

Sept 15. 07

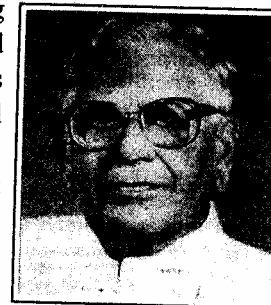
From the Bhavan's President  
**The Spirit of the University**  
R. Venkataraman

The new academic terms all over India commenced in July. The Chancellors, Vice-Chancellors and Principals of our Universities and Educational institutions may get food for thought from this article of the veteran national leader and former President of India and Bhavan's present President.

**T**he happiest period of one's life is the time spent at the university. The campus brims with youth and friendship. The gymnasias and playing fields fill you with vigour and vitality. The debates and discussions broaden your mind and widen the horizon and a spirit of enquiry springs therefrom. A feeling of brotherhood and camaraderie emerges from living and working together. The university spirit gently wafts like a fresh breeze over the entire scene. After

graduation each will be going his different way perhaps never to meet again. But wherever one is, one should carry with him or her the university spirit all along one's life. One should cherish it as a living gospel of life.

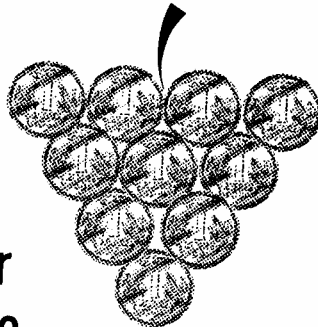

Each one of the graduating students has specialised in one or the other branch of human knowledge. He has studied various subjects in depth and with commendable diligence. The parchments he receives on



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graduation testify to his skill and hard work. But he must strive to reach the pinnacles of excellence in his chosen fields, being satisfied with nothing less than the best. Nothing can be as satisfying as the knowledge that in his specialisation he has the hallmark of quality.

But while specialisations can and must serve to equip professionally, they ought also to lead to something beyond the disciplines. That something is not concerned with becoming a professional but with what becoming a good human being.

Specialisation is a talent and ought not to become an imprisonment. Professionalism ought to be a means towards fulfilment as members of the Family of Man. Human society is too intricate and interrelated a phenomenon for us to rest content with achievements in the chosen fields alone. It is what one does with one's profession for the larger good

**Man yearns for a coalescence of purposes which can integrate the information that he has derived from books, with the knowledge that he derives from life.**

that ultimately counts. And so, the graduates should view the skills and training that they have received in the University in the perspective of their role in the world of human affairs.

It is not enough to be Bachelors and Masters in the Arts or in the Sciences. What is required is the ability to go beyond the collecting of knowledge, to using that knowledge in a manner that satisfies our individual and social prompting. In a memorable piece of verse a poet has said:

*"Vain is your Science  
Vain your Art  
Your triumphs and glories vain  
To feed the hunger of the heart  
And the famine of the brain."*

Man needs and seeks vitalities-physical, emotional, intellectual and moral that lie beyond what the Sciences and

the Arts can provide. He yearns, consciously or subconsciously, for a coalescence of purposes which can integrate the information that he has derived from books, with the knowledge that he derives from life. He seeks to merge his individual heartbeat

with the pulsation of his times. It is only when an integration takes place between the life of one's schooling and the schooling of one's life, that man can come to terms with himself.

Today, more than five decades after Independence, our freedom struggle appears to have had all the makings of historical inevitability. But it is important to remind ourselves that our freedom did not 'happen' just like that; it was won.

When the freedom fighters of those days gave up their

**Those men had no thought of office; in fact, they were not even sure whether freedom would come in their lifetime. Participation in struggle had transformed them into men of destiny.**

careers and in fact career-mindedness itself, to join the struggle, they had no conception of whether the struggles would end in success or in failure. But success or failure was not their concern at all.

Going against the tenor of our colonial times, going against

the homilies they received, they plunged into the vortex of political turmoil. Thousands upon thousands of that generation declined to heed the call of sinecure but preferred instead to think of larger concerns, concerns that went beyond their personal or professional interests.

Those men had no thought of office; in fact, they were not even sure whether freedom would come in their lifetime. Participation in struggle had transformed them into men of destiny.

A contrary alchemy seems

now to be at work. Today, the trend seems to be increasingly to turn inwards within one's own interests and professions. The earlier trend of reaching out to others is not to be seen. The aim now is to reach the zenith in our own professions and be ace lawyers, doctors, engineers or civil servants. The students should certainly strive for excellence in their chosen fields but, at the same time, heed the promptings of what Gandhiji used to describe as 'the still, small voice within', namely, the inner voice. Let that inner voice be heard above the din of the competitions and rivalries of our age.

It is not being suggested that students should give up all thoughts of professional satisfaction or successful careers. My caveat is against


the neglect of the concerns of others and the soul-stifling preoccupation with one's own self.

The students must identify themselves with the changes that are taking place and give the processes of change a further heave, but also invest the changes that are taking place in India, a quality and direction.

They will not be able to do so by just adopting a profession, not even by excelling in it. They will be able to do so only if they decide to slake a part, even a small part, of the thirsts of our time; if they decide to meet, in Whitman's phrase, the hunger of the heart and the famine of the brain.

The distinguished philosopher Immanuel Kant divided, the things constituting

**SWEET THOUGHT**



**THE BEST WAY  
TO ESCAPE FROM A  
PROBLEM IS TO  
SOLVE IT.**

PONDY BAZAAR ADAYAR ANNA NAGAR  
PH: 4312345

SEPTEMBER 15, 2001

**"Human nature does have dignity, but its dignity is precarious. A human being is dignified in so far as he is disinterested, altruistic, compassionate..."**

—Toynbee

human life into those that have either value or dignity. The things that have value are quantifiable and can be pursued either by individuals or groups with one's skills or one's resources. They constitute the ingredients of what is often described as the standard of living. The things that have dignity on the other hand, are not quantifiable and are to be pursued not necessarily with skills or resources but with a certain respect for the human personality.


Each professional has to sell his skills in order to live. But

as a human being he possesses something else which he must give, which he must share, not sell. And that is his affiliation with human concerns, human

aspirations, human needs. This affiliation may synchronize with his profession; or it may not. The main thing is that there must be an affiliation, to good causes that cry out for attention in our country. Every human being, in our situation, is in fact, a cause. As the famous Telugu poet G. Appa Rao said: *"A nation is not just its soil; A nation is its people."*

It should not happen that the students find professional success but not personal satisfaction, professional fame but not personal fulfilment.

**SWEET THOUGHT**



**THE MEASURE OF MAN  
IS WHAT HE DOES WITH  
POWER**

PONDY BAZAAR ADAYAR ANNA NAGAR  
PH: 4312345

- Pittacus

BHAVAN'S JOURNAL

There is a celebrated passage in the New Testament:

*"What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"*

It seems to have been devised for societies and for people who place the value of living above the values of life.

I am not for a moment suggesting self-abnegation. How can I, to a group of young men and women who, in the fullness of their youth, are looking forward to roles of fulfilment? I do not consider it wrong *per se* for individuals or groups to seek self-fulfilment.

What I am suggesting is that their self-interest must not only not conflict with the larger interest of society but must effectively interlock with it.

Only if that happens can one's work lay claim to a modicum of dignity.

Whatever be the role of students, be it ever so humble or ever so important, the honest and upright way is the best. We come across people in all branches, professional as well as commercial, resorting to unfair practices, to short-cuts. The short cut is never the straight path.

Being false to oneself leads to falseness becoming an ingrained habit.

The memorable lines from Shakespeare's Hamlet are most relevant in this regard.

*"This above all, to thine own self be true,  
And it must follow as the night the day,  
Thou can not then be false to any man."*

**SWEET THOUGHT**

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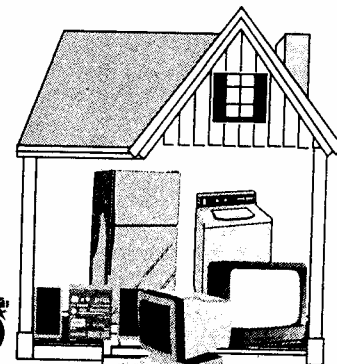
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