



Purity

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Photo on Page 3

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

President Lauds Brahma Kumaris

A Brahma Kumaris delegation called on the President of India, Hon'ble Ram Nath Kovind, last month. During their interaction, the President lauded the role of the Brahma Kumaris in women's empowerment and said it was the foremost institution engaged in empowering women.

The President was informed about the imminent visit of the Chief of Brahma Kumaris, Dadi Janki, to Delhi, and her desire to pay him a visit. The President said that it would not be appropriate for him to have the 102-year-old Dadi Janki come to Rashtrapati Bhavan, his official residence, to see him. Instead, he said with great humility, he would like to visit the Brahma Kumaris headquarters in Mount Abu, Rajasthan to meet Dadi Janki.

The President was informed that it would be best if he could visit Mount Abu in February or March 2019, when Brahma Kumaris representatives from all over the world would be present at the institution's headquarters, and he agreed to consider the suggestion.

The President was apprised of the Brahma Kumaris' role in celebrating the International Day of Yoga on June 21, 2018. This year, the Ministry of AYUSH had invited the Brahma Kumaris to hold an event at the Red Fort grounds, noting the institution's capabilities and



Rashtrapati Bhawan, New Delhi: President of India Hon'ble Ram Nath Kovind being presented 'The Story of Immortality' by BK Brij Mohan and BK Asha.

its association with the government in marking the International Day of Yoga every year.

The President recalled that he was in Suriname on an official visit at that time and he, along with the President of Suriname, had participated in the Yoga Day event in the South American country. The United Nations later took

note of the fact that it was a unique yoga event where two heads of state were present.

President Kovind later visited Cuba, where he found yoga to be quite popular. He was told by Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel Bermudez, who himself practises yoga regularly, that yoga was India's greatest gift to the world. ■

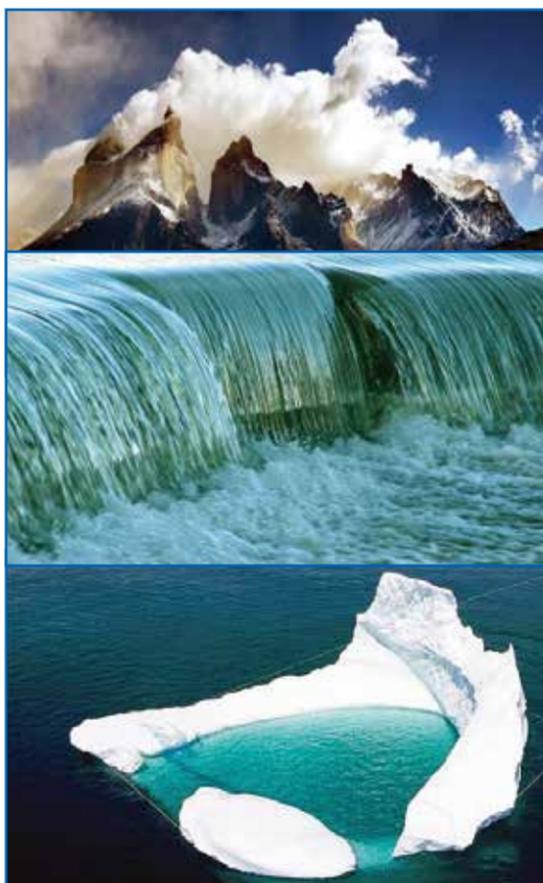
(Special Report)

The Shape of Water

Water is found in abundance on our planet. About 71 per cent of the Earth's surface is covered with water, and the oceans hold more than 96 per cent of all the water on Earth. In the human body, water accounts for approximately 60 per cent of the weight. Water exists in the air as vapour, in rivers and lakes, in ice caps and glaciers, and in the ground as moisture and in aquifers.

Water thus exists in the gaseous, liquid, and solid states. Tasteless and odourless at room temperature, water can dissolve many substances — a quality that is vital to living organisms, which depend on aqueous solutions such as blood and digestive juices for biological processes. While water appears colourless in small quantities, it actually has an intrinsic blue colour as it absorbs some light at red wavelengths. Water also assumes the shape of whatever container it is poured into.

Some of the properties of water are unusual but important to life. One such quality is that in its liquid state, water is denser than its solid form. With most other compounds, the solid state is denser than



the liquid one. This quality of water supports life in winter, when the ice floating on the surface of ponds and lakes acts as insulation, protecting the aquatic life below.

As a liquid, water provides a medium of transportation and a habitat for plants and animals. As vapour, water is transported through the atmosphere from the oceans to inland areas where it condenses and falls as rain.

The different qualities of life-giving water teach us many things. The versatility of water is what makes it so useful and valuable. If we are equally adaptable, we are able to interact with all kinds of people and deal with different situations with ease. Such adaptability makes our relationships easy and free of stress.

Just as water flows, if we keep flowing in life, not stuck anywhere or holding on to anything, we remain free of emotional and mental baggage that can otherwise weigh on the mind and rob one of peace and joy. For this one has to be free of attachment, non-judgmental, and willing to forgive and forget.

(Contd. on page 5)

NEWS IN PHOTOS



Shantivan, Abu Road: Lighting candles during 'Divine Felicitation' of Annual Meeting participants are Dadi Janki, Dadi Ratan Mohini, BK Nirwair, BK Brij Mohan and others. Enthralling dance performances were presented by Cine Actor Gracy Singh's Group and Indore Hostel Kumaris.



Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi, speaking to Dadi Janki by video conference, lauded Brahma Kumaris' role in Swachh Bharat Abhiyan.



PURITY 38

With this October 2018 issue, PURITY enters its 38th year of regular publication since 1981. Thanks to all our readers and patrons in India and abroad for sustained interest and support.

Nagpur, Maharashtra: Union Minister Nitin Gadkari seeking blessings from Dadi Janki for Ganga cleaning project during inauguration of 'Vishwa Shanti Sarovar'.



Chicago, USA: Brahma Kumari Usha from Mt. Abu with a group of participants in 2nd World Hindu Congress, organised by World Hindu Foundation.

Transforming Nature through Meditation

In the last few decades, our civilization has been witness to nature's sudden wrath on an unprecedented scale. Around the globe, the five elements are up in revolt against homo sapiens, unleashing fury in the form of floods, earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes and tsunamis.

Despite having several warning systems in place today, no one is really sure about what they are going to wake up to. Disaster management has come up as a major focus area in the current years, but while we can gear up for any natural calamity within limits, it is almost impossible to stand up to the unprecedented high magnitude of nature's wrath that we have witnessed lately. Especially in the case of earthquakes, which are occurring more frequently, there is little one can do to manage the repercussions, for often disruption of electricity, connectivity and other technical foundations that we base ourselves on are the first casualty.

The question that emerges in everyone's mind is: what is the reason behind this drastic change in the temperament of nature, which has been revered for ages as the mother by mankind, from the most bountiful to the most ferocious? Though calamities were not unknown in the past, their occurrence was rare and isolated.

Scientists have stressed that global warming, caused by emission of carbon gases into the atmosphere as a result of greater mechanization, industrialization and depletion of green cover, has



Mental
degradation
has led to
environmental
degradation.

brought us to the present predicament. They say that earth has been pushed with such great momentum to the brink that even a full and immediate halt to these activities will not save us from its consequences.

The root cause, however, is that man has violated natural laws and plundered resources recklessly to meet his greed, without restoring anything that he took away from nature. His internal nature, driven by selfishness and corrupted by the quest to exploit and profit from that which is free for all, made him greedy and short-sighted, thereby inviting his own downfall. Therefore, the corruption of internal nature has led to the degradation of natural resources and the environment.

Man has founded the so-called modern world by going against the laws of nature and violated the lessons that nature taught him — to share, sustain and to exist in harmony with others. Nature does not operate by the law of the jungle, as many believe, but is originally benevolent and nourishes life.

They believe that spiritual crisis is the reason behind every upheaval in the world — moral, social or natural. Mental degradation has led to environmental degradation.

Through the process of Rajyoga meditation taught at the BK centres, individuals connect to their original, virtuous self and to the Supreme Soul, who is the ocean of purity, and transform themselves into beings whose natural way of life is non-violent, whose natural nature is of care and compassion, and whose life is in conformity with the laws of nature. While the world deliberates on managing calamities, the Brahma Kumaris, through the power of meditation, are in the process of creating an altogether new world in which man and nature coexist in perfect harmony. ■

(Purity Features)



Chennai: Dadi Janki performing the foundation laying ceremony of Angel House at Happy Village Retreat Centre, near Chennai.

*Pure thoughts
are the
invaluable
treasure of
your life.*

The Night of Moral Darkness

According to the cyclical concept of time, the world is now in the fourth and final phase of the current cycle. This phase, known as Kaliyug or the Iron Age, is reached after progressive degradation during the preceding golden, silver and copper ages. Scriptures describe the Iron Age as a time of unrighteousness and extreme degradation in every sphere of life. At such a time, even good deeds fail to produce good results.

Our present times are very much like this. Everything in the world is increasingly getting corrupted under the influence of the Iron Age. Human efforts to solve the world's problems are unwittingly producing more problems.

In fact, our scientific progress has been accompanied by a slide into moral decay. The practical manifestation of this, experienced by almost everyone, is that even though our physical comforts are increasing, our peace of mind, inner contentment and spiritual strength are getting depleted.

Why is this so?

The answer is that nothing truly good can happen in this degraded world.

Take a look at our development over the ages. Economic growth is giving more and more people access to an increasing variety of goods and services. But that has not made people happier. The gap between the rich and the poor is widening day by day. The consumption-driven model of growth is causing social strife, with communities violently opposing projects for which their resources are expropriated by governments or private firms that give them little in return.

It is also taking a heavy toll on the environment—a fact governments have begun to realize. The phenomenon of climate change, triggered by our abuse of nature, threatens to make life on this planet impossible in the not too distant future. Scientists and policymakers can only wring their hands in despair as they see droughts, floods and freak weather caused by climate change wrecking economic havoc in rich as well as poor countries.

Even the benefits of science are proving to be either ineffectual or a bane. The automobile is a wonderful means of

When the sun shines
bright, there is no need
for lamps.
Lamps cannot turn
night into day.

comfortable and fast travel. But today, in most cities across the world, getting stuck in traffic jams is an inescapable part of daily life for hapless commuters. The choking exhaust from millions of vehicles is leading to respiratory ailments among residents of all big cities.

If we thought medical science would take care of that, it is not a rosy story here either. Over the past century we have conquered an array of diseases, and average lifespans have increased as a result of medical advances. But newer and incurable variations of older diseases are emerging and taking a toll on human life. Tuberculosis, an age-old killer, now has a deadlier variation called extremely drug-resistant TB. Similarly, even as scientists are searching for a cure for AIDS, a more lethal variation has been found to be killing its victims faster. And ironically, our life of comfort itself is now killing us. The most widespread health problems in the world today—obesity, diabetes and coronary artery disease—are largely the result of wrong lifestyles.

In the political field too, we see divisions and strife on the increase. On the

one hand nations are forging partnerships for economic gain, and on the other, countries are getting fragmented on ethnic, linguistic and sectarian lines.

The most ominous part of the world's political rivalries is the huge stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction built up by nations. The Cold War is supposed to have ended and trade and telecommunications have brought nations together like never before, but still governments are engaged in refining these tools of annihilation.

Unable to bear the growing grief, misery, disease, untimely death, conflicts and natural calamities, humans are turning to God for succor—but in vain, because they do not know God. Religion has divided mankind and produced hatred and violence. Ignorance of our true spiritual identity and that of God has thwarted all efforts to create inter-religious harmony. When the sun shines bright there is no need for lamps.

The growing suffering in the world that is defying all human efforts at betterment is proof of the truism that however many lamps you may light, you cannot turn night into day.

We are passing through the night of moral darkness. It will end only when God, the Sun of Knowledge, ushers in the Golden Age. He performs this task through His children, we humans, by awakening them to their true spiritual identity and giving them the strength to overcome the vices, which are the root cause of man's degradation. When the vices are eradicated, all suffering ends and the golden dawn breaks over the world. ■

(Purity Bureau)

Smile a While

Critic: "Ah! And what is this? It is superb! What soul! What expression!"
Artist: "Yeah? That's where I clean the paint off my brush."

Movietown psycho specialist says, "If you think you're crazy, you're not. If you think everybody else is crazy, you are!"

"I had a real fight with my landlady last week and she threw one of my suits out of the window. I wouldn't have minded so much if I hadn't been wearing it at the time."

Employee to co-worker: "I'm caught in a power struggle. My boss has the power and I have the struggle."

The guy comes from a family of writers: his sister writes poems nobody will recite, his brother writes songs nobody will sing, and he writes cheques nobody will cash.



*Remember, whatever
you do, others will
watch and follow.*

Symbol of Snakes in Mythology

Snake worship is devotion to serpent deities. Snakes have always been an integral part of religious mythology and mysticism in ancient cultures all over the world, where snakes were seen as symbols of strength and renewal. Almost all Indian temples have some kind of snake worship.

In Africa, the cult of the python seems to have been of exotic origin, dating back to the first quarter of the 17th century. In many parts of Africa the serpent is looked upon as the incarnation of deceased relatives. Ancient Egyptians worshipped snakes, especially the cobra. Indigenous peoples of the Americas, such as the Hopi, give reverence to the rattlesnake as the king of snakes who is able to give fair winds or cause tempest.

In many Mesoamerican cultures, the serpent was regarded as a portal between two worlds. The Mayans worshipped the "feathered serpent". Similarly, serpents figure prominently in Chilean and Colombian cultures. Serpents, or nagas, play a particularly important role in Cambodian mythology. It is believed that the great temples of Angkor in Cambodia were built by Naga descendants. They went from India, intermarried with the indigenous people, and established a kingdom. The Khmer people are believed to be their descendants.

Nagas were ruled by queens, not kings, as they were matriarchal families. All the Goddesses in the world – the Middle Eastern, North African, Mesopotamian, South Asian, Central European – are always symbolized together with snakes. In mythology, there are Naga Lokas in the netherworld – a whole society of not just snakes, but human beings who belong to the snake clan. They are known as Nagas.

In Korean mythology, Eobshin, the wealth goddess, appears as an eared, black snake. In Australia, various Aboriginal mythologies tell of a huge python referred to as the Rainbow Serpent, that was said to have embodied the spirit of fresh water, and punished lawbreakers. Serpent worship was well known in ancient Europe. Serpent worship has been part of ancient cultures in Rome, Italy and Germany.

The oracles of the ancient Greeks were said to have been the continuation of the tradition begun with the worship of the Egyptian cobra goddess, ancient Mesopotamians and Semites and Sumerians worshipped serpents. Significant finds of pottery, bronze-ware and even gold depictions of snakes have been made throughout the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Contemporary Christian culture identifies the snake as a symbol of evil and of the devil himself. Adam and Eve

Spiritually, snakes represent the poison of vices in human souls which can only be removed by God, the Purifier.



were banished from Paradise after Satan tempted them to eat the forbidden fruit.

Snakes or nagas, had high status in Hindu mythology. The naga primarily represents rebirth, death and mortality, due to its casting of its skin and being symbolically "reborn". In Northern India, a masculine version of the serpent named Nagaraja and known as the "king of the serpents" was worshipped. Instead of the "king of the serpents," actual live snakes were worshipped in Southern India. The Manasa-cult in Bengal, India, however, was dedicated to the serpent goddess, Manasa.

Over a large part of India there are carved representations of cobras or nagas or stones as substitutes. The serpent-god's image is carried in an annual procession by a celibate priestess. Milk is poured into snake holes as an offering by worshippers and many also offer milk at temples. Snake figures are drawn in homes using a black powder, cow dung and milk mix. Prayers are said and more offerings of milk, butter (called ghee), water and rice are made. Nag panchami is an important Hindu festival associated with snake worship which takes place of the fifth day of Shravana (July-August). Snake idols are offered gifts of milk and incense to help the worshipper to gain knowledge, wealth, and fame.

There are numerous mythical tales about serpents in Hinduism. All Hindu Gods Like Lord Shiva, Lord Vishnu, Lord Ganesha and Lord Karthikeya are associated with snakes. Shesha - the 1,000 headed snake upholds the world on his many heads and is said to be used by Lord Vishnu to rest. Shesha also

sheltered Lord Krishna from a thunderstorm during his birth. Vasuki allowed himself to be coiled around Mount Mandara by the Devas and Asuras to churn the milky ocean creating the ambrosia of immortality. Kaliya poisoned the Yamuna river and infant Krishna subdued him by dancing upon him and compelled him to leave the river. Lord Shankar is also shown with a snake around his neck.

A coiled-up snake symbolizes awakening of the kundalini in hatha yoga. The highest form of perception, which is the opening of the third eye, is punctuated by the presence of the snake in Lord Shankar's forehead.

Sarpa Kavu (meaning Abode of Snakes) is a traditional natural sacred space seen near traditional homes in Kerala state of South India. Inside the grove, a snake shrine would be built for the serpent god who, it was believed, would bring prosperity to the family. Apart from the occasional prayers and ritualistic feeding of milk to the snakes to please the serpent gods, human interventions in these ecosystems were practically nil. Thus, the religious beliefs indirectly promoted the conservation of natural resources.

Spiritually snakes represent the vices that have poisoned human souls. Bitten by a snake symbolises humans who get trapped by desires and fall into vicious ways of living. The conquest of vices through spiritual wisdom, meditation and virtuous living is symbolised as Krishna's dance on Kaliya and Vishnu's resting on Sheshnag. Lord Shankar wearing a garland of snake represents the powerful yogi who has subdued the vices and is free from desires.

At the end of Kaliyuga the Supreme Soul God Shiva opens the third eye of wisdom of human souls who then are able to remove the poison of vices within by becoming soul conscious and by being in yoga or constant remembrance of Supreme Father God. The poisonous venom of vices in human souls can only be removed by God who is the Purifier. ■

(Purity Bureau)

The Shape of Water

(Contd. from page 1)

Water's ability to dissolve many things teaches us to assimilate, whether it is ideas, opinions, or cultures. This creates harmony in relationships and helps us to learn and grow. It also enables us to cleanse—remove the fears, worries and troublesome traits of others by showing them better ways of thinking and behaviour.

Water is also naturally cool. It has to be heated to increase its temperature, it returns to its cool state after it is removed from the source of heat. This teaches us to be cool at all times, even in the face of provocations. When we stop resorting to anger, impatience and disapproval, we are able to see situations clearly and respond appropriately. If my mind is like a cool and calm lake, the fire of anger can never burn me.

So the next time we see water, let us remember at least some of the things that this commonplace substance can teach us. ■

(Purity Features)

The contented one is always smiling and attractive.



Weeding out corruption of the highest order

Editorial—

Seeking and accepting sexual favours in return for official work can now be considered a bribe, as the anti-corruption legislation no longer limits the scope of graft to extracting monetary benefits alone. The Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Act, 2018, incorporates the umbrella term “undue advantage”, which means any gratification other than legal remuneration. So, investigating agencies can now book officials seeking and accepting sexual favours, expensive club memberships and hospitality, among other things, and those found guilty can end up in jail for up to seven years.

The intention behind the latest amendment is to recognise and weed out corruption in whatever form it exists, and to strive to bring back transparency and honesty to the system. But the whole idea of looking at an evil of such magnitude as merely a bribe is apparently flawed.

When a woman in need is compelled to compromise with her honour in return for official work, or anything which is otherwise due to her or is necessary for her growth, it is violence of the greatest degree. It is an assault on the honour and dignity of womankind. It exploits her vulnerable position, scars her for life, and sets the stage for power play and gender discrimination. Such crimes breed and lead to more exploitative trends that rip apart our social fabric. The loss of an individual’s dignity, the assault of her mind and body – both are an attack on humanity and cannot be seen as just a bribe. If we call it that, we inadvertently label women as objects and dehumanise them; we fail to realise the seriousness of the situation.

With rising prices, taxes and responsibilities, and with ever-growing competition at the workplace, women, especially those belonging to the poorer sections, find themselves in a tight spot. Many of them then take the road less dignified and end up offering services that they would never have chosen to in better circumstances. Or they are forced to comply with their bosses’ demands to keep things stable. These acts should not be seen as an individual error but as a collective social issue that has been staring at us for long and needs to be fixed.

The trend of seeking and giving sexual favours is deeply rooted in many moral and societal problems and prejudices that have been prevalent for decades now. Our culture subjugates the weak and intoxicates the powerful. It looks upon women as lesser beings, and reduces the female form to a means of gratification for men. It brings up individuals with low self-esteem, and above all lacks a spiritual environment which is necessary for values to flourish. All these aspects are interconnected and everything around us is contributing to making this web more complex. So, the solution to our predicament has to be well thought out, and practised collectively and honestly; it cannot be shallow or superficial.

Many laws today exist only on paper, and so they create token results. Take the case of anti-tobacco regulations. It is mandatory for cigarette manufacturers to print written and pictorial warnings that ask consumers to refrain from consuming tobacco, as it kills. Yes, it sounds good and does achieve something. But when the government itself generates revenue from tobacco sales, how much will it control, and how many citizens will it save?

Similarly, we do have a mechanism for ‘censorship’ of visual content available through cinema, TV and the Internet. As the law asks, there is a certificate before each video that categorises a movie as adult or otherwise. Also, disclaimers are flashed before showing any explicit or violent material. But instead of actually regulating content in order to keep the young and impressionable safe, the law here dumps that responsibility on the viewer’s own discretion. Since there is no way to actually check the age of viewers, everyone is watching everything.

The time has come to take cognizance of this scenario seriously, to review our actions with far-sightedness, and to check if we are designing the future we want. If we are dealing with our current challenges superficially, we will end up creating more issues for ourselves.

The cause of reinstating women’s dignity should be our top priority at this time. The law must show zero tolerance to cases of gender violence as it is corruption of the highest kind. Exemplary punishment should be given to the perpetrators.

India was once a land of deities. It is time to revive our original values and culture. ■

Gleanings from the press

Non-addictive pain drug on the cards

We may be close to a non-addictive painkiller. Known as AT-121, the new chemical compound has dual therapeutic action that was found to suppress the addictive effects of opioids and produced morphine-like analgesic effects in non-human primates. The compound was effective in blocking the abuse potential of prescription opioids. AT-121 showed the same level of pain relief as an opioid, but at a 100-times lower dose than morphine. The findings have been published in the journal *Science Translational Medicine*. (News Report)



France bans use of phones in schools



Following a nationwide ban on mobile phones in schools, texting under the table should be a thing of the past in France. The new rule also banishes tablets and smart watches from primary and junior schools. Nearly 90 per cent of French 12- to 17-year-olds have a mobile phone, and supporters hope the ban will limit the spread of violent and pornographic content among children. (Agence France Presse)

Lack of exercise puts 25% population at risk

Lack of sufficient exercise will put one in four people in the world at risk of cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, dementia, and some cancers, says a study. In India, more women are inactive compared to men. At least 44% of women reported insufficient activity compared to 25% men. (News Item)



Smile not always a sign of happiness



Smiling does not necessarily indicate that a person is happy, according to a study. It is widely believed that smiling means we are happy, and it usually occurs when we are engaging with another person or a group of people. Researchers from the University of Sussex show this is not always the case. Sometimes we smile simply because we are happy, but we also smile for social reasons and to put people at ease, as well as to show more complex emotions, such as resignation. (Times of India)

Drug-resistant superbug spreading in hospitals

A superbug resistant to all known antibiotics that can cause “severe” infections or even death is spreading undetected through hospital wards across the world, scientists in Australia have warned. Researchers at the University of Melbourne discovered three variants of the multidrug-resistant bug in samples from 10 countries, including strains in Europe that cannot be reliably tamed by any drug currently on the market. (The Hindu)

Bhoola Bhai

And our friend Bhoola Bhai on Temple Street wonders about the way we honour our heroes these days—make their postage stamps and deface them with ink.

What happens in the heart simply happens.



Where is your favourite pilgrimage place?

Mike George, London

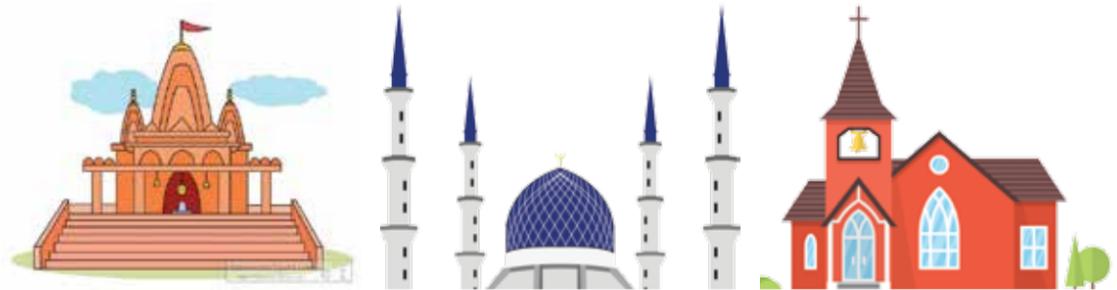
In the spiritual or religious context, the pilgrim's journey is to a place that is historically perceived as holy or sacred. It is there that they may repent for their sins, relieve the burden of their conscience, and thereby restore contentment to their heart and happiness to their life. Some travel to worship their idols so that they may have bestowed upon them the blessings of their God or deity, thus invoking success and prosperity for their endeavours, with the promise of restoring contentment to their heart and happiness in their life. The more solitary pilgrims will travel to more isolated places, to sit in silence, perhaps live in ultrasimple ways, in order to attain some form of enlightenment... why? So that they may 'see through' and dispel the 'stress-making' illusions, delusions and confusions that they have absorbed since childhood from other people and the world around them, thereby restoring contentment to their heart and happiness to their life.

The most popular annual pilgrimage would 'seem' to be a little less spiritual in its purpose. What we call our annual 'vacations' has its roots in the pilgrimage to some benevolent location, a far-off beach or snow-covered mountain, and once there to spend some 'holy days' in relaxation, with the aim of... restoring contentment to the heart and happiness to one's life! Annual holidays are the mass pilgrimages of this industrial era.

The weekly 'religious pilgrimage' of millions is of course to stand before the altar or the lectern of the church or a visit to a temple or mosque. Once there, both songs and prayers are offered with the desire to be forgiven and/or raised up in spirit, or to request that the desires of the heart be fulfilled. All moved by the hope for a renewed contentment of the heart and happiness in life... for another week at least!

And if it's not to the church, temple or mosque, then it's off to the modern-day equivalent, namely the stadium, the shopping mall or the concert. It is there that the 'team' or the 'music' or the 'new shoes' are given responsibility to restore contentment to the heart and happiness to our life... for a few hours at least.

Whether the motive appears to be spiritual or material, whether the pilgrim's (our) journey is long or short, daily or annual, the underlying movement is to go 'somewhere' in search of 'something' that will restore our contentment and happiness.



Contentment and happiness are always there in the only place where we seldom look.

Until, that is, we notice that the achievement of any contentment and the feeling of such happiness is always a temporary one, an ever-fleeting gift, a transient stimulation that cannot be sustained and always passes.

If the seeker seeks earnestly and consistently for this inner restoration, then eventually a moment comes, out of the sheer frustration, when there is the realisation that the contentment and the happiness that we seek through almost everything that we do and everywhere we go cannot come from outside one's self. The 'belief' that it is possible to find our peace and contentment 'in the world itself' collapses in the light of a simple truth. The human spirit cannot be 'made' truly content and authentically happy by anything physical or mental. All pilgrimages and their rituals, all pilgrimage places and their apparent sources of deep and wise insight, only become another stimulation and, therefore, another dependency. And all forms of dependency, regardless of their physical or mental form, are by definition, saboteurs of contentment and happiness.

Sooner or later, even the modern-day pilgrims that we know as the shopping traveller on their way to the mall, the sports fan to the big game and the music fan on their way to the concert, realizes deep down that their pilgrimage is being made to satisfy an addiction that signals the presence of a dependency that will render true and lasting contentment and happiness impossible.

And so it is with some inevitability that all seekers eventually awaken to realize that all seeking is futile, for contentment and happiness are always there in the only place where they always were! Always there in the only place where we seldom look, in the heart of the seeker. A moment of enlightenment occurs with the realization that to seek is to avoid. To go, travel, look 'out there' towards anywhere, anyone or anything in the hope of finding one's inner peace, one's true contentment, one's authentic happiness is to attempt to avoid what is already present.

Perhaps that is why an ancient sage once said: "Seek not for the contentment of your heart but know that you are that contentment. Seek not for any 'thing' other than your self and you will come to know that the self cannot be sought. And when you realize that the seeker cannot be found separately from the sought, then you will know the seeker and the sought are one. And then, in the ending of your seeking, is the contentment of your heart because there YOU are."

At the very least, perhaps such wisdom has the power to help us from our travel expenses! ■

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The spiritual newsmagazine that presents the spiritual perspective on issues confronting society, suggesting how individuals can effectively deal with problems by changing their way of thinking. The magazine carries articles on a wide range of subjects, particularly spirituality, personal development, well-being, and relationships, with a healthy dose of humour included. Now in its 38th year of publication, the 12-page tabloid produced by a team of volunteers does not carry any paid advertisements and has a wide reach in more than 100 countries.

In Lighter Vein

- What kind of a car do you have? 'Pray as you enter'.
- No customer can be worse than no customer.
- The best way to get a seat in a bus is to become its driver.
- Your future depends on your dreams, so go to sleep.
- It's comforting to think we are all getting richer by charging each other more.
- Child: The father of man, but not when it's a girl.
- Conference: A meeting where people talk about things they should be doing.

Do not look for peace outside, for it lies within the soul.



Mount Abu: BK Shivani speaking during National Conference on 'Mind-Body-Medicine', at Gyan Sarovar Campus of Brahma Kumaris.



Nepal, Pokhara: BK Parneeta presenting a picture of Incorporeal God Shiva to State Minister Ms. Nardevi Pun Magar.



Aizawl: Hon'ble Mizoram Governor K. Rajasekharan being tied 'Rakhi' by BK Narmada.



Hon'ble Prime Minister of Aruba, Evelline Croes, with BK Jyoti and others.

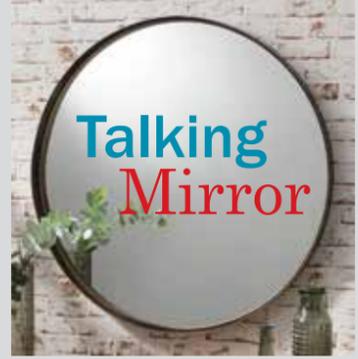


Bengaluru, Karnataka: BK Ambika with actors of 'Janamashtami' celebrations at VV Puram Centre.



Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh: BK Karuna, Media Chief of Brahma Kumaris, BK Kamal Dixit, and BK Reena at Editors Meet on 'Media and Positive Society'.

God Provides



A generous king once ruled in the land of Andhra. Every day, two beggars used to come to him for alms and he always gave them food and money.

On receiving the alms, one of them, the older one, used to say: "God provides." The other beggar, the younger of the two, would say: "Our king provides."

One day, the king gave them more money than usual, whereupon the older man cried out lustily: "God provides."

This annoyed the king, who thought: "It is I who am feeding him and he keeps saying: 'God provides'. It is time he learnt who his real benefactor is."

The next day, after he had given them alms, he asked the beggars to go by a little-used road instead of their usual one.

"I have provided for one of you," he said. "God will provide for the other."

He made sure that the one who always praised him went first. He had ordered that a purse of gold be kept on the road in the beggar's path so that he would find it.

But as the beggar walked down the road, he wondered why the king had sent him that way.

"Perhaps he wants me to enjoy the privacy of this road," he thought.

"It is indeed a beautiful road and so broad. One can walk with one's eyes closed." And he closed his eyes. As a result he missed seeing the purse.

It was spotted and picked up by the other beggar, who was coming behind him.

The next day, the king asked the beggars whether they had found anything on the road he had sent them by and he looked meaningfully at the younger man.

But the beggar shook his head. "It was a beautiful road," he said. "But I did not find anything on it."

"But I did," said the other man. "I found a purse of gold. God provides."

Now the king became even more determined to show the older beggar that he was their true benefactor. So while the beggars were going away he called the younger one back and gave him a pumpkin.

The pumpkin had been hollowed out and filled with silver coins.

But the beggar did not know that. On the way he sold it to a merchant for a few coins.

The next day the king asked the beggars if anything eventful had happened the previous day, looking meaningfully at the younger beggar.

"Nothing," said the beggar. "Except that I earned a few more coins than usual by selling the pumpkin you had so generously given me."

The king tried hard not to show his dismay. "And you?" he said to the other beggar. "Did you too earn more than usual?"

"I certainly did," said the beggar. "As I was passing by a merchant's shop he called me and gave me a pumpkin. When I went home and cut it I found that it was full of silver. As I always say, God provides." ■

Every experience is a lesson

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Wisdom of Dadi Janki

Chief of Brahma Kumaris

Now is the moment!

Now is the time to become complete with all virtues — to be completely peaceful, completely loving and completely happy. Now is the moment! Remember to never see the negative in others. Let such things not even be visible to you. Why? Because when I see the negativity in others, it stirs the negativity within me. I do not want the negativity in the world around me to enter my heart and mind. So make this commitment: I have to become full of all virtues.

Learn to be Silent Inside

We need to learn to make ourselves silent inside. Previously, many people drank water from wells at home. The water was very pure because it came from deep underground. So too, **in meditation**, we have to go very deep, becoming a still point. We will feel that cool, clean water is refreshing us, making both mind and body healthy. Then our compassion will not run dry.

When we are tired, we cannot give love. When **we dwell on other people's mistakes**, it is as if that critical consciousness weighs us down. It makes us heavy, and distances others from us. Even to say, "Oh, she is always like this" is to experience loss, because it is an act of disrespect towards the other person. Rather than dismiss them out of hand, focus on their good intentions. If you see someone sinking, reach out to them by bringing good things into their awareness, helping them not to focus on their difficulty. If we listen to them, at least our relationship will remain good.

We need **faith and trust** to keep moving forward together. Continuous ups and downs can cause us to lose faith in ourselves, such that we may feel God has turned away from us, too. Even though there is so much that is good, we let one little weakness bring us down. Especially at times like that, we must maintain



Dadi's pure love instantly pulls and gives one a deep experience of 'belonging'. Pic. shows her greeting Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje Scindia in her Cottage at the Brahma Kumaris headquarters in Shantivan, Abu Road.

deep feelings of trust, in the self and God. Then after some time, it is as if God will smile and say, "The child has turned out to be a faithful one!"

There is benefit in developing a **nature of acceptance**. It does not mean we have to agree with others all the time, but when we give respect and regard to everyone, with truthfulness, love and faith, we receive a lot of cooperation. It does not cost us anything, does it? When it comes to wanting to give respect to others, let us have a true and big heart. This practice needs to continue over a long period. ■

Sterling values of caring and loving

To be caring and loving is a very essential virtue for this world of tremendous pain, loss, grief and sorrow. People today are hurting from all manner of things. Some people have emotional pain, some people have the pain of loss of income and employment, some people carry the pain of childhood or past births, and some people carry the pain and suffering of others. Whatever the reason, let us be loving and caring towards one another.

When we feel that someone genuinely cares about us, then we feel as if we are no longer alone. With this feeling of love and care, the wounds become

healed and the situation seems to be infinitely smaller than it was before. Caring people attract others because no matter what the reason for someone else's loss, they don't see it that way. All that they see and care about is that person's well-being, his safety, his comfort, his protection or happiness. To care about other people is a good thing, because it means that we also 'step away' from our own needs for a while. It is good not to be too self-centred and worried about our own well-being. Sometimes, by being over-involved with the self, we become selfish and blind to the needs of others, whether they be creative needs, emotional needs, physical needs or the need for opportunity.

Caring has this quality. It opens the door of opportunity for other people. Especially when someone may be rather shy, introvert or have difficulty in expressing himself or asserting himself, then it is good to have caring and supportive people around. In this way, there is

always a chance that person can express his needs and have them met! After all, isn't that what we are all about as a human world family? Caring.

Have you ever seen people who seem to belong in the caring professions? Nurses, doctors, therapists and other people with this quality fortunately grace our health and welfare systems. They have to be careful, however, because it is all too easy to overload the self with other people's problems and consequently suffer from 'burnout'. Burnout comes when I can no longer differentiate my needs from someone else's needs and sometimes it happens that I adopt other people's problems to avoid looking at my own. This becomes a form of sickness, where I become dependent upon other people's problems to keep myself on a high. It is one thing to recognise that other people are considerably worse off than I am, that they are suffering or have suffered more than I do, and this keeps us from feeling sorry for

ourselves, but it is quite another thing to make a career out of the weaknesses and sickness of others. The healthy attitude is to make sure that one's own life is stable and sound, without major problem and weaknesses. ■

Pearls of Wisdom

Don't go through life, grow through life.

—Eric Butterworth

The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeing new landscapes but in having new eyes. —Proust

Anything is possible, if you don't care who gets the credit. —Harry Truman

You'll see it when you believe it. —Wayne Dyer

When true giving occurs, you have more afterwards than when you started.

—Peter Rengel

You cannot simultaneously prepare for and prevent war.

—Albert Einstein

*In order to
heal yourself,
learn to love
yourself.*

Ravana is not yet Dead

The festival of Dussehra or Vijayadashmi has a deep spiritual significance to it. On this day, people burn an effigy of Ravana, who, according to Hindu mythology, was the demon king of Lanka.

The myth goes that Ravana had abducted Sita, the consort of Lord Rama. Supported by an army of monkeys, Rama defeated Ravana and rescued Sita. The slaying of Ravana by Rama is celebrated as Dussehra.

Dussehra stands for dus (ten) + hara (conquer). Ravana is shown as a demon with ten heads, so Dussehra symbolises the conquest of ten vices, of which five are in men and five in women. The five vices are lust, anger, greed, attachment and ego.

Just as Vishnu symbolises the combined form of the perfect man and woman, Ravana represents the five vices in men and women. All men and women in this world today act on evil tendencies like lust and anger.

Ravana represents all that is evil and Rama symbolises God, who is the epitome of goodness. Normally, people burn the effigy of a living person whose actions they dislike. There would be no need to protest or burn the effigy of someone who



Every year people burn larger and larger effigies of Ravana because evil continues to grow in the present Kaliyuga.

is dead. The fact that every year people burn larger and larger effigies of Ravana points to the subtle truth that Ravana is alive and evil continues to grow in the present Kaliyuga.

Interestingly, Dussehra is also known as 'Vijayadashmi', which commemorates the tenth (dashmi) day of victory (vijaya). The victory of Rama over Ravana is symbolic of the victory of virtue over vices in men and women who follow the path of self-purification and attain spiritual perfection.

True Dussehra will be celebrated when all human beings become pure, i.e. when the vices of lust, anger, greed etc. are totally eliminated from human minds and Ravana, the symbol of evil, is defeated forever.

The great battle with vices is being led now in this present age of spiritual transformation by none other than Almighty God Shiva, who incarnates in a human medium named Prajapita Brahma.

The true knowledge that is imparted by God dispels all spiritual ignorance. He says that like Sita, all human souls have been enslaved by Ravana, i.e. by the five vices, today. Therefore, this world is like the kingdom of Ravana, where evil activities prevail in spite of so many religious teachings. But when incorporeal God, the true Rama, incarnates in the present age, He rescues the souls from the clutches of vices by giving them Godly wisdom and power. He guides them to become pure and defeat the vices.

Rajyoga meditation is the method by which the Ravana lurking in the human mind can be destroyed. It is a mental link with the Supreme, Almighty God, by remembering whom human souls regain their spiritual and moral power. They regain their *swarajya* (self-sovereignty) — control over their mind and senses — and thus conquer the Ravana within. For details, contact the local Brahma Kumaris centre in your area. ■ (Purity Bureau)

Give minimum information to media... they themselves will add spice & expand it.



Complete non-violence is not to hurt anyone even in thoughts.

RAKSHA BANDHAN PHOTOS



New York, USA: Mr. Yerkin Akhinzhanov, Dy. Ambassador of Permanent Mission to the UN, the Republic of Kazakhstan, being tied 'rakhi' by BK Gayatri Naraine.



Agartala: Hon'ble Governor of Tripura, Kaptan Singh Solanki, being tied 'rakhi' by BK Kabita.



Kohima, Nagaland: Mr. T. John LKR, IPS, DG Police, being tied 'rakhi' by BK Rupa.



New Jersey, USA: Mr. Thomas Lankey, Mayor of Edison, being tied 'rakhi' by BK Sister Dolly.

Divinity and Spirituality

What is the difference between spirituality and divinity? When there is the awareness of the existence and nature of the soul, the eternal self and the eternal and imperishable part recorded within, then this is known as spirituality. In this consciousness, there is broad-mindedness and large-heartedness, where the conflict of differences, of personality, nature, nationality, religion, age, sex, occupation and education no longer exists. Body consciousness is the opposite to soul consciousness, wherein there is constant comparison and competition on the basis of these artificial barriers.

Spirituality is the prerequisite for divinity. Divinity is that state where the self is liberated from negative states of mind, and is filled with divine virtues. The soul is not caught in the complexities of modern life, of personality traits and behaviour, but is the embodiment of peace, bliss, purity and divine wisdom.

Spirituality is the basis for overcoming conflict and separation and divinity is the method to draw the threads of divine love closer. A spiritual person will have a knowledgeable outlook on life and will be contented. There will not be the tendency to argue and question, but a natural acceptance of differences and a tolerance of attitudes and beliefs.

A divine personality will be naturally equipped with spiritual understanding, but beyond this, is able to infuse truth and beauty in every situation. Divinity is the highest state of human consciousness, and actions based on this consciousness will be sublime.

Within spirituality there is the understanding of the soul, the Supreme, the eternal drama, the three aspects of time, the genealogical tree of world religions and the three worlds.

Spirituality is the method and divinity is the fruit. The key to the future is to become spiritual and divine. ■



Shantivan : BK Brij Mohan speaking at Scientists Conference on 'Khushnuma Zindagi'. To his R & L are Gujarat BJP leader Ms. Ramilaben Bara and Mr. R.K.Ratan, Operation Vice President, Hero Cycles, Gurugram.

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Manager

It is no use having a good memory unless you have something good to remember.



Hyderabad, Shanti Sarovar: Golden Jubilee celebrations and 'Inner Space' being inaugurated by Dadi Janki, Chief of Brahma Kumaris, along with former Union Minister Bandaru Dattatreya, Dy. Chief Minister of Telangana, Md. Mohamood Ali, Chairman, Telangana Legislative Council, K. Swamy Goud, BK Kuldeep, Director, Shanti Sarovar and others.

Mr. Lazy



Mr. Lazy thinks being lazy helps him to 'take it easy'.

This means he's not alert, which gives rise to many avoidable problems of his own making.

It also means he is not accurate, which creates a lot of difficulties for him.

Mr. Lazy thinks he is carefree.

In truth, only that person can be carefree who is careful.

Actually, Mr. Lazy is careless.

Mr. Lazy thinks he's comfortable.

Life is precious and time is flying. Time spent without fruitful activity is a sheer waste. Who will take comfort in wasting away life?

Mr. Lazy believes he's light.

In practice he is always burdened, for he considers even a small job to be a big burden. He makes mountains of molehills.

Mr. Lazy says his aims are high.

Wishful thinking. If wishes were horses, beggars would ride.

Mr. Lazy is found to be busy always.

Busy building castles in the air!

Mr. Lazy always thinks ahead, he thinks of tomorrow.

Yes, he puts off until tomorrow what he can do today. And tomorrow will always remain tomorrow, it will never come.

Mr. Lazy is always hopeful.

Yet, he fails to realize that time and tide wait for none.

Who'll tell *Mr. Lazy* that actually he's being a bit **crazy!**

Tailpiece

The Japanese eat very little fat and suffer fewer heart attacks than the British or Americans. On the other hand, the French eat a lot of fat and also suffer fewer heart attacks than the British or Americans. Conclusion: Eat what you like. It's speaking English that's killing you.



■ ■
The law should be loved a little because it is felt to be just; feared a little because it is severe; hated a little because it is to a certain degree out of sympathy with the prevalent temper of the day; and respected because it is felt to be a necessity.

■ ■
The foreign tourist was walking a long distance from the hotel to the railroad station and was getting tired. Finally he asked the accompanying guide: "Say, why did they build this station so far out of town?" The guide shrugged and explained, "Wanted to get the station near the railroad."



Om Shanti Retreat Centre, Gurugram: Inaugurating the new 'Khushnaseeb Bhawan' are Dadi Janki, BK Brij Mohan, Union MoS Ms. Krishna Raj, Mrs. Salma Ansari, w/o Mr. Hamid Ansari, former Vice President of India, MM Swami Dharamdev Maharaj, BK Asha Behn, BK Gita Behn, BK Shukla Behn and others.



Past is a place of reference, not a place of residence.



St. Petersburg, Russia: BK Santosh, Brahma Kumaris Director in St. Petersburg, Mrs. Sonia Gandhi, Chairperson, United Progressive Alliance, (1st & 2nd from R) and participants in the 2nd Eurasian Women's Forum standing in silence to mark UN International Peace Day on Sept. 21.



Port of Spain, Trinidad & Tobago: BK Sisters Indira and Jasmine with former First Lady Mrs. Zalayhar Hassanali, Ms. Leela Ramdeen, Chair of Catholic Commission for Social Justice, Hetty Sargeant and others after celebrating International Day of Peace.



Mother is mother! Mother lion caressing her cubs.