

THE MAGAZINE COVERING ALL ASPECTS OF THE INDIAN WORLD

INDIA LINK

INTERNATIONAL



Dec 10 - Jan 11
Vol 17 No 6

REPUBLIC DAY ISSUE



OBAMA'S OVERTURES

U.K. £3.00 • India Rs 50 • UAE AED 19 • USA \$6.00 • CAN \$ 6.00 • S.AFRICA 15 RAND

THE ART OF BALANCE

BY DADI JANKI, HEAD OF BRAHMA KUMARIS

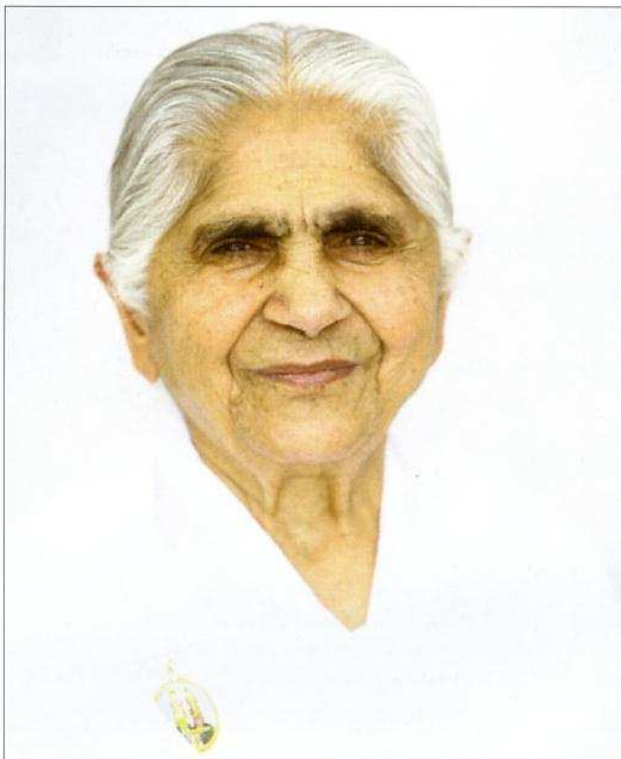
Becoming spiritual is not a matter of learning techniques, chanting words or performing rituals. Spiritual growth means learning to keep balance. With balance we gain perspective, we keep a hold of reality, and we learn to avoid extremes. Extremes segregate and separate. In balance there is reconciliation, even with those things that appear to be opposites.

People who are spiritually aware understand that the myriad threads that run through everything in this universe are each necessary. It is all these diverse threads woven together that create the wondrous tapestry of existence. Balance is what holds the diverse threads peacefully and harmoniously. The measure of a person's practical wisdom is their capacity for balance. Balance is harmony and order, it is peace. In the modern world, keeping balance is not always easy: just one negative thought or word can throw us totally off balance. We are like tightrope walkers.

To successfully walk to the other side, we carefully place one foot after the other, holding a pole to balance. A slightly wrong step, a little too heavy on one side of the pole, then over we topple. The rope we walk is the path to our destination. To reach the other side, each of our steps must be accurate. Each step requires that we balance the different virtues. There should not be too much of one virtue on one side otherwise we can lose our balance. For example, in life we need to be sweet. Sweetness is a sign of a good and understanding nature. However, too much sweetness, like honey, is sticky. People stick to us or we stick to them, then the heaviness overbalances us.

Even positive things need to be in balance. For example, we need to be determined to achieve our aims. Determination provides the energy and concentration necessary for any accomplishment. However, too much of the wrong kind of determination can become stubbornness and the narrow vision that makes people insensitive to others. So determination needs to be balanced with patience and flexibility.

Every virtue when in action has value and is necessary, but it requires some level of detachment if a balance is to be kept. If we carry a virtue to the extreme it can become a negative thing. With detachment everything remains in balance. Attachment, or wanting something too much, destroys a good thing. Attachment, even



to the good qualities is one's self, reduces the value of that goodness. We become dominated by ego, the original purity is gradually lost.

There are many other qualities and virtues necessary in life that requires balance. We need to be strong-hearted to face the many difficult situations of life, but we must never be so hard-hearted that we are not concerned for the sorrow of others. We should become content by appreciating what we have in life, but never become complacent so that we make no effort to improve. We should be flexible, with tolerance and humility, but never compromise our principles, thus losing our integrity. We should be concerned about others but never worry about them. Worry comes from fear, and worrying never brings solutions. To be concerned is to care, but to help we need to be clear minded and free from fear.

We should be spontaneous but never impulsive. If people are impulsive they act without thinking. Impulsive emotions can be very negative. Pure feelings of love and joy, if they are genuine, are natural and spontaneous. Spontaneity is positive and uplifting.

We must challenge but never provoke. For progress and positive change, we need to challenge ourselves and others to think and to act in new and different ways. Provocation, on the other hand, is based on ridicule. Ridiculing and

deriding what others believe or do is destructive and never beneficial.

We must be lawful but not dogmatic. Laws are necessary. As members of humanity we need to do what is right and fair in order to protect the well-being of all things. However, even though we need laws, we must never lose sensitivity to the needs of the individual. To be obedient to eternal laws creates compassion. It never means becoming dogmatic and fundamentalist.

These balances that make life peaceful and happy. Balance is acquired when there is discernment. Discernment comes from wisdom and personal experience and the right discernment gives us the appropriate understanding at the appropriate time.

Dadi (Elder Sister) Janki has dedicated more than 70 years of her life to the work of the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University of which she is the Administrative Head. She began her spiritual apprenticeship in 1937 at the age of 21 as one of the founding members.

After serving throughout India in the years following independence, she moved to London, UK, in 1974 and from there her vision and drive saw the organisation's teachings carried into more than 100 countries.

Now internationally acknowledged as a great spiritual leader, Dadi's lifelong focus has been to align her mind and heart to God's will and purpose. Dadi is deeply and compassionately aware of the selfish tendencies that currently afflict human relationships and affairs, and that put our world in peril. However, she is a visionary, with an unswerving optimism. "In the winter, we foresee the spring", she says. "She holds the vision of a world where all things are given freely, where the highest human potential is fully realised." That future world is guaranteed, in Dadi's eyes, but to reach it, our consciousness has to change.

Raja Yoga Meditation as practised by the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University is a perfect tool to bring about changing our awareness and attitude. Come and experience for yourself the benefits of meditation by visiting www.bkwsu.org/uk or telephoning 020 87273350 for more details and information

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