

#### **4. Devotion without discipline is valueless**

THE world attracts man in innumerable ways. Either in speculation or in exploration, man cannot go beyond the Universe. Whatever knowledge he acquires, however much he develops his powers of understanding, his knowledge is confined to things of this world and does not go beyond it. He can know about the objects in creation, but cannot understand the Supreme Principle that is at the base of all creation.

Physics is concerned with the physical properties of material objects. Chemistry teaches the composition and qualities of created things. Botany deals with plants and trees found in nature. Zoology is concerned with the study of living beings, till that man learns about these things relates to the natural sciences. It is not knowledge relating to the Supreme. Man, who is immersed in the temporary pleasure derived from his knowledge about the *Panchabhuthas* (five basic elements) that constitute the physical Universe, does not know what is his own future, what is in store for him the next moment. He behaves like a mouse which is attracted to the onion in a mouse-trap. Caught up in the knowledge and skills he has acquired and satisfied with the benefits from them, man does not try to find out the truth about his future and his real destiny.

#### **Man lacking gratitude forfeits the Grace of God**

The teacher should serve as the signpost for the community. The student determines the future of the nation. Together, they help to promote the greatness and welfare of the nation. Both teachers and students should realise that their welfare is bound up with the well-being of society as a whole. Individuals are prepared to engage themselves in various activities for the sake of their own personal comfort and for the acquisition of wealth and position and for ensuring the good of their kith and kin. But few of them are prepared to make any efforts or sacrifice for the general good of society. It is not realised that all the pleasures and comforts enjoyed by one are really derived from society and are not solely got from one's own means. Man does not show any gratitude to the society which has enabled him to enjoy his wealth, position and power. A man lacking gratitude is worse than an animal. He forfeits the grace of God.

To secure 'the grace of God one must adhere to right conduct and observe purity in thought, word and deed. Kindness and compassion are the hall-mark of a true human being. Young men of to-day are ready to listen to a thousand lies, but do not have the patience to pay heed to a single truth. One honest man who speaks with love is better than a hundred flatterers.

Young people do not realise the value of health and strength they enjoy during their years of youth. They should learn to lead purposeful, unselfish lives even while they have the benefits of youth and health, instead of dissipating all their energies and talents in the pursuit of sensuous objects and evil desires. An evil-minded person in a village is more harmful to the community than even a polluted pond.

Young persons take great pains to acquire degrees for securing good jobs. But they hardly take any trouble to develop their character and personality. Good conduct and character are the most essential requisites for a man. They are the basis for the spiritual life. If the spiritual aspect is neglected, man becomes an artificial, mechanical being with no genuine human quality in him. Young people today do not understand what is meant by spirituality. It is the knowledge of Divinity, which is 'the core of man's true nature. Spirituality reveals the basic principle that is immanent in everything and sustains the entire Cosmos.

### ***Vijnaana* without *viveka* will destroy millions**

Young people today lack a broad-minded Universal outlook which will enable them to lead exemplary lives. They are too much self-centred and, like frogs in a well, are preoccupied only with their narrow selfish interests. It is essential that they should broaden their vision and develop large-heartedness.

The uneducated persons in the world may not appear to be great patriots, but they do not do any harm to their country. The world is being destroyed by the highly educated who claim to be patriots. For example, there are great scientists in the United States of America and in the Soviet Union. Out of narrow considerations of national interest, they are busy producing monstrous bombs which will destroy millions. They do not realise that their country is only a part of this world. They are in perpetual dread of the destructive power of the weapons they have created. What is the reason for all this? It is the fact that while *Vijnaana* (science) has progressed, there has been no growth of *Viveka* (wisdom) at all. It is only when wisdom and science march together that the true character of science will be realised.

### **A loving heart is the only means to Divine Grace**

Who is entitled to wield authority? Is it the person who has high educational qualifications and feels puffed up by his knowledge? No. Or is it the person who claims that he has all material resources and can use them as he likes? No. No one who is filled with pride and conceit is fit to wield power. It is only the person who is imbued with humility and appears to be not very knowledgeable that is fittest to wield authority. Hanumaan is an example of such a person. Although he was endowed with enormous prowess, he appeared as a simple person. This humility enabled him to leap over the ocean. Socrates, who was hailed as the wisest man among the Greeks, always professed that he knew nothing.

The knowledge that is paraded is like a seed ostentatiously planted on a rock for all to see. It will not sprout and yield fruit. It is only the seed that is planted in the soil will grow into a tree and bear fruit. The scholar who is humble and respectful towards everyone is the truly great man. One who lacks these qualities, however knowledgeable he may be, is only an incarnation of egoistic pride. The truly educated person should not have the slightest trace of ego. You may achieve great distinction in sports or in your examinations or in any particular field of study. But if you develop pride or arrogance as a result, it will bring; about your downfall.

You must realise that the grace of the Divine cannot be got by sweet talk or staging songs. When your hearts are pure, the Divine will dwell in them. The Divine is not pleased by showy offerings or expensive paraphernalia. A loving heart is the only means to Divine Grace. 'All the study of scriptures will be of no avail for realising the Divine.

### **Five types of duties laid down for man**

Five types of *Dharma* (duties) have been laid down for man. One is *Kula Dharma* (duties relating to his occupational group). The second is *Dhesha Dharma* (duty to the nation). The third is *Matha Dharma* (duties pertaining to his religion). The fourth is *Gana Dharma* (duties relating to society). The fifth is *Aapath Dharma* (the duty when he faces danger).

All these five types of duties are related to one's life in the phenomenal world and are not concerned with the Supreme Reality. All these duties have penalties for their violation. Without these penalties organised life is impossible. Such punishments should not be regarded as unwarranted impositions. On the contrary, they should be considered as essential corrective

measures conducive to one's good. Only the person who has been subject to such restraints can achieve anything great in life. Discipline is like the reins which regulate the movements of a horse. It is like the goad that controls the elephant. Without discipline and the punishment that may be inflicted if it is violated--man will not be able to correct his mistakes.

Seeing the change that the Sai devotees in Tamil Nadu are effecting in the lives of people around them, while transforming their own lives by their Saadhana, devotees elsewhere should ask themselves whether they are doing all they can to elevate their own lives and contribute to the improvement of others. Many have been coming to Bhagavaan for many years. They must examine in what way they have improved their character and conduct. How far have they shed their undesirable qualities? What good habits have they cultivated? How far are they living up to the teachings of Bhagavaan? How far do they adhere to the disciplines of the *Aashram*? These disciplines are intended for the benefit of the devotees themselves. Devotees coming from abroad have been strictly carrying out the instructions given to them.

### **Life must be lived for a purpose, an ideal**

I expected that at least the students would observe strict discipline and set an example to others. It was unfortunate that this was not always the case. The students were a small number and it should be easy to develop unity amongst them and real fellow-feeling. How can they hope to serve the country well if they have not learnt to cooperate with each other while at College?

Students! Education should serve to teach you two things: What is life and how you should live. Life is not mere existence. It must be lived for a purpose, an ideal. A life without ideals is utterly worthless. Only character and humility can lend meaning to life. Students should strive to develop these qualities. Earning of money cannot be the sole purpose of education. If money was all that mattered, it could be got by other means than education by begging or stealing. Education should help one to acquire good qualities.

The Sai educational institutions have been established not to enable students to earn a living but to make them acquire good traits and lead ideal lives. I wish that henceforth you should concentrate not only on your studies but also on the development of your character so that you may serve as an example to others and promote Sai ideals everywhere by your actions.

*Prashaanthi Nilayam, 9 February 1984*

*The fate of the country will depend on the character of its people and character is elevated and purified by saadhana, the hard way of regulation of behaviour and the control of desire. God is the guardian, and as guardian, He has to warn and punish to wean people away from harmful habits. If it is necessary, the guardian will resort to the infliction of pain too, as a curative and corrective treatment.*

*Sri Sathya Sai*