

Purity

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Compassion, the need of our times

News from around the world paints a picture of increasing violence, misery and suffering. More than 65 million people have been forcibly displaced worldwide because of conflict or persecution, which is a record number. There are also 10 million stateless people who are denied a nationality and basic rights.

Besides, in various parts of the world, governments and armed groups are abusing human rights in a multitude of ways, while authorities are viciously cracking down on dissenting voices, and hate speech is rising.

But the suffering caused by all these developments is not generating the response one would expect. The steady stream of reports of unhappy events has dulled the senses of many people, with the result that what used to be shocking earlier is now considered routine as long as it does not directly affect oneself or one's loved ones. Even when something does catch the attention of people and manages to elicit their concern, it is soon brushed aside by their more immediate and important priorities. Someone entangled in their own desires, responsibilities, pressures and problems can hardly spare a thought for others.

This kind of an individual attitude towards those in misery has taken the shape of a global trend towards angrier and more divisive politics, in which 'others' are blamed for problems, and fear and scapegoating are used to offer simplistic and false solutions to complex issues. In fact, in a troubling development, governments are now promising their people security and prosperity in return for a surrender of rights and freedoms.

Behind the apathy, selfishness and cruel disregard for others lies ignorance of the spiritual ties that link all people in this world to form the human family. Before anything else, we are spiritual beings, or souls, and

the children of one father, the Supreme Soul. A person born into poverty or another religion is no less a human being than we are. We all have similar hopes and aspirations, and want to live a peaceful and happy life. But we forget this basic truth and identify each other by labels of gender, nationality, race etc. This fosters feelings of 'us' and 'them', and prevents us from feeling the pain of others and helping them.

But, one might ask, what can an individual do for the millions of people who are in sorrow? Just as the spiritual bonds that connect all of us together are subtle, the service each one of us can render to our less fortunate brothers and sisters is subtle. It does not have to be material or legal assistance, which may be short-lived. Something that all of us, rich or poor, young or old, can do is to have good wishes and compassionate feelings for them. Thoughts and feelings create vibrations, which build a corresponding atmosphere. When a sizable number of people have certain kind of thoughts, the power of their vibrations begins to influence the thinking of others, and thus initiates change.

To someone who is in sorrow, just knowing that somebody knows about their plight and cares for them, is a great solace. It is a subtle but very powerful way of serving others. It costs nothing and even those who are sick and infirm can do it, as it does not require any physical effort. All that is needed is a caring heart and the desire to be of help to one's fellow humans. It is the duty of all of us who are fortunate not to have experienced the afflictions being suffered by a large part of humanity to do all that we can to reduce pain and sorrow in the world. If we are just content to be happy and wilfully ignore what others are going through, we would be failing in our duty as members of the global human family.★

(Purity Features)



Ranchi, Jharkhand: Hon'ble Ram Nath Kovind, President of India, being presented a picture of Incorporeal Shiva by BK Nirmala.



Kathmandu, Nepal: Hon'ble Bidhya Devi Bhandari, President of Nepal, being presented a memento by BK Brij Mohan and BK Ram Singh after the inauguration of the 50th anniversary celebrations of Brahma Kumaris in Nepal.



Bhubaneswar, Odisha: Hon'ble Venkaiah Naidu, Vice President of India, in conversation with BK Leena.

Mr. X the Great

Aruna Ladva, Kuwait

Historically, rulers were often given the title of 'The Great'. Alexander the Great, The Roman Emperor Constantine the Great, or Catherine the Great of Russia are just a few examples. Yet, what was exceptional about these human beings that qualified them to receive this title? Mostly these individuals ruled for a long period of time, or conquered large parts of the world, and sometimes they were seen as kind and benevolent leaders, but not always.

In the modern era we don't seem to award these titles any longer - for example, we don't say 'Queen Elizabeth the Great', or 'Bill Gates the Great'. Could it be that we are looking for a new kind of leadership, or that our measure of greatness is a very different one now?

In today's world, we call many people 'great' in all areas of life. We praise 'great' actors or singers, 'great' speakers and teachers, and we applaud great innovators, scientists and writers. As we become inured to success in the world, our measure of greatness is rapidly changing its meaning. Greatness is no longer a symbol of someone having hierarchical power, especially in this technological age of instant communication, where fame and success is available to many, and in almost any arena.

We are living at a pivotal time when there is a lot of development, innovation, success, and yet that is not matched by an inner sense of satisfaction or contentment. So although great things may be happening to me, or happening out there, it is not always making us feel great as a person, or as a community. We always seem to fall short of something - which keeps us discontent, searching for more and more. And as the global community evolves spiritually, we are realizing that greatness is not all about external success.

Greatness is about mastering our inner world, mastering the self. We are slowly but steadily moving away from the era of being 'ruled over', and heading into a new era of being self-rulers'.

The one who is calm and peaceful is great. The one who can give love in the face

Greatness is not confined to the exalted few. We can all be great in our own way.

of hatred is great. The one who has humility when opposed with insult and arrogance is great. This really does change the meaning of greatness altogether. Because greatness is not about power, stature or conquering the world, but about who we are and how we are able to master ourselves in the face of change.

A big part of becoming great is also about making others great, contrary to the outmoded belief that when I become great, it is I alone who climbs to the peak of name, fame and adoration. Being great is about putting others first, pulling others up with me, being a leader, and not about being a bully or a boss. It's about inspiring and building a community of great people. This takes fortitude and humility.

To be great means to step away from selfishness, to step aside from what I personally desire, and to look to the needs of the whole in order to repair the greater whole. The vision of a great person is broad and far-sighted. It goes beyond looking at the micro details and instead looks at the

bigger picture. It means going beyond judgement and blame, and not putting others down in order to appear better or more impressive.

Neither is greatness confined to the exalted few. We can all be great in our own way. In fact, we are programmed for this kind of greatness. It comes from the heart and soul rather than the head, and once it is achieved, we will be living in a great new world of harmony and peace.

Being great in a world that is currently not so full of greatness or great news is not easy, but it is important that we persevere daily to reach our highest potential. In fact, this is the very time in the world when inner greatness is needed. Our world leaders are no longer the icons we need to look up to. Instead we need to look inside to see our own greatness. We need to look inward and find the power within. When we all become beacons and spread our light, then we will co-create a community, a civilization of greatness. *

About Life

It matters not how long we live, but how. — Bailey

A useless life is an early death. — Goethe

Life is a long lesson in humility. — Barrie

On life - a little gleam of Time between two eternities. — Carlyle

Quality living is determined by an elevated standard of life and not by a high standard of living. — BK Geeta

Once we know what humanity is, we will wholeheartedly devote ourselves to serving it.



Bengaluru, Karnataka: BK Sister Jayanti from London delivering the keynote address in the SPIR-IT Summit of senior leaders in IT and related industries, organised by the IT Wing of Brahma Kumaris at Hotel Chancery Pavilion.



New Delhi: (Pic. Top) A group of interfaith leaders with Hon'ble Ram Nath Kovind, President of India at Rashtrapati Bhawan. Leaders of different faith traditions are seated in the front row. In his speech, the President mentioned that he had attended several programmes organised by the Brahma Kumaris and appreciated its services.
(Pic. Above) BK Brijmohan meeting with the President with other Leaders.

Happy Valley Tea Garden, Munnar, Kerala.

Mr. Wise



Mr. Wise?

Yes.

Stress has afflicted the entire human race?

True. Its causes may vary but it has affected almost everyone.

Isn't stress growing in direct proportion to modern advancement?

I cannot say.

And Mr. Wise?

Be pleased to say.

Stress management has become a big business?

Quite. Medicos, management gurus, and entertainers are all in it and coming up with their respective solutions.

And yet people complain of growing stress, why?

I cannot say.

Lastly...

Come on.

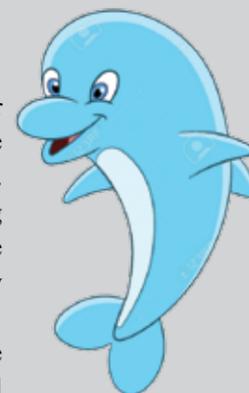
Stress is born in the minds of men?

Quite so. And strengthening of the mind by enhancing inner powers can dilute stress gradually.

And this can be achieved through Rajyoga meditation?

Yes, you are right.

Tailpiece



The famous millionaire John D. Rockefeller had a very strict upbringing. Discipline in the Rockefeller household was severe in the extreme. On one occasion, he was receiving a caning from his mother, during the course of which he managed to convince her that he was not guilty of the offence for which he was being punished.

'Very well', said his mother. 'But we have gone so far that we may as well proceed. It will be credited to your account for next time.'

A merchant took out a fire insurance policy and, the same day, his store was burned to the ground. The insurance company suspected fraud but couldn't prove anything. It had to contend itself with writing the following letter:

"Dear sir, You took out an insurance policy at 10.00 am and our fire did not break out until 3.30pm. Will you kindly explain the delay?"

Tom and Jerry were partners in a profitable painting-contracting business. Unfortunately, they weren't entirely honest because they mixed their paint with thinner. One day, Jerry's conscience started to bother him as they painted a poor widow's house. The next day, Jerry told Tom he just couldn't be dishonest any more. "Don't stop now", Tom begged. "A few more jobs and we can retire."

Jerry refused to change his mind.

"Tom", he said, "I just can't do it. Last night an angel stood by my bed and said, 'Repaint, you thinner.' " (Repent, you sinner).
