

# **THE SHIPWRECKERS AND THEIR BOAT**

## **Intent of the story:**

- ✓ *Value of tradition.*
- ✓ *Do not be a worshipper of the past*
- ✓ *What has been good once will no necessarily be good for ever.*
- ✓ *Growth in any sphere of life implies a certain death to past and present.*
- ✓ *Detachment from – not rejection of - the past is the key that opens the future*

## **THE STORY.**

Once upon a time, there was a shipwreck on the high seas. The survivors, after swimming across an angry sea, reached the shores of an inhospitable island. For a long time, they managed to live in that deserted place, until one day they decided to build a boat that would take them back to their homes. With great determination and hard labor, they worked for nights and days to build a large boat. At last the boat was ready. They named it "SALVA"TION".

Entrusting themselves to their "SALVATION" they set sail across the perilous sea. After a long and arduous journey, they managed to reach their beloved motherland. "SALVATION" made it possible!

Still to reach their village of origin they had to undertake a long journey over mountain and valley. To do that, they had to take a painful decision. They had to abandon their beloved boat on the shore and walk home without it. But how could they do that? After all, the boat had been their "SALVATION"

So, they decided to carry their "SALVATION" home. They loaded .their boat on their shoulders and started their journey inwards and onwards to their native village.

Unfortunately, their "SALVATION" was too heavy to be carried over such a long trek on land. Unfortunately, their "SALVATION" at the end , turned to be their "PERDITION". In fact, the poor wreckers never reached home. They died of exhaustion crushed beneath the weight of their "SALVATION!"

*Adapted from a Buddhist Story*

## **Step 2, Points for Personal Reflection**

*Ask the participants to put down in writing their main thoughts and reflections.*

1. Can there be any progress in life if we stick uncritically to the past? Why?
2. Have we to keep "all" our old traditional and sacrosanct practices and customs untouched forever? Why?
3. Has tradition been always helpful to move forward in search of God and truth? How?

4. Can scientific theories, philosophical systems, religious dogmas, political ideologies, however good in the past, be our "SALVATION" in any possible changing situation? Why? How?
5. Can you mention some of the things of the past, in any sphere of life, you think are boats to be discarded in today's present?
6. Are not our political systems loaded with crushing burdens of old ideologies and outdated assumptions? Mention some of them? What should be done?
7. In our educational system what boats have turned to be our "PERDITION"?
8. In our religious beliefs and practices which are the boats we carry to the point of being crushed? What should be done?
9. What has to be carried forward and what has to be left behind, if there has to be progress in life?
10. Is it possible to grow in maturity while carrying all the "emotional luggage" of our past lives?
11. How to say "goodbye" to dear parts of ourselves in order to keep personally and emotionally growing in the future??
12. Can anyone enjoy his old age, if emotionally he got stuck in his younger day's feelings and memories?
13. How can we grow old gracefully?
14. What other lessons the parable of the 'Shipwrecks and the Boat' teach us? Find as you can.

### **Step 3 Sharing and discussion**

- ✓ Request the participants to share with the group the main points they jotted down.
- ✓ Sharing should be followed by discussion and interaction.
- ✓ If the number of participants is large, hold the sharing and discussion in small groups.
- ✓ In that eventuality, the main points shared and discussed in the small groups should be recorded, and later on communicated to the house.

### **Step 4 Input – Teaching. Suggested Thoughts.**

- There is no possible progress if we remain stuck in the past
- Growth is a continuous death. It is rather a rebirth.
- A new plant born from dying seed shows continuity between past, present and future.
- Progress doesn't mean death to the past, but transformation.
- We have not to disown the past because is the past, but nether to keep it frozen
- We need discretion and discernment to see what has to be kept and what has to be discarded

### **Explain the following sentences**

- Our present is the outcome our dead past, our future will be the outcome of our dying present
- Traditions are good, but not eternal.
- Traditions pave the way to the future, they should not block it
- An obstinate attachment to the past is an obstacle to enter into a better future.
- Every today is a death to yesterday

- Unless the grain of wheat dies it will not bear fruit..
- Life is dying by degrees.
- Let every new day be both a dying and a birthday to you
- All that was done yesterday should not necessarily be done today.
- To run the race of life, jump out of the rut.
- Live your present in between the stickiness of the past and fickleness of tomorrow
- If you are not ready to die, you cannot live.
- Do not worship the past neither the future, revere the present..
- Human life is a trapeze's job. The old trapeze has to let go, to hold to the next. Let your past go to hold to your future. You cannot hold both at one time..