

|| From the mighty pen of Sanjay ||



DEEPAWALI



Diwali or Deepawali – the festival of lights –is very widely celebrated in India. There are a number of practices and observances that are usually associated with it. However, it is relevant to know what the spiritual and philosophical meanings of these are and why people celebrate this occasion with such great festivity.

A Personality-Portrait of Lakshmi

The word 'Lakshmi' is derived from the word 'Lakshya' or 'Lakshma'. Both these mean: 'The goal'. So by semantic implication, Lakshmi represents 'the final goal' of life. The symbols associated with her and the rituals and practices followed on the day of Deepawali all imply that she stands for the highest stage of perfection and development which a human soul can reach.

The Sanskrit word 'Laksha' stands for hundred thousand (rupees or property worth this amount) so that a person possessing wealth of this amount is called Lakshpati, and Shri Narayana, the consort of Lakshmi is called Lakshmiapati. Because of phonetic closeness and similarity of meanings, besides other reasons also, Lakshmi is considered as 'goddess of wealth'. However, wealth is not the only possession of Lakshmi.

Symbols associated with Lakshmi

The Symbols, associated with Shri Lakshmi clearly bring out that she represents the goal of human endeavour of perfection in human life.

(i) **Her four arms** or hands signify *Dharma, Artha, Kama and Mukti*, i.e., the stage of Fruition or Beatitude. There is nothing left to be achieved. Health, Wealth, Virtue and Happiness are all included in this. Her 'Abhaya Mudra' shows the pose of assurance and safety.

(ii) **The Hundred-petal Lotus** on which she sits is symbolic of hundred percent purity and detachment or her perfectly ontological (*Sattwic*) stage. The hundred petal open lotus, which she holds in her right hand, is symbolic of all development. Then, there are many lotus flowers shown floating in *kshira sagar* – the ocean of milk. These are symbolic of purity, peace and prosperity.

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NAVRATRI-DUSSHERA-DEEPAWALI



SPREAD VIBRATIONS OF PEACE AND HAPPINESS



When the monsoon thunder, storms and lightning greeted the earth, it brought relief from the scorching heat and songs to the birds. Though, it did cause damage to the buildings and roads, and even took some lives, the crops have brought cheer to the faces of the rich and poor alike. The prices would come down and so every one seems relieved. The weather is slowly changing and becoming more and more pleasant each day. Navratri Festival is in full swing along with the very best of 'Dandia Raas', followed by enjoying kheer and other sweets every night. Everyone's faces are the reflection of immense love, peace and happiness... In all parts of Bharat, these nine nights are celebrated with lot of devotion towards the goddesses in particular, as they are respected for bestowing power, wisdom, wealth and health, and ultimately helping the human race conquer Ravan, the Demon. The vibrations totally transform and

become powerfully divine. Though we have been celebrating Navratri, Dusshera and Deepawali every year, we hardly think about the origin of these events.

The three prominent goddesses are symbolized presently by the daughters of Brahma, who are spreading the light of love, enlightenment, wisdom and virtues or purity of thought. How we fervently wish that the third eye of wisdom of each human soul is awakened to remove the darkness of ignorance from every nook and corner... Supreme Father, the 'Deepraj' or Supreme Source of spiritual light and divine might will then be glorified in everyone's heart and home. The entire world, including the five elements, and living creatures will sing praise of the Creator!

From then on the era of Golden Age would dawn. Darkness, death and disease would vanish and every human being would enjoy ever-healthy and ever-happy lives.

Children would be born 100% pure like Shri Radha and Shri Krishna. Innocence and enlightenment would be lived in the practical, at every moment, all through long and prosperous lives. Truth, love, beauty, purity of heart, respect and honesty would rule supreme consistently for 2500 years, during the period of *Satyuga* and *Tretayuga*!

Let us prepare to be worthy heirs of God by imbibing His wisdom bestowed through Mateshwari Saraswati, the self-same Durga and Amba, Pitashri Brahma and claim the titles of Shri Lakshmi and Shri Narayan. The entire globe will then shine brightly in the form of Golden Age or *Satyuga*, where every one will witness real Deepawali in our lives.

**MAY YOU BECOME
THE WORSHIP-
WORTHY DEITIES OF
THAT GOLDEN AGE
AND CELEBRATE
TRUE
ENLIGHTENMENT OF
DEEPAWALI!**

PLATINUM JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS

Celebrating 'One God - One World Family' Consciousness

Friday, 16 September 2011, was a day of unparalleled honour when the President of India, H.E. Mrs. Pratibha Devi Singh Patil flagged off the Platinum Jubilee celebrations of Prajapita Brahma Kumaris Ishwariya Vishwa Vidyalaya at Om Shanti Retreat Centre, Gurgaon, near Delhi (Complete text of the President's Speech on Page no. 8).

It marked the celebrations of '**One God – One World Family**' consciousness. It was in the year 1936-37 when the Supreme Father, through medium of Pitashri Brahma Baba, revealed His true identity and marked the beginning of a unique spiritual education. This new education, being totally revolutionary as well as completely enlightening, took quite some time to be understood, practised and lived before being revealed or propagated. It was after 14 long years that the holy Brahma Kumaris sisters moved out of their commune to spread the word of God. Today, people understand the language of the soul and the Supreme Soul and

communicate on a spiritual level to benefit each other around the globe. The 'One God – One World Family' consciousness helps us understand the unlimited World Drama of 5000 years.

These celebrations are well-set between the days of Navratri and Deepawali. The Shiv Shaktis are worshipped during Navratri in different forms with different names, symbolizing the various boons received from Durga, Saraswati and Lakshmi. The Shiv Shaktis are presently playing their roles all over the globe through powerful awakening of the third eye of wisdom, and restoring of the relationship between each human soul and the Supreme Being. This relationship helps each one return to its original purity and piety; human souls thereby become light and pure, and are able to enjoy peace, happiness and ecstasy.

This supersensuous joy is portrayed by the communities during Navratri throughout Bharat. Later, souls attain worship-worthy status when their deeds become elevated and divine, which gives birth to the divine dance of deities on

earth. The transformation from Kaliyuga to Satyuga is celebrated as the Festival of Lights or Deepawali. Human beings are 100% enlightened by the 'Deepraj', God, the Supreme, and they enjoy ever-happy, ever-healthy and ever-prosperous long lives.

Our beloved Dadis are taking this message of 'One God and One World Family' all over the globe even in their 80s and 90s! In September 2011, Dadi Jankiji and Dadi Ratan Mohiniji visited the African and Asian-Pacific regions, while Dadi Hirday Mohiniji was on tour of North India. All have been spreading the light of love, peace, hope and happiness. Salutations to these living goddesses on Earth who are untiring in their service of God's children!

Delhi, the Capital of India will be honouring the Platinum Jubilee anniversary of the Brahma Kumaris with a series of dynamic and entertaining spiritual events, dialogues and stage programmes as follows:

8th October 2011:

10:00 a.m. – Inaugural Session at Vigyan Bhawan at the hands of

H.E. The Vice President of India

2:00 p.m. – Programme for Youth at Vigyan Bhawan on “Youth for Integration of Human Society”

6:00 p.m. – Programme for Women at Vigyan Bhawan on the theme: “Women for Preserving Family Culture”

9th October 2011

8:00 p.m. – Platinum Jubilee Celebrations at CPWD Grounds, Chirag Dilli

10th October 2011

2:00 – 4:00 p.m. – Interfaith Conference at Talkatora Stadium

5:00 – 8:00 p.m. – Platinum Jubilee Celebrations at Talkatora Stadium

11th October 2011

5:00 p.m. – Platinum

Jubilee Celebrations at Dadi Prakashmani Auditorium,

Om Shanti Retreat Centre, Gurgaon

12th October 2011

10:00 a.m. – Interfaith Conference at Hotel Radisson Blu

5:00 p.m. - Get Together for Business Persons and Industrialists at ORC

13th October 2011

6:00 p.m. – Platinum Jubilee Celebrations at Swami Amardev Grounds, Derawal Nagar

14th October 2011

5:30 p.m. – Celebrations at Siri Fort Auditorium

15th October

One- Day Retreat for Latino Community at ORC

5:00 p.m. – Celebrations at Dusshera Park, Janakpuri

16th October

11:00 a.m. – Felicitation of Dadis at Manekshaw Auditorium, Delhi by Manesar Industrial Welfare Association and Haryana Industrial Association

5:00 p.m. – Celebrations at Leisure Valley Grounds, Gurgaon

We have full faith that these celebratory events in Delhi, and ensuing programmes in different parts of Bharat and foreign lands, will be the impetus to bring many of our spiritual sisters and brothers closer to self-realisation, God-realisation and inspire them to be instruments for world transformation.

– **B.K. Nirwair**

WHEN GOD IS MY COMPANION

I am drawn beyond, into silence

My karma changes

Success comes to me

At every step experience His company

The intellect transforms

My life becomes simple and a sample and is filled with spiritual strength

Relationships becomes rich

I become valuable for the world

I become an instrument

I am the richest in the world

TRAINING MIND TO THINK POSITIVE

—B.K. Dr. Kaberi Kakati, Guwahati

Once, an old man and his 24-year old son were going in a train. The son sat next to the window with his father beside him. The son looking out of the window shouted, 'Dad, look, the trees are going behind.' Dad smiled. A young couple sitting near them looked at the young man behaving childishly with pity. Suddenly the boy again exclaimed, 'Dad, look, the clouds are running with us!' The couple couldn't resist and said to the old man, 'Why don't you take your son to a good doctor?' The old man smiled and said, 'I did and we are just coming from the hospital. My son had been blind since birth; he has just got his eyes today.' Most of us would have had the same response as the young couple and would have pitied the old man and his son for their sorry state instead of even imagining about something positive in such a situation.

We are living in a brutally competitive world where a minor slip can result into voyage to abyss. The rule "Survival of the Fittest" applies today. In the race to survive in this hectic

world, we are unknowingly losing all our inherent qualities of peace, purity, love and happiness. Each one of us has this constant need of love, admiration and acceptance. However, people often fall victim to outbursts, anger, fear, jealousy and dislikes. All these elements are mere manifestations of our negative thoughts. But the thing with negativity is that, the more you express it, the more you are attracted towards it. In any challenging situation in life, it is usually the negative thoughts which first emerge in our mind. The reason for this is the negative environment in which we live today. The first thing that we get in the morning is negative information with which we fill our mind and this gradually leaves an ill-effect on our mind and prompts us to have a negative disposition towards people and life.

That's where the power of positive thinking comes into the picture. Positive thinking can be one of the most powerful weapons one can have. This is not something to be underestimated and certainly not

to be considered as a mere preaching tool of sages and holy men. Whatever we do, begins with a thought. We are always thinking something or the other, and thoughts certainly affect the outcome of our actions. So why should we not strive to incorporate this inevitable thought process in our lives in a positive way? Positive thinking is a virtue and a necessity in today's world. The single attribute of positive thinking can help in making a difference to our lives and also to the people in our surroundings. Positive thoughts instigate positive attitude towards a task, which in turn changes the outcome. Health experts and psychologists have reiterated the virtue of positive thinking in our lives. It is the crucial foundation upon which a healthy, happy and long life is built.

But given the conditions that we live in today, positive thoughts and attitudes won't come just on their own. Proper guidance and knowledge is necessary so that we can always think logically and see only the positive in every situation. Such highest level of knowledge can be given only by the Supreme Father. Our Beloved God Father Shiva has now incarnated from His abode—Soul-World to disclose

Contd. on page no. 34)



SPEECH BY HER EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA,

**Shrimati Pratibha Devisingh Patil at the inauguration of
The Platinum Jubilee Celebrations of the Brahma Kumaris,
ORC, Gurgaon, Haryana, INDIA,
16th September 2011**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to inaugurate the Platinum Jubilee Celebrations of the Prajapita Brahma Kumaris Ishwariya Vishwa Vidyalaya. Seventy Five years is an important milestone in the journey of any organization. Brahma Kumaris is not a religion, but a spiritual fraternity, and with its message of importance of a spiritually rich life and value-based living, it has touched the lives of thousands of people from all walks of life from different nations, cultures, creeds and races. It is, therefore, apt for such an organization to have chosen the theme “One God, One World Family” to celebrate its Platinum Jubilee.

I begin with a quotation of Gandhiji where he said, “I believe in absolute oneness of God and, therefore, also of humanity.” This captures so well the basic philosophy of India, contained in the concept of ‘Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam’ — the world is one family. It enjoins upon us to treat fellow human beings as our own

family. This thinking is an outcome of a profound understanding of the inter-connectivity and inter-dependability of human beings on one another. In today’s era of globalization, an echo of this is heard, when the world is described as a global village, and where all human beings are required to be good global citizens to promote global good.

Of course, each individual is an important entity. The collective world that we are building is dependent on individual behaviour. The macrocosm is, hence, a product of microcosm. This again is an ancient truth. Our lives are not isolated islands; rather we are living in close proximity with each other. Each one has to be deeply conscious of the reality, that there will be peace and harmony in our environs, only if there is peace in our minds. For it is then only, that we will seek to live in peace with fellow humans and nature. For communities to live in harmony, we need to have human beings with qualities of love and compassion, who work to create calm and concord. The purpose

of our lives must go beyond self-satisfaction. Concern for humanity and desire to alleviate suffering has always been an exemplary thought and action for individuals and society. It requires a spirit of giving and a spirit of generosity. Nature contains this basic message. It is said in one of our Shlokas:

**Trees give fruits for the
benefit of others**

**Rivers flow for helping
others**

**Cows give milk for others
So, also our lives are for
helping others.**

Human beings have immense potential to rise above narrow considerations and to strive for broader welfare. This can happen when our thoughts, attitudes, emotions and actions are righteous. All religions espouse the path of virtue and righteousness, and emphasize the importance of pursuing peace, adhering to goodness and kindness and overcoming anger and greed. Today if we look around us, things are not good. In this situation, the people need to fortify their minds and control their greed. To build an internal reservoir of positive

energy requires reflection, introspection and self correction by an individual, at every stage in life. Feelings of lust, anger, greed, attachment and ego that generate negative emotions are not conducive to the well-being of either the self or others.

It is a matter of concern that a degree of selfishness has crept into our societies. Visions have got limited. Take the example of the meaning that is attached to success. It is often measured in terms of material gains and in this race for success we forget human relationships. We sometimes forget that in little things like loving smiles, friendly conversations, in words of encouragement, in sharing our joys and sorrows, there is meaning. A meaningful life, as I have mentioned earlier, is one of living for others. Spiritual awareness and empowerment of people should go hand-in-hand with material progress. Then only can we realize the dream of establishing peace and prosperity in the world.

Building peace has another essential element. It is rejecting violence of any kind, as violence even of the subtlest form can destroy peace. Indeed, Mahatma Gandhi, the Apostle of non-violence, describes it as a creed, and as a strategy which involves respect and love for all forms of life. Using harsh language is also similar to

violence. The US civil rights activist Martin Luther King Jr., deeply influenced by Gandhiji, said, "Returning violence for violence multiplies violence, adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars...Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that. Non-violence and pure feelings for all are necessary to foster unity in diversity".

Often differences are created by lack of understanding and misperceptions. We need to bridge these divides and necessarily through dialogue. Dialogue produces a confluence of the various streams of thought, opinions and aspirations. It draws together various inputs to produce a grand movement of human advancement. India is a land of many faiths and cultures, and the principle of secularism, enshrined in our Constitution, is based on respect for all religions. I would like to stress this again, that not merely tolerance but respect for all religions is important. There is no place for fissiparous ideas of any sort – region, religion, language, culture, caste, creed, hatred or any other ground. We have to work together with unity of purpose to make India, which has a pluralistic society, an even more prosperous and harmonious nation, on the solid

foundation of secularism which is the basic principle of our Constitution.

Also, progress should touch every section of society. Inclusive growth is very important in building an equitable, stable and sustainable base for the growth of the nation. I have always been a proponent of women's empowerment, as I believe that they have immense potential, and channelizing their energies will build more peaceful societies. A woman's intrinsic nature is that of giving and nurturing. These qualities are very important to create stable societies. It is noteworthy that from a small beginning in 1936, the institution of the Brahma Kumaris has emerged as a large organization of its kind, led largely by women working ceaselessly for peace, harmony and universal brotherhood. I congratulate you for this.

I hope that the Platinum Jubilee Celebrations will spread the message of compassion and oneness; and inspire people to build bridges of unity amongst all cultures and creeds. I once again congratulate the Brahma Kumaris on this momentous occasion, and wish them success in achieving the noble vision of creating a world of peace and harmony.... *Jai Hind*



CREATING THE RIGHT MINDSET



– B.K. Jayanti, London

What spirituality has taught me is that you can't simply say 'let me change things out there'. Instead, you have to see what you can do to change yourself in order to make a contribution towards a better world. Similarly, sustainability is much more than the planning of cities, the planning of housing, etc. It involves three fundamental levels: sustaining the self, sustaining relationships, and sustaining communities.

Sustainability from the Inside Out

Firstly, we need to spend time in self-introspection and create right awareness, right attitude, and right consciousness. It is only then that we can start thinking about how to have a sustainable lifestyle and a sustainable world.

How can I sustain myself? The most important value that comes to mind is "respect". If I value and respect myself, I will be able to sustain myself. As I develop that self awareness, I am also going to be able to respect you and on that basis build a sustainable relationship.

Have you ever seen, known, or experienced a relationship that lacked respect? I may love you later on, but first at least let me develop the capacity to respect you. Only then can I start the process of getting to know you better—maybe even reaching to the point of loving you. This level of respect can further lead to respecting the community as a whole—not only some individuals, but the community in its entirety because I believe in the strength of the synergy.

The multiplication of energies when the gathering comes together is far greater than what I can accomplish on my own. Ten people spending three hours together can achieve something quite amazing. I could spend thirty hours on my own and still would not come any way near what we could have done together. Thus, respect for the collective gathering, the community is absolutely the foundation of progress for the future. And as we look further and develop this concept of respect, then we'll think not only of the community but also of the

world at large and the entire planet.

We need to ask ourselves, to what extent do we respect this home that has been provided for us? We haven't created it, but it has come to us as a gift. It has been described as the very precious blue pearl. That the astronauts were able to see from a distance and the only blue pearl as far as we know up until now...this very precious space is our home. On a personal level we also need to ask, to what extent have I been able to respect my home, care for it and tend to it? Within my home, within my planet, am I able to have respect for all forms of life?

Finally, the best way to accomplish these three levels of sustainability is through meditation. I will be in a better position to do something about sustaining the planet and the world around me by starting with myself and creating the right mindset, which ultimately means accepting responsibility. If I think that the world out there is somebody else's responsibility—how they've done that, they shouldn't have done this, why did they do that, etc. — then I will not be able to make any contribution to creating positive change. However, if we stop for a moment and ask what role we

had to play within all this, we will then be able to see that we have a responsibility to help create a better world.

Unsustainable materialism

In my visits to cities around the world what strikes me the most is inequality. It is rapidly on the rise and showing no signs of decreasing. I believe that it is not government plans that will change inequality, but only human awareness, human consciousness can attain the goal. We need to change the mindset of **hot heads and cold hearts. Instead warm hearts and cool heads** can create a huge amount of difference.

The root cause of inequality today is materialism. Materialism also touches upon the subjects of consumerism, climate change, and the depletion of resources. Materialism is very much connected to matter. Instead of understanding that life is about cooperation and living together, human beings' desire for the conquest of external matter has led to the sad state of affairs.

We have become slaves to matter, and I am thinking particularly about the matter that makes up this physical body of mine. From the moment that I try to possess matter I become a slave to my own physical

senses and my desire to gratify my senses. So, materialism and conquest of matter have actually led to forgetting the inner being and allowing this matter to take over my consciousness and my mind.

Awakening human consciousness

The solution to materialism is the awakening of the human heart, the awakening of human consciousness, so that I can really understand that the happiness that I am seeking is not to be found by having a bigger house or a bigger car or a larger television set. It is actually found by going within.

I am not talking about something which is abstract. I am instead talking about something which is very practical and it is very much needed for today's world. It is simplicity. The ability to reduce our personal needs so that we are able to reduce our carbon footprint, so that we can find the happiness that we need within ourselves and not think that happiness involves things outside.

The moment we discover that real treasures lie within, we will have an open heart, a generous heart, a heart that is able to share. We will then know that things really do not belong to us. We are here at this

moment and we can care for things, but also they exist to be shared with all others around us. I believe that this is the change that can bring about a transformation within society. It is a change that has to happen within ourselves, but as it happens within us, it can also be shared with the world.

Finally, I want to close with an experience from the UN Millennium Peace Summit in 2000. It was the first time that spiritual religious leaders were called to UN. When everyone came together, they spoke about one thing; they all had the same story, every single one of them. We have more resources, more technology, more information, more money, etc., but the problems of the world have multiplied in each one of these areas.

At the summit, we came to the realization that it is only when human consciousness changes that these problems will be able to improve. For me that was a very powerful defining moment that a political body should come to the awareness that there is a need for a change in consciousness. But, of course, consciousness cannot change by a blanket edict. It can begin to change when I reach to that awareness myself. ●



SCIENCE AND SPIRITUALITY



– Dhavala Amita, Pune

It all began when man started questioning in the eagerness to know the reason for his existence on earth. Human identity follows inquisitiveness. Man has tried to answer many questions which have led to the development of science. Former President of India Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam was once asked who was the first scientist on earth. His answer was 'a child'. A scientist asks questions and it is child who asks lot of questions. He rightly opines that child should be given the credit of being the first scientist. Innocence and questions go very much together. When I say 'questions', I will now ask a question, i.e., what sort of questions should man ask to improve? Improve in what sense? It is all the quality of questions which decides the quality of thoughts, and hence the product of thoughts which we can see as actions. It is quality of questions that affects our own lives as well as those of the people around us. Improvement has to be seen not only in physical sense, but also in spiritual perspective.

Science means the study of nature; understanding how the nature works. It strives to find out what is that driving force which makes the water, that we pour to ground, go high up to the coconut and get secreted inside the hard shell? Who does this job? Physics answers the question – it is the capillary action of the plant tissues etc. Now why should the capillary action work the way it works? Again physics says – radius of the tube being too small as compared to the height of the tube, the liquid flows upwards. Again I ask a why? why? why? A series of whys will finally give a why which won't have answer. And finding out the answers to all possible questions is the domain of science.

We can think of what we mean by energy; what is positivity? What is negativity? First of all, these are all just words. Obvious. Why did I mention it then? Because words mean man-made. They are man-made ways to communicate thoughts. In fact, in spiritual path there is no need of words or anything for

communication. Also these words many times create unnecessary hurdle in understanding something correctly. Anyway, energy is capacity to do work. This is scientific definition given in primary schools to all students. Spiritually, what is energy? Energy is the soul which drives this body. It is something beyond words and can only be experienced. The effect of existence of energy is something we can see, but not energy itself. This energy or consciousness drives the body, hence, soul is the charioteer, in this chariot called body.

In physics, we divide the study into classical studies and quantum studies. Classical studies deal with the study of macroscopic objects whereas quantum studies deal with too small particles of nano dimensions or even lesser. Classical objects are those which we see. In fact, what we see is just an illusion and the reality is much different when the same object is in very small dimension. How about the too big objects, like the whole universe itself? How about the too small objects? both; we do not know. The too small and the too big, both are unknown and what we know or more precisely what we think that we know, is not actually what it is.

Now we begin to see; what we think we are, is not actually what we are. Even physics says energy and mass are inter-convertible. That is exactly the famous equation of Einstein. It can be interpreted as our bodies with mass are actually energy; in fact, infinite energy. Infinity is another beautiful concept. In science, infinity is something very large relatively. For a very small object in nano dimensions, 1 cm. can be infinity. So the concept of infinity is relative. It can be actually anything depending upon where we are and how we take it. Even the supreme God is the same; He can be felt and realized by anyone and anywhere, depending upon how we visualize Him. Isn't it?

As we see, science is the art of questioning. Realization of ultimate truth is true understanding. The spiritual knowledge imparted by God Shiva through Brahma Baba is highly scientific in approach. The Supreme Soul is a point of light. Physics says, energy is never created nor can it be destroyed; it can only be transferred from one form to the other.

The Supreme Soul is the point source of energy for us, which are actually point sources. The point soul, which is not in arrest

of any body or other worldly attachments, can only give indefinitely because there is no loss of energy in any form. Hence, the Supreme Soul is the source of perennial energy for us-souls and we can derive all powers and virtues from Him through our intellectual communion with Him.

We also understand that all material objects tend to gradually deteriorate and ultimately reach the point of the utmost degradation. The Law of Entropy applies equally to all people, nations and organizations. We read about very mighty civilizations that also underwent decline and decay. A study of major religions of the world tells us how religions also undergo changes. Initially, every religion was powerful, having values and spirituality in it. The followers led a pious, simple, and sincere life. Gradually, as the number of followers increased, they were not able to maintain values in life.

The guiding principles of nobility and righteousness, which were the very basis of their existence, took a backseat. This process of downfall or gradual degradation happens to every religion. Most of the religions of the world have now lost their original power of

purity. *Thus, today we stand at a very important juncture in the history of mankind where on the one hand, we see the end of Kaliyug and the emergence of a new era of piety, peace and plenty at the most auspicious period, i.e., Sangam Yug.*

We understand that we have lost all our spiritual strength due to lack of self-control. Being a slave to material attainments and subjugated by physical pleasures, soul has lost its self-sovereignty. There is disagreement in thoughts, words and deeds due to sensual gratification. Soul, having lost its intrinsic power, frequently falls a prey to Anger, Lust, Greed, Attachment, Ego, Hatred, Jealousy etc. Majority of the people have lost hope, considering that it is impossible to overcome mental vices while living in the physical body.

The world as we see through our eyes, is apparently an interesting inter-play of three very powerful entities – Soul, Matter and God. We have to understand that now we are surrounded by illusion or Maya due to body-consciousness. A proper realization of this will liberate the souls. God, being a point of light, needs the assistance of some matter to manifest to us, who are in body

consciousness. And manifestation of the Supreme results into purification and elevation of souls as well as of matter.

The re-establishment of Golden Age or heaven on earth is really a very wonderful concept which we can see being fulfilled at the most auspicious Confluence Age or *Sangam Yug*. If we ponder deeply, we can conclude that through God's help and through our own sincere efforts, we can attain victory over mental vices and achieve marvelous results, by spiritually empowering the self.

Dear divine friends, except the amount of spiritual growth we acquire, in the long run nothing else really matters. Let us keep attention that what we do should lead us to attainment of the supreme knowledge. Our deeds should elevate us on the spiritual path. Different subjects that we study are various ways to help us realize the ultimate truth. All true seekers of truth endeavor to attain the Supreme Being through various ways. With this in mind, let us all put best of our efforts to keep the Lord in first place, in whatever we do. Let us be pure in our thoughts, words and actions. May God bless all of us!

**Steer easily through life
by keeping a light touch
on the controls, and a
strong sense of humour.**



PROJECTION OF MENTAL ENERGIES IN RELATIONSHIPS

Sometimes in relationships, **you believe that the other person is hurting you because they do not meet your desires, but in such cases how can you know if it is really true?** Let's go a step ahead; **does the belief that they are going to hurt you influence the situation until in the end it happens?** Perhaps, they won't hurt you. Your belief that the other is going to hurt you is not so powerful that it will necessarily affect the other person. But it affects you yourself. They may not hurt you at all finally, but you will end up with hurt, you will become emotionally ill, even physically ill sometimes. The symptoms will begin to show themselves and you will say: "Did you see? I feel hurt, I keep telling you so." So your belief caused you to get hurt and not the other.

The other person isn't you. **In relationships, a moment comes when you don't know if it is their fault or yours, if it is their responsibility or yours, if that person has caused the irritation inside you, or if it was you, if that person began the argument or it was you, if they created the conflict or if it was you, because we project (throw) our energies onto each other.** All of this drives us to frustration. A lot of power, negative or positive, is needed for a person to be able to influence others with their consciousness; it is easier to influence ourselves. This is a basic principle of human relationships, which we don't understand and the reason is that we don't see ourselves, because we are always looking at the other, putting the responsibility onto them, blaming them, criticizing them.

HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY OF THE WORLD REPEAT IDENTICALLY



– B.K. Khem Jokhoo, Trinidad

One of the basic tenets of Rajyoga and the spiritual knowledge revealed by the Supreme Soul God Shiva, at the Confluence Age, through His corporeal medium Prajapita Brahma, is that **“the History and Geography of this world is cyclic and repeats identically after every 5000 years”**. As a student of *yoga* and meditation, it is important to have a clear understanding of this Eternal World Drama and have faith in the intellect and in God.

During the last few years, there have been very frequent discussions about the world transformation in the print and electronic media. There was also some nervousness caused by many prophecies and predictions. In fact, the transformation from the old to the new has already been taking place. All souls must become pure through their own efforts or by the will of God. The five elements of nature – air, water, earth, heat and ether in their many forms will purify themselves. The only way the elements know to re-purify themselves is by cataclysmic

and catastrophic, mishaps which is the main reason why the world is now experiencing an increase in natural calamities. There is also going to be realisation of the self and God.

Transformation takes place in the last 100 years of the cycle when God descends to destroy the evil, protect the virtuous and re-establish righteousness (Gita c4v7-8) and the New World order of the Golden Age. According to the teachings of Rajyoga, the last 100 years commenced in 1936 and God Shiva is transforming this old world by teaching the knowledge of past, present and future of the Eternal World Drama. **This is done through the instrument of Prajapita Brahma who established the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University in 1937 (which was known Om Mandali during those days) in Hyderabad, (Sindh) now in Pakistan. The organisation later shifted to Mt. Abu, Rajasthan, India, in 1950. Today, there are more than 8500 branches of this spiritual university in 137 countries**

across the globe.

The essential teaching of the institution aims at conquering the five vices, viz. sex-lust, anger, greed, attachment and ego; this is achieved by understanding that each person is a unique soul with a unique, predestined part to play. This is based on the knowledge that God is Father of all souls and they (souls) are brothers. It has been revealed by God Shiva that soul is a tiny point of conscient oval-shaped light made in the same image and likeness of God, and the souls come down on earth to take a body, to play their pre-destined part in this Eternal World Drama as human beings.

The only difference between Supreme Soul God Shiva and souls is that God is ever-pure, He is immune to birth and death, and is beyond karmic bondages. In Gita c9v11, God tells Arjuna, **“Fools, not knowing My supreme nature, think low of Me, the Lord of creation who has put on the human body. That is, they take Me, who has appeared in human garb through my divine potency for the**

deliverance of the world, to be an ordinary mortal". God continues to advise in Gita c10 v3, **"He, who knows me in reality as without birth and without beginning, and as the Supreme Lord of the universe, he, undeluded among men, is purged of all sins"**. Also see Gita c7v24-25 & c8v9.

The knowledge of Rajyoga teaches us that the cycle is made of approximately 3000 years before Christ and about 2000 years after Christ. The last 100 years of the Iron Age are called the "Auspicious Confluence Age", and include the transformation process as well as the beginning of the new cycle, i.e. commencement of the Golden Age. For the cycle to begin, all souls and the five elements must become pure to herald the births of Radhey and Krishna, the first princess and prince of the Golden Age. When they get married, they become the first empress and emperor of the Golden Age and are hence forth known as Shri Lakshmi and Shri Narayan. Their coronation is the beginning of the Golden Age.

Much has been written about the second coming of Christ and Armageddon. In this understanding, it is clear that Christ would come again. Not only Christ, but all the great prophet souls such as Abraham, Buddha and Mohammed will come after the Golden and Silver ages, to sustain the world with their purity and divine wisdom. Armageddon and the Mahabharat war are but the same event and it is nothing but the war between the vices and the virtues. Therefore, there is nothing to fear or to be worried about, since entropy must take place if there is to be transformation for a better world where true love, peace, purity and prosperity would be the order of the day. ●

THE CONSPIRACY

– B.K. Vidya, Kochi

Trespassers into
My Kingdom!
Halt! Who goes
there?
Mercy! Said one
Power! Called out
another.
Let us in
O' Heir
We shall serve you
Selflessly
And
Dethrone
The ones who
Conspire
against you
There are
Five conspirators
In this game
Watch out!
Young soldier
They have
Surrounded
Your kingdom
And
Are waiting
for you

to catch
Their
Bait.
Lust, Anger, Greed
Attachment and
Ego
Beware
O' friend
Lest they
Overthrow
Your
Kingdom
Maintain
Self-respect
Let go of the
Past
Emerge
Virtues and powers
Make them your
True companion
Recognize your
Original divine Self
And
Become
A
True
Self Sovereign.

RAJYOGA FOR SELF-EMPOWERMENT

– B.K. Anupam, Saraswati Vihar, Gurgaon.

Looking at different meditation techniques, we can see that there is one basic component that lies in the heart of all these techniques. And that component is an object of focus. In some meditation techniques, the aspirant focuses on concentric circles, in some on breathing, or focus on a flower, or focus on a *mantra*. But what's the objective behind this? The intent is to get control of our mind. We want to be able to keep our mind focused on 'what we want to focus on and for as long as we want'. We want to be the rulers of our mind and not be ruled by it. In absence of this, our mind keeps wandering around, leading to a complete drain-out of our energies.

We might experience peace for a short duration using these techniques. But getting complete mind control is both different and difficult and everything looks ineffective to achieve this. That is why there is so much restlessness inside most of us today. The reason that these techniques fail to

provide mind control in true sense is that in all these techniques, the object of focus is a physical entity. But the soul is not a physical entity. Mind being one of the components of Soul is also not a physical entity. Physical things cannot be used to conquer non physical things.

Another reason is that, trying to control mind is like trying to stop a river coming in full force. We can gently and gradually change the course of a river but we cannot stop its flow for a very long time.

This is where Rajyoga differs from all other types of meditation. In Rajyoga, the effort is not to control the mind, but to channelize the thoughts. We actively monitor our thoughts and give them the desired direction. We do not let our mind wander around but start becoming its master. It seems difficult in the beginning but gradually this starts increasing the power and focus of our mind.

Another revolutionary aspect about Rajyoga is that there is no physical object of focus. The

basic tenet of Rajyoga is to realise our true identity, i.e., soul and connect with the Supreme Soul, using our mind and intellect. So Rajyoga is not about Focus, but it's about a loveful and purposeful bonding between the Soul and the Supreme Soul. What is celebrated as Kumbh Mela, is actually a remembrance of this beautiful meeting of the souls with The Supreme Father.

Rajyoga Meditation doesn't just stand on its own like a meditation technique. It's combined with a daily study of Godly knowledge which establishes a connection between the soul and the Supreme Soul. I will remember someone only when I know that person and have a relationship with him. We have been trying to communicate with God for all these years. We have been telling Him what we think and what we want. But do we know what God wants from us? This Godly study is a loving conversation between God and His children and it establishes this relation between soul and its Father. As we progress on this path, we develop love for our spiritual Father. We start experiencing His support and guidance. And this remembrance or Rajyoga becomes more and more natural.

Each thought we have and every action we do affect our state of mind. Rajyoga is not just about controlling our mind for say an hour a day but, it is a way of life. It's a constant process by which the soul starts acquiring control over its mind using its intellect leading to transformation of its *sanskars*. The more we have this control, the better is our connection with the Supreme and hence the quality of our Yoga.

What is called as the *Ashv Medh Yagya* is all about winning over our mind which is just like a horse. That is so because when we lose control over it, our state is just like a rider who cannot control his horse. It drags us everywhere and we are exhausted and worn out without doing anything. And when we are able to control this horse, it can take us to any destination we want. Nothing else in this world can take us to our destination but this very horse. Our sweet home, the soul world, the abode of our loving Father is beyond the physical realm and we can't reach there with this physical body. The only way of reaching there is with our mind and intellect. So even though we are sitting in this physical world, our consciousness is shifted to the Supreme Abode.

Human Soul has immense powers and nothing is impossible for it. The deciding factor of success or failure is our control over Mind. An organised mind can turn us into deities and a destabilised mind can turn us into devils. This is self-empowerment and self-sovereignty in its true sense.

WORSHIP TO WORSHIP WORTHY

Worship means giving worth to something or person. It also means being impressed by the worthiness or giving respect to a person because of the worth. Worship may sometimes refer to an attitude towards someone of immensely elevated social status, such as a king, a noble person, a saint, an individual, such as a hero or a lover.

Worship also refers to acts, expressions and a state of religious devotion of deities.

It is also the response that conscious beings make to their Creator, to God, through thinking, recognition and different channels of realisation such as religion, nature, history, science, art, human life and character.

An expression of worship may be performed individually, or collectively.

Expressions of worship may vary among people of various faiths but would in general through prayer, sacrifice, rituals, meditation, holidays, festivals, pilgrimages, music, singing, dancing, dining, fasting, readings, listening to a public speech, construction of temples or churches or mosques, the creation of idols of the deity, private acts of devotion etc.

On the other hand, by acquiring eternal divine knowledge, divine virtues such as humility, simplicity, purity, kindness, sweetness etc, and spiritual powers such as tolerance, cooperation, discernment etc. from the Creator and use them in our daily life, in our interaction with other fellow-beings, with plenty of peace, love and happiness, one can elevate the self from an ordinary worshipper to a worship-worthy angel and deity, in the very near future.

The worship-worthy feels as if he is an instrument of his creator for a worthy cause of bestowing Peace and Bliss to the fellow beings of the global family, in a very natural and profound way.

Rajyoga enables to transform the self from a worshipper to worship-worthy elevated being, an angel, who is the helper of the mankind and the instrument of the ever-pure, Creator. Now or never.

Contributed by **B. K. Rajsekhar**

SPIRITUAL REJUVENATION

– B. K. Rakesh, New Delhi

Right from the day of my divine birth, which took place in June 2008, I have been immersed in divine experiences. I really feel blessed by God. Hardly has a day passed when I have not experienced Godly hand on me. How the last three years of my life have proved to be the most auspicious, highly rewarding and mentally elevating – I would like to share with esteemed readers, my spiritual brothers and sisters, for their spiritual benefit.

By profession I am into business, running a manufacturing unit and also a school in New Delhi. Besides, I am into construction business and recently I have expanded into retail garments business. I passed Masters degree in Electronics, and subsequently Masters in business management. Since my birth, I have been inclined towards spirituality, always trying to reason out the intricacies of life and our connection with the Supreme.

About three years back, I was passing through a very

difficult phase of my life. It so happened that I had borrowed a lot of money from a bank to construct the school premises. It was becoming difficult to repay the monthly instalments to the bank. I was undergoing a dire financial crisis. There were some serious family problems too. My father was catching Alzheimer's and had started forgetting everything very fast. The only source of income, our manufacturing unit, had to be closed down as I alone could not look after the two units. All these worries had made my life miserable. Above all, these tensions had become life-threatening. My health was deteriorating. I was down with severe arthritis attack, which had almost crippled me. I could not walk, and even could not stand on my feet; all the joints of the body had swollen. The only remedy was the disease-modifying drugs, which are usually given to cancer patients. Feeling very dejected and lonely, I had almost lost hope. The only plus point was that I had great faith in God, because

of the spiritual bent of my mind. At this juncture, I came across a book entitled *Many Lives Many Masters* by Dr Brian Weiss. I read the book very earnestly which convinced me that "I", the soul in this birth, must be under some *karmic* debt and hence was facing such hardships. I understood that my *karmic* debts are being paid back while I, the soul, exist in the body, as perceptions of happiness and pain are felt and experienced by the soul only through the five senses while it is in the human body.

Incidentally, I had started watching the spiritual programme of the Brahmakumaris organisation on Aastha TV Channel. The talks by sister B.K. Shivani inspired me and had an incisive effect on me. I used to wonder if I also could learn meditation, be relaxed and blissful like her! It was the peak summer of June 2008 when I was sitting in the office of my school. Just when I was thinking about meditation, a young lady appeared. She had come for a teacher's job. As is generally the procedure, I told her to leave her resume and contact the headmistress for further queries. While I was speaking to her, I noticed that she had mentioned meditation as a hobby, in her bio-data. When I enquired about

meditation, she gave me a lecture on Rajyoga meditation taught by the Brahma Kumaris. I eagerly asked for the contact details of the B.K. centre, as I could not believe that there was really someone who was telling me about the Brahma Kumaris where sister Shivani belonged to. It was like Godsent. She obliged me by giving me the telephone number of the BK centre. I noted down the number in my diary. That lady never came back; nor was the resume traced. But the number which I had noted gave a new meaning and altogether different dimension to my life.

I joined the BK centre in June 2008. On the very first day in the centre, when I sat for meditation in Baba's room, I felt as if Brahma Baba was very lovingly gesturing me to sit beside him; hugging me and saying, "Sweet child, you have to study and gallop fast now, as there is little time left". I thought this to be an exciting experience and shared it with the B.K. sister. She explained that there was some secret behind this experience.

Thereafter, things actually started happening fast. The Rajyoga course was like a main switch of my body system. All the folders of my mind started opening very quickly. I felt that

this knowledge was true and it already existed in my subconscious mind. In August 2008, when I was attending a programme in Gyan Sarovar auditorium in Brahma Kumaris' Academy for a Better World, Mount Abu, I vividly remembered the dreams already had, wherein I had seen myself sitting in the same auditorium and attending the programmes.

A true understanding of the spiritual knowledge highlighted to me the unique and wonderful role played by Brahma Baba, the corporeal medium of Incorporeal God Shiva. Brahma Baba had left the mortal coil in 1969, when he attained spiritual perfection. The selfless spiritual services of Brahma Baba really inspired me. I came to know that Avyakt Bapdada (Incorporeal God Shiva and Brahma Baba, in combined form) still meet and bless the spiritual children through another medium, Rajyogini Dadi Hriday Mohini ji, in Mount Abu, the international headquarters of the organization. I felt that I should meet Bapdada and see them playing their divine part and blessing the spiritual children. In the month of November 2008, I visited Mount Abu for this purpose. The serene and pious

environment of the *ashram* had an indelible impact on me. I met Bapdada and life changed hundred and eighty degrees. I became completely relaxed. All my loans were paid off and the money returns were more than I needed. Besides, the business expanded, I became hale and hearty, and family problems also subsided considerably.

Everyday I felt as if some invisible power was pulling me and inspiring me to further dwell on Godly knowledge. The B.K. sisters were extremely loving and motivating. They inspired me to attend the Murli classes. Gradually, in few months, I had been inspired to guide others and conduct 7-Day course to them. Today I remember Bapdada's words: "Sweet child, you have to study and gallop fast now, as there is little time left". I guess that it was because I had to play my part in divine services—sharing the wealth of knowledge, and that is why I grasped the divine knowledge so fast, by the benign grace of God. On subtle inspiration of Baba and the B.K. sisters, I completed the P.G diploma and M.Sc. in Value Education, which further helped me in spreading Baba's knowledge.

Soon thereafter, I was allotted few schools for teaching values to their senior classes. At

that time, I could not comprehend the course of action Bapdada had planned through me. But today when I look back, I feel humbled and quite satisfied through doing the divine service. The students and the classes which earlier used to show poor results and were actually labelled as the stigma of ill repute, actually passed with flying colours, after completing the value education programme; they stood second in the whole school. As Bapdada says, 'Last So Fast', today I sit back and feel His loving *drishti* which sends a current of bliss all along this physical body. I am enjoying and loving this flow of my daily duties on his '*Shrimat*' while humming the song "*Prabhu tere rang mein, hum rang gaye aise...*"Dear God, we have been coloured in your spiritual hues to such an extent.....

I personally feel that Rajyoga meditation is the key to settle one's *karmic* accounts. Once the accounts are settled, there is a new meaning and purpose of life. Almost everyday there is a new experience waiting to be felt and enjoyed. Today, all the staff of my 6 retail outlets, numbering almost 50, have made it a point to read the Murli before starting their daily chores. There are about sixty teachers in our school. They feel so energetic and in a state of happiness while performing their job at work. They always say that the place gives them some kind of positive vibrations till they are inside the school premises. We have installed a huge portrait of Bapdada and start the day's work only after wishing the Almighty and thanking Him for His grace. Even the managers, who are looking after the construction business, have completed Seven-Day course and feel some kind of power helping them to perform their assigned duties.

Everyone around keeps joking with me and poking me with questions like, "do you ever work"? I wish I could make them understand that God has His own ways. He looks after the work assigned to me and I take care of His assigned duties, like an obedient servant.

MIRACLES OF MEDITATION

– Gwen Blott, Chelmsford, UK

Meditation is an ancient art.
Provides inner self a new start
A source of peace and power
In divine garden, blooms each flower

Begets inner potential each hour
Gifts virtue in constant shower
Begets Contentment, love and bliss
Conquers each turmoil and crisis

Withdraws from worldly pleasures
And frees from all pressures
Relaxes muscles, removes strain
Empowered soul gets rid of pain

Ennobles life, fills with inspiration
Makes victorious in each life situation
Frees you from all old inclination
No need for excuse and machination

Find time for it, daily my dear
If you wish to be calm and clear
Generate reservoir of contentment
And find pastures of refreshment

Change all vicious style of life
Free the self from sin and strife
Allow yourself more free space
Unrighteousness not even a trace

Be brave, smart and decisive
Actions worth emulating, conclusive
Break all shackles, limits and bondage
Goodwill for all, civilized or savage

Open new avenues of virtue and love
Inner enrichment, sanctity and glow
Pick up virtues from every soul
Certainly you'll attain life's goal

THE ART OF RIGHT THINKING

– B.K. Pradeep Khare, Bhopal

We teach a child to talk, walk, run, read write and behave; but no one teaches him how to think. No educational institution trains a person to think in the right manner. As a result, the society is paying a heavy price for ignoring this vital aspect of life. It is responsible for the various evils which have troubled the people of the world today.

Human mind is constantly generating one thought or another. On an average, about 25 to 30 thoughts are generated in our mind every minute. They can broadly be classified into four categories viz., elevated, positive, waste and negative thoughts. **Elevated thoughts are those which involve gratitude to God and selfless service to humanity. Positive thoughts are centred on seeing the goodness in others and improving the self. Waste thoughts are about those matters on which we have no control, and which don't necessarily concern us directly.** They are found in spicy gossip and rumours. **Negative**

thoughts are the lowest quality of thoughts and they revolve around jealousy, criticism, anger, hatred, revenge etc. Each one of us has a choice as to what type of thoughts he or she wants to generate.

It has been found that on an average, about 70% thoughts are waste, 20% are negative, 8% are positive and 2% are elevated. The reason for this alarming state is not far to fetch. The day of an ordinary person today begins with the daily newspaper and TV news which generally highlight scams, scandals, accidents, disasters etc. The general conversation at home, workplace and neighbourhood is based on criticism, jealousy, leg-pulling, sarcasm etc. Most of the TV serials and films are based on themes of conspiracy, violence, strained relations and idolising unacceptable behaviour. It may be noted that some of the late night TV serials are based on horror and fear.

Our mind is like a fertile piece of land. We reap what we sow. The seeds of fear, anxiety,

conspiracy, criticism, scandals, accidents when sown in our minds, unknowingly produce anger, depression, lack of self confidence, fear and low self-esteem. The kind of thoughts that we send out to others, are reflected back to us manifold. By the law of attraction, our mind gets attracted towards more thoughts of the same category that we have generated.

Let's try to understand the far-reaching impact of thoughts on the quality of our life. Thoughts create feelings which lead to action. An often repeated action becomes a habit; after some time, the habit leads to the formation of attitude. The attitude shapes the personality of an individual, which in turn is responsible for his destiny. So, if you want to change your destiny, better change your thoughts.

The Brahma Kumaris, which is an international spiritual organisation dedicated to the cause of value-based education for strengthening humanity, has changed the lives of countless people across the globe by helping them to channelise their thoughts in the right direction. The B.K. brothers and sisters serving through more than 8500 centres world wide are embodiment of selfless service

(Contd. on page no. 23)

SHIVSHRI-PURI: ODISHA'S SPIRITUAL PILGRIMAGE



– B.K. Krishna Chander Mouli

For centuries, Jagannath Puri, Odisha's coastal pilgrim city, has been a centre of devotion for spiritual aspirants. The Hindu scriptures and epigraphic references have stated the religious and spiritual importance of the city of Puri as 'Vatican of the East'. The sun rises here early from the depths of the Bay of Bengal and sets behind the hills. The city is revered as an abode of Lord Vishnu, as Lord Jagannath in the mortal world along with brother Balram (Balabhadra) and their dearest sister Subhadra. Just as devotees in the north reach Vaishno Devi in groups chanting JAI MATADI; likewise, Lord Jagannath's devotees throng the temple premises from all corners of the country chanting JOI JAGANNATH. The annual ritual 'The Car Festival' (Rath yatra) of Lord Jagannath is the symbol of unity in diversity here as people from all religions congregate at Puri on this occasion.

The pilgrim city has been blessed with another spiritual pilgrimage Shivashree, the

Godly Rajyoga Retreat Centre (GRC) of Brahma Kumaris. Whoever lands at Puri is welcomed by the gorgeous and roaring waves of the Bay of Bengal and its sunny silver beaches along the marine drive which ultimately lead into the lush green bio-diverse environs of the Retreat. Ensnoced in the deep forest greenery surrounded by trees laden with mangoes, cashew fruits and nuts, sapodilla (cheekoo), guava, blackberry (Jamun), neem and bio-diversity in abundance in a non-polluted atmosphere, with flowers of different shades blossoming with refreshing fragrance, are a treat to watch.

The Retreat Centre, on the banks of the Mangala river on one side and the sea-shore on the other, has a natural serenity besides the spiritual vibrations of the grand old Dadis of Brahma Kumaris. Just by entering the Meditation hall here in pin-drop silence, one experiences not only the power of silence but also an absolute peace of mind. The Godly vibrations keep reverberating around impacting those in

pursuit of peace, and spiritual empowerment by realising the self as a soul and getting connected with the Supreme Soul in seconds.

The B.K. sisters and brothers in their whites symbolise peace and purity and it is always a feast for the eyes looking at their ever-smiling faces and affectionate and welcoming gestures and warm hospitality. They add to the atmosphere of divine wisdom and enlightenment here. Godly Rajyoga Retreat Centre, Puri is the place where one can marvel at the beauty, bounty and mystery of Almighty's creation.

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for one and all. The powerful technique of Rajyoga meditation helps us to get rid of the waste and negative thoughts. The daily spiritual classes reinforce the principles of conquering one's ego, spreading goodwill to one and all. Thus, a spiritual aspirant attains self-transformation step by step, paving the way for world-transformation.

COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS

– B.K. Neena, E. Delhi

Why, given all our skills, intellect, virtues, we, so obviously being capable of being the best, settle so often for the worst? In other words, why do we resign ourselves to our fate saying, “perhaps this is ordained for me—can’t help it”. We are unable to resolve any surmounting problem confronting us; become subjugated and lose our hope... Why are we not motivated enough? What is that we as an individual or a nation are missing? What could motivate us to get back on the winning trail and unleash the willpower lying dormant, the potent energy within that hasn’t allowed itself free rein? Once Mahatma Gandhi had said—”Men often become what they believe themselves to be. If I believe that I cannot do something, it makes me incapable of doing it. But when I believe I can, then I acquire the ability to do it, even if I didn’t have it in the beginning.”

When you are growing up, say till the age of fifteen, the best role model I can think of

would be your father, mother and your school teacher. The home environment, your surroundings, and the school atmosphere undoubtedly shape and build your character. A proper education system would help nurture the same. **Character is something which no law can enforce**—It has to be nurtured primarily by oneself, with the support of family and society. In the past, spiritual values were imparted in our Gurukul system of education. Whether prince or pauper, everyone studied together. They spoke the truth, served others and treaded along the path of righteousness; albeit had tremendous faith in God. I strongly feel that spiritual and moral science should essentially be included in our school curriculum. The youth of today are brought up in the lifeless, rather life-crushing machinery of modern system of education wherein their intellectual faculties are paralyzed by materialism and atheism. To them, spiritualism, more often than not, looks askance. Is it not foolhardiness on their part to

discount the vast treasure of spiritual knowledge that transcends the mundane world; deny, denounce and denigrate what is beyond their comprehension? Thus, the whole race of humanity has suffered a rude jolt through the sands of time where man’s journey has been far from smooth.

Self realization leads to Divine realization. Count your Blessings. Be thankful to God for all the treasures within you—all that you are endowed with.... Try to excel in what you think you are most capable of. Ask God—do a tête-à-tête with Him. That would help you in reaching your cherished goal, keeping Him beside you. No matter how trying the situation may be, never ever let your wavering, turbulent mind hold sway over you. It’s a Herculean task when everything turns against you.... Assert and affirm— “I’m a unique individual. What I have, nobody else possesses. My tapestry of life and experiences are different from others”.... and so on. You have really something or the specialties which belong only to you; thus making you the most adorable, blessed child of God. Thus, don’t ever compare yourself with others; as each individual is a unique personality. Royalty means

being cheerful and graceful even in difficult times and grief. A noble character would be friendly and smiling even in hostility. Simply witness everything you perceive in the midst of turmoil, in a detached, unfazed manner. Go beyond the question of why it's happening, how things will get better etc. Never lose your identity. I know it's a gargantuan task but practising seclusion and solitude and invoking God do help a great deal in empowering yourself. As **Baba says, obstacles are a means for developing deep love with Him; thus paving the way for success !** Surely enough, good times will come and tables will turn in your favour. Practise this drill. Just be still for some period of time. Watch your thoughts. Let them flow ceaselessly. Some psychologists advise to do rigorous exercise when angry. They further advise that when you are very angry at being wronged by someone (or betrayed by someone)—punch hard on a pillow or a ball or kick a wall...soon your emotions would quell—then things do work out...and you shall never fluctuate. But for spiritual persons, inner transformation of the self is a better idea.

If you wish to overcome the emotions of anger, anguish and disgust, you require conviction and Faith—faith in yourself, faith in the unflinching Drama (that it is beneficial); and faith in **Shiv Baba** whom you ought to make your constant friend, guide and companion. Eventually, it helps in stabilizing yourself onto the seat of self respect. You feel triumphant! The power of faith means somewhere along the line, right solutions will come your way just at the right time. **So bide your time** and be rest assured that Truth and Good always triumph over evil. Truth need not be proved; it reveals itself just at the right time. The victory is yours, eventually.

HAVE GOOD WISHES FOR ALL

► Would you reprimand a young child for his mischievousness or mistakes? Though it's important to be firm in teaching discipline, a good parent or care-giver realises that the child is innocent of how it should behave. Therefore, the approach is being patient and loving.

But what happens when we see adults making big-little errors? Our mature self makes us react, comment, argue and say "But they should know better..." It's true that adults have to be more responsible for their actions but that's not always the case. **It's in our best interest to accept that no matter how much we correct people, they are likely to change at their own time.** At times, we all come under the influence of our *sanskars* which compel us to act against better judgement. As we are in the same boat, **keeping faith and good wishes for others (and ourselves) is the best way to bring about good transformation.**

► While striving to attain our goals, there are several times when we may feel disheartened or tired or fed up. **It's a fact that nothing worthwhile comes easy in life. Our fortune opens at its own right time.** Luck can take us ahead, and may even help us realise our dreams but those attainments fade away quickly without diligent hard work. **So perseverance is the guiding force behind every success story,** which involves motivation, faith in the self, concentration and the willingness to let go of comforts or distractions until the goal is achieved.

THE ROLE OF HR IN AN ORGANIZATION

– Divya Punia, HR Manager, New Delhi

The role, Human Resource Management plays in every organization today, is very strategic. Gone are the days when HR was relegated to the back burner and its only role was to maintain personnel records. Today's HR has bounced back in a dynamic avatar. HR Directors sit at all important meetings in the Board Room, even if the agenda concerns marketing and sales or accounts. HR plays a very significant role in preparing the plans and policies of the organization including its vision today. The way it handles its workforce determines the productivity and profitability of the company. Right from the time an employee enters the organization and the day he resigns or retires, HR plays a very important role in his career development and performance.

Here are the important areas in which HR assists in building a strong foundation for the organization.

Objective of an organization:

The very existence of an organization rests on accomplishment of the goals it sets, by its employees. As primary objective of a company is profit-making, the 'Vision' of the company plays an important role in giving a sense of direction to the company's work force. It lets them know where the company is headed. It looks at what level the company would be after fifteen years. These questions need to be tackled and worked upon by the top management after extensive discussion of core values and goals, keeping in mind all the stakeholders of the company, how outside circumstances affect the company and vice versa. To come to a conclusion about this, an extensive survey and analysis need to be conducted by the Human Resources Division of the company so that they can give proper feedback to the top management.

Importance of Employee Engagement:

It is important to keep the entire workforce informed about the core values and future goals of the company. Employee engagement is the key responsibility of an effective HR Manager. This includes regular interaction with the employees, organizing functions at important occasions, festivals like Holi, Id, Christmas and New Year's Eve, for example. All this helps in keeping the morale of the employees high as they feel part of the company like one big family. Additionally, wishing employees on their birthday or on an important occasion in his or her family, goes a long way in making the employee feel that he is an important part of the organization. A sense of belongingness comes into the subconscious minds of employees. This results in increased productivity and efficiency, which accelerates the growth of the company, fulfilling company objectives!! For this, the HR Dept. needs to go on field visits, talk to ground level employees and address employee grievances, and also come out with solutions in a given TAT or deadline.

Formation of Company's Vision Statement:

Many companies already have a vision statement formed years back. In that case, it is the role of an HR to revise it keeping in mind the latest market trends. In case the company has not yet formed the vision statement, the HR Dept. must inform the employees about this so that they may participate actively in the formation of a vision for the company. A ground level feedback is important to be included in a company's vision statement. This is because it is at ground level that business is generated.

In the formation of vision statement, the HR Dept. can play a major role of a facilitator in connecting:

‘Employees with employees’
‘Ground level employees with top management’

The HR Dept. can facilitate in making bullet points to be included in vision statement.

EFFECTIVE GOAL SETTING

There are several very simple yet extremely effective management tools that many executives aren't aware of.

SMART goal setting is one of them. Many a time the goals set by the companies are not effective in implementation. This is why we need to talk

about SMART goal setting.

SMART stands for:–

S– Specific

M– Measurable

A– Attainable

R– Relevant

T– Time Bound

- ▶ **1. Specific:** What do you need to accomplish? What is the outcome you need to achieve? Is it clear to others what you are trying to achieve?
- ▶ **2. Measurable:** What are the performance targets that the goal has been met? What are your quantitative or qualitative measures that you can use to help you know when you will have reached expected results?
- ▶ **3. Attainable:** Do you have all the necessary resources to attain this goal, despite all the foreseeable obstacles? Is the goal challenging enough to help you people grow, yet realistic? You don't want a goal that is too easy, nor do you want an impossible goal.
- ▶ **4. Relevant:** Are the goals directly related to the business goals? Do they address key customers (internal and / or external) requirements?
- ▶ **5. Time bound:** Do you have regular dates set up to review your progress? How

long will it take you to achieve this goal? Make sure all your goals are SMART!!! Not setting SMART goals is a primary cause of low performance.

Once feedback is given to top management, they in turn formulate and formalize the vision statement in detail. This completed document should be used as a bible for company's working giving a direction for work flow....

Writing a vision statement is only the beginning; even the best crafted vision statements are worthless if they are not used as a leadership tool to bring change for a more productive and profit making organization.

Employee Retention

This is very important in today's competitive scenario, where other companies are head hunting and willing to offer lucrative salaries to good workers and wean them away from their present jobs. It is the HR's role which works here to implement methods by which employees remain loyal to the company and they also feel happy to continue as employees of the company. Training and development, incentives for good work and social benefits comparable with the industry are some of the attractions, along with a good salary, which

help in retaining employees.

Training and Development

As mentioned above, Training and Development is one of the incentives for an employee to continue his employment with the company. It not only increases his market value from his point of view, but also improves and enriches his work performance. It increases his knowledge and keeps him up to date in that particular subject. It also prepares the employee for promotion to the next level. So, it has to be made an integral part of the HR set up of an organization.

Organisation Development

This is the process of continuously developing and improving organizations. That means the people in it, the work processes and quality. It refers to an organisation's ability to learn and change with the circumstances. It is the duty of the Human Resource Development to educate the employees about the process of Organisation Development being adopted by it and what sort of changes are expected to be brought about by it. Without their co-operation, not much can be achieved in terms of change and improvement. OD can be done in-house or a consultant can be

hired to suggest improvements and changes which the organization will implement. In most cases, a pilot project is initiated with one department to see how the change works. OD is an ongoing process. Training and development is an integral part of OD.

Yoga and Meditation

Employees working in organizations are prone to physical fatigue due to sitting for long hours and working on computers. This puts strain on the eyes and neck. It is a good idea for the employers to



introduce *yogasanas* for their employees in their free time, i.e. before lunch, after work or before starting work. It would be wonderful if they could have a break for half an hour in-between their work to stretch themselves and loosen their limbs.

Meditation works wonders for those under stress due to overwork and deadlines. It puts us in contact with our source and soothes our nerves. Techniques like *yoga nidra* relieve stress and insomnia, which have become a part of our lives today. Short meditation sessions would rejuvenate employees, especially those working odd hours at Call Centres and they would never feel that they have missed out on sleep. The Rajyoga meditation taught by the Brahma Kumaris is very simple and does not take very long time. It is ideal for practising in offices. The offices could maintain a small room with a shrine where the employees could take breaks to meditate or pray. It is also a source of great support to those in sorrow or pain.

If employers could offer these two methods of support to their employees, it would go a long way in increasing their productivity and encourage loyalty and long-term commitment to the organization.

Thus, we see that HR is the backbone of any organization and keeping it healthy is one of the main issues since any deviation could make or mar an organisation. ●

BLIND DATE

(You Are What You Think. But Do You Think Who You Are? Are You Moving To The New World Or Are You Staying In Your Normal Little House Of Sorrow? Once You Were Mr. Universe. Could You Beat Quick Draw McGraw? Are You Allowed To Eat And Walk Slowly? Are You A Pilot Or HGV Driver? Are You A Cowboy Or A Sheriff?)



– **B.K. David**, Paignton, England

We should create a 'Think Corporation' so that we can study who we are. With this Corporation we can look more in depth at the role thoughts play in our lives. We often think our thoughts to be secondary to our lives, with us being in control in the driving seat, choosing where we want to go. The reality is, our thoughts are directing us; they are in control of us and our lives, which make us secondary in the scheme of things.

It Only Takes A Couple Of Wrong Thoughts To Pull The Guns Of Anger

We really are often the bystanders to what is going on in our lives, and at the mercy of our thoughts, which have the key to the gate of our emotions. Yet today, once they are through the gate, our thoughts pull out the guns of irrational thinking and angry attitudes and with no self control over their finger, they easily pull the trigger, with the result they fire bad thought

bullets at everyone they see.

It's Time To Hang Up Your Guns

It's now time to take control of your thoughts, your thinking, your attitude and with it, your life, your well-being, your success and stability. If you do not take control, your future is uncertain, and so will be your happiness.

Are You A Cowboy Or Sheriff? Can You Go a Day Without Drawing Your Gun?

Many people are modern cowboys out of control who are fast on the draw. Their thoughts, emotions and shooting are almost simultaneous and too quick for even themselves to stop it. The gun (thoughts) rules them. Without exception, every cowboy shoots himself in the foot. For those who live as a gunslinger, will die by the gun (anger). They cannot live a day without going for their gun.

Dodge City Is A City

Worth Dodging

Some live and think as if in an orchard and their thoughts are like fruit (sweet). Their thoughts are beautiful and people experience their sweetness and nutritional qualities. No one has to dodge bad thought bullets shot from their minds. They just walk round donating the fruits of friendship with peace and love. Their orchard (life) is one of beauty and fragrance and a place everyone is happy to be in.

Bullets of Bad Feeling

The gunfighter lives in a ghost town of dust with suspicion in every window and in every corner. They will shoot first and ask questions later; such is their mentality. Their town is overrun with corpses in the street whom they have shot. They live in a ghost town and cannot feel friendly towards anyone; so they shoot them with the bullets of suspicion, anger, disrespect and bad feelings. They have no time for strangers and don't have the love to make the time to get to know them. Dodge City is a place we all should avoid.

Quick Draw McGraw

There are many in this ghost town (world), yet the one carrying fruit cannot be harmed by the gunfighters or their bullets. Their fruit and sweetness protect them and

render their bullets harmless. I know gunslingers and walking fruit branches, trees and orchards, and they will all, in time, make the cowboy shoot himself in the foot of realization.

Slow Growing Fruit

Far better to be slow at growing fruit than quick on the draw. How our thoughts make us feel and where they take us are for most very much a daily 'blind date'. We do not know how we are going to feel and act from one minute to the next. True? We are unsure who we are going to meet when we wake up each morning. Will we be in a happy, good mood? Or will we be fed up again? It is really hit and miss which person will walk out your front door each morning -- you in a good mood or you in a bad mood? Everyone is a Jekyll and Hyde with very few having enough self-control as to let only the good take centre stage in their life each day.

Are You Made Or Influenced To Sit On The Roller Coaster? Or Can You Get Lost In The Forest?

Some will have a good period in the day when they feel good which is often induced with sugar, coffee or alcohol. Most go through the day on a roller coaster of emotions, out of control and travelling (thinking)

too fast. They are at the mercy of their subconscious self with all their hang-ups and secret desires. Many are easily influenced by the whims, dictates and moods of others. Either way, someone is always standing behind and hitting us, even if that person is yourself.

Everyone Is On a Constant Blind Date

Everyone is on a constant blind date, continually meeting their not so good selves throughout the day. Then they meet their good side briefly before again meeting their bad side again. They meet so many different sides of themselves they never quite know who they are, during the course of a day. It is true that people do not know themselves. They think, say and do things they know they should not do; they are often a stranger unto themselves. We are blind to who we really are. The world is truly blind to who and what we are.

Do You Eat In The Forest Or On The Roller Coaster?

Whom we take to work, whom we eat with and come home with is often a complete mystery. One can only strive towards the 'good you' and hope that he eats healthily, follows you tactfully, drives carefully and talks sweetly and wisely with you throughout the

day. Does he allow you to eat and walk slowly?

Your Blind Date Will Either Be Miss World or Miss Directed

Yet no matter how much you try, it seems just one big gamble and blind date who you'll come home and meet. Who'll be waiting for you? A fed up you? An exhausted you? An irritable you? A happy you? Your blind date can cause you a lot of problems if you come home to an irritable you.

Are You Mr. Universe Or Mr. Normal?

Once you were Mr. Universe, now you struggle to be Mr. Normal. Are you in the process of moving from Normal Road to New World Street? You will be able to tell this by who you wake up to and go to work with each morning. If you wake up happy and you walk happy, then you'll be moving soon. If you wake up bored and still tired, you are not moving anywhere and will have to stay in your little normal house of sorrow.

Do You Spend Time With Enlightened People?

Hopefully your blind date is spent with someone you can call your best friend, and not some bad tempered person you do not like. Be particular and persistent if necessary, but ask this rude person to leave you alone as you

only want to spend quality time in the company of enlightening and amusing people who can make you laugh and see the humorous side of life.

Who Do You Sit Next To All Day? A Moaner Or A Smiler?

Life's too short to spend it with moaners who are always negative. Make it clear to them that you only wish to wake up to your good half, eat breakfast with a smile and drive to work sitting next to a happy person.

The Perfect Date

Life should not be a gamble with you never knowing who is going to turn up on your blind date. You want to be confident in the knowledge that each day you are going to meet your perfect match and partner -- the perfect you!

Can You Walk On Water Or Only Carpet? Do You Fly Or Limp?

There is more chance today of the moon swapping place with the sun than for some people to change. Some are so stuck in their ways, there is more chance of you meeting the Queen and the Pope out shopping today, than for them to mend their ways. Their legs are stuck in concrete whilst God is trying to teach them to walk on water. Some are skilled pilots whilst many are HGV (Heavy Goods Vehicle) drivers.

Put Down Your Stick and Eat the Cake (Sweetness) Of Change

It takes courage and the realization that you are not moving forward to check and change from the heart. One needs love for truth to actually change. The more love someone has for truth, the greater the change. Holding your stick will not help you at all to swim against the tide of change. The sea is full with those making effort and swimming against the tide. If only they fed themselves the sweet cake of love every hour, they would catch and ride the outgoing tide to heaven.

You'll Need To Put Down Your Stick If You Wish To Catch The Tide

There is nothing more natural and powerful than the tide of love -- the trick is to catch it -- and enjoy it. How does it sound if the policeman stops in prison (hell) while the 100 criminals get released and transferred to heaven? Does it sound fair that the law upholder stays in prison whilst the criminals walk free? There is nothing like

freedom and there is nothing like prison.

You Are Driving the Bumper Car with Yourself as a Passenger

If you must bump into someone today who's really not so pleasant and who has a bad temper and moods, make sure it's someone you can talk to and change -- like yourself!

Have you ever thought that perhaps your passenger is often in a bad mood because you keep bumping into things? ●

O' SHIV BABA!

– B.K. Priyanka Sunil Udasi,
Amravati

O' Shiv Baba, you are so bright,
Source of light and might,
Purify us by divine insight
And make us reach great height



You provide us various powers
In our path, you spread flowers
Sure, sweet and great is Thy love
Pure like a lotus, innocent as a dove

Those who abide by your directions
Elevated naturally are their actions
For them all work is a play
In soul-consciousness ever they stay

SPIRITUALITY FOR SUCCESS AND PEACE IN LIFE

Briefly presented at the Inaugural session of
the 5th SIR Conference & Meditation Retreat at Shantivan, Abu Road.

By Pro. A.L. Madan, Kaithal (Haryana)



**Dear B.K. Brothers,
Sisters and Researchers,**

We are meeting at this holy place when the world in general, and our great nation in particular, is passing through a grave crisis. As for India, this is the crisis of corruption in almost all walks of life. It appears as if the whole society were in the grip of vices of all kinds—social, moral, economic and political degradation; this became evident a couple of months ago when common man and the youth power of all political hues poured on to the streets in support of Anna Hazare's fast against corruption all over the country.

Being a creative writer and a researcher too, I have been observing the events very closely. I can say that the root cause of this malady of corruption is lack of spirituality in all our individual, social and national endeavour. Though, culturally speaking, our nation is great, our traditions are spiritually healthy and deep-rooted, our heritage is something to feel truly proud of, yet when

it comes to the application of these spiritual values in our day-to-day practical life, we stand miserably exposed. Instead of aspiring to lead a peaceful life in perfect harmony, we begin to fight one another in the name of religion, region or language. Endless greed for money and power may lead us to individual success and a huge bank balance, but socially speaking, sometimes we have to hang our heads in shame in front of the world when we have been loudly preaching about moral and ethical values from our rooftops. The mad pursuit of our selfish motives in our general conduct makes me wonder as to whether our society is heading towards total chaos and failure or towards so-called economic prosperity in the face of naked poverty and hunger that still exist in large parts of our country.

Had our generations since independence been truly made aware of the need of the spiritual application in our practical life too, we would not have to face such ugly situation

as pointed out by the second Gandhi, Anna Hazare or as evinced by various judicial judgments against various scams and scandal mongers. It is sad that in the name of modernity or building scientific temperament and secular ethos, our polity and policy makers totally ignored another dimension of man's life, i.e., the spiritual dimension. Maintaining the secular fibre of our evolving society intact, they could have introduced spiritual content in the syllabi of schools and colleges of modern independent India. And this spiritual content should have contained the major truths and insights from all the religions and ways of life being practised in India.

I am happy to note that Prajapita Brahma Kumaris Ishwariya Vishwa Vidyalaya, Mount Abu, has been playing a vital role in this direction through its 8500 study Centres in more than 137 countries. The resolve of the Brahma Kumaris movement to impart spiritual education to individuals all over the world without any

discrimination of gender, creed, region or religion is, indeed, laudable. Its various wings provide service to different sections of society such as Jurists, Educationists, Social workers, and Researchers etc. They are doing a wonderful job in spreading that spiritual awareness of which I talked a few moments ago in widening the basic dimension in every man's existence - that of spirituality.

Brothers and Sisters, as a novelist, dramatist and a bit of poet, too, I can very briefly share one of my own insights. And this is that all great literature is based on same sound values of human existence and man's present condition on this earth -- and these values are rooted in applied spirituality of compassion, love, purity, understanding, tolerance and fight for justice, too. After all, our great epics like Ramayana, Mahabharata are based on these values. It is another matter that the common man's hero or the protagonist in a literary work has to fight it out and wade through the mud of worldliness, but the end is, undoubtedly, spiritually great.



THE TOMATO STORY



A jobless man applied for the position of "office boy" at Microsoft.

The HR manager interviewed him, then watched him cleaning the floor as a test. "You are employed." He said. "Give me your e-mail address and I'll send you the application to fill in, as well as date when you may start."

The man replied "But I don't have a computer, neither an email." I'm sorry", said the HR manager, "If you don't have an email, that means you do not exist. And who doesn't exist, cannot have the job."

The man left with no hope at all. He didn't know what to do, with only \$10 in his pocket. During that season, tomatoes were in great demand. So, he thought of doing some business with them. He then went to the supermarket and bought a 10Kg tomato crate. He sold the tomatoes in a door to door round. In less than 2-3 hours, he succeeded to double his capital. He repeated the operation three times, and returned home with \$60.

The man realized that he could survive by this way, and started to go everyday earlier, and return late. Thus, his money doubled or tripled everyday. Shortly, he bought a cart, then a truck, then he had his own fleet of delivery vehicles. 15 years later, the man is one of the biggest food retailers in the US. He started to plan his family's future, and decided to have a life insurance.

He called an insurance broker, and chose a protection plan. When the conversation was concluded, the broker asked him his email.

The man replied, "I don't have an email".

The broker answered curiously, "You don't have an email, and yet have succeeded to build an empire. Can you imagine what you could have been if you had an email?!!"

The man thought for a while and replied, "Yes, I'd have been an office boy at Microsoft!"

— (... Contd. from Page No. 3) —

Gold coins continually coming from the left hand signify un-ending material prosperity.

An interesting feature of her portraits is that, in all pictures of Shri Lakshmi, four elephants are shown pouring water on her. Four Elephants, in Indian tradition, are symbolic of the four directions – East, West, North and South. Moreover, elephant is an emblem of strength, wisdom and faithfulness to the master. It is a sign of grace and majesty. Thus, four elephants constantly pouring water, from the golden vessels, on Lakshmi – are sign of the faithfulness of all her subjects living in the East, the West, the North and the South and of constant affluence. It means that she had her sovereignty on the whole world.

Invoking Shri Lakshmi on a pitch-dark night (Amavasya) 'by lighting lamps and candles, is symbolic of enlightenment of the souls (when complete ignorance of Knowledge prevails in the world) so as to attain the stage of perfection or the three-fold goal of life—purity, peace and prosperity. Complete cleaning of houses and business-houses in advance is indicative of the observance of complete purity. The use of four elephants, each holding a lamp on it, is symbolic of keeping in mind the goal of complete victory over the self so as to attain world sovereignty or *Chakravarti Rajya* in the world of *sattwa*, i.e., Golden Age.

Keeping the door open all night is to let knowledge, virtue and fulfilment of goal be achieved by keeping the doors of knowledge open. But the pity is that people worship only Mammon on this day, forgetting God and *Lakshya* or the goal of life; they remember *Nakad Narayana* (cash or money). They keep the door and windows of the house open (even running the risk of a thief coming instead of Shri Lakshmi) but they have the doors of knowledge shut! ●

BE HUMBLE

Ganeshji, the deity acclaimed for being the Destroyer of Obstacles became so after God severed the false head of ego. What a powerful reminder of how detrimental ego can be! Ego pushes me towards all that is temporary and mirage-like i.e. connected with the body (high or low education, good or ordinary physical appearance, status at home and work, professional experiences). It traps the mind in limited, petty thinking and prevents me from recognising the value of virtues because they seem worthless in today's materialistic, competitive world. A humble person may have to swallow bitter words and actions from time to time, however he or she is guaranteed to receive God's unlimited blessings and love - what more could we ask for.

A great number of us wish we weren't forgetful or careless. But interestingly enough, the mind generally forgets normal, routine things but can't get away from contemplating on the past or future. It's not surprising that my mind finds it hard to remember what I need for today, as it's trying to manage the traffic jam of thoughts pertaining to yesterday and tomorrow. We could argue that the past has many good things to adopt or that we need to plan for the future but along with that I end up encouraging the past or future to weigh me down. Let me guard my thoughts carefully and not allow any leakage of the mind power.

Contd. from page no. 7)

the secret of our True Self, the World Cycle and the Law of *Karma* and thereby enlightens us to remain strong and positive and spread peaceful vibrations around us in the midst of a chaotic society.

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