

# The Swaminarayan

Education is that which liberates

**Dear Parents, Guardians, Pupils and Friends,**

## **Theme for next week**

The theme for next week is “**Love Yourself.**” I have written about it at the back of the newsletter.

## **Mathematics Department – Mr Stewart-Brown writes:**

This morning from 11.00am to 12noon, all S3, S4 and S5s sat the Intermediate Maths Challenge in the Yogi Hall.

All students prepared for the Challenge by using the online resources and booklet which was provided. The resources have proved effective in improving students’ performance and enjoyment in the Challenge.

## **Brent Youth Parliament - Mr. Pinto writes:**

Since we have been an active school within the Brent Youth Parliament over a number of years it is very pleasing to see the tradition continued with our current representatives taking a very active role.

## **Simran Bodh Senior 3 writes about a recent event:**

### **Holocaust Memorial and Genocide Memorial evening by Simran Bodh**

I spent quite a lot of time at Brent Civic Centre last week. 3 visits in total as I was lucky enough to be chosen as one of the six BYP members to play a key part in presenting the Holocaust Memorial and Genocide Memorial evening at Brent Civic Centre on 24 January this year.

Our rehearsal day the week before was long and intense but proved to be a great bonding experience between myself and the other BYP members. The teamwork aspect of putting together this event was an invaluable learning curve. It was so pleasing to see that despite all my fellow BYP members being from schools very different to ours, of different races, colours and religions that the camaraderie between us was strong.

It made me realise how passionate and committed I am to my role and how much I want to succeed and put my skills to use. Our rehearsal co-ordinator started off by hearing us individually reading out a poem we had never seen before. I was chosen to perform a touching and emotional poem called ‘Terezin’. A very harrowing poem about the Terezin Nazi concentration camp.

Finally, our audience and guest speakers began to file in at 7pm and were welcomed by the Chief Executive of Brent Council, Carolyn Downs and the evening was opened by the Mayor of Brent, Arshad Mahmood. Some guests whose names you may have heard of were Dawn Butler, Shadow Women & Equalities Secretary and Councillor Muhammed Bhutt. The evening then got underway. The world knows that The Holocaust was a terrible event for the Jews but nothing could have prepared me for the atrocities I learnt about the Holocaust that evening.

Ilana Metzger was one of the guest speakers whose Father (96 years old) luckily survived the Holocaust after being starved, tortured and torn away from his family who were murdered at the Gas Chamber. The original video footage really brought home how bad things were. There were many silent tears flowing in the audience.

This harrowing account was then followed by the lighting of six candles in memoriam of the Jews who were killed. I felt very honoured and humbled to be lighting a candle in their memory. The lighter played up, on cue, but after several attempts I finally managed to light up the candle, which was met with a few cheers and laughter.

The evening was concluded by myself reading the poem 'Terezin' I mentioned. I am so grateful to the The Swaminarayan School and all who voted me in to the role of Brent Youth Parliament.

## Writer's Corner BOOKS VS. MOVIES – by Manan Besherdas

"The book is a film that takes place in the mind of the reader" – Paulo Coelho. I couldn't agree more. I love books but I also love movies. Hence why this debate is as heart wrenching as choosing between my phone and my parents! It's just so hard..... I can just imagine book sceptics moaning, "Books are boring!" But if I can keep an open mind to movies, they can surely keep an open mind to books. Now why is it that so many teenagers feel positively nauseous at thought of being faced with words, words and more words? Only 35% of 10-year-olds in England report that they like reading 'very much'. Whilst the percentage of countries like Russia, Ireland, New Zealand, and Australia is almost ten percent higher. Can you imagine how much that figure will drop by the age of 15?

So let's explore what is so attractive about movies apart from the fact that you don't really have to use your imagination – the enjoyment comes as a pre-packaged meal that you digest as easily as your microwaved popcorn. Let's explore whether movies really have outclassed the literary giants such as Jane Austen and Charles Dickens or whether teenagers are quite simply, not interested.

Firstly, let's focus on imagination and visual effects. Hollywood is really quite skilled when it comes to special effects especially their animations, which are getting so realistic. There were moments when watching *Toy Story*, that one could have been forgiven for believing that Buzz Lightyear was actually a real man until logic kicked in. But have they really caught up to that other special effects factory – your brain? It's fair to say that everything you see on a screen is something that someone pictured in their head first. A book opens up a world inside of your head, where there are no limits – like effect budgets, or computer loading time. You can just feel free to imagine and never stop. Oh, you want 3D? Try a pop-up book. One of my most favourite examples of fiction opening up a new world is when Hogwarts was first introduced to the world, in Harry Potter. "Everyone in?" shouted Hagrid, who had a boat to himself, "Right then, FORWARD!" And the fleet of little boats moved off all at once, gliding across the lake, which was as smooth as glass. Everyone was silent, staring up at the great castle overhead. It towered over them as they sailed nearer and nearer to the cliff on which it stood.' Everything in movie originates from books therefore I think it's safe to say – one point to books.

Secondly, the hours of entertainment gained from books is much longer than that of movies. You can only watch a movie for the first time once – and it only lasts for one to two hours. Unless it's Bollywood, then it'll be three to four! With books, the pleasure can last for days, or even weeks! Sometimes when you read a book again, you feel as though it you are reading it for the first time or you noticed detail that you missed the first time. It never gets old. Two nil to books.

Music. Now many movies have brought us the most memorable music that we've ever known. Musicals are movies that trick the audience into getting more involved, more invested in a story than they intended. The audience has the misconception that they are to just sit back and be entertained but then all of a sudden they find themselves humming along to the ridiculous tune of Hakuna matata, sung by Timon and Pumbaa, the dynamic duo appearing to give grief counselling to the lost and vulnerable Simba. Carried away by the absurdity of it all, the audience finds themselves humming or perhaps even singing along, enchanted by the dulcet tones of a meerkat and a warthog. Or maybe you find yourself bewitched into thinking that life will be just supercalifragilisticexpialidocious if Mary Poppins could just give us a spoonful of sugar to make our medicine go down. Once the musical is over, we find ourselves feeling somewhat melancholy as that momentary escape from reality comes to an end. So I would say, one well-deserved point to movies.

Another point to make here is about sharing moments with your friends and family. Unlike books, you can enjoy watching movies together. Laughing together. Crying together. Screaming together.

You can experience such moments of emotion with those whom you are watching the movie with. So, that makes everything tied up.

What is the deciding factor? Drama. With books, many authors help you to depict the action in your mind. And so do many movies. However, lots of movies that I have watch can be overdramatised! For example, in many Bollywood movies and TV programmes just if something as little as little and petty as someone dropping a plate happens, all the actors cry out as if they are in a Greek tragedy and someone has died. Cue tense, dramatic music. Cue black and white screen and extreme close-ups.

“What are you doing?” Cue weeping and wailing. However Bollywood movies aren’t the only culprits guilty of doing this. In many Hollywood films you tend to find over-dramatised scenes, too. Perhaps the main actor is just walking down the street: you’ll see the actor, looking mysterious, as they stare into the distance; their hair blowing in the wind. The final touch is ACDC’s track, ‘Highway to Hell’ dramatically blaring loudly in the background. Is this entertainment or just pure sensationalism? Point. Books.

Overall, perhaps books have won the debate, three points to two. So why then don’t other 15 year olds see what I see? I’m no different to them, I think. Or maybe the ‘nerd factor’ that comes into play. Maybe some teenagers blossom into bookworms whereas others quickly develop incurable allergies to reading. If only we could find a cure....

## **Love Yourself**

### **Think**

Whenever I speak about love in front of students I have always heard a ripple of mirth pass through the class. However, love is one emotion that everyone wants to feel. The love of family, friends, a boy or a girl; it is all about loving others.

### **Feel**

Yet the most important person to love is yourself. If you do not love yourself, who will? I know sometimes you will feel that you don’t deserve to be loved, but don’t be too hard on yourself because you are young, and you are still learning and finding out about the world. It is all right to make mistakes, as long as you learn from them. You may make several mistakes before you learn, but that is fine too because there is no greater teacher than experience. Love yourself and you will learn to love others, hurt yourself and you will learn to hurt others.

### **Do**

Love is a beautiful emotion, all good things come from love. Everything you will ever want and need in your life comes from love, but you must first love yourself because when you love yourself everything you do will be done to be good to yourself. This is not in a selfish way but in a way that makes you grow as a person; you will see that everyone else loves too, and you will feel happier inside. This will show on your face as you will smile and laugh more. You will have seen what happens to people who have happy personalities; everyone wants to be with them, be around them and be their friend. The whole world will love you if you learn to love yourself.

**Yours sincerely,**

**Nilesh Manani**