

[Global Family Education](#)

Category : [March 1996](#)

Published by Anonymous on Mar. 02, 1996

PUBLISHER'S DESK

Global Family Education

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

We have been speaking with many parents lately, in India, Singapore, Malaysia and the US, about the challenges that are discussed in this special edition on family. Clearly, humanity is at a crossroads, and the wisdom of all the religions of the world is needed more than ever to knit families together and empower them to raise fine, cultured citizens of the future. Education is a vital key.

Hindu educators have begun to foster a truly significant global education. They have found that now is the time to return to the most basic of human values, which are taught in the traditional tribal cultures of India. Cardinal among these values is that people should be the primary concern of educators, not their institutions nor economies. We need, in the century ahead, to teach all children tolerance, openness to different ways of life, different beliefs, different customs of dress and language. We need to stop teaching them to fear those who are different than themselves, stop teaching them hatred for peoples of other colors and other religions, stop teaching them to see the world as a field of conflict and instead instill in them an informed appreciation and a joyous reverence for the grand diversity we find around us. Modern education can do that,

provided the approach is changed. This is essential for sustainable family life in the future.

Basic human Vedic values should be taught to every child and every student. These eternal values have nothing to do with race, creed, caste, politics or ethnic culture. Learning how to read and write is not the ultimate goal. The ultimate goal of education is also knowing what to read and what to write as well as how to live in tune with nature, in harmony with the universe and at peace with oneself and one's fellowman.

A great Hindu saint once wrote, "Those who cannot live in harmony with the world, though they have learned many things, are still ignorant." The big question today that spiritual and political leaders are facing is how the peoples of the world are to live on this planet in harmony, and how to correct the errors of the past, and the resentments that still linger, to insure survival of humankind in their future. Education, they know, will play a key role, but only if educators focus first on human values which make humans better people, and secondly on technical know-how.

The human values we are speaking of here are known by all the tribal peoples, as they are inwardly a part of the knowledge within each of us. This knowledge is beautifully expressed in the article on the African Akan faith on page 10. These principles must be cultivated, however, to manifest in any society, community, village or family. We have simple problems on this planet--food for survival, water, air, shelter and health care. The tribals are well aware of each and have them under control. In the same spirit that the modern

pharmacologist journeys into the Amazon to discover medicines used for centuries that he can apply to world health care, so we in our various spheres of knowledge need to more and more rediscover the old ways and bring them forward.

Yes, global education begins with the root people of the planet who are thriving and existing as they have for century after century. They have a sustainable relationship with nature and gentle relationships with the world. We live on a garden planet, the only one we have discovered so far in our galaxy. Let's take heed of the people who live on it with respect and reverence--the Cherokee, the Navaho, the Tongan, the tribals of Australia and Brazil and of Asia, the fifty million tribals of India, the Polynesian communities, the Eskimos, the noble African tribes. The fact that we are a global people, each a part of the global family, living together in a global village, must be recognized.

In most Western countries, a student's education level is tested with two primary indicators--math and science on the one side and language on the other. On the basis of that, people are accepted into college. Not a word about social, cultural, spiritual, human understanding, and not a word about self-sufficiency, not a syllable about philosophy or lofty ideals or the interactivity of man and world and ecology. Math, science and language are essential, and must be strong, but they are not sufficient to develop a good person, a fully functioning human being, a useful citizen. In a real sense, these are peripherals. What we need to do globally is to make human consciousness the focus of human consciousness, rather than breaking it into bits and pieces of knowledge which are less important. We are focusing in the wrong area, having

failed to understand what education really is. Therefore, we are not truly educating the student anymore. They are given a few facts with the hope they will figure out the really important matters on their own. Learning by their own mistakes is the course. What kind of a course of study is that?

The basic human values must be cultivated, become popular and be allowed to develop and be taught in many unique ways. The cultivation of the student's character is what the final outcome of education is all about. Education means to "bring out, or draw forth knowledge from the soul of the person"--not to impose a dogma, but to awaken knowing from within, to teach the art of being a human being and how to usefully live with others. This is vitally important for the sake of families now and in the future.