

13. The highest saadhana

Parents entrust their dearly beloved children to the teachers in schools, believing that they are capable and willing to guide the kids and instill into them skills and habits that can later help them to stand up against the hardships and temptations of the world. Teachers are therefore burdened with a great responsibility. When a child needs help, it rushes to the mother; when the mother needs help to equip the child with knowledge and strength of character, she rushes to the teacher. Therefore, the teacher has to be more than a mother for the kids. Her anxiety about the child's physical, mental and moral health and her vigilant attention and care have to be more constant and knowledgeable than the mother's.

The teachers must speak to one another only in loving terms. They should not indulge in mutual recrimination, for the tender minds of children will be tarnished by the slightest tinge of hatred that pollutes the atmosphere of love. No harsh word can be uttered in their hearing against the *Ayah* (maid) who brings them from their homes with loving care. The children will develop negative reaction towards the teacher who slights the maid or any other employee or worker, like the cook or the gardener. Do not parade before the children as a hierarchy or a bureaucracy. Each one has a distinct duty assigned according to the talent possessed by the one; no duty is superior or inferior. Let this lesson soak into the consciousness of the kids.

Be cheerful always. If you keep in mind this fact that you are engaged in the divine task of furthering the unfolding of the petals of purity and piety in the hearts of the kids, the process of *vikaas* (enlightenment). I am sure the rare good fortune that has been showered on you will keep you smiling, whatever may happen to mar the joy. Contemplate the bubbling springs of innocence before you, and sadness will flee from your minds.

Children yield to affectionate advice

Every person in the *Sishu Vikaas* or primary school must feel a sense of Sai kinship with every other. Consult every person involved in the task of unfolding, caressing and caring. Let there be harmony in the office, the classroom, the dormitories and the dining table and the play ground. And, whenever any one is asked to do a thing or not to do a thing, ensure that the person knows how it is relevant and important. This will help quick and proper execution.

When you have to reprimand a child for some misdemeanour or delinquency, do not pounce all of a sudden or terrorise by shouting. Tell them politely: "If another kid did the same to you, or took away for use your article or hit you, won't you feel hurt? Now, is it not wrong to hurt the other kid? When you do not like a kid to do you any harm you too should refrain from inflicting harm." Kids will understand, soon feel sorry and resolve not to repeat the act or word. They yield to affectionate advice.

The Primary School where teachers accept children aged five is the very foundation, not only for all higher grades of education, but even for advancement and the progress of mankind. Therefore, teachers engaged in this task are doing the highest *saadhana*, which benefits themselves, the children and society. It is a *saadhana* that can certainly win the Grace of God.

Primary School, Advice to teachers of Prashanthi Nilayam, 4-7-1981.

Of what profit is to have a car, if you are ignorant of the art of driving it or using it for moving about? Of what profit is to have a radio, if you are unaware of its working and of the ways of benefitting by it? Of what benefit is it to have a body, If you do not seek to know how best to utilise it?

Learn from the saints and sages who have realised the truth about the path you shall tread and the goal you have to attain. That Goal is God.

He is beyond all notions of good and bad, right and wrong. These are earthly measures, by which the temporary is weighed and judged. He has no Form, no Limbs, no qualities, no references, no prejudices, no predilections.

Sathya Sai Baaba