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P Y T H A G O R A S A N D
T H E R E F O R M A T I O N O F P R I S O N E R S

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In the 1st World Congress of Pythagorean Organizations held in Athens in August 1955, I presented the Pythagorean educational system and its perennial value. (1)

On this system, after intensive experimentation I have developed a new method of character training, which is now successfully applied in different institutions in Greece.

This method now is translated in English, French, Spanish, S. Korean, and Portuguese and has been applied successfully in Spain, through the efforts of Dr. Porcar Gil, Professor of Philosophy in Valencia University, and in S. Korea. There a branch of our O.M.R.Y. (Organization for the Moral Rearmament of Youth) has been established. The Board of Governors of the O.M.R.Y. in Korea includes among others personalities the General prosecutor of the S. Korean Government and four Presidents of Universities in Seoul. The purpose of the branch in S. Korea is to "impose on the Korean educational system the new method of character training by Dr. Sakellariou"

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See Proceedings of the 1st World Congress of Pythagorean Organizations, ed. by Dr. Sakellariou, Athens, 1958, pp. 36 - 42. Also, Jean Mallinger, La Prevention des delits, Revue de Postes Belges, 15me Annee, no. 6., pp. 224-226, G. Sakellariou, L' education pythagoricienne et sa valeur, Forces Spirituelles, 9 annee, no. 113-114, G. Sakellariou, An Effective Method of Improving Social Life, in Etudes Internationales de Psycho-Sociologie Criminelle, G. Sakellariou, A New Method of Character Training etc., Athens 1956 pp. 37, G. Sakellariou, A New System of Moral Education, Athens, 1957, (publ. in Greek under the title, Νέον συστημα ηθικής αγωγής, 'Αθήναι, 1957) See also, the magazine A Lambâda, Anno XXVe XXVI No. 89, Março 1956, Curitiba-Panama-Brasil.

1. The method consists of the application in everyday life of the three Pythagorean questions:

- a) What did I do today ?
- b) What did I trespass ?
- c) What duties did I leave undone ?

In practice the method consists of the marking in the schools or any other organized social group of the progress made not on the learning of knowledge but of practicing virtues in and out of schools.

Every member of a class(among students) marks himself once per week before the class after self- examination on a scale from 0 to 10 on the progress he has had in practicing the 12 virtues which are the components of good character. These virtues are explained in special hours by each teacher or officer applying the system. They are:

1. Religious life.
2. Temperance
3. Cleanliness
4. Good conduct
5. Courage
6. Contribution to
general welfare
7. Respect for the
law
8. Industriousness
9. Truthfulness
10. Co-operation
11. Order and exactness
12. Justice

The teacher and also the parents grade each student and insert/a^{on} special place in the bulletin of virtues their mark ; and from the three marks (one of the student himself, then of the parent and the teacher, the average is taken, indicating the grade acquired each week on the character training.

Ethical commands and ideals spread by charts posted

in schools, buses, courts and in any other place where people gather guide people toward moral conduct. These commands are explained in special occasions by the teachers.

The philosophy of the method is thoroughly developed and explained in an essay under the title, "A New Method of Character Training Applied on 200.000 Students". In this essay we can find very useful information related to the technique of the method and the results of the application of the method in more tha 1000 schools, and the testimonies of parents and teachers, who testify on the value of the method.

Through this method a student or any subject examining himself becomes a confessor and a judge of himself. His moral consciousness increases from day to day and his Nous, which is given man to "know himself" is developed. The atmosphere of the school changes rapidly for the better. The student digging deeply within himself sees what his duties are, becomes governor of himself, is set free from egoism, perfects himself from day to day, becomes able to evaluate material and spiritual values, adopts a philosophy of life in view of social unselfishness and social ethics, assures mental health and gives equilibrium to his mind and harmony in his human relations. Parents and teachers improve also. Inspectors of schools have an objective criterion by which to judge the growth of the students in character building, by noting the increase in their average mark from week to week. School and parents cooperate. An ethical revolution is noticed in short time in the school, at home, and in the community. This happens because in this method all factors of moral growth are combined:

a) knowledge of right and wrong, given not only through teaching about the outside world, but through the formation in oneself of the moral conscience, the judge and the confessor, whom they put in themselves by self-examination.

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b) Freedom in the choice of the right, because, as we said, a man who overcomes his defects and perfects himself, who acquires control of himself, through continuous self-examination, becomes free to choose the right.

c) Ideals are proposed, shining as beacons before the **Subjects examined**, ideals about virtues spread by charts, posted on the bulletin boards of the schools, buses, courts and any other place where people gathered. These charts contain ethical commands and ideals of youth, of the nation, of education, of the destiny of man etc. and guide people toward moral life, as it was tried in a similar way, by the "archontes", (leaders) of ancient Athens.

d) Another factor of moral growth with the new system is the voluntary and continuous exercise of virtues. This is guaranteed by the emulation developed in the class by each student to improve and acquire the highest mark or the prize of virtue, awarded to those who have an average mark in all virtues for two weeks in succession, the highest (10). This is helped by the continuous self examination of the 3 Pythagorean questions.

e) Noble competition is born, by right means, of all members of the class with one another for the sake of helping their improvement, for reasons we mentioned before.

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f) Through this system abstract moral concepts (principles) such as those of the 12 virtues, which seldom are taught either at home, or at school, are presented concretely before the subjects students.

g) Another factor for moral growth in this new system is: wholehearted cooperation of school and home for the benefit of subjects. This is assured by the love and interest of the parents for their children and by their teachers urging parents to such a cooperation.

h) Besides, this method of character training gives to each student the sense of responsibility for himself and for his community in so far as every member of the class or of any organized group is trained in the contribution for the common good and cooperation and not for class struggle or antagonism. This is performed not by an outside force but from a free choice and free will.

i) By accustoming students or any member of organized group to approach even their enemies and try to make them friends, it prepares people for a peaceful life.

j) It trains men and women to be ready to serve and improve the community wherein they live, their school , family, or factory.

k) It helps also for the consolidation and elevation of the family and therefore /of the nation and further of humanity, because according to testimonies, parents, felt a great improvement being obliged to present themselves as

an example of virtuous parents for imitation by their children.

The Method in the Prisons.

The same method, with the assistance of the Ministry of Justice in Greece is applied in the prisons and reformatory schools of Greece three years ago.

Results from the application of the method.

Here are some of the results drawn from the reports of the directors of Prisons and reformatories in Greece.

II. The vice-Director of the prison of Averof in Athens, Mr. Jiannoulis writes:

"From the application of the system of Dr. G. Sakellariou for an interval of one month we observed the following:

1. We noticed interest on the part of the guardians, who acted as teachers in the application of the system; also we observed that the method made a good impression on the inmates. This improvement is greater among the younger in age. The work of the guardians became more pleasant and the atmosphere of the prison changed for the better.

3. We noticed an emulation for mutual improvement of the inmates.

4. The inmates are today more studious and perform all their

duties voluntarily. Noble sentiments are born in the hearts of the subjects and punishment is diminished. The inmates look to us now with better disposition. The time spent for the marking at the beginning was $1\frac{1}{2}$ hour and now - after a month- is diminished to one hour.

Although it is difficult in such a short time to derive conclusions from the application of the system on the inmates of our prisons, especially on the misbehaving ones, we may say with assurance that this system will serve greatly the reformatory work in the formation of the character of the prisoners, especially on the younger ones.

We report characteristically an example of a young prisoner. He, examining himself on the virtue of religious life put the mark (0) for the 2nd week, although the first week marked himself with (7). Being asked " why so low this week ?" he answered: " I cursed, I blasphemed twice this week.- but he added: next week, I will mark myself 10, because I will not curse at all!!!"

II. Results of the application of the Bulletin of Character Training, by Professor George Sakellariou of Athens University, for an interval of the first three weeks, in the Prison of Tiryns.

The Director of the prison of Tiryns writes:

" Applying this method we noticed interest on the part of the employees to whom this work was assigned and good will on the part of the prisoners on whom the system was applied.

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Generally speaking, this exercise, in spite of the small interval during which the method was applied gave very satisfactory results, because considerable ethical improvement of the prisoners was noticed and their obedience and diligence increased considerably. Moreover, the application of the bulletin of virtues, as it is easily understood, helps greatly the attempt of the correction service for the ethical and vocational improvement of the convicts.

We can therefore without hesitation or doubt say that: this method of character training is an excellent one for the realization of the aim pursued by the corrective service and that through the continuous application of it, we will be able to have in the future very excellent results."

III The Director of the Reformatory School for Boys in Vocational Education Mr. Ath. Papoutsidakis, after applying the system of Character training in the boys of the school which he directs, reported to us, in a letter dated October 6, 1956:

" A good impression and a great interest was observed in general and then a considerable improvement among the disobedient and very difficult to handle prisoners. This improvement was observed especially in the respect towards God, in cleanliness, order, love towards all inmates, and discipline. This change is more evident in the older inmates.

The atmosphere of the prison changed for the better and the work of the guardians and teachers became more pleasant.

We noticed a great interest during self-examination and grading and a great competition for betterment. The inmates became also more studious.

In the inmates were born feelings like love towards God and their country, solidarity, respect, dignity, industriousness, and they became in general, more clean.

Punishments were reduced and the inmates look to us now with better disposition.

We may say with assurance that, from the time we have started regular meetings in the prison and we have explained the slogans of the Moral Rearmament of Youth, which were given to

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and smooth and so on. They understood

the prison and feeling for the first time the beneficial influence

of the bulletin of Virtues, will manage, when they leave the prison to start a new life and be virtuous thereafter, having as their sole aim in life to do the good and thus help themselves as well as their fellow~~x~~men.

Up to now no one managed to get the highest grade. They do try hard however, and so we are convinced that in a~~x~~short time they will take it.

I feel it is necessary to report the fact that the initiative taken by the Organization for the Moral Rearmament of Youth will help a lot, in reforming the character of the inmates and will, undoubtedly, guide them to a safe port of moral progress for the good of their family, society as a whole, and the Nation."

V. Results from the application of the Method in the Prison for Women in Athens. The Directress of the Prisons for Women Mrs. A. Petrandi

in a report dated July 20, 1957, sent to the Ministry of Justice and to the offices of the O.M.R.Y. writes the following:

"The application of the bulletin of virtues during the first semester of the year 1957, brought about very satisfactory results.

The interest of the employers and the prisoners continued undiminished.

With the disorderly and the misbehaving ones improvement is always slow but steady.

Greater improvement was noticed in the following~~x~~ virtues:
a) religious life, b) cleanliness, c) workmanship, d) cont~~ri~~bution to the common good, e) good conduct, f) coop~~er~~ation.

The coefficient of improvement is the same, both in the younger and the older women-prisoners.

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Being succesfull in applying the system, the employees work now more happily.

The atmosphere of the Institution continues to become more and more pleasant.

Emulation among the women prisoners was noticed, but not in a very high degree.

Women prisoners are less egoistic and more diligent now.

Good taste, the tendency of helping one another and a sense of duty were cultivated among the women prisoners.

Punishment is very rare among the prisoners on whom the system is applied.

The application of the system must continue because there are always new women prisoners in our institution.

One hour is now necessary for every group of prisoners instead of the two or three hours that we needed before.

The quotient of the improved women prisoners, because of the application of the system, reached the point 40 %.

Six women prisoners are now worthy to take the prize of virtues.

These six women were graded for three months continuously with 10 (excellent) in all virtues- from themselves, from their guardians, and from the Director of the prison.

The Bulletin of Virtues, no doubt, contributes greatly in our efforts for reforming the women of the Institution.

During the first year of application of the system we had such cases of improvement in character that we were in fact very surprised from the success of the method."

The significance of these results I think is obvious not only from a philanthropic point of view both for the prisoners and their families, but from the economic, i.e., the loss on national and private economy from the idleness of the prisoners, witnesses, relatives, prisons, police and Jendarmerie, etc. This loss, according to an investigation in (1) 1932 in Greece by the author, amounts to more than one billion drachmas per year.

By this method extended to other organized groups of society, such as the army and the factories, an idealistic philosophy of life may be spread, which helps to combat the present materialistic conception of the world. So, human interactions and relations may improve steadily and safely, both in school and adult society, brotherhood of man may be practiced and facilitated, and human society on the whole may continuously improve.

(1)

See, George Sakellariou, Crime in Greece. Also, G. Sakellariou, Sociology, 1953.