

# Special Issue

Vol.No.56

FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION ONLY

JULY 23, 2018



## Margins in Life

During our childhood, our teachers taught us to leave a margin as we were learning to write on a white paper. We used to either draw a line or fold the paper for two or three inches to leave a left margin. Later, as we learnt to write for publications, we realised that right margin, left margin, top margin and bottom margin are expected in every publication.

While giving instructions, God told the people of Israel the following: *“When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not to reap to the very edges of your field, or gather the gleanings of your harvest. You shall not strip your vineyard bare, or gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the alien: I am the Lord your God”* (Leviticus 19:9, 10)

The people of God were asked not to take and use everything that rightfully belonged to them. God instructed them to leave a significant amount of their rightful possessions so that it could benefit the poor and the alien. In the story of Ruth, Boaz asked his men to leave gleanings for Ruth to pick up (Ruth 2:16), which in turn became a source of life for her. To take this valuable instruction a little broadly, we can understand this to mean our daily aspect of life. In today’s world, we normally fill our diaries to the fullest possible manner. We do not leave some gleanings which can be used for some contingencies. There is no space for emergencies. There is no gap to feel a sudden surprise. There are no margins.

**1. Margins in Budgeting:** Most of us have the habit of budgeting, which is a good life practice. While budgeting, we account for even the last rupee. Therefore, if someone suddenly asks for some financial help, we are not prepared to meet their emergencies. Sometimes we tend to argue that we plan for all possible emergencies (personal). However, when a stranger comes on our way we are caught off-guard. Therefore, we are asked to consider our lives which might include the unexpected emergencies in terms of spending and be prepared to leave some margin.

**2. Margins in Schedules:** In a busy world like ours, most of us are dictated by our diaries. We fill our diaries to the extent that there is no more time left in our daily schedule. We become restless when there is a gap or some free time. Again, if there is no space in our daily schedule, we are useless when there is an emergency. When a colleague or a student comes to us for an unscheduled help or demand of our time, we are completely upset. We become irritated. Should we consider leaving a margin in our schedules?

**3. Margins in Emotions:** When we are filled with some emotions – positive or negative, we seem to be completely filled with that emotion with no space for anything else. However, there are many situations which plead for our gracious attention even though we are engulfed in our own private emotions. Often, it is because we are so filled with our own emotions, that there is no space for to consider the emotions and feelings of another that suddenly come our way. Should there be some space for an emotional margin?

**4. Margins for Feedback:** In a school, margins are used by the teachers to mark their feedback or corrections while evaluating an answer paper. Sometimes we lead our lives in such a way there is no room for correction. We become closed to any feedback either from others or from God, the creator. Maybe a little space in life could be left blank as a margin so that our master teacher, Creator God, will have a chance to make His comments?

During his earthly ministry, Jesus was invited by Jairus, the ruler of a synagogue to heal his daughter who was at the point of death. He accepted his invitation and was on His way to Jairus’ house, when a woman, who was sick, interrupted him and sought His mercies. Jesus spared some time, gave His full attention for a while and did whatever was needed for her (Mark 5:21-43). The beautiful thing in this whole scenario is that Jesus made time-in the midst of all other scheduled engagements- to see and help a person in need.

**Question for thought: How do I leave a margin in my life?**

- Rev. Dr. Arul Dhas, Chaplain