

TODAY'S MAN

Barry Battista

Today's Man has enjoyed the fruits of his labor in a big way. Economically, they tell him that he's never had it better. Yet what price is he paying?

Today's Man has his own house, car, credit cards, charge accounts and all the other things that go with the 20th Century "good life." Yet what price is he really paying? Urged on by powerfully directed impressions and efforts to stimulate his desires Today's Man works hard to make enough cash to fulfill these desires. Even Today's Woman has to leave her home and children and go out into the world to help gratify her family's whipped up desires. Tension, worry and all kinds of pressures are very familiar to Today's Man. His load is so heavy he doesn't see any way out. Life for Today's Man is work, sleep, work, sleep plus a few days here and there for all out attempts to gratify his desires. His life has brought him so much of what he wants but so little of what he really needs.

From my own experience with life I know that what Today's Man really needs is a teacher. He can never reach the Spiritual Path — which offers the only solution to these problems — without a true spiritual teacher whose life exemplifies his teachings. Elwood says, "If any person follows exactly the programme given to us it is impossible for him to be caught up in the web of materialistic passions brought on by past impressions and unfulfilled desires. Just a little effort to follow the teachings given to us brings on waves of inspiration to probe deeper and deeper and deeper into the realities, as compared to the "unrealities" of life. If Today's Man would spend more time in the pursuit of Self knowledge and less in the search for material pleasure, name, fame and fortune the burden of purification would not be difficult. This is simply because he would not commit himself to not fall prey to the temptations of that world which keeps him in an endless cycle of negative Karma, a product of his thoughts, actions and deeds."

After personally living the life of Today's Man by Grace one comes to know that only through the atmospheric purification through Agnihotra and the loving presence of a true spiritual teacher can one ever hope to overcome these forces and rise above the murky depths. In fact, just doing Agnihotra regularly is enough to begin one's ascent to lasting peace and happiness. Otherwise one gets pulled deeper and deeper into the trap of searching for happiness in the unreality which is the

material world. No one can really afford to pay the price but like the credit system of today, just because the bottom line is deferred for a while one tends to think it'll never show up. But surely the day comes when all debts must be paid in full.

Practicing the spiritual disciplines based on the science of Agnihotra and the Eternal Principles of Religion would elevate any sincere person above the state of confusion and despair. Today's Man should rejoice that for such a token payment his immense personal debts can be wiped out and his life literally started anew. Otherwise it is reap what you sow, as the law of cause and effect moves to claim its due. Then what price are we really paying?

Thy Will be done not mine.

AGNIHOTRA

Vasant

Agnihotra is merely a stepping stone in one's spiritual development. Agnihotra prepares the mind for the dawning of higher knowledge. It enables the mind to be free, to be clear-thinking by scientific methods as given through Vedas. It is so simple and the cost is minimal. You pay nothing except to purchase one copper pyramid shaped pot. The supplies to be burned are very inexpensive and simple to obtain. Nothing is required. This was given and shall always continue to be given. No money is ever to be charged to teach one Agnihotra. What other things you wish to teach do so on your own but Agnihotra is never to be charged for under any circumstance. It is our's by Grace that we can share with others.

Actually the essential ingredients of Agnihotra are cowdung, ghee, and some grain. The grain chosen in this case was rice because of its chemical protein structure and its availability. The wood is used as a means of ignition. If the woods used are of medicinal variety then something is added to the Agnihotra fire. Also for optimum effect the pyramid shaped copper pot is essential.

There is such a turbulence of energies that come exactly at Agnihotra time that nothing should be done to disturb the movement of those energies. This is why one should not blow on the fire. Also some things with the breath may disturb the purity of the energy that is created at that time. If there is bacteria in the mouth for instance and one blows it into the fire it spreads. So this sort of thing should be avoided.

AGNIHOTRA WILL AMPLIFY THE EFFECTS OF MUSIC AS THERAPY.
Agnihotra acts as a catalyst to boost the effects in atmosphere.

Agnihotra has such a good immediate effect on children. They stand to gain so much by it. They are less concentrated than adults, and therefore it is easier to see the effect of Agnihotra on a child. In that way they are like plants, more simple than some of us.

HABITS AND RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS

Deborah Weaver

This section is designed to convey the practices of (1) sharing assets in a spirit of humility (2) self discipline (3) doing good actions without attachment. Through these simple practices a child is given the ability to get along better with himself and others. With older children, discuss how we must loosen the hold which poor habits have on the mind. Use examples that the class can relate to, i.e. poor study habits, dishonesty, stealing, fighting, yelling, excessive talking, overeating, always wanting to have their way, etc. In the case of older teenagers, relate how life is troubled by the six crocodiles of the mind — passion, anger, greed, attachment, pride and envy.

Refer to Section Three on Tapa in “Light Towards Divine Path”* for suggested disciplines to practice. This can be modified for teenagers. Stress that the most beneficial discipline to practice is twice a day. Children, if they are not practicing Homa Therapy at home may go to a place where Agnihotra is practiced to benefit from the healing vibrations.

Name: Action and Reaction

Objective: To help the learner become more aware of how he can change the way he reacts to actions or circumstances around him.

Ages: 9-18 years

Materials: Small slips of paper. Actions (examples) — Smile at your partner. Tell your partner how you feel about him/her. Pat your partner on the back. Frown at your partner. Wink at your partner. Rub your partner gently on the face. Walk away from your partner and sit down across the room. Hug your partner. Close your eyes and take both of your partner’s hands in your hands.

Activity: The class should choose partners. One partner in each set is given a slip of paper with one of the actions on it. The two partners are to stand facing each

*“*Light Towards Divine Path*,” publisher Agnihotra Press Inc.
P.O. Box 13, Randallstown, Maryland 21133 U.S.A.; \$1.50

other. The partner with the slip performs the act to the other partner. Make no comments at this time about reactions. Next, give a slip to the other partner. He/she performs the action to the other partner.

Now have the class write down on a sheet of paper what they did when they were the receiver of the action and what they did when they were the giver of the action.

After the students have completed this task have a discussion of how we create reactions through actions (Law of Karma).

Refer to the chapter on Karma in the book "Light Towards Divine Path."

Name: Meditation Wheel

Objective: 1) To create a cooperative group experience. 2) To emphasize how humans are connected in life with others and how through sharing and cooperation everyone benefits. The activity also can be used to emphasize the cycles of nature.

Ages: All

Materials: Drawing pencils for teenagers. Crayons for children.

Activity: Everyone lies down on the floor in a circle with their feet spread apart. The feet should be touching the person's feet next to them. The feet are in the center of the circle, which is the hub of the wheel. The heads are the rim of the wheel, and the rest of the bodies are the spokes of the wheel. Ask them to close their eyes, hold hands with the person on the right and left. Now imagine yourself moving around and around to the left and then to the right. Some examples can be given about a wheel, the movement of the Earth around the Sun, sunrise and sunset, etc.

Discuss how we must all connect to make the wheel move. Discuss how the cycles of nature and the cycles of man are like the movement of the wheel. Have the class draw about what they visualized or felt while they were performing the meditation.

Name: Role Playing

Objective: To dramatize how habits and desires cause unhappiness.

Ages: 10-16 years

Materials: Depends on the script the teacher creates.

Activity: Use examples given in the book “Light Towards Divine Path” to have the class act out the situation. The teacher should write the situation down on index cards and give it to the actors (if necessary, read aloud to class). Allow the children to be creative, have fun and make them act as real as possible. The teacher can also make up acts to dramatize actual things she/he has experienced students in the class doing i.e. one child “picking on” another child.

Name: Five in One

Objective: To increase the learner’s awareness of how his senses relate to forming habits.

Ages: 10-16 years

The five senses can be talked about. Talk about the senses, the feelings that come from the senses, how we use the senses, how animals use their senses and how the senses are linked with nature and what is the best way that we can use our senses. How we use our thoughts, our feelings or senses as tools to learn and grow and play. Ask the children how we can use them better. Show the class pictures of people doing things. Have them identify what sense(s) is being used in the picture. Discuss how desires and habits operate through our senses. Discuss how the mind governs the five senses.

Name: Trust Walk

Objective: To increase the participants trust in others.

Ages: 7-16 years

Activity: Ask the class to pick partners. Explain to the class that this is an activity which helps the participants develop trust in others. Blindfold half of the class. The partner without the blindfold leads the blindfolded partner. The leader should hold his partner’s hand as he guides him. The leader may walk at different paces or even run. He should also place the blindfolded partner’s hand on different things such as the grass or a flower if the activity is being done outside. The activity should be done in silence. The partners exchange roles. After all children have had a turn being blindfolded have them discuss their feelings about the activity. Discuss trust.

Note: This activity is done best in an open space, particularly if more than two or three pairs are involved.

Variation: Blindfold one child and have him/her go around and identify the other children by feeling of their faces.

Name: Trust Circle

Objective: To help the students experience a growth of trust.

Ages: 9-16 years

Materials: None

Activity: Have the children (at least five) stand shoulder to shoulder forming a circle. One person stands in the center of the circle. This person closes his eyes and falls backwards. He is caught and gently passed around the circle. He should keep his heels on the floor and be relaxed. Each person takes a turn being in the center of the circle. The group is in complete control and decides when the center person can rejoin the group. This should be done in silence or while chanting a Mantra. Concentration is essential.

Name: Sharing

Objective: To help students understand how beneficial it is to both the giver and receiver to practice sharing.

Ages: 5-16 years

Materials: Use simple and inexpensive craft materials that the class can make into things such as pot holders, plant hangers, pillows or ask the class to bring a small toy(s) from home (inform the parents of the activity and purpose). The same may be done by creating a food basket with items the children have brought from home.

Activity: Have the class prepare these items in an appropriate manner. Jointly the teacher and class discuss the importance of sharing. Use the book "Light Towards Divine Path" for points to include in the discussion. Choose a person or group of people to give the gifts to — nursing homes or elderly people are particularly good receivers (check with the center before you go). This activity will take two sessions to complete.

If the previous activity is too involved, have the class make something simple with the understanding that they are making it for someone else. Again discuss the different aspects of sharing.

TALKS WITH HOMA THERAPY TEACHERS

Vasant

Be grateful always, every moment of every day. You may ask "What do I have to be grateful for?" You do not have to think. You do not know what you truly have.

Simply be grateful for every moment. If the moment brings you pain or pleasure, joy or sorrow be grateful. Try to maintain attitude of serving, humility in all things. Then anger has no place in your home. If you are grateful for every moment then there is no reason for anger. There is no real reason for anger.

You have to be strong and full of love in all you do. Practice becoming more full of love and have less of ego. One gets jealous, the other becomes arrogant. It is like that in all normal relationships but it is possible through Tapa and practice of Agnihotra to break out of that pattern.

Someone can teach a class in Pranayama, another in Hatha Yoga. Your main concern should be children. Let other people organize workshops in their particular interests.

Take proper care of health now. Eat properly. Do not worry weight gain or loss. Do not eat any eggs. Eat sufficient protein and drink only pure water. See that you get proper nourishment and proper rest.

You work on your own faults, cleanse yourself of bad habits, correct your diet. Proper exercise and diet are important. Faults of your own are enough burden to carry rather than assuming the weight of other people's faults in addition to your own. Can you see how this is foolish? The stronger you become, the purer example you will be and this alone will help the other person to overcome his weaknesses. If the other person does not realize it he cannot himself attain it. Be content with your own progress and leave the progress of others in their own hands and in Shree's Grace.

Socializing is good. This way you will meet more people in the area but don't make it also a regular habit.

When an opportunity is given it can be taken or it can be missed. It is up to you. Laziness can go with intense discipline and physical workout. If you make the effort now you will be lifted.

If you keep silence more you will come to know you can effectively respond to situations in a calm, eased manner. Silence helps to turn thoughts inward and you momentarily take pressure off the mind.

It is a time of concentrating and practicing Mantra. It is an extremely useful tool. Keeping silence for just a few hours every morning can set the whole mood in a correct balance for the day. This does not mean that no outside tensions will be there. Of course, they are going to be there no matter where you go, alone or with others. But practice of minimum silence in mornings is going to serve as an aid in coping with these day to day affairs.

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