

**ADDRESS BY THIRU BANWARILAL PUROHIT, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF
TAMIL NADU AT UNVEILING THE STATUE OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AT
RAJ BHAVAN, CHENNAI ON 13.09.2019 AT 6.00 P.M**

Anaivarukkum Maalai Vanakkam

Thiru. Edappadi. K. Palaniswami,
Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu

Thiru. O.Panneerselvam,
Deputy Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu

Thiru. P. Dhanapal,
Speaker, Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly

Dr. Girija Vaidyanathan, I.A.S.,
Chief Secretary to Government

Thiru. R. Rajagopal, I.A.S.,
Additional Chief Secretary to Governor

Swami Goutamananda,
Vice President, Ramakrishna Math and Mission

Thiru.N.Ravi
President, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Chennai Kendra

Padmashri Thiru. Nalli Kuppuswami Chetty
Vice President, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Chennai Kendra

Distinguished Invitees

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a proud moment for me to be in your midst at this function in Raj Bhavan for unveiling the statue of Swami Vivekananda to commemorate the 125th anniversary of Swamiji's address at the Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in 1893.

Swami Vivekananda was a symphony of many melodies. He was a scholar, a poet and an orator; a mystic, a devotee, a worker, a yogi; a nation-maker and a world-builder; a worthy disciple and a compassionate master; a divine dreamer and a man of action-he was all these and many more.

He was a great champion of nationalism, whose patriotic speeches awakened the national consciousness, at a time when the road ahead

was dark and the quest for freedom was in a dormant state.

Swamiji had great faith in the people of the Indian nation. He said and I quote “If there is any land on this earth that can lay claim to be the blessed Punya Bhumi, to be the land to which all souls on this earth must come to account for Karma it is India. Here is the life-giving water with which must be quenched the burning fire of materialism which is burning the core of the hearts of millions in other lands.

It was Swamiji's hope that India shall combine her best spiritual tradition with the latest advancements in Science and Technology and Administration and good organizing capability, and

Management practices of the West. In Swamiji's integral vision of truth there was no cleavage between Science and Religion, the East and the West, secular and spiritual, work and worship.

Swamiji emphasized that we should have the spirit of self-reliance, the immovable fortitude, that dexterity in action, the bond of unity of purpose, and the thirst for self improvement.

That the greatness of Swamiji was recognised even more than a hundred years back by stalwarts such as Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi is evidence of his lasting glory. Tagore said of Swamiji and I quote “If you want to know India, study Vivekananda. In him everything is positive and nothing negative.”

Mahatma Gandhi explains in his writings about how he was inspired by Swamiji in the following words “I have gone through his words very thoroughly, and after having gone through them, the love that I had for my country became a thousand” – fold....

When Swamiji spoke at the Parliament of Religions at Chicago, the audience listened with rapt attention. At that historic address he stated and I quote,

“Much has been said of the common ground of religious unity. I am not going just now to venture my own theory. But if anyone here hopes that this unity will come by the triumph of any one of the

religions and the destruction of the other, to them I say, "Friends, yours is an impossible hope."

The seed is put in the ground, and earth and air and water are placed around it. Does the seed become the earth, or the air, or the water? No. It becomes a plant, it develops after the law of its own growth, assimilates the air, the earth, and the water, converts them into plant substance, and grows into a plant. Similar is the case with religion.

If the Parliament of Religions has shown anything to the world it is this: It has proved to the world that holiness, purity and charity are not the exclusive possessions of any religion in the world, and that every system has produced men and women of the most exalted character. In the face

of this evidence, if some people still dream of the exclusive survival of their own religion and the destruction of the others, I pity them from the bottom of my heart, and point out to them that upon the banner of every religion will soon be written, in spite of resistance: “Help and not Fight”, “Assimilation and not Destruction”.”

After the historic Chicago Address (1893) and his subsequent tour of the USA and Europe, Swami Vivekananda travelled via Colombo and using a ferry along the Ram Sethu set foot on Indian soil at Rameswaram on 25th January 1897. He was accorded a rapturous welcome by the Rajah of Ramnad who showed his devotion by walking in front of the chariot in which Swamiji was

seated. Thereafter Swamiji came to Madras and stayed at the building which is now known as Vivekananda Illam.

The period of the 9 nights of stay of Swami Vivekananda from 6th February at Madras are being celebrated as Vivekananda Navaratri. It is a matter of great satisfaction that the statue of Swamiji is being unveiled during the period of the Navaratri.

The vision of Swami Vivekananda went beyond religion. He was a patriotic saint who engaged himself with the problems of day to day life like poverty, slavery and education.

He lectured on a variety of topics such as the importance of education and the need for

emancipation of women. He feelingly spoke of Daridra Narayana when he said that service to the poor is equal to service to God.

Thus Swami Vivekananda ushered in a process of national rejuvenation with a strong call to humanity “Unfurl the banner of love – Arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached”.

When he spoke of India in the comity of nations he said, India's gift to the world is the light spiritual. We read in history that whenever there arose a great conquering nation uniting the different races of the world, binding India with the other races, taking her out, as it were, from her loneliness and from her aloofness from the rest of the world into which she again and again cast

herself, that whenever such a state has been brought about, the result has been the flooding of the world with Indian spiritual ideas.

It is impossible that all differences can cease; it must exist; without variation life must cease. It is this differentiation of thought that makes for light, for motion, for everything. Differentiation, infinitely contradictory, must remain, but it is not necessary that we should hate each other therefore; it is not necessary therefore that we should fight each other.

I wish to conclude by emphasizing the fact that a society can ascend to greatness only if its citizens follow the path set by great personalities.

Great thoughts originate in great minds. And great minds propel great actions. Not everyone can be blessed with self propelled greatness of thought and action. Let us try to make our nation great by following the path of Swami Vivekananda.

I wish to record my appreciation of the Rama Krishna Mutt who have provided the statue of Swami Vivekananda to be installed at Raj Bhavan. I am sure that the banner of Swamiji will continue to fly with grandeur and majesty all over India. My best wishes to all those assembled here on this happy occasion.

Nandri Vanakkam....

Jai Hind....