

Tribute to Dadi Janki
Spiritual Head of Brahma Kumaris,
The world's largest spiritual organization run by women

INDIA -- Dadi Janki Kirpalani, leader of Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University, died on March 27, 2020 in Mt Abu, India. She was 104.

Born in Hyderabad, Sindh, in northern India (now Pakistan), it was clear from an early age that Janki was called to a spiritual life. With only three years of formal schooling, she convinced her father to take her on pilgrimages all over India, meeting many sages and saints. At age 19, while out walking with her father, they encountered Dada Lekraj, a highly respected jeweler whom she had known since childhood. She later recalled that as a life-changing encounter. She saw Lekraj's image dissolve into a field of light and felt transported beyond the physical world into a timeless dimension, and engulfed in pure love. Certain that Lekraj was somehow connected with the truth she yearned for, she asked to attend the spiritual gatherings that had begun in his home.

But, Indian tradition required young women to be married according to a choice made by their parents, and this was Janki's fate. Her new husband refused her request for spiritual study, making her a virtual prisoner in her home, occasionally even beating her. Eventually Janki's father realized he had made a terrible mistake and helped her escape to Karachi, where the small community around Lekraj then resided. After the 1947 partition of India and Pakistan, the group moved to Mt Abu in India. This community eventually became known as the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University, and the spiritual knowledge they taught on the soul, God and time was the focus of the remaining 80+ years of Janki's life.

In 1974, Janki, now called "Dadi" (older sister) was asked to go to London and serve what they called "the foreign lands." With a tiny Air India bag and two white saris, and knowing only a few words of English, she moved to a small flat in a poor part of the city. A door became her makeshift bed. She soon met a handful of young westerners who were to become lifelong companions in the work of the BKs. Dadi developed real love for those she met abroad,

appreciating their honesty, sincerity and openness. They developed a deep love for her wisdom, courage and unbreakable friendship.

Word of the teachings gradually spread across the UK and the world. Those who studied with Dadi Janki during the time of massive expansion remember her relentless drive and her insistence that they should follow her example in study, remembrance of God, and service. She was tireless, accepting speaking invitations in city after city. Now the spiritual university has a presence in about 130 countries.

Dadi engaged deeply with those who could help guide humanity through difficult times. She had friendships with people of all religions. Under Dadi's leadership, the Brahma Kumaris became a founding member of URI and have been active in URI throughout the world. She was designated a Wisdom Keeper at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit. She addressed the United Nations, where the Brahma Kumaris had become a non-governmental organization with general consultative status. An avid supporter of the Parliament, Dadi spoke at the 2004 Parliament in Barcelona and the Melbourne Parliament in 2009.

Dadi gave equal time and love to those leading ordinary lives and to the scientists, prime ministers and celebrities. Robin Gibb of the popular British singing group, the Bee Gees, wrote the song "Mother of Love" in honor of Dadi's 90th birthday and performed it at Wembley Arena in London.

In 2007, Dadi Prakashmani, Head of Brahma Kumaris, passed on, and Janki was called back to India to lead the organization. She was 91. For the next 13 years, she regularly addressed groups of 20,000 or more at the Mt Abu headquarters. She took her last international trip in 2019, traveling to Dubai and Nairobi, then to London and New York.

Dadi's health, delicate since childhood, began to deteriorate last February. She was taken to the Brahma Kumaris' Global Hospital in Mt Abu. There, breathing difficulties and a heart attack finished her life of service. Under normal circumstances, tens of thousands would have come to India for a final farewell. But with the covid 19 virus closing borders and grounding flights, her

life was celebrated in a small ceremony in the ashram to which she had come in 1950, a simple ending for one who had devoted herself to simplicity and truth. #####