

Ashok Gangadean addresses graduating seniors ('15) at Haverford Commencement

May 17, 2015 ((Living Lives that S-peak))

Here is the link to video of Ashok delivering the opening ((greetings)) to the graduating class of 2015, and text from his presentation is below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dB9V13cwo5U>

Greetings Graduating Seniors:

It has been a pleasure witnessing and participating in your remarkable journey over the past four years—seeing you grow and blossom, finding your voices and arriving now at this important commencement life shift and rite of passage.

I felt moved on this occasion to reflect for a moment with you as you now make that crossing beyond our Haverford Sanctuary “out there to the real world”. And I focus now on a question many of you have been asking repeatedly with a certain urgency.

Many of you have been immersed in different aspects of Global Wisdom and Awakened Intelligence as you engaged urgent issues in Global Ethics, the wisdom of Socrates, Plato and other wisdom teachers as they open space to awakened rational life in the Logos, the enlightenment of Buddha urging us to Mindful Living, the teachings of Lord Krishna in the *Gita* to mature as humans through the awakening technology of Yoga Wisdom, the advanced teachings of mindful Zen Life ...to mention a few...

And in entering these powerful awakening wisdom labs many of you found that when you were in peak experiences...heightened awareness...peak performances in the zone... as scholar-athletes on the fields, at work and play, as a performing artist...in peak mindful moments is your creative work... in these diverse peak moments of engaged living you recognized that these were embodied moments of mindful living urged by our great wisdom endowment through the ages....

Such moments of peak experience and being in the zone were power points where you felt you embodied the great call of our wisdom teachers to heightened awareness and

engaged mindful living. And you began to learn that our great teachers through the ages have been urging us to mature as whole humans in sustainable ever deepening patterns of mindful, heads up living. This is the mindful art of being a human in living Lives that Speak.

And many of you were deeply moved by this call but naturally wondered if it is possible to sustain a life in the zone out there in the “real world”. It is one thing to have spontaneous episodes of peak moments within the protected sanctuary of haverfields...but how is it possible? is it possible? to sustain an awakened mindful life in the zone out there in the “real” world?

This is the haunting question that many of you puzzle over, especially now that you are ready to make that crossing. And this is a concern you often raise, which I wish to reflect upon with you for a brief moment.

When we stand back a take a deeper look at the dilated intelligence being embodied in such peak moments of heightened awareness when we are at our personal best it is clear that we are tapping our great wisdom endowment of the ages calling us to highest fulfillment as awakened, engaged mindful humans. And of course this is the endowment at the heart of what is highest and best in our Haverford Ethos, Quaker Values and noble liberal arts tradition, educating for leadership-in-service and lives that speak.

This great wisdom endowment empowers us to see systemic connections between mindful engaged living, our cherished Honor Code, the intelligence and art of deep dialogue where we recognize that we are Dialogue Humans, I-Thou Beings deeply connected to our Other, where in awakened rational life in the Logos we understand that all life is sacred and in mature moral consciousness it is a form of violence to objectify our Self and Others in our human relations.

It is clear in this heightened awareness in the zone that we live in intensified situational awareness and called to collaborative creativity and courageous innovation to meet the unprecedented challenges we now face. In this Mindful Ethos of a Life in Deep Dialogue across borders the true Ethos of Diversity ignites and the open minded virtues of

Community Building and Global Citizenship flourish. And this heightened rational intelligence of mindful heads up awareness is a highest form of creative activism in the marketplace.

And in this Light when we focus on the current state of the “real world” out there it is clear that our cultures are in crisis, facing unprecedented challenges; the “real world” is “sub-real” in many ways and needing urgent care and healing medicine of awakened deep dialogue Humans who live and embody the literacy and creative intelligence of mindful and heightened awareness.

At every turn in our surrounding cultures we can see violent breakdown in human relations, we see the failure of the Ethos of Real Diversity, we see patterns of humans objectifying themselves and others, we see fragmentation and polarization in the civic spaces where true open minded Dialogue and mutual respect across borders fail. The challenges are enormous and in every corner of our cultures we see dominant patterns of monologue, localized tribal or myopic thinking crying out for mindful humans with situational awareness who embody the medicine of engaged Dialogue Humans living in the Zone.

As you are now poised in your rite of passage to a new phase in your life I felt moved to share my sense that your journey through our Haverford Ethos over the past four years has prepared you for this passage to a next stage of your continued liberal art learning K through 90...to facilitate through your mindful activism to help make the “real world” get Real. So I am not so much concerned about whether You are well prepared to take on the “real world” out there, but more whether the world out there is ready for you.

And so I join my colleagues, your professors, your parents, family and friends gathered here to celebrate your life shift rite of passage and we wish you a mindful, high-voltage, situationally aware, heads up, proactive life of courageous and creative leadership in service in whatever path you may take. We wish you a wonderful flourishing and fulfilling Life: go for it!! and ((stay in the zone)).

Ashok Gangadean, Margaret Gest Professor of Global Philosophy