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The teacher's task

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Item Type	Article
Authors	Baba, Sathya Sai
Publisher	International Sai Organisation
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Download date	2026-11-05 23:06:50
Link to Item	http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12424/196236

19. The teacher's task

Wholesome happiness arises only from the fullness of love;

Truth, peace, charity, fortitude---these can fructify

Only in the atmosphere of love---sayeth Sai.

Men yearn for good times, high status, power, good life;

But seldom do they yearn for good thoughts, wisdom, and virtue.

What better advice can Sai give

Man's feelings and activities move along three courses: the emotional, the actional and the rational, otherwise denoted as *bhakthi, karma* and *jnaana* paths. The first type does everything in a dedicatory spirit of worship, which promote purity and goodness. The second type does actions which are service-oriented, either towards the individual, or the society or the nation. They derive joy through such activity and realise their life-goals therefrom. They feel that activity is the purpose of living, its justification, its goal. The third type is moved by the spirit of inquiry into the basic principles governing life and nature, or as *Vedhaantha* states, into the *thatthwa. Thatthwa* is a word of two *syllables---thath* and *thwa. Thathwa* means the highest and the fullest knowledge.

The rays of the sun fall upon things, both clean and dirty; they illumine good things and bad. But they are not affected by them in the least. So too, the *'Thath'* is unaffected by the consequences of *karma* or the ups and downs of life. It is the serene witness of the *vishaya,* the observer of objective Nature. *Thath* is *Aathma. Thwam* is the ever-changing, ever-affected, Nature. *Thath* is *Aathma. Thwam is an-aathma, the non-aathma.* The Rational type finds joy in analysing and discovering the *Aathma,* discarding the *Anaathma.* Surprisingly the term 'rational' has taken on contrary and crooked meanings. Its proper objective is the *Aathmic* investigation for which man is endowed with the reasoning faculty.

A person's activity reveals his personality

These three types are actually three strands intertwined into one rope. They cannot be untwined. A house is built of brick, mortar and wood. So too, for the mansion called human life, *bhakthi, karma* and *jnaana* are essential, just as heart, hand and head. For spiritual success one should possess the heart of Buddha, the hands of Emperor Janaka and the head of Shankaraachaarya. The three together in one, form the Love of Sai.

Of the three, the middle one, karma or activity, must be based on the synthesis of both *bhakthi* and *jnaana. The karma* in which one is engaged is the measure of one's personality. Like a thermometer revealing the degree of warmth, *karma* reveals whether a man is predominantly *thaamasik, raajasik* or *saathwik. Karma* is important from another point of view. It shapes one's personality. The nature of the *karma* decides the nature of the consequence.

We find many who decide not to utter falsehood but are yet doing so. They vow to follow an ideal but fail to follow it. Why is this so? Man has in him the three traits mentioned above. Of these, the *rajoguna* (the passionate, emotional trait) has an offspring, *kaama* (lust). The *Thamoguna* (the dull slothful trait) has children---Anger, Hatred, Envy and Selfishness. Lust is

the leader of this gang of four. Lust forces entry into the heart through a gap he creates and the entire gang make it their den. Lust is all-consuming fire.

Fire is known in Sanskrit a *analam,* which means 'not enough'! Moreover, one keeps away from fire when we see it even at a distance. What to say, then, when the fire of lust is a conflagration in the heart itself? How can we live in peace and joy when this fire is consuming us? We can quench this fire by the knowledge of the strategy of sense-control, through the exercise of discrimination.

Teachers must inspire the pupils

Teachers have to discriminate thus and develop a firm faith in the *Aathma. As* the seed, so the crop. Unless they are able to implant this seed of knowledge, value orientation cannot happen. "Who am I?" is the question, the answer to which must be known and experienced. The Sanskrit word for I is *"Aham"*---this is formed by putting together the first letter A and the last letter *Ha.* It shows that all thoughts and expressions centre around the I; nothing is outside it.

The I is the centre of all duties and obligations. Teachers and others complain that they are not given the respect that is due to them; if they fulfill their duties, they will certainly get their due. Both teachers and students must be intent on discharging their duties. They must be ever vigilant against bad habits and vices gaining a foothold in their minds, for, like a brood of white ants, they will eat into the vitals until man crumbles.

Teachers and students must develop constructive companionship. The teacher must share the sorrows and joys of the pupils as keenly as if they were his own. He must identify himself with them as milk does with water. When the water with which milk has been associated goes off as vapour when boiled, the milk is so saddened that it rises over the edge of the vessel and tries to fall into the fire. Seeing its plight, you add a little water and the milk is quietened and pacified when the companion rejoins it.

Man has in him the Sun *of jnaana* but he ignores it and behaves as if he has to live in a dark dungeon. This is what is called *"maaya"* or "the great illusion." So, the teacher who is entrusted with the task of carrying illumination into tender minds has to become aware of the light within so that he may inspire the pupils under his care.

Sathya Sai Auditorium, 30-8-1981

> *The secret of liberation lies, not in the mystic formula that is whispered in the ear and rotated on the rosary; it lies in the stepping out into action, the walking forward in practice the pious pilgrim route, and the triumphant reaching of the Goal.*
>
> *The best* Guru *is the Divine in you; yearn for hearing His Voice, His* Upadesh*.*
>
> *If you seek wordly* gurus*, you will have to run from one to another, like a rat caught inside a drum, which flees to the right when the drummer beats on the left and to the left when he beats the right/*
>
> *Sathya Sai Baaba*