

Assignment 1

World Famous Philosophers, Sages/Saints and Great Kings -
(UPS2002A)

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Q1. Elaborate the statement in short. “No Peace, No life...Know Peace, Know Life.”

“The life of inner peace, being harmonious and without stress, is the easiest type of existence.” - Norman Vincent Peale.

The life of humans now, and just a century ago, has some spectacular, and some ironic differences in it. We now have technology like never before, we can communicate with anyone, anytime. All the knowledge of the world is at our fingertips. At this point, "Everything that one wants, one can get without any hassle, Guru, or without even having to get out of our homes" - but *can we though?*

Despite having everything, we seem to be unhappy. We are pots of water half filled living in the utopia of our minds, that think we have everything, when truly we do not even *know* what we are missing out on. When Master Oogway said "*Inner Peace*" in Kungfu Panda, the line resonated with the audience more than it would have a hundred years ago. It is something subtle that is missing from our lives, and we don't even know it.

Our lives, and especially of those that have grown up in the 21st century and the era of the internet and media, are so distorted and entangled, that we have never received the chance to even learn or be taught about peace, let alone experience it. This thought doesn't stem from juvenoia, but it's what has happened to our civilization from its dawn. We have increased our activities, supplies, production and economy daily, and as an unintended but inevitable result of that, we slowly *diminished* peace from our lives, and in a sense, have extinguished the very *spirit and essence of life on earth*.

Life has gone from a boon to everyone, to a responsibility to many, and a curse to some. This is because we don't find the time to feel it passing by, and regret the time when it does. People that know peace, have seen life with utmost intricacy, and have an air of calmness and composure around them. It is visible on their faces and their eyes. Such people have *lived* their lives, while the others have barely skimmed through the surface because they had to.

How can we improve the situation? Inner peace, only comes from hardwork, helping others, selfless sacrifices, and watching the smile emerge on the faces of your loved ones. But inner peace being the luxury that it has become, is not that difficult to obtain even now. If we just take the time to sit down and reflect, even on the events of the day, we will eventually start to notice things like the birds on the trees, the fragrance in the air, and most importantly, the people in our lives. When everyone starts to find peace in the little things is when we as a society will truly get to *know peace again*.

Q2. "Service to Mankind is service to the Lord." Comment on this referring to work done by Saint Gadgebaba.

Throughout History, there have been individuals that have lived lives that influenced thousands of others. Some of them have had a negative impact on those thousands, but a lot more have had a positive one, despite of no one asking for their help. We as the *homo sapiens* aren't really that powerful physically to the *panthera tigris*, the tiger, or the Elephant, or the once lived Dinosaurs. And yet here we are standing, ruling and exercising unprecedented power over all the animals on this planet. The credit is not due to our strength as individuals, but our strength as a society. Man doing service for another is the reason why we are what we are today.

One such roaring example of this spirit was Sant Gadge Maharaj. Born to a small and poor village in Amravati, Maharashtra, unhinged by social norms, he managed to rise above outdated and senseless stereotypes, and set an example to live by.

He was a public teacher, and spread ideas like compassion, the importance of cleanliness and humanity. He would educate people against blind Faith and rituals. He was an animal lover, and was deeply against animal sacrifice, which used to be widespread practice during the time. Fed up by the material world, he decided to leave his home, his family, and set out with a pan and a broom to clean the village gutters and roads. This campaign of voluntary cleanliness began gaining momentum slowly, and turned into a very prominent ideology upon which political parties were built.

It is very easy to mention the works of someone born in 1876, and write about the influence he had on us, which was clearly staggering, given that we take inspiration from his works even today. It feels like something that can be done rather easily now a days, and yet no one does it. It was certainly much much harder back in his day, about a century ago, when India was under the disastrous reign of the British, and yet he did. He picked up the broom, for completely selfless service to other members of the society, for absolutely no personal gain. He did what he thought was his *Dharm*, rather than someone else's work. And working on that *Dharm* of his, he changed more lives and pleased more Gods than anyone else in that village.

We confuse prayer, devotion, and all other practices to please the Gods, with doing real work to help the society, when it is all the same. Any service to mankind, is the greatest service to the Lord.