

[Brahma Kumaris: Conquering A Callous World with Purity](#)

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Brahma Kumaris: Conquering A Callous World with Purity

"We are on the verge of a worldwide transformation. It is as if the whole planet were in darkness. But, after the night must come the day, and that day is dawning now. We have already seen the rays of the Spiritual Sun. This is the good news that we want to communicate." These are the prophetic words of Dadi Prakashmani, the current administrative head, of one of India's most dynamic, mystical and widespread spiritual organizations, the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University. Dadi's message is at the core of the Brahma Kumaris' teachings and mission, which was set forth by the organization's extraordinary founder, Prajapita Brahma, or Brahma Baba [see page 8]. While Hindu-based in their beginnings and teachings, the Brahma Kumaris have declared themselves an independent religion. Through 3,700 branches in sixty countries they work powerfully at the individual and social level to create a peaceful, loving world-that is, to be a vanguard of the impending new age of peace, known by them as the "Golden-aged Deity World"-the Sat Yuga of Hindu philosophy.

The Brahma Kumaris organization was conceived in a divine vision and is maintained with divine guidance. They teach the traditional Hindu knowledge of the cosmic cycle of the four yugas-Sat, Treta, Dvapara and Kali-but they term these the golden, silver, copper and iron ages, proclaiming that we are now at the end of the iron age. Their's is a monumental mission, to be sure-to usher in a unified, pure and peaceful age. Even with such epic ambitions, their means remain focused one-pointedly on individual effort and transformation. As Dadi emphasizes, "We must change first, not wait for others to do so. Once we become masters of our own minds again, there will be no further sorrow. Love is such a power it can change anyone, but only a powerful soul can offer love." Since 1980, they have worked closely with the UN and have been awarded consultative status. Thus, the Kumaris have created a difficult-to-achieve balance between profound spiritual teachings at the individual level and dynamically effecting change at the worldwide social level. Their International Conference on Values for a Better World, held February 9-13, 1995, at Mt. Abu, India, along with the inauguration of the Academy for a Better World, was their latest endeavor to uplift the morals of humanity.

Out to Change the World

The BK World Spiritual University offers a range of educational programs in moral and spiritual values aimed at building a greater awareness of the worth and dignity of the human person. The curriculum is based on the recognition of the intrinsic goodness and spirituality of every human being. Education in spiritual principles is combined with the development of latent qualities and the awakening of dormant personal power.

Most of the administrative and teaching work is done by dedicated Brahma Kumaris and a sizeable number of Brahma Kumars (brothers). Working closely with Dadi Prakashmani are Dadi Janki as additional administrative head and Dadi Nirmal Shanta and Dadi Chandramani as joint administrative heads. While there are no restrictions or limitations for men, the organization is clearly dominated by women [see interview, bottom of this page].

The BK estimate having 230,000 members, defined as "students," emphasizing the need to put the spiritual knowledge into practice-an important BK doctrine. They have a unique policy of not asking for or accepting any money from anyone who is not "benefiting from the teachings." They receive no grants from governments or any other organizations. All funds come from students' voluntary donations. They are staunch promoters and practitioners of the traditional observance of brahmacharya, celibacy, even among householders. As a symbol of the purity they strive for, Brahma Kumaris and Brahma Kumars wear white, the traditional garb of the brahmachari. They live strictly. The most strict will not eat food which is not prepared by a BK. While traveling they abstain from public fard and carry their own utensils for cooking.

The World Needs Help

The BK are not afraid to point out what most would rather ignore-the degenerate condition of morals in society and overemphasis on material acquisition and enjoyment. According to the BK, the gains of scientific knowledge and industrial advancement have been nullified by the increased human distress. Life is filled with hunger, poverty, disease, stress, conflict and many such maladies. They hold a not uncommon tenet that the dawn of the new age can only occur through the

destruction of the old. The forces of purity and righteousness destroy evil on the spiritual level, but there are physical manifestations as well. An early BK textbook states, "This second force brings about destruction on a physical level-civil war in every continent of the world. The third and final aspect of the powers of destruction is the stock of nuclear weapons man has created. The material already accumulated is not simply for keeping, but will be used very shortly. But destruction is a means of complete purification-a cleansing. With that final act of nuclear war there will be liberation for all souls-return to their original home, the Land of Peace." They point out that much of this is already occurring.

The courses, classes and lectures aim to balance the rational and intuitive faculties of the intellect and nurture the ability to call on inner resources and strengths in any situation. Teachers and students from the University also visit community clubs and organizations, prisons, hospitals, schools and businesses to give talks and advice. Classes are open to persons of all faiths, ages, races and backgrounds.

The work of the University is inspired by the vision of a world where everyone lives in harmony with others and the natural world. It does not seek to convert anyone into "followers," rather to create leaders. Its activities are founded on the belief that the world needs sound moral values more than systems. One example of the way they instill a sense of global cooperation is their unique World Meditation Day. An hour of silent meditation is synchronized across all time zones to bring together thousands of people around the globe at the exact same time on the third Sunday of every month.

Peace Messengers

In 1980, the BK became affiliated with the UN department of Public Information. In this capacity, they regularly disseminate information about the UN's programs of action through magazines, newsletters, conferences, seminars, etc., and UN representatives are invited to international and regional programs. Their relationship has since grown to formal affiliation with the UN Economic and Social Council, and they were granted consultative status with UNICEF. In 1981, the UN Secretary General awarded them the "Peace Medal." They launched the peace initiatives called "Million Minutes of Peace Appeal" and "Global Cooperation for a Better World." They took an active part in organizing the UN activities for the "International Youth Year," 1985, "International Peace Year," 1986, "Year of the

Homeless," 1987, and the "International Women's Year." The recent conference in Mt. Abu was part of their contribution to this year's "Year of Tolerance."

Conferencing for a Better World

The Mt. Abu conference was held at the newly built complex of the BK's Academy for a Better World, called Gyan Sarovar, or "Lake of Knowledge." Two thousand delegates from over sixty countries attended. It was inaugurated by H.E. Ramesh Bhandari, the Governor of Tripura and many prominent personalities participated, including former Supreme Court justice V.R. Krishna Iyer; Mauritius Women's Rights Minister Sheila Bappoo; Union Secretaries Virendra Prakash, S.K. Mahapatra and M.S. Dayal; WHO representative N.K. Shah and the UN Secretary General's representative Mr. Bayani S. Aguirre.

The first day involved orientation and meeting Dadaji and other senior Sisters. Day two was dedicated to the inauguration of the new Academy and its various facilities-all done with the requisite pomp and festivities-and the final three days were the conference itself. Well composed seminars were held simultaneously for leaders and teachers of the most influential segments of society: educationists, administrators, scientists and engineers, jurists, industrialists and businesspersons, media, health, women, culture, youth, social service and politicians. The goal was to imbue the need to implement values at all levels of human experience, from the top down. By inspiring and edifying the world's leaders, conference organizers rightly reasoned, they could improve thousands, even millions of lives.

The nonconventional Academy for a Better World inaugurated at the conference will function as an international institute of higher learning serving and teaching all sections of society in a pollution free, family like atmosphere. According to Sister Chandru of California, USA, the significance of the Academy is its primary emphasis on how to put spiritual knowledge into practice in all human endeavors. There are many universities of philosophy and technology, she notes, but this is the only Academy to combine and practically implement the two. Their impressive auditorium, Harmony Hall, seats 1800 and has simultaneous translation cells for 10 languages. There are meditation and lecture halls, research laboratories and libraries, dining and residence halls and parks and plantations. Gyan Sarovar is located in the serene hill resort of the Aravali range in Rajasthan, adjacent to Mt. Abu-the scenic city of lakes. It is a self-contained modern village. The complex uses solar and wind energy systems to help meet electrical needs and it was constructed

to fit into the existing landscape without disturbing it.

Ascending Into the Dawn

Prajapita Brahma gave up his physical frame on January 18, 1969. This day is celebrated as the day of his spiritual ascension. It is believed that he continues to aid the organization from inner worlds, but the ultimate guidance and authority still comes directly from God Siva, who has since chosen another to be His "trance messenger." Currently Sister Raday Mohini serves as the instrument to give voice to Siva's messages, but this is viewed as a temporary assignment given by God. Every year, around February/March, a gathering occurs in Mt. Abu where Siva speaks, guides and gives blessings. This sets the patterns for the coming year as the guidance is distributed to the centers around the world, including through their intra-organizational e-mail. In this way the Brahma Kumaris advance into the future as pure and humble servants of God, preparing the way for the Spiritual Age.

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Sidebar: The Divine Transformation of "Father" Dada Lekh Raj

Dada Lekh Raj was a highly successful jeweler in the Sindhi community of Hyderabad, Bombay and Calcutta. He was a rigorous Hindu and therefore his diet was wholly sattvic, including strict vegetarianism. He was firm in observing Hindu rituals and prayer. His adherence to duty earned him the respect and friendship of

king, prince, businessmen, guru and peasant. He always returned this friendship naturally, loving the company of people as much as that of God. His nature was one of always giving-the true philanthropist.

He often held satsangs at his home in Bombay. One day, nearing age sixty, he had invited a well-known pandit to speak on the sacred Gita. During the sermon, Dada felt something pulling him. He tried to ignore it, but like a magnet it kept pulling him. It would be the height of bad manners to leave during the discourse, but the power overwhelmed him. He stood up, walked to his room and sat down in a state of deep meditation. An image came in front of him. As it became clearer he thought, "This is God Himself-the four-armed Vishnu." The vision lasted for some time, then vanished. Pure intoxication filled his soul.

In his friend's garden, in 1936, Dada saw the vision of a huge destruction. He watched in disbelief-a bomb fell, the earth rocked and flesh was splintered into pieces-screams, frenzy and fire everywhere-a scene from the future. The great world war had been revealed to him. Later, another vision came. Points of light, like stars, fell from the sky onto a new earth. On touching the ground they changed into divine beings. These were the deities of the future Golden Age. Dada was told he would be the human instrument for the creation of this new world. How and when as yet he did not know. His family and friends noticed the deep transformation within him, as he awakened a deeper and deeper silence.

Vishnu appeared again. This time he spoke, "I am the four-armed, and so are you." What did this mean? Was he like God? Dada was confused. His first thought went to his guru, "Who else would grant me this blessing?" But the guru denied giving anything. So, Dada thought, this blessing was granted by God Himself.

In the following days he yearned for silence and solitude. So he journeyed to the house of a friend in Banaras. The atmosphere of these days was charged with power, mystery and intoxication. Those who attended the satsangs in his home received visions of Dada as Krishna. Many experienced trance and visions, seeing the Golden Age, Radha, Krishna and other deities.

One day, a most extraordinary thing happened. Pulled into a state of intense meditation, he felt someone entering him. It was a great power, a great light. The

room vibrated with energy. Taking over his physical senses, the Being started to speak. At first softly, then growing louder, "I am the Blissful Self-I am Siva. I am Siva. I am the Knowledgeful Self-I am Siva. I am Siva. I am the Luminous Self-I am Siva. I am Siva." Incorporeal God Siva had given His introduction through Dada Lekh Raj.

Leaving business, discarding social and religious traditions, Dada surrendered himself to God's work. Incorporeal Siva gave him the name "Prajapita Brahma," father of humanity. Through him God imparted the knowledge that would give divine rebirth to all people. Many were attracted, especially women. One of God's teachings stated that through the moral upliftment of the woman the world would automatically gain upliftment. So the spiritual role of the woman as teacher and guide was practiced from the very beginning. Brahma Baba formed a trust of eight women and surrendered his entire property to this committee that it might be used for the spiritual service of uplifting humanity. By 1937 a group had formed, later to become known as The Prajapita Brahmakumari Ishwariya Vishwa Vidyalaya, now the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University. The strict rules of conduct, deep philosophical teachings and mystical mission set forth by Baba have been carefully maintained by successors and present-day leaders, faithfully preserving the magic and power of Baba's direct experience of God.

Sidebar: Interview with Sri Dadi Prakashmani

Hinduism Today: What is the significance of Rajayoga?

Dadi Prakashmani: Rajayoga meditation taught by the Brahma Kumaris is simple and practical. It does not involve physical posture, breathing exercises, chanting or devotion to any human guru. This Rajayoga meditation is done with the eyes open and, with practice, one can be able to meditate anywhere, anytime. The meditation begins with learning to focus our thoughts. It is important that the thoughts we contemplate are only positive ones. With this in mind, the topics covered in a course of Rajayoga are: the nature of the human soul, God and the relationship between the two. This helps to focus the mind at the highest level and one is able to communicate with the Supreme Being. This communication is known as "Rajayoga Meditation," which helps the individual to develop positive thinking, willpower and harmony between mind and body and nature. The law of karma and how it applies to our life is another subject that is explored.

HT: How do you manage this worldwide institution?

Dadi: My experience and faith are that this institution is founded and being run to carry out the divine will of the Supreme Being. I am just an instrument in His hand to work. Every member/student of this institution is called Brahma Kumari or Brahma Kumar. They feel that this institution is a spiritual university and also a divine family. The focus of its teachings is on spiritual, moral and human values. The students, after gaining personal benefit, associate themselves to impart this spiritual education to others. They voluntarily contribute physical, mental and monetary support for the greater well being of the society. We do not collect or accept any donation from any governments, organizations or individuals who are not beneficiaries of this education.

HT: Mostly women lead Brahma Kumaris Institutions. Why is this? Can a "brother" also become the chief?

Dadi: The corporeal founding father of this worldwide organization is Pitashrik Brahma, who was a male. He believed that women have certain special qualities like kind-heartedness, the spirit of service and sacrifice, tolerance, etc., which are helpful to impart spiritual education. In India, you are aware women are worshiped as Saraswati-symbol of power. You are also aware that many Indian rivers are named as Ganga, Yamuna, Godhavari, Kaveri, Saraswati, etc., which symbolizes the great virtues of women. In view of this fact, the founding Father of this institution considered women as guardians of values and suitable instruments for imparting value education and transformation of the society. I never feel that I am the leader, but the Supreme Father, Supreme God Himself is the leader and that everyone can lead. This is my faith in each one, this is how I trust each one.

Sidebar: Kumari Mysticism

Here is a glimpse into the Brahma Kumaris' teachings, taken from BK publications.

"Remember you are the living being, the soul, and not the body made of

matter. Let the soul be in command of the senses of this physical instrument.

See all others with love as your brothers and sisters. See only the shining star, the pure soul in the center of the forehead.

Let the mind go beyond humans and prophets to the Supreme, the source of light and might.

Remember the Home of all souls, the Silent World of Light, and prepare to return there.

Be aware that every action has an equal reaction that returns to the self; let each action be one that gives only happiness.

Purity is the soul's birthright. Let thoughts, words and actions be filled with this.

Begin each day in silence, so that the influence of God is felt throughout the day.

Let the "third eye" constantly remain open so that each moment is guided by wisdom.

Keep your own perfect image as the goal. Within this is the harmony of the masculine and feminine energies, the authority of the male, the gentle virtues of the female."

The BK meditate on an elliptical golden-red light, said to be the original home

of the soul. Residing here is the Supreme Soul, or God, also in the form of a point of light, infinitesimal in size but unlimited in qualities. They meditate thus, "I am peaceful, calm energy. I am light. Flying beyond this physical world I enter a region of subtle golden-red light. This is my original home, where God, my Father/Mother, also resides. In this, my silent home, I absorb God's vibrations and I am able to express and share these pure vibrations with others."

Sidebar: "A Message from God"

Here is a short excerpt from one of many messages from God the Brahma Kumaris have received.

"Those who in the present are rulers of the self, will have the right to rule in the future. And those souls who follow the elevated, divine code of conduct now, will be able to control religious affairs in the future. This impure world is now being transformed through the Power of Purity. This power cools down the temper of souls burning in the fire of vices, and brings them relief from their many burdensâ€¦it transforms the self and others."