

Swami Ranganathananda
Chief Guest - 1988

When we heard the citations, we could realize that our country is not entirely as evil as you get the impression when you read the newspapers. There are thousands and thousands of people doing silent service, activities in various parts of India. Gandhiji had used an expression coined by Swami Vivekananda- "God in the poor, God in the suffering, God in the afflicted". If only we had continued that spirit our problems would have been solved by now.

Tyaga and Seva - without a little Tyaga no Seva can come -Tyaga finds expression in Seva. Those who do not serve others with their strength, their life is empty.

We can say that sometimes the foreigners may make better use of Gandhiji than we did. There is one Cesar Chavez in America. There was a strike by Grey Pickers in the California. They wanted more salary and could not get from the owners. Chavez was the leader of the Union. He started a satyagraha. He had Gandhiji's photo in his own office room. He fought for the labour class, using Gandhiji's methods without any violence and a settlement came between the owners and the workers. Similarly in Europe, we had already a Frenchman who did Gandhiji's way of living and working and became a recipient of this Award earlier. Today it is an Italian and I am sure soviet Russia is going in that direction. When we became free, we had plenty of good people in India ever ready to serve to bless people. And just now there is plenty of evil in our Society. But we have both maladies as also remedies. In Bharathari's words. there is a very fine classification of humanity in any society. There will be always four types of people. The first group of people in is called Satpurusha. They are interested in the interest of the other people. They withdraw from one's own self interest. We had in Gandhij a supreme example of that type. Then those who are around Gandhiji, especially the one whose remembrance we are having today, Jamnalal Bajaj. A man earns money only to spend it for the good of all especially for the poor.

The second class is something much more general - Samanyast Paramudya Vratsa. That means they also work for the good of the people but without sacrificing their own self-interest. We call them in English "people with enlightened self-interest". These two we had in plenty in 1947 in India. Then what happened. They began to slide downwards and began to create the third category, who are called by the poet Tayme manava rakshasa - they are devils among men. They destroy other people's welfare to gain something for themselves. Every type of adulteration in food, medicine, corruption all belong to this category. We have plenty of rakshasas in India today. When it comes to the fourth type they are those who, without gaining any interest for oneself, destroy other people's happiness and the welfare; that is called vandalistic type. Third one and the fourth one have multiplied to such an extent that the whole nation is sick today and all over the world also the same sickness of violence. This picture of a society must be presented to every child in our homes. You have to ask the children - you want the first category or the second category or the third or the fourth. Originally all children will say I will be first or second. Nobody will say I will be third. Due to some weakness, that circumstance we have created in India after freedom not taking into account the profound idealism that ruled over the nation for the last 50-70 years which brought us political freedom. Now, to make that freedom meaningful, we have to return back again to that great achievement of character. That type of first and second we must multiply in India and all over the world as well. Then only you will find international peace as well as national peace and welfare.

