

Value education- The gateway of knowledge and eternal peace

Dr. Mitali Panda

Principal, El-Bethel College, Rasapunja, Bakrahat Road, Kolkata, West-Bengal.

Abstract

Today, everybody is in search of peace and happiness. Values are the guiding principles of life which are conducive to all round development. In inculcating values, all human faculties such as head, heart and hand should play a role. Value education covers the entire domains of learning, the cognitive, affective and psychomotor. They give direction and firmness to life and bring joy, satisfaction and peace to life. The higher virtue is to preach peace. This is the secret of morality, ethics, humanity, and civility. Peace is the process of progress and prosperity. Through inner peace, genuine world peace can be achieved. The importance of individual responsibility is quite clear; an atmosphere of peace must first be created within ourselves, then gradually expanded to include our families, our communities, and ultimately the whole planet.

“Dharma” (Righteousness) is considered to be the foundation of human world and is an instrument of regulating life for right conduct or right action. It includes values like control of senses, charity, honesty, love, non-injury, self-restraint etc. In order to develop genuine peace we must implement the five basic principles such as ahimsa (non-violence), Satya (Truth), Asteya (non-stealing), brahmacharya (Purity) and Aparigraha (Renunciation) to follow the noble eight-fold path includes right speech, right action, right livelihood, right concentration, right intention and right view.

Keywords: Value education, eternal peace, principles of life, secret of morality

Introduction

“Education is the panacea to all evils,” said Swami Vivekananda. Education denotes the methods by which a society hands down from one generation to the next its knowledge, culture and values. Education is the one and only instrument through which humanity has survived in living and progressing and will be existing. Education itself makes a man great. In Sanskrit they say “Vidya Dadati Vinayam”: educated people become egoless, self confident, broad minded and dedicated.

In recent years it is being increasingly realized that the traditional Indian culture is undergoing considerable transformation under the impact of Western education, Urbanization and Industrialization which constitute the broad process of Modernization. In general, there is a widespread feeling that the basic value system regulating the norms of social life has changed or is changing. In particular, increase in violence, corruption, indiscipline and social tension etc. has become part of the contemporary reality experienced in everyday life of the people. In 69th years of independence India has achieved tremendous progress. But at the same time, “Human problems”, “Man made problems”, “Human created problems” highlight decline of human values. Value-particularly spiritual-provide a bridge between the individual and society.

Value literally means something that has a price, something precious, dear and worthwhile; hence something is ready to suffer and sacrifice for. In other words, value is a set of principles or standards of behaviour. Values are the guiding principles of life which are conducive to all round development. They give direction and firmness to life and bring joy, satisfaction and peace to life. Values are like the rails that keep a train on the track and help it move smoothly, quickly and with direction. They bring quality to life. A life

without proper values will become chaotic and disastrous. It will be a boat without rudder. To guide our life in the right path and to embellish our behaviour with good qualities, we need values. Any human activity, thoughts or ideas, feelings, sentiments or emotions that could promote self-development of the individual in all its dimensions could be said to constitute a value. Mahatma Gandhi considers values as an inseparable component in the full flowering of development of personality. Value-particularly spiritual-provide a bridge between the individual and society. They are the norms and standards of behaviour that enable the individual to lead his life in society in such a way that a harmonious development of both his self and society is achieved thereby.

Our values, especially those which are universal and eternal, give us wisdom to look into our own selves as also to things external to us. They tell us that in each one of us there is a lower self and also a higher self and that we are obliged by our higher calling to make a movement from the lower to the higher by making continuous efforts in life in such direction.

Moral values: Moral values refer to those values which are related to an individual’s character and personality confirming to what is right and virtuous. They reveal a person’s self-control. Examples: honesty, integrity, sense of responsibility, compassion etc.

Spiritual Values: We define ethical value as the perception of the ‘within’ in man, it arises from the inner depth dimension of man; it bestows the capacity to see the false as the false and the true as the true; it is the key to the integration of the man. The ultimate ethical value is called spiritual value. Spiritual value is the awareness itself. Virtues that are associated with the spiritual values purity, contentment, austerity, scriptural study, devotion to God, spiritual wisdom, dispassion, self-discipline,

control of the senses, endurance, piety, sublimity, yapa, meditation, tranquility, etc.

Universal values: It is universal values that indicate the essence of the human condition. It is through universal values that we link ourselves with humanity and the cosmos, it is through these that all barriers of time, place and ethnicity are eliminated. These values are not manifest. They must be experienced, as one experiences a sunrise, the beauty of a flower, as one experiences joy, pleasure, bliss, awe, serenity. These values cannot be contained by words. That the Upanishads and the Bible have remained relevant today as they were centuries ago, tells us that at the core, there are some constants in human condition that time has not changed. That we are still moved by the wonder of the Taj Mahal, the music of Mozart, the life of Hamlet, the perennial philosophy of the Bhagavad Gita speaks volumes about the mystery and timelessness of universal values.

Individual values: Individual values are our private principles, the result of individual personality and individual experiences. Parents, teachers and one's peer group shape individual values. Individual values are reflected in individual goals, vows, relationships, commitments and personal preferences. These are often colored by memories of the past and therefore there are differences in the meaning attributed to a common experience. To one person children denote happiness and strength, to another they may denote bondage.

Individual values are malleable, often contained in a time and memory warp. They can transform themselves into universal values when you practice awareness and living in the moment. Universal values can be experienced as life, joy, brotherhood, love, compassion, service, bliss, truth and eternity.

Beyond our ego (sense of self) and identity (sense of belonging to a group) that dictates what we know, think, feel and how we act lies the universal identity. Dissonance between ego and identity can create anxiety and alienation but acting upon universal values will not, for here it is authentic action emanating from an authentic Self. Universal values are at the top of the list. The others have their place but it is through universal values that we experience a sense of oneness with the human race.

Universal values must be our foundation if we are to enjoy a rich, profound and fulfilling life. Our personal and cultural biases limit and distort our perception of the universal wonder that is life. Even as the hands of a clock are powered from the center that remains ever still, so the universal values remain ever at the center of human life, no matter where the hands of time are pointing-past, present or future.

Indian view of values: Philosophy to the ancient Indians was not just a means of satisfying intellectual doubt (Samsaya), but more a practical endeavour that showed one the way to attain spiritual liberation (Moksha), the summum bonum of life. Although there are four supreme ends of life (Purusharthas)-economic well-being (Artha), physical well-being (Kama), righteous action (Dharma) and spiritual freedom (Moksha) – the secular values of artha and kama rank inferior in status in the Indian hierarchy of values, to the spiritual values of dharma and moksha. Even among the latter, moksha is higher than dharma. In fact, it is the highest end of human life, it being freedom from the very notions of right and wrong and good and bad. According to the sage Yagnabalkya, as a moral value

'dharma' signifies the cultivation of the virtues of non-injury, sincerity, honesty, cleanliness, control of the senses, charity, self-restraint, love and forbearance.

"Dharma" (Righteousness) is considered to be the foundation of human world and is an instrument of regulating life for right conduct or right action. It includes values like control of senses, charity, honesty, love, non-injury, self-restraint etc. Dharma' is that which holds together, that which unites, that which integrates. Love is the basis of this unity and peace is its fruit. Thus dharma is an integral concept implying "Love-Unity – Peace". *Worship, study and helping the needy ones* constitute the foundation of *dharma, truth, non-violence*. Dharma refers to the ability to distinguish between *truth and non-truth*. It leads to progress, victory and self-confidence. Dharma has given the status of mother, father, brother and friend. *Non-violence* is believed to be the greatest dharma, which brings *happiness, prosperity and longevity* in one's life.

Peace: *'Peace can not be kept by force. It can only be achieved by understanding.'* - Einstein.

What is peace? Peace is energy, a qualitative energy which emanates constantly from the one imperishable source. It is a pure force that penetrates the shell of chaos, and by its very nature automatically puts things and people into balanced order. The self is a reservoir of vital resources, one of which is peace. To recognize the original quality of the human soul as peace is to stop searching outside for peace. Through connection with the one eternal and unlimited source of peace, our own reservoirs overflow with silent strength. In its purest form, peace is inner silence filled with the power of truth.

The higher virtue is to preach peace. This is the secret of morality, ethics, humanity, and civility. Peace is the process of progress and prosperity. Inner peace (or peace of mind) refers to a state of being mentally and spiritually at peace with enough knowledge and understanding to keep oneself strong in the face of discord or stress. Being "at peace" considered by many to be healthy (homeostasis) and the opposite of being stressed or anxious. Peace of mind is generally associated with bliss and happiness. Peace of mind, serenity, and calmness are descriptions of a disposition free from the effects of stress. The power of positive thinking when combined with the power of positive deeds creates positive results and happiness (Enlightenment). On the contrary, negative thoughts combined with negative deeds tend to be a very destructive force and leads to misery, pain and suffering (See Buddha & Dalai Lama in "Ancient Insights").

- There are many ways to promote peace in the world but perhaps the best way is to promote it within ourselves. Peace is gradual and wonderful event that occurs because compassionate people are inspired to help others discover the joy of peace.
- Helping others also has the direct effect of increasing our personal peace and well-being, but this is merely one of the many bonuses that come from sharing our kindness with our fellow human beings.
- In some cultures, inner peace is considered a state of consciousness or enlightenment that may be cultivated by various forms of training, such as prayer, meditation, T'ai Chi Ch'uan or yoga, for example. Many spiritual practices refer to this peace as an experience of knowing oneself. Finding inner peace is often associated with traditions such as Buddhism and Hinduism.

- Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th Dalai Lama, emphasizes the importance of inner peace in the world: "The question of real, lasting world peace concerns human beings, so basic human feelings are also at its roots. Through inner peace, genuine world peace can be achieved. In this the importance of individual responsibility is quite clear; an atmosphere of peace must first be created within ourselves, then gradually expanded to include our families, our communities, and ultimately the whole planet."
- Peace like reading, writing, mathematics, drawing, emotional intelligence and enlightenment ("understanding/comprehension/ compassion/ meditation/ intuition"), are learned skills that improve our knowledge, maturity, health, happiness and longevity. Peace is probably the most important lesson we should learn during our lives, and the sooner the better. Through knowledge peace will evolve. Knowledge is power. Knowledge combined with enlightenment leads to wisdom. Wisdom is peace.

Be the change you wish to see in the word Peace starts from within. A change in perception leads to change in attitude, which leads to change in behaviour, which leads to a change in the world. Life's what you make it.

Indian values and Peace: Ashoka was the first emperor in human history who has taught the lesson of unity, peace, equality and love. He was the true devotee of non-violence, peace and love. He defined the main principles of dharma (dhamma) as non-violence, tolerance of all sects and opinions, obedience to parents, respect for the Brahmins and other religious teachers and priests, liberality towards friends, humane treatment of servants, and generosity towards all. According to Ashoka, to harm in another's religion is a harm to someone's own religion. Ashoka asserted his people to live with Dharmacharana. Ashoka asked people to live with harmony, peace, love and tolerance. Ashoka called his people as his children, and they could call him when they need him. Ashoka also believed in Dharmacharana (dhammacharana) and Dharmavijaya (dhammavijaya).

The Ashoka Chakra is a depiction of the dharmachakra or chakra of wheel. The flag of India with three colours, Saffron, white and green with Ashoka Chakra has described its significance as follows. Bhagwa or the Saffron colour denotes renunciation or disinterestedness. The White in the center is light, the path of truth to guide our conduct. The green shows our relation to (the) soil, our relation to the plant life here, on which all other life depends. The "Ashoka Chakra" in the center of the white is the wheel of the law of Dharma. Truth or satya, dharma or virtue ought to be the controlling principle of those who work under this flag. Again, the wheel denotes motion. There is death in stagnation. There is life in movement. The wheel represent the dynamism of a peaceful change. It also represents 24 hours in a day. A widely held unofficial interpretation is that the saffron stands for purity and spirituality, white for peace and truth, green for fertility and prosperity and the wheel for justice/ righteousness.

There is no gift like the gift of the Dhamma, (no acquaintance like) acquaintance with Dhamma, (no distribution like) distribution of Dhamma, and (no kinship like) kinship through Dhamma. And it consists of this: proper behaviour towards

servants, and employees, respect for mother and father, generosity of friends, companions and relations, Brahmins and ascetics and not killing living beings.

Inculcation of values: Decline in moral values is a global phenomenon. The neglect of purity and morality in the means adopted inevitably leads to further fall in moral inhibitions. Moral and ethical values are inextricably linked with purity. Humanistic values upheld by an individual are a combination of moral, ethical, and spiritual qualities acquired.

We have become selfish, weak especially in the moral sphere, hence the scams and scandals, even in high places. Swamiji's logic eyes saw the hidden divinity in man and visualized that a selfish man, a person living for himself, coming in contact with education becoming a good man. That means education should help to manifest the divine qualities in man. And for that, we can remember Swamiji's word, "Be strong men in the real sense of term. Seek man-making religion, man-making ideas and man-making education all round. And here is the test of truth-it is strengthening, invigorating, purifying and enlightening".

Today we are trying to keep the world peaceful & undisturbed. We are trying to drive away intolerance and promote understanding and education. India always believes in the unity of life and harmony of religions. The main concern of Indian philosophy is "Sarvajana Sukhino Bhavantu" (happiness for all man-kind). And the philosophy of Vedas is that "Justice should be done to all creatures and we should live in peace and harmony". It is this spirit of the oneness of all life and of the harmony of all religions that we can see in the life and teachings of saints and sages. From the time immemorial our great philosopher and prophet had been preaching us about the true education and the value of education that also lead us to the gateway of knowledge and eternal peace.

Value education

"Education without vision is waste; education without value is crime; education without mission is life burden".

Value education means inculcating in the children a sense of humanism, a deep concern for the well - being of others and the nation. This can be accomplished only when we instill in the children a deep feeling of commitment to values that would build this country and bring back to the people pride in work that brings order, security, and assured progress. This can be accomplished only when we instill in the children a deep feeling of commitment to values that would build this country and bring back to the people pride in work that brings order, security and assured progress. Value education has the capacity to transform a diseased mind into a very young, fresh, innocent, healthy, natural, and attentive mind. The transformed mind is capable of higher sensitivity and a heightened level of perception. This leads to fulfillment of the evolutionary role in man and in life. Value education in all its comprehensiveness involves developing sensitivity to values, an ability to choose the right values, internalizing them, realizing them in one's life and living in accordance with them. In inculcating values, all human faculties such as head, heart and hand should play a role. Thus value education covers the entire domains of learning, the cognitive, affective and psychomotor.

Value education in ancient India: As *Dharma* was the universal guiding force in attaining self-perfection and social harmony, ancient Indian education was mostly value based and

aimed to cultivate virtues like non-violence, sincerity, honesty etc., in the form of ulterior values-truth, beauty and goodness (Satyam, Sivam, Sundaram). The ultimate purpose and aim of education in ancient India was self-realization and divine perfection.

In the past, with the help of strict discipline, child was trained to control his desire to gain knowledge and acquire skills required for self-perfection. The child was initiated into education through a ritual called as 'Upanayanam', considered to be borne afresh to discharge the duties of brahmacharya in order to attain self-perfection and knowledge.

The relationship between teacher and taught was spiritual and divine. With the help of this close spiritual relationship between teacher and taught, child acquired and imbibed knowledge, efficiency and way of living of teacher. In ancient system of education, teacher was an exemplary model to students for imbibing noble values. Imparting knowledge and inculcating values was considered by ancient teacher as a social responsibility. The method of education involved three steps of sravana (listening), manana (deliberation), and nididhyasana (meditation).

The importance of Value Education

Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man. Education is not the amount of information that is put into your brain and runs riot there, undigested all your life. We must have life-building, man-making, character-making, assimilation of ideas. If you have assimilated five ideas and made them your life and character, you have more education than any man who has got by heart a whole library. – Swami Vivekananda Swami Vivekananda said "Each Soul is potentially divine. The goal (of human life) is to manifest this divinity within". This divinity within, the Self, is the source of all perfection, power, bliss and glory. The purpose of our Value Education programmes will therefore be to help people become aware of their innate divinity and how to make its perfection and happiness manifest in every movement of life. The idea is to set in motion a machinery, which will bring noble ideas to the door of everybody. It is hoped that by motivating the youth for introspection and self-analysis and through meditation and prayer, the desired results would be achieved. Keeping good company, reading good books and cherishing high ideals a person can mould his thoughts and thereby his character and destiny. Vivekananda had stressed the need for man-making, character-building education, whereby the beneficiary would be made a good citizen. He or she would be able to raise above all distinction and differences and would possess the spirit of *Tyaga* (sacrifice) and *Seva* (service).

In the following words of *Radhakrishnan*: *We must develop the freshness of feeling for nature, the sensitiveness of soul to human need. We must foster the freedom of the mind, the humanity of the heart, the integrity of the individual. Even from the nurseries, we must train human beings by unconscious influence and conscious effort to love truth, beauty and goodness.*

Education is a methodical effort towards learning basic facts about humanity. And the core idea behind value education is to cultivate essential values in the students so that the civilization that teaches us to manage complexities can be sustained and further developed. It begins at home and it is continued in schools. Everyone accepts certain things in his/her life through various mediums like society or government. Value education is important to help everyone in improving the value system

that he/she holds and put them to use. Once, we understand our values in life, we can examine and control the various choices we make in our lives. It's our duty to uphold the various types of values in life such as cultural values, universal values, personal values and social values. Value education is always essential to shape a student's life and to give him an opportunity of performing himself on the global stage. The need for value education among the parents, children, teachers etc, is constantly increasing as we continue to witness increasing violent activities, behavioral disorder and lack of unity in society.

The 1986 National Policy on Education on value education: Truth, peace, non-violence, righteous conduct and love as core values, it said, could become the foundation of value-based education programme. Recommendations on values and religion contained in the 81st report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Human Resources Development on Value-based Education headed by Shri S. B. Chavan say: Truth (Satya), Righteous conduct (Dharma), Peace (Shanti), Love (Prema) and Non-violence (Ahimsa) are the core universal values which can be identified as the foundation-stone on which the value-based education programme can be built up. These five are indeed universal values and respectively represent the five domains of human personality: intellectual, physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual. They also are correspondingly co-related with the five major objectives of education, namely knowledge, skill, balance, vision and identity.

Value education in search of peace

Today, everybody is in search of peace and happiness. The modern man is in search of peace and happiness. Rich, or poor, old and young, everybody is under stress and everybody is in search of peace and happiness. The family system in India has a long tradition of imparting value education right from the ancient practice of the Gurukul system. But with modern developments and a fast changing role of the parents, it has not been very easy for the parents to impart relevant values in their wards. Therefore many institutes today conduct various value education programs that meet the rising needs of modern society with respect to code of conduct and values. These activities concentrate on the development of the children, young adults etc. focusing on areas like happiness, humility, cooperation, honesty, simplicity, love, unity, peace etc.

How can we achieve Peace on Earth? First and utmost, we must find it within ourselves. By sharing our inner peace with others, peace will spread. By raising our children properly and teaching them to respect and love their neighbors (didn't someone say this before? :) they will learn the joy of peace. The peace process should be a predominantly preventative measure (A gram of prevention is worth a kilogram of cure). Peace should likely start as a grassroots movement, thereby creating a "trickle-up" process. Not only can we teach others about peace but we can suggest alternatives to governments and political candidates that continue to advocate war as the main solution to civil and international conflict. Along the way, some form of world "Planning and Lawmaking" committee probably needs to be established that includes all nations. One nation's problems are problems for all of us. We must learn to see ourselves as one small planet and not be so concerned with our nationality, race or religion. When it comes right down to it we are all human, and we should work together for human rights and justice for all. Shouldn't we? Think what we could

accomplish if we all worked together to create a true world economy. We could end starvation, reduce poverty, create jobs and work towards common goals such as worldwide justice, peace education, pollution control and planet management.

Finding peace is not just about learning how to obtain it, but also learning how to hold onto it without slipping back to angry ways. If we want to achieve Peace, should not talk only to our friends, talk to our enemies. The specific objectives of value education for peace are: training of enlightened leaders, educating the youth to be responsive citizens, who care for the welfare of humanity in the years ahead and make education for social transformation and nation building. It is a hope that the humanity will be rebuilt when the students who sit in the classrooms today will take up responsible positions in their homes, community, government offices and other fields. They will be agents of peace and builders of a universal family. Then there will be peace in the society. If a family has friendly relations with neighbours then that family will be happier, more successful, less fearful and less jealous. In order to build a happy society, happy family & happy community, peace is very essential.

Today we require better citizen, citizens with understanding, relative citizens and spiritual citizens and in transformation of better citizens, value education could contribute. Our vision and values need to be rooted in and inspired by a Dharmic world view. Our education system has to be promoting such a holistic vision. The Dharma asks everyone to probe into the mystery of education, to enquire as to where do we come, and where do we go. Education is not the only sector that can take total responsibility, but it certainly has to accept the major share of it. The realization that violence must be checked by all means seems to have dawned upon educational policymakers globally. We are often coming across the term 'peace education' used by the international agencies. This could be done one of the alternatives. Preparing children to internalize the strength of non-violence is now on the agenda of schools and institutions of higher learning globally. Thus the right direction, for education for non-violence has to become an integral part of the process of teaching, training and learning. Universities, social and religious organizations, political parties, organizations promoting sports, the corporate sector and all others must accept responsibility in this matter. None can internalize the value of non-violence without having accepted. Truth, peace, and love as essential ingredients of a non-violent approach and behaviour. Obviously, such an individual all automatically adopt the path of 'righteous conduct'. And that is 'Dharma', common to all faiths and civilizations. It has the strength of unite and assimilate all types of divisive forces. Only those who imbibe moral values can be Dharmic and role models.

The National Curriculum Framework for School Education-2014 of NCERT has strongly recommended values to be developed in an integrated way. As per this framework, schools have to develop in students qualities like creativity, democratic attitude and environment sensitivity. These values are embedded in school subjects also. As such it has been recommended that value education may be developed through school subjects and all other activities. Since values such as non-violence, fearlessness, compassion, tolerance, courage cooperativeness and friendliness are also embedded in different religions; a thoughtful awareness of the basis of all religions will help students to imbibe those values.

- whatever be the level of expectation, if value education is to be emphasized in earnest, schools will have to undertake the following actions:
- Development of suitable literature in the form of child-friendly materials like comics, charts, slogans, etc.
- Compilation of short stories, which have strong value components;
- Development of literature for teachers;
- Organizing specific in-service courses on value education for teachers, headmasters, supervisory staff and parents;
- Inclusion of value education in pre-service courses, i.e. in foundation courses;
- Design and development of posters for promoting value education and arranging school and district competitions;
- Design and development of exhibition on value education;
- Design and development of dramatic activities on value education;
- Development of audio and video programmes, both for teachers and students;
- Networking institutions for capacity building;
- Others that may be locally accessible and relevant.

There has to be a well-planned consistent effort to support education of human values right from the primary level to the secondary level to higher education. It would be a fruitful exercise if educational institutions make consistent efforts to promote social, moral, aesthetical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual values. To leave the learner to imbibe values by trial and error method would be disastrous. Needless to say that a teacher has to be competent in his/her discipline pedagogy, and he/she must be capable of managing classrooms and ensuring good quality learning. Commitment to the learner, to the profession, to society and to excellence is only possible when the teacher is committed to values.

A comprehensive programme of parental education is very much necessary because, in nuclear families today, parents are over possessive and over concerned. They pamper their children even when certain remedial corrective actions are called for. There are parents who are not able to do justice to their responsibilities towards the child because of their over involvement in the profession and consequent lack of time that could be spent with the children. Many of them may not be familiar with the ways and means to deal with the children and be supportive in their growth. Parental expectations also sometimes become a great stress on their children. There are parents who like to fulfill their goals of life through their children. This destroys the child's own interests who either neglect education or starts behaving in unexpected ways.

Conclusion

In order to develop genuine peace we must implement the five basic principles such as ahimsa (non-violence), Satya (Truth), Asteya (non-stealing), brahmacharya (Purity) and Aparigraha (Renunciation) to follow the noble eight-fold path includes right speech, right action, right livelihood, right concentration, right intention and right view. We must practice Peace and Ahimsa to face the problems of life. Such ethical concepts should be instituted in modern mind through proper education which could make everyone work together and live together.

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