

Point of View

If you chase two rabbits, both will escape. The main thing is to keep the main thing as the main thing. Focus on what you want and not on what you want to avoid.

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

GST – The Real Reform

Publicized by the government as India's biggest tax reform in 70 years of independence, the Goods and Services Tax (GST) was finally launched at the stroke of midnight on July 1, 2017. It is an indirect tax applicable throughout India, and replaced multiple, cascading taxes levied by the central and state governments.

The tax largely simplifies taxation by reducing the number of taxes during multiple stages of manufacture, sale and consumption. It will subsume around 17 taxes. The decluttering of taxes will eventually lead to financial integration of the country. It is said that the cost of goods and services was pushed up by the earlier taxes on transactions across the states. Not only does GST allow free movement of goods across state borders, it also enables more efficient costing and transportation. In addition, it aims to reduce tax-evasion. Since implementing GST involves monitoring of bills and the paper trail across each stage from manufacture to sale, it's an efficient way to curb domestic black money. Lower costs of goods and services is one of the most important expected outcomes of GST. With the minimising of cascading taxation, goods will cost less.

All this is aimed at making India a stronger economy and a developed nation. Just as leaders in power in India are pushing various kinds of reforms, numerous groups of people are engaged in various fields of human



New Delhi: Mr. Ramnath Kovind, the 14th Hon'ble President of India, being presented a frame of Incorporeal God Shiva by BK Asha, Director, Om Shanti Retreat Centre and others.

activity in an effort to change the world for the better. More than at any other time, there is growing restlessness and a desire for change all over the world. There have been significant developments that have changed the way we think, act and live in this world, but most of these have been of the material kind. The real and lasting reform or transformation that we all want is not going to happen through new laws and regulations. It needs change of a deeper kind – a change at the core of human beings, a change in their consciousness, attitude and way of life.

This change can only happen through spiritual awakening. It is said that knowledge liberates one. Knowledge of the self as an immortal, infinite being of peace, purity and love liberates us from greed, fear, insecurity, selfishness, ego and all kinds of pettiness that binds us to a vicious cycle of sin and suffering. Soul consciousness makes one virtuous and powerful. 'Nirakari, nirvikari, nirahankari' – bodiless, viceless, egoless – this is the true nature of every soul. It is soul consciousness that helps us go beyond vices and live in a state of natural purity.

It is not renunciation of worldly roles or relationships that sets us free, it is the renunciation of our limited sense of identity, our egocentric consciousness that liberates us. Instead of chasing desires, clinging, attaching, grabbing, holding on and living in a state of constant fear of loss, we begin to live like carefree emperors. When we are soul conscious, our sense of identity is derived from the inherent worth of the soul rather than the limited roles that make us feel superior or inferior.

The outer state of the world is a reflection of the inner state of the world – our moral,

ethical and spiritual foundations have become weak. And it is exactly at such a time of utter darkness and extreme degeneration that God, as per His promise in the Gita, transforms our old, vicious, iron-aged world into a new, viceless, golden-aged world. Only God can guide humanity from its present impasse to lasting peace and happiness. God is unique and above all. He is supreme amongst all creation, therefore, He has the wisdom and power that can change the entire world and restore it to its original, perfect state.

God Himself is now guiding humans towards liberation from this age of sin and suffering, and re-establishing a new world of long-lasting peace, purity and happiness. By following the path of wisdom imparted by Him, we can conquer the vices within us and become virtuous like deities.

In this context, GST also signifies God, Soul and Transformation. Supreme in His attributes and powers, God is able to change the entire world from hell to heaven by imparting Godly wisdom. The small percentage of human souls who transform themselves and regain their original purity through God's wisdom help transform the entire world through their spiritual power. They become God's agents of change, the harbingers of the Golden Age on earth.

It is certain that the world is changing, and in a big way. The predicted end and a new beginning for the world depend on when we change our attitudes and actions. It depends on how much we are able to conquer our negative traits and weaknesses such as hatred, jealousy, ego, greed, lust and attachment. Hence, we have to see how fast we can transform ourselves for the better. *

(Purity Features)



In a sence, GST also signifies God, Souls and Transformation. Human souls who transform themselves through God's wisdom become harbingers of the Golden Era on earth.

Pune, Mira Society : Lighting lamps to inaugurate conference on 'Spirituality in Politics' are Mr. Ramraje Naik Nimbalkar, Chairman, Maharashtra Legislative Council, BK Brij Mohan, Chairperson, Politicians' Service Wing, BK Lakshmi Didi, National Co-ordinator, Prof. Lakshman Dhobale, BK Sunanda Didi, Director, Rajygoa Centre, Pune and others.

Photo Gallery



He who knows others is wise. He who knows himself is enlightened.

Shantivan, Abu : Lighting candles to celebrate 'Samarpan Samaroh' of 300 Brahma Kumaris are Rajyogini Dadi Ratan Mohini, Jt. Chief of Brahma Kumaris, BK Lakshmi Didi, BK Sarla Didi, Rajyogini Dadi Ishu, BK Bharti Didi, BK Sharda Didi and others.



Kingston, Jamaica : Mr. Carlos Brathwaite, West Indies Cricket Team Captain receiving spiritual literature from BK Sister Bharti at Sabina Park Cricket Stadium. She also gave Godly message to team members and other dignitaries.



Gyan Sarovar, Mt. Abu : Standing in silence after inaugurating National Conference on 'Holistic Rural Development through Pure Feelings' are Dr. Ram Khurchae, Vice Chairman, Maharashtra Council of Agriculture Education, BK Sarla Didi, Chairperson, Farmers & Rural Development Wing, Dr. J.P. Sharma, Jt. Director, Indian Agriculture Research Institute, Delhi, Mr. Pradeep Yadav, former Food Minister, UP, BK Raju, Vice Chairperson, BKs Rajkumari, Tripti, Sapna and Sunita.



Om Shanti Retreat Centre, Gurugram : (Pic. top) Yoga Guru Dr H.R. Nagendra, President, VYASA addressing the National Convention on Bhagavad Gita. Rajyogi BK Brij Mohan, Convener and BK Usha Didi, Facilitator are also seen. (Pics. above) Renowned Gita Scholars, Vice Chancellors, Judges, Senior Journalists and Spiritual Leaders sharing their wisdom on the theme.



Sydney, Australia : Group photo after Peace Entourage – a concert for public at Brahma Kumaris Inner Space by Mr. Sam McNally, Australia's best keyboard players with Sisters Yuko and Etsuko, Vocalists from Joy2 and Ayako, Japan.



Harmony Hall, Mount Abu : Inaugurating National Women's Conference are Dr. Promila Gupta, Dy. Director, National Programme for Control of Blindness, BK Chakradhari Didi, Chairperson, Womens' Wing, Mr. Raju Anthony, Chairman, All India Council of Human Rights, BK Sheilu Didi, BK Dr. Savita and others.

Finding True Love in times of Deceit

Everyone wants to be loved by others, and it is the nature of the human soul to love. Love provides a feeling of well-being, contentment, security and support that one cannot get from money, power and prestige. Love acts like sunshine, lighting up one's life, enriching the soul and making it bloom.

But true, unselfish love is becoming increasingly rare nowadays. More and more people are ending up disappointed, disillusioned, bitter or cynical after being rejected, betrayed or abused by someone they loved.

For a lot of people, love has come to mean emotional and physical intimacy. This may be based on several things.

If we love someone because of their pleasant nature, we may enjoy their company when everything is going well, but such persons may not necessarily be caring or helpful. When faced with difficult circumstances, they may act selfishly, and that will hurt us if we are counting on them to be nice and friendly all the time.

People are also attracted or impressed by someone's intelligence, polished behaviour or talents, and come to love them. They assume that the other person must be having other good qualities as well. Such a naïve belief can ultimately lead to sorrow, because having one or more remarkable qualities does not necessarily make a person loving or caring. On the contrary, someone with exceptional talents may be self-centred, arrogant or callous about others' feelings.

Physical attributes are an equally shallow foundation of love. Beauty, as they say, is only skin-deep. In earlier times, poets used to liken a beautiful face to the moon. But after telescopes provided us a closer look at the lunar surface, with all its craters, the moon ceased to be regarded as a symbol of beauty. Similarly, if we take a closer look



Why do more and more people end up betrayed by someone they loved?

at the character, behaviour and temperament of those who look beautiful, we might discover some ugly truths and realize that our love was misplaced. Moreover, the body is subject to disease and decay, and love based solely on physical beauty also withers away as the years go by.

Then there is love based on family ties, which is also not guaranteed to be permanent. Dysfunctional families and fratricidal disputes prove that even blood connections provide no assurance of love. When the members of a family become self-centred or egoistic, they stop caring about the feelings of those they live with. Such families get fragmented emotionally and even physically, with each person going his or her own way.

Love can be true and lasting only if it is based on truth. First of all, we need to know our true identity – that we are souls, not bodies. The

soul is the sentient point of light that gives life to the body. Peace, purity, love, joy and truth are the natural attributes of every soul. That is why we feel comfortable when we experience these qualities. And all human souls are related to each other by the virtue of being the children of the Supreme Soul.

Negative traits like anger, ego and greed are impurities that have entered the soul as a result of the soul forgetting itself. Unaware of its strengths and virtues, the soul turned to these vices in its attempts to get a sense of fulfilment, suffering sorrow in the process.

When we remember our real self, the intrinsic goodness of the soul begins to emerge, and it gets strengthened when we establish a mental link of love with God, who is the ocean of all virtues.

Self-awareness opens our eyes to the true identity and innate goodness of others. Such a perspective naturally brings out in

us love for all, and fosters healthy and caring relationships that are not entangled in desires and expectations which arise when we identify the self with the body.

Our positive way of looking at others also helps them realize their inner worth and connect with all that is good within them. Relationships that are based on such spiritual awareness help everyone involved develop self-esteem as well as love and regard for others. Such love comes with understanding and does not make any demands on others which can produce strains in relationships.

When souls experience such love and see that they are not judged, slighted or rejected, they develop the confidence to connect with others on an equal footing.

This is the basis of true love, which God has for all His children, and which we can experience and share to enrich ourselves and heal broken hearts.★ (Purity Bureau)

Humour

A young doctor newly posted to a village dispensary found that most patients could not describe their ailment. After consulting his pharmacist, he started writing GOK on the prescription slips, and patients were given sundry medicines. The formula worked wonders. GOK was an acronym for 'God Only Knows', he confided.

♦♦♦

Literacy has reached the villages. A newly literate villager visited a city. He read the words 'Gupta Manufacturing Company' painted in bold letters at the entrance of a firm and exclaimed: "Ah! Now I know wherefrom all these 'Guptas' come!"

♦♦♦

A lot of arrangements had to be made to put up a big show, and a team worked day and night to complete the job. One fine morning, to know the progress made, a senior official of the team asked his junior, "How are things?"

The junior replied: "All is in the well, Sir....."

♦♦♦



Om Shanti Retreat Centre, Gurugram: Mr. Ravi Shankar Prasad, Hon'ble Union Minister for IT, Law & Justice, launching a 'Digital Awareness Campaign' after addressing the valedictory session of a Conference-cum-Retreat for IT professionals, on "Inner Technology for Peace & Happiness". Also in pic are BK Asha, Sister Shivani, Mr. Tanmay Chakravarty, TCS Vice President, BK Yashwant, Mt. Abu, and BK Rama.

Pause 'n' Ponder

- Angels fly, because they take themselves lightly.
- Meditation is not silence, it is communication.
- Our own actions are our security, not others' judgments.
- Poverty should not own us.
- Welfare, not warfare.
- Purity is the bed-rock of peace.
- Those who rule by sword, fall by sword.
- Vice often lurks in close proximity to virtue.

Pulling out the *Roots*

BK Aruna Ladva, Kuwait

We are all seeking freedom, but from what? From the clutches of vices. Whether we realize it or not, those vices which we sometimes look upon as our friends are really enemies which enslave us.

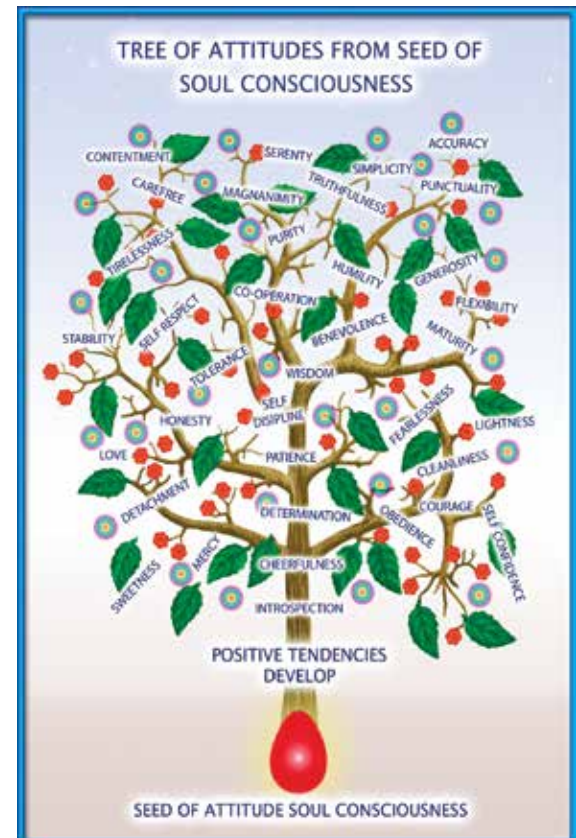
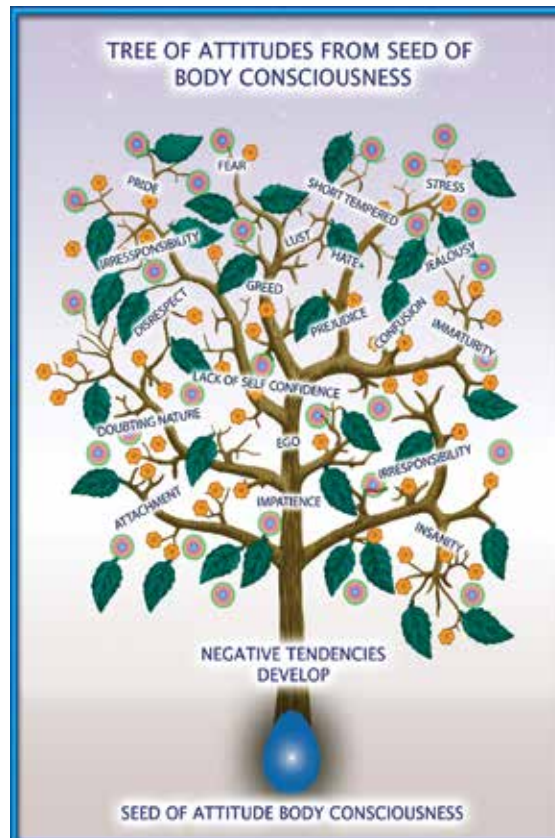
In Raja Yoga terms, we understand that the roots of all negativity and sorrow are the 'vices': ego, attachment, greed, lust and anger.

And if desires are the seed of all sorrow, then the roots, trunks, branches and twigs are the vices and all of their progeny. A seed is so tiny, and yet look how much emerges from it!

We lose our happiness because we get trapped in fear, pain and the negative emotions of the branches and the twigs. We become victims of sorrow.

It is only when we get to the real root of the vices that we can see what is actually causing our sorrow.

Envisage the scene: everyone's personal 'package' of vices is being played out against others' on this world drama stage. One person's anger striking another's, one person's lust playing off another's. Attachment interwoven



Get to the deep roots of the vices to see what is actually causing sorrow.

into complicated webs of relationships. Greed and competition escalating on all sides. It is no wonder we have lost our peace of mind!

The way back to peace and happiness is to trace the line of the twigs and branches back to the trunk and the roots. Find out what your main core vices are and begin to eliminate them. For example, if you are discontented, needy and selfish, realize that at the root of these sorrowful emotions is the vice of greed. Greed is constantly trying to tell us, 'I need... I want...', and desires are then created in an attempt to fill the void. So we search in vain for things to end the emptiness, instead of replacing the vice of greed with the

virtues of love and spiritual fulfilment.

Each vice is connected with another, and they feed each other. So find out which are the core vices behind your feelings and emotions, and renounce or transform them with understanding and determination. Very soon they will be replaced by peace, love and happiness.

We all have vices: no one is immune to them! But why not take the time to identify your 'greatest enemies' and see what gives birth to what. You may just find the root cause of your sorrow, sadness or discontentment, and the way to inner peace and happiness.*

Choosing Happiness

Meditation can often be that first step towards self-empowerment. Those Aha! moments can bring with them the realization that we need to change something in our lives. It is then that we can begin our journeys towards inner freedom and happiness.

We begin to see that we have the power of choice. Choice brings freedom. It gives us power to change things in our lives. I can choose to be happy, simply by choosing to move away from those old and unhealthy thoughts and emotions. Until we have tried and tested some of the spiritual principles, they can seem like a lot of mumbo jumbo. But, you may be pleasantly surprised to find that these spiritual principles actually work!

Take, for example, managing expectations. That expectation could be about the situation, or that another person should be different, or they should treat me in a different way. Our expectations may be reasonable, but if we are experiencing some form of disappointment, upset or emotional disturbance, then it is still an expectation. Behind any emotion of upset, there is bound to be an expectation.

We can make ourselves free when we realize that the person is like that with everyone, and it is just part of their make-up. Then we can more easily let go of what they say, and not



It's time... to choose happiness.
As you do this, you become the
master of your life.

hold those feelings of hurt in our heart and mind. The way to make our minds free and reset ourselves to peace is to simply choose not to take things personally.

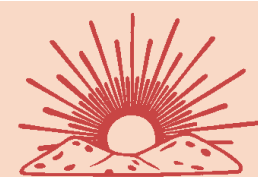
Writing and keeping a journal enables us to reflect on the day to see how it went. Highlight the things that went well, appreciate those positive qualities and then build on them. For the situations that were not so smooth, just see if it is possible to make some changes that will improve the situation the next time.

Sometimes, it is also good to see: what is the lesson here for me? What changes can I make in my life to avoid some of these situations

in future? Can I do anything? Sometimes we cannot do anything, but we still need to let things go. It is best not to dwell on old issues, but to see what can be done to make things smoother and better.

It is all to do with the law of energy, or we could call it the law of attraction. Whatever we give our attention to, we empower and draw more of the same quality, and of similar nature, towards ourselves. This applies to that which I do or do not want. This is because this law works like a magnet.

The important thing to realise here is that happiness is in my hands. Let me not wait for anyone or anything to make me happy. Right here and now, stop and choose to be happy doing what you are doing. If you are tired of waiting, then wait with happiness. If you are working hard, work hard happily. If you are poor, be poor happily. When you are happy, everything comes to you easily.*



Truth is above all,
above that is
truthful living.

Independence Stems from Interdependence

Independence is cherished by most people. It implies freedom to make decisions about one's life without any kind of compulsion from others. Independence means different things to different people. To nations it means the ability to pursue policies of their choice; to media persons it means the absence of government influence or pressure; and to youth it means freedom from parental control.

Dependence, on the other hand, is seen as a condition that constrains and stunts one's life, preventing one from realising one's potential and expressing oneself fully. However, there is one kind of dependence that offers independence in several ways. It is called interdependence. It is a condition in which two or more individuals or groups come together in a mutually beneficial way, with each offering others resources and services they can share, while at the same time profiting from what others offer.

Interdependence exists at many levels, and is a key factor in the smooth functioning of families, societies and nations. Mutual trust, for example, is a kind of dependence wherein one relies on someone's honesty and goodwill, and is vulnerable to abuse of that trust. Where such trust exists, it creates freedom of action, and the stronger the trust, the greater the freedom it provides, enabling people to engage in positive interactions. Personal and business relationships are based on such trust, and they unravel if that trust is eroded.

In the absence of trust, official rules and laws are needed to facilitate social and commercial activities.

In earlier times, it was common for extended families to live together. The various tasks necessary for sustaining the family were divided among the family members, with some doing household chores while others took care of all work outside the home. In this kind of an arrangement, each individual is required to do only his or her bit, and all their needs are fulfilled by the family. This can look like dependence on others, and it may involve the sacrifice of some freedoms for the sake of familial harmony, but it also provides each family member freedom from many tasks which are done by others, besides creating a sense of security. Of course, such



Interdependence is inherent in nature and human nature. It makes life possible on earth.

an arrangement works only when each member of the family enjoys some amount of freedom and respect, the absence of which can produce strains that may break the family.

In a society, too, teachers, traders, the police, and cleaners all play their respective roles to help life go on smoothly. They are all dependent on each other to varying degrees, but the interdependence frees each section of society from the responsibilities that are fulfilled by others.

No individual, not even someone living alone, can claim to be fully independent in a modern society, as they use services rendered by others. Those who live off-grid are not really independent: they are just using alternative resources. Even primitive tribes that have no contact with the rest of the world are dependent on nature for survival.

Nature itself shows how its different components work together — the water cycle, the carbon cycle, and ocean currents are well-

known examples — to make life possible on earth.

The rewards of cooperation motivate states to forge trade agreements which ease the movement of goods, services and people, and thereby boost economic growth.

A notable example of how interdependence benefits nations is the economic miracle witnessed in Japan after World War II. A security umbrella provided by the United States helped turn the war-ravaged country into a major economic power. Free from security worries, the East Asian state focused on post-war recovery and growth to achieve remarkable success. Instead of hobbling it, its dependence on another state worked to its advantage. The US, in turn, gained a valuable ally.

In the past century, some extreme ideas about independence have arisen. They place an excessive emphasis on competition, and advocate personal success as the key goal in life. In this view, each person's main obligation is to themselves. Individuals may collaborate sometimes, but only when it is in their interest. There is no concept of the common good, and life is largely a struggle for success. But such a struggle is a zero-sum game, because if one person rises another must fall. In such a world, it is impossible for everyone to progress.

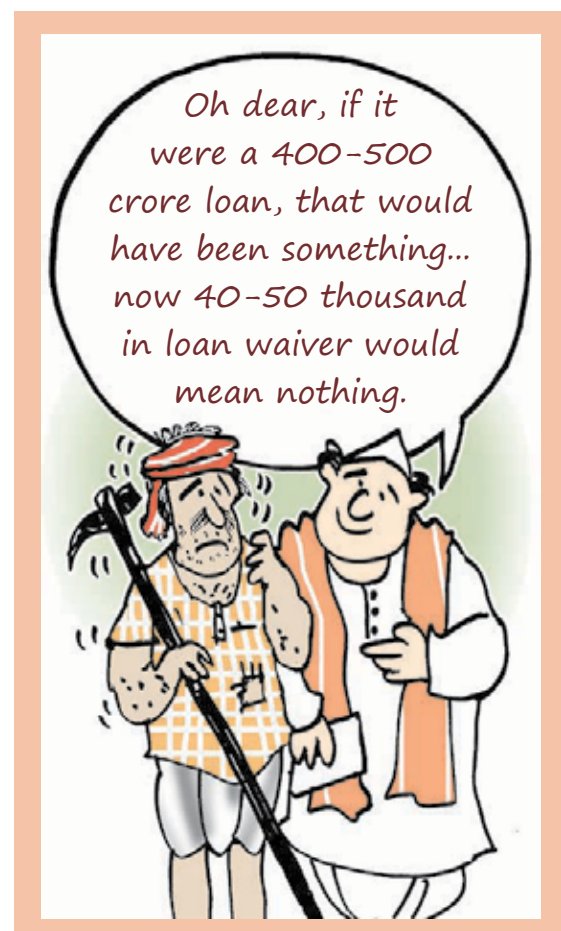
Many people argue that human nature is inherently selfish and one should just accept that fact. But we now know that it is the human instinct to cooperate which has given humans their extraordinary power over most other species.

When guided by enlightened principles, such cooperation, which is inherent in mutually rewarding interdependence, can be the basis of a positive-sum game that provides everyone in the world the opportunity and independence to work for their own well-being and that of others. All it requires is the wisdom and the will to put aside selfish instincts and assert our altruistic nature. *

(Purity Features)



Mumbai: BK Yogini didi giving Param Vishishta Parayavaran Mitra Award to Mr. K N Rai, Speaker, Sikkim Assembly, and Mr. A K Ghetani, Health & Family Welfare Minister, Sikkim, at the NESCON 2017 Conference, organized by Environmental Medical Association.



Editorial

It's Time to Return Home

As the sun sets and twilight takes over the sky, everyone heads home. While they all were upbeat in the morning and happily busy during the day, they are too tired to continue in the evening, and know it's time to wrap the show. They must anchor themselves at night in order to rest and rejuvenate, before they set sail the next day.

The cycle of day and night resembles the world drama – the cycle of time lasts 5,000 years, and is repeated identically. During the first 2,500 years, everything on earth is fresh and pristine. Man lives in full harmony with Mother Nature, who is at her best – benign, beautiful and bountiful.

When a fresh cycle of time begins, souls come down from the Incorporeal Soul World and don bodily costumes as their role calls them. They are full of their original virtues and there's perfect harmony between thought, word and action. Love, kindness and happiness are naturally present in all relationships. In the first half of the cycle, both spirit and matter undergo negligible decline.

The speed of the downfall, however, increases steadily as the second half of the cycle of time begins and souls come under the influence of matter. They move away from their originality and become body conscious. In due course, greed drives them to plunder nature, and there are divisions at the micro and macro levels. More and more souls come down to play their part, so the population increases, and this multiplies the challenges on earth.

As the cycle of time approaches the finish, both spirit and matter lose their essence. The once abundant human values are then found only in traces, so there is a breakdown in relationships. The key pillars of society, such as religion and politics, are corroded by corruption. On the global level, there is escalation of violence, and deadly weapons of mass destruction are developed. Non-renewable resources are on the verge of exhaustion, and nature revolts with fury. The earth reaches a state that is beyond repair. This is the twilight of the world drama, a phase that clearly signals that it's time to go back home before a fresh cycle of time begins yet again.

Just as a tree gets its leaves gradually, but sheds all of them at fall, human souls enter the world stage at different times but exit collectively around the same time. As is evident from the current symptoms of the world, we are approaching the time of our departure. Scientists are predicting a sudden end to events on earth soon through a catastrophe, and have placed the hands of the Doomsday Clock closer to midnight.

However, souls can't return to the soul world soiled and burdened. They have to settle all their karmic debts before they depart. They must cleanse themselves of acquired impurities through yoga with the Supreme Soul and settle their accounts gracefully. Otherwise, they will have to undergo great suffering before their return journey. Those who commit themselves to the process of self-purification earn a place in the coming Golden Age, which has a small population.

We are currently going through that auspicious transition wherein the old world order is giving way to the new. The imminent destruction will be a blessing in disguise. The destruction of the present veritable hell will lead to the creation of the deity kingdom, or heaven.

Before God's plan for massive transformation is fully implemented, let us become instrumental in His plan for creation. The extent to which we purify ourselves before going home will decide the time of our descent to earth in the next cycle, and also our future status. Those of us who participate in manifesting His vision will get to experience the best time in the world drama.

So, let's not get stuck in trivial things of the past, but utilise our precious resources of time, thought and energy to create a bright future for humanity. Let's not get so engrossed in our daily business that we forget our higher purpose. Now is the time to detach ourselves from the wasteful and ordinary, and to prepare ourselves for our return journey by becoming soul conscious.★

Gleanings from the press

Iceberg equal to four Delhis breaks off from Antarctica

A trillion-tonne iceberg, one of the largest ever recorded, has snapped off the West Antarctic shelf. The iceberg, four times the size of London, or equal to four Delhis, has a volume twice that of lake Erie, one of the Great Lakes. It is about 350m thick. The iceberg was already floating before it calved away, so it has made no immediate impact on the sea level, say experts. The landscape of the Antarctic Peninsula has been fundamentally changed. *(Agencies)*



A reason to wake up helps us sleep better

The secret to a good night's sleep is having a reason to wake up in the morning, say scientists. A team of researchers from Northwestern University in the US said that older adults who felt their lives had meaning were 63 per cent less likely to have sleep apnoea, a disorder that occurs when a person's breathing is interrupted during sleep. Helping people cultivate a purpose in life could be an effective drug-free strategy to improve sleep quality, particularly for a population that is facing more insomnia. *(The Hindu)*

Yoga and meditation can 'change genes'

Mind-body interventions (MBIs) such as meditation and yoga don't simply relax us; they can 'reverse' molecular reactions in our DNA which cause ill health and depression. Research published in the journal 'Frontiers in Immunology' reviews more than a decade of studies analysing how the behaviour of our genes is affected by different MBIs, including mindfulness and yoga. Eighteen studies — featuring 846 participants over 11 years — reveal a pattern in the molecular changes which happen in the body as a result of MBIs, and how those changes benefit our mental and physical health. *(Science Daily)*

A wound healer, made in India

Indian scientists have come up with a new combination of polymers that can be used as a hydrogel to make the process of wound healing faster. The main advantage of the new hydrogel is that mixing the two polymers causes rapid gelation at the body temperature of 37 degrees Celsius without generating much heat. Generation of heat during gelling can lead to tissue death in the area surrounding the injection site. This will be avoided. *(The Hindu)*

This hands-free brush cleans teeth in 10 secs

The world's first hands-free toothbrush, which takes just 10 seconds to clean teeth, could take the hassle out of scrubbing, rinsing and flossing. Designed to look like a bristly mouthguard, the Amabrush is made out of three parts; a silicone mouthpiece, a handpiece, and toothpaste capsules that you attach when you're ready to brush. Amabrush's creators say that the mouthpiece is made from bacteria-resistant silicone and features 3D bristles on both sides which are soft enough to prevent gum disease but hard enough to clean your teeth. *(The Independent)*

Bhoola Bhai

And our friend Bhoola Bhai on Temple Street says that bad social habits make a person crude, and would like to share with you the following brief list thereof:

- Speaking or laughing loudly.
- Staring at a stranger passing by.
- Throwing litter anywhere.
- Delaying returning something borrowed.
- Touching anything in other people's homes.
- Giving more importance to rich friends or relatives.
- Making noise with the shoes while walking.
- Visiting the neighbours when there is a visitor there.
- Munching noisily when eating.
- Missing appointments or reaching late.

The Power of the Soul

Ninety-five per cent of our time is wasted on thinking about others; we go on and on with a string of expectations, which become like hammer blows of demands on other people's heads. Take a combination of expectations and demands, and what does it equal? Conflict!

At this time in the world drama, everybody has some illness of the mind, and is abusive to others in some way. If you meditate, you can help that soul by responding with respect and care instead of reacting.

As the world becomes more complex and problems become further deep-rooted, "listening is the first step to communicating and harmonizing with everyone; it is a method to understand the reality of others in order to live better with them. Listening to myself, to God, to others, and to nature enables the self to harmonise" its personality and prevent conflict.

I have learned that "the illness of anger comes from the germ of expectation, that the illness of possessiveness comes from the germ of insecurity, that the illness of aggression, or forcefulness, comes from the germ of fear, and that the illness of stress stems from the germs of worry, doubt, and greed." Through the power of meditation these illnesses can be suppressed in the soul.

"Om' is the consciousness of 'I am' – the consciousness that denotes both an uncreated selfhood and a pure state of being. The human soul originally had this consciousness of 'Om', but gradually forgot it. Therefore, the aim of 'knowing' (or at least spiritual knowing) is to return to this original state. The way of return is called 'remembrance': that is, to pay attention and keep remembering the eternity of the self, otherwise referred to as the soul, the 'atma'."

"...Without focused silence, it is difficult to remove the germs, even if they are seen and understood. The original, innate energy of the soul is needed for any permanent cure."

"Success, or victory, depends as much



I have learned that "the illness of anger comes from the germ of expectation, that the illness of possessiveness comes from the germ of insecurity and the illness of aggression comes from the germ of fear."

on doing the task with the right intention as it does on allowing things to take their own course."

"...Only when the soul is in a state of complete self-respect can there be freedom in relationships."

I have also learned that no human can help me. Only God can help me. Stay in the self-respect that I need nothing from no one.

Keep truly honest by believing that everyone is very good.

Understand that when others are abusive towards you, they are in a lot of pain and are unhappy. The medicine for this is to give them respect and care. Sometimes it is safer to do it through vibrations. Do this selflessly.

Count your blessings to stay in constant connection with the Supreme Energy source of the universe. Fall in love with God and feel the ocean of love giving you His attention.

The trick for not taking sorrow when someone abuses you is to understand that they are teaching you something. That soul is your teacher. It means they have more power than you. Be grateful that they are teaching you something and develop more power in yourself through meditation.

It is still not too late, the world can be saved through meditation power.★

(Extracted from the book, 'Slaying the Three Dragons' by Anthony Strano)



The disease of anger needs the medicine of tolerance.

The pain of disappointment needs the medicine of hope.

The violence of revenge and spite needs forgiveness.

Fear needs courage.

Ego needs self-respect.

Through Meditation we receive the medicine and the strength to heal.



Bhilai, Chhattisgarh : Inaugurating Media Seminar are Dr. Mansingh Parmar, Vice Chancellor, Kushabhau Thakre University of Journalism & Mass Communication, Raipur; Mr. Sumit Awasthi, Dy. Managing Editor, 'News 18 India, Delhi, Prof. Kamal Dixit, Mr. Govind Lal Vora, Chief Editor, Amrit Sandesh, Mr. Ramesh Nayyar, Senior Journalist, BK Asha, Director, Rajyoga Centre and others.





◀ **Kathmandu, Nepal :** Bollywood actress Ms. Manisha Koirala receiving a frame of 'Lakshmi and Narayan' from BK Raj didi, Director, Brahma Kumaris.

▼ **Valsad, Gujarat:** BK Sarla Didi, Zonal Head, performing foundation laying ceremony of new centre in Silwassa along with Ms. Priti, Sarpanch, Naroli, BK Ranjan Didi, BK Rohit and others.



◀ **Udhampur, Jammu:** Mr. Jitendra Singh, Hon'ble Minister of State for Development of North Eastern Region & Prime Minister's Office, receiving Godly gift from BK Veena.

▼ **Navarangpura, Ahmedabad :** After giving Godly message to Baba Ramdev are BK Lalit, BK Ishita and BK Meena.



The Best Artist

The Chinese and the Greeks were arguing as to who were the better artists. The King said, "We'll settle this matter with a debate." The Chinese began talking, but the Greeks wouldn't say anything. They left. The Chinese suggested then that they each be given a room to work on with their artistry, two rooms facing each other and divided by a curtain. The Chinese asked the King for a hundred colors, all the variations, and each morning they came to where the dyes were kept and took them all. The Greeks took no colors. "They're not part of our work," They went to their room and began cleaning and polishing the walls. All day every day they made those walls as pure and clear as an open sky. The Chinese finished, and they were so happy. They beat the drums in the joy of completion.

The King entered their room, astonished by the gorgeous colour and detail. The Greeks then pulled the curtain dividing the rooms. The Chinese figures and images shimmeringly reflected on the clear Greek walls. They lived there, even more beautifully, and always changing in the light. The Greek art is the spiritual way. They don't study books of philosophical thought. They make their loving clearer and clearer. No wantings, no anger. In that purity they receive and reflect the images of every moment, from here, from the stars, from the void. They take them in as though they were seeing with the Light of God that sees them.

There is a way that leads from all-colors to colorlessness. The magnificent variety of the clouds and the weather comes from the total simplicity of the sun and the moon.*



Panipat : Presenting Godly Gift to Mr. B.V. Ram Gopal, Executive Director, IOCL, Panipat Refinery are BK Bharat Bhushan & BK Harshita

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Pathankot : Mr. Amit Vij, MLA, BK Satya Didi, Incharge, Rajyoga Centre, Mr. L.R.Sodhi, BK Pratap, flagged off the awareness procession on International Day Against Drug Abuse.

Spiritual dimension of Food

In addition to the qualities of nutrition and sensory appeal, food has a spiritual component. The spiritual dimension of food encompasses its purchase, preparation, acceptance and eating. Food that is selected with care, prepared with love, accepted with gratitude and eaten with purity acts as medicine for both, the soul and the body. The underlying ingredient is consciousness. Where the consciousness is clean, filled with love and detachment, the food is purified, and this also purifies the body. As a result the mind is cleansed and becomes free from desires and engrossment in the sense organs.

If you study the diet of the ancient yogis of India, you will notice that their approach to eating was very refined. They accepted only certain types of food, and did not overindulge or allow themselves to be influenced by the senses of sight, smell and taste. Taking the spiritual path means being attentive to what one eats. Abstinence from meat, egg, fish and chicken (as well as products derived from slaughtered animals, such as rennet and gelatin), and from alcohol, tobacco,



The type and quality of food and the manner of eating affects the state of the mind, and hence affects digestion.

narcotics, and excess of tea and coffee, is a part of the spiritual way of life. For spiritual reasons, many people also avoid onion, garlic and heavy spices which stimulate the endocrine system and thus destabilize the emotions. The diet of a yogi thus incorporates two main principles.

- Not to cause suffering to another living being;
- Not to over-stimulate the physiological system (the digestive, nervous and endocrine systems).

A basic tenet many of us are familiar with is, "As you eat, so is your mind". This is a fundamental principle of a spiritual diet. The type and quality of food and the manner of eating affects the state of mind. Food that is implicated in the slaughter of animals carries a karmic debt, and that becomes a burden for the human soul. Food or drink that has a stimulating effect on the body also carries a toxic load that gradually leads to the development of diseases such as cancer, diabetes and heart ailments. Food that is eaten in a state of tension, anxiety, depression, anger or fear will carry

those vibrations and hence affect digestion. Hormones stimulated by those vibrations in turn create further negative vibrations and hormones, and the damaging cycle continues.

A spiritual approach to diet includes preparing food in a meditative state with feelings of love and detachment. When one is free of desire yet cooks with love, either for the self, one's family, friends, or for God, the food will carry a subtle power that energises the soul and the body.

Within the parameters of an accurate spiritual diet, however, it's good to accept food with gratitude and not become too focused on "I can't eat this, I can't eat that", unless there are specific health needs.

Organic food is now quite popular since the harmful effects of pesticides, fertilizers and antibiotics (which also affect milk, yoghurt, butter and cheese) have become well-known. Macrobiotics is also gaining popularity, but it does not necessarily equate with spirituality.

These diets are good for health, the environment and one's awareness, but if the person following a strict regime becomes too fanatical and creates stress as a result, then many of the benefits will automatically be lost.

Spirituality also includes sharing. There is nothing more wonderful than to share a beautifully cooked meal with others. By sharing we lose our sense of attachment to food and the body, and overcome greed. The natural sustenance provided by food is enhanced by the power of pure vibrations, and this brings benefit on the spiritual level. One way to bring about harmony and unity in any gathering, be it a family, a company or amongst friends, is to eat together. Food cooked with love will help generate positive feelings. Mothers know the power of food in affecting the feelings of children and bringing a sense of contentment. When children are unmanageable, give them food that has been cooked with a lot of peace, love and purity. It will quieten their mood and they will naturally become cooperative and loving.

In Raja Yoga meditation, food is prepared in remembrance of God and offered to God before eating. The food then works as a blessing in our life.★ (Purity Bureau)



San Fernando, Trinidad and Tobago : Group photo of Dialogue on "Four Faces Of Woman". Standing in front row are Mrs. Kamla Persad Bissessar, former Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago and leader of Opposition, BK Hemlata, BK Aruna, BK Silvereen and others.

We owe our bodies to Mother Nature

From the dawn of history, humanity has been fascinated by three energies – nature, soul and God. The investigation of these three eternal entities has often been the individual domain of different experts, each working within his own boundary with his own perspective, and each reaching his own conclusion. With different theories gaining supporters, and an ever-increasing lack of understanding of the whole, advancement or progress in one area has almost always been at the expense of another. Those who have achieved materialistic or technological advancement have usually bartered their soul to do so, whereas fatalism, or denial of the reality of matter, has left some communities bereft of the physical wherewithal for a dignified life. But if the puzzle of life has any solution, and if our existence has any meaning or purpose, its foundation must be based on truth. If we are to recognize truth when we see it, two of the qualities that may transcend the disguise that it sometime seems to hide behind, are its simplicity and universal applicability. An understanding of natural laws and truth as a whole, from which they derive their authority, should enable us to understand the intimate connection between human beings and nature.

Around the world, nature is reverently referred to as Mother Nature, and her very first act of service is to provide the soul with a body. Our relationship with nature starts with our bodies, and every action we perform affects the physical matter our bodies are made of. Therefore, every human action inevitably has an effect on matter, and no one is immune to the effects and consequences of their actions.

Original Beauty

The law of nature is a pattern of ceaseless motion and change in which every natural process is irreversible and leads toward



As a human family we must accept responsibility for our behaviour. We must change our way of thinking and our way of life.

a state of decay or disorder, although as a mother, nature's tendency is to try to restore balance and minimize pollution and disorder. The fact that the environment is polluted and abused as it is today is because we have forgotten that we are intimately connected to nature, as a baby is to its mother. By arrogantly treating her as an object of reckless exploitation to meet our perceived, and often imaginary, needs, and by desecrating the original beauty of our planet, we have fouled and blocked our life-giving umbilical cord.

As humans we must accept responsibility for our behaviour. We must change our way

of thinking and our way of life. We must act together for the common good of all.

This would be the first and fundamental step towards a genuine relationship with nature, and only when policies and decisions are based on such realities can there be solutions to which individuals and nations will be committed. This cooperation and commitment will materialise because it is the right and noble thing to do. Because of our understanding that to destroy the environment is to destroy ourselves. We must develop new inspiration and insights on how to protect our home. A relationship is not a one-way street. We must not depend on nature to always protect us. We must stop the insanity of environmental abuse and replace it with environmental integrity, as otherwise we will face the consequences together as the human race. Let us be sensible and invest our resources in a sustainable way. After all, we share one earth and sky, and by the law of interconnectedness, investment in one simple part will help to sustain the whole. Let us do this for our children's sake.*

(Purity Bureau)

In Full Bloom



Dadi Janki tops the examples of achievement at an advanced age:

- At 101, Rajyogini Dadi Janki is the Chief of Brahma Kumaris.
- At 94, Bertrand Russell was active in international peace drives.
- At 92, Bernard Shaw wrote the play *Farfetched Fables*.
- At 91, Eamon de Valera served as President of Ireland.
- At 89, Mary Baker Eddy was directing the Christian Science church.
- At 89, Albert Schweitzer headed a hospital in Africa.
- At 88, Coco Chanel was the head of a fashion-design firm.
- At 87, Konrad Adenauer was Chancellor of Company.
- At 83, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe finished *Faust*.
- At 80, George Burns won the Academy Award for his performance in the *Sushine Boys*.

(The Book of Lists)

You Ask... We Reply

Nageshwer Rao, Hyderabad

■ If I am already happy, why should I remember God?

- The entire world is filled with sadness today. Nobody is completely or permanently happy. If we think we are happy, that happiness is temporary. That happiness is the outcome of our past good deeds, and we can do good deeds only by staying in remembrance of God. We do good deeds by keeping the divine in mind, which makes us happy and contented. Hence, it is necessary to remember God in order to make our future better, and to remain contented and happy. Our good deeds in the present will bring us the fruit of happiness in future.

Surjan Singh, Pathankot

■ How can God solve my problems while sitting far away?

- The sun, moon and stars are all so far away, but they help us so much in our lives. It is impossible to live without them. These are insentient celestial bodies forming part of the cosmos, and without them life on earth

would not be possible. Now think of the divine Creator who is sung of as being the purifier of sinners, the liberator and redeemer, who is almighty and merciful. Isn't it possible for God to help resolve our entanglements from his divine abode, the incorporeal soul world, located far beyond the planets and stars of this universe? When we remember God with love, He is always available to help us in times of need.

Sheela Kumari, Patna

■ How is the knowledge given at Brahma Kumaris different from hypnotism?

- When it comes to hypnotism, it can be practised on an individual or a small group, and the spell would last for a short period of time. However, the knowledge imparted at Brahma Kumaris centres is acquired and practised in life by millions of people all around the world, hence it is not hypnotism. Whatever an individual learns at the Brahma Kumaris is permanent and does not vanish with time.*

Send your questions to purity@bkivv.org

News in Photos



Compassion calms passion. When you bow, others bend.



Gyan Sarovar, Mt. Abu : Lighting lamps to inaugurate National Religious Conference are Acharya Arvind Muniji, Patiala, BK Dr. Nirmala Didi, Director, Gyan Sarovar, BK Brij Mohan, Addl. Secretary General, Brahma Kumaris, Swami Avinash Chetan Brahmchari, Vrindavan, BK Manorama, Co-Chairperson, Religious Wing, BK Ramnath, Hqs. Coordinator and others.



Mumbai : Rajyogini Dadi Hridaya Mohini, Addl. Chief of Brahma Kumaris awarded with 'Bharat Gaurav Award'. Seen in pic are BK Sister Dolly, USA, BK Laxmi didi, Mount Abu, BK Yogini didi, BK Neelu and others.



Chandigarh : Standing in silence after inaugurating 'My Punjab Addiction Free Punjab' programme are Mr. Anurag Aggarwal, Home & Health Secretary, Chandigarh, Dr. Rakesh Gupta, Nodal Officer for Tobacco Control, BK Amirchand, Dr. Pratap Midha, Dr. Banarsilal Shah & Dr. Sachin Parab.



Harmony Hall, Mt. Abu : Inaugurating Administrators' Conference on 'Strengthening our Roots' are Mr. Shreechand Kriplani, Hon 'ble Rajasthan Minister for Urban Development and Housing, Mr. Anil Swarup, Secretary, Union Ministry of HRD, BK Asha Didi, Chairperson, Administrators' Wing, BK Mruthyunjaya, Executive Secretary, Brahma Kumaris, BK Avadhesh Didi, National Co-ordinator, BK Harish, HQs Co-ordinator, BK Poonam, Jaipur and others.



Raipur : Inaugurating public programme on "Happy Living" are Mr. Gauri Shankar Aggarwal, Chhattisgarh Assembly Speaker; Mr. Rajesh Munat, Public Works Minister, BK Shivani, Main Speaker, BK Kamla didi, Director, Rajyoga Centre and others.

Port Louis, Mauritius : Conducting Rajyoga Meditation to celebrate International Day of Yoga are BK Mala, BK Geeta, Director, Rajyoga Centres, BK Sarita from Pune and others.



Hongkong : After celebrating 'International Day of Yoga' organised by Indian Consulate and Asia Society are BK Rohini, Sister Kathie, Sister Susane with representatives from nineteen other organisations.



Judge each day by the seeds you plant.



Australia : Group photo of the elite participants of 'the future of power' dialogue. Sitting in middle row centre are Mr. Nizar Juma, Initiator & Host, BK Charles Hogg, BK Maureen Chen and others. For more details visit futureofpower.org.



**It's Sweet
It's Warm
It's a Big Hug**



Gigantic iceberg of the size of Wales breaks away from Antarctica

Mr. Wise

Mr. Wise?

Yes.

Is it true that nothing in the world happens without God's will, and even a leaf cannot stir without His command?

That is what they say. Human beings are mere instruments in executing God's will.

Would that not mean that God is the motivator of all crime and sin, and if so, why should humans suffer punishment for that?

I cannot say.

♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦

And Mr. Wise?

Come on.

Is it not a general belief that God is omnipresent?

Yes, it is.

Then why are God's attributes of peace and love not present everywhere?

I cannot say.

♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦

Lastly...

Yes...

Did Ravana really have ten heads?

To question this would amount to doubting the authenticity of the Ramayana.

But it must be pretty hard for ten-headed Ravana to sleep on his sides.

Moreover, how could he simultaneously speak or eat with all his ten mouths?

I cannot say.

♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦



Tailpiece

Twin brothers entered the professional life, one as a clergyman and the other as a physician. The one who was a doctor was stopped one day by a woman, who said, "That was a fine sermon you preached last Sunday."

The physician said, "Madam, I am not the brother that preaches; I am the one that practices."

♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦

A villager working in his field was approached by a stranger who had one hour's time to catch a train from the nearest railway station. Since no conveyance was available, and walking down the main road would take a least two hours, he asked the villager if he knew of a shortcut. Pointing to a nearby banyan tree, the villager told him to take the foot track starting there, which would take him to the station in 90 minutes.

"But I have just one hour left, and must catch the train", pleaded the stranger. "Please do tell me some way out".

The villager looked at the stranger, paused for a moment, and pointing towards a dog sitting under the banyan tree, advised:

"Then you tease that dog by throwing a stone. You will reach the railway station in thirty minutes."

♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦

