

FILTHY SHOW OF WEALTH

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“Today our marriage anniversary has reached two digital figures! So I am celebrating it with these sweets,” a young friend said in a circle of 10-12 friends in a meeting of Gujarati Lakhak Mandal (GLM) and he distributed sweets. Then he shared about his marriage. In the morning of their marriage the bride and the bridegroom with their parents went first to a temple and then they registered their marriage in a court. Afterwards both the parties went and had a meal in a hotel. Later the bridegroom came home alone with his bride.

Till that day the respectable young man was staying alone in his bungalow in a housing society. That day evening seeing a young lady in the bungalow the women in the society began to gossip. But no one knew anything about the new woman in their society. Two days passed in suspense. How to go to the respectable young man’s house and enquire about the woman! On the 3rd day some women saw the young man leaving his house for his job. A few women got together and went and rang the door bell of his house. The newcomer of the house opened the door.

“The young man is not here?” The woman who rang the bell asked. “Who are you?” She enquired in the same breath.

“He has gone to work... I am his wife”, the young woman said.

“We have married. Three days back we went to the temple and then registered our marriage in the court,” the young woman added seeing the wide open eyes of the visitors.

Sharing the experience of his unique way of marriage our young friend said that even today in the society some women would not believe that we are married because we have not gone around the fire seven times. “We are together. We have a seven-year old daughter. And we are happy. That is enough for us,” the young man added.

Recently I got a marriage invitation card. Inside there was the invitation to the engagement of a friend’s son. As I opened the cover there was a golden lettered card announcing the engagement of their NRI son and a second card inviting me for the ceremony in the temple followed by a grand meal in a well known five star hotel. Obviously the costly invitation card and its content were a filthy manifestation of the money and wealth of that man and his NRI son.

As a writer in touch with the public I get a lot of marriage invitations from friends and others. Many of those invitations are costing not Rs.20/- or Rs.30/- but a minimum of Rs.100 and more! In such display of cards costing thousands of rupees and meals billed for lakhs of rupees, I see not the joy and merriment of engagement or marriage but an opulent show of money and wealth!

People spent money not only in invitation cards and meals but lakhs of rupees are also spent in photography and video shooting. These are nothing but an exhibition of filthy wealthy and craving for popularity.

Some times back there was a news items in many Gujarati newspapers. An NRI bridegroom in a show of wealth spent lakhs of rupees to hire a helicopter and fly to the bride's village in South Gujarat from an airport!

There was another example of filthy exhibition of money-power and show of wealth spending millions of rupees. A four page weekly newspaper published from the Gujarat capital, Gandhinagar displayed a multi-colour four page photo-feature of a marriage celebration showing people including a person accused of notorious encounter killings in Gujarat. The whole multi-colour photo-feature was like a vulgar display of the bridegroom and his parents' wealth and money-power.

India may be the land of many billionaires. But India is also the land of most abject poverty. The thinking and good-will people cannot forget that here in India, amidst the vulgar display of money-power and wealth there are very poor people who are dying of hunger and malnutrition! Here the gap between the rich and the poor, that is, the divide between the millionaires and billionaires on the one side and the people who struggle for one square meal a day on the other side is increasing day by day. Instead of bridging this great divide those, who contribute to it, are inhuman people committing great sin.

In such situation I consider that the exhibition of their filthy wealth and money- power are committing a terrible sin through exorbitant spending in marriage and other such occasions.

Much money and wealth in itself are not evil. There are people in our midst who have earned in right way pots of money and many of them put into good use their well- earned to money.

In a marriage party and celebration a person known to me fed more than 500 relatives and friends and well wishers. When I confronted him, he said to me. "On the occasion of the marriage of my son I set aside ten cent land and build a two-room kitchen cement-concrete cottage for a poor young couple without a home. Similarly when I got my daughter got married three years back I helped with dowry a poor girl and took most expenses her wedding."

Among the wealthiest people in the world are two great people: Bill Gates and Woren Bufet. Both the men possess enormous wealth. But they do not safely preserve their huge wealth and money for themselves and their posterity nor do they spend the money for their own selfish motives. They spend their money which they have made by hard work for the welfare of poor people through 'Bill and Meleni Gates Charitable Foundation'.

One has no right over the unjustly earned money. Even hoarding selfishly the justly earned money is a crime against the poor. The vulgar display of money on occasions like marriage to my mind is an evil; it is a crime; it is a sin. (contact the author: ciss@satyam.net.in)

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