

25. Studies

Earning a fat salary is not the chief thing at all; no. The aim should be the cultivation of virtue. Studies are the roots of the tree of life. The attachments which the individual develops towards kith and kin, the objects of the world, the ideals and the goals, the fancies and fashions--all these form the branches and twigs. The blossoms which the tree produces are the intelligence and its manifestations. The blossoms yield the fruit of *Aanandham* or Joy.

The fruit of *aanandham* confers the sweetness called *Character*. The essence of character is virtue. It is in virtue that the tree of life justifies itself. The root of education fulfils itself in the fruit of virtue. Without it, life is a waste; it is as much a waste as a tasteless fruit.

So, the aim of all study should be the cultivation of good qualities, the development of virtuous habits, the raising of the standard of values, of one's own self-respect. We say, 'they study' or 'he studies'. What really is the study? Years of study do not give any idea of the 'entity' that studies! The result of study does not reveal itself in character and virtue; the educated person is more prone to temptation and more addicted to evil habits and evil attitudes. The best that can be said of the learned is that they are efficient in the art of argument and cynical discussion and criticism. The real subject of study for men is the study of the means of ending death and birth.

Result of knowledge without virtue

Millions read, and write; millions attain degrees and become experts and specialists; they are efficient collectors of information or big encyclopaedias of general knowledge; but, not one can say, who he really is. What is the use, then, of the vast amount of exertion and energy they have spent for their education?

Each space rocket costs as much as will maintain all the Universities in India for a period of twelve years! What a colossal waste is this? People try to fly millions of miles into space, but, they are powerless to travel even half an inch to their own inner realm and discover what lies therein, what their reality is.

This 'Science' has enveloped the whole world in mortal dread; each nation holds its life in the clasp of the palm and is shivering in hate and fear, awaiting the moment when it may be reduced to ashes or dust. That is the result of knowledge without virtue. A spark of hatred or pride or short temper can set the whole world aflame today. But, the science that was extolled and practised in India since ages is the science of sense control, of mind control, of character development, of the cultivation of the individual and social virtues, the progressive unfoldment of the Divine in man, not of the mean in man.

It speaks of the reality *aspuurnam* (fulfilled), and of this world too, as fulfilled, *puurnam*. From the full, this full has manifested. It does not posit any incomplete, unsatisfied vacuum or discontent. For, it taps the very spring of eternal Joy and Strength and Wisdom. That is the path of spiritual discipline, steady intellectual and moral discipline. That is the basic, the essential study. The cultured person is the person who has cultured the spirit, not the person who caters to the senses and enslaves himself to their attractions.

Foster the divine in each one

When the *buddhi* (intellect) is thus transmuted, man attains *siddhi* (fulfilment). When moral discipline is absent, man reduces himself into a brute. There is the spark of the divine in each one and the duty is to foster it and develop it and benefit by it, rather than smother it and silence it.

How to keep in constant contact with this higher Self that is seeking expression in our acts and words and thoughts? The best means is the simple exercise of Naama *smarana*, the repetition of any one of the meaningful Names of the Lord, signifying the Glory that lies embedded in man. People indulge in all types of purposeless gossip and scandal; they find time and interest in these degrading pursuits; but, they have no inclination to awaken the Divine in them by constant indwelling on the splendour of Creation and the Creator. See only such scenes as will foster this discipline; speak only of elevating, uplifting subjects; listen only to purifying topics; think and feel only pure thoughts and emotions. That is the way to develop the Divinity inherent in each one. Our thoughts now build up only castles in the air; our plans are like bubbles on the surface of the waters. They are ephemeral, because they have no grounding in the permanent, the eternal base.

Life on this world is a bubble that is formed in a second and bursts the next second. It is a fair, that lasts a portion of a day. The entire career of a person starts and finishes in a matter of two hours. All the pomp and paraphernalia that man seeks and flourishes are of the stuff of dreams. Which among these is true? Which among these lasts for all time, without degenerating or declining or dying? You are all present now; you are seeing Me and listening to Me; you feel now that this is true. But, how long is this true, how true is all this? This is real experience for you, so long as you are in the waking stage. This night, when you lie down in bed and start dreaming, the dream is as real to you as all this. This waking stage and all this experience are then unreal. You experience fears, delusions, joys and pleasures in the dream and they are all true, so long as you dream. But, wake up; and, the dream is negated! Both are dreams, a night dream and a day dream. Only one idea is permanent, throughout the dream, the deep sleep and the waking, the idea of the 'I--I dreamt, I slept and I woke. That 'I--the I behind all the manifold millions--that I is the Truth and nothing else.

Distinguish between essential and non-essential

The question may arise, if there is only one 'I', which is the Eternal and the Absolute, why do all the individuals have different experiences? The newly educated worry themselves with such questions. But, they are due to a false cleverness, not deep inquiry. For, the same current activates the fan and gives air, illumines the bulb and gives light, heats the stove and cooks, moves the wheel around and works the machine. The instruments are different, but, the inner energiser is the same. Some bulbs are 40 watts and some 60, or 100 or 1000 watts. The current is the same, but illumination is different. Have a powerful bulb, and the light is strong. Change it, it is dim. Name and form are not essential; the inner current is the truth. Take the body; that itself has the hand as a limb; the hand has fingers, the fingers have nails, in their turn. Through every part of every limb flows the same life force. So too in this Universe which is the Body of God, every being is a part of a limb, that is sustained by the same divine essence. So, resolve now to analyse and honour every one; distinguish between the essential and the non-essential he; and, revere the essential He, the divine He.

Of course, the body which is the case for this divine spark has to be guarded and taken care of, until its purpose of self-realisation is fulfilled. But, its nourishment and care should not overshadow the attention due to the mind, its purification and sublimation. Now the body is nourished with tiffin in the morning, lunch at noon, tea at 4 p.m. and dinner at night. The body is the cart and the mind is the horse that drags it. No food is given to the horse, which is really the more valuable of the two. Give the mind and its culture the importance it deserves; then only is life worth living. The mind has to be hale and hearty, joyous and peaceful, free from agitations

and worries. That can be done by the recitation of some holy name or the performance of some holy act which conduces to welfare. This is the study that will confer lasting joy.

Discourse at Poona

Sathyam is My Prachaar;

Dharma is My Aadhaar;

Shaanthi is My Swabhaava;

Prema is My Swaruup;

Follow anyone of the Four

You are Mine, I am Yours.

Sathya Sai Baaba