

23. What is Vidhya?

STUDENTS ! Remember that it is only with the result of the merit which was accumulated by you during many lives that you have been able to join these Sathya Sai Loka Seva Educational Institutions. What does the word student mean? It means a person dedicated to study. He is called *Vidhyarthi* because he seeks *Vidhya* (knowledge). What does *vidhya* mean? *Vid* means Light and *ya* means that which gives light. Of course our eyes give us light because they are blessed by the Sun. They make things in nature clearer and clearer. Thus we have five senses which collect information about nature and place them at the disposal of the mind. The mind has got a master namely the intellect which discriminates between the good and the evil and encourages you to accept the good and reject the evil. But as the basis of the *buddhi* (intellect) there is the *Aathma* (soul) which gives you the experience of the *Aanandha* (Total Bliss), whenever you are aware of truth, goodness or beauty.

Beauty is not to be mistaken for physical charm which is temporary. *Vidhya* means proceeding from darkness to light, that is to say, from ignorance of the *Aathma* (Divine Self) to the awareness of the *Aathma*. People do not seek the *jyothi* (light) that can lead them from *thamas* (inertia) into wisdom. The reason is they have no steadiness in their *saadhana* (spiritual effort). They pay more attention to material pleasure and the earning of money by any means to have what they hope will give happiness in the future. Steady effort in these directions is simply running after a mirage. All efforts must be directed towards the realisation of the truth, goodness and beauty which are latent in us as the *Aathma*.

Anger is the worst exhibition of the ego.

Now you are not able to understand the *Aathma* because your effort is not sincere and steady. You feel that there are more valuable things which can be got from the outside world by fair means or foul. But pure and lasting bliss which will not cause harm to anyone can be got only from the inner search.

When you run after temporary pleasure any disappointment or obstacle will produce anger and hatred. The angry man is blind and temporarily mad. The saint Dhurvaasa who is the personification of anger is called so because he was full of *dhur* (bad) *vaasanas* (tendencies). Anger is the worst exhibition of the ego.

In order to realize the *Aathma* you must have faith in your success and in the fact that the *aathma* exists and that it can be brought into consciousness all the time. Faith is essential for success in any undertaking. However little, you can progress in education only if you have faith in your abilities. Of course, the material education you are trying to get is necessary for material ends but it cannot give *Shaanthi* and *Aanandha*. When success comes your way, you become proud and uncontrollable; when defeat encounters you, you become dejected and desperate. It is only spiritual education that can tell you that both success and defeat are inevitable in life and both must be faced with an equal mind.

Spiritual education leads to detachment

Material education leads to desires and attachments. Spiritual education leads to peace and detachment. Material education develops the ego. Spiritual education surrenders the ego at the feet of the Lord. The Yaadhavas had an egoistic attachment to Krishna. They thought of him as a kinsman belonging to them specially; as a result they had to end their days before the passing

away of Krishna fighting among themselves. But the *gopees* (cowherd girls) had surrendered their ego and merged their individuality. So their *Aanandha* was not disturbed. Here in the Lokaseva schools you are introduced to this essential spiritual education as tender plants. You help to cultivate duty, discipline and devotion and grow into straight and steady promoters of the spiritual culture of India.

The new born child asks the question "*Koham*" (Who am I?) That is the meaning of its first cry. Of what avail is human life if the answer to this question is not discovered by man? Of what avail is an electric bulb which has no current to illuminate? Man should not live like dogs and jackals. He must realise he has God in him in the form of *prema* (love) which draws him to every living thing. Then he will get the answer to the question with which he was born: "I am love, I am God." You must all be disciplined and devoted. Duty is God. So attend your classes and learn your lessons and be true *Vidhyarthi*s, seeking *vidhya* (light). Have prayers to the Lord morning and evening. You have all taken great trouble to clean with extra love every square inch of this huge campus. I know how much time and energy you spent for this and I am sorry I cannot now stay longer with you. I wish I could come once again very soon and spend more time with you.

Bhagavaan's Discourse to students at Alike, April 1979

During the saguna (quality-oriented) worship, the basic nirguna (quality-less) aspect of God has to be sustaining the mind; no description can exhaust the Glory, no word can approximate the Majesty. During the nirguna meditation, the faith that God does not diminish His Glory of Majesty by being with Form, Attributes and Name must be the sustaining force. The final step, however, must be the right foot, considered auspicious, the nirguna step.

Sri Sathya Sai