

3. Ceiling on desires---I

MEMBERS appear to be confused about the true meaning of this programme of "Ceiling on Desires" decided on at the Tenth All India Conference of Sathya Sai Organisations. There are four components in the term "Ceiling on Desires." They are, respectively; curb on excessive talk, curb on excessive desires and expenditure, control of consumption of food, check on waste of energy. Man needs some essential commodities for his sustenance and he should not aspire for more. We can learn a lesson in this respect from Nature. Only if air is available in sufficient quantity will it be comfortable and good. If it is excessive and there is a gale you will feel uncomfortable. When you are thirsty; you can consume only a limited quantity of water. You can't consume the entire water of the Ganga! We take only as much as is needed for the sustenance of the body.

Doctors know that the body temperature is normally 98.4. If this goes up to 99 they say fever has set in due to some disorder in the body. We inhale and exhale at a normal rate. If there is a slight increase or decrease in the rate it indicates disorder in the body. Changes in the pulse rate or blood pressure also indicate disorder. So you find that if you cross the limits even to a little extent it is dangerous or harmful to the body. There is a limit for everything to function in a normal way. When your eyes happen to see a flash of lightning or a flash light while taking photographs, they automatically close because they can't withstand such high illumination. Ear drums also cannot tolerate hearing beyond a certain volume and we close our ears or keep cotton inside the ears. From these we see that our life is a *limited company!*

Misuse of money is a great evil

Similarly our desires also should be limited. Women are usually desirous of adding to their wardrobe any number of sarees when they go to a shop or an exhibition. You should have a reasonable number of sarees, but not a huge collection for pomp or show. Misuse of money is a great evil. Even men will have to do their own bit in controlling the expenditure on unwanted and unnecessary things. Money is *Dhaivaswaroopam* (embodiment of Divinity). When you talk of wealth you should be careful to avoid avaricious accumulation and extravagant expenditure. Even in the preparation of food, you should be careful in avoiding wastage. We are only doing a disservice by consuming more food than what is necessary for the body.

Thirdly, you should be careful about 'time', which is the yardstick of life. Seconds become hours, hours become years, years make *yugas* (ages) and so on. You should not waste this most valuable 'time'. Time lost in wasteful pursuits can't be got back by any means. All our activities should be planned for utilising the available time to maximum advantage. So, we should not waste food, money, time and energy. Even in purchase of garlands, you need not waste money. What God wants is the flower of your heart that is filled with humility and devotion. Eight types of flowers can be offered to God, viz, (1) *Ahimsa* (Non-violence), (2) *Indhriya Nigraha* (Control of senses), (3) *Sarvabhootha Dhaya* (Compassion towards all beings), (4) *Sathyam* (Truth), (5) *Dhyaanam* (Meditation), (6) *Shaanthi* (Peace), (7) *Vinaya* (Humility), (8) *Bhakthi* (Devotion).

God appreciates only your motive

I feel very much concerned about the excessive money that is spent by the Trust and Samithi on the expensive huge garlands offered to Me on every occasion and also the use of flowers for decorating the path. No doubt you are doing this as an expression of your *Aanandha* (Divine bliss). But I won't call this *Bhakthi* (devotion), though you may not own this. We should realise

our defects and rectify them. You may show your affection by just handing over one flower and spend the money wasted on garlands for helping the poor people in distress.

People may think that Baba will not like it if flower paths are not provided and huge garlands are not offered. You must understand that God appreciates only your motive and not the external things. By indulging in such exhibitionism, you will only spoil the name of the organisation. As a member of Sathya Sai Organisation you should have no sense of ego or pride. As I have often said you should have your "Hands in society **and** heads in the forest". This should be your guiding principle. What little you do you must do with a good and pure heart.

In the *Bhagavathgeetha*, Krishna has referred to "*Pathram, Phalam, Pushpam, Thoyam*" (that is, leaf, fruit, flower or water) that can be offered to God. I am pleased with any of these provided it is offered with sincere devotion. What is '*pathram*'? It is not the 'leaf' that you see around you. The inner meaning is that your body itself is the leaf. Flower is not the one in the plants but it is the flower of your heart, "*Hridhaya Pushpam*". '*Phalam*' is not the ordinary fruit but '*Manophalam*' (the fruit of your mind). '*Thoyam*' means water but what is referred to here is not the water from the river or tap. It refers to the tears of joy welling up within you from a sincere and prayerful heart.

Transform yourselves into better individuals

Moreover you should not only practise yourself but teach others also about this ceiling on desires. Though Naaraayana is in everyone, the one in the poor people is referred to as "*Dharidhra Naaraayana*". When this Naaraayana begs for food, you refuse to give him food while you offer food to another person who is already well-fed. You place before God's pictures a lot of food of rich variety as '*Naivedhyam*' (offering). You do this because you know very well that this is coming back to you. So, here too it is '*Swaartham*' (self-interest) and not '*Thyaagam*' (sacrifice) The *amrithathwa* (immortality) or *Moksha* (Liberation) will come out of *thyaagam*.

We have Seva Dhal, Bhajan Mandalis, and other Wings. It is a good sign that more and more youngsters are coming forward to join the Seva Dhal and take part in service activities. The participation of youth is necessary for the welfare of the world. We should rejoice when they turn over a new leaf in their life. There is a common saying that you should not rejoice and distribute sweets etc. when a child is born, but you should do so only when the son grows up and earns a good name as a '*Sathputhra*' (good son). You can't please Me just by joining as a member of the organisation. I shall wait for the day when you turn over a new leaf and transform yourselves into better individuals. You should become '*Guna-sheelas*' (persons of sterling character and good qualities).

It is the code of conduct which is responsible for the organisation moving forward growing from strength to strength. The office-bearers should exercise maximum care to see that the code of conduct is adhered to and guide others also in the right path. When a cook in a house works with integrity the master on his own will entrust him with the keys of the house. Similarly, God also will appreciate only men with integrity. The desire to please God should be the fundamental motive.

Discourse to active workers of the

Sri Sathya Sai Organisations, Tamil Nadu at Abbotsbury, Madras, 19 January 1983

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.

Sri Sathya Sai