

CONSCIOUSNESS

WHAT DO I NEED TO DO NOW?



CHARLIE HOGG

At this particular time, many people are asking themselves and others 'what's happening, what's going on?'. Some time ago, in Australia, a radio host asked his listeners the same question and then asked them: given the calamities, diseases and conflicts in the world, did they think that it was just 'business as usual' or was it different. A few phoned in and said they thought it was the same as it had always been. However, a great many said, no, something is going on, there is something in the air – a deep shift in the soul of humanity – it is very difficult to pinpoint exactly what it is, but it is palpable. There seems to be a sense of deep anxiety about the future.

are asking the wrong question. Perhaps the question should not be 'what's going on?' but 'what do I need to do now?'.

The Brahma Kumaris have an understanding of what is needed now, but it is important to remember that each of us has our own journey, and we need to respect the journey of every individual because not everyone is on the same one. However, it is interesting that 80 per cent of people do believe they are more than just a body. This belief is key in understanding what is needed and what is unfolding.

We understand that there are three eternal energies. The individual soul, a point of consciousness with no dimension and completely indestructible. The Supreme Soul, who in form is exactly the same, and the material world. The whole story, from the beginning, through the middle to the end, depends on the interplay of these three eternal energies. We call this interaction, life. As things change during



the interaction, we put a label on the changes, and call them, time.

Eternity is a fascinating concept and in terms of time, the only possible motion of eternity is a cycle. This is a widely held belief among ancient peoples and religions. So, what is the story of the soul through this cycle of time?

We understand that there is a 'springtime' of the world of matter, the earth, and of the souls who are present at that time. It is a world of

truth and beauty. This is followed by a 'summer-time', when more souls are present and still enjoy a world of peace and love. As time passes the energy of the souls gradually depletes and then they begin a search, that lasts through the next age of 'autumn', looking for a way to return to the perfection that has been lost. That is the era of the arrival of all religions and religious founders offering some kind of solace.

Finally, the earth enters the age of darkness, of 'winter', where nothing is what it seems when chaos and suffering increase as the souls become more and more lost and embedded in the world of matter, bodies, objects, creating attachment, and fear of loss.

That is the time for the Supreme Soul, God, to educate souls as to who they really are and how to return to the state of this consciousness filled with love. This is the age of the confluence of the

old and the new and arrives at the time of the deepest darkness and suffering.

All the soul has to do is to recognise the truth of being eternal, and connect in yoga with the Supreme Soul to heal the self and the world. What I need to do now is to live a simple, pure life, let go of the past and prepare for the future.

Charlie Hogg, based in Sydney, is the National Coordinator, Brahma Kumaris, Australia.

QUALITY OF ACTIONS

COURAGE AND HONESTY ENSURE OUR SUCCESS



DADI JANKI

Success means reaching such a constant level of positive thoughts that pure actions happen naturally. Pure actions are like good seeds which, when planted, produce healthy, sweet fruit. "As you sow, so shall you reap".

Concern for the quality of my actions today ensures the success of my tomorrow. Virtues are the

mainstay in this because success like this requires hope, and hope, in today's world, requires courage. It is a matter of working from the strength of your convictions which is a spiritual kind of honesty. Balance these qualities and your path will be easy. You will move forward. Your success will be assured.

Courage alone does not bring success. If there is only courage, there will be ego. It is courage plus honesty which brings God's help and that is what guarantees success. "God is getting it done through me", "I am simply an instrument in this task", these are honest thoughts that elicit God's help and protection.

Humility is the result of such honesty and courage. A life of enthusiasm, courage, honesty and humility is inspirational. It is a way of helping others become successful, too.

POWER OF THOUGHTS

THE BENEFITS OF CONCENTRATION



B.K. USHA

To have the mind remain stable in one thought is the highest level of concentration. If we develop this degree of focus, our attention and energies will be applied fully and accurately to any task, leading to easy success. The power of concentration automatically brings mental clarity, an elevated state of mind,

and several other powers, including discernment, decision-making, and judgment. Because of this, if there is a difficult situation, even one individual with good concentration can find a solution to it.

When someone is deeply absorbed in one thought, they forget everything else and that thought is their world. Powerful concentration focuses our mental energy in such a way that we can convey our ideas to others clearly so that they can understand what we are thinking, and why. This helps to create concord and unity of purpose in a group. It is one thing to at-



tain such concentration by strenuous effort, and quite another to

remain constantly and naturally focused. To achieve the latter stage,

one needs solitude and long-term practice of focusing one's mind. With

dedicated and sustained practice one can acquire the ability to remain calm and focused even when there is commotion all around.

This ability not only helps us remain stable but also enables us to help others in times of distress. One whose mind is undisturbed and still is a source of hope and courage for those who are in the grip of anxiety, fear, confusion and depression.

Many of us think it is impossible to find time in our busy schedule to sit down and practise concentration. It is not that difficult. The key is to practise, even if for a short while, whenever

we have time. When we do this repeatedly, the mind will become habituated to being focused, and concentration will gradually become easier.

Concentration power developed in this way keeps us tranquil even in a difficult situation. Furthermore, it prevents wastage of mental energy in unnecessary thinking. A focused mind is, therefore, a powerful mind that can do more in less time. Such a mind is the key to quick progress on the path of self-improvement.

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MIND MATTERS

BLESSINGS DO WHAT MONEY CANNOT



B.K. SHIVANI

There are times when some families face a situation that cannot be resolved even if they spend all their money on it. In contrast, some other families easily come through seemingly insurmountable problems, as if by a miracle. But miracles do not happen. Those families had earned a lot of goodwill and blessings from others, and these helped tide them over the difficulty.

We all get the fruit of what we have done in the past. If we have accumulated a large stock of good wishes, we receive help from unexpected quarters that takes us across tough times.

Blessings are an intangible commodity, so we underrate them. We value what is vis-

ible: wealth, achievements, personal connections. It is essential to have money, and there is no harm in earning large amounts of it, but it helps to collect some blessings as well. They are invisible but have the energy to make the impossible happen.

If we are not getting blessings from others, in all likelihood something else is coming our way. When we are warm and friendly with someone, the other person responds in kind, and we receive pure and positive energy, or what we call blessings. But if we are cold or discourteous, or harbour ill-feelings for them, their thoughts about us are unlikely to be nice. We engage in such karmic transactions every day, investing in good or bad thoughts and feelings, and getting the return of that. But we overlook this – at great cost.

Suppose we get angry with someone and shout at them for a minute. How long are they going to take to get over the bad feelings



and emotional upheaval we caused? Probably a lifetime. A minute's investment of anger brings us a lifetime of ill-feeling from the other person.

We invest money with great care, checking beforehand what the return will be, but give little thought to karmic investments and end up receiving things we had not bargained for. Then we wonder why we are not happy even though everything in our life seems to be fine. We are earning loads of money and have everything we want, but we are still not content. That empty feeling inside is the result of the

harmful vibrations we have attracted by hurting others knowingly or otherwise.

Karmic investments call for more prudence than business deals. If we pay no attention to the quality of our actions, the corrosive effect of bad karma, which stems from – and reinforces – our character flaws, will corrupt our mind and the decisions it makes.

When we invest intelligently, that too brings lifelong returns, in the form of goodwill, cooperation, and friendship. Suppose someone has made a mistake and is expecting to get an earful from me, but instead of exploding with rage I just gently tell them to be more careful in future. They are going to remember my conduct for a long time, with some gratitude.

Can we always speak and act in ways that keep others happy and content? This calls for understanding, tolerance, and tact. If we do this, the blessings will keep rolling in and we will always find ourselves in good spir-

its. Where there are abundant blessings, there is joy, health and loving relationships. Money cannot buy any of these.

There is another important aspect to money: the thought behind earning it. We work hard and put aside something, thinking that it will come in handy in the event of a serious illness. If we earmark money for that purpose, that is where it will most likely go, because that is the thought energy we have put into it, which will create that reality. Why not accumulate good wishes instead, which will keep us healthy?

We err in assuming that material success will help us have peace, joy and contentment. For these, we can spend some time taking care of our mind so that we know how to manage our thoughts and emotions. Once we have learnt this subtle art, life will be much easier and more enjoyable.

B.K. Shivani is a well-known motivational speaker and Rajyoga teacher.

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