

RETREAT

ISSUE
No.10

The Magazine with insights & inspirations to nourish your mind, your heart and your soul

In this Issue

TRUE SELF

**THE
MYSTERIOUS
POWER OF
THOUGHT**

**EXTREMELY
BUSY
PEOPLE
LEARN
MEDITATION**

**THE WORLD
OF DREAMS**

**RELIGION
WITHOUT
SPIRITUALITY**

**A SPRITUAL
LIFESTYLE**



WHY SILENCE?

Ten reasons why a few moments of silence is the best way to start any meeting.

- 1 Silence tends to be associated with the past and sombre remembrance of sacrificed lives. The aim of this silence is to let go of the past, be here now, and prepare to focus on the future.
- 2 The primary purpose of a moment of silence is to achieve some quietness or stillness within a busy mind which has been working, creating, thinking all day. It is a moment to rest and let go of the day in order to come fresh to the moment now.
- 3 Silence also allows you to be an observer for a moment - essentially of what is happening in your own mind. It is therefore a method of raising self awareness, listening to oneself as a preparation for listening to others.
- 4 Silence allows that quiet but powerful voice of your own innate wisdom to speak to you, free from the voices of desire, expectation, personal opinion and immediate memories.
- 5 Silence also helps to bring the group together in the room. It helps us to let go of the past interactions and let down any barriers from a day which may have been spent 'on the defensive'. Letting go and letting down (or at least starting the process) are essential to a harmonious, flowing, fruitful exchange and mutual appreciation of views.
- 6 The power of silence is the power of creation. Just as the artist starts with the silence of a blank canvas, and the composer uses silent spaces between the notes, so between and behind our thoughts is... silence. This is not a void however, but the energy of consciousness which we use to create our thoughts and shape our ideas. Being attentive to your inner silence generates personal creative power and opens your inner space for insight, intuition and inspiration.
- 7 Silence restores the ability to find balance between being and doing. Today, both outside and inside our heads we are addicted to action, becoming more like human *doings*, and forgetting that first and foremost we are human *beings*.
- 8 As silence raises your awareness to your state of being it naturally shifts attention away from the **outer quantities** of your life and back to an awareness of **inner quality**. Here is perhaps the source of all quality - the quality of being, or state of consciousness.
- 9 Inner silence allows you to rediscover what you truly value i.e. your innate values - peace, love, happiness, generosity, harmony, honesty, integrity (integratedness) i.e. qualities of spirit or *virtue*.
- 10 This is where virtue meets value, at the level of the spirit. And here is perhaps where the exploration of values, and the expression of those values in our ethics, begins - in silence, in the awareness of your self.

C O N T E N T S

- p3 **True Self... Naked and Exposed!** - Roger Cole
How dying can be both dignified and liberating for everyone concerned.



- p6 **Dumbing us Down** - Theodore Roszak
Is the Internet a place to go to get a good education?



- p10 **The Mysterious Power of Thought** -
David Swindley - An important reminder of what your
mind can do.



- p13 **Extremely Busy People Learn Meditation** -
Sister Jayanti
If you are a busy person this is the first step.



- p16 **The Tao** - Barbara Ramsey and Dadi Janki
Variations on a theme plus some simple wisdom.



- p21 **The World of Dreams** - David Fontana
It's time to teach yourself to dream.



- p25 **The Path of the Slave and
the Path of the Master** - Mike George
Find out which path you are on.



- p27 **Religion Without Spirituality** - John Whitmore
Why is modern day religion seeing its influence wane in
the world?



- p30 **The Muller Effect** - Robert Muller
Insight and inspiration from a special soul.



- p33 **A Spiritual Lifestyle**
Foundation Course in Meditation - Part VIII



- p36 **Buddhism for Sheep** - extracts by Chris Riddell and
Louise Howard



ISSUE No.

IO

EDITOR

Mike George

CHIEF SUB-EDITOR

Mary Newton

EDITORIAL ASSISTANTS

Jillian Sawers

Lynn Henshall

ART DIRECTOR

George Edwards

COVER

Cover graphics
by Ulysses Smith

PUBLISHED BY

Brahma Kumaris Information
Services

Global Co-operation House

65 Pound Lane, London, NW10 2HH

Tel 0181 459 1400

Fax 0181 451 6480

PRINTED BY

Waterside Litho (Chesham) Ltd.

PLEASE WRITE FOR PERMISSION
TO REPRODUCE ANY OF THE
MATERIAL IN THIS MAGAZINE

ISSN 1353 - 811X

Views and opinions of the writers do
not necessarily reflect those of the
publisher.

RETREAT

**Treat Yourself
or a Friend
to a
Great Gift**

Subscription Form

2 Issues – 1 Year
4 Issues – 2 Years

Name.....

Address.....

Postcode.....

Telephone.....

- £6.00 for one years UK subscription
- £7.00 for one years European subscription
- £8.50 airmail Overseas
- £7.00 surface mail Overseas

- £10.00 for **two** years UK subscription
- £11.80 for **two** years European subscription
- £14.50 airmail Overseas
- £11.80 surface mail Overseas
(price includes postage/packaging)

Please make cheques/Drafts/Postal Orders/
Credit Card payable to:

BRAHMA KUMARIS PUBLICATIONS
(in Pounds Sterling only) and send to

Retreat Subscription
Global Co-operation House
65 Pound Lane
London NW10 2HH
E-Mail: 101343.1621@compuserve.com

I would like my subscription to begin with issue no

NEW SUBSCRIPTION RENEWAL

Please charge my Visa Access

Mastercard Switch (issue no. _____)

Card No. _____ Expiry Date _____

Signed.....

Date.....

KNOW NEED!

When Religion is born and Spirituality dies

Philosophical conversations about human need tend to arrive at the meeting of love and money. Money because that's what appears to bestow power to satisfy basic physical needs. And love because in a moment of deeper reflection most people acknowledge the deepest need of the human spirit is love.

Paradoxically, the most prevalent illusion on earth today is 'money *can* buy you love'. And even while most people will say it does not, their behaviour continues to demonstrate their attempt to try. Hence the prevalence of material values and the pursuit of tangible wealth.

But money and love represent only the polarities of need. In between are a myriad of other needs of the conscious being, in order to be a good human. A constant flow of knowledge and wisdom is the food which stimulates learning and growth and results in inner strength. In **Dumbing Us Down**, Theodore Roszak questions the value of the ubiquitous NET as a source of food for our children as they partake of their education. While in **The Tao**, Barbara Ramsay and Dadi Janki remind us that while the ancients were simple in expression they were wise by nature.

Rest, relaxation and reflection are the methods to satisfy the need for regular re-creation. In **Extremely Busy People Learn to Meditate**, Sister Jayanti explains the first step of meditation. In **The World of Dreams**, David Fontana raises our awareness to the importance of the dream state while **A Spiritual Lifestyle** recommends the practical physical activities which compliment and encourage spiritual renewal.

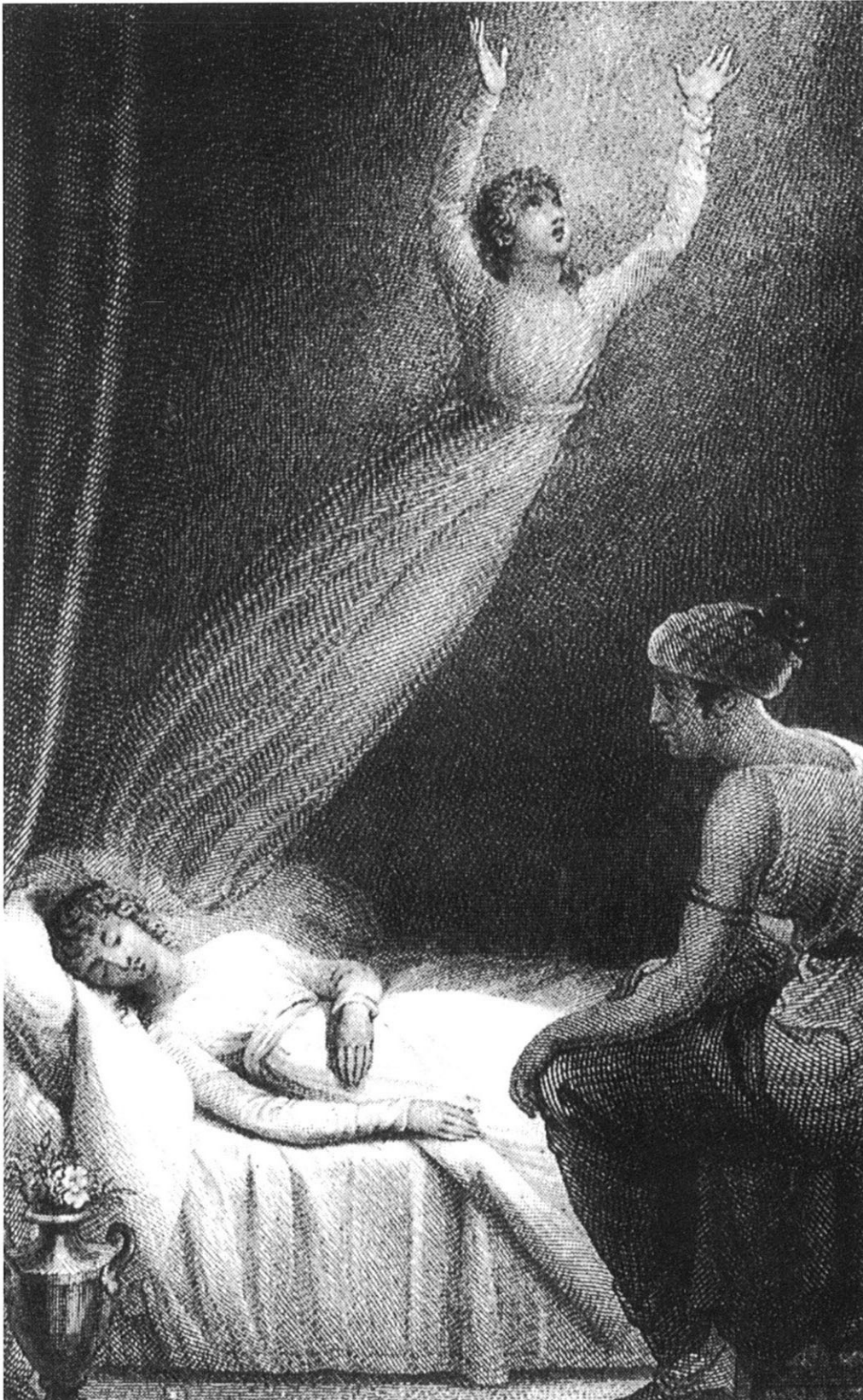
But why is an authentic spiritual path so hard to find in this modern age? It is perhaps our greatest need in these turbulent times. In **Religion Without Spirituality**, John Whitmore brilliantly illustrates what happens when we ritualise, institutionalise and proselytise. Religion is born and spirituality dies.

Welcome to Retreat number 10

As always, it's great to have you with us.

True Self ... Naked and Exposed!

Dr Roger Cole recalls the transforming insights he gained when he explored death and dying with one of his groups.



One of the outstanding benefits of accurate self-awareness is a relative freedom from the needs and dependencies that normally govern our lives. It also establishes a new frame of reference for the terms purpose and meaning. Such orientation and freedom enables one to experience peace and contentment, without leaving 'worldly' responsibilities behind. It is a liberated state, yet influential, with the potential to create a far better world.

In the care of the dying, we are occasionally privileged to witness this potential. In the mid-seventies Elisabeth Kübler-Ross wrote a landmark book, *On Death and Dying*. In this she outlined five stages of adaptation to a terminal condition, those of anger, denial, bargaining, depression and acceptance. When the final stage of acceptance is manifest, we can see an example of the original nature of a soul emerge. And within this example is merged a mirror of opportunity; the opportunity to discover our true self.

About a year or two ago I was asked to speak to a group of hospice volunteers about spiritual aspects of care for the dying. During the discussion I talked about this state of acceptance. Not as one that simply acknowledges death but as one that engages the outstanding beauty of a soul. In the hope of a demonstration, I asked if anyone had ever witnessed such beauty at the time of a death.

One of the group, June, volunteered that she had. Her mother's death had been like this, one of true acceptance, despite the fact that she lay there, withered and utterly dependent. "It was beautiful," she said. "My mother was radiant with peace and the room just filled with her love. Everybody there was uplifted and happy by her company. She appeared so contented. It seemed as though she was surrounded in light like an angel. I will never forget it. It was really special."

It is wonderful, isn't it, that such grace can emerge at the time of dying. June and her sisters were with her mother when she was dying. I prompted June with a few questions. "Was your mother worried about any of you at that moment in time?" "No," she said. "She knew we were there, but she was beyond concern about how we were feeling."

"How about her looks and circumstances?" I asked. "Was she bothered by her appearance, or about the disease, and the fact she was dying?"

"No..," she paused. "... Mum was at peace with herself. It was as if her body had ceased to exist. Only serenity

remained, and there was no fear there at all."

"How about all the problems of our world?" I asked. "Was your mum troubled by all the conflicts, deprivation and confrontations that are going on?" June laughed, entertaining a fleeting memory. "Oh, mum always had an opinion about everything. She used to get into a real state about it all. Really angry or really sad. But now you mention it no, she wasn't troubled at all. I guess she must have just let go of everything ...," she faltered, searching, "..... she had let go of everything."

This last statement had a profound effect on the room, the words were charged with positive emotions. There was a pause, then a short silence that was full and unifying. The group vibration resonated with peace and harmony, as I measured the final question.

"In letting go of everything, just before she died, did your mother appear to be carrying the burden of any of her life's roles or responsibilities?"

"No, she had become completely free ... completely free!"

In those final conscious moments of her life, June's mother had become completely free. And liberated. Freed from all concerns of living. In the essence of her soul or 'living spirit'; liberated - yet still occupying the wasted remnants of her physical body. As such, the soul stood naked and exposed, revealing her true and authentic self. I regard this to be fully manifest acceptance and would describe it as a state of grace. Or as one of true dignity. Most people feel that loss of dignity is certain where there is dependency, or the need for help with their bodily functions. I believe this to be a misconception which reflects human ignorance.

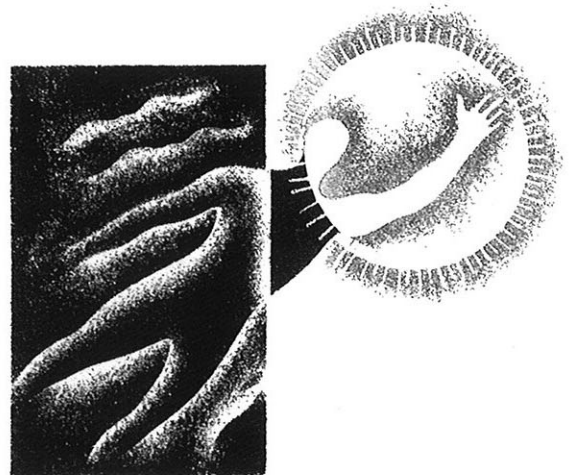
An ignorance born of body-consciousness. While we will be exploring this concept further, June's mother offers herself as living proof of this ignorance. In spirit she was graceful, and was revealing her true and original personality through liberation. The questions that I asked of June, were intended

to explore four principal directions by which liberation leaves a soul free and vibrant. Liberation from the roles and responsibilities of a lifetime. Liberation from being affected by problems, in an increasingly complex world. Liberation from the material world, including the physical body, its diseases and appearance. And liberation from the attachments we form in a lifetime of relationships.

By liberation, June's mother entered a state of being in which she was freed from the awareness of her body. She had become completely 'soul-conscious'. As such she naturally filled the room with a radiance of love, peace and acceptance. And those who were in her presence became happy and peaceful. I believe this to have reflected a return to her original condition. The condition she had before taking birth. That of a peaceful soul.

In witnessing this example we are seeing the establishment of soul-consciousness in the face of death. So one might ask, why is it we wait so long to find such serenity? And why do we have to be forced into submission - by death - before we can love and let go? Evidently it could be possible to do so in life and our volunteer's mother is trying to show us this. The question is, "How?"

I have considered transformation to begin with enlightenment. And that enlightenment is bestowed as a gift of awareness, requiring no endeavour on behalf of its beneficiary. When there has been recognition of the opportunity that enlightenment offers, then transformation can proceed. The difference now is that effort must be made. During enlightenment the individual's experience is akin to that of June's mother. Spiritual growth or



transformation is about holding this love and light constantly. The effort required needs to be made in two directions simultaneously - towards the state of being; and towards the state of liberation. In fact both of these are intimately associated. The main effort is that of becoming soul-conscious and free from dependencies. Liberated!

It represents completely new identity. In our volunteer's mother this was attained in the face of death. Through the dying process she had become completely detached from all directions external to herself. External, that is, to her soul - the true or authentic self. In so doing she became a vessel of divine influence, radiating love, light and peace to those around her. She was detached from her family, yet they were experiencing love from her. Pure spiritual love. It seems a paradox, doesn't it, that she had become both detached and loving. Totally unconcerned about anyone's welfare. Yet loving and, quite effortlessly, meeting everyone's need for peace and happiness. Her spiritual beauty came with the exposure of her soul. Through its nakedness, seeds of transformation were cast in a radiance of purity. And like a mirror she was revealing the true nature of soul to anyone who entered her presence. June had said, 'It seemed as though she was surrounded in light ... like an angel.'

I think she was an angel.

By attaining grace, June's mother had also revealed this aim and object of spiritual growth. That of becoming an angel. Or soul-conscious. From this case it is evidently possible to do so. Her soul-consciousness was a state of awareness (or being) that served and uplifted others. She gave out an automatic, natural radiance of pure virtues. With a leaf from her book, as enlightened effort-makers, we could transform ourselves. And become holistic, spiritual servers, whatever our social or professional roles. Where June's mother was forced to do so by her circumstance of death, we have the opportunity to 'embrace the light' in accordance with free will. In giving us this example, she has afforded us this opportunity.

An opportunity for even higher attainment than hers.

Where she found liberation and self-

realisation in death, we can do so in life. But we must first let go of fears and misconceptions. And understand paradox. To detach from those we love will transform the quality of that love into something divine and unconditional. Do we have the confidence to let go of relationships? And become merged in the divine love that will fulfil those relationships. Or is it that our fear is too great - that we will lose something? It is no easy thing to let go of a world you have come to depend on. But it is a wonderful thing to surrender your life to a higher power. For in surrender you become an instrument, where there is no burden on your shoulders. And you discover the delight of lightness in the service of humanity. I guess angels don't get too worried about things. Then why should they? They are only God's helpers after all.

June's mother has given us a glimpse of the personal aim and objective within transformation or spiritual growth. And we have looked beyond enlightenment to the state of grace. Grace that beckons the soul to make effort to be itself, and to become free, liberated from body-consciousness. By this I mean to have a separate awareness from the physical body; and to be liberated from the four directions. Those of attachments, of responsibilities, of being affected, and

of the material world.

We are now entering the individual's journey. In doing so we will take care to remember that whoever travels this path enters a divine plan. Effort-making and self-transformation is inspired by a higher power. Enlightenment is a gift of a higher power. And the motivation to take the journey is sustained from this divine source. We will also remember that the individual who journeys, contributes spiritual vibrations towards world transformation. Each one unique. Each one selected, each with a role to play. Yet not one is special. For each is only rediscovering his or her true self, before allowing it to remain naked and exposed!

Dr Roger Cole is a specialist physician trained in cancer medicine. He currently directs the Palliative Care Service in Australia. This is an extract from his forthcoming book *A Tapestry of Light*.



WHAT IS DYING?



A ship sails and I stand watching till she fades on the horizon and someone at my side says, "She is gone". Gone where? Gone from my side, that is all; she is just as large as when I saw her. The diminished size, and total loss of sight is in me, not in her, and just at the moment when someone at my side says, "She is gone", there are others who are watching her coming, and other voices take up a glad shout. "There she comes!" And that is dying.

by Victor Hugo from Toilers of the Sea



Dumbing US Down

Convinced that kids will be left in the dust unless they become computer literate? Anxious about getting your local school wired up to the information age? Well, don't be. Theodore Roszak argues that computers in the classroom are not all they're cracked up to be.

“... the main, ongoing story about the Web is how much profit its backers are (or are not) making. What passes through the medium is bound to be shaped by those values, not by any significant regard for quality, truth or taste.”

By now most of what there is to say about the Internet is predictably clichéd. As usual it all has to do with stuffing lots of information into people's lives. Surfing the net, the hot new way to get information, begins by logging on to a variety of World Wide Web search engines, like Yahoo, that use keywords to find items. Almost all the search engines are commercially sponsored and feature advertising, some of it enticingly presented with lots of colour and blinking lights and cartoony images. Sometimes there is a prize for choosing this or that link, or maybe an Elvis Presley sighting is promised. Or there might be a big, bright link that says Don't Click Here! If you do you get a Dr. Pepper soft-drink advert or some such.

Some Web sites are perfectly intelligent, conscientious efforts created by universities, government agencies, publishers or organisations like the Smithsonian Institution or the Library of Congress. Others feature celebrity gossip, sports, comics, jokes or pornography. With 20 or 30 machines running material like this in the classroom one can imagine teachers having some difficulty keeping everybody's attention focused on the assignment at hand.

If teachers can get the kids beyond the advertising and ask them to learn about, say, Aztecs, the search engine may produce in the order of 45,000 'hits' containing that word somewhere in this searched copy. This will include everything from soccer teams, used-tyre companies and disco clubs to bowling alleys and software firms. Yes, the search can be refined, but not always that easily for younger students, since

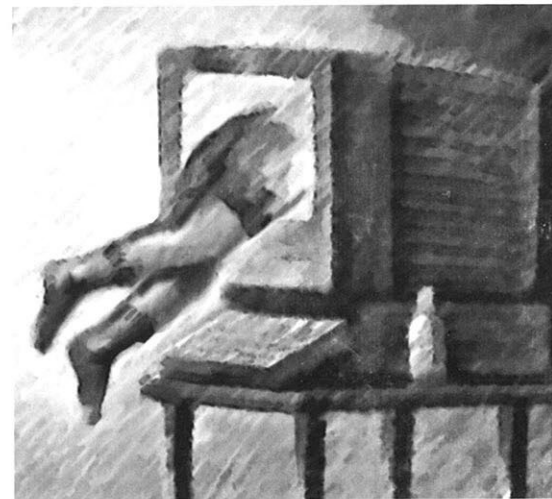
all the engines use different protocols. Even so, the refined search will continue to produce lots of wastage because the waste is there and because the search engine, simply keyed to words, is a dumb thing that cannot tell waste from value.

On the Internet, there is no quality control as there would be in any school library. If a bibliography on the real, historical Aztecs surfaces amid the gleanings, it may very well be out of date and unattributed. It might be the work of an amateur Aztec enthusiast in Pretoria who never read the basic materials in the field. If there is an essay on the Aztecs it may have been written by a fellow in Moose Jaw who has rather unusual theories about pre-Columbian peoples and space aliens. The Internet is a free-for-all, as enjoyable as any conversation one might strike up in a saloon or coffee house. But is hardly governed by the critical safeguards and intellectual structures that have been developed across the centuries to discriminate between honest thought and rampant eccentricity.

The Web is a creation of the entrepreneurial world view. It favours high-tech effects and attention-grabbing tricks. The key forces behind it are seeking desperately to transform the medium into the new television, the new movies. Their objective is to get millions to look at their site so that they can make a lot of money. This is no secret: the main, ongoing story about the Web is how much profit its backers are (or are not) making. What passes through the medium is bound to be shaped by those values, not by any significant regard for quality, truth or taste.

Used as a teaching device the Web is an expensive way to distract attention and clutter the mind. I would not see it eliminated from society for that reason, but neither would I choose it as an educational resource. Over the generations teachers have evolved skills to encourage a respect for quality, truth and good taste. I'm not sure I understand why we should, at the behest of entrepreneurial elements, not decide to retire those skills in favour of 'Yahooligans'.

I draw up the attached list of rules to embody in as compact way as possible the reservations I have about computers in schools. I have tried to mention everything that gets left out of the compulsory enthusiasm in which every report on the Net and Web becomes wrapped. I offer it in the name of balance.



Computers in schools: 19 neo-Luddite rules

- 1** Computers are merchandise. Treat them as such. Believe nothing you hear from people who are selling (and these days everybody is selling). Expect nothing to work as advertised.

- 2** People who recommend more computers for schools are like doctors who prescribe more medicines. What medicine? How much medicine? For what reason? The same questions apply to computers. Only the answers may be a long time coming since schools have to consult and budget to decide which computer to buy (Macintosh, PC?), which operating system (DOS 6.2, System 7, OS/2, Windows 3.1, Windows 95?), which programs?
- 3** By the time a school decides to buy anything it will be out of date. Rapid obsolescence is a key marketing strategy of the computer industry.
- 4** Computers are not a free choice. The money to buy them comes from places that need it more. For example: hiring more teachers at better salaries, buying lab equipment, books, art supplies, musical instruments, repairing the plumbing, fixing the roof.
- 5** No computer is any better than the software you run on it. The further the subject is from computation and objective right-or-wrong, the dumber the software. In some subjects (literature, history, creative writing, art) don't even bother looking.
- 6** No two people mean the same thing by computer literacy. Ten years ago computer literacy meant teaching kids BASIC to do their own programming. Then it meant desktop publishing. Then it meant multi-media. Now it means cruising around in cyberspace. Next year it will mean something else that requires updates and enhancements, faster chips, new programs and, for sure, spending more money. Computer literacy is a commercial fashion, not a specific skill, let alone a subject matter. If computer literature does not include material on what computers can't do and shouldn't do, it is advertising, not education.
- 7** The main thing kids learn from computers is how to use computers. And anything they learn today is apt to be obsolete in two years. Absolutely nothing kids learn about using a computer in the first grade today will make them more employable when they leave high school. Employers should be left to teach what their employees need to know about the firm's computer system after hiring them.
- 8** When it comes to employment the computer is not working-class friendly. Computers don't create jobs; they eliminate the employment many kids would otherwise have. If we could delete computers from history tomorrow, there would be more jobs the next day than there are now.
- 9** Teachers who are reluctant to revamp the curriculum so they can intrude computers upon their pupils (and contribute to Microsoft's earnings) probably have good pedagogical reasons for their reservations. Trust them and hear them out before you spend the money. Portraying cautious teachers as obstacles to progress is a mean trick computer enthusiasts play to discredit the people who care most about education.
- 10** Playing computer games is not the same as learning. Games are fun, nothing wrong with that. Learning is another kind of fun, often related to long intervals of dogged attention, persistent questioning, strong doubt, memorising things, looking things up, being bored, overcoming frustration. Games and learning have their own kind of fun. Confusing the two is the worst lesson to teach kids.
- 11** All CD-ROM materials do more to fragment the attention span than to teach anything. CD-ROM was invented by clever hackers to display the razzle-dazzle, hypertextual, multi-media capacities of the technology: point-click-zip-wham-wow! Hence there are few CD-ROM teaching materials that require kids to read more than three continuous paragraphs without being distracted by a hypertext link. The pedagogical value of hypertext is totally speculative.
- 12** Some knowledgeable people actually find surfing the Net to be a woeful waste of time. And with good reason. Before wiring your school find out why they feel that way.
- 13** Spending money to wire your school is the first step towards spending a lot more money after you're wired. The World Wide Web is very, very slow unless it is run on fast equipment and the latest software, none of which is free. All freebies from the computer industry should be regarded as you would a free sample from your friendly neighbourhood crack dealer.
- 14** The World Wide Web is primarily an advertising medium. The main information kids will find on it is advertising. All the search engines used to find anything are rigged with advertising. Almost all

information-bearing homepages are studded with advertising. The main reason enthusiasts want it in schools is to deliver advertising. If you don't believe me, try suggesting that all advertising be eliminated from computers used in schools. Just try. You will be told this is a technical impossibility. It isn't.

15 People who think education equals information have no idea what either information or education is. Always ask computer enthusiasts to define what they mean by information. If they tell you everything is information and information is everything: beware. That's a sales pitch, not a sensible idea. A good working definition of information might be: it is an answer to a question that purports to be a fact. At least a definition like that reminds us that the quality of the question is more important than the quality of data that appears as an answer. And how do we teach kids to ask good questions?

16 Kids don't need much information anyway. Not first of all. Teaching them that they do is bad teaching. They need ideas, values, taste and judgment without information which is worthless. Take a simple example: the telephone book contains lots of information. To use it at all kids need to know alphabetical order. But alphabetical order is not information. It is a very old idea about organising information.

17 Ideas, values, taste and judgment are found in other human minds. And most cheaply in the minds of authors of books and teachers in classrooms. Kids need to learn about those other minds. Let them. A good teacher equipped with enough cheap copies of Huckleberry Finn to go around can

teach more that kids need to know than the same teacher forced to revamp all she knows to fit the limited skills of a roomful of expensive computers.

18 There are about as many kids born computer-proficient as there are born piano-proficient or poetry-proficient. It is mere folklore that all children born since 1980 have mutated into brilliant computer-users. Different kids have different talents. Provide for as many as your budget allows.

19 A computer is an expensive way to spend a long time getting ready to do anything. A kid with a pencil in her hand is ready to write. A kid with a crayon in his hand is ready to draw. A kid with a computer is ready to ... begin a learning curve which starts with booting up, virus-checking, configuring, re-booting if the machine hangs, searching for misplaced files, undeleting lost files, learning the interface, arranging the desktop, re-arranging the desktop, customising the icons, fussing with screen-savers, creating button-bars,

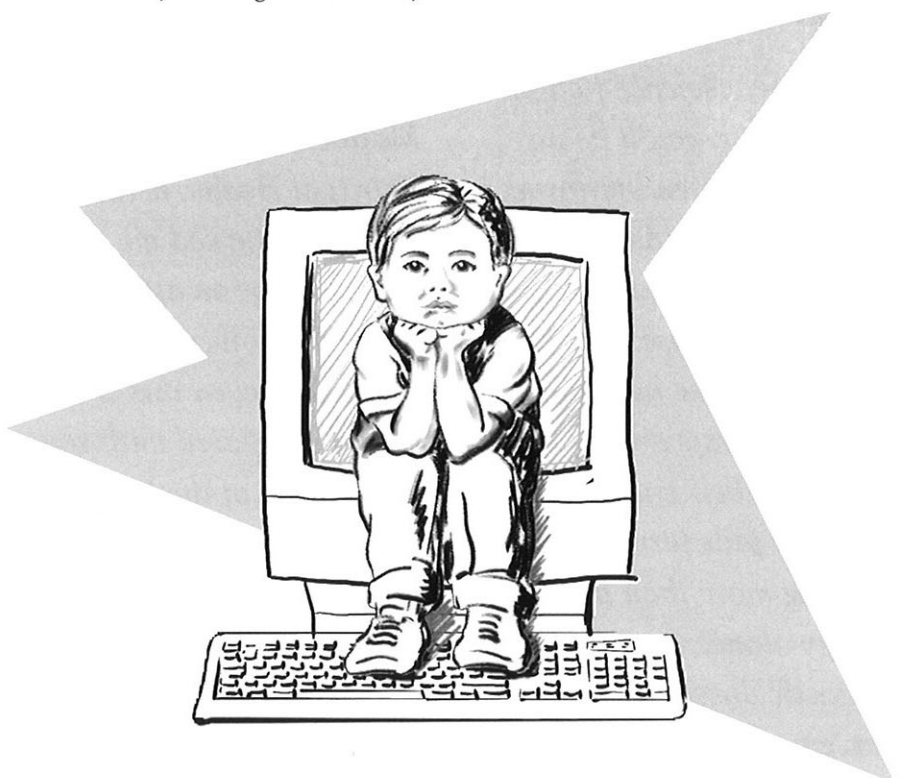
resizing and positioning windows, formatting, re-formatting, mastering protocols, downloading, uploading, clicking on menus, choosing fonts, deciphering error messages and reviewing the documentation. Unless, of course, the teacher does all that for the kids and creates the illusions of easy-to-do.

Or if all of this is too much to remember, here is the abridged version:

1. Find out what Bill Gates wants your school to do. Don't do that.
2. Keep the pre-computer image of education in mind at all times, remembering that education pre-dates high-tech. Here's one I like: Abraham Lincoln learning to write with a lump of coal on the back of a shovel and growing up to jot the Gettysburg Address on a crumpled envelope.

®

Theodore Roszak is the author of *The Cult of Information: A Neo-Luddite Treatise on High Tech, Artificial Intelligence and the True Art of Thinking* (University of California Press, 1995). His novel *The Memoirs of Elizabeth Frankenstein* was published by Bantam Books, 1996. First Published in the New Internationalist.





The Mysterious Power of Thought

How powerful is the energy of your mind? David Swindley reminds us of the efficacy of positive thinking.

If you are a science fiction fan, as I am, you'll be no stranger to alien life-forms from other worlds who can move objects around, transform themselves chameleon-like into many different forms and imprison their enemies in invisible jails formed of nothing more than thought energy alone. Sounds fantastic doesn't it? And yet equally amazing things

happen here on Earth. Matthew Manning, the Spiritual Healer, is said to have once turned an electric light on and off using the power of his mind, and even this is trivial compared with some of the feats of the Masters of the East. What is this power they're tapping into? Is it available for all of us?

I believe it is, and most of us are using it all the time without realising it. The

only difference is, it's less dramatic and takes a little longer. Even as you read, your thoughts are directing your actions and what will happen to you in the future. Just consider for a moment. Experiments using high-tech biofeedback equipment have demonstrated that every thought you think affects every cell of your body. You don't need sophisticated devices to prove it though: try this with a friend:

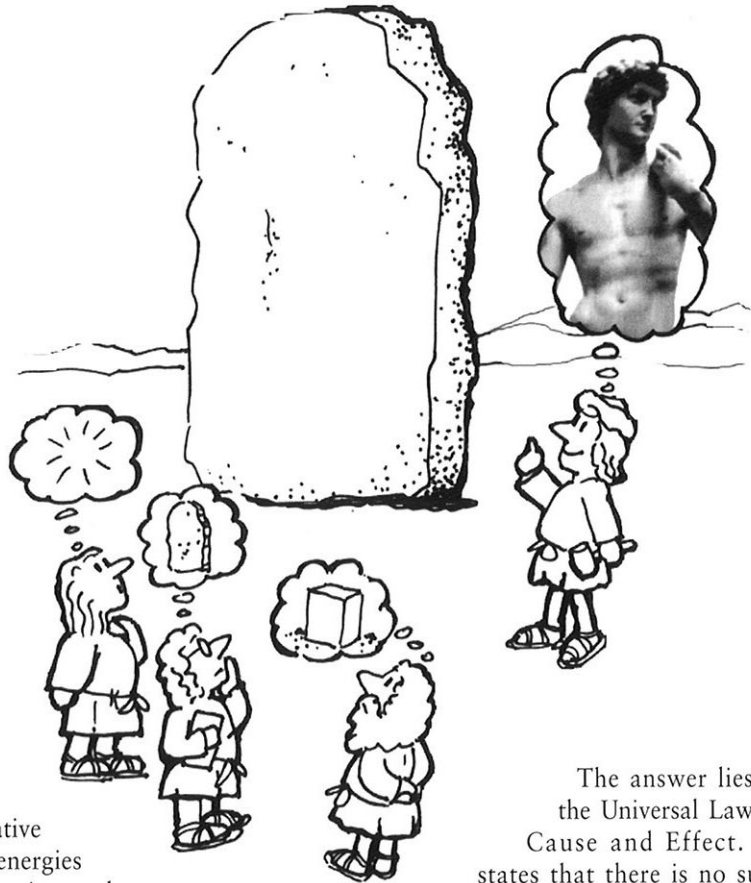
Ask him or her to stand up and raise their strongest arm horizontally, then say, silently, under their breath, "I am a weak and unworthy person", ten times. Now try to push the arm down whilst they resist. Then ask them to raise their weakest arm and repeat, "I am a strong and worthy person", ten times. Now try to push the arm down. What happens?

You will find that the arm collapses weakly after the negative statement, but is rock-solid after the positive affirmation. In essence, your thoughts have sent a message through your nervous system to your muscles, and they can't help but respond.

Your thoughts affect other people. You are surrounded by a field of electro-magnetic energy, your aura, which changes in size, shape and colour according to your thoughts. Happy, positive thoughts expand it and make it glow brighter and change colour. Unhappy, negative thoughts cause it to contract and take on a greyish hue. Other people, not necessarily the gifted psychics who can actually see the aura, can sense another's feelings through their aura. Hence your unspoken thoughts can attract or repel other people!

Every emotion you have ever experienced began as a thought. Your dominant thoughts are programmed into the unconscious mind and become locked into the nervous system. Think confident thoughts, and you feel confident. Think angry thoughts and you feel angry. It is simply not true that emotions happen to us in a random and uncontrolled way; we create them by choosing our thoughts. Top sports stars are very well aware of this. They know that if they allow their emotions to run amok, they will disempower themselves and ultimately concede the match. They are among the most adept at using their thoughts to manage their emotional states.

There's no getting away from it, thoughts have energy. But what is the source of this energy? To get an answer to this important question we must delve for a moment into the world of metaphysics. Every culture in the world believes that there is some great universal source of wisdom influencing the course of events. God, Krishna, Jehovah, Allah, the Great Spirit - whatever you call it, or believe it to be, doesn't matter, as long as it works for you. All the great religions define our purpose on Earth to be the expression of this universal intelligence, to channel its energy and bring out the potential within us.



The reason why negative thought energies are so detrimental to our well-being is that they frustrate the universal forces that can create a happy, healthy and successful life. They keep our true potential trapped in a mental prison of our own making.

Over three decades ago, Earl Nightingale spelt out the secret of life in six words - "You become what you think about." It wasn't an original idea; philosophers down the ages have disagreed on many things, but never this.

"A man's life is what his thoughts make of it," said Marcus Aurlius. *"As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he,"* according to Proverbs, 23.7, and *"We are what we think, all that we are arises with our thoughts,"* said the Buddha, *"with our thoughts, we make the world."*

In other words, you are constantly creating your circumstances by the way you think. It's as if you had a guided missile in your unconscious that relentlessly directs you towards its target, and the target is whatever your thoughts dwell on. Think doom and gloom, and that's what you'll get. Focus on happiness and optimism, and they're already yours. Why?

The answer lies in the Universal Law of Cause and Effect. It states that there is no such thing as an accident, that nothing ever happens without reason and, as Emerson said, "The ancestor of every action is a thought." Like gravity, it makes no difference whether you believe in this Law or not, it still operates. Gravity will pull you earthwards whatever your opinion on the matter. Similarly, your thoughts shape your destiny even if you're totally oblivious to the fact.

Think about it for a moment. Can you think of a single human achievement that did not originate as a thought? You can't. It's impossible. Every great invention and work of art, sending men to the moon all began with a single thought in someone's mind. You can't scratch your nose or tie your shoelaces without first thinking about it, consciously or unconsciously, even if only for a fraction of a second. Thoughts are the source of everything. It's a kind of chain reaction. An ancient Chinese proverb puts it like this:

*Sow a thought, reap an action
Sow an action, reap a habit
Sow a habit, reap a character
Sow a character, reap a destiny.*

Whether you like it or not, your past thinking has brought you to where you are now, and every thought from this moment on will shape your future. All this leads to an inescapable conclusion: you take control of your life by taking control of your thoughts. If you don't control them, they're going to control you.

"But surely," you might say, "you can't change your thoughts. They float in and out of my head as they see fit." If this is your opinion, you're kidding yourself. You're right that thousands of thoughts float into your mind every day, but you always have choice: whether to hold onto them, or release them. If you don't want a particular thought, you can consciously and deliberately change it. If you don't, it will seep through into the unconscious, and keep coming back to haunt you. So programme negative thoughts out of your life. Simply stop thinking negatively.

Thoughts are things with tremendous power. As Marcia Grad wrote, "As long as you keep thinking as you've been thinking you'll keep feeling as you've been feeling, doing as you've been doing, and getting what you've been getting." Everything you do to improve the quality of your thoughts improves the quality of your life. Here's a few tips to get you started.

Be Mindful

Mindfulness means developing the habit of stepping back and observing your thoughts, consciously directing your mind inward. Just pay attention and take note. Isolate any destructive words and phrases. It's especially beneficial when your mind and body are relaxed, then you can simply watch the thoughts floating in and out of your head and quietly replace any that are not contributing to your welfare.

Get Rid of Negative Thoughts

The technique for eliminating negative thoughts is called 'Conscious Thought Stopping'. It's so straight forward you may think it sounds too simplistic, but it works. It consists of stopping negative thoughts dead in their tracks before they can cause permanent

damage. This is how you do it: -

As soon as you become aware of a negative thought, say "Stop! Go away! Cancel!" and do something physical, like clapping your hands or pinching yourself. You can also, in your mind's eye, imagine closing a book, a symbolic gesture that that's the end of it.

After a while, thought stopping becomes automatic. Warning bells sound as your 'negative thinking alert' swings into action. Eventually it will become unnecessary, because negative thoughts will learn that they are unwelcome and they won't even bother entering your head once they know they'll be firmly dealt with. Your aim is positive thinking without having to think about it.

Feed in the Positives

The most straightforward replacement is the exact opposite of the destructive thought you've just removed. For instance, replace "I can't" with "I can" and "I'm not" with "I am" Don't worry if a little voice in your head pipes up, "Don't be silly, of course you can't, who do you think you're trying to kid?" Just ignore it. It's your conditioned mind trying to hang on to old habits. It may be necessary to suspend disbelief until your new thinking pattern is established.

If you can't come up with an instant replacement, try reciting your favourite affirmations, or some powerful, 'off the shelf' ones such as 'I like myself' or 'I am a strong and worthy person'. Everyone has their own favourite words, so be mindful of your language and experiment a bit. Which expressions make you feel good? Which substitutions work for you? Remember the one maxim, "Never say anything, either to yourself or out loud, that you don't sincerely want to be true."

Keep at it and Enjoy the Results

You can't ignore it, you're surrounded by people who take a pride in pouring cold water of anything that smacks of enthusiasm, optimism and positivity, who wallow in an 'Isn't it awful'

mentality. It is deeply engrained into our national life. For instance, TV newsreader Martyn Lewis recently made an impassioned plea for more good news on television. "We consign viewers to growing up in a relentless culture of negativity, of naturally expecting things to go wrong, and finding it ever harder to believe that anything in life is achievable," he said. Reactions to his speech among his fellow journalists ranged from mild support to utter contempt. "He wants to sanitise the news," said one, convinced that Lewis wanted to follow the lead of the Soviet news bulletins which would lead with stories about record carrot crops rather than explore the true political situation in the country. The fact is, newspaper sales reflect the national mood, and good news doesn't sell newspapers.

So you'll have to be vigilant. You can take a person away from their normal environment, teach them to think and act positively and watch an astonishing transformation take place, then see it evaporate when they return home. You won't be able to change anyone else, of course, but it may be wise to minimise your contacts with the doom and gloom merchants until your new thinking patterns are well installed.

The rewards are well worth it, because you can only have a happy and enjoyable life by thinking happy and enjoyable thoughts. There is no other way. And you're unlikely to make a success at anything important, including your own spiritual growth, unless you can connect to the Universal Intelligence, by removing the main blockage - negative thoughts. As Henry George so aptly put it, "Unless there be correct thought, there cannot be correct action, and when there is correct thought, right action will follow."

Taking charge of our thoughts is a decision, probably the most important we could ever take. We all need to realise that personal transformation cannot take place unless we do.

David Swindley is a writer, lecturer and psychotherapist. He is a co-author (with Rex Johnson) of 'Creating Confidence - The Secrets of Self-Esteem' and Co-Director of the Dynamic Living Institute which runs courses in all areas of personal and spiritual development.

Extremely Busy People learn Meditation



More people are living, but fewer are choosing, life in the fast lane. The need to restore balance, find inner peace and replenish spiritual power can be satisfied by some form of daily meditation.

In a recently published series of audio cassettes entitled Meditation for Extremely Busy People, Sister Jayanti, an extremely busy person in her own right, presents the how to of meditation and ways that meditation can help to take the stress out of busyness. This is an extract from her opening presentation.

I wonder how well I know myself. Sometimes I really do wonder because I surprise myself at my own reactions and responses in certain situations. I wish I could have behaved a little bit differently. It's one of the indications that tells me that I need to know myself a little better. In a materialistic

world everything carries values in terms of matter. So often the value that I've placed in myself has also been associated with external factors, the possessions that I have, the property that I own, the position and profile that I occupy or the position that others give me. Very often I see myself in compartments, just simply in the way that others see me. What is it that you see when you look at me? Instantly the inner computer begins its calculations and we connect with each other in terms of our face, our colour, our skins, our features, our age, the profession we work with and yet, when I begin to think about it, I question this and wonder whether external factors

tell me anything either about myself or about you. And I begin to be aware of things that are actually not material at all, nothing to do with my external form or external situation and these are the things that I actually value and appreciate about myself.

I look inside and I become aware of things like my feelings, my emotions, my thoughts and I begin to wonder which bit of me is really me. It's important that I learn to separate two identities, the material identity, that is the physical form, and the inner reality of my thoughts and feelings. It's important to know things in terms of the external, but much more important to know that which is under the surface, that which is below the skin, and when I focus my attention inside, on my inner being, that's when our journey begins.

Coming into this inner space and finding what's happening in my own inner world is actually an adventure, as marvellous as the adventures of outer space. Where is it that my thoughts and feelings emanate from? As I begin to allow my mind to be quiet I discover that the source of life, the source of energy that I am, is actually just a spark, a being, a point. I am not five feet tall, but I am just a point of light. In our language we use sometimes this expression 'my soul', or 'I have a soul' and yet this is not true at all - the reality is that I am a soul, I am this point of light. And operating from this consciousness creates a total change in my awareness. In this awareness, knowing who I am, I'm able to step beyond all those limits that the physical body has imposed on me. So often I have said "I can't do this, that or the other", and yet none of that is a reality. I am this eternal being of light. I am

a being of light, I am actually a being of love; these are my natural qualities, and coming back to this awareness means that I'm able to go beyond all barriers, all boundaries. I am able to find that inner freedom of the self. In this awareness of knowing who I truly am, I'm able to manage myself.

Sometimes we question whether the original state of the self is that of goodness. And yet peace is that which is totally natural for me, and so I know that it is a state that belongs to me. I don't need to attempt it. It is there within me. In a life in which one is very busy, if I know how to turn my attention just for a moment, to this point of light that I am, peace is instantly accessible. When I find that inner peace, it's like the recharging of the battery and then I'm able to accomplish all that I need to accomplish on the external level. If I can even do this for one minute within every hour I would find that the other 59 minutes are able to flow very, very smoothly.

My own being of peace inside also means I have power inside. I'm able to find my own inner strength. We use this word 'empowerment' a great deal and yet empowerment cannot come to me from anyone else outside, but empowerment which comes within means that it's a strength that stays with me forever and ever. Wherever I go, whatever else it is I do, this power is that which I carry within my own being.

Let's experience a few minutes in which we use this concept so that you can actually see how it works for yourself.

Sit quietly just letting the body be relaxed, preferably both feet on the ground and your hands folded quietly.

Let your breathing become natural and slow.

You can keep your eyes open.

In fact it's preferable to do so, so that this awareness becomes a natural stage of awareness for you. I focus inside and I watch what's happening inside my own inner world.

I see many thoughts flickering on this screen of my mind and I can consciously choose which thoughts to have.

I choose the thought of peace.

I visualise a point of light and in this awareness of peace I know that this is who I am.

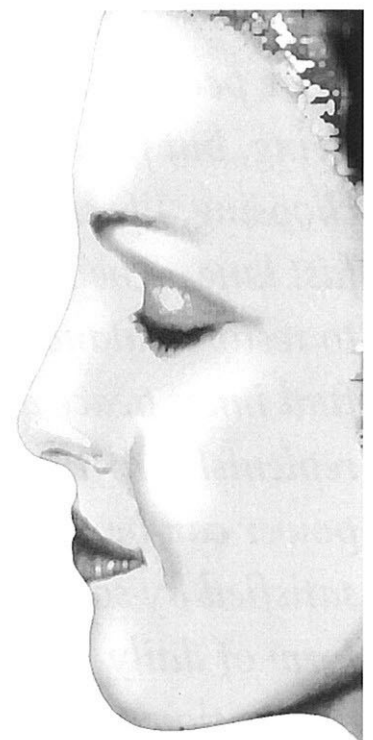
I am a being of light.

I am a being of peace.

My thoughts slow down and I savour the beauty of peace within, as my inner world is filled with peace.

I am also filled with light.

I can feel the clouds of confusion receding and as this light becomes bright I can feel my own inner power growing within my own being is light, is might, is peace.



Having forgotten myself I had forgotten these original natural qualities of mine, and now that I know who I am, all these qualities naturally belong to me again and in this awareness I radiate light, peace and might.

And now I let my thoughts come back to the awareness of the physical body that I occupy and the situations in life that I find myself in today, but now I come back with an outlook transformed with an attitude which is very different.

Coming home in this awareness of I the soul, the master of this physical instrument, this precious body of mine, I know now what it is I have to convey through my eyes, through my lips, through my actions, I know the direction that I have to move in. My vision of others has also been transformed. I don't put them into boxes any more. I'm able to see them as eternal being, as souls. I still carry on with those things I need to do, but now having created that original eternal world also, there is clarity in the way which I think, there is understanding and empathy in the way I behave with others, there is power in my actions so that my actions lead to the right conclusions and positive results emerge in my life and also the lives of others around me.

I compare this to the state I was in before, a state of chaos and confusion inside, and so little wonder that there was chaos and confusion in the world around me. Managing myself means to know that I am the creator of my own inner world. I'm able to be the creator of the world around me. Managing myself means finding my own dignity, finding my own state of self-respect so that I'm able to stand independently on my own feet. We surround ourselves with so many different supports and are unable to manage without those supports. But now that I know

who I am, I carry my own stage of self-esteem and of course when I value myself, I value others around me. In a state of self-respect that respect extends out to others. Managing myself means I'm able to move with a stability in which I bring calmness in a world of chaos around me. The peace that I have means that I can begin to create a little oasis of peace around me. The light that I have means that illusion and darkness no longer touch me. The power that I have means that I can truly be free. Om Shanti. Om means I am, shanti means peace. I can turn back to this awareness at any moment and again be a master of myself. ®

Co-presented by Sister Jayanti and Mike George, *Meditation For Extremely Busy People* is an audio presentation consisting of three cassettes and a workbook available from Brahma Kumaris Literature.



Meditation is ...

... the gathering of self knowledge and the dispelling of ignorance

... the pathway back to inner peace

... the restoration of love for your self

... the act of creating quality thoughts and feelings

... rediscovering that place of eternal, unchanging stillness within

... reaching to the highest level of conscious awareness

... the best way for extremely busy people to stay cool, calm and focused

The Tao

Respectfully revised
and lovingly added
to by
Barbara Bossert-Ramsay
and complemented by the
thoughts of Dadi Janki

*The title of the annual Mt
Abu Forum in India earlier this
year was The Spirit of the 21st
Century. Three themes provided
the focus for the Forum -*

***SIMPLICITY, CREATIVITY and
RESPONSIBILITY.***

*During the forum Robin Ramsay,
Barbara Bossert Ramsay and Tamasin
Ramsay adapted and performed The Tao
to align with the themes, and then Dadi
Janki shared a lifetime's wisdom on each
of the three topics.
This is the essence.*

SIMPLICITY

To know others is wisdom;
To know the self is enlightenment,
To master others requires force;
To master the self requires strength.

To be happy where you are
is to be content,
To be content
is to be eternally present,
To be eternally present
is The Way



Those who know do not talk.
Those who talk do not know.

Keep your mouth closed,
Guard your senses.
Temper your sharpness.
Simplify your problems.

Beware of any undertaking
that requires new clothes.

He who has achieved this state is
happy with friends and with
enemies,
is comfortable with good or with
harm,
with honour and disgrace.

This is the highest state of man.



The five colours blind the eye.
The five tones deafen the ear.
The five flavours dull the taste.

Owning and losing madden the
mind.

Precious things lead one astray.
Therefore the sage is guided by
what he feels and not by what he
sees.

He lets go of that and chooses this.



If I have just a little sense,
I will walk on the main road and
my only fear will be of straying
from it.

Keeping to the main road is easy,
But people love to be side tracked.

When the court is arrayed in
splendour,
The fields are full of weeds,
And the granaries are bare.
Some wear gorgeous clothes,
Carry sharp swords,
And indulge themselves with food
and drink;
People have more possessions than
they can use.
This is certainly not the way.
Sainthood, charity, ingenuity.
These three are outward forms
alone.
They are not sufficient in
themselves.



Give up sainthood.
Renounce the self-righteousness of
wisdom,
And it will be a hundred times
better for everyone.

Give up charity.
Renounce opinions of what
should be
And humanity will re-discover
respect and love.

Give up ingenuity.
Renounce accumulation and profit
And bandits and thieves will
disappear

It is more important
To see the simplicity,
To cast off selfishness
To temper desire
To realise one's true nature.

This is contentment.
This holds happiness.



Empty yourself.
Let your mind rest.
All the things of the world rise
and fall
While the soul watches their return.
Everything grows and flourishes
and then returns to its source.
To return to the source is stillness.
This is unchanging, eternal.
To know this constancy is insight.
To know this constancy frees the
mind.

A free mind brings an open heart.
Open hearted, you will act royally.
Being royal you attain the divine.
Being divine you will be your
true self
Your eternal self.

The body dies.
The soul will never pass away.

SIMPLICITY

It is a form of wisdom to know
how to remain simple, to merge
everything and become peaceful.
In this state of consciousness
spiritual power is accumulated
automatically. To become simple
means to become a good example
in front of the world.

When we become simple we see the
solution to everything is to remain



peaceful and happy in our dealings with everyone. Simplicity creates the state of introversion in which we no longer waste time and energy by going into this and that. This makes us very royal in our attitude and behaviour. Any unfulfilled desire does not even arise in us. Any work that we are responsible for is done with a natural easiness. We are able to create ideas and an atmosphere that makes everyone feel comfortable. It's as if the inner mirror becomes clean and we can see clearly what we have to do.

Simplicity allows us to have courage and faith and it is this that creates success. Simplicity allows us to let go of old things. Simplicity allows us to be more loving towards ourselves and others. And this is what develops self respect. And by living in a simple way the speciality of each one becomes clear and we can easily see each other's value.

CREATIVITY

What is firmly established cannot be uprooted.
 What is firmly grasped cannot slip away.
 It will be honoured from generation to generation.

Cultivate Virtue in your self,
 And Virtue will be real.
 Cultivate Virtue in the family,
 And Virtue will abound.
 Cultivate it in the village,
 And Virtue will grow.
 Cultivate it in the nation,
 And Virtue will be abundant.
 Cultivate it in the universe,
 And Virtue will be everywhere.

Therefore look at the body as body;
 Look at the family as family;
 Look at the village as village;
 Look at the nation as nation;
 Look at the universe as universe.

How do I know the universe is like this?
 By looking!



My words are easy to understand,
 my directions easy to practise,
 Yet only a handful under the sky hears and follows them.

My words have ancient beginnings
 My laws are eternal.
 Those that know me are few;
 Illusion is everywhere.
 Therefore the sage wears rough clothing and keeps jewels safe in his heart.



Thirty spokes share the wheel's hub;
 But only the centre hole makes it useful.
 Cut doors and windows for a room
 And it is the holes that make it useful.

Shape your clay into a vessel;
 It is the space within that makes it useful.

Without going outside
 You might know the whole world.
 Without looking through the window,
 You might see the ways of heaven.
 The farther you go,
 The less you know.

Thus the sage knows without travelling;
 He sees without looking;
 He creates without doing.



CREATIVITY

You are able to develop creativity in yourself when you have the attitude of learning and when you have the aim of self improvement. When you have the aim of self improvement you won't want to have any defects in your character. You will make an effort to remove anything negative. For this I need to make myself calm and peaceful. I need to spend time in silence. I have to see myself within. Then I can cleanse my inner self. Then I can create new things. This is the

practice which can restore my creative ability.

Try not to allow anything external to influence you; whether it is in the form of praise, defamation, victory or defeat. Everything that is happening is just like a game. I am just an actor. So keep yourself always balanced. Whatever is happening externally let it happen but maintain your highest intentions and focus inside. Thoughts, words and actions should be identical. Attitude should be filled with benevolence and thoughts constantly linked with the creator.



Just as there is a connection with the power generator in order to draw power so in the same way we have to be linked with the creator and draw that power to play our rôle accurately within the creation. This power restores concentration which enables us to create pure and positive thoughts. When there are thoughts of love and respect for the self we are able to create the same for others. This is spiritual service.

RESPONSIBILITY

Accept your life willingly,
Accept obstacles as part of the
human condition.

What do you mean by, 'Accept
your life willingly'?
Ride the low waves as well as
the high,
Do not be concerned with loss
or gain.
This is called 'Accepting your life
willingly'.

What do you mean by, 'Accepting
obstacles as part of the human
condition'?
Obstacles are part of your learning
Without obstacles how can there
be life?

Surrender yourself willingly;
Then you can be trusted to care
for all things.
Love the world as our own self;
Then you can truly care for
all things.



A good walker leaves no tracks;
A good speaker makes no slips;
A good reckoner needs no tally.
A good door needs no lock,
Yet no one can open it.
Good binding requires no knots,
Yet no one can loosen it,

Therefore the sage takes care of
all men
And abandons no one.
He takes care of all things
And abandons nothing.

This is called 'following the light'.
This is the heart of the mystery.



When Truth is lost,
Charity and self-righteousness
arise.
When cleverness and scholarship
are born,
The great pretence begins.

When there is no peace within
the family,
Social workers and care givers
are born.
When the world is confused and
in chaos,
The keepers of peace appear.



Know the strength of man,
But keep a woman's care!
Be the stream of the universe!
Being the stream of the universe,
Ever true and unswerving,
Become as a little child once more.

Know the white,
But keep the black!
Be an example to the world!
Being an example to the world,
Ever true and unwavering.
Return to the infinite.

Know honour,
Yet keep humility.
Be the valley of the universe!
Being the valley of the universe,
Ever true and resourceful,
Return to the stage of the
uncarved carved block.

When the block is carved,
it becomes useful.
When the sage uses it, he comes
the ruler.
Thus, 'A great tailor cuts little.'



The greatest good is like water
It flows in places human
beings reject.
It gives life without any effort.

Therefore:

In dwelling, be close to the land.
In meditation, go deep in the heart.
In dealing with others, be
gentle and kind.
In speech, be true.
In ruling, be just.
In business, be vigilant.
In action, keep your timing full
of care.



Let your heart be like water
It will flow in places human
beings reject.
It will bring life without any effort.

Ancient masters.
Profound, responsive, subtle,
mysterious.
The depth of their knowledge is
unfathomable.
Because it is unfathomable.

But we can describe their
appearance.
Watchful, like those crossing a
winter stream.
Alert like those aware of danger.
Courteous, like visiting guests.
Yielding, like ice just about to melt,
Simple, yet holding everything,
Like blocks of wood ready to
be carved.

And if we learn carefully,
If we remain still until the moment
of action
If we yield like ice just about
to melt,
We too become simple, like blocks
of wood ready to be carved.
It is the depth of their knowledge
that is unfathomable.
Not having knowledge itself.

And having the knowledge,
The depth is only your decision.
And to all others,
It is unfathomable.

RESPONSIBILITY.

Regarding the coming 21st century we all have a responsibility to plant seeds. The first seed is of simplicity. To have simplicity in our communication with each other and in our relationship with God. There is great beauty in this simplicity for it is open and honest and clean. In your relationships develop a selfless attitude where you bring benefit to one another. Put your heart on one another's hand. Trust one another. Everyone is now thinking for themselves or their own family. This is the time to think for the world, we have to do something for the world. I have to look and see what it is I have to do at this very important time now.

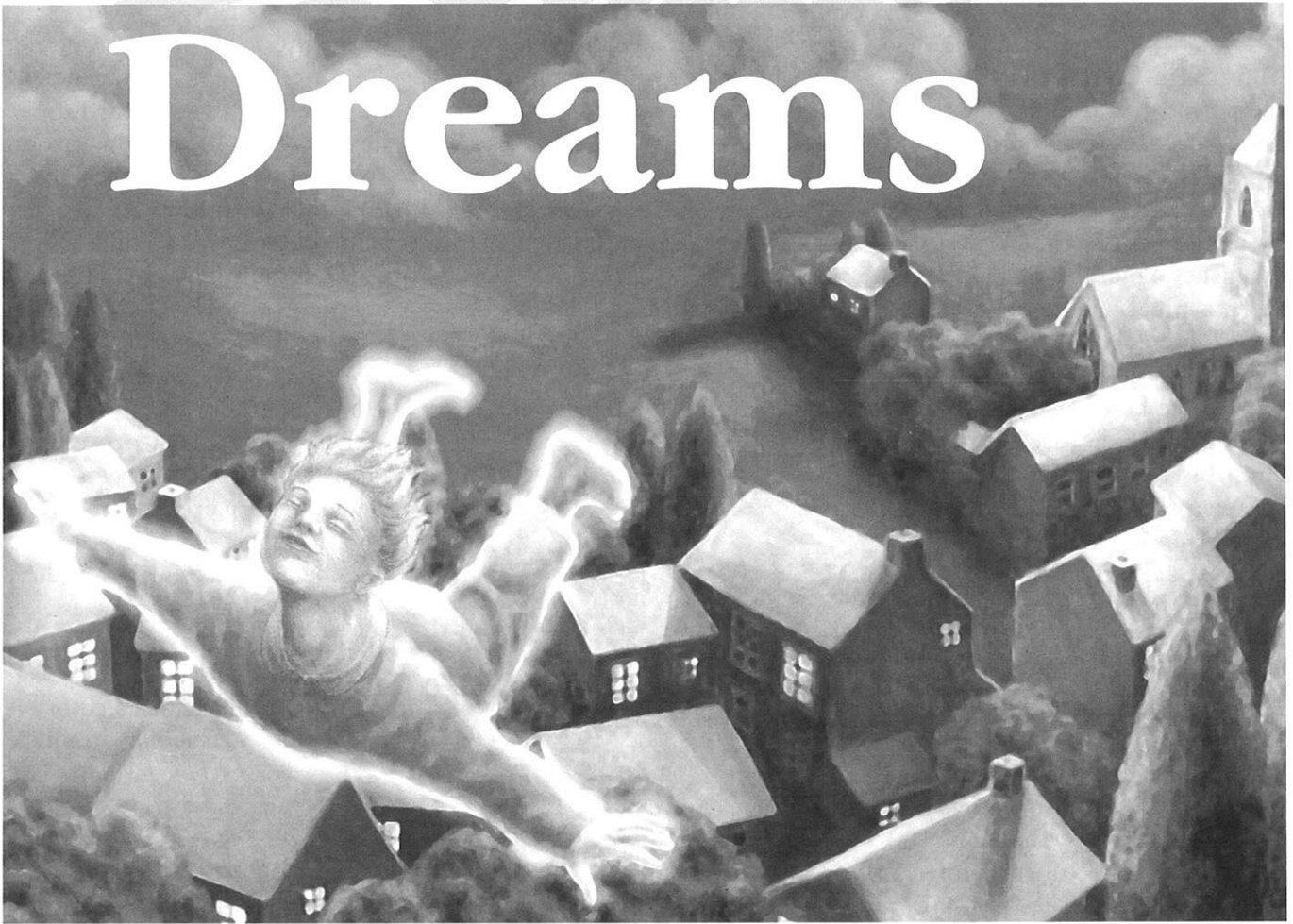
It is our responsibility to be forgiving, loving and merciful towards ourselves and then others. We must not be sorrowful seeing

people in sorrow, this does not help them. So we must bring them to happiness. With truthfulness and with love, if I am responsible for my own self and know that this is what I have to do, I will definitely receive the help of God. But first I need to have pure and elevated thoughts, determined and courageous thoughts; these are my responsibility and these will serve the world in the 21st century. ®

Barbara Bossert Ramsay is an Author and Freelance Writer based in Melbourne. Dadi Janki is the Additional Administrative Head of The Brahma Kumaris.



The World of Dreams



In his latest book David Fontana explores and explains the unconscious dimension of our dreams

“A dream is a theatre in which the dreamer himself is the scene, the player, the prompter, the producer, the author, the public and the critic”

- Carl Jung

Why should we teach ourselves to dream? Why attach any importance to the apparently random jumble of memories, fantasies and absurdities that make up our dreams? The answer is that, although we dream every night, we often fail to grasp the unique importance of our nightly experiences. Dreams are our chance to eavesdrop on a conversation between our unconscious and conscious minds, offering us opportunities to understand ourselves better and achieve greater inner harmony. We can learn how to reveal the special personal meanings of our dreams, and how to make them more vivid. We can ask our unconscious to

help us solve practical problems and to show us a way forward in times of personal difficulty, and we can even teach ourselves to lucid dream - to take control of our dreams.

LEARNING FROM HISTORY

In ancient times, it was widely believed that dreams had the power to solve problems, enhance fertility, bring hunters prowess and make warriors bold and skilful. Dreams could also predict the future, heal sickness and bring spiritual revelation. Our forebears constantly sought to ‘incubate’ dreams that would bring such blessings. To this end, they slept in

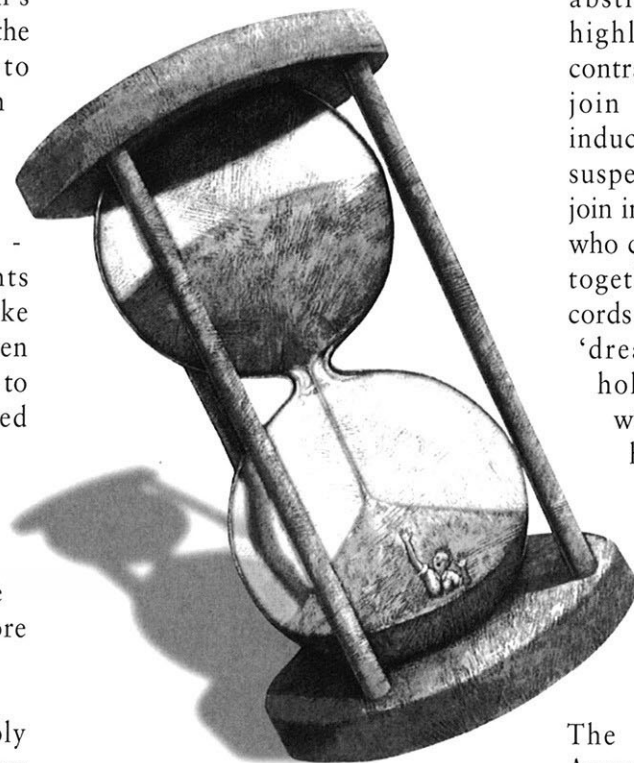
sacred or lonely places (in temples or in the wilderness) and followed distinctive rituals to make requests for dreams. These physical and spiritual disciplines made them mentally prepared and especially receptive to vivid dreams.

The ancient Greek's knowledge of the potential of dreams, like their knowledge in so many fields, was especially sophisticated. Socrates (c.470-399BC) anticipated Freud by more than two thousand years when he explained that dreams were a place where a person's bestial desires run riot, unless the 'well-governed soul' is able to replace the baser instincts with reason, in which case dreams equip us to come 'nearer to grasping the truth than at any other time'. Aristotle (384 - 322BC) said that the insights available from dreams were like objects reflected in water: when water is calm, the forms are easy to see; when the water is agitated (that is, when the mind is emotionally disturbed), the reflections become distorted and meaningless. "The more the mind can be stilled before sleep," said Aristotle, "the more the dreamer can learn".

The practice of sleeping at holy places to bring on particular types of dreams was common in Greece and throughout pagan Europe. Perhaps surprisingly, early Christians followed the same procedure, sleeping at shrines of saints or martyrs who could send dreams with the power to heal or bring peace. In the Far East, too, there were temples for dreamers. For example in 14th-century China, each city was watched over by its own god. When visiting a city, government officials had to spend their first night in the temple, waiting for instructions from the god. Judges also slept in the temple to receive guidance, first purifying themselves by fasting and ritual

bathing, then burning a written petition before the altar to inform the god of all the relevant legal arguments.

The ideas that dreams could supply missing links, helping us to solve problems and make decisions, has not been confined to ancient cultures. Even Rene Descartes (1596-1650), the French philosopher who is considered one of the founders of modern science, believed in 'priming' the mind to incubate



meaningful dreams. Descartes said that several of his major theories came to him in dreams, and in his philosophy he struggled to find a clear distinction between dreaming and waking experience, concluding that "even if I were asleep, everything that appears evident to my mind is absolutely true".

Dreams in Other Cultures

In the West, we tend to believe that 'reality' can be defined solely in terms of empirical fact, but many other cultures have a more open-minded approach. While fully

aware of the difference between dreams and waking life, they see both types of experience as equally real and valid, and believe that dreams have the power to change lives.

In northern Peru, for example, dream contact with an ancient warrior soul is essential for the success of any hunter or warrior. To obtain such an apparition, a hopeful youth will ingest hallucinogenic plants and endure weeks of solitude, hardship and abstinence. In the southern highlands of New Guinea, by contrast, whole communities will join together in a dream inducement. If someone dies of suspected sorcery, villagers may join in a dream exercise to find out who cast the spell. They sleep tied together by their wrists and by cords wound across the chest. A 'dream master' keeps a vigil, holding one end of the cord; when he judges that someone is having a disturbing dream, he wakes everyone with a sharp tug, and all the members of the community relate their dreams, revealing clues as to the sorcerer's identity.

The aboriginals of Western Australia have an entire musical repertoire extracted from dreams. In the morning, dreamers sing to the rest of the community new songs that they have dreamed, and by joining the singing, each member of the tribe deepens his or her own dream experience.

In many cultures, dreams are seen as ways to channel power from the spirit world, harmonising inner conflicts and renewing hope, confidence and vitality. Anyone who does not dream regularly is considered to be cut off from the power of the sacred. The Menomini, of the Great Lakes region of North America, watch

their dreams for warnings and prophecies, and take precautions (such as wearing talismans or casting spells) to try to ward off predicted disaster. The Iroquois people of the northeastern USA engage in an elaborate dream-guessing rite, which obliges the dreamer to present his or her dreams to the community in the form of riddles that must be solved if the wishes in the dreams are to be fulfilled.

These beliefs in the power of dreams reflect the real benefits that dreams can bring the dreamer. We in the modern world, who are often tempted to rationalise dreams as mere physiological events or psychological aberrations, can learn a great deal from such traditions. This does not mean that we should deny the findings of science: if we are to learn from our dreams, we need to combine elements of old wisdom and new understanding.

Dreams come from three different levels of the unconscious. Any dream can contain material from more than one level, but typically one or other level predominates, guiding the way in which we approach each dream. Dreams from level 1, the preconscious, are, for example, really a continuation of waking preoccupations, weaving together fragments of recent events, current anxieties and acknowledged hopes and wishes. The meaning of such dreams can often be taken at face value.

The three levels can be described as:

Level 1: the preconscious: the most accessible part of our unconscious mind, containing all the material that can readily be called into consciousness when we are awake.

Level 2: the personal unconscious: memories that are beyond the reach of our waking consciousness, but exert a profound influence upon our psychological life, including our dream life. Childhood traumas, repressed wishes and fears, unacknowledged emotions and expectations, all form part of our personal unconscious, which develops and changes over time.

Dream Cue

Think of the mind as a tall building. We spend most of the time on the top floor; the domain of the conscious mind. Occasionally however, we go down onto the lower levels, which represent the unconscious. Hold the image of this building in the mind before sleep, instructing your dreams to roam freely through it in search of meaning.

Level 3: - the collective unconscious: the primal ideas, symbols, themes and archetypes forming the raw material for profound human aspiration, drives and longings. The collective unconscious is an inherited level of mind, common to us all, from which come the recurring themes in the myths and legends of all cultures. Jung referred to the collective unconscious as "the vast historical storehouse of the human race".

*"And dreams in their development
have breath,
And tears and torture and a touch
of joy"*

Lord Byron

Contacting the Dream World

"Of scenes of Nature, fields and mountains, of skies so beautiful after a storm, and at night the moon so unearthly bright, I dream, I dream, I dream."

Walt Whitman

Imagine going to the theatre to watch an exciting play, but being shown to a bad seat, far away from the stage and behind a pillar. You have a limited, half-obscured view of the stage, and are able to take in the merest frustrating fragments of the action. You find that you can make no sense of the play. The next evening you return to the theatre; the play is different, but your seat is the same. Again, you catch only glimpses of the stage, and can absorb only fleeting and meaningless snatches of the play. After several days of this experience, you are tempted to give up, vowing never again to visit the theatre again.

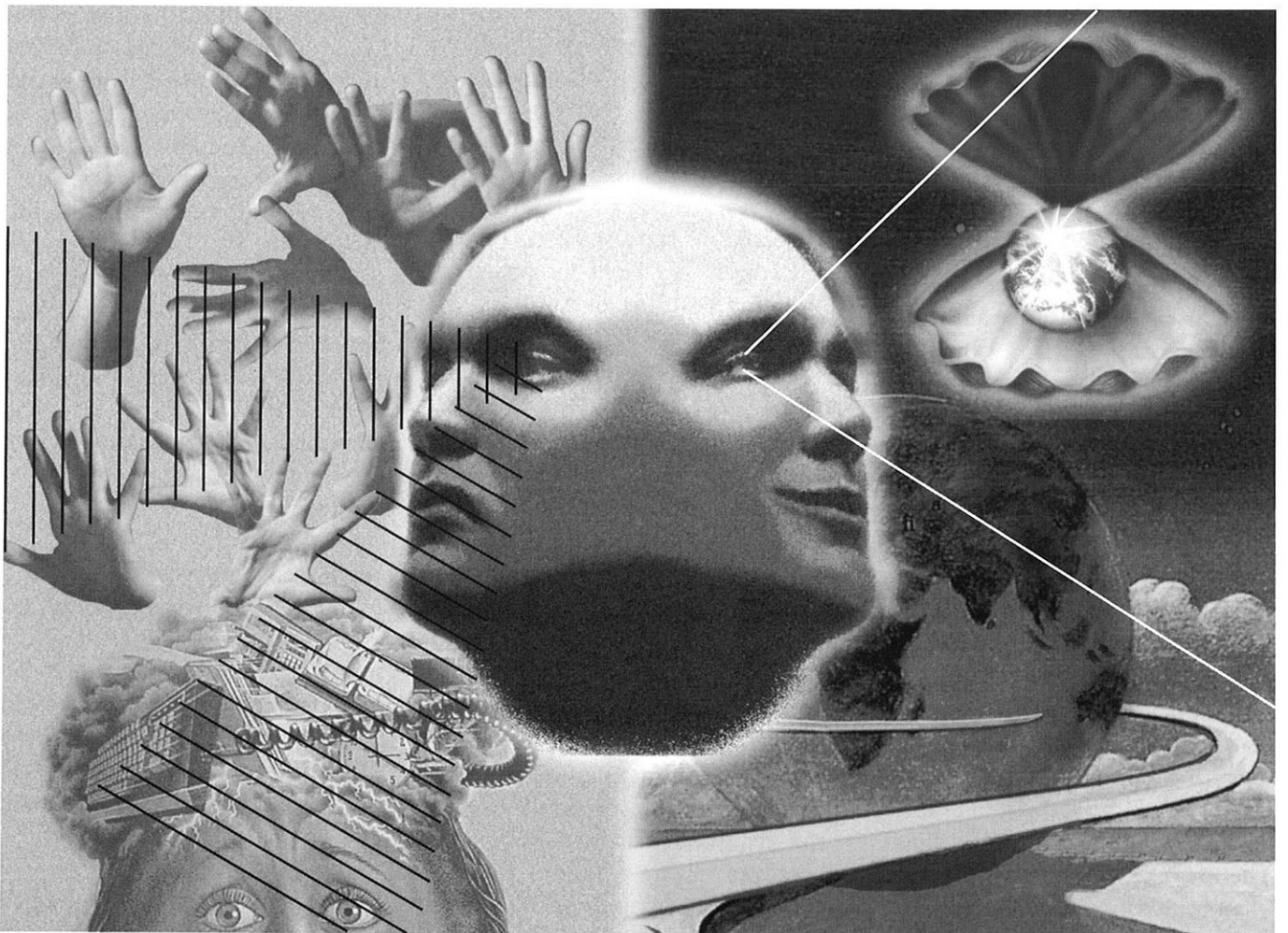
However, theatre-goers who have a better view of what is going on insist that their experiences have been worthwhile, telling you of the beauty and interest of what they have seen. Stimulated by these accounts, you decide one day to find a better seat in the auditorium, and are amazed at what you see.

In the same way, most of us catch only tantalising, mystifying glimpses of our dreams. The first step toward understanding and appreciating them is to obtain a better seat in the nightly theatre of sleep.

®

Extracted from *Teach Yourself to Dream*, created and produced by Duncan Baird Publishers, and published by Mitchell Beazley.

The Path of the Slave, the Path of the Master



Mike George reminds us of the need to be awake at each and every fork in life's road.

One of the most prized freedoms in human life is the freedom of choice. Millions have fought and died down through the centuries for the right to choose. Unfortunately most of the choices we have made have turned into illusory freedoms. When examined closely they have been choices which have led us down the path to slavery.

Every waking moment represents a moment of choice. And depending on the choice made so will be the path we walk.

The Path of the Slave

Attention

The first and constantly recurring choice is to what and to whom we give our attention. Where attention goes energy flows. There are now a thousand and one people competing for our attention and the flow of our cash. We find it easy however not to take responsibility for where our attention goes as we blame the myriad glammers, distractions, slogans and images which surround us. And yet we often contradict the belief that we have no control over where our energy flows by choosing which channel on the TV we will watch. And we turn towards what is most attractive.

Attraction

Attraction follows attention as we move towards the object of our now stimulated desire. The new dress, the new car, the new person begin to pull us as gravity pulls a falling stone to earth. In the movement of attraction we begin to consume and take our pleasure in the form, the colour, the fragrance and design of the object (or even concept if you are a philosopher). And if we choose to linger too long and return too often we will be unconsciously choosing attachment.

Attachment

Attachment is not a commonly used word in 'sophisticated'

societies. In relationship to our property it is called possession. In relationship to ideas it is called copyright. In relationship with another person it is called love. But attachment can never be love. Attachment means resistance to letting go and where there is resistance there is fear. When we choose attachment we choose fear and where there is fear there cannot be love. Attachment is therefore an unhealthy choice at any level. If this choice is repeated too often, dependency becomes a reality and addiction is the destination.

Addiction

Who would choose to be an addict? Few would argue for it, but many, if not most, choose it a hundred times a day. Addiction is not only a needle in the arm. Addiction is indulging, consuming and returning to the same source of pleasure with habitual regularity. The source could be your fridge, your TV, your CDs, your work, your dog, your home, your partner. Our lives are a tapestry of addictions and contradictions as we tut tut the drug, the cigarette and the alcohol addicts while partaking in our own form of socially acceptable daily hits! And where there is addiction, even to a memory, there cannot be freedom, because choices are not consciously made. And where freedom disappears slavery enters, and with it the inevitable.

Atonement

How often have you seen a child and a toy being separated? The tearing, the wrenching, the parting are accompanied by screams and tears. Pain is the price that must be paid for taking a stroll down the path of attention, attraction, attachment and addiction. This is atonement, and it is as predictable as the sunrise. For big grown up people the toys take a different form and the pain, if not expressed,

is suppressed or repressed, finding other ways out in a rainbow of dysfunctional behaviours. Or else it just eats away at our insides. Why do we choose this path, this pain, and call it pleasure? Why do we delight in our own demise? Smiling as we cry. Celebrating as we fry. Laughing as we die.

Was it because we surrendered our freedom a long time ago, and signed up for slavery in the name of civilisation, sophistication and progress, and called it all the good life? Sweet illusions. Cursed by the darkness of ignorance and those demons of desire have we all turn into frogs?

Imagine the kiss, the awakening, the transformation, the seeing of the 'other path'. Imagine the path of the master now that you have tasted the path of the slave. What do you see?

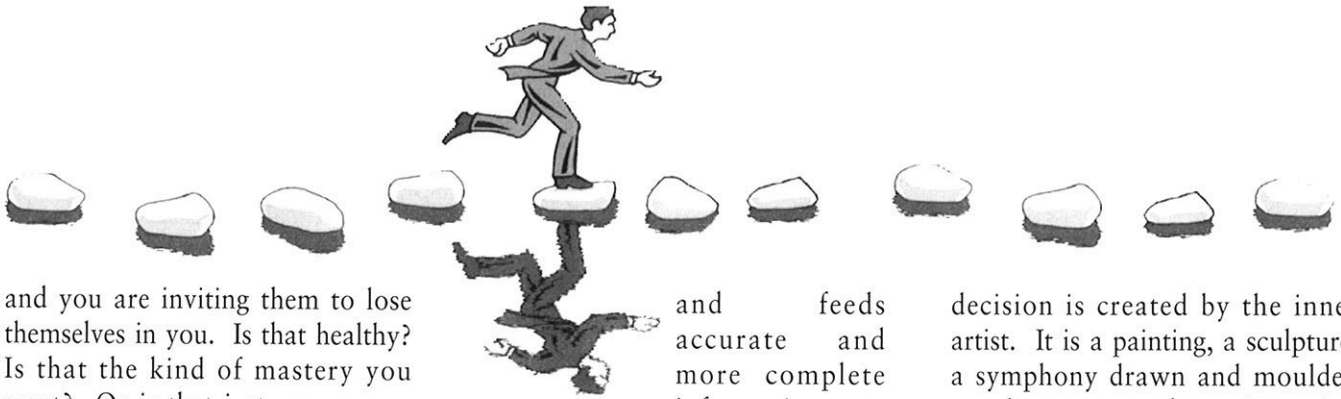


The Path of the Master

All steps on this path are fully conscious and measured choices. The first step is the most important.

Disidentify

The first moment of attraction is also the first moment of identification. Identify with the flower, the team, the flag and you have, for that moment, just lost yourself. Be attractive to others



and you are inviting them to lose themselves in you. Is that healthy? Is that the kind of mastery you want? Or is that just power over others' weakness, which is no power at all, and another false turn into slavery in dependence? Do you respect yourself when you become dependent on the object of your identification? Do you respect others when you become their object of identification?

A master is vigilant at every moment. A master is attractive but not attracting. A master is attracted but never subsumed by the object of his or her attraction. A master never identifies with anyone or any thing except their own self. This choice allows them the next luxury.

Detachment

Next time you are in an art gallery watch people watching the paintings. Seldom do you see anyone with their nose inches from the canvas. Detachment simply means standing back and observing. Big picture consciousness is then possible and meaning is better discerned and more likely to be complete. This skill is not taught by our parents or teachers so our journey becomes a series of nose scraping experiences as we get too close to the canvas of life. Masters never get too close to anyone or any situation but they never turn their back and walk away. Masters never consume the emotions and moods of others but never deny their validity. Masters never invite themselves to help but never deny assistance when invited. Detachment allows perspective, meaning, understanding and action to flow in one seamless movement. Why? Because it creates inner space

and feeds accurate and more complete information to a master's most important ability.

Discrimination

Can you tell the difference between a genuine Rolex and an imitation, between mineral water and tap water, between someone telling a lie and telling the truth. In matters of truth, masters of the art of discrimination have a strong connection to their own conscience. That's the space inside that knows what is right and wrong, what is true and what is false. This is our source of innate wisdom from where the voice of intuition will speak. Hearing this voice is impossible when the mind and intellect are clouded with the noise of desire and dependency. Knowing the value of self sensitivity, masters cultivate this quiet inner voice and learn to trust its guidance when faced with the challenge of making decisions.

Decision

With hundreds of small, medium and large decisions in every day, where each decision is like a fork in the road ahead, where there is no turning back because time only knows how to go forward, where each decision will affect the lives of others; how important is a decision? If governed by attraction and attachment, and the voice of your wisdom is quietly strangled, life will be a series of wrong turns and unfortunate accidents. Purpose will be absent, meaning impossible, destiny will be in the hands of mere chance and pain will be your companion.

Masters understand that each

decision is created by the inner artist. It is a painting, a sculpture, a symphony drawn and moulded on the canvas of a quiet mind which allows experience, wisdom, care and purpose to be united and shaped by the highest intentions. This process is beyond time. If rushed by an external clock it will be coloured by fear. And fear is the darkest cloud. A fear driven decision is no decision, it is only either panic or compulsion. But if the decision is fear-free the master has available an energy which knows no price.

Determination

With the energy sucking hindrances of dependency and addiction now off the menu, power is available to 'make things happen'. Powerful, important and focused decisions attract their own obstacles and tests. Determination means to determine or never stop. To have no end to forward movement. Faced with the obstacles of others' resistance or disapproval, faced with the outer tests of unexpected circumstance and the inner tests of their own not yet fully healed weaknesses, masters can continue to determine their own chosen destiny. Nothing and nobody can stop them. Force is never used to overcome. Instead, patient conversation and intelligent persuasion are the surgical tools of determination.

And so the path is chosen, consciously, wisely and freely. And true freedom is tasted. To a master, freedom is not a noun, it is a verb. Choice is not a task, it is a process. And mastery is not an option, it is an absolute necessity.

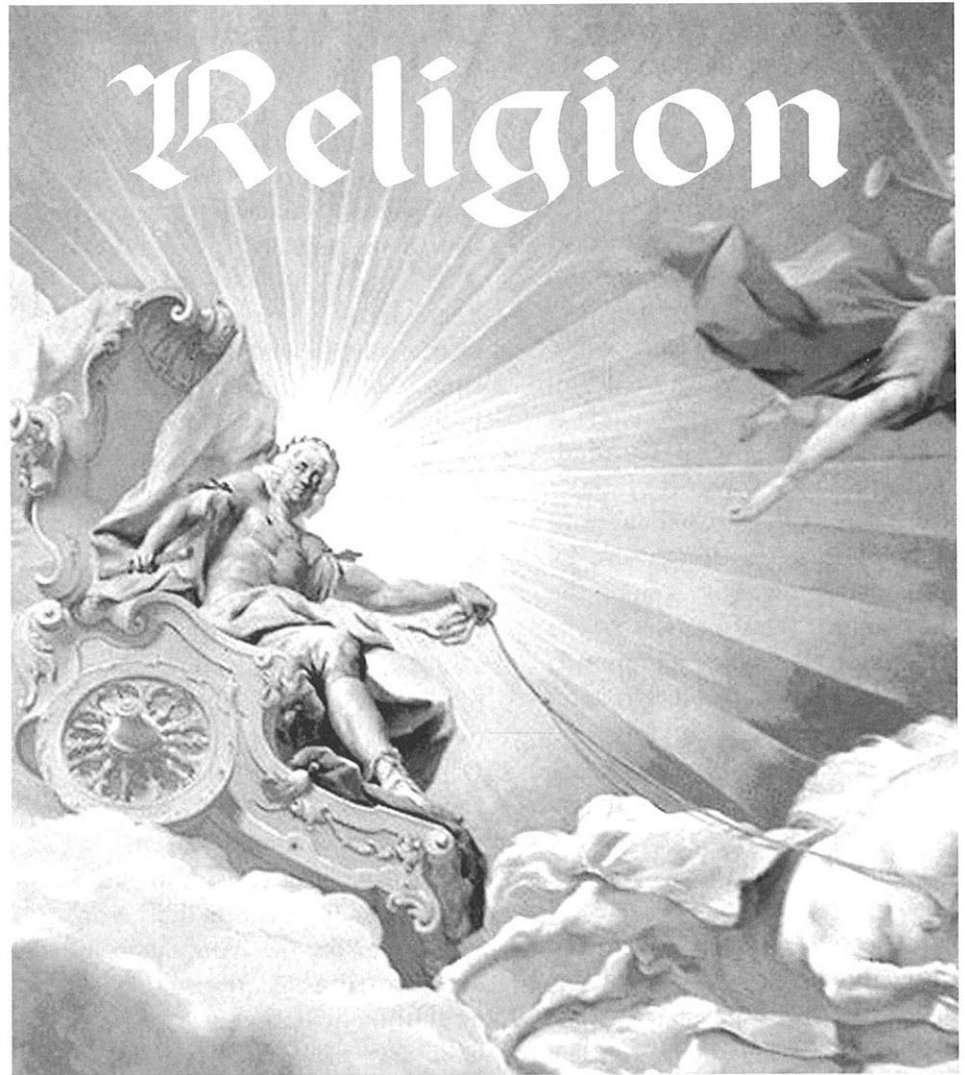
Mike George is Editor of Retreat Magazine.



*In his latest book, **Need Greed or Freedom**, John Whitmore sets out the three main stages of development which every group or organisation goes through in its development - inclusion, assertion and co-operation. He also tackles religion and identifies which stage it is currently going through while pointing out why the influence of religion has diminished in the past few decades.*

Religions are divisive. Of course they are not supposed to be that way, but anyone who claims they are not is simply blind to the reality. Most religions were inspired by God or his messengers, but along the way, sometimes with good intentions, sometimes with bad ones, they became distorted, trivialised and used by godless humans to control the masses, and for personal enrichment or ambition. It is probable that in every religion there are still too many people in high places who are motivated more by the love of power than by the power of love.

This is a harsh judgement and a gloomy picture, but while it is hard to dispute, there is another side too which is less visible and is hugely influential. All over the world there are countless humble people, inspired by their religion and guided by its



without Spirituality

moral code, who have renounced power and material possessions to serve God and humanity in any way they can. They minister to homeless people in inner cities, to those existing in the harsh climates and conditions of poor and poorly managed countries, to those in prison, to the bereaved, to the lonely, the elderly and the terminally sick, and to the innocent victims of natural and man-made disasters in every corner of the

world. Their personal and individual embodiment of the love of God is worth more than all the sermons ever preached.

These are two very different and perhaps extreme perspectives of religion today, but we need to take account of both, and all that lies in between, when we look at the impact that religion has on human evolution, and at the evolution of religion itself.

Despite the highly co-operative espoused ideals and moral values at the heart of every religion, religions have fared no better than most other large social groups in evolutionary terms.

Countless different religious formats cater for every taste and offer a haven or a place to belong. Dependency is encouraged. Once you enter, conformity to group norms, behaviours and beliefs is expected, if not demanded. Individuality and non-conformity are not tolerated. Challenges to church leadership are regarded by the more conservative among the flock as heresy, as the issue of the ordination of women has shown. Most sects and cults too thrive on maintaining a high level of inclusion dependency.

While internally every major religion has tended to remain at the level of inclusion, opposing religious groups have, for thousands of years, engaged in highly assertive behaviour towards each other. "We are right, and they are wrong." "God is with us, and they are servants of the devil." "We have the truth, and they are misguided." "Our practices will lead you to enlightenment, theirs are false." These early differences in religious beliefs soon became so hopelessly entwined with socio-economic and political dispute that the primary spiritual purpose and principles became sidelined or manipulated for worldly ends. The tragic primal hostility between Jews and Muslims in the Middle East, Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland, Hindus and Sikhs in India, Christians and Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina are all ancient and complex mixes of political, economic and religious conflict. The assertive behaviour evoked by these differences is deeply ingrained, habitual and mindless. The hostilities are

perpetuated for generations as they provide a pretext for violence perpetrated by godless people through assertion. Perhaps some do believe they are doing it for God, but God must weep at what is done in his name.

There are of course pockets of co-operation both within and between some religious groupings. Inter-faith contact and activities are on the increase. Within the Christian fold there is the ecumenical movement and the World Council of Churches. Christian-based charitable outreach to the poor, the needy and the oppressed is worldwide and is a significant manifestation of co-operation in deed with humanity at large. Other religions, other sects and even individual churches each have their forms of humanitarian co-operation often right alongside strong assertion and inclusion behaviour. But the green shoots of co-operation need a lot of nourishment if they are to take hold.

I have often observed that participants in therapy groups which have evolved into the co-operation stage display certain qualities. It is interesting to note that these qualities are precisely those which a Christian might describe as Christian values or behaviour. Support, caring, unselfishness, consideration, tolerance of differences, love and the rest. The fact that these qualities emerge from within the group and are not imposed or introduced by the leader suggests that they already reside within people, perhaps just waiting for an opportunity to be expressed. Is this what is meant by the God within? It is highly significant, to me at least, that these are the same qualities that business team members consistently list as the

qualities of an ideal work team.

For some, spiritual psychotherapy provides the space and security for the God within to emerge more effectively and authentically than with the church. In religion, there is often a gap between words and actions, as there is in business, but also between the mind and the emotions, between spirituality and psychology and between religious belief and worldly behaviour. Much of what happens in group therapy is non-verbal, in which context the separation between words and actions can not exist. There is a huge difference between saying 'I love you' and being kind to someone; just about the same as the difference between talking about co-operation and being co-operative.

Religions tend to suggest or demand certain good behaviours and thoughts. Though the intention may be admirable, it completely fails to recognise the path of self-development and the psychological need for inclusion (belonging) and assertion (self-expression and esteem) to be worked through. It is impossible to coerce people into genuine co-operative behaviour if they are not developmentally ready for it, and unnecessary if they are. By the subtle application of threat and repression, people can be forced into adopting apparently co-operative behaviour for a period of time.

This mild or not so mild fire and brimstone approach, which is not uncommon in religious circles, breeds guilt, suppression, resentment, sometimes leading to covert and dangerous assertive releases. These assertions are liable to manifest themselves as fanatical religious fervour against non-believers, or as psychological self-

flagellation, rather than being directed against what is repressing them. This unchristian and very vicious circle is perpetrated by dedicated Christians, and fanatics of other faiths, all over the world. The twin dangers of the psychological ignorance and emotional repression among religions and the religious are great indeed.

Religion is by and large held back somewhere between inclusion and assertion by a divisive legacy. The values it espouses are those of co-operation - those it exhibits are anything but. Authentic moral or co-operative values can, and do, emerge from within the human spirit, but that only occurs in a safe, understanding and co-operative environment. Religions seem to be incapable of providing this on a wide scale, so they revert to demanding certain moral behaviour which causes more problems than it solves. Without deep psychological re-evaluation and the removal of dogma and the lateral and vertical barriers within and between religions, religion will remain incapable of fostering the widespread adoption of moral values and consequently the harmony (co-operation) of the human race. Religion should be leading the awakening of humankind, being a role model of co-operation, but it can be argued that a huge cultural transformation towards co-operation is already beginning in spite of religion, not because of it.

SPIRITUALITY

Another kind of spirituality has existed alongside religion for centuries. Sometimes through an unexpected revelation, sometimes through retreat and contemplation, sometimes through art, beauty or music and sometimes through a



natural or synthesised hallucinogenic, people have discovered what they may variously describe as God, their soul, themselves, transcendence, inner peace or enlightenment. Such people might be said to have had spiritual awakening, even if they have no connection past or present to any religion.

Others have been brought up with or in a religion, but later they have 'left the church' and freed themselves from the constraints of the religious dogma that alienated them. They may still practise some of the rituals privately and may even attend a service on occasion, but they retain no attachment to any particular church or even religion.

Many westerners, brought up in the Christian tradition of the external God to be feared and worshipped, feel that something is missing and are attracted to the eastern concept of the God within. They adopt some eastern practices of meditation or yoga and form their own unique blend of the spirituality of the East and the West with allegiance to neither. There is yet another very broad entry point into the spiritual life through healing, through the study of parapsychology, mythology, physics, earth sciences, crop circles and even UFO's. This collection of loosely connected fields used to be called New Age activities until the term became overused and then misused by the tabloid press to describe nomadic malcontents or hippie remnants from the 1960s.

By and large these categories of spiritual people who shun conventional religion have a great deal in common. They are non-dogmatic, they respect and accept each other's different paths, they transcend nationality, cultural and traditional religion, they see the universality of God, they have a vision of a balance between a universal hierarchy without and the Self or the God within which is remarkably consistent, their spirituality is rooted in their experience rather than in theological theory and their nature is co-operative. While there are exceptions on both sides, my experience of these kind of people is that they embrace the loving essence of religion with greater comfort than those who fit the conventional criteria of being religious. They show the way to a co-operative world much more convincingly.

®

John Whitmore is an Author and Director of Performance Consultants. His latest book *Need, Greed or Freedom* is published by Element Books.

Robert Muller, former Assistant Secretary General at the United Nations, worked closely with and inspired a number of Secretary Generals. Tijn Tuber asked him to reminisce and the result was some fascinating insights.

Q: How do you keep going, with your enthusiasm, with your optimism, when we see the way the world seems to be heading these days?

A: I have learned in my life that if you are not optimistic you might as well be dead. During the second world war, when the Gestapo was on the point of arresting me, it was only through an incredible optimism that I decided, "I can get out of this situation" and I walked out. Since then no one on earth can tell me that pessimism is better than optimism - I was saved by it. Ever since then whenever something goes wrong or something adverse happens to me I interpret it as good and ask what is the lesson, what is the meaning? I always learn and always find meaning.

When you work in the UN you are dealing mostly with impossible problems which cannot be solved during your lifetime. I will die and there will not be total peace on this planet, and there will still be hundreds of millions of hungry people. So you deal with things which appear so impossible. But if you treat them as impossible you might as well give up. My philosophy was I will do my best, I will do the impossible. So I only selected impossible problems. And once something was put in place to deal with the problem I would leave and people would say, "You



must be crazy, now that you get a promotion in this thing, you leave!" I never made my work dependent on results. Most of the people I meet they say, "Oh, Mr Muller, I tried it, it didn't work. So I gave it up!" But how can you give up? ... I have no right to be recompensed by success.

Q: You once said that as a young boy you had a natural spirituality and then as you grew older pessimism began to creep in. But your spirituality returned again. It seems, to become spiritual as an adult, we have to unlearn many things - do you think that is true?

A: Yes, I think that we have to 'unlearn' the wrong priorities which current society gives us. Current society is entertainment. It is to consume more, always to want more, it is a society of consumption. You have advertisements, you have television and everybody wants to sell you more. And everybody wants to tell you how you are going to be famous if you study this, if you become a Dr. of Law, if you become a professor, and then you come to the end you say to yourself, "Wait a minute, I never became really famous, what went wrong in my life?" And then you discover that you did not remain faithful to your original beliefs.

I believe that every human being is endowed with one particularly outstanding characteristic. As I look at my grandchildren and my children they are all different, but they have one thing that characterises them - and my characteristic - when I was a little boy was that I loved to live. I never felt I had to become the Secretary General of the UN, I do not have to become the President of a country - I would even refuse it now! Because at my age I can have the pleasure of living fully. Unfortunately, many young people are unhappy, are without meaning or hope, because they have not been told that, "You do not have to be rich." Let me give you an example. There was a woman who wrote to me from Texas saying, "Mr Muller, I am 48 years old and I am really desperate. I have no job, and everything is hopeless around me. And I read your book on happiness and I want to thank you for having given me hope and what would you advise me to do?" And she told me that she was a deeply spiritual person. So I wrote to her and I said, "Look, I was poor and in a very desperate situation during the war several times, and one day when I was in

one such situation I walked in front of a church and said to myself, why are you desperate? All you would have to do is to knock at the door of the church and tell the priest, I would like to become a priest or a monk, and you would live in frugality and simplicity, you would be taken care of until you go to your tomb, and you might have the most wonderful life on earth by being in constant spirituality as a monk or as a sister or as a priest. So if things come to the worst, and this would not be worst at all, why should I despair?"

And it is not impossible that by telling this to her she said, "But he is right, I always wanted to become a sister. This is why, I did not get married". You never know! But to say that you want to become a sister or a priest today, people laugh at you. It is no longer fashionable. This is why many of the monasteries and the churches are empty, while in reality you probably have many young people who would love to select this as a life but they will not because it is not fashionable. "What would my friends say if I become a priest?"

Q: There were two Secretary Generals of the United Nations whom you worked very closely with and who had immense influence on your own spiritual growth. Could you say a little bit about how exactly they influenced you?

A: The first was Dag Hammarskjöld. He was an aristocrat, lived in a castle, was very well educated as an economist and a very superior character. He was a distant man at first, pure intelligence and pure rationalism, you could almost sense the absence of feeling within him. When I was in a meeting and he looked at you, you almost shut up immediately. It was those little icy eyes. But he changed during his life because he had an internal search. He was the

only Secretary General who left philosophical notes. He called them markings. When a philosophical thought occurred to him, he wrote it down. And this became a very important book. When it was studied by theologians and by spiritual people, what they discovered was that from a purely rational intellectual economist he became a mystic. By then whatever he wrote was his dialogue with God. The fact that he worked for humanity he had to ask himself the most fundamental questions and then he turned to God for guidance, "What shall I do?" So he was one of the great mystics of our time.

The second one was U Thant who was a teacher, a nice Bhuddist diplomat, very humble, very little known in the world because he did not want to brag. But I worked with him during the last two years of his Secretary Generalship - and I was absolutely amazed to find probably the most spiritual person I have ever met on this planet - without even knowing God - because as a Bhuddist he did not believe in God. But his life was a spiritual ministry from morning to evening. It was incredible. There was a humility which he believed was a spiritual duty of someone in his position. I remember one day I asked, "How come that when you have visitors you talk so little you almost do not talk?" He looked at me absolutely surprised and he said, "Robert when someone comes to see me it is to bring me a message, to tell me something. In order to receive this person I have to empty myself of myself. I must completely lose whatever I have on my mind in order to understand him fully." And if you asked him what do you think of Mr so-and-so, as a candidate for such-and-such a position, the worse that he would do was not to say a word, that was his condemnation, but he would never say anything bad

about anyone - never!

Now I saw this type of spirituality and I almost felt ashamed. He once said to me, "I will never understand you Westerners because you limit spirituality to prayer in the morning and the evening, and to going to church." Spirituality is the highest virtue which has to take place from morning to evening - that was his philosophy and I have never forgotten it.

Perez DeCuellar was a different person. He was the spiritual artist. The first thing he did when he became Secretary General was to go to the meditation room before going to his office. And then he declared that all the national holidays of the UN staff would be replaced by Holy Friday. He was a profound Catholic but his spirituality came completely from his love for art - music in particular. His ultimate spirituality was Bach and the beauty of nature.

Q: What would you say that your influence has been on these people?

A: Well, you do have quite an influence. I remember when I joined U Thant during the last two years of his Secretary Generalship. He was so humble and so undemanding, he had almost been abandoned by his colleagues. They were all saying he is going to leave in two years, he is not going to change the world. So they had practically abandoned him. And when I discovered he was such a wonderful man, I said, "Look, let's do things." And I remember I asked him at one point, "As you have only two years to go as Secretary General, do you have any unfulfilled dreams?" He said, "Yes!" "Well, what are they?" And he said, "Well, first would be for the continent of China to take its seat in the UN, secondly, I

would like to have the Pope come to the UN to give a spiritual message, because I hear only the politicians and economists. And my third dream is that I feel that peace cannot be achieved if we do not have a new education. So I would like to see a United Nations University be created."

So I said, "Ok, let's work on it." He looked at me astonished. Well, we got communist China back. We even got the Pope to come to the



UN. And we created the United Nations University. And at the end of his mandate, when he was writing his speeches at one point he said, "Robert, you helped me to become in love again, with my profession." So you can, even if you work with the Secretary General, you can help them enormously.

When Perez DeCuellar was elected Secretary General, we had been friends for a number of years. He called me to his hotel room and he said, "Robert, I would like you to be my first Assistant Secretary General because I have a great respect for your Internationalism, for your purity. I have not even

consulted the French delegation and I will not consult them. You are my international appointment - do you accept?" So, I said, "Yes," with pleasure and as we were sitting in his hotel room he said to me, "You know Robert, I do not like politics really, and to be the Secretary General of the UN is a political position, and I am not in love with this, what I am really in love with is music." And he was playing Mozart at the time. "This is what I really love." And I almost shouted at him, "but this is what you are supposed to do in the United Nations. You have to create harmony, you have to be a composer, you have to be a musician." And he looked at me surprised because that was exactly what he was supposed to do. "Take your job as the composer, as the creator of harmony between nations and between people." But it had not occurred to him. "There is no distinction between being an artist or a musician, or a philosopher, or a spiritual person and the job you have to do in the United Nations, on the contrary, what you love you can apply in this position." So, I had a wonderful life in the UN.

Q: One last question. What would be your message to the youth of today?

A: To work for a better world. To ask him or herself, "How would I really like the world to be? What is my vision of the world I would like to see in the next century?" To visualise the world, which very few governments do, and then once you have your vision of the world you want to see, to work for it. Then, your life will have meaning and you will be recompensed by happiness.

®

Tijn Tuber is a musician and freelance journalist based in Amsterdam.

Foundation Course in Meditation - Part VIII



a Spiritual Lifestyle

Supporting your meditation and spiritual development with the right lifestyle.

Meditation is the bridge between theory (knowledge) and practice (experience). During this course you have been learning the theory or knowledge of soul, consciousness, time, creation and the creator. In time and with the

practice of meditation all the ideas and insights will become real in your experience. In the process of learning meditation the primary aim and focus is on the rediscovery of self as spiritual being (soul). When that becomes a real experience and not simply an idea many other questions are answered and insights are gained.

When soul consciousness is experienced the difference between

physical energy and spiritual energy is rediscovered, and the true relationship between you and your body is understood. Forgetfulness of this distinction however will continue to happen frequently as you fall back into the old sense of self identity based on your physical form, and the consequent attachments, insecurities and fears which come with it.

Regular daily meditation is the way

to build and strengthen your spiritual awareness, experience the natural positive qualities of the soul and achieve freedom from fear. This process is greatly enhanced when your outer lifestyle complements and assists in your spiritual growth.

We may not be of this world but we are in it, with responsibilities to fulfil, opportunities to serve others and many lessons to learn. Life is relationship and it is in the context of our relationships that many influences, obstacles and tests will come to challenge you in your meditation practice and spiritual development.

The first and closest relationship is with your own body. In right relationship your mind is the master of your body and your physical senses. However, one of the most common illusions is that when you achieve physical well-being you will automatically experience mental well-being. In reality it is the other way round. Well-being starts, like charity, at home i.e. within your consciousness.

Diet

In respecting and caring for your body our diet requires deep consideration.

Apart from the moral aspect (and Karmic implications) of killing and eating other animals, a vegetarian diet is recommended. While many people fear they will not get enough protein from a vegetarian diet there are now hundreds and thousands of vegetarians who have survived and thrived on a meatless diet for many years. The protein myth is then recognised as a marketing ploy.

With an understanding of the power and quality of vibrations and (thoughts), attention is also given to the quality of our

consciousness as the food is prepared. Addictive and harmful substances like alcohol and tobacco are avoided. Meditation is used to empower oneself to overcome the power of unhealthy habits and achieve freedom from addiction.



Routine

Providing rest and relaxation for the body is as important as it is for the mind. The difference being that if the mind is not relaxed, the body will not relax, whereas when the body is tense or even sick it is still possible for the mind to relax. For the purpose of self healing, meditation is an important practice to aid recovery. The timing and extent of physical relaxation activities is obviously dependent on personal metabolism as well as professional and family responsibilities. However it has long been recognised that the most effective time in the daily cycle for meditation and spiritual development is in the early morning, before the routine activities of the day begin. A practised meditator can also lessen their dependence on sleep as a form of rest and renewal. Hence the wisdom in the saying, "Rest does not come with sleeping, it comes with waking."

Taking time each morning to meditate, study and understand spiritual principles and values

provides both mental and spiritual nourishment for the day to come.

Company

Aware of the influence of other people, the spiritual journey is best made in the company of those who are positive and encouraging by nature - ideally those who are also on a similar journey. As we now so easily consume the emotions of others, care needs to be taken, not to avoid the negative personalities in our lives, but to ensure time spent in their company is lessened. This can present a challenge if that negative person is in the family or at the workplace, in which case it is useful to perceive that person as a challenge to your personal strength and development. Those who choose to be our enemies, adversaries or negatively inclined companions then become our teachers. The principle here is **take care**, because the company that you keep will colour your thoughts and feelings and eventually your personality.

Relationships

As the practice of meditation takes you to a deeper understanding of truth, spiritual growth and self realisation, it is almost inevitable that the 'meaning of love' will be explored at some stage. Love is one of the primary needs as well as the greatest gift of the human soul. Love is the highest currency in human relationships. The loss of awareness and understanding of the true meaning of love, plus our inability to be loving towards ourselves and others, has resulted in the increase of pain in the form of fear, anger and conflict.

In many ways it is the return to love which is the aim of the spiritual quest. When the human capacity to love is fully realised, four levels of loving are possible - spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical. In current times three of

these levels are largely unexplored territory in the vast majority of relationships. The fourth, the physical, is where almost all attention and focus goes. The result is unbalanced, unhealthy relationships where sex becomes synonymous with love. This results in almost total body consciousness, selfishness and the disappearance of spirituality. This is the root reason for the increase in levels of fear and violence in society today. No one is to blame but we are all responsible.

Traffic Control

As days become busier in an increasingly busy world, here is a short, practical and empowering exercise which you can integrate into your daily lifestyle. At regular intervals throughout the day (10.30am, 12.30pm, 2.30pm, 5.30pm, 7.30pm and just before retiring) stop whatever you are doing (if practical at that time) and withdraw your attention from everything around you. Bring your attention back to yourself. You will become aware of heavy traffic in the form of your thoughts passing through your mind. Now step back on the inside and just observe your thoughts. They will naturally begin to slow down. Then just remember who you are - a peaceful soul who is the master of mind and body. Spend three minutes doing this exercise and you will find that with practice you will quickly regain concentration, focus and energy which you can now re-direct to whatever you were doing.

In recognising this state of affairs in relationships, and this state of being within oneself, many people on the path of spiritual

development choose to devote a period of time to celibacy. This allows the time and inner space to remove habitual attention from the physical, and learn how to love again at those higher levels. A period of celibacy which is freely chosen and fully understood makes it much easier to raise the level of consciousness from the anchor of physicality to the true awareness of self as soul. Much healing and renewal can take place during this process.

Service

A balanced life, a spiritual life and a fulfilling life have a foundation of four legs

- *daily meditation/yoga*
- *daily spiritual study*
- *fulfilling immediate responsibilities*
- *the service of others.*

Daily meditation/yoga provides the means to explore, discover and reconnect with one's self and with God. Daily spiritual study provides the right quality food for mind and intellect, the two key faculties of the soul. We have a responsibility to our immediate relationships - family, colleagues and friends. It is in those relationships that our ability to respond will also be tested and strengthened.

And then some time is given to a wider circle in the form of service. A life without some kind of service is a narrow, perhaps selfish, life in which satisfaction and contentment will be difficult and sustained happiness impossible. Finding an appropriate way to use your now growing spiritual power and understanding for the benefit of others is also a method of sustaining your personal growth.

It is obviously not possible to meditate from a printed page such as this, and the time you give to

practising the art of meditation is entirely up to you. Finding time in your daily routine may be a challenge. If it is, perhaps it's time to review your values. You can never say you do not have time for anything. What you are really saying is you value doing one thing more than an other. So how important is meditation to you in your life right now - and when, how often, for how long will you give focused attention to your practice?



THE FOUNDATION COURSE IN MEDITATION

Meditation is seldom associated with history or the concepts of time and space. It is seen rather as a method to escape the details of such things. Raja Yoga Meditation (the Foundation Course outlined in this series) recognises that the natural thirst of the soul for truth and understanding, for meaning and significance, for purpose and identity must be satisfied before the 'peace that surpasseth all pleasure' can be achieved through the technique of meditation itself.

The Foundation Course in Raja Yoga Meditation is taught at all Brahma Kumaris Centres worldwide. If you would like to find the nearest centre to you, or would like copies of the series of articles on the Course, please send a stamped addressed envelope to:

*The Editor, Retreat Magazine, Global
Co-operation House, 65 Pound Lane,
London NW10 2HH*

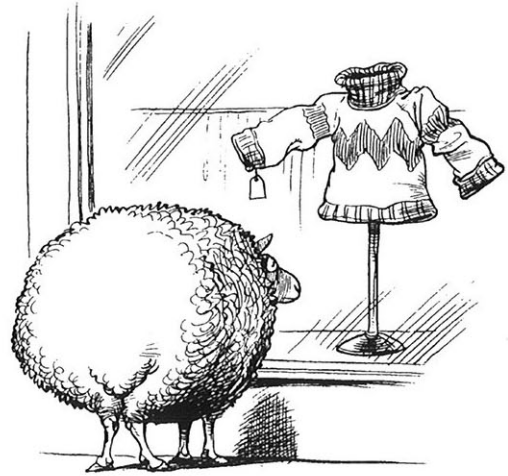
®

Buddhism for Sheep

From the book 'Buddhism for Sheep' by Chris Riddell and Louise Howard
Published by Ebury press, London.



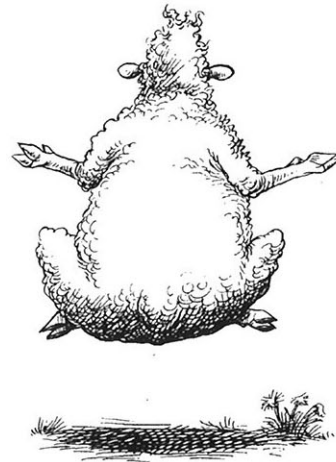
The stinking pen and the fragrant rose
are two aspects of the same existence



Do not consider your possessions to be
yours alone



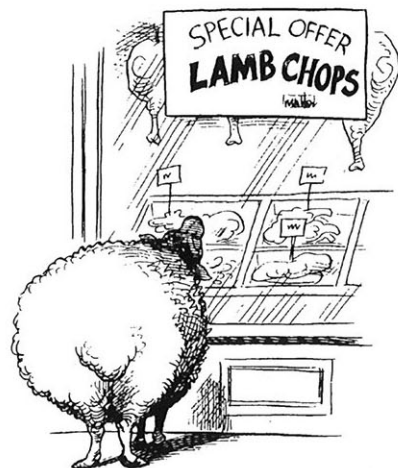
Confidence must be balanced with wisdom



The road to the experience of ultimate reality
is the practice of meditation



With a clear gaze reflect serenely on reality



It is necessary to gain the insight
that life is impermanent

®

Competition, Co-operation, Comperation or Co-opetition?

What is the right way to live - in competition or in co-operation? Some say competition because that's the script they have learned since day one of their life. This belief gives rise to the perception that competition is natural behaviour in all the other animal and plant kingdoms. But is that simply interpretation by desire i.e. "I see what I want to see in order to find confirmation of my belief"?

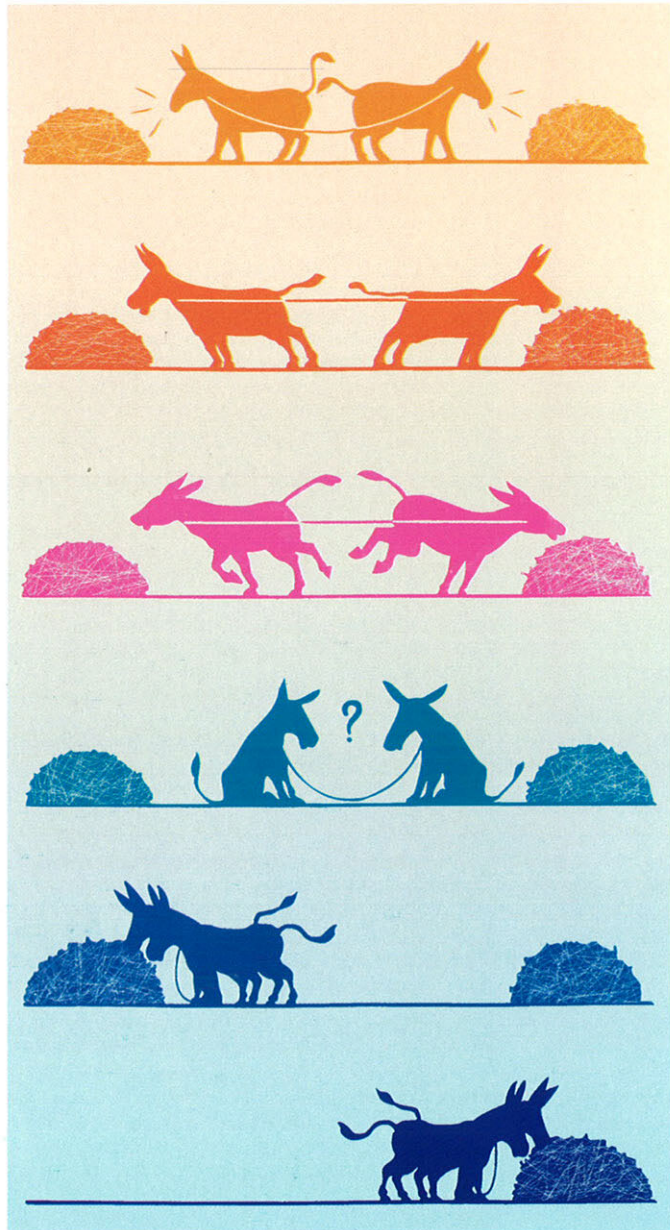
Others see nothing but co-operation, for they see nothing exists for itself. They see connections everywhere at every level. They see sacrifice, sharing and selfless activity. They see delicate threads weaving us all together - the highest is love in human relationship and the lowest are the fibre optics underneath our streets and criss-crossing our oceans.

Some see competition enhancing performance, while others have experienced the death of performance at the hands of the fear that is implicit in win or lose outcomes. Some see a higher set of values in a culture of co-operation - openness, honesty, trust, loyalty - and lower values in competition - domination, exploitation, manipulation.

While some see that creation is only possible through co-operation others see competition as the key thread sustaining their belief in evolution. Does that mean that the competitive spirit has been responsible for the gradual destruction of the planet, (to which we are only now very reluctantly coming to terms) or is that still a bridge too far?

Are competition and co-operation compatible? Can we have both in co-opetition or even comperation? Or are they like Yin and Yang where one represents the seed of destruction for the other?

Interesting questions aren't they? What do you think?
Which way are you living?
How does it feel?



BRAHMA KUMARIS WORLD SPIRITUAL UNIVERSITY A New Vision for a New World

The Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University is an international organisation with centres in over sixty countries. Each centre offers The Foundation Course in Meditation and a variety of seminars, lectures and workshops which serve to assist the individual to realise their full potential by understanding the eternal spiritual laws which are at the heart of human consciousness.

For address details of over 3,000 Centres worldwide please contact one of the following:

INDIA: WORLDWIDE HEADQUARTERS, PO BOX NO.2, **MT ABU**, RAJASTHAN 307501;

EUROPE: INTERNATIONAL CENTRE, GLOBAL CO-OPERATION HOUSE, 65 POUND LANE, **LONDON** NW10 2HH (181) 459 1400

GLOBAL RETREAT CENTRE, NUNEHAM PARK, NUNEHAM COURTENAY, **OXFORD** OX449PG (1865) 343551

AFRICA: PO BOX 12349, MAUA CLOSE, OFF PARKLANDS ROAD, **NAIROBI**, KENYA (2) 743 572

ASIA AND FAR EAST: NO. 10 LORONG MAAROF, BANGSAR PARK, 59000 **KUALA LUMPUR**, MALAYSIA;

16B HUNG ON BUILDING, 3 TIN HAU TEMPLE ROAD, CAUSEWAY BAY, **HONG KONG** (852) 806 3008; 78 ALT STREET, ASHFIELD, **SYDNEY** NSW 2131 AUSTRALIA (2) 799 9880;

SOUTH AMERICA: R. ESTEVAN DE ALMEIDA 53/69, **SAO PAULO** SP 05014-010 (11) 864 3694;

USA: GLOBAL HARMONY HOUSE, 45 MIDDLE NECK ROAD, GREAT NECK, **NEW YORK**, NY 11021 (516) 773 0971

In Their Hearts

*There are people who know
the true meaning of caring
And give of themselves
in the spirit of sharing
As they live life with
love in their hearts*

*There are people who smile
with the passage of each season,
Who understand change
has a purpose and reason,
And they carry that hope
in their hearts*

*There are people who have
dedicated their life
To help others overcome
meaningless strife
Because they have banished
all pain from their hearts*

*There are people who value
the simplest of treasures
And recognise beauty and worth
in small pleasures
While they hold lasting joy
in their hearts*

*There are people who show
the true meaning of love
Whose thoughts and pure feelings
uplift, like the wings of a dove
Because love has its home
in their hearts.*