



English rendering of PM's address at Students' Convention on the occasion of Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Centenary Celebrations and 125th Year of Swami Vivekananda's Chicago Address

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I have been told that due to shortage of space here a large number of people are sitting in some other room. I respectfully remember them also.

Today it is the 11th September, the world never knew the importance of 9/11 before 2001. It's not the fault of the world, it's our fault that we pushed it into oblivion. Had we not done so, perhaps the terrible 9/11 of the 21st century would not have happened. A 9/11 happened 125 years ago also, the day when a young man from this country, he was almost your age, may be older by 5-7 years, in a saffron robe, the world wasn't even familiar with the attire, and the world which was looking at him as a representative of a slave India, but his self-confidence had that power that even the slightest shadow of slavery was neither there in his thought nor in his behaviour nor in his voice. What kind of heritage he was carrying inside himself that even after thousands of years of slavery a fire was raging within him, he had that kind of confidence in him that our country, its philosophy, its lifestyle has the capability to give a lot to the world. That was something extremely unusual.

We should reflect on this that when everything around us is negative, when everything is against our own beliefs, when there are voices of dissent all around and still we have to articulate our ideas then how scared we would be in doing so. Under such a pressure situation we will think twice before speaking lest someone may misinterpret. What kind of strength that great personality had that he never let this kind of pressures sway him. A person who knows very well his inner fire, inner enthusiasm, inner self confidence only he can attempt to provide the right direction to the world, solutions to the problems of the world. The world did not know that there could be other than the words: "Ladies and Gentlemen". And when he addressed them as "Brothers and Sisters of America", there was burst of thunderous applause that continued for quite a few minutes. With these words he introduced the power of India to the world. That was also a kind of 9/11. One who had treasured Mother India within himself by travelling the entire country. The one who had imbibed all the languages of India in him, from north to south, from east to west, one who could see the miracle of India within himself, one who could make the entire world his own within a few minutes, one who gave identity to the oneness to the whole world by gathering different cultures that flourished through ages, he conquered the whole world. That was 9/11 and that was the world victory day for me. And there was this other 9/11 at the beginning of 21st century when human beings were massacred and there was destruction all around. On the same land of America, one 9/11 gave the message of love and oneness and the other which shook the world and humanity and brought them on the verge of destruction, was the result of our forgetting the lessons of the first 9/11. The world then came to know that how a voice that emanated from India gives 9/11 a significance in the history and how this 9/11 remained seeded in the psyche of world which moved ahead on the path of destruction and deformity. And that is why today, on 9/11, I feel that there is a need to understand Vivekanand Ji in a different manner.

If you look at it closely you'll see two aspects of Vivekanand Ji. Across the world wherever he went, wherever he got an opportunity to discuss, he would tirelessly glorify the great traditions and philosophy of India, he would never stop or feel embarrassed in doing so. That was one aspect. And the other aspect was whenever he would speak in India he would openly criticize our evil practices. He used to hit hard on our weaknesses and the language that he used - if we use the same language today perhaps, people would be surprised, how anyone could use such a language. He used to raise voice against every vice of the society. And just imagine that the society of that period when the importance of rituals, worship, traditions was very high and it was the society's natural tendency. During such a time and under such a condition, a young man of 30 years, stands up and says that you will not be able to reach God by following these rituals and worshipping in temples. He said, "Service to mankind is service to God". "Go and serve the poor and you will be able to reach God". What a great strength!

The person who would praise India outside the country but when he would come back to India he would hit hard on the social evils of the country. He belonged to the tradition of saints but he never went out in search of a Guru. It is a matter of learning and appreciation. He did not come out to find a guru, he came out in search of truth. Throughout his life Mahatma Gandhi was also engaged in the search of truth. He was also search for the truth. The family was in difficult economic situation. Ram Krishna Dev sent him to goddess Kali and said "Go and ask whatever you want from goddess Kali". And when he asked him later whether he had asked for something or not Vivekanand Ji said: "No, I did not". That was his nature that he was not even ready to seek help from the goddess Kali. What was that inner strength, what was that energy that gave rise to such capacity, and hence whatever evils are present in the current society, shouldn't we fight against those evils? Should we accept them?

Vivekanand Ji used the words 'Brother and Sisters of America' on the American soil and we dance and rejoice here but I would specifically like to say this to youth of my country: do we really respect women? Do we really look at the girls with a feeling of respect, and I bow 100 times to those who really do, but those people who are not able to see girls as human beings; they are also a creation of God just like you are. If we do not look at them with this feeling then we must really think 50 times whether we have the right to rejoice at the use of words, 'Brothers and Sisters of America' by Vivekanand Ji.

Have we ever thought that Vivekanand Ji used to say that serving the society is equal to serving the God. Now look, a man, at the age of 30, created ripples in the world. During that period of slavery there were two personalities who manifested a new consciousness and energy in India. There were two incidents, one when Rabindranath Tagore was awarded Nobel Prize and other when the 9/11 speech of Vivekanand became a topic of discussion all over the world. These two incidents stirred up a new consciousness in India during that period of slavery, and both of them were prodigies of Bengal. How much pride I feel when I tell somebody in the world that Rabindranath Tagore from my country created the national anthems of India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. Do we take pride in this legacy of us? And it is not shallow. Today, India is a young country in the world. 800 million people of this country are less than the age at which Vivekanand Ji gave his speech in Chicago. A country whose 65 percent population is less than the age at which Vivekanand Ji made his mark in the world, what could be a better inspiration for them than Vivekanand Ji and therefore, what kind of work did Vivekanand Ji do, he was not the one who would limit himself to preaching only. He converted ideas into idealism and he combined ideas and idealism to make an institutional framework. Around one-twenty years ago he created Ram Krishna Mission, he did not create Vivekanand mission. It is a small thing but a hint is enough for the wise men and the way Ram Krishna Mission has emerged, that even after 120 years there is no dilution or diversion in its principles. How could he lay such a strong foundation for the institution, how clear his vision was and how strong the action plan was? Every aspect of India would have been experienced in such a deep sense, only then it became possible for that movement to be still moving ahead with the same spirit even after 120 years.

I had the good luck of spending a few moments in that great tradition. I was fortunate to visit Chicago on the centenary year of Vivekanand Ji's speech of 9/11. I was fortunate to visit the hall and participate in the centenary celebrations of the speech. I can imagine how emotional that moment was.

Has anyone in the world thought about celebrating the 125th anniversary of a speech? A speech which lasted for sometime, a speech of few words which is still alive even after 125 years and which is capable of rekindling the consciousness of people. This in itself is a very big opportunity for us to make it as one of our great heritage.

I came here and I heard the chanting of Vande Mataram, Vande Mataram in the loudest possible voice. It's a hair raising experience and a feeling of reverence for India naturally takes over. But I am not posing this question to the people present here in this auditorium alone, I am asking this question to the entire India. Do we have a right to chant Vande Matram? I know what I just said will hurt many people. You can think 50 times, but tell me, do we have the right to say Vande Matram? We are those who are spitting on mother India after eating pan and then chanting Vande Mataram. We are those who are throwing all the garbage on mother India and then chanting Vande Matram. If anybody has the first right to say Vande Mataram in this country then it is those sweepers and cleaners who are involved in cleaning India and therefore it is essential for us to think that our mother India which is full of water and productive in every way, we may clean it or not but we do not have any right to make it dirty. We may have reverence for Ganga, thinking that taking a dip in Ganga cleanses us of our sins, every young person has a desire in his heart to take his parents to Ganga at least once for a holy dip, but are we able to stop ourselves from polluting that Ganga? If Vivekanand Ji would have been present today, would he have scolded us or not? Sometimes we feel that we are healthy because there are plenty of doctors, best of the best doctors are available.

No sir, we are not healthy because we have plenty of doctors, we are healthy because someone is doing the job of cleaning. And if we can have more respect for his work than for a doctor then only can we enjoy saying Vande Matram. I remember quite well that once I said, first build toilets then a temple. Many people scoffed at me but I am happy that we have this kind daughters in our country who have refused to marry if there is no toilet in the house. We are here on this land for thousands of years. What is the reason for that: We believe in changing with the times. Among ourselves we have produced such people who led us in our struggle with our vices and that is our strength. Therefore when we remember Swami Vivekanand Ji, then that 9/11 was not a mere treasure of words, it was the voice of an ascetic, it was the voice of tenacity, only then the words which came out had the power to mesmerize the world. Otherwise do you remember, India, a land of snakes and snake charmers, a land of the rules about what to eat and what not to eat on a particular day, this is how India was recognised.

विवेकानंद ने दुनिया के सामने कह दिया था हमारी परंपरा के नीचे उनकी परंपरा नहीं है। क्या खाना, क्या नहीं खाना यह मेरे देश की संस्कृति परंपरा नहीं है, वो तो हमारी व्यवस्थाओं का हिस्सा होगा, हमारी सांस्कृतिक व्यवस्था अलग है। आत्मवत् सर्व भूतेषु यह हमारी सोच है। अहम् ब्रह्मास्मि ऐसी निकली हुई बातें नहीं हैं। गुणतम् विश्व मारयम् यह आर्य शब्द हम पूरे विश्व को सुसंस्कृत करेंगे, इस अर्थ में है किसी जाति परिवर्तन धर्म परिवर्तन के लिए नहीं है और इसलिए जिस महान विरासत के हम उस परंपरा से पलेबढ़े लोग हैं यह सब इस धरती की पैदावर है।-

Vivekanand had publicly told the world that our tradition was not inferior than theirs. What to eat and what not to eat has never been a part of our culture; it might have been a part of our system. Our way of thinking is that our own soul is reflected in every living being. 'I'm the Supreme Being' these ideas have not emerged without any

purpose. 'We will make the entire world Arya (great)', this Aryan philosophy means that we will make the entire world civilized, it is not for changing anybody's caste or religion and that is why the great legacy, the great tradition under which we have been raised, all these things have evolved on this land only.

These things are a result of penance of many centuries and every person in the country has contributed something or the other in this. This is a country where a beggar is also full of knowledge. He conveys his good wishes to the givers and also to those who don't give anything. And therefore this was the fundamental basis of the success of Swami Vivekanand Ji that he had the feeling of self-confidence and self-pride in himself and 'self' does not mean an individual, it was the pride in the heritage of the country which he was representing and which he presented to the world. Do we ever care about what we say? If we go to a good place which has good natural environment and which is spic and span, then what is the first thing that comes to our mind: this does not seem to be India. Do we say something like that or not? If we would have been raised with self-respect and with self-pride then this feeling would not be there. We would take pride that our country also has such things.

I tell you friends that if we really look at Vivekanand Ji in today's context; whenever I say 'Make In India', there are many people who oppose it. Some people say that instead of 'Make in India' it should be 'Made in India', there are many smart people who can give a new meaning to it. But if someone recalls the discussion that took place between Vivekanand Ji and Jamshed Ji Tata; at that time India was a slave country but even then a 30 year old young man was asking a person like Jamshed Ji Tata that he should Make in India, he should setup industries in India. And later Jamshed Ji Tata himself acknowledged that these words of Vivekanand Ji have been an inspiration for him and that is the reason that he established industries in India.

You would be surprised to know that the first agriculture revolution took shape from the ideas of Vivekanand Ji and Dr. Sen who is considered to be the pioneer of first agricultural revolution in India, when he set up an institute, he named it Vivekanand Agriculture Research Institute. It means that the approach to agriculture in India should be based on scientific research and it should be modern, Vivekanand Ji had this kind of ideas during that period.

Today a lot of emphasis is being laid on the fact that our youth goes to university. Today 9/11 is also associated with the centenary celebrations of Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyay and it is also the birth anniversary of Acharya Vinoba Bhave, the person who truly lived according to the principles of Mahatma Gandhi. Today when I say this thing, then the people who have read, listened or studied Pandit Deen Dayal, his thoughts on progress, welfare of poor and service to the society is the service to god etc. these are nothing but the teachings of Vivekanand Ji in the modern context. A very close associate of Acharya Vinoba Bhave ji was Dada Dharmadhikari. What Gandhi Ji used to think or teach, Vinoba Ji actually expressed those thoughts by leading his life by following them and what Vinoba Ji used to think, the task of putting them into words can be seen in Dada Dharma Ji's thought process. Dada Dharmadhikari wrote about a funny incident in one of his books. A young man came to him for a job through some acquaintance. He wanted Dharmadhikari Ji to recommend him so that he could get a job. Dada Dharmadhikari wrote about it that he asked that person what did he know and the person replied that he was a graduate. Again he asked the person: what do you know, he again said: I'm a graduate. That person could not understand what Dharmadhikari Ji wanted to know. So Dharmadhikari Ji asked for the third time: what do you know? That person again said: 'I am a graduate'. Dharmadhikari Ji then asked that person, do you know typing, he said no. Do you know how to cook? He said no. Do you know how to make furniture? He again said no. Do you know how to prepare tea or snacks? He said no, I don't know all these things but I am a graduate. Now look what Vivekanand Ji had said, everything that Vivekanand Ji had said had the power to revolutionalise our thinking and he used to talk like that only and he said a very interesting thing, he said: ***'Education is not the amount of information that is put into your brain and runs riot there, undigested all your life.'*** If you have assimilated five ideas and made them your life and character, you have more education than any man who got an entire library in his chest which means that there are people who stored information equal to a library into their chests and minds but anyone who lives by five ideas is an educated man. It means that he had distinguished knowledge from skill. Today whole world gives more importance if one has some certificate or skill in their hands. This government has tried to put forward that idea, the idea of skill development.

Skill development is not a new subject in our country but earlier it was scattered in different departments which had no accountability, it used to move in the directions given by the whims and fancies of the people. We brought all the skill development related work in to one place and we created a new ministry and a new department for it to prepare the youth of India in such a focused way that they should never be dependent on anybody. The youth of my country should not be a job seeker, he should be job creator. The youth of my country should be a provider instead of seeker and hence today when I remember thoughts of Swami Vivekanand Ji, he was a supporter of innovation, he was a supporter of research. He would exhort people to boycott all the old and useless things, however great they might have been, howsoever good they appear, but he would exhort people to banish them.

Social life can progress when we innovate on regular basis, only then we can be successful. The young generation of our country needs to have that courage and that feeling of innovation. Some people are afraid of 'what if I fail'. Have you seen anybody in the world who has become successful without facing any failures? Sometimes the path to success is paved by failures only, therefore being scared of failure is not the life. One who keeps standing on the river bank never drowns, one who jumps into the water, he drowns but while drowning he

also learns how to swim. Anyone can live their entire life by counting waves from the shore but the ability to cross waves comes to those who have the courage to fight them by jumping into water or into a lake, or in an ocean. Swami Vivekanand Ji had hoped for such kind of young generation.

Today, the government of India is running campaigns like Start-up India, Stand-up India. You can get loans without bank guarantee under the Mudra scheme. I would like the youth of my country to come up with new products and innovations for the problems of my country and take them to the people of India. India is a very big market. It is waiting for their talent and capabilities. And how Vivekanand Ji separated knowledge from skill, it is the need of the hour that we keep on emphasizing on the importance of skill. It does not happen overnight, we have to keep giving it more importance. You'll see that the results would be very much different. We have started Atal Innovation Mission i.e. AIM through our NITI Aayog. Along with that Atal Tinkering Lab is also there, which is a campaign to promote young talents of the country. It is a silent movement but it is going on. And many talented children brought many new things. Once I was in Rashtrapati Bhawan, when Pranab Da was the President, he had called such children from all over the country. Around 12-15 children came with the things that was their innovation. So Pranab Da requested me that I should meet these children. I was surprised to see that among those 12-15 children who had come with their innovations, half of them were students of 8th, 9th or 10th standard. They brought the project of how to make best use of garbage waste, look what was the influence of cleanliness campaign. They had brought things with them which could be made from garbage. What I mean to say is that there is no dearth of talent in India and we must think about that.

Today a lot of discussion takes place in the world about foreign policy. This camp, that camp, this group, that group, cold war etc. look at the selection of words. Has anyone read Vivekanand Ji, what was his foreign policy? Swami Vivekanand Ji had said it at that time and now after 120 years it is evident to the world. He had given the concept of One Asia and with that concept he had said that when the world would be embroiled in crises then it would be only One Asia which would have the abilities to give a new direction to the world. One Asia is rich in cultural heritage. Today the whole world is saying that the 21st century belongs to Asia. Some people say it belongs to China while some others say it belongs to India but there is no doubt that the whole world says that the 21st century belongs to Asia.

What role can One Asia play in this whole picture of the world? What are the fundamental capabilities of One Asia which can provide solutions to the problems? It has a rich heritage of thousands of years, this philosophy, this concept of One Asia was given 125 years ago by Vivekanand Ji. And hence we must look at Vivekanand Ji in the modern context. He talks about promoting entrepreneurship, in his every discussion he talks about on what basis India can become capable and powerful, so the first thing he talks about is agricultural revolution, then he talks about innovation and the third thing he talks about is entrepreneurship. He would also talk about fighting the vices of the society. He speaks a lot against untouchability and calls it insanity. Today we are celebrating the birth centenary of Deendayal Ji and he also talked about upliftment of the downtrodden people. Mahatma Gandhi used to say that if you are making any decision then just make sure that it would be beneficial for the person at the last end of the society and your decision will always be correct.

Few days ago, some young people organized a program and it was about travelling on the golden quadrilateral that was constructed during Atal Ji' tenure. They did a relay race of 6,000 km on cycle. Their mantra was very good, they had said: follow the rules and India will rule.' If 1.25 billion Indians just do this much i.e. follow the rules then the dream of Vivekanand Ji that one day India will become guru of the world, then automatically India will rule the world. But we must follow the rule to achieve that. So with these feelings, when we are celebrating 125 years of his speech, when we are celebrating 100 years of Deendayal Ji, and it is also the birth anniversary of Vinoba Bhave Ji and on the other hand the other horrible 9/11 which caused mayhem in the world and pushed it towards destruction; when man turned against man; in times like these, people like us who believe in whole world being one family, who see God in nature, who see God in plants, who consider rivers as their mothers, who consider whole universe to be their family, we will be able to give something to this crises stricken world and humanity. Only then we take pride in our things and make timely changes. Whatever is wrong and harmful for the society, many beliefs may have been correct during the past but if they are not appropriate in the present day then we must raise our voice against them and we must come out to stop them, abolish them.

My young friends,

Ramkrishna Mission which was started by Swami Vivekanand has now completed 125 years. It will be 75 years of independence of India in 2022. Can we make a pledge? And that pledge should become the aim of our lives, yes I will definitely do this, and you'll see it will be a different life. Sometimes there is a debate in our country whether all the university presidents who have been elected are student leaders or not. It is a matter of contemplation where the student politics began and where it has reached now. Sometimes I see that when people who have been involved in the student politics contest elections, they make promises that they will do this or that but till now I have not seen that any candidate has promised that they will keep the campus clean. If you go to any university campus one day after the elections, what all lies strewn there? Still Vande Matram? Do we wish to make the 21st century as India's century? We will be celebrating 75 years of independence in 2022, is it not our responsibility to make India as per the dreams of Gandhi Ji, as per the dreams of Bhagat Singh, Rajguru, Sukhdev, as per the dreams of Subhash Chandra Bose, as per the dreams of Swami Vivekanand? Management

students are taught that everybody, somebody, nobody, but ultimately it comes to nothing and that is why this thing that I'll do it, this is my responsibility becomes necessary and you'll see that it will not take much time for India to change. If 1.25 billion Indians take one step forward then India will move ahead by 1.25 billion steps.

I have seen that certain days are celebrated in colleges, people may feel good or bad about it, some people protest also, but different days are celebrated in colleges, today it is Rose day, some people are against it and they might be sitting here also, but I am not against it. You see, we don't have to prepare robots, we need creativity. There is no better place than university campus to bring out the inner feelings and an individual present inside us. But does it ever come to our mind that a college in Haryana should decide to celebrate Tamil-day, a college in Punjab decides to celebrate Kerala day? We will listen and sing few of their songs, we will dress up like them and come to college. We will learn to eat by our hands. We will see some Tamil or Malayalam movies in our college, we will call some young people from there and ask them about the games which they play in their hometown and then play those games with them. Please tell me that whether such day would be productive or not? Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat will happen or not? You people shout a lot of slogans regarding unity in diversity but please tell me do we ever try to take pride in this diversity? Till the time we do not have a sense of pride for every state in India, a sense of pride for every language of India, I remember some students from Tamil Nadu university just came up and I greeted them by saying 'Vanakkam' to them, they became so happy and they felt touched. Don't we feel that we should create such an environment and celebrate this kind of special days in our universities? Don't we feel that in our university we should celebrate a day dedicated to Sikh Gurus so that we get to know about the sacrifices made by the Sikh Gurus of Punjab. Or we will remain stuck in Bhangra only? Punjab is much more than Bhangra and Paratha. You see, life is nothing without creativity. We cannot become robots, the person present inside us should express itself continuously but we must do what enhances the power of our country, which increases our capability and which fulfils the requirements of our country. Till the time we will remain aloof from them, we will be limiting ourselves.

Vivekanand Ji used to tell the story about the mentality of a frog in a well. We cannot be like that. We have to integrate ourselves with the entire world otherwise we will confine ourselves to a corner, no one can imagine us like that. Our journey has been from Upnishads to Satellites. We have never shied away from accepting anything from the world if it was favorable to us or was favorable to the humanity. And we have never been scared that somebody will come and we will be trampled. No sir, whatever may come we will handle that, we belong to this thought process. We will make them our own and we will move ahead whatever good they have in them, then only India will become capable of giving something to the world. There might have been a period when we were living as slaves so we might have been living with a protective nature. Today we must have this kind of strength and we should not be concerned influence of the outside world. And nowadays whenever I go abroad, I have this feeling that the outlook of world towards India has now changed. This has not been achieved due to our political power, it is the strength of our people, the reason behind this is the strength of 1.25 billion Indians. But if we keep on brushing our evils under the carpet then there would be nothing but a rotten bad smell. We have to fight these evils, we have to fight with our own vices. It should be our dream to make a modern India and why India should not become a modern state? Why shouldn't the youth of my country be at par with others in the world? Why shouldn't they become strong? Once I met with a great personality, he must have read my speech somewhere so he brought up that topic, at that time I was not in politics. He said: brother, do you know what is the problem with India? I asked: what was that? He said: 5,000 years ago India was like this, 2,000 years ago India was like this, India was like that during the times of Buddha or like that during the times of Rama, we could not come out of this mentality. The world evaluates you on the basis of where you are at present. We are fortunate that we have a great heritage but we are not ready to move ahead beyond praising that. Taking pride on your past should be an inspiration to move ahead, it should not make us step backwards and stop. We have to move beyond singing our praises. Being young is not a state, it is a state of mind. One who is immersed in the yesterday cannot be considered as young. But one who takes best things from the past and thinks of the future and understands it, he is young. You must make a pledge how to move forward with that feeling of youngness. With this, I pay my obeisance to Deendayal Upadhyay Ji, I pay my obeisance to Vivekanand Ji, I pay my obeisance to Vinoba Bhawe Ji and I congratulate the young members of my country.

Thank You.

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