



Science Reporter

EDITOR
HASAN JAWAID KHAN

LAYOUT & DESIGN
NEERU SHARMA
ABHINAV RAJ

PRODUCTION
PANKAJ GUPTA
ASHWANI KUMAR BRAHMI

SALES & MARKETING
LOKESH KUMAR CHOPRA



COVER DESIGN
NEERU SHARMA



THINK CRITICALLY

THINK LOGICALLY

REASONING & LOGIC MAKE YOU HUMAN

In Robert Browning's enchanting and tragic story "The Pied Piper of Hamelin", the pied piper blows his magical pipe and leads thousands of rats to their death to rid the inhabitants of the deadly infestation. Denied the promised payment, he blows his magical pipe once again to lure away the town's children, never to be seen again.

Even today the world abounds in pied pipers. Only that they are not in it for any good but out to dress up their false egos, take revenge on the world for imagined hurts, driven by a convoluted vested interest only they understand better, or simply power-hungry. These pied pipers attract and trap gullible and innocent people. Displaying an almost charismatic form of leadership they create revolutionary imageries and instil utopian ideas into the minds of their followers who then become blinded by the visions of the future not even bothering about their lives or of their near and dear ones.

This is what happened in the recent carnage witnessed in Mathura where 28 followers of an absurd ideology lost their lives battling the police. And this is what happens around the world as people become committed followers of a cult or a fake baba or a terrorist organisation. What is it that draws able bodied and thinking people into the arms of such forces?

Well, for one, credit must go to the recruiters or fake babas who with their communication skills or even sleight-of-hand practices passed off as supernatural miracles are able to influence the minds of people beset with perceived social inadequacies, identity crisis, problems or diseases. Such people tend to find solace under the wings of such imposters or a group identity and even security and respect in their communions.

And once they step into such groups, they fall prey to a well-oiled mechanism that calls upon them to suspend reasoning and questioning and go in for blind and unquestioning acceptance of whatever is handed to them. The loss of critical thinking is the first step into the swamp from which very few are likely to come out. Emotions like fear, guilt and pride are also deliberately induced with promises of handsome rewards – in this world or in the afterlife.

Says John G. Clark, Professor of Psychiatry at the Harvard University Medical School, "Cult groups have developed basically similar and quite compelling conversion techniques for exploiting the vulnerabilities of potential converts." And Margaret T. Singer, Professor of Psychology at the University of California at Berkeley, says, "The techniques of many cults fall under the general rubric of brainwashing. Consciously and manipulatively cult leaders and their trainers exert a systematic social influence that can produce great behavioral changes."

Independent thinking, logic and questioning are stellar traits that humans are bestowed with. Suspend or suppress these traits and one is more likely to fall prey to charlatans who are only out to make a fast buck or build an empire of automatons.

Hasan Jawaid Khan

Printed and published by Hasan Jawaid Khan on behalf of the National Institute of Science Communication And Information Resources (NISCAIR), CSIR, Dr K S Krishnan Marg, New Delhi-110 012 and printed at International Print-O-Pac Limited, Phase-II Extension, Noida - 201205, U.P., India
Science Reporter is published monthly by the National Institute of Science Communication And Information Resources (NISCAIR), CSIR, Dr K S Krishnan Marg, New Delhi-110 012. NISCAIR assumes no responsibility for statements and opinions advanced by the authors or for any claims made in the advertisements published in *Science Reporter*.

For Editorial Queries: Ph.: 91-011-25848702; Email: sr@niscair.res.in; Fax: 91-011-25847062

For Sales & Subscription Related Queries: Ph.: 91-011-25841647, 25846301 Extn. 286; Email: lkc@niscair.res.in

For Advertisement Related Queries: Ph.: 91-011-25843359; Email: sales@niscair.res.in; Website: <http://www.niscair.res.in>

Subscription: Inland: 1 yr: Rs 300/-; 2 yrs: Rs 570/-; 3 yrs: Rs 810/- Foreign: 1 yr (Air Mail): US \$ 90 (Annual)

© National Institute of Science Communication And Information Resources (NISCAIR)