

2. Be prepared for a life of sacrifice

*The moon illumines the night,
The sun illumines the day,
Dharma illumines the three worlds,
A good son is the lighter his lineage.*

IT is the moon that sheds light during the night. During the day the sun gives light and shows the way. For the three worlds the illumination comes from *Dharma* (Righteousness). A good son is not only a beacon for his family, he is the light for his *entire Jaathi* (community).

Education is the means of unfolding the moral and spiritual potentialities of man. Education reveals to man what is right and what is wrong.

For a good son, who is a student, five things are essential. First is *Vidhya* (right education). *Vidhya* means that which expels darkness (the darkness of ignorance). Second is *Vijnaana* (discrimination). This refers to the power to discriminate between the permanent and the transient, the true and the false. Third is *Kramashikshana* (discipline). Discipline is not got from books. Fourth is *Dheshabhimaanam* (love for one's country and people). Fifth is *Sathseelam* (good character). Only the person endowed with these five qualities can be regarded as a man of virtue.

Students should recognise these five qualities as their *Pancha praanas* (five life-breaths). It is only a virtuous, son endowed with these five qualities who lends lustre to his family and his nation.

True learning is character, morality and spirituality

The social scenario and the educational system today are riddled with many defects. Education today is concerned with imparting worldly knowledge, with no place for ethics or spirituality. It does not equip the student with competence or capability. It is essential to carry out a total, radical change in the educational system. What is needed is a total revolution. Only then the value of education will become apparent.

In this context, a change in the student's attitude is also necessary. There should be a change in the student's approach to the educational process. Only then can he secure true education. All along education has remained an exercise in acquiring bookish knowledge. What is needed today is practical knowledge. Every student should acquire a good character, moral values, and develop a spiritual bent of mind. These three constitute true learning. These three have been held in high esteem from ancient times. Unfortunately from the beginning of the modern era, morality has disappeared from the scene. Righteousness and spirituality have vanished. Neither the teachers nor the educational authorities have shown any concern for these vital elements.

Indian culture is sublime. The *Vedhas*, *Upanishaths*, *Puraanas* and the great epics are veritable oceans of supreme wisdom. The sun turns every day vast quantities of water from the ocean into vapour and gives it back to the earth in the form of rain to sustain nourishing crops for mankind. Although the amount of water vaporised by the sun is immense, the ocean's depth does not diminish. Nor does the level of the ocean rise even by a little despite the inflow of waters from the rivers. The immensity of Bhaaratheeya Culture is like the ocean which neither swells nor goes down. From days of yore, the sages of India absorbed this culture and propagated it among

people and ennobled their lives. Bhaaratheeyas today have not attempted to understand the greatness of their cultural heritage. On the other hand, many people in foreign countries have explored the treasures of this vast reservoir of knowledge and *benefited* from it in many ways. The Russians and the Germans made ample use of the *Rig Vedha* and *Atharvana Vedha* to promote their national interests. The *Atharvana Vedha* is a source of valuable knowledge regarding the arts and weapons of war. In India today no one seems to bother about the *Atharvana Vedha*.

Recognise the greatness of Sanskrith

Bhaaratheeya culture is entirely based on Sanskrith. All Bhaaratheeya students should recognise Sanskrith as the mother of all Indian languages. Without a knowledge of Sanskrith, one cannot understand the elements of Bhaaratheeya culture. Recognising the value of Sanskrith, Russia, Germany, Japan, Malaysia and other countries are introducing the study of Sanskrith in their educational curriculum.

The intimate relations between foreign countries and Bhaarith from ancient times have not been understood by most Bhaaratheeyas even today.

Indonesia cherishes Mahaabhaaratha

You may be aware from your study of books or from other sources that Indonesia has named its airlines as Garuda Airways. Garuda is the divine bird which is the vehicle of Vishnu, according to Indian mythology. The banks in Indonesia are named after Kubera, the Hindu deity representing wealth. Whiz Bhaaratheeya culture is surviving so prominently in overseas countries, it is not so well appreciated in Bhaarith itself.

The first President of Indonesia was Dr. Sukarno His father was a great student of the Mahaabhaaratha. Admiring the great qualities of Karna as a warrior and a magnanimous donor, who never refused anything which a supplicant sought from him, the father named his son Sukarno, though he was a Muslim. In this manner, foreigners cherish what is great in Bhaaratheeya culture. But, Bhaaratheeyas, oblivious to the glory of their culture, are imitating occidental practices.

It would be good to remember the supreme sacrificing spirit of Karna. Although because of his association with some evil minded men, his name got tainted, no one can equal the spirit of sacrifice of Karna.

The great Mahaabhaaratha war came to a close on the seventeenth day with the fall of Karna. The Paandavas were celebrating their great victory over Karna. The Kauravas felt utterly hopeless as Karna was their greatest warrior. The Paandavas rejoiced in the fall of their most powerful opponent. But, Krishna was sitting apart and appeared to be immersed in sadness. Arjuna went to him and asked why he was feeling sad on a day when they should be rejoicing over their victory Krishna told him that Bhaarith had lost its most heroic warrior that day. The hero who had brought glory and good name to Bhaarith had fallen. "I feel immensely sad because the country is losing such a great hero."

On hearing these words, Arjuna looked at Krishna with a feeling of amused surprise. He said: "Krishna! To ensure the victory of the Paandavas you chose the role of charioteer. Because of that, Paandavas won their victory. Instead of rejoicing over this victory, why are you feeling sad over the fall of our enemy?"

Karna's greatness as warrior and donor

Krishna replied: "Karna is the very embodiment of sacrifice. Sacrifice is a synonym for Karna. In the entire world you can not find one other man equal in the spirit of sacrifice to Karna. In weal or woe, triumph or defeat he could not forget the quality of sacrifice. Have you got that spirit of sacrifice? *No.*" Krishna then asked Arjuna to follow Him.

Darkness had enveloped the battlefield. Krishna was proceeding with Arjuna. In his sweet voice, Krishna was exclaiming: "Karna! Karna!" Karna was gasping for breath in his last moments. He cried: "Who is calling me? I am here." Following the direction from which the words came, Krishna went near Karna.

Before approaching Karna, Krishna assumed the form of an indigent Brahmin. Karna asked him- "Who are you, Sir?" Karna was nearing his last breath. Even at that moment, without any hesitation or faltering in his voice, He put that question to the stranger Krishna, as the Brahmin replied: "For a long time I have been hearing about your reputation as a charitable person. You have acquired fame as *Dhaana. Karna* (Karna the great giver). Today, not knowing about your plight, I came to ask you for a gift. You must give me a donation." "Certainly, I shall give you whatever you want," replied Karna. "I have to perform the marriage of my son. I want a small quantity of gold," said Krishna. "Oh what a pity! Please go to my wife, she will give you as much gold as you need," said Karna.

The "Brahmin" broke into laughter He said: "For the sake of a little gold have I to go all the way to Hastinapura? If you say, you are not in a position to give me what I ask I shall leave you." Karna opened his mouth, showed the gold fillings in his teeth and said: "I shall give this to you. You can take them." Assuming a tone of revulsion, Krishna said: "What is it you suggest? Do you expect me to break your teeth and rake the gold from them? How can I do such a wicked deed? I am a Brahmin."

Karna offers his heart itself to Krishna

Immediately, Karna picked up a stone nearly, knocked out his teeth and offered them to the "Brahmin". Krishna in his guise as "Brahmin" wanted to test Karna further: "What? Are you giving me as gift teeth dripping with blood? I cannot accept this. I am leaving," He said. Karna pleaded: "Svaami, please wait for a moment." Even while He was unable to move, Karna took out his arrow and aimed it at the sky. Immediately rain dropped from the clouds. Cleaning the teeth with the rain water, Karna offered the teeth with both his hands. Krishna then revealed his original form. Karna asked: "Who are you, Sir?" Krishna said: "I am Krishna. I admire your spirit of sacrifice. In any circumstance you have never given up your spirit of sacrifice. Ask me what you want." Beholding Krishna's beautiful form, Karna said with folded hands- "Krishna! *Aapadh-baandhava* (reliever of troubles)! *Lokarakshaka* (protector of the world)! Oh Lord, who holds the universe in yore palm, what can I seek from you? At this moment of my passing, I am fortunate to close my eyes gazing at your Divine form. This is my greatest blessing. This is boon enough for me. To have the vision of the Lord before one's passing is the goal of human existence. You came to me and blessed me with your form. This is enough for me. I offer my salutations to you,"

Arjuna was observing the whole scene. Krishna turned to him and said: "Are you prepared for this kind of sacrifice?" Arjuna bowed his head in silence. The Lord praised the greatness of the quality of sacrifice in man. Of all kinds of sacrifice, the greatest is the sacrifice made for God.

"Oh Lord! That heart which you gave unto me, I am offering to you. What else can I bring to offer at your lotus feet? I prostrate before you. Please accept my offering." This was the prayer addressed by Karna to Krishna.

Keep faith in God steady like life-breath

Man forgets his true nature because of attachment and egoism. Man should develop faith in God. Faith should be like your life-breath, which goes on inhaling and exhaling at all times without respite. Respiration goes on whatever work you may be doing and whatever be the state of your mind.

Likewise, in all situations and at all times, your faith in God should never leave you. It should not change according to whether your desires are fulfilled or not. Like your lifebreath, your faith should remain steady, through joy and sorrow, loss and gain, pain and pleasure. Treat whatever happens as good for you. Have that sense of fortitude. When you have faith in the Self, even wild animals will be gentle towards you.

Every man should recognise that the body has been given to him to render service to others. You must use the body for promoting the welfare of society. Of what use is the endless study of books if you do not use your knowledge for the good of others? A mind that is not utilized for imparting joy to others or a body that is not used for the service of others is totally useless. The way to love God is to love all and serve all. Students should imbibe this ideal.

Man should strive to become good and virtuous. Only when a man is filled with good thoughts and feelings and performs good deeds will his life become meaningful. These good qualities will serve to make a better man of you. That is the purport of the saying: "*Suputhro Kuladheepakah*" (A good son illumines his lineage). As good sons all of you should pledge yourselves to serve and protect the nation.

Avoid bad company and develop spirit of sacrifice

Students! Your secular studies will help you in worldly life, but will not promote your spiritual progress. Without spirituality, all worldly accomplishments are worthless.

With all his prowess, why did Karna come to a bad end? Because of his association with the evil-minded Dhuryodhana. If he had not made common cause with Dhuryodhana, Karna would have become an effulgent star in the firmament. All his native good qualities turned into ashes because of bad association. Your company determines your character. Hence from the outset, cultivate the company of godly men. Without it, all other things are useless. Today *wherever* you turn in Bharath you see only disorder, violence and fear. What is the reason? People have lost their faith in the Self. They are fostering attachments to worldly objects. They are forgetting that true bliss is derived from the Divine.

Students! Develop broad mindedness. Cultivate unity. It was because of lack of unity, Bharath came under the rule of a small nation like the British, though it did not lack great warriors, scholars and administrators. Today the nation is afflicted with two bad qualities lack of unity and insatiable greed. Education should be pursued for the sake of wisdom and virtue, and not for securing jobs.

Develop the spirit of sacrifice like Kama. Honour the plighted word. Dedicate all your actions to God.

As alumni of our Institute you should stand out as ideal students and as examples to the world. Realise that there is no greater quality than truth. Truth is God. *Dharma* is His ornament. Adhere to these two as the highest attributes of humanness.

Students! Your hearts are tender and unsullied. From this age itself you must foster pure thoughts. Plant the seed of love in your pure hearts. From that tree of love you will have the fruits of forbearance, compassion and kindness. Always be smiling. Face every situation in life, including death, with a smile.

Earlier, there were speeches by some students. The students spoke very well, sweetly and delightfully. Their speeches would be immensely effective if the words came not merely from the lips but from their hearts. There should be complete harmony in thoughts, words and deeds.

I desire that you should all redeem your lives by contemplating on God, cherishing good thoughts and engaging yourselves in the service of your fellow men. I bless you all.

Discourse in the Institute Auditorium on 19-1-1997.

You have to busy yourselves with activity in order to use time and skill to the best advantage. That is your duty and duty is God.

Baba