

# heart & soul

INSIGHTS AND INSPIRATIONS FOR LIVING IN THE LIGHT

ISSUE 20

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# The Buried Life

Mathew Arnold (1822-1888)

Light flows our way of mocking words, and yet,  
Behold, with tears mine eyes are wet!  
I feel a nameless sadness o'er me roll.  
Yes, yes, we know that we can jest,  
We know, we know that we can smile!  
But there's a something in this breast,  
To which thy light words bring no rest,  
And thy gay smiles no anodyne.  
Give me thy hand, and hush awhile,  
And turn those limpid eyes on mine,  
And let me read there, love! thy inmost soul.

Alas! is even love too weak  
To unlock the heart, and let it speak?  
Are even lovers powerless to reveal  
To one another what indeed they feel?  
I knew the mass of men conceal'd  
Their thoughts, for fear that if reveal'd  
They would by other men be met  
With blank indifference, or with blame reprov'd;  
I knew they lived and moved  
Trick'd in disguises, alien to the rest  
Of men, and alien to themselves--and yet  
The same heart beats in every human breast!

But we, my love!--doth like a spell benumb  
Our hearts, our voices?--must we too be dumb?

Ah! well for us, if even we,  
Even for a moment, can get free  
Our heart, and have our lips unchain'd;  
For that which seals them hath been deep-ordain'd!

Fate, which foresaw  
How frivolous a baby man would be--  
By what distractions he would be possess'd,  
How he would pour himself in every strife,  
And well-nigh change his own identity--  
That it might keep from his capricious play  
His genuine self, and force him to obey  
Even in his own despite his being's law,  
Bade through the deep recesses of our breast  
The unregarded river of our life  
Pursue with indiscernible flow its way;  
And that we should not see  
The buried stream, and seem to be  
Eddying at large in blind uncertainty,  
Though driving on with it eternally.

But often, in the world's most crowded streets,  
But often, in the din of strife,  
There rises an unspeakable desire  
After the knowledge of our buried life;  
A thirst to spend our fire and restless force

In tracking out our true, original course;  
A longing to inquire  
Into the mystery of this heart which beats  
So wild, so deep in us--to know  
Whence our lives come and where they go.  
And many a man in his own breast then delves,  
But deep enough, alas! none ever mines.

And we have been on many thousand lines,  
And we have shown, on each, spirit and power;  
But hardly have we, for one little hour,  
Been on our own line, have we been ourselves--  
Hardly had skill to utter one of all  
The nameless feelings that course through our breast,  
But they course on for ever unexpress'd.  
And long we try in vain to speak and act  
Our hidden self, and what we say and do  
Is eloquent, is well--but 'tis not true!  
And then we will no more be rack'd  
With inward striving, and demand  
Of all the thousand nothings of the hour  
Their stupefying power;  
Ah yes, and they benumb us at our call!  
Yet still, from time to time, vague and forlorn,  
From the soul's subterranean depth unborne  
As from an infinitely distant land,  
Come airs, and floating echoes, and convey  
A melancholy into all our day.

Only--but this is rare--  
When a belovèd hand is laid in ours,  
When, jaded with the rush and glare  
Of the interminable hours,  
Our eyes can in another's eyes read clear,  
When our world-deafen'd ear  
Is by the tones of a loved voice caress'd--  
A bolt is shot back somewhere in our breast,  
And a lost pulse of feeling stirs again.  
The eye sinks inward, and the heart lies plain,  
And what we mean, we say, and what we would, we know.  
A man becomes aware of his life's flow,  
And hears its winding murmur; and he sees  
The meadows where it glides, the sun, the breeze.

And there arrives a lull in the hot race  
Wherein he doth for ever chase  
That flying and elusive shadow, rest.  
An air of coolness plays upon his face,  
And an unwonted calm pervades his breast.  
And then he thinks he knows  
The hills where his life rose,  
And the sea where it goes.

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welcome

# The Authentic Spiritual Path



**W**ho would be a spiritual seeker in this day and age? Well most of us are whether we are aware of it or not. At one end of the spectrum, there are those who consciously seek the truth about life, the universe and everything. They ask the big questions, like why are we here and who am I anyway? At the other end, there are those who simply seek the next pleasure and the temporary happiness it can bring, little realising they are also being driven by a search for truth – the truth of human happiness. They only look in the wrong place and have not yet realised that the suffering that must follow pleasure-seeking is trying to tell them so.

In many ways, this is the worst time to seek consciously. This is the era of the spiritual supermarket. Its reach is global and it's open 24/7. On its shelves is a bewildering array of philosophies, psychologies, therapies, psychotherapies and psycho-spiritual-therapies! Waiting to advise us at the seminar, retreat and web-site are rows upon rows of gurus, sages, masters, channels, teachers and guides. Then there are all the new intelligences – emotional, spiritual, natural, compassionate and divine intelligences are all vying for the attention of our ... intelligence. How on earth are we to discern truth from illusion, the authentic from the fake, the genuine article from the clever imitation?

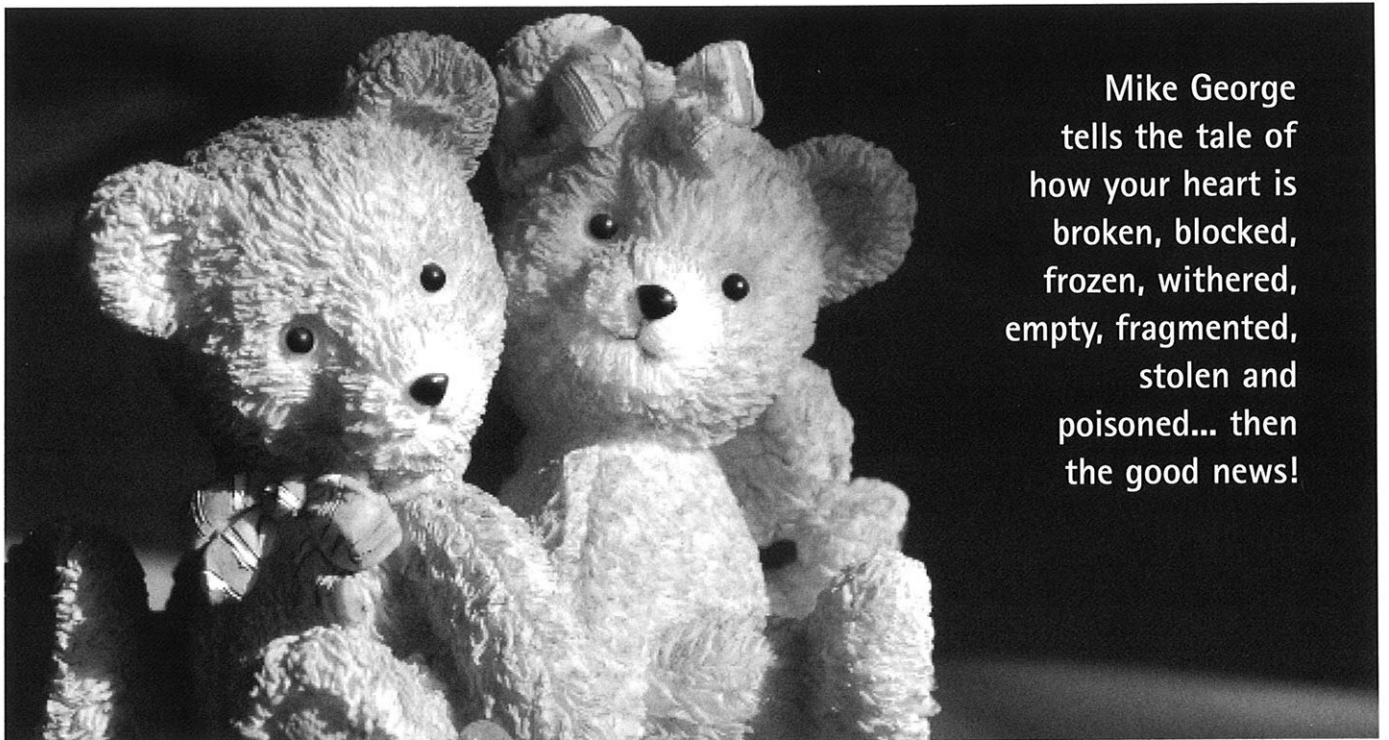
When you step onto any spiritual path or study any spiritual wisdom, there are many ways to measure its authenticity. Here are seven of hundreds of signs of an authentic spiritual path:

- the emphasis is on the changing 'process' of personal experience, not a package of static beliefs
- there is a personal practice, which results in self-realisation
- there is a real, positive transformation of thought, attitude and action, that is felt by the self and is consistently visible to others
- there is a gradual increase in spiritual power over a long period of time
- illusions about the self and the world are recognised and progressively dissolve to reveal a deeper understanding of the meaning of life
- those who teach 'the practice' walk their talk and the leaders are held as leaders out of respect and not as an assigned position
- there is an open acceptance (not necessarily agreement) of the beliefs and ways of others

Perhaps one more sign – what once seemed complex is not only simplified but is genuinely seen and understood in simple terms. If the spiritual wisdom that is shared travels towards simplicity and is essenceful, it is likely to be authentic. If it journeys away, into expansion and detail, it is likely to be just another philosophy.

Welcome to the 21st century spiritual jungle and to the 20th edition of Heart & Soul, where we always attempt to do essence not expansion, spirituality and not philosophy and simplicity not complexity. Not easy in the medium of the printed word, where all explanation is a form of philosophy!

# THE TRUE TOY STORY



Mike George tells the tale of how your heart is broken, blocked, frozen, withered, empty, fragmented, stolen and poisoned... then the good news!

Are you sitting comfortably?  
In the beginning your love was innocent and then...

**O**nce upon a time, when you were still very young, you received your first toy from big people! You were encouraged to play with your toy and you were expected by those big people to be happy when you played with your toy. And while you were happy with your new toy, you were even happier when you saw they were happy that you were happy! The more you loved your toy, the more the big people who gave you the toy loved you. Or so it appeared. Gradually you learned that happiness and love were dependent on acquiring and playing with toys and letting the big people know you were happy. Then one dark and predestined day, you had your first earth shattering experience. Someone broke your toy. You screamed and cried, and for the first time you knew the

pain of sorrow. Your heart broke (for an hour or two). Your heart had become attached to the toy and when the toy was broken, it seemed like your heart was also *broken*. Of course it didn't break literally, but metaphorically, and you created your first experience of suffering, under the illusion that the person who broke your toy was the same person who broke your heart and was therefore the creator of your suffering. Since that moment it's been downhill all the way!

## Selfish becomes natural

This first experience of pain, which you thought was caused by someone else, triggered your decision to try to protect yourself from a recurrence. So you began to protect your toys. No one-else was allowed to play with your toys, especially

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nature, as if it were ... natural! You learned to believe that being selfish was OK. And as you built an imaginary fence around your toys, you didn't realise you were really building a wall around your heart. This began to diminish the natural emanation of the energy of your heart, often referred to as love. Your heart was becoming *blocked*.

While you allowed new toys to come 'over the wall', other people, the breakers of toys, were kept at a distance just beyond the wall. Occasionally you would let someone in, or you might come out and let your heart shine all over a new person (as if they were a toy). Once again however, they would do something unexpected, something which contradicted an image of how you wanted them to be - an image to which your heart had become attached. With your heart invested in your expectation of them, once again you suffered, and the illusion that other people were the cause of your suffering became stronger and deeper. So one day you decided to completely isolate some parts of your heart altogether. This served to completely deny the sunshine of your love to others. Slowly but surely, your heart began to *freeze over*.

### Life without love

Little did you realise that, as you blocked the sunshine of your heart to them, you were doing the same to yourself. Instead of radiating an unconditioned love to those around you, you began to love some a little, others more and a few not at all. Being completely ignorant of your self as the first source of love to your self, you denied your love (your self) to others, completely unaware you were denying your self (your love) to your self! Like a lake that becomes a desert without rain, like a tree that withers without water, your heart *withered* without the nourishment of your own love.

By now your heart is broken, blocked, frozen and withered. But you were just getting started. As you watched those around you, especially those big people who brought you your first toys, it seemed they had found love and happiness in life in other more interesting ways. As you became bewitched by the Technicolor, multi-channel, multicultural electronic window onto 'life as entertainment', you learned to believe that love and therefore happiness could only be gained from others, either through your looks, your status, your personality or your achievements. And so the external striving for love, in the form of the approval of others, began in many

with your favourites. This was then interpreted by the big people who gave you your toys as 'selfish'. And while it was obviously a negative judgment of you, they seemed resigned to the emergence of your selfish

areas of your life. Your heart searched in work, in objects, in others and in achievement, even in your family, for something or someone to restore love to your heart and happiness to your life. You were occasionally able to dull the pain of your aching heart, but it was always only temporary, and you succeeded only in creating a feeling of *fragmentation* as you became torn between people and big toys, career and family, leisure and work. Even as you accumulated more possessions, even as you acquired more friends, even as you gathered the trophies of greater achievements, you couldn't quite understand why your heart felt increasingly *empty*.

### Flower of hope

But still your heart held the delicate flower of hope. A hope that was fuelled by the mythology of romantic love, and it fed your imagination. Somewhere out there was your perfect partner, your soul mate, the moon to your sun, the light bulb to your lampshade, and the promise of a love so complete, so true, so comforting. You looked, you sought, you searched, ready to collapse the walls, ready to turn on the fountain within the rusty gates of your heart. In your desperation, you allowed one or two or maybe three to enter. Only to find that their heart was also broken, blocked, frozen, withered, fragmented and empty in similar ways to your own. You eventually realised that they too were in a state of neediness and searching for the sunshine of love to illuminate the lonely darkness of self-isolation. And with each passing encounter, with each disillusion, you suffered a further withering of your own heart, now so parched and dry that hope itself was beginning to fade.

Then one day, one splendidly fateful day, there 'they' were. You caught each other's eye from afar and in one glance, one moment, one magical, stunning moment, you were hooked! This was the mythology of 'love at first sight' come true. 'Falling in love' was real and it was happening now. In an instant your heart surrendered. Walls tumbled, barriers dissolved, the ice melted and out you came, nervously, gratefully, into the light of another's love, somehow trusting, somehow knowing, somehow feeling safe, secure and most of all sure... this is it! They are it! Everything else in life became a secondary distraction and you only had thoughts about them. From your first waking moment to the closing thoughts at the end of each day, so strong were the feelings for each other, going in both directions, it was as if you were glued together in each other's presence, even when you were hundreds of miles apart.

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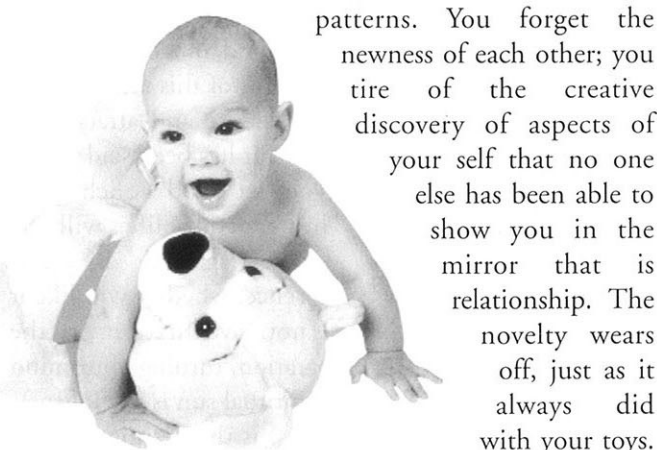
**"IT WOULD BE  
SOME TIME BEFORE  
YOU WOULD REALISE  
THAT YOUR HEART  
HAD BEEN STOLEN"**

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It would be some time before you would realise that your heart had been *stolen*, and that you were attempting to steal theirs. Like some children will steal the toys of others under the illusion that they are more deserving, and that the acquisition of the others' toys will fulfil the self and make them happy, you try to do the same with another's heart. If only you could have exclusive access, if only you could be the only one to be loved by them, then it would be as if you had won the lottery of the ultimate affection.

**Novelty wears off**

So the emptiness disappeared, the withering ended, the fragmentation was healed and the ice melted. But only in their presence and not for long. Familiarity soon sets in, and you fall back into old patterns. You forget the newness of each other; you tire of the creative discovery of aspects of your self that no one else has been able to show you in the mirror that is relationship. The novelty wears off, just as it always did with your toys.



The honeymoon time, which contained giving, sharing, understanding and much laughter, subsides into routine. The demise of the relationship is foretold when the first expectation is born. You did not realise that in your giving and sharing you were really taking in disguise. You didn't realise the water of another's affection cannot flow constantly in the way you want. You didn't see the real reason why they showed up in your life – to give you a chance to burst your own dam, to give your own heart an opportunity to flow out freely as it once did in those innocent times before toys. In those times, your innocence loved unconditionally, without exclusivity, without fixating on one object or one person. You loved without expectation. Your heart was the fountain of your life and the pathway to connect you with all other life. In those sweet, innocent days, your love was pure. Your love made no judgments, needed nothing and recognised everyone and everything was deserving of your attention and, as you attended, you loved.

It is now hard for most of us to imagine what this kind of love was like. We are confused about love. We

have learned to believe love is attachment, love is sentiment (sadness), and when we believe that to worry about someone is to show that we 'care' about them, we are afflicted by the illusion that fear is love when, in fact, they are opposites.

**Freedom from illusion**

We often hear the idea that 'the truth will set you free'. But few of us realise how it can, because so few of us realise that we are not free. We just don't recognise, within ourselves, the symptoms of a heart that is broken, blocked, frozen, withered, fragmented, empty and enslaved to someone or something outside ourselves. No-one has been able to help us see that our hearts have simply been *poisoned* by the wrong beliefs.

The good news is that there are three ways to heal and restore your heart it to its original, loveful and contented form. Each requires a little inner work, known as the cultivation self-awareness. The first way is to become aware of the self-sabotaging beliefs which you have learned from others. Then to consciously replace those beliefs with the truth, because almost all beliefs are not the truth. Of the many truths which do the work of inner healing, these are (see box) probably the most important.

False Beliefs that Wound Your Heart	Truths that Heal Your Heart
I need other people's approval to make me happy	You can make yourself content wherever you are whatever you are doing
Other people upset me and other people break my heart	You upset you, and your heart feels broken only because what it was attached to was damaged
If I deny my love to others I will be better able to protect myself from pain	If you give love to others you will cease creating the pain you mistakenly think others are creating in you
Success is the acquisition of things and achievement of status	Success is stability of mind and contentment of heart
The more I have the happier I will be	Real happiness comes from inside out, not outside in – less is more
Others should dance to my tune and do what I want them to do	You cannot control any aspect of the consciousness of another human being
There is one special person out there who is deserving of my love	True love can never be exclusive, it is only truly known and expressed when it is inclusive
Other people make me feel	No they don't! You make you feel
I need something 'more' to make myself complete	You are already complete and your life is an opportunity to express it, and as you do, you will know it

## Route 1: 5 Steps

**Step One** – Cultivate awareness of the beliefs you have absorbed. This means learning how to observe inwardly and reflect on what you think and feel. Then looking behind your thoughts, emotions and actions, and seeing the underlying belief. Some people perceive this as self-indulgent and a waste of time, but if you don't understand yourself and the beliefs which are motivating your thoughts and actions, you will find it hard to understand others.

**Step Two** – Challenge the belief. Is it true that the other person made you upset?

**Step Three** – Affirm the truth once you see it, i.e. no, it was me that made me upset. I am responsible.

**Step Four** – Ask yourself why you believe others make you feel what you feel and you will discover it's because someone taught you to make your self-esteem and self-respect dependent on the moods and responses of others.

**Step Five** – Affirm the truth that you are the one who is responsible for how you see yourself and feel within yourself. Then practise living this truth.

This however, is the long road home. There is a quicker way.

## Route 2: The gates of paradox

The second heart-healing route is through the gates of paradox. The paradox buried within the healing process is that we already know these truths; we are already whole and complete. Our heart is already healed. It's just that we do not know it, we are not consciously aware of it. The purpose of meditation is to 'see' and experience this directly, feeling the power of our heart, which is the power of love. The result is an awareness that our heart is actually indestructible. Turn your attention inwards and, within your meditation practice, detach from all your thoughts, feelings, habits and memories. This will then allow you go deeply to the heart of your consciousness. There you will find your original state of peace, your original form of love and your original happiness. You will find your true heart, your spiritual heart, is beating and is still perfect.

## Route 3: Straight to the Source

The third and most profoundly effective method to

heal the heart is to accept some help from the Source, from the purest, brightest, most loving heart of all. Just as a physical wound requires the light and warmth of the sun to heal, so our spiritual wounds require the light (truth) and warmth (love) of the Source to show us the illusions upon which our wounds are based. Whether you call this source God, or the Supreme Being or Allah or Jehovah, matters little. What is essential is a direct personal link with the unconditional love that emanates from the One. This is a relationship that is beyond belief

and belief systems. Sometimes referred to as yoga, this is not a physical relationship, but a subtle, spiritual meeting in silence, in stillness,

in love. In the mirror of this relationship, you will see your

heart is already whole, you will recognise your own inner

power and innate beauty. In the light of this relationship,

fear, desire and attachment melt. It has been said that if

you let God touch your heart, your life will be forever graced by His

presence, whether you like it or not. Meditation is the

preparation, turning your mind to the spiritual sun is the journey,

yoga (union) is the destination and transformation is the outcome.

In time, with regular reflection, with

the practice of meditation, with the cultivation of

your relationship with the 'sun of spirit', with the seeing

and dissolving of

those old false beliefs

and with the

absorption of the

balm of truth, your

spiritual heart, which

is you, will be

restored to its original radiant beauty. In time and with

patience, your vitality will return as you live openly, learn

eagerly and laugh lovingly, free of all neediness or

expectation of others. In time, if you constantly gravitate

towards the truth, towards the light, your own

gravitational field will naturally return and others will be

drawn to be close to you. They will come to bathe in the

innocent and entirely unconditioned love that emanates

from the heart of a reconditioned soul. That's you again!

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**"IN THE LIGHT OF THIS  
RELATIONSHIP, FEAR, DESIRE  
AND ATTACHMENT MELT."**

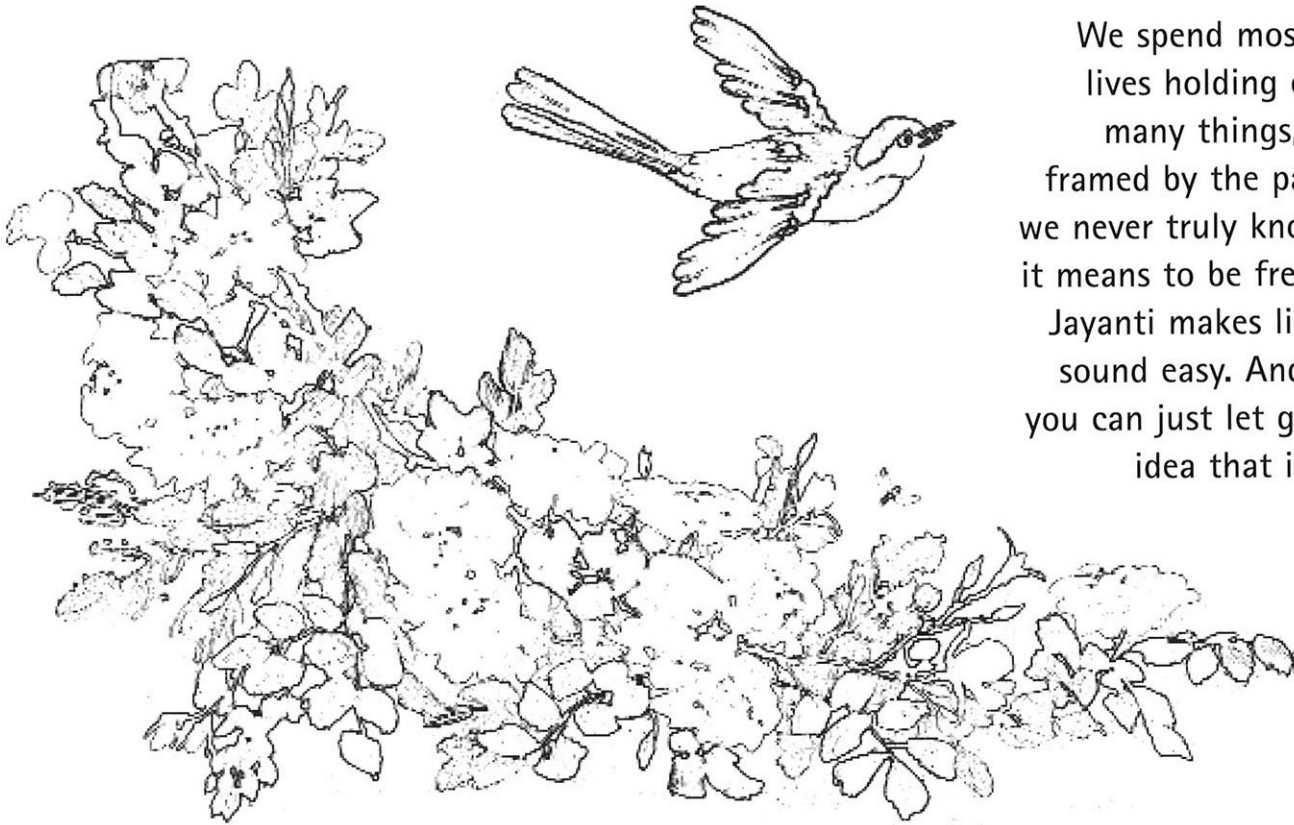
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# LETTING GO



We spend most of our lives holding on to so many things, usually framed by the past, that we never truly know what it means to be free. Sister Jayanti makes liberation sound easy. And it is, if you can just let go of the idea that it's hard!

**S**ometimes we think that things can only be accomplished by holding on, whether it's relationships or situations. Yet to hold a bird, tightly, you'd probably squeeze the life out of it. Even holding the bird gently, the bird is not fulfilling its purpose of existence, which is to fly. If I hold a flower in my hand, how long will it last? If I let the flower float in water, it will last longer. If the flower is left in the soil, its natural habitat, it will last even longer. First, there is the desire to have the flower, and so I cut it. And then it's not just good enough that the flower is in a vase but it has to be mine, I have to hold it, and deny it life.

In relationships, when I hold on to someone, I'm not giving them space or freedom to express themselves and be who they are. Holding on and not wanting to let go is my own insecurity. I'm afraid and so I need to hold on. The moment I become stable, secure and confident within, I don't need to hold on.

Letting go is absolutely important in order to live and let live. If I don't let go, I'm not allowing others to survive.

Why are we not willing to let go of circumstances? Circumstances change, nothing stays the same. From one moment to the next, it's a different scene. We hold onto these scenes in our mind. The image of a particular situation, or the impression of something that's left in the mind keeps repeating in my head. I'm hanging onto this state of consciousness and it's occupying precious space. I have only a limited, finite amount of space in my mind. I can choose what to do with it. Somehow it seems that the beautiful memories disappear and only painful memories remain. This is strange because I don't want to experience pain, and yet I hold onto painful memories. By thinking about these memories, again and again, I'm inflicting and creating recurring pain for myself. Nobody else is the oppressor. I become my own victim by oppressing myself and not letting go of that particular situation.

Thankfully, we're not in this state all the time, but certainly there are periods of our life, situations or relationships in which we get stuck. It's important to

allow myself to grow, flow and move forward. If I'm doing that for myself, I'm giving space and permission for everyone else around me to be able to move and grow also.

So that's the theory - how do you do it? First is to give importance to, and recognise, that I need to be doing something about my own inner world, because the process is happening in the mind. It's on the inner level that I have to be free. Most people think that if they fix things externally then things will get better. Sorting things externally is like putting on sticky tape, it holds things together for a little while and then another bit of tape is needed, and another, and another. A quick fix is not enough. When we understand that things begin in the mind and then move outwards, to sort things out, we can begin to look for the answers inside. I will then come across permanent solutions.

Letting go does not mean cutting out. If you try to cut something with a sharp knife, then probably a lot of blood will flow and it's going to be very painful and not a happy experience. Cutting things is no good. Gently move away, disentangle and find that you're able to let go at the right moment when things are ready to shift. That's a much smoother and less painful process.

Ask yourself, "What is it that I really need?" When you start to fulfil your own inner needs then you'll realise that you don't actually need to hold onto that bird. When you open your hand and watch the bird flying free, you can love and appreciate its beauty and its flight. The bird will probably come flying back and rest in your hand, out of its own natural will and choice.

So, I have to let go of my desires. When a desire is born, it will spin around and keep coming back into your mind until you've been able to fulfil it. Once the desire is fulfilled, then there are more desires, and then more and

more. It's an unending situation in which I'm never going to come to a state of peace and fulfilment. When I let go of desires, I can have peace within. To let go is to know that all that I need is within. When I follow this and make sure that my thoughts, words, and actions are aligned to this truth, my needs will be fulfilled. As Mahatma Gandhi once said, "Earth provides enough for every man's needs, but not every man's greed."

There are lots of empty spaces within the soul. We think that those empty spaces will be filled by others, work, position, possessions and partners. However, no matter how much we try to fulfil ourselves with all things external, there's still that feeling of internal emptiness. The way to fill in the empty spaces is not by the shifting sands of relationships, or the changeable circumstances of position at work, or the possessions that work brings me, but I can fill myself by tapping into my own inner

resources and connecting with the Divine. This infinite source is never going to let me down, and never going to dry up. It's a possibility that's available to all of us at any moment.

As I fill myself, I can feel the strength of love, peace, joy and power returning to my own inner being. There's security in knowing that I can be self sufficient and self-reliant. I don't need to hold onto people and things any more. When I'm with others, there's an exchange of love and happiness, yet I'm not dependent on others. If they're not around, I don't miss them. That is the state of freedom that the soul is able to experience. Letting go is not deprivation or sacrifice. Letting go means to step away, and to be free. It means to give freedom and space to another.

In that state of letting go, I'm able to step away and see things from a distance. When you're seeing things too

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**"TO LET GO IS TO KNOW THAT  
ALL THAT I NEED IS WITHIN."**

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close up, you don't get a very clear picture. When you see a tree, you don't realise that it's part of a whole forest. Step back a little and you'll see things on a

broader scale. To look at things differently is the process of inner wisdom. To teach myself to look at things from many different perspectives is the path of spirituality.

Letting go means to be in that inner state of peace, then to do whatever is right according to the situation. Most of our responses are not logical but emotional. When something happens, our emotions and feelings are triggered immediately, and our response is instantaneous. So, I've already said something, I've already expressed something and then I think about it. We can choose to live like that, continually reacting, creating a mess and then mopping it up later. The problem is that the cleaning up process takes a while. What I can do is learn to develop a considered response, one filled with warmth and love, and one based on understanding. Not just see and react, but give myself a moment of space to pause, reflect and then respond.

### Forgive and Forget

I'm now in a position where I can start to develop love and compassion in my heart. Until I've learnt to forgive the person with whom there is conflict, there'll always be problems in my relationships with others. A block in one relationship also affects the whole flow of energy with everyone else. If I don't forgive, then there's bitterness, pain, many hang-ups. There's sorrow for myself, never mind the person I'm not willing to forgive. When you have flu, you can't eat anything because nothing tastes good, nothing tastes right. It's not the food that's bad, but there's a bitter taste in your mouth. It's the same when I don't forgive, that feeling of bitterness in my mind influences everything else that I do. So, the process of forgiveness is part of my own healing.

Forgiving the self involves the process of realising and then letting go of the ego. It's our ego that doesn't allow us to acknowledge our mistakes. When I let go of the ego with honesty and humility, I'm able to have the recognition of my mistake. There's determination that I don't want to repeat that mistake again. Experiencing God's grace and forgiveness, I'm able to let go of my own guilt, and my own pain. Through that, I take a step forward to walk through the new door of opportunity.

When I realise my own mistake, others are also ready to forgive me. Forgiveness from other people comes from their own generosity of spirit, and also their faith in the goodness of every human being. That's why they're able to say, "We understand, we know that mistakes happen. It's ok. We've been through the same." When I remember

**"LETTING GO MEANS TO BE IN THAT INNER STATE OF PEACE, THEN TO DO WHATEVER IS RIGHT ACCORDING TO THE SITUATION."**

the situations where I have received forgiveness, there's a feeling of gratitude and humility. Appreciative of that forgiveness, I know that I have a

responsibility to do the same for others.

When a mistake has been made, sometimes an apology isn't enough. Feelings are so deep and have been hurt so badly, that I have to prove that there's been some change and I'm not going to cause you any more pain. When there has been some transformation in the self, then the other person will also be ready to forgive.

When the other person is not ready to forgive you, the only possibility at that moment is to let go and step away. From their side, there's rejection because their mind and heart are just not open. Let there be peace in your heart and positivity in your mind and maybe, with time, hearts will heal and the minds will be open.

When it comes to forgiving others - do I have the authority and the right to forgive? The world is actually based on law. Everything moves in a pattern, which is absolutely right. We might see disharmony and disorder, however this is only part of the whole scene. Things settle and resolve and get back to a state of order, harmony and justice. So, my forgiving you is really for my own healing and the healing of the relationship, but I don't really have the authority or the power to forgive you. The law of karma is absolute, so whether somebody forgives or not, the outcome will be sorted out in the right way.

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**"FORGIVENESS FROM OTHER PEOPLE COMES FROM THEIR OWN GENEROSITY OF SPIRIT, AND ALSO THEIR FAITH IN THE GOODNESS OF EVERY HUMAN BEING "**

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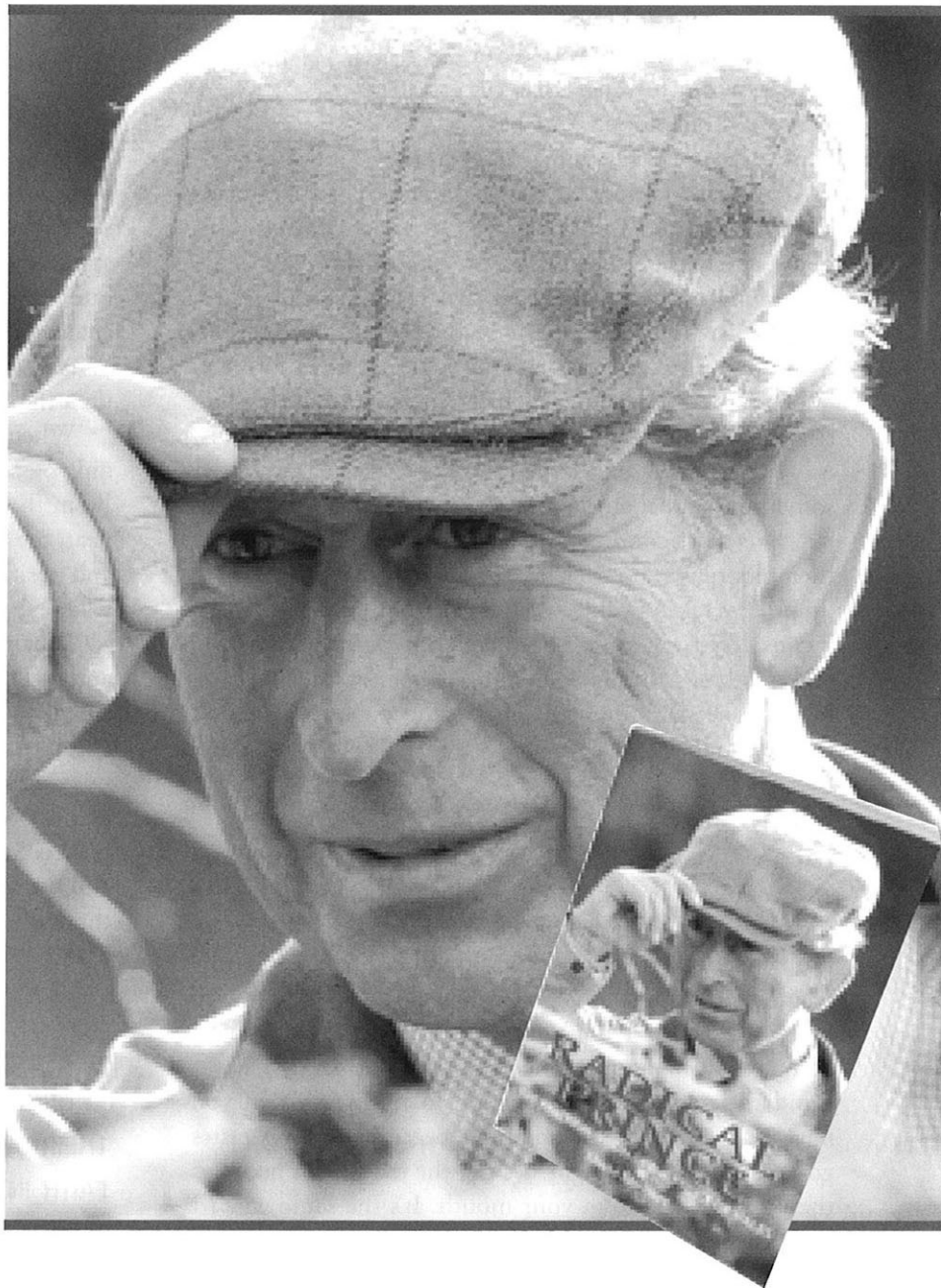
There's an expression that, "God is able to forget my past but am I able to forget my past?" God, the compassionate Parent, gives unconditional love, forgiving and forgetting the past. With the recognition of being a child of God, I'm fully open to God's healing power.

To forget is to let the past belong to the past, instead of bringing it back into the present. By learning to put a full stop in my own mind to the past, there is the possibility of creating a better future. To let go, forgive and forget, I need power. I can gain inner power by connecting with the Divine. By focusing and drawing on that strength, I'm able to lead my mind in the right direction and create a peaceful state within.

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# A TIME TO HEAL

In this extract from the introduction to *A Time to Heal*, David Lorimer begins to clarify the core beliefs and the philosophy of Prince Charles and why he appears to court controversy



**C**onsider the following headlines: *Experts Pour Scorn on Prince's NHS Crusade*; *Scientists Condemn Prince's 'Woolly' Lecture on GM Food*; *Prince and Sophisticated Populist*; *The Rural Prince – Useful Thoughts on the Countryside*.

Why have the Prince of Wales's views evoked such strong and contradictory reactions? One answer is that he has not been properly understood. Another, perhaps more significant, is that these contradictions represent a profound dichotomy at the centre of our society, concerning our understanding of the very basis of reality and therefore the significance of human life. This book has been inspired not only by a desire to set out the Prince of Wales's philosophy in a coherent and comprehensive

way but also to understand the source of that modern dichotomy and the imbalance it represents. Does the Prince's philosophy go some way towards restoring the balance? Are the contradictory reactions to his views evidence of the very polarity they seek to heal?

As will become apparent below, the Prince has a wide range of interests but the public catches only glimpses of his concerns on the occasion of major speeches and the ensuing press reaction. One month it is medicine, a few months later agriculture, and the following year business in the community. The very nature of major speeches is occasional and hence coverage of the Prince's views is not only episodic, but public understanding of how his interests link up is inevitably fragmented. This book aims, first, to show how the Prince's views on ecology,

*The Eagle soars in the summit of Heaven,  
 The Hunter with his dogs pursues his circuit.  
 O perpetual revolution of configured stars,  
 O perpetual recurrence of determined seasons,  
 O world of spring and autumn, birth and dying!*

*The endless cycle of idea and action,  
 Endless invention, endless experiment,  
 Brings knowledge of motion, but not of stillness;  
 Knowledge of speech but not of silence;  
 Knowledge of words, ignorance of the Word.  
 All our knowledge brings us nearer  
 to our ignorance,  
 All our ignorance brings us nearer to death,  
 But nearness to death is no nearer to GOD.  
 Where is the Life we have lost in living?  
 Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?  
 Where is the knowledge we have lost  
 in information?  
 The cycles of heaven in twenty centuries  
 Bring us further from GOD and nearer to the Dust*

T.S. Eliot, Chorus I from *The Rock*

agriculture, religion, architecture, medicine, business and education reflect wider currents of thought and are the expression of his personal philosophy; and secondly to illustrate how this philosophy is translated into action through a multitude of practical projects. The Prince is no armchair philosopher, but a man of action with a passion for helping bring about improvements in his various fields of interest.

The last fifty years have seen extraordinary scientific and technical achievements, but these have been underpinned by a bleak materialistic philosophy that sees the universe and human life as devoid of meaning and purpose. Marxism may have been largely abandoned, but materialism is rampant. However, a sense of technological triumph (at least in the West) has been matched by a

profound spiritual malaise, as people have lost their traditional bearings at the same time as having to live at a frenetic pace. As a jet pilot reportedly said, "I'm lost but I'm making record time!" The Prince is acutely aware of these tensions and has repeatedly castigated the shortcomings of a modernistic and mechanistic approach while calling for a restoration of the place of the soul and an inner spiritual life.

### THE PRINCE'S APPROACH IS RADICAL IN THREE RESPECTS.

First, he insists that we need to rediscover our roots in a living tradition in order to retain a sense of meaning and direction. In this sense he can be called a radical traditionalist. Second, the Prince identifies the root cause of many of our current problems in the one-sided philosophy of modernism, which we discuss below. If the root lies in the philosophy and values, then it shows up in our attitudes to the environment, agriculture and medicine, among other areas. This means that a change of thinking or philosophy is required before corresponding policies will be implemented. The third sense in which the Prince is radical is in his belief that the kind of action required is that which addresses the level of causes rather than tinkering with symptoms, and that one of the best ways of demonstrating this is through example.

Modernism, the Prince argues, has carried out a demolition job by literally pulling up our traditional roots. This has affected "the very ground of our being which had been nurtured for so long in the soil of what I can only describe as perennial wisdom. And I think the destruction was utterly comprehensive and deadly in its effect and it has particularly affected the four areas in which I have battled away about for the last 25 years or so - that is agriculture, architecture, medicine and education".

#### *The Prince elaborates:*

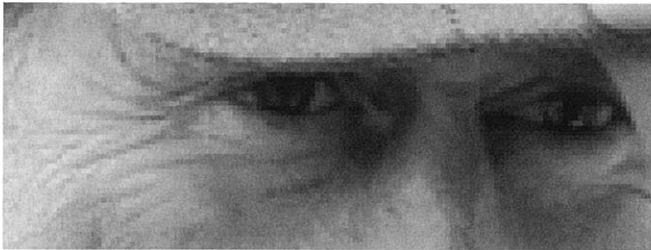
"As far as agriculture is concerned, I remember when I was a teenager, miles of hedges were uprooted, ancient meadows and woodlands ploughed up and removed in a matter of days. You try putting them back, it takes hundreds of years - I'm trying.

The land was forcibly drained and laced with chemicals of all descriptions - look at the problems now. Familiar landmarks, as far as architecture is concerned, ancient town centres that escaped Hitler's bombs, entire

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**"GOD WAS DECLARED  
 DEAD - I REMEMBER IT  
 HAPPENING. THE SOUL  
 WAS DECLARED MORIBUND  
 AND REDUNDANT."**

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streets housing cohesive communities, great complexes of finely designed 18th and 19th century cotton mills for instance, were all swept away and comprehensively re-developed.

In medicine, as in architecture, the doctrine of man as a machine has held sway. God was declared dead - I remember it happening. The soul was declared moribund and redundant. Ancient well-tried therapies and diagnostic techniques were simply abandoned and thrown away. The balance of the rational and the intuitive was destroyed.

In education, I believe, the same doctrinal brutality reigned supreme, resulting in a complete wasteland of moral relativism and the deliberate disruption of an approach that had always ensured the transmission from one generation to another of a shared body of knowledge, of a cultural, historical and moral heritage. And what has been the result of all this brutal vandalism for the sake of, I believe, a gigantic social experiment?

I believe that it has created a profound malaise, a deep dis-ease, a dis-integration and a dis-functioning of the natural harmony in human existence, all because modernist ideology demands that all history and all tradition be pulled up by the roots so that we can all start again with what they like to call a tabula rasa, a clean slate."

Many of us share the Prince's sense of unease about the excesses of modernism and support efforts to redress the balance, as we shall see, in the environment, agriculture, medicine, architecture, philosophy, education, business and the community.

#### Wisdom and Information

Where is the Life we have lost in living?

Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?

Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?

This quotation from T.S. Eliot is arguably more relevant today than when he wrote it over 70 years ago. Eliot did not have to live in our 24/7 world where we struggle to keep information overload at bay. Perhaps you are reading these lines with a drink in a comfortable chair, but the chances are that you may be in a crowded train where a mobile phone could go off any second – at which

point people generally give a graphic description of where they are and why they will be late! Your neighbour may be working on a laptop or reading a book on time management about how to prioritise her life and fit even more activities into it ('the endless cycle of idea and action'). So where is the time for quiet reflection, for that knowledge of stillness rather than motion, knowledge of silence rather than speech that Eliot speaks of?

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### THE PRINCE CALLS FOR A COMBINATION OF THE BEST OF THE OLD OR TRADITIONAL WITH THE BEST OF THE NEW AND INNOVATIVE.

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This predicament brings us to a core theme in the thinking of the Prince of Wales: the need for balance and harmony between head and heart, reason and intuition, outer and inner, action and contemplation. Eliot also reflects on the eternal cyclical nature of spring and autumn, birth and death, light and darkness. Most of us are less immediately aware of these cycles than our ancestors, but they frame our lives nevertheless – especially if we are lucky enough to live in the country - and enable us to feel connected to the perennial cycles of nature.

As the Prince put it in his Reflection on the 2000 Reith Lectures:

"I believe that we need to restore the balance between the heartfelt reason of instinctive wisdom and the rational insights of scientific analysis. Neither, I believe, is much use on its own. So it is only by employing both the intuitive and the rational halves of our own nature - our hearts and our minds - that we will live up to the sacred trust that has been placed in us by our Creator - or our 'Sustainer', as ancient wisdom referred to the Creator."

Implicit in the Prince's analysis here is that modern Western culture is currently in a state of imbalance. There is too much emphasis on reason and scientific analysis at the expense of intuition and wisdom. At worst, reason cuts itself off from its roots in a deeper part of the human mind. It is important to stress the Prince's insistence that he is "not suggesting that information gained through scientific investigation is anything other than essential." His scientific critics frequently ignore such carefully worded qualifications and launch into impulsive attacks on his speeches as a "return to superstition and ignorance", roundly accusing him of being anti-science. Although the Prince himself argues for the importance of intuition and wisdom, he is clearly advocating a both-and approach that values intuition and reason together, rather than privileging one mode of knowing over the other. This both-and approach is reflected right across the range of his concerns. The

Prince calls for a combination of the best of the old or traditional with the best of the new and innovative. He deplores the cult of the new when it means a wholesale repudiation of traditional wisdom and often refers to the danger of throwing the baby of tradition out with the bathwater of superstition.

In a more recent speech the Prince goes further than harmonisation of opposites by insisting that his deeper motivation is healing:

“Now all my life I've been driven by a desire to heal the festering wounds produced by what I believe is an aberration, and will be proved to be, in the soul of humanity. In other words, to heal the landscape, to heal the soil, to work in harmony with nature once again. To build in a way that actually respects the sacredness of the land and reconnects man with the organic roots of his being, with the ancient principles of traditional urbanism that reflect our human scale with the healing timelessness of a living tradition, not a dead thing, It's not a dead language, it can be a living tradition, contemporary in each generation. Not a genetically modified disruption to the invisible patterns of our existence.

To treat the whole individual, not merely one part of us, to restore the soul to its rightful place, to integrate, this is the most important thing, the best of modern medicine with the best of ancient therapeutic wisdom. To reorientate the damaged psyche in terms of stress, trauma and the problems associated with frenetic lifestyles.

In educational terms, to reconnect our young people to their literary, historical and moral roots. To provide the disciplined framework that paradoxically provides the genuine opportunities for creativity.”

The Prince of Wales is not alone in advancing a diagnosis of imbalance in modern life. It is not simply work-life balance that is at stake here but, more profoundly, the balance between contemplation and action, between being and doing. The philosopher René Guenon refers to much of our action as “agitation as unprofitable as it is trivial.” He goes on (writing as long ago as 1942!):

“This, indeed, is the most conspicuous feature of modern times; a craving for ceaseless agitation, for continuous change, for ever-increasing speed like that with which events follow one upon another. On all sides we see dispersion into multiplicity, and in a multiplicity no longer unified by consciousness of any higher principle; in daily life, as in scientific thinking, analysis is driven to extremes, resulting in an endless subdivision, a veritable disintegration of human activity in every sphere in which that activity can be exercised; and hence the inaptitude for synthesis and the incapacity for any sort of concentration that is so striking a feature in the eyes of Orientals.”

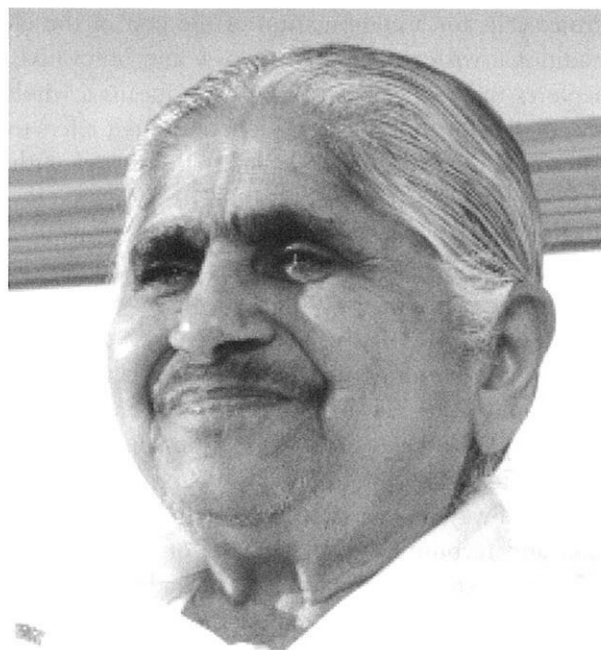


Since Guenon's time, the situation is far worse. Attention spans have been further reduced and tens of thousands of children have so-called attention deficit disorder while being exposed to never-ending sources of stimulation and distraction. It is significant that we refer to information overload rather than 'knowledge overload', while 'wisdom overload' would seem a contradiction in terms. We tend to conflate the urgent with the important, spending our time in inverse proportion to the respective importance of information, knowledge and wisdom. We struggle to absorb ever-increasing piles (or screens) of information, leaving us little time for recreational study and practically none for contemplation or reflective reading. We give ourselves mental indigestion but do not nourish our deeper roots. We are then in danger of joining Dr. Elisabeth Kubler-Ross's patient who, when told he had six weeks to live just as he was looking forward to retirement, said, "I made a good living but I never really lived." "Where is the Life we have lost in living?"

The consequence of this break-neck pace and the dominance of instant information is that our knowledge is not tempered or balanced by wisdom. Wisdom comes from life experience, although there is no guarantee that life experience will bring wisdom. Wisdom is a timeless but elusive quality rooted in depth of character and insight into life. It is traditionally associated with the great sages of religion and philosophy, and, to a lesser degree, with kings and judges. Sages spend long periods in silent meditation and contemplation, thereby gaining the knowledge of stillness and silence to which Eliot refers, which in turn informs the sage's actions. This may be a counsel of perfection for harassed professionals and parents, but we all feel better when our lives are in a better state of balance.

*David Lorimer* is the author of *A Time to Heal* and several other books. He is the founder and former Editor of the *Science and Medical Network Magazine*. ❖

# THE WISDOM AND THE POWER TO CHANGE



## Q & A with Dadi Janki

### **Please define self-respect? What does it mean to value the self?**

Firstly it means realisation of the self as a soul, then knowing and accepting God from the heart. This creates the foundation of true self-respect. When constructing a building, the foundation is laid first. They dig deeply into the ground, replacing the ordinary landfill with the strong materials needed to make the foundation solid. Otherwise, with one storm, the building collapses. Why? Because its foundation is not strong.

In the same way, we need to go deep inside and remove the waste and negativities that have deeply penetrated the soul over many births. The attachment to and obsession with our body, bodily relationships, the atmosphere of the world, ego and arrogance – all these must be cleared out. This is accomplished only through introversion, and the humility to recognise, “I, the soul, am a child of God.” We need to travel deep inside to experience our self as a soul, then go up above and reconnect with God. This is the

correct spiritual effort to be making now. This is what establishes and sustains our stage of self-respect.

### **Why is our self-respect so easily undermined?**

Most souls are still carrying around a lot of scars from the past. These spiritual wounds are always the result of ego-based action. Then, when something happens, it's like putting salt on the wound. The pain is out of proportion to the actual situation. When this happens, we need to understand that we have not properly 'cleared out' and 'refilled' the foundations of the heart. There are thoughts such as, “Why is this happening to me?”, “What to do?”, “How should I do?”, “No-one cares about me”, “No-one ever helps me.” These thoughts weaken the heart further, and there are tears at the slightest provocation, anger at the smallest criticism. Pain like this is a sign that the heart is still blocked.



The way to open the heart is to replace those thoughts of loneliness with thoughts of how “I, the soul, am separate from this body. I, the soul, am detached from the body, I, the soul am peaceful and loving by nature.” When we practise these thoughts in our daily meditation, self-realisation follows and our power is restored. The problem is that the soul has developed a nature of dependency. It is now in the habit of depending on external supports. This has destroyed any confidence in being able to do by myself. Courage is easily lost and the soul forgets that, “If I do, God will help.” When God becomes aware of the soul’s effort to awaken and heal, He becomes available immediately.

## **Isn't there a risk of becoming dependent on God in the same negative way we have with human beings? Doesn't self-reliance figure in this in some way?**

God does not say, “Take my support and become dependent on me.” He tells us that if we remain truthful and courageous, He will help. We need to be sensible in these things. Taking help from a human can easily lead to being trapped and possibly enslaved by another. However God does not enslave. On the contrary, through Him we are made free. His power is that He enables the soul to become free and to fly Home to the soul world. He helps by making us like He is. We are not becoming dependent. We are becoming kings, which means restoring sovereignty over our own consciousness.

It is a matter of truly understanding who we are and then playing our part accurately. This type of honesty is what God likes. Then, even if we don't have a good intellect to begin with, or we are low on power or courage, He gives that. God is an enabler. He enables. There is no question of enslavement. When we have the sense to keep with us truth (of who we are), courage (to transform ourselves) and total faith in God, all our problems begin to dissolve.

## **Why is extroversion contrary to spirituality?**

Extroversion is the habit of losing the self in one or another aspect of the outer world. With extroversion, the

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**WHEN YOU FOCUS ON YOUR VALUES, YOU CAN MAKE THEM FERTILE AGAIN BY THE WATER OF GOOD THOUGHTS AND PURE FEELINGS. THEN YOUR VALUES, LIKE SEEDS, WILL GROW – FROM THE INSIDE OUT.**

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mind and physical senses race outwards, wanting to know what is going on in everyone else. Introversion is a matter of going within, to understand and experience the self.

We become extroverted because we have grown accustomed to satisfying our needs and desires through our physical senses. This is what happens when we lose our soul consciousness and become identified with the body. Such physical satisfaction can only ever be temporary. This is why most of our needs reflect a spiritual emptiness. Nothing physical can fulfil the needs of the spirit.

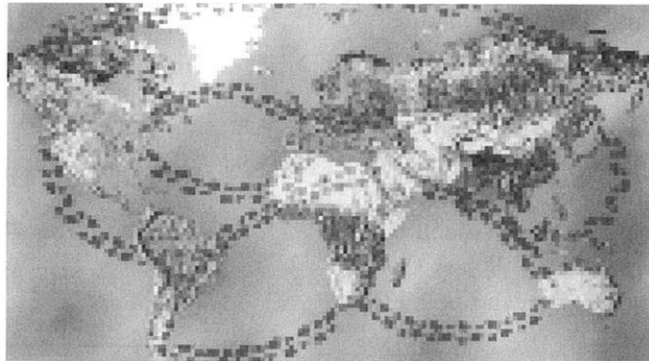
Yet our habit continues, of looking outside the self to satisfy the needs of the spirit. People, places and possessions consistently attract and trap the intellect. Even if we wish to, we find that we cannot remain independent of them. Despite knowing it is a world of sorrow, we do not let go of any of it easily. We remain mentally attached. This is the reason why many people embark on a spiritual search. There is a feeling that something within is being overlooked. There is a desire to explore this inner space.

## **How do you cultivate a more introverted state?**

Take time to sit down and observe the self objectively. Look at your own feelings with a lot of love and say, “Don't worry. Everything is alright.” If you are feeling bad, you need to understand that these bad feelings are not the real you. Say to yourself, “I am soul. I am peace. I am love. I will regain my original nature.” Remember that peace is your eternal and original religion. By turning within and increasing your experience of it, you will come to understand and accept that this is, indeed, your truth.

## Why do you emphasise silence so much?

We all have a sacred space inside us. This is the silent space, which is the heart of the soul. To experience silence, we need to go into this inner world. This silence then informs our thoughts about the self, about God and the way we should behave. Learn to touch this silence, this deep inner peace, wherever you are. When you rediscover that peaceful space inside and remain there, it empowers you and all that you do. God Himself is always in silence, so if you want to meet Him, you need to go into silence too.



under the negative influence of others and the world. Then, it is as if the soul loses personal meaning. Values do not grow easily in a mind filled with negativity.

When you focus on your values, you can make them fertile again by the water of good thoughts and pure feelings. Then your values, like seeds, will grow - from the inside out. We need to protect them from adverse influences, by stopping the tendency to blame or criticise others. Prepare your values well, so that whenever there is an opportunity to share them, you can do so with love. This is where honesty and altruism are needed together. When they are present within the self, others are served.

## Why do you always encourage others to think about God all the time?

Thought creates lines of connection, similar to the way that old telegraph wires used to connect people in conversation. The more you think about the qualities and personality of God, the more you make a subtle connection with Him and the more you are coloured by His company. If you spend time contemplating and creating a silent conversation with God, you will experience the virtues of God. This is called yoga.

There is a lot of power in God's virtues. When we learn how to draw these in, we can change the self much more easily than if we try to do it on our own. A real experience of God enables us to recognise, in a flash, everything inside us that is false. The light received from this experience removes our darkness. This is the essence of a good yoga practice.

## Why do you stress the appreciation of values?

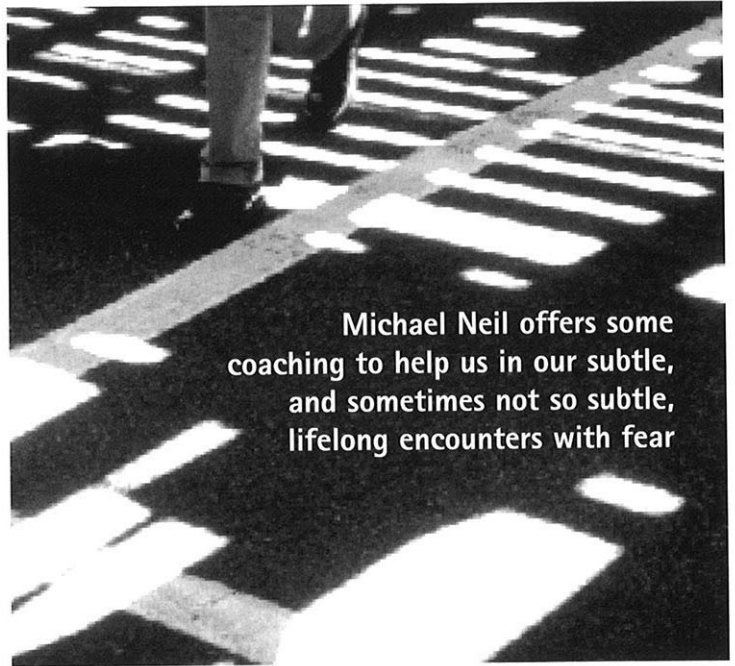
Spiritual values create quality in our lives and relationships. They bring dignity to our species. They give life its sparkle. They are like a personal property that no-one can ever steal. Values can never be lost to the soul. Values can, however, be neglected. They can be buried

## Which brings us to the subject of time, something we all value. Why do you continually stress that this is an important moment in time?

This is the season to become good and do good. Just as the darkness of night is followed by day, so too this winter of humanity will give way to the blossoms of spring. When it is the season for planting, a farmer knows he has work to do. His attention goes to what seeds need to be sown. He makes no excuses. In the same way, now is the time to let our spiritual values emerge. Through them the value of life is increased. A better life, a better world, can only emerge when we live our highest values so it's in our hands, no-one else's. We are all of the same family and, when we emerge our spiritual values, we can move a mountain. It is not a big thing. Human beings can do whatever they set their mind to. It's happening now because more people are giving such attention to themselves. For the last sixty years, I have witnessed a groundswell of authentic spirituality emerging in the world. It is not something you will read about in your newspapers, but it is a reality. The long winter of humanity, during which our spiritual values have been gradually lost to our awareness, is coming to an end, and the new spring is about to begin. Of this I am certain.

*Dadi Janki* is the co-administrative head of the Brahma Kumaris worldwide. ❖

# SEVEN STEPS BEYOND FEAR



Michael Neil offers some coaching to help us in our subtle, and sometimes not so subtle, lifelong encounters with fear

"Fear is the mind-killer. Fear is the little death that brings total obliteration. I will face my fear. I will permit it to pass over me and through me. And when it has gone past I will turn the inner eye to its path. Where the fear has gone there will be nothing. Only I will remain."

- Frank Herbert, from Dune

**1** In 1997, I appeared on a TV programme in the UK called 'Put it to the Test'. My challenge was to put the NLP Fast Phobia Cure to the test on national television. Three arachnophobics joined me in studio, hooked up to EEG and EKG machines by electrodes and monitored by two medical doctors. During the show, they were shown a clear container which contained several tarantulas, and sudden increases in heart rate variability and electrical activity in the brain spiked off the monitors. I worked with them for approximately 30 minutes, at which point they were returned to studio, re-connected to the equipment, and once again exposed to the tarantulas. This time, their heart rate and brain activity remained near normal, even when the spiders were brought directly in front of their faces.

Despite the medical doctor's amazement at the results, I wasn't particularly surprised (relieved, yes!), as I had seen the technique work hundreds of times before. What I found most interesting about the day happened before we began filming...

A few hours before we were due to go before the cameras, the volunteers were hooked up to the monitors for a dress rehearsal. A stage manager brought in the empty container in which the spiders would eventually be

placed. As soon as the volunteers saw the empty container, their heart rates and brain activity spiked exactly as if the real spiders had been brought into the room. What was suddenly obvious was that they were not afraid of spiders - they were afraid of what they made up in their minds and bodies when they thought about spiders. What I have come to see in my own experience and that of my clients is that this is not just true of phobias but of all fears:

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**YOU AREN'T AFRAID OF WHAT YOU THINK YOU'RE AFRAID OF - YOU'RE AFRAID OF WHAT YOU THINK.**

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Since the source of 99% of fear is in your thinking, you can quickly and easily release your fear once you know how, without anything having to change in the world.

Here are seven strategies for releasing and overcoming the limitations of fear in your life. When I use one or more of them, I experience peace, passion and power in my life; when I don't, I experience fear, helplessness and depression. It really is that simple!

## 1. CULTIVATE YOUR CURIOSITY

*"A hero is no braver than an ordinary man, but he is braver five minutes longer."*

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

In 1911, for reasons no-one has ever been able to ascertain, a man appeared, naked and alone, in the foothills of Mt. Lassen in Northern California. With the help of two anthropologists from Berkeley, named Thomas Waterman and Alfred Kroeber, it was learned that he was the last remaining member of a once strong tribe of Native American Indians known as the Yana. Although accepting the friendship of the Westerners who took him in and gave him a home at the local University, he would never share his real name and he became known as 'Ishi', which translated simply as 'man'.

Having never before lived in what his benefactors called 'civilisation', he was continually being introduced to things he had never before experienced. On his first visit to San Francisco, Ishi was taken to the Oroville train station. When the train approached, he walked quietly away from his travelling companions and stood behind a pillar. When they beckoned for him to join them, he strode forward and boarded the train.

Back at the University, he was asked by Kroeber about his strange behaviour at the train station. Ishi told him that, when he was growing up, he and the members of his tribe would see the train pass through the valley. Watching it snaking along and bellowing smoke and fire, they thought it was a demon that ate people.

Amazed, Kroeber asked, "How did you find the courage to get on the train if you thought it was a demon?"

Ishi replied, "My life has taught me to be more curious than afraid."

## 2. IDENTIFY YOUR HIDDEN FEARS

If you know what to do to reach one of your goals, but you're still not doing it, chances are you're afraid of something. Here's a simple exercise from author Steven Scott which will assist you in identifying these 'subtle and oftentimes unconscious fears'. Choose an area of your life where you feel stuck. Then, ask yourself the following three questions:

1. What do I really want?
2. What obstacle(s) stands in my way?
3. What keeps me from confronting or attempting to overcome this obstacle?

For each fear that comes up in response to question 3., run it through the following questions to gain some valuable perspective:

1. What's the worst that can happen if that which I fear came to pass?
2. What's the best outcome possible for me or for others if I 'felt the fear and did it anyway'?

3. What's more likely to happen than either of those two things?

## 3. RECOGNISE THAT IT'S (NEARLY) ALWAYS ALRIGHT NOW

No matter how bad or painful we think something is going to be, life is almost always all right in the present moment. For much of our lives, what causes our pain and fear is in fact our expectation of further (and worse!) pain and fear in the future. By checking in with ourselves in any moment to see, "Is it all right now?", we discover that invariably, the answer is a resounding, "Yes!"

As you develop your skill in staying present, moment by moment, it can be a powerful experience to go back and revisit something which frightened you in the past, with your new awareness. In fact, it has sometimes been recommended that you should try any potentially worthwhile activity at least three times - once to learn how to do it, a second time to get over the fear of doing it and a third time to figure out whether or not you actually enjoy it!

## 4. STOP LOOKING TO FEAR TO SAVE YOU

As children, we are taught to fear things in order to keep us safe. Rather than take the time to explain the dangers and subtle nuances of a vast uncharted world, our well-meaning parents and guardians pass on a sort of 'shorthand of fear' in an effort to ensure our survival. We then naturally inherit the nearly global assumption that fear is what keeps us safe.

In fact, as Zen teacher Cheri Huber points out, "Intelligence is what keeps us safe... what would be helpful is for someone to explain it all - not as if the child is stupid or careless or headed for disaster - but simply by way of giving information to someone who doesn't have it."

Former Navy Seal Richard Machowicz puts it like this, "Fear is not a true indicator of danger, evaluated experience is... It's a given that fear exists for every one of us. But never for a moment think that if you're afraid of something, that fear is somehow a warning and will save you. Good evaluation of past experiences makes for good decisions, period. And it's good decisions that will save you."

I remember the first day this really made sense to me on a visceral level. I was waiting to cross a busy road, stepping back involuntarily whenever a car whizzed by, when I realised I didn't have to be afraid of being hit by a car to not step out into the road. I could take care of myself in this way simply because I wanted to and knew how to - I no longer needed fear to help me do it.

## 5. DO AT LEAST ONE THING YOU'RE SCARED OF DOING EVERY SINGLE DAY

*"You must do the thing you fear, and the death of fear is certain."*

- Eleanor Roosevelt

I will always remember my very first parachute jump. On the day of the jump, we went down to the aerodrome, had two minutes of basic training, two hours of waiting, and then into an open-bellied plane. As we gradually climbed higher and higher to our 'cruising altitude' of ten thousand feet, it occurred to me that although what I was about to do was considered 'risky', I had probably never been safer in an airplane before. (Usually the parachutes are stowed underneath your seat - this time it was already on my back!)

It wasn't until the moment of jumping, as I looked out of the plane at the vast expanse of unknown sky and cloud below me, that I realised that this was in fact not a new experience - that in fact, jumping out of airplanes was something I've done my whole life. Sure enough, there was that familiar jolt of adrenaline as I considered what I was about to do. Next, the almost invisible moment of decision, the headlong, out of control rush to the edge, and much as I wish it had been otherwise, falling more than jumping head first into the void.

Once I got used to the speed of freefall, the parachute kicked in, and soon I was able to control my descent, aim for the landing site, and enjoy the view, as I floated effortlessly towards my target. I also had time to reflect on the experience.

Because we are conditioned to think our fear will keep us safe, we often treat it as a 'red light' - a signal from our bodies that we should stop. By taking time every day to do at least one thing which is a little bit scary for us, we are reconditioning ourselves to see fear as a 'green light' and developing courage, the muscle of the heart.

We are then free to follow the advice of Sir Laurence Olivier, who responded to young Albert Finney's question of how to deal with nerves by saying, "Do what I do, dear boy - amaze yourself with your own daring!"

## 6. CONNECT WITH YOUR INNER MENTOR

*"If we can become for ourselves the mentor we always wished we had, then everything in life becomes an exciting adventure."*

- Cheri Huber

What if you had someone in your life who would walk with you every step of your path, love you unconditionally and support you no matter what, even when you were 'wrong'? What if you felt absolutely safe and cared for and loved and approved of and watched over? Would you be more willing to take on a challenge? To take on the world? To take on your life?

Your inner mentor is that part of you who is always present, always loving, always kind, and always there for you. If you haven't met them yet, take a few moments now to guide yourself through this exercise...

1. Relax your body and allow yourself to become fully present - seeing these words, hearing the sounds around you and feeling what you feel.
2. Now imagine you are sending love into every part of your body - your toes, your eyes, your thighs, your nose - go through every part of your body until you are tingling from head to toe.
3. The part of you that is able to give yourself love is your inner mentor. As you practise spending time with yourself in this way, you will find your fear begins to disappear and new possibilities become available to you.

## 7. PREPARE TO DIE

*"No-one is truly free who is afraid to die."*

- Martin Luther King Jr.

On most people's list of empowering beliefs to live by, "We're all going to die" doesn't make the top ten, or even the top fifty. Yet for me, this is one of the most motivating and inspiring concepts in the world.

You see, if we're all going to die and we don't know when, then it would only make sense to live each moment fully. If we're all going to die and we don't even know when, then what would be the point in engaging in activities that brought us no rewards along the way but might one day get us something that we want? If we're all going to die and none of us knows exactly when that will be, wouldn't it naturally follow that we would want to make provision for our loved ones and family?

Several years before 9/11, I stood atop the World Trade Center in New York and got a terrifying jolt of vertigo. I closed my eyes, took several deep breaths and reminded myself that I was going to die anyway - the only question was when. Bizarrely, rather than increase my fear, reminding myself of my own mortality completely eliminated the fear. From that point on, I was able to walk around the observation deck and look out over the city with a feeling of ease and grace.

In some ways, all fear stems from the fear of death. Follow the 'ladder of fear' down rung by rung (...and what are you afraid would happen if your fear came to pass? And what are you afraid would happen if that came to pass? etc.) and you will inevitably find yourself bumping up against your own eventual demise.

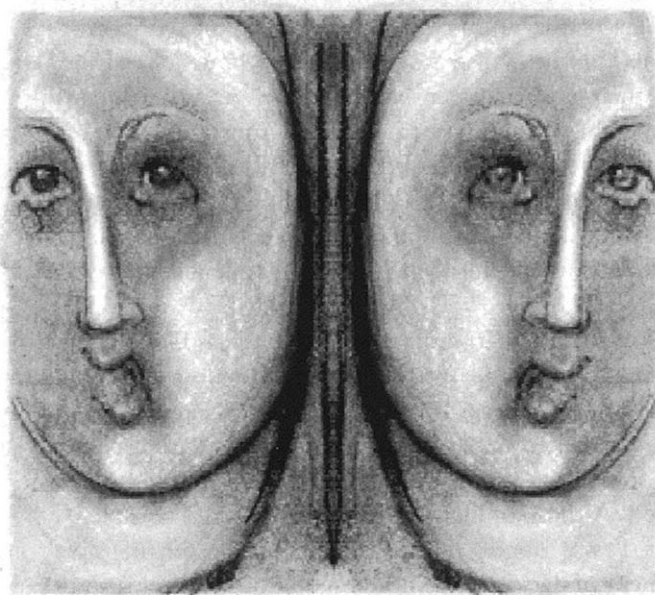
By making peace each morning with the fact that today might be our last, we ironically free ourselves up during the day to truly live...

Have fun, learn heaps and, as former US President Franklin D. Roosevelt said in his inaugural address to a nation struggling with financial depression and the threat of war, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself."

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# inner couple

Do you ever feel an inner tension, a subtle battle between two opposing forces? It could be your 'inner couple'! Monica Weisner remembers an unusual conversation with her two most intimate companions.



**T**he understanding that the human psyche contains both female and male characteristics, regardless of physical gender, is ancient as well as modern. In Indian mythology this is represented by the form of Vishnu, a four-armed deity with androgynous features symbolising the original union of the feminine and the masculine within the human soul. In the beginning of the last century, Carl Jung called these two archetypes Animus and Anima.

On my own path of self-understanding over the last 20 years, I have consciously explored this concept within myself. I increasingly became aware that I predominantly live on the masculine side of my personality (though being in a female body). I recognised that I had come to consider certain aspects of the feminine nature as weak and I did not want to be weak. Sensing a latent tension and subtle animosity within the relationship of my 'inner couple', I became increasingly curious about what was going on. During one of my daily meditations, I decided to play the role of a third party and invite my animus and anima to speak to me. I was amazed to find the 'female' and the 'male' aspects of myself were like people in their own right. Each had a depth of awareness of its own history that surprised me. This is an extract from the conversation.

I started by asking the male who he actually is and this was his reply.

*"I am a lonely, emotionally isolated warrior. I am used to being on my own; I do not need anyone else. I am my own commander; I like to do my own thing without having to consider others. This is my kind of freedom."*

"Are you happy like that?" I asked.

*"No," he said, "not any more. I feel lonely and exhausted; I am tired of fighting. And I have also realised that there is no external enemy to fight."*

I then addressed my feminine side, "And who are you?"

*"I am the emotionally abused goddess of love that once was divine. This divine quality of love was once composed of an unconditional regard and unlimited appreciation of every being and every thing within creation."*

"And how did the abuse happen?"

She answered, *"In the course of many lifetimes, I gradually became separated from the source of divine love. I remember this beginning to happen when I started to identify with matter, with the form I occupied. This limiting self-identity had a devastating effect on my ability to express love. Over time it came to sound like, "I love you but only if you behave like this; I will love you but only if you do this and that for me; I love you because you look good; I love you because you are rich and educated." So my original expression of love as giving became distorted into wanting and taking, and whenever any desire was not fulfilled, I started to use force and became violent towards others and myself"*

“What does it mean to use violence on yourself?” I asked.

The female said, *“My typical reaction, when my desires were not fulfilled, was to blame myself, claiming that I am unworthy. I indulged in thinking negatively of myself and thus became frustrated and depressed.”*

I turned to the male, “And what is your typical behaviour when it comes to unfulfilled desires?”

*“I get irritated and angry. I put the other person under pressure, threatening her or him and often use violence to assert my will.”*

So I asked the male aspect, “Do you really want to change?”

*“Yes,” he said, “I want to stop fighting others and want to fight the internal enemy: the illusionary thinking and perceiving that I have come to see arises when I forget myself.”*

“What is your true passion?”

*“My passion is truth! That is why I want to fight illusion now,”* the male responded.

At this point I heard myself reflecting to myself that the value the male incorporates is truth and the value the female represents is love.

So I turned to her once again, “How have you actually experienced your relationship with the internal male up to now?”

She said, *“I feel disrespected and dismissed by him. Most of the time, he just ignores me.”*

I then turned to the male and asked, “Has it really been like that?”

*“Yes,” he confessed, “a partner to relate to did not exist for me. The world I lived in existed of merely ‘I, no other person.’”*

I said, “Now I can understand why you started to feel lonely. But why did you not consider the female as a potential partner for you with whom you can share?”

He said, *“She was so much led by her emotions, had low self-esteem and was frustrated and passive most of the time. It was easier to ignore her than to deal with her.”*

I addressed the female, “And how did you perceive yourself up to now?”

*“As I said earlier,” she replied, “While I knew I incorporated a love that was originally divine, from the time I was disconnected from the source of that love, I have increasingly felt insecure as I was not able to receive that divine creative power. I felt abandoned and increasingly powerless. Becoming more and more frustrated with this condition, I also became passive and submissive, and dependent on the male’s power.”*

I turned to him and asked, “How did you respond when you first felt that sense of separation?”

*“I started to draw on my own power,” he replied, “and as the guidance of the source was no longer accessible, I took on the leadership role to be able to get on with life. This worked well at first, because my highest values - truth and freedom - motivated me. But in the course of many life times, I became trapped in that role of being ‘the one in power’ and I became obsessed by it. I started to dominate the female and judged her as weak as she did not seem to have this power. This made me feel superior and I became increasingly dismissive towards her.”*

I turned to the female: “What was your contribution to make all of this happen?”

*“In my passive state I compelled the male to take on the leadership. In fact I could see he had to compensate for my increasing disempowerment with a power that continually became more violent. As a consequence we created a great deal of suffering for each other.”*

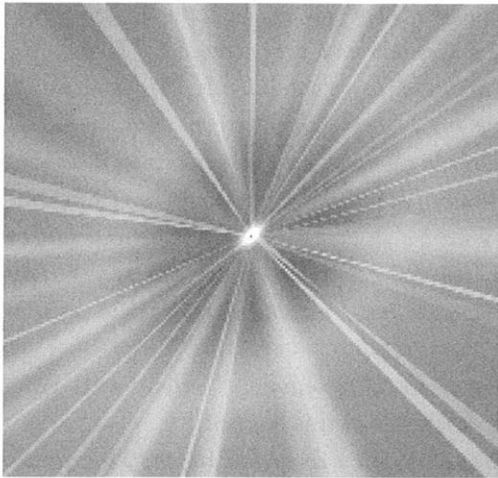
“Do you have any feelings of blame for each other or guilt?” I asked the female and the male.

*“No,” she said, “not any more. I sense this split, this polarisation had to happen, so that you could become more consciously aware of the full range of your personal attributes. I can now see how the inner schism would eventually compel you to seek the divine, the source of power, and thereby reunite us.”*

*“Fortunately,” the male added, “now that you are able to consciously reconnect with the source of Truth, this charges me with the power to fight the internal illusions and dissolve the duality that used to deceive me within my relationship with the feminine.”*

As I reflected on this internal conversation, I realised that being bound by form and defined by physical gender is guaranteed to create an inner disintegration, a breakdown or suppression of some aspects of the self’s spiritual potential, while the other aspects dominate. I now see in everyone how one side dominates the personality, the discomfort it creates for the individual and how unaware they are of the cause of their discomfort. During this and other conversations with my inner couple, I have also become aware of the complete range of my personal attributes. I can see now that it is only through such self-awareness and self-understanding that re-integration is possible. Only then can that sense of wholeness, the reunion of the masculine and feminine, be restored.

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# A POINT OF LIGHT

David Cadman reflects on a spiritual encounter in the North of London

**M**any Quakers are comfortable in the company of other faiths. Indeed, given our hesitation at imposing religious practice on even our own members, the foibles and peculiarities of others are, if anything, a constant source of interest and, sometimes, fascination.

Nevertheless, the first time that you visit Global Co-operation House in Willesden is an odd experience. Driving through rows of houses in north London and turning into Pound Lane, a quiet, tree-lined road that runs alongside a large area of allotments, you come upon what, at first, appears to be a suburban office block. However, crossing the pavement and entering the building, you find yourself standing in the reception area of what is clearly not an ordinary office. The walls are covered with murals painted in pinks, blues and lime-green and the entire staff seem to be women dressed in white saris, some, because of the season, with the addition of a white cardigan. This is the London headquarters of the Brahma Kumaris.

Now you have to readjust the parameters of your expectations. On the one hand, you appear to have left what we often call 'the real world'. Indeed, if you arrive on the half hour you are likely to hear the 'tannoy' announcing 'traffic control' – an instruction to stop

whatever it is that you are doing and enter a brief period of silence and reflection, before resuming whatever it was that seemed so urgent at the time. On the other hand, it soon becomes clear that this is a place of administration and highly focused work, the centre of a large organisation. With their global headquarters on Mount Abu, Rajasthan in northern India, the Brahma Kumaris have 5,000 branches in over 80 countries. Indeed, they present themselves as a worldwide Spiritual University and, at the foot of Mt. Abu, they have a lecture hall that can take 20,000 people and the world's largest solar cooker with a capacity for 60,000 meals a day. What is more, if you spend some time browsing through the bookshop that stands at one side of the reception area, you will see that this is a group of people that is involved not only at the 'grassroots', with local inter-faith work and with courses and seminars but, most especially, is active globally, working with the United Nations and other governmental initiatives for education, peace and health care.

I have come to meet Dadi Janki, one of the three most senior women of the Brahma Kumaris (or BKs, as they are known) and the person responsible for all of their work outside India. I am taken upstairs and along a corridor until I come to a door in front of which is a row of shoes, neatly arranged. I take off my shoes, add them



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**SHE IS SMALL AND ELDERLY, BUT AT ONCE I AM AWARE OF AN INNER ENERGY AND AUTHORITY. HER EYES ARE ESPECIALLY BRIGHT AND I AM HELD BY THEM.**

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to the row and go into a comfortable room, set about with low armchairs and decorated with pictures that must represent aspects of the teachings of the BKs. There are flowers on a table. After a short while and accompanied by a number of her sisters, all clad in white, Dadi Janki comes into the room to greet me. She is small and elderly, but at once I am aware of an inner energy and authority. Indeed, someone once described her as “a woman short in stature but taller than any woman I know”. Her eyes are especially bright and I am held by them.

She sits, her feet resting on a footstool. We sit, too, and the sisters adjust their saris and cardigans as if to make ready for a discussion of some importance. Although one of the sisters, acting as interpreter, introduces me to Dadi Janki in Hindi, I feel that she needs the translation less than one might at first suppose. And, as in other moments when I have met people who are truly holy – but this may be no more than my own paranoia – I now have an unnerving sense that she can see deep inside me, bringing into the light all of my frailties. There is no hiding place.

I had planned to ask all sorts of sensible questions, but now, despite being drawn by Dadi Janki’s evident compassion and, indeed, courtesy, I find myself somewhat lost for words. This, however, is not a problem, for within no time at all and without prompting, she has begun to teach on the very matters that ‘speak to my condition’, each fragment spoken in Hindi and then translated for me. Often her words are brought to an end with an expression of the eyes and hands that says, “Isn’t that the way it is?”

This is no ordinary woman and at the end of our meeting, before I am plied with all sorts of sweetmeats and gifts, I am offered drishti. This is somewhat unsettling. I am invited to sit in silence (all right so far) and look directly into the eyes of Dadi Janki (not so easy – how often do we avoid eye contact). But not wishing to offend, and conscious that this is an important ‘gift’, I surrender. Her eyes are filled with deep compassion. They are a window into another world. And as each moment passes, my initial reserve eases and I find myself resting in her gaze, allowing myself, as best as I can, to receive the blessing of God, trying not to be a barrier to that gift. This is the direct transmission of love from one soul to another. Later, and on reflection, I am sadly conscious of how difficult this was for me and how ‘clumsy’ I am in spirit.

Assigned to Sister Maureen as my guide, there have been many other good moments after this. Further visits to Pound Lane, taking part in a number of discussions or ‘dialogues’ as the BKs sometimes call them. There have been visits to the BK’s retreat house in Oxfordshire, with early morning meditation, teaching and excellent vegetarian food, which seems to involve mini-bus loads of Gujarati mothers and grandmothers, visiting the house and making delicious sweet biscuits and savouries. And, of course, there have been further teachings from Dadi Janki herself. All of this has been supplemented by some excellent books, tapes and CDs of teachings and meditations, including those of Sister Jayanti, the European Director of the BKs. I would not say that I have become a member of the family but I certainly feel that I am a second cousin and a welcome and regular guest. As a Quaker, I am very happy to be so.

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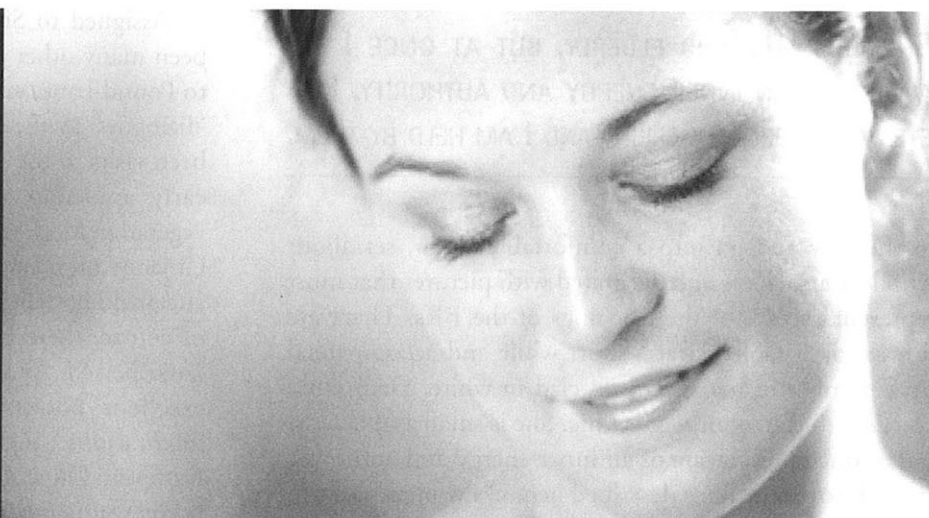
**... IT IS BASED UPON A DOCTRINE AND PRACTICE OF LOVE, WITH A BELIEF IN THE INTRINSIC SPIRITUALITY AND GOODNESS OF EACH ONE OF US.**

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The Brahma Kumaris was founded in the 1930s by a remarkable man, now referred to as Brahma Baba. In Hindu philosophy, Brahma means ‘the creator’, but for the BKs, and in this context, it means ‘an instrument for renewal’ and Baba means ‘father’. Brahma Kumaris means ‘daughters of Brahma’. Brahma Baba had been a successful diamond merchant in Calcutta, but in the last part of his life he received, and then passed on to his students, a series of revelations about the nature of the world, our place in it and our relationship both to God and to each other. A great many of his students were young women and, indeed, the organisation has always been run by women. Some, like Dadi Janki, were there at its beginning and have dedicated the whole of their lives to its work.

The basic teaching of the Brahma Kumaris is Raja or Sovereign Yoga, the highest form of yoga that is expressed both in meditation and in a way of life in which the self is surrendered to God. The teaching is at one and the same time simple, direct and profound. Like Quakerism, it is based upon a doctrine and practice of love, with a belief in the intrinsic spirituality and goodness of each one of us. Indeed, again perhaps like us Quakers, the BKs recognise that the global change that they work for can only arise from the changes that each one of us makes in our own lives.

... A WISDOM OF THE HEART, SOMETHING THAT ARISES FROM AN INNER INTELLIGENCE OF FEELING AND INSPIRATION. WHEN YOU ARE IN ITS PRESENCE IT IS POWERFUL AND COMPELLING.



However, there are aspects of the teaching that are especially of a BK 'flavour'. For example, although we may see, and indeed experience, ourselves in bodily form, each one of us is, in essence, said to be soul – not to have a soul but to be soul, "I am soul" is a much-used mantra in BK meditations. Visualised as a point of light held in the forehead, in the position of the 'third eye', we can bring our soul being to rest in the light that is God. This light can be regarded as a point of light that is both eternal and without dimension. It is both a point and an ocean of light.

By the regular practice of surrendering ourselves to this light, mirroring the Christian notion of "Thy will be done", the BKs teach that we both open ourselves to divine service and find the guidance and confidence to be 'a good servant'. Dadi Janki is crystal clear on these matters and will often say something like, "Well, what is the difficulty? It's clear isn't it? Just do it!" I am struck by certain similarities with the teachings of George Fox: turning to the Light, dwelling in the Light. But in the teaching of the Brahma Kumaris, there is no judgment, just a way of being.

Another particular characteristic that might seem 'difficult' to Quakers is the notion of a cycle of history that starts with a Golden Age and then moves through a Silver and a Copper Age before coming to the darkest of all times, the Iron Age, the time in which we now live, the Kali Yuga. The Golden and Silver ages were a time of perfection, a time of paradise not dissimilar to the notion of the Garden of Eden before the Fall, although, as time passed, purity and power of spirit began to decline. To begin with this decline was only very slight but, as we entered the Copper Age, there was a further and more marked decline. As a consequence, happiness was lost and a spiritual search began. Thus it was that teachers such as Abraham, Buddha, Christ and Mohammad appeared. As each age has passed, we have moved further and further

from God. Indeed, we now reside at the lowest and darkest point of the cycle, the time of the Iron Age in which, with the growth of materialism, there is greater suffering and loss of holiness. Nevertheless, it is thought that this time, barbaric and violent as it is, is the eventide before a new Golden Age. Indeed, this is called the Confluence Age – and it is thought, therefore, that this is a particularly important time to be making preparation by developing greater spirituality and nearness to God. Is this urgent 'turning to God' what is meant in the Orthodox Christian notion of metanoia? There are certainly parallels in this and other traditions of oncoming catastrophe and turmoil followed by a 'new dawn', although this is not much discussed, I think, in Quaker circles.

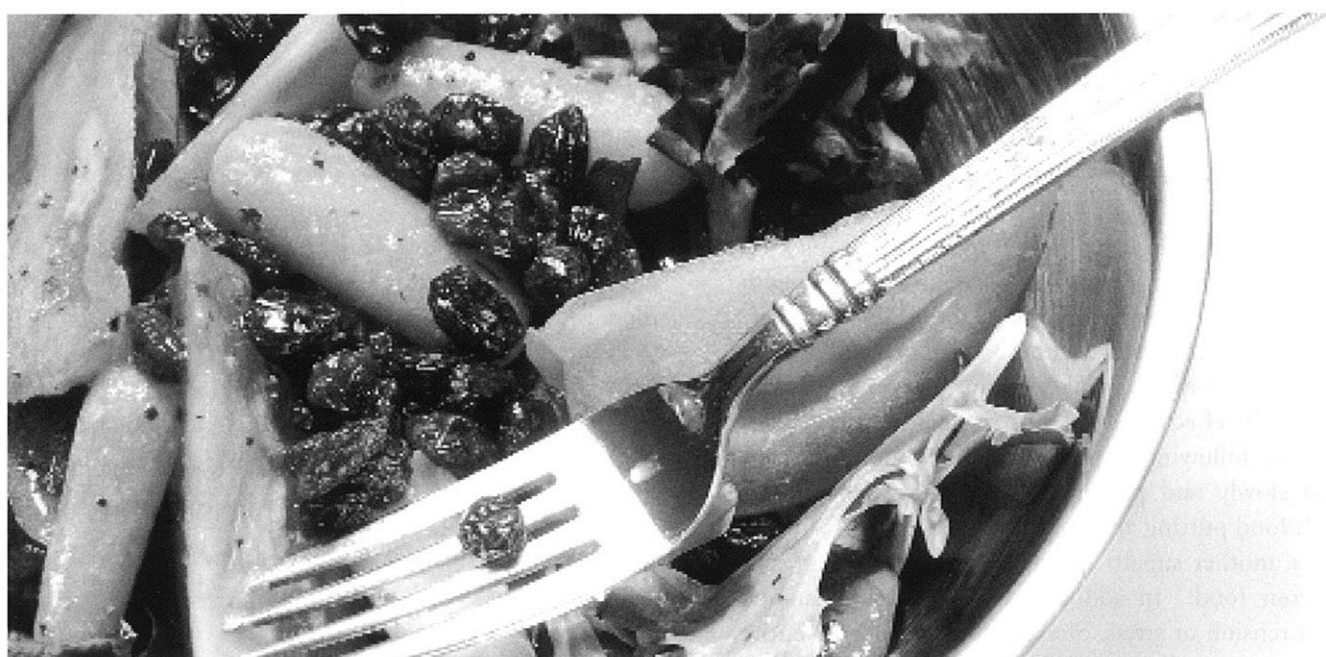
I have to say that I do not find myself drawn to these matters and am rather influenced by the Buddha's advice that such speculation is unlikely to lead to enlightenment. In any event, and despite the evident degradation and disorder of the present time, I wonder whether such cycles are less a description of history and more a description of the moment-to-moment fluctuations of the spirit, the rise and fall of the experience of the divine each day and throughout our lives.

Perhaps for me, as a Quaker, the principal lesson of the Brahma Kumaris is their faith and their directness and commitment to a spiritual life, a lived experience that comes from a disciplined and constant practice that draws them towards God and sustains them in the presence of God. In this there is the enquiry of the mind but there is, most especially, a wisdom of the heart, something that arises from an inner intelligence of feeling and inspiration. When you are in its presence it is powerful and compelling.

By way of greeting and departure, the Brahma Kumaris say, "Om Shanti", which means, "I am a peaceful soul." It is a reminder of a way of being. Om Shanti. ❖

# NOURISHING THE SPIRIT

Aruna Ladva distils the essence of dietary wisdom



**O**ne of the basic concepts of natural health is articulated in the common phrase, “You are what you eat.” To a large extent, our diet determines the energy we have to enjoy life. Over the last 150 years or so, our basic diet has changed drastically. We have gone from fresh, wholesome, unrefined, unsprayed, non-Genetically Modified foods to processed foods, picked young to be frozen, canned or refined, that are treated with toxic pesticides, preservatives, colourings and other chemicals to keep them tasty and prevent them from ageing. Mass food production has given us more food but less nutrition, as the soil, as well as the processing, has depleted it of essential nutrients. We are literally starving ourselves nutritionally.

Not only is the quality of the diet poor, but our consumption is also as much of a problem. There is a Chinese saying that nine-tenths of the food we eat is for

our health while the last one-tenth is for our doctor. Eating disorders have never been as much of an issue until now. Whenever we eat more - or less - than our body needs, we invite disease. This holds true for all foods, healthy and unhealthy. If something is good, excess consumption does not mean it is better. For example, though oranges are good, many are not better, for they can cause acidity. “Too much of a good thing is never good”... in any language!

Hippocrates, known as the ‘Father of Medicine’, was regarded as the greatest physician of his time. He held the belief that illness had a physical and a rational explanation. He believed in the natural healing process of rest, a good diet, fresh air and cleanliness. He also said, “Let your food be your medicine.” He was also the first physician who held the belief that thoughts, ideas and feelings come from part of the brain, which was a controversial idea at the time.

A major cause of disease is the silent accumulation of waste and toxins in our body. Hippocrates routinely recommended prolonged fasting. Most religions advocate periods of abstinence from food to attain physical and spiritual purity. Fasting allows the energy to be re-directed from digestion and assimilation to the elimination of toxic waste substances, which obstruct the vital forces. On another level, fasting allows us to appreciate the foods we are given by Mother Nature and makes us aware of how gluttonous we can become.

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**WHAT WILL TRULY ENERGISE US? WHAT WILL GIVE US HOPE? WHAT WILL RETURN US TO A STATE OF SPIRITUAL HEALTH AND WHOLENESS? THE ANSWER IS TO CHANGE THE DIET OF OUR THOUGHTS.**

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Animals and babies retain their natural instincts to refuse food when ill, while most mothers plead with their children to eat when they're not well. However, by relying on natural instincts, the body taps into its own wisdom and knows that it needs the time and space to heal from the effects of food digestive constraints.

In following a proper diet, all food must be chewed slowly and peacefully. Too many people rush through food putting an excess burden on their stomach. There is another superb saying, "Chew your water and drink your food!" In addition, food is best consumed without tension or stress. Stress puts a halt on the entire digestive system. Ever noticed how hunger disappears after hearing something stressful?

The soul has a parallel tale to tell. In spiritual terms, "The thoughts we keep, determine who we are." I think we would all agree that the diet of our thoughts has also drastically changed over the last 150 years or so. We can therefore conclude that diseases of the body are diseases of the mind. We have moved from a simple, wholesome life, to a sophisticated, complicated one in a matter of a century. We are literally deprived of the spiritual and holistic elixir.

In the news, in our conversations, in our personal lives, in our goals for the future, we find very little 'nutrition'. What will truly energise us? What will give us hope? What will return us to a state of spiritual health and wholeness? The answer is to change the diet of our thoughts.

Our over consumption of negative, toxic and contaminated thoughts has robbed our soul of all its nourishment and goodness. Our life sometimes feels like a roller coaster of emotions, where we feel others are in control. However, whatever we resist continues to persist,



until and unless we decide to make a conscious change in our thinking. Most often pain is a messenger telling us there is something **I need to change**.

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**THE LOTUS LIFE PATH IS ABOUT LIVING IN THE WORLD, BUT NOT BEING OF IT, WHICH MEANS THAT THE ROOTS GROW IN THE DIRT, SYNONYMOUS WITH OUR LIVES ROOTED IN A DEPLETED WORLD.**

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Spiritual pain is no less. The emptiness in our heart, the fatigue of our spirit, the lack of significance in all that we do, our lethargy, our confusions ... everything is tormenting our soul. Mother Theresa once said, "It is easier to feed the hunger of the body than the hunger of the heart." Do not deny these and other questions that our soul is seeking answers to; these are messengers in disguise guiding us back to our wholeness of being.

To lead a healthy life, we have to be **committed**. Once we are committed, then life becomes easy. The selection in supermarkets and restaurants becomes simple; one need not be battling at every moment with one's choices and conscience. If we are committed to a lifestyle of simplicity and health, then our choices will reinforce that. If we clear away half the flab of indecisiveness, we become 'light' and 'free'. Each time we vacillate between our choices and become 'warriors', we become tired.

Spiritual deficiency denies us the time and attention needed to heal ourselves. Finding pockets of time to reflect and contemplate will enable us to nurture and nourish the quality of our life. To see the correlation

between our thoughts and diet, look at the simple act of cooking. Taking time to cook with the right consciousness can also affect the energy in our food. Mum's cooking always tasted best, because it was cooked with love and care. A cook with an angry temperament will pass on the vibrations to their customers, who may not enjoy the food. As such, while preparing and cooking food, ensuring that the thoughts are of the highest quality will ensure that the food is charged with the right spiritual nourishment.

Spiritual teachings advocate that we keep our life in balance. For some, a whole day spent in silent meditation can be damaging. A life of solitude without the treasure of sharing can be harmful to oneself. The lotus life path is about living in the world, but not being of it, which means that the roots grow in the dirt,

synonymous with our lives rooted in a depleted world, yet we appreciate the attractive lotus that reflects our inner beauty.

Just as health is not simply the absence of disease, so too spiritual health is not simply about abstaining from negative and ordinary. As we create the right awareness and uplift our consciousness, then life truly becomes healthy and joyful. The soul becomes powerful and, at the same time, cultivates a beautiful glow, an aura as referred to by some. Today the current fashion is to be health conscious, let it also be a time for us to begin a new trend of becoming soul conscious!

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## GARLIC – TOXIC SHOCK!



The reason garlic is so toxic, the sulphone hydroxyl ion penetrates the blood-brain barrier, just like DMSO, and is a specific poison for higher-life forms and brain cells. We discovered this, much to our horror, when I (Bob Beck, DSc) was the world's largest manufacturer of ethical EEG feedback equipment. We'd have people come back from lunch that looked clinically dead on an encephalograph, which we used to calibrate their progress. "Well, what happened?" "Well, I went to an Italian restaurant and there was some garlic in my salad dressing!" So we had 'em sign things that they wouldn't touch garlic before classes or we were wasting their time, their money and my time.

I guess some of you are pilots or have been in flight tests...I was in flight test engineering in Doc Hallan's group in the 1950's. The flight surgeon would come around every month and remind all of us, "Don't you dare touch any garlic 72 hours before you fly one of our airplanes, because it'll double or triple your reaction time. You're three times slower than you would be if you'd not had a few drops of garlic."

Well, we didn't know why for 20 years later, until I owned the Alpha-Metrics Corporation. We were building biofeed-back equipment and found out that garlic usually desynchronises your brain waves. So I funded a study at Stanford and, sure enough, they found that it's a poison. You can rub a clove of garlic on your foot - and you can smell it shortly later on your wrists. So it penetrates the body. This is why DMSO smells a lot like garlic: that sulphone hydroxyl ion penetrates all the barriers including the corpus callosum in the brain. Any of you who are organic gardeners know that if you don't want to use DDT, garlic will kill anything in the way of insects.

Now, most people have heard most of their lives garlic is good for you, and we put those people in the same class of ignorance as the mothers who at the turn of the century would buy morphine sulphate in the drugstore and give it to their babies to put 'em to sleep. If you have any patients who have low-grade headaches or attention deficit disorder, they can't quite focus on the computer in the afternoon, just do an experiment - you owe it to yourselves. Take these people off garlic and see how much better they get very, very shortly. And then let them eat a little garlic after about three weeks. They'll say, "My God, I had no idea that this was the cause of our problems." And this includes the de-skunked garlics, Kyolic, some of the other products. Very unpopular, but I've got to tell you the truth.

*Source: From a lecture by Dr. Robert C Beck, DSc, given at the Whole Life Expo, Seattle, WA, USA - Nexus Magazine.*

# ANATOMY OF THE SOUL



While the practice of meditation is vital to spiritual development, what is often absent is a clear understanding of the self. Only when the truth about the self is fully realised (self-realisation) can all the false identities be eliminated and the spiritual journey truly begin. Here is a reminder of the true identity of the self and the faculties of consciousness, which allow us to create, discern and decide how we will live and be fully human.

**A** soul is like a seed and contains all the necessary information for its expression when planted in a body. Just as a seed forms into a particular plant, when sown in the earth and sustained with water, sunshine and fertile soil, so a human being comes to life when a human soul enters an embryo. That moment of entry is called the quickening and is indicated by the first movement in the foetus.

A soul will take a body according to its action (*karma*) and *sanskaras*. *Sanskaras* (*a Hindi word*) take

the form of latent tendencies, habits or behavioural characteristics. *Sanskaras* are described in greater detail later.

## LOCATION OF THE SOUL

The seat of the soul is in the centre of the forehead. What is the evidence for that? There are many signs we use and actions we perform which indicate that this is the place of the soul. For example, Hindu women will wear a dot (*bindi*) or *tilak* in that place. In Hindu temples, it is customary to put a *tilak* of sandalwood paste on the

forehead of the devotees and the Hindu priest. In the Jewish religion, the rabbis place a miniature book of the Torah in a tiny box and tie it to their foreheads during their morning rituals. Christians place holy water on the forehead during the ceremony of baptism and when entering a Roman Catholic church. Ashes are also placed on the forehead during certain religious festivals.

There is physiological evidence that the interface between the energy of the mind and the nervous system occurs in the hypothalamus, a gland situated in the brain slightly behind the centre of the forehead.

The soul occupies no space in the physical body since it is not physical, but it animates the body and operates it via the brain and nervous system. The soul also receives signals from the body. It is a symbiotic relationship. The energy of communication between the two is the power of thought, which is analogous to the energy of electricity. This energy is consciously heightened through meditation.

**DESCRIPTION AND FACULTIES**

A soul is invisible to the physical eye because it is not material. Through our physical eyes, we can see only material objects. We do have another eye, sometimes called the inner eye, the third eye or divine vision, through which the incorporeal soul can be perceived as an infinitesimal point of light energy. This is the soul, the conscious animating force. This is the conscient self.

The first step of Raja Yoga meditation is to consider yourself as a soul, a tiny pinpoint of light that is self-aware. Using its subtle faculty called the mind, a soul

will think, “I am aware of myself and of my existence. I am aware that I think and feel, but I am not my body.” The predominant and essential quality of a soul is peace. This is the significance of the expression, *Om Shanti*, which means, “I am a soul at peace.” This affirmation is a continuous reminder to consider the self as peaceful. Other inherent qualities of a soul are love, power, purity, happiness and bliss.

This peaceful, serene point of self-aware light energy (you) has three faculties that are the subtle organs for expression of consciousness. They are:

**MIND, INTELLECT AND SANSKARAS** (*impressions or personality traits*)

These faculties operate in conjunction with each other in a cyclic way.

The incarnated soul, expressing itself through the body, is a living human being. A soul expresses itself consciously and subconsciously. The soul is conscious of the external material world through the physical senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch.

As the soul performs actions (*karma*) through the instrument of the physical body, it experiences the consequences of those actions through the physical body. Some consequences occur immediately, others later. Each action, which the soul performs, leaves an impression on the soul. This impression is called a *sanskara*. The *sanskara* manifests itself as an inner compulsion or a thought arising. Thoughts have a tendency to be expressed as action and this reinforces the originating *sanskara* or impression.

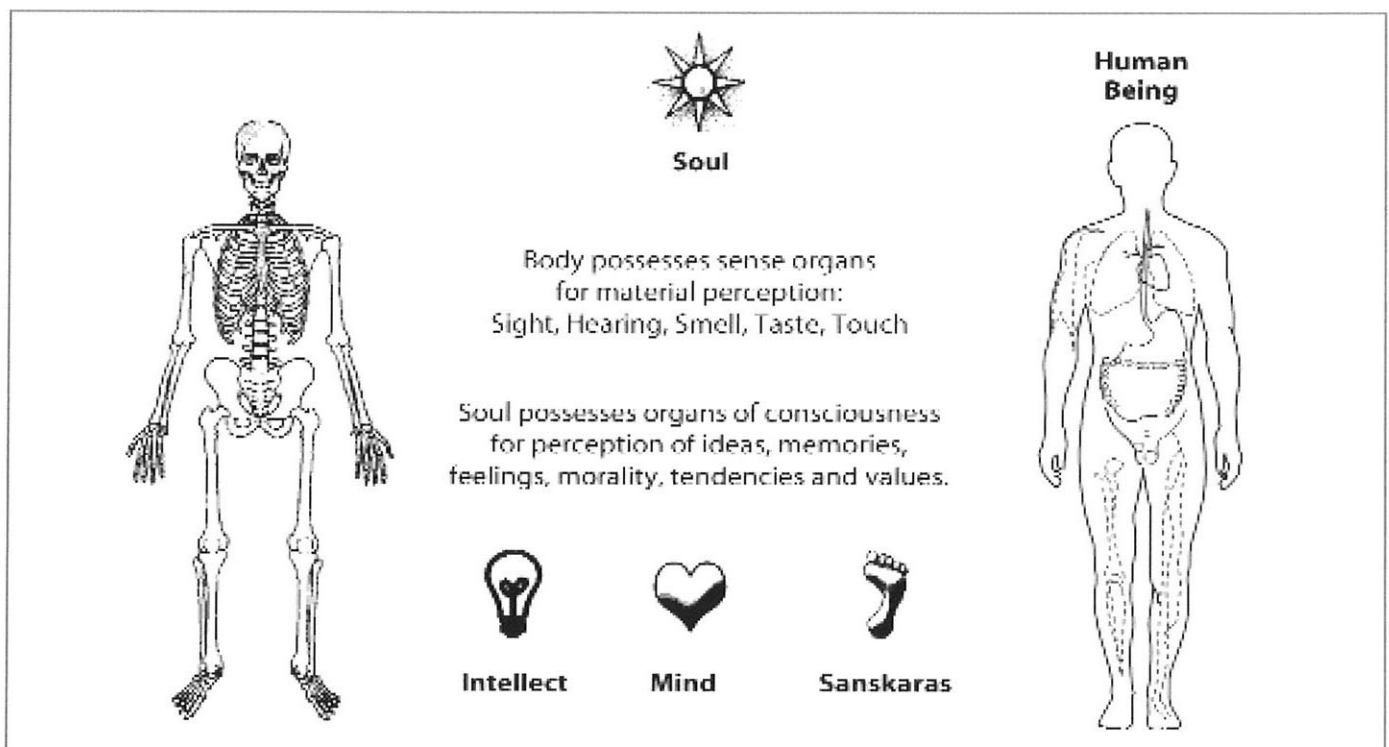
**CHART 1: CONTRASTING CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SOUL AND THE BODY**

THE SOUL	THE BODY	THE SOUL	THE BODY
Being	Object or thing	Influences the body	Influences the soul
Light	Opaque	Infinitesimal	Finite size
Immortal	Mortal	Not limited by time or space	Limited in time and space
Self-aware	Unaware	Incorporeal	Corporeal
Eternal	Temporary	Has no beginning, no end	Begins and ends in time
Unborn	Born of man and woman	Sensitive	Insensitive
Indestructible	Perishable	Accountable	Not accountable
Non-flammable	Combustible	The soul animates the body	The body is the vehicle of the soul
Invisible	Visible	Soul is the occupier of the body	Body is occupied by the soul
Weightless	Fluctuating weight	The soul is me	The body is mine

Chart 1 compares and contrasts the soul and the body. The purpose is to encourage you to observe the distinctions and build understanding of your identity as a soul in a body. It is normal to think of the self as a body, but natural to think of the self as a *soul*. This point is exemplified by Chart 2.

The soul and the body are both mutable and so both are influenced and affected by action and experiences. The soul and the body are also affected by time, which causes both to degenerate.

## CHART 2: THE BODY PLUS THE SOUL EQUALS A LIVING HUMAN BEING



### THE CYCLIC PROCESSES WITHIN CONSCIOUSNESS

The diagram opposite shows the cyclic operation of consciousness. There is an internal cycle and a cycle that links the internal with the external, material world. Arrows indicate the flow of the soul's energy as it moves instantaneously from one faculty to the next in the inner cycle, translates into action via the body, and returns to the inner cycle as an impression or sanskara.

Although it is an endless and unstoppable cycle, for the purpose of analysis, we can observe the following:

### THE CYCLIC PROCESSES WITHIN THE SOUL

Memories, impressions, instincts and habits are imprinted in the subconscious memory bank

### THOUGHTS EMOTIONS DESIRES

1. A thought arises in the mind.
2. That thought has the potential to come into action.
3. Before becoming an action, the thought passes before the intellect, conscience or moral consciousness.
4. Then it is judged and either accepted or not accepted (however, a weak intellect is unable to prevent that thought from recurring).
5. If it is accepted, it becomes expressed as an act (a sustained thought, a word or an action).



6. If it is not accepted, it simply disappears or stops.
7. Once an act is performed, it has several effects:
  - it has a consequence and provokes repercussions.
  - it forms a sanskara.
  - it will provoke a new similar thought.
  - it will provoke a response from the external world
  - it forms an imprint upon the soul.
8. The impact and memory of thoughts, words and actions are stored in the deep memory track.
9. The impact of actions and experiences can manifest as dreams.
10. A new thought arises in the mind and the cycle resumes.

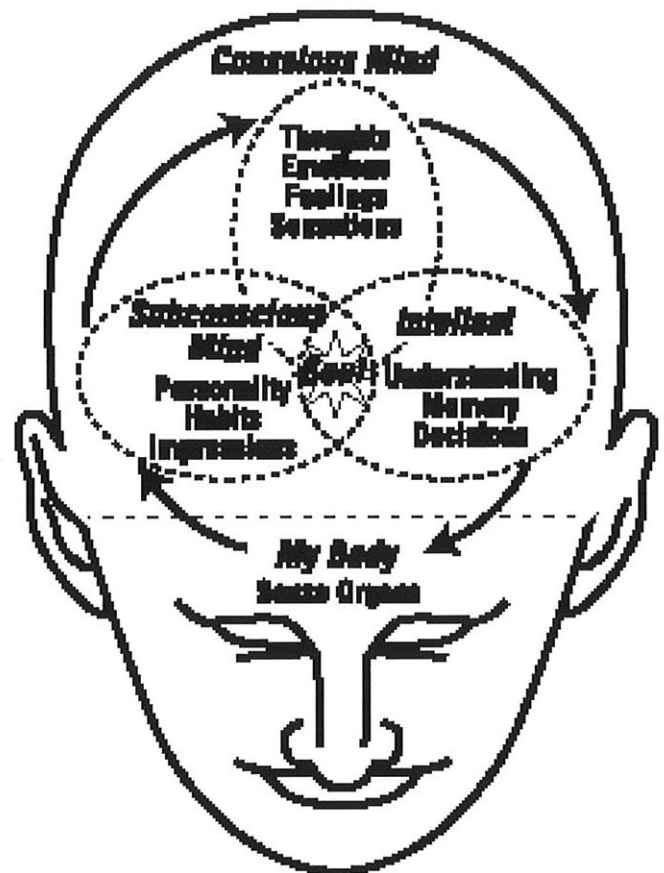
A thought can arise in the mind because of:

1. sensory perception - something you see, hear, smell, taste, touch
2. association
3. memory
4. stimulus from the intellect or conscience
5. a spoken or written command, instruction, information, etc.
6. a sanskara.

This is the basic process that operates in the most complex and extraordinary phenomenon, which we call the human soul or consciousness. This understanding sheds light on other more subtle and profound aspects of spirituality and the development of values.

## MIND AND SANSKARAS

The soul operates through three subtle faculties. One of these is the mind. The mind is defined as the power or ability to create thought. Thinking is an act of the soul. It takes the form of desires, emotions, unspoken words, visualisation on the 'screen' of the mind, etc. The mind is fed by stimuli that come from the external world via the sense organs of sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch. Stimuli also reach the mind from the subconscious, which



are also called the sanskaras (memories, instincts, habits and the impressions on the soul from past actions).

The soul's mind is constantly active, creating thoughts. It is the nature of the soul to think. There are four types of thoughts:

\* Positive \* Negative \* Waste \* Ordinary/neutral

Meditation is a disciplined process designed to inspire the mind to produce positive thoughts. Thoughts which refer to day-to-day tasks such as, "I have to buy sugar today" are neutral and do not require moral evaluation. Such ordinary thoughts move into the categories of negative or waste when, to use this example, sugar, time or money are not available, thus provoking anxiety or other disturbing emotions.

Chart 3 draws distinctions between positive, negative and unproductive thoughts (i.e. thoughts that are not exactly negative, but which could easily lead to negativity, if unchecked).

All thoughts are a form of mental energy that can lead to action through the body. A powerful thought has more energy and is more likely to lead to an action than a weak

### CHART 3: CATEGORIES OF THOUGHT

Positive Thoughts	Negative Thoughts	Unproductive Thoughts
I am a pure, peaceful, loving soul.	No-one is pure, so what difference does it make what I do?	I don't know whether or not I am a pure soul.
Whatever happens occurs for a reason. There is a lesson in it for me to learn, to grow and to progress.	This should not be happening. I can't stand it. I'll do something about it. I will punish the culprit!	Why is this happening? It is not good. How could God allow such things to happen? It is not right!
I know I am not alone. I have help from the Divine. Many people will co-operate with me. I can manage well with what I have.	I am alone. I am helpless. Why is he better paid? He's wronged me so I have to get my own back.	I don't know if I can manage. What can I do, I am too weak to protect myself? No-one's helping me. I am very unhappy.
I'm sure that I am loved. If I continue to make efforts, my talents will definitely develop and I will get many chances.	Nobody loves me. I have no talents and too many problems. Everyone hates me and wants to stop my progress.	I feel lonely. I am not sure if anyone really likes me. I doubt if I can develop any talents. My life may not be successful.

thought, which has less energy and may remain just a thought. If the positive thoughts are weak, they will not have enough energy to transform themselves into positive actions. A weak positive thought may degenerate into a weak negative thought or even a strong negative thought. If negative thoughts have strong energy, they will transform themselves into negative actions; if unproductive thoughts have strong energy, they will also become actions. The more often a thought is repeated internally, with conviction and faith, the more it gains energy and the more likely it is to become an action.

#### THE INTELLECT

The buddhi or intellect is the faculty of the soul which judges thought and determines its quality, ethical purity, truthfulness, usefulness, appropriateness, accuracy, correctness or incorrectness. The intellect also functions as the conscience. It determines whether the thought should or should not become an action. If there is a positive thought, the intellect should support it and encourage it to come into action. If there is a feeling of doubt accompanying the positive thought, the intellect has to assess and erase that doubt. There is no inner conflict when the faculties of mind and intellect are pure and strong and they co-operate and support each other. If the intellect is weak and the mind is impure or

fragmented, then the energy of the soul will generate many unproductive and negative thoughts, which the intellect will be powerless to restrain or prevent from coming into action. There will be a lot of inner conflict and the intellect will ultimately lose. Negative or unproductive actions will be performed, which are in opposition to the conscience, thereby forming negative sanskaras.

The intellect is the most important faculty of human consciousness for bringing about change. Your sense of identity depends on the power and refinement of the intellect. This determines the capacity and quality of the intellectual processes. If the intellect is pure, you will quickly and clearly distinguish truth from falsehood, and what is real from what is unreal. If the intellect is polluted, then you are likely to make choices that are incorrect, dishonest or illogical. If the intellect is vague, then you will be confused; you will justify dishonesty, accept incorrect assessments and be unable to distinguish between the real and the imaginary.

*This is an extract from one of the Brahma Kumaris Values Education Modules now being offered to and in Universities worldwide. Written and compiled by Denise Lawrence, Sue Emery and Rose Kelly and the Values Education team*



# LOW MORALE AND BURNED OUT?



Is this a good description of those who work in the health service? Some think so. One solution is to teach a values-based spiritual approach to health care. A core group of health professionals, under the umbrella of the Janki Foundation, have created the tools to teach and the methods to learn how to integrate a more spiritual approach to caring for others.

## Craig Brown introduces the Values in Healthcare programme.

**1** In the busy and stressful environment of hospitals and community care, how can we bring the best care to our patients and at the same time feel enriched by the work? In times of low morale and burnout in staff, it is important to return to the values that formed the foundation of medical and nursing practice. It is personal values that form the foundations of team and organisational values. A newly developed modular educational package is described that advocates values as an essential part of the training of healthcare professionals at all levels. A spiritual approach is adopted to bring a fresh look to these deep-rooted problems and concludes that self-development and self-care of the professionals is an essential component in providing excellent patient care.

### Current challenges of low morale and burnout

Over recent years, it seems that there has been a decline in morale in health care professionals and a feeling of not being valued, where once a sense of vocation flourished. A survey of general practitioners shows two-thirds saying morale was low or very low and 80% reported that work-related stress was unmanageable.

A recent editorial entitled, 'Why are Doctors so unhappy?' suggests, "the most obvious cause of doctor's unhappiness is that they feel overworked and under supported." The author goes on to suggest other factors are "diminished control, more change and increased accountability", and acknowledges that the cause runs much deeper. Doctors and nurses may feel worn out by work at times, but when this becomes a chronic state they suffer from burnout. Burnout is 'a state of physical

emotional and mental exhaustion caused by long term involvement in situations that are emotionally exhausting'. It is characterised by feelings of being emotionally drained (emotional exhaustion), negative attitudes and feelings towards patients (de-personalisation) and a growing devaluation of self-competence and achievement (reduced personal accomplishment). Nurses are considered to be particularly susceptible to burnout, as their jobs are typically stressful and emotionally demanding. Nurses are repeatedly confronted with people's needs, problems and suffering.

**SEEKING SOLUTIONS:** How do we bring hope to beleaguered healthcare workers? How do we prevent burnout, raise morale, enjoy our work and feel good about ourselves? How do we not only survive but thrive at work? Early in 2000, a registered charity called the Janki Foundation that is committed to promoting holistic care, invited a group to meet and explore these questions. This core group brought their experience from work and teaching in their own specialties of general practice, psychiatry, nursing, medical education, complementary therapy, occupational health, organisational consulting and a wide variety of other sources. They considered that these issues were essentially a spiritual problem and that healthcare professionals needed to find meaning and purpose in their work, and reconnect with their personal values to be able to create a positive vision for their future. They decided to develop and design an educational programme to teach values using an innovative spiritual approach to tackle the issues on a personal level and its consequences at an organisational level.

**VALUES:** Prompted by the perceived decline in morale, the British Medical Association held a summit meeting on 'Core values for the medical profession'. They concluded that changes in society, demography, healthcare organisation, patients' expectations and techniques of medical care were challenging doctors' traditional role and core values. The summit called for a re-evaluation, redefinition and restatement of core values, which it defined as 'ancient virtues distilled over time', and recognised these values as the profession's greatest asset, greater even than scientific knowledge and sophisticated technology. The core values of the medical profession identified by that summit were caring, compassion, integrity, competence, confidentiality, responsibility, advocacy and the spirit of enquiry. An earlier publication by the Royal College of General Practitioners 'What sort of doctor?' stresses good communication skills, reflective practice and an obligation to maintain one's own health.

Knowing and living our values can help us understand the purpose in our lives and form the basis of our judgments about what is good and bad, right and wrong. Learning to understand and act on one's values is the key to thinking about renewal. Not only do values act as a guiding principal for individuals but values are essential for leaders and organisations to know what they stand for and how they govern their affairs.

However much our professional bodies give us these guiding principals to practise by, values derive from our own inner values. We need to understand that values are part of the very fabric of our work and make them part of our education at all levels.

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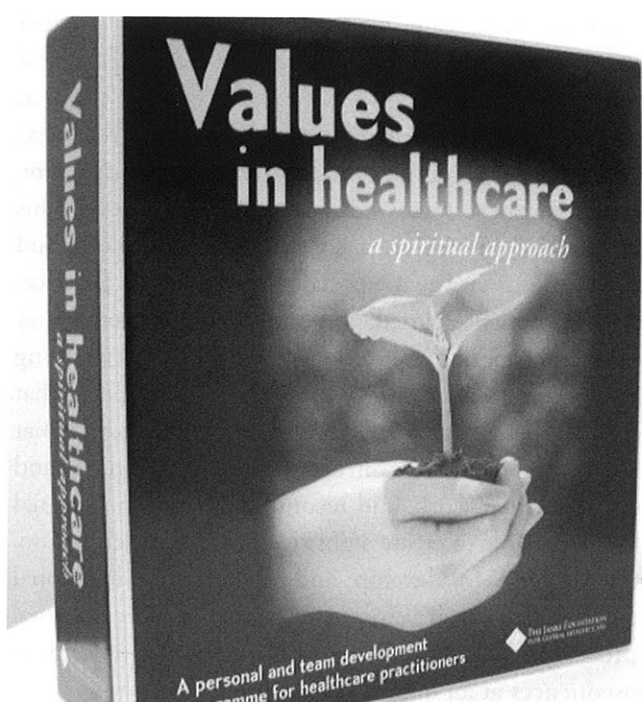
**THE SPIRITUAL APPROACH TO REFLECTION IS TO EVALUATE OUR INNER RESPONSE WITH THE AIM OF HELPING OUR SELF-DEVELOPMENT. IT IS TAKING A DETACHED VIEW OF A SITUATION BY STANDING BACK AND EXAMINING OUR OWN EMOTIONAL REACTIONS AND FEELINGS.**

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**TEACHING VALUES:** As healthcare professionals, much of our training is geared towards acquiring knowledge and learning practical skills. Less time is spent on communication skills and even less time is spent on looking after ourselves. With this in mind, the Janki Foundation core group adopted three key principles when teaching values. The first was to put professional caregivers at the centre of healthcare delivery by adopting the ideal of 'physician, heal thyself'. The belief is that nourishing and supporting ourselves and paying attention to our self-development will raise morale and restore within ourselves the sense of purpose and altruism we had at the outset of our careers. The second was that spirituality is best learned through direct experience, so the style of teaching is important and the programme should be facilitated, rather than taught. There should be time for silence, reflection and sharing in a supportive, easy environment. Thirdly, the learning experience should be relevant to both our work and our life, with an emphasis on action planning and evaluation, with a commitment to ongoing learning.

Many of the sessions were piloted and tested and a consultation group of trainers and educationalists was sent the material for comment. The challenge for both the core and consultation groups was to develop an acceptable educational programme that healthcare professionals can relate to, while at the same time maintaining the essence of spirituality.

**A SPIRITUAL APPROACH:** The healthcare professionals use many different methods to teach the skills and the art of each respective discipline, including formal lectures, personal study, tutorials and practical experience, alongside apprenticeship learning. The core group felt that to teach values it would adopt a spiritual approach, with the exercises being experiential, personal and at a deep level. Meditation and visualisation were felt to be essential, as was the need for deeper reflective and listening exercises. The group used 'Appreciative Inquiry' as a method of adopting positive attitudes. Finally, the group felt the teaching needed to be creative and playful.



**MEDITATION:** Meditation is being silent and using the time to learn about our mind and our thoughts. The method we advocate does not involve reciting any mantras or using incense or chimes. It is a way of simply focusing our awareness on the peace within. By using positive and peaceful thoughts, we can move towards the calm and silent centre of our consciousness. There is a powerful sense of wonder when that peaceful place within is found. It is not a state of passive emptiness. Quite the contrary; by actively letting go of negative feelings, we open up space to experience very positive feelings. Such meditative practice helps to quieten our mind and bring calm to our work.

**VISUALISATION:** Often images we have in our mind are of past negative experiences and when we dwell on them it causes us unhappiness or frustration. Visualisation is simply using our mind to create new positive images, which will help us be more optimistic in our attitude. Using exercises to build up positive images of past successes and a better future can have profound effects on our self-respect and create positive attitudes.

**REFLECTION:** 'Reflective practice' is learning from past experience and, in healthcare, is a well-established method of evaluating concerns with the aim of improving clinical practice. It is a useful discipline to create a structure that reviews our professional progress. The spiritual approach to reflection is to evaluate our inner response with the aim of helping our self-development. It is taking a detached view of a situation by standing back and examining our own emotional reactions and feelings. It is a way of moving into a place of calm and peacefulness, so we can observe how we responded. This way we can begin to understand that our own feelings of anger, anxiety and attachment are something that can be released. We can then focus on what went right and the positive contributions we make. The aim of this type of reflection is to strengthen self-esteem, by learning from mistakes, observing our feelings and building on positive experiences.

**LISTENING:** Perhaps the most important aspect of any communication is how we listen. The spiritual approach involves a deep listening. Such listening is dependent on the listener finding peacefulness within and giving his or her full attention without distraction. This can be practised by keeping the mind clear and focusing on what the other person is saying in a non-judgmental way. Finally, with this type of listening, it is good to have an open heart by having an attitude of kindness. It brings benefit not only to those being listened to but the listener themselves.

**APPRECIATION:** In healthcare, we are taught to be careful and develop a critical attitude. This is appropriate for many situations in the technical side of medical care, but is not when dealing with many aspects of patient care, interactions with colleagues and our personal life. Appreciation looks at individuals and groups from the perspective of valuing what works best, drawing on existing skills and shared values to seek solutions, rather than focusing on the problem and apportioning blame. It assumes that in every team, group or society, something works and the task for the group is to embrace this. This approach is used throughout the programme to encourage co-operation during the sessions and to take it into our teams at work.

**CREATIVITY:** There are an unlimited number of ways to be creative and a spiritual approach encourages creativity as a way of discovering new solutions. Ideas often come to us when we give ourselves some silent space. Equally, sometimes when we are taken up totally with something, ideas may then begin to flow. Some practical ways of being creative are painting, drawing or writing poetry. We encourage facilitators to experiment with new ways of exploring and developing exercises to teach values. It may mean taking some risk and behaving outside our normal role.

**PLAYFULNESS:** Fun and laughter is essential to balance some of the serious discussion that may occur during the teaching sessions. Being playful is being spontaneous, carefree with a willingness to risk getting it wrong. It is a good way of letting go of barriers and overcoming difficulties. Having a 'lightness' in our manner encourages tolerance in our listening and softness in our judgments. Playing simple games is something many of us are at first inhibited to do, but when we do, it can be a moving experience. It helps us to connect at a deeper level, beyond normal conversation and discussion, and in a group. When we have fun we can drop all our pretences and just be ourselves.

**MODULES FOR VALUES:** Using the spiritual approach, we focused on seven themes. They can be run as modules over a one day session: values, peace, positivity, compassion, co-operation, self-care and healing. Each session starts with an introduction and outline of the day, with a space for silence. The theme of the module is investigated, using reflection and listening in pairs with feedback to the group. There may then be a meditation or visualisation. There is time for breaks, suggested movement exercises and playful exercises. The first session of each module tends to explore the theme of the module

and the second session applies what has been learnt. Each session ends with some time spent on summarising, evaluating and closure.

**VALUES:** An exploration of what values mean to us personally and how they apply to our life is the foundation of the spiritual approach. They are the principles that we choose to live by and are an inner resource that we can draw on. Knowing and living by our values enriches our self-development and leads to an understanding of the purpose of our lives. It is the key to bringing meaning to our lives and raising morale.

**PEACE:** Central to this theme is the idea that being peaceful is our natural state. In each one of us there is an innate core of calm and tranquillity. In the session, we use simple yet powerful ways to rediscover our inner peace. By practising peacefulness, we access our positive qualities, which build our self-respect and contentment. It is the medicine for burnout.

**POSITIVITY:** Even as healthcare professionals who, out of habit and training, analyse things critically and often negatively, we have the choice and power to change the way we think. Relearning to observe our thoughts and changing them to be more positive, benefits our patients and colleagues.

**COMPASSION:** Compassion brings humanity to healthcare and is the expression of our innate qualities such as patience, generosity and kindness. It is something that we can develop and practise, yet there are barriers preventing the true expression of compassion that we need to acknowledge in ourselves. Anger, anxiety, guilt and attachments are the ever-present, unacknowledged, shadow side of ourselves that needs to be examined in such an educational programme.

#### CO-OPERATION

For a group of people to work well together, it is essential that they understand what thoughts, attitudes, feelings and behaviours help them co-operate successfully. One can then build team spirit in non-competitive ways, so that tasks become creative and enjoyable.

#### SELF-CARE

The focus on this session is looking after oneself by reflecting on what we already do and what we would like to do in the future. The question, "Who and I?" explores this theme at a deeper level. Ultimately, by recognising

our own worth, we are better able to acknowledge the intrinsic worth of others. This leads to mutual respect and harmony in all our relationships. We benefit, our colleagues benefit and our patients benefit.

#### HEALING AND CARING

There is a need for individual clarity, concerning the words health, healing, spirit and spirituality, so we can continue to develop the ideals of holistic health and make spiritual care intrinsic to our work as healthcare professionals.

#### GUIDELINES FOR TRAINERS

The success of the sessions will be largely dependent on how they are conducted, so there are detailed guidelines and training sessions for the facilitators. We encourage facilitators to draw on their own personal experiences, anecdotes and stories. This will reveal not only their wisdom in spiritual terms, but also their vulnerability. Exercises should not be rushed and be conducted at an easy pace, as some of the questions in the exercises may seem simple but they can be quite profound. Sharing in pairs and small groups can be a rare opportunity for healthcare professionals to discuss some of their own issues.

#### CONCLUSION

We already know that low morale and burnout are prevalent in doctors and nurses and need to be urgently addressed. There are some excellent values statements produced by professional bodies, but to make them real they need to be owned at a personal level first, then integrated into the workplace. We contend that this is best done through a spiritual approach, using meditation, visualisation, reflection, listening, appreciation, creativity and playfulness. An educational package has been developed that is presented in a practical, personal and experiential way that focuses on self-development and self-care. It builds self-esteem and renews a sense of purpose amongst healthcare professionals, consequently improves patient care and reverses the trend of deteriorating morale and burnout amongst staff.

*Dr Craig Brown has been a full time NHS general practitioner in Rustington, West Sussex for 24 years. He was President of the National Federation of Spiritual Healers from 1997 to 2001. He has published a book 'Optimum Healing' which outlines a spiritual approach for patients towards their illness. He is a member of the core group of the Janki Foundation, designing the training programme and teaching spirituality to healthcare professionals.* ❖



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# A Benevolent Attitude

**Can your hand of friendship give hope to the lonely?**

When you extend pure love to everyone with selfless motivation, that is an attitude of kindness.

**Can your faith in someone unearth courage they didn't know they had?**

When you send good wishes and pure feelings to those who are in deep sorrow, that is an attitude of mercy.

**Can you lift someone's heart by seeing the best in them?**

When you see the virtues rather than the weaknesses in people, that is an attitude of compassion.

**Can you meet someone's anger with so much peace that it melts away like ice in the sun?**

When you bless and uplift someone even as they defame you, that is an attitude of forgiveness.

**Can your respect help someone walk a little taller?**

When you tolerate a situation and take responsibility as well as give co-operation even when not appreciated, that is an attitude of humility and self-respect.

Every second, every moment and every breath of our life is nurtured by our attitude.

# MEDITATION IS

BY FAR THE BEST WAY TO TRAVEL...

...from the  
anger that wants  
revenge to the  
peace that grants  
forgiveness

...from the jail that's built  
from hatred to the freedom built  
from forgetting

...from the hell of self-rejection to the  
heaven of self-acceptance

...from a life that feels like zero to a life that  
creates a hero

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