

CULTURE – AGRICULTURE

India is a sacred land, whose glory has spread over all the continents, whose sons and daughters have won by their material and spiritual excellences eternal fame amidst all mankind. They have freed their motherland from the shackles of foreign rule; they have added to human happiness by their attainments in music and the fine arts. Even today, India has a name that is revered and held in high esteem. You have a great responsibility, for, you have to maintain and develop the splendour that was India. We have met here today in a spirit of prayer and *Sadhana* (spiritual discipline), to dedicate ourselves for a new step in education. The objectives of true education are two and only two. The first and the most basic of the two is education for the provision of food, clothing and shelter, for the promotion of health and harmony in society, for avoiding pollution and promoting honesty. In the olden times, when the student underwent the basic training under the teacher, he learnt, before he was 15 years of age, to spin, weave and procure clothes for his own use; to produce the food he required; and to look after his needs for basic comfort. He was contented and happy, with simple habits which gave him ample leisure for *Sadhana*, and contemplation of Nature. Everyone must endeavour to be self-reliant and self-sufficient, so far as food and clothing are concerned.

Education Should Develop The Culture Of The Mind

The rulers of this land are scared of the growth in population and they are excitedly advocating wrong and dangerous means to curb the increase. But, they forget, that with every extra mouth that has to be fed, we are getting also two extra hands, and a pair of legs, besides a brain that has vast potential for development into a national asset. We have no scheme to use the two extra hands and the precious little brain for national uplift and national prosperity. We encourage laziness, by making it the sign of affluence; we do not condemn it, wherever found. We have no strategy to maximise production and minimise waste, even in food. If only everyone in this land will consume just the quantity of food that he needs and nothing more, there will be no scarcity at all. This country has never lacked in the wherewithal to feed her children. This is the land of Goddess *Annapoorna* (Food plenty). The second objective of education is the culture of the mind and the spirit. This too is very much like agriculture, which provides food and clothing for man. We want *Dhaanya* (grains) to sustain the body; we require *Dhyana* (meditation) to sustain the spirit. In agriculture, you prepare the soil, plant seeds, feed the plants with fertilisers, and reap the harvest. In heart-culture, we have to plough the *HrudayaKshetra* (the field of the heart), remove the weeds and wild growth, and plant the seeds. The weeds are pernicious tendencies, attitudes and habits; the fertilisers are devotion and dedication. Water to help the plant grow is the quality of love. The seeds are the

Names of God, which are deposited within the purified heart. The harvest which is the reward of all this spiritual discipline is Wisdom.

Plant Seeds Of Love; Reap The Harvest Of Wisdom

Heart-culture has been the goal and aim of *Sanatana Dharma* (Eternal Universal Religion), the ancient religion of India. It is essential for a happy contented peaceful life. This *Dharma* exhorts us to plant the seeds of Love and reap the harvest of Wisdom, for the sake of social harmony and national prosperity and the uplift of all humanity. *Sanatana Dharma* makes you realise the Unity that underlies all the diversity that is apparent. The unity is the basis and the justification for loving all, with no desire for any benefit there from. But, Indians have developed so much cynicism and scorn about their heritage that they ascribe the discovery of the *Vedas* (sacred-revealed ancient scriptures) and their compilation to the crooked designs of some *Brahmins*! Muslims revere the, Quran as the Word of God; Christians revere the Bible as the word of God; but, Indians treat the *Vedic* scriptural texts as negligible teachings of interested persons! And, they stray away from the right path into distress and discontent. Max Muller (a German born expert on comparative religion) said that, what is not found in Indian culture is not found in other countries. But, as soon as Indians learn English or any other foreign language, they develop so much of ego that they start decrying their own ancient culture and adopting the manners and mannerisms of the alien civilisation.

Everyone Is At Cross-Purposes With The Rest

Gandhi said, "*My India is the India of villages.*" The freedom that has been won and the prosperity that is looked forward to, can be ensured only when the villagers are free and prosperous. And, this depends in its turn on the freedom and prosperity of each family in the village. Now, there is no unity, no mutual co-operation, no love between the four or five brothers in the family; everyone is at cross purposes with the rest. How then can the village enjoy freedom and peace and prosperity? And, what to speak of the country, when the condition of its villages is so bad? Every person seeks positions of authority, without trying to deserve the authority by means of the qualification necessary to use it in the right way. Of course, if a person who has good intentions and full capabilities and the vision of the Divine, he can well seek authority and discharge it well. But, we seldom see anyone thinking of one's duty; everywhere, people are after the acquisition of positions of authority. As a result, several malpractices have entered the field of education. Money is paid to gain admission into schools and colleges, money is paid to acquire marks and degrees. The teacher does not transmit taste, style, attitude or outlook; it is all a matter of books and more books. The student is left to gather these from outside the educational institutions. Moreover, more value is attached to information and its

collection; no attempt is made to gain transformation and to the correction of habits and characteristics. How did the great artists who drew the frescoes of Ajanta and carved the temples of Ellora learn their trade? They did not attend any school; they learnt from the teachers, the master craftsmen, the inspired artistes. Books cannot give the guidance and the inspiration for real good work. Also the worldly aspects must be harmonised with the spiritual aspects in order to live a full life. Then only can man have self-confidence and avoid the imitative path. Mental peace cannot be secured by blaming others and avoiding one's own responsibility.

Fill Your Heart With Love And Light

Today, we are establishing this Agricultural Polytechnic, so that those who study here may not depend upon others to give them a job but, so that they can earn a livelihood for themselves by their own skills and effort. This will be a spiritual discipline also and it will give them ample chances to develop their spiritual attainments too. Students here will be encouraged to practise working with others in mutual and productive co-operation. The five fingers of the hand have to come together so that a thing can be grasped firmly. Nowadays, you know they appoint what are called 'Committees' for all kinds of works, a committee for water supply, a committee for the supply of electricity, etc. But, they do not work smoothly; there are bickerings and factions. They 'come for tea' and do not deliberate and determine anything. Mutual respect can be built on the faith that all are children of God and all are Divine. Then on that basis, there can be co-operation, and enthusiasm for work. Each will then do his best, knowing his duty and his responsibility. The future of the country depends on the skill and the sincerity of the youth. Therefore, the necessary enthusiasm and encouragement must be generated among the youth. All my hopes are based on the students, the youth. They are very dear to Me. They are faultless; it is the parent and the school that are at fault for all the waywardness and violence. They lead them into wrong directions. Instead of filling your heads with facts and figures, fill your heart with love and light. Have confidence in the vast powers of the *Atma* (soul), which is your reality. Have faith in the Grace of God, which you can secure by prayer.

Do Your Work With Devotion As An Act Of Worship

While praying and using *Mantras*, sacred formulae or such expressions, one must know the real meaning and significance of the words and their deep implications. One individual for example did not know the full implication of the word '*Shiva*'; he meant by that word, the Form of God who is supposed to live in Kailash with His consort and family. He told me that '*Shivoham*' meant, '*I am Shiva*' and was shocked when asked, "*Then, what is Parvati to you?*" Many people do *Japa* (repetition of holy names) and join Bhajans (group singing of devotional songs), but, they are not aware

of the meaning and value of the words they utter mechanically. Elders who propagate *Mantras* and pose as spiritual teachers do not themselves know the inner meanings of what they recommend to others or hand on to their disciples. *Shivoham* means that you are Divine.

In Education Spiritual Values Should Be Emphasised

Man must be engaged in work; he must do it with faith and devotion, as an act of worship. In this way, he will derive wisdom. But, the education imparted today does not direct him along these lines. It is sterile instruction, as it is. I hope that in this Polytechnic, whose foundation stone I am laying now, will pay attention to these points also. Moral and spiritual principles have to be emphasised all along, even while merely material subjects are taught and learnt. I want the Committee in charge of this Institution to propagate the ideals of service, love and *Sadhana*, which *Sanatana Dharma* embodies. Even a small number of such Institutions will be enough in our country to serve as examples and guides to others. A college in every city is not necessary. We do not have several commanders-in-chief: we have only one, though soldiers are a million or so. This one college in the city of Bombay, if run in an ideal manner, can spread the ideals of the Unity of Man and the Value of Love throughout its vast population and even outside its limits. Students who undergo training here, in this College, when they go to the other states will spread the ideals they have imbibed here. The role of the teachers is also important, for, if a student deteriorates, only he will suffer. We must try to raise in this College good teachers for similar colleges in future. The citizens of Bombay should endeavour to promote educational Institutions of this type and also institutions fostering the health of people, so that the land may have peace and prosperity.

Now Man Is Devalued Into A Machine

Today, there is a great deal of talk that this country is lacking in peace. But, this is not right; for, the lack of peace of mind is an intensely individual complaint and phenomenon. The country has not deteriorated at all! It is the individual that has to be cured; it is their thoughts and feelings that have to be corrected and cleansed. It is not possible for any one individual to change his ideas, his habits, his attitudes and impulses. For example, we find that the price of every article is soaring sky high. The rulers of the land are devising various plans to bring down the price. But, this can succeed only through one means: raise the value of man, and the value of everything else will come down. Now, man, is devalued into a machine. Man too has forgotten his worth. He is demeaning himself into a beast and not realising that there is Divinity in him. Today, commodities are valued as essential, but, man is not so valued. If man is valued at his true worth, and treated as a Divine spark enclosed in the body, then, he will rise into new heights of achievement and produce all the

necessities of life in profusion. He will not grab or cheat: he will be a good worker, a pure person and a sincere *Sadhaka* (spiritual aspirant). He will cultivate the inner vision and realise that he is not the body or senses or mind or even intellect. He will be full of *Prema* (love) and self-confidence. It is not good for man to be constantly engaged in exciting things—exciting food, talk, books, films and games. They are *Rajasic*(passionate) things that disturb and agitate the mind. Nor is it good for man to be engaged in cruelty—cruel thoughts or actions. Today, the foundation has been laid for this Agricultural College. I hope a beautiful building will come up here before long. I hope there will not be any misuse of money in wasteful expenditure. I hope students who are trained in this College will become efficient farmers, self reliant young men, who depend on their own skill, character and stamina for earning their livelihood. I bless you all.

January 5, 1975

Foundation Stone Ceremony of the Agriculture College Bombay