

15. THE IDEAL STUDENT

*With scholarship, one may subdue savants in court;
Brave in spirit, one may fight courageous battles;
Born a king, one might rule over an Empire;
One may lavish gifts of gold;
One might be able to count all the stars in the sky;
One might be able to enumerate all the living species;
One may master all the eight forms of knowledge;
One may even land on the moon;
But of what use are all these achievements,
If one is not able to control the mind and the senses,
And uphold eternal human values?*

Students, Boys and Girls!

What the world badly needs today is not wealth, affluence, and prosperity but students with exemplary character. The progress of the nation depends on such students alone. This is the fundamental assumption of *Bharatiya* culture. *Bharatiya* culture is the epitome of truth that is eternal. It is impervious to the passage of time

and not influenced by history. *Sanathana dharma* is the core of *Bharatiya* culture. The culture of Bharat is latent in everyone as human values. This land Bharat is sacred in all respects. There is *sathya* in its dust, *dharma* in the wind, and *daya* (compassion) in the sand. *Prema* or love flows in the sacred river Ganges. To top it all, there is *kshama* or forbearance in the people of this land.

Human Values are your very life

Bharat has been the home of such noble qualities and virtues from ancient times. The *rishis* of yore crowned sacrifice and not people. They accorded *dharma* a place of pride in their lives, were committed to justice, and embraced *sathya*. It is such sacred practices alone that have protected Bharat through the ages. Unfortunately, values declined in the course of time, and *Bharatiyas* of today have completely forgotten all about our ancient culture. People no longer remember their duty and obligations. In the prevailing situation, the basic principles of our ancient culture have become a vital necessity for one and all. Indeed, because of its fundamental nature, this culture is needed not only for the people of this land but also for the whole of humanity. Which country can afford to deny *sathya*? Which country can say that it has no need for *dharma*? Is there a person who says that he or she does not want *santhi*? Is there a human being that does not want love? *Sathya*, *dharma*, *santhi*, *prema*, and *ahimsa* are indispensable for the whole of humanity. They are vital for the survival of mankind. Neglecting to uphold these basic values, *Bharatiyas* in recent times have slowly forgotten all about virtues and character.

Students, Boys and Girls! You are the future citizens of this country. The glory of the ancient culture of Bharat can be revived only if you become the torchbearers. Today, falsehood, injustice, bad conduct, and evil are rampant everywhere in the country. You students must firmly resolve to wipe out all such forces of immorality. Students of Bharat must make every effort to abide by basic human values and to spread joy and happiness in society.

Human values do not come from somewhere outside. They are latent in a human being and come along with the person at the time of birth itself. Since they are already in you, there is no need to go searching for them all over the place. They are in you and follow you wherever you go. If you cannot recognise the values already latent in you, how then are you going to understand your innate nature? If a person does not understand what *sathya* and *dharma* mean, how then is he going to live as a human being? Therefore, begin by realising that *sathya* and *dharma* are already in you. *Bharatiya* culture stresses the tremendous importance of *sathya* and *dharma* through the injunctions: *sathyam vada, dharmam chara*. Always speak the truth and follow the path of righteousness. *Sathya* and *dharma* are the fundamental guiding principles of mankind.

*Without sathya, dharma, santhi, and prema,
Education is empty.*

*Without sathya, dharma, santhi, and prema,
Charity and donations have no value.*

*Without sathya, dharma, santhi, and prema,
Sacred activities so-called are pointless.*

*The eternal values sathya, dharma, santhi, and prema
Are the four pillars of Sanathana Dharma.
What else is to be communicated
To this august body of students?*

Gateway to ruin

Students! Human values are your very life, and you should never abandon them. Do not dissipate yourself by struggling for worldly achievements and power. No matter how powerful you are, if you immerse yourself in the world, you are sure to get drowned. Ravana was most powerful. His strength was unmatched and so was his wealth. There was no comfort he did not enjoy. There was nothing he lacked. He was highly learned too, having mastered sixty-four forms of knowledge. He even knew the language of the birds and the animals. Despite all this, he became a slave to just one bad quality, lust; and that one weakness brought about his total ruin. On account of desire, he lost his kingdom, his kith and kin, and his own son too. In the end, he lost his life.

There is also the example of Hiranyakasipu, a scientist *par excellence*. Whereas modern scientists have journeyed merely to the moon, Hiranyakasipu travelled all the way to the stars in order to investigate them. Once, as a part of his studies he was about to disturb a star. Fearing that there might be terrible consequences, people respectfully requested Hiranyakasipu to abandon his plans. Hiranyakasipu yielded and returned. This man who was so clever, smart, and accomplished, hated God. Why? Because he was a slave to anger. Anger and hatred blinded Hiranyakasipu

completely and brought about his downfall. He lost everything, including his life. An angry man will never achieve true success. He will constantly face obstacles and be driven to sin. He will invite only contempt from others. This is what anger does to a person, and Hiranyakasipu embraced this vile quality.

We also have the example of Duryodhana who was just as bad as Hiranyakasipu. He grabbed the territory that rightfully belonged to the Pandavas and exiled them to the forest. It was *lobha* or greed that drove him to such mean acts. *Kama* (desire), *krodha* (anger), and *lobha* (greed), are three great enemies of man. The evil persons mentioned thus far had only one bad trait each in them; but in this *Kali* age, all the three evil qualities co-exist in the same person. If one weakness alone led to such disaster earlier, what can happen to a person when all three are together present is beyond one's imagination. Students must therefore exercise strict control over tendencies that can lead toward *kama*, *krodha*, and *lobha*. Perhaps it may not be possible to completely quell such tendencies; only the very great have been able to wholly vanquish them. Even so, these bad qualities must be kept in check as much as possible. If any undesirable thoughts come to you, pause and think: "Is it good or bad? Is it right or wrong?" If your heart says it is bad, then immediately drive the thought away. Such discipline alone would, in future, enable you to become an emancipator of this country. Unfortunately, at the present time, neither parents nor teachers nor leaders give proper guidance and direction. This is what is responsible for students going astray.

Students are intrinsically selfless, pure, and unsullied. Basically, they are very good. If they have bad qualities, they are generally

inherited from parents. In the school, the bad qualities multiply. When they enter adult life, the prevailing political environment wipes out all traces of good qualities. Politics is the root cause for the present plight of the country. It alone is to be blamed for the decline of values and virtues, and the concomitant growth of evil. Therefore, avoid politics! Instead, dedicate your life for the progress, welfare, and the development of the nation. No matter what, be resolute in serving the country. Nothing excels service and sacrifice.

Always be happy

Students! In olden times, centres of learning were regarded as highly sacred. People in such centres prayed thus:

Sarve loka hite ratah.

May everyone be prosperous. In those days, people prayed for the welfare of one and all.

Sarve samuditah gunaih.

May everyone be virtuous.

Sarve jnana sampannah.

May everyone be blessed with wisdom.

Broaden your mind and treat the body as most sacred. Always ensure that your words are truthful and unsullied. Do not

permit your body to stray to the path of sin. Man's true nature is a combination of a pure heart, an unsullied mind, and sacred speech. That is why it is often said: The proper study of mankind is man. He alone is worthy of being called a man whose thought, word, and actions are in perfect harmony. You should speak the truth that comes out of your heart. *What you say, you must do.*

*Tridalam, Trigunakaram, Trinetrām Ca Triyayudham.
Trijanma Papa Samharam, Eka Bilvam Sivarpanam.*

*I reverentially offer the trifoliate Bilva leaf to Lord Siva, the
Three-eyed One, who bears three weapons, and has the power
to wipe out the sins committed in three births.*

In the *Gita*, there is a reference to *pathram* (leaf), *pushpam* (flower), *phalam* (fruit), and *toyam* (water). Your body is the leaf, your mind is the fruit, and your heart is the flower. Your tears of joy represent water. You should shed tears of joy and not of sorrow. Why at all should you ever be sad? Sorrow is the result of worldly attachments. Never give any room for sadness; always be happy, happy, and happy! What is happiness? Happiness is union with God. Be always attached to Divinity, and problems will not bother you. Due to bondage as well as due to the vagaries of the world, pain and pleasure will keep visiting you in alternation. But you should learn to ignore them; they are just passing clouds; they come and go. They should never be allowed to enter your heart. Instead, let your Heart be just a witness. In fact, your heart is truly the Eternal Witness. By all means do what you must; do your duty; but remain aloof and detached. Abide by the advice of your parents. Absorb all their good teachings. Revere them as your preceptors and God. *Rishis* of old declared:

*Matr Devo bhava. Pitr Devo bhava.
Acharya Devo bhava. Atithi Devo bhava.*

Mother is God, father is God, your teacher is God, and your guest also is God. In fact, in this world, all are divine. If you are good boys, you become God boys! You should therefore all become good boys and experience the *Atmic* Principle. If your heart is devoid of divine feelings, your entire life would become empty.

Strive for the restoration of dharma

Spirituality has declined sharply in recent times, and consequently human values have been forgotten. In turn, this has led to the disappearance of ethics and morality. Owing to the absence of ethics and morality, *dharma* also has vanished. Since there is no *dharma*, there are no ideal persons anymore and there is no idealism left.

Clearly, restoration of human values should be the country's first priority; then alone would the country be seized with spiritual fervour. The rise of spirituality will automatically promote morality in society. The return of morality is nothing but the restoration of *dharma* (*dharmasamsthapana*). When *dharma* prevails, everyone can easily lead an ideal life.

Students! You should all lead ideal lives. For that, you must strictly adhere to the path of *dharma*. Enquire deeply: "What is the basis for *dharma*?" Morality is the basis of *dharma*!

Dharayatiti dharmah.

Ceaseless contemplation of God is tantamount to following *dharma*. What is the prime quality of fire? To burn is its natural attribute. If it does not burn, it cannot be called fire. What is the quality of ice? To be cold is its nature. If it is not cold, it cannot be called ice. In the same way, what is the distinctive quality of man? Truth is the innate quality of man. But unfortunately, there is hardly any trace of truth in the world today. That is why there are law and order problems all over the world. Man opens his mouth only to utter untruth. No one believes what the other person says. How can children grow up to be truthful in such an environment?

Satyam nasti parodharmah.

There is no *dharma* greater than *sathya*. If there is no *sathya*, there cannot be any *dharma*. Harishchandra faced innumerable obstacles and enormous difficulties; but he stuck resolutely to *Sathya* all his life. People complain: “What can I do? It is so difficult to be truthful these days. If I do so, I might have to lose my job.” So what? Let go of the job. Why so much fuss about *udyogam* (job)? What you really need is *yogam* (spiritual progress) and not *udyogam* (employment)!

Man today is all the time concerned only about job and money. It is nothing but job, money; job, money; job and money. Man has become a servant of job and a slave of money. Is this the way to live? You must become a slave of *sathya*! Today we need leaders who are *dharmic*. Only a slave of *sathya* can become a *dharmic* leader. Without *dharma*, how can one become a *dharmic* leader?

The behaviour of people these days is a matter of great shame. Truly speaking, you are the son of *dharma* but what is it that you are doing to uphold *dharma*? There is none to speak forthrightly like this, and that is why the country is plummeting to ruin. There is no need to be afraid of being truthful. Be bold and face difficulties squarely. Bear the suffering and march resolutely a head. Students of such high calibre are a vital necessity in today's world.

Students! Life is meant to be a saga of bliss. Adhere to the path of *sathya*. Install *dharma* in your mind. Then you will automatically experience and enjoy *santhi*. You must be totally aligned to *Bharatiya* culture. What is meant by *samskruti* (culture)? That which refines is culture. You should be a refined and a cultured individual.

Bharatiya culture is most sacred. Because of its spiritual basis, it has from ancient times served as a beacon to all lands. Elsewhere today, the situation is deteriorating. And this country which was once the fountainhead of *sathya* and *dharma* is faring no better. It is a matter of shame that it has lost its old glory. You are the children of this ancient culture and civilisation. You must uphold this tradition so that you can hold your head proudly and declare that you are a *Bharatiya*, wherever you go. This is the level of self-respect that you must achieve. You must boldly declare: "This is my motherland, this is my mother tongue, and this is my tradition." You must enhance the prestige and the reputation of this country. You must be an instrument that spreads the name and fame of Bharat. Spiritual power alone will enable you to do

all this, and *dharma* is the basis for spiritual power. For *dharma*, *sathya* is the foundation. The close inter-relationship between *sathya* and *dharma* is the cardinal feature of *Bharatiya* culture.

Hallmark of a Sai student

Embodiments of Love! Just recently, all of you have taken a stiff examination with difficult questions. A few questions were so difficult that even some teachers did not know the answers! Nevertheless, all students have scored over ninety percent! Two students have even scored *centum*! The overall performance has been so good that Swami feels that everyone should have got a hundred out of hundred! (Loud applause.) Elsewhere, it is difficult to find students with such concentration and focus on spirituality. The discipline of students is also of a high order. Swami does not want to praise students in their presence but facts need to be mentioned. The discipline found in the Sathya Sai educational institutions cannot be found anywhere in the world (applause). Elsewhere, you might find enforced discipline but in our institutions, discipline is spontaneous, born of the heart, and therefore sacred. Sai students bring credit to their *alma mater*, irrespective of where they go. The Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning enjoys great reputation all over the world.

There may be a few shortcomings here and there. You must aim at being perfect and eliminate these. You must earn an even higher reputation for your Institute. One look at you, and people must be immediately able to identify you as a Sai student. Your looks must be sacred, conduct impeccable, and behaviour exemplary.

*Your looks must ever be compassionate,
Your words must ever be soaked in truth,
And your feelings must ever be nectarine.*

You must always be happy and under no circumstance appear downcast. Smile always; that should be your trademark.

Swami constantly gives, without even being asked

Students, soon many of you will be leaving the portals of the Institute. Wherever you go, maintain your character and your sacred outlook. Swami blesses that this shall be so. Right from the beginning, Sai institutions have been giving free education. Not a single paisa is charged as fees. There are no fees of any kind. It is all free, free, and free! Actually, where you are concerned, this term free has no place. Who is giving free to whom? You are all Mine, and I am yours (loud applause)! I give My children what I want to give; is it proper to describe this as a free offering? You must appreciate this bond of unity between Swami and yourself – *I and you are one!*

If you want a new dress, do you go to your father and say, “Father, you are making so much money. You are able to afford so many luxuries. How about a new dress for me?” You do not do that. You simply demand the dress as a matter of right, irrespective of what his earnings are and what his status is. You have the same right with Swami. You do not have to beg of Swami or praise Him before making a request.

Īsanah Sarvavidyanam.
Īsarah Sarvabhutanam.

God is present in all beings and the same Divine Principle is present in you as well as Me. You must understand this fundamental truth. It is enough if you grasp this basic fact; there is no need for formal worship, ritual, and the like. Fill your heart with sacred feelings; there is nothing greater than that.

Draw people into the Sai path

You must all register steady spiritual progress and share with others what you have gained. Every year, each student must induct at least ten others into the spiritual path and train them properly. *This is your real job, not the one that fetches a salary.* Train as many people as you can to follow Sai's principles and teachings.

It is said that Bharat is economically backward. This is no doubt true to some extent. But there is a greater problem faced by the country; in fact, it is a grave danger, and that is the decline of moral and spiritual values among the people. It is this decline that is mainly responsible for the present plight of the country. If public morality and ethics improve, all-round progress would automatically follow. Hence, do not be concerned that the country lacks wealth. What is true wealth? True wealth is love for God. That is the wealth you must acquire. Develop all the love you can; never stop. If you wish, go for higher studies and seek high positions. But always use these advantages for helping others.

Help ever, hurt never. Help everyone and not just the members of your family or community. Do not differentiate by saying, “These are mine, those others are not”. Regard everyone as belonging to you. Such feelings alone can weld the whole of humanity into one tightly-knit family (*viswakutumbam*). Never forget this.

The importance of adjustment and understanding

Embodiments of Love! During the summer course, you may have had to face many inconveniences. Swami knows about them all. In fact, these inconveniences are intended to be a part of your training. At home you may have a room all to yourself but here you have had to share a small room with as many as thirty people sometimes. Swami knows how difficult this is. However, this is done deliberately in order to teach you adjustment and mutual understanding. These two qualities are most essential in life. If you have learnt how to adjust with your room mates here, you can adjust with people anywhere in the world, and under any circumstance.

Next, food. You have come from different parts of the country and are accustomed to different types of food. Your tastes vary, but over here you all have happily accepted the type of food served. There was not even a trace of any discontent, displeasure, or disappointment. You must develop such contentment and joy in all aspects of life. You must be ever humble, under all circumstances. Humility is the hallmark of a true Sai student. Such behaviour would make you an ideal person and earn a great reputation for your Institute. This is what would make Swami

extremely happy. Swami does not want anything else. He only wants you to earn a good name. This is all that Swami wants, and you do not have to do anything special to please Swami. However, Swami is ever ready to do anything for you. Get a good name, and become leaders in society. Then alone would *Bharatiya* culture be restored to its ancient glory. Be polite, courteous, and humble when speaking to elders. Never be rough or rude. Your humility would please the elder to whom you are speaking. At times, you may not be able to do what you are asked to, but you can be courteous while being non-committal. As Swami often says: “You cannot always oblige but you can always speak obligingly. Cultivate this practice.”

Always love your mother and motherland

Always be immersed in divine feelings. If you happen to see a wicked person, do not immediately think of that person as being bad. The bad actions of that person are due to the body but within that person is the same *Atma* that is also in you. This unity, this *Atmic* Principle is what you must focus on. Deal with this other person with the feeling that the Self in you is also present in him. This is the way to develop love for all beings. Also, do not bear ill will toward any country but be alike to all. Do not criticise the culture of other countries. Love your culture as your mother, just as people of other lands love their respective cultures.

Janani Janmabhumisca Svargadapi Gariyasi.

One's mother and motherland are greater than the very heaven.

Always love these two. If you live like this, you will, without question, become an ideal person. It is not dress that makes a person great. Merely putting on *kaashaayam* (ochre robes) does not make one a noble person; one should see that there is no *kashaayam* (ill-feelings) within. It is not externals but internals that are important. You must spiritualise your attitude, tendencies, and mind. Blessing you all to develop a sacred outlook and find fulfilment in life, Swami brings this discourse to a close.

Bhagavan then sang two *bhajans*. The first was a not commonly heard song beginning with the words *Sathya dharmamu....* After this, He sang the familiar *Prema Mudita....*

30 May 2000