



BRAHMA KUMARIS
WORLD SPIRITUAL UNIVERSITY (UK)

Programmed for Peace

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We live in an environment that promotes 'peacelessness'. Messages from newspapers, computers and other media are designed to create in our minds fear-based, anxiety-ridden and suspicious thoughts – because 'peacelessness' sells. To *re-programme* ourselves for peace, we have to recognise what is going on - outside in the world and inside our heads - take responsibility and learn to discriminate between which thoughts are useful and beneficial and which are not.

What is peace? It is not something passive, such as the absence of war. Peace is truth, personal energy and coming to terms with oneself.

We can choose whether our thoughts are peaceful or peaceless. Negative thoughts are easier to create – and much faster, so they drain our energy. Thoughts generally start with something you have seen or heard. Those that are critical of others are particularly 'juicy'. There is a difference between critical thinking and critical thoughts. Critical thinking is positive: it is the ability to critique any given subject and to discern how useful it is. Critical thoughts are a mental addiction: 'If everyone else is not good, then I am ok.'

Changing the way we think is not a five minute job. You start by noticing what's going on in your mind and creating a balance between your internal and external focus (this is where meditation helps). Where your eyes are, your mind will go, so we encourage students to focus on a point of light – that spark of conscient energy which is the soul – either in a picture or on someone's forehead (the 'third eye' point). It helps to think of yourself as two, not one: your essential self (the soul), and your persona (your body and the stories attached to it). The soul is the conscious part of you - a vast arena of thoughts, feelings, opinions and imagination. The body is not conscious. The soul - the core of our being - is gender-free; thus the male/female issues that often take away our peace are all fake. Most people know *what* they are but not *who*. To know 'what' is easier; 'who' is more subtle, more elusive and requires more attention.

Go inside and ask yourself: 'Who am I? How truthful am I to myself and others?' If I am not truthful, I will be difficult to be with - my conscience will bite. The most valuable part of a human being, the conscience is an extremely subtle, delicate machine for telling the difference between right and wrong, appropriate and inappropriate, necessary and unnecessary. If you ignore it, it loses functionality. If you consider how often in your life you have done, said, felt or thought something against your conscience, that is the extent to which you have neglected your conscience. To have peace you have to bring the conscience back to life. This requires determination – willpower. Imagine if everyone in London did everything according to their conscience!

By spending time with yourself and following your conscience, you will find that you have more energy and more time. Your inner landscape – which is where you live – will be restored. Connected with yourself, you will be less disturbed by external



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distractions. This is lifelong work. Don't try to do too much too fast. Remember: the highest priority of your life is yourself. This is not selfishness; it is self-responsibility.

Be with yourself. Know yourself. Discover yourself. Spend time with yourself. Strengthen yourself. Then you will have peace. Otherwise, you will not.

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