

and the sooner the better. Stand up, men and women, in this spirit, dare to believe in the Truth, dare to preach the Truth! The world requires a few hundred bold men and women. Practise that boldness which dares know the Truth, which dares show the Truth in life, which does not quake before death, nay, welcomes death, makes a man know that he is the spirit.'

Swami Vivekananda's real life work was concerned with this ushering in of a new world order, where spirituality would have its fullest sway and every individual the fullest freedom and opportunity for the

expression of his divine nature. 'My ideal, indeed,' he said, 'can be put into a few words, and that is to preach unto mankind their divinity, and how to make it manifest in every movement of life. ... I should like to see hundreds coming to the Lord.'

The observance of the Centenary would have fulfilled its purpose, and we would have paid the best homage to the memory of the great Swami, if each one of us, in whatever station of life we are, strove to manifest in our lives, in however small a measure, the divinity within and thus did our mite to fulfil his wish.

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## MESSAGE OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA TO MODERN INDIA

SRI JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

I have been asked to deliver a presidential address. I do not know what I, or for that matter anybody, should say on such an occasion. Perhaps the best presidential address would have been to recite to you the words of Swami Vivekananda himself, because whatever he said or whatever he wrote throbbed with life. If someone translates his words, puts them to you in a different language, they lose this vitality.

As we all know, Swami Vivekananda was a unique personality. India has produced great men since ancient times, and Swami Vivekananda was one of them. These great men, these great of all ages, do not grow great simply in air. They grow in their times; they live in their times; and say things that are relevant to their times. They interpret old traditions and old beliefs and apply them to the problems of the new age. It is from this fact that their precepts derive their unusual strength. If I talk to you about old things, you may like them, you may admire them, you may even believe in them, but they have little relevance today. If I talk

about the things of the day, as politicians—those who work in the field of politics—do, you will be interested, as everybody else. But these have little depth. They do not move you. They may be interesting but you are likely to forget them after some time. But in Swami Vivekananda we find a combination of both the ancient and the modern. The Swami knew of the ancient basis of our approach to things and of our achievements; and he explained them to the people of today in their own language. He was surcharged with the lore and learning of India, but he did not confine himself to India alone; it was because of this that his voice was listened to with attention in other lands as well and people there were impressed with what he said.

I see a large number of children here. Someone may ask me what I would say to these children. There are many things that they have to learn. Whom should they look up to for learning them? It is quite possible that I may not be able to place before them a name from the history of India as apt, as

appropriate, as that of Swami Vivekananda. Let us look up to him, let us read him, let us learn from him many things, but above all the one for which he was particularly known and which manifested itself as energy, as force, as indomitable strength. Every word of his drips with this energy, and he used this energy at such a terrific rate that he died young. He did not complete his fortieth year, and even prior to that he had shaken the whole of India and the people abroad, and created an impression on their minds.

Vivekananda saw that India had degenerated into a weak nation. Indians are intelligent; they are brainy, they become doctors, they become engineers. This is all very good. But they are weak. The foremost quality that a people require is strength. If they do not have it, all their intelligence, all their knowledge becomes ineffective. Therefore the lesson he imparted was of infusing strength in the people, in every individual, in every nook and corner of India. During his short life he went all over India and preached; and what he taught made a powerful impact.

After him came Mahatma Gandhi. He taught us a number of things and the greatest of his teachings was that we remain fearless—the same lesson that Swami Vivekananda taught. Do not be afraid; stand fearless; because, to the man who is fearless, other things are comparatively easier. If we are afraid, if we are terrified, our intelligence and other faculties tend to weaken. The man who is fearless does not require to hide what he does. For instance, today we hesitate to talk about certain matters, we hide certain very small things. It means that we are afraid of ourselves, we are afraid of others. So what Swamiji told us is very important. We should be fearless, we should be strong as individuals and as a country. I shall say only this to you that you, particularly our young men, should get the opportunity to get acquainted with the ideas of Swamiji. We could not be so fortunate as to hear his voice, but we can at least read what he taught and

what he wrote, and learn from it. You will find that even his words are packed with vigour. Whoever reads them feels their impact.

Today our country is facing a difficult situation. It is confronted with great problems. We have to resolve them. This cannot be done all at once. There is no magic key by just turning which the difficulties vanish. It is a great test for us and for our country. We will gradually fulfil this test. Under these circumstances it becomes all the more necessary that we fearlessly stand up to these problems. If we do so, the problems which overawe us will disappear. On this occasion, I shall say that we should receive some light in our hearts from Swamiji. It will make it easier for us to find the way, because, as you know, Swamiji had a combination of both the old and the new.

The greatest problem before India is to arrive at a compromise between the old and the new. We have had our roots in this land for centuries. How should I put it? You and I, all of us are born in this land; I mean this land of Bharat. It has a history running into a thousand years. We have thoughts of Bharat, her way of years. We cannot leave it. And why should we leave it? It is very precious. How can we leave it? We learn from it. From a person who always looks up to the ancient we can learn many good things. But if he does not take into account the world of today, he certainly is not living in the present age. We live in the present day world. Even if we want to completely live in the ancient times we cannot do so. It is a different world. If we want to live completely only in the modern age, detached from the roots of ours from which we are derived, without learning from them and without having some sort of understanding of them, we tend to become, in a way, superficial.

Without roots nothing lives. There is no tree without roots. But if we are only roots, that will not do; and if it is only the upper

portion of the tree without roots, that will also not do. Both of them are essential. We have to correlate and combine both of them. Old world and ancient ideas, I think, are essential to the new world. We should understand them, and march ahead. I feel this is a big problem for India to tackle. As we are, something or other new has always been taking place in politics or elsewhere.

New questions arise and we look for their answers. But I feel this is the main problem. If we want to cut off ourselves from the world we can do so. Why should I say that we cannot do it? But I shall tell you what is in my mind, what I think. It appears to me that we have to face the problem that is in the world; and in a way, as far as possible, as much as we can, serve others, our country, our public, or the world, whatever you may like to call it. Because, these days all of them are somewhat mixed up. But we can better understand the present and work in it when we know about our roots in the ancient India and profit from them. Swami Vivekananda had both these things. He knew the ancient Indian ideals and learning shaped by our great men, and knew the world of today as well. That is why his words have so much power, and accordingly Indians must be powerful. It is a great idea that Indians should be energetic, Indians should be forceful. Without energy man is ineffective. I do not mean the physical strength as that of a wrestler, though that is also good; all types of

strength are good, but the strength of heart, strength of mind, a sort of toughness, strength not to bow down before a wrong, is what we must acquire. It is then that we will be irresistible in our onward march.

There are numerous problems confronting our country, many undesirable things, many weaknesses. How are we to overcome them? It will not do only to tackle an enemy who comes from outside. We say the Chinese attack us. It is correct. We have to face the attack, and we shall face it. But what is more difficult is a determination to face one's own weakness. Among soldiers, those who are the weakest of heart talk loudest in order to hide their weakness. But it cannot be hidden by shouting. We have to strengthen ourselves first. We must proceed along the correct path and purify our minds. And for doing all these things, as I have told you, the only example that I can place before you, from which children can learn, is that of Swami Vivekananda. In him we find all these qualities. In a short span of life, how he moved India! Not for a few days only; in a way, the movement still continues even after him. I did not come here to tell you anything. I came to offer my homage to Swamiji and to express the hope that the people of today and tomorrow, our countrymen, particularly our children and young men, will keep before them the example and memory of Swami Vivekananda and learn from his writings and his life.

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## SWAMIJI'S PHILOSOPHY IN HIS LETTERS

DR. P. S. SASTRI

The letters of Swami Vivekananda are a great treasure-house of Vedānta, both theoretical and practical. In these letters, written mostly to his friends and acquaintances, we find a tone of intimacy. A certain frankness

characterizes them. A query, a doubt, or a faulty statement evokes an expression of the heart. It is not so much the dry intellect of a thinker that we have in these outpourings as the spontaneous outburst of a heart deeply