

Learning To Be...

A curtain raiser on the Sri Sathya Sai World Education Conference

July 20, 2008

What is the end goal of Sathya Sai Education? Learning **To Be**. To help develop the whole *human being*, a balanced development of the physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual domains to endow one with an integrated personality is the first and foremost aim of Sathya Sai Education.

Bhagawan exhorts: Students! Teachers! Patrons of education! You should understand the true meaning of education. Education does not mean mere acquisition of bookish knowledge. Can you call all those who know how to read and write educated? Can one be called educated merely by acquiring degrees? How can you attain the eternal knowledge if you do not know your true Self? You should make efforts to know your true identity. All your education will prove futile if you do not know who you really are. (Dasara 2004)

On the auspicious Guru Purnima morning on the 18th July 2008, Bhagawan, citing the example of a student-turned faculty member who has been invited to go over to Hungary for his thesis and presentation, exhorted the students of Sathya Sai Institutions to share the knowledge that they have been fortunate to learn in the portals of the illustrious hallowed institution, at His Divine Lotus Feet. Teachers and students should not only study and recapitulate, but should be able to impart the knowledge, said Bhagawan in a different context during the Divine Discourse.

Sathya Sai Education has its roots in the teachings of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba who has established His Empire of Educational Institutions in the year 1969 that has grown in to a University with unique distinction over the years. Very early in His life, Sri Sathya Sai Baba declared that His Mission would be to impress upon mankind on the crucial importance of leading moral lives by the practice of universal human values: *Sathya* (Truth); *Dharma* (Righteousness); *Shanthi* (Peace); *Prema* (Love); *Ahimsa* (Nonviolence). 'Education should bring out human values. "To bring out" means to translate these values into action'. Ever since, He has remained a constant motivator and guide in the development of Sathya Sai Education. The most distinguishing feature of this educational system is its philosophy that helps students to develop good character with equal importance in fostering the development of skills that will help them to earn a good living. He says, education is for life and not merely for living. Revolutionary in concept and comprehensive in scope, Sathya Sai educational principles have become a lifelong learning and transformation process for children, men, and women in all parts of the world.

"Education is not for mere living; it is for life, a fuller life, a more meaningful, and a more worthwhile life. There is no harm if it is also for a gainful employment; but the educated man must be aware that existence is not all, that gainful employment is not all. Again education is not for developing the faculty of argument, criticism, or winning a polemic victory over your opponents or exhibiting your mastery over language or logic. That study is best, which teaches you to conquer this cycle of birth and death and that will not be disturbed by the blessings or blows of fate. That study begins where this study of yours ends."

Sathya Sai Educational Programme has become a global phenomenon that has made its strong presence in many parts of the world and its impact would be known to the world when the climax would be unfolded, as Bhagawan has taken great pride in calling His students future leaders. It has been an evolutionary process starting with His first educational institution in Anantapur in 1968, Bal Vikas Movement in 1969, a Boys Campus in Brindavan, Bangalore in 1969, Primary and Higher Secondary Schools in Prasanthi Nilayam in 1970, a Campus in Prasanthi Nilayam for Men in 1978, the inception of Education in Human Values in the year 1980, Institute of Sathya Sai Education in 1987 followed by the conception of "Educare" in the mid nineties.

Inaugurating the Anantapur College for Women on 22nd July 1968 Bhagawan said: *"This is a Divine and blessed land whose tradition is based on spirituality. This college has to be an example. Motherhood aspect is very important. The influence of good or bad, which a mother exerts on her children is far-reaching. Good mothers are needed to rebuild India again."*

The network of Institutes of Sathya Sai Education has now expanded to over 20 countries. It is mainly aimed at "to propagate the ideals of Sathya Sai Education in primary and secondary schools, colleges and universities." In their respective geographical regions, the Institutes provide standardized training of teachers and teacher-trainers. They also offer Diploma and Advanced Diploma courses, assist in establishing Sathya Sai Schools, and support the adoption of existing schools.

Yes, towards '*Learning To Be*', one of the four pillars of education defined in the report of the International Commission. In the most inclusive sense, *To Be* refers to developing the *whole human being*, or a balanced

development of the physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual domains to endow one with an integrated personality. By combining spiritual education with secular education in an integral manner, Sathya Sai Education lays the foundation for developing an integrated personality. Bhagawan has referred to it as the harmonious development of a sharp intellect endowed with fundamental discrimination; a kind, compassionate heart with love for all; and competent hands that serve selflessly. Such a personality is the combination of nobility and ability. Bhagawan says, "Nobility without ability is useless to society and ability without nobility is dangerous to it." The most important manifestation of this *whole human being* or an integrated personality is character, and that is the goal of Sathya Sai Education. The human values of Love, Truth, Peace, Right Conduct, and Nonviolence provide the foundation for character, which in turn manifests itself as unity in thought, word, and deed, in selfless service and love for all. Character alone confers the ability to exercise objectivity and a sense of personal responsibility to attain common goals of the society. Information, knowledge, and skills gained through secular education are important tools and are prerequisites for righteous action, but these become ineffective when the personality lacks character.

Addressing the students of Sathya Sai University during the Summer Course in 1992 Bhagawan declared: "I want you to be leaders to protect the world. Leaders like lions-self-reliant, courageous, majestic and just. Lion is the king of animals and I want you to be king among men".

The end of education is character;
The end of knowledge is love;
The end of culture is perfection;
The end of wisdom is freedom.

It could be an ambition, a dream for mortals, but, for the Immortal One it was His *Sankalpa*. His *Sankalpa*, His Will is bound to be done! And Sathya Sai Education is the perfect tool in His hands to make it happen.