATION



B.K. JAYANTI

Looking at the world right now, we wonder if this is a time of crisis or opportunity. We all understand that we are living in precarious times, and we all recognise the need to rise, support and help others. Spiritual traditions share insights into principles and practices that will be helpful in doing this. We all are aware that love can do magic. Every faith tradition has emphasized that time spent in silence, prayer or meditation develops one's inner power and capacity for love. The power of love will increase our capacity to serve and support those in need. Ignorance of love allowed violence to erupt against the human family and nature itself.

From a spiritual viewpoint, the current circumstances hold an incredible opportunity for transformation.



Transformation of the self and transformation of this planet. Looking at time from a linear perspective, it feels as if we are approaching the end of an era. We are totally unsure of what comes next, if anything at all. However, looking closely, we can see that days, months, seasons and nature itself moves in circles and cycles. Interestingly, there is not a straight line to be found in nature. Humanity has always gone through periods of light and darkness and there was always a new beginning. Seeing time in a

cyclical way offers hope for the future and teaches us humility and compassion. This is the most critical period in history, and time is asking humanity to take the lead in a transition to move from the lowest to the highest, from negativity into goodness, truth and beauty.

Humans do have an incredible potential to bring change to the world. We have to open our hearts and minds to the divine and reconnect with our eternal self — the soul. This interaction will liberate us and set free our creative

potential. Once we visualize a better world, we soon realise that compassion, love, peace and joy are among the most essential qualities. Mind is above matter!

The world is definitely at the turning point where soon the darkness will end and there will be a world of light, a better world in which there can be truth, justice, love, happiness and peace for all. Let us join hands in this task and create a beautiful world.

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