

5. 'Youth Guides' for youth

WELL-WISHERS of Youth! Instructors of Youth! Young men of the College! When you look deep into the theory and practice of modern educational institutions and compare them with what we know of the theory and practice in ancient Indian-educational institutions, you will be shocked at the vast difference in the two systems. The ancient schools aimed at self-knowledge first and knowledge of the objective world as a corollary. Truly, that is the sign of the educated man--his awareness of his own reality. How can a person be termed educated, when he does not distinguish between the really real and the relatively real in himself as well as in the outer world?

Among the educated, we do not find signs of self-knowledge; nor do we see another quality that we expect every human being to have, namely, the quality of mercy, of sympathy or compassion. The 'un-educated' have this quality, more than the 'educated!' 'Education' seems to harden hearts and squeeze out the feelings of pity and piety. Many species of animals are soft, and tender in their habits and nature. The deer, the elephant, the cow, the horse---these live on *Saathwik* (pure) food and behave in a *Saathwik* manner; so, they are adored and even worshiped by man. Tigers, bears, hyaenas and other wild animals are feared by man and driven by him into the dark recesses of forests. The wonder is that the wildness, the cruelty and the terror-inflicting attributes of these beasts are developed, and exhibited by man himself! Man prides himself as the crown of creation; he declares that he has in him the spark of the Divine. But, he ignores it or suppresses it and revels in displaying the qualities of the ferocious beasts of the jungle.

Man has become the lair of cruel habits

Imagine the fate of the cows, when a tiger enters the manger. Can they survive the invasion? So too, the 'cows' of Truth, Justice, Peace and Love cannot survive in the human heart when the 'tigers,' namely, greed, anger and pride enter and play havoc. Today, the human heart, (especially the hearts of those who are 'educated') has become the lair of wild desires and cruel habits, *Rajoguna* (restless) has overwhelmed the *saathwik* (pure) traits.

A blind person cannot see the travails of others; nor can a deaf person be moved by the groans of a man in pain. The sight of suffering softens the heart; stories of distress urge one to rush to the rescue. But, education, as imparted now renders men indifferent to the sufferings of others, blind and deaf, in fact. Things are even worse, for educated persons under-going education in colleges and schools now inflict harm and pain, cause loss and injury, and revel in violence; and apparently enjoy doing so! Observing this downfall in standards, one is tempted to doubt whether these are men, or, beasts in human skin!

Students of today are the teachers of tomorrow

Embodiments of the Divine *Aathma* (Divine Self)-Yours is the responsibility to cherish and develop the ancient culture of this land. Bhaarath is the land of Love, of *yoga* (divine communion), of spiritual search, and of joyful sacrifice, of the lower self to promote the interest of the higher self. But, this day, Bhaarath is afflicted with the poverty of all these precious qualities. Greed, anger, hatred and other evil traits have displaced the traits of love, brotherhood and compassion. In the educational field, too, the evil has grown. Educational institutions are the nursery for tradition, loyalty to culture, and ideals of service to society. They train youth to benefit by the experience of the previous generations and to march on towards victory in the campaign to master this world and the next.

Therefore, I desire that the youth of the land must make the fullest use of these precious years, when they are at College, to learn and practise the culture of this great land, they should not fritter away this crucial period in their lives, indulging in wasteful and wild adventures causing loss and pain to others. The students today are the teachers of tomorrow's colleges; they have to shape the destiny of this land, through their precepts and example. You cannot be young for long. Every day you are moving nearer and nearer to the 'age' when you have to take up the burden of running a home, and running the country. If you relish the infliction of loss and damage, of suffering and pain, today, surely you cannot complain when later, you have to encounter those very evils at the hands of the youth of those days.

Wisdom grows where only humility prevails

Wisdom flashes like lightning amidst the clouds of the inner sky; one has to foster the flash, and preserve the light. That is the true sign of the 'educated' person. Do not believe that mastery of many tomes make you wise. Wisdom can grow only where humility prevails. It thrives when man is afraid of vice and sin, and is attached to the Divine, in himself and in all else. The crisis of character which is at the root of all the troubles everywhere has come about, as a result of the neglect of this aspect in education.

I shall illustrate this by one little example. The Universities lay down the rule that a student is entitled to a degree, when he gets thirty marks out of a total hundred prescribed for a question paper. This means that you can get the distinction of being an 'educated' person, even if you commit seventy mistakes! When such a degree holder gets a job on the basis of having committed seventy mistakes(!), he easily slides down, by force of circumstance, into a hundred mistakes out of every hundred tasks that he has to do. Naturally, the country suffers and people bemoan the educational system. Education today has to move haltingly and half-heartedly through a series of strikes, *gheroos* (lock-ins), and other interruptions and so, students are seldom able to carry out their primary duty of study. Later on too, when they become responsible officers, they easily tend to neglect the duty that is primary to them at that stage.

While you are students, you must feel that study is your first and only duty. Be witness of what is happening outside the classroom; do not rush out and get distracted. Try to identify the One in the many; become strong, physically, mentally and spiritually; imbibe as much as possible the wisdom that has been gathered in the past; cultivate the skills by which you can serve society. The heart soaked in compassion is verily the Altar of God.

If you forget these ideals and allow greed, conceit and hate to take root in your hearts, you are only lowering yourselves to the level of the beast. As a first step in educational progress you must revere your parents and have gratitude and love towards them. It is through them that you have this wonderful chance of life on earth. They are the custodians of culture, the earliest teachers who instilled virtue into you. In this College, the ancient ideals of Truth, Righteousness, Equanimity and Love are held before you, all the time. I am sure you have imbibed them, and I bless you that you by your example, propagate them wherever you are. Have compassion in your hearts for the unfortunate brothers and sisters, who are unlearned, ill or suffering. Try your best to open their eyes, to cure their ills and to alleviate their distress. That is the message I wish to give you this day.

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