

Letter of Swami Vivekananda to his disciples in the U.S. dated 18th Nov 1896

Letters of Swami Vivekananda

I am very glad to hear that you are all well and happy. I am sure you will be able to study the scriptures with more interest and devotion than ever before. I intend to return to the U.S. and to Europe in about a year.

With all love & blessings

Vivekananda



Advaita Ashrama

(103)

To Swami Shivananda

U. S. A.,*

1894.

DEAR SHIVANANDA—Your letter just reached me.
1 Vivekachudamani.

Perhaps by this time you have received my other letters and learnt that it is not necessary to send anything to America any more. Too much of everything is bad., This newspaper booming has given me popularity no doubt, but its effect is more in India than here. Here on the other hand constant booming creates a distaste in the minds of the higher class people; so enough. Now try to organise yourselves in India on the lines of these meetings. You need not send anything more to this country. As to money, **I have determined first to build some place for Mother,¹ for women require it first. . . . I can send nearly Rs. 7,000 for a place for Mother. If the place is first secured, then I do not care for anything else.** I hope to be able to get Rs. 1,600 a year from this country even when I am gone. **That sum I will make over to the support of the women's place and then it will grow.** I have written to you already to secure a place. . . .

I would have, before this, returned to India, but India has no money. Thousands honour Ramakrishna Paramahansa but nobody will give a cent—that is India. . . . In the meanwhile live in harmony at any price. The world cares little for principles. They care for persons. They will hear with patience the words of a man they like, however nonsensical, and will not listen to anyone they do not like. Think of this and modify your conduct accordingly. Everything will come all right. Be the servant if you will lead. That is the real secret. Your love will tell even if your words be harsh. Instinctively men feel the love clothed in whatever language.

My dear brother, that Ramakrishna Paramahansa was God incarnate, I have not the least doubt, but then you must let people find out for themselves what he used to teach—you cannot thrust these things upon them—this is my only objection.

¹ The Holy Mother.

Let people speak out their own opinions. Why should we object? Without studying Ramakrishna Paramahansa first, one can never understand the real import of the Vedas, the Vedanta, of the Bhâgavata and the other Purânas. His life is a searchlight of infinite power thrown upon the whole mass of Indian religious thought. He was the living commentary to the Vedas and to their aim. He lived in one life the whole cycle of the national religious existence in India.¹

Whether Bhagavân Sri Krishna was born at all we are not sure; and Avatars like Buddha and Chaitanya are monotonous; Ramakrishna Paramahansa is the latest and the most perfect—the concentrated embodiment of knowledge, love, renunciation, catholicity and the desire to serve mankind. So where is anyone to compare with him? He must have been born in vain who cannot appreciate him! My supreme good fortune is that I am his servant through life after life. A single word of his is to me far weightier than the Vedas and the Vedanta. तस्य दासदासदासोऽहम् —Oh, I am the servant of the servants of his servants. But narrow bigotry militates against his principles, and this makes me cross. Rather let his name be drowned in oblivion, and his teachings bear fruit instead! Why, was he a slave to fame? Certain fishermen and illiterate people called Jesus Christ a God, but the literate people killed him. Buddha was honoured in his lifetime by a number of merchants and cowherds. But Ramakrishna has been worshipped in his lifetime—towards the end of this nineteenth century—by the demons and giants of the university as God incarnate. . . . Only a few things have been jotted down in the books about them (Krishna, Buddha, Christ, etc.). “One must be a wonderful house-keeper with whom we have never yet lived,” so the Bengali proverb goes. But here is a

¹ The first two paras as well as the last half of this para are in the original.

man in whose company we have been day and night and yet consider him to be a far greater personality than any of them. Can you understand this phenomenon?

You have not yet understood the wonderful significance of Mother's life—none of you. But gradually you will know. Without Shakti (Power) there is no regeneration for the world. Why is it that our country is the weakest and the most backward of all countries? Because Shakti is held in dishonour there. Mother has been born to revive that wonderful Shakti in India; and making her the nucleus, **once more will Gargis and Maitreyis be born into the world.** Dear brother, you understand little now. But by degrees you will come to know it all. **Hence it is her Math that I want first.** . . . Without the grace of Shakti nothing is to be accomplished. What do I find in America and Europe?—the worship of Shakti, the worship of Power. Yet they worship Her ignorantly through sense gratification. Imagine, then, what a lot of good they will achieve who will worship Her with all purity, in a Sâttvika spirit, looking upon Her as their mother! I am coming to understand things clearer every day, my insight is opening out more and more. **Hence we must first build a Math for Mother. First Mother and her daughters,** then Father and his sons—can you understand this? . . . To me, Mother's grace is a hundred thousand times more valuable than Father's. Mother's grace, Mother's blessings are all paramount to me. . . . Please pardon me, I am a little bigoted here, as regards Mother. If but Mother orders, her demons can work anything. Brother, before proceeding to America I wrote to Mother to bless me. Her blessings came, and at one bound I cleared the ocean. There, you see. **In this terrible winter I am lecturing from place to place and fighting against odds, so that funds may be collected for Mother's Math.** . . . Niranjana has a militant disposition, but he has great devotion to Mother, and all his vagaries

I can easily put up with. He is now doing the most marvellous work. I am keeping myself well-posted. And you too have done excellently in co-operating with the Madrasis. Dear brother, I expect much from you, you should organise all for conjoint work. **As soon as you have secured the land for Mother, I go to India straight. It must be a big plot; let there be a mud-house to begin with; in due course I shall erect a decent building, don't be afraid.**

The chief cause of malaria lies in water. Why do you not construct two or three filters? If you first boil the water and then filter it, it will be harmless. . . . Please buy two big Pasteur's bacteria-proof filters. Let the cooking be done in that water and use it for drinking purposes also, and you will never hear of malaria any more. . . . On and on; work, work, work; this is only the beginning. —Yours ever, VIVEKANANDA.