

## **8. Teachers and students**

MAN does not become fully human merely by making himself a prosperous moral person. Spiritual progress has also to be achieved. Body, mind and spirit--these three together make up the man. The animal is concerned primarily with the body. Man has risen since he has been equipped with a mind. Cultivation of the spirit will elevate him to Divinity. The three are intertwined and interdependent. Each promotes the other. Without the mind, the body cannot decide on any step. Mind and body have to subserve the spirit and become aware of the Divine *Aathma* (Divine Self).

Health is very important for a fully disciplined life. Health means wholeness, fullness. The senses and the mind have to be controlled and regulated, so that man can win the battle of life. Self-control is sense control, mind control. This is, otherwise called *samskruthi* (culture). Culture must be evident in every aspect of life while studying, eating, sleeping, playing games etc. Culture expresses itself as discipline.

You must ensure that living is a purposeful process. Without such a faith, life is rendered wild and wasteful. With it, you can attain Divinity. The faith will induce a regulated and disciplined life. A farmer was once charged before a court in Greece for adulterating the milk he was selling. The judge found that the milk was indeed not pure and was about to deliver the sentence when the farmer's earnest plea of innocence induced him to probe further into his habits. He found that the farmer milked his cows on some days at 4 a.m, some days at 6 a.m. and on some other days, when he could not sleep long, even at 3 a.m. The quality of the milk was affected by this irregularity and waywardness in milking. The farmer was admonished and advised to adhere to a regular time.

### **Duty and discipline to be observed by teachers**

Duty is best discharged through discipline. Discipline for teachers cannot be limited to punctuality and adherence to the timetable. Duty for them involves intensive preparation, choosing the most effective means of communication and discovering how best to instruct and inspire the pupils under their care. The pupils and the teachers must both have high ideals and aspirations. You know Darwin, the great scientist. Though born in a poor family, Darwin even as a boy had a heart full of ambition. He came under the care of a teacher named Henslow who discovered his talents and fostered his aspirations. He filled his pupil with courage and enthusiasm until he became an image of his master.

Vaalmeeeki, by meditating on the glory of Raama, was able to mould himself into the immortal poet who composed the Raamaayana. He became an embodiment of that glory, and therefore, he could create that great epic. When we decide on writing a letter, we gather in our minds the facts to be communicated, the manner in which it has to be written, and then, we start writing it. When we decide on building a house, we build it first in our minds--the drawing room here, the dining hall there, the kitchen at this end, etc., and then, draw the plan on paper. What we do is to project an ideal into action, into a concrete program.

The external action or achievement is only a reflection of the Inner Being, which frames the ideas and concepts. So, the transformation and refinement have to be done in the inner region of the mind. Constant reflection on the glory of God helps to transmute the body, mind and spirit. The face mirrors the moods of the mind. When the mind is gloomy, the face records it; when the mind is full of *Aanandha* (Divine Bliss), the face spreads *Aanandha* all around.

### **The highest duty is to have a high ideal**

Aurangzeb was Emperor Shah Jehan's son. He was tired of waiting to ascend the throne; so he imprisoned the father and crowned himself. His evil-minded comrades desired to put an end to Shah Jehan's life, so that Aurangzeb could be safe on the throne. They planned to execute him. When Shah Jehan came to know of their plot, he felt glad that he could escape the humiliation and misery of exile and imprisonment. Aurangzeb gave up the idea of execution, when he found that the father was welcoming that fate. He did not relish the idea of satisfying the old man. He decided to keep him in prison until his death, with a single feeble-minded servant and the Holy Quoran as his only companions.

Shah Jehan was elated at the opportunity to read the Holy Quoran to the companion. But, he had to give up the attempt when there was no response from him. He said to himself: "What have I to do with companions now? Peace is the first companion. The joy of Love is the second, the third is Affection, the fourth is Adoration. and the fifth is Sweetness. All these together are inspiring me to become aware of my soul". With this resolution, he spent himself in the Holy Quoran, and became one with its message. This is the highest duty, to have a high ideal, to reach It and become IT.

### **Faith is the foundation for any forward step**

When ridiculing, reprimanding or punishing pupils, teachers must try to picture themselves in their position and discover how they would have reacted to the same, when they were pupils. Self- inquiry of this kind will be very useful. The word *Upa-ni-shath* teaches a great lesson. 'Upa' means near, 'ni' means down and 'shath' means sit; the pupil sits down, at the feet of the Guru and also near him. 'Thath' (That) is the *Guru*; 'Thwam' (You) is the pupil. The "*thwam*" poses the question and the "*Thath*" gifts the answer. The bond is love from "*Thath*", humility from the "*Thwam*". And '*asi*' (*is*) connotes the *Aanandha* at the knowledge, the illumination, that is shared. The educational process adopted at Prashaanthi Nilayam might appear to be novel but it is really superior and highly beneficial. It has not been devised for awarding degrees only; it is aimed' at equipping the student for an integrated life. The student must be aware of all aspects of the adventure of life. One must be aware of the do's and dont's, the ups and downs of all fields of activity--moral, material, scientific, philosophical, political and economic. Or else, one will be haunted by doubts when faced with difficult situations and problems.

Therefore, teachers as well as students must develop faith in the validity and worth of this process. A Thelugu proverb exhorts man thus: "Believe and Live". Faith is the very foundation for any forward step. If the step has to await the dawn of faith through experience, one cannot progress at all.

### **Journey of the spirit from the individual to the Universal**

The journey of the spirit is from the individual to the universal, from '*I*' to '*We*.' It is said by some, "*I and You are one*" but the reality is "*I and You are We*" and "*We and We are one*." Students have to be aware of the mergence of the self in the all-pervading Self--not merely physical existence. In deep sleep, the '*I*' alone persists but even the '*I*' is not perceived! A person whose eyes are closed declares that he does not see anything. "*It is all 'dark*." So, he sees darkness! Something in him sees both light and darkness. That is the Witness.

When baby Krishna clamoured for milk, Yasodha said that it was too early an hour and she would feed him only at nightfall. Krishna closed his eyes and said night had fallen. The mother said that the darkness of night is different. It cannot happen when one person closes his eyes. But Krishna argued that light contains darkness and darkness has light in it. When one is present, the second is not evident, that is all. The Sun illumines the world but hides the stars. The child contains the old man; the old man has childhood persisting in him | Grief has joy latent in it; joy has the potence to land the person in grief. When one is evident, the other is hidden, that is all.

Teachers must endeavour to help each pupil to unfold his native talents and innate skills and recognise his latent potentialities. When you plant a sapling, you provide it water and manure; you ensure that it receives plentiful sunlight and air. But, the wonder is the plant does not become air, soil, manure or water. It grows as the very plant which was the Truth of the seed. Recollect your own childhood and boyhood, ' the struggle for preserving and promoting your individuality and deal with your students who have the same problems and the-same purpose.

### **Self-examination helps correction of one's attitude**

There is a Telugu proverb, "It is always an old mud pot, if the mother-in-law breaks *it*." When she stumbles over a glass tumbler and breaks it, she blames the daughter-in-law for keeping it at that spot. When the daughter-in-law stumbles and breaks it, the fault still is the daughter-in-law's. "Have you no eyes?" she asks. The mother-in-law holds that she is never in the wrong. Such an attitude has to be given up. Self examination helps the correction of one's attitudes. Emperor *Bhoja* had a unique way of testing and judging the worth of *Gurus*. He never pitted one *Guru* against another. He arranged contests and competitions between the pupils of different *Gurus* and from the result of these tests, he honoured the *Gurus*.

### **The *Aathma* is the Truth of Truths**

In our educational institutions and in this Institute, students must shape themselves as 'images' of their teachers. They must spread the message of our ideals throughout the world. Teachers must live that message and students must imbibe it and become it. The *Aathma* is the Truth of Truths. When one achieves its awareness, all knowledge is added unto-him.

Imagine a coconut tree with a headload of nuts. It casts a long 'shadow on the ground and the shadow fruits are equally plentiful. When one climbs the tree and plucks the fruit, he can also be seen moving along the shadow tree and plucking the shadow fruit. So too, when one seeks to know the *Aathma* and succeeds, he can at the same time progress along the "World" (which is an illusory shadow) and gain the shadow-fruit (which is. trivial and temporary).

This is a noble task-- hard but heavenly Saadhana (spiritual effort). Teachers have to undertake it with patience and humility, always standing forth as examples and ideals. They can then confer on the world the invaluable boon of *Aathmic* Awareness, through the students whom they instruct.

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