

5. Eyelids and the pupil

I AM pleased prizes were awarded today to the students who manifested enthusiasm in social service, in reverential humility in the observance of disciplinary rules, and in scholastic attainments. Ability to win such prizes is a good foundation for a useful and efficient career later on. Education is not the acquisition of burdensome information regarding objects and men. It is the awareness of the immortal spirit within, which is the spring of joy, peace and courage. Here, you study the *Vedhas*, the *Shaasthras* and *Puraanas*: in consonance with the teachings contained in them, you are also given instructions in *yoga* (control over senses) and *dhyaana* (meditation). Growing in this atmosphere in Prashaanthi Nilayam, learning those basic subjects that train you for a good and simple life---is a great piece of good fortune for you. Really, your parents too are fortunate. There are about five or six children in each family in this country. Among those millions of children, these few alone have secured this gift of Grace. That is something on which you can be congratulated.

Life has to be spent in accumulating virtue and safeguarding virtue, not riches. Listen and ruminate over the stories of the great moral heroes of the past, so that their ideals may be imprinted on your hearts. Virtue is becoming rare, nowadays, in the individual and in the family, society and community, in all fields of life, economic, political and even 'spiritual.' So also, there is a decline in discipline, which is the soil on which virtue grows.

Becoming rich is but a vulgar achievement

Unless each one is respected, whatever his status, his economic condition, his spiritual development, there can be no peace and no happiness in life. This respect can be aroused only by the conviction that the same *Aathma* (Self Reality) that is in you is playing the role of the other person. See that *Aathma* in others; feel that they too have hunger, thirst, yearning and desires as you have; develop sympathy and the anxiety to serve and be useful.

Into this Prashaanthi Nilayam, persons come from all parts of the world, of all stages of development, with all types of problems, afflicted with all forms of pain or grief, inspired with all varieties of promptings. As students of the *paathashaala* (educational institution), you must be shining examples of humility and reverence before them. You must by your behaviour bring good name to the parents, who pray that their children must live without distress or dishonour. Becoming rich is but a vulgar achievement; black marketeers and housebreakers also achieve it. Living without suffering or making others suffer---that is grander and nobler. You must make your *kaayam* (body), *kaalam* (time) and *kaanksha* (wishes) instruments for uplift, not downfall.

You have in the coming days, to go forth into comers of this land and awaken spiritual hunger among the people and provide the wherewithal by which it can be appeased. The atmosphere in which you are prosecuting your studies is very congenial for the training necessary for this role. You have as preceptors, *Pandiths* (scholars) who have renounced hearth and home and who are happy with the service they are privileged to render. You have teachers from America and North India, imbued with faith and devotion. They look upon you as their own children, as entrusted to their care by Me---and so they nurture you, as the eyelids nurture the pupil! Be grateful to them; you owe a great debt to them, the debt of children to the mother.

Be a light, radiating virtue and self-control

You have the valuable opportunity to listen to My discourses and directions. They have been printed upon your hearts; your talk is about them; your conversation is centered on Me, My words. My *ledas* (divine acts), My *mahimas* (glories). When you go to your villages, you share the sweetness of this experience with the young companions you have left there.

My advice is: Apply this adoration in life. Show your companions here and in your villages how disciplined you are, how sincerely you obey your parents, how deeply you revere your teachers. Be a light, a lamp, radiating virtue and self-control in the village. Do not slide back into indiscipline, bad manners, irresponsibility and evil habits. Behave in your village, or wherever you are, as commendably as here.

Rise from bed, there too, in the *Bhrahma-muhurtham* (the auspicious period, dedicated to *Brahman* meditation, (from 4.30 to 5.15 a.m.), recite the *Pranava* (Aum), even if you have no group around you, repeat the *Suprabhaatham* (awakening hymn), sit for some time immersed in *dhyana* (meditation), go through the *yoga* exercises, the *Suuryanamaskaars* (obeisance to Sun God); sing *bhajans* (devotional songs) when the hour reminds you that *bahajan* has started at Prashaanthi Nilayam. Then, you will be carrying the sacred atmosphere of the Prashaanthi Nilayam with you; your parents will be elated; the elders will learn from you the discipline which confers concord and courage.

Do not complain against food; whatever the parents give, eat with pleasure. Do not protest against any errand that they may assign you. Run gladly, to fulfil it. When they want you to nurse them, nurse happily, intelligently, glad that you got the chance. So live here and everywhere, now and always, that I who see you and know all thoughts, words and deeds, can pour My Grace on you, more and more.

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Make your home the seat of virtue, of morality, of love. Control anger and greed. That is the sign of the genuine bhaktha, not unrestricted speech and movements. You may claim to be a devotee and declare yourself as such, when you speak; but unless your egoism has gone and you love all equally, the Lord will not acknowledge your devotion!

Shri Sathya Sai