

8. New horizons for the Sai Institute

STUDENTS! Do not be proud that you have acquired scholastic knowledge. The true form of knowledge is humility. Eschewing pride and self-conceit, pursue the right goal.

Students today are acquiring considerable scientific knowledge. It serves only to promote civilised living in the phenomenal world. But what the students need today is the refinement of the heart. This is possible only through an internal process. Students who have imbibed modern culture should not only develop their intellects, but should also develop a broad outlook.

The students today have a two-fold duty: One is to face the challenges of modern civilization, the other is to protect and preserve the ancient spiritual and cultural heritage of the country. Students should shine as ideal citizens of the nation.

A complete education is that which makes a man compassionate. Besides giving appropriate exercises to the body, students should strive to cultivate the heart and keep it pure.

Two kinds of learning in educational system

There are two kinds of learning in the educational system today. One relates to information about various subjects. The other relates to the rectification of the individual's life. The first relates to the physical. The second relates to the spiritual. The former is concerned with earning a living. The latter is concerned with the basic goal of life.

In the first type of education, you have opportunities to investigate various matters, and arrive at scientific truths. For instance, you find out that water is composed of two parts of hydrogen and one part of oxygen. You thereby know the composition of water. This enhances your scientific knowledge. But what is relevant from the social and spiritual point of view is how to ensure fair distribution of water among all people.

A national system of education calls for the cultivation of humility, devotion and obedience. When students go through such a national system, they will not only manifest the inherent divinity in them, but also develop discipline. If education consisted only of scientific knowledge, the world will be a hopeless place. Scientific knowledge alone does not constitute the content of education. Character is knowledge. Character is power. Character is life itself. Character is the hallmark of true education.

Unfortunately, the student today fills his head with a lot of information, but his personality is impaired in the process. Filling his mind with physical facts and absorbed in physical investigations, he undermines his basic humanness.

Aim at cultivation of good qualities

Selflessness, humility, unostentatiousness are qualities that underlie the human personality. Along with academic excellence, a student should aim at the cultivation of good qualities. Education enables you to score marks, but you also need elevation of your personality. Qualities contribute to elevation. Education and elevation combine to develop the human personality.

Unfortunately, people today are only concerned about academic education and ignore the cultivation of good qualities. Today the progress of scientific and technological education has virtually destroyed the sacredness of the human personality. Even the great war leader and Prime Minister of Britain, Winston Churchill, once declared: "Man has conquered everything, but has

not conquered himself." Prahlada reproved his father, Hiranyakashipu, by telling him that though he had conquered the three worlds, he had not learnt to conquer his senses.

Without being able to control the senses, what is the use of learning every kind of knowledge? All knowledge is useless, if one has not acquired Self-knowledge. Such a person may be regarded as intellectually clever, but cannot be called intelligent. The first step, therefore, is to know one's Self. Spirituality is the means to acquire knowledge of yourself. Hence, as much importance should be assigned to the promotion of good qualities in the educational process as is given to academic studies.

During the past two centuries, many marvellous and even dangerous achievements have resulted from the pursuit of science. Exploiting the resources of the earth, they are boasting about their accomplishments. They have produced atomic bombs which can cause terrible destruction. Is it a sign of wisdom to boast one's capacity to destroy the world? This is a demonic power. The Western nations are now worried about the consequences of their dreadful discoveries.

Vijnaana should be combined with Prajnaana

It is essential that the development of science should be accompanied by a corresponding development of the power of *Viveka* (discrimination). *Vijnaana* (Science) is doubtless, necessary. But it should be combined with *Prajnaana* (divine wisdom). *Prajna* is the essential principle in man. This 'Integrated Awareness' in *Vedhaanthik* parlance, *Prajnaanam* has been equated with *Brahman* (the Supreme Absolute).

When science is combined with *Prajna*, discrimination follows as a corollary. By forgetting *Prajna* and pursuing *Vijnana* (science), man is making a mockery of his existence. It is not enough to make a mere man out of a person through education. Education should aim at making him a "full man".

It is well known that the Indian economy is passing through a critical phase. But this is not so grievous a problem as the decline in morality and character. If this moral decline is not reversed, education will be utterly ruined. Students therefore must endeavour to promote morality and ethics. Without these, the entire nation will be ruined.

Four-fold formula for developing human qualities

Earning of money should not be the primary aim of students. Education should be for developing human qualities, not for securing jobs. There are four requisites for promoting this attitude to education and life. They are: "*Thyaja dhurjana samsargam*" (Give up all association with the evil-minded), "*Bhaja Saadhu samaagamam*" (Pray for the company of the good), "*Kuru punyam Ahoraathram*" (Engage yourself in meritorious deeds day and night) and "*Smara nithya-anithyathaam*" (Remember what is permanent and what is transient).

You should run away from bad company. A bad company can spoil even a good man. A renunciant may be turned into a covetous man. This is the effect of bad company. The ancient sages considered association with the evil-minded as companionship with a poisonous snake. It was to escape from the danger of such association that they resorted to the solitude of forests. A snake may bite a person once in a way but a bad man infects others with poison all the time. A bad man is one who is filled with bad thoughts, speaks bad words and does bad deeds.

The Mahaabhaaratha offers four examples of bad men called *Dhushta Chathushtayam*. The first one is Shakuni (Dhuryodhana's maternal uncle). Shakuni was all the time filled with

Dhuraalochana (bad thoughts). He is a total stranger to good ideas. He was always plotting something bad for someone or other.

Dhuryodhana was having Shakuni as his adviser Dhuryodhana was engaged in *Dhuscharya* (bad deeds). They were comrades in evil.

Then came Dhusshaasana (brother of Dhuryodhana). In association with Shakuni and Dhuryodhana, Dhusshaasana became notorious for his *Dhushpravarthana* (bad behaviour). When these three evil-minded men came together, "even stars, started " falling during daytime," as the saying goes. The whole cosmos rebels against such evil-minded men.

Karna, out of a false sense of *Dhurabhimaanam* (bad attachment), joined this trio. Gratitude is doubtless a good quality. But because Dhuryodhana came to his rescue on a critical occasion, Karna developed a wrongful attachment to Dhuryodhana. Karna was a good-natured person. He was noble-minded. But because he was associated with evil-minded men he also became a bad person. Despite his valour, physical prowess and intellectual abilities, Karna met with disaster., because he had made himself remote from God. What was the defect in Karna? *Dhurabhimaanam* (misguided attachment).

Four kinds of evil persons

Evil thoughts, evil deeds, evil conduct-and attachment to the evil-minded---these are *Dhushta Chathushtayam* (the four evil persons). Hence, students should, at the outset, give up the company of bad persons. Once you have achieved maturity in moral stature, you can associate with anyone. At this stage, when your hearts are tender and your minds are not developed, you should not move freely with all and sundry. When you are spiritually immature, you should not associate with one and all equally.

These four rules should be the guiding-posts in your life. If you adhere to these four rules, you will be able to acquire all knowledge, by the grace of the Divine. This is illustrated by the story of Padhmapaadha, who acquired spiritual knowledge from Aadhi Shankara purely by his devoted service to the preceptor, without any attention to scriptural studies. Service to the preceptor was the *Punyakarma* (meritorious deed) which he performed all the time. This sanctified his life. While bringing the clothes of his *guru* from the other bank of the Ganga, the river was in spate and rose to the level of his neck. He prayed to Lord Shankara to enable him to serve his preceptor He could reach the other bank by walking over lotus shaped slabs which appeared on the swollen river. He got the name Padhmapaadha and received all spiritual knowledge from Aadhi Shankara by sheer grace.

Service to Guru sanctifies one's life

Let me relate the story of Ashvathaama, who secured *the Chuudaamani* (diadem) by the grace of his preceptor for his devoted service to the *guru*. The *Chuudaamani* which Ashvathaama wore on his head, saved him from being beheaded by Arjuna, who had taken a vow to cut off Ashvathaama's head for his crime of slaughtering the Upa-paandavas (infant children of the Paandava brothers). Though Arjuna was keen on carrying out his vow and took Ashvathaama before Dhraupadhi, she, out of the largeness of her heart and from the inspiration of Krishna, found a formula to punish Ashvathaama without cutting off his head.

She said that if a *Brahmana* was kept captive in a house and sent out as free man, it was equivalent to beheading him. She also told Arjuna that it was not *Dharma* to kill a *Brahmana* who carried on his head the precious jewel given to him by his *guru*.

Students have to bear in mind these four principles: (1) Give up association with the evil-minded. (2) Welcome the company of the good. (3) Do meritorious acts ceaselessly. (4) Remember always what is transient and what is eternal.

You must remind yourselves that you are human beings and not animals. You must give no room to bad thoughts. Develop the inner vision to realise the Divine within you. This is the significance of devotees closing their eyes when they are in the inner sanctum of a temple. They pray to the Divine to open their inner vision.

The unique Chancellor and Vice-chancellor

In today's programme, we regard two items as important: one, a send-off and the other, a welcome. That is not so. Both are welcome. There is no such thing as a "send-off" with Sai. Svaami will not stand in the way of those who wish to leave. But I will not ask anyone to go.

However, during the past two years, Prof. Sampath moved among the staff and the students as among the members of the family. The teachers, the students and others lived as members of the same family. In other educational institutions, the Vice-Chancellor puts in his appearance once a year. Chancellors are hardly to be seen at all. But in our Institute, even more than the Vice-Chancellor, the Chancellor is ever present.

The most amazing fact is that the Chancellor spends all twenty four hours with the students. How should they answer their examination papers? How should they face their examinations? Speaking to the students even about these simple matters, Svaami gives them joy. In the same manner, the Vice-Chancellor also, from the morning prayer, till late in the evening, discusses their problems with the students. Prof. Sampath is a devotee. He did not come here seeking an office. To lead a sacred life in close proximity to Svaami was the sole desire of the couple Mr. and Mrs. Sampath. Coming here, he carried on his duties, to the limit of his capacity, without any deficiencies on his part. This is his home, not mine. So everyone carried on his respective duties. It is not merely to praise him that I say all this. He performed his duties well. That is enough.

Need for research in harnessing solar energy

Do not consider that from this day he is relinquishing his post. Spending the rest of his life with Svaami, giving to the students the benefit of all his knowledge, he should contribute to the growth of our Institute in a unique way. He has specialized in electronics. In addition, he is interested in the harnessing of solar energy. Bhaaratheeyas revere the sun. The sun is an immense ball of hydrogen and helium. There is immense scope for harnessing a small fraction of the energy coming to the earth from the sun. My desire is that "Our Sampath" should remain here and make use of his knowledge to utilise solar power. The sun is the embodiment of effulgence. Wherefrom does this light come? How does it come? No scientist has yet found how this light reaches us. It comes from a Divine power. The Divine is fully effulgent. He has the splendour of a billion suns. Today you are not able to make use of the energy from a single sun. How can you measure the power of One who has the splendour, of a billion suns? The solar system is like a candle to the effulgence of the Divine.

For harnessing the solar energy, with the realisation of its divine source, special efforts should be made in our Institute to develop research in electronics and solar energy. I desire that Prof. Sampath should ascertain what arrangement should be made for this purpose and carry on his work here in the years ahead.

Raamaayana should be enacted in the Sai Institute

The new Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Hanumanthappa, has been a devotee of Svaami for the past 25 years. When the Sai College was started in Brindhaavan, he used to come all the way from the city and hold classes in Commerce for our students. Nor is that all. He has been closely associated with our educational institutions from their inception. At that time our college in Brindhaavan was affiliated to the Bangalore University. From those days he has been rendering service in various ways. He is an ardent devotee. Both the outgoing and the incoming Vice-Chancellors should work in perfect harmony, make our Institute an ideal institution and do pioneering work in new fields for the progress of our students. They should be like Raama and Lakshmana. Our Institute should be like Seetha. When you have these three, Raama, Lakshmana and Seetha, our students will develop like Bharatha and Shatrughna. The Raamaayana should be reenacted this form and presented to the world.

What is the inner significance of the Raamaayana? *"Sathyam Vadha: Dharmam Chara"* (Speak the Truth and follow Righteousness). Today, these two have to be upheld. Without these two, life is worthless.

Prof. Sampath honoured

Prof. Sampath could have continued for some more time. But official regulations have prescribed an age-limit, which has to be complied with. Therefore, he had to retire. But this is only in conformity with external regulations. He will not depart from Svaami's heart. For the signal service rendered by him during the past two years, he has to be appropriately honoured. We are binding him closer to ourselves. The bonds we are placing on him are that he should impart all the knowledge he has acquired to our students and offer to the nation the new discoveries by our institutions in Prashaanthi Nilayam.

I, therefore, fasten two gold Kadiyams (bangles) on the wrists of Prof. Sampath. Sampath! we are going to bind both your hands. Hence, you will be a bondman, engaging yourself to the full measure of your capacity in Svaami's work, and rejoicing in the service you render

Discourse at a special function, unique of its kind, got up by Bhagavaan Baba, Chancellor of Shri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, on 4-3-1993, in the Institute Auditorium, to honour the retiring Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Sampath, and to welcome the new Vice-Chancellor, Dr. K. Hanumanthappa.