Swami Vivekananda on Education

Development of Personality

“That is why purity and morality have been always the object of religion; a pure, moral man has control of himself. He who knows one lump of clay has known all the clay in the universe. Similarly, he who knows and controls his own mind knows the secret of every mind.”

“All great incarnations and prophets are such men; they reached perfection in this one life. This is due to the science of study of the mind. This science wants you to be strong, to take the work in your own hand, instead of leaving it in the hands of nature, and get beyond this little life. True education must stress this science.”

Work Like a Master

“You must remember that freedom of the soul is the goal of all Yogas, and each one equally leads to the same result. By work alone men may get to where Buddha got largely by meditation or Christ by prayer. Buddha was a working Jnani, Christ was a Bhakta, but the same goal was reached by both of them.”

“. . . You see what Karma-Yoga means; even at the point of death to help anyone, without asking questions. Be cheated millions of times and never ask a question, and never think of what you are doing. Never vaunt of your gifts to the poor or expect their gratitude, but rather be grateful to them for giving you the occasion of practicing charity to them.”

Religious Education

“Through the thunder roll of the dignified Vedic hymns, life is to be brought back into the country. In everything the austere spirit of heroic manhood should be revived.”

“Strength, strength is what Upanishads speak to me every page. It is the only literature in the world where you find the word ‘Abhij’, ‘Fearless’ used again and again. That is why Upanishad are the great mine of strength and fearlessness. The whole world can be vivified, made strong, energized through them.”

The Teacher and the Taught

“My idea of education is Gurugriha-vasa (stay at Guru’s house). Without the personal life of the teacher, there would be no education. In our country, the imparting of knowledge has always been through men of renunciation. The charge of imparting knowledge should again fall upon the shoulders of Tyagis.”

Conditions for the Taught:
~ Purity – in mind, in thoughts and in actions
~ Real thirst for true knowledge
~ Perseverance – constant struggle, a constant fight till the victory is reached.

Conditions for the Teacher:
~ He must know the spirit of the scriptures
~ Sinlessness – He must be perfectly pure and then only comes the value of his words.
~ Motive – His work must be simply out of love, out of pure love for mankind at large.

Conditions that a Disciple must fulfill:
~ Wants to know the truth must give up all desires for gain.
~ Must be able to control the internal external senses.
~ Must have great power of endurance.
~ Should conceive an extreme desire to be free. If you want to be spiritual, you must renounce. This is the real test.
~ The sole goal of the Disciple should be to know the highest truth.
~ Must have complete faith in the teacher. Without such submission and humility, there cannot be any growth in us. In those countries which have neglected to keep up this kind of relation, the teacher has become a mere lecturer. Worship your Guru as God, but do not obey him or her blindly.

Conditions that a Teacher must fulfill:
~ The Teacher must throw his whole force into the tendency of the Taught. Without real sympathy, we can never teach well. The true Teacher is one who can immediately come down to the level of the student, and transfer his soul to the student’s soul and see through and understand through his mind. Such a Teacher can really teach and none else.

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