

**Opening Remarks by Ambassador Sibi George at
Swami Vivekananda Birth Anniversary Celebrations
organized by Embassy of India, Japan
January 12, 2024**

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

A very good morning to all of you and and Greetings of National Youth Day!

2. It gives me a great pleasure to address you all today, and welcome to this today's event to celebrate the 161st Birth Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda, one of the greatest spiritual leaders and philosopher, whose life and teaching continue to inspire millions around the world, transcending time and boundaries. His birth anniversary is not just a day to remember a historical figure but an opportunity to delve into the eternal relevance of his thoughts and ideals.

3. Swami Vivekananda stands as a monumental figure in our nation's history. His life was testament to the power of dedication, selfless service, and the pursuit of knowledge. He was not merely a philosopher, but a practical visionary who believed in the holistic development of individuals and society, and who played a pivotal role in bringing about a new awakening in India.

4. Swami Vivekananda played a crucial role in introducing Indian philosophy and spirituality to the global stage. In his famous address at the Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago in 1893, he introduced the world to the timeless

wisdom of Hindu philosophy, promoting the ideals of tolerance, acceptance, and universal brotherhood.

5. Vivekananda's teachings transcend the boundaries of time and culture. His emphasis on the harmony of religions, tolerance, and acceptance of diverse paths to the divine echoes in today's world. His vision of a spiritually awakened society, where individuals recognize the divinity within themselves and others, remains a guiding light for us.

6. Swami Vivekananda was a revolutionary who yearned to bring changes to society. He participated in many social movements and fought to eliminate the convention of early marriage from society. He promoted education and wanted everyone to be literate irrespective of any social or cultural denominations. His focus on the theme of Vedas and Upanishads brought a great impact on the socio-cultural traditions of our nation.

7. He emphasized that each individual has the potential to manifest greatness, and it is through self-realization that one can unlock the doors to a life of purpose and fulfillment.

8. His message of universal brotherhood and self-awakening remains relevant especially in the current backdrop of widespread political turmoil around the world.

9. As we commemorate the birth anniversary of this great soul, let us reflect on the timeless wisdom he imparted to the world. Let's strive to incorporate the principles of selflessness and compassion into our lives. May his teachings continue to inspire generations to come, and may

we all contribute to the realization of his vision for a harmonious and enlightened world.

10. Let me conclude by quoting what the Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji had tweeted on Swami Vivekananda's last year "His ideals of service, humanity and spiritual enlightenment continue to inspire and guide us towards building a strong and vibrant India. We reiterate our commitment to fulfilling his vision of unity and brotherhood."

Thank you.
