



4. "Education on Right Path"

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INTRODUCTION

Vivekananda advocated education for self-development. According to him knowledge is inherent in man, no knowledge comes from outside; it is all inside. True knowledge does not come from outside, it is discovered or unveiled with the individual, in the self which is the source of all knowledge. Thus, education is discovery and the advance of knowledge is made by the process of uncovering. To quote Vivekananda again, "All knowledge that the world has ever received comes from the mind: the infinite library of the universe is in your mind. The external world is only the suggestion, the occasion, which sets you to study your mind. He further said, "Like fire in a piece of flint, knowledge exists in the mind; suggestion is the friction which brings it out. All knowledge and all powers are within. Man manifests knowledge, discovers it within himself, which is preexisting, through eternity."

Swamiji attempts to establish, through his words and deeds, that the end of all education is man making through the process of self-development. Swamiji defines education as "the manifestation of the perfection already in man." The 'perfection' alluded to here is the excellence of the human soul-the self, which by its very nature is perfect. The part 'already in man' means that perfection is innate and not acquired. According to Swamiji, the Atman is the ultimate source of not only all knowledge and happiness, but also of all noble qualities and capacities inherent in man. Education is the process by which this innate perfection is manifested. The aim of education is to manifest in our lives the perfection, which is the very nature of our inner self. This perfection is the realization of the infinite power which resides in everything and every-where existence, consciousness and bliss (satchidananda).

After understanding the essential nature of this perfection, we should identify it with our inner self. For achieving this, one will have to eliminate one's ego, ignorance and all other false identification, which stand in the way. Meditation, fortified by moral purity and passion for truth, helps man to leave behind the body, the senses, the ego and all other non-self elements, which are perishable. He thus realizes his immortal divine self, which is of the nature of infinite existence, infinite knowledge and infinite bliss. At this stage, man becomes aware of his self as identical with all other selves of the universe, i.e. different selves as manifestations of the same self. Hence education, enables one to comprehend one's self within as the self everywhere. The essential unity of the entire universe is realized through education. Accordingly, man-making for Swamiji stands for rousing man's to the awareness of his true self. However, education thus signified does not point towards the development of the soul in isolation from body and mind.

Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902) a great patriotsaint, great thinker a religious leader and social reformer of India, embraces education, which for him signifies man making, as the very mission of his life. He wanted to promote spiritualism, perfection, divinity, self-reliance, universal brotherhood and faith through education. In this article which purports to expound and analyze Vivekananda's educational views, an endeavor has been made to focus on the basic themes of his philosophy, viz, self-realization and the spiritual unit of the universe.

The character of any man is but the aggregate of his tendencies, the sum total of the bent of his mind. We are what our thoughts have made us. Thoughts live; they travel far. And so take care of what you think. Every work that we do, every



movement of the body, every thought that we think, bears an impression on the mind-stuff. What we are every movement is determined by the sum total of these impressions on the mind. Every man's character is determined by the sum total of these impressions. If good impressions prevail, the character becomes good, if bad impressions prevail, it becomes bad".

Swamiji advocated education for self-reliance. He proclaimed, "we want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded and by which one can stand on one's own feet." Swamiji remarked, knowing the self is the chief object of education. Further he says, education is not filling the mind with a lot of facts and diverse knowledge of perfecting the instrument and getting complete mastery of one's own mind is the ideal of education." To him "the training by which the current and expression of will are brought under control and become fruitful is called education."

These words by Vivekananda represent the characteristic Indian definition of Education. Education according to most of the Western educationists aims at searching for empirical knowledge along with man's adjustment with the environment. According to the Indian philosophical tradition, on the other hand, education is the quest for those nobler aims which liberates man from causal ignorance i.e., the ignorance of the true nature of the Atman. When causal ignorance is removed, the Atman reveals or manifests itself in all its glory. This experience is known as realization of the inherent knowledge which is the essential meaning and ultimate purpose of human life.

Man-making education involves the development of one's personality with the consciousness that one must be responsible and purposeful servant of one's community. The pupils should learn those things which will make their life happy in all respects. That which does not turn the joy of early life into the grief of youth, the merriment of youth into the sorrow of middle age and the happiness of the middle age into the miseries of old age is the right type of learning. Education which makes the whole

society happy with the happiness of the individual and which produces a society which is constrained and fair in its relation with other societies is called the right type of education. Whatsoever removes misery and increases happiness and makes the happiness stable is real education.

Vivekananda supported the idea of Swadharma in education. The aim of education should be fulfillment of Swadharma. Education should be modified to suit the individual child. Each child should be given opportunities to develop according to his own inner nature.

Education to be complete must have five principal aspects relating to the five principal activities of human beings. The physical (skill) vital energy (balance) mental (knowledge), intellectual (discernment) and blissful (identity or oneness) integration of the individual into a complete man is a broad definition of the fundamental aim of education.

Education for Women :

Swami Vivekananda used to observe that the country which had no respect for woman-hood could never become great. To quote his inspiring words: "If you do not rise the woman who are living embodiment of the divine mother, do not think that there is any other way for the nation to rise". He pointed out that unless Indian women secure a respectable place in this country, the nation can never move forward. He remarked that "There is no chance for the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved. It is not possible for a bird to fly on one wing". Thus, the regeneration of Indian women, according to Swami Vivekananda, depends upon proper education.

Swamiji's views on curriculum for school education have following unique features. Swami Vivekananda, in his scheme of education, meticulously includes all those studies, which are necessary for the all-around development of the body, mind and soul of the individual. These studies can be brought under the broad heads of physical culture, aesthetics, classics, language, religion, science and technology. According to



Swamiji, the culture values of the country should form an integral part of the curriculum of education. The culture of India has its roots in her spiritual values. The time tested values are to be imbibed in the thoughts and lives of the students through the study of the classics like Ramayana, Mahabharata, Gita, Vedas and Upanishads. This will keep the perennial flow of our spiritual values into the world culture. Education, according to Swamiji, remains incomplete without the teaching of aesthetics or fine arts. He cites Japan as an example of how the combination of art and utility can make a nation great. Swamiji reiterates that religion is the innermost core of education religion is the innermost core of education.

Everyone who has dealt with children and adolescents knows the truth of this statement. It is not possible to instill virtues and noble qualities in youngsters merely through sermons. It can be done only through living contact. Swamiji wanted the ancient traditions of gurukula vasa to be reviewed. In the Gurukula system of education students got ample opportunities to be in the close proximity of their Gurus, almost all the time, and this gave them enough opportunities for imbibing moral and spiritual values from their Guru. Swamiji wanted to promote perfection and divinity that are already in man by positive ideas, encouragement and personal life of the teachers.

Method of Education :

There is only one method by which to attain knowledge, that which is called concentration. The very essence of education is concentration of mind. The more the power of concentration, the greater the knowledge that is acquired. This difference in the power of concentration constitutes the difference between man and man. All success in any line of our work is the result of this concentration. Thus, to Swamiji the power of concentration is the only key to the treasure house of knowledge. According to Swamiji knowledge is inherent in every man's soul. What we mean when we say that a man 'knows' is only what he discovers by taking the cover off his own soul. Consequently, he draws

our attention to the fact that the teacher's role consists chiefly in providing an external stimulus and in removing the obstacles to the manifestation of inner knowledge. In his words: "Thus Vedanta says that within man is all knowledge even in a boy it is so and it requires only an awakening and that much is the work of a teacher." To drive his point home, he refers to the growth of a plant. Just as in the case of a plant, one cannot do anything more than supplying it with water, air and manure while it grows from within its own nature, so is the case with a child. Vivekananda's method of education resembles the heuristic method of the modern educationists. In this system the teacher invokes the spirit of inquiry in the pupil who is supposed to find out things for himself under the bias-free guidance of the teacher.

To quote Swamiji's words: "No one was ever really taught by another. Each of us has to teach himself. The external teacher offers only the suggestion which rouses the internal teacher to work to understand things". Swamiji also gives great importance to training of the will-powers and method of giving positive idea in his scheme of education. For achieving will-powers, one will have to eliminate one's ego, ignorance and other false identification, which stand in the way. Meditation, fortified by moral purity and passion for truth, helps man to leave behind the body, the senses, the ego and all other non-self elements, which are perishable. He thus realizes his immortal divine self, which is of the nature of infinite existence, infinite knowledge and infinite bliss.

Swamiji lays a lot of emphasis on the environment at home and school for the proper growth of the child. The parents as well as the teachers should inspire the child by the way they live their lives. Swamiji recommends the old institution of gurukula and similar systems for the purpose. In such systems, the students can have the ideal character of the teacher constantly before them, which serves as the role model to follow.

Although Swamiji is of the opinion that mother tongue is the right medium for social or mass



education, he prescribes the learning of English and Sanskrit also. While English is necessary for mastering Western science and technology, Sanskrit leads one into the depths of our vast store of classics. The implication is that if language does not remain the privilege of a small class of people, social unity will march forward unhampered.

According to Swami Vivekananda the qualifications of a true teacher are as follows : The teacher should have a thorough knowledge of the spirit of the scriptures. The teacher should be sinless i.e. he should be pure at heart and soul. The teacher must not teach with any ulterior selfish motive, for money, name or fame. He should be a tyagi and should be able to stimulate the spirit of intellectual curiosity in the students. His work must be simply out of love, out of pure love for mankind at large. The only medium through which spiritual force can be transmitted is love. This love within the teacher is the real source of his influence upon the students.

Swamiji says, 'three things are necessary to make every man great and every nation great. They are conviction of the powers of goodness, absence of jealousy and suspicion and helping all who are trying to be and as good.' He holds that 'the life is short, the vanities of the world are transient, but they alone live who live for others, the rest are more dead than alive.'

Swami Vivekananda says,, "the national ideals of India are renunciation (Tyaga) and service (Seva). Intensify Her in those channels and the rest will take care of itself." In this context the role of the teacher is to help the child to achieve

Vyaktitva (individuality) first, and Vikasita Vyaktitva (personality) immediately after, through physical, intellectual and spiritual expansions. This transcendence of mere organic individual into spiritual personality, through conscious social participation is the only way to happy family and to full national integration.

Character building and man-making should no doubt start at home under parental supervision. But it has to be continued naturally and harmoniously in our educational system as well. Character to be stable must rest on the five basic values such as self-confidence self-reliance, self-knowledge, self-control and self-sacrifice which are cultural values practiced from time immemorial in this country are to be new re-vested and inculcated in the minds of new generations. This can be accomplished only through schools and colleges.

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