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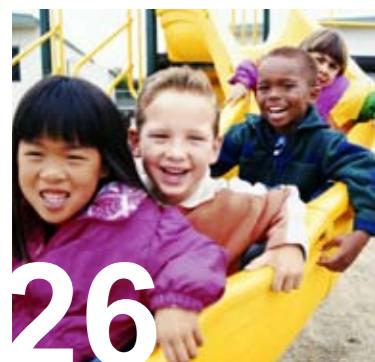
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**Healthy  
mind...**

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*a prescription for a  
beautiful life*

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Universal Target is a spiritual journal promoting unity in diversity and peaceful co-existence. It is founded on the belief that all human beings share a common source and spiritual heritage, irrespective of the differences of culture and world traditions. The journal draws upon the shared and accumulated wisdom of our common heritage, to encourage harmony through self-realisation. Universal Target endorses the maxim of His Holiness Nirankari Baba, 'Know One, Believe in One, Become One'.



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## Editorial

# A Good Mind

**Seneca, the Roman philosopher and statesman, likened a good mind to a lord of a kingdom. Indeed, a mind that is at peace with itself and in harmony with its environment can turn a hell into heaven. The opposite is also true, that an ugly mind, overflowing with ego, hatred and jealousy can turn heaven into hell, as Milton so elegantly put it in 'Paradise Lost'.**

We are what our mind is. Edmund Spencer would say that it is the mind that makes good of ill, wretch or happy, rich or poor. How we see life - our view of the world – all depends on the mind. Generally it is the mind that governs our life and dictates our actions. Even in otherwise healthy people, the mind plays havoc. Sages of the East have gone further in describing the fickle mind as an uncontrollable, wild elephant which causes destruction in its wanderings.

*When a wild whimsical elephant of a mind refuses to yield*

*What can a mahout of religion do without a rod of wisdom?*

Mind is thus 'man'; everything depends on him. He is responsible for the dismal state of our society; the mess humanity is in, and the seemingly never-ending mayhem and strife.

But the answer to man's plight has always been there. Throughout the ages, the enlightened beings have urged mankind to attain self-realisation, otherwise known as God-realisation. Sadly, no more

than a handful usually heeded their call.

The mind has to be tamed. The ancient wisdom (leading to spiritual awakening), which guided the enlightened holy beings over the centuries, is the tried and tested way of domesticating the unruly mind. It is this wisdom which transforms the mind from its usual state of unrest, to health and vitality. For such a mind the age-old wisdom of God-realisation is indispensable, as God is truth, goodness and beauty. It is stated in the sacred Scriptures that:

*Water remains confined by the pitcher,  
but the pitcher cannot be made without water*

*The mind is held by Divine Enlightenment,  
but Divine Enlightenment can not be obtained, without the Guru*  
(Asa di Var, Translation by Dr. Ajit Singh Aulakh).

Today His Holiness Nirankari Baba is tirelessly giving the message of love truth and goodness to humanity at large. The sole mission of his life is to bring about spiritual awakening the world over. He often says that only a beautiful life can make this world beautiful, but life can only be made beautiful if the mind is beautiful. If God is essential for liberating one's soul, then God is equally crucial for cleansing one's mind. When one attains self-realisation and when God dwells in the mind, ill-will, hatred and delusion can be overcome.

Such an enlightened being with a cleansed mind, also cleanses

the environment around him, spreading fragrance and beauty. Hence he contributes to making this world a more pleasant place to be.

To conclude, it is imperative for man to conquer his mind with the aid of God-knowledge, as it is decreed by the holy personages that one who has conquered the mind has conquered the world.

**Harbans Singh ■**

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# Timeless Message

HIS HOLINESS NIRANKARI BABA

## The Mind

We can only make our life worthy of living if it is based on the boundless, Supreme Power. When the heart is immersed in it, a remarkable change takes place which beautifies the mind and makes life more exquisite.

Life does not become exquisite with fine clothes or attractive appearances. It is the beauty of the mind that makes it so. The mind only becomes beautiful when the Almighty and the words of saints and sages dwell in it.

If we limit the beauty to external looks, outward appearances and thousands of adornments, it will be of no avail. It is said, a good mind is like capturing all the purity and holiness of the Ganges in one small pot.

People talk of morality, ethics and good deeds whilst harbouring intense lust. The mind is full of wicked and malicious thoughts – i.e. hate, greed, covetness, lust and enmity. In fact, it is ablaze with jealousy of others' happiness and success. Such is the state of the mind that it has become sullied. When the mind is so ugly and repulsive, what would be the point of external adornments or charm? Alluding to empty rituals, Saint Kabir says, what's the point of shaving your head, when your mind is 'unshaved', for whatever is done is done by the mind, and it is the mind that needs 'shaving' (put right). You have not shaved your vices. By merely shaving your head if you think you have become a good person in the eyes of God, you are deluding yourself.

Similarly, you cannot be devout by bathing. For saints have said,



what can you achieve by bathing.

Though always in water, a fish never sheds its bad smell. Yet you think you have become great and pure, by washing your body. Washing the dirt off the body will not do if the mind is filled with hatred and jealousy.

It is for this reason that the focus should be the mind. We are made up of body, mind and soul, but more importance should be given to the mind and soul. The soul needs to be liberated and the mind made pure during our sojourn on earth. If God is essential for liberating the soul, then God is equally vital for cleansing the mind.

Ill-will and deluded thoughts disappear when God dwells in the mind; one then attains higher wisdom and becomes enlightened. This is how the mind is refined. Such a refined mind reaches lofty heights, and not only cleanses itself, but also cleanses the environment around it like beautiful flowers embellishing the garden and enhancing the beauty of the earth.

Just like flowers, those who possess pure thoughts, exquisite conduct and impeccable dealings with fellow-humans, also make valuable contributions towards the refinement of the world. When we see flowers, we appreciate them

and derive pleasure from them. Such is the case of those with pure and good minds. They have the same status as that of flowers, for they too add to the beauty of the world.

But, there is no shortage of people bent on polluting the world with their wicked thoughts. With their anti-social acts and violence, robbing and looting, thieving and grabbing, hatred and narrow-mindedness, such people are continually poisoning the atmosphere. They are filling the world with stench, rather than with sweet fragrance. So much so that it has become difficult to breathe a sigh of relief.

However, a refined mind spreads love all around and engages in selfless service of fellow-beings. In place of violence, it nurses the wounds of others, picks up the fallen and brings people closer to each other. Such pure-minds rise above differences, treating everyone as their own. They have no enemies; none is a stranger to them. They belong to all, and all belong to them.

Their language and conduct hurt no one. Their speech is like a soothing balm, giving solace, relief, support and strength. They use it for the good of others. They use their hands to uplift the fallen; they use their feet for common welfare and to engage in the company of the wise. So everything depends on the mind. In fact, there is a profound need to reflect, to ruminate and to examine it, as saints like Bulleh Shah have said,

*One frequents temples and mosques*

*But one ventures not into one's own mind*

That is, you have not examined your own mind. You have not asked: Where am I? What is my state? What is inside me?

At home, when we notice the slightest dirt in any room, we

instantly say that it has not been cleaned properly. Likewise, if there is a stain on any clothes, it is immediately pointed out. The ease with which this is done, alas with the same ease, we could see what is in our mind. It has been said,

*Where shall I come; your mind is full of undesirable strangers*

That is to say, the mind is occupied by strangers, such that the more welcome guests of pure love, joy, kindness and humility are not present. These welcome guests, are left out in the cold, and missing. It should be that the beautiful One - God - dwells in the mind.

This is why the saints and sages are telling us to focus on God, the ultimate Truth. When we focus on Him, the soul is automatically liberated and the mind purified. It is, therefore, important to remain immersed forever in the Truth, the supreme Power. In such a blissful state, may we continue life's journey.

Saints have also expressed similar views and feelings to enable man to evaluate his fast and furious life, and to analyse as to what his mental state is. Does my mental state accord with the highest and the most sublime Holy Scriptures, prophets, saints and sages? Or is my mental state one that is scoffed at? Where do I stand? To which category do I belong? Self-analysis is, therefore, vital and a must.

We tend to forget our own self, but start making comments about the life of others. For this very reason, holy beings have counselled us to enhance the value of our life. In fact, the Creator has given us this priceless gift of life. Let us not diminish its value to such an extent that it is worth less than a dime.

The Lord has given us this priceless gift. Let's refine it and purify it like polishing an item of

gold. If we place the value of a dime on our life, we ourselves are responsible for it, no one else. For there is no one else who can put a low value on our life.

As Rahim says, something that is big does not become small, simply because somebody says it is small'. Quite clearly, by simply labelling something big as small, does not make it so. A six-foot tall individual does not become four-foot tall, simply because someone says so. Hence, if we, by ourselves, declare our value to be a mere dime, then nobody else can do anything about it.

Therefore, holy beings remind us to be conscious of our self-worth, care about our life and vitality, and always be thankful to the Lord for His incredible gifts. Equipping yourself with good thoughts, use your body to do good; only then will your deeds and actions command value. Otherwise, nothing but shame awaits you.

Hence, it is the beautiful mind that makes our life refined and blissful. In such a sacred state of mind, our eating, drinking and dressing also become sacred.

## Editorial Team

*This is an English adaptation of an extract of His Holiness Nirankari Baba's address delivered at Yamuna Nagar, in December 2011. ■*



# God is zero

**Surjit Dhami, Cannock, UK**

**Let's take a walk down memory lane. Like many surprise parties, a few billion years ago, it is said the universe started with a BIG Bang. From a point of no dimension, matter exploded like a party popper to form the stars. The universe then expanded like a gigantic party balloon.**

**This gigantic point of no dimension was the cause of all this celestial activity. Supernovas and galaxies like the Milky Way lit up the universe like brilliant disco lights. Man in this cosmic celebration is a late-comer. Late-comers to parties always have a lot of questions. They often like to know whose idea it was to have the party in the first place.**

In fact, man has always yearned to know the origin of everything. He has followed rivers to find the ocean; he has uprooted trees to find their roots. To find the origin of the universe, man discovered mathematics to count the seeds and stars. The concepts of one, many and nothing have always captivated his mind. Mathematics is regarded as the forefather of science, but invariably forgotten as the offspring of spirituality.

The link between spirituality and mathematics, in the early 20th century, was made by the genius mathematician Srinivasa Aiyangar Ramanujan. His research was

out, the cosmological constant is said to be zero, with no mass, no energy, no time and no space. But this begs the burning question, what does zero actually mean?

This conundrum has been around since time immemorial. How can you count something that does not appear to exist? What do you find inside an empty bag? Ummm... Nothing. But it is that something on which mathematics and the universe is founded. Today zero is solely a number.

The concept of zero was introduced by the mathematicians from India to the Arabs, who then

**Lord Buddha premised that life is nothing but suffering because man in his ignorance attaches himself to the seen, as opposed to the unseen – the void (or zero). In other words, inner turmoil continues ceaselessly until one turns to the infinite zero.**

found to be so earth-shattering by scholars like G.H. Hardy of Cambridge, that Ramanujan became honoured as the Fellow of the Royal Society and Fellow of Trinity College of Cambridge. Today, he is acclaimed as a legend amongst mathematicians across the globe.

In his papers, Ramanujan expounded and equated zero to infinite and infinite to God. By equating God to zero, he did not profess atheism. On the contrary, he glorified the infinite nature of zero, otherwise called God. The idea of a formless spirit is often shelved as a theoretical concept. This state of zero is indeed that state of eternal Oneness, which so many speak of, but few experience.

Albert Einstein also approached this subject with his concept of the cosmological constant. This was the measurement of the energy density of the original vacuum. If all matter and anti-matter cancel

passed the knowledge on to the Europeans. Its conception was not scientific, but mystical. The Vedic equation of zero in Sanskrit was Nirgun - Attribute-less Truth. Attribute-less here does not mean lack of attributes, but the transcendence of them.

Actually, zero has never been fully understood. The Greeks were dumbfounded by it, for they believed all numbers expressed geometrical shapes. As to which geometrical shape equated to zero, was a question that defied their logic.

To the Romans, zero was heretical; they had no use for it. In the 13th Century, the city of Florence made use of the number zero a punishable offence. However, the European mathematician, Fibbernaci, recognized the value of zero in his treatise 'Liber Abaci', and introduced the 9 Indian symbols, as well as zero, to Europe, to which until recently, Europeans

paid little heed.

The eventual embracing of zero, together with the 9 numbers, in Europe triggered a scientific revolution, as scientists began to appreciate its simplicity and strength. This led to the binary system of zero and ones, and heralded the new era of computers, internet and digital technology.

Just as an expert mathematician is required to unravel the intricacies of numbers, a spiritual adept is also indispensable to unfold the mysterious relationship of Nothingness (zero) to God. A drowning man only drowns because of his body weight. By weighing zero, he stays afloat.

Lord Buddha premised that life is nothing but suffering because man in his ignorance attaches himself to the seen, as opposed to the Unseen – the void (or zero). In other words, inner turmoil continues ceaselessly until one turns to the infinite zero.

The effulgent light of zero can illumine the mind even in pitch black darkness. Unaware of the value of zero, sadly man deludes himself to feed his vanity. So, with such a deluded mind, how can he expect to know his real self?

In reality, the struggle for self-esteem runs counter to realisation of the self. To be somebody, one has to be self-realised; to be self-realised one has to be no-body; and to be a no-body is to be a magnificent zero. Unaware of the greatness of zero, man falls in the rat race of wanting to be number one. In such a deluded mind how can man know his own real worth without realising the eternal, formless source of all creation? With this realisation I am able to rejoice in the knowledge that the essential 'I' has no form. God has no form, thus God created man in His own image, that is to say 'imageless'. ■

# myprayer

RAMAN CHAUHAN,  
VICTORIA (BC), CANADA

I close my eyes and say a prayer  
All at the same time, in unison  
My mind becomes clear  
Like the vast, deep ocean  
Make this prayer come true  
For my truth and life are you

It is only your touch  
That cleans my heart  
Of all my mal-intents  
With which I can fall apart  
Your touch brings me glory  
And duly sets me free

Though my eyes are still closed  
I see you in your silence  
The goal for one and all  
Can only be your parlance  
In your hands I place my soul  
For my mind to be in control

This is my true home  
Where I rightfully belong  
Free of false pretensions,  
Self-conceited, arrogant songs  
Here, there is equality and joy  
The language of love I enjoy

My prayer to you, my Lord  
Is to see you in all your glory  
In every colour, new and afresh  
But never old or hoary  
Save me from my fall  
To become righteously tall.

## BE WHOLE

NASRAIN DHANANI, FLORIDA, USA

Today is the oldest you have ever been  
Yet the youngest you will ever be  
Today is the time to heal yourself  
And enjoy yourself until eternity  
So, don't wait to learn from experiences  
But create your very own experiences.

A by-stander asks: "Is this possible?"

A wise man answers: "Sure, it's easy."

We all know dis-ease in the mind is disease in the body and that both result from the spirit being ill at ease. In such a situation, we often feel unworthy, self-critical and self-demeaning. This leads to intense feelings of being incomplete, unhappy and disaffected all because of the painful separation from the whole.

We know the whole (God) is a part of us. It provides for us and we become dependent on it. After all, we were initially created to receive His benevolence as a right, which He showers with pleasure. But we are quibbling in spite of His blessings. Why? Because rather than being dependent on Him, the sixth element, we are depending on, and giving more attention to matter, the five elements.

With the thought that I am here, and God is there, we get the feeling that God is far away and as such sense that there is a delay in His giving and my receiving. The non-gratification of my desire creates fear. I begin to think - what if He decides not to give when I want, or what I want?

Fear makes me think. Since I have not received, I cannot give. I become a hoarder. Fear has made me an ungrateful and unfaithful being. I stop doing His will. The spirit is at dis-ease. The power of thought has disturbed me and my world. This is one negative thought, but this can be applied to many other negative emotions the mind is accepting in thought form. But I can change. I choose to change my thoughts.

With the grace of my spiritual mentor, His Holiness Nirankari Baba, I have achieved this knowledge. I now believe that I am an image of God and I am a part of God; I am complete and eternal. The whole is not a part of me; I am part of the whole, the eternal. As soon as divine consciousness accepts its spiritual heritage, life takes a healthy turn. I am now a part of the whole and I have no restrictions; I am free.

I gracefully accept to receive, in return to distribute and become like him. I am greedy to receive because I want to be more and more like him. In completing my goal in life – freedom, he is always with me. My desire for spiritual growth has become my spiritual awakening. I now know that the spirit is permanent; it

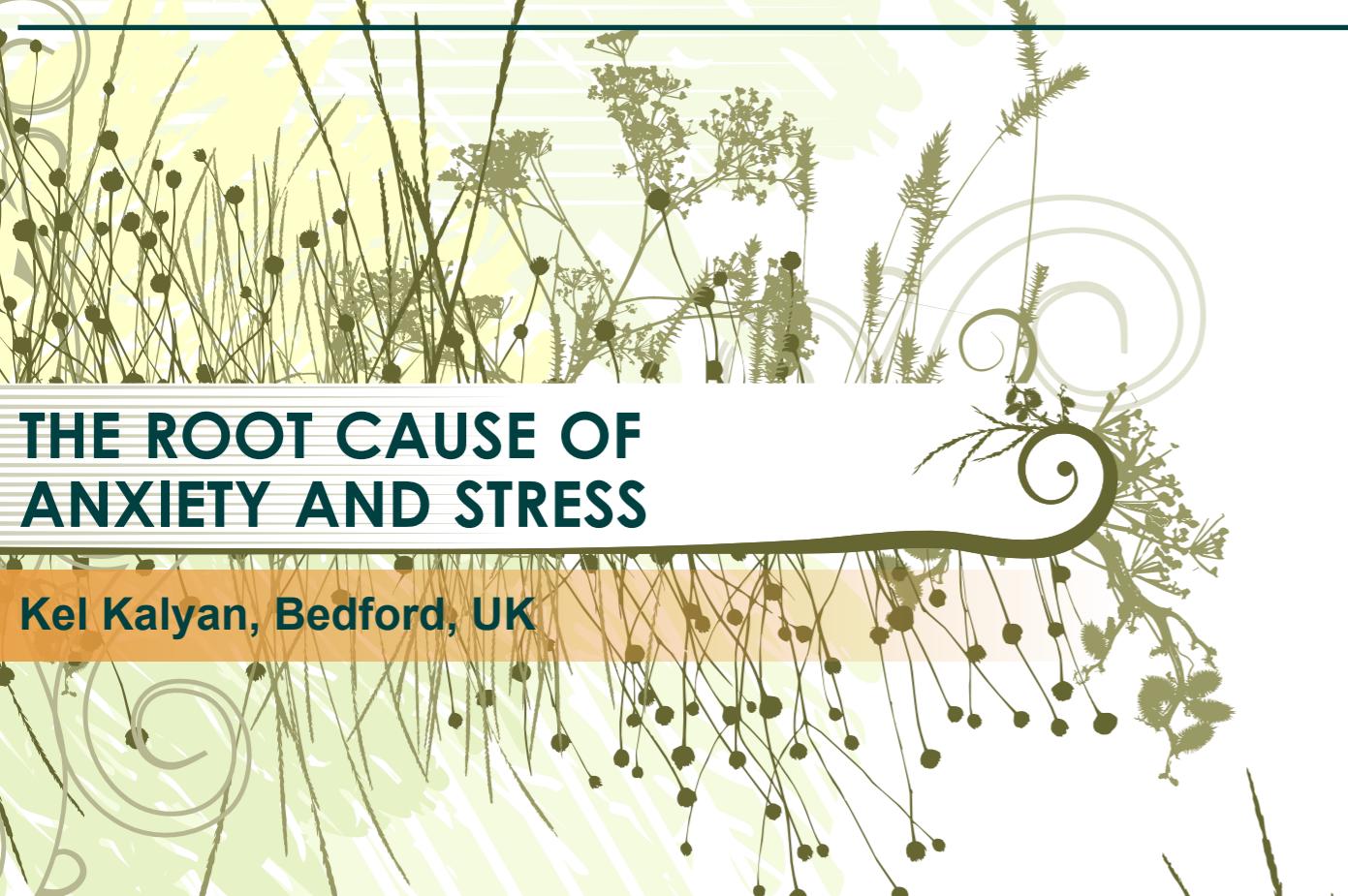
never changes; it is simply my awareness that has grown. Being awakened and present I now have divine will guiding me to my real home. The heart is now filled with His love.

The fear, the anguish, the frustration, the dissatisfaction, all the false beliefs are dispelled and abandoned. I now know what is life enhancing, and what elevates one to rise above life and death.

All emotions are created by dependency on impermanence. I observe that the multi-coloured desires come and go with reason and season. With my spiritual mentor's grace, I can now love selflessly. I know that power without love causes harm; power of love brings true wisdom. I am in total harmony. My Creator and I are one. I am healthy, happy and permanent.

All I needed to change was my thought – the thought that I am weak and powerless, beyond control, and that somebody else is the reason for my misery. I now accept that the thought is the seed. If it is a good seed, it will yield good fruit. I have personally chosen to plant positive thoughts; they will heal the body, mind and spirit. ■





## THE ROOT CAUSE OF ANXIETY AND STRESS

Kel Kalyan, Bedford, UK

**To truly ascertain the cause of stress, we must learn from the realm of spirituality, where lies the answer to every question in our universe. From ancient times to the current day, sages and Prophets, have asserted the reality that instability and anxiety is a consequence of material attachment, and yet further decree that God-union imparts stability and bliss. This assertion is understood when we have explicitly grasped the difference between material and spiritual living. This insight will also reveal the origin of anxiety, but more importantly reveal that bliss can be experienced whilst surrounded by materialism, if one is connected to spirituality.**

During human life we have two phases of existence. One is material existence, where we are ruled by the sensual material conception of the body, mind and wealth, and the other is spiritual existence, where we can always relish the happy, transcendental contact of the true nature of Nirankar.

God-consciousness (Brahm Gyan) is ultimately the device to awaken a dreamer from materialism, to spotlight the contrast between these two diverse parallels. It further reveals that we are not the body, and that we are in fact soul. The basis of a soul is that it is an eternal subdivision of the Over-Soul, the formless entity called Nirankar, which also bears the name Allah, God, Brahma, Hashem, Tao, Waheguru and so on.

Therefore, to live life as a Soul would empower us to live contented, and liberate us to view the material

world as a mere transient experience, which is not intended for obsession and any form of extremism. This is because anxiety and stress is a natural consequence of material obsession; therefore instability is only endured by those who remain single-mindedly engaged and engrossed within it.

In simple terms, the soul is spiritual, which is our native eternal existence. Conversely, the ego, is based on material existence, which is temporary; therefore its existence is limited to the period of our human life. The implicit vow undertaken by a seeker on receiving God-consciousness is to renounce the proverbial I, ego, which empowers the soul to take control of our human experience.

However, even after God-consciousness, the two identities - soul and ego - remain in constant clash during the human experience, as they both strive to

win command of the human body. Likewise, one cannot overthrow the power of the persuasive ego without the aid of divine union by merging in God. It is for this reason that His Holiness Nirankari Baba encourages the company of the God-realised, and practice of selfless service and contemplation.

The crucial importance of spirituality is to open the lines of communication beyond the material that is bound within the laws of space and time. The vast expanse of the material universe is subject to change and has an end date. Therefore, any measure of attachment or deep association with material objects i.e. material beauty and possessions, will accordingly create instability and emotional loss, as nothing is stable or permanent in the universe, other than the Formless, Timeless - Nirankar. Consequently, His Holiness reveals the gateway into a stable world beyond. But if we stubbornly cling to material reality we will experience the natural effect of material turbulence.

Our ego is shaped and based on the material reality (illusion or something that the seers in the East called Maya). Therefore, the ego and illusion are indivisible and together they conceal us from the spiritual reality. The ego's perception is restricted to our five senses: sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste. Before God-consciousness, the ego, through the five senses, commands control of our life, a life based on material illusion and focused on the identity of the body, mind and wealth, driving the instinct of accumulation and possession.

The ego begins with the instinct of desire at birth, but later through maturity these desires develop into more worldly pursuits. And before we know it, our chain of desires become the basis of our reality and seeks happiness. This is because the ego seeks

happiness.

The Soul is the conscious-divine architect which permeates within every atom, directing the continuing growth of human life, maturing the embryo to a child, and through to adulthood. A human being cannot be created and grown without the intelligent supervision of a soul, just as bricks could not arrange themselves into a house without an intelligent builder.

As part of the Over-Soul (i.e.Nirankar), the soul is a wave



of the ocean of eternal love. Hence the main objective is to remove the egoistic shroud and return to his real source - Over soul, Nirankar. Once the ego is removed, the soul wins charge of the human vessel and lives as the image of his real self. This transformation would guide our free will from our soul, (which was previously being guided by the ego).

Free will, or freedom of choice is Nirankar's divine contribution to human life and part of the cosmic plot, which constructs and determines our human drama and destiny, paving the way for our journey back to our source - Nirankar.

Free will is inherently linked with the cosmic law of cause and

effect, which in simple terms denotes that our unfolding destiny is a result of our past choices and actions. Therefore, positive results denotes positive past actions, and vice versa. When we live as a soul our free will is influenced towards positive actions, i.e. when we choose to forgive, choose to tolerate, choose to accept, and choose to selflessly give. This produces positive results and keeps us stable and blissful. This is because stress and anxiety is a result of misusing our gift of free will. Therefore, when our Soul controls the power of free will we experience bliss and transcend the human body, surpassing any negative perceptions that the material world could present. This is because we are not the body; we are now the soul, which is God-like, resilient, carefree and blissful. This is a spiritual being having a human experience!

Admittedly, human life to a large extent is a mechanical process following a routine of our predecessors, believing that stress and anxiety is an integral and unavoidable part of human life. Therefore, without spiritualism the world is deficient of the fundamental art of living, and we become victims of stress and anxiety.

The shift from material to spiritual living is to demonstrate that heavenly bliss is not only confined to the afterlife, it is a phenomenon which is also destined to be enjoyed during the human-material experience. This occurrence will naturally transpire whilst staying attuned with Formless Being. Furthermore, it provides the gift to understand and synchronise with the laws of cause and effect, which influence the cosmic universe. A God-realised person will naturally accept their unfolding destiny, for example if we protest rainfall, it will only create tension. But if we were to accept the rainfall as a course of celestial destiny, we would thus rise above and remain

unaffected and blissful. By this ruling we accept all events good and bad; this would negate regret and negativity, and sustain a healthy mind. Furthermore, pain and pleasure do not disturb a person, who is in a blissful state.

Acceptance is the foundation of faith and the hardest trial of our spiritual journey; acceptance is accomplished with absolute trust in God. Equally, the inability to accept our unfolding destiny is the most common feature that creates emotional distress and regret. This is because maya crafts the illusion that 'I' the ego is in control of destiny, which creates the failure to accept our unfolding events, which can cause anxiety on a daily basis. Consequently, if we are agitated in life, it is because we are lacking in faith, it is faith in Nirankar that provide us with the ability to endure the ups and downs of His will.

In the absence of knowing this infinite truth, life is perceived as a mixture of pain and pleasure. Getting close to Nirankar through true-knowledge will heal the

fear of life and death, and give ultimate meaning to our existence. Without this awakening our notion of reality is chaotic. Through spiritual awakening we perceive the vast universe as His projection; He turns out to be the only thing that is real. Arriving at this truth is the purpose of spiritual life, whose end point is total clarity, a sense of peace that

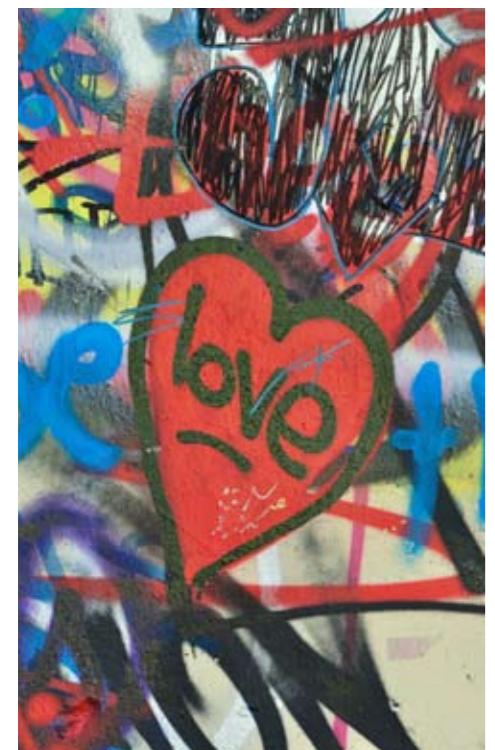
### **Acceptance is the foundation of faith and the hardest trial of our spiritual journey; acceptance is accomplished with absolute trust in God.**

nothing can agitate. In the end those astonishing events we may call miracles or disasters only give us clues to the workings of this ineffable intelligence.

Let us remember spirituality does not undermine or alienate material living, but it does assert that it will become our undoing if we have breached the basic instincts of desire, and lost the duty of knowing our true Self and our purpose. For this reason, any experience short of bliss is an

in practical life. Consequently, the spiritual master, His Holiness Nirankari Baba today leads by example. He negotiates and tolerates the same worldly choices and events as we do, but he is unaffected by temptation, or any form of extremity, and remains in equilibrium in the face of choice: as nothing alters his state of bliss.

He demonstrates the divine way to attaining a healthy mind, so that a spiritual voyager can learn to live temporal life in bliss. ■



## ***Humankind***

**Gurdip Roopra, Birmingham, UK**

A human finds peace when removing fumes from his mind  
The humankind is human, when a human is kind

When your mind is clouded, you'll hear your mind scream  
The key to a healthy mind, is to keep your mind clean

Eat healthy, think healthy, there's no reason for pain  
There can always be a rainbow, outside the season of rain

Love one another, for contentment and bliss  
A healthy mind and body is the key to this

Jealousy and envy always bring you down  
Remove your hate, love isn't a mere noun

Stay happy, and smile; remember what you deserve  
Happiness is life, and to love is a verb

outcome of material attachment. Spirituality is the guide to navigate us towards soul existence and attachment with the One without form, the closer we draw near towards its nectar, the further we increase our familiarity with bliss, and subsequently avoid anxiety and stress.

The aforementioned principles are not theories; they are proven



God is the key; give your emotion to him  
He's amazing; he gets the ocean to swim

Clean the world, as you would clean your mind  
Unity in diversity is humanity defined

All colours are united like a rainbow  
We have many differences; we are the same though

We need a roadmap to peace, signposted here  
By working together we can beautify our atmosphere

A human finds peace when removing fumes from his mind  
The humankind is human, when a human is kind. ■

## **A healthy mind**

**Dr. D K Mehta, Wolverhampton, UK**



**G**od created man with a mind, the faculty to ascertain what is real and what is unreal. This unique ability is to receive the spirit and to attain the knowledge of the self, which is not in the domain of the physical, but very much in the spiritual, and yet it affects the physical every single day through our constantly fluctuating mental states - anger, jealousy and desirous attachments. So much so that when the mind turns to the world of change and decay, its vision is confused, and it seems to lack intelligence. However, when it focuses on objects illuminated by truth and reality, it understands them and functions intelligently.

We are, indeed, like people who are looking for something they already have in their hands, but never find it because they are looking for it elsewhere. Let us therefore, investigate as to what this mind is, how it affects the physical being, and how we can harness it for spiritual health.

A human mind is a sum total of mental faculties, thoughts, volition and memory, and such phrases as 'call to mind', 'keep in mind', 'to have in mind' et al automatically crop up. According to Lama Zopa Rinpoche, it is not body, not substantial, has no form, no shape, no colour, but like a mirror, can clearly reflect objects. The Dhamapada claims that all things are preceded by the mind, led by the mind, created by the mind. Hence, without the discipline of guarding the mind, the other disciplines are of no use.

The three major schools of thought that try to explain this mind are: dualism, materialism and idealism. Dualism holds that the mind exists independently of the brain; materialism holds that mental phenomena are identical to neuronal activity (brain signals); and idealism holds that only mental phenomena exists.

In the case of dualism, if the mind indeed remains independent

of the brain, which acts on and reacts to countless sensual stimuli, its status quo could never be healthy. Caught up in incessant change, it can never be still, free from the ups and downs, trials and tribulations, and pleasure and pain. In the case of materialism, if all that we are is nothing but neuronal phenomena, then we cannot possibly be made in the image of God. As the recipients of the image of God, we are not mere matter alone, but much more than that. In the case of idealism, if all that exists is mental phenomena alone, then once again we are mistaken. The human body does in fact exist, and for it to be ideal – in a state of equipoise, it has to work with the mind. This is to establish the reign of the ideal in a real world in a monistic manner (the many to work under the control of the one). This is perhaps what Lord Jesus Christ refers to when he says, love the Lord, your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind (Mat 22:37).

#### New Testament

Religion with its commandments, pillars, noble truths and principles is very clear on how the mind can be rendered healthy and peaceful. Paul (Rom 8:6) reminds us that only the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace. The first requisite, for a healthy mind, is to be complete in knowledge .... (Rom 15:14), and to make every effort to add to your faith, goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness (2 Pet 1:5-6). With this the yield is multiplied manifoldly and your love abounds more and more in knowledge and depth of insight (Phil 1:9).

#### Guru Granth Sahib

A healthy mind does not come from physically detaching yourself from the world by fasting, abstaining, or renouncing, but by detaching your mind from the temporary and attaching it to the permanent. The peace of mind we look for comes from meditating on the Lord, who is the provider of all peace and comfort (GGS, 1426). For in so doing, not only does the mind become healthy, but it also attains salvation and frees itself of the cycle of births and deaths (GGS, 11).

#### The Quran

The Quran tells us that Allah has not put two hearts in man's chest (Al-Ahzab, 33:4). On the contrary there is only one, and this one heart has to be congruent with the one Allah. For it is only by becoming one and remembering the one God (Allah), can the heart find assurance and peace (Al Ra'ad, 13:28). This heart that works and acts in the will of God is the mind, which is guided by Allah for those who believe in Him (Al-Taghabun, 64: 11).

#### The Sufi Mind

Comparing the body with the mind is very much like the coat of a person and the person himself. The coat is not the person; the person is infinitely superior. This superior person is the mind, which can only be harnessed with love – the lover's relentless love for his Beloved. When this love penetrates to such an extent that the lover and the Beloved become one, then there is nothing but the mind that prevails in its purest form.

*Love is here like the blood in my veins and skin  
He has annihilated me and filled me only with Him*

*His fire has penetrated all the atoms of my body*

*Of "me" only my name remains; the rest is Him.(7)*

Trans. Andrew Harvey,  
Light upon Light (Berkeley:  
North Atlantic Books, 1996), p.181

#### Nirankari Baba

In his address in the New Year (January 2012) – a leap year, the Nirankari Baba said that the way to foster a healthy mind is to make a great leap towards spirituality that sees the whole diverse world as one single family. The leap year, which is usually coupled with the Olympics, should demonstrate to us that even in the midst of competition amongst nations, there should be grace. The world initiative of co-operatives – organisations pooling their resources to work together, also shows us the spirit of positive minds. It must be borne in mind that negative minds, however beautifully shrouded, remain negative. Poison, however much adorned, is still poison. Corruption in India, shrouded under the cover of co-operative services, is still corruption.

The Nirankari Baba tells us that there can be no love or compassion; tolerance or perseverance; bliss or stability; deeds or meaning, until the mind is coloured with the hue of devotion (Mumbai Convention, January 2011).

A healthy mind, therefore, is one that is in tune with the universal mind, equipped with clear thinking and positive discernment. It is most certainly one that transcends hate, jealousy, anger, greed, and run-away desires. ■

# The Soul's Rose

SERENA NAGHA, LONDON, UK

Sun of my heart who outshines all malice  
Who frees us from temptation's chalice  
Lend Your cup of mercy, cleanse this mind  
Help me collect my sins, leave them behind

Succumbing to malnutrition  
Or a lack of love by definition  
Renders the Faceless a stranger  
But such separation leads to danger

Oh unconquered mind!  
That leaves me blind  
Discipline yourself  
Attain such health

So the eye of knowing remains alert  
Cleanse yourself of this dirt  
Drink from the cup of mercy He gives  
And the venom of ego shall cease to live

Surrender with dignity  
To He who beats finity  
For in the absence of self  
Lies unimaginable wealth

Burst open the dam, be free  
Become a part of the sea  
For purity is yours  
In the ocean of souls

Quench the void Earth cannot fill  
In the motion of madness, remain still  
For within this chance He bestows  
Expect it to blossom, the soul's rose. ■

## The mind has its own economics

How it operates, what thoughts it entertains, and what perceptions it gives rise to, we clearly want to know. Monitoring its graph indeed highlights its visuals of benefit - stability, and its violent and erratic movements - instability. In spite of many intellectuals, psychologists in particular, who have searched for answers, having conducted detailed research to monitor trends and functionality, we are clearly not in a position to say that they have comprehended its mechanics and solved its mysteries. For, on the one side, the mind is leaping towards technological advancement, and on the other side, it is still causing genocide and heinous acts of terror. A healthy mind cannot be one that kills or causes grievous harm, but if it is one that dwells on deceleration, leading to a state of silence, away from the hustle and bustle of the world, which path must it follow?

### Fresh Perspective

Innumerable enlightened souls have walked this earth in the past; they are also here today, issuing warrants of wisdom to the world. They counsel modern man not to seek relief from just the physical world, but to seek a sense of lasting comfort by engaging in a fresh perspective of universal thinking. Such a quest can be sought under proper guidance in an inclusive or exclusive manner.

### The Exclusive Method

*The sun will go; the moon; earth and sky will also go*

*Air and water will both go; my Mighty stays on show*

The exclusive method is expressed in the couplet mentioned. It explains that all the elements, including the sun, the moon, the earth, sound, water and wind will one day perish, but what will remain is the ultimate reality - the indestructible, Formless God. The idea here is to remove whatever you can physically see with your eyes. Not only imagine, but see that everything within this world is taken out and nothing left in. This nothingness forms the basis of everything and this is what the sages stated that we behold as the very truth of our existence. In such an experience, God which exists beyond attributes is present. There is in attendance, an essential essence which exists between the ground and the sky, which becomes apparent. Man is given this face to face introduction; he becomes gripped by this simple truth. In some philosophies, it is evoked with the thought of removing the veil and the face which was not previously seen, becomes very real and present.

### Inclusive Method

The inclusive approach may appear to be a strange paradox, but it is one that the seers have commented on. React with the world by seeing everything within it. That is to say, find God within the entire creation - within all things, within every particle, solid, liquid or gas or for that matter within all that is conceived with the eyes.

*In every being, it's the Almighty who speaks*

*Says the Lord: nobody speaks without Him!*

It is intimated that Ram or God exists and permeates within the entire creation. In this scenario one does not exclude anything but sees, feels and lives in a constant awareness of God. The acquaintance is represented in all things, at all times, wherever



one dwells, in all moments and movements. This feeling is often likened to a fish in an ocean. God is similarly all around in all places.

*Within every atom the divine power is hidden, yet the whole is not visible just as the fire is hidden in the flint and within the seed the entire tree.*

**Sheikh Badruddin**

# Mental Economics

Ricky Bhatia,  
Birmingham, UK

**React with the world by seeing everything within it. That is to say, find God within the entire creation – within all things, within every particle, solid, liquid or gas or for that matter within all that is conceived with the eyes.**

aspects of modern life – i.e. much talk, but little action. There are great distances to be covered upon the journey to stability. In fact, the greater the distance from the vital essence – God, the source of all stability, the greater is the degree of instability. This is a relative relationship. When we remember that the ultimate provider is with us, this knowledge provides and works to establish stability and good health. The emptiness fills and becomes complete with energy, reaching beyond the confines. In adopting the Formless Being in our lives to regenerate stability, the signposts of a fulfilling life will be self-evident.

What does it do for the economic indicators? All the tell-tale signs begin to show full growth and prosperity, the signs of stability and peace of mind. Why not try it! ■

# Pollution

Raul Kamal, Oxford, UK

There's congestion in my lungs  
I just cannot seem to breathe  
It never allows me to be happy  
But always makes me seethe  
  
It harms the world around me  
And also damages me  
It releases toxic gases  
Will it ever set me free?  
  
I'm talking about 'pollution'  
This has not yet been seen  
It beats out all the good things  
And everything I have been  
  
It leaves behind a waste  
That's more poisonous than gases  
It spreads negativity within me  
And throughout the masses  
  
The pollution that I talk of  
Does not exist in the air  
It roams freely in my mind  
Causing sadness and despair  
  
In creating dire negativity  
And roaming through my mind  
It prevents me from loving  
Spreading peace and being kind  
  
There is a cure for this illness  
I must start with the way I think  
This will make my thoughts positive  
And my problems will begin to shrink  
  
If I surround myself with those  
With both wisdom and 'light'  
My perception will change  
And my future will be bright  
  
The wisdom comes not from them  
For they're inspired by the One  
The One God who comes for us all  
Our hearts and minds who has won  
  
I must turn to this One  
Who lifts us when we fall  
I must connect to Him  
The infinite source of all  
  
The solution to my pollution  
It's the One who helps me find  
that changing my perception  
Results in a 'healthy mind'. ■

**ON THE FIRST  
DAY OF JANUARY  
2012, HIS HOLINESS  
NIRANKARI BABA'S  
NEW YEAR'S  
MESSAGE WAS  
BROADCAST  
WORLDWIDE. HE  
SAID:**

**"Saints especially have a big responsibility to fulfil and to perform because enlightened souls are the ones who have a very important role in making this world a better place to live in."**

Hearing these words particularly struck a chord within me. I was sitting in the gathering of enlightened ones (Sadh Sangat) at the time, when I heard this. I heard myself say, His Holiness is talking to me. Those who have been blessed with divine awakening or God-consciousness are the enlightened. As such, they have a role to play. In fact all the enlightened ones have an important responsibility in this world.

A week into the New Year, and these words were beckoning me time after time. On the following Sunday, my name was down to assist with the children's Sunday school (Bal Sangat). His Holiness Nirankari Baba's New Year's message was the theme for my group, who were all aged above ten.

I shared his words with the group to see what I could learn from them. I began by asking why His Holiness had used the term 'enlightened' to describe those who had been blessed with God-consciousness. A couple



of the youngsters responded by saying that this Knowledge (gyan) makes a devotee bright. I cheekily asked if that meant that all enlightened devotees look as if they are wearing Christmas lights around their necks. After some smiles, I probed for further understanding. The discussion went into the analogy of how, just as light allows us to see where we are going so that we don't knock into things and hurt ourselves, the knowledge and thus divine connection, brings about an awareness, which takes us out of the darkness

of ignorance, giving us an opportunity to live life in a far more enjoyable manner.

After an in-depth discussion on the soul being part of the super soul, formless-Nirankar, and thus, every human being is inter-connected, I guided the young minds towards the idea of being responsible. Why is it that enlightened ones have a very important role to play? What makes enlightened souls different?

The 11 year old sitting beside me answered that those who are

enlightened know that God is with them watching them all the time. Therefore, they are aware that they should not do anything wrong.

Continuing on the topic of what makes an enlightened soul different; the young pure minds explained that enlightened ones treat everyone equally. How? Well, we're all connected and a part of us is within every human being. On a deeper level, perhaps, it is because enlightened ones see God, the connecting factor, within everyone.

I couldn't help but ask the group to be honest and put their hands up if they were able to treat everyone in their class at school equally. Not bad, three out of ten put their hands up. I asked the others why it was that they were unable to treat all of their classmates equally. "Well, if others are not nice to us, why should we be nice back?" questioned the young 10 year old. The others on my left nodded in agreement.

I then asked half of the group whether an enlightened soul would react in this way. When the answer came in the negative, I asked them to put themselves in Nirankari Baba's position, and to advise the rest of the group the way in which His Holiness would act. The advice was "treat others the way you wish to be treated" and "it doesn't matter how others treat you, you still have to do your bit."

Such a simple answer made me realise the basics of the Mission's philosophy, that once we are introduced to Nirankar it is important to connect to it. "Know One, Believe in One, Become One" is a theme His Holiness often elaborates upon. A Nirankari is an enlightened person who endeavours to imbibe Nirankar's eternal attributes such as unconditional love, compassion, acceptance, broadmindedness and humility.



Therefore, an enlightened soul is one who dwells within Nirankar and is connected to its source of positivity. Thus giving out positivity is its natural consequence that brings positive results to oneself and to those around. His Holiness often compares an enlightened soul to a rose that continues to give out its sweet fragrance even though it may be surrounded by thorns.

I asked the group on my left if the advice given to treat others well despite how they are treated in return was an easy task to implement. They shook their heads to say no. It then struck me that this responsibility and expectation that His Holiness has placed on us is not easy. It's not easy for young or old alike.

Looking at their dismayed faces, I tried to remind them as well as myself of how many advantages we have with knowing Nirankar and being enlightened. For instance, we never have to feel alone, we have the Creator of the Universe with us all the time, ready to help us out in every situation. We know who created us and we know who to thank for everything given to us. In fact, difficult situations become easier as soon as we surrender ourselves to Nirankar and ask the Lord to mould our thoughts, words and actions. Life is actually so much easier being enlightened and living in accordance with Nirankari Baba's teachings. We often forget this.

The only way I could think of

### Nirankari Baba's guidance reminds of a quote from Spiderman: "With great power comes great responsibility."

Therefore, it is these enlightened souls, the superheroes, who are committed to helping others and making the world a better place. ■



## POWER OF HUMILITY

SHIVA RANE, LIVINGSTON, SCOTLAND

**Humility does not mean you think less of yourself; it means you think of yourself less. It does not symbolise weakness, but on the contrary, greatness. This is exemplified in the following anecdote.**

Arthur Ashe, the legendary tennis player, was slowly dying. He contracted AIDS during his open heart surgery in 1983, from an infected blood transfusion. On seeing a public figure brought down to his knees, a reporter emotionally asked:

Why did GOD select you for such a bad disease?"

The answer he gave was iconic. He said:

When I was holding the champion cup aloft, I never asked GOD, why he chose me? And now that I find myself in different circumstances, I should not be asking GOD, why me?

To develop humility in the heart and mind, the following pointers are useful:

### Attitude of gratitude

At every opportune moment, thank others for what they do and what they have helped you with. For no one accomplishes anything on their own; we always need help and assistance from others. In appreciating God's bounties such as health, wealth and happiness, let us forget our complaints. In spending time with nature, you will find that it is impossible not to be touched and humbled.

### Mere instruments

In remembering that God made us as an instrument, through which he works, allows us to be humble and at peace. It helps us to focus on the useful, not the useless. Once, on seeing a devotee distributing fruit to the passers-by, an inquisitive person came and said:

Wow! You're doing such a great job.

The devotee responded:

Who am I? I am nobody. I have to be thankful to the tree, without which there would be no fruit.

The Supreme Lord is the Ultimate Doer of everything. It is He, who makes us his instruments to do the job. Those who become such mediums, they never nurture or harbour pride in whatever they do.

### One doesn't have to be right

For a devotee there is never any right or wrong. He never tries to outdo the other person to make him self look better. This attitude helps to keep the ego in check. In accepting that we do not always have the right answer and that there is always something more to learn, we allow ourselves to be open and to nurture the spirit of humility. This is a sure way of progressing. If others do indeed appear small to us, it means that we are either looking at them from a distance or that we are looking at them with pride.

### One doesn't have to be first

Being first is not necessarily a bad thing. However, an unbridled desire to achieve first place, at any cost, can come across as competitive and self-promoting. Ego is the wanton desire for you to be uniquely special, and humility is the desire to see everyone as special.

### Speak less, listen more

There is a reason why God has given us two ears and one mouth. It is so that we may listen more and speak less. We have to be truly silent to listen to the self and others. By listening to others, we become more respectful of others. The others also respect us more for it.

### Do not judge or label

The Lord doesn't judge us, so why should we judge our fellow beings? Everyone is different and has goodness. The Bible reminds us "judge not lest ye be judged." (Luke: 6.37)

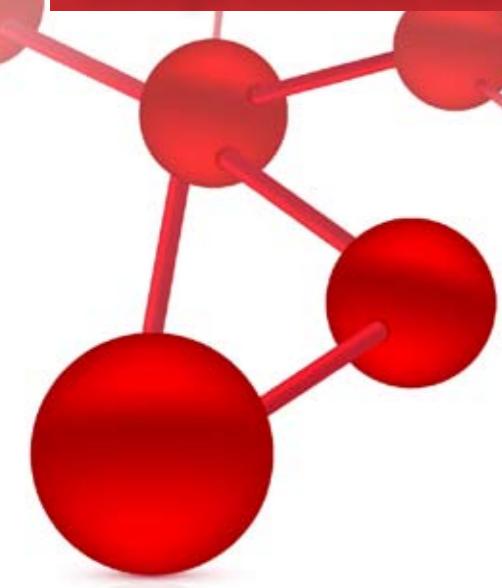
### Above all trust God for everything

This does not mean that we shouldn't do our best in everything we do. In truth, there may be a limit to what we can change in the world around us. However, there is one thing which is always within our power to change - our attitude and thoughts in every given situation. ■

# SCIENCE AND SPIRITUALITY

## PART TWO – THE QUEST FOR KNOWLEDGE

George Khambe, Iver, UK



Before we turn our mind to some of the intriguing topics of this series it is important that we first build some appreciation for the way in which science has evolved as a discipline, particularly from a time when the world was perceived in a vastly different way. In this chapter we will therefore revisit the story of western science and some of the issues brought to the forefront through its uprising.

Science is often seen to be overwhelming for the layman, with an array of acronyms and complex equations usually filling up the pages of most scientific works. In fact it often seems unsurprising that science tends to predict some quite unusual and somewhat ironic results based on its extreme obsession for numbers and computation. However, underneath this thick blanket of mathematical trickery lies a simple and systematic culture of thinking and, fundamentally, this is what really should be called ‘science’.

Having studied physics I appreciate that it can often appear beyond the scope of normal comprehension. No doubt there is a community out there bent on confusing people for their own amusement, if not for self glorification through ego-boosting vocabulary and alien notation. However, I firmly believe that the beauty of scientific understanding is within the grasp of every willing individual, and more important than one’s ability is the desire to understand. For at the most fundamental level, Science is the quest for knowledge, and this is

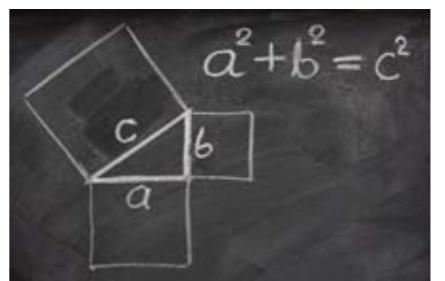
where our story begins.

Somewhat controversially, let us appeal to the Biblical account of Adam (Hebrew for ‘mankind’), supposedly the first man on earth, and an individual of pure or ‘simple’ consciousness. Having eaten fruit from the tree of knowledge Adam began to differentiate between himself and the physical world. He now knew much more than was originally intended for him, but this realisation came at a cost as he had disobeyed God in the process. Adam was forced to leave the Garden of Eden and survive the wider world on his own.

Possessing an increased awareness, Adam and his partner, Eve, placed themselves at the top of the hierarchical order of creation. They learned how to adapt to the environment, and how to exploit its resources. Subsequent generations also developed skills of hunting and farming; this marked the infancy of a highly practical (physical) science. The next jump arose from the emergence of metal

tools, about 5000 years ago, which proved to be a crucial aid in human development. This brings us to the era of the Greco-Romans, a civilisation from which the western world derived a great deal of structure. Henceforth, the wise began to philosophise about the existence of man, and this gave birth to modern science.

In sixth century BC, the Milesians (of Greece) established the foundations of physics. They were considered to be the first real scientists, but their philosophy was still influenced by ancient thought. Developing on this approach, the Pythagoreans proposed that the universe may be constructed from ‘atomistic building blocks’ and this led to the idea that the spirit and matter were separate entities.



Then, in fourth century BC, along came Aristotle, the student of Plato. He was able to prescribe a formal structure for existing scientific knowledge, whilst introducing the concept of logic. These ideas were reinforced by distinguished academics such as Archimedes and Euclid, who made important contributions towards mechanics, mathematics and astronomy. So where did religion fit into this picture?

Up until the seventeenth century the Christian church happily accepted Aristotle’s early theories. They believed that man had been created in God’s image, and we were therefore His most noble creations. They adopted the (perhaps egocentric) view that the universe was centred on man, and as a result, the Earth was stationary with the sun and planets orbiting around it. At this time, science and religion worked in unison, and were strongly supportive of each other. The church also believed that their understanding of God could be enhanced if they looked beyond the earth’s atmosphere, and explored the regions of outer space. The great thinkers of the period were thus employed to search the skies, leading to a fascination for the stars and planets. A new breed of astronomical science was born, but with unforeseen consequences.

After 2000 years of domination, Aristotle’s ideas were eventually challenged. The latest discoveries in astronomy and physics inspired scientists to propose a new representation for the universe, the Copernican model. This assumed the earth to be one of many planets revolving around the static Sun. The church was deeply disturbed by this however, as it had always been believed that the earth had been created by God to occupy a central position in the universe, and this gave rise to a simmering conflict. This model was also promoted by Kepler,

Galileo, and later by Newton; forcing an ever increasing rift between science and religion – eventually the supportive relationship transformed into one of conflict.

*‘I would rather have a mind opened by wonder than one closed by belief.’*

Gerry Spence

Since then religion and science have been generally accepted as polar opposites. In the western world physical science has established itself as the dominant model for human thinking. A corollary of this is the emergence of mind sciences, or psychology, which also has limited place for religious teachings within its framework of human analysis. The irony of the whole situation is that modern science was

teachings of past and present masters.

In this way, western science and spirituality are not so dissimilar. So much so that now some of the prominent scientists of our time are beginning to draw an increasing number of references to sacred spiritual texts to reflect the implications of their work – most notably in the area of quantum physics. This however is not so surprising, as some of the spiritual writings from ancient times dating back over more than 5000 years were based on the philosophical work of what some might call the ‘Scientists’ of the Sanskrit tradition – these philosophers weren’t just mystics or yogi’s – they were the Scientists of their era.

For me, science is a discipline that



originally inspired by the church, but has ended up contradicting its philosophy.

However, just as life appears to repeat itself, so the new science of the present era is beginning to change the game again. The latest scientific observations and experimental methods are peeling another layer of the onion to unveil a new level of understanding which is challenging some of our established theories. At the same time, we are also beginning to draw an important distinction between ‘religion’ as an institution, and the ‘spiritual essence’, which is really at the heart of the great

explores the physical nature of our existence and the world around us, and does so in often quite elegant and remarkable ways. Science is objective and therefore empirical in its approach, but the prevalence of theoretical physics has continued to drive it towards the edge of reality and prompt new ways of thinking. Spirituality, then, has made a home for itself at the other end of the spectrum, focusing on the ethereal aspects of our existence and the justification for our place in this universe. However, just as theoretical physics pushes empirical physics to the boundaries of the irrational, so the

yogic and meditative practices of spirituality give rise to the mind-soul-body conundrum, drawing us back towards our relationship with the physical world. It seems inevitable to me that our questions will remain unanswered until we build a bridge between the two: we rely on all sorts of things that add to our ignorance, but never search for that something that can remove our ignorance - that something being God.

As it is stated in the adapted verses of stanza 92 of the sacred Avtar Bani:

*'One seeks the way to God  
From the shackled - souls  
Away from journey's end  
Far from the pristine goal  
In wandering, 'to and fro'  
Rites, rituals, they uphold  
Not seeking Guru, Avtar  
To untie their 'blindfold'!'*

I believe that the true quest for knowledge must encompass both the spiritual and the physical aspects of existence, and it is only when we begin to explore both of these that we begin to appreciate the significance of one against the other. In his statement 'science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind', Albert Einstein famously highlights that both science and religion are individually limited and must find a way to collaborate. Moreover he was not alone in thinking so:

*'Science can never solve the ultimate mystery of nature.  
And that is because, in the last analysis, ourselves are part of nature, and, therefore, part of the mystery that we are trying to solve.'*

Max Planck

Over the years I have come to the firm opinion that although science has provided us with significant insight and visibility into the world around, it is only through spiritual realisation that we can build the complete picture of our existence. Despite our discussion above, this may still appear as a statement

plucked from the ether, but it really does come down to a question of how open and committed we are to the experience of learning. As the American composer Frank Zappa said, 'A mind is like a parachute. It doesn't work if it is not open'. With this in mind, I leave with the conclusion of our discussion for this issue:

*'Religion and science are the two wings upon which man's intelligence can soar into the heights.'*

Abdu'l-Baha ■



# The Divine Plan

ANON.

Once there was a sweeper (cleaner) in a well-known temple; he was very sincere and devoted. Every time he saw devotees coming to the Lord, in their thousands, he entertained the thought that the Lord must be feeling very tired. So one day very innocently, he asked the Lord if he could take his place for a day to enable him to get some rest.

The Lord replied:  
I don't mind taking a break. I'll transform you into myself, but you must observe the following: You must stand here like me, smile at everyone, and just give blessings. Do not interfere with anything, and do not say anything. Remember that I have a master plan for all.

The sweeper agreed to it. The next day he took the position of the Lord. A rich man came and prayed to him. He offered a handsome donation and prayed for his business to go from strength to strength. On leaving the temple, he left his wallet full of money right at the altar.

As the sweeper in the form of the Lord could not call out to him, he decided to control himself and



keep quiet. Just then a poor man came in. He placed one coin at the altar and said that it was all that he could afford. He too prayed to the Lord to carry on being engaged in His service. He said that his family was in dire needs, and that he trusted the Lord to provide for it.

When he opened his eyes, he saw the wallet that was left behind by the rich man. The poor man took the wallet very innocently and thanked the Lord for His kindness. The sweeper in the form of the Lord could not say anything and kept smiling.

At that point a sailor walked in. He prayed for his safe journey as he was going on a long trip. Just then the rich man returned with the police, saying that somebody had stolen his wallet. On seeing the sailor there and believing that he had taken it, he asked the police to arrest him. The sweeper in the form of the Lord wanted to let on that the sailor was not the thief, but not being able to do so, he became greatly frustrated. The sailor looked at the Lord and asked why he, an innocent person, was being punished.

The sweeper could not tolerate it any longer. He felt that even if the Lord himself had been there in person, he too would have definitely interfered. Hence, he started speaking and informed the police as to whom the culprit was. He said that the thief was the poor man, not the sailor. The rich man and the sailor were both thankful.

At night, the Lord himself came and asked the sweeper how his day fared. The sweeper said:

I thought it would be easy, but now I know that it is quite the contrary. However, I did one good thing.

Then he explained the whole episode to the Lord, who became very upset with what the sweeper honestly believed to be a good deed. The Lord asked:

Why didn't you just stick to the



plan? It would appear that you had no faith in me. Do you think that I don't understand the hearts of all those who came here? The donation the rich man gave was all stolen money. There is only a fraction of what he honestly possesses, and yet he wants me to reciprocate manifoldly. The single coin offered by the poor man was the last coin he had; he gave it to me in good faith.

The sailor might not have done anything wrong, but having been thrown in jail, would have saved his life. For going aboard the ship that night, he encountered severe inclement weather and was near to death. The wallet should have gone to the poor man because he will have used it to serve me. I was going to reduce the rich man's karma, and save the sailor. But you cancelled everything because you thought you knew my plan.

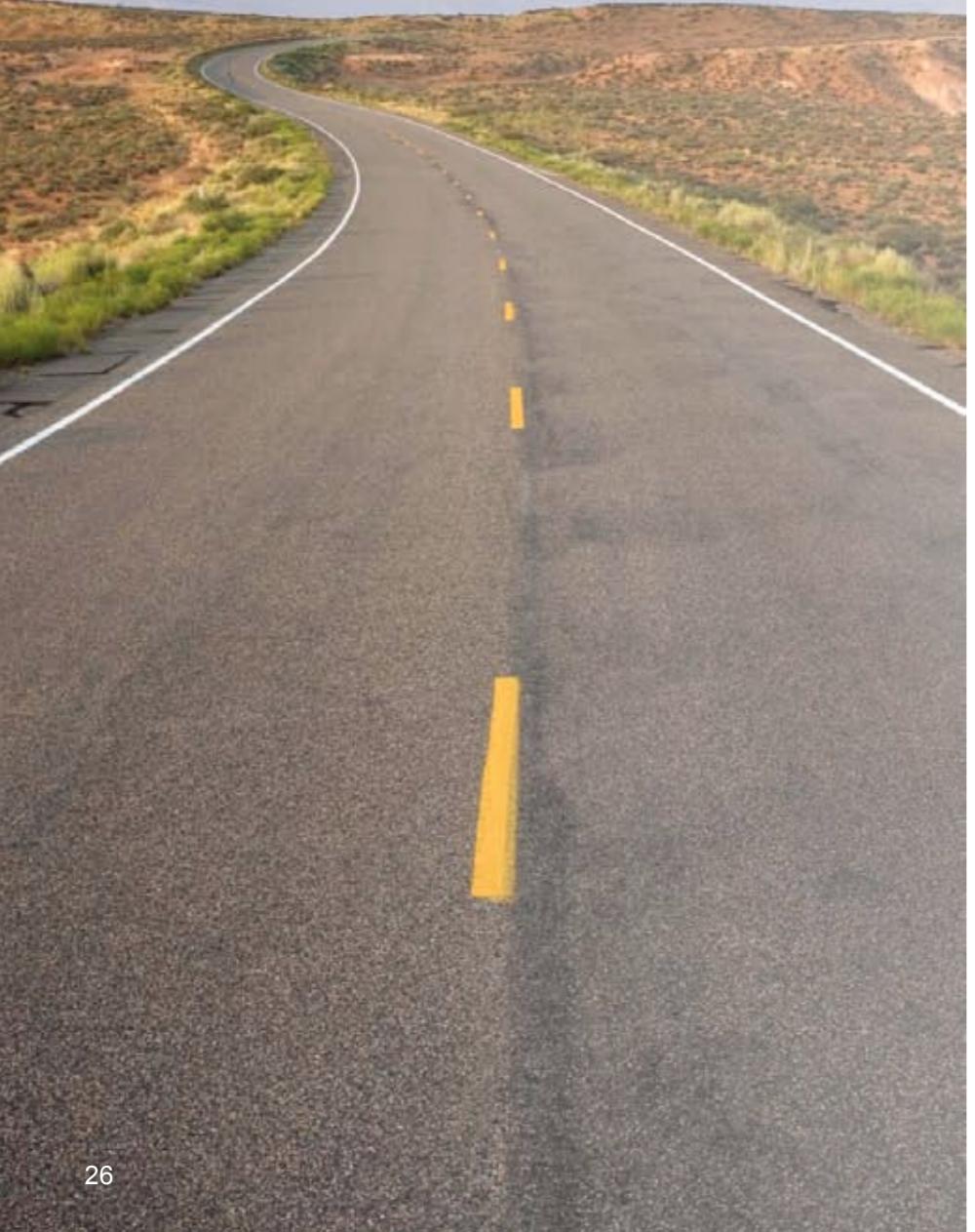
God has a plan and justice for everyone....We just have to have patience! ■



# Path to health

DR. KANWAL CHAWLA, FORT MYERS, FLORIDA, USA

**What is the mind? Is it a force within the brain, or is it an abstract entity that lies elsewhere but determines the way we think?**



The mind is so powerful that it can determine the action the whole physical body takes. It is said that a human being is the crown creation because of his rational power to analyze and think critically. He has unlimited ability to use this power in two ways, either positively to make this world an ideal place to live in, or negatively to create chaos and destruction. Ironically, we can see the manifestation of both extremes in the world today. Technological advances are being used, on the one hand, to facilitate our life, and on the other hand, to destroy it with weapons of mass destruction. So how does the mind determine which path to choose?

It is said that a child has the purest form of mind. No prejudices and no hatred. When children play, they do not pay attention to the others' ethnic origin, religious background or nationality. They simply have fun and enjoy their company. As children grow, their minds fashion an identity influenced by the environment. If the environment harbours love, joy, compassion and selflessness, then the mind adopts those very virtues. If the same mind is constantly bombarded with anger, hatred, harmful competition and chaos, then that is exactly what it absorbs and reflects.

If at a young age, a person's mind is nurtured with spirituality, love and values of universal brotherhood, then that individual is more likely to have a positive influence in society. If, on the other hand, the mind is directed towards amassing material wealth, name and fame at the other's expense, then that person is more likely to spread hatred, jealousy and chaos. Such an individual, in a race to collect endless wealth and accolades, would not gain lasting peace. In fact, the mind is always at loggerheads because of the fact that desires are insatiable. Life is spent in mundane pursuits, rather than in attaining eternal peace through love and spirituality. Such paucity is the sign of an unhealthy mind.

So what are the signs of a healthy mind? It is one that demonstrates no prejudice, harbours no hatred, constantly flows with love and accepts situations as they come, without extreme emotions

or reactions. Children portray these qualities when interacting with each other. They play with each other with complete joy, and share their toys and playground without much hesitation. They enjoy themselves regardless of where they find themselves. If a disagreement does occur, it does not last very long. Within a short period of time, they are seen playing with each other once again with full joy.

Indeed, if the mind has the capacity to analyze what is right and wrong; it also has the ability to reverse what it has been impregnated by, to re-condition itself. As positive qualities start to outweigh negative ones, the mind sheds the prejudices and selfish motives. Fortunately, every person has this ability to decide as to which path their mind should take.

The mind is like a dog on a leash. If the master lets the dog lead the way, then it takes the owner off the path. On the other hand, if the master holds that leash tightly, then the owner can direct the dog as intended. In the same way, if we let the uncontrolled mind dictate to us, then it will constantly take us towards the path of materialism and selfish achievements. If we pull on that leash and divert the mind to think spiritually - helping other people and emitting love - then in time the mind has no choice but to think that way.

As parents, we are obliged to help nurture a child's inquisitive nature,



and direct its ever-absorbing mind towards goodness, love and compassion. This ensures that the child emits those very feelings as he grows up and becomes a responsible member of society. If all parents followed this path, the degradation of others would be a thing of the past. A spiritual education through a sacred congregation most certainly would sort out the wheat from the chaff. This would be the ideal solution to creating healthy minds in this world. We also need to allow for current, unhealthy-minded adults

but again the unhealthy mind drives people to prejudice and forces them to isolate themselves from others. Unfortunately, the core message of religion is misconstrued. Either we do not understand the true meaning, or that the message is misunderstood due to ignorance. It would appear that the mind alters, distorts and shrouds the message to suit its own well-being.

True religion always delivers the message in its purest form, and

**The mind is like a dog on a leash. If the master lets the dog lead the way, then it takes the owner off the path. On the other hand, if the master holds that leash tightly, then the owner can direct the dog as intended.**

to improve. As always, it depends on the individual's own desire to change. If a person is on the path to self-destruct, then there is nothing we can do. But if the individual senses unrest or chaos within his life and feels he needs to change something to bring about peace, then there is hope. Self-analysis is one of the most important tools that one can utilize every day to improve the state of the mind. By becoming aware of the positive and negative at the end of the day, one can begin to improve one's life.

Religion plays a major role in one's path towards self-improvement. The golden rule - treat others as you wish to be treated - is a common theme in religion. Most of us want to be in and around an environment which is full of love, joy and peace. This has to be reciprocated.

Most religions preach the presence of ONE omnipotent God. If that holds true, then mankind is His creation and we are all children of the same, one God. Human beings understand this concept for the most part,

always promotes the truth of one God. It helps its adherents to become more peaceful and compassionate by sublimating their unhealthy minds. One way of doing this is to pray – selflessly pray – amongst other like-minded individuals; the other is to serve mankind – diverse people from all walks of life – as our own. After all, it is said that a person is known by the company he keeps. Hence, if we keep the company of the wise – saints and seers, our mind gravitates towards the most pious of thoughts. Being with them is tantamount to being in the presence of God, which gradually makes us godly, the epitome of cleansed and pure minds.

A peaceful mind is one that accepts all that life throws at it – the ups and downs, success and failure, and pain and pleasure. In accepting that everything we have amount to gifts from God, who can take them all away at will, we acquire a special peace of mind. The knowledge of God – self-realization – that converts our unhealthy minds into healthy ones is the very substance that Nirankari Baba offers. ■

**Having concluded an interview with a patient, who had abused his family over many years, I was struck by his words, "what choice did I have? What else did I know?" He was deprived of contact with his children because he was serially violent and threatening to their mother. He used to return home drunk and disorderly. Some days this amounted to shouting and intimidating – other days, physical violence.**

The patient was speaking about his own childhood. He became a reflection of his own abusive father. As a boy, he too had experienced the trauma of domestic abuse and had the scars to prove it. The physical injuries had long gone, but the emotional hurt was still with him.

Although I had little difficulty in empathising with his story, I could not help but think of another patient, who had lived through a very similar upbringing. Whilst his mother and father had also frequently fought and hurt one another, this man had resolved never to repeat this history. Indeed he was shy, under-confident and often depressed, but never aggressive or a concern to anyone else's safety. With these experiences, I often ask myself as to what makes the difference? How is it that we forge such uniquely different destinies from such similar lives?



Psychologists have long debated the influence of nature and nurture. One view is that we are 'hard-wired' to behave in certain ways - develop particular habits and present certain temperaments. This is based on the notion that biological or genetic predispositions carve a certain path and lead to a predictable set of outcomes. This view appears to be nonsense for it makes us choice-less and little more than organic machines. The other view – that whatever we see and hear is painted on a blank canvas at birth as experience, and eventually becomes the personality that we reflect on the world – also has its limitations. Twin studies have shown that two children, sharing the same genes and being raised in the same environment, can achieve very different lives and modes of being. Does the truth, therefore, lie somewhere between the two positions - not fully accounted for by nature and not completely explained by nurture? Are we all born with certain propensities and yet moulded by our experiences and learning in unique and indeterminate ways? Let us investigate.

If we consider the idea of pre-existent tendencies in spiritual traditions of the East, there is much said about 'sanskaaras' – latent impressions which travel with the subtle being, across successive births. If this is

# MENTAL HEALTH

Dr. Bobby Sura, Solihull, UK



accepted, it stands to reason that we bring a whole host of potentials with us when we are delivered into this world. Evolutionary theorists talk of the collective experiences of an entire species, not merely the individual. This collective experience - described to have travelled with us across the millennia – is not dissimilar to the psychoanalyst and philosopher, Carl Gustav Jung's idea of the collective unconscious, which is taken to be the deepest level of the psyche, containing the accumulation of inherited psychic structures and archetypal experiences.

In spite of such established outlooks, we cannot ignore the impact of the social and emotional context upon each of us as individuals. Developmental psychologists such as John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth hold firmly to the view that the transformative phase in a human being is within the first 3 years of life (and most particularly the first 3 months). If this period is characterized by the making of a secure base, we learn to trust others, explore our world with confidence and open curiosity, and in so doing develop into more rounded human beings. This security is founded

upon caregivers who are calm, responsive and predictable in the nurturing they provide. Such understanding leads us to the conclusion that an either/or debate is shallow – a both/and discussion is needed. What we bring and how we are influenced by what we experience need not be mutually incompatible theories. They may both co-exist.

Behind every aggressor is a victim. Whilst it is important to be empathic towards people who behave hurtfully, we cannot, however, excuse their actions. Empathy must be combined with the rule of law and the individual responsibility never diluted. Yet at the risk of seeming naive, it is also true that few people actively choose to be offensive. Sigmund Freud offers some insight into such unexpected behaviours, when he describes the subconscious mind. He speaks of it as the dumping ground for experiences and impulses we wish to hide from ourselves and others. Obscured from view, and not easily accessible to us, these memories and instincts get played out, without people really being aware as to why this is happening, or how.

Ralph Waldo Emerson tells us that the ancestor to every action is a thought. But what happens if our thoughts are harsh and disapproving? Narrative therapists such as Michael White and David Epstein talk of the stories that have been told about a person, and that repeated experiences of those tellings lead people to internalise them as an accurate representation of themselves. In other words the story is accepted, believed, and then acted out. The myriad other stories which could have been told or were whispered too quietly, become lost and minimised. Where the dominant story told is negative and disempowering, our choices to act or live become constrained. This concept is eloquently portrayed in the poetry of Dorothy Law Nolte;

'if children live with criticism they learn to condemn,

if children live with hostility they learn to fight;

if children live with fear they learn to be apprehensive;

if children live with ridicule they learn to feel shy....'

The idea of individual autonomy gets a little shaken and stirred, when we reflect on the power of such words. Do we really have an unlimited sense of personal agency to act and behave in the way we would like? Or are we led purely by unconscious motivations and biological predispositions? Do we step into the roles that others make for us, or are we ever able to write our own script?

Certainly narrative theorists work therapeutically with their patients (or clients) by helping them re-author their lives. They work to help a person challenge the thin descriptions that others may have imposed, and work to create more meaningful and health-giving stories. This process culminates in the person reclaiming the power to realise their aspirations and hopes. Not dissimilarly, the psychoanalysts believe that when we have resolved emotional conflicts and made sense of the trauma we have repressed in our lives, then and only then can we let it go. Aaron Beck provides a complimentary mantra within his widely accepted talking treatment for anxiety and depression – cognitive therapy – where automatic negative thoughts and unhelpful rules for living can be challenged and replaced with new and more adaptive and more positive thoughts and rules. To overcome the negativity, we need to appreciate the impact of early life experiences.

The fact is that irrespective of what we bring with us, there is an opportunity within human life

to rise above these inheritances – to be resilient in the face of adversity. Perhaps the most striking example of this, is to be found in the book ‘Man’s Search for Meaning’ by Victor Frankl, an eminent physician and psychoanalyst, who survived the Holocaust. He writes:

‘We who lived in concentration camps can remember the men who walked through the huts comforting others, giving away their last piece of bread. They may have been few in number, but they offer sufficient proof that everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms - to choose one’s attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one’s own way’.

This inner strength can be found – my clinical experience in mental health confirms this to be so. But, certain factors create the platform from which resilience can grow. The key ingredient is to be found in relationship - notwithstanding the predispositions with which we may come into the world, or the hardships we may face, experiences of being loved and cared for make all the difference. The care may come from any direction - be it a sibling who holds your hand in times of fear, a responsive teacher who looks beyond a child’s disruptive behaviour, or friendly neighbour who watches appreciatively. Dorothy Law Nolte alludes to the power of such relationships:

**‘...If children live with encouragement, they learn confidence;**

**if children live with tolerance, they learn patience;**

**if children live with acceptance, they learn to love;**

**if children live with fairness, they learn justice...’**

**We who lived in concentration camps can remember the men who walked through the huts comforting others, giving away their last piece of bread. They may have been few in number, but they offer sufficient proof that everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms – to choose one’s attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one’s own way’.**

Over the centuries people have found such comfort in spirituality, perhaps because a relationship with a higher power, and an awareness of our higher nature never allows us to feel alone.

Even in the midst of events that would ordinarily cause pain and anguish, we can find the resolve not to be defined by them. Spiritual Masters over the centuries have inspired human beings to discover this, potential which so often lies dormant within us. They have also lived by personal example, to model a way of being kind-hearted and generous towards one another. Faith communities who live these teachings, by prioritising love over hatred and togetherness over division, offer the gift of peace and solace to the world at large. This is why the Nirankari following places such emphasis on the sadhsangat – the company of the loving and wise. There is life-changing love and care to be found in faith. Even ordinarily critical and offensive people may begin to respond more gently and politely if given repeated expressions of warmth, appreciation and regard from others around them.

The Dalai Lama says:

**‘...I have found that the more we care for the happiness of others, the greater is our own sense of well-being...’**

His Holiness Nirankari Baba also reminds us:

**‘When we offer support and care to another, we find that we gain a great sense of care and support for ourselves...’**

It would appear that life is not nature or nurture; it is not entirely pre-disposed or wholly experiential. It is, in fact, a combination of the two. There are indeed certain pre-determined dispositions, but there is enough room also to author our own destiny. If we want a brighter future tomorrow, we have to make our present bright today.

We can realise our potential, by being part of a spiritual community. This is where we keep replenishing our limited reserves; we tend to experience empathy, acceptance and love as a natural part of our coming together. We also feel a deep sense of care and nurturing, from our relationship with God, who is always with us. Such connected experiences, repeated frequently over time, improve our state of mind. This fosters sound mental health, which in turn carries us through the journey of life, with its various landscapes and challenges. When we are spiritually healthy, we are naturally more robust and resilient. Where psychotherapy has its place and utility, it would be of benefit to add a dose of spiritual medicine. ■

# sensibleuse ofsenses

DR. C DADLANI, WASHINGTON DC, USA

Our physical body has been graced with so many senses and abilities including but not limited to seeing, hearing, speaking, feeling, thinking, and touching. It’s amazing and ironic, that although we have been blessed with these abilities and senses, we use them in a senseless manner. These gifts could change the world we live in, yet we waste and abuse them.

We were given two precious eyes to see and experience this world. These eyes are frequently used to look down upon others and to see the flaws and weaknesses in others. Imagine, these eyes could also be used to see beauty in all things, and sense when others are in pain and need our help. Let us see what we can give instead of what we can take. Rather than divide, our eyes should seek opportunities to bring people together. Most importantly, may we see God in all whether our eyes are open or closed. Let our hearts be filled with love and guide our sight so that we may spread the values of humanity to all corners of the world.

We were also blessed with the ability to hear sound with two ears. These ears seem to follow gossip and rejoice in hearing the misery of others. Let us use this gift to hear music and laughter in all things around us. Yet, never forget, when we hear the cries of our neighbors, this gift can lend a listening shoulder to lift spirits when they need it the most. May we try to listen more than we speak. Let us listen carefully for

God’s inspirations to better our lives and the lives of those around us.

The tongue is our most powerful ally or our worst enemy. The words we speak can bring immense pleasure, happiness and peace. When abused, it creates loads of pain, strife and tears to others. This ability to speak is the most difficult ability to control and use wisely. Often times, silence speaks more volume than any word could convey. We must learn when to speak and when to stay silent. When we do use this gift to speak, let us speak that which would not cause regret. The power of our words should inspire and give hope, laughter, support and kindness to those around us.

The hands that we have been blessed with should be building bridges not walls. We should use them to create atmospheres of bliss rather than environments of destruction. Hold each other’s hands through tough times and good times alike. We must resist the desire to use our hands to push people away and take things away from others. I pray our hands always remain folded and



humbled as we acknowledge that this Formless God is the doer of everything.

Blessed with feet, we were given the ability to walk all parts of the globe. Let us never cut others off or walk over others to hurt them. Let us never think we walk on air and treat others as inferior. I wish that we always walk the path God has chosen for us. When we choose to walk behind Him, he will keep us in the right direction and help us from stumbling.

Amazing, after all the gifts thus far, we were still given more. A heart. What more can be said. Our hearts were designed to be open to others and filled with compassion, kindness, and love. Without love, our hearts literally stop beating. When filled with animosity, rage, hatred and jealousy, the heart affects all of our senses in the worst way possible. When the heart is filled with love, the heart is filled with God.

Seems so simple, so sensible, yet mankind appears senseless. I pray we use our senses more sensibly. ■



# THE FIRST PRINCIPLE

RANJIT CHEEMA, TORONTO, CANADA

## The Nirankari Mission rests on Five Principles

The first principle is that the body, mind and wealth belong to Nirankar (Formless God). We understand that although our body, mind and wealth belong to God, we can, in fact, use them all the time. Although entrusted to us, they remain the property of God.

Understanding 'body' is simple. It is our physical self, hands, arms, legs, feet, head, eyes, ears, mouth and so on. We use them in our day to day lives as human beings. We are given control of our body at Nirankar's discretion. Our body belongs to Nirankar completely and its control can be taken away from us at any moment. In fact, at any moment, our body can become useless; it can die. We are given the use of our human body for one purpose: to find and attain God and, therefore, liberation for our soul. As the body has a limited life span, we make best use of our lives to attain God before it's too late.

Understanding 'wealth' is also simple. When we think about it, all material things, not only things like money, gold, precious items, real estate and so on, but all material things that we can see and obtain in one way or another also belong to Nirankar. Like our body, we are given wealth to use in our day to day lives. All material things are given to us by Nirankar and we are at liberty to use them by His grace. So everything is borrowed by us in our human selves from Nirankar. Wealth is given to us, more or less, in proportion to the effort that we make. Normally if we work hard we can have more wealth and if we do not work so hard we cannot expect great riches. Our human body uses this wealth. What are we supposed to use wealth for? The main purpose is to sustain our human body with food and shelter. We need to sustain our body so that

we can use it to accomplish the main purpose that we were given the body for in the first place: to attain God, and attain liberation. Understanding and controlling body and wealth for the purpose that they have been given to us, is relatively easy because they are physical things. We can easily touch, see and manipulate them.

Let us consider the 'mind' now. It is obvious to us that the mind is different from body and wealth. The mind consists of our thoughts. While we can touch, see and feel the body and different forms of wealth, the mind is unseen. It cannot be touched or felt by our hands or seen by our eyes. Yet the mind is included along with body and wealth, in the first principle, therefore it has importance.

It is easy for us to see and use and manipulate our body and wealth. It is also relatively easy to treat them as belonging to Nirankar. It is very hard to actually treat the mind and use it as belonging to Nirankar. Everyday our thoughts run wild. It is said in the scriptures that the mind is like an elephant. What would happen if we tried to put a leash on an elephant and took it for a walk? Just like a huge animal is hard to control, the mind is also just as hard, if not more. As our mind belongs to Nirankar, all the thoughts that it contains also belong to God. Emotions like love, hate and anger are also in the mind. Since we have to treat the mind as Nirankar's property, we have to have a good mind. Having a good mind means having good

thoughts. As we use the body and wealth to the purpose they were intended, we must also use the mind likewise. When we are awake and conscious we are thinking many thoughts, and feel many different emotions, both good and bad.

It may be relatively easy to control our speech, just as it is possible to use wealth for good purposes. It may be hard to control the mind, but it is possible with the right tools, which Babaji has kindly bestowed upon us. By going to the congregation and making an offering, our wealth can be put to good use. By listening to the saints, our mind is cleansed. By contemplating God our mind is put to good use; it is purified and bad thoughts are kept at bay.

Therefore, by engaging in this devotion, it sanctifies our mind, and helps in satisfying the first principle. So use all that you have to enjoy the immeasurable blessings that flow from Almighty God. ■

# HEALTHY SPIRIT

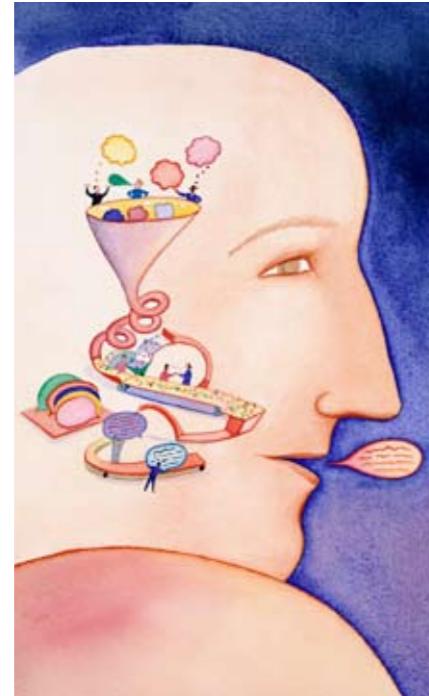
Davinder Dhanota, Toronto, Canada

Mind is not a tangible object you can touch or feel. Mind is actually a capacity for perception, reason, imagination, memory; and it supports functions such as emotion, attention, and communication. A rich set of unconscious processes are also included in many modern characterizations of mind.

Essentially, the power of mind is within what we call thoughts and ideas. Modern scientific instruments have tried to capture or see what thoughts look like, and what they discovered was electro-magnetic impulses going from one end to the other like fireworks or a light show in the brain!

Much of the quality and fulfillment of life comes from our thoughts and how we see the world. This heavily depends on our state of mind, so it is essential that if we want to lead a rich fulfilling life, we need a sound mind. What this means is what Lord Buddha would call right mind or thought. To see reality for what it is and lead a life conscious of this fact.

His Holiness Nirankari Baba helps humanity through this path of achieving a healthy mind by integrating it with the permanent, changeless, eternal, omnipotent, and omnipresent Formless. The knowledge of this supreme all-pervading energy helps people distinguish between the temporary creation and the eternal Creator, thus giving people a focus in their lives. Once you focus on something permanent and eternal and realise everything else changes and in no way can give you eternal bliss or happiness, you gain perspective and give the mind the power to separate



truth from untruth, also known as viveka (discrimination).

Normally we associate a healthy body with a healthy mind. In other words, physical fitness and health also leads to the mind being healthy. However, the greater balance rests with the mind – if it is fit, the body will follow. This mind-stamina can be built through spiritual awakening i.e. union of mind with God.

*"A sound mind is your best friend, and an unsound mind your worst enemy."*

Bhagavad Gita

The person who has the knowledge of God and practices it in their daily life through remembrance of the divine, company of saintly beings, and selfless service of the community develops a healthy mind which leads to equanimity in life and ultimately bliss. ■

My first thoughts take me back to science class at school. I remember the class was exploring mechanisms through which our internal environment stays in balance – a process known as homeostasis. Through many interconnected biochemical processes, the body addresses its need for equilibrium, so one might say that the mind also requires a sort of homeostasis to maintain regularity? But what is the mind?

Commonly people would agree that the mind is something separate from the brain. It is agreed that the brain is a muscle or organ, but the mind is some different faculty, which enables man to understand and process knowledge.

The key to a healthy mind - where there is a healthy homeostasis - would require a need to identify with the whole. If homeostasis is the holistic balance of all internal physical and biological states, causing them to work as one whole entity, then the mind requires sourcing to its whole identity i.e. God or the Super-Mind.

As with all living beings, we require impetuses to inspire us to keep on moving in life. The mind requires new thoughts; the body requires new food and drink. If any of these needs are compromised then the health of the individual is compromised. Like the waters of a pond, blocked by a fallen tree and no longer fed by a stream, become stagnant, so is the case with the mind. If we are not flowing to the ocean (God) then our lives (the playground of the mind) also become stagnant.

# HOMEOSTASIS

Sunny Mehta, Wolverhampton, UK



If there is an in-built mechanism in the mind to maintain balance, like the body's homeostasis, what are the triggers, and what would be the outcomes?

Leaning first from the thoughts of Lord Buddha, who taught us that suffering is an ingrained part of existence (the first noble truth), the origin of suffering is craving, acquisition of identity, and in the end annihilation. This would illustrate how, without guidance, mankind suffers a rather tragic end.

However, the Buddha does go on to say that "all suffering can come to an end", bringing to light the Eight-fold path: right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration.

The Buddha has taught us that man's natural state, before enlightenment dawns, is that of suffering. If one wishes to end his suffering then discipline is required. In fact holy personages tell us that enlightenment is our natural state, for we are first spiritual beings having a human experience, and not the other way around.

One attains this perspective upon

surrendering to an enlightened master. On our own we are bound to suffer the desires of human existence, yet, with the advent of spirituality, which is advocated by enlightened seers, we can as the Buddha says, leave behind suffering. This experience is possible, through the interception of a sage.

When it is hot, we seek shade. Just so, when the mind is troubled, it seeks solace. We may turn to a spiritual master, at such times of need. However, there is a famous Confucian teaching where a disciple is shocked when Confucius continues to pour tea into a cup which is already full. Spirituality tells us that to attain balance or a kind of homeostasis, we first need to 'empty our cup'.

Saints have spoken about anger (another trigger) which affects not only the mind but the spirit also. Anger is said to be worse than any poison and has worse effects. One drop of poison can kill a man, yet in its bottle, the poison remains docile. However anger (an emotional poison) when imbibed into the mind, eats away at the individual. If it is acted out on a by-stander, the effects can be horrible. Saints and sages have always encouraged

tolerance as a pre-requisite to healthy living.

In contrast, the medicine prescribed by holy beings is spirituality. This is the mind's homeostasis. However this innate mechanism can only be realised fully by the grace of a living master.

His Holiness Nirankari Baba offers us three main precepts to maintain a healthy balanced mind. The first is to attend the holy congregation. It is said in the Sacred Avtar Bani, that the dross of the mind is washed away by attending congregation. The second precept, is to serve selflessly. This can only be attained by first surrendering to the greater good, or as Confucius said "to empty one's cup". The third precept is to maintain good connection with the source of the mind / super-mind, namely God. This is done through prayer or God-remembrance.

Homeostasis can be achieved in the mind through spirituality, and like the body, the balance can be controlled by the guidance of the innate nature of man, a spiritual being. This innate nature of man is Spirit, cohesion of Body, Mind and Soul. When the aspirant finds the infinite source, namely 'Nirankar', the balance is forged. ■



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