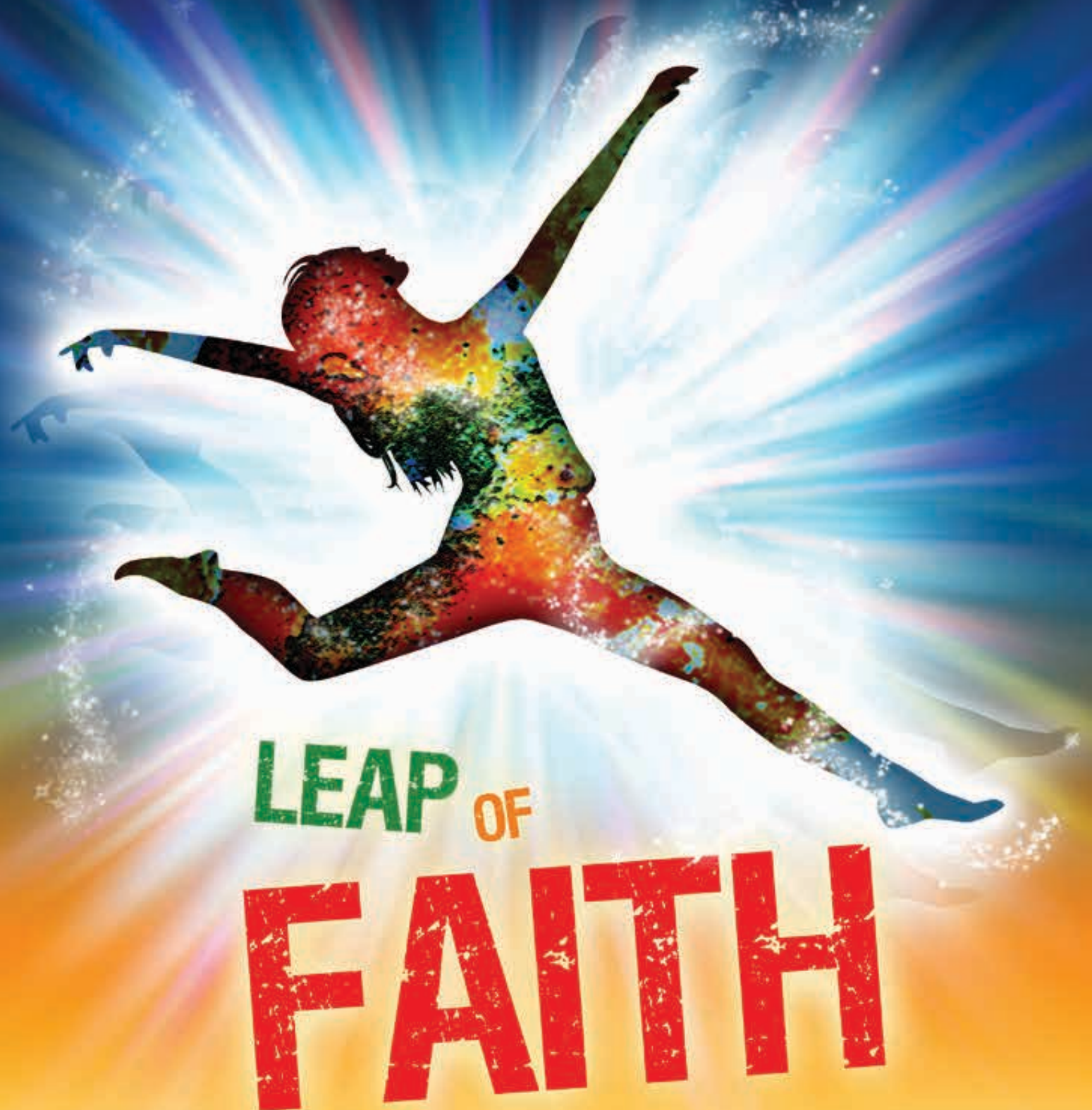
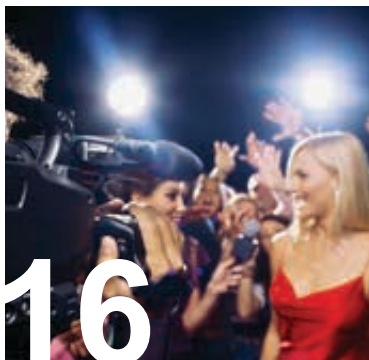
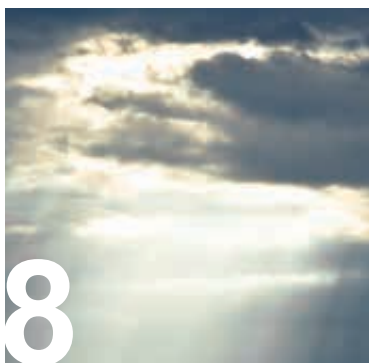

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Universal Target is a spiritual journal promoting unity in diversity and peaceful co-existence. It is founded on the belief that all human beings share a common source and spiritual heritage, irrespective of the differences of culture and world traditions. The journal draws upon the shared and accumulated wisdom of our common heritage, to encourage harmony through self-realisation. Universal Target endorses the maxim of His Holiness Nirankari Baba, 'Know One, Believe in One, Become One'.



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Editorial

Leaping for Oneness



Billions of eyes will be fixed on the Olympic Games in London. The athletes will be using every ounce of strength to break old records and achieve new Olympian heights. They will all be leaping for gold. The atmosphere will be intense and electrifying, incredibly nerve-wracking and breathtakingly elating.

For two weeks, nations will put aside any deep-rooted historical grievances and differences to work together on a common platform, exuding a spirit of unity in diversity.

The Olympian ideal would be unattainable without the spirit of friendship, respect and excellence. Were this original ideal to be lost or forgotten, mankind's legacy of humaneness, built on the rock of steadfastness, tolerance and forgiveness, would turn to mere echoes of the distant past.

Discrimination and prejudice based upon race, colour or creed, should be unequivocally quashed. The blatant racism that frequently surfaces at football matches and other sports is glaring evidence of the lack of these vital human values. The true spirit of the Games should be an embodiment of them.

If this decline of human values is not checked by us, as also our decision makers and leaders, it would incalculably damage the well-being of the whole of humanity. Therefore, the real purpose of the Olympic Games would be defeated.

It is highly commendable to achieve excellence in any specific

field - be it sport, arts, music, science or technology. However when the attributes which make up an ideal human being, such as tolerance, understanding, love and kindness, are absent the honour attached to such great achievements appears incomplete. These human values demand large-heartedness, broad-mindedness and compassion. One who imbibes such values relishes serving and living for others.

Excellence on its own, may win the respect and admiration of the public for the achiever, but it does not generate true respect, friendship and oneness amongst human beings. The achiever has to own these attributes in order to spread respect and friendship. Just as an athlete toils, sweats, perseveres and makes sacrifices to achieve his goal, an ordinary individual can also achieve excellence by working diligently to become a better human being. To be at peace with oneself and with others, one has to be in harmony with the environment and its source. If we truly want to see a peaceful world, we need to connect with the source.

World peace begs unity and a sense of oneness. We have to make some gigantic leaps guided and instructed by those who are adepts in these matters. This means that one has to seek a coach who can oversee our quest for human excellence.

The Sant Nirankari Mission is hosting numerous community events in the run-up to a momentous two-day festival. The Nirankari International Samagam (NIS) is being held at the National

Indoor Arena in Birmingham and the theme of Oneness will be promoted in order to foster good human values. The festival will be a significant leap for oneness and anyone earnestly interested in universal peace and unity should attend. Leaping for oneness can only take place if events like these are widely supported and appreciated.

Harbans Singh ■

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Should you wish to write for the journal please email your contributions to the Editorial Team at: universaltarget@nirankari.org

Timeless Message

The Religion of Humanity

HIS HOLINESS NIRANKARI BABA



When the true religion is established in our lives, the world becomes a better place. And humanity is the true religion. We have religious and sectarian divides because the meaning of religion has not been understood or fully appreciated.

Enlightened beings, throughout the ages, not only accepted humanity as the true religion, but also imbibed the core human values. If we, too, accept and follow such a religion of love and humanity, there would be no room left for any disputes or violence. Without such human values, hatred and enmity make us no better than beasts. Love helps us to pursue the path of humanity, which in turn, leads us to lofty angelic heights. In other words, love turns the earth into a heaven, whilst hatred turns it into hell.

We cannot bring about an atmosphere of abiding peace as long as the essentials of love and brotherhood are treated as mere slogans. For there to be peace, there has to be action and implementation. We have to follow the advice of our seers and sages. We have to be human first. After all, the imperative to be human is not directed towards animals, but to man himself.

This injunction became necessary because although man acquired the body of a human, he did not embrace the nature of a human. By espousing human nature, man can not only become a real human, but also a truly religious being.

Religion is not the mere summation of rites, rituals and observations. It is simply to be human.

This can be its only viable definition. We cannot be religious without spirituality, which is its essence. Without spirituality - the embodiment of selfless-love, compassion, tolerance, kindness and humility - religion is reduced to mere buildings, customs, rites and rituals. We get entangled into them to such an extent that we are caught up in disputes and disagreements. Where spirituality prevails, there is no room left for cruel disputes, damaging divisions, and communal violence.

Thus spirituality is the heart of humanity. It is its

indispensable quality. Just as salt cannot be salt without its saltiness and sugar cannot be sugar without its sweetness, a tree cannot be a tree without its essence, the roots. Likewise man cannot be human without his fundamental trait of humanity.

Saints and sages have always stressed upon this essence, and urged us to understand religion, as well as to extract the message hidden behind words, containing pure nectar. They teach us to love, as life lived with love is life indeed.

What matters is the awareness of our essence. If we are aware of it, nobody can succeed in poisoning our minds with hatred and enmity. By being conscious and alert, we can not only save humanity within, but also raise religion to its glory.

A disciple of Mahatma Gandhi's path of non-violence, Rev. Martin Luther King, echoing the words of prophets and saints said:

"I will allow nobody to narrow and degrade my soul by making me hate others".

That if some people hated him because of the colour of his skin, then under no circumstances would he stoop so low as to hate them in turn, and that he would not allow himself to be dictated to hate others.

We need to grasp the essence by knowing the Truth and by realising ourselves. This will enable us to rise above all kinds of baleful discriminations and malicious prejudices.

We should not be under any illusion, for the reality is that the Creator dwells in the creation, and the creation is in the Creator. The Creator is everywhere. If we cannot see the Creator as one, we cannot beautify the mind. This all-pervasive Creator dwells in everything and in each particle. As it has been said:

Every atom bears Your mark;

every leaf, Your physique

In all four corners, all around; I see only Your mystique

A self-realised human being would say: 'You dwell in every object. You are equally in all four directions. When I look to the left, I see you; when I look to the right, I see the same you. I see your glory all around. Whether in the North, South, East or West, I see your exact same glory. You are no different in different directions; You are exactly the same.'

The Unseen, with the aid of spiritual enlightenment (knowledge of God), is seen in everything animate and inanimate. This enlightenment has been regarded as illumination, whilst ignorance equates to darkness. Ignorance gives rise to doubts and delusions, causing people to stumble and fall; illumination destroys doubts and delusions, saving us from stumbling and falling.

Those who embark upon the path of true religion, contribute to the cleanliness of the environment. As a result, purity and peace prevail in society, making the environment joyful and happy. It is the enlightened ones who beautify the social environment.

This is the reason that gurus, prophets and enlightened personages have endeavoured to awaken mankind over and over again. Sadly, though people listen, they do not understand. In fact, they misunderstand and misconstrue.

The situation is analogous to the story of an office clerk, who was asked by his superior officer to take a count of and report on the number of mandirs (temples) in the city. After having waited for a whole week, the officer asked the clerk:

"Have you managed to count them?"

"No, sir," he replied.

"I am really at a loss, sir. They keep on jumping from one place to the other; they are never still."

Puzzled by the answer, the officer asked:

"Tell me how the mandirs keep on jumping."

The clerk replied:

"Sir, I thought you wanted me to count the bandars (monkeys)."

This is what happens when we fail to comprehend the importance of words.

We must, therefore, come out of our slumber and heed the inspiring words and guidance of the spiritually wise to walk the path of Truth. Our essence must identify itself with and merge in the Super-essence. We are to become one with it in such a way that there is no distinction left. There are no more complexes of superiority or inferiority. Equivision then rules. Everyone is equal; no one is lower. Everyone is worthy of due respect.

It would be worthwhile to remember saint Kabir's words that he alone is bad; everybody else is better than him. By adopting this type of attitude we can reign in our destructive ego and self-centeredness.

Celebrated saints and sages have been counselling us not to belittle others. For denigrating others results in our own downfall. They exhort us to be meek and live our lives in humility. Those who possess humbleness are able to reach the zenith. They urge us to shun ego, hatred, narrow-mindedness, greed and violence. In fact, they tell us to avoid anything that causes harm, and is an obstacle in practising spirituality, the true religion of humanity.

Editorial Team

This is an English adaptation of an extract of His Holiness Nirankari Baba's address. ■

NAVIGATING THE JOURNEY OF LIFE

Sandeep Khinda, Delhi, India



A few days ago, I was watching a programme on the National Geographic channel, which showed the origin and evolution of certain items like electronic gadgets, appliances and other items that we habitually use in everyday life. Of particular interest was the Satellite Navigation Device, and how it came into use. Whilst driving, the longitude and latitude are identified to locate our exact position. So much so, that we can be routed to our destination.

In this vein, HH Nirankari Baba also steers us onto a smooth and safe route, during our sojourn on earth. But as self-willed beings, we go askew and lose ourselves in the treacherous maze, taxing and confusing the mind.

The programme got me thinking about the journey of life - a journey that truly begins when a spiritual mentor plants the compass of Divine Knowledge in our heart. With such knowledge, and the guiding principles of the mentor, we can navigate the course of our lives.

When we use sat-nav technology in a vehicle, we travel on our journey with confidence. Should we take a wrong turn, we hear not only the caution, but also the guidance onto the right path.

In this vein, HH Nirankari Baba also steers us onto a smooth and safe route, during our sojourn on earth. But as self-willed beings, we go askew and lose ourselves in the treacherous maze, taxing and confusing the mind.

HH Nirankari Baba repeatedly tells us that carelessness on the path is likely to lead us astray. Sometimes we accept his injunction, and sometimes we don't. However, the mentor continues to bless us. Knowing that we have a tendency to go astray, he goes out of his way to redirect us. Unfortunately, we seem to become so complacent in the certain knowledge that our recurrent mistakes will be taken care of as a matter of course. It is as though we're leaning on the adage, "to err is human, to forgive, Divine." To rely on such a justification for continually committing the same errors, is a lame excuse.

After attaining Divine Knowledge from the mentor, we come to realise that we are spiritual beings

having a human experience. To sustain this awareness, we need to abide by the mentor's guidance.

However, by demonstrating partial acceptance of the teachings, or following them half-heartedly, we find ourselves off-course. We are then subjected to the untold travails of life.

With the passage of time, we again approach the mentor, seeking forgiveness. The mentor responds compassionately. He shows us the easy way, but we cannot resist doing it the hard way, over and over again. Blessed will be the day when we wholly accept the guiding advice of the mentor. For in so doing, we will not only navigate our way home safely, but we will also thoroughly enjoy the journey of life. ■



Positive *Attitude*

G S Shekhawat, Auckland, New Zealand

An interesting incident occurred, which I shall never forget. It was a regular day. I was in a rush to reach my clinic on time. As usual, I took a bus to the hospital, and I reached just on time. My first patient was a 75 year-old lady who was already waiting in reception. Without further delay, the assistant sent the lady into my room. I was reading through her case file so that I could update myself as to her medical history. Before I could even ask her any of the standard protocol questions, the old lady spoke with a very weak and shaky voice: “You would never want to be old...it’s a curse to be old.”

For a second, I forgot the protocol and looked at her. She was a skinny, fragile looking old lady with short grey hair; she was sitting in a wheelchair staring at the floor. I asked her as to why she said that. The old lady spoke again, with frustration in her voice, “I can’t see very well. My joints hurt and I can’t walk properly. I am suffering from heart issues and now to top it all, I have hearing problems as well. I don’t have anything to look forward to, except death.”

I could feel the sadness whilst she was expressing her frustration. She was still staring at the ground.

I took a moment and then said, “Well, I differ from what you have just said.”

In response to that, she lifted her head and looked at me with a big question mark and what I guessed to be a bit of anger. “Why do you think so?” She asked with a harsh voice.

“I think it’s a privilege to be old, for not everyone gets the opportunity to be old.”

I smiled and whilst trying to maintain my cool I said, “I think it’s a privilege to be old, for not

everyone gets the opportunity to be old” (echoing the words I’d heard once spoken by HH Nirankari Baba)”. I continued, “you have so much life experience. Think of the new born kids who die in infancy, teenagers meeting with accidents, people suffering from life-threatening diseases in

their middle age. You are one of the fortunate ones to live long and experience so much in life.”

“If my actions are dependent on the actions of people around me, then I am not living my life.”

I paused for a moment and continued... “correct me if I am wrong, but I think your life experience is very rich, and you should be thankful for it.” I was not sure how she would react to what I had just said, so I looked at her, only to be amazed with her expression.

For the first time in my session, I could see a big smile on her face and a twinkle in her eyes. She looked right in my eyes and said with joy, “you are full of wisdom young man.”

Then I carried on with the examination and the session. I could never forget this incident and on reflection I realised that there had been no change in the lady’s medical condition after my session. She still had eyesight problems, pain in her joints, heart issues and hearing loss. She was very sad when she came to my session, however she left with a sparkle in her eyes.

What was the difference? What made her smile? I guess it was her attitude - the way she looked at her condition. Initially she was counting all the negatives associated with her ageing, and later on she realised that not everyone has the opportunity to experience this. ■

Fire of Love

Sunny Mehta, Wolverhampton, UK

Illustration: Gurcharan Tandon, Sydney, Australia

Dear Lord, who hears all prayers
Saviour of all, who truly cares
Take my humble request O' Lord
Let me live as per your accord

My plight is such: I cannot change
My habits are such: I cannot wage
A devoted life, I hope to gauge
To redeem this life, to reach some stage

With you I feel a peace beyond
From my sadness I can abscond
All my mistakes you've overlooked
You are the bridge, the verge, the brook

Enlighten my dusty path today
For I stumble readily in dismay
For your peace and bliss, I wholeheartedly pray
To be a good disciple, every single day

I ask this day for a way to be
To transcend the traps that beguile me
To be a beacon of your love and light
To see so clearly, to have pure sight
My eyes seemed shut; I could not see

I'd closed my self, to tranquillity
I begged for Nirankar* to save me
He always did; He set me free

Now all I need is to stand firm
To live a good life, in which I can earn
Habits that still bind me, to discern
On the fire of love, may I burn

Keep me as your symbol of light
And slowly free me from my plight
Give me back, a life that is good
With you and me and brotherhood ■

*Nirankar – Formless God

Leap and Soar

Serena Nagha, London, UK

Crushed under the burden of ego
In life's race, how far can we go?

When hurdles are higher than the goal
And venom of doubt poisons the soul

To shed the skin of ignorance
And be blind to every difference

To unite as one human race
In the name of God, who has no face

When the day of winning comes
Every inequality, simply numbs

From ego's vicious grip did I tear?
Which cloak of courage did I wear?

In the presence of fear, Your love sought me out
It taught me to soar; it removed all the doubt

A leap of faith, the borrowed sight to see
That nurtured my soul and set me free

That the gold medal is the chance
For the soul to ecstatically dance

Cut the burden of vices; burn ego's core
You won't just leap, you'll soar! ■

Smile, Pray, Sing!

Arti Nehru, Los Angeles, USA



I was craving something sweet. A minute later I opened my front door and found a basket full of chocolates. Later that week, I went to the grocery store and really wanted to buy some strawberries but when I saw the price tag I walked past the aisle. A couple of minutes later they announced that the strawberries would be 75% off for the next eight hours. I was *ecstatic!*

It's easy to have faith when things work out like this.

But the true test of faith comes when you do everything right yet everything still seems to go wrong; or when you see others get what you *believe* you deserve; or when that grey cloud seems to linger over your head relentlessly and there seems to be no silver lining around the corner.

Tough situations like these give us all a better understanding of our faith. Do we complain or do we thank God for knowing best? There is a saying, "faith is a film developed in the dark." This means faith actually grows during hard times.

We all face the good and the bad in

life. But there's something *beautiful* and magical about faith. It gives you the wings to fly out of your misery. It gives you peace in any situation and more importantly, it gives you the strength to endure and persevere.

I have noticed faithful people often spread their light even in dark places. Like a lit candle,

*"Faith without works is dead."
(James 2:14-26)*





they spread their brightness and positivity onto everyone who comes into contact with them.

As it is said, "Faith without works is dead." (James 2:14-26)

I interpret this as meaning faith just isn't faith until it is put into action. How wonderful it must be to be able to sing when you might otherwise feel like crying or when you can praise God even when you feel defeated! **Faith** in action is when you choose to trust God in the midst of unanswered questions because you know He is with you and He is in control. And the joy we derive from faith is often our strength.

Many times in life we are forced to choose between living in fear and living in faith, and whichever one we choose is reflected in our actions. For example, when we live with excitement and not discouragement, it shows that we trust God. Faith in action is often exemplified when we stop trying to

solve every problem with our own **strength** and lean on God instead.

"Those who joyfully leave everything in God's hand will eventually see God's hand in everything. Worry ends where faith begins."

- Anon

Because faith can be fragile at times, I have learned to staunchly protect and feed it by reading spiritual books, praying regularly and surrounding myself with friends who also have strong faith. Regularly attending a holy congregation is also a great way to maintain that connection with God. So when challenges do arise, I turn to Him for solace and support.

There is beauty in faith. It affords extraordinary rest. It can heal the wounded. It can bring peace to the troubled. So, **smile....pray....sing!** Put your faith in action and allow it to be an expression of God's love and His blessings. ■

"Those who joyfully leave everything in God's hand will eventually see God's hand in everything. Worry ends where faith begins." - Anon

THE ATHLETIC IDEAL

Dr. D K Mehta, Wolverhampton, UK

This is the year of the Olympic Games. Held at four year intervals, they are truly international, and represent an age-old ideal – an athletic ideal – of enacting a healthy mind in a healthy body.

Greece, the birth place of this ideology, believed that the success of society came from the moral citizen, who was holistically trained, spiritually sound and physically strong. The citizen, the athlete, was an everyday part of life involving religion, education, the arts, and politics. He wove physical disciplines into the very fabric of society, leaving no area untouched. Gymnasium, academy and palaistra¹ were not just venues for secular training, but forums for moral, intellectual and sacred discipline. The amateur status of the Games was kept to preserve the balanced mind, which began to waver with the onslaught of material reward.

The spirit of the Games was, infact, compromised by Alexandra the Great. In the early 4th century BCE, he introduced a monetary prize, which led to the professional athlete. The bond between religion and the athletic ideal sadly broke, rendering the Games a secular event.

Under Roman occupation, the Games were further moulded into something closer to the gladiatorial contests. The sacred traditions that had grown up around them disappeared. In AD 392, the ancient Olympics were held for the last time.

Later, Wenlock Olympic Games, founded by Dr William Penny Brookes in 1850, were instituted to promote the moral, physical and intellectual health of the inhabitants of Much Wenlock (UK). They were encouraged to participate in outdoor recreation. However, when Dr Brookes died, Pierre de Coubertin, a French educator, revived the spirit of the athletic ideal in 1895. It was his effort and dedication that gave rise to the modern Olympics.

This year the whole world will be gathering in London to witness this enactment. Once again, it will be time to imbibe the spirit of 'agon', from which we get the English word agony. Not just the rigorous physical turmoil, but also the spiritual sacrifice that the athlete had to come to terms with.

Will the modern Olympics, very much like the past, exhibit the ancient athletic ideal of high morals and exemplary spirituality? Will the perfect balance between the material and the spiritual be seen? Or will it represent a mere one-sided development – the physical excellence?

To be the best amongst the best is never easy. It requires, from an early age, the pursuit of unfaltering attributes: a positive spirit that never wanes; a boundless energy that has no bounds; a competitive zeal that has no compromises; and a relentless goal – to go for gold.

“As our whole being consists of the heart, soul and mind, we have to use all three holistically to become the very best.”

In order to be competitive and worthy of the Olympics, athletes go through scientifically planned and specifically organised 10-month fitness regimes known as macrocycles, under the expert guidance of sports professionals. The macrocycle is designed to lead to peak performance on the date of the event. It starts with base strength – a level at which the muscles are strengthened and a cardio base built. Then the cycle becomes more specific; the intensity is increased, but quantity of exertion is reduced to prevent fatigue or injury. If the cycle proves to be successful, it results in peak performance on or about the week of the event. Leading up to the Olympics, athletes find themselves in the tapering phase that culminates in maximum strength for their event. This also allows for full recovery and training effect from the previous intense, sports specific training, which goes through various phases of performance.

Similarly, to become spiritually adept, in the highest of sacred fitness, Jesus tells us to imbibe, as the First Commandment, the following: Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. - Matthew 22:37

This is echoed in the Avtar Bani: As You are my Lord and Creator, it is You to whom I pray. My whole joy - body mind and wealth, I offer you everyday.
- Verse 50

As our whole being consists of the heart, soul and mind, we have to use all three holistically to become the very best.

As our whole being consists of the heart, soul and mind, we have to use all three holistically to become the very best. The rigorous program recommended is to go through disciplines such as self-restraint, reflection and service of humanity, all of which lead to liberation. This helps us develop our faith in the Word of God.

For in the absence of this liberation, we shall end up as nothing but dust. Not only will we lose our gold medal, but we shall also be confined to training and re-training (the wheel of becoming).

Just as the professional trainer prepares the athlete for his peak physical performance, the sacred Master (also known as the Cup of Eliza: Talmud (Pesachim 10:1) serves the acolyte four cups of wine, known as the four expressions of redemption (Exodus 6:6-7), for his peak spiritual health.

In its heyday, the Games united the divided states into one nation. Today, they unite divided countries and continents in to one world of colour, race and creed. The Games, therefore, will always be welcome, for they bring out the full physical potential in man. But for man to be complete as the image of God (Genesis 1:27), he has to acquire the spiritual prowess too. For with it, he will be the rightful owner of the ‘gold’, and without it, he will lose the game of life over and over again.

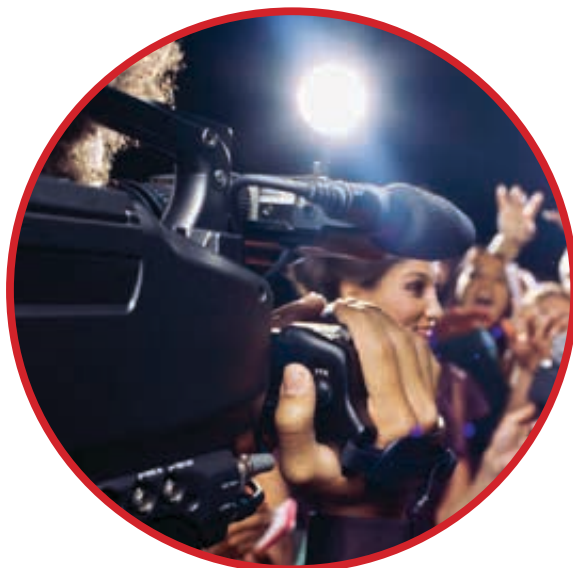
HH Nirankari Baba, in his address of 12 April 2012, reminds us that there are four types of acolytes. The first type worships the Lord for material gain – gold medals and so on; the second type worships because of fear; the third type worships because of his genuine desire to know; and the fourth type is he who has, in fact, known. Such a person is the enlightened one, who rises above every difference that separates man from man, to become the vast ocean, though in the form of a single drop. It is he, who attains true happiness and real bliss, which is enshrined in the age-old athletic ideal.

Such a person is the enlightened one, who rises above every difference that separates man from man, to become the vast ocean, though in the form of a single drop.

¹ Palaistra : forum for wrestling, the first venue for the Games. ■

Celebrity Worship

Surjit Dhami, Cannock, UK



When one feels down, one tends to look up to those held in high esteem, such as rock idols, film stars and sports stars. But it is an appalling state of affairs when society's role models are no more than 'dressed up' models. Our children are raised with very little knowledge about our real role models, who stood for equality, tolerance, and universal love. Generation after generation has been nurtured to worship celebrities, who are often at variance with these very values. Children, for example, are obsessed with dreams of becoming pop stars or footballers overnight, and are potentially sacrificing their true vocation.

Exploiting the vulnerable and the impressionable, our media opt for popularity by portraying celebrities as the be all and end all of life. As a result, the virtue of achieving prosperity with the sweat of the brow is ridiculed by the youth.

The gulf between media hype and reality has grown even further. Society that ditches spirituality and allows celebrities to become role models for billions of people can only be heading towards an inevitable disaster.

Many of these celebrities, (if not all), feel no obligation to act in a socially responsible manner. On the contrary, they do not think twice of using profanity to bolster their fame. Do we want role models who sing about love

behaviour, the fans remain drawn in awe of their superficial, larger-than-life images.

As a society, we quite rightly do not tolerate religious fanaticism in any shape or form, and yet we wholeheartedly embrace the dangers posed by celebrity fanaticism.

We tend to ignore and underestimate the devastating impact on children of celebrity worship. They are made to feel bad about their looks and bodies.

As a society, we quite rightly do not tolerate religious fanaticism in any shape or form, and yet we wholeheartedly embrace the dangers posed by celebrity fanaticism.

and happiness but are sometimes depressed drug abusers? In spite of their fortunes, their private lives are often plagued with relationship problems, loneliness and unbearable suffering. Sadly, despite their disillusionment with the superstars' appalling

So to be cool, they copy the excesses of their idols.

The sensationalising of binge drinking, foul language and loutish behaviour has been the hallmark of celebrity culture. Singers, for example, who glamorise guns

and demean women have a hugely harmful influence on the young. This has arguably inspired substance misuse and violence in society.

Greed, shock factor and the unending drive for fame have been the primary driving forces behind the lewd behaviour of celebrities. Reality TV too is promoting a voyeuristic society. People sit in front of their screens, watching celebrities do the most inane things, such as opening doors and going to the toilet. This sort of

In the kitchen, we check every sell-by-date, to ensure no one gets food poisoning. Yet, the poisoning of the mind goes on unchecked.

mind-numbing experience can never be beneficial, by any stretch of the imagination, for building a healthy society.

We all claim we want the best for our family, yet we expose them to the most harmful influences the world has ever produced. In the kitchen, we check every sell-by-date, to ensure no one gets food poisoning. Yet the poisoning of the mind goes on unchecked.

The impressionable minds of our children and our young require protection against the negative forces. Just as intellectual education is important, so is spiritual education. Both are equally essential in the development of a healthy society.

In fact, man must learn to filter the gold from the dirt. This is only possible if he has the art of differentiating the real from that which is unreal. For celebrity fame is a passing show, and to attach ourselves to it is to become part of it.

To follow this passing show, without questioning it, is tantamount to the blind leading the blind. It is society that sets celebrities as gladiatorial demigods, who fight to keep their egos aloft. When they fail to do so, their tragic fall from grace is mocked and uncannily celebrated.

Instead of looking up to such demigods with irreparably wounded egos, we turn to the ageless solution of the wise and the enlightened for inspiration and redeeming vision.

These visionaries are our real role models, as opposed to the celebrities we hold in high esteem. For only they are capable of infusing the universal human values into society that it so badly lacks. Ultimately, the lack of human values leads to a shallow life. This is exquisitely captured in a memorable inscription, found on an ancient tomb of an affluent man, who spent his entire life hankering after popularity...

'I have dined with many mighty kings, now ants and insects are dining in me!' ■



Success & Spiritual Excellence

Dr. Tina Mohindra, Oxford, UK

**“Happiness is not something ready made;
it comes from your own actions.”**

In this fast moving, shrinking world, professional success is as ever competitive and widely desired. Such a success varies greatly from person to person. Ultimately, to be successful in life is to achieve happiness and inner peace. No matter how educated or successful one happens to be, the drive hardly ends there. For there is always more to achieve, more money to be made, more fame to be gained and more people to be pleased.

People strive to be successful in all aspects of life, sometimes without even realizing it. However, there can be many distractions and obstacles which prevent us from reaching our own potential and the inner peace we all desire. It is our duty to overcome these distractions by being motivated and using self-discipline. These distractions take on many forms, but quite commonly there is a

misunderstanding about where our happiness really lies. When this misconception is corrected, we can set ourselves goals which allow us to reach the true purpose of life, and we can dedicate ourselves to this sole purpose.

To be successful in any aspect of life, there needs to be a heavy input of hard work, dedication and focus. Without these three things, the chances of being successful, professionally or personally are very slim. This also applies to gaining success in our everyday duties and responsibilities - in being a good friend, a good mother, a good employee or a good human being. By reflecting on our achievements in every aspect of life, we are able to evaluate and set goals. In doing so, we are more likely to succeed in reaching spiritual awareness and happiness.

The London Olympics and Paralympics are fine examples

of many hard working individuals looking to gain success and to be at the top of their field. They will all be working towards a goal, the key element in these games. Without a goal, there is little motivation to practice and do the hard work required to become a medalist. Without a goal, dedication and focus, success is a far cry. The motivational coach, Tony Robbins, once said:

“Setting goals is the first step in turning the invisible into the visible.”

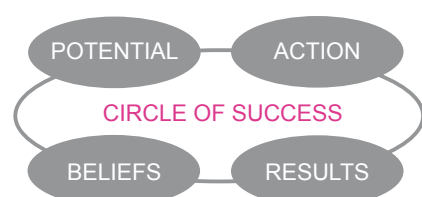
The goal is always invisible until it is reached. The medal is invisible until it is awarded. Likewise, God is invisible, until we realize him.

The formula known as the circle of success helps individuals to reach their goals. Consciously or subconsciously, the competitors in the Olympic Games, business men/women, artists and so on,



all use the circle of success to realize their aims. This circle involves belief, potential, action and results.

It is imperative to understand your potential before you set out on your goal and this can only be done when one believes in



oneself. The belief, therefore, sets the potential. Action needs to be taken to achieve the goal and by analyzing the results of the action, the belief is further strengthened. With a stronger belief, one's potential can increase and so the circle continues until we are at the top of our cherished goal. Each part of this circle is crucial for our attainments. Swami Vivekananda reminds us to,

“arise, awake, and sleep not, till the goal is reached”,

implying that we need to be fully conscious of ourselves to reach the goal of life. Human life differs from that of the animal kingdom, as only humans appear to have the ability to discover their true, permanent Abode. This, in fact, is the ultimate goal of every human

being.

The list of unhappy, rich and famous is endless, and the tabloids are overflowing with such stories. On the other hand, we have many ordinary people without fame and fortune, who are immensely happy. Therefore, it goes without saying that true success is the achievement of happiness, regardless of materialistic wealth. This happiness, an altogether different entity, is founded on spiritual awareness, the attainment of which requires the same formula.

This simple rule can be applied to gain spiritual success and happiness. However, there has to be a spiritual guide to show the path and take us through the enlightening journey. To start with, there has to be a belief. A belief of one's own potential. A belief in the Supreme Being, and a belief in the teachings of a spiritual mentor or guide.

“Unless you believe, you will not understand.”
(Saint Augustine)

The understanding that one has the potential to attain spiritual goals makes one act upon this belief. In other words, there has to be action following a belief. If the belief is not acted upon, there is no belief. The belief therefore sets the potential.

Turning beliefs into actions requires courage and dedication. The result is the realization of the supreme, which is the spiritual goal. When this goal is reached, one's self-belief is further strengthened and this then has an impact on our potential and on our actions. This whole cycle is carefully guided by the true spiritual mentor, who shows us the way to attain inner peace through self-realization which equates to God realization.

God realization, together with the

inspiration of the spiritual guide, changes our actions towards others. By realizing ourselves, we discard our self-ego and become kinder, more respectful and more tolerant towards others. This in turn, re-enforces our spiritual success. By making others happy, we feel rewarded. In this vein, the Dalai Lama emphatically says:

“Happiness is not something ready made; it comes from your own actions”.

So to be happy, we need to act and make the people around us happy.

Hence, being a good person, being kind to others, being tolerant towards others and being altruistic, all lead us to the godly path. These are the essential ingredients in becoming a successful human being, be it a doctor, a lawyer or a professional. Thus we can say that a wealthy and famous doctor who makes a fortune by selling kidneys is not really a successful person, because to be successful one has to be a good human being.

HH Nirankari Baba underlines the importance of spreading happiness and keeping the company of like-minded people.

For “coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success.”

Therefore, with our beliefs setting our potential, and our actions guided by the true mentor, we are able to successfully reach our spiritual goal, find inner peace and share our brilliance and happiness with the people around us. ■

Exercise your Faith: Walk with Nirankar!

Dr. Pavan Chera, Stoke on Trent, UK

We often come across the expressions having faith, keeping faith, or that faith can move mountains, in the media and in everyday verbal interactions. I would like to share what faith means to me, and how I exercise it in my life.

Faith, very simply, may be explained as complete, unequivocal, unshakeable belief; or special confidence, hope and trust in someone, something or some cause. Let us look at examples of what some writers say about faith:

“For we walk by faith, not by sight.”
- St Paul (2 Cor. 5:7)

“Take the first step in faith. You don’t have to see the whole staircase – just take the first step.”
- Dr. Martin Luther King

“Faith is an oasis in the heart, which can never be reached by the caravan of thinking.”
- Khalil Gibran

This may imply that faith defies logic, but for me it’s about surrender. It is the realisation that God provides faith and all our needs, for it is He who is first and foremost in our lives. If we walk by faith, we can face any distress, for faith is like a steady generator; it gives power when all else fails.

All these thoughts are indeed informative, but what I’d like to focus on is my relationship with them: what they mean to me, how they manifest in my life, and how I put them into practice. After all, to have faith, I need to believe. To believe, I need to know. To know, I need to be enlightened.

In the Avtar Bani, verse 24, HH Nirankari Baba says that God

“faith is like a steady generator; it gives power when all else fails.”

can only be known by the benevolence of God Himself, and that a true Master can reveal Him instantaneously.

For me it is the Knowledge of God, which is the starting point. By practically imbibing it in my life, it can take me to a higher plane. Intellect can only take me so far. Belief without action is also hollow and meaningless. I have to listen with my own ears, behold with my own eyes, and then have faith in God. Only then can I truly do as I say, and say as I do.

In buying a chair, the assets of logic, knowledge and hearsay simply will not be enough. Third party reviews and recommendations will also be insufficient. What I will need to do is to practically sit on the chair to test its suitability, robustness and aesthetics. Likewise, faith is incomplete until God is personally experienced in everyday life. For this very reason, there is no greater religion than to perceive the omnipresent God, and there is no greater sacrifice than to surrender one's mind to the Lord.

A tightrope walker exemplifies this further. Having walked from one side to the other across the Niagara Falls, a tightrope walker asked the crowd below: “Can I do this?” “Yes”, they replied. Then he went across with a wheel-barrow and asked the same question: “Can I do this?” “Yes”, once again, they replied. The third time, the walker took his friend in the wheel-barrow, balancing perfectly across the full length of the rope. He asked once again: “Can I do this?” Having seen him do it practically, they replied: “Yes.” Then he looked around at the amassed crowd and asked: “Who's next?”. The tightrope walker was testing the faith of the crowd.

Hence, if I have an abiding faith, nothing can trouble me.

In trusting my life to God, relying only on Him, faith allows me to think positively and find courage. This leads to acceptance and thankfulness to cope with the ups and downs of life.

This does not mean my boat will not face any storms, but that it means I have faith that no storm will be strong enough to sink it. I am ever grateful to God, in prosperity and austerity alike. I take the present to be pleasant, and the future to be equally so.

With this perspective, I can move away from the fickle friends of doubt, uncertainty and all other negative attributes, to the constancy and steadfastness of faith. This nurtures love, kindness and all other positive virtues. God supports me through my obstacles, by strengthening my faith. This does not mean that they disappear, but simply that I get the conquering force to overcome them. As it has been said:

“The task ahead is never greater than the strength within you.” - Anon

I aim to diligently follow a road map set out by my Spiritual Guide, HH Nirankari Baba. It consists of the selfless service of humanity, the remembrance of God at all times, and the fellowship of saints. I am also given the five guiding principles, which help me to beautify my life. They give me a framework in which I can be more humble, tolerant, large-hearted and responsible.

Divine knowledge can never take root in the heart if it is not accompanied by faith. Hence, for me, faith is indispensable since without it there can be no beauty, peace and equipoise.

I am grateful to my Spiritual Guide, for giving me everything I need to exercise my faith, and to walk with God at all times. ■

TAKE A LEAP

Komal Preet,
Los Angeles, USA



On this Earth, we have our goals, aspirations and dreams
We can have whatever we want, nothing's unattainable it seems

Progressing through our lives, we may come to a place
Where we are too scared to trust, and take a leap of faith
In a world of liars, cheats and thieves, who can we trust?

For our family, friends, relatives can only do so much...

At the end of the day, it really comes down to just two,

For it has always been about the Almighty and you
Do choose to count on Him, though it may seem wrong...

Even if it seems that the path is endless; far too long

Your patience and diligence can take you only so far
And a leap of faith, believe you me, is not all that hard

We may feel cautious, weighing every potential risk
Safeguarding against haste, being irresponsible and quick

So when we come to the edge, we must make a choice

To trust our head or to have faith in our inner voice

We have to march forward, and be prepared to soar

For our trust in God, can make us strong all the more
Because this faith is the sunlight that illumines the dark

God will show you in all, His own divine shining spark.





Stress-free life

DAVE DHANOA, TORONTO, CANADA

What would you think if I were to say that each one of us is a part of, and has access to, the Supreme Power of the Universe 24/7, with each and every breath? Whatever we want or need, this Power can and does provide. If we need anything, we can ask this Power. In actual fact this Power already knows what we need, and duly gives it to us.

In today's rat race, stress is unfortunately too common an experience. It is increasingly the root cause of many illnesses and diseases.

Various self-help gurus and others of an entrepreneurial mind-set, attempt to teach techniques and methods of stress release. Many of these techniques may be temporarily helpful if we work upon them with diligence, trust and faith. Trusting relationships develop through successful outcomes when we experience the benefit of following guidelines. For future issues thereafter, we tend to revisit those guidelines over and over again. Even if the prescription does not succeed all the time, the fact that it succeeds more often than not, leads us to build trust in it. However, there is no lasting relief to be found.

"See it, talk to it, remember it, interact with it, and look what happens!"

The recipe for a stress-free life is actually to be found in faith in a higher power. This Power has many names, Nirankar, Jehovah, Allah, Waheguru, to name just a few. It is omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient. It is in each and

every speck of the Universe, and everything in the Universe is in it.

How can we build trust in such a Being? All ancient and present spiritual teachers tell us that the first step in the establishment of faith is to know what we are trusting. Seems logical, doesn't it? Sadly, in the religious realm many people ignore this vital step.

Only when the aspirant is introduced to the Supreme Power, through the medium of a spiritual mentor, can he build a relationship with it. See it, talk to it, remember it, interact with it, and look what happens! Yes, this is the main part of building trust; you have to communicate with this Power.

This supreme power is perfect; everything it does is perfect too. Whether good, bad or ugly, we get the strength to see past the

"the first step in the establishment of faith is to know what we are trusting."

apparent imperfections in life, whatever they happen to be.

What takes away stress and replaces it with bliss is Trust in the Lord (Supreme Power). Once you have a relationship with It, and you understand that it is Almighty - the doer of everything in the Universe - troubles cease to trouble us, and we develop a mind that does not mind. Nothing is impossible in faith.

Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself.
- Matthew 6:26-34 ■



ILLUSION

SHIVA RANE, LIVINGSTONE, SCOTLAND

Immerse a stick into a glass of water and what do you see? The stick appears to be bent. An uninformed person would say the stick is either crooked or there is something wrong with their eyes. But ask a student of science and he will say, 'no', the stick is neither bent nor are the eyes faulty. In fact, it is simply an illusion caused by the refraction of light. His knowledge of science makes all the difference.

The spiritual mentor does exactly this. By blessing us with the Divine Insight, he removes the veil of ignorance right in front of our eyes, to show us what is true. The world appears to be real, permanent and a source of happiness. But an enlightened person can tell how 'false' the world really is. Nothing lasts forever, be it wealth, power, fame or relationships. Everything has a life span. What a person has today will vanish tomorrow. Therefore, it is in one's best interests to accept that all possessions belong to the Creator, and that we are mere caretakers.

We all know that our body sheds old cells and produces new ones every day. Scientists have computed that an average person sheds all of their old cells for new ones every seven years. That means:

a man aged 50 would have undergone a bodily cell change seven times over!

The very body he was born with is no longer there!

However, the spiritual mentor through the Divine Insight shows us that this body, which we think we own, is not ours anyway. It is this that makes us aware and enables us to distinguish between the 'true real' and the 'seemingly real'.

How ironic it is that what looks real to the worldly eyes is actually unreal, and what looks unreal, is actually real - the Eternal Formless.



When television was first invented, the inventor was branded a fool in trying to bring a moving picture from the air. Even today when I watch a family drama, an action thriller or an interesting documentary, I get so carried away that I think it is actually real. The characters, the scenes, the emotions all seem so real. Only if I could take a step back and remain detached, would I be constantly aware that it is only a programme, not real, but an illusion. This is the case in the world, too.

However, we need to be snapped out of our illusion, and brought to our senses. The Divine Insight helps us in this regard, and allows us to become fully aware. To be aware at any given moment is to be fully present and conscious of what is real. Contrary to popular belief, ignorance is not bliss. ■

Expectations

Sangeeta Tutt, Walsall, UK

In *Great Expectations*, Charles Dickens writes about a character called Pip, who has great expectations. Some literary enthusiasts have analysed Dickens' choice of title as alluding to the three stages of expectations – Pip's childhood and the rise to his riches, Pip becoming a gentleman in name only, and Pip dealing with reality and its consequences.



Ever since I can remember, I have been surrounded by expectations. My parents expected me to be well-mannered; my teachers wanted me to obtain good results; my friends wanted me to be a good friend; my grandparents, a good granddaughter, and the list goes on. From early childhood we are brought up having to make efforts to meet the expectations of others in our behaviour and our achievements. Being accustomed to such norms, many of us reciprocate this lifestyle and often find ourselves easily expecting things of others.

Of course, everyone has expectations, for without them one may argue whether things would ever get done and whether people would actually prosper. The question here is what happens when our failure to manage our own expectations becomes the cause of despair? For example, let's look at our expectations of friends, work colleagues and relatives. I

expect my loved ones to be there when I need them, and to love me regardless of my faults. What happens when these expectations are not met? Does disappointment herald me into thinking that my friends and family have failed me? How can I manage my expectations of my dear ones? Or rather, how can I manage the expectations of others?

Depending on the culture in which we live, there are some common expectations that most of us have. A classic example is when you leave the door open for a complete stranger, who is entering the same building behind you. Is it not natural to expect a thank you or a smile of acknowledgement in return? How about when we give another driver the right of way so that he can pass easily along a narrow road? Do we not expect a short wave of the hand to say thanks? Most of us expect others to be courteous with us because we live with the philosophy 'treat

others the way you wish to be treated'. How long does it take for this philosophy to quickly disappear when we don't receive the same treatment in return?

The great English poet, Alexander Pope, once wrote:

"Blessed is he who expects nothing, for he shall never be disappointed."

Some may find a hint of cynicism in this quote, whereas others may find a treasured reality. Perhaps Pope had experienced the pangs of disappointment and its accessory frustration, and realised how it can risk diminishing one's inner peace.

How many of us know someone who has inner peace and can continue to treat others with respect and kindness, regardless of how they are spoken to or treated? Where does their inner peace or strength of compassion come from? Don't they feel they

deserve to be treated well? How is it that some people are different in the way they perceive and react to others? Is it because they don't expect others to be kind and generous in return?

His Holiness Nirankari Baba, often shares examples of how to lead a more blissful and fulfilling life. I've heard him state that just because you are a vegetarian, it doesn't mean that the lions won't eat you; meaning that even if you are truly loving and compassionate towards someone, it is not guaranteed that the same will be reciprocated. His Holiness often says:

“What is so great about loving someone, who loves you back? That love is truly great, in which you love someone who doesn't love you back.”

Such words often probe me to think about my relationship with my dear ones. Is my love flawed with conditions and expectations, or am I able to love open-heartedly without hesitation or restriction?

I once asked someone how they were able to practise such lofty ideals - being able to love and give - without expecting anything in return. They told me that they were able to manage the expectations of their ego.

Ego? Some define it as the 'false self', created by the unconscious or subconscious identification with the mind, which often demands self-praise and self-importance, at the expense of belittling others.

The ego has great expectations in terms of how it is fed.

If the ego only realized that there is an Entity far greater than itself, of which it is a part, it would realise that this Entity is far worthier of praise than itself. Such a realisation changes the ego's identification with the mind (the false self), identifying itself with the Entity (the true self). As the true self is beyond the constraints of the individual mind but realises itself to be a part of the greater universal mind, it has no expectations of others.

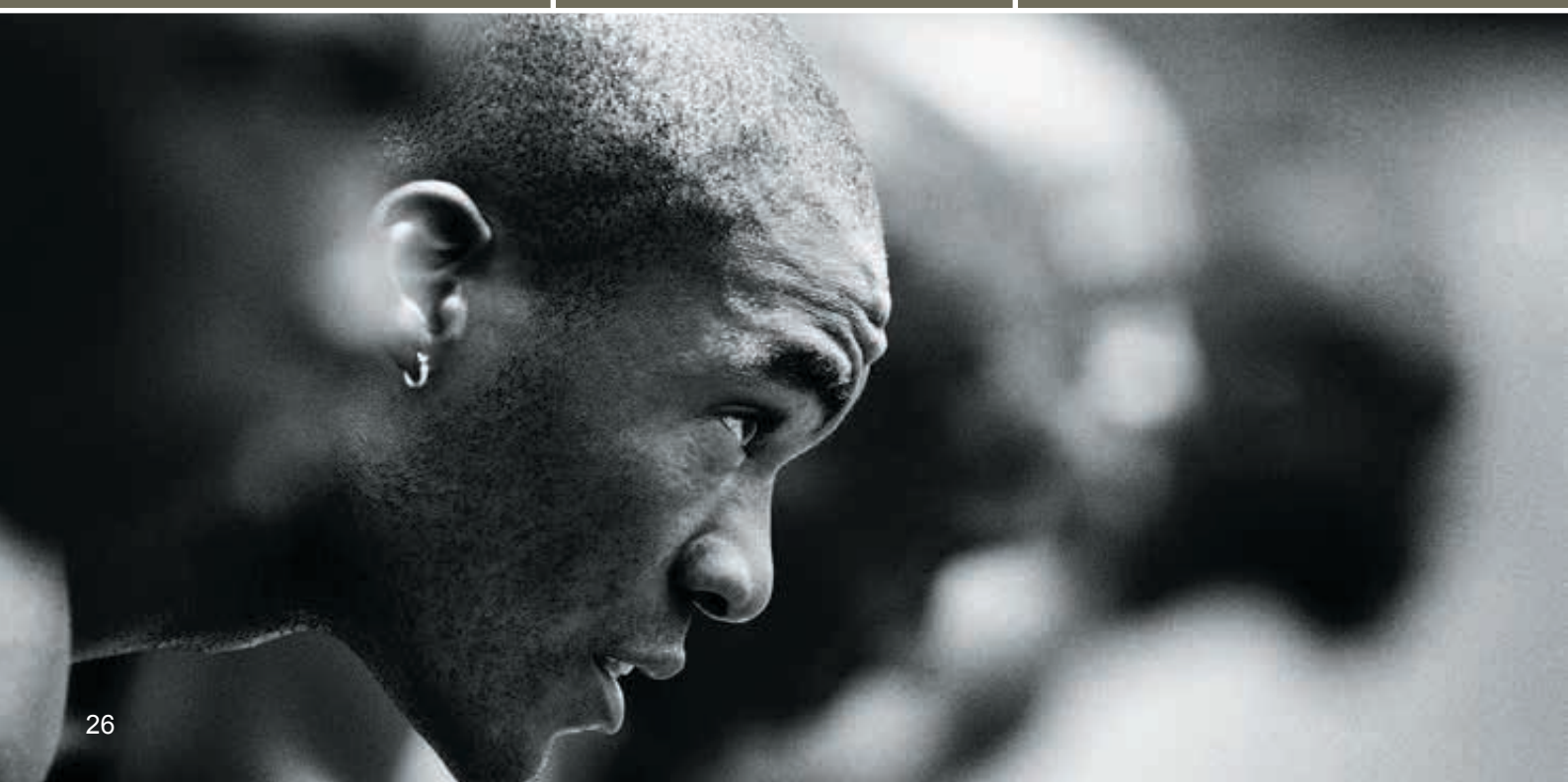
The ego that was once obsessed with feeding its own insecurities

transforms into a well-balanced and self-assured humility. In place of demanding its expectations to be met, a selfless compassion and contentment resides. The world of the ego no longer revolves around itself, but around the Supreme Entity - Nirankar. The ego recognises it as residing in everyone and makes it the object of its adoration.

Eckhart Tolle, a spiritual author, once wrote:

“When you drop your expectations that a person, a situation, a place, or an object should fulfil you, it's easier to be present in this moment because you're no longer looking to the next one.”

When we are living within the present moment, we are living within the "true self" and appreciating whatever the moment is, rather than wishing for something else. A peaceful state of mind exists. In this way, Alexander Pope is right in calling those able to expect nothing (in return for the way we treat others) as "Blessed". ■



Journey of Faith

Akanksha Mehla, Toronto, Canada

Living in the age of reason, it is often difficult to believe so strongly in an Entity which is beyond reason and explanation. This is because it requires a leap of faith. In its most commonly used meaning, it is the act of believing in or accepting the intangible or the improvable. It demands an act of faith, which is the essential element of piety, commonly associated with religious belief.

Over the ages, religion has changed and adapted to the needs of the time, but it has always kept its vital core. Although regarded as the greatest mystery, it can be unraveled through faith. If we look back into history, we can see that every religion has been, and still is, composed of a number of leaps of faith, some more transparent than others. Some may argue that anything religious or spiritual is in fact based on eternal precepts that cannot be logically proven, but are essential for the achievement of peace and unity. Those who wholeheartedly believe in the sacred texts, whatever they maybe, have already taken the primary leap of faith necessary. Without any empirical proof, the followers have declared their submission to the Scriptural Truth by believing in God's word and His essential Truth.

However, we cannot really understand Scriptural testimonies without experiencing their meaning. We are driven towards faith through our realization of the Infinite.

Yet, in today's hectic world, everyone seems too busy to reflect on spiritual matters. As human beings, we are constantly in motion: going to work, attending school, coming home, studying, going to the gym, watching a movie with friends... We have time for everything, but spirituality. This is where the problem arises.

But even if we make God a diary entry in our busy schedule, we limit our perception of spirituality.

In reality, we should be holistically spiritual, and carry out our material routines in the light of spiritual understanding. We should be taking time out of our spiritual schedule to carry out our material routine; not the other way round.

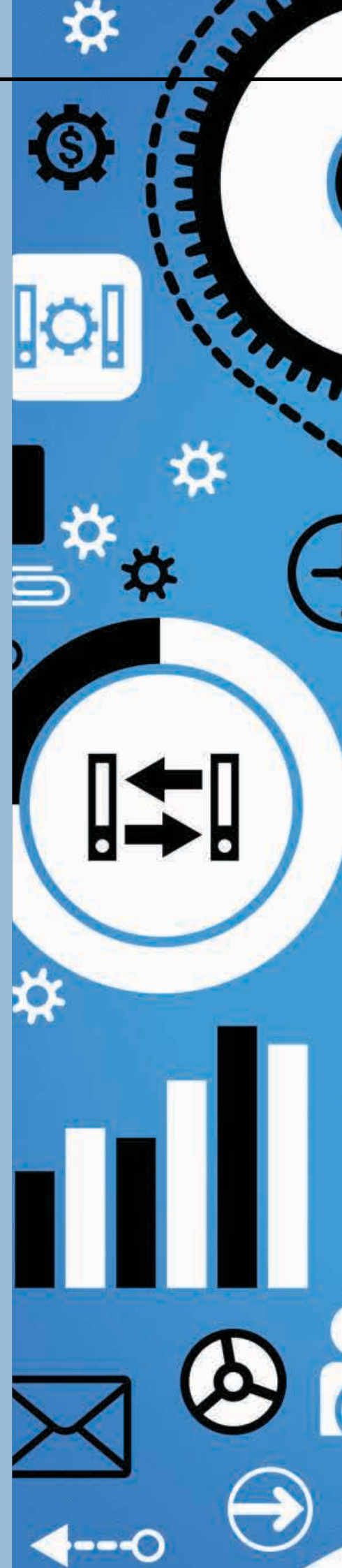
To achieve a life that mirrors the epitome of bliss, we should practice our faith with every single breath. Faith, most definitely, is not a one-time thing, and it should never be practiced as such. For in so doing, it would be a fruitless pursuit. Faith is a lifestyle. Faith is about trusting the Formless Almighty to see us through the ups and downs of life. Faith is complete submission to God.

The one who approaches God must wholeheartedly believe that He exists. It is commonly thought that a leap of faith is characterized by spending a lifetime in harsh climates, detached from the world, in the contemplation of God. But whilst faith demands sacrifice, we do not need to flee from the world. What is required is a detached-attachment.

Faith is exhibited through action. We take a leap of faith by knowing the One, also termed as realization of the Infinite. On the journey of faith, the more we see God's greatness, the more we grow to trust Him.

**It is not how great our faith is,
but realizing how great God is.**

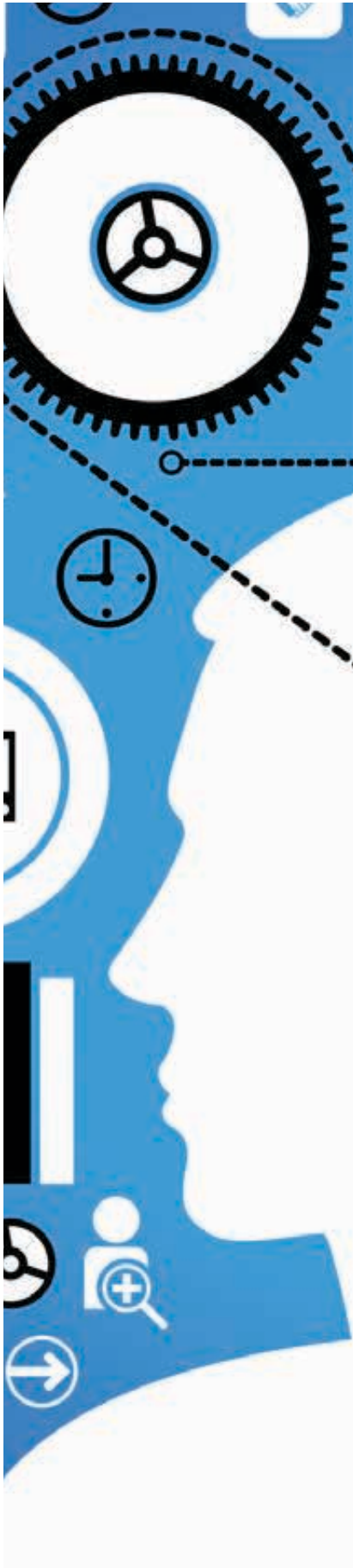
Faith is a journey, a difficult journey, the destination of which is utter joy and enlightenment. ■





OLYMPICS OF THE MIND

DR. C DADLANI, WASHINGTON DC, USA



Spanning the globe across cultures, races, ethnicities and nationalities, we see a vast diversity. There are differences in hair color, eye color and skin color; there are different languages, cuisines, diet and dress; and there are different professions, family traditions and even methods of prayer. Our artificially created differences are separating one society from another even more. These differences are created by our mind and free will. Somewhat ironically, we perceive immense superficial diversity.

Everything on the planet, when broken down fundamentally, is made up of the same four elements. The striking fact is that all our visual and physical differences emanate, in an identical manner, from the same one source, our creator, to which they eventually return.

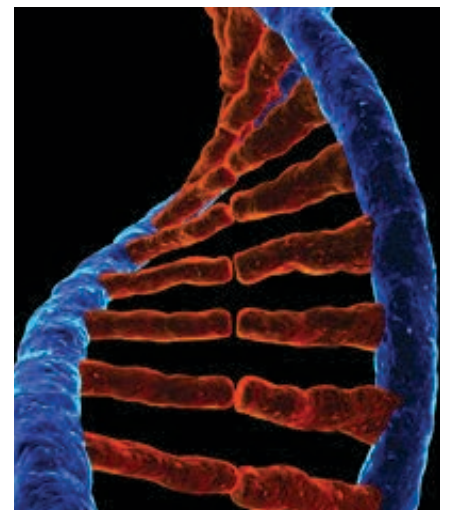
Hence, all living creatures are made up of the same building blocks: blood vessels, nerves, organs, skin, muscles, fat, bone and so on. In fact, all human beings have blood running through their veins; all are created from the fusion of two cells that continue to multiply. It's incredible how similar living creatures truly are. Arising from cells that perform miraculous functions to maintain life, these cells are trying their best to work together in unison to perform the same functions ideally, in every body. Some cells are targeted towards the skin, others towards the brain, liver, nails, hair, eyes, heart, lungs and so forth. Yet, they all have different duties and functions so that the body can survive. If any component begins to fail, the body begins to have ailments. The cells were designed to work in harmony for the benefit of all.

We could learn so much about

humanity from the components that create us. These cells behave as a team and respect each others' contributions. None are more important than the other, and by their grace, we exist. Even more interesting is the fact that all cells began as one, single cell, which multiplied and then differentiated into separate cells with specific functions to ensure survival. These cells came from a creator cell. As they developed differently, they were assigned to different parts of the body. They operated together using their skills to ensure our life. It's amazing that these cells are performing similar functions in each of us, yet they themselves have different functions to sustain our lives. It is when the cells become out of sync that they stop respecting each other, overgrow and dominate, and become poisoned. The body then malfunctions.

It is very similar to humans; we are all identical in our compositions. We come from the same elements, yet we also have

"It is our thoughts and ego that create distances and widen the gap amongst humans."



developed differences amongst ourselves that can be considered gifts. They are to be used to help each other in sustaining humanity. If we consider each person as a cell and the world as the body, we would be able to realize that we need to work together to sustain life on the planet. The challenge we face today is how to transcend the differences amongst individuals which cause hatred, animosity, negativity and war. These differences, which should be viewed as gifts, have taken the form of poison for mankind. This poison prevents unity and harmony, just as the cells become poisoned and deteriorate the body.



We realize that we are the same elements when the mind acquires the capacity to see and process beyond the physical layer. Although we have much more in common with each other, the visual differences artificially separate man from man, causing havoc in society.

When life ends, we all return to the same elements that created us. Although our life's inception and ending are the same for all, the use of our gifts (i.e. differences) between life and death, create disharmony. Man has to work together to maintain harmony. Even the cells in our bodies were designed to have differences, yet aid one another to sustain life.

When we really stop to consider how intricately our bodies function, it is then that we realize that mankind was created to operate similarly. Thus, when we hurt another person, when we judge, discriminate, fight and kill each other, we are destroying humanity, our body and life. We are poisoning our minds over differences which were granted to help us function as one human race. Although we are one with each other in terms of our composition elements and inceptions, we use our privileges of mind and free will for destruction.

It is our thoughts and ego that create distances and widen the gap amongst humans. These gifts of free will and thinking have

the power to bring immense love, friendship, unity, respect, courage, peace, laughter, bliss, compassion, tolerance, and kindness to the world. Yet, it is this ego which has created turmoil amongst men and within individuals themselves. It appears that from birth to death, the individual mind takes the toughest journey. The mind, our only true difference, is what appears to be separating us from each other. The difference does not really exist beyond the superficial appearance.

It is this gift of free will and the mind that is the most powerful common denominator. Our minds must learn to function as an Olympic team to win the race of life before our demise. Let us take this gift in our life, to realize how similar we really are and to come together with one another as the cells in our body do, to live for one another, rather than against each other. We are each a piece of the larger puzzle of life.

The differences our mind registers were not designed for separation of mankind. Rather, these differences were given to help humanity function as a team. It is the mind that has created an illusion of distance and disharmony. We must train the mind to connect with its creator so that one realizes that all belong to the same body - the body of the human race. Let us join hands and live in harmony, peace, love and compassion. ■

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