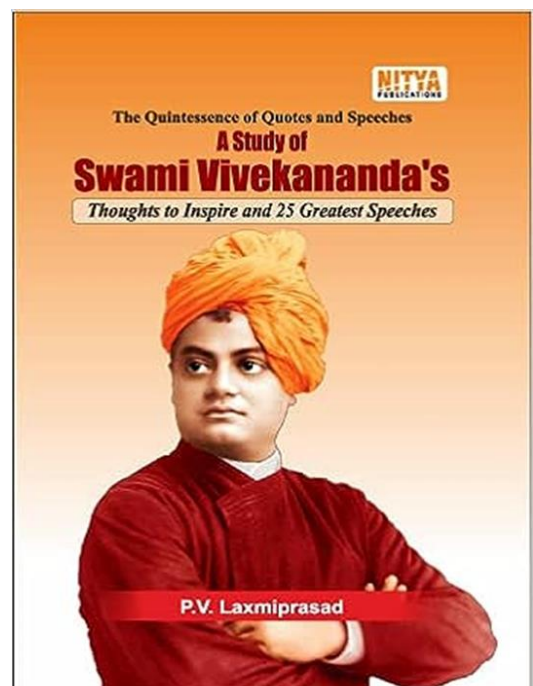


***The Quintessence of Quotes and Speeches: A Study of Swami Vivekananda's Thoughts to Inspire and 25 Greatest Speeches* by P.V.Laxmiprasad, Nitya Publications, Bhopal. India, ISBN : 978-93-91257-66-8, 2021, Price. 499.00, Pp. 153.**

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The Quintessence of Quotes and Speeches: A Study of Swami Vivekananda's Thoughts to Inspire and 25 Greatest Speeches, an analytical work by Dr. P. V. Laxmiprasad is a wonderful piece of scholarly work in the genre of spiritual and moral writings. In the very introduction of the book the critic has very aptly presented how Vivekananda has influenced eminent statesmen like Gandhiji, Tilak, Subash Chandra Bose, Rajagopalachari, Vinoba Bhave and stalwart writer like Rabindranath Tagore was influenced by the Parivrajaka. Even prominent figure of the 21st century like Barak Obama, former President of the US has most often quoted the nineteenth-century Indian



Hindu monk. His prime concern was to spread the message of —"divine unity of existence and unity in diversity". It was a remarkable statement by Rabindranath Tagore on the importance of the study of Vivekananda's works "If you want to know India, study Vivekananda. In him everything is positive and nothing negative." Mahatma Gandhiji's statement on Swamiji makes his stature very high. He says "I have gone through his works very thoroughly, and after having gone through them, the love that I had for my country became a thousand fold."

Vivekananda was not merely a spiritual leader. He had felt that the base of development of a nation in the modern perspective is scientific development. That is why when he once met Tata, he insisted on establishment of world class scientific institution which inspired Tata for establishment of 'Indian Institute of Science'. PV Laxmiprasad has made an extensive as well as intensive work on Vivekananda's speeches which form 'an entirely different genre'. The

author has taken two of Vivekananda's books *Thoughts to Inspire* and *25 Greatest Speeches of Swami Vivekananda*, the former a collection of 103 quotes and the later a collection of inspiring speeches which have immensely influenced the entire world. The work by Laxmiprasad reveals his love for India and Indian religious practice supported by Vedas, Purana and Upanishads.

Laxmiprasad has simplified the thought-provoking-immortal-philosophical-quotes of Vivekananda, so that a layman even can understand the meaning lying therein. This immortal book, explaining the quotes is so lucidly explained that even a small kid can understand the philosophy within. It gives a new dimension to the philosophically loaded quotes.

Selection of 25 Best Speeches by Vivekananda has been very apt in the contemporary society. Vivekananda's concept of religion is quite different from that of the present people. Religion for him was just like life being; breathe of human beings. Religion is not something that human being has created. Rather it has its existence since the inception of the universe. Vivekananda's example of existence of religion in human civilization as the gravitation of earth is inspiring. "Just as the law of gravitation existed before its discovery, and would exist if all humanity forgot it so is with the law that governs the spiritual world. The moral, ethical and spiritual relation between soul and soul and between individual spirits and Father of all spirits, were there before their discovery, and would remain even we forget them." (P. 55)

Vivekananda's speeches give us the idea that his concern was not confined to moral and spiritual world only. It also spreads to science. He says "As soon as science would reach perfect unity, it would stop from further progress, because it would reach the goal. Thus Chemistry couldn't progress farther when it would discover one element out of which all other could be made." (P. 58)

Vivekananda's opinion on different religions is worth mentioning. Speaking at Twentieth Century Club, Boston, USA on 'The Spirit and Influence of Vedanta' Vivekananda says "As so many rivers, having their sources in different mountains roll down, crooked or straight, and at last come into the ocean-so, all these various creed and religions, taking their start from different standpoints, and running through crooked and straight sources, at last come onto THEE."

In the speech at San Francisco, USA on 23 March 1900 Vivekananda throws light on the gist of mundane life, where we can find reflections to Buddhism. He concentrates on the simple law of life that life is a series of infinite desires. The more one wishes to fulfill one, the closer he is drawn to difficulties.

Vivekananda's concept is universal in nature. To him there is no discrimination between the Gods of different religions. "You may call it God, Allah or Jehovah.....Gods of a religion do not match with the names of other Gods in other religions. Forms are different but message is one and the same." (P. 66)

In his speech delivered in San Francisco on 05 April 1890 on 'Practical Religion: Breathing and Meditation' Vivekananda say "He who eats too much can't be a yogi. He who fasts too much can't be a yogi. He who sleeps can't be a yogi, nor he who keeps awake too much." (p. 74)

In the speech delivered on "The Ideal of Universal Religion" delivered at Hardman Hall on January 12, 1896 Vivekananda highlighted the misconception of God in all religions and he compares the conceptions to fetching water with different vessels. Water takes the shape of the vessel in which it is carried. So is God. At the same time he condemns the concept of religious brotherhood which ceases its applicability to people of other religions. His concept of religion was not confined to any particular religion. On the other hand his discussion includes all leading religions of the world. His world was not confined to religious and spiritual thoughts only. Rather his interest was more social in nature. His speeches on "Women of India", "The Power of the Mind", "The Great Teachers of the World" are the landmarks of his social consciousness.

Thus to conclude, his spiritual world served as a bridge between Western and Eastern countries. He was as concern to the world for spiritual enlightenment as he was for social harmony. This was possible with his authoritative knowledge on Vedas and Vedantas, Ramayana and Bhagvad Gita as well as Quran and Bible too. Laxmiprasad's contribution on Swami Vivekananda will be a milestone in Indian Writings in English.