

Chapter 19. Love and Brotherhood

Happiness and misery are due to our own actions

Of the three instruments used for thinking, speaking, and action, the third instrument is the body with its hands ready to execute the thought that is expressed in words. The deed, the work, the labour in which the hand is engaged are the source of all the happiness or misery in which a person is involved. One asserts that one is happy, or that one is anxious and afraid or that one is in trouble. And one attributes the cause of these conditions to some person other than oneself. This belief rests on a wrong basis; happiness and misery are due to one's own actions. Whether one accepts or rejects this truth, one has to go through all the consequences of one's action. This is the law of nature. One may not believe in summer or winter, in fire or rain, but one cannot escape from heat and cold. They affect the person anyway. Therefore, the best course is to direct our activities along proper lines.

Hands are not the only limbs or agents that are involved in human activity (*karma*). Whatever is done, whatever is seen, whatever is heard, one should be vigilant about its purity. Thought, word, and deed must be free from pride, greed, and hatred. The words that one utters must be free from these faults; things that one yearns to hear must be free from these superficially attractive qualities; the pleasures that one seeks must not be polluted by evil.

Students must assimilate the lessons

Students must first assimilate these mental lessons and demonstrate their effect in their speech. The lessons that are taught by words must be translated by them into action.

Today, however, education does not transform the mind. It stops the listening process, through the ear. What enters the ear might not be clear to the mind; it might reach the mind only in a hazy form. So education has to be so imparted that it is received clearly by the mind. To achieve this aim, it has to be transmitted through heads, tongues, and hands that are pure, with no blemish that warps. Only then can the learning be clear and the wisdom bright.

The role of the teacher

Students study only for a few years, but teachers, in order to justify being in the profession, have to be engaged in studies always without stopping. So teachers are to be reckoned as the only genuine students. To the question who is a real student the answer is, "The teacher". The motto, "I shall be the ideal student, for my pupils to emulate," must inspire the teacher. Such a teacher has surely recognised their duty. The teacher must come down to the level of the student; if the teacher doesn't and still continues to teach, the fate of the student is best left to the imagination.

This process is called "descent". It does not mean stepping down from the top to the ground. It means only accepting the level of the person who is to be benefited. The baby on the floor cannot jump to the arms of the mother when she calls upon it to come up. "I am a great person; I can't stoop" —if the mother feels like that, she cannot possess the child. Stooping does not make a person small. Similarly, it is not demeaning for the teacher to come down to the level of the pupils in order to teach them. It is simply a laudable sign of love.

Many teachers, at the present time, have fallen into the habit of asserting. “Well! I have got ready one lesson on one topic for today. My duty is to speak on that. I will do just that and go.” Have the pupils grasped the lesson aright? Which subject has to be taught in which way, through which method? These problems do not seem to bother them. Moreover they should conduct themselves just in the same manner as they advise and expect the students to behave. When they are taught the lessons through love, their reverence for the teacher will also be deepened. Each teacher should strive to encourage the all-round development of the student. Each teacher must expand their own heart through love and not waste years in furthering their own interest.

The teacher should not cultivate divisive traits. The saints and sages (*rishis*) of ancient times treated their own sons and their students with equal affection. Today, we have lost faith that our teachers are of this nature. When the principal’s son is answering question papers for an examination in one hall, the principal will not be posted as invigilator there, lest he should dictate the correct answers and help his son to get good marks! But, in the hermitages of old, there would be no suspicion that the *guru* would show such preference or partiality. Today, corruption has crept into thought, word, and deed at all levels. Hence these precautions. Teachers have to adopt the spiritual discipline (*sadhana*) of purifying their emotions in order to earn the status and authority of *gurus*. The true *guru* must lead the pupil into a worthy and happy life. And the true pupil must respond with eagerness and adoration.

Teachers are responsible for the nature and quality of the activities and character of students. For they impress the youth by their scholarship and leadership. So, they must keep clear of selfish aggrandisement and political manoeuvring and have only spiritual enlightenment as their ideal in life. The members of the teaching staff must move among themselves as brothers. Students become aware of differences and rivalries between their teachers. Of course, differences are inevitable and may even be useful. But differences shouldn’t pollute mutual relations, hinder the progress of the institution, and affect adversely the processes of teaching and learning. In these fields, teachers must consult each other and cooperate with others.

Students must practise cooperation

Among students also, we don’t find this spirit of singleness of purpose and fraternal cooperation. Good nature (*sadbhava*) and good company (*sathsanga*) have become rare; mutual love and yearning for good company have weakened. “As the ruler (*raja*), so the ruled (*praja*),” says the proverb. “As the teacher, so the pupil” seems to be equally true. Teachers, therefore, have to be interested in high thinking and a life steeped in renunciation.

The expert in chemistry or physics may not know much biology. But there is every need for them all to be friendly and work as a team. For whatever the science in which one specialises, the science of the spirit, the science that leads to the ultimate truth has also to be mastered.

The basis of humanity is God

At the Atomic Research Centre, I said that everything has energy latent in it—a piece of paper has it, a strip of cloth has it. When the latent energy is exhausted, death results; when energy fills, birth happens. Being-awareness-bliss (*satchidananda*) is energy. We (*sat*) are (*chit*) happy (*ananda*). Energy is all, and energy is derived from God. That is the very basis of all people.

Now, we are building super-structures somewhere else, not on the basis. The foundational divine principle is

being ignored. We are fascinated by subjects and studies that promise to feed our stomachs and make us materially happy and powerful. But the hard truth is the Divine beneath all. People must either know the supreme truth of the one Being behind all becoming or at least know the practical truth of love and brotherhood. These two points are the limits that education must ever keep in mind —the starting point and the goal.