

EDUCATION TODAY

Sathya Sai Education in Human Values

NEWSLETTER

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July 2023

Editorial: Human Values - Aspects of the Self

HIGHLIGHTS

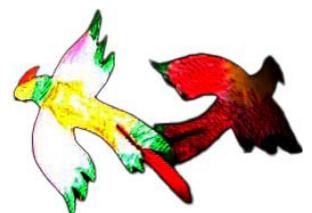


VALUE FOCUS
Introspection



SSEHV
in GREECE

Training & Education
in HAITI



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“A school should not be considered to be just a commonplace arrangement designed for teaching and learning. It is the place where the consciousness is aroused and illumined, purified and strengthened, the place where the seeds of discipline, duty and devotion are planted and fostered into fruition.

— *Sathya Sai*

EDITORIAL

Human Values: Aspects of the Self



Sathya Sai Baba framed in clear and beautiful ways deep ancient knowledge about the nature and the meaning of life; and how to help children at an early age to become aware of who they are and to act correspondingly. As all profound philosophy, this process implies learning by layers. In this light, our approach can be deeper or more superficial. The question of character, as well as the concern on how to bring character development into education is immemorial. Also timeless is the tendency to misunderstand the meaning of humanness. As a result, the rich and beautiful process leading children to become aware of their true humanness has been often transformed into a prescribed formalistic and painful indoctrination, with carryover complaints about the lack of values among youth,

schools, and teachers. In the framework of SSEHV, “human values” have great significance and have different layers of understanding. At the beginning, we may consider value-based education as a set of rules to guide children to behave well. Human values, however, are aspects of humanness, aspects of the Self.

If we stick to a superficial understanding of the meaning of “human values”, the consequence is a loss of depth, reducing Education in Human Values to a mere effort to have children behaving well. In most traditions, humanness is something deep and special. Even in common language, when we say that someone is “very human”, we are describing something special. A human person without humanness or genuine human traits, in this sense, is unnatural or abnormal.

Good behavior is, therefore, a worldly reflection or a natural consequence of humanness. The path underlying

Sathya Sai Education in Human Values (SSEHV), hence, corresponds to a two-fold effort: (1) to have a direct experience of our intrinsic humanness, deeply recognizing ourselves as humans; and (2) to express or bring out (ex duco, educere, education) this humanness as constantly as possible in our connection with

ourselves and with

everyone and everything

else. This is an inner

process, not something that

can be controlled or even

conducted from the

outside. Trying to have a façade of humanness without actually experiencing it is a futile effort—this is where most attempts of indoctrination of good behavior sadly fail.

If real education, in this deeper sense, cannot be elicited from the outside—i.e., telling others what to do or how to

behave—there is an inevitable conclusion: SSEHV is basically a process for us. Not just a set of techniques to be taken to classrooms. We can of course consider better ways to guide children towards awareness of the Self. But it will not be an efficient process to any extent if one who guides is not at least genuinely dedicated to move towards Self-consciousness. This applies to teachers in relation to their students; but also to Principals in relation to teachers. And to people at all higher levels of responsibility in the educational structure. Moving towards Self-knowledge is the core purpose of SSEHV. It is the destination of our most sincere effort: to have the experience of who we really are and act accordingly. “Your life is My message”, says Sathya Sai Baba.

Dr. Dalton Amorin
EC Board Member

**Moving towards
Self-knowledge
is the
core purpose
of SSEHV.**

*Educare is the gradual unfolding of
Self-knowledge, like a seed that sprouts,
a tree that grows, a flower that blossoms.*

SSEHV TRAINING AND EDUCATION IN HAITI

“Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world” - Nelson Mandela

The ESSE Institute accompanies 3 primary schools along their journey with Sathya Sai Education in Human Values (SSEHV), by providing training and lessons to a total of 600 students in Port-au-Prince, the capital of Haiti, a very poor country, victim of recurrent natural disasters. It is important to give a chance of free education, a loving environment and a daily meal to the children of these three schools. The founders and teachers of the schools were introduced to SSEHV in 2010, and continue to receive training and mentoring, albeit now online. In addition to the academic curriculum, the schools focus on stress reduction, silent sitting, human values lessons, special activities, and celebrations. With this education for life, the new generation will be better equipped with an inner shield and the stability necessary to face life’s challenges with additional courage and Self-confidence, thus improving their future and the future of their country.

In the words of two teachers:

«I have been truly inspired because I learned that I am the light to light others. I must love without conditions, in other words, unconditional love.» - Christianne

«I understood that one can change his environment through right action and bring spiritual light. The desire to do good grew in me, and not to criticise others but to try to understand them and to share my love with them.» - Emmanuel

Each teacher will touch the lives of hundreds of children during their career. The students of these three schools love their teachers and do not want to graduate! Former students come back to help with special events and two former students have become teachers at one of the schools today. These are our greatest rewards.



For more information: <http://www.esseinstitute.org/en/node/346>



SSEHV SUMMER CAMPS IN GREECE

During the month of July, for the past twenty years, a SSEHV summer camp is conducted in the beautiful natural surroundings of the Sai Prema premises, not far from Athens. Boys and girls from age 6 to 15 enjoy a ten-day programme that includes morning prayers, physical exercise, a leading daily quote, human values lessons, group activities, singing and cooperative games. The children eagerly help to clean up after their tasty and nutritious vegetarian meals and look forward to an afternoon swim in the cool waters of the Aegean Sea. The evening routine recalls the programme of the day and ends with prayers, to ensure a peaceful night’s sleep. Each year the camp proposes a different theme, at times inspired by Sathya Sai Baba’s axioms such as “Love All, Serve All”, “Life is a Game, play it!”, “Love is the Source, Love is the Path, Love is the Goal”, or based on core topics such as “Unity in diversity”, “Singing and Praying for Mother Earth”, “Be the change you want to see in the world”. The topics are deepened through uplifting stories such as the life of Mahatma Gandhi, Mother Teresa, or Albert Schweitzer, and the life and teachings of Sri Sathya Sai Baba, or highlighted through stories taken from ancient Greek myths or the spiritual heritage of world epics. The adventures of the Greek hero Hercules, or narratives from the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, help the children dive deeply into the meaning of the camp themes. At the end of the camp a drama is set up and performed to share the theme of the year with parents and friends. Thanks to the joyful participation of the children, the support of the parents and the commitment of the teachers, the yearly SSEHV summer camps have always proven successful and a valuable experience of joy, love and unity for the children who are often unable to hold back their tears at the time of departure.

Value Focus: Introspection

The habit of sitting quietly, observing one's emotions and flow of thoughts gives rise to the invaluable skill of introspection which fosters tranquility and calm and promotes a state of mindfulness, the capacity to "be fully present to oneself", thus creating space for new understanding. This ability to "look within" (the root meaning of the word introspection), promotes self-awareness; we become conscious of our feelings, impulses, desires and reactions, and of the push and pull of the thoughts behind them, grasp our all-round personality and character traits and learn how to monitor our weaknesses and make the most of our strengths. When the process of introspection is coupled with Human Values, we learn to harmonize our thoughts with our Spiritual Heart, the seat of Human Values, and to act in accordance with them. An attitude that kindles inner peace, which in turn enables us to discern and make the right decisions. Such a character – built on self-mastery and unity of thought, word and deed – leads us from introspection to Self-inquiry, and, by exploring the real substance of the Self we grasp our True Identity, the soul of our very own being.



*"Who in the world am I? Ah, that's the great puzzle."
— Lewis Carroll, Alice in Wonderland*

An Uplifting Story: True Education

Wishing to offer his son, Śvetaketu, the idea and taste of Truth, the sage Uddālaka Āruṇi sent the boy to fetch a red fruit from the banyan tree. When the boy brought the fruit, his father said: "Cut it in half". The son did as he was told.

"What is there inside?" asked his father.

"There are countless seeds."

"Take one seed and cut it in half" said the boy's father.

The son did as he was told.

After much effort and patience, Śvetaketu succeeded in cutting one tiny seed.

"What is there, inside it?" asked his father.

"There is nothing inside father".

"Oh, my child, a tree like this cannot grow out of nothing."

"Truly father, there is nothing."

"That which you call nothing, is something that eyes cannot see – something invisible from which this huge



tree grows. That is the invisible Essence which pervades everything and is the root of everything that exists. That is the Truth. That is the Self. That thou art, O Śvetaketu."

*(Chāndogya Upanishat,
chapter VI, section 12)*

"Values education is more than teaching good manners and kindness. It is about helping children grasp a fuller vision of human potential".

Mary Kay Tam, M. Ed, Awakening Human Potential

Front cover: SSEHV Summer Camp, 2013 - Greece



The Sri Sathya Sai International Organization (SSSIO) is a spiritual and humanitarian organization that has been active for over 50 years, currently in 114 countries. The SSSIO Education Committee supports and promotes Sathya Sai Education worldwide including 39 Sathya Sai Schools, 28 Institutes of Sathya Sai Education, and programs of Sathya Sai Education in Human Values (SSEHV) and Sai Spiritual Education (SSE). For more information please contact: ec@sssio.org

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