

For Juniors (Std. V to VII)

Note:

1. Time Allotted: 3 minutes.
2. Please confine to the prescribed text.
3. Evaluation by the judges:
(a) Content: 30 marks. (b) Clarity: 10 marks. (c) Impact: 10 marks.

1. NARENDRA (SWAMI VIVEKANANDA) MEETS SRI RAMAKRISHNA

When one thinks of the first meeting of Swami Vivekananda with Sri Ramakrishna, one comes to understand how eagerly the Master, established in the divine state, was waiting for his ‘marked’ devotees, as he saw the time of their arrival drawing near. Surendranath Mitra of Simla in Calcutta came to Dakshineshwar and was much attracted towards the Master at his very first visit. Drawn closer and closer to him within a short time, he took him home and celebrated a joyous festival. No good singer being available for the occasion, Surendra affectionately invited Narendra, the son of Vishwanath Datta, his neighbour, to join the festival and treat the audience, especially the Master, to devotional songs. The first meeting of the Master and Narendra, the chief playmate in his divine sport, came to pass that way. It was probably the month of November 1881.

The Master was very much attracted towards Narendra as soon as he saw him that day and collected all possible particulars about this youthful singer of sweet voice. When the singing was over, he himself came to Narendra, spoke a word or two to him and invited him to come soon to Dakshineshwar some day.

Sri Ramakrishna briefly told what thoughts came to

his mind when he saw Narendra on the latter's first visit to Dakshineswar. He said, "Naren entered this room on the first day through the western door (facing the Ganga). I noticed that he took no care of his body. The hair of his head and his dress were not at all trim. Unlike others, he had no desire at all for any external object. He was, as it were, unattached to anything. His eyes indicated that a major part of his mind was perforce drawn ever inward. When I saw all these, I wondered, 'Is it ever possible that such a great spiritual aspirant possessing a super abundance of Sattva, should live in Calcutta, the home of worldly people?'"

There was a mattress spread on the floor. I asked him to sit down near the jar of Ganga water. A few acquaintances of his also came with him that day. I felt that their nature was just like that of ordinary worldly people and was quite opposite to his. Their attention was directed to enjoyment only.

On inquiry, I came to know that he had learnt two or three Bengali songs only. I asked him to sing them. He began singing a song. He sang it with the whole of his mind and heart, as if in meditation. When I heard it, I could not control myself and was in ecstasy.

Afterwards, when he left, there was tremendous eagerness in the heart, all the twenty-four hours of the day, to see him. It cannot be expressed in words. From time to time I felt excruciating pain, as if my heart was being wrung like a wet towel. Unable to control myself, I then went running to the Tamarisk trees in the north of the garden, where people do not generally go, and wept loudly, saying, "Oh! My child, come, I cannot remain without seeing you." It was only after weeping a little thus that I could control myself. This happened continually

for six months. My mind sometimes felt uneasy for some of the other boys too who came here. But it can be said that it was nothing compared to my feelings in Naren's case."

In the course of a conversation regarding that occasion, one day Swami Vivekananda said, "I finished singing. Immediately afterwards the Master suddenly stood up, and taking me by the hand, led me to the northern verandah. It was winter. So to protect the room against the northern wind, the open spaces between the pillars of the verandah were covered by mat screens. Therefore, when one entered the verandah and closed the door of the room, one could not be seen by any person within or without the room. As soon as he entered the verandah, the Master closed the door of the room. I thought he might perhaps give me some instruction in private. But what he said and did was beyond imagination. He suddenly caught hold of my hand and shed profuse tears of joy. Addressing me affectionately like one already familiar, he said, "Is it proper that you should come so late? Should you not have once thought how I was waiting for you? Hearing continually the idle talk of wordly people, my ears are about to be scorched. Not having anyone to whom to communicate my innermost feelings, I am about to burst." And so he went on raving and weeping. The next moment he stood before me with folded palms, and showing me the regard due to a god, went on saying, "I know, my Lord, you are that ancient Rishi Nara, a part of Narayana, who has incarnated Himself this time, to remove the miseries and sufferings of humanity."

I was absolutely non-plussed and thought, 'Whom have I come to see? He is, I see, completely insane. Why should he otherwise speak in this strain to me, who am really the son of Vishwanath Datta?' However, I kept silent and the wonderful madman went on speaking whatever he liked. The next moment

he asked me to wait there and entered the room, and bringing some butter, candy and Sandesh, began to feed me with his own hand. He never gave ear to my repeated requests to give those things to me, so that I might partake of them with my companions, saying, they will take them later. You take these yourself.” Saying so, he fed me with all the sweets, and only after that could he rest content. He then caught hold of my hand and said, “Promise, you will soon come to me again and all alone.” Unable to evade that earnest request of his, I had to say, “I shall,” and then I entered the room with him and sat down beside my companions.

I went on observing him closely and could find no trace of madness in his deportment, conversation, or behaviour towards others. Impressed by his fine talk and ecstasy, I thought that he was truly a man of renunciation who had given up his all for God and practised personally what he professed. ‘God can be seen and spoken with, just as I am seeing you and speaking with you; but who wants to do so? People grieve and shed potfuls of tears at the death of their wives and sons, and behave in the same way for the sake of money or property. But who does so because he cannot realize God? If any one is in truth equally anxious to see Him and calls on Him with a longing heart, He certainly reveals Himself to him. When I heard these words of his, the impression grew on me that it was not mere poetry or imagination couched in fine figures of speech that he was expressing like other preachers of religion, but that he was speaking of an attainment of which he had an immediate knowledge of an attainment which had come to him by really renouncing everything for the sake of God and calling on Him with all his mind.’”

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2. WANDERING DAYS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Swami Vivekananda, in the course of his pilgrimage around India met with all sorts and conditions of men. He travelled throughout the length and breadth of India for several years with an open mind. His travels which ranged from the sublime, majestic, snow-capped Himalayas in the North to sea-lined Kanyakumari, the southernmost tip of India, were quite eventful.

Speaking about his wandering days, the Swami told of an event which happened at Khetri:

In the course of my wanderings, I was in a certain place where people came to me in crowds and asked for instruction. Though it seems almost unbelievable, people came and made me talk for three days and nights without giving me a moment's rest. They did not even ask me whether I had eaten. On the third night, when all the visitors had left, a low-caste poor man came up to me and said, "Swamiji, I am much pained to see that you have not had any food these three days. You must be very tired and hungry. Indeed, I have noticed that you have not even taken a glass of water." I thought that the Lord Himself had come in the form of this low-caste man to test me. I asked him, "Can you give me something to eat?" The man said, "Swamiji, my heart is yearning to give you food, but how can you eat

Chapatis baked with my hands. If you allow me, I shall be most glad to bring flour, lentil and other things, and you may cook them yourself.” At that time, according to the monastic rules, I could not touch fire; so I said to him, “You had better give me the Chapatis cooked by you. I shall gladly take them.” Hearing this, the man shrank in fear; he was a subject of the Maharaja of Khetri and was afraid that if the latter came to hear that he, a cobbler, had given Chapatis to a sannyasi, he would be severely dealt with and possibly banished from the State. I told him, however, that he need not fear, that the Maharaja would not punish him. He did not believe me, but out of the kindness of his heart, even though he feared the consequences, he brought me the cooked food. I doubted just then whether it would have been more palatable even if Indra himself, King of the Devas, had held a cup of nectar in a golden plate before me. I shed tears of love and gratitude, and thought, “Thousands of such large-hearted men live in lowly huts, and we treat them as low-castes and untouchables. When I became well-acquainted with the Maharaja, I told him of the noble act of this man. Accordingly, within a few days, the latter was called to the presence of the Prince. Frightened beyond words, the man came shaking all over, thinking that some dire punishment was to be inflicted upon him. But the Maharaja praised him and put him beyond all want.”

Once it occurred to the Swami that going from place to place and begging for food from door to door was after all not the aim for the realization of which he had renounced his home. In a letter written about this time to one of his brother-disciples, he says dejectedly. “I am going about taking food at others’ houses shamelessly and without the least compunction, like a crow.” On the occasion in question, the thought came to him,

“Let me beg no longer! What benefit is it to the poor to feed me? If they can save a handful of rice, they can feed their own children with it. Anyway, what is the use of sustaining this body if I cannot realize God?’ A desperate, spiritual dissatisfaction and ascetic mood came upon him, as sometimes happens with great souls. In that moment of despair, he determined to plunge into a forest and, like some Rishis of old, let the body drop from starvation and exhaustion. Without more ado, he entered a thick forest that stretched for miles before him, and walked the whole day without food. Evening approached. Faint with fatigue, he sank to the ground beneath a tree, fixing his mind on the Lord, and looking vacantly into the distance.

After some time he saw a tiger approaching. Nearer and nearer it came. Then it sat down at some distance from him. The Swami thought, ‘Ah! this is right; both of us are hungry. After all, this body has not been the means of the absolute realization. Therefore by it, no good to the world will possibly be done. It is well and desirable that it should be of service at least to this hungry beast. He was reclining there all the while, calm and motionless, waiting for the tiger to pounce on him at any moment; but for some reason or other the animal made off, of its own accord. The Swami thought that it might yet return, and waited; but it did not. He spent the night in the jungle, communing with his own soul. As dawn approached, a sense of great power came upon him.

On another occasion also, he became dizzy from exhaustion and could walk no further. The sun was intolerably hot. Managing to reach a tree nearby, he sat down beneath it. A sense of unutterable fatigue came over his limbs. Then, as a light shines in the darkness, the thought came to him, ‘Is it not true that within the Soul resides all power? How can it be

dominated by the senses and the body? How can I be weak?' With that there was a surge of energy through his body. His mind was flooded with light; his senses revived. He rose and journeyed on, determined that he would never again yield to weakness. Many times, he was in a similar condition during his wandering life; but he asserted his higher nature and strength flowed back to him.

Once, while in the Himalayas, he chanced to meet an old monk suffering from extreme cold. He was one of those monks who wander about like lions, scorning any protection over their heads, but he was ill and miserably cold. The Swami was passing by and saw his plight. At once he took off the only blanket that he had to cover himself with and put it over the monk. The latter looked up, and, with a smile of gratitude, uttered the words, "May Narayana bless you!"

Many were the times when the Swami faced danger, hardship and want in solitude with nothing in his possession save perhaps a photograph of Shri Ramakrishna and a copy of the Gita. He had many trying experiences because people refused to give him food and shelter. It was in that period that he lived with a family of the sweeper caste and saw the priceless worth and potentialities that could be found among those whom society rejected. It must have been contacts and experiences like these that made him realize the distressing condition of his country, and turned him into the champion of her depressed millions. Poverty and misery he saw on every side, and his heart was overwhelmed with compassion.

The wandering life was thus of great educational value to Swamiji.

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3. SERVICE TO GOD IN MAN

After his hard work in the West, Swamiji rested for a while at Darjeeling, a hill-station in the Himalayas. Then something happened that made him take up active life again.

There was a dreadful sickness in Calcutta at that time. Many people were dying of it. No one wanted to nurse the sick people, because they were frightened of catching this terrible disease. It was called the plague.

Swamiji called his brother-monks and disciples together.

“We shall go and nurse the sick people”, he said, “We shall open a hospital, and we ourselves shall nurse those who have this awful disease.”

“But Swamiji, where is the money to do such work?” someone asked.

Swamiji was like a man on fire.

“Money?” he thundered, “Do not bother yourself about money. Get on with this work of service. If I have to, I shall sell the new Math and give all that money for this work!” Swamiji continued, “Do you not remember that Sri Ramakrishna told us that we should serve God in man? This is service to God in man.

It must be done!”

But he did not have to sell the Math. Money came, and the work was done. Finally, the plague was over, and people got well again.

The Swamiji’s heart always went out in sympathy for the poor and neglected masses. During the latter part of 1901, a number of Santhal labourers were engaged in levelling the grounds around the monastery. They were poor and outside the pale of society. The Swami felt an especial joy in talking to them, and listened to the accounts of their misery with great compassion. One day, he arranged a feast for them and served them with delicacies that they had never before tasted. Then, when the meal was finished, the Swami said to them, “You are Narayanas. Today I have entertained the Lord Himself by feeding you.”

He said to a disciple: “I actually saw God in them. How guileless they are!” Afterwards, addressing the inmates of the Belur Math he said -

“See how simple-hearted these poor, illiterate people are! Will you be able to relieve their miseries to some extent at least? Otherwise of what use is our wearing the ochre robe of the sannyasin? To be able to sacrifice everything for the good of others is real monasticism. Sometimes I think within myself: “What is the good of building monasteries and so forth? Why not sell them and distribute the money among the poor, indigent Narayanas? What homes should we care for, we who have made the tree our shelter? Alas! How can we have the heart to put a morsel into our mouths, when our countrymen have not

enough to feed or clothe themselves? Mother, shall there be no redress for them? One of the purposes of my going out to preach religion to the West, as you know, was to see if I could find any means of providing for the people of my country. Seeing their poverty and distress, I think sometimes: Let us throw away all pride of learning and all spiritual disciplines for the attainment of personal liberation. Let us go from village to village, devoting ourselves to the service of the poor. Let us, through the force of our character and spirituality and our austere living, convince the rich about their duties to the masses, and get money and the means wherewith to serve the poor and the distressed... Alas! Nobody in our country thinks for the low, the poor, the miserable, those who are the backbone of the nation. whose labour produces food, those whose one day's absence from work raises a cry of general distress in the city. Where is the man in our country who sympathizes with them, who shares in their joys and sorrows? After so much tapasya, austerity, I have known that the highest truth is this He is present in all beings. These are all manifested forms of Him. There is no other God to seek for. He alone is worshipping God, who serves all beings."

Speaking on the topic of Real Worship in the Rameshwaram Temple, Swamiji said, "This is the gist of all worship to be pure and to do good to others. He who sees Shiva in the poor, in the weak, and in the diseased, really worships Shiva; and if he sees Shiva only in the image, his worship is but preliminary. He who has served and helped one poor man seeing Shiva in him, without thinking of his caste, or creed, or race, or anything, with him Shiva is more pleased than with the man who sees Him only in temples.

A rich man had a garden and two gardeners. One of these gardeners was very lazy and did not work; but when the owner came to the garden, the lazy man would get up and fold his arms and say, “How beautiful is the face of my master”, and dance before him. The other gardener would not talk much, but would work hard, and produce all sorts of fruits and vegetables which he would carry on his head to his master who lived a long way off. Of these two gardeners, which would be the more beloved of his master? Shiva is that master, and this world is His garden, and there are two sorts of gardeners here; the one who is lazy, hypocritical, and does nothing. only talking about Shiva’s beautiful eyes and nose and other features; and the other, who is taking care of Shiva’s children; all those that are poor and weak, all animals, and all His creation. Which of these would be the more beloved of Shiva? Certainly, he that serves His children. He who wants to serve the father must serve the children first. He who wants to serve Shiva must serve His children must serve all creatures in this world first. It is said in the Shastras that those who serve the servants of God are His greatest servants. So you will bear this in mind.

Let me tell you again that you must be pure and help anyone who comes to you, as much as lies in your power. And this is good Karma. By the power of this, the heart becomes pure (Chitta-shuddhi), and then Shiva who is residing in everyone will become manifest. He is always in the heart of everyone. If there is dirt and dust on a mirror, we cannot see our image. So ignorance and wickedness are the dirt and dust that are on the mirror of our hearts. Selfishness is the chief sin, thinking of ourselves first. He who thinks, ‘I will eat first, I will have more money than others, and I will possess everything, he

who thinks, ‘I will get to heaven before others, I will get Mukti before others, is the selfish man. The unselfish man says, ‘I will be last, I do not care to go to heaven, I will even go to hell if by doing so I can help my brothers. This unselfishness is the test of religion. He who has more of this unselfishness is more spiritual and nearer to Shiva. Whether he is learned or ignorant, he is nearer to Shiva than anybody else, whether he knows it or not. And if a man is selfish, even though we has visited all the temples, seen all the places of pilgrimage, and painted himself like a leopard, he is still further off from Shiva.”

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1. THE GREAT TEACHERS OF THE WORLD

The Universe, according to the theory of the Hindus, is moving in cycles of wave forms. It rises, reaches its zenith, then falls and remains in the hollow, as it were, for some time, once more to rise, and so on, in wave after wave and fall after fall. What is true of the Universe is true of every part of it. The march of human affairs is like that. The history of nations is like that: they rise and they fall; after the rise comes a fall, again out of the fall comes a rise, with greater power. This motion is always going on. In the religious world, the same movement exists. In every nation's spiritual life, there is a fall as well as a rise. The nation goes down, and everything seems to go to pieces. Then, again, it gains strength, rises; a huge wave comes, sometimes a tidal wave...and always on the topmost crest of the wave is a shining soul, the Messenger. These are the great world-thinkers. These are the Prophets of the world, the Messengers of life, the Incarnations of God.

Man has an idea that there can be only one religion, that there can be only one Prophet, and that there can be only one Incarnation; but that idea is not true. By studying the lives of all these great Messengers, we find that each, as it were, was destined to play a part, and a part only; that the harmony consists

in the sum total, and not in one note. As in the life of races - no race is born to enjoy the world alone. Each race has a part to play in this divine harmony of nations. Each race has its mission to perform, its duty to fulfil. The sum total is the great harmony.

Most of us are born believers in a personal religion. We talk of principles, we think of theories, and that is all right; but every thought and every movement, every one of our actions, shows that we can only understand the principle when it comes to us through a person. We can grasp an idea only when it comes to us through a materialised ideal person. We can understand the precept only through the example. Would to God that all of us were so developed that we would not require any example, would not require any person. But that we are not; and, naturally, the vast majority of mankind have put their souls at the feet of these extraordinary personalities, the Prophets, the Incarnations of God.

God is an Omnipresent Principle everywhere: but we are so constituted at present that we can see Him, feel Him, only in and through a human God. And when these great lights come, then man realises God.

In the history of mankind, you will find that there come these Messengers, and that from their very birth their mission is found and formed. The whole plan is there, laid down; and you see them swerving not one inch from that. Because they come with a mission, they come with a message. In these great Teachers you will always find this sign: that they have intense faith in themselves. Such intense faith is unique. The purpose and intent of what I have to say to you is that I have found it possible in my life to worship all of them, and to be ready for

all that are yet to come.

Now, as regards those of you that think that you see Truth and Divinity and God in only one Prophet in the world, and not in any other, naturally, the conclusion which I draw is that you do not see divinity in anybody; you have simply swallowed words and identified yourself with one sect, just as you would in party politics, as a matter of opinion; but that is no religion at all.

Now, in my little experience I have collected this knowledge -that for all the devilry that religion is blamed with, religion is not at all at fault: no religion ever persecuted men, no religion ever burnt witches, no religion ever did any of these things. What then incited people to do these things? Politics, but never religion; and if such politics takes the name of religion whose fault is that?

So, when each man stands and says, "My Prophet is the only true Prophet," he is not correct - he knows not the alpha of religion. Religion is neither talk, nor theory, nor intellectual consent. It is realisation in the heart of our hearts; it is touching God; it is feeling. realising that I am a spirit in relation with the Universal Spirit and all its great manifestations. Recognise all the great, spiritual men and women in every age and country, and see that they are not really at variance with one another. Wherever there has been actual religion - this touch of the Divine, the soul coming in direct sense - contact with the Divine there has always been a broadening of the mind which enables it to see the light everywhere.

These great Messengers and Prophets are great and true.

Why? Because, each one has come to preach a great idea. Take the Prophets of India, for instance. They are the oldest of the founders of religion. We take, first, Krishna. Those of you who have read the Gita, see all through the book that the one idea is **non-attachment**. Remain unattached. The heart's love is due to only One. To whom? To Him who never changeth. Who is that One? It is God. And what is the other message of Krishna? "Whosoever lives in the midst of the world, and works, and gives up all the fruit of his action unto the Lord, he is never touched by the evils of the world. Just as the lotus, born under the water, rises up and blossoms above the water, even so is the man who is engaged in the activities of the world, giving up all the fruit of his activities unto the Lord" Krishna teaches us not to shirk our duties, but to take them up manfully, and not think of the result.

Listen to Buddha's message - a tremendous message. It has a place in our heart. Says Buddha, "Root out selfishness, and everything that makes you selfish. Have neither wife, child, nor family. Be not of the world, become perfectly unselfish.

Behold another Messenger, He of Nazareth. He teaches, "Be ready, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. Do not delay a moment. Leave nothing for tomorrow. Get ready for the final event, which may overtake you immediately, even now." That message, also, has a place, and we acknowledge it. We salute the Messenger, we salute the Lord.

And then comes Mohammed, the Messenger of equality. Mohammed was the prophet of equality, of the brotherhood of man, the brotherhood of all Mussulmans. Mohammed by his life showed that amongst Mohammedans there should be

perfect equality and brotherhood. There is no question of race, caste, creed, colour, or sex.

So we see that each Prophet, each Messenger, has a particular message. When you first listen to that message, and then look at his life, you see his whole life stands explained, radiant.

Will other and greater Prophets come? Certainly they will come in this world. But do not look forward to that. I should better like that each one of you became a Prophet. Take all the old messages, supplement them with your own realisations, and become a Prophet unto others. Each one of these teachers has been great; each has left something for us; they have been our Gods. We salute them, we are their servants; and, all the same, we salute ourselves; for if they have been Prophets and children of God, we also are the same. They reached their perfection, and we are going to attain ours now. Remember the words of Jesus: "The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!" This very moment let every one of us make a staunch resolution: "I will become a Prophet, I will become a messenger of Light, I will become a child of God, nay, I will become a God!"

(Ref.: The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda - Vol. IV)

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2. ONWARD FOREVER

Ye are the children of God, the sharers of immortal bliss, holy and perfect beings. You must not say that you are weak. Stand up, be bold, be strong. All the strength and succour you want is within yourselves. So long as the millions live in hunger and ignorance, I hold every man a traitor who, having been educated at their expense, pays not the least heed to them! I call those men who strut about in their finery, having got all their money by grinding the poor, wretches, so long as they do not do anything for those two hundred millions who are now no better than hungry savages! Must the teaching, "Looking upon all beings as your own self" be confined to books alone? How will they grant salvation who cannot feed a hungry mouth with a crumb of bread? How will those who become impure at the mere breath of others, purify others? "Don't touchism" is a form of mental disease.

Arise and show your manhood...not in the spirit of a master-not with the rotten canker of egotism crawling with superstitions and the charlatanry of East and West - but in the spirit of a servant.

The first of everything should go to the poor, we have only a right to what remains. The first of all worship is the worship of

the Virat-of those all around us. Worship It. Worship is the exact equivalent of the Sanskrit word, and no other English word will do. These are all our gods-men and animals; and the first gods we have to worship are our countrymen. “This is the only god that is awake, our own race - everywhere his hands, everywhere his feet, everywhere his ears, he covers everything.” All other gods are sleeping. What vain gods shall we go after and yet cannot worship the god that we see all round us, the Virat?

Look upon every man, woman, and every one as God. After so much austerity, I have understood this as the real truth God is present in every Jiva; there is no other God besides that. “Who serves Jiva, serves God indeed.” If you cannot worship your brother man, the manifested God, how can you worship a God who is unmanifested? You may build a temple in which to worship God, and that may be good, but a better one, a much higher one, already exists, the human body.

You must give your body, mind, and speech to “the welfare of the world. You have read “Look upon your mother as God, look upon your father as God”-but I say “The poor, the illiterate, the ignorant, the afflicted let these be your God.” Know that service to these alone is the highest religion.

I know for certain that India requires the sacrifice of her highest and best. The earth’s bravest and best will have to sacrifice themselves for the good of many, for the welfare of all. Buddhas by the hundred are necessary with eternal love and pity.

Men, men these are wanted: everything else will be ready, but strong, vigorous, believing young men, sincere to the

backbone, are wanted. A hundred such and the world becomes revolutionised. We should first form their lives and then some real work can be expected.

Work among those young men who can devote heart and soul to this one duty-the duty of raising the masses of India. Awaken them, unite them, and inspire them with this spirit of renunciation; it depends wholly on the young people of India. I am born to organise these young men; nay, hundreds more in every city are ready to join me; and I want to send them rolling like irresistible waves over India, bringing comfort, morality, religion, education to the doors of the meanest and the most downtrodden. And this I will do or die. Awake, awake, great ones! The world is burning with misery. Can you sleep? Let us call and call till the sleeping gods awake, till the god within answers to the call. What more is in life?

We are poor, my brothers, we are nobodies, but such have been always the instruments of the Most High. The poor did all the great and gigantic work of the world. Trust not the so-called rich, they are more dead than alive. The hope lies in you-in the meek, the lowly, but the faithful.

Onward for ever! Sympathy for the poor, the downtrodden, even unto death-this is our motto. Onward, brave lads! Have faith in the Lord; no policy, it is nothing. Feel for the miserable and look up for help-it shall come.... I bequeath to you, young men, this sympathy. this struggle for the poor, the ignorant, the oppressed.... Vow, then, to devote your whole lives to the cause of the redemption of these three hundred millions, going down and down every day. If you are really my children, you will fear nothing, stop at nothing. You will be like lions. We must rouse

India and the whole world.

Go from village to village, do good to humanity and to the world at large. Go to hell yourself to buy salvation for others. My boy, when death is inevitable, is it not better to die like heroes than as stocks and stones?...It is better to wear out than to rust out-specially for the sake of doing the least good to others.

Put yourself to work, and you will find such tremendous power coming to you that you will feel it hard to bear. Even the least work done for others awakens the power within; even thinking the least good of others gradually instills into the heart the strength of a lion. I love you all ever so much, but I wish you all to die working for others-I should rather be glad to see you do that.

He works best who works without any motive, neither for money. nor for fame, nor anything else; and when a man can do that, he will be a Buddha, and out of him will come the power to work in such a manner as will transform the world.

Love shall win the victory. Do you love your fellow-men? Where should you go to seek for God-are not all the poor, the miserable, the weak, Gods? Why not worship them first? Why go to dig a well on the shores of the Ganga? Believe in the omnipotent power of love.

Blessed are we that we are given the privilege of working for Him, not of helping Him. Cut out this word "help" from your mind. You cannot help; it is blasphemy. Do it only as a worship. I should see God in the poor, and it is for my salvation that I go and worship them. The poor and the miserable are for our salvation, so that we may serve the Lord, coming in the

shape of the diseased, coming in the shape of the lunatic, the leper, and the sinner!

Forget yourselves; this is the first lesson to be learnt, whether you are a theist or an atheist.

When you would be able to sacrifice all desire for happiness for the sake of society, then you would be the Buddha, then you would be free.

Let us pray, "Lead, Kindly Light a beam will come through the dark, and a hand will be stretched forth to lead us.... Let each one of us pray day and night for the downtrodden millions in India who are held fast by poverty, priestcraft and tyranny-pray day and night for them. I care more to preach religion to them than to the high and the rich. I am no metaphysician, no philosopher, nay, no saint. But I am poor, I love the poor.... Who feels there for the two hundred millions of men and women sunken for ever in poverty and ignorance ?... Who feels for them?...Let these people be your God-think of them, work for them, pray for them incessantly-the Lord will show you the way. Him I call a Mahatman (great soul) whose heart bleeds for the poor.

Three things are necessary for great achievements. First, feel from the heart.... Do you feel? Do you feel that millions and millions of the descendants of gods and of sages have become next-door neighbours to brutes? Do you feel that millions are starving today, and millions have been starving for ages ?... Does it make you restless? Does it make you sleepless? Has it gone into your blood, coursing through your veins, becoming consonant with your heartbeats? Has it made you almost mad?

Are you seized with that one idea of misery of ruin, and have you forgotten all about your name, your fame, your wives, your children, your property, even your own bodies ? Have you done that? That is the first step to become a patriot, the very first step. Have you found any way out, any practical solution, some help instead of condemnation, some sweet words to soothe their miseries, to bring them out of this living death? Yet that is not all. Have you got the will to surmount mountain-high obstructions? If the whole world stands against you sword in hand, would you still dare to do what you think is right ?.... Would you still pursue it and go on steadily towards your own goal ?.... Have you got that steadfastness? If you have these three things, each one of you will work miracles.

Work, work the idea, the plan, my boys, my brave, noble, good souls to the wheel, to the wheel put your shoulders! Stop not to look back for name, or fame, or any such nonsense. Throw yourself overboard and work.

Forward! We want infinite energy, infinite zeal, infinite courage, and infinite patience, then only will great things be achieved.

My child, what I want is muscles of iron and nerves of steel, Inside which dwells a mind of the same material as that of which the thunderbolt is made. Strength, manhood, Kshatra-Virya plus Brahma-Teja.

Cultivate the virtue of obedience, but you must not sacrifice your own faith. No centralisation is possible unless there is obedience to superiors. No great work can be done without this centralisation of individual forces.

Beware of everything that is untrue; stick to truth and we shall succeed, maybe slowly, but surely.... Work as if on each of you depended the whole work.

Be moral. Be brave. Be a heart-whole man. Strictly moral, brave unto desperation. Don't bother your head with religious theories. Cowards only sin, brave men never, no, not even in mind.

Take care of these two things-love of power and jealousy. Cultivate always "faith in yourself."

Make men first. Men we want, and how can men be made unless Shraddha is there?

Arise, awake; wake up yourselves, and awaken others. Achieve the consummation of human life before you pass off-
"Arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached."

For Seniors (Std. VIII to X)

Note:

1. Time Allotted: 3 minutes.
2. Please confine to the prescribed text.
3. Evaluation by the judges:
(a) Content: 30 marks. (b) Clarity: 10 marks. (c) Impact: 10 marks.

3. WORK AND ITS SECRET

One of the greatest lessons I have learnt in my life is to pay as much attention to the means of work as to its end. He was a great man from whom I learnt it, and his own life was a practical demonstration of this great principle. I have always been learning great lessons from that one principle, and it appears to me that all the secret of success is there; to pay as much attention to the means as to the end.

Our great defect in life is that we are so much drawn to the ideal, the goal is so much more enchanting, so much more alluring, so much bigger on our mental horizon, that we lose sight of the details altogether.

But whenever failure comes, if we analyse it critically, in ninety-nine percent of cases we shall find that it was because we did not pay attention to the means. Proper attention to the finishing, strengthening of the means is what we need. With the means all right, the end must come. We forget that it is the cause that produces the effect; the effect cannot come by itself; and unless the causes are exact, proper, and powerful, the effect will not be produced. Once the ideal is chosen and the means determined, we may almost let go the ideal, because we are sure

it will be there, when the means are perfected. When the cause is there, there is no more difficulty about the effect, the effect is bound to come. If we take care of the cause, the effect will take care of itself. The realization of the ideal is the effect. The means are the cause: attention to the means, therefore, is the great secret of life.

If we examine our own lives, we find that the greatest cause of sorrow is this: we take up something, and put our whole energy in it-perhaps it is a failure, and yet we cannot give it up. We know that it is hurting us, that any further clinging to it is simply bringing misery to us; still, we cannot tear ourselves away from it.

That is the one cause of misery we are attached, we are being caught. Therefore says the Gita: Work constantly; work, but be not attached, be not caught. Reserve onto yourself the power of detaching yourself from everything, however beloved, however much the soul might yearn for it, however great the pangs of misery you feel if you were going to leave it; still, reserve the power of leaving it whenever you want. The weak have no place here, in this life or in any other life. Weakness leads to slavery. Weakness leads to all kinds of misery, physical and mental. Weakness is death. There are hundreds of thousands of microbes surrounding us, but they cannot harm us unless we become weak, until the body is ready and pre-disposed to receive them. There may be a million microbes of misery, floating about us. Never mind! They dare not approach us. they have no power to get a hold on us, until the mind is weakened. This is the great fact: **strength is life, weakness is death.** Strength is felicity, life eternal, immortal; weakness is constant strain and misery :

weakness is death.

Whatever we do, we want a return. We are all traders. We are traders in life, we are traders in virtue, we are traders in religion. And alas! we are also traders in love.

If you come to trade, it is a question of give-and-take. If it is a question of buy-and-sell, abide by the laws of buying and selling. There is a bad time and there is a good time; there is rise and a fall in prices: always you expect the blow to come. It is like looking at the mirror. Your face is reflected: you make a grimace - there is one in the mirror; if you laugh, the mirror laughs. This is buying and selling, giving and taking.

We get caught. How? Not by what we give, but by what we expect. We get misery in return for our love; not from the fact that we love, but from the fact that we want love in return. There is no misery where there is no want. Desire, want, is the father of all misery. Desires are bound by the laws of success and failure. Desire must bring misery.

The great secret of true success, of true happiness, is this: the man who asks for no return, the perfectly unselfish man, is the most successful.

Ask nothing; want nothing in return. Give what you have to give; it will come back to you but do not think of that now, it will come back multiplied a thousandfold - but attention must not be on that. Yet, have the power to give, Give and there it ends. Learn that the whole of life is giving, that nature will force you to give. So, give willingly. Sooner or later you will have to give up. You come into life to accumulate. With clenched hands

you want to take. But nature puts a hand on your throat and makes you open your fist. Whether you will it or not, you have to give. The moment you say, "I will not", the blow comes; you are hurt. None is there who will not be compelled, in the long run, to give up everything. And the more one struggles against this law, the more miserable one feels. It is because we dare not to give, because we are not resigned enough to accede to this grand demand of nature, that we are miserable. The sun is taking up water from the ocean, to return it in showers. You are a machine for taking and giving: You take, in order to give. Ask, therefore, nothing in return; but the more you give, the more will come to you. The quicker you can empty the air out of this room, the quicker it will be filled up by the external air; and if you close all the doors and every aperture, that which is within will remain, but that which is outside will never come in, and that which is within will stagnate, degenerate, and become poisoned. A river is continually emptying itself into the ocean and is continually filling up again. Bar not the exit into the ocean. The moment you do that, death seizes you.

We must learn that nothing can happen to us, unless we make ourselves susceptible to it. I have just said, no disease can come to me until the body is ready; it does not depend on the germs alone. but upon a certain predisposition which is already in the body. We get only that for which we are fitted. Let us give up our pride and understand this, that never is misery undeserved. There never has been a blow undeserved: there never has been an evil for which I did not pave the way with my own hands. We ought to know that. Analyse yourselves and you will find that every blow you have received, came to you because you

prepared yourselves for it. You did half, and the external world did the other half: that is how the blow came. That will sober us down. At the same time, from this very analysis will come a note of hope, and the note of hope is: "I have no control of the external world, but that which is in me and nearer unto me, my own world, is in my control. If the two together are required to make failure, if the two together are necessary to give me a blow, I will not contribute the one which is in my keeping, and how then can the blow come? If I get real control of myself, the blow will never come."

We are all the time, from our childhood, trying to lay the blame upon something outside ourselves. We are always standing up to set right other people, and not ourselves. If we are miserable, we say, "Oh, the world is a devil's world." We curse others and say, "What infatuated fools!" But why should we be in such a world, if we really are so good? If this is a devil's world, we must be devils also; why else should we be here? "Oh, the people of the world are so selfish!" True enough; but why should we be found in that company, if we be better? Just think of that.

We only get what we deserve. It is a lie when we say, the world is bad and we are good. It can never be so. It is a terrible lie we tell ourselves.

This is the first lesson to learn be determined not to curse anything outside, not to lay the blame upon anyone outside, but be a man, stand up, lay the blame on yourself. You will find that is always true. Get hold of yourself.

We are to take care of ourselves that much we can do - and

give up attending to others for a time. Let us perfect the means; the end will take care of itself. For the world can be good and pure, only if our lives are good and pure. It is an effect, and we are the means. Therefore, let us purify ourselves. Let us make ourselves perfect.

(Ref.: The complete Works of Swami Vivekananda - Vol. II)