

**The Celt and the Yogi:  
Enriching our lives with Ancient and Contemporary Wisdom**  
Global Co-operation House, London  
Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> September 2007

It was just like being in someone's living room. The performers sat in a semi-circle on sofas and chairs, taking turns to make their contribution, while the others listened appreciatively. The artists were later joined by the two main speakers, Anthony McCann and Dadi Janki and all were competently and disarmingly guided by master of ceremonies Mai Newe.

The afternoon began with lively Celtic (Irish and Scottish) music from Tony and Gill on their fiddles (joined later by Bodhran player, Surie) and a song -- 'Break the Chain' - by Lucinda Drayton.

Harpist Liehsja Andrea (who, along with Lucinda, performed at the just-a-minute launch event at Wembley Arena in 2006) played two 17<sup>th</sup> century pieces on the Irish harp, which she described as "A dance of joy and sadness – a celebration of life." She also spoke a little about her work as a Harp Therapist in hospices and clinics, and how music can give comfort and relief to the seriously ill.

There followed three beautiful poems by Dwina Murphy-Gibb. The last one, entitled 'Song' from 2001, was dedicated to Dadi Prakashmani, and began and ended as follows:

*A song of gentle bird follows you, wherever you go  
And in that wall of song my heart is soothed...*

*...The celestial angels give praise in your presence and your absence.  
And in their adoration of you I am as one favoured and gifted.*

Lucinda then sang the song, 'Star Child' – inspired, she told us, by one of Dwina's stories.

Anthony McCann, a Lecturer in Contemporary Folk Culture at the University of Ulster, joined the gathering on stage at this point to share some of his thinking on the nature of gentleness, tradition and power (questioning the validity of Celtic stereotypes on the way). He recited a long list of adjectives used to describe 'Celtic' – which included: poetic, soulful, magical, feminine, gentle and other-worldly. Living in war-torn Ulster, such qualities, he said, "served as a resistance to the social and personal changes we encounter on a daily basis." He praised the family traditions of gentleness and respect for others and was keen to explore what actually constitutes gentleness – and its counterpart, power. Power, he had come to realise, was not about the attempt to control - that drive to "eliminate uncertainty" - but rather "the ability to vary the experience of another", of which, he felt, a key element was the capacity for deep appreciation and listening. Gentleness and respect were, he admitted, unusual concepts to emerge from an academic



institution. He expressed how, as a newcomer to the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University, he liked what he had seen so far and was interested to know more.

The second harpist, Harriet Earis, then played two lively pieces, communicating her intoxication with “the happiness of Celtic music”, as she beamed at the audience with delight as she deftly plucked away.

At this point Dadi Janki joined the gathering on stage and the audience were encouraged to join Dadi in meditation, while Lucinda sang another song: ‘The world is lost to me’.

Dadi Janki began by relating how, since birth, she had only been interested in spiritual matters. At school there were only two subjects that she felt had any relevance: English (just enough to be able to ask, “How are you?” and “Who are you?”) and maths (Dadi doesn’t believe in leaving calculations to computers). Why, she asked, would I want to know about history (which is just: who is at war with whom) or geography (when she knows that God’s children are in all those places, all searching for truth)?

Taking up many of the ideas raised earlier by Anthony McCann, Dadi declared that “compassion is the root of religion; sin is the root of ego – and ego makes me perform sin.” Compassion, she continued, is when you “naturally perform good, elevated actions; you have love for everyone, love for life.” She remembered how, in the early days, people would ask, “How do we learn to love ourselves?” Her answer was unequivocal: “Become good. Don’t ask for love from others; then God can give you love”, adding, “God has given me a lot of love. All I know is how to love God.” Dadi encouraged the audience to “be an observer and watch everyone with love,” adding that such wisdom was in the ancient scriptures, the Vedas, but human beings had not had the sense to practise it. “We have to be able to look at ourselves in the mirror and not get angry or upset, if we get criticised.” Meditation, she said, was about “cleaning our inner mirror and asking ourselves, ‘What have I done?’ and ‘What mistakes have I made?’”, so we can recognise what is reality and become real. With truth, love and non-violence in our lives, we remain happy with ourselves – and with everyone else.”

Dadi demonstrated how the Indian custom of putting two hands together in greeting symbolised two people coming together with humility and saying to God, “We will harmonise together” and related this to the Western custom of shaking hands (“the right hand and the right hand”). “East and West, she concluded, “have to come together to become one.

There were a number of questions from the floor. Anthony was asked how one begins to explore gentleness and replied that it was when he was studying intellectual property law in Ireland. He did not like what he was seeing and yet he did not want to spend his life criticising; he wanted to “learn to speak in more hopeful terms.” Someone then asked Dadi, “Help me to understand your relationship with God. How can God be aware of everything in the universe, even a small person like me?” Dadi’s answer was clear: “Go inside yourself; if you



remain external, God will be distant... This is a play in which we all have different roles; I have to explore inside who the creator and director is... God *does* exist. Understand that we are His creation. My experience is that God is love and truth; then I feel that He is my Father. He eliminates our negativity and makes us pure... He understands the things of my heart; He understands everyone.... I was once asked: 'How do you talk to God?' Become peaceful. Finish all negativity and waste. Then see. Where there is purity and positivity, God appears."

Sister Veronika ended the afternoon with a guided meditation, accompanied beautifully by the two harpists.

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