

24. Honour the mother

THE mother's lap is the school for every man. It is his first temple. The mother is every man's primary wealth. To recognise this truth about one's mother is the duty of every person. There is no higher god than the mother. The father is one's treasure; the mother is his god. Instead of valuing such precious wealth and divinity, men engage themselves in all kinds of activities to acquire riches and positions. The father and the mother are inseparable like the word and its meaning. Everyone should cherish one's parents as embodiments of the Divine. The mother and father may be physically separate, but spiritually they are one.

Even the distinction between man and women relates only to the physical body. The Indwelling Spirit in both of them is the same divine. In fact, every human being can be divided into two constituents. One is the body. The other is the *Aathma* (Divine Self). Hunger, thirst, sleep, work, etc., are qualities derived from the body. Truth, forbearance, sympathy, love and other qualities originate from the *Aathma*. If the truth is gone into, it will be seen that man is not the body, though he identifies himself with it. The physical body is common to all living beings. It is made up of the same five elements. It is subject to decay and death. Food, sleep, reproduction are common to all living things. It is the Indwelling Spirit in man that is immortal. That Spirit is Divine. Man strives hard in many ways to acquire worldly things. But he will not make the sacrifice needed to realise his Divinity.

Role of women is crucial in cultivation of basic qualities

We see in the world today disorder, violence and conflict. The world is like a sick man afflicted with many ailments. What is the cure for these ills? Man must shed his selfishness, greed and other bad qualities and rise above his animal nature. He must cultivate Charity (unselfishness) to achieve Purity. Through purity of hearts, men will achieve Unity, which will lead to Divinity. The mansion of human life should be built on these four bases.

In the cultivation of these basic qualities, the role of women is crucial. Only dedicated mothers can offer to the nation children who will strive for a great future for the country. Truth, sacrifice and peace are predominant qualities in women. Women are concerned about the purity and welfare of the community. When his son · Abhimanyu died in the Kurukshethra war, Arjuna lamented that the war had been fought in vain as there was no one to inherit the kingdom. Subhadra, however, felt grieved that the death of a son while the parents were alive was the precursor of the *Kali Age*. She recalled that in the days of Raama no mother had to mourn the loss of a son.

While the father's love was related to mundane desires, the mother's love was related to spiritual concerns. It is such broad-minded mothers who are needed today. Good mothers are more essential than good wives. A good wife is of value only to her husband. A good mother is a national asset. From ancient times, Indian scriptures have glorified the examples of great women like Maithreyi, Seetha, Saavithri. Their lives continue to be a source of inspiration to this day. We cannot afford to forget them.

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Be always saturated with prema; do not use poisonous words against any one, for, words wound more fatally than even arrows. Speak soft and sweet; sympathise with suffering and loss and ignorance; try your best to apply the salve of soothing word and timely succour. Do not damage the faith of any one in virtue and divinity.

Encourage others to have that faith by demonstrating in your own life that virtue is its own reward, that divinity is all-pervasive and all-powerful.

Sri Sathya Sai