



CONTRIBUTION OF SWAMI VIVEKANAND IN BRINGING MODERNIZATION

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Early Life and Career

Vivekananda's original name was NarendraDatta . He was born in 1863 in a very well-to-do family. His father provided best arrangements for the education of his son. NarendraDatta was very brilliant student & he graduated with honors from Kolkata University. He was very much interested in the study of philosophy and religion. For sometimes he worked as a teacher. His search for truth took him to Ramakrishna, a mystic who was regarded as an embodiment for the teaching of Vedanta. Meeting with his greatest seer in 1888, transformed the life of NarendraDatta & intensified his aspiration for God realization. So he left home, broke all earthly ties, travelled all over India and became a wandering monk. He made his mark in 1893 when he delivered the message of peace and harmony to the Parliament of Religions held at Chicago. He gave a memorable and soul-address.

Vivekananda's fame spread far and wide and was invited at various places in foreign countries to lecture on the Vedanta. He lectured at the universities of Harvard and Oxford. He with his beginning bowl wandered all over India. In 1897, he started the Ramkrishna Mission with the help of his disciples. The Ashram worked for the education of the poor. It helped people in distress. It organized relief camps in times of flood etc.. At present there are numerous centers. They are also engaged in the spread of the gospel of Ramkrishna and Vivekananda. The Ramkrishana Mission has attracted scholars and swamis to its fold from all over. Vivekananda founded the Vedantic Society of San Francisco. He died at a very young age of 39 years.

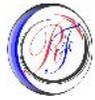
Philosophy of Vivekananda

Religion is within us and it is Realization: - Religion is not in doctrine or dogmas, nor in intellectual argumentation. It is being and becoming. It is realization. Swamiji stated, "If religion and life depend upon books the existence of any prophet whatsoever, then perish all religion and books. "

Swami Vivekananda, however had all regard for the prophet and saints and he states, "Salutation to all the prophets of the past, to all the great ones of the present and to all of that are to come in the future." His was the practical religion, "It will not do merely to listen to great principles, You must apply them in the practical field , turn them into constant practice . What will be the good of cramming the high sounding dicta of the scriptures?. You have first to grasp the teaching of the Shastras and then to work them out in practical life. Do you understand?. This is called practical religion." Service of the poor was the best religion. He expressed his feelings in these words, " Seeing the poor people of our country starving for food , a desire comes to me to overthrow all ceremonial worship and learning and go round from village to village, collecting money from the rich by convincing them through force of character and Sadhna, and to spend the whole life in serving the poor."

He travelled to all corners of India and experienced the anguish of the country's impoverished multitudes. His call to the nation was, "O India! Forget not that the lower classes, the ignorant, the poor, the illiterate, the sweeper are thy flesh and blood?" . He saw the divine in the form of the poor whom he called " Deidra Narayan".

Education is the manifestation of the Perfection already in man:-Swami Vivekananda explains his ideas in these words, " We say Newton discovered gravitation.



Was it sitting found it out? All knowledge that the world has ever received comes from the mind; the infinite library of the universe is in your mind. The external world is only the suggestion, the occasion, which sets you to study your own mind. He rearranged all the previous links of thought in his mind and discovered a new link; among them, which we call the law of gravitation. It was not in the apple nor in anything in the center of the earth. All knowledge, therefore, secular or spiritual, is in the human mind.” Again Swamiji has observed that 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 the knowledge is made by this process of uncovering. The man from whom this veil is being lifted is the mere ‘knowing man’s; the man upon whom it lies thick is ignored, the man from whom it has entirely gone is all knowledge omniscient. Vivekananda explains this with an example. “ Like fire in a piece of flint, knowledge exists in the mind, suggestion is the friction which brings it out. All knowledge and all power are within. What we call powers, secrets of Nature and forces are within. All knowledge comes from the human soul. Man ‘manifests knowledge’, discovers it within himself, which is pre-existing through eternity.

Man- Making Education

“Mere book-learning won’t do,” says Swami Vivekananda. Continuing, he says, “ We want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is explained, and by which one can stand on one’s own feet.”.

Meaning of True Education

Swamiji wrote, “ Well you consider a man as educated if only he can pass some examination and deliver good features? The Education which does not help the common mass of people to equip themselves for the struggle for life, which does not bring out strength of character, a spirit of philanthropy, and the courage of a lion is it worth the name?” He further observed, “ Education is not the amount of information that is put into your brain and runs riot there, undigested, all your life.

What is character---- Sum Total of our Action

Swami Vivekananda explained what character was and how it could be formed. “The character of any man is but the aggregate of his tendencies, the sum total of the bent of his mind.” It is the product of man’s thoughts and actions. He has given us a beautiful smile. Mind is like a lake. Every work that we do, every thought that we think, produces a ripple of impression in the mind and every ripple, every wave that rises, does not die out but leaves a mark. Such marks or impressions may not be obvious on the surface but they are strong enough to work beneath, the surface subconsciously and mold the mind of man and make his character. What we are every moment is determined by the sum total of these impressions on the mind. So it will not be very difficult to predict how a child is going to shape out if we could observe what impression he is likely to gather from his environment. In a very simple language, swami Vivekananda showed how important was it to select the right type of environment for the child. If good impression prevails, the character becomes good, if bad it becomes bad. If a man continuously hears bad words, thinks bad thoughts, does bad actions, his mind will be full of bad impressions; and they will influence his thoughts and work without his being conscious of the fact. He becomes helpless like an impoverished slave in the hands of his powerful masters- the bad impressions- that lash him and lead him to bad action. But when, a man is under the constant influence of good work and good thoughts, there grows in him an irresistible tendency to do well in spite of himself. The Phrase ‘in spite of himself’ insignificant. The whole environment of the child exerts an unimaginable influence on the child. If he is bad it is not because of his choosing but because of our choice of his environment. He is helpless. He has a readily impressionable mind and his school and out-of-school, experiences will blue-print his future on it. On the other hand if the environment is healthy and congenial, he cannot, but become good. The good



impressions like a talisman guard him from evil deeds. Even if he wishes to do evil, his mind will not allow him to do so; it will pull him back. Thus a man's good character is said to be established when he is completely under the influence of the good tendencies.

A child Educates itself

Vivekananda observes, "You can supply the growing seed with the materials for the making up its body, bringing to it the earth, the water, the air that it wants. And there your work stops. It will take all that it wants by its own nature. So with the education of the child. A child educates itself. 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. We have to do only so much for the boys that they may learn to apply their intellect to the proper use of their hands, legs, eyes, ears etc., and finally everything will become easy."

A True Teacher

Vivekananda states that the true teacher is he who can immediately come down to the level of the students, and transfer his soul to the students' soul and see through and understand through his mind. Such a teacher can easily teach and none else.

Education through Personal Contact with the teacher

He says, "My idea of education is personal contact with the teacher 'Gurugrihvasa'. Without the personal life of a teacher there would be no education. Take your Universities, What have they done?. They have not original man. They are merely an examining body." It is the of man that really impresses us and not merely his words. "Words, even thoughts contribute only one-third of the influence in making an impression, the man two-thirds. What you call the personal magnetism of the man- that is what goes out and impresses you." It is the real man, the personality of the man that runs through us.

Women Education

Swami Vivekananda desires that all the time been trained in helplessness, servile dependence on others. What a pity that they are good inly to weep their eyes at the slightest approach of a mishap or danger. He forcefully advocates that they should acquire the 'spirit of velour and heroism'. In the present day it has become necessary for them also to learn self- defense. See how grand was the Queen of Jhansi. Vivekananda again states, "If you do not raise the women who are the living embodiment of the divine Mother, don't think that you have any other way to rise. He stresses that the country and the nation which do not respect the woman have never become great, nor will ever be in future'. He pleaded that Brahmacharinis of the education and character should take up the task of teaching'. Because through such devour preaches of character, there will be the real spread of female education in the country.

Vivekananda observed that women education should be spread with 'religion as its center. All other things should be secondary to religion. History, house – keeping, the arts, sewing, upbringing of the children, the duties of the home life and the principle that make for the development of character are to be taught to girls.

Education for the Masses

Education of the masses was his chief concern. He considered it a great national sin, if the education of the masses was neglected. He observed, "No amount of politics would be of any avail until the masses in India are more well educated., well fed, and well cared for." "If we want to regenerate India, we must work for them." Vivekananda calls him a Mahatma 'who feels for the poor'. He stated, "Let these people be your God--- think of them, work for them, pray for them incessantly, the Lord will show you the way." He advocated that education must reach every home.

Physical Education



According to Vivekananda strength is goodness, weakness is sin. All sins and evil can be summed up in one word 'weakness'. 'First of all our young men must be strong. Religion will come afterwards. He very emphatically declared,' You will be nearest to Heaven through football than through the Gita.'

Education for Productivity

Vivekananda strongly condemns the prevailing system of education. 'Fie on Modern Education', 'What is the good of your education?', Either a clerkship or being a roguish lawyer, or at the most a deputy Magistrate, which is another form of clerkship – is not that all? What good will it do to your or the country at large? What a piteous cry for food is rising in the land of Bharata, proverbial for its wealth? Will your education fulfill this want? He felt," It would be better if the people got a little technical education, so that they might find work and earn their bread."

Learning from the West but Keeping our own

Vivekananda condemned the mania of becoming Westernized. He states," When we take anything from others we must mold it after our own way." He has further observed," What we want are Western Science coupled with Vedanta, Brahmacharya as the guiding motto and also Shraddha in one's own self."

Contribution of Swami Vivekananda

Swami Vivekananda strove for the reconciliation of human contrast and conflicts and the establishment of the brotherhood of men. To the world he held out the vision of the universal religion which would recognize divinity in every man and woman and which would help humanity to realize its own true, divine nature. He stood impartially between East and West, prizing the virtues and condemning the defects of both together.

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