



SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AS A SPIRITUAL GURU AIMING AT A HARMONIOUS BLEND OF MATERIALISM AND SPIRITUALISM : AN ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

This paper is an attempt to present Swami Vivekananda as a perfect spiritual guru who always aims at the harmonious blend of spiritualism and materialism through his speeches. By analyzing the mesmerizing and spell-bounding speeches of Swamiji, this paper tells how he influenced the world and spread the moralistic thoughts of Hinduism. Though he was a stern believer of Hinduism, he also had a greater respect on Buddhism and greater love for Jesus Christ. Hence, whatever the religion be, Swamiji always proposed love and compassion among human beings. Thus, this paper is a fine attempt to picturize Swamiji as a prophet who spread morals and love to the world.

Key Words: spiritualism, materialism, love, compassion, philosophy, humanity.

INTRODUCTION

Modern India has produced many great orators in the sand of time and Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902) holds a significant place respectively child Narendranath as he was called in his pre-monastic days in the famous Dutta family of Simla in the northern part of Calcutta on Monday, January 12th, 1863. Naren's education began at the knee of his mother from whom he learnt the Bengali alphabets and the first English words. His boyish imagination very often travelled back to the hallowed days of the epic past, when he listened with rapt attention to the romantic tales of Ramayana as told by the mother, and he became so much thrilled to hear their soul-stirring episodes that he began to offer worship to Sita-Ram and earnestly longed to

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have a vision of the devout Hanuman. Once he meditated in a room of his house with so much rapt attention that the door of the room had to be broken to awaken him. Thus, yogic consciousness was evident in him from the very beginning. His routing and fiery words colored with Hindu mythologies are still inspiring many devotees and others both in the East and the West:

*“From dramas awake, from bonds to be free
Be not afraid. This mystery,
My shadow, cannot frighten me,
Know once for all that I am He” (P 8).*

It is said that Swamiji preached aggressive Hinduism to the world. He himself expressed his aim of life to sister Nivedita thus:

*“to make Hinduism aggressive,
Like Christianity and Islam, and
To effect an exchange of the highest and
To realize these in practice” (P 8).*

His aim was to serve the Humanity in all respects. Swami Vivekananda was moved by the love of Jesus Christ. He was also inspired by the compassion of Buddha. In the course of his speechless, he laid emphasis on love and compassion. In the modern world, love and compassion would contribute a lot to bring an integration of human society. The spiritualism of Swami Vivekananda consists in love and compassion. Many of his lectures and speeches delivered in small congregations deal mainly with love and compassion. Sister Nivedita says:

*“To not a few us, the words of Swami
Vivekananda came as a living water
To man perishing of thirst” (P 147).*

Swami Vivekananda is one of the most powerful spiritualists India has ever given to the world. His sole purpose was to bind the human beings of all nations with spirituality. He was not just an Indian but he was a universal prophet. He dreamed of a universal religion holding together the truths of all religion: “The Swami is not a sectarian; he is the promoter of religion, not of one religion only. The exponents of single points in the vast field of religion can find nothing in him to fight” (Nivedita 145). Though he preached the Vedantic philosophy, he appreciated the truths of all religions; for he found that the truths of all religions are the same. Religion is an institution of principles and dogmas. The aim of established religion is to seek divinity and realize God through lofty principles. As he himself said, “All narrow, limited, fighting ideas of religion have to go, all sect ideas and tribal or

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national ideas of religion must be given up” (TCWAV, Vol-II, P-67). His contribution consists in his speeches, letters, poems etc. in the words of P. S. Sastri, “Swami Vivekananda lectures, letters and writings reveal not the dry intellect of a thinker, but the outpourings of a heart, the spontaneous outburst of a heart deeply stirred” (P 294). The might words which were addressed by Swami Vivekananda to the entire humanity over the heads of the official representatives in the parliament made a tremendous appeal to the conscience of the people at large. His popularity spread all over the world. The best most conservative of metropolitan newspapers proclaimed him as a great prophet and seer. Indeed, it was a glorious day when the New York Herald spoke of him in these words:

“He is undoubtedly the greatest figure in the Parliament of Religions. After hearing him, We feel how foolish it is to send missionaries To this learned nation” (P 143).

Dr. Annie Beasant giving her impression of Swami Vivekananda at the parliament, wrote long after:

“A striking figure, clad in yellow and orange, shining like the sun of India in the midst of the heavy atmosphere of Chicago, a lion-head, piercing eyes, mobile lips, movements swift and abrupt – such was my first impression of Swami Vivekananda, as I met him in one of the rooms set apart for use of the delegates at the parliament of religions. Month, they called him, not unwarrantably, but warrior rather than of the monk, for he was off the platform, and his figure was instinct with pride of country, pride of race – the representative of the oldest of living religions, surrounded by curious gazers of nearly the youngest, and by means inclined to give step, as though the hoary faith, he embodied was in ought interior to the noblest there” (P 143).

“To introduce the life of Swami Vivekananda is to introduce the subject of spiritual life itself” (P 1).

To think about such an inspiring person as Swami Vivekananda, fills everyone with a new spirit. He practiced spiritual exercises and as a result experienced a kind of bliss which he wanted everyone to experience. It should be added that Swami never propounded any new philosophy; nor did he try to impose his philosophy on others.

“Swamiji revived that old spirit, recast and recommended it to make it more relevant to the modern world – full of complexities and contradictions” (Dutta 265).

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According to Swami Vivekananda, the world as a whole, stands divided into two parts – the East and the West. The East remained poor by restoring to spiritual experience and realization and the west, by inventing more and more through science, increased the materialistic pleasures. Swamiji realized that there should be an incompleteness in human life. Human life revolves round two things – materialism and spiritualism. To keep and maintain a complete life, there should be a harmonious blend of materialism and spiritualism and materialism should be gradually but ultimately be subordinated to spiritualism. India, from time immemorial, has been a source of great spiritual power giving birth to a long line of mystics and earnest seekers of truth. It was natural for a person like Swami Vivekananda to experience certain Indian spiritual ideals and endeavor to make them comprehensive to the common man. It is said that Swamiji had a divine grace which inspired his speeches keeping the audience spell-bound. “He had a dynamic dominating magnetic personality. The charm and power of his eloquence captivated all” (Jagtiani 5).

To conclude, Swami Vivekananda is a dynamic spiritual force with a positive outlook of life.

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