FOLLOW RULES

t's indeed a common observation that some adults may not always follow road safety rules. However, this doesn't mean that younger individuals should follow the same path. It's crucial for younger generations to lead by example and prioritize safety, even if it means going against the actions of their elders. Setting a positive example can inspire

Raising awareness about road safety and educating people, especially the youth, about the consequences of reckless behavior is essential. This can be done through school programs, public campaigns, and community initiatives. When people understand the potential risks and consequences, they are more likely to make responsible choices.

Government imposed fines and regulations are in place to encourage safe behavior and deter risky actions on the road. These fines are not meant to burden citizens but to protect lives. By enforcing strict rules, governments aim to reduce accidents and save lives

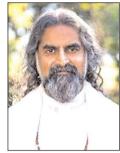
The media, including films and television, can have a significant impact on people's behavior. It's important for the media industry to exercise responsibility in portraying safe behavior and avoiding the glorification of dangerous stunts. Public awareness campaigns can also address the influence of media on people's actions.

Ultimately, road safety is a matter of personal responsibility. Everyone who uses the road should prioritize safety by wearing seat belts, helmets, and following traffic rules. It's crucial to remember that these actions not only protect one's own life but also the lives of others sharing the road.

Communities can play a significant role in promoting road safety. Organizing local events, workshops, and discussions on road safety topics can help create a culture of responsibil-

Supporting organizations and initiatives dedicated to road safety can contribute to the broader effort to reduce accidents. Advocacy for better infrastructure, safer road designs, and improved traffic management can also make a

Raja Yoga-The Royal Path of Annihilation, Dissolution



ver the ages, Masters have guided people to understand themselves and attain Selfrealisation. Self-realisation happens when the body, mind, intellect and ego become silent. It is then that the experience of Self happens. It's almost like graduation - once you graduate, you remain a graduate. To get there, a Guru's hand is helpful because somebody who has

already travelled that path can hold your hand and say that this is the way to go.

For recognising and realising your Self, there are the paths of Bhakti Yoga (devotion path), Karma Yoga (activity path), Jnana Yoga (knowledge path), and Raja Yoga (dissolution path).

These are based on what suits someone's orientation. While all paths are effective, the right path for you is the one that suits you, the one that is effortless and easy for you. It is the one that makes you feel aligned.

For some people, devotion or Bhakti is easy and enjoyable, and they connect in an emotional wav through feeling, singing and chanting. When analysis stops, and feeling and surrendering happen, then the devotee dissolves into the One that is being worshipped.

On the Jnana path, you accumulate knowledge and then assimilate all the knowledge, digest it, and then eliminate whatever is not Consciousness. Then you dissolve. It's slightly more difficult

because the mind enters into analysis and analysis can detach you from the Truth.

Then there is the selfless service path (Karma yoga).

When you serve the beings around you without the feeling of ownership, purification happens.

Knowledge, devotion and service are all gains in some way. A more powerful path of connection is the path of

Annihilation means you lose all your identifications and just merge with the Supreme Unmanifested God, pure consciousness, or brightness. This is called the Golden Path, Raja Yoga, or the Royal Path. There are no forms attached; you connect to your soul.

The fundamental tenet of the Raja Yoga path is that things are happening; there is no 'doing', only 'being'. It is a lifestyle; it's not about activities. The Raja Yoga path is about shedding! Not shedding consciously -the moment you say, "I don't want this," and you move something out, its residue will stay. But if it goes off by itself because you are not using it, it will not come back. It's about awareness.

What are you being aware of? The energy inside you. You're remembering all the time: "I'm not this personality which I'm projecting, but I'm the energy which is activating this projection." This remembrance is enough.

You'll start connecting more and more to the subtle or sookshma aspect inside.

Satisfaction isn't sitting with anything outside. It's what's sitting inside that satisfies.

You come to a state where no thoughts are produced. which means there are no desires, no inclinations, and no tendencies. You become more and more stable within, where you are not chasing anything in life. Whether a position or possession is available or not, whether a relationship is there or not, you are still stable.

And with that level of stability, you start experiencing the real energy that activates all these faculties. That's the time when you come in contact with the soul. Your mind and body are then totally aligned and as one unit; you are fully established inside. You gain the potential to become the Universe.

It helps to be connected to the consciousness of a master, not be confused with the personality of the master. Since the master is already aligned, when you are in the master's consciousness, then automatically you will be aligned. So what do you get when you walk this path with full awareness of being connected?

You become a master - you aren't a slave to life any-

In a nutshell, Raja Yoga is the yoga where you are connecting and dissolving into the Supreme. Unmanifested, the intangible form of pure energy brighter than a million suns. We are not connecting to an object. It is beyond bhakti, jnana, karma, etc. or it is a mixture of everything. Raja means king or an emperor - not bound by anything on earth. It is a state where nothing can bind you, no practice, thing, person, situation, or time. It's a state of being totally free.

Please visit www.mohanji.org for more information.

Understanding Rabies: A deadly threat that can be prevented

■ DR. SHALLI & DR. SANJOLLY GUPTA

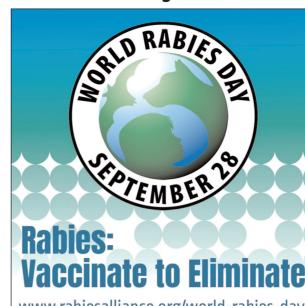
abies, a viral disease that has haunted humanity for centuries, remains a significant public health concern Paround the world. Despite being almost entirely preventable, rabies continues to take lives, particularly in regions where access to vaccination and education is limited.

Every year on September 28th, people around the world observe World Rabies Day to remember Louis Pasteur, a French microbiologist who created the first rabies vaccine. The day was established to boost vaccination campaigns and raise awareness of the illness. It was established by the Global Alliance for Rabies Control (GARC) and the World Health Organization (WHO) has designated this day with the goal of increasing public awareness of the dangers of both human and animal rabies to public health and promoting the fight against this disease and reinforce awareness about its prevention. "All for 1. One Health for All" serves as the theme for this year. The theme highlights the need to implement an intersectoral and multidisciplinary approach with the contribution, intervention, and cooperation of professional teams from the human, animal, and environmental health sectors.

Rabies is caused by the rabies virus, a member of the Lyssavirus genus. It primarily affects mammals, including humans, and is typically transmitted through the saliva of infected animals, most commonly through bites. Once the virus enters the body, it travels along the nervous system toward the brain, where it causes severe inflammation and, ultimately, death. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), rabies still claims tens of thousands of lives each year, with an estimated 59,000 human deaths annually, primarily in developing countries. The vast majority of these deaths are attributed to dog-mediated rabies transmission.

Symptoms

All warm-blooded hosts are affected by the acute encephalitis brought on by the rabies virus, which almost always results in death. Lethargy, fever, vomiting, and anorexia are a few examples of the non-specific early signs of rabies. Within days, symptoms progress to deviant behavior, hostility, and/or self-



www.rabiesalliance.org/world-rabies-day

mutilation, as well as cerebral dysfunction, cranial nerve dysfunction, ataxia, weakness, paralysis, convulsions, and difficulties breathing and swallowing.

Once clinical symptoms appear, rabies is almost universally fatal, underscoring the critical importance of prevention and immediate medical attention for potential exposures.

Transmission and Risk Factors

While dogs are the primary carriers of rabies in many parts of the world, various wild animals, such as bats, raccoons, and foxes, can also transmit the virus. Human infections primarily occur through bites, but in rare cases, exposure to infected saliva through mucous membranes or broken skin can lead to transmission.

Prevention and Control

The most effective way to combat rabies is through prevention. This includes:

Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP): Immediate administration of PEP, which includes a series of rabies vaccinations and rabies immune globulin, can prevent the onset of clinical symptoms if administered promptly after exposure.

Education and Awareness: Raising public awareness about rabies risks, prevention measures, and the importance of seek-

ing medical attention after potential exposures is vital. For Pets: Routine vaccination of pets and domestic animals is crucial. Additionally, vaccination campaigns in wildlife populations can help break the transmission cycle. Vaccination should be done at 3 months of age and thereafter, booster dose should be given every year.

How important is dog vaccination?

Dogs are the main source of human rabies deaths and vaccinating them is essential to controlling the disease.

Global Efforts and Progress

International organizations, including the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), are working towards the goal of zero human deaths from dog-mediated rabies by 2030. Mass vaccination campaigns, improved access to PEP, and community education initiatives have led to significant reductions in rabies cases in some regions.

Conclusion

Rabies remains a global health threat, but with concerted efforts, it is a disease that can be controlled and eventually eradicated. Education, vaccination, and timely medical intervention are the cornerstones of rabies prevention. By continuing to prioritize these strategies and working together with other health professionals and community members, we can achieve the goal of "All for 1, One Health for all" and move closer to a world where rabies is no longer a deadly menace to humans and animals alike.

(The writer Dr. Shalli is Assistant Professor, Community Medicine, AIIMS Vijaypur, Jammu and Dr. Sanjolly Gupta is Ph.D, Veterinary Public Health and Epidemiology).

Empowering Women in India and the Reservation Bill



in words."

woman is half the world. She is also a paragon of beauty as well as a symbol humility. She also stands out as a figure of strength and forbearance. In fact, the richness of her being cannot be ever exhausted

In the grand circle of India's progress, the empowerment of women stands as a pivotal thread, intricately woven with history, culture, and aspirations. While we celebrate significant strides in recent years, it is imperative to recognize the persistent challenges that demand our attention and resolute action. As a dedicated advocate for the cause, I am compelled to shed light on the complexities of women's empowerment in India and chart a path towards a brighter future. The policy of women's empowerment is incorporated into the constitution of India which became effective in the year 1950. Article 14 ensures the right to equality for women; Article 15(1) prohibits gender discrimination; Article 15(3) empowers the state to take affirmative steps in favour of women, to name a few. Women empowerment in India is dependent up to a great

extent on numerous different variables that geographical encompass setting (urban/rural), social status (caste and class), educational status, and age factor. Actions on the women empowerment exist at

the state, local (panchavat), and national

One cannot overstate the importance of education and employment in the journey towards women's empowerment. Education, as the beacon of knowledge, empowers women to harness their potential, equipping them with the tools to navigate a rapidly changing world. It is heartening to see more Indian women embracing education and stepping into the workforce. However, this momentum must be sustained and amplified. The government's commitment to investing in education and employment opportunities for women is non-negotiable. By doing so, we enable women to cultivate their skills and knowledge, and crucially, achieve economic independence. It is a collective responsibility to ensure that every girl in India has access to quality education and the chance to pursue her dreams.

Despite the urban progress, rural women often find themselves on the fringes of empowerment. This injustice must be redressed. Our focus must extend to the heartland, where rural women, frequently the most marginalized, yearn for opportunities. We must empower them through education, create economic avenues, and ensure access to essential services. It's time to bridge the urban-rural divide and create a more inclusive India. Deep-rooted social and cultural norms perpetuate gender inequality. Government must muster the courage to challenge these norms and rewrite the narrative. Education and awareness programs are powerful tools in dismantling the stereotypes that restrict women's progress. Moreover

promoting female role models across various sectors can inspire future generations to reach for the stars, just as the women scientists at ISRO did during the Chandrayaan-3

Pertinently, the scourge of violence against women must be confronted head-on. We need a multi-pronged approach, encompassing prevention, stringent punishment for perpetrators, and unwavering support for victims. Creating a society where women can live free from fear and violence is our collective responsibility.

The Women's Reservation Bill, is a defining moment in India's journey toward gender equality. This legislation, by reserving onethird of seats in the Lok Sabha and state legislative assemblies for women, will amplify their voices in decision-making processes. It is a significant step forward, and we must rally behind it. Women's empowerment is not just a noble aspiration; it is a strategic imperative for India's development. Our progress as a nation hinges on the full participation of women in every sphere of life. The challenges may be formidable, but our resolve must be stronger. India already reserves onethird of seats for women in Panchayati Raj Institutions at the village level and one-third of the offices of the chairperson at all levels of the Panchayati Raj Institutions, and in urban local bodies, respectively.

Globally, women currently occupy only 26.7% of parliamentary seats and 35.5% of local government positions. The reserving of 33% seats for women in India will leapfrog India into one of 64 countries around the

world who have reserved seats for women in their national Parliaments. Typically, achieving a critical mass of 33 per cent representation by women in Parliament is known to yield positive outcomes for women's empowerment. With implementation of such reservations will eventually lead to achieving 50 per cent representation of women in Parliaments across the globe.

My heart is happy to the core to see the remarkable achievements of women in fields ranging from space exploration to politics. They exemplify the indomitable spirit of Indian women. It is my fervent hope that, as a nation, we will stand united to overcome the challenges and usher in an era where every woman can fulfill her potential. Together, we can create a more just and equitable India, where no woman's dreams are limited by the gender she was born with. It is important that formulating and execution of a concrete policy framework, dispersing civic awareness, and education concerning the empowerment of women can usher to accomplishing the desired missions in eradicating the plight of women in the society of India. The realm of women empowerment in India is limited to granting balanced rights to women. Pertinent to mention that country's bold and path breaking step viz a viz Women's Reservation Bill is a clear message to the whole world that the path to gender equality is also attainable.

(The author is former Member of Legislative Council Jammu and Kashmir and can be reached at

Identify the best Scientific Talent

■ VIJAY GARG

he rationalisation of awards providing equal opportunities to people working in every sphere of science will help identify the best scientific talent.

The government of India has decided to rebrand the science awards delivered by various ministries into a single new avatar. As per the new decision, there is a rationalisation of awards. Previously, the Department of Science and Technology presented a total of 207 awards, including four with national significance. Additionally, there were 97 private endowments and 56 internal awards. The Department of Biotechnology granted six fellowships as part of its awards program.

The Department of Atomic Energy distributed 25 performance-based honours and 13 awards in non-core domains. Except for the one internal award given by the Department of Atomic Energy in the name of Homi Jehangir Bhaba, all other internal awards have been stopped. The new avatar 'Rashtriya

Vigyan Puraskar ' shall be limited to 56 prizes under 4 categories, viz., Vigyan Ratna, Vigyan Shri, Vigyan Yuva-Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar, and Vigyan Team. The Vigyan Ratna Award will honour the lifetime accomplishments of scientists, while the Vigyan Shri Award will acknowledge notable contributions to a specific field. The Vigvan Yuva Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Award aims to inspire young scientists who have demonstrated outstanding contributions in their respective fields.

The Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar will be conferred across 13 disciplines, encompassing Physics, Chemistry, Biological Sciences, Mathematics and Computer Science, Earth Science, Medicine, Engineering Sciences, Agricultural Science, Environmental Science, Technology and Innovation, Atomic Energy, Space Science and Technology, among others. The Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar is open to every Indian citizen and also to people of Indian origin working in other countries.

However, there is a limit to the number of people of Indian origin to be considered for these awards. Out of the total number of 3 awards in the Vigyan Ratna, a maximum of only 1 can be considered from people of Indian origin, while in Vigyan Sri and Vigyan Yuva-Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar it is 3 out of 25, while the Vigyan Team award is exclusively for people working in India. Similarly

Vigyan Yuva-Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar (VY-SSB) there is no upper age limit for applying. In VY-SSB the upper age limit is fixed at 45.

In the earlier version of the award that has been followed for many years only people working in government sectors were considered. The Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar is open to all researchers, irrespective of the organization. Even people working outside the gamut of any organization can also apply for these awards. This will help thousands of outstanding researchers working under various NGOs in the country to showcase their scientific talents

A panel headed by the Principal Scientific Adviser will be responsible for choosing the recipients. The Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar Committee will comprise secretaries from all six science departments, four presidents chosen from science and engineering academies, and six eminent scientists and technologists representing various realms of science. Each vear, nominations for these awards will be open from January 14 to February 28, coinciding with National Science Day. One landmark decision in the new award is the clause for selfnominations, which was not possible in the earlier version. Often the malpractice and unethical practices happening in science are because of this nomination culture. The rationalisation of awards providing equal opportunities to people working in every sphere of science will help identify the best scientific talent from the country.

(The writer is Retired Principal PES-1 Educational columnist, Malout Punjab).

YOUR COLUMN **BJP** must do away with Karnataka type experiment

The BJP must not think of the Karnataka type of experiment in the Assembly elections due to be held in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhatisgarh, Telangana and Mizoram. BJP suffered jolt in Karnataka due to freebies announced by the Congress, BJP ushering in new faces to contest the elections without considering the win ability of the candidates, shifting of loyalty by the Lingayat communities from BJP to Congress since main Lingayat leaders like B.S. Yediyurappa and Jagadish Shettar were sidelined, meek submission to the propaganda unleashed by Congress concerning "40 per cent commission" charge against former minister K.S. Eshwarappa and a "Lakshman Rekha" drawn by party itself not to allow the candidates crossing the age of 75 years to contest. Leaders in verge of attaining 75 years naturally feel that they have no future in the party. As such the thought of crossing over to a party where there is no age bar crosses the mind. With this, leaders and their followers start flocking to a party where no 'retirement age' has been announced. Yediyurappa could not thrive by forming his own party called Karnataka Janata Party. Jagadish Shettar has been dumped because he lost the Assembly election and Lakshman Saudi is in no better position than Shettar in terms of the position given to him even though he won the election. Congress knows that Shettar and Saudi are spent forces and their utility to the party is minimal. Politicians in the evening of their political career are like aged patients not effectively responding to the medicine in times of illness. Loss of power and position to the deserted leaders in the new party is not the gain of the old party. The damage has been suffered and it cannot be undone. BJP needs to learn lesson from its failed experiment in Karnataka. At least, BJP must do its best to retain Madhya Pradesh and bag Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh. Mizoram National Front (MNF) in Mizoram, Congress in Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh and BRS in Telangana are the ruling parties. Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan are vulnerable for BJP. BJP and Congress are locked in straight fights in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh. BRS has its hegemony in Telangana. In Mizoram and Telangana, BJP must strive hard to improve its seats tally and try to make large inroads in terms of seats and votes tally. Any attempt to suddenly change the face of BJP in the election-bound states would boomerang like it happened in Karnataka.

K.V. Seetharamaiah

Adieu Lord Ganesha

The festival of Ganesh Chaturthi is celebrated on a large scale in several parts of India. The history of the Sarvajanik

Ganesh Chaturthi in Maharashtra is centuries old. It was started by the late Lokmanya Tilak.

According to Hindus, Ganesha is the remover of obstacles and all the problems in one's life, as well as the creator of happiness in the life of people. People in India worship Ganesha before starting any new work. He is the eldest son of Shiva and Parvati and is one of the five major Hindu deities. With his pot belly and elephant head, he is the god who removes all obstacles in the paths of those struggling to achieve both spiritual and worldly success. Almost every Hindu home has an image of Lord Ganesha over the doorway, and he is worshipped at the beginning of every important undertaking, whether it is the building of a new house,

As per belief, Ganesha is also known as Vighnaharta or the one who removes all obstacles. He holds great significance in Hinduism where almost all rituals begin with his worship. Celebrations for this festival begin months in advance with the preparation of idols of Lord Ganesha.

the beginning of a marriage, or the opening of a new

On the 10th and last day of the festival, the idol is immersed in a nearby river or pond with full devotion, and this ceremony is called 'Ganesh Visarjan'. People chant "Ganapati Bappa Morya, Pudhchya Varshi Lavkar ya", which means "Goodbye Lord Ganesha, please come back next year.'

Jubel D'Cruz