

FAITH

Connecting with God brings power and happiness



DADI JANKI

When you are happy, you do not worry about anything. We are not talking about superficial, external happiness. We are talking about deep, inner happiness. When we have this happiness inside, we feel that everything is easy—nothing is difficult. If you think too much about something, you end up making the situation big and then start worrying about it. It could be an insignificant

thing, but we make it big. If you do something good or if you do something well, you will automatically feel good inside.

We are able to experience inner happiness when our breathing is comfortable, our thoughts are peaceful and our feelings are positive—then we are automatically happy and our time is being used well. For instance, in meditation, when we are all using our breath well, our thoughts are good and our time is being used in a worthwhile way, we are automatically free from the worry of thinking what is going to happen and how it will happen. When you have the attitude and mindset that everything is good and everything is going to be good, then it will be good. What does meditation re-



ally mean? Your mind is good and your body is good too. It is in the consciousness and awareness that I am a soul seated in the centre of

the forehead. The soul is in this body and so this body functions. In fact, you are a soul and the soul makes all the organs of the body

work. We have the sense to know that we are the driver of the car and that the car is separate from us. When we realise that we are separate

from the body, it is said that we have divine insight.

When you are worrying, there is not the firm understanding that you are a spiritual being. The awareness is of being this limited physical body, and so you look at others with that consciousness and see the physical aspects of others and think about things such as where they have come from, who they are, what are they like—all questions that come from that physical consciousness. When you have the awareness of yourself as a spiritual being drawing all powers from the Supreme, you let go of that awareness and turn inside. Your thinking changes to the awareness of being a soul, a child of the Supreme Soul, our eternal Father.

We can draw all powers

from the Supreme. Generally, with the awareness of the self as a physical being, there is always going to be some attachment in the form of association with others, and this association will make you attached, attracted, influenced and subservient to others. Now, with this awareness, let there be the experience that the Supreme Father is my Mother, Father, Teacher, Brother, Friend, and Companion, and then attachment, the tendency to be impressed, influenced, and suppressed by others will be transformed through these relationships with the Supreme Being.

Our energy is being consumed and we are becoming empty when there is this tendency of being attached, attracted and in-

fluenced by others. When we have all relationships with that One, there is so much power within the self. There will be power in every situation and that comes when you first have power in your relationships with the Supreme. The power to be content, the power to accommodate, and the power to tolerate—all these powers are useful in relationships with others because you go deep inside, and in doing so become free from worry. In the eternal thoughts about the self, you also begin to experience God's presence. Talking about God brings about a lot of happiness inside. Then the quality of our thoughts and relationships, and our face, changes. *The late Dadi Janki was Administrative Head of the Brahma Kumaris.*

A THOUGHT FOR TODAY

Light distinguishes day from night. Away from the equator, when the days are shorter and the nights longer, people wait with anticipation for the light to return. At this time in the world, all souls are seeking light. Whatever the tradition or belief system, everyone wants to experience light. Spiritual light is the inner flame of the soul lit with the pure energy of self-awareness. Today let me sparkle brightly and add light to the world.

DIWALI

BEING A LIVING IGNITED LAMP



ERIC LE RESTE

We have not been able to celebrate the festivals that mark the passing of the seasons with the pomp and show we usually do because of the restrictions brought about by the pandemic. It seems a good time to reflect on how to experience the inner celebration of Diwali to ignite and keep alight the light of the soul.

If we want our car to move, we have to start it by turning on the ignition. The ignition creates a spark that creates a contact and then there is power. In the same way, the spark of the soul creates life in the body. We become human beings. We love babies so much because we can almost see the soul through the eyes of a baby because there are no filters, just pure light. As

the body begins to grow and experience one thing after another, the soul becomes more and more identified with the body and becomes almost caged in there.

We need a second ignition which we find when we begin a spiritual life. When I learnt about the light of the soul and the power and reality of the soul, it was like a second ignition. Suddenly I had a completely new perspective. I could see the connection between the soul and the body, I could understand the eternity of the soul. That was when the flame of the soul began to appear. However, the flame can easily be extinguished by the winds and storms out there in worldly life.

When I began, many years ago now, to embrace this wonderful and illuminating spiritual journey, I wanted to go and sit on a mountain and hold on to the experience so that the inner light could burn brightly and consistently. It took me a while to realise that the purpose of my life was to maintain a deep spiritual life while maintaining an active and successful professional life. I had to put the teachings into practice. It was



only through this that I could teach those concepts and explain the teachings because it came from authenticity.

It became clear to me that one of the main values for keeping the flame alive was

self-esteem. This was not something I could arrive at by going to a workshop or listening to a class. It is developed following a long succession of achievements. It is similar to going on a pilgrimage, for ex-

ample. There are many steps on the way to the final goal, and yet each step has its own reward. Every step is meaningful.

In my own life, time is telling me to check the inner

light, my own personal Diwali. I need to see that I am doing what needs to be done to be enlightened, to celebrate it internally by doing the inner work that is needed. I find that I am developing an authenticity that does not have to prove anything, that there is a surprising humility, and I do not have to defend or pretend. I need less from others. I listen to others more easily and give them the respect they deserve.

This light cannot be sustained only by myself. There is a Supreme light, a Supreme Soul, and what helps me to keep my own inner light bright and shining is my connecting with that Supreme light. If it were not for this amazing relationship with God, this extremely powerful and immensely loving Supreme Being, I would have lost courage and my inner light would not have kept burning. May this year be a time of an inner celebration of Diwali.

Eric Le Reste is a journalist and producer for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, and coordinates the activities of Brahma Kumaris centres in Canada.

CLIMATE CHANGE

WE NEED TO CHANGE THE CLIMATE OF OUR MIND



STUART HEPBURN

As a society, we are in crisis; many are suffering from 'climate anxiety' as the reality of global warming takes its toll. The pandemic has caused a great deal of fear which is often dividing families and causing mental distress. To relieve some of these tensions, more than ever, people are turning to meditation, mindfulness and other methods of calming the mind to bring them to a state of equanimity and calm.

Meditation gives us the possibility of taking responsibility for our own mind and developing stability in the face of internal and external storms.

"How do you deal with difficult emotions?" "Where do I focus my mind?" Filling it with fear and anxiety is clearly not the answer, so what is? Meditation is not escapism. Deep meditation, or 'tapasya', as it is known in India, can give you the key to gaining control over your mind, enabling you to function well even in the most challenging of circumstances. We are living in an age when several big issues need to be confronted.

COP 26 is undoubtedly a critical event. It is, therefore, understandable that there is considerable emotional pressure on all the delegates at the event. The issues under discussion are



We need to go deep, beneath the layers of emotions, to what really drives and motivates us. If we do not get to this root cause, then problems will only increase with time. And time is something we do not have a lot of.

potentially quite frightening because of their vast scale and our relative powerlessness, as individuals. No one is suggesting that meditation is going to make these issues go away. Nor is meditation about turning our back on things. Rather it is about understanding issues more clearly and having the ca-

capacity to respond more appropriately to the challenges we now face globally. Perhaps more than anything, it is about recognising the link between human consciousness and what is happening around us.

For that we need to go deep, beneath the layers of emotions, to what really drives and motivates us. If we do not get to this root cause, then problems will only increase with time. And time is something we do not have a lot of.

The 'environmental crisis' has a variety of dimensions. First, there is the threat to our biodiversity. Species that we rely on to make our environment healthy and productive are increasingly coming under threat as a consequence of our decisions and lifestyles.

Global warming is not new. It is a pattern that can

be traced back hundreds of years, giving scope for sceptics to pursue harmful populist policies. But global warming has accelerated dramatically in the last hundred years or so as fossil fuels like gas, coal and oil have generated large amounts of carbon in the Earth's atmosphere, which has had the effect of warming up the planet, melting ice caps and raising sea levels to dangerous heights. Global warming has also disrupted weather patterns, leading to droughts, floods, forest fires, tornadoes and unseasonal, extreme temperatures.

On top of all that, there are the various social challenges; racism and inequalities in gender, culture, race, and wealth. There is the economic crisis that stems from unprecedented (in peacetime) levels of government borrowing, not to mention

the pandemic and the resultant health crisis of deferred health treatments.

Meditation is not about pretending these challenges do not exist. They do, and the role of meditation is to reveal how the state of human consciousness underpins all of these issues and provides the basis for addressing them in a meaningful way. Political initiatives have been tried but the problems have not gone away. Now is the time to get to the root of these problems. Now is the time to address the elevation of human consciousness which can provide a truly sustainable way forward. Now is the time to explore meditation.

Stuart Hepburn is an author and artist. He studied Rajyoga in London, and now lives in Scotland. He has used a wheelchair since his stroke in 2005.