

43. Teach by example

EVERY limb of the body has a distinct name, form and function. Every nerve, muscle, and joint has its own share in the upkeep and growth of the body. The word 'body' denotes all these together. So too is the word 'Village' and, the name, 'Puttaparthi.' It denotes all the individuals, families and communities living and functioning together, here. If a single nerve or muscle or joint is diseased, the entire body suffers, loses efficiency. So too, even if one individual or family in the village has no ease, is distressed or disabled, anxious or afraid, ill or bed-ridden, indigent or ignorant, the entire village is infected by the misery. When the toe is hit, the eye sheds tears; when the lowest and the poorest are hungry and oppressed, the highest and the richest are also affected. During the ages when each one was recognised as complementary parts of the same 'body-politic,' there was peace in the land, laughter in the field and festoons across the door.

But, now, each limb endeavours to injure the other; there is no co-operation or co-ordination. And the body is lying prone, in pain. Living, happy living, is possible only in and through society; society cannot thrive on egoism, greed and envy, which turn one man's teeth and claws against another.

Villages which are the cells of the body-politic are afflicted with this terrible malady today. So, this school is being established in order to guide children on right lines and to inspire the elders to be examples of tolerance, service and mutual love. Joy and peace have to be restored in this village through truth, goodness, justice and love. Each one can best perform the duty that has fallen to his lot only when he develops in himself an attitude of dedication to these ideals.

Keep alive the roots of one's native culture

Every village has to be equipped with four *Aalayas* (Houses). First, the *Bhojan-aalaya* (the Eating-house or Hotel), which must provide for a moderate price, clean sustaining food. Of course, man does not feed on such food only. He feeds on pure water and air and the food that he gorges through the eye, the tongue and the sense of touch has also to be free from pollution and poison. Next, the *Aarogya-aalaya* (the Medicine-House, the Hospital). This has become essential, since man has neither healthy eating habits nor the inclination to adopt them. Third, the *Vidhyaalaya* (the Learning-House, the School) which is a lamp lit to keep darkness away. The School must instruct the young and inspire the old, keep alive the roots of one's native culture. Last, the *Deva-aalya* (the House of God, the Temple, the Heart of the Community), pumping the life-blood of Faith, Reverence and Steadfastness throughout the body-politic.

The School is influenced by the Village, as much as the Village is influenced by the School. Children learn at School for a few hours, during a few months of the year, a few disciplines and skills, and some chunks of information. They are already shaped, well nigh irreparably by their parents, kith and kin and elders. Children adore their elders and imbibe by imitation their prejudices and predilections. They watch the behaviour of the elders and value it more, though they may not follow their advice and admonitions. They can see through the veil of humbug and the pall of hypocrisy.

Puttaparthi is a name adored throughout the world; it has become a holy word which gives comfort, consolation and courage to people of all lands. But, this village itself is far behind others in education. I am aware of this; I need not be told or informed about anything. I know that communication with nearby places where we have High Schools are frequently cut off by

floods; boys and girls of this village have to trek miles to attend them. So, this High School has been resolved upon.

Don't be misled into doubts and distress

My activities are not for publicity or propaganda or even to confer joy on others! They are for conferring joy primarily on Me! I have no need to please others and to earn approval or appreciation. For, I and you are not distinct entities; you are I and I am you. I am the current that flows into every bulb and illumines it. Those who see Me as separate are seeing falsehood. I am in your hearts; you are in mine. Don't be misled into doubt and distress. Dogs may bark and jackals howl; but Truth moves majestically forward.

Everyone in the village is a flower with its unique hue and fragrance. They are collected and strung as a garland for the Lord. The string that runs through all, that holds them together, that enables them to enhance the charm of the Lord (if ever that is possible!) is the *Brahma-suuthra*--the unifying thread called *Brahma* (the Universal Absolute). This Truth has to be revealed to everyone; it has to be implanted in the heart, so that each one can have the faith that can face both failure and fortune. That is the inner purpose of the School.

This is the gift the School ensures. But, the giver will be happy only when the gift is utilised to the best advantage and not frittered away or east aside. The giver can be induced to give again and give more, only when the gift is accepted with intelligence and gratitude. There is an intention to raise the School into a College to serve the needs of this area, a College which can be affiliated with others of a similar type coming up in all the States of India in the Sathya Sai Scheme of Higher Education.

Wisdom alone can bring peace

There is a plan also of establishing in this village some opportunities for gainful employment so that no person suffers from the pangs of hunger. The intention is there; its execution depends on your enthusiasm and faith. The drug is effective and within reach; but unless it is consumed and the directions strictly adhered to, it cannot cure! Do not waste time in idle fantasies but demonstrate your sincerity and faith in practice---sending your children to school, facilitating their studies, and, providing them the environment necessary for progress. The vaults of the Reserve Bank have lots of money but of what use are they to you? Talking about them will not remove your poverty. Work alone can bring income; wisdom alone can bring peck.

Gratitude to parents is a basic virtue; reverence to the parents is reverence to the past, to the traditions of the past, to the great treasure of wisdom that the past has garnered and preserved. I am spreading this message by Myself setting the example. The *Kalyanamandap* that is fast coming up in the village will commemorate the 'father.' He was eager to serve the best interest of this village, as you all know. The Mandap will be a community Centre for religious ceremonies and the spread of spiritual ideals. This School will commemorate the 'mother'.

My life is My Message, as I often declare. I have been re-emphasising the *Upanishathic* exhortation, "Speak Truth; act righteously; revere the mother as Divine, revere the father as Divine, revere the preceptor as Divine." I emphasise not only through words, but more by deeds. You must dedicate your skill, your earnings, your intelligence to the service of your parents and fulfil your duties as their progeny. If you fail in this, you do not deserve this glory of being an Indian, and a human.

Puttaparthi, 20- 7-1972

*All good things have to be done the hard way. Ease and elevation
cannot go together.*

Sri Sathya Sai