

Exploring Green Power: Making the Dream Come True

Sunday 29th January 2 - 5.30pm · Conference Hall, Diamond House, London

REPORT

On the last Sunday of January, **Green Power**, a new series of workshops led by the *Brahma Kumaris Environment Initiative (BKEI)* was launched at GCH. This was just a few days after ecologist and editor Satish Kumar had joined Sister Jayanti there in a lively conversation on the topic *Now is the Hour*.

Br Navin welcomed the audience of around 25 people and started by asking what they hoped to find in today's event. 'I'm trying to live better,' said one. Another was interested in the advance of the sand in the Southern Sahara. Br Navin shared how it's about striking the balance: what we want for ourselves in our own lives and making this world a better place to live in - and a good way to start is to ask, 'Am I looking after my *inner environment*?'

Sr Leza explaining how the aim of GREEN POWER series is to offer an *'inside-out' approach to green issues, giving the understanding that by changing our consciousness and re-connecting with our inner spirit we will naturally want to make the world a cleaner, greener place. Also, it gives people who are interested in green issues spiritual tools and insights to change their way of thinking, living and being to enhance their relationship with Nature and improve the global environment.*

Sr Leza pointed to a beautiful, giant visual of the Earth, our home, where each one of us tiny specks is special. She invited everyone to imagine, to feel, what the Earth is feeling at this time in history and then to write a letter from the Earth to you personally.

Br Thiru performed a dance to the song **True Colours**. *'It's hard to take courage in a world full of people...I see your true colours shining through... Your true colours are beautiful... So don't be afraid to let them show - your true colours...'*

Sr Nirmala shared about her journey in exploring her own inner 'green space' and the tools she uses to help others - staff and patients - relax and make better sense of their lives. She started by raising the ultimate first question: who am I? Explaining that she's spiritual energy, consciousness, light - a flawless diamond, just like the one everyone was handed as they walked in. If we want to fix the world we have to start with 'fixing' ourselves'. She took the audience through a slide show on the BKEI and its approach of seeing ourselves as 'guardians of the Earth'. She talked through the five main attitudes that are core to BKEI:

1. Living with simplicity
2. Buying compassionately
3. Using Economically
4. Learning continuously - from each other and from nature, and then giving back
5. Sharing generously

Sr Nirmala highlighted the 'green' meditation commentaries offered on the website, the BK's active participation in the United Nations COP Climate Change conferences since 1990 and, in particular, described with enthusiasm two major, practical BK green initiatives: India One, the BK's Solar Thermal Power Plant, and also their Yogic Farming project. She then asked us to ask

ourselves: what am I doing personally? There are initiatives here in the UK to encourage us to be 'more green'. Do I recycle rubbish, do I have a compost bin for vegetable peelings, do I have a water butt to collect rainfall, etc. Some might even have solar panels, if they have the resources. It's a case of each doing what they can do.

A powerful video (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sizTT_7PEJs) was then shown about India One, a 1MW solar thermal power plant with 770 solar dishes on 35 acres of land in Rajasthan, India, near the BK spiritual HQ. This plant is able to store as well as collect solar energy - a world first, that has received funding from the Indian and German governments and has been largely constructed by using and training the local labour force Sr Nirmala then shared how, just as we can take energy from the physical sun, similarly we can connect with the Source of spiritual energy, the Powerhouse - the Divine. To connect to the source of the sun, the glass has to be clean and so I have to create my own inner solar system to connect with the Divine. Another video on Climate Change and Consciousness, (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3S4XkPnURSc>) was shown about thoughts and awareness, giving the experience of the difference between positive and negative thoughts and how thoughts lead to our impact on the Planet. Kinder awareness leads to kinder thoughts leads to kinder actions leads to kinder impact. Impact triggers change. The time to act is now. The time to act collectively is now. It all starts and ends with our awareness. She finished with a favourite Thought for the Day: *Every thought create vibrations. Vibrations are like sound waves or radiations. No obstacles, no hurdles can stop them.* She shared how as she started to meditate, she became more aware of her thoughts and the impact they were having.

Sr Nirmala then led everyone in a gentle relaxation and meditation experience. After the meditation, she introduced the idea of 'self-compassion', saying how meditation, reflection, visualisation, listening and appreciation are all tools we can use - with ourselves as well as others. Getting everyone to put their hand on their heart and to appreciate in their minds and give thanks for something they have done today. She then invited all to remove the hand from the heart and outstretching it to offer compassion to the world and then bringing the hand full of compassion back to the heart. Then, doing this gesture, keep in mind every living being in the Planet and Mother Earth and extend your compassion to these. Holding the diamond, experience being the diamond. Using the Buddhist concept of 'beginner's mind' - seeing the diamond as if for the first time, as a child. Just observing, feeling, focusing solely on the diamond, being with the diamond. Sr Nirmala then spoke another meditation commentary about being the diamond, revealing my true colours and giving back to Mother Earth what I have been taking for so long.

A video was shown of an interview with Sr Jayanti at COP21 in Paris 2015, originally broadcast on Climate Change News. <http://www.climatechangenews.com/tv/11128> *'Everything starts with the individual. Things are happening across the world - it's as if humans have forgotten to stay in touch with their own hearts. But it has to start with myself. The shift in my consciousness means I don't need to take so much from outside... When you turn inwards and connect with the happiness and joy within, your lifestyle becomes a simple one. There's a spirit of generosity and care and you're able to share with others. It's one planet and one home... We are one family... We all survive together or we all sink together... We all have to work together in a spirit of cooperation, not competition with each other. There's no other way... [Let each one] make a conscious choice knowing that your decision about what you buy, eat or wear is going to have an impact on your carbon footprint and is going to have an impact on others too.'*

After the tea break Br Gil brought everyone back with a jaunty violin piece. Sr Leza then reminded everyone of the letter the Earth had written to them earlier in the afternoon about how the Earth is feeling now. Some shared their thoughts: 'I'm really tired', 'Be quiet, calm, peaceful', 'Check the Earth's resources, they are running out', 'Grow some more green stuff to help me heal', 'Look for the beauty', 'I am happy to be part of this planetary system, I love the sun but please get rid of the cancer in me', and 'I'm worried. I am one but you and your fellow humans are intent on dividing me up.' The Earth is saying: Please help; I've given you almost everything.

Sr Karishma sang the song *Imagine* very beautifully, with a slight but significant change of words: *Imagine there's a heaven... Imagine all the people living life in peace. You may say I'm a dreamer but I'm not the only one. I hope someday you'll join us and the world will be as one.* Sr Leza then invited everyone to be the dreamer and create a vision of how they would like the world to be in five years' time. Then she asked: If **that** newly created Earth wrote to you, what would that Earth say to you? Some shared: 'You and me are just one', 'I'm now spinning less fast; I am healing now', 'Thank you, I appreciate your global effort', 'Thanks, you are my pride', 'I am heaven on Earth'. Just thinking these positive thoughts for the Earth and writing them down have created positive vibrations for the Earth.

Sr Leza asked everyone to look back from that beautiful Earth they had created, that heaven on Earth and to feel what it feels like. Now ask yourself: what did I do personally to make that happen? What inner change and what practical, external change can I make to bring beauty and harmony with nature? Each one wrote down their own thoughts in silence and then everyone got into groups of three or four and shared their vision and their personal contribution with others and perhaps create other ideas within the group. Each group then gave their feedback with the whole gathering and Sr Nirmala summarised them in a plan for the future, as follows:

- Awareness – making right choices (vegetarian food, dress) as consumers; keeping a balance of wants and needs; constantly learning to make right choices; helping to keep places clear by picking up rubbish and disposing.
- Recycling – share importance of this to young people and others; growing more plants both edible and ornamental; creating clean air, water and sound.
- Creating harmony in the family; reducing consumerism and improve sustaining resources; being the diamond and nurturing the diamond (true self); creating positive thoughts and vibrations.
- Sharing vibrations of peace, love, harmony; creating feelings of oneness; giving thanks to the earth for clean air, water, etc.

Based on the ideas of creating awareness, vibrations and positive energy, knowing that our thoughts can change, Sr Nirmala led the audience into a reflection exercise: *Emerging the Diamond again, knowing that if I cannot doing anything else due to limits of resources/time, at least I can do an infinite amount of things with my thoughts. Being love. Take time to clean the diamond of the everyday dust of living. When clean, I connect with the Divine and the light of the diamond shines out into the world.*

Sr Jayanti joined the gathering and Navin asked her a few questions.

Q: Tell us about the BK contribution to meeting the challenge of climate change

" We've been planting trees (around 14 million) in India. She talked of how Dadi Prakashmani made Gyan Sarovar happen without damaging the environment out of what was said to be infertile land, with everything built around the trees and the mountains. As an experiment, we started

planting fruit trees and we now get tons of plums, apricots, bananas, grapes and mangoes. We've also won awards from our water recycling. The Founder never left the premises of our ashram after 1965 - his walks were within the ashram and for footwear he wore a wooden platform with a rubber strip on top cut out from old tyres.

Q: How is spirituality linked to improving the global environment. We know about vibrations but what can we do collectively to make a shift in the world?

First step: if someone says they are spiritual and interested in ecology, I think they would change to a plant based diet - it's real compassion for the Earth, nature and water, the source of life. Chatham House, a London think tank, presented a paper at the Paris COP in 2015 - the amount of emissions created by transportation is equivalent to the amount of emissions created by food production/diet (14%). It's not mentioned because diet is culture, habit and taste and would cause too much havoc in people's lives and the government would be voted out of office if they implemented that!

Q: What do we need to do to shift from being aware and implementing what needs to be done.

Silence. I need time for self-reflection and the choices I'm making in my life for myself and future generations. To find meaning and significance in what's going on. In silence I connect with the Divine and get access to a Source of spiritual power I need to make the necessary changes in my life. We use the phrase willpower. Most of us need that. It's only in silence I draw that power from the Source to make the changes I would like to see happen. Another thing, consumerism - there's a neediness, there's even a shopping addiction - we have shoppers anonymous now. How can I switch from thinking more is going to make me happy. In silence I realise it's not the things outside that are going to make me happy; I glimpse the treasures inside and experience truth and love within and the happiness that brings means I don't need to go out any more to find happiness.

Sr Jayanti then took everyone into a meditation experience:

Sitting comfortably, let the body relax. I invited you to follow these thoughts. I leave the world outside for a few moments and focus my attention on the world within... going deeper and deeper into the awareness of the inner being. In this awareness, I connect with the light that I am, a tiny diamond that sparkles deep within. And the light it radiates is visible through my forehead and I touch with this inner being I connect with peace. My thoughts slow down. I realise that I am a being of peace. This is my natural state of being. This is who I truly am - a being of peace. And in this awareness of peace I connect with the Source, the Divine, the Supreme, the Being of light. The form is the same - I, the soul, a being of light and the Divine, a Being of light. But, as I connect, I can feel from the Source of love, waves of love reach the soul and it's as if the love washes away all the dust I had accumulated.. The power of this pure love heals the souls. Through the cleansing and healing, I am transformed and I begin to experience the inner happiness that lies within. And, filling myself with this love, I know that I can now begin to love myself and also I can love God, I can love my neighbour - all my neighbours. And the power of peace and love reaches out into the world, transforming, healing and radiating. Staying connected with the Divine, I come back to the awareness of this moment here and now but having filled myself with the power of pure love. Om shanti.

Sister Jayanti then shared drishti, toli and blessings with all.

Ends