

## **7. Love and serve**

THERE are many organisations in this country, established with the express purpose of promoting the welfare of the country, in the political, economic, educational, moral, and material fields. Many have social and religious affiliations, but, unless there is a spring of spiritual enthusiasm beneath the activity, a fervour fed by faith in God, they will be groping in the dark, holding in their hands lamps without flame. Light and Love, so essential for being really helpful to man, have to come from the recognition of spiritual kinship.

I find that the Rotary Club has as its aim the service of others, mainly, the amelioration of poverty, the alleviation of disease and the promotion of education. I have visited a large number of Rotary Clubs and Lions Clubs in India and across the sea, in East Africa. I have noted that they have as members, enterprising individuals, experts, rich men, highly educated persons of various professions, like law, medicine, engineering, architecture, trade, etc.

I find that you pay great attention to the cementing of friendship among yourselves, rather than expanding love outwards, to those who are hungry for it. You arrange dinner parties and picnics, where members are treated to costly feasts, more as a part of social convention, than to appease hunger. This is sheer exhibitionism and display. Instead, I would ask you to feed some hungry people, with the delicious dishes, people who have never had in their lives the joy of having eaten a full meal, not to speak of a rich meal.

### **Love grows with every gift of Love**

The point of view is most often warped; the direction in which thought flows is, how much can I get out; of all this, what benefit can I derive from membership, how beneficial it will be for my status, profession, contacts. This has to be changed full circle. The problem should be framed as: "How much can I give my fellowmen through this membership? What can I contribute to the fulfilment of its ideals?"

All are eager to take, none is earnest about giving. The reason is absence of Love, love that transcends caste, creed, colour, and the fences erected: by man between man. Fill the heart with Love, and distribute that Love to all. Love grows with every gift; of Love; the heart that pours out love is ever full. God is there as Love and you are only drawing on Him, when you are sharing love with others.

Expansion is love, is life. Contraction is death, is hate. Pray for the good of all, crave for the prosperity of all, not of one person or party, or nation. The craving for power if it afflicts any one person degenerates into a mania, and it brings in its wake, great confusion and calamity. Be servants, not masters. How can one be happy, putting another into the humiliation of attending to one's personal comforts--this is what I cannot understand. Try as much as possible to avoid this painful contingency.

### **How long can a nation subsist on alms?**

The people of this country are suffering from poverty, disease, and want of proper education. Clubs such as this can render intelligent help, supplying food and medicine. I find that you are also providing wells in villages where there is at present no adequate supply of drinking water. Instead of duplicating services already being carried on by Governmental agencies, I shall be happy if you select areas where such agencies do not operate; as also, select activities that are specially yours, where your contribution will be thankfully appreciated.

Bhaarath is now standing before the doorsteps of other nations with the begging bowl, for even the most essential day-to-day need of food! This is because, farmers concentrate on cash crops, rather than food crops. How long can a nation subsist; on alms? This nation has another series of food crops too, which have been neglected, in the rush for growing cash crops. They are the *Upanishaths*, the Geetha, the Bhaagavatha. They have been neglected; man is not cultivating them and reaping the harvest of peace and joy that can fill his inner granary.

*Vedha* and *Shaasthra* are the two eyes of *Bhaaratha Maatha* (Mother India). Through neglect, her eyes are now as bad as gone. She is now struggling to see through American eyes or Russian eyes or Chinese eyes! See through the Self, the eyes that the Self activates; for, the Self knows best your utmost need.

In Clubs and similar Associations, the President or Chairman is the heart and the members constitute the body. The heart must pump enthusiasm and the body must transform it into useful activity. There must be wholehearted co-operation and faith. Doctor members must visit the slum areas once a week; they must be at the consulting centre, at the same time, every week. Be punctual and regular, sweet and courteous. If you talk with a smile, the tablet will act more efficiently.

### **Learn the ways of acquiring peace of mind**

Lawyers can help the poor, by drafting documents according to rules; now, most of litigation is due to faulty drafting. They can also point out to the villagers and the poor how the various Governmental agencies are prepared to help them; they can instruct them about the methods of securing that help. Ignorance of the assistance offered is leading many grants to lapse, and many a good intention to evaporate into nothing.

This length of cloth has such strength, because a large number of thin threads have joined systematically, with disciplined determination, into one new entity, called cloth. A single thread cannot stand the pull of an ant; but, many stranded together can hold back an elephant in rut! Indiscipline, factionalism and recrimination are the bane of all associations in this country. Every one is plotting for the promotion of his own interests, whether he deserves or not.

Instead of inviting important persons to spin platitudes and their own pet prejudices, I suggest that you can well listen to spiritual discourses from learned and experienced people. They can give you the secret of equipoise, the ways of acquiring balance and peace of mind and the means of enjoying unadulterated bliss. I also desire that you should encourage the use by members of *saathwik* (pure) food and the avoidance of intoxicating drinks. It is demeaning the high role of man; it is pitiable to see a man under the influence of drink. Do not put tender minds on the path which leads to moral and physical tragedy. Drink milk or yogurt; eat fruits and nuts. They generate constructive, virtuous spiritual thoughts.

I suggest that you start *Baala Vihaars* (cultural centres for toddlers), and the very young. Provide them inspiration to understand and live by the culture of this ancient land. Schools are not at present eager or willing to do this. So children grow up, dehydrated, and torn from the roots. They sing of Jack and Jill, not of Raama and Seetha. They know the robin and the raven, not the crow and the peacock. Children are moving about, like cars with no brakes. Boys and girls are growing up, resentful of constraint and treating elders with contempt. Demonstrate to the young the joy one can derive through service, let them learn the technique of timely service and be eager and ready to speed with service, wherever it is needed---in times of flood, fire, famine, and

festivals where the sick and the old require special care. Money spent for training youth for this kind of loving service is well spent.

Do not feel that I am a stranger, doling out advice. All are mine, those who serve and those who render service. I belong to all. Like flowers of many species and colours and fragrances, you have come together to make up a garland, for the adoration of God. Fulfil that great mission. That is my blessing to you today.

*Ananthapur, 18-1-1971*