

POEMS OF THE MONTH

The Teachers.

-Simon Zachariah

Experience is a good teacher.
Failure is a good teacher.
Mistake is a good teacher.
What are they teaching?

Experience teaches perfection
Failure teaches persistence
Mistake teaches carefulness
What else you need in life!

What degree they offer?
A Doctorate in humility,
A Doctorate in tolerance,
A Doctorate in teamwork!

ഒരു പഴമൊഴി

- സൈമൺ സാഹിയാ

മനസ്സ് സിലാവായതെ
മനസ്സിലായി എന്തെ പറഞ്ഞാൽ
മനസ്സിലായതും കൂടെ
മനസ്സിലാവില്ലെന്നു
മനസ്സിലാക്കിയിട്ടു,
മനസ്സിലായിട്ടുവേണം
മനസ്സിലായി എന്തെ പറയുവാൻ.
മനസ്സിലായോ?
മനുഷ്യന്റെ അടിസ്ഥാന ആവശ്യം മാനമത്രെ
മനസ്സിലായോ?
ഭക്ഷണം വസ്ത്രം, പാർപ്പിടം എല്ലാം
അഭിമാനത്തിനു ശേഷം മാത്രം
മനസ്സിലായോ?

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Channels of Glory Newsletter
December, 2020



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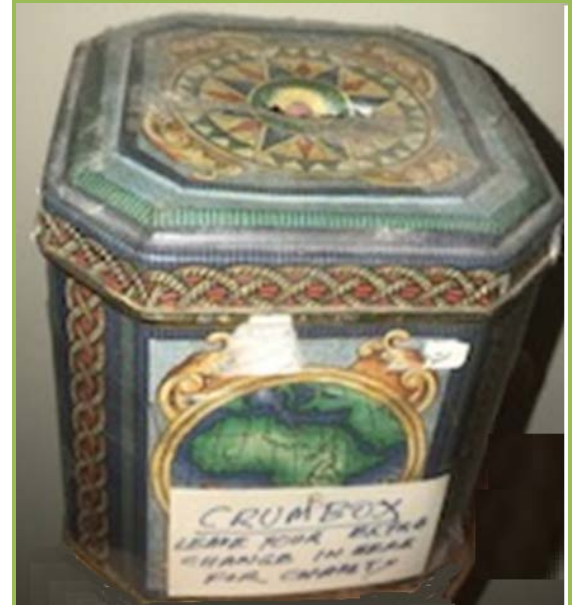
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(Est. 2005)

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A Newsletter

Vol. 15 No. 3. 2020



"Even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table."



Channels of Glory – **Letter from Dr. Simon Zachariah**

Commonsense is the most uncommon virtue we see in this world. Even people who are claiming to be educated often lack this quality. Christian missionaries during their training are taught the three essential foundational steps: Soap, Soup, and Salvation. This is fundamental commonsense we all have to understand in our daily life. First of all everyone needs some personal cleanliness, secondly, food to nourish the body and finally the need for spiritual food. Every day we meet several people but we forget to look at their heart to learn about them before we interact with them. It is very important to study an individual and his needs before we interact with them, just like we touch and feel the chair before we sit on it. Even though you might have sat on that chair for the past many years, you do not know its condition now. In the same way it is better to assess a

person each time you interact with them. A cheerful smile, a kind word of appreciation, will give you a quick assessment about them, and will help you to form a bond with them. I remember as a child, when there was any surprising news or sad news, my mother used to warn us, “Don’t say anything yet when dad comes home; I will tell him at the right time.” In order to understand people we need to have certain experiences in life. Unless you have gone through the same experiences, you cannot understand the feelings of others. Once I happened to interact with an orphan student who was hiding the fact that he was an orphan. Once that secret was revealed, he was so much depressed. When I tried to comfort him, he told me, “No one can understand the feeling of a young orphan. It is not the fact that I don’t have parents; but the fact that I do not know them.” So do not say, “*I understand*” to any one, because each one has different past experiences which makes them unique. All we can say is “I accept you as you are!” Sharing food is a common ritual in every culture. This shows our concern towards others and it shows how welcoming we are.

One of my colleagues told me that his father used to eat only from a corner of his plate. The main reason being that he was saving the rest for any surprise visitors who may come unannounced. Immediately he would share the untouched part of his food with that person. I remember my mother also used to give food to the less fortunate people who came to see her and to share their sorrows. After giving food she used to

enquire about their wellbeing and she used to comfort them through prayer. This brings us to the question about what else can we share? I have placed the photo of a piggy bank box on the front page of this newsletter. I started this piggy bank named “Crumb Box” many years ago, and preferred to call it ‘*Crumb box*’ because I was reminded of the bible story of the woman who said that even the dogs in the family are fed by the crumbs falling from the table. My family saves all the coins lying in the house and puts it in the ‘Crumb box’. When I used to work at the University, I used to see a lot of fallen coins at the bus stop and considered their value in Indian currency. Every Christmas to my astonishment I could collect more than fifty dollars to give away as charity! Think for yourselves, and reflect on ways you can contribute for the good of society. It may be your ability to sing, or to preach, or to teach or just to listen to others. So let us look at our own treasure chest and find ways to share it with others at this time.

This Christmas season is a special one. So many are suffering from the pandemic in different ways. Let us fight the loneliness of our loved ones with some cheerful phone calls and letters. We know that many families have empty chairs around their table this year. Many are grieving the loss of their loved ones. Find out your own innovative ways to help each other and do not try to give advice, criticism, and judgement. But always remember the missionary formula, Soap, Soup, Salvation!