

[Precious Youth, Civilization's Cradle](#)

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MINISTER'S MESSAGE

Precious Youth, Civilization's Cradle

Hindu parents are failing. Education's ethical and spiritual priorities must be reestablished.

Sri Swami Guhabhaktananda

Youth are the nation's most precious treasure, the potential leaders to guide our tomorrows. Only values taught to young children will be emulated by them in their youth, guiding them to build a moral and ethical society. This most impressionable age offers the best opportunities for the development of man's culture. So, parents have a great responsibility in molding their children to be useful not only to the parents, but also for the welfare of the nation. The great mother saint of Tamil Nadu, Auvaiyar, said, "What is taught in the cradle goes unto death." Values not imbibed by age five cannot be imbibed at fifty. Wholesome early impressions will influence a man's youthful and adult years.

Leaders must practice leadership by example, setting good patterns for the youth and not merely preach this concept. Unfortunately parents allow degradation of their own behavioral patterns in front of their children, who imitate their ways. When adults quarrel, scream and yell all types of

abusive words in front of their children, the children pick them up and voice them back to their parents, not knowing the consequences. Once a husband abused his wife and called her "idiot!" right in front of his 3-year-old son. Later, when the father was scolding his son one day, the son called his own father an "idiot," not knowing the meaning of the word.

As the child grows, an inner culture develops. Mothers have the first responsibility in education, which starts at infancy. Even the mother's lullaby should be divine and soul-elevating, infusing in the child healthy ideas of fearlessness, joy, peace and godliness. Though the child may be incapable of grasping the meaning of the words, the mother's powerful thoughts, directed with one-pointed attention at the child, whom she loves with all her heart, are bound to exercise a profound influence on the child's mental make-up and character. The great mother Madalasy sang to her children the lullaby of "Siddhosi, Buddhosi and Niranjanosi" (O child, be blessed with spiritual fulfillment, discrimination and spotless purity). It is said that her children became realized souls in later years. Equally important is the role of women teachers in kindergarten and schools. There is something that a woman can do for a child that a man cannot. The mother is the child's first teacher, and God has equipped her admirably to fulfill this glorious task.

Unfortunately, today's education is not aimed at the development of a spiritual attitude towards life or any foundation of ethical and moral living. Education should be able to lift the youth above the narrow grooves of bigotry, crookedness, hypocrisy, fanaticism and selfishness. Instead, we see an alarming trend. A substantial number of youths are

involved in many anti-social activities, despite the existence of thousands of temples and many spiritual, religious, educational, social and cultural organizations and institutions. This is mainly due to films depicting violence and sex, and the print and electronic media focusing on unhealthy trends.

While all religions stress the importance of giving religion to their children when young, our Hindu parents are seriously neglecting this duty. Though many religious and spiritual institutions conduct free religious classes for children, their parents do not take interest in sending their children to these classes. Most of our Hindu parents take a great interest in sending their children to martial arts classes. And as they grow up, these children are happier to use their legs and hands to greet each other than to do, "Namaskar!"

The effects of evil company are disastrous. The company of those who indulge in talk about sex, the viewing of obscene pictures and films, the reading of obscene novels, the singing of obscene songs carries a lot of undesirable news and pictures that corrupt the mind. Thought alone shapes and molds our whole life. As are your thoughts, so will be your life. Improve your thinking, and you can improve your life. Better thoughts bring better action. A person who correctly understands this law and applies it in daily life will become a man of discrimination. A big change is needed.

Parents, teachers and elders should make it their duty to advise, encourage and motivate all youth in the importance of receiving an education, not only to earn a livelihood but also to learn spiritual and moral values. Otherwise, education loses its

value. Education should not so much teach or educate as it should create an intellectual with a spirit of service, a thinking and creative mind, a broad vision, a pattern of self-control, a path of discipline and a desire for self-realization. Schools and colleges must provide the youth an all-round harmonious development of the entire human personality and cultivate a sense of fellow-feeling and universal brotherhood. The purpose of true education should be to enlighten humanity, to destroy the lower nature in man, to better the social order and to promote human well-being by training the student both for external achievements and for internal attainment, propelling youths into lives of noble aspiration and sacred values. Education must develop one's personality, initiative, courage, good manners and heart qualities. Your character is your destiny. Without character, everything else is of no avail. The regeneration of individuals, particularly the younger generation, means the betterment of the whole nation. That our youth will excel in moral perfection, in truth and purity, in learning and wisdom and in strength of character and will, is my earnest prayer.

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