

***A report on the Interaction session of
Dr. Baldev Raj, Distinguished Scientist, Director, IGCAR
& Chairman, LMC
with students of Atomic Energy Central School-I, Kalpakam
on 23 August, 2008***



It has been a great honour to the AECS schools that, Dr. Baldev Raj, Distinguished Scientist, Director, IGCAR and Chairman, Local Management Committee(LMC), Shri. Prabhat Kumar, Distinguished Scientist and Project Director, BHAVINI and Co-Chairman, LMC and Dr. M. Sai Baba, Head, Strategic and Human Resources Planning Section, IGCAR and Vice-Chairman, LMC visited our premises to hold an interaction session with our students. It has been Dr. Baldev Raj's favourite passion to interact with students and young minds whenever he could snatch some time amidst his busy preoccupations.

Around sixty students and staff members of the school had assembled to listen to Dr. Baldev Raj, who steers IGCAR, which is the world leader in Fast Reactor and associated closed fuel cycle technologies. Dr. Baldev Raj, suddenly sprung a surprise by enthusing the students to propose three topics to be discussed and also invited a student to conduct the discussion, who happened to be Master Pon. Krishnan, a student of Class X. This created an informal atmosphere for young minds to unfold themselves comfortably.

Some of the questions asked by students and the response by the team of visiting scientists and technologists along with the Principal, AECS-1 are given below:

1. What should the students do to improve knowledge in Academics, Co-curricular activities(CCA), Sports and Games?
2. What are the responsibilities of a child in maintaining a high level of discipline in the school?
3. What can we do to become a great son of mother India?

The panel of the visiting scientists and technologists along with the Principal, AECS-1 also put forth the following queries (to the students) for discussion.

1. How can life be full of fun and still have accomplishments?
2. How to identify what gives us happiness in work?
3. How can the family (the parents) and the school work together to build a future society of responsible citizens?



1.What should students do to improve their knowledge in Academics, CCA, Sports and games?

The response from students was that:

“ only bookish knowledge is not sufficient –
we have to improve our communication abilities also”,

“Hard work is a must for success”

“Self confidence is necessary to succeed”

“Think positive”,

Dr.Baldev Raj consolidated the discussion and said the following:

In order to feel confident you should identify what you are good at and build upon it. Please work on your ideas. Great people like Sir C.V.Raman, Shri M.K.Gandhi, Dr.Abdul Kalam were not good at everything but they identified their specialities and reconstructed themselves on that foundation. Know yourself, take steps to work at least three hours more than what is done by others and by the end of the twentieth year you will have worked 20000 hours more than the others, which forms a large chunk of time in anyone’s life. You should honor the value of time.

Without any distraction of the television or the temptations by friends, along with a minimum fourteen hours of study, you can develop a good strategy to excel in life. Since everyone longs to be successful in life, nothing can stop you from being determined in doing your work with concentration provided you enjoy your work.

2. What are the responsibilities of a child in maintaining a high level of discipline in the school?

“What does the term Discipline mean to you?” quipped Dr.Baldev Raj.

One boy replies “Doing the right thing at the right time, at the right place”.

Dr.Baldev Raj, highly pleased with the reply, added that: If you want to develop into a responsible student, you should apply yourself to the prudent advice given by your teachers because in every great person’s life, the teacher has played a greater role. At times if the teacher is wrong, be convinced in your position but ask the teacher to explain his position to you.

At this juncture, a student of class VI, proudly says, "If there is a choice between God and teacher, I would choose the teacher and I was taught so by my mother".

"Wonderful, excellent - I have great regards for your parents who taught you good values in your life", said Dr. Baldev Raj.

Dr. Baldev Raj further said "If you follow the teacher's advice and respect your parents, you will be a person most sought after everywhere. "Gold is valuable because it is available less in the earth. Similarly truth-loving people are rare and valuable because they are less in number. Even if a large number of people going in the wrong way, you should speak the truth in order to be valued in the institution where you are studying".

3. How to become a great son/daughter of this country?

Shri Prabhat Kumar, responded to this question by telling that honesty, truthfulness, hardwork, dedication and commitment will help one see through all difficulties.

Endorsing this view Dr. Baldev Raj asserted that, "The school is the seed - ground where good characteristics can be developed at the formative stage. One should learn to express oneself clearly, stand up to what one feels right, and not to miss any opportunity to learn. The lesson the student gets from the school should teach him to live with dignity, have a pride for the country especially by learning its history. The way a student brings himself up in the school should make his parents feel proud of him while at the same time he should give his service back to the school".

Dr. Sai Baba felt that the students should prepare themselves in doing things of according to their ability. They should start with small steps and achieve big things. Group dynamics, cooperation, sharing, sympathy and care are assets to the individual. The questions from panel to the audience were as follows:

4. How can life be full of fun and accomplishments ?

Dr. Baldev Raj, who believes in that action means more than words, highlights some anecdotes from the life history of Shri J.R.D. Tata, Sir C.V. Raman, Sir Albert Einstein, Dr. Abdul Kalam and the likes who were led by example.

Dr. Baldev Raj, enunciated the following recipe for success:

- Enjoy the job you are assigned with
- Value each and every moment of life
- Find happiness even in small things
- Don't be frozen by fear of failures or be mind - blown at successes
- Congratulate yourself even for a small achievement
- Feel happy in others' happiness
- Learn from the past, plan for the future but don't get too much into them and do the best of the present
- Learn to do your work with fun
- Any work felt as a burden is no fun and such work is never accomplished.
- Even at this age I do not feel tired at all because I never think my work to ever be a burden
- Count on your blessings and not troubles

5. How to identify what gives happiness?

This question was posed by Dr. M. Sai Baba and a wide range of answers emerged from the lively audience. He further added, "Look into the inner side of your personality and search for the real 'you'. Do the things you enjoy - be it sports, games, CCA, Art, dance, music - whatever. If you

believe in what you say and stand up to your convictions there may be opposition but still don't stop in believing in what you feel right. This gives real joy".

Shri Prabhat Kumar, was of the impression that pursuing a hobby brings happiness – Hobby brings in activity, activity leads to results and he added to say, "Stay focused, avoid distractions, read what interests you and be a learner all along your life in spite of completing your course of study because reading books gives new ideas, creativity, initiative and joy. Your acquiring capability and confidence brings happiness to your parents and others and thus you can identify what brings happiness to you".

Dr. Baldev Raj said, "We as individuals get hundreds of times more than what we really deserve – the society is doing so much lavishly for us that we should return something back to it."

It is now the turn of Principal Shri G. Vijayaganesan, to pose a question on a different aspect of student life

6. How can the parents and school go together in moulding a better citizen?

Response from Students:

"Encouragement of parents and teachers play a big role in a student's life".

"Discussing daily with parents regarding the happenings in the school brings out an open mindedness."

"Sharing experience with teachers and parents relieves the strain and tension."

"In spite of the situation at home being good or bad, we should continue to carry on good ideas."

"Respect the proverbial saying in letter and spirit - Mata, Pita, Guru, Deivam"

The discussion forum was truly rewarding and kept the students, panelists and audience elated. Vice-Principal of the school thanked the participants for making it lively. True to these words that *"Everyman of true education and culture is a student all his life"* Dr. Baldev Raj added that, "I do not feel humble or modest today in saying that I have learnt a lot by interacting with the students. My personal experience proves that obstacles should not stop us from what we are aiming to achieve and to do this we need not take short cuts because they get us nowhere. While following the path of truth, a lot of people try to pull you down to their level, yet follow the principle of the compass – it always shows the right direction. If you are able to read it carefully life is yours".

The panel was highly appreciative of the intellect and maturity exhibited by the students in expressing their ideas and remaining receptive all through the interactive discussion.

The feedback from the students about the interactive session is as follows:

Who could dream of the privilege of talking face to face with world class scientists?

"I am sure after this chat with a true leader my outlook has broadened" – a VI class student.

"I will not be daunted by difficulties hereafter" said a student from Class X.

"What is amazing is the friendly way in which a doyen of nuclear science, Dr. Baldev Raj, interacted with simple folks like us" felt another boy.

"Such opportunities never repeat themselves in everybody's life. I will remember it for ever" said a student of Class VII.

The school is thankful to the team of visiting scientists and technologists for enriching the students and teachers.