



WORKING FOR MUTUAL INTEREST

We have inherited great architecture: the Pyramids, the Taj Mahal, the great mosques and cathedrals. We are blessed with so much literature, poetry and music and so many paintings. We are enriched by the great teachings of enlightened masters. We have been endowed with philosophy, science and technology.

The list of gifts we have received from our ancestors and our fellow human beings is endless. We are indebted to them.

And now it is our turn to contribute to that culture and civilization and ensure that no child in our human family goes without food, no sick person is left unattended, no country or community is afflicted by war, exploitation or torture.

We may not achieve this goal tomorrow but efforts towards the well-being of all must start today and we must rise above the narrow confines of self-interest and work towards mutual interest.

But that vision of working for mutual interest is never easy. There are vested interests in society that prevent us from acting in mutual interest and push us towards self-interest. The strong exploit the weak; the rich keep down the poor; seekers of power subjugate the powerless.

Mahatma Gandhi practised non-violence, truth and compassion, yet fought a battle against colonization and for freedom. Activists such as Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, Václav Havel, Mother Teresa and Wangari Maathai are examples of people who offered their lives for the well-being of society as a whole.

From these outstanding activists we can learn the lessons of activism for social justice and strive to establish a new moral order of human dignity.

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