Swami Vivekananda on Education

Philosophy of Education

“Within man is all knowledge, and it requires only an awakening, and that much is the work of the teacher.”

“What we need is to study, independent of foreign control, different branches of the knowledge that is our own, and with it the English language and western science; we need technical education and all else that will develop industries, so that men instead of seeking for service may earn enough to provide for themselves.”

“The end goal of education is ‘man-making’.”

“All knowledge that the world has ever received comes from the mind; the infinite library of the universe is in your own mind. The external world is only the suggestion, the occasion, which sets you to study your own mind.”

“Tell the truth boldly. All truth is eternal. Truth is the nature of all souls. Anything that makes you weak physically, intellectually and spiritually, reject as poison.”

The Only Method of Education

“The very essence of education is concentration of the mind… in making money, or in worshipping God, or in doing anything, the stronger the power of concentration, the better will that thing be done.”

“One becomes what one thinks.”

Education of the Masses

“So long as the millions live in hunger and ignorance, I hold every man a traitor who, having been educated at their expense, pays not the least heed to them.”

“Every nation, every man and every woman must work out their own salvation. Give them ideas—that is the only help they require and then the rest must follow as effect. Ours is to put the chemicals together, the crystallization comes in the law of nature.”

Education of Women

“The real Shakti-worshipper is he who knows that God is the Omni-present force in the universe, and sees in women the manifestation of that force. ...Manu says, 'Where women are respected, there the Gods delight, and where they are not, there all work and efforts come to naught.'”

“If women are raised, their children will by their noble actions glorify the name of the country; then will culture, knowledge, power, and devotion awaken in the country.”

Education for Character

“Words are secondary. Thoughts live; they travel far. And so take care of what you think.”

“The cause of all apparent evil is in ourselves. Do not blame any supernatural being... We mould our destinies.”

“We commit mistakes because we are weak, and we are weak because we are ignorant. Who makes us ignorant? We ourselves.”

What is Duty

“The ordinary idea of duty everywhere is that every good man follows the dictates of his conscience.”

“There is, however, only one idea of duty which has been universally accepted by all mankind, of all ages and sects and countries; and that has been summed up in a Sanskrit aphorism this: ‘Do not injure any being; not injuring any being is virtue, injuring any being is sin.’”

“...We should always try to see the duty of others through their own eyes, and never judge the customs of other peoples by our own standards. I am not the standard of the universe. I have to accommodate myself to the world, and not the world to me.”

Taken from Education by Swami Vivekananda compiled and edited by T. S. Avinashilingam