

# 1.

## The Glory of Indian Culture

The entire Cosmos has emerged from Truth  
And it will merge back in Truth  
Where is the place beyond the sway of Truth?  
Behold, brothers, That which is the Pure Sathwa!

### **Embodiments of Divine Love, dear students, teachers and patrons of education!**

To every man born on earth, Truth is verily the visible God. The entire universe consisting of movable and immovable objects has emerged from Truth. *Sathyam-Jnanam-Anantam-Brahma*. Truth is indeed Brahman. Truth is endless. According to *Vedantins*, Truth is synonymous with the eternal Brahman. Hence, truth alone has to be revered by everyone. *Bharathiyas* (Indians) are wedded to truth and righteousness. Justice is their mainstay. Every man is the inheritor of truth and righteousness. Young boys and girls who want to promote peace and harmony should strive to seek and pursue truth. *Bharathiyas* cherish the welfare of the world. Our youth should therefore dedicate themselves to universal well-being. This is our creed or religion, so to speak. It is because we have forgotten such sacred truth as well as our culture and the sanctity thereof, that we are unable to achieve communal unity and national integrity.

Truth and righteousness will never submit to anything. All kinds of power, whether physical, intellectual, monetary, military, or political, have to bend before truth and righteousness; but the latter will yield to none. Truth and righteousness will always triumph.

The chief requisite of man's life is to be human. Whatever our scholarship or position of authority, we should not ignore the human values. Indian culture is unparalleled and most wonderful. Having forgotten the grandeur and glory of their heritage, the students of today enticed by so-called modernity, have become oblivious to their own innate divinity. The whirlwind of the rapidly progressing science and technology, coupled with industrialization, is bringing about undesirable changes in our society by way of uprooting the moral or ethical values so essential for human well-being. Science and technology have, no doubt, contributed substantially to material progress; but they have altogether undermined spiritual values such as selflessness, divinity, and dignity inherent in man. In a way, they have devalued humanity itself so much so that the present generation of young men and women are unable to recognise their divine nature. They are considering self-centredness as the goal of life. Demonic qualities like ostentation, egoism, and excessive and empty talk are playing their devil dance in society. This very country, which has been the spiritual teacher of entire mankind, is becoming the playing field of evil forces like injustice, indiscipline, licentiousness, and defiance of truth. Having become slaves to modernity, people are utterly disregarding truth and righteousness and ignoring the hoary Indian culture and traditions, with the false notion that material self advancement is the *summum bonum* of life. What the students have to protect today is not the nation. They have to safeguard truth and righteousness only. These two, in turn, will protect the nation. Giving up truth and righteousness, educated persons nowadays are causing damage to the nation, ostensibly in the name of protecting it.

People do not become wise by mere education. They are considering education as a means of livelihood rather than the art of living. The supreme goal of life should ever be

kept in view. A small piece of fertile land is more valuable than a large tract of barren land; so also character is much more valuable and essential than scholarship. Today everybody is striving to acquire wealth, power, and pelf, which are like passing clouds, while nobody bothers himself to acquire virtues that lead to the Truth Eternal. You must try to become exemplars of virtues, but not of wealth and power. It is a pity that even the elders who profess themselves to be well-wishers of society are giving up their own ancient culture, lured by modernity. When the mother cow is grazing off the crop in the field, will its calf stand quiet on the field bund? It is impossible. It is no wonder the younger generation is following the bad example of their elders, leaders, parents, and teachers who are not setting the right example for the youth to emulate. What is the reason for our ancients earning name and fame as upholders of morality in society? Because of their exemplary practice of virtues in daily life. They pursued the four *purusharthas* (goals of life) scrupulously and shared with others benefits and joys derived therefrom. But the present day youngsters are groping in the dark, aimlessly indulging in all sorts of indiscriminate activities.

*Dharma* (right conduct), *artha* (wealth), *kama* (desire), and *moksha* (liberation) are the four *purusharthas* (goals of human life.) Dispensing with *dharma*, which is like the feet, and *moksha*, which may be compared to the head, people are hankering only after *artha* and *kama*, resulting in disorder and insecurity in the society and nation in general. The root cause for loss of peace and security is the neglect of truth and righteousness, which are highly indispensable for man.

Students! Do not forget our ancient culture, which is the very life-breath of *Bharathiyas*. Bharath (India) had offered the gems of its great culture to the world at large in the past. The nation has suffered a serious setback due to the ever-growing malady of aping other countries. Imitation is human. Creation is divine. The right education for the students is the manifestation of their innate divinity.

About fifty years back, the youth of our country, imbued with patriotism and love for our culture, used to follow the footsteps of the elders. The national leaders, teachers, and scholars of those days were setting up exemplary ideals. There was harmony in their thoughts, words, and deeds. That is why the younger generation was following their example. They used to decorate their rooms with pictures of divine incarnations and national leaders whom they used to adore and emulate. However it is a matter for regret that nowadays, ideal teachers and ideal leaders are conspicuous by their absence. Leaders and teachers say something and actually do something else, with the result that they have forfeited the confidence of the young. Today the pictures of their favourite film stars adorn the walls of the students' rooms. What is the reason for this degeneration of their minds? The only reason is the dearth of ideal leaders who believe, practise, and propagate the Indian culture. Nevertheless, *Bharathiya* culture might be seen by the discerning eye to be pervading not only the manner of dressing and speaking, working, and playing but also every activity undertaken from dawn to dusk.

In present day India there are many persons who do not understand what *samskrithi* (culture) is. There can be no human life without *samskrithi*. It is a way of life. Ignoring this way and taking to wrong paths, men are losing peace and security. Everyone wants comfort. But no attempt is being made to recognise what real comfort is. Eating four times a day, sleeping, viewing television and films three or four times, forgetful of the outside world—these are considered to contribute to comfort or happiness. Among all living creatures, to be born as a human being is declared by the scriptures as a rare privi-

lege. But if man too is content merely with eating, drinking, mating and sleeping like birds and beasts, without trying to understand what *samskrithi* is, his life is a sheer waste.

The word *samskrithi*, originating from *samskritham*, refers to the process of refinement of every object before it is made fit for human use. For example, consider how many transformations are undergone by paddy before it becomes fit for human consumption—threshing the paddy grains from the sheaves, winnowing and separating grains from chaff, pounding or milling to remove the husk from the grain, cleaning the rice by removing extraneous matter like small stones and weed seeds, etc., soaking the raw rice in water, and finally cooking over fire to get cooked rice. Such *samskrithi* (refinement) also enhances the value of things. For instance, the value of paddy is, say, one hundred rupees per bag. But, when it is dehusked and cleaned in the milling process, the value of one bag of rice will be six hundred rupees—a sixfold increase due to refinement. Let us consider a second example. If a wrist watch made of stainless steel is crushed and thrown into fire, the resulting mass of stainless steel will not be worth even a quarter of a rupee. But the worth of the same mass of steel when fabricated into a wrist watch by the manufacturing process is enhanced to one thousand rupees. To give another illustration, cotton harvested from the cotton plant has to be dried, the unwanted calyx removed, and then put in a ginning machine to separate the seeds from the lint; the lint has to be spun into yarn in a spinning machine, and the yarn has to be woven into cloth in a weaving mill. Thus, when cotton is transformed into cloth, its value and utility are enhanced. Likewise, man should not remain in the state in which he was born. He should manifest his inherent divinity. Students should therefore try to acquire, in addition to academic knowledge, qualities like humility and discrimination, which will help them to become full-fledged human personalities. As a seed finds fulfillment in a fruit-bearing tree, man should find fulfillment in a purposeful life leading to perfection through *samskarana* (transformation), and yielding the fruits of peace, security and love.

Love is a divine quality in man. But it should be shown not only toward other human beings, but also towards birds, beasts, and other living creatures. True *samskrithi* lies in such an expansion of love, giving up narrowness and developing broad-mindedness, which results in real joy for oneself and for the society as well. Thus will human nature be sublimated into divinity.

The *Vedas*, which are the repositories of Indian culture, have declared that one should not entertain hatred or ill will toward any living being. Therefore, along with their normal studies, the students should acquaint themselves with the Indian culture and put it into practice.

You are all aware how in the present day world man is losing foresight in every thought, sacrificing truth in every word, and forsaking righteousness in every action. Love is on the decline on all fronts and progressive ideas are given the go-by. Spirituality is being ridiculed. Hatred based on caste and religion is ever on the increase. Parochialism and selfishness are running riot and playing havoc. If today revolutions are rampant, what is the reason for it? It is because people have forsaken fear of sin, love for God, and morality in society. There is no benefit to the world from people who have the human form *sans* discrimination and discipline, which are the characteristics of a true man. Students! Along with your usual education you must imbibe the qualities of faith in the nation to which you belong and cherish the welfare of the world in which you live. Since ancient times, it has been the Hindu tradition to pray for the happiness of all. Bharath has

been contributing to the stability, peace, and security of all nations through its unique spiritual genius.

The *Vedas* which are the basis for Indian culture, have taught: speak truth—practice righteousness. Unfortunately, today, people do not speak truth. They talk about righteousness but do not practise it. If we protect *dharma*, practising it, *dharma* in turn will protect us. *Dharma* does not mean the mere observance of certain traditions and formalities. It is the harmony of thought, word, and deed, which results in the purification of these faculties. Today, *dharma* has declined because of the lack of such harmony and purity of the *trikaranas* (three instruments of action). The *Upanishads* exhort man not to abandon *sathya* (truth) and *dharma* (righteousness) under any circumstances even at the risk of his life; King Harishchandra stands out as the supreme exemplar in this respect.

Truth alone triumphs. One who wants to achieve victory should follow *dharma*. Dhritarashtra asked Sanjaya, “in your opinion, who will win the Kurukshetra war—Pandavas or Kauravas?” Sanjaya, who was the master of his senses, replied, “O King! Where there is the Almighty Lord together with the virtuous Arjuna devoted to truth and righteousness, there certainly will victory be.” There is no *dharma* or religion higher than *sathya* (truth). *Dharma* depends on *sathya*. Bhagavatha declares that there is no greater sin than going back on one’s own plighted word. Hence *sathya* is supreme. *Sathya* and *dharma* are interdependent and inseparable.

Boys and girls—children of Bharath! The path of truth is supremely important. We should firmly believe that it is the divine Principle and pay obeisance to it accordingly. People study and learn about various things, but, with all their education, they do not know their own Reality. The more one has book learning, the more argumentative one becomes. Howsoever educated a wicked fellow might be, his evil nature will not change. What is the use of straining oneself to acquire such worthless education? That alone is true education which confers immortality on man. That is indeed the education in truth and righteousness. *Sathya* and *dharma* are inseparable from the virtuous and noble persons. That is why truth, which is eternal, is also called *Atma*, which is the core of all beings. While all other objects and beings are subject to change, like the passing clouds; *Atma* alone remains changeless. That does not mean that you should give up secular learning. Along with it, you should try to acquire the knowledge of that which is real and everlasting. How many have not acquired high educational qualifications, name and fame? But how transient and fleeting are such things! The body itself is impermanent. However, even when the body perishes, our *samskaras* (accumulated mental impressions) will remain with us permanently. We should remember that we should live not for the sake of *annam* (food), but for the sake of *adarsham* (ideal). Ideals are always supreme and everlasting. If one person becomes an ideal, he can influence the lives of many others for the better. It is better to live like the swan for one year than to live like the crow for hundred years. It is enough if you live even for ten years as ideal students. To lead an ideal life, it is essential to have love of the nation and love of the Spirit (*Atma*), as well as love and respect for parents.

Students! Try to recognise how sacred, how pure, how exemplary, how loving, how sublime, and how vast your motherland is. Many young men of India are nowadays going abroad, belittling their own motherland as worthless. In fact, no other country in the world has really all the worthwhile things that Bharath has. Born in this land of *karma*, *yoga*, and *thyaga* (sacrifice), students should understand and cherish its cultural heritage. Their present ignorance of this sacred culture is due to the absence of teachers and par-

ents who could convey the elements of this culture to the students. During the fifteen days of this Summer Course, you, students, should learn how to harmonise our ancient culture and tradition with the needs of the modern world and to lead lives governed by truth and righteousness. Position or power is not important. They are transient like the passing clouds. One should not be proud of one's wealth, progeny, or youthful vigour. They may all disappear in a moment. Adolescence is a very precious period in one's life. It should be rightly used. Once you waste this precious period, you cannot get it back later on, strive as you may, with all your effort. Try to develop faith in the sacred *Bharathiya* culture, which transcends the limitations of time, space, and circumstances. During these fifteen days, endeavour to understand fully the glory and unique greatness of our culture.

In his welcome address, the Vice-Chancellor, Sri Saraf, prayed that I should explain to you the functions and significance of the body, senses, mind, intellect, and *Atma*. It is essential for students to know about these matters. Of what avail is it for one to know all about the external world without knowing about one's own reality! It is important for you to understand the nature of Brahman (the supreme Oversoul), and *Atma* (the individual soul). This is the royal path to the fulfillment of human life. Students—both boys and girls— should sanctify this precious period of time by imbibing sacred ideas and ideals and then strive to spread the same throughout the length and breadth of this vast country of ours. Do not forget that in all these matters, devotion is the most important requisite. Without divine grace, we cannot achieve anything. For anyone to think that he can achieve things by himself is only to betray his egoistic arrogance. Therefore, try to develop faith in *Atma* (Self); then you can achieve anything.