

TRIBUTE

# Prajapita Brahma: A spiritual pioneer like none other



JANE KAY

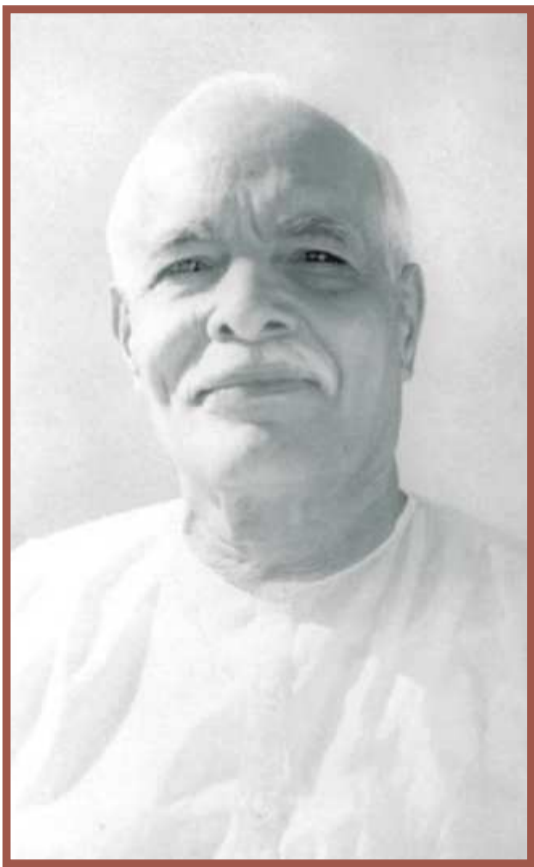
In two days' time, on 18 January, more than one million people, living in over 130 countries across the world, will spend their day quietly remembering a man whose life became an inspiration for them to change their own.

Dada Lekhraj, later known as Prajapita Brahma, and affectionately referred to as Brahma Baba by the Brahma Kumaris, was someone whose search for truth set him apart from those around him. His love for God and devotional nature

automatically inspired respect. He was also a wealthy diamond merchant, whose own nobility of demeanour, gentle humility and honesty in his business dealings attracted both Indian and foreign royalty as customers.

However, it was a series of visions that he received during deep contemplation that heralded the beginning of a life of such purity and simplicity that hundreds flocked to be near him and follow his example.

The light of Divinity began to illumine his life, and he renounced his business and devoted the rest of his days to demonstrating the reality of spirituality in action. This was not as easy as it reads on paper. His advocacy of a life of purity and of dignifying the role of women, by placing them as trustees and leaders of the organisation, met with great re-



sistance.

Someone who had garnered respect and admiration became someone

who was vilified and opposed at every step. No matter — he had found what he had been look-

ing for and continued to deal with each one, however they approached him, as someone worthy of regard, spiritual love and mercy.

The message he conveyed has attracted peoples of all ages, faiths, nationalities, social status and beliefs.

The reason why the message resonates with those from so many diverse paths of life is threefold: The message says that firstly, each one is a spiritual being, a soul — each with a different role to play on this field of action. Secondly, that the Supreme Soul has a unique part to play here, and His task is to make the world a better place for all, by helping His children — each one of us — to regain their dignity and self-respect. The third aspect is that the cycle of time is coming full circle, and now is the moment to understand and participate in

the beginning of an age of peace and happiness.

The sun can rise on this enlightened age only when human beings begin to live a life of virtue. Each individual soul can bring about this transformation in the self by connecting with the Supreme Being.

Prajapita Brahma perfectly understood this message that was given through him, and consequently gave his wealth, his life and his every thought to the upliftment of humanity. His life of truth, purity, peace, love and humility has become an inspiration for thousands.

It is a wonder; and yet no wonder at all that January 18, the anniversary of his passing, has become a day of quiet remembrance and gratitude.

Jane Kay is a university teaching fellow in the UK, and a Rajyoga teacher with the Brahma Kumaris.

DISCOURSE

## TO LEAD OTHERS, HAVE PURE FEELINGS



DADI JANKI

Good leadership is based on skills which are incognito, such as pure feelings, faith and trust. These keep both, your frame of mind, and the task, moving in the right direction.

It is human to err, but your high hopes for someone can actually eliminate errors. Doubting people has exactly the opposite effect. Believing in someone, extending feelings of trust,

never telling people what to do, but stepping aside and watching, with faith; this is what enables a task to get done in the right way.

Spiritual skills like these are cultivated by avoiding complacency, learning to be sensitive, and staying alert. Also, keep an eye on your own spiritual health. Do not look to others for what is lacking, look within, see what remains to be done, and do it.

Never allow those with strong personalities to tell you what to do, especially when you feel something else to be right. This creates depression and you cannot afford to be disheartened.

Take care of yourself with understanding and love, and make sure you never compromise your own spiritual growth.



## A THOUGHT FOR TODAY

The lotus flower is a symbol of contentment. Its quiet beauty floats serenely on the water, untouched by the mud below the surface. In meditation, I can experience a state of mind untouched by the mud of the world around me. This happens when I keep my thinking above the dirt but use the compost offered by the world to nourish my inner learning journey. Today let me live like a lotus.

INTUITIVE UNDERSTANDING

## THE ESSENCE OF SPIRITUAL MATURITY



KEN O'DONNELL

I have been spending more time than usual during the current pandemic at our retreat centre in Brazil. Thus, I have been able to observe the exuberance of nature here; how all of the elements are able to live with each other in harmony.

You will never see trees fighting with each other in their effort to put their highest branches in the sunlight. The wind, clouds, rain and sun-

shine combine to produce refreshing scenes every day. Nature is forever recycling itself. Even looking out of the same window, where my office is, everything is different every time I look out — clouds and sunlight are always changing.

These are the things that remind me of spiritual maturity. For me, it is a sense of sufficiency, that everything is moving along nicely, not in the sense of standing back and just going with the flow. It is really because there is a relationship between internal order and how it influences the world we live in. There is an understanding that worry is low-quality thinking,

and that it is much more profitable to have inner control and peace and, in that state, watch the wonders that happen around us.

I have been thinking more about spiritual maturity in terms of some indicators. How humble do I feel? How protected do I feel? Does my spiritual state reflect the more than 40 years I have dedicated to developing it? I can honestly say I do not have pride about what I have learned and know. It is that I am really happy about how spiritual knowledge has helped me and others throughout my life. I do not feel that I am better or worse than anyone else, just different.

There is an intuitive



understanding that I do not need to compare myself with others. I just have to recognise and celebrate the many things we have in com-

mon. And any intellect or personality differences only provide variety for the theatre of life. I understand that truth will always be

self-evident. I do not need to prove anything. Only that which is really true has a future. Everything that is intrinsically wrong, or

false, does not last.

I recently found two words in Sanskrit that reflect an important part of spiritual maturity:

*Gaunibhakti* is ego-based devotion, in which the person feels that he is "saved" and looks with disdain at any other kind of faith. This means to love one ideal but feel aversion to other ideals.

*Parabbhakti* (the highest level of devotion) means total loving devotion to the truth, so much so that there is no room for hatred of any kind. This, to me, is the essence of spiritual maturity.

Ken O'Donnell, an author and international consultant on strategy and leadership, is the director of Brahma Kumaris' services in South America.

INTERCONNECTEDNESS

## ATTITUDE OF INCLUSIVITY FOSTERS HARMONY



GOPI PATEL

The year just past has pushed us to 're-view' many aspects of our lives and our vision for collective harmony. The pandemic has affected the lives of everyone and tested our sense of inclusion and belonging. Diversity, inclusion and belonging have been the 'loud' themes emerging throughout the year.

Diversity is the state of the natural world. Nature exhibits the beauty of co-existence where every organism has its own part to play in maintaining a balanced ecosystem. It is also the natural state of humankind, as expressed through culture, religion, attitudes, beliefs, and opinions. Nature is free of the ego of compari-

son, inferiority, superiority and the complexes of shame and guilt.

However, humans see diversity through the lens of ego. If we could see human diversity through the eyes of equality and respect, we would see that each person is playing their unique part in the ecosystem of the human drama. Then we would understand the value of diversity and recognise our own part and how we fit into the whole. The impulse of diversity is natural and will always find expression.

Inclusivity is a feeling, a mindset, an attitude and a way of behaving, speaking and thinking. In a world of

structures and tick boxes, diversity is easy to measure, inclusivity is not. Creating an environment of inclusivity requires personal introspection and fresh thinking, free from the subtle biases and belief systems shaped by our culture and past experiences.

True inclusivity requires a radical change in attitude. When I have an attitude of inclusivity, I see the value of each person, no matter their packaging. When potential is recognised, people can claim their seat at the table with strength and dignity, not from a place of shame and weakness.

A sense of belonging is the

direct result of an attitude of inclusion. When not included, people become hurt and angry and the bonds of belonging bear the brunt of this. Broken bonds result in divisions and lead to exclusion. The human spirit, when broken, lacks the courage to be inclusive. Nurturing an attitude of inclusion requires healing of the spirit. The collective spirit of humanity also needs to heal.

Meditation is a powerful tool to release ourselves from the limited trappings of the ego's insecurities and wounds, reconnecting us with our spiritual authentic selves. This healing process leads to more openness and kindness in interactions with others. We begin to experience the depth and value of our interconnectedness and the beauty of diversity.

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TRANSFORMATION

## TO CHANGE THE WORLD, START WITH THE SELF



B.K. MRUTHYUNJAYA

When we work on ourselves to become better individuals, it helps to check our progress from time to time and find out our speed of self-improvement. How far are we from our goals? Are we moving fast enough?

To what extent have we finished our weaknesses and defects? And have our attitudes, beliefs, and ways of thinking changed in accordance with our goals? We can develop a new perspective only to the extent that we change our old thought patterns.

When we keep a high aim in mind, we are not influenced by the weaknesses of others even though we can see them clearly. At the same

time, we are often able to inspire change in them by the example of our conduct.

But are we doing this? Do we have benevolent feelings for all, including those who do corrupt or wicked things, or do we harbour feelings of dislike for them? Do we understand and feel compassion for them or do we despise them? On top of that, do we point out their defects to others in order to justify our ill feelings? In addition, do we wish to serve all our fellow humans or are we concerned only about those we know or those from our city or country?

Is our attitude so pure that our presence changes the atmosphere of a place? Purity, in fact, constitutes the power of our attitude, and the basis of purity is the awareness that we are souls, children of the Supreme Soul, and everyone else in the world is also a child of God, and thereby our brother.

Nowadays people accept and believe only that which they can see or experience;



merely telling them about something does not convince them. If we claim to be helping others, but cannot stop our own waste thoughts, and are always crestfallen because of failing to achieve our goals, what impact will we have on others? We can only really help others if they can see, from our behaviour, that there is a better way to live.

Most people think that self-improvement is a difficult

task and making the world a better place for everyone is well-nigh impossible. Consequently, there is a great deal of disheartenment. They will gain courage and strength when they see a sample of self-transformation. Becoming that sample is the best way to serve the world.

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