

Of Strangers And Friends

Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

Normally preoccupied with family members and a small circle of friends, most of us do not generally want to become familiar with strangers; we look upon them as 'others'. This kind of thinking is based simply on suppositions about others – and sometimes such suppositions are unfounded. Experience shows that it is perfectly possible to make friends out of strangers.

Swami Rama Tirath, a man of considerable education, decided in the last decade of the nineteenth century to visit the US, despite paucity of funds and not knowing anyone there who could receive him and host his stay there. After a long sea voyage, he reached the American coast, where he disembarked along with the other passengers. There were many Americans who had come to receive their friends and relatives at the port. However, Swami Ram Tirath found himself walking all alone by a corner of the port. An American, seeing him there, approached him and asked, 'Do you have any friends in America?' Swami Ram Tirath said: 'Yes, there is one friend and that friend is here.' Saying this, he embraced the American.

This kind of behaviour was unexpected and the American was impressed. He said: 'Yes, I am your friend.' and then he took him along to his home. Swami Ram Tirath remained his guest till he left America for India.

No one is a stranger to you; everyone is your potential friend. Just behave in a friendly way and accept others as your sisters and brothers. If you can sincerely adopt this kind of friendly attitude, you will find that everyone is your friend and no one is alien to you.

The fact is that all the men and women have common ancestors. This means that the

whole world is a single family and everyone has that kind of attachment with others that is so noticeable in family life.

It is only distance that makes you a stranger. If you eliminate distance, nature will prevail and all can be like blood brothers and sisters to you. The formula for friendship is very simple. If you are truly a friend to others, then you can safely predict that they will also become your friends. Develop genuine love for others in your heart and then others cannot but love you in return.

A philosopher said that man keeps radiating feelings all the time. If you are a compassionate person and you are radiating compassion, then others are bound to receive

those radiations of compassion from you. If you have developed love for others, then you are radiating love and others are bound to receive the radiation of love. This is the law of nature. You will therefore receive a positive response to positive radiation and a negative response to negative radiation.

The only condition in this regard is that you should be a selfless person. Positive behaviour combined with selflessness always works. It is selflessness that makes your behaviour ring true. On the contrary, if you are a selfish person, your behaviour will be like that of a salesman. And such behaviour cannot have any positive effect.

Abide by your own nature and you will be a successful person. Everyone is born like an angel but, after receiving negative impulses from his environment, he becomes otherwise. So, return to your original nature and you will be acceptable to all.

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