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080  
wit



# WIT AND WISDOM



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Benjamin Franklin  
Thomas Jefferson  
Abraham Lincoln  
Henry David Thoreau  
Mark Twain  
Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.  
Rabindranath Tagore

# WIT AND WISDOM

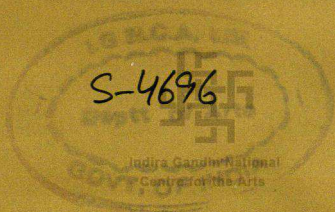
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Swami Vivekananda  
George Santayana  
Mahatma Gandhi  
H. L. Mencken  
Franklin D. Roosevelt  
Jawaharlal Nehru  
John F. Kennedy



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In January 1967, the "American Reporter" published its first "Wit and Wisdom" column, a compilation of comments on a variety of subjects by Franklin D. Roosevelt. What was to have been an occasional feature of short duration continued into the following year as staff members and readers contributed subjects for consideration.

Ignoring Benjamin Franklin's advice that, "None preaches better than the ant, and she says nothing," we have decided to publish an anthology based on some of the more memorable columns in the hope they will bring you amusement, enjoyment, inspiration, and, perhaps, some universal truths.

We do so, too, despite the sage comment of George Santayana, who once said: "Almost every wise saying has an opposite one, no less wise, to balance it."

**William D. Miller**

*Director*

*U. S. Information Services in India*

*March 1969*

*N. D. Miller*



# BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

*American founding father, statesman, philosopher (1706—1790)*





### **Education**

Being ignorant is not so much a shame  
as being unwilling to learn.

A learned blockhead is a greater blockhead  
than an ignorant one.

### **Fraud**

There is no kind of dishonesty into which  
otherwise good people more easily and frequently  
fall than of defrauding the government.

### **Free Speech**

In those wretched countries where a man cannot call  
his tongue his own he can scarce call anything his own.

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If all printers were determined not to print  
anything until they were sure it would offend  
nobody, there would be very little printed.

### **Friendship**

Do good to thy friend to keep him,  
to thy enemy to gain him.

### **Good Habits**

Early to bed and early to rise, makes a man  
healthy, wealthy, and wise.

### **Hope**

He that lives upon hope will die fasting.



**Law**

Laws too gentle are seldom obeyed;  
too severe, seldom executed.

**Liberty**

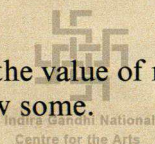
They that can give up essential  
liberty to obtain a little temporary safety  
deserve neither liberty nor safety.

**Life**

Dost thou love life? Then do not squander time,  
for that is the stuff life is made of.

**Money**

If you would know the value of money,  
go and try to borrow some.



The use of money is all the advantage  
there is in having money.

**Patience**

He that can have patience can have what he will.

**Reason**

If you will not hear reason,  
she will surely rap your knuckles.

**Religion**

If men are so wicked with religion,  
what would they be without it?



**Reputation**

Glass, china, and reputation are easily cracked and never well mended.

**Riches**

If your riches are yours, why don't you take them with you to the other world?

**Self-Love**

He that falls in love with himself will have no rivals.

**Success**

Be studious in your profession, and you will be learned. Be industrious and frugal, and you will be rich. Be sober and temperate, and you will be healthy. Be in general virtuous, and you will be happy.

**Taxes**

In this world nothing is certain but death and taxes.

**Unity**

We must all hang together or most assuredly we shall all hang separately.

**War and Peace**

There never was a good war or a bad peace.

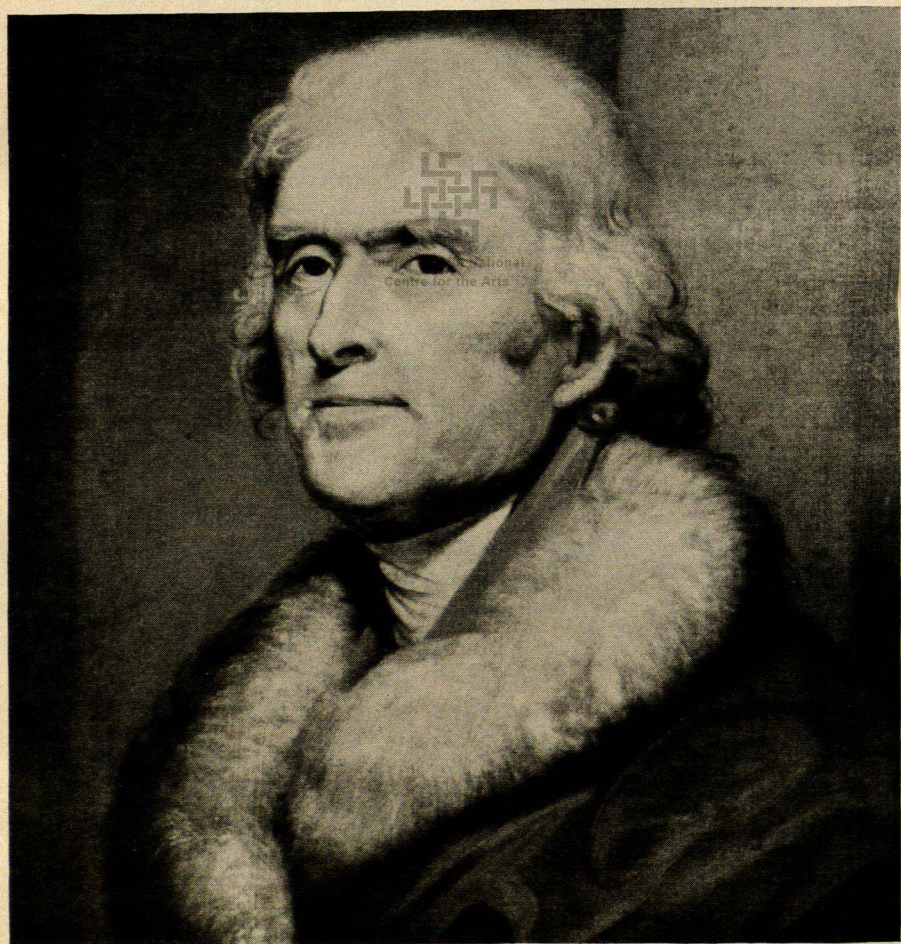
**Water**

When the well's dry, we know the worth of water.



# THOMAS JEFFERSON

*Third President of the United States (1743—1826)*





### **Agriculture**

Those who labour in the earth are the chosen people of God, if He ever had a chosen people.

### **Aristocracy**

There is a natural aristocracy among men. The grounds of this are virtue and talents. . . There is also an artificial aristocracy founded on wealth and birth, without either virtue or talents; for with these it would belong to the first class. The natural aristocracy I consider as the most precious gift of nature, for the instruction, the trusts and government of society.

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### **Democracy**

I am persuaded that the good sense of the people will always be found to be the best army. They may be led astray for a moment, but will soon correct themselves. The people are the only censors of their governors, and even their errors will tend to keep these to the true principle of their institutions. To punish these errors too severely would be to suppress the only safeguards of the public liberty.

Though the will of the majority is in all cases to prevail, that will, to be rightful, must be reasonable; the minority possess their equal rights, which equal laws must protect, and to violate which would be oppression.



### **Government**

We may consider each generation as a distinct nation, with a right, by the will of its majority, to bind themselves, but none to bind the succeeding generation, more than the inhabitants of another country.

The whole of government consists in the art of being honest.

### **Law**

No society can make a perpetual constitution, or even a perpetual law.

### **Liberty**

We are not afraid to follow truth wherever it may lead, nor to tolerate error so long as reason is free to combat it.

Timid men prefer the calm of despotism to the boisterous sea of liberty.

I am not among those who fear the people. They, and not the rich, are our dependence for continued freedom.

I have sworn upon the altar of God, eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man.

The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time, with the blood of patriots and tyrants. It is its natural manure.

### **Pain**

The art of life is the avoiding of pain.



## **Politics**

No man will ever bring out of the Presidency the reputation which carries him into it.

Politics is such a torment that I would advise every one I love not to mix with it.

## **The Press**

Our citizens may be deceived for a while, and have been deceived; but as long as the presses can be protected, we may trust them for light.

Our liberty depends on the freedom of the press, and that cannot be limited without being lost.

## **Religion**

Difference of opinion is advantageous in religion. The several sects perform the office of a censor over each other.

It does me no injury for my neighbour to say there are twenty gods, or no God.

## **Rights**

It behoves every man who values liberty of conscience for himself to resist invasions of it in the case of others.

## **Truth**

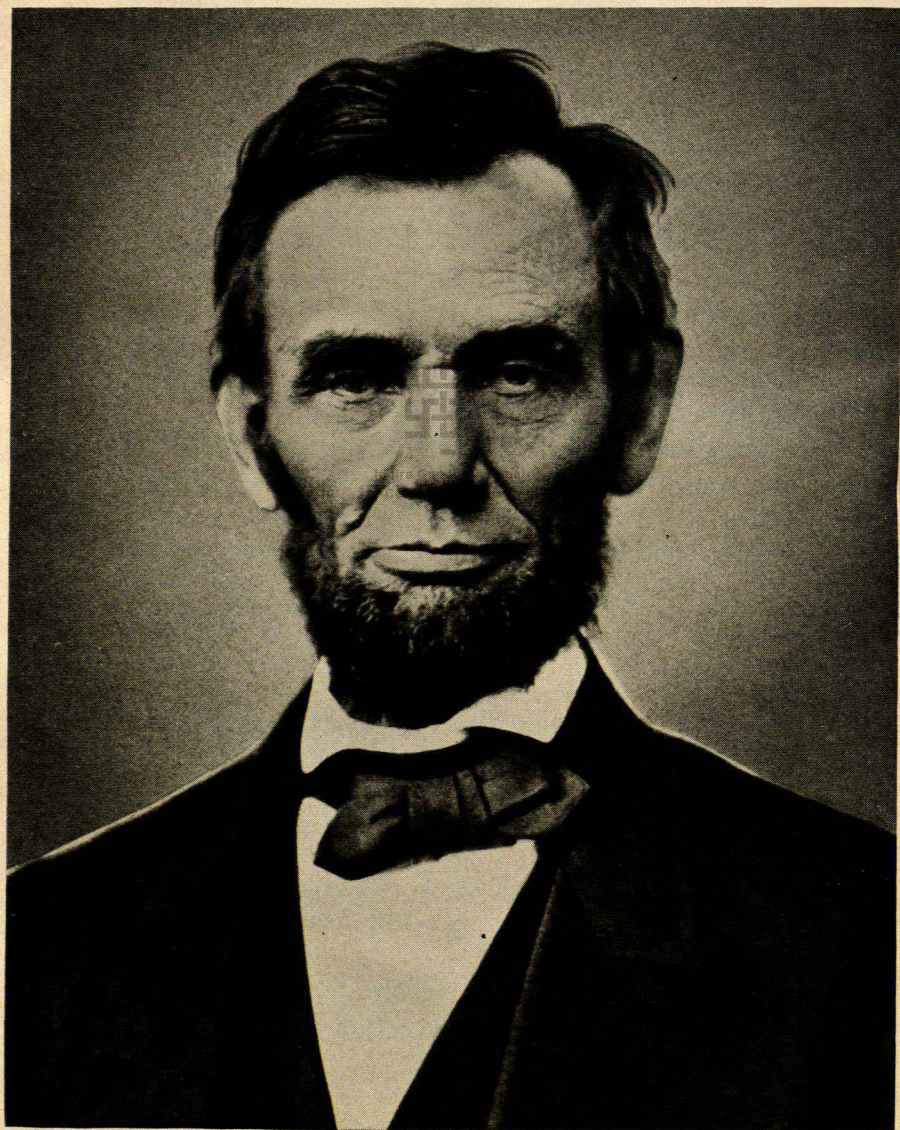
It is error alone which needs the support of government. Truth can stand by itself.

There is no truth existing which I fear, or would wish unknown to the whole world.



# ABRAHAM LINCOLN

*America's Civil War President (1809—1865)*





### **Character**

Character is like a tree and reputation like its shadow.  
The shadow is what we think of it; the tree is the real thing.

### **Civil Liberty**

The fight must go on. The cause of civil liberty must not be surrendered at the end of one or even one hundred defeats.

### **Education**

Upon the subject of education, I can only say that I view it as the most important subject which we, as a people, can be engaged in.

### **Government**

The ballot is stronger than the bullet.

I am for the people of the whole nation doing just as they please in all matters which concern the whole nation; for that of each part doing just as they choose in all matters which concern no other part; and for each individual doing just as he chooses in all matters which concern nobody else.

### **Labour**

As labour is the common burden of our race, so the effort of some to shift their share of the burden on to the shoulders of others is the great durable curse of the race.



## **Law**

Let every man remember that to violate the law is to trample on the blood of his father, and to tear the charter of his own and his children's liberty.

Let me not be understood as saying that there are no bad laws, or that grievances may not arise for the redress of which no legal provisions have been made. I mean to say no such thing. But I do mean to say that although bad laws, if they exist, should be repealed as soon as possible, still, while they continue in force, for the sake of example they should be religiously observed.

## **Liberty**

In giving freedom to the slave, we assure freedom to the free—honourable alike in what we give and what we preserve.

The shepherd drives the wolf from the sheep's throat, for which the sheep thanks the shepherd as his liberator, while the wolf denounces him for the same act as the destroyer of liberty, especially as the sheep was a black one. Plainly, the sheep and the wolf are not agreed upon a definition of the word "liberty."

## **The People**

Why should there not be a patient confidence in the ultimate justice of the people?  
Is there any better or equal hope in the world?

I am a firm believer in the people. If given the truth, they can be depended upon to meet any national crisis. The great point is to bring them the real facts.



**Progress**

I do not mean to say we are bound to follow implicitly in whatever our fathers did. To do so, would be to discard all the lights of current experience—to reject all progress, all improvement.

**Property**

The love of property and consciousness of right or wrong have conflicting places in our organisation, which often makes a man's course seem crooked, his conduct a riddle.

**Public Opinion**

No law is stronger than is the public sentiment where it is to be enforced.

Our government rest on public opinion.  
Whoever can change public opinion can change the government practically as such.

Public opinion, though often formed upon a wrong basis, yet generally has a strong underlying sense of justice.

**Rights**

Whenever there is a conflict between human rights and property rights, human rights must prevail.

**Revolution**

Be not deceived. Revolutions do not go backward.



# HENRY DAVID THOREAU

*American writer, libertarian (1817—1862)*





**Age**

The lament for a golden age  
is only a lament for golden men.

**Books**

Books are the treasured wealth of the world, the  
fit inheritance of generations and nations.

**Capacity**

Man's capacities have never been measured;  
nor are we to judge of what he can do by any  
precedents, so little has been tried.

**Change**

Things do not change; we change.

**Double Standard**

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As for conforming outwardly, and living your own  
life inwardly, I do not think much of that.

**Evil**

There are a thousand hacking at the branches  
of evil to one who is striking at the root.

**Fashion**

Every generation laughs at the old fashions,  
but follows religiously the new.

**Friend**

A man cannot be said to succeed in this life  
who does not satisfy one friend.



**Government**

Under a government which imprisons any unjustly,  
the true place for a just man is also a prison.

**Heresy**

All this worldly wisdom was once the  
unamiable heresy of some wise man.

**Knowledge**

To know that we know what we know, and that we do not  
know what we do not know, that is true knowledge.

**Life**

The art of life, of a poet's life, is, not having  
anything to do, to do something.

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**Love**

You must get your living by loving.

**Majority**

Any man more right than his neighbour  
constitutes a majority of one.

**Misery**

If misery loves company, misery has company enough.

**Non-conformity**

If a man does not keep pace with his companions,  
perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer.



**Prejudice**

It is never too late to give up our prejudices.

**Regret**

Make the most of your regrets . . .

To regret deeply is to live afresh.

**Riches**

A man is rich in proportion to the number of things which he can afford to let alone.

**Solitude**

Why should I feel lonely? Is not our planet in the Milky Way?



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**Truth**

It takes two to speak truth—one to speak and another to hear.

**Virtue**

When were the good and the brave ever in a majority?

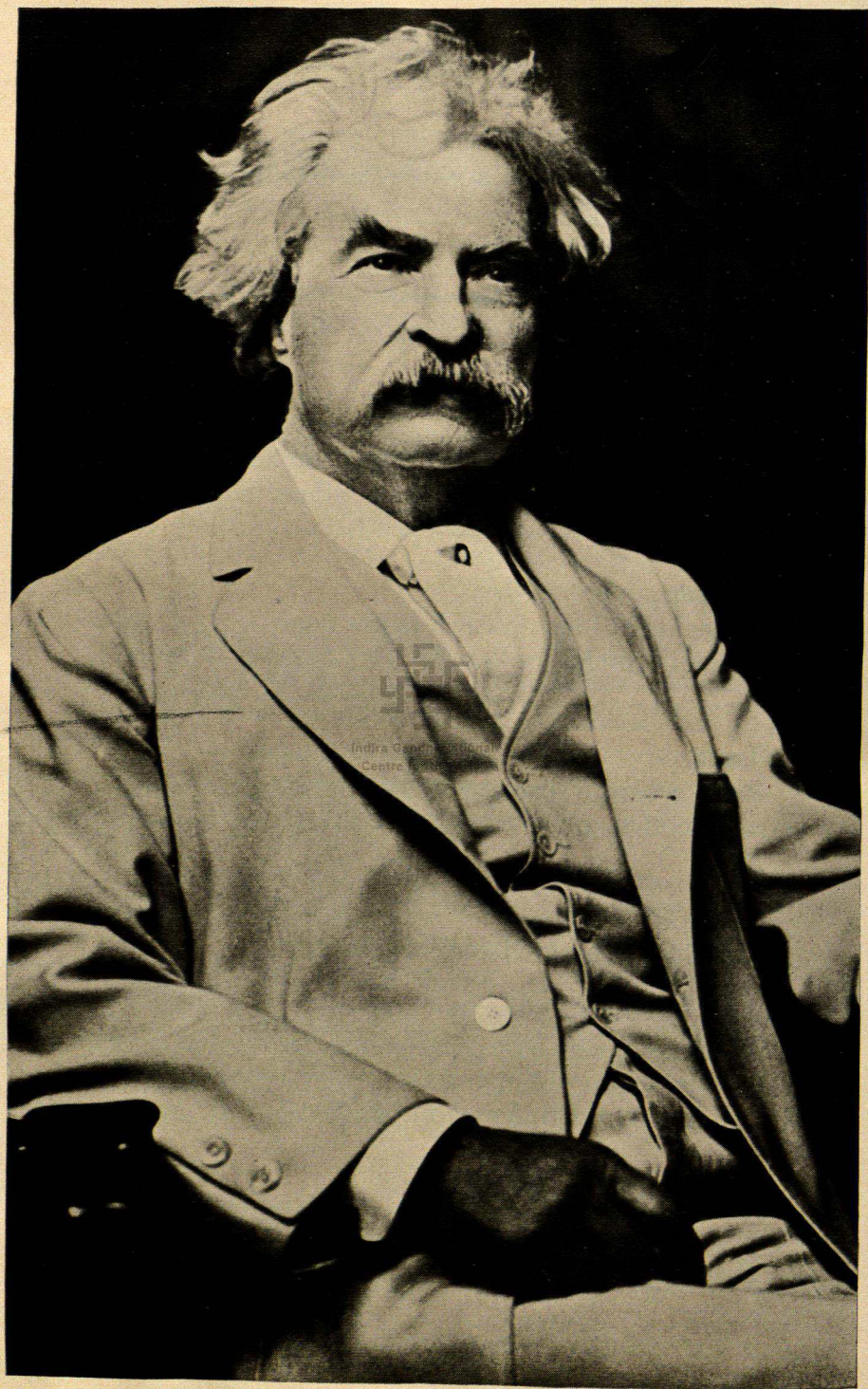
**Wisdom**

A man is wise with the wisdom of his time only, and ignorant with its ignorance.

**World**

The world was never less beautiful though viewed through a chink or knothole.







# MARK TWAIN

*American writer-humourist (1835—1910)*

## **Anger**

When angry, count four; when very angry, swear.

## **Education**

Training is everything. The peach was once a bitter almond; cauliflower is nothing but cabbage with a college education.

## **Eloquence**

Noise proves nothing. Often a hen who has merely laid an egg cackles as if she laid an asteroid.

## **Friendship**

The holy passion of friendship is of so sweet and steady and loyal and enduring a nature that it will last through a whole lifetime, if not asked to lend money.

## **Joy**

Grief can take care of itself, but to get the full value from joy you must have somebody to divide it with.



## **Loyalty**

My kind of loyalty is loyalty to one's country, not to its institutions or its office-holders. The country is the real thing, the substantial thing, the eternal thing; it is a thing to watch over, and care for, and be loyal to; institutions are extraneous, they are its mere clothing and clothing can wear out, become ragged, cease to be comfortable, cease to protect the body from winter, disease, and death.

To be loyal to rags, to shout for rags, to worship rags, to die for rags—that is the loyalty of unreason.



## **The Morning Paper**

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Constructive Movements

I have been reading the morning paper. I do it every morning—well knowing that I shall find in it the usual depravities and basenesses and hypocrisies and cruelties that make up civilization, and cause me to put in the rest of the day pleading for the damnation of the human race.

## **The Precious Things**

It is by the goodness of God that we have these three unspeakably precious things: freedom of speech, freedom of conscience, and the prudence never to practise either of them.

## **Riches**

Prosperity is the surest breeder of insolence I know.



### **Sheep and Self**

We are discreet sheep; we wait to see how the drove is going, and then go with the drove. We have two opinions: one private, which we are afraid to express; and another one—the one we use—which we force ourselves to wear to please others, until habit makes us comfortable in it, and the custom of defending it presently makes us love it, adore it, and forget how pitifully we came by it. Look at it in politics.

### **Stubbornness**

Loyalty to petrified opinion never yet broke a chain or freed a human soul.

Get your facts first, and then you can distort them as much as you please.

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### **Truth**

Truth is the most valuable thing we have.  
Let us economise it.

When in doubt, tell the truth.

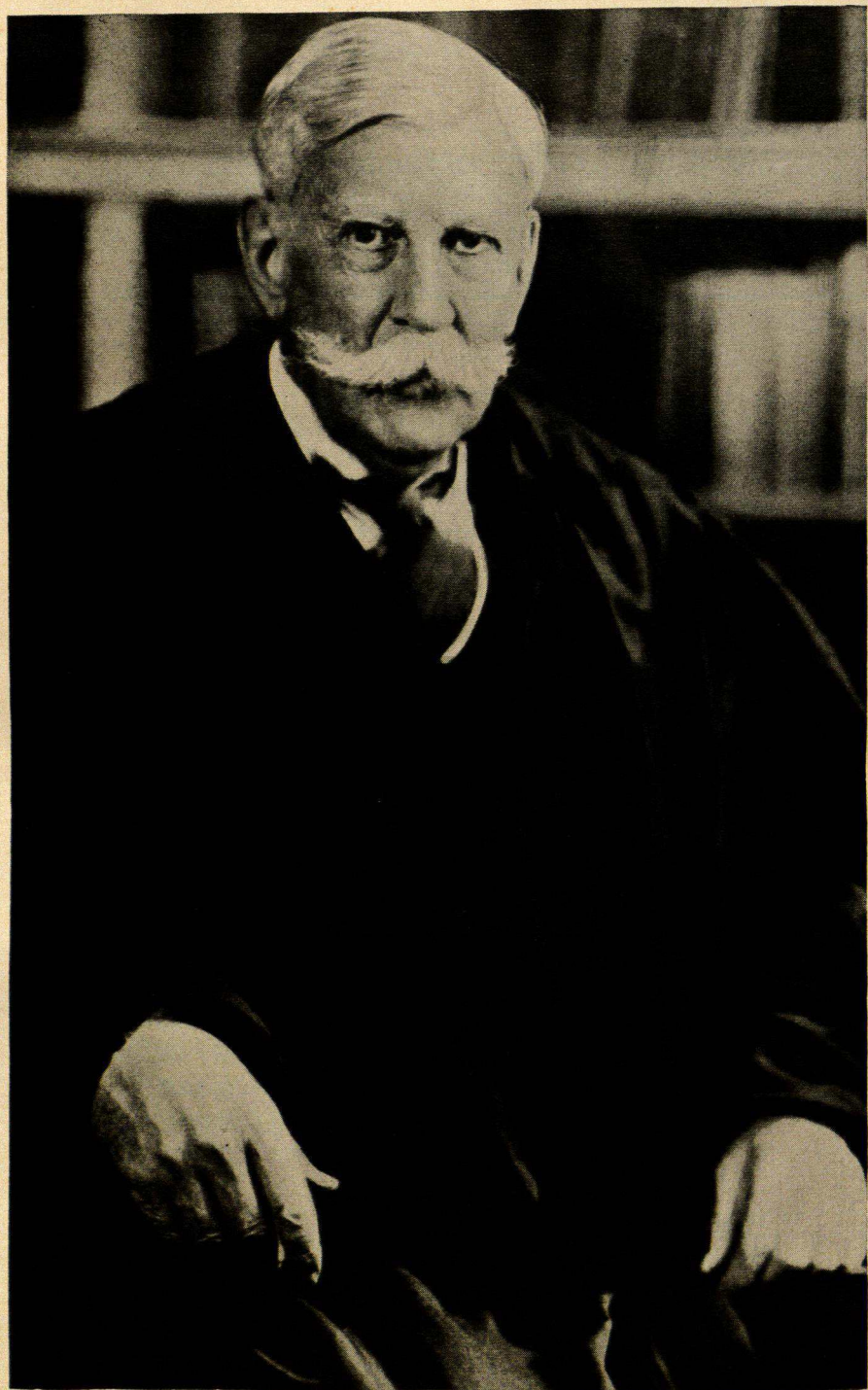
### **Wars**

There never was a just one, never an honourable one—on the part of the instigator of the war. I can see a million years ahead, and this rule will never change in so many as half a dozen instances.

### **Weather**

Everybody talks about the weather,  
but nobody does anything about it.







# OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES, JR.

*American Supreme Court justice (1841—1935)*

## **Civilization**

To have doubted one's own first principles is the mark of a civilized man.

## **Faith**

The great act of faith is when man decides that he is not God.

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## **Formulae**

To rest upon a formula is a slumber that, prolonged, means death.

## **Free Speech**

The character of every act depends on the circumstances in which it is done. The most stringent protection of free speech would not protect a man in falsely shouting fire in a theatre and causing a panic. . . . The question in every case is whether the words are used in such circumstances and are of such a nature as to create a clear and present danger.

In the abstract, I have no very enthusiastic belief in free speech, though I hope I would die for it.



### **Free Thought**

If there is any principle of the U.S. Constitution that more imperatively calls for attachment than any other, it is the principle of free thought—not freedom for those who agree with us, but freedom for the thought we hate.

### **Generalisation**

The chief end of man is to frame general propositions, and no general proposition is worth a damn.

No generalisation is wholly true, not even this one.

General propositions do not decide concrete cases.

### **Law**

It is revolting to have no better reason for a rule of law than that it was laid down in the time of Henry IV.

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The standards of the law are standards of general application. The law takes no account of the infinite varieties of temperament, intellect, and education which make the internal characters of a given act so different in different men. It does not attempt to see men as God sees them, for more than one sufficient reason.

### **Life**

Life seems to me like a Japanese picture which our imagination does not allow to end with the margin.

Life is an end in itself, and the only question as to whether it is worth living is whether you have had enough of it.



As life is action and passion, it is required of a man that he should share the passion and action of his time, at peril of being judged not to have lived.

All life is an experiment.

### **Majority and Minority**

The greatest good of a minority of our generation may be the greatest good of the greatest number in the long run.

If the welfare of the living majority is paramount, it can only be on the ground that the majority have the power in their hands.

### **Opinions**

With effervescing opinions, as with the not yet forgotten champagne, the quickest way to let them get flat is to let them get exposed to the air.

### **Punishment**

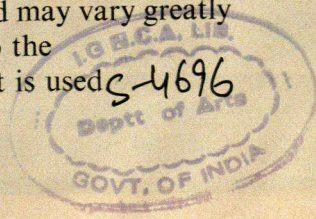
We have to choose, and for my part I think it a less evil that some criminals should escape than that the government should play an ignoble part.

### **Truth**

All I mean by truth is what I can't help thinking.

### **Words**

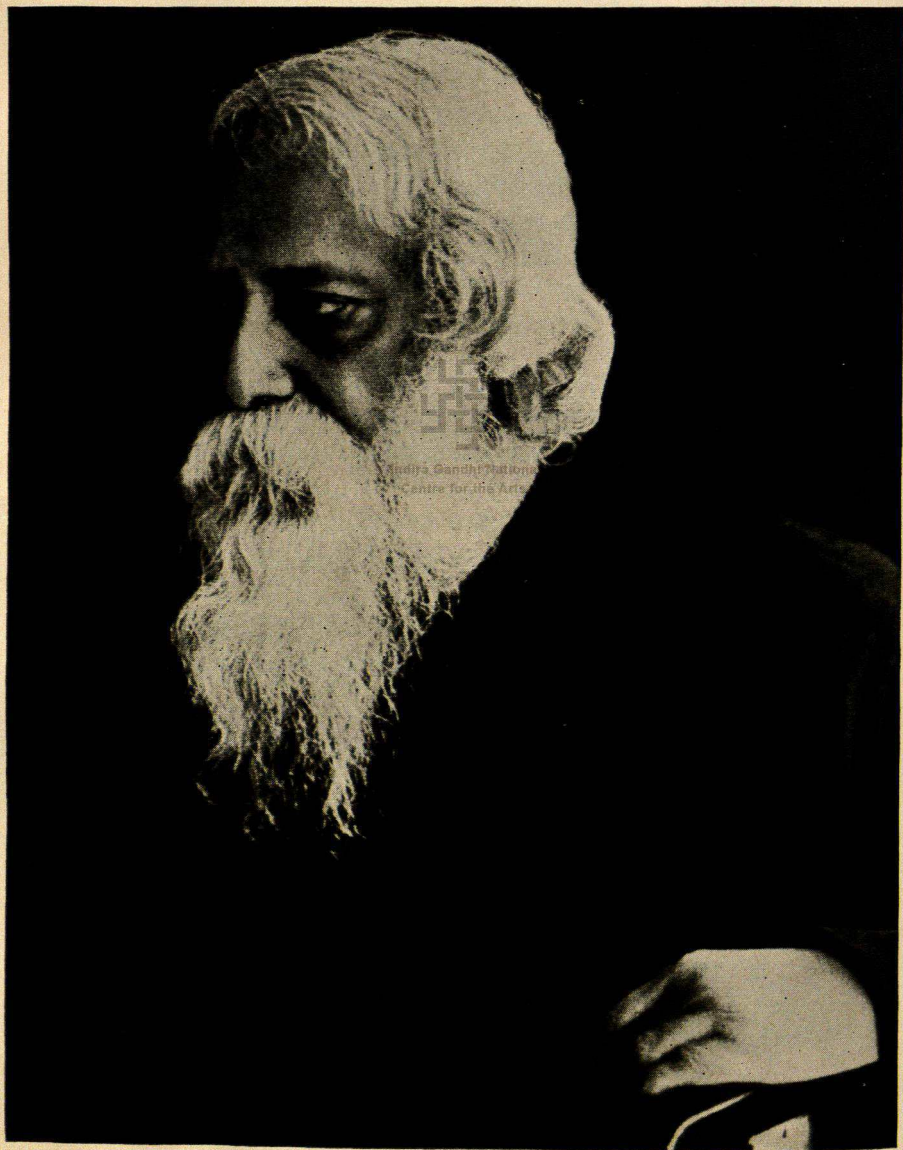
A word is not a crystal, transparent and unchanging, it is the skin of a living thought and may vary greatly in colour and content according to the circumstances and time in which it is used.





# RABINDRANATH TAGORE

*Indian Nobel laureate, poet (1861—1941)*





**Achievement**

The foolish achieve success, the worthy glory.

**Action**

Deeds, however harsh, are better than the hell of uncertainty.

**Ambition**

The ambition that seeks power in the augmentation of dimension is doomed. If the tail does not have the decency to know where to stop, the drag of this dependency becomes fatal to the body's empire.

**Appearance**

Judge a flower or a butterfly by its looks, but not a human being.

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**Argument**

There is no greater nuisance in a country than an argumentative person.

**Child**

Every child comes with the message that God is not yet discouraged with man.

**Combination**

The elephant's trunk, the tiger's paws, the claws of the mole, have combined their best expressions in the human arms. It would have been a hugely cumbersome practical joke if the combination of animal limbs had had a simultaneous location in the human organism through some overzeal in biological inventiveness.



**Conviction**

We can be staunch in our own convictions,  
but we have no control over those of others.

**Eloquence**

There is nothing like eloquence—to attract women.

**Freedom**

Merely to be independent is not to be truly free.

Freedom in the mere sense of independence has  
no content, and therefore no meaning.

**Greed**

It is well known that when greed has for its object  
material gain then it can have no end. It is like chasing  
of the horizon by a lunatic.

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**Harmony**

Men reveal themselves in music, not in dissonance.

**Heroism**

Men are heroic only before their wives.

**Humour**

Humourists have a knack of making  
themselves felt even in the dark.

**Joke**

People resent a joke if there is some truth in it.



**Leadership**

It is easy to drive people.  
What is hard is to lead them.

**Love**

Trust love even if it brings sorrow.  
Do not close up your heart.

**Procrastination**

Sweet are the fruits of delay.

**Specialisation**

The camel is a specialist in the desert,  
awkward in the swamp. The hippopotamus  
specialises in the mudlands of the Nile,  
is helpless in the desert nearby.  
Compartmentalised efficiency.

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**Simple and Complex**

The nest is simple, it has an early relationship with the  
sky; the cage is complex and costly; it is too much itself  
excommunicated from whatever lies outside.

**Violence**

Kicks raise dust, not crops.



# SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

*Indian mystic, Vedanta philosopher (1863—1902)*





**Bad Times**

If a bad time comes, what of that?  
The pendulum must swing back to the other side.  
But that is no better. The thing to do is to stop it.

**Education**

Education is the manifestation  
of the perfection already in man.

**Equality**

If we are all equal, why is there this inequality?

**Freedom**

Freedom is the goal.



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**God**

God has become man; man will  
become God again. You cannot believe  
in God until you believe in yourself.

**Great Things**

Great things can be done by great sacrifices only.

**Hate**

No man, no nation can hate others and live.

**Help**

Let me help my fellow-men; that is all I seek.



**Ignorance**

There is neither sin nor virtue;  
there is only ignorance.

**Inspiration**

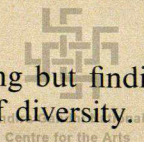
It is true I believe Ramkrishna Paramahansa to  
have been inspired. But then I am myself  
inspired also. And you are inspired. And your  
disciples will be; and theirs after them;  
and so on, to the end of time!

**Kindness**

Feel for the miserable and look up  
for help—it will come.

**Knowledge**

Knowledge is nothing but finding  
unity in the midst of diversity.

**Love**

Love never comes until there is freedom.

**Man**

Man is born to conquer nature, not to follow it.

**Money**

Money is not power, but goodness and holiness are.

**Nation**

Only by the highest and best can we judge  
a nation; the fallen are a race in themselves.



**Religion**

Any sect that may help you to realise God is welcome. Religion is the realising of God.

**Rituals**

Rituals are the kindergarten of religion.

**Teacher**

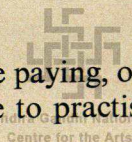
There is no teacher but your own soul.

**Truth**

Everything can be sacrificed for truth, but truth cannot be sacrificed for anything.

**Unselfishness**

Unselfishness is more paying, only people have not the patience to practise it.

**Work**

Work as though you were a stranger in this land, a sojourner; work incessantly, but do not bind yourself; bondage is terrible.

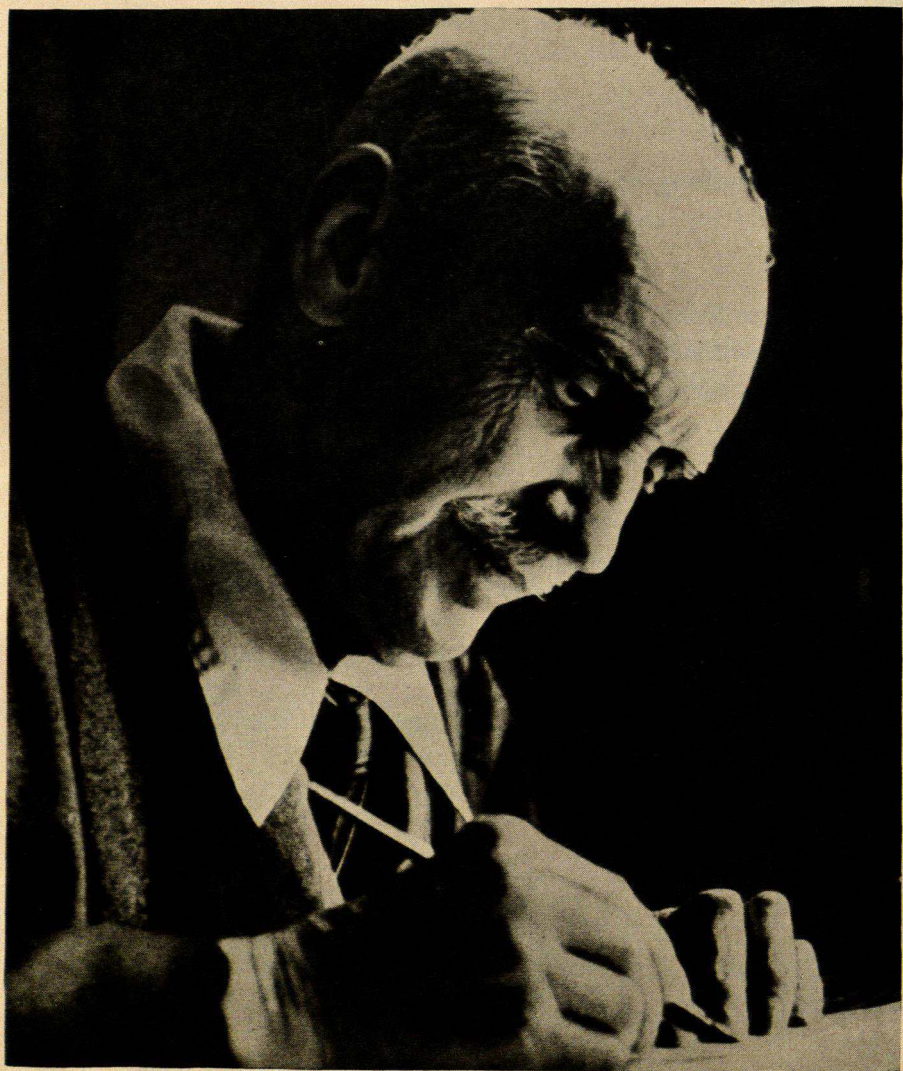
**World**

This world is the great gymnasium where we come to make ourselves strong.



# GEORGE SANTAYANA

*American philosopher, teacher, writer (1863—1952)*





**Age**

The young man who has not wept is a savage,  
and the old man who will not laugh is a fool.

**Art**

Nothing is so poor and melancholy as art  
that is interested in itself and not in its subject.

**Brevity**

As man is now constituted, to be brief  
is almost a condition of being inspired.

**Civilization**

Does the thoughtful man suppose  
that ... the present experiment in civilization  
is the last the world will see?

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**Death**

For a man who has done his natural duty,  
death is as natural and welcome as sleep.

**Declarations**

Declarations of independence make  
nobody really independent.

**Dignity**

Our dignity is not in what we do,  
but what we understand.

**Family**

The family is one of nature's masterpieces.



**Fanaticism**

Fanaticism consists in redoubling your effort when you have forgotten your aim.

**Genius**

Originality and genius must be largely fed and raised on the shoulders of some old tradition.

**Goodness**

The good, as I conceive it, is happiness, happiness for each man after his own heart, and for each hour according to its inspiration.

**Idea**

For an idea ever to be fashionable is ominous, since it must afterwards be always old-fashioned.

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**Immortality**

The fact of having been born is a bad augury for immortality.

**Laughter**

There is no cure for birth and death save to enjoy the interval.

**Life**

Life is not a spectacle or a feast; it is a predicament.

**Literature**

To turn events into ideas is the function of literature.



**Mind**

The mind celebrates a little triumph  
whenever it can formulate a truth.

**Past**

Those who cannot remember the past  
are condemned to repeat it.

**Pedantry**

An artist may visit a museum,  
but only a pedant can live there.

**Poets**

The degree in which a poet's imagination  
dominates reality is, in the end, the exact measure  
of his importance and dignity.

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**Sanity**

Sanity is a madness put to good uses.

**Society**

Society is like the air, necessary to breathe,  
but insufficient to live on.

**Soul**

The perfect body is itself the soul.

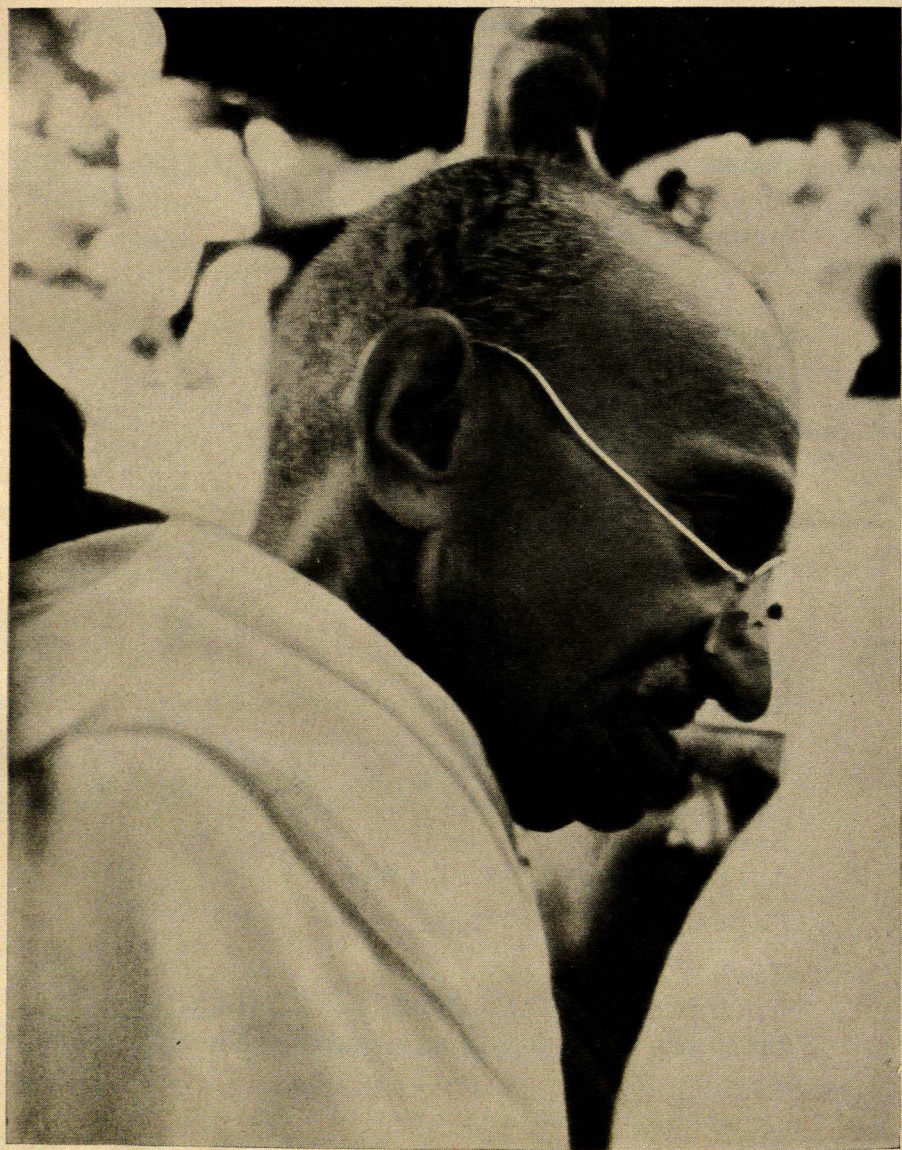
**Truth**

Truth is a jewel which should not be painted over;  
but it may be set to advantage and shown in a good light.



# MAHATMA GANDHI

*Father of the Indian nation (1869—1948)*





### **Autobiographical**

I never could learn the art of copying.

### **Children**

The fact is that the child never learns in after life what it does in its first five years. The education of the children begins with conception.

### **Compulsion**

It is not possible to make a person or a society nonviolent by compulsion.

### **Confession**

Confession of error is like a broom that sweeps away dirt and leaves the surface cleaner than before.

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### **Duties**

One's life is not a single straight line;  
it is a bundle of duties very often conflicting.

### **Error**

Error can claim no exemption even if it can be supported by the scriptures of the world.

### **Final Judgment**

No man can be said to be good before his death.

After I am gone, no single person will be able completely to represent me. But a little bit of me will live in many of you.



### **Free Will**

How far a man is free and how far a creature of circumstances—how far free will comes into play and where fate enters on the scene—all this is a mystery and will remain a mystery.

### **God**

He who would be friends with God must remain alone, or make the whole world his friend.

### **Humiliation**

It has always been a mystery to me how men can feel themselves honoured by the humiliation of their fellow beings.

### **Hunger**

To a man with an empty stomach food is God.



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### **Imperfections**

We should not have recognised a perfect man if he had come as our leader, and we might have driven him to a cave.

### **Life**

There is more to life than increasing its speed.

### **Limitations**

My mind is narrow. I have not read much literature. I have not seen much of the world. I have concentrated upon certain things in life and beyond that I have not other interest.



**Misery**

If I did not feel the presence of God within me, I see so much of misery and disappointment every day that I would be a raving maniac and my destination would be the Hooghli.

**Openness**

I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the cultures of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible.

**Originality**

I have nothing new to teach the world. Truth and nonviolence are as old as the hills.

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**Practicality**

If any action of mine claimed to be spiritual is proved to be unpracticable, it must be pronounced to be a failure. I do believe that the most spiritual act is the most practical in the true sense of the term.

**Religion**

If a man reaches the heart of his own religion, he has reached the heart of the others too.

**Service**

I am endeavouring to see God through service of humanity, for I know that God is neither in heaven, nor down below, but in every one.



# H. L. MENCKEN

*American humourist (1880—1956)*





### **Age**

The older I grow the more I distrust the familiar doctrine that age brings wisdom.

### **Anger**

Every normal man must be tempted, at times, to spit on his hands, hoist the black flag, and begin slitting throats.

### **The Artist**

Nothing can come out of an artist that is not in the man.

### **Dreams**

The more a man dreams, the less he believes.

### **Duty**

If a sense of duty tortures a man, it also enables him to achieve prodigies.

### **Envy**

Men always hate most what they envy most.

### **Fear**

The one permanent emotion of the inferior man is fear—fear of the unknown, the complex, the inexplicable. What he wants beyond everything else is safety.

### **Fiction**

Character in decay is the theme of the great bulk of superior fiction.



**Ideas**

To die for an idea: it is unquestionably noble. But how much nobler it would be if men died for ideas that were true.

**Morality**

To denounce moralising out of hand is to pronounce a moral judgment.

**Philosophy**

There is no record in human history of a happy philosopher.

**Poverty**

Poverty may be an unescapable misfortune, but that no more makes it honourable than a cocked eye is made honourable by the same cause.

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**Prejudice**

One may no more live in the world without picking up the moral prejudices of the world than one will be able to go to hell without perspiring.

**Preparedness**

There is no record in history of a nation that ever gained anything valuable by being unable to defend itself.

**Prophets**

The prophesying business is like writing fugues; it is fatal to everyone save the man of absolute genius.



**Rebellion**

It doesn't take a majority to make a rebellion; it takes only a few determined leaders and a sound cause.

**Repentance**

The true physician does not preach repentance; he offers absolution.

**Riches**

The most valuable of all human possessions, next to a superior and disdainful air, is the reputation of being well-to-do.

**Stupidity**

It is the dull man who is always sure, and the sure man who is always dull.

**Time**

Time is a great legalizer, even in the field of morals.

**Truth**

Nine times out of ten, in the arts as in life, there is actually no truth to be discovered; there is only error to be exposed.

The smallest atom of truth represents some man's bitter toil and agony; for every ponderable chunk of it there is a brave truth-seeker's grave upon some lonely ash-dump and a soul roasting in hell.



# FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

*Thirty-second President of the United States (1882—1945)*





## **America**

We offer to every nation of the world the handclasp of the good neighbour. Let those who wish our friendship look us in the eye and take our hand.

As a nation, we may take pride in the fact that we are soft-hearted; but we cannot afford to be soft-headed.

Men are not prisoners of fate, but only prisoners of their own minds.

It is common sense to take a method and try it: If it fails, admit it frankly and try another. But above all, try something.

The followers of the philosophy of "let alone" decry measures of social welfare. What do they call them? They call them "paternalistic." All right, if they are paternalistic, I am a father.

## **Brotherhood**

There never has been, there isn't now, and there never will be, any race of people on the earth fit to serve as masters over their fellow men.

Whoever seeks to set one religion against another seeks to destroy all religion.

## **Civil Liberties**

The Bill of Rights was put into the Constitution not only to protect minorities against intolerance of majorities, but to protect majorities against the enthronement of minorities.



## **Democracy**

The ultimate failures of dictatorships cost humanity far more than any temporary failures of democracy.

## **Economic Morality**

It is an unfortunate human failing that a full pocketbook often groans more loudly than an empty stomach.

Faith is a delicate though powerful factor in our economic life.

People who are hungry and out of a job are the stuff of which dictatorships are made.

## **Education**

Education in its broader sense begins only after formal school education is finished.

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The truth is found when men are free to pursue it.

## **Government**

The whole cornerstone of our democratic edifice was the principle that from the people and the people alone flows the authority of government.

It is most difficult, if not impossible, for a government to raise and maintain in any field a standard higher than the public will support.

## **International Morality**

We look forward to a world founded upon four essential human freedoms.



The first is freedom of speech and expression—  
everywhere in the world.

The second is freedom of every person to worship God  
in his own way—everywhere in the world.

The third is freedom from want—  
everywhere in the world. The fourth is freedom from fear—  
anywhere in the world.

### **Social Justice**

We cannot be content, no matter how high the  
general standard of living may be, if some fraction  
of our people—whether it is one-third  
or one-fifth or one-tenth—is ill-fed, ill-clothed,  
ill-housed, and insecure.

We know that equality of individual ability has  
never existed and never will, but we do insist that  
equality of opportunity still must be sought.

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### **War**

Too many individuals want civilization at a discount.

It is useless to win battles if the cause  
for which we fight these battles is lost.

More than an end to war, we want  
an end to the beginnings of all wars.

The time to prepare for peace is at the height of war.

### **Youth**

We cannot always build the future for your youth,  
but we can build our youth for the future.







# JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

*India's first Prime Minister (1889—1964)*

## **Change**

The basic fact of today is the tremendous pace of change in human life.



## **Cooperation**

The law of life should not be the competition of acquisitiveness, but cooperation, the good of good of all.

## **Culture**

A culture that cannot understand modern times is an incomplete culture.

## **Decisiveness**

A person should have the capacity to think, to act, and to decide.

## **Democracy**

No democracy can exist for long in the midst of want and poverty and inequality.



### **Epitaph**

If anybody remembers me, I would like him to say this about me: "He was a man who was in love with India and the Indian people, and who received more than his share of their love."

### **Freedom**

Freedom demands respect for the freedom of others.

### **Harmony**

How can a person work if his head does not agree with his heart?

### **History**

You don't change the course of history by turning the faces of portraits to the wall.

### **Lincoln**

In our Indian stories and our Indian epics it is always said that the great man should be a man devoted to action and yet above action, not controlled by action but controlling action and remaining himself whether victory comes or defeat. Lincoln to a very large extent fulfils that ideal.

### **Machines**

The legend goes that Ravana had a thousand hands and a dozen heads. The machine gives a man a thousand hands and a dozen heads.



### **Man and God**

As a man progresses, God also progresses, for after all God is a creation of man's mind... A man's understanding cannot outstrip his intellect.

### **Materialism**

It is not that the material civilization was ingrained in the soil of Europe, and that it was not there in India. These ideas are the result of the time a country is passing through.

### **Neutrality**

Where freedom is menaced, or justice threatened, or where aggression takes place, we cannot and shall not be neutral.

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### **Science**

It is the children of science who have made the world of today.

### **Self-Esteem**

We should hold our heads high. Whatever we have to say need not be said with our heads bent and our eyes to the ground.

### **Slogans**

Raising a slogan cannot raise a person's stature.

### **Unanimity**

I do not think there was ever unanimity in the world.



# JOHN F. KENNEDY

*Thirty-fifth President of the United States (1917—1963)*





### **Age**

Whether I serve one term or two as President of the United States, I will leave office at what might be called an awkward age—too old to begin a new career and too young to write my memoirs.

### **Change**

You can't stand still in a hurricane.  
And hurricane winds of change are sweeping the world.

Time and the world do not stand still. Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or the present are certain to miss the future.



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### **Democracy**

The efforts of governments alone will never be enough. In the end, the people must choose and the people must help themselves.

### **Fate**

It is the fate of this generation... to live with a struggle we did not start, in a world we did not make. But the pressures of life are not always distributed by choice.

### **Government**

My experience in government is that when things are non-controversial, beautifully coordinated and all the rest, it must be that there is not much going on.



## **Heroism**

President Kennedy was asked by a little boy,  
“Mr. President, how did you become a war hero?”  
“It was absolutely involuntary. They sank my boat.”

## **Human Rights**

The same revolutionary beliefs for which  
our forefathers fought are still at issue  
around the globe—the belief that the rights of man  
come not from the generosity of the state  
but from the hand of God.

## **Ideas**

A man may die, nations may rise and fall, but an idea  
lives on. Ideas have endurance without death.

## **India**

Text of a letter to young Peter Galbraith, when his  
father, John Galbraith, was nominated as the new  
U.S. Ambassador to India:

Dear Peter:

I learned from your father that you are not anxious  
to give up your school and friends for  
India. I think I know a little bit about how you  
feel. More than 20 years ago, our family was similarly  
uprooted when we went to London, where my  
father was Ambassador.

My younger brother and sisters were about your age.  
They had, like you, to exchange new friends for old.  
For anyone interested, as your father says you are,  
in animals, India has the most fascinating possibilities.  
The range is from elephants to cobras, although  
I gather the cobras have to be handled professionally.  
P.S. I wish a little I were going also . . .



### **Leadership**

We don't want to be like the leader in the French Revolution who said, "There go my people. I must find out where they are going so I can lead them."

### **Liberty**

... Unless liberty flourishes in all lands, it cannot flourish in one.

Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, in order to assure the survival and success of liberty.

### **Negotiation**

Let us never negotiate out of fear.  
But let us never fear to negotiate.

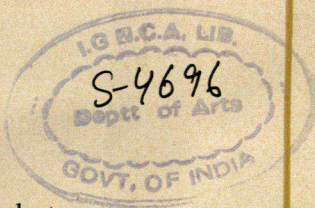
### **Responsibility**

And so, my fellow Americans: Ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country.

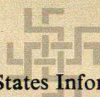
My fellow citizens of the world: Ask not what America will do for you, but what together we can do for the freedom of man.

We are not here to curse the darkness, but to light the candle that can guide us through that darkness to a safe and sane future.

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