

12. A happy human community

This country's youth are makers of tomorrow's India. The fortunes of India, good or bad, are dependent on them. On their skill, on their character, on their eagerness to learn and to serve, are based the progress of India. They can also bring about, by their conduct and character, the disintegration, the decline or the debilitation of its culture and fame. The poverty and misery that the country suffers from at the present time are the consequence of our youth ignoring their duty. India, which was for centuries the ideal land for many peoples following many faiths is today struggling to provide a mouthful of food for her children! How has this tragedy come about?

The reason is the attitudes, the desires and the acts of the youth have become unholy, impure and polluted by selfish and greedy motives. They are not seeking the education that can implant and develop qualities befitting mankind such as tolerance, humility, and the spirit of sacrifice. How are thieves able to steal flowers and fruits from a garden? Because it is not fenced in; there are no watchmen. In the Brindaavan of the heart of youth, fresh, fragrant and green, holy emotions, impulses, feelings and desires bloom and fructify, but before they ripen into goals which are pursued with determination into projects and programmes implemented in daily life, thieves like evil habits and vices invade the hearts and overwhelm the youth. Therefore, the first requisite is to erect the fence of discipline and to foster the practice of virtues in the Brindaavan of each heart.

Whatever has a form and name, definite and distinct, has also a cause, a creator, a maker. Every deed involves a doer. But there are among men both optimists and pessimists, the hopefuls and the depressed. The optimists keep their eyes always on higher values; the pessimists slide down into dispiritedness and despair. During nights the optimists look up at the starlight; the pessimists look down and grumble at the darkness around them. The optimists draw confidence and courage from the twinkling of a myriad lights on high. The optimists have eyes only for the flower on the rose plant. The pessimists see only the thorns underneath the flower. So fear of thorns results in rough handling and the petals of the lovely rose fall off.

Faith is essential for human progress

Seeing a glass half filled with water, the optimist is glad that it is half full, while the pessimist is sad that it is half empty. Though both statements are correct, the optimist hopes to fill the other half too, while the pessimist gives up in despair. The one has faith; the other has no faith to sustain him. So, we must develop faith by steady effort.

Faith must lead to effort. Faith is essential for human progress in every field. Knowledge, and through knowledge, wisdom can be earned only by means of faith and effort. Equipped with these, man can venture into the heights and emerge victoriously. Of course, one has to be warned against cultivating too much faith in things that are merely material. One has to develop it deep in the eternally valid Truth, God.

Faith is power. Without faith, living is impossible. We have faith in tomorrow following today. That is what makes us take up activities and projects that extend beyond this day. People with no faith cannot plan; they court misery by their want of faith.

A rich man in South Africa once heard a divine voice which promised him a gold mine, if only he would dig at a certain place. He dug at that place to a depth of 200 feet and failed to discover any vein of gold. His faith waned. He doubted the authenticity of the voice. He talked to others

how the voice had played false. When another rich man heard his story, he developed great faith in what he believed to be God's command. He dug in the same areas and laid bare a rich gold mine barely three feet below the surface of the earth. That became the richest and the most famous of the gold mines of South Africa.

Want of faith brings death

During the Second World War, a steamer carrying Indian sepoy was bombed by the Japanese and it was sunk. Many lost their lives. Only five men managed to row their life-boat and hoped to have a chance to survive, in spite of the surging ocean. They were tossed about for many hours. One of them became desperate. "The sea will swallow me. I will be food for sharks," he cried, and, in panic, he fell into the sea. Another sepoy wept for his family. "I am afraid they will suffer much. I am dying without arranging for their future", he said. He too lost his faith in his survival and breathed his last. The third man said, "Alas! I have with me the policy documents of insurance. What a pity I did not give them to my wife. How can she get the amount, now that I am dying?" And he also died.

The other two men reinforced each other's faith in God. They said, "We shall prove by sticking to life, however desperate the situation. God has created us for some good purpose. We shall not yield to fear. We shall not give up faith in God's compassion and power". They had to give up the leaky boat and swim towards the shore. Within five minutes, a helicopter sent from a coastal ship which had received signals for help from the sinking steamer, sighted them and hauled them up to safety. While safe on land, they said, "It is only five minutes between victory and defeat". Those who dug for the gold mine could well say, "It is only three feet of soil between victory and defeat". Faith won the victory; want of it brought about defeat and death.

Humans are the crown of created beings

Faith is the very breath we live by. Every being is the effect of some cause and has been created for some purpose. Man has been made man for some cause he has to serve. Young persons must firmly believe in this cause-effect principle. This silver plate has a purpose. The plate did not exist as plate; it existed only as silver. So too, the pot is already in the mound of clay, as cause; it has not yet manifested as effect, at the hands of the potter. Cause and effect are indistinguishably intertwined---*Avinaa-bhaava-samban-dham*. Silver is the cause and plate is the effect; clay is the cause and pot the effect. In the same way, Divinity is the cause and Humanity is the effect.

The effect reveals the cause. The pot is the effect of clay. Why can't pots be the effects of water or of sand? When the cause (the clay) assumes the form of the effect (the pot) it reveals itself in the effect. The *Dharma* (innate nature) of the cause will be evident in the effect also. *Dharma* means 'vesture', that which is worn. The effect has the same vesture, characteristic pattern, as the cause.

Salt is salty; if it loses its saltiness, it is not salt. Fire must burn; if it does not, it is no longer fire; it is only cold coal, not hot embers. Chillies must taste hot; if they do not possess that characteristic and unique quality, they are not chillies. Each thing has a unique quality for which it exists. Man too has unique quality which marks him out from others. It is *Thyaaga*, the capacity and the willingness to give up, renounce, sacrifice, He is endowed with that quality for a high purpose.

What exactly is that purpose? The *Vedhas* declare it in clear terms. "By renunciation alone can immortality be gained". Immortality, not death, is the genuine *dharma* or nature of the human being. This is the reason why humans are the crown of created beings.' But man has lost hold of this precious quality and he lives in bondage to selfishness. When man attaches himself to the ego (*swaartha*) he loses access to the higher levels of consciousness (*paraartha*). This downfall results in his losing grip of the Reality (*yathaartha*). And, when the Reality eludes him., he is confronted by a crowd of contradictory conclusions (*naanaartha*). This calamity (*anartha*) in the thought process results in mental confusion (*ashaanthi*).

Evil desires rob man of peace

Students must make all efforts to know the Reality (*yathaartha*) by boldly entering the realm of the spirit, as Shvethakethu, the son of Uddaalaka, is said to have done in the *Upanishads*. Shvethakethu sought to discover the First Cause, the Reality, that which is neither born nor subject to death, which has neither beginning nor end. The hypothesis that food was the cause of life was rejected. His father led him from one theory to another, which he visualised as the ultimate Truth. Shvethakethu was convinced that the Cause could not be either water or fire or air or ether (*akaasha*). It could only be God.

The One Divine remains one, though It is cognised in and through diverse Forms. It can and does assume these forms. It wills to be Many. *Ekoham bahusyaam--I am one; I shall be many*. So, all things and beings in the Universe have God as the cause. Scientists who have not attained the knowledge of the totality suffer from want of faith in the Divine Will. You must give up this weakening complex and venture courageously on the path of discovery. That is the purpose of religion, as emphasised in Indian culture. There is no defect in the goals that Indian culture has laid down; the fault lies in the minds of those who judge it. Cleanse the mind of material desires and sensual longings. Then you will find that the teachings of all religions are sound and satisfying.

Lesson offered by Karna's life

Evil desires rob man of peace. The tender hearts of students must be guarded against hypocrisy, conceit, and pomp. Karna, the great hero of the Mahaabhaaratha epic, had the Sun-god Himself as his progenitor. He had divine blessing in ample measure. As a consequence, he possessed enormous powers. No one could overcome him in battle. But, on a few occasions, through man's own innate wilfulness and wickedness or through his goodness and purity, blessings are transformed into curses and curses are sublimated into blessings.

Karna's life offers a good lesson in this respect. He approached Parashuraama and desired to learn archery from that divine sage. He sought also to gain some supra-human weapons like the *Brahmastra*, from him on the conclusion of his training; Parashuraama had vowed to destroy the entire Kshathriya caste, for Kshathriyas had dealt with his father, Jamadagni, very cruelly. So, no Kshathriya boy was accepted by Parashuraama as a pupil. Karna therefore claimed to be a Brahmin himself, of the same caste as Parashuraama. Parashuraama accepted him as a Brahmin boy and instructed him in archery and taught him the use of the *Brahmastra* also. But, in the end, he came to know that *Karna* was a *Kshathriya*: He grew angry. He said: "Since you learnt archery from me through impersonation, I curse you that you shall never succeed in using this sacred *Brahmastra*".

Therefore, when you approach the preceptor, you should not try to deceive him. Let there be no trace of ego in you. Do not boast or exaggerate. Do not parade your learning or wealth or physical power. Be his pupil and learn from him, in a disciplined and humble manner. Since Karna was arrogant and cunning, he had to suffer defeat at the hands of the Pandava brothers.

Importance of truth and morality in life

Another warning, for you. When you are aware of the Truth and when you know what action *Dharma* (virtue) dictates at a particular time, you should not play false to yourselves. Apply the knowledge of Truth in every crisis during your lives; follow the path *Dharma* has laid down; do not be misled by falsehood or wickedness by fear or favour. Bheeshma had won great fame from the vow by which he abjured wedded life as well as throne to which he was entitled. He was the teacher of both the Kauravas and the Paandavas. He was a great warrior, a fearless fighter, an unfailing guide. He knew all the intricacies of *dharmā*. But, yet he failed to guide Dhuryodhana and Dhussasana at a critical moment when they dragged queen Dhroupadi by the hair and insulted her in open Durbar before himself and others! Of what avail was his mastery of *dharmaic* codes?

Sathya and *Dharma* go together; they are the two faces of the same coin. *Sathyaannaasthi Paro Dharmah*---There is no *Dharma* higher than *Sathya*. Righteousness is built on the foundation of Truth. Since Bheeshma, Dhrona and others did not rise to the occasion and stop the wanton wickedness of their wards, they covered themselves with infamy. What was the reason for their inaction? It was consideration for the self, sheer self-preservation. They were overcome by a sense of gratefulness. Conscious that they were eating the salt provided by Duryodhana, they attached more importance to the impermanent body and its needs and ignored the permanent values of truth and morality.

This day there is a great need to assert and proclaim by every means possible the power of truth and morality, their holiness and their unique importance in life. This must be proclaimed both by words and deeds. Youth must demonstrate the value and validity of truth and morality (*dharmā*) by adhering to them under all conditions. For, God is the motivator for truth and morality. The inner urge to uphold them is the urge of the Divine in us.

Do not lead barren lives, live for others

Students! The information and the physical and intellectual skills you gather and gain will be of use to some extent in your dealings with this material world. Scientific knowledge can be expanded through the manipulation of matter, or through the understanding of the world and the changes that happen in them. Scientists can describe the composition of matter and its behaviour, but they cannot delve into the why and wherefore of things. The real aim of education must be to help the student discover the Divine in every being. Saint Vemana says:

Scholars Study! Study! Study!

But the fools know not who they are!

Studying, studying, studying.

The scholar is not free from vice

Nor has he become wise.

Then, why study these mean mortal things?

Study only that which is deathless.

The most desirable subject for study is the secret of the soul which is immortal. Do not be satisfied with the education that helps you to eke out a livelihood during your sojourn on earth. Even birds and beasts eke out their livelihood somehow. You have come to the world as humans in order to manifest fully the special human endowment, of intelligence and intuition. This is the goal which Prashaanthi Nilayam is seeking to realise through the schools, colleges and university.

Live for the progress of the country

You should not confine yourselves to the study of books. You should expand the love latent in your hearts and translate it into service to man. Service to society is the worship you offer to the Lord. Do not lead barren lives, concentrating on your own advancement. Live for others, for the promotion of the welfare of society, for the progress and prosperity of the country.

It is not as if you are not aware of the conditions in this country. They are serious and ever frightening. Wherever you turn, people are anxious and agitated. Peace and security are not available for them. Your responsibility is, therefore, tremendous, for you have to lift India out of this morass of poverty, hatred, ignorance and violence. By the example of your lives, you have to restore confidence among the people in the higher values of life. Do not neglect the great lessons embedded in *Sanaathana Dharma*, which have sustained countless generations in this land for many centuries. "May all the Worlds be happy"---this is the goal towards which *Sanaathana Dharma* is leading us. Welcome within the fold of your love all men without distinction of race, religion, colour or class. Have the picture of the happy, united, love-filled human community in your heart. That will give you enough encouragement in your mission.

Develop simple living and high thinking

Students! Only two paths are open before you: the path of individual freedom and the path of social service. Adhering to individual freedom, you should not lose yourselves in egotism. Students must develop simple living and high thinking. In the name of high thinking, do not lose yourselves in tons of books and waste your energies in barren pursuits. The mind will only confuse, confound and weaken your reason. Use only the energy that the situation and the need of the moment demand. Take the example of the electric bulb. The drawing room should have a higher wattage bulb, while the bedroom does not need it. If you fit all rooms with brilliant bulbs of high wattage, for the simple reason that electric current is available, you will be wasting precious stuff and paying heavy costs. Energy too has to be conserved. Pay careful attention to the time, place and purpose, and your action will be correct.

You are falling a prey to Western manners and behaviour patterns. They are not in line with the culture of India. Their social life and habits are suited only to the conditions of their countries. You cannot adopt their modes of living without injuring your own. So, adopt only those which are in accord with our cultural traits. Give up all habits which are completely unrelated to our ideals and goals.

Man has in him vast resources of power. When he does not utilise them while discharging his duties to himself and to the society which sustains him, he is only becoming a target for ridicule. When you are on a railway station platform waiting for the train that is due, and when you come to know that it will arrive five hours late, how do you react? You fling abusive words at the train.

When the coaches receive from you such treatment, how much worse treatment you deserve for not fulfilling your duty and for disappointing the expectations that you have raised by your being a man! Utilise your skills and learning as consistently and as effectively as duty demands. Unless used, a watch get rusted what can be said, therefore of unused skill?

The body has to be exercised to keep it trim as a tool for serving your fellowmen. The body has not been granted by God in order to be fed and well clothed and to be paraded around in pride. Plunge into the problems of society, take up the burden of the family, and advance the interests of your country. Shine as examples of loving service. This is the ideal of the Sai Colleges. Cast aside all egotism, pluck out the root of pride, destroy the weed of envy and cultivate the Divine Consciousness. That will make you true students of these institutions.

Prashaanthi Nilayam, 27-6-1981.

Many people think of God only when grief overtakes them; of course, it is good to do so; it is better than seeking the help of those who are also equally liable to grief. But, it is infinitely better to think of God in grief and in joy, in peace and strife, in all weathers.

The proof of the rain is in the wetness of the ground; the proof of bhakthi is in the shaanthi the bhaktha has, shaanthi which protects him against the onslaughts of success as well as failure, fame and dishonour, gain and loss.

Sathya Sai Baaba