

INTRODUCTION TO INDIAN PSYCHOLOGY

Term Project Report

On

Dada Lekhraj

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1. BRIEF STORY OF THE LIFE AND BACKGROUND

Dada Lekhraj was born as Lekhraj Khubchand Kriplani on December 15, 1876, into a humble family in Hyderabad, Sindh (now in Pakistan). Due to his mother's demise when he was young, Lekhraj was brought up by his Father, Navalrai Kriplani, and his maternal aunts. He was born in a traditional joint family which followed Vallabhacharya Vaishnavism, a sect in Hinduism popular at that time. He went on to marry Jasoda Mata, and the couple had six children: Krishan, born 1910; Kalavati, born 1914; Nirmal Shanta, born 1917; Navnidhi, born 1920; Naraian, born 1926; and Surya.

At the very young age of 15, Lekhraj was sent to Calcutta (now Kolkata) in search of work by his father. Lekhraj found work at a jewelry business named Tarachand Parsuram and Sons. He displayed excellent acumen in his work and was awarded the post of General Manager in a short period of time along with a small part of the company's shares. However, he soon felt dissatisfied due to conflicts with his employer and left his job to open his own business named Lakhiraj Sevakram and Sons, in partnership with his friend Sevakram. He soon found success in his business and gained the patronage of royal families in India and Nepal.

After reportedly having spiritual visions at the age of 60, Lekhraj became solitary and introspective, started neglecting work, and spent his time capturing his musings in the form of drawings and writing. He claimed to have undergone spiritual enlightenment and soon assumed the title of Brahma Baba. He started directing Satsangs which found patronage among many wealthy members of his community. In the year 1937, with the support of a few patrons, he started a spiritual movement called Om Mandali in Sindh, which formed the core of the Brahma Kumaris movement.

The Om Mandali was associated with lots of controversies due to its influence on young ladies from the Bhaibund community. A committee called Anti-Om Mandali composed of Bhaibund men was formed to oppose the workings of Om Mandali. When the situation got worse for Om Mandali, it moved to Karachi, and a woman named Radhe Pokardas Rajwani, also known as Om Radhe among the followers, took its reign. The Om Mandali was declared an unlawful organization, but it continued its operation in secret. In 1950, it moved to Mount Abu in Rajasthan and was renamed Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University. Currently, Brahma Kumari Spiritual Headquarter is known as Madhuban.

2. MAJOR WORKS

In 1930, Lekhraj Kriplani founded the Brahma Kumaris movement in Hyderabad (Sindh, Pakistan). The organization gained recognition for the outstanding presence of ladies in the campaign. The organization teaches that instead of focusing on our identity as a body, one should focus on identity as a soul. They believe that the source of all goodness is God and all souls are intrinsically good. The organization instructs us to go beyond the labels linked with our bodies, such as religion, nationality, gender, and race. It seeks to build a universal culture based

on what Dada Lekhraj calls "soul consciousness." The organization mainly consisted of women and children from the Bhaibund community. Bhaibund community is a community of business people and rich merchants whose leading men in the family often traveled abroad on business. According to BKWSU claims, a relative reported that a spiritual being (Shiv) entered Dada Lekhraj's body and spoke through him. After few years of gatherings, it became natural that Om Mandali was imparting exceptional ethos and value to women's roles and was not following the caste system.

The movement promoted inclusiveness by allowing people from any caste to attend meetings. Dada Lekhraj was also of the opinion that young women should be free to live without marriage and that married women should also be allowed to choose a celibate life. Due to the overwhelming impact of Om Mandali and the presence of Dada Lekhraj, soon the movement started facing opposition from a number of influential male members. They started preventing members from entering Om Mandali's premises, and later, many women began facing domestic violence in their homes. In 1938, Om Mandali expanded its influence to Karachi, which became the major center for its activities due to increasing opposition in Hyderabad. Approximately 300 members moved to Karachi. Since education was the main focus of the organization, it was renamed "Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University." After this, the teaching methods became more structured by the introduction of a seven lesson course.

3. TEACHINGS

The Brahmakumaris primarily teach the Raja yoga form of meditation. RajYoga is made of two words, namely 'Raja' and 'Yoga.' Raja means a King in Hindi, and Yog or Yoga means relationship or a connection. In this Yog, the soul establishes a connection with the Supreme Soul and becomes the master of all its senses by simply remembering its original nature. There are two interconnected steps to master and learn the Rajyoga meditation, Self-realisation and God-realisation.

In Raja yoga meditation, the soul establishes a mental link or connection with the Supreme Soul. One has to discover one's true spiritual identity to start the process of establishing this link. The process of connecting with the father, the supreme source of energy and virtues, goes through experiencing oneself as a spiritual being, empowers the self in a long-lasting way.

RajaYoga can help the soul achieve peace, purity, etc. It was the Confluence Age (Sangam Yug) when God taught us this RajYoga so that we can be released from the sins of our previous lives by remembering the Almighty. The soul is eternal. When we take birth, the soul enters a body, and when we die, it leaves the body. There is a beautiful relationship of us with Guide (liberates from sorrow and brings us back Home), God, as our father (who creates us), Teacher (gives us knowledge of entire creation).

There are four main pillars in the Brahmakumaris way of life:

- Study
- Meditate
- Practice virtues
- Serve

3.1.ACHIEVING BALANCE BY THE FOUR PILLARS OF SPIRITUAL LIFESTYLE

A spiritually fulfilling and balanced life can be compared to a table with four legs. To be balanced and in equilibrium, all four legs have to be of the same height. The four pillars which make a life spiritual are the subjects given below. One has to make all these subjects a part of one's life to the same extent. If not, then it can have adverse effects and lead to an unbalanced life.

3.1.1. Study (Learning)

To nourish the intellect and mind, it is important that we do Spiritual Study daily.

3.1.2. Meditation (spiritual Yoga)

Meditation helps us to reconnect, discover and explore ourselves and connect with God.

3.1.3. Inculcating good virtues (Dharma)

We should give sometime every day to develop our behaviour. This helps us to eradicate any bad sanskaras or evils. This, in turn, improves relationships. Our dharna is reflected by the quality of our relationships.

3.1.4. The service of others (Seva)

The practice of giving lays the foundation of personal growth for a life based on purpose. We should use our energy to empathize and understand the life problems of others; this will also increase our spiritual power. The blessings from those people transfer positive energy, which ensures our happiness for the present and the future.

4. THE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL INFLUENCES OF LEKHRAJ'S TEACHINGS

Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University(BKWSU), which started as "Om Mandli" ("sacred circle" or "gathering of those who chant om") and may be referred to as "the Yagya" (the "sacred sacrificial fire") as the spiritual revolution in the historical Indian landmass. The situation around Indian independence contributed a lot to shaping the character of BKWSU. Brahma Baba's demise led to the expansion of Yagya in different parts of the world, and the foreigners came to learn meditation and state the new stage in the progression of Brahma baba teaching.

In 1971, Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University opened the first overseas center in London, and in 1981, it received NGO status with the UN. During the continuous spread of the teaching of Dada Lekhraj, BKWSU opened Shantivan and Gyansarovar to assist people coming from different parts of the world to gain Dada Lekhraj teachings.

From 1990 to 2000, BKWSU saw a tremendous rise of people worldwide and facilitated centers in different countries to develop their connections and relationship with peace.

In the United Kingdom, there has been a considerable amount of changes in the movement. One of them is the earlier practice of isolating oneself from the world, then transforming into a teaching organization that predicts the date of the world's destruction, adapting itself to offer various programs for a different set of people.

Brahma Kumari, set up by Dada Lekhraj, contributes to society's various social upliftments like education, health, and calamity prevention to make the world better than before.

BKWSU believes in Raja Yoga meditation practice to counter the destructive event occurring around us and preaching the same to others to help them uplift from the calamity. BKWSU believes in the peace that is expressed through self-awareness or "soul consciousness" and the love and strength achieved through Raja Yoga meditation as a solid technique to counter the adversities around the world.

The example of expansion in Australia is one of the examples of how BKWSU positioned itself on the global map. One of the catapulting steps of this organization was the special status of women in BKWSU.

Due to its large number of members, there are many differences between them, and the sizable organizational harmony cultivates the common culture across the globe. One of the various methods used is reading the Murli, which is done worldwide at a particular period, preceding the discussion.

The global community regularly organize a grand meeting where people from different parts of the world gets deep into meditation and tries to attain a state of soul consciousness that transcends sex, position in the society and various materialistic roles and relationship.

5. COMMON VIRUSES ON OUR TEAM

We discussed among ourselves the common vices and viruses that affect us the most. Out of the very many viruses that we found out about ourselves, the recurrent ones among us were Anxiety and Self-centeredness.

5.1. Anxiety

Common symptoms of anxiety are a sinking feeling, tense or uncomfortable feelings, or 'nerves.' It's a common problem among us as we often find

ourselves fretting and overthinking about things. Most of them are irrational fears about life and our future. These thoughts are rather common in teens, and this virus of overthinking and anxiety disrupts our state of mental peace, and thus it is important for us to eradicate it out of our systems.

5.2. Social Inactivity

Another common trait among us was the presence of social inactivity. We noticed that we are disconnected from society in the sense that we are lost in our own world, which does not go beyond social media and friends. It is very easy to get caught up in these things, and this limits our thoughts and the freedom of our minds. Our feelings are manipulated by social media to a very large extent. Even watching few posts can make or break our mental state; this is how mentally weak and reliant we have become on social media, which makes it imperative to get rid of this virus.

6. REPROGRAMME SYSTEM

6.1. Antidote for Anxiety

6.1.1. Through Mediation

Brahma Kumaris practices meditation and Yoga, which can be very helpful in calming and strengthening our minds. Their teachings encourage the students to purify their minds. They suggest we sit peacefully and make affirmations regarding the eternity of our souls and the nature of God. One of the most intriguing parts of their teachings is the fact that they stress upon learning meditative states while engaging in daily activities. Thus this practice of meditation with open eyes is very relevant in the present day and age.

6.1.2. Through healthy Lifestyle

To attain control over our senses, actions, and thoughts, Brahma Kumaris suggested a particular lifestyle. They are not strict about their Lifestyle, so participants are free to follow any beliefs and disciplines they wish. Particularly to overcome anxiety, we should follow a lifestyle that gives us plenty of time to sleep and rejuvenate ourselves and follow a regular and healthy diet to keep ourselves fit physically as well.

6.2. The Antidote for Social Inactivity

6.2.1. Through changing our thoughts

Brahma Kumaris believe that every being should be considered as a spiritual being. They practice "शुभावना" (pure feelings) and "शुभकामना" (good wishes) for spirituality. According to them, Identifying oneself and others

based on labels such as religion, race, nationality, and gender can lead to negative emotions such as biases and negative feelings. They focus on finding the intrinsic goodness in oneself by identifying everyone as the child of one Spiritual parent. This makes us altruistic in the sense that we are open to help anyone and everyone who comes to us.

6.2.2. Through our actions

Brahma Kumaris strive for personal growth in life based on purpose. Thus, we should use our energy to empathize and understand the life problems of others; this will also increase our spiritual power. The blessings from those people transfer positive energy, which ensures our happiness for the present and the future, which we have also seen in our Introduction to Psychology course, where we followed Shawn Acker's video and wrote about the random acts of kindness we did throughout the day.

7. INFERENCE OF ONE'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE WORLD

Brahma Kumaris view everyone as social and spiritual beings having one single spiritual Parent. They strive for an altruistic development of human beings through practicing Shubhawna (pure feelings) and Shubkamna (good wishes). Thus one can say we as living beings are not only limited to our physicality but also spiritual as well.

They also suggest us to lead a balanced life based on their four pillars which implies that we should strive for having a balance in spiritual life. It promotes us to develop a character by helping the people around, which in turn would resonate with the whole world; this makes our identity complete and promotes a life based on purpose.

This is summed up beautifully by one of their primary slogans-

"When we change, the world changes."

8. REFERENCES

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