

Conversations with self

What makes a gift?- T. T. Srinath



Every act of kindness shown, and every gesture of help and support given is a gift. Yet, we look only for large recognisable gifts as contributions to our wellbeing.

There is a well-quoted story of a man seeking God. Yet, when God appears he does not recognise him. “Lord! I want to see you,” said a man. There was lightning, then thunder. The man got scared. He said, “Lord! Touch me”. A mosquito sat on his shoulder, and he quickly swatted it. Such is the way we reject gifts.

Learn to look around

Gifts come couched in many forms. We often regret what we have not got and unmet desires. When we dwell on these, we become restless and impatient. This obscures the gifts in front of us.

We must learn to turn away from ourselves and look at others — we will feel less obsessed.

If we distract ourselves and look at what is around us, we distance ourselves from regret and appreciate the bounty of life — the flowers in bloom, the watchman who opens the door, the driver who lets us pass when we are in a hurry, the co-passenger who allows us to board the railway compartment when in a rush, the vegetable vendor who smiles at our purchase; many such acts of kindness that we miss in our attempt to look at what we do not have than what we do.

We must therefore train ourselves to focus on what we have, for, in doing so, what we don't have becomes less important.

What people do

This story says it all: A young boy once asked his mother to show him God. The mother was at a loss. Being a Sunday, she packed his lunch box and sent him off to play in the nearby park. In the park, the child met an old woman who, like him, had come to spend the day at the

park. The old lady and the young boy got talking. In the evening, the old woman returned to her house as did the young boy.

The boy's mother asked the young lad, "What did you do today, son?" Prompt came the reply: "I saw God and she is an old woman".

The old lady, on returning to her house, was quizzed by her daughter: "What did you do today, ma?" The lady replied: "I saw God, and he is a little boy."

Such recognition of the gifts of life make for peace and happiness.

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