

ON EDUCATION

1.The New Graduates

(By A.R. Jayavelu B.A)

The convocation season is afoot and a large number of young men are invested with new degrees. Let us examine the prospects before these new graduates.

Education is the making of man. We expect an educated man as one instructed to appreciate the values in life, to conform to reason and to confound superstition. Judged from this standard of the meaning of education we cannot say that the young men turned out of university are truly educated. While in their class room they discourse on the movement of the earth and the stars in space, in their home life they believe that the world is flat and the sun a great god drawn by chariots, is having his course round the earth. They do not have the courage to discard the superstition of Brahmin divinity or to break the tradition of too many gods and idols. They just drift on into the rut of common life. The fact of his having received an education does not mark him out from his uneducated brother. They both keep to customs harmful and meaningless.

Women and fathers in-law have a great fascination for graduates. But only the rich can afford to marry a graduate. There are some who find fault with graduates when they demand big dowries or allowances. There is no reason to find fault with them. They are rather to be pitied. Surely you cannot expect a man of Rs.40 per mensem value to keep and maintain a married life for any length of time. So these graduates find themselves unable to marry unless their wives have independent means of support. The condition of our girls of South India is such that they have to be married as early as possible. Parents cannot leave their daughters to themselves, so they make their best, more often than not, run onto debts to secure a husband for their daughter and then continue to maintain him. If the daughters of India were given their rights there will be no early marriages in India. There will be a better understanding of human values in general.

One may well wonder if graduates of foreign universities are also thus only fit for clerking and living on a forty rupees standard of life and whether his education such as does not fit him to non conform with superstitious life around him, and whether his usefulness in life consists just in marrying and expecting his father-in-law to support his married state.

There is only one means of escape from this sordid life for graduates. They must combine in a revolt against custom-trodden society, and laugh to scorn at the superstitious folly of the life around them, and refuse to marry until they are financially independent. This determination will have its reaction on society, tending to the improvement of female education and will have the way for the attainment of freedom, rationality and self-respectability. Will each of those who graduate this year take to this determined course of life and participate in the revolt?

-Revolt, 6th February 1929

2.RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

(By B.G.)

Religion has played an important part in human life from the very beginning of the universe. Even before writing and reading were known to the people, religious stories were told from generation to generation. In India religious education was perhaps the only education first given to man; but under the present regime of the Britishers, religious education does not form part of the present-day educational institutions. So, it is but natural, that the most religious minded people of the world, the Hindus, raise a bitter cry that their religion is in danger.

Let us examine what sort of religious education is given in other religions. Education, as we all know, is to draw out what is latent in a child. The teacher helps the child to learn for itself, and in modern educational methods, experiments form the important factor in

education. But on the other hand, in religious classes, the teacher infuses into the children certain ideas which they must repeat even if they do not understand them. In a religion, certain dogmas are held sacred and professed to have been told by god himself. We are told that god created a man and a woman and put them to watch the garden of Eden. The necessity for god to keep them in a garden, leave them naked, forbid them from plucking an attractive fruit, and then curse them with untold miseries, we are yet to have a prophet to tell us. Again, why not the Almighty shorten the life of Ravana, instead of being born as Rama, undergo the shame of being abducted by his consort and destroy the big kingdom of Lanka. It is this sort of education, we are failing to give our children.

Man, in his impressionable age is being told some ghost stories and made to believe them. What more do these religious books tell us than the elementary principles for the welfare of humanity? Nobody in this world denies that theft, murder etc. are bad. Then, should we have a god to come down all the way from the "Seventh Heaven," and be born as one of us to tell us all these elementary principles? India wants bread, but she is given stone. It is not religion, the crying need of the masses, but two meals a day and sufficient clothes to cover their body.

Years of religious education has not changed the mentality and character of the twice born, and yet why should we burden our children with more of stories and poems to be got by heart?

-Revolt, 17th April 1929

3. RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

(D.V. Pradhan)

Of late religion has been made to play a very unhealthy part. In the public affairs of this country, to an extent that we seem almost to begin over again the religious cat calls of Europe seven to eight centuries ago. Whatever may be the origin of the differences that may crop up, they at once take on the religious cloak and sides are instantly taken on the

so-called religious basis. Common differences on sanitary and national importance or things necessary for the healthy growth of the individuals and nations are discussed on the religious plane. If one asserts that India as it is seen today is nothing more but a slave to the mentality that has been created by the religious heads, we shall not be far from truth. Our every day life is also dominated by religion and we can safely say that the overdose of religion has killed the mentality of reasoning of every son of this land. Is there any way to get out of this entanglement? Can we be free and use our reasoning for the betterment of India? What should we do to break the shackles of religion and give full play to our natural faculties? The answer is simple enough. We should look to every day happenings in other parts of the world. The whole world is astir to weed out religion from public life and is endeavouring may have practically made it a question of individual observance. Russia has frankly gone in for ATHEISM. It is no question of toleration with them. It is strictly banned and is a bar to any public employment. Gauging from the events that are turning out, every one will have to agree that time is fast approaching when every nation will have to take a leaf out of Russia's book in this direction. There can be no serious contradiction to this view.

History teaches us that religion has played great mischief and has added much to the miseries of the world instead of happiness in any way. It has been a constant menace to the progress of the world. There is a great deal of truth in what that great Economist, Karl Marx, has said that religion is opium, nay it is even worse than that. Opium makes a man temporarily insane but fanaticism is the acme of religion. It drives a man mad throughout his life. There is no other go for him but to suffer and make others suffer through the infection which has made its home in him. Had there been no religion there would not have been the fights of Roman Catholics and Protestants, Jews and the Gentiles, Hindus and Moslems, Buddhism and Brahminism. This cult or that cult. This sect or that sect.

Leaving aside the question of the world we can learn much from the happenings of this country. Let the past history not teach us anything. Let it remain on the shelves. But even without turning over its pages the very recent quarrels and disturbances that were and are going on in every corner of this country must go a long way to teach us as to the evils

they let loose. The sorry spectacles of Hindu-Moslem riots, Brahmin-Non Brahmin controversy and Touchable - Untouchable struggles will amply prove the mischief that has been wrought amongst us. It is patent fact that these differences have only kept us from giving a united front to the foreign Government who are exploiting this country.

The mentality that has been created is such that even pure and simple economic struggles are given a religious tinge. If a serious student of Politics tries to analyse the real causes of these feuds, he will at once discover that all such abnormalities in this land are nothing but the adverse play of Economics. Go to the bottom of the real trouble and you will find that the economic condition of this country based as it is on the most iniquitous capitalistic system is the only root cause of the present day feuds. The Hindu - Moslem problem in the Punjab is nothing but pure economical struggle of the later with the former who have captured every possible places of power and pelf. The same can be said of other parts, in some places parallel to others modified. In some places Hindus are masters of the situation, at others Moslems. But all these struggles every now and then are being inflamed and given a colour of religious fights by the agitators of the market place, Mullahs, Moulvies, Priests and Brahmins, the so-called watch dogs and trustees of so called religions.

This ought to suffice every one to realize the situation in its true perspective and to come to a decision to see that religion is at least made an individual observance within the four walls of one's place of residence. It must not be allowed to continue its appearance in public life. No questions ought to be discussed from the religious point of view but from the interests of the society. If we are not in a mood to do it at least efforts ought to be made to see that the next generation of this country is kept aloof from this poison. But instead of that one finds to his regret the attempts that are being made in some quarters to introduce the system of religious instructions in the Primary Schools. It is in the Primary Schools where the foundations of Indian Nationalism and world internationalism are being laid. These are the places that would mould the early and impressionable lives of the citizens of tomorrow. This is where the men and women of this and every land lay the basis of their usefulness to the country and the people in the future. Primary Schools are

the places which can be really called as the places where one is made what he is. They have quite a unique position in the building of the nation, country and world. What should be seen is that the education that will be given to the future citizens should be such that will make them as true to India as to their own lives. We do not want them to be hypocrites nor go about fighting under the guiles of religion as Hindus, Jews, Moslems, Sikhs, Christians and what not. We want only such people who would be proud of themselves as Indians and *Men*. Why do these advocates of religious instructions add to the numerous difficulties by creating and accentuating communal Bourgeois? Are there not enough of them? There are lots of them in Hindus, Moslems and others. Religious instruction means nothing but a regular breeding of these mischievous germs at our cost. This insanitary problem ought to be fought from the national point of view, no less than from the international.

Really speaking we have come to such a stage that any communal or religious organization that puts out its head prominently should be given a burial, no matter however difficult the task may be.

It is high time that start in the interest of the Nation and world is made to abolish all the educational institutions that are being conducted on communal and religious grounds and are spreading the infection of so called religion. Let it have at least its own course if we are not prepared to put it down systematically as Russia. Our educational institutions and particularly the Primary Schools should be such that they will mould true citizen of tomorrow who is and shall only be counted upon in the modern states. There is no place for a religious banner in the modern state. If the nation at least keeps its hands off the religious activities and discussions, I am sure there will not be any fights over child marriages, widow re-marriages, temple-entry, pollution, filling in the so-called sacred wells and tanks, common drinking pots irrespective of the castes, crematorium *et hoc genus omne*, much waste of public time and energy will be saved which can well be utilized in furtherance of the interests of the country in other directions.

By the bye it will not be out of place to suggest that we very urgently need legislation to ban each and every so called religious activity in the public life. Untouchability ought to be made a penal offence. The so called high and low caste system of the Hindus ought to be put a stop to and strict measures ought to be taken against the offender. Every citizen must have equal treatment in every affair of the State. State ought to concern itself to the citizen and not to his religion. The so called religion ought to be confined to such a place where these religious units have their own abodes. They ought not to be allowed to form any association, body or organization based on religious grounds. Provision should also necessarily be made to see that no meetings of children, young men and women take place for the furtherance of any religion. No materialistic body ought to be allowed to spring on religious ground. Not only that. There ought to be special clauses to have the schools absolutely non-religious ones. Nay a regular propaganda ought to be taken in hand by the State to make the children anti-religious. No more Hindu or Moslem Universities or Hindu or Moslem College or Hindu Helping Societies or Moslem co-operative societies ought to be recognized but ought to be wiped away from our midst.

-Revolt, 18th August 1929

4. "Education of Muslim Girls"

A Lecture

The Seventh anniversary of the Baith-ul-Thulba (Students' Home), was held on Saturday last in the Muslim High School Hall, Triplicane, Miss De La Hey, Principal, Queen Mary's College, presiding.

Mrs. Henseman, who next delivered the annual address on "Education of Muslim Girls", in the course of her speech, pointed out that three per cent of the girls of the Muslim community attended primary schools, while the percentage of the Hindu girls was only 25,. Hence, so far as elementary education was concerned, the Muslim girls attended in a majority, but only in the matter of higher education, probably owing to pardah system,

their community was far behind other communities. Now that the first girl among them had taken up her degree, it was up to them to realize the need for educating their girls and not to let go the opportunities that were afforded to them.

After reading a paper on the subject by an eminent Muslim lady of Bengal, the lecturer proceeded to say that the world, as they saw it, was good enough to live in, but it ought to be their endeavor to leave the world better than it was. Education of women was a pressing question all over India, and when the whole nation was advancing in the matter of female education, she did not know why one particular community, should lag behind. There were several great women among them, and given proper opportunities, they would shine in the world.

The president in the course of her concluding speech, said that she would not see how any community or nation could progress, while the one half of its was lagging behind. She did not suggest that all the girls of the community should take degrees, but she thought that the education was quite essential.

Then again, if they wanted their girls to be educated by ladies of their own community, it was necessary that at least some of them, to begin with, ought to receive higher education. Referring to the comments of certain persons on the position of women, in the West, much of the philanthropic and unselfish work was done by women there. It was rather too late in the day to suggest that they ought not to go forward. If they wanted India to take her right place in the nations of the world, they ought to educate their women. She requested some of the best among the community to come forward and give them a lead at this time.

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(These articles were selected from the weekly 'Revolt' and compiled by Prof.S.V.Rajadurai, Head, Centre for Periyar Studies, Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirapalli-600 0024, Tamil Nadu)