

Is Moral Education Really Necessary in Modern Society: Analysis from Philosophical Stand Point

Dr. Swarupa Pal

Assistant Professor

Department of Philosophy

Kanchrapara College

Abstract: Education plays a prominent role in all around development of individual as well as society. Our system of education gives us formal knowledge of various types of subjects but does not teach us what morality is and how to bring the characteristics related to it in our mindset. Our schools, colleges and universities are churning out millions of young graduates every year who experts in some field of science, humanities, commerce, or technology. Moral education is very much necessary to uplift career of modern society. Recent reports of media show that increased violent juvenile crime, teen pregnancy, suicide have happened causing moral crisis in the society. Moral education will enable the victimise one's to go on the right path forgetting all acts which are not at all desirable to them. We cannot deny morality. Be a man means be a moral man. Morals or Morality broadly speaking implies honesty of characters, fairness in attitude and absence of evils like jealousy, hatred and greed from actions. It is the duty of both teachers and parents to give awareness of morality from childhood. Moral values are extremely important for building a society which is free from the evils of violence, greed, hatred, avarice and jealousy. However, high economic growth do we achieve, whatever high amount of wealth do we accumulate, our society will be afflicted by corruption, inequality and poverty if moral education is ignored. This paper is made for highlighting the importance of moral education for decadence of society.

Index Terms: Moral value, moral education, students, teachers and parents

I. INTRODUCTION

Education is essential to human progress. It plays a vital function in all round i.e. mental, physical, emotional, social, spiritual, moral development of an individual as well as the society. It also plays a key role in creating patriotic, disciplined and productive man power. Educated manpower constitutes precious assets as well as agents for advancing the nation. Education means the fastening of one's personality through the unhampered development of innate qualities of a human being. It aims at integrated development of personality. Education was included in the concurrent list of the Constitution of India and accordingly the Government of India plays a leading role in the evolution by monitoring of educational politics and programmes such as national policy of education (NPE), 1986 and programme of action 1986 as updated in 1992.

The word 'moral' means that in which moral quality or rightness or wrongness is present. Simultaneously 'value' is commonly regarded as an economic conception. Value is described almost completely in terms of adjustment to the environment. Generally truth, beauty and good or virtues are regarded as intrinsic values. They are good in themselves and not means to any other good. Moral or morality broadly speaking implies honesty of character, fairness in attitude and absence of evils like jealousy, hatred and greed from actions. Our systems of education gives us formal knowledge of various types of subjects but does not teach us what is morality and how to bring the characteristics related to it in our mindset. Our schools, colleges, and universities are churning out millions of young graduates every year who are experts in some field of science, art, commerce or technology. We have professionals in every field, but we have few people in society who have a high moral character. One of the major drawbacks of our present system of education in India is that it gives our students the impression that their aim in life is to pass the examination, instead of becoming a man of good character and sound temperament. This mentality has many socio-economic evils rooted in it. Naturally, the products of such education system do not contribute to the development of the country, but add to its woes.

II. THE PRESENT SCENARIO

The society reflects our education. Through day to day newspaper and other medias, it reveals that corruption has been spreaded in every sphere of life, namely Business Administration, Politics, Officialdom and Services. Nobody can be considered free from corruption from a high ranking officer to a peon. It is said that unless bribery is paid no file moves from one table to another in Secretariat, Zonal Office and District and Block Offices. Most of our officials whether in Public Sector or Private Sector are corrupt. The assets they have acquired are often several times higher than their known sources of income. We read about income tax raids on the residence of high officials. This reveals the fact that our greed has been increased gigantically. Some Government employees do not work properly and not prepared to help. This is nothing but stealth of time. These types of people were not made aware of the happiness that one derives by working and sincerely. The commercialization of education is increased. The civil practice of charging capitation fees is an open manifestation of this in which the highest payer is assured a place in educational institution of high repute, paying little attention to merit.

The atmosphere in our schools, colleges and other institutions of education is full of competition. The students are taught to excel one another. This competition sometimes leads to rivalries, jealousy and hatred among class-fellows. Sometimes they get high marks by means of some forbidden means. All these are the examples of decline of morality in our society. To root out the evil of corruption from the society we need to make a comprehensive code of conduct of politicians, legislatures, bureaucrats and such code should be strictly enforced.

III. MORAL VALUES AS DEPICTED IN OUR PHILOSOPHY

Moral values are extremely important for building a society. It is a basic need for modern times where one is fast witnessing a degeneration of moral values. Actually, you can teach norms easily but you cannot teach easily to obey the rules unless you teach ethics. The education of moral values should be spreaded among every member i.e. including children, parents, teachers of the society. Our prime duty is to make an ideal man i.e. a man who possesses good character. I am trying to discuss this from some philosophical standpoints.

The Bhagavad Gita describes the qualities of an ideal man of steady wisdom. A person of steady wisdom completely controls his senses and concentrates his mind on God, who is the supreme end of his life. One who is devoid of firm faith in God can not have peace. Peace springs from desirelessness and perfect self control because desires are never quenched by gratification but always increased by it. Success in any undertaking becomes easier if one works hard without being bothered by the outcome. A person should work without selfish motive as a matter of duty for a greater cause of helping the humanity rather than just one self or few individuals. The welfare of the individual lies in the welfare of the society. The wise work for all of society, whereas the ignorant work only for themselves.

Dharma is that which holds or that which sustains. It is that properly in the presence of which man becomes a man and the absence of which man is not a man i.e. can not be called a man. When for example a man quarrels with another and uses abuse language, we say that he behaving like a dog. A man may be educated but if he fails to behave sympathetically with his fellow beings and deprives them their dues, we say that he is 'amanus', i.e. not possessing the qualities of man. A man is thus not born but made. It is not truly his physical appearance that characterizes him properly what he is. It is rather his achievements, his attainment that makes him a man proper. That is why, Swami Vivekananda exclaims "Man making is my mission". For 'man making' Swamiji emphasizes the role of 'character building'. When you build up your character, you not only become a man yourself but also become able to make another man. That is why Swamiji's clarion call: "Be and make". Sri Ramakrishna used to say: "mon mukh ek karai dharma" that is to say to do one thing and think another is not 'dharma'. To do the insightful vision of Sri Ramakrishna: "A man is one who is conscious of his own standard, his own ideal – man samparke hunch manus.

Let us now turn to the teachings of Sastras which a man sets before himself in order to become a man proper – his dharma. To the vision of our truth-seers the following five properties at least need to be cultivated in order that one attains dharma. These are:

ahimsa satyam asteyam saucam samyameva ca

etat samasikam proktam dharmasya panca laksamam

Ahimsa means absence of doing harm to any body always and everywhere. M.K. Gandhi gives a new orientation to the problems that face humanity today and offers a new solution. Buddhism and Jainism preached Ahimsa in India long ago. Hinduism inculcated Ahimsa for attainment of liberation. But they do not apply it to the social economic and political problems. Gandhiji was influenced by Tolstoy. Gandhiji also says Ahimsa is the means, truth is the end, Ahimsa is our supreme duty. Ahimsa is not merely a negative virtue of non-killing and non-injury, but a positive virtue of doing good to others. Ahimsa is supreme kindness and supreme self sacrifice. It is non violence in thought, word and deed. Ahimsa requires truthfulness and fearlessness. Life should be ruled by the law of truth regardless of consequences. "Non-violence and Truth are inseparable and presuppose each other". An ideal man will always try to overcome evil by good, anger by love, untruth by truth, himsa by ahimsa; we can win over the opponent only by love, never by hate. Non-violence is the weapon of the strongest and bravest. A violent man can become non-violent. But a coward can never become non-violent. Non-violence implies restraint upon one's desire for vengeance. Vengeance is weakness. Vengeance is better than helpless submission. But forgiveness is higher than vengeance. Without self purification the observation of the law of Ahimsa must remain an empty dream. Self purification must mean purification in all the walks of life. Purification of one self necessarily leads to the purification of one's surroundings. Every person should earn his bread, labour and reduce his wants to a minimum, respect every man, woman and all religions, exercise self-restraint in every sphere of life and live a simple life. He should perform his duties conscientiously without insisting on his rights and be ready to sacrifice himself for the service of humanity.

Buddha clearly enunciated the morality of Ahimsa. Parents should give proper intellectual and moral education to their children and children should support their parents. Pupils should honour their teachers and teachers should instruct their pupils in art, science etc and train them in virtue. All should cultivate liberality, courtesy, kindness and selflessness. Buddhism stresses right conduct, right concentration and right insight. All should meditate on love and friendship for all creatures, compassion for distressed creatures, joy for virtuous person and indifference to all vicious persons. These meditations are enjoyed by Jainism also. The Yoga and the Gita also inculcate the cultivation of these virtues.

Satya stands for agreement or parity between words and deeds. Even if the words correspond to reality and meaning but the intention of the speaker is otherwise, it to be taken as mithya or falsehood. Sri Ramakrishna used to say: to be uniform in mind and speech is dharma and this dharma is satya. M.K. Gandhi also used to say truth is God and God is truth. Satya is essential. The first lesson, imparted to a disciple by a teacher is Satyam Veda – Speak the truth. It is better to be reticent when speaking the truth may cause harm to somebody. In general, half truth and lies are to be given up once and for all. When one attains the stage of Satya, one becomes aryaarthavak i.e. what he says becomes inevitably true.

Next comes Asteya or non-stealing. Vidyasagar in his Varnaparichaya teaches us that taking away others property without information amounts to stealing. That teaching is meant for beginners no doubt. In Yoga philosophy it is stated that non-attachment to articles belongings to others, in mind, speech and deed is the essence of Asteya. The Sastrakaras point out that if debts are not paid back we are to be branded as thieves. We may think that we have not stolen anything from anybody; indeed we have earned ourselves. But the Sastrakaras point out that if you accumulate more than what you need, you will be considered as a thief. For you are not paying your debts to society. This is communism proper. It is not established by force

Sauca which is placed under niyama stands for purity both of body and mind. External purity of body can be had through bathing etc. Internal purification of mind can be obtained only through good thoughts, thoughts of well beings to others. This is why so much importance is attached to sadhu sanga in our scriptures. There is a proverb in English to this effect: A man is known by the company he keeps. Antara Sauca leads one to the intrinsic pleasure and bliss of mind resulting in the conquest of sense organs, mastery over them and concentration of mind.

By Samyama is usually meant to keep in control the power of different sense organs, specially the sex organs. In Manusamhita this known as Indriya nigraha. One who has mastered in the art of controlling one's passion like kama, krodha, lobha etc is to be regarded as one who has attained samyana.

It becomes perhaps clear by now that dharma which is to be achieved by all men in order to be considered as men proper is one and uniform. Being common for all mankind, this dharma is termed by Manu as sadharana dharma. Sadharana dharmas are to be considered as safeguards against communal egoism and intolerance. In other words sadharana dharma stands for universal code of conduct and provides a basis for humanitarianism. Thus dharma is the gradual unfoldment of one's humanity through the rigorous means of ahimsa, satya, asatya, sauca and samyama. This is not at all easy to achieve although it must be achieved in order that we may be regarded as truly human beings. Manusyatva (humanity) is one and uniform to every body irrespective of caste, creed and culture. Man is alone real. Nothing is above him. All are children of same mother. Chandidas, the famous Vaisnava poet exclaims: Savar upara manus satya, tahar upara nai. Leaned man without humanity is a more dangerous man than an ignorant one. So humanity is to be achieved first. The education which does not help elicit humanity is not education worth the name. If men earn wealth, gain education, acquire name and fame without attaining humanity then problems will aggravate. That is why Swamiji lays emphasis on character building. In order to reach the ultimate goal i.e. humanity he exclaimed: "Arise and awake and stop not till the goal is reached". Though David Hume refers to it in a different context, we may utilize it to suit our purpose by saying, "Be a philosopher, but amidst all your philosophy be still a man".

A note of caution here. Let us not think that the ideal of humanity is the only goal to be reached. There is still a higher destination which a man can reach and should reach by his sincere effort. As a matter of fact the lower goal is easily achievable if we set before us a higher goal. Just as if you want to Ph.D Degree, you must get a master degree which seems easier to get in that case.

Either as a teacher or as parents or a social being, our duty is to help a person to form good character. Development of a good character depends upon the following conditions:-

- i. development of intelligence and quickening of moral reason, which enable a person to have a clear conception of the moral end and a moral insight into his duties in concrete complex situations, unclouded by passion and prejudices, a clear knowledge of his station in society and his 'special duties' pertaining to that station.
- ii. Strength of will to control his instincts and impulses, emotions and passions and to resist temptations.
- iii. Steadfast and continuous habit of performing his duties.
- iv. Perseverance in pursuing the goal, brushing aside all hindrances and difficulties and for taking infinite pains until the goal is reached.
- v. Keeping good company and living in a congenial environment free from temptations and opportunities for indulging in moral lapses.
- vi. Forming, nursing and strengthening a sentiment of self regard to which all other sentiments are subordinated, because it is the master sentiment which forms the core of character.
- vii. Expressing noble thoughts in concrete actions in service to the society and making humble contributions to the progress of humanity.
- viii. conquering vices by cultivating the opposite virtue, for example hate by love, enmity by friendship, falsehood by truth, cruelty by non-violence, meanness by greatness.
- ix. Following the examples of prophets, saints, heroes who are beacon lights to the people of the world, who are the embodiments of all that is great, noble and sublime in human life.
- x. Fixing the mind on the noble, the sublime and the Holy and straining after the perfection of God and loving His meanest creature on earth.

IV. CONCLUSION

On the basis of above discussion, it may be mentioned that moral values entail having integrity convection a personal sense of what feels wrong or right. Students are the future of the country. The future of our country depends on the moral values imparted to them in their student life. Children always observe their parents at home and their teachers in schools / colleges. They are very sensitive. They fast copy their teachers. Teachers should always behave property and set an example. Values are guiding principles of behavior. Following M.K. Gandhi, it may be said that if character is lost, every thing is lost; best of all things is character. As character is necessary for individual, it is also necessary for a nation. A nation cannot make a progress if it has lost its character, thus, introduction of moral education from grass root level to university level is very necessary. Moral education is important as it teaches diversity, tolerance, mutual respect and pluralistic values; It should be an integral part of its school and college curriculum. "Moral education is an umbrella term for two quite different tasks and approaches. The first, which might better to be called moral socialization or training is the task of nurturing in children those virtues and values that make them good people. The second task of moral education is to provide students with the intellectual resources that enable them to make informed and responsible judgment about difficult matters of moral importance. A great responsibility devolves on the

teachers to remove the ill feelings of jealousy and hatred from the pupils' mind. They must teach the students to achieve their goals through hard work. The attitude of fairness and justice developed in childhood and teenage will lay the foundation of responsible citizen.

REFERENCES

1. P.K.Bakshi, The constitution of India,universal law ,Publishing co.
New Delhi
2. David Hume, An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding, with
an introduction by J.N.Mohanty.
3. S.K.Maitra, The Ethics of Hindus, Publication University of Calcutta.
4. Sankara's commentary on Bhagavad Gita.
5. William Lillie, An Introduction To Ethics, Allied Publishers
Private Limited.
6. Jadunath Sinha , A Manual Of Ethics, New Central Book Agency.
7. Sri Ma, Sri Ramakrishna – Kathamrta(Mohendra Nath Gupta).
8. Works Of Swami Vivekananda(Udbodhan Karyalaya).
9. Mahanambrata Bhrahmachari Manab – Dharma, Published
by Mahanambrata.
10. Dr. Tapan Kr. Chakroborty, Lights On Philosophy.
11. Ramprasad, The Bhagavad Gita, Motilal Banarasi Das Publishers Pvt.
Ltd., Delhi.
12. Srimad Hariharananda Aranya. Patanjala – Yogadarsana (Calcutta
University.
13. Raghavan N. Iyer, The Moral and Political Thought of Mahatma Gandhi,
Oxford University Press.
14. Prof. Ashokarnath Shastri, Manu Samhita, Modern Book Agency.
15. Swami Prajnananda, School of Indian Philosophical Thought, Firma K.L.
Mukhopadhyay.
16. K. Monohar Gupta, The Aryan Path of The Buddha, Sandeep Prakasana,
New Delhi.
17. Warren A. Norde and Charles C Haynes, taking religion seriously across the curriculum, ased, Virginia, USA