

Parents Are Angels on Earth



Children, the practice of sending one's parents away to old-age homes, prevalent in the West, is catching on in our country too. At least, in the West, the aged mother or father will have a pet dog for company. But even that consolation is not available here. Of course, the children have their own lives. In order to fulfil their dreams, they might have to work in some distant location.

This is understandable. It might, however, be difficult for them, who are living in their own worlds, to understand the mental agony that their aged parents feel when they are lonely. Today, most care homes have modern amenities like the television, swimming pool and recreation area, as well as other residents to whom they can open their hearts. But care homes for the elderly can never give them the love, security and joy of their own homes.

Amma remembers the experience that an 80-year-old woman living in an old-age home in America told her. The owner of a big house and enough money, she had a son and three daughters. All three daughters were living 30-45 minutes away, and the son was in a neighbouring state. This woman was all alone in that big house. For company she had a dog, a cat and a parrot. At first, the daughters used to take turns visiting her thrice a week and do whatever was needed. They would take her outside for meals.

The son would come once a month to see his mother. But over time, the children gradually began to find all these visits burdensome. The thrice-weekly visits became twice-weekly, and then weekly. Then it became fortnightly. Finally, the children jointly decided to admit their mother to a care home. All four of them were unanimous in this matter. But when it came to dividing the property, there was a dispute that eventually ended up in the court. In the meantime, the four of them took away everything from the house in which the mother lived.

A mother carries the baby in her womb with immeasurable care and love. The foetus breathes and is nourished through the mother. Its body is nothing other than its mother's flesh and blood. In every respect, the baby is a part of its mother and dependent on her. The birth of a child is the fruit of a mother's intense labour. The infancy and childhood that follow is the time a child experiences love and affection the most. No child can grow and develop in the right way without breast milk and the warmth of affection at the mother's bosom. Only a mother can understand the sacrifice that she willingly undergoes for the sake of her child.

Today, many children invite their parents to stay with them only when they have children. Since both the husband and wife have to work, they need someone who can stay at home to look after the baby. They also call their parents during their birthdays, or send them birthday cards. "Mommy, I love you. Daddy, I love you"—with that, their duty ends. And then, when they grow old, what they receive from their children is admission into a care home.

If we look after our parents with love and reverence, our children, seeing this, will treat us in the same way in future. Nowadays, Mother's Day and Father's Day are celebrated even in India as children are not taking proper care of their parents.

These are not affairs that one should remember just for a day in the year. The bond with our parents should last for as long as we live, as an emotion rooted deeply in our hearts, as a part of our very soul. For this, one should live according to principles of spirituality. Every home should become an arena for acquiring these values and practicing those precepts.