

Pujya Swamiji's Address to the students and staff of the 16th batch of Post Graduate Programme of the Indian Institute of Management, Kozhikode

Pujya Swamiji visited the Indian Institute of Management, Kozhikode on July 5, 2012 to address the students and staff at the prestigious institute. He was introduced to the audience by the Director of the Institute, Prof. Debashis Chatterjee. Pujya Swamiji talked on the topic of "Success". He said:

There is a very well accepted concept of success in the society. The widespread belief is that success depended on how well one had fulfilled one's ambitions and desires. That cannot be said to be not valid, taking into account the human being's nature. Being self-conscious and self-judging, every human being wanted to accomplish something and wanted to be different. 'I am not acceptable to myself as I obtain now. Therefore I have got to be different'. And this orientation initiates a process of becoming.

In this process someone is able to fulfill the predominant desires in his or her life and is applauded as a successful person in the society. But whether there is a sense of accomplishment and success in that 'successful' person's own image is a different question! Ironically that is the most important thing at the end of the day.

There are many spheres in one's life like home, marriage, children, community, country, world, religious leaders etc. And there are desires with respect to every one of these important spheres. If we were to reckon success as a percentage, then success in each of these spheres needs to be taken into account.

Looking into one's own life, can we have at least one single day when all our

desires are met with? When there are no more desires it means all desires are fulfilled. No, there can never be one. In fact desires constitute one's personality and importantly desires are not something that we should not have. In fact desiring is a privilege and a manifestation of one's freedom. Therefore having desires is totally acceptable but if my concept of success depends on the fulfillment of desires, then desires entertained divided by the number of desires fulfilled is always going to be a miniscule number like 0.00005! Not having desires at all is also not possible and not an option. Advising one not to have desires is like saying if you have a head, you will have head ache and hence remove it!

Hence the question is what really accounts for success. One form of desire is wanting one's wife/husband/child to be different. But the fact is nobody can change anybody else. But if you want to change yourself, nobody can stop you. Because all desires are not satisfied, self-loath, pity, seeking approval etc are inevitable. If I have approved myself, others' approval or disapproval do not matter all. If I am given a human body with a faculty of knowing and an uninhibited consciousness making me self-aware and self judging, I better learn to accept myself as I am. This is of utmost importance.

Any freedom is subject to abuse, and not abusing is wisdom. Hence, freedom to desire is a privilege but making a judgment about myself in terms of fulfillment of those desires is asking for abject failure in life. There is a proposition in the Gita

'sarveṣāṃ buddhau rāgadveṣau vyavasthitau. Rāga is desiring to obtain what one does not have and dveṣa is wanting to get rid of something. Wanting to obtain a qualification, being in the right place at the right time, retaining what I already have etc are called rāgas. Wanting to avoid illness, grey hair, extra weight etc is dveṣa. Every individual is his or her rāga dveṣas

In the process of fulfilling them, we are supposed to follow the ground rules having their basis in – what is what is good to you is good to me and vice-versa, called dharma. These rules are universal and pertain to common sense and need not be mandated by God.

Concept of success includes one's capacity to conform to these rules by common sense. I don't want to get hurt and I know that others expect the same thing from me. This is all given like the body, mind, sense, sun, air etc. And this knowledge (dharma) is also given. Dharma is a manifestation of Īsvara and it is given. 'For God's sake' I cannot go against dharma because dharma itself is God. My story of success includes my capacity to conform to dharma without irritation, murmuring, complaining etc. I can grow into that kind of person and I don't consider my life is successful if I fail to conform to dharma.

As a human being I have to account for myself. Otherwise I have guilt – 'how come I did not do the right thing, and hurt – how come I did the wrong thing'. It is impossible to get rid of these two unless the thinking is revolutionized. It is an entirely different pursuit. I should be able to conform to dharma and go about planning and executing. But then nobody calls all the shots including Sachin Tendulkar. Life is a percentage game.

Expectations can result in four ways – getting more than what is expected, less than what is expected, equal to

expectation and contrary to expectation. Like when crossing the road to catch a bus – one can get a ride, miss the bus, catch the bus and meeting with an accident while crossing. Doing one's homework is prudence. Covering all possible pitfalls is thoroughness. Not taking anything for granted is alertness. But success of the undertakings is wide open. If one has an appropriate healthy attitude to handle all the fou,r then one can call himself successful. Fulfilling of all desires is not success; neither is getting rid of them. Managing desires is success.

One needs to be ready to accept reality. There are many known and hidden variables. When even all known variables cannot be controlled what can we say about hidden variables? In life we are smothered by hidden variables. Hidden variables in our culture are taken care by prayer. That is why whenever anything is bought a pūjā is done. Denial of hidden variables is living a life of denial of reality. Hence prayer is also included in our trying to accomplish something. If I do not get what I want, I need to be able to accept it with maturity. I have a choice over action but not with respect to result – karmaṇyeva adhikāraṣṭe. The choice over action is in the form of doing it, not doing and doing it differently. There are other factors inhibiting one's action like one's own past, other people etc and that constitute the hidden variables. I should be objective towards the results of action and enjoy the process of fulfilling desires. The day one begins to like what one does is when one becomes successful in life. That happens only when one accepts oneself. A spiritual attitude is accepting what one does and the result. That is prasAda and that is success. This is our culture, spirituality and Indian wisdom.

Pujya Swamiji then answered questions from the students.

Inauguration of PGP Batch 2021-14

Sri Swami Dayananda Saraswati, an eminent teacher of Vedanta and an erudite scholar in Sanskrit, address the students

