

UNIVERSAL TARGET

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LETTING GO

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EDITORIAL

LETTING GO

Whilst some things in life ought to be discarded and some kept, there are others that one may well desire to adopt. But the obvious question is, what is it we should let go and what must we hold on to?

The first golden rule is to vehemently hold on to that which is conducive to the betterment of life. The second, equally important, golden rule is to throw overboard that which is harmful and contrary to our mutual welfare and wellbeing.

After all the cause of most, if not all conflicts, is invariably intolerance and narrow-mindedness, which are occasionally coupled with greed and complexes of superiority or inferiority. It is this kind of bigotry, which turns the perfectly happy life upside down; it breaks up families and wreaks untold pain and suffering. Therefore, there should not be the least hesitation to ditch intolerance, which is one of mankind's biggest foes.

Paradoxically, the forces, supposedly for the good of society, have been the greatest cause of hatred and strife. Regardless of our manifold differences, the role of religion was to provide an abiding base for cohesion, and to promote unity and fraternity. Sadly, more blood has been shed in the name of religion than in any other cause.

It is, in fact, a total antonym of what religion actually stands for. Religious fanaticism is nothing but a manufactory of hate. The purpose of religion is to bring people together, no matter who they are, not to divide. Contrary to its innate nature, it seems to serve as the prime root of schisms.

If we are to use it for the good of the human race, we need to understand religion in its right perspective. In the interest of humanity, we should not think twice about letting go of the 'hate machine' that poses as religion. We must go for the pure

and sublime spirit of religion, and universally imbibe it.

The values that have sustained our societies for ages are those of love, compassion, and tolerance. The Greats, be it of yesteryear or the modern age, who espoused these traits, should be emulated as the real role models by the young and old alike. For it is these characteristics that make humans stand out as unique beings.

So let us not allow our planet to be destroyed in the name of 'progress', but hold on to these tried and tested codes of behaviour, and march on to realise the harmonious accord.

We are fortunate to have many a personage, who are dedicated and devoted to promote peace and harmony. Their efforts deserve not only appreciation, but our wholehearted support.

One endeavour worth noting is the most recent inauguration of the musical Fountain of Oneness. This new wonder is sited in the park opposite the historical Coronation ground in Delhi where, a century ago, King George V, grandfather of the incumbent British Queen, held his splendid durbar. Amidst the grand assembly of notables, he was crowned the Emperor of India.

As the tireless protagonist of world peace, love and unity, through this marvellous work of art, the Nirankari Baba seeks to remind mankind that we are all in essence one, from the same one source. Hence, we should embrace oneness; adopt change where it's needed, for a better, safer and environmentally friendly globe.

In short, we need to be discerning

in deciding what to drop and what to keep. We must discard some practises and retain others to generate greater happiness for all. Thus it would be wise to hold on to what is good and useful, and give up what is harmful.

Harbans Singh ■

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Timeless Message: *Translation of Words into Deeds*

HH Nirankari Baba

(An abridged version by Dr. D K Mehta)



Wherever I go, I find the lovers of Truth embracing spirituality. Their lives are rooted in the love of God. They follow the path of humanity, with compassion and care for the welfare of others. They cherish these common feelings, wherever they happen to be, whichever language they speak, and whichever culture they may belong to. They all share the same sentiments of humility, love and selfless service. Their lives are exemplary because they translate the teachings of the holy beings into deeds.

The advice is to walk in their footsteps, but we tend to do the opposite. We would rather walk in front and ignore them. As a result, instead of imbibing love and humility, a false sense of pride, anger and conflict rule us.

The enjoins of prophets, sages and seers can liberate us, enlighten us and make us the means to enlighten others. They fill us with nectar and cleanse our minds. Their purifying words help to keep us on the right path. They help us to shun impurities and undesirable thoughts

so that we do not soil ourselves or malign others; and do not poison our own lives, or the lives of others. For in so doing, lies the welfare of the whole world.

Although this wisdom has been there for ages, man has preferred to follow the path of destruction, which not only harms him, but harms others too. His words and actions damage and poison the atmosphere, causing restlessness and upheaval.

Those who love the Truth have

always eschewed these negative tendencies. They rise above narrow-mindedness and focus on self-reform and self-refinement. They do not entertain jealousy or contemplate any thoughts of denigrating others. They have always given top priority to this noble goal and coloured their words with the acts of deeds. Such a refinement of the self lends a pleasant aroma to the environment and beautifies the surroundings.

Words are important only if acted upon, and based on love, faith and

devotion. This is what distinguishes the saints. Although they may not be with us any more, their fragrance still touches us today; they have become worthy of our respect and honour. They attained lofty heights not with mere words, but with practical action.

Words are important only if acted upon, and based on love, faith and devotion.

Words in themselves are not enough. If humility is talked about, it has to be practised. We have to love others; mere talk of love will not suffice. If we talk about large-heartedness, large-hearted we must become. People can gauge our intentions; we cannot hide them for long. We must, therefore, watch what we say and always exercise control.

We must not forget that God is with us all the time and knows our thoughts. Nothing is hidden from Him. We are all answerable to Him. We cannot argue before Him. Through the exemplary lives of saints and seers, He teaches us exactly how to live. Like a drunkard who stumbles, we can never walk the straight path, bewitched by wealth, education and ego. A stable walk requires the awareness of the Truth.

There is a tendency not to accept responsibility, but to readily blame others. Yet, if we were to overcome the weaknesses of mind, stop indulging in slander and remain steadfast, then nothing would affect us adversely. By making the Truth as our base, we usefully concentrate on healing and providing solace to others.

A poet reminds us that one evil word spoken within a short

moment can have far reaching consequences, giving rise to suffering that lasts for centuries. It is like a pebble thrown in a pond, the ripples of which reach far and wide. The careless remarks - the blind son of a blind father - gave rise to the epic of Mahabharata. These were words, uttered by one of the main characters, directed at an antagonist, who misjudged a shallow pool of water for a shiny stone surface. These seemingly harmless words originated the mighty war.

Like a drunkard who stumbles, we can never walk the straight path, bewitched by wealth, education and ego. A stable walk requires the awareness of the Truth.

A word can redeem, and a word can hinder. But, if we live by the words of saints, our status remains intact and cannot be lowered. The life of St. Kabir is an example. In spite of people's attempts to disrepute him, his status was high, is high, and will be high for years to come. History is replete with many similar examples.

Our real worth is not gained through education, high rank or ego, but through humility and selflessness. The humblest, therefore, is the highest. To remain the highest, we have to ditch the selfish ego.

The one, who is imbued with divine love, gives up his ego. He forsakes his 'I' and gives prominence to the 'Thou'. St. Bulleh Shah says, such a person considers himself naïve, low and without merit; he owes his

existence solely to the grace of God. We have to live in the light of God-realisation.

Our real worth is not gained through education, high rank or ego, but through humility and selflessness.

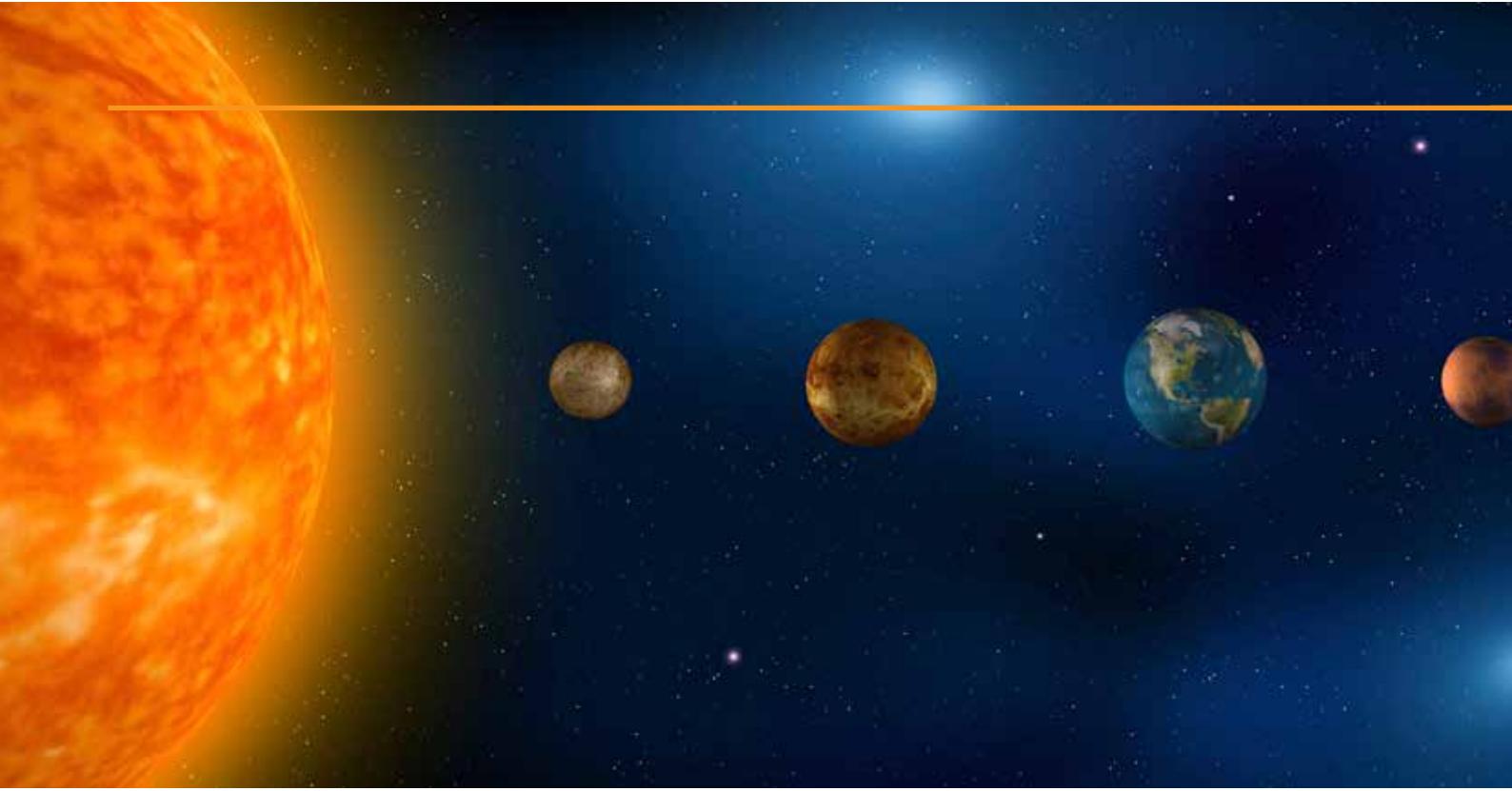
If we close our eyes, the sun does not lose its light; only we do. Hence, we must keep our gnostic eyes always open to be enlightened within and to be able to see without. By so doing, we can never stumble. Baba Gurbachan Singh ji used to say: both the inner and the outer eyes need to be enlightened. If you choose to close your physical eyes, the light does not go away; it is still there. By the same token, if you choose not to use your gnostic eyes, you will not see the goodness all around.

This means that the inner vision should yield outwardly. Our good intentions should manifest into equally good works. We are to listen with our mind and recite sacred words with our deeds. Putting into action what we hear is the real adoption of truth.

I, therefore, pray that everyone marches on with the torch of Truth, and live their lives to accord with the teachings of the seers and sages. May they continue to inspire others, and ask the Lord to endow them with wisdom to choose the right thoughts, words and deeds.

We are to listen with our mind and recite sacred words with our deeds. ■





We are constantly deluded by the objects around us, the earth being no exception. The earth spins more than one thousand miles per hour, yet it seems static as a rock. This whirling rock we call earth has tricked the greatest of minds for thousands of years.

The idea of the earth being motionless was supported by the ancient Greek scientist, Aristarchus. Although he suggested that everything revolved around the sun, many believed that the earth was the centre point. So much so that anyone who questioned this risked being burnt at the stake. However, Copernicus in the 16th Century challenged this idea and postulated that the earth spun on its own axis and moved around the sun.

The brain has a great ability to disregard the overall picture and to focus on detail to such an extent that the detail remains our only reality.

The reason why the earth appears to be motionless is because of the constant speed at which it turns. When the velocity is constant, one

can pour hot coffee, without spilling a single drop. After all, the planet is just a larger plane without wings, but with an invisible pilot. However, should the earth decide all of a sudden to change speed, we would all be catapulted off the surface like flying objects.

Moreover, science has now unveiled the mystery of colour by confronting the most complex challenge, the brain.

Are roses really red and violets, blue? Every colour we see outside is created within the brain. The way the brain creates perception of the external world leads us to a new frontier and invites the irresistible question, ‘what is real?’

Science has proved that colour is an elaborate illusion. For example, although you see the black ink on this page, the truth is, it is not black. Colour is created simply by neural

interactions in the brain, which are projected onto the external world. Because colour helps us to detect the borders of everything we see, it is closely associated with form. Without detecting colour, we would struggle to detect form.

Colour is simply a vibration of light and energy. The shift in frequency of that vibration is the important factor that the brain uses to determine how it is projected. To be able to understand it, it has to be examined at the single cell (neuron) level.

The neuron’s response unlocks the secret of colour vision. When light waves enter our eyes, the photoceptors convert light energy into neural signals. This information is passed from the retina to the thalamus where it is subjectively created in the brain’s visual cortex. Hence, it is in the brain where the majestic wonder of colour is produced.

It has taken centuries to accept that the earth rotates around the sun, and yet it is ironic that the ego refuses to accept the universe does not revolve around it.

Not only are the eyes and the senses tricked by an Illusionist, the



the grand ILLUSION

Surjit Dhami, Staffordshire, UK

human ear is also often fooled by auditory deceptions. The illusion of hearing something that is not present is experienced daily by many. The brain is an amazing biological machine that learns to reconstruct pieces of sounds to make sense of what it hears. We are able to develop creative listening, enabling us to make sense of distorted conversations in a noisy room. The brain fills in the information gaps and makes sense by creating an image of the sound. When it comes to listening, the theta oscillations (slow brain waves) help us to encode the sound barriers. When these are suppressed, the illusion of continuous sound is created in the brain.

The brain has a great ability to disregard the overall picture and to focus on detail to such an extent that the detail remains our only reality. The brain can shape and sculpt multitudes of alternative realities in just a few moments. As you read this article silently, you can still hear your own voice. This is also an auditory illusion, where in fact there is no voice. The voice we hear in this particular case is created in our brain.

It has taken centuries to accept that the earth rotates around the sun, and yet it is ironic that the ego refuses to accept the universe does

not revolve around it.

This is the grandest illusion of all. If a person is nothing more than a physical speck of dust in this cosmic expanse, why are their worries bigger than Saturn's moons?

Thoughts are often unreliable and inaccurate. Just because the mind has conjured up an idea does not necessarily make it valid or real. Often the mind is selective about what it focuses on and what it chooses to remember and disregard. We rarely have a complete picture of our experiences. In a feedback of a hundred positive comments, it is the few criticisms that stick. Our tendency is not to remember thoughts but feelings that are invoked by thoughts, which eventually make us who we are. No matter how wonderful or elaborate our thoughts maybe, they are, in fact, little more than electrical impulses flickering around the brain. It is only when we have an ability to zoom out, to see ourselves from the eyes of the universe that we can see our world for what it is.

An astronaut, orbiting the earth in a space shuttle, would see the earth as a small blue ball. The overwhelming feeling of floating

in the great expanse called space would be very humbling.

Any illusion, which the brain may create, of a small narrow world consisting of divisions of language, country, religion or region, would fall apart with the realisation of a greater expanse. Sadly, not everyone is able to experience the vastness of space. To maintain this sense of reality, one has to see with the cosmic vision. Space, however vast it may be, is itself contained between celestial bodies.

Our tendency is not to remember thoughts but feelings that are invoked by thoughts, which eventually make us who we are.

The great spiritual teachers have always inspired one and all to break free from the illusion and to see that even the vastness of space is small compared to the reality that contains it. This reality is boundless, without form, without colour and without shape and sound. It is the realisation of this reality that shatters all illusions. ■

THE ONE KNOWER

SUNNY MEHTA, WOLVERHAMPTON, UK

In a world where man is ridden with shallow feelings for others, I believe spirituality is the real cure. Once the knower of one, the enlightened master, expounds the eternal knowledge onto the seeker, meeting the seer then, becomes a regular thing.

Whether we know it or not, the enlightened master, who is the source of this gift of knowledge, never leaves our side, and is ever aware of our doings, day in and day out. When connecting with him and acknowledging his presence, with regular recognition, we are marked as ‘knowing souls’, for he is the keeper of all our feelings and concerns; he then shines through us. When we understand his importance, only then does the change begin.

No responsible shop keeper desires to leave his business unattended, when he knows it requires attention to improve his sales. He attends to the well being of his staff and pays good attention to his resources to maximise. If he adheres to his responsibility honourably, he keeps a happy ship.

With his understanding and generous nature, he sees the weaknesses and strengths of his work force, and gives vital support to maintain a good reputation.

All this is done, behind the scenes, so the planning goes unseen. However, without the business owner, the customer would have walked away.

The One Knower requires us to, ‘give light unto the other candles, which are not yet lit.’

As an exalted seer, he oversees all souls. However, we fail to recognise him.

He is forever benevolent. He understands our thoughts and intentions and creates a worthy outcome for all involved. He is the Enlightener and he is the keeper of all the secrets of all our souls.

If we do not open the door to our highest good, we will not receive the best. The Enlightener is ready

to sit within; we need only to surrender, and make room for him.

The first fruit of divine knowledge is self-realisation. But we must persevere to read the contents of the curriculum before we reach the happy medium too early. Through self-realisation and being absorbed in deeds, it becomes apparent that ‘the One’ is watching out for our well-being and that we should remain humble.

By maintaining egoist perspectives, we veer away from the Benign One, and cause our own destruction. The key is to remember the source of one’s knowing, and seek Him. He answers the call.

The Master knows our true intent. He is the knower of all our values, and all our beliefs. If the shop keeper’s staff does not value him, it breeds disharmony in the work place. Similarly, we must all respect our Spiritual Enlightener. We must trust him, for it is for our highest good.

By realising the Eternal Truth the spirit of man becomes enlightened, and we rise above our animal nature. Let us resolve in being more than just errants; let us become reformed through the good offices of the One Knower, the Enlightened One. ■





Be true to yourself

Acharya Dr. M Praveen Kumar,
Birmingham, UK

Awareness of the true self is the mystical experience, which a seeker aspires to attain in his pursuit of the transcendental peace and bliss. Like the enlightened seer, King Janaka, declared: “Me naasti kinchan athavaa me sarvam (on the one hand, nothing belongs to me; on the other, everything is mine)”.

These are the words of an adept, who saw the world of matter and experienced the realm of the all-pervading formless, with which he identified his immutable self.

The key formula to achieve a sense of complete liberation is given in the Astavakra Gita. It is a lucid dialogue between a teenaged sage - teacher, Astavakra and his royal disciple, Janaka. In a nutshell, it is about ‘letting go’. That is to say, learning to detach yourself from your false ego, which is in itself a misconception, created by the illusion of the world of pluralities.

So how do we let go of this ego? Remember that the mind is nothing more than a constant flow of thoughts. The more the flood of thoughts gushes through the mind, the more uncontrollable it becomes. So the factors that we need to

cultivate are those that can quieten the mind, and keep the sources of disturbance at bay.

But the cultivation of the mind-quietening factors entails letting go of the ego by attaching yourself to your pure effulgent self, which is ever peaceful, all-knowing and the witness of everything that happens. It is the reflection of one supreme and eternal Creator - the Brahman, the ultimate reality.

However, do also remember that an aspirant does not have to renounce his worldly possessions or become a recluse to obtain freedom from ego. For there is no harm in possessing the things of the world, but it would be a tragedy if we allowed the things of the world to possess us.

For example, if we possess wealth,

we are free to be rich. But when the wealth possesses us, we become a slave to our own wealth! Likewise, it is perfectly natural to eat food, but we should never allow the food to eat us!!

So long as the faculties of body, mind and intellect are in our control, there can be no harm, and only good can flow from them. But in our ignorance, we allow our faculties to trap us and enslave us, inviting misery and unhappiness into our lives. To avoid this, we have to detach ourselves from the world of matter, and attach ourselves to the world of non-matter, through the instrument of self-realisation.

So letting go of the ego, by the grace of the enlightened sage, is the only way to be your true self, and acquire liberation. ■

SHINE BRIGHT, BE BOLD!!



Dina Sabnani, Hong Kong

Sometimes we allow life to get in the way or then give others the permission to take the light away from us. We put ourselves in situations that we know are toxic for our souls and yet choose to be in them because of guilt, conditioning or fear. When we do not vibrate in a positive manner, we cannot attract that which is positive to us. If we are constantly unhappy, feeling bad, or in a negative frame of mind, our frequencies remain at that level, and we keep attracting situations that keep us in that space.

The truth is - we have a choice to change it. We can choose to be grateful for everyday things, change our outlook, and focus on anything that makes us feel good. It is simple, perhaps not easy, but very possible! No one likes change except for a baby with a dirty diaper. But if we keep doing what we're doing, we're going to keep getting what we're getting.

So in order to create something different we're going to have to do something different! That choice to do something else lies in our hands. We can choose to see the light or remain in darkness. Remember though, it just takes the slightest, tiny flicker of light to dispel any darkness. A darkness of thousands of years, does not need a candle to burn for thousands of years to vanquish it – the moment the candle is lit, the darkness recedes immediately.

A darkness of thousands of years, does not need a candle to burn for thousands of years to vanquish it – the moment the candle is lit, the darkness recedes immediately.

When we are in a feel good state of mind, we have a good idea as to what we are going to attract. Good feelings, a whole host of opportunities, synchronicity and guidance. Things start happening effortlessly. People you meet, books you read and songs on the radio. Almost everything becomes relevant if you learn to stay open and to see them. Of course you have to take action if you are guided towards something. Don't be wishy-washy. It has come to you for a reason. Carpe diem! (Seize the day!)

Just stop right now and take a look at your life, and the people in it. How are you feeling at this very moment in time? Be honest with yourself! Ask yourself if you are happy. Or are you just saying 'like I have a choice so I guess its ok'? It's not ok to just be ok! Apathy is a killer. Apathetic people, and negative ones, are a drain to be around.

I speak from experience. I'll through my own phases. Sometimes I allow myself to get sucked into the pit. However, I thank God for my friends that have stuck by me. It's the fear of so many things: past conditioning, not being good enough or smart enough, not to mention laziness and complacency. How would I expect to attract great things in life?

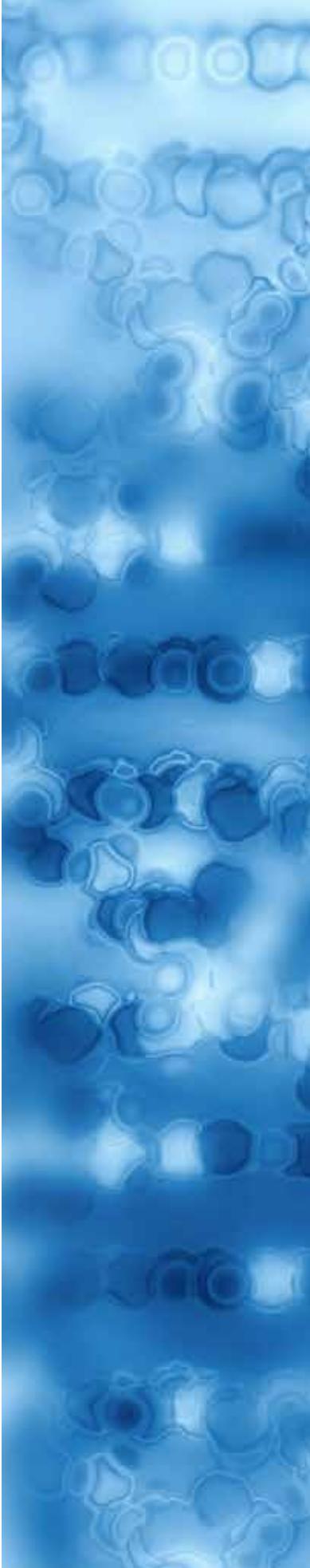
I know that every time I have found the strength to break free from my own madness, I got back on my feet and did even better! I watch how things just start to appear out of nowhere. Opportunities fall in my lap, people come in my path and the sun starts shining bright even in the rain. So there is a light at the end of the tunnel, and infact at any point in the tunnel, if we have the resolve to experience it.

Yes, truth is there always. It is a light deep within us. We just need to have the guts to allow it to shine as bright as possible, and be the best version of ourselves we can possibly be!

So look at yourself in the mirror and marvel at how amazingly gorgeous you are and crank up the wattage so that even if the sun is not shining, your presence adds the light and the warmth to the lives of others. Remember the words of Nelson Mandela,

'..... We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It's not just in some of us; it's in all of us. And when we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others'.

You need to own your life. Rock your life. Live your life! ■



Science vs Spirituality

Dr. Ashish Toor, California, USA

**Are science and spirituality at loggerheads?
Or are they complementary? When we focus on
the minuscule, do we miss the more obvious?
Let us look into these questions.**

X-ray films are known for their cryptic nature, and radiologists are sometimes revered as superhuman in their ability to decipher these images in a matter of minutes. Radiologists may be considered to have among the best observational skills, finding pathology that is otherwise invisible to the untrained eye.

Recently, Trafton Drew, a researcher at Harvard University, carried out an experiment to test the ability of humans to notice unexpected occurrences in their visual field. They collected a group of subjects and presented them with a video in which they were shown some children passing a ball among themselves. Half the children wore white shirts and the other half wore black. The subjects were instructed to count the number of ball passes between children wearing the same shirts. This is not an easy task as the children were moving rapidly among each other.

During the midst of this video, a man dressed as a large hairy gorilla

passes through the children, stops, beats his chest, then walks off the screen. The subjects were later asked some questions. One question was if they had noticed the gorilla. Surprisingly, fewer than 50% had even noticed this obvious intrusion into their viewing.

Given the failure of the ordinary person to notice the obvious, Drew and his team then decided to experiment on a group with hyper acute observational accuracy; radiologists. This professional group were given slides to review in which they would normally search for cancerous nodules. On these slides, an image of a large hairy gorilla shaking its fist was superimposed. The radiologists were later asked if they had noticed the gorilla. Even more astonishingly, 83% of radiologists said "No".

So what is the explanation for this dismal performance? The effect is called inattentional blindness. When our brains are asked to perform a task, we focus so intently on the task

at hand that our minds filter out all other noise, even large hairy gorillas gesturing at us! One conclusion of this ingenious experiment is that ***what we see can be influenced by what we are told to look for.***

In addition, it is natural for a mind concentrating on fine detail to miss the big picture.

Just as the concentrating radiologist focused on finding cancerous nodules misses a large primate, the ***human eye focused on the minutiae of daily living misses the expansive divinity that envelopes us all.*** As we focus our efforts in education, career, family, hobbies, travel, investments, science and technology, we fail to see the obvious that stands before us every day.

The problem with this omission is that unlike the hairy gorilla on the radiology slides, God is not

the “noise”. God is the essence of existence. God is the cause, the mechanism and the reason for all being. To miss God, is to miss our essential purpose.

The inquiring scientist tries to gather factual information about his or her environment, and does so using the five senses. The senses are used to perceive the world around us and to comprehend its workings. Intriguingly, God has hidden Himself in the world in such a way that none of the physical senses can be used to perceive him. God cannot be directly seen or heard. We cannot feel Him, nor taste Him. We cannot touch Him. So how can Science prove that God exists?

The fallacy in this approach is that one can only use empirical methods of perception to define material things. The physical senses are finite and destructible, and can only

be used to perceive matter that is finite and destructible. Our eyes help us see objects, people and places. But objects, people and places are material and will perish. Our ears hear sound. But sound is material and will perish. Our hands can feel the world around us. But the world around us is material and will perish. We can taste food, we can smell fragrance. But food and fragrance are material and will perish.

To sense the infinite, we need a sense that is infinite and imperishable. This “6th sense” is God knowledge. This sense is a power not of the body, but of the soul. ***Once ignited, this knowledge never dies. And its flames are fed by the fuel of Faith.***

There are some phenomena in our universe that have never



been seen, or perceived in any other manner, yet are infallible in their existence. No one has "seen" gravity. Yet we are certain that it exists as evidenced by its manifestations. Any object thrown in the air inevitably falls down towards the earth. The pull of this force keeps the planets revolving around the sun. The magnitude of gravity depends on the mass that produces it. Any experiment on gravity follows the same rules and predictions. Hence it must exist.

No one has "seen" an atom. Yet the existence of atoms explains Brownian motion and the particulate nature of matter. It explains the properties of solids, liquids and gases. Hence the atom must exist.

God's presence is ubiquitous. And once the vision of God is imprinted in the human soul, it can never be obliterated.

Even the greatest scientific luminaries of our age have professed to the mystical spirituality that orchestrates the universe. Stephen Hawking compared studying the universe to "understanding the mind of God". Charles Darwin, a devout Christian, was so moved by the beauty and diversity of creation in his travels that he said:

"No one can stand in these solitudes unmoved, and not feel that there is more in man than the mere breath of his body."



So where is the evidence of the existence of God? And is this evidence consistent and reproducible?

Through the ages, the prophets and messengers of God have sought to prove His existence through acts of miracles, of achieving the impossible. In the early stages of spiritual evolution, faith must be bought with miracles. As the soul progresses in enlightenment, its faith becomes unconditional. For the person who is seeking, God's existence is unquestionable. For the person that is enlightened,

V.V Rahman, a physicist, has compared science to sonnets. When we study a sonnet, on one level we can attempt to understand its diction, its structure, rhyming scheme and rhythm. But we need to move beyond this level to understand the sonnet's meaning. Similarly, ***scientific investigations can reveal structure, pattern, order and oddness of the natural world.*** But science does not and cannot provide insight into the meaning of it all. Religion gives us this complimentary way of approaching the world.

Albert Einstein spoke openly about his spirituality, and said that there were only two ways to live. One, as if nothing was a miracle. And two, as if everything was a miracle. To him being "religious" meant a knowledge –

"Of the existence of something we cannot penetrate, our perceptions of the profoundest reason and the most radiant beauty, which only in their most primitive forms are accessible to our minds: it is this knowledge and this emotion that constitute true religiosity. In this sense, and only this sense, I am a deeply religious man... I am satisfied with the mystery of life's eternity and with a knowledge, a sense, of the marvellous structure of existence - as well as the humble attempt to understand even a tiny portion of the Reason that manifests itself in nature."

The evidence is overwhelming that those who polarize themselves into camps of "science" vs "spirituality" with claims that the two cannot co-exist are basically flawed.

Science does not clash with spirituality, but instead nurtures it. Spirituality does not clash with science, but instead completes it. Science and spirituality are the black and the white, the yin and the yang that together define our world. For only when we start delving into the depths of knowledge do we discover how much we do not know, and how much we will never know.

It is only when we start peeling away the layers of creation do we realize that there is a power at its core so pure, so good and so strong that it gives meaning and reason to all existence. And when we align ourselves with this power, it gives our otherwise insignificant lives immeasurable worth and purpose. ■

The pursuit of happiness

Sneha Bijlani,
Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Personally, this past year has been about the pursuit of happiness. I woke up every morning thinking of all those things I thought I needed in my life to be happy. I thought, if only I'd have that promotion at work to feel accomplished and fulfill my material needs. If only my family could be more understanding towards me? If only I had friends I could always depend upon. I was always left thinking, if only? Then I thought to myself, wants and expectations are relative to the phase of life I'm currently in. Ten years down the line, would these wishes and wants still make me happy? Would I have achieved eternal happiness? If I kept thinking this way, I would remain dissatisfied throughout my life.

I then came across a concept integral to Taoism, known as Wu- Wei which literally means 'non-action' or 'non-doing'. Wu may be translated as 'to not have' or 'without'; Wei may be translated as 'do' or 'act'. Therefore, the typical meaning of the concept is non-action or better explained as effortless doing.

The idea behind this concept is derived from the effortless manner of nature. The planets revolve around the sun, trees grow, tides ebb and flow, flowers bloom, birds migrate across the globe and the list is endless. These acts are performed in a natural uncontrived way; without the actual effort of doing. The spiritual angle of this principle is the application of this effortless behavior in human lives. It is for humankind to accept themselves and the natural course of life, the way God has intended. Furthermore, the principle highlights the realization that happiness is derived from living in harmony with one's natural surroundings and to realize that all life is

interconnected.

"You don't have a soul. You are a soul. You have a body." – C.S. Lewis

Intellectual capability has made it very hard for humankind to release control of their lives. There is a compulsive need to micromanage every aspect and control the outcome. However, happiness lies in the smallest lessons learnt from nature; to act by letting go of doership and surrendering to the Creator.

Does this mean that we should not have expectations or strive to achieve certain goals? Humans are social animals; we cannot shirk our duties and live a life of solitude. It is important to stay ahead in the game of life; but material success should not be seen as an exclusive key to happiness. Happiness should be accessible to everyone. Therefore, while complying with our daily responsibilities it is important to stay invested in the process and not the outcome. Invest in the process of performing well at work

and loving your family and friends. Leave the outcomes to the formless Creator. Performance of the deeds lies in our hands; however, the result is in the hands of the formless Creator. In the words of the ancient Chinese Master-Sage;

"The work is done and then forgotten. And so it lasts forever," – Lao Tzu.



The key to happiness is in performing, but then letting go of the outcome. Once humankind achieves this realization happiness is not a pursuit, but a choice, a conscious decision. ■



"happiness is derived from living in harmony with one's natural surroundings"

"MOST OF OUR TROUBLES ARE DUE TO OUR PASSIONATE DESIRE FOR, AND ATTACHMENT TO, THINGS THAT WE MISAPPREHEND AS ENDURING ENTITIES."

HH DALAI LAMA

At first, I questioned the validity of the above statement. Do our troubles really originate from our attachments? Then, after much thought, it dawned on me that the Dalai Lama was not wrong. For we tend to measure our happiness by the stability of our relationships, the success of our careers, the value of our properties, the hierarchy of our social status, and the extent of our wealth.

As time goes by, this attachment to material things becomes more of dependence. When those prized possessions are taken away from us, it seems impossible to let go. The painful process of letting go takes over our thoughts and actions. We complain, whine, and try to justify it to ourselves. Time is wasted. Stress levels elevate. And, most importantly, we lose sight of the good that we still have in our lives. When we become too attached to what is familiar, we bind ourselves to limited joy. The



fear of loss starts suffocating us and prevents us from fully enjoying the present.

“WHEN WE BECOME TOO ATTACHED TO WHAT IS FAMILIAR, WE BIND OURSELVES TO LIMITED JOY.”

So much for attachment, what about hate?

In today's fast and competitive world, envy and animosity prevails. Rather than sharing the happiness of others, one indulges in jealousy, hatred and greed.

Hate becomes our baggage. The longer we carry it, the more it stinks up our soul and the world around us. Letting go of hate, paves the way for relief and peace of mind. Think

of hate as cholesterol: when we keep our emotional artery free of unnecessary hate, we allow more love to flow through our life. Hence, let us heed the immortal words of Dr. Martin Luther King:

“DON’T HATE, IT’S TOO BIG A BURDEN TO BEAR.”

The biggest hurdle is to let go of our ego. This is a one-person battle, a battle against the self, which is not easily won. It's a constant challenge. We rise, we fall and fall again.

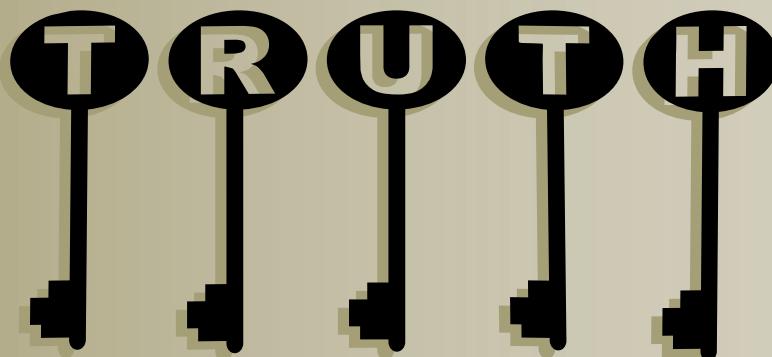
It's a fight to prevent ourselves from becoming too selfish with our success and too greedy with our self-importance. If we keep fighting, we are bound to become stronger. When we let go of our ego, we make room for God. Let us include God in our lives and make Him our best friend. As we always consult our friends and family for advice, why not turn to Him?

Letting go need not be an agonizing process. It can be a blissful experience. The key is to surrender to God, the act of which strengthens our faith and helps us to cope with the struggles of life.

“WHEN WE KEEP OUR EMOTIONAL ARTERY FREE OF UNNECESSARY HATE, WE ALLOW MORE LOVE TO FLOW THROUGH OUR LIFE.”

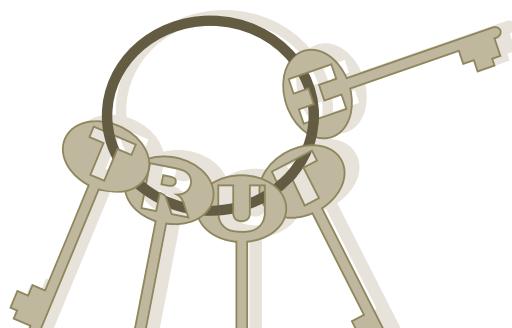
The best happens when we depend on Him, rather than material things, hatred or ego. Our worries vanish, like a drop of water in the ocean, when we immerse into the Super Soul.

Now, are you ready to let go? ■



ARE YOU READY TO LET GO?

NITYA TARNEJA, ROCHESTER, NY, USA





**Lesson to remember:
Do not take physical
life too seriously!**

Overcoming the Sense of Ownership

Dave Dhanoa, Toronto, Canada

A lot of positive self-talk in today's modern age revolves around letting go. This could be of desires, evil thoughts and passions. They are the cause of our anxieties. Our mind seemingly likes to focus on negativity; it loves it and spins it around. Like a moth drawn to a flame, this process leads to heightened stress and unhappiness.

A

houses, cars, properties, and even spouses and children, can give rise to negativity, which leads to discomfort and distress.

Just imagine if these were loaned to us, and given to us to use, but the real owner was someone else. How would that change our mindset? The owner would have the ultimate responsibility, and not you. You simply follow his directives. If you lose any of your transitory possessions, material or otherwise, you would not take it to heart. There would be no question of stress and anxiety, knowing full well that you do not own them. Moreover, you also know that the real owner of the assets, given to you for use, is your owner as well.

Anxiety and stress begin with ownership. The sense of ownership of our

According to HH Nirankari Baba, the leader and guide of the spiritual movement called the Sant Nirankari Mission, all our physical and mental possessions and potentials belong to the almighty formless God (Nirankar). This supreme Energy is the real doer behind everything in the Universe. This power has awarded all faculties to us, and we are required to do our duties, and perform our responsibilities, in the spirit of detached attachment. As the final outcome is not in our hands, but in the hands of God, we should avoid getting entangled in the material possessions.

What a relief it is to live like this! So you live in the world, in the present moment, without fretting over the past or future, because it is not in your hands, but in the hands of this Energy. As it has been said;

To pine greedily for what has already gone, is a form of illusion.

We are an eternal, everlasting spark of the infinite supreme energy called the super-soul.

While lamenting over the past is illusion, sitting idle and dreaming of the future, is also illusion. And, forgetting the Formless One and depending on material objects is also a form of illusion. Similarly, fake love and devotion also fall in this category. We have to rise above every kind of illusion, remember the Creator and concentrate on Him all the time. Only then we can obtain a lasting happiness, here and hereafter.

(HH Nirankari Baba, from the book: Gurudev Hardev)

According to this way of thinking, since we do not really own anything, things are already not in our hands; we effectively do not have anything to let go of!

This is the illusion! Our ownership which gives us stress and anxiety is not even real. It is just like borrowing something from a friend. You have it for a while, you feel it is yours, and start to develop an attachment to it.

Similarly, everything - body, mind and wealth - is God's gift to us. We are to take care of everything and fulfil our role as per God's plan. The thing which eases the mind is the fact that nothing is that important. If nothing is ours, how can we get entangled in these objects or situations? Something to think about.

A helpful principle is that in order to lead a relaxed life, we have

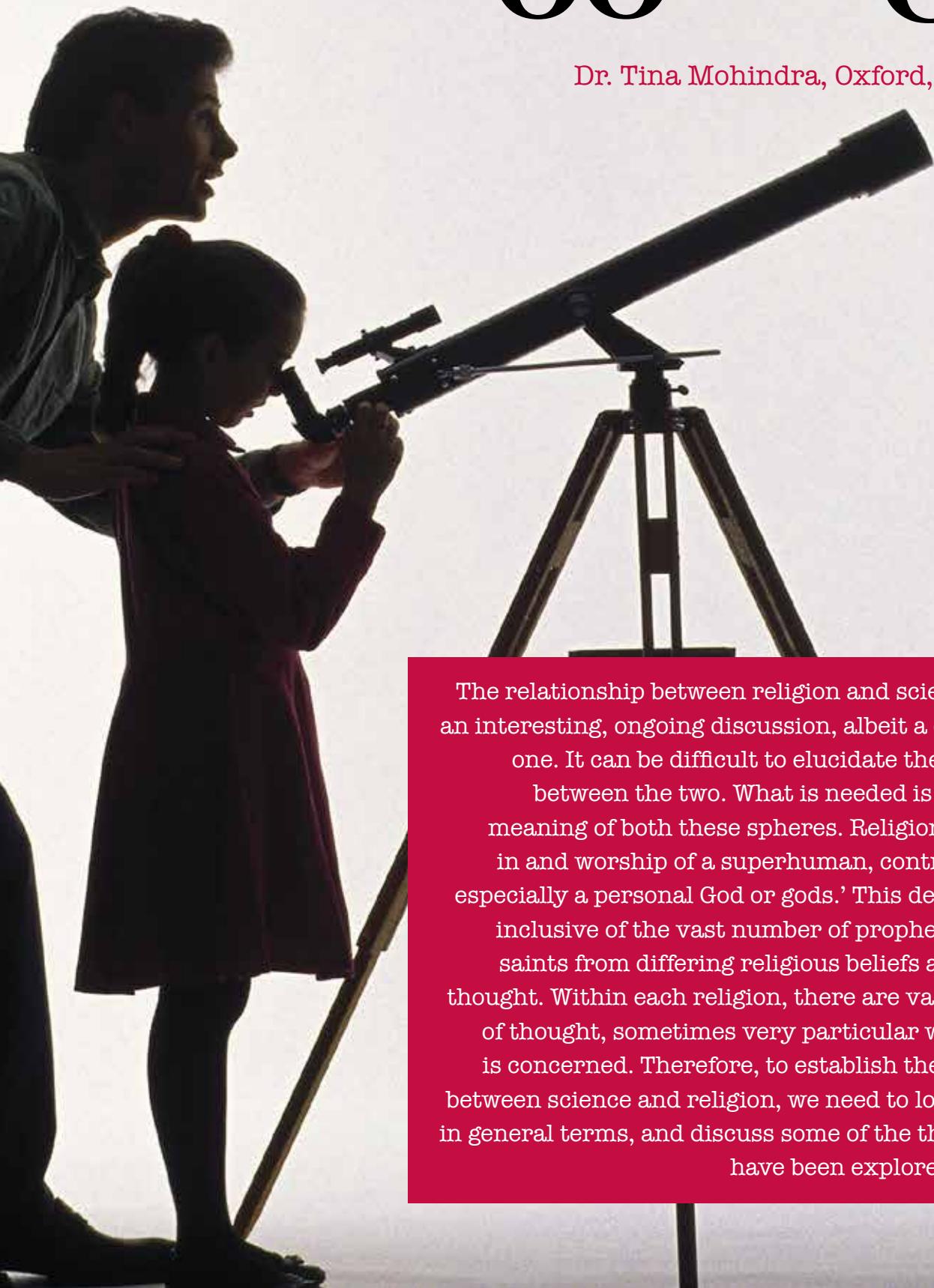
to be aware that we are above our bodies, possessions and wealth. We are something else. We are an eternal, everlasting spark of the infinite supreme energy called the super-soul. The outcomes are outcomes after all, whether we like them or not. Lesson to remember: Do not take physical life too seriously!

However, having said that, we must honour our responsibilities and duties to ourselves, family and society. The negativities will not touch us, as we truly surpass them. As true spiritual entities, we are accountable to the almighty and beyond illusion. ■



SEEING BEYOND LOOKING

Dr. Tina Mohindra, Oxford, UK



The relationship between religion and science has been an interesting, ongoing discussion, albeit a controversial one. It can be difficult to elucidate the relationship between the two. What is needed is clarity in the meaning of both these spheres. Religion is 'the belief in and worship of a superhuman, controlling power, especially a personal God or gods.' This definition is not inclusive of the vast number of prophets, gurus and saints from differing religious beliefs and schools of thought. Within each religion, there are varying schools of thought, sometimes very particular where science is concerned. Therefore, to establish the relationship between science and religion, we need to look at religion in general terms, and discuss some of the theories which have been explored in the past.

Science is ‘the intellectual and practical activity encompassing the systematic study of the structure and behavior of the physical and natural world through observation and experiment’. Where major western religions are concerned, there has always been some conflict between science and religion. Where science appears to be in continual development, religion may sometimes appear static rather than evolving.

Religion is often believed to be the ultimate truth, and as such, this fact or belief does not always change within a religion. Religion sometimes relies on the continual belief in facts relating to the past and the future, in the hope of changing the present. For example, there are Christian ideas of heaven and hell, which people understand literally. In Hinduism, it is believed that the world was created as a result of Lord Shiva’s cosmic dance, which was to destroy a weary universe and help Lord Brahma to re-start the process of creation.

No one has been to heaven and hell, and back, to confirm their existence. No one was present during Natraja’s dance to witness the formation of the solar system. It is ironic that people are so certain of these theories that they base their beliefs on them.

There must either be something supernatural or some behavioral human trait with which people blindly follow for a sense of belonging. The worldwide decline in religious belief is probably due to the latter. However,

religion still remains a powerful institution. These beliefs might also be true, requiring a deeper understanding and a delicate shift in our perception of them. Either way, the fact remains that there is a feature in our brain, which consistently requires us to be aware of some important truths.

Science, on the other hand, is a continually changing institution, where each theory, even when proven wrong, contributes to a greater and better understanding of the material world. As an example, in the past, there have been three milestone theories about the motions of the Earth and the Sun. Galileo said that the Earth moves and that the Sun is fixed. The Inquisition said that the Earth is fixed and that the Sun moves; and Newtonian astronomers said that both the Sun and the Earth move. The three theories appear to differ greatly. However, in actual fact, all three of these statements are equally true given that the interpretation of ‘rest’ and ‘motion’ is modified and adopted to each statement.

This realisation has only come about when we acquired the concept of relative motion. At their time, each one of these theories were correct, until a better understanding of relative motion emerged. When this happened, scientists united in the concept of this perfect truth; this in turn, gave rise to a much better understanding of the material universe.

In religion, the concept of heaven and hell on its own appears to be an abstract belief. However, with a perfect understanding of God, as the

ultimate truth, the notion of heaven and hell, is given much more clarity. Words alone have little substance. But interpretation, which evolves over time, adds to the truth.

More often than not, it is believed that science leads the way to the truth. Everything in science is based upon factual evidence, which needs to be backed up with rigorous experimental reasoning, statistics and peer review. Assumptions are made in science, but are usually short lived, as there is a heady drive to prove it from right or wrong. For this reason, many scientists have little interest in religion and move towards atheism due to a lack of reasoning. This is because the power of science has been overstated and the limitations are often not acknowledged.

The scientists’ hypothesis that the entire universe was created spontaneously is not one that holds water because of the instability of empty space. This instability is like a pencil balancing on its tip. A law in itself cannot create anything. This is where science ends and the beauty of spirituality and the existence of God begin.

Science has added to our understanding of the material world, and continues to advance to make our physical existence easier. Science also provides paradigms, which give way to a perfect, religious understanding, albeit through its own limitations. The clash of the doctrines of science and religion should not be seen as a collision, but rather an opportunity. The clash is a sign that there are wider

truths and finer perspectives within which a reconciliation of a deeper religion and more subtle science can be found. The vivid evidence of emotional experience and the cold certainty of scientific perception lead to a more delicate apprehension where meaningless formulae fade away. A human life can be preserved by flux of form but the same life cannot be permanently enclosed in the same mould. Embryology can increase the chances of the physical human formation, but no human being can create a soul. Every human being's physical existence will one day fade away, no matter how much science and medicine is applied.

These scientific limitations point to the presence of a supreme being, which past saints, sages and prophets have been leading us to. This is, in fact, the truth that HH Nirankari Baba is revealing to the world at large, today.

"How can it be that mathematics, being after all a product of human thought, independent of experience, is so admirably appropriate to the objects of reality?"

Albert Einstein.

Ultimately, the creator of the universe has given rise to creation in such a way that no scientist can ever get close to unraveling its marvelous force.

No matter how deep science goes, from trees to seeds, and cells to DNA, it still remains constrained to a study of aggregates. John Daido Loori, once said,

"When the true eye functions, it goes beyond looking and enters the realm of seeing. Looking speaks to what things are. Seeing reveals what else things are, the hidden aspect of reality, the reality of a rock, a tree, a mountain, a dog or a person".

Spiritual Masters, Satgurus and Mystics give us the ability to see beyond the realm of looking:

"Do not be misled, God is in the creation, and the creation is in God; God is all-pervading."
HH Nirankari Baba

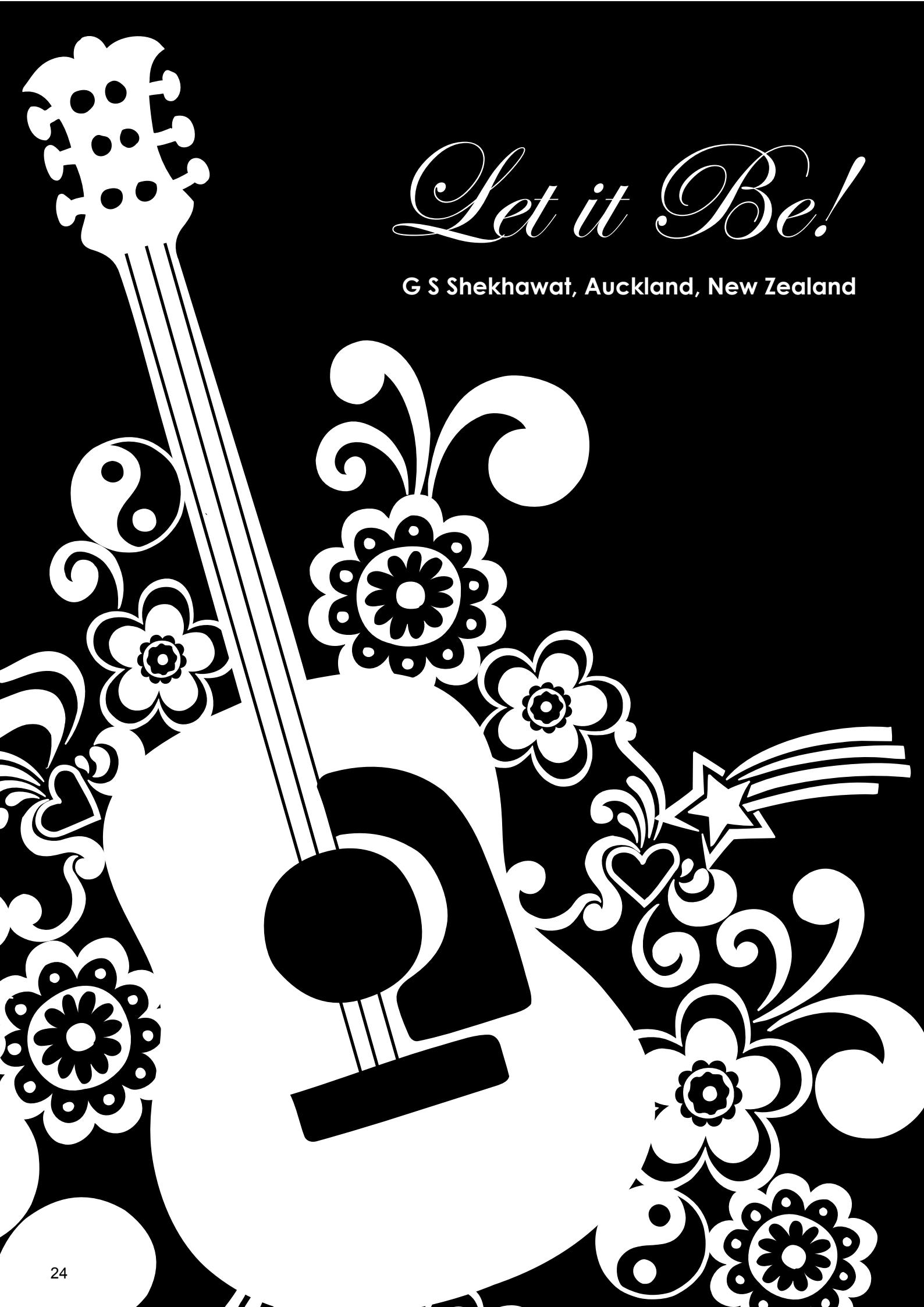
Where translational science proves theories to create medicines, devices and technology to give us a better physiological quality of life, Satguru blesses us with the supreme knowledge, which liberates our spiritual being for eternity.

Hence, the relationship between science and religion simply lies within the definition of science. Science gives us a better understanding of our material world, and religion gives us a better understanding of our spiritual world.

The true master awakens this understanding by showing us the eternal light which is God:

"We should make God our mainstay, imbibe God in our heart, and give God uppermost importance in our lives."
HH Nirankari Baba ■



The background is black, and the design is composed of white and black shapes. A white acoustic guitar is positioned vertically on the left side. It has a black pickguard and a black bridge. The neck of the guitar is decorated with a yin-yang symbol and a flower. The body of the guitar is surrounded by several large, stylized flowers, including a sunburst-like flower at the top and a heart-shaped flower on the right. There are also swirls and a shooting star with a trail. The title 'Let it Be!' is written in a cursive, flowing font at the top right.

Let it Be!

G S Shekhawat, Auckland, New Zealand

'Let it be' was the last album of the Beatles, the world-famous rock band. The very first words of the song, "when I find myself in times of trouble, Mother Mary comes to me, whispering words of wisdom, let it be, let it be," encapsulate the philosophy of life. One of the simplest and most effective teachings of letting go can revolutionise lives.

The lyrics exhort one to accept God's will over personal volitions. The spiritually inclined should not find it too hard to accept the fact that God's plan for our lives is far more superior and beneficial than our own plans, dreams and aspirations.

Recently an interesting incident happened. We were expecting some guests for dinner. My wife, Anita, and I, were busy cleaning our apartment, making it presentable. After finishing my tasks, I lit up some perfumed candles, and started to play with our 14-month old daughter, Khushi. She is a very active and playful child and gets fascinated with lights.

On seeing the lit candles in the bathroom, she darted towards them. I rushed to get her out of the bathroom before she harmed herself. She cried in protest. In spite of her crying, I ensured her safety. If somebody were to ask why I did not let her play with the lit candles, my answer would be obvious. I would let her cry for a couple minutes, rather than expose her to danger.

Incidents like this are very common, which parents normally encounter

with their children. The reason I mention this incident is because there are times when I also behave exactly like my child. There are moments in my life when I am totally obsessed with buying a new house, a car of my choice, seeking promotion or a job-switch, and harbouring a host of other expectations, which do not necessarily accord with God's will. And yet I expect my children to behave in a particular manner, but when things do not go my way, I complain, lose sleep and peace.

When faced with situations like this, we just need to let it be, for God would let his children cry momentarily, rather than letting them play with fire. The sooner we accept this maxim, the sooner our mental anguish goes. We can regain positivity, tranquillity and a peaceful state of mind.

In other words, the let it be approach is one of the best tools to deal with life's unwelcome surprises. It provides much needed immunity against petty squabbles, anxiety, stress and negative vibes, allowing us to carry on with our beautiful, spiritually drenched lives. ■

'Nirankar'

- The Ultimate Energy Source

George Khambe, Iver, UK

Many religions of the world will tell you that the universe is driven by a single almighty power, which is ultimately spiritual in nature. We may call this power God, or by one or more of the multitude of names out there. Scientists, however, have always been reluctant in accepting such claims. For them, the world we live in is rather more orderly and composed of deterministic systems governed by mathematical relations.

Unfortunately, their world is also beset with disorder and chaotic behaviour, which makes it all the more difficult to explain some of the subtleties of everyday life. So much so that today we have formulated many diverse theories: Quantum Mechanics, String Theory and Thermodynamics to mention a few. The list continues with each one adding value in its own context, but none of them really coming together to tell us what the real story is behind this peculiar world we live in.

With such theories in place, scientists have generally come to a common agreement on what they presently believe to be the Four Fundamental Forces: the strong, weak, electromagnetic and gravitational forces. Each one manifests through particular types (particles). For this discussion, although we do not necessarily

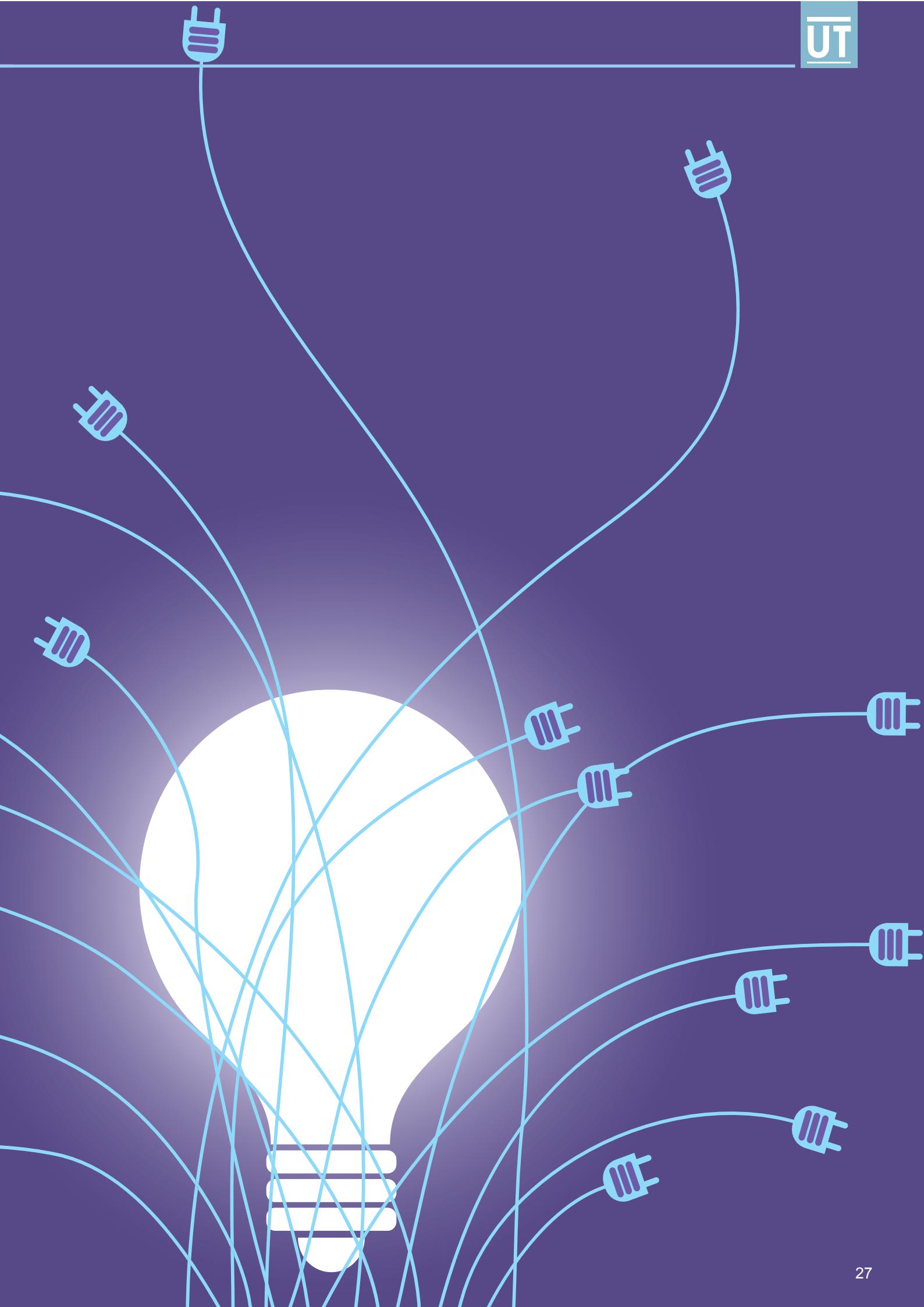
need to understand their details, we do, however, need to question as to whether or not these four can be described by one underlying force of nature. In fact many theoretical physicists have dedicated their lives to this cause, hoping to integrate the four forces of nature into one common model, often termed the Grand Unified Theory. In other words, we seek a single model that will explain the origin of nature and all its wonders.

Having studied physics, I have some appreciation for what this means. But I cannot help thinking that this has become an intellectual quest to dot the i's and cross the t's in an elegant mathematical model. The questions we should really be asking are more fundamental to the origin of the source of life. These are questions that bring us closer to the ultimate truth.

For religion, this truth is explained in terms of the almighty power (God). Is this enough? Personally, I believe that true appreciation must come through both a spiritual and scientific pursuit: spiritual in the sense that we must look deeper into the nature of reality, both within us as well as around us, and scientific in that we must test the insight we gain through experience to fully appreciate it. Conclusions derived merely from theory or from blind faith are ultimately hollow. Without a firm foundation, they will not solve any of our problems. I believe that this applies equally to science and religion, and to this point, science has been pondering a problem in recent years, which has challenged its apparently firm foundations and promoted a rethink – the so-called Dark Matter Problem.

The Dark Matter problem reared its head at a point in time when astronomy was already sufficiently





advanced enough to view the stars and galaxies with great precision. By collecting data from astronomical observations, scientists were able to perform various calculations and make predictions about our galaxy with great confidence. However, it soon became apparent that there were some discrepancies and some results did not actually align with expectations; it was soon realised that the reason for this was that our understanding of the mass of our galaxy (from observations) was simply too small.

Moreover, there had to be something else in the galaxy, something they could not see, could not measure, and could not account for. With all the visible things in the universe e.g. sun, planets, moon, earth, the environment and physical matter, they could still not satisfy the discrepancy in their models. The problem was that this something, which they called Dark Matter, played a highly dominant role in the galaxy. In fact, it is now thought that this Dark Matter accounts for 90% of our galaxy, and up to 98% of our Universe!

When I heard this in a lecture some 15 years ago, I was absolutely stunned. I wanted to put my hand up in front of the class of students and shout out “I know what it is”, but I couldn’t. It’s not something they could have appreciated at that point in time. However, I felt a tingling in my spine and I couldn’t wipe the smile off my face. In my mind it appeared to be obvious that Dark Matter was pointing towards the existence of an intense and undefinable energy, one that we might liken to ‘Nirankar’ (the Formless). If only we could open our minds to it? At the time, I remember reading the words of the acclaimed physicist Paul Davies, who suggested that there was...

“... Powerful evidence that there is ‘something going on’ behind it all”
- Davies, 1989, p.203

These words confirmed my opinion that science could not explain everything on its own, and I was inspired to dig deeper to see what parallels I could find with spirituality. So, I decided to start with a very famous (and fundamental) law in Physics:

“Energy can neither be created nor destroyed; it can only be converted from one form to another”

This is the First Law of Thermodynamics. Now compare this with the description of Nirankar/Brahma: He was neither born, nor does He die. He always was, is, and will ever be. Furthermore, Nirankar permeates in everything; He resides within all creation and binds all visible and

the lines, we learn that it is near impossible to even begin to imagine the power of this Nirankar. Just think about it, a force that has total power over everything that will ever exist, and holds the arrow of time firmly in its hand. Lord Krishna says (Chapter 2, verse 23) that weapons cannot cut it, nor can fire burn it; water cannot wet it, nor can wind dry it.

Nirankar is the ultimate energy source, the force behind all forces, and the net result of all outcomes. Guru Nanak Dev Ji puts it simply beautifully in the Raga Asa that

“His only quality is, that there is none like Him”

“... Powerful evidence that there is ‘something going on’ behind it all”

invisible substances together. And, although He is so close, science is still not able to grasp the subtlety of His presence. Lord Krishna in the Bhagavada Gita (Chapter 7, verses 4 and 5) tells us that the elements constitute His eightfold lower nature, and that His higher nature sustains the whole universe.

I often like to reflect on what this really means. Let your mind expand and for one moment consider that the power of Nirankar permeates from the hair on your head all the way through your body down to the end of your toenails. Now consider that the energy you feel flowing through

“Energy can neither be created nor destroyed; it can only be converted from one form to another.”

We are reminded in verse 10 of the Sacred Avtar Bani that there are nine elements that amount to matter. The tenth is the all-pervasive, supreme entity (Nirankar/Brahma) which pervades them all and stands aloof.

I cannot say for anyone else, but I am amazed. Reading between

your body is exactly the same as that which is pervading in the void of outer space, through absolutely everything, both backwards and forwards in time. Surely it is such a realisation that has inspired all manner of individuals throughout the ages:

“...I am Re-birth, I am life. Eat me,

“His only quality is, that there is none like Him”

drink me, I am your Food. And finally, do not be afraid, I have overcome the whole Universe.”
Passage from ‘Lewis’, 1979, p.79

The exercise is endless. Think about the qualities of Nirankar: infinite love, tolerance, discipline, vision, power, strength, serenity and much more. Moreover, there is the potential for those who meditate on him through the heart, soul and mind. They adopt the same qualities, and eventually become like the source themselves. Perhaps this is why we feel inspired and encouraged by the company of the spiritually enlightened - those who are effortlessly connected with the source.

It seems too simple to be true, but as HH Nirankari Baba says, “The truth is always simple”. ■

“...I am Re-birth, I am life. Eat me, drink me, I am your Food. And finally, do not be afraid, I have overcome the whole Universe.”





Desire

Nishi Bahl-Gulati,
Toronto, Canada

According to the Oxford Dictionary, ‘desire is a strong feeling of wanting to have something or wishing for something to happen’. Desire may come in many forms, and too often if I do not get what I desire - the house, the car, the career, money, the relationship or the family - not only do I want it more, but my cravings grow exponentially. This unfulfilled hankering can lead to all manner of feelings, such as disappointment, anger and jealousy. These feelings are often associated with similarly unsettling thoughts.

Do negative thoughts and feelings really matter? Perhaps not. But, if one is searching for and wishes to attain peace of mind, then one will have to overcome their burdensome effects.

What is the cause of this never-ending chain of desires that create havoc in our every day lives? I ‘see’ the house, and I end up wanting

it. I ‘hear’ someone having made a million dollars, and I end up yearning for even more. I ‘smell’ an expensive perfume, and I am driven to acquire it. I ‘taste’ chocolate, and I end up itching for it. The problem isn’t in wanting or not wanting it, the problem is the negativity that develops if the sought after object, is not obtained.

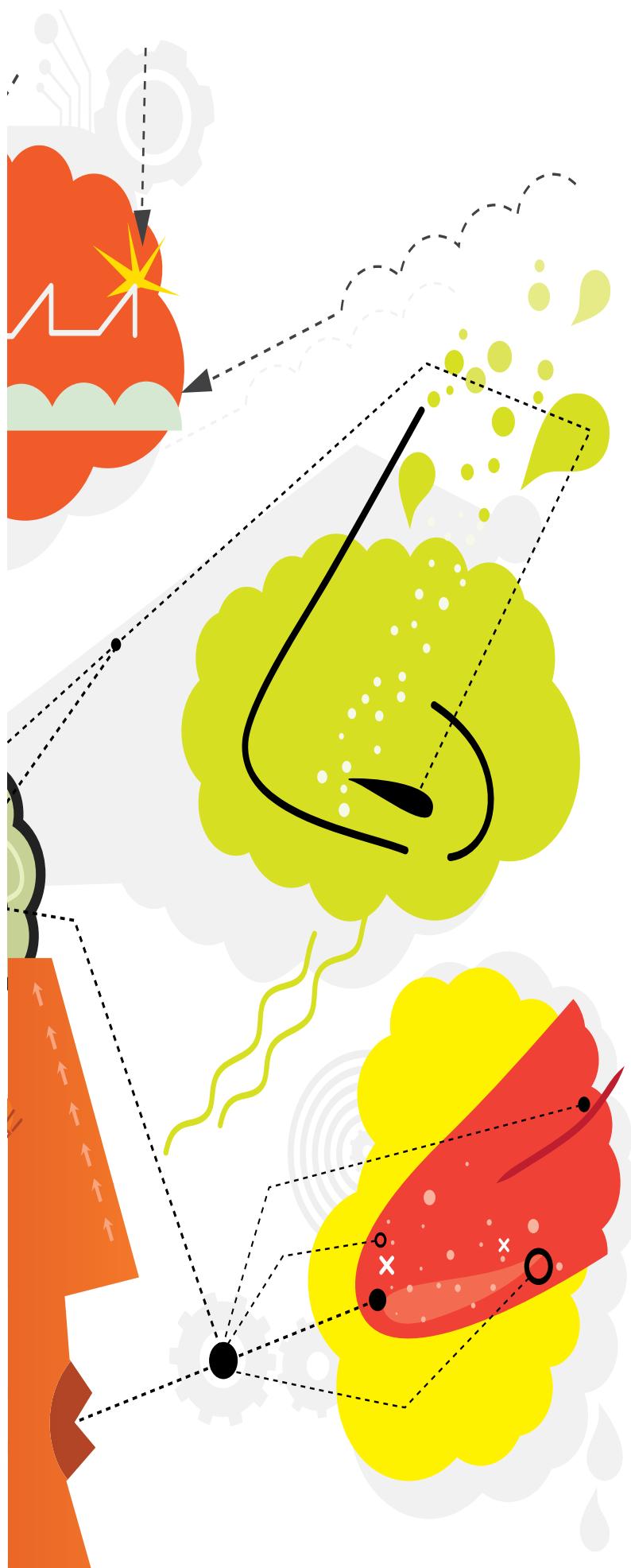
You will notice that it is the five senses – i.e. to see, to hear, to touch, to taste and to smell – that first come into play before any desire arises. And this is where the answer to ‘what do we do about our desires?’ lies. Right now our senses are acting like a bridge between ‘it’ which exists in the outer world, and desires which exist within us.

For example, our eyes see a house. Our desire says: I want that house. If I don't get the house, sadness misery and frustration may follow. But a house is just a house. When our sensory organ, the eye, sees the house and only the house, then we reach the detached state of mind where there is no attachment to the house, and then we successfully sever the connection between 'it' (outside) and the desire (within).

To lead a detached life, we need to start looking within ourselves and becoming 'aware' - aware of our desires; aware of what causes these desires; and aware of how we react to these desires. We have all done this at least once, where we think no one is watching us and we start dancing or singing. All of a sudden we become 'aware' that someone is watching us, and as such we immediately become shy and stop in our tracks. Similarly, when we start paying attention to our desires, we bring awareness to our anger, jealousy and sadness. But the minute these negative feelings become 'aware' that someone is 'watching', we notice an immediate stop just like when we were dancing or singing.

As suggested, the cause of disturbance in our peace of mind is when our desires are not fulfilled. To maintain peace of mind means we need to reduce our wanton desires. To diminish our needless desires means that we learn to sensibly regulate the bridge that connects the outer world to our inner feelings. This bridge is the product of our senses. To manage the bridge means to become aware of the negative thoughts that develop within us when one or more of the five senses is triggered.

It is this awareness that helps us to control our objectionable desires, and stops the negativity from becoming a hindering-block in the pursuit of an abiding peace of mind. ■



Absence of Proof

Dr. K Chawla, Florida, USA

What do we define as the truth?

Truth is something that cannot be changed or destroyed. Everything in this world is dynamic in nature; it was created and will, at some point, perish. People of faith proclaim that the only thing that is static, and cannot be destroyed, is God (the Truth).

Almost every religion professes that there is a super power that created everything in this universe, yet there are many who doubt its existence. Whether it is a debating club or a court of law, to win an argument, proof is required. To establish something as a scientific fact, an indisputable proof is required. Although certain facts such as hydrogen and oxygen atoms comprising water molecules or the existence of viruses, have been proven beyond any doubt, the absolute proof of the ultimate truth is hard to obtain.

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It is such a powerful force, and yet some demand proof of its existence. Some, like Richard Dawkins, justify this demand by saying, 'science replaces private prejudice with public, verifiable evidence.' Many feel that we have the cognitive ability to justify the existence of anything in this world with some effort. Others argue that, 'If we require some kind of sign or proof, for our belief in God, then we believe, or place our trust, not in God but in the sign or proof.' (Robert L. Short, the Gospel According to Peanuts).

As human beings, we have certain limitations. There are forces or phenomena that are beyond our comprehension. Trying to understand them is frustrating, leading to no concrete results. For example, have you ever felt love? Has anyone ever been able to find definitive and scientific proof for the existence of love? If this proof is unattainable, would that lead one to conclude that love doesn't exist? Would one trust their intuitive feelings or would they favor empirical science?

Scriptures from different religions confirm what prophets have preached during their time of existence. Prophets have always reminded mankind that a much more powerful Being exists that is responsible for the creation. Mankind must acknowledge this power or suffer undesirable consequences. As stated above, reading scriptures and listening to sermons becomes "private prejudice" or hearsay more than scientific evidence.



What does philosophy have to say about all of this?

There are four statements we can make with logical resolutions.

- *That God exists, and yet some do not believe in His existence. The consequences are quite dire. They will suffer for their defiance to a superior force, and they will not attain salvation.*
- *That God does not exist, and that those who ascribe to this view face no consequences of their defiance because they believe they do not have to answer to a superior force.*
- *That God does not exist, and yet there are those who believe He exists. There are no stern consequences in this situation, but it is considered that the time dedicated to the Non-existent God has been wasted.*
- *That God exists, and that many believe in His existence. This is the most rewarding and positive scenario. If man realizes his creator, he will be rewarded with bliss and liberation.*

If we analyze the statements above, it is evident that a negative scenario cannot arise for mankind if man believes in the existence of God. There's a 50-50 chance that if one does not believe in God, then the soul will continue to suffer. Is any sane person really willing to take that chance?

The author of The Lost World, Michael Crichton, states that the 'absence of proof is not proof of absence.' It's a powerful statement. Just because we cannot find absolute proof that God exists, does not mean that there is no God.

As discussed earlier, even though we cannot provide concrete proof that love exists, it is a feeling that everyone in this world can relate to. A great majority, if not all, can vouch that love is something that can bring people together, and help them overcome obstacles. It is often said that 'Love is God and God is Love'. If we can justify the presence of love in an abstract manner, then why cannot we accept that God exists?

The universe is so vast that no human being can ever measure its size. Thinking about this can make anyone light-headed. In the same way, to think that there isn't a greater force that is responsible for the creation and sustenance of this universe is inconceivable. Just the thought of conceptualizing how the universe was created without an omnipotent and omniscient force can be befuddling for most people.

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More the doubters question the existence of God, more they realize that there is no evidence disproving God's existence. Intelligent people make decisions based on sound facts and reasonable extrapolations. There are very few things that we should just accept as they are. Believing in God is one of them. Numerous accounts of miracles have been documented and millions of prayers have been answered without any rationale. One or two incidents can be coincidences, but how can one explain millions of recounts?

Prophets, regardless of their background, come on to the earth with one message: there is one God, and we are His children. If only one prophet had claimed the existence of God, then mankind would have had a big reason to doubt him. In reality, all the prophets and seers have preached the existence of one God. So, why should anyone doubt His existence?

Science and technology should have helped humankind to get closer to God. Arguably, however, science has been used more to create lethal and advanced weapons to harm, and less to help, human beings. Though the internet has opened doors to limitless knowledge, which is easily accessible, we are still not any closer to God.

Saints and seers, who have catalogued their respective experiences of bliss and joy, in scriptures all over the world, and left a plethora of undeniable testimonies of their intimate relationship with the almighty power, is proof enough for me, that God does in fact exist. These self-realised, illumined beings saw God all around them, and everywhere. They experienced Him in their lives and acquainted the genuine seekers, who, equipped with enlightenment, were able to perceive (see) the Almighty, within and without.

The proof of the pudding lies in the eating. In short, proof of God, lies in experiencing Him in life. For this, we need to seek an enlightened experiencer of God, who can impart the skill and art of experiencing Him! ■

Satguru

Rahul Singh, Cannock, UK

Our ancient texts tell us that God is the one and only Truth. And this Truth is acquired through the kindness of a True Teacher, the Satguru. A seeker has to find such a personage to be reunited with the ultimate Reality.

The word Satguru is composed of two Sanskrit words, sat and guru. Sat has two meanings, true or the Truth. And Guru is made up of two syllables, gu meaning darkness or ignorance and ru meaning the ridder of it. In common parlance, guru means a teacher, who has thoroughly mastered his subject. It can be a teacher of music, arts, sciences or any other discipline.

Satguru, therefore, is the one who knows, and is one with the Sat or the Truth. He has the competence to impart the knowledge of the Truth to a seeker with a sincere quest. Such a True Teacher with divine knowledge guides the seeker- turned- disciple on the spiritual path.

The sacred Scriptures also state that the Satguru is never born and never dies. His formless aspect lives on, from one divine form to another. The Satguru is God's emissary to help us live our daily lives with love, peace and unity. He is the liberator.

The need for the True Teacher would be obvious by now. He is a man of deeds, not just words, and a perfect role model to follow. His thoughts, words and actions are one and the same. He lives in the light and dispenses the light because he is the light; light that enables man to discern the good from the bad, the infinite from the finite, and the real from the unreal.

The real we see not, but the unreal we sense, feel and touch. Ironically, the illusion we regard as real, and the real as illusion.

The divine knowledge is the means by which the real is perceived and the unreal, apprehended. With this rare knowledge, the True Teacher aids his student to burst the bubble of illusion.

The knowledge of the Truth is an absolute imperative for a happy, fulfilled human life. This makes the need for the guidance of the Satguru even more imperative. ■



LETTING IN PEACE

Arfi Nehru, Los Angeles, USA

Letting go of anything can be scary. Letting go of expectations. Letting go of past hurts. Letting go of your dreams. Letting go of the person you love. Letting go of control.

Sometimes the act of letting go is a choice, and the right thing to do. A parent lets go of the child when the child becomes an adult, and a father lets go of his responsibility when he walks his daughter down the aisle.

But sometimes we are forced to let go of a situation or a desire. No matter how hard we try to convince someone to stay, they still walk away from us. And no matter how hard we work, we are passed up for a job promotion, and we have no choice but to let go of that dream.

It might not even make sense at the time. You try your best, but nothing happens? Why? Such questions can plague the mind to the point of craziness or even worse.

Here is what I have learned that has really helped me to let go. Having control, at the

end of the day, is just an illusion. If you accept there is a Creator, who fashions the world, operates it and that you are a mere instrument in the game of life, and then you will understand that you were never in control to begin with.

Therefore, refuse to be anxious, depressed or hopeless. If He wills it, it will happen. If it does not happen, there is a divine reason. And to embrace this understanding is putting faith in action.

This understanding can save us mountains of grief. Rather than being held captive by our desires, the understanding that He is in control, sets us free.

I don't believe this means that we cannot desire things. Rather, it means not to be so attached to them that they rob us of our peace of mind. If you think about it, the pain we get in life comes from not accepting, or resisting, what is beyond our control.

Relinquishing control over a situation or letting go does not always mean giving

up. In fact, sometimes it's the best thing you can do, for yourself and for others.

Hanging on to something that God has not intended, is a sure recipe for chaos and disorder for us. In fact, I have experienced many a moment where I let go of a past dream that was causing more disturbance than peace.

Sometimes the reason why things do not go as planned, is beyond our comprehension. When we cannot grasp the divine plan with our limited intellect, faith comes into play to make things easier.

Faith empowers us to accept God's will. It tells us that what God can do in one moment, we cannot accomplish in our entire lives.

Many times, people may well believe they are the victors, when they have the last word in a fight. But the truth is, when we are able to let go of our ego and put the happiness of others above our own, we are not giving up, we are building our character. We are practicing the

art of letting go.

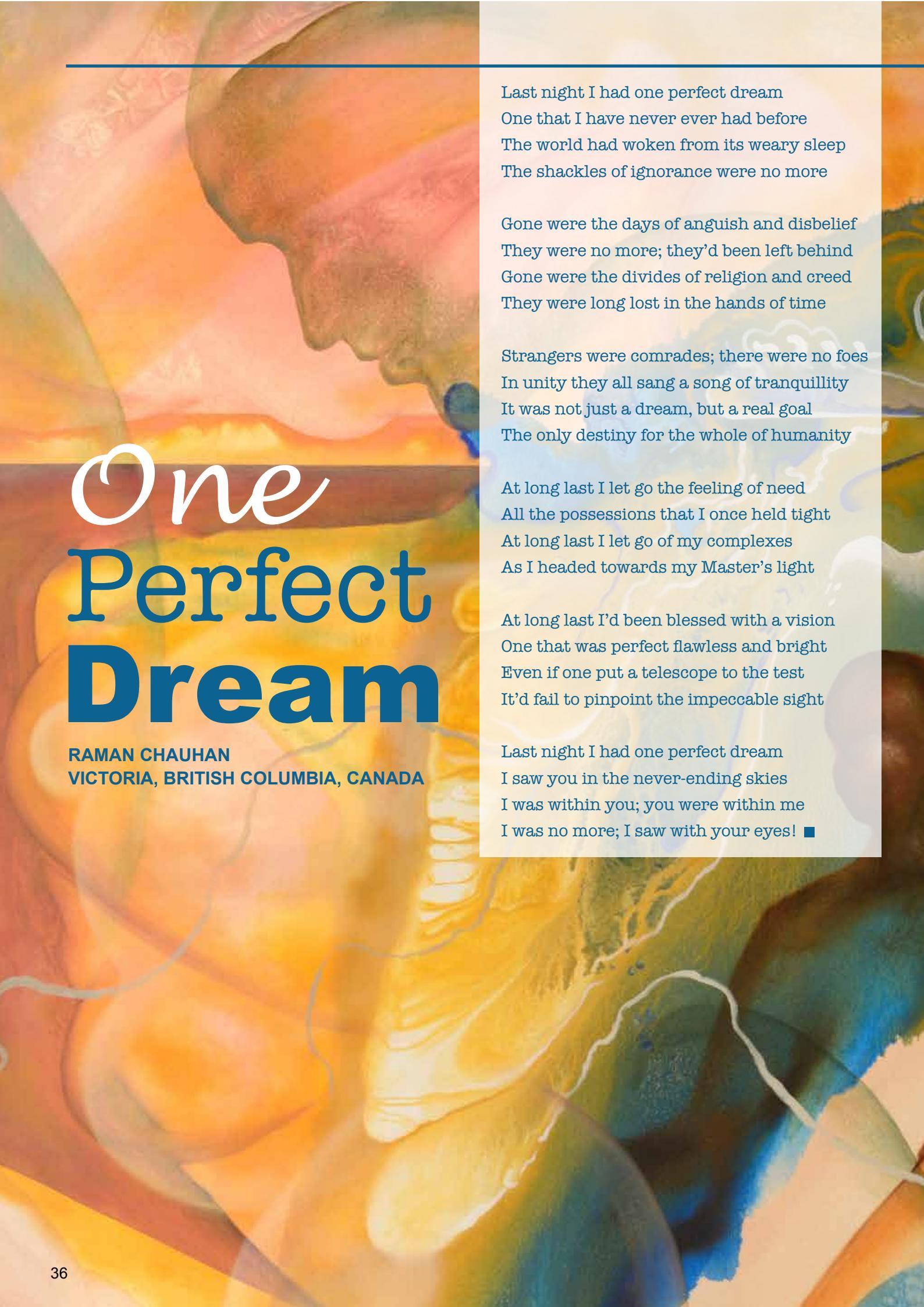
The best part of letting go is that we let go of our worries, anxieties, plans, troubles, and hand them over to God. We can pray to remove all those desires that are not good for us, and replace them with those that are.

"Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you."

(1 Peter 5:6-7 Bible)

In return, He blesses us with a peace that surpasses all understanding, and the strength to let go.

He will direct our paths. He will give us wisdom. Trust Him, praise Him, and let go of anything you need to let go of right now. It doesn't mean you are giving up. It means you're accepting His will for you. And a lot of times, whether we like it or not, thankfully it still goes His way. ■



One Perfect Dream

RAMAN CHAUHAN
VICTORIA, BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA

Last night I had one perfect dream
One that I have never ever had before
The world had woken from its weary sleep
The shackles of ignorance were no more

Gone were the days of anguish and disbelief
They were no more; they'd been left behind
Gone were the divides of religion and creed
They were long lost in the hands of time

Strangers were comrades; there were no foes
In unity they all sang a song of tranquillity
It was not just a dream, but a real goal
The only destiny for the whole of humanity

At long last I let go the feeling of need
All the possessions that I once held tight
At long last I let go of my complexes
As I headed towards my Master's light

At long last I'd been blessed with a vision
One that was perfect flawless and bright
Even if one put a telescope to the test
It'd fail to pinpoint the impeccable sight

Last night I had one perfect dream
I saw you in the never-ending skies
I was within you; you were within me
I was no more; I saw with your eyes! ■

The ones who know

Sudhir Kundi, London, UK

**The feeling is great when you let go
It is as if one is floating on the sea
There's no stress going with the flow
So let go and you are free!**

**Free from stress and worry,
Free from all kinds of concern,
No expectations to rely on
And nothing to make you burn.**

**But letting go is not that easy
If it were everyone would smile
Every day would be peaceful
We'd be grateful all the while**

**A baby that laughs, not cries
When thrown into the air
Safe in the knowledge that
Their father below is there**

**Likewise you'll find your Father
When you get to know the source
Your view on life will change
When you're one with this Force**

**Accept there's nothing you can do
Trust that He will not let you fall
When things become too much
You must give to God your all**

**Ask one who has seen Him
They would be glad to show
You should not follow blindly
For God is around you to know**

**Those who go about smiling
Untouched by pleasure or woe
Go ask them the rarest secret
For they're the ones who know! ■**



To Surrender is to Liberate

Akanksha Mehla, Toronto, Canada

In life, we experience moments of sheer happiness when we feel that the whole world is at our feet. But it is not long before we find ourselves crashing down to rock bottom, when we are surrounded by nothing but despair. Then we begin to question everything.

It is in this predicament that we yearn for a flicker of light that shows the way out of the pitch of darkness. This ray of hope helps us to rediscover what we had lost sight of during our good times. In fact, it is often these adverse moments that help us to discover the higher reality, and to appreciate the surrender of the self to the highest power.

Let us see what we mean by 'surrender'? Surrender is the act of relinquishing that which we believe to be very precious to us: that is, our ego that we regard as dearer than our life. **It is the ego that we have to drop, as it is the real cause of the distraught and covetous state of mind.** The ego fuels the illusion, which separates us from our Greater Self (Spirit). Not only does it create instability, but it also gives rise to cravings for things.

True surrender enables us to release the fear, anticipation and expectation that we often get caught up in. We must detach from matters material, and the ego we so tightly hold on to, to feel the joy of the divinity within. We must free ourselves from the worldly shackles by attaching ourselves to the peerless, liberating, Common Spirit.

Such an attachment, stemming from the realization of this spirit, envisions us with divine sight to see the infinite in all human beings.

It releases the vast reservoir of love and compassion that lies in the deeper recesses of our heart. It is at this point of our spiritual journey that the saintly traits enter our lives.

However, we refrain from surrendering because we want to be in control. Otherwise, surrendering, in itself, is not a difficult task. We are the ones, who hold back. We fail to realize that there is some force guiding our hand. We fail to see the advantages associated with surrendering. By letting go, we hand over our cobweb of worries and stresses to God, and He hands over his peace to us.



We must understand that to surrender is to liberate ourselves from the fetters of existence. We must also remember that surrendering is conditional. It requires us to submit to and admit the formless Spirit into our lives, which, in itself, entails taking a big leap of faith.

Surrendering and admittance is very much like looking at a painting, or listening to a piece of music. We cannot judge the piece of artwork in advance just because we have been told it is great. We must experience it for ourselves. To achieve the spiritual equipoise, we need humility. We need to be able to bow down before the Formless, feel His divine hand on our head, and experience His blessings, protecting us from the tempests and storms.

In order to ascend to the highest, we must first descend to the lowest, in order to earn the grace and blessings of the Spiritual Teacher. Just as the patients accept the doctor's word, because they know the doctor has expert knowledge, is there to protect them, to treat them and to help them, likewise we must accept the Teacher's advice to elevate ourselves. We must have the requisite faith.

Surrender is the essential ingredient required to attain the realization (liberation) of the self, and of the Greater Self, the Absolute One. This realization liberates us from the cycle of ups and downs, highs and lows, and despondencies and elations, in life. It forges a balanced living and induces a much needed equipoise. Peace and calm descend, whilst the spirit and soul blend into the highest reality. ■



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