



Purity

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Truly Independent India
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New Learning from Bhagavad Gita



Delhi/Gurgaon: The yoga mentioned in the Gita refers to establishing a mental connection with God and not doing physical exercises — the war described in the Gita was non-violent and symbolic of our internal struggle between the good and evil; God is the imperishable, incorporeal being of spiritual light, not a physical being. He is omnipotent, not omnipresent — these are some of the key conclusions that were arrived at the two-day National Convention on New Learning from the Bhagavad Gita organised in Delhi-NCR last month by the Brahma Kumaris. Saints and scholars from different parts of the country brainstormed to demystify the truths as stated in the Gita.

The aim of the programme was to explore the core knowledge of the Gita and present it in its right context in order to make it accessible and useful to everyone. The panelists were of the opinion that unless people embody the knowledge of the Gita; merely learning or to recite it, will not translate to the high aim of personal transformation.

At the public programme organised at Siri Fort Auditorium on the second day of the convention, it was said that describing physical exercises as yoga misleads people away from the ancient yoga as taught in the Gita.

Professor Prafulla Kumar Mishra, former Head of Sanskrit Department at Utkal University, Bhubaneswar, said: Keeping the body fit is not yoga, it is far from it." The Bhagavad Gita is a yoga shastra and many of its shlokas talk about stabilising the mind through meditation, he said, adding that the Gita nowhere asks us to perform physical asanas, and they do not result in the personal upliftment everyone is looking for.

Dr. Pushpa Pandey, Gita research scholar from Jabalpur, said that yoga was not possible without remembrance of God: "The biggest problem in the world today is depression, and though exercise does bring relief through the release of endorphins, it is only when we concentrate our mind in meditation and remember God can we truly improve our mental health."

She said that we receive the qualities of what we concentrate on. God is the ocean of peace, love, happiness and power, and we get all we want by remembering Him.

Professor Alekh Chandra Sarangi, former Vice-Chancellor, Shri Jagannath Sanskrit University, Puri, said: "The Gita is called yoga shastra. Rajyoga is the means to transform our negative tendencies and connect with God."

Calling Rajyoga a remedy for mental stress, BK Veena, Gita research scholar, Sirsi, Karnataka, said: "Many shlokas in the Gita say that the burden of sins can be cleansed only when we connect to God through His accurate introduction." She said that hatha yoga does not lead to purification of the soul.

Bringing clarity to the subject of who God is, she said that the Gita supports the fact that both the soul and the Supreme Soul are a form of spiritual light, and one could know God only through the knowledge given by Him.

Swami Gopala Krishnananda, Peetadhipathi, Sri Dwarkamai Sai Baba Peetham, Hyderabad, said: "God is the Supreme Light, but we can connect with Him only when we first connect with ourselves as souls."

He said that one could achieve peace of mind and spread peaceful vibrations through Rajyoga meditation, not by performing physical kriyas. Once the soul is set on the path of purification, it can overcome mental illness, he said.

BK Trinath Inala, Gita scholar from Hyderabad, said that God is ever pure and does not go through the cycle of sato, rajo and tamo. He, the Supreme, is



Mahamandaleshwar Swami Dharamdev Maharaj being greeted by Rajyogi BK Brij Mohan, Convenor, Bhagavad Gita Convention.

neither a deity nor a human being, he said.

The panelists asked the audience to be discerning and to understand the deeper meaning of the metaphors used in the Gita. Interpreting the text literally could lead one to make faulty, bizarre and contradictory conclusions, and to miss out on the profound knowledge. In the same light, it was asked if it was at all possible for the God of the Gita to advocate war and violence when *ahimsa parmodharma* is its key tenet.

Rajyogi BK Basavaraj Rajrushi, Gita research scholar from Hubli, said, "The war described in the Gita is a symbolic representation of the war between negative and positive tendencies that goes on in everyone's mind."

Dr. Surendra Mohan Mishra, Associate Professor, Department of Sanskrit, Kurukshetra University, said that truth and violence were inseparable, and that the revival of our nation was unimaginable without truth.

He added, "The war described in the Gita is a depiction of our mental conflict... The Gita inspires us to gain victory over our mind."

Brahmrishi Gaurishankaracharya of Shri Amritanubhav Sangh Trust, Nepal, said, "On the one hand we say that inflicting violence brings us negative karmic returns, on the other hand, Krishna has been depicted as a destroyer."

He said Dhritrashtra represents a person who is so blinded by attachment to the idea of 'me and mine' that he is unable to discern the right from the obvious wrong. "When the vices, represented by the Kauravas, influence a person, his intellect, represented by the Pandavas, becomes dysfunctional." Mahabharata is the journey between 'where we are' to 'where we want to go', and we should try to destroy all obstacles that keep us off our goal, he added.

Dr. Yogendra Nath Sharma 'Arun', member of HNB Garhwal University, Srinagar, said: "When we act under the influence of vices, we become Duryodhana, otherwise we are ready to walk the right path."

Kansa is a symbol of violence and so non-violence could not be established

(Contd. on page 2)

Gita Convention in Photos



(Contd. from page 1)

without his destruction, he said — he clarified that many characters in the scriptures are meant to give a message and must not be confused with actual historical figures.

BK Usha, Gita expert from Mount Abu, said, "The war described in the Gita is certainly not a violent one. This is clear from the fact that Arjuna is time and again asked to gain victory over his five sense organs and conquer his mind."

She said that the mind becomes restless under the influence of desires. "We must steer the mind, not suppress it - this is the message of the Gita." The antidote for depression given in the Gita, she said, was to make our mind positive with Godly power and thereby experience happiness.

BK Brij Mohan, Additional Secretary-General of the Brahma Kumaris, said, "When we say the mind is uncontrollable, it also means that the intellect is corrupted and thereby unable to restrain the mind. The intellect is corrupted by wrong actions, which are performed repeatedly under the influence of vices and eventually harden into sanskars. The Bhagavad Gita prescribes yoga as the only means to transform our sanskars and thereby gain victory over our mind."

Contradicting the concept of omnipresence of God, BK Veena said: "It is mentioned in the Gita that God descends on earth each time when unrighteousness reaches its peak. If He were everywhere, as is often believed, there would be no need for Him to come from somewhere else. Also, the Gita mentions that He resides in an abode that is highest on high."

Speaking on the role of women and why the Gita is silent on the subject, BK Asha, Director, Om Shanti Retreat Centre (ORC), Gurugram, said the dialogue between Arjuna and Sri Krishna represents a conversation between the soul and the Supreme Soul. As the soul is beyond gender, the characters are inclusive of both genders. Speaking further on the role of women, she said: "Women have a crucial role to play in the transformation of society because they are naturally blessed with the qualities of nurturing and non-violence ... It is impossible to change the world without the essential feminine qualities of patience, humility, compassion and kindness."

Bringing the convention to a close, Justice V. Eswaraiyah, former chairperson, National Commission for Backward Classes, stated in essence the key conclusions of the discussions. He said that since the knowledge given by the God of the Gita is spiritual in nature, it could only be understood in a soul-conscious state.

Earlier, on July 27, the two-day programme was inaugurated at ORC by Guest of Honour Mahamandaleshwar Swami Dharamdev Maharaj of



Harimandir Ashram, Pataudi, along with other esteemed scholars. He said though reading scriptures is a great practice, what truly matters is not how learned we are but how much knowledge we have churned and imbibed in our practical life. He urged the audience to practise the Gita as a way of life.

Speaking at the inaugural session, BK Brij Mohan asked everyone to reflect on the question - who would renew the world when everyone and everything is bound by entropy. Since the Supreme Soul is ever pure, He alone could do it, he said. "He is called the Almighty Authority because He does what nobody else is capable of doing - transforming the world."

He said the symptoms of extreme decay is visible in all the 'sattas' (institutions) today. It tells us that we are living in that crucial phase in the cycle of time when the God of Gita is once again carrying out the work of world transformation, and changing it from its oldest to its newest form.

Yogacharya Vipin Chander Joshi, Shri Mahant Mata Vaishnodevi Gufa Yoga Mandir, Tapkeswar Mahadev, Dehradun, said that the Gita teaches us to carry out our responsibilities obediently. "If we fulfil our duties, we earn our rights automatically," he said.

During the panel discussions held on the first day of the convention, it was unanimously agreed that 'truth' refers to what is eternal and indestructible. The soul and the Supreme Soul are the two ultimate truths, and if one lives in this awareness, it brings out one's intrinsic divine qualities to the fore. This is how truth is linked with non-violence.

Calling the Gita a source of universal knowledge, BK Rajiv Gupta, Gita scholar from Mumbai, said that attaching the Gita with a particular person or deity reduces its value. If its core knowledge is understood accurately and as the one given by the Supreme Himself, it would be rightly recognised as a text belonging to all humanity equally. ■

(Purity Report)

Purity Feature

Civil Eyes

If face is the index of mind, eyes are windows of the soul.

If face is the index of mind, eyes are windows of the soul. Eyes communicate both ways – they can receive impressions and transmit expressions – without uttering a word. One can virtually speak through the eyes. Silence, they say, is the climax of speech, and eyes are the medium for that. Eyes can smile, express love, hate, sympathize, in fact can communicate any emotion. Eyes shed tears in diametrically opposite states of joy and grief. Eyes can read! In shame or deceit, eyes get automatically lowered. Eyes are raised to make a point. In agreement we see ‘eye to eye’ with each other. In confrontation we look at each other’s ‘eyeball to eyeball’. In anger, the eyeballs become red and in extreme anger the eye balls seemingly pop out. We acknowledge with eyes, ignore with eyes and make all sorts of gestures with eyes.

We see the world through our eyes. It’s indeed a great marvel of nature that delicate optical nerves provide vision to the eyes! Scientific study about how eyes send information to the brain estimated that about 100,000 ganglion cells in the retina transmit about 875,000 bits of information per second. With about 1,000,000 ganglion cells, the human retina is estimated to transmit data roughly at the rate of an Ethernet connection, or 10 million bits per second!!

We can infer from this that what we see and the information we take in through our eyes has a major influence on what we think and how we behave. While eyes are an optical tool to see the outer world there is something deeper that colours our vision - our past impressions, emotions, beliefs and attitudes. What the eyes ‘import’ and what they ‘export’ depends upon the worldview, outlook and attitude of the person. Also a person with a strong will power can ‘export’ more. A person whose will power is weak, will be gullible to outside influences, particularly that of powerful, but completely commercialized, media. He cannot lead an independent life, free from harmful influences. Today our vision is clouded and

polluted by the negative quality of images and information we gather through our eyes.

Our external eyes are merely a functionary of the ‘inner eye’ or the mind which is a faculty of the soul. The state of one’s mind directs the eyes to act according to its likes and dislikes, prides and prejudices. A vice-afflicted soul will use its eyes for vicious purposes viz. to covet, harm, seduce, steal, defame and hurt. A pious person will communicate love, mercy, sympathy, appreciation, encouragement, good wishes and blessings through his eyes.

A person is truly civilized only if he is ‘civil-eyed’ i.e. viceless and has ‘criminal-eyes’, his actions will be unrighteous and sinful which would spread sorrow and suffering. Howsoever well-mannered he may pretend to be, he would prove to be a wolf in sheep’s clothing and cannot be called ‘civilized.’ When we look at another person with hatred, dislike, criticism, lust, possessiveness, fear, jealousy, ego and other negative emotions our eyes are violating the purity of self and the other. Such eyes are ‘criminal or vicious eyes’.

In order to become ‘civil eyed’ we have to practice using the third eye of wisdom. The third eye is known as the gateway to higher consciousness. It may alternately symbolize a state of enlightenment. In Eastern and Western spiritual traditions, the third eye is known as the “inner eye”; the mystical and esoteric concept referring to the “ajna” chakra. The third eye is associated with clairvoyance, out-of-body experiences, visions, and precognition.

People who have developed their third eye are known as “seers”. Hinduism and Buddhism use the third eye as symbolism of enlightenment. East Asian and Indian iconography show the third eye as a dot, eye or mark on the forehead of deities and other enlightened beings.

The third eye is non-physical and can be visualized with ‘divine intellect’ or ‘divine insight’ bestowed by the Supreme. It is shown in the centre of the forehead, in the middle of the two physical eyes at the place called ‘Bhrikuti’ which is the seat of the soul. It is also known as ‘Gyan Netra’. Hindus place a “tilak” between the eyebrows as a representation of the third eye. There are two small organs in the brain known as the pituitary body and the pineal gland. Medical Science refers to the pineal gland as the “atrophied third eye.” These glands were once supposedly used in the past as a means for man to get in touch with the inner world, his way to ingress. Activating the third eye can be accomplished through meditation.

It opens with ‘self realisation’ or soul-consciousness and God-consciousness through the practice of Rajyoga Meditation. It brings about a paradigm shift in the life and outlook of the person pursuing it. It clears the mind and cleans the intellect, which then use the physical eyes in a righteous way leading to elevated actions. ■



Aha Eyes!

- The eyes believe themselves; the ears believe other people.
- Your eyes show the strength of the soul.
- If you see with innocent eyes, everything is divine.
- The eyes have one language everywhere.
- When the heart is full, the eyes overflow.
- Beauty lies in the eyes of the beholder.

From this article

- A person is truly civilized only if he is ‘civil-eyed’ i.e. viceless.
- If he is vicious and ‘criminal-eyed’, his actions will be sinful which would spread sorrow and suffering.
- Eyes shed tears in diametrically opposite states of joy and grief.
- Eyes transmit about 875,000 bits of information per second.
- The state of one’s mind or ‘inner eye’ directs the eyes to communicate according to its likes and dislikes.

Anatomy of Peace & Harmony

Neville Hodgkinson, Writer Journalist, UK

For centuries scientists and philosophers alike have tended to dismiss the "dualistic" idea of soul and body - of a "ghost in the machine". They have long argued that however unacceptable the idea might feel, purely physical laws ultimately govern our world and its inhabitants. Paradoxically, focusing too much on external realities can also weaken the objectivity that the science prizes so highly. Researchers who neglect their inner world may become unaware of how much their mental and emotional needs are influencing their observations.

Now, however, some of the best minds at the frontiers of physics and biology are developing a map of the way things are that helps us to understand how the living energy of the "soul" may be central to reality. They say the roots of our being lie within a non-material realm, outside space and time. Each of us is a centre of consciousness - an eternal soul - negotiating the world of time and space through the brain and senses.

In this view, every material thing, from a particle, to a flower, to a human body, or to the cosmos, takes its form through continuous interaction with a subtle level of reality. The concept of information lies at the heart of this new



Scientists have demonstrated that the brain as well as the body change constantly according to how we use them.

paradigm, but to be meaningful, information needs both a source, and something to be informed. We can see these subtle, informational fields as a bridge between soul or spirit, and the material world, to which the information gives form.

This new thinking, sometimes referred to as the consciousness-based paradigm, looks set to bring aspects of spiritual understanding right back into the realm of science. In the new paradigm, everything is interconnected. We share a common understanding or "feeling" about the quality of

different colors, for example, because of a deep connection between the different wavelength characteristics of the colors, the sensory equipment that enables us to distinguish them, and the consciousness - the "I" - that sees.

Moreover, scientists have now demonstrated that the brain as well as the body change constantly according to how we use them. As we learn, even individual brain cells (neurons) change their structure, as well as their connectivity. Thinking, learning and acting bring changes in the activity of genes inside the cells, enabling the brain to adapt at a fundamental level.

This principle operates not only with regard to developing new skills such as learning a language or playing the piano, but also the components of our character such as habitual attitudes. Lasting change

requires persistent, close attention. It comes about both through forces that inhabit and/or destroy old patterns, connections, and forces that promote new ones. Love, it seems, can do both. Neuroscientists tell us that when we fall in love, or become parents, massive brain reorganization takes place. Millions of old neural networks fall away, as millions of new ones form.

Love for God is at the heart of the life journey known as Raja Yoga. In this journey, God is in a sense more real than the world of "things". He is an eternal Being who resides outside space-time, yet holds within Himself the knowledge of everything that happens within the material world. The challenge we face is to allow ourselves to open up to this divine love and wisdom, revealing our own loving nature and helping to restore love and peace in the world. ■

Godly Wisdom (Shrimat)

God says : Tame the wild horse of your mind

Your soul, like a king, is the ruler, controller, the master of all sense organs. The mind is its 'mukhya mantri' or chief advisor — the one that gives 'mantrana' or advice to the soul. If the mind is not kept under control, it becomes disobedient. The mind is commonly compared with a horse which can play naughty when it becomes wild. This horse has to be kept under control with the reins of 'shrimat' (Godly knowledge). If the reins become loose, the mind gets a chance to create waste thoughts which influence the soul's actions. The reins get loose when the master is looking at side-scenes. Repeated loss of control results in repeated emergence of waste thoughts leading to formation of a habit. When this weakness lingers for long in the mind, then it also coaxes the intellect, the soul's legal advisor, to cooperate. This results in making the weakness a 'sanskar' (personality trait).

Then you make another mistake. Having given a place and allowed waste thoughts, to stay in your mind, you begin to consider them as your own by calling them 'my nature', 'my habit', 'my sanskar'. When a ruler loses his ruling power and controlling power, he loses his authority and is over-powered.

It is basically wrong to consider acquired weaknesses and imaginary fears as your own nature. These are intruders and invaders that have usurped the rightful place of your original 'sanskar' which are of humility, benevolence and compassion. When weaknesses enter the mind in the form of ego, jealousy, hatred etc. there is a tussle within the mind between these and your original sanskars. This creates tension, disharmony and disturbance.

So, keep this wild horse under control. Let there be no place in your mind for waste or negative thoughts. Ordinary or weak thoughts too fall in the same category because they are 'nish-fal' i.e. they do not bear any fruit. Let your mind create noble and elevated thoughts which when acted upon are 'safal' or 'seh-fal' i.e. fruit-bearing. This will enhance your happiness and bliss. ■

ANGER IS DANGER

- When anger rises, think of the consequences. — Confucius
- Anger always begins with folly, and ends with repentance. — Pythagoras
- Anger dwells only in the bosom of fools. — Albert Einstein



Hon'ble Vice President of the Philippines MA Leonora "Leni" Robredo with BK Sister Jayanti from London, BK Sister Rajni and others.

Feature Article on Independence Day

Truly Independent India

Seventy-two years ago, India won freedom from British colonial rule. Independence, it was hoped, would bring a new era of peace and prosperity. Mahatma Gandhi, the leader of India's freedom movement, spoke of establishing Ram Rajya in India. He described Ram Rajya as "sovereignty of the people based on moral authority." According to him, it would be "the land of dharma and a realm of peace, harmony and happiness for young and old, high and low, all creatures and the Earth itself, in recognition of a shared universal consciousness."

However, Gandhi's dream remains a distant goal more than seven decades later. In fact, Gandhi himself foresaw this prospect when he wrote a few months before independence that "there can be no Ram Rajya in the present state of iniquitous inequalities in which a few roll in riches and the masses do not get even enough to eat."

The inequality Gandhi wrote about, not only persists, but has grown over the years. The latest Oxfam report on global inequality has reiterated, once again, that the rich are getting richer and the poor are lagging behind.

According to the report, India's wealthiest 1 per cent of the population now holds 73 per cent of the country's wealth. The wealth of this elite group increased by over Rs 20.9 lakh crore during the period of the study, while 67 crore Indians, comprising the country's poorest half, saw their wealth rise by just 1 per cent.

This phenomenon is not just unique to India. According to the report, there are now 2,043 dollar billionaires worldwide. The wealth of this group increased by \$762 billion in just 12 months, while the bottom half of the global population got less than 1 per cent of the total wealth in 2016-2017.



For India to become free from slavery to vices, each person in this country will have to become free first. Is that possible?

Gandhi's dream for India remains unfulfilled because while the country attained political independence in 1947, it did not really become free.

Earlier, it was a colonial power that drained the country of its resources and curbed the freedoms of its people, but now the people are slaves to vices, which have corroded every aspect of life and are at the root of the ills plaguing India.

Inequality is the result of greed and selfishness, which also give rise to corruption. India ranks a poor 78th among 180 countries in the global Corruption Perceptions Index.

Crime and violence, including terrorism, also stem from vices, including lust, anger and hatred.

These vices enslave not only the minds of people but also imprison many of them physically by landing them behind bars for crimes committed under the influence of evil tendencies.

The condition of such 'enslaved' persons is similar to that of the Kaurava prince Duryodhana in the Mahabharat. When told by Lord Krishna that the way he was treating the Pandavas was morally wrong, Duryodhana replied, "I know what is right, but I am not able to practise it; I know what is wrong and I am not able to keep away from it."

This happens when the soul is weak and does not have the power to stop negative thoughts and refrain from acting on them. This is the condition, in varying degrees, of most people in the world today.

The way to end this slavery is to know the self, the soul, and empower it so that it can choose good and positive thoughts over those which are negative and wasteful. Empowerment occurs when the soul connects mentally with the Supreme Soul. Remembrance of God brings His powers and virtues into the soul and removes the influence of vices.

Regularly making this connection gradually enables the soul to become self-sovereign, when it becomes free of all external influence.

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Things have come to the present pass because of the ravages of time. All souls are originally pure, and peace, love, truth, power and bliss are their natural qualities. But as souls take successive births in this world, playing various roles in the drama that we call life, they lose their power and are influenced by matter and other souls. This process of decline ultimately leaves them depleted, unable to resist negative influences.

No community or country can hope to be rid of vices by itself. It is only when all souls attain salvation that the world is freed from this slavery.

The Gita tells us that when unrighteousness reaches extreme proportions, God incarnates Himself to destroy evil, salvage humanity, and establish a righteous new world order. This is when the world is freed from the clutches of vices, and true independence dawns. ■

Freedoms that ought not to be enjoyed in 'Free India'



Independence

- I would rather sit on a pumpkin, and have it all to myself, than be crowded on a velvet cushion. - Thoreau
- Every man for himself and God for us all. - Cervantes
- Independence has to be experienced within the reality of interdependence.

-BK Dr. Nirmala



Restoring Values to Arrest Crime

Editorial—

A couple and their two little children in north-west Delhi were in for a terrifying experience last month when they returned home early morning. As they entered their residence and were parking their car, three masked men appeared and looted them at gunpoint, the CCTV camera footage showed. In another incident that took place a few days later, a store manager was robbed at gunpoint in an outer Delhi area. A month before, the Delhi Chief Minister had expressed serious concern over the spurt in crimes in the city after an elderly couple and their house help were found murdered in south Delhi, and more such news was reported from other parts of the capital.

Whenever there is an apparent increase in the capital's crime rate, it is seen as a grave law and order issue. The conversations in the media and on public platforms at that time centre round stepping up policing, patrolling and technical surveillance. There are discussions on instilling fear of law among the offenders and strengthening the country's judicial system.

These measures are vital to arresting crime and must be taken. But another fact is that they can achieve only limited results as the malady is far too deeply rooted. While many of these measures can be implemented only after the crime has taken place and the victims have suffered harrowing experiences, others act as limited deterrents for miscreants. Also, practically speaking, it is not possible to guard every nook and corner of the city.

Creating a space where everyone lives without fear and with dignity requires a much more comprehensive approach, a long-term plan and great investment of thought and effort. Resolving the situation outwardly or punishing the wrongdoer form only a small part of this plan.

Wanton use of violence and exploitation of the vulnerable anywhere, anytime – are symptoms of a society gone morally bankrupt. Such incidents are an expression of corruption of our inner world. Where most of the people live under the influence of lust, anger, greed, attachment and ego, and have a habit of silencing their conscience to make quick material gains, the ideals of fairness, honesty and social good are lost. As values take a nosedive, the rule of the jungle takes over.

The growing vices within individuals are behind the deteriorating law and order situation of our country and its capital. Unless this issue is addressed at the root level, little will change. The call of time is not just to fight evil tendencies but to create an environment that allows ethics and noble principles to flourish. Our focus must be on treating the ailment where it first takes shape – the human mind – and tapping into the inherent goodness of all individuals.

If we are able to convince our younger generations of the value of doing good karma as against performing ordinary or negative actions, they will be motivated to behave in an elevated way. Those who fiercely guard their own karma, with or without checks by external agencies, and recognise the worth of personal goodness as an essential contribution to the world are most valuable today. We must work towards shaping more self-regulated individuals.

An essential step in this direction is to spread value education through schools, colleges and public institutions. Values cannot be taught superficially, but their depth and practical utility must be well understood and demonstrated. Thus a big onus would lie on those who become part of this initiative. The government can collaborate with spiritual and religious organisations of credibility that promote personal development of individuals through the practice of self-restraint and value building, and thereby spur a cultural shift.

The Brahma Kumaris have been tirelessly promoting positive life skills and an elevated lifestyle for over 80 years now. Regular BK students, who study spiritual knowledge at BK centres daily, take an oath to live a sattvic and non-violent life. They endeavour to cleanse themselves of their shortcomings. The organisation's multi-pronged services have touched millions of people from all walks of life within the country and abroad.

Dedicated efforts towards self-transformation can transform our society collectively, and so the authorities must seriously consider working in this direction to achieve the aim of providing safe living conditions to the citizens. ■

Gleanings from the press

Antibiotics can weaken flu defences, says study

Antibiotics can leave the lung vulnerable to flu viruses, leading to significantly worse infections and symptoms, according to a study. It found that antibiotics can wipe out early flu resistance. Inappropriate use not only kills helpful gut bacteria, but may also leave a person more vulnerable to viruses. (PTI)

An apple carries about 100 mn bacteria: study



Besides containing fibre and vitamins, an apple also carries about 100 million bacteria, and whether these microbes are good or bad for health may depend on how the fruit was grown, says a study. It shows that organic apples harbour a balanced bacterial community — which could make them healthier and tastier than conventional apples. (PTI)

10% of people have had a near-death experience

Around 10% of people report having had mystical near-death experiences, including out-of-body sensations, hallucinations, and time distortion, according to a new study. These experiences are equally common in people who are not in imminent danger and in those who have experienced life-threatening situations such as heart attacks, car crashes, or combat situations. Far from being a pleasant experience associated with feelings of peacefulness and well-being, as some studies have reported, the study found a much higher rate of people reporting their experience as unpleasant. (ANI)

German circus replaces animals with holograms

Circuses have been criticised for the way in which they treat the animals they train to perform silly tricks. It is in response to such criticism that Germany's Circus Roncalli has replaced elephants and horses with holograms of the animals. The flat images appear to be three-dimensional, and you can enjoy the show guilt-free. (BGR News)



Polluted water killed 7 every day in 2018

Polluted water killed seven people a day in India in 2018, while at least 36,000 people were diagnosed with water-borne diseases every day. In 2018, 2,439 people died because of four major water-borne diseases — cholera, acute diarrhoeal disease, typhoid and viral hepatitis. In all, more than 1.3 crore people were diagnosed with these diseases. (News Report)

School bag must not be more than 10% of child's body weight

Scientists have established that schoolchildren who use backpacks should avoid loads of more than 10% of their body weight and those who use trolleys, 20% of their body weight. In collaboration with researchers from Liverpool John Moore University, scientists from the University of Granada in Spain used statistical techniques to analyse the full kinematics curves based on tracing point trajectories. (Times of India)



Bhoola Bhai

And our friend Bhoola Bhai on Temple Street believes that every longing ends up in a belonging and tightens the strings of attachment which brings nothing but grief.



Raksha Bandhan – To Purify and Protect

Raksha Bandhan is celebrated in the month of Shravan (August) on a full moon day. The festival of Raksha Bandhan has acquired different expressions and connotations in the course of time. It has been celebrated as a promise by the brother to protect the sister. On this day sisters tie a decorative piece of thread around the wrist of brothers and apply a tilak on their forehead. The rakhi is considered a sacred vow taken by brothers to assist or protect their sister in difficult situations.

In this age of women's empowerment, it would seem a denigration of women to suggest that they need to be protected by their brothers. This could not be the original intent and purpose of the festival.

Before the advent of the sister-brother ritual, the sacred thread of rakhi was tied by the family priest who visited his clients and tied the thread, which was considered auspicious for all members of the family. This custom still prevails in parts of India.

It is also believed that soldiers and warriors were tied the rakhi by their sisters and wives before they went to the battlefield to wish them safety and good luck. The significance of rakhi here is not so well understood. Actually, it was a reminder that they should respect the honour of the womenfolk of the enemy in the same spirit as they would expect their own womenfolk to be treated by the enemy, if captured.

The origin of Raksha Bandhan is, however, an altogether different story, now as revealed by the Supreme Rakshak (Protector) God Shiva, through the medium of Prajapita Brahma. It symbolises a very significant transformation that takes place in human history every 5,000 years.

It relates to the purification of human souls during Sangamyuga (Confluence Age), when God descends to transform the completely vicious Iron-aged (Kalyugi) world into completely viceless Golden-aged (Satyugi) deity world of purity, peace and prosperity.

God is surely a more loyal and mighty protector than any human being. And it is God alone who shares the wisdom behind tying the sacred rakhi or rather, taking a vow



Rakhi is the bondage of purity that truly frees us from all negativities, fear and sorrow.

of protection. Rakhi is the bond of purity that truly liberates us from all negativities, fear and sorrow. God's guidance (*Shrimat*) helps humans attain victory over the vices of lust, anger, greed, attachment and ego.

Supreme Soul Shiva creates a spiritual army of Shiva Shaktis (spiritually empowered women) who take a pledge to observe Brahmacharya (celibacy) and complete purity in thoughts, words and deeds. In return, they get God's guidance and His protection from all evil.

The tilak applied on Raksha Bandhan signifies the tilak of soul consciousness which inspires us to take the pledge to stay in our original nature of peace, love, purity, wisdom and joy. Every thought, word and action then becomes elevated and divine. As children of God, the Supreme Father, all human souls are brothers, so we need to imbibe a pure vision towards all, a soul-

Ambition

Ambition has but one reward for all:
A little power, a little transient fame,
A grave to rest in, and a fading name!



I had ambition, by which sin the Angels fell;
I climbed and, step by step, O Lord
Ascended into Hell.

conscious vision. The more we purify our consciousness, the stronger is our connection with God.

Bringing purity in one's life requires the divine companionship of God, our Supreme Guide and Protector. God binds us in this sacred bond of love and purity. Making a firm promise to God of imbibing purity and goodwill ensures that we constantly receive strength to overcome the vices and sorrow that are plaguing humanity today. For all our sincere efforts, God in turn promises to gift us a place in the divine new world of Satyuga, where happiness, peace and prosperity will rule.

Purity of the soul, purity of the heart is the greatest shield of protection, because a pure heart is the key to God's blessings, and His blessings are the greatest protection. By purifying our consciousness, attitude and deeds we are able to protect ourselves and others from the influence of negative feelings. Such spiritually empowered humans also help other souls to enter this spiritual bond of love with God.

Raksha Bandhan signifies this great event of human transformation. ■

(Purity Bureau)

Wise Sayings

- Always bear in mind that your own resolution to succeed is more important than any other thing.
—Abraham Lincoln
- The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.
—Eleanor Roosevelt
- A person starts to live when he can live outside himself.
—Albert Einstein
- Diligence is the mother of good luck.
—Benjamin Franklin
- Genius is one per cent inspiration and ninety-nine per cent perspiration.
—Thomas A. Edison
- I'm a great believer in luck, and I find the harder I work, the more I have of it.
—Thomas Jefferson
- It is not because things are difficult that we do not dare; it is because we do not dare that they are difficult.
—Seneca
- Obstacles cannot crush me. Every obstacle yields to stern resolve.
—Leonardo da Vinci
- We must become the change we want to see.
—Mahatma Gandhi
- Who dares, wins. —Anonymous
- Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work.
—Thomas A. Edison
- No chains can fetter the mind.
—C.C. Colton
- What is mind? No matter. What is matter? Never mind.
—T.H. Kay



New Delhi: Inaugurating National Conference on New Education for New India are Mr Ramesh Pokhriyal, Hon'ble Union Minister of HRD, BK Mruthyunjaya, BK Sister Chakradhari, BK Sister Shukla, Sister Shivani and others. The programme was held at Dr. B.R.Ambedkar Auditorium, New Delhi.



Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh : Mr. Chowna Mein, Hon'ble Dy. Chief Minister with BKs Jayadeba Sahoo, Arun Sarma and others.



Raipur, Chattisgarh : Mr. Ramesh Bais, newly appointed Hon'ble Governor of Tripura, being greeted by BK Sisters Savita and Vanisha.



Ropar, Punjab : BK Jyoti speaking at All India 'Mera Bharat Swarnim Bharat' exhibition bus campaign. BK Rama from Mohali and Mr. H.P.Wali are also on stage.



Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh : BK Sister Vimla speaking at 'Holistic Lifestyle' programme organised by Alliance Club and Brahma Kumaris.

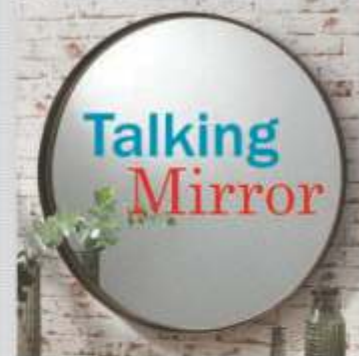


Ambala Cantt., Haryana : BK Asha and BK Jagbir presenting 'memento' to Mr. Rajinder Vij, President, Dist. Swimming Association. Also in pic is 'Mr. Punjab' Tejinder Singh.



Bengaluru (Basavanagudi), Karnataka : BK Sister Ambika with participants in a special programme for IT professionals held at Vardani Bhawan Centre.

Can you sleep when wind blows?



Years ago a farmer owned land along the Atlantic seacoast. He constantly advertised for hired hands. Most people were reluctant to work on farms along the Atlantic, they dreaded the awful storms that raged across the Atlantic, wreaking havoc on the buildings and crops.

As the farmer interviewed applicants for the job, he received a steady stream of refusals. Finally, a short, thin man, well past middle age, approached the farmer. "Are you a good farmhand?" the farmer asked him. "Well, I can sleep when the wind blows," answered the little man.

Although puzzled by this answer, the farmer, desperate for help, hired him. The little man worked well around the farm, busy from dawn to dusk, and the farmer felt satisfied with the man's work. Then one night the wind howled loudly in from offshore. Jumping out of bed, the farmer grabbed a lantern and rushed next door to the hired hand's sleeping quarters. He shook the little man and yelled, "Get up! A storm is coming! Tie things down before they blow away!"

The little man rolled over in bed and said firmly. "No sir, I told you, I can sleep when the wind blows." Enraged by the response, the farmer was tempted to fire him on the spot. Instead, he hurried outside to prepare for the storm. To his amazement, he discovered that all of the haystacks had been covered with tarpaulins. The cows were in the barn, the chickens were in the coops, and the doors were barred. The shutters were tightly secured. Everything was tied down. Nothing could blow away.

The farmer then understood what his hired hand meant, so he returned to his bed to also sleep while the wind blew. When you're prepared, spiritually, mentally and physically, you have nothing to fear. Can you sleep when the wind blows through your life? ■



Bengaluru, Karnataka : BK Megha and others planting saplings at a programme organised by ISRO Layout BK Centre.

Freedom from **FEAR**

The ghost of fear seems to have taken possession of almost everyone in today's world. Fear has become the biggest stressor of our times. It lies in the subconscious and surfaces as and when a situation arises of possible or imminent loss of life, property, loved ones or prestige. The greatest fear of all is, of course, that of death, because all physical relationships and material possessions are lost with death. The fear of death, it is said, is worse than death itself.

What people fear most today is untimely death, and this fear is growing because of the growing uncertainties of modern life. Scientific advances have made life more comfortable in many ways, but insecurity has also kept pace with progress. Today everyone feels vulnerable, for anything can happen to anyone, anytime, anywhere. Man's increasing tendency for violence and the growing mechanization of our lives have created conditions in which death is just a careless moment away.

A big reason for this feeling of insecurity is that more and

Today everyone feels vulnerable, for anything can happen to anyone, anytime, anywhere.

more innocent people are getting killed in man-made situations not of their own making. While we do get reconciled to the death of innocents in natural calamities or accidents by telling ourselves that it was willed by fate, acts of wanton killing carried out by humans often leave a deep scar on our trust in fellow human beings.

Medical science has not yet found any cure for fear. Actually, it is a malady of the soul and calls for a spiritual solution. First of all, it requires an attitudinal change. We need to drill into ourselves that one only loses by giving in to fear. It paralyses the mind, renders it incapable of doing what it can easily do otherwise. Pigeons illustrate

this very well. Crippled by fright when they see a cat, pigeons just shut their eyes instead of flying off, and get killed. By practising to take on any situation calmly and with courage, we will be able to change our tendency to get frightened by unexpected or adverse circumstances. Another change needed is in the way we look at adversity. All the tests that we face in life, regardless of whether we pass them or not, make us stronger and equip us to face similar tests in future better. If we dodge these tests for fear of failure or loss, we will advance in life no more than a student who refuses to sit for examinations out of examination phobia.

The illusion of mortality is a deep-rooted cause of fear. It stems from wrong identification of the eternal self with the perishable body. It can be overcome by realisation of a basic truth: that we are souls and the soul is immortal. This is the first lesson of the Bhagavad Gita. The soul is an actor and the body is like its costume. It takes rebirth, casting off one body to take birth in a new body. What we call death is nothing but the departure of the soul from the body after its role in the body is over. This is not an esoteric truth just to be wondered at; anyone can realise it by practice of meditation. Living in soul-consciousness over a long period empowers us to overcome the fear of mortality.

While attitudinal change can help us overcome fear to some extent, complete freedom from it requires attention on our karma. Fear is always about the future, but its roots lie in the past. It is the law of karma that we reap as we sow. Fear is punishment for our sins small and big. This is why some people are gripped by

fright in a situation which others take lightly. The seemingly baseless and even peculiar fears or phobias that people suffer from – fear of the dark, fear of water, fear of going out alone, fear of certain places – all result from their past actions and experiences, which are recorded in the soul. To be free of fear one needs to perform righteous deeds full of virtue and free from the vices of lust, anger, greed, attachment and ego. Such deeds do not bring the burden of sin on the soul.

Our mythology eulogizes the brave: the story of the doughty monkey prince, Angad, the emissary of Rama, standing his own in the court of Ravana is well-known, and Durga, the eight-armed female deity who rides a tiger, symbolizes feminine courage and power. It is with such courage that countless martyrs braved death and great men like Mahatma Gandhi overcame seemingly insurmountable odds. ■

(Purity Bureau)

RESPECT

Respect is a precious human virtue. Man does not live by bread alone. Respect is the source of zeal and enthusiasm in life. It brings people closer together and strengthens relationships. It resolves conflict and removes misunderstanding.

Giving respect, like courtesy, costs nothing. Giving respect is true royalty and the greatest charity. Respect begets respect. It's the key to winning friends and getting cooperation. Respect has to be selfless and honest – coming from the heart.

Respect has the magical power to transform and bring about a change of heart. It is an antidote to ego and arrogance. Respect generates the power of humility and mercy. It empowers you to let go, forgive and forget. It prevents waste thoughts and saves energy.

Respect for others begins with self-respect. Seeing good in everything, looking at the good qualities of others, broad-mindedness, avoiding argument, patient listening, politeness and simplicity are some of the qualities which create self-respect. ■

What Language Do You Speak?

Your language points directly to your state of consciousness!

The language of the ego is separative

- The language of desire is acquisitive
- The language of humility is respective
- The language of the mind is reflective
- The language of the intellect is evaluative
- The language of the heart is inclusive
- The language of habit is reactive
- The language of peace is proactive
- The language of love is creative
- The language of fear is destructive
- The language of control is manipulative
- The language of hate is vindictive
- The language of the soul is silently introspective

Which of the above language do you speak most internally and externally?

(Purity Bureau)



Gandhinagar, Gujarat: Shri Acharya Devvrat, the newly appointed Governor of Gujarat, being greeted by Brahma Kumari Sisters Bhartiben, Kailashben, Ushaben from Mt. Abu, Amarben, Taraben and Anjuben.

The Art of Loving and the Wisdom of Detachment

Q&A with Dadi Janki

What is detachment? Why is it Important?

You need power to remain free from the influence of others. Detachment is this power. If you can't stay detached from influences, you will not be able to keep your thoughts under control. From there, it will be a downward spiral until all trace of inner well-being is lost.

The first step is to understand who you are as a spiritual entity. This allows you to 'detach' yourself from your physical identity, and its world of limited thoughts and feelings, and 'attach' instead to your spiritual personality, the being of inner peace and power.

A normal day will be filled with challenges to this detachment. On the one side will be your spiritual awareness, but on the other there will be the attraction towards human beings and the material world. Detachment is not a question of becoming separate from the latter, but of simply remaining conscious of yourself as a spiritual being whilst being in the world and playing your part. Detachment simply means to keep yourself centred in your spirituality.

Can detachment and love go together?

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

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



Rajyogini Dadi Janki planting a sapling at Shantivan Campus of Brahma Kumaris headquarters in Abu Road.

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

Science and Spirituality — Time for Reconciliation

BK Brother Nirwair, Secretary General, Brahma Kumaris, Mt. Abu

Most people in our present-day world are quite impressed with the achievements of Applied Science and Technology, and they feel very comfortable and contented when these scientific gadgets continue to work to their satisfaction. However, the moment these gadgets stop functioning or develop some other fault these individuals feel very disturbed and dejected, until the gadget is mended and set right and normalcy returns. Spirituality, though quite a deep and vast subject, is hardly explored and experienced by the majority in today's world. Those who are enlightened, wish to help human society but they have to face some hardships and discomfort created by misinformed individuals in the field of Science and Technology. However, it has been seen in the past couple of decades that some awakening and transformation is taking place, which is likely to enhance the atmosphere of reconciliation of the two.

It is time to take initiative



BK Brother Nirwair (2nd R) along with others planting a sapling to launch a campaign for planting 40000 trees in and around Abu Road.

to bring Scientists and Spiritualists together with the noble thought of helping society at large to realize the beauty of scientific achievements and inner richness of a spiritual lifestyle. For advancement and progress, there is definite need for creating a comfortable

environment, where every individual can explore the depths of scientific formulae and spiritual enlightenment. There have been instances where a scientist, inspired by nature, witnessed the falling of the fruit from a tree onto earth and unveiled a scientific

concept. Similarly, the cool and calm atmosphere created by trees or sea breeze helps spiritualists to explore the depths of various layers of human consciousness, and prepare them for experiencing visions and the presence of the Divine. So, a viable union of the two seems to be the most apt way of success in life.

The whole world is gifted with and overflowing with every possible material utility, comfort and value, but it is time for the third eye of wisdom to open wide, in order to appreciate all these with a suitable human endeavor. To bridge the gap between science and technology we need some highly experienced Scientists, with an inclination towards Spirituality and also students of Spirituality who appreciate the use of scientific gadgets for suitable propagation of deep spiritual experience. Environmentalists also have a great role in creating a sustainable world with lasting peace and harmony in our strife—torn world. ■

Happiness is Accessible

BK Brother Ramprakash, Consultant Engineer, USA

Every now and then we have been intrigued by the idea of Heaven. We imagine it looks wonderful to think about, but is it simply a fantasy or could it be a reality? We see a magician performing magic and we know it is fake, but we still enjoy it. There is even this wish that I could do that. We call God a Magician. But God performs the real and practical magic of changing hell into heaven. This real and practical magic follows the process of turning negative into positive and, although magical, it actually works systematically.

Fifty years ago, a mobile phone would have been beyond anyone's dreams. Flying in the air must have been laughable, until the Wright Brothers invented the plane in 1904. No imagination is without a reality.

God provides spiritual energy and nature provides physical resources. We human beings represent both God and nature. It is up to us to apply both these resources and build Heaven, the World of Happiness. Heaven is not merely a world of palaces, beautiful gardens, spring-like weather, and an abundance of wealth. There is much more to it. It consists of a society living together with love, happiness and harmony. Building such a world can become a reality if we understand and apply the science of Physical and Spiritual energy.

Physical energy is governed by the law of entropy, a law

of deterioration. However, spiritual energy is governed by the law of reverse entropy, a law of rejuvenation. We can start the process of reversing the declining order into a rising curve by applying this law of reverse entropy. Spiritual energy is not a defensive energy. It is a dynamic force that can do wonders. We can say that love can move mountains and love can melt a stone. Happiness generates pro-active energy in the mind and body and brings success in personal, family and professional life.

A fall triggered by a 5mm by 1mm thick slab can demolish the 105-story Empire State Building by the domino effect. Similarly, an act of goodness is a small trigger that can demolish the huge mountain of sorrow from the world.

Further, there can be curiosity in the mind about how my small acts of goodness will impact the whole world? Think of Einstein's Equation ($E = mc^2$): one extra neutron of an atom starts the chain reaction that ultimately results in an atomic explosion. When we do something extra at the time of need, it becomes the catalyst in triggering an explosion of goodness and happiness in the whole world.

In the Gita episode, Lord Krishna awakened Arjuna's courage to build heaven on the rocky land that was available to him and called that land "the land of Action". Arjuna represents us, the 7 Billion people on this globe of earth.

Can we awaken the DNA of the soul of our World, the DNA of care, compassion and generosity?

Can we garner the courage to build our 'World of Happiness' starting with a Small Act of Goodness? Yes, We can! ■



New York, USA : Some of the participants of 2019 Youth Retreat held at Peace Village and Retreat Centre seen with BK Sister Kala.



Aberdeen, UK : BK Sister Maureen Goodman seen with speakers and participants of 'Disheartenment to Hope' interfaith workshop.



Danang, Vietnam : BK Dr. Nirmala and BK Sister Savita from India seen with participants of Silence Retreat.



Surat, Gujarat : Sister Shivani (Guest Speaker) and BK Sonal seen with Mr. CR Patel, Legislator, Mr. Hitesh Koya, Collector and Officers of Textile Association at a programme 'Password for happy and successful life in business'.

Peace of Mind
CABLE Network

hatway@ DEN Digicable
GTPL FASTWAY JUCN JioTV

TATA Sky 1065 airtel 678
videocon 497 dishtv 1087



Azerbaijan : Dr. Satish Gupta from India speaking on 'Golden Principles of Stress-Free Living' at a programme organised by Brahma Kumaris at Embassy of India.



Lenticular Clouds; Such clouds are stationary clouds that form mostly in the troposphere, typically in perpendicular alignment to the wind's direction.



Gyan Sarovar, Mount Abu : Inaugurating SEW National Conference on 'Personal Effectiveness' are BK Godavari Didi, Mr. Mahendra Singh, CEO, Dalmia Cement, BK Mohan Singhal and others.



Gyan Sarovar, Mt. Abu : At Inaugural Session of Social Leaders Conference are Rajyogini Dadi Janki, BK Santosh Didi, BK Amirchand, Mr.V.K.Jachhadar, Former Dy. Prime Minister of Nepal and others.



Cultural performance by children at Gyan Sarovar, Mt. Abu



Gyan Sarovar, Mt. Abu : Inaugurating Administrators Conference on 'Renewing the Mindsets for Better Governance' are BK Brij Mohan, BK Asha Didi, Mr. Roshan Jaggi, Jt. Secretary, AYUSH Ministry and others.

Mr. Wise

Mr. Wise?

Yes.

Love is a many splendoured thing?

So, they say.

Why don't they say 'pure love' to make it more meaningful?

I cannot say.

■■■

And Mr. Wise?

Yes. I am listening.

Why do they 'fall' and not 'rise' in love?

Because all sensual love is spiritually degrading.

Shouldn't it then be called 'lust' rather than love?

I cannot say.

■■■

Lastly...

Please speak on.

Is it possible to 'rise' also in love?

Of course. Love of God and spiritual love for brother souls elevates your consciousness to new heights.

You mean one 'falls' when love is body-conscious and 'rises' when it is soul-conscious?

Yes, you are right.



Tailpiece



A priest is walking down the street one day when he notices a very small boy trying to press a doorbell on a house across the street.

However, the boy is very small and the doorbell is too high for him to reach.

After watching the boy's efforts for some time, the priest moves closer to the boy's position.

He steps smartly across the street, walks up behind the little fellow and, placing his hand kindly on the child's shoulder leans over and gives the doorbell a solid ring.

Crouching down to the child's level, the priest smiles benevolently and asks, "And now what, my little man?"

To which the boy replies, "Now we run!"

■■■

My boy, said the businessman to his son, there are two things that are vitally necessary if you are to succeed in business.

What are they, Dad?

Honesty and sagacity.

What is honesty?

Always — no matter how adversely it may affect you — always keep your word once you've given it.

And sagacity?

Never give it.