**THE BUILDING OF CHARACTER**

* *By Annie Besant*

Building of character is not only a chapter which describe the traits a person needs to accomplish the higher self or walk on the path that leads to Masters of Wisdom which the author referred to as the outer court, but also it guides the person through the journey of his character building.

Right from sketching the outline of the building from his abstract mind to laying the foundation, gradually carving his way, raising the walls higher and higher and placing the crowing stone finally upon the work of his aspirations to divinity, candidate goes through the sense of joy, fulfilment, discouragement, confidence, despair, fear, compassion and tenderness.

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Once the plan is sketched and we set to follow the outline, man goes through series of rebirth taking forward his deeds of previous lives attached to his soul whether good or bad adding and subtracting themselves to measure the highs and lows of his path, thus the very first step of building a distinct character is being a virtuous and religious man. Omitting every wrong, vice and evil tendencies from within to achieve positive, high and noble virtue with the thought of service in mind. Though there may be failures on the right path but without any wrong intent.

There needs to be a definite purpose and deliberate action. I remember when we kids gathered in Suvralina aunty’s house for Sunday get togethers long time ago with the only intent of playing, she once asked us the purpose of our lives, why we are given what we have today. That time I didn’t understand her purpose of teaching us but as I read this chapter, I know I cannot be uncertain, mind cannot be in one direction today and in another tomorrow, there has to be a deliberate purpose.

I am at that stage of my life where I’ll start a new chapter with my career, learn new things everyday but at same time I am fully aware of the rat race in my field, I never knew what I wanted to be , went with the flow ,took science, persuade engineering, will start a job just like everyone else, but a point I need to answer myself what is the purpose of my life.

There should be a certainty that every seed a man sows will bear fruit when the right time will arrive. Patiently waiting and trusting the Laws of Nature whatever the man has in hand from his previous lives no matter how small it may be, there is no limit to vastness it may grow into.

The law must give back the equivalent of that which he gives.

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The aspirant should be bound to humanity with the self-control: self-control in thought, in speech and in action. the primary motive of aspirant is the service of others. The thoughts generated act as magnet for other thoughts, restricting the evil ones and allowing the good one to flow, these thoughts channel with a new impulse on others. Right thoughts guard the mind from enemies. On the other hand, right speech must be true and gentle. True Speech pierces through the world of illusion and gentleness doesn’t wound any other.

Right thinking and right speech must be followed by right action. For action is only the manifestation of what is within. If the source of water is sweet, every river lake waterfall will have that sweetness. These threefold cord must be right and good.

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The author talks about the ideals. But what is ideal? As we think of a shape our mind projects multiple images of shape, rectangle triangle circle … our mind has the abstract idea of the plan or desire we hope to reach at or be like and our image building faculty of mind draws out the essence of mind and heart and projects an ideal figure. We deal with things that might not be true but with truth. But why do we need an ideal. How someone abstract can help us build our personality, our character. Ideals gives a way to a man’s fulfilment of desire, when he goes on his journey he needs to look back and cross check his decisions.

Man’s mind act as a mirror and the glory of these ideals reflects on this mirror for the man to constantly manifest and dwell upon. Contemplating every day, rays of divine illuminate on him becoming what he adores.

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to contemplate the man should train his mind in concentration, no matter how trivial the task is

once the mind is in his power, when it is not shattered nor it needs applause in little things, when it is calmer inside out, self-discipline take its role to the whole. Keeping up with a schedule, fixed waking and sleeping cycles, working patterns, daily routines. But this can become monotonic! Key is to be ready for change not on impulse but only if you think you choose badly.

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The next stage is to work with knowledge, judging your character which will lead to the gate of temple. In Bhagavadgita 16th disclosure narrates the virtuous qualities which the man can mark for himself. As he practice them daily with little improvement everyday he gets an unselfish, harmless love, courage, strength, and endurance perfect balance of character which is strong and tender, helper of weak and yet unmoved, self-discipline and full of harmony.

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These virtues change the man’s attitude on everything outside the world. No matter what the storm is in the outside the world, he will sense calmness, strength and serenity inside him.

The inner self will for sure respond but refuse to alter and heart will be filled with love and compassion. As mentioned in Upanishad the chhandogya: man is a creature of reflection; what he reflects upon, that he becomes, therefore reflect upon brahman; the hatred from outside world is the reflection of evil inside. But the one with pure heart has nothing to fear he can tread on uncanny paths without fearing the injuries, and even if he does get injured, lets says he is repaying the debt of his evil past.

Building character seems to be difficult to understand but it is actually adding strength to who you are. Being confident with the decisions, knowing that thoughts which are generated in your consciousness are right for the world and rights for you. In school we are taught every subject maths, science, social studies, biology, Hindi, English keeping in mind the layout of basics in a kid. Just as he is able to think good for himself, he chooses his stream, dives deep into a subject, evolves and masters himself for the future contribution. There may be many discouragements, mistakes on the way of truth, he will ponder his decisions but his determination, strength and confidence which he will gain will evolve the character within him, he will see the permanent amid the transitory world and gain self-resilience.

How can these qualities exist in one being and harmonize with such absolute perfection?

Once the man has reached the temple, we will find his feet treading on earth, standing beside his brothers, radiating energy to serve others. Character building is just adding to what we are, who we are, being the best selves of us for the greater good and serving the purpose of humanity and helping others.