

Inspirational speech

Profession, Teacher



Address at the 10th year celebrations of DPS Sharjah Dubai 24 January 2011

RIGHTEOUSNESS IN THE HEART I am delighted to participate in the 10th year celebrations of Delhi Private School, Sharjah. What does it mean? That means, DPS Sharjah has orbited 10 times around the sun. My greetings to the DPS management, teachers, students and their parents. I was happy to see your website and your attitude to see each student in his or her potential strength. Education is becoming borderless and we all have to work for an education with value system at global cadre. I strongly believe enlightened citizenship will be the basis of world prosperity and peace. The three components of enlightened citizenship are (1) Education with value system (2) Bridging religions through spirituality and (3) Economic Development.

When I see a large number of parents assembled here and their children and teachers, I would like to talk on the topic “ Righteousness in the heart” My experience in Greece Friends, let me share with you a beautiful experience when I visited Greece in April 2007. I was negotiating and climbing towards Acropolis mountain top in Athens and came across a group of 150 Greek students. They threw a spontaneous smile on me; the teachers came forward and introduced the students. They said, they were very happy to see the Indian President and that the children would like to hear from him a few words. My mind at that time was thinking about the great personalities the land of Greece had given to the world: Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. The words of Plato were ringing in my mind when I saw the young students. Plato brings out that “ Our aim in founding the State was not the disproportionate happiness of any one class, but the greatest happiness of the whole”, 2400 years ago. Similarly, around the same period Tamil poet Saint Thiruvalluvar

said, That is, " the important elements that constitute a nation are: being disease free; high earning capacity; high productivity; harmonious living and strong defence". We have to find how we can provide all these elements to the citizens of every nation on an equitable basis for happiness for all. With these thoughts, I made up my mind, of what to say to the students and the youth of Greece. I slowly repeated line by line, a hymn which I normally hear in Indian spiritual centers. Righteousness Where there is righteousness in the heart There is beauty in the character. When there is beauty in the character, There is harmony in the home. When there is harmony in the home. There is an order in the nation. When there is order in the nation, There is peace in the world. When the students and the youth repeated with me, the tourists around at the Acropolis also repeated and there was all round ovations. Then I realized how people from multiple nations, young and experienced were influenced by the thought of righteousness in the heart irrespective of their nationality. You can see how the righteousness in the heart generates beauty in the character in the human beings and beauty in the character leads to harmony in the home. Harmony in the home in an integrated way generates order in the nation. Of course the order in the nation finally blossoms peace in the world. The righteousness in the heart is the starting point for great individual, great family and great nation and ultimately great planet earth. Now the question is: How do we inculcate the righteousness in the heart. In my opinion, there are three sources which can build a youth with righteousness in the heart. One is mother, second is father and the third and the most important is the teacher, particularly primary school teacher. Also, to provide righteousness in the heart to the young

minds, we should have an environment of great education and a spiritual way of life and spiritual environment. When the parents and primary school teachers create righteousness in the minds of your children, then he or she will be ignited and get a wings to fly. In this connection let me recall famous verses of 13th century Persian Sufi poet Jalaluddin Rumi: Wings to Fly “ You were born with potential. You were born with goodness and trust. You were born with ideas and dreams. You were born with greatness. You were born with wings. You are not meant for crawling, so I don’t, I have wings. I will Learn to use them to fly. ” 9. Jalaluddin Rumi 10. 13th Century Persian Sufi Poet My message to you and to the young friends, is that education gives you wings to fly. Achievement comes out of fire in our sub-conscious mind that “ I will win”. So, each one of you assembled here, will have “ Wings of Fire”. The Wing of Fire will indeed lead to knowledge which will make you to fly as a Doctor, or an Engineer, or a scientist, or a teacher, or a political leader, or a bureaucrat or a diplomat or anything you want to be. If you want to achieve what you desire then you should identify the inner potential that is unique in you. UNIQUE YOU Friends, I have met, so far, 11 million youth in a decade’s time, in India and abroad. I learnt: Every youth wants to be unique, that is, YOU! But the world all around you, is doing its best, day and night, to make you just “ everybody else”. The challenge, my young friends, is that you have to fight the hardest battle, which any human being can ever imagine to fight; and never stop persevering until you arrive at your aspiration, that is, UNIQUE YOU! What is your destined place? How do you want to achieve to reach that destined place? The mission of teacher and parents has an important role in making our children each one unique

person. Criteria for achievement for youth How does achievement come? There are four proven steps; having an aim in life before 20 years of age, acquiring knowledge continuously, hard work towards the aim and perseverance to defeat the problem and succeed. Once the children are able to achieve their goal using these four important aspects for a success, which will lead to excellence in whatever the task they do. Culture of excellence Excellence is not by accident. It is a process, where an individual, (or organization or nation,) continuously strives to better oneself. The performance standards are set by themselves, they work on their dreams with focus and are prepared to take calculated risks and do not get deterred by failures as they move towards their dreams. Then they step up their dreams as they tend to reach the original targets. They strive to work to their potential, in the process, they increase their performance thereby multiplying further their potential and this is an unending life cycle phenomenon. They are not in competition with anyone else, but themselves. That is the culture of excellence. I am reminded of a poem which I had written and recited, while addressing the Indian Parliament and its members. The poem is called " The Vision" The Vision I climbed and climbed Where is the peak, my Lord? I ploughed and ploughed, Where is the knowledge treasure, my Lord? I sailed and sailed, Where is the island of peace, my Lord? Almighty, bless my nation With vision and sweat resulting into happiness This poem focuses on the vision to bring peace and prosperity to the people through knowledge. Dear Friends, it is said, for every right you cherish, you have a duty to fulfill. For every hope you entertain, you have a task to perform. For every privilege you would preserve, you must sacrifice a

comfort. Freedom will always carry the price of individual responsibility and the just rewards of your own choices. This principle is true for young and experienced. I am sure, the school education and its teachers have inculcated these responsibilities among all the students which they will cherish and preserve throughout their life. Dear friends, I would like to share with you three incidents of value based educational intervention by Lead India 2020 movements to the school students which may give you the idea on how the education empowers the youth. I can do it When I was the President of India, I met the group of tribal students from Lead India 2020 movement on 28 Aug 2006. I asked all of them one question: " What you want to become? " Out of many responses, one visually challenged boy studying IX class got up. His name is Srikanth, he answered me " I will become visually Challenged first President of India". I was very happy to see his vision and ambition. Small aim is a crime. Hence, I congratulated him to realize his vision and told him to work for realizing the vision. Thereafter he worked hard, got 90% in 10th class and 96 % in intermediate and he set a goal to study Engineering in MIT, Boston USA. His relentless hard work not only secured seat but he got full fee waiver from MIT, Boston. Srikanth's achievement has brought changes in many change agents of Lead India 2020 and inspired to set high vision. Lead India 2020 training has set a high vision for every student who undergoes the training process. Seeing this impact of Lead India 2020 training, GE volunteers have funded Mr. Srikanth for his travel to USA. Today he is pursuing his studies at MIT, Boston. When the GE offered him a job on his completion of graduation, he told them that he would certainly come back to GE, if I couldn't become the President of

India. What a confidence that boy has amidst of difficulty and the challenges in his life by being visually challenged. What a great transformation that has brought into a visually challenged boy's life by Lead India 2020 movement through value based education intervention. The whole education system should be shaped in such a way that every student must be able to say " I can do it". Mother smiles — family smiles Again during Lead India 2020 meeting at Tirupati, I asked the children to take one oath. That oath is " From today onwards, I will make my mother smile daily", all the children took oath from me. When mother smiles, family smiles and society smiles. That day evening, I met the some of the parents when I visited the Tirupati Tirumala temple. They all told me with delight how their children came to them and made them smile with pride. I was very happy that such a single effort made the entire family happy and created a good ambience in the family setup. Dear friends, these three incidents show how the value based education to the school students can bring self transformation to the students, which is the foundation for the societal transformation. Human Indomitable spirit has a blessing of Almighty Imam Ghazali was a saint teacher lived in the 12th Century. My father narrated me a scene when Imam Ghazali has been tested by Shaitan, the transgressed Angel. One day Imam Ghazali was unfolding his prayer mat for Maharif Namaz. At that time, the Shaitan appears in front of him and said, " Respected Imam Sahib, I am just now coming from heaven where there was a discussion about great human beings and you have been judged as the best human being living on Earth. As a recognition of your great stature you have been exempted from the trouble of performing Namaz in future. Imam Ghazali was restless as the

Namaz time was approaching. So he looked at Shaitan and said, “ Shaitan Sahib, first of all performing Namaz is not a trouble at all and when even Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him), was not exempted from performing Namaz five times a day, how can a poor Imam like me be exempted?. Thank you. He went on to perform the Namaz. When he completed the Namaz, Imam Ghazali still saw Shaitan was standing. Imam Sahib asked him what he was waiting for. Shaitan said, “ O Imam you have excelled even the most favoured Prophet Adam, who could not win over my deception and I made him to eat the forbidden fruit. Realizing that Shaitan was flattering, Imam Sahib prayed to Allah, Oh almighty, help me and save me from the deception of the flattery, making a disappointed Shaitan finally disappear. The Shaitan’s mission failed. The message we derive from the story of Imam Ghazali is that, spirituality and religion should create and nurture indomitable spirit which is resilient to all temptation and corruption.

Gandhiji’s mother’s advice Now I would like to recall, the advice of Gandhiji’s mother to her son. " Son, in your entire life time, if you can save or better someone's life, your birth as a human being and your life is a success. You have the blessing of the Almighty God". This advice had a deep and lasting impact on Gandhiji and he continuously worked to better the lives of human race as a whole in different parts of the country.

Aim in life When I was in 5th class, at the age of 10, I had a teacher, Shri Sivasubramania Iyer. He was one of the very good teachers in our school. All of us loved to attend his class and hear him. One day he was teaching about bird's flight. He drew a diagram of a bird on the blackboard depicting the wings, tail and the body structure with the head. He explained how the birds create the lift and fly. He

also explained to us how they change direction while flying. Nearly 25 minutes he gave the lecture with various information such as lift, drag, how the birds fly in a formation of 10, 20 or 30 etc. At the end of the class, he wanted to know whether we understood how the birds fly. I said, I did not understand how the birds fly. When I said this, he asked the other students whether they understood or not. Many students said that they did not understand. Our teacher was a real teacher and very good teacher. He did not get upset by our response. In view of this, my teacher said that he would take all of us to the sea shore. That evening the whole class was in the sea shore. We enjoyed the roaring sea waves knocking at the rocks in the pleasant evening. Birds were flying with sweet chirping voice. He showed the sea birds in formation in 10 to 20 numbers, we have seen the marvelous formation of birds with a purpose and we were all amazed. And we were simply looking at the formation. He showed the birds and asked us to see when the birds fly, what it looked like. We saw the wings being flapped. He asked us to look at the tail portion with the combination of flapping wing and twisting tail. We noticed closely and found that the birds in that condition flew in the direction they wanted. Then he asked us a question, where the engine is and how it is powered. Bird is powered by its own life and the motivation what it wants. All these things were explained to us within 15 minutes. We all understood the whole bird dynamics with practical example. How nice it was? Our teacher was a great teacher; he could give as a theoretical lesson coupled with live practical example. This is real teaching. I am sure, many of the teachers in schools and colleges will follow this example. For me, it was not merely an understanding of how a bird flies. The

bird's flight entered into me and created a feeling on the seashore of Rameswaram. From that day evening, I thought that my future study has to be with reference to flight and flight sciences. I am telling this because my teacher's teaching and the event that I witnessed decided my future career. Then one evening after the classes, I asked the teacher, " Sir, please tell me, how to progress further in learning flight sciences." He patiently explained to me that I should complete 8th class, and then go to high school, and then I should go to college that may lead to education of flight. If I do all these things I might do something connected with flight sciences. This advice and the bird flying exercise given by my teacher really gave me a goal and a mission for my life. When I went to college, I took Physics. When I went to engineering in Madras Institute of Technology, I took Aeronautical Engineering. Thus my life was transformed as a rocket engineer, aerospace engineer and technologist. That one incident of my teacher encouraging me to ask questions, showing the visual live example proved to be a turning point in my life which eventually shaped my profession. India has 540 million youth below 25 years old. Ignited mind of the youth is the most powerful resource on the earth, above the earth and under the earth. If the youth are empowered with education with value system at the young age then they are ambassadors for realizing the missions of the developed India before the year 2020. Dear friends, when you complete your education, what type of India that you are going to see, shape and contribute it with your expertise in various fields of education. I visualize the following distinctive profile for India by the year 2020, so that you know what the challenges are before you. Distinctive profile of the nation 11. A Nation where the rural and urban

divide has reduced to a thin line. 12. A Nation where there is an equitable distribution and adequate access to energy and quality water. 13. A Nation where agriculture, industry and service sector work together in symphony. 14. A Nation where education with value system is not denied to any meritorious candidates because of societal or economic discrimination. 15. A Nation which is the best destination for the most talented scholars, scientists, and investors. 16. A Nation where the best of health care is available to all. 17. A Nation where the governance is responsive, transparent. 18. A Nation that is prosperous, healthy, secure, peaceful and happy and continues with a sustainable growth path. 19. A Nation that is one of the best places to live in and is proud of its leadership.

Integrated Action for developed India To achieve the distinctive profile of India, we have the mission of transforming India into a developed nation. We have identified five areas where India has a core competence for integrated action: (1) Agriculture and food processing (2) Education and Healthcare (3) Information and Communication Technology (4) Infrastructure: Reliable and Quality Electric power, Surface transport and Infrastructure for all parts of the country. (5) Self reliance in critical technologies. These five areas are closely inter-related and if progressed in a coordinated way, will lead to food, economic and national security. The major mission is the development of infrastructure for bringing rural prosperity are through Provision of Urban Amenities in Rural Areas (PURA) through creation of three connectivities namely physical, electronic, knowledge leading to economic connectivity. The number of PURA for the whole country is estimated to be 7000. PURA is the vehicle for bringing sustainable development to the rural areas. Certainly

PURA provides an opportunity for all the disciplines of education and research to contribute for its sustainable development. Capacities to be built among students The primary focus of the students should be to excel in their studies. This is their first contribution to the development of the nation. The education system should instill in the minds of students capacities of inquiry, creativity, technology, entrepreneurial and moral leadership. If we develop in all our students these five capacities, we will produce “ Autonomous Learner” a self-directed, self controlled, lifelong learner, who will have the capacity to both respect authority and at the same time is capable of questioning authority, in an appropriate manner. These are the leaders who would work together as a “ Self-organizing Network” and transform India into a developed nation in a time bound manner. Dynamics of Smile So, far I have met more than 10 million youth from all parts of our country. In these meetings, I observe a progressive change in the smile pattern of the children of belonging to various age groups. When they are five years old, they carry a beautiful smile, since they are blossoming innocently. When they get into the teens, slowly the smiling fades and signs of concern appears. At this age, anxiety about their future sets in and takes away their smiles. When they complete their education, the top most questions in their mind are, what will they do after the education? Will they get employment? The parents, who have spent all their savings on their education, also share the same concern. These thoughts really made me think and think. I suggest the parents, schools and other educational institutions have to collectively work for injecting creativity, innovation and self-confidence among the youth. They should develop the spirit “ I can do it”, “ we can do it” and the “ nation can

do it". Education has to transform many youth as employment generators rather than employment seekers. This will enable building of self-esteem and self-confidence leading to continuous retention the blossoming smile of the child. Conclusion Friends, there is something unique about the parents and the students assembled here. You are able to intimately know about two cultures — one of your country of birth you and your parents. The other the country of your residence. Naturally you could develop some friendship bridges, which will go a long way in your life experience. You could every time visit India, bring in some messages of good will, of knowledge of UAE and present to the students, teachers and parents in India. Similarly when you come back, bring in some good books, good information about India and your places of visit and present to your UAE colleagues. And in ten years, you must have built a good strength of alumni. Expand the alumni to include the parents of the students and try to get the messages working of education with value system that you have developed. Progressively, you may take up some societal entrepreneurial projects so that world literacy is improved or world poverty is reduced or your experience of education with value systems spread to the globe. With this thought, I greet the students, Parents and teachers of DPS, Sharjah on their 10th year celebrations. May God Bless you.