

You must find time.

By Hanumanprasad Poddar.

Cleanse your mind first

IT is a cold wintry day. The tailor is busy with his work, basking in the sun in front of his house. His young boy approached him from inside the house and said, "Papa, it is very cold to-day; pray, make me a jacket." "The sun has just risen, my darling," replied the tailor. "Bask yourself a little; I shall prepare one for you to-day, if I get time." The boy waited there a while, and presently got up, saying "Please do get the jacket ready to-day, papa." The tailor, who was busy conversing with two new customers, gave no reply, and the boy went inside the house and thought no more of the jacket. Early next morning, the mother of the child renewed the request, saying that the boy had been shivering with cold for the past so many days and crying for a jacket. "It is rather strange," she added, "that you could not find time to make a small jacket for the boy. Pray get me a piece of cloth and I shall do it presently." The tailor said, "What you say is perfectly right; but tell me when am I to take up this work. Cold weather has just set in and the customers plague me with their reminders day and night. I do not get time even to prepare their clothes; I am so hard pressed for time. Don't you see, I go without clothes myself? Am I proof against climatic changes? I must get time even to fetch cloth from the bazaar." "You might

as well get the cloth through any one," retorted the tailoress. "You have so many customers waiting at your door every time; why don't you ask any of them to get the cloth for you?"

"What will it avail, even if some one fetches the cloth for me?" replied the tailor. "I have so many clothes of my customers to prepare that both you and I shall have to work at them for a number of days continually in order to be able to dispose of them. And, if I get more work in the meantime, we shall not be able to do so even then." "There will be no end to your work," said the tailoress. "The whole winter will have passed before you are able to dispose of your customer's clothes and in the meantime, God forbid, if you or the boy catches cold and fever, what will happen to me?" "What am I to do?" replied the tailor rather coldly, "I have no time to spare just at the present moment."

Similar is the case with the so-called teachers of mankind; they get no respite from the work of teaching others. (A tailor at least fits others with clothes and thus protects them against heat and cold, but these so-called teachers or preachers practically waste the whole of their time). But a day will come when they will get complete rest from their work, a rest which will know no hindrance. To say nothing of these

poor people, even those who have boards bearing the words "No time" hanging at their doors and who are always found murmuring that they have no breathing time, will automatically get full leisure to roll in the ashes of the cremation-ground.

Hence it will be wise of you if you spare time beforehand. Leisure is not something to be imported from outside: it has to be found out at any rate. You will greatly repent if you find your life a great void in the end. You should therefore set apart some time at least from the work of redeeming others and serving your motherland, and utilize it in redeeming and serving your own self.

It is only when you have washed off your own sins that you will find yourself equal to the task of serving your motherland and, later on, the entire universe.

The saint-poet Narayana says:—

"Let the world do whatever it takes into its head to do, no matter whether it is good or bad; what you should do is to put your own house in order."*

"You have spent decades in trying to purge the world of its sins! You should therefore clean your own mind first; or else it will continue to remain dirty, (however you may try to clean others)."†

Tuka's Prayer.

Lord, forbid it that I should cast my eyes on things
that bring evil thoughts. Far better that I were blind.

Lord, forbid it that I should foul my lips with any
words stained with filth. Far better that they were sealed.

Lord, forbid it that I should hear any word of injury
to another, or listen to a word of contempt.
Far better that I were deaf.

Lord, forbid it that I should look with lust
upon those who should be sisters to me.
Far better that I were dead.

Lord, let Tuka flee from all this world of sense
To find eternal peace in Thee.

(Adapted from an *Abhang* of Saint Tukaram)

* तेरे भावै जो करौ भलौ बुरौ संसार । नारायन तू बैठकै अपनो भवन बुहार ॥
† जग अघ धोवत जुग गए, धुप्यौ न मनकौ मैल । मन मल पहलें धोयलै, नतरु मैलकौ मैल ॥