



SRI SATHYA SAI

GLOBAL BAL VIKAS GURUS CONFERENCE



UPHOLDING TRUTH • NURTURING HEARTS • BLOSSOMING EXCELLENCE



PRE-CONFERENCE

READING MATERIAL



OFFERED AT THE LOTUS FEET OF OUR DEAREST LORD,

Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

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Introduction to Study Material

There are three methods of learning namely shravanam (listening), mananam (constant contemplation) and nidhidhyasana (to assimilate)... Truly, what you have listened to cannot be easily grasped and assimilated just by listening. You have to do some mananam or think it over again and again and then absorb what you have listened to. This is nidhidhyasana. If you do all three—listen, think over and absorb—then only can you enjoy the fruits of what you have listened to. There is a small illustration for this. Suppose some food is cooked in your kitchen. Will your hunger be relieved merely by looking at what has been cooked? Even if you just eat what has been cooked, will you be able to derive the necessary strength from the nourishment? Only if you digest the food that you have eaten, can you get the nourishment. As cooking, eating, and then digesting are three essential processes to get the ultimate result, so also, shravanam, mananam, and nidhidhyasana must follow one another in that order so that it may give you the ultimate result. Then only can you acquire some aspects of the Atma-vidya. People who just listen and do not do any mananam are like those who just see cooked food in a kitchen and do not attempt to eat it.
–Sri Sathya Sai, June 9th, 1974.

Bhagwan Sri Sathya Sai Baba has blessed us with the unique gift of His words and message directly. We do not need a Valmiki or the Apostles to know the Truth. Swami Himself has delivered discourses on various topics to us directly. A devotee will realize that each discourse is His direct words to each of us. He speaks to us when we keenly listen.

This study material is compiled to bring Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas Gurus from across the globe together with one goal – to engage, to ruminate and to be inspired by His words. The idea is that every group takes their time to engage with the study material and , through discussions, Gurus are able to derive action plans that they can take back to their groups and centers.

The following material has been taken directly from 3 discourses given by Bhagwan to the Balvikas Gurus during Gurus Training Camps:

1. Jan 03, 1974
2. July 25, 1978
3. December 5, 2006

Each discourse has the link to the original version, both transcript and audio. In these discourses Swami is instructional in His delivery, very clear on His expectations and His words are universally applicable and are relevant even today.

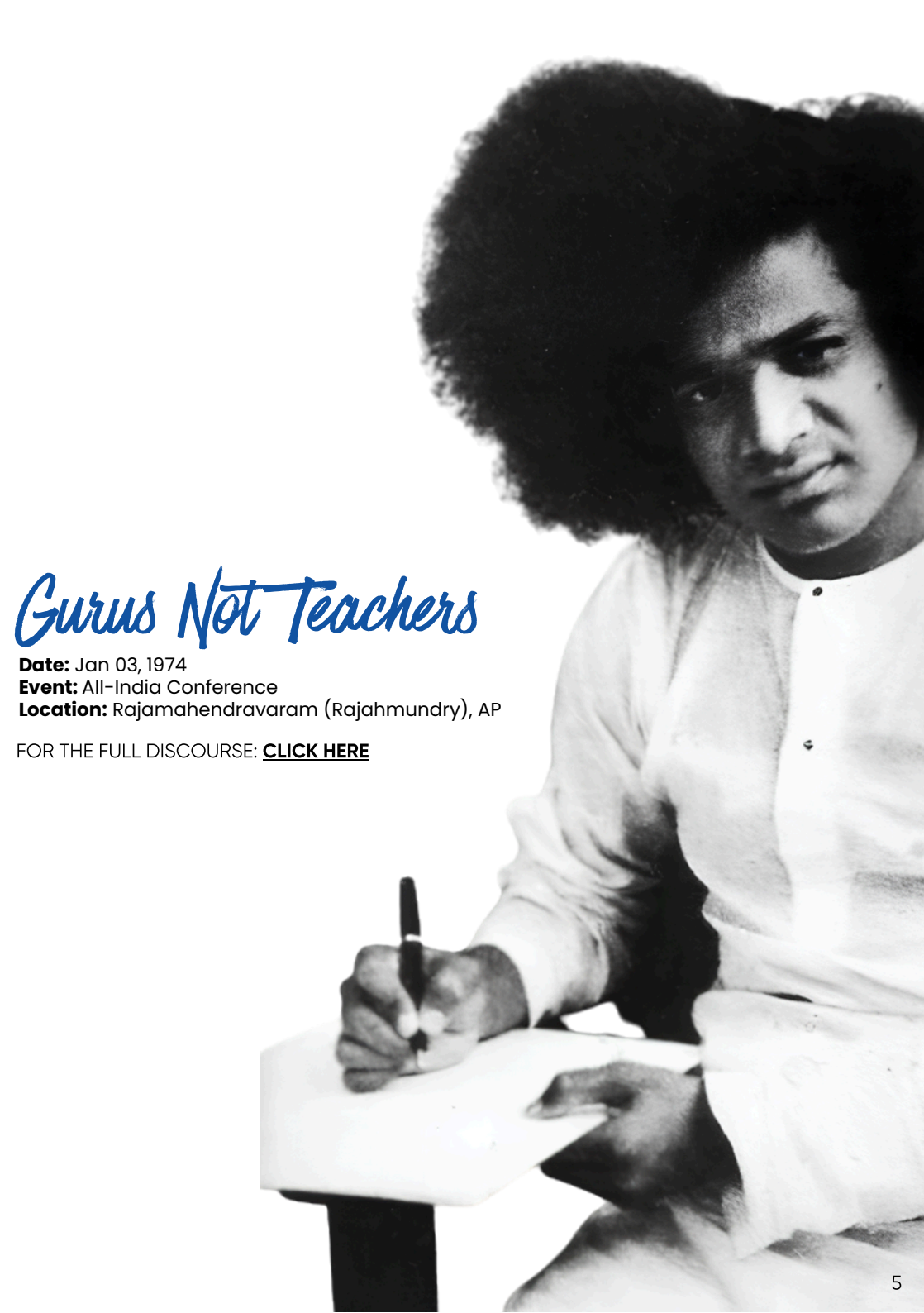
How to Use This Guide:

Zones and Countries can choose to deliver them in the way that best suits them. Below are some suggestions for you to consider:

1. Have a nationwide study group online to engage in these discourses and spread it out over a period of time. For this you need to know your countries and zones well so that you can focus on areas of need.
2. Centers/Samitis/Regions can conduct it in smaller groups from smaller geographic areas for more reach both in person and online.
3. Self Reflection Journal- Each guru can go through the material and engage in note taking and setting individual goals so that they allow themselves room to reflect and practice. This journaling can be combined or shared if there is an opportunity to meet as a larger group.

The material is collated for the Gurus and the questions there are broad enough for all to engage. Each country may decide to delve deeper into many aspects of these divine words. Do not feel the need to cover all this by the time the conference ends. Take your time and meet the Gurus where they are. Like Swami says, “quality, not quantity.” The only thing we need to think is “how does this help me be a better guru?” and “how am I becoming a better person today than I was yesterday?”

We hope you truly enjoy what the master designer says not only about the program, but also about His Gurus and children.



Gurus Not Teachers

Date: Jan 03, 1974

Event: All-India Conference

Location: Rajamahendravaram (Rajahmundry), AP

FOR THE FULL DISCOURSE: [CLICK HERE](#)

WHAT IS THE "TRUE PURPOSE" OF EDUCATION ACCORDING TO SWAMI?

Contrast this with what is described as the "caricature" of modern education focused only on material gain. Education confers humility, endows one with an authority to command that will entitle one to affluence. With the help of this affluence, charity and compassion can be made fruitful, and by this means, happiness in this world and peace in the next can be won. Education is thus a great constructive force for mankind.

HOW CAN TEACHERS AVOID "TURNING STUDENTS INTO EXPERTS IN SUBJECTS BUT IGNORANT OF LIFE"?

Discuss the examples given (e.g., knowing American geography but not the direction of Kashi). Instead of Education being the great constructive force for mankind, it has now been reduced to the art of collecting information of the objective world.

WHY IS IT CRUCIAL TO START SPIRITUAL EDUCATION EARLY IN LIFE?

Discuss the slogan mentioned: "Start early, drive slowly, reach safely." We postpone this essential task of education at our peril; for, when children are equipped with the discipline to secure balance, equanimity, harmony and peace, they can no more be drawn into wild adventures and barren activities.

GURU: Role and Nature

WHAT DISTINGUISHES A "GURU" FROM A "TEACHER" IN THIS CONTEXT?

- What are the necessary qualifications to be a Balvikas Guru?
 - Training in child education
 - Reach the child at their level
 - Have faith in the rich cultural heritage of Bharath
 - Evaluate all teaching material against the cornerstone of promoting Individual Faith and Social Harmony.
- How does the role of a Guru parallel the Divine Trinity (Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheshwara)? Discuss the parallels between the Trinity and the tasks that Swami lists out for the "Guru".
- What does the well-prepared soil in this sentence mean?
- How can you evaluate if LOVE forms the medium for your teaching?

WHY DOES SWAMI EMPHASIZE THAT BALVIKAS INSTRUCTORS BE CALLED "GURUS"?

What specific spiritual responsibilities does this title imply? I direct that Balvikas teachers should hereafter be known by the vastly more appropriate name of Guru, so that you may be conscious always of the spiritual role which you have taken on, and its responsibilities and value. You are the lamps from which their tender hearts must receive Light and Love. By your adherence to truth, righteousness, peace and love, you have to inspire these qualities in the children that come to you and the homes from where they come.



HOW SHOULD A GURU "SCULPT" THEIR STUDENTS?

Discuss the effort that must be put into making sure every child is taught at their individual level. While this may seem a challenging shift, this is what Swami expects.

WHAT IS AN APPROPRIATE ATMOSPHERE FOR STUDY AND TEACHING? HOW DO WE PROVIDE THIS KIND OF ATMOSPHERE?

The teacher must win the reverence of the pupil by showering on him his Love; the pupil must win the Love of the teacher by showering on him reverence and affection. It is a mutual transaction, a sharing of the emotions of the heart. How can a proper - congenial atmosphere for study and teaching be built on a foundation of doubt and hatred? Nowadays, the atmosphere is polluted by the teachers' fear and suspicion, and the hostility and audacity of the students. There is no Love to lubricate the relations between the teacher and the taught.

PARENT: Role in the Balvikas

WHAT ROLES DO PARENTS PLAY IN A CHILD'S SPIRITUAL EDUCATION?

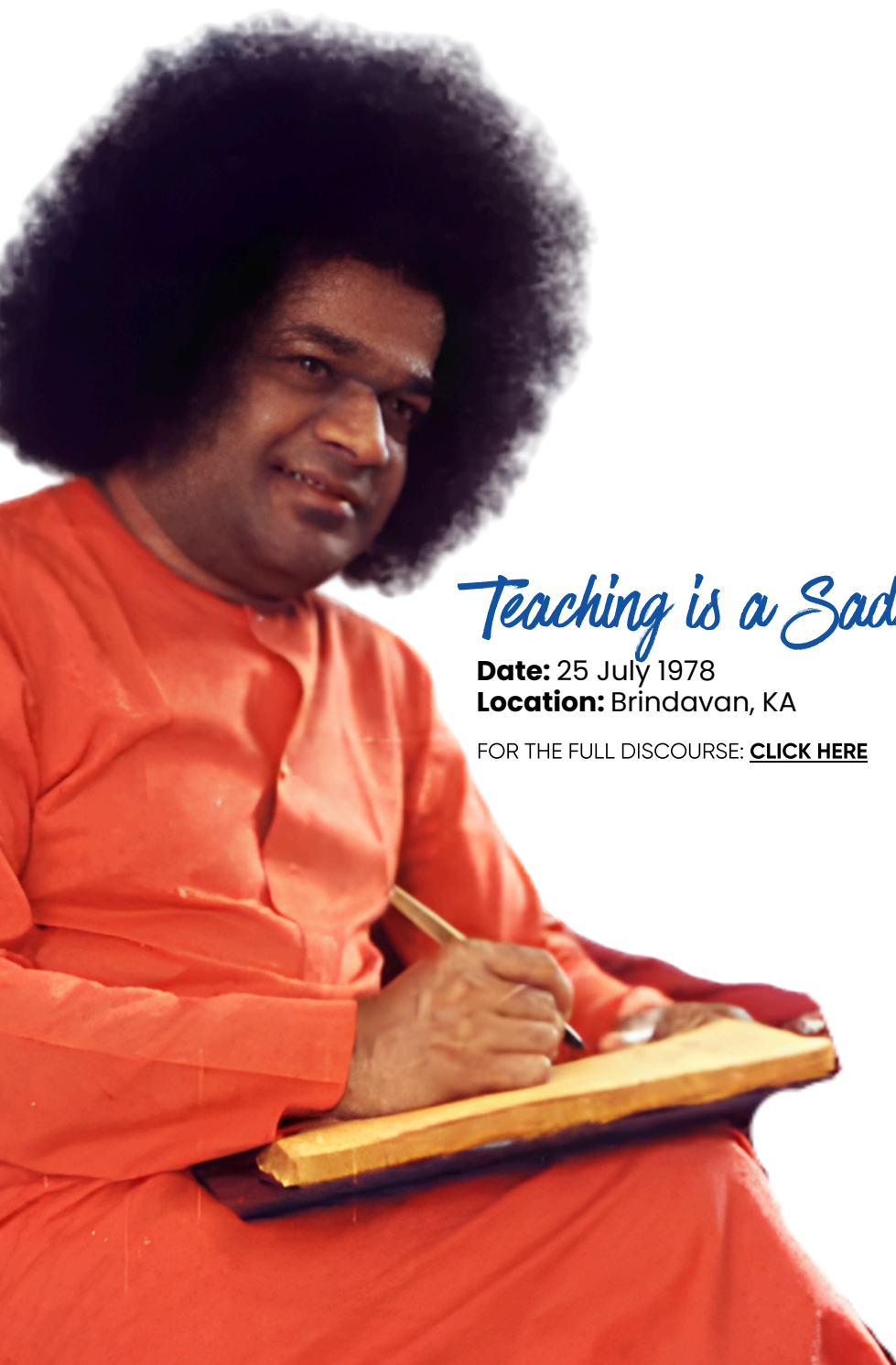
How do they compliment the work of the Guru?

HOW DOES "LOVE WITHOUT CALCULATION" TRANSFORM THE TEACHER-STUDENT RELATIONSHIP?

Why is a material-based relationship considered "artificial"? ...when teachers love the children, they will be rewarded by the love of the children who sit around them. Now they are loved for the sake of the money they bring, and so, the relationship is artificial and without roots in the heart.

HOW SHOULD THE "RELIGION OF LOVE" BE APPLIED IN A CLASSROOM SETTING?

Discuss the instruction to use scriptures and moral heroes from all faiths equally.



Teaching is a Sadhana

Date: 25 July 1978

Location: Brindavan, KA

FOR THE FULL DISCOURSE: [CLICK HERE](#)

WHAT DOES SCIENCE SAY ABOUT DIVINE WILL?

“Man must realise the immensity of the play of the Divine Will which manifests Itself in such abundant variety. But what does science say of this Will? It only declares that we should not believe things that we do not see. The Divine Will is beyond our power to see, so it cannot be testified to be real! This attitude is not correct. Take this kerchief which I drop from my hand. It falls to the ground instead of going up in the air. We attribute this to the gravitational pull even though we do not see the pull.”

The Mind is a Bundle of Desires

WHY IS ‘DOING’ MORE IMPORTANT THAN ‘KNOWING’?

“Today man is found of accumulating information by studying books. He likes to indulge in argument and explanation. He can analyse a matter and talk along about it. But in the field of the spirit, study, experiment and analysis do not take you a long way. What is required is the inner experience resulting from actual practice. When we have before us a plateful of eatables, of what use is it to simply recite the names of the different items? What is needed is to benefit from their goodness is, to eat them. So also, for cognizing the Divine, the mind needs to be used, it being the instrument that can either bind or liberate.”

HOW DOES THE FOOD WE CONSUME INFLUENCE OUR MIND?

“Science would testify that the nature of the mind depends upon the food we consume. The gross material of food we excrete, but the more subtle part is used by our system to feed the intelligence, and the most subtle part becomes the mind. In Vedantic parlance, we can illustrate this by an example: ‘What do I have in my hand?’ – ‘A piece of cloth.’ ‘What does the cloth contain?’ – ‘Yarn.’ ‘Where did the yarn come from?’ – ‘From cotton.’ At first, the cotton, then yarn and, finally, cloth. The names and forms are different, but the basic material is the same. Without basic cotton and yarn, we cannot have cloth. So also, without food, we cannot have the mind to exercise discrimination, to make preferences and judge dos and don’ts. When every yarn is pulled out, the cloth becomes non-existent. So also, when there are no dos and don’ts, the mind cannot exist. For the mind is only a bundle of desires; it is no real entity, it has no power of its own.”

Thoughts of “I and Mine” results in Bondage

HOW CAN WE ATTAIN CONTROL OVER OUR MIND TO FREE OURSELVES FROM BONDAGE?

“In whichever direction a camera is turned while its film is exposed, the resultant picture will be of the things in that direction. It all depends on the turn of the lens. Similarly, the mind reflects the nature of things that we are attracted by. When someone blames us, we get into fury and behave madly. When someone praises us, we leap with joy and think well of the person who does so. In either case, the reason is our emotional perturbation. We must understand the secrets of the mind and the ways in which it plays with us. We must learn to be unruffled and steady, whether we are praised or blamed.”

Attaining Higher Spiritual Development



WHAT EFFORTS ARE REQUIRED TO EMBRACE THE CONCEPT THAT THERE IS ONLY ONE GOD?

“The sages and seers who have from time to time investigated the nature of God from the ancient past to modern times, have discovered that ‘there is only one God and that He is known by various names and say forms.’ ‘Ekam Sat Viprah Bahudha vadanti’, say the Vedas (revealed ancient sacred scriptures). How can the One have so many names and forms? Well, don’t we prepare sweets with various names and shapes, though they all have sugar and taste sweet because of it? When this fact of the One supporting all names and forms is firmly believed in, there is no more scope for delusion.”

Man can Change His Nature by Disciplined Effort

HOW CAN WE PROVE THE CORRECTNESS OF THE ASSERTION “THOU ART THAT” (TAT TVAM ASI)?

“Suppose there is a boulder on a hill. A sculptor spots it there and carves out of it a beautiful idol of Krishna which is installed in a temple and adored ceremonially with every prescribed rite. The flaked pieces of the same boulder are lying about in heaps on the hill at the site where the sculptor chiselled the idol. These flakes are worthless – no temple is built to install any one of them as an idol, for they have undergone no transformation. Yet the flakes declare, ‘We are That: We are the same as that Idol there’, though they have been discarded by the sculptor.”

WHY IS MAN THE ONLY ONE THAT CAN RISE TO HIGHER STAGES OF SPIRITUAL EVOLUTION?

“Man, alone can rise through the effort to higher stages of spiritual evolution. No other animal can do so. Animal tamers of the circus can train a tiger to perform various tricks, but they cannot change its nature. They cannot make it live on grass and completely deprive it of meat. But man is different. His nature can be changed by means of his own disciplined effort. He can control, by his will, the evil thoughts and ideas that arise in his mind. This is why birth as a human being is considered a rare gift.”

Only a Volunteer Can Grow into a Leader

WHY IS SERVICE THE DUTY OF EVERY HUMAN BEING?

During our lives, we must accept help rendered by many thousands. We must pay back this debt by helping at least as many people as we can. With a genuine keenness or readiness to serve others, you can be happy in any group or community. Derive bliss through seva that is not done with any desire to get something in return. When you get a chance to help someone, rejoice at your good fortune. The very eagerness to serve others will endow you with the power and skill necessary for the required service.

"I" is the same in Everyone

WHO OR WHAT IS THE "I" IN EVERYONE?

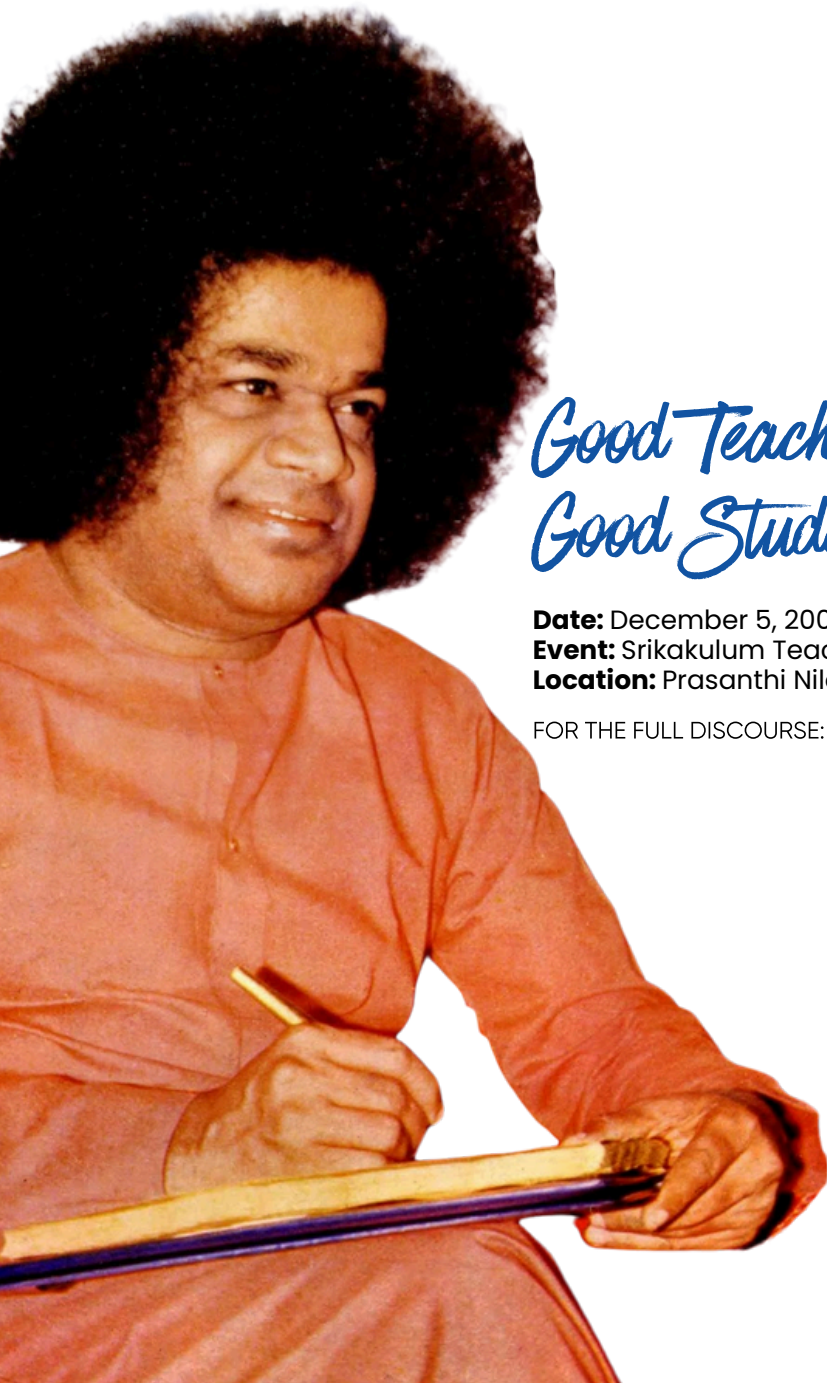
"When I ask your name you say, "Ramanna, Lakshmayya, Venkanna, Krishnamurthy", etc. When you are asked who this Ramanna or Lakshmayya is, you raise your hands and say, "I, I". I ask several people and use several names, but the answer is always 'I'. Where does this 'I' come from? It is found in everyone. Has this 'I' got a form? Is it this body or mind or intellect or consciousness? It is not any of these. The 'I' is not this body. When I say my kerchief, I imply that I am different from the kerchief. I say my table or my chair because I am not a table or a chair. Now, if we have this 'I' in everyone, it must be the same in everyone. It is the One among the many. $1 + 1 + 1 + 1$ is equal to 4. But $1 + 1 + 1 + 1$ is equal to only 'I' for, the 'I' is, the same in everyone. To recognise this is to truly know one's real identity as the One, the Atma. Without this life is a waste."

Only the Dedicated Come by Wisdom

HOW DO WE LEARN TO PRACTICE WHAT WE PREACH AS GURUS?

"Without a seed, in the past, there can be no plant in the future. Do not feel that there is no seed of devotion or dedication in you. This seminar has been arranged to make you aware of the good that you possess and tell you about the methods by which this good can be developed and cultivated. Do not be misled into the cynical thinking that you are sent here just for some training and that there is nothing here for you to learn. 'Shraddhavan labhate Jnanam' (Only the dedicated come by wisdom).

Take the example of the eagle. It has big, strong wings, but until it has the will to fly, it cannot move even an inch. And look at the ant, which can move something even ten times its own weight. Faith moves; doubt deters. When we develop faith and strength of we will execute any kind of work, but when we feel we need not act, no activity is possible. A hundred men may carry a horse to the shore of a lake, but they cannot make it drink. It alone must, do so. I desire that: you should develop faith and strength to foster the sacred ideals of Indian culture and spirituality in the children under your care and cultivate in them the right priorities of life."



Good Teachers Make Good Students

Date: December 5, 2006

Event: Srikakulam Teacher's Conference

Location: Prasanthi Nilayam, AP

FOR THE FULL DISCOURSE: [CLICK HERE](#)



SWAMI STARTS THIS DISCOURSE BY SAYING THAT FOR A COUNTRY TO MAKE PROGRESS, TEACHERS AND STUDENTS HAVE AN IMPORTANT ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY. HOW CAN TEACHERS BALANCE IMPARTING WORLDLY KNOWLEDGE WITH INSTILLING SPIRITUAL AND MORAL VALUES?

A country makes progress because of such teachers only. However, much depends on the conduct of a country's students. The students who are endowed with skill and knowledge can promote its welfare and advancement. They should have purity of thought and tenderness of heart. It is the teachers like you who prepare such students. If the teachers are good, the students will also be good. If the teachers have purity of speech and thought, the students will also imbibe pure, tender and exalted feelings.

You should not impart merely physical and worldly education to children. You should also expose them to moral, ethical and spiritual knowledge. Infuse self-confidence in the students. Whatever one may possess, it is of no use without self-confidence. You should primarily instil spiritual thinking in students. Spiritual thinking means contemplation on God. So, develop the thoughts of contemplation on God in the hearts of students. Then their feelings will become pure, steady and selfless.

WHAT DOES SWAMI MEAN BY REAL HAPPINESS? HOW CAN ONE ATTAIN REAL HAPPINESS? CAN YOU THINK OF AT LEAST ONE EXAMPLE THAT SWAMI HAS GIVEN TO ILLUSTRATE THE POINT, 'THERE CAN BE NO DHARMA WITHOUT SATHYA'.

We can attain happiness only through right conduct, sacrifice and love. Wherefrom does dharma (righteousness) come? Satyanasti paro dharmah (There is no dharma greater than adherence to truth). There can be no dharma without Satya (truth). Therefore, lead your life relying on Satya and dharma. Why are we born in this world? Not merely to eat, drink and sleep. Lord Krishna declared, " _Mamaivamsho Jeeva-loke Jeeva-bhootah Sanatanah_ " (the eternal Atma in all beings is a part of My Being). Each being is an aspect of divinity. Hence, all of you are embodiments of divinity. Love is your true nature. Having been blessed with human birth, you should lead your life with purity of thought and action. Only then can the country make progress. Otherwise, all your spiritual practices like Yajna, Yaga (sacrificial rituals) and Tapas (penance) will be as futile as pouring rose water over ash.

MAKE THE STUDENTS SHINING IDEALS OF GOODNESS. HOW CAN BHAKTI (DEVOTION TO GOD) SHAPE THE CHARACTER OF A STUDENT AND BENEFIT THE WORLD?

The hearts of students are pure and sacred. Sow the seeds of love in them. They will grow into gigantic trees and yield the fruits of peace and righteousness. Never give room for worry; lead a life full of happiness. Love for Swami is the panacea for all your worries. Inculcate good qualities in children so that they can attain progress in life and have a bright future. If you sow the seeds of Satya (truth), Dharma (righteousness), Shanti (peace), Prema (love) and Ahimsa (non-violence) in children, they will set not only this country but the entire world on the right path. When the main switch is put on, all the bulbs will shine. Similarly, when the main switch of bhakti (devotion) is put on, it will spread its sacred light to all countries. Bhakti does not merely mean singing bhajans to the beats of cymbals. Bhakti means love for God. When you develop this love, all your endeavours will become sacred. Not only that, your entire life and your human birth will also be sanctified. You are born out of love, you are sustained by love and you will ultimately merge in love. Teach the children to develop tender feelings and sweet speech. Never teach them to speak harsh words. Saturate their life with love and righteousness. Then the entire world will shine resplendently. Just as a lamp spreads light all around, the light of their good conduct will make the world shine.



WHAT EFFORTS SHOULD TEACHERS TAKE TO INCULCATE GOODNESS IN CHILDREN DESPITE MANY DIFFICULTIES AND PROBLEMS ONE MAY FACE? HOW CAN TEACHERS RELATE TO THE CHILDREN TO ENSURE THEIR WELLBEING AND HAPPINESS?

Make every effort to inculcate goodness in children in spite of all your difficulties and problems. That is your primary duty. Teachers are the true leaders of the country, not the political leaders. Only teachers can make the children good. There would be chaos all around without good teachers. Teachers should take keen interest in the well-being of students. Make them shining ideals so that their light of goodness spreads to every street and village, giving joy to one and all. People today are suffering from many types of problems. By exhorting them to contemplate on the name of God, you should try to alleviate their suffering. They may be afflicted with any number of worries, but their heart will rejoice the moment divine name enters their ears.

TEACHERS SHOULD SET IDEALS FOR STUDENTS TO EMULATE. HOW CAN TEACHERS LEAD BY EXAMPLE? DESCRIBE AND DISCUSS THE LESSONS FROM EXAMPLES SWAMI GIVES TO HIGHLIGHT THIS POINT.

Dear Teachers!

You are all very fortunate. Make the best use of the fortune that you are blessed with. Develop this fortune and share it with all. By sharing this with all, you will enjoy the harvest of bliss. Teaching is a noble profession. The teachers are the leaders of the world. The world cannot exist without them. There have been many great Maharshis (sages) like Vashishta, Vishwamitra, Jamadagni and great preceptors like Dronacharya, Kripacharya and Bhishmacharya who set ideals for the whole world by their example. They in fact were true Acharyas (preceptors). If you transform yourselves like them, you can remove all evil from the face of the world.

WHAT ARE THE ATTRIBUTES OF A TRUE TEACHER?

The happiness of the children is the source of sustenance of the world. Their ananda (happiness) is verily its aharam (food). Without the food of happiness, what is the use of other foods? Eating, drinking, walking, sleeping and ultimately dying – is this the be-all and end-all of man's life? Human life is highly exalted and lofty. We should fill our heart with sacred feelings befitting our exalted human birth. Being teachers, first you yourselves should cultivate good habits and lead ideal lives. Then you should teach the children to cultivate good habits. When a teacher is addicted to smoking, how can he tell the students not to do so? It is only when the teachers cultivate good habits and good conduct can the students emulate their example and strive for the welfare and progress of the country. You may have to face many difficulties but never go back on your resolve to mould the students as ideal persons. These are the attributes of a true teacher.

Additional Discourses to engage in are below. Open ended question suggestions for a heart to heart dialogue with a goal of reflection, self-transformation, and practical application in teaching children.

Suggested Questions for any discourse discussion:

1. Identify who in the group listened to the discourse and read it?
 - a. Ask the ones who listened about what they learned about the way Swami delivers His instructions on Balvikas.
2. How can I ensure that I am teaching by example rather than just by words?
3. What core values/principles does Swami emphasize in this discourse, and why are they important for Balvikas teachers?
4. Which part of the discourse challenged your current way of thinking or teaching the most?
 - a. What changes can you make going forward?
5. How does this teaching redefine the role of a guru beyond simply delivering lessons?
 - a. What do you think they are?
6. What small, consistent actions can we take to bring these values alive in every class so that it is easily digestible by children?
7. What challenges might arise when trying to deliver His message to various Groups?
 - a. How can we be developmentally appropriate when delivering lessons to children. Swami often takes the highest of Vedantic principles and shares them with us in an easy to understand language. What examples of that can we take from Swami?
8. What stories did Swami share in this discourse (or the discourses you listened to) and how did He deliver it? Can you share some strategies you notice so we can use them when narrate stories to children?
9. How can we, as a group of gurus, support each other in living these teachings more authentically?

Supplemental Material for Engagement



Jan 3, 1974	https://www.sssahitya.org/discourses/1974/gurus-not-teachers?searchQuery=balvikas%20training%20camps
Jan 3, 1974	https://www.sssahitya.org/discourses/1974/answering-the-doubts-of-balvikas-gurus?searchQuery=balvikas%20conference
Mar 3, 1974	https://www.sssahitya.org/discourses/1974/how-should-children-live-in-the-world-today?searchQuery=balvikas%20conference
Nov 18, 1975	https://www.sssahitya.org/discourses/1975/how-must-gurus-treat-balvikas-children?searchQuery=balvikas%20conference
Nov 22, 1975	https://www.sssahitya.org/discourses/1975/balvikas-should-be-open-to-all-faiths?searchQuery=balvikas%20conference
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Jun 6, 1978	https://www.sssahitya.org/discourses/1978/new-version-of-gurus?searchQuery=balvikas%20training%20camps
Jul 25, 1978	https://www.sssahitya.org/discourses/1978/the-teacher-and-his-task?searchQuery=balvikas%20training%20camps
Jul 30, 1978	https://www.sssahitya.org/discourses/1978/love-must-win?searchQuery=balvikas%20training%20camps
Nov 20, 1979	https://www.sssahitya.org/discourses/1979/serve-the-child?searchQuery=balvikas%20training%20camps
Nov 21, 1979	https://www.sssahitya.org/discourses/1979/the-holiest-task?searchQuery=balvikas%20training%20camps
Nov 22, 1979	https://www.sssahitya.org/discourses/1979/children-should-develop-the-4-ss?searchQuery=balvikas%20conference
May 11, 1981	https://content.sssmediacentre.org/audio/Audio_96/DD_1981_05_11_TRAINING_CAMP_SSSS_ORG.mp3
Aug 1, 1981	https://www.sssahitya.org/discourses/1981/discourse-to-overseas-bal-vikas-gurus?searchQuery=balvikas%20training%20camps
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Supplemental Material for Engagement



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Dec 27, 1983	https://content.sssmediacentre.org/audio/Audio_96/DD_1983_12_27_BALVIKA_S_TEACHERS_CONFERENCE_02.mp3
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Dec 28, 1986	https://www.sssahitya.org/discourses/1986/the-teacher-and-tomorrow
Jul 25, 1978	https://www.sssahitya.org/discourses/1978/teaching-is-a-sadhana?searchQuery=balvikas%20training%20camps
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May 1, 1996	https://www.sssahitya.org/discourses/2001/human-birth-is-to-experience-atmic-bliss?searchQuery=balvikas%20conference
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Dec 5, 2006	https://www.sssahitya.org/discourses/2006/good-teachers-make-good-students?searchQuery=balvikas%20conference



PRE-CONFERENCE

READING MATERIAL