

SUMMARY :**Part 1 [full explanation in English]**

My brother is five years older than me, but only three grades ahead. He also started studying at the same age as I did but in matters of importance like education, he did not like to act in a hurry. He wanted to put the foundation of this building very strong, on which a luxurious palace could be built. He used to do one year's work in two years. Sometimes it used to take even three years, if the foundation is not strong, then how can the house become profitable.

I was young, they were big. I was nine and he was fourteen. He had the full and birthright of my patronage and supervision, and my decency was to understand his orders as law.

He was very studious by nature. Always sitting open the book and perhaps to give rest to the mind, he used to make pictures of birds, dogs, cats on the book margins on the copy. Sometimes he would write the same name or word or sentence ten to twenty times. Sometimes imitating a lion in beautiful letters again and again. Sometimes he used to compose such words, which had no meaning, no harmony. For example, once I saw this inscription on his copy - Special, Amina, brothers - brothers, Darasar, brother - brother. Radheshyam, Shriyut Radheshyam, for an hour - after this a man's face was made. I tried a lot to make some sense out of this riddle, but failed. And did not dare to ask him. He was in the ninth tribe, I was in the fifth. Understanding his creations was a big deal for me.

I did not feel like reading at all. It was a mountain to sit with a book even for an hour. As soon as he got a chance, he used to come out of the hostel and come to the ground and sometimes he would throw pebbles, sometimes he would fly paper butterflies and if he found a companion, then what to ask. Sometimes climbing the boundary wall and jumping down. Sometimes riding on the gate, enjoying the motorcar driving it back and forth, but upon coming to the room, seeing that ruddy form of brother Saheb, his life would have dried up. His first question would have been - 'Where were you'?

Always the same question was always asked in the same voice and I had only silence to answer it. I don't know why it doesn't come out of my mouth that Zara was playing outside. My silence used to say that I accepted my guilt and there was no other remedy for my brother but to greet me with words of affection and fury.

"If you study English like this, you will continue to study for the rest of your life and not a single word will come. Reading English is not a joke, that one who wants to read it or not, Era- Gaira Nathu-Khaira, all become English scholars. Here night and day eyes It has to be broken and blood has to be burnt, then somewhere this knowledge comes. What is there, it comes to say yes. Even great scholars cannot write pure English, so far speaking. And I say, you are such a snail, that even by looking at me, you do not take a lesson. You see with your own eyes how hard I work, if you don't see it, it is the fault of your eyes, the fault of your intellect. There are so many fairs and spectacles, have you ever seen me going to see? There are cricket and hockey matches every day. I don't wander near. I always keep reading. Even on that too, I am lying in one grade for two-three-three years, yet how do you hope that you will pass by wasting time in sports like this? It takes me only two or three years, will you keep rotting in this level for the rest of your life? If you have lost your life like this, better go home and have fun playing gulli-danda. Why do you spoil the money of your grandfather's hard earned money?"

Hearing this rebuke, I started shedding tears. What was the answer? I have committed the crime, who bears the reprimand? Bhai Saheb was perfect in the art of preaching. He used to say such sounds, shoot such gnomes and arrows that my liver would be broken into pieces and my courage would break. In this way, I could not find the strength to work hard and in that despair for a while I started thinking - "Why not go home. Why spoil my life by putting my hand in the work which is outside my power." I'll do it. "I wanted to be my own fool, but I used to get dizzy because of that hard work. But after an hour or two, the clouds of despair would burst and I intended to study diligently in the future. Quickly make a time table. How to start work without preparing a plan without making a map in advance. In the time table, the items of sports and jumps would fly away completely.

Get up at six in the morning, wash your hands, have breakfast, sit down to read. English from six to eight, accounting from eight to nine, history from nine to nine and a half, then food and school. After returning from school at half past three, half an hour rest, geography from four to five, grammar from five to six, half an hour walk in front of the hostel, English composition from six and a half to seven, then after eating translation from eight to nine, nine to nine Hindi till ten, miscellaneous subjects from ten to eleven, then rest.

But making a time table is a different thing, implementing it is another thing. On the very first day his disregard would start. That pleasant green of the field, the light gusts of wind, that jump of football, that gamble of kabaddi, that quickness and agility of volleyball, would have drawn me unknown and inevitable and I would have forgotten everything by going there. That murderous time table, those blindfolded books, no one remembers anyone and brother Saheb would have got an opportunity for advice and trouble. I would run away from their shadow, try to stay away from their eyes, get buried in the room in such a way that they do not know. His eyes turned towards me and my life came out. It always seemed like a pointed sword hanging over the head. Yet even in the midst of death and calamity, man remains in the bondage of illusion and delusion, I could not despise sports even after being reprimanded and scolded.

Part 2 [full explanation in English]

Annual examinations were over. Bhai sahib failed; and I passed, securing the first position in the class. Now he was just two classes ahead of me. For a moment I thought of giving him a piece of my mind: 'Why didn't your ascetic's hard work pay? Look at me. I enjoyed myself playing, and have stood first in my class.' But he was so heart-broken that I sincerely sympathized with him, and the very idea of lacing his wounds with salt looked despicable. Yet, I began to feel proud of myself and gained a certain amount of self-esteem. Now I was no longer under Bhai Sahib's tutelage. I began to participate freely in games and sports. I was determined. If he tried to meddle I

would tell him plainly: ‘What have you achieved by sweating blood? I have obtained the first position even while playing and having fun.’ Even though I had not the courage to speak out with such insolence, it was clear from my demeanor and actions that I no longer felt terrorized by him. Bhai Sahib saw through this with his acute common sense. And one day when I returned at lunch time after spending the whole morning playing gulli-danda, Bhai Sahib pounced upon me, as if with a drawn sword: ‘I can see you have become too cocky because you have passed this year and also secured the first position. But, my brother, pride has not served well even the greats. And what are you? In history you must have read about the fate of Ravan. What have you learnt from his story? Or have you just read it and passed over? To have passed an examination is not enough; the real thing is the acquisition of wisdom. To internalize whatever you study. Ravan was the master of the whole earth. Such a king is called a Chakravarti, the Universal King. These days the British Empire is so vast, yet it cannot be called a Universal Kingdom. Many countries of the world don’t accept British supremacy and are fully independent. Ravan was a Universal King. All the kings of the world paid taxes to him. Many great gods were his humble servants. Even the gods of love and rain were his slaves. And yet, what was his end? Pride totally destroyed him. None of his clan survived to give him even a drink of water. One may commit any sin, but that of pride? Commit this sin and lose everything. You must also have read about the fate that Satan met. He claimed that no one was a greater devotee of God than him. And he ended by being expelled from Paradise and cast into hell. The emperor of Rome too was puffed up with pride. He died a beggar. You have passed only one class and your head has turned. In this way you won’t go very far. You must realize that you did not pass through your hard work. It was a fluke. It was as if a blind man should by chance nab a partridge. But this can happen only once. Not again and again. Sometimes even in Gulli-danda a person plays a big stroke by chance, but that does not make him a great player. A great player is one who never misses his target. Don’t think of my failures. You will know when you come to my class: You will sweat between your teeth when you will have to crack the tough nuts of geometry and algebra. And study the History of Englistan! It is not easy to remember the names

of the kings. There have been no less than eight Henrys. Do you think it is easy to remember whether a certain event took place in the reign of this or that Henry? If you mistook Henry the Eighth for Henry the Seventh, you would lose all the marks, absolutely. You won't get even a zero, not even a zero! What do you think? There have been dozens of Jameses, dozens of Williams, and any number of Charleses. It is mind boggling. These wretches couldn't think of new names. They kept on affixing first, second, third, fourth, fifth after the same name. If they had asked me I would have suggested a million

And Geometry! God alone save you from geometry. If you wrote ACB for ABC, you would lose all the marks. No one cares to ask these cruel examiners as to what the difference between ACB and ABC is, and why they torture students for these worthless things. How does it matter whether you eat dal-bhat-roti or bhat-dal-roti? But these examiners don't care. They see only what is written in the books. They want students to cram everything word for word, and this cramming has been called education. After all what is the point of learning things that are without a head or feet? If you draw a perpendicular on this line, the base will be twice the perpendicular. How does it matter if it is four times or even one half! But since you have to pass the examination you have to remember this dumb thing. They ask you to write an essay on The Importance of Punctuality which should not be less than four pages in length. Now you open your notebook and hold your pen and pour your heart on this topic. Who doesn't know that punctuality is a good thing? It brings discipline in your life, people begin to love you and you progress in your business. How to write four pages on such a simple issue? Why waste four pages on something that can be said in one sentence? I call it insanity. Far from being a proper use, it is misuse of time to stretch a thing too far. I think a man should say what he wants to say quickly and go his way. But no, you will have to blacken four pages, whatever you may write. And four foolscap pages, nothing smaller! If this is not being cruel to students, then what is? The worst part is you are told to be brief. Write a short essay on Punctuality in not less than four pages. Four pages in brief, otherwise they might have asked you to write one or two hundred pages. Run fast, but slowly. Isn't that funny?

Even a child can understand, but these teachers have no sense. And on top of it, they proudly proclaim they are teachers. My boy, when you come to my class, you will have to perform these soul-grinding tasks. Don't float in the air just because you have secured the first position in this class. I might have failed many times, but I am elder than you and more experienced. So mark my words. Or you will regret later.

It was time for school, or God knows when this chain of sermons would have rounded off. I had lost all my taste for food. If I was being run down like this after having passed, I might have been made to give up my life, had I failed. The fearful image that Bhai Sahib had drawn of the studies in his own class had terrified me. I am surprised why I didn't flee homewards, but even after all this running down I couldn't overcome my distaste for books. I wouldn't miss any opportunity for sports; I studied too, but not much. Only this much, that I should complete my daily tasks, to avoid any humiliation in the class. The self-confidence I had attained now disappeared, and I was obliged to live like a malefactor.

Part 3 [full explanation in English]

The annual examinations. And it so happened that once again I got through and Bhai Sahib flunked. I hadn't worked very hard but I don't know how I stood first again. Even I was surprised. Bhai Sahib had worked till he was nearly dead. He had mugged up every word in the syllabus. Till ten o'clock at night, from four o'clock in the morning, from six to nine-thirty before school. His face had lost its sheen, but still the poor man failed. I felt sorry for him. When the result was announced he broke down. I also cried. The joy of having passed was halved. Had I also failed, Bhai Sahib wouldn't have grieved so much, but who can alter the course of destiny!

Now Bhai Sahib was just one class ahead of me. A malicious thought entered my mind. Suppose he failed once again. Then we would be in the same class, and he would lose the high ground to humiliate me. But I wrenched this despicable idea out of my heart. After all, he upbraids me for my own good. It may look unpalatable to me now, yet

it might be that I passed these examinations one after the other with good marks because of his sermonizing.

Now Bhai Sahib had softened down a lot. He restrained himself even when there were occasions to upbraid me. Perhaps he had himself realized that he had lost the right to upbraid me, or lost it more or less. I felt far freer. I now began to take an undue advantage of his lenience. I started believing that I would get through, whether or not I studied. My luck would always hold. Therefore I stopped whatever little I used to study out of fear of Bhai Sahib. I had developed a fondness for flying kites and most of my time was spent in this activity. But still I had a lot of respect for Bhai Sahib, and so used to fly kites away from his prying eyes. To ready the kite string, to balance the kite, to prepare for the kite-flying tournaments – all this was done surreptitiously. I didn't want Bhai Sahib to even suspect that my respect for him had diminished.

One evening, far away from the hostel, I was running like the mad to capture a free floating kite. My eyes were turned upwards and riveted on the air traveler that was reeling gently towards its downfall, like a disembodied soul descending from heaven to assume a new identity. A whole army of boys carrying bamboo poles mounted with dry twigs was racing to grab it. They were all unmindful of the things around. It was as if they were flying with that kite in a sky that was level and open, and free from cars, trams or any kind of vehicles.

All of a sudden I came face to face with Bhai Sahib, who was perhaps returning from the market. He caught hold of my hand there and then and shouted: 'Aren't you ashamed of running after this half penny-worth kite in the company of these street urchins? And you don't seem to care that now you are in class eight, just one class lower than me. After all, a man should have some sense of his status. There was time when people would become naib tehsildars after passing class eight. I know many a middle-pass who are now deputy magistrates or a superintendents. Many of them are our leaders, or newspaper editors. Many scholars work under them; and here you are running about in the company of this riff-raff to loot a kite. I am shocked at your lack of good sense. You are intelligent, undoubtedly so, but what use is

intelligence if it destroys your self- esteem! You must be thinking that now being just one class higher, Bhai Sahib has no right to admonish me. But you are wrong. I'm five years elder to you, and even if you come to the same class as I – and in the present system of examinations it is quite possible you would be my classmate next year, and even ahead of me the year after – but even God cannot close the five-year gap between you and me. I am five years your elder, and shall always remain so. You cannot ever match my experience of the world and life even if you become an MA, or a D.Phil. or D Lit. One becomes wise not by reading books but by seeing the world. Our mother never went to school and our father perhaps

