

Purity

August 2016 Vol. 35 No.11

Point of View
This Independence Day let us take a pledge to become free from vices and protect the honour of women to again make Bharat the land of *devi-devatas*.

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

Freedom to Liberation

Every living being sings the song of freedom. Freedom is the basic nature of all creatures. Bondage is resisted by everyone, including animals. In a world torn apart by conflict and oppression, it is more than relevant to look at freedom with a wider perspective.

Many thinkers, philosophers and writers have mused about the true meaning of freedom. The famous lines of the internationally renowned poet, Rabindranath Tagore, spoke of freedom in an expansive sense: *Where the mind is without fear... Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls... Where the mind is led forward by thee into ever-widening thought and action; Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.*

Freedom, independence and liberty are often used in the context of political, financial, religious and personal rights and choices. In terms of nations and sovereignty, the word independence is used when the citizens of the nation enjoy self-government. When a nation is not independent, we call it a dependent territory. In a broader sense, when some group or groups of people have complete control of a geographical area or an economic group, or of their personal lives, we call it independence.

Freedom pertains to an individual's rights within the independent state. Even in an independent state, freedom can be curtailed by applying conditions upon people about expressing views, about business, media, governance and other public activities. In certain places there are strict laws for how one dresses, how people assemble, and what they watch or hear through television, radio or the Internet.

Freedom is more than enjoying rights and privileges as a citizen. Apart from the basic human rights that a person needs to survive and progress in life, there are many other factors that make an individual truly free. Total freedom is not a state of existence in which one can think and live as one wants, but it is an experience of living in true self-awareness. It is to experience and exist as one truly is. "When I discover who I am, I'll be free," said American scholar Ralph Ellison.

Today all humans are like bonded labourers. We are all in bondage - spiritual, emotional and

physical. Due to ignorance of our true self we identify with a false image of the self as a physical being. We get attached to many roles and identities that seemingly make us feel worthy. Hence, every human soul today is in bondage to vices such as lust, anger and greed. Most of the actions that are performed by them are based on desires that originate from vices and dependencies that drive them into further bondage. Hence, true freedom entails freedom from vices as well as from the bondage of karma, mainly bad karma. The whole world is a *Ravan Rajya* in which human souls, like Sita in the epic Ramayana, are imprisoned by vices.

Material progress and a consumerist culture have multiplied the choices that human beings have to live their life in greater comfort. But every choice that they are making today to assert their freedom is disempowering them spiritually and creating more dependencies on objects, people, roles and addictive habits. Ironically, all such misconceived freedoms eventually damage their physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being.

"Between stimulus and response, there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom." - Viktor Emil Frankl.

The ancient spiritual wisdom of Rajyoga guides human souls to regain *swarajya* (self-control). Controlling the senses helps gain ruling power and conquer negative tendencies, which is essential for achieving true freedom. The soul is the master of the sense organs and its subtle faculties - mind, intellect and *sanskars* (personality traits). Those who attain *swarajya* attain true freedom, independence and, finally, liberation.

God is the only soul who is always liberated from the cycle of birth, death and karma. He is now guiding human souls to become liberated. By being soul-conscious and by remembering Him with love, we can cut away the bonds of vices and vicious karma. His remembrance helps souls to become free from all karmic and vicious bondage. Such liberated souls help others to become liberated from the cycle of ignorance, sin and suffering. It will not be long before humanity celebrates such true freedom and liberation from the present Kaliyugi world.*

(Purity Features)

Special feature to celebrate

August 15, Independence Day of India



Rajyogini Dadi Hirdaya Mohini in Om Shanti Retreat Centre, Gurugram.

Photo Gallery

Spiritual Love alone can unite living beings for it alone joins them by what is deepest in themselves.



Shantivan, Abu : Dadi Janki, Chief of Brahma Kumaris, meeting with Mr. Sudarshan Bhagat, Hon'ble Union Minister of State for Agriculture & Farmer's Welfare. Also in pic. are BK Mruthyunjaya & BK Sapna.

Guwahati : Mr. Sarbananda Sonowal, Chief Minister of Asom, meeting with BK Sheela didi and group.



Gyan Sarovar, Mt. Abu : Inaugurating Administrators' Conference are Mrs. Kiran Maheshwari, Rajasthan Minister for Public Health & Water Resources, BK Brij Mohan, BK Avdesh, BK Mruthyunjaya, BK Poonam, Mr. Rakesh Mehta, IAS and BK Harish.

London, UK : 'Bharat Gaurav Award' to BK Nirvair, Secretary General of Brahma Kumaris, Mt. Abu, being received by BK Bharat from Mr. Suresh Sharma, Chairman, Sanskriti Yuva Sansthan at the House of Commons.

Chennai : 'Peace Rally' being flagged-off from Marina Beach by BK Sushma from Jaipur, BK Beena and others.



St. Petersburg, Russia : Group photo of scientists, science reporters, environmentalists and farmers who participated in the seminar on 'Sustainable Yogic Farming'. Standing in second row are Mr. Oleg Mukhin, vice-president of the Russian Astronautic Federation, BK Santosh didi, BK Raju and BK Atam Prakash.



Who will become *devi-devatas*... in the coming Golden Age?

Who Wants to Be a Millionaire is a popular television game show franchise, with participants in the quiz contests answering a series of multiple-choice questions while attempting to win large cash prizes. Various versions of the show have aired in more than a hundred countries, with the top prize usually being a million units of the local currency.

The shows' popularity the world over is largely due to the money on offer, and most people are quick to see the opportunity to get rich fast. Similarly, people look out for other ways to advance in life, whether materially, professionally or otherwise. Not surprisingly, educational, professional, and self-improvement courses are now big business.

At the same time, few people see the opportunity to change their lives meaningfully and become something more than an ordinary human, especially when such transformation involves subtle effort and working on oneself over a period of time. Such is the chance we get when the world passes from one age to another as the wheel of time turns inexorably.

Time brings major changes in the world, slowly but surely. This process is usually imperceptible to humans even as they unknowingly play a part in it, partly because it stretches over a long period of time. The process becomes apparent only when its ultimate results manifest themselves, as is happening with climate change.

A time comes when the world undergoes renewal, and the old order is swept away and a new one takes its place. This is part of the cyclic repetition of time, in which the world goes from new to old, is rejuvenated, and again becomes old before another renewal, in an endlessly repeated process.

The present time is one of such transformation, when darkness gives way to light, and sorrow and suffering reach a climax before they are removed for a long time. This is referred to in religious and spiritual lexicon as the transition from the Iron Age to the Golden Age, which occurs at the beginning of the cycle of time.

The Golden Age is a time when all souls as well as the elements of nature are in their pristine state, and consequently there is spiritual as well as material abundance. Souls are free of the traits called vices, which are the root cause of all sorrow. In the absence of these vices, there is unalloyed peace and happiness during that period.

The Golden Age is a time when all souls are in their pristine state, and consequently there is spiritual as well as material abundance.

A lot of people assume that just as the passage of time will end the Iron Age, which is also called hell because of the hellish conditions prevalent during that period, and usher in the Golden Age or heaven, they too will enter that heaven automatically.

However, that is not the case. When the world passes through different phases, which have been classified as the Golden, Silver, Copper and Iron Ages according to the quality of souls and life in these periods, everyone experiences the conditions prevailing in these Ages. However, the transition from Iron Age to Golden Age is accompanied by renewal, and only souls that have in them the qualities that are identified with the Golden Age live in the world at that time.

In other words, one has to qualify for the Golden Age, just as in many organisations workers rise to a certain level over time, but after that they have to qualify for each subsequent level by acquiring certain knowledge and skills.

Living in the Golden Age is a prize worth much more than a million dollars. Despite his millions, a millionaire may suffer physically, mentally and emotionally, and he still lives in an imperfect world of violence, fear and misery.

The Golden Age, in contrast, is a time of unalloyed peace and happiness, when there is no disease, violence or sorrow, because the root cause of these, vices such as lust, anger, greed, ego and attachment, don't exist then.

Therefore, to live in that Age one has to become free of these vices by making spiritual effort. The soul can be purified only by connecting with the eternal source of power and purity, the Supreme Soul. When the soul remembers the Supreme, His power and virtues flow through this mental link, recharging and cleansing the soul. Gradually, the soul is rid of the dirt it had



accumulated over the course of its sojourn in this world, and its innate qualities of peace, love, purity and truth naturally manifest themselves in its actions. Only such a soul can take birth in the Golden Age and live in a world free of sorrow until the end of the Silver Age.

If the soul retains vices at the time of the world's renewal, it will next take birth only after the vices make their appearance, in the Copper Age.

The effort is simple, though it requires patience, fortitude and some spiritual knowledge, but the reward is great – it is something no millionaire or billionaire can hope to get in this world. So, who wants to become a deity (*devi-devata*)?★

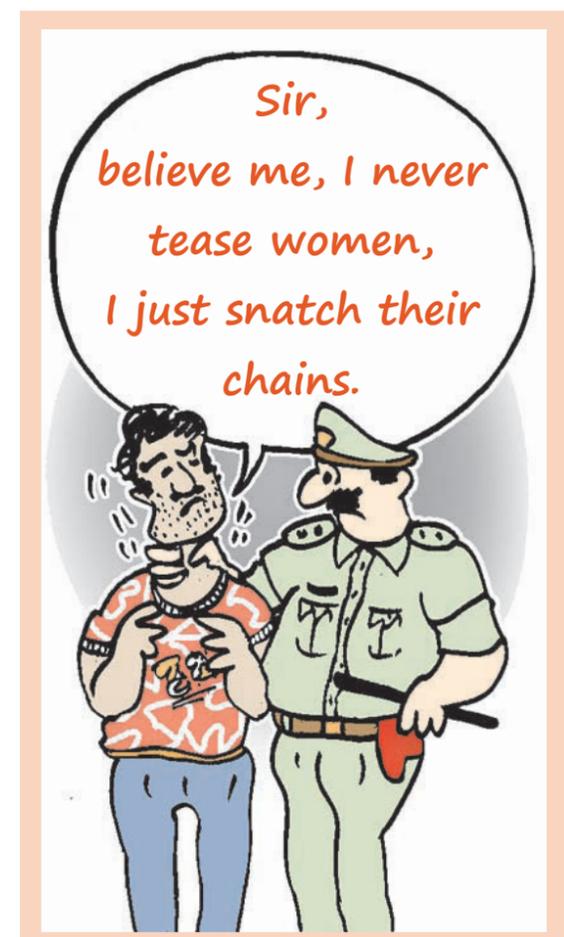
(Purity Features)

Pearls of Wisdom

When you build a house, every brick counts. When you build a character, every thought counts. You are what you think. Love, purity, peace, wisdom - the more you think of these qualities, the more you will become them.

In everything, goodness is there. Our goal is to find it. In every person, the best is there, our job is to recognise it. In every situation, the positive is there, our opportunity is to see it.

Leave worries aside and you will be surprised by the beauty of the sky and the colour of flowers, of the freshness of the breeze and the generosity of the sun. The greatest wealth is to appreciate what we have and what we are.



The Sacred Second

If I wish to become an angel, I need to become the master of time and the master of my thoughts. When time and thoughts are combined in a positive way, magic happens!

A second is the unit of time, just as a thought is the basic unit of consciousness. A body has many cells, and so do time and consciousness. Whether we measure time in terms of eternity, ages, cycles, centuries, millennia, years, seasons, months, days, hours or minutes – the basic unit, or cell, remains the second. We may measure consciousness in terms of awareness, attitudes, feelings, behaviour, choices, aliveness, responses but the basic unit, or cell, is always a thought.

Just as cancer begins in a single cell and spreads to others cells, so the same happens in human life as the infected seconds and thoughts spread.

Ultimately this results in emotional, mental and even physical disease in the human body and mind, since our conscious life is acted and expressed within and through time.

Time is closely linked to thoughts. Time is wasted when thoughts are wasteful. Then the day becomes diseased with stress, fear, doubt and other unhelpful emotions.

If this becomes a habit, we feel as if we have no time, or that life has passed us by. We feel a failure, unable to cope with the demands of today, surviving rather than thriving. We feel empty and overcome. What is the therapy for such a state of consciousness? How can we heal

Just as cancer begins in a single cell and spreads to others cells, the same happens in human life as infected thoughts spread.

ourselves?

We can begin by coming back to the basic unit of time – the second – and the basic unit of consciousness, a thought.

If we take one second, the tiniest unit of time, and one thought, the tiniest unit of consciousness, we can make them work together.

In order for this to happen, we must fully accept the understanding we gain by doing meditation. Under no circumstances rush or make this meditation exercise routine. Otherwise it just becomes a technique and will no longer be experiential. It is especially important to give quality time to this practice and not to rush it, no matter what reason we create to justify the hurrying.

We must focus on the self when dealing with these tiny units. One mistake will destroy the whole process.

The slower and more concentrated we become, the deeper the thought goes and then we can tap into the pure energy of the original self and release it into consciousness.

When we try this as a method, we will never again honestly be able to say that we don't have enough time. Every day we will have lots of time.

The apprentice who moves to angelhood must completely master these units of time until they become eternity. They must also master their thoughts so fully that thinking stops and there is only awareness.

Meditation

Take one second to think one thought. Slowly and faithfully think; "I am." Add another second and another thought; "a soul". Add another second or two and think; "I am peace". Add another second or two and think; "I am a being of peace."

Repeat; "I am a soul, I am peace, I am a being of peace."

Repeat these thoughts gently to yourself, paying special attention to them. There is no need to rush, no need for second thoughts or ideas going anywhere else. Just focus on these thoughts about the original self.

When this meditation in awareness is practised properly – not as a technique, but as a heartfelt and accepted reality – pure new energy is released into the consciousness. A cleaning, or resurrection, takes place.

Throughout the day, gently but deeply repeat this one second one thought meditative exercise. Each time

may take 10, 12 or 14 seconds. This can be repeated, of course, so at one sitting you can build up the seconds of absolute concentration. If you are naturally focussed, you can continue for up to 60 seconds. Sixty seconds filled with 60 positive thoughts. This begins to heal and transform the self.

Repeating this meditation exercise in awareness often results in a tremendous release of energy, both inside and outside.

When concentrated for a long duration, let's say an hour or two, it results in an 'atmic' explosion.

The word 'atmic' derives from the Sanskrit word 'atma', which means 'soul'.

Unlike an atomic explosion, which is violent and destructive, an 'atmic' explosion is a benevolent release of the purest energy of the human mind, which heals and harmonizes people as well as nature and her elements.

When practised at a collective level, the 'atmic' explosion, which is subtle and invisible, restores the globe to its original order and balance. How cool is that! ★

From the Book: The Man Who Loved Angels, Anthony Strano

Well Said

It is in Giving that we Receive

What is ours that we are giving when the reality is that we came into this world empty-handed? Nothing really belongs to us, not even our body, for even that will be left behind. So what is it that one can actually give? Real giving is in giving oneself selflessly. The common underlying factor with all noble people is that they do not expect anything in return. They believe in only one thing. It is in giving that we receive.

Your Words create your World

To know the power of words, just utter the following words and observe the feelings they kindle in you! Flowers, rainbow, Buddha, nun, baba, sunrise, mango, love, friend, gift, top of the world.... Now utter the following words and observe the feelings they kindle in you. Thorn, volcano, Hitler, hospital, graveyard, desert, betrayal, crisis, pulling on....

Your words have in them the power to make you or break you. True, your attitudes shape your altitude. But your attitude is shaped by your thinking, and your thinking itself is shaped by the words that you use. Positive thinking can be developed only by using a positive vocabulary.



Nairobi, Kenya: A group photo of participants in a five-day retreat for BK teachers from Africa. BK Jayanti, BK Vedanti and BK Mohan Singhal are seen in the front row.

In Lighter Vein

Recession: It was Ali Baba and the 40 thieves. How come there are only 30 now? "I had to downsize," Mr. Baba told *The Economic Times*. "There's a recession."

Cut to the bone: While visiting a medical college, I came across this announcement on their notice board: "Due to the forthcoming pooja holidays, the anatomy lab will function with a skeleton staff only."

Inconvenience: From a newspaper: "Even while organising rallies and public meetings, due permission has to be obtained from the authorities in order to cause any inconvenience to residents."

A Catch: When a mathematician wandered home at 3 am, he got an earful from his wife. "You're late!" She yelled. "You said you'd be home by 11.45." "Actually," the mathematician replied coolly, "I said I'd be home by a quarter of 12."

Not Good: Picking up a container of insecticide, a garden centre customer asks the salesperson, "Is this good for red ants?" "No," says the salesperson. "It'll kill 'em!"

Raksha Bandhan can help create safer environment for women today

Raksha Bandhan is around the corner, as evidenced by shops selling colourful rakhis of all shapes and sizes. This festival celebrates the love between brother and sister: the sister ties a rakhi on the wrist of the brother with prayers for his well-being, and he in turn promises to protect her.

A multicultural festival, Raksha Bandhan, which literally means 'knot of protection', is marked on the full-moon day in the month of Shraavan in the Hindu calendar, which falls during the July-August period. Hindus, Sikhs, Jains and people of other faiths as well celebrate this festival. Priests tie rakhis around the wrists of congregation members, rakhis are shared between close friends and, in some parts of India, people offer prayers to deities and men change the sacred thread they wear.

In addition, ceremonies are held to tie rakhis around the wrists of soldiers, and women and schoolgirls visit political leaders and other public figures to tie the rakhi.

Such gestures are welcome, as they help bring people from different sections of society together, but our celebration of this festival needs to go further.

There are many festivals in which shaktis, the feminine incarnation of power, are worshipped, but Raksha Bandhan is unique in that it encourages respect for ordinary women. The noble sentiments of love and care that this festival evokes in men towards women need not be confined to their family or close friends. These feelings must extend to womankind in general, for every woman is a sister or daughter to someone, who cares about their safety.

This safety has come under

Raksha Bandhan can be harnessed for changing men's attitude towards women.

increased threat lately, with horrific cases of sexual assault against women, and even minors, being reported with worrying frequency. In this context, an occasion such as Raksha Bandhan can be harnessed for social good.

Crimes against women, like all crimes, have their roots in the mind, and it is there the remedy must be attempted. More than a change in laws, it is change in attitudes towards women that will ensure their safety. A beginning can be made this Raksha Bandhan by sisters urging their brothers to give other women the same regard that they show to them, for that would contribute to the sister's protection, because if most men, or even a considerable number of them, did this, women would feel much more secure when out alone or among strangers.

Legends related to Raksha Bandhan speak of enemy kings turning protectors after they had a change of heart on receiving a rakhi sent by the queen of a rival kingdom. If the humble rakhi could change political fortunes in earlier times, there is no reason why it cannot help create a safer environment for women today.

Besides women, the less fortunate members of society



New Delhi: Mr. J.P. Nadda, Hon'ble Union Minister of Health & Family Welfare, being tied the sacred thread of 'Raksha Bandhan' by BK Asha.

can also be served by the spirit of Raksha Bandhan. If women and children visit prisons and homes for the elderly and the disabled to forge a bond of sisterly love with the inmates, they can bring a little cheer into their lives. Such visits are made on a small scale in some places, but they can be much bigger and regular features of this festival so that those on the fringes of society do not have to go

through an unloved existence, and have something to look forward to in their otherwise dreary lives.

More than a century ago, Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore organised public celebrations of Raksha Bandhan to promote inter-communal harmony in Bengal. His initiative can certainly be adapted to our times, to create a more humane and caring society where everyone feels secure.★ (Purity Features)

God cannot be Omnipresent - Why?

God's omnipresence is the biggest myth that has taken roots in the minds of believers. It is one of the greatest paradoxes that the belief which was supposed to have bridged the gap between humans and God has instead kept them far removed from truth. This belief must have originated in the blind faith that God, being the Creator, also dwells in all creation. Devotees who have felt God's grace and power at different places in different ways must have formed the idea that God is everywhere.

Let us examine this belief in the context of what is happening in the world and what humans have been doing or saying about God. If God were everywhere then there would be no difference between the Creator and the creation. There would be no single supreme source that can set the creation in order, and if the Creator were permeating the creation, then there should be no degradation and disorder in the creation.

The creation is always separate from the creator just as a sculptor is separate from his sculpture, a father from his child, and a carpenter from his furniture. All human souls are God's children and hence we are a spiritual brotherhood. To say that 'atma' is 'paramatma' — soul is God — would make humankind a spiritual fatherhood. It is really a brotherhood of souls and the fatherhood of God.

If God lives in every particle in the universe then His virtues or attributes should also show in every particle. Just as fire is manifested as heat, light or smoke, the presence of God would be manifested as at least one or a few of His qualities, such as peace, love and truth.

The Power of One

- ✓ One bird can herald spring.
- ✓ One song can spark a moment.
- ✓ One tree can start a forest.
- ✓ One smile begins a friendship.
- ✓ One star can guide a ship at sea.
- ✓ One candle wipes out darkness.
- ✓ One step must start each journey.
- ✓ One hope will raise our spirits.
- ✓ One voice can speak with wisdom.
- ✓ One laughter will conquer gloom.

Editorial

The Dance of Death

People in India were moved when two senior police officers from Karnataka recently committed suicide within a few days. It is alleged that they were 'under pressure after being falsely implicated in different cases'. In the last few months, there have also been reports of students studying in top medical and engineering colleges taking the extreme step due to personal and career-related stress. The tragic trend of suicide by farmers continues unabated in the country. The situation of our 'anndatas' remains challenging as nature and their socioeconomic condition refuse to offer them any hope.

In the Kashmir Valley, nearly fifty people have been killed and many more severely injured during recent clashes. In neighbouring Bangladesh, Eid celebrations went sour when an explosion ripped through one of the biggest festival gatherings in the country. While many regions of the world are becoming targets of terrorist groups, in the US gun culture continues to flourish and cut short civilian lives in the absence of a political consensus on strict weapon procurement laws.

And, as has been the case for many years now, nature's fury in the form of floods and earthquakes is striking India and other countries. A large number of people have lost their lives in incidents resulting from unprecedented climate change.

It seems that a dance of death is taking place across the globe as one reason or another becomes instrumental in the destruction of life and property. No one is spared the insecurity of sudden loss, so the atmosphere everywhere is one of fear, anxiety and stress. As the news ticker continues to deliver more sad stories, humanity is being engulfed in a sort of collective depression.

Our present state has come about because a culture of violence has been normalised in our lives. From individual choices to global practices, power play is rampant everywhere, and it has caused the exploitation of both man and nature. While corrupt tendencies are in full bloom today, goodness hardly gets a chance to survive.

External violence, which is directed at others and the natural world, is rooted in internal violence against the self. When we forget our original spiritual identity, we get disconnected from the virtuous core of our being and come under the influence of the body and matter. Our mistaken identity sows the first seeds of violence as it strangles our pure conscience and compels us to act under the spell of vices such as lust, anger, greed, attachment and ego. This inner deception is behind all external conflicts.

No form of violence is unaccounted for, not even when it lies only in our thoughts. The law of the land may vary according to the country, and can be manipulated, but the universal law of karma is inviolable. Our challenge-ridden present is the cumulative return of humans' collective karma performed under the influence of vices.

Measures such as opening multi-speciality hospitals and increasing the defence budget do not redeem our situation because they only treat the symptoms of a disease which is deep-rooted. Unless we return to our original nature, a sense of healing will not be reached, and the cycle of violence and suffering will continue to intensify.

External destruction is ignited by the chaos in our inner world, and that is where peace must be introduced first. Using spiritual wisdom in our actions and recharging ourselves by connecting with the supreme spiritual powerhouse will make human nature benign. When we reawaken to our eternal bond with other souls as brothers belonging to one, large family, our differences will dissolve and commonalities surface. The path of spiritual revival of humankind will lead us to a destination of non-violence, where the dance of death will give way to the music of hope and harmony.*

Gleanings from the press

New method can kill cancer cells in two hours

Researchers from University of Texas in the U.S. have developed a new, non-invasive method that can kill cancer cells in two hours, an advance that may significantly help people with inoperable or hard-to-reach tumours, as well as young children stricken with the deadly disease. The method involves injecting a chemical compound, nitrobenzaldehyde, into the tumour and allowing it to diffuse into the tissue. A beam of light is then aimed at the tissue, causing the cells to become very acidic inside and, essentially, "commit suicide", researchers said. (PTI)

For ₹ 300 only, have your stamp

You can now have your picture printed on a postal stamp. Be it a picture of an infant on his first birthday or one of close buddies during a college reunion, the Indian postal department is ready to give a special touch to your cherished moments — a special stamp customised for you. And don't worry about the cost — it is as low as ₹ 300 for a pack of 12 stamps. (News Report)

Self-organising soft materials

Researchers have created self-organising soft materials that mimic the spontaneous folding motion seen in the Mimosa pudica plant. The technology could benefit numerous emerging technologies, including wearable sensors, microfluidics, and artificial muscles. Many biological systems in nature adapt to their environments using self-assembly techniques, such as the formation of seashells. The Mimosa pudica plant reacts to the slightest contact pressure. (The Hindu)

Don't mix pills with juice: Medical body

The Indian Medical Association says juices affect the absorption of drugs, particularly those prescribed for chronic conditions such as hypertension and heart disease. One should have these pills only with water. "Orange and apple juices have been shown to lower the absorption of certain drugs, thus compromising their effectiveness. On the other hand, grapefruit juice increases the absorption of some drugs. This can turn normal doses into toxic ones." (Times of India)

MP gets "dept of happiness"

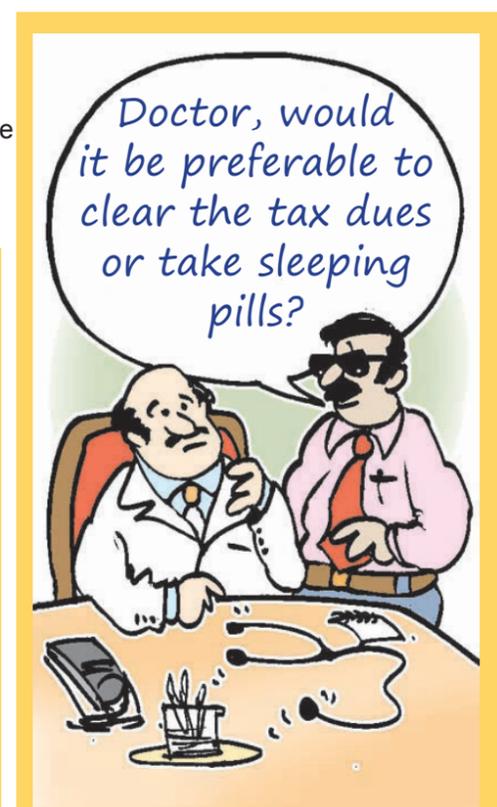
Madhya Pradesh has become India's first state to set up a dedicated "department of happiness", with the aim to "put a smile on every face". The government will form a panel of experts for suggestions to "infuse positivity in people's lives" through yoga, spirituality, meditation and the arts, with psychologists on board to offer counsel on how to be happy. (News Report)

Gift of Pure Love

A dear friend, who has adopted a life of a messenger of peace, recently posted a touching quote on Facebook: "Your purse might be empty, but if your heart is full of pure love, you always have something to give. Nothing that a pure heart gives away is ever lost. It is kept in the hearts of others." Indeed, the gift of love is the greatest gift one can give and it is like a recurring deposit that has its value going up. The word 'love' itself has a magical effect on our mind and body, and it enhances the meaning and value of life for both, the giver and the receiver. (A Report)

Bhoola Bhai

And our friend Bhoola Bhai on Temple Street finds that many people say, 'I want to do this, but am unable to do it', or, 'I didn't want to do this, but did it.' He advises them to enhance their will power by practising Rajyoga meditation taught by Brahma Kumaris.



The Untouchables!

For ages, the Indian social set-up has been afflicted by the evil of untouchability. Under the caste system, people belonging to the lowest varna were treated as untouchables by the 'upper' sections of society. They were condemned to do menial jobs and any physical contact with them was said to have made impure a person of the upper caste, who would then perform several rituals for purification.

Untouchability was abolished in India by law in 1950, although, like many other legally abolished evils, it continues to be practiced in various forms. It is just one of the many social evils prevalent in society. There is another kind of little-known but extremely lethal and contagious moral evil, which is the mother of all evils, that has taken over humankind today. This evil is not confined to any

There is another kind of extremely contagious and lethal form of 'untouchability'.

caste, sect, vocation or country, but is so widespread that it has afflicted almost the entire human race. In fact, it is the crying need of our times to completely renounce it. It is the addiction to the five vices of lust, anger, greed, attachment and ego, the root causes of all human suffering.

We, the Brahma Kumaris and Kumaris, are on a journey to root

out this contagious disease from society, where almost everyone is infected. We do not consider anyone untouchable because of his 'low' caste. However, as people with a spiritual mission, we have to maintain the purity of the soul and body, thereby making certain precautions necessary. Any contact with the five vices is to be avoided and hence we need to keep away from people and places that are home to them.

Just as a single rotten fruit can spread the rot to other fruits kept with it, but healthy fruits are unable to restore the original richness of a rotten fruit, it is easy for vices to be transmitted to a virtuous person than the other way round. Therefore, people aiming for moral or spiritual upliftment have to take care to keep aloof from these evils. It must be understood that this practice means treating the vices as untouchables without meaning any offence to others.

Just as doctors take the necessary precautions before treating others, people who wish to spread spiritual health must be themselves free of diseases that afflict the soul. They need to consume pure food cooked in remembrance of God, keep the mind strong through a mental link of love with the Almighty, be in Godly company and keep the self and surroundings sanitized with clean habits. These precautions are

necessary to avoid loss of spiritual immunity to any infection.

The five vices are born out of the mistake of identifying 'mine' with 'I'. In other words, when a human being mistakes his own body, its acquired assets, relations and status to be himself or stays in this consciousness most of the time, these five vices begin to manifest themselves in multiple ways. By being body conscious, a person mistakes physical relationships to be the source of happiness and prosperity.

The soul, the life-force that runs the body, is the 'I' in which virtue and powers reside. Love, peace and happiness are experienced by the soul and are born out of its innate qualities. So, when one wastes his time in physical or material pursuits, trouble and suffering keep piling up. Because of lack of this knowledge, people involved in charity, prayers and good deeds find that their miseries and pain continue. Any action performed without the consciousness of one's spiritual identity does not qualify as a completely righteous action. Similarly, mistaking God's divine role, people seek material comforts from Him. The Brahma Kumaris are engaged in the task of making people realize their true spiritual identity to remove the evil of five vices from the society.★

(Purity Bureau)

Spiritual Wisdom

Life is a game of forgetting and remembering

You are losing the game when you...

- Forget who you are and what you are doing here.
- Remember the false things of the past and what they did to you.

Life will bring obstacles and difficulties

They do not come to stop you. They can strengthen you and help you progress with more experience. Keep advancing. One day is not the same as another. Sometimes you do not have to find a solution, it is enough to keep moving forward, leaving the obstacle behind.

Ignorance makes you believe that life functions haphazardly

Wisdom teaches you that everything that happens in the theatre of life has profound significance. What you see today is not the fruit of chance but a fruit from seeds planted in the past. Plant seeds of peace now and you will create a life of peace in the future.

Desires cause peace to disappear

You think that acquiring things will make you feel secure, but the reality is that the more you have the more fear there usually is of losing it, and the further you are from peace. Desires are the cause of all conflict. When you want something and cannot get it, you become frustrated. Learning to be free from desires is learning how to remain peaceful.

Peace ends when you are emotionally involved

The practice of being an independent observer helps you stay stable and calm. It is the best way to reach a decision in any circumstance.

Why do you like sunsets so much?

Because they take you beyond your physical dimension. You experience peace and silence. You sense that time stops, and you understand what eternity means. It awakens your dormant spirituality. Whenever you have the chance, sit in front of a sunset and relax. Do not analyse. Only watch and observe and let profound feelings of peace emerge.

Well Said

- Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong. The weak can never forgive. - Cherie Carter-Scott
- I have often regretted my speech, never my silence. - Abraham Lincoln
- Do what you can, for whom you can, with what you can, and where you can. - Publilius Syrus
- Action may not always bring happiness, but there is no happiness without action. - Benjamin Disraeli
- The persons who lose their conscience have nothing left worth keeping. - Izaak Walton
- Democracy is a system of self-determination. It's the right to make the wrong choice. - John Patric
- Governments tend not to solve problems, only re-arrange them. - Ronald Reagan
- Forget injuries, never forget kindness. - Norman Cousins



Trinidad & Tobago: Week-long yoga activities were organised by the High Commissioner of India, Mr Gauri Shankar Gupta, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, the United Nations and the Brahma Kumaris.



Sambalpur : BK Parvati giving Godly gift to Mr. Samanth Verma, Collector and District Magistrate.



Mount Abu, Pandav Bhawan:
Hon'ble Mr. Justice Ravi Ram Tripathi, Member, Law Commission of India & Mrs. Sudha Tripathi, being taken around the campus by BK Mahesh Chandra.

Odisha, Bhadajhola : Mr. Purna Chandra Nayak, MLA, being presented a copy of 'Purity' by BK Laxmi.



Odisha, Rayagada : BK Sreemati, presenting Godly gift to Mr. Bhaskar Rao, the newly elected MP (Rajya Sabha).

Freedom



A man, a great man, a fighter for freedom was traveling in the mountains. He stayed in a caravanserai for the night. He was amazed that in the caravanserai there was a beautiful parrot in a golden cage, continually repeating "Freedom! Freedom!" And it was such a place that when the parrot repeated the word "Freedom!" it would go on echoing in the valleys, in the mountains.

The man thought: "I have seen many parrots, and I have thought they must want to be free from those cages... but I have never seen such a parrot whose whole day, from the morning to the evening when he goes to sleep, is spent in calling out for freedom." He had an idea. In the middle of the night, when the owner was fast asleep, he got up and opened the door of the cage. He whispered to the parrot, "Now get out."

But he was very surprised that the parrot was clinging to the bars of the cage. He said to him again and again, "Have you forgotten about freedom? Just get out! The door is open and the owner is fast asleep; nobody will ever know. You just fly into the sky; the whole sky is yours."

But the parrot was clinging so deeply, so hard, that the man said, "What is the matter? Are you mad?" He tried to take the parrot out with his own hands, but the parrot started pecking at him, and at the same time he was shouting "Freedom! Freedom!" The valleys in the night echoed and re-echoed, but the man was also stubborn; he was a freedom fighter.

He pulled the parrot out and threw him into the sky; and he was very satisfied, although his hand was hurt. The parrot had attacked him as forcefully as he could, but the man was immensely satisfied that he had made a soul free. He went to sleep.

In the morning, as the man was waking up, he heard the parrot shouting, "Freedom! Freedom!" He thought perhaps the parrot must be sitting on a tree or on a rock. But when he came out, the parrot was sitting in the cage. The door was open. ✨

New Delhi : Group photo of GAIL officials after a workshop on 'Rajyoga for Healthy and Happy Living' organized to celebrate International Day of Yoga 2016. Seated in front row are Mr. Amit Ray, Executive Director, GAIL, BK Pius and BK Girija.



Indonesia : 10-year old Arya Permana of Karawang in West Jawa is the 'world's heaviest child' weighing 188 kg. He wears only a sarong and must sleep against the wall to breath better.



Anubhuti Meditation & Retreat Center, Near San Francisco : Participants in 'The Time is Now : Being Essenceful and Powerful' retreat with BK Asha didi from New Delhi. Over 140 BKs from Canada, USA and Mexico attended.



Confusion about God of Gita

The Bhagavad Gita has been written in the form of a dialogue between God and the Pandava warrior Arjuna, and is part of the Bhishma Parva of the Mahabharata. On the battlefield of Kurukshetra, God revealed to Arjuna profound spiritual truths and expounded the secrets of yoga, Vedanta, bhakti and karma.

A notable feature of the Gita is that in it God speaks in first person, with the words 'Bhagavaan Uvaacha' (God said) preceding all that was spoken by Him.

But since God is personified in the form of Shri Krishna in the Gita, there is debate about who is the source of the wisdom contained in the sacred book, which is often called the 'mother of all scriptures'.

The teachings of the Bhagavad Gita are universal and relevant to all people, as they provide answers to questions that vex human minds everywhere, and show the way to conduct one's life, achieve spiritual progress, and attain self-realisation.

However, the God of Gita, who is the source of all this wisdom, does not have universal acceptance. That is because in the Gita, God is represented in the form of Shri Krishna, a Hindu deity. This has limited the Gita's appeal and a lot of people regard it merely as a Hindu holy book, and not a universal scripture that has something for everyone.

On careful study of the Gita one realises that the Mahabharata, of which the Gita is a part, is an allegorical tale meant to convey many teachings. Shri Krishna is merely a representation of incorporeal God, and not God Himself, while Arjuna symbolises the spiritual seeker weighed down by ignorance and doubt.

Passages in the Gita make it

God being ever incorporeal, the question arises as to how He could have spoken, as shown in the Gita.

clear that Shri Krishna, a deity, or in other words a human with divine qualities, cannot be the God of Gita. In the book, God describes Himself as being 'unborn and of imperishable nature'. Shri Krishna, a deity or, in other words, a human with divine qualities, could not have attributed to himself the qualities of the Supreme Being and exhorted Arjuna to remember him.

In another passage, God says, 'Whenever there is a decline of righteousness, O Arjuna, and rise of unrighteousness, then I manifest

Myself'.

Again, Shri Krishna could not have said this, as deities live in the Golden Age, when there is no trace of unrighteousness in the world. Deities don't exist in the evil world that God comes to salvage. They gradually lose their divinity and become ordinary humans, who also suffer spiritual depletion and become influenced by vices, because of which the world reaches a state that necessitates God's intervention.

God is almost universally accepted as being incorporeal, and is described in several religious traditions as a divine light without a human form. That raises the question as to how could God then have spoken, as shown in the Gita.

The Gita itself provides the answer, with God saying that He incarnates Himself in an ordinary human.

In the Gita, Shri Krishna represents this human medium, through whom incorporeal God gives

spiritual knowledge.

This medium is remembered in scriptures as Brahma, the first man. Brahma is referred to in other religious traditions as Adam. He is the one who first receives spiritual knowledge from God and becomes instrumental (God's human medium) in the establishment of a new, righteous world order.

The confusion about the God of the Gita has not only denied the book its rightful status as a universal scripture but also prevented a large part of the human family from benefiting from the wisdom contained in it.

Removing this confusion will help take the Gita to a wider audience, and also establish the fact that there is just one incorporeal God, and all human souls are linked to that Supreme Soul. Recognition of this spiritual connection will bring the human family closer together and help heal its divisions.*

(Purity Features)

HUMOUR

One morning Paul opened the door to get the newspaper and was surprised to see a strange little dog with his paper in its mouth. Delighted with this unexpected 'delivery service', he fed the dog some treats. The following morning he was horrified to see the same dog sitting in front of the door, wagging its tail, surrounded by as many as eight newspapers. He spent the rest of that morning returning the papers to their owners.

Judge : You committed this theft alone?
Culprit : Yes, your honour. You can't trust anyone these days.

Judge : Well, we have thirty witnesses who saw you steal the automobile.
Prisoner : Maybe, but I can give you sixty witnesses who did not see me steal it.



Montevideo, Uruguay: Group photo of participants in International Day of Yoga 2016 celebrations organised by the Indian Embassy and the Brahma Kumaris.



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Inspirations from Dadi Janki

Chief of Brahma Kumaris

Everything will be good

You are learning to have mastery over your thoughts and feelings so you can bring benefit to the world. This is not the time to get upset with anyone else. It is not the time to become dependent on anyone. We can never know what will happen, but we do know that if we keep our thoughts elevated and our feelings pure, everything will be good. Put a full stop to negative and wasteful thoughts. When you put a full stop, and keep God as your companion, you will not experience anything to be a problem. You will dance in happiness.

What we must be and What we must do

This is a period when we are receiving sustenance and touchings from God about what we must be and what we must do. Keep God in front of you and have the recognition of who He is. Have the recognition of who you are and that you belong to him. When you experience that you belong to Him, you will experience yourself to be close to Him and you will feel inside what you have to do.

Past is past

This time is such that we have to move into a state of soul conscious awareness inside ourselves. We have to remain soul conscious in the relationships we're in, the people we're with and the situations we're facing. Don't allow your mind to return to situations of the past. Keep the awareness that "past is past". Whatever it was, is finished. And now is the time to keep your thoughts elevated and your feelings pure.

Where have all the birds gone?

Dull, dusty skies invaded by billboards and entangled wires, clothes lines crowding tiny balconies hanging out of high-rise buildings, and roads choked with vehicles are a common sight in major cities today. Where space is always a constraint, there is obviously no room for nature. Greenery is restricted to a few potted plants outside apartments or found in public parks, though the number of car parks far exceeds them. Fresh flowers are hard to find, so home interiors are adorned with artificial lookalikes while synthetic essence and aromas make up for the absence of fresh, organic fruits.

There's no more chirping of sparrows every morning, nor the sweet call of the cuckoo during the rains, and even crows and kites are a rarity today. Our date with the natural world has now been reduced to a few annual holidays in hills and resorts. Major cities may be a mark of modernity and of how far we have come hand in hand with technology, but they also symbolise our broken alliance with nature.

In recent years our relationship with nature has worsened and we are troubled by its frequent revolts. How to win it back to our side has been an ongoing international discussion. But there's no more time for token gestures. We can make amends only if we go into the depth of how we landed here.

We already have evidence that the environment is impacted by human action, but spirituality reveals an even deeper connection. According to it, human nature has a direct bearing on other life forms, and also the five physical elements, because mind influences matter. Mother Nature got shunted out of our lives as we gradually moved away from our original nature.

The core of our being is pure, intuitive and in tune with universal laws. It understands that everything around us is fundamental to a larger scheme of things that is self-sustained and has its own dynamic. It respects natural laws, their extraordinary accuracy and secrets of growth, and is designed to work in tandem with them.

However, by identifying ourselves with the body rather than living in the consciousness of our being, we were taken over by desire and greed. The world shrunk around us as we placed man at the centre of the universe



Taken over by desire and greed, we placed man at the centre and sidelined the rest

and sidelined the rest. In fact, we began to view both life and matter only in reference to our needs and ended up exploiting them. We discarded the deep wisdom of Mother Nature and invested in science to put us on the road to rapid development and urbanisation. In the race to achieve instant feats, we lost our foresight and kept pushing ourselves towards the edge each day.

When we moved away from our original nature, we also distanced ourselves from the Creator in whose image we are made. He is the ocean of all the spiritual qualities we embody, and also the seed of this universe. Just as a cut plant can bloom no more than a few days and eventually dries up, humans too are lost spiritually after being separated from the Ultimate Source of wisdom, peace, love and bliss. The disharmony with the environment reflects this separation.

In this very understanding lies the secret to our rejuvenation. If we rekindle our mental

link with the Creator, we would automatically come closer to our natural self and the natural world. This would have a ripple effect and revive the planet. Preserving flora and fauna in wildlife sanctuaries and national parks is an important but small step in managing a much larger issue. The problem took shape due to corruption of our inner world and would be resolved by reversing that process.

Many may find this process long and the aim unattainable, but everything has its season. When the night is the darkest, it begins to prepare for dawn, and summer does arrive eventually even if the winter was harsh. Similarly, after this chaos, the season of all-time spring must be on its way. It will be a time when rivers would be clean, the land would become green, the birds will nest around us again, and science will work in alliance with nature. As life moves in circles, the end is always the sign of a new beginning.★

(Purity Bureau)





Gyan Sarovar, Mt. Abu : Inaugurating Women's Conference are Mrs. Lata Vankhere, Dr. Mahua Mauji, Chairpersons respectively of State Women's Commission, MP & Jharkhand, Mrs. Sanjeeta Singh Negi, Chairperson, Ahmedabad Chapter of All India Women's League, BK Chakradhari didi, BK Sharda, BK Sheilu and BK Dr. Savita.



Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh : International Day of Yoga 2016 for BSF personnel organised by the Brahma Kumaris.

Photo Gallery

Stop sitting there with your hands folded; get into action and live a glorious life. Now.

San Francisco, USA : BK Asha from India and BK Chandru with participants in 'Building Spiritual Resilience – A Spiritual Dialogue'.



Georgetown, Guyana : Mr. V. Mahalingam, Hon'ble Indian High Commissioner and BK Jean seen with participants in Raja Yoga meditation programme on IDY 2016.



Italy, Rome : BK Radha conducting Rajyoga meditation at IDY 2016 celebrations at Hanging Gardens of Parco della Musica Auditorium.



Goa, Dona Paula : BK Surekha doing Yoga Meditation with Mr. R.K. Srivastava, IAS, Chief Secretary and other dignitaries to celebrate IDY 2016.





Mauritius : A group of 600 BKs in front of the State House after doing meditation for 'Inner Peace and Mother Earth' to celebrate IDY 2016. The programme was hosted by H.E. Mrs. Ameena Gurib-Fakim, President of the Republic of Mauritius in the garden's of the State House. BK Sister Gaitree gave a brief explanation on Rajyoga meditation. (Inset) H.E. Mrs. Ameena Gurib-Fakim speaking on the occasion.



Houston, Texas, USA : Dr. Hansa Raval and BKs with Hon'ble Mr. Anupam Ray, Consulate General of India alongwith several yoga disciplines celebrated the 2nd International Day of Yoga at NASA Space Center. Brahma Kumaris conducted meditation to start the event.



Aruba : International Day of Yoga was celebrated by Brahma Kumaris on the beautiful Eagle Beach joined by 10 different hatha yoga groups.

Mr. Wise



Mr. Wise?
Yes.
What is truth?
Truth is something that was, that is and that will be. It is eternal and everlasting.
What's the truth for a human being?
The soul, the being, is truth because it is eternal and imperishable.
How about those who believe that everything perishes with death?
I cannot say.

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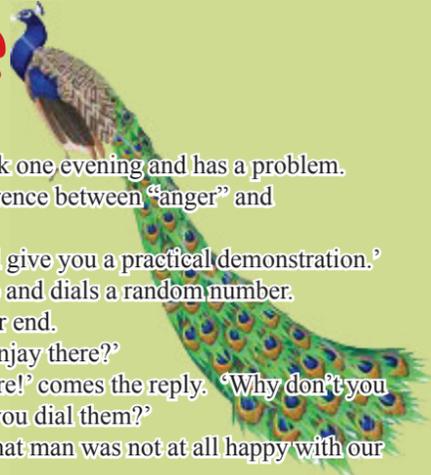
And Mr. Wise?
Yes.
Truth is God and God alone is truth because He is eternally unchangeable.
How about human souls?
Their entities are eternal but attributes change from 'sato' to 'rajo' to 'tamo guna'.
Then how did people come to believe that soul is God?
I cannot say.

◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆

Lastly...
Yes.
All souls are not God but God too is a soul?
Right. God is the Supreme Soul (Param Atma). God is one and truth also is one.
You mean souls are eternally different from God, the Supreme Soul and not His particles as believed by many?
Perhaps you are right.

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Tailpiece



Little Sonu is doing his homework one evening and has a problem. 'Dad,' he says, 'What is the difference between "anger" and "exasperation"?'
'Well, son,' says his father, 'I will give you a practical demonstration.' His father then goes to the phone and dials a random number. 'Hello,' comes a voice at the other end. 'Hello,' says Sonu's father, 'Is Sanjay there?' 'There is no one called Sanjay here!' comes the reply. 'Why don't you learn to look up numbers before you dial them?' 'You see,' says Sonu's father. 'That man was not at all happy with our call. But watch this!' He then dials the same number again, and says, 'Hello, is Sanjay there?' 'Now look here,' comes the angry reply, 'I told you there is no Sanjay here! You have got a lot of nerve calling again!' And then he slams down the receiver. 'Did you hear that,' asks Sonu's father. 'That was "anger". Now I will show you what "exasperation" is!' He picks up the phone and dials the same number again, and when a voice violently shouts 'Hello', Sonu's father says: 'Hello! This is Sanjay. Have there been any calls for me?'

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A professor attempting to inspire his students says to his class: 'This week is your last chance to study for your final exam scheduled next Monday. Time is running out. The exam is now in the hands of the printer. Are there any questions?' One student inquires, 'How many questions will there be?' Another student asks, 'Will the exam require easy answers?' A third wants to know, 'Who's the printer?'