

So the big word today is – SHARING. Maybe some of your teachers will speak more to you about this word and its meaning.

God bless you.



I AM LEARNING! *Assembly 3 January 7th 2003*

Do you remember the theme of yesterday's assembly? SHARING. Today, I want to show you what, in England, we call an L-plate. (*Show it*) Do you know what L is for? Do you know where you see L-plates in England and other countries?

We see them on the front and back of cars? What does it mean? That the drivers are Learner-Drivers! ? The L-plate tells people I AM LEARNING. Learner-drivers are the drivers who are preparing for their driving test. They have to drive on the roads in order to practice but all the other drivers know they are learner-drivers and usually keep their distance and are especially tolerant.

The driving test in England is very difficult. Some people take it many times before they pass it. When you pass, you are very happy and sometimes you invite your friends and you burn your L-plates!

But when it comes to education, we can never burn our L-plates. We are always learning. In fact, in the business of being alive, of being human, there is always something new to learn. Especially now, the world is changing very fast. In education, every teacher is having to learn new methods, even ones who are good teachers – *especially* ones that are good teachers. But it is also true in every job. Everyone is having to re-train. None can say, "I have been doing my job now for so many years, that no one can teach me anything." None can say that.

In the more developed countries, there is a culture of re-training. Everyone is being re-trained! Directors of big companies – and hospital cleaners, doctors, teachers and musicians – everyone goes away for re-training. People are networking to share new ideas. Here in Dhaka, the English-medium schools are beginning to network with one another and we are beginning to organize united cultural events – we are having a dance exhibition in May and Miss Nehreen is already training a group for that. We are also expecting to have some teacher-training events. No one can say, "We do not need this. We have nothing to learn from each other!" We learn from each other when we listen and work with each other.

When you come to school, the most important thing you learn is HOW TO LEARN. You are learning how you are going to learn the skills you need to live. What is our school motto? 'Education for life'. We are all students, all our lives long. We have to wear our L-plates all our lives. I AM LEARNING is a verb in the continuous present tense.

God bless you.



LEARNING FROM OUR MISTAKES *Assembly 4 – January 8th 2003*

(*Show L-plates again*)

Do you remember what these were? Learning for a life-time - Education for a life-time.

Have any of you seen a baby learning to walk? What happens?It keeps falling down. When we see a baby falling down when it is learning to walk, what do we do? Are we angry?No, of course not!What would you think if someone said, "You naughty baby! How dare you fall down? How stupid you

must be to fall down?" It would be very strange. Such a person must be very disturbed! Of course, it is natural for a baby to fall down when it is learning to walk! Scientists tell us that learning to walk needs many different muscles to work in many different ways. Walking is a very complicated thing for the body to learn so it is natural for the baby to fall down when it is learning to coordinate all these different muscles! It is as difficult for the baby to learn how to walk as for you to pass your examinations...

And you and I, when we are learning something, we usually do it badly, to begin with. When you learn to ride your bicycle, you fall off. When you learn to cook, you burn the food. When we learn to care for people, sometimes we get it wrong. One day, maybe, you must learn how to be married. This is very hard work and you will make many mistakes. There is no shame – no *lodja* – in making mistakes – it is normal. We should not say, when we are learning how to write, or do Mathematics or learning to play cricket, "How terrible! I have made a mistake! I must stop trying because I must be very stupid!" No, we try – maybe again and again and we learn to do a very important thing – WE LEARN HOW TO LEARN FROM OUR MISTAKES.

This is a big problem teaching in Bangladesh. In your culture, you tend to feel shame very quickly. In Haluaghat, where I was teaching before, I used to mark a piece of work for a form and give it back and say, "Now we shall look at your mistakes!" and look up and all the papers had disappeared! The red pen had made marks on the papers so the students felt they had been very bad. And I would say, "Get out the papers! Look at your mistakes! There is no shame in making mistakes. You should only be ashamed if you make the SAME mistake again and again. So that you do not do that, you must look at your mistakes and understand your mistakes and do your corrections." We all have to LEARN FROM OUR MISTAKES and we should all help each other to learn from our mistakes.

So please remember, you must never be rude and teasing to someone who makes mistakes. Let us help one another so that we understand our mistakes and can always learn from them so that we make progress and do more and more things well.

God bless you.



LEARNING TO DO WITHOUT TEACHERS!

Assembly 5 January 9th 2003

(Show L-plates)

There is just one more thing that I want to say about LEARNING. We all learn in different ways and at different speeds. Our brains are like computers but each one is wired differently. Some people can learn very easily through spoken words. Some need pictures and drama, some need music and some need practical examples. Just because someone learns in a different way from you, does not mean that he or she is stupid. So you must respect each other's methods of learning. In teacher training today, teachers are encouraged to use different methods to explain different things so that all the different sorts of brains inside the heads of the different pupils in the class can make the right connections.

In some Bangladeshi schools, pupils do not feel free to inform the teachers that they have not understood something. This is very strange for we should all try and help one another in the learning game. Teachers can learn from one another and pupils can learn from one another. Sometimes, a teacher has to accept that a pupil who is having difficulties may find another pupil who understands the subject more helpful than the teacher! So we are all both teachers and learners. As soon as we know something, we can teach someone else. I am sure that some of you are teaching your