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## Truth And Righteousness Are The Foundation For True Education

*Dear Students!*

*There is no Vidya which our students are not proficient in. They develop all the virtues and they saturate every act of theirs, including their skills and studies, with those high and pure qualities. To demonstrate that this process will yeild joy, peace and prosperity, I have these students as My instruments. They would themselves act as ideals. They are the source of My delight and they sustain My hopes. They are My Ananda and Ahaara.*

Baba

I do not wish to speak much about the present day education. In fact, there is but one purpose and goal for education; that is truth. Whatever is learnt other than truth, cannot be construed as true education. That is only secular education. There are many 'educated' people in the world today. But, what is it that they are engaged in? I do not find educated people engaged in service to society today. Nevertheless, the educational institutions in the world are turning out more and more such 'educated' people. The education that these people acquire is only secular education and not spiritual education. In fact, spiritual education is the only true education, which will establish the existence of god. Secular education enables one to scure employment and eke out a living thereby. It is for the physical sustenance of the person concerned

and his or her family. As the saying goes, “The end of education is character”. Devoid of character, all other possessions are useless. Unfortunately, today character building has been relegated to the background. It is the last priority. Of what use is it to pursue such education which does not confer character on a person? Modern education may help one to gain control over men and matter, but utterly fails in uplifting one’s own self. There must be unity between one’s inner feelings and outward actions. The harmony between thought, word and deed is of utmost importance. Education should enable one to cultivate good qualities, character and devotion.

### **Character Is The Mark Of A Human Being**

When there is unity between thought, word and deed, one can acquire purity and realise divinity. Modern education is fully self-centred. Wherever you see, selfishness is rampant. Contrary to it, true education teaches selflessness. People pursuing such type of education, give up their selfish interests and work for the larger interest of society. It is said, *Paropakaraya punyaya, papaya parapeedanam* (one attains merit by serving others and commits sin by hurting them). Wherever you see, people today analyse whether a particular activity they wish to undertake will bring material benefit to them or not. Everywhere you will find only selfish interest coming to the fore. People tend to forget that the real self is one’s own Self (*atma*), which is the same Self (*atma*) present in every individual. And, that Self is *chaitanya shakti*

(the power of universal consciousness). This *Chaitanya Shakti* is present in every human being, nay every living being. That is why it is said, *Easwarah sarva bhutanam* (God is the indweller of all beings). Hence, one has to give up one’s self-interest and strive to realise the *atma tattwa* that is present in every living being. Modern education is steeped in utter selfishness. It is only when one transcends his self-interest can one acquire true education and purity of heart. One has to rise above self-interest and help others with a spirit of sacrifice. It is only then that one can become a true human being and can be called as such; not by mere education. Birds, beasts and animals cannot realise this sacred *atma tattwa* and manifest selflessness. Only a human being can do so by *sadhana*. A human being can acquire value only by developing good character. Hence one has to strive to acquire and protect one’s character by pursuing true education.

Education is not for earning a fat pay-packet. After all, what can money do? In what way can it help us? It may perhaps help us to acquire name and fame and build palatial buildings with modern comforts. But, devoid of character, of what use are all these comforts? Unfortunately, today the world respects such people only. In My view, a person without character is unfit to be called a human being. He is only an animal. Even an animal is better than such a human being, for, it has a season and a reason. But, a human being has no season and reason at all! Wherever you see, you will find only selfishness today. Only such people pass off as gentle-

men in society in present times. Then again, character is the most important aspect of a human being. Truth and righteousness are the foundation for character. As the saying goes, *Sathyannasti paro Dharma* (There is no *Dharma* greater than adherence to truth). The mansion of righteousness rests on the foundation of truth. If the very foundation of truth collapses, there can be no righteousness. Hence, truth and righteousness are the two most important limbs of a human being. When truth and righteousness go together, love manifests.

*Bereft of truth, righteousness, love and peace the  
value of all your education is zero;*

*Bereft of truth, righteousness, love and peace the  
sanctity of all your acts of charity is zero;*

*Bereft of truth, righteousness, love and peace the  
utility of the positions of power occupied is  
zero;*

*Bereft of truth, righteousness, love and peace the  
result of all your good deeds is zero;*

*These four qualities are the four pillars that support  
the mansion of Sanathana Dharma.*

*What more can I explain,*

*Oh! Men of noble qualities!*

(Telugu poem)

There can be no peace without truth, righteousness and love. You often come across people complaining, “I have everything in life, but I have no peace of mind”. A

person without peace of mind is confronted with troubles from all sides. If only one has peace of mind, one can be happy in the world. He will have no troubles at all! Such a person is a great soul.

Let us now analyse the true meaning of the word “*Manava*” (human being). It means one without attachment to the world. Only such a person can be called a real human being. To marry someone, beget children and develop a family these are all considered to be attachments. Man loses peace on account of developing attachments. A paradoxical situation has developed today where man has everything good food, comfortable life, etc., but, he has no peace of mind. Why? Because, he has developed an attachment to the objects of enjoyment. Peace is something which cannot be purchased in a market. It depends upon one’s attitude to life and living. Hence one has to develop *ekatma bhava* (feeling of oneness). If this *ekatma bhava* is developed, one can move about freely in the world with no attachment to any particular individual or object. When man loses his freedom he will become bound by the objective world. He will develop desires, lust, etc. Where there is lust, love cannot exist. The rose flower which is a symbol of love teaches many good things. It is a thing of beauty that speaks silently in the language of fragrance. It is surrounded by thorns. In this example, the rose flower is comparable to love and the thorns to lust. Man must be able to pluck the flower of love without being pricked

by the thorns of lust. It is only when man develops pure love untainted by desire and lust that he can be called a true human being.

### Attachment Denies Peace

Adi Sankara, the greatest exponent of the *Advaita* philosophy, once went on a tour to North India on a mission of winning over scholars by argumentation. During the course of his tour, he came across a great scholar by name Mandana Mishra. He had a wife by name Ubhaya Bharati who was equally well-versed in scriptures. Besides, she was a realised soul. She was selected to be the arbitrator and judge to decide the winner in the argumentative sessions between Sankaracharya and Mandana Mishra. She was a truthful lady and was aptly suited to be a judge. The judges of modern times are not comparable to Ubhaya Bharati in the qualities of truth and objectivity. She always believed in the aphorism “Truth is God” and therefore was eminently suited for the assignment. The arguments commenced in the presence of Ubhaya Bharati. She was following the arguments and counter arguments with rapt attention. Finally, Sankaracharya defeated Mandana Mishra and he was declared as winner by Ubhaya Bharati. As per the conditions, Mandana Mishra had to take to *sanyas* and he did accordingly. As a dutiful wife, Ubhaya Bharati followed suit and she also took to *sanyas*. A question may arise here as to what is *sanyas*, in the real sense. It is giving up of all desires. As long as one entertains desires, he will only be a *samsari*

(householder). He will develop worldly relationships. He will desire to have a son in the first instance. Thereafter, the whole retinue of daughter-in-law, grandsons, granddaughters, etc., will follow. Ubhaya Bharati did not wish to entangle herself in the web of such worldly relationships. Hence, she took to *sanyas* (renunciation).

One day, she was going along with her disciples to the river Ganga for taking a holy dip. On the way, she observed a *sanyasi* relaxing on the wayside, keeping a dried bottle gourd under his head. This, he was using for storing drinking water and hence he was preserving it safely. Ubhaya Bharati saw this *sanyasi*'s attachment to the bottle gourd and commented to her disciples, “Look! This man calls himself a *sanyasi*, but he is attached to a bottle gourd which he is keeping safely under his head as a pillow.” The *sanyasi* heard this comment, but did not utter anything then. While Ubhaya Bharati and her disciples were returning from the river, he threw away the bottle gourd in front of them in order to demonstrate that he was not attached to the article. Observing his action, Ubhaya Bharati aptly remarked, “I thought there was only one defect in him *abhimana* (attachment). Now I realise that he has another defect also *ahamkara* (ego). How can one with *abhimana* and *ahamkara* become a *jnani* and *sanyasi*?” Her comment was an eye-opener for the *sanyasi*. Immediately, he fell at the feet of Ubhaya Bharati and prayed to her to teach him true knowledge.

People today put up a show as though they had renounced everything. In fact, it is they who crave for worldly possessions. Dear students! You are all engaged in pursuing education. Hence, you must have only one desire now. That is *Brahmacharya* (celibacy). When you come here to join the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning as students, you pray, “Swami! We don’t want anything. We have no desires like marriage, setting up a family and building of houses, etc. Please lead us on the path of liberation.” But, the moment you leave the portals of the Institute, umpteen number of desires swarm you like honey bees.

### **Bad Company And Bad Place Influence Human Behaviour**

Man’s behaviour is influenced by *Sthanabala* (power of the place), *Bhujabala* (power of the physical body) and *Dhanabala* (power of wealth). For instance, in the *Ramayana*, when Sita, Rama and Lakshmana were taking a stroll in the forest, Lakshmana suddenly felt tired and told Rama that he was exhausted and would like to go back to Ayodhya as quickly as possible to have a more comfortable living. Rama smiled at him and said, “Let us proceed further, I shall explain everything later.” How did Lakshmana who previously had declared that Rama was everything to him and that he would not live without Rama even for a moment, suddenly develop this attitude? How did this concern for bodily comfort arise

in him suddenly? After they walked some distance, they sat under a tree. That moment Lakshmana felt the pangs of repentance for his impertinent behaviour. He realised his mistake, caught hold of Rama’s feet and implored, “Rama! Forgive me for what I had said. I cannot understand how these devilish qualities and bad thoughts entered me. What could be the reason?” Rama thought over the matter for some time and explained, “Lakshmana! The region through which we passed just now was the haunt of Surpanakha. She used to rest under that tree. Hence, the place is surcharged with all her devilish qualities. The vibrations of those evil qualities aroused bad thoughts in you. The moment you came out of the place, you are your normal self again. Your inherent good nature asserted itself.” Thus, one’s association with a particular place also has its effect on one’s behaviour. That is what is called *sthanabala* (power of the place).

People often wish and pray for a son. But what type of son should they pray for? One who will emulate the noble qualities of the parents. Unfortunately, today you do not find noble qualities anywhere. Youngsters often move in bad company and cultivate bad qualities. This is not correct. They should always make friendship with good people and emulate their qualities. The great epic *Ramayana* is replete with several examples of how association with good people results in developing noble qualities. Adi Sankara in his famous *Bhaja Govindam* song very graphically described how *satsanga* would

ultimately lead one to liberation:

*Satsangatwe nissangatwam,  
Nissangatwe nirmohatwam,  
Nirmohatwe nischalatatwam,  
Nischalatatwe jivanmukti.*

(Sanskrit verse)

Today, people move about in bad company and ultimately spoil themselves. This is the effect of *Kali Yuga*, which is often referred to as *kalaha yuga* (the Age of Conflict). Man, by nature is divine, but turns bad on account of *dussanga* (bad company). That is the reason why sages and seers in ancient times constantly strove to cultivate noble qualities by *satsanga*. Today, trash literature is found everywhere. Wherever you see, you will find people, especially youngsters reading bad books that pollute their minds. You might have observed youngsters visiting the library invariably on Sundays and holidays. They search for bad books and read them with absorbing interest. Those bad books are very exciting to the young minds. Thus, youngsters spoil themselves on account of bad company. No force on earth can change such boys. Not even God. Unless one makes introspection into one's behaviour and strives for transformation, one will continue to move about in bad company. One's character and conduct are of paramount importance. If they are taken care of, one is sure of treading the right path. There is no use acquiring high academic degrees with a view to earn high salary and position. How long

will they last? On the other hand, it is possible that they may land one in trouble sometimes.

In keeping with the saying, *Yad bhavam tad bhavati* (as is the feeling, so is the result), one has to cultivate noble thoughts and feelings. One has to read good books that will bring about a transformation of heart and uplift the soul. You often find youngsters going to the library and remain engaged in deep study. What sort of books do they read? They read bad books camouflaged in a good cover. Once you remove the cover and look into the book, everything is trash with bad pictures. You will have to be very strict with such students. No one can be taken for granted. They speak sweet words outwardly as though they are very innocent. But, they stealthily engage themselves in bad activities. Unlike the students in the *Gurukula* system of the ancient times, the present day students indulge in bad behaviour. In spite of great efforts on the part of teachers to bring about a transformation in them, they continue to exhibit their bad qualities. It is not surprising to see students assaulting teachers in the educational institutions today. There are students who find fault with those who actually provide for their living. There are also students who do not hesitate to hurt the very hand that feeds them. Such are the qualities of the present day students. They do not appreciate the role played by the teachers in their uplift.

**Be An Ideal Student**

What are the qualities expected of a student?

*Students should pursue such education which confers on them the sacred qualities like good character, adherence to truth, devotion, discipline and duty.*

(Telugu poem)

Only those students who cultivate such qualities are eligible to be called students in the real sense. Those who act against those principles are not students, but stupids. You should not associate with such people. Neither you should call them stupids and earn their wrath. Be neutral in your relationship with them. You should keep up your own good qualities, which the world will appreciate. Love all. In fact, love is the most important aspect of education. One who teaches the method by which man can cultivate selfless love is the real *Guru*. There are, of course, several such teachers. I have established the Sathya Sai Educational Institutions only with a view to inculcate love and teach good qualities to the students. It is not an exaggeration to say that there is not a single bad book in our library. Our students are very good students. They do not at all move in bad company. Even when they go home for vacation, they do not like to stay there for long. Sometimes, their mothers may say, “My dear! You stayed for one full year in Brindavan or Puttaparthi. You never had an opportunity to eat tasty and spicy food. I shall now prepare such food that you will relish.” Our boys will then reply, “Mother! You should

also not eat such *rajasic* food. It is not good for health.” As is the food, so is the head (thoughts). Thus, when the food and head go together, people forget God. Hence, do not change your food habits. Continue to stick to a *sattwic* diet. Take plenty of green leafy vegetables. It is only when you maintain spartan habits with regard to food and head, will you become a good-natured individual. You are aware that people outside have high expectations of the students studying in Sri Sathya Sai Educational Institutions. Students, as long as they remain in our hostels, exhibit good behaviour and devotion. Once they go out of the portals of the institution, they turn bad. This should not happen. Wherever you are, whether in the hostel here or when you go out, you must continue to exhibit good behaviour. Of course, I have no doubt at all about the behaviour of our students. They are good boys. I hope that our students will continue to be good and become good citizens worthy of emulation by others. I conclude My Discourse with blessings to all.

*Benedictory Address XXIV Convocation Of SSSIHL,  
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