

Nationalism and Swami Vivekananda

Ishwar Yadav^{1*} Dr. Mukesh Kumar²

¹ Research Scholar, Department of English, Singhania University, Pachari Bari, Rajasthan

² Assistant Professor of English, Govt. College M. Garh, Haryana

Abstract – Swami Vivekananda might be called as the father of modern Indian Nationalism. He was a true nationalist. Swami Vivekananda's contemporary social and religious reformer taught the people about metaphysics but Vivekananda's theory was different. He says, "An empty stomach is no good for religion." He considered first duty of us is duty for our motherland. He took motherland as deity to be worshipped. He took every Indian as his brother. He believed that the main cause of India's downfall is the exploitation of poor masses. By upliftment of poor and downtrodden, we can establish nationalism. He called the people as well as Indian youth 'Arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached. He believed that it was very important to arise a feeling of nationalism among Indian people. By lectures and writings Vivekananda imparted a sense of pride, cultural confidence to Indian people. The Rama Krishna mission also became a central point of Indians' conspiracy. He also made an influence on Indian revolutionaries like Gandhiji, Subhash Chandra Bose, R. N. Tagore.

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INTRODUCTION

Swami Vivekananda indirectly opposed the British political autonomy. His nationalist movement played an important role in the displacement of British emperor. Vivekananda's nationalism was based on spiritualism, patriotism and religion. He again introduced Indians with Vedas, Puranas, Geeta and their great past heritage. He was also a great patriot. He stressed on selfless service, a sense of human dignity, manliness for national integration. He believed that in India, religion has been a creative force in stability and integration. He gave an idea of strength and fearlessness to Indian people. He also worked for removing the social evils like caste system, purdah system, untouchability, child marriage etc. which were resistance in Indian nationalism. He considered Education as the panacea of all social religious problems. He not only believed in nationalism but also in internationalism. In World Religion Summit at Chicago in 1893, he taught whole world a lesson of Universal brotherhood, Hinduism etc. Dr. Radhakrishnan rightly observed "Nationalism is a political religion which stirs the hearts and wills of men and rouses them to service and self-sacrifice in a way that no purely religious movements have done in recent times."

India is one of the ancient land where culture, philosophy, civilization, religion took their birth and reached on peak position. It is a fully blessed land with special various different geographical updowns. It is the place where many people with their different cultures assimilated into this. It faced many cruel

invasions but remained firm and united. Because of great past heritage, it gave some great personalities who taught the world a lesson of unity, humanity, brotherhood etc. Vivekananda is one of them. He might be called as the father of modern Indian nationalism. He considered that our first duty is, our duty for motherland. He took motherland as a deity to be worshipped. He created a national consciousness amongst all Indians. He showed richness of past Indian culture in modern time. He was the symbol of national unity. He was the person who did great job in uniting the nation by socially, spiritually as well as religiously. He believed it is very important to arise a sense of nationalism amongst Indian people. Vivekananda believed in the theory 'Unity in variety is the plan of creation'. He believed that all religions are same at a point. He took religious viewpoints as attempts of realizing infinity. Unity in diversity helps in making nation building. He also satirised bigotry. He says, "I am a Hindu. I am sitting in my own well and thinking that the whole world is my littlewell. The Christian sits in his little well and thinks that is the whole world." This type of thinking is a barrier in nationalism. Vivekananda believed that at a point all merges at one place. He didn't impose one religion on everybody but he said main core of all religions is one. We shouldn't criticise one another, He says, "If one religion be true then all the others must be true." He says that i studied all religion like Mohammadan, Buddhistic, Christian and other but i find all the same teachings which were taught to me by my religion. He also praises Hindu religion. He says, "I am blessful that i took birth in such a great Hindu religion that assimilate all religions. His master taught

Vivekananda that service to man is service to God. So, Vivekananda says, "The best form of worship was to see God in poor, the downtrodden, the sick and the ignorant and to serve them." He believed that in India, religion has been a creative force in stability and national integration. He gave an idea of strength and fearlessness to Indians. He declared, 'essence of my religion is strength'. Another base of Vivekananda's nationalism was spirituality. He told the Indians about their great past culture. He considered spirituality as the main strength of India at present time as well as in old days. It is the spirituality that frees a man from all boundations and make him liberated. He told that this was the land that introduced philosophy, religion to the whole world. He told about the endless Vedas, the Puranas, the Upnishads, the Geeta, the ultimate source of knowledge. Vivekananda considered that Vedas are not the utterance of any person. Vedas are eternal. Their date has never fixed. Vedas are themselves the authority. There is the no beginning and no end. The origin of Indian philosophy may be traced easily in the Vedas. The Puranas, Upnishads and Bhagwatgeeta are the base of Indian philosophy. Vivekananda considered Bhagwatgeeta as one of the best holy texts. He also lectured on Geeta on 26th, 28th and 29th of May in San Fransico and on 1st April, 1900 in California. Vivekananda was also a great patriot. He stressed on selfless service, a sense of human dignity, manliness for national integration. By lectures and writings Vivekananda imparted a sense of pride, cultural confidence to Indian people. The Ramakrishna mission, established by Vivekananda was also one of the central point of Indian conspiracy. He also influenced many Indian revolutioners like Gandhiji, Subhash Chandra Bose, R.N. Tagore. R.N. Tagore said about Vivekananda, "If you want to know India, study Vivekananda." He also tried his best towards nationalism on the view point of social. He considered that caste system, child marriage, sati pratha, purdah pratha are the restrictions in nation's integration. Caste system was one of the biggest social evil of 19th century in India. Caste system was formed by individual's profession or work of job but in 19 th century it had taken other shape. Now individual's caste was decided by his birth. Individual caste decided his social status. Higher caste people hated low caste people. Lower caste people were exploited by them. They had no right. They were torched physically as well as mentally. Vivekananda was very affected from the caste system. He also condmned the caste system. He took caste system as a obstacle in our progress. No doubt he believed Varna system but as per described in the Vedas. But he was against the evils of this system especially untouchability is its worst part. He criticized this type of "Don't touches". He wanted to abolish this type of dogmatism from the society. Child marriage is a formal marriage of an individual before reaching on a certain age. It was also a prominent evil of that era. Teenagers were cast for marriage due to poverty, dowery, brideprice, social pressure, politics and financial relationship, kidnapping etc. These were such

like several reasons responsible for this but all results would be faced by girl child. Sati Pratha was a system or religious taboos in which wives cast themselves for burning with their dead husband. Actually it was started after the invasion of Muslim invaders. But with the span of the time it became a religious tabcoo. It was more rampant in Bengal. Woman is considered as a sexual pleasure from a long time ago. She was kept secluded from the society. Purdah system played also her role for making her more miserable. Invaders were also responsible for this evil. So women were kept away from education. They were bounded with the four walls of house. If we talk about the condition of education for woman that was very miserable. Nobody cared for their education. They were bounded with four wall of home. They were studied domestic education like cooking, cleaning, childcare, handspinning. If her family could afford the expenditure for study then they hired a private tutor at home. And at the age of 9 or 10 they were pushed for married life. Now the burden moved to her husband's family. Hindu / Jain Gurukul system , the Madrasa did not offer for women's education. Female literacy was recorded at 0.5% in the first census in 1881, reaching 0.6% in 1901. Girl infanticide was not prevailed in all cases. It was prevailed in Rajputs and poor people. They killed their daughters left they became prey of invaders. Another reason for poor people is dowery system. They had not much sum to spend on daughter's marriage. So with the fear of poverty and fear of disgrace they killed their daughters at very early stage.. But some social worker like Raja Ram Mohanroy, Swami Vivekananda, Keshab Chander Sen etc. opposed these evils. And due to their endeavours, child marriage was stopped. This crime was abolished in late 19th century. Vivekananda also joined Brahama Smaj a Hindu reformist organisation that worked to eliminate child marriage, Sati Partha, Girl infanticide etc. He awared people about these evils that were responsible for Indian backwardness. He also focuses on education. He believed that education is the panacea of all the evils. He believed that socio economic change could be brought by education. He supported that education by which character is formed. Vivekananda said : " Let nature be the teacher". He always said that education is development of humanity. First bread and then religion. Vivekananda's contemporary reformers taught the people about metaphysics but Vivekananda's theory was different. He says, "An empty stomach is no good for religion." So he laid special stress on the technical education and industrial training. Because he described machinery which will bring noblest ideas to the doorstep of even the poorest and the meanest. He also worked for the women's right of education. He glorified women's role. He considered women as the creating force. He said that if women are educated, they educate the society. Vivekananda said: " With five hundred motivated men it will take me 50 years to transform India. With motivated females it will take a few years". He was in support of respect to be given to

women. He said that a nation could not be great nation with disrespect of his women. He gave example of Sita, Savitri, Danyanti etc. No doubt, he believed in conventional value of family but against their subjection. He opened many schools as well public libraries throughout India because of that a common man could easily read. He also founded the Journals 'Prabudhabharta' in English and 'Udhbodhan' in Hindi. He also asked 'Jamshed Tata' to set a research and educational institution. Tata offered him as the head of institution, now again, he refused and showed his firmness. He considered that education is a powerful tool to unlock the golden door of freedom which can change the world. On May 1897, he founded the Rama Krishna mission for social services at Calcutta. Its ideal are based on Karma Yoga. He told each Karma has its own importance. The life of every individual has its special duty. The Hindu begins life as a student then he marries, becomes a householder, in old age he retires and give up the world and becomes Sannyasain to each of these stages of life, certain duties are attached. None of these stages re superior to another. The life of a householder is quiet as great as celibate. The sweeper is quiet as great and glorious as king. He advised the householder does his work without thinking about fruits of action. No doubt, it is very typical task. By this she can live a life of householder as well as Sannyasain on the same time. Vivekananda not only believed in nationalism but also in internationalism. On 11 September 1893 at the 'Art Institute of Chicago' as part of World's Columbian Exposition, he began his speech with "Sisters and Brothers of America." At this sentence, the audience clapped for two minutes continuously. He taught India's tolerance and universal acceptance of Hindu religion. Vivekanand attracted widespread attention in the press which called him 'Cyclonic Monk from India'. Vivekananda spoke on Hinduism, Budhism and harmony among religions up to end of the parliament on 27 September 1893. Vivekanand then toured many cities of US. He remarked at Brooklyn Ethical Society, "I have a message to the West as Budha had a message to the East". He founded 'Vedanta Society' at New York in 1894. He gave private lectures, classes of Yoga and Vedanta also. He visited England twice. There in a meeting, Margaret Elizabeth became his disciple with a new name 'Sister Nivedita'. He met Maxmuller. He travelled Germany also. He was offered Academic positions in Harvard and Columbia University, but he declined. It shows his commitment and greatness as a monk. He attracted many followers and admires. He built a 'Shanti Ashram' for Vedanta student at Los Angeles. His ideas for the integration of nation are working in 21st century also. At last, we can say Vivekananda is a true nationalist.

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Corresponding Author

Ishwar Yadav*

Research Scholar, Department of English, Singhania University, Pachari Bari, Rajasthan

E-Mail – yadavhr236@gmail.com