

The Spirit of Our Work

India's Human Development Index rank is now 132 among 194 countries studied by UNDP. This is unfortunate, but we know the remedy. So, instead of fretting and fuming, let us plunge into the work in a manly fashion. Doing anything in the name of Swami Vivekananda or just arranging some discussions on character-building will not take us anywhere. We have to understand the tested and established ideas and methods of the Mahamandal. Those who intend to work for the cause should try to understand the exact approach of this organization and its uniqueness. As we catch the right spirit, allegiance and dedication will come. No organization can thrive for long without whole-hearted allegiance and dedication of its workers.

The objective is to build a new India. Many things are to be done for that. Our area of work is man-making. We concentrate there, and we are sure that the rest will come as an effect, not necessarily through this organization. Man-making is the transformation of a man into a real man. By taking care of the three components of his being, the body, the mind, and the heart, by systematically providing proper nourishment and exercise to them, one can build one's life. Such a life becomes a fit instrument to deliver constructive inputs for national awakening and reconstruction. We intend to make it possible in every young man's life in every part of the country.

So we must know the language of the Mahamandal, which can be understood by the young men. We must serve them the right food which will nourish them. We shall neither try to please, nor antagonize anybody, but say what is correct and suitable for the youths. They must be given exactly the prescribed ideas and methods in the prescribed manner and encouraged to study the books prescribed. These must be followed religiously. Those who are serious about the work will at once grasp that it cannot be a 'go as you like' sort of thing! There will be many approaches and creative responses, but the core, the nucleus, cannot be tampered with.

As this is an organization for young men in general, we stick to simple, practicable, and universally applicable concepts only. For example, we have nothing to do with difficult philosophical theories and rituals and terminologies unknown to them. These are useless, often harmful, for our purpose. These may cause confusion or repulsion among many young people. Swami Vivekananda advised, 'Do not bother your heads with religious theories.' One may like to perform rites and rituals in personal life, but so far as the organization is concerned, they are not necessary at all. Listen to Swamiji: 'I tell you brother, let everything go on as it is, only take care that no form becomes necessary – unity in variety – see that universality be not hampered in the least. Everything must be sacrificed, if necessary, for that one sentiment, universality.'

We shall not even recognize the so-called different religious sects or ethnic groups. Whether one is a Hindu (whatever the term means!) or a Muslim or a Christian or something else, whether one is a Bengali or a Marathi or whatever else, we are not concerned. You are a young man with great possibilities. You can grow into a real man, if you strive in the right direction. Come, let us do it together and enthuse others too to do the same. We love our Motherland and her poor, illiterate children. Let us do whatever lies in our capacity. Let us

try to improve our capacity also for the work. We shall not sit idle. There is too much suffering all around us. They are the Gods Swamiji taught us to worship. No other vain Gods for us. We must build our life, this precious human life, and give it wholly, or at least as much as we can, for the good of the nation.

That is the spirit. Spreading Swami Vivekananda's name and telling people how great he was is not our business. Whether a youth vows in his name is not the question. Is he trying to build himself as an honest, strong, and unselfish man, ready to serve the nation?

Many people have different ideas. You must see through the apparent similarity. Do not mix up things. The work must be done in its pristine purity. Others may be doing wonderful things. We would respect them. But this work is something different. We have to understand it correctly.

The big thing is to feel the heart throbs of Swami Vivekananda. Study him, try to feel him moving and talking to you. To understand his ideas thoroughly and how we can apply them, study all the publications of the Mahamandal minutely. Along with that give great attention to every small practical details of our everyday life. No compromise with untruth. All love and care for our brothers. And thus we surely move nearer to the goal.

Listen to the assurance: 'We may not live to see the outcome, but as sure as we live, it will come sooner or later. What India wants is a new electric fire to stir up a fresh vigour in the national veins. This was ever, and always will be, slow work. Be content to work, and, above all, be true to yourself. Be pure, staunch, and sincere to the very backbone, and everything will be all right.... My task will be done, and I shall be quite content to die, if I can bring up and launch one hundred such men over India.... The petty attempts of small men should be beneath our notice. Onward! Upon ages of struggle a character is built. Be not discouraged.'