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KOLHAPUR-

Your kind invitation to me to deliver the Convocation Address for this year has not only greatly honoured me but also given much pleasure. It has given me the opportunity of observing the rise of a new seat of higher learning in an area which has figured prominently in the historical developments in the country over the last 350 years or so and which is the home of some of the most energetic and vigorous people in the country, gifted with a rare capacity for organizing progressive agriculture and industry on a co-operative basis.

My acquaintance with the affairs of your University is necessarily limited, but I have heard sufficient from the Vice-Chancellor to form the impression that the University has got off to a good start. The Education Commission has indicated the basic principles that have to be kept in view in establishing new Universities. They include a responsibility for making a substantial improvement in standards and in the output and level of research and necessity of ensuring a strong core of teaching departments combined with about 30 affiliated colleges in close proximity. They have entered a caveat against creating by the establishment of a new University an undue dispersal of intellectual talent, funds and administrative ability, all of which are in scarce supply at present. Although the Education Commission have not mentioned it I regard the opportunity to try out interesting innovations in the field of higher education as one of the prime justifications for the establishment of new Universities. This point is amply illustrated by the modes of development selected for themselves by the crop of new Universities that has sprung up in recent years in Great Britain. On the Indian scene I fear there is far too strong a tendency to enforce uniformity and to discourage experimentation by means of direct or indirect regulation.

Old or new, Universities have important objectives to attain, which have concern with the pursuit of knowledge, the development of qualities of leadership, the provision of highly trained man-power to the nation, professional and of other sorts, and the development of 'the good life' in individuals and society. In addition, as the Education Commission points out, Indian Universities have special responsibilities in regard to intellectual and spiritual leadership of the community and elevation of the education level, not only of schools, but also of their total environment by means of adult education.

gown and the town have crumbled and the life of the University and that of the community can be vitally linked for their mutual enrichment. “ How this is to be achieved has been indicated in sufficient detail by the commission. There is a place in this effort for voluntary agencies, which in effect means the private citizen, to which category some of you will belong either immediately or a few years later after completing further stages of your education.

There is, however, one field of very special importance to which pointed attention has been drawn by the Education Commission; that field is the liquidation of illiteracy for which a sustained campaign is strongly urged, a campaign which should involve, besides Governments, Voluntary Agencies, Industries and Educational Institutions, all educated men and women in the country. I suggest that whether in the University or out of it, students and ex-students form voluntary organizations for the express purpose of participating vigorously in the campaign for the liquidation of illiteracy. Maharashtra has already done much in this direction by means of its *gmm-shikshan mohim*, and the trail has already been blazed, for young educated men and women to follow.

There is nothing like some over-mastering passion for public service like this to keep the flame of your patriotism burning bright. To my mind, patriotism is apt to be confused, unwittingly perhaps, with advancement of self-interest or acquisition of power, and many a seeming patriot is apt in the light of experience to be found to be a highly ego-centric individual who has convinced himself that his being at the head of affairs at his chosen level is the sole means of saving the country. Real patriotism is, however, dedication of oneself to one's more disadvantaged fellow-beings, often without recognition or reward. Indeed this dedication is both patriotism and religion, if one is inclined to be religious.

From the point of view of success, a spirit of service is the best guarantee of its success. It will draw both money and co-operation, which will flow freely, no matter how difficult the circumstances, to those who are known to be working genuinely for others, without a thought for advancing their own financial or political interests. The history of Maharashtra is full of noble examples of such servants of the people and it is these examples that ought to be emulated by young people rather than those who have achieved glamorous successes in the field of politics.

Before the advent of independence the common man, somewhat helplessly, bewailed the unethical conduct of business. The cynical answer to him in those days was ‘Business is Business’. Today, with a democratic constitution of the Western parliamentary type in full operation, a new area of unethical conduct has emerged - that is politics. The lack of a high ethos is even more conspicuous in this arena than in business and even more emphatic is the cynical answer

'Politics is politics'. While legal curbs create an illusion of restraint so far as business is concerned, because ingenious evasion is manifold and widely spread; in politics there is not even a semblance of self - restraint. The god that presides over business is, however, a god that cannot be imposed upon - it is the balance-sheet and like the lily that has blown and is no longer decorative, a spent business man quickly disappears from the scene. Not so the politician, who can flourish indefinitely long after his utility, if he ever had any, is exhausted. The voice of his God, Vox Populi, speaks only after long intervals and seldom in terms. 'that are just or clear. The criteria for measuring success or failure are either non-existent or ambiguous and in any case our cultural milieu is such that inutility or worse in this field is seldom exposed or can rarely be established or brought home.

That a little less than three-fourths of the population of our country and therefore of the franchise holders, is illiterate and ill-informed has something to do with this stage of affairs, a situation which is aggravated by inadequate development or imperfect use of the many modern means of mass-communication. It is in this context that eradication of illiteracy should be recognized as a matter of prime importance, for education could open the gates for better understanding and more judicious exercise of the franchise.

However, I should like to sound a note of warning here. In my view it is vain to hope that education will help in the cultivation of moral and spiritual values. The general experience, on the contrary, is that education intensifies and renders more capable misuse of one's innate imperfections in the sphere of these values. The naturally cunning and unprincipled, for instance, become more unmanageably cunning or unprincipled. I have yet to be convinced that education in general or university education, in particular, helps to form character.

To my mind character is the product of innate endowment, influence of environment and constant self-introspection in the light of that indefinable, imponderable and intangible conscience. It is very much the private business of everyone, subject to a variety of influences all through life. Good acts and good habits are the basis of good character, and therefore, character formation is a continuous process from birth to death, a process in which constant introspection can play an important part.

It is also my belief that the tone of a society around one can play a material role in the formation and stabilization of one's character. There are fields of human activity such as business and politics, where a noticeably depreciated scale of moral and spiritual values prevails and in these spheres character is an easy casualty. Mounting scarcities, such as exist today in India, are also destructive of acceptable moral and spritual values, especially in congested urban conditions.

I am convinced that in the long run no society can prosper in which scales of moral and spiritual values are continuously depreciated. Such a society will be full of tensions and conflicts which are bound to entail the gradual erosion of the rule of law and to end in some sort of cataclysm. In this context I feel no compunction in quoting what I said on a previous occasion of this kind. “ The world is very dynamic and there is a great demand for scientists and technicians; yet greater is the demand for people whose character, sense of justice and creative ability can be relied upon. We are lagging behind on account of centuries of slavery and in order to line up with the advanced countries we shall have to work very hard. This task is as great as was the struggle for freedom. We have become lethargic on account of centuries of slavery. We can easily tolerate injustice, rudeness and falsehood. We shall have to give up this moral apathy and this is to be done by young persons like you. The world that you will enter with such aspirations will be lacking in comforts and amenities and you will have to struggle hard to attain them. The moral plane of this struggle will be very low. Everywhere, you will find the greed for power, crookedness, dishonesty, indifferences to justice and such other evils triumphant. In such an adverse environment, the strength of your character will be put to test. Cultured young persons like you, with strong character, will have to change this atmosphere. It is natural that each one of you may not be able to display supreme courage. However, the progress of society can be measured only by the character and efficiency of its ordinary or average citizens. It is true that the development of culture and civilization is the result of the efforts of a few extraordinary thinkers. But the extraordinary will be extra-ordinary after all. The common people can always do one thing. They can remain firm in their character and can thus promote the progress of the entire society. Whatever be your status or post, I advise you to work whole-heartedly and to preserve your character. Character has no connection with high or low status. On the contrary I have noticed that even a rich man does not attach as much importance to character as a poor man does. The experience of the human race to this day shows that the happiness of character eclipses all the pleasures of wordly life. And what else do we need besides maximum happiness in life ?”

We of this century are living in the midst of a heady cultural revolution characterised by explosion of population, on one hand, and explosion of science and technology on the other. Whilst the former makes tremendous demands on our resources, the latter has within it the potentiality of meeting them. What is needed, however, is a thorough understanding of the situation by the young and the old alike if the human community is to live harmoniously. In the conduct of human affairs, especially, the relationship between the older and the younger generation has to be re-identified and redefined. This is especially necessary in a

