

## **THE FUTURE OF POWER\***

This Assembly of intellectuals, blessed with capacity and potential to lead, has been convened to exchange and share views on the Future of Power. A few basic questions arise: What? Why? Who? and, How? I venture to share very briefly my views in the way I have perceived the subject and my response to the questions.

### **What and Why?**

We are living in the world of tragic paradoxes. To mention a few:

- We have taller buildings, but shorter tempers,
- We have learnt how to make a living, but not a life,
- We have added years to life, not life to years,
- We have conquered outer space, but not inner space,
- We have done larger things, but not better things,
- We talk too much, love too seldom, and hate too often,
- These are the times of fast foods and slow digestion,  
big man and small character, steep profits and shallow relationships.

The result, turmoil and turbulence are being witnessed in society and in leadership (political or societal). We are missing the right kind of leadership. Sheer greed and reckless leadership appear to be leading the humanity to virtual collapse. By and large, the leaders seem to be working for their personal interests and exploiting every opportunity to their advantage. There is no accountability and no mechanism to assess the leaders. It is an era of challenge and uncertainty.

The upsurge of such ugly tendencies is inequality, injustice, and oppression of the weaker and vulnerable. The system seems to be failing not once but repeatedly.

Throughout the world, whether it is East or West, a need for change is being felt. Right minded people are feeling depressed and frustrated. They are looking for a ray of hope. There is a felt need for transition of power – a transformation from negativity to positivity and from destructivity to creativity – in the society.

We need ideal leaders. Effective leadership is evolved in urge for excellence in service to the society. It is soothing to learn that there is someone who has taken a selfless initiative in this direction and they are the BKs.

The fundamental formulas are:

- |                     |   |                                  |
|---------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| Develop and Deepen  | - | Awareness                        |
| Explore and Share   | - | Best practices                   |
| Think and Transform | - | Ownership into Trusteeship       |
| Aim and Move        | - | from Materialism to Spiritualism |

## **Who & How?**

The Charter of United Nations says – thoughts of war erupt in the mind; and solution lies in sowing the seeds of peace in mind of man.

Society begins to decline when intellectuals become indifferent and self-centred. *Koi nrip hoi hamahi ka hani*. How does it make a difference, who rules? The intellectuals shall have to shed their inhibition and take upon their shoulders the task of ‘learn and lead’. “The leader is one who knows the way, shows the way and goes the way”. The intellectuals shall have to arise and awake and realise their duty to humanity. They have to light the lamp, hold it tight and lead to fight against all evils in the Society. Not only purity of thought, we need men of character who’s thoughts and action do not differ.

## **Can India Lead – The Future of Power**

BKs have found by their spiritually empowered research into annals of history that every 2500 years there is a shift in centre of power or the seat of leadership. The time has come when the power would shift from West to East, and, once it shifts, it will be here for at least another 2500 years. The indications are already there. We have to catch the signals. To be successful, it is necessary:

- to be aware of such change which is imminent;
- to be ready to act as if there is call of duty;
- to be prepared to prove that we deserve to lead.

## **We Can do it.**

Everyone believes in progress and prosperity but the difference lies in the means and goal. What do we wish to achieve? And, how? We in East, and particularly we in India, believe that progress and prosperity are only means, not an end in themselves. Our destination is peace in universe and Godliness in every human being. We believe in *vasudhaiva kutumbakam* – the universe is one. We believe that every creature is a child of God and, since we are born of one father, we are all brothers and sisters. To share and care is in our blood and belief. But, we have forgotten what we were. We have to revive and recharge - which is not easy.

## **Hard Power Versus Soft Power**

What is Power? Power is the ability to influence the behaviour of others to get the outcomes you want. For those who wish to capture power, there are two courses open: (i) to coerce the subjects with threats or to induce and allure them with payments, or (ii) to attract and co-opt *them* to want what *you* want. According to the concept developed by Prof. Joseph Nye of Harvard University,

the former is 'hard power' and the latter is 'soft power'. Without going deeper into defining these concepts, to my mind it appears, that hard power is physical power – it is money or muscles. The stronger rules the weaker. Such power is ephemeral.

In contrast, soft power is spiritual power - the power of spirituality. It believes in contentment, peace and prosperity for everyone and enables cultivation of these virtues. Five great enemies to peace inhabit with us: avarice, ambition, envy, anger and ego. If those enemies were to be vanished we should infallibly enjoy perpetual peace. This is the goal which soft power seeks to reach.

Ever since the man was born, he has faced challenges. The difficulties need not scare us. The need of the hour is to think and act. Each one of us has to ask oneself: What is my personal character? What is my value system? What is my attitude towards the challenges?

Bringing about a change and shifting from hard power to soft power is not difficult. The reason is: While the physical power needs to be acquired; the spiritual power pre-exists within. It does not need to be acquired; it only needs to be recognized and nurtured.

It is very interesting to note that the spiritual power is never negative and never destructive. While hard power creates enemies and invites retaliation; spiritual power, the more it develops, the more it finds support.

The only alternative to co-existence is co-destruction. The time has come when we cannot afford to be diffident. The difference between the impossible and possible lies in a man's determination. A dream does not become reality through magic; to realize a dream it needs invincible determination and incorrigible dedication; else, it remains a mere wishful thinking. Desire with determination acts as bridge to success.

Superiority of spiritual power in living is not new to us. We had it but long back. It is not difficult to re-gain it. Let us have hope, courage and confidence. Let us mobilize our intellect and all our resources to face the challenges staring at us. Let India be the Nation which by exerting its prime resource i.e. spirituality can lead and rule the world.

I would close by posing a question unto myself and to yourself – do we have that determination? If yes, the purpose of today's event has been achieved.

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*\* Views expressed by Justice R.C. Lahoti, Fr. CJI, at Seminar on **Future of Power** organized by Brahma Kumaris at Gwalior on February 10, 2013*