

NEED OF THE VALUE EDUCATION FROM THE ROOT

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Abstract:

As every one knows, with rapid and great progress in Science and Technology and other branches of worldly knowledge, Education in Values or divine virtues has been relegated to the back seat. It has even been given a good bye and been ousted. The result of all this has been a great erosion in human character. Today we have many law books and documents on Human Rights but we find increasing terrorism, torture, tension and turmoil on the national and international scene. There is exploitation, extremism, enmity and ill-will in the atmosphere. Values are the roots of Human Rights and belief in the self as a soul is the ground in which these roots lie. So, if the roots are uprooted and the ground is eroded, how will Human Rights stand? What will be the source of their strength and nourishment? On what ground will they stand? It is therefore, of utmost importance that Education should play this important role which it has neglected more and more during the last half a century or more. Without making Education Value-added, neither can the citizens have a good moral standard nor can there be much hope of Human Rights being observed by the citizens and the governments. And, as a consequence of this, the crime and the sufferings will grow.

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Introduction:

When we look at institutions of learning, we find there an atmosphere of grave indiscipline. The relationship between the teachers and the students is uninspiring. A large number of teachers are not deeply devoted to their noble profession. It seems that most of the teachers do not understand the importance of their role as builders of the nation or a society and as moulders of men nor do they evince any sign of such great responsibility¹. The students also do not have humility and love and regard for their teachers nor have they any reverence for knowledge, which too has lost the elements of enlightenment and ennoblement.²

Most of the educational institutions are now more centers of academic interest where one goes to learn and cram some bits of information or certain skills, in return, get diplomas or degrees so that one can claim some social status and entitlement to certain jobs³. No education is imparted their in the art and science of life and living nor is such knowledge given as should develop the potential goodness, lying dormant in the students⁴

The students, today are not equipped with such knowledge that should enable them to be peaceful and happy under all circumstances and to face their problems without mental tension⁵. The result is that an increasing number of students adopt unfair means to pass the examinations and many are becoming drug-addicts. They are following the life-style of cine actors or certain characters portrayed in some novels because they have no such inspiring role-model before their eyes whom they should follow. They have no idea to inspire them nor do they know the meaning of life. Thus, they have neither the congenial atmosphere, nor inspiring education. They have neither the ideal nor an opportunity or role-model to acquire a set of proper values in life that should enable them to get through tests of life as persons of clear conscience and principles. This has led to many problems and to a sort of crisis in human character. So, there is now great demand for value based education or for value orientation so that the crisis does not deepen and acquire the form of social catastrophe⁶.

Formal or informal education in values during formative period of life:

Researches into human personality have given adequate evidence that the hard core of human conduct and character is formed during the first eight, fourteen, sixteen or, at the most, eighteen years of life and what one acquires after this period is mostly in keeping with the beliefs, vision, attitude and outlook one has acquired during the fore mentioned formative period of life⁷. If therefore, values are not cultivated during this formative period through education, the most valuable opportunity for human resource development has almost been lost. No doubt, environment, education and certain events and examples can bring about transformation in later period of life also but that does not happen easily or with large number of people⁸. The day is cast in the earlier period and the crucial and important role of formal and informal education by the teacher and the parents must, therefore, be understood properly.⁹

Proliferation of the problem of value erosion:

Now though the process of character formation starts from early childhood some would say from even before one's birth yet flaws in one's character take many forms and spread in many segments of society as one grows¹⁰. For example, if one has been nurtured in utter materialism and consumerism, without being nourished on even a grain of spirituality, he when he later becomes a doctor, may be insensitive to his poor patients and may practice over drugging and over billing because he now considers money or the transient material gain as the foremost value and has no place for sympathy, compassion or feeling in his professional conduct. Or, he may try to become rich overnight by unfair trade-practices or by throwing business ethics to winds. Or, he may behave as a dry and blunt commercial dealer wheeler, without a soft corner for the weaker sections of society. He may indulge even in bride burning, women thrashing or child abuse if he has acquired such traits in the formative period of his life. He may work against his common sense and may violate the relating to protection of environment if he does not feel concerned for the well-being of the society and is blindly selfish and without any sense of hygiene and health. He may create tension in the family atmosphere or social and political affairs if he is impulsive, short-tempered, vituperative, and wild in manners and does not believe in right of others or in dignity of the human individual. He may become a corrupt official who does not do this duty for which he is paid and may expect or demand money for doing his official work. Thus, lack of moral education in early period of life, may result in proliferation of characterlessness in all professions, all segments of society and all spheres of human activity¹¹.

At that stage, interaction of one individual with another, or one professional with another, would further fuel corruption and moral degradation. It would act as a chain reaction. The whole society would thus become a breeding place for forces of corruption, immorality and unethical practices, consequently, all would suffer, each one blaming the other for his share of troubles. No one would be able to control the other, as all would have one moral weakness or the other; the difference would be only of degree.

Effect of Vitiating environment on students and all others:

In such a vitiating and vitiating atmosphere, the child, the adolescent or the youth would also be affected and infected¹². If his father is a doctor, doing over billing, and uncle is a bureaucrat, thriving in corruption, and elder brother is a politician, aligned with criminals, how would he remain totally immune to, or protected from, this epidemic? In what manner and how long can he be quarantined? When he moves with open eyes and open ears in such a society and is exposed to the media especially the electronic or the film media how can he be protected from contamination except through effective education in values and congenial atmosphere where he can breathe healthy air? This should point to the strong need for effective education in values in schools, colleges and universities before it is too late. Also, it should shake us to realize that ethical education is utmost necessary not only for the student community but for all because each one is influencing the other through interaction, observation and vibrations. So, the educational institution of Brahma Kumaris imparts education in values to all professionals and age groups.

A short list of the values to be inculcated:

Now the question is: What are the values, which we wish to cultivate or promote? If we put this question to a number of people, they would name at least a few values and, in the final result, we will have a list which will have these and some other values: 1. Honesty and integrity, 2. Sincerity, Truthfulness and Innocence, 3. Love and Non-violence, 4. Sympathy, 5. Co-operation, 6. Cleanliness of body, dress, mind and environment, 7. Sweetness of language and manners, amiability and sociability, 8. Self-control, 9. Positive thinking and seeing the positive element in persons and events, 10. Self-respect, 11. Respect for others and or their beliefs and views, 12. Inner Calmness and Tranquillity, 13. Patience, 14. Enthusiasm and Happy outlook, 15. Detachment, 16. Humility, 17. Fearlessness and Worrylessness, 18. Forgiveness, 19. Contentment, 20. Sattwic habits, 21. Respect for women and 22. Belief in the dignity of the human individual¹³.

All values must be fully developed:

Let us think further on his matter. If a person is educated in values, will we be satisfied if he has one or two values and is without other values? For example, let us suppose that a speaks sweetly but has no honesty and is rather corrupt: will it be correct to say that he is moral and spiritually educated? No, his sweetness may be a cloak or a mask and he may actually be a hypocrite, so, truth, all values are essential.

Further, will we rest content if someone has little bit of each one of these qualities? No, because 'little' in this case would mean 'deficiency' or 'weakness' 'moral poverty' or 'spiritual inadequacy'. Moral weakness would make a person prone to all attacks of immorality. Lack of moral vitality would not give a person a feeling of spiritual health and happiness. Moral poverty would always make a person think that he is morally backward or low caste. Many morally weak persons would make a society vulnerable to corruption and vices. Moral lameness or dumbness would give the feeling of being handicapped. One would have, therefore, to have full moral growth and not just be connected with being a moral pigmy.

If we agree that our aim or noble ambition is to have all the divine qualities and those too to the fullest possible degree, then we should agree to say that we aspire to become fully divine¹⁴. In other words, we wish to become deities, divine beings or goddesses and gods devis and devatas. Unless and until we reach that goal, there will be restlessness of spirit; there will not be any full quietitude of mind. We will not have attained full freedom or liberation if even an iota of negativity, vice devilish quality of demonical traits is left in us. We have to become completely pure and let divinity flower fully in us. So, why shouldn't we proclaim that this is one of the foremost aims of education and specifically of Value Education?

High ideal and high thinking:

Let us suppose for a movement that all cannot be fully divine; all cannot be sublimate their character to that Himalayan height¹⁵. But, even as a strategy, it is always better to have a high and inspiring goal before us. We should always have high thinking. Why, from the very beginning should we think that we couldn't reach that height? Why should one have a defeatist mentality at the very outset?

Potential goodness in all:

If we wish to have values and virtues in our practical life, doesn't our this wish imply that we have a potential to become good? If there were no dormant goodness within us, our aspirations would be meaningless, fruitless, or groundless. And, if we have that potential which we now intend to develop and manifest through education, then it means that man is potentially divine or good. It would, therefore, be in the fitness of things to make it known to all and to invite all to realize that there is a sleeping beauty within

them; they have basic goodness wherefore, they always have some whispers of good conscience whenever they are confronted with a moral choice. So, we must prepare the ground for sowing the seeds of divine qualities by telling the students that man's intrinsic and original nature is essentially good and that he has acquired evil traits only from the vitiated interaction and atmosphere. We must also make it clear that it is wrong to believe that we must have some ape-like qualities because we have descended from the ape but the truth is that we are children of God, Who is goodness personified or Virtue at its perfection. After all, there must be a peak point or a summit or virtue and that is why He is known as the 'Supreme Being'.

Values are to be inculcated in Consciousness:

We must be clear in our mind that 'Values' relate to consciousness. Value-education is in fact, 'Conscious training'. Values are, therefore, also called 'divine qualities' for these are not the qualities of Matter or of various forms of energy¹⁶. Consciousness is a reality and is different from the material reality. The former is an entity that is aware of the latter and also of itself whereas the other is ignorant of itself and of consciousness. Consciousness is the actual user of Matter and its various forms whereas the Matter is the used thing. Consciousness has a personality whereas Matter forms consumer goods for persons and personalities. Consciousness observes, studies, experiments with and experiences the fruits of Matter whereas Matter is the thing that constitutes the instruments for and objects of experience. So, this basis must be made clear so that the students and the professionals must understand that they are missing the development of a very important dimension of human personality and that, sooner or later, they have to pay attention to and make effort for this because, short of that, there is no fulfillment there is only deprivation and search for this precious attainment of life.

In truth, realization of our real identity is of prime value because it is the self in which all values will inhere or inhabit. Without knowing the self, how can we have the correct basis on which we should relate with others? And, what meaning do the values have if they have no anchor in relationship? Without having correct knowledge of the self, we cannot understand our equation with others and, without that. Values will not say long. If each one of us is not an 'experiencing self' that is a conscient person and has an essential relationship with every other being. Then why ought we to love with sympathy and co-operation? It is thus to be a logical necessary to tell people that each one of us is a 'self' characterized by consciousness and that all of us are brothers in spirit, and this is relationship which can overlook or break at our own peril, causing pain to others as well.

Non-observance of Values is non-observance of Moral Law, followed by self-inflicted punishment:

We must explain to all that non-observance of a Value is non-observance of a Moral law, governing human relationships and based on human nature. It is a very serious matter, for no one can escape its consequences. One, who violates Value, invites a punishment. This punishment is not always derived from statutory law but Moral Law from which no one can run away. For example, if a person defames and abuses another person and indulges in an act of character-assassination, he may not be tried in a court of temporal justice but he definitely invites a self-inflicted punishment, for he suffers from a guilty conscience, sense of remorse and repentance, insomnia, fear, adverse reputation as a person of bad manners. More punishment may follow later because he has set in motion a number of negative forces or vibrations, which will rebound on him in course of time.

So, everyone need be convinced that moral education is neither an option nor is it a matter of choice. It is neither a luxury nor a burden. By introducing Values in education, we will not be putting extra burden on the students or on the teacher or the national exchequer. Let us understand it clearly, that in this matter there is neither any alternative nor any chance of avoiding it¹⁷. Avoid education in Values and invite a colossal disaster. If no steps are taken now, then the time is not far off when the whole civilized society will live under the law of jungle. If politics is criminalized, bureaucracy goes corrupt, environment gets more

polluted by poisonous wastes, more and more students become drug-addicts and all people go amuck with inflated ego and ultra-violent tendencies, then who will save whom? If all become moral 'outlaws' what will be the meaning of 'brother-in-law', sister-in-law because there would then no longer be any law?

Teachers must have moral orientation

If teachers lose the strength of character, then who will build character of the succeeding generations? If the salt loseth its saltish savour, then wherewith will the things be salted? If students do not have discipline, how can have we a self-regulated and self-controlled nation or society? So, let our academic institutions rise to the occasion, pick up the gauntlet and accept their benign responsibility with a spirit of enthusiasm and first, set their own staff and atmosphere in order. Let value-education start with moral orientation of the staff and let this be introduced as a subject in Teachers' Training course and let us give moral touch to such subjects as history etc., in order that students learn to inculcate values¹⁸. There are many ways in which this subject can be taught to students of different levels and these can be discussed in detail and various courses can be devised and assessment procedures and methodologies also be spelt but let us, first, have a collective will that we will introduce this subject it without any further delay.

Conclusion:

Yoga is conscious process which helps to control mind. It has a vast potential towards value-education and can be an effective tool for inculcation of values early in childhood. Principles and elements of yoga in make a child receptive towards inculcation of right value systems which can help in his/her overall growth and development. Right values can be imbibed in a child by encouraging to follow the ideal lifestyle as prescribed by the yoga scriptures. Various streams of yoga put emphasis on such divine values. these values promoted early in life lay a foundation for strong character.

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