

TRUE SELF

# How to be free from false perceptions



NEVILLE HODGKINSON

The essence of problems that many of us face is that we have two selves, and their interests do not always coincide.

One is the sense of self acquired over time. As soon as we are born, we are surrounded by instructions and information and experiences that slowly build an identity with which we navigate life. From parents, teachers, and peers, we learn 'who' we are in terms of our gender, our abilities, our weaknesses and our predispositions.

This acquired self is largely a matter of memories that have become recorded in the brain,

often without our conscious awareness. The recording is vital for negotiating life. It enables us to respond moment by moment to the circumstances in which we find ourselves, as individuals. In psychology, it is called the ego self. It is a constructed self. This 'persona' can be egotistical, demanding, negative, but it can also be healthy and positive. Just as we need a body, we need some sense of identity to play our parts on the stage of life, rather as an actor needs a 'back story' as well as a costume.

However, there is also a deeper or higher self, the soul. This identity is independent of gender and in its highest form, independent of abilities and weaknesses. This higher self has intrinsic positive energies such as love, peace, joy, playfulness, and generosity of spirit. This is true of each one of us. It is who we really are, but it becomes covered with layers



of the more limited sense of identity.

Problems arise when memories of loss and hurt, often experienced early in life when we are very helpless, emerge from our subconscious and influence how we respond to people and situations. They cause us to lose faith and trust in ourselves, and oth-

ers, without good cause. These tendencies are often put in place as a protection against sorrow. They are defensive habits, which we develop to try to avoid further pain. But because we often suppress our awareness of them, they emerge inappropriately, distorting the way we see the world, causing

confusion, and limiting our capacity to love and prosper.

So, how do we become free from these false perceptions? The secret lies in accessing our true, divine self. Rajyoga teaches us self-realisation, and through that, how to connect and fill with the power of truth from God. With this strength,

we become able to bypass the conditioning in the brain, which limits us. We experience our intrinsic, beautiful qualities of spirit, and learn to bring those qualities into everyday life with authenticity and dignity. *Neville Hodgkinson is a UK-based author and journalist, and a long-time student of Rajyoga.*

DISCOURSE

## YOU NEED NOT THINK TO UNDERSTAND GOD



DADI JANKI

Human beings believe that in order to understand something, you have to think about it. However, to understand God, you do not have to think. When it comes to physical matters, then there is a need for thinking—you need to analyse in order to figure a thing out. But not with God.

Have you ever had a thought simply come to you 'out of the blue'—an

intuition, or a sudden inspiration—without any actual thinking? God gave you that inspiration. Did you do any thinking? In one flash, God gave you the understanding. You did not think, but suddenly the whole thing was clear to you, whereas under ordinary circumstances you would not have got the picture even if you had thought about it for years. God gave you that intuition. He touched your intellect, your heart, like light.

It is truly a wondrous thing that God can touch us in this way, while He Himself is beyond thoughts. God does not think. God does not have the need to create any thoughts. And now He is making us like Himself—beyond wasteful and ordinary thoughts, beyond thought altogether. Actually, there is no need to think. Thinking too much is just a habit.

BEAUTIFUL EXPERIENCE

## SPIRITUALITY IS FULL OF LOVE AND RESPECT



B.K. MOHINI

Spirituality means living in simplicity with a clean heart. It is good to check that I am living in this way. If I find that the heart is not clean and filled with good wishes for everyone, then I need to pay more attention to my spiritual practices.

All of us are souls, in different bodies, fulfilling the responsibilities of different relationships, just like actors inhabiting different costumes. If we see each other in that way, soul to soul, there is so much love and power.

All karmic accounts are created between souls. We create good karma when we speak and act with respect and regard for each soul. Each soul has a different and important part to play, and each soul has a different personality. Spiritual love is distinct and totally different from the kind of love that is felt when



we are only aware of the body. It is when we have spiritual love that we can give respect and regard to the other. This is not an outward show of respect but emerges from deep internal feelings.

We are all souls, brothers, children of the One Father, and we all come from the same home. As we travel on this journey of lifetimes, birth after birth, we take on different costumes and take part in different relationships. The one who is my mother in this birth was someone else to me in another birth.

Spiritual love is a very important principle and when we have this deep realisation it creates a beautiful experience. With this awareness we remain truly happy and are able to have love for everyone; friends, relatives and even those we do not know. In this way, our attitude and vision become loving.

So, let us concentrate internally with honesty and respect, and have deep spiritual love for everyone.

*B.K. Mohini is the Additional Administrative Head of the Brahma Kumaris.*

RIGHT AWARENESS

## TO BE HAPPY AND STRONG, WE NEED KNOWLEDGE



B.K. SHEILU

Millions of devout people across the world have great love for God. Few among them, however, seek to know Him as He is. Their love does bring rewards in the form of happiness, peace, and Divine love, but they are short-lived, and vanish when their feelings wane. That is not the case when we know who we are and how we can connect with God.

Recognising the truth that we are souls, children of God, is the first step of spiritual learning. Once we understand that we create our destiny by our actions and God, the Father, gives the guidance for that, we live responsibly and face life's challenges without too much

fuss. Those who love God but lack this understanding have unrealistic expectations from Him, and when those are not fulfilled, they are unhappy.

Both kinds of people—those with only love, and the better informed ones—experience the joy that faith brings, but the former are not strong. When they are full of love, they are on cloud nine, but a small problem can shake them as they lack the power that comes with knowledge. One day you see them dancing with joy and the next day a trivial matter

has them wailing. "What can I do? How can I do it? What will happen? How will it happen?"

They are like schoolchildren who love their teacher and enjoy being with him but make no effort to study. They do not understand that the teacher is there to teach, not just to be nice, and unless they pay attention to his words and do as he says, they will learn little. The result is that they fail the test.

The devout but naive souls are sustained by the power of love but lack the strength

to face difficulties. The informed souls, on the other hand, know that they are children of the Almighty and can be powerful like Him if they remember who they are and who their Father is. This twin awareness makes them strong. They do not ask for anything, trusting that the Father has their back and anything they need will be received at the right time. Their connection with the Divine and the strength it brings enables such individuals to easily overcome obstacles.

Becoming strong is not difficult—it is a matter of having the right awareness. When we are constantly aware, the pulls of desires and emotions and the deceptions of ego no longer affect us. Freed from all inner neediness, we are able to use our resources fully to serve others and help them become strong.

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### A THOUGHT FOR TODAY

When I leave home to explore the world, I take myself with me. No matter how independent I become, my strengths and weaknesses will come along as baggage. True independence comes when I conquer my weaknesses. A weakness compels me to act in ways that trap me in sorrow. The spiritual journey is one of liberation. True independence is to be free from the sorrow caused by my own weaknesses. Today let me become truly independent.

PANDEMIC TIMES

## JOY AND VALUE OF MEANINGFUL COMMUNITIES, BUILT ONLINE



JUDY JOHNSON AND DAVID FLETCHER

The time of Covid has extended beyond what any of us could have imagined. Alone in our homes, we watch the world through news headlines that scare us and push us psychologically apart. As social beings, we miss the experience of community. Many of us feel alone and lonely, even when we are living with others. Researchers indicate that

meaningful involvement with others reduces burn-out associated with the pandemic.

We spend much of our time online for work, school and social encounters because the online environment provides a physically safe way to come together and yet, the call to be in community is stronger than ever. How can we use the online

platform to create and sustain meaningful communities?

In community and social conversation, we can support and nurture each other. A sense of belonging is created when a person is seen and heard and able to contribute to others, which builds a foundation for resilience and positive mental health.

Every day we meet with a group of people for a spiritual study session online. Although we are nourished by our practice of meditation alone in the sweet territory of silence, as social beings, there is still a pull to be in community, to feel a sense of belonging and togetherness with others.

We take it in turns to



read the spiritual lesson of the day out loud. We then have a few moments of silence, after which each one shares their thoughts and reflections on what they understood. Taking time to listen to

each person with caring attention has created a sweet energy and a feeling of belonging. It has given us an appreciation of the uniqueness of each of our classmates. It has also yielded priceless jewels

of insights, new and marvellous, as each has come from the deep mines of a different mental terrain.

We take care to share our thoughts with love and respect for their beauty with the best words we

can find in an essence-full way, so as not to demand too much of the listeners. Silence after the sharing allows us to digest the rich spiritual food with an inner smile of contentment and appreciation of our fellow learners and our learning community.

Feelings of kinship and a sense of belonging have been nourished in this online platform. Our manners, care and attention to honour each one's contribution while offering our best input has created a culture of respect and belonging; a model for the world we wish to live in.

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