Indian wisdom in the eyes of western scholars

By : sgewali

What is Indian wisdom? Know the answer from the world renowned intellectual giants

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A feature article on â What is India?â

By Rajib Roy

â Great minds on INDIAâ , a book of quotation compiled by Salil Gewali is actually the most commendable attempt to present the views of various intellectuals giants of the world about India and her classical literature. The views given by these intellectuals will actually help readers to understand India in right perspective and will also dispel the misconception of scholars and to make a factual and actual estimate of Indiaâ s contribution to the modern world of science and technology. An international acclaimed NASA scientist Prof. A. V. Murali, says -- â 'WHAT IS INDIA' is simply outstanding! I never knew that such a compilation exists and we all should be thankful to Salil Gewali! These great quotes should be embossed (on plaques) and displayed on the walls of our Parliament, State Assembly Halls, and at all our educational institutions. Most importantly, the material should be made a compulsory reading for all the school students --- elaborating more on ' who is who' and the monumental contributions of these intellectual giants.â

About the Author

Salil Gewali was born in Shillong, among four brothers and three sisters. An MA (English), he is married with two kids, his wife is a Hindi teacher in Arya Kanya Vidyalaya, Shillong, Meghalaya, and is also the founder president of Ekta Mahila Samity â a social organization. Salilâ s father Krishna Prasad Gewali was a renowned essayist whose books are taught in universities and colleges of NEHU, North Bengal University.

The Book

The book â **â Great minds on INDIAâ ,**is a compilation of quotes by famous intellectual personalities on â Indiaâ â which they consider as the cradle of human race and land of perfect wisdom and spiritual knowledge. The book was released by Meghalaya Governor, RS Mooshahary at the Sri Aurobindo Institute of Indian Culture this April. Salil says, â I want to highlight and bring to knowledge how great India was, the vast diversified knowledge it offers and how it is just forgotten, now.â Salil who was a science student in his pre-university years later switched over to arts because of his patriotic trait and spiritual bent had come across the works of great poets and philosophers like TS Elliot, Ralph Emerson, David Thoreau, Walt Whitman among others which have influenced him to Indian philosophy. He says, TS Elliotâ s â The Waste landâ which later became world famous poem was actually inspired by Upanishads and so does, David Thoreauâ s â Walden â an American Classic, the work that stir the ascetic soul of Mahatma Gandhi even.

â These intellectuals were all well versed in the Vedas and Upanishads and was hugely inspired by Indian philosophy,â says Salil whose book â What is Indiaâ actually stands testimony to this fact. â These personalities relationship with Indian philosophy have actually given me the inspiration and encouragement to delve more into Indian philosophies,â says Salil adding â these philosophers have also acknowledged the fact that knowledge is in the east and not in the west.â

â My interest in Indian philosophy inspired me to turn into this venture as I was very keen in learning about the biographies of great philosophers and scientists like J. Robert J Oppenheimer â â The Father of the Atomic Bombâ among many others,â says Salil. He cites the reference to the Trinity test in New Mexico, where Oppenheimerâ s Los Alamos team first tested this bomb where he famously recalled the Bhagavad Gita, â If the radiance of a thousand suns were to burst at once into the sky, that would be like the splendor of the mighty one,â and â now I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds.â He further quotes Oppenheimer who said, â Knowledge and wisdom of India can be utilized in many ways which is beyond time and as experienced by scientists, philosophers, scholars and others.â

Salil started collecting quotes for the about last ten years and compiled them in the last two years. He says, â I actually came across a booklet on Indian philosophy and started exploring more into the subject matter, which has helped me to get an insight and encouragement,â adding the internet and books also helped him in his works. â Whatever is truth, enlightening and beneficial to mankind, I tried to portray the richness of Indian philosophies, values and ethics in my book,â says Salil which has inspired the literary scholars of the world. â My intention is not to earn money or fame but this book is for all those who do not know about this great country, whereas the western world knows much more about this country,â he reasoned behind the compilation of this book. â The words and quotations of the great people have inspired me and I thought they should be compiled for the benefit of all,â

He says further. The concept of nuclear science, radium, electricity, DNA code and what else have all their origins in the Vedas and Upanishads, as Ella Wheeler Wilcox, American most celebrated Poetess and Journalist said, â India â the land of Vedas, the remarkable works contains not only religious ideas for a perfect life, but also facts which science has proved true. Electricity, radium, electronics, airship, all are known to the seers who founded the Vedas.â

Werner Heisenberg--- co-founder of Quantum Physics, T. S. Eliot --- great American writer, Friedrich Hegel, Julius Robert Oppenheimer--- Father of atomic bomb, Ralph Emerson, Henry David Thoreau--- one of the greatest American writer, Erwin SchrÃ¶dinger--- father of Quantum mechanics, had drawn their intellectual nourishment and inspiration from Indian Classical Literature.

On asking the author about his views on what is India, the author says, â Most secular for all ages, which is timeless.â The former Minister of Education, Manas Chaudhuri, Government of Meghalaya who penned the foreword in the book besides a message by Dr. Pramod Tandon, VC, NEHU alongside friends and well wishers like Dr Dr. Prem Saran, IAS, S. Murthy Divakaruni, USA, Dr. (Prof) Damodar Thakur, Yemen, encouraged him in his project of compilation. The designing of the front cover and raising the book to its final shape is the work of the author himself.

His next task is to upgrade this book, which has sold more than 15000 thousand copies already. He says, â Various intellectual from across the world have appreciated his work immensely.

The book is in circulation not only here but also in mainland India besides Europe and America. Now the book is going to be published from USA also. A great US based writer Prof Chitra Divakaruni says: "Salil Gewali has lovingly compiled an excellent set of quotations that illustrate how highly great thinkers from all over the world valued Indian spiritual culture and how it transformed their lives. An inspirational read that reminds us of our amazing ancient heritage and why we need to incorporate it into our lives as modern Indians." Ms Divakaruni,is world famous for her famous novel, The Mistress of Spices was released as a film directed by Paul Mayeda Berges starring Aishwarya Rai and Dylan McDermott.

"We all must congratulate Salil Gewali for bringing out such a wonderful booklet containing the quotes of the world renowned intellectuals on Vedas, Upanishads and the Gita which are in appreciation about the supremacy of the Indian wisdom. The youth of today should be wholly aware these great quotes so that they

will have better appreciation of our Indian culture, tradition and heritage." Writes Dr. D. Swaminadhan, a prominent scientist, UNESCO International Consultant, Vice Chancellor of Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University, Hyderabad.

Few famous Quotes fromâ Great minds on INDIAâ ,

â We owe a lot to Indians who taught us how to count, without which no worthwhile scientific discovery could have been made,â Albert Einstein, the greatest scientist of the 20th century

â The Vedas haunt me. In them, I have found eternal compensation, unfathomable power, unbroken peace,â Ralph Waldo Emerson, one of the greatest philosophers and poets.

â The Indian way of life provides the vision of the natural, real way of life. We western veil ourselves with unnatural masks. On the face of India are the tender expressions which carry the mark of the Creators hand,â --George Bernard Shaw, a great dramatist, Nobel laureate in literature

â The marvel of the Gita is its truly beautiful revelation of lifeâ s wisdom which enables philosophy to blossom into religion,â **Herman Hesse**, German poet and novelist, awarded the Nobel Prize for literature

â In the morning, I bathe my intellect in the stupendous and cosmogonal philosophy of the Bhagavad Gita, in comparison with which our modern world and its literature seems puny and trivial,â **Henry David Thoreau,** a great American Philosopher, writer, Unitarian, social critic, transcendentalist

â The Vedas and the Sankhya hold the key to the laws of mind and thought process which are co-related to the Quantum Field, i.e. the operation and distribution of particles at atomic and molecular levels,â Brian David Josephson, A great physicist, Nobel laureate, head of the Mind and Matter unification project, credited for the prediction of eponymous Josephson effect.

â Even the loftiest philosophy of the Europeans appears like a feeble before the Vedanta,â August Wilhelm Von Schlegel, a great German poet, philosopher, critic

"One has the feeling that the thinkers of the East knew it all, and if we could only translate their answers into our language we would have the answers to all our questions."

-by: **John Archibald Wheeler,** Eminent American physicist, the first to involved in the theoretical development of the Atomic bomb and first to coin the â Black Holeâ who later occupies the chair that was held by Albert Einstein.

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