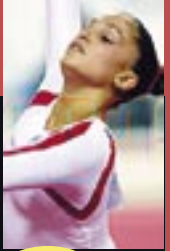
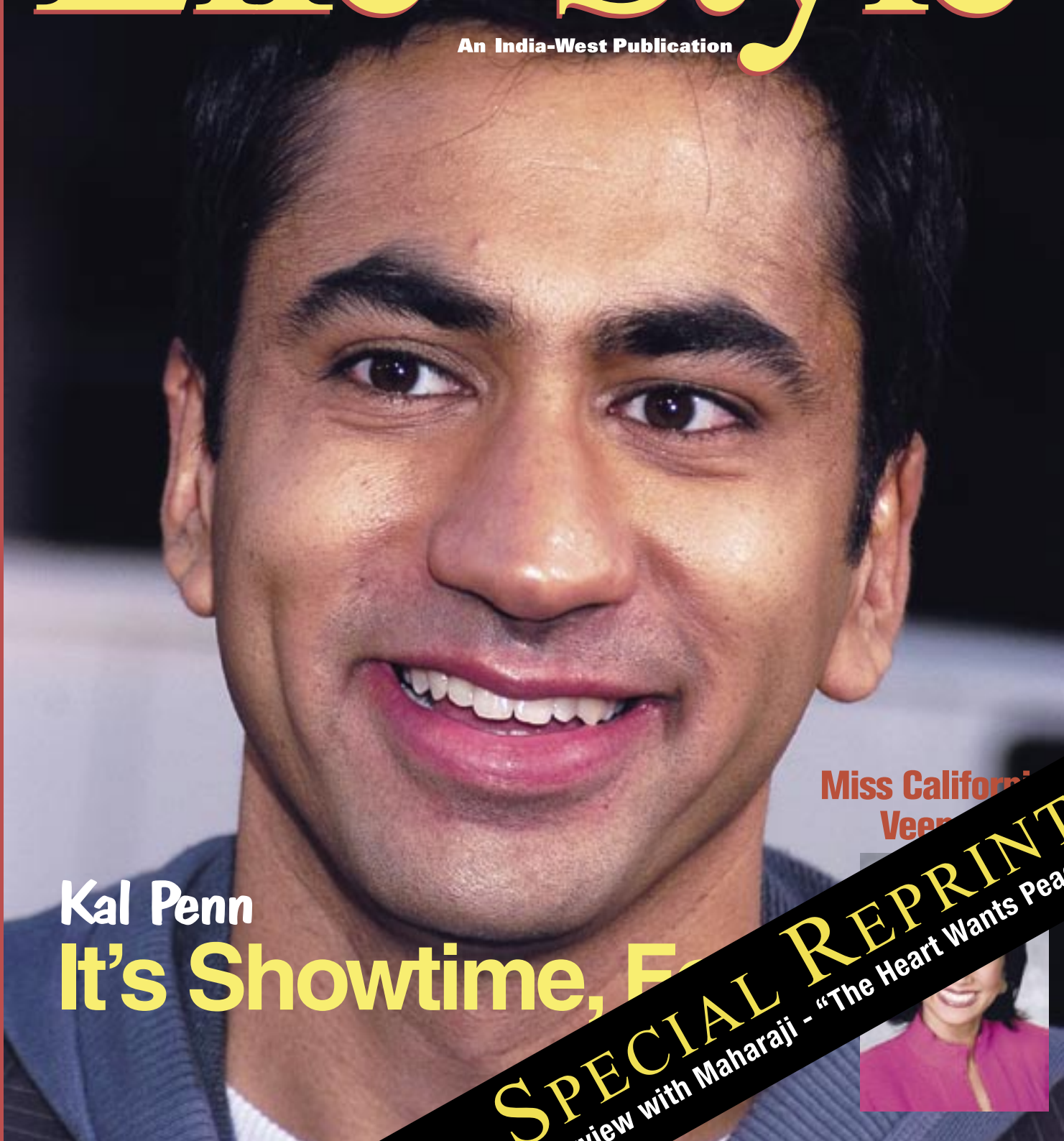


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SPECIAL REPRINT
Interview with Maharaji - "The Heart Wants Peace"



THE HEART



*Left to right:
During a recent tour in
India; Maharaji at
Harvard University's
Sanders Theatre;
During a recent tour
in India; Maharaji at
the United Nations
Conference Centre,
Bangkok, Thailand.*

We live in a world where people are constantly seeking something—a better job, a new car, or a larger house. It is usually something material. When we get it, we wonder if it is what we were really seeking. Few of us get true satisfaction from all the material things we strive for. Others look for spiritual calmness through the doors of religion, ancient scriptures and the teachings of ancient gurus. For all those seekers who never seem to find the one ultimate thing in life, Maharaji presents a simple and profound message: What we are seeking is peace, and peace lies within us. As human beings, we have within us powerful tools to be able to find that inner peace.

“What you're looking for, first of all, is inside of you,” says Maharaji. “What you have to get in touch with is your thirst. And there is a way to be able to reach that place inside of you which can bring you peace.”

Maharaji was born in Northern India and grew up in Dehra Dun, where he learned English. At a very early age, he started to listen to his father—a respected teacher—speak at public gatherings about Self-Knowledge.

Sometimes while attending his father's speeches, he would be given the opportunity to speak. “The message for me was very, very simple. It was not a complicated message.

WANTS PEACE



“What you’re looking for, first of all, is inside of you. And there is a way to be able to reach that place inside of you which can bring you peace.”

“I have been given a gift and an opportunity,” Maharaji says. “My father made many things possible for me—not only public speaking, but he also gave me the means to be able to feel the peace inside of me. That’s how it all began.”

His father passed away when Maharaji was only eight, but by then he already had a following. At thirteen, he was invited to speak in England, and later he travelled throughout Europe and the U.S.

“I was actually responding to an invitation that had been sent by some people who had come to India from the West. They had received the gift of Knowledge and were very interested in having me come to London,” he recalls. “It was my summer vacation, so I decided, ‘Yes, I’ll go and see what happens.’”

ANIL DAYA, MD, *Internal Medicine Physician and Travel Medicine specialist in Los Angeles.*

When I first listened to Maharaji, to my amazement, my questions were answered without my even asking them. He has helped me find contentment within me and see a simple beauty within each person. I see that everyone wants to find happiness in their life. These understandings have greatly affected my work as a physician. I truly respect my patients and their best interests. I make an effort to treat the root of a patient’s problem as well as the symptoms with the best available treatments. Maharaji inspires me to enjoy the gift of life to the fullest.

He realised that there was a lot of interest in his teachings in England, Australia and the U.S. He found the U.S. to be convenient in terms of travelling to different places. “There were many places where people invited me to speak, and there was a lot of enthusiasm. It seemed the place to be. So this is where I ended up.”

Since then, Maharaji has brought his message to more than 50 countries and has spoken to millions of people. His message has been translated into more than 70 languages. Through the years, his basic message has



*Harvard University,
Sanders Theatre*

and say, 'Eat this and it will fill your hunger,' and so you eat it. But has it fulfilled your hunger?" he questions. "The other person cannot make that judgment. You are the one who has to make that judgment. For one person, it might be a small piece of bread that fills them up. For another, it might have to be the entire loaf of bread. This judgment has to be made by each individual—not by society, not by a book, and not by a group of people.

stayed the same: What you're looking for is inside of you. Whatever you call it—whether you call it peace, love or enlightenment—it lies within you.

"For a lot of people that's a very nice statement to make," he says, "but then everything stops. What I am offering is not only that statement, but a practical means to be able to go inside and feel that."

Some describe his message as a solution for peace, but Maharaji speaks of peace in the same simple and straightforward way that he delivers the rest of his message.

"There are a lot of definitions of peace out there," he says. "A lot of people look at symptoms and see peace as the way to resolve them. It's a bit like having a stone in your shoe and you are feeling the pain. A lot of people think, 'All you really need to do is take an aspirin. If you take an aspirin, the pain will go away.' To me, it is much more fundamental than that. Take off your shoe. Get rid of the stone, and you won't need to take the aspirin.

"A lot of people are chasing the symptoms in this world. A lot of people are saying, 'The end of war is peace.' Or, 'If everybody lives in harmony, there will be peace.' But there is a reason for the lack of peace. There is a war going on inside. It doesn't matter what kind of facade you try to put up on the outside; if there is a war raging inside, sooner or later it is going to be reflected on the outside."

He adds that each individual needs to give himself or herself a definition of peace. "You need to understand in your own heart, in your own being, what that peace is," he says. "Somebody may come to you

Mou Roy, PhD, a scientist working on the exploration of Saturn for NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in California.

I knew of Maharaji from my parents and trusted him quite naturally. As I grew older, I wanted to discover the experience of peace within I had heard him speak of. His teachings have inspired me and helped me discover an inner strength that guides me in whatever I do. He has shown me a place within that I can turn to—a place of solace and calm. This has made a practical difference for me. I trust myself. This is reflected in my professional and personal life. I know that there is a reservoir of peace within me that I can turn to when I need to.

To me, this is standing on your own feet. It is really taking responsibility in your life for your own peace, for your own understanding. In the truest sense, if the word 'enlightenment' could ever be applicable, then enlightenment would be just that: to stand on your own feet, not just accept someone else's definition. That is not enlightenment."

The path to Knowledge—or the know-how to be able to go within—is through four techniques, Maharaji says.

"It is a practical way of taking the focus from the outside to the inside," he explains. "Then it's up to the individual to take a little time to practise it every day. You don't have to be an athlete to do it. It's not like the physical yoga. This is a very different thing. And it's very simple to do."

“You need to understand in your own heart Somebody comes along to you and says, ‘Eat this and this will fill your hunger,’ and you eat it. But has it fulfilled your hunger?”

But before anyone can seek this Knowledge, they need to feel a thirst for it.

“A person who finds that thirst inside of them, understands that thirst and addresses that thirst can walk purposefully to the well, pull the water out and enjoy every drop of it—enjoy the process of quenching the thirst,” he



says. “That, to me, is the real process. Not just saying, ‘Tell me when my thirst is quenched,’ or, ‘Now that I have a glass of water in my hand, obviously my thirst must be quenched.’”

Maharaji’s students speak highly of the impact he has had on their lives.

Anil Daya, an Internal Medicine Physician in Los Angeles, says that Maharaji helped him to see the ways in which people are similar. “Instead of focusing on their differences, I see that there is a simple beauty within each person. I see that everyone wants to feel happiness in their life, and that everyone responds to simple kindness and being cared for.”

“He has helped me to find a feeling of inner strength that guides me and helps me every day of my life in whatever I

Above: Maharaji addresses more than 130,000 people at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, New Delhi. Right: Maharaji delivers the keynote address at the First International Conference on Peace at Salamanca University, Spain.

KAMLESH PATEL, Health Care Practice Manager with Boots The Chemists, a leading UK retailer.

I first became interested in Maharaji when I realised that all the material things that I had gained in pursuit of happiness only bought me temporary happiness. Through his guidance, I learned how to find a happiness within that would always be there for me. The inner strength I have found through his teachings has allowed me to deal successfully with the ever-changing challenges in my life. The strength I have found within me has enabled me to meet life’s challenges from the truest part of me as a human being.

do,” says Mou Roy, a scientist who works on the Cassini Project, run by NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory. “Life has had its ups and downs, but I have found that there is always a place within me that I can turn to—a place of solace and calm.”

“The strength I have found within me has enabled me to meet life’s challenges from the truest part of me as a human being,” says Kamlesh Patel, a Health Care Practice Manager for Boots, based in the UK.

At Duke University Medical Centre, Mimi Sengupta Biswas, an Associate in Medicine, says: “More than any professor could, Maharaji and his teachings continue to guide me through stressful as well as happy times, both personal and professional, allowing me to keep my focus on what is important in my life.”

Understanding the meaning of inner peace and the realisation of Knowledge transcends all religions. Maharaji says that no matter what religion people follow they can still have peace in their lives.





Maharaji is welcomed at the Conference Hall of the Chamber of Deputies of the Italian Parliament by Emilio Colombo, ex-President of the European Parliament and ex-Prime Minister of Italy.

“I don’t really want to change people’s culture... but that doesn’t mean they should be deprived of the possibility of feeling peace, because peace transcends cultures.”

message—not a culture—to people.

“I don’t really want to change people’s culture,” he says. “Whoever they are, whatever their life-styles may be, that is the

way it’s going to be. But that doesn’t mean they should be deprived of the possibility of feeling peace, because peace transcends cultures.”

Maharaji says that his work and projects around the world are supported by people who appreciate what he has given them. “No one is asked for money, but individuals who want to participate in the different projects that may be happening help however they can to make them possible.”

KAMRAN MALIK, Head of Business Risk Solutions for Royal Mail, UK.

Listening to Maharaji, I have learned that every human being has untapped potential that is not a function of their role or rank. I have learned from him not to prejudice people and to see the best in everyone. One of the important lessons I have learned from him is the value of making the best use of my time and setting the right priorities for my life.

“It is distinctly something that rides way above all of that,” he says. “There are people of completely different religions who have received the gift of Knowledge from me, and they are enjoying their lives very much.”

Unlike Indian spiritual teachers who carry in their message roots of Indian culture, Maharaji has dropped references to Indian scriptures, traditions and practices in his teachings. He says he wants to take his

A free clinic sponsored by The Prem Rawat Foundation and Raj Vidya Kender in Mehrauli, India.



Recently he has started The Prem Rawat Foundation, a charitable organisation that operates in parallel with his work. The Foundation goes beyond helping to spread his message of finding inner peace. It endeavours to bring comfort to people in need. The Foundation has donated food to refugees in war-torn Ivory Coast and is holding free eye clinics in Northern India.

“For a long time I had been helping people on the inside, and I feel that now it is possible to help people on the outside as well,” he says of his foundation. “Certainly the purpose of the Foundation isn’t to try to fulfil those needs and necessities that governments should be meeting. It is to fulfil those needs that are just possibly being completely overlooked.”

MIMI SEMGUPTA BISWAS, MD, *Duke University Medical Centre, North Carolina.*

Maharaji’s guidance gives me stability and puts my life in perspective. He has opened my eyes to the preciousness of human life. Now I feel compelled to help people—helping them stay healthy so they can enjoy their lives. His inspiration has guided me through stressful as well as happy times, both personal and professional, helping me keep my focus on what is important in life. As a cardiologist, I have studied the intricacies of the heart, inside and out. The heart Maharaji speaks of may not be outwardly tangible, but it is at the core of every being.

Recently Maharaji made one of his many trips to India. His public appearances took him to several cities, including Kanpur and Varanasi. In Bhagalpur, more than 275,000 people came to seek his inspiration and guidance. Each time, the audiences were huge, but as always, he did little promotion. Most people attend his meetings because they hear about his teachings through word of mouth.

“Regarding posters and everything else,” he says, referring to various forms of promotions that he possibly could do to attract large crowds, “I don’t want to display my face all over the place. This is not a popularity contest for me. I’m a very private person. A lot of people try to push themselves. I’m trying to push a message, because to me the message is what’s important, and that’s what is going to help people.”

India will always remain a very special place for him, since he was born and raised there.



“By the same token, my resolution has always been to take this message globally, because I don’t believe in borders,” he says. “I fly a lot. I look down at the land, and I know that over here is one country and over there is another, but land mass is land mass. It is people who have created the borders. To me, everyone has the potential to feel peace in their life. I want them to make this potential a reality.”

He sees India on a two-tiered level: the interior where it often seems that nothing has changed, and the metropolitan cities that are filled with the buzz of modernity. But he often mentions at his events in India that he does not want people to lose their Indian heart.

“Personally, I am a technology fan, and I use technology quite a bit,” he says. “You can be in a highly technical society and, at the same time, have the heart of a child, have a simple beauty in your life, and let that beauty radiate and emanate. The heart wants peace and the two can certainly co-exist.”

“I think India has the maturity to make that happen,” he adds. “India has the foundation to make that happen. It has a culture that likes beauty and peace. That is superb. That’s just wonderful.”

Aseem Chhabra is a freelance writer living in New York City.

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