

BIG QUESTION

What does spiritual freedom mean?



CHARLIE HOGG

In the world there are so many movements for the cause of freedom. Freedom is a deep need of each one of us. True freedom though is spiritual and means identifying and taking support from that which is permanent, that which always exists, that which is eternal.

I can only have and understand spiritual ability and power when I lay the foundation of my life on that which always exists — this is the way to deep spiritual freedom. If I hold on to anything temporary in this world, then that

which I am dependent on will ultimately cause me suffering and sorrow in some form.

Spiritual power is lost through the network of 'I' and 'my' that we create and try to depend on. I look outside and depend on those things that give me temporary support. The 'I' of ego and the 'my' of dependency is like a sticky spider's web and the paradox is, that the emptier and more insecure I feel, the more dependent I am on those things outside of me in the web, then the more trapped I feel. It is then that I call out to God to liberate me.

There are pulls, attractions and influences that I am dependent on. One is that I become dependent on a belief that I have of myself; that I am not really loveable, for example. Then even if I am shown love, I cannot really accept it because of



the deep belief, on which I have come to depend, that I am not loveable.

God, though, sees the eternal reality of the soul. So, I have to break down these rigid, deeply held beliefs about my own limitations and take the support of One God only. This web, this creation and network I have created, has to be let go of. A spiritual journey is all about letting go. This needs a lot of courage. The intrinsic state of the soul is peace and freedom. This letting go of gross, subtle and refined dependence is the ultimate spiritual journey.

When I turn to God, then the gross dependence is easy to let go of, those things outside of me. It is the first big step. The next step is to become of service to others and become fully involved in serving,

is happening, because I will notice that I am not really happy.

Letting go and turning within I see that my mind is a sacred place, a still state of being, clean. I must not allow anything I see or hear, to penetrate this place and drive my thinking. Because this is also a dependence — to be under the influence of the power of the senses, of what the world is showing me. A true yogi sits in the sacred space of the mind and sees everything and hears everything and yet lets nothing enter or disturb that sacred space. They have become free of the dependence on the sense organs. Their mind is filled only with stillness and thoughts of what is eternal, permanent and always exists — God.

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

DISCOURSE

GOD'S ROLE IN THE DRAMA OF LIFE



DADI JANKI

We leave our original home (the soul world), come into the drama of life and eventually we forget the plot. God never comes into the drama, and therefore does not ever forget the plot. Thus, it is He alone who can give us an understanding of the whole play.

Only God possesses such knowledge; only He can come and give it. This is why He is the Supreme Soul. He is beyond, He is different; He is unique. He is the Father, and He gives us new life.

God is wonderful, you know. Even though He is not in the drama, He has the complete knowledge of the drama. He does not have to experience it to know it. He does not have eyes, but He sees our experiences. He gives us recognition so that we can 'see' and know Him.

Just as a generator sits in one place, continuously sending out an electric current, so the Almighty Father keeps sending us spiritual power. And we receive it — if, that is, we are linked properly and have taken care that no part has blown its fuse.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF YOGA

IT'S TIME TO TAKE A SPIRITUAL BREATH OF LIFE



ARUNA LADVA

Yoga and meditation have many principles in common. Yoga tends to deal with exercises that stretch and strengthen the body, and meditation focuses more on the spiritual aspects of life, and strengthening the soul. For each modality to be successful, one has to learn how to control the mind.

TAKING THE BREATH

We talk about the breath of life... and yes, this works on a physical level... without breathing there is no life! But what is the breath of mind? At a spiritual level the breath of mind relates to the quality of our thoughts and therefore our experience of life. Inhale positive

and powerful energy, and breathe in love and peace. As we generate those high-vibration thoughts, we are more easily able to exhale and expel negative and stressful thoughts and emotions. We definitely do not want those toxins to linger in our body or mind in any form.

Breathing is a recognition of the presence of the life force... the soul... the being... and that 'I am the soul', the one who is experiencing life through matter, through this body. But what does it mean to breathe spiritually? It means to take in every moment that we spend with quality thoughts like love, appreciation and gratitude as these will be both powerful and energising for the soul.

Only that which we take in with love will be nourishing for the soul, just as with the food that we eat. Both the body and soul can more easily digest that which is both wholesome and healthy; this enables us to grow and flourish.

Anything toxic that we



take into ourselves will only damage us. It is very important for us to spiritually breathe with our soul lungs, just as we breathe with the physical lungs. Therefore, we have to be very mindful to maintain our good health in body, mind and spirit.

LEARNING TO SIT IN

SILENCE

The poses of hatha yoga are there to make the body physically flexible and adaptable... malleable.... These postures help us to build up our muscles; to tone the body and increase our overall stamina. Likewise, meditation makes the mind strong and healthy and makes us tolerant and

adjustable. Therefore, it is important to pay attention to both, our diet for the body and our mind.

The power of silence enables the soul to take time out; to re-adjust and become re-centred; and to find our natural poise and balance. Just as with physical yoga, many postures require the soul to have great fo-

cus, and to concentrate the mind with determination. These are admirable qualities used to balance the body and mind.

KEEPING THE THIRD EYE OPEN

This is the inner eye of understanding, where we are looking from deep within, from the dimension of

spirit. As we become familiar with our inner wisdom, then we will begin to live more naturally from this spiritual place.

When we appreciate and value the practice of meditation, the yoga of the mind, it means that we will be careful to pay attention to the nature and quality of our thoughts through-

out the day. We will check and change those thoughts when necessary, because our aim in life is to maintain clarity and balance. Ultimately, we have a desire to be peaceful, healthy and happy.

From a spiritual perspective, and as a spiritual being, I know that innate virtues and specialities form the foundation of 'who I am'. When I practice affirmations, it is like I am breathing life back into these virtues. When I remember my original nature of the 'self' as a spiritual being, as pure energy and light, then I can experience some of these eternal truths.

I am love... I am light... I am peace... I am happy... I am joy... I am wise... I am strong... and eternally... I am... Om Shanti... I am a peaceful soul...

Courtesy of itstimetomeditate.org

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HAPPINESS MANTRA

THE BEST WAY TO MAKE LIFE EASY



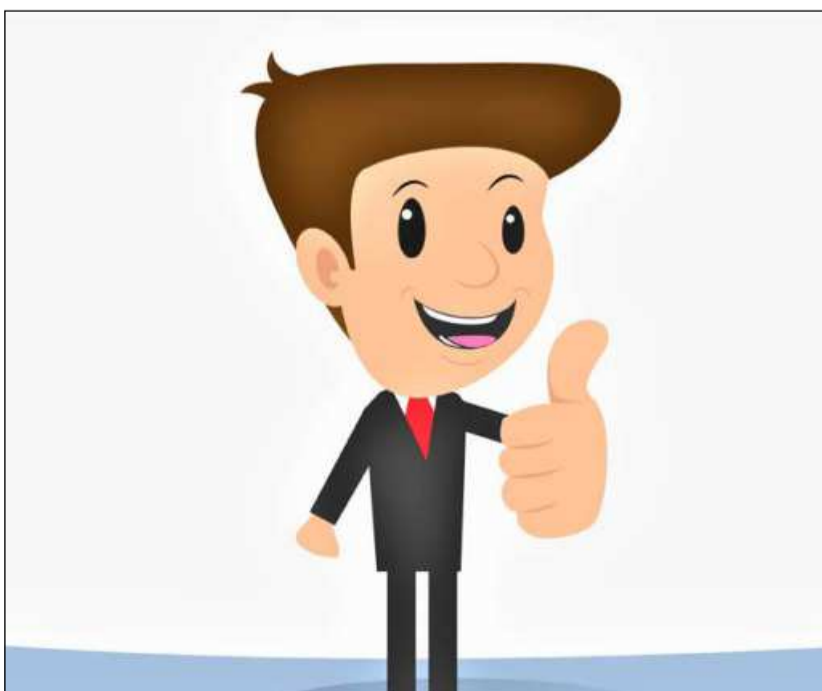
B.K. SURYA

An easy-going nature and living life in a relaxed manner bring several benefits. One who is equable is free and light in their behaviour, and this is reflected in their relationships; their physical ailments are easily managed; their problems are not complicated; and since they are not much distracted or stressed, they have better mental focus.

Living life easily is an art. Some people become flustered every time they have an important task on hand, and their mind goes into overdrive. Being relaxed means being patient. This makes our speech and actions more mature and wise. It slows down the speed of our thoughts from the normal level of 25 a minute to 15-20 a minute, which increases our efficiency, enabling us to finish tasks faster.

Those who are relaxed enjoy their work as they do not feel burdened by it. In the absence of stress created by worry and overthinking, they also make fewer mistakes.

How does a laid-back



attitude help during illness? Some people are alarmed by a minor ailment: they keep thinking and talking about it and end up feeling

worse. Our state of mind affects the body — fear, anxiety and agitation sap our energy and reduce our immunity, making us more susceptible to disease and slowing our recovery. Remaining calm and positive, on the other hand, provides a psychological boost that moderates the force of the illness.

The same happens when we are faced with a difficulty. Instead of getting disturbed, if we quietly consider our situation, focusing on the possible solutions rather than the problem, we will find a way out of it.

Being easy and light makes for harmonious relationships. Such a

person readily cooperates and adjusts to different kinds of people and circumstances. Because of their accommodativeness they make fewer demands, which also helps them get along with others. Even in a difficult relationship, a relaxed attitude helps us take harsh words or behaviour from others in our stride. Otherwise we can react immediately and make matters worse.

An easy-going nature, thus, makes our whole life easy, and brings success without any seeming effort.

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A THOUGHT FOR TODAY

The sense organs are the antennae of the body. The intellect is the antenna of the soul. When my intellect is refined, I am able to detect the pure energy of peace, love, contentment, serenity and fulfilment. To enjoy this experience, I must reach beyond the world of noise and tune my intellect to the subtle frequency of silence. Today let me refine my intellect by tuning to the subtle.