

The Inner Wave



BRAHMA KUMARIS
WORLD SPIRITUAL UNIVERSITY (UK)

Insights and experiences from the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University (UK)

Welcome to the second issue of *Inner Wave*, which has 'light' as its theme – with Diwali and Christmas and also looking at how to find relief and hope in dark times. Thanks to many readers who have written to us with comments and ideas – please keep them coming. *Inner Wave* will now be bi-monthly and our email address is: newsletter@uk.bkwsu.org.

Editorial Team

Calm in Crisis

Dadi Janki

Administrative Head, Brahma Kumaris

In challenging times the greatest contribution I can make is to have good wishes and compassion for everyone. By spreading positive, peaceful vibrations into the atmosphere, I am able to give comfort and strength to others in their distress - and protect myself against the weakening influence of negativity.

Thinking too much about negative situations, and asking, "Why did this happen?" will only drain away my natural energy and creativity and prevent me from seeing things clearly, making good decisions and adapting to change. I cannot change what has happened - past is past - but I can change how I think and act now, and so improve the future for myself - and for the world.

I also have to recognise that the current condition of the world is a consequence of the past actions and priorities of human beings – due to a great misunderstanding on our part. Seeking our identity, success and security in the material world, we have lost touch with our eternal, spiritual selves and with the Divine.

To find my true self respect and security, I need to go inside,

“ *I need to go inside and rediscover my inner qualities and strengths.* ”

rediscover my inner qualities and strengths and build a loving, honest relationship with my true, spiritual self and with God. This is the understanding and practice of Raja Yoga. Re-awakening my inner truth and connecting with the eternal Source of peace and power, I can then help others to do the same. There is no greater charity that I can do.

Every situation in life is an opportunity for learning and growth. I am 92 and still learning so much! I always ask myself: What is this situation teaching me? Is there something in my behaviour or in the way I spend my time, energy or resources that I need to change?

The key to surviving and growing through these times is to live simply and free myself from needing and expecting a lot in order to be happy - to learn to appreciate and use carefully what I have. What our children need from us is not money or material things, but our love, regard and time.

Strangely, we often look back at times of upheaval with gratitude - because they wake us up. They help us to recognise the value of time and the true purpose of our lives, and to appreciate the goodness in ourselves and in others.

For information about Raja Yoga meditation courses across the UK, please see www.bkwsu.org/uk/whatwedo/courses

Celebrating light. Around 25,000 people gathered in London's Trafalgar Square for 'Diwali on the Square' on 19th October.



The Steps to Forgiveness - A Hostage's Experience

© The Forgiveness Project



Camilla Carr and Jon James

“Making the decision that I wanted to forgive was the starting point”

At a three day event for professionals from offender management, held at the Global Retreat Centre, near Oxford, in October, an audience listened spellbound to a conversation with Camilla Carr, author of *The Sky is Always There*.

Camilla and her partner, Jon James, travelled to Chechnya in 1997, to help set up a therapeutic centre for war-traumatised children. After only two months they were kidnapped and held hostage for 14 months by Chechnyan rebels.

There are many stories of hostages held under terrible conditions, and they all merit our attention for the courage and resilience of those held captive. But what is so remarkable about this story is that it lays before us an honest account of the workings of forgiveness and of how the choice to think and act compassionately played a very large part in keeping Camilla and Jon alive.

At one point in the seminar, Camilla answered questions about how it was possible to forgive the men who held her and Jon captive and inflicted many acts of violence on them both. Camilla paused for a very long time and then answered,

“I think it always starts with trying to understand the other person; what may have brought them to this point. Whilst in captivity Jon and I started a dialogue to help understand where these men were coming from. In some cases it was ignorance. And, yes, after I was released, I did feel a lot of anger and tears. But I wanted to work towards feeling love and compassion and forgiveness, so I asked for a lot of help from the Source of love, and I felt a lot of love coming towards me from that Source.

What helped me was realising that I have anger like anyone else, and I, too, could be vengeful, if I chose to be but, despite what happened, I chose not to be bitter but to forgive. Making the decision that I wanted to forgive was the starting point and I believe that's why I received so much help from what I would call an unseen force. I am not religious but I did experience an energy of love and peace, when I asked for it.”

The forgiveness that Camilla described was not a single spontaneous event but a series of little steps - a practice of forgiveness. Camilla used her time in captivity to try out certain thoughts and feelings, creating them in her mind and then repeating the ones that led to feelings of healing and hope.

One of the approaches she describes is deciding to 'see' her assailants not as evil and brutal men but individuals who have been deeply wounded and brutalised by war, leading them to become brutalisers themselves.

“As part of the Forgiveness Project, I have been able to meet men who have been violent and who have changed by deciding that they no longer wanted to be part of that cycle of vengeance. That has also been very helpful in my healing process.”

For those of us who would like to forgive the small as well as the large things in our lives, Camilla suggests some ideas that might help in the process of forgiveness:

- ◆ Don't be hard on yourself if you are finding it difficult to forgive. It's easy to feel angry and bitter; it's only human. It doesn't mean that you are a bad person.
- ◆ Find someone to talk to about your feelings.
- ◆ I have taken great comfort from a quote on the Forgiveness project website: 'Forgiveness is giving up all hope of a better past.' We can't change what has happened in the past, but we can make new choices about how we deal with things in the future.

You can hear the full interview with Camilla Carr at www.bkwsu.org.uk/spiritualityinprison/services_staff/seminars/past_seminars.htm

- Camilla Carr runs workshops in prisons and schools based on her story of captivity; she can be contacted at camjon2@googlemail.com
- The Forgiveness Project promotes conflict resolution and restorative practices as alternatives to the endless cycles of conflict, violence and crime: www.theforgivenessproject.com
- The Brahma Kumaris currently work within prisons with both staff and prisoners. In October 2008, for example, ten detainees of Foston Hall Women's Prison, South Derbyshire took part in a one-day course in Self-Esteem. www.bkwsu.org.uk/spiritualityinprison

Understanding Forgiveness

The F word: images of forgiveness was an exhibition of photographs and interviews at Global-Co-operation House, North West London in November 2008. It was co-ordinated by The Forgiveness Project, whose founder, former journalist Marina Cantacuzino, joined Rosalyn Hollidge, an integrative counsellor, coach and motivational trainer and Sister Maureen, Programme Director of the Brahma Kumaris at *Towards Forgiveness*, an event exploring the subject through discussion, music, poetry and dance.

*“Forgiveness is a process - difficult, complex and painful but also potentially transformative. Forgiving also means the **giving** of compassion **for** healing.”*

Marina Cantacuzino, speaking at *Towards Forgiveness* at Global Co-operation House, 9th November 2008

The Global Retreat Centre, Nuneham Courtenay, Oxfordshire, where over 7,000 people have attended events, seminars and retreats this year.



Diwali on the Square: working together

Trafalgar Square was transformed by magical light displays, music and dance performances to mark Diwali, the Festival of Lights, on Sunday 19th October 2008, organised by the Greater London Authority and the Diwali in London Committee (DiL), in association with Barclays.

Diwali on the Square brings together people of all different faiths, races and cultures and symbolises the triumph of light over darkness and good over evil, and the renewal of life. Addressing the crowd, Sudesh Didi of the Brahma Kumaris described Diwali as “the time when we recognise the light within and let that shine.” The Square

fell uncharacteristically silent, when a short animation was screened, inviting people to take ‘just-a-minute’ silence breaks throughout the day, followed by a minute of stillness and prayer.

Fellow DiL Committee member Bhasker Rughani of ISKCON paid tribute to the contribution of Sister Jaymini, who chaired the DiL Committee this year, and her team: “It has been pleasure working with the Brahma Kumaris and to see their passion, commitment and perseverance. We have all learnt so much from each other and developed a strong bond, which has enabled us to deliver the most successful and the biggest Diwali on the Square in 7 years.”



Diwali in London Committee with the Mayor of London. Standing (left to right): Chiman Shah, OSHWAL UK, Bhasker Rughani, ISKCON; Vinay Tanna, ISKCON; Srutidharma Das, ISKCON; Boris Johnson, Mayor of London; Sudesh Didi, Brahma Kumaris; Sister Jaymini, Brahma Kumaris; Vinod Patel, BAPS Swaminarayan; Nitin Palan, BAPS Swaminarayan; Bhimji Vekaria, Metropolitan Police.

The Santa Clause: Treat others...

Despite being his busiest time of the year, The Inner Wave managed to arrange a short telephone interview with Santa Claus, so he could share his perspective on Christmas and the New Year.

Q: What will you be doing from now until Christmas Eve?

Santa: Ho, ho, ho! Right now we're finalising the lists of children around the world and then matching the gifts to their personality, so that I can deliver them on Christmas Eve. It's always a long and sometimes complicated exercise.

Q: Tell us more about how you decide who gets what?

Santa: Well, it's a simple formula that has stood the test of time, throughout all the traditions and faiths across the world. You look at the child and ask “To what extent have they stuck to the Golden Rule of ‘treat others as you wish to be treated’? Then I know what to give them

to help them do this all the time. I wish adults would ask themselves this question, too – the world would be a better place, if they did.

Q: It looks like things are getting tougher for people – sometimes they don't feel safe or they worry about the future. Is there anything you can do to help?

Santa: I'm in a privileged position – I have seen the beauty and value of people from all backgrounds and, regardless of who they are, they all really want the same things. They want peace, love and happiness. Christmas and the New Year is a time when just the thought of me can give them a taste of this; imagine what would happen if they thought of God instead! I often joke with God about this, you know!

Q: We know you're busy, so one final question – what presents are you getting us at The Inner Wave?

Santa: Ho, ho, ho! I'm going to find you the most lovely people to read your newsletter! One of them is reading it right now! Must attend to the reindeer now....Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

RECIPE: Walnut Cake



4 cups plain flour
½ tsp vanilla powder or essence
1 tsp ground cinnamon
1 ½ tsp baking powder
¾ cup honey
2 ¼ cups warm black tea
¾ cup sunflower oil
1 cup sugar
1 cup walnuts, coarsely chopped

1. Preheat the oven to 170°C/335°F/Gas Mark 3.5
2. Sift the flour. Add vanilla powder, cinnamon and baking powder, and mix (If using vanilla essence, mix with liquid ingredients instead)
3. In a separate bowl mix honey and tea, until the honey dissolves. Add sunflower oil and sugar and mix again briefly.
4. Mix together the dry and liquid ingredients and whisk briefly by hand. Mix in the walnuts.
5. Cook in an oiled 30cm diameter baking tin or 30x30cm sq deep tray for about 50 minutes
6. Leave to cool for about 10 minutes before turning out of the tin.
7. Serve with cream

From *Pure and Simple* is available from www.bkpublications.com



Bihar flood relief

Part of the relief team from the Global Hospital and Research Centre, a Mount Abu-based partnership project of the Brahma Kumaris, providing emergency supplies to people in the flooded state of Bihar, India, in September.



Dadi Janki with Her Excellency, Ms Rawya Bint Saud Al-Busaidi, Minister of Higher Education

Dadi Janki in Oman

Oman, acknowledged recently as the most peaceful country in the Arab region, lived up to its warm and hospitable reputation during a three-day visit to Muscat, the capital, by Dadi Janki in September.

Three Oman Government ministers, two of them women, hosted Dadi at their respective ministries – tourism, higher education, and the environment. There was extensive newspaper coverage of the visit, with two full-page profiles of Dadi as well as accounts of her public talks. The latter included the keynote address at a celebration marking the UN International Day of Peace, and a lecture entitled “Live More, Worry Less” at the Indian Embassy.

The Rajayoga Education and Research Foundation, Oman, was the main organiser and sponsor of the visit. Dadi was accompanied by three representatives of the BKWSU (UK), who expressed their appreciation of how this Islamic nation had welcomed Dadi's message linking pure thoughts and feelings to lasting peace and happiness.

Images and Voices of Hope – Media Summit

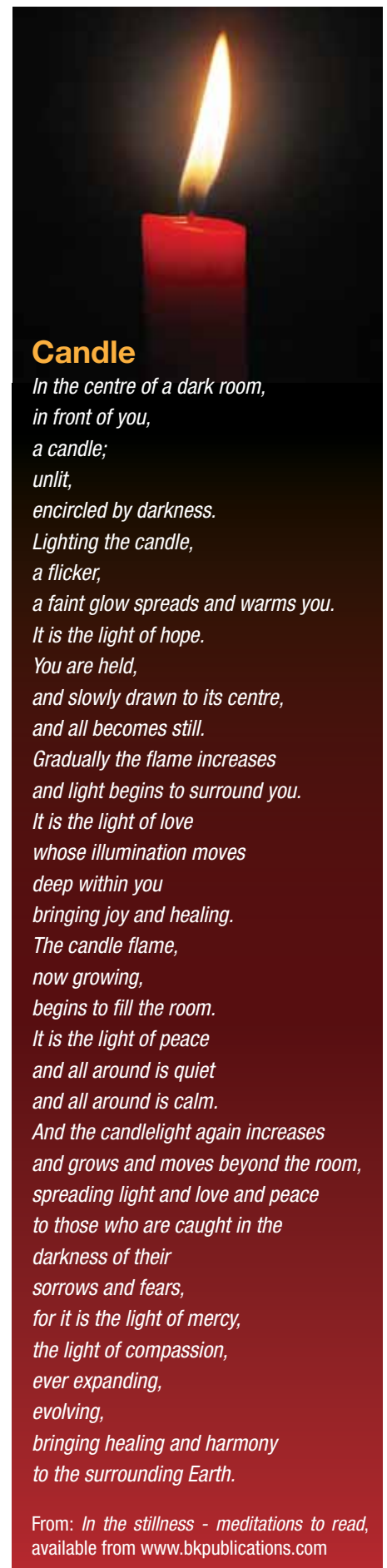
Journalists, photographers, artists, web designers and musicians were among the 100 participants of the Images and Voices of Hope (IvOH) Summit at the Brahma Kumaris' Peace Village retreat centre in New York at the end of September.

IvOH is an international conversation about the impact of media images and stories on people, families, communities, cultures and the world. The Brahma Kumaris are one of the three partner organisations which convened to form the initiative, together with the *Institute for Advanced Appreciative Inquiry* and the *Visions for a Better World Foundation*.

Judy Rodgers, one of the project's founders, described the summit for us: “The conversations we had were revealing and inspiring. The work we screened together was extraordinary. We especially appreciated the long trips made by participants coming from Asia, Africa, Europe, South America and across the United States.”

Highlights of the event included: a journalism panel and interviews with senior reporters from national media; a screening of documentaries produced by participants; a spectacular peace mural; and the *Images and Voices of Hope Awards of Appreciation* ceremony, at which individuals were honoured for their commitment to bringing benefit to the world through their work.

www.ivofhope.org



Candle

*In the centre of a dark room,
in front of you,
a candle;
unlit,
encircled by darkness.
Lighting the candle,
a flicker,
a faint glow spreads and warms you.
It is the light of hope.
You are held,
and slowly drawn to its centre,
and all becomes still.
Gradually the flame increases
and light begins to surround you.
It is the light of love
whose illumination moves
deep within you
bringing joy and healing.
The candle flame,
now growing,
begins to fill the room.
It is the light of peace
and all around is quiet
and all around is calm.
And the candlelight again increases
and grows and moves beyond the room,
spreading light and love and peace
to those who are caught in the
darkness of their
sorrows and fears,
for it is the light of mercy,
the light of compassion,
ever expanding,
evolving,
bringing healing and harmony
to the surrounding Earth.*

*From: In the stillness - meditations to read,
available from www.bkpublications.com*