

1

The Duty Of Students

The influence of Western education has resulted in the dwindling of interest in the study of the Sanskrit language. It has caused the disappearance of domestic felicity and the erosion of the principles of arya dharma. People are enamoured of external appearances and behaviour, and consider speaking in their mother tongues a fault. They hesitate to honour the norms of social etiquette and regard it a burden to respect teachers and elders. Timidity is prevalent everywhere and has become a contagion.

If women flock to offices and take up jobs, who will be there to look after home and perform the domestic duties? If both husband and wife take up vocations, who

shall perform the household chores? If mothers go to school to teach the children of others, who is there to teach their own children? If women take up books and go about like men, who will look after the kitchen? By a woman taking up employment there would be fewer financial problems for the family, but several other difficulties would arise denying happiness to her.

Embodiments of Love—students, teachers, and patrons of education!

Bharath, the acknowledged birthplace of spirituality, has been witness to a decline in righteousness and has gradually become a veritable abode for demoniac tendencies that nourish injustice, disorder, and unethical conduct. It is the duty of students in such a malaise-ridden society in this terrible age of Kali, with all its rampant vices, to see that righteousness and love are resuscitated and peace and security assured.

Just as mothers feel sorry for their children who are backward in education or in other aspects of life, mother India too laments over the spiritual and moral degradation of her children. To remove this agony of mother India, the students should fulfil their duties. In doing so, they would do well to remember that the citizens, the elders, the men wielding authority and the

great leaders were all, at one time, students themselves and that they, too, in time and in their turn, will be the leaders and citizens of tomorrow.

The Government does not have the power to guide the people along the path of morality and spirituality. The citizens, on their part, do not have the authority to correct the Government when necessary. Viewed from the spiritual angle, both the Government and the people appear to be losing their right to mend the ways of each other. The reason for this situation is that the men who are now at the helm of affairs had failed to shape their lives along spiritual lines during their childhood.

The greatness of an individual depends on the cultural perfection he has attained. “Culture” does not connote mere diligence. It means the removal of evil thoughts and propensities and the promotion of good thoughts and qualities. The lives of the citizens of tomorrow depend upon and take shape according to the type of life they lead as students today. The life a person lives as a student is the foundation for the life he will lead later as a citizen. It is only when a student lives a life characterised by peace and self-control that he will have a peaceful and contented life later as a citizen.

It is against this background that the students of today must act. They must realise that the moral strength in them is being sapped by Western culture and education. Western culture is the culture of the

metropolises where the multiplication of individual desires has led man to misery and unhappiness. Indian culture, however, is the culture that prevails in the rural milieu where desires are few and contentment rides high. In the present context, therefore, we should seek that education which confers the joys of a contented life. To live such a sacred and exemplary life is the duty of students today.

In the field of education, as in every other sphere of human endeavour, we are faced with baffling problems. The present educational system does little for the purification, the enrichment, and the spiritual unfoldment of man. It has merely brought society to the brink of disaster. In addition, we have the constant babble and meaningless prattle the intellectuals and *pundits* trying to thrust upon the administration in the country, thereby reducing the nation to a “kingdom of rabbits.” The spread of modern education has brought in its train, spiritual retrogression and a surfeit of selfishness. We, therefore, require today patriotic students with broad minds, men of action capable of selfless service and sacrifice. “Simple living and high thinking”—that should be the ideal for us; not “high living and low thinking” which seems to be the maxim of modern education.

It is to impart to you such wholesome ideas and to enrich your value systems that the Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust has been conducting these summer courses

every year. These courses afford you an opportunity to gainfully spend a month imbibing the high ideals of life that provide you with spiritual nourishment.

Human life is comparable to a tree and the kinsmen of the individual to its branches. On these branches the flowers of his thoughts and feelings blossom. These flowers gradually develop into fruits of good qualities and virtues. The nectarine juice present in these fruits is character. Without roots and fruits, a tree is mere firewood. Self-confidence is the root of the tree of life and character, its fruit.

With the hope that you will all become exemplary students, reap the full benefits of this course, purify your hearts and reform society, I bless you all.