

Children's art and it's role in the making of a better human being

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In our day to day existence we take a lot of things for granted. Only when we face discord we begin to question. In a broad sort of way we look at nature also in the same way. We have no time for it in the rat race. But a more relaxed look around us would reveal the beauty and mysterious wonders of the natural wonders around us.

One such wonder is when a child sits down to draw and paint. You are on to a discovery when the child makes shapes and gets together colours into a miraculous arrangement of form. It is a very sensitive period of the child's development and we as parents should be wary of interfering with his natural progressions. But unfortunately that is not so. At a very young age he is sent to so called 'art' schools or classes where the teachers are at best untrained. Much harm is done to the child's psyche. He is made to copy forms and styles that reflect the genre of the instructor. All this is done in the spirit of 'committing to memory' (Mukhosto). It does the same amount of harm, in fact much more, as it does at school where children are forced to commit to memory pages after pages of text. It stems the flow of imagination and the power to think for oneself. All this is encouraged by the teachers as well as their parents (I refer now to the 'Sit & Draw' contests that are raging all over the place) Sit and Draw itself is not bad—but when parents begin to be party to the competition and expect their child to win prizes—just as a race horse owner would love his horse to get past the winning post—then the children are not enjoying themselves and finding pleasure in it. It is an imposition and they lose interest. The real purpose of artistic activity is completely lost. We deprive the child of his right to discover for himself his own creative instinct.

If we lead the child to love nature and observe, teach them to appreciate the shapes and colours inherent in nature, the child himself will begin to find the way to artistic creativity. His imagination will take a magic leap in visual shapes. All that a parent has to do is give the child enough paper and paint to work according to his instinct. Parents are not to make any value judgements.

The child's own critical faculties would correct him. Allow him to enjoy and explore new avenues all by himself. Be ready to encourage him with gentle praise.

Every child who takes to the paint brush need not necessarily become a painter in his adult life. It would make him tranquil and channelize his restless spirit by giving him the power to concentrate. When he grows up his aesthetic sense will develop and he will be a fully 'educated' person. He will have a better vision and be appreciative of good things.

The restlessness of the rat race has brought Man today to the brink of disaster. More and more people are tending to become mentally tense and unstable because we are distancing ourselves from Nature and natural instincts.

It is through the child that we may return to the innocence of natural behaviour, to bring peace and tranquility to the mind of Future Man.