
Vivekananda - The Augury of a New Incorporeal Wave

Sabyasachi Mukherjee

Research Scholar, Tilka Manjhi Bhagalpur University, Bhagalpur, Bihar

Abstract: *“Stand up, be bold, be strong, take the whole responsibility on your shoulders and know that you are the creator of your own destiny”*

– Swami Vivekananda

(Web Search – wiki/10.06.2018)

Swami Vivekananda whose original name is Narendranath Dutta is one of the bright-stars in the galaxy of Indian education-system who contributed and shaped today's Indian's education. He came in a time when India was being ruled by the British people and when there was a demoralization of Indian youth. All aspects of life- material, physical, morals, intellectual, spiritual lay under where darkness and the progress of education were blocked. Nationalism declined day by day and a lack of unity was felt everywhere. Situations however began to change with the coming of Swami Vivekananda who took a major force in the revival of Hinduism in India and contributed to the concept of nationalism in colonial India. The focus of this present article is Vivekananda's Philosophy, his credit of raising interfaith awareness, bringing Hinduism to the status of a major world religion and re-interpretation to various aspects of education, faiths, character building as well as social issues pertaining to India.

Keywords: Education, Philosophy, Nationalism, Contribution, progress.

1. INTRODUCTION

Born as Narendranath, into an affluent Bengali family in Calcutta-Vivekananda was one of the eight children of Vishwanath Dutta and Bhuvaneshwari Devi. He was born on January 12, 1863 on the occasion of Makar Sankranti. Father vishwanath was a successful attorney with considerable influence in society, Narendranath's mother Bhuvaneshwari was a woman endowed with a strong God-fearing mind Who had a great impact on her son. As a young boy, Narendranath displayed sharp intellect. His mischievous nature belied his interest in music, both instrumental as well as vocal. He excelled in his studies as well, first at the Metropolitan institution, and later at the presidency college in Calcutta. By the time he graduated from the college he had acquired a vast knowledge of different subjects. He was active in sports, gymnastics, wrestling and body building. He was an avid reader and read up on almost everything under the sun. He perused the Hindu scriptures like the Bhagvad Gita and the Upanishad on one hand, which on the other hands he studied western philosophy-history and spirituality by David Hume, Johann Gottfried, Fichte and Herbest spenser.

Although Narendranath's mother was a devout woman and he had grown up in a religious atmosphere at home he underwent a deep spiritual crisis at the start of his youth. His well studied knowledge led him to questions the existence of God and for sometimes he believed in Agnostic's. Yet he could not completely ignore the existence of a supreme being. He became associated with Brahma Movement led by Keshab chandra Sen for sometimes. The Brahma samaj recognized one god unlike the idol-worshipping superstition ridden Hinduism. The host of Philosophical question regarding the existence of God rolling through his mind remained unanswered. During his spiritual crisis, Vivekananda first heard about Sri Ramkrishna from William Hastings, the Principal of the Scottish Church College.

Earlier to satisfy his intellectual quest for God, Narendranath visited prominent spiritual leaders from all religious, asking them a single question-‘Have you seen God?’ Swami Vivekananda once wrote ‘all the power is within you, you can do anything and everything. Believe in this, don't believe that you are weak. Stand up and express the divinity within you’ – Teachings and philosophy of Swami Vivekananda thus stressed on different aspects of religion, education, character building as well as social issues pertaining to India. His teaching propagated the advaitic principle as far more reaching on the social and political front apart from its philosophical aspect. In this

respect the words of Rabindranath Tagore is relevant- "If you want to know India, study Vivekananda. In him, everything is positive and nothing negative. Vivekananda realized a country's future depends on its perplex, so he mainly stressed on man, man makings mission, that's how he deserved his teaching."-

(Web search – e-library/11.06.18)

He was a Hindu monk from India, who played significant role in introducing Vedanta to the Western world and also reviving and redefining certain aspect of the religion within India. To him, the emerging compassion that transforms into a strong determination to help others who are unaware of the oneness is the true monk of as enlightened person like him.

It is noteworthy that education to Vivekananda was not only collection of information but something more meaningful. He felt education should be man making, life giving and character building. To him education was an assimilation of noble ideas. In his own words- "Education is not the amount of information that you put into your brain and runs not there, undigested all your life. We must have life building, man-making, character making assimilation of ideas. If you assimilated fine ideals and make them your life and character you have more education than any man who has got by heart a whole library." (Ranganathandanda, Swami- Swami Vivekananda : His Humanism)

Vivekananda always stressed on giving the public only positive education, because negative thoughts Weaken men. He told if young boys and gives are encouraged and are necessary criticized all the times, they are bound to improve in time. - Swami Vivekananda thought that it was a pity that the existing system of education did not enable a person to stand on his own feet, nor did it teach his self-confidence and self-respect.

In the year, 1884, Narendranath underwent a considerable financial distress due to the death of his father as he had to support his mother and younger siblings. He asked Ram krishna to pray to the Goddess for the financial welfare of his family. On Ram krishna's suggestion, he himself went to the temple to pray. But once he faced the Goddess he could not ask for money and wealth; instead he asked for 'Vivek' (conscience) and 'Bairagya' (reclusion). That day marked the complete spiritual awakening of Narendranath and he found himself drawn to an aesthetic way of life. During the middle of 1885, Ramkrishna who had been suffering from throat cancer, fell seriously ill. In September 1885, Sri Ramkrishna was moved to Shyampukur in Calcutta and a few months later Narendranath took a related villa at cossipore. Here he formed a group of young people who were ardent followers of Sri Ramkrishna and together they nursed their Guru with devoted care. On 16 August 1896, Sri Ramkrishna gave up his mortal body.

After the demise of Sri Ramkrishna around fifteen of his disciples including Narendranath began to live together in a building at Baranagar in North Calcutta which was named Ramkrishna Math, the domestic order of Ramkrishna. Here in 1887, they formally renounced all ties to the world and took vows of monkhood. The brotherhood rechristened themselves and Narendranath emerged as Vivekananda meaning 'the bliss of discerning wisdom'. The brotherhood lived off on holy begging arms donated voluntarily by patrons during 'madhukari' performed yoga and meditation. Vivekananda left the Math in 1886 and went on a tour of India on foot as a 'Paribrajak'. He travelled the breath of the country, absorbing much of the social, cultural and religious aspects of the people he came in contact with. He witnessed the hardships of life that the common people face, their ailments and vowed to dedicate his eye to bring relief-to these suffering. During the course of his wanderings, he came to know about the world parliament of Religion being held in Chicago, America in 1893. He was keen to attend the meeting to represent India, Hinduism and his Guru's Sri Ramkrishna's Philosophy. He found assertion of his wishes while he was meditating on the rocks of Kanya Kumari, the southernmost tip of India. Money was raised by his disciples in Madras (now Chennai) and Ajit Singh, Raja of Khetri, and Vivekananda left for Chicago on May 31, 1893 from Bombay. He faced insurmountable hardships on the way to Chicago but his spirits remained as indomitable as ever. On 11 September, 1893 when the time came, he took the stage and stunned everyone with his opening line- 'My brothers and sisters of America'. He received a standing Ovation from the audience for the opening phrase. He went on to describe the principles of Vedanta and their spiritual significance, putting Hinduism on the map of world religious. He spent the next two and a half years in America and founded the Vedanta society of New York in 1894. He also travelled to the United Kingdom to preach the tenets of the Vedanta and Hindu spiritualist to the Western world.

Vivekananda returned to India in 1897 amidst warm reception from the common and royal alike. He reached Calcutta after a series of lectures across the country and founded the Ramkrishna Mission on May 1897 at Belur near Calcutta. The goals of the Ramkrishna Mission were based on the ideals of Karma Yoga and its primary objective was to serve the poor and distressed population of the country. The Ramkrishna Mission undertook various forms of social service like establishing school, colleges and hospitals, propagation of practical tenets of Vedanta through conferences seminars and workshops, initiating relief and rehabilitation work across the country. His religious conscience was an amalgamation of Sri Ramkrishna's spiritual teachings of Divine manifestation and his personal internalization of the Advaita Vedanta Philosophy. He directed to achieve the divinity of the soul by undertaking selfless work, worship and mental discipline. According to Vivekananda, the ultimate goal is to achieve freedom of the soul and that encompasses the entirety of one's religion. His philosophy of living can be summed up-

- 1) **Love is the law of life** - All love is expansion, all selfishness is contraction. Love is therefore the only law of life. He who loves lives; he who is selfish is dying. Therefore love for love is sake, because it is law of life just as you breathe to live.
- 2) **It is your outlook that matters** - It is our own mental attitude that makes the world what it is for us. Our thoughts make things ugly. The whole world is in our own minds. Learn to see things in proper light.
- 3) **Life is beautiful** - First believe in this world- that there is meaning behind everything. Everything in this world is good, holy and beautiful. If you see something evils, interpret it to that you do not understood it in the right light. Throw the burden on yourselves.
- 4) **Feel like Christ and you will be a Christ** - Feel like Buddha and you will be a Buddha. It is feeling that is the life, the strength, the vitality without which no amount of intellectual activity can reach God.
- 5) **Let yourself free**- The moment I have realized God sitting in the temple of every human being and see good in him- that moment I am free from bondage, everything that binds vanishes, and I am free
- 6) **Do not blame the Game** – condemn none, if you can stretch out a helping hands do so. If you cannot, fold your hands, bless your brothers and let them go their own way.
- 7) **Help others**- If money helps a man to do good to others, if is of some value. If not, it is simply a mass of evil, and the sooner it is got rid of, the better.
- 8) **Uphold your ideals**- our duty is to encourage everyone in his struggle to live up to his own highest ideal, and strive at the same time to make the ideal as near as possible to the Truth,.
- 9) **Listen to your soul**- you have to grow from the inside out. None can teach you, none can make you spiritual. There is no other teacher but your own soul.
- 10) **Be yourself** - the greatest religion is to be true to your own nature. Have faith in yourselves.
- 11) **Nothing is impossible**- Never think there is anything impossible for the soul. It is the greatest heresy to think so. If there is sin, this is the only sin- to say that you are weak, or others are weak.
- 12) **You have the power**- All the powers in the universe are already ours, It is we who have put our hand before our eyes and cry that is dark.
- 13) **Teach every day**- the goal of mankind is knowledge ...now this knowledge is inherent in man. No knowledge comes from outside, it is all inside. What we say a man-knows should in strict psychological language, be what he discovers' or 'unveils' what man learns is really what he discovers by taking the cover off his our soul, which is a mine of infinite knowledge.
- 14) **Be truthful**- Everything can be sacrificed for truth, but truth cannot be sacrificed for anything.
- 15) **Think different**- All differences in this world are of degree and not of kind because oneness in the secret of everything.

Education is a process of self developments. It is the cultivation of people who at the end are able to perceive accurately, think clearly, act effectively on self selected aspiration and are constantly against in practice of cognitive

cartography. Mark Twan (1835-1925) once remarked- “only education can transform a cabbage into a cauliflower” But long before him, this great social reformer and advocate of social justices, Swami Vivekananda cried- “The education which does not help the common masses of people to equip themselves for the struggle of life, which does not bring about the strength of characters, a spirit of philanthropy and the courage of a lion- is it worth the name of education? Real education is that which enable one to stand on one’s strong legs.” (Wikipedia- e-library/ 15.06. 2018)

During his time, Vivekananda insisted that our education should be conducted on national lines through national methods. It was he who inspired pride in their cultural heritage. yet, he was not a blind following of the ancient cultural heritage of our country. All that he wanted to provide a synthesis between tradition and modernity. What he wanted to emphasizes was that attachment to and reference for traditional values is not enough. One has to examine how for traditional values are relevant in the modern context. He had this in mind, when he insisted on a synthesis of Vedanta and Hestern science as a model of our educational planning and programme.

Fortunately India has believed in such education and knowledge since the days of the Upanishads. The Upanishads are the only literature in the world, which teaches man to find and realize within himself the implications of the word ABHIM (fear less ness) It urges a person to believe in himself and believe in oneness of the universe. Religion underlines that man has to live for all beings. All are one and invisible. Vivekananda had warned that a major shortcoming of Easterns civilization was that it thought intellectual education alone was enough without taking care of the heart. That kind of education only made a mind more selfish. India today along with the rest of the world has to give the topmost priority of the dissemination of an education that will inspire every human being to work for amity and fellowship to have internal Peace and search for removing all conflicts. Spiritual education seeks to bring home the essence – ‘He alone sees, who sees all beings as himself. A time has come for the world to realize, more than ever before a value education makes a man realize his spiritual nature. Only a man conscious of his spiritual self can be truly secular in his conviction and outlook. Religious education brings out the spirituality of man and that is the only life giving force.

Every society has its outer sheath called knowledge and an inner core called culture. All students are exposed to both of these, knowingly or unknowingly to be molded and educated accordingly. Tagore (1861-1941) in this context said, “Education is a diamond and culture its glory.” Swamiji observed, “it is culture that absorbs shock; knowledge is only skin deep. A little search brings about the old savage.” Thus, the importance of exposing to and teaching of human culture cannot be overemphasized in making education human-friendly. According to him, the cultural values of the country should form as integral part of the curricular of education. The ideal education system should notonly impart theoretical knowledge but also enable the learner to apply intelligently all the noble ideas and to grow physically, intellectually, normally and spiritually. Like the body needs good food for healthy the mind needs civilized education and cultural ideals for growth.

As formal education is becoming more institutionalized, teachers are playing more significant roles in shaping the destiny of the nation. The teachers are playing more significant roles in shaping the destiny of the nation. A teacher needs to teach the student not only important information but also how to think, what to think, how to disseminate between good and bad, and how to appreciate the good. The teachers must not only possess the requisite knowledge but also the technique of curriculum transaction. He should also stress on the following qualities that a teacher should have- The first condition is that he should be sinless. The second condition is that he should know the spirit of scriptures. The third condition is that the spiritual force of the teacher should be based on love for the students. The fourth condition is that the teacher should think that he is only helping the child to grow. He is the external teacher and he offers the suggestion, which arouses the internal teacher.

With regard to teaching method Vivekananda was of the view that children should be made to learn themselves. All knowledge is within them all learning is only a function of their mind, they should only be made active. Methods like self-learning, discussion method and meditation and concentration methods one used for teaching. He also told a lot about student. A student, according to him should have an inclination and eagerness to learn. He should be an observer of celibacy. He should have control over him senses and he at same time must follow the ideals laid close by his teacher. In order to become a good receive of education, the students must be teachable. The essential virtues

of the taught are- purity, real thirst of knowledge and perserevance. We must have confidence, conviction, trusts reverence humanity and submission towards his teachrs. The teacher pupil relationship according to him is based on mutual respect and trust and thus it is the basic foundation of education system.

2. CONCLUSION

The tremendous explosion of information without commensurate wisdom ad immense power not tempered with compassion, tolerance, ethics or humility has made today's education a potential source of disaster. On this, Swamiji remarked, "Hundred of science have been discovered. The sole effect is that few have made slaves of many. That is all the good that has been done. Artificial wants have been created. Every poor man whether he has money or not desires to have those fulfilled, when he cannot, he struggles and dies." Those prophetic predictions are truer today. Today's education not only neglects training of mind but also negates all spiritual values. Brains are staffed with indiscriminate informations. Education no longer stimulates one's thinking process. This obscures assimilation of information into knowledge and knowledge into wisdom. A moving storehouse of information is more encouraged today than cultivated humanity.

REFERENCES

- [1] Pani Sp, Pattnaik SK (2006). Vivekananda Aurobindo and Gandhi on Education, Anmol publication Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi : pp. 59-60.
- [2] Swami L (1996). My India : The India Eternal, Ramkrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Calcutta.
- [3] Johari, PK (2005), Educational Thoughts Anmol Publications Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi : 238.
- [4] Vivekananda : The Yogas and others works – Wikipedia
- [5] Ranganathananda, Swami. – Swami Vivekananda – His Humanism
- [6] Chattopadhyay, Santinath. – Man – The spiritual : An Inter-cultural expansion of Swami Vivekananda Synthetic vision of Humanity(second Volume).