

# Call to the Youth of India



**Swami Vivekananda**

## Foreword

*Swami Vivekananda's ideas on India and his call to the youth of India are spread across his various talks, writings, interview and epistles. The core of his ideas was written in his letters to his disciples and brother disciples in India, and in the series of talks that he gave when he reached India. Here is a selection from his talks given at Colombo, Kumbhakonam, Madras (Chennai) and Lahore, which covers almost all the important ideas.*

*These words of Swami Vivekananda are intended to serve as an appetizer to help people get an overview and encourage to probe further. References to the volume number and page number in the Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda are given for every paragraph. Pointers for further reading are given at the end.*

उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत

***Arise, Awake, Stop not till the goal is reached.***

# Call to the Youth of India

## India's Heartbeat

If there is any land on this earth that can lay claim to be the blessed *Punya Bhumi*, to be the land to which all souls on this earth must come to account for Karma, the land to which every soul that is wending its way Godward must come to attain its last home, the land where humanity has attained its highest towards gentleness, towards generosity, towards purity, towards calmness, above all, the land of introspection and of spirituality — it is India. Hence have started the founders of religions from the most ancient times, deluging the earth again and again with the pure and perennial waters of spiritual truth. Hence have proceeded the tidal waves of philosophy that have covered the earth, East or West, North or South, and hence again must start the wave which is going to spiritualise the material civilisation of the world. Here is the life-giving water with which must be quenched the burning fire of materialism which is burning the core of the hearts of millions in other lands. Believe me, my friends, this is going to be. (CW III-105)

In other countries religion is only one of the many necessities in life. ... Politics, social improvement, in one word, this world, is the goal of mankind in the West, and God and religion come in quietly as helpers to attain that goal. Their God is, so to speak, the Being who helps to cleanse and to furnish this world for them; that is apparently all the value of God for them. All the arguments they produce against the Indian religion is this — that our religion does not conduce to well-being in this world, that it does not bring gold to us, that it does not make us robbers of nations, that it does not make the strong stand upon the bodies of the weak and feed themselves with the life-blood of the weak. Certainly our religion does not do that. It cannot send cohorts, under whose feet the earth trembles, for the purpose of destruction and pillage and the ruination of races. Therefore they say — what is there in this religion? It does not bring any grist to the grinding mill, any strength to the muscles; what is there in such a religion? (CW III-179)

They little dream that that is the very argument with which we prove our religion, because it does not make for this world. Ours is the only true religion because, according to it, this little sense-world of three days' duration is not to be made the end and aim of all, is not to be our great goal. This little earthly horizon of a few feet is not that which bounds the view of our religion. Ours is away beyond, and still beyond; beyond the senses, beyond space, and beyond time, away, away beyond, till nothing of this world is left and the universe itself becomes like a drop in the transcendent ocean of the glory of the soul. Ours is the true religion because it teaches that God alone is true, that this world is false and fleeting, that all your gold is but as dust, that all your power is finite, and that life itself is oftentimes an evil; therefore it is, that ours is the true religion. Ours is the true religion because, above all, it teaches renunciation and stands up with the wisdom of ages to tell and to declare to the nations who are mere children of yesterday in comparison with us Hindus — who own the hoary antiquity of the wisdom, discovered by our ancestors here in India — to tell them in plain words: "Children, you are slaves of the senses; there is only finiteness in the senses, there is only ruination in the senses; the three short days of luxury here bring only ruin at last. Give it all up, renounce the love of the senses and of the world; that is the way of religion." Through renunciation is the way to the goal and not through enjoyment. Therefore ours is the only true religion. (CW III-180)

We have, as it were, thrown a challenge to the whole world from the most ancient times. In the West, they are trying to solve the problem how much a man can possess, and we are trying here to solve the problem on how little a man can live. This struggle and this difference will still go on for some centuries. But if history has any truth in it and if prognostications ever prove true, it must be that those who train themselves to live on the least and control themselves well will in the end gain the battle, and that those who run after enjoyment and luxury, however vigorous they may seem for the moment, will have to die and become annihilated. There are times in the history of a man's life, nay, in the history of the lives of nations, when a sort of world-weariness becomes painfully predominant. It seems that such a tide of world-weariness has come upon the Western world. There, too, they have their thinkers, great men; and they are

already finding out that this race after gold and power is all vanity of vanities; many, nay, most of the cultured men and women there, are already weary of this competition, this struggle, this brutality of their commercial civilisation, and they are looking forward towards something better. (CW III-181) ... These races of the West are eager for some new thought, for some new philosophy; the religion they have had, Christianity, although good and glorious in many respects, has been imperfectly understood, and is, as understood hitherto, found to be insufficient. The thoughtful men of the West find in our ancient philosophy, especially in the Vedanta, the new impulse of thought they are seeking, the very spiritual food and drink for which they are hungering and thirsting. And it is no wonder that this is so. (CW III-182)

## **India's Mission**

Each race has a peculiar mission to fulfil in the life of the world. Each race has to make its own result, to fulfil its own mission. Political greatness or military power is never the mission of our race; it never was, and, mark my words, it never will be. But there has been the other mission given to us, which is to conserve, to preserve, to accumulate, as it were, into a dynamo, all the spiritual energy of the race, and that concentrated energy is to pour forth in a deluge on the world whenever circumstances are propitious. (CW III-108)

But there is another peculiarity. (CW III-109) ... We never preached our thoughts with fire and sword. ... Slow and silent, as the gentle dew that falls in the morning, unseen and unheard yet producing a most tremendous result, has been the work of the calm, patient, all-suffering spiritual race upon the world of thought. (CW III-110)

Today, under the blasting light of modern science, when old and apparently strong and invulnerable beliefs have been shattered to their very foundations, ... when religion in the West is only in the hands of the ignorant and the knowing ones look down with scorn upon anything belonging to religion, here comes to the fore the philosophy of India, which displays the highest religious aspirations of the Indian mind, where the grandest philosophical facts have been the practical spirituality of the people. This naturally is coming to the rescue, the

idea of the oneness of all, the Infinite, the idea of the Impersonal, the wonderful idea of the eternal soul of man, of the unbroken continuity in the march of beings, and the infinity of the universe. The old sects looked upon the world as a little mud-puddle and thought that time began but the other day. It was there in our old books, and only there that the grand idea of the infinite range of time, space, and causation, and above all, the infinite glory of the spirit of man governed all the search for religion. When the modern tremendous theories of evolution and conservation of energy and so forth are dealing death blows to all sorts of crude theologies, what can hold any more the allegiance of cultured humanity but the most wonderful, convincing, broadening, and ennobling ideas that can be found only in that most marvellous product of the soul of man, the wonderful voice of God, the Vedanta? (CW III-110)

At the same time, I must remark that what I mean by our religion working upon the nations outside of India comprises only the principles, the background, the foundation upon which that religion is built. The detailed workings, the minute points which have been worked out through centuries of social necessity, little ratiocinations about manners and customs and social well-being, do not rightly find a place in the category of religion. We know that in our books a clear distinction is made between two sets of truths. The one set is that which abides for ever, being built upon the nature of man, the nature of the soul, the soul's relation to God, the nature of God, perfection, and so on; there are also the principles of cosmology, of the infinitude of creation, or more correctly speaking — projection, the wonderful law of cyclical procession, and so on — these are the eternal principles founded upon the universal laws in nature. The other set comprises the minor laws which guided the working of our everyday life. (CW III-111)

The great principles underlying all this wonderful, infinite, ennobling, expansive view of man and God and the world have been produced in India. In India alone man has not stood up to fight for a little tribal God, saying "My God is true and yours is not true; let us have a good fight over it." It was only here that such ideas did not occur as fighting for little gods. These great underlying principles, being based upon the eternal nature of man, are as potent today for working for

the good of the human race as they were thousands of years ago, and they will remain so. (CW III-112)

## **Principles of Hinduism**

There are certain great principles in which, I think, we — whether Vaishnavas, Shaivas, Shâktas, or Gânapatyas, whether belonging to the ancient Vedantists or the modern ones, whether belonging to the old rigid sects or the modern reformed ones — are all one, and whoever calls himself a Hindu, believes in these principles. Of course there is a difference in the interpretation, in the explanation of these principles, and that difference should be there, and it should be allowed, for our standard is not to bind every man down to our position. It would be a sin to force every man to work out our own interpretation of things, and to live by our own methods. (CW III-372)

### **1. Vedas**

Perhaps all who are here will agree on the first point that we believe the Vedas to be the eternal teachings of the secrets of religion. We all believe that this holy literature is without beginning and without end, coeval with nature, which is without beginning and without end; and that all our religious differences, all our religious struggles must end when we stand in the presence of that holy book; we are all agreed that this is the last court of appeal in all our spiritual differences. We may take different points of view as to what the Vedas are. There may be one sect which regards one portion as more sacred than another, but that matters little so long as we say that we are all brothers in the Vedas, that out of these venerable, eternal, marvellous books has come everything that we possess today, good, holy, and pure. Well, therefore, if we believe in all this, let this principle first of all be preached broadcast throughout the length and breadth of the land. If this be true, let the Vedas have that prominence which they always deserve, and which we all believe in. (CW III-372)

### **2. God**

The second point we all believe in is God, the creating, the preserving power of the whole universe, and unto whom it periodically returns to come out at other

periods and manifest this wonderful phenomenon, called the universe. We may differ as to our conception of God. One may believe in a God who is entirely personal, another may believe in a God who is personal and yet not human, and yet another may believe in a God who is entirely impersonal, and all may get their support from the Vedas. Still we are all believers in God; that is to say, that man who does not believe in a most marvellous Infinite Power from which everything has come, in which everything lives, and to which everything must in the end return, cannot be called a Hindu. If that be so, let us try to preach that idea all over the land. Preach whatever conception you have to give, there is no difference, we are not going to fight over it, but preach God; that is all we want. One idea may be better than another, but, mind you, not one of them is bad. One is good, another is better, and again another may be the best, but the word bad does not enter the category of our religion. Therefore, may the Lord bless them all who preach the name of God in whatever form they like! The more He is preached, the better for this race. Let our children be brought up in this idea, let this idea enter the homes of the poorest and the lowest, as well as of the richest and the highest — the idea of the name of God. (CW III-373)

### **3. World**

The third idea that I will present before you is that, unlike all other races of the world, we do not believe that this world was created only so many thousand years ago, and is going to be destroyed eternally on a certain day. Nor do we believe that the human soul has been created along with this universe just out of nothing. Here is another point I think we are all able to agree upon. We believe in nature being without beginning and without end; only at psychological periods this gross material of the outer universe goes back to its finer state, thus to remain for a certain period, again to be projected outside to manifest all this infinite panorama we call nature. This wavelike motion was going on even before time began, through eternity, and will remain for an infinite period of time. (CW III-374)



#### **4. Man**

Next, all Hindus believe that man is not only a gross material body; not only that within this there is the finer body, the mind, but there is something yet greater — for the body changes and so does the mind — something beyond, the Âtman — I cannot translate the word to you for any translation will be wrong — that there is something beyond even this fine body, which is the Atman of man, which has neither beginning nor end, which knows not what death is. And then this peculiar idea, different from that of all other races of men, that this Atman inhabits body after body until there is no more interest for it to continue to do so, and it becomes free, not to be born again, I refer to the theory of Samsâra and the theory of eternal souls taught by our Shâstras. This is another point where we all agree, whatever sect we may belong to. There may be differences as to the relation between the soul and God. According to one sect the soul may be eternally different from God, according to another it may be a spark of that infinite fire, yet again according to others it may be one with that Infinite. It does not matter what our interpretation is, so long as we hold on to the one basic belief that the soul is infinite, that this soul was never created, and therefore will never die, that it had to pass and evolve into various bodies, till it attained perfection in the human one — in that we are all agreed. (CW III-374)

#### **5. Eternal Purity of Atman**

And then comes the most differentiating, the grandest, and the most wonderful discovery in the realms of spirituality that has ever been made. Some of you, perhaps, who have been studying Western thought, may have observed already that there is another radical difference severing at one stroke all that is Western from all that is Eastern. It is this that we hold, whether we are Shâktas, Sauras, or Vaishnavas, even whether we are Bauddhas or Jainas, we all hold in India that the soul is by its nature pure and perfect, infinite in power and blessed. Only, according to the dualist, this natural blissfulness of the soul has become contracted by past bad work, and through the grace of God it is again going to open out and show its perfection; while according to the monist, even this idea of contraction is a partial mistake, it is the veil of Maya that causes us to think the, soul has lost its powers, but the powers are there fully manifest. (CW III-375)

This is one great point to understand, and, my friends, my brethren, let me tell you, this is the one point we shall have to insist upon in the future. For I am firmly convinced, and I beg you to understand this one fact - no good comes out of the man who day and night thinks he is nobody. (CW III-375) ... We are the children of the Almighty, we are sparks of the infinite, divine fire. How can we be nothings? We are everything, ready to do everything, we can do everything, and man must do everything. This faith in themselves was in the hearts of our ancestors, this faith in themselves was the motive power that pushed them forward and forward in the march of civilisation; and if there has been degeneration, if there has been defect, mark my words, you will find that degradation to have started on the day our people lost this faith in themselves. Losing faith in one's self means losing faith in God. Do you believe in that infinite, good Providence working in and through you? If you believe that this Omnipresent One, the Antaryâmin, is present in every atom, is through and through, Ota-prota, as the Sanskrit word goes, penetrating your body, mind and soul, how can you lose, heart? I may be a little bubble of water, and you may be a mountain-high wave. Never mind! The infinite ocean is the background of me as well as of you. Mine also is that infinite ocean of life, of power, of spirituality, as well as yours. I am already joined — from my very birth, from the very fact of my life — I am in Yoga with that infinite life and infinite goodness and infinite power, as you are, mountain-high though you may be. Therefore, my brethren, teach this life-saving, great, ennobling, grand doctrine to your children, even from their very birth. (CW III-376)

## **India's Lessons on Religion**

### **1. Principles vs Personality**

Excepting our own almost all the other great religions in the world are inevitably connected with the life or lives of one or more of their founders. All their theories, their teachings, their doctrines, and their ethics are built round the life of a personal founder, from whom they get their sanction, their authority, and their power; and strangely enough, upon the historicity of the founder's life is built, as it were, all the fabric of such religions. If there is one blow dealt to the

historicity of that life, as has been the case in modern times with the lives of almost all the so-called founders of religion — we know that half of the details of such lives is not now seriously believed in, and that the other half is seriously doubted — if this becomes the case, if that rock of historicity, as they pretend to call it, is shaken and shattered, the whole building tumbles down, broken absolutely, never to regain its lost status. (CW III-182)

Every one of the great religions in the world excepting our own, is built upon such historical characters; but ours rests upon principles. There is no man or woman who can claim to have created the Vedas. They are the embodiment of eternal principles; sages discovered them; and now and then the names of these sages are mentioned — just their names; we do not even know who or what they were. In many cases we do not know who their fathers were, and almost in every case we do not know when and where they were born. But what cared they, these sages, for their names? They were the preachers of principles, and they themselves, so far as they went, tried to become illustrations of the principles they preached. (CW III-183)

At the same time, just as our God is an Impersonal and yet a Personal God, so is our religion a most intensely impersonal one — a religion based upon principles — and yet with an infinite scope for the play of persons; for what religion gives you more Incarnations, more prophets and seers, and still waits for infinitely more? The Bhâgavata says that Incarnations are infinite, leaving ample scope for as many as you like to come. Therefore if any one or more of these persons in India's religious history, any one or more of these Incarnations, and any one or more of our prophets proved not to have been historical, it does not injure our religion at all; even then it remains firm as ever, because it is based upon principles, and not upon persons. It is in vain we try to gather all the peoples of the world around a single personality. It is difficult to make them gather together even round eternal and universal principles. If it ever becomes possible to bring the largest portion of humanity to one way of thinking in regard to religion, mark you, it must be always through principles and not through persons. Yet as I have said, our religion has ample scope for the authority and influence of persons. There is that most wonderful theory of Ishta which gives you the fullest and the

freest choice possible among these great religious personalities. You may take up any one of the prophets or teachers as your guide and the object of your special adoration; you are even allowed to think that he whom you have chosen is the greatest of the prophets, greatest of all the Avatâras; there is no harm in that, but you must keep to a firm background of eternally true principles. The strange fact here is that the power of our Incarnations has been holding good with us only so far as they are illustrations of the principles in the Vedas. The glory of Shri Krishna is that he has been the best preacher of our eternal religion of principles and the best commentator on the Vedanta that ever lived in India. (CW III-183)

## **2. Rationality of Religion**

The second claim of the Vedanta upon the attention of the world is that, of all the scriptures in the world, it is the one scripture the teaching of which is in entire harmony with the results that have been attained by the modern scientific investigations of external nature. (CW III-184) ... It seems clear that the conclusions of modern materialistic science can be acceptable, harmoniously with their religion, only to the Vedantins or Hindus as they are called. It seems clear that modern materialism can hold its own and at the same time approach spirituality by taking up the conclusions of the Vedanta. It seems to us, and to all who care to know, that the conclusions of modern science are the very conclusions the Vedanta reached ages ago; only, in modern science they are written in the language of matter. This then is another claim of the Vedanta upon modern Western minds, its rationality, the wonderful rationalism of the Vedanta. (CW III-185)

## **3. Acceptance of Religious Diversity**

India alone was to be, of all lands, the land of toleration and of spirituality; and therefore the fight between tribes and their gods did not long take place here. For one of the greatest sages that was ever born found out here in India even at that distant time, which history cannot reach, and into whose gloom even tradition itself dares not peep — in that distant time the sage arose and declared, एकं सद् विप्रा बहुधा वदन्ति — "He who exists is one; the sages call

Him variously." This is one of the most memorable sentences that was ever uttered, one of the grandest truths that was ever discovered. And for us Hindus this truth has been the very backbone of our national existence. For throughout the vistas of the centuries of our national life, this one idea — एकं सद् विप्रा बहुधा वदन्ति — comes down, gaining in volume and in fullness till it has permeated the whole of our national existence, till it has mingled in our blood, and has become one with us. We live that grand truth in every vein, and our country has become the glorious land of religious toleration. (CW III-186)

The world is waiting for this grand idea of universal toleration. It will be a great acquisition to civilisation. Nay, no civilisation can long exist unless this idea enters into it. No civilisation can grow unless fanatics, bloodshed, and brutality stop. No civilisation can begin to lift up its head until we look charitably upon one another; and the first step towards that much-needed charity is to look charitably and kindly upon the religious convictions of others. Nay more, to understand that not only should we be charitable, but positively helpful to each other, however different our religious ideas and convictions may be. And that is exactly what we do in India as I have just related to you. (CW III-187)

#### **4. Spiritual Oneness, the Rationale of all Ethics**

The other great idea that the world wants from us today, ... is that eternal grand idea of the spiritual oneness of the whole universe. I need not tell you today, ... how the modern researches of the West have demonstrated through physical means the oneness and the solidarity of the whole universe; how, physically speaking, you and I, the sun, moon, and stars are but little waves or wavelets in the midst of an infinite ocean of matter; how Indian psychology demonstrated ages ago that, similarly, both body and mind are but mere names or little wavelets in the ocean of matter, the Samashti; and how, going one step further, it is also shown in the Vedanta that behind that idea of the unity of the whole show, the real Soul is one. There is but one Soul throughout the universe, all is but One Existence. ... It is the one great life-giving idea which the world wants from us today, and which the mute masses of India want for their uplifting, for

none can regenerate this land of ours without the practical application and effective operation of this ideal of the oneness of things. (CW III-188)

The rational West is earnestly bent upon seeking out the rationality, the *raison d'être* of all its philosophy and its ethics; and you all know well that ethics cannot be derived from the mere sanction of any personage, however great and divine he may have been. Such an explanation of the authority of ethics appeals no more to the highest of the world's thinkers; they want something more than human sanction for ethical and moral codes to be binding, they want some eternal principle of truth as the sanction of ethics. And where is that eternal sanction to be found except in the only Infinite Reality that exists in you and in me and in all, in the Self, in the Soul? The infinite oneness of the Soul is the eternal sanction of all morality, that you and I are not only brothers — every literature voicing man's struggle towards freedom has preached that for you — but that you and I are really one. This is the dictate of Indian philosophy. This oneness is the rationale of all ethics and all spirituality. (CW III-189)

Let every man and woman and child, without respect of caste or birth, weakness or strength, hear and learn that behind the strong and the weak, behind the high and the low, behind every one, there is that Infinite Soul, assuring the infinite possibility and the infinite capacity of all to become great and good. Let us proclaim to every soul: उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत — Arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached. Arise, awake! Awake from this hypnotism of weakness. None is really weak; the soul is infinite, omnipotent, and omniscient. Stand up, assert yourself, proclaim the God within you, do not deny Him! Too much of inactivity, too much of weakness, too much of hypnotism has been and is upon our race. O ye modern Hindus, de-hypnotise yourselves. The way to do that is found in your own sacred books. Teach yourselves, teach every one his real nature, call upon the sleeping soul and see how it awakes. Power will come, glory will come, goodness will come, purity will come, and everything that is excellent will come when this sleeping soul is roused to self-conscious activity. Ay, if there is anything in the Gita that I like, it is these two verses, coming out strong as the very gist, the very essence, of Krishna's teaching — "He who sees the Supreme Lord dwelling alike in all beings, the Imperishable in things that

perish, he sees indeed. For seeing the Lord as the same, everywhere present, he does not destroy the Self by the Self, and thus he goes to the highest goal." (CW III-193)

## **Our National Ideal**

In all our books stands out prominently this ideal of the Brahmin. (CW III-196) ... Our ideal is the Brahmin of spiritual culture and renunciation. By the Brahmin ideal what do I mean? I mean the ideal Brahmin-ness in which worldliness is altogether absent and true wisdom is abundantly present. That is the ideal of the Hindu race. Have you not heard how it is declared that he, the Brahmin, is not amenable to law, that he has no law, that he is not governed by kings, and that his body cannot be hurt? That is perfectly true. Do not understand it in the light thrown upon it by interested and ignorant fools, but understand it in the light of the true and original Vedantic conception. If the Brahmin is he who has killed all selfishness and who lives and works to acquire and propagate wisdom and the power of love — if a country is altogether inhabited by such Brahmins, by men and women who are spiritual and moral and good, is it strange to think of that country as being above and beyond all law? What police, what military are necessary to govern them? Why should any one govern them at all? Why should they live under a government? They are good and noble, and they are the men of God; these are our ideal Brahmins. (CW III-197) ... The command is the same to you all, that you must make progress without stopping, and that from the highest man to the lowest Pariah, every one in this country has to try and become the ideal Brahmin. This Vedantic idea is applicable not only here but over the whole world. Such is our ideal of caste as meant for raising all humanity slowly and gently towards the realisation of that great ideal of the spiritual man who is non-resisting, calm, steady, worshipful, pure, and meditative. (CW III-198)

## **Rejuvenation of India**

### **1. Spiritual Knowledge and Sanskrit Language for all**

My idea is first of all to bring out the gems of spirituality that are stored up in our books and in the possession of a few only, hidden, as it were, in monasteries and

in forests — to bring them out; to bring the knowledge out of them, not only from the hands where it is hidden, but from the still more inaccessible chest, the language in which it is preserved, the incrustation of centuries of Sanskrit words. In one word, I want to make them popular. I want to bring out these ideas and let them be the common property of all, of every man in India, whether he knows the Sanskrit language or not. (CW III-290)

The ideas must be taught in the language of the people; at the same time, Sanskrit education must go on along with it, because the very sound of Sanskrit words gives a prestige and a power and a strength to the race. (CW III-290) ... It is culture that withstands shocks, not a simple mass of knowledge. You can put a mass of knowledge into the world, but that will not do it much good. There must come culture into the blood. We all know in modern times of nations which have masses of knowledge, but what of them? They are like tigers, they are like savages, because culture is not there. Knowledge is only skin-deep, as civilisation is, and a little scratch brings out the old savage. Such things happen; this is the danger. Teach the masses in the vernaculars, give them ideas; they will get information, but something more is necessary; give them culture. Until you give them that, there can be no permanence in the raised condition of the masses. There will be another caste created, having the advantage of the Sanskrit language, which will quickly get above the rest and rule them all the same. The only safety, I tell you men who belong to the lower castes, the only way to raise your condition is to study Sanskrit, and this fighting and writing and frothing against the higher castes is in vain, it does no good, and it creates fight and quarrel, and this race, unfortunately already divided, is going to be divided more and more. The only way to bring about the levelling of caste is to appropriate the culture, the education which is the strength of the higher castes. That done, you have what you want. (CW III-291)

## **2. Unity of Castes**

The solution of the caste problem in India, therefore, assumes this form, not to degrade the higher castes, not to crush out the Brahmin. (CW III-293) ... The solution is not by bringing down the higher, but by raising the lower up to the



level of the higher. And that is the line of work that is found in all our books. (CW III-295)

It is the duty of the Brahmin, therefore, to work for the salvation of the rest of mankind in India. If he does that, and so long as he does that, he is a Brahmin, but he is no Brahmin when he goes about making money. ... Secular employment is not for the Brahmin but for the other castes. To the Brahmins I appeal, that they must work hard to raise the Indian people by teaching them what they know, by giving out the culture that they have accumulated for centuries. It is clearly the duty of the Brahmins of India to remember what real Brahminhood is. As Manu says, all these privileges and honours are given to the Brahmin, because "with him is the treasury of virtue". He must open that treasury and distribute its valuables to the world. (CW III-297)

To the non-Brahmin castes I say, wait, be not in a hurry. Do not seize every opportunity of fighting the Brahmin, because, as I have shown, you are suffering from your own fault. Who told you to neglect spirituality and Sanskrit learning? What have you been doing all this time? Why have you been indifferent? Why do you now fret and fume because somebody else had more brains, more energy, more pluck and go, than you? Instead of wasting your energies in vain discussions and quarrels in the newspapers, instead of fighting and quarrelling in your own homes — which is sinful — use all your energies in acquiring the culture which the Brahmin has, and the thing is done. Why do you not become Sanskrit scholars? Why do you not spend millions to bring Sanskrit education to all the castes of India? That is the question. The moment you do these things, you are equal to the Brahmin. That is the secret of power in India. Sanskrit and prestige go together in India. As soon as you have that, none dares say anything against you. That is the one secret; take that up. (CW III-298)

Being of one mind is the secret of society. And the more you go on fighting and quarrelling about all trivialities such as "Dravidian" and "Aryan", and the question of Brahmins and non-Brahmins and all that, the further you are off from that accumulation of energy and power which is going to make the future India. For mark you, the future India depends entirely upon that. That is the

secret — accumulation of will-power, co-ordination, bringing them all, as it here, into one focus. (CW III-299)

### **3. Service to the Country**

For the next fifty years this alone shall be our keynote — this, our great Mother India. Let all other vain gods disappear for the time from our minds. This is the only god that is awake, our own race — "everywhere his hands, everywhere his feet, everywhere his ears, he covers everything." All other gods are sleeping. What vain gods shall we go after and yet cannot worship the god that we see all round us, the Virât? When we have worshipped this, we shall be able to worship all other gods. Before we can crawl half a mile, we want to cross the ocean like Hanumân! It cannot be. Everyone going to be a Yogi, everyone going to meditate! It cannot be. The whole day mixing with the world with Karma Kânda, and in the evening sitting down and blowing through your nose! Is it so easy? Should Rishis come flying through the air, because you have blown three times through the nose? Is it a joke? It is all nonsense. What is needed is Chittashuddhi, purification of the heart. And how does that come? The first of all worship is the worship of the Virat — of those all around us. Worship It. Worship is the exact equivalent of the Sanskrit word, and no other English word will do. These are all our gods — men and animals; and the first gods we have to worship are our countrymen. These we have to worship, instead of being jealous of each other and fighting each other. It is the most terrible Karma for which we are suffering, and yet it does not open our eyes! (CW III-300)

### **4. Right Education**

We must have a hold on the spiritual and secular education of the nation. Do you understand that? You must dream it, you must talk it, you must think its and you must work it out. Till then there is no salvation for the race. (CW III-301) ... Education is not the amount of information that is put into your brain and runs riot there, undigested, all your life. We must have life-building, man-making, character-making assimilation of ideas. If you have assimilated five ideas and made them your life and character, you have more education than any man who has got by heart a whole library यथा खरश्चन्दनभारवाही भारस्य वेत्ता न तु

चन्दनस्य | — "The ass carrying its load of sandalwood knows only the weight and not the value of the sandalwood." If education is identical with information, the libraries are the greatest sages in the world, and encyclopaedias are the Rishis. The ideal, therefore, is that we must have the whole education of our country, spiritual and secular, in our own hands, and it must be on national lines, through national methods as far as practical. (CW III-302)

## **5. An Institution**

We must have a temple, for with Hindus religion must come first. Then, you may say, all sects will quarrel about it. But we will make it a non-sectarian temple, having only "Om" as the symbol, the greatest symbol of any sect. If there is any sect here which believes that "Om" ought not to be the symbol, it has no right to call itself Hindu. All will have the right to interpret Hinduism, each one according to his own sect ideas, but we must have a common temple. You can have your own images and symbols in other places, but do not quarrel here with those who differ from you. Here should be taught the common grounds of our different sects, and at the same time the different sects should have perfect liberty to come and teach their doctrines, with only one restriction, that is, not to quarrel with other sects. (CW III-302)

Secondly, in connection with this temple there should be an institution to train teachers who must go about preaching religion and giving secular education to our people; they must carry both. As we have been already carrying religion from door to door, let us along with it carry secular education also. That can be easily done. Then the work will extend through these bands of teachers and preachers, and gradually we shall have similar temples in other places, until we have covered the whole of India. (CW III-303)

## **Call to the Youth**

Where are the men? That is the question. ... Will you respond to the call of your nation? Each one of you has a glorious future if you dare believe me. Have a tremendous faith in yourselves, like the faith I had when I was a child, and which I am working out now. Have that faith, each one of you, in yourself — that

eternal power is lodged in every soul — and you will revive the whole of India. Ay, we will then go to every country under the sun, and our ideas will before long be a component of the many forces that are working to make up every nation in the world. We must enter into the life of every race in India and abroad; shall have to work to bring this about. Now for that, I want young men. "It is the young, the strong, and healthy, of sharp intellect that will reach the Lord", say the Vedas. This is the time to decide your future — while you possess the energy of youth, not when you are worn out and jaded, but in the freshness and vigour of youth. Work — this is the time; for the freshest, the untouched, and unsmelled flowers alone are to be laid at the feet of the Lord, and such He receives. Rouse yourselves, therefore, or life is short. There are greater works to be done than aspiring to become lawyers and picking quarrels and such things. A far greater work is this sacrifice of yourselves for the benefit of your race, for the welfare of humanity. What is in this life? ... Life is short, but the soul is immortal and eternal, and one thing being certain, death, let us therefore take up a great ideal and give up our whole life to it. Let this be our determination, and may He, the Lord, who "comes again and again for the salvation of His own people", to quote from our scriptures — may the great Krishna bless us and lead us all to the fulfilment of our aims! (CW III-304)

### **Reference:**

All excerpts are from the section "Lectures from Colombo to Almora", which can be found in the third volume of the Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda. This section is also available as a separate book by the same title.

### **For further reading:**

- Lectures from Colombo to Almora
- Talks with Swami Vivekananda
- Letters of Swami Vivekananda
- Life of Swami Vivekananda by his Eastern and Western Disciples
- Reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda