

LIFE MANTRA

Removing stress from the root



B.K. BRJMOOHAN

It is our mind that controls the body. We may be feeling tired and weak, but if a situation arises, we suddenly become active. Suppose someone wins a huge sum in a lottery and has to go to the tenth floor of a building to collect the amount, and the lift is not working, what will they do? They will run up the stairs to get the money. Some years ago, there was an earthquake, and a patient who could barely walk without assistance ran out of the hospital to save himself. What these two examples show is that our mind gives us energy when it is happy or under some kind of compulsion. The mind also makes us stressed when we think the wrong way. Conditions in the world are such that people live in fear and worry. No one can be certain about having a long

and healthy life. Anything can happen to anyone at any time. This causes uncertainty and insecurity.

What is the root of this insecurity? All our fears and worries are about losing something. Whatever we have, including our body, is ours temporarily. We bring nothing with us when we are born, and acquire many things during the course of life. The one thing that is permanent and indestructible is our self, the soul, the seat of consciousness, which gives life to the body.

Fear of loss arises when we identify ourselves with the body and think that one day we will cease to exist and lose all we have — our loved ones, wealth, and possessions. Once we understand that we are immortal souls who have always existed, playing various roles through successive lives, our attachment to the body and our possessions begins to loosen.

We are sovereign beings free to act as we like. My job is to mind my actions, as they determine the quality of my life in the present and future. But we get caught up with what others are doing, especially their mistakes: "How could they do this?", "How dare



they say that?"

We forget that like us, others are free to do what they want, and we cannot control them. But we have expectations, for respect, cooperation or obedience, and when they are not met, we get stressed.

We also haggle with the plumber, the electrician, the mechanic, over small amounts of money. Why? Due to the same attitude, of getting something, not giving.

In accounting, we are taught that when you get something, it is credit, and when you give, it is loss. But life is different. The law of karma is: as you do, so will be done to you. In other words, the more you give, the more you will be given. Nature gives — the sun

radiates heat and light, rivers provide water, trees offer shade, fruits, and shelter to birds. Even inanimate objects — furniture, appliances, vehicles — have value only if they are of use to others.

But humans do the opposite — we always seek to gain. If we adopt the magnanimity of nature, we will begin to experience contentment. The natural instinct of humans is to help others, which is why we get an uplifting feeling, called helper's high, after doing a good deed. This relieves stress and is said to promote longevity.

However, our natural nature has got perverted. To become large-hearted again, we need to rid ourselves of

the things that make us selfish. Vices such as greed, attachment, ego, lust and anger are the root of our sorrow and stress. We can be free of them by remembering who we are — eternal souls, not bodies. This brings about a paradigm shift in our outlook, as we realise that what we see in the world is transitory — we can interact with people and use things, but not own them forever. What endures with me are my qualities as a soul, such as peace, love, happiness, and the blessings I have earned. It is these I need to collect in order to live a fulfilling, stress-free life.

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DISCOURSE

HONESTY MEANS HAVING PURE FEELINGS



DADI JANKI

Honesty does not mean simply speaking our mind. Honesty means to be very clear about everything going on inside us. Where there is honesty, feelings become pure and clean. Honesty is where there are no other thoughts or

feelings inside, other than those that God Himself would have.

Such clarity is reflected in our words; they will be filled with the power of truth, and spoken with ease and without hesitation. The genuine honesty cultivated within us is what will reach out and touch others.

Being easily influenced by people will diminish our ability to remain honest. Others will not be able to get that feeling of truth from us, and our interactions will not carry a feeling of love. They will seem superficial. Although superficial love is better than no love at all — at least it ensures that we do not become completely dry — it will nonetheless be obvious that it is not the real thing.



NOBLE THOUGHTS

THE SUBTLE WAY TO SERVE THE WORLD



B.K. SHEILA

Thoughts are spiritual lifts that take us up or down. With our thoughts we can attain an elevated state of consciousness. The ability to use the power of thought at will to reach a high stage is the sign of a powerful soul. The soul, or the mind, is the creator of thoughts, and strong souls are always aware of this, so they have mastery over their thinking. They are neither influenced by their thoughts, nor do they struggle to fo-

cus their mind.

The subtle and easy way to serve others is to help them still their restless mind with the stability of noble thoughts. A lot of people in the world desperately want their wandering intellect and unruly mind to become quiet. To help them, we first need to have control over our mind. The ultimate stability comes from having full faith in the Supreme. That removes all doubt, fear and worry, and frees us from attachment to transient joys which eventually lead to disappointment.

To achieve that steadiness, and help others do so, we have to stop waste thoughts and cultivate a habit of creating pure thoughts; secondly, keep moving forward, crossing any hurdles on the way without much fuss.

Obstacles on the path of self-development scare



many people because they forget that such imped-

iments are inevitable. They are tests of one's faith and

ability that show where one stands.

"Why do I face these problems?", "Why am I influ-

enced by the atmosphere?", "Why do these old weaknesses still come up?" We get entangled in such questions, which consume our time and energy and weaken our faith.

The truth is that the higher one goes, the tougher the going gets. The difficulties are meant to upskill us, make us stronger and wiser, not bring us down. If we think about the solution instead of brooding over the problem, we will become free from obstacles.

And why are we influenced by a negative atmosphere? We forget that we are the ones who create any atmosphere with our attitude. When we remember that we have the power to change the vibrations of any place, we will not be influenced by them.

Some people also complain that their family and

companions do not cooperate with them. Every soul is unique and has their own role to play in the world. If someone's nature or behaviour is not very good, the best we can do is to have good wishes and pure feelings for them.

When we look only at their flaws, we become upset. The correct response is dispassionate empathy, not fear or dislike. We are disturbed by the company of a weak soul when we do not keep the company of the Supreme. One who remains in His remembrance cannot be coloured by any other company.

To serve others, create a happy atmosphere with your attitude, and inspire them by transforming your life.

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MIND MATTERS

The art and science of not thinking



NEVILLE HODGKINSON

Clarity of thought and peace of mind are time-honoured treasures. Most of us think far, far too much: we go around in circles, backwards and forwards, and all too often remain stuck in the same old grooves of thought. Thinking less means reducing this mental noise, easing thoughts that are useless and wasteful and energy-draining. Is it possible, though, to not think at all? The answer to this

question depends on one's understanding of who it is that is doing the thinking, and how thought works.

To enjoy a deep stillness of mind is an art. It does not mean that you have to cut off from life. Rather, it means learning how to let your life be guided by deeper currents than your individual mind dictates. When this art is mastered, you move effortlessly forward, like a surfer carried along by a powerful wave.

The understanding of what goes on in that stillness, is a science. Incredibly, in the worlds of medicine, physics, biology and mathematics, independent and synchronistic research is now deepening such understanding. It centres around the concept that it is not the brain that thinks, but consciousness; the brain is an



instrument of consciousness, rather than consciousness necessarily being a quality arising from the brain.

Dr Pim Van Lommel, a doctor in Holland, carried out eight years of research into Near Death Experiences (NDEs) and discovered that many such patients undergo an expansion rather than an

end to their consciousness during the period when they are clinically dead. After resuscitation, on their return to the body, they recall having felt blissfully at one with a realm beyond time and space.

Jill Bolte Taylor, an American neuroanatomist, had a massive haemorrhage in the left brain and also experienced

this expansion of consciousness, which she subsequently described in a book called *My Stroke of Insight*. In fact, many such accounts are now available.

Scientists in Oxford, in the UK, scanned the brains of volunteers given mind-expanding drugs to find out which neural circuits were responsible for the altered states of consciousness. They found instead that no part of the brain "lit up", but rather, the brain's central connecting hub 'shut down', bringing about what they called a state of 'unconstrained cognition'.

Such findings support ideas being developed by theoretical physicists that at its most fundamental, the material world arises from a complex web of information, put in place by consciousness. It is as though

we are all actors in a play, staged by the mind of nature. We have our individual parts, but there is also an overall script.

So, how does this help us to not think? First, by understanding that in our innermost being we are consciousness itself, and not the brain. In Rajyoga meditation, we learn to go beyond the brain, which in today's world is usually full of "noise", and connect instead with a higher power, full of love and wisdom. We then learn to bring those qualities back into our physical being and navigate life's challenges with more clarity, peace, and understanding of ourselves and others.

Neville Hodgkinson is a UK-based author and journalist, and a long-time student of Rajyoga.

A THOUGHT FOR TODAY

A bad day is good data about what makes me react, where my sensitivities lie, how I respond when triggered, and what leads me to take sorrow from others. Data, when well-interpreted, becomes knowledge. When I use this knowledge to adjust my thinking and my response to external triggers, I develop wisdom. Today let me use the data of a bad day to become wise.