

What is Wanted

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With emphasis and conviction it can be said that the ideas and the objects of the Mahamandal are set forth by Swami Vivekananda. The Mahamandal has not sprung up out of the ideas of one or a few intelligent persons. It is just a working policy to translate the ideas of Swami Vivekananda, here in India, for a thorough regeneration of the decadent nation. Swamiji wanted the young men of India to come forward leaving behind all lethargy, despondency, despair, and every other humiliating idea which benumb their limbs, shorten their stature, and dampen their spirit. This has been happening in our country, of late particularly, and generally for the last one thousand years or so. Swami Vivekananda came to inspire the Indian youths, to instill a new spirit, to give a new vigour to the national life, so that the nation can once more rise to eminence which will dim even its past glorious history. That was Swami Vivekananda's dream. It was a waking dream with Swami Vivekananda, not like the dreams which we have while asleep. Swami Vivekananda was ever awake. He never slept. That was a vivid dream and therefore not really a dream, but a vision.

He could see the history of the past and the history in making and the history that was yet to be. He could see fifteen hundred years hence, as he said. He could see the march of mankind and he saw that India was rising. And it is the youths of India who will raise her again to eminence.

The Mahamandal came into being to do a little like the squirrels who helped Sri Ramachandra to build the bridge to Lanka from the main land. We, the youths of India, are very humble people, we are nobodies, as Swami Vivekananda says, but these nobodies are most powerful beings. Because they believe in their inner strength, they believe in their possibilities, they know how to overcome all fear. They know how to go forward, how to march on the tune of the call of the great Swami Vivekananda. He wanted the youths of India to be men and we, the youths of India, want to be men. We want the regeneration of India.

We must remove the causes which have brought about the present degeneration. And what are they? So many causes are there. Lack of seriousness, in the first place. Swamiji said: We have a tendency nowadays to trifle with everything, but do not understand the importance of things. Everything with which to build the future of our nation we take lightly, we take the human life lightly, we take our behaviour, education, our thought, and everything else lightly. This is the first cause which has brought about this present decadence.

So have a little more gravity and seriousness. Gravity does not mean that we will always wear grave faces. Swami Vivekananda says: Don't pull a long face like that. Why? You are not poor, you are not weak. You are not really miserable. You are heroes, you are giants, you are strong, you are fearless. You can sacrifice everything for the good of others. You can serve people. You do not care for money or anything else. You do not

care to satisfy your senses. You can overcome the longings of your senses. You can transcend your body and your mind. This is spirituality. Swami Vivekananda wanted to give this spirituality to the youths of India. You are ready to do good to India. That is why he says, Deluge the country with spiritual ideas first of all. Before all else we have done just the opposite. We have put spiritual strivings and spiritual ideas in the cupboard. We have drawn up plans and programmes for the welfare of society. We take great pride that we have been doing so. We spend money in hundreds and thousands of crores and we see that the benefits do not trickle to the poorest and the meanest of the Indian population. They starve, they suffer. We are being deceived, and we have allowed us to be deceived, we, even those who have had some so-called education. We do not see things in the proper perspective. We do not realize the peril that we are bringing due to our negligence, due to our lack of seriousness, due to our lack of love for the people, due to our lack of sacrificing spirit, due to the lack of our service attitude, due to our selfishness.

Simply we have become servants of our body. We want only bodily comfort and pleasures through our senses. Swami Vivekananda asked us to rise above all these low aspirations. To rise above these is spirituality. He wanted this spirituality to be revived again. He wanted the practice of this spirituality in everyday life. He wanted the practice of this spirituality in everyday life. He wanted the practice of this spirituality in everyday life. He wanted to bring the great ideas of the Upanishads to the ploughmen, to the householders, to the workers, to everybody in society. That was his idea and the Mahamandal wants to work on this line.

This is a big – this is a big work and we must do it. The Indian youths must be ready to do this. Who else can do it? Not elderly people, not weak people, not lean bodies, not sleeping minds; only they who have a strong body, a strong mind, and a large heart, with energy, discipline, seriousness, love – they can do and they are the youths of India. This great work of thorough regeneration of India. This is the great work.

There are two ways of doing something. One is to do the thing in a big way, with big plans, spending a large sum of money, etc and the other way is to do the thing in a small way, even unnoticed by people, without any praise or anything. Calmly in our day to day life and through small organizations we can work for a big goal. That is the method of work of the Mahamandal. To translate Swamiji's ideas into practice for the regeneration of the nation. That is the aim of the Mahamandal.

The Mahamandal does not want name or fame, does not want to acquire property, does not want to be admired or applauded by anybody or to raise large funds. It has one merit – a fund of will, a fund of determination in a few young men. They are not well-known figures, do not have much education, they are really nobodies. Simply they have this will: We will translate Swami Vivekananda's ideas into practice; we will regenerate the whole nation thoroughly.

We will be pure. Our efforts will be pure, our plans will be pure, our purpose will be pure, our methods will be pure. With purity we will go forward and translate the ideas of Swami Vivekananda and regenerate India. How can it be done? We do not stand in need of big programmes or a big propaganda machinery, on which nowadays we often find people tempted to put much faith. But the work can be done with a good resolve and conviction, love for the people. The Mahamandal has been trying to do this.

‘Our great country is on the road to degeneration in various respects.’ Can we tolerate it? Can Indian youths tolerate that? We can prevent it and do something that will reverse the process. How can we do that? We can do that only by building our life, only by building our character. Because the nation can be raised only by men of character. If we have this power of character then we can achieve anything we desire.

What is this character? The capacity to will rightly, not the capacity to will for a selfish end. It is to will for the good of all. That is character. Character is to overcome passions, to overcome desires for self-satisfaction, for gratification of the sense, it is the capacity to suffer for the good of others. The capacity to overcome all misery. These are some of the things that are together known as character. To be a man of character means all these.

Unless we are men like this, can we solve any problem? Can we really help others, can we really serve the society? We cannot. So if we want to work for the good of the nation, first of all we must build our character. If we do not build our character and at the same time go to serve society, go to help others – the poor, the illiterate, all our efforts ultimately will go in vain. Because, if men without character serve people, the want of people served may sometimes be removed a little, their hunger may go for a few days, they may be able to read newspapers and books, write some simple letters, but they will remain men without character. They will do all sorts of things not conducive to the welfare of the society. They will bring in things which will harm society.

Public money is being drained. Bribery is rampant. Everyone wants less work, no responsibility, and more money for more gratification. Mass media, literature, education – whether at home or in the institution – examples of elders, all go to pamper lower passions, inflame greed and lust, inflate selfishness in the growing youths. This is not the condition in our country only. That is the situation everywhere. But we cannot afford this ruining luxury at this juncture when we must rise as a nation, to rebuild it on a sound ground, to remove the agelong poverty and ignorance of the masses.

We do not have the capacity for right thinking. We have lost that capacity. Simply we are moving like a herd of sheep, as Swamiji repeated again and again. Unscrupulous people achieve their own selfish ends at the cost of the less privileged and people having no education and intelligence believe that they are working to help them. They often follow them and gradually lose their character, become corrupt, simply lose their efficiency to work even.

Hard work our nation has forgotten. What do others, men in other countries, do? We are not going to praise others only, but men almost everywhere else are hard working people. We must learn *to do more than paid for*. I get this much as wages as I am supposed to work for eight hours in a factory. I work for the manufacture of seven pieces of an item. If twelve pieces are produced in a day, I am satisfied. If I produce fourteen instead of twelve I will get an incentive bonus. But can you produce fifteen or sixteen and do not claim anything more than the wage that is fixed for you? I will do. Yes, I earn my livelihood through my work. But my nation is here. I can contribute for the good of my country. I work here in this factory, but the things I produce will enrich my nation. I do this work. I do this much, and, with what I earn somehow I can make both ends meet. It’s

all right. But, if I can produce fifteen pieces in a day, why should I stop after the tenth piece, just to earn my wages?

Can I not contribute something to my nation through my labour, even if for a part of it I do not earn an extra sum? Many have no job, they are also in need of money. My extra production will create some capital, which may be ploughed back to create job for them. Can I not compare my situation with theirs? This is a spiritual capacity. Everywhere this works. I talk four hours in a school and I get this much salary. If I talk four hours on the subject taught in a school as per syllabus and if I talk to the boys for an extra hour and give them some ideas working upon which they can build their character and life, I will really contribute so much to my nation. Suppose I am a doctor in a hospital. I have fixed hours when I go there. Suppose I treat a hundred persons daily for which I am getting my salary. Can I not work for one hour more and treat ten poor people? We don't do that. Swami Vivekananda said, 'So long as millions die in hunger and ignorance I call every man a traitor who having been educated at their cost does not pay the least heed to them.' That is what most of the educated people of our country today are.

Do the young people today want to be educated and traitors? Swami Vivekananda calls halt to that. The Mahamandal wants to prevent that. With a little bookish knowledge, they think they have become really learned, they have real education. Real education will expand your heart, make your body and mind strong.

Love the country, love your fellow people. Love your brothers, love your own blood in the countrymen. Think clearly, work hard, and help others. You can do that. Learn the trick of controlling your mind. Concentrate your mind upon the problem of the nation and upon the small problems of your own life. Solve them with resolution and determination and become a serious and hard-working, heart-whole man. Think for the people and raise your nation. That is what Swami Vivekananda wanted of the young people of India and that is wanted by the Vivekananda Yuva Mahamandal. The ideas and ideals of Vivekananda Yuva Mahamandal are Swami Vivekananda's ideas and ideals. We want to and should translate them into practice.