***Morals, Ethics, Values ...Character***

Looks like we all have to go back to junior schools. Like kids! Along with them! For, we as individuals, groups, social beings, societies and as a nation seem to have lost basic disciplines of life. No amount of deterrent, law or punishment can instil or inculcate these.

At the conditioning stage at home, school and amidst others we do get taught and influenced by strangers in our own character formation. Of necessity they need be assimilated, learned, absorbed, imbued and embedded through observations, experiences, validations etc. At our growth to maturity, are we failing ourselves by failing to realise value of these values?

Lack of real heroes and misuse of wrong ones by media for creating hype, influencing and marketing have led to lowering of values and setting of bad examples especially for youth.

Money power alone is influencing decision making in all spheres of life such that values are lost in pursuit of material gains. Hasn’t corruption so become a corollary to the general rules for survival and happiness?

From cradle to grave we are at the mercy of the corrupt. Starting with school admission, the young are exposed to this evil. Families practise it for survival and staying ahead of others. What can we expect from youth if the right examples are not set? Isn’t the spate of gender and physical violence these days due to fallen standards of morality? Population explosion is the underlying cause and this need be addressed too. Natural conversion of large/joint families to nuclear ones has also led to general erosion in values, character and culture.

The libertarian view of individual’s superiority over all else and one’s freedom to choose and behave as one feels fit, is only adding fuel to fire. In work place and social space, one and all from individuals, families and groups are succumbing to prisoners’ dilemma of opting for betrayal than co-operation for ensuring own gains than others. Cynicism is another aspect that is converting many by the hordes. Why should I lose for the sake for others is the clincher? Isn’t *paropakarartha idam sareeram* (one’s body/life is to perform common good and not for selfishness, like trees) an underlying all-encompassing unifying philosophical truth?

In succession planning it is said that a good manager would choose a compatible protégé who would keep the mentor’s misdeeds covered for the greater common good. The good advice given to administrators is to be worldly-wise and to young entrepreneurs is first to learn as to how to work the system. Comparative costs of economic theories have affected moral values leading to turpitude. In which case hasn’t the community got both the right and responsibility to set right individuals as well as the system?

Formation, existence and continuation of a commune and society itself by its focus, efforts, needs and goals are for the benefit of groups and communities, to a certain extent over-riding isolated/selfish needs/desires of individuals. Primacy of the citizen is well established in the constitution. However, if citizens fail in duties and responsibilities, fail to cast votes or give it away for freebies -as some are said to be doing- we naturally lose the inherent benefits of citizens bestowed on us. As such, there is no point in blaming the politicians who are our representatives highlighting the rotten times we are in –having created it for ourselves.

Hence, in our own selfish group interests we have to find a way out of this morass. For this, we not only have to clean up ourselves and the next generations who are being misled. Weren’t we taught to place our responsibilities and collective benefits ahead of our selfish goals and motives? Have we to go back to drawing boards of primary education to resurrect lost values? If so, if not now, when? A handful can make the difference if they try hard. Let us not walk away from responsibilities, lest we be blamed by generations to come.