

Values beyond time and change

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Everyone becomes a mystic while using the word change! This is truly the beauty of the word 'change' that it has managed to survive despite all change. Once again, New Year is back with the bang and the old 2017 is shown the door. True to the adage- 'old order changeth, yielding place to new' we all vouch for the power and prowess of change. But it was only last week that I could discover a new dimension, thanks to my visit to Bihar- a land of enlightenment for Buddha and seat of great learning in ancient India. I was on the campus of Simultala Awasiya Vidyalaya (SAV), one of the most prestigious schools run by the Government of Bihar. It was a workshop both for the learned teachers and inquisitive young minds. There was spark in the

eyes of the students. They were all eyes and ears throughout my session. They were all hungry but not for food. They were curious to find out more and still more. The innocuous smile on their faces and innocence in the hearts were simply disarming. There was a sense of jubilation. The word discipline had lost its sheen. The participants were driven by high energy and were highly self-disciplined. My heart was filled with joy unspeakable. How could students manage to remain unfazed by the pernicious propaganda of caste and petty politics of the state? Like Arjun of *Mahabharat*, they had total clarity of their goal. It was inspiring to see their broad vision of life. A student named Mohammed Parwez asked, 'What is the best way to make India proud'?

After interacting with umpteen number of students and teachers, I grew skeptical about the veracity of the statement that nothing but

change is permanent. It is true that every society is progressing and that progress entails radical change in many of the societal norms, laws and customs. But there are many things that refuse to change, perhaps for good reason. I realised it soon after meeting two of my old friends - Rajiv Ranjan and Santosh Singh. They had changed no doubt in their shape and size but inside they were as pleasant and positive as ever in the past. The best experience was in store still.

My mom, a septuagenarian though, was waiting desperately, having prepared all types of delicacies that I savor. Such was her love and commitment that I was reminded of the time gone by when she would ensure that lunch was ready early in the morning as I would be boarding my bus to Bhagalpur, where I studied. She had no complaint ever, a typical Indian mom, who lives only to make all sacrifices for family, especially children. At times, I am

amazed to think how could she understand and appreciate the value of education so deeply when she herself never went to any school. My love and respect for her grew manifold, thinking of how family system in India is still nourished by a set of values and principles that show no sign of ageing, let alone undoing a sea change. These values as epitomised by mothers everywhere are perhaps the values that sustain human society beyond the barriers of caste, community, color and class. Today, management gurus across the globe are busy highlighting the urgency to embrace change. As a result, even primary relations like family and friend are collapsing, resulting in despondency and despair in society. It is time we restored those pristine values that bring warmth and innocence in relationship. What gives meaning to life mustn't change. Join hands with me in welcoming Happy New Year with this new mindset!