

‘THE KARMAYOGI’

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One fine evening the baby mosquito asked his mother, “Mummy mummy shall I take a ride through the street all alone?” After persistent requests, the mummy mosquito agreed with hesitation. A victorious baby mosquito returned after a while and when queried about his maiden experience with a vainglorious smile he said, “What a beautiful world! What propitious and benevolent people! Mom as I flapped my wings through the busy street they looked at me and clapped their hands to encourage me. I think they were astonished by my smooth flying and the melody I sang as I hastened ahead.” Poor baby mosquito we would say! He misapprehended the attempts to terminate his very existence as encouraging applauses. We live in the ultramodern era which could be easily analogized with a mirage. Deadly traps show up in appealing and attractive guises. The young and the tyros are easily deceived by the splendour and glow of momentary pleasures. Decisions taken in the spur-of the moment may have drastic outcomes that may falter their glorious future. Today’s children need more guidance than any other generation since they have to cope with too many changes in too short time. They face more competition, more powerful peer group pressure, immense emotional stress, confusions and frustrations. They are often immoderate in success and inconsolable in failures. The promises of tomorrow need influential models to look up to from whom they can imbibe values and virtues that would steer their lives safely through the tempests of this present world. In the annals of history there had been some exceptional personalities who were touched by God and who in turn influenced the vast ocean of humanity by revealing their spiritual beauty and apostolic fervour. Blessed Kuriakose Elias Chavara, often addressed as the ‘Star of the East’ is an outstanding personality, a visionary who continues to inspire, impel and motivate millions even after a century since he left for his eternal abode.

Blessed Kuriakose Elias Chavara, was an illustrious scholar, prolific writer, genuine poet, multilingualist, efficient organiser, and eminent educator who permeated his spirituality to all around him, so much so that he was accepted and referred to as a man of God, from his early years. The motto of his life was “The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup.” He was irresistibly drawn towards God who revealed His ways to him. In response to the Lord he found delight in spending himself for the people around him. He was a ‘Karmayogi’, a contemplative out in the world, who blended contemplation and action in right measure, the one leading to the other in mutual enrichment. He had an amiable, loving, sociable nature and an all-embracing and all-inclusive heart. He was able to move and mix with everybody without distinction of caste, creed or colour. His name has been immortalized by the revolutionary steps he took for the upliftment of the society and the downtrodden. In a time when untouchability was prominent in India and when education was imparted only to the creamy layer of the society Blessed Chavara had the courage to start schools which were open to members of every community regardless of cast or creed. His pioneering efforts to educate the people through print media were extraordinary. “The house of Charity”, an institution founded by him in the 19th century to benefit the poor and the destitute was the first of this kind in India. Today his followers render dedicated spiritual, social and educational services all over the globe. We the Carmelites are much edified by the exemplary life of our founder father Blessed Chavara. It is his vision that triggers our mission to mould a future generation with excellent cognitive talents merged with refined character and filth less values. His counsels to families given in the form of a "Testament of a Loving Father" are universally applicable and are relevant to this day. Some of his advices are:

1. Children, you are God’s gift in the hands of your parents
2. The children who have a love of God and fear of God will love and respect their parents.

3. The day in which you have not done any good to your fellowmen will not be recorded in your book of life.
4. Regular reading of good books and meditating on them will illumine the mind
5. You ought to reach home before evening and take part in the evening prayers.
6. Since you belong to God, you have to give yourself back to God

We are God's gift to this world. Through our virtuous life we have to reflect the merciful face of God in this world. Let not a single day pass by without a virtuous action. "Happiness is like a butterfly. The more you chase it the more it will elude you. But if you turn your attention to other things, it comes and softly sits on your shoulder", says Nathaniel Hawthorne. One's life is created by the choices one makes, in quest of happiness. Lasting happiness is not the pleasure derived from the satisfaction of bodily appetites nor is it obtained from achievements and success but is the joy in loving and serving God and others. Our life values must be something that we really treasure and the impetus behind our every choice. The wind of God's grace is incessantly blowing; lazy sailors on the sea of life do not take advantage of it. But the active and strong always keep the sails of their minds unfurled to catch the favourable wind and thus reach their destination very soon. Let us awake from our self imposed slumber and strive hard to fashion a personality rich in virtues and values like that of Blessed Chavara. A dead fish floats with the current but an alive one floats against it. Let us choose to be fully alive and active, swimming against the current let us to reach the shore of karmayoga.