

STOP taking LIFE for GRANTED!



The other day, I got a shocking news that one of my University professors, whom we fondly called ‘Kaushik Sir’, was infected with Covid and he was on ventilator. And the very next day, heard that he was no more! It was only then, that I checked back into his WhatsApp contact on my mobile, to see, as to when he had stopped messaging me, for he was one of those caring souls who kept sending best wishes and motivational messages daily, though I seldom checked them, and never replied! I found that his last message to me was at this Easter! I frantically began calling him up, though I knew that now the possibility of his attending my call was absolutely zero! ***The owner of this phone number had gone away beyond my time and space zones!***

Amid my shock and sorrow, I vividly recalled the noble soul that he was, always greeting people with a warm smile, his genuine desire to help others in all possible ways, without any selfish pursuits of his own and his delight in sharing his rich treasure of knowledge with his students! But above all, and what stood out the most, was, the way he loved and cared for those in his circle of contact. **The memories he imprinted on the heart of life brought me to reflect on what matters most in my own, what am I giving my energy to and where am I giving it away.**

A little over a week after his passing, he came in my dream. As I sat, he stood in front of me, smiling, with a simple gesture of kindness, genuine care and compassion. I asked him the only question I could think of at that moment, ***“Sir, do you miss anything about being here (in the physical world)?”*** In hindsight, it was probably the best question I could have asked, because when we answer the question of what we would miss most if we were no longer here, we ultimately discover **what’s most important**. And in doing so, we naturally are led to focusing our energy on the right things to lead us to a life of more meaning.

His reply was simple and clear. With a confident and peaceful tone, he said, ***“The only things I miss are those who were in my life.”*** He expressed how he would miss physically being here with loved ones, sharing moments and laughter and helping people out. That to be physically here is unlike anything else and a time to be cherished and fully lived.

So, the question is, **“What is most important?”** Harvard research studies says that it is our relationships in life that lead us to the greatest happiness and meaning. Love is at the heart of this. **At the end of the day, it is our connection with our daughters, sons, friends, relatives, spouses, partners, students and colleagues.**

In post-modern times of today, we have been so frantically busy shooting deadlines, achieving targets, keeping pace with fastest changing technicalities and procedures; that at times, we feel, we have miserably lost the essence of life! We have the best of technology, comforts and fast paced networks, yet we do not have time, today, to connect at heart level, to invest in real life relationships and joys! **And this is essentially a serious situation!**

Friends, today in the wake of the pandemic, the fact of our inescapable mortality and certain death is all the more clear. **Everything that is trivial shall fall away, melt away, and all we will be left with is: Love.** At the end of the day, at the end of it all, all we have is love. All we have is each other. To miss that, to not realize it and act on it, is to miss the fullness, the

richness, the flesh of our entire existence. **To have never loved is simply to have never lived. And we are here to live!**

So let's live...let's love! Be vulnerable. Take chances, risks. Get better at loving. Tell people how you feel, really feel, about them. Tell people you love them. Show people you love them. Love yourself. Let people love you. Care. And then, just when you think you can't anymore, care some more. **Because at the root of it all, the heart of it all, is to live a life well-loved, and to have loved well — is to have a life well-lived!**

Love is what connects us to others here on Earth, as well as after leaving this life. Each one of us is like a thread in a beautiful tapestry of life, one that is under the consistent presence of divine love working in the lives of us all.

As we celebrate the feast of St. Joseph, the worker, *may all of us, like him, find meaning, purpose, happiness and fulfilment in our lives through the moments we share and the ways we care for others, the joy we feel in a job well-done, and in the practice of loving life and all those in it to the best of our ability!*

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