

10 EDUCATION

1. Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man.
2. What is education? Is it book-learning? No. Is it diverse knowledge? Not even that. The training by which the current and expression of will are brought under control and become fruitful is called education. Now consider, is that education as a result of which the will, being continuously choked by force through generations, is now well-nigh killed out; is that education under whose sway even the old ideas, let alone the new ones, are disappearing one by one; is that education which is slowly making man a machine?
3. The true education is not yet conceived of amongst us. I never define anything, still it may be described as a development of faculty, not an accumulation of words, or, as a training of individuals to will rightly and efficiently.
4. A child teaches itself. But you can help it to go forward in its own way. What you can do, is not of the positive nature, but of the negative. You can take away the obstacles, but knowledge comes out of its own nature. Loosen the soil a little, so that it may come out easily. Put a hedge round it; see that it is not killed by anything and there your work stops. You cannot do anything else. The rest is manifestation from within its own nature. So with the education of a child. A child educates itself. You come to hear me, and when you go home, compare what you have learnt, and you will find you have thought out the same thing; I have only given it expression. I can never teach you anything; you will have to teach yourself, but I can help you perhaps in giving expression to that thought.
5. You see, no one can teach anybody. The teacher spoils everything by thinking that he is teaching. Thus Vedanta says that within man is all knowledge-even in a boy it is so-and it requires only an awakening, and that much is the work of a teacher. We have to do only so much for the boys that they may learn to apply their own intellect to the proper use of their hands, legs, ears, eyes, etc., and finally everything will become easy.
6. Haven't you read the stories from the Upanishads? I will tell you one. Satyakama went to live the life of a Brahmacharin with his Guru. The Guru gave into his charge some cows and sent him away to the forest with them. Many months passed by, and when Satyakama saw that the number of cows was doubled, he thought of returning to his Guru. On his way back, one of the bulls, the fire, and some other animals gave him instruction about the Highest Brahman. When the disciple came back, the Guru at once saw by a mere glance at his face that the disciple had learnt the knowledge of the Supreme Brahman. Now, the moral this story is meant to teach is that true education is gained by living in constant communion with Nature.
7. To me the very essence of education is concentration of mind, not the collecting of facts. If I had to do my education over again, and had any voice in the matter, I would not study facts at all. I would develop the power of concentration and detachment, and then with a perfect instrument I could collect facts at will. Side by side, in the child, should be

developed the power of concentration and detachment.

8. Well, you consider a man as educated if only he can pass some examinations and deliver good lectures. The education which does not help the common mass of people to equip themselves for the struggle for life, which does not bring out strength of character, a spirit of philanthropy, and the courage of a lion-is it worth the name? Real education is that which enables one to stand on his own legs. The education that you are receiving now in schools and colleges is only making you a race of dyspeptics. You are working like machines merely, and living a jelly-fish existence.

9. Education is not the amount of information that is put into your brain and runs riot there, undigested all your life. We must have life- building, man-making, character-making, assimilation of ideas. If you have assimilated five ideas and made them your life and character, you have more education than any man who has got by heart a whole library. If education were identical with information, the libraries would be the greatest sages in the world and encyclopaedias the Rishis.

10. Negative thoughts weaken men. Do you not find that where parents are constantly taxing their sons to read and write, telling them they will never learn anything, and calling them fools and so forth, the latter do actually turn out to be so in many cases? If you speak kind words to boys and encourage them, they are bound to improve in time. What holds good of children, also holds good of children in the region of higher thoughts. If you can give them positive ideas, people will grow up to be men and learn to stand on their own legs.

11. In language and literature, in poetry and in arts, in everything we must point out not the mistakes that people are making in their thoughts and actions, but the way in which they will gradually be able to do these things better. Pointing out mistakes wounds a man's feelings. We have seen how Sri Ramakrishna would encourage even those whom we considered as worthless, and change the very course of their lives thereby! His very method of teaching was a unique phenomenon.

12. Knowledge is inherent in man; no knowledge comes from outside; it is all inside. What we say a man `knows', should, in strict psychological language, be what he "discovers" or `unveils'. what a man "learns" is really what he "discovers" by taking the cover off his own soul, which is a mine of infinite knowledge. We say Newton discovered gravitation. Was it sitting anywhere in a corner waiting for him? It was in his own mind; the time came and he found it out.

13. 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 simply the suggestion, the occasion, which sets you to study your own mind, but the object of your study is always your own mind. The falling of an apple gave the suggestion to Newton, and he studied his own mind; he re-arranged all the previous links of thought in his mind and discovered a new link among them, which we call the law of gravitation, It was not in the apple nor in anything in the centre of the earth.

14. All knowledge, secular or spiritual, is in the human mind. In many cases it is not discovered, but remains covered, and when the covering is being slowly taken off we say "we are learning", and the advance of knowledge is made by the advance of this process of uncovering. The man from whom this veil is being lifted is the more knowing man, the man upon whom it lies thick is ignorant, and the man from whom it has entirely gone is all-knowing, omniscient

15. Like fire in a piece of flint, knowledge exists in the mind; suggestion is the friction which brings it out.

16. No one was ever really taught by another; each of us has to teach himself. The external teacher offers only the suggestion which rouses the internal teacher to work to understand things.

17. Education is not filling the mind with a lot of facts. Perfecting the instrument and getting complete mastery of my own mind [is the ideal of education]. If I want to concentrate my mind upon a point, it goes there, and the moment I call, it is free [again].