

Dr. Annie Besant and Gandhi: A Historical Perspective (1847-1933)

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Abstract – The paper manages the profound training with uncommon reference to Dr. Annie Besant's perspectives in which her life and social way of thinking just as Theosophical way of thinking impact profound instruction. The paper likewise manages her theosophical way of thinking dependent on the standards of 'The Unity of God' and of 'The Universal Brotherhood' which are the essential piece of otherworldly instruction. In this paper an endeavor has been made to perceive, understand, discover, break down, combine, assess and fundamentally inspect the prevailing variables answerable for reinforcing profound training with respect to Dr. Annie Besant's perspectives.

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The paper finishes up 'Profound Education' as "it is instruction which assists with satisfying the natural limit of the people through the Theosophical Idea of Education dependent on the Unity of God (Universal Source of all presence) and Universal Brotherhood, Self-control, Self-investigation, Self-regard, Control of brain, self-acknowledgment, self-talk with, otherworldly approach, Love and Sympathy, Service, Freedom, God-acknowledgment Patience, Peace and Tolerance and to set them up to take care of the regular issues forever imaginatively and helpfully in the new circumstance of the socio-psycho-physical condition for accomplishing the most elevated information and shrewdness, if the educators empower to adjust such sort of personal conduct standards of people,- this is profound training."

Although primarily Dr. Annie Besant was concerned with Theosophist movement for promoting essential human virtue, she gradually was drawn towards Indian Struggle for Swaraj. She entered into domain of politics as she was convinced that India's independence was imperative essential for the ageold and time tested wisdom o serve as a beacon of life for the entire globe.

Dr. Besant in due course of time after launching the Home Rule Movement (HRM) was impressed by Gandhi. she admired Gandhi on account of his uncompromising sand on truth, compassion and satyagraha. Owever, she had her reservation of the method that Gandhi sometimesapplied to Indian mass movement. Both in the context of the Non cooperation Movement and the Civil Disobedience Movement. She foresaw the danger of instilling disrespect for law. So far herown stand was concerned she stood for achieving political reforms by constitutional methods. Moreover, she was of the view that given the typical temperament Gandhi was

competent to accomplish everything except being a political leader and negotiator. I one of her meetings with Dr. Rajendra Prasad, she remarked, "He (Gandhi) is very good for other kinds of work but he is not a politician."¹

From 19 13 to 1919 Besant was one of the foremost figures in the political life of India. She founded the Home Rule League in September 1916, and did considerable propaganda to polpularize the ideal of Home Rule. But since 1919 she became more isolated.. She had some quarrels with BalGangadharTilak. The beginning of the Gandhiansatyagraha movement further isolated her from the main stream of Indian politics and it was pathetic to find a one-time immensely venerated figure being looked upon, in some quarters' with suspicions. Both Besant and Gandhi were deeply and devoutly religious personalities. Both had a religious approach to nationalism but the practical implications of their philosophical orientations were different. Besant stressed that India's connection with Britain was ordained by Manu' It was the desire of the spiritual Heirarchy that India be linked with the Empire. Hence in spite of her eloquent advocacy of Home Rule' Indian nationalists regarded her as an imperialist at heart. Gandhi rose to superserved to mobilize the latent resentment of the masses against the deculturizing influences of an alien imperialism. She denounced the Non-cooperation movement in unmeasured terms and regared it as revolutionary, anarchical and a fomenter of heated and violence. She ridiculed Gandhi as being a vague, dreamy, mystic politician, and not a realist. she ridiculed Gandhi even doubted the genuineness of Gandhi's attachment to the cult of confessions, fasts and penances. Besant persistently warned the nation against the

recession to anarchy which was bound to be the consequence of the adoption of Gandhian technics.

She leveled three main charges against the Gandhian Non-cooperation movement'

- (i) In principle, it is revolutionary, Mr. Gandhi propose to paralyze the Government, to render it powerless' unable to govern. The fact that he does not propose to kill its members, does not alter the fact that he is trying to bring about Revolution, for, whether, you kill the Government with machine-guns or by paralysis, the end is the same' You overthrow the Government. At first, Mr. Gandhi proposed to substitute nothing in its stead; now he goes a step further, and says that the people should go to their own courts, form their own police for preserving order, and, Presumably, pay taxes to support them.
- (ii) Dr. Beasant also felt that the Non-Cooperation movement promoted racial antipathy between the Indians and the British' It was, despite the professions to the contrary, calculated to excite mutual hatred and thus violence was bound to occur., Non-cooperation stirs up hatred between Government and people against the Government, which Mr. Gandhi describes as wicked and cruel. In addition to this, it stirs up race-hatred. Its popularity is due to the fact that large number of Indians feel bitter resentment against the Government in account of the Punjab atrocities; the people feel helplessness in the face of the Government of India's inaction in dealing with the peccant officers, as the Imperial Government bade them to do. The people see in stirring-up of race-hatred, is, if possible, more immediately dangerous than Englishman by four Musalmans armed with swords. The two who are arrested say that they committed the murder because of the Khilafat speeches. Such result was foreseen and, if Non-cooperation is accepted as a principal, this one assassination will be the forerunner of many. It is no excuse to say that the murderers were bad characters; violence finds its tools among ignorant fanatics, not among high-principled men. It is all very well for Mr. Gandhi to say that he feels no hatred against the Government he denounces, but only 'absence of affection'; he may paralyse and Yet to be free from hatred but the those who follow him do not share his passivity, nor his self-control."
- (iii) The Gandhi movement of Non-cooperation was, in Beasant's opinion, an anti-social force. Itought to damage the foundations of society by disrupting the bounds of the social

structure. "Non-cooperation strikes at the foundation of Society which is based on co-operation and' can only exist through continued co-operation. It means a reversion to anarchy, a violent breaking of all the mutualities which bind men together. It will inevitably lead to rioting and bloodshed, which can only have one result-repression and the putting off of all improvement in our civil conditions."

CONCLUSION

In an article in New Indian Published on January 10, 1929, Dr. Beasant bemoaned the destructive influence of Mahatma Gandhi on Indian politics and castigated the "wild-cat movement of Non-cooperation and civil Disobedience."

REFERENCES:

1. M. N. Roy, India in Transition, p. 216, writes : "Annie Beasant was . in reality a masked defender of the Interests of the imperialist bourgeoisie to which she belonged, in spite of her Irish birth. she had always been a champion of the British Empire, which she chose to call the foundation of a real League of nations. Her instinctive zeal for the welfare (not spiritual) of the imperialist bourgeoisie disquieted her at the sight of ominous clouds gathering on the political horizon."
2. Quoted in Annie Beasant : Builder of New India, pp. 15- 16.

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