

1. Opening Address

In this sacred country Bharath, the quality of forbearance has been the greatest of our traditions. Adherence to truth has been one other important ideal. What can be sweeter than the widely accepted custom in this country according to which, we respect the loving aspect of the mother. Further, our honour is more valuable to us than even our life. We are prepared to give up our lives to protect our honour. Alas! we are forgetting these ideals today and accepting in their place, foreign ideals. We have forgotten our own culture. What else can I tell the citizens of this country? Like an elephant which does not know its own strength, the citizens of this country do not know their strength.

Good ideas, good conduct, and adherence to truth should result from our education. That which promotes these aspects is indeed true education. Only those who acquire these qualities can be called truly educated people.

Educators, authorities of education, patrons of education, students and teachers:

Today, in our country, spiritual values have disappeared, *dharma* has declined, adherence to truth is not found anywhere, demoniac features like cruelty, unkindness, lack of truth and egoism have spread everywhere. At one time, this country was known all over the world for *Dharmic* conduct. Like the parents who feel sorry when they look at the improper educational attainments of their children, the motherland of India feels very sad when she looks at us, who have lost faith in our spiritual traditions. In order to pacify this motherland of ours, it is the duty of the young students to do service to the

community and learn the right things which education is expected to teach them. The country does not merely consist of dust and land. It consists of people who live in it. Students should recognise that setting right the country means setting right the people and putting them on the proper path. The first natural outcome of education should be the ability to do some service to the country and re-establish the spiritual values in the country. We should thus show that we have a leadership of the world in this aspect.

The value of an individual depends on his culture. One's culture is a very sacred aspect and has been inherited from our ancestors. We cannot interpret or understand culture superficially. It has a very deep meaning. It is the first duty of every individual to give up bad conduct in his daily life and improve his daily habits. The deservedness by which you will be entitled to become useful citizens of the country should be acquired while you are students. In the entire life of a human being, the most important period is the period of being a student. A student is like the root for the tree of his life. Recognising such truth, you should lead the life of a student happily and learn good lessons from it.

Today, the government has got neither the ability nor the right to correct people. The sacredness by which the people can correct themselves is not present in them. People have also lost their capacity to correct the government. When we look at it from the spiritual angle, we do not see, either in the rulers or in the ruled, the capacity by which they can set themselves right. The reason for this is that people have not corrected their lives, when they were young, in a manner in which their life could become useful when they grow older. It was due to their inability to recognise what kind of conduct would have made them useful when they grow older. In that context, the students

must now realise that they should introduce the necessary correctives in their lives, even while they are young, so that their life can become useful when they grow older. Students should have in their hands the future of this country. Wherever they gather, they should see that there is calm and peace and that the community respects them. The place where students gather should become a symbol of peace and happiness. This is the right symptom of good education. The main reason by which students of today have lost their *dharmic* traditions is their contact with western civilisation. They are not seeing things with their own eyes. They are not experiencing things with their own mind and heart. They are borrowing the eyes of others and they are borrowing the thoughts of others. They are making their life imitative and artificial. Students: it is very necessary for you to recognise that youths are like the roots of the tree of life. The manure and the water which we have to give must be given to the roots and not to the branches or leaves. We always, no doubt, keep in mind peace and happiness — which are like branches and leaves — and forget that we have to give importance to *dharmic* conduct which is like the roots. In that context, we should realise that manure and water in the form of morality and *dharmic* conduct should be accepted and practised when one is a student. Unfortunately, the pure, tender and good hearts of the students are being agitated, polluted and ruined by political leaders for their own selfish purposes. They are thus ruining the entire future life of young students. The life of a student is very valuable. The entire future of a country depends on the good conduct of its students.

We should realise that all the leaders of today were at one time students. If you want to become leaders at a later age, the sacredness that will make you good leaders must be cultivated at this young age. Politics is good in its own way, but it is not good for young students. After you finish your student

career, you can decide for yourself what is good for you. If you enter politics while you are a student, you will not be able to do well in either of the fields. This is neither right nor good for your conduct. In the political sphere, it is not as if there are no petty feelings like jealousy, ego or anger which drive you to a bad or a wrong path. The political sphere is such that it promotes differences between people. It is not bringing about unity among the people. Lust is like a demon, jealousy is like a madman and ego is dreadful. These have become a part of our daily life, and so we are not able to make much good out of our lives. Man is losing the human qualities inherent in him, because he is filled with ego. He does not understand his true form. He is also not making an attempt to understand his fellow human beings. This ego is such a bad quality that it has ruined even gods and angels and not only human beings. When this ego enters the minds of students, the very fundamental aspect of education disappears from them. Education gives you humility, and humility leads you to deservedness which in turn will give you wealth. Wealth should enable you to take the *dharmic* path. Therefore, students should first learn to be humble and conduct themselves with humility. Today, although the students learn very little, they feel very proud. Because of this, they are losing the broad hearts that they should have. Education is not intended to simply amass wealth. It is intended to reveal the true and sacred nature of life. Not only this, the respect that students can command and the honour which they have in the society will depend on the qualities which they exhibit. What is most important to man is his character. When the students can promote character in themselves, they will be able to do good to the country. I am also hoping and asking the education minister, who is present here, to see that in all spheres—the worldly sphere, the *dharmic* sphere and the moral sphere—that good things are taught and that the tender minds of the students are protected. The students today take a lot of

trouble to acquire a degree but they use that degree for eking out a livelihood. Are they spending even a small fraction of their time for promoting good qualities in themselves? Do not be proud of your meagre education and think education is intended only to get you a degree. It is intended to enable you to do service without ego and help your country and your people to prosper. We are converting the sacredness of education into the form of a begging bowl. It is very necessary to inculcate a sense of values in the students and train them to smilingly and willingly sacrifice for the prosperity of the country. So long as we depend on the attractions of the world, we cannot escape the predicament in which we are today. When we are prepared to sacrifice fully, our prosperity will grow. We must become warriors who are prepared to do active work. The country cannot prosper by having a number of lazy people. Without wasting our time and life, we should be able to take to the path of spiritual enquiry and promote the sacredness of this great country of Bharath. After spending thousands of rupees and giving a lot of trouble to our parents to get a degree, we are then turning this degree into a begging bowl, and we go from office to office for a job. We should become people who can stand on their own legs and resources. It is the first duty of the students to learn to value hard work. We must show our gratitude to our parents and then develop the determination to serve the community. The happiness and safety of the country should be your first aim. You must recognise that the true meaning of education is to give satisfaction to your parents and to your country. This will bring prosperity to the country.

I am happy that the Governor and the Education Minister are here to participate in the opening ceremony of our Summer Course on Indian Culture and Spirituality. I am hoping that you will be able to draw inspiration and learn good ideals from the course and put them into practice. Today we

see that wherever students gather there is agitation and unrest. This is because they are not able to understand the true meaning of education. It is not right to join as students in a college and to run after sensory pleasures with that excuse. They join the college for education, but are they getting true education? The students join with one objective and attain a different objective. If the students have a problem, they have the right to go and meet the authorities and discuss. But you do not have the right to cause harm and damage to others.

From tomorrow, you will listen to elders speaking about the unity of all religions and the sacredness of Indian culture. I hope that you will carry great ideals from here and put them into practice. You should strive to bring back the glory to this sacred country that it had enjoyed in the past.