



Sri Sathya Sai Advises Parents

Bhagavan inaugurated an exhibition entitled 'Creative Creation', organized by the students of Brindavan Campus as part of the Hostel Day celebrations of Sri Sathya Sai College, Brindavan, on 4th and 5th of February 1984. Sri Govind Narain, former Governor of Karnataka and Sri. M.K. Rasagotra, Secretary, External Affairs Ministry were present on this occasion. Bhagavan addressed a meeting of the staff, students, and parents on 5th evening.

"Parents today tend to lavish too much affection on their children. But such affection alone is not enough. There should also be control over the children. There should be both love and law. Only when both love and restraint are present will the love prove beneficial. The parents are primarily responsible for all the evil habits of their children, who are naturally innocent and uninformed. They do not make any efforts to teach proper ways of behavior to them. They pamper the children by giving them money freely. They want their boys to become high officers, to earn large incomes, acquire wealth, and lead a life of comfort and ease. But they do not consider for a moment how they should make the children realize the need to develop good qualities. It is up to the parents to teach the children to cultivate right attitudes and moral qualities. To encourage them merely to get on in life is not proper. Parents should feel happy only when they see their sons leading blameless lives, acquiring a good name, and behaving properly. To rejoice merely at the birth of a son is foolish.

Dhritarashtra [Kaurava patriarch] had a hundred sons, the Kauravas. He knew very well that they were a wicked lot, pursuing bad ways. He knew also that his brother's sons, the Pandavas, were wedded to *dharma* (righteousness) and that the Kauravas were inflicting many indignities and injuries on the Pandavas. Although Vyasa [the teacher] told Dhritarashtra several times that out of his misplaced affection for his sons he should not allow the latter to persecute the Pandavas, the doting father did not pay any heed to Vyasa's advice. Consequently, he got involved in many sinful actions.

Give right values to the children

Vyasa warned Dhritarashtra, "Dhritarashtra, I do not say that it is wrong to love your sons. But you must know what kind of son you should love. Not knowing this, you are behaving like a blind man. By showing your love on a bad son, you are causing harm to the community and the country." What did Dhritarashtra achieve by his blind infatuation for his sons? In the final outcome, he had no one even to

perform his funeral obsequies. The righteous Pandavas had to render this service to him.

It is not wrong to love children, but you (parents) should learn how to love them. Whenever the children go astray, wittingly or unwittingly, parents should hasten to correct their faults and bring them on the right path. The obligations of parents do not end with providing food, schooling, and knowledge of worldly matters. The children should also be provided with right values. They should not be made to think that the acquisition of wealth is the be-all and end-all of life. Wealth does not accompany one when he leaves the world. Wealth is necessary only for meeting one's essential needs. Too much wealth is an embarrassment like an over-sized shoe. Too little of it is likely to be painful, like a right-fitting shoe. So, it is desirable to have only that amount of wealth that is adequate for one's basic needs. It is deplorable that today in the mad pursuit of money, people are forgetting all human qualities.

The persevering seeker secures wisdom

Young people today are totally oblivious to the importance of dedicating their lives to great ideals. It is up to the parents to endeavor to make their children lead purposeful lives. Teachers, on their part, should set an example and inculcate the right values in their wards. Only a lit lamp can give light to other lamps. If teachers lack idealism how can they inspire their students to lead ideal lives?

People talk about the spiritual life, but rarely practice it, and often act contrary to it. The reason is the lack of virtues. Without good qualities, all other attributes are useless. It is like pouring water in a pot full of holes. When the heart is oozing with bad thoughts and evil desires, how can you fill it with pure aspirations?

Governor Banerjee spoke about success and mentioned that "success begets success." But how is success to be achieved and what is the success you should aim for? The *Gita* says: "*Shraddhavan Labhate jnanam*". ("The persevering seeker secures wisdom.") This means that without perseverance and earnestness no success can be achieved. You must take interest in the path shown by elders. You must devote attention to the knowledge taught by the ancients. You must pay heed to what the elders say. If you have no *shraddha* (earnestness) you cannot achieve anything, whatever other qualifications you may have.

Despite eons of evolution and considerable progress in scientific knowledge, man is not able to make significant progress toward the Divine because of absence of strenuous striving in the spiritual sphere. Without spiritual practice, reading religious books and listening to spiritual discourses have no value. Study of the *Upanishads* and *Shastras* (spiritual sciences) and reciting God's names may be good acts in themselves. But if there is no love, which is the basis of all *sadhana* (spiritual discipline), they are of no use. They are like buttermilk. But the love of God is like well-boiled milk. Everything is contained in it—all proteins and vitamins. Love

reinforces one's physical, mental, and spiritual energies. Devotional acts without love are like diluted buttermilk in which there are no nutrients.

The importance of faith

Dhyana (meditation) and *japa* (repetition of sacred formula) without love are lifeless rituals. Love that expresses itself in service to all living things is the best expression of the love of God. There is no true devotion without such love. It is love that is unchanging and that does not mind any sacrifice in serving others. When we have students filled with such love and imbued with the spirit of service, the nation will achieve unalloyed prosperity, peace, and progress. Learn, first of all, to honor your parents. Be respectful to elders and heed their advice. Carry out the behests of your teachers. Place your trust in God.

Without faith in God, all other possessions are of no avail. Take, for instance, the case of Duryodhana [a Kaurava]. He was the lord of an empire. Both Duryodhana and Arjuna [a Pandava] went to Krishna before the Kurukshetra battle. Duryodhana wanted only Krishna's army on his side. Arjuna was content to have Krishna alone on his side. This was enough to secure for him victory in the war. All the armies Duryodhana had were of no avail. Duryodhana relied on the clever strategies of Shakuni [his uncle]. He had no faith in the divine intelligence of Krishna. The lesson that students should learn from this episode is that they must rely not on their intellectual cleverness but on the guidance of their higher intelligence, which transcends ordinary reason and thinking. They should seek the support of *That* which sustains everything in creation.

Relationship between spirituality and science

Students should cultivate the quality of *sahana* (forbearance). Whatever you do, do it without any selfish motive. You spend a great deal of time to acquire some material object or other. How much time do you devote to thoughts of God? You shed tears profusely for getting sensuous pleasures. Do you shed a single tear for experiencing God? How then can you realize God?

Today manifestation of *bhakti* (devotion) has become a mass-produced manufactured product. But are the devotees practicing what they profess? Without practice can the fruits of devotion be realized. Spirituality is not separate from other aspects of life. You must understand that spirituality permeates everything. Science is spirituality. Mathematics is spirituality. Spirituality can be found in everything if you look for it. What, for instance, is the connection between mathematics and spirituality. Spiritual mathematics is different from academic mathematics. According to academic mathematics 3 minus 1 is equal to two. But in spiritual mathematics 3 minus 1 is one! How is that, it may be asked. There is a mirror. When you look at it, you see an image. There are thus three things: The seer, the mirror, and the image. When you take away the mirror, the image also goes and only one thing remains. Nature is the mirror. The Divine is the seer. The *jeevi* (individual) is the image. When the mirror of nature is removed, the *jeevi* goes and only the Divine remains.

Birth is the cause of all sorrow

It is the relationship with nature (the phenomenal world) that produces the appearance of duality and individual separateness. What one should seek to realize is the oneness with Divinity. The means of realization has been indicated in the 12th Canto of the *Bhagavad Gita* where the qualities of the true *bhakta* (devotee) are described. The primary quality is absence of hatred toward any living thing: "*Adveshtasa-Sarva Bhootanam*" (Cultivate Universal Love.) Avoid causing harm to others. Do not speak ill of anyone. Give up pride and egoism. Cultivate purity of thought, speech, and action. What is the origin of pride? Is it knowledge? What is this knowledge? It is really nothing more than ignorance. What is the cause of ignorance? It is the feeling of duality. Wherefrom has duality originated. From *raga* and *dwesha* (attachment and hatred).

What is the origin of these two? They are the products of circumstances. How have the circumstances come about? Through *karmas* (past deeds). What is the cause of *karmas*? It is birth. It will thus be clear that birth is the cause of all sorrow. It is only by seeking freedom from birth that one can free oneself from sorrow. The opportunity that has been provided by being born as a human being should be used for realizing this supreme goal.

It is the duty of parents to set children on the right path from their early years. They should not hesitate to correct them and even punish them when the children take to wrong ways. The best way they can show their love for their children is to do everything necessary to make them follow the right path. If any boy proves intractable or incorrigible, they should not hesitate to disown him. It is better to have one good son rather than a brood of bad children.

Years of youth are most precious

When the boys come home for holidays, the parents must keep a watch over their activities, movements, and companions. Some parents tend to pamper them at home on the ground that the boys might have lacked some things in the hostel. They are encouraged to see films or the TV. They are given unwholesome food. All this is undesirable. The children are undermined by these indulgences.

The parents should exercise restraints on themselves in the interest of the children. Because parents are present in large numbers, I have spoken in this strain. You must bear in mind that the years of youth are the most precious years in one's life and they should not be wasted or misspent. To let the children watch TV from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. is to make them forget all that they have learnt at school or college. In addition, they learn many evil things. If TV is used for teaching good things, it can serve a worthy purpose. But that is not the case. The younger generation is being ruined by undesirable films and TV programs. Their minds are being poisoned. It is not a sign of parental love to let children be mined in this manner. Even parents should avoid going to cinemas. All the crimes and violence we witness today are largely the result of the evil influence of films on young minds.

Education must be a preparation for selfless service

While science and technology may appear to confer many benefits, they also have many harmful effects. We must have the wisdom and discrimination to make the proper use of scientific knowledge. Students must learn how to use their learning to lead worthy and noble lives. If they cannot mold themselves properly in these crucial years, they cannot hope to lead better lives in later years. Parents and teachers have a duty to see that the children are brought up on right lines through love, precept and, if necessary, corrective measures.

Some parents say that their boys do not listen to their words. This is a sign of weakness. Why should children refuse to obey their parents? If from the beginning children are taught to respect parents and elders, this kind of attitude will not develop. A disobedient child should have no place in the home. It is only when parents show firmness in dealing with their children that they will develop along right lines. It is because parents and teachers fail to enforce discipline that students behave in the most irresponsible way and indulge in disorder and violence.

Education must be regarded as a sacred process and a preparation for unselfish service to society. There are innumerable persons in the world who are suffering from various physical and other disabilities. It is the duty of educated persons to serve them and help to relieve their suffering to the maximum extent possible. This is the best form of service to the Divine. There is pollution in the air, in the water we use, and impurity in so many things. You must use the knowledge you acquire to purify what is impure. It is for this purpose that the science courses in the Sathya Sai Institute are being given a spiritual orientation. Service to society must become the primary purpose of education. Students of Sai Institutions should devote their knowledge not only to earn a living, but to use their talents and energies in whatever walk of life they may be engaged, to render service to society in all ways open to them."

[The Warden of the Hostel welcomed the gathering. The Chief Guest Sri A.N. Banerjee, Governor of Karnataka, addressed the gathering. Pandit Ravi Shankar presented a Sitar recital. Bhagavan presented rings to Ravi Shankar and the Tabla player. Bhagavan watched a display of gymnastics and a marchpast by the students at Brindavan College grounds that evening.]

Source: *Sri Sathya Sai Digvijayam* (1926-1985)

S.S.E. Students from regional Sai Centers have submitted offerings of artwork on the theme of the Divine Mother in honor of Mother's Day. You can view the artwork at <http://www.saisarathi.com>.

Easwaramma—An Homage

The Lord said In the Gita:
In every age when this Earth
Is dominated by sin
And evil prevails,
I descend on Earth
To redeem humanity.
However, while descending
Even the Lord has to follow
His own laws;
Even He has to decide
Who should act as His parents.
Imagine!
How fortunate the couple.
How lucky the home
Where the Lord takes His birth.

True, a mother is a mother,
Holy beyond words for all time
Even if the son goes astray.
But among them all
The one who begets Hari, the Lord,
Is the holiest of all.
Who has earned this honor
As the guerdon
For her relentless penance.
Who can reckon the amount of *punya*
Kaushalya could garner
In her previous births
Before Rama chose her
As His mother?
And who can gauge
The depth of suffering
Which Devaki must have undergone
To receive Krishna?

But O Easwaramma!
Unparalleled is the sacrifice
You made
To set an example
For women in every age
Of what motherhood is.
Let's open our hearts
For you to tread gently.

O Mother Divine!

It's not everyone
Who can fathom your love,
Your agony and your philosophy.
Imagine the moment when Sathya,
The darling of your heart
Stood confronting you and said,
'*Maya Maya*, it's all *Maya*,'
And you the mother stood
confounded!
The lips quivered.
The tearful eyes betokened
An ocean of surging love,
But you restrained their flow
Not allowing a drop to fall.

Tell us O world tell us
If there's a mother to compare with?
—A mother, whose lotus feet
Make you bow down
A thousand times.
"Kaushalya?" You say.
You are surely mistaken.
Kaushalya's ordeal was limited
To barely fourteen summers:
And time flies—
Years turn into months,
Months into days
And days into minutes and seconds,
And hope persists.

'What? Devaki?'
Devaki's was no agony at all
For who's that mother
That wouldn't prefer
To live away from her son
And see him happy
Than to keep him with her
And lose him?
And did she not know
That He whom she delivered
Was the Lord Himself,

Easwaramma's agony was unique.
It's the agony of a fish
Living in water and yet thirsty!
The Lord said,
"I belong to the *bhaktas*.
They need me,
How can I leave them
And belong to you?
If you need Me,
Come and join the congregation
And forget the worldly bonds
Of mother and son."

The mother listened and listened
To these heart-rending words,
But she neither shrieked nor cried,
Rather looked straight
At her dear little Sathya
Shedding affection from her
moistened eyes.

Mother!
The holiest of the holy ones,
The Lord demanded your devotion;
But what is devotion;
If not the acme of Love—
Pure and selfless Love—
Which never gets dim
Ev'n in the darkest hour?
Who could claim better devotion
Than you?

O Gentleness incarnate!
You dived deep
Into the agony of Love
And had it in full measure.
Your decision was clear,

"Let *bhakti* go to the *bhaktas*
I need my son.
Let those who aspire for
Deliverance, get it;
But the thirst of a mother
Shouldn't go unquenched."
"If God is Love and Love is God,
And all else on earth
Transient,
Then let Love prevail."
And it did prevail.
The words of the Lord
Were rendered true
By none else than the Lord's Mother.

In Brindavan
When the elements wanted to
Disintegrate,
And you knew your time was come,
You called, "Swami! Swami."
"Coming!" said the
Lord and rushed;
But you outpaced Him.
When He reached
The nest was empty,
The winged-one had gone
As if to tell Him,
"Here lies the *Maya* dead,"
And the Mother merged with the Son;
For Love is eternal,
Steadfast and immortal,
Whereas *Maya* assumes
New forms every day
And the wheel of life and death moves
on.

~*Bhagwat Prasad Misra, Prasanthi Nilayam*

Walking with the Divine

Living in Dharmakshetra (Mumbai) I was blessed at an early age. As a child I visited the center regularly with my grandfather. The first time I met Swami was in Kodaikanal. He walked into the hall and was standing close to me. He suddenly gave me a look that still resonates with me to this day. Swami as the beacon of light has been guiding me on the divine journey ever since during the peaks and valleys in life.



One of the greatest blessings was coming to Canada. Only applying to one university and being selected was entirely with Swami's grace. Swami blessed me with the opportunity to complete the Sathya Sai International Leadership Program for Young Adults and SSE *guru* training. Both of these instances changed my life completely. My connection with Swami was strengthened.

Being a part of the Young Adults Leadership Program has helped me serve and dedicate myself in ways that has made me a better person. Being guided by Swami on the divine journey has helped me gain confidence.

Teaching kids has always been a passion of mine. Only Swami knew that I would become an SSE guru. One of the greatest gifts that Swami has given me is my connection to the children that I teach. With each day, I feel myself becoming closer and closer to

Swami. Teaching students in SSE is like touching the Divine Heart of Swami. It gives me immense happiness.

~Sai Lakshmi, Canada

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Q & A with Bhagavan:

Jnana and Yoga

- Q. You have been saying that *jnana* is essential; well, what exactly is the function of *jnana*?
- A. *Jnana* makes you realize the *atma-swarupa*, that is to say, your own Reality.
- Q. And *yoga*? If a person has no *yoga*, what happens?
- A. He is like a lame man.
- Q. And if a person has no *jnana*?
- A. He is like a blind man.
- Q. They say that *yoga* destroys all blemishes, removes all faults. How does that happen?
- A. Can rice become eatable unless it is boiled over a fire? By *yoga* and other disciplines, the *chitta* [will] becomes soft. It is called *tapas*—heat; it becomes *tapta*—hot. Moreover, *yoga* and *jnana* are like oil and flame. The oil is *yoga* and *jnana* is the illumining flame of the lamp.
- Q. Swami! Pardon me for asking this. There are so many teaching *Vedanta* now, have they all realized the truth and experienced this Reality?
- A. How can this be said? You can yourselves judge them. See if they have purity of heart, purity of thought, purity of mind, knowledge of the inherent and immanent *Paramatma*; only such have the right to teach *Vedanta*, for they alone can experience the *Vedanta*.
- Q. The teaching by those who have no such qualities, will it benefit to a certain extent at least?
- A. Fine descriptions of the various delicacies and tasty dishes will not satisfy the hungry man. The *Vedanta* that stops with words is like that. It has to be experienced in order to satisfy. Again, listening without eagerness to learn is also ineffective. Unless the teacher has detachment from sense objects, his teaching is but parrot talk. Those who come to listen without desire to learn and benefit are only engaged in showy demonstrations.

- Q. Baba! You say that purity of heart, purity of mind, and knowledge of the immanent and transcendent *Paramatma* are essential. Then of what use is *sadhana* done through the body, composed of the five elements? Is it not enough if one acquires the *jnana* of *swa-swarupa*?
- A. Wonderful fellow! Simply because the rudder is essential, can you take it that the boat is unnecessary? How can you cross the river with the rudder alone? Believe that the Lord has conferred upon you the body as a boat to cross the sea of *Samsara*, and *chitta* as the main thing in it. That is the first step in *Vedanta*. *Swa-swarupa-jnana* is the rudder really. But that alone is not sufficient; physical habits and disciplines have also to be attended to. To attain the ethereal eternal stage, the disciplined body is important.
- Q. Another doubt afflicts me, Swami. Talking of physical disciplines, may I know whether *Brahmavidya* [spiritual knowledge] makes any distinction between male and female?
- A. Well, my boy! This boat has no such distinction. *Brahmavidya* and *Chittashudhi* [purification of mind] do not depend on sex at all. All who are ill have the right to the drug that cures, is it not? So, too, all who have the illness of *bhava* (birth and death) have the right to *Brahmavidya*, the specific that will cure it. It may be that not all can afford to have access to that wonder drug; but you cannot argue that some have no right to it.
- Q. Why, Swami, some *Vedanta* scholars themselves say that women have no authority to learn or practice *Brahmavidya*! The boats are not of the same nature, it seems.
- A. My child! As I said, both have equal right to the specific. But both have to follow a regimen in order that the drug might act upon the system. *Brahma-bhavana* or the contemplation of the essential basis of oneself, is the drug; along with it the regimen of *jnana* and *vairagya* [detachment] has to be rigorously followed. Women may not be able to observe this disciplinary regimen as rigorously as men, since they are weaker. Perhaps, the reason for those people denying women the right to this drug is this weakness. But all, whether men or women, who can observe the restrictions and regulations, have an equal right to benefit by the drug of *Brahmavidya*. That is my verdict.

Source: *Prasnottara Vahini*

Thought of the Month:

How to Combine Pleasure and Renunciation

The *Isaavaasyopanishad* [Hindu scriptures] declares that whatever *bhoga* (pleasure) one wants to enjoy, he should do so in a spirit of renunciation. In daily life, enjoyment and renunciation do not go together. The *tyagi* (renunciant) is not interested in enjoyment of sensual pleasures. The *bhogi* (the pleasure-seeker) will not think of renunciation. In such a situation, how is it possible to combine enjoyment of pleasures with renunciation or sacrifice? It is in this context that the *Isaavaasyopanishad* has declared that when every action is free from the sense of *ahamkara* (egoistic doership) and all enjoyment is free from attachment or desire, there will be no difference between enjoyment and renunciation. Hence any enjoyment associated with the ego and with attachment will be enjoyment without sacrifice. When ego and attachment are absent, the actions are free from self-interest and hence are tantamount to acts of sacrifice.

How then, can man experience the enjoyment associated with sacrifice? Such selfishness converts *bhoga* (enjoyment) into a *roga* (malady). Man should aim at becoming a *yogi* and not a *bhogi*. What really constitutes pleasure? Is it eating, drinking, and indulging in sensual enjoyment? For protecting the body, food is doubtlessly necessary. Raiment is needed for protection against cold. But beyond these basic needs; to pamper the body is futile as it is essentially composed of decaying elements. Instead of pampering the body, man should use it in the service of the Lord.

You must understand that when you limit your desires, keep the welfare of society in view, and seek to discharge your duties, you will be realizing the objective of combining enjoyment with sacrifice. In fact, the bliss that is derived when one renders service to others is beyond measure. It is by such sacrifice that real joy is experienced. When anything is done in expectation of a return, such joy cannot be got.

Sacrifice has also been declared to be the only means of achieving immortality. Giving up what is taken in is a law of life. It applies to breathing, food, and other things. Likewise, the wealth that one acquires should also be given back to society. Wealth includes not only riches, but every other form of acquisition including knowledge, scholarship, and skills of various kinds. The knowledge you have acquired through education should be imparted to others. It is by such sharing that your education gets enriched and purposeful. If you do not impart the knowledge you possess, it becomes useless. This means that the more you give, the more you grow.

Source: *Sathya Sai Speaks*, Vol. XXIV, pages,106,109,110,111