

THEY ARE GODS!

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“We struggled day and night to make our children reach their present positions of power and prestige. But in our troubled old age of distresses and diseases, they don’t even come to have a look at me. When I think how callous and insensitive our children have become, my heart breaks with sorrow and pain. Often I wonder why I lived for so long. I do not want to continue living. I wish that death comes and takes me away to free me from this intolerable pain.” This is the letter that a mother wrote to Vachanotsavam requesting for prayer help. She was sharing with us her painful experiences. The letter looked like one written with the ink of her blood and tears depicting her excruciating agony caused by the utter neglect by her children, her own flesh and blood.

How soon our children forget the things they studied at home and in the catechism classes that parents are visible gods? In the four walls of the Old Age Homes, and at the threshold of many ‘Homes’, we find hundreds of mothers who can’t even find listeners to share their tale of woes they faced in their lives. How many fathers are there who keep their lips tightly shut, their emotions suppressed, their hearts brimming with sorrow and pain! Indeed to borrow a Shelley an phrase “They have fallen upon the thorns of life and they bleed”. But there are no listeners to hear their moans and groans.

The invalid man at the Bethzatha pool, who had been waiting for healing for 38 long years, has only one complaint, **“I have no one...”** (Jn 5:7). Behind that embittered statement, there are many stories of refused and rejected love. That incident is not to be dismissed as a miraculous story of healing given by Jesus. Friend, this Word should help you in listening to the lachrymal lamentations of your living parents, who have toiled and moiled, struggled and sweated, suffered and sacrificed for you to let you reach your present position and status. Give them seven times over all those joys and pleasures that they denied themselves for your sake and then your home will become a dwelling of the blessings of God. **“Honour your father and mother... so that your days may be long and that it may go well with you”** (Deut 5:16).

My eyes often get moist with compassionate tears when I visit some Old Age Homes. When I see the pain lurking behind the impassive countenances of the old, I tell them with a ring of helplessness in my breaking voice, “I will pray...Let’s pray.... The Lord is there seeing everything.” But remember, the bruises and lacerations they carry in their hearts are not curable by prayers and reliance on God alone. Those are wounds that will be healed only when they are looked at lovingly, approached compassionately with sympathy and understanding and by letting them sleep peacefully in their own homes. When old parents are bundled away into Old Age Homes, the very foundation of the family is quaked, causing it to crack and crumble. **“A father’s blessing strengthens the houses of the children, but a mother’s curse uproots their foundations”** (Sir. 3:9).

We should not forget that we will be accountable in the court of god for all the tears shed by our parents if they sit alone and moan and groan because of our lack of love for them, our

neglect for them and our refusal to make available to them any medical attention they might have needed. If you have been beguiled and hoodwinked into believing that success in life consists of accumulating wealth and materials, wounding your parents and rejecting them in the process, it is high time for you to realize the truth and bring them home back giving their due. If you have not yet done it, make haste and do it now!

As we peruse the book of our obligations and indebtedness, the two words that must strike us as foremost and paramount are **‘Father and Mother’**. We can remember them only with the great feeling of gratitude. It is their selfless sacrifice carried out on the altar of life that has nourished and nurtured us. It is from them we imbibed various virtues of faith, of life, of forgiveness, of accepting suffering, etc. If our hearts throb with the chimes of paternal and maternal love, let us praise the Lord for giving us our Father, the giver of our daily bread, and the Mother, the supplier of our daily milk. Let us place them in the loftiest niches in our hearts, only just below God, without limiting our bounty to the free use of our purse on their behalf, feeding them sumptuously as a formal duty and obligation and visiting them on scheduled dates with limited time. After all, they gave you birth, you are what you are primarily because of them.

We have so many stories of indebtedness to tell them for which we are obliged to them, and which we can't hope to repay in our life time. Always remember that we carry with us this baggage of indebtedness, obligation and gratefulness in our journey of life. “Remember that it was of your parents you were born; how can you repay which they have given you?” (Sir 7:28). They loved us dearer than their lives. They shared with us whatever they had, including their flesh and blood. They prayed for us with hands raised to the heavens. Let's remember all that and say with affection and gratitude bubbling in our hearts, “They are indeed gods”.

