

Point of View

Consider everything that happens to be beneficial. Even if it looks bad, there is always benefit. Patience and humility enable us to remain peaceful.

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

Eternity moves from Absolute to Absolute

Anything that is not qualified or diminished in any way is said to be absolute. It is a law of nature that nothing in this world remains in an absolute state forever. Time wears down matter and living beings, and they change or, ultimately, cease to exist. But whatever ceases to exist takes a new form; new saplings emerge from the seeds of a tree that has withered and died.

The human soul transitions from a state of absolute purity and truth to one of total impurity before it undergoes rejuvenation.

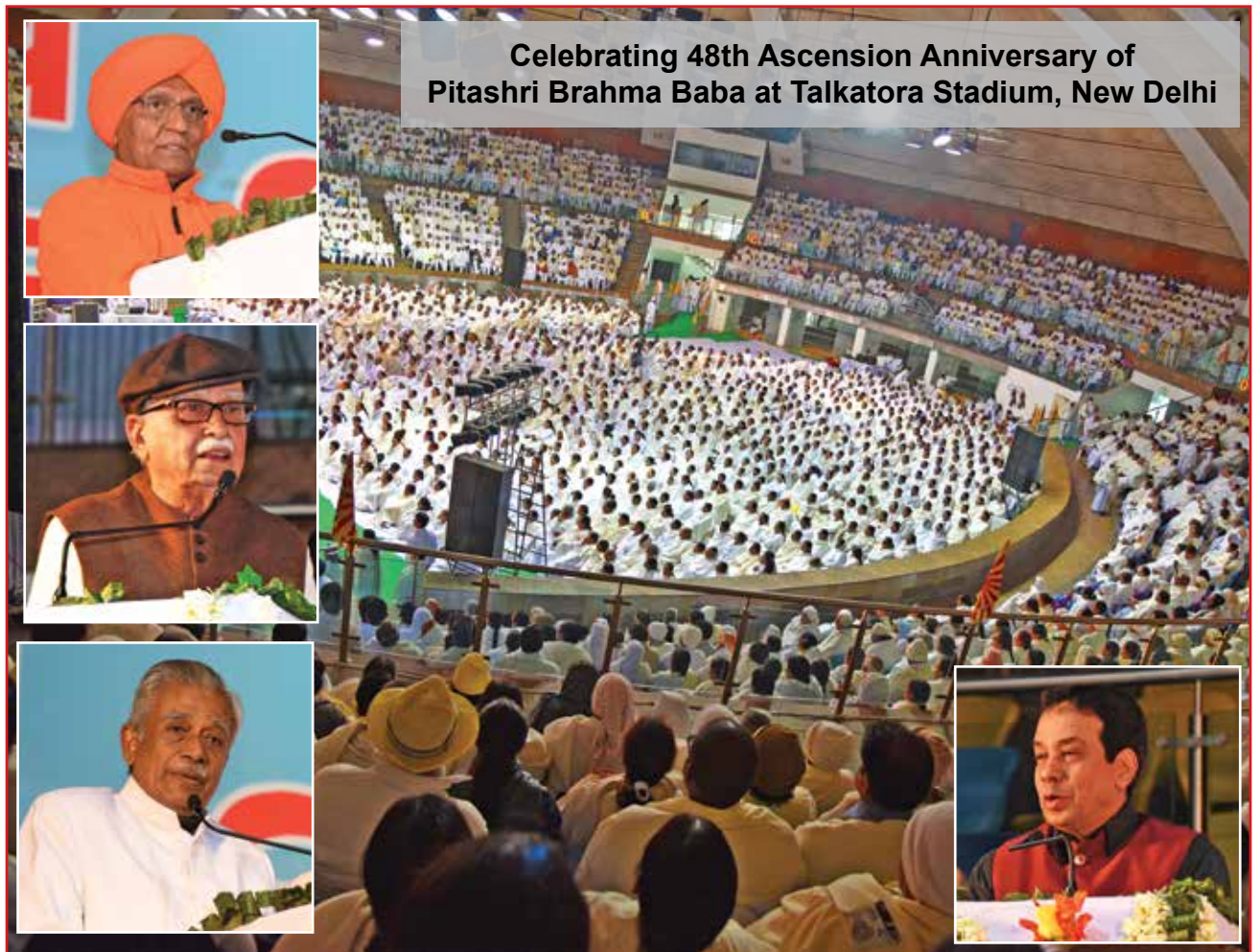
When the soul begins to play its part in this world, it is in its original, complete state. It expresses its innate virtues, such as truth, peace and love. However, as the soul comes in contact with other souls and matter, it gets influenced by them.

Just as an object starts to wear out once it is put to use, the soul gradually loses its power and virtues over successive lives. From its pristine state it reaches a condition where it has virtues as well as vices in varying degrees. The thoughts, words and actions of the soul are informed by this inner state. The drop in the quality of its consciousness is reflected in the soul's actions, and the fruits thereof. Then, a time comes when the soul's original qualities are completely subdued by vices. At that point, the soul can be said to be absolutely impure or false, because it is totally lacking its true qualities. But this absolute state is not its original state, and once there, the soul must undergo rejuvenation.

The passage of human souls from absolute truth to absolute falsehood is manifested in many ways. The period when souls are completely true, or pure, is called Satyug, or the age of truth, which occurs at the beginning of the cycle of time. In that age, the elements of nature are pure and unpolluted, there is no falsehood or deceit, and all is as it should be.

Since there is no impurity of any kind, living beings and matter show their best qualities and exist in harmony with each other. There is no adulteration, dilution, or make-believe. Even make-up does not exist in that age, as humans are endowed with natural beauty and feel no need to show themselves as different from the way they look.

Later, as the souls' true nature is laced with other qualities, falsehood appears in human lives in various forms: lies, fiction and false



Celebrating 48th Ascension Anniversary of Pitashri Brahma Baba at Talkatora Stadium, New Delhi

On the 48th Ascension Anniversary of Pitashri Brahma Baba, 5000 Brahma Kumars and Kumaris did collective meditation for four hours. 'Spiritual Brotherhood Day' was celebrated with Mr. L.K. Advani, Senior BJP Leader, Swami Agnivesh, Social Activist, Mr. D.R. Kaarthikeyan, former Director, CBI, and Rev. E.I. Malekar, Head Priest, Judah Hyam Synagogue, as distinguished speakers.

appearances. Change in the quality of fiction over the centuries, from inspiring and instructive stories to classic novels and then pulp fiction, is also, in a way, an indicator of the decline experienced by human souls over time.

The move from a real to an increasingly unreal world is also apparent in the evolution of popular means of entertainment, with plays losing audiences to movies, which, in turn, are facing stiff competition from video games.

While a play, which is but a dramatized depiction of real or imaginary events, has some element of reality in that one can see the actors on stage, movies merely show images of people, places and events. The props, sets and special effects are all meant to create images that have little or no relation to the real world. And the worth of an actor is measured by how much they can dissolve their identity to become a completely different person on screen.

Video games take us further away from reality, with most of them being animation. But virtual reality, by its very name, appears to signal

the culmination of the human soul's 'progression' from absolute truth to total untruth. The computer-generated simulation of three-dimensional images or environments can be interacted with in a seemingly real or physical way. Though current users of virtual reality can experience unwanted symptoms such as headache, nausea and disorientation, experts foresee more and more people spending time in 'virtual space' in future.

Advances in communications technology have made all this possible, but it is increasingly being recognised that real interpersonal communication is suffering, with people spending time interacting with gadgets rather than with other human beings.

In more mundane areas of life, too, the pure and natural has been replaced by tainted and synthetic variants. Earlier, all food used to be organic. But today such food is an expensive luxury beyond the reach of most people unless they grow it themselves. Produce containing agrochemical traces is the most commonly available choice for the masses, who are told that what they are eating is poisoned, but it is still

safe for human consumption.

Genetically modified crops represent another step away from natural food, and experts say that if agricultural production fails to keep pace with population growth, synthetic foods, which contain nutrients required by the human body and are produced in labs, might be the foods of the future. Synthetic organisms are already being created in labs, and biological products derived from these creatures are being used in consumer goods such as soaps and lotions.

The artificial world we live in is a creation of souls who have lost touch with their original qualities. When the souls become empty of these qualities, it is time for their rejuvenation. The Supreme Soul, who is ever-pure and unchanging, awakens in them the memory of who they really are, and teaches them to connect with Him so that they can regain their strength and become whole again. Souls who carry out this self-transformation become instrumental in bringing about a similar change in the world, once again ushering in Satyug, the age of absolute truth.★

(Purity Features)

Photo Gallery

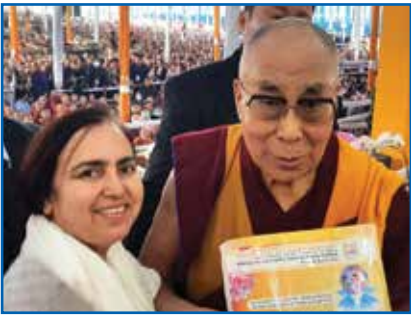
Sweet words are like moisture to dry skin.



Bali, Indonesia: BK Sister Janaki with His Excellency Mr. R.O. Sunil Babu, Consul General of India in Bali, and other dignitaries during Republic Day celebrations at the Indian Consulate in Denpasar.



Abu, Shantivan : Rajyogini Dadi Janki, Chief of Brahma Kumaris was greeted on her 100th birthday with a garland of 100 different flowers. The garland was included in 'Wonder Book of Records International, London'. BK Deepak giving certificate to Dadiji.



Patna: BK Dr. Binny giving an invitation for Abu to His Holiness The Dalai Lama.



Hyderabad, Shanti Sarovar: At a seminar of political leaders on the theme 'Re-establishing Golden Era' are Mr. Madhusudana Chary, Speaker, Telangana Legislative Assembly, Mr. Swamy Goud, Chairman, Telangana Legislative Council, Ms. Kavita, MP, Mr. Gandhi, MLA, Gachibowli constituency, BK Brij Mohan, Chairperson, Politicians' Service Wing, Justice V. Eshwaraiiah, former Chairman, Nation Council of Backward Classes, BK Lakshmi didi, BK Usha didi & BK Kuldeep didi.



Om Shanti Retreat Centre, Gurugram: BK Brij Mohan giving a talk to doctors and executives of Max Hospital. Also seen on stage are BK Asha didi, BK Shivani and BK Usha.



Moscow, Russia: BK Sudha, Director, Brahma Kumaris Center, with other dignitaries after addressing a conference on Children's Safety and Prevention of Children's Road Traffic Injustice, at the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation.



New Delhi: At an "Interfaith Meet" organized by Mr. B.K. Modi, Chairman, Spice Global, and social entrepreneur, BK Sapna with other Religious Leaders.



Abu, Manmohini Complex: Dadi Janki speaking during National Conference of IT Professionals. Also in pic. are BK Dr Nirmala didi, BK Nirwair bhai, Mr. Mukesh Sharma, CEO, QA Infotech, Mr. Alok Agarwal, Vice President, Genpact, & BK Yashwant.

India Gate, New Delhi: Mr. Ashok Gajapathi Raju, Hon'ble Minister of Civil Aviation, with BK Satish behn, BK Bheem bhai and BK Motilal bhai during a 'Road Safety Walk' organized by Union Ministry of Road, Transport and Highways.

Pathway to God

The quest for God by humans has led to the birth of many ideologies, ways of worship, scriptures, pilgrimages and faiths. God has been the most sought after yet elusive and mysterious entity for humans to understand and define.

When it comes to understanding God and the paths to reach him there are several views. Adherents of different faiths believe that the path prescribed in their faith by their preceptor or scripture is 'the path' to reach God and salvation. Some believe in devotion, some in renunciation, some in service and good karma and some others in knowledge and meditation as the path to God.

We have often heard people say that there may be distinctions between various religions, but if you strip them down to their essentials, all religions fundamentally teach the same thing. In other words, all spiritual paths lead up the same mountain because all religions basically teach the brotherhood and the sisterhood of men and women and the universal fatherhood of God.

The *Rig Veda* says: "There is one reality, the wise call it by many names; there is one truth, reached by many paths."

"As men approach Me, so I receive them. All paths, Arjuna, lead to Me, says the *Bhagavad Gita*.

Confucius said, "In the world there are many different roads, but the destination is the same. There are a hundred deliberations but the result is one."

The idea of all paths leading to God gained currency in the light of religious intolerance and conflicts in the name of God. Many religious and social leaders advocated harmony by promoting acceptance and tolerance towards different ideologies and religious belief systems.

"God can be realized through all paths. All religions are true. The important thing is to reach the roof. You can reach it by stone stairs or by wooden stairs or by bamboo steps or by a rope. You can also climb up by a bamboo pole," said Ramakrishna.

Everyone says that God is one and truth is one. Then why do we have so many messengers, so many paths and different messages? God's messages should have unified all humans instead of dividing them. God's message establishes true *dharma* on earth. Hundreds of religious heads have come on earth and preached about *dharma*, but there never was more *adharma* in the world than in the world we now live in.

The root problem in the quest for God is that not only are people confused about the right path to reach God, but they are also confused about the destination, i.e. about the reality of God Himself. There are as many beliefs about God as there are faiths. Some say that God is omnipresent, some say that God manifests as various deities or *avatars*, while others say that God is in Heaven, and still others believe that God does not exist.

We can find a perfect path only if the destination or goal is known. If we are not sure about the destination itself, the question of choosing a path does not arise. If God is everywhere, there is no need to reach Him or find Him. If the images or idols we worship are God, then again, why are we still suffering?

The preceptors of major religions came in



Rashtrapati Bhawan, New Delhi: Mr. Pranab Mukherjee, H.E. President of India, being greeted by BK Pushpa didi, BK Rama and others.

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the Copper Age and early Iron Age, when moral degradation, religious bigotry and exploitation had become the order of the day. The religious fathers provided a new leadership that was based on high moral values and a strong belief in God and good actions. All of them urged their followers to eschew vices and treat everyone with respect and compassion. However, their message has gone unheeded and humans have continued to fall into deeper moral and spiritual decadence.

Who can salvage humanity at such a critical hour? Only God can guide humanity from such an 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.

Human beings, howsoever great, are in the bondage of certain limitations, such as those of space and time. All saints and preceptors took birth in a human body and manifested their wisdom and power in their respective areas of influence. God is ever incorporeal. Since He has no body of His own He has no selfish desires or motives. He is unlimited in wisdom, virtues and

powers. He is beyond the limitation of space and time; He has knowledge of all worlds and all time. He is the Supreme Father of all souls; He belongs to all and yet has no attachments.

God's coming is always connected to dire times on earth. His role is to be benevolent, merciful and transformational. Different faiths talk of different times of God's coming. In the *Bhagavad Gita*, God says that He incarnates to re-establish true *dharma* and righteousness on earth and finish *adharma* or unrighteousness. The present period is *Sangamyuga*, when God imparts truth about Himself, human souls and the world drama through a human medium, Prajapita Brahma. He transforms humans into pure divine beings and re-establishes *Satyuga*. This is the only time in the whole cycle of human existence when we can know God, learn from Him and attain Godly inheritance of true peace, joy, love and harmony. It is now or never.*

(Purity Features)

Pearls of Wisdom

- Act quickly, think slowly.
- Let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak.
- To improve your aim — improve yourself.
- Look to God alone; "It shall be done."
- Wisdom is knowing what to do next, virtue is doing it.
- Discipline is a kind of order that sets you free.
- The principal part of faith is patience.
- Nine-tenth of wisdom is being wise in time.
- From what we get, we make a living; what we give, however, makes a life.



Attitude changes everything

BK Aruna Ladva, Kuwait

Attitude can be seen as something negative, or something 'cool' and desirable – depending upon your attitude of course!

Originally the word referred to a person's disposition or manner, but in a modern context it has also come to infer boldness, brashness or arrogance.

But without getting into the psychology of this stuff, in fact, everyone has an attitude at any given time. It just depends whether it is obvious to everyone or not. You can deduce a person's attitude from their choice of words, their mannerisms, or how they treat other people.

Someone may be a good person at heart, but their undertone could be one of being superior, 'better than thou', and of always being busy and not having time for others. It is likely that you may respond kindly to their good aspects, but that you may dislike them for their attitude.

An attitude is a position someone takes on something. So I could perhaps have a feeling that everyone is lazy around here, because no work seems to be getting done. That may create in me an attitude of irritation and disdain, and will determine the way I interpret their actions, and the way I speak to them – probably with contempt or condemnation. If, on



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the other hand I take the position that everyone is good at heart and they are trying their best, then my positive attitude will mean that my behaviour towards them is more likely to be of appreciation, respect and encouragement.

Another example. If I feel that my job is a waste of time, that it serves no purpose, it is meaningless, then I will start to resent it. I will begin to hate going to work every day and I will make the least effort to make any contribution to the company, my performance, or ethic. If, on the other hand, I feel that the job is okay for the time being, it is bringing in the money for me to survive, and

in the meantime I am getting work experience, then, even though it is not the ideal job for me, I will make the most of it and go to work joyfully and with an attitude of gratitude.

Of course the ego plays a big part in our positioning. The ego usually believes itself to be right and deems others to be wrong. We need to be wary of the ego and of creating false positions such as I am the best and I am right and I am perfect. Because from this lens, no one else can ever be right, and I will continue living in a bubble of illusion!

An interesting exercise is to sit at a table and draw a number three ('3'). The person sitting on your

right will see it as a 'W'. The person sitting on your left will say it is an 'M'. Finally, the one on the opposite side will see it as an Arabic 4 (if they understand Arabic!). So it's all a matter of perspective. It's not only you who are right, but all of you.

Taking on a certain attitude is like wearing certain coloured goggles. When I have the green ones on, I am convinced that everything is green. And when I am wearing the red ones, then everything is red; it can't possibly be green.

In fact, the situation is what it is; it's my attitude that makes all the difference to creating a happy, peaceful, joyous life, or one that is dreary and full of pain and misery. So it's totally up to me. And what's more, people are very likely to live up... or live down... to the attitude I have of them.

Can I change my attitude? Certainly I can. I need the wisdom to realise whether the attitude I am holding is serving me or not, whether it is winning me love, friendship, support or not. Sometimes it may be something as simple as a shift in my way of thinking that will change my attitude. Perhaps trying to see the same thing from someone else's perspective can help me to shift mine.

It's time... to shift my attitude.★

You Ask... We Reply

Send your questions to purity@bkivv.org

T. Mohan, Madurai

■ When does need turn into greed?

■ People nowadays are constantly shelled with external stimuli that create desires. These desires are not necessarily needs, although we may feel as if they are. For instance, if a person says, 'I need to purchase an upgraded version of a mobile phone', or, 'I need to purchase an expensive car,' usually these desires are not needs but greed. Hence, there is a very thin line between need and greed, which is often hidden or not visible. The distinction between the two is as shown in a short story. Once, a monk was walking through a forest. He was hungry. He saw three thieves sharing their loot. He went up to them. The thieves offered him food. He accepted and ate two chapattis. When a thief

offered him a third, he declined to take it and said, 'I cannot accept it, as you are a thief.' The story reveals that need can be delineated as something that a person requires or desires to live a comfortable life. However, greed is a desire that has gone out of control and can never be satiated. It is the desire to possess more than one needs or deserves. The greedier a person becomes, the more he wants. Excessive desire or need for something can be considered greed. As per the famous quote by M.K. Gandhi, "there is sufficiency in the world for man's need, but not for man's greed."

Sunita Sharma, Ludhiana

■ I don't feel good because I have to live with people whom I don't like because of their bad manners.

■ Dislike or hatred is a form of anger, which is a big weakness. Just as one keeps away from the fire of anger to be safe from the heat, so also hatred distances you from those you dislike. For the sake of your own happiness, you have to have good feelings for all, without any exception. So, follow the good old saying, 'forgive and forget'. One has to love all in a detached way, but avoidance or disliking is not the same thing as having a detached relationships.

Rahul Rai, Nagpur

■ What is the sign of a true Karma Yogi?

■ He will perform each and every action in a blissful state, in remembrance of God.

Somnath Mukherji, Kolkata

■ Why is there so much confusion about God?

■ Confusion arises when the destination and the way are not clear. Humans cannot know God, the Creator, which leads to so many views. It's like the experiences of the blind persons who went to 'see' an elephant. Clarity comes at the end of Kaliyuga (Iron Age), the present, when incorporeal God Shiva descends on earth in the human body of Prajapita Brahma and reveals the truth about Himself and the story of creation. ★



Blankets being distributed by Dadi Ratan Mohini to workers of Shantivan complex of the Brahma Kumaris Headquarters in Abu.

Shiva and Shivratri

Shivratri is celebrated every year on the 14th night of the waning cycle of the moon in the month of Phalgun in the Hindu calendar, corresponding to late February or early March.

Shiva holds a special place in the Hindu pantheon, being referred to as the Supreme Soul whereas the other figures are called deities, as indicated in the prayer, 'Brahma devaya namah, Vishnu devaya namah... Shiv paramatmaya namah'.

Unlike the deities, who have a physical form, Shiva is represented by a Shivlingam because He is always incorporeal. Since Shiva has no creator, his name carries the suffix 'Shambhu', which is short for 'Swayambhu', or one who manifests on his own. Since He is unchanging and eternal, He is also called 'Sadashiv'.

It is at midnight that worshippers mark the divine descent of God Shiva, because He comes to this world when it is enveloped in the darkness of ignorance, whereby everyone has forgotten their true identity, that they are souls. People instead think that they are bodies - a belief that gives rise to vices such as lust, ego and greed, which are the root cause of human suffering. Shivratri is not about one night but the entire period of unrighteousness, i.e. the latter half of the cycle of time.

This black period is referred to as the night of Brahma in some Hindu texts. It covers the duration of the Copper and Iron ages, when

souls have lost touch with their innate virtues and consequently suffer. In contrast, during the Golden and Silver ages, called the day of Brahma, souls are in their pure state. As the souls lose their power, they are unable to resist vices, which drive them to act in evil ways. When they have touched the nadir in their spiritual downfall, and impiety prevails everywhere, the souls call out for salvation.

Just as the sun dispels the darkness of night, God Shiva, the sun of knowledge, drives away evil from the world. He does this by reminding humans that they are spiritual beings. He tells them that they are His children, and that their sorrow and suffering would end if they remained aware of being souls and remembered Him, the Almighty. This remembrance empowers the soul, enabling it to break the grip of vices.

In the Dharma Samhita of Shiv Puran, it is stated that at the end of Kaliyug (Iron Age), a magnificent light revealed itself, blindingly luminous and radiant. The world was created through this light, it is said.

Shiva, whose name literally means 'the benefactor', actually creates a new, spiritual consciousness that acts as the seed from which a righteous world order emerges. In this process the old order is swept away, and those who act on God's teachings become His instruments in sustaining the rejuvenated world.

Shivratri, in effect, commemorates the rejuvenation



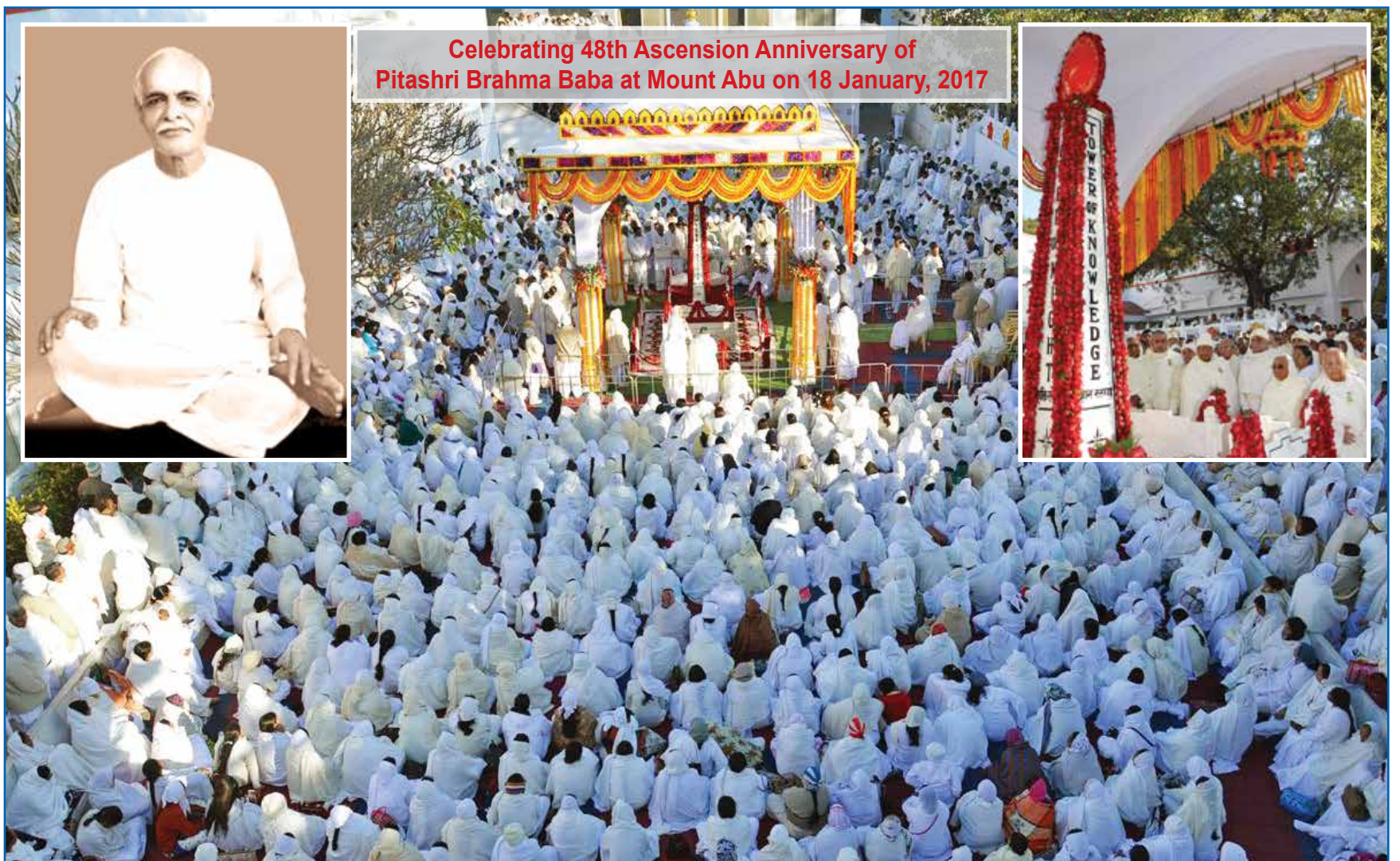
Shivratri, in effect, commemorates the rejuvenation of the world carried out by God Shiva. He comes to this world when it is enveloped in the darkness of ignorance.

of the world carried out by God Shiva. The 'tripundi', the three lines on the Shivlingam, signifies the tasks of creation, destruction and sustenance performed by God. They also symbolise his titles of 'trinetri' or one who has the third eye of wisdom, 'trilokinath', the master of the three worlds, and 'trikaldarshi', the one who knows the past, present and future.

Today, when the world is witnessing growing violence and suffering, it would be apt to take

our Shivratri celebrations beyond mere rituals. Following the directions of Shiva, the benefactor, on this occasion we can do our bit to dispel gloom from the planet by banishing some of the evil that lurks within us. A small first step could be to give up petty ways of thinking, and be more accommodating and generous to those who are less fortunate than us. This will help remove many sorrows and create a kinder society.★

(Purity Bureau)



Editorial

Dangers of Growing Nuclear Deterrence

In the past few months, many countries have reaffirmed and demonstrated their plans to enhance their military might. Recently, India successfully tested an intercontinental ballistic missile, which, once formally inducted, will make the country a part of the select group of nations to have such a weapon.

When any country makes a major advance in enhancing its defence capabilities, the news is met with applause by its people, and they find comfort in the added sense of security it provides. The state's custodians feel invincible as they pride themselves on the improved deterrence level thus achieved.

These responses are rooted in the rationale that a powerful country is safe from external threats as others are wary of meddling with it for fear of an equal or stronger retaliatory action. This checks other nations from misusing their power against it, thereby strategically strengthening its position. But the fact is that the idea of deterrence, especially in this particular regard, is both dangerous and flawed due to the sheer irony of the state of things.

The illusion of defence remains only as long as these weapons sit in the stockpile. It is their disuse that is the source of security and not otherwise. This holds true for all countries, irrespective of their rank in the global military hierarchy. Going by the nature of weapons in their arsenal, it would be impossible for any nation or region to remain immune from the immeasurable human cost that would be incurred in case these were used.

We should ask ourselves the difficult question – how long can growing deterrence last? It is obvious that anything created will eventually fulfil its purpose one day. And then, irrespective of who started it, the fire will engulf everyone. What we refer to as means of defence are weapons of mass destruction that constantly threaten our common security.

When a country flaunts its latest weaponry, others are unsettled until they develop a potent counterattack mechanism or have upped their game in some respect. Watching this, many others follow suit. In this manner, a dangerous arms race is sparked off, creating an environment of suspicion and uncertainty. Thus, by diverting humongous amounts from our treasury in the name of deterrence, we are involuntarily sealing our own fate.

Our planet is now sitting on a pile of ammunition that is waiting to explode, and can blow it up many times over. Humanity is hanging precariously on the edge; a disagreement between nations, involvement of a rogue element, or just an accident can escalate into a disaster of unimaginable magnitude.

We rightly recognised after the two world wars that if a third one were to happen, the winner and loser would both suffer the same fate. That is why we built a platform like the United Nations, and collaborations such as the Non Aligned Movement, with the aim of consciously diffusing political tensions and creating an international environment of goodwill. We advocated non-proliferation of weapons and campaigned for no first use of nuclear weapons.

But despite our good intentions, we never really altered our course of action. Though we continued to rally behind peace on the international stage, at home we all strived to outdo each other in the arms race. That is why we are heading for the same scenario that we have been trying to avert.

For our own sake, our approach, both in words and deed, must be to build a world which is safe for all. Instead of scaring each other with our military might, we must make consolidated efforts to nurture a culture of mutual respect, cooperation and positive exchange. This will prove to be a far better deterrent, both reliable and inexpensive, and good for everyone's health.

Looking at our interests in isolation causes conflict, and keeping a collective vision of one human family guides us to take the right decisions. Let's choose wisely because our choices are crucial to our very existence. ★

Gleanings from the press

Richest 1% own 58% of total wealth in India

In a sign of rising income inequality, India's richest one per cent now hold a huge 58 per cent of the country's total wealth – higher than the global figure of about 50 per cent, a new study shows. The study, released by charitable group Oxfam, says that just 57 billionaires in India now have wealth (\$216 billion) equal to that of the bottom 70 per cent of the country's population. The study said there are 84 billionaires in India, with a collective wealth of \$248 billion. (PTI)

Massive Antarctic ice shelf ready to break

A gigantic chunk of ice that is breaking away from West Antarctica is now attached to its parent ice shelf by just a thread, scientists report. Covering 5,000 sq. km. and nearly 100 storeys-deep, the formation is poised to snap off from Larsen C ice shelf, creating "one of the largest icebergs ever recorded", the researchers said in a statement. (AFP)

76% of human beings have excess body fat

About 5.5 billion people — up to 76 per cent of the world's population — are 'overfat', warn researchers who say the new pandemic has quietly overtaken the planet. The researchers, including those from Auckland University of Technology in New Zealand, put forth a specific notion of 'overfat', a condition of having sufficient excess body fat to impair health. (PTI)

Bhoola Bhai

And our friend Bhoola Bhai on Mandir Marg observes that rampant corruption is eating into the vitals of our society, and the benefits of welfare schemes are not reaching the underprivileged. Top priority needs to be given to the revival of spiritual values by those in authority if development in true sense is sought to be achieved.

Button-sized batteries to power cars, devices

Scientists have developed a button-sized garnet-based rechargeable battery that may power vehicles, electronics and grids by storing renewable energy. The battery developed at the University of Calgary in Canada is chemically stable, non-flammable and can operate safely at a higher voltage than existing batteries. "The new technology would enable absolutely stable, robust, safe, high-powered, all solid-state lithium batteries for future energy storage", said the scientists' team leader. (PTI)

Facebook can make us more narrow-minded

Facebook may actually make us more narrow-minded because we seek out news and views that tally with our opinions, according to a new study which contradicts the belief that social media sites expand our world. It shows that social media isolates us, creating and facilitating confirmation biases and echo chambers where old information is just regurgitated over and over again. (Times of India)

Well done
is better than
Well said.



Godly Spiritual Knowledge imparted by Brahma Kumaris

Body and Soul

(Continued from last month)

Mind, Intellect and 'Sanskars' are not separate from the soul

The three faculties of the soul, namely mind, intellect and sanskars, are not separate from the soul. These are the soul's intrinsic, inherent and subjective powers which make it a live and sentient entity as distinguished from matter, which is insentient and objective in character. The functions of desiring, contemplating, judging and experiencing cannot be performed by insentient elements of nature, which constitute the human body.

Therefore, the mind and intellect, which perform these functions, are not physical organs. The very thinking and realization by the soul that "I am a soul" also shows that the mind and intellect, i.e. the powers of thinking, realizing and experiencing, are an integral part of the soul. If they were physical objects, they could not possibly conceive the fact that 'I am a soul'. 'sanskars' are earned by the soul from one birth to another. As a matter of fact, the soul gets the next birth on the basis of its previous birth. This shows that 'sanskars' also are not physical or material objects but a faculty of the soul which determines the entire field of its activity in space and time.

Just as electricity, an insentient power, performs various functions of lighting, heating, cooling and moving, the soul, a sentient power, performs the different functions of desiring, thinking and experiencing (through the mind) and deliberating, discriminating and judging (through the intellect).

The Thought Process

On the basis of 'sanskars', thoughts originate in the mind. Thoughts have a tendency to translate themselves into action. When thoughts originate, there are four possibilities: good thoughts may be put into action, good thoughts may not be put into action, bad thoughts may be put into action,

or bad thoughts may not be put into action. In each one of these situations of doing or not doing, the intellect comes into operation and gives the decision. Situations thus determined leave a mark on the soul. That mark or impression is known as Sanskar. The 'sanskars', in turn, become the basis of further thoughts and the cycle is set a-rolling.

Why do habits die hard?

Formation of 'sanskars' can be compared to the digging of a pit. The more one digs, the deeper the pit becomes. Action when repeated a number of times forms into a habit or 'nature' due to the formation of 'sanskars'. The more one indulges in a particular habit, the stronger that habit becomes, and consequently, the sanskars take deeper roots. People find it very difficult to give up habits like smoking, drinking and gambling because these are deep-rooted in the soul in the form of 'sanskars'. Habits of this life are the 'sanskars' of the next. In the next birth, the habits of the previous life emerge naturally.

Cyclic Pattern of Thought Process

The inter-dependence of thoughts, actions and 'sanskars' follows a cyclic pattern. Thus, once vices creep in, the 'sanskars' of a soul tend to become vicious, and their viciousness keeps on increasing due to the cumulative effect caused by the cyclic nature of the thought process. Even the intellect bows before the force of 'sanskars'. In spite of the intellect, man commits wrong actions. So one's own intellect is not a dependable check against bad thoughts. Self-improvement means bringing about a change in the 'sanskars' of the soul. This can be achieved through Rajyoga, which purifies and strengthens the intellect.

Form of Soul, its Place in the Body and its Original Abode

Place of Soul in the Body

The soul is a very subtle point of light and might that resides in the middle of the forehead between the eyebrows (called 'Bhrikuti' or Glabella). Some scriptures describe it as 'an invisible star that shines in the centre of the forehead'. As a reminder of this fact, the custom of putting a red dot called 'tilak' or 'bindi' at the particular spot on the forehead is widely prevalent. It will be observed that the important organs of the body through which the soul functions, namely the brain, eyes, ears, nose and mouth, are all found to be located near the seat of the soul and give the person his individual look on his face. No two faces are exactly alike as their souls have different 'sanskars'. Some people think that the seat of the soul is in the heart. This is a wrong belief which has taken root due to ignorance about the distinction between the heart and the mind, as already explained. It is because the word 'heart' is used as a synonym, though wrongly, for 'mind' that phrases like 'kind' or 'noble-hearted', 'heart of gold', 'qualities of head and heart' etc. are used. Actually, qualities like kindness, nobility etc., are of the soul, and are reflected through its faculties of mind (thinking) and intellect (judgment). Therefore, use of the word heart to describe the bearer of such qualities is a mistake. The heart is merely a physical organ which regulates the circulation of blood in the body. No doubt the breathing stops when the heart fails to function, but breathing is merely an automatic physiological process for the intake of oxygen, which is essential for sustaining the body so long as the soul has to reside in it. Obviously, breathing



Shantivan, Abu: Dadi Ratan Mohini, Jt. Chief of Brahma Kumaris, receiving 'Manavadhikar Ratna Award' for promoting human values in society, from Mr. Milind Dahivale, Chairperson, Human Rights Organisation.

is not life itself, but only a life-sustaining process. The soul, being incorporeal, cannot be seen by the physical eye but can be perceived by the Divine eye, also called 'third eye' or 'Divya Drishti', in the trance state of Rajyoga.

The Soul World

The original abode from where souls descend to play their role in this Corporeal World is called 'Parlok' or 'Paramdham' (the Supreme Abode). It is also called the Incorporeal World or Soul World. It is the uppermost region, situated far beyond the Sun and Moon, and, in fact, beyond everything which we can see through the naked, unaided eye. It is in this Soul World that all souls reside before and after playing their role in the drama on earth. When someone dies, it is usually said: 'Parlok sidhar gaya' (left for parlok), which is also indicative of the fact that Parlok or Paramdham is the abode of all souls (although as we will see later, no one actually returns there before the end of the world cycle).

'Paramdham' is pervaded by the sixth element, which is a subtle insentient light of crimson golden glow and is called 'Brahm'. That is why it is also called 'Brahmlok' (World of 'Brahm' Element). The element 'Brahm' is different from 'Brahma' as also from God, a distinction which will be explained later. The souls are positioned in that world in well-defined groups and descend to earth in a certain chronological order. At the apex of this configuration of souls is the Supreme Soul, God Father Himself, who is known by various names, such as Shiva, Jehovah, Allah etc. The very name of the abode of souls, viz. Parlok or the Soul World, indicates that it is the home of all souls, as otherwise it would not have been called a 'Lok' or a world.

In Paramdham, there is no gross matter. In the absence of matter, there is no activity of any kind. The souls remain there in a dormant or latent state. Bliss, happiness and other emotions do not exist. There is no sensation whatsoever. It is also known as the world of silence (Shantidham). Here the soul is in the state of 'mukti', liberation or redemption. Hence it is also called 'Muktidham' (world of liberation or redemption). Every human soul is in a state of perfect peace and liberation (mukti) in its original home Paramdham. That is why every human being in this Corporeal world aspires for peace, his basic attribute.

(To be continued)

(From correspondence course in Godly Knowledge)

In Lighter Vein

How come people with life insurance are still dying?

Having a good name is better than being rich. Having a good name is tax-free.

Scientists have found the gene for shyness. They would have found it years ago, but it was hiding behind a couple of other genes.

I get four kilometres from my new car. My kids get the rest.

I just can't find anything that would help me sleep!

Try accounts payable.... Usually works for me.

The traffic around here has been terrible of late! It used to be easy, but now cars come from all directions!

Did you just notice that now?

No, only after I got these new glasses!

The doctor in our town was really bad! How bad was he?

They named a cremation ground after him.



BK Laxman bhai
left his body on January 8, 2017. He was 87. Along with his father, mother, spouse, three younger brothers and sister, he dedicated his life in Baba's service. Laxman Bhai was a true 'Dhadhichi Rishi'.



Yaounde, Cameroon: Sr. Dipti introducing Om Shanti Project to Hon'ble Mrs. B.E.P. Ndoumou, President of the Network of Parliamentarians on the World Bank and IMF.



Durg, Chattisgarh: Marking first anniversary of BK Om Prakash Bhajji, Zonal Head, Indore, are Dr. Pramod Gupta, eminent psychiatrist, Mr. Netram Aggarwal, Social Leader, and BKs Rita and Rupa.



Hathras: Standing in silence after unveiling a sign for 'Brahma Kumaris Marg' are Mr. Avinash K. Singh, Distt. Officer, BK Shanta and others.



Bharatpur, Rajasthan: BK Kavita with guest speakers during Pitashri Brahma Baba's anniversary celebration.

◀ **Nabarangpur, Odisha:** BK Nilam presenting Godly gift to Dr. Poma Tudu, IAS, Project Director, DRDA.

It's what you scatter



I was at the corner grocery store buying some early potatoes... I noticed a small boy, delicate of bone and feature, ragged but clean, hungrily appraising a basket of freshly picked green peas.

I paid for my potatoes but was also drawn to the display of fresh green peas. I am a pushover for creamed peas and new potatoes.

Pondering the peas, I couldn't help overhearing the conversation between Mr. Miller (the store owner) and the ragged boy next to me.

'Hello Barry, how are you today?' 'H'lo, Mr. Miller. Fine, thank ya. Jus' admirin' the peas. They sure look good'

'They are good, Barry. How's your Ma?' 'Fine. Gittin' stronger alla' time.'

'Good. Anything I can help you with?' 'No, Sir. Jus' admirin' them peas.'

'Would you like to take some home,' asked Mr. Miller.

'No, Sir. Got nuthin' to pay for 'em with.' 'Well, what have you to trade me for some of those peas?' 'All I got's my prize marble here.' 'Is that right? Let me see it', said Mr. Miller. 'Hmm, only thing is this one is blue and I sort of go for red. Do you have a red one like this at home,' the store owner asked. 'Not exactly, but almost.' 'Take this sack of peas home with you and next trip this way let me look at that red marble', Mr. Miller told the boy.

Mrs. Miller, who had been standing nearby, came over to help me. With a smile, she said, 'There are two other boys like him in our community, all three are in very poor circumstances. Jim just loves to bargain with them for peas, apples, tomatoes, or whatever.

'When they come back with their red marbles, and they always do, he decides he doesn't like red after all and he sends them home with a bag of produce for a green marble or an orange one, when they come on their next trip to the store.'

Several years went by, one day I learned that Mr. Miller had died. They were having his visitation that evening, and knowing my friends wanted to go, I agreed to accompany them. Upon arrival at the mortuary we fell into line to meet the relatives of the deceased and to offer whatever words of comfort we could.

Ahead of us in line were three young men... all very professional looking. They approached Mrs. Miller, standing composed and smiling by her husband's casket.

Each of the young men hugged her, spoke briefly with her and moved on to the casket. Her misty light blue eyes followed them as, one by one; each young man stopped briefly and placed his own warm hand over the cold pale hand in the casket. Each left the mortuary awkwardly wiping his eyes.

Our turn came to meet Mrs. Miller. I told her who I was and reminded her of the story from those many years ago and what she had told me about her husband's bartering for marbles. With her eyes glistening, she took my hand and led me to the casket.

'Those three young men who just left were the boys I told you about.

'They just told me how they appreciated the things Jim 'traded' them. Now, at last, when Jim could not change his mind about colour or size... they came to pay their debt.

'We've never had a great deal of the wealth of this world,' she confided, 'but right now, Jim would consider himself the richest man in Idaho...'

With loving gentleness she lifted the lifeless fingers of her deceased husband. Resting underneath were three exquisitely shined red marbles.

It's not what you gather, but what you scatter that tells what kind of life you have lived!★

Questions to help us understand and embrace our limited ego

BK Ken O'Donnell, Brazil

Limited ego is the mediator or gatekeeper between my deep internal state of being and the external world.

Although the vibrational frequency of all signals that emerge from my deeper internal state may start out as positive, they lose power as they come their way through the limited ego gatekeeper. Then I find myself unable to follow through on a pure, positive intention.

What do I have to do to relocate my sense of self in my deep internal state of being? How?

Limited ego creates a sense of identity on the basis of physical aspects such as nationality, culture, religion, gender, profession, possession, marital status, etc.

Even traces of a limited physical identity will keep me seeking a sense of accomplishment and pride on the basis of what I do and what I have. I will then find it difficult to think of myself as a child of God. The limited ego cannot really love itself, so self-respect is continually undermined.

How can I fix myself in soul-consciousness as God's child?

Limited ego's source of fulfilment is physical sensations.

An attraction to the temporary pleasures of the world is strengthened and reinforced by limited ego. Then I crave or rely on pleasure from worldly sources and the soul is unable to fulfil the spiritual craving underlying it. Limited ego stops me from having an intense desire for spiritual development and using it to overcome my attraction to sense pleasures.

UN Days

- 4-Feb World Cancer Day
- 13-Feb World Radio Day
- 20-Feb World Day of Social Justice
- 21-Feb International Mother Language Day



Shantivan, Abu: Mr. Winston Dookeran, former acting Prime Minister of Trinidad & Tobago, with Dadi Janki, Chief of Brahma Kumaris, BK Mruthyunjaya, BK Hansa and BK Harry Persad from Trinidad, during his recent visit to Brahma Kumaris headquarters.



To what extent I have a burning desire for my spiritual development beyond the senses?

Limited ego constructs pride on the basis of acquired knowledge.

It believes that to KNOW is to BE, that ideals are reality. The limited ego builds castles on the basis of very little and expresses itself as subtle arrogance in my thoughts, attitudes, behaviours in relation to others. Then I am unable to have caring feelings for others (including service companions). I consider them less intelligent so I am unable to see how they can serve better than me because they have a spirit of love.

How much understanding and sense of charity do I have towards others whom I classify as having little intelligence, but however, have more spirit of service with love than me?

Limited ego prioritizes activities on the basis of a false scale of values.

So I am left having gained the world but losing my soul. The limited ego keeps me busy pursuing things that add no value to my divine development but convinces me they do. The limited ego shifts my perception of my environment so I see value in activities that reinforce ego.

How many things do I still do or chase that do not add value to my spiritual development?

Limited ego makes true things appear false and false things appear true.

The limited ego distorts everything I do to add emphasis/drama and make it more interesting or worthy of ignoring. I begin to live inside the story it creates and am unable to accurately discern

what is real and false in my actual environment.

How real is my perception of my current surroundings?

Limited ego isolates me from others and maintains an illusion that I am separate.

This illusion allows the limited ego to judge and organize me and my life around things that interests it. Slowly I forget the natural beauty of the experience of the consciousness of 'we' or 'us' and dig an even deeper hole for myself to hide in.

When was the last time you were really in the consciousness of 'we'? How was it?

Limited ego creates a false sense of security in things that ultimately do not give me real support. The limited ego creates dependences on people, possessions, and positions for my sense of well-being. The limited ego leads me to believe that I am indispensable or essential. Fear of losing things that I am dependent upon becomes a subtle limitation and produces many games.

If I lost all the things or people on whom I feel dependent, I would still exist. How would be my experience?

Limited ego restricts and interferes with my spiritual development because it knows/suspects that this will ultimately lead to its extinction.

The limited ego convinces me to make excuses like 'it's human to make mistakes'. The limited ego creates doubts about the possibility of self-transformation and undermines my discipline.

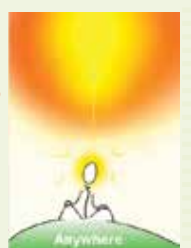
What are the excuses (self-lies) that I frequently use so as not to make the necessary spiritual effort?

Limited ego has an enormous capacity for self-deception. It positions me as better or worse than I really am. This leads to blind spots in the way I behave and impact on others. The 'me' that lives inside my head gets out of sync with reality and refuses to believe that others see me in a way I am unable to see or reveal myself.

If I made a list of virtues that I naturally have and those that I need to improve, would it be the same list as of those with whom I live and work closely? ★

(Ken is an Australian, resident in Brazil. He is the author of 15 books on personal and organizational development, some of which are published in nine languages.)

Meditation
makes your thoughts
Pure
Positive
Powerful



Wisdom of Dadi Janki

Chief of Brahma Kumaris

The key to contentment

Contentment lays the foundation for happiness. Happiness not only makes us feel great, but in the East it's thought to be the best medicine because this state of being contains within it so much optimism and enthusiasm.

Contentment should not be confused with complacency. To be complacent is to achieve a state of subtle arrogance, thinking, "I have reached my goal. No need for anything further. I am fine", followed by the shutting down of both creativity and the willingness to bring about personal change.

To be content, appreciate where you have reached, value your efforts yet realize that there is more to learn and keep yourself open to that new learning.

Being content leads to a sense of progress, a feeling that, 'I have found something very good, but let us make it better and ultimately the best.'

Contentment comes from appreciation – from a deep gratitude for all the things life gives us and heartfelt thanks that God has given us the capacity to learn and exist meaningfully.

The father of contentment is humility, the openness to receiving new signals from life as well as the courage to act on them. The mother of contentment is simplicity because it is the simple things in life that create its wonder, such as breath, thought, choice, the sunlight, flowers and a smile. Nothing is taken for granted when we know true contentment. We cherish and value everything. Because of this inner awareness we do not compare ourselves with others, or feel inferior or superior, but simply have the great feeling that everyone is good and everything is good.

Vitamins of patience, love & peace

Let me appreciate the need to go into silence. If I want to have harmonious relationships and to do everything well, each morning I need to take the vitamins of patience, love and peace. It is in silence that I am able to nurture myself with these values. Clarity comes from constantly practising these values.

The intellect needs to be very clear to be able to understand the self and others. Many times people do not even try to understand one another. They focus on explaining to others but do not pay



Shantivan, Abu: Cutting a cake on the 101st birthday of Dadi Janki, Chief of Brahma Kumaris, in Diamond Hall, are Dadi Janki, Dadi Hirdaya Mohini, Dadi Ratan Mohini, BK Nirwair Bhai and others.

attention to understanding the other person. A mother will understand the child's need and treat the child accordingly. A teacher will understand the student's needs and respond accordingly. In the same way, I need to take quality time and with patience, love and peace understand what are the needs of the self and what needs others have. To understand needs requires a great deal of inner silence.

Giving love and respect

Every human being is born with a special gift which is unique. When we recognize and use our specialities without letting the ego become involved, then God fills them with his power. It is as if the special gift is no longer mine but becomes a gift that God has specially given to me. That speciality becomes an extraordinary gift; a unique quality. It is experienced as a blessing. When God fills my speciality with His power, then it becomes easy to give love and respect to others. When I am able to recognize the unique speciality in someone else, then the love and respect that I give to them will be true and genuine.

If I find it difficult to give love and respect, then

I must look inside my heart. When I look with the attitude and vision of my own speciality, then I realize that there is no reason not to give love and respect. Actually, it is not a difficult thing to give love and respect. I just need to recognize that it is ego that makes it difficult; once I become humble, it becomes easy.

Truth and Humility bring bliss

Just imagine what it would be like to be completely stable in the stage of bliss, experiencing bliss for even a second. Truth and humility bring bliss. Truth is something that is internal; humility is expressed through relationships. Through truth you develop pure power, and through humility you experience great happiness. The love humility brings goes deep inside and creates a stable form of happiness. When there is humility in relationships it is as if you draw blessings from each other. Learn to keep your internal stage filled with truth, and to be humble in relationships, and you will be able to become stable in the stage of bliss. Remember, you can only bend when you are strong. ★

Ha! Ha!

'They tell me that your son in college is quite an author. Does he write for money?'
'Yes, in every letter.'

♦♦♦

'How's the new patient feeling', the doctor asked the nurse.
'Oh, he's much better,' she replied. 'He started talking this morning.'
'What did he say?'
'He said he was feeling much worse.'

♦♦♦

'My husband,' said the lady to her psychoanalyst, 'He's convinced he's a parking meter.'
The analyst looked at the silent, morbid fellow and asked, 'Why doesn't he say something for himself? Can't he talk?'
'How can he,' said the lady, 'with all those coins in his mouth?'

♦♦♦

The son asked if he could borrow some money to buy a car. The father explained that borrowing money was a bad habit. 'Son, I got my first motorcycle when I was nineteen, and with my own money. I got my first car at twenty-four, and with my own money. And I got my second car when I got married, and with my own money.'

At this point the son interjected excitedly, 'So there is no problem. This car would be with your own money as well.'



News in Photos

You can only bend when you are strong.



BK Betty Narain
 (lovingly called Aunty) left her mortal coil on December 1, 2016. She was 88. She, BK Steve Narain (the then Vice President of Guyana, lovingly called Uncle), who left his body three years ago, and their children were the first BK VIP family abroad. They opened a BK centre in Guyana in 1975 and set several big milestones in Godly service.



Coimbatore: During a programme on 'Give Happiness a Chance', BK Usha (main speaker) and BK Beena giving a Godly gift to Mrs. Soundharam Balasubramaniam, Bannari Amman Sugars group.



Mumbai, Ghatkopar: During Pitashri Brahma Baba's anniversary celebration in BK Ghatkopar Peace Park, BK Nalini didi with dignitaries from different fields.



Brahma Kumaris stall at the World Book Fair 2017, Pragati Maidan, New Delhi.



Bhilwara, Rajasthan: Inaugurating a media seminar are Mr. V.S. Awasthi, Legislator, BK Sushant, BK Shantanu, BK Indra and others.



Mumbai, Borivali: During the Human Chain for Road Safety awareness programme, TV artists and well-known celebrities with BK Divya Prabha didi and others.



Jammu: After a talk on 'Self Management' for executive staff of Emcure Medical Company, Mr. Satish Koul, Managing Director, BKs Ravinder bhai, Kusum Lata and Shweta.



Los Angeles, USA: A group of interfaith leaders from Southern and Northern Buddhism, and Catholic, Jewish, Mormon, Hindu and Muslim leaders assembled for a joint prayer for world peace and social harmony at Hsi Lai Buddhist Temple in La Habra Heights. BK Gita is standing in front row, centre. The main monk, Master Huidong, welcomed everyone.



Motherly Protection.



Om Shanti Retreat Centre, Gurugram: Performing yoga dance during a three-day retreat on 'Self Development' are students from Mahabodhi Residential School for Girls at Leh Ladkhakh.

Mr. Wise



Mr. Wise?

Yes.

Can nectar and poison co-exist in the same vessel? Can light and darkness exist together at the same time and place?

No.

Then how can heaven and hell both co-exist at the same time on planet earth? I cannot say.

◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆

And Mr. Wise?

Yes.

Some believe that heaven exists somewhere above and hell, below the planet earth?

Actually, the two are above and below each other in order of time only, on this very earth.

Who is responsible for changing heaven into hell?

I cannot say.

◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆

Lastly...

Yes.

Can there be any form of grief, sorrow or suffering in heaven? Certainly not.

By the same logic, isn't hell an era of grief, sorrow or suffering in one form or another, where complete, uninterrupted happiness is not possible?

I think you are right.

Why then the illusion that the rich in today's Kaliyuga, which is the other name of hell, are living in heaven?

I cannot say.

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Tailpiece

My three-year-old daughter stuck out her hand and said, "Look at the fly I killed, Mommy." Since she was eating a juicy pickle at the time, I thrust her contaminated hands under the faucet and washed them with antibacterial soap.

After sitting her down to finish her pickle, I asked, with a touch of awe, "How did you kill that fly all by yourself?"

Between bites, she said, "I hit it with my pickle."

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A police officer jumps into his squad car and calls the station.

"I have an interesting case here," he says. "A woman shot her husband for stepping on the floor she just mopped."

"Have you arrested her," asks the sergeant.

"No, not yet. The floor's still wet."

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I've given up social media for the New Year and am trying to make friends outside Facebook while applying the same principles. Every day, I walk down the street and tell passers-by what I've eaten, how I feel, what I did the night before, and what I will do tomorrow. Then I give them pictures of my family, my dog, and me gardening. I also listen to their conversations and tell them I love them. And it works. I already have three people following me — two police officers and a psychiatrist.

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