



BRAHMA KUMARIS
WORLD SPIRITUAL UNIVERSITY (UK)



'Eastern thought for the Western Mind'

Global Co-operation House, London

Thursday 16th August 2007

In collaboration with the "India Now" initiative by the Mayor of London, The Brahma Kumaris hosted the third in a series of public programmes on Thursday 16th August, entitled "Eastern Thought for the Western mind".

Author Anthony Strano, a meditator for 30 years and co-ordinator of the Brahma Kumaris' centres in Greece, Turkey and Hungary, was the guest speaker for the evening.

The evening started with a stunning "Hang" performance by Ann Malone. Hang, literally meaning "hand" in the Burmese language, is a percussion instrument that was developed in Switzerland six years ago after years of research and study of instruments from around the world.

Seminar summary

Anthony was born in Sicily, Italy, into a practising Christian family and moved to Australia at the age of eight. Whilst at university, his enquiring mind coupled with a deep interest in eastern philosophy and culture pulled him to the shores of Calcutta, India. As he travelled through India, he began to appreciate the cultural and spiritual vastness of this ancient land; albeit different to the West it was equally magnificent in its own right.

Plato once said, "Truth is to remember what you have forgotten". This generally happens when we get lost in the outside. Although we may think of this as being realistic, or getting the job done etc., we often find ourselves grappling to control the external. However, if the internal system has integrity and confidence, then we are able to successfully meet external challenges.

To make accurate choices and decisions in life requires the ability of the soul to be quiet and to be receptive to the response of the divine and the universe. To make time for inward silence allows the mind and intellect to be given the space to harmonise and re-energise one's being. As the capacity to hold this inward silence increases, your tolerance power increases. The people and circumstances around you are seen as teachers and, although your teachers may not necessarily be the one's that you would have chosen, you take a step back as a student of this Universal Classroom and, as an observer, ask yourself, "What lesson is he or she teaching me?"

Four aspects of Eastern spirituality were briefly touched upon: Yoga, Dharma, Karma and Nirvana.

Yoga means connecting the mind with God. A divinised mind allows the connection with others to be respectful and one based on understanding. As you begin to tune into the



high consciousness within, you are able to appreciate yourself as a soul and see everyone as a soul, and not the costume we call the body.

This emerges a more positive energy, thought and attitude towards others. Raja Yoga is about mastering myself, the mind and how I think. My journey of inner silence allows for greater reflection, contemplation and peace. As my inner harmony increases, I find myself being able to let go of the resentment towards issues of the past.

Dharma means the right way of living or proper conduct. Your role, your dharma, is your responsibility. Dharma means putting knowledge into practice.

Putting knowledge into practice gives the inner being nourishment and strength. Unless knowledge is put into practice, mere words and doctrine have no power at the time of tests, because the instinct to survive takes over. This can often result in the breakdown of trust and communication. The strength of my connection with the divine is reflected in my relationship with others. This requires the practice of observing my thoughts and behaviour - and not the behaviour of others.

Karma means that the choice and responsibility of action lies in our hands. Just as you experience the consequence of your actions over time, so you have the responsibility and ability to choose your actions. We cannot blame others or God for the consequences that arise from poor judgment and action on our part.

Nirvana is a place as well as a state of being. It is a state of very deep peace that comes with the practice of letting go of the awareness of the physical costume, the body, and experiencing the seed stage: the true nature of the soul. This is like giving oxygen to the soul. This practice for a few moments five or six times a day is not a luxury but a necessity for a healthy mind and body.

The evening was rounded off with a guided meditation by Anthony with soft background music by Ann Malone playing the Hang.

End.