

1. Nut and bolt

TODAY is an auspicious day, for the New Year is welcomed with great expectations and the old year is given a grand farewell, on this holy day. Every year, man has been bidding farewell to the old year and giving welcome to the new year; this has been going on since the history of man began. But, what is the net result? Only despair and distress, anxiety and insane fear! This is an occasion to inquire and discover why it has been so.

Everyone seeks and strives to be at peace with himself and with society (the community in which he has to live) and find his fulfilment. He has tried to get this peace, by accumulating wealth, which gives him power over others and the ability to command the conveniences and comforts which will confer peace. He has sought to hoist himself to positions of authority and influence so that he can shape events suited to his aims and fancies. But, he has realised that both these paths are beset with fear, and the peace that he secures thereby is liable to quick and sometimes violent extinction.

How then can man achieve peace? Only through Love! *Shaanthi* (peace) is the fruit of the tree of life; without it, the tree is a barren stump. It has no value or validity. The fruit is encased in a bitter skin, you must have noticed, so that the sweet juice may be preserved and guarded against marauders; you have to remove the skin, before tasting the sweetness within, and strengthening yourself. The thick rind is symbolic of the six evil passions that encase the loving heart of man: lust, anger, greed, attachment, pride and hate. Those who can remove the rind and contact the sweetness within, through hard consistent discipline attain the peace we all desire; that peace is everlasting, unchanging, overwhelming.

Reason for insecurity stalking the land

Of what avail is a car, a bank deposit, a bungalow in a posh extension in this City? If you have all these but no love in your heart, the heart becomes a dark deserted temple, where the bats of lust and anger breed in everlasting night. Such hearts are foul, diseased with terror and error.

We have this vast gathering of the workers of the Kamaani Organisations, in the various fields of Kamaani enterprises. The Industrial, the Agricultural, the Mercantile, the Political and the Administrative---these are like the five vital airs that sustain activity in man. These five must not be at loggerheads; they must work in unison, prompted by love and mutual respect. Then only can the community have peace, security and happiness. If they do not understand each other and co-operate, or if any one of them strays away into a cross-road, disaster is inevitable.

This co-operation is unfortunately not visible at the present time. Factional interests, on the other hand, are predominant and the competitive struggle is on, in all fields---in labour, politics, administration, commerce and agriculture! That is the reason why anxiety and insecurity stalk the land, both in rural and urban areas, and people have to go about their business, with death or disaster threatening them round every corner! An ominous uncertainty shadows them, at every turn. And, human thought turns to violence and revolution, as the obvious cure.

Duty is God; Work is Worship

But, that can never cure; it can only worsen the illness. Excitement blinds the reasoning faculty. Passion, violence, and cruelty create more problems, without solving any. These are now flooding the land as a deluge; persons who have no training and no sincere yearning to bear responsibility and discharge the obligations of office are raised to positions of authority. Ability

as well as willingness to discharge duties and to bear burdens---these alone entitle men to hold authority over others. Duty is God; Work is Worship. The power that office confers has to be handled with that attitude of gratefulness and reverence.

If this is remembered and practised by every worker, however placed, wherever placed, work will give happiness, contentment and peace, both to the person concerned and to the society of which he is a limb. The *Kamanis* erect transmission towers all over the country. It is only when each nut and bolt is fixed fast and firm, faithfully, that the towers can stand up to the rigorous test of wind and weather, isn't it? Who can say, how can we judge, whose share in the erection is more important and whose is less? The work of each is essential and valuable, so far as his share of the responsibility extends. Having the skill and the willingness to carry out that share of the responsibility is his title to that position, in the common enterprise. You cannot declare one item of work as high and another item as low. That will only engender malice and hate. And it is not correct, either.

Each one must use his skill and intelligence

A man sees while going along a road, a ripe fruit, on a tree by the side. The mind craves for the fruit, but that by itself cannot fulfil that craving. The feet take him near the tree. But, that does not bring about the consummation. The trunk stoops, the hand picks up a stone, the shoulders throw the stone at the fruit, and the fruit falls on the ground. But that does not end the story. The fruit has to be picked up by the fingers, transferred into the mouth, the teeth have to bite into it, and masticate it well and the tongue has to take charge in order to make it reach the stomach. The eating part of the task is thus over.

But, that does not end the story of the craving for the fruit. Since so many instruments co-operated in the fulfilment, gratitude has to be rendered to each of them. So, the stomach sends strength and satisfaction to every limb that shared in the adventure of securing the fruit and eating it---the eye, the feet, the hands, the fingers, the shoulder, the tongue, the teeth, the gullet. No one of them is neglected or discriminated against.

Each limb must act effectively at the exact juncture to meet the duty entrusted to it and accepted by it, so that the body may live in health and in tip-top efficiency, alert with all its skills and potentialities. This is true also of the enterprises which man undertakes with others of his kind. Each one must resolve to use his skill and intelligence for the discharge of his obligations.

The more love is shared, the deeper it becomes

Man has not come into this world to strut about for a while on the stage, consuming food and gaily gallivanting. Man comes into the world so that he may bask in the Presence of God, through the exercise of love and the cultivation of love. The earth is a great enterprise, a busy factory, where the product is love. By means of *Saadhana* (spiritual practice), it is possible to produce love and export it to millions and millions of people, in need of it. The more it is shared the deeper it becomes, the sweeter its taste, and the vaster the joy. By means of love, one can approach God and stay in his presence, for God is love, and when one lives in love, he is living in Go. If you deny Go angrily, you are drying up the strings of love in your heart. If you declaim that God is nowhere, you are installing night in your heart and making it ready for dark schemes and misdeeds.

Once upon a time, a monk wearing the ochre robe chanced to enter a village full of atheists; he fell in with a gang of defiant youth who challenged him to show them that the God whom he was adoring actually existed. He said, he can; but before doing so, he asked for a cup of milk.

When the milk was placed before him, he did not drink it; but, sat, looking at it, long and silently, with increasing curiosity. The youth became impatient; their clamour became insistent. The monk told them, "Wait a minute, I am told that there is butter in milk; but, I must say, this cup does not have it, for, I do not see any of it, however hard I look into it!" The fellows laughed at his innocence and said, "Silly man! Don't rush into such absurd conclusions.

Milk has butter in every drop; that is what makes it so nourishing. If you must see it as a separate concrete entity, you have to boil the milk, cool it, add sour curd, wait for some hours for it to curdle, then, churn it, and roll the butter that floats into a ball." "Ah," said the monk, "that makes my task of showing you God much easier! God is in every thing, being, atom of the Universe; it is because of this that they exist, and we can recognise them and enjoy them. To see Him as a concrete entity, you have to follow a prescribed procedure, earnestly, strictly and sincerely. Then, at the end of it all, you can experience His Grace and His Glory."

The Divine is everywhere, near and far

The nature we have around us and with us is the vesture of God. We have evidence of His Beauty, Goodness, Wisdom and Power, all around us, wherever we turn our eyes. But, the art of recognising Him is strange to us and so, we deny Him, and live on in darkness. We have all around us in the atmosphere the music emanating from all the broadcasting stations of the world, but they do not assail your ear at any time. You are not aware of any station. But, if you have a receiver, and if you tune it to the correct wave-length, you can hear the matter broadcast from any particular station; if you fail to tune it correctly, you will get, instead of news, only nuisance! So too, the Divine is everywhere above, around, below, beside; near as well as far. For cognising it, you require not a *yantra* (machine) but a *mantra* (mystical formula, potent with psychological undertone). *Dhyaana* (meditation) is the fixing of the exact location of the station in the band; love is the correct tuning in; realising the reality and the bliss it confers is the happy clear listening!

Work in the spirit of love; it leads you on to Worship, that is to say, work without any regard to the proportion of benefit you derive from it; work, since it is your duty; work, since you love to work, work since that is the way you can offer God the gratitude for the skills God has endowed upon you. This kind of work leads to wisdom. Wisdom means the recognition of the immanence of the Divine in every being.

Habits of discipline alone can ensure happiness

The relationship between the worker and the employer should be that between the heart and the body. Both are bound intimately with each other; they depend on each other for their very existence. The employer must take upon himself the role of the father and the employees must accept the role of the children, attached by love and gratitude to the father. Love and affection have to govern the relations between the two, not hatred or envy. If the anger and irreverence of a few are allowed to blind the rest, all will suffer.

In the Community Hall inaugurated by Me just now, I want weekly or monthly *bhajan* (group singing of spirituals) sessions and *sathsang* (spiritually oriented) gatherings. Arrange some good

Aadhyathmic (spiritual) talk or discussions, on these occasions. I desire also that you should run a *Baala Vihaar* for your children, where they will learn stories from the scriptures, the epics and the lives of saints belonging to all religions. Children must also be taught habits of cleanliness and mutual help and co-operation. They can also be taught to sing *bhajan* songs and enact little plays on themes selected from classics. They will also learn habits of discipline, for, these alone can ensure happiness, individual and social.

Embodiments of the Divine Spirit! I am happy to meet all of you. May the New Year grant you mental peace and may your life's ideal of self-realisation be fulfilled. May all comforts and full contentment be added unto you. That is my blessing.

Kurla, Bombay, 1-1-1971

The place has a subtle and powerful influence on the man. Maarkandeya held tight the Shiva-linga and so, Yama's noose bound both himself and Shiva; that was the reason the boy was saved.

The story teaches you to be ever in contact with God, for you do not know when the noose will be thrown.

Attach yourself to the Highest, call it by any name, conceive it in any form. But, remember, without Dharma you cannot attain it.

Sri Sathya Sai