

KINDNESS

Being loving yet detached creates benevolence



B.K. VEDANTI

There is great benefit in being a detached observer of the unfolding story of humanity. Each one has passed through various incarnations. We have accumulated so many experiences from different roles, relationships, and situations through all the physical costumes that we have occupied. We have brought all these impressions into the body we now occupy. We have become accustomed to identifying so strongly with the body that we are constantly aware of, and speaking about, "this is mine", "my" this, "my" that, in such a way that to be detached from our current

experiences is a little difficult at first. If I react to loss, insult, praise, then I am not being a detached observer.

Each soul I meet has a different nature, different karmic situation, all different from mine. So, I need to remain light, remain benevolent to all so that it is easier to observe what is happening around me, giving myself time to respond correctly.

If we base our detachment on spiritual love and with wishes of peace and love for each one, it is easier to become a detached observer. We can see, in the world around us, how many things are happening that are not correct, and even we behave incorrectly from time to time, but by becoming detached from the actions of others, remaining unaffected, we can be free from reacting in a way that is not helpful. We have to act in life and fulfil responsibilities, but we can do this in the best way possible



by being a detached observer.

If we begin to compile a list of complaints rather than watching the situations we are involved in with a loving, detached eye, we cannot resolve the situation in the right way. Everyone around

me is doing what they have to do, but I have to do what I have to do, in the very best way possible. This brings a great sense of peace. I then know when to act, when to speak and when not to. Spending time in meditation from time to time

during the day, we begin to develop the power to observe in this way. Early morning meditation is the very best time to practise observing the world, and our own situation, with detachment and love. Life then begins to show us wonderful

secrets, our complaints begin to finish, and we are able to improve the atmosphere at the place we are and share all of these kinds of benevolent experiences with others. B.K. Vedanti is the director of the Brahma Kumaris' services in Africa.

PEACE

CONTENTMENT COMES FROM SPIRITUAL AWARENESS



DADI JANKI

First of all, understand discontentment. Discontent is caused by a constant multiplication of desires. One desire leads to another until there is never a moment when you

feel fulfilled.

Desires are like traps. Because of endless desires, relationships have become very fragile. There is a lot of irritability and anger due to selfish attachments (to possessions and people) and pride (attachment to a particular image of the self). Where there is discontentment, the heart can never be still because wasteful, negative thoughts destroy peace.

Contentment is the result of spiritual awareness, which allows you to recognise negativity. It changes your pattern of thinking. As you tap your huge inner potential, all desires are fulfilled and you regain your peace.

WORK-LIFE BALANCE

SOMETHING TO LEARN FROM LABOUR DAY



JUDY JOHNSON

Labour Day celebrates the achievements of workers. On this day, we honour workers and their importance to our society. Its origins are in the labour union movement focused on balancing a worker's day, with eight hours for work, eight hours for recreation and eight hours for rest.

Labour Day acknowledges the value of this work-life balance. This balance can be attention to apportioning equal time to work, recreation and rest. In spiritual terms, balance is about being centred. A fulcrum is a stable midpoint between two equally balanced weights. When we



live from our spiritual core (the soul) we live on the fulcrum or centre point. Here, in this state of mind, we are most stable and find we do not tip back and forth and lose our balance.

Labour Day reminds us that nothing, no matter how big or small, is achieved without effort. In fact, the greatness is in the effort. Karma dictates that every action we perform produces a return. One form of spiritual effort is

the practice of remembering that we are peaceful beings living in a peaceful world and making an honest effort to live our values practically. The return of this effort is a clean conscience and a trustworthy character. Society benefits from those who make these spiritual endeavours.

When there is love in a task, there is no labour. A story is told of a group of workers with a pile of bricks and mortar. Each

was asked what their work was. The first worker said their job was to move the pile of bricks to another location. The second worker said their job was to build a wall. And the third worker said their job was to build a house of worship to honour God. Same bricks, same project, different story. When we genuinely love what we are doing, and it has meaning and value, it does not feel like labour.

This Labour Day let us do what we love or find a way to love what we do. Let us value the work we do, in whatever field, knowing there will always be a return for honest effort. And most of all, let us enjoy the sweetest, simple effort possible for a human soul - to remember God, the One we love. Then we will enjoy the peace, happiness, and love that return to us.

Judy Johnson coordinates the activities of the Brahma Kumaris meditation centre in Halifax, Canada.

INNER AWARENESS

THE TASTE OF HONEY THAT SWEETENS LIFE



NEVILLE HODGKINSON

A child born and growing up in difficult and even terrible circumstances can survive and thrive, providing they have a glimpse of something better. A teacher, parent or other relatives who gives genuine care and encouragement can serve as a small light in the darkness, and as the child grows up, they always know it is there.

In our lives generally, tough things happen that can lead us to put up protective barriers around our hearts and minds. This is an understandable step taken for survival, but there can come a point where it does us more

harm than good. It holds us back, prevents us from fulfilling our potential. We may refuse to accept love and care even where it is freely offered and available. Or we may refuse to listen to signals that we are off track, and persist in acting in ways that harm ourselves and others. In time, this constant fight with life can take its toll on us physically, leading to ill-health and premature ageing.

Something that acts as an antidote to this tendency is what I like thinking of as a taste of honey. It first happened to me 40 years ago, when I met some experienced yogis from India. Yogis do not just have a taste of honey, they live in a honey jar of sweetness. They spend a lifetime remembering an inner dimension of our being that has kindness as its essence. This practise enables them to give a taste of it to others.

There are many ways of



reviving our awareness of this inner dimension. However, an attitude of "seeing life as a drama" offers a way of finding sweetness even in situations that might otherwise have a bitter taste. It takes me into inner awareness of myself as an actor, playing out my part on the stage of life, rather than thinking that I am that part.

When I develop this knack of standing back, I do not feel I have to withdraw from the play. I can continue with the game of life, but refreshed and

strengthened by developing a wider, wiser perspective. I am much more likely to become aware of benefit being hidden in every scene, so even an apparent failure brings progress, and I am soon ready to engage again. As I become more detached about the scenes that pass, I also have a better chance of staying in the sweet awareness of the inner being - the soul.

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

SPIRITED ACTION

STOP PROCRASTINATING, ACT PROMPTLY



B.K. MRUTHYUNJAYA

In our efforts for self-improvement, we sometimes fail to attain our objectives despite having the required knowledge and understanding of what we need to do and what will be achieved if we put in the necessary effort. We recognise the problem, know how it can be resolved, but are still unable to do it.

The reason is a common habit that is quite strong

in some people - of procrastination. When we get the thought of doing something, it carries with it the energy of newness and some zeal and enthusiasm. All these provide us with a psychological boost if we act on the thought immediately - of course, after due consideration. That positive frame of mind lightens the burden of the effort we put in.

However, if we put off implementing our ideas, due to inertia or laziness, their freshness is soon lost, and so is the spirit that comes with a new thought. Later on, when we decide to act, we may find the effort tedious because the initial vigour is missing. Our exertions may flag and the result



we achieve might be well short of what it could have been had we acted immediately. The dif-

ference is similar to that between eating fresh fruit and having that same fruit after it has withered

and become stale. How much energy and nutrition will it provide then? We say: "I will do it..."

it will happen... it has to happen... yes, I want to do it..." By thinking in this way and endlessly making plans, we allow the fresh fruit to wither. Acting without delay brings greater success, and with it more happiness. But we are robbed of both by the habit of putting off things and coming up with excuses such as, "once this happens, then I will do it..." And then, when we are disappointed by the results of our belated efforts, we think, "Well, I did it the right way, but it did not work."

Fortune is connected to time. Once the time has passed, the atmosphere, the attitude, the vibration... everything changes. Even the best

seed planted at the wrong time will not produce the desired result. Just as eating fresh fruit is invigorating, prompt and spirited action brings greater success, joy, and a feeling of progress and power.

Doctors often advise people to have fresh food. "Don't fry it, roast it, or change its form before you eat it: have it as it is to get the maximum benefit", they say. Similarly, acting quickly on a good idea, without adulterating it with our weak thoughts, leads to fast progress. We not only succeed but also set an example that inspires many others.

B.K. Mruthyunjaya is Executive Secretary of the Brahma Kumaris.

A THOUGHT FOR TODAY

In a world of constant movement, we take satisfaction from action. This can make it difficult to be still. Stillness is a natural balm for the soul, required for true rest. As I learn to meditate and concentrate my focus inwards, I begin to take satisfaction from stillness and silence. When this happens, I lose the compulsion to act. Then my actions are created by intention rather than compulsion. Today let me take satisfaction from stillness.