

Balavikas Youth Competition 2024 Recitation

High School

Three Visions for India

I have three visions for India. In 3000 years of our history, people from all over the world have come and invaded us, captured our lands, conquered our minds. From Alexander onwards. The Greeks, the Portuguese, the British, the French, the Dutch, all of them came and looted us, took over what was ours. Yet we have not done this to any other nation. We have not conquered anyone. We have not grabbed their land, their culture, their history, tried to enforce our way of life on them. Why? Because we respect the freedom of others.

That is why my first vision is that of Freedom. I believe that India got its first vision of this in 1857, when we started the war of independence. It is this freedom that we must protect and nurture and build on. If we are not free, no one will respect us.

My second vision for India is development. For fifty years we have been a developing nation. It is time we see ourselves as a developed nation. We are among top 5 nations of the world in terms of GDP. Our poverty levels are falling, our achievements are being globally recognized today. Yet we lack the self-confidence to see ourselves as a developed nation, self-reliant and self-assured. Is this right?

I have a third vision. That India must stand up to the world. Because I believe that unless India stands up to the world, no one will respect us. Only strength respects strength. We must be strong not only as a military power but also as an economic power. Both must go hand-in-hand.

Why is the media here so negative? Why are we in India so embarrassed to recognize our own strengths, our achievements? We are such a great nation. We have so many amazing success stories but we refuse to acknowledge them. Why? We are the second largest producer of wheat in the world. We are the second largest producers in rice. We are the first in milk production. We are number one in remote sensing satellites. There are millions of such achievements but our media is only obsessed with the bad news and failures and disasters. In India we only read about death, sickness, terrorism, crime. Why are we so negative? Another question: Why are we, as a nation so obsessed with foreign things? We want foreign TVs, we want foreign shirts. We want foreign technology. Why this obsession with everything imported. Do we not realize that self-respect comes with self-reliance?

I was in Hyderabad giving a lecture when a 14 year old girl asked me for my autograph. I asked her what her goal in life is. She replied: "I want to live in a developed India." For her, you and I will have to build this developed India.

-Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam