

## SSIO LEADERSHIP SERIES- MODULE 9- EDUCATION

#1- Opening Slide.

Module 9 addresses two important subjects: **Devotion** and **Education**

Slide 2

The slide gives us the general outline of the module- The true meaning of devotion; the devotion wing; the true meaning of education; and the education wing. In both instances we need to pay careful attention to the word true.

What is education really and truly? Is it what we think it is?

#13. We will be focusing on the *true* meaning of education. The slides on the *true* meaning of education focus on some key words and quotes from The Founder Himself on the subject of education. There's no better way for finding out the meaning of *true* education. The Founder is Sri Sathya Sai Baba (1926-2011), one of the world's foremost educators. Let The Founder tell us. Let The Founder be our guide. I will be sharing additional information on what the Founder says about education to enable us to understand the *true* meaning of education.

Slide 14

"Education has two aspects: The first is related to external and worldly education, which is nothing but acquiring bookish knowledge. In the modern world, we find many, well-versed and highly qualified in this aspect. The second aspect known as 'EDUCÆRE' is related to human values. The word 'EDUCÆRE' means to bring out that which is within. The five human values, namely, Truth, Righteousness, Peace, Love and Non.....-violence ... are latent in every human being. One cannot acquire them from outside; they have to be elicited from within. But as man has forgotten his innate human values, he is unable to manifest them. 'EDUCÆRE' means to bring out human values. 'To bring out' means to translate them into action." ~ Sathya Sai Baba (26th September 2000).

This quotation signals a defining moment in The Founder's on- going discourse on education. This defining moment occurred on the 26<sup>th</sup> of November 2000.

Please permit me to briefly trace how SSE evolved up to that point- 26<sup>th</sup> Nov 2000. Sathya Sai Education started in 1969 with Bal Vihar. BV means the *play*

way in education. The nature of a child is to play; children learn through play. The Founder assigned responsibility for *Bal Vihar* to the Ladies' Wing because of the motherly qualities women are blessed with- among them caring, patience and sacrifice. In 1971, The Founder changed the name to *Bal Vikas* which means the flower way of child growth. *Vikas* is what the bud does when it blossoms into a lovely flower. This is where we got the phrase *blossoming human excellence*. In 1995 at the 6<sup>th</sup> World Conference, the name was changed again – to 'Sai Spiritual Education' to emphasize the universality of the program. In the early 1980's a modification of the BV program was developed for children whose parents were not Sai devotees. It was called Education in Human Values. The Founder later on said *Sathya Sai* must be added to the name. On the 26<sup>th</sup> of November 2000, The Founder, **for the first time**, gave us the word **EDUCARE**.

In the quote The Founder makes a distinction between 2 types of Education.

External and worldly education- This is akin to modern-day education which seeks to develop almost exclusively our intellectual capacity- logic and reasoning. The education timetable is outward focused- *external*. It gives us knowledge and skills and competencies to control and adapt our physical environment/our external environment. The Founder calls that bookish knowledge; that's worldly or secular education. It is information-oriented.

2nd aspect- Pronounce "**Educaray**". The word education comes from two Latin roots. One root is educere which means to bring out that which is within. The second root is "educare" which means to nourish or to protect. Both words help us to understand that true education has to do with bringing out, manifesting our true nature. Our true nature is the latent human values that lie within. We were born with them; they are innate; they are our very nature. To bring out means to translate them into action. We must bring them out in an environment of spiritual nourishment and protection. Because we have forgotten our innate human values, we are unable to manifest them- the quote says.

The example of the tree can further help us understand *innate* and *latent*. Although we can see the branches, leaves, trunk, flowers and fruit, in order to understand the true and whole nature of the tree we must seek to understand the hidden, latent aspect that sustains it and nourishes it; that is to say, its roots.

Permit me to please highlight a few important things The Founder said/ reminded us about in introducing the concept of Educare. Placing the quote in its context will deepen our understanding of the concept.

- The Vedas call the life principle in man Truth. Without this power of Truth, man cannot exist. Truth is one and the same in all and that is God. We note that in the context of Sathya Sai Education, this is the ultimate definition of truth.
- The Founder then made mention of the five life-breaths. These are the divine powers latent in man. The 5 human values are the manifestations of these five life breaths. But, as The Founder says, man is wasting his human birth, as he is unable to recognise these subtle principles.
- The Founder then went on to show the interconnectedness of the five values. Truth is the starting point. When truth is put into practice, it becomes righteousness/right action. Truth is expressed in words, while righteousness is expressed in action.

Without the foundation of truth, the mansion of righteousness cannot be built. Practice of truth is true dharma/duty. This dharma/duty is uniform for all human beings. It is what makes us human. Peace - the 3<sup>rd</sup> value- is the reflection of dharma. When we practise dharma/right action it blossoms into peace. Peace is man's most priceless possession.

“Peace is the best treasure, without which, power, authority, fame and fortune, are all dry ingredients.” (The Founder)

The fourth human value is love. Actually, The Founder describes it as 4<sup>th</sup>. Love originates from the principle of atma/ divinity. This is the source of love. Love is the manifestation of Truth. The Founder, on that occasion, reminded about the 9 attributes of Love : Love is pure, steady, effulgent, attributeless, formless, ancient, eternal, immortal and nectarous. These are the nine qualities of Love. Love is an energy; it is not an emotion.

The Founder then goes to Non-violence. It is the culmination of the 4 values. It shines as the undercurrent of the values. It is love as understanding. It embraces every single person and thing in the universe; this is universal love.

The Founder went on to say that one who considers human values as his life-breaths alone is a true human being. These five values are the fundamental powers of human life. Forgetting these fundamental powers, man relies more on worldly power (this is the education aspect). As the quote says it makes us

well-versed and highly qualified. *Knowledge is power*, the education aspect says. This aspect may make us great but not necessarily good.” *Character is power*, teaches the Educare aspect. Self-knowledge is power; this is knowledge of a different kind that modern day education does not give us. The Founder said that these five values were meant for the peace and prosperity of the world. Without understanding the significance of these values, one cannot understand humanness at all.

What The Founder emphasized in giving us the word educare is that the five values are interrelated. Not any one of them can exist without the others. So we got from this : *Love as thought is truth/Love as action is right action/Love as feeling is peace/ Love as understanding is non-violence*.

Slide 15

“Education is for life. Life is for man. Man is there for society. Society is meant for spirituality. The spirituality is there for the nation. The nation is part of the world, and the world is for peace. Today everyone wants peace. In fact, you can attain and acquire peace only out of human values. For peace and happiness, human values are most important. Bereft of human values, man can never be at peace. Without understanding this principle, man tries to acquire education. Man today considers that receiving information is education. It is not information that confers human values. Modern education makes a man machine, a computer. Greatness lies in becoming not a computer but a composer. You have to acquire education to make your life ideal.” ~ Sathya Sai Baba (10th August 1998)

The Founder, in speaking about education, frequently makes the distinction between education for life and education for living . Education is for life and not for living, The Founder emphasizes. Education enables us to make a living /livelihood. It gives us *a begging bowl* (The Founder’s words). *The begging bowl* is the certificate, the diploma, the degree. Let’s listen to The Founder’s very potent argument “*If education is meant for a living, don’t we find birds and beasts, having no education whatsoever, doing the same. Education is for life. First of all, one should understand this truth.*”

In the chain of creation, we are higher than the birds and beasts so we ought to do better. Living is for the lesser creatures.

Life is for man says the quote. The word *life* is all encompassing. It takes into consideration every aspect of our functioning. *Living* is only about one aspect-

keeping body and soul together. What about the life of the spirit, for instance? Man is there for society. Man has a responsibility to society; and that is, to make it a better society. An improved society is what will impact the world.

Society is meant for spirituality, says the quote: *constant availability of translating love into action* ( L.Vaswani on service last day). That is about opportunities we have for selfless service in society. We have learnt that selfless service, that is, serving with sanctity and purity, nurtures spirituality. The Founder does not recommend becoming hermits and running away to the forests for nurturing spirituality. We need to stay in the company of our fellow-men, society - to nurture spirituality. Spirituality is for transformation of society. Society is for the practice of spirituality because the company of men provides us with ongoing opportunities for *translating love into action*.

The world is for peace. Of what use is the world if there is no peace? World peace starts with each man. World peace starts in the heart of man. Peace is innate. Peace is our birthright. Peace lies within. Bring it out, manifest it. The quote says, bereft of human values, man can never attain peace. Acquiring information will not give us peace. It will give us outstanding technical competence, a man machine (says the quote) . Man can function with mechanical precision-the head values are well developed- logic, understanding, problem-solving, analysis, synthesis ; we can operate with scientific precision and accuracy; robotic functioning. We are just machines. Our heart is largely undeveloped. Developing the values of the heart is not/ is not a priority on the agenda of modern-day education. The quote says: *Greatness lies in becoming not a computer but a composer* . The composer operates from his heart, from his intuition. As such, more is required of Man: *greatness/ goodness* that comes from transformation of our hearts and minds, development of our higher consciousness as to who we are, that we are MAN. Man is divine, of course.

*Last line of the quote:* Education here refers to both aspects- education and educare - to make your life ideal. Both our head and heart must be developed and must work in harmony with each other.

The Founder gives us the prescription for an ideal life:

“Along with this education, you must foster human values. Just as valuable ornaments are hidden in an iron safe, within man’s body lie the valuable jewels of human values. You must protect these properly. They are covered by the

doors of the heart. You must earn the key of love for it. When the safe vault of the heart is opened by the key of love, the valuable qualities of human values emerge. This door of heart cannot be opened with any other key. “

Slide 16

“I find here a large number of students. Well, what are they studying for? What is the goal? How are we to judge that they have studied well? By the salary they are able to get, or the cadre they are able to secure? No. Education must result in the development of viveka (wisdom) and vinaya (humility). The educated man must be able to distinguish between the momentary and the momentous, the lasting and the effervescent. He must not run after glitter and glamour but he must seek instead the good and golden. He must know how to keep the body in good trim, the senses under strict control, the mind well within check, the intellect sharp and clear, unhampered by prejudices and hatreds, and the feelings untouched by egoism. He must know the Atma too, for that is his very core; that is the effulgence which illumines his inner and outer selves. This knowledge will ensure joy and peace and courage for him throughout life.”~ Sathya Sai (25-07-1958).

*What I find truly amazing about this quote is that The Founder said this so very long ago; in 1958. The Founder said this 11 years before SSE started. What it says to me is that true education was always on The Founder's agenda. It also reminds me of what The Founder has said about education: (The world will know of his mission through education, more than through any other activity; education is what will transform the world.)*

*This quote sums up the ultimate purpose of education.*

*What is the goal? asks The Founder.*

*Is salary or your cadre/ professional affiliation, the measure of an educated person? No, says The Founder.*

Education must result in the development of wisdom and humility. What's the point in having a head full of facts? Knowledge is not wisdom. They are two different things. If I may put it this way, wisdom is the truths we distil out of knowledge and our experience of life. Knowledge can be considered a sign post on the road to wisdom. We get wisdom higher up the road. It is wisdom that enables us to choose what is good and of everlasting and eternal value.

*How do we cultivate wisdom?*

The first virtue in cultivating wisdom is *humility*, the absence of pride. This is what The Founder says: “As long as you have pride, you cannot earn wisdom. A person’s behaviour should be like the behaviour of water; whatever colour you pour into water, it absorbs it and never asserts its own colour. It is humble without conceit. But now the behaviour of people is quite contrary. When they do the smallest service or donate the slightest amount, they are anxious for people to know about it. For this, they go about prattling or arranging to get it published. The absence of such pride and ambition is what is recommended as humility.”

On another occasion this is what The Founders said about humility:

“Education should confer humility. Education without humility, action without discrimination, scholarship without wisdom, words without truth, friendship without gratitude, music without melody, politics without morality and integrity can never shine in society. One’s personality blossoms only when one has humility along with knowledge. Education should be useful to society. It should make citizens follow the path of morality and righteousness and make their lives happy.”

In the quote, The Founder goes on to give a description of the educated man. Let’s see what the educated man needs to be considered educated:

The educated man must have the quality of *discrimination*- he must be able to distinguish between the momentary and the momentous- in other words, he must be able to tell the difference between that which is fleeting and impermanent and of no value - from that which is momentous or valuable , lasting and important; he must be able to tell the true from the false, the good from the bad, the unreal from the real. He must not run after tinsel and trash; superficiality; he must pursue that which is good and noble and worthwhile. We note that only human beings have been endowed with the power of discrimination.

*He must know how to keep his body in good trim* – the body is the temple of God; he must not defile it in any way; it is his instrument for engaging in righteous action. He must watch what he imbibes through his 5 senses. He must have control over his senses, control over his mind, develop a clear and sharp intellect, unclouded by feelings of prejudice and hatred; untarnished by the promptings of the ego. He must know the atma/divinity too- that is his core, the divinity that illumines his inner and outer being.

In summary, what The Founder is saying to the students is that education must confer on them wisdom, humility, the power of discrimination, knowledge of their inner reality, knowledge of who you really are for it is this knowledge which when put into practice- will give courage, joy and peace, a life worth living, a happy life. This is the goal of education; the goal of education is not the salary or the cadre or whom you will rub shoulders with.

Education must nurture intuition, conscience, the inner voice, the heart.

A question worth pondering on: In light of the standard/ prescription The Founder has given for the educated man- because this is what it is- it is a **standards** document- would you say that you are educated?

In speaking of today's students this is what The Founder says: "Their mind is lost in worldly desires, dirty desires and useless desires. How long can the worldly things last? They come and go like passing clouds. Today, students are trained in such education which fosters desires."

Slide 17

"True education does not have to do with the world. True education is that which has to do with yourself, and it helps you realise the true meaning of the term 'I'."

True education leads you on the path of self-knowledge to discover your true reality. **Who am I?** You become a seeker thirsting for knowledge of the real. It leads you to inquire into the purpose of existence- **What is my purpose?**- inquiry into the nature of the self, the *atma*. **True** education takes you on an inward journey. Educare takes you inward. Education takes us outward – into the world of illusion and delusion.

Education leads us to understand the true meaning of **I**. As we can see in the image, we are not one person but three:

The one we think we are (the body).

The one others think we are (the mind).

The one we truly are (the eternal self).

We identify ourselves with the body, the mind and the intellect but these are temporary and changing all the time. The *Gita* tells us " I was never born, nor can ever die, as I am not the body, mind and intellect."



We are the eternal self, we are truth, eternal and indivisible. This is our true reality. The ancient sages called it *sat- chit -ananda-* pure existence, pure consciousness and pure bliss. So, **this** is the true meaning of I.

The Founder also reminds us that the The end of education is human excellence- This refers to self-actualization. Development of our full potential as human beings; excellence at every level of our personality - intellectual, physical, emotional, the heart aspect, social, creative, and spiritual. The end of true education is blossoming human excellence – academic excellence, character excellence and spiritual excellence.

The end of education is character.

Character is human excellence. Human excellence or character is the end/goal of education. The five human values provide the foundation for character.

*Education without character is useless,* says The Founder. Let's listen to what The Founder says:

“Character is three-fourths of life. So, you have to develop character. Without character what for is wealth, strength and friendship? They come and go like passing clouds. What is the essence of education? Concentration is the essence of education. What is the aim of education? asks The Founder. “*The aim of education is not only cultivating human qualities, but attaining divinity.*”

Really and truly a different level of education. Extremely uplifting and a standard worth aspiring to. What is encouraging is that some of the influential reports on Education like the *De Lors Commission Report* are tending in this direction : *Education should contribute to every person's complete development- mind and body, intelligence, sensitivity, aesthetic appreciation and spirituality.*

It is encouraging to note that more and more the word spirituality is being mentioned in the education plan of many countries.

Slide 22

“I know you have the enthusiasm to carry My Message among the people of this country and other countries. Let me remind you that the best and the only successful way in which you can do it is to translate the message into your own lives. Your thoughts, words and deeds must be saturated with the Message. Then, they will spread effortlessly and efficiently, and the face of the whole world will be transformed.” ~ Sathya Sai Baba (SSS, Vol. 8, pg. 19)

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