



Climate Justice and Food Security: Moral, Ethical and Spiritual Imperatives

Panel discussion arranged by:
**Caritas Internationalis, Religions for Peace and
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Perspectives from Sister Jayanti, panellist from
Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University

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Panellist Sister Jayanti, European Director of the *Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University*, which seeks to underline the spiritual origins of so many of the dilemmas facing our global community today:

From the spiritual perspective, human beings have been given this planet in trust as stewards. We hold our own life, our own body and all that there is on this planet in trust for the Divine. And it is only if we live according to His instructions that we can continue to experience happiness and harmony and generate an atmosphere of well-being for others too. Yet when we move away from those instructions, we invoke the chaos that can be witnessed today.

The first and foremost instruction is respect for the self, then, when we learn to respect ourselves, seeing each one as a spiritual being we become able then to respect other human beings around us and the animal kingdom and all forms of life as well as the planet, and nature itself.

One of the things missing from today's world is respect; on a personal level and also on all these aforementioned levels. It is essential to come back to that awareness of respect through the spiritual understanding of the self. This step would restore balance and harmony in a way that we desire and would be healthiest for all ecosystems.

We can only love our neighbour when we first learn to love ourselves.

When we can respect, we can also go further and experience love. We can only love our neighbour when we first learn to love ourselves. And loving the self, as a child of the Divine, means that we acknowledge what God has given us, not out of ego but with that pure innocence with which we can recognise that we are children of God.

And with the awareness of loving the self we could then love all neighbours and all other aspects of creation too. When there is respect and love automatically there will be non-violence.

There cannot be violence when there is respect and love.

Understanding this universal truth, we can see how all exploitation on the planet around us has spread from a lack of respect and love. And we see also how when we have forgotten our spiritual identity and come to the consciousness that identifies with matter, developing an entirely physically-focused consciousness. We have moved away from understanding and honouring the inner qualities of the self.

Spirituality doesn't mean isolation or moving in another dimension somewhere, but spirituality means understanding the self, understanding the relationship with the Divine and thereby also understanding our relationships with all other people.

Furthermore, when contemplating the morals and ethics of food, security and climate justice, we can see that when there is love and respect, these two basic factors allow the possibility of being able to share and care, and this is how compassion can enter all interactions with others.

Trying to solve all the problems just on a physical level has not succeeded. We have tried negotiations and treaties and all manner of strategies, but coming together as a world family and a spiritual family, as children of the one Divine, recognising our own responsibilities towards each other can make a huge difference. This step will emerge the compassion that is much needed in the world and allow us to share time, resources and aspirations with each other.

A change in consciousness does not happen through laws; change of consciousness is not facilitated by treaties. Our awareness must mature and produce conscious choice to act in ways that are fully cognisant of our ethical guardianship as trustees of Mother Earth.

The faith communities are in a position where they can influence huge numbers of people because their constituencies include vast groups of concerned citizens across the world. The BKWSU sees the imperative for people of faith to work together to create harmony and equitable access, that is, better world for all.

In our experience, as spiritual brothers and sisters, we know that our language has to change to include and manifest care and compassion in a culture of open sharing. The spirit of generosity must emerge if we are to step into times of greater prosperity and security for all people.

The BKWSU invites people to come together in spiritual understanding and awareness through the power of collective thought with this spiritual reflection:

*Aware of the inner being, the being of light and love, the spirit that I am,
I connect with the One Father, the Supreme, the Being of Light,
the Source of truth, of love, of compassion.
and through the recognition of spirit,
I know I am connected through an eternal bound of love
with each and every human being on this planet.
And in this awareness, we hold this planet in trust,
we share in remembrance of the Divine,
our thoughts of God's light, of God's love.
So that all human hearts may come together
and allow light and love to reach the animal kingdom and the world of nature.
The light restores harmony and the love heals.
So that there can be a renewal and transformation
and together we create a new world order of peace, of truth, of justice.*