

Let s all together, Make a Difference

“Hands that serve are much holier than the lips that pray”

- Satya Sai Baba

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Introduction:

All of us are aware that among all living things human beings are some thing special as they can think and have reasoning capacity to judge what is good or bad. But merely entering in to this world, as one great poet has rightly said that “all of us are mere actors on this world stage, and vanishing without doing any worth while thing won’t do.” We should always remember that at the end of our lives, we will not be judged by how many diplomas we have received, how much money we have made or how many great things we have done. We will be judged by our acts like compassion, kind deeds that we did for the less fortunate.

What is the Stark Reality?

On August 21st 2008, just few hours before the eagerly awaited iPhone was launched in the country, a young man was walking the streets of central Delhi, pleading for help. He had been stabbed seven times. Bleeding profusely, his assailants still right behind him, Kuldip Singh desperately tried to flag down cars, buses, anyone who’d help. No one stopped. Finally, a passing auto rickshaw

driver took pity on Singh, taking him straight to hospital.

Just three days before Singh’s ordeal on Delhi unquiet streets, Nirmala Kadam died on a busy road in Mumbai. Hit by a taxi while crossing the road, Kadam was then run over by a bus. As she lay in a pool of blood, begging for water, the world turned a blind eye to Kadam’s distress. Even the constables, who came ostensibly to help, treated her with callous neglect. She died on the way to hospital.

But it's an accident in Kolkata which takes the cake and shows how far we can fall. When security guard Kadam Prasad Panth was taken ill on a bus, the driver stopped. Panth was brought out of the bus and made to lie on the pavement. People crowded around; no one did anything to help or offer water. Meanwhile, police from two different areas squabbled over which jurisdiction applied to Panth. By the time they sorted out their differences, the old man was dead.

These are not the only victims of our uncaring society. Almost every other day, on some mean street, in some madding city crowd, someone fall victim to the apathy of his

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fellow citizens. People show reluctance to help in the hours of crisis. They turn their backs or remain mute bystanders. What had happened to our sense of compassion? Did we ever have it at all?

Yes we do have scores of incidents where in people did make a difference to others lives.

Happiness Lies in Making others Happy

As we all know the whole world, except leaving a few pockets, is reeling under the impact of recession (or slow down) and most of the people are not happy with the prevailing situation. But the root cause of all problems is that when things are to be used and people are to be loved, people are being used and things are being loved. Can we make others happy because there is tremendous happiness in making others happy, despite our own situations? Here is a small story:

Once when I was a teenager, my father and I were standing in line to buy tickets for the Gemini circus. Finally, there was only one family between us and the ticket counter. This family made a big impression on me. There were eight children, all probably under the age of 12. You could tell they didn't have a lot of money. Their clothes were not expensive, but they were clean. The children were well-behaved, all of them standing in line, two-by-two behind their parents, holding hands. They were excitedly jabbering about the clowns, elephants and other acts they would see that night. One could sense they had never been to the circus before. It promised to be a highlight of their young lives.

The father and mother were at the head of the pack standing proud as could be. The ticket lady asked the father how many tickets he wanted. He proudly responded, "Please let me

buy eight children's tickets and two adult tickets so that I can take my family to the circus."

The ticket lady quoted the price. The man's wife let go of his hand, her head dropped, the man's lip began to quiver. The father leaned a little closer and asked, "how much did you say?". The ticket lady again quoted the price. The man didn't have enough money. How was he supposed to turn and tell his eight kids that he didn't have enough money to take them to the circus?

Seeing what was going on, my dad put his hand in his pocket, pulled out a Rs 50 note and dropped it on the ground (We were not wealthy in any sense of the word!). My father reached down, picked up the note, tapped the man on the shoulder and said, "Excuse me sir, this fell out of your pocket."

The man knew what was going on. He wasn't begging for money but certainly appreciated the help in a desperate, heartbreaking, embarrassing situation. He looked straight in to my dad's eyes, took my dad's hand in both of his, squeezed tightly onto the 50 rupee note, and with his lip quivering and a tear streaming down his cheek, he replied, "thank you, thank you, sir. This really means a lot to me and my family." My father and I went back to our car and drove home. We didn't go the circus that night, but we didn't go without.

Most of the time we get perplexed with the situation wherein people are so caring towards their family members but not towards fellowmen. It's almost like keeping our home clean but not our surroundings. But here too there are exceptions; thanks to the great tradition of this karmabhoomi. Here is such a case. A true experience of one of my friend:

They Alone Live who Live for Others

One day my friend was trying to convince his only daughter Sindu to eat Curd Rice. Sindu is a nice child, quite intelligent for her age. She has just turned eight. She particularly detested Curd Rice. His mother and wife are orthodox and believe firmly in the 'cooling effects' of Curd Rice! He cleared his throat, and picked up the bowl.

"Sindu, darling, why don't you take a few mouthful of this Curd Rice? Just for Dad's sake, dear". Sindu softened a bit, and wiped her tears with the back of her hands. 'OK, Dad, I will eat – not just a few mouthfuls, but the whole lot of this. But, you should' Sindu hesitated, 'Dad, if I eat this entire curd Rice, will you give me whatever I ask for?Oh sure, Darling.....Promise?' 'Promise'. He covered the pink soft hand extended by his daughter with his and clinched the deal. 'Ask Mom also to give a similar promise his daughter insisted his wife put her hand on Sindu's muttering 'Promise'.

Now he became a bit anxious, 'Sindu dear, you shouldn't insist on getting a computer or any such expensive items. Dad does not have that kind of money right now. OK? No, Dad, I do not want anything expensive'. Slowly and painfully, she finished eating the whole quantity. He was silently angry with his wife and mother for forcing his child eat something that she detested. After the ordeal was through, Sindu came to him with her eyes wide with expectation. All their attention was on her..... 'Dad I want to have my head shaved off, this Sunday!' That was her wish. 'Atrocious' shouted his wife. 'A girl child having her head shaved off?' Impossible! 'Never in our family!'

Sindu darling, why don't you ask for something else? We will be sad seeing you with a clean-shaven head'.

'No, Dad I do not want anything else'. Sindu said with finality. "Please, Sindu, why don't you try to understand our feelings?" He pleaded with her. 'Dad, you saw how difficult it was for me to eat that Curd Rice'. Sindu was in tears. 'And you promised to grant me whatever I ask for. Now, you are going back on your words. Was it not you who told me the story of King Harish Chandra, and its moral that we should honor our promises no matter what?

It was time for him to call the shots. "Our promise must be kept". Are you out your mind? Chorused his mother and wife. 'No. If we go back on our promises, she will never learn to honor her own. Sindu, your wish will be fulfilled. With her head clean-shaven. Sindu had a round-face and her eyes looked big and beautiful.

On Monday morning Sindu was dropped by her father at her school. It was a sight to watch his hairless Sindu walking towards her classroom. She turned around and waved. He moved back with a smile. Just then, a boy alighted from a car, and shouted. "Sinduja, please wait for me!"

What struck him was the hairless head of that boy. 'May be that is the in-stuff', he thought.

"Sir, your daughter Sinduja is great indeed!" Without introducing herself, a lady got out of the car, and continued, 'That boy who is walking along with your daughter is my son Harish. He is suffering from Leukemia.' Harish could not attend the school for the whole of the last month. He lost all his

hair due to the side effects of the chemotherapy. He refused to come back to school fearing the unintentional but cruel teasing of the schoolmates. Sinduja visited him last week and promised him that she will take care of the teasing issue. But, I never imagined she would sacrifice her lovely hair for the sake of my son!

“Sir, you and your wife are blessed to have such a noble soul as your daughter”.

My friend stood transfixed and then he wept ‘My little Angel, you are teaching me how self-less real love is!’

The life is short, the vanities of world are transient but they alone live who live for others; the rest are more dead than alive”.

There is another true story of a very touching experience which will make all of us understand how important it is to love and show concern to others.

Love and Concern for Others

Once an old man collapsed on a street corner in Brooklyn, New York, USA and was rushed to Kings Country Hospital. The nurse on duty, after some inquiry, “discovered” that a certain marine stationed in North Carolina might be the man’s son. She called the officer-in-charge and requested that the marine be sent to the hospital.

When the marine arrived, she took him immediately to the bedside of the dying man and said, “Your son’s here”. The old man was heavily sedated, but he slowly reached out his hand. The marine grasped it gently, and held it for the next four hours. As the nurses came, they asked the marine to go out and relax for a while, but he didn't.

After the man died, the marine asked the nurse. “Who was that man? Wasn’t he your

father?” The nurse asked. “No”, said the marine, “but I saw he was dying and needed a son badly. So I stayed!”

Love and Concern have no limits; Love and Concern have no relatives; Love and Concern embrace all, and in a special way those who suffer, those who have no one to assist them, those who are abandoned. It is great to love even those who do not deserve our love! “For if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you?”

Before we look at the reasons which keep the people away from helping the needy let's look at the 5 lessons that will make us think about the way we treat people.

How we should Treat People.

1. All are Significant

During my second month of college, our Professor gave us a pop quiz. I was a conscientious student and had breezed through the questions until I read the last one:

‘What is the first name of the man who cleans the school?’

Surely this was some kind of joke. I had seen the cleaning man several times. He was tall, dark-haired and in his 50’s, but how would I know his name? I handed in my paper, leaving the last question blank. Just before class ended, one student asked if the last question would count towards our grade. ‘Absolutely,’ said the Professor. ‘In your careers, you will meet many people. All are significant. They deserve your attention and care, even if all you do is smile and say ‘hello’.

I've never forgotten that lesson. I also learned his name was Ramesh.

2. Helping the Needy

One night, at 11:30 p.m., an older African American woman was standing on the side of an Alabama highway trying to endure a lashing rainstorm. Her car had broken down and she desperately needed a ride. Soaking wet, she decided to flag down the next car. A young white man stopped to help her, generally unheard of in those conflict-filled 60's. The man took her to safety, helped her get assistance and put her into a taxicab.

She seemed to be in a big hurry, but wrote down his address and thanked him. Seven days went by and a knock came on the man's door. To his surprise, a giant console color TV was delivered to his home. A special note was attached.

It read: *'Thank you so much for assisting me on the highway the other night. The rain drenched not only my clothes, but also my spirits. Then you came along. Because of you, I was able to make it to my dying husband's bedside just before he passed away. God bless you for helping me and unselfishly serving others.'*

*Sincerely,
Mrs. Nat King Cole.*

3. The Obstacle in Our Path

In ancient times, a King had a boulder placed on a roadway. Then he hid himself and watched to see if anyone would remove the huge rock. Some of the King's wealthiest merchants and courtiers came by and simply walked around it. Many loudly blamed the King for not keeping the roads clear, but none did anything about getting the stone out of the way.

Then a peasant came along carrying a load of vegetables. Upon approaching the boulder, the peasant laid down his burden and tried to

move the stone to the side of the road. After much pushing and straining, he finally succeeded. After the peasant picked up his load of vegetables, he noticed a purse lying in the road where the boulder had been. The purse contained many gold coins and a note from the King indicating that the gold was for the person who removed the boulder from the roadway. The peasant learned what many of us never understand!

Every obstacle presents an opportunity to improve our condition.

4. Giving when it Counts.

Many years ago, when one of my uncles was working as a volunteer at a hospital, he got to know a little girl named Roma who was suffering from a rare and serious disease. Her only chance of recovery appeared to be a blood transfusion from her 5-year old brother, who had miraculously survived the same disease and had developed the antibodies, needed to combat the illness. The doctor explained the situation to her little brother, and asked the little boy if he would be willing to give his blood to his sister.

I saw him hesitate only for a moment before taking a deep breath and saying, 'Yes I'll do it if it will save her.' As the transfusion progressed, he lay in bed next to his sister and smiled, as we all did, seeing the color returning to her cheek. Then his face grew pale and his smile faded.

He looked up at the doctor and asked with a trembling voice, 'Will I start to die right away?'

Being young, the little boy had misunderstood the doctor; he thought he was going to have to give his sister all of his blood

in order to save her but he had chosen to save her anyway.

Now let us briefly discuss as to why people behave differently and don't help in the hour of crisis.

Why People don't Care

We all must have experienced one thing at one point or other i.e. it's not that people are lacking compassion; it's just that they don't want to get involved. Citizen's generally fear the cops and don't want to get embroiled in legal issues. On the streets it is hard to enforce the Supreme Court's guidelines directing lay Indian's never to ignore the injured and medical practitioners never to turn away victims of road accidents. Often, bureaucratic formalities engulf the Good Samaritan. Once when a Mumbai business man took a victim of a train accident to the hospital, much to his shock was fined Rs.1200 by the police and labeled 'drunk' by the hospital authorities after he had an argument with a doctor over delayed assistance to the victim. That businessman, I am sure, would now think twice before reaching out to casualty.

Natural calamities and riots often produce a crop of touching stories. During the Mumbai floods of 2005, the worst in living memory, residents handed out bread and water to the weary and threw open their homes to complete strangers. And yet Mumbai ignored Nirmala Kadam as she lay dying on the street.

Indians, by and large, are generous when all that is needed food and shelter but mean: spirited if an incident could end in a police station or court of law. Our Gandhigiri appears to stop at donating money to victims of natural disasters. But we would rather not take causality off the roads and to hospital. At least

part of the callousness may be a habit ingrained by years of clandestine help during communal riots.

So its time that state creates institutional infrastructure to ensure the good Samaritan is hailed and not harassed so as to motivate others to emulate the great Indian habit of generosity i.e. helping the needy or those in distress.

Conclusion

Mother Theresa used to say that "when you caress the hapless and unfortunate, you are pouring you genuine love. In the process you are making God enter you, for love is God".

The best way of serving the God is to serve our fellow human beings. In other words "Manava Seva Madhava Seva".

Let us understand that

Rivers flow so that we all have water to drink.

Trees grow fruits so that we all can eat them.

Cows give milk so that we all can drink and

God has given this body to serve others
(Paropakaram Idam Shaririam)

So work like you don't need the money, love like you've never been hurt, dance like you do when nobody's watching and love and have concern for those who suffer and especially those who have no one to assist them. That's the best way of leading a purposeful life.

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