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BE VIRTUOUS

'All is rotten in the State of Denmark', observed Shakespeare in his tragic play Hamlet. Some such thing can be witnessed in the present society. Virtue has taken a back seat in the carrier of life. Virtue is the main plank on which the social structure rests. If virtue is gone, the fall of society is a natural corollary. Virtue has its own reward. A virtuous life is a supreme possession of a human being. Let it not be lost, otherwise our lives will remain boats without oars, unrealised souls. The very purpose of our being born will be defeated. Concern for others is the main ingredient of a virtuous life. One who lives for others never dies. If you want to live a fruitful life, be virtuous. Also, if you want to be successful in life, be virtuous.

The rot has invaded modern society to such an extent that it is like an incurable cancer affecting the whole world. There may be no partial cure. What is needed is to discard the basic premises on which society is built up when the purpose of life and the individual's relationship with the whole are not clear, all is topsy-turvy. The only remedy is to attack the problem at the root. This is possible only by arriving at and adopting a new way of life. I feel, our young men and young women must shoulder the responsibility to come forward to bring about the necessary change of life. The change in their life will change them alright, but it is bound to change those who come in their contact.

To be able to change ourselves and the society in which we live, we, specially our young men and women must make the best of bad system of education. If we start off with theories that are wrong in that they do not correspond to reality, we move off in the wrong direction, which does not lead where we want to go. Therefore, as Lord Buddha said "to make use of our knowledge in daily life, one must have right understanding of our knowledge as the first step," we, would, therefore, advise our young friends to develop right understanding of what they read. They should learn to separate the husk from the grain, that is, they should develop the power of discrimination, so that they are in a position to choose the factors, which, when practised, are bound to change them and the society in which they live.

Teachings of men—saints, sages, philosophers, poets, and even scien-

tists—tell us to acquire virtues and to be virtuous. A truly virtuous man is far from being a man of pride and conceit.

Both science and art of living tell us to sit down and meditate regularly, a good self-discipline. By doing so, you will improve culturally and be an example for others to follow. All know it too well, example is better than precept.

Some of our young friends are likely to raise the question—our sole object is to get success at the examination, why all this to us? The answer is simple and two fold, self-discipline will enable you to understand your lessons better and do much better at the examinations. The second idea is to make you more useful to the people who you would be expected to serve better, if and when selected to some post of responsibility.

Several serious minded public figures have struck the right note when they gave a call for heart searching. Those who have shortcomings, you, the young men and women of India must realise the same and resolve not to repeat the mistakes instead of blaming others. Let my friends take corrective measures to make better individuals of themselves. Then you will be in a position to tell the people what is harmful for their lives, and also tell them how they were duped and were forced to go the way of the devil. Virtue is not something which is confined to books, and is not a theoretical matter only. It is something to be practised and lived. When we talk of a virtuous person, we do not mean a man of heaven or a superman, we mean a man of the earth who knows how to live freely and friendly. A virtuous man is a gentleman, who does not inflict pain on anyone, and at the same time, he can not see any one being unjustly treated. As such our young friends can behave like a virtuous person, even during the time of their studies, which we call student life. If our young men and women make up their minds to go the way what the virtues demand, they can make much better students, and be ideal citizens afterwards. If that be so, Indian society will get a band of pledged young men and women, who will fight the evil forces at every step and at every stage. They should be convinced that they have to do the right, and set things right as well, as the authorities also have become a tool in the hands of the evil-doers. If authorities were not so, then how heinous crimes could be committed on the highways, and that too of in broad day light?

The present age has been compared with rusted iron. Those young men and women, who aspire for high posts of public service, must realise that they will be called upon to do the alchemy of transmuting the base metal to a noble one. Better they prepare for the job from right now.

Try to do freely what you think and believe is right, because it is only out of freedom in oneself that the genuine talent in man blossoms. Only a virtuous man is free. A man of vice is slave to his vice and hence not free. So be virtuous if you want to lead a fruitful life.