

**Address to teachers and parents of the BODH school on the occasion of the Independence Day Celebrations -2004**

**by Sri K.C. Narayana Garu.**

The word education is derived from the root 'educere' meaning 'extract from' 'draw out'. Similar are the origins of the words 'deduce', 'induce', 'reduce'. It implies that there is something in the individual that can be drawn out and exhibited in its perfection that the individual possibilities permit, This meaning of the word I am informed is not current now a days and the word is derived from educate the meaning of which I do not know. Surprisingly in some of the latest dictionaries I find no reference to the roots from which the word is derived from. Yes. That is my point. We forget the roots.

Every one of us is an expression of the ultimate energy or power of God and within the constraints of the form we have try to express the spirit behind us. Every individual is endowed with a physique, a mind and a heart. The physical body is an instrument to work relating to the physical world, the mind is an instrument to work in the mental plane and the manas is the tool as also the jewel box of sentiments, emotions, feelings and sensitivity expressing the nature of the heart we have. The endowments in the physique and mind are different and each accomplishes according to the assets and limitations of the same. But the realm of manas except in very unfortunate cases has the same potential and capacity in all though there are covers and coverings over the heart. While the perfection of the physique and mind are sought to be achieved through conventional education enabling us to learn skills and techniques

the realm of the heart is brought to perfection by making it more and more exposed to the bounties of Nature and blessings of the Divine.

Education may be thought of, from one of point of view as the process of attaining basic skills such as those involved in reading, writing, speaking and computation. It may be thought of as acquiring knowledge of geography, history, science and other subjects. It may be conceived more generally as 'learning to think'. However there is more to education than all these, if individual development is the meaning we give for it. Thus 'education' is a multidimensional in nature. Not only the intellectual aspect of development and social and emotional adjustment is the task of education but more than all this essentially making a person 'human' is the real task of education. Human perfection lies in 'man' becoming 'real man' according to the Great Master of the day Sri Ramchandraji Maharaj of Shahjahanpur, U.P. India.

But at present education is perceived mostly as a preparation for a vocation. Vocation is other wise called and better known as means of livelihood. I am sure there will a hue and cry when I say so; but I have come out of the indoctrination of the philosophies of market place. After all the education, a person completes in school or college or Universities the question that faces him is "what is my place in the Labour market?" Recently a Chief Minister of a State went on record to the extent to saying that study of arts, humanities and fine arts is a waste and all that is required is professional (what it means I am not clear) education and technical education. There is no technology without basic sciences is totally forgotten. So every

one is after those professional institutions and land up in the category of unemployed (I understand in India the number of unemployed is over 20 crores at present and professional graduates and post graduates constitute about 25% of them). They do not know anything other than the skill sets taught and never had occasion to practice. They thus find themselves incapable of entering into the labour market. Since they equated a job with happiness they are not happy. Happy living is natural to all species of animals including human. But the process of lop sided education has made many a young man forget the basic skill God has endowed all of us with-‘to be happy’. It is this prejudice in favour of what is thought of as professional or vocational education that inhibits the natural expression of joy and happiness in human life.

All education now a days lead a person to unhappiness as the art of happy living is never taught and learnt. The concept of education that it is meant for vocation and thereby to a decent living (no body knows what it is) has really ruined the thinking of parents and children alike. Even by the time a person enter a kinder garden school the student is taught how to be a coolly: learning the lessons of load carrying. That it affects the tender bones of the bodies of the children which affects their health much later if not immediately is neither the concern of the parents nor the teachers; the only thing in mind is the illusory vision of the ward becoming a great Engineer, Computer professional or a Doctor with a D.S. That these visions collapse soon is a known fact and depression for parents and frustration and dejection for children is the consequence. Thus

emotional maladjustment and misbehaviour on the part of the children ensues.

While that is the lot of the child with average and above average abilities in the physical and mental planes the lot of the children with difficulties in learning is worse. They are really unwanted children for the parents and also in the society that seeks to see every individual as a bee in the hive, slogging for the Queen or the Boss in the industry. Exploitation is the norm in all cases and in the case of these persons with faculties of body and mind not fully developed the neglect and disregard of the human worth is worse. The admission of such students in the normal schools is a problem by itself. They are usually the drop outs at various stages of educational training and become bullies at various stages in their life.

Children are to be viewed as embodiments of love and affection. The educators' job to develop their inner resources so as to become tomorrows' peace makers. In the myopia generated by the over riding priority to money and vocation, the interest of the spiritual growth of the individual is totally forgotten. I repeat for the sake of emphasis that man is essentially a spiritual being: an expression of the Divine and not just a rational being. Rationality is and should be subservient to the needs of spirituality of the individual. This fundamental fact is forgotten and educators have become experts in killing the spirit in man and promoting the machine and animal in him. This is a sin that is universally practiced. This sin is promoted and abetted by the marketing of consumer goods and hospitality

industry as it is called. The two things for which we are to earn and save are: to spend all our earning on food and drinks and fashion and display. We were all taught through generations the wisdom of saving and the present thinking is the art of spending. No matter we have no money: someone is there to lend. The stature of the person we were taught in the schools of Economics is ones' credit worthiness and not the Gold or silver he may have and now all the human population are credit worthy. Borrow and purchase what we sell is the slogan. Creation of paper money was the first error and the creation of card money is a blunder.

But the educators' role is essentially to provide support to the children to grow spiritually and learn the virtues of gratitude, hope, satisfaction, friendship, sharing, non-violence, non-jealousy, non-envy, controlling the desires and urges etc., Above all the creativity which is another word of "life" has to be promoted. By our insistence to curtail the creative expression of the individual we make 'bonsai' equivalents in human form. They should learn the most important lesson of 'letting go'; it is the absence of this learning that we find is the main reason for all conflicts in family and societies.

The materials for children's spiritual education we provide are to be practical, easy to follow, and professionally presented. Our children will not be able to live in peace until a majority of the people of the world adopts an all-inclusive view of religion and move on to understand spirituality in the real sense of the term. Recent world events have demonstrated that our lives literally depend on a unified

understanding of the concepts of God and religion. Religious prejudice has led to rampant brutality and greater devastation. Just as the peoples and nations of the world have come to recognize and promote the fundamentals of universal human rights, so should they come to acknowledge and celebrate the essential oneness of all in a bond of fraternity. The researches of the Great Master Sri Ramchandraji Maharaj which discovered the points in the human frame where meditations are to be done for holistic living are to be made available to students from childhood. Meditation is a preparation that is essential for spiritual development.

## II

That much for the philosophy of education we should adopt. The Sahaj Seva Samsthan has done well in starting an institution for the purposes of education children who are not capable of entering the competitive world of other schools of education. The children in the schools of this institution are broadly classified as persons with learning difficulties. The teachers should have a firm grasp of the problems of learning the students have and use innovative methods to assist them. The other schools herd the students into rooms where education is provided for the entire group. This school should adopt the method of individual Lesson plan and attend to the students. The aims of the lesson plans we draw for the student is not to be just what he is going learn of the alphabets and numbers during the year but should cover the areas of character building and spiritual development. We should provide a systematic means for building a foundation for understanding the nature and purpose of

life and the common relationship that all of humanity shares with its Creator.

The lesson plans and supplementary materials should be in addition to the academic (where however the students of our school may not compete with the rest of the children population) a response to a need for spiritual and moral education programs which embrace parents and children of various backgrounds. Our general framework should focus on holistic growth of the student/ward under our care rather than keep us bogged down with the learning of 3Rs.

Above all, we are to be committed to the students and their development and as they grow with us ever deepening conscious integration. Knowing them, as an individual, a unique creation, we should help them uncover their work, their path, and make them see how beautiful they are as creations of the Lord irrespective of their problems and difficulties of body and mind and enable them discover the Master in their heart—what they actually are, in the way that works best for them.

Caring, compassionate, and—above all—completely human, the educators should be their mentors. The teacher should, do their utmost to support the natural, integrated unfolding of their students. The teachers at the Bodh School who were drawn together having realized the seamless Unity of Spirit and matter should spread the message through words if they can, if not through the heart. Further our teachers have come from variety of backgrounds and have many different interests, capacities and skills. Some had extensive

experience in various schools of learning both, both formal education and spiritual education. The teachers have the fundamental responsibility for the students and should serve the students in profound relationship of mutual and sacred trust. The management should work in concert with the teachers as important members of the aspirant's support team. They must help hold and nurture students in much the same way as older siblings might with their younger brothers and sisters. The fundamental principles of this work are that teachers and mentors should in simple and natural manner not only understand, but rather live the spirit in their everyday functioning.

The training in our schools should be as already stated not only academic but moral and spiritual. Regarding the teaching of the academics we should use the computers more and more. This is one gadget that is discovered by technologists that can aid enormously in helping all students and more particularly the students with learning disabilities. Repetition is the way for rote learning. Nothing in the world can compare its efficiency with the computer in this regard. The same exercise will and can be practiced any number of times as the student needs and the patience of the teacher and parent is not involved in this process. There are enough number of CD—ROMs in the market that can help the school administration and teachers in this regard. More than any thing else it is the creative preparation of exercises and lessons that is required.

No student should be thought of as incapable of completing the lesson plan drawn for him and should be allowed to appear for the examination for which he is being prepared in all subjects. Arbitrarily restricting them from appearing for the examinations is a prejudice and can mar the self respect of the student. In our eagerness to get 100% results in the examinations the School authorities should not curb the learning possibility by appearing for the examinations.

The need for periodic and constant evaluation of learning should be done by the teachers in all the subjects under question. Review with the students and parents should be regular. Unless the parents are enlightened they may not take interest in the child for they are not going to be productive bread winners-they are really unconcerned in anything except the employment there is going to have after studies. They refuse the realities of the situation and do not co-operate. But that is the reason for us to enter the field and help the future generations accept the philosophy of the Masters Commandments. There is every need to influence the parents of his philosophy and science of Raja yoga without being apologetic. That is the solution for deriving happiness.

The text books of NCERT and NOS are exhaustive and are excellent in helping the students. Our school which is recognized by the NOS authorities should try its best to live up to the expectations of the NOS thinking and concepts. It is likely that every one of our students may take more time than the normal student. But by utilization of computers into which our lessons are programmed we

should be able to reduce the time frame. If programs of the school lessons is not done so far they should be done. The management should have no difficulty to provide for the same.

The language Telugu should be taught to the students. The same is what is learnt by over 90% of the student population in Andhra Pradesh where that language is the medium of instruction. There cannot be any difficulty for the students to learn and the teachers to teach Telugu. To say that is a difficult language is not tenable.

### III

I leave the subject of academic education here with the hope the teachers and administration will take necessary steps.

The more important is the imparting of moral and spiritual education. Here in lies the keys for happy living. As stated already the method of meditation on points A and B should be taught so that the lessons in fraternity get imbibed in them even without their awareness. They are only 10 minutes exercise. If need be the time can be reduced to 5 minutes. When the students are taught that the teacher should also pray along with them. Then the beginnings of moral education with firm foundation will start. Prayer as given by the Master should be taught explaining the meaning for the children in a way they can understand.

Prayer: It should be taught to all students. Our prayer is the same as given by the Master. To make it meaningful for the students we

need to present it in a way that is appealing to them. It maybe like this.

O Master: dear children, Master or God is the one who gives Peace. You all know we want Peace in our lives. The Peace giver is in the heart of all the people.

Thou are: in old time English this means 'you are'

The goal of life: our aim in life is to be happy and peaceful.

We are: all of us are.

But slaves of wishes: you know children you want many things. Some parents give and some teachers us. But there are many more things you want and they do not give. You feel bad and some times angry.

Thou art: You are

The only God and power: there is only one God and he is within us.

To bring upto that stage: By remembering you in our heart we get peace as you are the giver of peace.

Many other ways of explaining can be given by the teachers according to the level of the students. The most important this is that every day the school should start with this prayer.

This should be followed by the National song 'Vande Mataram'. The song should be sung. The teachers should teach the meaning of the song to all levels of students.

Development of Art: Every student has the capacity to express and this should be promoted. The school should organize Arts gallery of the student paintings and drawings. The students should be asked to explain their paintings. Efforts should be made to invite people and they should be encouraged to buy the art creations.

Music: The crow is never shy of singing in its own voice. There is no voice that is more sweet or less sweet. Every song has its own beauty and need to be encouraged. Singing should be promoted and taught in the school.

Dance: Dance is the best method by which the possibility of expression through body is learnt. Body language is something that is native to everyone.

Fortunately there are dance teachers, arts teachers and music teachers available for the school. With the spirit of co-operation the school administration should be in a position to avail their services.

Story telling is an ancient method by which morals were taught through out the world. The story of Panchatantra where the unwise and near imbecile children of the king were taught lessons of life by the teacher through stories.

Story writing and telling are skills that every person in student education should know. It is found that often the good writers often break rules—but they know they're doing it and also why!

It seems people think a writer is a person, who walks around, or sits around, waiting until an idea strikes. Those who think that idea hits floods through the brain and finds expression thorough the fingertips onto the computer keys and a story is born are wrong. Those of the teachers who have struggled to write stories know better.

We should know that story telling requires a thorough knowledge of the story and through creative expressions the teacher can make it very interesting to students. Our culture is very rich and we do not Ella's and Cinders to be the content. The teachers should have been influenced in their lives by the study of the lives of great men and women and they can weave stories of them in addition to the ancient tales of the land. If it is found the old story requires a different ending the same should be attempted and revised story told.

If the teacher is really inspired or motivated by a famous or historical person she may want to introduce that famous or historical hero as a role model. Then she needs to do some serious study and search for details from all possible sources and prepare the story.

The first few lines of any story re the most important-and often most difficult—words for us to write. The next most challenging piece of

writing is the ending. Once we draw in the students and readers and take them through our story, we need to leave them with a satisfying conclusion. There should be a moral for the stories that are told. The children's story should not begin with description, continue with description, containing some dialogue here and there, and end with description. The author should know that simply telling the story is not adequate and should realize that stories without dialogue are boring to the students.

Storytelling is an art. In order to attain a degree of excellence, one must become familiar with the basic principles of this art and dedicate many hours of practice to it. That requires the willingness to do additional work and one may be assured that it will be highly rewarding in the development of the teachers spiritual worth.

The stories should be followed by some questions about the students' comprehension of the same. The students can be asked to tell the story in their own words. We can ask them to draw pictures and paintings of the same leaving their imaginary creative ability a chance to express. They may be asked to suggest alternative endings to the story.

Since I was asked several times to giving some clues as to how to go about the instructions in these schools I have troubled you with this note today. Independence Day in a day of rejoice. I wonder whether any student here can come forward and tell the story of the national heroes like Mahatma Gandhi, Pundit Nehru, Prakasam Pantulu, and Subhash Chandra Bose.

I was trying to motivate teachers and others to write and tell stories to children as also teach the students the stories and poems in the native language and other languages. Brothers M.V. Ratnam and others co-operated and selected poems for learning by the students. Brother Janardhan reddy retied them in his rhythmic and sweet voice. It is hoped they are being taught. Dr.Koteswara rao has taken pains to record some stories and gave tapes of the same to the school for distribution to others as required. Such help from elders is an advantage for our school and the school and the school teachers and authorities should utilize the same. The Sri Ramchandra Publishers have taken lead to get written some stories and tales by our brothers and sisters and they are now printed for use by the school, students and parents of our children. It is happy to note that is being provided on this happy occasion. Many more such books on morality and spirituality need to be prepared and taught in our school to make our students develop spiritually. Our opportunities to help the children of our schools are as many as the stars in the sky. The stars in the sky not only twinkle and make us wonder what they are as the rhyme goes. For a teacher of this land the stories offer scope to teach about the stars with their stories of Dhruva-the Pole star.

