

16. Training

UNTIL about an hour ago, the organisers of this function were nervous that I might not come. They had reconciled themselves to the disappointment in store and were feverishly engaged in making alternative arrangements, for they had heard that the Godavari was in high floods and that I was at Rajahmundry. So they feared that I might not be able to cross the floods and come south in time for this engagement. From the fact that I had permitted them to announce My arrival for the function, they could well have inferred that the floods would subside and that I would be in their midst, for, once My word goes forth, it must happen accordingly. Do not doubt it. The furious waves calmed before Rama; the floods went down in time for Me.

We left Chebrole last night at 11 p.m. and reached Nuzvid at about dawn. From there we motored throughout the day, without as much as a halt on the way, not slowing down even when the Kumararaja and others accosted Me near the bridge on the outskirts of this town, for I was determined to be here at 5 p.m. as promised. Let me reveal to you that the organisers were caught a little unawares; they were confused by rumour that I was held up and that I could not be reached by post or telegram or telephone. They asked Me for some time, about two hours they said, for hastening with the arrangements! Believe Me, nothing can hamper Me; My will must prevail. Those who spread stories that I was held up by the floods were ignorant of my Reality.

Nothing can hold Me up or agitate Me or cast a shadow on Me come in this Human Form; be certain of that. Not even a hair can be touched by forces of calumny or distrust or ignorance. My Resolve must prevail; My task must be accomplished. My mission will succeed. I have come to illumine the human heart with the Light Divine and to rid man of the delusion that drags him away from the path of peace (*santhi*), the perfect equanimity born of realisation.

Reason for naming persons with God's Names

This School is associated with the late brother of the Raja Saheb, a person who dwelt on My name even in the last moments of his life, and that was why I agreed to inaugurate it. I find that his name, which is a long compound of a number of fine appellations of God, each redolent with divine Glory, has been shortened into a string of single letters, which has no fragrance, flavour, or significance. This is not proper. Why deprive a name of its halo by amputating it or wiping out all its aura? This distorted list of letters that you have substituted for his full name, probably for the sake of greater convenience, seems to Me even more complicated than the original name, which, though long, reminds one of the magnificence and splendour of the Lord. That is why such names were recommended for men and women in the spiritual scriptures, so that whenever they are mentioned, some one picture of the Lord, sweet and splendid, might appear before the mind's eye.

It is indeed good that the girls of this town have now a high school. I appreciate the efforts of all of you to start it, and I see that the building and the equipment are quite satisfactory. I bless that the girls studying here as well as everywhere else (for all schools are Mine, whether I inaugurate them personally or not) may cultivate faith in righteousness (*dharma*) and have sympathy toward all.

Students must be trained in ancient disciplines

Bharath has to take up once again the role of the teacher for the whole of humanity, so every boy and girl

of the land must attain unblemished character and lead a life of strict moral discipline. Bharath (India) is a word derived from *Bhagavan* and *rathah* (constant attachment to the Lord), and the word connotes a people who are dedicated to the service and uplift of the Divine in each. So, along with the schooling that you get under present conditions in such institutions, a schooling that helps some of you to earn a living and that gives all of you a certain “polish” and “glitter”, you must also undergo training in the ancient discipline that tames the instincts, controls the impulses, and assures steadiness of character. These things are necessary for your own sake, not to speak of the role Bharatha has to play.

Training (*sikshana*) is a process in which the teacher and the taught cooperate. It must be a pleasant experience for both, a useful and heartening endeavour. *Kshana* means “a second”, and I want that you must learn a good lesson every second of your school life. For example, when the teacher enters the classroom, children should salute the teacher; that is a lesson in humility, in respecting age and scholarship, in gratitude for service rendered.

Teachers too should decide to deserve the salutation of the children entrusted to their care by sincere work and selfless service. The student should not respect the teacher through fear but be moved more by love. The teacher should avoid all methods that frighten or terrorise. Education is a slow process like the unfolding of a flower, the fragrance becoming deeper and more perceptible with the silent blossoming, petal by petal, of the entire flower.

Example, not precept, is the best teaching aid

The unfolding will be helped if the teacher is a fine example of discrimination, humility, and clear-sightedness), rather than a person engaged in the task of mere repetitive teaching and coaching for examinations. Example, not precept, is the best teaching aid.

The value of character has to be emphasised here, for this is a school for girls, and traits like modesty and devotion to God are the real jewels for womankind. Women preserve the traditional values of our culture and keep the nation on an even keel. If they fail, it would be famine, not prosperity, believe Me. So, base all educational efforts on building up the character of the students, and then you can confidently think of raising on it the superstructure of curricula, etc.

Pupils must know the secret of a happy life and of happy cooperation with other members of the community. There are duties to oneself, one’s family, and one’s society, which must be carried out intelligently and joyfully. Then only can life be harmonious and fruitful. I declare that this task of renovating and recasting education is a part of My Mission, and before long you will find Me engaged in it and chastising those who simply talk loud and long of reconstruction and the preservation of spiritual values.

Girls are the makers of the homes of this land, so this school is a very basic institution, essential for this town. Woman is honoured in this land as the Lakshmi of the home, as the companion on the pilgrimage toward God and self-realisation, and as the mistress of the house.

Girls should dread sliding into moral error

If the women of a country are happy, healthy, and holy, the men of that country will be hardy, honest, and happy. Thyagaraja has sung that even the strongest of heroes are swayed by the wishes of women, so every woman has a very crucial role to play in individual and social uplift. Therefore, I would not burden girls with the study of the geographical minutiae of America, Australia, or Germany. I would rather they knew the technique of mental

calm, social harmony, service, and economic contentment. Let them develop a dread of falsehood, of sliding into moral error; that is more important than even the development of the dread of God.

Let the girls also know something of the joy that service to those in distress can give, service without a thought of the benefits that may follow from the sympathy shown. Let them learn to lay aside the egoism that poisons the selfless service of even veterans in the field, who go about extolling themselves as founders and promoters, for the service of the poor and the maimed, of this institution and that. The joy of selfless service is the act itself. The fruit of the selfless service is the removal of egoism, not its multiplication.

Attitudes to be developed by children

The students of this school will take up later the most glorious and the most responsible role of Motherhood, so the teachers in schools for girls have a great big task before them: the shaping of the future history of this country. The mother is the pillar of the home, of society, of the nation, and so of humanity itself. Mothers should know the secret of mental peace, of inner silence, of spiritual courage, of contentment, which is the greatest wealth, and of spiritual discipline, which gives lasting joy.

The mother should teach the children the value of remembering the Name of God and of mental and physical cleanliness. She should be like the mother in the story told by Vivekananda, who advised her son to call upon Krishna in the woods while going to school alone and helpless.

The father and the mother must supplement at home the training given by the teacher at school. They must acquaint themselves with the lesson the child receives at the school and see that their conduct and advice do not conflict with what the child learns from the teacher whom he adores.

Teachers and parents must see that children learn certain good habits and attitudes during these formative years. What is read from books must be contemplated upon, thought over in quietness, reflected upon in silence. This is a very good exercise in intellectual development and in the acquisition of mental peace. The instinct to quarrel and fight over all misunderstandings must be regulated and sublimated.

Children should not enjoy the infliction of pain or be allowed to suffer physical pain or mental anguish. They must have a sense of responsibility at least for the safe custody and proper upkeep of their books. They must not take delight in showing off their dress or ornaments or status or wealth before less fortunate children of the school. They have to be taught sensible habits of personal cleanliness and, more important than all, the habit of prayer at regular hours.

Importance of prayer at home and school

They may be encouraged to go to bed regularly every day at 9 p.m. and wake up at 5 a.m. After washing the face and cleaning the eyes and teeth, they may be induced to pray or even to meditate. Do not think that there is a time enough for prayer later on in life, during old age perhaps. The time to lay the foundation for the habit is now. At school too, the day's work should start with prayer for five minutes, which should be taken seriously by one and all and not reduced to the mere formality or farce that it has become in most schools. The slightest sign of neglect shown by the school while arranging the prayer sessions will react on the minds of the children, and they will see through the humbug quickly. So treat the prayer as the very foundation of the entire edifice of schooling.

When the last bell of the day is rung, make the pupils stand up in the class quietly and let them observe si-

lence for a minute or two and then disperse. There is nothing like silence to still the waves of your heart.

The teachers must tell the children inspiring tales of our saints and heroes and plant the love for spiritual literature. If this school grows up along these lines, then the money so generously offered and so gladly devoted to the establishment of the school is well spent, and I am sure this school will develop into a very useful institution in a short time.

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Man can be happy with much less equipment than he seems to think essential. When some article is with you for some little time, you feel it is indispensable, and you do not know how to live without it. Like the silkworm, you weave a cocoon for yourself out of your fancy.

Do not allow costly habits to grow, costly from the monetary as well as the spiritual point of the view. Watch your likes and dislikes with vigilant eye and discard anything that threatens to encumber your path.

Sathya Sai Baba