



Purity

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Dadi Janki, Chief of Brahma Kumaris
in a tea estate, Asom

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

Defamation of Deities in Mythology

Indian mythology contains numerous tales about the lives of deities, which highlight their powers and munificence and show them in their various moods: wrathful, playful, vengeful etc.

These stories are intended to showcase how the deities heroically, or through their supernatural powers, overcame evil forces to ensure that righteousness prevailed in the world.

The Ramayana and the Mahabharata are among the better known of these tales. Read and revered by millions, the two holy books, respectively, tell the story of the life of Rama, the ruler of Ayodhya, and of the dynastic struggle between the Pandavas and the Kauravas. The Ramayana enjoys immense popularity in India, where its recitation is considered an act of great merit.

Similarly, there are the Puranas, which contain narratives about the genealogies of kings, heroes, sages, and demigods. The Bhagavat Purana narrates the deeds of Krishna, including his childhood heroics, which have been popularised by many Bhakti movements.

All these stories may have been intended to



Lucknow: Inaugurating Brahma Kumaris 'Sustainable Yogic Farming' pavilion at three-day 'Krishi Kumbh' organised by Uttar Pradesh Govt. are Hon'ble Radha Mohan Singh, Union Minister for Agriculture, Hon'ble Yogi Adityanath, Chief Minister of UP, agricultural scientists from Israel, BK Sarla Behn, Chairperson of Rural Development Wing, and BK Radha Behn.

In the modern context, mythological tales are taken as divine sanction to justify gambling, narcotics, inappropriate behaviour with women, violence and war.

celebrate the lives and exploits of deities, but they also contain instances of what may be described as inappropriate behaviour in the modern context.

These instances have been selectively picked up by people who see in them a sort of divine sanction for their own wrongful actions. This has done immense damage to society.

Shri Krishna, a deity who is said to be full of virtues, completely free of vices, and a perfect being, is described as stealing butter and hiding the clothes of women while they bathed.

Such purported behaviour, which is explained away as 'playful', is excuse enough for some people to take liberties with women.

Similarly, the game of dice described in the Mahabharata, where the Pandavas are tricked into losing not only their wealth and possessions, but also themselves and their wife Draupadi, is cited by those who maintain that gambling has long been a tradition in India and there is nothing wrong with it. While the game is a well-known episode in the Mahabharata, what is not is the fact that Krishna later on in the story describes dice as an evil that robs one of prosperity.

Not just gambling, even taking drugs has mythological precedent in India, with Shankar shown as smoking cannabis. Several explanations are given for this, including that Shankar is god, so he is not affected by the narcotic effect of the drug, and that since he dwells in the Himalayas,

he needs marijuana to survive in the cold climate. Whatever the logic, it is perhaps good enough for a lot of sadhus to smoke marijuana.

But perhaps the most serious consequence of such defamation of deities and literal reading of scriptures is the belief that violence is a valid means to achieving just ends.

Some of the goddesses in the Hindu pantheon are shown armed to the teeth, perpetually in a state of readiness for war. Goddess Durga is shown holding a trident, a bow and arrow, a sword, a mace and a sudarshan chakra—a disc-like weapon—in her many arms. Goddesses Amba and Parvati are depicted similarly armed.

Goddess Kali's arsenal is bigger, and includes two types of sword and an axe as well. The goddess, known as a destroyer of evil, is also shown holding a severed head in one of her arms and wearing a garland of severed heads.

Such imagery and the tales of these goddesses slaying demons have given rise to the belief that violence can be employed to destroy what one considers evil. Those of an unsound mind can use this idea to even commit heinous crimes.

Recently, a serial killer accused of killing more than seven people told the police that he

chanted a mantra to goddess Kali 108 times before committing a murder, in order to atone for his sins.

Violence on a much larger scale is shown in the Mahabharata, in which more than 1.6 billion men are said to have perished in the war between the Kauravas and the Pandavas. The fact that Shri Krishna is shown exhorting the Pandava warrior Arjuna to fight the war is taken by many as teaching that violence can be employed to remove evil or achieve justice.

For this reason, there was a trial in Russia some years ago for banning the Russian edition of a popular commentary on the Gita, on charges of religious extremism.

The violent rhetoric and even physical violence resorted to by many groups in support of what they see as a valid demand, is a fallout of the misrepresentation of deities in mythology and misinterpretation of the same.

Deities are completely non-violent beings who are free of vices such as anger and hatred. And the demons they vanquish are negative tendencies, not evil persons. Their battle was spiritual, not physical, and fought in the battlefield of the mind.

Religion is meant to be a positive force, but we have managed to turn it into a destructive idea thanks to our misreading of its teachings. This damaging anomaly can be corrected only when we pay attention to the true, spiritual essence of religion. ■

(Purity Features)



Feature Articles to mark All India
Conference on Bhagavad Gita
Pages 3 & 4

NEWS IN PHOTOS



Nepal, Pokhra : Princess of Philippines Maria Amor Torres and Peace Ambassador from Thailand Dr. Aphinita Chaichana being presented memento by BK Sister Parinita.



Sivasagar, Asom : Inaugurating 'Global Peace Festival' are Rajyogini Dadi Janki, Mr. Topon Kumar Gogoi, Power Minister, BK Hansa, BK Sheela Didi, BK Satyawati Didi, BK Rajni, BK Kamlesh Didi and others.



Ranchi : Ms. Draupadi Murmur, Governor of Jharkhand being greeted by BK Sister Nirmala on the occasion of 'Bhaidooj'.



Mumbai, Alibaug : BK Jayanti, Director, Brahma Kumaris in Europe & Middle East, at 7th AFI (Action For India) Annual Forum after a talk on 'Sustainable Development Goals and Impact Investing'.



Tawang, Arunachal Pradesh : Mr. Kiren Rijju, Union MoS for Home Affairs, with BK Kabita, BK Meena and others after visiting Brahma Kumaris exhibition in 3-day State Festival.



Shantivan, Abu : BK Brother Nirwair, Secy. General of Brahma Kumaris, being interviewed by Dr. Honey Kalaria of NuSound Radio, UK.



Trinidad & Tobago : Chaguana Rajayoga Centre preparing food boxes for distribution among flood victims in cooperation with Monroe Road Hindu Temple.



Egypt, Sharm-El-Sheik : BK delegation including Sr. Sonja, Denmark, Sr. Chen, China, Br. Golo Pilz, Germany, Br. James Mair, Scotland and Sr. Dorcas Alusala, Kenya at 14th meeting of COP 14 at United Nations Biodiversity Conference.

True Message of Bhagavad Gita

Victory of Non-violence (Ahimsa) over Violence

For centuries people not only in India but also in other parts of the world have been reading and interpreting the message of the Gita with great devotion. There have been several commentaries, interpretations and expositions on the verses of the Gita.

The story of the Mahabharata represents the struggle that takes place on the battlefield of every thinking man or woman's mind, when desires, expectations and vices try to get the better of the innate virtues of the soul. The Gita tells us how we can win these inner battles and emerge as better human beings, free from all bondages. At the individual level, it is a valuable and inspiring handbook for self-transformation, but at a larger level, it is a blueprint for a new world order.

What will that new order be like? God gives hints of that in Chapter 16 of the Gita, where He describes the traits that make one divine. The Gita talks about the *Daivi Sampada* and *Asuri Sampada* – the virtuous society and the vicious society.

These traits are the hallmarks of the new world order, just as the demoniac qualities, mentioned in the same chapter, characterize the world we live in. When those of a demoniac nature are thus transformed into divine beings, the world turns from hell to heaven. It applies to the whole global family of humans. It goes on to show how humans can create the divine society. This great change in the quality and consciousness of humans influences other creatures and the elements of nature too, transforming them in the process.

Bharat was once known as the Golden Sparrow of the world. Man, nature and animals lived in peace and harmony. There was truth and non-violence, prosperity and well-being in the whole society. Unity was the hallmark of Golden Bharat – even lion and cow drank from the same pond. It was a glorious era when there was every kind of joy and bliss.

This vision of Ram Rajya or Golden Bharat was sought to be achieved by great leaders like Mahatma Gandhi. While India has come a long way in material development since the days of Independence, there are many big challenges facing the country today, such as economic disparity, unemployment, terrorism, communal violence, degrading social and moral values among others.

Such a world of divine bliss and happiness can only be established through a righteous value system. Development or governance sans spiritual power cannot lead to lasting prosperity. Purity is the mother of peace and prosperity.

One of the most quoted and famous verses of the Bhagavad Gita is this verse from Chapter 4: "*Yada yada hi dharmasya...*" According to this verse, God says that whenever there is decline of dharma or righteousness, He manifests Himself to destroy evil and re-establish principles of dharma in every cycle of yugas or ages. In essence, God says that He manifests Himself at the end of every cycle for the task of world transformation. He comes to transform the entire world from a degraded state to a pure, virtuous state.

Only God can perform the task of world transformation, the task of purifying human souls from vicious to completely divine state, because He is omniscient and omnipotent. His coming has a universal purpose. God is known as the Redeemer and Liberator. He is the one who purifies vicious souls by freeing them from the bondage of vices and bringing out in them the virtues that are intrinsic to every soul.

One of the most important teachings of the Gita is about the true identity of human beings.

God establishes a righteous world not through violence but through complete non-violence



Feature Articles to mark All India Conference of Saints & Scholars on Bhagavad Gita at Om Shanti Retreat Centre, Gurugram, Delhi NCR

God tells Arjuna – You are a soul. This is a universal spiritual truth that is applicable to all. It transcends all limited identities that bind humans in various roles and karmic bondages.

The root cause of degradation of human beings or *dharmagani* described in the Gita is the influence of the vices. This is also true of the entire humanity. All humans are now infected by vices such as lust, anger, greed, attachment and ego.

There are clear references in the Gita to a non-violent war. There are numerous verses pertaining to the subtle war against vices such as lust, anger, doubt, greed etc. The Gita tells us that God loves yogi souls who commit no violence, and one who is constantly peaceful and blissful.

God establishes a righteous world not through violence but through complete non-violence. In the Gita, God tells Arjuna that by means of this war, the gates of heaven open, and that if anyone dies fighting this war he will go to heaven. The battlefield of Kurukshetra is symbolic of this world which is a *karmashetra* (place where actions are

performed) and the battle of human beings here is not against any person who is considered evil, but against evil vices such as lust, anger, doubt, greed etc.

Hence the war is symbolic of the spiritual endeavour to conquer all vices and make oneself pure. The Gita says those of a divine state are fearless, pure of heart, steadfast in yoga and knowledge, harmless, true, peaceful, compassionate towards beings, gentle, modest, straightforward and free from anger, crookedness, hatred and pride.

When those of a vicious nature are thus

transformed into divine beings, the world turns from hell to heaven. This great change in the quality and consciousness of humans influences other creatures and the elements of nature too, transforming them in the process. This is the way God re-establishes Golden Age or Satyuga in the world.

This rejuvenation takes place in every cycle of time, and God sustains the new world through those individuals who have made themselves capable of this task by following His teachings fully. This task of creating a Golden Bharat is taking place right now.

By practising true spiritual knowledge, by being in yoga with the Supreme and by imbibing divine virtues a *karmayogi* is able to manifest the highest level of perfection and gain victory over all vices. It is time to integrate the message of the Gita in our life and contribute in the re-establishment of a new golden era which is free from violence of the vices. ■

(Purity Features)

God is not omnipresent

Let us look at a well-known passage from the Bhagavad Gita and see what it implies. The Gita is often called the mother of all scriptures and its words are said to have come directly from God's mouth. A unique feature of the Gita is that in it God, represented by Shri Krishna, speaks in first person.

God is shown as telling the warrior Arjuna that whenever righteousness is on the decline and unrighteousness prevails in this world, He comes here to salvage pious souls, destroy evil and establish a righteous order once again.

This act of God takes place at the end of each cycle of time, when the Iron Age is coming to a close and the Golden Age is about to begin with a new cycle.

If God were omnipresent, the world would not witness any moral or spiritual degradation that would necessitate His intervention. And His saying that He comes to this world is another indication that He is not present here.

The fact that God is shown giving humans knowledge about Himself illustrates that humans, who do not have a clear idea about the Supreme Soul and therefore perceive Him in various ways according to their inclinations, can truly know God only when He introduces Himself, as shown in the Gita.

Mistaken beliefs, including that of an omnipresent God, are the result of human ignorance and a pious willingness to attribute even impossible qualities to the Almighty.

Those who truly love God can experience His company everywhere and at all times. He is omnipotent and His powers and virtues are boundless. For this reason He need not be omnipresent in order to do His work in this world.

(Purity Features)

Interesting Headline (Times of India 23 November 2018)

City air quality improves to 'poor'

Professional Life and Spirituality

An enormous amount of time, money and energy is devoted to creating a successful career. Over 20 years of study may be necessary, as also considerable financial commitment, long hours of dedicated work and sacrifice of other activities. The fruits of a successful career include self-esteem, higher level of know-how and expertise, automatic development of a wide range of skills, breadth of communication skills and contacts, and progress towards a more refined way of life.

The exhilaration of learning, application and achievement are powerful motivators in the pursuit of professional excellence. The standard guiding codes of the ethics of industry, law, commerce, medicine etc. enable an honest worker to move quickly along the path of professional excellence. Whilst moving along, however, there are a few checking points that need to be considered in order to:

- maintain standards of ethics and codes of conduct.
- maintain purity of purpose and be free from the corruption of wealth, position, fame and power.
- maintain zeal and enthusiasm to pursue excellence and productivity that enhances both quality of life and economic stability.
- provide a service that is useful, beneficial (e.g. to develop and manufacture noxious chemicals is not the correct application

When we understand that whilst playing our roles we are essentially brother souls, then our focus is on self-progress

(of the knowledge of science).

With the understanding of how to maintain our principles and purpose we can ensure that professional life will be free from guilt, inner conflict, competition and jealousy.

Some of the checking points for a spiritual person include:

- Are my dealings pure and honest?
- Do I accept bribery in the form of praise, favours and wealth?
- Is my service/role/product totally beneficial? Is there adequate research to monitor the effects of my activities and readiness to seek positive alternatives?
- Am I maximizing my time, energy and resources for the company/nation? Can these three work "currencies" be better used by me?
- Do I maintain a personal standard of integrity and balance?

The soul who has balance and does self-checking, and has a sense of professional worth and responsibility. i.e. the value of the profession as a whole, will maintain equanimity of mind and steadiness in progress.

Where jealousy exists, there I have left the value of self-respect and see only the efforts and achievements of others, and where there is defamation, false advertising and rivalry, then I have forgotten the method of cooperation and my activities have a selfish motivation.

When we understand that whilst playing our part as engineers, doctors, lawyers, businessmen etc. we are essentially brother souls, then our focus is on self-progress rather than just on external show and the accumulation of material wealth. It is not that these things are not good i.e. visible signs of achievement, financial security and profit, but I also have to monitor my own consciousness, attitudes, actions and perspectives as these manifest outwardly and reflect the company as a whole.

Moreover, my personal "dharna" i.e. practical way of being and doing, is ultimately the precursor to my own happiness, upliftment and downfall. Therefore, see the role as the "vehicle" for: -

- self-expression and self-improvement
- learning and excellence
- benefiting the self and society
- developing individual and community knowledge, experience and understanding. ■

(Purity Bureau)

Indianising Management Ethics

Three words of Indian wisdom: *Adhikaar* (control), *Paropkaar* (public service) and *Satkaar* (respect) can lead to a harmonious atmosphere at the workplace.

These words sum up, in a sense, the entire code of management ethics. These three key words contain the essence of the core values needed for managerial excellence.

Adhikaar means right, control or authority. It begins with self-mastery or control over one's body and its organs. This comes by bringing under control the subtle faculties of mind, intellect and *sanskars* (personality traits). Without this, the pull of bodily attachment is bound to interfere with one's judgement and decisions. Realization that the conscious being is distinct from the body can liberate the mind from the slavery of material attractions and greed.

India is a Diamond Mine of Ancient Wisdom

All material things are subject to the pull of gravity. Science has developed rocket technology to go beyond the sphere of gravity. Silence power, which indeed is the mother of science power, enables one's mind, through Raja Yoga meditation, to pull away from insatiable desires for unnecessary material objects.

As the inner being frees itself from body-consciousness and the pulls and pressures arising therefrom, it steadily begins to gain

Pearls of Wisdom

- Anger finishes all wisdom.
- Greed finishes all honesty.
- Ego finishes respect.
- Worry finishes happiness.
- Doubt corrodes the soul.

Doing something more than my duty, something that gives benefit and happiness to others, is public service

control over the mind and matter (elements of nature). Its positive, innate qualities, such as love, compassion, mercy and sympathy, get released from the suppression of negativity of attitude and begin to flourish naturally.

This enhances one's inner powers and capacities which, like your own property, become available for use whenever and wherever required. They're then at your beck and call. One's willpower is thus enhanced, and where there's a will, there's a way!

Paropkaar or public service is equally essential for moving towards excellence in management. We all get so much from others and the world outside. We must pay that back, but doing what is just my duty is not public service. Doing something more than that, something good, without any selfish motive, something that gives benefit and happiness to others, is public service. It brings goodwill, inner satisfaction and bliss, keeps the mind cool and the intellect in balance, and the inner being fulfilled. *Paropkaar* is, in a sense, godliness or something done in the name of God for which multi-million times return comes automatically. It is the best insurance of one's health, wealth, happiness and total well-being.

Satkaar or respect, is the third ingredient

for success. The tried and tested formula for this is: give respect to get respect. Respect for all of God's creation is respect for God. Life, and dignity, particularly of the human being, regardless of colour, nationality, status or any other barrier, lies at the root of cultivating an attitude of respect. Honour follows respect like a shadow. A manager who practises this philosophy will have a family-like loveful and harmonious atmosphere at the workplace which will not only be conducive to efficiency but also to holistic human resource development. ■ (Purity Bureau)





Spiritual Response to Broken Relationships

Everything in the world exists in relationship to something. There is a correlation, connection, exchange of energy and interdependence of all things and beings. Our world is defined by the way each one of us relates to the world around us – whether its material things or living beings. This constant flow of energy by connecting and relating to objects, people, places, occupations and ideas is what makes our world so dynamic.

The quality of our relationship decides the quality of life. Unfortunately, most people today experience unhappiness and stress in their lives either due to their relationship with work or with their family. The highest form of exchange of energy in any relationship is love and respect. When love is absent there are problems in relationships.

To understand relationships we have to understand who we really are. In essence, we are not physical beings but souls playing our roles in a human body. So what are we doing in the physical world? First, we relate to our physical body and its senses. How do we relate to our body? Do we respect it, use it wisely or abuse it by overindulging in sensory pleasures and by neglecting proper diet and exercise? When sensual pleasures begin ruling our choices, our relationship with the body is driven by vices such as greed, attachment and lust.

Even more subtle is the relationship of the soul with its subtle faculties — mind and intellect. Every choice begins with a thought, and the intellect discerns and decides what is right or wrong. When we choose to follow a certain thought and express it through our sense organs, it becomes an action or karma. The relationship of the mind and intellect is harmonious when the mind is guided by good reason and the wisdom of the intellect. But if the mind starts dictating to the intellect, and actions flow from thoughts and emotions influenced by vices, our actions become vicious and ultimately bring us and others suffering and misery. This disharmony between mind and intellect brings conflict in all our relationships.

So there is an exchange of energy in every kind of relationship. If there is peace, joy, love, kindness, courage and wisdom in everything we relate to, then every relationship will bring happiness.

The highest form of exchange of energy in any relationship is love and respect

we can experience natural peace, love and connectedness or unity with all creation.

Relationships are also a great learning ground. We can learn and grow through our relationships when we take responsibility for the way we respond and perceive others. We can resolve conflicts by responding with compassion and empathy. We can learn by observation, introspection, and quiet reflection on the way we are responding to a relationship.

Meet experiential leaders from India and Abroad at International Conference on **Spiritual Response to Critical Times** 10 March, 2019 at Indira Gandhi Stadium, New Delhi

When a relationship is selfless, there is a natural feeling of contentment, of being truly alive. When love is real, we behave naturally, without calculating and without measuring. To keep a relationship real we need to be honest with ourselves and each other. Loyalty is the result of each of us seeing the worth of the other. Loyalty comes when there is a willingness to grow together, when we learn to accept any limitation and keep our vision on the other's true self.

Where love is absent, stress will be present in a relationship. The exchange of anger, hatred and fear in any relationship breaks the union between people. The origin of stress is when we want people to do or be something because we believe that our happiness and sense of self-worth depends on them, and when they do not do or be what we want, our love turns into resentment and fear. Instead when we accept them as they are, we can heal and restore the relationship. Love has no needs; love only gives of itself.

Today we all live with a fragmented sense of self defined by many identities, based on physical, social and professional identities, which has led to inner disintegration of the self. It is the cause of our inability to love and feel love for ourself. We can experience our completeness when we realise our true identity as a soul. It is only in soul consciousness that

Acceptance, appreciation, trust, good listening, respecting others' ideas, sincerely wishing them well and taking care to exchange positive vibes in all interactions – all these are valuable investments in a good relationship. The best part of this is, that whatever we exchange with others, we first give to ourselves.

There is truth in the expression, 'God is Love'. Love never focuses on what is wrong, but on what is intrinsically good in a person. Love has the power to defuse negativity. God loves us as we are. A relationship with God is not coloured by owning, demanding or expecting. God has faith in our potential. He frees us, making us independent. This independence comes when we find our spiritual identity. We learn to have faith in what we are and the courage to realise it. Spiritual independence keeps us close to one another.

God's love heals and empowers us. It then becomes the foundation for all our relationships on earth – with the body, with people, with work, money, nature, and everything else. All selfishness and ego dissolves and there is only loveful sharing and joyful engagement with life, not painful entanglements. When we are constantly connected to God, every exchange of energy is guided by His wisdom and power, which keeps us light and free from karmic bondage. ■

(Purity Bureau)

Relationships are harder now because conversations becomes texting, argument becomes phone calls, and feelings become statuses and tweets.



Moscow, Russia: Participants in a Youth Workshop on 'Capacity of Time'. BK Valery Dobrov, Film Director and University Lecturer, BK Mayajeet, Russian Teacher, and BK Elena Titova, English and German Teacher, with the main speakers. The Chief Guest was Mrs. Irina Vissyagina, Teacher, Moscow Publishing and Polygraphic College.



Ek Hi Raasta - Only One Way

Editorial—

All roads, they say, lead to Rome. What route we take does not matter as long as we arrive at a common destination. People, communities and countries across the globe have always longed for world peace, and many ways have been tried to achieve it.

The prime message of most religious founders was that of non-violence and brotherhood. They preached love over hatred, tolerance over dissent. But as time passed, religions lost their original purity and were reduced to rituals. They began to be associated with their unique practices and customs, rather than their core principles that had universal appeal. As a result, paths that were initially meant to create harmony came to be misused by vested interests for further polarising society.

Many political and economic ideologies and 'isms' came up in the past few centuries to secure just and equitable distribution of resources. They did address the dominant issues of their times, but were eventually caught in a downward spiral as narrow interests overshadowed the larger picture. Sometimes leaders of such movements got intoxicated with power and hence were derailed from their mission.

By the time countries collaborated on a common platform, such as the United Nations, the idea of 'world peace' had largely become synonymous with avoiding war and diffusing political tensions. But even that looks hard to achieve today because while heads of state may rally behind world peace at international forums, they continue to stockpile and refine weapons of mass destruction in their backyard.

Though initially well-meaning and elevated, most such endeavours have reached nowhere close to their desired aim of peace and harmony. As a result, today we live in a world of pieces – fragmented by geography, ideologies, disagreements and discord. In the absence of any major bridges of values, the rule of the jungle has taken over. Might seems to be always right as oppression of the weak is now a norm of sorts.

When groups or nations come together today in an attempt to reconcile or to collaborate, it is still an arrangement, a deal to make things temporarily cordial between otherwise separate and differing parties. World peace is an aim far higher, and cannot be achieved with such narrow-mindedness. It cannot be reached unless we stand on a common base and join hands as one, not separate people. That one common point is our spiritual identity.

As spiritual beings and children of the Supreme Spiritual Father, we belong to one and the same spiritual family. Though all of us souls are unique, our spiritual core comprising the qualities of purity, peace, love, happiness and truth is the same. If we use our common roots as the foundation of all our endeavours, it will bring harmony in the world. This is the only way that does not branch out or go downhill. Our advance on this journey is always upward and closer together. This is the only route on which the differences we acquire through our bodily costumes – of gender, nationality, religion, colour, class – do not stand in the way.

The awareness, belief and loyalty to this common ground, the relationship to our common Supreme Parent, and the feeling of belongingness to our larger spiritual family is the only means to harmonise our thoughts and create oneness in the world.

Also, when we forge a link of love with the Supreme as souls, which means we connect our mind to Him in the awareness of His true identity and ours, we draw abundant purity, peace, power and love. This calms us down and we become more patient and kind and also inspire others around us to be so.

World peace is the sum total of the vibrations of people who are at peace with themselves and others. When the collective energy of a critical number of souls in the world reaches a high degree of peace, purity and spiritual love, universal peace will be achieved. That will pave the path for the coming new world order where 'right' would not just be 'right', but would become 'might'.

Let's walk hand in hand (spiritually) with Him today, and we shall walk hand in hand with each other tomorrow. ■

Gleanings from the press

Coconut oil a more effective bug repellent

Compounds derived from coconut oil are better than diethyltoluamide (DEET) at preventing disease transmission and discomfort associated with insect bites, according to a study. The study, published in the journal *Scientific Reports*, identified the specific coconut oil fatty acids that have strong repellency and long-lasting effectiveness against multiple insects – mosquitoes, ticks, biting flies and bedbugs – that can transmit diseases to humans and animals. *(Press Trust of India)*

Excessive noise may raise risk of heart disease

Chronic exposure to excessive noise may increase the risk of heart disease and stroke by activating a brain region involved in stress response, a study has warned. This response, in turn, promotes blood vessel inflammation, said researchers at Massachusetts General Hospital in the US. The findings reveal that people with the highest levels of chronic noise exposure – such as highway and airport noise – had an increased risk of suffering cardiovascular events such as heart attacks and strokes, regardless of other risks. *(Times of India)*

Antibiotics disturb the immune system

Disturbances in the gut microbiome caused by antibiotic use can lead to long-lasting and deleterious shifts in the intestinal immune system of mice. These shifts led to increased susceptibility to certain infections, a finding that underscores how repeated antibiotic use can carry persistent and unforeseen side effects. *(News Report)*



Poor diet worse than diseases

A poor-quality diet is a greater threat to public health than malaria, tuberculosis or measles, as diet-related factors now account for six of the top nine contributors to the global burden of disease. Though the world is producing more food than it needs, about three billion people have inadequate diets, according to a report of the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation. *(Times of India)*

'Toxic' declared Oxford Word of the Year

Oxford Dictionary has declared the adjective 'toxic' as the Word of the Year for what it says reflects the ethos, mood, or preoccupations in 2018. The word was selected from a shortlist that included 'gaslighting,' 'incel' and 'teclash.' *(Press Trust of India)*

Eat beetroot and spinach, check vision loss

Eating vegetable nitrates, found mainly in green leafy vegetables and beetroot, could prevent macular degeneration, a common cause of vision loss in people over age 50. Spinach has approximately 20mg of nitrate per 100g, while beetroot has 15mg of nitrate per 100g, said researchers from Westmead Institute for Medical Research in Australia. *(IANS)*

Bhoola Bhai

And our friend Bhoola Bhai on Temple Street says self-respect with no realisation of the self is no respect, and respect without self-respect is arrogance.

Humour

"This crime was the work of a master criminal", said the prosecutor, "and was carried out in a skilful, clever manner." Blushing, the defendant rose to his feet. "Sir, flattery will get you nowhere. I am not going to confess."



Rest while you Rest

Not too many people need to be convinced that the body must have sleep. However, not many people are aware of the vital role of rest in preserving health.

Many people are apt to confuse the words rest and sleep as being synonymous. Not so. Though both are vitally important, they definitely are not the same. The condition of sleep exists only when consciousness has ceased. Not so with rest.

What is rest? It is a period of inactivity during which the body can restore expended energy. We've all experienced this. You're tired and fatigued. Take some rest and you feel refreshed and invigorated.

Four kinds of rest are required to refresh your body and mind.

Physical rest may be obtained by discontinuing physical activities—sitting or lying down and relaxing.

Sensory rest is secured by quiet and by refraining from using the eyes, which curtails a great drain of energy.

Emotional rest is achieved by non-involvement in the ups and downs caused by personal interaction.

Mental rest is obtained by positive thinking, meditation i.e. Raja Yoga.

Takes Its Toll

Rest, in essence, is the curtailment of energy expenditure, which permits the body to redirect energies to restoration. It can be used very effectively to rejuvenate yourself and improve your outlook.

For varying reasons sometimes, your sleep may be inadequate or you may have to be more active physically or mentally during some part of the day. In such situations, you become drowsy, sleepy, restless or down. You need rest.

Most of the stress that so many working people struggle under can be traced to forcing the body beyond its capabilities. Today's "success at any cost" culture has some people thinking they would rather be caught stealing than caught taking rest. So, they push themselves, though feeling in need of rest, and resort to stimulants like coffee, tea, soft drinks



Most of the stress that so many working people struggle under can be traced to forcing the body beyond its capabilities

etc. to perk themselves up. This practice takes its toll. The problem is aggravated rather than solved. Nervous energy is further drained by it, even though the drain may not be evident at the time.

In today's hustle and bustle atmosphere of workaholism and efforts to succeed and get ahead, the body's biological needs are often sacrificed in favour of productivity at any cost.

Just Try It

It is far better to take some time to rest quietly, with eyes closed and the body still, so as to perform more efficiently thereafter, than to forget the needed rest and drag through and perform at a greatly reduced productivity level.

In many countries, a siesta is the normal practice. Animals in nature also rest during the heat of the day. Napping improves body functions, including digestion.

Resting prevents excessive fatigue and promotes better and more efficient work. It

sharpens the mind and also allows you to fall asleep more quickly and sleep more soundly.

Try this: Turn your coffee break, your stimulation break, into a rest break and see for yourself what a positive difference this will have on your day. Just try it.

The healthy custom of taking a short noontime nap has been largely destroyed by the needs of an industrial society. This has, to a large extent, contributed to ill health and stimulated habits that make people in industrialized societies so highly stressed and diseased.

Resting and napping is not a sign of laziness, it is an intelligent and productive use of your time.

Rest and Yoga

Resting the mind is even more important than resting the body. A tired mind will not allow the body to take rest. Regular practice of Raja Yoga meditation for even a few minutes in the morning, at bedtime and at convenient intervals during the day would keep the mind constantly relaxed and considerably reduce the quantum and frequency of rest that would be required. ■

(Purity Bureau)

English Language

There is no egg in the eggplant
And neither pine nor apple in the pineapple.
English muffins were not invented in England
And French fries were not invented in France.
We sometimes take English for granted
But if we examine its paradoxes, we find that:

- Quicksand takes you down slowly
- Boxing rings are square
- The guinea pig is neither from Guinea nor is it a pig
- And what about the noun roots of verbs?
- If writers write, how come fingers don't fing?
- If the plural of tooth is teeth, shouldn't the plural of phone booth be phone beeth?
- If the teacher taught, why didn't the preacher praught?
- If a vegetarian eats vegetable, what does a humanitarian eat?
- Why do people recite at a play, yet play at a recital?
- Or park on driveways and drive on parkways?
- You have to marvel at the unique queerness of a language:
- Where a house can burn up... as it burns down
- In which you fill in a form... by filling it out
- Where an alarm is only heard once it goes off!

English was created by people, and it reflects the creativity of the human race (which, of course, isn't a race at all).

That is why when the stars are out, they are visible...

But when the lights are out... they are invisible.

But still can't figure out why is it that when you wind up your watch, it starts... But when you wind up a discussion... it ends.



Nabarangpur, Odisha: Rajyogini Dadi Janki, Chief of Brahma Kumaris, laying the foundation stone of Anand Sarovar Retreat Centre along with Mr. Basanta Panda, Regional BJP President, BK Asha Didi, BK Neelam Behn, BK Parbati Behn, BK Nathmal Bhai and others.



Raipur, Chattisgarh : Lighting candles at 'My India Golden India' Youth Bus Campaign are BK Kamla Didi, Regional Director, Brahma Kumaris, Dr. Mansingh Parmaar, Vice Chancellor, Khushabhai Thakre University for Journalism and Mass Communication, Dr. K.L. Verma, Vice Chancellor, Ravishankar Shukla University and BK Rashmi, Team Leader of Bus Campaign.



Delhi, Rajpur Road : At Mass Meditation for Peace are (R-L) Mr. Satyendra Jain, Delhi Health Minister, BK Meera Didi, BK Chakradhari Didi, BK Asha Didi and BK Pushpa Didi.

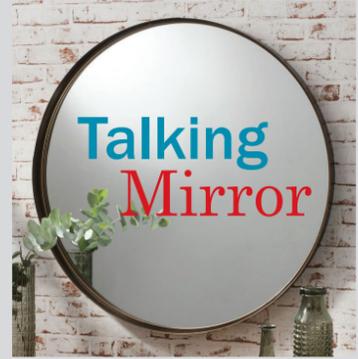


Gangtok : Lighting lamps to inaugurate Silver Jubilee Celebrations of Brahma Kumaris Centre are Mr. Pawan Kumar Chamling, Chief Minister of Sikkim, BK Sonam and others.



Mumbai, Borivali (East) : At the UN 'World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims' are Ms. Ishika Teneja, Miss India Tourism, BK Divya Prabha, Vice Chairperson, Brahma Kumaris Transport & Travel Wing, Cine Actor Biwaji Chatterjee, S.Gurusevak Singh, Head Priest, Gurudwara and others.

The Bridge



Once upon a time two brothers who lived on adjoining farms fell into conflict. It was the first serious rift in 40 years of farming side by side. They had been sharing machinery, trading labor and goods as needed without a hitch. Then the long collaboration fell apart. It began with a small misunderstanding and it grew into a major difference which exploded into an exchange of bitter words followed by weeks of silence.

One morning there was a knock on elder brother's door. He opened it to find a man with a carpenter's toolbox. "I am looking for a few days of work", he said. "Perhaps you would have a few small jobs here and there. Could I help you?"

"Yes!" said the elder brother. "I do have a job for you. Look across the creek at that farm. That's my neighbor, in fact, it's my younger brother and we don't get along. Last week he dug a wider passage for water into his farm. But he ended up creating a very wide creek in between our farms and I am sure he did it just to annoy me. I want you to build me something so that we don't have to stand and see each other's face from across."

The carpenter said "I think I understand the situation. I will be able to do a job that will please you." The elder brother had to go to town for supplies, so he helped the carpenter get the materials ready and then he was off for the day. The carpenter worked hard all that day measuring, sawing, nailing.

At sunset when the elder brother returned, the carpenter had just finished his job. The elder brother's eyes opened wide and his jaw dropped. It was not what he had even thought of or imagined. It was a bridge stretching from one side of the creek to the other! A fine piece of work, beautiful handrails. And to his surprise, his younger brother across the creek was coming to meet him with a big smile and arms wide open to hug him.

"You are really kind and humble my brother! After all I had done and said to you, you still have shown that blood relations can never be broken! I am truly sorry for my behaviour", the younger brother said as he hugged his elder brother. They turned to see the carpenter hoist his toolbox on his shoulder. "No, wait! Stay a few days. I have a lot of other projects for you," said the older brother.

"I'd love to stay on", the carpenter said, "but, I have many more bridges to build!" ■

In Lighter Vein

- It's hard to believe the Darwinian theory that only the fit has survived.
- The green light is the signal for the man behind you to blow his horn.
- Some people who think they are busy are just confused.

Peace of Mind
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Self-managing Strategy Life in the Age of Uncertainty

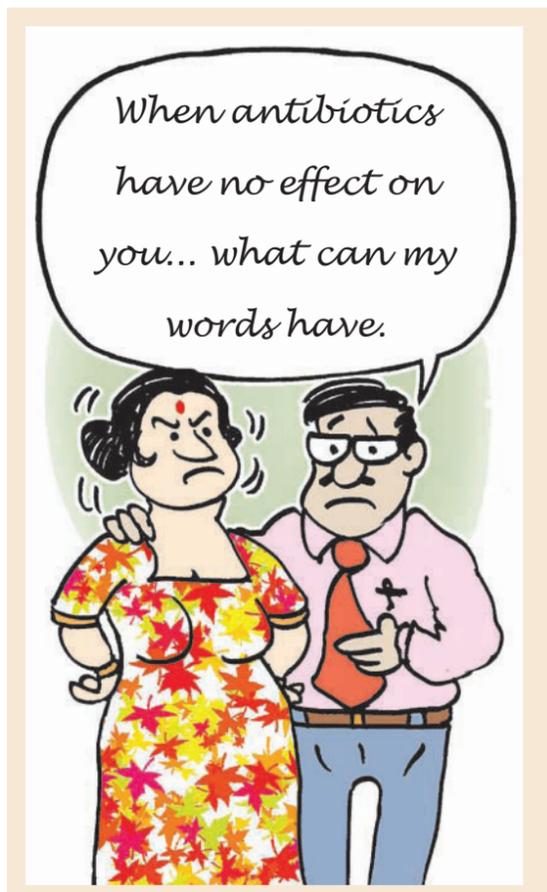
Society is in transition! Old certainties of family, gender, work, finances, class and culture are “all at sea”. Many of the guiding traditions of the past are no longer working. This is an ‘Age of Uncertainty’ and an ‘Age of Re-evaluation’, as we seek to find new strategies for the future.

As the external environment changes fast and becomes more complex and contradictory, the importance of self-management increases. It is hardly possible to manage the external environment. As with King Canute, the waves keep coming. The emphasis has shifted towards managing our inner environment, that is, harnessing inner resources so that we are effective.

The Self-managing Strategy provides an opportunity to set down personal principles, ideas, values and beliefs and to develop a bold strategy to lead change, rather than to be tossed around in a sea of change. The challenge is to redefine, reinvent and re-orient ourselves for the future so that we can lead change creatively. On a personal level, our success at self-management will determine how we survive and prosper in the 21st century. There are common complaints of stress and a growing malaise of insecurity and anxiety. Change is the name of the game and we must learn how to handle it effectively. In a highly competitive world, there is little margin for error. There are many examples of individuals and organizations that are failing to cope in this new environment. The cost of not managing change is high. Those who don’t manage successfully are very likely to become redundant, not just in terms of their work, but also in terms of their meaningful participation in society.

Managing the Transition

One of the big challenges in the present time



As the external environment becomes more complex, the importance of self-management increases

of transition is to make sense out of it! This is a time of massive redefinition and re-orientation that is resulting in confusion.

We are being met with one change after the other, whether it be organizational, family, cultural or economic. Perhaps even more destabilizing are the fundamental questionings about our own long-held beliefs and assumptions. Many have talked about a transition in their lives and how what has worked in the past just does not seem to be working any more.

This can happen in the form of a crisis or a series of crises. It can be confusing as we struggle to let go of the old while, at the same time, identifying the new way that is going to move us forward. People sometimes judge themselves harshly at this time. They think they have failed or made mistakes and none of these upsets should have happened. Yet this is the process of transition. We have to let go of the old in order to start the new and, paradoxically, we have to start the new to let go of the old. Once we understand how transition takes place, we can make sense of it and start to put a framework in place to deal with it.

Redefining Effectiveness

A view of effectiveness is emerging which is based on natural principles. If these principles or laws of effectiveness are followed, success

will be an automatic consequence. Here are three key principles which form a practical basis for effectiveness.

As is my aim, so is my action — The quality of action I perform is dependent on the quality of vision that I hold within my mind. If I can create new images in my mind, I can dramatically improve the quality of my action.

As is my stage, so is my world. The situations, circumstances and events that I find going on around me are a reflection of my inner state of mind. The outer reality is a reflection of the inner reality. Changing inside changes my outer world.

There is benefit in everything — this understanding is required in order to live effectively and happily in the 21st century. Whatever happens is to help me learn and grow. There is significance in upheaval. Upheaval leads to new systems, new practices and new methods, to make us more effective.

These fundamental principles lead to significant increase in effectiveness.■

(Purity Bureau)

In Lighter Vein

- Doctors bury their mistakes, journalists print them and lawyers hang them.
- Where there's a will, there are relatives.
- We must remember the past in order to forget it.
- Doctors enjoy poor health.
- A Shakespearean dilemma: If the world is a stage, where is the audience sitting?
- If we learn by our mistakes, then I am getting a fantastic education.
- Worry is the interest you pay on trouble before it arrives.



Vadodara, Karelibagh, Gujarat: Rajyogini Dadi Ratan Mohini, Jt. Chief of Brahma Kumaris, inaugurating Om Shanti Bhawan along with BK Dr. Niranjana, BK Leela and others.

Facing Challenges with Inner Strength

Dadi Janki, Chief of Brahma Kumaris

What is “inner strength”? How does it help us in practical life? What nourishes inner strength?

Everyone needs inner strength regardless of their business, profession, vocation, occupation. People need inner spiritual strength. This provides willpower.

When people have done something good they naturally want everyone else to know about it and appreciate them for it. If they do something bad they prefer that no one should know. They try to hide it.

A person who has developed a personal ethical policy of not defaming or insulting anyone generates considerable inner strength from this inner discipline and consequently receives deep love and respect from others. In the process of consolidating such an ethical policy you become sensitive to



Dadi Janki in Guwahati, Asom

the feelings of others, as well as generate the inner power to tolerate unpleasant truths about yourself, and realize what personal changes are required. Making those changes permanent and indelible is a proof of inner integrity and strength.

Practising such self-restraint

generates the power to tolerate various social and personal challenges, defamation and the phenomenon of having one’s motivations questioned. It mitigates any remaining hunger for praise, recognition and regard.

We are on a journey of life-long learning. Learning to let go of ego, dishonesty or superficial interaction with others is not a small thing. There are many fears to be faced. The heart is often broken, disillusioned and in pain. We cover these wounds with many attractive bandages, but eventually we need to remove them and begin the process of healing the wounds and become whole again.

It is not so easy to develop an attitude of renunciation and decide to live simply, economically and with ease and freedom. We are in love with our limitations and the chains

that bind us, but we come to see that the infatuation is illusory. With trust and courage, take a step of determination and we receive the strength to shed the false accoutrements, make ourselves clean and free from dependencies. Then we can experience that it is a small price to pay for the great gain of personal freedom, fulfilment and independence. ■

Wisdom of Dadi Janki

- The greatest jewellery in the world is your own nobility.
- Your own best companion in the world is your determined thought.
- Those who do not wish for anything receive everything.
- Renounce that happiness in which there is sorrow for others.

A Christmas Story

The child slept in the corner of the room, his parents slept close by. They were poor and times were hard but they had decorated the room as best as they could. In another corner stood a small Christmas tree decorated with silver tinsel, glass bells and baubles. On the branches there was cotton wool snow and underneath the tree were boxes and parcels tied with coloured ribbons and all neatly labelled.

At the very top of the tree stood a fairy in a white dress carrying a wand. Above her head was a beautiful star shining in the light of the fire burning in the hearth.

The old clock in the alcove struck midnight and the fairy woke up, looked at the boy and flew around the room touching all the paper decorations hanging from the walls with her wand. They glistened in the darkness. Next, she touched all the baubles hanging on the tree and they glowed with many beautiful colors. As the fairy went about her business the boy woke up and silently watched the beautiful scene in front of him.

The fairy knew that the boy was awake but said nothing and carried on with her work of bringing light to the dingy room. Quietly the boy whispered “Who are you?” “My name is Shiva Shakti”, said the fairy in a light voice, “and my job is to transform this old place so that you can have a bright new dawn to enjoy all the gifts that have been brought for you for thousands of years to come.”

The boy’s eyes lit up and a tear

of joy ran down his cheek. “We have not had much happiness lately”, he said, “everything has been going wrong and everyone is poor and many are sick. The world seems to be filled with nothing but sorrow.”

“I can change all that with your help”, said a voice from the corner. The boy looked but could see no one there. “You won’t see me by looking in that way”, chuckled the voice. The boy looked again, but could not see anyone.

Again, the light laughter came and the boy noticed that the star on the top of the tree was glowing and was surrounded by beautiful red light. “Are you in that star” asked the boy. “I am the star” said the voice, “and I have come so that you get to know me very well and then help me to remove all the sorrow and suffering from this sad old world”.

“That would be nice”, said the boy, “but my mum and dad say that there is now no hope for us and that the whole world is falling apart and can’t last much longer.” “That’s why I have come and that’s why I need your help.”

The boy was silent for a while. “Do you also have a name?” he asked. “My name is Shiva”, said the star, and I want you to meet my other helper.”

At that moment there was a great rumbling in the chimney and the large man with white hair and big white moustache, dressed all in white appeared in the hearth. “Who are you?” asked the boy. “Some call me Adam and some call me Brahma: some even call me Father Christmas.” “Father Christmas is red”, the boy

argued. “No, red is Shiva’s colour, mine is white.” As he looked back at Shiva the star, the red glow seemed to become even brighter, and suddenly the boy himself became a star and flew to the top of the tree. He sat beside Shiva in the beautiful red glow. He looked back and saw the boy, himself, sitting in the corner. “But I am up here with you,” he said to Shiva. “That’s right child, and your body is there below in the corner.” “But I thought that was me.” “No child, that is just your body. The real you is the star, the soul that is up here.” “You must be God!” said the boy. “They do also call me that,” said Shiva, “and I am your eternal Father and he, said Shiva, pointing to Brahma, “is the Father of all humanity, the first man. He is here to help me turn this old world full of sorrow and pain into a world of happiness and love, for you to live in with all the other most beautiful star children.” The child was silent for a long time. “Can I help you do this?” Suddenly the top of the tree was surrounded with stars all dancing with Shiva in the most beautiful dance. “These are all your special family who are also helping.” “I have a lot to learn” said the child. “That’s why he is here,” said Shiva and at once the child was sitting on Brahma’s lap surrounded with light. “I feel different,” said the child. “That’s because you are now using your body of light, your angel body.” The boy looked, and sure enough, he was pure light and had the most beautiful pair of wings. He looked back at the bed and saw his physical body sitting there. “You have to learn



to use all three forms”, said Brahma, “the physical body, the angel body and the point of light. Then you can help in finishing this old world of sorrow and creating heaven on earth.”

The boy woke up. His mother was gently stroking his head. “Happy Christmas”, she said. “Happy Christmas Mum”, he said, jumping out of bed. “What are you going to do today?” asked mum. “I am going to change the world,” said the boy, and do you know what? He did! ■

Pause ‘n’ Ponder

- Most quarrels, like muddy water, will clear up if you don’t keep stirring them up.
- Looking at others’ mistakes invariably results in overlooking one’s own.
- No one tests the depth of a river with both feet.



Bhadohi, Uttar Pradesh : Ms. Smriti Irani, Union Textiles Minister, being greeted by BK Vijaylakshmi at Brahma Kumaris Vishwa Shanti Bhawan.

Puttaparthi : Mr. Chandrababu Naidu, Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, receiving memento from BK Ambika Didi after inaugurating Shiv Darshan Art Gallery. Also seen in pic. are BK Karuna Bhai & BK Mruthyunjaya Bhai from Mt. Abu and others.



Africa : BK Pratibha, permanent representative to United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) with African representatives during her recent service tour.



Toronto, Canada : BK Sister Mohini, Director of Brahma Kumaris in the Americas, inaugurating the newly renovated Brahma Kumaris Centre along with Mr. Dinesh Bhatia, Consul General of India, Mr. Anthony Perruzza, Councillor, Mr. Satish Thakkar, Chairperson for International Yoga Day and others.



Panaji, Goa : Seated on stage in a Panel Discussion at International Conference on 'Yoga for Public Health' organised by Ministry of AYUSH, Govt. of India are Mr. P.K.Pathak, Addl. Secy., AYUSH Ministry, Prof. Vd. K.S. Dhiman, DG, CCRAS, Dr. R.K.Manchanda, DG, CCRH, BK Sister Sapna from Delhi, Dr. I.V.Basavaraddi, Director, MDNIY, Dr. Geetha Krishnan, Consultant, Traditional Medicine, WHO, Geneva and others.

Mr. Wise



Mr. Wise?

Yes.

What in your reckoning is the greatest of all powers that a human being can have?

It's 'will-power' which is the mother of all success.

It is a power that will lead you from success to success.

Then why don't they all try to increase their 'will-power'?

I cannot say.

And Mr. Wise?

Continue please.

What's so unique about 'will-power'?

Unlike other powers, it is not a fair-weather friend. It will stand you in good stead at all times and under all conditions. It will always be at your beck and call because it's your very own inner power. You don't have to be dependent upon anyone or anything for pressing it into service.

So, it liberates one from all dependencies also. Shouldn't it then be called a 'wonderful magic power'?

I cannot say.

Lastly...

Now what's that?

How can one develop this wonderful power?

By heeding to the voice of conscience, positive thinking, pious life-style and spiritual service of fellow beings.

And all these qualities will naturally come by practicing Rajyoga Meditation?

Of course, you are right.

Tailpiece



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

'You 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.'

"If I sold my house and my car, had a big garage sale and give all my money to a charity, would that get me into Heaven?" I asked the children in my Sunday school class.

"NO!" the children all answered.

"If I cleaned the temple every day, moved the yard, and kept everything neat and tidy, would that get me into Heaven?"

Again, the answer was, "NO!"

"Well, then, if I was kind to animals and gave candy to all the children, would that get me into Heaven?"

Again, they all answered "NO!" "Well," I continued "then how can I get into Heaven?"

"A five-year old boy shouted out, "You Gotta Be Dead!"



Hyderabad : Global Cultural festival and Bathukamma celebrations organised by Brahma Kumaris in association with Govt. of Telangana with participation of spiritual artists from 21 countries held for 7 days. Seen in pic : Mr.SK.Joshi, Chief Secretary of Telangana, Mr.Venkatesham, Principal Secretary, Cultural Dept; Justice Eshwaraiah, BK.Santosh, Director, Divine light group, Russia, BK.Kuldeep, Director, Brahma Kumaris Hyderabad and artists from several countries.



The Colorado River Region begins in the Rocky Mountain National Park.



USA : Hurricane Florence, category 4 hurricane which affected the states of North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia as seen from International Space Station.



Manila, Philippines : At a BK Family Day meditation practitioners from the metropolis centres came together to join inauguration of building offered by BK Ellen Luna and BK June Luna for Godly service and to celebrate festival of lights (Diwali). BK Sister Rajni, Director, Brahma Kumaris in Japan, shared blessings to all.



Om Shanti Retreat Centre, Gurugram : Group photo of 2nd Indian National Space Settlement Design Competition organised by NASA. Seated in front row are Judges of the competition, Mr. Abhishek Agarwal, Coordinator (5th from left) and others.