

paths to nowhere

Edw. Owen 2-5-33

argues for economic activity in agriculture, industry and the service sectors. If we do so, we may yet create a better social order though there appear no signs of this taking place in the foreseeable future.

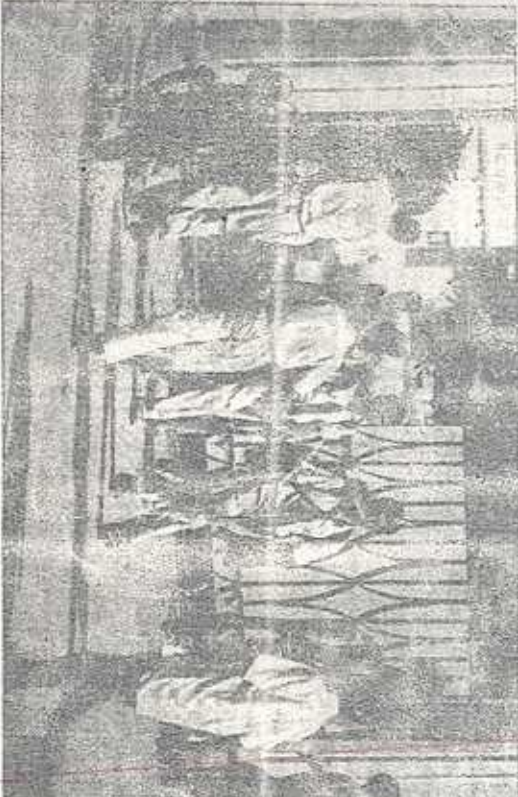
As if this scenario was not morbid enough, in our country we have religious education and secular education running on parallel lines. The mental moulds that are formed through the old education and the new education are so incompatible that unless one or the other, or both, are changed, there is no possibility of their adjusting themselves to one another.

Some religious seminaries have also earned the bad name of churning out foot soldiers for ethnic strife at home and *jeleidi* activities abroad. This

is, of course, sad because seminaries have played a useful role in the past to provide education and knowledge to all segments of society. Irrespective of socio-economic segmentation as at present,

As things stand today, even seminars are further divided on several lines, the main ones being Hanafi, Deobandi, Hanafi Barelvi, Ahle Hadess, and the Fiqoh-Jaffria.

This has been the main reason for sectarian differences arising among the people that sometimes take a nasty turn, and have a deadly impact on the minds and actions of the people. If secular education system has created economic differences, the traditional system of edu-



CAREFREE DAYS: But what does the future have in store for them?

caution, as it is followed presently, creates cultural differences. What is required is to reform and re-organize the seminars so that they can play their rightful role in society as was brought to the

consciousness of the Muslims by Maulana Shibli, Nomani and other religious leaders in the past. It was to solve this problem that the Nadwat-ul-Ulema and its educational institution, the Darul Uloom of Nadwa, was founded. But this movement withered in

the blasting political winds of independence.

For the purpose of reform in the system it has to be decided whether religious schools are places of general education parallel to secular schools, or special vocational institutions for training of those who have to perform the functions of religious education and guidance.

In their present form, these institutions cannot fulfill the economic objectives of general schools, and can only be useful as vocational institutions. Admissions should be open only after a thorough test to find out which of the candidates have the inclination, disposition, capacity, temperament and character required to make them suitable for the important function of religious teaching and guidance. They should possess a natural inborn urge to find out and realize the eternal reality behind a

changing world, and the will to devote themselves to the spiritual welfare of their fellow-beings. The government should provide adequate resources for religious schools so that the teachers may be given adequate emoluments. After acquiring due education, the students should be given the

opportunities of serving according to their capacity and choice, as teachers in religious schools, fellows of literary academies, writers, journalists, preachers and Imams. This should be encouraged with sufficient remuneration so that they may provide a moderately comfortable life for their families.

Those who go for higher religious education must acquire at the same time higher secular education, as otherwise they cannot succeed in their objective of religious reform. Similarly, seminars must provide a special course of religious studies for Muslim graduates of secular institutions who are wishing to acquire higher religious education.

In this way, the gulf that divides the minds of religious and secular educated classes will be bridged and both will be able to grapple with the tremendous task of reforming the religious and cultural life of the people, which cannot be tackled without the cooperation of both sides.

Finally, and yet most importantly, comes the size and pace of the change that must be brought about. To the politician and his hatchet man, the bureaucrat, to the businessman obsessed with large-scale happenings and results, the trees are invisible because of the magnitude of the wood. But to the teacher,

the educationalist and the man of vision, it is the individual trees that constitute the wood, and the individual men and women who make the great collective that is humanity. They find as much pleasure and significance in implanting the seeds of good emotions in the nascent mind of the pupil, and love watching them grow into seedlings as an industrialist does in launching his new and massive venture.

The continued polarization of society into economic groups of vast differences is a wrong and humiliating position. Let us, therefore, mobilize all our forces in the development of a meaningful education for all, and not just a select few.

Let us stretch our hands to all those who wish to join in the great fellowship of knowledge. Let us make public opinion so strong in favour of our goal that no government or system, however chauvinistic and aggressive, would dare to create a divided society.

In bringing out this inner psychological revolution, education must play its special part, and the educationists should take into regard all the vital forces that are slaying the modern world, and, thus, help to orient the growing generation towards a more equitable and humane social order.