

### 31. The educational crisis and the way out

*Wealth has been apotheosised;  
Arrogance has become a creed;  
Peace has become remote from man;  
Egoistic boast is fashionable  
Property has become an adornment;  
Selfishness is installed in the heart;  
Sense of self respect has declined;  
Hypocrisy has become the hall-mark;  
Love and affection have become sickly;  
The heart is divorced from righteousness;  
Life has become a burden;  
People have lost their moorings.  
What does the future hold?  
Make education value-based  
And ensure a future for Bhaarath!*

*STUDENTS! Embodiments of Love! Educationists!* Bhaarath, which has been the treasure-house of spirituality, is steadily going down in *Dharma* (righteousness). Injustice, dishonesty, immorality and other demonic qualities are having free play in the country. In this situation, students alone---both men and womens---will be able to deal with these evil forces and establish peace.

*Students!* If your parents will feel unhappy if you are backward in your studies, how much more unhappy will Mother Bhaarath be feeling over the decline of moral values! Students must take a resolve at the outset to serve their mothers and the Motherland. They must strive for restoration of peace and. order in the country.

A country does not mean a piece of earth. It is the people who make the country.

What is the meaning of transformation of people? Transformation is not one specific object. it is the entire process of refinement by which people get rid of their bad thoughts and actions and cultivate good thoughts and do good acts in daily life

What is the meaning of *Vidhya* (education)? What is the kind of education suitable for young people today? What are the norms of right education? What kind of education will promote the elevation of man? What is the use of the present system of education? The. one who examines and finds the right answers to these five questions will be a wise adviser for the nation. The value of a person is nor derived from education alone. The cultural refinement of his life-style is also essential.

What is meant by culture? It is the realisation of the inherent divinity in man and making it manifest in one's way of life. A life without culture is like a house without light. A dark house is

a home for foul-smelling bars and nor for fragrant objects. A person without culture is like a stringless kite, which is tossed hither and thither. An education bereft of culture is worthless like a counterfeit coin. Hence culture is most important, especially in relation to one's character.

### **Education for life, not merely for living**

In the sphere of education many revolutionary changes are needed. Since the attainment of freedom 50 years ago, many committees have been set up by the government to go into the problem of educational reform. These committees have recommended many reforms. There has been no implementation of these reforms.

Even now, no one is trying to restore the ancient ideals of education. As a result, the country is riddled with violence and disorder. Educational institutions have become centres of disorder.

*Vidhya* means acquisition of knowledge. In the English language this is called "Education". The term education is derived from the Latin term *e-ducare*, which means "drawing out". The idea is to draw out what is latent. Acquisition of knowledge is a worldly aspect. But what has to be discerned is the divine feeling present in the human heart. One refers to living and the other to life itself. In addition to earning a living one has to understand the purpose of life.

Both these aspects are as essential as the two eyes for a person. Today there is too much concentration on one aspect---how to earn a living? Even here, there is a steady decline in moral standards.

No one makes a serious attempt to realise the divinity in man. No attempt is made to understand one's true nature. That is the real purpose of life. True education means trying to manifest the inner divinity in man. How is this manifestation to be brought about?

Education is that which illumines the physical, the mental and the social environment of man. It is not confined to one specific sphere. Education should illumine every aspect of life the economic, the political, the moral, the spiritual and other spheres of life.

Students consider book knowledge as education. This gives them only superficial knowledge. They need practical knowledge. This knowledge should enable them to Lead righteous lives.

Today people are worshipping wealth as divine. This is totally wrong wealth can never give peace of mind. It may provide physical comforts but not mental peace. Without understanding this, people and the government imagine that there is great progress in education.

*What is this progress?*

*Justice and morality are confined to books.*

*The hearts have become the abode of all that is foul.*

*Hands have become instruments of selfishness.*

*This is the progress achieved by education today.*

(Thelugu Poem)

### **Education must be for the well-being of the society**

Is this the mark of true education? No. Efforts must be made to eliminate such feelings. *Moreover*, all that is learnt must be utilised for promoting the well-being of society. All should work for the welfare of society.

*"Sarva loka hithe rathaah"* (Let all rejoice in the well-being of all people in the world).

*"Sarve jnaana Sampannaah"* (Let all possess wealth of all knowledge).

*"Sarve Samhitha gunaihi"* (Let all be endowed with good qualities). These are three main pronouncements regarding the educated persons. This implies that every student, after completing his studies, should dedicate himself (or herself) to serving society. For this service, one should acquire all the necessary knowledge. Students should have all good qualities. A good student should promote a calm atmosphere wherever he stays. He should be ever prepared to help others. These are the marks of a good student. Unfortunately students today are not having any of these qualities. Who is to blame? Not the students. Not the teachers. All in society are responsible. Students do not possess the requisite abilities to pursue the right path. Teachers also lack these abilities. They do not take up the task of moulding the character of students from an early age. To do so they have to train themselves to be ideal teachers.

When the teachers lead an exemplary life, the students will follow their example. There is no scrutiny of how teachers teach or how students study. The Government is spending over Rs.2,000 crores a year on education. No one knows what the outcome of all this expenditure is. What transformation is taking place in the students? What is their future? No. one seems to enquire into all this. Only money is spent endlessly.

#### **It is not greatness but goodness that matters**

Nor is that all. Politicians are invading the educational field and ruining the students. Students have, of course, to study political science. But the educational field should not be politicalised. Today students are entering the political field and not only spoiling their studies but ruining their entire future. Hence students should resolve to pursue their studies with devotion.

Parents also should encourage their children to pursue education in the right spirit. They should not desire so much that their children secure high ranks. It is not greatness that matters but goodness. They should, wish that their children should earn a good name rather than achieve purely academic excellence.

Make proper use of your education for the good of society. Be men of good character. That will make you shine before the public. True education will make you divine. Education is not mere knowledge of words. It should broaden the mind. The mere acquisition of degrees is valueless. Character is more important and it can be developed only by taking to the spiritual path. Of what use is an education that does not promote good qualities?

#### **Humility is the hall-mark of true education**

*Students! Boys and Girls!* Together with academic education you have to acquire wisdom and a sense of right and wrong. Knowledge without wisdom, scholarship without determination, music without melody, learning without humility, a society without discipline, friendship without gratitude, speech without truth--all these are utterly useless. Hence everyone should seek to follow the correct path.

There is no sense of respect for people in society. Gratitude is absent. Scholars are without discretion. The educated lack humility.

Humility is the hall-mark of true education. Humility does not mean moving about with a bowed head. It calls for respect to humanness. It is beastly to go about causing fear in others. Humans should be free from fear. Both fear and frightening are animal qualities. Men must be fearless.

Today fear haunts every place. How does fear arise? When one is full of bad thoughts and bad feelings.

Educational institutions today are full of disorder and indiscipline. How different were the ancient abodes of learning! In ancient times education used to be offered free. In those days, the preceptors used to send the students to the forests. The students used to be examined periodically about their studies. For instance, the students would be asked: "What tree did you find useless in the forest you visited?" The replies of the students varied, each one saying that one particular tree was useless. The preceptor did not accept their answers. He told them that all trees were useful, each in its own way. Every tree had something or the other which had medicinal properties. If a tree did nothing else, it served to take in the carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and release the life-giving oxygen for the benefit of man. Every tree serves a useful purpose. Equally every human being is valuable.

Today education has become very expensive. Education should be made free. Then there would be no room for corrupt practices over seats.

### **The uniqueness of Sai Education**

In the Sai Educational System, there are no problems of student unrest because education is free. Our students are happy. All of us are also happy.

Because of free education the students behaviour is exemplary. All the students feel spontaneously: "Here we are getting free education. We must conduct ourselves well to show our gratitude to all concerned." Opportunities must be provided for students to develop such an attitude towards their alma mater. In our Institute no fees is charged for anything.

We must strive to revive the ancient system of free education. Today such a sacred approach to education is lacking among students, parents, teachers and the authorities. The change must come at the Governmental level. Then the public at large will also change. There must be a change in the moral climate of the educational system. Only then the educational institutions can turn out young men and women of character.

### **Tribute to Sai Students**

The first thing students have to learn today is moderation in speech. Talk less and study more. Although I do not speak about it often, I am immensely happy over the character of our students. They are inspired by high ideals. Some of the students even go to the extent of reforming their parents. With due humility and reverence they tell their parents to change their ways of living. Whenever I hear reports of such conduct by our students I rejoice in the fact that we have such students. I do not expect anything from the students. All that I desire is that they should earn a good name when they go out. Their behaviour should be beyond cavil. Ill-educated students are worse than illiterates.

Skepticism seems to grow with more and more education. The more intelligent the students are, the more doubts develop in them. Lacking self-confidence, ultimately they fail to reach Self-realisation.

Our Institute students are always happy. This happiness lends beauty to their lives. It is not physical beauty, but the spiritual beauty derived from good character.

Our Vice-President (in his Convocation address) dwelt at length on *Dharma*. Today *Sathya* and *Dharma* are not very much in evidence. *Dharma* seems to be fleeing from the people. *Sathya* and

*Dharma* are declining among the people. The ancient sacred *Vedhik* teachings are disappearing. It is essential to revive them.

Students should not be obsessed with earning *dhanam* (money). They must be keen on *acquiring gunas* (good qualities). Education without ethics is no education at all. Education must teach men to be sincere in thought, word and deed as the mark of humanness. The state of Indian education is such that it breeds all sorts of bad tendencies in the students. It encourages deception and dishonesty.

Education should result in the purification of the heart. Students need not be over-anxious to score high marks. It is more important to cultivate a good heart. Revere your parents. Promote social improvement. Co-operate with your fellow-men. These are the things you should learn.

### **Make Nature your teacher**

Make Nature your teacher, instead of relying too much on books. The vast universe has many lessons to teach. Make your heart your preceptor. Esteem God as your best friend. He will never fail you, unlike most fait-weather friends in the world.

I prefer to hear that you have earned a good name for your behaviour than praise for your scholarship. Do not calculate what money you can cam from your degrees.

You must ask yourselves: "What good can I do to my family? What help can I render to my fellow men?" Education is not for securing a job. It is for acquiring knowledge and wisdom. It is unfortunate that education has been linked to jobs and earning money

You must move among the people in a friendly and comradely spirit. Do not hate anyone. Follow the principle- "Help ever; hurt never."

Today many occupy high positions and earn fabulous salaries. How many of them do work that can justify the salaries they are paid? Men who receive Rs.20,000 a month do not do even Rs.20 worth of honest work. This is treachery to the nation. An educated person must give proper return for the salary he receives. Students must bear this in mind when they enter service. They must give adequate return for the salary they receive. That will give you job satisfaction and soothe your conscience. Our students are behaving in an exemplary manner. Whatever their background before joining the Institute, within a month the new students are transformed into ideal students. They develop commendable qualities.

*Boys and girls!* Wherever you may go and whatever institutions in which you may work, bring a good name to the Institute and earn a good name for yourselves. Girl students who may get married should serve their in-laws in such a way that the good name of the institute is vindicated. The mother-in-law should be proud of a well-educated daughter-in-law coming from the Sai Institute.

The good name you earn will rejoice Me. Do your duty wherever you may go.

Earn the esteem of your employers. That will please Me. This is My message to you.

### **Students' devotion to Svaami**

*Students!* Many of you have secured high ranks in the examinations. This year 150 students of the Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School appeared for the public examinations held by the Central Board. All of them passed in I class. In many States when one or two candidates get I class, they give publicity to it. I asked our students why they do not get their photos published in

the papers when they have secured a 1<sup>st</sup> class. "We studied for the sake of Svaami and not to get our photos published in the papers," they replied. Those words delighted Me immensely. That such high sentiments are present among young children is known to very few. The children are full of fine qualities. They have the ability to develop the whole world. But they do not try to utilise it. Students should realise the integral relationship between them and the world. Hence they should, not hesitate to serve the world with determination. They can achieve anything they want to.

Students possess immense power, more than anybody else. My students are My property. Earn a good name wherever you go--from the home to the nation. That will please Me more than anything else. When you earn a good name, your human birth is redeemed. Shankaraachaarya has warned youth against being proud of wealth, progeny or youthhood. All these are transient. What are enduring are *Sathyam* and *Keerthi* (truth and fame). Never bother about success or defeat, loss or gain, happiness or sorrow. They are incidental to life in the world.

With the conviction that very soon our students will go out into the world, set an example to everyone in whatever institutions they may work and usher in a new era, I bless one and all.

One more thing. I do not mind whether you achieve high ranks or not. But do not get any "remarks" against you. I am aware that nearly all of you are behaving well. But one or two may go astray. I desire that everyone should be exemplary. This is My benediction.

*Address at the XVI Convocation of the Sai Sathya Sai*

*Institute of Higher Learning on 22-11-1997, in the Purnachandhra Auditorium.*

*Trust in My wisdom. I do not make mistakes. Love My uncertainty,  
for it is not a mistake. It is My intent and will.*

*Baba*