

9. Make Swami's words your beacon-light

EMBODIMENTS of love! Through the power of speech man is able to conquer kingdoms. Through speech man loses all his wealth. Man acquires kinsmen and friends through speech and loses them also by his words. Through words, again, man loses his life. Words are the root cause of all these happenings. Speech is important for man whether for experiencing loss or gain, prosperity or adversity or pain and pleasure.

Life is extremely precious. Time is highly valuable. The heart is tender. The mind is a great possession. Though endowed with all these valuable things, man conducts himself as a mean, ignorant and miserable being. He is unable to recognise what a rare, sweet and blissful thing is human life. The reason is, man, forgetting his divine nature, is immersing himself in worldly pleasures and in mundane desires.

Man should realise that he is subject to Time and Time has no respect for wealth or position. Man is devoting all his time to worldly pursuits and the demands of the body. Not realising the significance of time, man leads an animal existence.

The heart, which is soft and compassionate by nature, has been hardened into stone by man. Humanness should manifest itself in a heart overflowing with compassion, but compassion has turned into hard-heartedness.

The mind is all-powerful. It can see without eyes, hear without ears, speak without the tongue and move about without legs. Man tries to control the mind, but he is subordinate to it. As long as he is subject to the mind, man cannot understand the true nature of the mind.

Scholarship alone does not make man a *Panditha*

Although Raavana was master of a larger number of *Vidhyas* (types of knowledge) than Raama, he could enjoy no peace or bliss because he did not practise in the right way what he had learnt. Raama, on the other hand, was always blissful because he had fully digested what he had learnt and put it to proper use.

Mere scholarship alone does not make a person a *Panditha* (a man of learning). "*Pandithaah sama-dharshinah*," says the Geetha. The true man of learning is the one who sees with an equal eye different beings. True knowledge should become an integral part of one's being, flowing in one blood in an endless stream. Ill-digested learning results in the diseases of egoism and pride, as in the case of Raavana.

Unfortunately education today has become a bookish affair, used only for passing examinations and forgotten immediately after quitting the examination hall. People who cannot make proper use of their knowledge for the nation's good, are traitors to the nation. They are a liability to the society and the country. Of what use is it to flaunt one's degrees if the only purpose of acquiring them is to earn a mess of pottage?

Mansur's saga

There was once in Northern India a Muslim called Mansur. From his childhood he was constantly meditating on God. Although he belonged to a poor family, his parents wanted him to have a good education. But Mansur had a pure unsullied heart filled with love and his only desire was to know his true self. When the parents wanted him to go to school, he asked what was the purpose of going to school. The parents said that he should get educated to be able to earn a

living. Mansur said: "Mother! Have I to study only for earning a living? Are not dogs, birds, ants and many other creatures able to get their food without any education? Am I to waste my divine life for the sake of filling my belly?" He walked out of his home. He was a young lad, but there was an effulgence in his face. He sought nothing from any one. People seeing the effulgence on his face offered him things of their own accord. One old lady offered him food. The purity of his heart secured for him the food. His pure love was feeding him.

Wherever he went, he was declaring: "*Anal Haq! Anal Haq!*" (I am God. I am God). This corresponds to the *Vedhaanthik* declarations, "*Aham Brahmaasmi*" (I am Brahman), *So-Ham* (I am He). This declaration was treated with ridicule by some persons. The elders reviled him and asked: "You little fellow! How do you claim you are God? How can you be God?" Foolish people ask such questions in this world out of their ignorance and lack of faith. Why should they undermine the faith of others?

Mansur's answer to them was: "I am uttering these words because I am God. There is divine energy in everyone. But some use it for good purposes and some others misuse it. I am using it for good purposes." He went on declaring "I am God. I am God."

Meanwhile all the *pandiths* (scholars) came together and observed: "We have studied all the *Vedhas* and Scriptures. We dare not make a declaration of this kind. How is it a young student goes about making such a claim? How did he dare to make such a claim?"

Do not allow your faith to be shaken

It is not scriptural knowledge that confers the courage to make such a declaration. It is the faith in the heart. Whatever others may say, one should not allow one's faith to be shaken. Students should have such firm faith.

The *pandiths* came together and went in a body to complain to the king. "Oh king! This boy is insulting our scholarship. In spite of all our knowledge, we are not able to declare that we are God. This illiterate fool goes about saying that he is God. How to account for this? Either he is a lunatic or an arrogant fellow." The *pandiths* somehow wanted to put an end to this. It is the nature of the evil-minded to cause harm even to those who are innocent and good. They make no distinction between the bad and the good, just as white ants make no distinction between an expensive sari and a tom piece-of cloth. People who criticize others are like these white ants.

Mansur's firm faith

When the *pandiths* complained to the king, the latter ordered the boy to be brought to him. When the King summoned Mansur, he declared: "I am God." The King drew the boy near him and tried to appeal to him in soft words. "Child! you are an ordinary human being. You are illiterate and ignorant. You should not boast that you are God." Mansur replied: "I will continue to do so. I am proclaiming the truth. I am God. You are God. All are God. The indweller in all is the one God. The Muslims say: 'Allah ho Akbar.' The Christians say: 'God is great.' The Hindhus say: 'So-Ham.' God is one. He is the *Brahma-Suthra*. He is the one thread running through all beings who are like beads in a rosary." Mansur went on arguing with the King in this manner. The King's words did not appeal to him. He said: "Oh King! You are seeking to divert me to a wrong path away from royal road. This is not proper on your part." Mansur continued to assert: "I am God."

The King got angry. "You are despising my words," he said. He summoned a doctor and ordered him to gouge the eyes of Mansur. "This will force him to remain in one place and he will not disturb others." The doctor took away the eyes of the boy. But he continued to shout in joy:

"Anal Haq! Anal Haq!" (I am God, I am God). The boy was free from body consciousness. The king then summoned a butcher and asked him to cut off the hands of the boy. Continuing to laugh, he exclaimed: "Anal Haq! Anal Haq!"

The people in the audience hall could not bear to see the gruesome sight. But there was no sign of grief on the face of the boy. He continued to laugh. His faith was unshakable. He was unaffected by what others said.

Of what use is education if there is no firm determination? Is the amassing of wealth and secreting money abroad, the purpose of education? No. Earning of money may be necessary, but it should be limited and the money earned should be used for good purposes.

Seeing the determination of Mansur, the King ordered that his legs should be cut off. After this maiming, Mansur died. But the blood flowing from his tortured limbs was proclaiming: "I am God. I am God." The dead body was cremated. But from its ashes rose the cry "I am God. I am God."

This happened three centuries ago in Northern India. The people were astonished at the phenomenon. The king felt repentant, but of what use is repentance after a grievous wrong had been committed?

You should not pay heed to the words of all and sundry, Students should use their power of discrimination and should be guided by the voice of conscience. They should imprint on their hearts, the words of wisdom of the great sages.

Students should realise that no one can escape the consequence of one's actions some time or other. But God's Grace can overcome a mountain of difficulties and sins. Why are you not taking the Sai medicine, which is the panacea for all ills?

Ingratitude is a grievous sin

You are the beneficiaries of totally free education in the Sai Institute. The gratitude you can show to the Institute is by your behaviour, as men of good character. Never be ungrateful to those who have been good to you. There is no greater sin than that. The sun, who is the presiding deity for the eye, punishes the ungrateful by denying them their eyesight. The consequences of one's actions may be felt instantaneously or after the lapse of some time. But they are bound to follow. I seek nothing from the students. All that I want is that the moment they see you, people should recognise you as the fine products of the Sai Institute. By your bad behaviour you should not bring a bad name to the Institute. More than a white uniform, you should have a white and pure heart. You must become ideal students.

The situation in the outside world is appalling. Even tenth standard students are taking to drinks and drugs. The parents are not restraining them. Nor are they setting a good example. When the parents exchange words, the children exchange blows. The parents give a free rein to the children instead of controlling them. The parents are to blame for three-fourths of their children's misbehaviour. A child who had stolen a mango was praised by his mother for his cleverness. He grew up into a criminal and was sentenced to death for murder. Before the hanging, the man asked for his mother to be brought near him and he started strangling her, saying that she was responsible for making him a criminal. (Svaami related the story so vividly that the entire audience was deeply moved).

When parents allow the children to go astray, some time or other they will suffer the consequences. It has become fashionable in this Kali Age to let the children have their own way. They fear that otherwise the children will run away or commit suicide. What does it matter what befalls such characterless children? Parents do not have today this kind of moral courage. They go on listening to bad reports about their children and end their lives in despair.

Bhagavaan's grace

Thanks to the Lord's Grace you young people have come to Svaami. You may not appreciate all that I have said at this age of yours. But you will realise the truth of Svaami's words in due course. You have been fortunate to secure something which few others have got. You are discarding it lightly. You are slighting Svaami's injunctions. You do not heed the words of Svaami.

*People do not listen to words of the wise,
but easily fall a prey to bad advice.
Such people, how can they
hope to understand Svaami?
Of what use is all their education? (Thelugu poem).*

They will not listen to good advice. But they will listen to bad talk, with both ears! How can they expect to know Bhagavaan? Can an ant fathom the depths of the ocean? Likewise you cannot cognise the truth about Svaami? But you can make good use of the opportunity that has come your way. "Sai has come to you because of your great merit. Arise! Wake up!".

Earn a good name

You are returning to your homes for the holidays. Conduct yourselves well. Bring a good name to your parents. Earn a good name in society. If you have no other work, join in any service activities of the local Sai organizations. Let service be your motto. That should become your life's goal.

If all of you behave in this way how much will the country benefit and prosper. Promote the welfare of society. Do not succumb to some of the petty desires of your parents. "Oh boy! Get married soon. You will get a rich dowry of lakhs of rupees!" What a shame that parents should speak like this and that boys should give in to them! Should a son be sold for the sake of a girl? Whether it is ten lakhs or ten crores, do not sell yourselves. You must stand on your own legs. You must depend on your own strength. Do not be carried away by what others say. Do not become a slave. Be a master. Only then can you be a master over others.

Students! Put into practice at least a fraction of what you have studied. Plunge into society and engage yourselves in social service. Make society happy. Having taken birth in society, if you achieve this much, it is enough. Remember that nothing lasts--the body, the mind or senses. Only one's reputation survives him. This is what Svaami expects from you. If you achieve a good name and bring credit to the Institute where you have studied, you would have rendered great service to the nation.

Four claimants of wealth

Do not become Raavanas. Earn a good name like Raama. Do not aspire to become a Birla, a Kirloskar or a Tata. A name earned by merely amassing wealth is ephemeral. Do not sell yourself for money. Earn a good income and make proper use of it. Money earned by sinful means will not last. Either thieves will rob you or the Income-tax department will seize it.

For wealth there are four claimants: Number one is *Agni* (fire). Number two, thieves. Third, relatives. Fourth, enemies. These four are after one's wealth. Before any of them deprives of your wealth, you should make good use of it.

Our students should not hanker after money either in the matter of marriage or in regard to a job. Work, work, work. That should be your sole concern. Become votaries of work. Work binds men to the world. The body is given for carrying out righteous actions. It is not given for enjoying carnal pleasures.

Madhaalasa gave birth to four sons. When each son was born, she did not desire that they should study, go abroad, earn great wealth and acquire name and fame. From the time the child was in the cradle, she taught the child the ideal of *Vairaagya* (renunciation). She sang a lullaby for the child, treating *Pranava manthra* as the cradle, the Mahaavaakya "Thathvam-asi" (Thou art That) as the bed, Awareness as the cord drawing the cradle. The four *Vedhas* were the chains for the cradle. Rearing each child in this manner, she sent him to the forest telling him that he will find real rest there.

Janaka and Gaargi

King Janaka was similarly a seeker after *Brahmajnaana* (the Supreme Truth). He sought knowledge for the sake of Self-Realisation and not for the sake of creature comforts. He held an assembly of sages where he achieved fame. At the assembly Gaargi carried on a debate with the sage Yaajnavalkya. The debate was based on the scriptures. It was inconclusive. Then Gaargi put a question to King Janaka: "What is the mark of a *Sthithaprajna*?" (a person of steadfast Awareness). The King replied; "He is the one who realises, the Oneness of the Absolute. There is no second." Gaargi said: "If you have realised this state of Awareness, you will be conscious of Oneness alone. You are not in that state now. I wish to realise this Awareness."

Gaargi said: "Oh King! I have one desire. Will you fulfill it?" "Certainly," replied the king. She asked him to marry her. The king said: "I have only one wife, Sunethra (the one with good eyes). I don't wish to have any other wife." Gaargi said: "You are a great *Jnani*. You have good eyes and your queen is a good-eyed lady. May I ask what reward you are giving to the great Yaajnavalkya?" The king said: "I shall give him whatever he asks." Yaajnavalkya was no doubt a great scholar but he did-not have total sense control. Yaajnavalkya asked the king again: "Give this Gaargi to me in marriage. Celebrate our wedding." There was a-great uproar in the audience-hall. The great scholars present there asked: "What is the meaning of Yaajnavalkya's request?" Gaargi then asked Yaajnavalkya: "What is the purpose of a marriage?" Yaajnavalkya replied: "To have progeny." Gaargi said: "No. The wife is one-half of the husbands----*Ardhaangi*. This means that she should pursue *Dhya* together with the husband as a *Dharmapathni* (a righteous wife). Marriage is for the sake of pursuing *Dharma*. It is not for enjoying worldly pleasures. Our emperor enjoys carnal pleasures in his palace. The same pleasures are experienced by street dogs. Is that happiness?"

Wealth is not the source of real happiness

Thyaagaraaja asked: "Is wealth the source of happiness or serving the Lotus feet of Raama?" Students should ask themselves—"Does happiness consist in the acquiring of degrees or getting good jobs or attaining high positions? Real happiness consists in the acquisition of wisdom. However, till that wisdom is got, one should try to live in the world with morality and integrity. That should be the aim, while living in the world. Keep your vision on the Divine and lead your life in the world. This is the teaching of Sai. You need not renounce the world. You need not go after jobs like dogs hunting for crumbs. Stick to the job you have and take proper care of your family. Lead an ideal life. Always bear in mind the goal. Students should recognise this and conduct themselves properly. Therein lies true bliss.

In olden days, after the disciples had completed their education and before they entered the life of house-holders, they stood before the preceptor to receive words of advice from him. This was similar to the convocations held these days.

Today some of you are leaving for your homes after completing your studies and others are going for the vacation to return after the holidays. You must experience happiness whether you enter a new life or whether you come back. Do not get into bad company.

As one of the students speakers said, cultivate good company. Avoid bad company at any cost. Seek good company with all your life. Serve your parents. Help your mother when she goes out shopping. You must confer happiness on the mother who bore you for nine months in the womb. Do not cause any displeasure to the mother. Be ready to give a helping hand to your father. Don't waste your time in idleness. Engage yourselves in social service. Those who can sing should take part in *Bhajans*. Serve patients in hospitals by purchasing medicines or providing clothes, but do not give them money. If you give them money, they turn into beggars. If you render service in these ways, you will be redeeming your human birth.

Adore God: Abhor the world

Keep your minds always fixed on God. That is the true meaning of *Upavaasa*, not observance of a so-called fast, followed by a sumptuous feast. (Svaami sang a Kannada song to illustrate how fasting is observed by some people to enjoy a feast later).

Never forget God. Do not believe in the world, which is perpetually changing. Don't fear death. If you learn to observe these three maxims, you can accomplish anything. Svaami will take care of you. When students complain that Svaami is not talking to them, they should understand that Svaami does not want to talk to those who do not heed His words. If you are good, Svaami will talk to you of His own accord. If you act upto Svaami's words, Svaami will take good care of you. Avoid bad friends. Cultivate good friends. Above all, cherish faith in God. God is your sole protector. Do not trust anyone else. Today distrust of each other has become universal. Esteem God alone as your true friend. You forget God at your own peril.

I seek your love

Students! I had no intention to speak today. But the Warden appealed to me to say a few words to the students. I have spoken often enough. Even now I am saying the same thing. I seek nothing from anyone. I have not sought anything all these seventy years. My hand always gives. The only thing that I seek from you is Love. My love for you is pure, unchanging and selfless. What is your life worth if you cannot believe in such love? Believe in it. You place trust in double-dealers. Why don't you stand by the truth which you know? Receive my pure love with a pure

heart. Make yourself holy. Live in love. Love is God. Bear in mind what Svaami has said and regard Svaami's words as a beacon light for your lives. With the light of Svaami's advice in your hearts, you can proceed on life's journey for any length of time. Remember with love God, who is everything.

Discourse-in Sai Ramesh Mandap on 31-3-1996.