

## SWAMI VIVEKANAND AS CONTRIBUTION TO EDUCATION

Dr. Jayati Maiti,

*Guest Teacher in Education, P. K. College, Contai, W.B.*

Dr. Manas Kumar Das,

*Assistant Professor in Education, Mahatma Gandhi College, Lalpur, Purulia.*

### Abstract

Education, in the opinion of Swamiji, remains incomplete until and unless we teach aesthetics or fine arts. He has given example of Japan and points out how the collaboration of art and utility can make a country and its people great. To be religious, in his opinion, means to lead life in such a way that enables us to manifest our higher nature, truth, goodness and beauty, in our thoughts, in our speeches, thoughts and acts. All emotions, feelings, thoughts and actions which take one towards this goal are naturally noble and harmonious, and are ethical and moral in the true sense of the term. He opines, we need, apart from technical education, all the other essential things which may develop industries, making men, earn enough for their survival, and save something for critical situations instead of seeking jobs. He feels the necessity of India's taking all that are good from the western nations for the betterment of its civilization. The whole educational program should be planned in such a way that it makes the youth to contribute to the materialistic prosperity of the country as well as to maintain the supreme value of India's spiritual heritage.

**Key Words:** *Education, Ramakrishna Mission, Religion, Ethics*

### INTRODUCTION

Swami Vivekananda was a great thinker as well as a social reformer of India. He was a prolific orator and writer not only in English as well as in Bengali. Vivekananda was a singer cum bard, who composed a large number of songs and poems including that of Kali the Mother, his favourite. He was born in a very rich family in Kolkata on 12 January in the year 1863. Prior to his monastic life his name was Narendra Nath Datta. Vishwanath Datta, Vivekananda's father, was a renowned and successful attorney and Bhuvaneshwari Devi, his mother, was a lady with deep devotion, strong character and had many virtuous qualities. Vivekananda completed his graduation from Calcutta University and gained vast knowledge

in different subjects, especially in Western philosophy and history. He delivered a series of lectures in places of India, and it created a great stir throughout the country. Through his inspiring and highly significant lectures he attempted:

- to rouse the religious consciousness of the people and imbibe in them pride in their cultural heritage;
- to bring about unity in Hinduism by citing the common bases of its sects;

In June 1899 he made his second visit to the West and he stayed most of his time in the Western coast of the USA. After delivering a number lectures in the USA, he came back to Belur Math in December 1900. The remaining part of his life was spent by him in India, by inspiring and guiding monastic as well as laymen. Ceaseless work, especially in delivering lectures and inspiring people his health decayed and his life came to an end quietly on the night of 4 July 1902. Before his Mahasamadhi he had written to a Western follower: "It may be that I shall find it good to get outside my body, to cast it off like a worn out garment. But I shall not cease to work. I shall inspire men everywhere until the whole world shall know that it is one with God.

### **ASSOCIATION WITH SRI RAMAKRISHNA**

Doubts about the existence of God assailed Narendra. One of his English professors at college told him first about Ramkrishna in November 1881. He paid a visit to the Kali Temple in Dakshineswar to meet Ramkrishna who had been staying there. Straightaway he asked the Master a question "Sir, have you seen God?" which he put many others but had not got a satisfactory answer. Sri Ramkrishna's unhesitating reply to this question was: "Yes, I have. I see Him as clearly as I see you, only in a much intenser sense." Sri Ramkrishna not only removed doubts from Narendra's mind but also won him over through his pure, unselfish love. Thereafter, Narendra used to pay frequent visit to Dakshineswar and, under the genial guidance of the Master, he moved rapidly on the spiritual path. There, Narendra got an opportunity to meet several young devotees of Sri Ramkrishna, and all of them became close friends. Diagnosis on Sri Ramkrishna reported him cancer of the throat. On realizing this fact Sri Ramkrishna gave up his mortal body on 16 August 1886. After the demise of the master Sri Ramkrishna, fifteen of his young devotees began to live together in a derelict building at Baranagar in North Kolkata. A new monastic brotherhood was formed under the leadership of Narendra. In 1887 they took the formal oaths of sannyasa, thereby taking new names. Thereafter, Narendra became Swami Vivekananda.

Swamiji, however, wished to have an inner certitude and divine call in respect to his mission. He got both of these while he sat in deep meditation on the rock-island at Kanyakumari. After founding the new monastic order, Vivekananda listened to the inner call for a greater mission in his life. Vivekananda realized the crisis mankind had been passing through.

### **FOUNDATION OF RAMAKRISHNA MISSION AND BELUR MATH**

After his coming back to Kolkata, Swami Vivekananda undertook another important task of his mission on earth. He founded on 1 May 1897 Ramakrishna Mission, a unique organisation in which monks as well as lay people would jointly undertake propagation of Practical Vedanta, and numerous social services, such as running hospitals, schools, colleges, hostels, rural development centre's etc, and conducting massive relief and rehabilitation work for victims of natural hazards and other calamities, in different parts of India and abroad. In early 1898 Swami Vivekananda acquired a large plot of land on the western bank of the Ganga at a place called Belur to have a permanent dwelling place for the monastic Order originally started at Baranagar, and got it registered as Ramakrishna Math after a couple of years. Here he founded a new, universal pattern of monastic life which adapts ancient monastic ideals to the conditions of modern life, which gives equal importance to personal enlightenment and social service, and which is open to all men without any distinction of religion, race or caste.

### **DISCOVERY OF REAL INDIA**

Swami Vivekanand was the pioneer religious leader in India to realise and openly declare that the true reason of India's downfall was paying not due importance to the masses. The immediate demand was to give food and other basic necessities of life to the hungry masses. For this they should be made aware of improved methods of agriculture, village industries, etc. Owing to centuries of oppression, the masses that were lagged behind had lost faith in their capacity to improve their fortune. It was first of all necessities to bring back into their minds their lost faith. For this they desperately needed a life-giving, inspiring message. Swamiji found this message in the rules of the Atman, the doctrine of the potent divinity of the soul, taught in Vedanta, the ancient system of religious philosophy of India. He noticed that, in spite of poverty, the masses drawn to religion, but they had never been taught the life-giving, ennobling principles of Vedanta and how to practice them in real life.

## VIVEKANANDA’S CONTRIBUTIONS TO WORLD CULTURE

Making an objective assessment of Swami Vivekananda’s contributions to world culture, the renowned British historian A L Basham stated that “in centuries to come, he will be remembered as one of the main moulders of the modern world”. His contributions to the modern world are mentioned below:

- ❖ **Meaning of Religion:** Most important contributions of Swami Vivekananda to the modern world is his illustration of religion as a universal experience of transcendent Reality, common to all human being. He opined that religion is as scientific as science itself. Religion and science are not antithetical to each other but are complementary. This universal conception frees religion from the shackles of superstitions, dogmatism, and intolerance, and makes religion the highest and noblest pursuit – the pursuit of absolute Freedom, absolute Knowledge, and absolute Happiness.
- ❖ **View of Man:** In the view of swamiji the present age propagates that man should be the main concern and centre of all activities and thinking. With the help of science and technology man has attained great progress and power, and modern modes and means of communication and travel have changed human society into a „global village“. But the degradation of man has also been continuing at a reasonable pace, as noticed by the huge increase in broken homes, immorality, violence, crime, etc. in modern society.

Swamiji has taught Indians how to master Western science and technology and develop spiritually simultaneously. He has also taught Indians how to adapt Western humanism to Indian ethos

### IMPORTANT TEACHINGS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA:

Vivekananda was a great philosopher and a great social reformer. The important teachings of Vivekananda include that;

- Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man.
- We want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded, and by which one can stand on one's own feet.
- So long as the millions live in hunger and ignorance, I hold every man a traitor who, having been educated at their expense pays not the least heed to them.

- My ideal, indeed, can be put into a few words, and that is: to preach unto mankind their divinity and how to make it manifest in every movement of life.
- Whatever you think, that you will be.
- If you think yourselves weak, weak you will be; if you think yourselves strong, strong you will be.

The first governor general of independent India, Chakravarti Rajagopalachari, said "Vivekananda saved Hinduism, saved India." According to Subhas Chandra Bose, a major proponent of armed struggle for Indian independence, Vivekananda was "the maker of modern India". Many years after Vivekananda's death, Rabindranath Tagore told the French Nobel Laureate Romain Rolland, "If you want to know India, study Vivekananda. In him everything is positive and nothing negative." Rolland himself wrote that "His words are great music, phrases in the style of Beethoven, stirring rhythms like the march of Handel choruses.

### **MEANING OF EDUCATION**

Vivekananda points out that the drawback of the present-day education system is that it has no definite goal to pursue. Sculptors have a definite and clear idea about what he wants to shape out of the marble block; similarly, painter know what they are going to paint. But a teacher, he says, has no definite and clear idea about the goal of his teaching. Swamiji attempts to establish, through his words and works, that the goal of all education is man making. He forms the scheme of this man-making education in the light of his philosophy of Vedanta. He defines education as "the manifestation of the perfection already in man." The aim of education is to manifest in our lives the perfection, which is the innate nature of our inner self. This perfection is the realization of the power which is infinite and resides in everything and every-where-existence, consciousness and bliss. After understanding the necessity of the nature of this perfection, we should identify it with our inner selves. For reaching this goal, one will have to get rid of one's ego, ignorance and all other false identification, which come in the way. Meditation, built by moral purity and passion for truth, helps man to leave behind the body, the senses, the ego and all other non-self elements, which are perishable. Vivekananda puts great emphasis on physical health because a sound mind dwells in a sound body.

## **METHOD OF TEACHING**

Vivekanand was of the view that knowledge is inherent in every man's soul. What we mean when we say that a man knows is only what he discovers by taking the cover off his own soul. At the same time he draws our attention to the fact that the duty of the teacher is only to help the child manifest its knowledge by removing the barriers in its way. In his words: "Thus Vedanta says that within man is all knowledge even in a boy it is so and it requires only an awakening and that much is the work of a teacher. Vivekananda's method of education is almost similar to the heuristic method of the modern educationists. In this system, the teacher invokes the spirit of inquisitiveness in the pupil who is supposed to find out things for himself under the unbiased guidance of the teacher. He puts too much emphasis on the environment at home and school for the proper growth and development of child. The parents as well as the teachers should inspire the child by the way they live their lives.

## **CURRICULUM**

According to Vivekanand, the cultural values of the country should form an integral part of the curriculum of education. The culture of India has its basis on her spiritual values. He, in his scheme of education, meticulously includes all those studies, which are indispensable for the all-around development of the body, mind and soul of man. These studies can be brought under the broad heads of physical culture, aesthetics, classics, language, religion, science and technology.

## **CONCLUSION**

He realizes that it is only through education that the upliftment of masses is possible. Education brings to light its constructive, practical and comprehensive character. He states it emphatically that if society is to be reformed, education has to reach to everyone-high as well as low, because individuals are the very constituents of society. The sense of dignity rises in man when he becomes conscious of his inner spirit, and that is the very purpose of education. He strives to harmonize the traditional values of India with the new values brought through the progress of science and technology. It is in the transformation of man through moral and spiritual education that he finds the solution for all social evils.

**REFERENCES:**

- Acharya, R (1986). India, Review of National Policy on Education. A Perspective paper on Education. New Delhi.
- Aggarwal, J. C. (1985). Theory and Principles of Education. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House.
- Aggarwal, J. C. (1997). Theory & Principles of Education. New Delhi: Vikas publishing House.
- Avinashilingam.(1967). Education. Coimbatore: Ramakrishna Mission.
- Barr, G. and Seates. (1954). Methods of Research. Newyork: Appleton Century's.
- Barr, S. Arvili. (1960). Research Methods in Chester. New York: Macmillan (Pub).
- Best, John. W. & Khan, James. V. (2002). Research in Education. New Delhi: Prentice Hall of India.
- Best, John. W. & Khan, James. V. (2002). Research in Education. New Delhi: Prentice Hall of India.
- Best, J. W. and Kahn, J.V. (1995). Research in Education. New Delhi: Prentice Hall.
- Bhagavath Geetha. 4.36.
- Bhagavatham. 11-17-27.
- Blaxter, L. etal. (1999). How to Research. Chennai: Viva Books.
- Bose, N.K. (1947). Studies on Gandhism. Calcutta: Indian Associated publishing co.
- Boud, D. (1985). Problem based learning for the profession. Sydney: HERDSA.
- Buch, M.B. (1972). Second Survey of Research in Education. Baroda: Society for Research and Development.
- Burton, N. Brundrett, M. & Jones, M. (2008). Doing your educational research project. Thousand Oaks, CA: Crowin press.
- Campbell-Jones, B. & Campbell-Jones, F. (2002). Educating African American Children: Credibility at the cross roads. Education Horizons.
- Chandokyopanishad. 6.8.7