

# EDUCATION

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## WHAT IT IS AND WHAT IT NEEDS

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## EDUCATION : WHAT IT IS AND WHAT IT NEEDS

I am deeply sensible to the honour which you, Mr. Chairman, have done to me by asking me to participate in the Seminar and to deliver this national lecture.

I crave your indulgence if, in my talk today, I appear to be somewhat dogmatic in some of the assertions I make. I am very conscious of the limitation of time and I am also anxious not to dilute the effect of the excellent national lectures given earlier in the course of the Seminar.

Education and life are interchangeable terms. To live is education. There can be no education which is life-less Education begins with birth and continues as long as life lasts : from the cradle to the grave. Some say that it was there even before birth and continues after ; but that depends on our conception of what life is. Education has no pauses as long as there is life.

The fundamental nature of the process of education also continues to be the same throughout, although, as a person matures and is called upon to operate at higher and higher conceptual levels and to cope with ever new and complex situations, he has to adopt highly sophisticated techniques of learning. The conventional division of education according to stages—primary, secondary, university and the rest—is a matter of convenience and it largely reflects changes in emphasis on one of the aspects of learning or another. The primary stage is more concerned with the tools of learning, acquisition of the skills of learning, cultivation of habits of body and attitudes of mind necessary for efficient

acquisition of knowledge, formation of sound judgments and skilled performance of tasks which have to be done. At a later stage, there may be greater emphasis on understanding of relations between abstract concepts and other refined intellectual processes. But education continues right through life; in schools and outside in waking life and in sleep.

Education is, in a way, like music in which two distinguishable notes keep beating and as they alternate in varying rhythm, they reflect how the powers potential in a person grow —powers of the body and mind, of intellect and imagination and of creativity and intuition. Education begins with wonder : a thrill of the mysterious when mind encounters some strange phenomenon. Native urges of curiosity drive the mind, often romantically, to unravel the mystery of the unknown. There is a little poet in every human being who, like the lunatic, lover and poet scans the wonderful creation around him with his eyes in "fine frenzy rolling". Whose heart does not leap up when he beholds the starry-path meander majestically across the heavens in the darkness of the night? or when he beholds the endless and vain rolling of the blue ocean or the opening of the dew-washed petals of a flowerbud to greet the rising sun? The mind does not merely "watch and receive" as Wordsworth would say. It sees more than meets the eye-castles in the rolling clouds; eight-horse driven coach of prince-charming in a pumpkin. He also experiences awe when he sees sorrow and death and he wonders, why? He feels within himself the urge as well as the power to find out answers. He delights in his freedom to think, to imagine, to understand, and to have visions. If he tries, he can perceive relatedness in the apparently unrelated world around him. If he has the will, he can also create things of immortal value.

The second note in the rhythm of education is somewhat sterner, it requires discipline and control of the self within. Things must be known as they are, not as what mind makes

of them. He cautiously tries to see things with seeing eyes to search for meaning and to understand in order to be able to explain what is really happening around him. He toys with things around him, arranges and rearranges the phenomena of his interest and manipulates them to make them yield the secret of their behaviour. He learns that all knowledge is tentative; but his inborn restlessness and discontent allow him no option but to press the enquiry further and further. His is the joy of hunt not of kill. The harder the probe, the greater the thrill. Poet Frost called it the "fascination of the difficult." Self-discipline, self-searching, and self-integrity underlie his rational thinking, his judgments and understanding of life.

Freedom of imagination and self-control; dissent and discipline take turns and appear in myriad forms in the play of education. They constitute the very essence of the process of education which can be summed as the art of management of dissent. Dissent loses its fire when blind; but if pressed with discipline, can enlighten new realms of knowledge and of action. The spirit of romance and rigour of discipline, both, must be kept alive in a fine balance lest one should destroy the other. Wordsworth complained that "we murder to dissect." What is essential in education is to stimulate and keep alive the sense of wonder, the thrill of mystery without which both life and learning are dull, and at the same time, to subject the self-within to rigorous discipline in the pursuit of truth.

Education is education of the pupil : the individual. This is a truism so self-evident that its implications in the process of education remain un-noticed. In the system of education importance is given to curriculum, to content of courses in various subjects, to the teacher, to the school and its management, to text books, to examinations and the rest. These are all important factors in organisation of education; but it is essential not to forget that the individual pupil is the centre

of all learning : it is his education. Frost observed that only a free born can realise and act upon the assumption that all learning is individual. Those who prepare and prescribe curriculum would have us believe that they are the key factor in education and determine what is education and its quality. In their anxiety to modernise courses of instruction they keep loading the syllabus with new concepts in the subject without cutting out the dead-wood in it. They are subject-centred and often unconcerned with the interests and capacities of the pupil. Programmes of instruction have undoubted value; but what is far more important is how the pupil learns and how he exercises the powers of his mind, how he understands and how he forms his judgments. The teacher, in his turn, is an important factor and his claim to shouldering major responsibility for education of the pupil cannot be disputed. But the process of education of every person takes place even when there is no formal teacher. The world outside, the home, the parents, the streets, picture houses, T.V. and all that each individual sees and hears, and all that he has to do constitute his education; often bad education. The teachers' role is to ensure that what a pupil learns is good and useful to him and that he learns by using the powers of his mind skilfully and efficiently. The teacher guides the pupil by his skill in the art of teaching and, what is far more important, by the example of his personal life and by his habits of living, thinking and working. He inspires the pupil to use his native powers and capacities : powers of the body and mind, imagination and intuition, understanding and creativity. He trains the pupil to use his powers well and wisely for self-refinement as well as for the good of those with whom it is his lot to live. However, education of each individual pupil is what he makes of it through his own effort.

Three native urges underlie growth of a person from childhood to adolescence and to youth. They are significant to his education. The first is the urge to be free. Freedom is a continuous initiative from within to fullness and harmony;

to aspiration and creativeness; in a word, to self-realisation. A little bird, soon after it is hatched, begins to test its wings; later it flies and then it soars : blythe spirit! It builds a nest of its own. Similarly, perhaps more slowly, a child tends to free itself from the apronstrings of his mother and, in course of time, to break away from her. He strives to build his own economic and social destiny. But he soon realises that there are more bonds that bind him than he perceives and they hold him in various ways unobtrusively; but none the less firmly. For example, knowledge of the outer-world comes from his senses which are rooted in the flesh which binds and also blinds him. He is unsure of the reality of what he perceives. Later he finds reasons to distrust words which are the valuable means to knowledge. There is much truth in Ludwig Wittgenstien's observation that words are cheats and there is good reason to be on guard against bewitchment of intellect by language. If he is sensitive, he begins to feel that he is in a prison-house and every circumstance throws rings around him and screens his knowledge. However the human spirit is defiant in its struggle for emancipation and strains to experience what lies beyond the realm of senses, of reason and of language. His quest is beautifully described in the inimitable words of Taittiriopanishad :

यतो याचो निवर्तन्ते अप्राप्य मनसा सह ।

(that world) from which speech along with the mind return without entering it—unfulfilled.

The human spirit endeavours to transcend all its limitations to experience a moment of boundlessness. This spirit underlies the ancient concept of education in India :

सा विद्या या विमुक्तये : that is education which emancipates. The same impulse is described by an Urdu poet :

हवे हस्ती बहुत कुछ नेस्ती तक खेंच लाया हूं ।  
मिला दंगा किसी दिन देखना मंजिल को मंजिल से ॥

The Poet claims that in his fancy's flight he has stretched boundaries of existence very close to the boundaries of non-existence. May be ! on some day he will dissolve the boundaries which appear to separate existence from non-existence. The second urge is closely related to the first. The growing adolescent experiences within his body and mind some vague and deep stirrings which are the beginnings of the impulse to find a mate. This urge opens for him the realm of fancies and drives him to go beyond himself to discover himself. Management of this urge, what the ancients in our country called 'brahmacharya' 'ब्रह्मचर्य' gives character and colour to the personality of the individual and in the end determines for him the values of his social life. According to Sigmund Freud the human civilisation is based on permanent sublimation of human instincts. Professor Herbert Marcuse observed : "Methodical sacrifice of the libido, its rightly enforced deflection to socially useful activities and expressions is culture". One cannot be a human being without cultural experience. Some fortunate persons have been able through self-discipline to transcend themselves and experience love of the kind and at the level which is best described by the mystic poet Kabir in his immortal couplet :

जब तू था तब मैं नहीं  
जब मैं था तू नहीं ।  
प्रेम गली अति साकरी  
ता में दो न समाय ।।

"Where you were (there in the lane of love) I was not ; when I was there, you were not. The lane of love is much too narrow to admit two : "I" and "you". To get into the lane together I should shed my 'I' ness and you, your 'I' ness. I and you must merge into one another and become indistinguishable.

Poet Tulsidas refers to his experience of his "knowledge" of God. Knowledge has limitations and God is assumed to

be infinite and limitless. How can the limited grasp the unlimited? Tulsi says :

सोह जानहुं जेहि बेहु जनाई  
जानति तुम्हहि तुम्हहि होई जाई ।

All knowledge comes from Thee : Knowing Thee I become Thee. Tulsis intuitive experience and power of vision enables him to transcend the limitations to which the flesh is heir. German poet Schiller visualised the liberating role of the play impulse as that of abolishing time in time. Aesthetic state which is the state of liberation enables transcendence.

The third fundamental urge inherent in the growing person is to fashion for himself his philosophy of life viz. his understanding of himself as well as of his environment in which he will have to live and his conscious effort in the shaping of his attitudes which will reflect his sense of values and determine his decisions. He must learn to appreciate how parts are related to the whole and how to value each part as it is in itself and in its relation to the whole. He must also have visions, as poet Blake points out :

"To see a world in a grain of sand,  
And a heaven in a wild flower,  
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand,  
And eternity in an hour."

In the same strain Emerson observed : "He crowds eternity into an hour and stretches an hour to eternity." For Heisenberg it is a search to discover a principle of differentiation and yet of relationship lucid enough to justify and purify scientific, philosophic and other knowledge, both discursive and intuitive, by accepting their interdependence. He considered this attitude to be the result of crisis made articulate by science viz. a new awakening in the midst of flux. Watching change and being in it. Niels Bohr described the



idea aptly when he said "we are both actors and spectators in the universe." The function of education is to help the pupil to carve out for himself his philosophy of life by which he must live. He needs to have a vision of his destiny and a clear view of the role he must play in life. A man is known by what he aspires to be; what he loves and cares for and the image with which he identifies himself. It is necessary to appreciate that a philosophy of life can be a very wicked one. It is still more essential to appreciate that if a person does not take the trouble of undertaking the hard—perhaps the hardest—task of evolving a philosophy of life for himself through his own effort, there are in modern life forces at large that would readily do it for him. There can be no philosophical vacuum ! fashionable political dogmas, newspapers, T.V., radio and commercial advertisements will make all choices for him and fashion his attitudes in life and determine his decisions. Professor Marcuse very relevantly observes : "The modes of domination have changed : they have become increasingly technological and productive, and even beneficial; consequently, in the most advanced areas of industrial society, the people have been coordinated and reconciled with the system of domination to an unprecedented degree !"

Even in the circumstances of modern life described by Professor Marcuse, there is no room for despair, if education in the proper sense is allowed to play its role viz. to awaken the pupil to appreciation of his freedom and responsibility in making choices in accordance with his own philosophy of life. But that is the hard way of life : also the nobler. It demands unceasing examination and re-examination of one's beliefs and opinions in the light of new experience and subjecting them to scrutiny to keep them ever bright and burning.

A person's philosophy of life and his value-system are reflected in his life-style; in the way he thinks, speaks, moves

and works—in his minutest behaviour. The more disciplined ones order their life according to their thoughts and to the values by which they stand and thus they cultivate studiously and skilfully a style of their own—which according to Whitehead is “the highest morality of the mind,” and the most austere of mental qualities. According to him style is an aesthetic sense based upon admiration of direct achievement of a foreseen end simply and without waste. Grace lies in performance of a task,—mental or physical—with perfection, with minimum effort and with aesthetic finish. The style is the man. Geeta says : यो यश्छदः स एव सः A man is what his श्रद्धा is : “श्रद्धा” “Shradha” is a difficult word to translate : it means one’s commitment to beliefs and values with which one identifies oneself.

In this context it would be of interest to digress to recall questions which, according to the Geeta, Arjun—the ideal student---put to Krishna---the ideal teacher---regarding the qualities of “स्थितप्रज्ञ” and “समाधिस्थ” the wise one who is perfectly self-controlled.

स्थितप्रज्ञस्य का भाषा समाधिस्थस्य केशव ।

स्थितधोः किं प्रमायेत किमासीत् व्रजेत किम् ॥

What kind of language does the wise one use? What is the manner of his speech ? How does he sit down ? How does he walk ?

The enquiry relates to the style of functioning of a person who has attained perfection and whose actions reflect the qualities of his mind.

I am also tempted to recall an old Hindi couplet which to me is significant :

मुख भवण ब्रह्म नासिका सब ही के एक ठोर ।

हंसिबो, सुनिबो बोलिबो चतुरन को कुछ और ॥

In the face of every man the mouth, the ears, the nose are located at their respective places. But the way the wise one laughs, listens and speaks is very different from the rest.

The "chatur"—the wise one is known by his style.

Education fails if it does not help the individual to cultivate the hardest of all hard arts—the art of life viz. the art of self-determination inspired and guided by elevated thoughts, humane values and refined tastes.

Let us turn to enquire what does a person carry home after he has had his education ! What belongs to him and endures with him? It is certainly not the knowledge of facts and information which he has learnt during his studies in different subjects. Knowledge keeps growing and what one learns today—in physics and chemistry, zoology and botany, economics and psychology—becomes obsolete in course of time. The French essayist, Montaigne put it beautifully : "I will rather fashion my mind than furnish it." I have already referred to the opportunity a man has during his education of making himself and architecturing his mind and manner according to his vision of himself. It is interesting to recall in this context the question which the teacher Krishna put to the disciple Arjun after his course of education was completed :

कश्चिदेतद्धृतं पार्थ स्वयैकप्रेण क्षेतसा ।

कच्चिदज्ञानसंमोहः प्रणष्टस्ते धनंजय ॥

Shri Krishna asks : Arjun ! you have heard me with rapt attention. Tell me what attachments—to views and values—to which you were attached due to ignorance—are destroyed (as the result of your education)?

Answer of Arjun is worthy of thought. He says :

नष्टो मोहः स्मृतिर्लब्धा ह्यवप्रसादान्मयाभ्युत ।

स्थितोऽस्मि गतसंदेहः करिष्ये वक्षनं तव ॥

Thanks to your favour Krishna my attachments made due to ignorance and illusion are now destroyed. I now know myself, I am firm in respect of what I consider to be true and just I have no doubts left in my mind. I shall abide by thy words.

In brief, Arjun has no knowledge or views which are untested and unscrutinised. He is free from doubts and firm in respect of his concepts of truth and virtue.

But a question arises. What does Arjun mean by ending up by assuring Krishna that he will carry out faithfully Krishna's bidding? How can the mind of Arjun, liberated by instruction by a great master, still entertains wish to conform blindly to his master's teaching rather than to think out for himself his own course of action? It is fair to recall the words of Krishna to which Arjun refers in order to keep the record straight. According to the ancient traditions the teacher was required to give अनुशासन some directive principles—to guide the life and thinking of the pupil and this was done by Krishna in an earlier couplet which I quote:

इति ते ज्ञानमाख्यानं गुह्याद्गुह्यतरं मया ।  
विष्णवेतद्दशोषेण यथेच्छसि तथा कुरु ॥

Shri Krishna observes :

I have talked to you on the most profound among the profound themes. (Your education now has ended and now I prescribe for you the following code of conduct).

1. Think-over (again and again) what I have said and examine it without leaving out any point of view.

2. (After you have done so) you are free to do what you consider best.

The first of the directives given by Krishna to Arjun relates to two main characteristics of an educated mind viz. detachment and humility. Arjun is asked to respect and give fair and thoughtful consideration to all points of view other than his own and try to understand truth as others see it. I recall an impassioned observation made by Oliver Cromwell : "I beseech you in the bowels of Christ, think it possible you may be mistaken." Main characteristic of a trained intellect is its humility. The ancients in India used to say : "विद्या दहानिवृत्तयः" Knowledge begets humility. Arrogance is associated with dogmatic knowledge.

The second directive given by Krishna is a Charter of freedom to a trained mind to pursue truth wherever it leads and to express it as he sees it. Freedom to speak and act in accordance to one's conception of truth is also associated with a state of mind which is free from fear : "अभय" "abhaya" means : where there can be no fear. Tagore in Geetanjali dreamt of the heaven of freedom in which "the mind is without fear and the head is held high". Fear is associated with ignorance and there is no happiness where there is fear. It may be permissible in this context to recall the old Indian way of thinking according to which true liberty is attained by self-discipline directed to conquest of the mind particularly over the six enemies which tend to govern it viz. काम desire, क्रोध anger, लोभ greed, मोह attachment, मद intemperence, and मत्सर covetousness and jealousy.

No convocation address could be more elevating and more pertinent to the true spirit of education than what is contained in the directive given by Krishna to Arjun. Arjun's offer to abide by the final command of his master was not an act of abject conformism. On the contrary, Arjun's words express his commitment to the real spirit of education.

Another equally essential and enduring gain of education was considered to be **विवेक** —Vivek—skill in discriminating and forming sophisticated dispassionate judgments. Vivek covers the entire realm of thought and action and all fields of knowledge, scientific, philosophical, and the rest. Vivek or discrimination is required in day to day practical life. An educated person will resist being pushed about; he guards his freedom to take his own decisions and act accordingly. Ancient mythology in India gives ample illustrations to show that a man falls when he loses 'vivek'. Vivek helps to keep the spirit of enquiry alive.

Yet another distinguishing characteristic of an educated mind is what the ancients in India called **समत्व भाव**—which was commitment to equality of all. Equality was considered to be native to the dignity of man. It is in essence an ethical quality far more real and profound than the popular political principle of equality conveyed by the saying : one man one vote. A man's freedom and even his control over himself presupposes his regard to equality of all human beings. There are two concepts in Ishopanishad that merit quotation :

यस्तु सर्वाणि भूतान्यात्मन्येवानुपश्यति ।  
सर्वभूतेषु चात्मानं ततो न विजुगुप्सते ॥

यस्मिन् सर्वाणि भूतान्यात्मैवाभूद् विजानतः ।  
तत्र को मोहः कः शोक एक इवमनुपश्यतः ॥

The essence of the two concepts is summed up thus : He who has learnt to regard other beings in the same way as he regards himself cannot hate any one. He who has true knowledge and has experienced sameness with other beings can have no attachment, no sorrow. Good education enables a person to understand other men, their thinking and actions. Proper understanding demands as a precondition recognition of equality. According to Bhagwat Geeta what

distinguishes a cultured mind is that he is a समदर्शी that he sees all as equal whether they are of "low caste or dogs" शनि चैव श्वपाके च पंडित, समदर्शिनः. Like all abstract ethical concepts understanding of the concept of equality requires critical discrimination in determining its scope and levels lest it should be understood in the vulgar sense of what is merely egalitarian and levelling up with all merits going down to the lowest common factor. Love for easy life and weakening of the moral fibre in the social fabric often result in crystallisation of the otherwise unexceptionable principle of equality of men as expressed in the political axiom : one man one vote; into dictatorship which is accepted as convenient in spite of its ethical ugliness. The last but not the least important gain which is expected of good education in accordance with the Indian tradition is cultivation of a clear view of one's own "dharma" "धर्मः". I know of no equivalent of the term "dharma" in English language : but I am certain about one thing, namely, that the term "dharma" does not mean as it is popularly understood to mean, 'creed' or 'religion'. The term "dharma" connotes many things at the same time including eternal laws, justice, duty, practical morality and sometimes even custom. Literally it means what holds in the midst of change धारयति इति धर्मः । Dharma is the effort of the individual to reach out to the central order of things and events whose existence seems to be beyond doubt. 'Dharma' is essential to keep the entire society together. Each individual must work out for himself his own concept of dharma and his commitment to his innerself as well as to the world outside. This is a necessary part of his education because it determines what he is expected to do in life because of his personal attainments and his position. According to Mahamahopadhyaya Dr. Kane, "Dharma was a mode of life which regulated man's work and activities as a member of the society in order to bring about the gradual development of man and enable him to reach what was deemed to be the goal of human existence." Dharma is a comprehensive theory

which welds together principles of ethical, social, political and economic life. A person guided by his concept of dharma will be incapable of double standards in private and public life, in personal and commercial dealings. In popular language the noblest expression of 'dharma' is "दया" "daya"—compassion and of "तपस्" 'tapas' or 'self-purification' "क्षमा" "Kshama"—forgiveness. In essence "धर्म" is one's concept of one's duty. It determines how one plays one's game in life.

I shall resist talking at length about what is expected of a teacher. My views on this subject are embodied in an article published through the courtesy of Shri Kireet Joshi, in a recent publication by the Ministry of Education. But I will do poor justice to my talk if I do not refer to the quality that makes a great teacher. I can do no better than to recall two instances of great teachers with which Lord Snow opened one of his Rectorial addresses at the University of Aberdeen. Both instances are of professors at Cambridge University, Lord Snow's own university, and illustrate why a great university is great.

The first story relates to a very distinguished Professor of Mathematics at Cambridge University many many years ago. I am sorry I forgot his name; but in his time he was considered to be one of the tallest poppies in his field of study. One day he surprised the University by sending a letter to his Vice-Chancellor offering to resign from the proud chair which he held. But his offer was subject to one condition, namely, that his resignation should be accepted only if one of his undergraduate students is appointed to hold his chair in his place. He considered his own young pupil a worthier mathematician than himself. The world has since known the name of the pupil : Sir Issac Newton.

The second anecdote relates to nearer time ; to Professor Hardy of Cambridge University. When Professor Hardy was



presented some manuscripts containing mathematical work of an unknown mathematician he summarily rejected them as meaningless. But he kept wondering in his mind how can a person write non-sense so consistently as manuscripts showed. He reviewed the papers again and scrutinised them more closely. And he discovered a mathematical genius—Ramanujam. So great was Professor Hardy's admiration for his new find that he devoted the best part of his life to teaching Ramanujam—who was an untutored genius—the language of modern mathematics and translating Ramanujam's formulae into the language of modern mathematics for the benefit of contemporary mathematicians. But for Professor Hardy, Ramanujam would have ended his life as one of the many clerks do who enter government offices and pass away unknown and unsung.

The two great professors were great because they had the magnanimity to see greatness where it was least suspected. Magnanimity to sense greatness in others makes great teachers and great universities.

No teacher and no university can be greater than the society will allow them to be. Political bosses and bureaucrats who rule the society in the name of democracy, are more concerned with accumulation of power and positions of authority and are insensitive to the role of the teacher and of educational institutions, like the university, in shaping the future of the race. They show scant respect to the teacher and use him as if he was a mere tool for purposes other than education. In this context it would be refreshing to remind ourselves of the position which the teacher was allowed in the past in our country some time early in 1000 A.D. I refer to the account given by a Tibetan visitor, Negtshe of an assembly in the university of Vikramshila. Negtshe attended a congregation at the university at which more than 8000 bhikshus—scholars—were present. The first to enter was Vidya Kokila who was to preside over the assembly. The

more distinguished monks were given reserved seats. Raja of Vikramshila (King of Magadh and one who maintained the university by providing funds and other means) was given an exalted seat. But none of the monks, old and young, got up from their seats to mark his arrival. But all monks and the King rose from their seats when the learned monk, Vir Vajra, entered. The King showed no embarrassment at the behaviour of the assembly. This was not a solitary instance of the kind. In accordance with the noble traditions of the country learning was prized above all and the rulers who maintained scholars and universities, showed humility which added to their dignity. Great teachers appear only in a refined and enlightened society; they cannot blossom in an authoritarian society. Mathew Arnold gave a beautiful picture of his great teachers :

Rigorous teachers seized my youth,  
And purged my faith and trimmed its fires,  
Showed me the high white star of truth,  
And there made me gaze and there aspire.

The big question I have in mind is : Can our ruling classes dare to suffer such teachers ? It is only great societies that create great teachers and that great teachers create great societies. Small minds go ill with noble traditions exemplified by Vikramshila.

I have rolled through fifty years working in almost all fields of education : primary, secondary, university, professional and technical.

I have been a teacher, an inspector of schools, a director of public instruction, secretary to government and I have been involved in making and implementation of educational policies in the country. I have almost become a weather-watcher in the world of education and I think I owe it to

the Teachers' Commission to share with it what, in the light of my experience, ails education and what crucial measures appear to me to be imperative. I shall be very brief :

The first step should be to initiate measures necessary to depoliticise education and to protect it from the machinations of politicians and bureaucrats. Their influence cannot be totally eliminated but considerably reduced and channelled to better purposes. The present state is sad and inclement for education in our country. Just consider, for example, the number of transfers of teachers which take place in government schools and colleges in the states, most of them to please local MLAs and those who hold positions in parties in power. The transfers of which I have personal knowledge are absurd. I know, for example, that under pressure in one school a good chemistry teacher, loved by his pupils, was transferred and in his place a teacher qualified to teach economics was posted, again to oblige some busy body. Transfers are made for power and for profit. A time has come when education should be entrusted to statutory autonomous bodies consisting of able and experienced persons whose credibility is above suspicion. The experience of the working of the University Grants Commission which has acted as a buffer between government and educational institutions, shows the way how educational administration can minimise undesirable pressures. It is necessary to have such autonomous bodies for viable regions, not necessarily linguistic. The jurisdiction of the regions of the autonomous bodies should cut across the boundaries of the linguistic states to free education from ugly chauvinism resulting from creation of linguistic states. Everything possible should be done to give education a humane character and national significance. There are many thinkers who would wish it to have a national importance as well as involvement of local communities directly concerned with the institutions.

The second measure which I commend for consideration relates to recruitment of the teacher which should be made

on the criterion of merit, and merit alone, as determined in a national or region based competitive examination held periodically by a competent examination body specially created for the purpose. Merit-based selection should be followed by an adequate period of probation during which the candidate should be trained and his personal commitment to teaching tested. It is equally necessary to weed out as early as possible those whose heart is not in the profession and help them to get such jobs in which they will find satisfaction. An incompetent teacher who finds no joy in his profession is a drag and spells disaster for the schools and generations of pupils who enter it. Schools and universities are no asylums for mediocrity. In a recent Report of the Bihar University Enquiry Commission, of which I happened to be the Chairman, it is recommended that the first recruitment of a lecturer in a university or a college, government or otherwise, should be made on merit determined by a competitive examination held by an independent statutory body functioning at the state level. The proposal has been well received by educationists.

The third important measure is creation of an independent inspectorate—something akin to Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools in U. K.—for guiding, supervising and reporting on the standards of education, functioning of the educational policies and the state of educational institutions at all levels. In the conditions which prevail today even people who are called upon to make important decisions do not know what is the real state of education in the far flung areas of the country. The country and the Parliament have a right to know the actual state of education in the country from a competent, unbiased agency which has the freedom to report on the real state of education without fear. I know from personal experience of the appalling waste of resources and energy on education which is of bad quality. Instead of being fed on statistics and formal colourless reports, the country needs to be told of the reality. Bad education is no

substitute for "no-education". The kind of inspectors visualised should not be a part of the machinery of government. They should be more closely associated with the autonomous bodies proposed earlier and allowed full freedom to find out and to report fearlessly on their findings.

Lastly, I think that we should have the courage to admit that our leadership rejected Mahatma Gandhi's concept of Basic Education light-heartedly without even a fair trial. We were much too bedazzled by the British models of educational institutions and attitudes to give any thought to their viability and relevance in the conditions obtaining in the Indian society which differ totally from those in Britain which could boast of presiding over a vast empire and of affluence which comes of industrial development. Our ruling elite had accepted English as its language. Language never comes alone: it comes with a culture which fashions our mind and determines attitudes which are hard to give up. Mahatma Gandhi had the courage to go alone to make Indian education Indian in spirit and to orient it with due regard to the imperatives of the social, economic and cultural life as it existed in the vast backward rural and agricultural areas of the country. He advocated that hard, productive, manual work should be the centre of educational activity which should provide the inspiring source of development of knowledge, of skills of body and thinking necessary for life and cultivation of attitudes which would reflect the best in the old cultural traditions of the country. Some of those who think seriously are becoming growingly conscious of how the system of education has widened the gaps which divide the educated and the masses of illiterate people and how the educated are able to exploit the rest. Education Commission of India did think on these lines but went only to the extent of suggesting provisions in schools of "work experience" as an expression of half-hearted acceptance of Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy of education. It is now time to rethink and redefine the concept of Basic Education in the light of the development of new technology.

and new awakening that has come in the country as a result of social and economic developments. The system of education should be redesigned to inculcate culture of hard work and to encourage learning by doing. Mahatmaji was impressed by the spirit of the Benedictine monks who believed in the trinity of knowledge, hard work and moral energy. In the circumstances of life today it is unthinkable that most of the schools will be supplied with all the resources they need for functioning efficiently. However the schools have human resources—the energy of the young pupils—abundant leisure and leadership of teachers. If given opportunity, the schools can wisely link learning with production. For example, consider for a moment the costly machines in the workshops of engineering colleges which are used mostly for demonstration purposes during certain periods in a week. There is no reason why the youthful energy of students should not be utilised for full utilisation of the available machinery for production of materials needed for the college. New policy in education should aim to develop innovative and creative activities necessary for cultivating love for hard work and incidentally producing some of the resources needed for improving the quality of education in educational institutions.

No reform in education will be effective if the country does not take care to restore the status and dignity which must come to teacher because of his responsibility in shaping the future of the race—which is in front of him in the classroom. It must also be realised that no teacher can take his status in the society for granted: he must earn it through his work, character and his commitment to his responsibility. A teacher with grouses, hanging around local leaders for petty favours, makes a sorry picture. A teacher is certainly entitled to certain minimum needs—simple but comfortable accommodation, approach to books and magazines, opportunity to keep improving his professional competence and all that he needs to maintain himself and his family in reasonable comfort.

A good teacher is the conscience of the society. His detachment should enable him to read the writing on the wall and to see whither the society is heading. He, if he has it in him, can be a sober and dispassionate critic of society's acts and tastes. Shelly talked of poets as "unacknowledged legislators of the world." He was right. However, the teacher is more directly responsible for giving character and purpose to the new order which will replace the present. In the long run, it would pay to trust him.

The effectiveness of a teacher depends upon the kind of relationship he develops with his pupils. In this context I am reminded of a beautiful prayer which constitutes Shanti Paath. "Prayer for Peace" which tops Taittiriya Upanishad. It is a prayer jointly made by the teachers and pupils together. It is a beautiful prayer and permit me to quote it :

हरिः ऊँ । सह नावतु ।

सह नौ भुनक्तु ।

सह वीर्यं करवावहे ।

तेजस्विनाव धीमस्तु ।

मा विद्महावहे ।

Hari Om : Together may He protect us,

Together may He possess us,

Together may we make unto us strength and virility

May our study be full to us of light and power.

May we never hate.

Education is a joint venture of the teacher and the taught; if any of them fails there will be no learning; no light.

Thank you.



सत्यमेव जयते





सत्यमेव जयते