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I feel greatly honoured that I have been asked to deliver the convocation address of this University. As is well known Kolhapur has been known from days immemorial as Dakshin Kashi and has had a long and glorious tradition of scholarship in various aspects of learning. You are all aware of the great importance played by this city during the Maratha days and I feel very proud to be here specially after having spent nearly 30 years of my life in Maharashtra.

My first duty is to congratulate the recipients of the degrees, specially those who have made a mark in their specific fields by receiving medals and other honours. In this highly competitive world that we live in, I know how difficult it is to achieve recognition and, I, therefore, feel a special word of praise is necessary for these prize winners.

You all know that we live in a scientific age where we are trying to rationalise the methods of thinking, living as we are amidst the great discoveries of science. A comparatively small number of physical laws seem sufficient to explain a great part of fundamental behaviour, right from the very edges of the outer universe to the minute regions of the atom and the atomic nucleus. This is a great achievement considering the success in explaining such a vast array of facts about the universe, with very small inputs. If science has been so successful in explaining the material world, we cannot but ask the basic question : Are we all merely manifestations of molecular forces which as we know are responsible for the behaviour of biological molecules ? Is it also logical to assume that our thoughts, actions and even our conscience arise from our molecular make up ? It is a view taken by scientists that even the conscience within us is indeed produced by the very molecules that constitute us and the case is strong when we consider the various stages of consciousness that exist in different systems of bio-molecules.

We must also admit that whatever be the origin of our consciousness, our intuition and the spirit within us have led to many great things in the world, not the least being the spirit of enquiry itself. I am pretty certain that if some living organism with intelligence came from another world, they would indeed be quite excited about all that we have done in the last 10,000 years. While we can admire

ourselves for having created a 'Civilization' of great sensitivity, we must take note of the fact that this very civilization of ours has led to much that has a capacity for self-destruction. As examples, we can refer to the various stupid types of superstitions, false intuition, etc. If you ask me why our country which should be the finest in the world has brought itself into a position where it is usually shown among the lowest in the world, I can only point out to the fact that individually and collectively, it is our false intuition that has been responsible. In my young days I recall the cruelty meted out to widows and other weaker sections of the society in the name of religion. In the olden days, many a time we have lost our independence by false intuition and by reliance on facts which could never have been true. Even now it amazes me how well-educated people depend on superstition to guide their daily lives. Very often this weak point of our human nature is utilised by interested groups to benefit from this very weakness. You will all agree that these weaknesses have to be corrected but by what methods and by whom ?

We have to recognise that the brain is essentially a complex computer. It has a memory, and it has various processes that can be programmed accordingly. The programming of the brain starts at an early age and is very dependent on the society around and on our parents who programme the youthful brain. Once this is done, it is very difficult to change it except by a very new kind of enlightenment. It has been pointed out that even so called incurable diseases can be cured, by various rituals which have no medical basis, of any sort. It sometimes succeeds because the brain has been programmed to produce by itself the necessary pharmaceutical agents as a result of some habitual external action quite unconnected with the disease. Many of the modern diseases usually referred to as allergy, could be due to the faulty programming of the brain. I would, therefore, like to ask the question-Is it possible to reprogramme the brain or are we completely left with it and any transformation can only be very slow or impossible? There is no doubt that programming a young brain is a comparatively easy matter but at later stages the programmes become largely irreversible. As examples of built-in programmes can be mentioned, food habits, language, superstitions, local prejudices etc. However, a fully developed human brain has one remarkable capacity and that is, within certain framework it can question its own I activity and rationality. If, at any stage, we have come to a position when we cannot ask questions about ourselves or about our society, we come to a state where we are no longer worthy of being called human beings. The very purpose of University

education though it comes at a late stage of our programming period, is to encourage functions of constructive self questioning. I do not think the purpose of university is merely to examine, classify people and give degrees or only teach them to agitate and become violent. There has been in recent times a tendency for Universities to do just this. This has resulted in much confusion and frustration. The very functions of a University have been distorted and sometimes special interests try to programme the brain to make the end products suitable for their own needs. The main function of a University is to make the mind think correctly within the framework of a scientific temper a phrase so often referred to by the late Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru.

At no stage do I reject the need for some spiritual support because if there is no prop of this type, the tendency of the mind is to allow itself into self-destructive areas. But the question is-What kind of spiritual support do most people need ? We have to admit that a mind brought up purely on the rational methods of science may feel a loss of mystery, a feeling of cynicism and an atmosphere of emptiness as though everything is almost pre-ordained except what rests on probability. While a certain group of people can get over this feeling by seeing mystery in rationality, by seeing inspired beauty in the methods of science itself, there will be many who may not perceive or get satisfaction from Science certainly in the way it is presented to them now. An incomplete appreciation of science can lead to cynicism and loss of values with reference to social behaviour. Respect for elders and teachers will disappear, grabbing money will become the essential aim of life, feelings of humanity will begin to deaden.

In the olden days education and learning were in the hands of a few, usually termed the "elite class" and they used to be within a framework of a society of established laws sometimes quite cruel but sufficient to allow for some creative activity. If, however, it is extended to everybody specially those of the first generation who have received education, some new forces are required to keep society in a position of equilibrium. What could these forces be ? Earlier I made references to spiritual forces. These used to manifest themselves in the form of religion, gurus, God-men, caste and clubs of various sorts. There used to be a clear distinction between the elite, the rich and the lower classes. I do not know whether stability of a society can be maintained by such forces again but I just enumerate these because each one of them is based on assumptions and applicability belonging to certain period of time. In fact personally I find them repelling whatever good they may claim. Be that as it may, some alternative

forces will be required for stabilization; otherwise there will be a tremendous outburst of crime, cruelty and corruption. The older methods of keeping stability of society will no longer help in reducing these evil manifestations of disequilibrium which seem to be already getting so frequent these days.

What then is the possible way out ? This is a very difficult question to answer but if human nature and our very molecular structure itself is responsible for the need of some religious atmosphere at least for a large part of population, I can only suggest one very good solution offered to us 2,500 years ago by the Buddha himself. We are not interested here in Buddhist Theology and the politics of the Sangam. We are interested in the fact that he recognised, that there is a mind, and the mind requires meditation and concentration. With this and the study of sciences one can retain a certain objective equilibrium of the mind which can include a life full of humanity, a life full of reason and a life without violence and cruelty. In recent times we have been building too much of our society based on falsehood. We have to create an atmosphere where falsehood would quickly be detected and exposed. You will see that this is not very different from what Mahatma Gandhi used to say about non-violence and truth.

I am not one of those who believe that the West inspite of all its glamour has solved its problems. With all its affluence that society is far from a state of equilibrium and it is only covered by a thick layer of the so-called stability. When affluence disappears, troubles will start and since the resources of the world are limited, this is bound to happen. We can already take the warning from all that is happening around us in other countries and in our own country.

I take pleasure in thanking the Vice-Chancellor for having given me this opportunity of expressing a few odd thoughts which may be of value to at least some of you especially those of you who are going to take up new responsibilities in the years to come.

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