

PEACE OF MIND

# Contentment helps us overcome difficulties



B.K. SHEILU

Contentment is an underestimated virtue. It is often mistaken for passivity or lack of motivation, whereas it is really a state of stability and fullness in which one is free from desires and expectations, and is not influenced by any situation.

It is a power that enables one to resist temptations and distractions and remain steadfast on one's chosen course. One who has any kind of desire, be it for love, sympathy, praise, fame, wealth or possessions, is always seeking, consciously or unconsciously, to fulfil it. The thoughts and actions of such persons are

guided by their wants. They are constantly looking to fill the void within them from outside, and as a result they are always wanting or expecting something from other people or situations. When others do not act according to their wishes, or situations do not turn out the way they want, they are disheartened, disappointed or angry.

Since they do not realise that their desires are the cause of their sorrow, they blame others, situations, or their fate, for their woes. They may even fall into a pattern of negative thinking and begin to attribute motives to others, imagining that they are deliberately trying to hurt them. Such thinking breeds mistrust in their relationships and they end up lonely and miserable as they lose the sympathy and cooperation of others.

Material desires put one on a roller-coaster ride of short-lived euphoria on



the fulfilment of a desire, followed by a feeling of emptiness as another desire crops up. Those who are slaves to desires are never happy, even if they have all that they need and more. Distracted by their wants, they cannot enjoy what they have or focus on what they are doing, as their mind is set on the next object of

desire. Contentment frees one from such bondage. A contented person looks at the best part of any situation and makes the most of it. Having no expectations from others, they are patient, understanding and peaceful, and look for solutions instead of complaining or apportioning blame.

They are not stuck on a selfish or self-centred idea in any situation, and are flexible, adopting the best course of action that is of benefit to all, without having their judgment influenced by personal wants or needs. Being unselfish, they win the cooperation and goodwill of others, which helps them solve problems and

get tasks accomplished.

One who is not burdened by his own needs and wants is also in a position to help others, who welcome assistance from a person who they know does not have a selfish motive.

In this way, contentment helps forge close relationships that are free from dependencies. In such relationships, there is lightness, joy, trust and cooperation. Wherever people have such happy relationships, it transforms the atmosphere of a place.

This energy can change any situation. It acts as a shield that wards off sorrow and makes one problem-proof. That is not to say one will not face problems, but in a contented state of mind one is not disturbed, and is able to take the right decisions to solve them.

*B.K. Sheilu is a Rajyoga teacher at the Brahma Kumaris headquarters in Mount Abu, Rajasthan.*

FAITH

## WALKING THE SPIRITUAL PATH



DADI JANKI

We, who walk the spiritual path, are those who have enrolled themselves in the school of spirituality. Our aim should be to pass all subjects, with honour.

This means that spiritual understanding and power from God have been so well assimilated that not one of life's

many challenges is faced without equanimity and truth. The heart is merciful and altruistic, never giving or taking sorrow. Feelings are pure, that is, devoid of any needs or expectations, and these pure feelings are shared abundantly with others.

And we will not have achieved this by becoming a hermit and leaving the world of everyday life. Rather, we will have remained completely in the world, yet distanced ourselves from all its vice and negativity.

Now is the time to become such a successful student of life; I should never doubt myself in this. Trust in God brings His assistance. This plus my own determination will increase the strength to move forward and progress.

LEARNINGS

# WHAT I LEARNT FROM SURVIVING 9/11



RAM SINGAL

I am 69 years old, and have been studying Rajyoga with the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University for over 47 years. On 11 September 2001, I was working on the 64th floor of The World Trade Center, in the north tower. The north tower was the first to be hit by the terrorist attack.

We started to move down the building using the staircase. As we were moving down slowly, the second plane hit the second tower and then we realised we

were under attack. After some time, the other tower collapsed. The debris from the collapsed tower blocked our stairs and we needed to change the staircase we were using. After some time, water started gushing down these stairs with great force. We were told to change our staircase again, as this one was broken and impassable further down. We had to go into a pitch-dark corridor with falling water and dangling electrical wires. It was like a scene from a horror movie. We finally reached the ground and within five minutes the tower began to collapse, and we had to run from the area to escape the falling debris.

I have been asked many times about how afraid I was. I tried to recall but could not remember any moment of fear. When I wondered about this, I tried to work out why that was so.



I do think that my practice of meditation over many years helped me focus on my inner ability to think clearly, but there were other factors. The smoke was not affecting me for some reason, while it was affecting others. I had a severe knee problem as I was recovering from surgery. None of this bothered

me because, and I think this is the key, I began helping others. When I heard screams of fear from ladies on the way down, I stepped back to reassure them, and let them pass in front of me. They called me an angel, which I found made me smile; all I had done was go back a few steps, and that

earned me the accolade of being an angel!

If I had died that day, some of those people would have remembered me as an angel. But I would have been a dead angel! I lost 10 co-workers in our division. This made me question the fact that I had survived. After a long period of reflection, I made

a silent promise to myself. I would consider that I had in fact died that day. The life I have now is a new life given to me by a higher being. So, this life is not for myself, it is a life of service of the world. I could become a real, tiny, living angel. Angels appear in times of crisis, help, and then disappear before

anyone notices. I would do something to make a difference.

In 2012, with the help of young people, I started a global initiative called '7 Billion Acts of Goodness'. The initiative is to create a global environment of care, compassion and generosity by inspiring people to collectively perform seven billion acts of goodness, one each for the seven billion people on Earth. To further the aims of the initiative I have travelled to more than 700 cities in 20 countries and delivered more than 2,500 presentations, mainly in schools and colleges.

When faced with extreme situations like the 9/11 terrorist attacks, you are completely on your own. It makes no difference whether you are rich or poor, the boss or an employee. You are the sum total of what you have been up until that

moment. You have no time to analyse or use logic, your destiny turns on a moment. Stay where I am? Go down the staircase? Destiny!

I believe that real healing comes from forgiveness. The cycle of revenge and counter revenge has to stop somewhere. Forgiveness brings freedom and acceptance. Forgiveness starts within my own self. Forget the negative, replace it with positive—positive thoughts, wishes, words and actions. Learning how to see the self in all its wonder is something that can be done through meditation. Can we together build a world of goodness and happiness? Yes, we can!

*Ram Singal is a civil engineer and owns a consulting firm in New York, USA. He is also the founder and international director of a worldwide initiative called '7 Billion Acts of Goodness'.*

RELAXATION

# THE BEAUTY OF A QUIET MIND

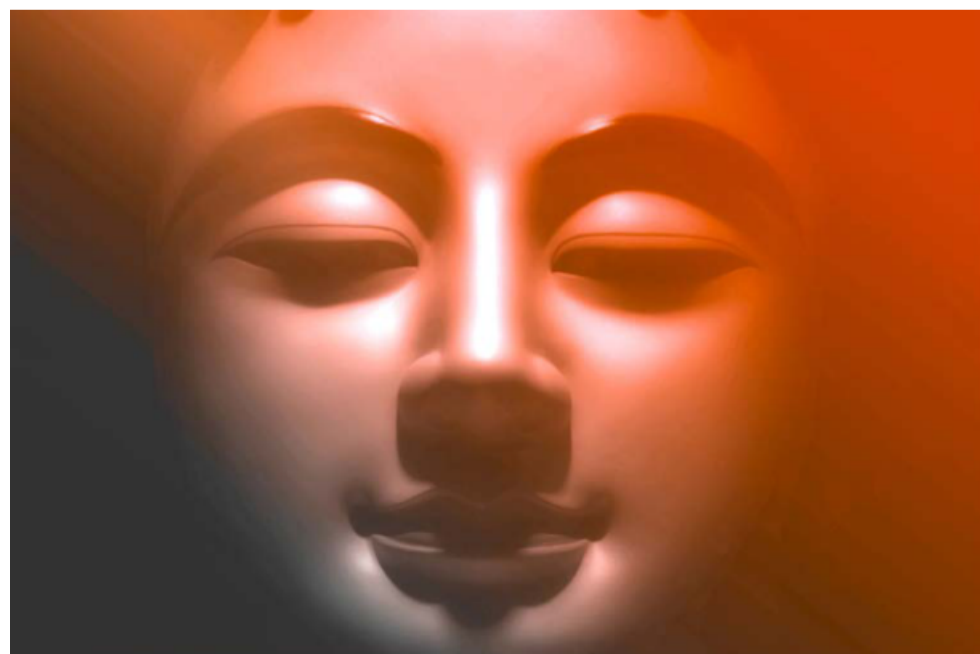


YOGESH SHARDA

When my mind becomes quiet, the whole of my life will have an upgrade. We spend a lot of time every day trying to communicate and assuming that our message is being understood. In fact, most people are actually listening to themselves, to the inner dialogue that is going on while someone is speaking to us; 'Am I being respected?', 'What does this person think of me?' 'What shall I say as soon as I get the chance to speak?'

This is why there is so much miscommunication, misunderstanding, confusion, chaos and conflict. It happens in the office, in organisations and in the home. We all try to be 'efficient' that is, doing things right. In fact, we need to be 'effective', which means doing the right things, which is the result of a steady and calm mind, acquired from deep understanding. A quiet mind can understand what is being said and can clearly see priorities; what needs to be done or said, and what does need to be done or said that can wait for later or a more appropriate time. This is one of the attributes of a good leader.

We have been brought up in a competitive and aggressive world where we all try to control others for our own agenda. However, the more we control the less influence is actually exerted. People put up



defences when they are being controlled. Those who influence make people feel safe and open and then they offer all the help they can. Those who

reach the top through control and aggression and by hurting others are never secure. They know deep down that they are not liked, and they live with

underlying fear.

Those who are the greatest among us carry a natural influence, and demonstrate by their behaviour what needs

to be done and how it should be done. These are leaders who serve and uplift others, and they actually achieve the greatest of all achievements, they win the hearts and minds of others; that is real power.

In times of upheaval people often say, 'Don't just sit there, do something!' It is much better to say, 'Don't just do something, please first sit there, and make your mind quiet; be at peace and whatever you do then, will be meaningful and effective.'

Quiet minds become quiet by spending time in introversion and meditation. A little time spent in this, each and every day, brings a mind that is full of quiet, clarity and power.

*Yogesh Sharda is the National Coordinator of the Brahma Kumaris' services in Turkey.*

## A THOUGHT FOR TODAY

Pure gold is malleable and never tarnishes. When another metal is added, gold becomes heavy and less flexible. Like gold, I have mixed within me the remnants of memories, hurts and losses from life's journey. This can make me rigid, fixed in certain attitudes and postures of mind. Just as alloy is removed from gold with heat, I can dissolve the leftovers from life with the heat of determination and the purifying rays of the Spiritual Sun. Today let me remember that negative energy can be removed with determination and love.