

20. Spiritual orientation to education

TEACHERS! Embodiments of Love! Educationists! students! You see light from a bulb. You enjoy the breeze from a fan. You experience the cool air from an air-conditioner and warmth from a heater. But what makes them all work is one and the same electric current.

Likewise, what you hear, what you see and think all appear to be externally different sensory experiences, but it is the intellect that enables the impressions received through the senses to be experienced.

Right education leads to refinement of conduct. With refinement of behaviour, one's life gets sublimated. Good intellect alone can lead to happiness which is the source of peace. Proper education brings about association with good people. The company of the good is peace itself. Good education redeems one's life and ensures liberation as a consequence.

*When one receives education that is
based on truth and eternal values,
He will be able to achieve liberation
without having to go through
the process of submergence in Samsaara.
Therefore, come forward to get
the benefit of such education.*

Humility is an attitude of mind free from egoism

"Vidhyaa dhadhaathi Vinayam" (Education confers humility). Humility does not mean mere bending of the head. Only an attitude of mind free from egoism, ostentation and attachment can be called humility. Today neither teachers nor parents are able to teach such humility to the children because they themselves have not cultivated that attitude. The water you can draw from a tap depends on the nature of the water in the tank. Today teachers and parents have not filled their minds with sacred divine feelings. How can they be expected to infuse the children with such feelings?

Here is a piece of burning charcoal. If you take proper care of it, it will keep burning. But if you neglect it, it will soon get covered up with ashes. In the heart of every human being, there is *Jnaana-Agni* (fire of wisdom). That fire signifies a pure heart. Today we are not able to see that fire because the heart is enveloped by the ash of worldly desires. When the ash is blown away, the fire will be visible. Men tend to forget the noble and ideal sentiments in their hearts because they are covered by worldly material and sensual desires.

Shri Krishna declared: *"Adhyaathma-Vidhyaa Vidhyaanaam"* (Among various kinds of knowledge, I am Knowledge of the Spirit). Bhaarath has given birth to countless noble souls who possessed such spiritual knowledge. People today have forgotten the message of such noble beings. Today, the noble, sublime and inspiring teachings of these high-souled sages should be imparted to our boys and girls.

A sculptor converts a block of stone into a beautiful idol. Language expresses the feeling in appropriate speech. Character takes a man on the righteous path. It is the teacher who moulds the children into exemplary human beings.

The real teacher teaches others how to live

The ignorant and the blind declare that a man, who cannot earn a living otherwise, becomes a teacher. On the contrary, the teacher is really the one who teaches others how to live.

*Those good men and women who
Teach children how to act righteously
in the future ahead of them,
And promote the spirit of
equality and affection,
Are alone real teachers.*

Today we treat teachers as mere employees and slight them. Teachers, in her, are the people who indicate the royal road for human life. Teachers illumine the nation by promoting great ideals. They are responsible for the blossoming of ideals in the young. They awaken in children *the Prajna* (integrated awareness) which is subtle and hard to recognise. They draw out the latent potentialities in the students. If they are encouraged to make the effort, students can accomplish anything.

Teachers are beacon-lights in idealism. It is only when the light, of the teacher shines effulgently that the light among students can-shine. The light from a teacher can light several lamps.

Recognise the importance of spiritual education

Teachers! You have to strive ceaselessly to impart to your students your sacred thoughts, your exemplary conduct and your ideals. Teachers are like guide-posts. It is only when you play this role well that you will have done your duty by the boys and girls to divinise their lives. Although secular education may appear necessary for mundane existence, the importance of a spiritual basis for it should be recognised. However, the responsibility for imparting a spiritual orientation to education rests not only on teachers, but also on the parents as well as the authorities.

In this context, students have to cultivate three qualities. "*Sarvaloka hithe rathah*" (One must cherish the well-being of everyone in the world). "*Sarva Jnaana rathah*" (One must be interested in all knowledge). "*Sarva sadhguna rathah*" (One must foster all good qualities). Without good qualities, without seeking the welfare of the country and without good thoughts centred on God, how can one be a true human being?

It is only when the individual is good that society will progress. When the society improves the nation will progress. The welfare of the individual, society and the nation is based on the observance of human values.

From ancient times the sacred land of Bharath has been standing forth as a leader among nations by its spiritual wealth, ensuring their peace and security. It proclaimed the great message: "Let all the people of all the worlds be happy."

Students should be taught to use properly, all the talents and qualities given by God to them. Without good qualities life is worthless. By their bad qualities students today misuse their knowledge. They should cultivate humility which can confer many benefits.

They should learn the lessons which Nature provides by way of selfless service. Every element in nature--the earth, water, the sun--demonstrate the selfless service it is rendering to man. Man, who is a child of Nature, has become a stranger to compassion and other natural qualities. By filling a prey to all kinds of desires, man has strayed away from the right path. He has not only to acquire knowledge, but wisdom. He has to combine good qualities with good practices. Book knowledge has to be translated into good deeds.

Demonstrate your unity and divinity

Teachers! You have the responsibility for reshaping the future. There is a big difference between the conference you have held here and conferences elsewhere. At other conferences, the tendency is to regard them as occasions for picnics and sight-seeing. You, who have come here at great expense, from long distances, should demonstrate your unity and divinity. Do not entertain any differences of race, religion and community. Foster the Caste of Humanity, the Religion of Love and the Language of the Heart.

Teach your students that it is the same *Aathma* (Spirit) that dwells in all beings. You must emulate the example of the ancient *rishis* who were the preceptors in the *Gurukulam*. You must ensure by your conduct the esteem and respect of your students, who are highly intelligent. To mould the students into good citizens is a spiritual *saadhana*. A bad teacher will spoil the lives of many generations of students.

Dedication shown by the Gurus

In fact, our teachers are very good persons. They undergo considerable trouble in rendering service. Many ladies, who have to attend to their daily chores at home, are carrying on their educational work out of their devotion to Svaami. They are treating it as a spiritual exercise. No other institution in the world can claim to perform the kind of selfless and dedicated service which the members of our *Samithis*, our *Seva Dhal* and Baala Vikaas teachers are rendering. Whatever their difficulties, they are coming here at their own expense and bearing their food expenses. The Sathya Sai Trusts do not provide any funds, for them, nor do they seek any aid from the Trusts.

Whatever trouble you may face, you must learn to feel happy in any circumstance. If you are stung by a scorpion, you must console yourself that you were not bitten by a snake, and when you are bitten by a snake, you must console yourself that it has not proved fatal. Even if you are not able to own a vehicle, be happy that you have got your legs intact to enable you to walk. Even if you are not a millionaire, be happy that you have enough resources to feed yourself and your family. This is the way to experience joy even while in adverse circumstances. Ceiling on desires is a must for leading a peaceful and meaningful life. You must curb the desire to seek more and more wealth and turn your effort to realise the Reality within. In pursuing this effort, you must avoid waste of food, money, time, energy and knowledge as all these are Forms of God. Unnecessary talk should be avoided as this results in waste of energy and reduction of memory power.

Teach children to talk softly and sweetly

Besides observing the ceiling on desire, students should also practise the discipline of seeing no evil, hearing no evil, thinking no evil and doing no evil. Only when children are taught these good disciplines in the formative stage, they will grow as good persons. By leading a life without discipline, students will practically be like cars without brakes which will spell danger to the occupants. Sense-control is an essential requisite for students who are in the vulnerable stage of succumbing to the temptations of sensual pleasures.

You must teach them how to talk softly and sweetly while adhering to truth. Some mothers complain that their children don't listen to their advice and retort- "Don't talk. I know." For this situation, the mothers alone are to be blamed because this is the result of their having allowed indulgence to their children in the earlier stages. From childhood, good things should be taught to them. When they send their wards to school, their responsibility does not cease. They should take care to ensure that not only they study properly, but develop good behaviour, respect for parents and elders, speaking the truth and avoiding unrighteous actions.

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