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Preface

In today's world there is lot of Chaos, signs of mental secession are increasing. A section of our society is consciously alienating itself from the larger mass, attempting to create and live both physically and mentally in a world of its own. Fierce battles are raging around the world in the name of religion. This is because the people believe either in rituals or they use religion for their political and other gains. They don't follow the teachings inscribed in religious scriptures.

Main cause of sufferings in the world according to most of religions is as given below:

1. Lust
2. Anger
3. Avarice
4. Attachment
5. Egoism.

That is why according to Sadhu T.L Vaswani, the modern saint of India said; "Disintegration has been our sin for a long time. A new integration and reintegration is urgent need of today." He advised the people not to cling to old customs and conventions and advised the people to follow the true devotees of God who have always risen above the dogmas and creeds which only imprison men.

Problems like poverty, greed, discontentment, insecurity, fear, anxiety and breakage of relationships are increasing day by day. This is because in one way or the other we are not at peace with ourselves. As *Thomas Merton* said, "*Man is not at peace with his fellow man because he is not at peace with himself. And he is not at peace with himself because he is not at peace with God.*" Peace of mind can come only if our lives are in harmony with true Principles and Values. Our society is deteriorating today because values like honesty, truthfulness, tolerance, compassion, hard work, social helpfulness, selfless service,

simplicity, nonviolence, faith not only in God but also in ourselves and love towards nature and other human beings are disappearing.

In this book, "*March to Peace and Happiness*" following writers have expressed their views which are beneficial to the society.

Today our society is not going to hold together the reason is given by Kiran Karnik in, "*I, Me and Myself Apathy of the Affluent*". The writer explains Apathy of the Affluent is the phenomenon when section of society so called privileged or affluents cares little for the happening in the rest of society.

This problem can be solved if we take the guidance of great men like Mahatma Gandhi. According to him, "*Whenever you are in doubt or when the self becomes too much with you, apply the following test: recall the face of the poorest and weakest man you may have seen and ask yourself if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him. Will he gain anything by it? Will it restore him to control over his own life and destiny? In other words, will it lead to SWARAJ (self-rule) for the hungry and spiritually starving millions? Then you will find your doubts and you're self-melting away.*"

It can happen only if instead of looking at the surface, we see in depth as given in Article, "*Know What Lies Beneath by Seeing, Not Looking*". Looking means looking at the faults of others while seeing means to look our inner self. We can see our inner self only if we are beware of our mind. As Upanishad says, "*The Mind alone is the cause of man's bondage, the mind is also the instrument of man's liberation*".

As nature of human mind is to drive human being in the path of selfishness. In order to do selflessness action

we should watch our mind continuously. The main hurdle in doing any work without any selfish action is ego. Meditation helps in preventing ego.

As *The Bhagavad Gita* preaches, "*He who has not controlled his mind and senses can have no determinate reason, nor can such an undisciplined man have belief (in God). The unbelieving man can have no peace and how can there be happiness for one lacking peace of mind.*"

Babujee Dutta in, "*A Picture in My Wallet After All, Those Years*" explain that God is eternal companion. The yogi, who has subdued his mind and body and who is free from desires and bereft of possessions, living in seclusion all by himself, he should constantly engage his mind in meditation.

The human psyche which is today fractured and fragmented can be healed only by the inner processes of meditation, prayer and introspection. Through this qualitative transformation began from within where conflicts originates. By resolving the conflicts within we can rediscover values like to love our fellow human beings, kindness, pure and boundless compassion, joy, humility and gratitude, all of which they already possess. As Swami Vivekananda said: "*This life is short, the vanities of the world are transient, but they alone live who live for others, the rest are more dead than alive... Love never fails today or tomorrow or ages after, truth will triumph. Love your fellow human beings. Do not care for doctrines; do not care for dogmas, or sects. They count for little compared to the essence of existence in each man, which is spirituality.*"

Deepal Agheda in, "*Love's Labour is Never Lost*" described beautifully the importance of Value of Love through the Japanese story of lizard. Through love we can tear walls that divides between our near and dear ones.

Love is gift. Take it and let it grow.

The love and care towards others gives us the strength to endure and understand difficulties by developing the values of tolerance and determination. As in life we face many obstacles and difficulties which are necessary to test one's character and moral stamina. Hard work is blessing not a curse. Those who have excelled in their work in whatever the sphere they have worked hard day after day.

These Values of love, tolerance and hard work help us in banishing fear, insecurity and boost our self-confidence as explained in Article, "*With Faith, Banish Fear & Boost Self-Esteem*". It is because of faith that cooperative, social life becomes possible. It is faith in each other that facilitates free give and take of love, free sharing of work and its results.

Happiness comes if we understand that what goes around comes around. As *Buddha* said, "*Seek happiness in the joy of duty which is nobly done*". It is the concept of personal growth and the creation of happiness in any society. *Henry Ford* stated "*To do more for the world than the world does for you is another way of judging how successful you are*".

Through rediscovering the Values in our life as explained by *Taru Bahl* we can resolve our inner conflicts and can be helpful in maintaining our relationships not only at home but also in society.

I am thankful to *Dr. Inderjit Kaur Ji* (Mukh Sewadar, Pingalwara) who gave me opportunity to read the Articles collected by *Bhagat Puran Singh Ji* (Founder of Pingalwara) and herself. Through these articles I got the answer of my questions, like why in spite of so many religious places we are unable to attain peace

of mind. Why are we not able to resolve the conflicts insides us and in society? I am hopeful that this book will be helpful in finding the answers of readers also.

Such books are printed by *All India Pingalwara Charitable Society (Regd.)* and distributed free of cost. Kindly donate generously for this work.

Ms. Ritu Sharma

D/o Late Sh. N. K. Singh & Late Smt. Promila

C/o Dr. Inderjit Kaur

(Mukh Sewadar, Pingalwara)

I, ME AND MYSELF

APATHY OF THE AFFLUENT

Kiran Karnik

Some years ago, when I wrote an article on how we successful were creating their own private domains, with no dependence on the services provided by the state. I was upbraided by many friends for what they saw as a vilification and a criticism of new lifestyles. At the time, one had hoped that the compulsions of the democratic process combined with liberalization would lead to vastly improved civic services, making unnecessary the secessionist islands of self-reliant communities. Unfortunately, this has not happened; worse, one sees growing signs of a more troubling divide.

The earlier manifestation of secession was best exemplified by walled-in “gated” communities, with their own security, electric generators and water-supply. In short, a physical independence. Today, there are increasing signs of mental secession, of considering oneself outside the geographical community that one lives in. A section of our society is consciously alienating itself from the larger mass, attempting to create and live—both physically and mentally in a world of its own. It seeks to disengage from the happenings in the rest of society and cares little for the events in that larger whole. This new phenomenon can best be characterised as the apathy of the affluent.

Evidence of such apathy is now very visible and growing. Most striking is the near-complete lack of involvement with civic issues and civil liberties. A journalist is arrested and jailed for over six months on trumped-up charges of possessing “secret” documents, which are, in fact, in the public domain. Clearly, many people in the decision-making hierarchy are aware of this. He is finally released, with an implicit admission that the charges were false.

It is well known that the police continue to use torture (more euphemistically called third-degree methods) on a regular basis to extract confessions, sometimes from innocent people. This barbaric method of investigation and “law” enforcement is of no concern to the privileged. The fact that this is the very anti-ethical of a civilised society is irrelevant to them. They are well aware that any brush that they might have with the law can be easily handled through a few telephone calls or at most, some non-musical notes.

Hundreds of pedestrian are killed every year in traffic accidents because, in the absence of footpaths, they have no choice but to walk on the road. The affluent are not even aware of this since they hardly ever walk except on golf courses or in manicured gardens. In case they are in the vehicle that happens to hit a few people, the procedure for buying silence and turning eyewitnesses hostile are now well-established.

The vicious cycle of poor enforcement leading to a breach of law, which is “settled” through a bribe that ensures poor enforcement, is well-known. Yet, those who have the power to push for changes are unconcerned. Harassment and petty corruption are day-to-day realities for the less privileged. The corrosive effects of this are established but this is not of interest to the affluent. On the contrary, corruption enables them to do as they please.

At the broader level, poverty, illiteracy and ill-health are matters of little relevance to the privileged. Sensitivity to the problems of others and empathy for their predicament are no longer the distinguishing characteristics of the affluent. At the international level, matters beyond restaurants cuisines, fashion, travel and sports, are not of any interest. The situation in Iraq is useful for a few minutes of social conversation, but not beyond that.

When draconian laws like POTA, enacted ostensibly to curb terrorism, are used against common criminals or

opposition politicians or even against 12 year olds, the affluent are unmoved. After all, these things happen to “other” people, in a different world and their own liberties are unaffected.

The amazing apathy of the affluent is in sharp contrast to the past societal involvement of this class, especially in the freedom struggle. In part, this change is due to the communication revolution which, by annihilating distance, has redefined communities in a thematic rather than spatial dimension. The affluent in India are now part of the international jet-setting community and identify more with their counter-parts in London or Los Angeles rather than Lajpat Nagar or Lalbagh. It is also due to some measure, to the death of ideology and the consequent change in values. Caring, concern and compassion have been conquered by apathy, aloofness and avarice.

The cocktail of hedonism and apathy amongst the affluent has, historically, led to totalitarianism. The unconcern about civil rights, turning of a blind eye to the repression of the “other”, has always had a boomerang affect. The apathetic affluent would do well to remember the adage from Hitler’s Germany: “They came for the communists and I did not speak up because I wasn’t a communist”, the same for the Jews, trade unionists, the Catholics and finally “when they came for me, there was no one left to speak up”.

While the danger signal is strong, there are yet signs of hope. Some of the emerging affluent—including especially the professionals who are entrepreneurs in the new industries—are a different breed, with strong values, sensitivities and concern for the community. Civil society groups need to engage and draw on these professional elite and work with them to enlarge the public sphere so as to create a caring, compassionate society.

(The author is president of NASSCOM, New Delhi)

The Times of India, 18 July, 2003

Life Is A Labyrinth, Let’s Negotiate It

Harsh Kabra

Life is often compared to a labyrinth. There’s always a negative ring to this comparison. But a labyrinth also has magical power; because we don’t realize this, we fail to harness those powers. A labyrinth is an ancient geometric pattern that combines the imagery of the circle and the spiral to create a winding but well-defined eulerian path that leads the follower to the goal the centre of the labyrinth and back out again.

Worldwide labyrinths have long been used as tool in meditation, prayer and healing to bring about personal psychological and spiritual transformation. “The path that guides us deeply into the psychological and spiritual centre is the same path that takes us back out again into the manifest physical world”, explains Reverend Lauren Artress. The labyrinth is an archetype of wholeness that helps us rediscover the depths of our souls.” Labyrinths are part of wellness programmes of hospitals in the US today.

While walking the labyrinth, we focus our mind on the path of the moment. This rids us of the problems of the day and brings us fully into the present. We galvanise the subconscious to forge intuitive, creative and broader perceptions for resolving the problem. In processing the available cues, we unlock our inner potential and heighten awareness. This brings us in contact with our thoughts and feelings thereby reducing stress and helping us to attain equilibrium. Going deeper into the labyrinth involves coming out of the ignorance about self.

The similarity between life and labyrinth shouldn’t

stop at their being intricate and convoluted. In fact, both life and labyrinth hold the key to greater spiritual depth and clarity. In both the goal is always visible. Yet we approach it and retreat from it several times, often turning away to reconsider our stance. Both are about being receptive and moving through reversals and turning points. But both are designed to help us find our way to the goal. We can't predict success in either; it comes as a surprise. During both journeys, we make discoveries about the path as well as ourselves. We can only take the single available left or right turn to get closer to the centre life just like in a labyrinth.

Life confounds us when it becomes a maze of ignorance. Unlike a labyrinth, a maze is full of roadblocks, twists turns and blind alleys. Despite its seemingly many paths, however, a labyrinth really has only one path. It is about achieving objectivity which happens only when we transcend the limits in which we live as sensual egos. In this objectivity, we are conscious not only of our own position and limitations but also of our spiritual possibilities.

Yet, we equate a labyrinth with a problem which in essence is an opportunity to employ a perspective both creative and effective to leverage and focus the strength of imagination for drawing ourselves into positive solutions and successes to decipher the constraints and recurrences of our life for gaining access to greater energy and consciousness.

Life often seems to be a force opposed to our propositions. But the labyrinth shows that this force can be turned into a release; a calming, centring and focusing influence. All we need to do is to look inward, shed distractions and trust the path laid out for us like we do when negotiating a labyrinth.

The Times of India, April 26, 2006

Know What Lies Beneath By Seeing, Not Looking

Janina Gomes

When we look, we look at the surface. When we see, we see in depth. That is the difference between looking and seeing. By moving from surface cares to authentic cares, we attain a pure heart.

We live in an age of looking. We look with a curious eye at other people's affairs. We look at what is really not our business. To see is to go beyond the surface of things. That takes us to a deeper level of concern and deeper level of caring. When Jesus healed 10 lepers, nine only looked at themselves when they became clean. It was only one of them that really saw the miracle that had happened and returned to praise God.

That is why faith for many is equated with sight. Not physical sight but internal sight. To see is also to believe or to walk by faith. Then we see through appearances and outer reality and ground ourselves in inner reality.

Seeing is also closely linked with seeking. The person who seeks God hopes to "dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of her life", to "taste the sweetness of the Lord" and to "seek His face" (Psalm 27). There is also a difference between true seeking and false seeking. It is God who knows and uncovers our secret thoughts, differentiating between true and false seeking.

When our seeking is true, we see the Truth. When our seeking is false, we flee from the Truth and all that really brings us face to face with the Truth. That is why some people seek and never find. They seek in the wrong places and put their trust in the wrong things and people.

To set one's hopes in what is passing and imperma-

ment is also to look at things only on the surface. What we 'see' changes our search in life. The more we chase the tangible, the more the intangible slips through our fingers, which is why 'seeing' is an important part of a real conversion of heart.

We can train our sight to look at merely externals or to look deeper and beneath. The clearer the mind and emotions, the easier it is to find one's true reflection and deeper self. When Narcissus fell in love with his own image he was merely looking but those who 'see' their external image fall in love with God. The world today is driven by external looks. Sight is driven by an inner quest.

Curiosity is a common characteristic of human personality. It is curiosity that drives people to relish knowing about other people's affairs and rejoice in the misfortune of others. Seeing on the other hand is closely linked to compassion. The Buddha was compassionate, Jesus was compassionate for the truly wise are compassionate.

Vision is like a laser that removes the cataract that obstructs sight. When Jesus said: "Look at the lilies in the field, they neither toil or spin but even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these". He was drawing our attention to real sight. He called us to see the universe and us as protected by the mantle of God.

If we begin to see we will seek and find. God who is invisible cannot be experienced by those who only look but can only be experienced by those who 'see' in all things not appearances but the miracle of life.

The Times of India, November 29, 2005

Mind Holds The Key To Happiness

Sher Singh Sangwan

The ultimate objective of all people is to lead a happy life. But, how does one achieve such a sparkling life? We used to read an English ballad, *The Enchanted Shirt* By John Hay. It was about a healthy king who was feeling ill owing to his idle life and doctors couldn't diagnose the disease. One day a Doctor, who used to examine patients with his own knowledge and patient behaviour, told the king, 'You will be alright if you sleep one night by wearing the shirt of the happiest man.' The next day, his soldiers were sent in search of the happiest man and to bring his shirt. After roaming the kingdom, the soldiers found a man crawling, jumping, shouting under a tree. They asked him if he was happy! He replied in the affirmative. The soldiers asked for his shirt. He said he didn't have any! At last the king realized that wealth was not a sufficient condition for happiness and opened the window of his room to let the air come in, and he felt better.

It is widely accepted that happiness is not a destination, but a way of life. It is the state of one's mind which is the basis of happiness. It evolves from one's family, company, income, education and exposure to society and places. All these impact the state of mind, perception of the world and vision life.

Often one comes across women, with grass/ wood bales on their head, singing as they return home. If they think about the big houses on the way, perhaps they may never be happy.

Well-paid youngsters working in companies, especially hi-tech MNCs, usually organize drink parties

on weekends as diversion from routine work. Enjoyment may be pleasurable, but after some time, many of them may start consuming liquor by themselves, and regularly, which may become a curse for their happiness and life. It is to be distinguished that happiness is a continuous way of life while pleasure is transitory and short-lived.

Diversion from routine office work is a must for relaxation and energizing creativity. Besides, weekend parties, occasional tours to natural sites and friends and relatives, depending upon your income are a welcome change.

In the late 1970s, I used to go to my village in a desert-like area of Bhiwani while pursuing PhD at JNU. I use to get new ideas from the area and that was when I constructed a small house with paltry savings of my fellowship. Later, I set up a charitable trust to help students of my village.

But youngsters, including my own prefer to annually visit a foreign country instead of their relatives who are mostly in villages. The Sanskrit saying, *janani janmabhoomischa swargadapi gariyasi* (mother and birthplace are greater than heaven) has lost its importance.

We are chasing happiness in the wrong direction.

(The Tribune, 06/02/2020)

Beware The Minefield

That Is The Mind

Mata Amritanandamayi

Selfless action is the outward expression of selfless love. When the heart is filled with love, it expresses itself in the form of unselfish action. One is a deep inner feeling and the other its outward manifestation. Without deep, unconditional love, selfless actions cannot be performed.

In the initial stages of our awakening, the actions we perform in the name of selflessness are not selfless, because the love we feel for ourselves is present in everything we do and say. In fact, at the beginning of our journey, our self-love becomes the driving force for each of our actions, even if we choose to call them selfless. Love for the ego, or oneself, is the predominant feeling in every human being. Unless this feeling withers away, real selflessness will not emerge.

Alertness is necessary to prevent the ego from interfering. It is easier to be in love with the ego than feel truly inspired by the ideal of selflessness. Generally, the selflessness we speak of is actually selfish, because everything stems from the ego. It is the ego and not our inner self that is the source of our so-called love and our actions. Nothing can be selfless unless it springs directly from the heart, from our true self. That is why great saints and sages have said you should know your own self then you can love and serve others selflessly.

There is a story of an old man planting mango trees. When his neighbour saw what he was doing, he said, "do you think you will live long enough to taste the mangoes from those trees?" "No, I doubt it," replied the old man. "Then why are you wasting your time?" asked the neighbour. The old man smiled and said, "All my life I have enjoyed eating mangoes from trees planted by others. This is my way of expressing my gratitude to the people

who planted those trees.”

Selflessness can be the driving force in all your actions. Learn to be thankful to everyone, to all of creation, even to your enemy and to those who insult you and get angry with you, because they help you to grow. They are mirrors, images of your own mind. If you know how to read and interpret the images properly, you can get rid of your mind and its weaknesses.

If you choose love and selflessness as your goal, you need to be watchful. Watch your mind constantly, because the mind won't let you do anything selflessly. The mind doesn't want you to be selfless—its only aim is to drive you down the path of selfishness, because the mind is selfish. As long as you dwell in the mind you can only be selfish. You have to be free of the mind to be selfless.

Selfishness comes naturally to human beings. While all of nature—birds and animals, mountains, rivers and trees, the sun, moon and stars—stands as a testimony to selfless service, man alone acts out of utter selfishness and greed. He dwells in his ego, turning life into a business venture and robbing it of all sanctity.

Children, filled with selflessness, will uplift us. By helping others we are, in fact, helping ourselves. On the other hand, we harm ourselves by being selfish. Learn to bless everyone, don't ever curse anyone, because a human being is not just a bundle of flesh and blood. There is a consciousness at work within everyone. That consciousness is not a separate, isolated entity, it is part of the whole, a supreme unity. Whatever we do is reflected in the whole, in the one universal mind and it returns with the same intensity. Whenever you perform a good or bad action, it is reflected in the universal consciousness. Therefore, learn to be selfless and proffer blessings on one and all.

The Times of India, 1 March, 2004

Looking Within To Resolve Conflict

Karan Singh

Quest for the Divine has been a major dimension in all great civilisations. The divine has been accessed in different ways, described in different words and portrayed in different forms around the world. The essential truth is expressed in the *Rigveda: Ekam sad vipraha bahudha vadanti*—the truth is one, the wise call it by many names.

It is incontrovertible that much that is great in human civilisation art and architecture, law and literature, dance and music, moral codes and religious texts can be traced back to one or other of the great religions of the world. It is therefore ironical that large numbers of people have been killed and tortured, persecuted and ill-treated in the name of religion.

Even today, fierce battles are raging around the world in the name of religion. This interfaith meeting of religious and spiritual leaders at the UN presents a unique opportunity to transcend barriers of hatred and exclusivism fanaticism and fundamentalism and move towards a new era in which we will respect all the great religious traditions of the world. We are free to hold that our own path to the divine is the best but it is not acceptable that we should perpetrate violence or discrimination against others who are following a different path. This should be our first commitment to move towards a culture of peace and conflict resolution.

Our second endeavour is to involve the alleviation and ultimate abolition of poverty and deprivation, of hunger and malnutrition from the face of our planet. If all the great religious organisations of the world were

to divert a substantial portion of their funds towards poverty alleviation, it would help to remove today's grave disparities that can become a source of conflict and tension. Those of us from developing countries who are here come from an oasis of well-being in a vast desert of poverty and deprivation. We must share the gifts that the divine has showered upon us with our less fortunate fellow humans, particularly women and children, the more vulnerable section of our societies. A massive multi-religious movement for the abolition of poverty must, therefore, be one of our major commitments and this is in harmony with the teachings of all world religions.

Thirdly, our educational systems today seldom teach religious harmony. In fact, in many societies there is indoctrination in favour of one and against other religious traditions, so that millions of young people are growing up convinced that their highest destiny is to destroy other people belonging to different religious traditions. A UNESCO report titled *Learning: The treasure within* talks about educational programmes not only for formal systems but also for non-formal methodologies using information technology and how it should be directed towards introducing an element of interfaith awareness, globally.

Fourthly, we must reiterate our commitment to safeguarding the natural environment, which is a divine gift to the human race. This was spelt out in the Assisi declarations on man and nature in 1986. Whether we look upon nature as a creation of the divine, or a manifestation of the divine, we must treat it as a resource which belongs to entire humanity and which must be preserved and protected for future generations.

Degradation and depredation of our natural

environment has been one of the most tragic features of the 20th century. The havoc caused by deforestation, desertification and pressure of population growth is causing widespread distress as in ruthless exploitation of non-renewable energy resources by developed nations. Global warming is melting glaciers and within the next two decades several Island countries are in serious danger of disappearing from the map of the world. The protective ozone layer is depleting. It is therefore essential that religious and spiritual leaders commit themselves to the preservation and enhancement of the natural environment by spreading the environmental message among their followers.

Finally, religious and spiritual leaders must draw the attention of humankind to the inner core; the light that is within all human beings, regardless of race, religion, sex or nationality. The human psyche today is fractured and fragmented and can be healed only by the inner processes of meditation, prayer and introspection. Let us recognise this fundamental truth enshrined deep within our consciousness—we will then enable ourselves to propagate the ideals and principles to which this historic millennium summit is irrevocably committed.

(The writer was member of the Advisory Board, Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders, UN).

The Times of India, 31 August, 2000

Guard Against Emotional Manipulation

Vinita Dawra

We are most vulnerable when we allow our emotions to be manipulated. Do you realise how often in a day you get manipulated thus? Our families and friends try to control us through our emotions all the time – deliberately or instinctively – but we are also being manipulated in several hidden ways that we may or may not recognise.

When a TV newscaster says, “Ek pachaas saal ki buzurg mahila ko pareshaan kiya gaya...”, he/she is not just falling prey to stereotypes (50-year-old male politicians are forever hailed as young); but also trying to work on our emotions. It is a known fact that advertising relies heavily on human emotions to sell products. If you thought your office is not exploiting your fears or other emotions, think again. Of course they are. Bosses, colleagues, competitors are all at it.

Those closest to us have the maximum power to hurt us because we have handed them the most potent weapons to use against us by willingly confessing our emotional weakness to them. When relationships break, panic and grief overtakes rational, loving behavior. Only extremely mature, intelligent people can hold themselves back from exploiting vulnerabilities they have been privy to in closer times.

However, we must understand that emotions are as critical to our well-being as they are dangerous if allowed to be exploited. After all, it is said that one of the deepest forms of love is to allow yourself to be naked emotionally with the one you adore. Emotional intelligence is a skill

whose importance has been much extolled in recent times. But the focus in this context remains on self-awareness, regulation of emotions and empathy. What is just as important however is to be aware of the triggers of your own emotions in order to guard these against exploitation by undesired people and elements.

Emotions have a powerful impact on us and lead to a straightforward response – we want to laugh out loud or cry in pain, submerge in a wonderful experience, shout in anger, back off in fear, or fight back. Simple enough, and yet so deadly! In highly emotional states, we are more likely to be controlled or manipulated by others. The closer we are to our primary emotions – fear, anger, happiness and sadness – the more vulnerable we are to being influenced or controlled by another. Emotional manipulators can make us feel guilty, sad, evil, unhappy, powerless or worse. They know all their victims’ buttons and push them relentlessly.

No wonder then Oscar Wilde said emphatically, “I don’t want to be at the mercy of my emotions. I want to use them to enjoy them, and to dominate them.” So would we all, wouldn’t we? Understanding what causes us to get emotional can help us control our emotions.

The limbic system, which controls emotions, got developed in our brains quite early on and was based around the need to survive. Now that we have moved past and redefined the definition of survival, we also feel emotional when we feel rejected or fear loss of love, or when our value system is challenged. This often results in irrational responses that are beyond the understanding of

others. Most often, our emotions emanate from previous experience or memory and don't have much to do with the exact present situation. Once we understand that, we are able to take a more rational view of a situation and manage our emotional responses better. Which is why it is said that though we might not be able to control external circumstances, we can learn to control our own response to the same. If we work on strengthening our emotional ramparts, we would be able to live in the present with a far more positive spirit than imaginable.

Emotional intelligence in the true sense would surely belong to those evolved people who are not just mindful to the feelings and sensitivities of others, but are also able to guard their own emotions from being manipulated and used.

In a manner of speaking then, we should learn to manipulate our own selves, rather than allow others to do the same to us. What do you say?

(The Times of India, 09 June, 2019)

Experiencing Truth, Consciousness and Bliss

Kishore Asthana

Spiritual concepts are often given complicated explanations. Sat-chit-ananda is one such concept taken to mean the same as God or Brahm, Universal Consciousness. This and other similar definitions make the intensely personal sat-chit-ananda impersonal for the normal seeker.

Scriptures describe Ananda as bliss that is Brahm. The Taittiriya Upanishad (3.6.1) says: "He, Bhrigu, taught by Varuna, realised that ananda is Brahm..." But, we forget that in the Upanishads, these concepts were imparted to those like Bhrigu who had prepared minds and could understand their proper context and meaning. For lay seeker, nowadays, these are dictionary meaning that do not increase their understanding. Hence the need to use more accessible terms.

Ananda is simply 'happiness' but on a higher scale than the ordinary joy that we feel in our everyday lives. Like the wonderful fragrance of flowers that waft towards you while approaching a divine garden, the advanced seeker starts getting glimpses of this higher joy while learning the sat-chit-ananda stage.

In quite moments, laughter bubbles up from the heart, without any apparent reason. Sometimes, in the mind, there is a feeling of spontaneous joy, which is not related to anything happening at that time. During such moments, the leaves appear greener, the light brighter and nature, most benign. The mind soars, leaving one causelessly happy. This feeling comes and goes at this stage since one has not reached the garden. Inside the garden, ananda becomes permanent.

The 'causelessness' is only apparent. There is a

cause that we do not realize at this stage. This cause is chit. Ananda is inextricably embedded in chit. What is chit? At the start of the Kena Upanishad the pupil asks, “By whom willed and directed, does the mind light on its objects? By whom commanded does life move? At whose will do people utter speech? And what god is it that prompts the eye and the ear?”

The master replies, “... it is the ear of the ear, mind of the mind, speech of the speech, and eye of the eye...” In brief, it is consciousness that is the mover of all our senses. That, indeed, is chit. But we have our chit from the moment we are born till we die and even after that, for consciousness is said to be immortal. Why, then, do we not have ananda all the time?

The answer is this: Chit, consciousness, is always filled with joy, ananda. That is its true nature. However, as long as we identify with our physical body-mind, the true nature of chit is masked by our ego-mediated mind. We remain outside the fragrant garden and, though the fragrance is there, we cannot sense it because our senses are attuned only towards our day-to-day world.

This brings us to sat. The fragrant garden is the domain of sat, the Truth. Not truth as opposed to the mundane word ‘lie’ but ‘real’ truth as opposed to a mirage. This is also known as the Infinite. It’s the essence of Brahmasmi.

When one overcomes identification with body-mind, the physical senses fade away. Then sat shines and the seeker identifies with his real chit. The mask drops and ananda prevails.

Living in this permanent state of happiness is sat-chit-ananda. It is everyone’s true nature, were we but to stop identifying with our mundane body-mind and known our real infinite selves.

(The Times of India, 26 December 2018)

A Picture In My Wallet After All, Those Years

Babujee Dutta

A ticket collector in a train found an old worn out wallet in a compartment full of people. He looked inside to find the name of its owner. There was no clue. All that there was in it was some money and a picture of Krishna. He held it up and asked. “Who does this wallet belong to?”

An old man said, “That’s my wallet, Sir, please give it to me.” The ticket collector said, “You’ll have to prove that it is yours. Only then I can hand it over to you.” The old man, with a toothless smile, said, “It has a picture of Krishna in it.”

The ticket collector said, “That is no proof; anyone can have a picture of Krishna in his wallet. What is special about that? Why is your picture not there in it like most normal people?”

The old man took a deep breath and said, “Let me tell you why my picture is not there in it. My father gave this wallet to me when I was in school. I used to get a small sum as pocket money then. I had kept a picture of my parents in it.

“When I was a teenager I was greatly enamoured by my good looks. I removed my parent’s picture and put in one of my own. I loved to see my own face and my thick black hair. Some years later, I got married. My wife was very beautiful and I loved her a lot. I replaced my picture in this wallet with a picture of her. I spent hours gazing at her pretty face.

“When my first child was born, my life started a new chapter. I shortened my working hours to play with my baby. I went late to work and returned home early too.

Obviously, my baby's picture occupied the prized position in my wallet."

The old man's eyes brimmed with tears as he went on. "My parents passed away many years ago. Last year my wife too left her mortal coil. My son, my only son, is too busy with his family. He has no time to look after me.

"All that I had ever held close to my heart is now far, far away from my reach. Now I have put this picture of Krishna in my wallet. It is only now that I have realized that He is eternal companion. He will never leave me. Alas! If only I had realized this before. If only I had loved the Lord all these years, with the same intensity as I loved my family, I would not have been so lonely today!"

The ticket collector quietly gave the wallet to the old man. When the train stopped at the next station, he went to a bookstall at the platform and asked the salesman, "Do you have any pictures of God? I need a small one to put in my wallet!"

When a man ceases to have any attachment either for the objects of senses or for actions and has renounced all thoughts of the world, he is said to have attained yoga.

One should lift oneself up by one's own efforts and should not degrade oneself. For one's own self is one's friend and one's own self is one's enemy.

He who regards well-wishers, friends, foes, neutrals, mediators, the objects of hatred, relatives, the virtuous and the sinful alike, stands supreme.

The yogi, who has subdued his mind and body and who is free from desires and bereft of possessions, living in seclusion all by himself, he should constantly engage his mind in meditation.

The Bhagavad Gita, (Chapter VI, 4-5, 9-10)

Conflict Resolution

Begins At Home

M. N Chatterjee

If one were to explore the philosophical basis of normative ethics to examine where terrorism falls on the moral spectrum, it will become evident that terrorism, sabotage and guerilla tactics are all acts of violence, essentially no different from overt war in the conventional sense. Terrorist attacks amount to war by stealth, shadowy figures replacing uniformed combatants attacking innocents to send a message to the real targets who are out of reach.

All acts of violence spring from fear, uncertainty and hate, as well as a total disregard for the lives of fellow human beings. The end is all-important and the means do not matter to the frenzied violators. A cause is invoked in the name of a group, sect or territory. The starting point, however, is often an individual going berserk, resolute in his own self-indulgent eyes but losing touch with reality.

A qualitative transformation must, therefore, begin from within, where the conflict originates. According to a Sufi saying, the peacemaker must first make peace with himself before trying to make peace in the world. The *Bhagavad Gita* teaches self-restraint, fortitude, truthfulness and faith as essential attributes of character. Patanjali describes restraint as "the accommodation of the senses to the state of the mind" and avers that there is no inimical feeling in a Yogi who has attained the cultivated enlightenment of the soul, in whom harmlessness and kindness are fully developed.

Swami Vivekananda said: "*This life is short, the vanities of the world are transient, but they alone live who live for others, the rest are more dead than alive...Love never fails today or tomorrow or ages after, truth will triumph. Love your*

fellow human beings. Do not care for doctrines; do not care for dogmas, or sects. They count for little compared to the essence of existence in each man, which is spirituality.”

The essence of the *Gita*, according to Swami Vivekananda, lies in these words of Krishna: *“He who sees the Supreme Lord dwelling alike in all beings, the Imperishable in things that perish, he sees indeed. For seeing the Lord as the same, everywhere present, he does not destroy the self by the self and thus he goes to the highest goal.”* All evil comes from ignorance and all good from faith in equality, in the underlying sameness and oneness of things.

Hobbes said: *“War consists not in battle only or in the act of fighting, but in the will to fight, the attitude of hostility.”* The so-called peace treaties do not make peace unless they are backed by honest intentions. Peace does not require men to become angels or saints and live together in perfect brotherly love which is all too much to accept. Peace is that state of affairs in which men can settle their differences by talking to each other instead of using force. Kant declared: *“The morally practical reason utters within us its irrevocable veto: There shall be no war”*,

Violence as a means to achieve ends is both impractical and immoral. It is impractical because it is a descending spiral ending in destruction for all. An “eye for an eye” will leave everybody blind, said Mahatma Gandhi. The concept is immoral because it seeks to humiliate the opponent rather than win his understanding; it seeks to annihilate rather than understand and thrives on hatred rather than love. It creates bitterness in survivors and brutality in the destroyers. *Ultimately, you can't reach good ends through evil means, because the means represent the seed and the end represents the tree. There is no such thing as a 'just' war.*

The Times of India, January 15, 2004

Non-Violence Is Way To World Peace

Indu Jain

Bhagwan Mahavir was deep in meditation. His closed eyes emanated an extraordinary peace and serenity. A bird flew in and sat close to him. When he opened his eyes, the bird got frightened and flew away. Lord Mahavir thought of the violence inherent in the very opening of the human eye. Non-violence, or ahimsa is not only the absence of violence but it is the lack of fear and the presence of an all-embracing love for humanity.

Non-violence is reaching out to others while transcending the barriers of caste, creed, religion, sex, faction and even species. It is an independent state of consciousness. Our physical, emotional and intellectual states of being limit confine us; they choke us, degrade us and make us unhappy. The absence of fetters or chains is non-violence.

Removing ignorance is the first step towards building a world movement for non-violence, True knowledge consists of self-understanding and self-control. Non-violence is the highest form of knowledge since it harmonises one's relations with others. Ahimsa, like *moksha* or *nirvana*, is freedom from the endless drama of opposites: pleasure-pain, happiness-sorrow, attraction-aversion, love-hate, gain-loss, success-failure, wealth-poverty, fear-courage, strength-weakness, victory-defeat, praise-denigration, honour-insult, conflict-harmony, gentleness-aggression, virtue-vice, good-evil and freedom-bondage.

In short, non-violence is freedom from the past, from history, from memory. It is freedom from all

that which suffocates, chokes, distresses and disturbs. Therefore, whatever can be subdued by opposites is not free; whatever is not free cannot be non-violent; I cannot be sensitive to other people's plight if I remain a prisoner of the human drama being played out by these opposites.

How can I be sensitive to other people and their pain? The Jain philosophy of *anekantvad* has an answer to this. It argues that there are no absolute theories or theorems or formulas that are capable of describing reality in absolute terms. Nirvana lies in right faith (*samyagadarshana*), right knowledge (*samyagnana*) and right conduct (*samyakcharitra*). Simply put, my way is not the final one, my version is not the only version and my truth is not the ultimate truth. There are many ways, several versions and diverse paths to reach the truth. Each in its own right is legitimate.

How is this perfect state of peace and universal love to be obtained? Desire and its satisfaction cannot be the foundation of relationship with myself and the other. In relation to myself, Desire will only drive me restless, anxious in seeking satisfaction and in wanting to retain what I have. I will reach a point where I can hardly ever enjoy what I desired and obtained. In relation to the other, I turn the other into a means of my satisfaction, into an object, to be grasped and retained, and then manipulated. This is why Jainism places such great emphasis on a-parigraha, roughly translated as non-possession. But this non-possession is not one of objects alone, but non-possession of desires and control of the lower senses.

It is fashionable in the west to think of non-violence as a powerless tool. This is a misunderstanding. Non-violence is a way of life and a theory of an ideal society. One who believes in non-violence resist and counters

violence by being uninfluenced by it Non-violence absorbs the recurrence of violence. It is an expansive, all-embracing love and concern for all living and non-living beings. Remorse and bitterness are not part of the agenda of non-violence.

Who would understand the language of love and concern better than the youth of today? If non-violence has to become a world movement, the young will have to assume the leadership of this movement. They have shown tremendous initiative in taking up the cause of environmental project, furthering peace and rising above the narrow confines of nationality, ethnicity and parochialism. Today's youth is a global citizen. He or she understands the only language that is universal: love. And love is possible through non-violence alone. I salute the youth of today. I salute non-violence. I believe in universal love and dedicate myself to furthering it.

The Times of India, 31 August, 2000

What Happens When We Become More Positive

Geetika Jain

Confucius said that to be wronged is nothing, unless you continue to remember it. Life is a string of inevitable experiences, pleasant and unpleasant. Happy events are thoroughly savoured while the challenges leave us shattered and unhappy. Often, we tend to perceive adversities as ‘wrongs’ inflicted upon us either by others or by life itself.

Negative events have a tendency to imprison our minds in their clutches for longer periods in sharp contrast to positive events that inhabit our memories for relatively shorter periods. It is always easy to condone the day-to-day minor wrongs we face, but the grave ones leave an indelible impact. By and large, traumatic experiences elicit two types of behavioural response. Firstly, some people may choose to wallow in self-pity, nursing their wounds for a whole lifetime. Secondly, some may become embittered, cynical and vindictive. They tend to harbour deep-rooted grudges, blaming and cursing people and circumstances that they think are responsible for their misfortune.

Neither of the two behavioural patterns alleviates our misery. In fact, they cause insidious harm. When a ‘wrong’ we faced grips us to the extent that we keep revisiting it mentally, we are flooded with negativity and are totally oblivious of positivities, joys and opportunities of the present moment. Inadvertently, we get anchored in the past which is nothing more than a grave. Life stagnates, losing its sheen. Personal growth is arrested and our existence becomes rudderless.

When we continue to be obsessed with the ‘wrong’ we face, unknowingly our entire beings gets consumed by

deeply ingrained anger, frustrations and resentments. Much time and energy is squandered in scheming retaliation. This unhealthy clutter inside us festers to such a point that over time, it paves the way to a plethora of physical, emotional and psychological aberrations. Psychosomatic disorders crop up. Life becomes a self-created inferno.

How do we overcome this unhealthy tendency to lean towards negativity? Forgiveness is a good place to start, but to do that is not easy. But once we realize that by forgiving, we benefit as much or more as the one who is being forgiven, it becomes easier to forgive. Then we are able to get rid of all the rancour and rage from our system, thereby reclaiming peace and happiness. Thus unburdened, we can move on in life.

Reading/hearing scriptures, positive literature and associating with the wise, will help us cultivate spiritual awareness and acquire a profound understanding of life and its functioning. Life is governed by specific and infallible natural laws like the cause-and-effect principle which need to be comprehended and adhered to. You reap what you sow. when we become aware that each individual carries the onus of his karmic account and also that he reaps accordingly, then, our emotions become less turbulent.

In this process of self-evolvement, the efficacy of meditation is paramount. The golden moments of supreme quietude illumine the path to a sublime, inner voyage. As we proceed in meditation, we are able to connect with our inner core gradually; the unexplored, inaccessible territories start getting familiar. Our unconscious repressions, grouses and hurts buried in the darkest crevices of the unconscious mind, start surfacing. Over time, the intense power and purity of regular meditation removes all toxins, resulting in a serene, happy and wholesome life.

(The Times of India, 21 February 2019)

Art of Wise Living Brings Great Joy

Swami Sukhabodhananda

The art of wise living involves four steps: plan purposefully, prepare prayerfully, proceed positively and pursue persistently.

The joy of wise living involves the art of joyous looking. There are two types of looking. You can look at the world with thoughts; you can also look at the world without thoughts, from a pure being. When you look at the world with thoughts, then you should be aware of the subtle pollution that exists. Thoughts come from memory. Memory is the representation of an experience of the past and so from the past you see the present. Hence, pollution happens.

Is it not natural that we look at the world through these thoughts? If the answer is ‘yes’, then the possibility of a higher perception does not exist. You can say, ordinarily, you look through thoughts. However, there is an extraordinary way of looking at life. Have you not observed many physically challenged people doing extraordinary things in life?

You might have observed that mental setbacks are harder to cope with than the physical, because it makes people ineffective. They operate from the “I can’t” rather than “I can”. They operate from scarcity rather than abundance. They are rooted in poverty consciousness rather than in prosperity consciousness. We have to learn the art of coming from abundance rather than from scarcity. Creativity happens in this space.

What does being effective mean? Effective people learn to reduce stress, increase happiness and increase

potential. How to reduce stress? There is external and internal stress. External stress involves your eating habits, pollution and erratic sleeping habits. Internal stress involves attitudes, beliefs, dogmas and negative patterns. One has to learn the art of handling them from a spiritual perspective. Meditation is a great way of making this happen.

What do people really want in life? Most of us are like a ship in the ocean without a compass. What we want is success and satisfaction. Success is getting what you like and satisfaction is liking what you get.

Reflect on the following exchange between a traveller and a tourist guide: *Traveller*: “what will be the weather at this point?” *Guide*: “*The weather is going to be the weather that I like.*” *Traveller*: “*How can you get a weather you like?*” *Guide*: “*I don’t always get the weather I like. Therefore, I learn to like what I get. So I get a weather that I like.*”

The art of getting what I like and liking what I get—this, one should cultivate through spiritual practice.

The next important point we need to observe is that most of us are searching for happiness. We search for happiness in the world of objects and things. However, we fail to appreciate that the world of objects can give us pleasure but not happiness. People don’t see this distinction; hence they suffer in life.

Happiness really exists within. The art of going within is one of the arts we have to learn. Once we discover the art of being happy within, then we will participate in the miracle called life. Have you seen the beauty of the sunrise? Very few people experience the ecstasy of the sunrise. We live in a beautiful world, but we still continue to live in small ponds of misery. Even when we are pulled out of the ponds of misery, we continue to be in our own

misery, for each one is identified with his or her own misery.

Once we learn the art of disassociating ourselves from the idea of misery, we will see so much of joy around us. We will participate in the sun rising, the sun setting, we will participate in the twinkling of stars and the moving clouds. The whole world will become a source of joy.

(The writer, of prasanna trust, Bangalore, regularly conducts 'life' workshops. www.swamisukhabodhananda.org)

The Times of India, 29 November, 2002

** The wings of the soul are two,—wisdom and sympathy.*
—Sadhu TL Vaswani

** If you were to place the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left, I would not swerve from the truth. God will teach me to stand for truth or give me death.*
—Muhammad.

Compassion & Peace Go

Hand In Hand

Hwasun Yangil Park

Buddhism advocates tolerance to accept that there are differences in human experiences; that diversity is part of life, whether in experiences, cultural back-grounds or religions/faiths. Buddhism is the religion of compassion, mercy and forgiveness for all life forms. It does not preach the superiority of its belief systems over those of other religions, nor does it believe in any sort of hierarchical ordering of faith systems; it does not discriminate against anyone, least of all on account of faith or belief. The recognition and embracement of diversity and pluralism and the resulting absence of any coercive or violent means for proselytizing is the very essence of the humanism of Buddhism. All life forms are treated as sentient beings of equal status, possessing innate dignity and potential for achieving Buddhahood. Remember, we are all brothers and sisters who eventually share the fruits of all our actions in an increasingly globalized world community.

Buddhism teaches us to practise behaviours and actions in everyday life to achieve the goal of true non-violence, love and collaboration. It is first and foremost practice, not scholarship. Those, who recite sutras and mantras faithfully but neglect engaging in practice may, in fact, betray the true spirit of Buddhism. All Buddha's of the past practised in the human realm and their greatness showed in their behavioural manifestations. Throughout many lives, the Buddha's practised generosity, be-friended all, suffered with all and worked ceaselessly to alleviate suffering among all life forms.

The sakyamuni Buddha taught a great many sutras and mantras and practised them in person for 49 year after his enlightenment. He taught and set the example for kings, ministers, farmers, men and women, children and people

of all faiths. In this way, he engaged in social actions and established the tradition of humanistic Buddhism to purify people's minds and to help establish a 'Pure Land'. All Buddha's were role models in establishing the show case of everyday practice of compassion and peaceful collaboration.

In order to emulate the Buddha's, we should first discover and cultivate our own Buddha nature, intrinsic dignity and the Bodhi mind and the door to our ultimate freedom from worldly suffering. By discovering and cultivating this boundless treasure and resource, we can also help all other sentient beings rediscover their kindness, pure and boundless compassion, joy, equanimity, humility and gratitude, all of which they already possess. Several small steps can be taken to make a beginning to help us find our true nature. *Treasure life, your own and of others; show gratitude; respect nature; be aware of national resources; do not be greedy, be content.*

We need to recognise our traditional responses to disorder and chaos. We tend to punish those individuals who are responsible for such disorders to serve as a deterrent to further aggravation. Punishment, however, can produce only temporary results. *To transform violence to harmony, jealousy to praise, greed to generosity and impurities to purity, we must not rely on negative and reactive punishments. We must promote, in a proactive manner, mutual understanding and respect, compassion, collaboration and honest transactions among all people.*

The same principles of mutual understanding via continuing dialogues, practice of concessions and international redistribution and aid systems need to be applied in the arena of international politics and economics. This will help to reduce conflicts among different ethnic, national and religious groups.

(The writer is a Korean Zen Master)

The Times of India, 24 February, 2003

Way To Tranquility: Value Goods But Don't Be Obsessed

Swami Tejomayananda

A person who lives in freedom, satisfied with knowledge and wisdom, is ever tranquil. To him a lump of earth, a stone and gold are the same. It is not that he does not understand the difference between the three but that he does not give undue weight to any of them.

In the scheme of life money has a definite place. Someone who believes that money is everything does not know the truth. Conversely, declaring that money is nothing is also incorrect because, in this world, money is required to live. We should be aware of the purpose, significance and place of money and not give it excessive or undue importance.

For instance, if we buy a relatively inexpensive cap and a pair of very costly shoes, even though the shoes are more expensive than the cap, can we place them on the head just because we have spent more on them?

People live in bondage because they do not know how to live with material things. *We often evaluate individuals by what they have and not by what they are. How often do we witness families break up for the sake of money?*

One day, a young man came and asked me to give him a message to follow in life. I said, "*Remember: Values are more important than valuables.*" When we give more weight to the latter, we dig our own graves. We give up values for valuables—they perish and eventually one ends up with neither.

Unfortunately, man feels that he is unable to live without certain objects; he feels that valuables and to his prestige and stature in society. He would otherwise

be labeled a useless person. This is a wrong way of thinking.

We superimpose too much importance and value on material things and end up becoming slaves to them. Do not neglect material object but do not get obsessed with them either. Know their correct value and importance. Place them accordingly and use them. But if you lose them, do not worry. Then you are free.

(The Author is the Head of Chinmaya Mission).

The Hindustan Times, August 22, 2004

We are all slaves to desires. We move about with chains on our hands and feet the chains of desires. Rise above the storm of desires and practice silence. Lay your senses to sleep, purify your mind of desires and practise silence. In order to practice such silence you require the grace of the Guru. Once you receive divine grace, the recollection comes to you that this world is not your real home. God is the Home-land of your soul.

—*Sadhu TL Vaswani*

Maybe You Have A Tunnel Vision of Love

Osho

Love can be of two types. One is when you say to somebody, “I need you, I really love you.” This is ugly love because it is based on need. You want to be together with somebody; you want to cling to the other. The other keeps you occupied. Without the other you become afraid of your own aloneness. And this is what people say, and lovers enjoy it very much. When somebody says to you, “I need you, I really love you,” you feel you are entering something beautiful but you are not. You are entering something destructive.

Freedom is lost. You cannot allow the other to be free, because if you allow freedom then you will have to face your loneliness and that you don’t want to do. So you cling, you hold onto the other, you possess the other. Even if it means being possessed by the other, you are ready to lose your freedom. You become mutual slaves, of each other.

Love as a need creates a “tunnel vision.” You become focused on one person and you are afraid that if the other person leaves you, you will not be able to live at all. One is willing to admit only a narrow range of sensations; all else is regarded as insignificant.

How can you possess a presence, a person? It is not a thing; you can never be the master. The other will go on asserting its freedom. The other will go on sabotaging your efforts to possess. The other is trying to possess you, and you are trying to possess the other. Nobody wants to be possessed, and everybody wants to be the possessor. Now, this is doomed to fail.

Sooner or later you will start felling life has no meaning. This kind of love is pathological, and it is the only kind that exists and is available in the world. It drives people neurotic, psychotic. It should be changed into love, not as a need but as a state. Then one can love life in more richness. Then one can love and yet allow the other freedom. Then love is non-possessive. But that love is possible only when you have learned how to live with your aloneness. When you can be alone and perfectly happy and you don't miss the other at all, only then you can love.

But now a totally different kind of love arrives – even to think of it will shock you. Then the lover says, “I don't need you, I love you.” It will look contradictory because you have always heard, “I need you, I love you very much.” You are acquainted with that approach.

But this is true and creative love, when you can say, “I don't need you, I simple love you.” Just meditate over it. Repeat it silently within yourself, “I don't need you, I love you” and a totally different dimension opens up. Now there is no need to possess, now there is no need to reduce the other to a thing, now there is no need to destroy her freedom, now there is no need to allow the other to destroy your freedom. Now love can exist with freedom. It is beautiful.

(Abridged from The Unio Mystica, Osho Times International, Osho International Foundation, www.osho.com)

(The Times of India, 10 March, 2017)

Labour of Love Frees You From Greed And Discontent

Sadhu Vaswani

An ancient Tao thought says: “Choose a job you love and you won't have to work a day in your life!”. The first secret of success is: Don't work just for wages, work for the love of God. *You can work too, for the love of humanity or the love of work itself. Your work then becomes a source of joy and delight.*

There is much talk about vocational education today. The word ‘vocation’ is derived from the Latin root which means ‘to call’. Let your work be calling. Let your work be a labour of love, something that you love to do and something that you enjoy doing, much more than just a source of monetary benefit. Labour of love leads to fulfillment.

In cities I find that when people are assigned work, they always ask: “What's in it for me?” or “What do I get for this?”. People work only for wages; they have forgotten what it is to view work as a source of delight. So work has become a cause of so much boredom and frustration for many.

Andrew Carnegie tells us that there are three types of people: The first type are those who do as little work as possible. The second type are those who do only what their work stipulates, nothing more. But the third type are those who do their duty and a little more. They are not bound by the clock. If there is work to be done, they will do it and more.

In the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna expounds his doctrine of karma yoga. He tells Arjuna: “Remember, you have the right to work, but not to fruit thereof”. You must work, you

must put in your best efforts, you must not slacken your endeavour's. But you must not be disappointed if, you do not get the result you seek. Perhaps many of you find this unacceptable. You will ask me, "But what about my just compensation? How can anyone work without wages in this world of growing needs?" Indeed work and wages go together. They are two sides of the same coin. Whether you work for wages or otherwise, wages are sure to fall into your lap. I am talking about your attitude to work. It is your attitude that will make your life a success or otherwise. *And your work should be an expression of your love. Those of us who work only for wages never experience real joy. And when you love your work, you will find it a joy forever.*

There is no happiness in wealth; but there is considerable wealth in the experience of happiness. I urge you, stop working simply for wages; start working for love. Many of us tend to equate success with money: More and more money, more material acquisitions. The truth is external achievements and monetary wealth cannot constitute true success nor can they guarantee happiness. Power, prestige, position, designations, perks, social influence, all these are in the outer. They touch the fringe of life, they don't enter the depths within.

What then is success all about? Success is the ability to be happy and make others happy, the ability to love and be loved, the ability to remain in peaceful harmony with yourself, with those around you and with God's cosmic laws.

The Times of India, August 2, 2005

Love's Labour Is Never Lost

Deepal Agheda

This is a true story. The Japanese usually tear open the wooden walls while renovating their homes, as there are hollow spaces between them.

While bringing down such wall, a man found a live lizard inside. A nail hammered from outside had stuck one of its feet. He felt great pity for the lizard.

But at the same time there also arose in him some curiosity. Upon checking, the man realized that the nail had been hammered nearly 10 years ago when the house was built.

The shocked house owner knew the lizard had survived without moving in the dark partition for 10 years. For the man this seemed impossible. He wondered how the lizard had survived.

So he stopped the demolition work and observed the lizard—what it did, what and how it ate? Sometime later, he chanced upon another lizard, with food in its mouth.

He was stunned and touched deeply. The second lizard has been feeding the nailed one for the past 10 years.

Such love happens even with God's tiny creatures. The man was amazed. That day he learnt that love could work wonders. A tiny lizard had cared for its partner for 10 long years without giving up on hope.

I was touched when I read this story and started wondering about relationships between family members, friends, lovers, brothers and sisters. Not many of us blessed with brilliant minds care much for other humane beings.

We are not willing to tear walls that create divides between our near and dear ones. We want these barricades as they protect us from the outside world and from the intrusions into our world.

And when one of us is nailed down with pain and sorrow, how many of us care to lend our help and services to the victim? Many times our affections dry up and we abandon the victim to his or her fate.

Therefore, we should never abandon our loved ones.

For, love is a gift. Take it and let it grow. Love is a sign we should wear. Let it show. Love is an act. Do it and let it go.

The Hindustan Times, October 22, 2005

True Power

Power is of two kinds. One is obtained by the fear of punishment and the other by acts of love. Power based on love is a thousand times more effective and permanent than the one derived from fear of punishment.

M. K. Gandhi

Immortal Love Is Within Reach

Sri Sri Ravishankar

What is the purpose of life? What do we want? Some say the purpose of life is to ensure that one doesn't come back to this planet because it is bereft of love. When love is there, it is painful.

By taking a multilateral view of life, one can begin to see the purpose of life from all angles. Then we come to realize that we want a love that doesn't die out, a love that doesn't cause pain, a love that grows and stands forever.

Suppose you were immensely successful and you had all the riches at your command and you were famous but love was absent from your life. Then life would not really be worthwhile; it would appear barren.

From every angle we would come to the same conclusion that all we want for in life is love, a divine love, a love that is ideal. The purpose in life is to bloom in that ideal love.

Why then do we lead a loveless life? It is our ego which is obstructing our path towards achieving love. What is ego? Ego is like a dream. A dream exists until it doesn't exist. You cannot call a dream real but you cannot call it unreal either because you have the experience.

Ego is simply being unnatural. If the ego is so unnatural why does every human being have an ego? The reason we have the ego is because it is necessary in some way for our growth in life.

A seed has a covering or shell over it and when you soak it in water, it sprouts and then the cover peels off. Similarly the ego is a necessary unnaturalness that develops in you as a child of two or three years. Before that, you are in a state of total, innocent, blissful love.

Then the ego forms a cover. What knowledge does is to uncover this shell from you and make you again like a child, natural, simple and innocent. When you are natural, simple and innocent, there is no ego.

The ego is not a substance, it is a non-substance much like darkness. Darkness is only lack of light. There is nothing called an ego that has substance. You could say it is just a lack of maturity or a lack of pure knowledge.

How can the ego be overcome? Through observing oneself and by going deep into one's self in meditation.

A sutra in the Narada Bhakti Sutras says: "Knowledge is one of the aids to discover the naturalness". Half knowledge brings ego in the first place. When knowledge is full, when knowledge has matured, the ego drops and simplicity dawns. Ego is just a lack of total development, a lack of total understanding. That doesn't mean it should not have been there from the very beginning. The ego has been necessary but now you can grow out of it.

Knowledge is an aid to develop our innermost layer, which is love. Everyone is made up of a substance called love. The purpose of knowing, the purpose of every civilization is to facilitate the opening of love.

Through understanding and through meditation, you get over these barriers and become simple, natural and innocent which leads to love.

We have been educated in many disciplines. We may know how to operate a complex computer but we falter when faced with the forces that make up life.

No one teaches us how to live life. We need to make that extra effort to learn more about our own mind and ego and find out who we are and why we are here. Only love can help us, widen our knowledge and understanding of life and the world around us.

The Times of India, April 24, 2003

Love, Revert Nature

Dharminder Singh Ubha

Nature is peerless in vastness, bounties and beauties. It is the richest treasure mankind has. Man can benefit from it, learn from it and enjoy it in countless ways. No other single source can educate his mind and sublimate his soul like nature does.

Wordsworth, while asserting that "Nature never did betray the heart that loved her" declares that nature is our best teacher and guide: "One touch from a vernal wood/may teach you more of man/of moral evil and of good, than all the sages can."

In yet another poem, he laments that in man's blind craze for material comfort, he has drifted from nature, as a consequence of which, he has lost spiritual depth and peace of mind.

"Our own sages and saints have said nature has a lot to give and teach us and if we want to put an end to the miseries of our life, we should go back to the lovely lap of our benign mother, nature.

Today's man is unhappy and discontented because he has gone away from nature and started attaching too much importance to worldly things. This attitude has made him greedy, selfish and narrow-minded.

The great lesson from nature is that it never discriminates between the great and the small, the rich and the poor, the young and the old. It treats all alike and distributes its bounties freely to whosoever approaches it. It inspires us to do good, to be kind to everybody and to add to the beauty of the world.

How bad that in his greed for more and more material comforts, man has started playing havoc with nature that sustains him, feeds him, soothes his heart

and sublimates his soul, which gives him endless joy and elates his spirit by making him forget the rough and tumble of this world! To conclude in Guru Nanak's words, "I am a sacrifice to Your almighty creative power which is pervading everywhere. Your limits cannot be known."

Isn't it time for us to think and be kind with nature?

The Hindustan Times, April 16, 2012

** What most of us call love, is not love, it is passion. True love springs from calmness. The centre of life is calmness. From this centre have sprung up all that you behold, these trees and gardens, this whole universe. Our love is expression of passion of appetites and desires. But true love springs from the centre of calmness. —Sadhu TL Vaswani*

Ideal of Simple Living And High Thinking

T. N Khoshoo

India needs eco-friendly development. Mahatma Gandhi said that economic development becomes relevant only when it is based on principles of environmental conservation and harmony and equity with social justice. Equity has an ethical content in the real world: it would involve sacrifice on the part of the privileged in favour of the less privileged. Gandhi conceded that a certain degree of physical harmony and comfort is necessary but above a certain level, it becomes more of a hindrance. So the ideal of creating an unlimited number of wants and satisfying them seems to be a snare that lures us away from the pursuit of the ideal of plain living and high thinking. *Our happiness really lies in contentment. Gandhi often said that an ounce of practice is worth more than a ton of preaching.*

Industrial countries on the fast track will eventually become ecological security risks, because they will not easily give up their present-day unsustainable lifestyles. In his essay the economic possibilities for our grandchildren, Lord Keynes said in 1930: "For at least another hundred years we must pretend to everyone that fair is foul and foul is fair; for foul is useful and fair is not. Avarice, usury and precaution must be our gods for a little longer still. For only they can lead us out of the tunnel of economic necessity and into daylight."

We need to usher in environmental education with regard to long-range ecological security. Natural, agro and industrial economic systems have to be both conserved and used in a sustainable manner. There has to be a healthy blend of environmental, social, developmental and economic imperatives. A sustainable society has faith

in science and technology as an instrument of environment friendly social and economic change because economic growth should not be at the expense of ecological assets. We should work in partnership with nature and conserve non-renewable resources and energy and reduce wastage.

We must believe that the earth's resources have to be protected and sustained not only for humankind but for other species, too, for present and future generations.

We need to share our resources across species as we are all interconnected as one giant living organism. The guiding principle of economics has to be the meeting of needs and not greed. Gandhi said: "The earth provides enough to satisfy every man's needs but not every man's greed." This age of consumerism can lead to over-extraction and over-consumption, resulting in pollution and eco-degradation, with serious environmental impact.

Market economy must include both the present and future costs of pollution and eco-degradation to help conserve our collective home. Using the polluter-pays-principle, the costs must be met by the manufacturer and or country concerned for failing to use environment-friendly technology.

Gandhi said: "Whenever you are in doubt or when the self becomes too much with you, apply the following test: recall the face of the poorest and weakest man you may have seen and ask yourself if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him. Will he gain anything by it? Will it restore him to control over his own life and destiny? In other words, will it lead to SWARAJ (self-rule) for the hungry and spiritually starving millions? Then you will find your doubts and you're self-melting away."

(Abridged from Teri's 'Mahatma Gandhi: An apostle of applied human ecology.')

The Times of India, 2 October, 2004

Endurance Is Perseverance

Taru Bahl

The most tangible form of endurance is perseverance. When stuck in the middle of a traffic jam no amount of hooting, honking, abusing, fidgeting and restlessness is going to get one smoothly through the traffic. Just turning off the ignition accepting the fact that there is precious little that one can do and waiting for things to clear up is the sanest option. Seconds before a train or airplane taxis to a halt, busy bodies with cell phones in one hand and laptop computers in the other make a mad scramble to leap off. Crowding around the exit point, they push jostle and create a palpable aura of tension. Seconds before the train can halt they tumble out in the hope that the few moments that they have gained will pitch them that much forward in their onward march to wherever they are headed. Patience is obviously something they haven't heard of. And they haven't bothered to calculate if the minutes that they have gained by hurrying and scurrying has been a gain in any real terms. Haven't we seen how racing cars driven by people possessed, overtaking us from the left are found at the next traffic signal thanks to the slow moving traffic and numerous other hindrances. To be quick, fleet footed, efficient and effective are definite advantages but when they amount to creating high stress levels without adding to the bottom line in any way, it may not be a bad idea to rethink and learn to relax, take it easy, hold on and persevere.

The spirit of endurance and perseverance is one of the most powerful concepts that man can ever learn and imbibe. The beauty is that it can fulfill one's objective in life with no external effort. We don't necessarily have to conquer others, we only need to be tough with ourselves. Oriental philosophy has always pointed out that it requires strength to endure, understand difficulties, suffer hardships

predict risks and tolerate abuse. *The human spirit has to triumph over itself even if it has to endure the humiliation of defeat and criticism.*

The fable of the Pung Bird demonstrates this most amply. Legend has it that in the North Sea of China there is a fish called Kun which is thousands of metres long and which when grows older evolves into a bird called Pung. It flies over the great sea southward to its destination the Celestial Pool beating the water with its majestic wings for over 3,000 Km. It takes six months to reach such a height before it is ready. Now with its back against the pure blue sky and nothing blocking it, it can set upon its course southward without any obstacles. How can one compare such magnitude with the morning mists the dust or insignificant creatures? Now, why does the Pung have to struggle upward 90,000 km without making any visible progress before starting his journey southward?

When a person makes a trip to the nearby woods to return a few hours later he doesn't have to prepare a supply of food. If he has to travel 100 Km, he would need to prepare food for a single night. If he has to travel 1000 Km he would need to prepare food for three months. What do the cicadas and doves understand about such matters? They don't know what spring and autumn is all about. The moral of the story is that when one is destined for greater accomplishments in life the preparation can be extensive. Just as the Pung bird struggled upward without making any visible progress towards its destination and despite the ridicule from other birds and insects it continued to flap its wings straight upward until it arrived at a greater height above the earth's surface. With lesser birds still chattering about his foolishness, he spread his great wings and soared effortlessly southward and into the Celestial Pool. *If we have to draw inspiration from the Pung bird we have to develop our powers of endurance even in the face of*

criticism, ridicule and physical hardship in order to achieve goals and to scale greater heights of physical, material and spiritual success.

Expecting instant results and solutions to the most complex problems is both the boon and bane of the present generation. While in some cases this sense of urgency actually helps maximize potential and garner support there are times it ends up complicating things further. The secret of success then lies in two words—persistence and resistance. Persist in what must be done and resist what ought not to be done. Emerson said, “a man is braver not because he is braver than anyone else but because he is braver for ten minutes longer.” Also remember that not all problems in life have a quick fix solution. *At times the solutions may be slow in coming and at others the solution may be in just learning to endure an unchangeable situation. Wisdom lies in knowing the difference.*

Milan Kundera in his book *Slowness* talking of speed says, “The man hunched over a speeding motorcycle can focus only on the present instant of his flight, he's caught in a fragment of time cut off from both the past and the future. He's wrenched from the continuity of time, he's outside time”. In other words he's in a state of ecstasy. In that he's unaware of his age, his wife, his children, his worries and so he has no fear because the source of fear is in the future and a person freed of the future has nothing to fear. Speed then is the form of ecstasy of the technological revolution bestowed upon man. As opposed to the motorcyclist the runner is always present in his body, forever required to think about his blisters, his exhaustion. When he runs, he feels his weight, his age and is more conscious than ever of himself. This all changes when man delegates the faculty of speed to a machine. From then on his own body is outside the process and he gives over to a speed that is non-corporeal, non-material.

There is pleasure in letting things take their own natural course. Resistance beyond a point only brings about strife and discord. Patience, stoic determination, gentle understanding and calm assessment of the situation are traits of an intelligent and wise mind. Going with the flow is not about giving up self-effort but rather about accepting reality. It is about recognizing when it is time for action and when it is time to sit it out. After doing all that was humanly possible during the period of crisis and finding that the situation is still beyond remedy one must anchor oneself with the spirit of endurance and let the dark moment/night pass.

Asians, who have a history of being the ideal role models when it comes to enduring suffering and hardship, swear by the principle of turning inactive to be able to conquer crisis. They feel when the pulls and pressures are all in the negative direction and everything seems to be tumbling down, just step back and wait till the dust settles so that you don't panic and your efforts don't backfire.

If on the one hand perseverance is all about enduring on the other hand it is about persistence too. But too much persistence may not always be pleasant attribute in one's mental make-up. It could be annoying and irritating, taking a person further away from his objectives. There is a certain harshness and arrogance in a person who insists on being persistent. He is guided by the singular purpose of his own need with utter disregard of the imposition he makes on the other's time, resources and sensibilities. One must know when to keep on trying in the hope of bettering the scenario and when to gracefully quit and move into other alternatives. Along with having the wisdom to persist when there is hope of reversing a trend or decision in one's favour one also needs to learn the art of sometimes suffering the insufferable, tolerating the intolerable and enduring the unendurable.

The Tribune, September 12, 1999

Acres of Diamond

I. M. Soni

When I was young, I read a story, *Acres of Diamonds*. It left a deep impression on my mind.

As I grew older, the story lost its sheen but it had sunk in my subconscious mind. Now, when I dig into the depths of my mind to find a tangible idea, the subconscious throws up some nuggets. Today I thought of the aforementioned story.

It deals with a farmer given to lassitude and laziness. He owns several acres of land which lie fallow and are overgrown with thistles and thorns. The farmer, in sheer despair, sells the land at a throwaway price.

The new owner is a digger. He tills the land day and night, every inch of it. Acre by acre, he proceeds to plough and turn his land. His sweat and labour bear fruit.

Most of what was previously infertile becomes fertile and yields rich crops. He finds a hidden treasure acres of diamonds. There are diamond mines underneath in the fallow lands.

The fable unfolds a moral: the land that was once thought to be fallow was, in fact, rich with diamonds. It was fallow because it had not been ploughed.

The American steel magnate, Andrew Carnegie, has postulated his philosophy: "To get one ounce of gold, you have to move mountains of dirt."

His philosophy basically says that if we want to find the 'diamonds' hidden within us, we have to dig deep and remove the debris from inside us. The mind will soon start yielding diamonds.

Of course, that does not mean that there will be

no setbacks, obstacles or difficulties. There will be plenty of these. They are in fact, like the coal that miners come across which indicate that the gold is near.

Obstacles on the path to success are like milestones. They should not be looked upon as mill-stones round the neck. Hardships and difficulties test one's character and moral stamina.

A person who detests hard work can never succeed.

Many rich parents pamper their children. They spare no expense in giving them necessities, comforts and luxuries. One may say that there is nothing wrong with this. But the truth is that these parents are depriving their children of the ability to cultivate fortitude.

Hard work is a blessing, not a curse. It is an instrument with which we can chisel our fate and personality.

Luther, when translating the Bible, took for his motto: "No day without some work accomplished."

Those who have excelled in their work whatever the sphere have worked hard day after day. Hard labour it was, but it brought its reward.

Peter the Great laid aside his royal robes and put on workman's clothes. At 26, disdaining luxury, he went on a tour to educate himself. He served as an apprentice to a ship-builder in Holland. In England, he slogged in paper and saw mills, getting the treatment meted out to an ordinary worker.

Many deceive themselves thinking that they are born genius if they are, they are lucky. Others may do well to undeceive themselves, by making up their mind that industry is the price of all that they want to achieve and they must at once begin to pay it.

Genius needs industry as much as industry needs genius.

Oliver goldsmith, however, thought four lines a day was good enough for a day's work. He took seven years to write 'The Deserted Village'.

He records, "By a long habit of writing one acquires a greatness of thinking and a mastery of manner, which holiday writers, with ten times the genius, may vainly attempt to equal."

If you have set your sight at achieving something worthwhile, nurse your desire daily on constructive thoughts about it. A word of caution: don't let it remain a mere idle desire. Convert it into a goal. Emerson observes: *small minds have desires: great minds have goals.*

The Tribune, April 7, 2002

Best Ideas

Your best ideas, those eureka moments that turn the world upside down, seldom come when you're juggling emails, rushing to meet a deadline or in a high-stress meeting. They come when you're walking the dog, soaking in the bath or swinging in a hammock.

Carl Honore

Faith Gives Courage And Works Wonders Unseen

Sadhu Vaswani

Historian Will Durant has described the age we live in as the Age of Reason. This era has succeeded the Age of Faith. But Rabindranath Tagore has said: “Faith is the bird that sings when the dawn is still dark”. It would be a pity indeed if faith is on its way out as some believe it is.

Faith is not blind. Faith is seeing with the eyes of the mind. Even as we have two physical eyes with which we see the wonderful physical world around us—trees, flowers, streams, hills, dales, forests, stars and sky—even so, with the eyes of faith we can perceive goodness, peace and joy all around us.

It has been said that faith the invisible, believes the incredible and receives the impossible. When fear knocks on the door of your heart send faith to open it and you will be free from distress.

Faith is believing that God loves you. God loves each and every one of us. He has a plan for us. He will provide for all our needs. St. Teresa wanted to build an orphanage. At the time, she had only three shillings. But she was not in the least worried. She said to those who ridiculed her, “With three shillings, Teresa can do nothing. But with God and three shillings, there is nothing that Teresa cannot do”.

On the pathways of life we face different types of weather including stormy and smooth, wild and mild. We come face to face with difficulty and danger, disease and death. We feel frightened. If only we cultivate the faith that such experiences come to us not without a purpose,

we need never be afraid.

Seek refuge in the supreme and trust Him entirely. Though storms howl and darkness grows deeper. His light will continue to shine on us. He is nearer to us than our heart beats and closer to us than our breathing. He is omnipresent. He is a friend. He is the all loving one whose ears are ever attentive to the prayers of His children. He is the all-knowing, one who will do the best for us. With Him all things are possible and if He does not answer some prayers realize that it is not because He cannot do them but because He knows that they are not for our good.

A philosopher was once asked by a King, “Who is the happiest man in the world?” Pat came the answer: “He who is closest to God”. “And how may we get closer to God?”. The king wanted to know. “Through the practice of silence”, he was told.

The Upanishad says: “The mind alone is the cause of man’s bondage; the mind is also the instrument of man’s liberation”. It is silence that can still the mind; it is silence that will awaken the Supreme within you. In silence you can meditate; in silence you can communicate with God. You can engage in an intimate and loving conversation with God, for he listens to your inner most prayers.

In your happy moments—Glorify God!

In your difficult moments—Pray to God!

In your quiet moments—Spend time with God!

In your painful moments—Praise God!

Every moment— Draw closer to God!

The Times of India, September 13, 2005

With Faith, Banish Fear & Boost Self-Esteem

Avtar Meher Baba

Faith is an important component in the life of a seeker. There are three kinds of faith: faith in self, faith in a Master and faith in life. It is because of faith that cooperative, social life becomes possible. It is faith in each other that facilitates free give and take of love, free sharing of work and its results. When life is burdened with unjustified fear of one another, it becomes cramped and restricted.

Children have natural faith in their elders. They instinctively look to them for protection and help without requiring any letters of introduction. This quality of trusting others persists in later life unless a person is rudely shaken by others who, through self-interest, deceive and exploit them.

Unshakeable faith in oneself is as rare as implicit faith in another. Few have developed it to the degree which ensures effective and constructive control of oneself. In most people faith in self is always being challenged and undone by constant experience of one's own frailties and failings even when one knows what is right. If an individual has no faith in himself, he cannot develop those qualities that invite and foster faith from others.

The confidence that you can remain loyal under trying circumstances to your own perception of what is right is the foundation of the superstructure of a reliable character. Self-confidence which is in perpetual danger of being shattered, could be securely established when one has an inspirational role model or models (that one chooses carefully).

Faith in a (credible) guide or spiritual master is important because it nourishes and sustains faith in oneself and faith in life in the face of setbacks and failures, obstacles and difficulties, limitations and failings. Life, as we understand or perceive it, may be narrow, twisted and perverse but life as one sees in an evolved master is unlimited, pure and untainted.

Faith must be carefully distinguished from mere intellectual belief or opinion. When a person has a good opinion about someone, he is said to have a certain kind of faith in him. But this kind of opinion does not have that spiritual potency which belongs to a living faith in a Master. Living faith, on the other hand, has the most vital and integral relation with all deeper forces and purposes of the psyche. It is a powerful factor that reconstructs the entire psyche; it is creatively dynamic.

For the disciple, living faith in a Master becomes the supreme source of inspiration and unassailable self-confidence. It expresses itself primarily through the spirit of active confidence in the Master and not merely through some opinion about him. Living faith is not a sort of certificate given by the disciple to the Master. It is an active attitude of confidence in the Master, expressing itself not only through implicit and trustful expectation of help from him but also through the spirit of self-surrender and dedication.

True faith is grounded in the deeper experiences of the spirit and the unerring deliverances of purified intuition. It is not to be regarded as the antithesis of critical reason but as the unfailing guide of critical reason. When critical reason is implemented by a deep and living faith, based on pure intuition, its functioning becomes creative, fruitful and significant.

The Times of India, July 5, 2016

What You Give, You Get From Life

Sadhu Vishwamurtidas

“Every action has an equal and opposite reaction,” declared Isaac Newton in the 1700s. “Garbage in, garbage out,” say Geeks. Sow a seed, reap a fruit. Plant a chilli, you get chillies back. Plant a mango, you get mangoes back. But how is it that sometimes people sow chillies but get mangoes and others sow mangoes, but get chillies? There’s no inconsistency in this; the chillies are simply fruits of some earlier actions of decisions and the mangoes are yet to come.

You can’t force a seed to grow. You can’t compel a flower to blossom. These things depend on the seed type and environmental conditions. Therefore, one must not get dejected, one must not stop sowing good seeds, because there exists no other way to receive good fruits. Often, bitter, drier fruits are more nutritious and health inducing than the succulent, sweeter ones.

This is the natural law of the universe. You get what you give, though you may not recognise it, because, it may arrive earlier or later than you expect it to or it could come in a somewhat different guise. For example, when we exhale, we give carbon dioxide to plants and trees. The plants and trees in turn metabolise it and release oxygen, which we again metabolise and return to the trees—in the form of carbon dioxide. If we did not give carbon dioxide to the trees, they would perish eventually and so would we. The cells in our body nourish one another, supporting and supplying each other with nutrients the other needs. The entire biological and ecological system combined makes possible the sustenance of the fabulous and intricate organic system’s we call ‘life.’

Similarly, if you befriend, you will be befriended. If you love, you will be loved. Love family and friends

enrich one’s life more than any amount of wealth. But you need to make continual investments of friendliness, affection and love to keep the system fully functioning. This is because we are all the human being and we don’t love all the time. Sometimes we say nasty things to a loved one—may be we say things we don’t really mean, but it amounts to withdrawal from the love account. What you take out, needs to be redeposited as early as possible.

Affection and love are not about giving away money or buying expensive gifts, although it is necessary to do these things on certain occasions. When you give of your possessions, you give little. *When you give of yourself, you give all.* Time, a sympathetic ear-humour or a helping hand in times of distress are all what more people need to receive and to give.

Most of us think we give much more to society than we receive. Psychologists call it self-serving Bias: we have an unwitting capacity to forget our neighbour’s good deeds, remember our good ones and forget our bad ones. We feel shortchanged. Just a little effort and reflection will show that the balance is not always tilted the other way.

Giving benefits your health. *14 year study of 2,700 people in Michigan, U.S. revealed that those who do charity work lived longer, were relatively free from heart disease, had lower blood pressure and greater peace of mind.* The dynamics of happiness are asymmetrical fulfillment comes from giving, not receiving. The fact that so many people in the world are still disappointed, frustrated and unfulfilled despite the fact they live in opulence compared to many others is evidence that they have only received. And the real magic of giving lives in the way you give.

Give with your whole being, your whole heart—remember, half a seed cannot germinate. *And after planting your seeds, expect absolutely nothing in return, give without remembering you gave and take without forgetting you took,*

Times of India, 4 September, 2002

Work And Not Expectation, Produces Results

Swami Swaroopananda

The only thing we all seek is happiness. But, we indulge in contrary actions: one gets married because one wants to be happy; one seeks divorce because one wants to be happy! Is permanent happiness really possible? 'Yes', says Sri Krishna, and gives wonderful tips for happiness, success, satisfaction and self-discovery in the Bhagwad Gita.

His first message is, 'Refuse to be miserable'. Life can be painful, but it need not be sorrowful. If you want to be happy, find occasions to be cheerful. Before you fall into self-pity and blame games, remember that responsibility comes to only those who feel responsible. Challenges are faced by the strong and courageous, and if life brings you such opportunities, then turn failures into success. This is the art of right conduct in life.

Hence, develop the right perspective. If we choose to see situations as problem, we will be bogged down. If we choose to see them as opportunities, we will be inspired. Take them as occasions to make a difference, to make a change, and develop inner strength.

Second, pay full attention to the action at hand. Mostly, our mind is busy focussing on results. They do not come according to our whims and fancies. They emerge from the quality of our action in the present. There is a widespread misunderstanding that Krishna directs us to work, without expecting results. Actually, Krishna advices us to concentrate our energy and attention on the work at hand. For example, do not worry whether your children are going to look after you in your old age! Enjoy them in the present. Even if the outcome of your actions is unfavourable, at least you would have enjoyed the journey.

Therefore, plan out the result and work with a sense of expectation; it inspires you to work, but recognize that the work itself will produce the result, not the expectation. So, expect if you need to, but do not be disappointed. Calmly accept the result and learn from it. If expectation drives you to action, acceptance keeps you working till the end. Apply this to every situation in life. Once you decide to accept the result, not only will you be mindful in your work, you will continue to expect as well as accept. Thereby, you will enjoy both the process and the result. Hence, do your best, leave the rest and accept whatever comes. This is the right attitude, born of right knowledge.

Another beautiful message is: 'Happiness in life does not depend upon things, but on the people you love and are loved by.' Therefore, love and be loved. Team work is possible, solidarity in the family unit is achievable, harmony in society is possible-only if there is mutual sharing. Share whatever you have in abundance. If you have talent, knowledge, wealth, or even a charming smile, share it freely.

Always remember that values are more valuable than valuables. Whom do we like in this world? Become whatever we admire in others. If we want people to be kind to us, be kind; if we want happiness, give happiness to others. One, who brings values into his life, becomes valuable. We should never compromise on our values, irrespective of the behaviour of people around us. The greatest value we respect in others, is humility. The greatest spiritual knowledge is gained by only those who are humble.

Apply these tips in your daily life. Live the Gita and gain permanent happiness - here and now!

(The writer is global head, Chinmaya Mission)

(The Times of India, 12 February, 2019)

The Ananda of Giving Without Expectation

Kamal Jain

Nature is abundant in giving. Earth becomes unique and rare due to this very abundance of nature. Unlimited opportunities, quantities of things and diverse forms of life are available in nature along with infinite time and space. Nature returns manifold of whatever it gets. The generosity of nature is to ensure that life goes on and thrives. Nature finds joy and happiness in this and it is enriched by only giving liberally.

Many believe in maximizing wealth and think that by giving, they will lose all of it. But in the domain of the heart, giving is not equivalent to losing. Generosity and kindness are two qualities which prompts one to give and true giving comes from the same source inside us known as inner bliss which is supreme happiness blended with contentment.

Enough to share

Generosity stems from our belief that we have enough to share. It is the most natural, outward expression of an inner attitude of compassion and conviction that whatever excess we have, is for the benefit of those who are in need. Rivers do not drink their own water, nor do trees eat their own fruits. Even the rain clouds don't eat the grains reared by them. They enjoy in giving only. Our devotion to developing the habit of giving like the river, sun or earth brings out the quality of generosity in us.

Mark Twain said that kindness is the language which the deaf can hear and blind can see. Lao Tzu wrote "Kindness in words creates confidence. Kindness in thinking creates profoundness. Kindness in giving creates Love."

Sometimes we have enough, but are incapacitated by our greed, and so we do not share what we have. Unless we are content, we can't even think of giving anything. Greatness is not what we have, but it is in what we give. That's why great people use their wealth for the benefit of others. A great sage in Babylon said, "The reward of charity depends entirely upon the extent of the kindness in it."

Generous and kind

We may be afraid of generosity because we may think that someone may take advantages or oppress us. But by cultivating generosity we oppress only our greed and attachment, allowing our true nature to express itself. Cultivating generosity and kindness enables us to graduate from the 'taking mindset' to that of giving.

Giving does not mean just giving money and other material things. Erich From, a psychoanalyst and philosopher, said that we should give to others, all that is alive in us – our interest, understanding, knowledge, humour – everything in us that's good. In doing so, we enhance the sense of aliveness in others while enhancing our own. When we give, we get a "heightened vitality" of what it means to be human.

Once giving becomes our attitude, it can be in any form. It could be a kind word, a simple smile or appreciation, sharing knowledge or giving support to someone during a difficult time. Giving in terms of our time, patience, wisdom, compassion, tolerance and caring are worth more than anything money can buy. Giving simply is pouring out the goodness of our hearts with no self-serving motives.

(The Times of India, 19 August, 2019)

Think About It: What Makes A Good Life?

Rajiv Vij

A great career, financial success, a nice family, lots of friends, an active social life and exciting holidays makes a good life, right? Think again. Often, I have admired the cheerfulness and tranquility of many of the security guards, cleaners and gardeners at our building. They arrive at work earlier than required, are always very willing to help and they do it with a smile. I have chatted with a couple of them at times and found their approach to life a reminder of what makes a good life.

Firstly, true quality of life is a reflection not of our standard of living but how we experience life within. Secondly, it is a measure of our level of freedom from our volatile emotional-mental states; how well we win over our frequent feelings of anxiety, fear and envy or craving for a different life. I have noticed three principles that contribute to such a good life.

1. Morality: we cannot be at peace or experience emotional freedom without a clear conscience. A high sense of moral integrity is important for a healthy inner life. Without strength of character, we can easily compromise on 'minor' infractions on integrity. We tell white lies, choose convenience over righteousness and assume that the end somehow justifies the means. It doesn't!

The emotional residue of any wrongdoing stays and accumulates in our psyche and manifests itself in one negative emotion or other. For example, guilt results in anxiety, irritability and low self-esteem. Immoral conduct in business or personal life corrupts and weakens us. Choosing to do the right thing strengthens our inner being.

2. Inner Compass: To experience emotional

freedom, it's important to live life on our own terms. We feel free when we align our life to our innate traits, core values and our life's calling. We carry enormous emotional baggage when we are trying to live a life that we believe others expect us to.

One of the biggest reasons for stress in our lives is our constant propensity to compare ourselves with others. Living by our inner compass relies on feeling grateful for and at peace with who we are and our circumstances. We don't crave for a different life and choose not to compare ourselves, our life or our progress, with others.

3. Wisdom around Control: One of the factors contributing to our inner suffering is our desire to control outcomes-from advancement at work and children's future to longevity and others' perception of us. Being focussed on goals and doing our best to reach them is healthy. However, with our high achievement-orientation, we routinely obsess about the outcomes. That significantly increases our emotional burden.

Wise people know the delicate balance between will power and letting go. They do their best on what's in their control and are wise enough to let go of the temptation to worry about what's not in their control. That's what can help us overcome our constant yearning for favorable outcomes and fully enjoy the present. It also helps us be compassionate towards ourselves, our colleagues and loved ones.

As you may notice, these principles, while not necessarily easy to live by, are great social equalizers. They are within the reach of almost anyone, irrespective of their financial or social status. That's how some of the staff in my building are happy and peaceful and lead a good inner life. I guess, you and I can, too!

(The Times of India, 2 April, 2019)

Make The Effort, Bring Joy Into Your Life

Jaya Row

Do you want to wake up joyful every morning, jump out of bed with enthusiasm, excitement, with a thirst for life irrespective of your circumstances? Everybody wants happiness. Yet only a few really find it. Why is it so difficult to find joy? We are looking for it in the wrong place!

Life is designed such that anything that gives pleasure in the beginning yields sorrow in the end. True happiness appears in the mask of sorrow. Yet people seek instant pleasure, only to find pain. Learn this basic truth and you can avoid a lot of anguish. Ancient Indian seers discovered many such laws and presented them as the science of Vedanta. They led us away from momentary excitement to lasting happiness.

What makes you prefer junk food over healthier options; prefer to laze around than exercise? Why do you give up a lifetime of happiness for a few seconds of 'joy'? You are acting on the whims and fancies of the mind, disregarding the advice of the intellect. The mind is attracted to instant gratification. The intellect picks short-term pain for long-term gain. The mind is irrational, unstable and undependable. The intellect is rational, stable and dependable. Consult the intellect and embark on a concerted programme to develop the intellect.

Most people act with the attitude to taking, rather than giving. It is so pleasing to take, and painful to give. Yet the law is- give you gain, grab you lose. The mere thought of giving empowers you, makes you creative and successful. All givers are happy. And giving transforms you from an ordinary mortal to an extraordinary Immortal. Follow this simple principle and miracles will unfold.

People are chasing after sense objects in the belief that the more they have the more they will enjoy. In fact, they are sculpting a life bereft of enjoyment. It is regulated contact with sense objects that gives lasting enjoyment. Let the intellect decide the quantum and frequency of contact and you will enjoy life fully till the last day of your life.

In relationships you want others to cater to you, pamper you, and meet with your expectations. You vociferously stipulate your demands. Rarely do you consider the other person's needs. Little do you know you are signing up for a life of conflict, pain and loneliness. Love people for what they are, not for what they do for you. Love must be unconditional. It has no reference to any return, tangible or intangible. The more you reach out to people with love, the more they adore you. You become fulfilled.

You want better homes, luxurious cars, exotic food, fancy vacations and more of everything. You are fanning desire. Ride on desire, the object of desire runs away from you. Rise above desire, and the object comes to you. Fix a higher ideal. Dedicate yourself to the well-being of others. Your desires will get fulfilled.

Some people seek knowledge. But they operate out of mere curiosity. They are information gatherers. They look outwards in the world. This leads you nowhere. Turn your gaze inward. Discover the infinite resources of energy, vitality and happiness within.

Life is precious and your only duty is to live it joyfully. Tap into the wealth of Vedanta to experience abundant joy. At your core, you are peace and joy. Sense it. Embrace it. Live it. Become one with it.

(The Times of India, 3 August, 2019)

What Goes Around Comes Around

Partap Lalwani

He almost didn't see the old lady, stranded on the side of the road, but even in the dim light of day, he could see she needed help. So he pulled up in front of her Mercedes and got out. His Pontiac was still sputtering when he approach her.

Even with the smile on his face, she was worried. No one had stopped to help for the last hour or so...was he going to hurt her? He didn't look safe; he looked poor and hungry.

He could see that she was frightened, standing out there in the cold. He knew how she felt. It was that chill which only fear can put in you. He said, "I'm here to help you, ma'am. Why don't you wait in the car where it's warm? By the way, my name is Bryan Anderson."

Well, all she had was a flat tire, but for an lady, that was bad enough. Bryan crawled under the car looking for a place to put the jack, skinning his knuckles a time or two. Soon he was able to change the tire. But he had to get dirty and his hands hurt.

As he was tightening up the lug nuts, she rolled down the window began to talk to him. She told him that she was from St. Louis and was only just passing through. She couldn't thank enough for coming to her aid.

Bryan just smiled as he closed her trunk. The lady asked how much she owed him. Any amount would have been all right with her. She already imagined all the awful things that could have happened had he not stopped.

Bryan never thought twice about being paid. This was not a job to him. This was helping someone in need

and God knows there were plenty who had given him a hand in the past. He had lived his whole life that way and it never occurred to him to act any other way.

He told her that if she really wanted to pay him back, the next time she saw someone who needed help, she could give that person the assistance they needed and Bryan added, "And think of me."

He waited until she started her car and drove off. It had been a cold and depressing day, but he felt good as he headed for home, disappearing into the twilight.

A few miles down the road the lady saw a small café. She went in to grab a bite to eat and take the chill off before she made the last leg of her trip home. It was a dingy looking restaurant. Outside were two old gas pumps.

The whole scene was unfamiliar to her. The waitress came over and brought a clean towel to wipe her wet hair. She had a sweet smile, one that even being on her feet for the whole day couldn't erase. The lady noticed the waitress was nearly eight months pregnant, but she never let the strain and aches change her attitude. The old lady wondered how someone who had so little could be so giving to a stranger. Then she remembered Bryan.

After the lady finished her meal, she paid with a hundred dollar bill. The waitress quickly went to get change for her hundred dollar bill, but the old lady had slipped right out the door. She was gone by the time the waitress came back. The waitress wondered where the lady could be. Then she noticed something written on the napkin There were tears in her eyes when she read what the lady wrote: "You don't owe me anything. I have been there too. Somebody once helped me out, the way I'm helping you. If you really want to pay me back, here is what you do:

“Do not let this chain of love end with you.”

Under the napkin were four more \$100 bills.

Well, there were tables to clear, sugar bowls to fill and people to serve, but the waitress made it through another day. That night when she got home from work and climbed into bed, she was thinking about the money and what the lady had written. How could the lady have known how much she and her husband needed it? With the baby due next month, it was going to be hard.

She knew how worried her husband was and as he lay sleeping next to her she gave him a soft kiss and whispered soft and low, “Everything’s gonna be all right. I love you, Bryan Anderson.”

There is an old saying “What goes around comes around,” Today, I sent you this story and I’m asking you to pass it on...Let this light shine.

Please pass this on to a friend.

Good friends are like stars...You don’t’s always see them, but you know they are always there.

October 12, 2004

Rising Above the Dynamics of Happiness

M.N Kundu

Happiness is a state of mind, instantly produced by sense-gratification through touch, taste, smell, sight and hearing of the desirables. At the emotional level, it is produced by social interactions, love, affection, enthusiasm, patriotism, compassion and empathy. Intellectual happiness originates from critical appreciation of art and literature, creativity, scientific discoveries, leadership, decision - making and problem – solving. Higher happiness springs from giving and not grabbing, self – sacrifice for a great cause, devotion to God and self – extension through service. But happiness is invariably of dependent origin and intensely subjective. Be it dependent on external stimulus or internal process, happiness cannot last long, due to natural boredom and fresh desires.

Bertrand Russell did not want to go to eternal heaven, thinking it to be too boring with stereotyped pleasures without challenges, trials and tribulations of life which make it worth living. In fact, the concept of eternal heaven or hell is self – defeating as it is not in tune with the scheme of creation, where every created thing is subject to birth, growth, decay and death or transformation.

Unblemished happiness arises only from wishing for others’ happiness, while unending suffering arises from wishing exclusively for our own happiness. Hence Shantideva warned, “If you do not switch your concern from your own happiness to relieving others’ pain you will not achieve enlightenment and there will be no pleasure in your own cyclic existence.”

Permanent inner peace, independent of transient externals, is the nature of Being. Whereas impermanent

happiness, dependent on desired possessions and praised performance, is the pastime of the ego, which never allows us to remain in peace, as the ego survives on discontent. It suffers from identity crisis in case we remain in tranquillity and peace. It therefore whispers from within to get something more and something better and thereby remain unhappy.

Our quest for permanent happiness is self – contradictory, as impermanence is the very nature of all created things. They are invariably short – lived and give short – lived satisfaction to be followed by anxiety and unhappiness. Any worldly possession becomes dull and insipid in course of time.

Our ego invariably thrives on unhappiness and creates desire for something more and better than others so that its sense of separatism, isolation and supremacy can be continued. Ego therefore entangles us in a web of endless desires. Ego is the nucleus of our existence with fragmentary sense of self. As long as we live, it remains with us and deludes us.

When the flame of desire is extinguished, we get permanent peace within, beyond impermanent happiness from wish – fulfillment. Happiness is of dependent origin as it comes from external achievements, objects, situations, persons or events. Whereas, peace comes from within when the mental waves are silenced and stilled by negation of external necessities for existence at the level of Being. When our constant search for happiness is stopped by wisdom, we can sincerely serve suffering humanity, rising above our egotistic existence.

We are always conscious of living in the domain of doing and having as we are used to identifying ourselves only with these and nothing more. Beyond the well-

known domain of doing and possessing, we have the eternal domain of Being where we are free from external activities, possessions and happenings. At the level of pure being we are nothing but peace and divine joy, where outer waves of happiness and sorrow of dependent origin cannot reach.

(The Times of India, 4 January, 2019)

My Temple

The moment I have realised God sitting in the temple of every human body, the moment I stand in reverence before every human being and see God in him-that moment I am free from bondage, everything that binds vanishes.

Swami Vivekananda

Choosing the Right Path for Happiness

Hasmukh Adhia

A disciple asks his spiritual master. “Swamiji, why should I consider the world as dream-like when it appears so real to me? Even if it is dream-like, why should I not enjoy this dream experience?” These are questions that come to all of us. If objects of the world are so beautiful, why not enjoy them, instead of having vairagya, dispassion, towards them?

With a meaningful smile, the master replies, “Yes, of course. Feel free to enjoy them, but if you understand anand mimansa, you will make a better choice.” The disciple asks, “What is anand mimansa?” And Swamiji replies, “It is an understanding of the process of how we derive happiness,” and goes on to elaborate on the subject.

Availability of objects creates desire in the mind to enjoy them. Desire causes agitation. Work hard to achieve those objects. When our desire is fulfilled after a lot of effort the hitherto agitated mind becomes temporarily calm, which is what we call happiness. Happiness is in that sense, absence of agitation of mind.

Example of deep sleep is given to prove this. In deep sleep, we get maximum happiness, and we always crave to go back to it every day because it gives us so much happiness. Why is deep sleep a joyous state? Because in deep-sleep state the mind is free of thought and agitation. We do not know, in our sleep, whether we are male or female, rich or poor, doctor or officer. The reason is, as scriptures say, sat-chit-anand, which is the core essence of our Atman. Self is always full of joy. But our mental patterns interfere with the flow of joy coming from

within. The joy of self is manifested better when our mind is peaceful, just as the sun’s rays get better reflected in calm and steady water as compared to dirty and turbulent water.

There are two ways to make the mind happy. One is to fulfill desires related to enjoying worldly objects and second is to desist from allowing the mind to be agitated by discrimination of mind. We see a beautiful lake full of lotuses and feel like sporting in that. But do we see the possibility of crocodiles in it, asks Swamiji. Are we fully aware of pain involved in acquiring and maintaining objects? Do we remember the side-effects experienced by us after every enjoyment?

Object-oriented happiness gives us temporary relief. They require too much effort. They stop making us happy when we see more beautiful things around, and the mind gets agitated again to achieve those objects. As they say, happiness is an interlude between fulfillment of one desire and creation of another desire in the mind. Happiness eludes us all the time, and in the race to get more and more objects – including power and position – we get tired.

A wise person chooses the path of contemplation – by which mental agitation is prevented – and meditation, by which the happiness, which is at our core, is manifested for a longer time. He feels happy all the time. That is a state called purity of mind, which can come by doing punya karma, by performing one’s role selflessly and carefully. Meditation also creates abundant mental peace and happiness. A person with purity of mind is always full of joy, in all situations, favorable or unfavorable.

(The Times of India, Dec. 15, 2018)

Finding the Key to Happiness and Success

Sadhvi Kamal Vaishnav

What is the key to success and happiness in life? To live a life of your choice, you need to start making efforts in that direction. Hardship and suffering should not deter a person from the chosen path.

No one achieves anything automatically. Besides the usual hardships, there are many external factors that impact our growth like colour of skin, physical appearance or material status. But internal qualities are really what are required to make us successful and happy. We need to understand and appreciate what one has received, to fully cherish it.

Therefore, before embarking upon a new venture, journey or project, do some soul – searching. Ask yourself these questions:

- Why am I doing this?
- What are the consequences?
- Will I be able to succeed 100%?

Once you have decided on moving forward with an idea after doing a lot of critical thinking about all the aspects of your life, step up your preparations keeping in mind the following guidelines to achieve success:

1. Put your energy into creating a future while living in the present.
2. Learn from past mistakes; avoid repeating them.
3. Never try to run away from the hurdles you face.
4. Face your problems and overcome them with determination.

5. Befriend people who have a similar outlook as yours.
6. Education is your best friend. It empowers you, generates new ideological energy and sharpness to perform daunting new tasks.
7. One should be honest and simple but avoid falling prey to selfish mentality of others.
8. Whatever you start with, ensure its completion. Even if the end – result is zero, this experience will definitely add to your success in life. Do not leave any task incomplete due to fear of failure.
9. Make a strategy before starting any work; how you will execute it.
10. Study religious texts; they will purify your thoughts.
11. Be positive and prudent.
12. Success is found only in silence. Wise people speak because they have something to say, whereas fools speak because they have to say something.
13. Overcome ignorance by befriending knowledge.
14. Do not share your secrets with anyone.
15. Choose your friends carefully.
16. The biggest challenge in the path of success is one's own nature.
17. Nature examines a person's ability, like an exam. For example, there's an interview before any job. So get rid of faults in your own personality to achieve success.
18. Hard work and concentration are the first steps towards success.

19. In case of failure, change the strategy, never change the target.
20. Whatever religion one follows, it must be followed spiritually. By means of chanting, austerity, fasting and meditation, one stays in contact with the formless divine power and develops a positive outlook. This way one can cultivate qualities like service, generosity and humility.

These virtues make life simple and relaxed. Such people are not comfortable in the company of those who blaspheme, conduct meaningless conversations, and pass on negative thoughts. Such associations should be discarded at the earliest.

By adopting these guidelines principles, all of us can smoothly move forward, on the path of a happy and successful life.

Happiness In Goodness

Arvind Alok

Seek not happiness other than by being worthy of it. Seek happiness in the joy of duty which is nobly done, so said the Buddha. Here is a fundamental basis of the art of social interaction. Here is a moral teaching of human fellowship, not of abstract faith. Here is a concept of personal growth and the creation of happiness in any society.

At times people act out of anger and hatred even when they are not influenced by moods. The history of human race would have been different in kindness and consideration had been practiced at all times. However, throughout history, man is seem to have been more interested in inflicting suffering than in alleviating it. Albert had Einstein said, *“The world is too dangerous to live in, not because of people who do evil but because of people who sit and let it happen.”*

Due to man’s foolishness and ignorance, he cannot fathom the pain he inflicts on others. Poor and helpless animals are being tortured or killed by the so-called civilized men in their pursuit of sport and adventure. The poor and innocent are callously exploited to gratify and satisfy the craving of modern society. So many have to suffer and die for the entertainment and pleasure of a few. It is not only bad enough to strike at a defenseless animal or to exploit another human being, but also bad to laugh and take delight at such inhuman activities is to reveal the weaker and darker side of human personality. *Foolish people take delight in committing evil with a false sense of pleasure.*

There are some who can laugh at the pain suffered

by others. It is not funny when someone hurts himself. It is also not funny to see anybody suffer. Unfortunately, many do not seem to think that way. To be noble, people must renounce these defiled mental states. They must learn to develop compassion and a caring heart for the welfare of all creatures, great and small. Only then we would have done our duty well on this earth.

The Hindustan Times, May 23, 2012

** Seva helps us in realizing the truth that we all are one, that through us all flow the same life-stream, the same life-current and that there is no separation between one entity and another. By doing Seva, our whole outlook on human relationships undergoes a change. In serving others, I become a part of others and others become a part of me. For all of us are a part of the Greater Life we call God.*

—*Sadhu TL Vaswani*

The Rewards of Generosity

Taru Bahl

A wise and kind king once announced a huge reward for any creature in his kingdom who could prove that he was the most generous. The award was lifelong provision of board and lodging fit for royalty. A snake, who taught himself to be very generous, confidently arrived at the king's court to stake his claim. The king asked him to back his claim. The snake said: "When I shed my skin yesterday, I gave it to a young goat who had wandered close to my hole. I asked the goat to make himself a snakeskin bag from it since this is a trendy and a much-sought-after fashion accessory."

The king was not convinced. He asked the snake, "Of what use is a fashionable snake-skin bag to a goat? Generosity does not mean presenting thing you no longer require. It also does not lie in giving away things which are of no use to others, too. True generosity lies in giving away things they really need without their having to ask for it." This is the essence of generosity. It is in the ability to sense another's need and to spontaneously reach out and share. It is giving even that which is useful to us without expecting anything in return, not even gratitude.

Helping those in need is one of the major themes of the *Bible* and of Jesu's Ministry. As far back as the 13 B. C., Hebrew law institutionalized assistance to the poor. "When you reap the harvest of your land you shall not reap to the very edges of your field, nor shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest. You shall not strip your vineyard bare or gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the alien." The underlying conviction was that by giving others what they lack, we can find meaning and fulfillment in our lives.

Greed, avarice and a miserly disposition can only lead to an empty craving for more, sidetracking us completely from our spiritual journey.

Most non-givers, people who cling possessively to their belongings are convicted that the act of giving would diminish their bank of resources. Their miserliness stretches to even things like smiling at a co-commuter or extending a hand to help someone who has lost his balance. They are so bereft of tenderness and compassion that they fail to connect with people at the humane level.

However, when generosity becomes a way of life, the giver gets his satisfaction by winning a smile, a blessing, a few emotionally charged words, an exchange of life experiences and even with this is not forthcoming, he is still happy because he knows he has made a useful contribution. Although he does not enter a *quid pro quo* arrangement, at the end of the day he is richer in more ways than one. He understands and values the fact that service to others brings meaning and fulfillment to our lives in a way that wealth, power, possessions and self-centred pursuits can never match.

Each of us has something to offer to someone in need. We can give our money and time to charity, be a friend to someone who is sick and lonely, do volunteer work or be a peacemaker. Just doing our everyday jobs with integrity and respect for others is also an act of generosity. Generosity then is a sign of emotional maturity. It is being thoughtful and considerate without being asked to be. A generous person has a special in his eyes and a glow on his face as he experiences the richness of life which a selfish person can never do.

When Jim Corbett's book *The Man-Eaters of Kumon* was selected as the book of the month in 1944,

his publishers arranged for him a book promotion tour to London. He was looking forward to the 'paid holiday'. But when he learnt that there was an English soldier waiting to rejoin his family after World War II and was without a ticket, Corbett handed over his seat to him and chose to stay back in India.

It is said that when we lose ourselves in giving, we find the reason for living. We also begin to discover our true selves through the quality of the contributions we make. Contributions by definition are offerings. And offerings are the things we give in order to receive. The principle of service may appear impractical to the cynic who considers it mere words and platitudes but the principle of service is basic to our modern capitalistic society. It can best be summarised by the statement: "Give and you shall receive in return". It is reflection of the law of cause and effect—for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction.

When one gets right down to the meaning of success in business, one discovers it is simply to provide service. And the more service one provides the more successful one is. Henry Ford said: "To do more for the world than the world does for you is another way of judging how successful you are". He applied the same philosophy to his business and gave it credit for the incredible success he attained in his lifetime. The lasting wealth of this world is rightfully won by those who render quality service. And those who have surrounded themselves with a lasting prosperity cannot help but enrich the whole world through their efforts.

There is an interesting tale of how generosity was once enforced by law. Foirella La Guardia, a Mayor of New York, was known to be a compassionate and generous soul. One day he was presiding over the police court when an

old man, shivering with cold and fear was brought before him. He had been charged with the crime of stealing a loaf of bread. The old man asked for pardon, saying he had been forced to steal the bread since his family had not eaten a square meal for many days. The Mayor was touched by his poverty but felt he had to do justice and punish him for his act of stealing. He fined him \$10. The Mayor then took out a \$10. bill from his purse and laid it on the table. "This is the fine which I pay on your behalf", he said. He then went on to address the people seated in the courtroom. "All of you must pay a sum of 50 cents each for living in a city where a man has to steal in order to eat. This is a reflection on our collective moral psyche." The old man left the courtroom baffled with the ways of the law but richer by \$50.

Peace of mind can come only when our lives are in harmony with true principles and values. There is an intrinsic security in it which results from an interdependent living. There is also security that comes when we automatically, creatively and in a cooperative manner interact with the people around us.

The Tribune, March 12, 2000

To Be Happy, Be Free From Any Image of Self

Swami Sukhabodhananda

These days people are inclined towards glamour than goodness. Media highlights glamour. People are brainwashed to believe that glamour is equal to happiness. It is a wrong notion.

Why does glamour have more appeal than goodness?

There are three traits in human consciousness: Looking good, feeling good and being good. The most important is being good. Many people value feeling good. However, if feeling good is not anchored on being good, then people get into drugs. Drugs temporarily make you feel good, but are not good for your well-being. People also value looking good more because it helps to impress others. For them, looking good physically and psychologically is more important than feeling good and being good. There is nothing wrong in looking good provided it is based on being good. More often people want their image to be appreciated to feed their ego. Glamour is food for the ego; it decorates the looking-good pattern. Hence glamour is of greater appeal.

Is looking good wrong?

It is not a question of right or wrong. There exists a deeper meaning to it. A young girl, widowed at the age of 20, expressed that she was feeling lonely. I asked her why she could not remarry. She replied that she feared what people would say if she were to get married again. I asked her as to what people were talking about her right then. She replied that they felt that she was a good woman. However, I asked her if she was feeling good. In the eyes

of the people she was looking good but she herself was not feeling good.

People sacrifice feeling good and being good for the sake of looking good. When looking good is not based on being good then life becomes a mess. The world runs on the illusion of looking good. If you do not look good, you will not survive this rat race, little realizing that even if you win, you continue to be a rat. Are people happy in spite of being successful? Why is it that many successful people continue to be miserable? The reason being that they do not know the art of being happy. A study done on happy people showed that happy people were good finders. They always seek and find something good even in the bad.

Use the image of looking good but do not be used by the image of looking good. Just as you wear a dress, you are not the dress. To be happy, be free from any image of yourself. Be empty of image, thoughts and conclusions. This inner emptiness is joy. This is a new way of looking.

Why should I be a good individual if being good involves more problems?

People throughout the world want only good things to be spoken of them. Nobody wants others to talk ill of them. It is thus clear that we are all seeking goodness. Being a good individual requires facing problems. In fact, being a bad individual also involves facing problems. Problems are part of life; hence train your mind to enjoy problems. Just as you go to a gym and enjoy the workout in spite of sweating, train your mind to enjoy problems. Problems often make you a powerful individual.

The Times of India, December 2, 2005

Don't Trash Goodness, Give It A Chance

Swami Nikhilananda Saraswati

Two types of personalities are predominant in us: the good or Daivi and the bad or Asuri. The recognition and development of good qualities will lead one to moksha and freedom from bondage and pain. Negative qualities on the other hand lead one into bondage, resulting in sorrow and dependency.

The positive and the negative are present everywhere and in all time periods. Even in the worst possible scenario, one could find something good. If a tragedy like an earthquake happens, it reveals how there are those who help total strangers even at personal risk. We also come across those who take advantage by looting and robbing.

Since both the good and bad tendencies exist in us, we are both potentially divine as well as devilish. Environment, association and circumstances might exercise a major influence. For spiritual progress, satsang is a good option. This means not only the company of the wise but also the company of good people, good books, good literature, good food and good television programmes leave an impact.

It is important, therefore, to avoid what is negative and encourage the positive. Even if one sees a little good quality in oneself or in others, encourage it! You might find something positive even in those you perceive as your enemies. So give goodness a chance.

Negative forces attract similar tendencies that create a corresponding environment. The same is true for positive forces. It is, therefore, a good idea to cultivate positive qualities. The good and bad don't, have equal potential. Good has power to face all negativities. One strong good quality can fight against many negative ones.

Similarly, in society if strong and positive forces arise then automatically negative forces are negative.

All interaction is merely a play of these qualities. To overcome anger one has to enhance love. This is made pure when directed towards the Divine. Then anger dissolves. Once negative qualities are identified, they can be dealt with. They have the ability to take any form. Often anger appears as righteous and spiritual.

Dedicating oneself to a good person brings out the goodness from within us. In the service of such person we imbibe their qualities, when one dedicates one's life to God, then Godly qualities emerge. These qualities are inherent and have to be invoked and literally pulled out of us.

Goodness when dedicated to a higher cause gains tremendous power. Hanuman's dedication to Sri Rama was unshakeable. When people dedicate themselves to subtle causes like alleviating poverty, to ecology and the like they develop remarkable strength. Their goodness is used for the common good free of ulterior motives or intention of self-aggrandizement.

Goodness that is dedicated to God helps in the seeker achieving God realization and takes him on the path to higher ideals. Being good and philanthropic due to pressure from society or the law or other lower reasons is not permanent. But Goodness that springs from within is everlasting.

Notice negative trends as they rapidly become insurmountable. One cannot fight with a terrorist by becoming a terrorist. It is by strengthening the positive that one can override the negative. Remember goodness is not an action. It is a state of being.

(The Swami heads Chinmaya mission,
Delhi, Noida & Gurgaon.)

The Times of India, August 12, 2008

PINGALWARA DIARY

(UPTO January, 2020)

Services rendered by Pingalwara Institution for the service of the suffering humanity are:-

1. Homes for the Homeless

There are 1792 patients in different branches of Pingalwara now a days:-

- | | |
|--|--------------|
| (a) Head Office, Mata Mehtab Kaur Ward,
Bhai Piara Singh Ward | 349 Patients |
| (b) Manawala Complex | 851 Patients |
| (c) Pandori Warraich Branch, Amritsar | 100 Patients |
| (d) Jalandhar Branch | 39 Patients |
| (e) Sangrur Branch | 247 Patients |
| (f) Chandigarh (Palsora) Branch | 120 Patients |
| (g) Goindwal Branch | 86 Patients |

Total 1792 Patients

The number of patients suffering from various diseases are as follows:

Disease	Number	Disease	Number
1. Mental Patients	320	9. Aids Patients	21
2. Paralysis, Polio	164	10. Epilepsy Cases	199
3. Mentally Retarded	475	11. Cancer Patients	03
4. Deaf and Dumb	193	12. Diabetes	100
5. Old Aged	123	13. School going Children	81
6. Injured	19	14. Abandoned Children	04
7. T. B. Patients	22	15. Recovered	31
8. Blind	37	<u>Total 1792</u>	

2. Treatment facilities

- (a) **Dispensary & Laboratory:-** Pingalwara has a dispensary and a laboratory for the treatment of patients. It has an annual expenditure of about

1 Crore 30 lakhs.

- (b) **Medical Care Staff:-** Experienced medical staff like Nurses, Pharmacists and Laboratory Technicians are available for the care of the Pingalwara residents.
- (c) **Blood-Donation Camps:-** A Blood Donation Camp is organized on Bhagat Ji's Death Anniversary every year. The blood is used for Pingalwara residents and road accident victims.
- (d) **Ambulances:-** Ambulances with basic Medical aid are available for victims of road accidents on G.T. Road, round the clock and provide facilities for taking Pingalwara patients to the hospital.
- (e) **Artificial Limb Centre:-** There is an Artificial Limb Centre at Manawala Complex, dedicated to the memory of Bhagat Ji which provides free of cost Artificial Limbs to amputee cases and calipers to paraplegic ,hemiplegic or polio affected people. 13668 needy people have benefitted till December 2019.
- (f) **Physiotherapy Centre:-** A Physiotherapy Centre equipped with State-of-the-art equipment is functioning in the Manawala Complex since June 2005. On an average 90-100 patients are treated everyday.
- (g) **Operation Theatres:-** There is a well equipped Operation Theatre at Manawala Branch of Pingalwara for general surgery, Micro Surgery where Cochlear Implants and major operations are carried out.
- (h) **Dental, Eye & Ear Centres:-** These Centres have been set up to provide these services to Pingalwara residents, sewadars and their families.

3. **Education:**

Pingalwara Society is running Educational Institutions for the poor and needy children.

- (a) **Bhagat Puran Singh Adarsh School, Manawala Complex, Amritsar:-** This school provides free education to 768 students from the poor and deprived sections of the society. They are provided with free books and uniforms. Children being brought up by Pingalwara Society are also studying in this school.
- (b) **Bhagat Puran Singh School for Special Education, Manawala Complex, Amritsar :-** This school is providing Special Education to 210 Special children.
- (c) **Bhagat Puran Singh School for the Deaf, Manawala Complex, Amritsar:-** Bhagat Puran Singh School for Deaf Children is functional at the Manawala Complex since May 2005. The school is equipped with state-of-the-art training aid and has 210 children on its rolls.
- (d) **Bhagat Puran Singh School for Special Needs Manawala Complex Amritsar:** Under RCI two Diploma courses are running.
 - (i) Diploma Special Education (Hearing Impairment) 25 Seats.
 - (ii) Diploma Special Education (Mental Retardation) 25 Seats.
- (e) **Bhagat Puran Singh School for the Deaf, Attari, Amritsar:-** 13 Students are taking education under the guidance of well qualified staff.
- (f) **Bhagat Puran Singh Adarsh School, Buttar Kalan (Qadian), Distt. Gurdaspur:-** This school is dedicated to the sweet memory of Bhagatji. 436

students are getting free education under the able guidance of well qualified teachers. The school also provides financial help to students who have finished their school studies and are aspiring for higher studies.

- (g) **Bhagat Puran Singh Deaf School, Buttar Kalan (Qadian), Distt. Gurdaspur:-** 11 Students are taking education under the guidance of well qualified staff.
- (h) **Bhagat Puran Singh Deaf School, Katora, Firozpur:-**This School is running since 2016 in which 17 Students are studying.
- (i) **Bhagat Puran Singh Deaf School, Sarhali, Tarn Taran:** 11 Students are taking education in this school.
- (j) **Bhagat Puran Singh Deaf School, Village Kakkon, Hoshiarpur:-** 9 Students are studying in this school.
- (k) **Bhagat Puran Singh School for Special Education, Chandigarh (Palsora):-**This school caters to the needs of Special adults of the branch and has 40 students.
- (l) **Vocational Centre:-** This Centre is providing free training in embroidery, stitching, craft work, making washing powder, candle making and painting, etc. Young girls from the villages of surroundings areas are the main beneficiaries.
- (m) **Computer Training:-** Computers are available in all the schools for academic and vocational training.
- (n) **Hostel facilities:-** There are separate hostels for boys and girls in Manawala Complex. Many girls are pursuing higher studies in different colleges.

4. **Rehabilitation:**

Marriages:- After being educated, boys and girls at Pingalwara are married to suitable partners. 46 girls and 4 boys have been married off till date.

5. **Environment Related Activities:**

- (a) **Tree Plantation:-** Bhagat Puran Singh Ji was deeply concerned about the degradation of the environment. A vigorous campaign of tree plantation is started every year on Bhagat Ji's Death Anniversary. Each year trees are planted in various schools, colleges, hospitals, cremation grounds and other public places. These include Amaltas, Kachnar, Behra, Champa, Arjun, Sukhchain, Chandni, Zetropa, and Kari-patta, etc. These are distributed to different institutions.
- (b) **Nursery:-** Pingalwara has its own Nursery where saplings of various plants and trees are prepared. Every year, the aim of nursery is to grow more than 54 different kinds of saplings.

6. **Social Improvement Related Activities:**

- (a) **Awareness:-** Pingalwara has played an important role in spreading awareness about the evils in the society. This has been done by printing literature on religious, social and environmental issues at the Puran Printing Press, Amritsar and is being distributed free of cost. Annual expenditure of printing and publicity is about 1 crores 50 lakhs rupees.
- (b) **Puran Printing Press:-** The Printing Press has been updated with an Offset Press.
- (c) **Museum and Documentaries:-** A Museum, and a

number of documentaries have been prepared on Pingalwara activities as well as on zero budget natural farming. The C.D.s are freely available from Pingalwara.

A feature film produced by Pingalwara Society, Amritsar on 30 January, 2015 EH JANAM TUMHARE LEKHE (Punjabi) on Bhagat Puran Singh Ji, founder Pingalwara and his struggle not only for selfless services of wounded humanity but for Environment Crisis also, has proved a beacon for the generations yet to come after us.

7. Help to the victims of Natural Calamities:

Pingalwara makes an effort to provide succour to the victims of natural calamities like floods, earthquakes and famines. Aid was sent for the earth-quake victims in Iran, Tsunami disaster victims, Leh landslide and flood affected areas.

8. Cremation of unclaimed dead-bodies:

Pingalwara cremates unclaimed dead bodies with full honour.

9. Dairy Farm:

220 cows and buffalos at Manawala Complex and at Dhira ot Farm provide fresh milk to the Pingalwara residents.

10. Old Age Homes:

Old age homes at Sangrur and Manawala Complex of Pingalwara caters to the needs of elderly people.

11. **Expenditure:** The daily expenditure of Pingalwara is more than 6.5 lakhs.

Other Details:

- a) All India Pingalwara Charitable Society is a Registered Society, registered by Registrar of Companies vide letter No. 130 of 1956-1957 as amended vide No. A-28/4540 dated 07-07-1998.
- b) All donations to Pingalwara are exempted under Section 80 G of Income Tax-II Amritsar letter No. CIT-II/ASR/ITO (Tech.)/2011-12/4730 dated 11/12 January, 2012.
- c) PAN Number of the All India Pingalwara Charitable Society is AAATA 2237R
- d) FCRA (Foreign Contribution Regulation Act) 1976 Registration No. of Pingalwara is 115210002

Wahe Guru Ji Ka Khalsa

Wahe Guru Ji Ki Fateh

Dr. Inderjit Kaur,

President,

All India Pingalwara Charitable Society (Regd.),

Tehsilpura, G.T. Road, Amritsar. (Punjab).