

Sir John Templeton

FROM BUSINESS TO PHILANTHROPY !! FROM PHILOSOPHY TO BUSINESS ?

14.07.2008

This week the world heard of the sad demise of Sir John Templeton, who, during his life, earned billions of dollars but became famous for giving away hundreds of millions of dollars in Charity. He established Templeton Prize in 1972 to be awarded to person of any religion for Progress in Religion. The purpose of Templeton Prize is to stimulate the knowledge and love of God on the part of humankind everywhere. He believed that "man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him for ever". For him, humanity was created by God for fellowship with God. He used to say, "God desires to be known, to be worshiped, and to be served by us". He maintained that our hearts will remain restless until we find rest in God.

Since 1973 the Award is being given regularly every year to a person who has stimulated quest for deeper understanding and pioneering breakthroughs in religious knowledge. He played very little part in determining the winner of the Prize which was decided by an independent board of judges.

He made billions in business but lived more honestly in religion wishing that the religion be considered not only as important as other sciences, physically or social, but more important than them. To demonstrate his priority of religion over sciences, he matched the Prize amount to the Nobel Prize money or even exceeded it (Pounds Sterling 750,000).

He turned away from business in 1992 and used his \$ 13 billion in assets to Philanthropy in which he solely remained engaged from that time onwards till his death. He is no more but his Philanthropy will continue to spread his firm belief in religion for a shared divinity between humanity and God.

Pandurang Shashtri Athavale

Pandurang Shashtri Athavale (P.V. Athavale), the head of Swadhyay Parivar from Mumbai, India, was awarded Templeton Prize of 750,000 pounds sterling for the year 1997. The Award was given to him for his religious activities for people to recognize and realize the presence of God within oneself and within others. Such recognition is accompanied by people's selfless offering of time and creative energy as a mark of devotion to God. He was awarded the Prize for transforming the social, cultural and spiritual conditions of the society. His activity claimed to have countered pervasive poverty, oppression and injustice with freedom, love and justice.

Press Release issued by John Templeton Foundation dated March 5, 1997 on declaration of 1997 Templeton Prize to Mr. P.V. Athavale, lists the achievement of Mr. P.V. Athavale, for which he was awarded the Prize, in the following words:

"The result has been a complete transformation – spiritually and economically – of approximately 100,000 villages and 20 millions people"

The claim of transformation of 100,000 villages in India was an exaggeration beyond anyone's imagination. It is just ridiculous to make such a claim when not

even one village has been so transformed. This controversy has been discussed earlier and we need not spend our time here again. Swadhyay activities in some villages might have brought mutual help, end of strife, reduction in vices and social reforms, but it would be stark exaggeration to describe such a change as "complete spiritual and economic transformation". Be that as it may, here is a more interesting side of the story. After the claim of complete spiritual transformation of 100,000 villages was made in 1997 (or earlier) Smt. Dhanashree Sreenivas Talwalkar (Jayashree P. Athavale), adopted daughter of Mr. P.V. Athavale the successor to Mr. P.V. Athavale (he died in October 2003) and the present Supremo of Swadhyay Parivar has herself made statement on oath showing that Swadhyay activity is not even present in 100,000 villages, leave alone their total spiritual and economic transformation. In a sworn affidavit dated 16th July 2004 filed by Dhanashree Talwalkar in the High Court of Gujarat at Ahmedabad in Special Criminal Application No.666 of 2004, she has mentioned that Swadhyay activities has reached at a total of 19042 Swadhyay/Chantanika Centres in the whole of India of which almost half of them (being 9773) are in the state of Gujarat where the Swadhyay activities have more pervaded than any other place. The total number of villages in the state of Gujarat are a little less than 19000. The Mahila Kendras, Video Kendras, Utsav Kendras, Yuva Kendras are all in the same villages where the Swadhyay/Chintanika Centres are situated. It is possible that some of the Prarthana Kendras which are shown as aggregating to 26916 in the whole of India (out of which Rs.24171 are in Gujarat) may be in addition to the Swadhyay/Chintanika Centres. Prarthana Centres are established before the village matures up to establish Swadhyay/Chintanika Centres.

A certified copy of the Statement filed by Dhanashree Talwalkar in the High Court (with High Court stamped affixed thereon) annexed to the sworn affidavit is attached herewith.

The statement loudly speaks as to the sort of exaggerated statements which are made by Swadhyay Parivar in order to get Awards!

With Dhanashree Talwalkar's sworn affidavit spilling the beans, is it necessary to add anything?

Another aspect of the Templeton Prize Award to P.V. Athavale is noteworthy. In an interview to the Press on declaration of the Templeton Prize on March 5, 1997, he stated that the Prize money would go to project run by his followers. He said that he would put the money back into Swadhyay Movement which sponsors housing and agricultural projects throughout India. He also declared "we are trying to develop selfless love. I do not want anything from any villager, not even a cup of coffee".

After the declaration, Dr. Jayant Bhatani a senior member and office bearer of Swadhyay Parivar in USA stated that P.V. Athavale had stated "he would match the amount with money from a trust set up by his movement, and would apply the combined total to housing and agricultural project through out India". (Report by Ben Jones in the Gazette).

In a Press Release later issued by Templeton Foundation under the heading "After the Award: The legacy of The Templeton Prize", a similar impression was created by Swadhyay Parivar that the moneys had been used for such purposes. The statement made is as follows:

"The 1997 recipient, Pandurang Shastri Athavale, founder and leader of the Bhagavad Gita-based self-study known as swadhyaya – which teaches self-esteem and respect for others and has helped 20 million people in 100,000 villages in India – distributed his funds directly to the communities in which he and the swadhyaya movement work."

Now please pick up your courage and hold your breath, Dhanashree Talwalkar has repeatedly stated, even during the lifetime and in the presence of P.V.

Athavale, that Templeton Prize was given individually to P.V. Athavale and the Prize money therefore, belonged to P.V. Athavale and he is not supposed to share it with anyone, not even with the poor, since Swadyay activities are a result of his single handed efforts!

Do we need to say anything more ?

Best regards

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SWADHYAYA ACTIVITIES AND KENDRA										
ACTIVITY	GUJARAT			OTHER STATE						TOTAL
	V A D	A H M	R A J	M A H	M P	A P	U P	R J N	O T H	
Swadhyaya/ Chintanika Kendra	2573	2397	4803	5343	545	2503	421	131	326	19042
Mahila Kendras										13414
Video Kendra	862	539	1103	397	100	61	8	20	14	3104
Utsav Kendra	3675	1923	3155	4390	734	330	77	91	306	14681
Yuva Kendra	2014	1374	3640	669	170	1074	59	25	95	9120
Divine Brain Trust	23	65	151	277	3		6	1	6	532
Prarthana Kendra	8773	8210	7188	2041	437		47	66	154	26916
Ekadeshi Bhaktiferi	16068	11710	13969	6849	3308	3456	691	190	364	56605
Geeta Pravaha	117	26	102	19	27		3		4	298
Tirth Yatri	24694	10988	26609	33054	4595	9587	1774	352	1274	112927
Vratin	11559	6881	20222	4051	1577	13058	505	157	274	58284
Krutin	21860	16310	27321	6170	3415	2766	396	605	546	79389
Abbreviations :										
VAD :	Vadodara			MAH:	Maharashtra			U.P :	Uttar Pradesh	
AHM :	Ahmedabad			M.P :	Madhya Pradesh			RJN :	Rajasthan	
RAJ :	Rajkot			A.P :	Andhra Pradesh			OTH :	Other States	

