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Arial views of Solar Cooker, which cooks food for 30,000 people on one hour, at Shantivan Complex, Abu Road.

**Ch. Why the words 'Brahma Kumari' to describe this organisation?**

**ND.** Our founder, Dada Lekhraj, was an instrument of God through whom God used to give instructions. One day Dada had a divine enlightenment of mass destruction on earth, man-made as well as natural calamities. And then he saw the earth converting itself into a beautiful, peaceful place, just like heaven where there is one God, one religion, one language, one view. Therefore, the word Brahma. Dada Lekhraj became Brahma by his karma through paramatma (God). The word, Kumari, means woman. Brahma Kumari means daughters of Brahma.

**Ch. Why is this organisation run only by women?**

**ND.** In the year 1937, a spiritual trust was constituted and Dada surrendered all his movable and immovable property to a committee of women and girls i.e. the Brahma Kumaris. **Never before in the history of the world had any male surrendered all his belongings to a trust, constituted only of ladies. Nowhere had women been given such an honour, as here, to head and run a spiritual organisation. He called them Bharat Mothers and said that these would open the doors to Paradise by educating people to be pure.** Our Ghatkopar Brahma Kumari center is the only example where a father has gifted an ashram as dowry to a daughter who decided not to marry. Dada Lekhraj called it a Happy Family. The Ghatkopar Branch is the only branch, which the founder himself inaugurated before he passed away in January 1969.

Women are the symbol of love, tolerance, sobriety, courage, dedication and nobility. These qualities are important to lead a good and pure life. In fact, women have always had a hand in getting men ahead and achieving their goals.

**Ch. Nikunjibhai, you are a Public Relations Officer of Brahma Kumaris. What made you join this organisation?**

**N.S.** As a 13-year-old, I was a very naughty boy. I never believed in God,

never said my prayers. Can you imagine, I was beaten up every time just to make me go to a temple! I never listened to my parents. Once my maasi (mother's sister), who was associated with the Brahma Kumaris in London, had come to visit us. She knew that I was always worried about a memory lapse during examinations and scoring low marks. She said that if you come with me to the Brahma Kumaris, your memory will improve and you will score high marks. I was tempted to go with her to Mt. Abu. Here, I was counselled by some of the Brahma Kumaris about my bad behaviour. They explained to me how lucky I was to have selfless and loving parents. I was taught meditation as well, so that I could concentrate in my exams and not forget answers.

There was a time when I wouldn't lift even a glass of water on my own in my house and here there was total transformation. I started doing all the household work at the Centre, including sweeping and swabbing the floors! So all this had an impact on me. Not just manners, but my whole way of thinking changed. Today, I, Nikunj Sejpal, am not just a PRO of this organisation, but I also run a business in electronics and software, and am the first to make a website for the Brahma Kumaris!

**Ch. What are the principles and teachings of Brahma Kumaris?**

**ND.** We do not have religious rituals and worship idols and images nor do we do any havan. We believe in Shri Krishna, Shri Rama, Shri Lakshmi and Shri Narayana, but we consider them only as deities i.e. human beings who had maximum divine virtues. We do not recite any Sanskrit shlokas (verses), do not have any rosary in hand. We mainly dwell on giving up sex-lust, anger, greed, attachment, ego, malice, laziness and blind faith.

**N.S.**

Our teachings mainly comprise four subjects: gnan (knowledge), rajyog (meditation), dharna (power) and seva (actions). It is important for you to not only understand, but to also digest the gnan that is imparted. Only then you are in a position to keep your thoughts pure and your mind away from negative things. Once you achieve this, you come to the stage of rajyoga. This is the most important weapon. Here, you improve your concentration. Next comes dharna. Once your personality is developed by meditation, there are certain values you imbibe. Your mannerisms change. The final stage is seva. By seva you pass on this positive energy to others as well. **This is the main reason why we say that we are not a religious or a spiritual organisation, but an education-based institution.**

**Ch. Any restrictions on diet or dress code, etc.?**

**N.S.** We always wear white as white is a symbol of peace, it stands for purity and is angelic. We have pure vegetarian food, do not have any hard drinks or drugs, and do not smoke. Also, we believe in doing our work ourselves instead of being dependent on, say, a servant. If we are Brahma Kumaris, then we surrender ourselves totally to the Institution, we do not marry and are celibates. Let me add here that we are taken well care of in every way.



Brahma Kumar Nikunj with his dear friend, the late S. P. Godrej at Pirojshanagar.

**Ch. Why is celibacy so important to a Brahma Kumari? In contrast, all religions consider matrimony and having children quite natural. How does celibacy help in day-to-day affairs?**

**ND.** Let me clarify. One of the basic pillars of rajyoga is celibacy and hence all the students as well as teachers of this organisation are required to follow celibacy. Also, we feel that once a woman is married and has children, she cannot pay full attention to her role as Brahma Kumari. Her energies are divided between taking care of her husband, her in-laws, raising her children and doing seva as Brahma Kumari.

**Ch. In fact a mention is made in Lancet and the general opinion of the medical world, that being a non-celibate and practicing regular sex is good for health. Don't you think you are going against something so natural and something that is scientifically proved?**

**NS.** Please try to understand. There is always a thin gap between a celibate and a non-celibate. How often we say that so-and-so person is like God. That level of purity is the main difference. He is not God, he is like God. You might have all other cultural values better than what the Brahma Kumaris have, but still there will be a thin line between you and the Brahma Kumari sisters. Because they practice celibacy. We believe that energy passes out of the system if you are non-celibate.

This is also tested in labs. in New York and London, and it is proved that such energy is generated. Dadi Janaki, our Additional Administrative Head, was put on a machine and the scientists told her to meditate. They poked needles in her hands, face and other parts of her body. The monitor showed everything absolutely normal! No thought came into her mind. Her mental wavelength was the same. She was awarded the "Most Stable Mind in the World"!

I believe that in order to be able to preach something you should have some values. I had always seen a sort of aura in Sohrabji.



**Ch. How many branches do you have?**

**NS.** We have 4,500 branches in India and 1,200 branches abroad. The first seed of our organisation overseas was planted in London, which was named as Global Co-operation house. Later, Brahma Kumaris set up a Global Retreat house at Oxford which was previously King George IV's palace. Here, we have lectures and public programmes and discussions. In fact, when Sohrabji died in London, Mr. Jamshyd Godrej was also there and he visited our Centre with a family friend of Godrej in London named Zerbanoo, where he was made to meditate. When he returned, he told us that he was very impressed and found immense silence and peace at the Centre. Maximum branches overseas are in London and U.S.A.

It may interest you to know that June 10 is an official holiday in Washington D.C. It's called Dadi Prakashmani Day. On June 10, 1999 Dadi Prakashmani visited Washington, DC on a tour, entitled "Reverence for Peace". She spoke at the National Press Club and during the conference, a Proclamation was presented to Dadi by director of scheduling David Howard on behalf of Mayor Anthony Williams of Washington, DC, that June 10 be declared a day for Dadi Prakashmani, a Woman of Peace. Each year thereafter on June 10, a tree planting ceremony has taken place in various locations within the Washington DC metropolitan area.

**Ch. From where do you raise funds?**

**NS.** Brahma Kumari Institution is an NGO affiliated to the UN, which does not take any donation. We are a family. Every year there is some programme at the UN organised by the Brahma Kumaris. The general theme is "World As A Family". The people, who come here to seek complete purity, peace and prosperity, are the ones who run the organisation. We have 6 lakh students worldwide. Even if all of them donate at least one rupee every day, our daily income comes to Rs. 6 lakhs. We do not accept any donations from outsiders. We say that you first follow our principles then you can give what you want. All we expect from them is co-operation.

Our policy is "tan, man, dhan". A person who can physically work, will give us something, a person who is intelligent will work with his mind and give us his moral support and blessings. A person who is rich will give us money. Recently, we were given space by the BMC in Mumbai. We made 11 Peace Parks. The biggest co-operation we received was from Sohrabji. The first tree was planted at the Peace Park by Sohrabji. We needed bricks. The Construction and Gardening Departments of Godrej swung into action. Cement was provided by L & T. One of our followers from Bharuch gave us 5,000 tiles. So co-operation is always welcome, but not money. We are not using anything for our personal purpose. Everything we get is directly

applied in seva.



L-R: Brahma kumari Nalini Devi, the late S.P. godrej and G.R. Khairnar at the opening ceremony of Prajapita brahma Kumari Chowk

**Ch. What exactly is this organisation doing in Godrej? How did you get acquainted with this Company?**

**NS.** I knew that there were some courses conducted by Mr. Brian Beacon, Management Consultant from Australia and his partner, Mr. Marc Fourcade from France, both followers of Brahma Kumaris. Influenced by the Brahma Kumaris, Fourcade conceptualised the Self Management and Leadership (SML) programme. We were also aware of another programme conducted at our Centre in London called Living Life Stress-Free.

Brahma Kumaris soon realised that the style in which knowledge was imparted did not fit into the present scenario of professional companies. We had to target different groups in a different way. We had to teach in the executive language to the management guy. It is like old wine in a new bottle. At that time E.J. Kalwachia had visited our headquarters at Mount Abu and was quite impressed with the courses we had.

He was aware of the case of Nagarjuna Fertilizers, whose Chairman, Mr. Raju, managed to turn the loss-making Company round by the SML programme. Raju brought the Brahma Kumari culture to Nagarjuna Fertilizers. He made a meditation center within the Company premises and made it compulsory for all workers to first meditate and then operate the machine. Sisters would come from Mt. Abu to give these SML lectures.

After I graduated, I came in close touch with E.J. Kalwachia. Initially, we were restricted to management. Then we thought, why not for the shop-floor? We trained our sisters at our Ghatkopar Centre as also the headquarters at Mt. Abu where they were trained to deliver lectures on SML. A new course was framed for workers, entitled Tanav Mukta Jeevan and Vyasana Mukta Jeevan in Hindi. We gradually started by having an exhibition for 3-4 days at the Pragati Kendra. Then there was an exhibition on meditation. Gradually we started delivering general lectures. Finally, we had a combined 7-day course in batch form.

As far as Personnel and the Administration Departments are concerned, the first batch was taken to Mt. Abu at the Rajyoga Retreat for a 3-day course. It is important to note that we use 85 per cent solar energy and only 15 per cent electricity. We also wanted the workers to avail of our facilities at Mt. Abu. But Kalwachia said that we had not yet spoken to the union. The Managing Committee of the Union met us at the Centre. They started questioning us like



journalists because they had heard that we take donations, we target only those corporates which are very rich, etc. A lot of notions were cleared. Nalini Didi answered their queries to their satisfaction. She convinced them that if they came with their families they would be benefited. We do not charge a pie.

**Ch. What are your expectations from our employees?**

**NS. Our first target is industrial harmony, second target, individual transformation and third target, transformation in family. We expect Godrej employees, especially workers, to understand that Godrej is not their enemy. We want them to understand that Godrej has provided them with a job, with a house, a decent standard of living, and they should appreciate that. We would like them to treat the Company as family, as one of their own, and not a business house.** The significant point is that they understand us. But immediately afterwards when they go to operate their machines, they feel that they are not treated upto their expectations. The Executive Directors are good and fair, but too busy to tackle these problems.

It is our dream that every corporate must have a spiritual consultant. This is because H.R.D. is lacking human touch in each and every organisation today. Merely getting a post-graduation degree in human resources and getting a high post in a Company is not enough. **No matter what, human resources people need certain training to understand people. This is the biggest problem in major corporate houses across India. Both the management and workers should work by shaking hands rather than working in two opposite directions.**

I interacted on this issue with a lot of Godrej personnel. Some have responded positively. Some have not been able to take advantage of rajyoga. Had they taken advantage of rajyoga sessions, the scenario in Godrej would have been different today.

**Mr. Kalwachia has yet to fulfil one of our requests. Our aim is to have a meditation room in this Company. Naturally, he had to think twice since today we want to have a centre in the Company, tomorrow some other group can ask for space in the premises. We told him that we do not want the name of Brahma Kumaris mentioned at all. We are not here for publicity. You put a nameplate Godrej & Boyce Stress Free Centre or Godrej & Boyce Value Education Centre. This made sense and Godrej is in the process of fulfilling our request. Plant-12 shall be restructured. We plan to have sessions from 6.00 a.m. to 8.00 a.m. and 6.00 p.m. to 8.00 p.m.**

Brahma Kumari teachers are well qualified. Some are gold medalists, some are lawyers and some well settled in big corporates. We chart out courses and projects as per the person's or corporate's needs. We have also devised certain courses for doctors, women and are working on courses for other segments of society so that all professions and segments become value-based. If given an hour every day, we can even provide value-based education at the Godrej-run Udyachal School. We can help imbue qualities such as humility, love, respect, happiness ... in children.

**Ch. How are our employees benefiting from your organisation?**

**ND.** We noticed that Godrej employees were not good listeners. They would act before they think, rather than viceversa. Now, after doing our course, they have improved. Also, their concentration levels have

increased by meditation. Besides, a number of employees have given up eating non-vegetarian food and stopped smoking. This is the feedback given to us by Godrej employees themselves.

For a few months there were lectures and programmes such as gnan murli (imparting knowledge through printed text), half-hour meditation and 45 minutes lecture for students of Udyachal School as well. We have themes such as how to improve your life, how to know yourself, how to make your mind pure.

**Ch. How far have you been successful in Godrej?**

**NS.** Well, the demand for having more lectures had certainly increased after the groups visited our Headquarters at Mount Abu, and we had a smile on our face. Four years back we grabbed this opportunity and started conducting a 7-day course. Mr. Kalwachia guided me to be low-profile. We thought, let us start with one batch first. From 3.30 p.m. to 4.30 p.m. a course was started. Demand started growing. Employees started approaching us. Till date we have taken 14 groups to Mount Abu for training, of which 400 were from the workers' side. In each group we have 80-90 workers.

The small number of employees, whom we have touched, want us to conduct courses in the three colonies: Station Side, Creek Side, and Hill Side, and involve their family members as well. Some of them are also willing to have sessions in their houses. Now we have people who want to practice this life.

Still we have not yet achieved awareness to the maximum. We have yet to reach out to the general worker.



The hut, surrounded by orchard of grapes, etc., inside Pandav Bhawan, silence resort of Prajapita Brahma.

**Ch. Having Brahma Kumaris in industry is quite unusual. Has any other organisation adopted a similar approach?**

**NS.** Of course, a number of organisations have found this approach beneficial. Apart from Godrej and Nagarjuna Fertilizers, our sisters go to Cripco in Surat, Cibatool-Bulsara, Parle-G, Indian Oil Corporation, Oil and Natural Gas Corporation, Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Garda Chemicals, and many more. Few international companies like Motorola, Volkswagon, etc. have also benefited from this programme. We have customised programmes for each of these corporates.

Not only corporates, a number of ministers have visited our Centre. We've had the late President of India, Giani Zail Singh, the late Prime Minister of India, Rajiv Gandhi, H.E. Dr. P.C. Alexander, Narasimha Rao, Ram Niwas Mirdha, Ajit Kumar Panja, Chandrababu Naidu and a

host of ministers and important dignitaries. Now, rajyoga is a 3-year course. We've had courses for ministers here at Sachivalaya.

It would interest you to know that our Institution has played a pivotal role during the riots in 1992 and earthquakes in Latur and Gujarat. We went to the affected areas and had exhibitions on peace, distributed food packets, books, blankets, clothes, etc. During the riot period, Mr. Narasimha Rao was the Prime Minister of India. When he came to our headquarters at Mt. Abu, in the presence of 20,000 people, he declared that he felt ashamed of his government whose job it was to control the angry and violent rioters and to rehabilitate the victims whose lives were affected. Instead, this job was being done by the Brahma Kumari sisters for which he expressed his deep gratitude.

Chandrababu Naidu has made rajyoga compulsory for teachers. All teachers must have a degree in rajyoga. Basic idea behind this was to educate the teachers so that teachers will in turn educate children, accordingly. He has provided us with free land to come up with this project.

Om Shanti!

This Organisation is a personal development institute for youngsters. Each and every youngster should join to learn this Centre at least basic manners.

**-Brahma Kumar Nikunj Sejpal**

#### **Remarks from Visitors**

"Happy morning at a landmark representing a worthy cause worldwide."

**-S.P Godrej**

At the inauguration of Prajapita Brahma Kumari Chowk on 18.1.1998

"Spent the morning with Brahma Kumaris, who are pure, peaceful and lovable. It was an experience and that too on Baba's day when one more Smarak in the form of Brahma Kumari Chowk reminds people that GOD still has faith in human beings. Such 4 lakh Divine souls will soon become 40 lakhs."

**-E.J Kalwachia**

At the inauguration of Prajapita Brahma Kumari Chowk on 18.1.1998

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