

### YOUTH-The Harbingers Of A Beautiful Tomorrow!!!

"I feel like I'm on an emotional roller coaster. Sometimes I just want to crawl into a hole and seclude myself from the outside world and sometimes I wish I could get wings to fly to reach out to the unknown like Jonathan Living stone Seagull. One moment I'm acting normal and yelling and venting my anger and frustration on everyone around me at the very next moment. It's hard because at this age, I don't know who I am, what I want to be and what my values are," opines a vibrant 12<sup>th</sup> grader who is all set to lock horns with the outside world.

"It really bothers me when adults treat me like a kid but expect me to act like an adult. I ask them if I can do something and they say, 'You're too young.' Then, if you do something wrong, they say, 'You're old enough to know better than that.' It's enough to drive me right up against a wall," howls a 10<sup>th</sup> grader who feels that today the generation gap yawns wider than the craters of the moon."

So, what has happened to the adolescent youth, the pesky, perky lot of generation-MTV, the torchbearers of the 21<sup>st</sup> century? It seems that the Vikings of a brave new world, who flaunt the brash arrogance of youth on their sleeves, wielding their branded armor of Pepe and Provogue, are going astray and meandering towards the ash-tray.

This tumultuous transition from childhood to adulthood leaves majority of the kids wrestling with their sense of self - the teenage werewolf who suddenly transforms from docile to demonic or the sweet little princess who switches from wizard to witch. This chaotic fusion of neither childhood nor adulthood results into tempestuous temper tantrums and obscene graffiti.

A heady mix of energy and a restless imagination typifies a reckless adolescent spirit. Slipping into a quick-sand of stress and depression, today's youth seems to be in a vague kind of mourning, a sense of betrayal, insecurity, uncertainty, a gnawing frustration and a feeling of living on the edge of a precipice. A web of frustration, anger, withdrawal

and escapism envelopes generation-WWW. Some feel that resorting to violence is the only way out while some feel that an intoxicating liquid and a cloud of smoke are inevitable to keep pace with the competitive world. If statistics are anything to go by, the number of youth with gun and barrel in the real as well as the virtual world sum up to a whopping 90% while those who find solace in booze binges and rave parties are not lagging behind. Unlike the good old days, today's youth experiments and experiences the good things of life, if I may say so, be it sex, be it drugs or be it alcohol. Today's youth eats, drinks and sleeps competition, where to fail is to die. The chills, thrills and frills which they set out to seek lead them to a dark dungeon of crime and prostitution.

Many of our 20-somethings live in a self-made sty. At a time when 'size-zero' and 'six-pack' are in and at a time when youth-icons model skimpy clothes, fake breasts and lurid lifestyles instead of propriety and decorum, the adolescent adult has only the society to blame for such a pitiable plight.

Against this gloomy backdrop, there is a silver lining on the horizon. Be it the daredevils who lock horns with the government machinery to unravel their inefficiency and compel strict compliance or be it the e-messiahs who take up a common cause to reach out to the common man, be it the nightingales who enthrall audiences with their mellifluous tunes or be it the wizards who dodge many a googly from the likes of Derek O' Brien or Harsha Bhogle, today's youth are going places. A potion of love, care and understanding from parents and an ocean of opportunities from the regime is the only panacea for these harbingers of a beautiful tomorrow. If not guided towards positive choices and if not provided with ample opportunities, to explore and to express, youth will find their own avenues which may not be socially acceptable.

At a time when old value systems are crumbling faster than the fickle stock-markets, the time is ripe for a moral and spiritual re-armament to wrestle the initiative to canalize the bubble before it bursts into a tsunami of catastrophic proportions. The need of the hour is for a compass and a lighthouse to steer the ship of adolescent youth to the precise destination. Christopher Columbus, anyone???

AND, when the tempest's over, maybe, the sun will shine again...