

THE SPIRITUAL SCIENTIST

An Ezine for Those Who Think

Published by VOICE, ISKCON, Pune

What Is Missing in Modern Education ?



"We have controlled machines and uncontrolled men," declares a slogan depicting the potential threat of global disaster due to the misuse of technology. It catches the tragic irony of modern society. The last century has seen amazing advances in science and technology, by which, "the world is at your finger-tips", as some ads put it. Yet statistics show that the last century has been the most violent century in known human history. Indeed, the violence in the last hundred years has been eight times more than in the previous nineteen centuries combined.

Therefore the question begs itself: where has modern society gone wrong? Despite extensive attempts at mass education, why has the advancement of knowledge not made people peaceful? Illiteracy can no longer be considered a reason since the best schools in the world have witnessed the worst violence in the last decade. The foundation of American society has been rocked by the repeated massacres by school children of their own peers and teachers for no good reason whatsoever. In many schools, metal detectors now screen every child before he enters 'the modern temple of learning'.



The **Vedic texts**, a vast body of profound knowledge coming down from ancient India, provide thought-provoking insights into this sorry state of affairs. The Vedic texts exalt knowledge for its transformational power. "What you know" is not considered as important as "**What is the effect on you of what you know**". In marked contrast, modern education swamps students with information, but the educational products are sadly lacking in character; many of the students are often victims of self-destructive habits like smoking, alcoholism and substance abuse; and even the best of them cherish no values higher than personal economic aggrandizement. "Information, information, information, but no transformation" is the plight of the modern educational system.



Of course many curricula worldwide do have some sort of value education, but they mostly serve a cosmetic purpose; they are ineffectual in actually building the character of the students. The Vedic texts assert unequivocally that morality has to be founded on spirituality; otherwise it soon becomes a mere lip-service. Unless one has an understanding of God as the Supreme Controller, the call to ethics has no weight. After all, what is there in an atheist's world view to impel him to stick to morality in his pursuit of pleasure? If a person does not understand his identity as an eternal soul, if he thinks that he can get away with whatever he does, provided he just does it cleverly enough, why will he not try to maximize the pleasure that this life can offer him? "**Beg, borrow, steal, kill, but enjoy**" becomes the motto of such a spiritually illiterate person.

Modern scientific education has been largely responsible for this spiritual and social decay. Honest scientists readily admit that spiritual subjects such as the existence of the soul and God are simply beyond their scope. But unfortunately practically all the science textbooks worldwide portray dubious theories such as the big bang theory and evolution theory as proven facts, thus forcing the naïve and innocent students to embrace atheism as the only "scientific" way of looking at the world. Many eminent scientists have openly rejected these theories as unscientific, while others continue to debate about them. But they are certainly not verified truths and



putting them in the school textbooks is a travesty of justice. If we let our children be taught that they have come from monkeys, how can we expect them to not behave like monkeys? The notion that life is a result of chemical combination breeds a murderous mentality: "If life is just a product of chemicals, then why can I not cut a bag of chemicals and eat it, if it tastes good? Or worse still: "If there is nothing more to life than chemical activity, then why can I not destroy the lump of chemicals if it obstructs my path to success?" When entire generations grow up with such perverted conceptions, is it strange that peace eludes humanity?



If we want our children to inherit a peaceful world, we have to teach them the spiritual truths that will engender that peace - within and without. To this end, the following non-sectarian universal divine principles must be incorporated into the syllabus worldwide:

1. God is the Supreme Father of all living beings and He is the Supreme Owner and Controller of everything, as confirmed in one of the foremost Upanishads, the *Ishopanishad (ishavasyam idam sarvam)*
2. We are accountable for all our actions to God (As you sow so shall you reap)
3. We are spirit souls, eternal sons of God and our real happiness is not in material acquisition, but in spiritual realization, in lovingly harmonizing ourselves with nature and God.

These spiritual precepts do not contradict the principle of secularism because secularism should not be misunderstood or misinterpreted as atheism. Secularism basically implies impartiality towards different religions and the above precepts are the common underlying teachings of all the major religions of the world. It will be most unfortunate if, in the name of secularism, we let people stay in spiritual ignorance and thus court global disaster.



Srila Prabhupada, the founder-acharya of the International Society for Krishna consciousness (ISKCON), practically demonstrated the efficacy of spiritual education as a means to individual and social transformation during the period of the counterculture in the USA in the 1960s. Empowered by this divine knowledge, thousands of youths were able to break free of the shackles of all self-destructive habits and become selfless spiritual activists, dedicated to the holistic service of God and all living beings. Even today it is a globally repeated phenomenon that adoption of genuine spirituality

by an individual concomitantly leads to character and compassion, the pre-requisites for sustained world peace.

Srila Prabhupada succinctly summarizes the need of the hour,

**"Without the awakening of divine consciousness within the individual,
there is no use of crying for world peace."**

