

LOOK WITHIN

# Meditation for a stable mind



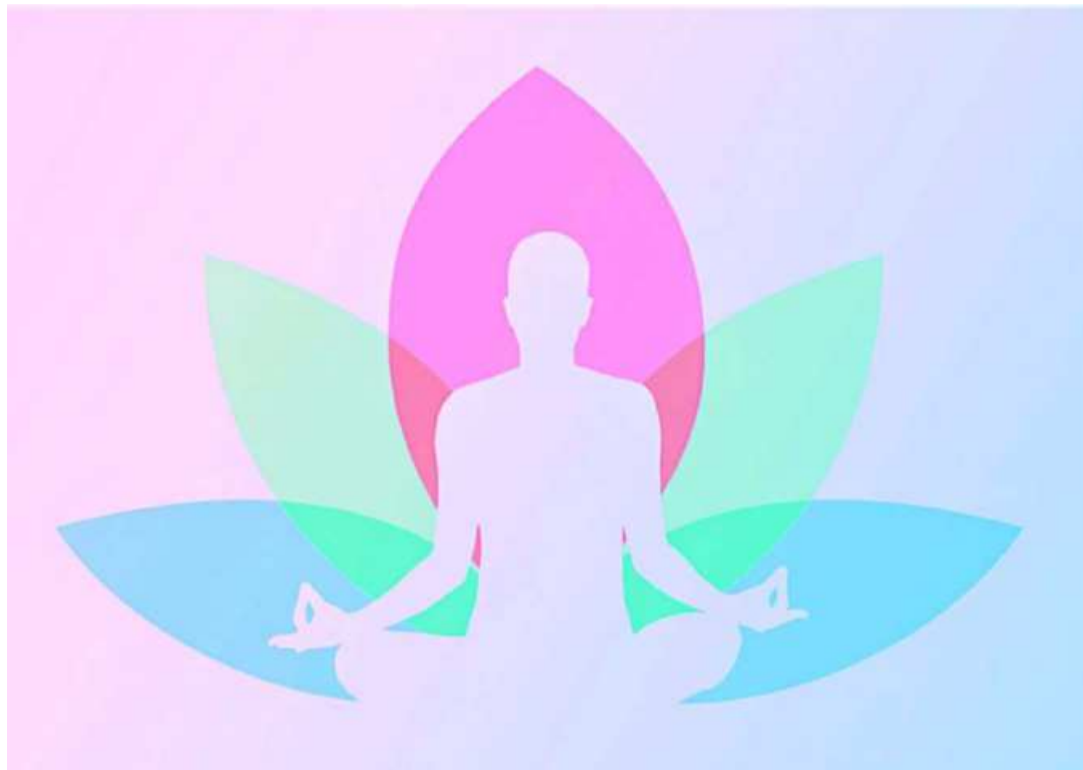
B.K. MOHINI

Spiritual study and meditation stabilise our minds and help us move through times of confusion. We all know the feeling when we come to a fork in the road and suddenly face a choice. At a moment like this it is not practical, and can even be dangerous, to stop and figure it out, because there may be cars behind us. A sensible person will pull the car to the side of the road, put the car in neutral and give himself time to decide which is the right way to go.

The same happens in other parts of our lives. Some people get confused very quickly. Spiritually, when there

is confusion, the best thing to do is to pull back from the situation, sit quietly and take the mind into even one moment of peace and silence. Just this one moment can bring great clarity.

Confusion is a subtle form of fear that brings anxiety. Perhaps something on the news disturbs us and we start imagining that the same thing could happen to us. It has never happened, and it is most unlikely that it will ever happen, but it creates anxiety, nevertheless. We begin to assume that it may happen and imagine how it would feel. When we invoke spiritual methods of regular and frequent moments of meditation, stillness, silence and peace, the mind comes to understand that everything will be alright, and even if such a thing did happen, we would know how to handle it at that time. The mind becomes calm and we stop worrying.



Spiritual study and meditation are invaluable practices to stabilise the mind and strengthen the awareness that we are able to deal with anything life may present to us.

Meditation links us with God and we then develop a state of peace

so deep that we become unshakeable in the face of anything. We need this quality of mind because uncertain and unpredictable situations can happen at any time. Scenes are continuously changing. Even as they change, we have to remain stable and culti-

vate the ability to adapt, change, grow and thrive.

We can start with just a moment and then move to many moments of silence and peace throughout the day. This practice of meditation, coupled with deep spiritual understanding of how and why the

world is changing the way it is, allows us to sustain an inner state of stability, tolerance and deep peace regardless of what is happening around us.

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DISCOURSE

## SOUL-CONSCIOUSNESS FREES YOU FROM EXTERNAL INFLUENCES



DADI JANKI

A beautiful state of being is soul-consciousness, where your whole sense of self is shifted from a physical identity to a spiritual one. In soul-consciousness, you no longer feel yourself to be male or female, black or white. No worldly achievement forms your self-esteem. Instead, self-esteem is shaped by a deep, abiding experience of your intrinsic worth as a child of God. A lack of soul-consciousness puts your well-being

at the mercy of your environment – you become a slave to the influences of the people and situations around you – you feel happy and good only when outside events warrant it. This kind of dependency leaves the soul weak and confused.

Soul-consciousness, on the other hand, frees you from external influences, allowing you to create an inner well-being which is totally independent.

Soul-consciousness is cultivated through deliberate practice and only those who have understood the need for this kind of true, inner self-respect will make the effort.

Difficulties will arise to test your resolve for self-uptilment – physical illness, relationships, memories of the past, and so on. Yet, with patience and introspection, you will come to see how these very tests are the means to strengthen your spiritual identity.

SERENITY

## THE BENEFIT OF BEING CALM



B.K. DR SAVITA

Truth is a great quality, but by itself it does not always bring complete success. If presented harshly, truth can offend and alienate people; it is when truth is accompanied by calmness that it finds easy acceptance and makes the greatest impact.

We may be true and know the truth, but we can serve others best when the confidence that comes with truth is balanced with calmness. One who has both these qualities can help cool down tempers. Instead of offering the truth gently, if we hurl it

at others, it can spark a confrontation. Wielding truth in the wrong manner can hurt people and stop them from accepting it. Instead if we understand where the other person stands, and approach them accordingly, presenting truth in such a way that they recognise its value and accept it, we are able to truly serve them.

This calls for empathy and maturity, which develop when we cultivate a spiritual awareness and relate to others as souls, our siblings in

the human family. Just as a mother is able to bring into line a mischievous child with her love, a calm and friendly manner prepares the ground for the other person, even if he is sceptical or cold, to acknowledge and accept the truth.

It is love and peace that make souls worthy or able to accept truth. The thoughts, words, and behaviour of a calm person have a cooling effect on others, disarming critics and alleviating the pain of those in distress.



In the absence of serenity, thoughts – a lot of them waste – arise fast in the mind, and we end up spending much time trying to control them. Those who have calmed their mind are not only saved from these troubles, they also are a source of solace for others. A tranquil person is like the tree whose shade provides cool comfort to travellers. People are drawn to such souls and find rest and ease in their company. At a time when conditions in the world are difficult for a lot of people, they are looking for such support in order to get relief from their fears and worries. This opens our eyes to the value of developing our spiritual resources and sharing them, for our own good and the benefit of others.

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LIFE MANTRA

## WHY CONTENTMENT MATTERS



B.K. SHEILU

Do we always remain content, or are we sometimes discontented with ourselves, with others, our shortcomings, or with the conditions prevailing in the world? No one likes to lose what they value, so why do we let go of our contentment?

It is wise to retain one's contentment no matter what happens. Being content sometimes and discontented at other times is not the best way to live. If our state of mind fluctuates according to circumstances or

how others treat us, we are no different from puppets, with little control over our life.

Contentment not only brings us peace, joy, and stability, it is also an invaluable quality that enables us to naturally serve others. People are drawn towards someone who is always content, as the latter are free from expectations and others feel at ease in their company. Such souls are sought after as they are cooperative and unfussy. Everyone likes to involve them in important tasks, knowing very well that they will get along with others and do whatever is required, without seeking special attention. Their quality of contentment keeps bringing them opportunities to serve, which helps them build close connections with people, learn new things, and thereby progress in life.

Since contentment enables us to accommodate the



various moods and nature of all kinds of people, a contented soul is not afraid of, or put off by, anyone's temperament. Their peaceability earns them appreciation and genuine love. It is one thing to appear to be loving to avoid upsetting someone and quite another to feel and show a true, loving attitude. Contented souls receive genuine love from everyone, and since contentment is always accompanied by happiness, they spread joy wherever they go.

Contentment also in-

oculates us against several weaknesses, such as anger, jealousy, and ego, as someone who is content does not compare themselves with others, or try to control anyone.

The easy way to remain content is to live by the principles of right conduct. We reap what we sow, and our experiences in life are decided by how we think, speak and act. When we keep doing good, the result can only be good. Challenges and tests will confront us, but they will pass, and since we are sowing the right seeds, the fruit of that will be received sooner or later. Recognition of this immutable law of karma guides us to do the right thing, and keeps us content in the knowledge that our future is bright.

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RESILIENCE

## EMOTIONAL IMMUNITY IN TROUBLED TIMES



KEN O'DONNELL

There are numerous studies that show the importance of psychological balance and mental health in guaranteeing a better physical immune response. This includes the state of our emotions.

After more than 45 years of meditation practice, I have a very clear idea of how the regular practice of meditation helps me create a better mental and emotional balance.

There are a couple of things

that I can do to bolster my emotional immunity, or in other words, strengthen my inner resilience.

The first tool is to better understand the spiritual dimension of our existence. I am a spiritual being going through this human experience. I play my role in this play of life. I cannot control the roles of anyone else. I know that my inner nature is one of peace and that it is very easy to forget this with everything that is going on.

The second tool to develop inner strength is to practice meditating on my spiritual nature to bring out the qualities that I need to face whatever comes up.

There is so much going on in the world around that it is so easy to get caught up in situations and relationships. This can end up making me



extremely vulnerable emotionally.

With unclear thinking and uncontrolled feelings, emotions can overwhelm me. If that happens, it is no use try-

ing to numb myself against whatever I am feeling through temporary escapes. I still would get stuck in the present without seeing the bigger picture. The best thing to do is to

look at provocative situations as a detached observer. This means amplifying my vision to include the influence of the past as well as the possibilities of the future. This helps me to mindfully accept the present.

I imagine the whole situation happening on the stage of a theatre. I am sitting in the back row looking at my performance. Then it is easier to accept whatever is going on, and to make appropriate changes. With this practice, I can emerge stronger and more resilient.

If I allow it, anyone or anything can take me away from my sense of peace and well-being. That is the key idea. I can always choose what to think and feel, however others are behaving and no matter what others are doing or saying. It is not they who jump into my

head and create my thoughts and feelings. I am always the author of them.

If I can manage my emotions in a positive way, I will be able to relieve stress, communicate effectively, empathise with others, and avoid possible conflict. It will help me to build stronger relationships at home and at work. It is all about being able to manage the self so that impulsive feelings and behaviour come gradually under control. It is about being aware of the impact of my emotional state on others and the world.

Through self-knowledge and the practice of meditation, I will be able to create more strength and resilience in my life.

Ken O'Donnell is an author and the director of Brahma Kumaris services in South America.

### A THOUGHT FOR TODAY

My future is not determined – but I am. Although forecasts predict the weather, it is only my determined actions that will predict my future. With determination I will get to my destination. Determination allows me to face any weather and continue my journey towards my ultimate aim. Today let me be determined.