

35. One-pointedness

EDUCATION must impart those qualities in the individual that will ensure his peace, and thereby, universal peace. It should cleanse the mind of all traces of narrowness and help in fostering unity and love. This is the message of *Bhaarith* from time immemorial. The *Vedhas* (revealed scriptures of Supreme Knowledge) proclaim these as the goals of education. This is the *Vedhabhoomi*, the land that reveres the *Vedhas*, which the sages learnt through Divine Revelation. The seeds of this Message grew up as saplings and blossomed in the garden of the *Upanishaths*. These saplings then grew and into ancient *Shaasthras* (spiritual sciences), and the winds carried the fragrance of their *aanandha* (divine bliss) to the four corners of the world to vitalise and awaken the people of all the continents.

In those days the sages lived with their pupils in hermitages, in quiet sylvan surroundings on the banks of rivers. Each hermitage was a university with the sage as the *Kulapathi* (Chancellor). They were proficient in ail the branches of knowledge and eager to give the knowledge over to whoever could receive it and make the best use of it. They succeeded in their mission as a result of their own efficiency, the enthusiasm of their pupils and the sublimity of the environment. It was all so simple and sincere, so fresh and free.

Teacher-pupil relationship in the olden days

The environment which surrounds educational institutions today is quite the opposite of this ancient picture. Then the pupils lived with their preceptor In his residence and imbibed not only information but also inspiration, not only manners but also morals. They rose with the dawn, bathed in cold water and went through the rigorous schedule of prayer, study, meditation and household chores. They ate the food that the preceptor gave them. There was no distinction made in any of these disciplines between the prince and the peasant, the son of a *Pandith* (scholar) or of an illiterate. There was no opportunity to waste time in idle pursuits or trivial gossip, or in satisfying vain whims and fancies.

Every pupil was acquainted with the basic values of Indian culture, their origins and developments and their essential validity for the progress of their country. Today the number of pupils has vastly increased but the quality of both teaching and learning, has suffered much. Serving the teacher was itself part of education in those days; it was easy to please the teacher and get the best out of him by the process of loving service. How can salaries and fees ever satisfy the teacher? They only increase the greed for more. Then the world's prosperity and peace were built on foundations of *dharma* (righteousness); now they depend on *dhana* (riches).

Man is the crown of the animal kingdom

The creation of the Universe must have happened when even time was unknown. Countless living beings have dwelt on this planet since, and the existing species are also innumerable. Man is considered to be the crown of the animal kingdom; his is the summit of living beings. *Of janthus* (living beings), it is said, he is the highest. Why? Because he is the only animal that can investigate his own self and realise and reveal the Divinity which is his reality. Other animals have no thirst for the basic inquiry and no hunger for this satisfying wisdom. This thirst has led many to posit that there is God and others to deny the existence of God. God is described in the Geetha as "more minute than the minutest and larger than the largest." Let us consider this paradox a little.

We cannot see the air that surrounds us though we inhale and exhale it every moment of our lives. How, then, can we see the minute atom and the particles of energy that it is comprised of? Similarly with a clouded, and therefore limited, vision, how can we visualise *Brahman*, the basic Divine Force that manipulates even the subtle energy within the invisible atom? Of course when the vision is purified into its most subtle aspect, (*suukshma-buddhi*) and when we are equipped with the wisdom-eye (*Jnaana chakshu*) as Arjuna was, then we can identify the Divinity that lies behind the minutest form or particle.

Stages of change of the created Universe

As for being larger than the largest, consider the Sun. It is about 93 million miles away from the earth. Hence if we travel towards the Sun at the rate of 500 miles per hour and 24 hours a day, it would take over 20 years to reach it. The Sun is so big that the terrestrial globe can be dumped into any one of the thousands of pools or 'pits' which astronomers have discovered in its surface.

The stars that appear to be so tiny and so multifarious are each far bigger than the Sun, and the distances between them are far greater than even the distance between the Sun and the earth! How can the petty mind of man ever conceive this vastness of the entire cosmos? But here too the sages by their sharpened Intellect and ecstasy-filled minds, have been able to visualise God, Immanent as much in this macrocosm as in the microcosm and even transcending its boundaries of space and time. Their experience has led them to express their adoration through names such as God, Allah, Jehovah and Bhagavaan. These are embodiments of the Glory and the Grace they tasted, the Love they felt as being at the core of the cosmos.

The created universe is called *Prakrithi* (Nature); prior to the Manifestation, there was darkness; after the Manifestation, there was light. The darkness was the *thaamasik* (quality of inaction) state, when there was no activity. The light was the *raajasik* (quality of agitative) state, when with movement and agitation, uplift and downfall alternated. The 'five elements' were then formed, and in time attained comparative quiet. That was the *saathwik* (quality of serenity) state, when Divinity shone through them. These five elements are perceptible by the five senses; in fact they are the responses to the needs of the senses. The *saathwik* state is the Divine state, when light is shed on the Truth. This Truth was there even before the creation and the cosmos.

Meaning of 'one-pointedness' of mind

Truth is more fundamental than the atom. Every atom and every star manifests the Truth to those who have the eye of wisdom. Each aspect of science has a special feature when it applies to some one group of things or beings. What is the special feature of man? If he too lives and dies as any animal, how can his supremacy be justified? His supremacy lies in his capacity to become aware of his Truth. We use the phrase 'one-pointedness' when referring to *saadhana*. The meaning that we generally give to that phrase is not correct. Each sense organ or faculty has 'a point' which makes it valid. Don't we say, 'There is no point in it,' when we condemn some thing in an argument? Seeing is the 'point' of the eye; hearing is the 'point' of the ear. If there is no point or *agram*, it is blind or deaf. The sense is then afflicted with some disease, It has some defect. Even if you catch a slight cold, the nose loses its 'point' for it cannot discover smells.

Now what is the 'point' of the mind? When we say 'one-pointedness' it must mean that the mind should be pointed towards the One-the One that is denoted as being without a second, the One which has willed that It may become the many. Unless the mind lays aside all other pursuits and

seeks to become aware of the One that has become the many, it can be said that the mind too is diseased and is suffering from some defect.

Elevate yourselves by speaking and doing good

The sages of ancient India had mastered this one-pointedness, and when they willed they could transmit this awareness to their pupils. Such persons are rare today. We have teachers in plenty but none of them has taken up with determination this task of discovering his own identity. With the disappearance of *rishis* (sages), the *rishikuls* (hermitages) of those days have become the schools (*rishikul-shikul-shkul-school*) of today.

I have told you often that besides your parents, your teachers and your elders, you have to also revere your deeds. Deeds elevate us or drag us down; they chain us to both, birth and death, or they deliver us from that chain; they result in Joy or grief, prosperity or poverty, gain or loss, pleasure or pain. You must realise that your enthusiasm or despair, success or failure, are but the consequences of your actions. While engaged in action, you come up against certain laws of nature which you cannot overstep. If you loosen your hold on something you have in your hand, it will fall down; similarly, if you slip while ascending a ladder, you shall fall, irrespective of your caste, creed or status. The law does not differentiate. In every deed or act, God is present as the Invisible Motivator; in every minute thing that you handle or manipulate, God is present as the Inner Core. So always try to elevate yourselves by doing good, speaking good, seeking good, and having the good of others in mind.

Education must confer humility and selflessness

You do not lose much if a finger is so damaged that it needs to be cut off. The body can still function and be a fit instrument. Even if you lose a limb, you can function and benefit with the help of your faculties. But If you lose your character, then everything is lost! You can be worthy of the name 'student' only from the day on which you imprint this thought on your mind. Do not allow laziness, hatred or anger to contaminate your hearts. The world looks forward to your leadership in establishing and ensuring peace; how can this be realised if you cultivate hatred and anger? Practise calmness and the habit of deliberation. Don't get agitated and yield to mass frenzy, that is a sign of weakness and waywardness.

If anyone blames, abuses or hurts you, do not return him with the same. Behave nobly and with patience. When a dog bites a man, the man does not bite the dog in return. Education must lead you from darkness to light. It is only those who wander in darkness that fall into pits; can a man walking in the light fall into a pit? If he does, it means that he is still in the dark, *Vidh* means light, and a *vidhyarthi* (student) must seek light and gain it. What is the use of an eye that does not reveal to you the pitfalls? Education must endow you with that type, of eye which will reveal in time the pits that yawn in your path.

Vidhya must confer humility, selflessness and the ideals of service. If a man adores his stomach and his material wealth as his heaven, how can he be honoured as a scholar?

The educated man must be ready and skilled to serve his parents, his villages, his state, his nation, his language and his culture. The air in a balloon is limited within the parameters and to the shape of the balloon; unless it bursts the balloon and overcomes its barriers, how can it merge with the Universe? Similarly, unless the self attains awareness and conquers the barriers of the ego, it cannot merge with the Omnipresent, Immanent Divinity.

You are born in society; it has helped to guard, guide and foster, you, to educate you and to fill you with dreams and Ideals, Repay to society the debt you owe to it. Proclaim aloud that you are Indians. Decide with pride and enthusiasm to serve India. The story of India and the culture of India---these are to be adored as your parents.

College Day, Brindhaavan, 30-7-1977

Man thinks he is enjoying the pleasures; but really speaking, it is the pleasures that are enjoying man, for, they sap his energies, dry up his discrimination, eat up his allotted years, and worm into his mind, infesting it with egoism, envy, malice, hate, greed and lust.

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