

## **‘Educare’ Is True Education**

*No harm can ever befall a person whose heart is full of compassion, whose words are adorned by Truth, and whose body is dedicated to the welfare of others*

*(Telugu Poem)*

### *Embodiments of Love!*

FIRST and foremost, we must investigate into ‘*panchatantra*’ or the five principal aspects of education. These are:

1. What is education?
2. What type of education should we pursue?
3. What is the main aim of education?
4. What is the uniqueness of education?
5. What are we gaining from present-day education?

Only when we recognise the inner significance of these ‘*panchatantras*’, can we know what is true education. What is education? It is of two types: The first type is collection of facts and knowledge about the external world and sharing them with students. The second type is educate. Educate involves the deep understanding of the knowledge that springs from within and imparting it to students. But today’s education gives the students knowledge only about the external world. Only culture or refinement can develop good personality and not this type of education. So, both education and culture are important. Today’s education is devoid of culture and is like a counterfeit coin. Even a beggar does not accept a counterfeit coin. Then how can experienced and intelligent people accept such education? So, to satisfy everyone we must develop educate. Education without refinement is like a dark room. Only bats can live in dark rooms; such rooms are filthy. So, by pursuing such education devoid of culture, our hearts have become dark rooms and hence many animal qualities find their way into it. Education without culture is like a kite with a broken string. No one knows where it will fall and what damage it will cause to others. Therefore, such education does not benefit anyone.

### **Proceed From Superficial To Practical Knowledge**

*Only if education is blended with culture, it will shine forth as true education.* What is culture? It is the

cultivation of discrimination between good and evil, sin and merit, and truth and untruth that we experience in our daily life. It is also removal of one's evil thoughts, feelings and qualities, and cultivation of good thoughts, feelings and good qualities. Not only this, culture makes one broad-minded by getting rid of one's narrow-mindedness. This morning, a song "I and you are one!" was sung. Even this is also a kind of narrow-mindedness. It will be better to say, "All are one!" A celestial voice told Jesus, "All are one, my dear son, be alike to everyone!" Educare develops such broad-mindedness. Today's education comprises only bookish knowledge. It is only superficial knowledge and it changes every moment. So we must add 'Educare' to this bookish knowledge. *Educare is practical knowledge.* There are a few steps between the superficial knowledge and practical knowledge. From superficial knowledge we must proceed to general knowledge. After analysing this general knowledge one gains discrimination knowledge and knows the difference between good and evil. From this discrimination knowledge we proceed to practical knowledge. This practical knowledge is changeless. True and eternal education never changes when the heart is filled with compassion; it becomes sacred and aspires for the welfare of one and all. An educated person should not have bad qualities and must not indulge in bad deeds. Today's education imparts only bookish knowledge,

which really degrades a person. How long will this bookish knowledge last? It lasts as long as we keep it in our mind. It is not possible to put bookish knowledge into practice. We fill our heads with bookish knowledge, go to the examination hall, fill our answer paper with it and return with empty heads! In effect, the head always remains empty.

To acquire discrimination knowledge one requires general knowledge, which consists of ordinary cleverness and intelligence. Discrimination knowledge also has in it common sense. Both are essential for life in this world.

*Students and Teachers!*

What we need today is not bookish knowledge though we require it to a certain extent to cope up with life in this world. But what is essential to us is the knowledge of the Atma. *Spiritual education* is the highest education, says the *Bhagawadgita*. It starts with discrimination knowledge, which is like a perennial river. In perennial rivers the quantity of water may vary but not the quality. Thus students should understand that quality of education is more important than its quantity. Degrees are not important, but the knowledge accomplished out of education is important. What is the meaning of education? 'Education is not mere knowledge, it includes action, too.' Education, which originates from within has a sound basis and is per-

manent. It is referred to as *Sathyam*. A step higher than *Sathyam* is *Ritam* as proclaimed in the *Vedas*. What we normally refer to as truth in daily life is merely a fact.

### **Education Is For Life Not For Living**

People mistake bookish knowledge to be true education. No one today bothers about the aim of education. *Education is for life and not for living*. Today's education is aimed at merely eking out a livelihood. If mere living is the purpose, then how birds and beasts live without any education? Even ants and mosquitoes, which do not have any education live their lives. Is education for merely earning one's bread? What is the essence of education? The essence of education is the concentration of the mind and not the collection of facts. Mere collection of facts will not serve any purpose. For example, a washerman in a village goes from house to house collecting clothes for washing. In each household the number of clothes, which are given for washing, are noted down in a notebook. But the washerman does not have an account. By evening he returns the clothes to the respective houses. This is general knowledge. For acquiring this general knowledge education is not necessary. Even a washerman possesses it. Many educated men lack the acumen of even a washerman. General knowledge cannot be acquired by mere study. It is learnt from the book of life.

What is the end of education? People answer this question by saying there is no end to education. Definitely there is an end to what we study from books. *The end of education is character. Education without character is useless.* Earlier in *Gurukulas* the sages took the students along with them wherever they went and taught them without conforming to any time schedule. This education was a continuous learning process. But today in the schools and colleges education is limited to strict time schedules. Therefore, education has become limited. But true education, which moulds character, has no limits. When we learn about that which is 'limitless' we attain the end of education. Our character is reflected in our words, behaviour and conduct in daily life. So we should speak pleasantly and not hurt others with our harsh words. It is true that we cannot always oblige but we can speak obligingly.

While cooking, ladies select appropriate vessels according to the quantity of rice to be cooked. It does not make sense if a large vessel is chosen to cook a small quantity of rice. Discrimination should be used to select the vessel and the intensity of the flame required for cooking. In the same way, discrimination should be used to enrich one's character.

### **Fact, Truth And Absolute Truth**

When elderly guests visit the house, even if one cannot offer them anything to eat, one should at least

welcome them inside, speak affectionate words and make them happy. Instead, if one asks them rudely, “Why have you come?”, it is not good. Even when the father is at home, one tells them that he is not there. This is not proper education. speak good words and tell the truth. There are three types of truth. They are fact, truth and absolute truth. To say as it is what you have seen is a fact. Suppose I see you wearing a white dress and say that “you are wearing a white dress”. This becomes a fact. Later at home you might wear a blue shirt. Then what I had said earlier does not hold good anymore. Thus a fact is subject to change.

Truth, on the other hand, does not change with time. A person may change any number of dresses, but the person remains the same. Thus truth is the same at all times. I often say that you are not one but three. The one you think you are: the physical body. The one others think you are: the mind. Mind is invisible. One’s happiness or misery is based on one’s actions. *Ritam* (absolute truth) transcends both good and evil. This is the one you really are, the Atma. You are a combination of body, mind, and Atma. Body is subject to change. It is Atma, which is eternal. This is referred to as *Ritam* in the *Vedas*. It is changeless and has no attributes. It is described as attributeless, pure, eternal highest abode, permanent and unsullied. One may say that one has acquired three postgraduate degrees. But what are these degrees? These are mere certificates.

Who is the one who has earned all these degrees? It is 'I'. This 'I' is the absolute truth. Only when you are awake you travel physically, see many sights, eat many dishes and experience many things. But in the dream state you create yourself! You do your work and travel to far off places like Delhi, America, without even purchasing a plane ticket. In deep sleep state one does not go anywhere. It is a changeless and steady state, which remains a witness. The same 'I' experiences all these three states. In the deep sleep you enjoy bliss. In the dream state you create various scenes and experience them. But in the wakeful state you experience everything physically through the senses.

Adi Sankara has cautioned us about the truth of what we experience through the senses. Vagaries of the mind are many. In order to control them, Sankara introduced a practice in his ashram. The disciples would walk from one end of the ashram to the other repeating, "Be careful! Be careful!" Once a feeling arose in Sankara's mind that he was the head of the ashram with a large income. At that moment he heard the sentinels cautioning, "Be careful! Be careful!" This alerted him and brought about a change in his feelings.

*Birth is a misery, old age is a misery, family is a misery, the last moments are full of sorrow, so Be careful! Be careful!*  
(Telugu Poem)



One might consider oneself to be great. As of now, one might be enjoying name and fame. But what will happen when one is faced with misery towards the end of one's life? Sankara wondered who would come to one's rescue at the fag end of one's life.

*Neither mother, nor father, nor relatives nor brothers, not even wealth or possessions will come to your rescue in the last moments. Hence be careful !*

(Telugu Poem)

In earlier days, this was taught in the *Gurukulas* to the students by the preceptors. This ancient educational system originated from absolute truth. This is what is **EDUCARE**. It is also reflected in the letters ABC as ALWAYS BE CAREFUL. Sankara preached the same principle. So, it is necessary to impart spiritual education along with secular education. General knowledge devoid of spiritual education is negative. General knowledge is like the bulb and spiritual knowledge is like the current flowing through it. Only when positive and negative meet is darkness dispelled. So, we must develop positive along with negative.

It would be enough if we have only positive aspects. The divine power is latent in every being, which is positive. Man today accumulates negative aspects in excess. Birth, growth, sustenance, and death are all negative.

*He is the Eternal One with no birth and death,  
 He who is the Primordial One does not have a  
 beginning or an end,  
 He is neither born, nor does He die, nor is He  
 slain by anyone. He is the Atma, which is the  
 Eternal Witness.*

(Telugu Poem)

### **Spiritual Knowledge Is Foremost And Fundamental**

Hence, the path of spirituality forms the basis for all forms of knowledge. The fundamental knowledge, which comprises spiritual knowledge, is greater than both practical knowledge and general knowledge. So, this should be imparted along with the secular education. How long can we lead a truthful and ideal life in the world without trying to discover the Absolute Truth (*Ritam*)?

We are making a mistake by identifying ourselves with the body. For example, a mother died leaving behind her fifteen-year-old son. The son was grief-stricken since there was none to look after him. The body of the mother was right in front of him; then why was he sad? It was because life had left the body of his mother. So, mother is not the body but the life principle. Life principle has no death. Body is like the dress; death is like change of dress. Everything in this world undergoes change. But there is one thing that is changeless. That is the Fundamental Truth. We should

learn that fundamental education. Once you have mastered it, it follows you wherever you go. Gradually you should get rid of attachment to the body and develop Atmic consciousness.

You are pursuing different types of education in different countries. But ultimately education should converge into educare. That can be achieved gradually. Therefore, mere acquaintance with books and what is written on the black-board cannot constitute education. True education throws open the doors of the mind. How can you enter a house with the doors closed? You desire many comforts and pleasures, and also aspire for virtues. For that you have to open the doors of your mind first. Only then absolute truth will manifest in us. This absolute truth is all pervasive.

In our organisation, we should not only wear a uniform dress, we should also develop uniform mind. The basic thing to be achieved is purity of mind.

*Embodiments of Love!*

There are many aspects in modern educational system that we must understand. But we are not learning what we ought to. Instead we are gathering irrelevant information. Mere learning of the contents of a book constitutes secular education. Education must be combined with educare. Only then will you experience the bliss. What is the difference between 'education' and 'educare'? Education is like insipid water, educare

is like sugar. Merely adding sugar to water does not make it sweet. It is only on stirring, does the sugar mix with the water making it sweet. The heart is the tumbler, divinity is the sugar, and secular education is tasteless water. With intelligence as the spoon and enquiry as the process of stirring, we experience the all-pervasive divinity. That is true wisdom, which enables us to recognise the unity of all creation.

This is a cloth. It is not just cloth. It is a bundle of threads and more fundamentally it is cotton. The cotton, thread and cloth are one and the same. Without cotton, there is no thread and without thread there is no cloth. Recognition of the unity in multiplicity is the ultimate goal of education.

You should learn to face adversities boldly without blaming God. God would have planned to grant you some benefit through the hardship. You should accept both pain and pleasure as gifts of God, and develop the attitude, “whatever God does is for my own good!”

You will have many discussions in the conference. Let the discussions be filled with love and not with criticism. You should not criticise any religion, because it is the same God whom you worship, be it in a church, a temple or a mosque. A true devotee of God will not criticise anyone. Share your love equally with everyone. Tomorrow I shall answer any doubts or

questions that may arise in your discussions today.

*First Conference of Sri Sathya Sai Schools,  
20.11.2001, Prasanthi Nilayam*

