

6. An Attitude Of Challenge

We heard the address of thanks the sixth form boys gave to the teachers of the school and the advice they gave to the students of the lower forms. Their words were very sweet, full of gratitude to the teachers and full of encouragement to the students who continue to be under the care of those teachers. They also expressed their grief that they had to leave a fine school and a fine set of instructors and a fine company of fellow students. But, though the words were fine, I doubt whether the feelings were also such, for after all they knew they have to leave the school for higher studies. All these years, they knew that this day will come. Of course it is good to see the boys express gratefulness for the benefits they derived. They promised also to serve their country to the best of their ability. For they are the guardians of this land in the days to come. I am specially happy in the company of students, for they are like the buds in the garden; they are the young heroes who have to take up the difficult task of national and international reconstruction.

The present situation in the world is like a typhoon, causing unrest and confusion. No one has mental quiet; fear and anxiety stalk everywhere; panic reigns even while the conquest of space and the mapping of new planets is being hailed. Even in this country, it is a time of crisis, and no time should be lost to set matters right so that men may enjoy peace (*santhi*) more than anything else; for, without peace, life is a nightmare.

Tolerate all kinds of persons and opinions

While studying other things, you should also learn the secret of peace. This opportunity should not be missed, for that is the wisdom that will save you. The present system of education aims at making you bread winners and citizens, but it does not give you the secret of a happy life — namely, discrimination between the unreal and the real, which is the genuine training you need. Of course, it is not your fault but the fault of those who direct these affairs. They will have to do it, sooner rather than later. The cultivation of discrimination is the chief aim of education; the promotion of virtuous habits, the strengthening of *dharmā*, these are to be attended to — not the acquisition of polish or gentlemanliness, or collection of general information and the practice of common skills.

First, be fixed in the consciousness that yourself is the immortal *Atma*, which is indestructible, which is holy, pure, and divine. That will give you unshakable courage and strength. Then, you must develop mutual love and respect. Tolerate all kinds of persons and opinions, all attitudes and peculiarities. The school, the home, and society are all training grounds for tolerance. At school, the teachers and pupils must be aware of their duties and rights. The relationship must be based on love, not fear. Only the atmosphere of love can guarantee happy cooperation and concord. Above all, be good, honest, and well-behaved. That will make the university degrees more desirable and valuable.

Do not attach undue value to the passing of examinations, for if you do, you are apt to get terribly depressed when you fail. We hear of too many young people committing suicide when the results of the examinations are announced. Dear children, do not do any such foolish thing. Take failure, if it comes, as a spur to further effort; analyse why you failed and profit by the experience. If you ruin yourself by such foolish actions, it will pain Me, remember.

Refuse to become scapegoats of politicians

Learn when you are students how to succeed in the turmoil of life, how to live without causing pain to others and suffering pain yourself. Do not waste time taking part in electioneering and quarreling over the factions and fancies of elders; they are setting you very bad examples, and you must avoid imitating their low behaviour. Politics is a variety of ‘ticks’, which infest some individuals and worry their lives out. Do not catch that infection from them. Be clean and content. You are too young to understand the complications and confusions of politics, and you can only be the tools and instruments of people who want to use you for their own purposes. Be bold; refuse to become the scapegoats of such men. Tell them you have better work to do.

Proceed only as far as your own talents and experience can take you. Examine everything, and believe only what appeals to you as correct. Do not simply say, Sai Baba spoke well, or Sai Baba writes well; respect Sai Baba only if He does as well as He speaks and writes.

Devotion and activity should go together. Sri B. Gopala Reddi had come to inaugurate the hospital at Puttaparthi, and he said, “If only the government had planned this hospital, even the basement would not have come up now.” So also, this school has risen to this fame and height due to the care and love of the founders and supporters. All should cooperate in tending such institutions; difference of opinion must be like the two eyes, each giving a different picture of the same object; both of which, when coordinated, give a complete rounded picture. The donors of this school have done a very good thing: they have done it in a spirit of worship and humanity. Be grateful for their sacrifice, and make the best use of the chance they have provided.

India is blessed with many saints and sages

The District Judge in his opening remarks said that Bharath (India) has been blessed with many saints and sages and with many manifestations of Divinity in Human Form. A doubt may arise why such appearances take place in Bharath more than in any other place, when the world is so big and we have humanity everywhere to be saved and guided. There is a reason for this, believe Me! Well, why should, in all India, Kolar alone have gold? Where there is a gold mine, there is the need for mining engineers and chemists who will extract it, separate it, purify it, and distribute it to the various places where gold is in demand, is it not?

So also, it is here in India that there is a mine of spiritual wisdom and spiritual treasure: the metaphysical sciences, revelatory scriptures, the *Gita*, and the *Vedas*. This has to be distributed pure and unsullied, guaranteed in value and quality, to eager aspirants everywhere, and thus we have here a succession of sages and saints. On account of the teachings and the lives of these people, there is a vast field of spiritual virtue in this land, which needs only a little more care to yield a rich harvest.

Attachment to nature has limits

People suffer because they have all kinds of unreasonable desires, they pine to fulfill them, and they fail. They attach too much value to the objective world. It is only when attachment increases that you suffer pain and grief. If you look upon nature and all created objects with the insight derived from the Inner Vision, then attachment will slide away, though effort will remain; you will also see everything much clearer and with a glory suffused with Divinity and splendour. Close these eyes and open those inner eyes — what a grand picture of essential Unity you get! Attachment to nature has limits, but the attachment to the Lord that you develop when the inner eye opens has no limit. Enjoy that Reality, not this false picture.

The Lord is the Immanent Power in everything. How can those who refuse to believe that the image in the mirror is a picture of themselves believe in the Lord, when He is reflected in every object around them? The moon is reflected in a pot, provided it has water; so too, the Lord can be clearly seen in your heart, provided you have the water of love (*prema*) in it. When the Lord is not reflected in your heart, you cannot say that there is no Lord; it only means that there is no love in you.

Students and even elders here have given up the study of Sanskrit, dismissing it as a useless difficult language. They have neglected the ancient texts, bundling them up and taking them down only on festival days for worship! But western aspirants who know their worth have taken them to their own lands, and they have translated them into their own tongues and learnt their essence with devotion.

Students must honour physical labour

Reading is not enough. You may master all the commentaries, and you may be able to argue and discuss with great scholars about these texts, but without attempting to practise what they teach, it is a waste of time. I never approve of book-learning; practice is what I evaluate. When you come out of the examination hall you know whether you will pass or not, is it not? For you can yourself judge whether you have answered well or not. So too in spiritual effort or in conduct or in practice, each of you can judge and ascertain the success or failure that is in store.

Spiritual discipline is the essential thing even for you; no age is too early for it. Just as you tend the body with food and drink at regular intervals, you must also tend to the needs of the inner *Atmic* body by regular repetition of the Name and meditation and the cultivation of virtues. Holy company, good attitude, and sacred thoughts are all essential for the growth and the health of the inner personality. The body is the mansion of the Lord of the world, His Universe. Just as you are particular about coffee or tea at regular intervals, be also particular about meditation and repetition of the Name at fixed times for the health and liveliness of the spirit.

Students must have challenging attitude toward things; they must honour physical labour. They should be eager to be of service to those who need it on account of their disabilities. Honour also your elders, and do not miss any chance of serving, honouring, or pleasing them. Whatever gives you health, joy, welcome it, but do not lower yourself by indulging in vulgar pastimes. Do not wander aimlessly in the streets or frequent cinema halls and mix with undesirable company, or cultivate bad habits just for sake of fun.

This country has to be raised to great heights through you, not through its present leaders, remember. Note also that whereas in other countries, people cooperate gladly with some one who is courageous, intelligent, and good, here the national trait is to be jealous of one another, to pull down those who are rising high, and to refuse cooperation and help. You boys must say to yourselves, “These elders do such things, though they know them to be wrong. What a pity! But we shall grow up differently. We shall not belie our words in our actions. We will act together in harmony and love.” If you develop such virtues, the nation will prosper; if not, it will be ruined. Have this warning always ringing in your ears.

I bless all of you — citizens, parents, teachers, and students. This school, which was established by the generosity of the people, will grow into higher status and shine as a great institution. I have no doubt of that.