

Sahaja Yoga

1st August, 2003



Australian Newsletter

Jai Shri Mataji!

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Publication deadline for contributions
is midnight each Tuesday

*Let us awaken this country of Maharashtra singing poems
We will carry out this work of awakening with complete surrender*

We will bow to Shri Ganesha:

Let us have pure wisdom.

We will bow to Adi Shakti:

Let us have pure understanding.

*Please listen to the Sahaja Yogis' request, you saintly people.
We will carry out this work of awakening with complete surrender.*

When Kundalini awakens

Then the power of Brahma flows in our hand.

With this power bestowed on us

The negative forces are burned away.

With the gift of pure wisdom we will become pure.

We will carry out this work of awakening with complete surrender.

We will enlighten one candle after another

With love in our hearts.

We will pray for Sahaja Yoga

With purity in our hearts.

We will sing the holy names of Adi Shakti.

We will carry out this work of awakening with complete surrender.

Babamama

(Marathi bhajan "Maharashtra Desha")



STATE NEWS

from Western Australia...

Visionary embroidery project a rewarding experience of collectivity

At first glance a finely-worked cross stitch cushion in silk thread does not look like a collective project. It obviously requires a certain level of skill and a fairly good eye and is unwieldy on a frame for even two people to work together. But being convinced that Sahaja Yogis can work miracles, we are rising to the challenge and have found a way.

We get together for about four hours one day a week and take turns on the main project while honing our individual skills on little sewing projects like pincushions, bookmarks, needle cases in less expensive materials. A lovely serenity settles over the room as everyone is focussing on their work and we are enjoying being with each other...many of us normally leading such separate busy lives that we hardly would get time for more than a quick hello at collective gatherings. One or two women said they had never sewn before and were amazed at how satisfying it is. How easy to make mistakes if your attention wanders into idle thoughts.

Of course the project itself requires some people to spend several concentrated hours at a time on it for the work to progress. But it seems that the purpose of it all is not so much the end result but the doing which should be fully enjoyed and contribute to our collective wellbeing.

It is sure to take at least a year. Some think maybe it will be a project handed on to our children's children to complete. As a serene collective activity it is hard to beat.

Our warmest thanks to the Paramchaitanya for making it possible and to Graham Brown and Lene Jeffery for their superb work in designing it in the first place.

Some tips for new sewers:

- It helps if each thread is removed separately and then all three aligned and threaded onto the needle. The threads are less tangly but still need untwirling every two or three stitches of course.
- It would seem better to leave all the metallic thread bits to the very last thing because they are too fragile for much handling.

*Lyndal Vercoe
Perth*

from the National Capital...

Workshop held in Canberra a day enjoyed by all

On Saturday 26th July at the Canberra Ashram we held our most successful workshop yet. It rained for three days before the workshop, clearing away all negativity in readiness for the day.

We had seekers from our weekly programmes and some seekers who had come for the first time. There were eleven in total. They came from various sources: our database that we have been compiling, the yellow pages and two people found out about the workshop from the Internet.

A seeker was travelling by bus and on the way he asked a lady sitting near him on the bus did she know where Chewing Street was. This is the street where the ashram is located. The lady was Suman Chaturvedi, a yogini who was on the way to workshop as well. Seeing the play gave us all great joy.

The focus of the workshop was meditation and using the elements to clear the subtle body. Everyone seemed to enjoy themselves and all the new people felt the vibrations.

After the workshop it was time for another cup of tea and just a little more cake and we all sat and enjoyed as one of the seekers gave us a little concert playing his guitar and singing songs he had written himself. We all enjoyed *Voltron Man*, which was about a robot that was the expression of the right side.

Follow-ups to the workshop will be held at the Ashram on Thursdays.

We are all looking forward to the next workshop.

*Alan Napper
Canberra*

from Queensland...

**Multicultural festival in Bundaberg
was the venue
for a great self-realisation stall**

A stall held at the *Childers Multicultural Festival* by the Bundaberg Sahaja Yogis last weekend drew plenty of genuine inquiries and interest. Realisation was given to 18 people, all of whom were very appreciative of the experience.



A doctor from the Bundaberg Base Hospital approached us for information so that he can refer his patients to us. People from Hervey Bay, Childers and Gin Gin expressed interest in us doing programs in their towns that we will follow up.

We are very thankful to Leanne, Gavin and Andrew for coming up from Brisbane to give us a hand. It was a very positive experience and a lot of good seeds were sown.

Jai Shri Mataji.

*Alan and Pam Jenner
Bundaberg*

from New South Wales...

***Spontaneous Caterers* news**

Hello Spontaneous Caterers

Thank you for your generous participation in the recent catering function, which made the day a great success. Jai Shri Mataji.

The next function will be prepared on Thursday 7th August and catering on Friday 8th August.

The function planned for 29th August has been cancelled.

With loving regards

*Katharine Tolfree
Pelaw Main*

Here is an article about medical research into the benefits of meditation that appeared last week in the Sydney Morning Herald:

(Two days after reading this article a new seeker came along to the Canberra Workshop. This surely bears testimony to the high regard people have for this vital research and the publicity surrounding it—Ed)

Good thinking

Meditation is playing an important role in modern medicine. Guy Allenby reports.

Until three years ago, Heidi Castro had suffered from “very, very intense” migraines that she’d put up with for about 10 years. She tried acupuncture and various pain-relief medications with mixed success, then she signed on to a migraine study at Sydney’s Royal Hospital for Women.

As part of the study, Castro attended a meditation workshop every Tuesday and Thursday for three months and meditated for five minutes twice a day.

“The first month the migraines and the number of migraines were reduced,” she says. “The following month they were reduced to about four in a month [10 was typical before the workshop], then after that I didn’t have any.”

She continued meditating for another two months and thought: “OK, I’m cured” and stopped. “I then started getting them back,” she says. “So I started meditating again. It has helped permanently.”

Dr Craig Hassed, a senior lecturer in the Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences at Melbourne’s Monash University, says: “Meditation is a great adjunct for a lot of things, from chronic pain to improving sleep, helping reduce blood pressure and coping with stress, anxiety and depression.”

At Monash, meditation is in the undergraduate curriculum for students, he says.

Research into meditation’s physiological and therapeutic effects has turned up some impressive results, and increasingly the technique is seen to have a role to play in modern medicine.

For instance, a study of Australia’s oncologists published in the Medical Journal of Australia in 2000 found that 82 per cent of respondents believed relaxation, meditation and visual imagery therapies were “helpful” for palliative cancer patients (the figure was 69 per cent for patients on the mend).

A University of Melbourne survey published the same year found that 80 per cent of Victorian GPs had referred patients for complementary therapies, with acupuncture, hypnosis and meditation considered the most effective.

At the Pain Management Centre at Sydney’s Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, patients are taught “mindfulness” meditation to manage their chronic pain. Tony Merritt, the centre’s clinical psychologist, says they use it as part of their

program “to help people think about their pain differently”, saying that meditation helps patients to see that pain is something “you don’t have to be afraid of and is something that you can live with and cope with”.

The method of meditation used at the centre is based on Buddhist teachings and was developed in the United States by Dr Jon Kabat-Zinn, emeritus professor of medicine and founding director of the Stress Reduction Clinic and the Centre for Mindfulness in Medicine, Health Care and Society at the University of Massachusetts medical school.

“You meditate on your breathing and you watch what comes into your mind,” says Merritt. “What people see is that they have the pain...and then there’s a whole lot of other stuff around it—fear of the pain, distress.

“What they get to see is that the fear and the distress are actually separate [from the pain]. What it can also tell people is that they are not their pain. And I think that’s a real problem for people with chronic pain, because it becomes their life.”

Meditation can take many forms, either attached to a spiritual tradition or practised as pure method. It typically includes techniques such as “watching” the breath, concentrating “one-pointedly” on something (a sound, an object), visualisations, repeating a mantra or observing or being “mindful” of your thoughts without “following” or being swept up in them.

Overseas, the early results of clinical research into those adept at meditation are, as one scientist has put it, tantalising.

The University of Wisconsin’s Dr Richard Davidson has tested the brainwaves of meditating Buddhist monks, with extraordinary results. Testing the abbot of a Tibetan Buddhist monastery in India with an electroencephalograph, Davidson discovered more activity in the area of the brain associated with positive emotions - the left prefrontal lobes - than his laboratory had ever measured. And that wasn’t only while his subject was meditating.

In tests on another monk, Dr Paul Ekman of the University of California discovered they could let off an explosive sound, equivalent to a gun going off, beside the monk’s ear while the monk was practising one-pointedness meditation, and his heart rate and blood pressure would actually decrease.

During another test, the same monk didn’t even startle (that is, his facial muscles didn’t move) when the sound went off. Classic research tells us the startle reflex is impossible to prevent.

Here’s the rub: there’s good clinical evidence starting to emerge of the extraordinary physiological effects of meditation; there’s plenty of anecdotal evidence on the efficacy of various techniques; plus there’s considerable support for its use in the medical community. All that’s considered

lacking now is the weight of research on its therapeutic effects to help direct and share its benefits.

"The important new frontier is looking at clinical outcomes," says Monash University's Hassed.

Not that this is a straightforward undertaking by any means.

Dr Ramesh Manocha, a clinical research fellow at the Sydney Royal Hospital for Women's Natural Therapies Unit, says: "One of the problems with meditation research is that the definitions are very imprecise, and that has led to very mixed and mediocre results under scientific conditions."

Manocha headed a research team that conducted a randomised controlled trial on using Sahaja yoga meditation in the management of moderate to severe asthma. The results were published in the world's leading asthma journal, Thorax.

"We selected a very specific definition that is a very traditional definition of meditation - Sahaja Yoga."

Sahaja Yoga meditation was founded by Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi in India in 1970.

It is, says Avinash Nickkawde, Sahaja Yoga's national coordinator, based on an understanding of "a subtle energy system that exists within each one of us...that governs all aspects of our life - physical, mental, emotional and spiritual," he says. "With the techniques of Sahaja Yoga you can understand how it works. It's practical in nature, very results orientated, very genuine, very scientific."

Nickkawde provided Manocha with meditation tutors free of charge for the study. Manocha is at considerable pains to point out that he is indebted to Nickkawde for being able to use the technique, and for his expert guidance during his research.

"My name gets out there in connection with this technique," says Manocha, "and people think that I developed it."

The trial compared two groups of people with moderate to severe asthma over 16 weeks.

The first group was taught a standard form of stress management, says Manocha, while the second group was taught Sahaja Yoga meditation techniques.

Each group practised twice a day for 10 minutes during the trial period.

"What we found was that the meditators improved more psychologically, and they showed significant improvements in physical dimensions of the disease process as well," he says.

The same improvement wasn't seen in the people doing the stress management.

What this means, says Manocha "is that this mental silence approach to meditation isn't just making people feel

better, they are also doing something that is reducing the severity of the disease process."

All subjects were tested for airway hyper-responsiveness ("considered the best and most objective measure currently available to assess disease severity in the asthmatic lung") over the 16 weeks.

Manocha says the results of the study were remarkable, because often meditation trials compare "meditation to nothing", while this study compares meditation with stress management. Trials that measure the effectiveness of meditation alone, he says, will show "that meditation does something", but that often "more conventional approaches to reducing stress come out looking equally effective".

"What that really means is that the scientific evidence [until now] doesn't support the idea that meditation is anything better than a placebo effect," he says. "The main aim of our research at the Royal Hospital for Women is to what effect there is above and beyond the placebo effect and simple relaxation and rest.

"With this technique called Sahaja Yoga," he says, "we have actually found that there is an effect, and it is quite substantial in the areas that we looked at. It's better than any research that's been done in the world."

It's a big call. And as well as being published in Thorax magazine, Manocha's trial is also mentioned in an editorial, The Therapeutic Effects of Meditation, in the British Medical Journal in May.

The editorial agrees that Sahaja meditation "improved some outcomes in patients with poorly controlled asthma", although it maintains that "differences were not maintained at two months".

But it goes on to conclude that "current evidence for the therapeutic effectiveness of any type of meditation is weak".

Manocha says he is happy that the editorial has appeared and is writing a paper in response.

"We can follow through and say, 'OK, you guys are complaining about the standards of meditation research, here's a paper that satisfies more, if not all, of your requirements. We are totally committed to addressing all those scientific issues."

British Medical Journal
bmj.com/cgi/content/full/326/7398/1049

Sahaja Yoga
<http://www.sahajayoga.org>

Sydney Morning Herald, Thurs 24/7/03
(<http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2003/07/24/1058853174422.html>)

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Two accounts of Shri Mataji's recent trip to Paris

Dear All,

Shri Mataji came to Paris yesterday evening, She was coming from Milan.

At the last minute we were informed that we are allowed to go to Airport and welcome Her. So within one hour, we all phoned to each other and we started a crazy-pleasant rush to the airport! It was such an happy rush!

She came at 9:40 pm along with Mr CP. No one was late. We made two lines of yogis and She passed in between on the wheelchair. We welcomed Her with so many flowers. She saw each and every one of us with FULL attention. Many children were there, newborn babies and also new comers. She did not speak, however She said "thank you" to everyone.

Shri Mataji and Her husband Sir CP will spend 2 days in Paris and go to India tomorrow Thursday. It was such a gracious and beautiful moment.

We are all so thankful to Shri Mataji for blessing us with Her holy presence.

Dear yogis and yoginis,

I would like to share my personal account of Shri Mataji's recent visit to Paris. I had just finished a training course in the company office at CDG and was wondering what to do with the evening when I received a call from a Sahaja Yogi brother that Shri Mataji was arriving in CDG and would be staying at the Hilton CDG. I couldn't believe what I was hearing. I stay in this hotel 2-3 weeks out of every month!

One of our technical support guys had received his realisation a few weeks back and had started meditating. He is very sensitive to the vibrations. I said to him 'You know the lady you have been meditating on for the past few weeks? Well, she's arriving at the airport tonight'. He was very excited at the chance of meeting Shri Mataji and I told him that this was a very rare opportunity. While we were standing in arrivals he said to me. 'I think that plane landed a few minutes early'. He was right. Shri Mataji had landed.

We saw her from the window and she waved lovingly at all the yogis. Making sure that she waved at the yogis in each window as she passed by. She received the flowers from everyone and it felt like old times again with all the

yogis gathering around Shri Mataji in a sea of divine love.

A smaller group of yogis then received Shri Mataji at the hotel and she was always graciously smiling and offering namaste to us. The next day I was giving a training course and heard that Shri Mataji was going to go shopping. So I asked Daniel Wagner (an Austrian yogi who lives in the UK), who also works for the same company, to signal me on his mobile phone when Shri Mataji was leaving.

I was in the middle of my training course and I received the call and I told the trainees that I had to go out for 15 minutes and that they should continue with the exercises. I raced to the Hilton which is only 5 minutes away and as I walked in Shri Mataji was in the reception hall, and apart from Majit who was pushing the wheelchair and Alganesh who was walking by her side I was the only yogi in sight. Shri Mataji gave me a big smile and offered namaste and I felt so blessed to have received her darshan. After Shri Mataji had left I raced back to my trainees feeling bathed in vibrations. It was quite a bizarre adjustment from having the darshan of the Goddess to going straight back into explaining the technicalities of our software product.

In the evening we heard there would be bhajans and some yogis went back to the ashram for instruments. Later, we were ushered in to Shri Mataji's room expecting bhajans but Shri Mataji wanted to talk to us about the hotel. She wanted to know why the seats and w.c's were so low and why the hotel was uncomfortable, especially for elderly people. We had never realized this but as Shri Mataji spoke it of course became obvious.

Since myself, Daniel and our work colleagues had also experienced problems with the Hilton we felt it was appropriate to share our experiences with Shri Mataji. Shri Mataji said she wouldn't stay there again and Majit was obviously concerned that she had not been comfortable but Shri Mataji said later that it had been a positive experience since she now could see what the problem was - that she needed to build a hotel that catered for people's comfort.

However she said that the area was good for Sahaja Yoga because of the good transport access so we will approach the hotel with the idea of offering Sahaja Yoga for guests. Bandhans please! Unfortunately we only had this idea the next day. We were all so thoughtless in front of Shri Mataji that our minds went blank.

After the talk was over we left the room. We then heard that Shri Mataji wanted to go for a car ride with all the yogis! So we all rushed out and drove off behind Shri Mataji with no idea of where we were going! We arrived in this beautiful hotel in the middle of the countryside. The Sahaja Yogis had considered this hotel but unfortunately it didn't have showers - only sinks and baths.

Shri Mataji toured the hotel and her eye fell on some crys-

tal horses upstairs. I was downstairs but I heard a lot of laughter. Shri Mataji then came down and as she was being wheeled out she stopped by another glass cabinet and virtually bought all the antiques inside. This was a beautiful moment since I'd never had the opportunity to go shopping with Shri Mataji. Only two hours earlier Dr Bohdan had asked me if I had ever gone shopping with Shri Mataji. I said no, but inside I thought 'but I would really like to'. Two hours later I realized my desire had been fulfilled!

Daniel and I made an appointment the next day with Sir CP to write down the list of complaints. He was very diplomatic and stressed that we accentuate the positive as well as the negative. He was happy with the staff and other features of the hotel. The main points were the furniture and the bathrooms especially the showers.

After Shri Mataji had left Daniel and I tried to see if we could upgrade our two rooms to the Presidential suite (rooms 811 and 812). With some extra payment we managed to arrange it. The manager was a bit confused. He asked Daniel if we needed some extra beds since there was only one bed (Mother's bed). Daniel said 'No it's okay, we'll sleep on the floor'.

Many French yogis came to meditate in the suite and we had a beautiful evening discussing the day's events with Majit and the French yogis. It was all very natural and without ego. Just a harmonious atmosphere where we were all talking about the only thing that really matters in this world - Shri Mataji and Sahaja Yoga.

I was getting tired and was thinking about getting some sleep when about eight of us walked into Shri Mataji's bedroom. After a few seconds the vibrations were so strong that we couldn't talk any more and we fell into deep meditation. At this point in my meditation I had this deep sense of what Shri Mataji really means about being the spirit. That within us there is a deep ocean of blissful consciousness. Beyond space, time and death.

Shri Mataji has said that we can slip into the depths of the ocean at any point. And this is what I felt. In my conceptual brain I projected that I needed to sleep because I had to work the next day but after entering Shri Mataji's bedroom I slipped into the ocean. I realized that this is the essence of Sahaja Yoga. By allowing Shri Mataji to guide us, by surrendering to her will, being in tune with her flow and not identifying with our own mental projections she can lead us to a divine experience that is a hairsbreadth away from our conceptual reality. This is what she means by Sahaj. At any moment if we are ready we can be transported into her divine world.

When I finished my training course on Friday I went back to the hotel and by this time all the yogis were gone and everything had been taken away. I was alone, meditating on Mother's bed. Just looking at the bed took me into

thoughtless awareness. I only had about half an hour to go before I had to take my flight and I was meditating on the reality that a divine incarnation had slept in this room.

I looked at the sheets that were still on the bed. The sheets that Shri Mataji had slept on two nights previously and I couldn't bear the idea of the cleaner coming and just dumping them into a bin liner. So I phoned the manager with another unusual request - to buy the sheets. It wasn't a problem. So I folded up the sheets and flew home and placed them on our altar. On the aeroplane I kept thinking of the vibrated sheets in the overhead compartment and felt that I was carrying back a small part of Shri Mataji's ocean of love along with the memory of an incredible week back with me to Vienna.

Jai Shri Mataji!

Steve Jones

GENERAL INTEREST

Open letter from the President of India addressed to the People of India

President's Office
The President of India
DR APJ Abdul Kalam's Speech in Hyderabad

"I have three visions for India.

In 3000 years of our history, people from all over the world have come and invaded us, captured our lands, conquered our minds. From Alexander onwards. The Greeks, the Turks, the Moguls, the Portuguese, the British, the French, the Dutch, all of them came and looted us, took over what was ours. Yet we have not done this to any other nation. We have not conquered anyone.

We have not grabbed their land, their culture, their history and tried to enforce our way of life on them. Why? Because we respect the freedom of others. That is why my first vision is that of FREEDOM. I believe that India got its first vision of this in 1857, when we started the war of independence. It is this freedom that we must protect and nurture and build on. If we are not free, no one will respect us.

My second vision for India is DEVELOPMENT. For fifty years we have been a developing nation. It is time we see ourselves as a developed nation. We are among the top 5 nations of the world in terms of GDP. We have 10 percent growth rate in most areas. Our poverty levels are falling. Our achievements are being globally recognized today. Yet we lack the self-confidence to see ourselves as a developed nation, self-reliant and self-assured. Isn't this incorrect?

I have a THIRD vision. India must stand up to the world. Because I believe that unless India stands up to the world, no one will respect us. Only STRENGTH respects strength. We must be strong not only as a military power but also as an economic power. Both must go hand-in-hand. My good fortune was to have worked with three great minds. Dr Vikram Sarabhai of the Dept of Space, Professor Satish Dhawan, who succeeded him and Dr Brahm Prakash, father of nuclear material. I was lucky to have worked with all three of them closely and consider this the great opportunity of my life.

I see four milestones in my career: Twenty years I spent in ISRO. I was given the opportunity to be the project director for India's first satellite launch vehicle, SLV3. The one that launched Rohini. These years played a very important role in my life of Scientist.

After my ISRO years, I joined DRDO and got a chance to be the part of India's guided missile program. It was my second bliss when Agni met its mission requirements in 1994. The Dept of Atomic Energy and DRDO had this tremendous partnership in the recent nuclear tests, on May 11 and 13. This was the third bliss. The joy of participating with my team in these nuclear tests and proving to the world that India can make it, that we are no longer a developing nation but one of them. It made me feel very proud as an Indian. The fact that we have now developed for Agni a re-entry structure, for which we have developed this new material. A very light material called carbon-carbon.

One day an orthopedic surgeon from Nizam Institute of Medical Sciences visited my laboratory. He lifted the material and found it so light that he took me to his hospital and showed me his patients. There were these little girls and boys with heavy metallic calipers weighing over three kg each, dragging their feet around. He said to me: Please remove the pain of my patients.

In three weeks, we made these Floor reaction Orthosis 300-gram calipers and took them to the orthopedic center. The children didn't believe their eyes. From dragging around a three kg load on their legs, they could now move around! Their parents had tears in their eyes. That was my fourth bliss!

Why is the media here so negative? Why are we in India so embarrassed to recognize our own strengths, our achievements?

We are such a great nation. We have so many amazing

success stories but we refuse to acknowledge them. Why?

We are the first in milk production.

We are number one in Remote sensing satellites.

We are the second largest producer of wheat.

We are the second largest producer of rice.

Look at Dr Sudarshan, he has transferred the tribal village into a self-sustaining, self-driving unit. There are millions of such achievements but our media is only obsessed in the bad news and failures and disasters. I was in Tel Aviv once and I was reading the Israeli newspaper. It was the day after a lot of attacks and bombardments and deaths had taken place. The Hamas had struck. But the front page of the newspaper had the picture of a Jewish gentleman who in five years had transformed his desert land into an orchard and a granary. It was this inspiring picture that everyone woke up to. The gory details of killings, bombardments, deaths, were inside in the newspaper, buried among other news.

In India we only read about death, sickness, terrorism, crime. Why are we so NEGATIVE?

Another question: Why are we, as a nation so obsessed with foreign things?

We want foreign TVs, we want foreign shirts. We want foreign technology. Why this obsession with everything imported? Do we not realize that self-respect comes with self-reliance?

I was in Hyderabad giving this lecture, when a 14 year old girl asked me for my autograph. I asked her what her goal in life is. She replied: "I want to live in a developed India."

For her, you and I will have to build this developed India. You must proclaim: "India is not an under-developed nation; it is a highly developed nation."

Do you have 10 minutes? Allow me to come back with a vengeance. Got 10 minutes for your country? If yes, then read; otherwise, choice is yours.

YOU say that our government is inefficient.

YOU say that our laws are too old.

YOU say that the municipality does not pick up the garbage.

YOU say that the phones don't work, the railways are a joke, the airline is the worst in the world, mails never reach their destination.

YOU say that our country has been fed to the dogs and is the absolute pits.

YOU say, say and say. What do YOU do about it?

Take a person on his way to Singapore. Give him a name - YOURS. Give him a face - YOURS.

YOU walk out of the airport and you are at your International best. In Singapore you don't throw cigarette butts on

the roads or eat in the stores.

YOU are as proud of their Underground links as they are. You pay \$5 (approx Rs.60) to drive through Orchard Road (equivalent of Mahim Causeway or Pedder Road) between 5 PM and 8 PM.

YOU come back to the parking lot to punch your parking ticket if you have overstayed in a restaurant or a shopping mall irrespective of your status identity.

In Singapore you don't say anything, DO YOU?

YOU wouldn't dare to eat in public during Ramadan, in Dubai.

YOU would not dare to go out without your head covered in Jeddah.

YOU would not dare to buy an employee of the telephone exchange in London at 10 pounds (Rs.650) a month to, "see to it that my STD and ISD calls are billed to someone else."

YOU would not dare to speed beyond 55 mph (88 km/h) in Washington and then tell the traffic cop, "Jaanta hai main kaun hoon (Do you know who I am?). I am so-and-so's son. Take your two bucks and get lost."

YOU wouldn't chuck an empty coconut shell anywhere other than the garbage pail on the beaches in Australia and New Zealand.

Why don't YOU spit Paan on the streets of Tokyo?

Why don't YOU use examination jockeys or buy fake certificates in Boston??? We are still talking of the same YOU.

YOU who can respect and conform to a foreign system in other countries but cannot in your own. You who will throw papers and cigarettes on the road the moment you touch Indian ground. If you can be an involved and appreciative citizen in an alien country, why cannot you be the same here in India?

Once in an interview, the famous Ex-municipal commissioner of Bombay, Mr Tinaikar, had a point to make. "Rich people's dogs are walked on the streets to leave their affluent droppings all over the place," he said. "And then the same people turn around to criticize and blame the authorities for inefficiency and dirty pavements. What do they expect the officers to do? Go down with a broom every time their dog feels the pressure in his bowels? In America every dog owner has to clean up after his pet has done the job. Same in Japan. Will the Indian citizen do that here?" He's right.

We go to the polls to choose a government and after that forfeit all responsibility. We sit back wanting to be pampered and expect the government to do everything for us whilst our contribution is totally negative. We expect the government to clean up but we are not going to stop chucking garbage all over the place nor are we going to

stop to pick up a stray piece of paper and throw it in the bin. We expect the railways to provide clean bathrooms but we are not going to learn the proper use of bathrooms.

We want Indian Airlines and Air India to provide the best of food and toiletries but we are not going to stop pilfering at the least opportunity. This applies even to the staff who is known not to pass on the service to the public. When it comes to burning social issues like those related to women, dowry, girl child and others, we make loud drawing room protestations and continue to do the reverse at home. Our excuse? "It's the whole system which has to change, how will it matter if I alone forego my sons' rights to a dowry." So who's going to change the system?

What does a system consist of? Very conveniently for us it consists of our neighbours, other households, other cities, other communities and the government. But definitely not me and YOU. When it comes to us actually making a positive contribution to the system we lock ourselves along with our families into a safe cocoon and look into the distance at countries far away and wait for a Mr Clean to come along & work miracles for us with a majestic sweep of his hand or we leave the country and run away.

Like lazy cowards hounded by our fears we run to America to bask in their glory and praise their system. When New York becomes insecure we run to England. When England experiences unemployment, we take the next flight out to the Gulf. When the Gulf is war struck, we demand to be rescued and brought home by the Indian government. Everybody is out to abuse and rape the country. Nobody thinks of feeding the system. Our conscience is mortgaged to money.

Dear Indians, The article is highly thought-inductive, calls for a great deal of introspection and pricks one's conscience too... I am echoing JF Kennedy's words to his fellow Americans to relate to Indians...

"ASK WHAT WE CAN DO FOR INDIA AND DO WHAT HAS TO BE DONE TO MAKE INDIA WHAT AMERICA AND OTHER WESTERN COUNTRIES ARE TODAY"

Lets do what India needs from us. Forward this mail to each Indian for a change instead of sending jokes or junk mails.

Thank you,

Dr Abdul Kalam
(PRESIDENT OF INDIA)