

The Prahlada Ideal in Education.

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The devotee Prahlāda stands before us as a great ideal, who, regardless of the many fiery ordeals he had to undergo, possessed such an indomitable courage as to demonstrate before his confirmed atheist father Hiranya Kasipu with unswerving confidence and irresistible faith the Omniscience, the Omnipotence, and Omnipresence of the one God in the form of LORD NAR-SIMHA. We remember him especially as a successful crusader against the godless education of Sandāmarka. Now the question naturally arises as to whether the ideal of education as proclaimed by Prahlada before his willing fellow-pupils can be practically adopted in modern times. Do we not feel the same "Sandāmarka" spirit within us which misguides plastic youths in godless ways? Are we not blindly setting before our future generation an absolutely mundane and materialistic system of education based upon the two monster principles—Hiranyāksha and Hiranya Kasipu charging fees and amassing wealth?

It is therefore absolutely essential that we should try to evolve a most practicable scheme of teaching based upon "The Prahlada Ideal in Education." At the outset, we must remember that the best methods in modern education

lead only to the most ancient Hindu ideal of Dakṣhināmurti Guru—

चित्रं षट्परोमूर्त्ते वृद्धाः शिष्याः गुरुर्युवा ।
गुरोस्तु मौनं व्याख्यानं शिष्यास्तु चिन्तनसंशयाः॥

All of them emphasise the point that the teacher should invariably be in the background; his function is only to observe carefully and guide wisely without undue intrusion after placing his pupil or pupils in decidedly congenial and instructive surroundings. Dr. Montessori claims that children brought up under her system suddenly burst forth into spontaneous and beautiful spellers, writers, and arithmeticians. The Dalton Plan enthusiasts affirm that children learn far more thoroughly and widely by their system than by the dry-as-dust super-imposed lecture system. The exponents of the Project Method demonstrate the all-round development of the pupils who are brought up under such a system.

What is the essential truth underlying the success of such modern systems of education? Every child is divine in origin with 'Intimations of Immortality' and fund of many-sided experience undergone in many different lives he had passed. It would be the height of impertinence on the part of any teacher to pose before his pupil as a superior in

age or wisdom. He would be failing in his most sacred duty if he does not consider his pupil as an evolving *Jivātmā* or Divine Balakṛṣṇa in the embryo. Following the ideal of Dakṣiṇamurti, the teacher has only to place his pupil in such a congenial and soul-developing surroundings (सत्वन) calculated to the spontaneous performance of the eight-fold yoga and convert him into a spiritual radio and dynamo with a fund of extraordinary potential energy. If, at this stage, he would press the button of SAT-(सत्)-the pupil develops into an all-wise prophet (त्रिकाळज्ञानी); if he taps the button of CHIT (चित्) the disciple develops into a powerful engine with infinite kinetic energy working in different ways for the good of humanity; if he opens the key of ANAND (आनन्द) he bursts forth into an all-loving and all-embracing personality. This is the secret of the Chinmudrā (चिन्मुद्रा) method of imparting knowledge as outlined in the following *Śloka*.

शैलध्यातयाप्रकटितपरब्रह्मतत्त्वं सुखानं
 धर्मिष्ठान्ते वसुदधिगणैराकृतं ब्रह्मनिष्ठैः ।
 आचार्येन्द्रं वरकलितचिन्मुद्रयानन्दमूर्ति
 स्वात्मारामं मुदितवदनं दक्षिणामूर्तिमीडे ॥

The Prahlada ideal in Education is mainly based on such a principle. The scheme can be formulated by the following eight sutras or maxims.

(1) Perpetual play with Holy Dolls of Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Christ, Muhammad, Buddha, Agni, Mahājina Veera, or Āum.

(2) Regularly retrace the holy names in insets of cardboard, wood, or metal. Better take ONE NAME e. g. AUM in particular for a fixed period every day in childhood.

(3) Dramatize all stories of religion and heroism.

(4) Model with hand holy names and figures with clay, wax, paper, plasticine, and wood (with Sloyd Knife).

(5) Rivet the lively attention of boys on very beautiful pictures of sacred objects* and attractive scenes of mother Nature during scouting and travel.

(6) Ample active scouting service among suffering humanity, and all living creatures.

(7) Music divine, grand, and supreme.

(8) Ample arrangements for self-expression. No canings, threats, fines etc.

Though the above 8 maxims are inter-dependent, they generally follow the evolution of a child from his birth. The divine education of Prahlāda began from the time when he was even within the womb of his mother. The music, grand, divine, and supreme (Maxim No. 7) of Mahārṣi Nārada enraptured the plastic baby in the embryo so much so that he could not help being a willing listener to the sage's soul-provoking perorations before his mother.

कौमार आचरेत्प्राज्ञो धर्मान् भागवतानिह ।

Every step thereafter must be constant reminders of the child's divine origin. During babyhood, children play with dolls; they feel and touch and make spontaneous use of their senses (Max. 1) During the early part of childhood, they are taught three R's; the best method is by directly dealing with holy objects and names—(Max. 2).

Then they live in a world of imitation; dramatization of religious and heroic stories will bring out almost all noble virtues essential for a Prahlada

* The pictures published by "Gita Press" Gorakhpur can be effectively used.

(Max. 3). Modelling Holy names and figures in different ways combine in it all the virtues of handiwork co-ordinating the muscle of the head, heart, and hand into a continuous *Puja* of the Almighty. (Max. 4) Heartfelt enjoyment in art-productions of holy images on paper, canvass, stone or wood, when encouraged in boys, develops the finer aesthetic feelings of boys, growing into adults. (Max. 5) Ample active, scouting service is sure to kill all seeds off selfishness in the developing adult, and make him a useful devotee of God in all His living manifestations—(Max. 6) The adult Prahlada should have now developed enough music, divine, grand and supreme as to captivate the hearts of his fellow-brethren (Max. 7). No effort should be spared to arrange all possible opportunities for self-expression so that the child may feel the extraordinary spiritual freedom of the ego (सोऽहं) (तत्त्वमसि) (अहं ब्रह्मास्मि) ।

The ultimate aim of the Prahlada Ideal in Education is that the child may think, feel, and act as follows:—

(1)

*Take my life, and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee;
Take my moments and my days,
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.*

(2)

*Take my hands, and let them move
At the impulse of Thy love,
Take my feet and let them be
Swift and beautiful for Thee.*

(3)

*Take my voice, and let it sing
Always, only for my king;
Take my lips, and let them be
Filled with messages from Thee.*

(4)

*Take my silver and my gold
Not a mile would I withhold;
Take my intellect and use
Every power as Thou shalt choose.*

(5)

*Take my will and make it Thine
It shall be no longer mine:
Take my heart, it is Thine one
It shall be Thy Royal Throne.*

(6)

*Take my love, my Lord, I pour
At Thy Feet its treasure store
Take myself, and I will be
Ever only all for Thee.*

The principle of the Prahlada Ideal in Education is well codified by Patanjali in his *Yoga Sūtras* and explained clearly by Vyāsa:

1. समाधिसिद्धिरीश्वरप्रणिधानात् । (2. 45)
ईश्वरार्पितसर्वभावस्य समाधिसिद्धिर्यथा सर्व-
मीप्सितमवितथं जानाति देशान्तरे देहान्तरे कालान्तरे
च । ततोऽस्य प्रज्ञा यथा भूतं प्रजानाति ।

One who consecrates himself with heart and soul, thought, word, and deed, to the Almighty gets everything he wants and becomes a Seer with perfect knowledge of all places, times, and things. His supreme intelligence is able to remember whatever he knew in his previous births.

2. देशबन्धश्चित्तस्य धारणा (3. 1)

तत्र प्रत्ययैकतानता ध्यानम् (3. 2.)

यथाभिमतध्यानाद्वा (1. 39)

तस्य वाचकः प्रणवः (1. 27.)

विषयवती वा प्रवृत्तिरूपज्ञा मनसः स्थिति-
निबन्धनी । (1. 35.)

These three *Sūtras* are at the root of maxims nos. 1 to 5 of the Prahlada Ideal

in Education. Vyasa explains the above sutras as follows:

नामिच्छे हृदयपुण्डरीके मूर्ध्न्योतिषि नासिकाप्रे
जिह्वाप्रे इत्येवमादिषु देशेषु बाह्ये वा विषये
चित्तस्य वृत्तिमात्रेण बन्ध इति धारणा । (3. 1)

तस्मिन्देहे ध्येयालम्बनस्य प्रत्ययस्यैकतानता
सदृशः प्रवाहः प्रत्ययान्तरेणापरामृष्टो ध्यानम् । (3. 2)

यदेयामिमत् तदेव ध्यायेत् । तत्र लब्धस्थिति-
कमन्यत्रापि स्थितिपदं लभते । इति (1. 39)

नासिकाप्रे धारयतोऽस्य वा दिव्यगन्धसंविस्ता
गन्धप्रवृत्तिः, जिह्वाप्रे दिव्यरससंवित्, तालुनि रूपसंवित्,
जिह्वामध्ये स्पर्शसंवित्, जिह्वामूले शब्दसंवित् इत्येताः
प्रवृत्तय उत्पन्नाश्चित्तं स्थितौ निवर्तन्ति, संशयं
विधमन्ति, समाधिप्रज्ञायां च द्वारी तिष्ठति ।.....
तथा च सति श्रद्धावीर्यस्मृतिसमाधयोऽस्याप्रतिबन्धेन
भविष्यन्तीति ॥

This may be summarised as follows:
Keep your mind fixed on some materialized spiritual object, that is suitable to your *Samskar* or mental condition. AUM is the best of such objects or names. No obstacles will then prevent you from consecrating yourself to the object of your adoration. All your senses will then centre round the one object of your love; all your doubts will be cleared; all the inner and nascent powers such as the self-confidence, soul-powers, and retentive memory burst forth in full strength:

3. मैत्रीकरुणासुदितोपेक्षाणां सुखदुःखपुण्या-
पुण्यविषयाणां भावनातश्चित्तप्रसादनम् । (1. 33)

मैत्र्यादिषु बलानि ।

These Sūtras are at the root of Prahlāda maxim No. 6. Vyāsa explains the above Sūtras as follows:

तत्र सर्वप्राणिषु सुखसम्भोगापन्नेषु मैत्रीं भावयेत् ।
दुःखितेषु करुणाम् । पुण्यात्मकेषु सुदिताम् । अपुण्यशीले-
षूपेक्षाम् । एवमस्य भावयतो शुद्धो धर्म उपजायते ।

ततश्च चित्तं प्रसीदति । प्रसन्नमेकाग्रं स्थितिपदं लभते ।
मैत्रीं भावयित्वा मैत्रीबलं लभते । दुःखितेषु करुणां
भावयित्वा करुणाबलं लभते । पुण्यशीलेषु सुदितां
भावयित्वा सुदिताबलं लभते ।

The above may be summarized by saying: Ample active, scouting service of mankind bring forth out of you all the soul-uplifting powers of Universal Love.

No sceptic need point his finger of scorn against the Prahlāda maxims in Education as outlined in this article, and pooh-pooh them saying that they are the outcome of the crazy mind of an impractical idealist. Let him but approach the whole problem with an open, unprejudiced mind, and give the maxims a fair trial. Even within the living memory of aged men in South India, such miracles have happened. Children who were set task of continuously writing. इति: ॐ नमो नारायणाय सिद्धम् at the very outset of their educational career had been known to lose themselves in those soul-energizing letters for months together in such a way as to forget all thoughts of food, water, and enjoyment. Even when nourishment was offered to them they did not care to examine the taste or the ingredients of the food offered to them. Suddenly they felt such a stream of knowledge flowing through their system that they became able to grasp whatever was taught to them even at the first hint, and retain the same. They would master the four Vedas, six Śāstras, ten Upaniṣads, eighteen Purānas, and sixty-four arts within an incredibly short period of time in such a perfect way as to be prepared for what is called (क्लिबारा) examination at the point of the sword.

Thy would fearlessly face fiery ordeals in order to prove their superiority in competitive debates (शास्त्रार्थ). Even now South India contains 'many gems of purest ray serene' who have mastered all the ancient texts from cover to cover, top to bottom, and who shed forth their lustre of knowledge in the four corners of the world.

The truth is that when the child is contemplating upon the holy names, sacred figures, and soul-elevating objects in the different ways outlined in the Prahlada maxims, it performs unconsciously yogic exercises of concentration on (अज्ञातक) the centre of the forehead. Suddenly 'Intimations of Immortality' pass through his plastic system and all knowledge past, present, and future permeate through his soul along with the flow of nectar अमृतमयासक्त from the अज्ञातक centre. There is no necessity for विद्यपेक्षण or चर्चितचर्चण or learning again what that *Jivātmā* might have learnt in thousands of his previous births. Take the case of the five years old Dhruva. What course of Education did he undergo? He got only a suggestion or उपदेश from Narad. He performed penances far beyond the capacity of a child gradually lessening the quantity and quality of his food and sat months together in contemplation of the द्रवशाश्वती मंत्र—ॐ नमोभगवतेवासुदेवाय kindly presented to him by the heavenly sage. At the end of the period Lord Nārāyaṇa in his condescending and overpowering love for the little child-devotee, opened all the floodgates of knowledge and physical and spiritual powers within him so as to fit him to be the centre of several solar systems of the universe and proclaim with overwhelming confidence:—

योऽन्तः प्रविश्य मम वाचमिमां प्रसुप्तं
संजीवयत्यखिलशक्तिवरः स्वयाम्ना ।

अन्यांश्च हस्तचरणश्रवणत्वगादीन्
प्राणान्तमो भगवते पुरुषाय तुभ्यम् ॥

The beauty of the divine processes undergoing in the system of such child— devotees who adopt the Prahlada system can be clearly illustrated by an analogy. The *Jivātmā* is like a seed just as the seed contains all vital principles of a big tree, so also the *Jivātmā* contains in himself all the omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence of the Almighty. A seed left to itself cannot grow into a tree; similarly, the *Jivātmā* cannot evolve into the state of अद् ब्रह्मसि without definite effort and proper guidance of a *Guru*. A seed sown in barren land cannot take root; similarly the *Jivātmā* when imbibing the lifeless education cannot find out his true potentiality. A seed needs a fertile soil; it wants some one to care for its nourishment; it wants regular watering and weeding, fresh air and sunshine. Then it grows to the full height of the original tree of which it was an infinitesimal part. Similarly the *Jivātmā* needs the fertile soil of the congenial and soul-developing surroundings. He must have ample opportunity for self expression. His parents must plough and prepare the soil and arrange for such advantageous conditions. The *Āchārya* or Dakshinamurti must sow him, water him, and arrange for free soul-development by eightfold Yoga methods in the fresh air and sunshine of the Paramātmā. Then the *Jivātmā* presently grows into a tender plant and gradually attains to the full beauty of the Almighty tree with green leaves, multi-coloured flowers, and very sweet fruits of all-embracing love, all-penetrating wisdom, and all-venturesome powers.

How are we to make a beginning in the introduction of the Prahlada

method of Education in the modern schools? The managers of the Gita Press, Gorakhpur, and 'Kalyan' can set the ball in motion. They can arrange for the preparation of special religious kindergarten materials and Montessori apparatus in order to follow maxims Nos. 1 and 2. These may be supplied by them to all schools interested in the method at a nominal cost or the materials necessary may be improvised at low price. New series of text books in all subjects sending all cock and bull stories to the oblivion, and introducing soul-provoking stories may be published. Special expurgated editions of religious and heroic dramas of Bhaktas may be published by the Gita Press adapting many soul-uplifting Bhajans and songs in the performance. Thinking, feeling, and acting like religious heroes will bring out high spiritual qualities. The beautiful pictures of sacred objects as published by the Gita Press may serve as models for imitation in clay, wax, paper, glasticine and wood. Study of the history of the fine arts in Europe and in ancient India shows us how Leonardo da Vinci was pouring out his soul through beautiful representations of the Madonna and the Last Supper and how the architects of South Indian temples have planned and built wonderful superhuman designs. Scouting service that has now become a compulsory activity in every school needs only a little re-orientation observing the following maxims:

(1) Persistent pathetic appeals to God even in the midst of tortures worse than death for the sake of the suffering humanity.

(2) Religious raptures' peals.

(3) Ever arrange tactfully for self-deliverance and others' deliverance.

(4) Methodical hymns in daily service to God, Crown, Country, humanity, and all living creatures.

(5) Read legitimately nature's open Vedas.

(6) Assist all enemies in their higher uplift.

(7) Mix daily with cast-aways.

(8) Attend all-seriously to self-improvement.

This will give an all-round opportunity for self-expression.

A word about the duties of a pupil in the Prahlada system of education and I have done. They are summed up in the following teachings of the Upaniṣads and the Gita.

तत्संग्रहार्थं गुरुमेवाभिगच्छेत् समित्पाणिः श्रोत्रियं
ब्रह्मनिष्ठम् ।

तद्विद्धि प्रणिपातेन परिश्रमेण सेवया ।

However much the pupil might have got glimpses, knowlege through intuition, he must beware of behaving like Balaki. He must possess three essential qualities. (1) Humility (प्रणिपात), (2) Eagerness for knowledge (परिश्रम), (3) Service (सेवा). It is a pity that all these three essentials are very much wanting in students of modern days. The habit of complete humility with साहाय्य नमस्कार or complete prostration before the *Guru* of required qualifications (श्रोत्रिय) should be cultivated, so that he may engage himself heart and soul, thought, word and deed in the pursuit of spiritual knowledge. His eagerness for knowledge must be out-

spoken in the form of obedient questions arising out of honest doubts. Last but not the least is गुरुभूषण and शिक्षादन. Whole-hearted service alone to the Ācharya is enough to make him a perfect spiritual pilgrim in the path of Service to the Guru. शिक्षादन is the best form of fees ever devised by educationists.

