

On the Role of Women

This letter written by Master Kirpal Singh to a non-initiate who wrote to him out of the depths of her frustration and feelings of inferiority over being a woman. This was originally published in the October 1975 issue of Sat Sandesh.



Arrival La Guardia (now JFK) airport 1955

Dear _____, I am glad to have received your letter of Aug. 15, 1968, and have carefully gone through the contents of the same.

There is nothing in life to feel perplexed or puzzled about. We have to take the facts of life with a broad smile. We, at times feel agitated because we are not aware of God's plan and

purpose of creation. From the Perfect One nothing but perfection comes into being. Since we see only the events and effects on the surface-screen before our eyes, we imagine that things have come suddenly and swiftly as if out of the blue without any pre-thought or premonition and we get flabbergasted. If we could but know that there is nothing that is haphazard or by chance, we will be saved much of the bother and pother to which we subject ourselves.

Now that you happen to play the role as a female, it does not mean that you will be assigned this role through eternity. It is really surprising as to how you have assumed that you have been playing this role in the past and shall continue to do so in future, ad infinitum. It is just a temporary phase and you should take it as such.

Again, it is merely a role and not what you really are. You are a living soul with the "Breath of God" quickening you. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you." (I Corinthians 3:16). Again in I Corinthians 6:19, "Know ye not that our body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is within you."

As the Spirit of God (the Supreme Power) dwells in us, what are we but the Spirit of God? "As we are the Spirit of God and the Spirit of God is Eternal, why think we can die and become extinct? You are of the same essence as that of God."

You should think of the indweller in the body—the spirit and power of God in you—rather than of the body in which you are dwelling. Sooner or later this dwelling place shall have to be vacated and you shall rise into higher life—the life of the Spirit, where the question of sex will not bother you. There is no sex in the soul—outward vestures of bodies are as the result of reactions of the past.

Even in the living present, you can know, understand and practice the Art of Life in fullness and learn how to rise above body consciousness. It is a regular science of practical self-analysis and once you become familiar with it, you will get rid of all the horrors that you imagine are in store for you simply because you belong to the weaker sex.

Again, I would advise you to forget your past, whatever it was, and not to trust the future, however rosy it may appear to be. We have to make the best use of the living present and of the God-given opportunities, especially the human birth which is a rare blessing for it is in the tabernacle of flesh—whether male or female—that we can gain the experience of life everlasting which consists in knowing "the only true God," as the Gospels tell us. Let us "Live in the Spirit" and also "walk in the spirit," is the injunction of Master Jesus, who came "to seek and find the lost sheep," sheep lost in the wilderness of the world.

One should not suppose that women are inferior to men in any respect. Women play as important a role in the drama of human life as men do, and at times excel men beyond all measure. In this twentieth century we have on record memorable accounts of the heroic deeds of women in the various fields of life—art, science, technology, law, medicine, surgery, engineering and the like. One fails to understand in what way they are inferior. Except for the different type of bodily raiment, they are endowed with all that is noble in life. They are bubbling over with the milk of human kindness. But for the healthier and holier influence of women, men for the most part would have been much different than they are.

In the art of government and administration, which is the most difficult one, women of today do not in any way lag behind. They adorn some of the highest offices in some of the states and are doing admirably well. They have, both in the east and the west, now come out of the seclusion of the home-life and vie with men in all the walks of life. With the spread of education and awakening, vast fields of activities are opening out, and women are taking an active part with their counterparts in ameliorating the conditions of society.

God is the God of all, men and women alike. Each has one's own sphere but part of one is complementary to that of the other, and together they make a composite whole and work better for evolving the best in them. Wedlock is a sacrament, a divine institution, meant for development of the inward spiritual graces. Procreation is just a minor part of it, though a necessary one. But mind, that marriage is not a hurdle in spirituality. Far from arresting the spiritual growth and stature, it rather helps and helps immeasurably if the significance of married life is properly understood and practiced. All the ills that one imagines are due to our lack of knowledge on such vital issues as the meaning and purpose of life, the true happiness, and how it can be had. We have no time and leisure to get a clear-cut conception of the problems of life. And the result is that we, in the course of time, become double minded and try to be wise by changing positions as may suit the exigencies of the moment. This habit works to make us unstable and unsteady. "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead," is the exhortation of St. Paul. The scriptures of each religion provide a blueprint on the art of living—its meaning, its value, its purpose and its uses and how to conduct ourselves in the work-a-day world.

But unfortunately we tend to forget our scriptures and find no breathing space to refer to them for our guidance. St. Paul in his Epistle to the Ephesians has given clear guidelines—particularly in chapters 5 and 6. If the women were to work for the "kingdom of heaven," half as zealously as they do for their household chores, they would certainly hasten the advent of the same on earth for which we all pray so fervently. We have on record instances of prophetesses like: (1) Miriam (Exodus 15:20); (2) Deborah (Judges 4:45); (3) Huldah (II Kings 22:15). In Acts 21:9, we read of the four virgin daughters of Philip the evangelist who also had the gift of prophecy. Then the accounts of saintly ladies like St. Theresa of Avila in Spain (1515-1582); Blessed Juliana of Norwich (1343-1420); and Catherine of Siena (1347-1380) who claimed to have received

on her body the stigmata. Similarly, in the East we had Rabia al-Adawiya Basri, a woman Saint said to be the founder of Sufism in the 8th century. In India, we had Mira Bai and Sehjo Bai as prototypes of Maitri, Gargi and Anusuya of ancient times.

The aim and purpose of life, as said before, is to know the true God alone, to practice Him in daily life, and to consciously live in Him. "Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy mind, with all thy strength and with all thy soul. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets," is what Jesus said. And again, "Love the kingdom of God and all things (of the world) shall be added unto you," for "all things work to the good of them that love God."

God Absolute is no doubt an abstraction. But God-in-action is the Spirit and Power of God—the Holy Word—which can be both seen and heard with help of subtle senses within. God reveals Himself in His own life and Light; and when one gets in touch with these lost strands of Reality, he comes to know the plan and purpose of God. It is, of course, a practical subject of self-analysis which is offered free and freely to all alike, like all other gifts of nature, provided one is prepared to observe and abide by certain dietary restrictions and to lead a life of rectitude and continence.

And I need hardly assure you that the Master Power above is ceaselessly taking care of you though you may not be aware of it. You need have no doubts and misgivings in this behalf nor should you get disheartened and dismayed. I appreciate your feelings and the spirit of enquiry. May God help you with His Light of Life, is what I wish for you. My loving good wishes will be always with you. With kind thoughts and best wishes,

Yours affectionately,
KIRPAL SINGH