

RAJYOGINI DADI JANKI - Chief of Brahma Kumaris



Overview

Dadi (Elder Sister) Janki has dedicated more than 70 years of her life to the work of the Prajapita Brahma Kumari Ishwariya Vishwa Vidyalaya (Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University) of which she is the Administrative Head. After serving throughout India in the years following independence, she moved to London, UK, in 1974 and from there her vision and drive saw the organisation's teachings carried into more than 100 countries. She has been based back in India since August 2007, at the main headquarters in Mt Abu, Rajasthan, following the passing away of Dadi Prakashmani, the former head.

Now internationally acknowledged as a great spiritual leader, Dadi's lifelong focus has been to align her mind and heart to God's will and purpose. She experiences God as a source of pure love and wisdom, and has made those qualities the foundation of her life. This spiritual strength enables her to be a beacon of light in the lives of others.

Dadi is deeply and compassionately aware of the selfish tendencies that currently afflict human relationships and affairs, and that put our world in peril. However, she is a visionary, with an unswerving optimism. "In the winter, we foresee the spring", she says. "Those with a positive vision of the future give us an image of a world on this planet where all things are given freely, where the highest human potential is fully realised." That future world is guaranteed, in Dadi's eyes, but to reach it, our consciousness has to change.

Dadi is a pioneer of a modern form of the ancient art of Raja Yoga. Through this structured and disciplined method of spiritual development, she has shown thousands of people of all backgrounds and walks of life how to regain true self-respect, to become free of addictive and negative tendencies and thereby able to contribute more to present-day society as well as a future world.

Early days

Dadi was born in 1916 in the northern Indian province of Sind, now part of Pakistan. From her earliest days, a concern for the wellbeing of others was a driving force in her life. Her childhood memories include travelling around in her father's horse and carriage to advocate the benefits of a vegetarian diet, and sitting with the sick and elderly to help lift their spirits. She spent only three years in formal education and then went on many pilgrimages in her search for truth and the understanding of the Divine.

In 1937, at the age of 21, Dadi joined the Ishwariya Vishwa Vidyalaya founded by Prajapita Brahma. Formerly known as Dada Lekhraj, Brahma Baba had been a successful jeweller whose visionary experiences as he approached the age of 60 led him to dedicate his wealth to the task of spiritual renewal. One of his insights was that women, who at that time were granted few rights of self-determination, represented a huge, under used spiritual resource. Between 1937 and 1951 a community of nearly 400 was formed, comprised mostly of women.

The community devoted this time to intense spiritual endeavour. The exploration of soul consciousness in meditation awakened a deeper awareness of the original and eternal identity as a source of all spiritual attainments. The practice of remembrance of God was mastered as the method for self transformation.

This period laid the foundation of a life of freedom from the limitations imposed on women at that time. Despite the joy they experienced at their new-found liberation, conditions were sometimes daunting and Dadi's role demanded hard physical work as well as sensitivity and skill, as she was appointed nurse to this group of pioneers. She was helped by the fact that through much of her life she had endured a series of illnesses that both tested and helped her to develop and refine her ability to conquer physical infirmity.

Service abroad

In 1974, Dadi left India to carry the teachings overseas. She based herself in London, now the International Co-ordinating Office of the BKs. Through word of mouth and personal experience, others soon realized that the spiritual university's core teaching, of regaining self-reliance through understanding and connection with the Supreme, was a need of the times in Western society. Many have experienced that an over-emphasis on material success has led to spiritual poverty and a decline in the higher values that spring from our spiritual roots.

Through Dadi's guidance and inspiration, centres teaching Raja Yoga now exist in more than 100 countries. Regular students carry the benefits received into their family and workplace. Teachers offer free courses in meditation, positive thinking, self-esteem and other self-development tools, as well as conducting programmes in hospitals, offices, schools, prisons and in other community contexts.

Dadi has also led the development of several international projects promoting vision, values and action at grass-roots level. The Brahma Kumaris maintain a strong presence and contribution at the United Nations, and Dadi served as one of the Keepers of Wisdom, an advisory group of eminent spiritual and religious leaders, at the UN Earth Summit in Rio, Brazil and at Habitat II in Istanbul, Turkey.

In 1997, the Janki Foundation for Global Health Care was established and launched in her honour in London. A charitable trust, it supports the work of the Global Hospital and Research Centre in Mt Abu, Rajasthan, as well as promoting greater awareness of holistic health and the spiritual dimension of health care world-wide.

Dadi has promoted inter-religious understanding and co-operation throughout her life. She is a Patron of the World Congress of Faiths and a member of the Global Peace Initiative of Women Religious and Spiritual Leaders. In December 2003 she was invited as a spiritual resource to be part of a small delegation of religious leaders who took part in dialogues in Jerusalem, Gaza and Ramallah, to help build trust and develop joint initiatives between Palestinian and Israeli women.

Now in her nineties, Dadi still travels extensively, enabling leaders from the worlds of politics, religion, medicine, science, education and other fields, as well as individuals at every level of society, to absorb spiritual strength by renewing their own link with the divine.

Among her many honours, in 2004 Dadi was awarded the Grand Cordon of the first order of Al Istiklal (the Medal of Independence) by HM King Abdullah II of Jordan in recognition of her humanitarian service to the world.

Published books

- *Wings of Soul* (Health Communications, Inc, USA, 2000)
- *Pearls of Wisdom* (Health Communications, Inc, USA, 2000)

- *Companion of God* (BKIS, London, 1999; Hodder & Stoughton, UK, 2003)
- *Inside Out* (BKIS, London, 2003)

Highlights

2007

- Appointed Administrative Head, Brahma Kumaris, 27 August
- Keynote speaker at Centre of Excellence in Women's Health, San Francisco, USA
- Secrets of Transformation programme with Rev Michael Moran, Senior Minister of Sacramento's Spiritual Life Centre

2006

- Robin Gibb (formerly of Bee Gees) sings new song, Mother of Love, dedicated to Dadi Janki for her 90th birthday and was performed at launch of Just-a-Minute initiative, London
- *I know how TO LIVE and I know how TO DIE*, public event with Dr Andrew Powell, Oxford, UK

2005

- Appointed patron of World Congress of Faiths
- Keynote speaker at *BE THE CHANGE*, three-day seminar in London
- *COURAGE OF CONSCIENCE AWARD*, Cambridge, Mass., USA
- Guest speaker, *WHAT THE BLEEP DO WE KNOW?* conference, Miami, USA
- *KASHI HUMANITARIAN AWARD* presented by Ma Jaya, USA
- Keynote speech, *II International Congress of Mothers*, Om Shanti Retreat Centre, Delhi (in conjunction with MAMA organisation, Moscow, Russia)

2004

- Awarded the Grand Cordon of the first order of Al Istiklal (the Medal of Independence) by HM King Abdullah II of Jordan in recognition of her humanitarian service to the world

2003

- *World Council of Religious Leaders* executive meeting, Jerusalem
- Helps launch *The Women's Partnership for Peace in the Middle East*, under auspices of the Global Peace Initiative of Women Religious & Spiritual Leaders, Oslo, Norway
- *Through the Brain Barrier* dialogue with Prof Colin Blakemore and Dr Peter Fenwick, Sheldonian Theatre, Oxford
- *Companion of God* published by Hodder & Stoughton, UK

2002

- Joined HRH The Prince of Wales and other spiritual leaders in launching *Respect, It's About Time*, an interfaith initiative, Birmingham, UK
- Addressed Second UN World Assembly on Aging, Madrid
- Led delegation to UN World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg
- Participant in convening *The Global Peace Initiative of Women Religious & Spiritual Leaders*, an outcome of Millennium World Peace Summit, at UN's Palais des Nations, Geneva

2000

- Health Communications, Inc., USA, publish *Wings of Soul* and *Pearls of Wisdom* **1999**
- Led delegation to UN World Summit on Social Development, Geneva
- Panelist and presenter at Geneva 2000 Forum, Switzerland, on Human Aspects of Social Integration
- Head of Brahma Kumaris delegation and presenter, Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders, UN General Assembly Hall, New York
- Plenary presenter, State of the World Forum, New York

1997

- *Janki Foundation for Global Health Care* launched in UK **1996**
- Led delegation to Habitat II, UN Conference on Human Settlements, Istanbul, Turkey. Addressed world governments on need for people-centred development, and pivotal role of human and spiritual values for survival
- Helped inspire *Living Values: an Educational Initiative*, launched in consultation with representatives from Educational Cluster of UNICEF, providing guiding principles and tools for development of the whole child. Kit for educators now being implemented in 60 countries
- Speaker, *State of the World Forum*, San Francisco, USA
- Launch of *Companion of God* in Chinese, to audience of 5,000 in Singapore
- Initiated *Young Women of Wisdom* project in honour of UNICEF's 50th anniversary to celebrate the Girl Child, developing self-esteem and dignity in young women across the globe

1995

- Led delegation to UN Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, China
- Launched *Sharing our Values for a Better World*, a world-wide project promoting values-centred development in politics, science, education and health

1993

- Hosted UK launch of the Year of Inter-religious Understanding and Co-operation, bringing together 600 people from all faiths and communities
- Elected Vice-President of the World Congress of Faiths
- Opening of Global Retreat Centre, Oxford, UK

1992

- Participates in *Keepers of Wisdom*, a group of spiritual and religious leaders convened to advise political leaders on spiritual dilemmas underpinning global environmental issues, UN Earth Summit, Rio

1991

- Opening of Global Co-operation House, London, as international co-ordinating office for Brahma Kumaris worldwide, and serving local communities through people-centred educational programmes

1988

- Launched *Global Co-operation for a Better World*, first UN Peace Messenger Initiative, at House of Lords, London. Project involves people of all walks of life, from street children to Prime Ministers, in 129 countries, in variety of self help community projects

1986

- Launched *Million Minutes of Peace Appeal*, largest non-fundraising project for UN International Year of Peace, with activities in 88 countries. Project recognised with seven UN Peace Messenger awards

1983

- Appointed Co-administrative Head of Brahma Kumaris

1974-present

- Overseeing expansion of work of Ishwariya Vishwa Vidyalaya into more than 100 countries, demonstrating the universality of spiritual truths and human nature across cultures of East and West
- Travelled to more than 100 countries visiting community projects, addressing major conferences and events and meeting world leaders in many fields, including religion, politics and science

1951 - 1974

- One of few women spiritual leaders in India (and the world), establishing teaching centres across the country, empowering individuals to bring spiritual values into their lives and women in particular to develop self-reliance and leadership skills

1937 - 1951

- Training in leadership skills which, for women, was an unprecedented challenge to social conventions of the time. In charge of health care and general nurse for early Brahma Kumaris community

1937

- Joined Ishwariya Vishwa Vidyalaya, at that time a 400-strong community of mainly women

1916

- Born in the northern Indian province of Sind (now part of Pakistan)