

Human Excellence

[Speech by Srimat Swami Ranganathanandaji Maharaj, 13th president of Ramakrishna Math & Ramakrishna Mission when he was Vice President, Ramakrishna Math & Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math and President Ramakrishna Math, Domalguda, Hyderabad.]

Friends,

After Sri Subramaniam has put the subject of this evening's talk in the perspective of our national needs and urges, I am very happy to be with you this evening to talk on this subject—**HUMAN EXCELLENCE**.

Ever since I read Swami Vivekananda's literature, it was in 1924, I have been deeply interested in this subject of Human Excellence. Swamiji stresses it again and again and therefore in 1967, I was to go to Bombay to give the convocation address to the Tata Institute of Social Sciences from Calcutta. Then I got a letter from Bombay, from an institution which calls itself 'Indian Centre for Encouraging Excellence' – "will you please come and address our group in Bombay? We know you are coming to address the Tata Institute's Convocation". That letter I received in Calcutta.

I was immensely happy to know there is such a thing as an institution in India for encouraging Excellence. I immediately replied – 'Yes, I will come and I shall speak on Human Excellence, answer questions, and enjoy the whole thing, because that's my life's dedication'. And so I went after the convocation addresses to address this group, a small group on Human Excellence. Then I left India on a foreign tour. After 2, 3 months, when I returned, I found a letter from that group, along with a Magazine, and the text of the lecture printed. Their own magazine – 'Indian Centre for Encouraging Excellence'. And in that magazine article they mentioned that this lecture has become the keynote lecture for our whole movement. Then I edited that lecture, you find it now in the 4th volume of "Eternal Values for a Changing Society – Human Excellence".

Human Excellence through Education:

All our Education, all our religions are ultimately meant to instil in us this desire for Human Excellence. There are two departments where Human Excellence finds expression. One is in the work we do. Second is in our Human Relations. In this both departments we have to express this idea of Human Excellence. First in the field of work and we have to go a long way, before we achieve Human Excellence in our work. Because somehow or other we have not been very good at work. Our whole philosophy of life has been stressing more on leisure than on work. So that we don't put our whole soul into the work, bring the concentration of mind to work efficiently. We are sometimes absent minded, when we work. Therefore work excellence has not yet come to many people in India.

We are not good workers, compared to many other people. This must be only a recent development, just a few centuries. Earlier period, there must have been tremendous workers, excellent work being turned out, that is why we have got a rich culture. But in these few centuries, we have become weak, physically, mentally and in our relationship with other human away. It develops a certain lazy-cozy attitude. That had come upon us during the last several centuries. Out of that we are waking ourselves up in the modern period. Great teachers have come to wake us up from that sleepy attitude.

When I see people working – I have been watching people working half-hearted work, there is no energy in that work! But if it is self-interest, there is plenty of energy! To earn money, to achieve something for oneself, we do so energetically. But if it is public purpose all our energy goes away! All our interest also dries up. So I have seen people working in a half-hearted way, never doing the work thoroughly. The result is, you cannot trust each other. If you send a radio for repair, you will get a big bill. But the radio on return will not work at all! So many such slipshod type of work we do. What is the reason for doing such things?

Human Excellence through Atma Shrddha:

First of all, we don't have that enough self-respect and faith in oneself. Swamiji spoke very highly about this quality – Have faith in yourself. [Atma Shrddha](#) – 'I can, I can' - that attitude. That brings out, the best out of us and a sense of honour and self-respect. It is this that stimulates me to work excellent. Wherever there is no sense of honour, no sense of personal worth and dignity, my work becomes sloppy, slipshod. Now, these are the qualities that our people must acquire to become excellent in life and work. It is a steady growth. It does not come merely by sitting and praying to some God or Goddess. In our work, we have to show, this capacity to express our whole soul in that work. There is a soulful work that alone can become excellent. A mere movement of hands and feet do not make for the best of work.

Human Excellence through Concentration of Mind:

When Swamiji Said – 'if you can prepare, what they call in North India, the chillum, that Hukka there is a way of preparing a Hukka. How to put the Tambaku (Tobacco) in it, how much water to be put inside? It is very carefully to be done. If you can do that well, then you can do meditation also well. In small actions, you show your excellence, and then you show your excellence in big actions'. We neglect the small, and we never achieve the big. Because we think – "in these small things I can be careless, I will be careful when the big things will come". Neither here nor there – we become excellent. So Swamiji said – "even the little things that you do, do it with the whole concentration. Your whole mind must be there. Then only work becomes excellent".

That teaching came to me quite young. Therefore when I was in Mysore, working in the kitchen for e.g. for six years – washing the dishes. That philosophy always prompted me for excellence in the kitchen. Every thing must be clean, timely. Of course what you cook must be tasteful. That is called excellence in cooking. I took that message into the kitchen, because Swamiji said it. Sweeping, I was so particular that when I sweep a floor, it must be clean, nothing should be scattered here and there. Sometimes I was watching the airports, that lady comes to sweep there. Her mind is nowhere there, in her salary only her mind is. So you can see the dirt is still there, but in western countries I didn't see so. They are sure to see that the place is clean. What is sweeping for? To make the place clean! We do it more as a lazy work, without caring to see the result of that work! What a long way we have to go? Before we achieve human excellence, this stress on the little things that you do – nobody is watching you and still you do it well. That is the foundation of all greatness.

Swamiji has given one criterion of Human greatness. He says – "[In the little things that you do, un-observed by anybody else, if you are excellent, then you are truly excellent. When people are watching and praising you and you do well that is not the true test of excellence. No body is watching you, what you do in the most private aspect of your life, there if you are excellent, you will be excellent everywhere](#)". He gave an example – Any fool can stand on the platform and

deliver a lecture if a thousand people are going to clap hands to praise him. Then he gets great enthusiasm. Nobody is going to watch you, nobody is going to clap hands, and then you still speak well, that is your real standard of excellence there. So one such guidance Swamiji gives on the subject of Excellence in work to all our people.

Human Excellence through Responsibility:

Un-noticed, un-observed by anybody, are you doing your work well? Is it well done? That must be our consideration. The humblest of work! Washing a vessel, making it clean. What is washing for? To making it clean. Is it clean? Our older generation, especially our women had that wonderful quality. Whatever they do, they do it excellent! Even in a poor home you go, their brass vessels, how clean, how beautifully organized and arranged! There you can see excellence there! They are not highly educated, but work excellence came to them. How? They put their soul into their work. A sort of dreamy type of work cannot create excellence. Our people have to learn it a lot! I am seeing it all over India and I am happy to say by and large our girls in schools and colleges have more interest in that kind of excellence than our boys. There is so much slipshod work, when boys do. The girls have yet maintained some standard of work. So this is the basis of excellence in work – intelligence is needed, that intelligence must be yoked to your muscular system.

Human Excellence through Personal Honour and Dignity:

Then a high motivation coming from personal honour and dignity, which is so little available in our society. When somebody is supervising my work, I may be nice; nobody is supervising, I become slipshod. There you can see want of self-respect, want of personal honour.

‘Why should anybody supervise my work? I am not a thief, I am not a lazy person, I am not a cheat!’ Now, these thoughts must come and inspire our minds. Have self-respect. I don’t want somebody to watch over me. Now, when I see people working in Japan and all that, they don’t work, because somebody is watching. They have tremendous self-respect. This is my work, my honour – that attitude alone can produce excellence in work. So in every department, in the most humble homely duties to administration, this concept of Human Excellence must inspire our nation today. I must be excellent in what I do. A clerk is doing clerical work in the office; he can be excellent in that work. First of all, that work excellence, and the work excellence will be better, if that human motivation is also added to it. Then supreme excellence will come. Otherwise work excellence can come, merely on the basis of our intelligence, talents and a spirit of self-respect. But the supreme excellence will come only when a human concern enters into my work.

Human Excellence through Love and Human Concern:

A mother is bathing a baby. She can be excellent in that work, because she knows the art and she has a mother’s love. That makes it excellent. Similarly in our work for society in the department of administration or in politics, professional departments, everywhere so many values have to find a confluence to make for excellence in work.

First value as I told is intelligence. We must exercise our intelligence, to show excellence in work. Second, self-respect and a sense of personal honour. Thirdly comes the human concern. When all these join together we get excellence in work. But large sections of people do not think in these lines in India!

How can I be excellent in my work? I am appointed to a post. I went as an employee, seeking an employment. Then I got an order – yes, you are appointed. From that very moment my whole attitude must change. We have not changed that attitude. We are always in the job seekers attitude. There are three levels – Job seeker, jobholder and excellent in job. These are three dimensions. We start as a job seeker. Quite O.K. After all I want a job. So I start as a job seeker. I apply for a job. Then I get a job. I became a jobholder. But in India the jobholder continues throughout one's life. One step ahead we are not able to go. How to make that job excellent? Why should I be watched over by somebody? That self respect, that tremendous concentration of energy unto work and that human concern do not come along with my job-holding situation.

Human Excellence as taught in the Gita:

When these values will join together, then job that I do will be an excellent job. This is what we have to achieve in India in a big way. We have the philosophy of it. There is the Gita – “[Excellence in work, excellence in life](#)” – is the profound teaching of the Gita. But we have never utilized the Gita. We have understood the Gita to be a book of consolation, a book of pious reading. Rap it in silk, keep it, once a while open it, read a little and get some spiritual satisfaction—most people understand the Gita from that point of view. They have missed the true significance of this great book.

I came across this poor understanding of the Gita, by our people in one situation. That was in 1947. I was having a widespread tour of Andhra Pradesh, after my return from Karachi. My last station was Hyderabad. Beginning from Bobbili upto Hyderabad, very happy lecture tour. In the University of Osmania, Nizam's College, Womens' College, so many lectures we had. Then friends told me – before you leave, why not call on the Military Governor Gen. Choudary? The police action is just over. He is the Military Governor. I said, “Yes, we don't know each other. But I shall be glad to call upon him and spend sometime with him.” I went there. We were utter strangers. I respected him, because he was the Military Personnel who went to Annex, Hyderabad to Indian Union, a well-known Military General. So we sat and all the talking he did. I was simply listening. He was busy with Warangal, Srikakulam Commissioners selection that time; telephone was ringing all the time. So he was talking in between. I was just listening. After half an hour listening, I started doing the talking till the end of the one-hour, because I saw a Gita book on his table. That gave me an opportunity. “Gen. Choudary, do you read this Gita”? - “Of course I read it, when I want a little peace of mind”, he said, - “that is not the function of that book”, I said with a certain firmness. He was alert immediately. – “Do you mean to say that this book has more relevance than merely to give some peace of mind”? I said, “Yes, for peace of mind there are plenty of books in India. That book has got some other relevance”. He became alert again. “Do you mean to say I as the Military Governor can learn lessons from this book”? “Exactly so. We have forgotten the real message of the Gita. We treat it like any other book, which is meant to put us to sleep. That book is to make you awake, to work hard, to bring happiness and welfare to millions of people”. He became very serious. He wanted to know what is the meaning of that philosophy that is contained in the Gita. He repeatedly asked, “I the Military Governor, can I get inspiration from this book to do my work well”? “Exactly so”.

Krishna's message is that, Now look at the fourth chapter, opening verses – in the second and third chapter Krishna expounded the philosophy of work called Yoga. The whole Yoga of the Gita is philosophy of work. After expounding it, in the fourth chapter how did Krishna begin? – Krishna says – “**Imam Vivaswate Yogam Proktavan Aham Avyayam Vivaswan Manave Prahah Manuikshwakave Abraveet**” – First two verses – this great Yoga in ancient times, I taught to Vivaswan, he taught it to his son Manu, Manu to Ikshwaku. Then the second verse says

– “**Evam Parampara Praptamimam Rajarshayo Viduh**” – “This dharma, this philosophy, this Yoga was coming by a succession of teachers and students. **Parampara Praptam** – It was known to Rajarshis – see the language there. Who is a Rajarshi? **Rajanashcha te Rishayascha Rajarshih** – they are both Raja and Rishi in one. Raja means sovereignty, power in the hands. Rishi means using that power for the good of the people, through that spiritual humanistic motivation. This was known to Rajarshis through a succession of teachers and students. Then Krishna says, “**Sa Kalena Iha Mahata Yogonastah Parantapa**” – “Arjuna, in course of time this profound yoga became diluted, diluted until finally it was lost in the society. That is the language – **Yogonastah Parantapa** – I often compare what you call religion in India in the last century like the milk in the market – 90% water, 10% milk. That is what we call yoga in India. Weakness, no capacity for work, no human feelings and yet we are very pious and religious.

So Krishna saying there, **Yogonastah Parantapa, Sa Kalena Iha Mahata** – in course of time we watered it down, watered it down. Then finally what we get is only water. So little milk in it. Even a pundit understands Yoga, as going to Haridwar, pay five Rupees to a panda, catch hold of a tail of a cow to get to heaven. Even a pandit will do that. That’s all of ideas of religion. So what Krishna says is perfectly true. But Sankara’s commentary on that is simply marvellous. He says – “How was this Yoga lost in the society? What is the reason for it?” The Answer, “**Durbalan Ajitendriyan Prapya Yogo Nashtah Parantapa**”, when this yoga fell into the hands of weaklings – **Durbalan** – No physical strength and **Ajitendriyan** – No inner self-discipline. Into their hands the yoga went and they started diluting it, diluting it, they cannot rise to that level. Ultimately it was lost. Krishna taught it to ‘men handling power’ – see the language. Those who handle power. The father handles power, mother handles power. That minister handles power. That clerk handles power. Even the constable on the street handles power. Krishna wanted to give all of them, a philosophy by which they will handle power in the best manner possible to produce happiness & welfare in society and to achieve ones own spiritual growth as well.

That is the nature of the work that is taught in the Gita. The philosophy of Yoga is the philosophy of work is the utmost efficiency in excellence by which, by your productive labour you enrich society. And by the same labour you grow spiritually, realize the truth that is hidden within you. So that every worker becomes a combination of Raja and Rishi in one. That is the Gita’s teaching. What is the meaning of Raja? For all of us Raja means a crowned head, that is Raja, a crowned head. But these are bad days for all crowned heads. All crowned heads are falling down. It was said when Faruk was ousted by Nasar in Egypt, he went to Italy as a refugee. There he made a remark – “these are bad days for Rajas and crowned heads. All will go except five, five will remain” he says. Which are the five? – The King or the Queen of England and the four crowned heads in the playing cards. They will remain. All the rest will go, he said. So you can see afterwards Iran has gone, many others have gone. So it is not that meaning. The word Raja – “**Rajate Virajate** – those who handle power. That is all it means. The American President is a Raja in that sense, compared to all the petty Rajas we have in India, what energy he is holding! What power, though he does not wear a crown at all! And he has to go after five years! So that the word Raja must be understood in that wider sense. Those who handle power, and in every society almost every one handles power with respect to somebody else. The father and mother handle power within that family circle. In that office that little clerk handles power, probably more power than the secretary sometimes. What ever the secretary does, he can cancel, he has that power. As you say in southern languages, God granted a boon the priest with heritage. Priest is more powerful than God. That is the saying.

So, power is a big subject in all free societies. How to handle power? In India, we have now got political power, administrative power. We have not discussed the subject – How to handle power in this democracy? But in England you will find, men like Bertrand Russel have written books on this subject of power – political power, intellectual power, economic power etc. How to handle it in the proper way? Here in the Gita, you have a profound philosophy of how to handle power. That philosophy says – that power in the hands of the clerk is to be humanized, must be used for the good of the Man. That power in the hands of a constable on the roadside is meant to protect the people. That Kshatriya power is to protect the people. You sleep soundly at night, why? The police is there guarding you. That is the power. Some growth must come within that constable. One day I was passing by a road, I saw a constable moving with his lathi, small lathi. A poor fellow was going with a cycle. He just gave a good beating to that fellow saying – ‘Go, get away from here’. Now, is that the way to deal with that citizen? That man is a citizen of India. This man has a little power in his hands! That power does very bad expression on that particular person! What is wrong with this policeman? He has power; he doesn’t know how to use it! Similarly the clerk in the office and many others in many situations.

So Krishna adds one more value to power. That is the second word – **Rishi**. Raja and Rishi in one. Now, whenever we use the word ‘Rishi’, like the word ‘Raja’, we have got peculiar ideas in our heads. First of all he must have a long beard, then only a man can be a Rishi – in our minds these are the pictures. Forget all this. A man like Krishna is not going to mystify these beautiful ideas. He is a great Kshatriya himself, he is teaching another Kshatriya. He gives a profound manly message. What does Rishihood means then? Rishi means one who has grown spiritually a little, by which he can become human. He can humanize that power. So Rishi and Raja must go together. A Rishi has no power. A Raja has no spiritual growth. We have both types in India. But Krishna wants a new type. You will have power and you will soften it by humanistic impulse injected into it. Then you get high-class excellence in life, in work, in every department of human activity. So **Rajanashcha te Rishayahcha**. The clerk in the office is a Rishi if he has grown a little spiritually. There are various stages of Rishihood. Just like there are various stages of Mahatmahood. Gandhiji was a Mahatma; you can also be a Mahatma, at least one percent, two percent!

Our teachers like Swami Vivekananda will tell – put your children on the Road of that Mahatmaship. That is a long road, but put them on that road. Be a Mahatma, be a Mahatma – what does it mean? Your atman is not within your skin. It has broken through the limitations of skin. It can think of others, love others, expand love and sympathy. That is all with meaning with Mahatma, ‘**Maha-Atma**’ – whose Atma is not conditioned by his genetic system. He is not imprisoned with this little skin. His Atma feels oneness with millions of people. So, when a clerk is sitting in the office – some villager comes to get some work done, this clerk has expanded beyond that genetic limitation. He can feel for the other person, he can respond in a human way to a human situation. As soon as he does so, he is on the road of becoming a Rishi. Forget all this mystical ideas of being spiritual – he must be in some Samadhi sitting like this – that is all we understand. **In the name of Samadhi the whole nation has gone to sleep in India. Everybody wants Samadhi.** I ask people, young people come to me – ‘what do you want?’ ‘Oh! I want to get samadhi!’ So quickly, So go to sleep! You will get Samadhi! One young man came to me once – ‘What do you want?’ ‘I want Samadhi, pranayama and samadhi’. I said, ‘All right. First you read this book’. I gave a book of Swamiji, ‘Lectures from Colombo to Almora’.

There he gives a wonderful message of man making, service, and dedication. After one year I asked him, 'You said, you want Samadhi and Pranayama etc.?' 'Oh! I don't care for all this now, I have got something better', he said. You are right, you have understood correctly. That is all easy to aspire for. Without any base, if you build a super structure, it won't stay. We built Sainthood without a grounding of manhood. So sainthood becomes a sham sainthood. And plenty of sham sainthoods we have in India. Be a man first, manifest excellence in life and work. So dealing with that constable, that clerk, or the officer of the departments, when I tell them – develop that human touch. Do the work of a clerk but never do it with a clerk's mind. Do it with citizen's mind. You are a fellow citizen. That constable dealing with that poor man on that street, he must treat him as a fellow citizen. Then excellence will come to the police work. Today he doesn't. He treats him as a criminal. No citizen at all for a policeman, all are criminals for him. That is the raw state of the human mind. If that constable is given this little spiritual stimulus, put on the road of being a 'Rishi', he develops a citizenship attitude. They are my fellow citizens. I respect them; I am here to help them. I am here to protect them; this power is given to protect them – when these ideas spreads all over India, a tremendous efflorescence of human excellence will develop in this country.

When I told all this to Choudary, he was listening. I did all the talking, the second half was my time. First half was his talking. He was very happy. Again he asked, "Do you mean to say I get a philosophy from this book for my work here?" I said, "Yes, this is taught by a great Kshatriya to another Kshatriya. He wants Arjuna to be awakened. **"Tasmat Twam Uttishtha Yasholabhaswa Jitwa Shatroon Bhunkshwa Rajyam Samridhdham** – In the eleventh chapter after showing his 'Vishwa Roopa' to Arjuna, this is Krishna's exhortation to Arjuna and to all of you and me. **Tasmat** – therefore, **Uttishtha** – Stand up Arjuna, don't be lazy; don't be sleepy, stand up! There is a big work for you to do. **"Yasholabhaswa** - there is a glory for man, acquire that glory. That glory is not there in us as human beings. When three hundred million people are poor and backward, many are illiterate, many are suffering all sorts of privation – can we say India is peopled by men and women? Not at all, we are not men! Let me quote the French author Victor Hugo, he said, - 'We are not men, we are only candidates to humanity.' People in India today are candidates to humanity. We have to achieve that humanity, that manliness, that excellence of human life. Krishna is saying that, - if people are starving, animals are starving, what does it show? India is not peopled by human beings! Not men and women! 1/4th men and women, fractional men and women.

We have not achieved that highest human excellence. If that comes, these all will be wiped away. Not a single animal will be hungry in this country, not a dog will go hungry in my country – that is Swami Vivekananda's way of putting that great message of Krishna given in the fourth chapter, given in the modern period.

Choudary was very happy. Then I asked him, "Have you read Swami Vivekananda's books?"- "Yes some small book of sayings I have read." – "Oh! That is only a 'Chutni', main books you must read", I said. "I am going to Delhi tomorrow, to take charge of Delhi Ashrama. I will send you a book of Swamiji, provided you promise you will read". I don't want to waste a book. He promised, "I shall read". Then I took leave. He was all kindness, all that coldness which we had at the beginning all vanished. Very warm relationship came. He took me to the car, put me in the car. Then I took leave, I went to Delhi. I sent him the book – 'Lectures from Colombo to Almora'. Vivekananda's famous lectures which has created modern India, the modern conscience in India, which has turned out batches of patriots who fought for freedom. That is the nature of that book – 'Lectures from Colombo to Almora' – five of the most brilliant

lectures were delivered in Madras. Man-making, nation-building, hard-work, wiping the tears from the eyes of people – all that constitute human excellence you find Swamiji conveys through that great book, a book along with other books like letters. Romaine Rolland describes in a wonderful sentence in his “Life of Vivekananda”, - "Vivekananda's words are great music. They are like Beethoven's symphonies, they are like the stirring rhythms of the march of handle caresses. I can not touch these utterances of Vivekananda, separated from me in books of 30 years distance without getting a thrill through my body as of an electric shock. And what shocks and transports must have been produced, when they issued from the lips of the living hero" – that is the wonderful sentence.

So this country will be completely transformed when it gets education in human excellence as conveyed in the Gita in the past, in the great literature of Vivekananda in our time. That is a great work that demands our immediate attention. To be remaining as undeveloped nation, is a shame to all of us! Because we have plenty of grains, plenty of natural resources. Only we don't have that human excellence in work and in human relations.

Human Excellence through freedom:

A human relation is a big field of activity. To respect the other individual, that constable respecting that simple humble person. All over India today we can see – whether it is a power of constable or the power of the officer above – they all function to protect the rich and the top. The poor has no friend anywhere. Universal it is. That shows our slavish mentality. The slaves are always cow to the people at the top and they suppress people below. When we cease to be slaves, when we become truly free, we develop the highest excellence. Then we shall become the friend of the poor, the strength of the weak. Today we are not, we are not the strength of the weak. The poor and the weak have to go to the wall. The rich and the powerful, they have been every thing. What a tremendous human transformation has to come, before we can become a free people living in a free nation!

There was a Rose show in Hyderabad a few days ago. About 5000 people participated. We have a Japanese Sadhu in our centre. Very nice Sadhu we call him 'Satyalokananda' - 'Partha Maharaj'. Now, they see things from their point of view, we see things from our point of view. What does not jar in our minds jars on his mind. Englishmen, Japanese, American, they are free people. So they see things quite differently from what we see. For example, apart from this story I am telling another story, which I mentioned in my lecture on Human Values in Management.

One Japanese came to Bombay. He went round, and he found everybody wearing a wristwatch, including rickshaw-puller all have wristwatch. He comes from Japan and he told his Indian friend, - “We in Japan produce for export, because we have to strengthen our economy. We don't consume all that we produce. We have to export. So all our watches we export. In my house there is only one clock, all have to go by that one clock. In India every body has a watch. Every body, even the poorest have a watch”. That is the first part of the remark. The second part is the most beautiful part, and he says, - “they all have watches and nobody is punctual. It is only for show, status, show”. We can't understand that at all. See how free people will remark! How they react to human situation! A wonderful remark it is! For show a watch! It is for punctuality. I must go to my office in time – that is the purpose of this watch. We never used it for that. We are always late to office except there in the emergency. Then every body was in time, because 'Danda' alone can make us work. That shows we are slaves. If we are free people, we don't want any pressure from any body, we know our value. We have sense of dignity and worth – that spirit has to come in all departments of life.

So coming to the rose show, it has a profound message to all of us in India today. How to get out of this feudal outlook? And develop a free democratic outlook! That is the lesson coming from that incident. This Japanese friend, sadhu went to the rose show. He found one gardener has created a beautiful arrangement of roses there. But the prize was given to the master of the gardener. She had done nothing, but she was a big officer's wife. So all the prize goes to her. The man who did it, nobody respects. "In Japan it can never happen Swamiji", he told me – "the one who did it, will get the prize. But in feudal India one who managed it above will get all the honour. He gets only labour, nothing else. That is India! Where is excellence here? Where is Human Excellence here? I may sit on a whole big throne, but there is no excellence in me. My foot is made of clay! That is the type of human beings we are! Living in high style, high possession! All the good work is done by somebody, I take all the name for myself. Even in scientific research, the juniors do good work; sometimes the seniors take all the result for himself. That is our country! In that country the most important subject today is human excellence. Both with respect to work and the other respect to human relations.

That is a profound theory, a profound philosophy of action. The Gita has given it, Swamiji has given it. And what we need today is, to think in these ways. How to combine power with that spiritual humanistic motivation? This is constant idea in the Chinese philosophy. This word, - '**Rajarshayo viduhu**' appears also in Chinese thought, what you call in Tao's thought. Exact rendering you can get there. Where they will say, to every one, not merely to kings or big ministers etc., to every one – [can you combine kingliness outside and saintliness within?](#) - That combination must come. Be saintly within, be kingly without. Without you are handling power, within you are humanistic, you are spiritual. Therefore you combine these two. That is what we need to create human excellence all round in our country.

I sent that book and he wrote me a nice letter, - "Thank you for your book. I have read it, I have gained from it", he wrote. Later on he was our Ambassador High Commissioner in Canada. From there his department wrote to me, - we want to translate into French your article on – Essence of Indian Culture, for circulation to French people in Canada. I gave my permission. That was my second relationship with him some years later. So I gave this example only to tell you, - how many of us when we are trying to create highly developed nation, where millions of people who have been next-door neighbours to brutes! That is Vivekananda's language! Millions of people whom we have kept as next-door neighbours to brutes! We want to bring them up to the highest level of human development. That philosophy is the philosophy of the Gita.

That is what Vivekananda gave us in his two great books. '[Lectures from Colombo to Almora](#)' and '[Letters of Vivekananda](#)'. Jawaharlal Nehru wanted all young people to study these books thoroughly, not just reading, thoroughly – imbibe the spirit that is there! Out of which will come a new race of men and women, expressing the highest human excellence. That is the goal before us. Let us march in that direction. Let us put our children on that long road of human Excellence. That is the thought with which we can close this lecture and leave the hall and continue to cherish these ideas, pass these to others as well. As Swamiji said – '[Be and Make](#)' that shall be our motto. Be men yourself and help others to be men. What a beautiful message! Be and make. This has been our way, a slavish attitude. A free attitude will come – I shall strive to be a man. I shall help you also to achieve the highest human excellence.

So keep this motto of Swamiji with you "**BE & MAKE–that shall be our motto.**"

Thank you, Namaskar.

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