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The Real Purpose of Education

The real purpose of education is to draw out the best that is there in the individual. An individual has potentialities that go far beyond what he thinks himself capable of. He has a gold mine within, though from outside he appears to be a simple human being. But what is that best which education aims at drawing out of him? Really that 'best' is the total human being that an individual is. In other words, an individual is striving constantly but unknowingly to attain that state of things which make him a total human being. Such a human being is really the end of our lives and the real purpose of education is to aid and enable us to reach that state. Such an individual lives not only for himself and his family but also for the society at large. He must pulsate with the spirit of service and sacrifice, creativity and a concern for all living creatures. He must dwell in truth, goodness and beauty which are the hallmarks of a true human being. God has blessed us with something which has the potentiality to bring us closer to perfectibility. But in the absence of true education that 'something' remains unexplored and unrealised. This is a great tragedy of our lives. The English poet Thomas Gray so succinctly puts it like this: "Full many a flower is born to blush unseen and waste its sweetness on the desert air." These words follow what he earlier said in the same stanza: "Full many a gem of purest ray serene, the dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear." We all have those purest gems inside the unfathomed caves of our inner being, but for want of opportunity and in the absence of real education those beautiful flowers, those valuable gems lying in the unfathomed caves of our inner selves go waste. Of course, the real purpose of education is to explore and preserve those precious things not only for oneself but for the good of all.

When we talk about a total or a complete human being, we mean not only a physical human being, but something more. This something more is more important than an ordinary human being. The complete human being has a capacity to explore, to examine his inward being. His capacity of going beyond the usual state of mind is the factor which constitutes the 'something more' of the average human being. To make the two—the human being and the human being with the something more—is the real purpose of education. So, the real issue of education is to see that when the student leaves the school, college or the university, he is well established in goodness, both outwardly and inwardly. The human being is courteous, the something more human being is inwardly courteous as well. It follows, therefore, that education enthrones in the minds and hearts of the students the ideals of loving knowledge and wisdom, service and sacrifice. It is not without purpose that Hindus seek salvation at the feet of Shri Vishnu or His reincarnation—or the incarnation of compassion and wisdom. Let our young men and women treasure these great goals, and strive after them and seek them, because, where your treasure is, there is your heart as well. In the death of these ideals vis-a-vis-our young men and women, humanity will find its grave.

In case the ideals of education *i.e.*, service and sacrifice, are practised in real life, truth is respected, beauty

valued and goodness practised, the individual concerned would have proved worthy of his education. A great educationist, throwing light on the value and importance of education has written that—"Let all that is dark within us be burnt with flame and devil of error be torn away. Education is the most potent and effective tool to redeem our lives—to bring about an individual's development, his emancipation, his cultural regeneration, his economic advancement and training men and women for the diverse needs of a socialist, secular and democratic society in the present scientific, technological and nuclear age."