

“The words of a wise man’s mouth are gracious” (Eccl 10:12)

According to Apostle Paul, the first manifestation of love is patience. He says, “Love is patient” (1 Cor 13:4). The very next thing he says is, “Love is kind!” (1 Cor 13:4). Also in the list of the marks of God’s servants, he mentions “kindness” immediately after “patience” (2 Cor 6:6). So also in the list of the fruits of the Spirit, kindness follows patience (Gal 5:22). Kindness is a language that the dumb can speak and the deaf can hear and understand.

Kindness is such an important virtue that John the Baptist equated the “fruits of repentance” to acts of kindness. He told the people, “Be kind to the have-nots!” To the tax-collectors he said, “Don’t overload the tax-payers!” He admonished the soldiers, “Don’t chargesheet anyone falsely!” (Lk 3:8-14). The greatest thing a man can do for his Heavenly Father is to be kind to His children! Jesus has taught us, “You must be compassionate just as your Father is compassionate” (Lk 6:36). We must be kind to the unkind people; they need it the most. This is where patience is challenged.

The story of the unkind debtor Jesus narrated shames us and warns us sternly. When the debtor pleaded with the King, “Be patient with me,” his debt of crores of Rupees was instantly forgiven out of kindness. But he grabbed the throat of his fellow-servant who had owed him just a few thousand Rupees, even though he also pleaded, “Be patient with me!” The story ends with the moral, “Should we not be merciful to others as God is to us?” (Mt 18:21-35). Isn’t Joseph who showed mercy to his merciless brothers a good example? (Gen 50:21).

Speaking kindly is an art to be learnt. Everyone in this world is hurting. Kind words are like medicine. If someone were to pay Rs. 10/- for every kind word you ever spoke and collect Rs. 5/- for every unkind word, would you be rich or poor? Speak kind words and you will hear kind echoes.

Kindness begets kindness, but be patient if your kindness is not positively reciprocated. Pray for a short memory as to all unkindness. Someone said, “Two things stand like stone: Kindness in another’s troubles; courage in one’s own.” Kindness is like snow; it makes everything it covers beautiful.

Kindness and graciousness are more natural to women than men. We applaud and greet womenfolk on this International Women’s Day!

Help me, O God, to be a helper!

1. If any little word of mine
 May make a life the brighter,
If any little song of mine
 May make a heart the lighter,
God, help me speak the little word,
 And take my bit of singing
And drop it in some lonely vale,
 To set the echoes ringing.
2. If any little love of mine
 May make a life the sweeter,
If any little care of mine
 May make a friend's the fleeter,
If any lift of mine may ease
 The burden of another,
God, give me love and care, and strength
 To help my toiling brother.
3. If any little word of mine
 Can make the pathway clearer,
If any little thought of mine
 Can bring a soul the nearer,
If any little deed of mine
 Can clear away a sorrow,
God, help me speak, and think, and do,
 And wait not for the morrow.
4. Then many a burden shall be eased,
 Because I help to bear it,
And many a care be lighter made,
 Because I try to share it;
And many a grief shall fly away
 When my bright song shall bid it;
And Christ, the Lord of love, will say,
 "It was unto Me ye did it!"

— *Franklin E. Belden, 1858-1945*

Jesus: "Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did whatever to one of the least of these My brothers, you did it to Me!" (*Matthew 25:40*)