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PREM RAWAT
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Prem Rawat

PEACE IS WITHIN YOU

Interview of Prem Rawat by journalist Eva M. Peña for Spain's Business & Class magazine

Born in India, Prem Rawat was given the honorary title of Maharaji at the age of eight, when he assumed the responsibility of spreading his late father's message of peace throughout the world. He had begun speaking to audiences when he was only three years old, and the following year he gave his first published address. Now his message of peace and hope is available in over 90 countries and 70 languages.

You live to spread the message that peace can be found, but what is peace?

There are many interpretations of peace. Some people think peace is the absence of war; some think peace is the absence of sound. But there is another kind of peace, which is inherently within every human being. People have known about this peace for a very, very long time, but in today's world, it is even more important to be in touch with the peace that is inside every human being.

If peace is within each person, why are human beings constantly struggling?

We are so geared to look for solutions outside us, that when it comes to peace, we look for it on the outside as well. It's a bit like somebody who has a gold mine under their house but doesn't know it. Maybe they beg all day long and they suffer, but the solution is so close to them and so simple. If they could find a way to access the gold mine under their house, they would never have to beg again. People struggle because they cannot find the peace within them. That is my message: Peace is within you. And not only that, I offer a way to be able to get in touch with that peace.

Do you think that man is often his own worst enemy?

It is true that the wars that rage on within a human being can be terrible. But if man is his own worst enemy, then he is also his own best friend. When you

know yourself, you become your best friend. When you don't know yourself, you become your worst enemy.

Why, in your view, are so many politicians ready to go to war with those who don't see things as they do?

Because mankind does not see peace as a solution. People look at all the problems of the world and think that war is the solution. Peace has been talked about but never applied. It has become one of the things we like to discuss over dinner. Yet, when it comes to the practicality of it, it remains a theory, an abstract concept, because people have not found it. But peace is not abstract. It's very, very real. And it's within every single human being.

People tend to do whatever they think is the easiest. Wars are easy to begin. Peace takes a truly cohesive effort. But make no mistake about it, peace has been an ideal of mankind from time immemorial.

You have stated that a person doesn't necessarily have to be going through hard times to have hope, but then why do many people stop pursuing hope when things are apparently going their way?

There is a very beautiful saying in India that when everything is going well, we take the credit. But when things go wrong, we like to blame others. We forget that good times come and bad times come. It is in the time of plenty that

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you need to think about the drought. It is too late to think about it when it has already come. In the same way, when things are going our way, we think it's never going to change.

Good times and bad times are like seasons. Summer comes; fall comes; winter comes. A wise person will take note that good times and bad times both come. We think we only need hope in bad times; we don't see the value of it in good times. But the person who understands about garnering the good all the time is the one who will be able to truly enjoy life. We need to understand the value of peace, the value of hope, in good times and bad.

Trying to think about peace only in bad times would be like trying to think about food during the drought. You can think about it, but you can't do anything about it. It's only in the time of plenty that you can do something about it.

What do you consider to be the worst "evils" of the twenty-first century?

I believe the worst evils of the twenty-first century are the same as they have always been—not being able to under-

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stand one's self, not being able to understand what we are all about. Those become the worst evils because they cause us to distance ourselves from our true nature. Our nature is not war. It is peace. When we are in turmoil, we naturally want to get out of it.

Peace is in our nature. If we understood that, we would make things happen that would actually help each other. We would work towards eradicating these problems. We think that external technology is more important. So we don't develop the technology for peace. We don't develop the technology to help people not go hungry. We develop the technology to kill each other because we do not understand who we truly are.

You were a "child prodigy," so to speak. Do you believe that today's youth have a dream?

There are many diversions for today's youth. It is easy to become distracted.

If we can get away from the distractions and be attracted to the call from within, there will be hope for everybody. If we can be attracted to peace, to the innate call of who we are, then I think

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the youth of today will have incredible hope.

Every generation has the possibility of making things better on this earth. Mankind has always had the desire to be in peace. Maybe this new generation once again needs to hear that call to bring peace and serenity to this world instead of war and turmoil.

Do you believe that mankind might be afraid of freedom?

If we were afraid of freedom, all hope would start to dwindle away. Freedom is a call from inside. And that we cannot be afraid of. Maybe there are concepts of what freedom is. Somebody might say, "If I can do this or that, I am free." But even if they can do these things, do they really feel free from the inside? You cannot deny what you feel. If you are hurt, saying that you are not does not

take away your pain. Freedom is not just a concept. You really have to feel free. We can definitely be afraid of conceptual freedom, but we cannot be afraid of the real freedom that we want to feel.

Precisely how does your method for finding peace help people? What makes it different and better than other methods?

A lot of people talk about conceptual peace. But there is a peace within you, and for that you have to be able to take your focus from the outside and put it on the inside to truly feel peace.

It's just like when you are thirsty. You can imagine drinking water. You can imagine the glass, the coolness, the clarity, and the sweetness of the water. But all this imagining is not going to take away your thirst. You need to drink the water. Once you have found the water, you don't have to imagine drinking it. What I offer is a practical means to be able to feel that peace within.

I tell people: Search. And if you don't find what you are looking for, I am available to help you.

My message is different because it is not about ideas. It is about feeling.

How is it possible for people who have suffered the effects of violence to make a fresh start? Do you believe forgiveness is possible? If so, how?

I think that when the ideals of people are greater than the sum of all the bad that has happened to them, they rise above

their anger, above their fear, to a place that can bring them true peace and tranquility. It is incumbent upon all of us to move toward that vision of peace. If we leave it to one person, it's not going to happen. We must all play our part in rising to the occasion and fulfilling the dreams we have.

When people have a vision of hope—not of violence or suffering, but of hope for a better life—they can rise above anything because that is also our nature. We love that which comes from deep within us, something that comes from our heart. Forgiveness has to come from the heart. And peace has to come from the heart. It's going to take a clear vision of peace for people to rise above their anger. Yes, I think forgiveness is possible.

You were born in India, and the Foundation that carries your name develops many humanitarian initiatives there. How do you view the future of your country?

I think the future of India is very bright. When people really come together,





what the catalyst is. Light a candle, and it will bring light. If you light gasoline, it will make big flames and possibly bring danger. The catalyst for true happiness is inside us. And the catalyst for incredible confusion and sadness is also within us. Ignorance will bring sadness; knowledge will bring joy and happiness. That's what we need to understand. We look for these catalysts on the outside, while we need to look for them within.

Thank you very much. It's been a great pleasure to talk with you.
Thank you.

The original article, which first appeared in Business & Class magazine in Spanish, has been edited for reprinting purposes.

amazing things can happen. India is a very old country with some very simple values. And one of those values is to move forward, to take the next step. Even though there is poverty and there is hunger, people help each other. People in India believe in each other. When people have that, no matter what they have gone through, they will have a bright future.

Do you think happiness can be attained?

Each person is born with an infinite mine of happiness. Inside of us, we have incredible sadness and incredible happiness. It depends on

