



Seven Ways to Achieve Inner Peace & Prosperity

His Holiness Sri Sri Ravi Shankar is the founder of the Art of Living Foundation, a multi-faceted organization that offers a wide array of educational and humanitarian programs that uplift individuals, make a difference in local communities, and foster global change. To learn more, please visit www.artofliving.org/atlanta or contact us at 877-AOLIVING or atlanta@us.artofliving.org.

Happiness, peace and prosperity are wished for by every lip on New Year, but do we really know what peace means? Peace lies within us and we know it too. As we move beyond a year and enter a new year, let us all take a resolution to become aware of this peace inside and allow our smiles to reflect the true sign of the prosperity that lies inside us. Here are seven ways to do it.

1. Give divine a chance, be grateful.

This year, let the devotion flower to its fullest and give it a chance to work. Our love, faith and belief should be deep rooted, and then everything else moves on its own. The feeling that "I am blessed" can help you overcome any failure. Once you realize that you are blessed, then all the complaints and grumbling disappear, all the insecurities disappear; and you become grateful, contented and peaceful.

2. Take out time for yourself.

Everyday you are engaged in only gathering information and you do not take out time for yourself to think and reflect. Then you feel dull and tired. A few quiet moments are sources for creativity. Silence heals and rejuvenates and gives you depth and stability. Some time during the day, sit for a few minutes; get into the cave of your heart, eyes closed, and kick the world away like a ball. Taking out some time for yourself improves the quality of your life.

3. Know life's impermanence.

See the impermanence in this life. Millions of years have passed and millions will come and pass. Nothing is permanent. What is your life? It is not even a drop in the ocean.

Just open your eyes and ask: Who am I? How am I on this planet? What is my lifetime? Awareness dawns and you will stop worrying about little things. All smallness will simply drop and you will be able to live every moment of your life. If you review the context of your life, the quality of your life improves.

4. Do random acts of kindness.

Make a commitment to make this world a better place to live. Do some acts of kindness without expecting anything in return. Service alone can bring contentment in life. It creates a sense of belongingness. When you bring some relief to someone through selfless service, good vibrations come to you. When you show kindness, your true nature, which is love and peace, comes to play.

5. Make your smile cheaper.

Every day, every morning, look at the mirror and give a good smile to yourself. Don't let your smile be snatched away by anybody! Usually, you give your anger freely and smile rarely as though a smile is costly. Make your smile cheaper and anger expensive! When you smile all the muscles in your face get relaxed. The nerves in your brain get relaxed and you become peaceful within. It gives you the confidence, courage and energy to move on in life.

6. Make meditation a part of life.

When we have higher goals in life it leads to stress and restlessness, which can only be released through a few minutes of meditation and introspection. Meditation gives you deep rest. The deeper you are able to rest, the more dynamic you will be in activity. What is meditation?

Mind without agitation is meditation.

Mind in the present moment is meditation.

Mind that has no hesitation, no anticipation is meditation.

Mind that comes back home to the source, which is peace and joy, is meditation.

7. Be a Student always.

Know that you are a student forever. Do not underestimate anybody. Knowledge may come to you from any corner. Each occasion teaches you and each person teaches you. The world is your teacher. When you are always looking to learn, you will stop underestimating others. Humility will dawn in your life.

Wish you all a very Happy and peaceful New Year!

All My Works Are Personal Alchemy: Booker Prize Winner

BY MADHUSREE CHATTERJEE

Hilary Mantel, the author of "Wolf Hall" which won the Man Booker prize for 2009, feels "there is always a danger with historical fiction that it may fall short as both literature and history".

"So, when I took on this project I knew that it was going to be a very difficult thing to do. But ha! who is interested in what's easy? But I was exhilarated by the way 'Wolf Hall' was received. I believe all my books are a kind of alchemy at a personal level," Mantel told IANS in an e-mail interview.

"Wolf Hall" is a racy chronicle of the rise to power of Prime Minister Thomas Cromwell in 16th century Tudor England when the country was under the rule of Henry VIII. The king is without a male heir and his country is threatened by war.

Henry wants to end his 20-year marriage to queen Katherine and marry Anne Boleyn. The Pope and most of Europe oppose him. Into this ferment steps the canny young lawyer Thomas Cromwell, who breaks the rigid social hierarchy and pits him-



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self against the papacy and parliament to reshape England to his own and King Henry's wishes.

The author said she first "came across Cromwell as a child learning history in a Catholic school".

"I grew up with the 'sainted' Thomas More looking down from stained glass windows. It made me ask whether there was more to Cromwell's story than just his opposition to More and I carried the question with me. When I began writing, I registered him in my mind as a potential subject. This would have been in the 1970s, when I finished my first novel. There seemed to be a lot of blanks in Cromwell's history and it wasn't easy to find out anything about him. But it is in these gaps that the novelist goes to work," Mantel said.

The fact that fascinated Mantel was "the transformation of the blacksmith's son (Cromwell) into the Earl of Essex".

"I wondered how that is done. You've to try to answer that question for it's what novels are meant to answer. But what made me sure that I could work with Cromwell was a letter he wrote to a friend in 1520s, when he was an MP. It is a huge rhetorical description of the course of the British parliament and all the business it dealt with. The letter, however, ended with a simple sentence.

Let me paraphrase it - 'at the end of it (proceedings), absolutely nothing changed'. The wry humour of the letter showed me there was a personality I could write about," Mantel said.

Another thing which got Mantel going was "a will that Cromwell wrote towards the end of 1520s".

"When you have seen somebody's life so minutely taken apart, when you know who's going

to get his books and you know the names of the people in his household, you become a part of that life. Seeing the will was like being in Cromwell's house," Mantel said.

The most-talked about British prime minister, says Mantel, "is still an enigma".

"His background in Putney was so obscure that we would have never heard of his family if his father

Walter had not been to the local courts so often for drunkenness, violence and for cheating neighbours. We don't know his mother's name. Cromwell rarely talked about his life. His early career was very hard to construct. He once said, 'I was a ruffian in my youth'," Mantel said.

Mantel said her basic source of information was the "Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic: Cromwell's Letters" published in 1902 by scholar Roger Bigelow Marriman in a collected edition.

"Hardly any of the material is personal. There are no biographies of Cromwell though there are many studies of his policies by G.R. Elton. For a novelist, this absence of intimate material was both a problem and an opportunity. I had to do the best with hints and possibilities. It's hard to please both the historian and the literary critic. The former (historian) wonders why you don't include all the details and the latter wonders why couldn't you lick history into a dramatic shape," Mantel said.

According to the author, "the art to write a historical novel - if there's one - lies in grasping why things happened and then forgetting the reasons".

"A historical novelist has to hazard into the unknown and live in the character's consciousness - move forward with the characters, walking into the dark," she said.

Mantel, who has seven books to her credit, apart from "Wolf Hall", said: "Virtually in all my books, there's slight edge of the supernatural and a preoccupation with what's hidden, what may be in the locked room. The locked room may be a part of the psyche that one does not want to enter."

Mantel's cache of books include "Fludd", "A Place of Greater Safety", "A Change of Climate", "An Experiment in Love", "The Giant O'Brien", "Giving Up the Ghost" and "Beyond Black".

The Man Booker winner plans to write a sequel to "Wolf Hall".

"Partly because I want to know what's going to happen next and partly because I long to be back in the thick of action. I look forward to getting back to the puzzles in my new book."

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