

Questioner. In previous Satsangs, you have often given examples based on married life, family life and the relationship to a particular loved one. Would you please say something about the role of single people in the community and by single here I'm including people who are widowed, divorced, separated or simply not yet married. Are they in any sense missing out from the spiritual point of view, and how can they channel their energies and their love so as to be of most benefit to others and to themselves?

Gururaj. Beautiful question. This question would never arise in the East, especially the place where I come from, because the marriages are arranged, and it is the responsibility of the parents to see that their children get married. Now, if a couple has three or four daughters in the house, there are three or four million worries. Firstly, is to teach them how to preserve chastity to which they do put great importance upon, a different culture altogether. Good. Then to find a suitable marriage partner. Now, this would sound very amusing to you. Let me tell you how it's done. Good.

Say a boy is of marriageable age, then some parent would be interested in this family and would never approach the family directly saying that 'You have a son who is eligible for marriage and we have a daughter.' No. They would go to one of their cousins or aunties and a letter would be written in very subtle terms, saying that 'We believe that your son has come of age and would you be interested in seeing my cousin's daughter?' Fine. So, now when this letter is received, the parents of the boy don't reply directly, they allow, or they get their cousins or uncles to reply that 'Thank you very much for your letter and it is quite possible that we might be coming round your way at such and such a time, fine, and if you could definitely tell us what day we should come, then we could plan our trip in that area accordingly.' In other words very subtly asking for an invitation. Good, fine. So then a reply is sent to that letter stating 'Well, we are at home on such and such a day and please stay over for a few days' - because you know those villages are far apart. So the only thing that happens there, you go visiting and when you visit, you don't have a chance to speak to the girl at all, you just see here, that's all. If you don't like her then very subtly an answer is sent back, you know, 'Thank you very much for your wonderful hospitality but one of our cousins or uncles have made some other prior arrangements' and a lot of excuses, so that is sent off.

Now like that, like that, so many letters come. Before I got married I saw about thirty girls (Gururaj laughs) and all that at the age of sixteen. And then of course the woman I married, I saw her, never spoke a word to her. And what she's required to do, what the girl is required to do is just to bring in the tea, that's all and while she's bringing in the tea and placing it down, you have to really make up your mind. (General laughter) You have to survey her from top to bottom.

You can't see much of them because they wear these saris which are ankle length, but nevertheless that is done. And after you like the girl, you tell you parents that, you don't say to your parents that "I like this girl", you say to your parents "Well if it is, if it is your wish, you know I comply with the wish". You see. Good. Fine. So then that is how with further correspondence through uncles and aunties and then the direct correspondence comes where the date is set for the engagement and thereafter the marriage. Now these are arranged marriages. Now, before this is done, before any arrangements are made, the girl's parents and the boy's parents dig into your history.

Like my parents went to great lengths to find out everything they can about my wife's parents and grandparents and great grandparents, the whole lineage, and what the character is and is there any blemish against their name. So that is how it helps them to decide. And that is why prestige is so important to those people, that nothing should happen in the family which would be a blemish or a mark on their names. They do that for the sake of the children. Right.

Now, here is a situation where there's first marriage and then love. While in our countries in the West, we first have love and then marriage and not only love and then marriage but also trial marriage, as if you're buying a Pawpaw and tasting it. Now, that is fine, trial marriages are okay, good, and even in co-existing with a person, a certain kind of morality can be maintained by knowing the person. Really knowing the person would not mean physical submission because if they do intend and have promised each other very sincerely that we are to be married, then perhaps that is permissible because the marriage has already taken place between two hearts, that's the real marriage. The little paper you get at the Registry is just formality and legal protection. Good. So, now, there are advantages and disadvantages in both systems. Now in the East you will find one divorce in perhaps fifty thousand and yet they had no love affair, no romance before they got married, while in the Western countries you have one divorce in every three. Compare the percentage, one in fifty thousand and in the other case one in every three. Now let us think why. What is the reason - look I have spent half my life in West and have studied western customs and the western way of life, perhaps I am more Western than Eastern, or a mixture of both. Fine. I have examined why, why is this happening and the thing which I have found that is happening, is a total lack of the idea of acceptance.

Now, in the East although there was no romance, two people are married and of course they get married at a young age. It's no more so. Now by law the girl has to be over eighteen and things like that, but even during those times, it was not that a young boy of fifteen or sixteen would be living with his wife - they'd still be living at their own parent's homes and when they come to maturity, do they get together. But one idea is implanted because of the culture behind them, because of the structure of society, that they find the greatest value in acceptance. The wife thinks to herself that I'm married to

this man and he is my husband and only death can part us, through thick and thin we are together because this is my destiny. I have not married this man by accident, it was predestined for me to marry this person. Of course there are a lot of arguments against that, because predestination can be taken to very absurd limits where it becomes really ridiculous, although there is some essence of truth in predestination when we view it from the angle of a Divine plan. So here the woman sincerely believes in her heart that this man was set out by Divinity, predestination, this man was set out for me and it is my duty to accept him as my husband and do my duty as a householder, as a wife, to look after the home, to help in work, in his work, or other work, whatever the case might be, look after the children. The husband tries his very best, as his duty, to be the protector and provider and things like that. And he too believes in the acceptance that this woman had been set out for me, no accident, no chance. Or else I have seen thirty girls, and some of them were far prettier than my wife, but why did I marry just that one? There's something that sparked off perhaps. Good.

Now, it is because of this acceptance that this is my man, or this is my woman, one develops a lot of tolerance of each other's faults. By developing that tolerance of each other's faults you also develop patience, forbearance and a lot of positive virtues that go with it. I, for example, I am a strong condemner of the person that invented twin beds, yes, it should be double beds. Let there be a quarrel in the afternoon and at night it can be resolved if it's a double bed. Good. Now, all these positive virtues develop and they do not come automatically, they come through strict discipline. You discipline yourself into various things and it is through the discipline that that heart opens and the love grows, and the love grows because you start understanding each other. Now, if boy meets girl and says we have fallen in love, I would not accept that, you don't fall in love, you get elevated in love, as I always say. So, here an understanding develops between the two partners, and when the understanding develops, love flowers, for love is something that has to develop and it takes years sometimes to really understand one's beloved and then to really love her. Now, that is the Eastern system. Fine. Not only that, but in the Eastern system they live a, I wonder how one could say it in English, but the son brings the wife home and never the son going to the wife's home - it's a system where the whole family is united. And there are family pressures from fathers, mothers, uncles, aunties that keeps you on the straight and narrow. You see. It's an entirely different concept, it's a system that has been going on for thousands of years. It is a certain kind of society structured in a certain way whereby that acceptance and that love grows and flowers until the one cannot do without the other. It might take a shorter period of time, it might take a longer period of time. Good. That is that system.

Now, in our system here we fight over one thing, mostly, and that is equality, that the husband, the wife says, "I am equal to you", and the husband says, "I am equal to you." Now, there is a great difference between equality and equalness. We'll come to the single part later. Fine. Let us discuss the married part first. Right. Now, there's a great

difference between equality and equalness. What we do in the Western world is lay emphasis on equality but not on equalness. Man and woman are structured differently, their whole physical, biological, psychological structure is different, totally different. Good. The man has certain qualities in him of being the king of the castle, and specially nowadays when he is thrown off his pedestal as the king of the castle, a lot of conflicts arise, good, because woman today generally wants to be independent.

Now, there's some goodness in this, there should be independence, to be able to express one's personality, there should be independence. But within the framework of independence there should be interdependence, and that is what we forget most of the time. Now, man and woman, as we said, have natural differences and because of the natural differences, they are complementary to each other, this is a must. Man has the power of protection, naturally it is in him, inbuilt, provider, protector, the strong shoulder when any problem comes about, it's the man that goes to the fore. The woman by nature has other qualities which are more markedly so in them, such as tolerance, patience, lovingness, kindness, compassion. Those qualities are more marked in women. Those qualities are more marked in women because they are to be mothers. They have been prepared by nature to be mothers, and a mother can never be a successful mother if she can't be patient and tolerant and kind and compassionate. She does everything, she is the toilet cleaner for the child and from there upwards she is the educator of the child, not the father.

If we want a better society in this world we want better women, not men because the child grows up under the guidance more of the mother than the father. The father goes out to work, it is the mother that moulds the child. So therefore there is a division of labour. The man has his duties towards the home and the wife has her duties. So it is not a question of equality, it is a question of equalness but within the equalness there is a division of labour, a division of duties, and both are complementary to each other. There is no man who is so hard hearted that could not have become more gentle and softer because of the gentleness and softness of his wife, if he loves his wife. Oh yes. She complements him, she draws out from him or in him all those qualities which are inherent. Because in every man there is a bit of a woman and in every woman there is a bit of a man. So the woman being complementary draws out those finer qualities in the man. The man in turn draws out certain qualities in the woman. The man is aggressive but because of his demanding or commanding nature, he draws out in the woman a certain kind of, not aggression, but assertiveness. And you can't exist in this world if you cannot exert yourself or assert yourself in various facets of life. Even in the bringing up of children you have to be strict at times and tell Tommy, "Sit down and have your porridge, no nonsense from you." Right. So, it is like our old analogy of electricity, you need the two currents, the positive and the negative and here by

negative, we don't mean that which is bad but polarity. And these polarities are needed to make this light bulb burn. Good.

So, the problem we have in our Western countries, and I have become quite unpopular when I talk on the subject because many times we don't like to face our faults and a teacher who only pats you on the back and never kicks under the arse is not a teacher. (General laughter) Yes. Good. Yes. So we here, in the Western world, and as I said I'm a mixture of both, we tend to place great emphasis on equality rather than equalness. We tend to not follow the principle of acceptance that he is my husband. As much as the East can learn from the West, so much can the West learn from the East as well. And that is very true. That is very true because I've seen Eastern women totally submissive where the entire personalities are lost and that is a failure, that is weakness. While we have the extreme again in the Western world where the husband's personality is lost and the wife wears the pants. Or else, even if the husband wears the pants the wife chooses the colour!

So, what I am trying to say is this, that there are weaknesses in the cultures of the East and as well as of the West but we living in the West, we should face ourselves and see this is a great sociological problem. Thousands of qualified sociologists try to get to the bottom, you know, of this problem where there is one divorce in every three. And I believe it's becoming one out of every two and a half now very rapidly. So, we mistake equalness with equality. We do not have the sense of acceptance and because we do not have the sense of acceptance, we are to a great extent less tolerant, less patient. And that is where all our problems begin. Of course let us not neglect the homes that are so, so happy because there are thousands and thousands of homes that are so, so happy and there's such togetherness where the husband is independent, the wife is independent, both expressing their own particular individuality and yet are interdependent. That is the ideal situation and this is found in all countries of the world. When we talk of divorce rates and things like that of course we are taking into account many pathological factors, which exists everywhere. Now, that is an ideal home, as I said, where there is interdependence, that becomes an ideal home.

Now let us think of the single people. Now for a woman, for a woman to be single in an Eastern country would be a great shame. As I said, if a couple has three or four daughters, the entire minds are worrying about the daughters all the time as they are growing up, that 'We must get them settled'. I have known of cases where the parents have actually mortgaged their little piece of land on which they grow their food, to get their daughters settled. And especially with this despicable dowry system and all kinds of systems you have, there are a lot of things that are just not right. And the

parents suffer for years and years and years to pay back the debts just to have their daughter settled because that is their prime duty, that is their prime duty.

So, in the Western countries what happens is this. In East, the sons or daughters don't leave home, the daughters leave home only when they get married. In the Western countries there should be freedom but freedom is taken to the extreme. When a daughter turns eighteen and she leaves home, leaves home and goes and lives in a flat, which could be just three blocks away from the parent's home. Now, the entire set-up, this is very difficult to change, this is very difficult to change because the entire society over hundreds of years has been orientated in this way, where the daughter she is eighteen or the son is eighteen or twenty, whatever the case might be, tries to find independence. And in finding that independence, they evolve or grow or start understanding life. Is that really true, if we ask ourselves, is it really true? Those millions of people that form two thirds of the world's population, aren't they growing and developing, living in a united family home?

So, in our systems here we sometimes encourage our youngsters to move away from home when they reach a certain age. Now, being alone and in finding that independence, they evolve or grow or start understanding life. Now, is that really true, if we ask ourselves, is it really true? Those millions of people that form two thirds of the world's population, aren't they growing and developing living in a united family home? So in our systems here, we sometimes encourage our youngsters to move away from home when they reach a certain age. Now, being alone and not having had the protection that's required from parents, they find a sudden freedom and they tend to go wild, though not all, not all, but there is a percentage that tend to go wild. You have a flat of your own, so you will invite friends and from friends to other friends. And then you'll have parties and all these things keep on going and going on, it could become a vicious circle, many times to betterment, most times to greater degeneration. And our whole society is geared that way. If we take a walk round Soho, Piccadilly and you see all those little cinemas with all their posters up and the, the, the titles, oh Lord! See so the whole structure is such that it encourages a certain kind of degeneracy, it encourages it, instead of regenerating spiritual values. Now remember, I'm speaking as a spiritual teacher, regenerating spiritual values, there is a degeneration.

So parents have a great responsibility in protecting their children, for it is better to leave a child a sense of goodness than to leave a child a million pounds, always. Fine. So now here the boy or the girl has to fend for himself. As time goes on of course he'll find work to pay rents for the flat and then got to have money over to go to night-clubs and whatever kind of entertainment they want to have and so naturally they require companionship and in finding the

companionship, you try and seek that companionship. Well many sensible young people would join good societies where they meet friends and a wonderful companionship develops. But within the growing adult a yearning starts developing, a yearning to find companionship with one person that could be very deep. And that means a search for love. Now, because of the background, because of the environment and how the society is structured they start experimenting with love, while love is no experiment. Love is an experience. It happens. There is another fault that we undergo and in the experiment of love, it is not only on the mind level, it is more so today on the physical level. They try to find out that are we physically compatible and then they try to find out of the mental compatibility and common interests, that's all. The spiritual side is forgotten of life.

Now, in this experimentation one meets one person, then another person, then a third person and a fourth person and like that it goes on until perhaps the right person, according to their assumption, is found. Then marriage takes place. Now, that right person that is found is also a mental projection, it's an ideal, that 'I see in my mind's eye a certain kind of girl with certain characteristics, with a certain kind of face, certain figure.' And I project that, my mental illusion I project, project upon the woman and when after getting married and living together for a while, they discover that this was a dream, it was a projection, not reality. I have not been really seeing what is real, but I have been projecting my own unreality, or my sense of so-called reality onto another person. And that is why I feel disappointed and we can't get along any more. Now, so you have the divorce, they can't get along, ends up in divorce.

Then of course we have the widows. And then we have the spinsters, single women that have not got married. Now, there are many, many reasons why a woman does not marry. Good. The main reason is that the woman has developed within herself a certain ideal and is not prepared to accept, because of the sense of independence, is not prepared to accept something lesser. There is, the man or the woman, the woman has an ideal of Gregory Peck, hah, (General laughter) or James Stewart, an ideal forms in the mind, this is the type, Prince Charming coming down, charging, you know on a white stallion (General laughter) and carrying me away. Unreality, illusion. And that you'd find according to the studies I have made, ninety percent of our young girls today go through that delusion of that Prince Charming charging down with his stallion. That is not reality. Now, the single woman for example, need not to have remained single in the first place, for within the circle of family and family's friends and their friends and their friends, a very good relationship with a future partner could have been developed but because the Prince Charming idea, that relationship never developed.

But then you will find a rare woman, a rare woman that is seeking for a rare kind of love. And this is the most beautiful woman in the world and I don't mean physically beautiful. She seeks a rare kind of love because of a certain inner awakening within herself, a spiritual awakening that has come through thousands and thousands of previous births, thousands of previous lives, she has reached a stage of evolution in this lifetime that if she cannot find one to match that stage of evolution, to match that compatibility of spirit, then she would rather stay single. And many of these women I have seen are very happy, these rare women, there is a strange kind of happiness in them. They become beautifully self-contained within themselves that they do not need an exterior person, another person to awaken the love in them. Love is already awakened and alive within them. And that person if well guided, could use that very love within them for the benefit of humanity, yes, where they could be serviceable to others in so many, many different ways.

The situation in the world as is regarded to be ideal, is the householder way of life, living a married life where there is procreation. As a matter of fact people don't procreate very much any more, they don't go in for procreation, they go in for recreation and procreation just comes by the by. Good. Fine. So you have this rare kind of person that could be self-existent within themselves. In the worldly life there is this householder life, which is living in the world but while living in this world, the person can be in this world and yet not of it and remain totally single and self-contained. And this is achieved, this is achieved through meditation, spiritual practices, where one goes deeper within oneself and find that everyone is really self-contained. Why does man and woman marry? They marry to find their own self-contained-ness and one helps the other. The path becomes smoother. But if you are born with a natural inclination to be single, then you remain single and be thoroughly useful to society. For it is not an ill and neither is it evil for a person to remain single. It is neither an ill nor an evil for a widow to remain single. If she has had experiences in her life which she found to be a great amount of suffering, she can remain single not to escape suffering but to overcome that suffering, divert those very energies that were involved in the suffering to her own spiritual unfoldment which takes one to the realisation, to self integration, self contentment and self containment.

So, different societies throughout the world have different structures and we are victims of sociological structures. We are really victims. No person in any society belongs entirely to himself, he is forty percent himself and sixty percent of himself belong to the conventions of society. You have to do certain things in a certain way because convention says that. You have to do that in this way because tradition says that and like that it goes on and on and on. And when you defy convention and when you defy tradition, then they call you a drop-out, and really speaking you might not be a drop-out at all. You might have risen far above all the so-called traditions and conventions, because traditions and conventions were created by man for, at a certain period of time, to stabilise a certain sociological condition and today that convention



or tradition is not necessary. I give you an Indian example. When the boy and girl are about to be married, three days before the marriage they are rubbed, the bodies are rubbed, with Bori, what do you call that? - Hurdur, do you know what Bori is? - that yellow - turmeric? - no, no, turmeric. Turmeric. Now, India is composed of over eighty percent villages. Now, turmeric has a quality, it's yellow, and the whole body is rubbed with turmeric. Good. It makes the skin glow, it's nice, according to their standards. Like in Central Africa, a big ring in the nose is nice, to them. Okay. In our culture here, a woman plucking half an inch thick of makeup is nice. So, so, so we all have our faults and our ideas of what is nice and what is not nice, yeah, but that is besides the point. So now in olden times when sanitation was not so well developed, this custom originated as a tradition mixed up with certain kinds of religious beliefs. But the underlying factor was this, that with turmeric rubbed on your body, mosquitoes don't bite you. In other words it is a mosquito repellent. Try it out. Now, that was the reason.

Now I have seen here in western countries, and I've been asked to bless some of Indian marriages and I go for five minutes to bless the marriage and they still rub themselves with turmeric, without any necessity. There are no mosquitoes flying around here where they need, turmeric for, turmeric. They don't need it, but tradition lingers on and on and on. What was meaningful at a certain time and at a certain place could be totally meaningless at other times and other places but the tradition lingers on. Now this is just one example. We can find many such examples in the Western countries. Oh yes for example, you sit to dinner and the, the host tastes the wine and says it is very fine, and - lot of things we do, formalities, formalities without any meaning. The whole meaning was lost. Right.

Nevertheless, so the person that decides to remain single, remains single for various reasons, and when I say single, I include single women, widows and others. Some remain single because of sociological conventions which has trapped them to remain single. Yes. Certain of them, this includes men as well of course, when I say women I mean both, that you normally find in legal agreements that he means she as well, that type of thing. Right. That's one reason, social conventions and traditions that has entrapped the person. Second reason is a certain kind of ideology that makes the person remain single, an ideology that has a belief that 'I am searching and searching and searching for a partner that is totally compatible with me, and I can't find such a partner, therefore I will not marry'. But if that person would have a change of outlook, that 'Let there be a partner to whom I can become compatible to'. You see the difference? One is centred around one's ego, while the other is an offering. And then of course you don't go and offer yourself to any Tom, Dick and Harry, you know I mean that's understood. There must be a great amount of common interests, not commonness, common interests. Good. And then it would become, it would become a lasting relationship because in the common interest, there could be used a lot of common sense, and when you use common sense then you get away from

nonsense. You see. Then the compatibility develops in body, mind and spirit, where you find that togetherness, oneness. So, here the single person has to become less egocentric, has to centre himself or herself less on his or her own ego level and be willing to compromise and in that compromise there has to be this offering, this sacrifice of the flower giving off its fragrance to the world. And once that is created in me, once I do that, then automatically the partner will do that also. It is contagious, love is. If I want you to love me, I must become loveable first, then you will easily love me. That is the principle. Good.

So then the trap that convention has set, the ego sense that one develops keeping one single then there are family oppositions which do not exist so much any more, the Romeo Juliet kind of thing. Thank God it's practically non-existent in our society now. Good. And then of course the rare person that is born so self-contained that does not require any outer companionship but finds that inner companionship within himself or within herself. Now, the crucial point which bothers all sociologists is this, that the boy or girl who wants to get married is not prepared to sacrifice or compromise the ego, that is not prepared to jump out of the trap of convention or of what society says, what about such a person? And that is the biggest worry in the world today, that is the biggest worry. Now, for such a person, life could become a living hell. Life could become a living hell because the desires of that person has not come to fulfilment, has not come to the reality. Such a person needs spiritual practices very, very much more than anyone else. And by spiritual practises, as the awareness develops, the person who at first did not seem ideal will be seen to be ideal because the awareness has expanded where the totality of the person that you just like, because of the expanded awareness, that liking will turn to loving. And a beautiful togetherness can be developed. I said in some talk some time, that loving each other is not looking in each other's eyes, but looking, both looking in the same direction. Then love comes. To be able to look in the same direction. You can look into each other's eyes and melt away, that's fine, okay, that helps a lot. It's a subsidiary, tributary of the main stream. And the main stream is to be able to look in the same direction. Now, this will always remain a question, a sociological problem in our times until society is changed to a certain extent where present ideologies of independence, that 'I am this, I am that, I can grow on my own, I want to experiment.' Fine. Good. It is good within limitations, but not to be taken to any extremes.

So, these are the problems we have and all over the world they're trying to solve the problem of the single person that wants, yet wants not, that wants yet wants not, because that person is not prepared to give and take, to form a compromise within himself first and then with the other. Now that is where meditation and spiritual practices could be of immense value in developing the awareness and as the awareness develops, the ego becomes more clearer, more transparent, then everything and everyone is seen. If I had to get married tomorrow for example, I could marry any

woman and make her the happiest woman on earth and myself included, happiest man on earth, because I would not be seeing surface value only, no, I would be seeing so much deeper. Immediately there would be a union. Immediately the recognition is there of her spirit with mine, which is but one spirit. And this has come about through ages and ages perhaps, years and years of spiritual .....

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