

## NAKA National Essay Competition for Sunday School Students 2007

**[A wise youth accepts his father's rebuke; a young mocker doesn't. The good man wins his case by careful argument; the evil-minded only wants to fight. Self-control means controlling the tongue! A quick retort can ruin everything.] - Proverbs 13:1-3**

The importance of religion is huge within every society throughout the world. Cultures and religions stress their rules and regulations in order to seek righteousness and order. Christianity exemplifies true religion as it is written down in history unlike any other religion. Thus for Christians like us, belief in Jesus Christ and that God is our Father is a binding agreement and relationship that sets us apart from other people. As Knanaya Christians, we possess a greater relationship with the Lord. Our ancestors were zealous for the Lord. The name "Knanaya itself originates from the Hebrew term "Kanai" which means "jealous ones for God." In the same manner, we should exhibit this religious fervor and enthusiasm. King Solomon wrote about the ideas of respecting one's parents and controlling the way one lives through his speech in Proverbs 13:1-3. It was written some 3,000 years ago and still pertains to the future of today's community as they strive to become good leaders and great Christians. If we follow these teachings, we can revive the Knanaya heritage and bring unity among us all.

To understand the essence of these verses, one must reflect upon the lives of King David and his son, Solomon. King David was loyal to the Lord but failed to receive the privilege of building the Temple of Jerusalem because of the sins he had committed. God had instructed David that his son, Solomon, would construct the Temple. When Solomon matured, he became the King of Israel. Solomon was allowed to ask the Lord for anything he possibly wanted. Instead of the riches of the world, Solomon asked for wisdom: the ability to discern right from wrong. These privileges were due to devout obedience and faith in the Lord.

From an early age, children obtain these virtues as they are instructed by their parents. Basic knowledge starts from the home. Violent acts conducted by children reflect upon the responsibilities of parents to discipline their children. Thus, it is important for children to obey their parents. Even adults are required to obey higher authority. The members of a church are subject to obey their priests, who are commanded to heed the words of other higher authorities. Therefore, it is essential that children are taught right from wrong in their initial stages. It will serve as the stepping stones to righteousness in a child's life.

A great analogy can be used to describe the unity Christians should possess as the children of God. Just as a rose is identified by its petals, a family is identified by its members. Every petal represents the beauty of a rose. In the same manner, each family member constitutes the unity of a family. Members of a family possess mutual relationships and responsibilities in which parents are required to discipline their children and children are required to heed their parents' words. When children accomplish great tasks and follow their parents' teachings, they bring a sense of pride and affection in their parents. For it states in Proverbs 10, "A wise child brings joy to a father; a foolish child brings grief to a mother."

When children fail to abide by their parents' words, they find themselves in dire situations. The youth of this present age indulge themselves in worldly pleasures such as academics, peer pressure, unhealthy relationships, television, and the Internet. As these children mature and become teenagers, they forget the Lord and follow the culture of modern society. If children are taught from childhood with these instructions and godly teachings, they will never forget the meaning of righteousness. Proverbs 1:7 states, "Respect and obey the Lord. This is the

beginning of knowledge.” When one feels the presence of God in his or her life, he or she is able to please parents and the Lord, Himself. Solomon once wrote in Proverbs 3:13, “Happy is the man who finds wisdom and gets understanding.” In our case, happy is the man who finds Jesus in his heart.

Throughout the Bible, one can find examples of people who have fallen due to their disobedience. This included Adam and Eve, a classic example. Adam had been loyal to the Lord until Satan came and tempted them both to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Even David, Samuel, and Eli failed to discipline their children. Abraham was unlike any other individual. His faith for the Lord is unparalleled in the Bible. In fact, he was known as the “Father of Believers.” Despite all this, Jesus was the ultimate example of obedience. He offered his life for the sins of humanity and obeyed the will of his Father.

Obedience is just one virtue we must possess as Christians. The way we speak is also an important aspect of our lives. Teenagers today speak profanity as it is encouraged in their academic environments as well as in society. They fail to understand that words are like seeds that are planted in the soil of one’s heart. Thus, they also fail to recognize the work done by their parents to provide for them. That is why it is so essential for children to attend Sunday School in order to instill the teachings of obedience and righteousness in their minds. If parents take the initiative to do so, they will benefit from this experience. By attending church on Sundays, children will be exposed to the divine Eucharist and will understand the sacrifice that Jesus laid down for all humans to save them from the jaws of death.

In today’s society, teenagers are persuaded by the cultures around them. Their assimilation to the American culture exposes them to the realities of life that are tempting. In order to face these obstacles and temptations, teenagers including the Knanaya youth are encouraged to heed their parents’ words. Consequently, they will receive rewards from the Lord Almighty. Teaching teenagers about the migration of 72 families in AD 345 will instill Knanaya pride. These families were reminded never to forget the teachings of their father, the patriarch of Antioch. In the same manner, the Knanaya youth should be instructed in the right path. The road to the kingdom of God is narrow; only a few will enter it. If Knanaya Christian youth heed these words and make efforts to prevent usage of profanity, the Knanaya community will grow. The future of this community relies on the unity and acts of the Knanaya youth. It is upon them to revive the zealotry for the Lord and preserve the traditions of the Knanaya community.

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