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Learn to Live by Values

The importance of higher values of life can hardly be over emphasized. It is because of higher values of life that we are humans. A society bereft of these values is nothing but a herd of wild elephants. It is these values which hold the society and the humanity together. Life in a society devoid of values is 'nasty, brutish and short' as Thomas Hobbes puts it. Truth, honesty, righteousness, fellow-feeling, helpfulness, benevolence, charity, generosity, magnanimity, concern for the underprivileged, compassion, mercy, an undiluted love for motherland and an all embracing sympathy coupled with high degree of tolerance and serenity of temper are some of the higher values of life which provide mainstay not only to the individual, but to the entire society at large. All scriptures of the world prescribe a set of higher values of life to be practiced by one and all, if humanity were to ensure peace and amity everywhere. Life without values is no better than the life of animals. Values indeed constitute what is called Dharma in the widest sense of the term. If we are guided only by money and material, and the transient worldly possessions and ignore the eternal values of life, we are leading a worthless life. It is imperative for us, therefore, to cultivate and practice higher values in our lives, if we really wish to lead a meaningful, fruitful and virtuous life.

To-day we are afraid of simple words like goodness, mercy and kindness. We don't believe in the good old words because we do not believe in the good old values any more. And that is why the world is so sick.

In the words of Philomena Aquado, "Values are the norms, goals or purposes that one chooses in order to give a sense of direction and meaning to one's life. They are the integrative forces that bring about wholeness in one's personality."

The main difference between modern and traditional values is that in traditional societies people were a valuable resource and the relations between them were carefully tended. In modern society things are the valuables and people are too often treated as disposable. This has resulted in self-centredness, and goods and commodities are considered more valuable than the human beings. The great economist Roy L. Smith has rightly remarked that "Too many men who know all about financial values, know nothing about human values." Our young men and women are hardly aware of the truth contained in this proverb "Riches adorn the dwelling, values adorn the person." The news of dacoity, smuggling, rape, kidnapping and the like do leave our young men and young women unmoved. They read and hear one thing, but think in practice quite otherwise. This scism has disintegrated the personality of our young friends.

This state of affairs cannot be and should not be allowed to last for long,

because the members of the younger generation have to take charge of the society, the country and do all the building for the future.

The future custodians of the freedom of India are not expected to have slight regard for human values. They must separate the chaff from the grain and have their own norms and values of life. The young men and women, who are trying to get, through competitions, into the administrative services have a greater responsibility on their shoulders. They would be expected to have a set of values, both in their private and public life.