

## **D Vinod**

### **Need for Moral Education**

With changing times, what has become synonymous with society is freedom. We all know that freedom comes at a price and though its citizens are enjoying freedom, it is the society which is being strangled by the price it is paying. Moral values have largely eroded and it is taking a toll upon the society.

**Need of Moral Education and Role of Parents:**

The new school of thought which rightfully promotes progressive education has empowered the youth with a think tank of knowledge and life skills but what has got lost in the quest is the cornerstone of moral values. You can blame it on materialism, globalization or liberalization but as parents and educators we are miserably failing in our endeavour in raising responsible children.

Everything today is associated with brand value and since moral value has no brand it is fast degrading. That moral education is very important, then, is just an understatement. But moral education of what kind? Surely not the earlier practice of learning a value at the end of each lesson but a deep sense of morality ingrained by imbibing parents and elders, inculcating a sense of responsibility, recognizing the power of self respect and dignity and crossing boundaries to embrace all that is good and right in the society. I think one of the biggest qualities which nurture moral values and enable moral education to pierce through the veneer of pretence and falsehood is the quality of empathy. Ability to 'feel' and then emote is the backbone of one's behaviour towards society because that is what constitutes a sensitive citizen and a sensitive citizen will always be a responsible one. Therefore this fine sensibility has to be embedded in the child from inception itself as s/he perceives the behaviour of those around and thereby develops it within him/her.

**Role of Media:**

We have come a long way from the era of Doordarshan and story books which were the only form of entertainment and leisure. Then suddenly cascading in a rush, technology especially media has stormed into our drawing rooms. The entertainment options are galore. All that is required is the lucre to afford it and a touch of a button which brings to fore innumerable possibilities of what I will not call 'entertainment' but 'discontentment' because the greed for more has only bred all kinds of vices. Apart from this the term "age appropriate" has lost meaning in the easy accessibility of information. Inappropriate content both printed and visual can do irreversible change at the young impressionable age. The innocence is lost and what emerges is a child in appearance but a grossly misinformed person inside. So will the media take the responsibility for this plunder of innocence and replacing in its wake a citizen whose responsibility towards society will forever stand questioned?

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(This story can be used in the beginning of the presentation to show how morality and immorality dwell in the same person and it is society which is instrumental in bringing out the desired aspect)

The Last Supper was painted by Leonardo Da Vinci, a noted Italian artist; and the time engaged for its completion was seven years.

The figures representing the twelve Apostles and Christ himself were painted from living persons. The life-model for the painting of the figure of Jesus was chosen first.

When it was decided that Da Vinci would paint this great picture, hundreds and hundreds of young men were carefully viewed in an endeavor to find a face and personality exhibiting innocence and beauty, free from the scars and signs of dissipation caused by sin.

Finally, after weeks of laborious searching, a young man nineteen years of age was selected as a model for the portrayal of Christ. For six months, Da Vinci worked on the production of this leading character of his famous painting.

During the next six years, Da Vinci continued his labours on this sublime work of art. One by one fitting persons were chosen to represent each of the eleven Apostles; space being left for the painting of the figure representing Judas or the face of immorality as the final task of this masterpiece.

For weeks, Da Vinci searched for a man with a hard callous face, with a countenance marked by scars of avarice, deceit, hypocrisy, and crime.

After many discouraging experiences in searching for the type of person required to represent Judas, word came to Da Vinci that a man whose appearance fully met his requirements had been found in a dungeon in Rome, sentenced to die for a life of crime and murder.

Da Vinci made the trip to Rome at once, and this man was brought out from his imprisonment in the dungeon and led out into the light of the sun. There Da Vinci saw before him a dark, swarthy man; his long, shaggy and unkempt hair sprawled over his face, which betrayed a character of viciousness and complete ruin. At last, the famous painter had found the person he wanted to represent the character of Judas in his painting.

By special permission from the king, this prisoner was carried to Milan where the picture was being painted; and for months he sat before Da Vinci at appointed hours each day as the gifted artist diligently continued his task of transmitting to his painting this base character in the picture. As he finished his last stroke, he turned to the guards and said, "I have finished. You may take the prisoner away."

As the guards were leading their prisoner away, he suddenly broke loose from their control and rushed up to Da Vinci, crying as he did so, "O, Da Vinci, look at me! Do you not know who I am?"

Da Vinci, with the trained eyes of a great character student, carefully scrutinized the man upon whose face he had constantly gazed for six months and replied, "No, I have never seen you in my life until you were brought before me out of the dungeon in Rome."

Then, lifting his eyes toward heaven, the prisoner said, "Oh, God, have I fallen so low?" Then turning his face to the painter he cried, "Leonardo Da Vinci! Look at me again for I am the same man you painted just seven years ago as the figure of Christ."

This is the true story of the painting of The Last Supper that teaches so strongly the lesson of the effects of right or wrong thinking on the life of an individual. Here was a young man whose character was so pure, unspoiled by the sins of the world that he presented a countenance of innocence and beauty fit to be used for the painting of a representation of Christ. But within seven years, following the thoughts of sin and a life of crime, he was changed into a perfect picture of the most traitorous character ever known in the history of the world.