

**Address delivered by the Rashtrapati Dr. S. Radhakrishnan at the First Convocation of the
INDIAN ACADEMY OF MEDICAL SCIENCES in Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi on 8th December, 1963**

Mr. President, Fellows of the Academy, friends : -

I have the honor to be called upon to preside over this First Convocation and give away the scrolls.

I see many distinguished men of achievement among the recipients of the Fellowship of this Academy. I hope they will establish a tradition of leadership in research so far as medical sciences are concerned.

You call yourself an Academy. This term was first used by Plato in 387 BC when he had an academy and had a number of pupils collected around him among whom was the great Aristotle, and so the tradition came down through the Italian renaissance to our modern academies. This idea need not be regarded as altogether unfamiliar to us. We had our forest hermitages, our tapovanas, where distinguished scholars gathered around them pupils and imparted not only information but transmitted to them certain vitality, certain love of the subject which they taught them. We had great medical savants who also had these tapovanas, and as you know the famous Jeevaka was invited by the Greeks to go and visit their country.

Tapas is mental travail. Panini tells us : *tapa-allocane* : *tapas* is reflection; *alocana* : it is by reflecting on the facts of experience, and not being satisfied with the first appearances that any kind of progress is made. If a science does not advance it becomes static and stagnant and dies away. It is therefore very essential that those who are dealing with medical sciences should do their utmost to keep up the flame burning brighter and brighter as the generations pass.

We had in our country a very great tradition of not merely reverence for life but reverence for suffering, reverence which made them take to healing people. The ayurvedic science gave a hint to Buddha. The ayurvedic science says '*roga, roga hetu, roga nivrti, arogya*'. Buddha said '*duhkha duhkha hetu, duhkhu nivrti, nirvana*'. So, this kind of analysis and attention to human suffering has been there. The greatest of our seers were people who tried to help those who needed comfort, tried to heal the sick, tried to cure the blind, tried to make the lame walk. That is what all the great people have said and have done in their own lives.

Therefore this medical profession is a profession of the greatest humanity, of the greatest service. If anyone makes research here, it applies not merely to his own country or to his people but to the whole world. When Madame Curie, a Pole who settled down in France, discovered radium, it was not merely for the Poles or for the French, but for the whole world that she discovered it.

We have been doing our utmost since independence by increasing facilities for medical education, by upgrading several institutions, by instituting post-graduate sections in different branches of study : But the real medical revolution which is taking place today all over the world, I do not think we have contributed to it in a very significant way.

Your President has observed that if you wish to have research, you require certain conditions. You require men of talent, you require an atmosphere and environment, you require the tools and the equipment. These things are essential. I do not see with these increasing facilities which we now have, there should be any lack of these facilities.

Our boys and girls, our men and women, are not inferior in intelligence or innate ability. They are people who can be raised to the level of first-class researchers in medical sciences as they have been raised in other sciences in this country. Tools and equipment may be costly, may be expensive as your President just remarked : But even then we are spending so much money on so many things and I do not see any reason why he should not provide our people with the right spirit, with the right

equipment and with the right tools which they need. You also find the environment, an atmosphere of research, a love of advancing the frontiers of knowledge. This must be instilled into every young mind. There is no point in bull dozing human minds and stabilizing them. You must try to give them the critical and creative powers with which they are endowed, full scope and full opportunity for expression. I think if our teachers have got that sense of not merely transmitting knowledge but transmitting love of research, our boys and girls would respond adequately to the appeal which they make.

Even today we hear of many cases of cholera in some parts of our country, a disease which has been wiped out in many advanced nations. It does not depend merely on medical science : It depends on the general raising of the level of our standards, depends on the raising so to say, of environmental hygiene, sanitation, proper water supply, etc. You find also heart ailments on the increase. That again is due to the lack of some kind of tranquility in the human being, the stress and strain of life. All the strains through which we are passing make us feel worried and worry is one the greater causes of any kind of heart trouble. You find also mental illness on the increase. What is it due to? It is due to the fact that the human being has reduced himself in many cases to a mere reactor to the changes which take place in the environment. He does not exercise his critical and creative faculties in accepting the challenges, overcoming them. Man should not be reduced to a mere robot; he must not become an automaton. He is not merely a cog in the wheel. He is the one who is responsible for all the achievements which we have made since the beginning of history. It is the free spirit of man that can sit in judgment on the environment, penetrate its secrets, mould the environment to suit our pattern, our own desire. So that free spirit of man must not be curbed. It was Jung, a great psychiatrist, who said that 60 per cent of the cases which came to him, mental cases, were due to lack of faith, to lack of purpose in life, to a certain vacuity, emptiness in the human being. The moment you rehabilitate him or her you give him or her faith, you give him or her a purpose in life, his or her mental disorder subsides.

We should, therefore, know that we are born in this world to live for a great cause, to live for some supreme purpose. If we overlook that purpose, if we make ourselves an object in the series of happenings and not a subject of creativity, if we overlook that fundamental fact, then we will make ourselves subject to every kind of mental disorder.

So the one great thing necessary is to instill into our young men a purpose in life, a sense of dedication, make them feel that they are born in this life to do something great. That is what is necessary. The disruption of human relationships which bring about so many casualties in this world, will all be overcome if a man has the sense of love. 'I never met a man whom I did not like', said one of the great thinkers. 'Every man whom I met I liked until he disappointed me, until he made me feel that there is something wrong which has to be set right'. It is that passion, that passion for human relationships, enlargement of human relationships, making people believe that we love them, we look upon them as something intelligent, dignified, who require to be given every kind of attention. That will bring down cases of mental illness, and it will also bring down the causes which break human relationships with so much tragedy consequent upon those things.

I hope this Medical Academy which represents different sciences, which represent men of achievement in their respective spheres, which offer an incentive to men of promise that they can also get these distinctions, will be regarded as something to which all our youngsters will look. A Fellowship of the Academy must be a matter of honour and not a matter of manoeuvring or intrigue but a manner of straight forward work which is acknowledged as first class in its nature. That should be the quality which we should encourage. It is good to know that you have now about 120 Fellows and you will hereafter elect about 15 and your maximum, number will not exceed 300 as at present your rules stand. I hope you will conform to that and exercise the greatest care in the choice of your Fellows. I may say there is a sister Academy here, Sahitya Academy. It has provision for fellowships, but in all these ten years in which it has been in existence, it has not elected a single Fellow. It shows the high standards which the Sahitya Academy has imposed on itself. I am not asking you to copy that model. You have not done so. But you have already 115 or 120 members : But in the

choice of your Fellows, be careful, be vigilant, take care of the great reputation which you should enjoy among the sister Academies of the world.

I wish you all well and I have now great pleasure in distributing the scrolls.
