

26. The fourfold exhortation

STUDENTS, Teachers, persons interested and involved in Education!

Education has to make a person the concrete embodiment of the higher Reality, that is the basis of the material universe, of life in the world, of the expanding dominions of the mind, and of the human community. He is the mirror which reflects the Divinity inherent in man, evident in every expression of his character. The process of education has to inspire man to discover the Truth seeking it through the study of the objective world. Fulfilment lies in the awareness of that Truth which, when once known, does not need correction or modification or revision. Education aims at this consummation in a life lived in the atmosphere of unity, devoid of the varied demands of diversity. The educated person knows the inter-relation between what appears as distinct.

Real sign of an educated person

Education must reveal the path which enables man to tap the dormant spring of divinity within, without getting entangled with the mass of created objects. It has to lay stress on spiritual transformation as more fundamental than even moral uplift. The real sign of an educated person is his attitude of sameness towards all. He sees in society the manifestation of divinity. Education does not lead from nature to the all pervading *Atma*. It leads man to study nature, with the unifying *Atmic* outlook. When the powers of Nature are harnessed to narrow selfishness, they recoil on him as plagues. When they are revered as revelations of the *Atma*, they become beneficial. Education equips man with this insight. The process by which man foregoes his freedom and is bound in the net of desire can never be education. It has to aim at ensuring peace and stability in each country by continuous precept and practice of the basic unity.

After acquiring this sacred vision and inspiration, *Brahmacharis* moved into the next stage of life, into society for founding and fostering families. The occasion was marked by a Convocation where they were provided with holy guidelines and reminded of their duties. When the young are at the *Gurukul*, with fellow students and teachers, engaged in study, one had to strive ceaselessly to cultivate serenity, purity and detachment, and try to identify their truth. For, the stage of *Brahmacharya* (studentship) sets the pace and decides the fate of three subsequent stages of householder, recluse and monk.

Students! When you lag behind and fail to achieve success in study and the practice of ideals, your mothers are steeped in agony. The motherland, Bharathamatha, too suffers the same agony a thousand times more, when you lag behind in acquiring moral and spiritual excellence. Students have the responsibility to save both mother and motherland from the agony and to confer *Ananda* instead. He alone can be considered a real student, who has realised this obligation.

Everyone of the leaders and elders you know, administrators and officers, in political and other fields has been, while young, students like you. You have to take their roles later. Do not ignore this fact. You have to help the progress of the motherland by work among fellow citizens with sincere effort and patent example.

Absence of spiritual vision

What is the meaning of the expression "human progress"? It means raising the level of moral life and brightening daily lives with goodness and godliness. Life has to be an incessant process of repair and reconstruction, of discarding evil and developing goodness. Paddy grains have to

discard the husk in order to become consumable rice. Cotton has to be reformed as yarn to become wearable cloth. Even gold nuggets have to undergo the crucible and get rid of alloys. Man too must purify his instincts, impulses, passions, emotions and desires so that he can progress in good thoughts, deeds and words. The individual is valued only on the basis of the level of transformation he has attained. But, today, the rulers have no capacity to transform the people, nor have the people the urge to transform the rulers. The absence of spiritual vision is the cause for this situation. So, efforts must be directed now to cultivate that vision among students who will be forming the citizens and rulers of tomorrow. Students of today must be encouraged to follow disciplined and devoted habits of thinking and living.

This is the age of novel civilisation

Students form the foundation of a nation; they are the roots that hold it firm. Their moral stamina ensures a home of peace and an era of joy and happiness. Science and technology have expanded vastly today. Their gifts have made life more comfortable and pleasant. But they have brought with them grief and fear, loss and calamity in far greater degree. More than all, they have bred domination and concentration of authority. The reason is absence of proper discrimination while accepting and utilising these gifts.

This is the age of a novel civilisation. The emergence of discordant notes has silenced the call of the divine from within man. He is eager to make his life a merry-go-round but it is turning into a painful tangle of troubles. He does not try to discover the cause of this contradiction. Instead, he wastes his years in empty ephemeral pomp and pretense. He is unaware of the value of each passing day. He is caught in the coils of speed and splash--films, planes, radio, video, television etc. He is restless and has to encounter countless worries. Fear of imminent war or famine has gripped man. Fear, while alone at home, fear while on the street! When insecurity prevails, how can man be happy?

The basic reason for this pathetic situation is the spending spree for satisfying sensual desires. To get his child admitted, a middle class employee pays thousands of rupees to the school. He pays lakhs of rupees to secure a seat in a professional college for his son or daughter. He competes with his neighbours in the purchase of gadgets which they parade, with the help of loans or corrupt practices. Technology ruins step by step the character of men. The son secures an LL.B. involving the sacrifice by his parents of their income. He gets no job. So, he decides on a career as lawyer. He has to own a car, though hungry and poor.

Man is no more human

Thus, truth, justice and morality have eroded everywhere and in every field. Man is no more human. Students! I exhort you to recognise this tragic situation and dedicate yourselves to the task of promoting the happiness and welfare of the people, and presenting shining examples of truth, sincerity and integrity. Give up the notion that you are undergoing education in order to grab jobs. Convince yourselves that you are earning knowledge leading to wisdom, in order to serve others all your lives.

The advice given by *gurus* during Convocations in hermitages is the same. "Mother and Motherland are more worthy of reverence than Heaven. Your parents are sacrificing their comforts and even necessities in order to ensure your progress. It is your duty to revere them and make them happy. Engage yourselves in acts that others will respect and not in acts of which you feel ashamed. Honour the elders. Love your native land." After receiving such directions from

the *Gurus*, students returned home, with hearts heavy with gratitude and sorrow at the departure from the hermitages. The Convocation marked the close of a sweet chapter in life when the ideals to be pursued in later years were implanted. So the leave taking was fraught with humility and hope. They realised then that life involved both coming together and separation from each other. They engraved in their hearts in golden letters the advice imparted to them on the occasion of departure.

Man has no fear of sin, nor love for God

But today, in the very same land, Convocations are polluted by noisy interruptions, disgusting behaviour and demonstrations of disbelief. Man has become so stupid that he has neither fear of sin nor love for God. How then can he be secure in peace and escape from catastrophe? These two are two eyes of mankind. Without them, man has to totter in darkness, however learned and scholarly he may be. Where can we find students with compassion in their hearts, spreading peace all around, straight and true in behaviour, righteous and virtuous? Individuals .who have illumined their innate good nature with such holy qualities and who. are eager to be helpful to others are not visible, to the eye. So, you have to acquire and develop the practice of Truth, Righteousness and Serenity.

Do not crave to acquire cultures foreign to ours. We have a treasure of gold in our Bharat. Why seek it outside? The culture of Bharat is sublime, splendrous, sacred, divine. It can fulfill all your high desires, quench your deepest thirst.

I am on the search, I am on the search

For one who ever clings to moral path.

Can tree cotton fruit ever mango be?

Can any stout cane claim sugar within?

Can pebbles that shine ever candy become?

Let not form deceive; see the nature and judge.

So, students have to cultivate character. That is what I am searching for.

Students! You must be aware of the implications of studentship. You have to translate that awareness into actual practice. You have to enshrine the experience in your hearts. You must, then, share the joy of that experience with others. Do not allow your minds to get agitated with limitless desires.

First, render your homes bright by pleasing your parents. If you cause grief to them your entire life will be soaked in grief and your children, in turn, are sure to sink you in sorrow. Do not be arrogant towards your parents because you have studied a few things. "Consider the Mother as God; consider the Father as God; consider the Teacher as God; consider the Guest as God." Follow this fourfold exhortation with full faith in its validity, derive *Ananda* therefrom and inspire others by your example, so that the Motherland may progress and prosper. Fulfil this desire of mine, with my blessings.

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