

New Beginnings

At this time of the year we often hear comments like, *“We’ll see what the new year brings.”* or *“Let’s hope it is better than last year.”* Such statements refer to the sense of having a new beginning with the New Year, a sense that we can start all over and do things differently, or get another chance. We also have the tradition of making a New Year resolution as we determine to change a habit, give up an addiction, or try something new.

Humans have a psychological and spiritual need to experience new beginnings because then we can also access two very important spiritual states:

1. The state of transcendence
2. The state of redemption

Transcendence helps us to lift our awareness above the business-as-usual life that is bound to our sense of local identity. Being caught up in surviving in this material world it is easy for our lives to become narrowed down to the extent that we end up just repeating the same old stuff year in, year out waiting till we grow old and “retire.”

A new beginning enables us to rise above this; to set our sights on a vision or a dream that will fulfil who we are and enable us to live a more dynamic life of value and purpose. A new beginning allows us to harvest whatever strength, wisdom and grace we have developed and bring that to a new path that we now more consciously choose.

New beginnings can also bring redemption. Who has not done things they regret, or are ashamed of? Who has not messed up in some way? With a new beginning we get the chance to do it differently. We cannot change the past but we can choose to change the present and the future. A new beginning reminds us that our past need not equal our future. We can redeem our so-called mistakes and, again, create a life of conscious value and purpose.

So, what creates a new beginning? The first thing is that taking a break over the summer holiday period does not necessarily constitute a new beginning. Hopefully, after your annual holiday you will feel physically rested and psychologically ready to embrace the New Year. But this R. & R. is very different from a true new beginning, which is a spiritual experience of release and renewal.

A true new beginning requires a new sense of identity and new awareness. A New Year’s resolution to get fit or improve your diet, or stop smoking usually comes from a genuine desire to change or improve, but does it spring from a release of the old sense of self that lived with those patterns. If you continue to

define yourself in the same old ways, except now a little fitter or healthier, then nothing has really changed. You are still living with the same old stale attachments, perceptions, patterns and attitudes. You are trying to force a new pattern onto the old you. It will not work.

“You cannot pour new wine into old wineskins.”

The life that throbs in your body is renewing itself constantly. Every day 10 million old cells die and 10 million new cells are created to replace them. Within 9 months your body has been completely renewed. And yet do you renew your mind and spirit in the same way? Or do you continue to hold onto the same opinions, judgements, fears and patterns. And then wonder why your life has lost the sense of joy and adventure that you once enjoyed as a child.

In the Bible there is the saying,

“Unless you become as little children you cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven.”

(the kingdom of infinite abundant life.).

If you were able to wake tomorrow morning and see the world as if for the first time then that would be a true new beginning. If you could let go of your opinions and brittle certainties and be open to what this moment has to offer you, then that would be a true new beginning. If you could regain the enthusiasm for each new day that a child has, that would be a new beginning. If you could be profoundly moved by the wonder and beauty of a roadside flower then that would be a new beginning.

At this time of the year we think about new beginnings yet we can live in that state every day, and even every moment of our lives. We can learn so much about this from the world around us. See how excited your dog gets about going for the same walk every day. For the dog it is a new moment, a new beginning, a new adventure. I get woken most mornings about 4.30 by a thrush that sings its heart out, instinctively celebrating the new day, the new beginning.

Every tradition tells us that we are transformed by the renewing of our minds. If you feel ready for the challenge I invite you to consider that as your New Year resolution – the renewing of your mind. This may seem like a huge and daunting task but there are many resources available to support you. Start the journey

Abundant blessings always

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