

1. Opening Address To The Students

In this great country of ours, the sacred relationship between the teacher and the taught has now become extinct. Truth and discipline, which are essential to good living, have become scarce. Devotion and self-confidence, which should be the primary ideals in our conduct, have disappeared. Moreover, desires devoid of responsibilities, have flourished. Forbearance is the primary feature of our lives. We should be interested to cultivate respect for truth. In our culture, respect for one's mother is regarded as even greater than one's own life.

In such a country, alas, the morals, traditions and attitudes, prevalent in foreign countries have been adopted by us today.

We are completely immersed in superficial appearances. How shall I tell you? The children of mother India do not realise the strength of their own traditions, like the elephant which does not know its own strength.

Dear students, teachers and patrons of education!

With a desire to improve education in this sacred land, we are devising many methods and many ways; but in so doing, we are unable to understand what is of paramount value in all that we are doing. The man who holds the plough for cultivating the land, the worker who works in a workshop, the tradesman who carries his trade and the writer who writes his poetry—indeed, every individual who is engaged in doing any task—are all students in the university of this wide world. However, the writer writes something and changes it. The artisan chisels something and alters it and so on. All these creations and alterations are the results of their own efforts.

In the created world, there is nothing which has no specific use. In this context it is extraordinary that man should make his own life useless. All religions and all castes are creations of man. As such, we are contributing to the divisions and differences in villages and in towns. There are two parts in a village, one which belongs to the rich and the other which belongs to the

poor. In a town, we have the old town and the new town. These differences are created by us. While doing so, we forget that the primary objective of everyone is happiness. Happiness, truth and sacrifice constitute the wealth in the treasury of God. You can be happy only when you understand the relationship that should exist between man and man. If we ask ourselves what the meaning of happiness is, we get the answer that absence of sorrow is happiness. Therefore, we have to think about the process of getting rid of sorrow.

Between one star and another and between one planet and another, there is light that shines in the space. In the same manner, between one period of sorrow and another, there should be happiness shining so far as man is concerned.

Before man can enjoy such happiness, we should make an enquiry and realise the inner meaning of some words that we use. In all that man does with a view to love himself, it is not possible for him to ignore loving others. Without cultivating love for others, you can never cultivate love for yourself. Sorrow for yourself is gained by hurting others. In the same manner, victory in every war will result in another war. So also, any happiness that you can give to others will result in happiness for yourself in the end.

Man must realise that he cannot get anything without sharing it with humanity around him. So, you

must believe that, in due course, happiness of the people around you will lead to your own happiness. Death is implied in life and sorrow is implied in pleasure. So also, night is implied in the day. We regard sorrow and happiness, night and day as different entities. No, this is not right. On a proper enquiry, we will find that in fact they are the same. Iron, in its native state, is black and hard but when you heat it, it becomes red and soft. This change has come as a result of the change that we have introduced into the natural state of iron.

In order to realise this truth at all times, we have to participate in good practices, keep good company and accept good advice from elders. From time immemorial, this sacred land has had good traditions, had expounded many spiritual truths and is noted for the exceptionally good teacher-student relationship. A *guru* like Vasistha and a disciple like Sri Ramachandra, a *guru* like Sandeepa and disciples like Krishna and Balarama, a *guru* like Datta Govinda and a disciple like Adi Sankara, a *guru* like Suka Maharishi and a disciple like Parikshith created the sacred traditions of our country which have remained as shining examples to all from that day till today. The traditions have no parallel in any other part of the world. Where are we to find such teachers or such students in the present-day world? Alas! where is such relationship to be found today between the teacher and the taught? It is only when we accept the need and value of such a teacher-student relationship, with a full heart and a clean

mind, that we can get the best out of our traditions relating to this matter. Modern youth should realise the truth in such a statement and for that purpose, it is essential that they understand correctly the relationship between man and man. Only then is it possible to understand the relationship between man and God, between creation and the creator, between *Nara* (man) and *Narayana* (God).

It does not matter even if there are no big reforms in our educational system, but it is sad that in the name of education, our youth are acquiring such queer habits that their parents are not able to lift their heads in the public because of shame. It is only when the contents of education that you get are closely linked with ideals of sacrifice, forbearance, truth and love that the youth will get the benefit of education. Students will never get any benefit out of education if it is devoid of these noble principles.

Education does not consist in the accumulation of information and facts from a multitude of books. Reading of books can only enrich you in the information that you may gather but can never give or promote good qualities. You will have to regard good education as a process by which your character is improved and by which you will be able to use your intelligence and sharpen your mind so as to distinguish right from wrong.

Students must strive to attain strength connected with responsibility. They should also recognise the

necessity for becoming aware of the defects in society and in mankind in general. Students must necessarily have three essential qualities—discipline, devotion and duty. It is only when the students have these three qualities, that they will become useful to society. Every student is neglecting these three important qualities. He is behaving in a manner which makes others feel that he is only after getting higher degrees like M.A. or M.Sc. This can also be summed up by saying that he is running after the so-called higher knowledge, not caring for general knowledge. If one does not possess ordinary common sense, however much he may think himself to be educated, he will have to be equated to an illiterate person. If there is no sense of discipline, if one acquires proficiency in English education alone, and if one is not educated in matters relating to the *Atma* or the self, the only result of such education will be slavery.

Today, one does not have the awareness necessary to respect even one's parents who have been responsible for bringing him up, nor the knowledge of how to conduct oneself in the presence of elders. Many young persons do not know what clothes to wear and when. Should people who do not possess this elementary knowledge be called educated people? If you respect your elders, your parents, your teachers and keep up the sacredness of these relationships, you will be respected in the future. If you do not respect your elders, others will simply ignore you.

Life consists in man's attempt to move from the place called "I" to a place called "WE." If each one becomes so selfish that he always desires that others should respect him and thinks that his interests alone matter, while he himself does not wish the well-being of others nor does he respect others, all of us will be following what may be called a one-way traffic. Life is not a one-way traffic. You should conduct yourself in such a way that you give happiness to others and then ask others to give happiness to you.

Dear students!

Man cannot live in isolation like a drop of oil put on the surface of a sheet of water. Man should realise that the individual and the society together make up the world. The happiness of the individual is intimately connected with the happiness of the society. The prosperity of the society itself is intimately connected with the happiness of the world. If you want to enjoy individual happiness, then you have to accept that the individual, the society and the world must all be happy.

It is because of the defects in our educational system, that a stage has been reached where our youth—both boys and girls—are sometimes taking to bad and unacceptable ways. This will be so, as long as the educational system confines itself wholly to worldly matters and so long as you learn about things relating to the world only. Our educational methods should include

spiritual, religious, ethical and moral aspects. It is only then that there is a possibility of the situation being corrected. Every youth must make an effort to generate confidence in himself and he can then enjoy happiness and bliss. He should then be prepared to sacrifice for the good of others. This will lead him to self-realisation. All religions, in essence, preach that you should purify your mind and know your own self.

We should not try to differentiate one religion from another nor one caste from another. The end and aim of all religions and all castes is one and the same. We should try to realise the oneness of all and the essential truth in them. During the one month that is to follow, there will be many elders, who have had considerable experience, talking to you about great men and great traditions of this country that have added lustre to our culture. Do not misuse this golden opportunity. You should preserve in your heart all that you hear. They are like gems that you may have to use in future. I hope that, after this one month, you will go out as torchbearers of Indian culture and re-establish faith in it. Those of you who have come to participate in this course are indeed lucky. Do not waste your time, but listen to what you will be taught and put it into practice in your future life.