

About Children- Growing up With Parents

In childhood you have never been taught responsibility. You have been shoved and pushed and ordered. The majority of your childhood I have seen in this country is regimented. Nobody uses heart. It is all head thing. So this kind of childhood is very painful. I understand that. If I would have been raised a child as we raise children here, I would have committed suicide at the age of two.

. . . The way you address your children, it is so rude, so inhuman. It is so neurotic! And if there is any worse abuse in English you know, add that to your-self. I don't want to repeat it. Just so discourteous in speaking to your children. And in spite of the fact that you are very loving **parents**, you never say to a child, "Please." I have yet to see one mother. You never call his full name. You never treat him like a person, or her as a person. You just treat them like puppies and you expect them to learn how to live ? Impossible.

I remember when I was almost 3-4 years old, how I was addressed all the time. I mean to say, there was never anybody, except certain situations of status or in certain situations where there was affection, always my full name was called. My mother never ever called me with a nickname. Never . . . I still remember mother will call, "Harbhajan Singh ji, this is the time for you to come and join us for breakfast." Or she will call me by my full name and say, "I have prepared the food you love very much. It is there. Let us go and sit down and eat. I'll like to feed you." But there was a great respectability and responsibility. The greatest thing that I was taught was that I have a complete, full, isolated but a sovereign identity. That, only your mother can give you. You can't get that in any other way. Your sovereignty can only be given to you as a child by your mother; by identifying you as a complete, total individual. And what you call 'grit', the strength of the identity is given to you by father. And it is all done in the first 11 years. Afterward anything said or done and taught is useless. Anything thereafter is a matter of knowledge. The base is built. The sweetness of you, of giving a child an identity, is very difficult for you. Because you think the child is a piece of furniture, is a property of you, you have absolute control. Is there any parent who can swear by just putting their hand on their heart, who can feel that their own child is a complete, independent sovereign person within the family ? Not at all. Maximum you can give him: he's a night's guest or a visitor, or a dependent. If you are very affectionate, you are very loving. If you are mad, you are very obnoxious. Do you bring things to trial ? If a child has done wrong, okay. Have you given him a chance to defend himself ?

You are cruel to your own self, you are cruel to your own born, and generation to generation you pass and inject this cruelty. And you think human progress is getting very moderately intelligent and very together ? No, Day by day we are miserable, we are in pain, we are totally insensitive, and we are effectively hurting each other. And we are developing diseases which will never be cured because our nervous system cannot take this nonsense. If a child has done wrong, totally wrong, . . . bring him on a trial. In my life I remember, I used to do sometimes intentionally wrong. Not wrong to do wrong . . . but intentionally get mad and do something really weird. So the only thing was, the notice was served. "Okay, tomorrow 11:00, what you have done today shall be considered. Prepare yourself . . . "

Basically, the most fundamental act of karma, cause and effect: "So shall you sow, so shall you reap," and you are a sovereign independent identity. And when you do a fault, you lose

your sovereignty and you subject yourself. And subjection is worse than death, and I was taught all that right from day one. It was a continuous process. It was a continuous learning, it was a continuous training, it was a continuous behavior.

I definitely remember, I was 9 years old, I put a petition that I don't like the newspaper, when it comes to me, it is all crumbled and it is not in order, and I don't like it. It like to read the newspaper, you know, page by page, as it should be. And normally the newspaper always goes to the elders first, right? And they pull out their own section and do the whole thing, but when it came to our room, it was up- side down. And I don't like it. And I lodged a protest and it is not heard, therefore I would like this to be done." And my father had to write in writing that always the newspaper will be sent to our quarters, totally complete. So nobody was considered "above the law? Now, do you train anybody like that? Do you give them the practical experience that nobody is above law? Do you tell your own child that nobody is above law? Do you subject yourself sometimes within the family rule when you have done something? Have you? Have you apologized to your older sons, "sorry" where is the practical application of life, living and living principles? And when the living principles are practiced, life is practiced. And that is the job you people are missing. What can you give to your child? Nothing, except value to self justice, except self- identity and self sovereignty, you have absolutely given no self respect to that child. You took away self respect from day one. And when there is a chance, the person reacts to this and then we need psychologists, psychiatrists, mental hospitals and everything else. Because in the childhood we have not been taught about life and justice, we have not been asked to relate to reality of life in practical sovereignty and our independence. We have no system of judiciary in ourselves and we don't have any experience about it. And we have been given injustice from day one and so the moment we grow up we want to catch up with that injustice, it doesn't matter what.

Siri Singh Sahib Ji, February 19, 1985