**ROLE & RESPONSIBILITY OF TEACHERS IN BUILDING UP MODERN INDIA**

***Swami Ranganathananda***

 **1. INTRODUCTORY**

I am very happy to come here and be with you, the teachers of three big schools of our capital. My time for this function is very limited; but any opportunity to meet our teachers and students is always welcome to me. I shall spend my time with you to discuss the subject which you have often heard and asked about: *Role and Responsibility of Teachers in Building up Modern India*. Whenever I speak on such subjects in any institution, the first thing I do is to help the listeners to see the subject in its proper perspective. Everyone must be fully conscious of the context in which you are living and working. Our culture is nearly 5000 years old and is very rich and variegated; and education, with its acquisition and diffusion of knowledge, had been the strength behind this culture. It has contributed to and enriched the sciences, the arts, philosophy, religion, and sociopolitical thought. But during the last few centuries, we had become contracted, had lost our freedom, and have been under continuous foreign subjection.

**2. FREEDOM: WHAT NEXT?**

Now we have achieved our political freedom and established a sovereign democratic republic. Post-freedom India is faced with. the question: Freedom: What Next? In our Constitution, we have made very big promises to our people and proclaimed that, through freedom, we shall solve the problems and reshape the destiny of India according to our own ideas, ideals, and needs. The first great problem posed by that freedom is the dismal poverty and backwardness of nearly half of our 700 million population. The second problem is the illiteracy of millions of them. The third problem is posed by the divisive caste and communal loyalties, weakening our infant democratic state. All these problems have to be solved by our people, by ourselves. No foreign power is going to help us, nor is it desirable to ask them to solve them for us. This national responsibility has descended upon us as soon as we became free, and this sense of national responsibility should be experienced by every citizen of free India. And this situation proclaims the role and responsibility of our teachers all over India and provides the dynamic context to discuss the theme we have chosen today.

I have specially used the word citizen. It is a great word. As soon as we became free, we became citizens of India. Before that, we were referred to as subjects of the British Empire There is a world of difference between the subjects of a foreign power and citizens of a free state. We develop a richer personality and a higher stature, when we become free citizens. But it is unfortunate that, though we have become free, we have failed to understand its meaning and live according to its true message. That is why our nation has not progressed, as it could have progressed, if our people had understood the meaning of this change in status from subject to citizen. This applies to all sections of our people — our politicians, administrators, teachers and other professional people, and our scheduled and backward castes and tribes. Of all people, our teachers need to understand its true implication and convey to our nation's children the privilege and responsibility involved in being citizens of a great country.

What does citizenship mean? It means the status of being a free and responsible person in a free society. We must note the two constituents. namely, freedom and responsibility. We are responsible for the progress of India. We are not only in India, but we are also of India and for India. This is the concept of citizenship in a modern democracy. When you look at the problems of India today, you will find that many people stress individual freedom, and more and more of such freedom, the first constituent, and also the rights accruing from it, but have not realized, and cared to stress. the importance of that second constituent, namely, social responsibility, and the duties flowing from it. If only we had realized our responsibility to our nation, we would have been working harder, more efficiently, and with greater dedication than what we do now. Every country that has become great has achieved that greatness through its people developing a sense of responsibility for the development of their own nation. But, in India, we have not learned this lesson and its concomitant of hard work. Go to the offices, go to the various departments of government, you will not find that sense of national duty and responsibility and hard work among most of the staff; and this afflicts our education as well. That is why even the promise in our Constitution to achieve universal primary education has not been. realized.

Education, particularly in our rural areas, has been very much neglected, as much by the teachers concerned as by the state itself. Today, we are experiencing the pressure of that responsibility for the first time. We are seeking a change in our educational goals and methods so as to make it nationally-oriented and universal, and remove from it that black colonialist content that has vitiated it from the days of our British domination. This is a great work that is being attempted today. In the current session of our Parliament, we are expecting the government to present to the nation a new education policy and action programme, nationally-oriented and value-oriented. I am sure that that new formulation will make our education quite different from what it was in the past. It may not be perfect, but it will be one step forward, and the nation can make it better and better later on.

In this context, what is your work, what is your role, and what is your responsibility, in our democracy? Education plays the greatest part in a democracy. You, as teachers, have to train and mould the minds of our young people so as to make them worthy citizens of our democratic state. Whatever training you give them will change the nation. That change must make for a better and healthier nation. That means that a tremendous responsibility rests upon the teachers. A child remains, ought to remain, in school for nearly 15 to 16 years, beginning from the age of three till about 18 or 19 years of age. At present, many of them drop out even before completing the lower primary level; I hope the new action programme will take steps to prevent this erosion of our: precious human resources. All the time, in school, he or she is receiving knowledge and ideas. Education at these pre-university stages has a special importance because these are the years when the human mind is most impressionable, and also because most of the students will leave off formal education after completing class XII. It is only a percentage of these that go to a university. So a majority of the students are under the care and influence of the pre-primary, primary, and secondary school teachers during the most formative years of their lives. That places a tremendous responsibility, and confers a great privilege, on all our teachers, at these levels. To discharge that responsibility, they themselves have to be nationally-oriented; then alone can they give this national orientation to their students.

**3. THE NEED FOR AN ATTITUDINAL CHANGE**

This can come only when a certain attitudinal change takes place in the teachers concerned. This I stress wherever I go and speak at gatherings of our teachers and administrators. There is a great need for a change in our attitudes. Our people need to think over and discuss the great subject of motivations behind all work-efficiency. 'When can I, or when do I, work best?' To this question, the answer given so far is: 'when I am given more money.' But all over the world, people have realized that money cannot be the sole motivation for turning out the best work. Money is only one item, but the greatest item is a change in our attitude, the change involved in one's sense of dignity and privilege of being a citizen of India, the pride in doing a particular work in the service of the nation. That is a greater and intrinsic motivation than merely money. Money motivation, un-supported by other higher motivations, converts people into, what we call in English, mercenaries. The mercenary works only for money. When this country was under foreign subjection for centuries, we saw many of our intellectuals and other capable people going to the foreign rulers, saying, if you pay us good salary, we shall work for you. They used to sell their intelligence and talents to the highest bidder! That is how such people functioned as mercenaries for centuries together. But, it is sad to note that several of our educated people, even today in our free India, rank lower than such a mercenary. The mercenary works hard for the money he or she is paid; but many of our people do not do an honest day's work even for the wages and salaries received! This has to change.

The loyalty of the mercenary is not to any ideal or principle or nation, but only to oneself. I do not think that any one of you, in our free democratic India, would deliberately like to be a mercenary. Today, one behaves like that, or even lower than that, only for want of thinking. That is not a status any thinking person would like to get; it is a very poor status compared to the citizenship of a free democracy. 'This is our country, we belong to it; we are responsible for its development and welfare, and we are going to convert our work into dedicated service to our fellow-citizens.' This constitutes the glorious citizenship attitude, in contrast to that mercenary, or lower than mercenary, attitude.

When this attitudinal change sets in, a tremendous energy becomes manifest in the individual concerned; he or she becomes invested with dynamism and a spirit of dedication. Here is manifest a powerful and spontaneous motivation far above that of money. Last week, I was addressing a gathering of the Secretariat staff of the Andhra Pradesh Government in Hyderabad, where the state Chief Minister and Chief Secretary were also present. There too I said the same thing. If you work as mere employees, you function one way; but if you change your attitude and develop the citizenship awareness, a tremendous change takes place in you and in your work. The Japanese are very devoted to their nation; they are proud of their nation; they are proud of their country and its history and culture, they will do everything to improve their country. If they go to a foreign country for education, they will return home and use their knowledge and talents for the welfare of their own country.

From this point of view, we have a great national defect. We have been the least patriotic among the nations of the world. We are attached only to our community, to our caste, to our family, and mainly, to ourselves. Today, however, a new wave, a new national consciousness, is developing in our people; it is the healthy symptom of a spiritual growth in our people. This is also finding a new expression in a healthy political awareness that we belong to a sovereign democratic republic, consisting of different types of people. different religions, different languages, different cultural levels, of which we are all part and parcel. It is in that context that you are called upon by the nation to work as a teacher. You ask this question to yourself: What should be my response, if I am asked to work as a teacher in such a situation? If, when I am posted as a teacher to a far-off village, I consider myself as a mere employee of the government or of some voluntary agency, my status becomes very small. As an employee, I shall be getting my salary; and my status will be that of a salaried employee. But, if I go there in the awareness of being a citizen of free India, and to shoulder the national responsibility of educating our children that come to my school, my status automatically goes up. I become one among the millions of silent nation-builders.

This is the attitudinal change that we have to achieve in a big way. No work is big or small; our attitude makes it so. You can do a clerk's work with a clerk's mind; then that work and that worker become very small. But if you do the clerk's work with a citizen's mind and attitude, then that work and that worker become great. Similarly, a teacher working in one nook or corner of India, thinking oneself as a comparatively low-paid employee, reduces himself or herself to an,. unknown and inconsequential individual. But by developing the citizenship attitude, he or she uplifts himself or herself to the high status of a nation-builder and thus invests his or her work with a significance and meaning, which no mere salaried employee-awareness can ever confer. You are free to make your work and yourself small; you are also free to make both big. It all depends on your attitude, on your philosophy of work. I often say that a big man does a small work and makes that work big, and a small man does a big work and makes that work small! It all depends on ourselves. We have to achieve an intrinsic bigness in ourselves; and we have then to impart that bigness to the functions we perform. This is character. Vedanta considers it as the greatest energy in the world.

**4. TEACHERS: NOT ONLY TO INSTRUCT BUT ALSO TO INSPIRE THE STUDENTS**

A teacher has to generate that energy in oneself and handle it in one's work of educating the boys and girls that resort to him or her. A teacher has not only to instruct but also to inspire the students; he or she has to influence the life and character of his or her students, and equip them with ideas and values which will fit them to enter the stream of national life as worthy citizens. You have to do all these during the years they are under your influence in the school.

You have to educate them on the need to recognize the equality of men and women in our democracy, to discard all caste exclusiveness and pride, untouchability, and communal distinctions and antagonisms, and to strengthen 'the dignity of the individual and the unity of the nation', as our Constitution proclaims.

The students must be educated to become the instruments to develop an integrated nation out of our diversities. They must be made acquainted with the noble humanistic sentiments of our Constitution and impressed with the passion to translate them into socio-political realities.

Your students belong to the age-group when character can be formed and national attitudes developed. You have to be the instruments of our new educational policy and action programme to develop," in your students, a high character-energy a pure national awareness, a firm democratic loyalty, a dedicated social responsibility This must be done in the context of the teaching of the other curriculum subjects. It is here that a teacher's national responsibility finds expression. The role of a teacher is to shape the minds, of the younger generation. That shaping will be on positive lines; development of a scientific and humanistic attitude and temper, self-discipline, concern for other people, an ecological awareness and concern, a firm conviction that democracy thrives on tolerance, and a firm commitment 'to break wits' and 'not to break heads'. To strengthen our democracy, teachers must instill into the students our ancient cultural spirit of tolerance of different opinions and viewpoints, and acquaint them with the modern wisdom expressed in the dictum of the famous French thinker, Voltaire: 'I do not accept what you say; but I will defend with my life your right to say so.'

Whatever India will be in the next generation will depend upon what you do to your students today in the classrooms. Today's children in school will start working and shouldering national responsibilities in the beginning of the next century. You have to give them that sense of national loyalty and responsibility. You must help to remove from their minds whatever is negative and weakening in our past. Our past history gives us some good and some bad; we have to eliminate what is bad and strengthen what is good. Students must learn to discriminate between these two aspects of their national heritage. Every cultural heritage has these two aspects. It is education that instills the capacity to discriminate between the two and the courage to reject what is bad and irrelevant and weakening. During education, our youth must be helped to identify and retain the «positive elements and pass them on to the next generation after strengthening them with their own contributions.

**5. THE INDIVIDUAL TO GROW INTO THE PERSON**

I often tell our teachers in various parts of India that, when you enter the classroom, the first thing you must do is to have a look at the class, just glance round the students in front, greet them with a winning smile, and ask yourself silently the question: 'Who are these children in front of me? What am I to do here?' Then the answers will come to you:

'These children, drawn from various levels of our society, are in search of knowledge; for centuries, they didn't have this opportunity; our free India's Constitution promises education and tile good life to every child in our nation; and these children have come, some even from far away villages, to avail of that privilege to get knowledge which had been till now reserved <for a few in our erstwhile feudal set-up. And I am here to communicate the best of knowledge and inspiration to these children.'

With this attitude, when you open your mouth to speak, every word will stimulate the children in front. You then cease to be a mere individual, a mere self-centered paid employee or mercenary, but become a true educator, an enlightened citizen. a full person.

I have just now used two words which you will find of great significance in your own development, apart from what you do to your students'— an individual and a person. As an individual, you are a genetically limited entity, confined to your own likes and dislikes, your own desires, your own ambitions. But as soon as you become a person, you expand, you are able to enter into the life of other people and also get response from the other people. That is the difference between individuality and personality. Personality is a richer word than individuality. Individuals are compared to billiard balls by the late British thinker and humanist, Bernard Russell. A billiard ball knows only how to collide with other billiard balls. Similarly, man as individual can't co-operate with other individuals, but will more often collide with them. At the level of individuality, teachers and teachers, and teachers and students, collide with each other. As soon as you become a person, you develop the capacity to enter the hearts of others, and to have others enter your heart; you become capable of working with other teachers and students as a team. Inner richness comes to one by growing from individuality to personality, since that growth is a spiritual growth.

There is a beautiful scientific definition of 'person' and 'personality' given by the late British biologist and humanist Sir Julian Huxley ('Introduction' to The Phenomenon of Man by Teilhard de Charmin):

"Persons are individuals who transcend their organic individuality in conscious social participation.'

You are, as an individual, only a genetically limited man or woman. You transcend that genetic limitation by conscious social participation, and thus grow into a person. You develop the capacity to love and to be loved. By this, you expand beyond your organic limitation. Individuality represents the ego as genetically limited, and personality represents the ego as expanding beyond that genetic limitation. Sri Ramakrishna calls them the kdca ami, 'unripe ego' and the pdka ami, 'ripe ego'. All growth beyond one's genetic limitation is spiritual growth. Individuality itself, according to Vedanta, is the first step in spiritual growth; it rescues man from submergence in the collectivity and installs him or her on the throne of human freedom and dignity. It is purely a human phenomenon: no animal develops individuality, since no animal has self-awareness or ego. This sense of individuality appears in a human child with the emergence of its ego-sense, of its self-awareness, at about the age of 2 or 2a. And the first education of a human child, up to the age of five, is the strengthening of this sense of ego or individuality. And, thereafter, it must be educated to steadily grow into personality, by orienting it to serve others, to find a place for others in its scheme of living and working. From five onwards, there should be initiated a steady growth from individuality to personality. Otherwise, the child will be a problem child, liable to accumulate traumas and complexes, and unable to establish happy relations with others.

In this context, we can use two words from our Sanskrit or Hindi: vyaktitva, for individuality, .and vikasita vyaktitva, for personality. A child is first a vyakti; then he or she grows into a vikasita vyakti. Sociologically speaking also, when any of our children, especially from rural and backward areas, first comes to school, he or she has no clear-cut vyaktitva, in most cases, due to the undeveloped feudal social background. He or she has been a part of a caste, of a tribe, of the collectivity. But within a few weeks of schooling, he or she develops a sense of individuality. The first step in the education of every child at home, and of everyone submerged in the social collectivity, says our Vedanta, is to give him or her that sense of individual worth and dignity. This is the great work waiting to be fully achieved in India, on a nation-wide scale. Millions of our people have been socially submerged for centuries together. They are slowly emerging from that submerged condition through education and developing their own individuality. Therefore, individuality, vyaktitva, is that first step in all spiritual growth, in all education, according to Vedanta. Without that first step, the second step, growth to personality, may prove to be harmful. But, with only that first step, we will develop too many rigid, self-centred individuals, too many billiard balls, colliding with each other. And that is what is happening in India today. We are all individuals, free, and with individual rights. We demand this, we demand that, on the basis of our individual freedom. As individuals, we have a sense of our freedom, but there is no sense of our social responsibility. That state of life betokens a combination of freedom with psychic immaturity.

Therefore, individuality, beyond a certain limit, can become a very great danger to our nation's health and well-being, to any society's health and well-being. That second step, therefore, must be taken in all education, to make the individual grow into the person, in whom freedom is enriched by psychic maturity through the influx of the sense of social responsibility. When this second step in spiritual growth will set in, something great will happen. The nation will have, in its educated section, millions and millions of free and responsible citizens. Then the whole nation will march in step towards its great destiny. Marching in step involves co-operation and teamwork. Man as individual does not possess it; it appears only in man as person. Individuals cannot help being jealous of each other, colliding with each other, and pulling each other down. Persons develop the capacity to co-operate, to live and work as a team; and this capacity, being the byproduct of that spiritual growth, is a spontaneous and natural capacity. This transcendence of mere organic individuality into personality, through conscious social participation, is the only way to happy family life and to full national integration. You can integrate persons, not individuals; in the former, it comes from within; in the latter, it has to be imposed from outside. At present, we do not have high team-work or full national integration, because we are mostly individuals and not persons.

**6. TYAGA AND SEVA**

This is the significance of education helping the child to achieve vyaktitva, first, and vikasita vyak-titva, immediately after. It is a continuous education. At the level of vyaktitva, man puts oneself in the centre and wants the world to dance round him or her: as a vikasita vyakti, he or she becomes humanized and learns the art of service and dedication to the people around. All true education involves this spiritual growth from vyaktitva to vikasita vyaktitva. Vikasa means expansion — not a mere physical expansion in body-weight and size, not a mere intellectual expansion in mastery of facts and formulae, but a spiritual expansion. through the assimilation of the values of, what Vivekananda calls, tyaga and seva, renunciation and service — renunciation of the 'unripe ego' and manifestation of the 'ripe ego', and personality expression in moods and acts of service of fellow-beings. Says Vivekananda (The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol. V, p. 228, seventh edition):

'The national ideals of India are renunciation and service. Intensify her in those channels and the rest will take care of itself.'

This message energized India and taught her, and continues to teach her, to forsake the path of exploitation of man by man and follow the path of service. Do not be frightened by the words, spiritual and spirituality. It is a significant term dealing with the higher levels of human growth, beyond man's genetic limitation. At birth, we are all genetically limited; but nature has given us the organic capacity to go beyond this genetic limitation. We have the capacity to go beyond ourselves and to love others, to serve others, and to dig our affections in others and allow others to dig their affections in us. This is a uniquely human capacity, revealing,, in human nature, a higher dimension of nature than what is revealed in external physical nature. It is the expression of this higher dimension that manifests itself as the spiritual growth of the child in response to other individuals in society. We call it moral, ethical, and humanistic values. These values are the by-products of that spiritual growth of man. That is why it is called vikasita vyaktitva. When our children are able to live in peace with others, work with others, love and serve others, then they have become persons, vikasita vyaktis; till then, they are only individuals, vyaktis. This type of spiritual growth from individuality to personality, from vyaktitva to vikasita vyaktitva, must first come to all our teachers—they must strive for it and achieve it, and then help their students also to achieve it. This is the great basic step that we have to take in our education. This is the very soul of value-oriented education, of human resource development; this is learning to be, added to the current learning to do, in the words of the UNESCO report on education significantly titled: Learning to Be.

Today, when we speak of human resource development, we see one very significant aspect of it in this spiritual growth from individuality to personality: teachers dealing with a classroom of children — what a socially important situation! The whole nation is there in thousands of such classrooms. We build the nation through what we do in them. We train them in virtues and graces that will strengthen our democracy. We enrich them with the humanistic attitude and the spirit of service The most important component of personality development, of character development, is the spirit of service. When an individual learns to invest one's surplus strength, knowledge, and power to serve other people, he or she becomes a person. develops a new energy resource, namely, character-energy. This is the third and highest human energy resource, over and above the first two, namely, physical energy and intellectual energy. Where education develops only the first two energy resources and neglects the third, there will always be the dominance of the 'unripe ego' and its constant concomitant of aggression and exploitation. The 'unripe I' is always aggressive, because it is self-centred. But when it becomes the 'ripe I', then it learns to find a place for others in its philosophy of life. Then it learns to ask the question to society: 'What can I do for you?', 'How can I help you?' It comes spontaneously without any effort on its part. This is the distinction between an 'individual, who is self-centred, and a person, who is other-centred. To illustrate this distinction, I give you a beautiful parable of Sri Ramakrishna:

A father brought from the market two fruits for his two children at home; he gave one fruit to each child. The elder child took the fruit, found it fine, straightaway went to his room, closed the door, ate the fruit, wiped his mouth, and came to the courtyard. The second child took the fruit, found it fine, straightaway went to his comrades in the courtyard, and shared the fruit with all of them.

Between the two children, who is the truly edu cated one? The first one is very intelligent, but that intelligence has become mere cleverness due to being self-centred; there you see just an individual, not yet developed into a person; but the second has achieved that growth into a person. He or she has spiritually expanded so as to think of others, care for others, and has developed the spirit of service. Here you can see the moral, ethical and humanistic development of the child. Our children must be 'helped to imbibe this kind of attitude, achieve this type of spiritual growth.

The spirit of service is found so little in our society today. Go to any office; no one there expresses any concern for you; no one responds to you; you won't get what is your due, even your salary, or pension, for months together. Why? Because people dealing with the subject are not concerned about others; they have learnt to concern only with themselves and their self-interest. But in offices in all foreign countries, I have seen this elementary virtue of the spirit of service, I have found a concern for others universally present. But, sadly, it is so little present in our country. The fault lies in our current education, narrowly conceived, as an instrument of mere individual ambition and advancement. In my speeches in various parts of our country. I often give an example to illustrate this truth.

I was in charge of the prestigious Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Calcutta, for five years, after I left the Delhi Ramakrishna Mission in 1962. It has an International House, consisting of a Hostel, for students and scholars, and a Guest House, for visitors, who come there from all over the world. I had a Dutch lady as its Manager; she was British in citizenship. One day, she came to me with great joy, saying: 'Swamiji, I have received from England a letter enclosing a cheque telling me that I am eligible for my old-age pension. I myself did not know anything about my eligibility for it!'

Now, please understand what it means. The lady did not know .what was due to her from the British government; but the office in London was keeping track of the situation and giving one of its citizens, living in far-away India, what was due to her, without her having to ask for it, much less knock about for it! In India, you have to knock at the doors of offices for many years even to get your hard-earned pension. That shows that our education has turned out only batches and batches of self-centred individuals, and very few socially responsive persons. This development of the spirit of tyaga and seva, this growth of individuality into personality, is the most important educational task before us today. Let us all become persons imbued with dedication and service. Teachers developing into persons, as also helping their students to develop into persons. This is the very soul of education, and Vivekananda has expressed it in a brief utterance: 'Be and Make, this shall be our motto.' Be persons yourselves and help others to be persons.

**7. THE SPIRITUALITY OF SCIENTIFIC TEMPER AND HUMANISTIC TEMPER**

Our country will grow and develop, all this poverty and illiteracy will be removed, when we have more and more service-oriented people, people who are sensitive to the needs and problems of others, who respond to human problems naturally and spontaneously. This is the first great development that must come through education. And all great developments come from thinking, from discrimination — viveka. We need to educate our children with the capacity to think for themselves; we have to instil into them the scientific temper and the humanistic temper. Says Swami Vivekananda in his lecture on Practical Vedanta delivered in London in 1896 (The Complete Works, Vol. II, p. 336, ninth edition):

"What we want is progress, development, realization. No theories ever made men higher. No amount of books can help us to become purer. The only power is in realization, and that lies in ourselves and comes from thinking. Let men think. A clod of earth never thinks; but it remains only a lump of earth. The glory of man is that he is a thinking being. It is the nature of man to think and therein he differs from animals.'

This is a great goal for us to work for in India. We have the load of many weakening superstitions, many obscurantist ideas, and many anti-human practices, to shed. We must, therefore, emphasize not only the learning of science subjects, but also the developing of a scientific temper and attitude. And this scientific temper should be combined with a humanistic temper. Both these together constitute the spiritual growth of man, as understood in our Vedanta. They constitute the critical search for truth and the passion to ensure human happiness and welfare. This is, therefore, not the work of the science teachers only, but of all teachers. We have to transform, through education, our nation into a thoughtful, critical, scientific community, imbued with the passion\* for truth and for total human welfare. Both are passions, creative and dynamic. When you develop that double passion in our children, they will get the capacity to appreciate their nation's great wealth of spiritual and cultural heritage and to brighten the life of our people at large. They will begin to understand the lofty philosophy and spirituality of the Upanisads and their scientific temper and approach. The sages of the Upanisads were moved by a passion for truth and a passion for human happiness and welfare. They achieved their purposes through rational questioning and inquiry and deep meditation. We can appreciate the greatness of our own culture, our own spirituality, our own philosophy, only when we develop a critical, truth-seeking, scientific mind.

Vedanta always emphasizes a rational, questioning attitude. Therefore, our education must help our children to develop such a critical, scientific. truth-seeking attitude. What is truth? What is a true life? How to live a true life and not a false life? This kind of questing and questioning attitude will help to bring out the highest possibilities hidden in our children; and through such transformed children, our whole nation will develop its true wealth, namely, human energy resources, this is true human resource development. This is what will integrate man with man, irrespective of caste creed, race or sex, and make our nation truly great. Our philosophy, the Vedanta, emphasizes the truth of our essential oneness. It is one and the same Sakti or Divine Energy, that courses through every being, says Vedcrnta. Therefore, love and concern for others becomes a by-product of this spiritual growth from individuality to personality, from vyaktitva to vikasita vyaktitva.

Try to understand the meaning of these two words against the background of your nation's great philosophy, the Vedcmta. Vedanta, through Viveka-nanda, defines the science of religion as: 'the manifestation of the divinity already within man.' Even a little manifestation of this divinity makes for love, service, creativity, and peace. It endows one with more energy, and the inclination to use that energy in the service of society. That is the very soul of education — increasing the energy resources in man and giving - it a humanistic direction. All this should come to the child through the teacher. Increase of knowledge makes for increase of energy. So guide your students to knowledge; see that they do not confine that search to their mere text-books; stimulate them to go to the library, to study the original books, and acquire more and more precise knowledge, think over what is learnt, and discuss it with teachers and other students. The teacher, thus, not only teaches but also induces the student to seek knowledge by oneself. In many foreign countries, I see students doing this very thing; there is love of knowledge and the effort, or tapasya, to seek knowledge . And that is the meaning of the Sanskrit word for student: vidya-rthi — arthi, seeker, of vidya, knowledge. That was the type of students and teachers that illumined Indian history, and created a rich and great culture, during the first 3,000 years of our history, before stagnation set in about a thousand years ago, from which we are now rescuing ourselves.

What a beautiful vision of a student's acquisition of knowledge is conveyed in the following floating verse of our rich Sanskrit tradition:

*Acaryat padam adhatte*

*padam styah sva-medhaya;*

*Padam sa-brahmacaribhydh*

*padam kalakramena ca —*

'The brahmachari, or student, gets one quarter of his or her knowledge from the acarya, or teacher, and another quarter from using one's own intelligence; a third quarter is acquired from interaction with other brahmacharis, and the fourth quarter is acquired in time (through one's own Hie and work).'

We have lost that hunger for knowledge at all levels of our system of education today; we have to capture it once again. There is at present only hunger for degrees and jobs, as remarked by the late Sir Julian Huxley in his letter, and in my reply to the same, over my book: The Message of the Upanisads (Appendix, pp. 607-9, Bhavan's fourth subsidized edition):

'You (Sir Julian Huxley) have commented (in your letter):

"On p. 263 (of the Message), the Swami gives a splendid definition of what education ought to be, and sometimes is. But my visits to India showed me that the aim of a large number of Indian undergraduates was not to enjoy an education of this sort, but to pass examinations and obtain a degree which was useful in getting jobs."

•This is unfortunately too true. The tyranny of the sensate, the fruit of nineteenth-century scientific, espec-cially biological, materialism, is powerfully affecting Indian youth now, as it has affected youth and others elsewhere. The message of twentieth-century science, especially biology, and your own message of psycho-social evolution and stress on qualitative enrichment of life, will take a few decades to become current coin, and affect, in a wholesome way, social outlook in East and West. India is wrestling with the problem of introducing ethical and spiritual values in education. She has a wealth of ideas in this field from East and West, ancient and modern, to draw upon, especially in her modem thinkers and leaders like Swami Vivekananda, Tagore, and Gandhiji; Writing a foreword to a small book of selections on Education by Vivekananda, Gandhiji says

"Surely, Vivekananda's utterances need no introduction from anybody; they make their own irresistible appeal."

'Current Indian education is basically a continuation of what the British introduced in India in the last century, with its aim of turning out clerks. It has quantitatively expanded immensely but has gone down qualitatively. It has neither the virtues of the ancient Indian system nor of the modern British system, but the weaknesses of both. It turns out every year not men, but functionaries of society — so many lawyers, doctors, engineers etc. etc. But India is also silently engaged in education and there is much silent constructive thinking and discussion also on the subject. We may hope to feel the impact of all these on our education in the coming decades. The fact is, everything in India today is in the melting pot — education, politics, religion, society etc. She is passing through the most revolutionary transition in her long history. Her modern thinkers and leaders, especially Vivekananda, had the fullest grasp of the scope and possibilities of this transition. None can predict the shape of things to come. But her great leaders have injected great ideas into the body-politic; and there is the atmosphere of freedom; and there is youthful energy and dynamism. The combination of these factors has turned modern India into a vast anthropological laboratory covering a sixth of the human race. And we can take comfort from what Vivekananda said: "Put the chemicals together, crystallization will take place according to nature's laws."

**8. IMPORTANCE OF TEACHER-TRAINING**

We must very much encourage that type of education for our children. We don't want our children to continue in that old stagnant state of mind and attitude. We want a creative mind in our children. So the teacher's role is great, and responsibility tremendous, he or she needs an effective teacher-training so as to be able to assimilate the educational values and ideas of one's own culture and of modern Western culture. The nation needs the services of millions of teachers who have trained minds and not stuffed brains, and who have learnt to think and to say to themselves:

"As a citizen of free India, I want to see my country great. I want to see my people get the best of knowledge and culture. As an educationist and a citizen of free India, I must respond to the national call and to my national responsibilities in an effective way, by imparting a man-making and nation-building and character-building education to the children who come to me.'

In fact, in the new educational policy to be soon announced by the government, a very important action programme is improvement of teacher-training. In our country today, teacher-training is the most important element for re-moulding our education. I am now talking to you, about 300 of you, on education; actually, I am talking, through you, to 3,000 or 30,000 of our students. Every well-trained teacher has the opportunity to influence every year, to national health and well-being, 30 to 40 students. Therefore, teacher-training is very important. Our teachers should not be those who fail in every other field and then come to educational service as a last refuge. Education must attract the best minds. Once in it, the teacher should have faith in oneself and in one's profession. The government also must do its part to take the necessary steps so as to attract the best minds to education, and give them salaries commensurate with their high national role.

It used to be said in England in the eighteenth century that 'patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel'! Let it cease to be said in India that education is the last refuge of a socially failed individual. Teaching is a mission. A teacher must be one who has a dedication to acquiring knowledge and its dissemination. What a beautiful idea it is? Therefore, we have to take steps to make available to our educational system batches and batches of such well-trained teachers. There is a new proposal to bring this about; and it is this: to start educational training after class 12, the three-year degree course and the one-year post-graduate teacher-training course getting combined into a four-year teacher-training course. In law education, this has already been introduced in a small way with a view to having efficient lawyers. Now, it will be salutary to introduce it in teacher-training also. That has the chance to attract more educationally oriented candidates from among the higher secondary learners who will be undergoing the 3-year undergraduate education itself in a teacher-training setting and orientation. That will bring to the postgraduate teacher-training course more and more candidates who take to teaching more as a mission than as a mere employment opportunity. In this way, there is a possibility of creating a grand army of teachers with the necessary educational commitment and national dedication.

**9. TEACHING TO BE COMBINED WITH LEARNING**

There are two constituents: one is love of knowledge, and the other is love of national service. Mere service will not do; love of knowledge is essential. A teacher who does not love knowledge cannot inspire love of knowledge in children. The teacher must keep one's mind fresh by study of new books; he or she must constantly renew one's stock of knowledge. In something like a highly inspiring Convocation Address in our ancient Taittiriya Upanisad, which is relevant for all students of all times, there is this beautiful exhortation to students: "

*Svadhya-ya-pravacanabhyam na pramaditavyam-*

'Do not forsake learning and teaching.'

They have to go together. A teacher reads new books, acquires new dimensions of knowledge, becomes enriched with new stock of ideas. That is the way to keep the mind fresh and creative. And this knowledge capacity must be combined with the capacity to communicate knowledge to others. And behind the knowledge communicated shines the personality of the teacher. By his or her knowledge, a teacher can only instruct; but communication of inspiration comes only from his or her personality. Long ago, in 1949, when I was in charge of our Mission in this capital city, I was invited to address the Central Institute of Education. It was a prestigious college of education in India at that time. In the course of my lecture, I quoted a sentence from Swami Vivekananda which says: 'Five years as a school master, a man becomes a fool?' Immediately, a teacher got up and said, raising much laughter in the hall: 'Vivekananda is too generous; only two years are enough!' What does it mean? We go on teaching from old books, we are not fresh at all. How then can we be good teachers? Teachers must read good books and refresh their minds. For example, any teacher who has read two of the many books of Vivekananda will be an effective teacher: 1. Lectures from Colombo to AImora, and 2. Letters of Swami Vivekananda. These are the two books that have created the national conscience of modem India, that have inspired batches and batches of patriots. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Netaji Shubhas Bose, Sri Aurobindo, Gandhiji — all have admitted deriving inspiration from them to love and serve India. There are the all-comprehensive eight volumes of The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda — strengthening, purifying, and unifying literature. The French thinker, Remain Holland, refers to this literature in a wonderful para in his Life of Vivekananda. Referring to the Swami as 'the embodied unity of a nation containing a hundred different nations', he says (p. 162):

"His words are great music, phrases in the style of Beethoven, stirring rhythms like the march of Handel choruses. I cannot touch these sayings of his, scattered as they are through the pages of books at thirty years' distance, without receiving a thrill through my body like an electric shock. And what shocks, what transports, must have been. produced when, in burning words, they issued from the lips of the hero!'

When our teachers study this literature and experience its electric shocks and thrills, something wonderful will happen. They will become a national force, instead of remaining 'a clod of ailments and grievances, ever complaining that the world does not devote itself to making you happy', in the pungent words of Bernard Shaw. Motivation for service comes from the heart, and not from the intellect or from the outside world.

Today, not only in our country, but in many foreign countries also, education is in a mess. Even American education, which has many good qualities, is in a mess, according to an American critic whose article I read some years ago in its April 1955 National Parent-Teacher Journal. What is education in America? The writer gives this definition:

'Education is 'that mysterious process whereby information passes from the lecture notes of the professor on to the notebook of the student, through his pen without entering the mind of either!'

As soon as I read it, I said to myself: I don't think it can be true of America, but it is absolutely true of our country! That is what we have been doing in the name of education. But today, we are a free nation. We must say goodbye to all this. We must have that kind of national awareness, citizenship awareness, which says to oneself:

'I am not a mere employee; I am not a mercenary;

I am a citizen. These children in front of me are my budding fellow-citizens; I am here to help them to acquire knowledge and character.'

What a beautiful attitude? What a change will come, through this, on our nation's educational scene!

 **10. A TEACHER AS EMPLOYEE VERSUS AS CITIZEN**

This is what I wish to stress today while speaking to you on the role and responsibility of our teachers in rebuilding modem India. Remember that the humanity that our politics and administration handle is the end-product of a processing, beginning with the parents at home and teachers in educational institutions. The most important processing takes place under you, the teachers, who deliver their products to the secretariats, to politics, to education, to the banks, to the insurance companies, and to the professions. If these products are crude and selfish, and without a sense of national responsibility, it is because you the teachers, as a class, have not given healthy ideas to your students. As teachers of secondary schools, you are dealing with the fresh and impressionable minds of the nation. A teacher's responsibility is to impress on those minds high humanistic values' and when you discharge that responsibility, your status also goes up. Instead of treating yourself as a mere employee, you consider yourself as a citizen discharging a high national responsibility. That is a big change. You cease to be a mere employee, getting a salary of Rs. 1000 or 2000 a month. You become a nation-builder, a man-making instrument. That is the significance of Vivekananda's calling for a man-making religion and a man-making education.

His literature is full of such arresting phrases capable of giving a thorough humanistic and spiritual orientation to our attitudes and outlook. We had, in ancient India, given a high status to our teachers; we call the teacher by the word 'guru'. Today we have contracted that word to the limited field of religious initiation. Actually the word , 'guru' has got a wide reference — one who opens ' the eyes and mind of the child to the world of knowledge. The first guru of the child is the mother, the second guru is the father, the third guru is the teacher at school. These gurus open the eye of the'- mind of the student to the vast world of knowledge, with its two integral dimensions of the secular and the religious. Both are spiritual, according to the unifying vision of our great sages. At some stage, after the mother and father and teacher have done their work, the religious teacher comes in, as the guru, into the life of the knowledge-seeker or vidyarthi- It is a continuous spiritual education and growth from the secular to the religious. India sees no conflict between the two. And India also says that the last and highest guru is one's own pure and trained mind. Sankaracharya in his Gurustotram, which millions in India and. now, abroad also, recite, and which begins with the- famous words: Gurur Brahma Gurur Vi?"u, gives a beautiful exposition of the service rendered by a guru:

*Ajiiana timirandhasyfl*

*jnananjana salakayS;*

*Caksurulm'ilitam yena*

*tasmai Sri Gill-are namah —*

'I salute the Guru who opens the eyes of one who is blind with the cataract of ignorance, by applying the collyrium of jndna. or knowledge.'

That is the science, with its various stages, of the opening of the mind of man to the great and vast world of knowledge. Who does it? The teacher, the guru. That self-respect, and faith in oneself and in one's work, must come once again to our teaching profession. It is unfortunate that teachers in India lost faith in their own profession before our society lost faith in them. They must now regain that faith: 'I am doing a national work, I am engaged in nation-building, man-making; mine is a noble profession.' Once that faith in your own work comes to you, the nation also will recognize your dignity and worth and accord to you the honour that you deserve in society. That is why I stress this point that the national responsibility, the national role, of our teachers is of tremendous consequence to our country; and I hope all of you will re-educate yourself, and elevate yourself, to play that role effectively. I have used the word re-educate. In the whole of India today, we have many educated people, and most of them need a re-education by which they will become free and responsible citizens of free India, and a source of strength to our infant democracy.

**11. INDIA'S IMPACT ON THE MODERN WEST**

In the new educational policy of the Union Government, there are several items, of which the three more important ones are: re-orientation of teacher-training, universalization of primary education, and stress on value-orientation. Whatever may be the government's contribution to that teacher-training orientation, the greatest responsibility rests on the teachers themselves; they must open up their minds to the world of new knowledge expanding every year. Western psychologists are daily coming up with new ideas on human possibilities, in which more and more of the Indian ideas on the spiritual depth dimension of man are getting a high place. Beginning with behaviouristic psychology of Watson of America and Pavlov of U.S.S.R., developing into the depth psychology of Freud and his school, getting slightly spiritually oriented by Carl Jung of Zurich and others, developing into the psychology of being by Abraham Maslow and his school, psychology in the West has now developed into the new dimension of trans-personal psychology. This new psychology has its own journal and there is an International Association of Trans-personal Psychology which holds annual conferences in various parts of the world. All these new developments have been powerfully influenced by Vedanta and yoga of the Upanisads, the Gita, and Patanjali's Yoga-sutras. A teacher who knows these developments will be a better teacher than one ignorant of them. And we in India have all these as our national heritage; but we do not know them or utilize them. Western people are appreciating and utilizing them more than we here; and that is our misfortune and their good fortune.

So, today, on this occasion, I reiterate this need on the part of our teachers to study, with a rational mind, the basic books of their own national heritage and to catch up with the Western developments in the field. Those of you who are in front of me here are a compact group of teachers of three Apeejay schools; already you are doing good work; your school results are good. But remember that that is merely the academic side. The more important thing is the character of the student who goes out from your schools. We don't want batches of just clever students — self-centred ambitious students, who merely want to make money for themselves, within India or abroad and lead a pleasant life — to come out of our schools. We want students who care for their nation, who care for the weaker sections of their society, including the millions of our tribals. Our children coming out of schools and colleges must be imbued with a humanistic passion. That must be a special trait of our Capital's children. The children of our Capital city have a special responsibility. They have far more opportunities for self-development than children elsewhere. They must remember constantly the truth of the dictum: To whom much is given, from him or her much shall be expected. In the course of your teaching, give your students this one sentence from one of tile letters written from Chicago in 1894 by Swami Vivekananda to the Maharaja of Mysore (The Complete Works. Vol. IV, p. 363, eighth edition):

'This life is short, the vanities if the world are transient, but they nio'ie lire. irho lire for- nihrrs. the rest more dead them alive''

Help your students to think and meditate on its message and how to live it, so that they will achieve that spiritual growth from individuality to personality. My love and good wishes to all of you. And I thank Shri Satya Paul of the Apeejay Group of industries for inviting me to come and address you.

But a speech is only a one-way traffic. The best part of a lecture is the question-answer session which I encourage and welcome all over the world. You are welcome to ask any questions, and I shall answer them to the best of my ability. I want you to remember that our country's philosophy, the Vedanta, not only can stand any amount of questioning, but invites questioning, and will not shine without that enquiring, questioning, approach. Here is a verse from our great epic, the Mahabharata (Bhandarkar edition, 1.1.204);

*Itihasa-puranabhyam vedam samupabrmhayet;*

*Bibhetyalpasrutat vedo mam ayam pratari?yati —*

'The Veda should be expounded in the light of all current positivistic knowledge; the Veda is afraid of the man of little knowledge and thinks: this man will certainly distort me!'

We are only sorry that our people are not approaching Vedanta in that rational questioning spirit. But the West today is approaching this philosophy and spirituality of Vedanta with a yearning inquiring mind. I am going abroad tomorrow on my annual 3-month round-the-world lecture tour, at the earnest invitation of Vedanta lovers in Australia, U.S.A., Holland, and West Germany, with Fiji, Philippines, Japan, and Mauritius added this year by the Government of India. It is a wonderful experience to see, and to cater to, the spiritual hunger and thirst of people in all these advanced countries. I will be teaching the Upanishads in Germany, Holland and Australia. What hunger they have for Vedanta! How they mop up everything they get, because they never had this freedom to seek and question about religion throughout their sixteen hundred years of Christian history. Some dogma, some creed, to be accepted without question, to invite danger if questioned — this was their experience. That gave them a closed mind. But in the modem scientific age, everything is open to question and free investigation, and Vedanta encourages them to exercise this freedom, and helps them to understand then-own spiritual heritage better. Indian thought introduces one to the wide and open sky of thought and ideas. The result is, hunger and thirst for philosophical and spiritual ideas from India.

So keep this truth of the contemporary world context in view, that we have a tremendous national and international responsibility. Live and work in the awareness that the rest of the world looks to India for philosophy and spirituality and that India has to respond to that call. Don't think this is a mere patriotic pride; for it is not we of India who say this; it is the Western thinkers themselves who say so. Let me conclude by giving you the statement of one of such Western thinkers, out of many, not even a man of religion but a historian with a critical mind, the late Professor Arnold Toynbee of Britain, author of the ten volumes 'on A Study of History. He had visited our Rama-Krishna Mission in Delhi in the late 50's and he had addressed a large public meeting at our Mission at my request and under my presidentship. I found in him a great student of human affairs. In a Foreword to a book by Swami Ghanananda of the London Ramakrishna' Vedanta Society, Sri Ramakrisan: His Unique Message, Toynbee writes:

 •Ramakrishna's message was unique in being expressed in action. The message itself was the perennial message of Hinduism. ... The message could hardly have been delivered by anyone who had not been brought up in the Hindu religious tradition. ... Today we are still i living in this transitional chapter of the world's history. But it is already becoming clear that a chapter which had a Western beginning will have to have an Indian ending, if it is not to end in the self-destruction of the human race. . . .

•At this supremely dangerous moment in human history, the only way of salvation for mankind is an Indian way. The Emperor Asoka’s and Mahatma Gandhi's principle of non-violence and Sri Ramakrishna's testimony to the harmony of religions: here we have the attitude and the spirit that can make it possible for the human race to grow together into a single family and. in the atomic age, this is the only alternative to destroying ourselves.'

**12. CONCLUSION**

What does that statement mean? Please note that it is not voiced by any disciple of any Indian guru, but by a critical thinker, by a historian. He realized, after studying world history and the contemporary world situation that India has a tremendous contribution to make to the enrichment of world civilization. So I put it to you to consider its implications. It is your national and international responsibility to educate yourselves and our new generation in the great ideas and values of our hoary culture which are universal, rational, and human. I wish you all success in your endeavors to play your role and discharge your responsibility to humanity in India and abroad.

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