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Self-Appraisal Will Bring You Light and Success

Self-appraisal, self-examination, self-analysis or what psychologists call self-introspection are the facets of the same device to evaluate oneself. We assess and evaluate others on different parameters and indicators and pass judgement on them, but we forget to do the same exercise with ourselves, with the result that we miss what we ought not to miss, the basic truths about ourselves and the world. We blame others for the slightest aberrations on their part but turn a blind eye to our own faults and foibles which we also, along with others, are subject to. When we start doing the exercise of self appraisal or self examination in a sincere and faithful manner, we find that we are grossly suffering from so many aberrations. When this truth dawns on us, we become an enlightened soul and enable ourselves to expand our mental, intellectual and spiritual horizon and begin to identify ourselves with our fellow beings and discover the same divine fire in all human beings, that sustains the creation. An attitude of generosity, love, compassion and tolerance is required to successfully undertake this exercise. Blessed with these attributes, one finds that there is no basic difference between one human being and the other and the whole world begins to appear to us as one single whole. It is the greatest spiritual achievement which really brings light, enlightenment and also worldly success which all of us hanker after. This is a difficult exercise indeed but is worth trying for. Try to do it and you will find that you are spiritually uplifted, the degree of success depending upon the measure of the effort put in. It is rightly said that self-appraisal and self-examination bring success and light to us, which we always crave for and struggle for.

An acquaintance once said how he had been very attached to a senior gentleman whom he considered his spiritual teacher. One day, he came upon his spiritual teacher unexpectedly and saw him beating his little child. At that moment, he saw through his apparent spirituality, which was only a mask behind which the real man lived. Do many of us not lead this type of masked or dual life? Let us examine ourselves, and see if our innerself is what we appear or profess in the outerself.

Some of the good students boast of their intelligence and brightness. They are despised and avoided by their classmates. In the same way, some of the examinees, on coming out of the examination hall, always say that they had done extremely well. Their friends feel jealous and tired of them. Let us be careful that we are not of this class.

Coming back to the professions of persons like the so called spiritual teacher, let us ask ourselves whether our motive in acting kindly is true compassion, the self-forgetful urge to help another, or it is the desire for a reward, whether in the form of material benefit or perhaps of gratitude from the person we help. Or, if our good deed remains anonymous, is it self-satisfaction, which actually motivates us?

This search for intentions, in the sense of self-appraisal, self-examination, self-observation, leading to a certain amount of self-knowledge, is

an inner search, which would tell us if we do what we say or our actions and professions are two different things.

It is quite possible that on self-examination, we may not get minimum passing marks. In that case, we need not be disappointed. We must find where we fail or falter and make necessary amends. That is the way to improve and succeed. If a competitor does not succeed in the first attempt, it does not mean that he should not try for a second or a third time. Rather it is necessary for making improvement and achieving success that we must do self-examination, and inner search. That would make us honest to ourselves, and do things in the right manner. A great thinker has very aptly remarked that "Never does a man look as small as when he is trying to look big", so, we have to be on our guard lest we should deceive ourselves, and get lost. Jeremy Taylor advises us thus—"observe thyself as the greatest enemy would do, so that thou be thy greatest friend. Though not always called upon to condemn ourselves, it is always safe to suspect ourselves."