

SIR VANGAL THIRUVENKATACHARI KRISHNAMACHARI (1881-1964)



Sir Vangal Thiruvengkatachari Krishnamachari was an Indian civil servant and administrator of repute and eminence. He served as the Diwan of Baroda from 1927 to 1944. Prime Minister of Jaipur State from 1946 to 1949 and as a member of the Rajya Sabha from 1961 to 1964. He was the Chairman of several committees. He was closely associated with the Chamber of Princes (1941-44), Indian States Finances Enquiry Committee 1948-49 and Indian Fiscal Commission (1949), and also served as a Vice-President for the Constituent Assembly, 1947-50. He was appointed as a Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission, 1953-60 by the Government of India.

BANARAS HINDU UNIVERSITY
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BY
SHRI V.T. KRISHNAMACHARI
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Mr. CHANCELLOR, MR. VICE-CHANCELLOR, GRADUATES,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I am grateful to you, Mr. Chancellor, for the honour you have done me in inviting me to speak at this Convocation. It is a privilege which I value highly.

Graduates of the year, I offer to every one of you my sincere congratulations on the degree you have obtained and I wish you all the widest opportunities of service to the country.

At an annual function like this, when the University is taking stock of its progress during the past year, our thoughts naturally turn to its great Founder. The late Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya embodied in himself the best elements in the ancient culture of India and of the West. He held fast to the fundamentals of our faith and lived the austere life enjoined by our Shastras, and at the same time took his full share in the national movement. His was a dedicated life in the best sense: and this great seat of learning stands as a monument to his long life of devotion to good causes. He has left behind him an inspiring example for all of us. As Carlyle has said : "We cannot, however imperfectly, look on a great man without gaining something by him."

We are living in an era of revolutionary changes. In recent times, conditions of life have undergone a more radical transformation than in any other comparable period of human history. Science has eliminated distance and brought all parts of the world nearer, and made the whole world one. The discovery of the structure of matter has led to ways being found for utilising nuclear energy, and the use of this for beneficial purposes opens out possibilities for the betterment of the human race hitherto undreamt of. It is not merely in external conditions of living that changes have occurred. There are the effects on the deepest and inmost activities of the human mind. The world war, with the enormous destruction that it caused, and its aftermath, have added to the uncertainties and anxieties of millions all over the world. We in India are feeling the full impact of these world forces. There are, besides, the forces at work in our own society as a result of the coming

of Independence, influencing the minds and the outlooks of millions of men and women. Everywhere there are hopes and aspirations for a new order of things, and the nation is seeking to build up a new life for itself, to create a new pattern of society "in which justice—social, economic and political—shall inform all the institutions of national life." When you leave the portals of University you will take your place in this dynamic world and play your part in these great tasks of reconstruction.

This new life must be built upon the foundation of the best elements in our past if it is to have permanence. This alone can give stability to the new structure. Historians recognise that, through all the apparent diversity in India, there runs an underlying unity in its civilisation—that there is a distinct type of thought and life which has endured through the centuries, and which is India's greatest contribution to the world. It is this conviction that has led this University to include among its objectives the "popularising for the benefit of ourselves and for the benefit of the world at large in general...all that was good and great in the culture of India." We have, therefore, to ask ourselves the question—In what lies the cultural unity of India? What have been the governing ideals in India's culture through the ages which have shaped the mind and spirit of the people? I shall attempt an answer in a general way to this question. What I shall say is familiar to all of us but is worth reiteration.

The greatest Truth enshrined in our culture is the dignity and worth of the human person and the possibility it has of attaining perfection. Life, according to us, is a ceaseless striving for perfection. Man is a free agent, seeking the Absolute by the discipline of selfless action. All human institutions have to assist in this quest. This applies to the State as well. The justification for the existence of the State lies only in so far as it recognises human worth and dignity and assists in the striving after perfection. It is in this sense that Aristotle said, "The State originates for the sake of life: it continues in existence for the sake of the good life", and Guizot, "Government is but the consequence of the recognition that man must obey the will of God." From the earliest times, our thought has insisted that the power of the State is not absolute. Above the State is the eternal Law—Dharma.

Connected with this is an equally fundamental fact in our life. It is the faith that there are many ways of approaching Reality, depending on one's inner experience. There is thus an unrestricted right to freedom of thought and we find,

in the Upanishads and elsewhere, all kinds of opinions are put forward and discussed, ranging from materialism to the highest flights of mysticism. It is because of this that reform movements like those embodied in Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism met with no antagonism or persecution. Some were absorbed and others remained outside, influencing and in turn being influenced by the existing systems. In later times, the saints who reached some fusion of Hindu and Islamic thought, especially in their mystical and devotional aspects, were recognised as leaders. This again happened when we came into contact with Western civilisation: we absorbed and made an integral part of our way of life the elements in that culture which suited our genius. There has always been at work a continuous process of synthesis and adjustment. This attitude to other ways of thought—of catholicity and broadminded tolerance—is India's great contribution to the world. Dr. Arnold Toynbee has drawn attention to this in a recent article in which he has described the changes that took place in his point of view during the three decades he was engaged in his monumental work, *A Study of History*. He says, "As I have gone on, Religion has come to take a more and more prominent place, till in the end it stands in the centre of the picture I have come back to a belief that Religion holds the key to the mystery of existence; but I have not come back to the belief that this key is in the hands of my ancestral Religion exclusively.... The Indian religions are not exclusive-minded. They are ready to allow that there may be alternative approaches to the mystery. I feel sure that in this they are right, and that this catholic-minded Indian religious spirit is the way of salvation for all religions in an age in which we have to learn to live as a single family if we are not to destroy ourselves." This spirit of synthesis was not confined to the realms of mind and spirit. The assimilation of peoples was no less persistent. Throughout the ages, many people's have come to India through the old gateways and established themselves in the country. Some came as conquerors and adventurers. Others, like the Jews and the Parsis, came to escape persecution in their native lands. But all have become part of the land and its culture, and, in their turn, they have given to their new country the enduring elements in their culture. This genius for assimilation and synthesis, for hospitality to newcomers and their ideas and institutions, has always been a distinctive feature of our civilisation.

These then are the fundamental ideas of our culture:—First of all, there is an underlying unity based on the dignity and worth—the sacredness—of the human person. Secondly, the diversities that exist in our life and thought: are

evidence of this unity and vitality: they add richness and variety to it. Take, for example, the different languages in the country. Most of them have a common origin; they have been growing alongside of one another, for centuries influencing one another; and they express different aspects of a common culture. The Constitution of India embodies the conception of all these languages developing by contact with one another and enriching one another, so that they may serve as a medium of expression for a free India which is seeking to take its rightful place in the modern world with its advances in science and technology. The same applies to other diversities. They strengthen our national life and are all needed in its service.

In the days in which our national life was at a low ebb, we lost sight of this heritage of ours. We developed fissiparous movements based on caste and community, language, religion, etc.—diversities which, as I have explained, were always regarded as valuable elements in our composite culture. Such movements spread mistrust and hatred, and still poison our national life. To mention an example, the recent happenings in regard to the adjustment of State boundaries show how far we have drifted away from our basic ideals. The fixing of State boundaries is eminently an issue on which settlements based on mutual good-will can be achieved, always bearing in mind predominant national interests. That this has aroused passions and led to violence should cause all of us the deepest concern.

To you, Graduates, it is my earnest appeal, that whatever positions you may occupy, you should wage incessant war against fissiparous movements started in the name of religion, language, sect, or caste. Such movements are evidence of deterioration of our moral values and of want of reverence for the ideals that have been a deep moving force in our life through the centuries. Nothing can be more detrimental to the nation's vital interests than these. In this fight for unity, educated men and women should take the lead. Fortunately for us, the heart of the people is sound. Shri Aurobindo has pointed out that "the main metaphysical truths...in their broad ideal aspects or in an intensely poetic and dynamic representation have been stamped on the general mind of the people." This is also mentioned by a foreign observer, who visited India recently, Mrs. Pearl Buck. She writes, "...the Indian peasant is a person innately civilised. The maturing culture of an organised human family life and profound philosophical religions had shaped his mind and soul." A special responsibility, therefore, rests

on educated men and women. They have to give the right lead to ensure that the unity of India is maintained at all times, whatever sacrifices might be required.

What I have said about the unity of India leads me to talk to you about our Five-Year Plans. By the end of March 1950, the First Five-Year Plan will have been implemented and the Second Five-Year Plan, on the preparation of which the country is now engaged, will come into operation. These Plans are not to be regarded merely as a series of projects or programmes. In the words of our Prime Minister, "It is something much 'vaster the mighty scene of a nation building itself, all of us working together to make a new India, not abstractly for a nation, but for the 360 million people.'" Again, "It is a joint effort in which a large part of the nation has taken part and it builds on the foundation of the individual."

The Planning Commission has invited all of you, through the Universities, to take your share in the making of the Plans. We want your support and co-operation. The objectives of planning are full employment, increased production and social justice. We are very far yet from the goals we have set for ourselves, but promising beginnings have been made: and, how much faster we can proceed will depend entirely on the magnitude of the effort the nation will make in the coming years. Let me give you some idea of what our needs are. The total expenditure under the First Five-Year Plan is expected to be about Rs. 3,500 crores. As a result of this, the national income is expected to rise about 15 per cent—at the rate of 3 per cent a year. In the Second Five-Year Plan we expect that we shall have a total outlay of about Rs. 7,000 crores, and that there will be an increase in the national income of 5 per cent a year.

In terms of employment, definite figures are not easy to give, but we think that employment will be provided for the annual additions to the population that take place in these five years, *viz.* about 8 to 9 millions. On the basis of such limited experience as we have, it has been calculated that it will need an investment of Rs. 18 to Rs. 20 thousand crores in the coming ten years to provide full employment in the country at a somewhat higher level of incomes than will be reached at the end of the second five-year period. As I have said, these calculations are very approximate: they, however, serve to bring out the measure of the sacrifices the nation should be prepared to make.

There is the question of "educated unemployment" in which all of you are interested. The Second Five-Year Plan, with the large industrial programmes and the expansion of facilities for training in technical courses that it includes, will

offer much wider employment opportunities than the First Plan. These, however, will fall short of requirements for those who have received general education. This special problem is being reviewed constantly. But, broadly speaking, the solution for "educated unemployment" can be found in two directions. First of all, the nation should have much larger programmes of development—economic and social—than at present. Secondly, as such programmes expand, Universities should adapt, their curricula and courses of studies to meet the changing requirements. This again underlines the need for national efforts to find largely increased resources for development.

Our Plans, however, have also higher aims. I have quoted to you what the Prime Minister has said on this aspect. The nation is seeking to create a new pattern of society, to meet the new hopes and aspirations and the longing for a new order of things felt by the millions in the country. I should like to mention specially to you the National Extension movement, which seeks to assist in one of the most difficult human problems that ever faced any nation—how to change the outlook of the seventy million families living in the countryside, arouse enthusiasm in them for new knowledge and new ways of life and fill them with the ambition and the will to live a better life. I invite all of you young men and women to take part in this great work. Some of you will, no doubt, find direct employment in this movement, which will cover the entire country in the coming five years. Others will work in different fields. But, wherever you may be, I hope all of you will devote a portion of your time regularly for honorary work in a definite programme for supporting the Plan. There is unlimited scope for such efforts. You can assist by organising savings' campaigns in your neighborhood; running co-operatives of all kinds and work centres for men and women; inducing villagers and others to build up assets for the community by voluntary work in off-seasons; and in many other ways. You will find this amply rewarding in the satisfaction it gives. It is only by the personal example of educated men and women all over the country that every family can be inspired to make the enormous-sacrifices needed for eliminating poverty.

The deeper issues involved are set out by Mr. Trygve Lie in his book, *In the Cause of Peace*. He says "How long can political democracy in the ' underdeveloped areas last without the economic underpinnings which a true democracy requires before it can function? How long before the decades or centuries of struggle culminating in political independence are revealed to have ended in a hollow victory—before hope and enthusiasm turn into disillusionment? ... If our

way of life is to survive, we shall have to demonstrate its versatility, its productive capacity; we shall have to prove to these millions, who are already beginning to doubt, that our method is the best method for achieving their goals. Time is running out." I personally have no doubt that we can face this challenge. We can raise living standards by pursuing peaceful and democratic methods. As the Prime Minister has said, "We can do this and the basic reason for my saying so is my enormous faith in the Indian people. The nation is awakening and there are no limits to what an awakened nation can achieve.

My young friends, I have tried to place before you as clearly as I can the grave responsibilities that will devolve on you when you leave the University. You should consider yourself fortunate that yours is the privilege to serve. Free India in these formative years. Life will be a most exciting adventure for you and the best wishes of the University and of all of us will be with you at all times.

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