

24. Many-pointedness And One-pointedness

THOUGH this area and this town are not new to Me, this is the first time that most of you are seeing Me. When a few more dishes are prepared, it become a festival day. So, when the district athletic competitions are held here, it is a festival for the boys and students as well as for parents and others interested in the welfare of the country. You have all put on a glad face forgetting the daily drudgery. You have witnessed the competitions and the games and enjoyed the keenness and enthusiasm of the participants.

The students sitting before us are the instruments with which the India of tomorrow is to be shaped. Their teachers, who are also here, are indeed lucky, for destiny has allotted them the noble task, the golden chance, to serve the interests of the people in a pleasant manner, spending their time in the company of innocent fresh children.

The father, mother, and teacher are the three primarily responsible for moulding the future of the country. Of these, teachers play the most important role, for they are specially trained and selected for the job; they voluntarily take it up and therefore must carry it out to the best of his ability without demur; they are implicitly trusted by the child, the parents, and the public alike and the trust must be repaid by honest service. The teacher is honoured and respected by the children and the public as the guru, with all the hallowed associations of that word. The teacher may be poor, uncared for by the people at the top, but the satisfaction gotten by the quiet creative work is enough compensation.

Teacher should himself follow the advice he gives

The teacher should never curse his pupils whatever the provocation; he must always bless them. If he swears like a boor, he reduces himself to the level of a boor. He should watch his behaviour rigorously and find out whether there is some habit or trait that if imitated by the pupil will be harmful. He should himself follow the advice that he gives. Otherwise, he will be teaching hypocrisy to the little children and encouraging them to acquire the cleverness not to be found out. It is sheer mental weakness and cowardice that allows hypocrisy to develop. If you have the courage to face the consequences, you will never utter falsehood. Do not try to rule through the easier means of fear, for that is full of dangerous consequences to the pupils. Try rather the path of Love.

Teachers should themselves take to the discipline of repetition of the Lord's Name and meditation; this will give them the inner quiet they sorely need. They should create an atmosphere of plain living and high thinking, for pupils unconsciously accept them as heroes and begin imitating them. They should hand over to the rising generation the riches that past generations have amassed, viz., the spiritual disciplines and discoveries. Learn them yourselves, and teach them to the pupils under your care. This will enable you to discharge the debt due from you to the sages of old. I know that when you sow bitter seeds you cannot grow sweet grain. Yet, certain things are possible even under the limitations of the present curricula and courses of study.

Be grateful to the village where you were born

The unmistakable sign of rain is the wetness of the ground; so too, the sign of a person who has had some years of schooling is good manners. One must have humility and know that the field of knowledge is so vast that one has been unable even to touch its fringe; one must be aware of one's kinship with all mankind and must show

a keenness to do service to others, at all times, gladly, and without desire for publicity. The educated boy must move with others in a free and friendly way. God is the moving force in everyone. God is behind all good impulses and useful attitudes, you are all separate beads strung together on that one thread, God. Hatred is ugly, unnatural, and inhuman; it is against the very core of love that is in every one.

Always respect another's opinion and another's point of view. Do not start a quarrel at the slightest difference of opinion. The other person may be right and you may be wrong. Ponder over their argument; they might have had the advantage of knowing more about the subject, or you may be prejudiced either for or against, or they may not know as much as you. All differences of opinion are not due to personal hatred, remember.

Above all, I must tell you one thing. Honour your parents and the villagers among whom you grow up. Be grateful to the parents for all the care and sacrifice they undergo for your sake. Be grateful also to the village where you first saw the light. What good is it if after being born in one place and bred in the cradle of its love if you run away somewhere and make that new place better? Always turn your attention to your village and think of ways and means of bettering its lot. That is the gratitude you must show.

Start the spiritual pilgrimage early in life

By all means, master the subjects prescribed in your curriculum of studies, but along with them, study also the principles of the Eternal Universal Religion (*Sanathana Dharma*). Do not give it up as old (*sanathana*), coming down from very ancient times. It has stood the test of centuries and is capable of giving you joy and peace even today. It is like a very loving grandmother, anxious and capable of feeding you with nice good dishes. You would not allow such a grandmother to die of neglect, would you?

A miser lived in a leaky house. The rainwater poured into the house through the roof, but he sat through it all. Neighbours laughed at him and warned him to get the roof repaired. But in the rainy season he replied, "Let the rains subside, how can I repair it now?" And when the rains stopped, he replied, "Why should I worry about leaks now the rains have stopped?" Do not suffer the leaks when the rains come, as they are sure to do; repair the roof now. That is to say, acquaint yourselves with the spiritual primers and textbooks now; begin the first lessons of silence, prayer, and chanting the Name of the Lord. It is never too soon in the spiritual pilgrimage.

Now when you wear bush-coats and strut about in pants, causing envy among the little children who cannot afford these, you feel elated. But you can be legitimately proud only when you are able to control the vagaries of the mind and direct your emotions and desires along honourable healthy channels, braving even the ridicule of your so-called friends. That is real freedom, real success. If you reach that stage, then you become a seasoned driver and can be trusted with the wheel on any road and with any cargo, however precious. Then you will not cause harm either to yourself or to others. Then you deserve to become a leader.

Only men with ideals are remembered by posterity

Be eager and earnest to know more and more about the art of joyful living, happy unperturbed living. One can advance only step by step, and there is the danger of slipping down two steps when you climb one. What matters is the determination to climb, the resistance with which the sliding tendency is met, the yearning to rise to progress, to conquer the lower impulses and instincts. If you have that, the hidden spring of power will surge up within you; the Grace of the Lord will smooth your path. Keep the ideal before you; march on.

The student of today becomes the teacher of tomorrow and headmaster later. How? By study, by the development of a reliable character. Only those with ideals are respected and remembered in gratitude by posterity. Rama is honoured and worshipped, while Ravana is execrated. Why? Because of the character they evinced.

Have the progress of your country, your *Sanathana Dharma*, and your own Self always before your mind's eye. Let the hunger for serving these three grow more and more. Then your studies will serve a purpose and give you a sense of mission. Then you will acquire fear of sin, fear of the God within, fear of the mean, respect for elders, and faith in your own self.

One thing more: Do not do anything that brings tears into the eyes of your parents. Honour them and obey them. Do not condemn them as old-fashioned. "Old is Gold." They speak out of a longer experience of the world and its tricks.

Winners must be thankful to the losers

Well, I am asked to distribute prizes (*bahumathis*) to you by Anjanappa and others. They meant that I should distribute the prizes, but "*bahumathi*" means "multi-mindedness". Now, I never give that type of mind! I always insist on single-mindedness (*ekagratha*). Anjanappa wished that I give you *prasad* (propitiatory offering); My *prasad* is always the Gift of Bliss! It can be got only through single-mindedness. I do not like this competition and strife, this cultivation of egoism through prizes and ranking. I am sure none of you here will be spoilt either by pride or by dejection.

Take failure coolly and take victory also coolly. The second is a very difficult mental exercise. The winners must be thankful to the losers for their victory, for if the losers had put in a little more effort, they would have carried away the prizes instead. The losers, by running neck to neck with you, prompted you to run faster and thus encouraged you to win. They gave you the grit to put in that extra pace, which brought the prize into your hands.

And the losers! I ask you not to lose self-confidence. Do not attach too much value to victory or too much importance to defeat. Even in examinations, when you fail, do not be overcome by despair and do silly things like attempting to take your own life. Life is much more precious than that. You are born for much greater things than the passing of examinations. Be brave and patient. All is not lost if you do not pass an examination, which tests just one aspect of your intelligence! Your destiny does not depend upon examination marks; it depends more on character, will-power, and the Grace of God.

The Headmaster hoped that this school would become a Higher Secondary School. I bless that it may be raised to that status soon and become a source of light and culture for this part of the country.

Madakasira, 1959-11-25

Love is God, God is Love. Where there is Love, there God is certainly evident. Love more and more people, love them more and more intensely. Transform the love into service, transform the service into worship; that is the highest spiritual discipline.

Sathya Sai Baba