

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S VISION & MESSAGE TO YOUTH

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*“Whatever you think, that you will be.
If you think yourself weak, weak you will be;
If you think yourself strong, Strong you will be.”*

-*Swami Vivekananda.*

Swami Vivekananda [1863, 12th Jan- 1902, 04th July], was an extraordinary intellectual thinker who has spiritual as well as educational influence around the world. He personified the eternal energy of the youth and their restless quest for truth. His message for youth is truly awakening and inspiring. He is considered by many as an icon for fearless courage, his positive exhortations to the youth, his broad outlook to social problems, and countless lectures and discourses on Vedanta philosophy. According to Swami Vivekananda the purpose of education should be constructive such as developing a good character, inventing new technologies and progressing towards a better life; not to study and accumulate everything in our mind worthlessly.

In the present time, if we see India, it is one of the youngest nations in the world, with about 65% population under 35 years of age. It is expected by the year 2020, the population of India would have a median age of 28 years only as against 38 years for the US, 42 years for China and 48 years for Japan. The youth indeed is the most dynamic and vibrant segment of the population in any country.¹ Proper education and encouragement would help them in becoming more valuable to the nation and the world at large. Swami Vivekananda always preached about the idea of India's eternal contribution to world progress.

¹ **Publication:** “Relevance of Swami Vivekananda as youth icon of India” by Alok Deshwal;
<https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=114503>

As history beckons, Indians never fought a war for wealth and power but still India was the wealthiest and the powerful nation in economic, social and political aspects around the world. We never maligned any country's tradition, culture and diversity by attacking them yet we imparted spiritual, cultural and scientific knowledge which world still follows. World will always owe to us for what we imparted to them. Also we can't find any other nation in the world which contributed even half what we did. That's why Swami Vivekananda told "You have done well; only try to do better."²

His message was very simple yet powerful. Many of us questioned, why youth day is celebrated on the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda? A simple explanation for this is that he conveyed his ideas directly to the people, especially to the youth. He enlightened that a nation that has no history of its own has nothing in this world; out of the past, the future is built. Whenever we look back and drink deep of eternal foundations that are behind. Next, we must look forward, march forward, and make India brighter, greater and much higher than she ever was. Our ancestors were great. We must recall that. The more therefore Indian study the past, the more glorious will be the future and whoever tries to bring the past to the door of everyone, is the great benefactor to the nation.

The next question which bothers most of the people, especially the youth is whether one should aim for individual betterment or serve the world? Swami Vivekananda suggested that our duty to others means helping others, doing good to the world. Why should we do good to the world? Whenever we help others indirectly we are helping ourselves. When we analyze it properly, we shall find that the world does not require our help.

"Let us give up all this foolish talk of doing good to the world. It is not waiting for your or my help, yet we must work and consistently to do good because it is a blessing to ourselves. That is the only way we can become perfect. No beggar

² Source: Book- Complete Work of Swami Vivekananda Vol.-3; Lecture: "India's Eternal Contribution to the World Progress" by Swami Vivekananda.

ever owed a single cent to us, we owe everything to him because he has allowed us to exercise our power of pity and charity on him. It is entirely wrong to think that we have done, or have helped such and such people. It is a foolish thought and all such thoughts bring misery.”³

It is rightly pointed out by Vivekananda that:

“We are what our thoughts have made us, so take care about what you think.

Words are secondary. Thoughts live; they travel far.”

Swami Vivekananda had a very progressive approach toward everything, his hope and confidence in the youth of this country were very high. The greatest service we can do is to adhere to the teachings of Swami Vivekananda in our life and carry it forward to the coming generations. One of his lecture which was held in Madras he asked the youth to respond to the call of the nation. He explained: “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- the eternal power is lodged in every soul- and you will revive the whole of India... Now for that, I want young man... 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.”⁴

Swami Vivekananda’s life has always been a source of inspiration to the youth. He had said that the world is waiting for the treasures to come out India. The time has come:

“ARISE, AWAKE! STOP NOT TILL THE GOAL IS REACHED.”

³ Source: Book- “Vedanta Philosophy – Eight Lectures on karma yoga, the secret of work” by Swami Vivekananda. Electronic edition published in 2010.

⁴ Source: Book- Complete Work of Swami Vivekananda Vol.-3 by Swami Vivekananda.