

# universaltarget

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A SPIRITUAL QUARTERLY

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FORGIVENESS COMPASSION TRUTH  
FRIENDSHIP LOVE  
PEACE PATIENCE  
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HUMBLE  
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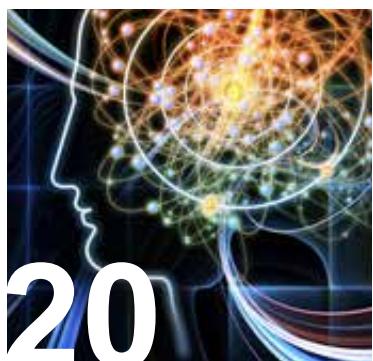
## HUMAN VALUES

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## Editors

Harbans Singh, Dr. D K Mehta and Dr. Bobby Sura

## Editorial Consultants

Bhupinder Anand, Surjit Dhami, Ricky Bhatia, George Khambe, Baljit Singh, Dr. Rekha Bassi, Ruby Rehal, Mandip Kundi, Gurdeep Bhangra, Nisha Kalra-Tutt and Kel Kalyan.

## Subscriptions and Distribution

Dr. Pavan Chera

## Marketing

Ravi Chohan

## International Contact

Raul Kamal

## Design

Kamaldip Bains, Suman, Vishu Singh, Simarjit Syan, Suman, Swanti Matharu, Mansha Chowdhry and Sundeep Dass

## Publisher

SNM UK  
Great Western Street, Potters Lane  
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WS10 0AS, UK

## Email

universaltarget@nirankari.org

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# A SOCIETY AND ITS VALUES

HARBANS SINGH

A society is only as good as the people that make it up. If the individuals forming it are caring, considerate and loving, it is more likely, that society as a whole will be compassionate, tolerant and peace-loving. But it all depends on the values it cherishes and imbibes the most, for good human values mean a good, humane and understanding society. And there has never been more need, in this ever-shrinking and intolerant world of ours, for such a universal society, than there is today.

However, the achievement of such a goal remains a distant dream in our materialistically-driven age, so long as our leaders, our pace-setters, and we, as individuals, refuse to give precedence to our fundamental human values, which form the bedrock of any decent society.

For a few days in the year, such as Christmas, or many other holy celebrations around the world, the spirit of giving, generosity and a sense of fellowship can be seen in many quarters. Sadly however, we find, on the whole, such hugely significant occasions reduced to spiritless merry-making and materialistic revelling. The importance of Christ's teachings by example is soon overtaken by shopping sprees and over-indulgence. The spiritual value of this festival, like many others regardless of the society or culture, is either ignored altogether or hastily shelved as soon as the festival ends. Thus, we have a society that is advancing at an incredible speed, on the one hand, and declining – perhaps decaying – on the other, mainly due to the inherent intolerance, pernicious prejudices, and the lack of

humanity on the whole.

To avert this slow but constant decline, we have to explore our rich legacies, left behind by our revered prophets, saints and seers – wherever they came from, whatever age or culture they lived in, and whichever 'faith' or persuasion we may like to attribute to them. What they taught by example, we need to enact in our day to day living.

According to our ancient texts, this decline in morals and the digression from righteous living is not a modern phenomenon, it has been quite cyclical. In fact, it has been quite common to lose the path of eternal religion. It is for this very reason that unique beings and personages have had to appear on the scene to bring strayed society back on track.

The celestial song, in the famous Bhagavad Gita, echoes the age-old truth, stating that whenever 'dharma' - the righteousness underlying the true eternal religion - threatened by materialism and irreligion, overpowers the human mind, the forces of good come forth to address the imbalance and to re-establish the righteous course of society. This obviously is the path of duty, where one's obligations towards fellow humans take unequivocal priority over one's own rights. This is where selfishness gives way to selflessness (as elaborated upon in Bhagavad Gita 4: 7-8).

And it is pure-minded humane souls, who profess and practise these noble traits and lead by example. They show that these qualities are not just the preserve of the few, but that they

can be espoused by the ordinary folk. They can be practised in their daily lives, whilst, at the same time, going about their daily chores, pursuing their own pursuits.

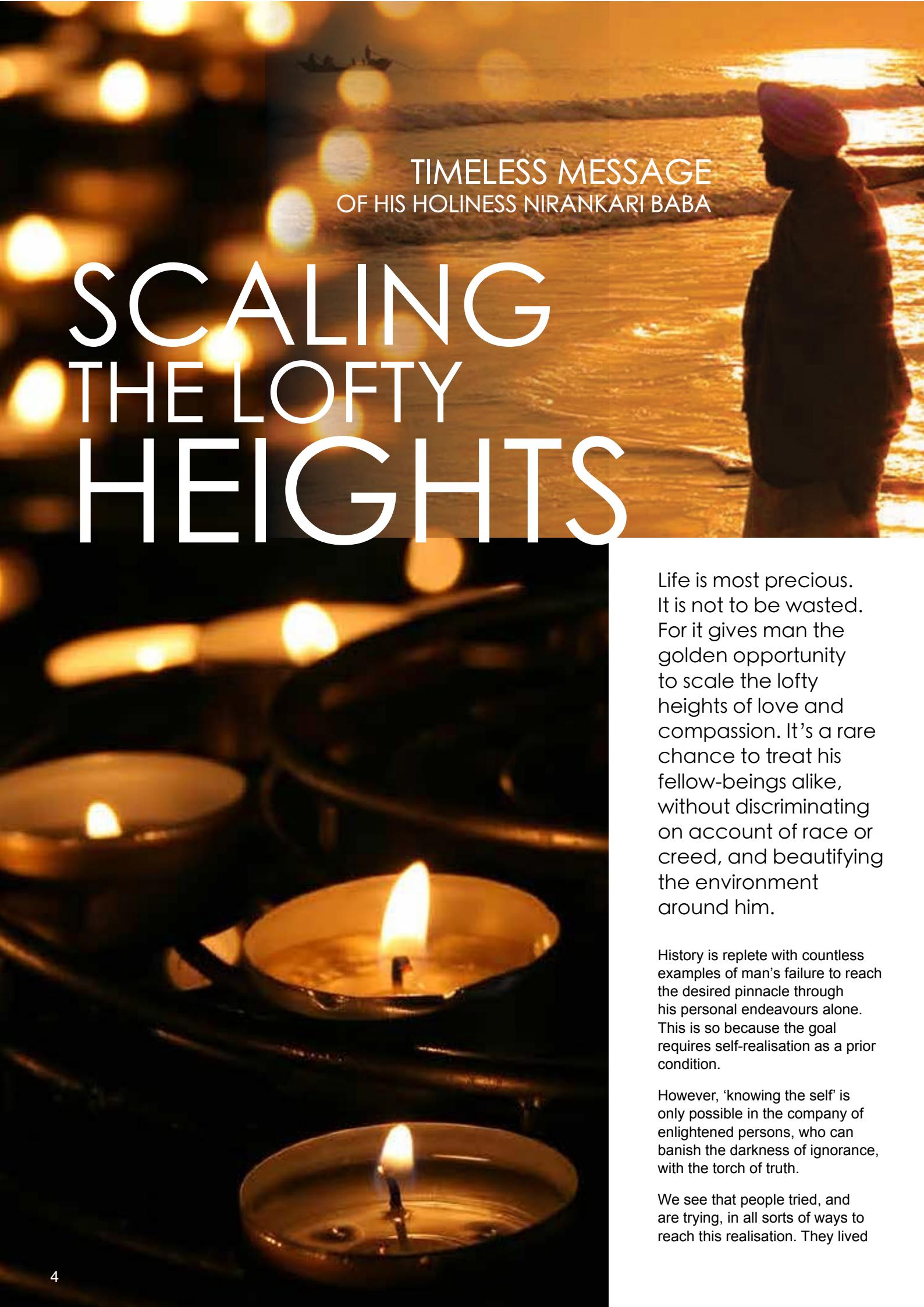
It is in this context, the great seer of the 15th century, saint Kabir, in his couplet remarked,

*"Had it not been for the saints (seers and sages), this world would have long perished."*

He is simply saying that our society survives because it still has the goodness and values proclaimed by such people, who may well be waning.

Today His Holiness Nirankari Baba, and the subscribers of his Mission, are actively engaged, all over the world, in imbuing and highlighting the need for these lofty human values to make this world far more tolerant and humane to live in. To emphasize the dire need of these values, the Mission adopted human values as the theme for its three-day annual Convention in Delhi, in 2013. The delegates shared their experiences, explaining how it is possible for an ordinary person to scale the heights to become an ideal human being.

The message of the Convention was that a humane society is only possible if it is grounded in the goodness of God, and that it can only be brought about if led by examples of self-less love. It cannot be done by a consumer-led development, for a society that is apt in materialistic thinking can only lead to material progress, at the expense of the spiritual. ■



TIMELESS MESSAGE  
OF HIS HOLINESS NIRANKARI BABA

# SCALING THE LOFTY HEIGHTS

Life is most precious. It is not to be wasted. For it gives man the golden opportunity to scale the lofty heights of love and compassion. It's a rare chance to treat his fellow-beings alike, without discriminating on account of race or creed, and beautifying the environment around him.

History is replete with countless examples of man's failure to reach the desired pinnacle through his personal endeavours alone. This is so because the goal requires self-realisation as a prior condition.

However, 'knowing the self' is only possible in the company of enlightened persons, who can banish the darkness of ignorance, with the torch of truth.

We see that people tried, and are trying, in all sorts of ways to reach this realisation. They lived

as hermits; they tortured their bodies, self-mortified, and resorted to all kinds of rites and rituals.

Those enlightened beings, who had secured the goal, tell us that it cannot be attained by mere cleansing of the body, going on pilgrimages, reciting Scriptures by rote or the repetition of mantras.

We will have to act upon the saints' messages. Not just to pay lip-service to their words, but also to imbibe them. Otherwise, it's like verbally accepting the decision of the elders, but refusing to actually implement it.

It is not an easy path to follow without help and assistance. Indeed, how can it be easy to sincerely pray for the welfare and well-being of those, who despise you, wrong you and ridicule you? The mind is the biggest stumbling block that has to be overcome.

The mind always has a choice between good and evil. If the mind chooses evil, no good comes out of it. It becomes wicked and creates problems. It turns us into beasts; it degrades us and causes our downfall. It makes us misbehave, flaunting greed and duality. The evil mind naturally flows downwards like the mountain water streaming down into the valley below. The undiscerning mind, and society by extension, is also going downhill with devastating effect.

If the mind chooses goodness, it turns people into celestial beings. Hence the mind has to be embellished; it has to be supported to give up its ego, selfishness and greed. A recognition must dawn through realisation, that the mind exists to establish love and to inspire the feeling of kinship. This is why the enlightenment of the mind is very important. In so doing, exploitation ceases and the spirit of selfless service, sacrifice and the welfare of others prevails.

It is this mind that has to be reformed. If the mind is not reformed, nothing is reformed. Without the cleansed mind, no individual, no family, society or nation can ever be uplifted. Not only does the ignorant mind continue to hurt itself, it also afflicts others, leaving a trail of darkness and despair.

We only have to look at the country we live in. We see the predominance of greed, selfishness, envy and jealousy to mention a few of the vices that plague society. The unenlightened mind pollutes the surroundings around, maligning homes, the community and social structures at large.

Pointing fingers at others is of no avail. Blaming others can never help. We have to be responsible as single, individual units. If every unit were to be so transformed, there would be no unease. This earth would become a heavenly place.

To put it another way, the mind is akin to a car steering wheel. There is only one of it. If controlled well, it can steer its passenger safely home. The very same steering wheel, if used unwisely, not only leads to accidents, but fatalities too. Therefore, the steering wheel can be both safe and dangerous, depending on the driver's prudence and its lack.

How can a realised or enlightened life be made possible? Certainly not by abandoning the core human values, which are a life-line to a more humane, tolerant and understanding society. What appears to be impossible becomes easy if the saints' (enlightened souls) counsel is adopted.

There is an abiding tradition to be followed, without which the pursuit of realisation is fruitless. If the prophets, saints and seers had to go through this journey, how can we by-pass it?

The journey cannot begin, until the mind is illumined, for the light of knowledge invites divine virtues to enter our life. Such a life becomes the source of comfort for all. It turns this earth into a paradise. It rehabilitates. It uproots no longer. Walls of religion disappear and the divides of class, caste and culture simply vanish.

A well documented method, leads to results that can be replicated by others. Let's take boiled water. To boil water, we need fire. If we pour the water directly on to the fire, the water will not boil. In fact, it puts out the fire. We need a pot, a go-between, to heat the water within. Only then, can the water reach boiling point. The scriptural testimonies are well

documented methods, through which enlightenment is to be achieved. They repeatedly highlight the need for a spiritual adept – a knower of God, as a medium through whom realisation can be achieved.

Hence, the company of saints is paramount and indispensable. For it is the enlightened sage, who removes the darkness by conferring on the seeker the realisation of the self, and by so doing illuminating the mind. It is imperative, therefore, that we act upon scriptural testimonies. It is not enough just to revere them; we have to honour their words too, and earnestly act upon them.

Upon self-realisation, we begin to understand that the eternal being (God or Super-soul) dwells in all. This is the universal truth, which acts as a catalyst for rising above petty differences and narrow-mindedness. It helps us to cherish and celebrate God-given diversity. After all,

**The earth is one, the pots are many, but the Potter is one, and the same.**

But, if we fail to acquire union with the truth, our lives, regardless of our efforts, will go to waste. It would be akin to a farmer, who ploughs his field, fertilizes it and irrigates it, but forgets to sow the seeds. What sort of harvest can he expect?

Hence, the saints' company has to be accessed. With such a company, every soul - child and adult alike - can ensure a fulfilled and happy life here, such that the hereafter will assuredly take care of itself.

In short, love and compassion, coupled with all other human virtues, is dependent on one's state of mind and attitude towards life. The illuminated mind, strengthened by the company of the enlightened, effortlessly walks the path of humanity, spreading fragrance, peace and happiness. ■

*An English language adaptation of HH Nirankari Baba's timeless message, by Dr. DK Mehta.*

# Of Failures and Phoenixes

Babita Kotwani, Singapore

*'Harry looked down to see a tiny, wrinkled, new-born bird poke its head out of the ashes. "It's a shame you had to see him on Burning Day," said Dumbledore... "He's really very handsome most of the time"....'*

*Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets by J.K. Rowling*

The Phoenix has long represented re-birth and been a vivid symbol of hope in overcoming obstacles. We often read of it bursting forth from the flames, resplendent, majestic and powerful.

And yet, perhaps J.K. Rowling's depiction of the Phoenix's regeneration is a more accurate and pragmatic symbol for our own re-invention. When our very foundations have been

rocked by tragic events or flawed judgment, we, as mere mortals, hardly burst forth in a blaze of glory following a traumatic event. *We often feel disoriented, we feel broken and we wonder how on earth we can ever gain the strength and courage to pick up the pieces and build ourselves up again.*

Martha Beck (Finding Your Own North Star, Claiming the Life You Were Meant to Live), writes that the first phase of metamorphosis is particularly frightening because 'we lose our identity...we may feel that everything is falling apart, that we're losing everyone and everything...we dissolve into "person soup".

At the risk of mixing metaphors, perhaps the Japanese art form Kintsugi is a good way to see our rebuilding process. Kintsugi is a form of pottery repair that has become elevated to an art form. In this, the cracks in a vase are not bonded with glue. Instead, the potter pours molten gold into the cracks. Not only does the vase get repaired, it becomes stronger than it was before. And not only is it stronger than before, it is actually more beautiful as the threads of gold that bond the vase together create a beautiful filigree pattern on the vase's surface. Its fragility becomes the reason for its beauty.

This should be the standard we set ourselves as we strive to rebuild ourselves after a traumatic event. Every day, one day at a time, healing one wound at a time or correcting one flaw at a time. We should not just focus on putting our broken pieces back together, but use our wounds and flaws to make us even better than before.

But the question remains: as broken and weak as we are at that point, how do we get the strength to put ourselves back together, let alone exceed our expectations of ourselves?

The answer is that we do not rely on our own intelligence and strength, but on a supreme energy beyond us, to heal us. When our bones break, for example, we put them in a cast, rest, and allow nature and time to mend them. Likewise, when our spirit is broken, it is difficult to rely on our own rationality to figure a



way out. Our emotions are in such a flux, our minds in such confusion that our judgment gets clouded. Hence, the need to rest our minds and free our spirit from this immense pressure, and rely on the higher power that rests in God.

This, however, also requires a shift in perspective. *We need to look at the cracks in our spirit, not as cracks, but as gaps through which God's energy, grace and love can shine through.* We might have gained glimpses of this in our everyday lives - when we've had a burst of clarity or a moment of epiphany without any conscious effort on our part. We must realize that in our depths of despair, we can experience His grace even more clearly. We cannot see our brokenness as a black hole; we need to see it as expanded space for God to display the full extent of His power. We need not just to believe, but know that He is working His perfect ways through us and for us, and that the abyss into which we have fallen allows space for even more grace to pour forth.

If we have committed any wrongdoing, we can be assured of forgiveness if we go to Him, as the scriptural text of the Avtar Bani says: *Even if there is a huge heap of hay, one spark reduces it to ashes; Avtar says, likewise, an iota of grace is enough to wipe out sins.* (AB Verse 218).

If we need His strength to overcome a difficult situation, then we should remember that 'The Grace of the True Master transforms his disciples from fear to fearlessness (and) relieves them of all suffering.' (AB Verse 282).

These verses are a testament to the power that Nirankar (the Formless Lord) holds to completely transform our lives and redeem us. At our lowest and weakest, we should recognize the need for Grace, and if we entrust ourselves to Him, we will see how He fills these gaps not with glue, but with gold.

We are mere mortals and we cannot expect ourselves to emerge in a blaze of glory if we have been reduced to fragments by our deeds or circumstances. But, we can exceed our expectations of ourselves as we heal, not with our own strength and intelligence, but through Divine grace and power. And because He has made us whole again, our flaws would have made us even more beautiful and precious. ■

# ONENESS

The transparency of knowing  
 The essential "me" right now  
 Luminescent awareness  
 Draws me here today somehow

It inspired me to write this  
 And you to be reading it too  
 Designed for us and by us  
 Our feelings, thoughts fly through

The words encapsulated  
 To savour them again  
 Capturing the moment  
 Though not the same refrain

Are we one or one of many?  
 A kit of cosmic parts  
 Close your eyes, what do you see?  
 A jigsaw made of hearts?

Hearts, expansive; joyful  
 We weep, we shiver and shake  
 Uncomfortable realisation  
 Synchronicity we make

Temporal and separate?  
 For centuries ingrained  
 What suffering is made of  
 It's somehow preordained

A sense of fragmentation  
 That needs to be dissolved  
 Incomplete and seeking healing  
 In ways we can't avoid

So when we let our boundaries down  
 Our self is there, yet not  
 Timeless co-creation  
 We're edgeless. One begot

A cosmic choir of voices  
 Converge and sing in tune  
 Common thoughts are intertwined  
 In belonging, we commune

Embracing synchronicity  
 Of what is "meant to be"  
 Unlimited awareness  
 Serendipitously

Radiant recognition  
 With open hearts inspires  
 Reiterates through time and space  
 Shared experience transpires

So oft we speak with one voice here  
 In creative collaboration  
 That precious jewel of ONENESS  
 A collective aspiration. ■

Julie Horsley, Solihull, UK

If honesty gave you the power to win  
Surely then you would never sin

If compassion swore, you would be blessed  
Even the beggar would become our guest

If faith proclaimed you could conquer fear  
Would the mind allow doubt to steer?

If life gave you riches in 'values' guise  
Do you think you would recognise?

I danced with my vices all over the earth  
Colliding with illusion I denied my worth

Solitude conquered my weakened being  
This prisoner of vice needed freeing

How I strived to mend my heart  
This callous earth had ripped apart

I worshiped those, so cruel to each other  
Yet rooted within, was the might of a lover

I succumbed to vanity and ego prevailed  
And then I knew I had really failed

Embittered and alone with the shell of a life  
My saviour came and pulled out the knife

This poisonous vice had twisted my mind  
I devalued humans, and I was so blind

But the eternal truth, the only one  
Meant the life of a human was a jackpot won

The priceless chance had been bestowed  
To kneel at your feet and let ego erode

I ached for copper, the diamond was unfurled  
In the oyster of this earth, I had found a pearl

Tolerance, humility, forgiveness and love  
All became mine when I looked up above

For it was only then that I could see  
The stars in bliss because You they see

And so my dearest Beloved may I yet learn  
That the title of human is yet to be earned

May I sacrifice in everyway  
Just as night does for the day

May I value this chance and do more  
Instead of crawling on the floor

It was in Your grace my life ran back  
It was in Your essence my ego cracked

In this body I could see through the storm  
And value the One who goes without form

Giver of values, who conquered my mind  
The One without eyes who leads the blind

I begged for the chance to value Your worth  
You heard my prayer and descended on earth. ■

# UNIVERSAL VALUES

→ Serena Nagha, London, UK

# Faster than a *Speeding Bullet*

**Science and Spirituality**

**George Khambe, Iver, UK**



**A discussion on ‘reality’ is like opening a can of words. Naturally we may feel as though we are experiencing reality at this very moment, but that’s not to say that we all experience the same reality. So why do we see things so differently, and if this really is the case then whose reality should we accept? Of course there is a scientific aspect to this question, but maybe if we gave this more consideration we could begin to understand each other a little better, and perhaps pave the way to a more accepting and tolerant society. Anyway, what does this have to do with a speeding bullet?**

The modern world is a remarkable place. Many of the things we take for granted today would have been considered miracles of science or even the magic of mystics in previous ages, but today they are the very essence of our way of life. However if we put technological advancements aside, and consider the most natural of actions, then we realise that even these themselves are underpinned by an amazing set of circumstances. Consider the act of walking into a room for example:

*“I am standing on the threshold about to enter a room. It is a complicated business. In the first place I must shove against an atmosphere pressing with a force of fourteen pounds on every square inch of my body. I must make sure of landing on a plank travelling at twenty miles per second round the sun – a fraction of a second too early or too late, the plank would be miles away. I must do this whilst hanging from a round planet, head outward into space, and with a wind of aether blowing at no one knows how many miles a second through every interstice of my body.”*

The Nature of the Physical World,  
1928, Ch. 15

After the apple had fallen on Newton’s head many people thought that was that. Newton was inspired to build on the work of previous scientists and along with his own ideas he was able to produce a theory that described the physical universe. Much of the



scientific community had accepted the four remarkable laws that governed the behaviour of matter and its interaction with the environment. These were taught in schools and discussed in lectures, so that the view of the universe essentially as an enormous clockwork machine had been accepted as a reasonable view. But, along came a young man that turned our accepted reality completely upside down, and changed the way we now perceive the world.

Albert Einstein’s work was rejected by much of the community as eccentric and in the realms of fiction. Ironically, he was a drop-out at school, but of course he saw the world in a different light (literally)! It took a period of twenty years before his remarkable theory of relativity was recognised and he was awarded the Nobel Prize. In life too it seems that truth usually remains hidden and disguised by more acceptable falsehoods. People are reluctant to accept things that are new to them or something that is beyond conception. Einstein too had placed such findings on the doorstep of our understanding that were difficult to grasp, whilst also coming together into a theory that completely shattered a widely accepted view of reality.

Newton’s laws weren’t wrong – they were just incomplete. In time we have realised that his laws are approximations to the world. But Einstein realised that the details overlooked by Newton were particularly significant in the description of reality. Before relativity came onto the scene there were

other discoveries that were, you might say, the warning signs to the real tremor. One of these was the beginnings of the Quantum revolution, which put forward the idea that electrons must be considered as either waves or particles. This twist in the tale of science was also a pathway to a new wave of science and associated discoveries – ones that gave rise to a new way of perceiving the world around and the nature of reality itself. In particular, it is a science that drove us towards the conclusion that ‘the observer cannot be separated from the observed’ – in other

words – we are intrinsically part of the experiments we conduct. To assume that we can isolate ourselves from the experiments we perform and results of empirical observations thereof, is unfortunately not so simple, and we as conscious beings must be considered as being part of the same experiment, as observers. This was to be the foundation upon which Einstein would build his theory.

The basis of Einstein’s philosophy is the premise that information cannot travel faster than the speed of light, which has been accepted as 186,000 miles per second – much faster than a speeding bullet! When things begin to approach such speeds our world becomes a very peculiar place, and the whole concept of reality begins to distort. It becomes plainly evident that the whole of creation as we see it now is something we cannot even begin to comprehend let alone express. Taking some artistic license I would even say that the line between science and spiritual writing becomes as equally blurred:

*“The house of God that plays dice has many rooms. We can live in only one room at a time, but it is the whole house that is the reality.”*

Ibid, p190

*“If the doors of perception were cleansed everything would appear to man as it is, infinite.”*

The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, 1790-3,  
'A Memorable Fancy' plates 12-13

Einstein’s theory is no doubt complex, but the difficulty lies in conceptualising his conclusions and not actually in the

logical acceptance. Quite simply, we are told of three phenomena:

1. Time dilation: when things travel close to the speed of light, time appears to slow down
2. Lorenz contraction: at such high speeds, lengths appear to contract or become shorter
3. Mass is equivalent to energy

Suppose you are in a plane flying extremely fast – close to the speed of light in fact. To somebody standing watching from the ground you would appear to be thinner and heavier and your watch would also be running slower. These effects happen all the time but because we are dealing with such small velocities the effects are insignificant. The fact is, when things travel at such speeds everything turns pear shaped... for example a plane having wide wingspan could theoretically pass through a narrow doorway! Hard to believe but this exactly the warping of reality that Relativity Theory asks of us.

So what of Formless Nirankar, the Almighty power?

The spiritualist in me is excited at the prospect of drawing analogies with Relativity. Omnipresent and all knowing, Nirankar as a Formless energy is both stationary and moving; He is the observer and is Himself the observed. In Relativity Theory any object travelling beyond the speed of light would become so thin it would almost disappear, and time would almost come to a standstill – imagine the consequences for an Almighty power without limit.

Einstein continued his voyage of discovery with other conclusions that were again difficult to swallow. One of these was the fact that time and space are not separate from each other; rather they are completely interdependent and form something called a space-time continuum. He also introduced the concept of Gravity being likened to acceleration, and demonstrated that Gravity may in fact slow the movement of time. His theory of General Relativity also predicts that light is bent by large masses as it travels past them. If this were true then it would mean our heads are older than our feet, and that people

living high up on mountains age more quickly than those at sea level.

*"Things derive their being and nature by mutual dependence and are nothing in themselves."*

Nagarjuna, quoted in TRV Murty, The Central philosophy of Buddhism- Allen and Unwin, London 1955

The following passage from the inspiring work of Dr Robert Barry provides an insightful perspective on Einstein's theories, and brings his conclusions to life:

*"The essence of what Einstein is telling us is this – reality is something that we can never fully comprehend, but whatever it is, each of us interprets and experiences it in our own unique way from our individual frame of reference. Even time and distance, which most of us take to be absolute and universal, are relative to one's frame of reference and are experienced differently by everyone. What we normally perceive to be a force – the force of Gravity – is not really a force at all. The objects that we see around us are, more accurately, forms of energy. There is no difference between matter and energy – they can be converted into each other."*

*"The world that we live in is much stranger than most of us think. Look around you, what do you see? You see different parts of the past – the light from objects furthest away in your field of vision takes longest to reach you. What does your friend, standing beside you see? Your friend sees other parts of the past. Now suppose you start to walk away from your friend, and as you walk away, you throw a ball up into the air. You and your friend will observe the ball to be of different sizes, and to take different times to come back down again. Look at the night sky, what do you see? Again, different parts of the past, but not only do you see stars as they were at different times in history, you also observe them to be located in parts of space where they never were (the light from them, on its way to your eyes will be bent by space-time curvature, or if you prefer the term, gravitational field)."*

'A Theory of Almost Everything', R Barry, Oneworld, Oxford, 1996

Such weird and striking findings have been long accompanied by biological, psychological, philosophical, and spiritual discussions to investigate the secrets of nature, and our existence as human beings. I do not intend to extend our discussion to these here, more so to highlight the fact that the world is not all that it seems to be – and that Nirankar is not an intellectual property up for discussion by either scientists or religious scholars. Our experiences are personal, and the nature of reality is much deeper and complex than we could imagine.

Personally, for me Nirankar serves as that ultimate reality that underlies all observation, thought and feeling, from all perspectives in all situations, transcending the realms of time, space, gravity and whatever else. Nirankar cannot be described; the wonder can only be felt. Perhaps it is not so different from what others have experienced. Nagarjuna, the Mahayana philosopher, proclaimed that reality cannot be grasped by concepts and ideas and therefore is a void/emptiness – 'Sunyata'.

This is another word to express the Formless. Other language used in scriptural testimony, is 'Brahman'.

*"Brahman is life. Brahman is joy. Brahman is the void... Joy, verily, that is the same as the void. The void, verily, that is the same as the joy."*

Chandogya Upanishad, 4.10.4

We could take this discussion into other directions. Instead, I leave you with a final thought from a very inspiring spiritual personality, and current President of the Sant Nirankari Mission. He shares another kind of relativity – one that hopefully we can all associate with:

*"Imagine you are alone on an island, you look out to see the horizon before you. Now imagine somebody sitting on an island opposite you. They would, in contrast, see your side as being the horizon. Who is right and who is wrong? They are in fact two different perspectives. Likewise we must not make relative judgments about each other; rather we should appreciate our neighbour's situation. Judge only yourself, for the 'observer becomes the observed'."*

JRD Satyarthi (Shastri Ji) ■



## Unity into Community

All nations will merge into God's Kingdom,  
The chain of humanity links and binds,  
From Eden to the sunset of mankind,  
Blending, like the world's colours, into one.  
One biology, blood the setting sun,  
The world's rivers flow into one ocean,  
And we have the same needs and emotions,  
The human race, a race that can be won.  
Celebrate life and shared humanity:  
Put unity into community.

The world is not separate warring states:  
One people, one kingdom and one planet,  
Hearts filled with love and not full of granite,  
And we must stop the misery and hate.  
Apathy is a meal that fills our plates,  
Turning to God, in peace, we may yet live  
And to the starving, food we all shall give,  
Not the highway heading to Satan's Gate.  
Celebrate life and shared humanity:  
Put unity into community.

We should all be Citizens of the earth  
United, together, as one people,  
From lowest gutter to highest steeple,  
Identity to be given at birth.  
Tears of pain replaced by laughter and mirth,  
God is calling and it's a long walk home;  
Death and destruction wherever we've roamed,  
It's now time to prove humanity's worth.  
Celebrate life and shared humanity:  
Put unity into community. ■

**Ian Henery, Walsall, UK**

# COMING TO TERMS, WITH WHO I AM

Though I live amongst people from all walks of life,  
I'm still too afraid to mingle, let alone say "Hi".

Maybe it's my ego that makes me feel supreme,  
I build barriers, hibernate and not to seem so keen.

Forget crossing the road to meet my neighbours,  
I don't even sit with my own unless they act like divas!

I don't associate with those who work for a good cause,  
I have hidden agendas; I only work for my own applause.

As long as my own self value, my worth is increasing,  
Who really cares if human values are decreasing?

So now I'm working longer hours to satisfy my greed,  
My health is decreasing, but I have to meet my needs.

If one wears a designer label, I'm after a bigger brand,  
I feel better when I reach higher, higher than others can.

As competing with others has now become the norm,  
Who cares how I get there, as long as I'm in top form?

I'm interested in the latest gossip and reality shows,  
Global disasters just happen; why bother to know?

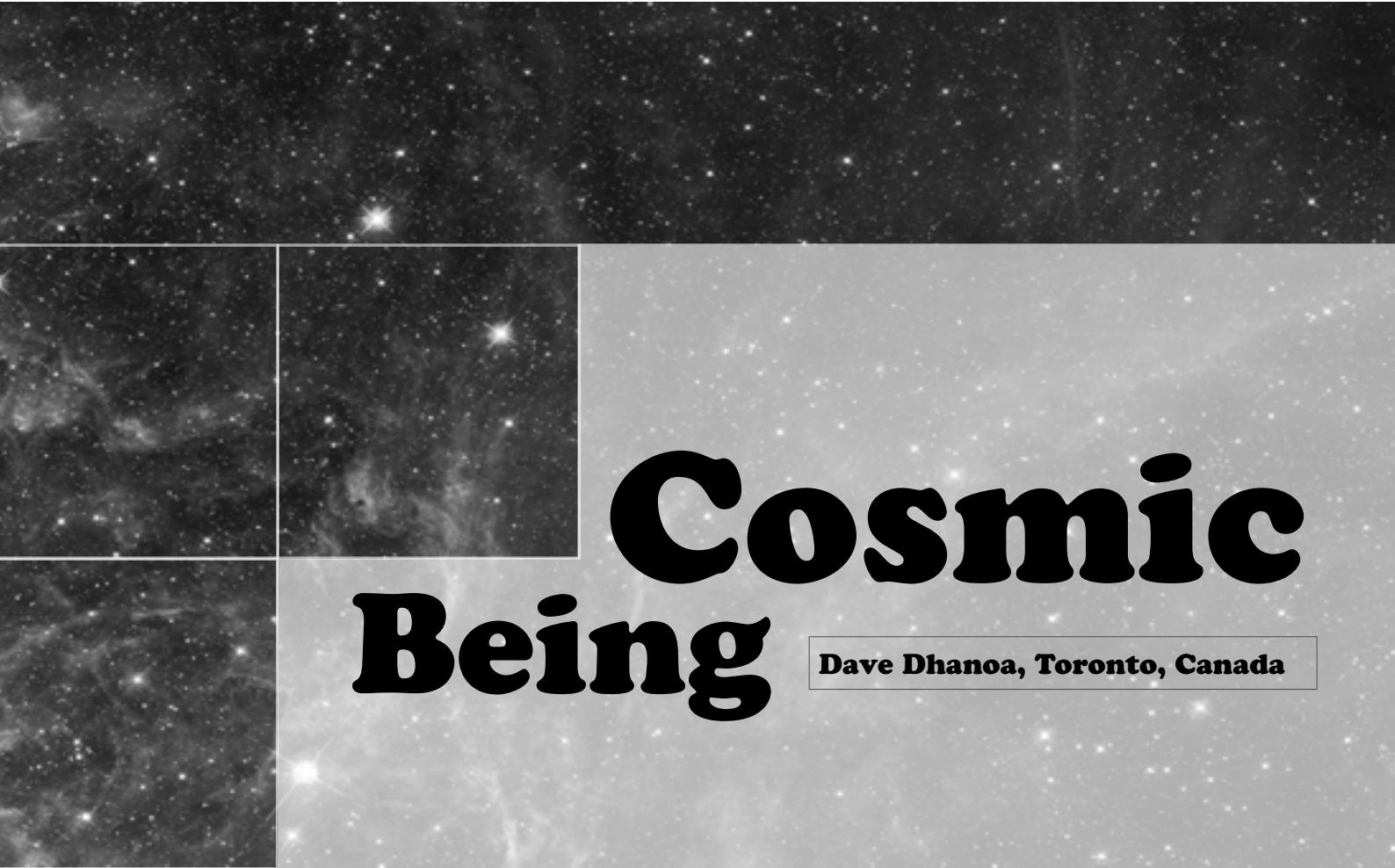
But if I do not come to terms with who I really am,  
My life would continue to be empty just like a scam.

But if I invest in goodness and self-realisation,  
I can be one with my inner, ever-lasting relation.

So let me seek the One that's the source of all,  
One redeemer of the many; beauty of my soul. ■

Bal Kamal, Coventry, UK





# Cosmic Being

**Dave Dhanoa, Toronto, Canada**

The journey of Spirituality entails discovering who we really are. Master-philosophers, Sages and Seers in all sacred traditions talked about how it is done, when this is done and what it feels like.

But, ever since the dawn of civilization, there has been a kind of disconnection. It appears not to have been everybody's cup of tea. For very few people, who reached the pinnacle, were revered as 'gods'. And those who won this rare adoration were the liberated souls, who secured nirvana and complete contentment.

According to the oriental traditions, there is a belief in reincarnation, evolving over perhaps eons from a mere cell to a sophisticated human being. According to the natural law of progression governing life, an individual spirit-consciousness travels from form to form until it is finally freed from all corporeal confines to be one with the Universe.

This state of liberation can only take place on this earth whilst alive, not after death. One who achieves this lofty status is a liberated being or 'jivan mukta'. He enjoys his very life on this planet.

How do we get there? Just like everything else, we have to find somebody, who has the requisite know-how and the necessary experience. He must be able and willing to help us to get over the hurdles to reach the zenith.

Having had the good fortune to have encountered such an enlightened personage, I have become aware just how important it is to undertake a process of unlearning, before it becomes possible to adopt a new art of life.

The enlightened preceptor shows you the reality and reveals to you your real self. He instructs you to connect and attune to the Spirit of the Universe, and teaches you to lead a liberated life.

Such a freed-soul transcends gross nature to embrace tolerance, patience, forbearance, humility and forgiveness amongst other virtues. The welfare of fellow-humans is foremost in his mind. In short, he lives for others as a true cosmic being. ■



## Realisation – Let's Live in Harmony

*What would you say if someone told you that there was more to life than meets the eye - more than we know or have ever experienced? And what if you were told about a vision or philosophy that could provide a clear perspective upon life with which you could see the Unseen?*

Well, realisation is exactly that. Most people would say that a dream is something that takes place at night when we close our eyes and concludes when we open our eyes the following morning. Philosophical thinkers, however, argue that life – the whole of life – is akin to a dream, an illusion, that begins at birth and comes to an end when we die.

Life appears to be a dream because we are never in a position to experience the silent witness, which works through the five senses, but stands aloft. Swami Vivekananda stresses upon this. He reminds us that we may well be aware of the five senses, but

*"if we were truly conscious of the sixth sense, it would change the way we view things forever."*

It has also been said, when we change the way we look at things, the things we look at begin to change. This sixth sense is known as the "super-conscious" state, through which comes all inspiration.

An inspiration and understanding of who we really

are. An appreciation and understanding that there is something so powerful, which resonates within each and every one of us. A power, which is the very essence of life itself. And it is only when we understand the power within us that we can make sense of all that which surrounds us. It is then that we can

*"exchange disharmony for harmony and pieces for peace."*

It is with this divine hue that we understand that we are all members of one human family. That our happiness depends on the happiness of others around us. For how could we ever be happy if there are people within our own household who are unhappy? How could we be joyful if our close colleagues or friends are not? Our happiness depends on the happiness of all those around us for we are all connected in some shape or form.

Realisation and harmony go hand in hand. Realisation is the beginning, and everlasting harmony, the resulting reward. A Chinese Proverb illustrates this beautifully:

*"If there is light in the soul, there will be beauty in the person If there is beauty in the person, there will be harmony in the house If there is harmony in the house, there will be order in the nation If there is order in the nation, there will be peace in the world."* ■

Raul Kamal, London, UK

# GREAT EXPECTATIONS



The future-oriented mind stretches for new horizons, and reaches for the stars. Given it is always some *where* else, and in some *time* else, expectant dreams occupy the vacancy the mind leaves behind. If only it could focus, and appreciate the reality of what is. After all, past and future are forged in the furnace of today.

It seems the human mind can't stop from desiring and needing. Perhaps this is an evolutionary function, etched deep within our hunter-gatherer psyche. These latent impressions may explain our tendency to acquire, store and then collect more. Just like our co-inhabitants on earth, feathered and furred, who accumulate more than they can eat, to build Winter reserves.

Like any habitual act, the behavior can continue even when it is no longer needed, and no longer makes

rational sense. The reality for many of us today, is that we have more than we can use, and eat more than we can really digest. Whereas people once worried about death from starvation, now a significant proportion of the world worries about the effects of over-indulgence. Obesity in much of the developed world is a growing statistic, with the burgeoning middle classes of poorer countries, replicating the trend.

Let us not be shortsighted. There is no inherent problem with abundance – infact, it's comforting to know that we have enough, and have more to share or use on rainy days, or when times get tough. The problem lies in failing to pause and appreciate what we have. Without a sense of contentment, the hunger can't be quelled, and the flames of desire burn all the stronger with every additional acquisition thrown into them. Whilst this corrodes the inner sanctum of the

human mind, making it a bottomless hole, there are moral and ethical consequences, when we hoard at the expense of others. It makes us all, that much poorer.

But all is not lost. In the most unlikely of places, within the heat and material lack of sub-Saharan Africa, children become the mouthpiece of hope and human sensibility. "We believe in Ubuntu" they cry, as an Anthropologist gazes in sheer astonishment at their miraculous feat. Just a few moments before, that visiting scientist had provoked the children to compete for a basket of fruit. "Just there, under the tree", he spoke, "I have placed the sweetest of foods... get there first, and claim the prize... eat to your heart's content".

But nobody runs. Hungry and ragged they may appear, but arm in arm they walk. None rushes ahead of the others, to take the food for

Dr. Bobby Sura, Solihull, UK

**"First I was dying to finish my high school and start college. And then I was dying to finish college and start working. Then I was dying to marry and have children. And then I was dying for my children to grow up. Then I was dying see them marry and have children. Then I was dying to retire. And now I'm dying, and suddenly I realized I forgot to live."**

*Author Unknown*

**"it's comforting to know that we have enough, and have more to share or use on rainy days, or when times get tough. The problem lies in failing to pause and appreciate what we have."**

themselves. And on approaching the tree, they sit and offer the food to one another, before taking even a morsel for themselves. "What is Ubuntu?" asks the baffled white man. One says, "it's how can I eat, when my brother is hungry", another says "it's like feeling bad, when I am warm, but my friend is cold". Raised within a wisdom tradition, in which 'humaneness' is prioritized, the outcome of this experiment reaffirms faith and trust in homo-sapien kind.

What leads the scientist to be so surprised, is the rarity of such thought. As human beings, we find ourselves increasingly lost in the web of personal fulfillment and individualized ambition. We have forgotten the bigger picture, which these Ubuntu children remind us of.

Yet it would be highly naive to suggest that reaching beyond ourselves and nurturing dreams can never be a welcome trait. Through it, we find new potentials, and achieve previously undiscovered talents and understandings. It would be limiting to suggest anything otherwise. What is being considered here, is the side-effects of unbridled desire, which gate-crash the well-being space. Uninvited, this instinct creates a competition with others, which erodes the much needed spirit of cooperation. Should the contest move within, a person is never happy with himself, and experiences perpetual unease. This state is aptly described in the words of Professor Rajan Sachdeva, an elder within the Sant Nirankari Mission in North America;

**"Strange is the nature of man. We are always longing to get or achieve something. The moment we get it or achieve it, longing for it diminishes and its value**

reduces. We take it for granted and start longing for something else... We think we will be happy if we continue to accumulate more and more of what we want, may it be money, love, respect or power. We do not appreciate what we have. We forget there was a time, when we were desperately longing for what we have right now."

Similar sentiments can be found in the writings of Epicurus, the ancient Greek philosopher from the 4th Century BC;

**"Do not spoil what you have by desiring what you have not; remember that what you now have was once among the things you only hoped for."**

Our limitless expectations would arguably cause less harm, if they were confined merely to ourselves. However, this is rarely the case. One who demands a great deal for himself, and of himself, tends to spread this way of being to others. Where such a person is never happy with where he is, what he is doing, what he owns and possesses – this state of discomfort is invariably passed on to others. And is it not the weight of expectation, which ruins relationships? It's the dissatisfied man telling a friend, "Why can't she think like me?". The mother complains about her son, "What is he doing – can't he understand that these are the wrong choices?". In short, we fail to appreciate and understand others, because we fail to see them as they are. We only see them, as we are.

**"When you stop expecting people to be perfect, you can like them for who they are."**

*Donald Miller*

I remember speaking with a friend, who seemed very content with life. He told me he suffered with Asperger's Syndrome, but it had never limited him from working, and living independently. I asked him what he might change, were he to look back on his life. He said, "I'd probably leave it just about the way it was". I asked what he might like to be doing in the future, and he said, 'I'd be happy with what is right now'. It seems strange, and perhaps some would consider this individual to be complacent, or lacking in the wish to better himself.



From another point of view however, this man is one of the wealthiest people on earth! In the words of Swami Vivekananda, 'he wants not, and rejects not'. When I enquired further, it was clear that he had achieved this state through spiritual practice. He meditated regularly, and read from all faith and scriptural traditions. He had stumbled across a formula for peace.

This connects beautifully with the writings of a man admired universally – the great poet-philosopher Kahlil Gibran. It seems fitting to end with this sentiment, as it conveys the spiritual essence needed, to place reigns upon the charging steeds of desire and expectation, so that they carry us home, rather than leading us into a desolate wilderness.

**"But if you love and must needs have desires, let these be your desires: To melt and be like a running brook that sings its melody to the night...to wake at dawn with a winged heart and give thanks for another day of loving... to return home at eventide with gratitude; and then to sleep with a prayer for the beloved in your heart and a song of praise on your lips."**

Gratitude and appreciation for the much we have been given, is a sure recipe for managing expectations. It creates a firm foundation, upon which to build achievements, and realise ambitions. When the structure of life is balanced so, expectations lead us forward, and we are saved from their downward potential. We grow, and enjoy the harvest of our labour – but with our ethics and moral values intact. This ensures that progress is accompanied by the satisfaction we all want. Isn't this the driving force behind all we do, anyway? ■

# There Are Ways

Christopher L. Johnston, Iye, West Midlands, UK



There are ways you can fall

But far more to rise

There are ways that a whale can breach for the skies

There are ways that a flower can blossom and bloom

Know that someone's there whilst alone in your room

There are ways you can take

But far more to give

Opportunities there as long as you live

There are ways you can dream without being asleep

There are chances lost but far more to reap

There are ways to discover

The person you are

There are ways you can see when you look with your heart

There are ways of the world, there are ways of the soul

There are ways you can feel you're part of the whole

There are ways you can lose

But far more to win

And you can't lose a war that you never begin

There are ways to have plenty, far more than have none

There's a light in the dark before the sun shone

There are ways to give in

But far more to believe

There are ways that the droplet returns to the seas

There are people who leave us and others who stay

So look and you'll find it because there are ways. ■

# Faith Song

Raman Chauhan, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada

Faith is a song  
that I must play,  
at every second  
of every day

Over and over  
without delay,  
its rhythm, rhyme  
on display

So that I may  
breathe in and out,  
exhale and inhale  
without a doubt

Faith is so abundant  
a sweet melody,  
truly radiant  
with harmony

No beginning no end  
means to an end,  
all contraries  
Forge and blend

With this song  
inside my head,  
faith will rise  
humility spread

Faster than any means,  
if it stops, I press play  
to renew, refresh  
and enjoy the replay

Over and over  
may I always do this  
and ever be tuned  
to this song of bliss. ■



# The Fascinating Void



Surjit Dhami, Cannock, UK

**E**ver since the dawn of civilization, the void has consumed the mind of many a philosopher and scientist alike. It obsessed Descartes, bothered Galileo and Newton, and fascinated Aristotle. So, what is the void?

What appears to be 'void', in fact contains all forms and diverse matter comprising countless stars and planets, which are nothing but tiny specks of dust in the ocean of inter-stellar vacuum. This very vacuum is immersed in the dense nucleus and electrons of each atom. According to Professor Bershenkov, a prominent physicist and the author of 'Something is Nothing', all particles interact with this vacuum.

The properties of the elementary particles determine the features and characteristics of atoms. They, in turn, produce the blueprint for building complex molecules, which eventually lead to complex life forms, enormous worlds, gigantic galaxies and the universe itself. This entire cosmic expanse is built, brick by brick, on the ground whose name is void.

However, some Greek scholars appear to have had difficulties grasping the concept of the void in its entirety. Although they readily accepted the four

elements – air, earth, fire and water, yet Greek philosophy still begged the question, can there be a ‘void’?

Leucippus and Democritus concluded that everything in the universe consists of atoms and emptiness (void) between them. Democritus is supposed to have said, ‘to walk in the air and swim in the river’, are possible only because of the void between the atoms. The joining of atoms to form the shore, sea and clouds, terrains and trees, and life itself, is only possible because of the void.

*This entire cosmic expanse is built, brick by brick, on the ground whose name is void.*

Aristotle believed the void to be conceivable, but appeared to have had difficulty relating it to nature. His teacher, Plato, propounded the theory of forms. He said that there were eternal forms, which in turn produced corporeal forms on earth. However, whether there was such a thing as the void was a matter of further enquiry.

Hero of Alexandria (who invented the first ‘steam turbine’ in 2nd century BC, using an automatic slot machine for dispensing holy water in temples and many other amazing mechanisms) believed the void was present in nature like air is present between the grains of sand on the sea shore.

Galileo and Strato of Lampascus and Hero of Alexandria, contended that the void is present in all substances, and that if it became dominant, it would destroy nature. This ‘terror of the void’ was explained away by the 17th Century.

The void is the reason why everything stands as it does. The void is the unseen thread that holds all the atoms and particles together. Later the idea of the void was applied to engineering and the invention of the air pump, whose purpose was to obtain a void. This helped invent the steam engine and gave birth to the industrial revolution. Classical mechanics wrapped itself around the void like a baby to its blanket.

Blaise Pascal, the French Mathematician, and Isaac Newton, did not accept the void. Pascal’s chief

argument against the void was this: if the vessel is empty of everything then how can light, heat and magnetic force pass through it? There would still be some matter there acting as a medium. Pascal wrote in one of his letters ‘I grant you, dear Sir, the opportunity to judge for yourself: when you do not see space, then whose opinion is more well-founded, one who contends that there is something there even if he observes nothing, or one who is sure there is nothing there because he sees nothing?’

Despite the fact that several respected scientists who stated ‘absolute void is impossible’, the Void could not be ignored. It glared at scientists, whichever field they studied in. Like a shadow, it was there even when they turned away from it.

Rene Descartes, the French Mathematician, wrote, ‘we consider a vessel to be empty when there is no water in it. But actually air remains in such a vessel. When we remove the air as well from the ‘emptiness’, again something remains. But we do not perceive this ‘something’. In the Torricellian tube there was neither mercury nor air. According to Descartes, there was something else which is called ‘ether’.

Modern science accepts ether without its contradictions as a concept of a field that takes on the duty of transmitting actions such as light, sound and gravity. For instance, if ether was the rail track, and signals were train carriages, the ground would, therefore, be the void. Without the void, there would be no rail track or train carriages to carry, neither the sound nor light or the gravity.

*The joining of atoms to form the shore, sea and clouds, terrains and trees, and life itself, is only possible because of the void.*

We see and feel, as space is far from being space, because everything that is void and not void is filled with the substance that is beyond comprehension. It contains within it ether and all their elements that are known and not known.

The human eye sees only that which moves relative to it. We distinguish the borders of still objects only because the human eye is itself in continuous motion. Other animals such as frogs without moving are only able to see moving objects. We find ourselves in the face of the void like a frog in the summer, sitting still on the bank of a pond, waiting for a flying bug to appear. Without moving at all, the frog sees the flying insect, but the pond in all its calmness is invisible.

As you may have noticed, I have deliberately avoided the word God to mean the void because, for thousands of years, God has been grossly misunderstood and misconstrued. The moment God is mentioned, all kinds of images are conjured up about something that has no image. Sometimes it is regarded as a man with a flowing white beard or a bright light at the end of the tunnel. But how can it have an image when it is formless, featureless and limitless?

The entralling and awesomely enrapturing void is indestructible, boundless as well as inexplicably spell-bounding. It is the source of peace, ecstatic joy, tranquillity, and nirvana to millions of ruffled minds.

Goethe aptly captures the unimaginable beauty of the void, through the famous words of Faust -

“Let us fathom it, whatever may befall, In this thy Nothing, may I find my All”. ■



# VALUE BEING HUMAN

For me, being human is about the experience that we all go through. So when we talk about valuing being human we are actually talking about valuing the human experience – your human experience and mine. These experiences may be spiritual or not, depending on one's definition of the word.

Spirituality, in essence, is what we really are – the real me, and my relation with myself. It is the appreciation of the temporal nature of everything around us, be it our ties with our friends and family or the objects in our possession. It is ascertaining what is true and what is illusory, and giving all things their rightful place and priority in life.

One of the key pillars of this spiritual understanding is reaching a lasting awareness of the inherent value that resides in each and every one of us. In order to value being human, we have to first of all value the human experience. Some interpret the spiritual path, as one of self-effacement, and self-denial. It's akin to throwing away all that is not eternal, and reaching a deep modesty or surrender. However, this way of understanding can lead a person to devalue life, and all it's trimmings.

In my view, to value the human experience, we must reinterpret the concept of humility. The word humility may bring to mind sentiments such as; "I am nothing" or "I am a miserable sinner". Arguably, this is not the kind of humility that can help in our spiritual journey. How do we value anyone or anything else, if we have not learned to value ourselves? To explain this, consider the example of a candle in a room.

If you are a lit candle in a room, you cannot decrease the darkness around you by extinguishing yourself or diminishing yourself. This only increases the darkness! As a candle, you only remove the darkness by lighting other candles, or burning more brightly. The key point is that true humility is acknowledging the value and potential of all others as equal beings to yourself. True humility is about appreciating the

human experience of others, and seeing it to be as valuable as your own. It is about appreciation, not depreciation.

Suppose a person says "I am not worthy" or "I am nothing". What is he doing? He is reducing his value. He is reducing in value that which is invaluable. That self which has been crafted in the image of God and has huge purpose on Earth. The end result is that this person is creating insecurities within himself; and insecurities are basically food for the ego. For our perceived "low value", the ego takes command and tries to compensate in one way or another. And when the ego takes control, we all know the result will not be beneficial to anyone. The ego as usual keeps you from seeing reality. It always stereotypes, it always categorizes, it discriminates and belittles. So we can see that this type of humility, if it engenders a sense of self-depreciation, does not actually help in the grand scheme of things.

Let us now look at the opposite kind of situation. Imagine you have another person who is constantly bragging about himself. He has an over-inflated view of himself. He is always better in one way or another. At first glance, we can say that this person is completely different from the one discussed. But is he? The person who is constantly bragging, boasting and putting others down, is he not simply displaying his insecurity? Is this a heightened sense of self-esteem, over-confidence or is it a disguised insecurity? It is simply another case of the ego trying to compensate for one's own deflated value.

The truth is that both of these mind-sets are simply the opposite sides of the same coin. Neither helps you progress spiritually. Rather, it is the edge of this coin, where some balance is to be found. It is about walking on a fine line characterised by humble confidence or being confidently humble. We must be able to value the entire human

experience which includes ourselves. Until we do this, and are comfortable, we cannot begin to value the human experience of others.

Have you ever seen an interview with an established movie star, athlete or accomplished entrepreneur and said to yourself, "you know they seem so down to earth and humble." It is usually because they have achieved so much over their careers. They have nothing to prove and as such they are completely comfortable with themselves. And it shows in their actions and in their words. They seem to be humbly confident.

In the same way, if we truly want to value being human, we need to be completely comfortable with ourselves. An important stepping stone to this way of being, is to develop spiritual awareness. This is one of the main aims of the Sant Nirankari Mission and the Journal you are reading just now – to connect yourself to the 'Super-self'. You see, to have a full and rich human experience, a connection to the Source is invaluable – in fact, it is indispensable.

Humility lies in the appreciation of others. Being humble in this manner involves the acceptance that the value of each human being stems from Source and none other. It's about appreciation of all that Source has created. It becomes a safety feature by ensuring that no matter how much we value ourselves and other souls in our human journey, this is placed in context with the value of the Super-self; the Source of all things.

In conclusion, to value being human we need to appreciate that there is a part of each and every one of us, which is a precious reflection of Source. To live in humility, is to understand the value of this self within ourselves and others. This demands a life of humble confidence. It also entails accepting the Super-self from which all stem. ■

**Pete Ahuja, Sutton Coldfield, UK**



# The Key to

**Ever found yourself at a crossroad between positivity and negativity? If so, you will know full well how each path makes you feel. Yet, we still fall into the trap of negative thinking. Why?**

We only have to look around to see what goes on. Violence, hatred and discrimination is rife, and wholly negative. Although contrary to social norms, these vices are seemingly condoned, often dismissed with a pessimistic shrug of the shoulders. After all, who has the power to change the world? There are times when we may also be swayed into thinking and feeling in negative ways. But, if not addressed, this acceptance fuels a dangerous habit. With such a malaise, we need hope. We need role models, who can bring us out of the darkness, into the light.

*"The main reason behind man's present negative state of mind and actions is his ignorance, which binds him into the bondage of delusion and superstition. The cure for his negative state of mind is God-knowledge. Since the olden times, all the Gurus, saints and sages have been bestowing upon man the gift of such a knowledge."*

**His Holiness Nirankari Baba**  
(11 Jan 2013, Innsbruck, Austria)

The role model, a True Master, gifts us with the opportunity to realise God, which in turn helps us to appreciate the beauty in all – firstly within, and then all around. We begin to understand that God is the Creator of life and that we should appreciate the beauty in all that has been created. Once this is happening, it becomes natural to remember divinity in our daily life, which can help us find positivity in any situation. After all, wholesome thoughts tend to come from a place of calm, love and appreciation. These inner positive feelings become deep rooted through regular remembrance.

*"The God-realised pray to God never to forget God-remembrance; they remain in constant God-awareness. Quite often, we are told that we lack in God-remembrance; when we lack in God-remembrance, we also lack in positivity; it means that negativity gets established within us. And as all of us know, no positivity can be expected from negativity!"*

**His Holiness Nirankari Baba**  
(28 Apr 13, Delhi, India)

We are encouraged to attend the holy communion – the company of God-realised and thus self-realised souls. It is here that positive thoughts, selfless service and kind sentiments are commonplace – in short, it is

# Positive Thinking

Meenakshi Kanda, Bradford, UK



a repository of positivity.

*"Just as a physical disease makes the body sick, similarly man's negative or diseased mind also makes the family and society sick. For this reason, it is of the utmost importance for man today to pay attention to this aspect of awareness. These Samagams (Holy Communions) and gatherings are positive steps towards creating such an awareness"*

**His Holiness Nirankari Baba**  
(11 Jan, 2013, Innsbruck, Austria)

We often hear the words, 'I feel some negative energy in me or my house', implying that the negative energy arrived from an outer place. However, its source is often within our own thinking, characterised by narrow-mindedness, complaint and resentment towards others. We nurture it within ourselves, and its waves keep expanding further and further.

This negativity cycle can only be destructive; we have to look within ourselves to make positive changes. In contrast to this, the feelings we have when we sit in contemplative remembrance, are based on love and adoration. Hence, we start to look at life and situations in a more positive light.

We alone can take control and change our own state of mind. We have to become conscious of this transition from the negative to the positive, and allow enlightened souls to help us in our journey into the light. God realised-souls talk about positive

energy and the goodness that comes from knowing who they are, and who their Creator is. So over time, our transformed feelings become our thoughts, words and actions.

Positive things are always said about friendship, humility and respect. Negative sentiments – anger, envy and greed are always frowned upon. His Holiness Nirankari Baba is spreading such a message of positivity with affirmations such as 'peace not pieces' and 'let's live in harmony'.

*"So every form of positivity, which can also be called another form of light, is impossible as long as man's thinking is based only upon the world and worldliness, and as long as man lives a life entrenched in worldliness. Consequently man's actions would be dark, evil, immoral and inhuman. There is no other means to change man's actions. But when this darkness changes into Light, man becomes elevated and a blessing for the whole Earth."*

**His Holiness Nirankari Baba**  
**(July 24, 2013, Delhi, India)**

This is exemplified by the experience of God-realised beings. They tell us how life becomes blissful in the company of the all-pervasive Lord. They show us how the mind can become centred and undisturbed, even in the midst of negative or difficult circumstances. How with God at their side, life truly becomes blissful and beautiful and the mind enshrined with positive feelings.

Hence, the key of positive thinking lies in God-realisation. This necessitates the presence of the adept - the True Master –who is the epitome of awareness and positivity.

When we are standing at the crossroad, we have to make decisions that are spiritually wise, which always lead us on the path that is 'good'. And even when negativity appears to reign supreme, the mind is still able to see the inherent beauty and blessings in the midst of the negative situation, if the person follows the lead of those who are Godly-realised. ■

## Human Values

Though lamps are many, the light's the same  
Human values are the light from this flame  
If we increase the love within every sector  
Then everyone can benefit from this nectar

Love, peace, respect and grace  
Tolerance, humanity within every race  
Judgement-free be the colour of your face  
May jealousy and ego have no place  
Show no prejudice towards any creature  
Let human values become your teacher

Though lamps are many, the light's the same  
Human values are the light from this flame  
If we increase the love within every sector  
Then everyone can benefit from this nectar

I talked to the moon; she gave the advice  
Always shine bright, don't forget to be nice  
Seen funerals of stars, as they merged into night  
Now I gather with thunder, but only for its light  
Never ever let darkness engulf planet Earth  
Instill human values from the day of your birth

Though lamps are many, the light's the same  
Human values are the light from this flame  
If we increase the love within every sector  
Then everyone can benefit from this nectar

Nice to be important but more important to be nice  
Let's learn the difference between value and price  
Sometimes we're pushed down to the floors  
Life's just a drama when we work for applause  
Take a pause, work for a cause and end the wars  
Brighten up the world walking through the doors ■

Gurdip Roopra, West Midlands, UK

# Value, beyond price

Sudhir Kundi, London, UK

Could I put tolerance, honesty  
love, compassion before profit?

Or is it simply the saints who  
follow teachings of the Prophet?

Currency may lose value, but  
worse still is human values falling  
Using people and loving things  
A state of affairs that's appalling

We must use things, love people  
We should be kind and forgiving,  
truth is high on the list of virtues  
And higher still is truthful living

Let us be the lighthouse  
Example that's apt and bright  
Be revered through the ages  
For living – pious pure and right

Those with human values  
are far and few between  
Values are merely read about  
they are rarely to be seen

More than ever today we need  
to trade these values; instead  
To follow our heart and soul  
Before we are declared dead

I trade in stocks and shares  
I see prices climb and drop  
A market that never sleeps  
Trades without a single stop

If I happen to lose today  
Then I shall gain tomorrow  
It's momentary happiness  
It's just a fleeting sorrow

It makes some people money  
It wipes some people out  
The fact I'm not trading today  
that's not what today's about

Just imagine human values  
Those things that should be real  
Things not bought with money  
those things we should all feel

I transact every situation  
I often end up going short  
It's profit ahead of value  
In the rat race I get caught

I often wonder if I could  
profit from every position  
Keep my human values high  
Making them my life's mission. ■

# Creating Harmony

ARTICLE BY  
YOUNG WRITER

ASHITA CHAWLA,  
ERITH, UK

We all need a harmonious world. But where do we start?  
Simple...we start within our homes. Here are 10 easy steps:

1

Youngsters should work to respect their Elders and gain knowledge from their experiences, instead of arguing over little things. Remember that "Elders have experience, and youngsters have energy; so if we combine this experience with this energy then there won't be any troubles in the home."

2

Remember that everybody in a household has their own responsibilities, but while we are carrying out our duties, we may gain an ego that tells us that 'I am the one that everybody is relying on', and that 'this place would not function if it weren't for me'. To prevent this ego taking over our minds, we must think about what would happen if two people in the same household were to switch roles. I know it's a gender stereotype, but I wonder what would happen if my mum and dad were to swap their household tasks? In my home, I can't imagine mum opening the bonnet of a car in need of fixing, and knowing exactly what to do. In the same way, I can't imagine dad making an edible meal! We must all learn to respect each other, and that's another lesson to learn.

3

Remember to acknowledge there are some who are stronger than you, smarter than you or faster than you. Everybody has different levels of capability, be it a natural talent or a developed skill. If one person can lift 100 kilos and another can only lift 40, we must remember that neither has unlimited strength. There is always a limit to our potential. This reminds us that we are not superhuman or extraordinary beings, and this should keep our heads away from the clouds. If we avoid arrogance, we won't judge negatively between differing abilities, appearances, qualities and thoughts within the family.

4

Remember that a peaceful mind-set between a group of people, be it a family, work or friendship group, is always based on mutual understanding. The strength of these foundations is based on love, respect, tolerance, forgiveness and acceptance.

5

Remember that whenever we are travelling, we see road signs that read, 'Give priority to oncoming vehicles'. If we take this concept, and bring it into our homes - that we give priority to other members in our family before ourselves - then the convivial atmosphere of our homes is maintained.



Remember that sometimes we see people in a family working really hard to gather material luxuries, but not caring for precious time that could have been spent playing with the children, or showing appreciation to their partner. They forget that there aren't very many necessities in the world, yet they carry on collecting the luxuries. This sometimes creates distances between the person and their family, which keeps on increasing. In severe cases, the gap results in families drifting so far apart, that relationships are lost. In any case, all material wealth will eventually leave us. Whilst we all benefit from the security of wealth and prosperity, it can backfire if we don't learn to give it the rightful place.

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Remember that knowing how to use the things of the world properly is an art. Parents have a great responsibility in teaching their kids this art of living. Some of the lessons need to incorporate morals, righteousness and good manners. These virtues and values can't be taken away from children once they have been imparted.

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# 8

Remember a wound on the tongue heals the fastest, but a wound caused by the tongue will never heal at all. We always need to watch what we say, because words that we may not find harmful could affect somebody else for the rest of their lives. We must understand that it is very easy to break household appliances and get them repaired within a day, but a broken heart takes much longer. There is a saying: Love and trust are like mirrors, you can fix them, but you can still see the cracks in the reflection.

# 9

Remember that whenever we do projects, whether it's in school or at work, we must always write out a self-evaluation of the said project at the end. If we continually self-assess ourselves, then we will realise that there is always room for improvement. If we spend more time building our own character, then we will have less time to criticise others. As it is said in the Holy Bible, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you".

# 10

Finally, if we focus on changing other people, and expecting them to be the best they can be without being the best ourselves, then we will get nowhere in life. However, if we focus on modifying ourselves instead of other people, then maybe one day, this world will live in peace and harmony.

# *Home Sweet Home*



# Make a Difference

We produce food on a mass scale, deliver it all around the globe inspite of the worrying carbon footprint, and yet some people are still starving. We have empty homes all over the country, and yet some people are still homeless. We create governments for law and order and equality to prevail, and yet there are divisions all around, and crime does not seem to abate. Where have we gone wrong?

It is very easy to blame God. After all, as the Maker it must be His responsibility to feed, house and create fairness within His own creation. But, this is where man's intelligence blinds, poisons and corrupts. For man is deluded by his own nature, oblivious to the oblivion he has trapped himself in. I remember reading somewhere that a person criticised God for all the sad animals, trapped in cages or sitting aimlessly in refuges. "Why don't you do something?", the person asked. God replied, "I have done something...I have made you".

It's not beyond anyone of us to make a difference, but only if we realise that the starting point is me! I must change myself first.

Humans seem to have forgotten their value. If something is valued, it is deemed to be higher or more

precious than other things. In this regard, human beings, supposedly God's greatest creation, should be valued as the highest. But to the contrary, we find human beings warring over land, power and money. Where is the fighting spirit needed, to combat homelessness, inequity and starvation?

As a young student, I am frequently asked what I want to do with my life. My reply is sometimes rather idealistic, as I say, 'I want to change the world.' It's not beyond anyone of us to make a difference, but only if we realise that the starting point is me! I must change myself first. In the words of Mahatma Gandhi,

"Be the change you wish to see in the world."

We have already been told for thousands and thousands of years how self-reformation can be achieved. Now is the time to imbibe the philosophy. Living in this century, we need to develop spiritually and holistically. Such development beautifies us, and pulls us out of the abyss. It is spiritual awakening which illuminates, purifies, and creates bliss. It makes us give, rather than just take.

Let us reflect. Do we value our existence? Are we truly living according to spiritual wisdom or do we just exist? We must address ourselves, and must discover the real purpose of existence. Having found purpose, would be like discovering

**Arman Musafir, Leicester, UK**  
ARTICLE BY YOUNG WRITER

an oasis in the desert! With an earnest desire for blissful living, we can find a way of lighting up the world, and feeding our empty souls. This requires a yearning for liberation.

Values such as tolerance, humility and kindness are only the first steps to a greater value. A value that knows no bounds, a value that is beyond good and evil, a value of eternal beauty.

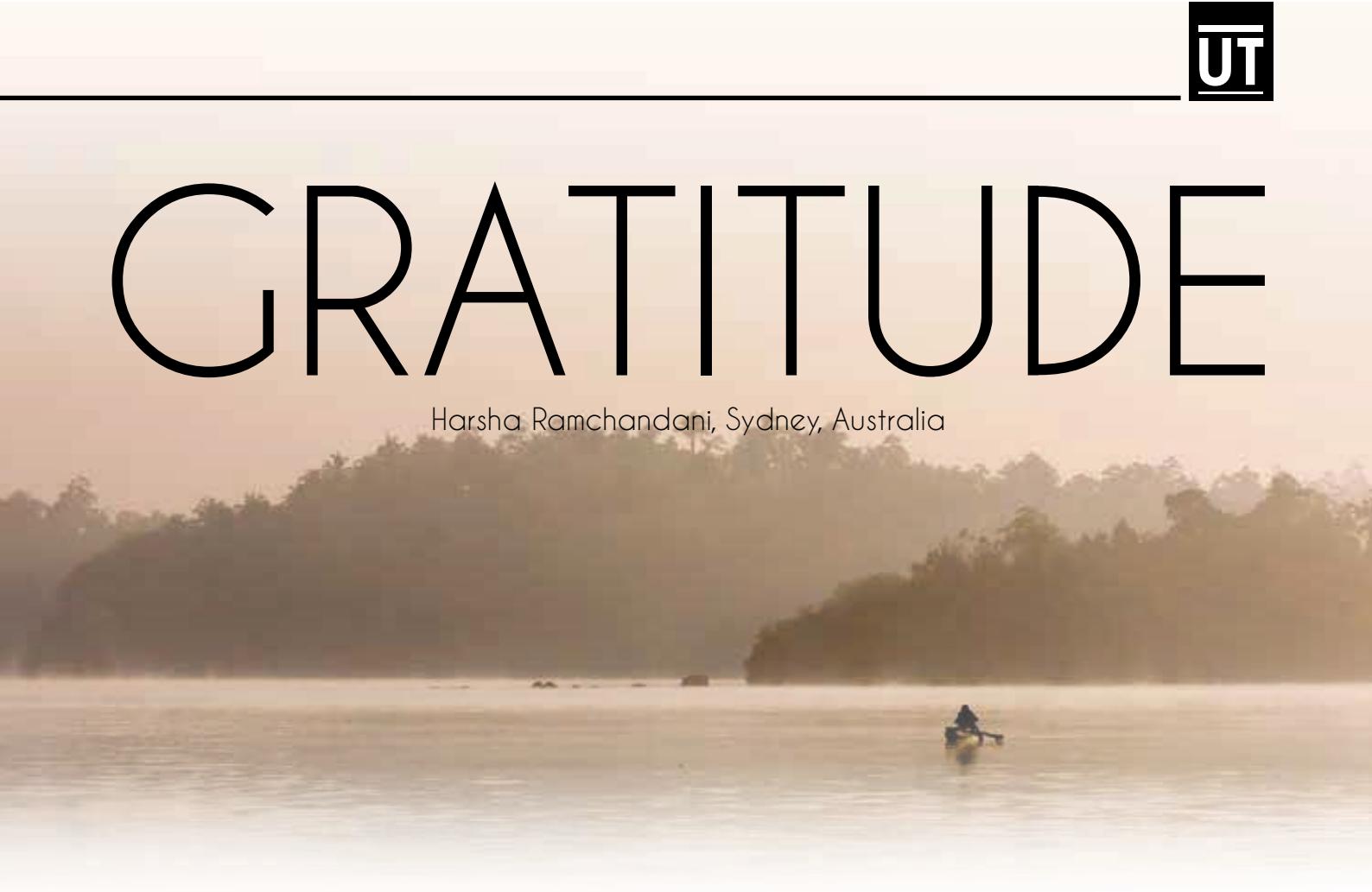
It is spiritual awakening which illuminates, purifies, and creates bliss. It makes us give, rather than just take.

His Holiness Nirankari Baba tells us, "We should expect love and compassion from the spiritually awakened, even if it is not forthcoming from people of the world at large"

This should not be seen as an indication that spiritually minded individuals devalue the world. Quite the contrary, they respect even those who disrespect them, show kindness to those who are unkind to them, and are gracious to those who are ungrateful to them. For the spiritually awakened understand that even beneath the misdeeds that flow from clouded minds, there is a pure essence and untapped divinity – the source of all goodness. By valuing this, the goodness will one day come to the fore. ■

# GRATITUDE

Harsha Ramchandani, Sydney, Australia



Every day is a journey,  
An exploration if you will,  
An opportunity to count your blessings  
And make sense of God's will.  
Rather than sit around and brood,  
Get up, take a walk, and conclude  
That you're lucky to be alive,  
have family, friends, and food.  
Some people say I have an attitude,  
It's the attitude of gratitude.

Now and then, I too get into a bad mood,  
I am anti-social, subdued, and even rude.  
But when I make time to reflect on my days,  
I make it a point to look through the haze,  
Hang on to the tiniest reason to praise,  
The One who never fails to amaze.  
'It's Inevitable' leads to a bad day,  
Thinking 'Optional' is a far better way,  
Some people say I have an attitude,  
It's the attitude of gratitude.

Go on, give it a go,  
Try being thankful instead of bitter,  
Put into words what you're grateful for, everyday,  
Whether in a journal, Facebook or Twitter.  
Experience the euphoria induced,  
Sift through the bad, and concentrate on the good.  
No situation will seem hopeless,  
Because you'll be spreading your online status,  
And when people say you have an attitude,  
You can proudly say, 'it's the attitude of gratitude'. ■

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## American Independence Day is celebrated in July. Indians celebrate their freedom in August. These days are significant in the respective countries because they represent the abolition of oppression by foreign rule.

Freedom provides an individual the right to express their thoughts and beliefs without suppression. Everyone should be able to enjoy basic human rights like expressing their thoughts freely, eating and drinking what they desire, pursuing their dreams and living a life that is safe and full of dignity and joy.

Unfortunately, we see too many people deprived of the latter. Ignorant and violent groups are suppressing the weak, forcing their beliefs upon others, and depriving them of a life of dignity, hope and love. Even though human beings are considered to be the prime species because of their ability to think and rationalize, too many of us still choose to lead a life full of hatred, discrimination, vengeance and ill-will.

Many nations may have attained liberation from oppression, but people's minds are yet to achieve liberation from negative and evil thoughts. Nelson Mandela put it best when he said,

".... to be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others."

Although attaining freedom at the national level leads to jubilation, it is often the case that conflicts and controlling practices remain at the local level, which still need to be analyzed and resolved. Within regions and cities, we tend to see people of various religious and cultural backgrounds. The name they have given to God can be different even though it is the one and same entity they pray to. Within local neighborhoods, we may see people wearing different clothes, enjoying different foods and speaking different languages. We dance to different music, and are raised within traditions and ceremonial practices, which are not the same for all. Whilst this adds to the color and appeal of the country,

too many of us see differences as a reason to prejudge others – to be prejudiced. Unfortunately these judgments become reasons for one community to segregate itself from others, or to become isolated or disenfranchised by others within the majority culture.

Religion, which was supposed to unite people, seems to be the largest

**“We are taking our own peace of mind away by being blind to the beauty that diversity brings.”**

factor in tearing people apart. Rather than appreciating the variety that God has blessed different human beings with, we look to discriminate against those who do not appear or behave the same way as us. Human beings have put themselves in chains due to this type of narrow thinking. We are creating tension in our own minds by wishing that everyone would think like us. We are taking our own peace of mind away by being blind to the beauty that diversity brings. This weaves us into a cocoon, rather than leading us to be openly appreciative of the contribution others make to this world.

Life is said to be just four days long:



two days spent wishing for things, and two days spent waiting to fulfill them! We waste our lives, losing the present trying to collect things that we will not be able to take with us after death. When things do not go our way or we are not able to complete our goals, we go through daily stress and depression. Not only do we suffer, but this mind-set causes our immediate family and friends to suffer also.

When God is not the primary focus of our life, then man becomes entangled between the fantasy world of desires and actual reality. Man puts so much effort into achieving his secular goals even if it means trampling over other people and their feelings. When those efforts take more time than expected in producing outcomes or deliver unexpected results, then anger, resentment and depression ensue. Life seems meaningless and man questions his purpose of life. The mind leads him towards various directions without a proper destination. Most people spend their lives caged in this state of purposelessness despite achieving numerous materialistic goals. There are a few, though, who rebel against this and rather seek the real aim of life.

There are many paths one can take to get to a mountain peak covered with ice. The most challenging path would involve using hand picks and knee braces to anchor into the ice and rock, which lines the steep incline. This process would take the longest time and require the most stamina and perseverance. The easiest way would be to have a helicopter fly to the peak of the mountain and drop us there. It would use the shortest rope possible. Of course, this would not satisfy the desire of accomplishing a great challenge that is associated with climbing a mountain, but it would be the most efficient and practical way to get to the top. To do it the harder, more fulfilling way is dangerous. It would require the services of an experienced instructor, and prior training in climbing. The experienced guide would show a route that has been carved by various climbers in the past, thereby helping to overcome the various obstacles, whilst also sustaining the least damage from severe conditions. This method would provide a sense of satisfaction in

reaching the peak of the mountain, without involving the greatest risks.

Spiritually, we may have many directions to follow - scriptures and prophets have stated that in order to feel the bliss and make this life purposeful, we can follow tried and tested paths.

Following a path that makes both the here and hereafter successful, is a joyous way to live and worship. Walking alone makes it all the more unlikely that we can ever reach the destination. Walking in the wrong direction will not help either! Finding good spiritual company, and experienced traveler-guides on the path of divinity, is the easiest, and most enjoyable way to undertake this journey.

This is why a Spiritual Teacher, and a Spiritual School is so helpful. For me, the destination is Self-realization. However, I have found that the path that leads me there begins with God-realization. After all, how can a droplet of water realize itself, without encountering the ocean first of all?

A Spiritual Master advises us that God is love. If we are to reach God, then we can only do so if we take the path of love. The practical expression of this in daily life, would be to consider the welfare of others, and to build bridges of understanding, rather than walls of ignorance or mistrust. Such Masters teach us that words should not create confusion, delusions, or

distances. Words coming out of our mouth should propagate truth and disperse joy to others.

"People demand freedom of speech as compensation for the freedom of thought, which they seldom use" says the Danish philosopher Soren Kierkegaard. When we adopt the wisdom of a True Master, we also attain wise qualities. Many people are talking in this world, but too often it is with ignorance and harmful intent. The speech of travelers on the spiritual path is imbued with sweetness and benevolence.

The choice is ours. Do we want erratic paths that lead to ignorance, stress and feelings of imprisonment? Or do we want a path with a clear destination, leading to peace and liberation? Peter Marshall beautifully says, "May we think of freedom, not as the right to do as we please, but as the opportunity to do what is right."

Man is mesmerized with this world from a very young age to his demise. He gets entangled in the web of secularism, giving more importance to materialism, fame and wealth, rather than God. The errant mind leads a person to blurred, random thoughts, inducing him to take harmful

decisions and fabricate biased prejudices, which lead to a life that is distant from the ultimate truth – God.

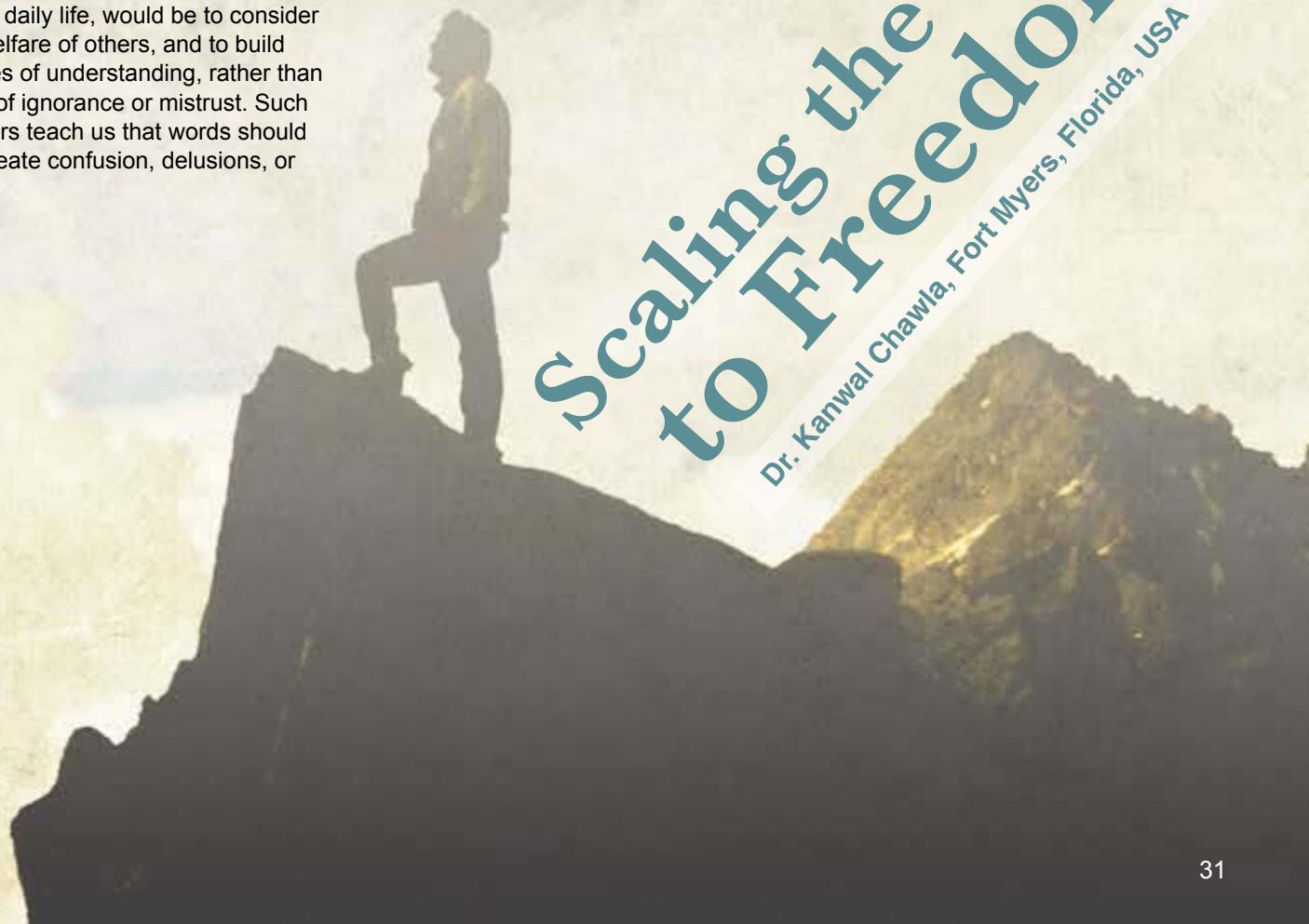
Most people are entangled in this fruitless path of life and do not realize it. There are those few who realize that they are stuck, and want to get out through the aid of a Guide.

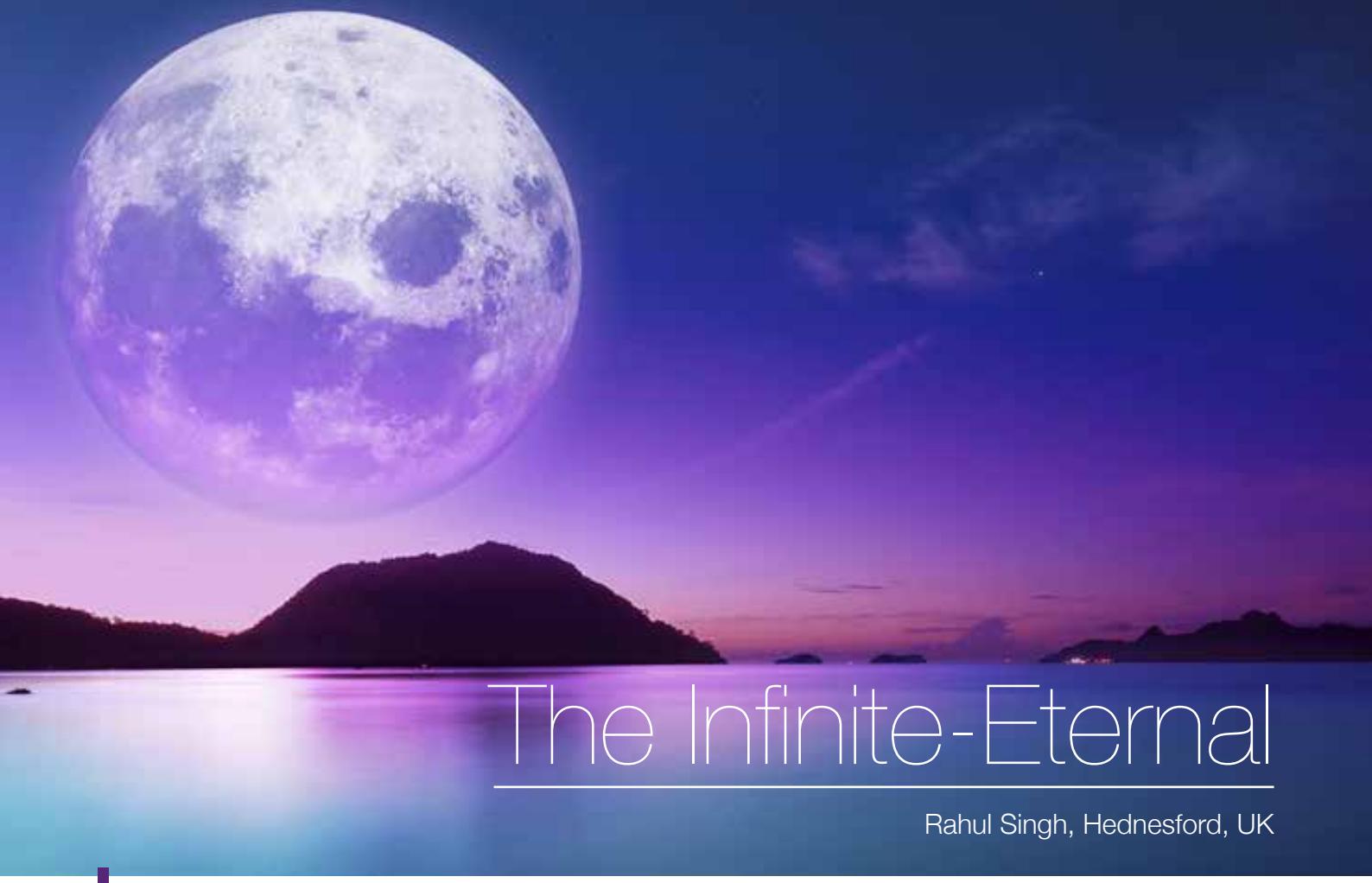
Once led to the peak of God Realization, such travelers cannot help but say, "I am truly satisfied, for I have been liberated!"

There is a key to open those prison doors – there is no need to shackle ourselves with hatred, enmity and misunderstanding. There is a way, through which we can value unity, and enjoy togetherness. It is like standing at the peak of the Mountain of Life, and seeing all there is to see, without impediment, without obstruction. ■

# Scaling the Heights to Freedom

Dr. Kanwal Chawla, Fort Myers, Florida, USA





# The Infinite-Eternal

Rahul Singh, Hedgesford, UK

If someone had asked me a few years ago whether I wanted to attain something Infinite and Eternal, I would have simply laughed it off as impossible. For I would much rather have pursued the temporal and the transitional - the sense of achieving something which would enable me to feel greater than others. I would have wanted to be the best, however hard that might have been. The question of something Infinite and Eternal would not have crossed my mind.

I always felt that pain and suffering led to heightened experiences. We realise that our senses fool us, making us feel great the one moment, and lousy, the other. Pain can be a great teacher, but we rush to get rid of it or numb it. This actually entraps us in a vicious circle, where we trade gratification of the senses with gratification of the ego. We are standstill within ritualistic worship and wanton prayers, aimed at removing the pain. Yet we do little to remove the thorns of attachment and pride.

We exhaust all the gratifications and realise that pain is simply being repressed to deeper levels. We come to understand that we never really get rid of the hurt, despite our small periods of happiness. Suddenly, the mind, which was our greatest obstruction for most of the time, gives up and says, '*I don't know...I simply don't know what to do.*' It is then that the sound of the Inner entity appears and you remember the words - those words that now inspire you towards liberation from the gratification of the senses and the false sense of self – the ego.

We may hear the voice of the Inner entity, but this is only the beginning. We will have to search for the

External entity - the guidance of an evolved individual, who is self-realised and living in enlightenment. Such an individual is one, who not only speaks of the Eternal-Infinite, but speaks with it too. Such a being embraces the Eternal, and sees this Infinite reflection in the whole universe. We lovingly call this person a Preceptor, or 'Satguru'. The hallmark of such a being is his ability, upon sincere seeking, to reveal instantaneously, the Infinite Eternal, without having regard to the seeker's faults or shortcomings. Such a benevolent being is only concerned with manifesting Enlightenment. The experience this being shares is a moment of intuitive awareness, which leads us to leap beyond the intellectual and finite mind, to experience the boundless supreme.

Once we find such an enlightened being, we begin the process of removing the false perception of reality that we ourselves have created. There is no consolation and no other consideration. This being reveals the Infinite Eternal that has no form, but through which all matter and form arises. That presence which is beyond space, and is entirely timeless, but because of whom space-time exists. The forms in the shape of humans have a tendency to be oblivious to the fact that they too are made up of the Formless (that without form).

The Preceptor guides us to witness and be conscious of the true Self at all times. Hence, we enter a dimension of bliss and begin to live with a god-like nature. We enjoy the transitory material world, whilst transcending the state of pain and pleasure. If somebody asked me today what I prized most in life, I would unhesitatingly say, 'more than anything I value the Infinite Eternal'. ■

# It's a Blessing!

Arti Nehru, California, USA

## In Loving Memory of Vivek Shauq Ji

For the world, Vivek Shauq was an Indian actor, comedian, writer and poet, who succumbed to a heart attack. For those who knew him, he was a spiritual being who inspired and touched people's lives. There was much to learn from him.

Shortly after Vivek Ji's passing on, I went back and listened to one of his last talks, given at a spiritual gathering. I'm so glad I did because his words were life changing. He explained some key concepts. The phrase 'prabhu ki kirpa' in Hindi can be translated as God's blessings. Indeed everything is God's blessings.

However, Vivek Ji took this one step further and clarified that as human beings we should never try to define God's blessings. He gave the example of a father, who, one day says, with God's blessing, my three sons failed their exams. People laughed at him and looked at him strangely. But he went on to explain, if it is God's blessings when they pass exams, then why is not God's blessings when they fail? The father was on to something. Why is it that only the acknowledgement of passing grades or the promotions at work fall into the category of God's blessings? Why is it God's blessings when everything goes our way? Should we not ponder over this?

It is important to realize that believing in God is to accept that He is managing the entire cosmos and that He loves us. This belief also means that everything that happens is not only His will, but also His Blessings. What is happening is God's blessing. And equally what is not happening, is also God's blessing.

If something doesn't seem right to us in our limited human capacity to understand the Omniscient, even then we need to defer to the view that there is a reason behind everything.

This was a new concept for me. I always believed everything happening is God's will. But Vivek Ji showed me that it is not only His will, it is also His blessing! And if we can walk with that simple realization, every step will be walked in peace.

The only thing we have to do is surrender. If something is not happening despite our best efforts, that is His blessings as well. Sometimes 'mera kuch karna hi kabhi kabhi rukawat ban jata hai'. In other words, sometimes we try so hard to go for something that is not His will, and that we, ourselves, become the cause of our own delays or roadblocks.

Word has it that perhaps the greatest Cricketer of all time, Sachin Tendulkar failed his 10th standard examinations. But now, in one state in India, one of the lessons taught in the 10th class is about the living legend, the 'little master' himself.

Blessings come in different forms and different guises. He may not have done well in 10th grade, but Tendulkar is a success. God had a special plan for him. That is not to say, we approach life with a 'given up mentality'. No, we must be proactive and strive not only to work hard, but also fulfill our responsibilities and spread love everywhere we go for as long as we are in this world.

Once we do this, we can rest in peace with the assurance that when you do your best, God will take care of the rest. Even doing your best, is not possible without God's blessings.

So, the next time something does not go the way you would like it to, remember – it is His Blessings. ■



# MY STATUS

Ricky Bhatia, Birmingham, UK

Social networking can be a force for good. It can be a process that inspires and motivates, forging connections between people who may never have conversed, or met outside of cyber space. People make 'friends', all over the world, transcending barriers of race, gender, religion and culture. However, social networking is also feared as a tool for spreading hatred and abuse, with many people worrying about the access strangers might have to their personal information and day to day lives. It is nigh impossible to police.

Focussing on status updates, I also post quotes, or express personal opinions online, from time to time. I share this with my network to receive a comment or two in return. I want other people to think about what I am saying. If I am appreciated, then it's great. If I get a positive comment, I feel encouraged. There is so much focus on this particular type of status. It consumes us with what appears to be wisdom. So much so that it does not really allow us to think about what we are writing, forget putting it into practice. Thoughts are noted to gain applause and perhaps little more. It is common to see inspirational quotes illustrating our status. One wonders what the point is in giving oxygen to such ideas if we are merely to read them, but never become exemplary. Would it not be better to place them in our inner incubator, allowing our soul to grow?

If we were to look at our inner status, it would bear even greater fruit. If our status could assist in moving away from the hatred we find in the world, would that not be better? If we can contemplate on what we are doing consciously, would that not pay dividends? Why indeed go into overdrive after posting hundreds of ideas online, but allowing ten, twenty, or even thirty years to pass by without any positive change. Without any real progress, do we not fall foul of attaining our goals?

It would appear that man is unable to even offer respect to the opinion of others. People argue about each other's status! The networking space can become a place for bigotry and bullying. This has led to recent, unprecedented violence, which in turn has punctured the spirit of many a person across this land. One fails to understand the confusion and irrationality behind such acts. The policy makers looking for answers would have to turn to spirituality for solutions. This is not to fuel the debate, but rather to provide direction.

In spite of the fact that we live in the pit of gold - amidst the cultural virtues and values of society – sadly we rarely value it. Those who do care for the betterment of humanity, stand tall. Their status grows manifoldly, as it was in a traditional sense. Should we not do the same now?

Man has distanced himself from the fundamental truths. His

Historically a person's status – his rank and file – was almost immobile. He was recognised by his status, which in turn defined his attributes, qualities and personal assets. This was an external narrative, imposed by social customs and norms. The most privileged could box people into certain jobs and roles, according to rank. People would have to work hard to grow their status, and break the mould. Today, a person's status is used to describe the comments he or she has posted on social networking sites, within the 'online' world. This status is far from standstill - rather, it changes by the second. It often reflects a person's fleeting moods, and aspirations. Why do we post our status, in such a public manner? What does it achieve, and is it just an exercise in ego-centric vanity?

sole passion for the acquisition of wealth leaves him spiritually bankrupt. It is for this reason that living in the light is of the utmost importance. It reduces the distance between people and brings them closer together. It fosters better relations and inspires people not only to change their inner status, but to live by the change.

The world is moving at such a fast pace. Technological advancements, both digitally and physically, are changing the world we live in. It is important to differentiate between the real and the unreal. For this we must ensure that the digital world through social networking does not become more significant than the physical sphere of existence. We must never forget our real self in the changing dynamic. After all, our physical existence is our opportunity to realise the deep nature of our true status and connect with the formless truth. This is not on some virtual cloud, but something that is all-pervading. Hence, it must be known before it is too late. ■



**It is the season of autumn. The wind is getting cooler, and the leaves are beginning to change colour. As nature takes on a new course, I cannot help but be fascinated by the beauty I am surrounded by. It is only a matter of time when these colours diminish and snowflakes begin to fall from the sky. Following this, the season of spring will come to rejuvenate the plants and we will be surrounded by greenery once again. The harmony of the fall colours hit me. As I watch the leaves fall off the branches, I am overwhelmed by a multitude of thoughts.**

# Life's Lessons

It strikes me that nothing is stationary. Everything, with the exception of the One, is on the move. Life and nature alike, are governed by the universal laws of motion. With the season's transition from autumn to winter, the leaves fall off the branches only to grow back again.

Experiencing changes – good or bad – is a fact that we must come to terms with. The difficult moments in our lives often act as the best learning media. They teach us and test us. Just as flowers bloom after a rainy day, the difficult moments also go away to bear positive fruit in the time after.

Without the rain, the flowers cannot grow; without difficult times, we cannot evolve. The shedding of foliage in the fall is not the end of the tree, rather it is the paving of the arrival of spring that ushers in new beautifying leaves. Similarly, the troublesome moments we may experience are transient, normally followed by the Almighty bringing joyful moments into our lives.

So, next time you find yourself in the midst of an unfavourable situation, understand that it is a temporary state, which, like the seasons, shall pass.

We too, sooner or later, are bound to return to our source. But what is this source? Our source is the Creator, the ever-present, all-powerful energy that has been given numerous names such as God, Allah, Jehova and Nirankar. It

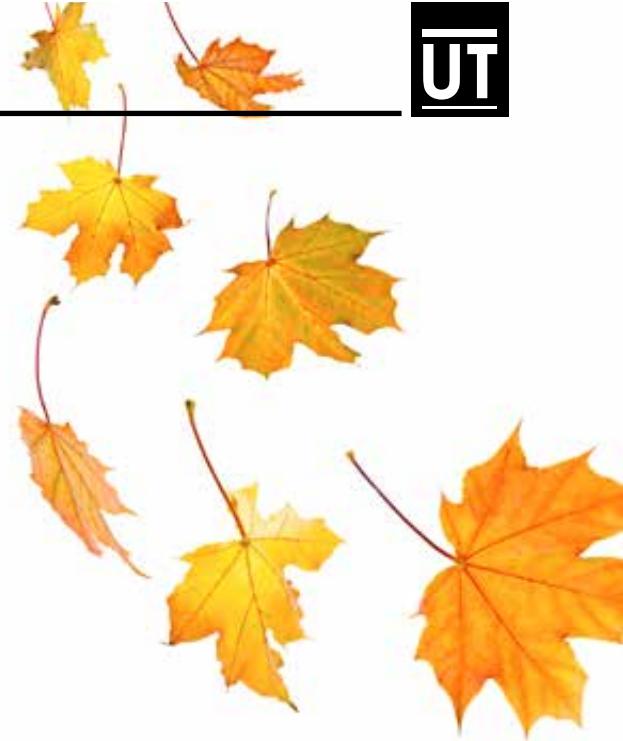
is from this source that we all stem, and divine love is its foundation.

In its purest and most powerful form love is not based upon jealousy or ego, rather it is an unconditional emotion. It is a habit that we must cultivate. Love is the reality of realities and the simplest most important emotional truth in the universe.

**“The shedding of foliage in the fall is not the end of the tree, rather it is the paving of the arrival of spring that ushers in new beautifying leaves.”**

Just as a horse's speed and direction is controlled by the horse rider, each of our actions too should be driven under the command of love in its purest form. Unlike the materialistic entities we like to surround ourselves with, love will always exist. Let us consider the example of a foetus that floats in its mother's womb, its only contact with the outside world being the placenta upon which its entire existence is based. The placenta nourishes the foetus and mediates its relationship to its source, its mother.

Similarly in our case the source or “mother” is the Formless Almighty God, our creator who is responsible for the universe and everything in it. Love is like the placenta, forging our connection to the source. It is through the resonance of this love



**Akanksha Mehla,  
Toronto, Canada**

that the creation becomes one with the Creator.

We are nothing compared to the infinite vastness of the Creator. Let us all nourish ourselves with the greatest gift he has given us, to become one with him by expressing his gift – love – in a pure, unconditional and selfless manner. With this we can arrive at bliss.

Bliss is not about fleeting entities such as fame and fortune. True devotion, true spirituality, true happiness, true bliss stems from one source – that is love. If you truly want to be happy then there is nothing that can stop you from being happy.

The road to happiness can be as long or as short as you want it to be. When someone criticizes you or disagrees with you, a small iota of hatred is born within you. If you do not squash this hatred at once, it turns into a snake poisoning your mind with negative thoughts, and acting as a burden in your pursuit to happiness. The only way to counter this hatred is through love alone.

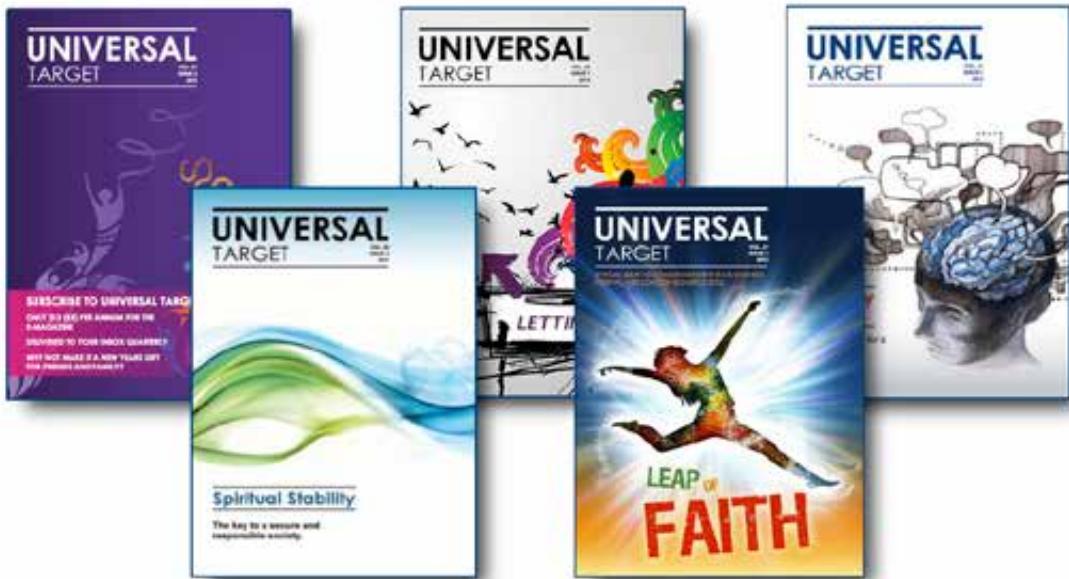
In conclusion, the quality of life and the degree to which we are happy depends solely on the amount of love we give out. We often forget that in the religion of love there are no believers or non-believers. Love encompasses all; it is like a magnet that draws people to it. Where everything in this world is changing, His Holiness Nirankari Baba reminds us that love should never be seasonal. ■

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