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*In the sweetness of friendship
let there be laughter
and the sharing of pleasure.
For in the dew of little things,
the heart finds its morning
and is refreshed.*

KAMIL GIBRAN

*I want world
sympathy in
this battle &
Right against
Wright.
Sande Maheshwari
5.4.30*



M. V. R. VIDYASAGAR

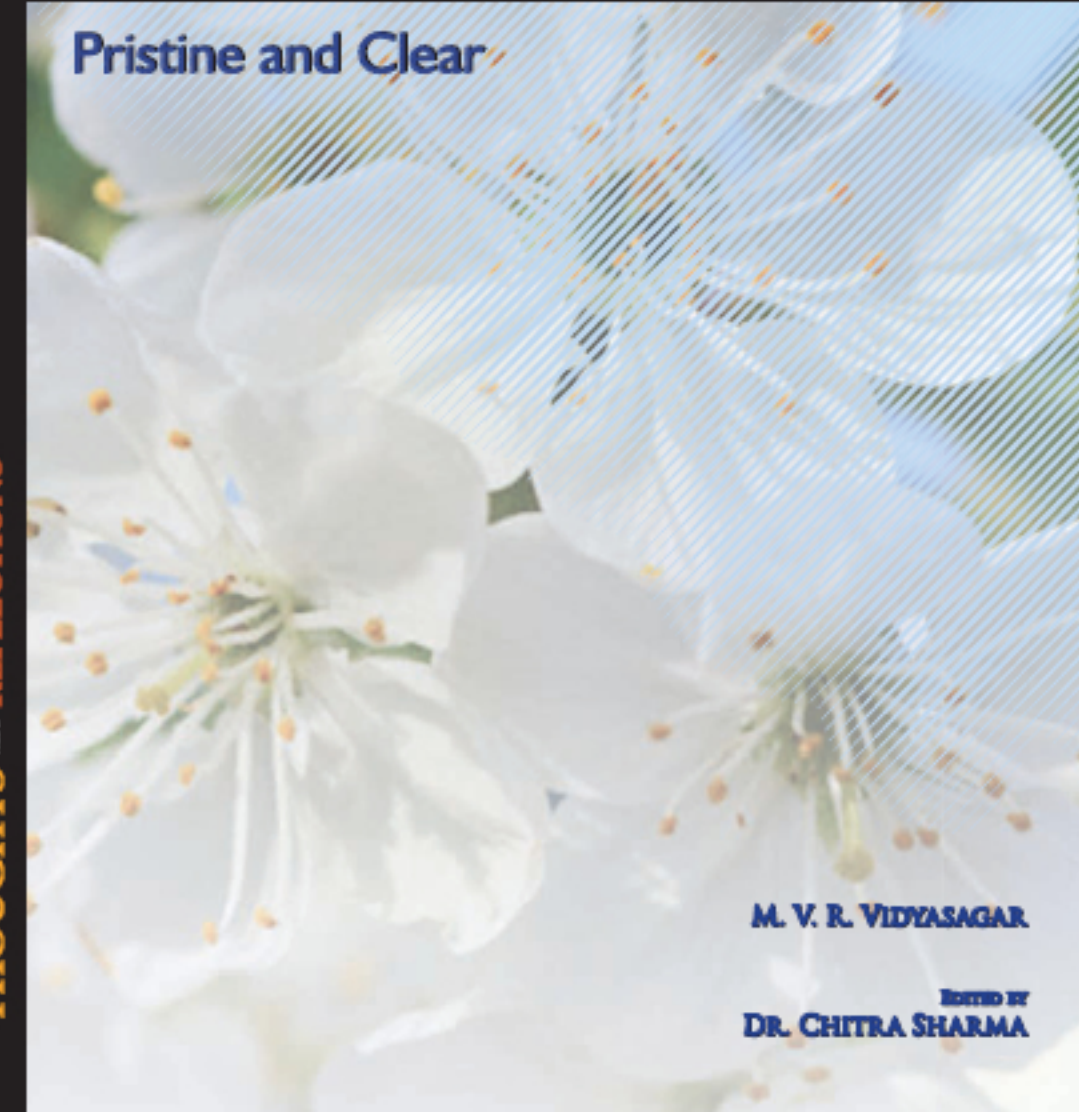
THOUGHTS and REFLECTIONS

आनो भद्राः क्रतवो यन्तु विशतः ।

THOUGHTS and REFLECTIONS

(A Treatise In Value Education)

Pristine and Clear



M. V. R. VIDYASAGAR

EDITED BY
DR. CHITRA SHARMA

Thoughts and Reflections

(A Treatise in Value Education)

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SPECIAL THANKS

The author is highly thankful to
Shri R. Subbaram
for all his suggestions which have been
gratefully incorporated in the present edition.

₹100/-

First Edition 2009
Second Edition 2010

Printed and Marketed by :
SS Print Services
#42, 7th 'A' Main, CHBS Layout,
Vijayanagar, Bangalore - 560 040.
Tel : +91 80 2310 4585
Mob: +91 94490 66611
Email : ssprintservices@gmail.com

An Appreciation

Vidyasagara
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Dear Shri Vidyasagar,

I went through your work - *Thoughts and Reflections*.

I have all appreciation to you for you have put excellent ideas so succinctly yet with so much of detail.

There are many reasons for your success. First you are an interesting story teller. There is an unequalled grace in the stories selected by you. Second your writings are amply interspersed with a number of anecdotes, examples and illustrations. They are truly potential in inculcating values like truth, non-violence, self-control, tolerance, humility, patriotism, purity of mind and body etc. In every literature you have chosen, especially in Sanskrit. There is limitless and unfathomable material with reference to Value-based education. You have extracted precious gems and nuggets of gold. This mirrors out your sense of judgement. Each title-page begins with a story or anecdote which leads to moral reflections and concludes with practical instructions. The result, every page is verily informative and turns the mirror of mind within. This ideal should become the real source of inspiration behind all Value-based educational activities. If the mind is intensely eager everything can be accomplished.

You are, by long experience, a gifted exponent of perennial values. You have managed to pack in such a lot of valuable knowledge into a little over 150 pages. I commend your earnestness as well as deep devotion. A Value-based education fulfils two objectives. One's liberation and the welfare of the world, this applied in particular, to a conscientious teacher.

With this background, I find your work a significant milestone in our long journey of value-based education.

The articles in the work carry distinct style of a seasoned teacher - lucidity as well as clarity.

I hope that the students as well as teachers derive benefit from going through this monograph on Value-based education. My heart overflows with joy on reading your work.

Paper, printing and front cover-page are captivating. I congratulate the printers.

~ T.S. KRISHNAMURTHY

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P R E F A C E

All truly wise thoughts have been thought already thousands of times. But to make them truly ours we have to think of them over again honestly until they take root in our personal experience.

The ability to think limitlessly is the unique quality of human beings. We get all kinds of thoughts, we receive many as we interact with others and this leads to further thinking. Thus thinking is an incessant process. While thinking is a natural and even inevitable process, getting thoughts of higher and nobler order (than the low and the commonplace ones) is a great quality. One has to strive to inculcate and develop this trait. It is not enough to be contented assuming that we always entertain lofty and great thoughts. We have to be receptive to such thoughts.

आनो भद्राः क्रतवो यन्तु विश्वतः ।

May noble thoughts come to us from all directions.

This ardent prayer for one's own elevation is from *Rig-Veda*. Our Vedas and Upanishads and sacred texts are replete with such maxims which ennoble our lives.

❀ जननी जन्मभूमिश्च स्वर्गादपि गरीयसी ।

❀ मृत्योर्मा अमृतं गमय ।

❀ उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्यवरात्रिबोधत ।

❀ सत्यमेव जयते नाऽनृतम् ।

And so on.

Shall we try to get such pearls of wisdom so as to share our joy with others?

Mahatma Gandhi on the Efficacy of Prayer

When every hope is gone, 'when helpers fail and comforts flee', I find that help arrives somehow, from I know not where. Supplication, worship, prayer are no superstition; they are more real than the acts of eating, drinking, sitting or walking. It is no exaggeration to say that they alone are real, all else unreal.

Such worship or prayer is no flight of eloquence; it is no lip-homage. It springs from the heart. If, therefore, we achieve that purity of the heart when it is 'emptied of all but love', if we keep all the chords in tune, they 'trembling pass in music out of sight.' Prayer needs no speech. It is in itself independent of any sensuous effort. I have not the slightest doubt prayer is an unfailing means of cleansing the heart of passions. But it must be combined with utmost humility.

The Power of Prayer

ॐ सहनाववतु । सहनौ भुनक्तु ।
सहवीर्यं करवावहै ।
तेजस्विनावधीतमस्तु मा विद्विषावहै
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

May God Almighty protect both of us (Teacher and Student). Let us enjoy (the gifts of God) together. May we both be powerful. May the effort we put in (for our study) be brilliantly successful. May there be no animosities between us.

This short, but very pertinent prayer recited by gurus and sishyas together contains in it the very essence of true learning. It enunciates the ideal relationship that should exist between teachers and students for effective learning to take place.

One of the most distinctive features of the Sanskrit language is that it has a separate dual number as against mere singular and plural in almost all the languages we know. It is this dual number that is most aptly used for the verbs in this prayer, as it is offered by two persons (a teacher and his disciple) or two groups of persons (teachers and their disciples).

The teacher - pupil relationship has degenerated to extreme low levels in modern times. What with almost business-like institutionalization that has taken over the modern education system, the pupils adopt a 'don't care attitude'. While the teachers rest contented as they 'don't bother' as long as they receive their pay packets all right. Teachers have rarely any concern and love for their students while students have hardly any regard and respect for their teachers. In

More things are wrought by prayer
than this world can dream of ..
~ Tennyson ~

such a situation, may be under the threat and fear of examinations and results, the teaching learning process tends to be little more than a mechanical transfer of the teacher's lecture notes to the student's study material.

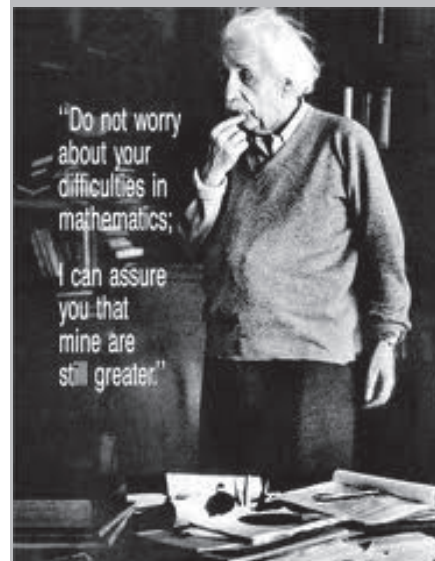
In the ancient Indian tradition seeking education was a sacred pursuit. The word 'Upanishad' etymologically means: 'closer to the Guru'. The closer the disciple is to the Guru, the more effective is the learning. The nearness or affinity implied here goes far beyond physical distance. 'Guru' actually means remover of ignorance.

In this verse the teachers and the pupils pray to God Almighty to bless them *both* with such ideal climate for learning.

What is to be noted in this prayer is that they pray for themselves and for the others as well. It means that they evince care and concern for each other. They pray for perfect unity between them. They seek to rise above all selfish considerations and *share* what is bestowed upon them by God. There is no desire at all on the part of one to prove superior to the other. On account of the teaching learning process, it is not only the pupil that learns and is elevated but also the teacher is benefited and becomes a better person. It is in this sense that the teachers and the pupils pray that both of them may become powerful, and their endeavour (study) be successful. Most important of all, there should not be any rivalry or resentment between them. It does not mean that they should always be in total agreement with each other and there should not be any scope for any difference of opinion. There are bound to be divergent opinions but they should not lead to any displeasure or ill-feelings between them.

Such an ideal teacher-pupil relationship certainly leads to peace that transcends understanding.

Albert Einstein learns from a school girl



Once a school girl came to know that Albert Einstein a famous scientist and mathematician was their neighbour. One day when she had a problem with her homework in mathematics she sneaked into his apartment and sought his help to sort out her problem. In all good humour Einstein obliged her. Coming to know of her daughter's audacity the girl's mother met the professor and apologized to him. Einstein replied that there was, in fact, no need to apologize, for he had learnt from the young girl more than what he had taught her.

Many of our educational institutions have adopted this verse as part of their daily prayer. What is more pertinent is that the teachers and the students have to try to adopt the spirit of the verse in their day-to-day life.



Flowers bloom and spread
their fragrance around.
Trees do not eat their
own fruit. Rivers do not
drink their own water.

Dissemination of Culture

Once a great saint was visiting different places, along with his disciples. One day they were at a village where the residents meted out a very unpleasant treatment to them. Scant respect was shown to the saint. The disciples were humiliated. They were denied food and basic amenities. The saint watched it all in silent composure and poise. While leaving the village, he gave this benediction: "Let the village flourish in prosperity". The disciples were surprised at this, but refrained from asking their Guruji why he had blessed the villagers so.

They visited another village next. In sharp contrast to their previous experience, they received amazing hospitality. The villagers were full of devotion and adoration to the wise sage. They treated the disciples with all the respect they were due. They did what all they could to keep the saint and his disciples in great comfort. At the time of departure, to the utter confusion of the disciples, the sage gave this benediction: "Let this village wither away". This time the disciples could not hold themselves from expressing their misgiving. In all humility, the disciples wondered if there was something wrong with his benedictions.

The sage smiled affectionately and said, "If the first village prospers and overflows with wealth, there will not be any need for the residents to migrate to other places in the world. So, they keep their culture to themselves. If the second village withers, the villagers will be forced to migrate to other places. Wherever they go and settle down, they will spread their great culture and endeavour to make the world a better place to live in."

Think and decide for yourself, which village you would like to belong to.



What a great teacher
is Nature!
Mighty trees grow by
dispersal of seeds

Perhaps God could not afford
to be everywhere.....

So he created
MOTHERS

A Kannada Folk –Tale

The story of a cow, her calf and a tiger in the tradition of Kannada folklore moves anybody's heart. It is sung by mothers to their children. An extremely simple story, but as extremely touching a story is showcased in the following passage:

It was evening. The cattle were returning home. Arbutha had gone without food for a week. He pounced on Punyakoti who had fallen behind other cows. Thinking of the calf back in the fold, the cow pleaded, "Give me some time. I will be back after feeding my calf." The hungry tiger did not agree to give up his prey. The cow assured him, "Royal Tiger, I am speaking the truth. Don't suspect my words. I swear in the name of God and my ancestors that I will surely return. I have only one tongue not two." The cow's earnest appeal had a magic spell on the tiger and he was kind enough to let her go. The other cows felt happy when Punyakoti returned to the fold safe, but Punyakoti had no time to spare. She went to the calf straight and said, "This is the last time, drink as much milk as you want." She advised her dear child about the ways of the world; how to behave at home, in the forest and with the other cows. She requested the other cows to look after her calf as if it was their own. "Remember my child; never go near the hill over there. There is a fierce tiger". Against the advice of the other cows she went back to the cave in the forest and told the tiger that she was ready and called upon him to satisfy his hunger by feasting on her. The tiger was surprised by the honesty of the cow. He thought it was better to end his own life than to slay Punyakoti. Full of remorse, he jumped from the hill and killed himself. Heavenly hosts welcomed the tiger.



Birthday

So long as one has not become a child, one cannot expect divine illumination. Forget all the knowledge of the world that you have acquired and become as ignorant as a child; then you shall attain to the divine wisdom.

~ Ramakrishna ~

A true work of art is one the memory of which lingers in our minds long after we have ceased to watch it. Quite a lot of excellent works of art or creativity fail to become popular or acquire the recognition they richly deserve. They fail to figure on the popularity biz. However much we want try to get them, at a later time, they may not be available even for our perusal. We have only to remain satisfied that we are lucky to come across and from time to time revive our memories of the excellent pieces of art.

During the late eighties or early nineties of the last century, Doordarshan beamed a televised version of a short story 'Birthday'. Details of those who created it cannot be given. I can only offer my lofty praises to those who brought it to the viewers.

A poor school teacher in pre-independence days, takes his son to the birthday party of his headmaster's son. The headmaster being a European, celebrates the occasion in the Western style in all grandeur and pomp. The boy is dressed up gaudily. People sing and dance merrily. Colourful balloons are burst, candles are blown out and a cake is cut. Gifts wrapped in attractive colour paper pour out. Rare delicacies are served. In all his innocence, the teacher's son is enraptured by the event. He pesters his parents as to when his birthday would be celebrated. They are not rich enough to afford such celebrations, but they cannot suppress their only son's enthusiasm. Only to pacify him, they set a day for the celebration.

After a long impatient wait, at last, the day arrives. The poor father stretches all his meagre means to fulfil his son's desire. On the appointed day, the boy is dressed up in typical traditional Indian style, with *Tilak* on his forehead and an Indian cap on his head. He is taken to a temple and a special pooja is performed seeking God's blessings for the boy. Then the parents take him to a group of hapless poor people and make him distribute grain among them.

On returning home, the boy asks his parents when the birthday celebration is going to start and the parents tell him that the celebration is already over. The boy cries bitterly in terrible disappointment for he has not had any of the ostentation of the headmaster's son's birthday.

Eventually the boy grows up to become a highly placed officer with a fashionable wife, luxurious bungalow and assured comfortable living. Reminiscing his boyhood days of poverty, he narrates his birthday experience to his son.

On his son's birthday, after the usual celebration he finds his son loading the car with a number of bags. He wonders what it is all about. On the way, the boy orders the car to be stopped at a place. As the father waits for him, while verifying his bank passbook, the boy goes to the beggars under the banyan tree and distributes the grain in the bags he has brought with him.

Our rich culture is like a perennial river. No doubt, it has its ups and downs, affluent and lean periods. We, sometimes, in our ignorance fear that it is fading out. No, it isn't, it always flourishes and regenerates itself in ever resplendent brilliance.



If winter comes, can
spring be far behind?
~ P.B. Shelley ~

Everything that happens is for our Good

**Self-Pity is delicious
~ Norman Mailer ~**

“Do not grieve that every rose has a thorn, instead rejoice that every thorny bush has roses in it”.

Instead of brooding and crying over the bitter and sad things that befall us, we have to try to seek what is good in them and learn to derive the joy of living out of them.

Once upon a time there was a king who had a minister who always used to say “Whatever happens is for our good”. He used to repeat it so frequently that people would get annoyed with his mannerism, but they put up with him because he was the king’s minister.

One day the king happened to cut his finger accidentally. The minister was quick enough to throw in his remark, “ Whatever happens is for our good”. Blood was oozing from the king’s finger and he was writhing in pain. The minister’s remark angered him so much that he ordered the minister to be thrown into prison. The king’s command was carried out promptly and the minister languished in jail.

In course of time the king got better. As was the regular practice with him, he went into the forest on a hunting expedition. Chasing a wild animal, he moved far away from his retinue. The beast eluded him but he became captive to a group of barbarians. They took him to their leader who ordered that he be offered to their goddess as sacrifice. Amidst confounding rites and rituals the king was prepared for the sacrifice. As the sword rose in to the air to fall on the king’s neck, the priest said, “This man is unfit to be offered as sacrifice to our

Just are the ways of God and justifiable to men
Unless there be who think not God at all.
~ John Milton ~

goddess, because he has a wound on one of his fingers.” As per their custom, a man with any deformity was not fit to be a sacrificial offer to the goddess. The king was set free and eventually he returned to his kingdom. He realized the truth of his minister’s words. He relented and set him free. The minister felt elated that his words had proved true and the king was convinced about the veracity of his saying.

But the king had a doubt now. He said, “Well, the wound has saved my life. But what good has your imprisonment done to you?” The minister smiled and said in all humility “Your Majesty, you ordered my imprisonment on account of the wound. If you had spared me, I would certainly have accompanied you, since the barbarians would have found me without any blemishes, I would have been slain. Has not my imprisonment done me good?”



Once in Persia reigned a king
Who upon his signet ring
Graved a maxim true and wise,
Which if held before the eyes,
Gave him counsel at a glance
Fit for every change and chance,
Solemn words, and these are they:
“Even this shall pass away.”

A Father's Lesson to his Son

Bharavi is a great name in the galaxy of Sanskrit writers. He was born the son of a great scholar. Even at a tender age, Bharavi made a name for himself for his profound scholarship. He gained wide acclaim for his amazing intellectual abilities. But to his disappointment and indignation, his father would never utter a word of approval for him. He always used to make light of his son's achievements. However hard he tried, Bharavi could not get a word of praise from his father. This filled him with resentment and he started nurturing feelings of grouse and grudge against his father. Finally, he decided to do away with him.

One night Bharavi equipped with a huge stone hid himself in the attic right above his father's bed. He waited for an opportune moment to let fall the stone on his father to ensure his death.

A conversation ensued between Bharavi's mother and father which was clearly audible to him. His mother who had perceived Bharavi's sulking, was cross with her husband. She said, "You are always unfair to Bharavi. Every one is full of praise for him. But you're always unkind to him. Can't you utter a good word about him? Why do you always belittle my son?". Bharavi's father replied, "I'm not without love for my son. I am really proud of all his accomplishments and achievements. But it is not proper for a father to praise his own son in public. It shows his own vainglorious nature and fills his son with vanity. It does good neither to the father nor the son."

These wise words of his father opened Bharavi's eyes. He realized how egoistic and stupid he had been. He felt ashamed of his nurturing revenge against his father and plotting to kill him. Immediately, he climbed down the attic and explained to his father all his feelings and intentions and begged him to punish him suitably. Bharavi's father, full of compassion for his son, readily pardoned him. But Bharavi

insisted that suitable punishment should be awarded to him for his criminal intentions. The sire pronounced the sentence finally that Bharavi should spend six months in his wife's parent's home.

Bharavi wondered what kind of punishment it was, still he proceeded to carry out his father's command. At his wife's parents' home, he was received as an honoured guest. For a few days, he was shown all hospitality. Then the parents-in-law wondered why their son-in-law was not going back. His prolonged stay puzzled them and caused them discomfort. They started feeling that he was a liability and a cause of nuisance. Since, as per his father's instruction, he had not brought anything with him, Bharavi had to depend entirely on his wife's parents. He suffered a lot of humiliation and indignities, even though he did all kinds of menial and lowly jobs with utmost patience.

One day, as Bharavi was working on a literary task he had undertaken, his wife approached him for some money. He had no money whatsoever to part with. He handed over to her the Thalapatra on which he had just written the verse

सहसा विदधीत न क्रियाम्
अविवेकः परमापदां पदम् ।
वृणुते हि विमृश्यकारिणम्
गुणलुब्धाः स्वयमेव सम्पदः ॥

Nothing should be done in haste, because the man of indiscretion always lands in deep trouble. Prosperity (Goddess Lakshmi) waits on the man who acts wisely after weighing pros and cons.

The lady, appreciative of her husband's plight, left the scene. She happened to show the verse to her neighbour. She admired the beauty of the verse so much that she displayed it prominently in her bedroom.

Actually she belonged to a business community. Her husband had left home on some business purpose and had not been seen for over twenty years. Having earned a lot of wealth, he returned. As he entered the bedroom he saw a young man sleeping there. He became furious as he assumed that his wife was living with another man in his absence. He took out his sword to put an end to him. As he raised the sword, he looked at the verse.

सहसा विदधीत न क्रियाम्

He held back his sword. Later he came to know that the young man was none other than his own son who was a small child when he had left home. Had he acted in haste, he would have killed his own son. The family had a very enjoyable reunion.

They attributed their turn of fortune to Bharavi and rewarded him profusely. The six month term ended. Bharavi returned home along with his wife. He was a matured man now, full of respect for his father.



A sculptor chisels an idol by strenuous and determined strokes, so as to bring out a perfect, enduring, enkindling piece of art. It is just like gold which emerges from fire, as pure as possible.

Polonius' Advice to His Son

The following is a famous, oft-quoted passage from William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. It is one of the most popular passages of Shakespeare, remarkable for its poetic excellence.



These few precepts in thy memory
Look thou character. Give thy thoughts no tongue,
Nor any unproportioned thought his act.
Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.
Those friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
Grapple them to thy soul with hoofs of steel,
But do not dull thy palm with entertainment
Of each new-hatched, unfledged comrade. Beware
Of entrance to a quarrel, but being in,
Bear't that the opposed may beware of thee.
Give every man thine ear, but few thy voice;
Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgement.
Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,
But not expressed in fancy, rich, not gaudy,
For the apparel oft proclaims the man.
Neither a borrower nor a lender be
For loan oft loses itself and friend,
And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.
This above all, to thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not be false to any man.

Be courteous to all, but intimate with few, and let those few be well-tried before you give them your confidence.

~ George Washington ~

A school boy's understanding of this passage is something like: Take care of your character. Don't speak out your thoughts. Don't act in haste. Make friends only with those who are suitable to you, after testing them. Hold fast to your friends. Do not waste money on newly made friends. Avoid entering a quarrel, but once you are forced to, teach your opponent such a lesson that he never dares to set himself against you. Listen to every man, take each man's opinion, but you don't give out yours. You must wear dress suitable to your status. It must be rich but not showy. The dress one wears shows the nature of the person who wears it. Neither borrow nor lend money, because by lending you lose money as well as friend. The habit of borrowing makes you a spendthrift. Most importantly, be true to yourself. Then as surely as night comes after day, you cannot be false to others.



What a wonderful piece of advice, to a simple mind! Superficially, it seems to be a sound advice. But a deeper study and analysis can reveal not only the shallowness but even the crookedness inherent in it. Before we look at it in depth, we have to know that the advice is offered by a character called Polonius in *Hamlet*. He is too talkative and indulgent. He considers himself to be the wisest and the most intelligent. He is always a scheming and wicked politician. At best he is a man of worldly wisdom and he can think no farther than material prosperity and worldly success. Though he seems to offer precepts of morality, they are shallow and self-deceptive.

Listening to others more than what you speak is, in deed, a noble

To feel good or to shine in borrowed thoughts brings only momentary glory as a passing cloud can bring but little drizzle, indeed. Do painted feathers make a peacock?

quality. But when it goes with the selfish motive that you take advantage out of what others speak but you don't allow others the benefit from your thinking and knowledge, it is outright cunning and wickedness. Broadly

speaking, being choosy about one's friends is all right. But how far is it ethically sound to 'test' someone whether he is fit to be your friend or not? Suppose the other person subjects you to a similar process, how do you feel then? True friendship cannot take place on these conditions.

If you are planning to revenge, build two graves, one for yourself.

Polonius advises his son to avoid entering a quarrel. It is true, we should not pick up quarrels on petty matters. But the advice that follows it is in bad taste. We should always be reasonable, just and fair. Even to our enemies, we should be compassionate and forgiving. We should not be venomous in inflicting revenge, but we should try our best to adopt a conciliatory approach to ensure peaceful coexistence.

His advice about dress is right, but is suitable only for wealthy people.

Earlier Polonius had advised his son to grapple his friends to his soul with hoofs of steel. But now his advice to him is neither to borrow nor lend - especially in respect of friends (for loan oft loses itself and friend). My own closest friend is in dire need. I am totally convinced of his truthfulness and sincerity. Still I avoid helping him, because my father's instruction is 'Neither a borrower nor a lender be' because of obvious reasons.

Effacing one's own self, sacrificing oneself completely for the loved ones is unknown to the likes of Polonius. It is that kind of friendship that we have to cherish; learn to offer to others first. We have to realize that any friendship made on conditions and considerations cannot be true friendship.

Polonius gives a seemingly logical conclusion to his speech which again is shallow and smacks of hypocrisy and cunning. As long as one indulges in wicked tricks and tactics like the ones he has professed one can be truthful neither to oneself nor to others.



Sibling Rivalry

Children born of the same parents, instead of living amicably, often indulge in quarrels and fights. We see little brothers playing happily and in a care free manner falling out and fighting with each other over trivial things such as toy cars. It is true, the brothers, in their child-like innocence no doubt fight but the displeasure or animosity between them is extremely short-lived. They forget their differences presently and turn affectionate to each other again. When together, they break into quarrels, but they cannot part from each other even for a short while. Such is the beauty of childhood innocence.

As they grow up and enter the adult world, they learn many things. They become crafty and adopt double standards. The sense of 'mine' and 'thine' overtakes them. They become increasingly selfish and self-centered. In addition, they go on weaving worldly cobwebs around them. It is easy to build these cobwebs but it is often impossible to free oneself from them.

During childhood, the siblings would have fought over toy cars. But as they grew up they quarrel over material things such as cars which are no more than adult toys. As children the brothers had fought but in no time they forgot their bone of contention and became friends again. It is the Godly quality of childhood innocence. But, all that is gone now. The adult brothers become bitter enemies over trifles. They soon reach the point of no return. Animosities and rivalries keep growing. They can only sadly remember the affectionate bondage that existed between them in their childhood days. There are scores of instances of battles and wars that brothers have fought on these lines. Is there any single instance of a war fought by two brothers, the other way round? It is difficult to find, but there is one – the *Dharma Yuddha* that took place between Rama and Bharata in the *Ramayana*.

Such a war, had perhaps never been there nor never will there one ever be -

Complying with his father's instruction Rama, accompanied by Sita and Lakshmana left for the forest to live for fourteen years. Bharata who was not at home when these strange developments took place came to know about them only after his return to the palace. Any ordinary young man in his place would have felt elated at the unexpected tilt of fortune in his favour. But Bharata felt it gross injustice. When it was the right of his eldest brother Rama to occupy the throne, how could he think of denying him his right and take his place? He raised hell with his mother Kaikeyi for what all she had done and left to the forest to meet Rama in a bid to restore him what exactly belonged to him. In order to gain moral support and bring pressure on Rama, he took along with him a large retinue of all the members of his family, Gurus and ministers and advisers.

The scene of Bharata's meeting Rama, Sita and Lakshmana in the forest is one of the most heart warming literary creations ever composed. It was here that a real *Dharma Yuddha* took place between Rama and Bharatha. Bharatha's plea was that being the eldest brother Rama had to become the king of Ayodhya. Rama insisted that he was bound by his father's instruction and under no circumstances kingship was acceptable to him until he completed his term of fourteen years in the forest. Both Rama and Bharatha held fast to their arguments. Thus there was a unique tussle between the brothers.

If only people and nations set aside their narrow selfish interests and struggled hard to uphold the rights of their fellow beings before claiming theirs, how happy and peaceful the entire world would be !



A Touching Story



Jim Corbett is a great name associated with the conservation of wild animals especially tigers and leopards. He rendered immense service to rural folk residing around forests by ridding them of numerous man-eating tigers and leopards. This provided him with enough scope to study in detail about the big cats.

Jim Corbett is full of admiration for the majestic, dignified and imposingly beautiful tiger. He says that writers who described the species as 'cruel' and 'blood - thirsty' have done great injustice to the animal. He lauds the tiger as "a large-hearted gentleman". Corbett makes an impassioned plea to protect and conserve the Indian tiger. If the species of the Indian tiger is extinguished, India will lose a lot in terms of ecological balance. In his honour, a famous zoological park in Uttar Pradesh is named after him.



"It's good to be kind when you are as strong as I am."

Besides his contribution to the cause of animal conservation, Jim Corbett is known for his interesting writings comprising short stories and anecdotes of his experiences with wild animals. He is one of the few English writers who brought out the virtue of the innocent Indian villagers. One such story is 'Lalajee'.

While Jim Corbett is on duty at a place called Mokama Ghat, he comes across a man called Lalajee, affected by cholera. Corbett gives

him shelter and sees that he is provided with proper treatment. Fortunately for Lalajee, he survives the almost fatal disease. Corbett learns from him that he was a thriving merchant. Being swindled by his partner he was ruined and became a bankrupt. Driven from place to place, Lalajee had reached Mokama Ghat and it was on account of 'Sahib's' kindness that he was saved. But now, Lalajee has no place to go to. Jim Corbett hands him over an amount of Rs.500/- (quite a lot of money in the first half of the last century) and a railway ticket to go to his place. He advises him to start life afresh.

After quite a long time, one day when Jim Corbett returns home after work he finds a shadowy figure waiting for him. To his pleasant surprise, he recognizes the person to be none other than Lalajee.

Lalajee tells Corbett that he started his business with the money he had lent him; he has been doing quite well and now he has come to return the money that Corbett had lent him. Lalajee insists on repaying the loan with interest. But Jim Corbett declines it. Only to satisfy Lalajee, he accepts the amount of Rs. 500/- he had given him.

"The quality of mercy is not strained, it blesseth him that gives and him that takes" says William Shakespeare in *The Merchant of Venice*. Jim Corbett, out of sheer love for humanity, extended the quality of mercy to Lalajee and Lalajee recompensed it with his genuine feeling of gratitude. In this sense, both Jim Corbett and Lalajee are blessed.

How wonderful the whole world would be, if human relationships are at such an ideal level!



There is a great man who makes every man feel small. But a real great man is the man who makes every man feel great.

~ G. K. Chesterton ~

Pity, Sympathy, Courage

Treat everybody with politeness even those who may be rude to you; for remember, you show courtesy to others, not because they are gentlemen, but because you are a gentleman.

Pity is a feeling of sadness caused by the suffering and troubles of others. Sympathy is showing that you understand and care about somebody's problems. Sympathizing is considered to be a nobler feeling than pitying, because when we pity something, we merely feel sad about it whereas when we sympathize, we not only feel sad for it, we are with the cause ready to alleviate it to the extent we can.

During his young age, when Swami Vivekananda was still Narendranath, he was immensely impressed by his mother Bhuvaneswari Devi, who told him a lot of stories from the rich Indian tradition that created in him high values of life. Narendranath's father Viswanath Dutta was known for his charity. "The impulse to help the poor was almost like a disease with him." He was locally called Vishwanath the benevolent. He tried to reach beyond his capabilities to help people in distress. His charity would not consider whether the needy deserved help or not. He would rush to help even wrecks like alcoholics and drug addicts. Young Narendranath questioned his father about this wastage which he then considered gross misuse of money. At this Viswanath said, "Life is full of suffering my son! When you grow up you will realize all this yourself and will have

Use every man after his desert, and who shall scape whipping? Use them after your own honour and dignity. The less they deserve, the more merit is in your bounty.

Hamlet

~ William Shakespeare ~

pity even on addicts or those who take to drink and other vices to get temporary relief from the endless miseries of life".

True to his father's words, under the influence of the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda transformed natural compassion into love and reverence for everyone and everything.

Ramakrishna Paramahansa narrated the following story:

Once there was a fearful snake which used to be a menace to the people around. A holy man possessing yogic powers happened to visit the place. He used his great power to subdue the snake. He instructed it not to harass people unnecessarily. From then on, the snake became meek and harmless. Finding it mellowed down, people started taking it for granted. They troubled the snake now by pelting stones at it. The snake suffered, but did not retaliate. After some time the Saint visited the place again and found the snake in a miserable condition. He said to it, "I told you not to harm people unnecessarily. I never told you not to open your hood and hiss them away."

Sri Ramakrishna said, "Man is a living God. Do we ever think of showing pity to God? No, on the contrary, we feel blessed to be able to serve and worship him. Therefore 'pity' is not the right expression. The right kind of attitude should be to serve 'Jiva' as shiva, to serve, humanity as the manifestation of Divinity. None is to be hated, for even the sinner is essentially God. The same Narayana(God) is present in the guise of the thief or the person lacking in culture, as well as in the righteous and refined."

He further said, "If in this hell of a world one can bring a little joy and peace even for a day into the heart of a single person, that much alone is true; this I have learnt suffering all my life".

During his days of wandering as a monk, Swami Vivekananda was passing through a thick forest. A group of wild monkeys attacked him. He started running to avoid them. The faster he ran, the more aggressive and menacing they grew. Suddenly a monk appeared before him and asked him to stop running and to face the brutes boldly. When he turned to face the brutes, the monkeys stopped frightening and harassing him. Quoting this incident, Swamiji would often say that one should not run away when faced with danger or difficulty; instead, one must face it boldly.

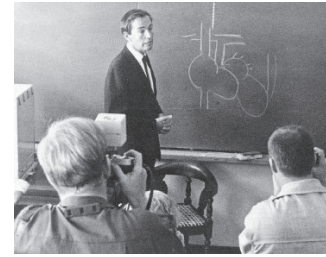
He said “Face the terrible. Face it boldly. Like the monkeys, the hardships of life fall back when we cease to flee before them. If we are ever to gain freedom, it must be by conquering nature, never by running away. Cowards never win victories. We have to face fear and trouble and ignorance if we expect them to flee before us.”



The chemist who can extract from his heart's elements compassion, respect, longing, patience, regret, surprise, and forgiveness and compound them into one can create that atom which is called love.

~ Kahlil Gibran ~

Living in the True Sense



Dr. Christiaan Barnard is the surgeon who performed the first heart transplantation operation. Besides being a rare expert in medicine and surgery, Dr. Barnard was an inspiring writer and eloquent speaker.

Explaining how we should not merely stay alive, but celebrate being alive, he says, “one does not become noble by suffering, but one becomes noble by experiencing suffering”.

The simple, but enigmatic words set us thinking. What is the difference between ‘suffering’ and ‘experiencing suffering’? How does ‘experiencing’ make one noble?

It has bearing with the difference between merely staying alive and celebrating being alive. When we are struck by an illness or a difficulty let us assume we just pass through all the discomforts, sorrows and ordeals the situation causes for us. At the end of it all we have remained what we were before that calamity befell us. Then we have only suffered. But if we pass through the suffering as an experience, react to it, and may be, draw pertinent lessons from it, it is then that we have experienced suffering.

When a teacher teaches a class, the teaching goes equally to the inanimate things in the classroom and to the students. While there is no change whatsoever in the furniture, the students get some learning outcome as a result of the experience. There has to be a behavioural change in the students on account of experiencing suffering. If no such behavioural change takes place in some students after they ‘suffer’ the teaching, how are they better than the inanimate furniture in the classroom?

A puny, shy young man was thrown out of a first class compartment in a remote railway station in South Africa. You would have guessed that it is Mohandas Karam Chand Gandhi who suffered several indignities as a 'Coolie Lawyer'. Gandhi was evicted from the first class compartment by an arrogant inconsiderate white man only on account of the colour of his skin. With his bag and baggage, he spent the whole night in bitter cold. It was there that he experienced suffering and became a transformed man. *An unknown white man threw Gandhi out of the first class compartment. The same Gandhi who became acclaimed all over the world as 'the Mahatma' hurled the white man out of his country.*

Thus, experiencing suffering ennobles man.

There is another similarly puzzling thought given by Dr. Barnard in the simplest possible words: "What is important is not what you have lost, what is important is what you have left".

Out of what we have, sometimes we lose something and it makes us sad. When we are cheated or by our own folly we happen to lose something, we are haunted by a feeling of defeatism and even though what we have lost is of little or no consequence it worries us and we are unhappy.

On the other hand, if we voluntarily part with (even a little of) what we have for a cause which we heartily believe is a worthy and noble one, a great feeling of contentment fills our heart and we experience a feeling of joy. That is why our Rishis have said Enjoy by renouncing.

Create new ideas and prove them
in the laboratory of life.

If somebody picks a paltry sum from my pocket, even though it does not affect me in any way, I feel unhappy because I have *lost* something. In contrast, I help someone in need and see him well out of his difficulty I feel satisfied and happy. Let us try to derive joy out of *leaving* and avoid the *grief* of losing.



Government houses seldom came with fences. Mother and I collected twigs and built a small fence. After lunch, my mother would never sleep. She would wash her kitchen utensils and she and I would dig the rocky, white ant – infested surroundings. We planted flowering bushes. The White ants at once destroyed them. My mother brought ash from her chulha and mixed it in the earth and we planted seedlings all over again. This time, they bloomed.

At that time, my father's transfer order came. A few neighbours asked my mother why she was exerting herself so much to beautify a government house. Why was she planting seeds that would only benefit the next occupant? My mother replied that it did not matter to her that she would not see the flowers in full bloom. She said, " I have to create a bloom in a desert and whenever I am given a new place, I must leave it more beautiful than I had inherited."

That was my first lesson in success – It is not what you create for yourself, it is what you leave behind.

~ Source unknown ~

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