

20. Spiritual basis for value education

HUMAN life is a very sacred and precious thing. It has to be used worthily. The body, mind *and Atma* constitute together the human entity. Actions are done by the body and cognition by the mind. The Atma is that which abides. The Atma is the Divine spirit present in the human heart. Action, Awareness and Being are the threefold aspects of human life which have to be properly understood. Although they appear to be distinct, it is the unity in Action, Awareness and Being which makes for the fullness of human life.

The mind, because it is engaged in various thoughts and motivates various desires and actions, is described as *Antahkarana* (the inner instrument). It is known as '*Manas* (mind) when it is engaged in good and bad thoughts. It is called *Buddhi* when it exercises the discriminating power. When expressing the will, it is called *Chitta*. As a manifestation of the Divine in the individual, it is known as *Aham* (the I or Ego). *Antahkarana* is the collective name for the manas (mind), *Buddhi* (intelligence), *Chitta* (will) and *Ahamkara* (ego-sense).

***Prajna* is 'constant integrated awareness'**

There is a fundamental principle which is at the base of all these. It is known as *Prajna*. *Prajna* has been described as *Viveka* (discrimination, intelligence, comprehension and the like). These are not quite correct. *Prajna* really refers to the *Brahman* in man. The *Vedas* have declared '*Prajnaanam* is *Brahman*. *Prajna* is the principle that is present equally in the body, the *Antahkarana* and the *Atma*. Hence it may be regarded as "constant integrated awareness." It is this constant integrated awareness that is the source of all values in man. This *Prajna* is permeated with love.

Truth is the echo that resounds from the love-filled *Prajna*. All actions that arise out of this love-filled *Prajna* are reactions, constituting *Dharma*. *Santhi* (Peace) is a reflection of this Truth and *Dharma*. Thus Truth, Right Conduct and Peace emanate from the *Prajna* that is charged with Love, as Resound, Reaction and Reflection. The proper understanding of the source and nature of Truth, Right Conduct, Peace and Love is *Ahimsa* (the attitude in which one cannot think of causing harm to anyone). Hence man should embark on any activity from *Prajna*.

Sathya (Truth) does not mean mere statement of facts as one sees them or hears about them. Truth in its real sense transcends the limitations of time, space and circumstance. It is difficult to practise this transcendental truth in ordinary life. *Vedanta* (bottom line of *Vedas*) described it as *Rtha* (principle of integrity). It is the basis of human existence. It is on this basis that all the facts of the phenomenal world should be properly understood. One should not act on the impulse of the moment immediately a thought occurs. The rights and wrongs of an idea should be examined and only when the heart approves of a certain course should action follow. This is the process of cultivating values. What the mind (head) thinks, should be examined critically by the heart and the right decision should be carried out by the hand. This should be the primary product of the educational process.

Creativity and science

We are discussing education in Human Values. What seems to be necessary is not EHV but 3--HV: Head-Heart-Hand (values). The hand should carry out what the heart has approved of the ideas emanating from the head. This triune process has been described in *Vedanta* as *Thrikaranasuddhi*--the purity and harmony of thought, speech and action.

Activities arising from *Thrikaranasuddhi* find expression in two ways: one through artistic creativity and the other, through scientific exploration. Of the two, artistic creativity is supremely important. The aesthetic feeling is based on creative imagination. A sculptor who desires to carve an image out of a piece of rock has to have the figure he seeks to carve in his imagination. This *bhava* (imagination) finds *ichcha* sakti (creative expression) in the sculpture. If the creative imagination is absent, no sculpture can come out of the rock.

Hence, imagination and the creative impulse have to be properly understood. Both of them are rooted in *Prajna*, the Divine source of all creative activity. As against this aesthetic creativity, we have the urge for scientific enquiry. This is primarily concerned with objects in the external world. Experimental research has its vision turned outward. But even that has its basis in the *Antardrishti* (Inward Vision). This relates to the subject.

Integration must become a way of life

Science has been making remarkable progress in the recent decades. The world undoubtedly needs the discoveries of science. But if it forgets the base and is preoccupied only with the superstructure, it will be the source of much disorder and trouble. It may cause all kinds of diseases. Science has been divorced from spirituality and faith in the Divine. Many imagine that science can create a heaven on earth. But what is the kind of heaven that is envisaged? Is it the enjoyment of material and sensuous pleasures? This hedonistic attitude is undermining all human values.

Research is going on endlessly. Science is continually seeking answers to various questions. But how many of the answers are correct and satisfying? Progressively, the climate of peace is being destroyed by science. If peace is to be ensured, science has to be promoted on the right lines. This calls for unity among the people. Service to society must become the fundamental purpose.

Everybody talks about the need for world unity. But real unity must begin with the individual and the family. From the home, it must spread to the village, nation and the world. National integration comes to the fore whenever there is an attack from outside by China or Pakistan. But when the external threat passes, integration is forgotten; integration should become an essential part of our being. It must become a way of life and cherished as an important value. It is vital to perceive the unity that underlies the apparent diversity. Bodies are many, but life is one. Beings are many, but Bliss is one. Religions are many, but Truth is one. This is the kind of oneness that has to be experienced in the depths of our heart.

Prajnana (integral, higher wisdom) subsumes *Vijnana* (secular knowledge) and embraces also *Sujnana* (right knowledge). *Prajnana*, *Vijnana* and *Sujnana* together contribute to the fullness of man.

The ABC of life: Always Be Careful

Life is an exacting master. Hence the need to be always careful in everything one does. This is the ABC of life' Always Be Careful. One should always remember the supreme sacredness of human life. Man can experience real bliss only when he recognises the Truth, Peace and Love that emanate from *Prajna* and moulds his life on the basis of that knowledge.

Human Values cannot be practised by studying books or listening to lectures. They have to be

cultivated by individual effort. Students! True education consists in sanctifying everything you utter and every thought and action of yours. Humility is the bed-rock. Cultivate humility as the first step, Bend the body. Mend the senses. End the mind. This is the key to immortality.

Human values are essential not for students alone. Everyone has to practise human values as a mark of a true human being. When a human being declares that he is a man, it is only a half truth. He must also declare that he is not an animal. To give up animal qualities and practise human values will make a man fully human.

Education without transformation

The educational process will not be complete unless, together with specialisation in specific subjects, one acquires general knowledge and develops common sense. Many famous scholars who had significant scientific achievements to their credit have been lacking in general knowledge and the common sense required in daily life.

Today we have made prodigious progress in various fields of knowledge--in mathematics, physics, chemistry, the bio-sciences. But no attempt is being made even to approach study of the spiritual. All our knowledge ends with study of matter, plants and living creatures. Education must go beyond these to an understanding of the Divine. Only that is true education. The task of education is to develop man into an ideal and exemplary person. Notable discoveries have been made over the years and great scientists have been produced. But how far have human values been promoted and what is the transformation that has taken place in mankind? There is no answer to these questions.

The promotion of human values must become an integral part of the educational process. It is because students today have not acquired human values that they are behaving often like demons.

Give value orientation to education

Leading Vice-chancellors and educationists have assembled here today for this national symposium. If they dedicate themselves to the task of giving value orientation to education, considerable progress can be made in this crucial sphere. To restore the supremacy of human values in all fields of national life, an association should be set up by leading scholars and educationists in the country. This association should have no links with the government. It is only if it is autonomous and completely independent that it can achieve its objectives. There are eminent educationists in the universities. They may have very good ideas but they have no freedom to implement them. They should be given the freedom to try out their ideas. Authority should be commensurate with obligations. Vice-chancellors will then be able to promote human values among teachers and students. If all educational institutions jointly strive to instill human values in students, Bharat can become an ideal nation and an example to the world.

Today educational institutions are growing in numbers, but there is no growth of a broad outlook among the educated people. Education should serve to enlarge the vision and broaden the outlook of the people. Everyone should be made to feel that his or her welfare is bound up with the nation's well-being.

Science and spirituality should go together

Everyone should feel proud about Bharat's ancient culture and its spiritual heritage. Spiritual knowledge and scientific knowledge should go together. There should be no dichotomy between

science and spirituality. True bliss can be experienced only when science and spirituality are combined. Development of science and technology alone will not help people to get rid of bad thoughts, bad desires and bad deeds, because science by itself is not competent to sublimate life. Only spirituality can promote ethical values, the spirit of tolerance and equal-mindedness.

The science of spirit is essential for developing human values. Devotion to God is the first stage in the spiritual journey. Instead of developing devotion men are immersed in the "deep ocean" of worldly life. When the Ocean of Milk was churned, the first thing that emerged was. the *Halahala*, fuming poison. *Amrita* (nectar) came later. When the ocean of worldly existence is churned, *Vairagya* (renunciation) will emerge first. The nectar of bliss will come later. *Vairagya* is renunciation of attachment to the physical and the material.

Students should start with cultivating the spirit of mutual regard and harmony. This will lead to good behaviour. When students in one educational institution grow in this manner, they will serve as an example to the rest of the world. Students should shed narrow and parochial loyalties and prepare themselves to serve the society and the world. Whatever conclusions are arrived at by the educationists and Vice-chancellors who have gathered here for this symposium, you students should become the "Messengers" for spreading them to the world.

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However high a bird may soar, sooner or later he has to perch on a tree top to enjoy the quiet. In the same manner a day will come when even the most wilfull, the most unbelieving, the most haughty and even those who assert that there is no joy and peace in the contemplation of the highest Self will have to pray: "God! grant me peace and consolation, strength and joy."

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