

Primacy of Spiritualism over Materialism

All the problems of our times including poverty, terrorism, religious or linguistic fanaticism, environmental degradation, regional jingoism and the like are in one way or the other related to the human beings' penchant for more and more acquisitions of the ersatz and hollow values of life which they have themselves created. And while we are all engaged in this mutually internecine chase, we lose our peace and happiness in this world. The human life, which could have been a positive sum game, ends up in a negative sum game. The race for one-upmanship and material successes at the expense of one another dehumanises all of us, leaving behind the hateful and disgusting worldly scenes, incidents and events that we come across every day in our day-to-day life.

And believe it or not, this sense of deprivation/privation or dissatisfaction is the fount of all our progress and further growth. Now it completely depends on us as to how do we treat our dissatisfaction. We can definitely ensure that in our bid to realise our dreams and aspirations, we do not ride roughshod over someone else's dreams or try to achieve the same by unjustly depriving someone else of his/her rightful deserts. Honesty in our thoughts and conduct shall ensure the peaceful and sublime co-existence of humans in this world. The enlightened ones rightly believe that all our woes and sorrows betide us as an effect of a human behaviour which is diametrically opposite of what should be ideally happening.

While the concept of ethics and moralities has varied over time and space, the basic ethos has always remained the same, i.e., we ought to live our life without hurting another's. In our bid to occupy more and more space for ourselves in any walk of life, we ought not to deprive our fellow human being of their legitimate space. And if by the grace of God or destiny, we happen to be in an advantageous position to help someone find that space, we ought to do that immediately as God/destiny has trusted us more by putting us in a position to be able to do so. We ought to thank God for the same and carry out the role bestowed on us as his 'chosen ones'. That is what people like Mahatma Gandhi meant when they talked about the concept of 'Trusteeship'.

After all, living for ourselves, an epicurean and hedonistic life, makes us no different from the animals who have no power of rational thinking, mental and emotional faculties. They

live just for themselves and when they live for others, they are forced into the same by the humans. So, while we live, we should live a life, sublime and humane, something that would differentiate us from the animals. We should never forget that life on earth is evanescent, not permanent. We should make the hay while the sun shines, i.e., we should realise the true purpose of life by enjoying the same in an uplifting manner. We ought to live our life in a manner as to be a beacon to brighten others' lives, by eradicating darkness from their lives.

We ought to take advantage of our human life to share our goodies by helping the fellow human beings in whatever way we can. Here, honesty in thought is more important than the actual outcome. We should ensure that we live in perfect peace and harmony as far as we can. As they say, many of us live as we would never die and many of us die, as we never lived. We should, at least, ensure that when we die we do not regret having lived a wrong life, having hurt someone knowingly or having behaved unjustly or of having deprived someone of something. If we cannot do a good to someone, we should, at least, ensure that we don't depart from this world by earning curses from the fellow human beings. How many people feel sorry at our demise and how many of them remember us fondly and positively even after our death point to our real acquisitions we leave behind in this world.

While we may not know for sure anything or something about the life after death or there actually being a heaven out there in the ethereal world, let's treat this world as a testing centre to find out the best of human beings amongst us. We should, therefore, try to amass as much goodwill as possible for deserving the best and also because that is the only thing that eventually goes with us. Our presence in this world is like a stone thrown in the water. The strength of the impact with which the stone is hurled into the water determines how bigger the resultant circle shall be.

Likewise, the bigger the circle of our goodness and goodwill as a result of our being in this world, the surer shall be our attainment of the eternal bliss. It is believed by many that God has all sent us to this world with a divine purpose—a purpose to excel positively and to make the earthly life better with our goodness. After all, if the world was fine the way it is, there was no need for us in this world. So, we should all try to discover the divine purpose of our existence in this world and we should all ensure that while leave this world, we leave behind deeply-etched sublime footprints on the sands of time.

However, as said above, the disharmony and disquiet in this world are the ways of the God to test our mettle. Life would really be just dull and drab if everything were to be like a fairy-tale. The injustices and vices seen around us are God's ways to find out His best souls. After all, everything has a price. If 'good' is better than 'bad', it must have a price. A perfume is the result of the painful squeezing undergone by hundreds and thousands of flowers.

Now it's up to us to decide as to what kind of life we want to live and what reputation do we want to leave behind when we finally kick the bucket. Notwithstanding destiny's micro-planning, we can still make or unmake the kind of life we want to lead in this world with our positive thoughts and humility accompanied by untiring efforts. Our positive thoughts are always backed, supported and reinforced by the inscrutable ways of the destiny, which we may like to call God, the Almighty.

Salient Points

- The race for material successes at the expense of one another dehumanises us.
- The dissatisfaction is the fount of all our progress and further growth.
- Honesty in our thoughts and conduct shall ensure peaceful co-existence of humans in this world.
- While occupying more space for ourselves, we ought not to deprive fellow human beings of their legitimate space.
- We should live a life, sublime and humane, something that would differentiate us from the animals.
- If the world was fine the way it is, there was no need for us in this world.
- Disharmony and disquiet in this world are the ways of the God to test our mettle.

Glossary

Ersatz: artificial

Penchant: strong liking for something

Internecine: destructive to both sides in a conflict

To ride roughshod: to do something without caring for others

Trusteeship: the concept that our success makes us trustee for the weak and meek

Evanescent: transitory

Hedonistic: engaged in the pursuit of pleasure

Epicurean: a person devoted to sensual enjoyment