



Purity

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Human Life on Planet Earth Only

For centuries man has wondered whether life exists anywhere outside our planet. Systematic scientific efforts to detect signs of extraterrestrial life began after the advent of radio in the early 20th century, and concerted international efforts in this regard have been going on for more than three decades.

Over the years, a lot of money has been spent on various programmes designed to look for signs of extraterrestrial intelligence. But all those efforts have drawn a blank so far.

From time to time, there is a flutter when it is reported that scientists have found signs that a planet or other heavenly body might have, or have had, water, indicating the possibility that life might exist, or might have existed, on it.

There was one such report recently, which said that complex, organic molecules had been discovered in geyser plumes that shoot off hundreds of miles above the surface of one of the moons of Saturn. But then it turned out that the molecules were not the products of life processes. Instead they were merely the raw ingredients of life. To conclude from them that life existed on the moon would be akin to saying that since dough, salt and yeast had been found in a house, there was bread in that house.

The fact is that planet earth is the only home of human beings in the universe. Even other life forms have not been found to exist anywhere else as conditions on other planets are not conducive to life.

While science has so far offered no evidence of the existence of life anywhere other than earth, myths and religious texts do speak of other worlds. In Indian mythology, there is mention of three worlds. Some believe that besides the world inhabited by humans, there is a heaven up above in the sky where divine beings live, and a hell somewhere in the netherworld, populated by demons and evil characters. Christian mythology similarly describes a paradise and an inferno.

Heaven and hell are not different places but states through which this world passes during a cycle of time. The world begins as heaven when it is in its pristine state, and gradually turns into hell as human souls lose their power and virtues and become increasingly influenced by vices.

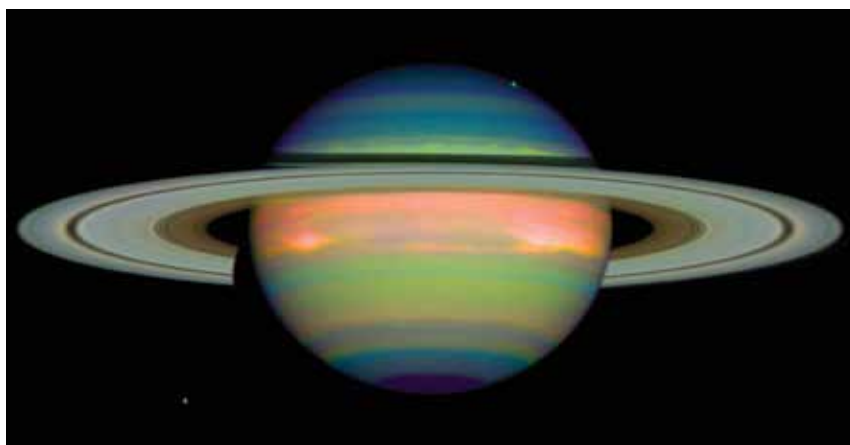
The three worlds, in reality are the world we all know, and the soul world from where all souls come to this world to play their part in the story of life, and the transitory subtle world where souls exist in subtle, angelic form before they return to the soul world at the end of each cycle of time, before returning to this world when the next cycle begins.

These three worlds are the only that ever exist, and it is only on earth that souls take birth and humans, all other creatures, and the elements of nature interact in the drama that we call life.

It is also to this very world that God comes, as described in the Bhagavad Gita, when unrighteousness rules, in order to redeem mankind and establish a righteous order once again. There is no mention in the scriptures of communion between God and His children, the human souls, in any other world.

Many sages and seers who could go into trance and travel in subtle form have described the subtle world and spoken of the soul world, but none have ever mentioned life existing in any other part of the universe.

Human fascination with exploring the cosmos and finding out if there are other places where life might exist in some form, is understandable. The universe is vast and much of it remains a mystery to us despite all our scientific advancement. But it is ironical that while



This delightfully detailed false colour image of Saturn is a combination of three images taken in January 1998 by the Hubble Space Telescope. Credit: NASA



Mother Earth - the only planet in the universe which sustains life.



Earth is our only home. Let's make it more liveable for all humans, other creatures, and nature.

we are looking for other inhabitable places in outer space, we have made the only home of mankind that we know of almost uninhabitable.

Reckless human activity is changing climatic conditions on earth in such a manner that scientists are predicting the extinction of life as we know it within the next century. Instead of a starry-eyed search for extraterrestrial life, it would be so much better to use our talents and resources to make this world more liveable for all humans, other creatures, and nature.★

(Purity Features)

High-rise or high risk?

Most of the urban skyline in cities around the world is characterised by high-rise buildings. These tall structures have become a symbol of modern civilisation and progress. The high-rise buildings came up to resolve the increasing pressure of housing in high population density urban areas. But in several cases these concrete jungles have sprouted mindlessly, with scant regard to the overall wellness of people who live in them.

The history of high-rises may be traced back to the pyramids of Egypt (about 48 storeys in height). In modern history, tall structures were not built until the late 1600s, apart from a few Roman apartment buildings of six or seven storeys and Europe's gothic cathedrals. Tall buildings with iron skeletons began to be constructed in the 1860s. Thus, high-rises can be termed as a very recent phenomenon. Hence they are not 'natural' habitats for human beings and so they may also be in some way harmful.

People living in high-rise buildings live with many fears. The height of the buildings evokes fear of fall from a high window or terrace. The possibility of fire is also a high-risk accident which can trap people inside their home or office. Earthquakes are another scary possibility that makes the chances of escaping to safety much less for people in high-rises because during such disasters electricity, elevators and communication lines can break down completely and the chances of running down from the top floors to an open ground or street are very low.

High-rise buildings are also a soft target for terrorist attacks. We have witnessed the horror of the twin towers of the World Trade Centre. The fact that thousands of people are living or working in high-rises means that people are more strangers than known neighbours sharing that space. It compounds the fear of crime and absence of social bonding and community support.

Many high-rises have guarded gates and high-tech security so that strangers cannot enter. People who live on the upper floors of a high-rise, especially children and the elderly, are less likely to leave home. This separates people from the outdoors, the city and from other people. High-rises separate large numbers of people from the street and they end up in a city that is detached from street life. People living on upper floors have scarce contact with ground-level events.

*Your life is a
printout of your
thoughts.*



Elderly who live on high floors are less likely to leave their house. Parents find it difficult to allow small children to go down to the park outside.

Also, the sheer number of people in one building may increase the fear of catching communicable diseases spread by others. Air and touch borne flu and colds, for example, spread more easily when many people share hallway air, door handles and elevator buttons.

There have been many studies about how living in high-rises affects children. For families with small children, high-rise living is an unsuitable option. Parents find it difficult to allow small children to go down to the park and to supervise their play. Consequently, children who live on higher floors go outside less often to play.

High-rises are isolating and dehumanising. In a large colony of high-rises, a pedestrian can hardly see people on the streets. There is only concrete, steel and glass all around. High-rise structures are not of human scale. People in high-rises are less likely to have chance encounters that occur in streets, public spaces and low-rise neighbourhoods. Such encounters are crucial for the liveliness and social fabric of a city. They are also essential for developing community support and individual social skills.

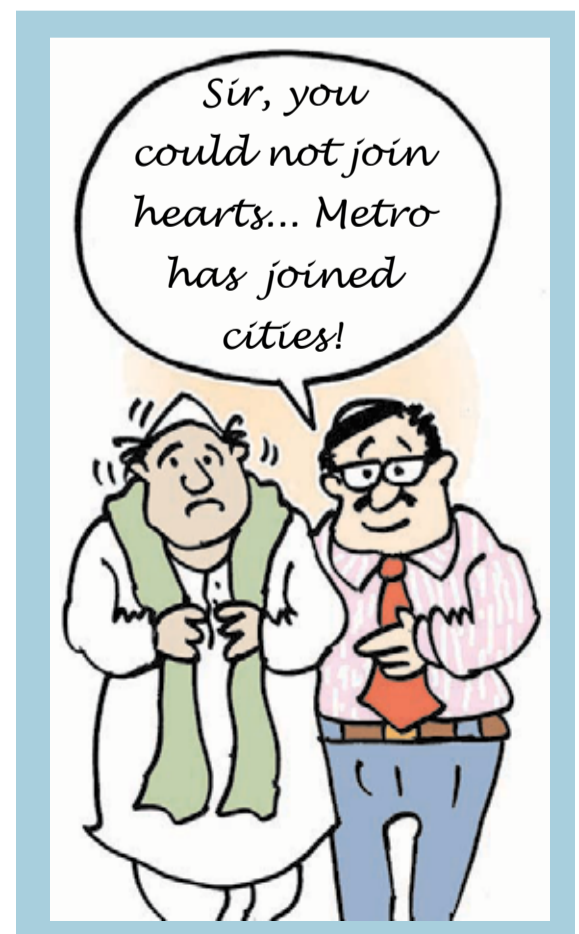
Tall buildings offer increased profits for developers. However, the higher a building rises, the more expensive is the construction. Tall buildings inflate the price of adjacent land, thus making the protection of older buildings and affordable housing less achievable. In this way, they increase inequality.

Furthermore, high-rise buildings are built largely of steel and concrete and

are less sustainable than low-rise and mid-rise buildings. High-rises use almost twice as much energy per square metre as mid-rise structures.

Living in a high-rise creates a very myopic and narrow worldview. People in these buildings have a very finite, protected and non-diverse human experience. It can make people very protective about their space and intolerant towards people who are not of their kind. Psychologist Daniel Cappon writes in the *Canadian Journal of Public Health* that high-rises keep children and the elderly from getting exercise due to the extra effort it takes to get outside, and encourages them to stay at home and switch on the TV. And he believes that the level of alienation and isolation, which negatively impacts health and even shortens people's lives, and these disadvantages increase with the height of the building. We must not go on blindly building these vertical coffins for the premature death of our civilization, he says.★

(Purity Features)



The Dying Tree of Life

The Tree of Life, also known as 'Kalpa Tree', is dying. Its leaves have almost dried and are infected by diseases. They have lost colour and changed shape. The Tree is bearing fruits of misfortune and has grown thorns of grief. Is it the same Tree of Life that once had lush green leaves, colourful flowers and was laden with sweet and juicy fruits of joy and fortune for all?

Let's take a closer look. The tree has become completely hollow from inside... the same way as wood is eaten up by termites. Only the form and outer bark remain. Inner content is finished. Inner contentment has gone.

Powerless Powers

The plight of all the four categories of inheritors of fortune from the Tree has become miserable. These are the Rulers, the Religious Heads, the Worshippers and the People. All of them once naturally possessed their respective powers, which have been lost today.

The Rulers: The ruling class no longer has the power to rule. It has given up the sanskars of royalty and consequently, lost the loyalty of the subjects. Loyalty flows from royalty, which means, in essence, the quality of sterling character. The rulers of today are not sovereign. The name is 'ruler' but inside, leg pulling and chair pulling goes on all the time. The fire of jealousy keeps on burning continuously. What to speak of getting any joy or happiness from rulers, they themselves do not have even a single minute of peace and rest. Even the ordinary fortune of good sleep is not there. Sleep is nature's way of providing rest and relief from tiredness and also giving relaxation by merging of thoughts. They are deprived of even this natural fortune. In other words, they are rulers no doubt but without any fortune. There is neither the fortune of power to rule nor of deriving any pleasure out of such rule. They sit on the seat of power haunted constantly by the ghosts of fear.

The Religious Heads: A few tender fresh leaves do keep emerging on the tree, but very soon, ego enters the scene. The sparrows of pride, name and fame, and accepting praise start eating them. In many cases, the name is religion but inside, the insect of unrighteous activity has made



Humans today are running after the mirage of name and fame, burning in the hell-fire of hatred and seeking escape in crazy consumerism.

them hollow. Deeply sunk in all sorts of worldly intoxications, they have become unconscious of the true consciousness that is religion. There is great outward pomp and show, but inside, desires and attachments have taken the place of renunciation and 'tapasya' (penance). Some are busy in the game of showing off their 'siddhis' (attainments) by performing illusory miracles. Many of them have become oblivious of their religious duties and are bargaining for high rewards if certain wishes of their followers are fulfilled.

The Worshippers: The eyes of worshippers are blindfolded owing to blind faith. Yet they are hoping to reach the destination. From whichever direction any sound comes they start moving towards that. Uncomfortably though, because of being blindfolded. Inside, they are experiencing uneasiness and worry. Whenever they hear that someone is granting quick boons or performing miracles, they rush to them. They are so engrossed in playing with dolls, owing to blind faith, that if someone tries to give them the Godly message about their true identity and abode, it falls on deaf ears. The power that they had as worshippers came from a relationship of deep and selfless love for God. Now, they have become selfish. They keep on begging. Asking for peace, happiness, more money, long life for their relatives and so on. Give me this and give me that is the content of their prayers. So, the power they gained by pure, loveful worship has disappeared.

The People: The people are sitting on the pyre of worries.

They appear to be eating, moving about, doing all activity normally. Inside, there is a constant thought of fear that the pyre may ignite any time. In their thoughts they see the scenes, like in a dream, that at any moment they may get into some trap or the other - trouble with the authorities, suffering from natural calamities, raped and looted by criminals - such dream-like scenes keep on emerging in their thoughts. The pyre of worries on which they are sitting has made them restless, harassed and tense. They do not see any way to escape and save themselves. If on one side there is the risk of burning in fire, on the other, there is the danger of drowning in water. So, they are living under the shadow of fear, worries and tensions surrounding them on all sides.

What a Fall!

Man is the most superior of all species. There was a time when he was divine. God had created him in His own image. The original creation of God, the Supreme Creator, the seed of the Tree, could be nothing else but divine. A mention of that pristine creation is found in scriptures of almost all major religions.

In the course of time, that original state of divinity was lost as lust, ego and other vices entered his mind. He sought it back through worship and prayer but that did not happen. On the contrary, the hold of vices gradually became more strong. Then came a time when he coined the phrase 'man is an animal' and proceeded to shed his human qualities and values. Presently, he has become worse than an animal, in the moral and spiritual sense of the term. What a Fall!

Worthless Life

By losing human values, man has made himself worthless and perhaps the cheapest thing in the world. Divinity and humanity in

man has become the most precious rarity. It is conspicuous by its absence. Let's be frank. Has man not become a soul-less creature today? Is he not devoid of the fragrance of human virtues, like a plastic flower? Has he not become a living corpse possessed by the ghosts of lust and anger, greed and ego? Pulled by sensual pleasures and pushed from one momentary attraction to another, all the time?

Need any proof? No stability, no security, no higher aim of life. Running after the mirage of name and fame. Shadowed by anxiety and haunted by fear. Burning continuously in the hell-fire of jealousy and hatred. Seeking escape in vulgar consumerism which is self-deception. The hangover of every such indulgence only increases his miserable plight. The heart weeps. The conscience cries: This is not the right course.

Hope for Future

The question that occupies every mind is: Is there any hope for the future? The answer is: Yes. There is a silver lining. The cosmos is eternal. And it is the law of eternity that everything follows a cyclic pattern. It cannot be otherwise.

The tree emerges from its seed and after it has fully grown and before it dies, the seed reappears so that a new tree can come into existence. This happens always.

The same holds good for the Human Tree. The present Tree of Life has decayed. Today's sordid state of affairs cannot continue for long. It has to finish. It's now time for its rejuvenation, for recreating the original man, who will be virtuous and divine. The Supreme Seed has already begun this Divine Task of Recreation. Brahma Kumaris are the Seed's instruments for accomplishing it. Visit your nearest Rajyoga centre and discover for yourself. ★

(Transcribed from a talk by BK Brij Mohan)



Sri Lanka: BK Brij Mohan from India in conversation with the Hon'ble Sarath Ekanayake, Chief Minister of Kandy. Mr. Ekanayake inaugurated the programme on 'Self Empowerment' for Education Directors and Officers, held at Central Provincial Council.

The start is what stops most people.

The Bondage Which Protects

BK Sister Kiran, Eugene, Oregon, USA

On August 26th 2018, Hindu women will tie rakhis (beautiful threads) on the right wrists of their brothers, apply tilaks (sacred marks) to the centers of their foreheads and offer them sweets. As they pray for their brothers' welfare, their brothers will pledge to protect their sisters' honour. Then they will give their sisters gifts and money as tokens of affection. Friends will also tie rakhis on one another to affirm their solidarity.

In modern times, Rakshabandhan, the ancient Hindu festival of brotherhood and pure love, has come to signify bonds of personal affection. Originally, however, it reflected the bond of purity and divine protection (*Raksha* means 'protection'; *bandhan*, 'bond') which memorialized our ancient covenant with God. The sacred rakhi thread symbolized the purity and peace of our original nature. Its knot represented our pledge to refrain from actions which are contrary to that divine nature. This pledge, born of spiritual love, was and is the 'tie that binds' us to God. It entitles us to the Supreme Soul's protection from vices and negativity and

Rakshabandhan memorializes the bond of purity and divine protection, reflecting our ancient covenant with God.

consequent grief and suffering. Everyone—in this age when vices have corrupted our thoughts and deeds—needs such divine protection. Raksha bandhan underscores the importance of seeking it.

The tilak applied on the forehead was meant to make us aware of our true spiritual nature. All human souls, as children of the Supreme, are brothers and sisters. Therefore soul awareness enables our vision of the family of humanity and of our eternal relationship with each other, which is based on selfless love, trust, faith and clean dealings. Raksha bandhan reminds us to rediscover the divinity in our relationships.



In one Hindu myth, Indrani ties a rakhi around her husband Indra's wrist following his defeat by demons. Indra, King of Gods, attains victory over the demons with the power of this protection, recovering the city of immortality, Amaravati. This myth symbolizes how the bond of spiritual love protects and gives victory over demons (anger, greed, ego, etc.) inherent in our body-based identity, enabling the return to an awareness of our eternal nature as an immortal soul.

Historically too, tying a rakhi offered protection. Alexander's wife tied a rakhi on the wrist of Alexander's Hindu adversary, Puru. As Puru raised his hand to kill Alexander, he saw the rakhi and restrained himself. "My hands are tied," people say when they can't do

certain things. Thus, a rakhi on one's wrist reminds us to do noble deeds and refrain from performing actions harmful to the self and others.

On August 26th, wouldn't our communities and our world be blessed if we celebrated the original spirit of Raksha bandhan by refraining from actions contrary to our divine nature? Will you join me in becoming aware of our spiritual interconnectedness and committing to actions which express selfless love, trust, faith and clean dealings? Let's apply the tilak and tie the sacred thread. ★

In Lighter Vein

- I backed the right horse but the wrong horse won.
- Money used to talk, but now it goes without saying.
- He who laughs last, thinks slowest.
- Your banker will lend you money if you can prove you do not need it.
- It is not hard to meet expenses...They are everywhere.
- My dreams are not dead, they are only sleeping.
- The absent are always wrong.
- Avoid reality — illusions are better.



Abu Road, Manmohini Complex: Inaugurating Administrators' Conference are Dadi Janki, Chief of Brahma Kumaris, BK Brij Mohan, Addl. Secretary General, Mr. Pradeep Patel, Chairman, Backward and Minority Finance Development Corporation, Bhopal (Chief Guest), BK Asha Didi, Chairperson, BK Avdesh Didi, National Coordinator, BK Mruthyunjaya, Executive Secretary, Mr. V. Shashank Sekhar, Jt. Secretary, Union Ministry of HRD, and others.

There are no strangers here; only friends you haven't yet met.

Highest Respect

The virtue of purity commands the highest respect. Even kings and VIPs bow in front of *sanyasis*, who lead a pure life. Even the rich and the highly educated bow in front of idols in temples because deities were an embodiment of purity in thought, word and action.

In Indian culture, *kumaris* or unmarried girls are worshipped. Revering them as goddesses, elders touch their feet on religious festivals. After marriage, as the gift of innocence is taken away, girls have to touch elders' feet as a mark of regard towards them.

This proves that celibacy or abstinence commands the highest respect. It is through the power of purity that all other virtues are born. It is what makes a soul *paawan* or holy.

Dadi Prakashmani

Angel of Love and Light

Dadi Prakashmani was the administrative chief of the Brahma Kumaris spiritual organisation from 1969 till she left her body on August 25, 2007. She had joined the spiritual family of Pitashri Brahma as a young girl in 1936. For more than 70 years she served tirelessly to share the love and truth of God with humanity. With her exemplary leadership she steered the institution both in spirit and number from a small family to a worldwide spiritual movement spanning five continents.

Apart from winning recognition and awards for the institution from the United Nations and several other organisations, Dadiji glorified the Brahma Kumaris as the largest women-led spiritual movement in the world. She was a great spiritual ambassador who brought fame to India and Mt. Abu as a world spiritual centre. Dadiji was admired and welcomed by countless heads of state, celebrities, social, religious, intellectual and other leaders all over the world as a great Indian spiritual icon.

She was a pillar of spiritual integrity and human values for the millions of brothers and sisters who became part of this organization. The incessant stream of pure love and good wishes in her heart flowed through her words and gestures. Her sincere care and warmth of heart connected thousands of people with God's wisdom and divine values. In her figure people found genuine spiritual strength and support.

It was her capacity to touch every heart that made her a true leader. She had a great ability to make all human encounters feel special and personal irrespective of the person's class, status or creed. She could expand her time to satisfy everyone without rushing or denying it. With her there was always an exchange of lightness, love and power, however fleeting the meeting was. She was very selfless and large-hearted. She never thought of her time, space or comfort. It was used for serving others.

Her administrative skills were phenomenal. She expanded the services of Brahma Kumaris in scope and quality, reaching out to all sections of society by offering value-based and practical spiritual courses. She was an exemplary teacher and spiritual guide whose words of wisdom could inspire even the most errant and hard-hearted souls.

She did not command by the authority of her position but with the power of truth

**Dadi's sincere care
and warmth of heart
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and divine values.**

and love. Sometimes a mere glance from her would transform the other person, who would realize his mistake. She would offer her suggestions lovingly and matter-of-factly and it would soon be realized into practical achievement. She stood tall by the total absence of 'I' or ego in her. Such strength of character came from her deep faith in God and great spiritual discipline. She always considered herself to be His humble instrument.

Today she is not amongst us in physical form but she has left behind many milestones that continue to guide us towards spiritual perfection. On the occasion of the eleventh anniversary of her passing on, the most befitting tribute we can pay to her is to emulate the example set by her and carry on the task of self-transformation and world transformation to completion.*

My experiences with Dadi Prakashmani

BK Brij Mohan, New Delhi

- I always felt very close to Dadiji. I think everyone felt that way with her. Dadi Prakashmaniji made each person of this divine family feel as if he or she was the most valuable, worthy soul; she could give everyone the feeling that they were very special.
- Everyone was special in her eyes and that is why she never gave special gifts or toli (prasad) exclusively to anyone.
- She never found fault with anyone but always encouraged and appreciated the specialities of others. Whenever people visited Madhuban (Mt. Abu) she took great care to see that they were satisfied and staying comfortably. She personally saw to it that everyone had good physical and spiritual sustenance. She played a perfect role as the head of the spiritual family.
- Dadiji was completely egoless. As the chief of such a large spiritual organization, she exercised her authority with great humility. She always reminded others that it was Baba's (God's) work and He was getting everything done. She crossed all challenges with complete faith and surrender to Baba.
- She was a charismatic spiritual ambassador. She travelled worldwide and met numerous heads of state and leaders from different walks of life with whom she shared the message of peace. Her spiritual charm gave them all an instant feeling of spiritual bonding and pure love. She was truly a great spiritual leader.

Dadi Prakashmani



**Jewel of Light
To
Angel of Light**



A Tribute

With care and concern deep at heart,
Oozing confidence from the start.

With love for all, big and small,
Extending provision to one and all.

Accurate and efficient to the tiny dot,
Honest in word, deed and the thought.

Rich tributes to the leader transparent,
Who from her elevation did never descend.

O Dadi, Your love & Law guide us in
Tribute,
Being *Baap samaan* will be our befitting
tribute.

*Divine love
bestows the keys
of knowledge.*