

43. The teacher-learner team

Teachers are the path-finders of the nation. They prepare the royal road to a bright future. The skill and efficiency of the people, their reliability and sense of duty depend on the community of teachers. Their virtue is reflected in their pupils; their faith inspires the young. Whether people waste their lives and ruin the lives of others by means of barren pursuits or whether people lead happy lives promoting the happiness of others---the answer lies in the hands of teachers.

A life without character is as barren as a temple without a lamp, a coin that is counterfeit, a kite whose string has snapped. A teacher who instructs pupils with his eye fixed on his salary, and a pupil who learns with his eye fixed on a job are both missing their vocation. The teacher has to help the pupil unfold and manifest the skills and qualities inherent in him and encourage him to rise to the fullest height he is capable. The Divine is the core in both teacher and pupil. The educational process is the increasing awareness of this truth, the increasing utilisation of this latent power.

This does not mean that the teacher and the student are on the same level. The teacher has to be so full of compassion and love that he understands and sympathises with the students and their struggle to expand and to blossom. The mother bends low to lift the child and fondle it. She does not lower herself thereby. The teacher too does not demean himself thereby. It only reveals that he has a sense of proportion, an alert attitude towards an inevitable situation. This love has become rare today. The teacher faces the class with a "take it or leave it" attitude. "I have earned my salary for today," he seems to say. The restlessness in the campuses that expresses itself in violence and indiscipline has sprung out of this selfish, loveless attitude of teachers.

Teachers must hold aloft ideals of scholarship

Teachers and students are now suspicious of each other; they are often in hostile camps. What a contrast is this to the *Upanishadic* ideal of ancient India. Then, both prayed together "May we both be guided and protected. May we progress together and achieve spiritual splendours together, through our studies. May no trace of displeasure or disturbance pollute our relation."

A loving teacher dedicating his life to his profession becomes the model for his admiring students. A teacher can make or mar the future of the student, for he is the hero whom he desires to emulate and imitate in dress, habit and style of living and thinking. When teachers divide themselves into factions or scandalise each other or revel in the game of politics, students are easily infected by the same harmful tendencies. Discipline can become rooted in the atmosphere of the campus only when teachers set the example. "As the leaders, so the led." When teachers form groups in order to gain power and influence, students too do likewise. So, teachers must hold aloft, both by precept and practice, the ideals of scholarship, companionship, mutual love and spiritual progress.

Lack of brotherhood in the teaching community springs from extreme specialisation. This Orientation Course is devised to give every one of you a glimpse of the basic philosophy that feeds every faculty. In other universities, Physics is Physics and Chemistry is Chemistry. Here, they should not be so isolated Philosophy is the link, the bridge, the sap that sustains all. The boundaries of each subject are not really so sharply drawn, they fade off into a neighbouring subject; they overlap and become kindred. Knowledge of this intimate interdependence is the Higher Learning you have to strive for.

Therefore, the syllabi of the various subjects for study have been so enlarged and entwined by this Institute that an Orientation Course has become necessary for the teachers to grasp the pattern.

On the 14th of this month, I was at the Atomic Research Centre, Trombay. I spoke there of the omnipresence of Energy. It is dormant or latent or patent, but it is everywhere at all times. It exists in a piece of cloth or in a sheet of paper.

It is the Truth of all that is. Everything that disintegrates loses energy; everything that 'originates' exemplifies energy. This tumbler is a bundle of latent energy. The *Upanishads* declare it has temporary form and a temporary name. But, its reality is *Sath* (existence), *Chith* (knowability), *Aanandha* (capable of contributing to the joy of awe and wonder). Not this tumbler only. Everything in the Universe is vibrant with *Sath*, *Chith* and *Aanandha*. We (*Sath*) are intelligent (*Chith*) and blissful (*Aanandha*). These three are attributes of Divinity, which is our dormant but dominant force. Ignorant of this truth, structures are built up and paraded on other bases. Mankind suffers from fear and hatred, on account of this fundamental defect in their search for Knowledge.

Vidhyagiri, 22-5-1982