

## 24. Not salaries but service

*EMBODIMENTS of Love!* The educational system today prepares students for pursuing worldly gains and comforts, but makes no attempt to cultivate in them the qualities of righteousness, love of peace and promotion of social welfare. Both students and educationists are mainly concerned about using education for getting jobs and earning large incomes. What kind of life do they lead in their earning, career? After a so-called hard day's work, they spend their evenings in clubs, imagining that they get peace and rest there. If they wanted real peace they should have it in their homes. In the clubs they spend their time playing cards and having "bottles." Is this commendable? Does this benefit persons calling themselves educated? Far from it. Not only do they ruin themselves this way, but also ruin their families.

Instead of falling a prey to such pernicious habits, the educated should use their knowledge for the improvement of society and thereby redeem their lives. Addiction to drink makes a man ultimately a slave of the bottle.

### **Man's debt to God**

Man is the beneficiary of innumerable gratuitous gifts of God: wind, rain, sunlight and so on. What gratitude is man showing to God for all these, while he is paying a big price for every small benefit he derives from services like water supply and electric power? God is the provider of all that is essential for life. What recompense is man making to God? On the contrary he goes on praying for more benefits. This insatiable desire is the cause of all man's evil qualities. The truly human qualities are calmness, forbearance and compassion. Man should lead a contented life.

God has given to man a wonderfully beautiful world, with mountains, forests, rivers and the glorious moon. Above all, God has endowed man with a compassionate heart. But he is polluting it. What is it that man owes to God for all his gifts? The ancient sages called it *bali* (sacrificial offering). The term *bali* has been misunderstood as the offer of an animal as sacrifice. The right meaning of *bali* is tax.

Many such terms are often given wrong meanings in common usage. For instance, the term *Shikhandi* is interpreted as referring to a hermaphrodite (one who is neither a man nor a woman). The true meaning, however, is "one who wears a peacock feather." The term is applied to Krishna.

What is the *bali* (tax) to be paid to God? Only the expression of our gratitude by a heartfelt prayer. That prayer is an expression of one's joy and thankfulness. The hands should be lifted in prayer and the words should come out full-throated. It is unfortunate that even those who are gifted with good voices do not sing aloud in *bhajans*. Man has been endowed with a tongue to sing the praise of God. If he fails to do so, he remains indebted to God.

The right attitude of the devotee should be one of total surrender. As one devotee declared: "I am offering to you the heart which you gave me. I have nothing I can call my own. All are yours. I offer to you what is yours. What else can I do?" This was the spirit in which Lakshmana served Raama. As long as this spirit of total surrender is not developed, man will have to be born again and again. One should offer one's heart to the Divine, and not be content with offerings like flowers, and fruits.

You should offer your knowledge for the benefit of the people. You should set an example to your fellowmen. Cultivate the spirit of oneness of all mankind. It is to teach this message that the Sai advent has taken place. Sai has come to indicate the omnipresence of God. The *Avathaar* has come down to declare that God is present everywhere. This is as necessary as the need for some one to light a lamp even if you have a lamp holder, oil and wick. The *Avathaar* comes not only to proclaim the eternal virtues but also to shower His love on all mankind. But each one will get the benefit according to the size of the vessel he holds.

*Discourse in the Sai Kulwant Mandap on 1-7-1996.*