

MORAL LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATION

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IN THE COURSE of the current school year, it seems not impertinent to ask, "What is the primary aim of education?" In fact a restudy of the basic aims of education should be undertaken at the beginning of every academic year. This review will serve to motivate the work and gear activities toward the accomplishment of the goals of education. The teachers should focus their thinking on the basic aims of education and rededicate themselves to moral leadership which the teaching profession demands of them. The teacher's philosophy can be crystallized in the intelligent discussion of goals at teacher's meetings, inasmuch as no teacher may be expected to carry out intelligently or effectively any educational reform unless he understands and believes in the basic philosophy of the Philippine Educational System.

With the leadership of the school officials, insights will be gained into the confused array of aims and purposes. Wrong emphasis can be corrected and right ones maintained and improved toward the achievement of the true aims of education. Administrators and supervisors moreover, ought to give more time and effort to the achievement of positive moral values among the teachers and learners.

The Supreme Goal

The supreme purpose of teaching ". . . may be summed up in the concept—Morality"¹ But what is morality? All school people from the grade school teacher to the highest official in the Department of Education should be able to answer the question in the words of Herbart. "Morality implies conformity with, and acceptance of

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¹ Frederick Eby, *The Development of Modern Education* (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1952), p. 474.

existing standards. . . ."² The existing standards are those patterns of behavior which have gained acceptance and approval in the community. The mores are the foundation of moral and ethical behavior; hence, of morality. To be moral one must act as justly, wisely, and magnanimously as one can. The requirement is for one to find and follow the best that is possible and subject that to the tests of truth and fairness and to the criteria of goodwill and benefits to all concerned. Morality is founded upon the claims of the community upon its members; therefore, it is relative to culture. The people's deep common beliefs of what is acceptable, permissible, required, desirable, and expected are the sources of their moral authority. Plato, the first educational philosopher, declared that what is honored in a place will be cultivated in that place. What is accepted and approved will be followed and imitated. If corruption is tolerated and grafters go scot-free, the young will cultivate immorality as their norm of conduct. A Manila columnist writes: "With nothing to emulate but evil how can they do better? Delinquent parents and elders breed delinquent children."³

Froebel, the practical-minded mystic, declared that the primary objective of education is the development of "a steady, dependable moral character."⁴ By moral character is meant a positive personality which outgrows and directs itself in its endeavor to pursue persistently and consistently ideals once perceived as the highest virtues. By choice, constant and unwavering, even in the face of difficulties these virtues are steadfastly sought. But what is the relation between morality and character? There is some substantiation of the idea that moral and ethical behavior manifests the character of an individual. Character is regarded as more inclusive and dynamic and morality is its essence. Moral character, therefore, is the integration of the moral forces which help one to exercise intelligent choice and sound judgement by weighing properly the individual and group demands. Self-discipline, consciousness of rights, the requirements of authority, and the demands of duty—these are the

² Cecil V. Millard, *Child Growth and Development* (Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1958), p. 330.

³ Teodoro F. Valencia, "Over a Cup of Coffee," *Sunday Times*, Vol. XII, No. 159, July 28, 1957, p. 4.

⁴ Frederick Eby and Charles Flinn Arrowood, *The Development of Modern Education* (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1945), p. 761.

fibers for a moral, strong character. Because of public and private apathy to the questionable patterns of morality, the development of moral character should be the chief objective of teaching by those entrusted with the education of children. Moral considerations are primordial in the lives of individuals. To be effective in the process of development and guidance of the learners, teaching should recognize the principle that "The most potent and universal bases for determining educational objectives...are those which deal with ethical or moral distinctions."⁵

Moral Character

In primitive times, a crude theoretical moral education in learning how to deal with the unseen accompanied practical training in the vocation. The young savage learned from the medicine man the religious forms and ceremonies of the group. He fulfilled his duties through the observance of the mores and folkways of his people. Any violation of the mores was met immediately with drastic punishment necessary to curtail any further disobedience. Still primitive in theory and praxis, Oriental education was the responsibility of the sacerdotal class required to preserve the moral and religious heritage of the people. The earliest form of education in India endeavored to imbue the learners with religious doctrines in order to prepare them for absorption into the Infinite instead of training them for the activities of this life. The members of the upper caste were the only ones supposed to gain knowledge of the sacred books. The earliest Hindu teachers were all Brahmans, showing that, to the Hindus, education was a moral and religious activity conducted only by the sacerdotal class as guardians of the morals of the people. In all Oriental nations education was in the best tradition of morality and religion.

The Jews made unique contributions to the development of moral education. From them, our moral and religious concepts were derived. The Jewish ideals in education have profoundly influenced modern education. Schools were attached to the synagogues for they believed that "the fear of the Lord was the beginning of wisdom". The Jewish fundamental aim of education was religious

⁵ Educational Policies Commission, *The Purposes of Education in American Democracy* (Washington, D. C.: The National Education Association of the United States and the American Association of School Administrators, 1938), p. 5.

and moral. Before the children went to school, the parents were held responsible for their systematic training in morality and religion. Speaking of Jewish education, Graves wrote:

They acquired a sound training in the morals and manners growing out of their religion, which emphasized such virtues as reverence, obedience, patience, charity, thrift, prudence, and patriotism.⁶

Elementary education among the Jews was universal and compulsory for the purpose of holding the favor of Jehovah. The subject matter was essentially religious; the passages in the Scriptures were the important components of the curriculum.

In the living past, morality was consistently emphasized as the aim of education. The Greeks by their intellectual training and ethical ideals had given impetus to moral education with the development of the arts designed to express their appreciation for their gods. Socrates inveighed against the Sophists and their individualism in education which underscored the importance of self-aggrandizement. In his dialectics, he pointedly stressed the reality of virtues and the significance of moral principles. He lived a rugged moral life, and his moral stamina proved too resolute for his followers to change or to persuade him to escape with the consent of his jailer. In prison, Socrates found himself in a moral situation in which the chance to escape was offered, but true to his moral conviction, he chose to die with honor. Truly it has been said that a moral situation is fraught with sacrifices and grave dangers to the lives of those involved. Two other philosophers, Plato and Aristotle, pursued relentlessly morality as the purpose of education. To them as well as to Socrates, the problems of ethical life were supreme and overriding. They believed that knowledge was virtue, and that the virtuous man was the best product of education, indicating to modern teachers that teaching is a moral responsibility requiring moral leadership. Any individual, therefore, who calls himself a teacher must recognize the moral and religious perspective of his calling. He is the guardian of the morals of the people.

Throughout the ages, moral character has been emphasized as the basic aim of education. Every nation has included ethical character as the basic purpose of education. Teaching is an ethical

⁶ Frank Pierrepont Graves, *A Student's History of Education* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1936), p. 21.

activity. The teacher aims at the development of the character of his pupils; hence, the teacher himself must be a moral and virtuous individual with high ethical ideals which he should earnestly and consistently follow in thought and deed. The teacher must live what he teaches.

Ethical Criteria

A review of the aims of education will show the permanency and consistency of morality in all educational activities. Because aims give meaning and direction to teaching and learning, the teaching process must be measured by ethical criteria. The Seven Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education, recognized as fundamental in guiding educational activities, include ethical character as one of the seven basic purposes of education. In fact, every aim of education has a moral implication. Every teacher holding in her hands the fate of her pupils is also entrusted with the future of the nation. The teacher has an appointment with destiny. All the aims in the Seven Cardinal Principles connote morality. In truth, all purposes of education become empty and highly superficial, if not downright dangerous, without the underlying principles of moral character. The development of vocational efficiency carries with it ethical considerations for without these, the individuals become dangers and liabilities to the community. Living activities mean activities involving other people who should be given due respect and regard. The individual to be accepted as a contributing member of the community must lead a moral life. Without morality, the community will suffer from dangers and difficulties inherent among people who are not motivated by moral ideals.

The Educational Policies Commission in 1938 adopted a set of objectives, three of which underscored the primacy of morality and discipline. The first one, self-realization, includes character development to equip the individuals with the responsible direction of their lives. The second is explained by respect for humanity, friendships, cooperation, courtesy, appreciation of the home, conservation of the home, efficient home making, democracy in the home. The fourth, civic responsibility, in its wider and deeper meaning, suggests moral responsibility as it allows the enjoyment of freedom which should be balanced by obligations. It must be recognized that these aims of education are restatements of the moral needs of young people and

children in the process of their growth and development. In the words of the Educational Policies Commission, "It follows from this analysis of the problem that the survival of every complex society is dependent in part on the moral quality of a program of organized education."⁷

Discipline

Section 5 of Article XIV of the Philippine Constitution provides among other things for the mandatory aims of education. The first objective which is moral character and the second, personal discipline, are the recognition of the national need for morality and discipline. By constitutional mandate, every teacher should emphasize morality and discipline in his teaching. Teachers should be of high morals and strong self-control so that they shall be fit to guide and give examples by their lives. Failure to bring to the teaching profession a high sense of moral responsibility and strong personal discipline is a violation of the Teacher's Oath of Office, which requires strict obedience to the mandates of the Constitution. Many of the questionable activities of administrators, supervisors, and teachers stem from their failure to act with a high sense of moral responsibility and tend to minimize the maximum efficiency of teaching and learning.

The basic philosophy of education in the Philippines is found in Section 1 of Republic Act 1124 which created the National Board of Education. All educational institutions are required to accomplish "an integrated, nationalistic, and democracy-inspired educational system in the Philippines."⁸ This is a reiteration of the aims of education as spread in the Philippine Constitution. To explain further the full significance and meaning of the basic philosophy, the Secretary of Education issued Department Order No. 1, on January 17, 1957, which embodies the "Revised Philippine Educational Program". Article I of the Revised Program enumerates the fundamental objectives of education in the Philippines. The first of the five aims commands all schools "to inculcate moral and spiritual

⁷ The Educational Policies Commission, *The Education of Free Men in American Democracy* (Washington, D. C.: The National Education Association of the United States and the American Association of School Administrators, 1941), p. 7.

⁸ Cresencio Peralta, *Teachers and Nation Building* (Manila: The National Teachers College, 1957), p. 7.

values inspired by an abiding faith in God."⁹ Needless to say the latest declaration on the aims of education in the Philippines starts out and repeats the importance of morality and spiritual values.

Moral Leadership

The supreme sacrifice of Rizal is the highest price paid for moral leadership. Teachers may well learn from the national hero the meaning, the significance, and the national effect of abiding by one's moral obligations. When teachers fulfill their duties and obligations with a high sense of moral responsibility, there will be a positive reawakening in the educational system in the Philippines. Dr. Vicente G. Sinco, until recently President of the University of the Philippines, declared:

No country and no people can have education without well-educated and deeply dedicated teachers. Education is discipline, mental, moral, and spiritual discipline, with all the hardships that the idea of discipline involves.¹⁰

The highest policy-making body in education in the Philippines has declared the importance of moral and spiritual values; by this declaration, teaching should be considered a moral responsibility which demands moral leadership. The burden of this responsibility lies squarely on the shoulders of teachers, school administrators, supervisors, and the higher officials in the Department of Education. It would be superfluous to say that the leader, the Secretary of Education, should exert efforts and bring to bear upon all officials and employees of his Department, the force of his moral leadership which is urgently needed in Philippine education. In fact, all leaders in every endeavor, public and private, should bring to bear upon the teaching profession the full weight of morality and spiritual values. In short, all leaders from the Halls of Congress to the last teacher in the farthest barrio should exert a telling and dynamic moral leadership. Teachers, whether in the classrooms or on the athletic fields, should not overlook nor neglect the moral perspective of all teaching. School administrators and supervisors should create situations, should bring about environments, which are conducive to making teaching and learning a moral activity at all times. Men

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

¹⁰ Vicente G. Sinco, *Education and National Self-Realization*, Speech Delivered in Baguio City, July 4, 1960.

and women high in the government hierarchy should not forget that they too have a stake in education; they should therefore provide facilities for teachers and learners to develop a high sense of moral responsibility. Lacking moral responsibility, man is not educated; without ethical principles, man cannot be invested with rights. Neither can he be entrusted with the duties of political or social living. Because of these, teaching should exert moral leadership worthy of imitation by the learners.

Adult Behavior

Imitation is a fundamental process in helping the young develop a strong moral character. For this procedure, the adults should be held responsible; it is they who should set the pattern for ethical and moral behavior. Problems in the community—social, political, economic, or otherwise—are the responsibilities of the adult citizens. Community life is shaped by the activities of the adults. Whatever these citizens do, either bad or good, will go a long way to deepen and heighten the ideals and aspirations of the young. Knowingly or unknowingly, however, through ignorance, plain negligence, or downright cupidity, these models, the adult citizens, parade their wickedness, their dishonesty, their defiance of authority, their neglect of duty, their immorality within the view and hearing of children and the youth. The adults stand accused by the youth for showing false models, discordant notes, and irresponsible behavior in public and private life. Teenage escapades and hooliganism, sometimes resulting in murder and fatal accidents, are traceable to the laxity in morality and discipline of the adults. Whatever glaring violations of the fundamental and elementary tenets of morality are perpetrated by the adults in high or low, public or private, positions in life are impressed upon young minds and hearts. Certainly the environment in which our children grow is not conducive to the development of moral life. Our homes have been negligent in the proper discipline of young people. These places are the domains of the adults where their behavior is the model and standard for children to imitate. Thus Herman Harrell Horne wrote:

In this connection it is to be remembered that the most valuable elements in human life, morality and religion, are largely the products of childhood imitation.¹¹

¹¹ Herman Harrell Horne, *The Philosophy of Education* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1904), p. 185.

The accepted process of imitation in learning, in developing patterns of behavior, character and personality, cannot be gainsaid. The child learns by imitating those around him, whoever that individual may be. As he grows older, when his perceptual powers become sharper, he selects those patterns which bring him satisfaction. The recognition of this basic principle in child growth and development should make parents, teachers, and other adults conscious of their moral responsibility to provide children and the youth with the best environment in which imitation will result in the development of a strong moral character and personal control.

Moral Lack

Education, public and private, is today harassed with serious problems which threaten to destroy the faith of the people in their educational system. The most difficult of these problems involves the moral leadership of the men and women in public and private life. President Roxas, speaking on moral bankruptcy, said:

Many of our people have come to accept the easy advantage of bribery, of evasion, untruth, graft, and even corruption. . . Religion and the eternal moral precepts have lost much force and meaning in our lives.¹²

Public life lacks morality and the children grow and develop in environments which are conducive to disrespect for authority, to delinquency, to graft, and even to corruption. The accusing finger has been pointed at the teaching profession, and teachers have been accused openly, both on platforms and in the columns of newspapers, as wanting in moral responsibility. Ethical considerations as guiding principles in teaching are flagrantly violated. Superintendent Conrado G. Genilo of Tarlac, in his report to the conference of Public School Superintendents in April, 1962 at Baguio, declared:

The crying need of the hour is still an effective character training to solve juvenile delinquency and remedy the general deterioration of the Filipino character.¹³

Forgotten and even ignored, the basic aim of education, morality, is judged old-fashioned and impractical in a world gone mad

¹² Manuel A. Roxas, Quoted by Antonio Isidro, *The Philippine Educational System* (Manila: Bookman, Inc., 1949), p. 45.

¹³ Conrado G. Genilo, "Character Education Lack Bared at Meet," *The Manila Times*, Hometown News, Sec. B, April 12, 1962, pp. 1B and 2B.

in a reckless drive for power and wealth. Teaching requires moral leadership, dynamic and pervasive, so that the learners will develop in an atmosphere where compromise with evils is not tolerated. Rather than appeal to greed and selfishness, moral precepts should be the criteria when choices and decisions are to be made. Teaching should not be measured in terms of material gains made by fair or foul means to the utter and brazen disregard of the education of the children.

The Greatest Need

To restore sanity and discipline in our schools, teachers and education officials must exert moral leadership. All leadership to be effective for community living should be moral leadership. Any leader without any moral backbone cannot be efficient in the building up of society. To be effective, moral leadership demands on the part of the leaders sacrifices in many forms. Leadership must be intelligent and responsive to the needs of the community. It must be unselfish and responsible. It must exercise fairness and goodwill for all irrespective of party lines and relationships. Moral leadership must be firm, yet objective; sympathetic, yet determined to pursue its purposes which are calculated to benefit the people it serves. Moral leadership must be free from self-concern; it must be socially mature, dependable, and self-reliant.

In the endeavor to rehabilitate our schools in the pursuance of morality, the leaders in public and private life should rededicate themselves to the fulfillment of their responsibility in strengthening and developing the moral stamina of the citizens. The leaders should recognize their moral obligations to the community. It is they who by virtue of their leadership can initiate the moral rearmament of our people. Unless the present leaders become dynamically conscious and persistently active in their moral leadership in education, the present impasse in morality will continue unabated. The results are not too difficult to surmise. As a warning, in his opening speech to the faculty and staff members, Dr. Cicero D. Calderon, the new President of Silliman University, underscored the need to strengthen the moral fibers of the people. Our leaders in education should purg themselves of the vices that breed dishonesty and wickedness in public and private affairs. In the classrooms, on the athletic fields in the halls of Congress, and in all government offices, there is a need for moral leadership to bring about a regeneration of spiritual values, morality, and discipline in education.