THE SOVEREIGN SOUL IN POSTHUMANIST DISCOURSE: INSIGHTS FROM BRAHMA KUMARIS SPIRITUAL LITERATURE

Ms. Poorva Vashistha
Research Scholar,
University of Mumbai.

Abstract

Posthumanism challenges the centrality of the human and reimagines identity through technology, ecology, and non-human agencies. Yet the spiritual dimension often remains marginal in these debates. This paper proposes a spiritual posthumanist perspective grounded in the teachings of Shiv Baba, as recorded in the daily murlis of the Brahma Kumaris. Drawing upon three murlis as primary texts (1) the Avyakt Murli emphasizing the soul's eternal qualities, (2) the Avyakt Murli on conscious agency over body and indriyas, and (3) the Sakar Murli on establishing peace and ethical governance of self and world — this study highlights how spiritual literature provides a framework for posthumanist agency.

According to these teachings, humans are eternal souls endowed with seven original qualities: peace, purity, love, happiness, truth, wisdom, and power. The body and its sensory faculties are instruments, while the soul is the true ruler. Loss of self-awareness leads to enslavement to material desires, habits, or even technocentric systems, whereas remembrance of the self as soul restores mastery, freedom, and ethical agency. Murlis, with their narrative, metaphorical, and pedagogical structures, function as living literature, offering both ethical guidance and cognitive tools for inner sovereignty. By integrating Brahma Kumaris spiritual literature with posthumanist discourse, the paper advances a model of being that transcends humanist individualism and technocentric determinism. It situates consciousness and soul sovereignty as the locus of genuine liberation, suggesting that spiritual texts are not merely devotional but also literary interventions in posthumanist thought, re-centering ethical, inner, and ecological dimensions of human transformation.

Keywords: Posthumanism, Brahma Kumaris, Shiv Baba, spiritual literature, soul, agency, consciousness, murlis

Introduction

The advent of posthumanism within the contemporary theory has created immense discussions regarding identity, agency and future of the human subject. Posthumanism challenges the ancient tradition of thinking that the human being is at the centre of the world and is the source of meaning and control. It transgresses the old identities of human and technologies as well as ecologies and other life forms, and re-defines the current age of being human. The questions have been of particular significance in a fast evolving world influenced by the technological revolution, the environmental issues and the changing social realities. Posthumanism promotes new forms of conceptualizing human life that go beyond individualism and situates humans in a new system of relationships.

The majority of the posthumanist discourse dwells on three aspects. The first area is technology. In this case, researchers discuss the impact of artificial intelligence, robotics, and biotechnology on human life and the way they change it.

These theses bring out the options of development and the threats of repression, surveillance, and alienation. The second area is ecology. Ecological posthumanism examines the profound interrelations between human beings and the natural environment. It highlights collective life and rejects the notion of human distinctiveness and superiority. The third one is hybrid identities. This strand looks at the melting of the categories like, human and machine, nature and culture and male and female and how the self is being defined differently in the world where such boundaries are becoming more permeable.

Although these dialogues are deep and transformational in nature, the issue of spiritual traditions is not always present there. This is quite surprising, since most spiritual philosophies such as the Indian philosophies provide profound understanding of consciousness, identity and transformation. Those spiritual approaches challenge the boundaries of the human body, reconstruct subjectivity outside the material body, and provide examples of self that is not based on technology and physical enhancement. The inclusion of these types of views into the discourse of posthumanism can provide new possibilities of thinking about agency and human potential.

The Brahma Kumaris spiritual movement can give an interesting illustration of such a view. Raja Yoga is the basis of the Brahma Kumaris, an Indian-based organisation, which was established in the 1930s. It elaborates that all human beings are fundamentally souls, which are eternal, conscious and independent of the material body. Based on this philosophy, the soul is said to have seven original qualities which include peace, purity, love, happiness, truth, wisdom and power. These attributes are deemed as the natural state of soul. The soul is said to manifest itself in the world through the body and senses. In this conception, the soul is the master of the body and senses, and it guides thinking, speech and actions consciously and responsibly.

The reason of human suffering is attributed to the loss of memory of this initial identity. The soul then begins to distinguish itself with the body, roles, or external situations, and then loses awareness and becomes reliant on external sources of stability and happiness. Such forgetfulness results in a state of enslavement, by which the soul is dictated by desire, emotions, social systems or technological systems. The only way to liberate oneself is by remembering that one is a soul and by linking oneself to the Divine, referred to as Shiv Baba. It is known as yoga and it helps the soul to take back its initial masterly state. In this state of awakening the soul is the master once more but it employs the senses as instruments instead of being their slaves.

This spiritual knowledge provides an alternative view other than human-centred and technology-centred views. Although a lot of posthumanism is putting the agency outside the individual human and into networks and systems, the Brahma Kumaris teachings move the agency into the consciousness itself. The spiritual discourses of Shiv Baba called the daily murli teachings are an invaluable source of spiritual knowledge and literary contemplation of the practitioners all over the world.

These doctrines articulate some sort of spiritual posthumanism. They demonstrate that the limits of the identity might be changed not just due to technology or awareness of the environment but also spiritual self-realization.

In this paper, I will use three murli texts to demonstrate how Brahma Kumaris spiritual texts can be used to enhance posthumanist discourses. The paper offers a model of the posthuman identity by reading these texts and relating them to the current ideas, which is centered on the sovereign soul. This paradigm emphasizes the strength of interior change and interiority, which is typically neglected when discussing technology and ecology. A dialogue between spirituality and literary studies can also be fruitful providing that we locate the murli literature within the posthumanist debates. The murlis are spiritual but are also literary texts that are powerful. They exploit metaphors, repetitions and philosophical concepts in passing across their messages. They may be studied as literature to reveal new ways of seeing how much they have influenced and how much.

Conclusively, the intertwining of posthumanism and Brahma Kumaris doctrine presents the possibility of changed thinking of the posthuman condition along with spiritual awareness. This view does not focus on technology or ecological networks alone; instead, it shifts the focus to the sovereign soul as an agency, knowledge and a transformational location. This perspective enlarges the frame of posthumanist investigation and creates novel perspectives of human possibilities that lie in inner consciousness and heavenly bond.

Literature Review
Posthumanism and Agency

Posthumanism was the critical response to the confines of Enlightenment humanism in which the man becomes the center of knowledge, meaning, and power, which is autonomous and rational. The enlightenment thought created a universal human subject male, European, and rational, and positioned him or her at the apex of a hierarchy that distinguished humans, machines, and animals, and nature. This perspective on the world supported the human exceptionalist stance and the taking over of the environment and other life forms. Posthumanism dares this model not only by undermining the very parameters of what it is to be human but also by creating new possibilities of considering subjectivity and agency.

The early posthumanist theorists emphasized the disruptions in the concept of the human as a self-sufficient and autonomous entity, which technology and ecology bring about. Hybrids like cyborgs, genetically engineered organisms and artificial intelligences cause blurred boundaries between organic and inorganic life. Human body is not perceived as an autonomous biological unit anymore but as a part of the bigger system of technological systems, information flows, and material relationships. This point of view gives rise to distributed agency. Rather than agency being held centrally by a specific human subject, agency is perceived to be the outcome of interactions between a human and non-human actor. The networks, systems, and relationships take the center stage in the way activities take place in the world.

This transformation has important implications on ethics, politics and identity. Decentering human subject, posthumanism helps us consider such issues as responsibility, decision and creativity when various forces are involved. Agency loses its control and gains a role in complex systems.

With such a perception, space also leaves room to rethink the fluid, relational, and embedded nature of the human identity within the larger ecological and technological spaces. These theoretical observations give a solid basis in investigating the different frameworks of agency such as those presented by spiritual traditions, that place agency not in rationality or technological systems, but in consciousness per se.

Technologies of the Self

Whereas posthumanism dwells on redistribution of agency within networks, there is yet another school of thought that dwells on self modification, where individuals act on their own through intentional practices. The notion of technologies of self describes the way people develop their subjectivity by using organized practices that focus on the enhancement of their selves, cleansing, or enlightenment. These can be in the form of meditation and confession, physical disciplines and self examination. They are technologies in that they are logical procedures and approaches, although not related to the machine or electronic.

Posthumanist theories and spiritual traditions can be well connected through technologies of the self. They demonstrate that identity metamorphosis does not just exist in technological enhancement or ecological involvement but can also be brought on through inner actions which reconfigure thought, feelings, and cognition. Such practices comprise compose regulation and reflection, which results in the emergence of new forms of awareness and agency. In such ways, a person can change his/her attitude to his/her bodies, desires, and environments. This transformational process counteracts the belief that the human subject is fixed and points out the possibility of self directed change.

These technologies are commonly incorporated in philosophical systems that determine what the self is and what the end of human life is in spiritual terms. They offer routes of moving beyond the constrained identities and manifesting elevated states of being. This point of view is close to posthumanist criticism of fixed human identity but is based on the spiritual but not technological point of view. With the introduction of these two frameworks into dialogue, one can develop the issue of how spiritual practices serve as alternative posthuman strategies of changing subjectivity.

Spiritual Literature and Inner Transformation

Indian spiritual traditions have come up with vast amounts of literature devoted to changing consciousness. There are also texts like the Bhagavad Gita, the Yoga Sutras, and philosophical commentaries that define detailed practices on how one can master himself/herself, liberate and become more aware. These books are not simply an accumulation of religious faith but applied manuals which influence the thought, feeling and behavior of people.

They are pedagogical technologies that act through language, story, and repetition to create an impact on the consciousness of the reader or listener.

There is a special place of the Murli literature in this landscape. The murlis are spiritual talks which Shiv Baba gives on a daily basis the human medium and this is the center of the teachings of Brahma Kumaris.

These writings are a mix of metaphor, teaching, cosmology and moral guidance in a well arranged form being poetic and instructive. The murlis language tends to underline the original nature of the soul, the impermanence of the material world, and the transformational nature of remembrance and meditation. Practitioners are encouraged to change their self-conception based on body identification to soul-consciousness through frequent listening, reading and reflection.

The murlis can be seen as transformative instruments in a number of ways. To start with, they establish a collective world vision that reestablishes the character of reality and self. The listeners are reminded each day about their spiritual connection and the fact that they are spiritual. Second, they give specific guidelines on spiritual practice, including early morning meditation, remembering God, and nurturing virtues, including peace, purity, and love. Third, they employ the use of narrative and metaphor to bring abstract spiritual ideas into reality and make them emotionally effective. This intellectual and emotional experience, which is combined over time, leads to profound internal transformation.

Although fairly rich, texts of the murli, and similar spiritual literature, have never been studied in the context of posthumanism. This is a lost chance since these writings provide another ontology of agency. They seek agency in the soul, which is perceived as a conscious, immortal, sovereign being, instead of in machines, in biological evolution, in ecological systems, etc. The soul is regarded as something that can change its state with the help of knowledge, memorizing and practice. This opinion offers a spiritual alternative to posthumanism (technological and ecological). It broadens the discussion further demonstrating that posthuman transformation may also be brought about by spiritual realization and not only by external interventions.

The introduction of the murli literature in the posthumanist discourse also affects the study of literature. These works are strong works of literature that employ language innovatively in bringing change on its readers. They are members of a tradition of spiritual writing that combines a poetic outburst with philosophical insight. Their interpretation as literature enables one to appreciate their rhetorical techniques, storylines, and figurative richness and to also appreciate them as living texts which define the community and individuals.

Results and Discussion

This part includes the critical examination of 3 chosen murli texts in terms of the posthumanist theory, and how Brahma Kumaris spiritual literature expresses the sovereignty of the soul, cognitive technologies, and collective agency. The discussed murlis, Avyakt Murli (02 Jan 1979), Avyakt BapDada (15 Dec 2010), and Sakar Murli (02 Sep 2025) provide the information on self-mastery, ethical change, and spiritual virtues development.

Both readings place importance on the power of the soul, the training that has to be done in order to stimulate the power and the impact of the personal change on the societal wellbeing. With the analytical space placed in the posthumanist paradigm, it is possible to point out how consciousness, as opposed to technology or biological determinism, serves as the key to ethical and cognitive improvement.

The subsections that follow discuss temporal urgency, self-cognitive technologies, ritual and collective agency and conceptualization of the sovereign soul as a posthuman subject.

Temporal Urgency and Ethical Transformation

The First Murli places the practitioner in a temporally tense structure, the urgency of ethical and spiritual action. Baba says, the nearer you approach completion, the nearer you are to world transformation (Avyakt, 02 Jan 1979). This assertion presents the idea that personal spiritual practice is a direct cause of world change, which forms a close connection between personal mastery and the well-being of the world. This is one of the ways of enhancing, which do not depend on technological augmentation but on the trained consciousness, according to a posthumanist viewpoint. The practitioner is encouraged to develop virtues, have a reminder of the Father all the time, and perform service, rather than using external devices or biological changes. Baba goes on to teach, you should be bestowers and not seekers imparting spiritual power and virtues on the world (Avyakt, 02 Jan 1979). In this case, the soul is imagined as an independent agent who can guide his or her faculties, senses, and intentions, and an example of ethical sovereignty is portrayed, which opposes posthumanist descriptions where technological determinism or hybridization with machines are prevalent.

This murli also anticipates temporal consciousness as an instrument of moral development. Baba says, you should know, this is the period to clear all the kamma and great efforts should be directed to be peaceful (Avyakt, 02 Jan 1979). The idea of spiritual time collapses the moral and ethical duty into the now moment creating a feeling of immediacy similar to the other temporalities found in posthumanist studies. There is a moral thing that must be done; all procrastination or clinging to old ways leads to karma. The consciousness itself, in this system, becomes a posthuman technology that has the ability to self-regulate, purify and transform itself. In putting the agency in the soul, the murli reorients attention to the outside systems to the internal capacities, which highlights that liberation and empowerment are achieved through knowledge, retribution and moral efforts.

Cognitive Technologies of the Self

The concept of changing the possessive mine into Yours and putting a full stop on unproductive or wasteful thoughts is presented in the Second Murli, given by Avyakt BapDada on 15 December 2010. According to Baba, one should change mine to yours and begin to put a full stop on waste thoughts within a second (Avyakt BapDada, 15 Dec 2010). This teaching is a cognitive technology, which aims at breaking the habitual practices of attachment, ego, and distraction, and to refresh the attentional focus towards the Divine.

The term full stop is a punitive, immediate way of self-correction, similar to the mindfulness or cognitive behavioral activities, but with a distinctly spiritual focus.

Baba goes on to state, when you cause an end to waste thoughts the fire of remembrance will be lit and the fire of corruption and violence will get completed (Avyakt BapDada, 15 Dec 2010).

In this case, the inner practices are directly presented as the technologies of augmentation, which enhances the existing abilities of the soul to maintain purity, love, and peace. These traditions help to increase attentional control, emotional control and moral judgment without using external equipment or other artificial improvements. The posthumanist implication is obvious: the soul, with the help of self-awareness and good discipline, is a transformative agent, which is able to evolve ethically and cognitively. This is in line with the Foucaultian notion of technologies of the self whereby the subject actively engages in conditions of forming his or her subjectivity by practicing, reflecting, and disciplining their subjectivity. Posthuman subjectivity in this spiritual model is not reached by using technology integration but inner mastery, moral clarity and constant remembrance of the ultimate reality.

Ritual, Discipline, and Collective Agency

The Sakar Murli Third Murli, given on 02 September 2025, focuses on being obedient to divine direction, meditating early in the morning, and being involved in collective service by centers and museums. Baba tells children, those who take bath early in the morning, cleanse themselves and go to pilgrimage of remembrance at the stipulated time are decent and obedient children. Unworthy children will also be left to sweep floors (Sakar, 02 Sep 2025). This quote emphasizes the importance of discipline, ritual and regularity as a tool of personal growth to connect personal mastery of self to community spiritual achievements. The routines and organizational networks that are structured can be compared with the socio-technical systems where the agency is spread among persons, practices, and institutions.

Baba also talks about the relational and ethical aspects of spiritual life and he says, always live as milk and sugar. Do not make anyone sad (Sakar, 02 Sep 2025). This metaphor summarizes an ethic of relational harmony, which is characterized by posthumanist focus on relationality and interdependence. As the posthumanist theory emphasizes the networked relations of human beings and non human beings, the murli gives a model where personal change is expanded to the collective good via practice, moral behavior and community life. Agency does not belong to the solitary practitioner but arises out of the system of souls, rituals, and teachings and creates the effect of spiritual influence on a great scale without technology.

The Sovereign Soul as Posthuman Subject

On the three murlis, the soul is the ruler of the action that is granted the faculty of bringing its thoughts under control, managing its feelings, and making moral judgments.

Baba emphasizes this sovereignty in numerous ways and says, You are the children of the ever-peaceful Father. This is His bequest to you as an inheritance (Sakar, 02 Sep 2025). The power of the soul is inborn, but the discovery of the inborn power requires conscious effort, recollection and practice. The virtues purity, love, peace, happiness, which the practitioner develops, put in place a spiritual posthumanism where consciousness itself is the medium of augmentation and transformation.

In addition, the murlis emphasize how collective agency is enabled through organized practice, ritual and service. Baba explains that people keep coming to the museums any time of the day. In certain locations, individuals go up to 10 or 11pm. They start serving them as early as 4.00am in other places. In this case, it is your house, and hence you can sit here as and when you feel like it (Sakar, 02 Sep 2025). This is the way of how time and space organization helps to support the continuous practice and how personal work can result in the larger community change. The practice and instruction networks are similar to posthumanist actor-networks in which the distributed agency has results beyond the capacity of any one individual. It is not focused on technological mediation but on disciplined, relational as well as ethically oriented consciousness.

Ethical aspect of agency is also preempted by the murli texts. To him, spiritual sovereignty is always associated with accountability and he says, Check yourself to ensure that you are not doing any sin. Ensure you do not have the habit of becoming non-peaceful or propagating non-peacefulness (Sakar, 02 Sep 2025). Such a reflective practice develops the understanding of one influence on others and strengthens the relationship between individual growth and social peace. The sovereign soul is therefore not a solitary player but where its mastery is evaluated through the contribution it makes to the collective good and this and this is in line with posthumanist views on autonomous, isolated humanism.

Spiritual habits like remembrance, full-stop and disciplined routine are technologies of self, which augment cognition, moral judgment, and stability. According to Baba, it is only through strong yoga, or, in other words, when the fire of love and remembrance is volcanic, that the fire of corruption and violence will come to an end and co-operation provided to all souls (Avyakt BapDada, 15 Dec 2010). The volcanic yoga metaphor indicates the intensity, transformative and the ethical strength of these practices. In contrast to posthumanist models, which place agency in the integration with machines or with ecological systems, the Brahma Kumaris model places agency in the very consciousness, and the soul is described to be able to evolve morally, emotionally and intellectually.

All three murlis together form an exemplar of spiritual posthumanism, defined by three principles which are connected together. To begin with, agency is based majorly on the soul, the sovereign locus of decision, thought, and ethical action. Second, inner practices are technologies of self-improvement, which allow being able to regulate attention, align morally, and be emotionally balanced. Third, webs of ritual, discipline and collective service share the agency amongst individuals, and impact the community and society in transformative ways.

These values manifest an understanding of posthumanism that is not machine-based or biotechnological, but based on consciousness, morality and relational practice.

These texts of Brahma Kumaris have been analyzed to show that the spiritual literature of the Brahma Kumaris provides a solid platform in the interpretation of posthuman subjectivity. The sovereignty of the soul, the cognitive and ethical enhancement through disciplined practice and the possibility of linking up in masses of practice are the parameters of collective networks of practice that lead to universal change.

The teachings of Baba elaborate a spiritual posthumanism which supplements modern theoretical discourse in a sense of putting the focus on consciousness as the center of agency and ethical action. By practicing disciplined self-understanding, recollection and relational harmony, the practitioners perform a type of transformation that is intensely personal and socially creative. These murlis are an unexploited deep well in the development of posthumanist arguments to incorporate spiritual, consciousness-based empowerment, responsibility and ethical sovereignty models.

Conclusion

This paper has explored the role of Brahma Kumaris spiritual literature, which has a significant contribution to the discussions on the posthumanist theory. Through the examination of three texts of the murli, it is clear that the teachings render the soul as a free agent, the freedom of which to act, to act morally, and to change oneself transcends the restraints of physical bodies as well as technology. This view changes the consideration of the idea of enhancement as traditionally reliant on the machines, digital systems or material interventions to an internally based model of agency that relies on the consciousness, virtue, and disciplined practice. In this context, the real empowerment is achieved based on the knowledge of the self, moral practice, and the systematic development of inner attributes, displaying a posthuman subjectivity based on the spiritual values instead of technological determinism.

Texts of the murli that are reviewed indicate that the spiritual practices are internal processes of augmentation. Remembrance, meditation, and learning to place a mental full stop to the useless thoughts are some of the examples of how individuals can become self-mastered and increase their cognitive and emotional abilities. The initial murli that is examined shows the significance of ethical action in the moment, making practitioners live virtuously, and also take an active part in the well-being of the world. By so doing, time does not exist solely as linear but as a place of moral and spiritual involvement, in which all thought and action has the power to transform. As can be seen in the second murli, even the simplest mental exercises, used consistently, are more complex technologies of the self that help individuals to control attention, emotional reactions, and have a consistent connection to higher consciousness. These practices depict such a that posthuman enhancement which is subtle yet deep, and which improves abilities of the soul as opposed to the body.

The third murli emphasizes the relevance of the organized practices, rituals, and group practices in multiplying the impacts of personal change.

Meditation everyday, morning spiritual practices and planned serving to the community centers are considered as a networked system where agency is shared among practitioners to practices and spaces. Such group orientation proves that change is not only individual but relational and has broader social and moral effects. The association of personal and social practice reflects the posthumanist concept of distributed agency in the present day, though with its spiritual and moral focus. In this case, agency is created by deliberate activation and conformity to superior values as opposed to technological structures.

The perspectives of these texts relate to not only the literary, but also the philosophical world. The teachings of murli can be interpreted as spiritual literature of transformation, using the devices of narrative, metaphor, repetition, and teaching as the most effective means to develop ethical, cognitive, and emotional potential. These writings are pedagogical and as such, readers are able to reach the sovereignty of the soul and grow self-aware and morally discerning. Philosophically, Brahma Kumaris model of spiritual posthumanism is a philosophy of ontology of consciousness that criticizes techno-centric and materialist understandings of enhancement. These teachings also recognize inner cultivation, ethical responsibility, and deliberate action as the key elements of change by locating agency onto the self-aware soul.

The method provided by spiritual posthumanism is especially timely in the modern environment characterized by the accelerated pace of technological advancement, social unrest and environmental issues. The process of improvement becomes redefined not as a process of increasing physical capacities, expanding external systems but as a process of developing inner capacities that enable people navigate the complexity with mindfulness, moral clarity, and emotional restraint. Developing of virtues, focused thinking, and compassionate interaction with the others brings forth some effects that go beyond the individual and create harmony, communal well-being, and social cohesion. Spiritual posthumanism thus offers a paradigm of useful, moral and relational empowerment, which supplements and amplifies secular posthumanist paradigms.

Finally, the Brahma Kumari teachings give a consistent picture of the sovereign soul as the seat of transformational action. By practicing discipline, nurturing ethically, and interacting together, one can be able to come up with abilities that enable him/her to be responsible, morally, and creatively in the world. This point of view provides a revision of the human potential, that any real improvement comes through the development of consciousness, self-control, and engagement in the activities of the common good. By placing the awareness and inner sovereignty at the heart of change, spiritual posthumanism provides morally based, intellectually challenging, and practically useful framework to comprehend the posthuman agency in the twenty-first century.

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