

GOOD LIFE

Benevolence: A blessing for the self and others



B.K. BRIJ MOHAN

We all like to be perfect and try to acquire the qualities that will help us to become so. Two of the attributes essential in this regard are purity and benevolence.

Who is truly benevolent? The answer to that question is easy and, at the same time, deep. One who is benevolent and uplifts fellow humans sees the virtues in others. Even when they notice anyone's defects, they have good wishes for the other person and encourage and help them to overcome their weaknesses.

To be benevolent is

to share one's virtues, such as peace, love, and courage, with others. Such caring souls are peaceful, happy, and powerful, and untouched by sorrow.

They are charitable in their thinking, speech and behaviour. They easily relate to others and share their joy with everyone. All who meet them go on their way happier.

Only one who is content can be benevolent, so such souls have no desire to get anything from others. Nor do they expect or wait for others to act first, before helping them. Their actions are not conditioned by what others do or do not do. They never say: "I will change when the other one changes. That one should change a little first."

Those who have such feelings cannot uplift others. Instead of being charitable, they are like businessmen, who



make deals. "When that one does this much, I will do this much", "Why should I always have to give in? How long must I do this?" — big-hearted souls do not think in this manner. Such thinking comes from the influence of some weakness, and it is a form of begging; it indicates lack of power.

Benevolent souls realise that the other one lacks strength, and it is unreasonable to expect anything from them. To get something from others before giving, is not benevolence. Instead, these beneficent souls make the weak powerful with their love, cooperation, and zeal and enthusiasm.

They have mercy on those who speak ill of others, and are kind to even those who insult them.

Even though they can discern the shortcomings of people, their feelings towards them do not change, nor do they gossip about others' faults.

The result of all this is

that everyone is content with such kindly souls — they create hope in the hopeless, and nurture courage and confidence in those rejected by others.

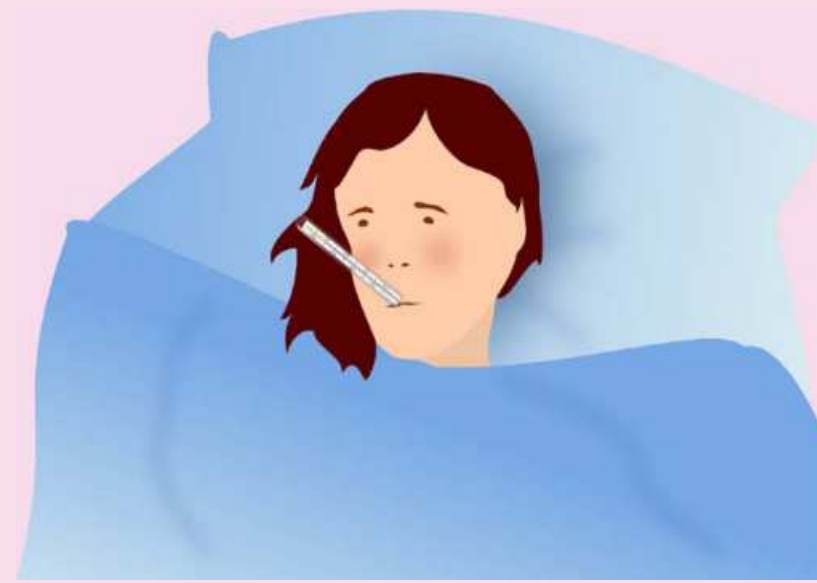
If someone, due to their naivety, desires praise or something else that may bring temporary joy but cause long-term harm, benevolent souls will not respond with criticism. Instead, they will inspire them to aspire for higher goals, helping the other soul realise their error and become wiser.

This kind of magnanimity brings lifelong rewards, in the form of goodwill, regard, and gratitude.

Those who uplift others in this way automatically elevate themselves — they receive heartfelt blessings from all, and are not just respected, but venerated. B.K. Brij Mohan is Additional Secretary General of the Brahma Kumaris.

DISCOURSE

THE BENEFIT OF SICKNESS



DADI JANKI

Being sick is an opportunity to experience yourself in a new way. Do you understand and accept this opportunity readily? Or are you unable to take advantage of it, too distracted by the illness? If that is the case, then you

need to take a closer look at yourself, to see where another kind of sickness might lie.

Just as the outward cure for sickness involves going to a hospital, seeing a good doctor, getting a comfortable bed and eating healthy food, the internal cure is the same.

I need to go to the Soul World, where the Supreme Doctor resides, rest in the comfortable bed of His remembrance, and eat the nourishing food of pure and positive thoughts. Sickness is the chance to teach the mind to remain independent of the physical state and so connect with your inner resources of peace and silence. This is the ultimate cure.

A THOUGHT FOR TODAY

The soul needs newness on a regular basis. The consistency of a healthy routine keeps me grounded and stable. However, without newness, it can become rote and boring. When bored, I look outside to change my situation, my clothes, my partner, or my life. To generate newness, from the inside out, I must stretch my intellect to create something interesting. Even the smallest innovation, when created myself, generates enthusiasm and motivation. Today let me stretch myself to create something new.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Seeing a better world into being



JUDY JOHNSON

Is it possible to see a better world into being? The answer for me is a resounding 'Yes'. My philosophy and daily spiritual practice are based on the understanding that, as spiritual beings, we have the ability and power to transform the world. Seeing the best in ourselves and others, consistently over time, we will transform our individual consciousness. Then the practical collective expression of our

better selves will create a better world to live in.

Inner seeing is, in fact, a prerequisite to bringing something into being. Most good ideas start as a picture in the mind. An architectural framework is built with the imagination long before physical hands are able to replicate the image in the outer world. The world's greatest inventions began as drawings, sometimes on physical paper, sometimes in the mind of the inventor.

Visualisation is a powerful tool used by sports psychologists and athletes as a way to break through habits of thought. Having performed at a certain level of accomplishment (speed, distance, height, etc.) an athlete begins to



believe this is the limit of their potential. Engaging the power of the imagination to create a picture of higher performance activates the will to stretch beyond the known threshold. By visualizing personal success in a race, the physiology of an athlete's body is compelled to respond.

If I can see it I can create it. If I cannot see it, I will not be able to create it.

As human beings, we share ideas with each other through language, art, theatre, visual expression and music. Ideas paint pictures in our minds. These pictures become our living reality as they frame and shape the world we create.

Pictures and ideas are contagious and can stimulate memories, bringing an experience into being. Ideas for changing our world begin in the mind. Big ideas for creating a better world must capture the heart as well as the imagination, awakening a longing to change, a longing to step beyond

the known comfort zone into something new.

People are consistently drawn to beauty, simplicity and order, drawn to kind, respectful, accepting environments. We are inspired by goodness, humility and the innocence of children.

At this time the human heart is longing for the experience of kindness, acceptance, respect and peace. And we share a common picture in the mind's eye of what it can look like.

When asked to describe their idea of heaven or a better world, most people (including those who do not believe in heaven) describe a similar place. It has a lovely, clean environment, everyone is treated with respect, every-

one is safe and cared for, and we all live in peace.

Although the pictures may be vague, the longing to create a better world is growing. When we give pictures to these feelings, we begin the practical process of bringing them into being without waiting for evidence of their possibility. It is only by creating evidence that something truly new — beyond the known and accepted — can be brought into being.

A beautiful world will come from our collective positive dreams.

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DIVINE BEING

DIGNITY OF DIVERSITY: HOW CAN WE BE ONE WHEN WE ARE ALL DIFFERENT?



B.K. JAYANTI

There are about 6,900 languages spoken in the world today. However, all the natural human languages share what Noam Chomsky, who is often referred to as 'the father of modern linguistics', calls the 'deep structure of grammar'. This means that the English language and the Chinese language, for example, are essentially the same. Therefore, any typically developing child can grow up to speak any natural human language, regardless of the language of their biological parents.

In terms of race, most anthropologists recognise four or five distinct racial groups. Again though, all races share more than 99.99

per cent of the same genetic material, which means that division of race is largely subjective. That is to say, as the UNESCO Statement on the Biological Aspects of Race states, there is no biological basis for racial classification.

There are 196 countries in the world. Within those there is an even more expansive list of varieties of culture. Culture is the full range of learned human behaviour patterns. There are over 7.5 billion people in the world, and at any one time, no two people will be thinking the same thought or have the same idea in the same way. However, there are commonly recognised learned behaviour patterns that are shared by all of humanity, collectively. These include:

- Communicating with a verbal language
- Raising children in some sort of family setting
- Distinguishing between good and bad behaviour
- Some sort of body ornamentation



- Artistic expression
- Leadership roles for the implementation of community decisions
- There are about 30 major religions in the world. Yet, the ethic of reciprocity is found in the scriptures of nearly every religion.
- You shall love your neighbour as yourself — Christianity

- Not one of you is a believer until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself — Islam.
- Try your best to treat others as you would wish to be treated yourself, and you will find that this is the shortest way to benevolence — Confucianism
- This is the sum of duty: do not do to others what

- would cause pain if done to you — Hinduism
- Treat not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful — Buddhism
- What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbour: that is the whole Torah; all the rest of it is commentary — Judaism
- In 1989, the Brahma Kumaris, as part of the pro-

ject, Global Co-operation for a Better World, carried out a survey of values in 88 countries. The result was the 'The Global Vision Statement'. Whether royalty, road sweepers, housewives or prime ministers, all cultures from all parts of the world were united in their values: Joy, dignity, integrity, equality, love, har-

mony, respect, tolerance, goodwill, honesty, cooperation, peace, sustainability, freedom.

Our differences of ideas, opinions, beliefs, ways of life need not divide us. Dignity creates harmony and freedom. Freedom to be myself and to allow others to be who they are meant to be.

Dignity is the most precious thing that a human being can have. It comes from the Latin dignitas, meaning worthy. Dignity resides in our hearts and minds; in our attitude towards ourselves and towards others. Dignity lies in knowing that I am an eternal being, a soul, with eternal qualities of peace, love, wisdom and joy. Dignity lies in knowing that we all belong to One Supreme Being.

By maintaining my own dignity, no matter how difficult a situation may be, I will not be influenced by the opinions of others, in a way that will take me away from my conscience,

often called the still small voice within. A dignified person will always seek to give, rather than to take. To listen to understand, rather than to prove themselves. Therefore, there cannot be true compassion without dignity. Otherwise even the most charitable acts can be self-serving, needing recognition. An act of kindness brings blessings from the hearts of others.

I can grow my dignity in inner silence. This allows my mind to connect to my own humanity and to a higher Divine Being, who is the only One who can unite the whole world. This inner silence holds within it the power of transformation. It is this transformative power that can take us beyond the barriers of culture or religion to the understanding that we all have our own, very special role to play in this world.

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