

MEDIA RELEASE

Over 1300 people come to the Athena hall in LEICESTER to watch hit Indian TV spiritual chat show

For immediate release

It's not often that a chat show on spirituality could draw hundreds to a live programme, but with over 1300 people in attendance, Leicester's Athena hall in Queen Street proved just how much interest there is in spirituality in today's world. It was an unprecedented record audience for the Brahma Kumaris, one of Leicester's most significant multicultural organisations.

And it was taking the city's multi-cultural ethos to heart that led to the show being held twice on the same day – once in English and later in Hindi. The English event featured interviewer **Kris Taylor, from Sabras Radio**, in conversation with the two stars of the popular show - Sister Jayanti, European Director of the Brahma Kumaris (BKs) and Shivani Verma from Delhi - speaking on the theme: "Empowering the Self".

The second show was themed "Harmony in Relationships", with **Deputy Lord Mayor of Leicester, Cllr. Manjula Sood**, acting as MC and **Nileshbhai Shukla, well known MATV presenter** and city councillor as interviewer.

Kris Taylor addressed the key issue in the first event by probing the concept of self-empowerment and what it really meant. Shivani Verma said: "I used to be a very argumentative person and thought I was always right. I was proud of the way I was, but now it is a different picture altogether. I am not looking at situations now: they come and go and but I take care of my thinking. In spirituality others are not in my control. Self empowerment for me, means stability. I have a choice how I choose to respond. It is our perspective that counts.'

Sister Jayanti explained the Brahma Kumaris' training for self empowerment is 'soul consciousness': "By having inner awareness of my own peace rather than being upset about a situation I can maintain this state of mind and bring a solution that benefits everyone. My strength in situations is the power of peace and stability." Let me direct my life the way I want to and not concern myself with what others want me to do."

In the second show, the conversations started with Nileshbhai Shukla asking Sister Jayanti: "what is your definition of harmony"? She replied: "The word 'har' in Hindi means defeat, but if I accept someone else is right then harmony will exist not only now but also in the future. It means unity and sweetness", said Sister Shivani. "For a relationship to work then you need to give love from the heart because you cannot change anyone. You can only work on yourself and change your thoughts and habits." She continued that all the different relationships we have are energies that flow which, if running smoothly without hatred and anger, there will be no blockages.

Much of the conversation centred on parents and children - how to help the young not to be so influenced in the world. Sister Jayanti mentioned that in the past families would eat together but today people watch television while eating and there is no spirituality.

Sister Shivani added: "The answer today is for parents to take time out for themselves, to understand what spirituality is to be able to explain to the youth. This will help keep alive the spirit of Bharat - of ancient India."

During the Q&A it was asked why is that relationships don't last? Sister Jayanti described society as a disposable one with throw away cups and even clothes. Short termism stems from our materialistic society. Shivani agreed and said it is not only in the West but exists in the East as well. Spirituality changes our perspective as happiness is found inside not outside.

Both events closed with the audience experiencing a guided meditation which took them into a deep experience of peace and serenity – and then left inspired and equipped with new ideas and techniques to help them live their lives in a more harmonious way and stable way.

The Awakening tour now moves on to Glasgow. It will also be going to Aberdeen, Birmingham, Manchester, Bradford/Leeds, Nottingham and in the London area to Wembley, Watford, Hayes/Hounslow, Willesden Green, Ilford, Croydon and Stratford. For more information on the tour –**where ALL tickets are FREE** – visit: www.bkwsu.org/uk/awakening

NOTE TO EDITORS:

- 1) For interview requests for Sister Jayanti and Shivani Verma, please call: Bhupen Patel on 0116 266 2023 or 07877 314 373
- 2) Filming opportunities and photography is available, on request.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Awakening with Brahma Kumaris can currently be seen on the **Aastha International channel on Sky channel 807**. You can also view some of the shows online at: www.brahmakumarisuk.blip.tv

ABOUT THE STARS OF THE PROGRAMME

Sister Jayanti is the European Director of the Brahma Kumaris, with over 40 years experience of Raja Yoga meditation and its practical application in daily life. Her gentle voice and profound insights on spiritual solutions to everyday problems have touched the hearts of thousands around the world.

Shivani Verma is known for her dynamic, engaging and down-to-earth nature. She is a hugely sought after speaker due to the clarity of the wisdom she shares. With a background in engineering, she has the ability to analyse the deep rooted causes of the negative emotions experienced in life.

The anchors:

Kris Tailor is an accomplished broadcaster and journalist, having worked for the BBC and local radios. He now regularly presents for Sabras Radio and is well known in this region because of working and supporting a number of Asian organisations in Leicester.

Nileshbhai Shukla has been working for local Government since 1989. He has given more than 300 TV episodes on MATV. And interviewed religious personalities including Jayanti Didi and has a deep passion to explore the depths of spiritual understanding.

ABOUT THE BRAHMA KUMARIS

The Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University (UK) teaches Raja Yoga as a way of experiencing peace of mind and a positive approach to life.

The University provides opportunities for people from all religious and cultural backgrounds to explore their own spirituality and learn skills of reflection and meditation derived from Raja Yoga, which will help develop inner calm, clear thinking and personal well-being.

Across the UK we work with national and local organisations and community groups in such areas as inter-religious dialogue, youth programmes, prison outreach, social work and women's and men's groups. BKWSU (UK) was established as a UK charity in 1975 and charges no fees for any of its activities, being funded by voluntary contributions.

The University is part of a worldwide network of over 8,500 centres in more than 100 countries, the first of which was founded in India in the 1930s. The Brahma Kumaris' first centre in the UK opened in 1971 in London. Today there are activities throughout the UK in over 50 locations.