

Quotations

(Social, Economic, Political, Literature, Sociology and General)

“INDIA MUST BREAK WITH MUCH OF HER PAST AND SHOULD NOT ALLOW IT TO DOMINATE THE PRESENT”

(NEHRU)

The past is something unique and every nation is proud of it. It gives a guidance for the future. It is the foundation upon which the structure of the society is built and it is ignored it will collapse. The independent nations which were slave, once again become independent because of the inspiration which the past gave. The frustrations, disappointments, jerks and jolts which one might have experienced in the past provide him with better and secure ground to stand upon. That is why history is known as a book of lessons for a statesman. No doubt it is said that the lure of the past has always been a stumbling block in the progress and as such this cannot be ignored.

If the past of India is viewed from this point of view there is much which is of greater use to us in the present. As a matter of fact, India has rich heritage; our culture is one of the three greatest out of which two, namely Greek and Egyptian have vanished. The cause of its stay doubtlessly lies in its superiority over them. India has contributed to Philosophy, Science, Art, Literature and Culture of the World. The discoveries and inventions of science which are regarded as extraordinary were known to us earlier; sophisticated weapons of today were used in the battle of Mahabharata. Politically, economically and socially India was on the top in the world. Democracy existed long ago in India. In society the status enjoyed by a woman was very high.

No doubt the dust and dirt of the ages has bedimmed the glory of the halo which has dazzled the eyes of the foreigners. The foreign invasions deposited a large number of the layers of dust. The English tried to replace our culture with their own. They distorted our history so as to make us ignorant of our real past. The customs and traditions, which were once used as correctives, with the lapse of time, corrupted the Indian society. But it does not mean that we should neglect our past. Certain concepts of the past are still vague but have vital importance in the society. We cannot afford to remove the impressions of the past from our minds simply because it has been absorbed by thought-currents. If a deeper

study of our past is made objectively it will be clear that it is not a hindrance in the future progress.

Indian religion of the past was Nature-worship. And the traditions and rituals concerning it were all scientifically made. Yogic exercises, observing fasts once in a week, calm sitting for half an hour a day, are scientifically good for health. They adopted hygienic rules in line with religious rituals; washing hand with sand, worshipping the rising sun are useful in many ways. So is the case with the customs and conventions which were practiced. The caste system was of rare type based on professional categorisation. Thus maximum co-ordination was brought in society. It degenerated and resulted in rigidity; though it has solved the problem of unemployment.

In art and literature India's past has special importance. It produced the rare type of art. We cannot afford to ignore the Ajanta Cave, the temple of Somnath and the forts of Rajasthan. Those are pieces of rare art. The Sanskrit literature is the richest in the world. We cannot bury the Vedas. The philosophy of the Upanishad which inspired even the West cannot be condemned. The works of Chanakya constitute master pieces in their own spheres. The poetry of Kalidas is of the highest quality. These are the foundations of our culture and if we break with it we shall be victims of foolishness. The past gives a vivid picture of our artistry, it increases our knowledge, it teaches us the morals which we should practice for preserving our culture. The moral force, the lesson which we take from our past, has relevance still.

The faith in God is also one of the principal teachings of religions. Faith in God inculcates confidence, hopefulness and optimism. Today, it is because of the lack of the belief in God that life has lost its meaning, significance and purpose.

The political theories of the ancient Indian scholars were great and political set-up was democratic. Our history tells that we dethroned the kings who did not work properly. The King had to consult the ministers as a President today is bound to consult P.M. The Panchayat system is deep rooted in our social setup; its re-introduction in the recent times is guided by the past. If such glories belong to the past, can we afford to neglect it totally?

Science has given us new weapons but in ancient India we had the automatic weapons, the sound control and in weapons which after attacking the enemy would come back. Thus we cannot say that past takes us to primitive times while in the past there was so much of scientific progress. It is certain that the doctrines of the past had healthy influence on us and, we should not kick them off. The moral and social customs of the past have relevance today.

If we depend entirely on the past it is also a folly. If we dream of the past and do nothing for future we will live in fool's paradise. The past should assist us in future. It should not dominate the future. The future should not be measured with the past but the past should provide something for the future. The past should not be the master but the servant. It should not dictate rather it should suggest. The past has passed and, in this sense, it should not be allowed to interfere with the existing affairs. The things of the past may not suit today. What was immoral in the past may be moral today. With the scientific inventions civilisation jumped from abstract to concrete. It is the age of mind not of heart and for this we will have to develop the scientific attitude. The dome of superstition of the past has to be shattered and we shall have to make our own way for future, the old paths of the past are dusty and of no use. That is why Mr. Nehru said, "We must break with much of our past and should not allow it to dominate the present."

If we think rationally, we shall come to the conclusion that because of the past we suffered again and again. Religion has always been an obstacle in our way. It divided the society into castes and as a result of it hatred among the castes developed. The links were broken and the state of affairs became worse. Untouchability came in the way of social progress. Too much belief in God made Indians idle; they resigned to the will of God.

Religions perhaps did the greatest harm. The fragmentation of the society was because of religion. It taught fanaticism. Religious battles were fought. Who does not know what happened in 1947-that was all due to religions. It is the far reaching influence of religion that threatened the national integrity of India. If we want to develop and be at the zenith of glory as we were in the past we will have to relegate religion to the background. We should not allow the religions to play vital role in the society. Religion should be an individual's concern, a private affair, having nothing to do with the national problems.

With religion are associated rituals and ceremonies which should be abandoned. Religion should not be regarded above law and man. Man is not to be judged by any religious principle but by the qualities he possesses. Religion should not be allowed to dominate. If the impact of religion is removed; many of the difficulties will be solved and future development will be easier.

In the social field, though untouchability has been legally abolished yet it persists in one or the other form. This horrible practice is still going on and its cause dates back to caste system. We think of the Past and follow the ancestors. If they committed mistake, it does not mean that we too should commit. We should realize their importance and due respect should be paid to them. The practice of dowry is a legacy of the past and still exists; under the circumstances a father or

a daughter cannot live happily. Society should be dynamic even if we remain static.

So is the case with the prevailing superstitions. While going on an important job if a cat crosses our way we cancel our programme. This is one example, but the fact is that every activity of ours is guided by superstition and all of the superstitions are meaningless. You are expected not to go out of station on particular days in particular direction. After all what is the cause of this. These are the stones on the path of development acting as obstacles. We must remove them. Indian brain is confined and for its freedom which is beneficial, the ideology of the past may not help.

With the change of times, the concepts have changed. India has never been as it is today. The moral scruples of the past should not be applied today. Attitude must be changed. To insist upon the old dogmas is to check progress. In the scientific age we cannot make God responsible for our action. You can not live at the mercy of God. If you want to live you will have to work. The scientific discoveries have shown that what was mysterious in the past, is known to the human beings. When world is going to probe Mars and we think moon to be a god you can well imagine, how deplorable is our condition. Sustained efforts are to be made to develop scientific attitude. For all that man made, God cannot be held responsible. So the doctrines of the past if allowed to dominate today shall take us in the backward direction.

From the perusal of both the aspects we come to the conclusion that we must break with much of the past but the rest should be retained. We may deny a place to the past on the ground that it will distort our present. The activities of the past are regarded as taboos. It is totally mistaken notion that we stand on the shoulders of the past but it is also wrong to say that we have nothing to do with the past. We are sure to make some headway if we simply sift out the useless from the useful. But in doing so one shall dispense with a good number of obstacles. The conservative mentality and habit will resist the change. Conservatism does not allow any sort of advancement. Besides this religious outlook of the people will hamper us. Our emotional sympathy lies with the past and we being proud of our past don't want to progress. India will not remain India if she completely breaks with her past. But it is also true that if India allowed the past to dominate it will not have the glory of the past today. New values of life have been adopted; western culture has made a deep dent in our traditional way of life, science has overhauled our thinking so past with its values has lost its relevance. Our appreciation of our thinking so past with its values has lost its relevance. Our appreciation of beauty, our cult of morality, our devotion to

community life, our spirit of accommodation and our spirituality are important even today. But much of our past will insulate us from the currents of modern life. Past is to be modified by the present but for the present we have to borrow much from the past.