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*The Sunday Talk Given at Prashanti Nilayam
by Prof. Anil Kumar*

“Kerala Teachers’ Meeting at Prashanti Nilayam”

(Part 2)

January 24, 2009, Evening

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Sai Ram

With Pranams at the Lotus Feet of Bhagavan,

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

I invite questions from all of you. Do not restrict your questions to education alone. This is a general gathering, so you may ask any question related to religion, spirituality, education, human values, educare, Bhagavan’s views, His mission and message, or any other topic you like.

I shall openly admit when I don’t know the answers. I shall not bluff; you can take it from me that I don’t do that. I am sure we teachers are honest, because we are academics. Our answers are not like income tax figures, which have to be manipulated. Teachers do not feel that it is necessary to do so. If I do not know the answer, I will be plain and honest enough to admit I do not know, and will seek the earliest opportunity to get the answer from Bhagavan Himself, at an appropriate time. I have the state president’s email address, and also I will never escape him. He can catch me anywhere in one of the fourteen worlds; I can’t go beyond!

Please ask questions using the hand microphone we have here, asking alternately on each side of the room, depending upon the number of people here. Thank you very much for being here with us once again on this pleasant evening. I welcome you all.

We at Bharathi Vidya Bhavan School, Jubilee Hills, Hyderabad, have one period of spiritual activity where stories of our cultural heritage are narrated and bhajans

are sung. Is the time allotted for spirituality enough, or should more time be allotted? If the answer is yes, how can we adjust?

Very, very good question. My friends, spirituality does not need an allotment of time. It is not a question allotting any time. Anything is spiritual, if we take it in the positive sense. Someone asked Bhagavan, "Swami, I have no time to pray, so what shall I do?" Bhagavan said, "Whatever you do, once you offer it to God, it turns into prayer." You have to allot time for non-spiritual things, not for spiritual matters.

Second, in our educational approach we have our own techniques. We can seize every opportunity to delve into spirituality. Why not? I give you one or two examples. Literature is the best topic with which to interpret the spiritual dimension; I think no one can go beyond it. I remember, subject to correction by a professor who is present here, because I studied this topic in 1957, the short and simple annals of the poor.

*Some village Hampden, that with dauntless breast,
The little tyrant of his fields withstood,
Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,
Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood,
All with glory go to the grave.*

(Thomas Grey, English poet, 1716-1771)

The author meant that, in spite of our achievements, in spite of our name and fame, all glory leads us to the grave. These have to go to the cemetery sooner or later. Therefore, none of the glory will follow you to that final resting place. When you explain grace, you can speak about how things are mundane, how things are momentary. Nothing is everlasting in this world. We have to seek the Divine and nothing else.

Consider history, for example, Shah Jahan in India, or any king for that matter. What happened at the end of their lives, with all the buildings they built, with the vast empire they acquired? They ended their lives imprisoned in a cell or in chains. Some were imprisoned by their own sons, as history tells us. That's an example that shows everyone what happens when a possessive instinct, a temperament that amasses wealth, turns anyone into an enemy, pitting one against the other.

Consider another example. In physics, for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction—Newton's law of motion. If you respect your parents, you will be respected tomorrow. If you love your parents and please them, you will be loved and pleased in return later. Whatever you do comes back to you. As is the seed, so is the fruit. As is the cloud, so is the rain. As is the flame, so is the heat. For everything, there is an equal and opposite reaction.

When you teach chemistry, the beauty is seeing the ways of life. The betel leaf is green in color. The betel nut is dark brown in color. Lime is white in color, and when we chew it, the tongue becomes red in color. Three different colors will produce the fourth color.

This is the chemistry of life. *Raso vai saha. Rasa kavahyam labdavandi bhavathi* is from the *Taitro Upanishad*. The essence of life is the vitality of life. That's how you can learn from chemistry. Instead of allotting time for spirituality, we should make use of each time and turn it towards the spiritual. Am I clear? It is possible.

I end with this note: if we really convey these things, our children will remember us for a lifetime. They will not remember us for completing the syllabus, for not shouting at them, for not securing office and status, no. They may be office holders; yet if we remember to build their personality, they will remember us for that in the long run.

At the primary level, what spiritual values have to be cultivated? Is there anything specific? Is what we are doing okay?

To tell you honestly, a child learns in the classroom. It is said that the future of the nations are in the classrooms. In the classroom children are taught the lessons of punctuality, cleanliness, health and hygiene, and about maintaining the classroom. The advantages of silence, teamwork, togetherness, playing together, laughing together, enjoying together in a social community are best taught in the classroom.

The classroom is a living laboratory, while the physics laboratory and the chemistry laboratory are non-living, consisting of burettes and pipettes that cannot interact or communicate. But the classroom is a living laboratory, where every child is a challenge and an experiment. In an experiment, the readings are never the same. When we conduct the same experiment repeatedly—for example, the pendulum experiment, the Archimedes principle—the readings will be different. Similarly, we may have any number of students, but we must see each student as our own experiment, by the way of our own observation.

Depending on the observation, every student is an experiment and we should draw an inference out of it and give an appropriate answer, response, or treatment. Everything can be done in a classroom, not merely molding students. We can learn from them. We can learn from our children.

In primary school when the child smiles, how beautiful it is. When we adults smile, the smile may not be natural. One may smile and smile, yet be a villain, because as adults we are cut off from smiles, miles and miles away from smiles. (*Laughter*) We don't know how to smile today. We enjoy seriousness in the name of dignity and status.

Life is meant to be happy going, easy going, and a letting go. Life is blissful, but we make it burdensome and heavy. That is the tragedy. The child's smile happens in an utter state of innocence. The child represents innocence, while the adult represents ignorance and nonsense. (*Laughter*) Therefore, innocence, ignorance, and nonsense are the three states that we encounter in adulthood.

The child's smile is innocence. The child does not consider if another child is from a rich family, from another caste, or is the grandson of a minister or neighbor. Any child has a

wonderful smile. In this age, we smile only when we come across our boss. We don't want to smile when we meet our peers, because we are afraid they may take things for granted, in a lighter vein. They may not follow our command at a later date. It is very silly.

We should learn lessons from children, because they are so inquisitive. Suppose they ask why cows yield milk, or why there are colors in the sky, or why there is no rainbow in the daytime? "Shut up, not necessary" is our answer. It's not easy to teach primary school children. The one who handles primary school children can handle PhD students. The one who handles PhD students is unfit to handle primary school. It's not easy. Primary school children will not listen unless they are impressed.

Therefore, we can learn lessons from our children—the lesson of innocence. Innocence is Divine. Ignorance is foolishness. Innocence is spiritual. Ignorance is like a perverted mind, a diverted mind, a modified mind, an unaware mind, a sleeping mind, a dull mind, a passive mind, an inactive mind, or an incorrigible mind.

The innocent mind is a meditative mind. The innocent mind is a contemplative mind and an investigating mind. The innocent mind is a mind of inquiry and represents humility, sanctity, and Divinity. Therefore, in primary school there is a lot to learn from our children and many more things to teach them.

Sir, should we stress writing answers in simple sentences at the primary school level or should we evaluate oral work? A lot of parents pressure us to give writing lessons. Should we budge under the pressure?

Good. Whether we put them to an oral test or a written test, a long or short answer, simple or compound sentences, simple or bombastic language, the students should understand what we teach.

Once, an experienced teacher said, "Whether the cat is made of mud or wood, it must eat the rat." Whether we speak in simple sentences or compound sentences, the children must be able to comprehend what we teach them. The professor would agree with me. The best writers in English prose are those who make use of simple sentences.

The best way to communicate is the simplest way possible. In order to say "Please get up", we need not say, "From horizontal to perpendicular." (*Laughter*) The simplest way to say it is, "Please get up." The English writer John Ruskin is known for his simple prose. William Haslet is known for his simple prose. Hamlet Johnson is known for bombastic language.

Therefore, my friends, the simpler we are, the closer we will be to our students. Simple language is understood very well by students. If a student has to have a dictionary on his lap while listening in the classroom, he will be too disgusted to attend the next class.

So let us be quite simple, with simplicity that is natural, not duplicity. We are expected to use simplicity, which is spontaneous and original.

Am I clear? You are quite welcome to challenge me and say, “No, Mr. Anil Kumar, what nonsense you speak. Kerala people cannot say ‘yes’ just like that.” No, no, you change governments within no time. *(Laughter)* You are full of awareness. Perhaps this atmosphere has made you remain silent. But I give you absolute freedom. I appreciate it if you oppose my statements, not only for the sake of opposition.

What is the role of the teacher in transforming students?

The teacher plays a big role in transforming students. In a biography, a patriot wrote a few sentences that drew my attention. He wrote this, “I don’t remember anything in my life, particularly as a student. But I remember one incident when I was hospitalised and my teacher came to see me. My teacher gave me spiritual encouragement. When I was desperate, my teacher boosted the spirit within me. That’s what I remember from my school days.” That’s what the patriot, Konda Venkata Appiah Desha Bhaktha, wrote in his biography.

The Rugby School and the Don School are reputable institutions, because the teachers leave an indelible impression. Here is my teacher, who is an orator. Here is my teacher, a man of poetry. Here is my teacher of excellence. Here is my teacher, with a handsome personality. Here is my teacher, whose face I would like to see again and again, because of the beautiful smile he wears.

That’s the kind of transformation we can bring about, with the unconditional love we show towards our students, the love that is showered on our students liberally and selflessly. We should love the students who are slow learners more. I don’t say backward students, as there is nothing like backward or forward students.

A person that is forward today may be horribly backward tomorrow. Some are fast learners. Some are slow learners. Some may pick things up rather slowly. We should be more attentive, we should be more considerate, and we should be more loving toward slow learners. They will never forget.

Though it is a matter of prestige, I don’t want to hold back a secret any longer, because we belong to one family. I was admitted to the MS program in botany at Andhra University way back in 1961, and our professor in the very first class gave us an assignment. In the first class, two or three students from our institution were an utter flop, to our disappointment.

He wanted us to draw a floral diagram. We were used to copying from the board, not drawing on our own. We were helpless, looking from side to side. The professor kindly asked us to meet him in his chamber. He said, “What is your problem?”

I said, "Professor Sahib, we were taught only to copy from the board. We don't know how to draw by ourselves."

He said, "Don't worry, Mr. Anil Kumar, don't worry. Come every day at lunchtime, and within a week I will make you the best drafter."

The subject of taxonomy, in which I was weak, is one in which I am very powerful and expert today. As a student, I was very backward. Why? I was taught to copy from the blackboard. But it was the Professor at the PhD level who started teaching elementary things right from the fundamentals: what a flower is, what a pedestal is, what a branch is, how to draw a diagram.

If any stranger looks at the situation, he will certainly spit on my face: "Are these things that you are supposed to learn at the PhD level?" Therefore, be more considerate, be more sympathetic, be more understanding, be more forgiving. Let us not carry any malice or hatred, or be vindictive against them. No, just love them.

I will give one example. I attempt to give illustrations from my own life, because of my long teaching career of four and a half decades. I hope you don't mind. In 1964 I was in my second year of service as a professor, as I had joined the service at the age of twenty-one. One boy refused to take notes in the class. In the early days of being a professor, it was a matter of prestige if a student did or did not take notes.

If any student said, "Sir, your lesson was nice," the next morning we wore a new tie and new suit, dress being very important in a Christian college. If students said, "Sir, we don't follow your lesson," I would reply, "Okay, we will see. (*Laughter*) We will meet in the laboratory. We will see how to get your records certified. I will make you go 'round with me." That was the temperament in the beginning.

These days if a student says, "Sir, you're a good teacher," you say, "Oh, perhaps you cared to listen to me attentively today." If a student says, "I don't understand," then you reply, "You don't have standards, therefore, you don't understand." (*Laughter*) That's how we take it. This is what is called maturity or experience.

One boy was not taking notes while I was teaching. His name was Samba Shiva Rao. After graduation, he worked in the Indian Agricultural Institute in New Delhi, and later went to California. As a student, he refused to take notes in the class, and it was a matter of prestige to me, especially when there were twenty-five girls in the class. (*Laughter*)

I asked the boy, "Why are you not writing notes?" "Sir, I have the textbook with me." (*Laughter*) Then I said, "Do you think others don't have a textbook?" "Sir, I will take notes myself." Any further dialogue would have made me uncomfortable, so I kept quiet. Do you know that it's bad luck to say anything in that situation?

I was also in charge of his practical class. We make biology science students dance and show them hell in practical classes. Instead of reacting, I ignored him. I used to correct the slides and diagrams of every student, but I would just ignore him. Please believe me, within a week he came with his father. His father said, "Mr. Anil Kumar, have you checked my son? Had you beaten him black and blue, things would have been much better. You ignored him, and he is not able to bear it."

I said, "Sir, what have I done? I have not shouted at him. I haven't done anything. Because he said, 'I can manage,' I said, 'Please manage. I am happy if he can manage.'"

We have our own technique without hurting the ego of our boys. I remember a situation between a student named Reddy, who is now a doctor in Chicago, and a lecturer in zoology, who later retired from our college. The zoology lecturer had a bit of a temper, and he was very annoyed with Reddy. He said, "Reddy, you're not behaving properly. Either you should remain in the class, or I will remain in the class." Reddy replied, "I will remain in the class, sir." (*Laughter*)

These things happen. Therefore, if we are not vindictive and are not partial, things will be beautiful. If we are found to be friendly with everyone, talking with everyone irrespective of any other silly or nasty consideration, if we love them, things will be beautiful.

Our experience tells us that our students love us much more than our own children. I think you agree with me. The senior teachers will certainly agree with me. Yes, these are things that I can share with you now.

It is said that prana has no religion; hence prana is without religion. How true is this?

My friends, you have no religion. You are not born with any religion. The body has no religion. The breath has no religion. The heart has no religion. Religion is the banner, like Godrej Elmira, Britannia biscuits, or Parry's Nutrine sweets. Religion is only a banner. But religiousness is the manner in which we conduct ourselves.

As such, the heart, *prana* or life, has no religion. It is beyond religion. Religion is something imposed. Religion is cultivated. Religion is something that you are put into. But religiousness is a culture. Religiousness is a tradition. Religiousness is in our blood, over ages of time. *Prana* or life breath is beyond religion. *Prana* has nothing to do with religion, or anyone of us, for that matter.

When we do Swami's work, more and more we have to face many criticisms. How can we overcome such situations?

I don't think you are encountering more problems than I did. I served in a Christian college for twenty-six long years, and I continued to be a Sai devotee. I was also a Sai

organisation state president at that time. You know how Christians react, particularly to a devotee of Baba, and what they say about Him.

We can't claim to be very good, because we were not very good before coming to His fold. We, too, had our own reservations earlier, right? Similarly, while I was working in a Christian college, please believe that I never spoke about Baba in the staff room, in the auditorium, or with any lecturer. Nor did I speak about Baba in a usual, casual, accidental, or incidental conversation or in a talk in the style of a monologue or a dialogue. I didn't speak.

In the Christian college we celebrated Christmas over a long period of time. We had community Christmas and staff Christmas. Each of the five hostels had Christmas celebrations, and five to six functions were held in the college auditorium during the Christmas season.

In the early years, the college organisers asked me to speak during the Christmas season. I spoke about the *Holy Bible* more than Christians themselves. When the *Bible* states that the Kingdom of Heaven is within you, what does Kingdom of Heaven mean? Does it mean that all of Heaven is right over there? Where is the Kingdom? How can it be within you? Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, says the *Holy Bible*. It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to get into the gates of Heaven—wonderful statements from the *Holy Bible*.

When I started quoting, and thinking aloud in the staff room, they asked me later, "Where have you learned about the *Bible*?" I whispered into their ears, "From Sathya Sai Baba." (*Laughter*) From that time onwards, people were very inquisitive. What did Baba say? They didn't ask me in public.

Moreover, I became close and intimate with all Christians. Usually when Christians have functions like weddings and housewarmings, most of their guests are Christians. Very few Hindus attend. But I made it a point to attend every wedding and function to which I was invited. They took me into their fold with understanding. As a result, they said, "Mr. Anil Kumar, how are you managing?"

I said, "Managing what?"

"You regularly go on tour for Swami's work. You tutor privately at home. You have a big, joint family. You are the only one who is a bread winner. How are you able to balance it all?"

"Sathya Sai Baba is responsible for this." (*Laughter*) How should you answer? "Sathya Sai Baba." That is the secret of success. I could manage things far, far better than those with lots of money in hand. I never took a loan from the college at anytime. Why? It was due to Sathya Sai Baba, because Bhagavan will never disown you at any point in time. As heavenly manna, you will receive some support from somewhere. From some corner, you will get some money.

Not only Anil Kumar, but any Sai devotee from all over the world will never, ever, stretch his hand for money! Please take it from me. (*Applause*) I have yet to come across a devotee who is in need of money. I have yet to come across a devotee who is starving. I have yet to come across one who thinks he is a beggar. He may think beggarly, but he is bigger, in the simple sense of the word. Therefore, Swami will see to it that we are well maintained. That is the Divinity of Sathya Sai Baba.

We can face criticism, not by not talking about Baba, but by living up to His ideals. When we live up to His ideals, people will say they want to know more about Baba through you, your life, your conversation, your performance, and your leadership. That is the best way to speak about him. Let us not speak about Him, rather than speak about Him unnecessarily at the wrong time, at the wrong place. That would be doing injustice to His mission itself. Let us not speak about Him. Let us live up to His ideals, then people will come closer to you and there will be no criticism.

You may not believe this, but I will give an example. Many Christians attended our residential *bhajan* sessions. Can you believe it? It is impossible. But they liked it: "When Anil Kumar attends our church, when he joins in our chorus and community singing, why not go?"

I don't invite them without going myself. I don't ask them to read the *Bhagavad Gita* without reading the *Bible* myself. I am a student in the *Bible* class, and I used to attend daily prayers as a necessity. Therefore, naturally we can win their confidence and their love. That is the way to avoid criticism. Am I clear or am I speaking nonsense? It makes sense. Okay.

How can teachers inculcate discipline during adolescence?

Indiscipline is something which comes later. Discipline is original. Discipline is natural. We are born in discipline, not indiscipline. Here are simple examples. Blood circulation follows discipline. Blood pressure is perfect discipline. The body temperature is perfect discipline. The beat of the heart is perfect discipline. The pulse rate is perfect discipline. Where is indiscipline? The sunrise and sunset are perfect discipline.

The ocean will never cross its limit. It's always like that. Seasonally, trees bear fruit at the right time, since there is perfect discipline in Nature. But because of selfishness, greed, self-centeredness, too much attachment, and ego problems, we take to indiscipline. Discipline is natural. Indiscipline is unnatural. We are born with discipline; indiscipline develops over a period of time. It's quite easy.

If I tell one of my students not to talk in the classroom, he will talk with double the vengeance after the class is disbursed. I know a college which is known for its discipline, and it is managed by Catholics who are very highly disciplined. No one is allowed to open his mouth at the college level. The moment the students come out of

that college, they are *gundas* (ruffians) number one, something like military regimentation. We don't believe in that.

Let us convince our students that discipline will help them and is for their own growth. Let us convince our students that discipline is to their advantage, will help them to come up in life, and that all great people could achieve and attain because of discipline.

When anything is imposed, students retaliate, react, and retort. On the other hand, if we tell them it is for their advantage, for their own good, they will follow.

First, let me, as a teacher, be disciplined, because students will watch me. If I don't complete my syllabus in time, then I have no authority to speak about discipline. If a teacher went to class directly from the railway platform, without grooming his hair, and the principal saw him on the verandah, the principal would say, "Please go home and rest. You cannot come to class right now, sorry."

Discipline is a multi-faceted word that includes many aspects of life. Where there is discipline in wearing clothes, there is mind discipline, physical discipline, psychological discipline, emotional discipline, and intellectual discipline. Discipline is multi-dimensional.

If I overeat, it is indiscipline. If I doubt myself or think excessively, then I am psychologically undisciplined. If I neglect everyone and doubt my own experience, then I am intellectually undisciplined. If I doubt God and conduct business in the name of God, or go to the temple for the sake of business or any other desire, then I am spiritually undisciplined. Discipline has many aspects; we cannot limit it to the classroom alone.

What is your opinion about introducing a system where students influence teachers? Such a system will help evaluate the performance of teachers.

I don't think our students have reached the stage of being able to evaluate teachers. When students show responsibility and learn the value of the money spent to educate them, then they are ready to evaluate their teachers.

In the west, many students work and earn money as they learn. They earn and learn. As they earn money and pay their own school fees, they know the value of money. They know the value of time. They understand the value of the subject taught by the teacher. Such a person can evaluate his teacher.

But a person who simply wastes money which comes from the pocket of his father, or in different ways simply draws funds from the government, is that person qualified to evaluate? A *gunda* (ruffian) cannot evaluate a teacher. Therefore, my personal opinion is that we have not evolved to the point where students should evaluate us. We have not yet reached that state.

If students do provide teacher evaluations, and you're a strict teacher, fifty students will say that you are unfit to be a teacher. What are you going to do in that case? If you are a very strict teacher in the classroom and don't spare any student if he doesn't do the homework, all the students will write, "She is a bad teacher. We don't want her." On the other hand, if the teacher leaks the exam answers, he will be rated a very good teacher by the students, who will say that he should teach every subject, whether he understands the subject or not.

Teachers themselves should be disinterested seekers of Truth, on their way to Reality. Their aims explain disinterestedness.

'Disinterested seekers of Truth', oh, I see. 'Disinterested seekers of Truth' is a good phrase, which I have come across for the first time. I have come across seekers of Truth, but not 'disinterested' seekers of Truth. Very good, let us talk about interest and disinterest.

These days we have interest if we have an incentive. Incentive and interest go together. "You are going to get a promotion." Ah, if a person hears that, then his interest develops. "You will get an additional increment of salary." Hearing that, he will become more interested. Interest is linked to incentives, promises, monetary gains, and professional prospects.

Truth, meaning the true, fundamental Truth which continues to be Truth, remains the Truth, whether you are interested or not. One day you will become disgusted with all outer pursuits, when you realise how untrue they are. The day when you discover the illusion, the utter falsity, of outer pursuits, you develop identity and interest in Reality or Truth.

We cannot be disinterested in Truth. Simple example—fire burns, which is the truth. Can you be disinterested? Try putting your hand in a fire. (*Laughter*) Ice is ice cold. No, I am disinterested. Carrying a piece of ice is impossible. Truth is fundamental; we cannot be disinterested. We cannot deny or reject it.

We cannot negate, because Truth is eternal. Truth is fundamental. Here I have to bring up another point. As teachers, we don't deal with Truth, please understand. We deal with facts only. Fact is different from Truth.

Baba explains this in a very good way. This morning I was in a regular suit, midday I am in a Jodhpur suit, and tonight I will have on night clothes. I may be changing clothes in the morning, afternoon and night, but I remain the same. Changing clothes is a fact; humankind remaining the same is the Truth.

That which is continuous is the Truth, and is the same in the past, present and future. *Sathyam Trikalam Avibhagyam*: it is indivisible and indestructible, something like the kinetic theory of energy. Energy can neither be created nor destroyed. Similarly,

fundamental Truth, the Truth which is eternal, the spiritual Truth cannot be created or destroyed.

When we deal with facts, we can be disinterested in them. If you are disinterested about the facts, then you are the loser. If you are disinterested with Truth, then life is in vain. We will be interested in Truth when we become mature, gain experience, and have the company of pious people, by reading sacred texts, and by listening to good talks. Once we are interested in Truth, we go above facts.

Facts are physical, while Truth is spiritual. Facts are changing, ephemeral, or momentary, whereas Truth is transcendental. Facts are limited to pressure and temperature. Scientific principle states that equal volumes of gases, under equal conditions of temperature and pressure, contain an equal number of molecules. I read about that theory long ago, in 1958. It continues to be correct.

At the same time, we deal with facts. At one time Dalton's atomic theory said that atoms are indivisible. Later it was proved that an atom is divisible and can generate enough energy to light the entire New York City, USA. At one time people said that the atom was indivisible, and now divisibility is a fact. Facts go on changing. Facts are physical, mundane, ephemeral, transient, momentary, changing, and worldly.

Truth is eternal. Truth is transcendental. Truth is reality. Truth is Divine. Truth is original. Truth is the substratum. Truth is the foundation on which the universes rest.

*Sathyambu Nundunni Sarvam Srishthinche
Sathyambu Nande Sarva Srishthi
Sathyam Mahima Leni Sthalamedhi Kanagunna
Shuddha Sathyam Adhiye Chudariayya*

This is a composition by Swami. *Sathambu Nundaniye Shrusthinche Sarva Srishthi*: out of the point of Truth, the whole of creation has originated. *Sathyambu Nande Sarva Srishthi* means that the entire creation goes back to the point of its origin. *Sathyam Mahima Leni Sthalamedhi Kanagunna*? Is there any place without any Truth? *Shuddha Sathyam Adhiye Chudariayya*—it is free of blemishes, unpolluted, spotless, the eternal principle of Truth, Bhagavan Baba has said. That is our Reality. That is what He said.

*Yatho Vayima Bhutani Jayante
Yena Jataani Jeevanti
Yat Prayan Savitanni Chanti
Tat Viginyaasasadat Brahma*

The entire creation came out of the Creator, and will go back to the Creator again. That is the Truth, am I clear? Yes. Okay, we have finished our interest in that question. (Laughter)

In spite of repeated correction, a child misbehaved and tried to hurt a teacher. Many times the teacher tried to correct him with good words. The child remains the same.

We should take the child to a child psychiatrist. We have child psychiatry. Psychiatry is very popular in the west, but has yet to take root in India. We don't need a psychiatrist, because most of us are psychic in our own humble way. *(Laughter)*

Someone asked me this question, "Mr. Anil Kumar, Baba started a department for neurology, a department for urology, a department for nephrology, and a department for ophthalmology. Why not psychiatry?" I said that Sai Kulwant Hall has been converted into an out-patient ward! *(Laughter)* All the residents in Prashanti Nilayam are in an in-patient hospital. It is a question of the difference in size between a gooseberry and a pumpkin--we are all mad in our own way. *(Laughter)*

If a child behaves outrageously like that, if the child doesn't rally around in spite of listening to loving words and loving treatment, something is wrong with the psychology of the child, and we should take the child to a child psychiatrist. My daughter is a child psychiatrist. I shall arrange the treatment totally free of charge. My daughter received her MD in child psychiatry from Stanford University, in California, USA.

How will teachers be successful in implementing values when children have a materialistic style of living? Is parenting also a part of value education?

Yes, all are materialists. Do you think that teachers are not materialists? The students understand that we seek money. Sometimes we have to pay increases from time to time. At times the increase may be much more than the basic amount. We discuss this in the staff room, "How many more bucks (*rupees*) am I going to get?" But if I talk about the money increase on the verandah, the student will get inspired to seek money without doing anything.

The best example is our own personality. Of course, my friends, I do agree that I am subject to correction. I will stand corrected by any one of you; I won't be insulted. Please correct me if I am wrong at any time. In the days when a teacher received one hundred fifty or one hundred eighty-four rupees salary, teachers were more respected than a teacher with a ten thousand rupee salary today. Please ask your father or your grandfather. Teachers in the olden days were more respected than teachers today. Today, teachers have a life of luxury, with all the comforts of life and a very high pay scale. Yet I don't think they are respected as much as teachers in the olden days.

Why? To them, teaching was an art. Teaching was a mission. Teaching was their very life. But to us, teaching is a profession and an avocation. Teaching is a means of livelihood and a venue for earning money. Therefore, we are materialistic in our approach.

I will give you an example. A gentleman by the name of V. Ramachandra Rao was the principal of a very reputed college. Long into his retirement, he didn't have sufficient money. He was leading a life below the average. People say he could not pay his medical bills.

At that time, one of his previous students, whose name was T. Krishnamachoudary, the all-India Vice President of the Jana Sangh party in those days, went to his teacher, Ramachandra Rao, and said, "Sir I have a son. Would you give him private tuition in English?" Ramachandra Rao said, "Yes, send him tomorrow."

Ramachandra Rao taught the son for three months. At the end of the three months, the student, who was the son of the National Vice President of Jana Sangh, put ten thousand rupees on a silver plate, with betel leaves, betel nuts, plantains, and apples. He put the plate on the ground, and then touched the feet of his teacher, saying, "Thank you, sir."

Ramachandra Rao said, "Please come back, I don't charge that much. Leave two hundred rupees and take the rest. I am ashamed of you. This is not the way to show respect towards your teacher." That's the reason why Buddiraju Ramachandra Rao is remembered to this day.

I also knew the school principal Wolfe in those days. Of course, he was not a wolf; just his name is Wolfe. He was a school principal and a great Christian. On his way home one day, he saw some people carrying his baggage, some jewels, and some furniture from the principal's bungalow. He said, "What is it you're doing?"

"We are carrying things." "I see. Please be careful as you walk, because this is a jungle. You may find serpents in the vicinity. You may find scorpions somewhere near. Please watch your step." The fellows put the luggage back and fell at his feet. Therefore, my friends, the world may be materialistic, but you need not be materialistic.

Who is remembered? Not a man of money. Who is remembered? Not a man of treasures. Who is remembered? Not a man of affluence, plenty and prosperity. Who is remembered down the ages? The man of sacrifice, the man of values, and the man of renunciation is the one remembered. For this, God has chosen us to be teachers. This is the best opportunity to lead the best lives ever possible.

There is a student in my standard one class. He speaks well and remembers the names of all the teachers in the school, and the subjects which they handle. But he is not at all attentive in the class, and is hyperactive. At times he even quarrels with others, and he speaks continuously the whole day. How should we handle the child?

Engage him. If you tell a man who is talkative not to talk, he will talk more. If you want a fellow who is active to be silent, he will be more active outside. Engage him continuously and make him the class leader. Tell him that his duties include bringing the

duster, or keeping the chalk pieces over there. Ask him to take the attendance, collect the homework, and keep it on the table. Have him make a list of the students who have not done enough work. Engage him and he will be your disciple number one. Instead of condemning him, blaming him, or disowning him, divert his attention.

Water that is not controlled flows into the sea. The water that is controlled by dams is used for irrigation. Likewise, the activities of a student must be channeled in the right direction, so that he is the best instrument of the entire community, or the whole institution. Make him a student of whom we can feel proud later. Am I clear?

If you condemn an active child, he will become an antisocial element tomorrow, for which you and I will be responsible. Society will say that you have spoilt him and not have directed him properly. We teachers feel very badly if we receive that kind of comment, but we can handle it. Why not? We can.

I will give you my own example. I was the director of the dramatic association of Andhra Christian College for several years. I was also the college lecturer in botany. We had many students in the Bachelor of Arts class who were majoring in politics and history. In those days, college students majoring in the humanities were usually quite unruly and undisciplined. As the director of the dramatic association, I had to handle those boys also.

First I noticed which students were the “number one” rowdies. Then I called them, and said, “You are leaders, I know. You have all of the leadership qualities. You are going to be volunteers for our inaugural function, and at the time of the valedictory function, I will award you silver cups.” Then those rowdies became my disciples, you know that. They controlled the whole thing. (*Laughter*)

If I had said, “You are rowdies, so you are not supposed to attend the inauguration,” they would have carried bombs with them to the inauguration, as well as the next day. (*Laughter*) Commonly, if you’re a good rowdy, then you’re a good volunteer. A thief can only detect another thief, not another man. We should know the correct way to handle unruly students.

Can we instill discipline in students using a small dose of punishment?

Today the rules are different. We cannot punish them today, whereas in the earlier days we could. Now we cannot use harsh words either. When I was a student in high school, my mother was a district administrative officer. My physical education instructor beat me with his cane. My mother measured the entire area of my wounds and calculated the square inches. Then she wrote a letter to headmaster: “This is not the way to beat my son—left leg, fifteen or two feet square inches.” As a result, the headmaster scolded the teacher, saying, “Be careful, because she is the district officer.”

After this my teacher kept quiet, but within one month, he again beat me heavily, saying, “If you report to your mother, I will kill you. Take care.” (*Laughter*) Then I kept quiet,

because if I told my parents, it would have brought me extra punishment. In those days it was allowed, but nowadays you cannot do it. In the old days, in English or Telegu grammar, and particularly in mathematics, if a student went wrong, the teacher would keep our head on his lap, and—*tak, tak, tak!*—*Kalyani! Appa!* Finished! (*Laughter*)

But today we cannot do it, because we are pampered, particularly in the West, where children are free to call the police and say, “I am harassed by my teacher.” So instead of going home, we would have to go to prison. (*Laughter*) We have to be moderate. We have to be skillful. In those days, physical treatment was enough; but now we have to treat the mind, even at home during a small family session.

Even after I became a lecturer, my parents did not want me to sit near them when they were talking about my marriage. I was to marry, but they did not want me to sit there, hovering. I had to tell my younger brother, “I want to see how she looks. These people don’t allow me to be there.” He had to tell my grandmother, “Fool, he has become so thick. We will take care of him.” (*Laughter*) That was the end of the matter.

Today it is not like that. We have to convince them, talk to them, and then make them come our way. First agree with the students, saying, “You are right. I understand you.” Finally, the student has to agree with you. So we have to handle the problem psychologically, because the modern generation is very active and proactive. We cannot beat them today, because it will boomerang.

Kindly suggest an effective technique to instill patience in students.

Patience in students is possible when the teacher is patient, not a patient in the hospital. (*Laughter*) How to demonstrate patience? Sometimes the student comes forward with a doubt, “Sir, I have a doubt.” The bell rings, then he will say, “Thank you.” On the other hand, if you say, “Time is up. Can we meet at the next class, or will you come to me during lunch hour, or meet me in the evening?” If we go on barking like Alsatians or Pomeranians, what kind of patience do we expect among students? (*Laughter*)

Students should notice patience in their teachers, so that the students can be patient in turn. Children may be impatient as well. Yes, we are parents at home, not only teachers. As teachers, we are parents. Parents may not be teachers. Most teachers are parents. I cannot help it if my child is impatient. I can demonstrate patience by setting an example with my actions.

The role of a teacher in reducing the stress and strain of a student, especially during examination or during a personal problem, is important. The result is stress, when you schedule an examination only once during a school year. Do you know what Bhagavan Baba did in His schools? We have periodic tests, mid—semester tests, assignments, and continuous internal evaluation. By the end of the semester, if the student has been examined periodically from time to time, he is relaxed, even in a final examination, because he has already been examined many times earlier in the class.

If we follow the annual examination system, and an examination takes place only in the month of March, a student relaxes from June to November. In the month of December, he will pick up some books to study. He will be a drop out, because he will not be able to face the examination, or he will want to copy from others and threaten teachers. There are other ways of getting good marks.

Just for fun, I asked the students to give an account of the transfer section of a stem. One boy wrote about the difference between the root and the stem. The question asked only about the stem, so why did he write about the difference between the root and the stem? I asked him, "Why this answer?" He replied, "Sir, you have asked six questions and said to write answers to any five. I have written two answers. Choose one of them." (*Laughter*)

I found another fellow—these very mischievous fellows all became lecturers, but they must have retired by now—copying in the examination hall. I said, "Hey, Samuel, what are you doing?" "Sir, sir, sir?" I found that he had brought a zoology paper with him, on the day of the examination in botany! (*Laughter*) "What are you doing?" "Sir, you have chosen questions, as you wished. I have brought the material as I find it." (*Laughter*) Oh ho, nice approach . . . there is some logic and method in madness. We have got to be careful with our students, you see.

Stress and strain can be relieved by putting students to periodic tests, so that they will be at ease with examinations, and not have tension. On the other hand, exams will start building up emotions. The funny thing is that parents know the marks of their children in every subject today. A few ladies meet and they talk, "Oh, your son got one hundred percent. My son got eighty percent. Another got fifty percent." Don't they have better things to talk about than marks? At least in public we must be relaxed.

Another conversation: "Oh, he knows the *Vedam*, so let him learn violin. He is in music, so let him be a dancer." This kind of peer pressure is more frequent in the west. Parents create competition among the children, and they cause stress and strain. Let us allow the child to grow in the way that he wants. If he wants to play, yes, let him play. If he wants to sing, yes, let him do it. If he wants to dance, why not? Let us discover their hidden talents.

Through educare, we can bring out hidden talents--not just stuff in information, but bring out talent. Let us bring out the hidden talents in students, so they grow in a natural way. That's the best way. Stress and strain are another thing.

Today corporate colleges have come into existence. I don't know the situation in Kerala, but some colleges in Andhra Pradesh, such as Chaitanya College, Bhashyam College, and Nagarjuna College, are grinding mills. The child should read from four o' clock to midnight, no play, nothing else. On a fine day, we see in the newspaper that someone committed suicide. We should have some time for fun, play, recreation, and fine arts, to bring out our talents.

That's the reason we have sports and games. We have music competitions so that there will not be stress and strain. We also don't want to rank students number one Master of Biological Science or number one Master of Communications just for the sake of number one. He may be very successful in examinations, but a complete failure in life, because we have not allowed him to grow in a natural way.

We come across some adamant, disobedient students, who tend to remain the same, in spite of frequent advice, warnings, or scoldings. Kindly suggest some effective methods.

Yes, the same answer I just said applies.

A lot of children are referred to counselors because of hyperactivity, depression, and other problems. How do we teachers handle them?

We send them to counselors when we fail, not otherwise. The word counselor was not existent in the olden days. Do you know that? Why was it unheard of? Some of our seniors are here. Did we ever hear the word 'bypass surgeries' in those days? What is bypass? Or stint? I don't know all this.

These words we hear now—bypass surgeries, sugar and hypertension, bundle block, ventricular failure—some nonsense. Why all these things? It is because of the kind of life we lead, full of tension and pressure, competition and comparison. We end up in hospitals. Why should we compare ourselves with anyone else?

I always tell my students, "You think about that fellow, going in his car, and you feel jealous of him. There is no reason to feel jealous. Find out where his car goes. The car goes to the clinic, where he has his blood tested and its sugar levels examined. You want his car, but you don't want high blood sugar. You should get high blood pressure and high blood sugar also, so that you can have a car." Am I right? If you want to compare your life with someone else's life, then compare everything the other person has, including his ailments.

My friends, life is complicated because of hopeless, cheap, mean, dirty, and unhealthy comparisons. Let's not compare ourselves with everyone else because we are not a mob, we are not a crowd. Everyone is unique. Please understand that everyone is unique and special. The whole universe will miss us when we are not here. The universe cares for us. The universe is incomplete without our presence. That kind of wholesomeness, a totally holistic view of life, is absolutely needed and should be cultivated. We don't live in isolation and solitude. We belong to a community.

Let there not be comparison and competitions. "He has a TV. Well, I have TV, but I still cry because his happens to be a color TV." I see. "I have a scooter, but I cry, because the other man has a car." You don't need to feel jealous of him, because he has to spend more money for his petrol. When the tire is flat, he has to walk. People ask, "Sir, do you have scooter?" "No, no, I use the costliest number eleven bus, to which I go on

two legs. It doesn't require any petrol or anything." These types of comparisons and competitions are responsible for all the stress we have today.

We have to deal with the student by considering the circumstances under which he is stressed and disturbed. What is he so anxious about? What's wrong with him? That is psychology. When we fail, we have to refer him to experts.

God is omnipotent, omnipresent, and above desire. Is the creation of the universe a result of desire or not? Please explain.

The child plays. The children are taken to Kovalam beach, where they play in the sand, make a beautiful sand hut, and then kick it with a leg, then jump and dance. Is it a desire? No. The child goes on laughing. Is it a desire? No, desire is need-based and goal-oriented. Desire is a wish for the fulfillment of some thing that you do not have: I desire a car because I don't have it, or I desire a building because I don't have it.

Desire is futuristic. Desire is hope. Desire is a future promise. But God is not a promise. God is not a hope. Who is God? God is here now, this moment. God is experiential and experimental. He is in the moment. He is in the present, not in the future, not in past, because the present is omnipresent. Present being is the result of the past. The present will be the foundation of the future. Therefore, God is presence. God is not an object. God is not a person. God is the present moment, and is existence. That's what I can say.

In spite of "value education" nowadays, there is a decrease in moral values and an increase in broken families. The impact is felt in schools. What is to be done to overcome this?

We understand the cause behind it, because of the family background. By showing extra love, by paying special attention to compensate for that which is denied, we can compensate for the things which the student is deprived of. By showing extra love and being more considerate towards him, let us pamper him, so that he loves to be in our company.

Bhagavan said that all of His teachers waited for Him. The moment He returned to school, every teacher waited for Him, and every teacher invited Him to dine for dinner or lunch. Some teachers brought packets of *pakodas*, saying, "This is for You." They hoped they could win His love by showering extra love on Him, believing the only treatment He would give them would be to be more considerate towards them.

Most schools group students and try to discover the slow learners. How to encourage slow learners?

We don't encourage a slow learner, no, no. We make them fast learners. We don't encourage slow learners, no. A slow learner will become a fast learner in due course of time.

Please explain the role of yoga, pranayama, meditation, and satsang in shaping the student's personality and in reaching the goal of education?

Though the words seem high sounding, *pranayama* is nothing but breath control, or breath management, to make use of modern jargon. A simple example: thought will flow as long as we breathe in and out. By this method, *pranayama* keeps exercising the flow of thoughts, and thought flow, its momentum, speed, and velocity, is gradually slowed down. With the passage of time, thoughts will not continue. You reach a thoughtless state, or no-mind state, beyond which is *samadhi*. *Samadhi* does not mean sitting straight and having back pain later. *Samadhi* is the thoughtless state. Control of thoughts is possible because of breath control.

Yoga is a physical exercise, a sound mind in a sound body. If the body is sick, the mind will also be equally sick. If the mind is sick, the body will also fall sick. This is what is called a psychosomatic relationship. Both the mind and body go together. One affects the other, positive or negative. *Yoga* will help the body be strong. As Swami Vivekananda said, we need to be youngsters with nerves of steel and iron. That is possible with *yoga*. The true meaning of *yoga* and its spiritual depths we can speak about later. This description is only at the school level.

Meditation, its higher aspects, and its ramifications and implications can be dealt with later. At the school level and for school children, meditation means concentration. We should teach them how to concentrate. In other words, students' concentration is dissipated and divided. In class a child will pinch the cheek of his friend; he will put a pencil into the ear of another student, or will pull the shirt of another. The child is automatically multi-dimensional, meaning he is in a conscious state which spreads to all teachers, all friends, all birds and animals everywhere. That conscious, all-pervading mind of a student has to be focused.

The mind has to be focused, which is called concentration. If the mind is dissipated, it is only in a conscious state. That conscious state has to be focused in concentration. Finally, meditation should take you back to the consciousness, that spiritual aspect, which we will discuss sometime later. I don't want to disturb you at this particular moment.

How to develop concentration? This is another question. Someone asked Swami, "How to develop concentration?" Swami said, "Do you have a car?" "Yes, Swami." "Do you drive your car?" "Yes, Swami." "If you have no concentration, how can you drive? You will meet with an accident." So you have concentration as you drive your car. You have concentration as you read the newspaper. You have full concentration when you listen to the pop music of Michael Jackson. We have full concentration with music and dance.

But we lose our concentration with respect to God. Concentration is natural, but the absence of concentration is unnatural. Concentration is our birthright. The absence of

concentration is artificial, which we have cultivated over a period of time, the reasons for which you know pretty well.

It is easy to teach students moral values. How do we teach people whose moral values are dwindling day-by-day?

My friends, it's not our job to reform the world. It's my job to transform myself. It's my job to reform my students. It's my job to mould my students, who are committed to my care. It's not my job to reform society. If I do that, God will be jobless, and our Bhagavan will not have His mission. Leave it to Him, because He has taken the trouble of creating human life. Let Him do it; it is His headache. Let us deal with the students here. It's our job right now.

Why do some students become good citizens, while others in the same class become corrupt? Is it the fault of the teacher?

To some extent it is the fault of the teacher, but not totally. We just sow the seeds, water and fertilise them with manure, put up the fencing, and see that they sprout. A sapling germinates. It is duty of the parent to see that this sapling is not eaten away by a goat or cows. Our duty ends after sowing the seeds, watering, nourishing, and nurturing them; that is all. The rest is the responsibility of society and the parents.

As I said, both of my parents were employed in education. My father always used to say that three aspects are important in raising a child. One part is the example of the father. Every child should feel proud of his father. "My father is an illustrious man. My father is a man of honesty and integrity." "Who is your hero?" "My father is my hero. Yes, my father is an example of a good father." The second important aspect is the training by the mother, and the third part is the inspiration of the teacher. It is the teacher who inspires. These are the three factors that govern and mould students committed to our care.

There is no syllabus in schools to inculcate values into the education. In government schools, we face the same issue without a syllabus.

A syllabus is not necessary. Anything that is only a syllabus is disgusting, because a syllabus needs completion of its syllabus. A syllabus includes examination, and therefore means hurrying and tension. No, no, a syllabus is based more on curriculum, but value-based education is based on values. This is eternal and continuous. Let's not limit ourselves and our values to a syllabus. What nonsense! Whatever I speak to our students will carry some values. Whatever lesson I teach will carry some values.

I learn values from the students as well, and I share the values that I have learnt over a period of time that have nothing to do with the syllabus. The tenth class syllabus is not appropriate when a student enters the eleventh class. But this bus should not stop. This bus is continuous and will continuously run. As long as the heart beats and blood circulates, as long as I am alive, I will search for Truth and live up to human values. As

Swami Ranganayakam wrote, eternal values in a changing society--society may change, but the values are eternal. You are supposed to know that.

In one of His discourses, Swami talked about oneness with God. Please explain it.

Oneness with God means when you forget yourself. When you rise above the body, when you are beyond the mind, you are one with God and no one else. In deep sleep, or *sushupthi*, the body is on a bed, and the mind is silent or passive. During deep sleep, with whom am I? What am I? I am the witness in deep sleep. I am one with God in a deep sleep experience, as Adi Sankara explains. The entire Adi Sankara philosophy is based on three states of consciousness. First is the waking state, *jagrath*. Second is the dreaming state, *swapna*. The third is deep sleep, *sushupthi*. Beyond that is the *thuriya*, the super conscious state.

What a philosophy! We are really proud of this country and the rich treasure of the knowledge which Adi Sankara has passed on to posterity. Ages may pass, but Adi Sankara's philosophy remains fresh. It is a challenge to science any day, at any time, anywhere all over the world.

A deep sleep experience will tell you that you are God, that's all. Why do I say that? You raised a simple question, what am I to do? A simple example: when the mind functions, you will be able to tell me about your dream. "Sir, in my dream I met Barack Obama." Oh, good. You can tell me, "Sir, I encountered Bin Laden." Oh, good. "I had a wonderful dream. I had a tea with Musharaf." You have nice dreams with great people or horrible creatures. (*Laughter*) Okay, dream, dream, so you can report what happened in the dream.

You can report that I was with Kerala people this morning. I was so happy I was talking with them that I lost myself, because God gave me the gem of an audience, which I had never had before. I can say this, because this is what I saw.

But can you talk about what you had during deep sleep? "Sir, I had a nice sleep." "How nice was it?" "I had a good sleep." "How good was it? Was it tall or short? Was it fair or unfair? Was it sweet or hot? What is the height? What is the weight?" "I tell you that it was a good sleep, that's all."

Good sleep is an experience which you cannot describe. Where there is mind, there is expression. Where there is no mind, there is only experience. That is the ultimate state.

Some students commit mistakes. We teachers try to correct them. But some parents try to support their children. How should we deal with such students?

Our students should love us to the extent that a student will correct his parents. That's what has happened in Sai institutions. I will give you an example. One alumnus is now a top officer in the Reserve Bank of India in Bombay. He is very close to Swami.

Swami used to talk to him everyday when he was a student here. Suddenly his father, the district *seva dal* convener, received a letter from his son. "Dad, Swami would talk to me everyday. Why is it that he stopped talking to me for the past three days?" The father replied, "You must have done something." The son said, "Nothing wrong with me, Dad. Please be frank."

The father showed me the letter and said, "Mr. Anil Kumar, I had been to cocktail party the previous night, and I enjoyed drinks at the party. The other day I was playing cards, and here is my son, who warns me not to do that."

Therefore, if a student loves the teacher more, he will go to the extent of correcting his own parents. That's what is happening here, because of the students' love for Bhagavan Baba. How Baba loves them! He will take them to that level in order to correct their parents.

What are the various approaches to impart value education to students?

There is an enormous amount of literature on Education in Human Values (EHV). The authors are experts; you can acquire all of the documents and try to implement them. Our general educational system has churned out batches and batches of self-centered people. It is our duty to bring out social awareness. Social awareness and social responsibility is our responsibility. We must see to it that students will be aware of these things, see to it that they will be aware of their own country, their geographical limitations, and their environment.

Because of this we have pollution problems. If students know what pollution is, and if they understand ozone depletion, they will have an environmental awareness, so that they can be responsible students. We have to find a way to inculcate these values.

Education has become more and more commercial. How can we change the trend of society, when society has become more and more commercially-oriented?

Society is restless. You see, my friends, every *guru* and every *ashram* today has large numbers of people. Every temple, such as Tirupathi, has thousands of visitors. Ayyappa Swami has *lakhs* of people. Everywhere it is commercial. Those who are more business-minded go to Tirupathi for extra profits. "Oh, Venkateswara, see that I win a lottery of twenty-five *lakhs* of *rupees*. I will give you my hair." (*Laughter*) Worthless! If you give that much hair, next month you will have to give that much more. Then you will have to give tens *lakhs* of *rupees* to fix your health. We are fools and we want to fool God also!

The loss of truth and peace in world is due to the loss of truth and righteousness. How can we make the world come under one roof of unity?

To do our own part, we must work under our own limitations. I cannot work on behalf of everyone. Let me make everyone happy; let me make everyone smile. Let me make

everyone laugh, that's all. I can make the atmosphere around me lovable and friendly, that's what I can do. That's what we have to do.

I have a son who is totally disinterested in studies. What should I do?

Make him a political minister. (*Laughter*) Why not? This anecdote was told to us by V.K. Menon of Kerala, the then Defense Minister of India. Jawaharlal Nehru and V.K. Menon were very close friends. A parent came and complained to Nehru, "Panditji, my first son is an engineer. My second son is a doctor. The third fellow is disinterested in studies." Nehru said, "Make him a minister." (*Laughter*) So it's good for him to make a very good career in politics.

Who is an ideal teacher?

You're an ideal teacher. Why not? Is there any yardstick, any parameter? No. Who is an ideal teacher? An ideal teacher is one to whom the student himself is the Divine, to whom teaching itself is *sadhana*, to whom money does not matter. The ideal teacher is one who brings a smile on the face of the students, who earns a word of appreciation from the parents, and whose goal in life is to help create a grateful nation. An ideal teacher is one who has the goal of satisfaction, the pride of his profession, a sense of belonging, and commitment to the mission of teaching, the noblest of all professions.

What should we do if a student transfers from one school, going to another school, and blames the teacher?

What to do? It is like my earlier example: if Lord Venkateswara does not fulfill your desire, you go to *Guruvayoor Pura Shri Hari Krishna Narayana Gopa!* (*Anil Kumar breaks into singing this bhajan amidst laughter*) If He turns His face to the side, then you go to *Shambo Mahadeva!* (*He starts singing this bhajans as all laugh.*) What to do when we are like that?

When we tell a student to avoid bad company, the students say everything is good. How can we explain bad company to youngsters?

What is bad company? What is good company? Good company is that which will make you healthy, wealthy, and wise. Bad company will never make you wise or healthy. You will not be wise; you will be otherwise. Bad company is that which is not value-oriented. Bad company is that which makes you undisciplined. Bad company is that which makes you irregular. It is not that difficult to know the qualities of bad company, which is unlimited today. It is most essential to know the qualities of good company.

But we the teachers can change the company students keep. A simple example: if there is a foul or bad smell, usually people burn an incense stick or use a room sprayer, and you will change it to a good smell. Why should I blame the company? I can change my company. I can transform my company. Why not?

Here is a simple example. In the early days, one film actor by the name of Rajakumar, from Karnataka, was kidnapped by Veerappan. Rajakumar made Veerappan sing *bhajans* in the forest, then hypnotised him to such an extent that Veerappan said, "Rajakumar, why don't we act together in a film?" (*Laughter*)

As a joke, Bhagavan spoke about Veerappan, saying, "Anil Kumar, if Veerappan kidnaps you, what will happen?" I replied, "Swami, Veerappan would feel very badly if he kidnapped me, because I want hot, hot Andhra pickles. I want *papad*, mango pickles, yes, I want those things! He would say. 'Why have I kidnapped this worthless fellow? Let him go back.' The second alternative is to bring Veerappan here to have Your *darshan*. I will make him sing *bhajans*!" We have the ability to transform the company; we don't have to blame the company.

I teach in a hotel management college, where in the laboratory we deal not with chemicals, but with lye, dead meat, and also liquors. We have to taste them to ensure that they are not spoiled. What situation am I in?

Hari Om, I have no solution. If I were you, I would run away. I would quit that job, because I can't take liquor or taste meat. I cannot do it. There are a number of professions in the world, but that doesn't mean that I should do a job that I don't like, that my conscience doesn't permit. That's what I would do.

Thank you so much for your many questions. God bless you. I am really flattered. I admire and appreciate each and every one of you for your questions, your patient listening to my talk, and your rapt attention. Thank you very much. God bless you.

Professor Anil Kumar finished his talk by singing "Jaya Ho Jaya Ho Gopalana."

Jai Bolo Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Babaji Ki Jai!

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