

April 6, 2013

Conversations with self-34

The value of togetherness

T. T. Srinath

The famous Muslim ruler Alauddin Khilji was once waging a war on a seemingly united Rajput fortification. In the evening, after sundown, when truce had been called for the day, Khilji was watching the enemy encampment from afar. He noticed smoke rising from several tents, so he asked his minister why this was so. The minister told him that no one caste would eat with another; hence, food was being separately prepared. Khilji in utter joy remarked, "If that is so, we have already won the war," and he did.

Each of us believes he or she can build our lives independently, without another's help. This can never be so. At work I need my colleagues to support me. At home I need my family's support.

If we learn to be less selfish and allow others to assist us, just as we can help them, the togetherness will yield much more. In our attempt to demonstrate our independence, we lose sight of the benefits of interdependence. Can I, therefore, allow people into my life? Can I draw on them, just as they can draw on me? If this happens our lives will be bereft of loneliness.

The famous English poet Shelley said:

'Nothing in the world is single;

All things by a law divine

In one another's being mingle;

Why not I with thine?'

(The writer is an organisational and behavioural consultant. He can be contacted at ttsrinath@vsnl.net)