

**NATURE OF SOCIAL REFORMATION  
AND  
SPIRITUAL UPLIFTMENT  
IN VIVEKANANDA'S PHILOSOPHY**

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## PREFACE -----

In the work entitled "Nature of social reformation and spiritual upliftment in Vivekananda" I have tried to mention and evaluate Swami Vivekananda's views on Religion, Spirituality, Education, culture etc. I have tried to show that being a vedantin, Vivekananda tried to uplift the ignorant down-trodden masses in the light of Vedantic identity of soul. With the same spirit he tried to solve the problems of individual and society, nationalism and internationalism spiritualism and secularism. Thus Vivekananda appears to me, as a great synthesizer of different values. At the same time he is a great lover of humanity, a lover of human freedom, a revolutionary against any kind of torture on humanity. He is a God- intoxicated man with a love for humanity. An all - extensive realization of this truth led him to serve man as God. 'Service to humanity is a way to serve God'---this motto inspired him. In his message, I find how a renouncer of the world becomes an important active factor of the world. This appears to me a great trait of Vivekananda's life and this attracts me very much. With all my limitations I have tried to give a faithful account of Swami Vivekananda's views and activities. In this respect I like to say that to complete my work, I have received the valuable suggestions help and guidance from my Professors. Dr. Usharanjan Chakroborty, Ex-Reader Department of Philosophy, North Bengal University and present Professor and Head, Dr. Raghunath Ghosh, Department of Philosophy, North Bengal University. I owe my life-long gratitude to both of them. I pray to the Almighty their healthy and prosperous life.

(Sutapa Banerjee)

# CHAPTER-I

## CHAPTER- I

### **SOCIAL PICTURE OF NINETEENTH CENTURY AND RENAISSANCE - A SHORT HISTORY**

Swami Vivekananda was a many- sided personality or rather 'a many- sided genius. The life and teaching of the Swamiji may be described as having a twofold import. First, he was a religious rejuvenator and reformer - 'a powerful preacher of the Vedanta'. Secondly he was a sociological thinker. For the Swamiji, however, there was no such duality in his role. Although some analysis of the character and also of the evolution of the Indian renaissance may be found necessary in comprehending the role of Swami Vivekananda in it.

#### **The Hindu Renaissance**

The renaissance came to India towards the middle of the nineteenth century. Till then priest craft reigned supreme and people continued to be exploited in the name of religion.

The mildly pro-Hindu policy of the British whetted the avidity of the Hindus for things from the west from the very beginning, but after the western contact, Bengali intellect began to measure the exotic commodities with the indigenous ones recovered from the depth of the past. Only then began the period of true renaissance in India. The contact with the west through 'new education' and Christian culture and a critical outlook against the prevalent superstitions of the Hindu life necessitated reformation and that spirit created an atmosphere which ultimately resulted in the renaissance. The three movements, viz: Socio religious, literary and national movements.

## **SURVEY OF THE INDIAN RENAISSANCE**

### **(A) THE SOCIO - RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT**

#### **Raja Rammohan Roy**

Raja Rammohan Roy has been called 'the father of the Indian Renaissance', 'the pioneer of Indian Renaissance', 'the messenger of the Indian renaissance' and so on. He was a brilliant master mind. The greatness of Rammohan Roy lay in overcoming the all- pervasive hold exercised by jumble on society and arriving at the rational creed of theism.

Rammohan Roy gave to his countrymen the basis of an eclectic religion. He was a universalist in religious matters. The religion he preached was neither tribal nor national in character. It was of a universal nature. Rammohan Roy tried to stop polygamy practiced by *Kulins* and fought for legal rights for Hindu women. Another important work of Rammohan Roy was to publish and translate into Bengali the work of Mrityunjayacharya named *Vajrasuchi*. It is a terrible polemic against caste system.

Rammohan Roy translated five Upanishads and established in 1820 a 'Veda School' for the study of the Vedas. In doing this he was anticipating the desire of Swami Vivekananda regarding the revival of our ancient scriptures and their study. The idea of starting this school was to preach Hindu monotheism.

In his political view Rammohan Roy was largely an upholder, rather a worshipper of western ideals, especially of those values that are associated with liberalism. In short, he stood for rights of men and women in particular and vehemently protested against any encroachment upon them. He had a liberal faith that human progress could be ensured by conscious human effort, but he lacked the optimist's belief of the Benthamite variety that this could be done by legislation alone.

## David Hare

To discuss the Young Bengal, a reference must be made to David Hare, (1775-1842) the agnostic Scottish watch-maker to whom the missionaries refused a Christian burial. He was guided by altruism pure and simple. His philanthropy and selfless service to the cause of suffering humanity in this country made abiding impression upon the minds of the Bengalis in the neighbourhood. But his altruism was mainly flown by education. The new education which was largely instrumental in ushering in the Renaissance in Bengal owes its origin very much to him. He established Hindu College, the Academic Association of the Derozians etc. He encouraged female education. To Swami Vivekananda, Hare was not only 'one of the educators of Bengal' but also one who made service his religion. Hare was therefore, in the Swamiji's eyes, a *Karmayogin*.

## The Derozians

The name of Henry Louis Vivian Derozio demands close attention in the history of this spread of education. Half-European and half-Indian by birth, he was still in his teens when appointment was given to him as teacher in the Hindu College. He was an intellectual prodigy and the Nineteenth Century Renaissance in Bengal owed much to him.

## Iswarchandra Vidyasagar

Pandit Iswarchandra Vidyasagar had a towering personality who had left an indelible impress on the Bengal Renaissance. Character, courage, discipline and wide human sympathy - which could be equated with humanism itself - made him what he was. He directed his attention to many social evils but his most memorable crusade was for widow-remarriage. Indeed he was incapable of group-action and had supreme faith in his own ability and also in his personal infallibility. This is a very important trait in a Renaissance personality, because it signifies the emancipation of the rugged ego of the individual.

## Keshabchandra Sen

Keshabchandra Sen formed a new organisation called the Brahmo Samaj of India in 1866. He made Brahmoism, especially, in its social implication, a great- force and not only all over Bengal but also other parts of India by undertaking missionary tours to Bombay, Madras and North Western provinces. His social reform movement included, besides widow- remarriage, female education, temperance and castelessness. He was regarded as the one who made the middle class Brahmo organisation broad based for the first time.

## Sri Ramakrishna

Sri Ramakrishna (1836-86) differs from the socio-religious personalities referred to above. In that he was farthest from a scholar; he was an illiterate person. Consequently he had no opportunity to turn either to Western Philosophy or the Vedas. But his spiritual experiences were rich and varied which convinced him that "all religions must be true, all being but different paths leading to the one goal which is to realize the absolute oneness of all things in the one Brahman." He taught nothing new, but he was 'the embodiment of all past religious thought of India.'

Ramakrishna was not interested in formulations of theology; for him religion meant experience - realization. He was not an abolitionist; he did not seek to reform Hindu Society; the sole aim of his teaching was to make others realize divine potentialities in themselves. Thus in his hands, philosophical apotheosis of man, which is the very definition of Renaissance, received its final emphasis in the Indian Renaissance movement.

## B. THE LITERARY MOVEMENT

### Bankimchandra Chatterjee

The literary movement endorses in no less measure the view that the Indian Renaissance in its genesis and first stages of development was essentially both Bengali and Hindu in character. Here also the credit of pioneering goes to Raja Rammohan Roy. And the chief architect of the literary renaissance was Bankimchandra Chatterjee, who was called the greatest intellect and literary man of the period.

Bankimchandra was one of the pioneers of Neo-Hinduism. He, in the words of Bipin Chandra Pal, "Openly attempted 'a re-examination, a re-interpretation and a re-adjustment' of our old theology and ethics in the light of the most advanced modern thought and in accordance with new rules of literary criticism and scriptural interpretation that had been so powerfully influencing current religious life and thought in Christendom itself".

Bankimchandra's contribution to the national movement was no less significant. Indeed his literary pursuit was represented by and large a national movement. Through his quasi-historical novels he sought to give and did actually give Bengalis a sort of their own history and aroused in them a kind of pride in their past.

## **Michael Madhusudan Dutta**

Michael Madhusudan Dutta (1824-73), who was denationalized and outlandish Neo-Derozian, first struck the note of humanism in literature. Revivalism through literature also owed a lot to Michael.

### **C. NATIONAL MOVEMENT**

Flow of national consciousness in the life of the Indian people is perceivable practically from the beginning of their contact with the west, but what has been designated by Tagore as the 'national movement that was not fully political' took shape only after the great revolt of 1857.

## **Surendranath and Tilak**

Surendranath first organized a student's movement and then through the India Association, established in 1876, started the campaign for political emancipation. Through this association, the country was able to demonstrate that her people, notwithstanding their differences in other fields, 'could combine and unite for the attainment of their common political ends'<sup>1</sup>. It has been said that

Surendranath 'opened the way for the united political efforts of an awakened India.'

Unlike Surendranath, Bal Gangadhar Tilak had a political outlook from his college days. Immediately after coming out of college he, with a few friends, started two newspapers the Mahratta in English and Keshari in Marathi. He wrote trenchant articles in his papers. He adopted other methods for providing a common national platform for all classes of Hindus. He was after Purna Swaraj and nothing less and in his opinion, things like social reform would not take long in coming once Swaraj was won. As a political leader Tilak was the first to look to the masses and the common millions and his forum was the village Mandap.

## **MUSLIM RE-AWAKENING AND CRISIS** **IN THE INDIA RENAISSANCE**

The Hindu national renaissance came to face the challenge from Islamic revivalism, and brought about by the Aligarh Movement. The movement fostered a common ideology for the Indian Muslims and provided them with a common intellectual background.

Under Sir Syed Ahmed the Aligarh Movement regarded the Congress as inimical to true Muslim interests and helped to develop considerable anti-Hindu bias among the Muslims. This resulted in growing alienation of the Muslims from the Hindus. Thus it stood in the way of unity of the national movement, and the Indian renaissance came to face a crisis.

### Swami Vivekananda

Vivekananda came with a message and a mission, each projected into the other, each coloured by the other in such a way as to make an amalgam which not only more than restored the Renaissance to its original character, described as 'preservation by reconstruction', but sought to provide for it, in all its aspects, a super scheme of unity.

In the traditional Indian thought freedom is viewed as personal liberation or salvation. In a masterly way Vivekananda incorporated into it the Western idea of Social and Political liberty. Neo-Vedanta therefore stands for all-round freedom - 'Physical and Mental, Material and Psychological as well as Political and Social'. It is thus 'a sense of the whole, an integrity of life,' that Neo-Vedanta Philosophy primarily seeks to convey. Synthesis of values, recognition of universalism in theological, cultural, social and political outlook, uplift of the masses etc., follow from this as natural corollaries.

Thus it is individual perfection which forms the bedrock of Neo-Vedanta scheme of unity and it implies an upheaval in the realm of spirit or a spiritual revolution. Leaders of the Indian renaissance beginning from Rammohan wanted to build up a strong, vigorous social order characterized by freedom, equality and justice. This, they realized, could be done only on the basis of a rational, living faith – a national religion. Rammohan endeavored to create it through a sort of Vedantism which sought to work out a synthesis between the Sankara and Ramanuja schools. Swami Vivekananda also proposed Vedanta for the purpose, and in this matter he was eloquent in acknowledging his debt to Rammohan. But Raja Rammohan's Vedanta and the Swamiji's Vedanta are two quite different things. The Raja Rammohan's Vedanta was, in the words of B.C. Pal, 'a pure, rational, regulative principle, the Swamiji's was on the other hand, a liberating gospel in full sense of the term'.

## Reference

1. Surendra Nath Banerjee, *A nation in making. Advaita Ashrama*, pp.42 ff.

## **CHAPTER- II**

## CHAPTER- II

### A SHORT BIOGRAPHY OF NARENDRANATH (SWAMI VIVEKANANDA)

Swami Vivekananda was born in the famous Dutta family of Simla, in Calcutta. His family name was Narendranath Dutta. His grandfather, Durga Charan Dutta was a gifted man, well versed in Persian and Sanskrit language and had a great aptitude for law. But at the age of twenty five, after the birth of his son, Vishwanath, he renounced worldly life and became a monk. Vishwanath Dutta, father of Swami Vivekananda, was also endowed with many qualities of head and heart, for which he commanded great respect from one and all. He was proficient in English and Persian language and took delight in the study of the Bible and the poems of the Persian Poet Hafiz. He took to law as a profession and became a successful attorney-at-law in the High Court of Calcutta. He was a man of deep compassion and great sympathy and his charity very often knew no discrimination. Vishwanath was a great lover of music and had a very good voice.

Vishwanath was blessed with a wife Bhuvaneshwari Devi who was his peer in all respect. She won the respect and veneration of all who

came in contact with her and her judgment was followed in the conduct of all affairs that mattered. Calm resignation to the will of God in all circumstances, strength and reserved nature characterised this Hindu women. The poor and the helpless were the special objects of her solicitude.

Of such parents was born, on Monday the 12th January 1863, Narendranath who afterwards as Swami Vivekananda shook the world and ushered in a new age of glory and splendour for India.

The influence of the mother in the formation of the character and the development of the mind of a child is always very great. Naren learnt the Epics and Puranas from his mother, who was a good story teller. He also inherited her memory among other qualities. He, in fact, owed much to her as he used to say later. Naren was all-round. He could sing, was good at sports, had a ready wit, his range of knowledge was extensive, had a rational frame of mind and he loved to help people. He was a natural leader. He was much sought after by people because of his various accomplishments.

Naren passed Entrance Examination from the Metropolitan Institution and F.A. and B.A. Examinations from the General Assembly's Institution [now Scottish Church College]. Philosophy was the first priority with him and Hastie, Principal of the college,

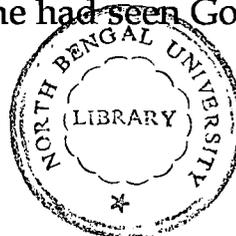
was highly impressed by Naren's philosophical insight. It was from Hastie that he first heard of Sri Ramakrishna.

As a student of Philosophy, the question of God very much haunted his mind. Was there a God? If there was a God, what did He like? What were man's relations with Him? Did He create this world which was so full of anomalies? He discussed these questions with many, but no one could give him satisfactory answers. He looked to persons who could say that they had seen God, but found none. Meanwhile, Keshab Chandra Sen had become the head of the *Brahmo* Movement. He was a great orator and many young people, attracted by his oratory, enrolled as members of the *Brahmo Samaj*. Naren also did the same. For some time he was satisfied with what the *Brahmo Samaj* taught him. But soon he began to feel that it did not quite touch the core of the matters, so far as religion was concerned. A relative of him used to advise him to visit Ramakrishna at Dakshineswar, who, he said, would be able to remove all his doubts about religion. He happened to meet Ramakrishna at the house of a neighbour, but there is nothing on record about the impression that he created on Naren's mind. He, however invited Naren to visit him at Dakshineswar some day. As the days passed, Naren began to grow restless about the various riddles that religion presented to him. He particularly wanted to meet a person who could talk about God with the authority of personal experience. Finally, he went to Ramakrishna one day and asked him straightaway if he had seen God. He said, he

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had, and if Naren so wished, he could even show God to him. This naturally took Naren by surprise. But he did not know what to make of it, for though his simplicity and love of god impressed Naren, his idiosyncrasies made him suspect if Ramakrishna was not a "monomaniac". He began to watch him from close quarters and after a long time he was left in no doubt that Ramakrishna was an extraordinary man. He was the only man he had so far met who had completely mastered himself. Then, he was also the best illustration of every religious truth he preached. Naren loved and admired Ramakrishna but he never surrendered his independence of Judgment. Interestingly, Ramakrishna himself did not demand it of him, or of any other of his disciples. Nevertheless, Naren gradually came to accept Ramakrishna as his master.

Ramakrishna suffered from cancer and passed away in 1886. During his illness, a group of select young men had gathered round him and began to nurse him while receiving spiritual guidance from him. Naren was the leader of this group. Ramakrishna had wanted that they take to monastic life and had symbolically given them *gerua* (saffron) cloth. They accordingly founded a monastery at Baranagar and began to live together, depending upon what they got by begging. Sometimes they would also wander about like other monks. Naren also would sometimes go travelling. It was while he was thus travelling that he assumed the name of Swami Vivekananda.

Vivekananda travelled extensively through India. Sometimes by train sometimes on foot. He was shocked to see the conditions of rural India –people are ignorant, superstitious, half-starved, and victims of caste-tyranny. If this shocked him, the callousness of the so-called educated upper classes shocked him still more. In the course of his travels he met many princes who invited him to stay with them as their guest. He met also city-based members of the intelligentsia – lawyers, teachers, journalists and government officials. He appealed to all to do something for the masses. No one seemed to pay any heed to him-except the Maharaja of Mysore, the Maharaja of Khetri and a few young men of Madras. Swami Vivekananda impressed on every body the need to mobilize the masses. A few educated men and women could not solve the problems of the country; the mass power had to be harnessed to the task. He wanted the masses to be educated. The ruler of Mysore was among the first to make primary education free within his state. This, however, was not enough in Swamiji's view. A peasant could not afford to send his children to school, for he needed their help in his field. He wanted education taken to the peasant's door-step, so that the peasant's children could work and learn at the same time. It was a kind of 'non-formal' education which perhaps he much thought he had given to the subject and how original he was.

Other princes, or the intelligentsia, as a whole, were impressed by Swamiji's personality, but were much too engrossed with their own

affairs to pay any heed to his appeals. Some of the young men of Madras, Alasinga Perumal specially, dedicated himself to the ideals Swamiji propounded and his contributions to the success of his mission were significant. Swamiji could guess the reason why the so-called leaders of society ignored him. Who was he? A mere wandering Monk. There were hundreds of such Monks all over the country. Why should they pay any special attention to him? By and large, they followed only Western thinkers and those Indians who followed the west and had had some recognition in the west by doing so. It was slave mentality, but that was what characterized the attitude of the educated Indians over most matters. It pained Swamiji to see Indians strutting about in western clothes and imitating western ways and manners, as if that made them really western. Later he would call out to the nation and say: 'Feel proud that you are Indians even if you are wearing a lion-cloth.' He was not opposed to learning from the west, for he knew the western people had some great qualities and it was because of those qualities that they had become so rich and powerful. He wanted India to learn science and technology from the west and its power to organize and its practical sense, but, at the same time, retain its high moral and spiritual idealism. But the selfishness of the so-called educated people pained him more. They were happy if they could care for themselves and they gave a damn to what happened to other people. Swamiji wanted to draw their attention to the miserable condition of the masses-

illiterate, always on the verge of starvation, superstitious and victims of oppression by the upper castes and the rich landlords.

As Swamij arrived in Madras, young people gathered round him drawn by his bright looks and inspiring talks. They begged him to go to the USA to attend the forthcoming Parliament of Religions in Chicago to represent Hinduism. They even started raising funds for the purpose. Swamiji was at first reluctant but later felt some good might come out of his visit to the west, for if he could make some impression there, his people back at home, who always judged a thing good or bad according as the Western critics thought of it, would then give him a respectful hearing. That is exactly what happened: Swamiji made a tremendous impression, first in the USA and then also in England. The press paid him the highest tributes as an exponent of Indian's age-old values; overnight he became a great national hero in India. Suddenly it was brought home to them that there must be something in India thought that Western intelligentsia feels compelled to admire. Slowly but inevitably, they began to revise their opinions about their own country and civilization. They began to suspect that perhaps they were not as backward as they once thought, and in areas like religion and philosophy, in art and literature, they were perhaps more advanced than the western people. They had always felt sorry about themselves, but, now for the first time, they awoke to the richness of their heritage. This was the starting point of the Indian renaissance one hears about. A long

succession of national leaders starting from Tilak have drawn inspiration from Swami Vivekananda. They discovered India - her strong and weak points - through him. 'If you want to know India, study Vivekananda', was Tagore's advice to Romain Rolland. This holds true even today. Indeed, no one has studied India's body and mind so thoroughly as Swamiji did.

He described India's neglect of the masses as a national sin. Next to this was the sin of neglecting the womanhood. Caste, in its present form, was yet another sin. India's ethnic and religious pluralism did not worry him, for India had always sought her unity in love and respect to different sects and communities. He saw socialism coming and he welcomed it- for India as for the rest of the world. The *Sudras*, i.e. the working people, were sure to come to power and in order that the transition might be peaceful he asked the Brahmins, i.e. the intelligentsia, to pave the way to it. Lest any culture decline occur following this shift he wanted to deluge the country with spiritual thought.

It was Swamiji's hope that India would create a new social order and a new civilization by combining her best spiritual traditions with the latest advancement in science and technology. She would be rich both materially and spiritually. He knew that affluence was not enough; a mental man would have to be a spiritual man too. He

wanted India to set an example in respect of a life high and greater than the present one.

## **CHAPTER - III**

## CHAPTER- III

### MOULDING OF FUTURE VIVEKANANDA THROUGH WANDERINGS

#### Introduction

It was on August 16, 1886, that Sri Ramakrishna passed away leaving his disciples in deep gloom. After the death of the master, Vivekananda began to organize these disciples into a monastic brotherhood. He went to the homes of those boys who had resumed their studies, and by a whirlwind of enthusiasm, tried to induce them to return to Baranagar where the first monastery of the Ramakrishna order was started. One by one the young disciples joined together and ultimately bounded themselves into a holy brotherhood under the inspiring leadership of Vivekananda. Vivekananda always spurred them on to burning renunciation and intense devotion. With the delight of a martyr these Monks practised the severest of spiritual austerities, and the world had no meaning for them at that time.

That he had a mission in life Vivekananda was conscious of, or at least was made conscious of, by Sri Ramakrishna. But he could not be sure for a long time, after the demise of Sri Ramakrishna what that

mission actually was. He wrote to Babu Pramadas Mitra of Benaras in July, 1889: "By the will of God, the last six or seven years of my life have been full of constant struggles..... I have been vouchsafed the ideal *Shastra*; I have seen the ideal man; and yet fail myself to get on with anything to the end- this is my profound misery."

The mission appeared in a very dim way to be the good of his own people or, rather, 'the good of mankind'. But he hovered between service to the country and the world and what Rolland called his 'passion for the divine gulf'. Vivekananda remained in such a tension for a considerable time-that was, the tension between *Dharma* and *Moksha*. Finally, however, 'the passion for the divine gulf' appeared to be too state to him, for he clearly perceived that 'it is more blessed to give than to receive' or, in the words of Sister Nivedita, 'to protect another is infinitely greater than to attain salvation'. He further realized that it was the essence of Sri Ramakrishna's philosophy of life. A perfected soul as he was, Sri Ramakrishna was only after giving and never after receiving.

After he had understood Ramakrishna thus, Vivekananda concluded that eschatological *Moksha* was not for him. He then definitely cast his decision in favour of *Dharma* - selfless service to the people to which he was committed by his *sannyasa*. Vivekananda chose, in the words of Rolland, 'the service of God in man'. Since the term 'man'

had special reference to his own people, this hour signalled the birth of Vivekananda, the patriot. But since he had not yet consciously dedicated himself to the wretched masses of his country, even though he had chosen 'the service of God in man', the tension seems to have persisted. It was over only after the dedication had been made. Then he fully realized that service as *Dharma* is a means to *moksha-moksha* is realizable through *karma* too.

## [ I ]

Soon a tendency to embrace a wandering life, according to the traditions of Monks, was most irresistibly felt by most of these young Monks. Vivekananda, in spite of his anxiety to maintain the ties of uniting the brotherhood, was himself tormented with the same desire to strike out in to the unknown paths of the monk's life and to lose himself in the silence of the wild, under the wide Canopy of heavens. Vivekananda resisted the call to flight for two years and apart from his short visits to some neighbouring places, he practically remained at Baranagar until 1888. But he was determined to break away from the Monastery to test his own strength, together experiences of a new life, to make himself absolutely fearless, and at the same time to force his brother - disciples to learn self-reliance and to stand-alone. He therefore suddenly Left Calcutta in 1888 and went to Vanarasi,

Ayodhya, Lucknow, Agra, Vrindaban, Hathras, and the Himalayas. At the railway station of Hathras he quite unintentionally made Sharad Chandra Gupta, the Stationmaster, and his disciple, who afterwards took the name of Sadananda. Sharat Chandra, without a moment's hesitation, left his hearth and home and followed the Swami gladly in his itinerancy through the hills. For some time both were lost in the silence of the Himalayas and were almost dead to outside world. But physical hardship and severe spiritual austerities undermined their health; both had to come back to the Baranagar Monastery after gathering manifold experiences.

After a year the Swamiji again went out and visited, among other places, Ghazipur. During his stay at Ghazipur, he met the illustrious saint Pavhari Baba who had attained to great spiritual heights through hard austerities and yogic practices. Despite the useful lessons, which he was able together from his travels, his heart still panted for a life of absolute freedom from all external frammels. He wanted to plunge into the depths of the Himalayas to acquire through extreme forms of mental discipline a tremendous spiritual power which would enable him to carry on his Master's mission without hindrance. With this end in view he broke loose at the beginning of July 1890, this time for many years, from the Baranagar Monastery. Swami Akhandananda, one of his brother disciples, who had just returned from his Tibetan travels with a fund of wonderful experiences of the life and manners of the people of the Himalayas,

became his companion at Varanasi Swamiji wrote to his friend, Pramadadas Mitra, a great Sanskrit scholar, 'I am going away; but I shall never come back until I can burst on society like a bomb and make it follow me like a dog.' From the moment he left Calcutta he was happy. The solitude, the village air, the sight of new places, the meeting with new people and getting rid of old impressions and worry delighted him. When they reached the Himalayas, the splendid scenery with its waterfalls, streams wild forests and its serenity and quietude and above all, its invigorating atmosphere buoyed up the spirit of the Swamiji, and the occasional glimpses of the eternal snows filled his heart with unspeakable emotion and joy. They wanted to go to Kedarnath and Badrikashrama, but they had to give up their idea of visiting those ancient places of pilgrimage as the road was closed by the government on account of famine.

By February 1891, the Swamiji finally became a solitary Monk and began his historic wandering of two years through India. He wandered, free from any plan, constantly with the thought of God in his mind. The Swami, in the course of his pilgrimage around India, met with all sorts and conditions of men and found himself today a despised beggar sheltered by pariahs or a brother of the oppressed identifying himself in keen sympathy with their misery and tomorrow a guest of the princes, conversing on equal terms with prime ministers and Maharajas and probing the luxury of the great and awakening care for the public weal in their torpid hearts.

First he visited Rajputana, the land of heroes, where he met some of the most enlightened Princes of the day. While at Alwar the Swamiji had a very interesting discussion with Prince Mangal Singh. The Maharaja asked the Swamiji, 'well, I have no faith in idol worship. I cannot worship wood, earth, stone or metal like other people. Does this mean that I shall fare worse in the life hereafter? The eyes of the Swamiji alighted on a picture of the Maharaja which was hanging on the wall. At his express desire it was passed to him. Holding it in his hand, the Swamiji asked, 'whose picture in this?' The *Dewan* answered, 'it is the likeness of our Maharaja.' A moment later those present trembled with fear when they heard the Swamiji commanding the *Dewan* to spit on it. The *Dewan* was thunder-struck and the eyes of all glanced in terror and awe from the prince to the Monk, from the Monk to the prince. But all the while the Swamiji insisted, 'Spit on it! I say, spit on it!' And the *Dewan* in fear and bewilderment cried out, 'what! Swamiji! What are you asking me to do? This is the likeness of our Maharaja. How can I do such a thing?' 'Be it so', said the Swamiji, 'But the Maharaja is not bodily present in this photograph. This is only a piece of paper. It does not contain his bones and flesh and blood. It does not speak or behave or move in any way as does the Maharaja. And yet all of you refuse to spit on it, because you see in this photo the shadow of the Maharaja's form. Indeed, in spitting upon the photo, you feel that you insult your master, the prince himself.' Turning to the Maharaja, he continued: 'see, your Highnesses, though this is not you in one sense, in another

sense it is you. That was why your devoted servants were so perplexed when I asked them to spit upon it. It has a shadow of you; it brings you into their minds. One glance as it makes them see you in it! Therefore they look upon it with as much respect as they do upon your own person. Thus it is with the devotees who worship stone and metal images of Gods and Goddesses. It is because an image brings to their minds their Ista or some special form and attribute of the Divinity, and helps them to concentrate that the devotees worship God in an image. They do not worship the stone or the metal as such. Everyone, O, Maharaja is worshipping the same one God who is the Supreme Spirit, the soul of pure knowledge. And God appears to all according to their understanding and their representation of Him'. The Maharaja who had been listening attentively all this time said with folded hands: 'Swamiji! I must admit that according to the light you have thrown upon image worship, I have never yet met anyone who had worshipped stone or wood or metal. therefore I did not understand its meaning. You have opened my eyes.'

This is but one of the numerous instances to show what illuminating discourse the Swamiji had, in the course of his tour, with men of learning and influence and how, with his characteristic frankness and boldness, he told all whatever he felt to be true and proper in the inmost core of his heart. But occasions were not wanting when the Swamiji learnt lessons of the highest wisdom even from the lowliest and the lost. One instance would suffice. Just before the Swamiji's

departure for the West, the Maharaja of Khetri, who had already become his initiated disciple, accompanied the Swamiji as far as Jaipur. On this occasion the Maharaja was being entertained one evening with music by a *nautch* - girl. The Swamiji was in his own tent when the music commenced. The Maharaja sent a Message to the Swamiji asking him to come and joins the party. The Swamiji sent word in return that as a *Sannyasin* he could not comply with such a request. The singer was deeply grieved when she heard this, and sang in reply, as it were, a song of the great *Vaishnava* saint, *Sudras'*. Through the still evening air, to the accompaniment of music, the girl's melodious voice ascended to the ears of the Swamiji.

The Swamiji was completely overwhelmed. The woman and her meaningful song at once reminded him that the same Divinity dwells in the high and the low, the rich and the poor - in the entire creation. The Swamiji could no longer resist the request, and took his seat in the hall of audience to meet the wishes of the Maharaja. Speaking of this incident later, the Swamiji said, 'That incident removed the scales from my eyes. Seeing that all our indeed the manifestations of the one, I could no longer condemn anybody.'

The Swamiji's itinerancy led him through almost all the historic places of Rajputana, Bombay state, and southern India till at last he reached Kanyakumari in all probability on 23rd December 1892. No

doubt, every moment of these travels of his with an open mind for several years throughout the length and breadth of India - from the dreamy poetic regions of the snow - capped Himalayas down to Kanyakumari, the last promontory of the land where the mighty ocean spreads out into infinity - were eventful. All these wandering had a great educational value for him , opening up, as it did, opportunities for original thought and observation, the most striking element in all of which was his tireless search for unity in the world of Indian ideals. Nevertheless, it was at Kanyakumari that his pilgrimage throughout his motherland and his days and months of thought on the problem of the Indian masses bore fruit.

Happy as a child is to be back with its mother, so was the Swamiji when he prostrated before the image of the Divine Mother in the seashore temple at Kanyakumari. After worshipping the mother, he swam across some two furlongs of the shark-infested ocean and reached the further of the two rocks that form the southern most extremity of India. Over the three days he sat there, he was in a long and deep meditation. The Swamiji himself has told of the thoughts that moved through his mind during that period. He saw as it were the whole of India - her past, present and future her centuries of greatness and also her centuries of degradation. He saw that it was not religion that was the cause of India's downfall but on the contrary, the fact that her individuality, was scarcely to be found and he knew that her only hope was a renaissance of the lost spiritual

culture of the ancient *Rishis*. But first of all the removal of peoples, poverty, illiteracy and selfishness are necessary, otherwise the people would not understand the real meaning of India's spiritual culture. But so long people suffered from poverty the restoration of spiritual culture was not possible. He was so moved by the ill-fed life of the people that his heart bled for them. In a letter to Swami Brahamananda he said, "I have travelled all over India. But also, it was agony to me, my brothers, to see with my own eyes the terrible poverty and misery of the masses, and I could not restrain my tears! It is now my firm conviction that it is futile to preach religion amongst them without first trying to remove their poverty and their suffering. It is for this reason-to find more means for the salvation of the poor of India-that I am now going to America".

## [ II ]

### SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S GREAT REALISATIONS THROUGH JOURNEYS

#### Swami Vivekananda continued his journeys -

During journeys he had a two fold realizations: Spiritual and Secular. During wanderings Swami Vivekananda discovered among other things the tragic face of suffering humanity in his own country. Swami Vivekananda further found that this suffering humanity was satisfied just by trying to keep itself "ready for life beyond this world". But he could not think this to be enough, for he thought at that time that it was a negation of justice. He therefore resolved that "they must have a better piece of bread and better piece of rug on their bodies." Thus Vivekananda, the prophet of social justice and therefore of harmonious growth was planning his march.

The second thing which he had perceived during these pilgrimages was eternal India, which perception, according to Rolland, was instrumental in his realization of the 'Spiritual Unity of India and Asia'.

Next it grows and transcends the territorial limit. We have from Rolland; again that Vivekananda informed his brother-disciples that the ancient idea of monopoly divine right had been substituted in the west by 'a perception of the Divinity of nature and of unity'. Human spirit can perceive unity only when it is liberated; and the liberated spirit, perceiving unity, extends itself towards fraternity, called by the prosaic name of 'co-operation' in our days. Thus from his idea of unity Vivekananda came to conceive of 'co-operation' as a universal principle.

During later short journeys, before 'he was swallowed up by the immensity of India'; we find that Vivekananda was struggling for the synthesis of faith and reason, of the implications of the Vedanta and social realization of the west. This was but another stride towards unity and its corollary, universal co-operation. This march towards synthesis later on found expression in such assertions as "Vedanta and modern posit a self-evolving cause".

Unity on the basis of synthesis requires accommodation of all faiths of all lower ideas of religion. During his pilgrimage excursions one of Vivekananda's problems was how to achieve this. Later though he was inclined to write a maximum Testamentum, it is this urge for synthesis and accommodation that ultimately enabled him to develop his gospel on the basis of sublimation and absorption.

This more he gathered from experience, the more his spirit expanded and his gospel developed. After he had chosen 'to serve God in man', Vivekananda began to feel the growth of a prodigious force in himself. It manifested itself in his resolve to change the face of society, or what Sister Nivedita describes as 'Nation-making'. For this he felt that he required 'freedom'- freedom from all chains that bound him. He therefore, decided on a solitary pilgrimage covering the whole of India, with only a staff and bowl and without a name. Consequently, he broke away from all, and 'the dust of the vast of the subcontinent completely engulfed him'.

During four years of his itinerant life, which included the brief former excursions, he strode the length and breadth of the country. "Plumbing the life of the people to its depths." Before this he thoroughly knew the middle class and the intelligentsia, at least of Bengal. Now he came to know the princes and the *Pandits*, but more intimately the masses --- the rank and file of exploited and downtrodden class.

With this acquaintance, the spiritual unity of the Indian people which he had intuitively perceived earlier became a matter of realization on the empirical plane. He felt that he was with each one of them 'On a footing of equality'. But he found that most of them remained in practice separated from him and from one another owing to wide

difference in material condition and in outlook. In other words, objects poverty of the masses and the outlandish view of life of the upper classes stood in the way of forging unity in actual social life. Yet common bases were there. The innate spirituality or what Max Muller calls 'transcendental temperament' of the people and unbroken chain of countless gods 'that formed only one God' being the most important of them. Their love of God and their acceptance of others, gods were the index of their true religious nature. This also implied perception of the principle of unity which is the essence of true religious culture. Any scheme for the growth of Indian social life must therefore be founded on this base, he concluded.

From this realization there emanated two of the cardinal precepts of his philosophy, to blossom forth later in the light of further experience: - **1. Each people like each individual have a theme of life and 2. Growth in the case of each - whether individual or society - must come from within.**

However, consolidation of the religious base would not solve the problem of poverty nor was the consolidation possible in any way so long as millions remained at the door step of death. Hence, poverty was to be attacked simultaneously. Only with 'a better piece of bread and a better piece of rug on their shoulders' the masses could become truly religious and thus perceive unity. Eradication of poverty was,

therefore, the first essential condition for the forward movement. Vivekananda was sure that this could be done through self-help and mutual aid. In terms of his gospel, it implied liberation of the spirit in man and its extension to fraternity.

Another important element that Swami Vivekananda acquired for his faith during his wanderings in India was the duty of resisting the evil. It so happened that one day in Benares, hotly pursued by a troop of monkeys, the Swami was running away when a *Sannyasin* shouted to him: "Face the brutes," He stopped, turned round and the monkeys gave up the chase and quickly disappeared. Later on as a preacher Swami Vivekananda used this experience to exhort the people "to face the dangers and vicissitudes of life and run not away from them." It may be safely held that the precious experience went to the making of his cult of optimism and his concept of duty.

Now Vivekananda comes to the last lap of his itinerary. Bearing the burden of finding the right way for India's salvation and pondering over different alternatives he moved towards Cape Comorin, the land's end of India, where the three seas meet. There he passed into a deep meditation upon the present and future condition of his country. This realization paved the way for building up a new nation, a new India, through the service to man regarding him the God-incarnate. He realized that without socio-spiritual upliftment the

nation could not breadth a new life and a religion that spoke of individual's liberation only could inspire no social life. A religion to be social must base itself on the principle of social service. But what is a society? It is the image of God. Hence regard society as God and serve God in the life of society. This is the new truth which he learnt from his Master Ramakrishna Paramhansa. Ramakrishna said, "*Siva Jnane Jiva Seva*". Swami Vivekananda realized that "*Mantra*" could help nation and humanity to breadth the spirit of a new life, a life eternal. This new "*Mantra*" is the foundation upon which Vivekananda later built up his philosophy of "*Practical Vedanta*". To Vivekananda the resurgence of India would be possible if Vedanta is brought in to practice in day to day life. The life of humanity would be changed if the spirit of Vedanta is cultivated in the life of society. Thus wanderings helped Vivekananda to realize truths necessary for helping humanity.

## **CHAPTER - IV**

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### VIVEKANANDA'S MEMORABLE SPEECHES IN THE PARLIAMENT OF RELIGIONS AT CHICAGO

After his wanderings, Vivekananda heard about the Parliament of Religions, which was to be held in Chicago in 1893, he expressed his desire to attend it, thinking that it might help him in carrying out his divine mission. And at last with the help of Maharaja of Mysore, the Raja of Ramnad and the Raja of Khetri, Swamiji sailed for America from Bombay on 31 May 1893.

Swamaji reached Chicago at the end of July. Arriving there he was shocked to learn from the Information Bureau that the Parliament of Religions would not commence until September and that no delegate would be admitted without proper credentials from a bonafide organization. Moreover, the time for admittance and registration of delegates was already over. The Swamiji did not foresee the difficulties in the way, as he was sure and he was moving towards the fulfillment of the divine mission.

He spent those days with very difficulties. But fortunately, with the help of miss Katherine Abbott (who invited Swamiji in her home to

live), Mr. J.H. Wright, a Professor of Greek at Harvard University (who gave him opportunity as a delegate of the Parliament of Religions) and Mrs. George W. Hale (who took Swamiji to the office of the Parliament of Religions), Swamiji succeeded to attend the 'Parliament of Religions'.

### **On The Platform of the Religions**

The Parliament of Religions was an adjunct of the World's Columbian exposition, which was held in Chicago in 1893 to celebrate the four hundred anniversary of the discovery of America by Christopher Columbus. Some of the declared objectives of the Parliament were to present the important truths held and taught in common by different religions of the world and to bring the nations of the earth into a more friendly relationship. But many thought and hoped that the Parliament would prone the superiority of their own religion over the others.

We shall now present the soul-stirring lectures of Swamiji in short.

## At the world's Parliament of Religions

Chicago, 11th September, 1893.

The first session of the parliament was held on Monday, 11th September 1893, in the spacious hall of the Art Institute. In the afternoon, he stepped up to rostrum to speak. Others had addressed to the audience in the customary manners but when Swamiji addressed them as 'Sister and Brothers of America', he had touched the deepest chord of their heart by discarding formality and stressing the kinship of all people. He began his lectures with thanks to the monks of the world, the mother of religions and also millions of Hindu people of all classes and sects. He added that he was proud to belong to a religion which had taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance. He was proud to belong to a nation, which had sheltered the persecuted, and the refugees of all religions and all nations of the earth. He was also proud to belong to the religion which sheltered and is still fostering the remnant of the grand Zoroastrian nation and the purest remnant of the Israelites which was shattered to pieces by Roman tyranny. Then he uttered the few lines from a hymn which is every day repeated by million of human being: 'As the different streams having their sources in different places all mingle their water in the sea, so, O Lord, the different paths which men take through different tendencies, various though they appear, crooked or straight, all lead to Thee'.

He continued that sectarianism, bigotry and its horrible descendent, fanaticism had long possessed this beautiful earth. They had filled the earth with violence drenched it often and often with human blood, destroyed civilization and sent whole nations to despair. Had it not been for these horrible demons, human society would be far more advanced than it was then? But he perversely hoped that the bell that tolled that morning in honour of that convention might be the death-knell of all fanaticism of all persecutions with the sword or with the pen and of all uncharitable feelings between persons wending their way to the same goal.

On the 15th September and there after Swamiji spoke on the sectarian narrowness in the field of religion, universal oneness of Vedantic Philosophy Catholicism of Hinduism belief in the immortality of soul, teachings of the Vedas, Vaidic conception of God as immanent and 'God as transcendent', and also about Buddha and his teachings. This Swamiji gave a pen picture of religious teachings of both the East and the West. In his concluding speech Vivekananda said that he was not in favour of conversion, what he wanted was to become a better follower of that faith to which he belonged. Swamiji said, "The Christian is not to become a Hindu or a Buddhist, nor a Hindu or a Buddhist to become a Christian. But each must assimilate the spirit of the others and yet preserve his individuality and grow according to his own law of growth".<sup>1</sup>

Vivekananda's address cleared up a few ideas. He was deadly against any kind of religious fanaticism narrowness bigotry, conversion from one faith to another and any religious false claim of superiority over other religious. Another thing that we note in his addresses is this: he boldly asserted the spirit of tolerance in Hinduism the Catholic Spirit in Hinduism a generous out look about all religions and a hope for a better world where no conflict could dominate rather a spirit of tolerance and acceptance would be the guiding principal for the progress of mankind.

### **New-Vedanta**

**Accordingly, Swami Vivekananda has given new meaning to the Vedanta:**

- The old Vedanta said that one who did not believe in God was an atheist, the new Vedanta says: He who does not believe in himself is an atheist. For new Vedanta material and spiritual development are conjoined. Work and worship go together. The inner and outer dimension of a person must be balanced in a pleasing harmony. The new approach does not believe in a God who promises a person eternal bliss in heaven but cannot give him read here. Practical

Vedanta is an active spiritual quest-not letting things happen, but causing them to happen.

- Another important contribution of the New Vedanta is its practicality. It replaces humanitarian ideals of compassion and charity with the spiritual precept of service to the living God dwelling in the hearts of all beings.

The New Vedanta is available to all regardless of caste, colour, or race. Its practice does not require a person to have a male body and Brahmin birth, or to live in the seclusion of the forest.

Advaita Vedanta would surely be misunderstood if it were thought that it considers the universe unreal in the crude sense of illusion or *Maya*. It maintains that this world is not what it seems to you now. It is infinitely more glorious, infinitely more real, infinitely more lovable and enjoyable than what we take it to be. What can be more realistic than this? The scientific mind will avidly grasp at this idea. Let us go on and on in our understanding, and the world will at last reveal itself as the embodiment of all that we are consciously and unconsciously seeking for. Only at a certain stage of our research, we shall have to change the laboratory instruments with the mental instruments of meditation and contemplation, concentration and

Tapas, and then the eternal secret will reveal itself to us.

As Swami Ashokananda says, "We thus consider Advaita Vedanta to be the hope of the present age. For it alone can successfully transform the dominant tendencies born of science and, through this, rehabilitate morality and religion. The true reconciliation of science and religion lies in their agreement not only in doctrines but also in the mental attitudes implied. Advaita Vedanta fulfills both these conditions. In it lies future of both science and religion, and if it fails nothing will succeed."

### The Vedanta of Swami Vivekananda

In one of the lectures he gave in this country Swami Vivekananda said, "A *Sannyasin* cannot belong to any religion, for his is a life of independent thought, which draws from all religions; his is a life of realization, not merely of theory or belief, much less of dogma." Even to call Vivekananda a "Vedantist" is to put a label on him unjustly.

What, then, do we mean by the Vedanta of Shankaracharya or of Ramanuja or of any other *Acharya* ?

We mean the emphasis, something indicated by the Sanskrit word *Darshana*, the outlook special to that particular person. We wish to outline and discuss here some nine salient points which could be considered the special features of Swamiji's Vedanta.

Before we do that, let us first point out what seem to be mistakes often made in approaching the life and thought of Swamiji. If we can first clear the ground of these mistaken preconceptions, our step into Vivekananda-land will be sure.

**1. That he was at times unfaithful to what Sri Ramakrishna taught: his message seems to be quite different.**

In the first place, the Master never told Narendra that he was to be a "clone" of himself. He often stood in awe of the height and breadth of his disciple's mind. Secondly it must be remembered that they had very different audiences. Ramakrishna spoke to the Western-educated, but still very Indian in background, Calcutta residents, whereas Vivekananda addressed crowds of Americans and Europeans, products of the Renaissance, of Science and of Western Philosophy and Theology. In Vedanta the message is guided by the nature of the recipients.

**2. That Swamiji got his Humanism, Socialism, Organizing Methods etc. from his experience in the West.**

By reading his life in detail one soon discovers that he was studying, and thinking about the ideas of Hamilton, Herbert Spencer, Tyndall, T.H. Huxley and others and how to use them, long before he left for the West. He was, even in his college days, familiar with philosophers like Hume and Hegel, and an avid reader of John Stuart Mill.

**3. That he was "only" the Master's messenger, not a spiritual power in himself.**

Nothing could be further from the fact. Sri Ramakrishna gave him the power accumulated by his own *Sadhana*, on one fateful day at Dakshineswar, remarking afterwards, "Now I have become a mere fakir." Swamiji too, challenged by one of his brother-disciples, declared unequivocally, "While I am on earth Sri Ramakrishna is working through me."

Now let us turn to what I would call Vivekananda's most significant and distinctive teaching. We shall put those under nine headings:-

## That truth is Brahman alone

This differs a bit from Sankara's "*Brahman* alone is real; the world is false." Swami Vivekananda said that the greatest name man ever gave to God was Truth. "My mission," he explained to an interviewer in London, "is to show that religion is in everything and is everything." He told us that drama and music and art are by themselves religion; that any song, love song or whatever, will lead to liberation if one's whole soul is in that song. Most surprisingly, he said "I am a materialist in a certain sense, because I believe that there is only One. That is what the materialist wants you to believe; only he calls it matter and I call it God, Brahman." He knew from his own experience, when, after the touch of his Master, he went into the streets and saw that everything, before him was God. So much for nature. As for the soul, "There is only one individual," he said, "and each of us is that." Atman is Brahman.

The ultimate realization is identity with Brahman

Here he shows himself the orthodox Advaitan. No compromise can be accepted. "Stop not until the goal is reached," he urged. What is the goal? That pure identity, attained only by fearlessness, which is why he talked so much of fearlessness. "That God, for whom you have been searching all over the universe is all the time yourself -- your self, not in the personal sense but in the Impersonal." And when

others appealed to Ramakrishna that this sounded like egotism, the latter replied, "Naren can say that."

"The eternal, the infinite, the omnipresent, the omniscient is a principle, not a Person. You, I and everyone are but embodiments of that principle and more of it is embodied in a person, the greater is he and all in the end will be the perfect embodiment of that, and thus all will be one, as they are now essentially..." He told us we are born monists; we cannot help it, because we always perceive the One.

### **All paths are grounded in Advaita and fulfilled in it**

This is what will prevent us from being fanatics: that man goes not from error to truth, but from lower truth to higher truth. When Swamiji spoke about Sri Krishna and the Gita he cautioned, "You must worship the self in Krishna, not Krishna as Krishna." He shows the all-inclusive nature of Advaita when he says that it accepts dualism and all systems that preceded Advaita. This is the universal solvent into which all philosophies must merge at last. This is not "inclusive-ism" or triumphalism as is sometimes alleged. It is said: "Without the Vedanta every religion is superstition (including 'Hinduism'); with it everything becomes religion."

## Religion should be presented rationally

This is just what Swami Vivekananda did in his speeches at the Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893. It captivated the audience, which was tired of emotional harangues from sectarian prelates. Vedanta of all persuasions has always prescribed *shravanam*, *mananam*, *nididhyasanam* -- hearing the truth, mulling it over, and meditating upon it; here was Vivekananda telling us not just about his own faith, but about all faiths. Had anyone done this in this way before? "If one religion be true," he pointed out, and then all the others must be true." "What happened once in history must happen again..." That was the scientific attitude. He said that the study of religion can and should be pursued on exactly the same basis as the pursuit of any other science. "Everything religion claims must be judged from the standpoint of reason," and when people replied that human reason was weak, he told them "a body of priests would be even weaker!" He dared to say to his own disciples at the head monastery in India, "Only those portions of the Vedas which agree with reason are to be accepted as authority," and also warned them, regarding the *Guru*, "Worship your *Guru* as God, but do not obey him blindly; love him all you will, but think for yourself."

## **All truths should be made available to all people**

"What I want to propagate," Swamiji said, in his lecture "The Ideal of a Universal Religion," "is a religion that will be equally acceptable to all minds; it must be equally philosophic, equally emotional, equally mystic and equally conducive to action... and this ideal will be the nearest approach to a universal religion." Particularly he drilled this into the ears of his fellow Indians. "The most wonderful truths confined in our Upanishads, in our Puranas, must be brought out from the books, brought out from the monasteries, from the forests, from the possession of selected bodies of people and scattered broadcast over the land, so that these truths run like fire, all over the country." "Advaita," he said, "shall no more be a secret... it must come down to the everyday life of the people." It has to enter the palace, come from the cave to the cottage, to the beggar -- everywhere. The oppressed -- the outcast and the woman were to fear no longer. "Let the new India arise, from the man who grasps the plough, from the huts of the fisherman, the cobbler, the sweeper..." And in London he made this prediction: "The power of religion, broadened and purified, is going to penetrate every part of human life ... it will live in our every movement, penetrate every pore of our society, and be infinitely more a power for good than it has ever been before."

## Everyone should embody all phases of truth

By this the Swami did not mean that there would no longer be specialists: he meant no more exclusiveness. What the age needs is the all-rounded person. "Would to God," he said that all the elements of philosophy, mysticism, emotion and work were equally present in full! That is my ideal of the perfect person. Everyone else ...is one-sided, and this world is almost full with these 'one-sided' people, with knowledge of the one road only in which they move; anything else is dangerous and horrible to them. To become harmoniously balanced in all these directions is my ideal of religion." On rare occasions he would point to his Master as the example of this: e.g., "It was given to me," he told the Madrasis, "to live with a man who was as ardent a dualist, as ardent an Advaitin, as ardent a *bhakta*, as a *jnani* Swamiji fortunately provided his own fine example: another such well-rounded prophet is difficult to discover. He was a master at stating accurately the views of another. He was a musician, and in the West took lessons in painting and in the French language. "We are of a new type," he told his listeners; "sometimes dressed like gentlemen, we are engaged in lecturing; at other times, throwing all aside ...ash-clad, we are immersed in meditation and austerities in mountains and forests." This same idea he applied to the form his work was to take: "I haven't been born," Swamiji remarked, "to found one more sect in a world teeming with sects."

## All paths are to be made active in the service of man as God

Let us suppose that we want to do charitable work; in that case what Swami Vivekananda tells us is: "Never approach anything except as God." "It is our privilege to be allowed to be charitable, for only so can we grow. The poor suffers that we may be helped; let the giver kneel down and give thanks, let the receiver stand up and permit." "Feel that the receiver is the higher one. You serve the other because you are lower than he, not because he is low and you are high." The relation of all this to the overcoming of ego is obvious. "Philosophy and yoga and penance... --all these constitute the religion of one person or one country; doing well to others is the one great universal religion." Swamiji told his own disciples, "Know this for certain: he who will work will be the crown on my head." "What is India, or England or America to us? We are the servants of that God who by the ignorant is called MAN." Now if this activity of service is to be expressed through all paths, then we are again reminded of our first point: that drama, music and art are by themselves religion. What Vivekananda preached he carried out? In his lecture to an American audience in San Francisco, entitled "Is Vedanta the Future Religion", he confided: "You are the Personal God. Just now I am worshipping you (in speaking). This is the greatest prayer."

## That man-making was his religion

What does he mean by a man? A human being, of course. "Great men," Swamiji said, "are those who build bridges for others with their hearts blood." That was the austerity for this age, not so much the forest penances and meditations, but the building of character through karma-yoga, is what is needed today. What India in particular now wanted was "muscles of iron and nerves of steel", which nothing could resist, which could penetrate the mysteries of the universe, and accomplish their purpose in any fashion, even if meant going down to the bottom of the ocean and meeting death face to face. Quoting or paraphrasing some verse of poetry he said, "We shall crush the stars to atoms and unhinge the universe. Don't you know who we are? We are the servants of Sri Ramakrishna!" One can sometimes feel that Swamiji's God was Man; "Read Man," he said, "he is the living poem." It is not humanism. It has a much larger definition.

## Worship the Terrible

This, in a way, is the most "personal" of these distinctive accents in the message of Vivekananda. He used to say, when speaking of Kali, that she, whom at first he could not accept, had become the Power

that now moved him. "Two or three days before Sri Ramakrishna's passing away she whom he used to call 'Kali' entered this body. It is she who takes me here and there and makes me work... I feel that that Power is constantly directing me." Aside from being personal to him, how is it an injunction for all of us? "Each is responsible for the evil anywhere in the world." No one can really "shut the door where evil dwells"; everyone has to face, eventually, that being whose hands hold good and bad, sweetness and terror. She, the even-handed Mother, was the chosen Ideal of Ramakrishna, and Swami Vivekananda had to make out the significance of it and carry this to the world. "Worship the Terrible," meant for him and us, no fear even of death; to see in the world of today the tremendous play of energy, showing its splendors in every way, understanding it as the Power of Brahman Itself.

## SWAMI VIVEKNANDA AND MODERN PROBLEMS

He was one of the "Seven Sages", brought down by Sri Ramakrishna for the good of the world. What are the implications of this, for our society today? As I study him I see him as a mind of the first order, applying itself not only to the traditional science of the spiritual life, but to all human problems, as far as he encountered them. We have an important question here: Should philosophers become kings? i.e., how far into society as an organism should one go who is vowed to be "out of society?" Does his detachment make for better wisdom? The Greeks usually said 'yes'. The Hindus usually no. Swami Vivekananda, however, was more than a traditional Monk: he was patriot and prophet as well, and in this respect joined in his own body of thought both Eastern and Western elements.

Swami Vivekananda is one of the very few *Sannyasins* to turn his mind to more than just "religion," and he has spoken on many of the issues of his day which remain issues for ours. Importantly, he looked upon religion itself as "the fulfillment of the perfection in man." He was a great humanist, who picked up European social ideas and fleshed them out with philosophic underpinning and implication. As a prophet he foresaw the twentieth century as the age "of labor and the *Sudras* and of women", predicting the rise of Russia

and China. He also said the Indian ideas would go to every country under the sun and, before long, become a component of their many forces. It should be obvious by now that the Western world's dream of attaining happiness or permanent success through materialism has been a failure. Certainly Vivekananda did say, "Bread first; then religion," but for those who have too much bread? What about them? It is fine to have computers and color television, but do we not see that it is the Orient alone which has understood the finer dimensions of happiness? It is never in the machine; it is in the human mind. This was his message.

Today we find ourselves in a world beset with horrendous problems and dilemmas, and we have not yet evaded the threat of nuclear war. What does Swamiji have to say to us? It plays out on two levels: first as he addressed the problem on the level of the problem; and later, how he made us look behind it.

### **Let us begin with Crime and Public Morality**

The facts are that punishment for crime often foments more crime than it prevents. The enforcers of law are as often corrupt and unlawful as not. And we could go on and on.

"If it is social opinion that makes us moral, then really we are little better than animals," he said. "It is inner strength only that can curb the vicious tendencies." He told Indian boys, "You will be nearer to God by playing football than by studying the Gita." "Strength is the medicine for the world's disease." He encouraged athletic and bodily development in all who were effete. How sad he would feel, now, to see the dearth of Indian Olympians at the games, and the commercializing of sports!

Swamiji saw crime as the result, not only of the injustices to the society, but more the lack of self-esteem in the individual, and the impoverishment of higher ideals. He compared the social fabric of India with that of America, and felt that the Indian marriage system, in spite of its glaring injustices, was superior to the promiscuity (already rampant in his day) of the romantic West. He was getting wind of the license Freudianism was going to bring. He did not try to be a Manu, defining particular codes of conduct. Following his Master, he could prescribe for human nature only turning our base impulses in a higher direction: there was no other solution. "Consciously or unconsciously," he said, "that Indian idea of the divinity within everyone will express itself even in other countries." Behind the drunkard, behind the abuser, he saw the crushed and struggling divinity. "Do not seek help from anyone. There is only one sin: weakness. Be strong, physically, mentally, morally."

## Family break down.

We have known for long that just producing valedictorians and spelling geniuses is not enough to warrant the continuity of high culture. According to Vivekananda: "It is the culture of the heart, really, not that of the intellect, that will lessen the misery of the world." "It is culture that withstands shocks, not learning! And we are finding that our children face many shocks, more every day. To the Christians he said, "Make yourselves decent people...Be chaste and pure...There is no other way. Did Christ find any other way? 'Except ye become as a little child, ye may not enter the Kingdom of Heaven.'" He told us how to love a wife or a husband: "It is not our love that makes us miserable, but the fact that we want love in return." Always give, do not demand, he said. Swamiji was not a "reformer" in the sense of pulling down social systems. He approved the idea of a caste system, but not the latter-day applications of it; with proper amendments he thought it good for a society.

As to family coherence, he knew that "those who cannot discipline themselves cannot control their children and pointed out the folly of expecting the offspring not to follow their parents' conduct.

What we would like others to do, we had better do, ourselves

## Health care

Sri Ramakrishna had been eclectic in his resort to methods of medical practice. He used to say that the Ayur Vedic treatments were good for the "*Satya Yuga*", the days of the *Rishis* when time was abundant. They worked too slowly for modern times. But when stricken by cancer at the end, he would let all the schools of medicine try their hand! Swami Vivekananda too, in his approach to health and treatment, felt that all types of health management could be tried. He had no high opinion of what governments could do in the matter; they had to take a role, of course, but when all the evils of corruption, inefficiency, waste and callousness which attend bureaucracy were taken into account, how much could health be improved? Again, that idea of strength: "No disease can get a hold in you unless you are weak, and allow it to do so." We do not know for sure, but can surmise that in today's health controversies he would encourage prevention over cure, immunity over medicine, natural alternatives over pills, and spiritual practice to eliminate mental and physical dependence. There are hints of these, throughout the Swami's conversations.

# SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND MODERN PROBLEMS

## (CONCLUDED)

### Environmental pollution and denigration

The problem was scarcely recognized at the end of the nineteenth century, but one can extrapolate from nearly all that Swamiji said about life styles and conspicuous consumption. He was a realist and knew very well that we cannot have something for nothing. "The misery of the world is like chronic rheumatism chases it from one area, it shows up in another," he said. If he were here today to face the problem in its ripest stage, there is little doubt that he would be an "environmentalist", and surely would remind us that we are going to be the inheritors of our own mess, allowing the Hindu doctrine of reincarnation. And one may imagine the almost acid tones with which he would refer to the population explosion and accent the role of self-control in its solution.

The same is true of fiscal irresponsibility. Do you remember that he upheld the value of the caste system as regards its original ideal and concept? That the caste member who attained to wealth or status was under the *dharmic* obligation to help raise the whole community from which he had raised and which had launched his struggle? Then how

can we provide only for our own offspring? That would be adopting the nuclear family framework of the West, not the best to emulate, in his mind. "Freedom is the first condition of growth;" he forcefully remarked one day, "what you do not make free can never grow." This applies to employees and dependents as well.

### **The question of male dominance and woman's status.**

This defect the Hindus share with all the world's peoples, he acknowledged, as there is scarcely a culture which has not succumbed to it. He was one of the first of his era in the field of religion to recognize the indignity and oppression which woman was subject to, in this world of men. He had seen and studied the misery of his own sister, a suicide, and it had deeply affected his thinking. "If woman cannot act, neither can man suffer," he said; a fact now well-known in the statistics of psychology. There were times when Vivekananda's mind was dwelling in a transcendental realm, and those times gave rise to expressions like these: "There is neither man nor woman [in Vedanta], for the soul is sexless... It is a lie to say that I am a man or a woman, or I belong to this country or that. The entire world is my country, because I have clothed myself with it as my body."

Such was his sense of identity at that moment. He never tired of brushing off the well-meaning concerns of men who would ask him about "women's problems": "Hands off!" he exclaimed, "Women will solve their own problems." Men had no business attempting to solve them for them.

In the United States he made a very interesting comment. He said, "American men profess to worship woman, but in my opinion they simply worship youth and beauty. They never fall in love with wrinkles and grey hair." By worship of woman, Sri Ramakrishna had meant, he assured us, that to him every woman's face was that of the Blissful Mother and nothing else. At the same time he could clearly see that in America alone there was now the social freedom to rise up and take equality with men. Swamiji met many women in the West, patrons, admirers, helpers, disciples and with all of them he dealt in his own natural and spontaneous way. They sometimes expected of him the gallant chivalry of that Victorian era, but he flatly refused. "You can take care of yourself," he would say; "you are as able as I am, if not more." Swami Vivekananda was prophet enough to foresee what the twentieth century would bring. We can sum up the subject in his broad but telling generality: "Asia laid the germs of civilization. Europe developed man. America is developing woman and the masses."

## Lack of religious identity

On this subject Swamiji had much to say. His years of wandering over his Motherland brought him to summarize what he considered the "Common Bases of Hinduism." These were: Belief in God (he once said with a bit of exasperation, "The Hindus can never give up His Majesty, the Lord of the Universe!"), belief in the Vedas as "revealed," the cyclic nature of time (*yugas* and *kalpas* in the macrocosm, reincarnation in the microcosm), and belief in all religions as valid paths because of the divinity of the human soul. Rather a minimal list, when one stops to think about it.

As regards scripture, Swamiji declared: "The proof of religion depends on the constitution of man, not on any books." What was the role of religion for a Hindu? "Religion, to help mankind, must be ready and able to help him in whatever condition he is." Then is there any place there for caste?

Above all, the Hindu is certain that we never go from falsehood to truth, but only from truth to truth. Be convinced of these and you are a Hindu.

## Reference

1. Chicago address, *Advaita Ashrama*, 1893 Page 40.

## **CHAPTER - V**

## CHAPTER - V

### VIVEKANANDA'S REFORMATIVE VIEWS IN THE FIELDS OF (A) EDUCATION, (B) SOCIETY & (C) SPIRITUALITY.

#### Education

Swami Vivekananda emerged as a social reformer and revolutionary in his application of ends and means to solve some of the problems of society. He looked at the reforms from the point of individual as well as social growth. Though a social reformer, Vivekananda kept himself aloof from other reformers. The reformers glued to evil and failed to diagnose – the cause of evil. But Vivekananda pointed out the necessity of removing the cause first, which will automatically be followed by the removal of the effect. He said, “To the reformers I will point out that I am a greater reformer than any one of them. They want to reform only little bits. I want root and branch reform. Where we differ is in the method. Theirs is the method of destruction, mine is that of construction, I do not believe in reform; I believe in growth”<sup>1</sup>.

Vivekananda believed that social evil was due to ignorance. Ignorance hinders individuals and social growth. He noticed that ignorance had to be dispelled by education. More than a reformer of society, he was a reformer of the individual. He wanted to usher a variable revolution in individual and social thinking by means of education. In this chapter I am going to discuss education, society and spirituality one by one as has been understood by Swami Vivekananda.

### **The Meaning of Education**

According to Swami Vivekananda, all knowledge and all power are in the human mind. They are inherent in man, no knowledge comes from outside, it is all inside. What a man 'learns' is really what he discovers by taking the covers off his own soul, which is a mine of infinite knowledge. In many cases, it is not discovered, but remains covered and when the covering is being slowly taken off, we say 'we are learning', and the advance of knowledge is made by this process of uncovering. Therefore, all knowledge and all power are within. What we call powers; secrets of nature and force are all within. All knowledge comes from the human soul. Man manifests knowledge, discovers it within himself, which is pre-existing, through eternity.

Swami Vivekananda remarked that each of us has to teach himself, no one was ever really taught by another. Teachers offer only the suggestions from outside. Things will be clearer to us by our own perception and thought and then we shall realize them in our own souls. He said that we cannot teach a child anymore. The child also teaches itself. We can only help him to go forward in its own way. We can take away the obstacles and knowledge comes out of its own nature. So the teacher spoils everything by thinking that he is teaching. Within man is all knowledge and it requires only an awakening, and that much is the work of the teacher.

Swami Vivekananda advised to give positive ideas. Negative thoughts only weaken men. If we speak kind words to them and encourage them, they are bound to improve in time. If we give them positive ideas, people will grow up to be men and learn to stand on their own legs. According to him, the teaching must be modified according to the needs of the taught. So, we have to give to the pupil according to his tendencies. And for that liberty is the first condition of growth. He advised that we could not give woman and child salvation from their problems; they would solve their own problems. To him, education means the assimilation of life-building, man-making, character making ideas. "The training by which the current and expression of will are brought under control and become fruitful is called education".<sup>2</sup>

The education is not the amount of information, but the collection of ideas. The education that does not help the common mass of people to equip themselves for the struggle for life, which does not bring out strength of character – is useless. We want that education by which character is formed; strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded and by which one can stand on one's own feet.

### **Concentration :- The most important method of requiring knowledge.**

According to Vivekananda, there is only one method by which to attain knowledge, that which is called concentration. The very essence of education is concentration of mind. From the lowest man to the highest Yogi, all have to use the same method to attain knowledge. This is the one call, the one knock, which opens the gates of nature, and lets out floods of light. In this point the main difference between men and the animals is the difference in their power of concentration. An animal has very little power of concentration. He cannot concentrate upon anything for a long time. This difference in their power of concentration also constitutes the difference between man and man. The difference is in the degree of concentration. All success in any line of work is the result of concentration. When the mind is concentrated and turned back on itself, all within us will be our servants, not our masters. As for example, the Hindu

concentrated on the internal world, upon the unseen realms in the self and developed the science of Yoga. "The world is ready to give up the necessary blow. The strength and force of the blow comes through concentration"<sup>3</sup>. The power of concentration is the only key to the treasure-house of knowledge. In the present state of our body we are much distracted, and the mind is frittering away its energies upon a hundred things. When we try to concentrate our mind upon any one object of knowledge, thousands of thoughts rush into the mind and disturb it. How to check it and bring the mind under control is the whole subject of study in *Rajayoga*.

To attain concentration of mind, unbroken Brahmacharya is necessary for that. Complete continence gives great intellectual and spiritual power. We have to transform the sexual energy into spiritual energy. The chaste brain has tremendous energy and gigantic will power. Without chastity there can be no spiritual strength. So we should be trained to practice absolute Brahmacharya and then faith and *shraddha* will come. The Brahmacharin must be pure in thought, word and deed.

## **Religious Education**

Religion is the inherent core of education. Vivekananda thought that the secret of success lies in the obedience to the Guru without questioning and strict observance of Brahmacharya. He advised all young people to be strong and tell the truth boldly strength is life and weakness is dead. Infinite strength is religion and all truth is eternal, the nature of all souls. He also realized that the religions of the world are not contradictory. They are but various phases of one eternal religion<sup>4</sup>. To get success he advised us to pay as much attention to the means as to the end.

## **The teacher - taught relationship in Education**

According to Swami Vivekananda, knowledge should be given freely and without any price. There must be some necessary conditions in the taught. They are purity, a real thirst after knowledge and perseverance. The necessary condition for the teachers would be sincerity. "He (the teachers) must be perfectly pure and then only comes the value of his words"<sup>5</sup>. Another condition is in regard to the motive. The teacher must not teach with any ulterior selfish motive, for money, name or fame. There should be a free and frank relationship between the teacher and the taught.

The first condition for the disciple is that the student who wants to know the truth must give up all desires for gain. The second condition is that a disciple must be able to control his mind from external world. The next condition is to conceive an extreme desire to be free. There is only one real desire; to know what is true to be spiritual. No one desiring anything beyond the body. These desires of the body bring only momentary satisfaction and endless suffering. Renunciation of the senses and desires is the only way out of this misery. If we want to be spiritual, we must renounce.

Swami Vivekananda is this connection observed that a man who wants to be a disciple must fulfill these conditions. Without faith, humility, submission and veneration in our hearts towards the teacher, there cannot be any growth in us. Moreover in this point he said that we should worship our Guru as God but need not obey him blindly. According to him, the true teacher is he who can immediately come down to the level of the student, and transfer his soul to the students' soul and see through and understand through his mind.

### **Women Education**

Swami Vivekananda noticed that there was much difference between men and women in this country, whereas the Vedanta declares that

one and the same self is present in all beings. All nations have attained greatness by paying proper respect to women. So we should pay proper respect to women otherwise no country would become great. Manu says, "Where women are respected there the Gods delight, and where they are not, there all work and effort come to naught"<sup>6</sup>. Vivekananda said that women had many grave problems that only could be solved by education. Manu enunciated that women also should observe *brahmacharya* and be educated as men. Vivekananda suggested that we could not solve their problems; they must be in such a position to solve their own problems in their own way. Female education should be spread with religion as its centre. All other training should be secondary to religion. Our Hindu women easily understand what chastity means, because it is their heritage. The women of India must grow and develop in the foot prints of Sita. She is unique to them. In villages and towns they must open centres and strives for the spread of female education. Through such devout preachers of character, there would be the real spread of female education in the country. History and Puranas, house-keeping and the arts, the duties of home life and the principles that make for the development of character have to be taught. If the women are raised, their children will by their noble actions glorify the name of the country.

## Mass Education

Another important point in this chapter is mass Education. Swami Vivekananda thought that the condition of the poor in India was the cause of downfall of this country. A nation is advanced in proportion as education and intelligence spread among the masses. It is national sin to neglect the masses. The only service to be done for our lower classes is to give them education to develop their individuality. Give them ideas, and then they will work out their own salvation. All castes, all classes have the right to get education. Some thoughtful people noted that Hinduism is responsible for the neglecting of the masses. But Vivekananda did not find fault in Hinduism. He taught that Hinduism teaches us that every being is only our own self multiplied. It is the want of practical application, the want sympathy – the want of heart responsible for the downtrodden condition of the masses. To uplift the masses Swami Vivekananda considered that spiritual and secular education was necessary for them. He wrote: “We have to give them secular education. We have to follow the plan laid down by our ancestors, that is, to bring all the ideals slowly down among the masses. Raise them slowly up, raise them to equality. Impart..... Secular knowledge through religion.”<sup>7</sup> Moreover he remarked that for great achievement in this field, we need to fell from the heart and go on steadily towards are own goal.

## **Character making Education**

Above all, the most important thing for Vivekananda was character making education. The character of any man is but the aggregate of his tendencies, the sum total of the bent of his mind. And the result of these combined impressions is what is called a man's character. Good and evil have an equal share in moulding character. If good impressions prevail, the character becomes good, if bad, it becomes bad. So we need to think always only positive thoughts that we can remove the bad habits forever from our life.

## **Man Making Education**

Finally, Vivekananda stressed upon the man-making education. To quote him, "It is man-making theories that we want. It is man making education all round that we want."<sup>8</sup> But what is man-making education? First, education that arouses self respect, secondly, the education that encourages the progressive upliftment of individual and society, poor and rich equally, thirdly, the education that arouses the spirit of patriotism and philanthropy, fourthly, the education that speaks of perfection in life temporal and life spiritual, fifthly, the education that helps to comprehend life in its totality, not simply in bits. Thus man-making education is all comprehensive, total and universal. It helps man to realize him as a part of humanity, as a part

of totality, as an inseparable part of integrality. A man secular, a man spiritual and a perfect man that is what the man making education means. The man-making education is the only means by which the external manifestation of internal perfection is possible.

Thus Swami Vivekananda gave vent to his thought in the field of education so elaborately that if follow him, we can expect a revolutionary change in our socio-religious life, in the educative life and in the moral life.

## SOCIETY

Swami Vivekananda believed that an individual is born in a particular society, according to his past 'Karmas' to work out its own destiny. In this respect, society is not a human creation, but an institution created by God Himself, according to the past '*Sakama Karmas*' of the '*Jivas*' themselves. He added that love, renunciation, unselfishness—three great manifestations of spirituality— from these alone can raise any society and stand. Neither physical powers, nor economic superiority, nor practical dexterity can form such a basis.

According to Swami Vivekananda, Society is a perfect system, a full organic whole, a loving and a living union, a unity-in-difference. Its basis is religion, its purpose is spiritualism, and its instruments are scriptural injunctions. It is not a political organization and not a prudential concern at all. He also used the organic analogy in his analysis of society. He wrote: "The aggregate of many individuals is called Samashti (the whole), and each individual is called Vyashti (a part). You and I - each is Vyashti, Society is Samashti."<sup>9</sup>

Like the Vyashti, the Samashti has a body, an organic life, a developing mind and soul. Progressing of society, a Vyashti has to sacrifice his own interests for the sake of Samashti. The sacrifice of individual interest is essential for the happiness of all members of society. In Vivekananda's view, all men have to transcend their petty interests for the well being of the society through gradual transition. Gradual transition from ego-centricity to sociability will bring a man near to human goals. Therefore every individual must be one with Samashti.

His view of society is quite in consonance with the spirit of Vedanta.

Its main features may be summarized as follows:-

- i. Society is a divine creation.
- ii. It is the aggregate of different individuals.

- iii. Self-sacrifice is essential for the well-being of Samashti.
- iv. Gradual transition is needed for being one with Samashti.
- v. Co-operatively shared happiness will be the final result of human relations and
- vi. Religion is the backbone of Samashti.

According to Vivekananda society was not a natural but a social institution. As a social evolutionist, he believed in the gradual growth and decay of social institutions. He defined that society was a loose collection of individuals. As society was a collection of individuals, it was not totalitarian and cannot wield absolute authority over individuals and groups. Instead, each individual or group was an independent unit. Social relations in society were based on mutual cooperation and service. There was no struggle for power between one unit and another.

It may be said that Vivekananda reacted only against the materialistic society, which was evil, and he was one with the spiritualistic society, which was eternal and free. He observed that attempts had been made to base social life on materialistic and spirituality. He believed that "the objective society will always be a mixture of good and evil."<sup>10</sup> Therefore he pointed out that "all societies and governments were comparative evils".<sup>11</sup> To obviate the weakness of materialistic

society, he gave emphasis on truth and prescribed it as the eternal ideal of society.

Vivekananda's concept of a spiritualistic society has morality as its basis. He proclaimed that the whole fabric was based upon that idea of restraint. He believed that the formation of society too was a form of renunciation and that society was social and organic. He held that if society was evolved on spiritual basis, it would last longer and remain eternal. Therefore that society is moral and self-restrained which clings to truth. According to him, "That society is the greatest where the highest truths became practical. That is my opinion and if society is not fit for the highest truths, make it so; and the sooner, the better."<sup>12</sup>

From Vivekananda's attitude towards law, Government and society, we can say that he was not a nihilist. He did not deny the past and present and he believed in a glorious future for humanity. The nihilists aimed at the destruction of law, Government and society, while Vivekananda's approach was only one of indifference to them. According to him, no society and Government was permanent and perfect. He did not want to create a void by abolishing society. He wanted only to replace the present society by the ideal society, the society of Brahminhood.

## Society and its origin

The Indian view of society is that it is eternal organic and teleological in nature. If society is eternal and created by God, man cannot be conceived to have any role in its shaping. Vivekananda therefore conceives society to be partly naturalistic, both in the metaphysical and in the secular sense and partly mechanistic in character.

According to Vivekananda, society is founded by men out of their very nature and there have been 'great originators of society'. Here Vivekananda anticipates the modern interpretation of the Aristotelian maxim that man is by nature a social animal. Although society is natural, it is never eternal.

Though man is impelled by his impulse to lead a social life. Society was founded by man for realizing life. But unfortunately man could not agree as to what should be the mode of this realization. Consequently," two attempts have been made in the world to found social life: the one was upon religion and the other was upon social necessity; the one was founded upon spirituality, the other upon materialism. Although Swami Vivekananda's conception of society is partly mechanistic, he clearly attributes to it as a super organic nature. He again derived from Advaita Vedanta, the two import Components. One is the doctrines of unity of existence and the other

is *maya*. Faith in the unity of existence drives one straight way to the organic conception of society and acceptance of the doctrine of *maya* makes, it a well- grounded philosophic creed. According to Vivekananda, *maya* is not illusion; it is the super imposition of ego-idea upon man's real self; the Atman.

### Social imperfections and Social regeneration.

Society is a pilgrimage in search of truth, so it can be regard as perfect only to the extent it has been able to manifest Truth. In Swami Vivekananda's own words, "that society is the greatest where the highest truths become practical"<sup>13</sup>. Again he declares: "Truth does not pay homage to any society, ancient or modern. Society has to pay homage to Truth or die. Societies should be moulded upon truth, and truth has not to adjust itself to society"<sup>14</sup>.

### Liberation of Society according to Vivekananda

Liberation may be described as social justice, for justice is the just ordering of things. Justice may be viewed either as an end in itself or merely as a means. According to Swami Vivekananda, social justice implies both. It is an end, because it is an index of purity of social relations; it is a means, for it is the condition of development both of the individual and society.

A Vedantins conception of justice must be in the nature of a permanent rebellion against every unjust order of things. It cannot tolerate social demination of the individual. Justice or just ordering is building up or recapturing the harmony between individual and society for assisting the progress to perfection. According to Vedanta, the world may be regarded as a dead or settled world. But it is completely alien to Swami Vivekananda. To him the world is never a finished one so long as every human being does not attain perfection in it.

In this unfinished world the individual is not only moulded by society, but can also mould it rather infinitely. On the other hand, it is a liberation philosophy; it postulates individual's deliverance from social determinism and support positive individual action for society's deliverance from the mechanics of determinism.

### **Harmony and Unity of Society**

According to Vivekananda, the social harmony should be distinguished from social unity. Social unity means perfection of the social order. It is thus the end and social harmony is a means to it. In other words, harmonization of the discordant notes of social life only implies the removal of a hindrance to the unity movement. The means can depend upon the character of its technique, and

Vivekananda finds the technique in the social mutual aid of his Conception, as determined in the light of Vedantic principles of liberty, equality, justice, discrimination and love.

Vivekananda's mutual social aid is a scheme of co-operation, but co-operation here implies an altogether different thing from the ideal of fraternity, emanating not only from the principles of liberty, equality and justice but also from that of love. As such, it is founded upon the category of renunciation and service, which, as a maxim of life, can be well practiced by the ordinary householder who constitutes the cell of social organism.

In such a scheme as Swami Vivekananda's the problem of, caste is automatically solved, for, in the ultimate analysis, it is the ideal of a casteless, classless, egalitarian society to be brought to birth through the perception of the fundamental Vedantic tenet of unity and its extension to the social sphere. Such perception and extension are according to Vivekananda, the index of true freedom.

### **Social Progress**

When the individual is able to manifest his personality, society marches towards progress. Society is perfect only when the individuals are so. Vivekananda's emphatic declaration in this regard

is: "Things do not grow better. They remain as they were and we grow better by the changes we make in them."<sup>15</sup> Because of man's gregarious nature society is natural for him. But as a volitional creature he seeks to realize life, to march towards goodness and truth through it. To be able to do so, he must mould it properly and for this purpose, he himself must be properly equipped. Thus individual uplift and social development constitute a spiral process the initial stage of which is, self-reform starting from the individual. We should not forget that the progress of the society is linked up with the progress of the individual; such a progress is mutually interdependent. Hence instead of an antagonism there is a harmony between social and individual progress. We may call it a harmonious progress. This is how Vivekananda conceived of a social reformation; and dealt with problems connected with it.

## **SPIRITUALITY**

In this section we shall discuss, after Vivekananda (1) the meaning of spirituality and (2) how can it be realized.

## **1. The meaning of Spirituality**

Swami Vivekananda says that each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this Divinity within, by controlling nature external and internal. The knowledge of spirituality comes through the human soul when the ignorance is disappeared from it. Spiritual knowledge is the only thing that can destroy our miseries for ever. It is only with the knowledge of the spirit that the faculty of want is annihilated for ever. The meaning of spirituality consists in this truth that our soul inhabiting different bodies is essentially one. The truth of oneness is inherent in all different. To realize this essential nature of oneness is the kernel of all spiritual experiences. Multiple objects explain nothing if then miss this basic truth. So it is spirituality that explains how multiple objects exists without losing an inherent unity in them. The spirituality is not an abstraction but a realization of eternal soul in and through the manifested objects. This is the true meaning of spirituality.

## **2. How can it be realized?**

Swami Vivekananda was a true Vedantin and a Vedantin's personality must exhibit same trend towards the identity of Brahmin and the Atman and all his teaching must be coloured by this. Vivekananda says that the purpose of human life is to realize the

divine in him, and to this end man, to the exclusion of other animals, has been endowed with the power of contemplation of experiencing and experimenting with truth. Swami Vivekananda says that our country made gigantic advances in spiritual ideas. At first we undeniably find various differences among our sects. Some are Advaitists, some are Dvaitists, some believe in Incarnations of God, some in image-worship while others are upholders of the doctrine of the formless. But in the midst of all these differences there is one unity among all. All religions of the world claim their authority as being delivered by a personal God or a special messenger of God. The mass of knowledge called the Vedanta was revealed to the *Rishis* of India. Through *Rishis* and sages India created a heritage of spirituality.

Swami Vivekananda points out that Vedas, Upanishads, Smritis, Puranas -differ very much from each other in certain points of spirituality. But the common ground of the essential principles of spirituality is also present there.

As the realization of multicoloured spirituality Vivekananda says that we cannot realize God or spirituality without knowing the soul. We handle the material world, but the spiritual world or the way to spirituality, the knowledge of the highest must come through the heart, the human soul. The souls are without beginning, and without

end, and immortal by their very nature. All powers, blessings, purity, omnipresence are buried in each soul. In every man and every animal, however weak or wicked, great or small, resides the same omnipresent soul. This soul is one but it manifests in multiple ways.

The Hindu believes that - God is a spirit. "Him the sword cannot pierce - Him the fire cannot burn- Him the water cannot melt - Him the air cannot dry".<sup>16</sup> The Hindu believes that every soul is a circle whose circumference is nowhere, but whose centre is located in the body and that death means the change of this centre from body to body. This soul is separated from the mind as well as from the body. The goal of the soul is freedom and this earth is the *Karma Bhumi* from which we attain to liberation. The idea of liberation given by Swamiji as follows:

"No more is there life"; therefore no more is there death. No more enjoyment; therefore no more misery. It is bliss unspeakable, indestructible, beyond every thing. What we call happiness and good here are but particles of that eternal Bliss. And this eternal Bliss in our goal".<sup>17</sup>

How can we reach that goal? By overcoming ignorance. Ignorance leads to bondage, knowledge leads to liberation. Here knowledge

means knowledge of God. This knowledge comes through love, Bhakti, by the worship of God, by loving all beings as the temples of God.

According to Vivekananda, spirituality can never be attained unless all material ideas given up. We should work for work's sake without caring for the results. In fact the spirit of the Gita's '*Nishkamo karma*', disinterested work is one way of spiritual knowledge. Vivekananda gives stress on this point.

According to Yoga philosophy, spiritualism is a manifestation through *Pranayama*. The prana is the vital force in every thing. Thought is the finest and highest action of prana. But when the mind attained the super conscious state, it is called Samasthi. And when we are able to do that we can control the whole body. So the greatest help to spiritual life is meditation. In meditation we divert ourselves of all material conditions and feel a divine nature. The aim of all religions is a union of man with God.

So, this is the ultimate goal of all man kind, this is the aim and end of all religions, is but one- re- union with God. But while the aim is one, the method of attaining may vary. Both the goal and the methods employed for reaching it are called Yoga. There are various yogas, or

methods of union- but the chief ones are - *Karma- yoga*, *Bhakti- yoga*, *Raja- yoga* and *Jnana- yoga*. We classify then in the following way:

***Karma- yoga*** - The manner in which a man realizes his own divinity through disinterested and duty.

***Bhakti- yoga*** - The realization of the divinity through devotion to and love of a personal God.

***Raja- yoga*** - The realization of the divinity through control of mind.

***Jnana- yoga*** - The realization of a man's own divinity through knowledge.

These are all different roads leading to the same centre---God. And these are the four paths which lead to salvation.

But apart from them there is the *Tantra yoga*. To *Tantra* mother-force is the ultimate reality. Through some spiritual activities we can reach that state. So the goal of *Tantra* is same with the goal of the Vedanta.

So these are the different methods by which one can reach the highest spiritual state and realize the supreme spiritual power.

**Swami Vivekananda** – the very mention of his name motivates the youth. His message has influenced, inspired and transformed innumerable individuals globally over the last hundred years. In his writings, he has comprehensively touched upon all significant aspects of human life, societal concerns and national life. He has extensively discussed the criticality of education, its meaning, objectives, transactional strategies, and expectations and potentialities. Swamiji was concerned about the lack of self-esteem and self-confidence amongst Indians, particularly the youth in his times. The present-day youth of the country appears lost in the maze of enormous magnitude of changes taking place all around on one hand and deterioration of standards, ethics and values in the society on the other. Centres of creation, generation and transference of knowledge have almost given up their role of guiding the youth and assisting them in manifestation of their inner potentials. Under the influence of alien education systems, India has conveniently ignored the thinking, experiences and understanding of its own sages, savants, sufis, scholars and thinkers. Swamiji was all of these in one. One oft-quoted sentence of his ‘Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man’ could be a beacon light for any system of education or institution of scholarship and learning. In his perception, education is neither mere book learning nor acquisition of diverse knowledge, but a preparation for self-control and development of skills to restrain the ‘current and expression of will’.

This cannot be taught by anybody else; it can only be experienced and internalized by the learner. Parents, teachers and others in the community can help in giving direction.

UNESCO appointed an independent Commission on *Education for the Twenty-first Century* under the chairmanship of Jacques Delors. The Commission's report is entitled *Learning: The Treasure Within*. It attempts to give a global picture of emerging scenario in education. It has been appreciated and is under discussion all over the world. The report is receiving accolades for the title itself, the logic and rationale for which has been explained in the preface. Majority of the members in any international commission, however, are generally unaware of the high ideals in the Indian culture which are contained in the rich Indian heritage and scriptures. It has always been made the basic premise of Indian thought that entire learning resides within the learner. Vedanta says that all knowledge is within the individual and it requires only an awakening. According to Swami Vivekananda this is the task the teacher is supposed to perform. Teachers have to motivate, demonstrate and persuade individuals to discover their own potential, intellect and to properly understand their body, mind and spirit.

India has in the post-Independence period, persisted with the alien model of education. Any effort to focus on the need for an indigenous

system for India is viewed with scepticism and grave apprehensions. The protagonists of modernization forget the words of Swami Vivekananda 'getting by heart the thoughts of others in foreign language and stuffing your brain with them and taking some university degrees, you consider yourself educated?' He further goes on to emphasize that 'education which does not help the common mass of the people to equip themselves for struggle for life, which does not bring out the strength of character, a spirit of philanthropy and the courage of a lion is not worth being called education'. Let these thoughts be examined in the light of the fact that most brilliant of India's young persons who manage a degree from apex professional institutions take the first available flight to the foreign land where life would be easy, luxurious and which would provide them avenues for future materialistic growth. Swamiji's statement made fifty years before Independence is true even fifty years after Independence. The situation has deteriorated. Is our education system a man-making system? Aping the West we have lost what was our own and which could provide strength to the youth of India. At present we observe much greater erosion of respect, *shradha* and faith. Those who talk of Gita, Upanishads and Vedas are immediately considered as backwards and rustics. The present education system inculcates a desire amongst the youth to master every detail of alien culture, traditions, and practices at the cost of what has evolved, grown and developed over the centuries in their own country. Positive education in life can be internalized by individuals only

when they get good quality indigenous education; an education which forms character, enhances strength of man, expands the intellect and helps individuals stand on their own feet.

### **Education for Masses**

Alien influences are inevitable part of the process of change and need to be viewed analytically in the interest of the nation. Swami Vivekananda was firmly of the view that 'flash of lightning may be immensely bright but it could be devastating if not handled properly'. It is the duty of the nation to educate its people and give them positive education, an education that makes children familiar with the great men of the country. Only that would enable people to stand firmly on their feet and realize their own strength.

India has to be a scientific nation committed to the present development of scientific and technological literacy and scientific temper amongst all her men and women. This can be achieved only by educating the masses. Swamiji was of the firm view that the 'only service to be done to our lower class is to give them education, to develop their lost personality'. While travelling in Europe, his mind was always preoccupied with the poor people of India. He was concerned not only with the attendance in schools but also in creating

conditions that would enable children to avail of the opportunity. Even today children working in farms, fields, factories and other occupations are deprived of basic education mostly due to the economic conditions of the parents and non-availability of supportive services that would permit children to attend schools and compensate their parents for their absence from productive activities. Education of the masses is essential as 'any nation advances only in proportion of spread of education and intelligence amongst the masses'. Confinement of education and intelligence amongst a handful of people was the main cause of India's ruin and poverty. Educated people would be able to solve their own problems. Without education, reforms would remain mostly on paper and as ideals. These ideas of Swamiji appear to be so prophetic and also realistic.

### **Learning Environment**

The personal life of the teacher is critical in several ways and influences the spread of education and the process of learning by the young ones. Imparting knowledge in India in the earlier times has been through men of renunciation. Even in the present times this basic task has to be handled by only those who have a genuine appreciation of renunciation, dedication, sense of commitment and preparedness for a value-based life. Love, affection, and empathy on the part of the teacher and the feeling of appreciation and respect on

the part of the learner could create an ambience in the teaching-learning process that would generate a true learning environment, essential for developing a learning society. Swamiji wanted teachers to know the spirit of scriptures like Bible, Vedas, Koran and Granth Sahib. In his words, 'It is knowledge of spirit of scriptures alone that constitutes the true teacher'. A pure heart and selfless motive characterizes the true teacher. The system of education must provide learning conditions in which the learner's mind is not restless. Only then the real knowledge can be assimilated and the learners become capable of appreciating and understanding the essence of higher human pursuits. Human life is not meant only for meeting the baser requirements but to achieve higher goals and values. Every individual has to learn to overcome the desires for materialism, egoism and tendencies to possess as much as possible. Education must light the pathway towards knowing the truth and in moving towards spirituality.

The deterioration in the functional environment within schools and institutions of higher learning is a serious national concern. One of the major causes has been the deterioration in the relationship between the teacher and the taught. The bonds of affection and empathy between the teacher and the learner either do not exist to have become just peripheral. The system provides only for transaction of the prescribed curricula aiming at the percentage of marks at the year-end examination. Institutional initiatives are

necessary to re-establish the close relationship between the teachers and the learners. This sound mutual relationship would enhance emotional and affective aspects of learner's personality development. The entire world is now realizing the significance of science of yoga which has enormous potentialities to develop human personality. The realities of physical world, mental world and spiritual world are in fact to be seen only comprehensively.

### **Present Context of Religion and Values**

Value education can be supported to a great extent by adequate and appropriate knowledge of basic postulates and philosophies of all religions of India. The Committees and Commissions in the past have duly emphasized this aspect. These included the Radhakrishnan Commission (1948-49), Kothari Commission (1964-66), National Policy on Education (1986), Ramamurti Committee (1990), Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE), Committee on Education Policy (1992), Planning Commission Core Group on Value Orientation in Education (1992). Present day education is generally perceived as an information transmission process with little focus on values and character development. Swami Vivekananda has very aptly described the situation as: "Education is not the amount of information that is put into your brain and runs riot there, undigested, all your life. We must have life-building, man-making

character-making, assimilation of ideas. If education were identical with information, the libraries would be the greatest sages of the world and encyclopedias the *rishis*".

The context of values and religion has been examined in the 81st Report of the Committee on Value-based Education, headed by Shri S. B. Chavan and presented to Rajya Sabha on 26 February 1999. This report highlights the need to inculcate five essential values: truth, righteous conduct, peace, love and non-violence. The Committee terms these as core universal values which could form the foundation stone of any value-based education programme. Concerning religion the Committee makes the following recommendation:

"Another aspect that must be given some thought is religion, which is the most misused and misunderstood concept. The process of making the student's acquainted with the basics of all religions, the values inherent therein and also a comparative study of the philosophy of all religions should begin at the middle stage in schools and continue up to the university level. Students have to be made aware that the basic concept behind every religion is common, only the practices differ. Even if there are differences of opinion in certain areas, people have to learn to co-exist and carry no hatred against any religion."

Swamiji advocated all these values highlighting their role in our lives. To him 'it is a great faith which will make the world better. If faith in 'ourselves' has been extensively taught and practiced, 'a very large portion of evils and miseries that we have would have vanished'. To Swamiji strength is goodness and weakness is sin. One of the most profound statements made by him is 'truth is the nature of all souls'. He highlights the mention of the word fearless in Upanishads and exhorts every individual to be fearless, acquire inner strength and tell the truth boldly.

### **Education for Girls**

Vivekananda has studied the position of women in India in the past as well as in his own times. Educated women, in his view, would inculcate virtues amongst the children and thus prepare the new generation of people who could distinguish themselves in virtues. He emphasized the role of women in housekeeping, religion, arts, science, and hygiene and wanted all girls to acquire suitable skills in these areas. He wanted them to move towards higher education. He was also in favour of educating the widow, which, in those times, was a pretty bold step. 'Women must be put in a position to solve their problems in their own way. No one can or ought to do for them, and our Indian women are as capable of doing it as any in the world'.

To him upliftment of women and awakening of the masses was the first requisite before any real good could come to India. He desired that schools for girls be opened in every village. This was his pioneering effort in the right perspective and strategy.

### Language Learning

There is a strong upsurge in India for English medium schools particularly amongst educated and literate parents. In this world of severe competitions, the only panacea, parents feel, is a good knowledge of English. Even those who are on the economically lower side of the ladder are cutting down other necessary expenses to put their children in the so-called public schools. A new generation is coming up in India which is not familiar with their own mother tongue. This situation though professionally unacceptable, is thriving because of ignorance and ambitions of the parents and craze for all that is 'western'. They fail to recognize that it is the mother tongue alone in which children naturally express themselves, in which they communicate love, grief or anger. No second language can have that force and that brevity and expressiveness. In fact the present generation is not being fair to the young ones by forcing them to begin their education in an alien language.

Sanskrit is a language whose perfection is being acknowledged also by the western world, particularly in the context of development of information technology. Sanskrit and its rich literature bring knowledge, wisdom and glory to India and to Indians. Learning of Sanskrit enhances the moral fibre of individuals. Swamiji said that Sanskrit gives prestige and power to the entire race. It is high time we pay heed to his advice and make maximum use of the treasure that is available to this country in the form of Sanskrit literature.

In the context of languages, Vivekananda gave a sutra to the teachers. 'The greatness of a teacher consists in the simplicity of his language'. This is very relevant for every teacher. This needs to be understood in the context of those schools where the school language and the home language are not the same. The number of such schools is very large, particularly in the rural and the tribal areas. Specific attention has to be given by the teacher to the socio-cultural context of the children including the language being used by the family and the community. A competent teacher has to put in extra efforts to plan not only activities and lessons but every word, sentence and sequence in local context. Teaching requires to be conducted in plain, simple and comprehensive language. That alone would generate self-confidence and prepare the learners for success. Swamiji described his own language as 'most colloquial and yet most expressive'.

## Towards Higher Intellect

The quality in the context of higher education is a matter of serious concern. The objectives of higher education obviously include learning how to solve the problems of life. While the study of advancements and developments in western world is desirable and indeed essential, these must be studied in consonance with Indian spirituality which is now attracting the attention the world over. Higher education must develop a sense of self-confidence and self-assurance along with necessary skills and competencies. Higher education for women was very near to Swamiji's heart. In fact he appreciated the Calcutta University for having opened its doors to women earlier than Oxford, Harvard and Yale. He reinforced his views by asserting that religion does not prevent a woman from being educated. He had pleaded for technical education, if necessary, even at the cost of higher education. Self-employment and entrepreneurship would really transform the youth in any country. It is the practical knowledge which brings out the best in the individual for the service of others.

Education is not the process of filling the mind with a lot of facts alone. 'Perfecting the instruments and getting complete mastery of my own mind is the ideal of education'. In the times of information explosion this could be the guiding star for every young person.

Learning to find out relevant facts from the heap of information is itself an acquisition of a competence. Concentration could help the individual in so many ways. Control of internal and external senses needs to be acquired necessarily in modern times. Another aspect which Swamiji highlighted was acquisition of the great powers of endurance which needs to be possessed by every individual. Weaknesses of mind should not be allowed to overtake the inner strength of an individual's mind. All knowledge which the world has received comes from the mind. Anybody who wants to become an intellectual has to work out the individual strategies on the intellectual plan.

Swamiji considered intellectual education in isolation as one of the evils of western civilization. Over the years we have learnt that our school education system focuses only on memory and those areas of learning in which written examinations are possible and are dutifully conducted. The system does not take care of affective domain in the growth and development of every individual. It does not take care of the heart which needs to be cultivated in all situations. Only the heart can take one to the higher plain which intellect can never reach. Swamiji exhorted the youth to develop a strong physique to ensure a healthy mind and a healthy heart. India needs all the three: healthy body, sound mind and enlightened spirit.

Swami Vivekananda's inspiring personality was well known both in India and in America during the last decade of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth. The unknown monk of India suddenly leapt into fame at the Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in 1893, at which he represented Hinduism. His vast knowledge of Eastern and Western culture as well as his deep spiritual insight, fervid eloquence, brilliant conversation, broad human sympathy, colourful personality, and handsome figure made an irresistible appeal to the many types of Americans who came in contact with him. People who saw or heard Vivekananda even once still cherish his memory after a lapse of more than half a century.

In America Vivekananda's mission was the interpretation of India's spiritual culture, especially in its Vedantic setting. He also tried to enrich the religious consciousness of the Americans through the rational and humanistic teachings of the Vedanta Philosophy. In America he became India's spiritual ambassador and pleaded eloquently for better understanding between India and the New World in order to create a healthy synthesis of East and West, of religion and science.

In his own motherland Vivekananda is regarded as the patriot saint of modern India and an inspirer of her dormant national consciousness. To the Hindus he preached the ideal of a strength-

giving and man-making religion. Service to man as the visible manifestation of the Godhead was the special form of worship he advocated for the Indians, devoted as they were to the rituals and myths of their ancient faith. Many political leaders of India have publicly acknowledged their indebtedness to Swami Vivekananda.

The Swami's mission was both national and international. A lover of mankind, he strove to promote peace and human brotherhood on the spiritual foundation of the Vedantic Oneness of existence. A mystic of the highest order, Vivekananda had a direct and intuitive experience of Reality. He derived his ideas from that unfailing source of wisdom and often presented them in the soul stirring language of poetry.

The natural tendency of Vivekananda's mind, like that of his Master, Ramakrishna, was to soar above the world and forget itself in contemplation of the Absolute. But another part of his personality bled at the sight of human suffering in East and West alike. It might appear that his mind seldom found a point of rest in its oscillation between contemplation of God and service to man. Be that as it may, he chose, in obedience to a higher call, service to man as his mission on earth; and this choice has endeared him to people in the West, Americans in particular.

In the course of a short life of thirty-nine years (1863-1902), of which only ten were devoted to public activities-and those, too, in the midst of acute physical suffering-he left for posterity his four classics: *Jnana-Yoga*, *Bhakti-Yoga*, *Karma- Yoga* and *Raja- Yoga*, all of which are outstanding treatises on Hindu philosophy. In addition, he delivered innumerable lectures, wrote inspired letters in his own hand to his many friends and disciples, composed numerous poems, and acted as spiritual guide to the many seekers, who came to him for instruction. He also organized the Ramakrishna Order of monks, which is the most outstanding religious organization of modern India. It is devoted to the propagation of the Hindu spiritual culture not only in the Swami's native land, but also in America and in other parts of the world.

Swami Vivekananda once spoke of himself as a "condensed India." His life and teachings are of inestimable value to the West for an understanding of the mind of Asia. William James, the Harvard philosopher, called the Swami the "paragon of Vedantists." Max Muller and Paul Deussen, the famous Orientalists of the Nineteenth Century, held him in genuine respect and affection. "His words," writes Romain Rolland, "are great music, phrases in the style of Beethoven, stirring rhythms like the march of Handel choruses. I cannot touch these sayings of his, scattered as they are through the pages of books, at thirty years' distance, without receiving a thrill through my body like an electric shock. And what shocks, what

transports, must have been produced when in burning words they issued from the lips of the hero!"

On the occasion of America's Bicentennial Celebration in 1976, the National Portrait Gallery in Washington D.C., mounted a large portrait of Swami Vivekananda as part of its exhibition "Abroad in America: Visitors to the New Nation," which paid tribute to the great personalities who visited America from abroad and made a deep impression on the American mind. Among those honored in the exhibition, some influenced art or literature, some science, education or social reform. But Swami Vivekananda touched the very soul of American people. The commemorative volume of the exhibition says: "The Swami charmed the audiences with his magical oratory, and left an indelible mark on America's spiritual development." This is no exaggeration. Swami Vivekananda was the first Hindu monk from India ever to visit America.

Guided solely by the will of Providence, he embarked on this journey to the new world. The unknown wandering monk, lost in the streets of Chicago, suddenly became famous after his first day's brief address before the Parliament. A select audience of nearly 7,000 enlightened representatives of different branches of American thought became thrilled to hear his message and welcomed him with sustained and thunderous applause. He captured the hearts of the

American people. Crowds gathered in the streets of Chicago to see the picture posters of Swami Vivekananda placed on billboards around the city, and lecture bureaus vied with one another to enlist him for lectures in different cities. Leading newspapers and journals published his words in bold letters. Some of these newspapers described him as the "cyclonic Hindu," some as "Prince among men" or "Brahmin monk," while others chose to designate him by such epithets as "warrior prophet" and "militant mystic." Contemporary leaders of American thought who met him were entranced by the radiance of his spiritual personality and his powerful message. Professor John Henry Wright of Harvard University told Swami Vivekananda: "To ask you, Swami, for your credentials is like asking the sun about its right to shine." After hearing Swami Vivekananda, the correspondent of one journal wrote: "The impertinence of sending half-educated theological students to instruct the wise and erudite Orientals was never brought home to an English-speaking audience more forcibly." Professor William James referred to Swami Vivekananda as "the paragon of Vedantists." The Parliament of Religions, which was an afterthought of the planners of the Columbian Exposition, became a focus of historic importance because it served as a pulpit for the presentation of the message of Swami Vivekananda to the American public. Recalling this event, Romain Rolland wrote: "His strength and beauty, the grace and dignity of his bearing, the dark light of his eyes, his imposing appearance, and from the moment he began to speak, the splendid music of his rich

deep voice enthralled the vast audience.... The thought of this warrior prophet of India left a deep mark upon the United States." America thus had the blessing of directly hearing a person of the stature of Buddha, radiating purity, compassion, and love.

The message of Swami Vivekananda was the message of Vedanta - a spiritual teaching that again and again saved India during periods of decline and crisis. The keynote of this message is: "Truth is one: Sages call it by various names." Its four cardinal points are non-duality of the Godhead, divinity of the soul, oneness of existence, and harmony of religions. Religion, in the light of Vedanta, is the manifestation of the divinity already in man. The central theme of Vedanta is harmony of religions. This spiritual harmony is to be realized by deepening our spiritual consciousness. Vedanta asks a Christian to be a true Christian, a Hindu a true Hindu, a Buddhist a true Buddhist, a Jew a true Jew, Moslem a true Moslem. The message was timely and powerful. America had received a rude shock from the Civil War and its aftermath. Science had already shaken the very roots of religious beliefs and dogmas, and the ideas of Darwin were challenging conventional American thought and religion. Americans were looking for a philosophy that could harmonize science with humanism and mystical experience, and Swami Vivekananda's words gave them hope for the fulfillment of their spiritual aspirations. The message was powerful not because of its dialectical superiority or philosophical subtlety, but because of the personality

of Swami Vivekananda. The message was an ancient one, but it bore a fire of conviction that was new. One familiar with the life of Swami Vivekananda will recall that his Master, Sri Ramakrishna, saw in him the power and potentiality of a great world teacher. Before the Master passed away, he prophesied: "Narendra (Swami Vivekananda) will teach others ..... Very soon he will shake the world by his intellectual and spiritual powers."

The news of Swami Vivekananda's success in America soon reached the shores of India and spread like wildfire. The country, lost in the slumber of inertia, woke up with its new vigour and confidence, and a spiritual renaissance was set into motion that would propel India to great intellectual and social development. Today Swami Vivekananda is regarded as the "patriot prophet" of new India. His words carry the power of inspiration and transformation.

Swami Vivekananda indicated Vedanta is the future religion of mankind. With his prophetic vision, he predicted that modern science and education would break down the barriers between nations and prepare the ground for the fulfillment of the age-old dream of one united world. But one world is possible only when there is one common Soul that transcends the limitations of race, culture, and religious denominations. Swami Vivekananda presents before humanity the World-Soul of Vedanta, the non-dual, nameless

and formless all-pervading Pure Spirit that alone can make the dream of one world a reality. He foresaw a new world order in which science and religion would cooperate, mysticism would combine with humanism and spiritual harmony would replace religious dissension. His final words at the Chicago Parliament of Religions were, "Upon the banner of every religion will soon be written in spite of resistance 'Help and not Fight,' 'Assimilation and not Destruction,' 'Harmony and Peace and not Dissension.'" At a time when world peace is being maintained by continuous wars, divisiveness is glorified at the expense of unity, and the human soul is being buried beneath the debris of brutality, violence and hatred, the words of Swami Vivekananda give us assurance -- an assurance that we are not living the last days of our destiny and that the light of the Divine, shining in every heart, will triumph over the forces of darkness.

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## **CHAPTER - VI**

## CHAPTER - VI

### NATURE OF VIVEKANANDA'S NATIONALISTIC OUTLOOK

Vivekananda's anarchistic ideal of Brahminhood makes the way for the emergence of a spiritual society. He was of the view that spirituality constituted India's Individuality. As India was spiritual he felt that its social and political institutions must be national and spiritual. It was for that he advocated India's spiritual nationalism.

Vivekananda was of the view that nationalism is conducive to the growth of internationalism. He firmly believed that nation's growth and expansion depend on cultivating international outlook and contact and mutual exchange of knowledge. As a nationalist, Vivekananda championed -

- i. The spiritual renaissance of India.
- ii. Advocated India's spiritual nationalism and
- iii. Established his place as a patriot of the patriots by identifying himself with the masses of India with the religious spirit of oneness.

As the leading soul of the spiritual renaissance of India, Vivekananda pioneered the past and present traditionalism and modernism to mould modern India's future. Pandit Nehru said, "Rooted in the past and full of Pride in India's prestige, Vivekananda was yet modern in his approach to life's problems and was a kind of bridge between the past of India and present."<sup>1</sup>

Vivekananda ejaculated India's self-respect and rejuvenated faith in her spiritual glory and unity. He urged his compatriots to disseminate his spiritual truths to the high and the low and expand his national institutions. By invoking the national ethos and touching the chords of his spirituality, he vindicated India's spiritual unity and freedom more spontaneously and effectively than his social and religious contemporaries. None of the Indian reformers before him conceived the idea of common nation on the grounds of spirituality. Vivekananda stood foremost in pleading for India's spiritual freedom. The reforming religious sects and social movements confined their thought and activity only to reform Hinduism and Hindu Society. They lacked the initiative and perspective of projecting a united India and creating national consciousness on the basis of spirituality. Their activities only convinced Vivekananda that they were accelerating the process of India's degeneration and denationalism.

Vivekananda felt that enslaved India could be liberated neither by social reform nor by political means but only by religious revival. He pointed out that in India, "Social reform has to be preached by showing how much more spiritual a life the new system will bring; and politics has to be preached by showing how much it will improve the one thing that the nation wants - its spirituality".<sup>2</sup> He also reminded the social reformers that her religious teachers maintained social dynamism by weeding out social evils without attacking her national institutions and beliefs. Therefore he believed that the remedy for India's degradation was not social reform but religion which encouraged individual and national growth.

Vivekananda exhorted that the programme of national revival should be chalked out with moderation. He pointed out that it must avoid the extremes of national fanaticism of religious and social orthodoxy and blind infatuation. Vivekananda felt that limited rigidity and flexibility should be adapted in the process of national revival. He stood for growth and not replacement of her national soul or individuality. He advised his countrymen: "Stand on your feet, and assimilate what you can, learn from every nation, take what is of use to you. But remember that as Hindus everything else must be subordinated to our national ideals".<sup>3</sup>

Of all the mentors of the Indian Renaissance, Vivekananda propagated with untiring energy and enthusiasm the incandescent spirituality of India which constituted her national growth and vitality. To the inactive, exclusive and degenerated India, he showed the heights of its majestic culture and Philosophy and the depth and eternity of its spiritualism. He infused faith and strength into the nation.

Vivekananda rightly observed that each nation has a mission and a message of her own. "Just as there is an individuality in every man. So there is a national individuality - each nation has a destiny to fulfill, each nation has a message to deliver, and each nation has a mission to accomplish."<sup>4</sup> Therefore it was his mission to revise the eternal teachings of the Vedas and the Upanishads to strengthen the nations growth and faith in its individuality.

Vivekananda pointed out that there can be no regeneration for India unless it regained its spirituality. When her spirituality was least in oblivion and subjected to derision, it was mulish to think of her independence. He was of the view that India relegated her religion and lost her freedom. He felt that India by neglecting her faith and will weakened itself and was enmeshed in social, political and spiritual servitude. Therefore he flooded India with the Vedantic message of strength, fearlessness and freedom. Thus Vivekananda

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held that India would become dynamic and strong by cultivating faith in her Vedantic, the impersonal religion.

According to Vivekananda, there is a significant distinction between a people and a nation. A people become a nation when it comes to be imbued with 'a national purpose'. Thus to Swamiji, a people with a national purpose, whether the purpose has any political significance or not, is a nation. The Indian people are a nation because they clearly exhibit political significance altogether from his notion of nationhood. Spiritual Independence is the most essential element of the Indian national life. "This is our national purpose."<sup>5</sup>

But can a national purpose as this, which is devoid of political significance alone make a nation? The Swamiji's answer to this, "The whole difference between the West and the East is in this: They are nations, we are not.....why was it so easy for the English to Conquer India? It was because they are a nation, we are not?"<sup>6</sup> Hence India, with freedom of religion as the theme of its life, was not exactly a nation in his eyes.

## MARX, VIVEKANANDA ON NATIONALISM

In this context we can compare the views of Marx and Vivekananda on the question of nationalism. The Nineteenth Century was a period of great national upsurge all over the world. In spite of the fact that nationalism was striking deep roots at the time, Marx devoted comparatively less attention to it than one would expect probably he did not realize the full significance of the national sentiment, pre-occupied as he was with the economic aspect, as distinct from its emotion aspect. Another reason may be that both Marx and Engels were internationalists and as such, did not sufficiently appreciate the sentiments behind nationalism.

On the contrary, Swami Vivekananda was an ardent nationalist, in spite of his being an all-renouncing Sanyasin. The servitude, under which his motherland was reeling at the time, must have definitely intensified his national feelings. The legitimate pride which he had in the glorious past of his country also contributed to the sentiment, as is evident from all his speeches and writings.

According to Marx, the origin of nations is to be sought in the play of economic forces. Nationalistic feelings emerge during the slave and the feudal period. They are extremely unstable, with the development of capitalism, economic disunity was gradually eliminated and a single

market emerged as a result of which nationalistic turned into the nation-state.

Marx and Engles were internationalists. They believed that nations were a phenomenon of the capitalist age. Marx declared, "Make the workmen of different countries not only feel, but act, as brethren and comrades in the army of emancipation".<sup>7</sup>

Swami Vivekananda's approach to nationalism was quite different. It was a cultural, not an economic approach. He was of the view that every nation is born, not created. Every nation is born with a mission to fulfill. Vivekananda does not agree with Marx that the central theme of every nation is economic, for some it may be economic, for some others, it may be politics or social life. In the case of India, it is religion. "Here in this blessed land, the foundation the backbone, the life centre is religion".<sup>8</sup>

But both Marx and Vivekananda were truly internationalists, though with that difference that Marx wanted nations to disappear and merge in a single world humanity and Vivekananda wanted each nation to grow to its full stature and strength, by remaining steadfast to its life mission, what ever it is and thereby contributing all that it is capable of, to the seem total of world's growth and fulfillment and human welfare.

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## **CHAPTER-VII**

## CHAPTER-VII

### NATURE OF VIVEKANANDA'S SOCIALISTIC TREND

#### VEDANTIC SOCIALISM

Vivekananda wanted to fulfill the Advaitic concept of unity in the social and political life. He believed that by the process of unity a harmonious society could be established. He was convinced that socialism could establish a just society by eliminating inequalities through the spirit of love and social oneness. His concept of socialism postulates the social theory of class-cooperation and unity and pleads for the recovery of original caste system for performing socialistic functions of society. According to Vivekananda, "The doctrine which demands the sacrifice of Individual freedom to social supremacy is called socialism.....".<sup>1</sup>

Vivekananda found in socialism the key to social unity and economic justice. It is only the principle of justice-social, economic and political – that inspired him to proclaim himself as a socialist. "I am a socialist not because I think it is a perfect system, but half a loaf is better than no bread."<sup>2</sup> In the words of B.N. Dutta, "Swamiji called himself a socialist, and so far it is known, he was the first Indian to designate himself as such".<sup>3</sup> Vivekananda championed it as the movement of

liberation of masses. Social liberation may also be described "as social justice for justice is the just ordering of things. Justice may be viewed either as an end in itself or merely as a means. To Swami Vivekananda, social justice implies both. It is an end, because it is an index of purity of social relation; it is a means for it is the condition of development both of the individual and society".<sup>4</sup>

Vivekananda believed that the establishment of socialism was to be preceded by mass awakening through education. He pinned his faith in the mass education. Sacred and secular pleaded for the restoration of their lost individuality. He was of the view that when the masses were educated, they would become conscious of their rights, improve their abilities, establish their Government and solve the problems of society. Vivekananda's approach towards the masses was creative and democratic. As mass awakening was to be gradual and peaceful; the ushering of a socialist society was to be achieved by peaceful means. His socialism thus stands for self-reliance and self-rule of the masses. Mass awakening brings with it a new culture and civilization. Though Vivekananda realized that Proletarian culture and civilization would be a degenerated one, he welcome it for its being based on social liberation of the masses.

## **Spiritual Basis of Socialism**

Vivekananda was of the view that social and political ideas and institutions were not eternal and they would face decay and death, if they failed to adapt to changing conditions and circumstances. However to make them effective and lasting and to create a dynamic society, he pointed out that they must be laid on a spiritual basis. As far as India was concerned, he made it clear that religion took precedence here over politics. He proclaimed that his "mission is to show that religion is everything and in everything".<sup>5</sup> He declared that religion was not in books and observance of social rituals but in the realization of spiritual oneness in social life. Accordingly he postulated his socialism or the spiritual basis of social unity with its concomitants of freedom and equality.

The Vedantic concept of unity, which postulates freedom and equality, encouraged Vivekananda to espouse socialism. He thought that Vedanta was conducive to the efflorescence of socialism. "Vivekananda affirms that the Vedanta can furnish all the modern communistic or equalizing theories with a spiritual basis."<sup>6</sup> Both socialism and Vedanta aim at human equality, freedom and unity and both advocate the upliftment and liberation of the masses from social political and economic bondage and exploitation.

Vivekananda's versatile and volatile neo-Vedanta negated neither freedom nor equality nor accepted any one of them to the exclusion of the other. Vedanta made Vivekananda a liberal in heart and a socialist in content. He reconciled the liberal idea of freedom with the socialist fascination for equality by means of the spirit of oneness and love. Liberalism, which stands for individual freedom and dignity, provides the thought and socialism the means of a just society. Socialism is rootless without individual freedom and liberalism is growth less without accepting socialist concept of economic equality. Socialism is thus an expansion of liberalism. Vivekananda improved socialism by emphasizing the modesty and necessity of the liberals, concept of individual freedom and improved liberalism by infusing into it the concept of just economy based on equitable distribution of wealth. Through the acceptance of individual freedom. Vivekananda has recognized himself as a un-Marxism socialist. The Marxism socialism admits of no individual freedom.

According to Swamiji, society is a natural institution and he is in agreement with Aristotle that man is by nature a social animal. The naturalistic view of the Swamiji has been interpreted as the Hindu view of society, which asserts that society is created and ordained by God. In respect of society, the importance question that generally comes out is that what is meant by socialism. The presentation of clear-cut definition is difficult because- "Socialism means four closely connected things - (i) a human fellowship which denies and expels

distinctions of class; (ii) a social system in which no one is so much richer or poorer than his neighbours as to be enable to mix with them on equal terms; (iii) the common ownership and use of all the vital instruments of production; (iv) and an obligation upon all citizens to serve one another according to their capacities.”<sup>7</sup>

Swami Vivekananda witnessed every where in India, the crippling poverty, the paralyzing slavery and the inhuman exploitation of the masses, the hypocrisy and priest craft – all these made him look up to the Philosophy of socialism as a probable ray of hope, if not as permanent sunshine. He knew well that there was no solution to the complex problems that confronted humanity. His attitude towards socialism has been neatly summed up in this famous sentence: “I am a socialist, not because it is a perfect system, but because I believe that half a loaf is better than no bread.”<sup>8</sup>

To discuss Swamiji’s concept of socialism, let us see how he perceives the course of history. He says, “From a careful study of the history of the world, it appears that in conformity to the line of nature, the four castes, the Brahman, the *Kshatriya*, the *Vaishya* and the *Shudra* do in every society and one after another in succession, govern the world”.<sup>9</sup> He remarks that caste is socialistic because it is based on social unity. It functions on the Principle of social and economic coordination and

not or rivalry of castes. The caste system as a socialistic institution promotes individual liberty and equality of opportunity.

The Brahmin Caste was the spiritual mentor and natural leader of society. The priestly order was based on the principal that knowledge is power. The *Kshyatriya* who succeeded the Brahmins developed urban civilization, promoted arts and sciences and ruled the people with paternal love. But later on kings two became selfish and ignored the Interests of the Community. The struggle between the king and people resulted in the establishment of *Vaishya* rule. The *Vaishyas* established international contacts and spread the fruits of knowledge. But the *Vaishya* power as its predecessors alienated itself from society and it was replaced by the *Shudra*, the proletarian. Vivekananda thought that it was the time for the rise of the *Shudras* and nobody could resist it. He stressed on the concept of the four fold Vedic social order – known as '*Chatur Varna*', which he described as the 'law of nature'. Of course he did not approve of the rigid, Orthodox, Petrified classification as it developed in Post-Vedic India, when the social order lost its dynamism and became fossilised. Yet he understood and accepted it as a tool for his Comprehension and interpretation of social evolution, not only in India but all over the world.

Here we can compare Vivekananda's socialism with Marx's Socialism. Marx gave unqualified support to socialism. He believed that religion was the opium of mankind and that it must be done away within the interest of human welfare. But Swami Vivekananda thought just the other way; his concept of socialism was in no way antithetical to religion. His socialism was based on the Vedantic view. He thought that religion goes to the roots of the matter. He says, "Socialism, as conceived today is a Product of materialism, but the present crisis is not merely in the outside world, but also in the soul of man and it can be resolved only by religion which raises man to the divine state".<sup>10</sup>

There is yet another fundamental difference between Swami Vivekananda and Karl Marx in their concept of Socialism. According to Vivekananda, "Freedom is the only condition of growth". Take that off, the result is degeneration". He says emphatic stress on the growth of the individual where as Marx lays the entire stress on centralized society or cumulative life. But ideal social life cannot be achieved if the individual has to sacrifice his soul or individual existence.

Probably the basic difference between the socialism as envisaged by Marx and that by Vivekananda is that the latter had based his concept on Advaita Vedanta whereas Marx had a materialistic

substratum. Vivekananda's Socialism is not a form of patriotism which has application to India alone, but it is of universal character as both a Panacea and a formula of growth. Thus it is democracy that is Vivekananda's ideal society and given the existence of political organisation it is his ideal state as well. His socialistic ideas pertain to this view of democracy, but a keen humanitarian sympathy induced him to accept the *Shudra* rule, which he found, in some form or other, was coming on the boards as socialism and to recommend it was to be given a four trial; for the novelty of the thing at least. But while socialism was a kind of creed to Marx, this was not so with Vivekananda, it was a new means of bringing out a social change to meet the demands of the changing society. More than that socialism, for Vivekananda, had no permanent efficacy in the historical development of mankind.

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## **CHAPTER - VIII**

## CHAPTER - VIII

### AMALGAMATION OF NATIONALISM, INTERNATIONALISM AND SPIRITUALISM IN VIVEKANANDA

Vivekananda's anarchistic ideal of Brahminhood makes the way for the emergence of a spiritual society. His heart and soul were one with it. To his heart's content, he found that India was the eternal abode of spiritualism. He thought that spirituality constituted India's Individuality and not in its replacement. As India was spiritual, he felt that its social and political institutions must be national and spiritual. It was for that he enunciated India's spiritual nationalism. He believed that India would become dynamic only by expanding her spiritual knowledge at home and abroad. He also felt that pursuit of spiritualism was not only in the interests of India but also in the larger interests of humanity. Therefore he wanted to unite mankind on the basis of spirituality.

#### Nationalism in Vivekananda

As a nationalist, Vivekananda championed –

i. The spiritual renaissance of India. ii. Advocated India's spiritual nationalism and iii. Established his place as a patriot of the Patriots by identifying himself with the religious spirit of oneness.

Vivekananda felt that the reformers who were under the hypnotism of superiority of western culture and civilization gleefully and brazenly aped Westernism in thought and activity, which only hastened the loss of India's self respect. He thought the social reformers in India wanted to bring social changes even by force of legislation. Though he was not averse to social reform; he discarded the imitation of western reform methods.

Vivekananda said that enslaved India could be liberated neither by social reform nor by political means but only by religious revival. He pointed out that in India "Social reform has to be preached by showing how much more spiritual a life the new system will bring, and politics has to be preached by showing how much it will improve the one thing that the nation wants - its spirituality".<sup>1</sup> He also reminded the social reformers that her religious teachers maintained social dynamism by weeding out social evils without attacking her national institutions and beliefs. Therefore, he believed that the remedy for India's degradation was not social reform but religion, which encouraged individual, national growth. He believed that social evils could be eliminated by mass education. He made it

clear that religion and reform should not middle in each other's affairs.

Vivekananda also held that Britain came to India not to fulfill but to destroy India's national faith and institutions. He pointed out that Britain provided neither good Government nor retained the well-established local self-government but only offered an indifferent bureaucratic government. He described its rule as follows: "This is the state of things - even education will no more be permitted to spread; freedom of the press stopped already, the bit of self government granted to them for some years is being quickly taken off. We are watching what next!"<sup>2</sup> He was of the view that British Government in India was avowedly anti-democratic and anti-national. Thus keeping in view the repercussions of social anglicanism and alien rule, Vivekananda exhorted that the programme of national revival should be chalked out with moderation. He felt that limited rigidity and flexibility should be adopted in the process of national revival. He stood for growth and not replacement of her national soul or individuality. He advised his countrymen: "Stand on your feet, and assimilate what you can, learn from every nation, take what is of use to you. But remember that as Hindus everything else must be subordinated to our national ideals."<sup>3</sup>

Moreover Vivekananda thought that nationalism was the product of innate religion. He believed that India's nationalism was based on the growth and expansion of religion. He was of the view that the reforming religious sects in India suffered from schismatic outlook and prevented the growth of national unity. Therefore Swami Vivekananda felt that religious conflict must give place for concurrence, diversity for unity. According to him, the unity in religion is absolutely necessary as the first condition of the future of India. To achieve national unity, he devised the concept of common religion.

### **Internationalism in Vivekananda**

Vivekananda's nationalism paved the way for his international outlook. He considered nationalism and internationalism as interdependent. According to Vivekananda, national growth and expansion depends on cultivating international outlook. He expressed the view that nations become dynamic and harmonious by assimilating knowledge, scientific and spiritual. Therefore he postulated his internationalism on mutual exchange of knowledge among nations and advocated union of nations on a spiritual basis. In other words, he regarded internationalism as a cultural and spiritual necessity for nations to find fulfillment of national ideals and realization of universal oneness. In the words of Isherwood,

Vivekananda's nationalism "was not nationalism in the smaller sense, it was a kind of super-nationalism, a kind of internationalism sublimated."<sup>4</sup>

The strands of Vivekananda's internationalism will become clear when we keep in mind the impact of various forces that moulded his outlook. He postulated his internationalism on the basis of (1) existence of national diversities, (2) fostering mutual contacts and exchange of knowledge and (3) asserting India's spiritual leadership of the world.

Vivekananda traced India's backwardness, degradation and slavery to the narrow and exclusive outlook of the Indians. The Indians falsely believed in the superiority of their culture and civilization and refused to come into contact with other countries on an equal basis. They held others as unequal and branded them as mlechchas, untouchables. They refused to share knowledge with other peoples. Internally also, the caste taboos prevented the intellectuals from going abroad. Thus India's growth was retarded due to the caste system. However the advent of British rule marked a change in the outlook of the nation and the course of its history. Vivekananda thanked Britain for expelling India's inactivity and narrow-mindedness. "Since the English came they have been forcing you back into communion with other nations and you are visibly rising

again. Every one that comes out of the country confers the benefit on the whole nation; for it is by doing that alone that your horizon will expand".<sup>5</sup>

Vivekananda's own experience of life in the East and the West showed him the imperative of internationalism. He advocated assimilation of knowledge for national growth and international understanding. He wanted to bring the east and the west together by exchange of scientific and spiritual knowledge. He pointed out that the west which had developed conquest of external nature was in need of spirituality and the East which adhered to spirituality must learn scientific knowledge from the West.

Vivekananda's faith in international unity was also strengthened by Vedanta. The Vedantic concept of love and universal oneness captivated his heart. He believed that Vedanta postulates good neighbourliness and brotherhood among nations. On the basis of Vedanta, he regarded all nations as equal and condemned all kinds of privileges. He wanted to promote equality and unity among nations by abolishing national privileges and prejudices.

The Vedantic concept of universal oneness revealed to Vivekananda that nations were not different from the Universe. He was of the view that all individuals and nations were parts of the universal existence,

Brahman. "Each individual is like a bubble and nations resemble many bubbles. Gradually these nations are joining and I am sure the day will come when separation will Vanish and that oneness to which we are all going will become manifest".<sup>6</sup> Therefore it may be said a nation, which injures others injures itself and also elevates itself by helping others, for all are manifestations of the impersonal Brahman. Nations quarreled among themselves because of their failure to overcome apparent or transient differences and saw the reality of oneness of the universe. Vivekananda hoped that nation by realizing their individual nature would also realize the nature of universal unity. He held the view that Vedanta did not negate the existence of nations. He affirmed international unity through national diversities.

### **International Unity through National Diversities**

Vivekananda's internationalism was based on recognition of national diversities. He visualized international unity on the basis of national individuality and independence. He pointed out that each nation has a message, mission and individuality of its own.

Vivekananda's defense of national individuality did not imply that he was for national isolation or contraction. He rather wanted the nations to expand their individuality into universality. He wanted

the countries to broaden their outlook by cultivating morality, renunciation of national weaknesses like pride and prejudice. He was for national self-restraint.

He hoped that nations would adopt self-imposed moral regulations in their dealings with other countries. He believed that "Each nation must give in order to live".<sup>7</sup> Thus Vivekananda believed that nations would enrich and expand their individuality by cultivating mutual trust and love. Nations like individuals were marching from lower truth to higher truth and from nationalism to internationalism by observing restraint. He thought that nations were accepting the concept of universal oneness and voluntarily joining the international organisations.

As Vivekananda's concept of internationalism was based on national self-restraint, international rules and regulations in a rigid form were not necessary to maintain harmony among nations. In other words, national self-restraint itself is a guarantee of good national behaviour in the family of nations. As individual freedom is no threat to society, national freedom is not incompatible with the spirit of internationalism. Just as Vivekananda held the view that society was a loose collection of individuals, his international order was to be based on loose collection of states. It was to be said that Vivekananda was for a loose federation of states. Therefore he did not think of

establishing an international order on a rigid framework. The free and equal states would contribute according to their capacity to maintain international growth and harmony and also promote friendly contacts among peoples.

Vivekananda was not content with the principle of national self-restraint in establishing international harmony. Positively he wanted to strengthen international understanding among the people by encouraging mutual cultural contacts. He himself undertook the task of bringing the peoples of the world together by establishing mutual contacts and exchange of knowledge. He approached America and Britain with the spirit of Brotherhood and with an open mind. He appreciated the social organisation of the west which was based on liberty and awakening of the masses and taught spirituality to it. He also wanted India to become an equal with the west by imparting her spiritual knowledge to the west.

### **Spiritualism in Vivekananda**

Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa was the starting point of the spiritual renaissance in India and the advent of Vivekananda marked its apogee. Vivekananda revived India's spiritual legacy and made it pervade all activities of national life. As the leading exponent of the spiritual renaissance of India, Vivekananda pioneered the past and

present, traditionalism and modernism to mould modern India's future. He travelled all over India and taught the doctrine of Universal Vedanta as the background of the new Hindu reformation. He ejaculated India's self-respect and rejuvenated faith in her spiritual glory and unity. He urged his compatriots to disseminate her spiritual truths to the high and the low and expand her national institutions. By invoking the national ethos and touching the chords of her spirituality he vindicated India's spiritual unity and freedom more spontaneously and effectively than his social and religious contemporaries. None of the Indian reformers before him conceived the idea of common nation on the grounds of spirituality.

### **Spiritual Nationalism**

Of all the mentors of the Indian Renaissance, Vivekananda propagated with untiring energy and enthusiasm the incandescent spirituality of India which constituted her national growth and vitality. Perhaps no one before him ever evoked the latent - nationalism as he and no Indian nationalist Prior to him regarded religion as a panacea for India's manifold problems. According to Swami Shraddhananda, "his was a Programme of a constructive and practical nationalism which could be worked out without waiting for the political freedom of the country".<sup>8</sup> To the inactive, exclusive and degenerated India, he showed the heights of its majestic culture and

philosophy and the depth and eternity of its spiritualism. He infused faith and strength into the nation.

Vivekananda observed that each nation has a mission and a message of her own. "Just as there is an individuality in every man, so there is a national individuality - each nation has a destiny to fulfill, each nation has a message to deliver, each nation has a mission to accomplish".<sup>9</sup> Pursuit of spiritualism constituted India's way of life. His mission was to revise the eternal teachings of the Vedas and the Upanishads strengthen the nation's growth and faith in its individuality.

Vivekananda pointed out that there could be no regeneration for India unless it regained its spirituality. When her spirituality was least in oblivion and subjected to derision, it was foolish to think of her independence. He was of the view that India relegated her religion and lost her freedom. He felt that India by neglecting her faith and will weakened itself and was enmeshed in social, political and spiritual servitude. He traced the political success of Britain to her faith in herself and India's weakness to the neglect of the Upanishads. He remarked that the Upanishads blazed out freedom and fearlessness. National weakness was not only anti national but also anti-religious to him. Therefore he flooded India with the Vedantic message of strength fearlessness and freedom. Thus

Vivekananda held that India would become dynamic and strong by cultivating faith in her Vedanta, the impersonal religion.

Vivekananda's intense nationalism was the product of his innate religion. He held that Vedanta was a universal religion. The impersonal religion to Vivekananda was identical with strength and selfless activity. He pointed out that selfless activity and spread of spirituality among the masses would awaken them and enable them to regain their lost individuality, namely inherent spirituality. He wanted to mould India as the field of eternal spiritual activity.

To alleviate the miseries of the poor, Vivekananda subordinate the bliss of the Absolute to the liberation of the Indian masses. At Kannayakumari, he determined to dedicate his life to serve his countrymen. He pointed out that the west was tired of Bhoga and was fit for Yoga, while India which was enmeshed in poverty cannot contemplate on Yoga. He told Americans what India needed was not proselytizing missions but bread and scientific knowledge. He remarked that an exchange of spiritual and scientific knowledge between the East and the West would provide a better and stable world.

Establishment of friendly contacts with the West was only the beginning of his activity. He wanted to consolidate the feeling of

oneness among nations on the basis of spirituality. Vivekananda's spiritual campaign in the West stabilised his faith in India's mission of spreading spirituality abroad. The West was active and receptive to India's spirituality. He believed that it was the historic mission of India to lead the countries of the world to spiritual unity. He was emphatic that in the realm of spiritual knowledge India was superior to the West.

Vivekananda's advocacy of harmony and spiritual unity of nations was based on his conviction in Vedanta. He believed that Vedanta stood for universal outlook. He considered it a universal religion. He hoped that it would provide the basis for unity of nations. He was of the view that on the basis of Vedanta all national and international problems could be solved.

It should be noted that Vivekananda put faith only in India's spiritual leadership to unite mankind. Vivekananda's internationalism grew out of his nationalism. He maintained neither the supremacy of nationalism at the cost of internationalism nor internationalism at the cost of national individuality. What he wanted was not the subordination of the one to the other but only coordination and even identity of nations on the basis of spiritual unity. The unity of the world was crystal-clear to him on scientific and spiritual basis. He hoped that in due course internationalism would become a way of

religious life on the part of individuals and nations. Growth of internationalism depends on the extent of awakening of humanity to the spiritual concept of universal oneness.

## **THE SPIRITUAL GENIUS OF VIVEKANANDA**

### **The Life of India's Most Admired Saint**

Swami Vivekananda is one of most admired spiritual leaders of India. The world knows him as an inspiring Hindu monk, his motherland regards him as the patriot saint of modern India, and Hindus consider him as a source of spiritual power, mental energy, strength-giving and open-mindedness.

Vivekananda was born on January 12, 1863, in a middle-class Bengali family of Calcutta. Narendranath Dutta, as he was called before sainthood, grew up to be a youth of great charm and intelligence. In a pre-independent India hidebound by communal disharmony and sectarianism, this blithe spirit soared above the rest to become the manifestation of freedom - the *summum bonum* of human life.

An avid scholar of Western and Hindu philosophy and ever thirsty for the mystery of Creation and the law of Nature, Vivekananda found his guru in Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa. He toured across India to know his country and people, and found his spiritual alma mater at the Kanyakumari rock in Cape Comorin at the southern most tip of the Indian peninsula. The Vivekananda memorial is now a landmark for tourists and pilgrims, and a tribute to him by his country men.

Swami Vivekananda rose to worldwide fame in 1893, when he visited America to attend the first Parliament of World Religions in Chicago. The uninvited young monk addressed this august assembly and electrified the audience. His speech made him world famous overnight: "Sisters and Brothers of America, it fills my heart with joy unspeakable to rise in response to the warm and cordial welcome which you have given us. I thank you in the name of the millions and millions of Hindu people ...."

Vivekananda's life and teachings are of inestimable value to the West for an understanding of the mind of Asia, says Swami Nikhilananda of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, New York. On the occasion of America's Bicentennial Celebration in 1976, the National Portrait Gallery in Washington D.C., mounted a large portrait of Swami Vivekananda as part of its exhibition 'Abroad in America: Visitors to

the New Nation', which paid tribute to the great personalities who visited America from abroad and made a deep impression on the American mind.

William James called the Swami the "paragon of Vedantists." Max Muller and Paul Deussen, the famous Orientalists of the Nineteenth Century, held him in genuine respect and affection. "His words," writes Romain Rolland, "are great music, phrases in the style of Beethoven, stirring rhythms like the march of Handel choruses. I cannot touch these sayings of his...without receiving a thrill through my body like an electric shock. And what shocks...must have been produced when in burning words they issued from the lips of the hero!"

An inspiring spiritual and social leader, Vivekananda has left an indelible mark in history with his teachings, which are studied everywhere in India and abroad. The immortal soul passed away on the 4th of July, 1902 at the young age of 38.

### **What is Hindutva?**

The term "Hindutva" is derived from the two terms 'Hindu Tattva', which literally mean "Hindu Principles". Now the question is what Hindu Principles are and what comprises the "Hindutva" outlook?

To answer this question we would have to begin with the history of the Hindus. The history of the Hindus is the history of a civilization which has developed in its natural state, without interruption, since antiquity. Its age is dated to be between five and nine thousand years. Hence Hindu history is a prototype of how human civilization would have looked, if civilization all across the globe had been allowed to develop in its natural state. This is the relevance for us to study Hindu Civilization, Hindu History and Hindu Culture.

The evolution of Hindu Civilization can be considered to be natural and continuing as there is no last messiah in the Hindu world view. In fact this is what distinguishes Hindu Civilization from the rest. And this is why Hinduism is called a Living Idea, guided by the sum total of human wisdom that is not considered to be embodied in one person, or one book, or one period of human history. Hence the term "Living". Hindutva is the articulation of this idea of continuity of freedom of thought from which emerge the multifarious Hindu Principles.

Two instances of Hindu Principles that symbolize the outcome of freedom of thought are the pronouncements made not today, but four thousand years back by unnamed *rishis* (Hindu ascetics) that "This world is one family" (*Vasudaiva Kutumbakam*) and that "The Universal Reality is the same, but different people can call it by

different names" (*Ekam Sat Viprah Bahuda Vadanti*). In these two proclamations made in ancient Hindu India, we see the seeds of globalism and freedom of thought, four thousand years before the world was to become the global village of today.

Thus in its true essence, Hindutva is a stridently assertive rational-humanist line of reasoning. And it is this essence of Hindutva that we have kept in mind, while developing this website. At the level of practice, the Hindutva outlook boils down to upholding righteousness (*Sat-guna*) and fighting ignoble attitudes (*Dur-guna*). Taking poetic license, we can describe the practitioners of this outlook as "*Heenam Naashaayati iti Hinduhu*" (Those who uphold righteousness and fight ignobleness are Hindus).

Thus, far from being a narrow nationalistic doctrine, Hindutva is in its true essence, 'a timeless and universal compilation of human wisdom'. Hence it is also called "*Sanatana*" which means, something that is "forever continuing."

At this site, you will read about different aspects of the history and culture of the Hindus in that part of our globe which is the birthplace of Hindutva. This land is known variously as Bharatvarsha, Hindustan or India. My approach of looking at history is that of a rationalist and humanist. In the context of India, these two values are

a result of the freedom of thought which forms the core of the tradition of Hindutva.

### Vivekananda and Ramakrishna Paramhansa

For nearly five years Narendranath stayed with Sri Ramakrishna and was taught and trained by him. At the end of this short period of utmost intensity Narendranath had imbibed the superhuman wisdom of the Paramahansa and had become his alter ego.

In 1886, when Narendranath was not even twenty-three years old, Sri Ramakrishna passed away. On Naren's very-young shoulders fell the gigantic burden of executing Sri Ramakrishna's mission. - It was not an easy task, but if anyone was capable of performing it, it was Narendranath, who had the brain and the brawn for it. He renounced home; he became Swami Vivekananda; he established a Math (a monastery) where he and his co-disciples could carry on austerities. - He then wandered over India as a *parivrajaka sadhu*. From the northern Himalayan extremity to the southern land's end of Kanyakumari did he travel, studying the Motherland, understanding her problems at first hand and forming solutions for her regeneration. This pilgrimage was one of the landmarks of his life and the very many occurrences and incidents relating to his

wanderings are fascinating peeps into the rich variety and compelling charm of his personality.

### **Sojourn to the USA**

In 1893 in the month of May, the Swami left by steamer for America to attend the Parliament of Religions to be held there at Chicago in September 1893. He had not been formally invited and enrolled as a delegate. With some difficulty he managed to get into the Parliament; he was too luminous not to be let in.

### **'Sisters and Brothers of America'**

But then it was a case of conquest at first speech. When his turn to address the august assembly came, he rose like the morning sun and spoke to the 'Sisters and Brothers of America'. That hearty call fascinated the Parliament and the Western World. Rising above cramping creeds and dwarfing dogmas he spoke of harmony and universalism; his message came like the breath of life to a suffocated people.

As soon as he spoke the words 'Sisters and Brothers of America' the crowd rose in cheer and everyday of the conference there was one

man they came to hear. The conference organisers, made Swamiji's talk the last of each day to ensure the crowd stayed to the end of each day.

He stayed many months in America lecturing and teaching and helping Westerners to study Indian philosophy. Then he went to England and Europe. He had become a bridge of understanding between the Orient and the Occident.

### **Return to India**

In 1897 the Swami returned to India. The nation rose like one man to honour him. The people saw in him a new Sankara who had risen to bring life and vigour to the motherland. The Swami reminded his countrymen of the Indian national ideal of renunciation, roused them to a sense of privilege in being Indians and showed them how spiritual culture was the secret of India's immortal existence. He made Bharata a Prabuddha Bharata.

Your country requires heroes; be heroes. Stand firm like a rock. Truth always triumphs. What India wants is a new electric fire to stir up a fresh vigour in the national veins. Be brave, be brave; man dies but once.

## A New Adi Sankara

But he did not stop with advising and preaching. He was a capable organiser and desired to set up an organisation which could ensure the continuance of his Master's mission. So he founded the Ramakrishna Math and Mission (with its Headquarters at Belur Math near Calcutta) which is a body to the service of humanity. This *Sangha* is his lasting legacy to mankind.

## Swami Vivekananda's Mahasamadhi

Swami Vivekananda was not forty, when he entered into Mahasamadhi. But his age is not to be calculated in solar years. For, in just one decade of public work he had implanted into human consciousness ideas which may need one thousand and five hundred years to get worked out in full. There is an Indian side to his life-work and there is an international aspect to it, in both the fields his contribution has been unique.

## Strength

Strength, manhood, *Kshatra-virya*, *Brahma-teja*. All power is within you; you can do anything and everything. Believe in that; do not believe that you are weak; do not believe that you are half-crazy

lunatics, as most of us believe now-a-days. You can do anything and everything, without even the guidance of any one.

Strength is what the Upanishads speak to me from every page. This is the one great thing to remember, it has been the one great lesson I have been taught in my life; strength, it says, strength, O man, be not weak. Everything that can weaken us as a race we have had for the last thousand years. It seems as if during that period the national life had this one end in view, viz., how to make us weaker and weaker, till we have become real earthworms crawling at the feet of every one who dares to put his foot on us.

### **Weakness is the one cause of suffering**

Strength does not come by thinking of weakness all the time. The remedy for weakness is not brooding over weakness, but thinking of strength. Either in this world or in the world of religion, it is true that fear is the sure cause of degradation and sin. It is fear that brings misery, fear that brings death, fear that breeds evil. And what causes fear? Ignorance of our own nature. Each of us is heir-apparent to the Emperor of Emperors.

Know that all sins and all evils can be summed up in that one word - weakness. It is weakness that is the motive power in all evil-doing. It

is weakness that is the source of all selfishness. It is weakness that makes men injure others. It is weakness that makes them manifest what they are not in reality. What our country now wants are muscles of iron and nerves of steel-gigantic wills which nothing can resist, which can penetrate into the mysteries and secrets of the universe and will accomplish their purpose in any fashion even if it meant going to the bottom of the ocean and meeting Death face to face.

We have wept long enough; no more weeping, but stand on your feet and are men. It is a man-making religion that we want. It is man-making theories that we want. It is man-making education all round that we want. And here is the test of truth-anything that makes you weak physically, intellectually and spiritually, reject as poison; there is no life in it, it cannot be true. Truth is strengthening. Truth is purity, Truth is all knowledge. Truth must be strengthening, must be enlightening, must be invigorating. We speak of many things parrot-like, but never do them; speaking and not doing has become a habit with us. What is the cause of that? Physical weakness. This sort of weak brain is not able to do anything. We must strengthen it. First of all our young men must be strong. Religion will come afterwards. You will be nearer to Heaven through football than through a study of the Gita. You will understand Gita better with your biceps, your muscles, a little stronger. You will understand the mighty genius and the mighty strength of Krishna better with a little of strong blood in you. You will understand the Upanishads better and the glory Of the

Atman when your body stands firm upon your feet and you feel yourselves as men. What we want is vigour in the blood, strength in the nerves, iron muscles and nerves of steel, not softening namby-pamby ideas. Be moral, be brave, and be stridently moral and brave. Don't bother your head with religious theories; cowards only sin, brave men never. Try to love anybody and everybody.

I have never spoken of revenge; I have always spoken of strength.

Get up, and set your shoulder to the wheel-how long is this life for? As you have come into this world, leave some mark behind. Otherwise where is the difference between you and the trees and stones? - They too come into existence, decay and die.

Be bold! My children should be brave, above all. Not the least compromise on any account. Preach the highest truths broadcast. Do not fear of losing your respect or of causing unhappy friction. Rest assured that if you serve truth in spite of temptations to forsake it, you will attain, a heavenly strength, in the face of which men will quail or speak before you things which you do not believe to be true. People would be convinced of what you would say for them, if you can strict serve truth for fourteen years continually, without swerving from it. We are all the sparks of the infinite. How can we be nothing? We are everything, ready to do everything, we can do everything and

man must do everything, Therefore, my brethren, teach this life-saving, great, ennobling, grand doctrine to your children, even from their very birth. This marvelous doctrine of the soul, the perfection of the soul, is this faith in them was in the hearts of our ancestors, this faith in them was the motive power that pushed them forward and forward in the march of civilisation; and if there has been degeneration and if there has been defeat, mark my words. You will find degradation to have started on the day our people lost this faith in themselves.

### **What did I learn in the West?**

There I saw that inside the national hearts of both Europe and America resides the tremendous power of the men's faith in them. An English boy will tell you, 'I am an Englishman, and I can do anything'. The American boy will tell you the same thing, and so will any European boy.

Can our boys say the same thing here? No, nor even the boys' fathers. We have lost faith in ourselves. There is not one system in India, which does not hold the doctrine that God is within, that Divinity resides within all things. Every one our Vedantic systems admit that all purity and perfection and strength are in the soul already.

The ideal of faith in ourselves is of the greatest help to us. If faith in us had been more extensively taught and practiced, I am sure a very large portion of the evils and miseries that we have, would have vanished.

Throughout the history of mankind, if any motive power has been more potent than another in the lives of all great men and women, it is that of faith in them. Born with the consciousness that they were of to be great, they became great.

Never quarrel about religion. All quarrels and disputations concerning religion simply show that spirituality is not present. Religious quarrels are always over the husks. When purity, when spirituality goes, leaving the soul dry, quarrels begin, and not before.

Do not care for doctrines, do not care for dogmas, or sects, or churches or temples; they count for little compared with the essence of existence in each man which is spirituality and the more this is developed in a man, the more powerful is he for good. Earn that first, acquire that and entices no one. Show by your lives that religion does not mean words or names, or sects, but that it means spiritual realization.

Sincerity of conviction and purity of motive will surely gain the day, and even a small minority, armed with these is surely destined to prevail against all odds. - Truth, purity and unselfishness - wherever these are present, there is no power below or above the sun to crush the possessor thereof. Equipped with these, one individual is able to face the whole universe in opposition.

It is only in our scriptures that this adjective is given to The Lord-Abhiih, Abhiih. We have to become Abhiih, fearless and our task will be done. Arise! Awake! And stop not till the goal is reached!

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## **Chapter IX**

## Chapter IX

### **Conclusion**

The influence of Swami Vivekananda on nationalist India is well known. His lectures collected in the book entitled "from Colombo to Almora" came to inspire greatly the youth of our country. His words "heaven is nearer through football than through Gita" and "we want men of strong biceps" became the slogans of ardent nationalist of that time.

Swami Vivekananda held high the Upanishadic concept of Purity of human nature. As Vivekananda believed that human nature is pure, free and divine, he defended the inviolable dignity of the individual professed faith in individual freedom and equality, maintained equal rights and opportunities for all to manifest their growth and insisted on the man-making process.

The purity of human nature inclined him to advocate anarchism. He regarded the individual as an end in himself. His faith in inherent individual divinity made him subordinate the society to the individual and freed the individual from the bends of government, society and laws, which he regarded as comparative evils.

The concept of purity of human nature also moulded his humanism, which can also be called Humanistic Advaita. He revolted against the concept of sin and labelled it as a standing lebel on human nature. He identified man with God and condemned all kinds of indignities on human nature. He restored faith and strength in the individual and sought human emancipation from all kinds of bondage.

The concept of purity of human nature made Vivekananda realize that all life in one, human growth is based on freedom and equality and social relations are interdependent. Vivekananda derived all these ideals from Vedanta which stands for love, truth, oneness or unity. Vivekananda believed that growth is dependent on freedom. He regarded freedom as eternal, infinite, absolute, and indivisible. In fact he viewed growth-- individual, social, political or spiritual in terms of freedom.

His concept of socialism is also based on this principle of unity in diversity or moderation. On the one hand, he realized the existence of classes and class differences and on the other, advocated class unity on the basis of Vedantic love and identify. He did not insist on class differences and rigidity.

His economic views are also marked with moderation. He glorified neither poverty nor prosperity. He recommended enjoyment of

material life for the child like individual and prescribed minimum wants for the spiritual individual. He believed that materialism was as essential as spiritualism. He was also for both rural and urban economy.

Regarding freedom, he was again for moderation and synthesis. He did not glorify individual freedom at the cost of society nor social freedom at the destruction of individual, for his concept of freedom is all-inclusive. He reconciled the individual and social freedom, material and spiritual freedom as well.

His technique of activity is also based on moderation, and it avoids extremes. He gave equal importance to ends and means and regarded them as inseparable. He glorified neither the end nor the means.

He supported both nationalism and internationalism. He defended national individuality and avoided the narrow and extreme nationalism. He warned that the Indian renaissance must avoid alien infatuation and orthodoxical rigidity. He believed that internationalism was a necessity for the nation's growth. He wanted the nations to become stronger by cultivating international contacts. He wanted to unite mankind on the basis of spirituality.

Therefore we can conclude that Swami Vivekananda wanted freedom and upliftment of the Indian people their material and moral advancement. His statements show that he divided Indians into two classes, the Rich - the upper class and the Poor - the lower class. The latter constitutes the over whelming majority of our people and the referred to them as the masses. And he was never tired of drawing the attention of the youth towards the urgent need to work for the betterment of their condition. He also laid down a positive programme for this work.

It seems that our youth perhaps did not fully realize the true import of Swamiji's advice in this matter. To them his call for upliftment for the Indian masses was an appeal for philanthropic and charitable work only. But Swamiji did not merely lay down an ameliorative programme. He also wanted and spoke of a radical cure for the chronic distress of our people. He was not for keeping up the status quo of the Indian society, but wanted a complete overall of the whole thing.

Swamiji was aloof from Indian politics but he wanted selfless workers who will educate and uplift the people. It should be mentioned that education for the masses was the keynote of Swamiji's attitude towards the Indian national question. He clearly discerned that there could be no regeneration for the country if the

majority of people remained dormant and debased and wanted the masses 'to develop their lost identity'. He clearly saw our degradation to be not so much due to political enslavement as to our loss of heritage and cultural tradition. That religious, social and economic slavery have dehumanised the Indians was the burden of his utterances on India's upliftment. He wanted to disturb the status quo in the Indian Society and described it as 'horrid diabolical'. As remedy to the ills it generated, he prescribed "No priestcraft, no social tyranny! More bread more opportunity for everybody!"

Moreover the Indian nationalist movement has been a class movement cannot be gainsaid. It has been the movement of the Indian bourgeoisie to get the political control of the country. But Swamiji was explicit in his opinion that this could not bring about the betterment of the condition of the Indian people. Without the emergence of the masses the majority of the Indian people will remain where they have always been since times immemorial as 'hewers of wood and drawers of water.' The nationalist movement in India up to the time of independence had been reactionary in character. It demanded political freedom only and had been silent on social, religious and economic freedom. But Swamiji demanded all round freedom for man.

In this point, we can say that if we think that Swamiji talked only of spirituality and of Indian spiritual civilization should take note of his following words: "We talk foolishly against material civilization..... Material civilization, nay, even luxury is necessary to create work for the poor".

Swamiji was not dead to the fact that without satisfaction of material wants higher thoughts and ideals could not develop. Therefore he said: "I do not believe in a God who cannot give me bread here, giving me eternal bliss in heaven!"

Swamiji was opposed to exploitation of all kinds. He was the first Indian to discern that our religionsity and patriotism had taken the shape of exploitation. He denounced the class character of our civilization and wanted to uplift the masses. He saw that in them lay the hope of India. It was a new India; he wanted to create on the basis of equality. He preached that 'Proletocult' would help to create the new India of his dreams. The future India would not be wedded to Sectarianism. The only practical way to unite the masses of divergent sects and communities is through a new culture which will not bear any class or communal character. It would evolve out of the Psychology of the masses and come as the solution to the complex communal and sectarian questions that have been tearing India asunder in our times.

According to Swami Vivekananda, "India is now passing through a period of intellect transition. The youth of this country should awake to the new consciousness of a new worldview and see Indian problems from new angles of vision. If the Indian youth wants liberty for him, he must be ready to give it to others. If he aspires for freedom, he must aspire for it in all spheres of life. If he wants to serve his country, he must serve the teeming millions suffering from chronic poverty who constitute the majority of his fellow countrymen".

Thus we find in Swami Vivekananda, a conglomeration of both spiritual and material life, we gave equal importance to the development of both lives. His view thus finds up heaven and earth together and helps to develop individual and social life simultaneously on the basis of the Vedantic unity.

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