

VALUE EDUCATION AS A MEANS TO RESOLVE SOCIAL CRISIS

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Today the whole human generation in general and the young generation in particular are running through an acute crisis. Drug addiction, suicide, abortion, even murdering become a common phenomenon among the students. Some of the students are found to be successful in their academic fields. They are becoming either a great Doctor or a great Engineer, or an eminent Lawyer, or a well known Politician. They are becoming Giant but obviously the selfish Giant. Naturally the question arises:

What is missing in our present education system? In reply it is said that the missing element is nothing but the value education. If the answer is proper then the solution seems to be simple. If value education is incorporated to the present education system then the crisis prevailing in our society can easily be solved. But what is value education? Different definitions of value education have been given. But among them, I think, the definition offered by C. V. Good is worthy to note. He says- "Value- education is the aggregate of all the process by means of which a person develops abilities, attitudes and other forms of behavior of the positive values in the society in which he lives." Now let us see how value education helps in resolving the problems in question. I think the hint is available in our *Śāstras*. In our *Śāstras* it is said that *dharmeṇa hīnā paśubhī samānāḥ*.

It clearly implies that a man without *dharma* or morality or moral values is nothing but a beast. More or less the same sense has been reflected in the statement uttered by British philosopher John Stuart Mill. He said: "It is better to be a Socrates dissatisfied than to be a pig satisfied." So far as the demand of food, sleep and sexuality are concerned man is not different from animal like pig, cow, dog etc. A pig takes food whenever it is hungry. Likewise a man also takes food whenever he is hungry. A pig goes to sleep at night. A man also does the same. A pig satisfies its sexual pleasure. Similarly a man also fulfills his sexual urge. In what sense a man is different from and superior to an animal like pig and dog? But we claim ourselves to be superior to animal. Candidāsa, a Vaiṣṇava poet, beautifully says- "*śunahmānuṣ bhāi sabār upare mānuṣ satya tāhār upare nāi*." Our *Śāstra* says that the human beings are, "*amritasya putrā*," the son of the Immortal. The Bible says, "The kingdom of God is within." Vedānta states, *jīvo brahmaiva nā paraḥ*."

Swami Vivekananda categorically says- "*yatra jīva tatra śiva*," "*nara rūpe nārāyaṇā*." Rabindranath says, "*sīmār mājhe asīm tumi bājāo āpan sur āmār majhe tomār prakāśtāi eto madhur*." All these clearly imply that man is superior to other animals. But where does its superiority abide in? Again, I think this answer is also available in our *Śāstra*. Our *Śāstra* talks of four *puruṣārthas*: *kāma*, *artha*, *dharma* and *mokṣa*. Particularly in so far as the last two *puruṣārthas* are concerned man is different from animals. *Kāma* as a *puruṣārtha* is common both for man and animal. But *dharma* and *mokṣa* are the two specific *puruṣārthas* meant for the human beings

only. It is important to note that *dharma* and *mokṣa* are closely connected. *Mokṣa* is the ultimate goal of human life. But that *mokṣa* can be attained by means of *dharma*. So *dharma* is the means and *mokṣa* is the end. But *dharma* here stands for morality or moral values. An animal wants nothing more than the satisfaction of *kāma*. But man wants something more. Keeping this in view the Bible says- “Man cannot live by bread alone.”

Besides the *kāma*, the sensual pleasure, man wants bliss, pure *ānanda*. Unlike animal man gets pleasure from music, song, drawing etc. Considering all these Swamiji says- “Religion is as essential as our food and cloth.” Mobile is an optional item in our life. One may or may not use mobile. In fact a number of people of our country are found not to use mobile. But in this way food is not optional. If we are to live then we must take food. Similarly *dharma* or morality or moral value is not optional for human life. If we are to claim ourselves superior to beasts then we have no option other than following *dharma* or moral values. Moral codes i.e *vidhi-niṣedhas* make our life meaningful. We all know that punctuation marks make a sentence meaningful. If one utters a sentence without giving proper pause as per the rules of punctuation marks the sentence becomes meaningless. In the like manner if one leads one’s life violating the *vidhi-niṣedhas* imposed by *Śāstras* his life is bound to be meaningless.

According to *Śrīmad- Bhagvad- Gītā*, two types of properties (*sampad*)- *dvaiva* and *āsurī*, remain potentially hidden in a man. The same truth is reflected in the famous saying- “*ke bole svarga narak ācche bahu dūr mānuṣer mājhe svarga narak mānuṣete Surāsūra.*” A baby is something like a lump of clay. The statue of both the *sura* and *asura* remain potentially hidden in one and the same lump of clay. Consequently, at the time of *Durgapūjā* the dolls of both of *sūra* i.e *Durgā* and *āsura* i.e. *Mahiṣāsura* are made out of the same lump of clay. Likewise, the potentiality of being a *sādhu* or a thief, the potentiality of being Buddha or Hitler is already hidden in a baby. But whether the baby will be *sādhu* or a thief, Buddha or Hitler it depends upon what type of property i.e. either *āsurī* or *daivī* be actualized or manifested. If the former one is manifested then the baby will turn into a thief or Hitler but if it is otherwise then he will turn into a *sādhu* or Buddha. But again what type of property of the baby will be manifested purely depends upon what type of education be

imparted to the baby, in what type of socio-cultural atmosphere the baby be brought up. If the baby is brought up among the *sādhus* then there is maximum possibility that the baby will turn into a *sādhu*. If, on the other hand, the same baby is brought up among the thieves then there is maximum possibility that the baby will turn into a thief. It is important to note that here the terms ‘maximum possibility’ instead of the terms ‘every possibility’ have been used keeping in view that there are exceptional cases. Prahallada, for example, was brought up in a *asura family* in spite of that he became a renounced *bhakta*. But there are some reasons behind it of course. Here we have no scope to discuss these reasons. Moral education is like a touchstone.

We know that whatever comes in contact with the touchstone it turns into gold. In the same way whoever comes in contact with the moral education and spiritual atmosphere he positively turns into a *sādhu*. In this context the definition of education offered by Swami Vivekananda is worthy to note. Swamiji says: “Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man.” Here Swamiji by education means the moral or value education. Now let us analyze the definition. We know that only God is perfect. So the implication of the definition is that man is a potential God. More clearly to say the infinite Divine property is already hidden in a man. Education proper makes that potentiality into an actuality. In another word, education i.e. moral or value education leads to turn a man, a potential God, into an actual God. So, according to Swamiji, if value education is properly imparted to all youths from the very childhood then all of them excluding the exceptional ones will turn into God and our society will become a heaven.

On the basis of the discussion so far it can be said that we are God in two different senses, in the implicit sense and in the explicit sense. In the implicit sense a man is God in the same sense in which a matchstick is fire. All the potentially of being fire is already there in the match-stick. But it does not mean that it will necessarily turn into fire. It will turn into fire when it comes in friction with the matches-box. Similarly, though man is potentially God, it does not mean that he will necessarily turn into actual God. He will turn into actual God when he will come in contact with moral or spiritual or value education. When the match-stick turns into fire then all its fiery properties reveal. In the same manner when a man turns into an actual God then all its godly properties i.e. infinite knowledge, infinite love, infinite

power will be manifested. But it is important to note that transforming a man, a potential God, into an actual God is not an easy task. It can be done only when moral or spiritual education will be strictly implemented. For this three steps, as it is suggested by our *Śāstra- śravaṇa, manana and nididhyāsana* are to be strictly followed.

Let us see how through moral or value education the present crisis prevailing in our society can be resolved. It is already pointed out that drug- addiction, suicide, psycho-problems etc., are nothing but the result of the lack of self confidence. One becomes the sufferer of all these problems when he does not see any light of hope in his life. He thinks that he is incapable of doing anything positive. So his life is meaningless. Now if one realizes that he himself is God, he is bound to regain his self-confidence. He discovers his hidden potential godly infinite properties. He comes to know that like God he himself is infinite in power, knowledge, in a word, in all respects. Consequently, he can do anything he likes.

Thus the problems mentioned above will easily be solved. Keeping this in mind Swamiji says- “First believe in yourself and then in God.” It is something like a man who knows that he is as good as a beggar. He has neither any bank balance nor any other property nor any service, nothing else. So it is meaningless to live any more. In this situation he takes the decision of committing suicide. Now suddenly someone informs him that his great father willed him one hundred acres of land the market value of which is several crores of rupees of which he was purely ignorant. Quite naturally, he regains his hope of living. More or less the same is true in this case also. Potentially we all are God. All godly properties are already there in us in the hidden form of which we are purely ignorant. So we consider ourselves to be bankrupt. We cannot find out any hope to live longer. In this situation our *Śāstra* informs us that we are not bankrupt at all, we are king, and we are God. And we regain our hope, our self-confidence and the problems are solved.

Murdering, rapping, cheating etc. are also some of the leading problems of our society today which can again be solved by moral or spiritual education. One murders or rapes or cheats others simply because he considers others as means instead of end. He ignores the dignity of others. But if he comes to know that each

and every one is God then the very question of his ignoring others and considering others as means does not arise at all. Thus these problems are also solved. Our *Śāstra* teaches us that God lives not only in the human beings but also in the whole world. Everything is pervaded by God. God lives everywhere and in everything. *Upaniṣad* says- “*īśāvāsyam idaṁ sarvaṁ yat kiñca jagatyāṁ jagat.*”¹ The *Caitanya Caritāmṛta* says- “*Kṛṣṇa ek sarvāśray Kṛṣṇa ek dhām. Kṛṣṇer śarīre sav viśver biśrām.*” Vedānta says- “*Sarvam khalvidam Brahma.*” So if one is properly taught by our *Śāstra* then he will learn to respect not only the human beings but also the whole world, living as well as non- living. Thus moral or spiritual or value education leads to solve the social and the environmental problems as well.

Once Yakṣa asks Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira: Which one is the right path (*Kah Panthāh*)? In reply Yudhiṣṭhira says- “*Mahājano yena gatah sah panthāh.*”² The *pāth* followed by *Mahājana* is considered to be right path. Today our society is running through a great crisis simply because the people of our society do not bother to follow the *pāth* of *Mahājana* (the great man). In this context it is said,

“*Dvādaśaite vijānima dharmam bhāgvatambhatāh/
Guhyaṁ viśuddhyaṁ durvodhaṁ yaṁ jñatvāmṛtamaśnute.*”³
“*uttiṣṭhata, jāgrata, prāpyabarānnibadhata. Kṣurasya dhārā niśitāduratayayā.
Durgampathastat kavyo vadanti.*”⁴

Keep yourself away from worldly objects of all types; try to manifest your real nature leaving all harmful things. Try to know God, the ultimate reality being graced by the great men, the seers of truth. The world, the razors edge can be overcome through knowledge of God only. *Dvau bhūtasagau loke ’smin dvaivāsura Viṣṇubhaktah daivāsuraṣṭadviparyayah.*⁵ In this world creation is of two types- *daiva* and *āsura*. The devotees of Viṣṇu are called *daiva* and those who are of opposite nature are known as *āsura*.

In our society selfishness is one of the most fatal diseases which create numerous problems. Today we are becoming so self-centered that we have no room for others. One neighbor does not know to stand by other neighbors in their ill days. Even it has become a common phenomenon that we keep aside our own brothers, sisters and even our parents from our family. Some parents become destitute to meet

the expense of the study of their sons/daughters. But when the sons get service even of high salary, they do not bother to carry out even the minimum expense for their old parents. It is moral or value education that teaches our society the lesson of disinterested action (*niṣkāma karma*). The present education system imparts lesson to our society to be self-centered where there is no room for others. But value education teaches us to sacrifice for others where there is no room for self, the agent, and the ego. For example, in the *Gītā* Kṛṣṇa teaches Arjuna to perform *niṣkāma Karma* (selfless activity). In fact Arjuna in the *Śrīmad- Bhagavad- Gītā* is the representative of our whole society. So, through the teaching of *niṣkāma karma* to Arjuna Kṛṣṇa teaches the same to the whole society. The same lesson is taught to our society by *Upaniṣad* when it is said- “*tena tyaktena bhūñjīthā mā gṛdhah kasyasviddhanam*”.⁶

The *Upaniṣad* teaches us to enjoy through sacrifices like a mother. A mother becomes happy and gets pleasure through sacrifice for her children. Swami Vivekananda was inspired by this teaching and he sacrificed his whole life for the wellbeing of the whole society. If proper moral and value education is implemented in our society then thousands of Vivekananda and Buddha can be made and thereby our society can be turned into heaven from hell. Some classic example of *niṣkāma karma* can be cited to make our point clear. Nārada once became egoistic and considered himself to be greatest devotee (*Bhakta*) in the universe. No devotee can be compared with him. He was always engaged with chanting the *nāma* of Nārāyaṇa, the God. The God, the *antaryāmin*, who can read the mind of others, came to know this. In order to give the proper lesson to Nārada one day God pretended to have His unbearable headache. On that day Nārada went to God like other days and saw that God was suffering from His headache. He asked God, what I can do for you. He said further-” I am your *dāsa* (servant), my whole life is meant for you, there is nothing that I cannot do for you, I can sacrifice even my life for you”. In reply God said, “You have to do a very simple thing, just touch the dust of your leg on my head and nothing else”. Listening to this Nārada immediately thought that if he does the same then as a necessary consequence he has to go to hell. Thinking this Nārada denied to do the same. He added that no devotee would agree to do it. Then God advised Nārada to go to Brindāvana. Nārada went to Brindavana and informed to the *gopies* about the headache of God and also about the remedy of the same. The *gopies* of

Brindavana immediately agreed to give the dust of their legs without any hesitation. Nārada became surprised. Initially he thought that *gopies* were fully ignorant about the consequence of the activity they want to do. So, he asked them whether they knew about the consequence of their activity and came to know that they were quite conscious about the consequence of their act. The *gopies* said- ‘we think nothing about ourselves, our lives are meant for God only.’ This clearly implies that in the spiritual world there is no room for self or ego which is at the root of all types of social problems.

References:

1. *Īsopaniṣad-1*
2. *Mahābhārata Banparva*
3. *Bhāgavata 6/3/20-21*
4. *Kathaponiṣad, 2/3/14*
5. *Padmapurāṇa*
6. *Īsopaniṣad-1*