



Purity

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International Women's Day is celebrated in many countries around the world. It is a day when women are recognized for their achievements without regard to divisions, whether national, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, economic or political. IWD first emerged from the activities of labour movements at the turn of the twentieth century in North America and across Europe.



United Nations

International Women's Day

Conference on Women and Spirituality

To celebrate International Women's Day, a conference on "Women and Spirituality" was organised on March 7 by the Embassy of Costa Rica in collaboration with the Brahma Kumaris at Om Shanti Retreat Centre in Gurugram.

Ambassador of Costa Rica, H.E. Mariela Cruz Alvarez, said: "Feminine leadership is one that comes from the heart and does not follow the path of aggression. Spirituality helps women to maintain the balance between looking after their families and work."

Noted environmentalist Dr. Vandana Shiva, the chief guest, spoke about women's power to create through non-violence. Things on earth went wrong when people thought that power was meant to subjugate others and nature. "Today, limitless greed is being celebrated as good economy. Spirituality means nurturing the positive qualities in any sphere," she said.

BK Brij Mohan, Additional Secretary General of the Brahma Kumaris, said that the founder of the Brahma Kumaris valued the feminine qualities of compassion, kindness, love and peace, and brought them to the forefront by forming a 'non-violent army' of women spiritual leaders. He said: "Real empowerment is one that is accessible to all. It means uplifting the quality of the soul."

Professor Krishna Menon, Dean, Ambedkar University, said that life is all about interconnectedness. "There are no binaries in life, and there is always room for dialogue."

Kalyani Unkule, Assistant Professor at Jindal Global University, said: "One way of protecting the world is to have more women leaders in different positions of power."

BK Asha, Director, Om Shanti Retreat Centre, said that competition and comparison were enemies of women as they forced them to step away from their higher feminine qualities of unconditional giving and sharing.

Divya Khosla Kumar, film actor and



Om Shanti Retreat Centre, Gurugram: Inaugurating International Women's Day celebrations are H.E. Mariela Cruz, Ambassador of Costa Rica, Dr. Vandana Shiva, founder, Navdanya, cine actor Divya Khosla, Ms. Kalyani Unkule, Associate Prof., JGLS, BK Chakradhari Didi, Chairperson, Women's Wing, Ms. Krishna Menon, Dean, School of Human Studies, Ambedkar University, and BK Asha Didi, Director, Om Shanti Retreat Centre.



Washington DC, USA: Celebrating International Women's Day are Dr. Smita Patel, Sister BK Jenna, Ms. Joanna Lukasis, Ms. Mina Patel, Ms. Zainab Al Suwajj, and spouses of African Ambassadors from Malawi, Botswana, Namibia and Mozambique.

producer, said that to protect the outer world, one needed to protect one's inner world through meditation.

Noted contemporary artist Manav Gupta gave the audience a visual treat through a PowerPoint presentation showcasing his artwork.

BK Chakradhari, Chairperson of the Women's Service Wing, said that women were creators. "Before creating a beautiful world, we have to create a beautiful us. That will happen when we bring out our intrinsic qualities of peace, happiness, love and power," she said. ★ (Purity Report)



New York: BK Julia BK Representative at the UN addressing Women's Meet on Awareness to Action - Nurturing the Seeds of Change.



Future Vision for a World in Transition

New Delhi: Practitioners of Rajyoga meditation from five continents shared insights on using spiritual principles to create a better life, during a two-day conference on the theme 'Future Vision For a World in Transition', organised by the Brahma Kumaris Worldwide at Siri Fort Auditorium here.

Opening the event on March 3, BK Asha, Director of Om Shanti Retreat Centre, Gurugram, said that one could learn the art of detaching oneself from the external world and be in touch with one's inner stability.

BK Ken O' Donnell, Director of Brahma Kumaris centres in Brazil and author of several books, said that he had always counted on his inner peace in trying situations in life. He gave a step-by-step introduction to Rajyoga.

BK Charlie Hogg, Director of Brahma Kumaris centres in Australia, who has been practising Rajyoga meditation for over 40 years, said: "The greatest success in life is to rebuild a loving relationship with the self." Most problems in the world are born because of the lack of self-respect in people, he said, adding that Rajyoga is a rich and loving relationship with the self and God.

BK Shivani, well-known motivational speaker, said that when we bless people despite their mistakes, we choose to shift our mind from a low-frequency state of hurt to the high-energy state of contentment. "The world will undergo a change when each one consciously contributes to the positive collective energy of the world and absorbs it." She asked the audience to become emotionally independent by taking responsibility for their choices and responses.

Neville Hodgkinson, former medical



BK Charlie, Australia, BK Shivani, India and BK Ken, Brazil, mesmerized the audience with their talk and guided meditation.



BK Neville Hodgkinson, interviewer with BK Luciana from Brazil, BK Maureen from Hongkong and BK Sonja from Germany.

BK Elizabeth from New York and MC, interacting with audience.

BK Brijmohan, Convener, interviewed by BK Charlie Hogg.



BK Asha welcoming the audience.



BK Goreti presented amazing Brazilian dance.



BK Golo Pilz

and science correspondent for *The Times*, London, interviewed a panel of international guests from all walks of life who have benefited from the ancient Indian practice of Rajyoga.

Among the panelists was Elizabeth Kotut, a former Catholic nun from Kenya. She said that she chose spirituality because it helped her gain clarity about truths in her own religion. Luciana Ferraz from Brazil said that despite her very accomplished life, she was drawn to spirituality because of her quest to find greater depth and meaning in life.

BK Sudesh, Director of Brahma Kumaris centres in Europe, emphasised on bringing out the core values of the being and sharing them with others. She also gave the audience an experience of guided meditation.

A special attraction at the event was 'paintings in the air' by Glow Artist from Hyderabad, Vinay Hegde. His performances were a unique blend of art, technology and spirituality. Several cultural performances added colour to the two-day event. *



BK David gave live meditation music experience.



Special attraction Glow Artist Vinay Hegde in action.

(Purity Report)

Changing our minds to change the world

When we look at the state of the world today, what catches our attention most are the various problems: poverty, terrorism, political instability, environmental issues, crime etc.

Governments, civil society groups and individuals across the world are engaged in efforts to address these issues, so that all can live a peaceful and happy life and we can ensure a secure future for the planet.

But with each passing year, conditions are getting worse, not better. Inequality is increasing, with a privileged few cornering more and more of wealth while the rest of the population is falling behind and seeing their opportunities for betterment shrinking. Crime and violence

Since the world we live in has been ultimately created by our thoughts, they need to change if we want to see real change outside.

have become a part of daily life in large parts of the world, while the scourge of terrorism seems to be metastasizing, spreading to countries that had been spared its horrors so far.

All this while, silently and inexorably, climatic conditions in the world are changing, portending calamitous consequences for the entire human race.

Why are things deteriorating in spite of the technological and economic progress that has brought material growth across the world? Why have more goods and services not made people everywhere happier? Why, in spite of decades of implementation of policies and plans to remove poverty does the world have so many poor people? Why has education not fostered greater understanding and better relations between



people and nations? And why do we continue to exploit and abuse nature despite knowing the dire results?

The reason is that our attempts to solve the problems of the world address only the superficial aspects, ignoring the underlying factors that have given them birth.

The problems of the world are the result of human actions, which stem from human attitudes and ways of thinking. The latter, in turn, are influenced by our tendencies or traits, which shape our consciousness.

This means if we want to change the world, we must first change the way we think. Our consciousness shapes our reality, and that reality cannot be changed if we continue to think in the same way. Albert Einstein said as much when he stated that we cannot solve a problem with the same mindset that created it.

Quantum physics now seems to support that assertion. It is known that more than 99.9 per cent of an atom is empty space, with matter, in the form of sub-atomic particles, occupying very little space. Physicists believe that the empty space is filled with information. That information is shaped by human consciousness,

and it is consciousness that decides how matter vibrates. This is the physics of how the world is being shaped by our consciousness. While we don't create matter, we shape it according to what we are individually and collectively.

Since the world we live in has been ultimately created by our thoughts, they need to change if we want to see real change outside. Changing thoughts does not just mean thinking more cleverly. A bright mind certainly helps, but it alone cannot guide one to the right decisions. For that, one needs other qualities, including values such as honesty, humility, and compassion. These and other qualities together constitute what we call wisdom, which enables one to determine not only what is good for the self but also what is socially and ethically right. Our values collectively act as a compass for the intellect, guiding it to the right track.

Spiritual intelligence is acknowledged by experts as the central and most fundamental of all the intelligences, including rational intelligence and emotional intelligence, because it is the source of guidance for the others.

Spiritual intelligence is developed by first knowing the self as a spiritual being, or a soul. Connecting with the self enables us to discover the peace, love, purity and other virtues that are inherent to the soul. The experience of these qualities nourishes the soul, helping it become healthy and whole. Connecting with the self brings about self-acceptance, which then translates into greater understanding and acceptance of others. This is the basis of harmonious relationships, with other people and nature. It is also the foundation of ethical conduct, which respects other beings and matter and seeks to work in a way that brings benefit to all.*

(Purity Features)

Pause 'n' Ponder

- God doesn't listen to the proud.
- Sometimes the best gain is to lose.
- They that envy are always poor.
- Strong hates reveal our secret desires.
- Pride often wears the cloak of humility.
- Purity means being honest to your higher self.



New Delhi: Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi being told about 'Yogik Kheti' at the Brahma Kumaris stall in the Krishi Unnati Mela, Pusa, by BK Mahendra.



Evolution, Creation or Cyclical Repetition?

Scientific theories about time and the evolution of human life, and religious concepts about the same have for long been subjects of heated debate.

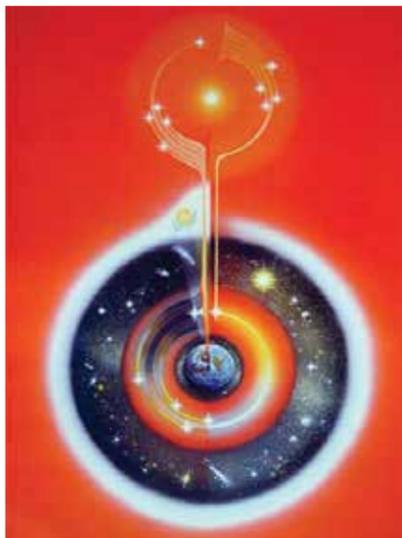
Evolutionary theory says life on earth originated about 3.7 billion years ago and then evolved, as Charles Darwin has theorised, by a process of natural selection. Prehistoric man is said to have evolved from apes and progressed, according to archaeological chronology, from the Stone Age to the Bronze Age and Iron Age in terms of the ability to extract metals from ores and manufacture implements from them. Extending this chronology to the present times we can say that humanity is now in the space age.

Rapid advances in science and technology over the past century have transformed our lives, but the challenges facing humanity have also become more complex and varied, spurring humans to push further the frontiers of science. Futurists speak of humans living on synthetic food, getting transplanted with manufactured organs and colonising outer space in future. However, nobody has a clear vision of where our 'progress' will lead eventually. There is just hope that science will find the answers to all our problems and life will carry on.

Religious concepts of time speak of the creation of humanity by God and a gradual moral decline of humankind, culminating in an apocalypse or Last Judgement, after which different eschatological traditions speak of various scenarios for human souls. Such scenarios, too, do not give a convincing or complete picture of what will eventually happen to human souls or life on Earth as we know it.

However, the spiritual concept of cyclical repetition of time is an exception. The cycle of time tells us that what we call life is a drama taking place on the vast stage of the Earth, with souls as actors and the elements of nature too playing an active role. This drama begins in the Golden Age, when human souls as well as nature are in their perfect state and live a life of complete happiness. Not all human souls are

The cyclical process goes on eternally, with rejuvenation by God at the end of each turn of the wheel of time.



present in the world at this time, as each comes from the soul world to play its role in this drama at its own appointed time. Over the Golden and Silver Ages (Satyug and Treta) the souls lose some of their spiritual power but are still free of all sorrow. By the time the Copper Age (Dwapar Yug) begins, the souls forget their true identity and start to identify themselves with their bodies.

This body-consciousness gives rise to vices such as lust, anger, ego, greed and attachment, which corrupt the thinking, speech and actions of souls, leading to pain and sorrow. The degradation of souls and their actions also affects the forces of nature, which start becoming violent and causing natural disasters. By the end of the Iron Age (Kaliyug), when the wheel of time is about to complete a full circle and begin a new one, the souls — all of whom are now present on Earth — are completely in the grip of vices and desperately searching for ways to escape sorrow. This is when God intervenes to salvage humanity. God performs the task of eliminating all evil and restoring souls and nature to their original, pure state. He recreates heaven or the Golden Aged world out of the Iron Age. It is for this reason that He is referred to as the Destroyer and Creator.

God, the Supreme Soul, performs this task by helping

human souls rid themselves of vices and making them instruments for transforming the world. He reminds humans of their true identity and teaches them Rajyoga — the way to connect mentally with God to draw His powers and virtues. For this, he incarnates in a human medium, who comes to be known as Brahma. God does not take birth like humans, as is shown in scriptures, and nor does He take the form of animals. And the very fact that He incarnates makes it clear that He is not omnipresent. He uses the human medium of Brahma to communicate with humans and give them spiritual knowledge.

God reminds souls that He is their spiritual father and that they can fill themselves with His powers and virtues simply by being aware that they are souls and remembering Him. Such remembrance of God is called Rajyoga. Since this is an easy method of meditation and does not involve any physical rigours, chanting or other rituals it is also called easy yoga. Being easy, it can be practised constantly. Regular practise of this form of meditation eventually makes one naturally soul conscious — aware that one is a soul, a sentient point of light separate from the body but living within the body and using it as a medium to think, feel, see, hear, smell, speak and act. This mental link with the Supreme Soul also fills the soul with God's powers and virtues. When the soul is enriched and strengthened in this way, it is no longer influenced by vices and consequently gets liberated from sorrow.

The thoughts, words and actions of such purified souls spread peace and happiness all around. When a critical number of humans start transmitting positive energy all over the world in this way, all negativity begins to get eliminated and the elements of nature also get

purified. In this process the world undergoes a major transformation whereby the Iron Age ends and the planet returns to its pristine state for the Golden Age to dawn once again. God and all human souls return to the soul world at this time, just as the director and actors in a play go home at the end of a performance, to come down again and play their respective roles when the drama begins anew as the wheel of time begins to turn a new circle.

This cyclical process goes on eternally, with rejuvenation taking place at the end of each turn of the wheel of time through the intervention of God.

The soul of Brahma, by virtue of being the first soul to achieve complete self-transformation and playing a key role in bringing about this rejuvenation, goes on to play the most prominent role in the Golden Age — that of Shri Krishna. However, since the Supreme Soul is always incorporeal and Brahma was His visible medium, people have attributed the task of creation of the new world to Brahma. They have also mistakenly credited Shri Krishna with giving humans spiritual knowledge in the form of the Bhagavad Gita as is depicted in the Mahabharata.

The battle shown in the Mahabharata is a spiritual one that each soul has to fight within itself to overcome vices and negative tendencies. God helps us in this battle by reminding us of our original goodness and empowering us to return to that state. Those who recognize the truth revealed by God and make the effort to transform themselves attain the powers and virtues that entitle them to play a leading role in the world drama right from the start of the Golden Age. It is an entitlement God offers to all His children. Claiming it is up to us. *

(Purity Archives)

A Correction

In the flower show photo published on page 12 of March 2018 Purity, the exhibition was organised by Supdt. of Gardens at Mumbai Rani Baug, and not by BK Centre, Sion.



Om Shanti Retreat Centre (ORC), Gurugram : Inaugurating Women's Senior Citizen Conference are Mrs. Rakesh Dhawan, President, All India Women Confederation, Dr. Vaid Pratap Vaidik, Chairman, Council for Indian Foreign Policy, Mr. D.N. Chapke, President, All India Senior Citizens' Confederation, BK Brij Mohan, Addl. Secretary General of Brahma Kumaris, BK Chakardhari Didi, Chairperson Women's Wing, and BK Asha Didi, Director ORC.