



Talk given by Dr Pal Dhall, Director, Institute of Sathya Sai Education

Opening of Sathya Sai Primary School, Murwillumbah, Friday 26 March 2010



Hon Justine Elliot, Mayor Warren Polglase, Sai Organisation office bearers, generous donors, parents, teachers and students!

It gives me great pleasure to be standing here at the formal opening of the new building of the Sathya Sai Primary School of Australia. Today is the culmination of a 12 years long dream come true for me and many others who have been involved with the project from the very inception. I heartily congratulate everyone who has been involved in this noble project, some in fact for much longer when the initial planning of this School started. Now we have an elegant building with state of the art facilities for learning. However, a physical building and the state of the art facilities, important as they are, are not enough for a School. A School is a place where we fashion and shape the minds and the hearts of the future generation. It is an active place of learning, of growth, of unfolding of the human potential, of laying the foundations of individual wellbeing, happiness, competence, wealth and prosperity. It is a place where we cultivate the seeds of future innovation, creativity, enterprise of our country and stewardship of the planet!

A School is vitally supported by a school community of dedicated and caring parents and teachers, of children who are active learners, an administrative structure that responds to the aspirations for the development and realisation of ideals of Education, of well wishers, volunteers and donors who put in their time, energy and money. Above all a School is a place where our philosophy of Education is given shape, is tested and actualised.

This Sathya Sai School is a member of a worldwide network of Schools and Institutes. There are over 150 Sathya Sai Schools and 30 Institutes of Sathya Sai education around the world. Sathya Sai Schools have come into existence in actualising the unique and high ideals of Education given by Sathya Sai Baba. He is a revered spiritual master and Chancellor of the University of Puttaparthi in India. His teachings are revolutionising education around the world. They are particularly apt for the present period in the history of humanity, when for the first time we are confronted with an active choice about our own future on this planet – to face a bleak future of unsustainability, wars, religious intolerance and terrorism or a future of harmony, accord, responsible living and prosperity.

We are all aware that the present spectacularly wasteful economic system that fuels mindless consumption, makes unsustainable use of natural resources, pollutes the atmosphere, land, rivers, lakes and oceans, is contributing significantly to climate change. This will in turn adversely affect our capacity to feed our increasing population. For this challenge Sathya Sai Baba gives us the philosophy that makes it possible for us to envisage and work towards a future with positive possibilities of peace and sustainability. In this future we will have unimaginable creativity working towards production and industry that will be environmentally neutral. It is a spiritual future which emphasises human development with prosperity founded on love of humanity through the practice of the five human values of Love, Peace, Truth, Right Conduct and Non-violence in every aspect of our lives – private, professional, political, commercial, corporate and civic. It is these human values, expressing through the choices we make, that will guide the advancements in Science and technology, stem cell research, genome project, nano technology, computing, development of human like intelligence, neuroscience, senescence and happiness research. It is these values that will radically reorientate our global, economic, political and cultural focus by shifting it from the short term profit and gains, short term reforms to genuine reforms that arise from deep within the spirit of humanity, reforms that are based on a shift in human consciousness, particularly about our responsibility towards the future generations.

We know that education is a powerful tool for societal change and transformation e.g. when education is given to the women not hitherto educated, it leads to improved nutrition, health, life expectation and reduced number of children in the family. When reform in education is combined with spirituality and human values then we have a “super lever” for the transformation of consciousness. With this we can raise a new generation that will use technology and science, their skills and creativity to serve humanity, to serve the planet rather than to exploit and destroy it.

Research has shown that it is a combination of education and spirituality that meets with the full developmental needs of our children. Education shorn of human values is inadequate to meet with the real needs of our children. We know that human values, particularly the value of love, is hardwired into our brain. It is this value that activates the neural area of the brain that forms the ethical core of personality. This is being recognised by more and more educators and is leading to education reform in a number of countries. Education Ministries in many countries are developing systems of education to incorporate values in education. However, what is needed is not just secular values as they tend to be instrumental rather than developmental. Sathya Sai Education system has important and unique features which make it outstanding in

meeting with not only the developmental needs but it also gives knowledge, skills, balance and insight, attributes that are particularly relevant to the changing global challenges that the new generation will undoubtedly have to meet.

The first principle that governs Sathya Sai Education is that the education is for total human development, not just to give children skills and information for earning a livelihood. Human development remains incomplete without establishing our purpose in life and that in a nutshell is developing an abiding relationship with the Transcendent. Research shows that human brain is not only ethical but also hardwired to ask the ultimate questions and get the ultimate answers. Our human development remains incomplete without a meaningful relationship with the Transcendent.

Secondly, the search for the Transcendent is not an esoteric practice confined to churches, temples and mosques. The Transcendent is not in the rituals of religions or in the scriptures. The Transcendent is everywhere – ‘It’ is in our very consciousness, ‘It’ is in the whole of creation. In fact all that we see and experience is the Transcendent even though our ordinary experience is one of relating to objects, people, events and phenomena. Consciousness research and Quantum Physics call this *Supervening Holism*. That means we form our relationship with the Transcendent not only through religion but by spiritualising all our relationships - with the animate and the inanimate. This we do through the practice of the five human values of Love, Peace, Truth, Right Conduct and Nonviolence. These five human values are the common denominators of all the spiritual systems and religions of the world. Love is the basis, the undercurrent of all the other human values. Love as speech is Truth, Love as action is Right Conduct, Love as feeling is Peace and Love as understanding is Nonviolence. The practice of the five human values enhances the contact with the Transcendent, softens the heart and makes the mind more flexible and focussed. It gives rise to self awareness, reflection, introspection and it confers the capacity of making deliberate moral choices. It strengthens the will to adhere to principled action in face of temptation. Thus Sathya Sai Education leads to genuine spiritual awakening through induction into heart and mind culture.

Third, Sathya Sai Education in human values combines the mainstream State curriculum with the depth of spirituality and human values. The students are expected to excel both in academic areas as well as physical sports, arts, culture as well as in the practice of human values. This means the children develop their full personality and character. The aim of Sathya Sai Education in Human Values is to raise a generation who is not only made up of good citizens, competent in earning a livelihood, developing innovative solutions, capable of contributing to their culture, but a generation steeped in the art of living. Each individual is self aware, morally grounded with highly developed personal and social conscience, fully inducted into a head and heart culture. The end of education is character grounded in the harmony of head, heart and hand.

Fourth, Sathya Sai Education in Human Values recognises that significant adults in the life of the students carry enormous influence in shaping their personality. Teachers and parents can raise the intelligence level of the children by +10% by providing nurturing environment. Further, children learn about spirituality and Transcendence not from the scriptures as much as by experiencing the Divine

attributes of parents and teachers who are their primary role models. The Institutes of Sathya Sai Education carry special responsibility to develop the teachers, to oversee the human values education in Sathya Sai Schools and to help parents in a deeper understanding of the dynamics of human values as they play out in their every day interactions in their homes.

Fifth, Sathya Sai Education is a model of education that has attributes over and above those of State education and the Private education models, although there are many common features. For example in common with the State education model Sathya Sai education emphasises social conscience, citizenship, egalitarianism, individual dignity and equality. However, in addition Sathya Sai education incorporates unity of Faiths, ceiling on desires and celebration of unity in diversity. In common with the Private education model Sathya Sai education emphasises attainment of excellence by underpinning education with a philosophy of life, not of a particular religion but of spirituality which is the common denominator of all religions. On the other hand in contrast to Private education Sathya Sai education is not commoditized education, the exclusive preserve of the rich. There is no fee charged for Sathya Sai Education. This means that other than the Government grants, all other expenses including the teachers' salaries, administration and the school facilities and buildings are met by freely given donations by individuals who share a vision of the future - a vision based on the ideals of caring, love and concern that expresses itself in generous donations for the wellbeing of the next generation.

It will therefore not be news when I say that Sathya Sai Schools and Institutes are having huge impacts in a number of countries – in the UK, Canada, Zambia, Thailand, Fiji, China, Mauritius, Kazakhstan, Latin America and we hope, also in Australia.

In rounding up let me once again congratulate all those who have been involved and have contributed to this noble project in their own special way. Let us all recognise their contribution of time, energy, money and effort. Schools of this nature are not short term- they last for centuries and continue to shape hearts and minds of many generations to come.

Thank you!

D.P. Dhall

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*Given at Sathya Sai Primary School, Murwillumbah,*

*Friday, 26 March 2010*

*On occasion of the Opening of School Extensions*