



Institute of Sathya Sai Education Australia

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PEACE AND PROSPERITY THROUGH SATHYA SAI EDUCATION IN HUMAN VALUES

Address given by Mr Neville Fredericks, Central Coordinator, Sathya Sai Organisation of Australia & PNG to the Education Conference at the Sathya Sai School Murwillumbah, 20th August 2011

Sai Ram! It is a privilege to be with you all here today.

As individual members of society, we strive to establish ourselves with an education and with work, and we seek to accumulate property and wealth. We might then say with a swell of pride, “my house, my education, etc”. But where do these come from? Who worked in the fields and the factories, who planned and built the roads and bridges, who built the colleges that trained the tradesmen who built – “your home”? Who saved the money so that you could borrow it from the bank to buy your home?

Without the support of society’s collective effort, providing security, education, food, clothing and shelter, our very lives could be at risk. In fact a community or country as a whole is at risk when its citizens do not have a sense of gratitude, a sense of duty and obligation to their society for the benefits that they receive from it. An individual’s interest is not separate from society’s interest.

What are the essential qualities that provide the best prospects for a society to experience peace leading to prosperity?

The five values as taught by Sathya Sai Baba provide an excellent framework to examine the essential attributes for good citizenship which enable society at large to be at peace and to prosper. The meaning I give to the word “prosper” in this context is “a flourishing condition”.

UNIVERSAL LOVE - is the most important quality of all . Love of country and society, love of neighbour and self for the goodness that is inherent in all. In everyday life this quality is revealed as equality for all, caring and empathy for others and a keen sense of duty and obligation to ones community and country. When engaging with the wider community, the practice of this value will certainly lead to cordiality, friendship and confidence in relationships

TRUTH- is the cornerstone of any well functioning society. It is the one value that individuals demand of each other in all circumstances. In commerce and in the

Courts, in personal engagements and in our Parliaments we heavily rely on personal and public communications between parties being truthful.

Recent academic studies have identified an important relationship between trustworthiness and economic prosperity. This field of work known as the "Economics of Trust", has found that the higher the level of trust between individuals in a society the greater the chance of success for newly establishing businesses. The practice of truth and the level of trustworthiness in a society do have a direct impact and influence on the prosperity of that society.

RIGHT ACTION- by individuals includes respect for the law of the land and having a clear moral compass to guide every decision and act. It means being dutiful in our workplace and being prepared to give voluntary service when the need or opportunity arises. Right action in society also requires each person to uphold the rights of others, as this leads to the maintenance of equality and the protection of freedom in our communities.

NON VIOLENCE - From my perspective this means keeping our minds away from judgment and irritable thought. To achieve this one must be tolerant and welcoming to all, regardless of creed, culture and social status. The individual should also strive to maintain their equanimity by acting in accord with the prompting of conscience.

PEACE has its foundation in the heart of every citizen, for that is the origin of the five values. When the individual lives peacefully and productively they can lead their families and communities along the path to peace

BUILDING PEACE AND PROSPERITY

Every person is a building block in the mansion of society. If an individual block crumbles due to lack of good character, then the building is marginally weakened. If a large number of blocks crumble then the whole structure of society is threatened. The key to achieving a peaceful and flourishing society is for its individuals to be model citizens.

A model citizen will have high ideals. They will be caring and supporting of others. They will be dutiful in the role that they play. Being a good student, child, parent, a good spouse, leader, grandparent, employee, etc. They will be truthful in their communications and their undertakings and commitments will be able to be relied upon.

A model citizen will work for society because they know that their well being is inextricably bound up in the well being of society as a whole. They will not waste time, energy or resources. They will have a mindset of a servant of family, business, institution and society. A model citizen will also be respectful of the collective wisdom.

In summary a model citizen is an inspired person, whose one tiny flame can light the lamp in a thousand hearts. Inspired = inspirited.

All of these qualities are honoured by the vast majority of our citizenry. Our society values and acknowledges citizens who demonstrate these noble qualities.

As fundamentally important as these qualities are, our governments and educators at large, are not yet purposefully teaching or building these qualities into our students' character, although there are wonderful exceptions to this. From time to time, I take the opportunity to discuss "values education" with senior educators. On one occasion, speaking to the Vice Chancellor of a university about values in education, he replied that this is "**none of our business**," and on another occasion, speaking with the Dean of a medical college, he said, "**values can't be taught**".

Well, we know that they can.

In recent years there has been increasing interest in "values in education". The Baha'i faith has developed a "Virtues Programme" which has been widely used in the public education system.

SATHYA SAI EDUCATION IN HUMAN VALUES

What makes SSEHV so effective in character building, so transformative for student personalities? From my perspective, the distinguishing elements are as follows:

1. EDUCARE aims to bring out that which is latent within the student --- their inherent goodness, fostering a connection with their conscience (guiding voice). This promotes an inner knowingness of what is right or wrong action.
2. THE BUILDING OF SELF CONFIDENCE IN STUDENTS. Developing an understanding that wrong action is lack of knowledge, that no one is inherently bad. In fact everyone is beauty, truth and goodness, for that is the nature of their inner being.
3. TRANSFORMATION is the objective, not just the acquisition of knowledge and information. With values integrated into the curriculum, students take on a values language and culture that is positively transformational, for students, parents and teachers, and through their example and influence, transformation of society is possible.
4. REVERENTIAL RESPECT FOR OTHERS. SSEHV promotes service to those in need in society as part of the student's education. It promotes a strong sense of equality and a recognition of the goodness inherent in every individual. It fosters cordiality with acceptance of cultural and religious differences.

SSEHV with its five values language is suitable for insertion into any secular or faith based curriculum with only minor modification. The five values language is universally accepted. There are now many examples around the world of miraculous results from SSEHV.

In fact the values in education revolution has already began. In my view SSEHV will progressively become accepted as a benchmark, a standard for values education. I hold this belief very strongly because the results of SSEHV in improving academic achievement and developing good character in students are far too powerful to be overlooked. Peace and prosperity will blossom, as education in human values expands worldwide. SSEHV provides the philosophical and spiritual guidance to values education.

A country's assets are not limited to its factories farms, its institutions and natural resources or the knowledge of its populous. A nation's true worth lies in the good character of its citizenry. It is therefore essential that every school should actively incorporate values education into their standard curriculum. This is the path to peace and prosperity in any society.

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