

9. Bhagavan's advice to villagers

MORE than economic development or provision of amenities, what is important in the reconstruction of our villages is the raising of the quality of life of the villagers and developing their moral and spiritual values.

Jnaana (spiritual knowledge) is regarded as the primary requisite for man. But what is really primary is his conduct--righteous conduct. One's conduct determines one's qualities and the qualities, in their turn, determine one's behaviour. All are God's children and are equally entitled to the love of the Lord.

Why, then, are there differences among men? Why is there no equality or sameness? This is because of differences in the mental make-up of people. If the mind is impure, one's actions are bound to be impure. When the mind and the consciousness are warped by egoism, the human behaviour is also distorted. When these are turned towards the Divine, good actions follow naturally. The mind is the cause of good and bad deeds.

Hence, whatever we wish to achieve, we should try to accomplish without excitement or agitation. For a human being, the important qualities are *sathya*, *dharma*, *shaanthi* and *prema* (truth, righteousness, peace and love). The villages are very backward today. To remove this backwardness, the first requisite is unity in the village. Villagers must be helpful to each other. If any one is afflicted with pain, all others should feel that they are equally affected. If the village is considered as a body, all the households in it are different limbs of the body. Harm to any part is to be treated as harm to the whole. Villagers should learn to speak sweetly and pleasantly. A harsh word can cause lasting damage. "If the foot slips, only the leg is injured; but if the tongue slips, one may go to hell," says the proverb.

Unity should be the watchword of villagers

The villagers must eschew hatred and discord. The village can prosper only when the villagers develop mutual love and cooperation. There may be differences between individuals. But these should not affect common action in the interests of the village as a whole. Unity should be their watchword. Through unity anything can be accomplished.

It is unfortunate that politics has invaded rural life and promoted conflicts and divisions among the rural population. This is not good for you. You must all make your village an ideal village by banishing factions and other differences. You must suppress your ego and pride. There is no basis for this pride when you realise that life is impermanent and all one's possessions may be taken away in one moment. Raavana made Lanka greater than *Swarga* (heaven) itself. But his egoistic arrogance brought about his fall. Similar has been the fate of arrogant men like Kamsa and Sisupaala. All of them courted destruction. The Kauravas met with disaster because of their arrogance. People should cultivate humility.

The villagers should avoid idle gossip and wasting their time in useless pursuits. I desire that you should build up your village as an example to the country by your unity, mutual cooperation and integrity.

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The Lord has declared in the Geetha that He is Sarvabhuutha-antharaathma---"the Inner Reality of all beings." Try to be ever in the awareness of this Unity in God; this is the one truth that has to be seen, experienced and announced; this is the soundest basis for individual and social life. This will serve as an unshakable foundation for your international outlook.

Sri Sathya Sai