

**Point of View**  
Meditation brings wisdom. Know well what leads you forward and what holds you back and choose the path that leads to wisdom.

Monthly Journal of the Brahma Kumaris Hqs. Mount Abu, Rajasthan, India

## Creating a Better World through Power of Mind

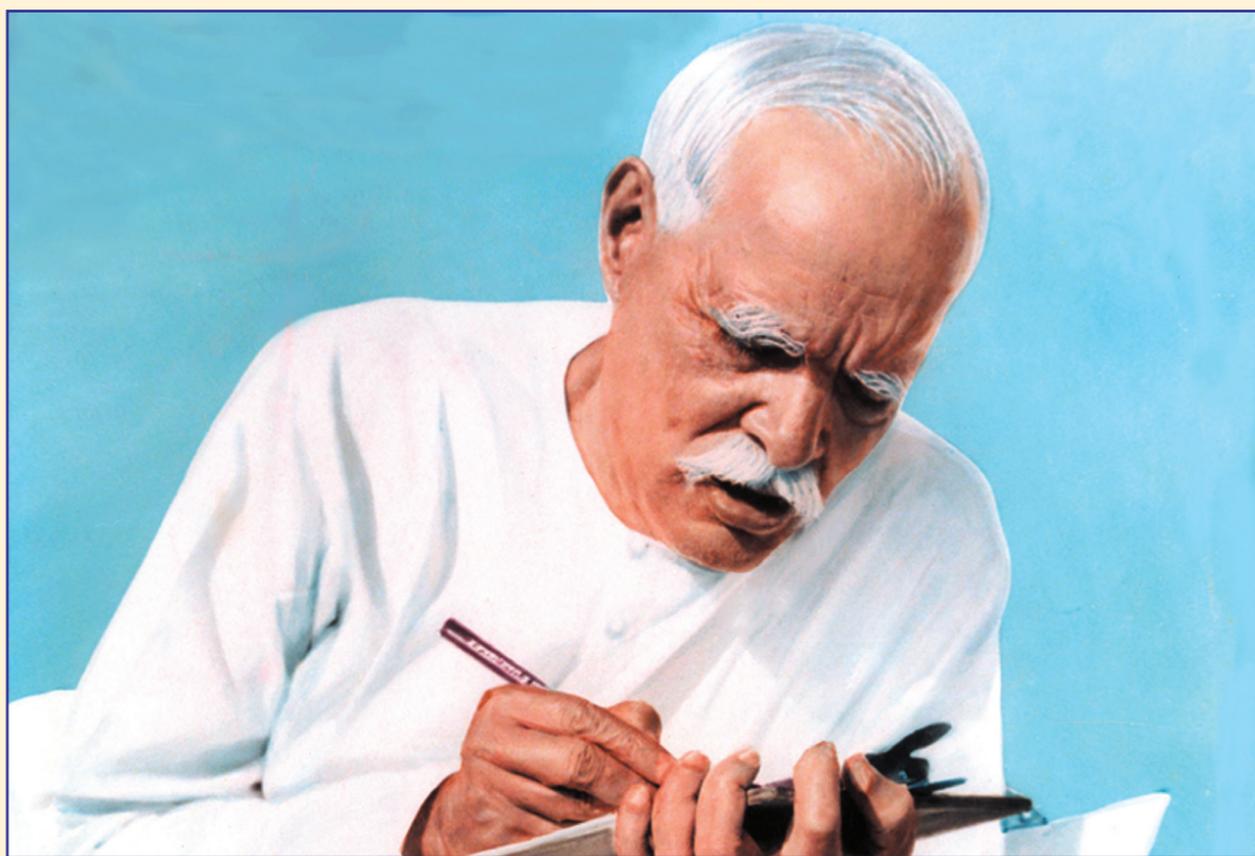
**T**houghts become things. Not just thoughts but events, experiences and relationships. Everything we see in this world has been conceived in the human mind. Thoughts are the seed of action, hence the world around us is a reflection of human consciousness.

Our thoughts not only matter, they create matter. Thought is where everything comes from. Everything in the physical world is made out of atoms. Atoms are made out of energy. Energy is made out of consciousness. Consciousness is what the universe is made of; matter and energy are just two of the forms that consciousness takes.

All physical reality is made up of vibrations of energy. Our thoughts are also vibrations of energy. This is not a concept or theory, but rather the startling reality that quantum physics reveals to us. Once we know that everything is energy — that there is no absolute distinction between matter and energy — then the boundaries between the physical world and the world of our thoughts start to disappear as well.

In 1994, Dr. Masaru Emoto conducted an experiment with water to test out a hypothesis about how positive and negative energies affect our environment. He froze bottled water and studied the molecules under a microscope. What he saw were shapeless molecules. Subsequently he froze other bottles of water and labelled them with key phrases: 'Love and thanks,' 'I hate you. You make me sick,' 'Joy,' 'You fool,' and purportedly the most powerful of them all — 'Gratitude.' The images posted by Dr. Emoto on his website show what the water crystals from each label look like after a few hours of refrigeration. Those labelled with positive words formed beautiful crystals whereas those with negative words crystallized in a haphazard form.

"New studies reveal a subconscious brain that is far more active, purposeful and independent than previously known... and the unconscious is perfectly capable of running the program it chooses," reported the New York Times



January 18 is observed as the ascension day of Prajapita Brahma, founding father of the Brahma Kumaris. (see pages 6&7)

regarding a recently concluded Yale research.

Optimism seems to reduce stress-induced inflammation and levels of stress hormones such as cortisol. Just as helpful as taking a rosy view of the future is having a rosy view of yourself. High "self-enhancers" — people who see themselves in a more positive light than others see them — have lower cardiovascular responses to stress and recover faster, as well as lower baseline cortisol levels (*Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, vol. 85, p. 605).

We've heard the old expression, "I'll believe it when I see it." But the world is created the other way: "You'll see it when you believe it." When novelist Victor Hugo said, "There is nothing more powerful than an idea whose time has come," we now know that this was more than a metaphor. He may not have fully realized it at that time, but he was giving us a literal description of how reality works. Our thoughts are the controlling factor in what we manifest and create in our lives. The idea precedes the manifested

reality.

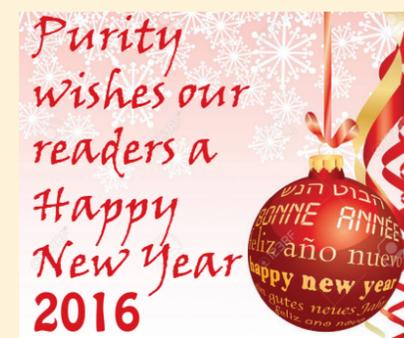
Our beliefs don't simply reflect our reality, they create our reality. Thoughts are like a canvas. What we project or sketch on it with our vision, thoughts and feelings, determines the kind of life experiences we live. To make changes in our life, we have to sketch a different reality, one that we like more.

What is the vision of a better world that we can think and wish for? All human beings desire peace, happiness, health and harmony. We want to live in a world that is free from disease, pollution, poverty and scarcity. We wish to live in a world free from violence, fear, jealousy, lust, hatred, greed and ego.

Thoughts, like seeds, have a natural tendency to grow and manifest in our life, if we feed them with attention, interest and enthusiasm. The power of our mind is part of the creative power of the universe, which means that our thoughts work together with it. Hence, instead of complaining, criticizing and blaming and catastrophizing about our problems and the future, we all have the

capacity to create a better world, firstly, by focusing on the values it stands for and by creating thoughts, attitudes and vibrations that reflect those higher values such as peace, respect and love. This collective positive energy will have a ripple effect and shift the awareness and feelings of other people and thus there will be a huge vibrational shift from Kaliyuga to Satyuga.

Let us all contribute with the power of positive and pure thoughts to create a new world by first bringing newness in our thinking. If we have been reflecting same old pattern of thoughts and feelings about life, it's time now to renew those patterns and renew our lives and thus the world around us.★ (*Purity Features*)





**Sonepat, Haryana:** Sitting on dais during the centenary celebrations of Rajyogini Dadi Janki, Chief of Brahma Kumaris, are (L-R) BK Sarla, BK Ultra, BK Hansa, Dadi Janki, BK Amirchand, Dr. Suman Manjiri, IPS, Inspector General, Mr. J.S.Cheema, President, Chandigarh Health & Wellness Association.



**New Delhi :** BK Asha giving invitation to Mr. Suresh P. Prabhu, Hon'ble Union Minister of Railways.



**Shanti Sarovar, Hyderabad:** Sitting in silence during the 4th anniversary of monthly IT retreats are BK Kuldeep, BK Aruna, BK David and others. The event was organised in association with IT Dept. Govt. of Telangana, and IT companies.

# Photo Gallery

*We can't become what we want to be by remaining what we are.*



**Manila:** Senator Leticia R. Shahani with BK Rajni, BK Denise and guests during an event held in her honour by BK Philippines.



**Jaipur, Rajasthan:** Celebrating the 18th Annual Day of Vaishali Centre by cutting a cake are Dadi Ratan Mohini, BK Sushma, Mr. Jasveer Singh, former Chairman, Minorities Commission, Dr. Pratap Midha, BK Chanderkala, BK Leela and others.



**France:** BK Jayanti, BK Golo Pilz, Sister Valerieane and Sister Sonja before attending a round-table discussion on 'The Role of Ethics and Faith in Climate Change' during the COP 21 World Climate Summit, at the Chamber of Commerce, Paris.



**Jalandhar, Punjab:** The Great Khali, world heavyweight champion, BK Deepak and BK Tripta after receiving "World's Biggest Hand Made Calendar" from BK Rekha.



**Navrangpura, Ahmedabad:** Launching the first annual report of service project for slum children 'Divya Nagari', are Mr. Bhupender Singh Chudasama, Gujarat Education Minister, BK Sarla didi, BK Chandrika, BK Kailash and BK Ishita.

# Remaining light in present troubled times

Most people today live with pressures that did not exist, or were less intense, a few decades ago. The list of burdens that the average person has to carry for a large part of his or her life is long.

Increasingly competitive job markets and business environments demand higher degrees of skill, competence and resources to succeed. Those lacking in any of these areas fall behind and often end up struggling against financial constraints that erode the quality of their lives.

For those who have to support a family, the burdens multiply. Ensuring the safety and well-being of one's loved ones, providing a decent education to the children and meeting the family's lifestyle aspirations all add to the responsibilities of the average householder.

One can safely assume that people in nearly every part of the world have the concerns mentioned earlier, but they weigh heavier on those facing difficult circumstances. If one is poor or unemployed, survival can become a daily struggle, especially in countries that don't offer their citizens social security.

Conditions in the places we live in can have a big impact on our lives. Political or economic upheaval, natural calamities and armed conflict can dramatically alter our circumstances and turn a life of comfort into one of misery.

At a more personal level, a death or illness in the family, a lawsuit, a failure or downturn in business, or sudden joblessness can put one under a lot of pressure.

Is it possible to remain light in such situations?

It depends on how we approach our situation. If we keep worrying about the problem, blame ourselves or others, curse our bad luck, rue our past decisions, go on thinking about how things might have turned out if we had acted differently, or become depressed, it is certainly not going to help.

Thinking repeatedly about a



**Jagannathpuri, Odisha:** Standing during the national anthem on the occasion of the centenary celebrations of Rajyogini Dadi Janki at Godly Rajyoga Retreat Centre are (L-R) BK Brij Mohan, HE Dr. S.C. Jamir, Governor, BK Nirupama, Dadi Janki, Gajapati Maharaja, Maharani Lilabati and Swami Samarpanananda Giri, Vice President, Prajnana Mission.

Cultivate a positive attitude, which will enable you to see the silver lining around every cloud.

problem magnifies it; it is like digging oneself into a deeper hole. If we realise that worry or fear are not going to help us, we will save a lot of time and energy. Instead, if we focus on finding a solution, various possibilities will come to our mind, and gradually a path leading us out of our troubles will emerge. This gives one hope and the impetus to make practical efforts.

On the other hand, if one becomes despondent, one will not only sink into further trouble but also cause distress to others.

Even when our options are limited, keeping a positive frame of mind helps us live through hard times more easily. We need to be careful not to let difficulties overwhelm us and push us into an abyss of self-

pity, cynicism or hopelessness. Just as good times don't last forever, bad times too come to an end, and if we keep our eyes and ears open, we would be able to recognise opportunity when it arrives.

We only need look at those who are less fortunate than us and see how they accept their circumstances and get on with life. As the oft quoted proverb says: "I cried because I had no shoes, until I met a man who had no feet." The idea is not to resign oneself to the situation, but to remember that it is possible to cope with any circumstance, and to not lose hope.

Our attitudes and thoughts create our reality, and if we entertain thoughts of failure and despair, we invite more of the same. If we remain positive instead, with the faith that things will eventually turn out better, then life will present us with new possibilities.

To be able to retain such a frame of mind when the chips are down, one needs to cultivate a positive attitude, which enables one to see the silver lining around every cloud. One should also be willing to learn from a loss or failure. When we dispassionately consider our state of affairs, we may sometimes hit upon a different way of doing things, or a

way to turn our predicament to our advantage.

Some spiritual knowledge also helps us orient ourselves correctly when we are tossed around by life's storms. Most of us are aware of Newton's third law, which states that for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. This law applies to everything, including human actions; we get what we give, and reap what we sow. When we remember this, we begin to stop blaming others for what we are going through, and start to take responsibility for our actions.

It is not money, a talent, or cleverness that bring us lasting security, success and happiness. These fruits can be harvested only if we have sown the seeds of pure intentions and actions. If the seed is good, the fruit cannot be otherwise. Sometimes the fruit may take time to appear and ripen, but as with nature, it will come at the right time, full of goodness.

In testing times, if we remember this truth and go on sowing the right seeds, we can be content and secure in the knowledge that our future will be better. Goodness, when it is invested, whether in the form of truth, peace, happiness, charity, simplicity or love, brings big returns.\*

(Purity Bureau)

## Rhythm of balance and order

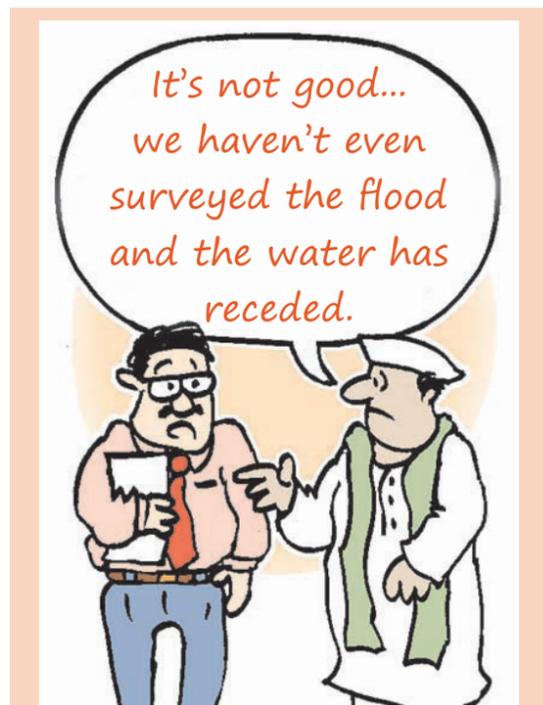
The natural religion of nature is a rhythm of balance and order. Her patterns and laws should sustain our lives, but disrespectful human interference and disregard are now producing disorders of all kinds — physical, environmental, and even psychological.

We realise that respect for nature should not come just from a fear of the consequences of not doing so, but from humility, which humans need to understand and apply. Humility is openness to learning, and it makes us flexible and egoless enough to realise that there are laws greater than those made by man; laws that are the standards of life and protect human life.

It is good to realise that we do not know it all — there are still things to discover; we cannot own the earth, the sky or the sea; they are ours when we respect them and do not seek ownership; in fact, everything comes close to us, whether people or nature, when we do not seek to possess or manipulate.

And for sustaining and enhancing respect for the self and others it is necessary to note the significance of respect to God. Not necessarily the traditional concept of God, which, with its associations of fear, punishment and guilt, has alienated humankind from Him, but a God who is the divine giver, the coordinator of spiritual harmony; the One who eternally holds within Himself the universal spiritual values of human life. Not a manipulator, but the one who facilitates the distribution of these values to anyone who, with honesty and respect for his fellow beings, wishes to be and do that which is right.

In silence we are also able to come close to ourselves, to nature and to the Supreme Being, and through this we are able to gain the understanding and the divine strength to integrate and realise the spiritual values of life by consciously bringing them into our life and actions. \*



## Editorial

# Happy New Year 2016

The countdown to midnight ends in an ecstatic roar. As the old year gives way to the new, fireworks light up the sky and celebrations begin on the ground. New Year wishes jam mobile networks and crowds high on merrymaking flood city roads, clubs and dance floors. Those at home sit glued to TV sets to watch 'festival specials' rolled out by entertainment channels.

But what is it about a new year that makes the celebrations such a grand show? What is so extraordinary about the earth beginning another revolution around the sun, or about the calendar starting afresh? It may be the first day of the first month, but everything else stays the same. We wake up in the same house, go to the same workplace, meet the same old people and our life continues in the same rut. We still face the same challenges, and our worries and anxieties are carried forward into the 'new' year. So what is new about a new year in an old world?

Newness is not a physical attribute but the creativity of the soul. It is the potential of our being to manifest its original qualities in the form of positive change. It is born in the mind as an out-of-the-box idea that is backed by a benevolent intention. It is 'new' essentially in its quality of being above the habitual patterns of thinking, behaving and living. An innovative thought could aim at a major transformation on the outside. Or it could mean initiating a personal, subtle change that comforts the self and also touches others and eases the atmosphere around us. In very simple words, the pure, virtuous core of our being is the source of all newness and visible change.

We can tap into our inner resources in moments of stillness. When the mind is quiet and undistracted, the jewels of goodness and positive creativity inside us surface effortlessly. In pre-dawn silence, or during the day when we are relatively detached from the 'tangible' and the 'obvious', we can tune into inspirations from above. It is in these moments that we get new beginnings and insights, and clues to untangle old issues in new ways.

The biggest challenge, of course, lies in our ability to sustain the change we introduce until it becomes the natural way to be. It means that we reject the temptation to go back to our routine and repetitive patterns, refuse to be one with the ordinariness in our surroundings, and stick to our bright plan with courage and faith. The new seedling in our mind can stand against all odds when we regularly sprinkle it with the water of determination and review our progress at the end of the day. Once we pass this testing phase, things become smooth as the change takes its course and assumes a firm shape.

Newness begins the day we decide on it. It does not need a starting line, nor is it connected to changes in the calendar. Nevertheless, the beginning of a new year is conducive for making any shift as both time and custom favour us to bid goodbye to the old and the ordinary.

Unless we make this inner journey, the New Year's Eve will remain a one-day wonder when the flower market is in full bloom and the entertainment and hospitality industries make big money. It will be reduced to a mere ritual, like blowing off another candle on a birthday cake, or an extension of our winter vacations, or just another commercial enterprise. It would be like hanging a new calendar on an old wall.

On the other hand, if we regularly succeed with our renewal and self-rejuvenation plans, a whiff of fresh air will surround us. Our aura will be youthful and our infectious enthusiasm will energise others wherever we go. ★

## Gleanings from the press

### New device stimulates tears to treat 'dry eyes'

Scientists have developed a tiny device to electronically stimulate tear production, which could help treat dry eye syndrome, one of the most common eye diseases in the world. The device, 16mm long, 3-4mm wide and 1-2mm thick, was implanted beneath the inferior lacrimal gland in rabbits. It was activated wirelessly and shown to increase the generation of tears by nearly 57 per cent. Researchers also discovered that the afferent neural pathway — the pathway from sensory neurons to the brain which activates the reflex tearing — offered an even more efficient way to enhance tear production. *(The Times of India)*

### Retinal nerve cells grown in lab

Researchers from Johns Hopkins University have developed a method to efficiently turn human stem cells into retinal nerve cells that transmit visual signals from the eye to the brain. Death and dysfunction of these cells cause loss of sight in conditions like glaucoma and multiple sclerosis (MS). It could eventually lead to the development of cell transplant therapies that restore vision in patients with glaucoma and MS, said Donald Zack from Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, the leader of the research group. *(IANS)*

### 'Vegetarians healthier than meat-eaters'

Vegetarians have been found leading a healthier life as compared to meat-eaters. Incidence of diseases such as pancreatic cancer and respiratory problems are also less common among vegetarians than in those who consume meat regularly, according to an Oxford study. Findings of the study suggested significant differences in health risk, mainly related to chronic diseases, among meat-eaters. Vegetarians and vegans had 50 per cent lower mortality from pancreatic cancer and cancers of the lymphatic or hematopoietic tissue. *(The Times of India)*

### Bhoola Bhai

And our friend Bhoola Bhai on Temple Street says successful people do not relax in chairs, they relax in work.

### Regrowing lost tooth

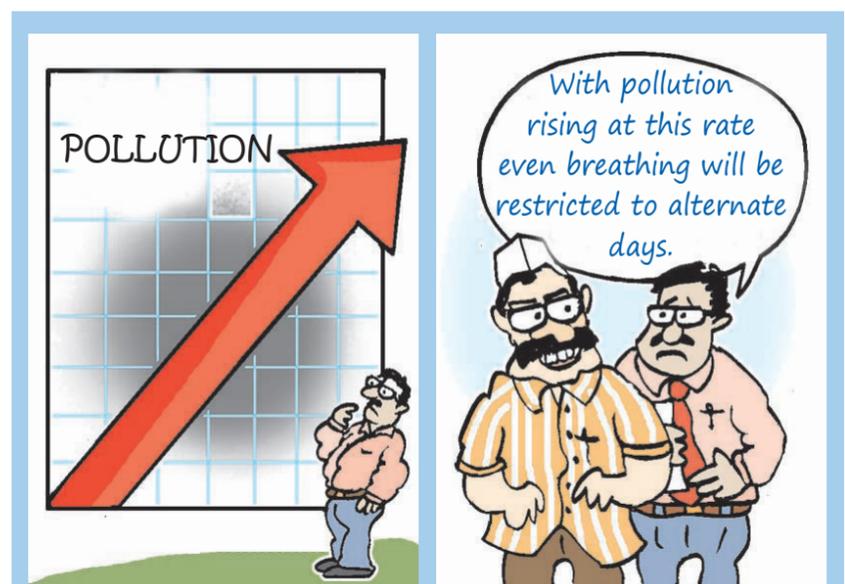
We're one step closer to being able to regrow a lost tooth, thanks to a new study showing it's possible to grow multiple teeth from a single root. These teeth can then be implanted to become fully functional. Thus far this has only been tested in rats, but it could lead to a potential revolution in human dental care. *(News item)*

### Study finds 'happiness spot'

The secret to happiness may lie in having more grey matter in a region of the brain called precuneus, a new study suggests. The study by Wataru Sato and his team at Kyoto University in Japan says overall happiness is a combination of happy emotions and satisfaction in life coming together in the precuneus, a region in the medial parietal lobe in the brain that becomes active when experiencing consciousness. *(PTI)*

### Hard nut to crack

There is growing evidence that the popular pastime of chewing betel nuts increases the risk of developing oral cancer. According to the British medical journal Lancet, the high copper content in betel nuts may be the cause of oral cancer. Betel nuts contain large amounts of the mineral compared to other nuts — 10 times that in peanuts. *(News item)*



# Don't kill the ego, clean it up - 2

BK Ken, Sao Paulo, Brazil

The ego is not the enemy of spiritual endeavour. It's how we use it.

The popular notion of seeing the world through tinted glasses is only part of the story. Many factors contribute to the colour and shape of the lens. They reduce, exaggerate or even change completely the way we see things. Our emotions, experiences, preferences and habits pool together in what we call the limited ego and make us believe that what we see and remember actually exists as such.

There was a guy named Tony who used to come to our meditation centre. Though his enthusiasm and progress was high, his wife was somehow jealously opposed to this. He tried to come at times when it would not upset her. Finally, he convinced her to meet him at the centre after work to explain exactly what he was doing. While waiting for him to show up, she overheard a conversation between two women in the next room. They were talking about the sweets they had prepared the day before.

They said: Did you see how much people liked the *toli* yesterday? (*Toli* is sweets in Hindi.)

What the wife heard: Did you see how much people liked Tony yesterday?

As soon as Tony arrived she practically jumped on him:

"Didn't you say you had to visit neighbouring cities yesterday? I just found out that you were here entertaining people."

"What do you mean? I couldn't have come here. I spent the whole day visiting clients."

"Don't lie to me. Let's get out of here."

## Humour

Mother: "Why are you home from school so early?"

Son: "I was the only one who could answer a question."

Mother: "Oh, really? What was the question?"

Son: "Who threw the eraser at the principal?"

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Teacher: "If I gave you two cats and another two cats and another two, how many would you have?"

Johnny: "Seven."

Teacher: "No, listen carefully... If I gave you two cats, and another two cats and another two, how many would you have?"

Johnny: "Seven."

Teacher: "Let me put it to you differently. If I gave you two apples, and another two apples and another two, how many would you have?"

Johnny: "Six."

Teacher: "Good. Now if I gave you two cats, and another two cats and another two, how many would you have?"

Johnny: "Seven!"

Teacher: "Johnny, where the heck do you get seven from?"

Johnny: "Because I've already got a freaking cat!"

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Teacher: "Which book has helped you the most in your life?"

Student: "My father's chequebook!"

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Q: Why was six scared of seven?

A: Because seven "ate" nine.



Celebrating 15th Annual Day of Om Shanti Retreat Centre, Gurgaon by cutting cake are Mr. Ram Niwas Goel, Speaker, Delhi Legislative Assembly, Mr. D.R. Karthikeyan, former Director, CBI, Dadi Rukmani, BK Brijmohan, Mr. Rakesh Mehta, State Election Commissioner for Delhi & Chandigarh, BK Asha, BK Chakardhari, BK Shukla and BK Pushpa.

The ego is not the enemy of spiritual endeavour. It's how we use it.

We didn't see either of them again. After about three months he called and we asked him what had happened. He explained that he had cleared up the misunderstanding of one word. We asked him if he wanted to recommence his meditation practice. He declined, saying that they were too embarrassed for him to take it up again. This shows how the limited ego in the form of jealousy distorts and even changes the course of events.

The ego, spinning around in its own interests and associations, colours, shapes and even positions the lens of perception according to its whims. When it is limited it's like looking at reality through a very tiny keyhole.

The first reducers of our perspective are the physical senses. We perceive only about 3 percent of the electromagnetic spectrum. We can't see anything before red and after violet. Dogs can hear and smell better than we can. Bats guide themselves around using sonar. Many insects and birds navigate around due to a map-like spatial memory, better than many human beings. Imagine if, for example, we could "see" people's vibrations.

The advantages of that would be tremendous. In essence, the world that we see, hear and touch is not the whole world that exists.

Secondly, we are limited due to the consciousness of the roles that we have to play. This becomes natural due to habit. A mother sees her children as the mother. A boss sees the team as the boss. In other words, the tasks and responsibilities pressure the roles so that we perceive things from that perspective. We put on the hat of our habitual identity and often can't see beyond that. This extends to cultural aspects as well — race, nationality, religion, and so on. As spiritual beings we are playing roles through the coordinates of our physical identity. We are not our roles, we are the actors.

The third limiting factor is our own story. We carry the memory of everything we have gone through in childhood, adolescence, youth and other age groups. All the events and the experiences we took from them crowd into a small window of perception. Objectivity becomes impossible as we take most of our experiences personally. Many of us become just human CVs or resumés interacting with other CVs and resumés.

For all the above reasons, it is by chance that we can perceive the same thing in the same way as someone else. Again, the problem is not the lens of the ego, but how open it is to see reality. When there is an unlimited sense of self, the whole door is open. We can see things as they really are.★

## Understanding Meditation

- Quiet the mind, and the soul will speak.
- Meditation is the flower and compassion is its fragrance.
- Meditation is the golden key to all the mysteries of life.
- Meditation is the nourishment of your authentic nature.
- Meditation applies the brakes to the speeding mind.
- Prayer is when you talk to God; meditation is when you listen to God.
- Meditation is not a means to an end. It is both the means and the end.
- Nowhere can man find a quieter retreat than in his own soul.
- Meditation changes the heart's capacity to accept life as it is.
- Meditation is not to battle with the mind, but witness the mind.
- Meditation is not stopping growth of the ego, it is death of the ego.
- Meditation is simply seeing reality and acknowledging it.
- Meditation creates more time than it takes.



# Experience with Pitashri Brahma

*BK Asha, New Delhi*

I am very fortunate that I, along with my parents, found Baba (Pitashri Brahma) in January 1958 at Kanpur. At that time there was no formal Brahma Kumaris centre in Kanpur. I was just eight and a half years old. Mamma (Mateshwari) and Baba used to come to Delhi, Kanpur, Mumbai and Punjab during winter as Mount Abu (Brahma Kumaris Headquarters) used to be very cold in those days.

I think it was in May 1959 (our school summer holidays) when I first went with my parents to sweet Madhuban (Brahma Kumaris

Baba gave me very  
powerful, loveful 'drishti'  
and said, "child, always  
remember, whatever I do,  
others will follow".

Baba before?" I said "No Baba, I am meeting you for the first time". Baba smiled. Then I saw that my teacher was looking at me and I remembered what I had to say. I immediately corrected myself and said "Yes Baba, I met you 5,000 years ago". Baba laughed and patted my back and said, "Child has learnt the lesson well". As children, we did not understand 'Gyan' much but this sentence of Baba became a blessing for me. Reading Murli (daily spiritual discourse) every day became an important part of my daily routine. I am proud to record that since then I have never missed a Murli.

We also got the golden opportunity to have a special personal meeting with Baba in which he gave me directions for my life. We were sitting in front of Baba's room on a cot (Baba, my father, mother and myself) and looking at me, Baba said to my father, "You must give this child good education and that too in English medium. I will send her abroad".

Let me share that at that time, around 1959-60, there were no centres abroad, but Baba is 'Jani Jananhar' (one who knows everything). Years later, I was sent several times to Brahma Kumaris centres abroad for service in different parts of the world.

Every year we used to visit and stay in Madhuban during summer vacations. It is as though I grew up in Madhuban.

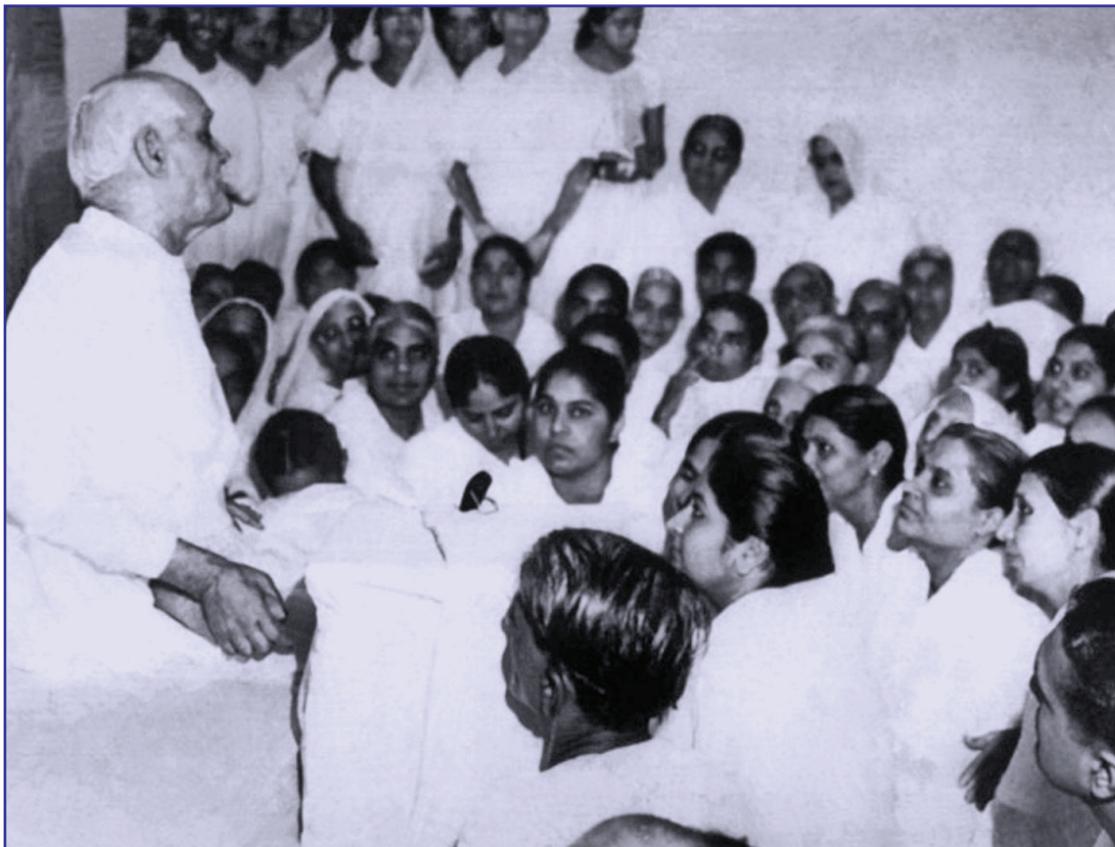
I would like to share memories of one special meeting with Brahma Baba. We were seven kumaris from Bangalore sitting in Baba's room in Madhuban. Didi Manmohini said to Baba that Asha gives lectures in English. Baba used to encourage kumaris, so he asked me to speak during the evening class and said that he would also come to listen. I nodded and said, "Ji Baba". The topic Baba gave me was 'World Peace'. Baba's personality was so charismatic that one would forget everything sitting in front of him. When I came out of Baba's room I realized what I had said to Baba! How could this happen! No, I am not going to speak, that too in the presence of Baba. Sister Rosy, who was our teacher, said now there is no way out, you will have to speak. It was the evening class, in History Hall in Pandav Bhawan. I sat on the 'sandali' (stage) and hurriedly spoke on the subject. Inside I was feeling very happy and said to myself, "Thank God! Baba did not come". But Baba was very wise and great. He did not come inside but stood outside the hall and from the first window heard my speech.

After finishing, I came down the 'sandali' and Baba entered. Sister Nalini of Mumbai, and Sister Lata of Surat told me how Baba had heard me speak. That evening Baba elaborated on world peace. He then started calling me 'Englishwali'.

My last meeting with Baba was in 1968. After that I did not meet him in 'sakar' (corporeal) form. It was again summer vacation and I was in my second year at university. Sister Santosh of Meerut, Neera (my younger sister) and myself went to Baba's room to say goodnight. Baba gave me very powerful, loveful 'drishti' and said, "Child, always remember, whatever I do, others will follow". At that time I did not realize why Baba said this. But after one year I had the realization. Since then I have found Baba has put me in various roles in which I have to constantly remember Baba's words, which are like a 'vardan' to me. To my surprise, when I met him for the first time in 'Avyakt' (subtle) form, in 1969 (during teachers' training), he again said, "You have to make others also like yourself". These words always ring in my ears and keep me attentive and alert. ★



Pitashri Brahma in a group photo with Mateshwari and young Brahma Kumari sisters who grew up to become Dadis. (File Photo)



Brahma Baba in a gathering of kumaris and mothers of Bombay and Maharashtra. (File Photo)

Headquarters). From Kanpur, a group of nearly 40 had gone and we were a part of it. Baba and Mamma used to meet each one personally as well as with the group. On the day of our arrival, I met both my 'Alokik' parents. Baba used to ask everyone some or the other question, such as "Have you met Baba before?" Or he would ask mothers, "How many children do you have?" (To

give the right answers we were trained in advance by our teachers).

When it was my turn, I sat in front of Baba. He gave me such sweet, powerful 'drishti' that tears started rolling down my eyes. Baba asked me why I was in tears. I did not know what to say. Baba extended his arms and took me in his lap. I forgot the world. He asked me: "Have you met

# Prajapita Brahma - Harbinger of Change

This is the story of an unusual man. His name was Lekhraj – a successful self-made businessman, a family man and a pillar of his community. Charisma surrounded him like a glow, one felt it even from the love, humility and sincerity of his nature. There was an unforgettable magnetic attraction in his eyes. His face was broad and commanding and his forehead high. He stood like a rock, the symbol of solidity and dependability in this unstable world.

## A Signpost

He rose to be a famous jeweller of his time. He had business connections with several royal families of the then princely states of India, and the British viceroy. After his adoption as a medium by incorporeal Shiva, the Supreme, he got the name Prajapita Brahma, one befitting his new role. Everyone lovingly called him "Baba".

From 1936 to 1969, every morning he played his divine role as the corporeal medium for the Supreme Soul to reveal Himself as the spiritual parent of all humanity. As a teacher he served by example. As a disciplined meditator he arose at 2 a.m. every morning. As a leader he was sensitive to everyone's needs. His wisdom was a signpost to all who came to him for guidance.

## Made Leaders of Women

Social upliftment involves social reform. Dada noted that women as a class were the most oppressed, who silently suffered due to outdated and unjust customs and bias against them. They were looked upon either as household chattels or as a means to satisfy the sensual desires of men. He decided to work for raising their status. He constituted a trust made up of women and bequeathed all his movable and immovable properties to this trust with the avowed objective of utilizing the same for imparting moral and spiritual education and developing ways and means for the upliftment of all people. Soon he became instrumental in the establishment of Prajapita Brahma Kumaris Ishwariya Vishwa Vidyalaya so that interested aspirants could be

given regular and systematic teachings.

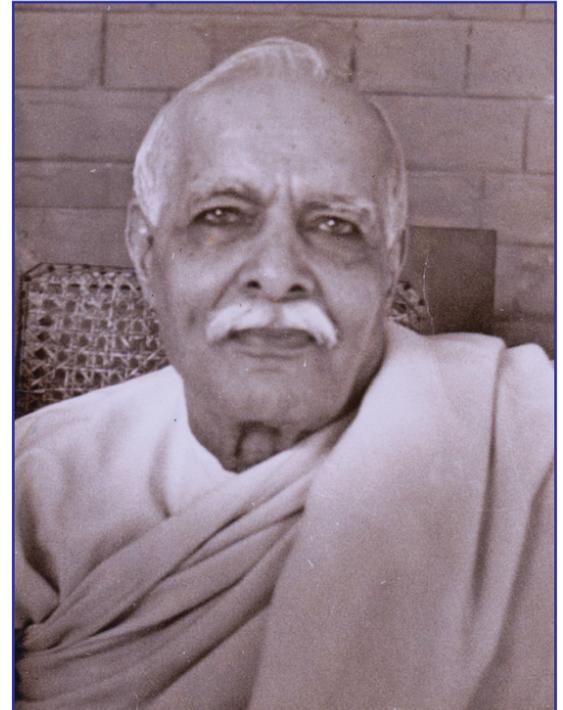
## Direction to Youth

Through his guidance the young realized that spiritual knowledge is not meant just for the leisure time of the elderly, but is the foundation of a high-quality life and should therefore be inculcated from an early age. They were inspired to adopt simplicity, service and sacrifice as the motto of their life, and purity as its most effective means.

## Teachings

His acts and way of life were very inspiring and full of dignity. One who sat in his presence and listened to the elevating Godly discourses delivered through him got a strong inspiration to adopt a viceless, holy life. He educated, inspired and guided people in inculcating human values in their personal and professional lives. He emphasized the concept of world brotherhood and freeing the mind from all kinds of bias or prejudices. His teachings encouraged liberalism and tolerance in religion. Meditation taught by him is a powerful means to get rid of mental tension, which helps to bring out the inherent qualities in one's personality. He taught that introspection, self-discipline and self-transformation are prerequisites for world transformation. They give to the individual the requisite spiritual power and correctional guidance to give up narcotics, greed, anger, exploitation and bad habits. He always pointed towards incorporeal God and preached the brotherhood of man under the Fatherhood of one God, before whom all men and women, young and old, rich and poor are equal if only their deeds are noble. This is a practical step towards international solidarity and emotional integration. He taught people to lead a lotus-like life of detachment, purity, self-control and "brahmacharya" while performing all their worldly duties. This helps in population control.

Brahma Baba's uniqueness was not merely in possessing the highest virtues among the



**Prajapita Brahma, corporeal founder of the Brahma Kumaris**



**Brahma Baba with Dadi Janki (left), Dadi Ratan Mohini (right) and others.**

souls who came in his contact. Brahma Baba proved that it is possible to attain mastery over one's mind and become the maker of one's own destiny.

## His Legacy

His legacy is an international university, recognized by the United Nations and respected worldwide for the purity and integrity of its spiritual education. It is the recipient of numerous awards for national and international service.

Prajapita Brahma relinquished his mortal body and ascended to his angelic stage of consciousness on 18th January, 1969 at the age of 93. During the span of 33 years of his dedicated life (1936 to 1969) he trained thousands of Brahma Kumaris, out of whom over 15,000 fully dedicated sisters are in the forefront to carry forward the mission.

Above all, Brahma Baba is remembered for his total love and constant companionship with God and his selfless sacrifice in order that all God's children may experience that eternal relationship.★

(Purity Archives)

## Teachings of Brahma Baba

### Be Tireless and Conqueror of sleep

Just as Brahma Baba became an example of being tireless and of having a constant, stable stage, in the same way, the children also have to be an example for others. Just as you are tireless and hardworking in physical work, in the same way, have such a strong mind that no situation can make you fluctuate. For this, keep three things in mind: constantly unbroken, unshakable and tireless ('atoot', 'achal' and 'athak'). Then the line of the Intellect will remain clear and you will be able to understand the intentions of others easily and clearly.

### Be Generous Hearted and the Image of support

In order to attain complete success in service, especially imbibe the virtue of being generous-hearted. By being an image of support, you become worthy to receive cooperation from everyone. So, you should constantly consider yourselves to be the instrument to uplift all souls. You must be generous-hearted in your thoughts, words, actions, relationships and connections.

### Create Hope in those with no hope

In today's world, it is not difficult to transform the land. Science is able to produce fruit from any type of land. You children should also serve in the same way. The original religion or dharma of you Brahmins is to bring hope in those who have lost hope. If we take one step of courage, Baba is ready to provide thousand-fold help. He increases the zeal and enthusiasm of the children. So follow the Father, that is, constantly have hope in everyone and increase their zeal and enthusiasm.

### Constantly practise being bodiless

In order to be loved by all, whilst being in the body practise being bodiless. Just as it is easy to put on and take off a costume, in the same way, practise being in the awareness of the body and to go beyond the awareness of the body. One moment you put on the costume of the body, and the next moment you take it off.



**Delhi, Majlis Park, :** Inaugurating 'Easy Rajyoga Shivir through music' are BK Brijmohan, Mr. Shiv Shankar, Mahamantri, BJP, Delhi, Mrs. Lalita Shankar, BK Rajkumari, BK Sundari, BK Kavi Devi Chand and others.



**Sirsa, Haryana:** BK Sharda from Ahmedabad and BK Bindu giving a picture of Shri Laxmi & Narayan to Ms. Kamlesh Chahar, Distt. Child Welfare Officer, after a programme on 'Receiving God's Love & Protection'.



**Cuttack, Odisha:** Lighting lamps at 'Farmers Empowerment Campaign' are Prof. Dr. A.K.Nayak, Principal Scientist, CRRI, BKs Kamlesh, Sulochana, Rajendra, Arun Panda, Nathmal and others.



**Om Shanti Retreat Centre, Gurgaon:** Lighting lamps to inaugurate a programme for sportspersons are Ms. Sunita Godara, former Asian marathon champion, Acharya Guru Karma Tanpai Gyaltsen Nepal, BK Asha, Mr. Piyush Jain, Secretary, Physical Education Foundation of India, Mr. Neeraj Kr Mehra, International Sports Admin, BK Jagbir and others.

**Vietnam:** Group photo of participants after a talk on 'Rajyoga for Personality Development' by BK Atamprakash from Mount Abu.



## Trust in God



Suresh, a sweeper in a temple, was an atheist. He daily used to watch devotees offering their prayers and God granting them all their wishes. At the end of the day he used to watch God being tired. He walks up to him one day and says that God, you do so much hard work and don't find time to relax at all, so take a day off. God smiles at the innocence and purity of Suresh and accepts his request and proposal to relax for a day. However, he assigns him the responsibility of taking his place for a day, making sure that he smiles at every offering when people bow in front of him, and also does not speak anything.

As promised, Suresh wakes up early in the morning and takes the place of God. Smiling at every offering and prayer, he started enjoying his stint as God. A rich man bowed and offered his wallet full of money and thanked God for giving him all amenities in life and went away. Then walks in a poor man who was in distress and crying bitterly. He said that he had nothing left to feed his children, except a one rupee coin which he offered to God. He lifted his head and saw the wallet and thinking that God had answered his prayers, happily went back home. Suresh, silently standing in for God, was just watching and smiling as he was not supposed to speak a word. Then walked in a devotee to take blessings from God for his first ever voyage. The moment he raised his head he saw a policeman and the rich man. The rich man started shouting that the sailor was the culprit who had stolen his wallet and should be put behind bars. Suresh, who was the witness to the entire day's proceedings could not tolerate the injustice and told the policeman that the sailor was innocent and the wallet had been taken by the poor man. The policeman seeks apologies from the sailor and takes the wallet from the poor man and returns it to the rich man. Suresh is elated at doing justice.

God meets Suresh at night and asks him about the day's proceedings. Being excited, he narrated entire day's events to God. God thanked Suresh for his kind gesture, but told him that he had committed a blunder. God said the rich man had earned a fortune through illegal means and because he bowed in front of God he was pardoned. The wallet left by the rich man would have served the poor and needy children of the poor man, who had bowed in front of God and offered all his earnings, even if it was one rupee which could have brought some happiness to the poor family. The sailor who had sought good luck for his first voyage by bowing in front of God had to die as that night there was a heavy storm. He would have been blessed with life by being jailed. God explained to Suresh that because he spoke, the sailor lost his life, the poor man now could not feed his children who had been hungry for days, and the rich man who had earned money by unfair means would have to suffer all his life. Suresh was stunned.

Leave everything to God and believe in Him.★

**Civil Lines, Gaya:** Lighting candles to inaugurate a public programme are Mr. Lalan Prasad, Principal, Hansraj Public School, BK Bhagwan from Mount Abu, BK Sheela and BK Nirjala.



# Every violation is an act of violence

A violation is generally understood to be an act that breaks or fails to comply with a rule or formal agreement. Some people consider certain forms of violation acceptable, such as jumping a red light when the streets are empty, or holding a noisy late night party that keeps the entire neighbourhood awake.

Whatever the justification given for such actions, they constitute a violation of laws or norms that are meant to uphold order and safeguard the rights of everyone in society. Breaching these norms, as also natural and moral laws, is as much an offence as breaking laws made by governments.

At a subtle level, every violation amounts to violence, be it against the self, others or a virtue. The origin of the word violation reflects this — the word is derived from 'violat', which in Latin means 'treated violently'.

We do not recognise the violence we commit when we act impulsively, thoughtlessly or under the influence of a need or desire, but we pay a price for it one way or another.

Take our daily routine. There is a right time for everything, determined not only by the demands of punctuality but also by nature, including our biological clock.

When we respect the signals given by our biological clock, the body functions smoothly, but when we ignore or override the messages, we begin to suffer the consequences. Unhealthy daily routines, such as staying in bed too late, having irregular hours for meals, and skipping or avoiding exercise altogether, take a toll on

Climate change, which is engaging so many minds all over the world, is also a consequence of violence — committed by man against nature.

the mind and body. "Early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise" is not a disciplinarian's advice, as many think. We now know that it keeps us in sync with the body's hormonal processes, thereby making us healthy and productive. It has been found that successful people get more done by 10 am than most people do all day.

As with our daily routine, we cut corners in other areas of life as well. We put off important tasks because they are not interesting, or are tedious. When we can no longer postpone them, we finish them in a hurry, ending up doing a sloppy job, which could have been done much better if we had scheduled time for it earlier.

The failure to recognise and respect the relative importance of different tasks ultimately has the effect of putting us and others under pressure, fraying tempers, spoiling relationships, and producing poor results. Those who habitually

work like this never learn to be systematic, and end up being seen as careless and unreliable, which has an effect on their personal and professional lives.

Disorderliness and disregard for doing things at the right time, in the right place, and in the right manner can lead to problems and misunderstandings. When such lack of consideration for norms becomes ingrained in someone, they may begin to engage in various forms of misconduct and transgressions, such as violating someone's peace, privacy or rights, treating someone or something with irreverence or disrespect, and more serious offences like fraud, theft and physical assault. They justify their actions with arguments such as "everybody does it", "this is nothing; there are people doing much worse things", and "you can't survive in this world otherwise". Such thinking is a slippery slope that can lead to even criminal activities.

Climate change, which is engaging so many minds all over the world, is also a consequence of violence — committed by man against nature. It may have been done unknowingly in the past, but even after it became clear that consumerist lifestyles and the industrial and commercial activity that support them are having a devastating effect on the planet, we have not changed course. This amounts to a wilful assault on the environment.

At the root of all these infringements lies the subtlest violation — of spiritual laws. Whenever we do something wrong, or contemplate such an action, our conscience alerts us by making us feel uneasy, fearful or guilty. Any thought, word or action that stems from anger, ego, greed or selfishness violates the sanctity of the soul. An action influenced by such vices will certainly give sorrow to others, and is akin to attacking them. It will also disturb the atmosphere. When large numbers of people behave in this manner, as is happening across the world, the result is misery, violence and disasters.

Laws and regulations will create a better world when we begin to respect spiritual laws, which tell us that truth, purity, peace and love are the energies that power each soul and are the basis of happiness — the goal that guides almost all human actions. If everybody starts living on the basis of these virtues, the world will no longer need man-made laws to ensure peace, security and order.★

(Purity Bureau)

## In Lighter Vein

Law: A unique fishing net in which small fish are caught and the big ones escape.

\*\*\*

A modern child is one who when informed that there will be a lunar eclipse that night, asks what channel it will be on.

\*\*\*

It is difficult to go on strike if there is no work in the first place.

\*\*\*

Steering Committee: Four persons trying to park their cars at the same place.

\*\*\*

Sign in a small village: Drive carefully. No hospital nearby.

\*\*\*

There's something I've been trying to forget and I can't remember what it was.

\*\*\*

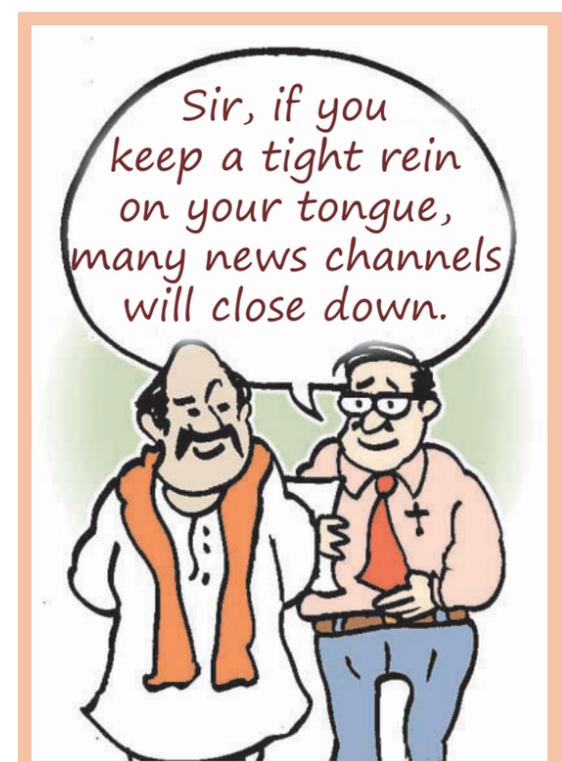
He seems to be honest. Records show he never takes a bribe, he only gives them.

\*\*\*

I have no brother or sister, so Mum always knows who broke the crockery.



**Shantivan, Abu:** Inaugurating 'Farmer's Empowerment Divine Festival' by lighting lamps are Dadi Janki, BK Nirvair, Mr. Ravinder Singh Cheema, Vice-Chairman, Punjab Agricultural Marketing Board, BKs Sarla, Chakradhari, Sharda, Laxmi, Gita, and others.



Wisdom of Dadi Janki

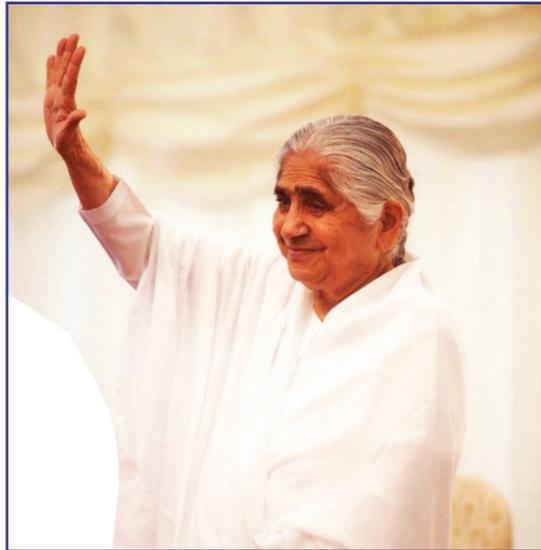
# Instruments of Peace

The call of this time is a call for peace. In my early morning meditations, I can hear the call of the peace-less world for peace — not just for an end to conflict, but for a deep inner stillness and calm, which all souls remember as our original state.

If we are to find peace, first we must teach ourselves to become quiet and then we can become peaceful. Becoming peaceful means seizing the reins of the out-of-control mind and bringing the runaway thoughts to a halt. Once we have the mind's attention, we can begin to coax it to take us into silence, a true silence; not a place without sound, but the place in which we experience a deep sense of peace and a pervasive awareness of our well-being.

It is not an empty mind that elicits this state of peace. To move into this state of profound silence we must train the intellect to create pure, good thoughts. We must train it to concentrate. Our wasteful thoughts burden us. Our habits of creating too many thoughts and too many words exhaust the intellect. We must ask, "How can I cultivate the habit of pure thought?"

Who is it that yearns to go into silence? It is I, the inner being, the soul. As I detach from my body and from bodily things, and turn away from the distractions of the world, I can face inwards to the inner being. Like a perfectly calm lake when all whispers of wind have stopped, the inner being shimmers,



quietly reflecting the intrinsic qualities of the soul. Feelings of peace and well-being steal across my mind and, with them, thoughts of benevolence.

I let go of all thoughts of discontentment and am reminded of my oldest, most intrinsic state of being. I remember this inner calm. Though I have not been here recently, I remember it as my most fundamental awareness, and a feeling of happiness and contentment wells up inside me. In this state I know every soul to be my friend. I am my own friend. I am deeply quiet. I am silent and utterly at peace.

This deep well of peace is the original state of the soul. When I am in this state, I feel the flow of love for humanity and I feel a state

more elevated than what I would normally call happiness: a state of bliss. It is when I attain this state that something truly miraculous can happen. When I am in this state of complete soul-conscious rest, I become aware that another energy is beginning to flow into me. I feel strength and a power so expansive that in this moment I know there is nothing I cannot do, nowhere I cannot reach.

When this happens, I am experiencing the connection with the divine energy and the flow of God's power into my inner being. If I stay focused inwards, connected with this stream of divine power, even the way I use the physical senses will be different. When I look at the world, I will see through my original nature of benevolence and experience compassion for the world.

It is in this experience that I know what silence power is. It is this power that transforms me inside, making me pure and powerful. When the soul and God are linked together, there is a power that reaches me and then reaches invisibly across to others, bringing about transformation in them, in nature, and in the world.

The secret of this power of silence is that I don't have to do the work of transformation. Divine power automatically transforms. Let me do the inner work. Let me go deeply into that experience of the original state of the self, and let there be silence so that God is able to do His work through me, His instrument.★

## Wellness at workplace through spirituality

It is no secret that the majority of people in today's world consider their workplace to be a major cause of stress in their lives. Not only is work likely to be one of the major causes of your stress, but it is also a victim of it. The factors responsible for such a situation could range from an unhealthy relationship with co-workers, to being unable to live up to the expectations of superiors, fear of downsizing, performance pressure or mere general dissatisfaction. The direct implication of these factors can be seen in the form of a growing sense of dispiritedness in individuals, and gradually in the overall workplace. This calls for the need to achieve 'occupational wellness' through spirituality.

The occupational dimension of wellness recognizes personal satisfaction and enrichment in one's life through work. Occupational wellness is nothing but enhancing our ability to achieve a balance between work and personal life, addressing workplace stress rather than avoiding

it, and building healthy relationships with co-workers, thereby improving the overall quality of our work and the quality of our life.

### How can Spirituality help?

To understand how a spiritual approach to life can directly contribute towards occupational well-being, it is necessary to understand its meaning. Spirituality is a broad concept with room for many perspectives but in general it means to have a deep and clear understanding of the 'self' and finding the 'real meaning and purpose of our life' by developing a strong connection with someone superior to ourselves. A deep insight into our inner self (referred to as meditation in spiritual terms) not only helps us identify and effectively manage and control our troublesome emotions of anger, fear, ego, jealousy etc., but also helps us understand other people's emotions that lead them to behave in a certain way. In other words, meditation or the practice of looking inwards helps us develop our emotional intelligence, which is as important in our personal and professional life as intellectual intelligence. It has been seen that people who are emotionally intelligent exhibit a sense of calm amid chaos. They're excellent decision-makers because of their high intuitive capacity. They take criticism well and use it to improve their performance, and most importantly, they're able to sense the emotional needs of others, which leads to beneficial outcomes such as increased job satisfaction, improved productivity and improved relationships with co-workers.

Developing a 'spiritual' workplace  
Developing a 'spiritual' workplace for people

would mean that it would change from merely being a place to earn enough money to survive — just earning the daily bread — to being a place of livelihood; a place where we both survive and are fully alive. 'We are alive' means our spirit is able to fully express itself, and through our contribution we allow other people's spirits to flourish and to be nourished, thereby creating a healthy and more conducive environment for work. Furthermore, a spiritual workplace would bring out creativity and promote the expression of talent and brilliance, which would lead to an efficient contribution from the whole team.

### Meditation to achieve well-being in workplace

Meditation again is a broad concept interpreted differently by different people, but broadly it means focusing inwards and being aware of your thoughts. The goal of meditation primarily is to experience our innate strengths and qualities of peace, happiness, cooperation and harmony. Studies show that in many companies around the world meditation has emerged as the 'number one' technique for busting stress and increasing efficiency and growth. There is a steady stream of new research and news stories about the benefits of meditation, which include boosting of energy, helping to focus, reducing stress and anxiety, increasing resilience and subtly changing your life and your attitude for the better. Plus, there is mounting evidence that an ideally humane workplace is more productive, flexible and creative.

As the famous saying goes — "Wake up with determination; go to bed with satisfaction." ★

(Purity Bureau)

### Words of Wisdom

- Order is heaven's first law.
- Sticks in a bundle are unbreakable.
- Learn politeness from the impolite.
- Be gentle to all and stern with yourself.
- A promise is a cloud; fulfilment is rain.
- Leave nothing but footsteps.
- A great sin can enter by a small door.
- A fortress is of no use to cowards.



Paris, France : BK Jayanti from London (2nd row centre) in group photo with BK family.



New Delhi : BK Asha speaking on 'Minimum government, maximum governance' at World Confluence on Humanity, Power and Spirituality' held at ASSOCHAM.



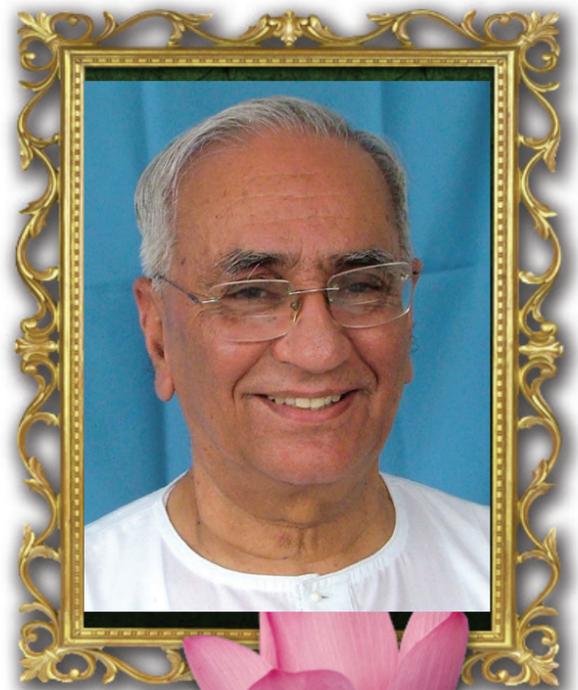
New Delhi, Karol Bagh : Mrs. and Mr. Surender Kr. Valecha, Vice President, Delhi Scooter Association, welcoming Sister Shiwani in a Public Programme. BK Pushpa is standing along.



Godhra, Gujarat : BK Sarla didi, BK Dr. Niranjana, BK Surekha with 6 kumaris at their 'Samman Samaroh' along with 27 couples.



Australia : Group photo of BK family along with BK Beena, Chennai and BK Charlie at 'Tamil Retreat'.



BK family's beloved Om Prakash 'Bhaiji', Director, Indore Zone and Chairperson, Media Wing (RERE) left his mortal coil on 25 December 2015.



New Delhi: Mrs. Aruna Roy, social activist, giving 'Manthan Award 2015' to BK Yashwant for community service by Radio Madhuban 90.4 FM.



Ludhiana, Punjab : S. Sukhpal Singh, Distt. Agriculture Officer, receiving Godly gift from BK Raj didi at a public programme.

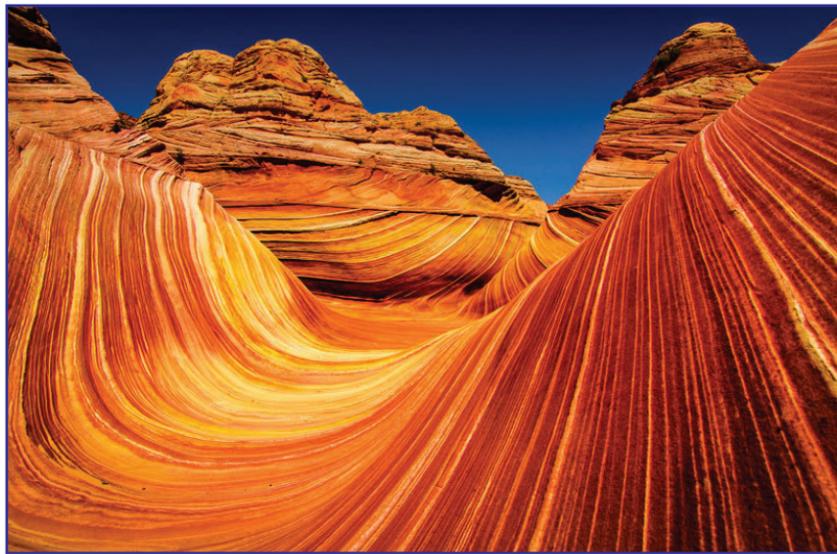
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**Gyan Sarovar, Mount Abu:** A group of 150 leaders from India and Nepal who participated in the 'Future of Power' retreat. Dadi Janki, Chief of Brahma Kumaris, BK Nizar Juma, host, BK Shivani, BK Nirmala didi, Director, Gyan Sarovar, BK Shashi, BK Anthony Phelps, facilitator, and others.



The Wave, Arizona: The colourful sandstone rock formation in the Coyote Buttes North Area of the US state features a pattern of beautiful curves.



**Om Shanti Retreat Centre, Gurgaon:** A youth group performing during the 'Ruhani Udaan' programme. 2,000 BK youth participated in the one-day retreat.

## Mr. Wise



Mr. Wise?  
 Yes.  
 Happy New Year 2016!  
 What's new about it, except a new diary on an old table?  
 And a new calender on an old wall?  
 I cannot say.

♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦

And Mr. Wise?  
 Yes.  
 Didn't we make new year resolutions?  
 Yes, but how many days did they last?  
 How about the joy of celebrations on 1st January?  
 One-day wonder, wasn't it?  
 I cannot say.

♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦

Lastly...  
 Yes.  
 We celebrate our birthdays by blowing off candles?  
 As a reminder that we have indeed grown older by another year.  
 In the same way we celebrate another new year in the old world?  
 Perhaps you are right.

♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦

## Tailpiece



A lawyer was defending a client who was being sued for returning a borrowed lawn mower in a damaged condition.

'Your honour', said the lawyer, 'we refute this charge on the following grounds. In the first place, my client never borrowed the lawn mower at all. In the second place, it was already damaged when he borrowed it. And in the third place, it was in perfect condition when he returned it.'

♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦

While handing over charge of a notoriously difficult department, the outgoing manager said to the new incumbent, "In your desk you'll find three envelopes. Whenever you have a problem, open one."

After a couple of months things started to go wrong — a threatened strike and criticism from the board of directors worried the new manager — so he opened the first envelope. "None of this is your fault". He read, "You're doing your job well. Carry on."

Three months later his problems had multiplied and production had drastically dropped. The second envelope was opened and the message said, "By now you should have come to grips with problems."

He weathered the storm, but by the end of nine months things were even worse. In desperation he opened the third envelope. It simply stated, "Prepare three envelopes."