

17. Become beacon-light

STUDENTS! You have to consider seriously the root cause for the chaos, the injustice, the falsehood and the disorder in which the world is caught up today. The old are lost in brooding over the past and lamenting the passing of "the good old days." The young are concerned about planning their future, their jobs, manage, family and so on. Both are ignoring their duties in the present. They do not realise that the present is both a product of the past and the seed for the future. If the present is properly taken care of the future will be good of its own accord. Decide to do your duty in the present. It will pave a royal road for the future. Duty is God. Work is worship. Make these two mottoes the guides for your life and pursue your studies in this spirit. If you are planning to do something in your future, what is the guarantee that such a time will come? Putting off obligations for tomorrow is irrational. Live in the present. Resolve to fulfill your immediate duties.

Show your gratitude to your parents, to those who have nourished and cherished you, to your teachers and your spouses. This is the primary index of humanness. Today, instead of gratitude we have cruelty. People do not hesitate to do harm to those who have done them good. This is inhuman. Instead of trying to do good even to those who have done them harm, how wicked it is to do harm to those who have done good to them?

Make life worth-while and meaningful

You have to develop the consciousness that you belong to one and the same human family. There should be no feeling of separatism on the basis of language, caste or creed. If you have not understood the greatness of your country and have no regard for upholding its stature and honour, of what worth is your education? Book knowledge is of little worth. All the energy expended on studying books will later turn to allergy. What is important is the cultivation of pure and sacred ideals. Acquiring degrees and begging for jobs is a pitiable situation. Develop self reliance and build your life on faith in God.

It is the decline of spirituality that has landed the nation in the mess in which it finds itself, with a complete loss of moral values. Parents are not held in esteem. There is little love lost between husband and wife and parents and children. 'What kind of life is this? The first requisite for children is to have love and regard for parents to whom they owe everything.

Learning to earn a living is only half the job. The other half is to make life worthwhile and meaningful. Students should take note of the innumerable ways in which energy is being wasted. Seeing bad things, listening to bad things, bad speech, bad thoughts and bad deeds----energy is being wasted in all these five ways. The power of sight is a precious gift. Whenever you see, some divine energy is expended in the act of seeing. This will be evident from the fact that blind people are found to have considerable reserves of energy. There are many intelligent persons among the blind. The man with sight walks briskly during the day, but flounders in the dark. Blind people walk at the same, even pace during day or night. Deaf and dumb persons also conserve considerable energy because they don't waste it in speech or hearing.

Modern students are growing like the giraffe, which has its head in one place and its heart a long way off. In the case of the giraffe, it is because of its long neck that the head is remote from the heart. But there is no such excuse for human beings. They should be able to observe unity in thought, word and deed.

You must set an example to the world

Good conduct is most essential. People without morals 'perish. It is the decline in morality that is responsible for the country's troubles. The recovery of morals is the primary need today. Morality cannot be had from the books or from the market. It has to come from the heart. With regard to professional education like engineering and medicine, many students go in for these courses after completing the 12th standard. This is too early for such courses. They may pick up some technical knowledge, but their general knowledge and awareness of conditions in the world are poor. Their command of language is also meagre. Students should have at least a degree before they are admitted to the professional courses.

There is a wide gulf between what you study at the college and what you will have to face in life later. After you finish studies, you may get married and will have to adjust yourselves to the customs and attitudes of your parents-in-law and others. Not all of you will be able to go for work. What happens to the knowledge acquired here? You must see what you learn is of use for the kind of life you will have to lead later. You have to learn how to move in society and how to be useful to society. All that you are, you owe to society and you have to show your gratitude to society by rendering service.

Your first duty is to give happiness to your parents. You should not be preoccupied with your own personal comforts and pleasure. You must set an example to the world as a result of all that you have learnt here.

Importance of women's role in Society

Remember that women have a vital role to play in the world. Our ancients recognised the primary importance of women and gave them appropriate status in every respect. Cultivate humility, which is the hall-mark of true knowledge. Develop self-confidence, without which nothing worthwhile can be achieved in life. Above all, have firm faith in God. People perform all kinds of rituals on the basis of the holy days mentioned in the almanac like *Ekadasi*. But they do not have firm faith in the Supreme Godhead, who is the eternal basis of everything.

Students! Education in our institute is merely an opportunity for you to become exemplary human beings. Commercial or worldly motives are totally absent here. My only wish is that all of you should develop into worthy representatives of Indian womanhood when you go out into the world. Learn to lead a life of righteousness, truth, love and beauty. Become beacon-lights for the world.

The eyes of the world are on the Sai educational institutions. You must live up to your ideals without fear or pride. Let your conscience be your guide always. You have my blessings in all your endeavours.

Discourse at the College Auditorium of Sri Sathya Sai College for Women, Ananthapur, on 30-7-1987.

No matter where you go, always know that I will be there, inside you, guiding you every step of the way. In the years to come you will experience me in different manifestations of my form. You are my very own, dearer than dear to me. I will protect you as the eyelids protect the eyes.

BABA