



Vol. 39 No.2 Pages 12

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

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Law of Karma and Global Justice

At some time or the other, the queer paradoxes of life plunge all of us into curiosity. We wonder why some people are born extra lucky to have accomplished a lot without much toil while others, more hard-working, are still waiting in the queue. Why someone is born with a silver spoon in the mouth and another with a begging bowl?

How is it that a person who is cheating on his partner, fudging his income tax return and scheming frauds is able to scale the heights of material and professional success, while a timid widow who means no harm to others has nothing to celebrate about. It is difficult to convince oneself of the justice of the situation. The global scene is equally strange. The parliaments of the world keep framing more and more laws, yet lawlessness continues to flourish and the ideals enshrined in constitutions have been reduced to mere embellishments.

Global justice is the bedrock of individual justice. Global peace is not possible without global justice. But how can global justice be brought about? Surely, it cannot be brought about by laws and courts, or by the International Court of Justice. In fact, no human agency in the world can make this happen because all have vested interests and, ironically, they perpetrate injustice globally.

What is global justice? It is the state of the world where everything happens at the right time at the right place and in the right manner. It is based on a righteous world order where 'right is right', unlike in today's world, where every action is based on the belief that 'might is right'.

There is so much injustice and lawlessness because humans have violated the universal law of justice — the law of karma, also known as the law of cause and effect. In simple terms, the law espouses that a person harvests what he sows, that every action has an equal and opposite reaction. A person will experience only what he has expressed. An expression here could be tangible, such as a physical activity, or intangible, as a thought or intention.

So when the universe is governed by such a law, let us explore the discrepancy in our perception. For this we need to delve deeper into the subject and find out who is the one experiencing or performing the karma. On



the surface, it could be a person identified by a particular name, gender or rank. However, the action is actually performed by the being who is playing that role and is known by that identity. It is essential here to understand that the performer of the karma here is the soul, not the body.

Souls take several births, and though with each new birth a new identity is acquired, the account of good and bad and the tendencies formed after performing actions are saved in it. So, what a person is experiencing now may not necessarily be the result of an action performed in the known past. What this law guarantees is that a noble deed will never go unrewarded, and a bad deed will bear a corresponding result, just that the time taken to boomerang could be variable. This is unlike the system of law we have in the world today that only checks the evildoer and forgets to reward the good. Therefore, the law of karma assures us that no injustice is actually possible.

The confusion in the world regarding the prevalence of injustice is due to the fact that we mistake the body to be the one who's experiencing rather than the soul with its long past, present and future. It is this very misunderstanding that limits our entire mental programming and is the root of all sin, and hence all suffering. When the medium, the body, is mistaken for the self, it is reflected in every action. We mistake comforts and luxuries to be the source of peace and are willing to attain them by hook or crook.

The understanding of this law allows us to take responsibility for our actions and amend them instead of passing the buck to someone else. Awakening to this absolute spiritual law not only settles haunting questions in the mind, but also gives us the key to health,

wealth and happiness, which is performing righteous actions.

But then why do people side with the evil despite having knowledge of this law? When a soul acts, the nature of the action is recorded as an impression on it. Similar repetitive impressions form habitual inclinations or *sanskars*, which then become a strong motivating force in influencing further actions and reactions. So a strong negative *sanskar* may compel a person to act against the will of his conscience or intellect.

Then there is the time factor, which explains the weakness in acting conscientiously. The world drama is near its end in this cycle, and souls are weak and tired. This makes it difficult for them to gather strength to perform righteous actions, and so this period is conducive to unrighteousness.

Peace and justice can return to our world only after we create global awareness about the perfect law of karma, that to be good and do good is in one's self-interest, as is to believe firmly that right is right. Righteous means are necessary to achieve righteous ends and to deliver global justice, thereby establish global peace. But is it possible that the entire human race is inspired to act according to the law of karma? It seems to be an unrealistic proposition, so how will global justice and peace be established?

The answer lies in God's plan for world renewal. As per His plan, there are two ways to purify and cleanse — firstly through self-purification by a critical number of souls who are enlightened and empowered by staying in His remembrance and following His wisdom imparted through the medium of Prajapita Brahma. Secondly, there will be destruction of evil by evil itself — through nuclear war and natural calamities. In this event all the bad karma of the souls is settled by means of suffering.

It is here that we can use the power of meditation. Meditation is the fire that can burn our past vicious *sanskars* and thereby restore the capacity to act in accordance with our conscience. It revives our original positive energies that spark a chain of positive actions that can usher in an era of health, happiness and prosperity. ■

(Purity Features)



Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala: Hon'ble Arif Mohammad Khan, the new Governor of Kerala, being presented a memento by a group of BK sisters led by BK Minni.



Bhubaneswar, Odisha: Hon'ble Ramnath Kovind, President of India, being greeted with a bouquet by BK Sister Leena, accompanied by BKs Bijaya.

News in Photos

Virtues bring man nearer to God.

Navi Mumbai, Vashi: Tree plantation by BK Santosh Didi, Incharge, Maharashtra Zone, BK Sheela, Incharge, Vashi Centre, Mrs. Shipla More, Corporator, and others.



New York City, USA: Diwali and UN Day celebrations at Brahma Kumaris Office. Many friends gathered to rekindle the spirit of the UN and strengthen the torch within.



Kolkata: Hon'ble Jagdeep Dhankhar, Governor of West Bengal, speaking during a programme on 'God's Power for Golden Age', organised by BK Sister Kanan, Incharge, Kolkata Museum, at Kalamandir Auditorium.



Pune: Group photo of participants from eight Rotary Clubs in a day-long Retreat for Professional Women on 'Four Faces of Woman', facilitated by BK Sister Sarita at 3D Destination Hall.

Can God be Omnipresent?

Omnipresence is one of the qualities attributed to God by millions of people. One belief holds that while God and the universe are separate, God is present everywhere, and according to another belief, God pervades the universe and also extends beyond it in time and space.

Some religious cultures see the whole of existence as a manifestation of the divine, while others hold that God is not immersed in everything, yet He can interact with the substance of creation as He chooses, and He cannot be excluded from any place or object.

One explanation commonly given to explain the belief in God's omnipresence is that God is Almighty, so He can be and do what is impossible for humans, and therefore it is possible for him to be present everywhere at the same time. Just as the soul is said to be in the heart and it pervades the whole body with consciousness, God can be everywhere and in everything with His spiritual energy even while remaining in one place, it is argued. One example used to illustrate this point is that of a power station that supplies electricity to a large area while remaining in one place.

These arguments, while true about the omnipotence of God, remain unconvincing. A power plant can supply power to a large area, but that is evidenced by the power, which may be used to produce heat or light, run machinery, and do various other things.

If God is omnipresent, why are His divine qualities not present in most people's lives?

Similarly, when the sun is shining in the sky, one can experience the fact in the form of sunshine and the warmth it brings.

The presence of any person or element of nature can be experienced by their qualities, which influence the surroundings. If there is fire, there will be heat and light, if there is water, it will cool its surroundings, if there is an incense stick burning, it will spread fragrance. Similarly, if there is a kind person, his or her kindness is felt by others, just as an irritable person's prickly nature keeps others away.

If God is truly present everywhere, His qualities should be felt in all places. God is known as the ocean of all virtues, including peace, love, and compassion, and as the comforter of hearts and the remover of sorrow.

God is also the only one who is ever pure, never influenced by any kind of impurity, so can He be present in every particle, including

dirt, as many believe?

If He is everywhere, why are His qualities increasingly rare to find today? Our world, in fact, seems far removed from anything godly, with violence, suffering and sorrow a daily experience for millions of humans.

Can we tell the more than 800 million people in the world who do not have enough to eat that God is with them, or in them?

And how do you explain to the kin of the 400,000 or more people murdered or killed in armed conflict last year that God, the ever merciful, is present everywhere?

If God, the all powerful, is omnipresent, why are His divine qualities conspicuous by their absence in most people's lives?

Every year, reports from international agencies inform us of the state of the world, listing all the problems facing the denizens of this planet, including crime, corruption, inequality, and environmental degradation.

Some of the countries in the world are described as dangerous to live in, as the chances of getting killed there by armed gangs or criminals are high. Does God's omnipresence not extend to such countries?

And if He is omnipresent, why is the world in such a sorry state?

Curiously, along with an omnipresent God, we are also told to believe in the law of karma, which says that we reap what we sow, and all our sufferings are the fruit of our actions.

If that is the case, what purpose is served by God's omnipresence? Is God present in the sinner who is suffering for his sins? Why is He suffering if God is in him? And why did not God stop him from sinning at the outset?

If karma determines our fate, what role does God have in our life? Why think about God at all if, despite His omnipresence, we are solely responsible for our joys and sorrows?

All these questions point to the fundamental question: Can God be omnipresent? Or is it that we have misunderstood His omnipotence and developed false, and even romantic beliefs, to conveniently absolve ourselves of accountability for our actions and place all blame for our condition on Him? ■

(Purity Bureau)

Albay, Philippines : Group photo of participants in 'Inner Leadership : Ignite your Greatness Within' retreat organised by Brahma Kumaris for 48 branch managers of various micro-finance institutions. ▼

Gems of Godly Wisdom

Spiritual Diet and Exercise

To stay mentally healthy, pay attention to two things – diet and exercise. Eat the diet of pure thoughts – thoughts of spiritual wisdom, peace, bliss and God. Abstain from eating waste and negative thoughts. Also perform mental drill by detaching from the awareness of the physical body and physical world. Hold the thoughts of peace for a few seconds and bring back your mind to the present.

Gift your Virtues

Virtues are like money. When you see a person, who is poor in patience, happiness or love, donate some of your virtues to him through your good wishes and good behavior. Do not condemn him by criticizing him or neglecting him.

Trust

Trust is essential if you want to help people. There are two aspects of trust – your own trust in others and their trust in you. People will naturally start trusting you when they see you overcoming problems in a reliable and constant way. However, a more powerful and long-term way of gaining people's trust is to give them the experience of your trust in them. This is an art which can be cultivated. Never listen to gossip and never foster it yourself; form neither judgements nor opinions; rather, be spiritual and clean in your feelings. Learn to develop good wishes for others. This will be the measure of your ability to trust.



What lies Beyond Greatness?

From time immemorial, human beings have endeavoured to achieve greatness. They excelled in arts, science, sports, physical prowess, mental wizardry and in political, economic, social, cultural and religious activities.

The world has idolized, eulogized and remembered those who achieved greatness. We may look at great persons as those who stood above the rest in some way. Greatness is also linked to the way an action is valued by the majority and how much benefit, joy, knowledge or power it brings to others.

Greatness can be achieved by constant training and practice. Sometimes it comes from innate qualities and talents such as in geniuses. Some great persons are born in times of great crises such as leaders like Mahatma Gandhi. Great people can be classed as pioneers, geniuses, founders, leaders, toppers, winners, achievers and unusual performers.

Whatever is perceived as great is linked to a lot of factors such as temporal, geographical, cultural, political, social, religious and economic. The way something is seen as great has a lot to do with the value systems and self-interests of the people who decided to give it the label of greatness. For a cricket enthusiast the way a batsman scores a century is great but a person who has no interest in it feels the whole thing to be a waste of time. For right-wingers Hitler was a hero, while Lenin was hailed once as a great symbol of socialist republic. There has always been an underlying contention about greatness between classical and popular, orthodox and liberal, conservative and radical cultures.

Hence, greatness is a delicate structure that floats on the surface of time driven by tides of popularity, compulsive factors and value systems of the period. The deeds and achievements that have a universal impact and hold good for a long time are indeed great. Many inventions and discoveries will fall under this category as well as several political, social and cultural movements. Then we have other types of greatness that have some degree of impact according to time, space, talent, ideology, culture etc.

What is truly great will be truly good. The word true means that which lasts forever; that which cannot be influenced

Eternal glory comes from actions that are pure, selfless and detached from ego.

by time, space or any other factor. In fact, such actions or events would be classified as beyond greatness because such actions originate from a consciousness or awareness that is above the bondage of actions and its results.

Such actions will be beyond expectations, selfish desires and biased values. More than anything, such actions will be beyond the fear of failure or want of success. They would not be limited by the ego and limitations of the doer. They will have a far-reaching, universal impact and produce maximum benefit for the maximum number for a long-lasting period.

Can we humans ever fathom and attain such level of perfection? The principles and the theory are simple but the practice would demand the highest level of faith, courage, wisdom, vision and values. Firstly, those who achieve such perfection will never do it with the desire to be great; they will do things for the sake of expressing goodness to the maximum extent. A saying goes: "Don't try to be great, just be good and you will be great." What is greatness if it is achieved at the cost of hurting or manipulating others or by simply doing things that bring no benefit to others?

There is, therefore, the need to go beyond greatness. For this, first principle is to surrender the ego, the consciousness of 'I' and to do every task as a trustee. This means to act as an instrument - God is Karavanhar (one who is getting it done through me). This would enable us to stay beyond expectations, fears, selfish desires, bias, preference and aversion. The more our actions are based on the purest feelings of joy, love and truth, and the more we act beyond any desire for fruit of our actions, we are able to rise beyond greatness. Our whole being, acting and feeling would consist of only pure self-respect, love for God and unconditional love for humanity. Such perfection is defined as a state of existence when one remains

unaffected by praise or insult, joy or sorrow, success or failure.

Such kind of greatness would touch the heart and soul of every human and also reflect upon the quality of the entire creation - elements, nature, flora, fauna et al. They would be universal and eternal in the sense that such actions would gradually bring about the metamorphosis of the entire creation to a state of perfection called Heaven.

The deities of Golden Age embodied such perfection and even today people feel blessed by looking at their idols. Their eternal glory comes from actions that were pure, selfless and detached from ego. They lived and acted as God's instruments. ■

(Purity Bureau)

It's either good, or bad!

It is a basic law of physics that one thing cannot exist in two places at the same time. This logic is not limited to the relationship between objects, space and time. A person cannot be right and wrong at the same time. He is either right or wrong.

Similarly, a person cannot be east and west at the same time. To quote Rudyard Kipling, 'East is east and west is west, and never the twain shall meet'. Nor can we be good and bad at the same time. One may have good qualities and bad qualities, but the sum total of those qualities is either good or bad. Nectar ceases to be so if even a drop of poison is dropped into it.

And can one love and hate at the same time? One may love some things about others and hate some other things about them but, in the end, one either loves them or does not.

God is called the Ocean of Love because He is always loving and does not hate anybody. But what do those who profess to be men of God do nowadays? They love others, but only so long as the other person belongs to their religion. When it comes to people of other religions, one need only mention that more than 75 per cent of all wars have been motivated by differences among various religious groups.

The state of religion today is symptomatic of the state of mankind. Man has achieved, in the past century, scientific progress unparalleled in history. We now enjoy material comforts unimaginable a few generations ago. But in this progress? The growth of our material comforts seem to have been matched by an increase in our social, physical and mental ills. Crime, corruption and violence have created conditions in which wealth and happiness cannot exist at the same place at the same time. Those who have the most wealth are also likely to be the most miserable. Their lives are plagued by fear, insecurity, stress and the consequent physical ailments.

True progress is that which advances our well-being and happiness. Such progress can be achieved only when material and spiritual growth take place at the same time. India's Golden Age exemplified the pinnacle of material and spiritual advancement. There wealth was a source of happiness, not worry, because it was earned and used virtuously. This virtuousness ensured that even while living in splendour, the humans in the Golden Age did not covet wealth. As a result, there was no crime.

Such a world can be created if we adopt the virtues of the Golden Age, giving up the notion that the good and bad can exist at the same time. ■



Gyan Sarovar, Mt. Abu : Lighting lamps to celebrate Diwali are BK Nirmala Didi, Ishu Dadi, BK Lakshmi, BK Sister Jayanti from London, BK Shashi, BK Sheilu, BK Karuna, BK Atam Prakash, Dr. Pratap Midha and others.

God's Plan for Peace on Earth

Many individuals and institutions are working to bring peace in the world. Their efforts are aimed at ending military, ethnic, communal and social conflicts through reconciliation, compromise and legally binding agreements. Such endeavours have succeeded in ending many international disputes, not to speak of countless smaller conflicts.

But in spite of the success of these peace efforts, conflicts and violence are increasing in the world. This fact is most visible to us at the individual level. We see and experience daily that humans are today more prone to irritation, anger, aggression, verbal abuse and physical violence than they were just a few years ago.

The phenomenon called road rage illustrates this well. Today, a minor traffic accident — one vehicle touching another, without causing even a scratch — can lead to an exchange of blows. This propensity to anger and violence is manifested on a larger level in the form of mob violence and riots.

Why have decades of peacemaking efforts failed? The process of rejuvenation by God is essential for continuance of human existence on this planet.

Then there is prejudice, mistrust, contempt or hostility among people belonging to different religions, castes, regions, communities, races or nationalities. These negative feelings frequently boil over into violence, often leading to mass killings.

As for armed conflicts and insurgencies, there are always a dozen or two raging in different parts of the world.

Peace

I prefer the most unfair peace to the most righteous war.
—Cicero

Peace rules the day where reason rules the mind.
—W. Collins

Peace is indivisible. —Maxim Litvinov

War is an invention of the human mind. The human mind can invent peace with justice. —N. Cousins

Peace cannot be kept by force. It can only be achieved by understanding. —Albert Einstein

On Peace

The first lesson on the path to becoming a peacemaker is to stop being at war with myself. In meditation I can retreat into the inner sanctuary of the soul and enjoy the tranquil flow of loving thoughts passing through my being. Only when the turbulence of my own mind has subsided can I make peace with the world. When I have developed some degree of inner peace I can hear the voice of my own wisdom and know how and where to use energy for the greatest benefit.

Why have decades of peacemaking efforts failed to end all this?

The basic reason is that all our efforts at peace have been aimed at removing the symptoms while leaving intact the roots of the problem.

We want everything in the world to remain the way it is and yet achieve peace. We hope and plan to solve the world's problems through political and economic measures and scientific tricks, without mending our ways.

It is like trying to remove the symptoms of a disease from the body while leaving intact the microbes that caused the disease. What will the result be? The microbes will multiply and attack with greater force. And if we continue to ignore them, it may lead to death.

Similar is the case with violence. The world today is a diseased body wrecked by vices such as lust, anger, greed, attachment and ego. These lie at the root of all violence. We will not have lasting peace until we destroy these vices.

That is why God, who is called the Creator, Saviour and Destroyer, comes to this world when the disease has reached its climax. He comes to save this world from death by destroying the vices.

Destruction of the vices involves their removal from human souls. This happens when souls connect themselves mentally to God. The more they keep themselves connected, the more they acquire the qualities of God and become free of vices. Souls that do not clean themselves by this process get purged of their vices by suffering. This suffering is the result of the gross and subtle sins committed by the soul under the influence of the vices.

Since a purified soul cannot live in an impure body, the destruction of bodies is a

necessary part of the clean-up performed by God, so that all souls can get new, pure bodies.

This destruction does not involve the elimination of all life on earth. A small group of souls, who have purified themselves by spiritual effort, remains in order to give birth to the new world.

This process of rejuvenation is essential for the continuance of human existence on this planet. It ushers in an era of complete purity, peace and happiness on earth. It is like a new sapling emerging from the seed of a tree that has completed its life and died in order to begin life anew. For detailed clarification, please contact the nearest service centre of Brahma Kumaris or write to 'Purity'.

(Purity Bureau)

Kindness Pays

His name was Fleming, and he was a poor Scottish farmer. One day, while trying to eke out a living for his family, he heard a cry for help coming from a nearby bog. He dropped his tools and ran to the bog.

There, mired to his waist in black muck, was a terrified boy, screaming and struggling to free himself. Farmer Fleming saved the lad from what could have been a slow and terrifying death.

The next day, a fancy carriage pulled up in the Scotsman's sparse surroundings. An elegantly dressed nobleman stepped out and introduced himself as the father of the boy farmer Fleming had saved. "I want to repay you," said the nobleman. "You saved my son's life." "No, I can't accept payment for what I did," the Scottish farmer replied, waiving off the offer.

At that moment, the farmer's son came to the door of the family hovel. "Is that your son?" the nobleman asked. "Yes," the farmer replied proudly. "I'll make you a deal. Let me take him and give him good education. If the lad is anything like his father, he'll grow to a man you can be proud of."

And that he did. In time, the farmer Fleming's son graduated from St. Mary's Hospital Medical School in London, and went on to be known throughout the world as the noted Sir Alexander Fleming, the discoverer of penicillin.

Years afterward, the nobleman's son was stricken with pneumonia. What saved him? Penicillin. The name of the nobleman? Lord Randolph Churchill. His son's name? Sir Winston Churchill.



Kathmandu, Nepal: Inaugurating Social Services Wing programme 'God's Power for Golden Age' are BK Raj Didi, Director, BK services in Nepal, Ms. Padma Kumari Aryal, Hon'ble Central Minister for Land Management, Cooperatives and Poverty Alleviation, BK Amirchand Bhai, Vice Chairperson of the Wing, BK Prem Bhai, National Coordinator of the Wing and others.



Challenges for women at workplace

It is now well-known that the work environment for women around the world is challenging, and at many places unbearable. Being responsible for securing their personal and family needs, or desirous of making a mark for themselves, women continue to work in unpleasant circumstances.

Many a time when women enter the workforce as vulnerable newcomers, they are offered favourable packages and facilities. Sometimes colleagues or seniors feign things to win their sympathy, and then get their work done by them on the sly.

At other times, special favours disguised as courtesy are given by powerful male bosses, who win their trust step by step. Later, when these women feel secure in the job and their life becomes accustomed to it, the bosses' attitude changes to seeking a return for their favours.

In such circumstances, many women are forced to comply as a lot in their life is dependent on their job. Some stronger ones, who stand up for themselves for the sake of their conscience, are often given a hard time, harassed, downgraded or sidelined. They are forced to bend or leave. Those who continue to work in such a scenario suffer from great mental stress that often affects their physical health and even their family's well-being.

The question is what can a woman do to protect herself from the corrupt gaze, unwanted advances and harassment of all forms? How can she enhance her personal safety against deceptive people and situations through her own actions?

Women are often advised to secure their boundaries, both for the self and others, and have a simple yet strict demeanour for their own safety. In today's vicious world, if one is able to build a strong, virtuous personality based on integrity and clarity of character, then one is able to command others' respect and keep unwanted elements at bay. Added to it, an approach of spiritual wisdom and restraint keeps one safe at all times.

At the fundamental level, all of us are imperishable souls that have donned perishable bodily costumes to play our part. Depending on one's costume, a person receives the label of male or female. The soul is a point of spiritual light and thus has no gender.

If one lives with the awareness of one's eternal identity, one's pure, non-violent spiritual core becomes a more active base of one's thoughts and actions. Also one's faculties of discernment and judgment are sharpened. As a result, a natural, protective aura starts to build around the soul.

One's pure karmic credit, gained by performing actions in a state of soul consciousness, also secure one against any future suffering. The accumulation of karmic credit begets more well-being.

The more internal purity a soul develops, the more protection and freedom it receives against widespread evil tendencies. It must be understood that our natural innocence is our treasured asset because it helps us to sense things when something is amiss. It must not be confused with naivety, which always lands us in trouble.

A soul can naturally become an embodiment of shakti when it taps into its innate quality of power. The conviction to stand up for oneself and for what is right, the power to face and manage adversity, and to see through deception are inbuilt in the soul. It must, however, endeavour to truly make these strengths its own by using them regularly in practical situations.

One could also draw lessons from real-life stories of women who exhibited extraordinary courage in the face of opposition or those who crossed mountains simply by believing in themselves.

A soul can transcend its own capacity and experience an altogether different level of self-protection by being in the company of God through His constant remembrance. In soul consciousness, one becomes a shakti. In God consciousness, one is elevated to a Shiv Shakti — one who cannot just defend the self but can also transform evil tendencies that come in one's way.

A living proof of this is the Brahma Kumaris, a women-led spiritual organisation whose members are making a difference globally with their roots in the principles of purity and self-discipline. BK sisters practise Rajyoga each day and experience the Almighty as their Supreme Guide and Protector. By drawing sustenance, strength, and support from Him, and by following Godly directions, they are transforming lives everywhere and leading humanity to a pure and pious Golden Era. ■



GLEANINGS FROM THE PRESS

'Artificial leaf' produces clean gas from sunlight



Scientists have developed an 'artificial leaf' device that uses sunlight to produce a widely-used gas currently made from fossil fuels, and could be used to create a sustainable liquid fuel alternative to petrol. The carbon-neutral device can directly produce the gas – called syngas – in a sustainable and simple

way from carbon dioxide and water, setting a new benchmark in the field of solar fuels. Rather than running on fossil fuels, the artificial leaf developed by researchers at the University of Cambridge in the UK is powered by sunlight, although it still works efficiently on cloudy and overcast days. Unlike the current industrial processes for producing syngas, the leaf does not release any additional carbon dioxide, according to the research published in 'Nature Materials'. Syngas is currently made from a mixture of hydrogen and carbon monoxide, and is used to produce fuels, pharmaceuticals, plastics and fertilizers. (PTI)

New way to convert heat into electricity found

Researchers have found a new way to capture heat and turn it into electricity, an advance that could increase the efficiency of energy generation from car exhaust, interplanetary space probes, and industrial processes. Scientists, including those from The Ohio State University, found a new way to design thermoelectric semiconductors – materials that can convert heat into electricity. The new method is based on tiny particles called paramagnons – materials which are not quite magnets, but produce a magnetic field around them. "Because of this discovery, we should be able to make more electrical energy out of heat than we do today," said co-author Joseph Heremans.

The study noted that magnets, when heated, lose their force of magnetism. But when one side of a magnet is heated, the magnetism in the colder side increases, producing a property called spin, which pushes the electrons, creating electricity. (News Report)

This pumpkin weighs nearly 1 tonne

A northern California hobbyist's 986kg pumpkin has won first place at an annual contest in Half Moon Bay. A contest spokesman said it was the second-largest in the contest's history. (News Report)



7-fold surge in Indians at risk due to rising sea level

An alarming 36 million Indians may be at risk from flooding and inundation due to sea level rise by 2050, according to a new study published this week. That projection is a seven-fold rise from a previous estimate of 5 million for the country, and the impact is likely to be concentrated in Mumbai, Kolkata, Odisha, coastal Gujarat, as well as Chennai and Kochi, the study shows. (Times of India)

Bhoola Bhai

And our friend Bhoola Bhai on Temple Street says, first they thought the world was flat. Next they decided it was round. Today they know it is crooked.

Religious Unity – Illusion or Reality?

One of the most arduous challenges that faces humanity today is to establish harmony amongst people of different religions. Political and religious leaders have time and again endeavoured to bring people on a common platform and find ways and means to forge better understanding and acceptance of each faith.

Can the diverse religions and faiths be united? On what grounds are such beliefs based? One of the reasons why the campaign for religious harmony originated is that the most violent wars and conflicts in human history were based on religious intolerance and hatred. Shocking as it is that religions which are supposed to make people more peaceful and loving have become the biggest cause of discord and bloodshed in the world, what appalls human sensibilities is that there are today organized groups sworn to spread terror in the name of God and to carry out ethnic cleansing in the name of removing evil



As the prophets passed on and religions expanded in numbers their original power and purity also diminished.

from the world.

Even though there are some common values and tenets in all the faiths there are far too many misconceptions and conflicting

beliefs that have continually fanned mistrust and hostility among the masses.

Where there are two opinions can there be a single acting belief? There can be better understanding tolerance and acceptance of each faith but there cannot be unity unless there is a single or common belief. The vision of heaven propounded by each faith is based on the tenet that only followers of their faith will go there. So, heaven is considered to be a place where only a unified or single faith can exist or conversely, one faith, one religion is the basis of heavenly existence characterized by lasting peace and harmony.

A close look at the growth of each faith down the centuries reveals an interesting pattern. At the time of inception every religion has the power of purity, truth and unity. The values and teachings are understood and imbibed in spirit. But as the prophets passed on and religions expanded in numbers and clout their original power and purity also diminished. Gradually there were cracks, factionalism shallowness, delusion, deception and ritualistic adherence sans spiritual significance.

Instead of empowering spiritual values, religions perpetrated dogmas, disciplines and barriers that segregate people on many lines. Most of them fall prey to the very evil traits they preach against – lust for power, pleasures and money. Instead of winning over the hearts of humans they push hard to manipulate their minds by employing clever methods and by pandering to their weaknesses.

In the eternal cycle of the human world drama everything goes through a change – entropy. Everything degrades from a

perfect state to an imperfect fragmented state. Human soul, nature, religions, civilisations, everything passes through the sato (pure), rajo (mixed) and tamo (impure) stages as the time cycle spins through Golden Age to Iron Age. Today we are witnessing the tamo-pradhan (most degraded) stage of all aspects of human existence. Religions are no exception to this process of change.

We can envisage a unified faith only in terms of the spirituality inherent in all faiths. The universal spiritual and moral values form the essence of religious teachings and the common goal of every seeker. But when will humans realise these values and embody this spirituality? The Golden Age of Satyuga is the period when everyone will be an embodiment of goodness, purity and divinity. Religion or dharma (which actually means original nature) will find its true expression in human beings. Truth, peace and harmony will prevail in that age.

None but God can create such a perfect world based on true dharma. Only God has the authority, wisdom and power to create a world based on unified faith. God is Truth and true religion embodies that truth. Only when humans embrace that truth in their hearts will there be a unified world. Truth signifies that which is immutable and eternal. The innate values merged in every human soul are eternal and hence we need to practice these values in order to unify the world. God alone gives us the wisdom to nurture these dormant values and to create a peaceful world. ■ (Purity Features)

Snippets

Touch Me Not

The leaves of the touch-me-not plant close and droop if they are touched by anyone. People whose feelings are easily hurt are also called touchy. Such people are excessively sensitive to adverse opinions, comments, or circumstances and react by complaining, sulking or withdrawing into themselves.

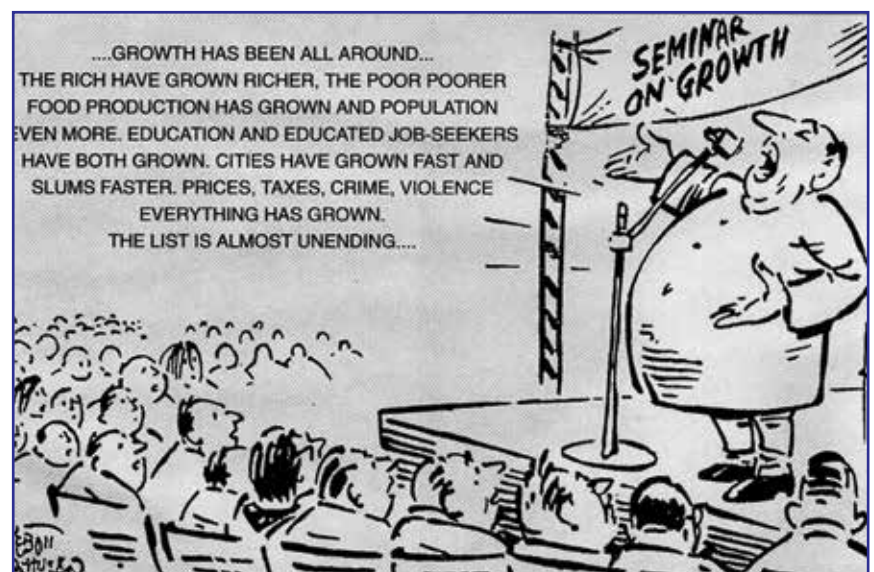
Too much of sensitivity is a weakness. it will never allow us to have peace of mind for long and make others wary of being frank and open with us. This flu of feelings can be cured if we keep in mind that everyone has his or her own opinion and point of view and we can accept them as they are without agreeing or disagreeing with them. Also God has told us that every soul has a distinct and unique part to play in the drama of this world — everyone will not act as we wish nor can we act according to everyone else's wishes. Also, everything happens for the best. Thus if we make a habit of taking everything in our stride, with the firm faith that ultimately it will be for good, we will be able to go through life without getting hurt.

Negative to Positive

Positive thinking is commonly taught of as the best approach to dealing with difficult circumstances in life. It enables one to see the benefit in every situation and make the best of it. It also saves one from sorrow and dejection.

But in order to really enrich our lives we need to learn to turn the negative into positive. One way of doing this is to change the negative feelings of others. If someone harbours such feelings for us we usually tend to reciprocate in the same way. That only perpetuates disharmony. Instead, if we look beyond the other's bad feelings and remember that the other person is under the influence of some weak sanskar, we will have sympathy for him. Then, we must give him the cooperation of our good wishes. Our good feelings will gradually cleanse the other's heart of any misunderstanding or ill will that he harbours for us, thus transforming his attitude towards us.

Actions are
Destiny's Pen





Kochi, Kerala : Lighting lamps to launch new channel - Rajayoga TV Malayalam are Hon'ble Muralidharan, Union MoS for External Affairs, Music Director Vidyadharan Master, Benny Behnan, MP, BK Karuna Bhai, BK Lakshmi Didi, BK Radha Behn and others.



Jaipur, Raja Park : Standing in silence after lighting lamps to inaugurate 'Facing Challenging Times' programme are Mr. Vinod Jakhar, Mr. Ramjilal Meena, BK Poonam Behn, Mr. Ramesh Chand Meena, Food Minister, Rajasthan, Mr. Mahaveer Gurjar, Mr. Mame Khan and Mr. Rahman Ali Khan, Bollywood Singers.



Chennai, Tamil Nadu : Lighting lamps to inaugurate 'Ageing with Dignity' programme are BK Sister Beena, Zonal Coordinator, Dr. Mahesh Hemadri, Mr. M.S. Manoharan and BK Kalavathi.



Nabarangpur, Odisha : Lighting lamps to celebrate Diwali are BK Neelam Didi, Mr. Ajeet Kumar Mishra, Collector and DM, Mr. Bhaskar Raito, Sub-collector and others.

Peace of Mind
CABLE Network

hathway | SITI | DEN | DE-CABLE
 GTPL | FEW | CUEN | JioTV
 TATA Sky | 1065 | airtel | 678
 VIDEOCON | 497 | dishtv | 1087

The First Saving!

A company offered Rs. 1000 for each money-saving idea submitted by its employees. First prize went to the employee who suggested that award be cut to Rs. 500.

Tolerance Wins



Long ago the Heavenly God Indra and his host of devas waged a battle against the Asuras. One day Indra said to the King of the Asuras, "Today let us not count the victor by the amount of bloodshed. Why don't we decide the winner by holding a debate?" In response, the King of the Asuras said, "Certainly, but who will be the judge?" Indra said, "Of the devas and of the Asuras there are beings of great wisdom and eloquence. Let us have them decide who should be victorious." Then the King of the Asuras replied, "You may speak first." Instead of speaking first, however, the Heavenly King humbly said, "I could speak first, but as you are the previous king of the firmament, you should have precedence. Please speak first."

The King of the Asuras said, "A foolish person puts up with insults because of fear, and yet prides himself in believing his tolerance makes him superior to the aggressor." Indra rejoined, "Even though a foolish person puts up with insults because of fear, being tolerant actually brings us the greatest benefits. The virtue of tolerance outweighs all the fame and fortune in the world."

The King of the Asuras then said, "Lacking wisdom, foolish people need to be forced to do right. They are just like lazy cows that need to be prodded along by the horns of more vigorous cows breathing down their necks from behind. Hence, the best way to control the foolish is by whips and spurs." The Heavenly King countered, "I think to control the foolish, forbearance is the best way. When confronted by an agitated person, if one can wait in peace and silence, their fury will die down naturally. A person without hatred or vexations is a saint or the disciple of a saint. A person whose mind is loaded with great anger and therefore gets angry easily will encounter obstacles as high as a mountain. On the other hand, if one can control one's anger as soon as it arises, then one will have done a good deed."

The devas and asuras who acted as judges for the debate thought that the arguments of King of the Asuras were based on the use of conflict and force, whereas Indra advocated putting arguments and competitions to rest with a mind free of anger and malice. In consequence, all of the judges awarded Indra the victory.

Indra represents one who is free of care because he always practices tolerance and also praises the ways of tolerance. Likewise, if we can practice and praise tolerance, then we are truly living a life of a saint. ■



Delhi Cantt. : Launching 'Holistic Well-Being a Way of Life' state-level campaign of Medical Wing are BK Asha Didi, BK Gita Didi, BK Sister Lakshmi, Dr. M.D.Gupta, Dr. Manju Gupta, Dr. Mohit Gupta and others.

True Love and God's Love

Q & A with Dadi Janki, Chief of Brahma Kumaris

Q. What is true love?

A. People don't know how to give love, nor do they know how to receive. Thus, the heart is empty. This is why they don't know what love is. Actually, just to take the time and effort to understand what love is, is in itself an act of love.

True love is totally uninterested in that which is false. Superficial emotions which keep you on the surface of things are not the basis of true love. True love means pure love, and pure love is based on your innermost truth, goodness and desire to bring benefit to others. Being affected by other people's character also dilutes it. You need to endeavour to understand the things of pure love and to check that it is what you are working with.

Let your love be so true that even if others become your enemy you do not stop loving them. You have to give love truthfully, from your heart. Your love should be such that you are able to place your hand on your heart and know that what you are giving is true. True love is what everyone wants, so this is what you should share.

Q. How can we get God's love?

A. God is teaching us the art of loving. He is the Bestower. He is the Ocean of Love and He is willing to give us so much. But first we have to learn the art of detachment, otherwise we won't have the right to claim His love.

Detachment is a talent as well as an art. It is developed through soul consciousness



Shantivan, Abu : Mr. Om Birla, Hon'ble Speaker of Lok Sabha paying respects before meeting with Dadi Janki, Chief of Brahma Kumaris during his visit to Brahma Kumaris Headquarters after giving Valedictory Speech at Global Summit.

which, together with a deep relationship with God, will keep me from being deceived by the attractions of limited love. It means to be so centred in the consciousness of my true spiritual nature that there is a natural, automatic rejection of adverse personality traits within me and illusionary attractions around me. Detachment allows me to be unaffected by these and be able to continue cultivating the values and virtues of my spiritual personality.

God is willing to give us all His love, but if the first condition of detachment is not met, we will not be able to receive it. Turning my eye in any other direction will block the truth and finish my progress. It's a very strong pre-

requisite.

Until we learn how to detach ourselves from a limited consciousness, human love with all its limitations, will attract us against our will again and again. Detachment of this sort is cultivated by reaching for God in such a way that we feel Him satisfying the needs of any and all relationships. God is the Ocean of love, so it is possible to experience Him as our perfect father, mother, beloved, and so on, all at the same time. It is only when we expose ourselves to all the aspects of God's love that we are then purified, that is, made full by its power. A limited consciousness will not allow us to experience such fullness.

Only by being faithful to that

One can we fulfil ourselves in this way. Souls have the habit of being distracted by the physical world. We have to study and look after ourselves to ensure that this does not happen to us. The only thing that will break this habit is the practice of soul consciousness. By being introverted, by turning our attention to One, we will continue to receive light and might from God. ■

Spiritual Love

Just as a kite flies high, held only by a string, our intellect can rise to the heights of wisdom, pulled only by the thread of spiritual love.



Om Shanti Retreat Centre, Gurugram : Group photo of participants in honouring ceremony of Delhi Zone 'Adi Ratans' who took direct sustenance from Pitareshri Brahma Baba when Baba was in corporeal form.

Regaining the Lost Paradise

Heaven or paradise is the ultimate destination of every believer. The mention of heaven conjures up images and feelings of eternal bliss, abundant joy, comforts and every kind of happiness that one desires. In heaven everyone is blessed with perfect health, immense wealth and eternal happiness.

Paradise is the creation of God, hence the elements of nature there are pure (Satopradhan) and everything is exceptionally beautiful and perfect. Every creature, object and scene there is a delight to the senses. Heaven is the model of perfection and bliss in every sense. There was such a paradise on earth long long ago. How was it lost, and what is the scenario today in terms of health, wealth and happiness?

Health: Health is not merely the absence of disease; it is a state of being physically, mentally, socially and spiritually fit. Today health has become just like any other commodity that is packaged and marketed smartly. Rather than reducing sickness, today we have more hospitals and medical shops that offer various types of healthcare. Commercialism in the healthcare sector has grown so much that even for admission to medical college lakhs of rupees have to be paid.

In reality, even primary healthcare is not available to the majority. Diseases are growing due to multiple factors such as growing pollution of air, water and farm produce,



In paradise everyone is blessed with perfect health, immense wealth and eternal happiness.

wrong life-style, mental stress, non-vegetarian and fast food diet, ecological degradation and poverty.

The future of humanity's health seems bleak. Apart from all the life supporting factors that affect health, people hardly know or understand that the most fundamental factor that controls our health is the quality of our actions. Good karma is the bedrock of good

health and poor health is in fact a punishment suffered by a person for unrighteous or sinful actions. All actions done with pure feelings, selfless attitude and in the remembrance of God are truly great actions that result in good health. Even now we have enough medical statistics which show that those who live with positive feelings are much healthier than those who live with negative feelings and attitudes.

Wealth: The economic scenario in the world presents a picture of stark contrast. The rich are getting richer and the poor are becoming poorer. Globalization has created privileged pools of wealth where a few powerful firms are controlling the market and trade policies. The cities are coming up with swanky malls, flyovers, skyscrapers and luxury products but a vast

majority of the world cannot afford them and a significant number of people still live in abject poverty. Economic prosperity is measured by the Sensex. But the ground reality is alarming – poor sanitation, lack of drinking water, malnutrition, starvation deaths, lack of basic healthcare etc. Even those who are wealthy are not happy: they have their own problems like fear of theft, extortion, murder, loss in business, taxes, tough competition, legal feuds, and pressures of a high society lifestyle.

Happiness: It has been said by the sages that happiness in Kaliyuga, the present world, is like the droppings of a crow, i.e. it is worthless. There is only fleeting joy in material pleasures and comforts. Not a single person in this world is free from sorrow and suffering, though the degree may vary. But people today are caught up in chasing the mirage of happiness in material possessions and relationships. The definition of perception of happiness has also changed. Sensual pleasures and brazen conduct that were once graded as cheap and immoral are today the popular means of seeking happiness. People find happiness in movies, music, video games, websites, fashion and hobbies that are actually bizarre and perverted.

All efforts made by humans at regaining peace, happiness and well-being today are like window dressing. They offer limited assistance to the poor, sick and suffering people but do not result in long lasting change.

The root cause of suffering is bad karma which stems from five vices - lust, anger, greed, attachment and ego. Any person whose mind is afflicted by these vices cannot be happy. The vices are born from body-consciousness, which arises due to ignorance of our true identity as a pure and immortal soul. When humans regain their original purity and spiritual power, they will regain the lost paradise.

The time has now come for world transformation through spiritual empowerment. Paradise is being re-established right now by purification of human beings through Rajyoga meditation and the wisdom imparted by Almighty God. ■

(Purity Bureau)

True Identity

You are a spark of eternal, spiritual energy.

This spark is the soul.

It is made up of mind, intellect and sanskars.

The mind has thoughts and the intellect chooses among them.

These choices become actions and actions repeated become habits. Thus is character created.

You do not have a soul. What you have can be lost.

You are a soul and you will never cease to exist.

You give life to your body.

You were once powerful, even beyond your own understanding, but your spiritual power faded as you traveled through time.

This power can be reawakened by connection with the Supreme Soul.

With it will come peace, love, purity, happiness and truth.

These are your eternal qualities. They belong to you.

Blunted by time they are still there, waiting for you to claim them.



—Barbara Ramsay

Clean Mind Clear Intellect

How much time and money is being spent to invent fast speed tools by means of science and technology. And look! Each one of us has such a fast speed tool that works at the speed of thought. Just think and you are there; again, just think and you are back here. The rocket of the mind can fly you anywhere, anytime, at the speed of thought. But a controlled flight to a pleasant destination needs a clean mind and a clear intellect that can produce the double refined propellant fuel of positive and benevolent thoughts.

News in Photos

Shantivan, Abu : 70th birthday of BK Lakshmi Behn (Munni Behn) was celebrated in Diamond Hall. Thousands of Brahma Kumars and Brahma Kumaris from India and abroad participated. Pic. shows BK Lakshmi flanked by Dadi Janki, Chief of Brahma Kumaris, BK Sister Hansa and Dadi Ratan Mohini, Jt. Chief of Brahma Kumaris.



Bengaluru, Karnataka : BK Sister Megha being bestowed with 'Prakruti Mitra Award' by Mr. Punati Sridhar, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and other dignitaries.



Bhubaneswar, Odisha : Prof. Ganeshi Lal, Hon'ble Governor of Odisha being presented bouquet by BK Brother Charlie from Australia.



Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh : During inter-disciplinary programmes in the State seated on stage are Mr. Shivraj Singh Chauhan, former Chief Minister, BK Avdesh, Organiser, BK Shukla from Delhi, BK Mohan Singhal, BK Karuna, BK Dr. Banarsi, BK Ashok Gaba, BK Lata and BK Vidya.



Sonepat, Haryana : Group photo of senior teachers from BK Punjab zone who participated in 5-day Silence Retreat at Sonepat Retreat Centre. Seated in third row (middle) are BK Amirchand Bhai, BK Asha Behn, Director, ORC, BK Ultra Behn and BK Sister Meera from Malaysia, who conducted the Retreat.



**Rajyogini Brahma Kumari
Sister Bharati, Singapore**
Born - 30 September 1945
Joined BK in Australia in 1978
Started BK Centre in Singapore in 1980
Flew to Baba's lap - 30 Oct. 2019
A trained pharmacist, Sister Bharti worked and ran the centre at the same time. In the last 4 years she ran a Peace Cafe and worked till the end.



**Rajyogi Brahma Kumar
Rohit Bhai**
Valsad, Gujarat
Born - 29 November 1948
Joined BK in 1971
Flew to Baba's lap - 18 Oct. 2019
Senior BK Brother Rohitbhai was a tireless all-round server, farsighted with planning intellect. He was humble, friendly and loved by all.



Sacramento, CA, USA: Seen at 'Pause for Peace' interfaith ceremony organised by Brahma Kumaris are BK Sister Vedanti and BK Deepti from Africa, BK Sister Hansa, Mr. Akram Keval, Islamic, Ms. Carol Loew, Jewish, Bishop Ron Allen, Diana Rude, Baha'i, Darshan Mundy, Sikh, Yee Kwong, Buddhist, and others.



Delightful Rainbow Mountains in China have to be seen to be believed.



BK Dr. Rani of Bhopal being presented the first Indian Energetic Women Award for pulling a truck, a railway engine etc. with her hair at Britain's House of Commons.

Mr. Wise

Mr. Wise?

Yes.

Isn't self-interest the prime motivator of human actions?

Of course. And self-development the prime objective of human life.

What then is wrong with being selfish?

Selfishness seeks 'to get', whereas everything in the world exists 'to give'.

Isn't that the universal law?

I cannot say.



And Mr. Wise?

Yes.

Charity, they say, begins at home. Doesn't it justify selfishness?

No, because charity involves 'giving' selflessly.

But you can give only if you have, wherefrom will it come?

To give is to get. 'As you sow, so shall you reap'. And sowing comes first, doesn't it?

I cannot say.



Lastly...

Yes.

Why do we confuse selfishness with self-interest?

Because we confuse our physical body with the eternal soul. Its body-consciousness that makes us selfish.

Perhaps you are right.



Tailpiece



Two little boys. Ages 8 and 10, are excessively mischievous. They are always getting into trouble and their parents know all about it. If any mischief occurs in their town, the two boys are probably involved.

The boys' mother heard that a preacher in town had been successful in disciplining children, so she asked if he would speak with her boys. The preacher agreed, but he asked to see them individually. So, the mother sent the 8-year-old first, in the morning, with the older boy to see the preacher in the afternoon.

The preacher, a huge man with a booming voice, sat the younger boy down and asked him sternly, do you know where God is, son?

The boy's mouth dropped open, but he made no response, sitting there wide-eyed with his mouth hanging open.

So, the preacher repeated the question in an even sterner tone, where is God?

Again, the boy made no attempt to answer. The preacher raised his voice even more and shook his finger in the boy's face and bellowed, where is God?

The boy screamed, ran directly home and dove into his closet, slamming the door behind him. When his older brother found him in the closet, he asked, what happened?

The younger brother, gasping for breath, replied, we are in BIG trouble this time. GOD is missing, and they think we did it.

