

1. SEEK EDUCARE INSTEAD OF JUST EDUCATION

*Vidya nama narasya rupamadhikam pracchannaguptam
dhanam*

Vidya bhogakari yasah sukhakari

Vidya bandhujano videsa gamane, vidya gurunam guruh

Vidya rajasu pujiyate na hi dhanm,, vidya vihinah pasuh.

True education is grand,

A rare beauty,

A hidden Treasure,

And an unfailing companion.

It is the supreme teacher

And that which commands real respect.

Fool is he that spurns such knowledge.

Students, Boys and Girls, Teachers, and Patrons of Education!

To begin with, students must appreciate the greatness and the grandeur of True Education. Such education alone is real beauty, a hidden treasure of mankind, and an unfailing companion when one travels overseas. It is also the Teacher of all teachers. In the Court of Kings, it is knowledge and not wealth that commands

respect. He is a pitiable fool, who does not aspire for such Eternal Knowledge.

Embodiments of Love! You have no idea of the anguish your parents feel if you are backward in your studies. In the same way, Bharat Mata, the mother of this land, will feel very sad if you do not make progress in the fields of morality and spirituality.

Janani janmabhumisca svargadapi gariyasi.

One's mother and motherland are greater than the very Heavens. Students must firmly resolve to spare the motherland of Bharat from the pain and the agony caused by spiritual backwardness.

Students of today are not making any efforts to understand the sanctity of education. What precisely is the type of education that students must acquire? What is it that contributes to true progress and the real prosperity of mankind? What is it that one expects from educational establishments? It is the foremost duty of students to enquire into all such questions and share their findings with others.

Mere bookish learning and the acquisition of information cannot by themselves earn for you respect and esteem in society. For that, culture and the associated refinement are also needed. Routine scholarship is negative, whereas culture is positive; both are required. Whereas bookish knowledge equips you with facts, culture refines and transforms your inner being (for the better). Education bereft of culture is like a field without water, a wire

without current, a house without a lamp, and a temple without a deity. Pursuit of such education makes youth totally rudderless.

In the past, several committees were appointed to suggest various reforms in our educational system. However, the recommendations of these committees were not implemented. Under the circumstances, youth must follow the examples set by noble elders. After deep enquiry, *rishis* of yore discovered sacred Truths, abided by them and derived Bliss therefrom, which they then shared with others. Students must emulate the glorious example of our ancients and not be content with learning by rote; mere bookish knowledge is of little value.

What is Educare*?

The word Education, especially as used today, is related to bookish knowledge. It is derived from the root word Educare. What is Educare? It is that type of learning that brings out the purity latent in the Heart, confers Bliss, and allows one to spread joy and happiness among others. Education is associated with knowledge pertaining to the ephemeral world, and can at best lead only to worldly pleasure that is invariably transient. Educare, on the other hand, confers inward Bliss, which is eternal in nature.

** According to Oxford Dictionary, the word 'educate' has its origin from the Latin word 'educare' which is related to 'educere' or 'educere' meaning: bring out or develop from latent or potential existence. Bhagavan desires that the process of education must bring out the human values latent in every individual. He calls this act of transformation 'educare'. Hence what is needed is 'educare' and not education, He elucidates.*

The (spiritual) Heart is the fountainhead of all Bliss. All the powers and the potentialities present in the external world are already present in your heart. Unaware of the immense power within, man today is preoccupied with exploring the outer world. However, all that is seen in the external world is merely a reflection of the Inner Being. Therefore, man must direct his vision inward, experience the unbounded joy within, and then radiate that joy to the outer world. Instead, man is frittering away his time in acquiring worldly knowledge, and in exploring the outer world. Secular knowledge is no doubt necessary, but its acquisition must have a fundamental (spiritual) basis. Investigations and enquiries lacking a fundamental outlook are totally meaningless.

Here is a silver tumbler. Besidesthis, there are other objects here like the spoon, the plate etc., also made of silver. The metal silver has been used to make all these objects. Silver can be used to make other objects as well. Further, one can convert a silver plate into a silver tumbler and so forth. In this example, silver is fundamental and the objects made of it are secondary. Likewise, there is a Fundamental Knowledge, which is the fountainhead of all other forms of knowledge. Called *Atma Vidya*, this Fundamental Knowledge is latent in the Heart. It is the Knowledge of the Self. Our ancients said,

Vidyanam jnanasaktih.

meaning that *Atma Vidya* is synonymous with power. Acquiring *Atma Vidya* confers the power of wisdom. You must try to comprehend the tremendous power that lies behind the Knowledge

of the Self and not waste your life by merely hankering after worldly knowledge all the time.

The Real Purpose of Education

There are crores of highly educated people in this country. But what is it they have contributed to the world and to human welfare? In what way are they helping the community? In no way at all! Instead, they are totally preoccupied with the pursuit of their own selfish interests; no one works for the benefit of the community. This should not be; you should work for the welfare of Society. You should be guided by three cardinal principles:

Sarve loka hite ratsh
Sarve samudita gunaih.
Sarve jnana sampannah..

All must enjoy prosperity. All virtues must be cultivated. All Knowledge must be acquired.

Your first objective must be to work for the welfare of society. Next, you must try to make others happy. Last comes the acquisition of the wealth of spiritual wisdom. Therefore, first and foremost, you must strive relentlessly for the progress of society. You must work hard and incessantly to promote the welfare of the community. You are a part of society, and your individual welfare is intimately tied up with the welfare of society as a whole. Hence, you must study not for making money but for the sake of serving society. Unfortunately, these days education

has been reduced to business, greedy business in fact. What you have received from society must be returned back to society, and in greater measure. You are able to study because of the infrastructure provided by society. Having been benefited thus, is it proper to forget what you have received and focus only on making money? To do so would be immoral, indecent, and totally against man's basic nature. As the *Vedas* emphatically declare, sacrifice is man's principal characteristic:

*Na karmana na prajaya dhanena tyaganaike amrtatva-
manasuh.*

Neither action, nor progeny, nor wealth, but sacrifice alone can lead to immortality. The *Vedas* further assert:

Sahasrasirsa Purusah.

God pervades the universe in diverse forms, providing thereby an undercurrent of unity to apparent diversity of the phenomenal world.

Eko'ham bahusyam.

There is only One, but the deluded mind perceives it as many. In other words, the apparent plurality of creation is really an aspect of unity. The *Vedas* also say:

Saha Na-vavatu. Saha nau bhunaktu. Saha viryam karavavahai.

It means that we must live together, work collectively and in unison, be in harmony with each other, have understanding for

each other, and thus attain illumination. These declarations are the corner stones of *Bharatiya* (Indian) culture. You must absorb the lessons they convey, follow the dicta, experience the Truth they imply, and share that experience with others.

See God in all, and the Universe as one Family

Students! While studying, you should set aside all thoughts of jobs and income. What is so great about income? Even a beggar is able to get money. Do you think that making money is a great achievement?

*Money has become God,
Pomp has become a creed,
Selfishness has become a fashion,
While righteousness has declined.
Money power has become mighty.*

Selfishness has become a fashion, and everyone is after it. Students! Give up selfishness; instead, foster unity, develop Love, and go through life with a spirit of sacrifice. Your life would then be on an even keel, and you would automatically enjoy happiness. Do not make creature comforts the goal of your life. What is so great about these comforts that everyone is craving for? They are all transient—today's comfort becomes tomorrow's discomfort. Food appears very tasty when you are hungry but once hunger is satiated, you no longer feel like eating that very same food. Ask yourself what is it that is responsible for desire, craving, frustration, and failure?

Mana eva manusyanam karanam bandha moksayoh.

All feelings spring from the mind, which alone is responsible both for bondage as well as liberation. In fact, the mind is the cause for everything. Where exactly is this mind? You think it is within you. No!

Mano mulam idam jagat.

The mind pervades the whole world, encompassing you also.

There are many bulbs here, and every one of them gives light. The bulbs may be different but the same current flows through them all. The individual bodies are like the various bulbs, and the *Atma* is like the current and is all-pervasive. It is present in all.

The Governor (Smt. Rama Devi, the chief guest on the occasion) said earlier that God resides in all.

Īsavasyam idam jagat.

Isvarassarvabhutanam.

God is present in all beings, but are you experiencing this all-pervasive divinity? Swami has told you on many occasions:

Deho Devalayah prokto, Jivo Devah sanatanah.

The body is the temple, and God is the Indweller. If this body is a temple, so is that body and every other body. All bodies

are temples, and the same God resides in every one of them. Therefore, does it make any sense to say that you like so and so and do not like so and so? The same God is present in all. Hence, regard the entire universe as one big family and love all without exception. If you hate anyone, it amounts to hating your own self. So, hurt never and help ever. There is no God beyond Love. God is Love and Love is God; live in Love.

Love alone is important and not Degrees

Students! Do not give room for undesirable traits like hatred, jealousy, and anger. Instead, assiduously cultivate the feeling of Love in such a manner that you radiate its effulgence all around you.

Start the day with Love!

Fill the day with Love!

Spend the day with Love!

End the day with Love!

This is the way to God!

You must develop this Love Principle. Education must transform you into an embodiment of compassion. What is the use of education if it does not foster compassion? Once, Gandhi was feeling very depressed. When an Englishman asked about the reason for his gloom, Gandhi replied, "I am disturbed by the fact that education today is making people hard-hearted." That is the problem; instead of breeding compassion, education these days is making people stonehearted. True education must touch the heart,

release a torrent of selfless love, make a person compassionate, and foster divine feelings. Such education alone is the need of the hour.

People are proud about their educational attainments, but degrees are not that important.

Do the skills of reading and writing alone make one educated?

Do mere degrees confer education?

How does one become learned without goodness and wisdom?

If making a living is the hallmark of education,

Then what about the birds and the beasts?

What degrees have the birds and the beasts received? Nothing! Education must not be for making a living but for guiding your life along the right path. However, people these days think of education as a passport to jobs and comfort. This is a colossal mistake. The unholy connection between learning and employment must be totally eliminated. Everyone is clamouring for work. Work, work, work! Does anyone understand the real meaning of the word work? All activity including household chores can be described as work. Therefore do not think of employment alone as work that you have to do. Hold a job by all means, but at the same time, do not forget to serve your parents and society. Remember, your welfare is intimately tied to that of society. Hence, do not think you are studying merely to get a good job; you must study so that you may discharge various responsibilities in an effective manner. True education is that which helps you to transform all work into worship. Duty is God. You may be

engaged in any activity but you can transform it into worship by regarding that work as action performed for the pleasure of God and as an offering to God.

Love and serve your Motherland

These days, students rush to the passport office even before they have their degree on hand! They are all so crazy about going abroad. Going abroad has become the fashion of the day. What is it that you find abroad that you cannot find here?

Yanna Bharate tanna Bharata.

What cannot be found in India cannot be found anywhere else in the world. People have become blind to the glory and the sanctity of Bharat. This country Bharat is *tyaga bhumi* (land of sacrifice), *yoga bhumi* (land of *yoga*), and *karma bhumi* (land of sacred action). But today, people are trying to convert this sacred land into a *bhoga bhumi* (land of trivial pleasure). *Bhoga* is not pleasure as people imagine but *roga* or disease! Therefore, do not get swept by this craze to go abroad. Instead, stay back and serve as well as protect your country.

This is my motherland,

This is my mother tongue,

This is my religion;

Is there a man without a soul to fail to proclaim thus?

There is no country greater than your Motherland Bharat. What a sacred land it is! There was a time when India was a beacon to

the whole world. It was foremost in all spheres of human activity – political, ethical, moral, and spiritual. How can you think of abandoning a country with such a glorious heritage? If you do not have love for the land of your birth, how do you think you are going to love the land you wish to migrate to? This being the land of your birth, you must love it, serve it, and strive hard to improve it. This is the way you must find fulfilment in life.

Cultivate Proper Discrimination

Students! Secular education is no doubt necessary; but along with that, you must also imbibe spiritual learning. A community or society bereft of moral and spiritual values will never have peace. Secular and spiritual learning are complimentary; one is negative and the other is positive. But, unfortunately, students of today are quite content with just the negative part alone. This is not good; if you neglect spiritual learning, you will be like a kite that has snapped; no one can say where the kite will fall. Hence, you must approach education in a balanced manner and with a total perspective.

Students! You are all good. Youth is a sacred period of life, and all of you are filled with sacred feelings. But before you do anything, pause, take time, think, and reflect on what you are about to do. Never be in a hurry. Remember, haste makes waste. Avoid impulsive actions; instead, pause and ponder. Whenever a thought arises in you to do something, take time and ask yourself: “Is it good or is it bad?” It is very important to exercise your discrimination properly. It is fundamental discrimination that you should apply, not individual discrimination. Your action should

benefit others —that is what fundamental discrimination is all about. Avoid haste, be patient, decide carefully on the basis of fundamental discrimination, and then only act.

The 'I' Principle

The governor gave you a lot of sound and good advice, based on her rich and varied experience. Among other things, she referred to self-confidence. You must all have self-confidence. Self-confidence will lead to self-sacrifice, which in turn will lead to self-satisfaction. Capping it all will be self-realisation. Self-confidence is the foundation, self-sacrifice is the wall, self-satisfaction is the roof, and self-realisation is the living being in the room. Is it possible to have a room with just walls and a roof alone, and without any foundation? Not possible. Therefore, you must first build up Self-confidence.

Now what is this Self in the word self-confidence? The Self denotes God [Swami often uses the word *Atma Viswasam* to denote Self-confidence]. Self also means I, I, I, I —everyone uses the word 'I' while introducing oneself. *Vedanta* gives a clear explanation of what precisely this 'I' means. *Vedanta* says, "Know thyself first". There is not much point in knowing about other things without first knowing something about one's own self. People say: "This is my body, this is my mind, this is my hand, this is my leg, my eye, " and so on. When you say "my", it clearly implies that you are distinct and separate from the object referred to. This brings one to the fundamental question of *Vedanta*: "Who am I?" You say, "My hand"; who is it that is associated with the word "my"?

You must appreciate the difference here; when I say, “This is My kerchief,” it means that the kerchief is separate from Me. “This is my tumbler,” —it means that the tumbler is separate from Me. In the same way, when you say, “My body,” it means that you are not the body but distinct from it. Then who exactly is the “Me”? If in this manner you investigate in depth, you will ultimately realise the answer to the question, “Who am I”?

Let us say you address the following question to the audience: “Who is Ramayya?” One person will get up and say, “I”. Similarly, if you were to ask, “Who is Venkayya?”, “Who is Lakshamma?”, etc., the concerned person would rise and say, “I”. Everyone says “I”. The names are different and the people also vary but everyone says “I”. The answer “I” is common and therefore fundamental. Therefore, if you know the answer to the question, “Who am I?” you will know about all others as well and in fact about the whole world. This is because everything is contained within the “I-Principle”. This is the essence of *advaitam*, the philosophy of non-dualism. The scriptures declare:

Ekam sat viprah bahudha vadanti.

Truth is only One but scholars refer to it with varied names.

Education must ennoble the Mind

Who is a man? One endowed with a mind is a man. A person without the thinking faculty can never feel kind or compassionate. He alone is a true human being who impulsively assists those

who are in distress and cry for help, and who is eager to wipe the tears of others. Therefore, you must always endeavour to help and give relief to those who are suffering.

Students! All of you are eager to study and acquire advanced degrees. Irrespective of the formal qualifications that you may acquire, never forget your motherland and its glorious culture. *Bharatiya* culture is based on the noble and exalted principle of seeking Unity in diversity; it has no room for fragmentation or divisive tendencies. No matter what walk of life you enter, make sure that your education benefits others. The knowledge you have acquired must be offered in service to the world at large.

These days, engineering and medical education have become roaring business. To secure a seat in a medical college, one has to shell out a hefty capitation fee of twenty lakh rupees. What do you get by spending twenty lakhs and earning a degree? It is far better to invest that amount in a fixed deposit and live comfortably on the interest accrued! If one spends a huge amount to get a medical degree, then all the subsequent attention would be on recovering the investment by any means, fair or foul. Exorbitant fees are the main reason for the deterioration of values in education.

One should not spend huge amounts in search of degrees. It does not matter if one does not secure admission to the course one wants to study. Students in the villages when asked, “What are you doing?” reply, “*Nenu chaduvukontunnanu*,” (I am purchasing education) instead of saying, as they ought to, “*Nenu*

chaduvukuntunnamu” (I am studying). These days, even primary school education has become very expensive and one has to deposit twenty thousand rupees in advance. Education is sold for money at all levels, from the KG (Kindergarten) to the PG (postgraduate), and indeed even to the Ph.D. level. How can one expect people who have thus bought learning at enormous price to ever think of using their learning for the benefit of society? Such people invariably argue that having spent huge sums of money and having placed heavy financial burden on their parents, they perforce have to make all the money they can to recoup the original investment on education. It is neither necessary to spend like this in the first place nor to indulge in undesirable practices later, using the excuse of recovering the money spent. No matter how limited your education, can you not feed yourself? God has given you one stomach but two hands. Can one stomach be filled by working with two hands? Is human birth necessary for filling the stomach? Do not the birds and the beasts get their food without the benefit of education? Make not the stomach an excuse for seeking education! You must study so that your mind becomes sacred and your thoughts become noble.

Realisation must be the Goal of Life.

All this is just the beginning, and there are fifteen more days in this summer course! Many scholars will be addressing you and sharing their experiences, just as the Governor did this morning. Experience is what you must learn from; you must digest them and put the lessons learnt into practice. You must be careful and exercise discretion as well as proper discrimination before doing

anything; otherwise, *vidya* (education) runs the risk of becoming *avidya* (ignorance).

Modern education is highly artificial. What you need is not this type of education but *educare*. The latter is what addresses the heart whereas education [as presently imparted] pertains solely to the head. From the heart alone spring human values that are everlasting — compassion, forbearance, tolerance, truth, sacrifice; all these flow only from the heart. Modern education deals almost exclusively with worldly matters and entities, and its content and nature both change with the passage of time. But the values associated with the Heart are eternal.

The heart is referred to as *hrudaya* (*hrud* + *daya* = *hrudaya*), meaning that the heart is the seat of *daya* or compassion. The head, on the other hand, can be the source of conflict and confusion. Real education is that which fosters virtue, morality, truth, compassion, discipline, and duty. It is not enough to be merely intelligent. You may be very clever but so is the fox! Has the fox received any education? So, just becoming clever is not the purpose of education. What education must confer is wisdom that flows from the heart and not just knack or cunningness. Let your heart alone be your guide, especially while dealing with others, no matter where or when.

You all know very well about the system of education adopted in our Institute. Education in Swami's institutions is totally free, all the way from KG to PG and even beyond. What is expected of you in return? Simply this: When you go out into the wide world,

conduct yourself as an ideal citizen. Share with others freely and with joy, whatever you have learnt here. Having acquired learning here free of cost, it would be improper for you to later cash on it and market it. Such an act would be most unethical and not expected of you. Do not stray into such improper paths. Share what you have with love, not just occasionally but all the time. It is only when you do so that you can claim to have received real education.

Do not become a mere bookworm and remain immersed in studies all the time. When you return to the hostel from the college, relax for a while, play some games or sing. Also, set apart some time for service. But be balanced; you should neither study all the time, nor play all the time. And, after your studies are over, don't pack your books and set them aside or throw them away! Preserve them and continue to derive benefit from them. In short, maintain balance.

Swami has on an earlier occasion drawn your attention to the example of Napoleon, a perfect model of strict discipline. Napoleon had complete mastery over both hunger and sleep. You too should be like that. Do not slide into lazy habits, the moment you leave the Institute. Laziness must be avoided at all cost. Laziness is rust and dust while Realisation is best and rest! Realisation must be your goal in life, and laziness can make that goal elusive.

Excessive talking must also be avoided. Too much talk diminishes memory and dulls intelligence. Therefore, do not talk much.

Others may try to drag you into pointless conversation but deftly dodge them. You cannot always oblige but you can always speak obligingly! Talk only when you must, speak sweetly when you do, be ever courteous, and never fail to respect your parents. It is only when you conduct yourself in this manner and base your actions on love that you can truly be called an educated person.

Embodiments of Love! In the days to come, Swami will tell you many more things. You must listen carefully and absorb the lessons taught. Later, you must recall and reflect on the teachings imparted. Just as the cow after first grazing withdraws to a quiet spot and then chews the cud, you too, once you are back in your room, must ruminate over what you have heard. What you take in with your ears is education; but it is only when you absorb and put into practice what you have heard that education transforms into educate. Therefore, education here and educate in your room! Only when you digest the lessons and practise them can you enjoy *pushti* (health) and *santhushti* (happiness).

At the end of the divine discourse, the National Anthem was sung as per Bhagavan's command.

Inaugural Discourse, Morning of 15 May 2000.

