

The Relevance of Jawaharlal Nehru
6th Lecture - by P N Haksar
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It is difficult to speak about Jawaharlal Nehru. So much has been written on him and about him - not least by himself. It would be futile on my part to isolate some significant aspect of Nehru and subject it to scholarly treatment. I felt, however that there might be perhaps some point in recording the impressions of a person who had been reacting to Jawaharlal Nehru every since he became conscious of the world around him, and who had the privilege to see him from afar as well as near and to serve under him.

The theme I have chosen for the lecture is "The Relevance of Jawaharlal Nehru" and I shall narrate how I, along with millions of my countrymen, became aware of Nehru.

Early glimpses of Nehru

I must have seen him for the first time for barely a few seconds. But the picture I have of him and of the day when I saw him is still sharply etched on my mind. I can see every detail despite the forty-three years which separate the event and its recollection.

I remember seeing the people of Allahabad streaming through its lanes, streets and mohallas; the streams converging and mingling to produce a surging humanity inundating every bit of land between the Ashram of Bharadwaj and beyond. I see the red brick wall of Anand Bhavan with a bit of history written on it in tar: NO WELCOME TO PRINCE. I can still feel the feverishness and the tenseness of long waiting; waiting for the dead body of Jawaharlal's father, Pandit Motilal Nehru, to arrive.

This happened on 6 February 1931, when I was a little over seventeen years of age. I was living in the hostel attached to the Government Intermediate College. The hostel faced the Malacca Jail. Its iron gates opened and closed like the jaws of some primordial beast, devouring a vast number of people. This experience linked itself to an earlier experience in 1920. We were in Nagpur. The house we lived in overlooked Dhantoli Park. In that Park the Indian National Congress held its session that year. My grandfather's brother, who stayed with us, attended the session. He was a Home Rule Leaguer. There were other visitors. The conversation was always full of references to Gandhi, Motilal Nehru, C R Das and Jawaharlal. A year passed. One day in 1921 my father returned home from court without his cap. It had apparently been consigned to the fire, because it was made in England!

And so I mingled with the crowd on 6 February 1931, rather more in response to a growing identification with the spirit of nationalism than to satisfy a curiosity or to participate in a funeral.

As the afternoon shadows lengthened, the funeral cortege arrived. Suddenly I glimpsed a face, and a hand resting on the body which was draped in the national tricolour. That is how I saw Jawaharlal Nehru - a mixture of myth and legend. That face and that hand got engraved in my memory even though I saw him from a distance and through the haze of dust raised by a million feet.

The second occasion when I saw Nehru was a few weeks later. I then saw him on a larger scale, as if in close-up, and for a longer duration. He was wearing a dhoti, a kurta and the jacket which has since become associated with his name. He wore a cap. His hands were clasped behind his back. He was looking down, slightly bent forward and listening intently to five or six young men. They were all from the University. I was passing by Thornhill Road and I stopped to look. I knew none of them and none of them knew me. Apparently this little group and Jawaharlal had just returned from Alfred Park where they had gone to see the tree

which by then had become a shrine. It was the tree behind which Chandrasekhar Azad had taken position to give battle to Nott-Bower and his police force. I cannot recollect what Nehru or these young men said. However, it was Nehru's face which arrested my gaze and I kept looking at it as one might look for hours at the changing shapes of the clouds after a monsoon shower. For the first time, I became aware of the importance of a person's face.

A man without a mask

The vast majority of us have no faces to show. We wear masks. Jawaharlal Nehru wore no mask. His face reflected every passing mood, feeling and emotion. Reading again through his autobiography I discovered the reason why his face was so sensitive. Contemplating the faces of Buddhist bhikshus (monks) Nehru reflects on the dilemma posed by his inner life and its outward manifestation. He observes:

The dominant expression of almost all of them (bhikshus) was one of peace and calm, a strange detachment from the cares of the world. They did not have intellectual faces, as a rule, and there was no trace of the fierce conflicts of the mind on their countenances. Life seemed to be for them a smooth flowing river moving slowly to the great ocean. I looked at them with some envy, with just a faint yearning for a haven, but I knew well enough that my lot was a different one, cast in storms and tempests. There was to be no haven for me, for the tempests within me were as stormy as those outside. And if perchance I found myself in a safe harbour, protected from the fury of the winds, would I be contented or happy there?

'The tempests within' were in all of us in varying intensity. Nehru articulated them. Others who came to Allahabad during the years I was at the University were confident men wearing masks untroubled by questions. No wonder they evoked so little response. Gandhi of course touched our hearts deeply but left our minds in a turmoil of unanswered questions.

Nehru defined the meaning and content of nationalism, and he saved it from introversion. He gave direction and purpose to the struggle for freedom. He gave a vision of India after freedom. Above all he discovered India for us so that we could feel that, whichever part of it we might come from the whole of it was ours. By presenting our own history to us as part of man's unceasing question, Nehru helped us to scale narrow 'domestic walls'.

All that relates to India's past. The question which is now being debated in India is: Does Nehru continue to be relevant to our contemporary concerns?

One hears a great deal today about the explosion of science and technology: people talk about the annihilation of distances, of the shrinkage of our world, of the conquest of the moon. All these are great and dramatic things. However, to my mind the greatest explosion in our contemporary world is the explosion of human consciousness. No longer is man's care bound by a few paternal acres; we must now take into account the depth and intensity of man's greater awareness, so that those who are concerned with the designing and engineering of societies and governments may be better able to cope with the turbulence of our times.

I am referring to this explosion of man's consciousness because it provides a backdrop to whatever I might have to say about Nehru. He was intensely sensitive to the turbulence of the human spirit and the deep yearnings which stir the depth of human beings.

Several questions arise in one's mind in relating Nehru to our contemporary times, and more especially to the solution of the problems with which India is beset.

What did Nehru seek to do? What did he seek to achieve? What was his design - his socio-architectural design - for India? One can answer these questions by reading his books and speeches over a period spanning nearly half a century.

One can gather a great deal about his vision by reading through the various significant resolutions adopted by the Indian National Congress beginning with its Karachi session in the Thirties, followed by the Avadi session in the Fifties and ending with the resolution passed by the Indian National Congress at its session in Bhubaneswar in the Sixties. One can also get a clear picture of Nehru's thought and vision, of his passion, of his design for India, by reading through the Constitution of India, more specially the Directive Principles enshrined as part of our Constitution.

One can read all this and yet fail to grasp what the entire pattern was? To understand this pattern one has to step aside and look at it as a whole. Only then one can see how Nehru wove into a pattern his dream for India.

The vastness of his enterprise

Jawaharlal Nehru was trying, in his own way, to consummate three processes of history which have been associated in the past with turmoil and violence. To a British audience familiar with its own history one could point out that Nehru was trying to span in a relatively brief period of time several centuries of social, economic, political and cultural development, which Britain witnessed from the latter half of the seventeenth century to 1918 when women were enfranchised. What he was trying to do was to carry out in India the transformation of a society from feudal to modern; from a society governed by concepts of status to a society governed by concepts of contract.

Our society, thousands of years old, frozen in a static mould for centuries and changing little in its structure, suddenly came face to face with the complex problems of life and living. The society needed change; it was governed far too rigidly, despite many protestant movements in India, by concepts of status determined by birth. It was tortured by its hierarchical divisions. Such a society could not face the challenges of the twentieth century. Jawaharlal Nehru was aware that he could not even begin to make a dent on our social structure and on the ideas and value systems which sustained it without, at the same time, changing the economy. This, in turn, meant bringing about an industrial revolution in India in a short space of time and carrying it through without causing excessive human suffering. And finally, Nehru was engaged in the difficult task of creating, out of a religio-cultural entity called India, a modern nation-state.

Analogies must not be pushed too far. But in terms of European experience, Nehru was trying to bring about the total process of social economic and political transformation of India. If you recall the history of Europe, if you recall the struggles for unification of Italy, if you recall the names of Cavour, of Garibaldi and of Mazzini, if you recall Britain's own efforts in this island for unification and the problems which the industrial revolution created, if you recall the writings of Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau; of Green and of Mill; of Adam Smith, Ricardo, Marx and Keynes; if you read all that Voltaire and Diderot said and if you put all these things together, you might get some idea of the vastness of the canvas which Jawaharlal Nehru was trying to paint. Only then can you measure his success or his failures, his relevance or irrelevance to India's present and the future.

Jawaharlal had a picture of the total transformation of India. He was acutely aware of the severe constraints which had no parallel in history and within which he had to function. What were these constraints? From the moment of its birth, the Indian political system ensured the widest democratic rights and liberties. But the Indian economy presented a picture of a wasteland. Whereas in Europe population as well as democratic rights and liberties grew with the growth of wealth, in India the situation was the other way round.

Need for historical perspective

Yet we began well in India. The state itself was established; its constitution was evolved with great care providing a realistic framework, and we were maintaining our unity in the midst of extreme diversity. Across our frontiers another state came into being and the two states started their careers at the same time, but on differing foundations. Nehru had the vision, the wisdom and the perception to see that a country like India, with its linguistic, cultural and ethnic diversities could not survive unless its policy rested on the principle of secularism

Without secularism as a binding force, as the common denominator uniting the citizens of India, we could not construct the policy of India. Nehru's constant reiteration of it and insistence upon it are responsible for our continued survival as an entity, even if some like to call India a marvel of organised chaos.

There are many among us whose moral sense is far in excess of their sense of history, more especially among the beneficiaries of contemporary affluent societies. I might remind them of the human condition prevailing in Britain itself not so long ago. I was witness to the hunger marches of the unemployed in the Thirties of this century. I have seen, too, the misery of the distressed areas. The state of affairs when Britain had almost completed her industrial revolution and founded an empire over which the sun never set was unbelievably barbaric. When Indian poverty and misery is described, it is well to remember that the phenomenon is not uniquely Indian. Somewhere between 1815 and 1855, in Britain too, 'men, women and children, in varying degrees, were wearing, breathing and drinking refuse.' The author of the *Industrial Society in England*, S G Checkland, describes the situation in the following grim words.

Old garments moved down the social scale and passed from peer to pauper at its nether end. The air was defiled with industrial and human effluvia. Water-courses became open sewers. Tipping and dumping were uncontrolled; there was a lack of depots for night soil. The sewage system was largely on the surface, courts were unpaved, the movement of air was blocked by crowded buildings. The builder might place the primitive privy where he wished, inside or outside the houses; when indoors the smells in winter were dreadful in houses tightly closed to keep warm, when outdoors women and children, unwilling to visit them in exposed places, became habitually constipated. Cemeteries gave off noxious smells and polluted the water supplies; tanneries, breweries, dyeing works, chemical plants, slaughter houses, and manure driers were uncontrolled in their disposal of waste matter, as gas, liquid or solid. The cesspool, 'that magazine of all contagions' as Farr described it, was still general. The children were the heaviest casualties. In the sixties about twenty-six out of every hundred died under the age of five; in the best districts the number was eighteen, in the worst it was thirty-six.

If, despite Indian poverty, democratic institutions and democratic processes continue to flourish in India, and show extraordinary strength even in the midst of extraordinary difficulties through which we pass from time to time, and we are certainly passing today, it is because of Nehru's insistence on secularism as a guiding principle not merely of state policy but of our thought processes and behaviour patterns.

The second important thing which Nehru grasped was that democracy in India had to be universal. It could not be restricted; it could not be qualified by some elitist concept on the facile assumption that only those who are educated are capable of exercising the franchise. In fact the experience of our elections during these twenty-five years has shown that there is no obvious correlation between political wisdom and formal education. And, from time to time, the Indian electorate has shown that despite poverty and deprivation, despite lack of formal

education, it can act with remarkable wisdom in times of distress, in times of crises and, more particularly, in recent times when the people of India have been experiencing extreme hardship and distress.

In a way, the battle for secularism and parliamentary democracy was relatively easy to win. After all, Nehru had thought about the problems of India and of Indian unification throughout his life. But the most difficult problem was to transform the barren wasteland of India living at the level of subsistence, with more than eighty percent of the people pressing on very limited land, and to convert the wasteland into green fields; to strike a balance between the town and the village. To stimulate economic growth and development in spite of the extreme paucity of resources was, and continues to be, our most difficult problem, and often an intractable one.

I need not dwell at length on what Jawaharlal Nehru did to encourage science and technology as a means of stimulating social and economic change. Lord Blackett, who knows far more about it than I do, has dwelt on this entire subject in his Nehru Memorial Lecture. Nehru saw clearly that if we are to span the centuries of backwardness the sovereign remedy lies in proper application and development of science and technology in India, and in making the correct choice of a mix of technologies appropriate to our country.

Nehru as a boundless source of encouragement.

To develop science is not easy. To apply it in the socio-cultural environment of a traditional India is even more difficult. Some of the difficulties were overcome because Nehru gave to science and technology his personal attention and passionate concern. He chose his men carefully; he sought counsel and advice, and Lord Blackett was one of his counsellors. In India today there is a vast accumulation of engineering talent of great variety and diversity. Within a short space of time, we have established competence in the field of designing, erecting and commissioning fairly complex industrial plants and machinery in some sophisticated fields. All this constitutes a tremendous national asset.

I know that science cannot grow in response to ministerial directives; that nurturing science is a delicate process. But Nehru had the capacity to recognize genius, as he did in the case of Dr Homi Bhabha. He gave him his blessing and asked him to go ahead. And he went ahead. To this day the structures and the norms Dr Bhabha created have endured, though he died soon after Nehru's death. That is one example of Nehru's durable contribution, and one which is of extreme relevance to our present and future.

I have briefly referred to the difficulties inherent in nurturing science and technology in a society where thought-processes were governed by traditional mores. Nehru was aware of these difficulties. He therefore never tired of speaking in his own simple way about the scientific temper, or of fighting irrationality. Those of us, whether in Government or outside, who had to cope with this irrationality with almost theological moulds of thinking had the satisfaction of knowing that in Jawaharlal Nehru we had a final court of appeal. We were never disappointed.

I would like to recall one incident. A young, unknown, film producer in India made a film putting into it all he had - not only his own senses and sensibility, emotion and feeling, but also the little money he had (he even pawned his wife's jewellery). My wife and I happened to see this film and we were both struck by its extreme beauty. We felt it was the kind of film which should be entered at one of the international film festivals. I found that the film had been made several years previously and that there was a ban against its being shown abroad. I made inquiries as to the reason for this extraordinary treatment. I was informed that as the film shows India's poverty, it was not suitable for being entered into foreign film festivals. A great battle ensued to have the order banning the film removed. Ultimately I had to go to the final court of appeal.

Nehru's reactions were spirited and I recall vividly what he said: 'What is wrong with showing India's poverty? Everyone knows that we are a poor country. The question is: Are we Indians sensitive to our poverty or insensitive to it? Satyajit Ray has shown it with an extraordinary sense of beauty and sensitiveness.' And with this final judgement, Satyajit Ray's film, *Pather Panchali* became world-famous. And Ray emerged as one of the great film producers of the world.

Thus secularism, rationality and a concern for the growth of science and technology imparted to an ancient India a new style of living and thinking. Nehru added to it the concept of planning. Whatever may have been the pitfalls of Indian planning, and there have been many, planning itself endures. If we in India want to overcome our problems it is only through the instrumentality of planning. Up and down the country, talking in simple language to millions upon millions of people, Nehru made planning and the concept of planning understandable, as he made secularism and democracy look part of India's heritage, and though planning has been attacked, both from the Right and from the Left, the broad fact remains that it is now the well-established means and mechanism for a total transformation of India.

All this does not mean that everything is lovely in the garden, that everything is perfect and that we have made no mistakes. Indeed in the realm of economics one thing is quite clear, that the seemingly economic problems are only part of the deeper problem of our society - its structure, function and value system. I am provoked to say this by a speech which Lord Balogh made in Hungary on 17 May 1973. In his own irreverent way he said that modern economics were irrelevant. He said that barely ten years ago there was an air of confidence among the economists of the world. Mathematics had come to economics and they thought economics was to be as predictable as physics. But in the affluent West, the sterling crises - about a dozen or so - and the dollar crises knocked the confidence out of economists, despite their sophistication.

Our economy does not lend itself to sophisticated handling in terms of conceptual apparatus of a Keynes or of a Leontief. Far too much of it is outside the organised sector and so we have to grope and search for a growth model suited to Indian conditions. To construct such a model is not easy. The various studies in developmental economics have not given any great insights. Our Second Plan was based upon a model prepared by that distinguished scientist and statistician, the late Professor P C Mahalanobis, a Fellow of the Royal Society.

With its emphasis on heavy industry and its linkages with power and transport, that model remains fairly valid. At any rate, the importance of that model lies in the fact that it mockingly reminds us of how far away we have gone from its actual implementation. The current Five Year Plan is, conceptually at any rate, a better model. And yet the model is not the problem. We have in our country some of the best economists one could hope for. It is not the model itself but how to correlate that model into a series of political and social policies that present hard choices; and this is where the difficulties arise. Despite these difficulties and despite the current situation which appears to be intractable, I have little doubt that given the necessary political will and with a forging of political instruments in India - this we have neglected in the past - the economic problems of India can be met and resolved.

To assess the continuing relevance of Jawaharlal Nehru, one has not merely to look into what he thought and did in the field of political structuring and the creation of a national state in India, or to his contribution towards national integration, economic development and the growth of science and technology, but also to see the impact he made on Indian art and culture. About this one hears so little.

In this field Jawaharlal Nehru made a distinctive personal contribution. The picture of arts and culture of India on the eve of independence was a desolate one. Nehru realised, to utter a cliché, that man does not live by bread alone, though bread is essential especially in a country like ours. He took a personal interest in stimulating the handicrafts of India. Their variety, richness beauty and quality can be traced to Nehru's personal encouragement of a wide variety of men and women who are engaged in reviving these dying crafts.

And not merely the handicrafts, but song and dance and drama and literature. He was president of the Sahitya Academy; and as its president he warned the Government over which he himself presided not to interfere with the creative activities of writers and artists in India. If today we visit even the much maligned city of Calcutta, we find it pulsating with creative activity of one sort and another; cinema, dance, drama, music, art and literature. Calcutta is the only city in India where poets sell their poetry in hundreds of thousands of copies in mini-books. Drama has revived. In my childhood it had reached total decline and degradation. Today, there is a new spirit among artists and craftsmen, poets, musicians, writers and all concerned with the theatre.

Democracy and non-alignment

Prime Ministership is too small a segment of time for any assessment. Anyone with the briefest acquaintance with history will know that the tasks which he set out to perform were of extraordinary difficulty. These tasks had taken other countries centuries to complete. As he reminded himself on the eve of his death he had 'many promises to keep and miles to go' before he slept: it was not as if he was unaware that in order to carry out the transformation of our society one needed a new instrumentality. But he was brought up prior to independence to regard maintenance of that unity in the midst of extreme diversity as so important that he felt that the Congress Party needed to be changed only with the greatest care. When one contemplates the entire panorama of history after the Second World War, one cannot fail to be struck by the durability of democracy in India as against its destruction in many parts of Asia, Africa and Latin America. This is a measure of the continuing relevance not only of Nehru's vision but of the work he did during seventeen years as Prime Minister.

May I now briefly touch upon Jawaharlal Nehru's contribution to the conceptual basis of India's foreign policy? In the world at large, the label of 'non-alignment' has got itself attached to our foreign policy. Perhaps it might be worthwhile to disentangle the phrase from the substance.

Soon after our independence we found the world divided and tortured by the Cold War, by a conflict of ideologies. Nehru rightly thought that the best thing for India was to keep out of it and to be non-aligned. But non-alignment was the means, at a particular time and in a particular place, to advance, to promote and to protect not just India's interests. For Nehru interpreted India's interests in a manner which did not conflict with the interest of maintaining world peace. And this idea of maintaining world peace was not only a moral imperative. Nehru saw very clearly that in the world as it is constituted today, and as it emerged immediately after the Second World War, war had ceased to be an instrument of policy; that the age of Clausewitz was over; that one could no longer talk of war being a legitimate instrument of policy; or of war being the continuation of politics by other means.

He saw that modern technology had made a nonsense of this concept, that even the structuring of a system of a balance of power was impossible. For, after all, the sanction behind any balance of power is war. So you come back to the fact that in the world of nuclear armament war cannot achieve anything except annihilation of the contestants. Therefore, why play around with outmoded notions of the past, of the nineteenth century when the balance of power was a legitimate function of the sovereign states of that time and of the technology of war at that time? That is why Nehru rightly said that the problem of foreign policy for every country,

including India, was so to interpret its national interest that it did not conflict with overall international interests. This he saw more clearly than anyone else I know. The world of today insistently demands co-operation and not conflict.

Nehru was maligned and misunderstood, more especially in 1952 during the period when Dulles appeared on the scene. But Nehru persisted. If today there is a feeling of detente, even if it is merely interpreted as an exercise in crisis management; if there is a degree of normalization of relations; if one is talking more of other problems than in the days of the Cold War, then I think we can rejoice in the fact that India, through Jawaharlal Nehru, made some little contribution to this relaxation and the development of something like peaceful co-existence. However, it would be unwise to think that detente has necessarily come to stay as a durable feature of international life. One has still to work hard to make it irreversible.

Nehru's testament

May I conclude by reading a small passage that Nehru once wrote: It will, I hope, explain such philosophy as he had of life and living. Actually, the idea of writing it originated in the United States when his publisher asked him way back in 1936 if he would write an essay on his philosophy of life.

He played with the idea, but did not write anything. When he had some spare time during his last imprisonment in the Ahmednagar prison between 1942 and 1944, he got around to writing it. It is a long passage in *The Discovery of India*. I would like to quote a portion of it to convey to you something of the flavour of his mind, of his spirituality of what he thought and what he felt. This is what he says:

What was my philosophy of life? I did not know. Some years earlier I would not have been so hesitant. There was a definiteness about my thinking and objectives then which has faded away since. The events of the past few years in India, China, Europe and all over the world have been confusing, upsetting and distressing, and the future has become vague and shadowy and has lost the clearness of outline which it once possessed in my mind.

This doubt and difficulty about fundamental matters did not come in my way in regard to immediate action, except that it blunted somewhat the sharp edge of that activity. No longer could I function, as I did in my younger days, as an arrow flying automatically to the target of my choice, ignoring all else but that target. Yet I functioned, for the urge to action was there and a real or imagined co-ordination of that action with the ideals I held. But a growing distaste for politics as I saw them seized me and gradually my whole attitude to life seemed to undergo a transformation...

Ends and means: were they tied up inseparably, acting and reacting with each other, the wrong means distorting and sometimes even destroying the end in view? But the right means might well be beyond the capacity of infirm and selfish human nature.

What then was one to do? Not to act was a complete confession of failure and a submission to evil; to act meant often enough a compromise with some form of evil, with all the untoward consequences that such compromises result in ...

My early approach to life's problems had been more or less scientific, with something of the easy optimism of the science of the nineteen and early twentieth century. A secure and comfortable existence and the energy and self-confidence I possessed increased that feeling of optimism. A kind of vague humanism appealed to me.

Science does not tell us much, or for the matter of that anything about the purpose of life. It is now widening its boundaries and it may invade the so-called invisible world before long and help us to understand this purpose of life in its widest sense, or at least give us some glimpses which illuminate the problem of human existence. The old controversy between science and religion takes a new form - the application of the scientific method to emotional and religious experiences.

And finally, Nehru comes to define what he considers to be his real problem:

The real problems for me remain problems of individual and social life, of harmonious living of a proper balancing of an individual's inner and outer life, of an adjustment of the relations between individual and between groups, of a continuous becoming something better and higher, of social development, of the ceaseless adventure of man. In the solution to these problems the way of observation and precise knowledge and deliberate reasoning according to the method of science must be followed. This method may not always be applicable in our quest of truth, for art and poetry and certain psychic experiences seem to belong to a different order of things and to elude the objective methods of science. Let us, therefore, not rule out intuition and other methods of sensing truth and reality. They are necessary even for the purpose of science. But always we must hold to our anchor of precise knowledge tested by reason... we must beware of losing ourselves in a sea of speculation unconnected with the day-to-day problems of life and the needs of men and women. A living philosophy must answer the problems of today.

If I may say so, philosophy in our contemporary world can be enriched by this testament of Nehru. There is a deep crisis in the world we live in, and there is an even deeper crisis in the realm of philosophy which is tending to degenerate into mere symbols with no meaning for the life we live or want to live. And so I have the conviction that even for those in our country or abroad who criticize Nehru for his failings, failures and weaknesses, his conceptual framework and what he actually achieved continue to be of great relevance today.

As far as I, with my limited understanding, can peer into the future, not merely of India but of mankind as a whole, I see that future depending desperately on the triumph of co-operation over conflict. Nehru deeply believed in this.

And he is of relevance. Mankind's future depends equally on freeing individual nations from the mythology of their own history so that it becomes part of the universal history of mankind. If this be true, then Nehru is of relevance. If the policies of tomorrow are to be freed from the corrosiveness of purely personal ambition and raised to the level of serving great causes - such as liberating men from poverty, disease and hunger, both of body and mind - then Nehru is of relevance. If kindness, magnanimity, gentleness, and concern for others are the virtues which should inform public life, then Nehru is of relevance.

With the passage of time, Nehru will be of greater relevance, and not merely to my country, but to the world at large. I have no doubt that so far as my own countrymen are concerned, more especially the younger generation to whom Nehru is a mere name, they will, in the fullness of time and in the measure they address themselves to the real problems of India's historic transformation, look to him and collect his ashes and canonize him as their patron saint.