

VALUE EDUCATION: THE NEED OF THE HOUR

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Samuel P. Huntington in his book *The Clash of Civilization and the Remaking of the World Order*, (Touchstone Edition: 1997; p. 380-382) considered as 'one of the most important books to have emerged since the cold war' writes :

"Far more significant than economics and demography are problems of moral decline, cultural suicide, and political disunity in the West. Oft-pointed-to manifestations of moral decline include :

1. increase in antisocial behaviour, such as crime, drug-abuse, and violence, generally;
2. family decay, including increased rates of divorce, illegitimacy, teenage- pregnancy, and single-parent families.

How far to go with the moral decline and, its consequent punishments? Chinese government had to intensify punishment-killing of culprits in a society where religious values were either rejected or destroyed by a so-called godless communism for a few decades. Sweden is known by many as a 'contraceptive society'. To the Westerners Vivekananda exposed the sad results of a purely intellectual culture. The majority of students today simply do not have a higher purpose of life, beyond personal profit, money-making, power-grabbing, and sensate enjoyments. This "economic reductionism ends in a Hedonistic Paradox by which peace eludes even after repeated sensate pleasures. Then begins a feeling of deeper frustration and purposelessness when the left-brain educated person begins to suffer from Noogene Neurosis, a sense of guilt for all the inhuman pleasures and cutthroat cheating he/she had to pursue to achieve their goal. Third wave civilisation' as Toffler calls it, 'must also begin proving a framework of order and purpose in life.' Perpetual purposelessness leads a young man to heroin addiction, which temporarily gives a way of life to a young person."3

The UNESCO report admits that the sense of depression and frustration among the youth is “due to ‘a distorted vision of man and the Universe’. The dominant Western view is man is a born sinner, and life is meant for sensate pleasures. The Vedantic view is that man is a born “God’ and all the activities of life should help him to manifest his / her innate perfection and divinity, attainment of Zatori and Buddhahood, as Zen masters would say. UNESCO recommends Education To BE. Education to be what? Vedanta answers-education to be the infinite man, the complete man, the Christ-Buddha Man.

Inculcation of values is a struggle to bring out the God from out of the animal man. Sometimes it is a life-long struggle. Values cannot be taught in a day. It requires the entire education period right from elementary education to that of research to infuse values in learners. A century ago Swami Vivekananda cautioned Indians in 1897: “We must have a hold on the secular and spiritual education of the nation. Till then there is no salvation of the race.

Value Education

Value education is going to emerge as a new science for inspiring human. values in our highly scientific and technologically advanced society. The challenge in front of today’s techno-globalism is the creation of value based human beings. Einstein’s brain should be combined with Buddha’s heart to stop the devastation of Nagasaki and Hiroshima. Napoleon’s dynamism should be combined with Vivekananda’s prophetic passion for helping human beings to manifest their divinity and Ramakrishna’s universal love, respect and acceptance of all religions, should be combined with the spirit of intense religious revival which is emerging all over the world today.

Value Education: The Vedantic Vision

According to Vedanta philosophy which is the highest culmination of Vedic knowledge, the human personality consists of five layers or sheaths. These five sheaths are: 1. The Physical body (Annamaya Kosha), 2. Vital body (Pranmaya) Kosha), 3. Mental body (Manomaya Kosha).4. Intellectual body (Vijnanamaya Kosha) 5. Blissful body (Anandamaya Kosha). In the West, man is a body; he has a soul. In India man is basically the non-physical Self, which

takes a body according to desires of the evolving soul. A purely technical education can cover the first four layers. It can physically, mentally and intellectually energise the students, but can never touch the final non-physical spiritual Self, which is the source of infinite bliss, knowledge, strength, and all kinds of human excellence hidden within each and every student.

Value Based Lives Inspire Values

The Bhagavad Gita (3:21) speaks of the tremendous influence exerted by great value-based lives: “Whatever the greatest men of society do, common masses imitate. Whatever the great ones prove by their actions, others follow unconditionally.”

Yat Yat Acharati shresthani, tat tat eva itaro janah,
Sa yat pramanam kurute Lokah tat Anuvartate.

The Socratic dialogues of Plato revolved around the question, “Can value be taught?” He realized that virtue is universal and is always the same everywhere; that the good values can be taught but teachers must be good; such teachers “call out” our inherent virtues rather than instruct us. While words teach values, great persons inspire us to put them into practice.

Historic Examples of Value-Based Lives

World history provides us with some of the most inspiring examples of value based lives who reached historic excellence.

King Ashoka flooded the Kalinga fields with human blood for the fulfilment of his ambition to conquer that kingdom. Out of intense remorse and penitence at the sight of the dying thousands, he found solace in a Buddhist monk who taught him non-violence, love, and service as the way to true fulfilment and peace. Ashoka started a new life of conquest through Dharma (Dharma Vijaya), and emerged as great king.

Guru Govind Singh saw his own father Guru Tegbahadur being beheaded in Delhi Chand ani chowk. Yet he did not stop to fight the mighty Mughals. Even when distrusted and resisted by Hindu princes, Govind Singh continued fighting for India’s eternal religion. His sons and his wife were killed most brutally by the Mughals. Undaunted, Govind Singh fought again and finally

got treacherously stabbed by the enemy. He died leaving behind the great force of Sikhism where the final leader-as Govind Singh taught-is not any individual but the Guru Granth Sahib. His immortal slogan 'Sardar-Sirdai' he who sacrifices is the leader and his historic sacrifice gave birth to sentinels of India's religion-the Sikhs, the heroes from the land of Punjab.

American Tycoon Rockefeller met Vivekananda in U.S. A. who told the rich man to find fulfilment by offering his wealth for impoverished have-nots. Rockefeller took the message of Vivekananda.

Rockefeller wrote at the end of his-life: "There is more to life than the accumulation of money... The best way to prepare for the end is to live for others. That is what I am trying to do."⁸

Holistic Action And Self Control: the Indian Ideal For Kings

What is righteous action? All righteous action is based on the holistic truth - I and my brother are one-action which is meant for the good of many, for the welfare of many, Chanakya's aphorisms inspired Indian kings to seek success in administration by this time-tested method of righteous action leading to the manifestation of divinity within :

Sukhasya Mulam Dharmah (The root of happiness lies in righteous action)

Dharmasya Mulam Artham (The root of Dharma is the legitimately earned wealth)

Arthasya Mulam Rajyam (The root of such wealth lies in having a kingdom)

Rajasya Mulam (Sasakasya) Indriya Vijayam (The root of Kingdom lies in the self-controlled life of the ruler.)

Indriya Vijayasya Mulat Vinayam (The root of self control lies in genuine humility.)

Vinayasya Mulam Vriddhopaseva (Humility comes from serving enlightened persons)

Vriddhopasevaya Vijnanam (From the service of enlightened persons comes wisdom)

Vijnanena Atmanam Sampadayet (by wisdom is gained the knowledge of the Atman-Self)

Sampaditmatma Jitmatma Bhavati (A man of Self-Realisation conquers everything in the universe)

Sardar Sardar : He Who Sacrifices is the Leader :

Vivekananda asserts that a mere awakening of an intellectual, dynamic or intelligent man is never enough. Success comes only when the holistic personality, inspired for serving others also emerges along with the intellectual man. Guru Govind Singh's slogan has been immortal in India: 'Sardar Sardar.'

Young executives or leaders today develop ego-centered devotion to the organization and seek status symbols like promotions, honours, titles and positions of power. Vivekananda plunged himself down to absolutely menial activities like cleaning big utensils of cooking, and even cleaning old-time latrines of the first Ramakrishna Math when workers failed to turn out. "If you want to lead, first serve others," he taught. To the Maharaja of Mysore; Vivekananda wrote the inspiring words (letter dated 23rd June, 1884).

"My noble prince, this life is short, the vanities of life are transient, but they alone live who live for others, the rest are more dead than alive."

Unselfish Action Brings Success

Gandhari, the symbol of righteous knowledge, advised her son Duryodhana before the war to accept the path of righteousness or Dharma, but Duryodhana refused to listen to his mother. In the Mahabharata, Gandhari cautioned her extremely brilliant son Duryodhana and Said (Udyoga Parva: 128:21 : 2:30)

Na hi Rajyam mahaprajna Swena Kamyena Sakyate Apitum

Rakshitam Va Api Bhoktum Va Bharatarshaba

Vashyendriyam Jitmatman Dhritadandam Vikarisu

Parikshakaritam Dharam Atyasham Shree Nasevyate

"O my extremely brilliant and mighty son, no one can get a Kingdom if he fights only for his personal benefit; even if he gets it, he can neither keep nor enjoy it. Unless the leader is selfcontrolled, the assistant ministers will never

listen to him, nor can he give punishment to evil doers if he takes rash decisions with an unsteady mind. The Goddess of Wealth never comes to such a person.”

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