Article **FAMILY**-18



SHARING LEADS TO GROWTH

You grow when you give. By DP Sabharwal

Nappy, the first cloth a human being is wrapped in, is without pockets and so is the coffin, the last cloth in which an individual is laid to rest. Yet, throughout life an individual is busy trying to fill up pockets with things that no one can take along," was an SMS message I recently received.

Though it stated a simple and universal fact known to everyone including me, yet the message somehow really moved me. The stark reality and the hard-hitting fact set me thinking.

The collection of various worldly materials, assets, wealth, knowledge, etc is not bad. In fact, it is desirable because in the absence of desires, wants and wishes, no one would work and the world would come to a standstill. So, putting in an effort to get more and more of everything is not bad. What is bad is trying to keep receiving without giving anything back. In such a scenario two things could happen. Others would be deprived of necessities and you would end up not knowing what to do with what you have. It is said that the "taste and proof of pudding lies in its eating". Let us start that way by going through a very relevant example from the history; nay the geography of the world.

Sea of Galilee and Dead Sea: The Sea of Galilee is just north of the Dead Sea. Both of these receive their water from the River Jordan. And yet, they are as different from each other as the proverbial 'cheese from the chalk'.

The Sea of Galilee is pretty, resplendent with rich, colourful marine life. There are lots of plants and lots of fish too. In fact, it is home to over as different types of fish. On the other hand there is no life at all in the Dead Sea. No fish, no vegetation, no sea animals. In fact, nothing lives in the Dead Sea and hence the name.

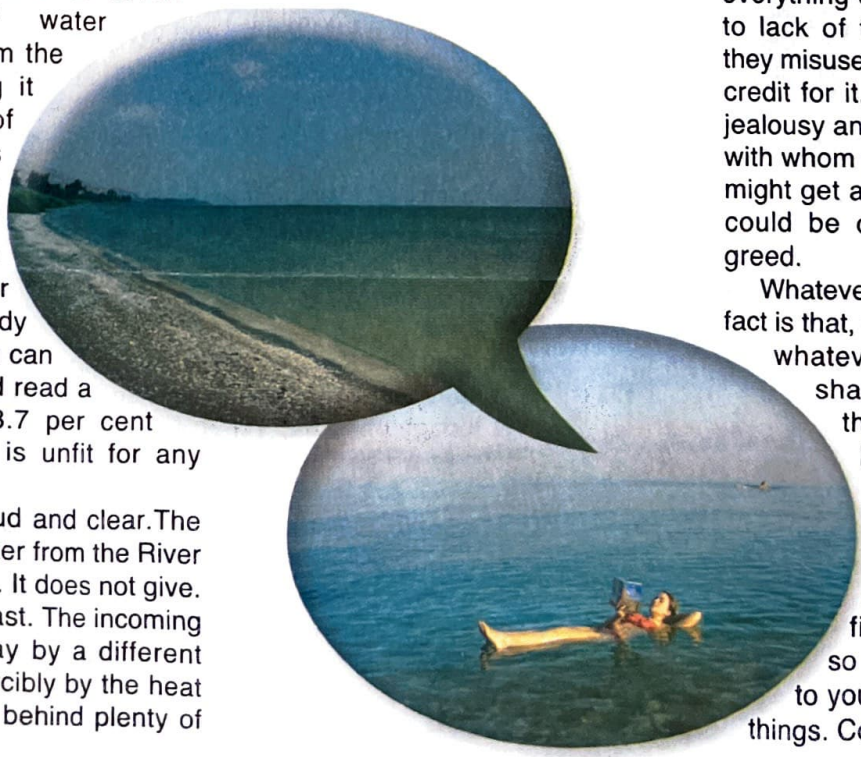
Same region, same source of water, and yet while one sea is full of life, the other is dead. Are wondering about this mysterious happening, if you already do not know the reason? Well, the reason is rather simple to see and understand. The River Jordan flows into the Sea of Galilee and then flows out. The water simply passes through the Sea of Galilee in and then out; and that keeps the sea healthy and vibrant, teeming with marine life.

The Dead Sea, on the other hand, is so far below the mean sea level that it has no outlet. The water flows in from the River Jordan but does not flow out. There are no outlet streams. It is estimated that over seven million tons of water evaporate daily from the Dead Sea, leaving it salty and too full of minerals. The sea is so high in salt content – almost nine times the normal ocean water – that the human body can float easily. You can almost lie down and read a book! And with 33.7 per cent salinity, the water is unfit for any marine life.

The lesson is loud and clear.The Dead Sea takes water from the River Jordan, and holds it. It does not give. Not voluntarily at least. The incoming water is taken away by a different route, so to say, forcibly by the heat of the sun, leaving behind plenty of salt and the result is there for all to see, no life at all.

The same applies to our lives. It should not be just about getting all the time but is about giving a bit like the Sea of Galilee. Otherwise we would end up like the Dead Sea! Many of us – definitely all of us who have the access to the magazine you are holding in your hands and reading – are fortunate to have wealth, knowledge and, in probability love and respect as well. But if we don't learn to give, we could all end up like the Dead Sea. The love and the respect, the wealth and the knowledge could all evaporate. Like the water in the Dead Sea.

If we get the Dead Sea mentality of merely allowing the things to come into our lives without giving back to society in which we live, the results can be disastrous. Sooner or later we could be left to ourselves, without friends well-wishers and care-takers. It would be a good idea to ensure that, in the sea of our life, we have outlets – as many outlets as possible: for love, wealth, knowledge and in fact everything else that you get in your life. Make sure you don't just get, you give too. Open the taps. And you will see that the floodgates of happiness and contentment would open out for you.



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Reasons for not giving: The reasons why people do not give or share with others are diverse and many. It could be due to inherent differences in age, gender, education levels, social status and the like. It could be due to general lack of time to share knowledge or inadequate awareness and realisation of the value and benefit of sharing with others. It could be due to competitiveness within the organisation and outside. It could be due to lack of a rewards and recognition systems that would motivate people to share more of their knowledge, money and everything else. It could also be due to lack of trust in people because they misuse knowledge or take unjust credit for it. It could also be due to jealousy and the fear that the person with whom you share the knowledge might get ahead of you. Above all, it could be due to pure and simple greed.

Whatever the reason might be, the fact is that, without giving and sharing whatever you have and can share, you are diminishing the chances of additional happiness that you would accrue if you do so. There are two ways of cultivating the habit of giving and sharing. In the first instance you can do so with whatever is surplus to you, mainly the materialistic things. Consider the following:

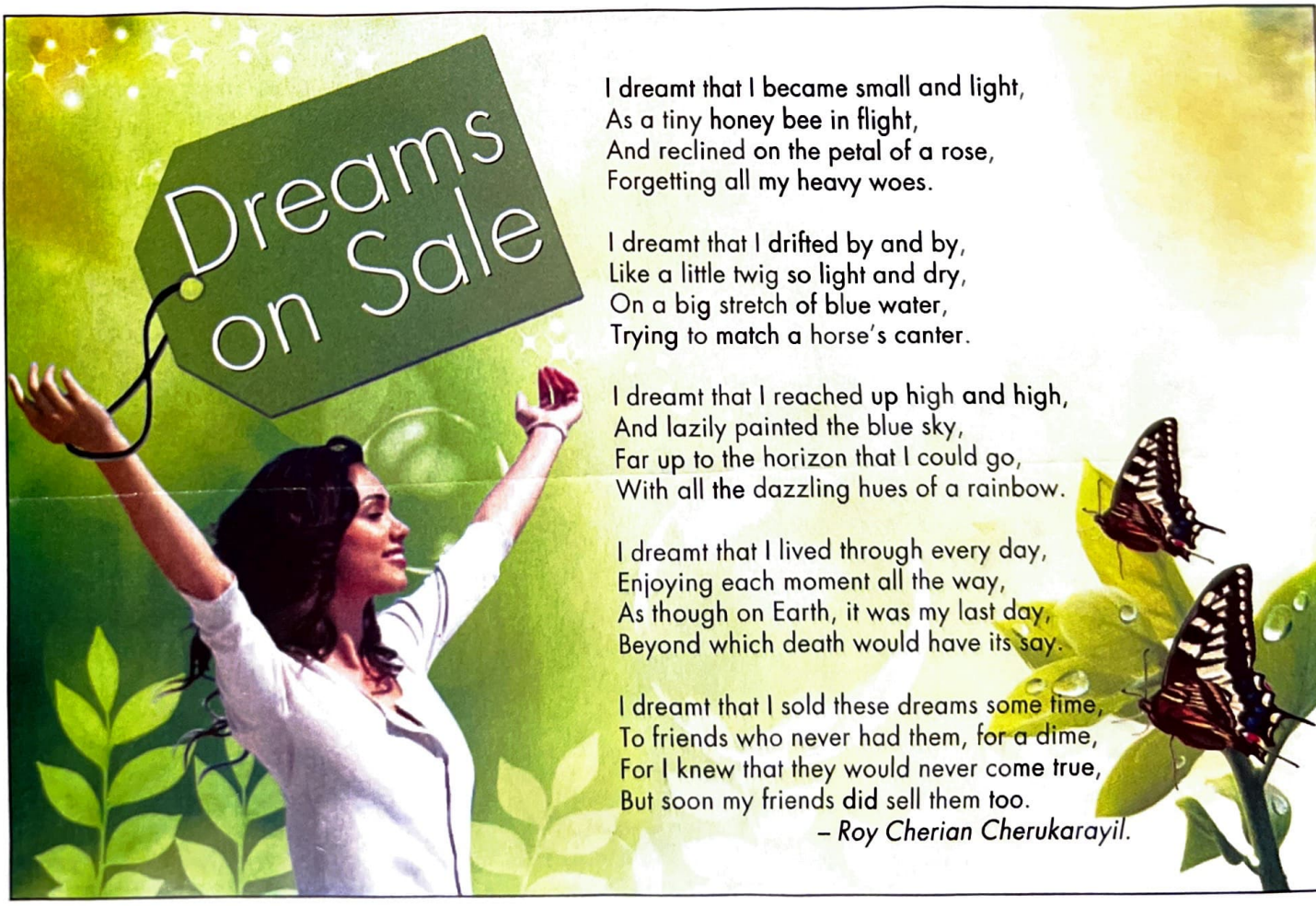
- Leftover food is kept in the fridge for days together but is not given to the maid. The result is that either you eat the stale food day after day, thus incurring the chances of getting sick, or you throw it away after storing for days when it starts tasting and smelling bad. In the latter case, you have wasted a lot of electricity by keeping it cool in the fridge. Consider giving it away in time when it is still fresh and can be used.
- Old clothes – though apparently new but either ill-fitting or out of fashion – are piled in the cupboards for years together. Then, when you think of giving them away, their yarn is so weakened that they cannot be worn and get torn just by pulling. It results in complete wastage.
- Same is the case with the clothes and toys of children who grow up. I have seen friends storing batteries of operated toys for years together in the hope that their grandchildren would play with them. When the time came, two things happened. Firstly, the children refused to let their children play with the outdated and dangerous toys and secondly the battery compartments were rusted and the toys had become worthless.

The second area of giving and sharing belongs to your abilities, wisdom and knowledge. I have seen well-educated and experienced people refusing to share their wealth of knowledge with others. The oft-repeated explanation is: "I learnt it the hard way, let youngsters too learn the hard way." Well, by all means let the youngsters put in hard work, but make their task a bit easier and more fruitful by giving them necessary advice and making them aware of the pitfalls to be avoided. Share your experiences with them, enlighten them with your knowledge and guide them through your wisdom. Rest assured, whatever you have would not diminish if you share it with others.

In our country there have been recorded cases where the earlier generations did not share experiences and trade secrets the next generations as a result which many 'arts and fine arts' hav died out and vanished. Let us not be contributory to this and put in our efforts to arrest the trend. Let us start sharing and giving whatever we have.

For this we would have to try and find time to do so. If we do not do so, the knowledge with us would rust over a period of time and no one would be able to retrieve it. The best example of such a scenario is the Ashoka pillar near the Qutab Minar in Delhi.

It has been there out in the open, exposed to the vagaries of weather over thousands of years, yet it has not corroded, the ideal example of the best stainless steel. What is sad is that we have no records or knowledge about the composition of this pillar. It was not shared at that time. The knowledge went down with the wise and learned people who designed and fabricated it.



I dreamt that I became small and light,
As a tiny honey bee in flight,
And reclined on the petal of a rose,
Forgetting all my heavy woes.

I dreamt that I drifted by and by,
Like a little twig so light and dry,
On a big stretch of blue water,
Trying to match a horse's canter.

I dreamt that I reached up high and high,
And lazily painted the blue sky,
Far up to the horizon that I could go,
With all the dazzling hues of a rainbow.

I dreamt that I lived through every day,
Enjoying each moment all the way,
As though on Earth, it was my last day,
Beyond which death would have its say.

I dreamt that I sold these dreams some time,
To friends who never had them, for a dime,
For I knew that they would never come true,
But soon my friends did sell them too.

– Roy Cherian Cherukarayil.