

# THE SPIRIT OF EDUCATION

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by

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Education is the process of manifesting the inner divine potentialities of man. The present system of education is introduced into India by alien rulers. They introduced this system to enable the unsuspecting Indian to qualify himself to be able to serve the rulers. It thus became a travesty on the real purpose of this sacred process, education, a process that has for its purpose the drawing out of the best, sublimest and noblest, of the latent faculties in man. Now the time has come to recognise the defect in this present system and to bring about the necessary changes in its outlook. The genuine and sincere aim of the administrators of India should be to educate the coming generation in such a way as to gradually make it grow into a perfect order of specimens of the glories of our most precious culture. To achieve this, the educational system should be one that does not merely consist in the filling of miscellaneous facts and figures into the young mind but should be a living process of touching and awakening in young India's heart of all the dormant idealism of our ancient tradition that is now slumbering, neglected in its heart.

Right education is the process of the discovery of truth. This truth is unravelled by degrees. Education ranges from the training of the self in the physical plane into the realisation of the highest and of disciplining life in general. The ultimate purpose of education is the knowledge of the

Divinity that shines in all beings. The process involves a burning up of the obscuring dross in the fire of self-discipline and purification. The impediments have to be removed from within. This removal of obstructions to the manifestation of the latent wisdom is education. Education means the subdual of the propensities which are antagonistic to pure understanding and awareness. Education is not merely an intellectual discipline; its integral part is moral achievement. Righteousness and virtue go hand in hand with true education. There is no value in education if it is destitute of the spirit of spiritual expansion or a progressive attainment of divinity. Though this sense of the highest perfection need not be explicit in the beginning stages of education, in no stage can it be entirely forgotten. Even as several zeros have no value without a number preceding them, nothing in this world, no achievement whatsoever, can have any real meaning if it is entirely devoid of at least the implied presence of the spiritual sense.

Schools and colleges should impart this kind of education. It does not mean, of course, that it is possible to make all students grasp the full significance of the higher life at once. But it is imperative that even small children should be brought up in such a way that they will grow perfectly virtuous and moral, good-natured and God-fearing. Everyone should be brought into the light of that ancient culture, the culture and refinement that belong to the nature of the manifestations of the Divine Being. The test of education is the revelation of inner light.

The spirit of real education is to be found in the meaning of the hoary Gurukulavasa and study under a perfected person. Whatever the degree of intelligence of the student be, the art of educating one lies in the method of an introversion of the faculty of knowledge. Introversion need not necessarily mean any mystic contemplation. It means, in general, an inner way of approach, the regulation of life in conformity with the perception of the ultimate unity of all things. It is the investigation of the powers of the inner man, the knowledge of the capacities and the potentialities which

are responsible even for the objective investigation of the scientist. The method of material science can ultimately be only a failure if it tries to know anything without gauging the depths of the knower. It is futile to attempt at anything unless the presuppositions of all attempts and undertakings, viz., the implications of the experiences and the faculties of the active knowing subject, are known. The modern methods of education cannot be satisfactory, since the most important factor in education, viz., inner culture, is not paid heed to. What does one see nowadays? Young men finish their courses of study after several years and come from colleges, grown in age, and yet know not the fundamentals of life or its meaning. Question any student—even the so-called educated youth—he betrays his ignorance of the central facts governing life. Not only this; students show a lack of real goodness and virtue. There is in them a want of moral strength, inner toughness born of a well-regulated and disciplined life. The ancient Sishyas under their Gurus were kept under rigid discipline. They were to observe such rules as would subdue their sense-desires and increase their mental energy and intelligence. The ancient Brahmacharins had tremendous power, Ojas-Sakti. They were Agnimanavakas, fire-lads, glowing with Brahmavarchas, as the result of self-mastery. The implicit surrender of the disciple to the Gurumeant a check upon the natural propensities that might be intruding in the midst of the disciple's higher aspirations. The very purpose of life under a teacher is to transcend the instinctive nature and live in the light of the inner hidden resources of the vaster life of the intelligent and spiritual nature.

Secular education cannot make a true man. Physical health, mental purity, intellectual acuteness, moral power and a spiritual outlook of life with right effort pointing to its aim should go together if perfection is to be achieved. Students should be thoroughgoing Brahmacharins, adherents to Satya and Dharma, to continence absolute, physical and mental, as well as a righteous mode of living. It is indeed not happy that the students of the present day take too much

interest in what lies outside the educational career, in politics, and social movements. Though these are all valuable activities, they mar the spirit and stultify the very meaning of real education. A student, as long as he is a student, should not concern himself with such things as would detract his attention and spoil his life of studentship. Moreover, the goal of education is not merely material comfort, but inner growth and culture which seems to have been forgotten by our students. A student should be an embodiment of humility, self-control, obedience, self-surrender and stern intelligence. He should be the very form of exemplary conduct, of spotless character. A student is a growing citizen, not merely of a country, but of the world, of the whole universe. This he can be only when he is unselfish and self-sacrificing, moral and pure.

It is not right to think that the spiritual sense has no relation to education in schools and colleges. Education is a barren husk if it is dead to the calls of the inner Spirit. It is imperative that at least one lesson in a week, if not every day, should be taught on morality and spirituality. Long courses of study without the spiritual note in them are like palaces built on quicksand. The Supreme Spirit is present in all, and so everyone should be alive to its existence and its demands. Let teachers, professors, parents and students, alike, hear this call of cultural renaissance, human uplift and universal brotherhood, and strive to attain the goal of true education, viz., cultural integration by spiritual perfection.