

MIND MATTERS

TO BE STRONG AND SUCCESSFUL, STOP WASTEFUL THINKING



B.K. ASHA

How do we see ourselves? With what kind of awareness do we go about our life? Our state of mind, perspective, and the way we relate to the world are all influenced to a considerable extent by our self-image.

If our self-respect is high, the standards we set for ourselves – what we think, how we behave and live – are also elevated. When we exist on that higher plane and interact with others from there, our self-confidence is naturally strong.

But even someone with a powerful awareness can become ordinary if they think wastefully – it drains their energy and consumes their time, to no end.

One can remain powerful only when one has stopped wasting time and energy. If there are waste thoughts in the mind, powerful thoughts cannot stay there. The waste will repeatedly bring us down.



An elevated awareness makes us strong and successful, but waste thoughts – born of fear, doubt, attachment or expectations – rob us of enthusiasm and joy. Someone troubled by “Why?” and “How?” in every matter will become disheartened over trivial issues. They have many desires, because of which they make numerous plans, and they

make them very quickly as waste thoughts arise fast. Therefore, they think of grand projects, but since they lack power the plans are never fully realised. That, in turn, causes disappointment.

Powerful souls, on the other hand, think sensibly and only to the extent required. Free from waste thoughts, they are calm and

focused, and therefore able to work according to their plan, which brings them favourable results.

Waste thoughts create upheaval in the mind and drain us, whereas positive and powerful thoughts keep us fresh and productive, helping us accumulate inner power in the form of confidence, determination, enthusiasm and optimism.

But why do we have waste thoughts? The reason is quite simple – we do not recognise the harm they do, nor do we fully understand the value of powerful thoughts. If we busy ourselves with positive, purposeful and powerful thoughts, there will be no scope for wasteful thinking. It is when the intellect is idle that waste thoughts arise.

The key to being strong and successful is to pay attention to our mind so that waste thoughts do not arise, and consciously create powerful thoughts. Spiritual pursuits greatly help in this. However, they should not remain an intellectual exercise limited to reading, listening to, and memorising ideas and concepts. Powerful ideas sound impressive and just hearing about them can be very exciting, but the joy is short-lived, and it does not make us strong. Only when we reflect on what we have learned, understand its relevance to our life and apply it does it turn into real experience, which gives us incontrovertible authority.

Those who have such authority, with their unshakeable conviction and the living proof of their life, are able to remove the doubts and fears of many others and show them the path to success and fulfilment.

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DISCOURSE

To change yourself, be patient



DADI JANKI

The most important virtue needed for self-transformation is patience. Without patience you will lose hope in the transformation process.

As you travel the path you sometimes run into rough spots where the foot slips and you find yourself suddenly not on the path, and there are wrong thoughts or be-

haviour. Patience makes you cool and calm. It makes the journey possible.

The process of self-transformation is not a ten-yard dash. It is the one-hundred-and-fifty-mile run. You have to pace yourself. Patience teaches you to pace yourself. You cannot take help from God until there is patience of this kind.

Where there is patience, there is peace. Where there is peace, there is love. This is a whole new experience of what it means to be human.



GOOD LIFE

Keeping balance brings constant progress



B.K. ATAM PRAKASH

Serving others voluntarily, by offering physical help, emotional support or spiritual guidance is laudable, but there is a difference between serving and serving with the right awareness. If we are focused entirely on the effort – planning, arranging and doing things – we may achieve good results, yet our state of mind might not be the best. We may be very well-

informed, intelligent and understand how to use our knowledge, but fall short of our goals because of not paying attention to the kind of awareness we have the whole day.

Having an elevated awareness means remembering that we are an instrument to bring benefit to others. It is a blessing to have the ability and opportunity to serve. Service brings satisfaction, adds value to life, and earns us the goodwill of those we serve.

But when we forget that we are God's instruments to assist our fellow humans, we lose sight of the lofty nature of our work and get caught in its mundanity. It may soon start feeling like drudgery, and instead of a sense of fulfilment, we may experience stress. Or service ceases to be a calling and becomes a career, or a means to showcase one's inflated sense of self-worth – “I serve more than others”, “No one can do it better than me”.



Self-respect not balanced by humility can change

into arrogance. When our efforts yield success, happiness is natural, but it helps to check our awareness at that time: “I did it”, or the correct awareness that “It is a fortune to have been a part of this”. Service accompanied by the right awareness creates a balance of humil-

ity and self-respect, which facilitates success not just in the task but also in our relationships with colleagues and those we serve.

The consciousness of being an instrument also allows us to fulfil multiple responsibilities without stress, as there is passion for the task, but no attachment, which keeps us light. In addition, we are saved from hubris. Success does not lead to the conviction that one has achieved perfection, and we do not rest on our laurels. Instead, the joy of attainment, balanced by the zeal to go further, keeps us progressing.

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SPIRITUAL PATH

It starts from the heart



MAUREEN GOODMAN

When the impetus to follow a spiritual path arises, it arises first in the heart. It begins with a kind of awakening inside, something stirs inside from the heart. If those feelings never arose, then we would never make any further changes in our lives. Once that feeling emerges, once you start to feel differently, it is almost impossible to ignore. When it is strong and deep, from the heart, we have to follow that feeling. It is the very thing that gives us courage to move forward. A strong heart is full of determination.

Where is the heart? We all know where the organ is in the body, but in spiritual terms the heart is in the soul. It is the capacity for deep feeling. This feeling is not about emotions, but about the very deep and pure feelings that are experienced from God. The heart is like the conscience; we need to listen very carefully. If we do not listen to what the heart is trying to tell us, then later on there is upheaval and then the heart



is in upheaval.

It is very important to follow the heart, but not simply based on our own desires. Our own desires, based on our past thinking habits, will try to make the heart desire something other than the truth. It is essential to keep the heart strong and safe. A yogi will pay attention to what is needed, will listen to the hearts of others, but will not be influenced. A yogi will retain and be strengthened by the truth and will not waver from that, no matter what happens or what stories are related.

In the world, people become very emotional and passionate about issues and idols and situations. Orators can speak very eloquently on these topics and easily stir people's

emotions. They can talk about hate, prejudice, war and peace, but peace is not about emotion. It is about a spiritual change within.

When we find ourselves becoming emotional, we need to regain the peace we have within us because emotion has no power or strength. It will take us up but then we will be brought down again, having gained nothing. A strong heart looks beyond the obvious and sees what is real and true, in any situation but most especially within each person. A strong heart sees the soul within. Exactly as God does.

Maureen Goodman is the Programme Director for the Brahma Kumaris UK, and BK NGO representative to the United Nations in Vienna.

LOOK INSIDE

Where do thoughts come from?

NICK CHRISTIANSON

If we take time to look at what is happening inside the mind, we notice that it is working constantly. Even when we are asleep, the mind is constantly active. When we are awake thoughts come one after the other in a seemingly unstoppable, incessant and perpetual flow, churning out a variety of thoughts, feelings and ideas. If asked, where thoughts come from, many people would say that they originate in the brain. And yet a series of case studies, recorded ever since the 19th century, seem to give rise to serious speculation as to the truth of that idea.

A case was recorded of an elderly man, who with increasing senility had reached the point where intelligible communication had ceased. One day, a short while before his death, he was suddenly able to hold a normal conversation with his relatives whom he, suddenly, fully



recognised. The atrophying of the brain explained the progressive dementia of the man, but could not explain the sudden recovery. After his death, doctors requested permission to perform an autopsy, as they were completely mystified. They found that the brain had atrophied to the

size of a small ball and the rest of the cranium was filled with fluid. It would seem then, that it was not the brain that was thinking.

What if the mind is not a function of the brain, but is independent, and is a function of spirit or soul? And what if that spirit or soul has the natural

power to manipulate the organs of the body? According to the medical case above, the patient's mind recovered even though the brain had not. The spiritual explanation of this is that, during the time that the mind is influenced by the material of the body, it will follow the condition of the brain. That would explain the increasing senility. However, at some point, close to death, the soul was detached to some extent from the body and was able to manipulate the bodily organs in order to speak, without the use of the brain.

Brahma Kumaris consider the soul, or consciousness, to be intangible, invisible, immortal. It gives light, or energy, to the body to remain active; “I am the soul, the consciousness; it is I, the soul, that thinks. The body is an instrument, a costume for me to use temporarily in this great cosmic drama”.

Nick Christianson is a Rajyoga teacher with the Brahma Kumaris based in the UK.

A THOUGHT FOR TODAY

Waste thoughts drain my inner power. A waste thought is an unproductive thought that takes my energy but gives nothing in return. The more thoughts I have the less power each thought contains. The fewer thoughts I have the more power each thought contains. When my thoughts are powerful, everything I create has more power in it and I experi-



ence more success. Today let me empower myself by

increasing the quality of my thoughts.