

From Om Mandli to Brahma Kumaris

The birth of knowledge

(as at October 2011)

The time between the early 1930s and the late 1960s was a powerful, cohesive, and deeply experiential era in our story. Most of today's vast BK community never knew Brahma Baba, however many of us were fortunate to have known Dadi Prakashmani who held the spirit of that early time. Dadi's passing has left many of us with a desire to re-connect with the visionary magic, and the dharna, of the time when our clear purpose of world transformation through self-transformation was truly established. The seed of our yagya (the spiritual heart of the Brahma Kumaris), planted all those years ago, is a powerful and benevolent one.

Experiences in the early days were characterized by visions and divine experiences of inexplicable love, belonging, purity and faith, contextualized deeply in bhakti. Shiv Baba had to unveil the new knowledge gradually, in order for people to accept something so different, something so distinctly at odds with their tradition and understanding. The following timeline outlines the journey of Brahma Baba and the first members of the yagya, as they moved from a time of little understanding, though profound other-worldly experiences, to an increasingly deep and clear grasp of the spiritual knowledge and principles that today are the foundation of our lives. This is the story of Om Mandli and the Brahma Kumaris. This is the story of Divine Shiv Baba. This is our story.

What we now know as The Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University began as 'Om Mandli' ("sacred circle" or "gathering of those who chant om") - a spiritual revolution in the North West of the Subcontinent that evolved through a time of great social unrest and national tension. There was also violence in their local community, as the yogic practice and understanding of those in the yagya jeopardized the Hindu tradition of marriage and the role of women, empowering young girls and mothers to become leaders and live pure lives.

As early as 1932, people began to gather at the home of Lekhraj Kubchand Kripalani. Stimulated by deep reflection, Bhai Lekhraj or Dada Lekhraj as he was known, had begun reading the Gita upon the advice of his guru. Satsangs were popular, and so Dada's reading provided an opportunity for women and children to come together and study scripture, which was considered a good use of their time, particularly with many of the men in the families away for long periods.

The original gathering was a socially and geographically intimate one. Most people came from the Bhaibhand (Band of Brothers) caste comprising wealthy traders and merchants, and families lived in proximity to one another. When people attended to listen to Dada read the Gita, he would increasingly feel the presence of a great power, and the women, children and men who attended were also powerfully moved by the experiences.

Time Knowledge and Activities

1932 – 1934 Dada became deeply contemplative. He spent a great deal of time talking to his mind and endeavoring to understand its behavior. To facilitate his understanding, he held satsangs in his home, and would read the Gita aloud, and others would come to listen.

January 1934 Dada's uncle died. This was a decisive moment for him, and he began to turn his mind more deeply to spiritual matters. Dada Lekhraj entered Vanprasth, the age of retirement. This is also sometimes called *sathiyana*, meaning 'sixtyishness'. Dada Lekraj was born between 1884 and 1890.

1935 The part of chanting and visions begins.

The first clear knowledge accepted within the community is that of a 5000 year, endlessly repeating cycle of four ages (a fifth age was understood later). Souls travel through the four 'castes' of Brahman, Kshetriya, Vaisha and Shudra. These 'castes' are identified as belonging to specific eras of human

existence; Golden, Silver, Copper and Iron Ages. Outsiders begin to call Dada Lekraj's satsang 'Om Mandali'. The community adopts the name.

1936 Dada has three powerful visions; One of paradise, one of destruction and one of Vishnu. When Dada chants "Om" during times of contemplation, people attending the satsangs frequently go into trance and have visions of Dada as Vishnu, as well as seeing other divine beings and light. At this early stage, Dada Lekraj is referred to as Baba, Om Baba, Bhagwan and Mandli Mata.

October 1937 The Trust is established, whereupon Dada hands over his wealth and property to a group of 8 – 15 sisters. He remains an advisor. Picketing and protesting from close family members begins, in defiance of the perceived anti-Hindu approach of women being empowered and leading celibate lives.

Early knowledge is limited to the Cycle and the Soul. There is a clear perception that destruction is imminent – there will not be another Dilwali.

During Golden Age and Silver Age the consciousness will be I am Creator of Creation (unity). During Copper Age and Iron Age the consciousness will be I am God but the Creation mere illusion (duality). There is great intoxication with the knowledge of the Drama and it is referred to in beautiful ways including the Eternal Creative Play and the World Bioscope. Early yagya members understand that there is a confluence of the old and new time periods but the Confluence Age *per se*, is not yet understood.

The understanding of the soul is distinctly different to what we know today. In the 1930s and 1940s the soul is understood as '*Aham Brahm Asmi*' or 'I am God,' although it can be translated in a number of ways. The understanding of the soul as a jyoti bindu (or a sentient living point) takes nearly 20 years to become clear. In the Gita, Brahma is both manifest and unmanifest, the ocean and a thumb. At that time there is no clear distinction between God and the self or between the self and the realm of light known as 'Brahm'.

Despite their lack of intellectual understanding, members have great spiritual confidence that they are the same souls of the previous kalpa, that they are the chosen ones, and they are the key to the world's liberation from sorrow. They experiment with practicing different states of mind. The great love, awareness, belonging and purity sustain them through many years of scant knowledge.

Baba goes to Kashmir for a period of months. During Baba's absence, the yagya members continue to experience trance and visions. Upon his return, Baba feels that there is another power working within him, but the community who are completely enamored of Baba, and the experiences they are having through him, largely ignore this.

August 1938 Due to violence and protesting, the community moves to Karachi and changes their name to *Rajsuva Asvamedh Avinashi Gyan Yagya*. Nevertheless, the protesting follows them. As do a series of court cases brought by members' families to try to – unsuccessfully – disband Om Mandli.

1939 - 1942 Experiences of bodiless *samadhi* increase amongst everyone. They experience merging with the Brahm element. Many report experiencing 'light upon light'. Early pictures (drawn in the early to mid 1940s) show 'Infinite Divine Light' written around the Cycle and the Tree, as this is what they frequently experience in their meditation.

Dada writes notes in the morning and Mama read them to the class. Trance messengers share their experiences daily so that others may learn from them.

1942 - 43 The role of Brahma is clarified for the first time. A young Sister, Pushpa, goes into trance, and then a whispering voice (that we now understand to be the influence of Shiv Baba) speaks through her. Dada refers to this 'personality' as *Piyu*, meaning the Beloved. No-one had heard this voice before, so it generates some interest, particularly in Dada, as it confirms his intuition that there is another power, another personality, responsible for the experiences he and others are having. They begin to call the written notes that Dada writes 'Piyu Vanis (versions of the beloved)'.

Piyu gives Dada the name 'Brahma' and clarifies the role of Brahma as creator. With this revelation, members start referring to him as Prajapati (Lord of the World) God Brahma. This confirms their bhakti understanding of Dada as a form or incarnation of God Vishnu. Brahma Baba though, believes in the distinct personality of Piyu. However, that does little to convince others. Nevertheless, one can presume that, at some point during the early years, Brahma Baba feels he is indeed God Brahma, due to the

strength of the experiences that others are having through him and the power of his own insights and experiences.

1943 During this period Brahma Baba relies heavily on a series of trance messengers to facilitate his own understanding and churning. Knowledge is still clearly *Manmanabhav* (let your mind be with God) *Madhiajibhaw*, ie *Aham Brahma Asmi* or *Aham Chaturbhuj* (I am the creator of creation/ Vishnu/ God).

In 1943 Gulzar Dadi has the first experience of Avyakt Brahma in the Subtle Regions, introducing the knowledge of the Subtle Regions for the first time. The tendency is to compare the knowledge gained through insight, trance, and visions, with the stories of the Gita, which is still the frame of reference for their experiences.

From the 1940s until the early 1950s Avyakt Brahma is a source of understanding, knowledge and support. Avyakt Brahma is understood to be the complete form of Brahma, but the importance of that role is not fully clear until 1969 when Sakar Baba becomes Avyakt and the combined form of Bap and Dada emerges.

Pictures from the 1940s created through trance show 'Infinite Divine Light' (the omnipresent essence of God), written clearly around the Cycle and Tree. These pictures also identify Divine Father Gyan Surya (Brahma Baba) and Divine Mother Gyan Chandrama (Mama). The second picture of the tree has arrows indicating how Brahma becomes Vishnu, so Krishna, so Narayan, which is absent in the first picture. The difference in the pictures indicates the gradual development of knowledge.

During these years, while WWII is going on, they reason that this is the very same Mahabharat war spoken of in the scriptures, and the old world will be destroyed in 1950. This also fits with the famous story of the 14 years of exile the Pandava's experienced. They felt there would be 14 years between the official beginning of the yagya, and the total demise of the old world.

14 Aug 1947 Partition of India. The Om Mandli community maintains silence, to develop their yoga practice and also for their own protection. The high wall that Baba had built to protect them from the violence through the protests, continues to serve them during the social and political violence of Partition.

1948 Shiv Baba speaks through Brahma Baba directly (not through Pushpa) saying "Shivohum" in the same whispering voice that had been associated with Piyu five to six years earlier. Dada Anand Kishore understands there is indeed the personality of God present, but this clarity and perception is not common. To some it becomes clear that Brahma is not God, that in fact no human being can be God. Some start becoming aware of a different personality.

During this second coming of Piyu, some report that - from time to time - there is a more intense light on Brahma's face and forehead. Others say Brahma's face was always shining, and others that there was no remarkable difference. Around this time, the community stops reading the Gita and notes down what is being spoken through Brahma.

1949 - 1952 Posters from 1949 still identify Brahma as Prajapati God Brahma. Around 1950 is when the understanding of the personality of Shiv Baba as a distinct incorporeal God emerges clearly. Murlis begin to be spoken by Brahma Baba with Shiv Baba also speaking.

May 1950 Baba directs all records from Pakistan to be destroyed or buried, to prevent the dissemination of misunderstanding. Many are reluctant to leave their precious diaries, so Baba tells them to bury their books and that these would then be discovered on the path of bhakti and form the basis of the scriptures in the next kalpa.

Om Mandli moves to Mount Abu and leases Brij Koti. Shortly afterwards they move to Pokhran House (Pandav Bhawan). They call the ashram Madhuban, named after the garden where Krishna played in the scriptures. Then in the early 1950s the Beggary Period begins, continuing for around 10 years.

Between 1952 and 1958, Shiv Baba is still thought of as thumb shaped. By end of the 1950s, the apprehension of Shiv Baba as a point of light becomes clear. Therefore, the knowledge of the soul as a point of light is also clear. In posters drawn after the 1950s a distinct difference is that Infinite Divine light is replaced by the presence of Incorporeal God Shiva.

1952 A lot is clarified. The differences between Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, Shankar, Krishna all become clear. Understanding is still developing through trance and experiences in meditation. By now it is clearly understood that Shiv Baba and Brahma Baba are two distinct entities. Reportedly though, many still aren't that concerned about it. Baba is Baba, whether there are two or one.

Service begin in centres outside of Madhuban and Brahma Baba came to be known as Prajapita (Father of the People), in contrast to Prajapati (Lord of the World).

1956-57 Clarification of Mind, Intellect and Sanskaras, and understanding of the Three Worlds.

1957-60 Clear distinction of and relationship between Shiv Baba and Brahma Baba: 'Bap' and 'Dada'. They understand that Shiv Baba, God, speaks through Brahma Baba, the first prince of Golden Age and the father of the people, and that God is not omnipresent. Confluence Age is understood. The picture of The Ladder (taken from another religious institution) is used as a way to describe the downfall of humanity.

1960 Organisation re-named Brahma Kumaris Ishwariya Vishwa Vidyalaya.

1965 The name 'BapDada' starts being used, clearly indicating collective acceptance of two entities at work, with Shiv Baba as Supreme. They perceive destruction as occurring in 1976, which is noted in some of the earlier posters. This also fit in with the 100 years of Brahma from the scriptures.

Again, the feeling of world change being imminent remained with them, as it does with us today. Now the knowledge is clear, Baba directs all records of previous knowledge to be destroyed for the second time, so that there is no trace of wrong understanding that remains within the community.

24 June 1965 Mama leaves the body.

1969 Understanding of the role of Avyakt Brahma. Sakar Brahma merges with 'complete Brahma' to become Avyakt Brahma. He then combines with Incorporeal Shiv Baba to become Avyakt BapDada.

The early documents and pictures are available at: (website ?) If you have any questions about the information here, please address them to (?) and cc (?). References can be provided.