

INDIA INTERNATIONAL TRADE FAIR

The much-anticipated India International Trade Fair (IITF) 2024 kicked off at Pragati Maidan in New Delhi, showcasing India's dynamic industrial and commercial growth. Organized annually by the India Trade Promotion Organization (ITPO), IITF has evolved into a platform where businesses, industries, and startups from across the globe converge to explore new markets, technologies, and opportunities. The 2024 edition of IITF, themed "Promoting Atmanirbhar Bharat through Innovation and Sustainability," brings together participants from over 50 countries, marking a significant leap in international collaboration. The fair is expected to witness the participation of over 2,000 exhibitors representing diverse sectors, including manufacturing, technology, agriculture, textiles, chemicals, food processing, and more. This year's fair also emphasizes India's growing strength in the field of innovation, digital transformation, and green technologies, aligning with the government's focus on creating a self-reliant and sustainable economy. One of the highlights of IITF 2024 is the strong presence of Indian startups, which have gained prominence under the Startup India initiative. These startups are showcasing cutting-edge solutions in various sectors, including renewable energy, artificial intelligence, healthcare, and e-commerce, reflecting India's thriving innovation ecosystem. Moreover, the fair features a dedicated Startup Pavilion to encourage networking and collaborations between young innovators, investors, and industry leaders. The fair also serves as a window for global businesses to tap into India's burgeoning market, which remains one of the world's fastest-growing economies. Foreign exhibitors and multinational companies are keen to explore the vast business potential in sectors such as manufacturing, infrastructure, and digital services. The event provides a platform for these global players to forge strategic partnerships with Indian companies, driving mutual growth and trade. The Government of India's emphasis on Atmanirbhar Bharat (self-reliant India) is reflected in the focus on indigenous products, technologies, and manufacturing capabilities at the fair. Domestic companies are showcasing their capabilities to meet both national and international demands, further boosting India's manufacturing sector and exports. In addition to the commercial aspect, IITF 2024 also aims to foster cultural exchange, with special pavilions dedicated to India's diverse heritage, arts, and crafts. Visitors can explore traditional handicrafts, textiles, and indigenous products, offering a blend of modern business with India's rich cultural tapestry.

Devkinandan & Baba Bhageshwar's clarion calls for Hindu unity

■ OMKAR DATTATRAY

Hindu unity is the need of the hour in India and realizing its necessity and value Kathavachak and good orator Devkinandan and Hindu religious guru Shri Dhrindra Krishna Shastari popularly known as Baba Bhageshwar have rightly given clarion calls for Hindu unity in the country as unity among different sects of people of the Hindu community is necessary for the safety, dignity of Hindu's and also for keeping Hindu's as majority community in the country called as Bharat in the country's constitution .These calls for unity are neither reactionary nor aggressive and nor communal and sectarian ,it only emphasizes that Hindu community which stands divided and thus is subject to exploitation and even assaults should unite to protect itself from the anti-social elements and the radicals among Muslim minority .Moreover planned efforts are underway to change the demography of the country and reduced the majority Hindu community to minority .Therefore the religious gurus ,saints ,religious orators and Kathawachaks have taken upon themselves the responsibility and mantle of awakening Hindu community so that they forge unity among their divisions and sects so that the community is guarded from the onslaughts of the fundamentalists and radicals and those publicly daring the inhuman and anti Hindu slogans of Sar Tan Se Juda .There is urgent and utmost need and necessity of Hindu unity in the country so that in the only Hindu majority country of the world ,Hindu's live with head high and with safety and dignity .As the conditions are emerging in the country and in the face of anti -Hindu sentiments spreading across various parts of the country ,there is utmost urgency and need that already divided and

fragmented Hindu community is united so that they can live with safety and dignity in their own country as the the whole world there is no place for them to live and grow .So there is need for Hindu's to unite and leave behind their divisions ,after all the people in the various divisions in Hinduism are after all Hindu's and so they should forge unity among themselves if their religious freedom and their Muths ,Minders are to be saved .Realizing the need for unity in the Hindu society ,Devkinandan the religious orator and religious guru and popular young saint Baba Bhageshwar have realized the need for unity among different sects and divisions of Hindu society and both these have initiated way and means of awakening the Hindu society .In this regard Devkinandan had recently organized a Sanatan dhram sansad ,the aim was to impress and demand the government to accept the constitution of a sanatan board to protect the Hindu temples and muths in the country on the pattern of Waqf board .He organized a big gathering of Hindu saints, seers and common Hindu's in national capital Delhi to awaken them from deep slumber and to unite them to meet the challenges prevailing in the country .Similarly Dhram Guru and saint Dhrindra Krishna Shastri popularly known as Baba Bagheswar is taking a Pad Yatra in MP's Chatterpur which is attended by thousands of Hindus and hundreds of saints to awaken the Hindu society with the aim and noble mission of forging unity among Hindu community which today stands divided on caste lines .There is utmost need to break the shackles of division in the Hindu society and instead forge unity among Hindus .It is worth mentioning that in the neighboring Bangladesh ,Hindu's are being persecuted ,killed and enormous atrocities are being

meted to them and there the Muslims did not differentiate between Hindus and Hindus while heaping untold miseries on the innocent Hindu's .So Hindu's in India who are a divided lot should understand that caste division will not give any relief to the divided society but will only increase the chances of their discrimination and atrocities as well as exploitation .Therefore solution to all ills and vices of Hindu society lie on making unity among the divided community so that they will live a life of security and honor in their own country ,where the voices of their suppression and exploitation occur because of the interventions of the radicalized Muslim community .Baba Bhageshwar is on the Pad yatra with hundreds and thousands of people in MP's Chattirpur and adjoining areas to awaken the Hindu's from deep slumber with the aim of forging much need and valued unity among the Hindu society which stands widely divided to its detriment .The Hindu's should appreciate the nicety and need of unity among Hindu's and so make concerted efforts to unite the divided Hindu society .It is pertinent to mention that Dhrindra Krishna Shastari of Bageshwar Dham launched the 160 km 'Hindu Ekta Yatra',urging unity and eliminating caste-based discrimination ,untouchability and social divisions .The Hindu saint Baba Bhageshwar launched the 'Hindu Ekta Yatra' on Thursday ,starting from Bageshwar Dham in Chhattarpur ,Madhya Pradesh .The 160km yatra aims to unite Hindu's by addressing and eliminating caste system that continues to divide the community .He emphasized the need to eradicate untouchability ,discrimination and social divisions in Hindu religion .Shastri stated that the purpose of this Yatra is to unite Hindu's by removing the caste system

and the animosity that divides us .He stressed the significance of nationalism ,declaring that love for the country should always come first .He further said the national anthem should be played everywhere ,including in temples and mosques .The ongoing nine day yatra will cover 160 km and is scheduled to conclude in Orchha on November 29.Shastri and thousands of his devotees are walking 20 km every day to spread the message of unity.MP Chief minister Dr Mohan Yadav extended his best wishes to Shastri for the success of the yatra. This Yatra is not against any community and more so against the Muslim community .But surprisingly there is heart burn and head ache among some Moulana's of the Muslim community and they see it as a threat to communal harmony and secularism .It the height that some Muslim leaders have requested the government to stop the Hindu unity march .But it is unlikely to find favor in the rulers who wholeheartedly are supporting this Yatra .This Yatra is not for division and disharmony but for unity in the already divided Hindu society .All should support this Yatra which is for unity among Hindus and at the same time it is not against any community and therefore no community should feel scared from the Yatra as the aim of this Yatra is harmony and not dis-harmony .Dhrindra Shastri needs to be appreciate for embarking on the noble mission and aim of Hindu unity .However it is not that easy to forge Hindu unity and for this noble cause all the Hindus should rise above caste divisions and forge genuine unity among Hindus which is the need and necessity and all should cooperate so that the Yatra will be a success. (The author is a columnist, social and KP activist)

Social Isolation of Women: Beginning and Early Solution

■ DR. RAJKUMAR SINGH

Social isolation is the lack of meaningful social interactions, connections, and relationships. It can have significant impacts on mental, emotional, and physical health, particularly for women, who may face unique factors contributing to their isolation. An overview of the concept include: a. Causes of Social Isolation in Women:Caregiving Roles:Many women take on primary caregiving responsibilities for children, elderly family members, or others. These roles can limit opportunities for social engagement. Economic Challenges:Financial struggles, including those stemming from the gender pay gap, may limit access to social activities or networking opportunities.Cultural and Societal Expectations:In some cultures, women may face restrictions on their freedom, mobility, or access to social spaces.Life Transitions:Events such as marriage, divorce, relocation, or the death of a loved one can disrupt existing social networks.Mental Health Stigma:Women experiencing mental health issues, such as postpartum depression or anxiety, may feel ashamed or unsupported, increasing isolation.b. Effects of Social Isolation on Women:Mental Health:Increased risk of depression, anxiety, and feelings of loneliness.Physical Health:Greater vulnerability to conditions like cardiovascular diseases, weakened immunity, and even premature mortality.Self-Perception:Prolonged isolation can neg-

atively impact self-esteem and confidence, reinforcing a cycle of withdrawal.Economic and Career Impacts:Lack of social networks can limit access to job opportunities and professional growth.c. Social Isolation in Women:Community Programs:Support groups, women's clubs, and hobby-based meetups can foster a sense of belonging.Technology and Online Communities:Virtual platforms can offer a lifeline to women unable to participate in physical gatherings due to caregiving or mobility constraints.Mental Health Support:Accessible counselling services and destigmatizing mental health discussions can encourage women to seek help. Empowerment Initiatives:Programs that promote education, financial independence, and leadership skills help women build networks and confidence.Supportive Policies:Family-friendly workplace policies, affordable childcare, and eldercare support can alleviate some burdens contributing to isolation.Addressing social isolation among women requires a multifaceted approach that acknowledges and tackles both individual and systemic barriers.

Phases of social isolation The social isolation of women has deep historical and cultural roots. Its origins are often tied to patriarchal structures, cultural norms, and economic systems that restricted women's mobility, agency, and participation in public life. a. Early Societies and Division of Labour:In many early agricultural and tribal soci-

eties, gendered division of labour emerged. Men often worked in roles requiring mobility (e.g., hunting, trade), while women were typically confined to domestic roles, such as caregiving, cooking, and managing the household.This division reinforced physical and social boundaries, limiting women's access to public life and broader social networks. b. Patriarchal Structures: Patriarchy, a system where men hold primary power, often dictated women's roles as subordinate and confined them to private spheres like the home.Cultural and religious beliefs frequently justified these restrictions, portraying women's roles as tied to their reproductive and caregiving functions. c. Rise of Private Property and Economic Dependence: With the advent of private property, inheritance systems often placed economic power in the hands of men. Women's lack of independent resources made them reliant on male family members and reduced their autonomy.This economic dependence isolated women, as they were less likely to engage in economic or social activities outside the home. d.Institutional Reinforcement: Legal systems historically restricted women's rights to education, property ownership, and public participation. For instance,Ancient Greek society confined women to domestic roles, with limited or no political rights.In many parts of the world, veiling or seclusion (e.g., purdah in South Asia) institutionalized women's isolation. e. Cultural and Religious Norms: In many cultures, notions of "purity"

and "honour" were tied to controlling women's behavior and limiting their interactions with others, particularly men outside their family.Practices like child marriage or restrictions on widows' remarriage further confined women socially and emotionally. f. Industrialization and Urbanization: While industrialization offered some women employment opportunities, it also introduced new forms of isolation, particularly for middle- and upper-class women who were expected to remain at home while men worked.Urbanization often uprooted traditional community support systems, leaving many women isolated in nuclear families. g. Social Isolation and Modernity: Even in modern contexts, societal expectations like the "ideal mother" or "ideal wife" roles perpetuate isolation, as women are often burdened with unpaid labour and caregiving.Economic inequalities, workplace discrimination, and lack of access to public spaces continue to limit women's participation in wider social and professional networks. Thus, the social isolation of women has evolved but remains deeply embedded in historical systems and societal norms. Efforts to dismantle these barriers-through education, advocacy, and policy change-are essential for fostering greater social inclusion and equity for women.

Required solutions The social isolation of women requires a multi-faceted approach that tackles both individual and systemic barriers. Effective solutions should promote

women's social engagement, economic empowerment, and mental well-being while addressing cultural and societal norms that perpetuate isolation. The key strategies include: Empowering Women Economically: Employment Opportunities: Create and promote equal employment opportunities for women, including flexible working arrangements to balance work and family responsibilities.Access to Education: Ensure women have access to quality education, vocational training, and skill-building programs to enhance their independence.Financial Independence: Provide microfinance programs, loans, and resources to support women's entrepreneurship.b. Building Social Networks: Community-Based Programs: Develop local women's groups, clubs, and support networks focused on shared interests or activities.Technology and Online Platforms: Promote access to digital tools and online communities to connect women who may be physically isolated due to caregiving or geographic limitations.c.Addressing Cultural and Societal Norms: Challenging Stereotypes: Conduct campaigns to debunk traditional gender roles and emphasize the importance of women's participation in all areas of life.Engaging Men and Boys: Promote gender equality education for men and boys to support shared responsibilities at home and in society.Cultural Inclusivity: Work with community leaders to redefine cultur-

al norms that limit women's mobility and opportunities.d. Enhancing Mental Health Support: Counselling Services: Offer accessible mental health support to help women cope with loneliness and isolation.Peer Support Groups: Establish safe spaces for women to share experiences and seek mutual support.Raising Awareness: Educate communities about the psychological impact of social isolation and the importance of emotional well-being.e. Creating Supportive Policies: Family-Friendly Policies: Advocate for workplace policies that support caregivers, such as paid maternity leave, childcare facilities, and flexible hours.Access to Public Spaces: Design public spaces and transportation systems that are safe and welcoming for women, encouraging greater participation in public life.f. Leveraging Technology: Digital Literacy: Provide training in digital skills to help women access online resources, remote work, and virtual communities.Online Mental Health Services: Expand telehealth services to provide remote psychological support.By fostering inclusion and addressing the root causes of social isolation, society can empower women to thrive socially, emotionally, and economically.

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The Inter-Relation between Different Religions in India

A Powerful Legacy of Unity, Wisdom, and Shared Humanity

■ MAHADEEP SINGH JAMWAL

India, a land of unparalleled spiritual diversity, is not merely a mosaic of different religions but a testament to the profound strength of interfaith harmony and mutual respect. The country's religious tapestry is a vibrant reflection of its rich philosophical, historical, and cultural heritage. In this vast land, where Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, Jainism, and Buddhism coexist, the inter-relation between these religions is far from being a matter of mere tolerance; it is a powerful, living force that has shaped the soul of the nation. The spiritual interactions across religious lines in India are inspiring examples of collective wisdom, shared humanity, and the universal pursuit of truth. India's religious landscape is grounded in the timeless truth that all paths, though different, lead to the same ultimate reality. As Mahatma Gandhi profoundly articulated, "I believe in the fundamental truth of all great religions of the world. I believe that they are all but different paths to the same God." This vision of unity transcends religious boundaries, affirming that at the core of all faiths lies a shared commitment to truth, love, and compassion.

The Bhagavad Gita, religious text of Hindus, in essence, serves as a bridge between religions, focusing on universal truths that transcend religious levels and promote spiritual unity. The Qur'an, with its teachings of mercy, justice, and brotherhood, advocates for peaceful coexistence. In 'Surah Al-Hujurat' (49:13), it says: "O mankind, indeed we have created you from male and female and made

you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you." This verse highlights the unity of humanity, transcending superficial differences in race, ethnicity, or religion. Similarly, the Bible emphasizes love for one's neighbor, a sentiment echoed in every religion's call for empathy and understanding. Matthew 22:37-39 states: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with your entire mind. You shall love your neighbor as yourself." This central teaching of Christianity reflects the idea that love and compassion lie at the heart of all religions. Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, declared: "There is neither Hindu nor Muslim," reinforcing the idea that religious identity is secondary to the shared values of humanity. In the Guru Granth Sahib, the central scripture of Sikhism, it is written: "There is no Hindu, there is no Muslim. All are children of the One God." This teaching emphasizes the unity of all people, regardless of their religious affiliation.

The relationship between India's diverse religions is not just a historical accident; it is the result of centuries of intellectual exchange, cultural integration, and mutual respect. From the ancient days of Buddhism and Hinduism, which share philosophical roots, to the synthesis of Islamic and Hindu traditions under the Mughal Empire, India has been a cradle of interfaith dialogue. Akbar the Great's philosophy of 'Sulh-e-Kul' (Peace with All) created a space for cooperation

between Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, and Jains. The Qur'an (5:48) encourages such peaceful coexistence: "To you be your religion, and to me my religion." One of the most profound ways in which India's religions have interrelated is through poetry and devotional music, which have transcended religious divides. Kabir, a mystic poet and saint who rejected the boundaries between Hinduism and Islam, crafted verses like "The mosque is my temple, and the temple is my mosque," reflecting his deep belief in the unity of all spiritual paths. In Sikhism, the Guru Granth Sahib is a spiritual and intellectual bridge between different faiths. The Sikh scriptures contain hymns by Hindu saints like Kabir, Ravidas, and Namdev, showing the syncretism between the two traditions. The Guru Granth Sahib teaches: "The Lord is one, but His names are many." (Guru Granth Sahib, p. 1349). The mystical tradition of Sufism in Islam also shares profound similarities with the Bhakti movement in Hinduism. In his famous poem, Bulleh Shah wrote, "I am neither a Hindu nor a Muslim; I am a servant of God." These words reflect the shared pursuit of truth that transcends the boundaries of religion. India's rich tradition of interfaith dialogue and unity has been championed by several of its influential leaders who, through their words and actions, emphasized the importance of harmony among different religions. Figures such as Mahatma Gandhi, Swami Vivekananda, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, and Jawaharlal Nehru laid the foundation for India's secular and inclusive ethos. However, more recent leaders, including Indira

Gandhi, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Manmohan Singh, Narendra Modi, and Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, have continued to promote and reinforce the ideals of unity, respect, and collective progress in an ever-evolving India. Indira Gandhi, the first female Prime Minister of India, once said, "We must learn to live together as brothers or perish together as fools." Atal Bihari Vajpayee's, famous speech at the Parliament of India in 2003 exemplifies his commitment to national unity: "We may belong to different religions, castes, and creeds, but we are all Indians." Vajpayee's leadership emphasized the importance of shared identity as Indians.

Swami Vivekananda in his speech at the Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893 reflected his philosophy of inclusiveness and the essential unity of all religions, when he said: "We believe not only in universal toleration but we accept all religions as true." The spiritual leader, Dalai Lama in various speeches, interviews, and writings over the years has expressed: "All major religious traditions carry basically the same message: that is love, compassion, and forgiveness... the important thing is they should be part of our daily lives." Rabbi Jonathan Sacks (Judaism) - "Religion is about the way we connect with the world and with each other, not ideas." Desmond Tutu (Christianity) - "Religion is about the beliefs we hold about how we should live our lives and how we should treat one another." Summarizing, I endorse the words of Dalai Lama - "My religion is very simple. My religion is kindness." We should think on these lines!

Lessons from childhood, family and experiences

■ VIJAY GARG

The past shapes our present. The present is past the next moment, to make way for the future. We are left with memories which also teach us invaluable lessons

I was also a mischievous child like any other young boy my age. I was assured of a haven, hiding behind my grandmother, whenever my parents were inclined to scold me. She would then counsel my parents to be more indulgent, simultaneously telling us to be particular about our behaviour.

I recall another memory from childhood. Our return home from school coincided with my mother's siesta. We would tiptoe into the house, careful not to disturb her. One afternoon I was excited enough to wake her to tell her about my outstanding results in the examinations. Still groggy, she hugged and blessed me, before continuing with her sleep. I still cannot forget her spontaneous reaction, even though I had interrupted her much needed rest.

My father was short-tempered in his younger days. He usually rested and slept on Sunday afternoons. We tried to be as quiet as children could be. One day, we might have been noisier than usual, and ended up soundly thrashed by him. Later in the evening, I witnessed a different facet of my father's personality. He gruffly apologized for having hurt me. I learnt an important lesson. There is no shame in accepting your mistake.

I remember the day I met the young girl who became my wife and life partner in the next few months. I also remember I had eyes only for her during the wedding reception. Those were the heady days before we buckled up to the serious business of making a life together. We have been married for 40 years. These have not been easy decades, faced with the harsh realities of life. We never give up, whatever the setbacks. We

work towards the common goal of leading a happy and contented life together. There is respect, and a recognition of the need for space for each to evolve as an individual.

Another nostalgic memory is from a long-ago holiday to Puri. Our guest house was a couple of hundred meters from the seashore. Our daughters were much younger. I was, and continue to be, a protective father, worrying about their safety. That one day, I sat on the veranda, fondly looking at the two children playing on the beach. I was proud of their happiness as they shrieked with joy creating something with sand.

My mother kept a copy of Ramcharitmanas in her prayer corner. I read somewhere that you could find a solution to any problem from the epic. All you had to do was open any page, and the top line would help you find ways to tackle your most pressing issue. I also tried it sometimes. I learnt that I could not always tackle situations through conventional thinking while navigating the complex labyrinths of life. Fair play, guiding the team members, impartiality, giving undivided time to team members however busy you might be, empathy, working for the team, pride in the performance of the team members, and out-of-box thinking, were only a few of the invaluable lessons that my experiences taught me. They have stood me in good stead through the rough and tumble of life.

The words of psychiatrist, Abraham Twerski would resonate with many, "Ruminating about the past will get you nowhere. So go ahead and learn from the past whatever you can, and then put it behind you. Remember, there is nothing you can do to change it, but you can use its lessons to improve your future."

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