

51. Adhere to Sathya and Dharma

*This motherland of ours gave to the world
Noble souls renowned in all the continents;
It is the land which freed
The nation from Western rulers.
This Bhaarath is reputed for its scholars hip.
It is the sacred land which stood forth
As the master in the realms of music,
Literature and sacred lore;
Born in the land of Bhaarath,
Noted for its fine arts and natural beauty,
It is your bounden duty to foster
The glory and prosperity of the Motherland.*

BHAARATH, which in the past was noted for its educational achievements in various spheres, is today confronted with a crisis in its educational system. The system attaches value only to the acquisition of degrees. Is it for earning a mess of potage that these degrees should be got? Or should they be acquired for rendering service to society? Or are they to be acquired for getting *Vijnaana* (wisdom)? Neither students, nor the authorities, nor the parents appear to be bothered about these questions.

The educational system of today

Can an education which is not of use to society or the nation be called education at all? Every year the colleges are letting loose upon the world lakhs of degree-holders. What is their future? What is the goal of the educational system? When you pose these questions, the answer you get is that the educational system has become mechanic. In today's education you find no trace of character-building, respect for values and regard for tradition. Education is pursued for selfish purposes and not for serving society.

There are in Bhaarath today 200 universities, 90,000 colleges and nearly a crore undergraduate students. What is the outcome of all this prodigious educational effort? What is happening to these millions of students and how is the outside world affected by them? The educational institutions appear to be mainly factories turning out graduates. Even the educational authorities seem to be content with statistical progress rather than the real achievements of the educational system. Schools and colleges are mushrooming everywhere, with or without official sanction. There is a pretence of acquiring education, without anyone being aware of what it really means.

Knowledge against Character

"Of what use is the acquisition of all kinds of knowledge if one has not good qualities and has no moral values?" says a Telugu Poem. What for is academic knowledge acquired? Is it for deceiving others? Or is it for promoting one's selfish interests? Or for the selfish enjoyment of pleasures? Education today is being, used largely for these purposes than to promote the well-

being of society or the nation. An education that serves no useful purpose in daily life is utterly worthless.

Education today promotes largely intellectual cleverness.

What is the use if the head is filled with bad thoughts,

If the ears listen only to scandals,

If the eyes look enviously

And the mind is plotting misdeeds? (Telugu poem).

All that is noble in human life is being destroyed. The students of today are divorced from all that is ennobling.

Educated youth, instead of going to the relief of the suffering and the needy, are raising problems for society. But they are not to blame. The fault lies with the educational system. Governments in India set up many committees to report on the reform of the system. From the time of Morarji Dhesai till today these committees have been set up. No one knows what happened to the reports of these committees. There is no evidence that anyone in authority is concerned about training our young people to be useful and ideal citizens of the nation. In the place of high ideals, students today are cultivating high ambitions. What is required is not Aasa (desire) but the *Aasana* (ideal).

Students have no awareness of the greatness of humanness. They do not understand the significance of unity in thought, word and deed. Instead of unity and harmony, you have only discord and division. All problems arise out of this discord.

Respect for culture undermined

What is important is *samskaara* (culture) much more than mere knowledge.

Occidental education has undermined

Respect for Indian culture,

Eclipsed Truth and Righteousness in daily life,

Encouraged fascination for foreign languages

And eroded the love of native languages,

Broken the norms of social behaviour,

And destroyed the respect for teachers.

(Telugu Poem)

The higher values of education are being eroded continuously.

Education is getting increasingly commercialized, especially in professional courses like engineering and medicine. I am unable to understand what joy the students derive from going through these excessively expensive courses.

Students should first of all know how to deal with the problems of daily life. They have to acquire general knowledge and common sense. Practical knowledge is more important than

familiarity with books. It is this kind of bookish education that has led young people astray and made them lead worthless lives.

Serve the Motherland

Students! You are the children of Mother Bhaarath. You must cherish and foster the great culture of Bhaarath. Born in this motherland, you breathe her sacred air, drink her holy water and are sustained by her produce. Follow her sacred footsteps, engage yourselves in service to society in a spirit of dedication. You have to transform yourselves in accordance with our ancient culture. Only then will your humanness be vindicated. Otherwise all your education will be like cultivating a barren land.

Your own conduct accounts for how you live. There is no need to blame anyone else. Begin with the purification of your minds. Then your thoughts, your looks and your behaviour will become pure.

Today men's actions are governed by selfishness and self-interest. Even when one appears to love another, it is only out of self-interest. Self-interest is bound to exist. But there should be a limit to it. As long as they remain as students, the young people appear well-behaved. But the moment they get out of colleges and enter the outside world, they get polluted.

Students! Wherever you may be, remain in good company. Entertain and do good deeds. Adhere to good conduct.

Inherently all students are good. But the social environment pollutes their minds. They are spoiled by bad associations. Hence they should take good care about the company they keep. They must bear in mind three vital maxims: One, "*Sarvabhootha hithe rathah*" (Rejoice in the well-being of all living creatures). Two: "*Sarvajnaana samayukthah*" (Have comprehensive knowledge of all things). Three: "*Sarvaguna Samayukthah*" (Develop all qualities equally). When you develop these qualities, your life becomes exemplary.

Today the world is filled with violence and fear. The root cause of all this is selfishness. Adhere to truth. Truth is your life breath. Truth transcends the categories of time. It is changeless. It is invincible. "*Sathyameva Jayathe*" is our national motto. The Chinese, though different in culture from us, also adore Truth. Truth is the basis of genuine prosperity.

The importance of Truth

There is a story relating to Prahlada. Once Indra secured from Prahlada the gift of his *Sheelam* (character). When character left Prahlada, the goddesses of Fame, Royal Prosperity and Prowess left him one after the other. Prahlada allowed them to go. But when *Sathya* (Truth) started to leave, Prahlada prayed to the goddess not to leave him. The moment Truth stayed with Prahlada, the other deities representing Fame, Prosperity etc. also returned.

Students! In whatever situation you may be placed in your official careers, never give way to untruth. You must uphold *Dharma*, which means acting according to your conscience. Always follow the dictates of your conscience. This is the meaning of the Upanishathic dictum: "*Sathyam Vadha, Dharmam Chara*" (Speak the truth, follow righteousness). This was the advice given by the Rishis to their disciples when they completed their studies.

Students! This is a great opportunity in your lives. Esteem this day of the Convocation as a sacred day. Take to your hearts the good counsel given to you. Dedicate your lives to righteous

ways. Earn a good name for yourselves. That is all that I desire. Bring a good name for your parents and for the Institute where you have studied.

Shed all fear except the fear of swerving from Truth. You should not be afraid because you are not an animal. You should not cause fear in others because you are not a wild beast. You are human beings. When you act upto this truth, you will benefit society.

I bless you all with the hope that you will not onlylead good lives but make your friends and all others with whom you are associated lead worthy lives.

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Values for Education; Education Jar Life; Life for Love;; Love for Man; Man for Service; Service for Spirituality; Spirituality for Society; Society for Nation; Nation for World; World for Peace.

Baba