

Nine Point Code of Conduct (3) : Participation in SAI SPIRITUAL EDUCATION by Children of the Family



“What we need today is not a new system of education, or a new social order, or even a new religion. What we need today are noble and high minded men and women.” - Baba.

1 What does ‘Bal Vikas’ mean?

‘Bal’ means ‘Child’ and ‘Vikas’ means ‘Expansion. That is to say, expansion of child’s consciousness. Sri Sathya Sai Service Organisation holds such classes weekly, normally outside the school hours, for the children of Sai devotees to guide and inspire them to be the best leaders of tomorrow. Swami has said, “The Bal Vikas children whom you are guiding and inspiring will be the leaders of tomorrow in this land. The virtues you impart in them, the counsel you are providing them and the examples you place before them will remain carved in their memories and transform their outlook and behaviour in the days to come”.

2 What is the ideal of Bal Vikas?

Swami has pointed out, *“The ideal of Bal Vikas is to raise a generation of youth who have a clean and clear conscience. The actual syllabus is not as important as the creation of an atmosphere, noble habits and ideals can grow and fructify Bal Vikas pupils follow Bal Vikas discipline and curriculum only for one day a week and attend their usual school on the other days.”*

3 What is the inner significance of Bal Vikas?

Swami has said, *“The inner significance is that by introducing the understanding of human values which enter every aspect of life, the child from a very early stage is made to appreciate the importance of values which are the basis of good character and happiness and joy in life. The objective is to bring up the child with a proper understanding of human values through stories, practical illustrations and experiences in life, etc., so that as a grown up individual he becomes aware of the Divinity inherent in him and become useful member of the society and citizen of the country.”*

4 What qualities Bal Vikas children must possess?

Swami has replied, *“You children must have Bhaya, Vinaya and Viswasa ... (Fear, Humility and Faith). Fear of what? Fear of doing wrong, of falling into falsehood.*

Humility before whom? Before elders, teachers, parents. Faith in what? Faith in God, in your own strength, in your own victory.”

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5 Who teaches in 'Bal Vikas'?

Normally the Bal Vikas Gurus are trained teachers.

Swami has said, *“The necessary training programmes have been designed and developed to their perfection, by Bhagavan Baba in their deepest possible details. Their aim is that the participants should blossom into human excellence. Even though the Bal Vikas Gurus could be belong to various professions, but they are trained to convert the school into a virtual nursery of virtues and values.”*

6 What type of behaviour is expected from Gurus?

Swami has said, *“The Gurus have to be embodiments of Love and patience. The impact of Gurus has to be extra strong if it has to act as a catalyst in the process of modification of the behaviour pattern of these pupils. The Bal Vikas Chores are bound to elevate and sublimate the thoughts and emotions of the Gurus far better than any other Sadhana can. Remember that as Gurus, you too, in turn, have a Guru; guiding you and overseeing your seva. So you are pupils too, and you too learn the lessons of equality and equanimity and selfless love while acting as a Guru.”*

7 Why is Sadhana a must for Bal Vikas Guru?

Swami has said, *“You, who have dedicated yourselves as Gurus to lead the children into Light, must practise the discipline of Sadhana at least one session a day in order to earn this bliss and equanimity. Those who have earned the gift of ananda alone can confer ananda to others. A person rich in ananda can share ananda with those around him. Therefore your duty as Gurus is firstly to earn and secondly to offer ananda. A life of Sadhana is a must to every Guru.”*

8 What is your advice to a Bal Vikas Guru who is indulging in fault-finding and jealous of other Gurus?

Swami says, *“No! Our Bal Vikas Gurus should not indulge in jealousy or fault-finding. They can undertake the task of teaching only after they rid themselves of evil traits. If Gurus talk ill of other Gurus and promote misunderstanding and factionalism, the children can never improve. So, resolve now to adhere to the right path. Be an example for the students to follow”*

9 What are Bal Vikas children taught?

Bal Vikas children are taught 'to respect Human Values'. Swami has elaborated, *“Today it is very necessary that along with worldly and material education, spiritual, moral and ethical education should also be given to the students. The reason why the students of today show utter lack of finer feelings such as respect, compassion and love is that they have not been initiated into spiritual education. It is necessary therefore that the teachers of Bal Vikas should combine moral, spiritual and ethical education with worldly education in their teaching course.”*

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10 What is Education?

What is education? Normally we men & women take up some courses with the college or university. Sitting for the exams at end of the year. And after successfully passing the exams and getting the diploma or degree, we assume we are highly educated. But how does that education helps us or the society? Only help it does give us is to make money for living. Swami has pointed out, *“Students should realise the truth that education is for life not for a living. Birds and beasts do not go to any university, yet they manage to live. We must seek education not for making money, but to understand the meaning of life.”* Swami has further said, *“The knowledge that we obtain in the educational institutions today is only information-oriented. It can be compared to gathering raw materials. The information you acquire should enable you to bring out the products such as self-respect, self-support, self-confidence, etc. It is our duty to supply these products to the nation. But the modern student, on the other hand, passes in some subjects the knowledge of which neither helps him nor his friends. Only good education can transform people and profession.”*

So we need education which can transform us to become better human beings first. Education should teach us how to control our anger, greed, lust, envy etc. Which university teaches that? All universities teach how to earn more but not how to control excessive desires. So the whole purpose of education is defeated. After getting degrees person starts yearning for more wealth and starts entertaining more desires, may be in a systematic way but alas, not putting ceiling on desires. Swami has said, *“Education should be useful to the society. It should make citizens follow the path of morality and righteousness and make lives happy.”* The education should be based on spiritual knowledge.

Swami explained what Vidya or education meant. He has said, *“What is ‘Vidya’? It is derived from the root word ‘Vid’, meaning, ‘to know’. Vidya is termed as education in English. The term education has its origin in the Latin word ‘Educare,’ which means ‘to elicit’. Education has two aspects, the worldly and the spiritual. Worldly education brings out the latent knowledge pertaining to the physical world. Spiritual education brings out the inherent divinity in man. So, both worldly and spiritual education are essential, without, which the human life has no value. But, spirituality finds no place in the modern education system. Only worldly education is given prominence. Just as two wings are essential for a bird to soar high in the sky, two wheels for a cart to move; so also the two types of education are needed for man to attain the goal of life. Spiritual education is for life, whereas worldly education is for a living.*

Only when man is equipped with these two aspects of education, can he be deserving of respect and adoration in society. Having these two aspects of education will bring not only respect and adulation, but also self-satisfaction. The worldly education, which relates to the head, name and fame – all these result from worldly education. The worldly education makes man great, whereas the spiritual education makes him good. The spiritual education relates to the heart, the origin of sacred qualities like compassion, truth, forbearance and love.

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Today the parents expect their children to go in for higher studies, amass wealth and become great, but very few want their children to be good. Goodness is long-lasting, whereas greatness is temporary. Goodness forms the basis for spiritual life. There are millions of people who have become great by amassing wealth, but what is their contribution to the welfare of society? Absolutely nil. Therefore, strive to be good, not great.”

11. What is Educare?

Swami has said, “*The word ‘education’ is derived from the Latin root ‘Educare’.* While education refers to collection of worldly facts, Educare is developing from within. Education is for a living while Educare is for life. Education is for ‘Jeevana Upadhi’ (livelihood). Educare is for ‘Jeevitha Paramavadhi’ (the ultimate goal of life). It is easy for us to recognise things outside us and difficult to look within. There are many things inside us, which are not manifest. When you join the letters individually they have no meaning of their own. Our effort lies in putting together these letters to get the meaning. This is Educare. Educare means to bring out from within. The Atman is our innermost reality. That is what Educare should bring out. Therefore, there is actually no difference among the different religions, spirituality and Educare.”

12 What are the ‘Human Values’?

The five human values are *Sathya* (Truth), *Dharma* (Right Conduct), *Shanti* (Peace), *Prema* (Love) and *Ahimsa* (Non-Violence). Swami has stated, “*Man should fill his heart with compassion, always speak the truth and dedicate his body for the welfare of society. The thought, word and deed of man should always be sacred. The heart not polluted by desire and anger, the tongue not tainted by untruth and the body unblemished by the acts of violence – these are the true human values. It is because of the lack of these human values that the country is facing hardships today.*

The parents and the teachers should take note of the fact that only the students can restore the pristine glory of Bharat, which once was the treasure house of spirituality, but has now become the abode of worldly and ephemeral pleasures. Just as the parents are saddened seeing their children lagging behind in studies, so also great nations feel sad seeing the children lacking moral and ethical values. You have to remember that all those whom you revere as ideal citizens and noble souls were once students themselves. Never forget that students of today are the future citizens and leaders of the country.”

13 Why so much importance is given to Human Values?

Swami has pointed out, “*Today the moral, ethical and spiritual values are on the decline. The modern students have no trace of these values in them. They have no respect for their parents or society. In that case how can they expect to be respected by their children? Our ancient culture exhorts: Mathru Devo Bhava, Pithru Devo Bhava and Acharya Devo Bhava (revere your mother, father and teacher as God). Respect and be respected. You must practice before you preach. A composer is one who practices what he preaches.”*

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14 As a parent - How do I participate in Bal Vikas ?

Either by becoming Bal Vikas Guru or by providing any help to the Bal Vikas Gurus, like in preparing lessons for the children, or by providing, even a secretarial work. No work is too small when it comes to spirituality as long your intentions are right and Dharmic.

15 At what age children can join Bal Vikas programmes?

It is good to start early - Right from tender age when they can be in the room under supervision of a Bal Vikas Guru.

16 What to do if some parents are reluctant to send their children to Bal Vikas classes?

Swami has said, *“In some places parents of some children are not coming forward readily to enlist their children in such Bal Vikas classes. We should also arrange to meet such parents and explain to them the true situations and win them over and make them enlist their children in the Bal Vikas Classes.”*

17 What is the impact of Bal Vikas classes on a household?

In Swami’s words, *“The young students who have attended the Bal Vikas classes and their parents all over the world have paid glowing tributes to the richness of the programme and its impact. It has helped the students to discover their real identity, improve their behaviour, intellect and intuition. For them it was a complete transformation. The parents equally have expressed their gratitude to the programme for making their homes vibrant and worth living. Bal Vikas children have brought about a complete transformation. The houses have become ‘Sweet homes’ where nothing but love vibrates and covers the whole Cosmos.”*

18 What are the Bal Vikas Gurus’ duties to their pupil?

Swami has pointed out, *“As teachers of Bal Vikas classes you do not look forward to any monetary or material benefits and so you have ample opportunity to make a child’s heart and intellect blossom through the rays of Love. The Guru should place before himself three duties to his pupil’s Love”.*

- 1) To develop in them the joy of physical labour. Only those who have gone through pain and suffering can understand and sympathise with those who are in pain and those who suffer.
- 2) To ensure the physical health of the child so that it can have a healthy mind.
- 3) To promote sharpness of intellect. Intelligence is not to be measured or promoted by placing ‘Question papers’ before them and challenging them to write the answers. What the pupil has learnt has to brighten or modify his conduct and attitude.”

19 Swami’s Advise to Bal Vikas Gurus

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Swami has given some guidelines as follows:

1. *“Gurus have to be examples which can inspire the pupils. They must practice what they preach. As the teacher, so the pupil. When the tap is turned, water flows down from the overhead tank. The quality of the tap water is the same as that of the water in the tank. When the heart of the Guru is full of goodness, selflessness and Love, the pupils will express these virtues in every act of theirs.*
2. *Somehow, somewhere, at intervals, you may be confronted by wrong traits. But remember that you have entered the circle of Sathya Sai Bal Vikas Gurus. It may not be serious if these traits enslave teachers in other circles, but your mission is much more fundamental and the hope that you arouse, much more heartening. These trails will hamper and pollute your efforts.*
3. *More than all fill your minds with God and transmit God to the children. Look forward to no remuneration or reward, except the joy on the faces of the children. So renounce, renounce! Serve and give your knowledge, your delight and your love gladly on the children. Serve thus the society and the people.*
4. *You cannot draw children to your side if you hold a stick in your hand; You will have to hold some sweets instead. So, the Gurus have to be embodiments of love and patience.*
5. *Lead the children along the joyous path of truth. Let your faces forever show smiles. Springing from the bliss you earn from seeing the happy faces of children. Do not fall into the traps of anger, jealousy and pride. You can avoid this through steady and sincere attention to the task you have undertaken. May the children you serve become heroes in the revival of the ancient glory of their motherland.*
6. *Instead of telling a hundred things or speaking of a hundred things, we must put into practice at least one single thing we preach. Only if teachers prove that they have got good ideals, good thoughts and good words, it is only then whatever they speak will make an impact on the students. Their behaviour and conduct should not be such as will turn the pure minded and pure hearted students to take to the wrong path.*
7. *Cherish in your hearts the scriptural teachings, ‘Mathru Devo Bhava, Pithru Devo Bhava, Acharya Devo Bhava, Atithi Devo Bhava.’*
8. *You must have Bhaya, Vinaya and Viswas - Fear, Humility and Faith. Fear of what? Fear of doing wrong, of falling into falsehood. Humility before whom? Before elders, teachers and parents. Practice what they teach you. Faith in what? Faith in God, in your own strength, in your own victory.*

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9. *Let me tell you that if you serve with your whole heart, the result will be an Ananda for your half-hearted work will give only superficial joy or fame. Remember that the God you worship by this work is resident in your own heart. Others may or may not see, but the ever present God sees and notes all that you do or feel. He meets out to you, the consequence, in full, of whatever you do or feel.*
10. *Welcome activities which give you healthy joy but do not indulge in wasteful and undesirable pastimes. Time wasted is life wasted. Do not waste food, because food is God. Similarly, do not waste water, electricity and other natural resources. Wasting money is evil, so cultivate the habit of saving.*
11. *Duty, Discipline and Devotion should be like your very life breath.*
12. *Teachers are sculptors of Personality. A sculptor takes up a block of stone. He mentally visualises the beauty within the stone. By carefully chiselling he uncovers the beautiful, charming idol of God. Bal Vikas teachers have a similar task to do. All of you should regard the children in the Bal Vikas as your own children. Extend the same love to the students as you would to your own children. Display equal-mindedness.”*

20 Keep an eye, what your child is learning

It is your duty to keep an eye on your child's daily progress. Swami has said, “*The friends that the child collects at school and around the house have a beneficial or deleterious effect on its growth. Comic books, horror stories, terrorism, gunmen pictures and cinema posters and films that degrade man flesh and skin – these may drag the prospective hero into a zero. The child learns to worship money and things which money can buy. He admires cruelty and cunning, rather than sympathy and love. So the home, the school and the society – all three have to arouse themselves and take up this challenge to the future of this great land.*” Swami has pointed out, “*Parents have to bring up their children as bright and willing citizens capable of earning their own food and helping others in distress, if they shirk this duty, they have failed in their worship.*”

21 Just a few points on Learning and liberation from HIM

Swami has said: -

- a) *Education must endow man with this compassion and this spirit of service, intelligence, timely and full. That is to say, education must not only inform, it must also transform*
- b) ***True education is that which liberates man.*** *Unless knowledge is transformed into wisdom, and wisdom is expressed in character, education is a wasteful process. If education confers this gift of transformation, then surely life will become peaceful, happy and full of mutual help and co-operation. But the aim of education, today, has degenerated into the acquisition of certain skills and*

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intellectual tricks. It provides the educated with food, clothing and shelter and considers that its task is over with that achievement.

The sages who laid down the goals of education have declared, “Saa vidhyaa yaa vimukthaye.” (That is true education which helps to liberate man) – liberate him from greed, hatred, unrest, narrow loyalties and ego impulses. Education today, adds to the unrest already in the heart of man; it does not liberate him from the prison house of desire into which he has strayed. Man builds rest-houses where he can unconcernedly learn to witness the happenings of the world, aware of the level of the world, aware of the level of their relative importance. That will give him equanimity. Faith in an All-knowing, all-operating God will render him free to watch with interest the ups and downs of history.

- c) **Education has to clarify the goal of life.** *Just as the body needs rest, the mind too needs quiet. Faith in God is the best guarantee of mental quiet. Man must follow the path of virtue, practise spiritual disciplines and take an enthusiastic part in social service. These three have to be accepted, adored and assimilated into daily life. Education has to clarify the goal of life to the rising generation and indicate the ways and means of accomplishing it. Women are taking to modern education in larger and larger numbers nowadays. They are serving in offices, schools and factories. They are also rising to positions of authority in other fields. But most of them are prompted by urges of personal aggrandizement rather than ideals of service. When women run after jobs, who is to run the family? If both father and mother move into offices to earn money, what becomes of the children? Pouring over books, how can the kitchen work? More money may be the reason, but it leads only to more anxiety, more unrest and more loss. The women who take up jobs are finding that they have no happiness worth the name. The educated woman must utilise her knowledge and skill to bring up her children into healthy, virtuous and disciplined youths who may be of use to their country, their culture and their community. Earning money is not the end-all of education. It is the greed to earn money by any means, as fast as possible, that has led to the evils that we see in society today. Money breeds pride, pride fosters hatred.*
- d) **Cultivate the habit of self-examination.** *No one has the golden quality of contentment. The discontented man is as bad as lost. There is no limit to man's desires. Every person wielding power over others yearn to rise higher and higher and exercise more and more influence, but no one attempts a rigorous examination of himself to find out whether he has merit enough to be conferred with the position he craves for. Those who contentedly carry out the duties commensurate to the positions they hold, are very few. Every one, fit or unfit, throws stones, on the off-chance of getting a fruit from the laden tree. Students must cultivate humility and the habit of self-examination.*

Another reason for the prevalent overwhelming dissatisfaction of the youth is the chronic hypocrisy of elders. The very people who proclaim the efficacy of Sathya (truth) from platforms, the very preachers who dilate on dharma (righteousness) and Shanti (peace), live without any regard to Sathya,

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dharmā or Shanti. The determination that one must act according to one's profession has disappeared. We can establish peace and prosperity, morality and uprightness in the land, only when those who preach and those who teach high ideals, act up to their own exhortations. Sheer ignorance is the root cause for the disrespect that is being shown to one's culture and the fascination exercised by the culture of the West. Do these people at least grasp the values of Western culture fully? No. Only the fringe and the foppery are adopted. How can a person who is unable to understand his own culture and heritage understand the meaning and significance of an alien culture?

The true sign of education is humility; for there is much more to be investigated and learnt. There are always many more who are far more learned. They carry their scholarship more lightly. Discipline is important in order to progress in learning, and even more so in dealing with others. An undisciplined person is a danger to society; any moment he may run amuck. Man must recognise what limits, regulations and dos and don'ts are laid down by the sages of the past in order to ensure social security and individual advancement.

- e) ***Be conversant with some spiritual discipline.*** *The code of conduct laid down for the students of this college helps you to develop qualities that will stand you in good stead later in life. The eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue – the four senses of sight, hearing, smell and taste – are all located in the head. Of course, the eye and the tongue have been provided with doors, so that the doors can keep out what is not desirable and welcome what is. Desire only the sight of beneficial things, only to speak out what will be conducive to peace and harmony.*

Do not indulge in talkativeness. If you get a reputation for talkativeness, you will suffer from weak memory, social odium, and nervous debility. You have the great responsibility of motherhood and the duty of educating your children into strong and good citizens of this country. Along with the University degree, you must also acquire some general knowledge which is essential for householders and others. Otherwise, though the husband and the wife may both be degree-holders, they would be helpless and desperate even if the baby caught a slight cold. You must also be conversant with some spiritual discipline like naamasmarana (remembering God's name), dhyāna (meditation) and yoga (divine communion), so that you will not be carried away by every changing breeze.

- f) ***Practise the constant presence of God.*** *It is best that you imprint on your hearts the dual nature of the world that is a mixture of pleasure and pain, joy and grief, victory and defeat. Practise the constant presence of God and learn to offer all your activities at the feet of the Lord as an act of worship. Then they will be free from fault. Krishna advised Arjuna to enter 'the fight' and at the same time told him not to have hatred towards the 'enemies.' These may appear to be two irreconcilable attitudes, for war is raga (passion, attachment) and renunciation of the hatred is vairāgya (absence of raga). Arjuna asked Krishna how he was to reconcile these two attitudes. Krishna*

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*said, “Maamanusmara, yudhyacha” – (Keep Me ever in thy mind and fight).
“Do not cultivate the egoistic feeling that it is you who is fighting. I am using
you as My Instrument.” He said.*

*Even the food you take should be to propitiate Him, who is resident in your bodies
and helps to digest the food we place in the body. It is the Lord who receives the
food, digests it and supplies strength thereby to the various limbs of the body. A child
of two or three will not dare venture outside the home alone. A person of twenty can
well look after wherever he/she is. But a child of tender years can neither be kept at
home, nor does it know how to look after itself outside the house. Therefore we all
have to guard the child and guide with great care and diligence. This is where Bal
Vikas education plays an important role.*

*We must see that the ideals and aims of this Bal Vikas are maintained and fostered.
On your discipline, devotion and duty are based the success and reputation of this
education system. Now, and later, you must always lead lives of exemplary virtue and
bring honour to parents and your teachers. Do not hanker too much after
irresponsible liberty. People suffer most when they are moved by this desire. You must
be the torch-bearers of the ideals of this education. When one teacher neglects his/her
duty or lowers his/ her standard of conduct, hundreds of students are affected thereby.
The moral strength and virtues of the teachers will be reflected in the students under
their care. You have to treat them as your own children, children who need and
deserve your love. Be like the father /mother to these children and let this relationship
ring with Love given and Love received.” – Baba.*

