

Discrimination is the means to self-realisation

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

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Embodiments of Love!

Today's function is being held to celebrate the anniversary of the School of Business Management, Accounting, and Finance. What is meant by business? Does business mean exchange of goods? No, it is not so.

Truly speaking, the entire world is engaged in business. Right from the Prime Minister of the country to an ordinary worker, everybody is involved in some kind of business or other and is following the working system appropriate to their occupation. Knowing fully well this reality, our students are making a mark for themselves in all fields of life.

Never forsake your culture

Man is endowed with five senses of perception. The functioning of the five senses is also a type of business in which all the limbs are engaged. All the senses perform their business in the most appropriate manner with regard to the limbs with which they are associated. Those who give proper direction to their senses so as to lead them on the right path are truly first rankers.

Business that is done mainly by reading books, and business journals and comparing Indian business with overseas business cannot be called business in the true sense of the term. Indian business should be concerned with Indian traditions and values. It should keep in view the interest and situation of the country. Other countries are making changes in their business ventures just to increase their power. We should not imitate them in any such manner. We should adopt those practices

that are appropriate to our culture and traditions.

Taking only money into consideration in business is flawed; culture has to be given utmost importance. Along with culture, the interest of the country should also be given high priority. True business is that which keeps culture and country in view. Some people today ignore the culture due to the influence of modern times. Never forsake culture, at any cost.

What is meant by culture? We should understand and follow our ancient traditions and values. We should never ignore our culture in our business matters. We should enquire into the relationship between culture and country. Culture has its existence due to the country. True humanness lies in the integration of culture and country. Culture is not related to your worldly relations and practices. Culture is concerned with the feelings of your heart and your power to discriminate between what is good and what is bad.

Hence, develop strong power of discrimination. This discrimination brings about many changes in the life of man. It is due to lack of discrimination that our culture has suffered a decline. And because of the decline of culture our country has become weak. Wrong cultural practices followed by the people are, in fact, the main cause for the weakness of a country. Today, people do not follow the true culture of our country. Consequently, the government also takes to wrong path. As you all know, different political parties today follow different cultural values and ideologies. But if they

all work together for a common cause, the results are sure to be good.

Give up craze for fashions

Once, when I was a student, some political leaders approached Me and requested, “Raju! We understand that You write good poetry. We have arranged a meeting in Bukkapatnam where a large number of people are expected to come. Please write a good song that can inspire the people.”

Those were the days of the Second World War. Hitler was marching forward to conquer various countries in Europe. He was trying to invade Russia. India was then under rule of the Britishers. Taking the situation into account, I wrote a small playlet. In that playlet, I kept a rubber doll in a cradle and sang the following song, rocking the cradle gently:

Do not cry, my child, do not cry.
If you cry, you will not be called a valiant son
of Bharat.
Go to sleep, my child, go to sleep.
Did you get scared because the terrible Hitler
has invaded the invincible Russia?
Go to sleep, my child, go to sleep.
Do not cry, my child, do not cry.
For the Red Army is marching under Stalin.
They will put an end to Hitler.
Then what else is the reason for your crying?
Is it because the countrymen lack unity?
All the countrymen will unite and fight to win
freedom;
Go to sleep, my child, go to sleep.
(Telugu song)

I used to compose songs and make the children sing those songs in the village so that people might give up their craze for fashions and cultivate noble thoughts. The wrist watch had just arrived in those days. If anyone in the village wore a wrist watch, he was considered to be a great person. Not only that, gents used to keep a small moustache under their nose as a fashion. I composed a song on these fashions.

Oh folks! What are these times that have descended on us!

People hang silver medallions from a leather strap on their left wrists —and call it fashion!
Grotesque appearances are made that cannot be seen by the eyes —and they call it fashion!
Long moustaches are cut to tiny patches under the nose —and they call it fashion!
(Telugu song)

Seeing all these fashions, I asked them, “My dear! Why have you done this? Your moustache appears like two flies sitting on your upper lip. This is not good.”

New fashions do not become prevalent all at once. They are the result of imitation: people see others and imitate them. Gradually, imitation changes into fashion for a particular period of time. See the influence of fashion on women! They have given up the use of auspicious turmeric and *kumkum* (vermillion) mark on forehead and have started putting a miniscule dot, which is hardly visible.

All these fashions keep changing. How long does a fashion last? It lasts only for a few months. Similarly, fashions of youngsters and adults undergo change within a short period. As you all know, earlier bell bottom pants became a fashion for youngsters; these were tight from above and loose below like the shape of a bell. This fashion lasted only for a short time. After some time, pants of the shape of a pipe tightly sticking to the body came into fashion. Recognising that it was not good, people thereafter reverted to ordinary dress.

In this manner, many unnecessary fashions appear from time to time like clouds in the sky, which come and go. I corrected the people when they took to such fashions. Man should live like a human being.

Unnecessary changes are harmful

Today, many changes are being made in the field of education also. Many meaningless changes are being made in the syllabus. Authorities may thrust such changes from

above. But do they prepare the teachers who are responsible for putting these changes into practice? No, not at all. What can the students learn from such teachers? First of all, qualified teachers are required. Our university is making great efforts to prepare such qualified teachers. If the teachers are good, the students will also become good.

Not only in the field of education, but changes have now crept in the area of health. Earlier, people used pitchers, plates, and pots made of clay by local artisans. After some time, stainless steel utensils replaced the clay utensils. But now plastic pitchers, plates, and pots have come into vogue. These plastic articles have exposed man to great dangers. The plastic bags and other articles have created enormous waste material which is not biodegradable. Even if you bury it underground, it does not decompose and remains as it is even after many years. Much land is being spoiled by this plastic waste. Vegetables grown in such land are harmful to man.

In this way, many harmful changes have crept in the life of man today. Therefore, we should not resort to unnecessary imitation and changes, particularly in the field of education.

Living in the present is most important

We should follow our indigenous system and experience the happiness of living in the present. Then, our future will also become happy. Many people are worried about their future. Do not brood over past; don't worry about future. Past is past; forget the past; do not think about it. Present is important. It is not ordinary present; it is omnipresent. Many people worry about their past and future and spoil their present.

Make proper use of our present. Sathya Sai colleges are the only institutions that teach students to make proper use of their present, though the environment in these institutions may appear to be like that of a rural institution.

The future does not always bring happiness. And so far as the past is concerned, how much happiness have you experienced in it? Therefore, live happily in the present. Nothing is lost when you lose money.

Acquisition of good qualities makes your mind steady. A steady mind is a good mind. It is the mind that brings about a change in the life of man. Even the parents do not know the mind of their children. The parents also should live in present. What is the use of thinking about the past?

Presently, our students have achieved great progress in many fields and set ideals for all. What should we do in the present? Follow the maxim in the present: Less luggage more comfort makes travel a pleasure. We should not worry about the past at all. Thinking about the past will not do any good to us. Therefore, we should lead our life in the present and achieve all-round progress.

You should realise the significance of the word "present". What does it mean? When you are in the class, you are present; otherwise you are absent. Absence will reduce your value. In every aspect of your life, present is important.

You achieve good results in all subjects when you are present. Therefore, all of you should think about only present.

Today, many elders have fond memories of past times, thinking, "Our past time was so good, but everything has turned bad in the present time. In those days, children respected their elders; they conducted themselves with great humility. They revered their elders and learnt good things from them. In fact, there was no need to go to teachers; the grandmother in the house taught many good things to children. In ancient times, all led a happy life."

"Old is gold" is a proverb. True to this proverb, people in olden times were like pure gold. By their teachings, they helped the peo-

ple to take to noble path. But today we have damaged this path. Therefore, we should repair this damage and restore the path again.

Love and serve your Motherland

Today, wherever you go, you see people fighting with one another. There is neither unity nor purity anywhere; it is enmity everywhere. Anybody you come across, you will see him in anger. You talk to someone, he will talk against you.

We should therefore drive away the evil qualities like anger, jealousy, hypocrisy, etc. Never harm anybody; never cause pain to anyone. Help Ever, Hurt Never.

You can achieve anything through unity. Therefore, always stick to the noble path of unity. Why did Subhash Chandra Bose had to leave the country? It was nothing but enmity. When does enmity arise? It arises when selfishness overtakes you. Though he had to leave the country, he fearlessly kept serving the people wherever he went. Our country is in dire need of such noble people.

Our professors also said, “Swami, our students are very good. They can bring about many good changes in society. Many parents today are sending their children to overseas countries. But, why should they send them out? Instead they can remain in our country and bring about changes in the community.”

Instead of earning 10,000 rupees a month abroad, it is better to be satisfied with 1,000 rupees in Bharat. In overseas countries, even pure water is scarce. Life is full of difficulties. Half of your earning will go as house rent. All other things are equally expensive. A small banana costs ten rupees! Wherefrom can you get so much money? How can you bring up your children? Impossible! In Bharat, your children would be happy and satisfied if you give them a simple food of rice and chutney. Forgetting this simple life in our own country, people want to go to foreign countries undergoing all sorts of difficulties.

I have never visited any foreign country except East Africa. Even there, I spent most of My time seeing wild life in the forests and observing the good qualities of wild animals. There I saw large hordes of elephants; that looked very beautiful and majestic. I offered bananas to some elephants, which they accepted very gladly and wanted more of them. Their ears were as big as a winnowing pan. When they swished their ears, mosquitoes sitting even at a long distance would fly away.

There were many zebras and giraffes also. They were happily moving in the forest. None of these wild animals causes any harm to man. They will be inimical toward us only when we approach them with the intention of harming them. Otherwise, they will be friendly with us and follow us like pets.

I saw a group of lions sitting at one place with their young ones. Even when we were very close to them, they did not show any feeling of enmity. In this way, all the wild animals behaved in a very gentle manner.

Your evil qualities are reflected in the animals. If your feelings are good, the snakes will also not harm you even if you were to lie down by their side. Otherwise, your own pet cow may gore you with its horns.

If a person is angry with you, what is the reason? It is only reaction, reflection, and rebound of your own feelings. It is only the evil qualities of man that bring about a change in the gentle nature of animals, birds and beasts. Today, there is hatred and conflict even between two sons of the same mother! What is the reason for this mutual hatred? Their evil qualities are responsible for this. We should never give room to such qualities.

Cultivate unshakeable faith in God

You are studying in a good college. You should uphold the good name of this college with your good conduct. If you want to earn a good name, you should join good company. Tell me your company, and I will tell you

what you are. As your company, so you become. Hence, join good company. It is a great good fortune to be associated with good company. Therefore, join such good company and try to develop all-round goodness.

Yesterday, the talks delivered by two of our MBA students were very good. Listening to them was a great pleasure to Me. We are very happy to have such good boys in our college. These two boys stood first in their class and were awarded gold medals. But don't be satisfied with these awards and rewards. You should become good boys. Even the value of gold may diminish but not the value of goodness. Hence, cultivate goodness and earn a good name, which will remain forever.

First of all, develop self-confidence. If you have self-confidence everything will turn out to be good for you. Devotees like Dhruva, Prahlada, and Radha led their lives with sacred feelings. Everything became good for them because they had good thoughts. Wicked Hiranyakasipu subjected Prahlada to all types of sufferings. He tried to get Prahlada trampled by elephants. Prahlada continued to chant the divine name of Narayana. He was never afraid of elephants. He saw Narayana in elephants also. Hiranyakasipu threw him before snakes but he escaped unharmed. When he was pushed down from a mountain top and thrown into a deep sea, Lord Narayana held him in His arms and saved him.

In this manner, one with faith in God will never be put to harm. Hence, develop unflinching faith. Your firm faith in God confers on you all types of knowledge. Where there is faith, there is love. Where there is love there is Atma. Atma has no specific name or form. Similarly, faith has no form, and divinity is also formless. Love is God. Live in Love. Truth is God, God is Truth. The entire creation has emerged from truth.

The creation emerges from truth and merges into truth,

Is there a place in the cosmos where truth does not exist?

Visualise this pure and unsullied truth.
(Telugu poem)

Realisation of truth is *sakshatkara* (God-realisation). Therefore, develop faith in this truth. No doubt, people do have faith, but their faith is wavering. As the faith, so is the result. If you have total faith, the results are bound to be good in all respects. When you are confronted with difficulties, you tend to lose your faith. You may lose anything but not faith. Consider faith as your life. That is the path you should follow.

You have a strong belief that your parents are your parents. Even if a thousand people tell you that they are not your parents, you won't agree. You must have such total faith in God also. God will go to any extent to help those who have such unshakeable faith in Him. Your faith in God should be total. We may have to undergo any number of difficulties and hardships, yet, our faith should remain firm. Ramadas worked as Tehsildar (revenue officer). He prayed to Rama, "Swami, whatever revenue I have collected I have spent it in your service." He sang thus:

Oh Ramachandra!

I have spent ten thousand gold coins to adorn
Mother Sita with a gold necklace and another
ten thousand sovereigns to decorate
Your brother Lakshmana with a gold belt.
That crest jewel which adorns You cost me
another ten thousand gold coins.

Unmindful of my travails, You are flaunting
the jewelery as if You got it with Your own
money!

(Telugu poem)

The compassionate Lord Himself appeared before the king and paid the money due from Ramadas. Later, Ramadas repented and prayed for forgiveness, "Unable to bear the hardships of Your test I have spoken such harsh words. Oh Lord! Please forgive me."

One can achieve anything in life with the help of God's grace. When you face all the

tests of God with total faith and do your duty, you are sure to succeed. Do you know the depth of faith of overseas devotees? Many of them come to Puttaparthi and live in small hutments. Even then, they are very happy. It isn't possible for anyone to describe their happiness, which is the result of their unflinching faith. If you have such strong faith in God, He will take care of you wherever you are.

God is your sole refuge wherever you may be,
In a forest, in the sky, in a city or a village,
On the top of a mountain or in the middle of
deep sea.
(Telugu poem)

Study to be steady

First and foremost, develop confidence. Mere acquisition of knowledge is not enough. Your knowledge may be as vast as an ocean, your common sense may be as great as the mighty Himalayas, but if you do not have discrimination, then everything is useless. It is enough if you have discrimination.

Before you undertake any task, always enquire, "Is this good or bad, is this right or wrong?" You will come up in life if you develop this one quality in you. This itself is self-realisation. So, it is important to have discrimination first.

Unfortunately, people use their discrimination to suit their self-interest. This individual discrimination varies from person to person. The same thing is viewed by ten people in ten different ways. You must adopt fundamental discrimination which is beneficial to society at large. Only fundamental discrimination will give you self-satisfaction, which in turn will lead you to self-realisation. So, proper discrimination is of prime importance for self-realisation.

Students!

You are like pure gold. You are all very good. But sometimes you encounter waves of disturbance and doubts in your lives. Many a

time, your faith is shaken by some aberrations. Do not pay attention to these. They will go as they come. Come what may, you must remain fearless and steady.

Your studies are meant to develop steadiness in you. Study to be steady. Keep this always in your mind.

Look at these two boys. How happy they are! In fact, all the MBA students are good. It is not possible to say that one is good and the other is bad. Their singing also was so good. They are intelligent, virtuous, and full of vigour. They will be an asset wherever they go. Such boys should stay back to serve the institution so that they can impart their goodness to others.

There is nothing great in going abroad and earning a lot of money with your academic qualifications. Money comes and goes, morality comes and grows. Develop such morality. It is enough if you have morality. What can money do? Can you eat money? Unless you spend it to buy something, you cannot satisfy your hunger. Hence, money is not important, morality is important.

Faith comes first, job next

Do not give up your sacred culture and love for your motherland. Subhash Chandra Bose never forgot his motherland, even when he was staying in other countries. You should proudly proclaim, "This is my motherland." Do not tarnish the image of the sacred culture of your land. Be happy.

(From Bhagavan's Divine Discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam, 22 August 2007 on the occasion of 21st Anniversary of the School of Business Management, Accounting, and Finance of the Sri Sathya Sai University.)