

LET US BE CHARITABLE TO THE COWS.

These jottings intend:

- ✓ *The difference between “Charities in Plural and Charity in singular*
- ✓ *The pitfalls and dangers of “Being Charitable”*
- ✓ *The danger of rationalizing our injustices under the guise of charity.*
- ✓ *An awareness that peace cannot be found while injustice thrives*

A STORY

In a large span of green and luscious grassland extending far and wide, with plentiful fodder and crystal like water, a large number of cows were leisurely and freely grazing all over..

One day, an enterprising farmer fenced a large portion of that green paradise: locked therein he kept hundreds of cattle inside the fences.

After some days, though outside the fence, there was plentiful grass for the cows to eat and plentiful water to drink, inside the there wasn't enough fodder and water for all. Very soon, the fenced-in -cattle were starving and thirsty.

Worse still, inside the fences fights and violence was rife. Bulls and cows were goring each other to death to grab whatever fodder and water was left for them to survive.

When the farmer saw the pitiful condition of the cows, filled with compassion for them, called his friends and told them: “Let us be charitable to the cows! They need our help. They are hungry and thirsty. Let us cut as much grass as possible outside the enclosure, and throw it to the cows over the fences for them to eat. ”And he called it “charity”

The farmer – out of concern for the cows - asked also his friends to help him to bring bucketfuls of water for the cattle to drink. And he called it “charity”.

And because in winter the cows were suffering of cold and exposure, he erected for them some cowsheds. And he called it “charity”.

When one day, his friends asked the farmer why was he taking so much trouble for the cows, he answered: “We have to be charitable to the cows in need” When, they retorted: “But, then, why are you not doing the obvious thing – break down the fences and let the cows look after themselves – with annoyance, he replied: “But then, if I let them go, I shall no able to milk them.”

(An adaptation of a story of Leo Tolstoy)

POINTS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. Why did The Enterprising Farmer show so much concern for the cows?
2. Was he really charitable to them? What was he?
3. Why there was violence and strife among the cows inside the fences?
4. How could peace be brought again into that bovine paradise?
5. Is “helping others” for selfish and ulterior motives charity? Why? Then, what it is?
6. Have you ever questioned: Why there are so many “charitable institutions” in our world?
7. Are most of our charity drives for the needy, motivated by love for them? Explain.
8. Why the better-offs of society, willingly patronize and welcome “charity drives”?
9. Why do they not like to hear of Justice Drives?
10. To what social class do most of the members of the well-known philanthropic associations belong? What does this show?
11. Were the cows in need of charity? What was their real need?
12. Why was the Farmer not prepared to listen to the advice of his friends?
13. What is easier – to be “charitable” or to be “just”? Why?
10. What is the greatest gift “CHARITY” can offer to others? Why?
11. What is the difference between “CHARITY” in singular and “CHARITIES” in plural?
12. Explain the sentence: “There is an inborn tendency in us all to be charitably exploitative.”

SOME IDEAS FOR TEACHING

1. In justice, not in charity, all men should have enough to live simple, dignified and satisfying human lives.

2. The greatest gift CHARITY should give others is JUSTICE, not CHARITIES.
3. Charities will always be necessary in our world as remedial measures in critical circumstances, but never as a substitute for justice.
4. Like our farmer, many of us are not really interested in the cows, *namely others*, but only with what we may get from them.
5. In our charities, consciously or unconsciously, we often hide selfish ulterior motives.
6. We are prone to indulge in charities to pacify our consciences for the injustices we do or we connived at
7. By doing charities we feel good, by doing justice, we feel the pinch.
8. We keep telling our children and pupils to be charitable; seldom have we told them to be fair and just.
9. The socio-politico-economical structures of our world are unjust and exploitative. They are sort of “legalized injustice”. They are fences.
10. The middle and the upper classes benefit from the injustices done to the deprived whom they help out of “charity”
11. Violence and strife is the daughter of injustice.
12. There cannot be lasting peace without justice. Peace is the daughter of Justice.
13. Justice is the daughter of love.
14. Love is Just.