

9. The tell-tale tongue

You are all at school; you are reading books, attending classes, and you all say, "We are students." Because, you are studying; studying many subjects. This study will help you to do some work or get into some job, when you grow old enough. You learn the ways of health, you play and do exercises to build your bodies firm and fast. This is very good; you must learn these things well. But, there are some other things, too, which you must learn to do, learn to do well. I shall tell you of those things today.

You must speak soft and sweet words to every one. Do you like the voice of the crow? No. You drive the crow away when it starts to caw, its speech is harsh, it is too loud for your ears. You must have heard the kokil, the cuckoo, haven't you? That bird looks very much like the crow-, it grows in the nest of the crow, with the baby crows; it is fed by the mother crow, along with her own kids. But, no one will throw a stone at a *Koel*. Every one likes to hear its sweet voice. Speak soft and sweet; then, every one will like you.

The eye sees; the ear hears; the nose smells; the skin tells you if a thing is hard or smooth. The tongue tastes. These five are called *Indhriyas* (senses). Each of these five does one job, and is fit to do only that one job. The eye cannot hear or smell or taste; the ear cannot see or smell or taste or tell you if a thing is smooth or hard to the touch.

Two big jobs God has given to the tongue

This is not true of the tongue, for it can do two jobs, and not one. And both the jobs that God has given to the tongue are big jobs. Just think for some time about the first job---tasting! If a thing tastes bad, you do not like to eat it. Of course, if you are ill, you have to take the drug, even though the tongue says that it tastes bad. So, you should not spit out all things that tastes bitter. Some of those things help to cure your illness quickly and well. Remember another fact also; if a thing tastes nice, it may not be good for your health. The tongue tells you that a thing tastes bitter or sweet, or saltish. It cannot tell you whether a thing is good for you or bad. So, you must care not to eat too much and spoil your health. When the body is ill, the mind too becomes weak, and the brain cannot work properly.

Now, about the second job that the tongue is given---speech. It is a tool that you can use in order to give vent to your thoughts, your ideas, your feelings, your desires, your prayers, your joys, your sorrows. If you are angry, you use it to speak out harsh words very loudly. If you are pleased, you use it to speak soft words in a low pleasant voice. I want you to use your tongue only for your good and the good of others. If you speak harshly to another, he too talks loud and harsh; angry words cause more angry words. But, if you use soft and sweet words when another is angry towards you, he will calm down, he will be sorry that he used his tongue in that way. Do not shout, do not talk longer than necessary, do not talk when there is no need to talk; when you speak to some one or some group of friends, raise your voice to the pitch that is just right for the listener or listeners and not more. Why should you waste your energy to talk louder and longer than necessary?

Use the tongue for your good and good of others

Never use foul words against another. Such words should not rise from your tongue, nor should they enter the ear of the others. Remember that there is God inside your heart, as well as in the hearts of all rest. He hears and sees all things. Do you not say, "My head, my hands, my eye, my

mind, my idea." Now, who is this I, that owns the body, the mind, the brain? That I is the spark of God that is in you. That spark is in every one. So, when you use harsh, cruel, angry, foul words against another, the God in you and the God in the other person is hurt. The tongue is a tool, as I said. You can harm yourself and harm others with it. So, be very careful; use it only for your good and for the good of others. If you use it for talking kind words, for repeating the Name of God or singing His Glory, or praying to Him---then, it is put to the best use.

I shall tell you something more about the tongue. You can learn much by watching the tongue. It stays in its own home and seldom comes out of its doorstep. It keeps quietly indoors; it knows its limits; it has no desire to wander or roam about. This is a lesson you should learn from it. Make yourself busy and useful at home; help your parents and brothers and sisters; do not run out into the street and move place to place, without aim or purpose. Do not rush into the homes of others and disturb them. The tongue never goes into another mouth; it remains inside its own home. It is not proper to leave one's home and waste time, standing or sitting idly, gazing at all those who pass by. You must earn a good name, at home and at school, by your strict mode of life.

Watch around you to avoid accidents

Do you know of another lesson that the tongue is trying to teach you? Watch your tongue when you are reading aloud or talking to some one. It moves quickly from one side to another, it moves forward and back, in order that the breath can come out as different sounds. And, when you are eating your lunch or dinner, the tongue has to move about pretty quickly. Have you noticed that during all this time, the tongue has to be very careful not to come between the teeth? There are 32 of them, all around the tiny home, with sharp edges like swords, which may cut into the soft thick tongue and wound it, causing it to bleed. Yet, see how skilfully, how cleverly, the tongue moves inside the mouth, escaping the 16 pairs of merciless soldiers that are looking out to wound it! You must also watch all round you, so as to avoid dangers and accidents. Do not fall into bad company, do not be led into bad habits, do not bring a bad name to your parents or your school.

We can learn another lesson, too, from the tongue. The tongue has no greed; it does not keep anything for itself. It does not store anything secretly, away from others' hand, so that it can have it all for itself. If a thing is good, the tongue sends it down the throat, to the stomach; if a thing is bad, bitter, or rotten, it sends it out, beyond the lips, as vomit! It has no urge to have anything for itself. It serves others; it puts its own needs last. It does not even keep a trace of the things that pass over it, on the way out or in. It may be oil or ghee, cream or jam; the tongue is as clean as before. It has no likes or dislikes; you must also give up greediness. Do not get too fond of any one or any thing. Do all your duties well; give full joy to your parents and teachers. Help all as much as you can. But, learn also to keep quiet for some time every day, and be calm when some thing happens in the way you do not like.

God will yield to your prayers and get bound

Some of you may know how elephants are caught and tamed. In the forests, the elephant is a wild beast, moving in herds and charging any one who dare go near. It is trapped, roped, and tied to a strong post, so that it cannot run away; it is made so tame that it stands on a small round three-legged stool, in the circus tent, or drags huge logs of timber, at the bidding of the mahout! When the elephant is tied to the post, all its strength and skill becomes yours, for you can use them for your own need. The tongue is a post; Bhajan of the Name of is the rope; with that rope, you can bring God Almighty near you and tie Him up, so that His Grace becomes yours. God is

so kind that He will yield to your prayers and get bound. You have only to call on Him, to be by your side, with you, leading you and guiding you.

Every one likes to keep what he has got; he feels hurt when some one takes it away from him, by force, or by cheating him. This is called theft. If your book or pen is stolen by another boy or girl, you will be very sad, isn't it? Do not make another boy or girl sad, by stealing her or his book or pen. Do unto others only as you would like them to do unto you. There is a song used in *Bhajans--Badaa chiththa chor--where* God is said to be a "big thief, who steals the hearts of persons!" The whole world is God's. All of you belong to Him, though you may not know it. Therefore, He can take anything from any one. He is the Master of the ether, wind, fire, water and earth; He can change the sky into the earth and the earth into the sky. So, He can take hold of the hearts of people and fill them with Love.

Once people know how great is the Love that gives, they will not desire any thing else. That is why He is called *Chiththa Chor* (Heart-thief). When you sing that song, you must pray, "O God! Enter My Heart also, fill it with Love, so that I may love all your children, in all lands." Never take hold of what others own. Do not talk ill of others. Do not talk about others but, if you must, talk only of the good in them. All are good; if you see bad in them, it is because there is bad in you. If you do not like some one, do not mix with him; keep away. But, do not try to blacken his name, and relate stories about him to others. Anger is harmful; it makes you do things blindly. You will have to repent much for whatever you do in anger; when your anger cools down, you see things clearer and then, it is too late to correct the wrong you have done!

Anger makes you do things blindly

You must read good books. Then only you claim to be good students. But, good books are now becoming rare. Cheap books and magazines give stories of bad life, dealing with crooks and cruel men, cheats and dacoits. Keep away from such books; they will dirty the mind, and fill it with anger and hate, and mischief. Read the sacred books of your religion and of other religions. Read the *Mahaabhaaratha*, the *Raamaayana*, the *Bhaagavatha*, the Bible, the Quran and other sacred books. In some families reading of such books is done daily; so, the children know something about the sages, saints and Divine persons of the past. Such reading is not done in most families; even the elders do not know what the books have in their pages! How then can the children know?

When you ask a boy about Raama or Krishna, he answers, "O, he is a boy studying in the same class as mine." He does not know that Krishna was God come as man, to help all men to reach Him! He does not know that Krishna taught Arjuna the Way to God, and that the teaching is found in the book of verses called *Geetha*. He does not know that Raama was a great King, who lived as an example to every one, for ever. He was also God come down as man, to show man the Path to God. There are many paths to God, as there are many roads to a city or as there are many tracks up a Himaalayan peak, by which sherpas can climb to the top.

Try your best to make your parents happy

You will find at home pictures of Go, kept in a special place for worship. In every home, however, there are living Gods, whom the sages ask you to serve and worship. They are your parents. They gave you life; you owe your health and happiness to them. They love you, they serve you, they give you as much as they can, and even more. Yes; they often take less food, so

that you can have your fill. They try to save money through various means, so that you can be at school, or live in a hostel, or attend a festival or go on a school tour.

The sacred books want you to honour them and worship them. "*Maathru dhevo bhava.*" "*Pithru dhevo bhava*",--"*Let your mother be your God;*" "*Let your father be your God*"---that is the teaching. Yes; how else can you thank them? What else can you give, in return, than your Love and Service? Think of all the care, all the love, all the pain, all the hunger and sleeplessness they underwent and undergo for your sake. Be kind, be soft and sweet to them. Do not be rude and disrespectful. Try your best to make them happy; obey them, for they know much more than you do of the world and its dangers. That is the way to worship them.

The sages also say, "*Aachaarya dhevo bhava*"---"*Let your teacher be your God.*" For, it is the teacher who opens the inner eye and makes you aware of the wonder and beauty of the world around you. He tells you of the truth of stars and sky, he teaches you how to be healthy and happy, useful and peaceful. The father and the mother brought you here and helped you to grow and gave you into the hands of the teacher. The teacher makes you bright and cheerful, skilled and serviceable to all. So, honour him, obey him and treat him with a much respect as you give to your parents.

In the book, *Mahaabhaaratha*, you read of a great battle that took place between cousins: the Kauravas and the Paandavas. Right was on the side of the Paandavas; they were fighting for truth and justice. So, God was on their side, helping them to win. The eldest of the Paandavas was the Prince called Dharmaraaja. His grandfather Bheeshma and his dear teacher, Dhrona, had chosen the Kaurava side and were getting ready to fight against him and his four brothers.

When the battle began, Dharmaraaja remembered the rule "*Pithru dhevo bhava*,"---"*Let your father be your God,*" and "*Aachaarya dhevo bhava*"---"*Let your teacher be your God.*" So, he walked up to the camp of the enemies, and reached the tents of Bheeshma and Dhrona, who were bent on defeating him! He fell at the feet of the grandfather and the teacher and prayed that they should wish him well. At this, they became soft and sweet to him; their hearts were filled with kindness; they said, "Son you have done only right and proper things, is on your side; you will win. We have to be on this side, as in duty bound. But, we bless you that you may defeat your enemies and get back your kingdom." See how Dharmaraaja got the blessing of his grandfather and teacher, by observing the *Dharma* laid down by the sages!

Have faith in God and in your own strength

You are members of Sathya Sai Baala Vihaar. You must shine as fine examples to other boys and girls. When you are at home and when some friends of your father come in, you must rise from your seat, talk politely and clearly, receive them gladly, and be nice towards them. When you have to talk over the phone, don't shout rudely, "Hello, Hello," to every one. Elders must not be addressed so lightly. Hello! Hello! is not polite; it is used only among chums. I would like you to say, *Ore*. Then, even your parents and elders will learn to say, *Ore*, from you. You must use some word that is specially Indian. Now, you learn only the ways of other lands and other people. At school, the first lesson is: "Baa baa black sheep, Have you any wool?" and the second, "Ding dong bell, Pussy is in the well."

Gone are the days when the first lesson was on Raama, Krishna or some great sage or saint. Getting to know about black sheep will make children black sheep; getting to know about the great and the good will make children great and good. Children of the Baala Vihaar are therefore

told stories of Raama, Krishna and other Divine persons. Learn those tales and decide to live like them. Learn Indian ways, Indian tales, and be true Indians. That is easy for you, and quite necessary. For example, why say, "Good

Morning" or "Good Night." *Namaskaar* or *Namasthe* is the Indian way, the really humble way. You must have *Bhaya*, *Vinaya* and *Vishwaasa*---*fear*, humility and faith. Fear of what? Fear of doing wrong, of falling into falsehood. Humility before whom? Before elders, teachers, parents. Faith in what? Faith in God, in your own strength, in your own victory.

I want each one of you to grow into strong, steady, straight persons. Your eyes should not seek evil sights; your ears should not seek evil tales; your tongue should not seek evil speech; your hands should not seek evil acts; your minds should not seek evil thoughts. Be pure, be full of love. Help those who are in worse condition, serve those who need your help. Then, you shall be worthy members of the Sathya Sai Baala Vihaar.

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Keep all personal animosity away from your conduct. Feel that you are kith and kin of each other belonging to the same family bound together by love and co-operation. Live amicably, live joyfully, undisturbed by faction and hatred; for, some day or other, you have to give up all that you hope to gain through these factions and these hatreds.

Sathya Sai Baaba