

# the future of power

India has dazzled the world over the past two decades with a stunning display of domestic economic growth, entrepreneurial ability at home and abroad, and emergence as a world power in information technology.

Great inequalities remain, but disadvantaged sections of society have gradually been finding their voice in the world's largest democracy, and tens of millions join the middle classes every year.

Meanwhile, many western economies whose performance seemed enviable are now heavily in debt, their GDP growths are either negligible or in negative territory and showing no signs of true recovery.

A seismic global shift of power is the likely outcome of these developments, according to Nizar Juma, a Nairobi-based businessman who chairs more than 50 Companies, who has teamed up with the Brahma Kumaris network in India and abroad to host a series of high-level dialogues examining the implications of these trends.

India's legendary intellectual, economic and spiritual resources flowed outward across the globe for more than 2,000 years, Nizar says, supporting and sustaining a succession of foreign civilizations and cultures. Beneficiaries included China to the east, then Egypt, Athens, Rome and northern Europe to the west, until power finally reached the Americas and became concentrated in the United States.

The current financial crisis, he argues, indicates a turning point in which US power is on the wane. A historic reversal is under way, in which power is flowing back to India.

Nizar Juma, spent six years studying Economics, Law and Accountancy, at the University of Wales, before embarking on a stellar career in manufacturing and development, since 1968.

To-day, he is a leader in industrial and commercial businesses, principally within Africa and Canada; he is best known as the manufacturer of Adidas Sports equipment for 49 Countries in and around Africa.

For the past 27 years, Nizar has also been actively involved in a voluntary capacity as Chairman of Boards of The Aga Khan Development Network – in their Social Welfare activities, including not-for-profit hospitals; and in their development activities in Power generation, fiber optics cabling systems, agriculture, banking, leather processing, hotels, pharmaceuticals, insurance, food processing and property development.

The Future of Power is the theme of a series of dialogues, which Nizar is hosting with Dadi Janki the head of the Brahma Kumaris, and which are taking place across India to deepen understanding of the nature of power, and help restore awareness of the nation's spiritual heritage both within India and abroad. The conversations, on the theme The Future of Power, will also give rise to a knowledge-base of ideas, insights and best practices in responsible leadership. Can India, widely accepted as the home of the highest spiritual understanding, set a lead in renewing true benevolence in human affairs, and show the way towards lasting solutions for current global problems?

Nizar says the dialogues will help participants respond personally and professionally to the challenges ahead.

During the past two years the future of Power events has been held in 17 Cities throughout India and in Melbourne, Australia. Events are to take place in more than 14 major Indian cities over the next two years and in Dubai, the UK, USA and Africa.

Juma, 68, who was awarded the Silver Star by the President of Kenya for outstanding services to the Nation, believes restoration of spiritual principles and values is the key to sustainable use of power. Personal and corporate greed briefly supercharged Western economies but are now seen as the main cause of the financial crisis.



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India has to reawaken her spiritual heritage if she is to avoid the same fate, Nizar argues, as well as show the world a better way forward.

He adds that between nations, power has tended to be administered in a coercive way. In earlier times this was tempered by a degree of altruism, but today narrow self-interest predominates and the world is experiencing increasing levels of chaos as a result.

The loss of good authority is also reflected socially and culturally, with growing levels of family breakdown, drug use, tottering financial systems, and weakened individual and planetary health.

The FoP series began in November 2009 with a one-day dialogue in Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh. Twenty six influential thought leaders took part, including Chandrababu Naidu, the state's modernizing former chief minister. Media, business, education and health were among other fields represented. The dialogue successfully provided participants with an opportunity to take time out and reflect on the deeper meaning of power in their lives.

Ajit Rangnekar, Dean of the Indian School of Business in Hyderabad, said the day had sown "thousands of wonderful seeds in my garden. Now I have to nurture, water, provide nutrients and finally decide what I will do with this garden. Am I the only one to enjoy it, or do I share?."

Media baron Ramoji Rao, head of the Ramoji Group, commented: "Our journey is of empathy. Power is also a power of empathy, trusting and respecting everyone. It is not tangible but it is a daily process of living an honest life and as a complete person. This moral and ethical space is power."

Rights activist and Padma Shri winner Shanta Sinha, renowned for her contribution to a reduction in child labour in nearly 500 villages in Andhra Pradesh, said: "Today, there was no preparation required; issues we discussed are not in fashion – truth, faith, beliefs, love. This has not been in the realm of conferences I have attended in the last year. It was great to open up. We need more of this, so we are not shy to think of these things."

Foreign participants included Wendy Lucas-Bull, a top South African businesswoman, and Zanele Mbeki, former First Lady of South Africa, who said she would like to see power defined as a capacity for good influence. "I discovered the power to transform ego into humility," she said. "The first step is personal power, and internal. Then we make it a collective power."

S. Gurumurthy, a leading Hindu activist and reformist, writer and intellectual, said coercive power – the use of force – always fails in the long run, producing violence in return. To make the world order work, "we have to restore respect for goodness, and good people, at all levels."

"The nature of the Indian psyche manifests again and again," he said. Spiritual power is the source of all true power; this needs to be clearly articulated and demonstrated, in practical ways and at all levels, through words and actions and lifestyle.

Dadi Janki, administrative head of the Brahma Kumaris, who attended both dialogues, said all the participants had received strength through the service to humanity they were doing selflessly, "but we are doing it alone. Let us do it together, and there will be power.

"The violence and falsehood of the world is unbearable. To bring about change, we have to go beyond differences. By seeing everyone's qualities, love is born. Selflessness also emerges love. When we see weaknesses, we cannot give love and cooperation. When service is done with love and with no expectations, when we have all relationships with God and let God be the One who brings benefit, when our approach in life is of giving rather than taking, there is power."



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Nizar says, Bharat's original spiritual power translated into a cultural and financial strength that enabled India to be an economic and political superpower for millennia. However, her people gradually lost sight of the connection between spiritual, internal power and external strength, and this led to a tendency to become absorbed instead in a love of power and wealth for its own sake. This led to the intellectual, economic and spiritual power to flow out of India and across the World for thousands of years. The recent economic and financial meltdown in the West suggests a reversal of the trends of the past 2,000 years, however, says Nizar, it requires leaders within India to re-examine their attitudes towards power, to help restore awareness of the central importance of spirituality and elevated action in human affairs.

But what is the nature of that inner power? What caused it to become depleted? How can it be regained? And what does it look like when applied in practical daily life - how will this 'power shift' affect current and future leadership?

These are among key questions that the dialogues aim to address. The intention is that with each event, a body of understanding will grow until at the end of four years of dialogues in major cities across India, a powerful synthesis of ideas and experiences will be in place.

As the FoP brochure states, "Time seems to be calling on us to be at the vanguard of a new kind of leadership – one rooted in authentic personal power." It is for this reason, that Nizar Juma who has been associated with the Brahma Kumaris for the past twenty years, decided to partner with them to host these series of dialogues.

The Future of Power series of events have so far been held in 17 Cities in India and it is planned to hold these in 32 Cities throughout India.

The next in the series is being held at Sant Tukaram Natya Mandir, here in Aurangabad on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> of February 2013 at 05.00 pm.

On the 17<sup>th</sup> March, 2013 the programme will be held in Mumbai in Maharashtra. Thereafter, events will be held in UK, Dubai and Kenya.

