

Swami Vivekananda – Philosophy and Language

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Abstract

This paper presents Swami Vivekananda as the icon of spiritual voice for the human evolution and freedom of their own with the spiritual power. He advocated the values of love, kindness, spirit of humanity, universal equality, unity, and fraternity. Vivekananda wanted to elevate man with the power of spirituality. Swami Vivekananda was a great intellectual orator. Swami Vivekananda's philosophical lectures do provide and present the universal spiritual values and their rational justification without reference to any cult or creed.

Keywords: Swami Vivekananda, Humanity, Spiritual powers, Truth, Faith, Universal Equality.

Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902) occupies a unique place in the Indo-Anglian literature by his contribution which consists of speeches, letters, and poems. He exhorted:

“Have charity towards all beings. Pity those who are in distress”.

He also said once: “Yes, a daily worship at the feet of beggars, after bathing and before the meal, would be a wonderful training of heart and hand together” (P 15).

By preaching the values of love, kindness, affection, and spirit of service to humanity, he desired to make human beings stand on the ground of universal equality, unity, love, and fraternity. He exhorted: “God has become man; man will become God again”.

Swami Vivekananda's philosophical lectures do provide and present the universal spiritual values and their rational justification without reference to any cult or creed. “Though their background is Vedantic, they are so closely related to the fundamentals of spiritual life that the followers of any religion will find in them some aid both to deepen and broaden their faith” (P iv).

Vivekananda puts a question, “Do you know how much energy, how many powers, how many forces, are still lurking behind that frame of yours? He adds thus: “... behind you is the ocean of infinite power and blessedness ... If matter is powerful, thought is omnipotent. The God

whom people usually worship as a far off and unknown being, is in the Vedanta the too-well-known and the closest object to us. The God of Vedanta is “identical with the Self and therefore the nearest of the near. It is through the self we know everything” (P 5).

We need both strength and goodness Swami Vivekananda says, “It is the journey from truth to truth, from lower truth to higher truth. Darkness is less light; evil is less good; impurity is less purity” (P 3).

Swami Vivekananda lays focus on “strength first and goodness next”. Strength is an overly complex word. In simple terms, it refers “to the state or quality of being strong ... among other things, physical strength, mental strength, intellectual strength, capacity to act courageously, having faith in one self and capacity to stay focused on the execution of work” (Sarma 10).

When one improves goodness first and strength later, they lack focus on the execution of work, thereby leading to inefficiency and failure to reaching their goals despite goodness. When one improves strength first and goodness later, one can attain success in the world because of the strength and faith in oneself, courage, and the power to stay focused on, in case of the execution of work. But more strength and less goodness are an intermediate stage, one needs to transform oneself from self-centeredness to an altruistic approach.

Vivekananda suggests that sincere efforts should be taken to enlighten the people on how spiritualism is an essential part of life and this would fill everyone with a new spirit. As Tapash Sankar Dutta puts it, “Swamiji revived that old spirit, recast and recommended it to make it more relevant to the modern world – full of complexities and contradictions” (P 265).

According to Swami Vivekananda, the world stands divided into two parts – the East and West. The East remained poor by resorting to spiritual experience and realization and the West, by inventing more and more through science, increased the materialistic pleasures. Swami suggests that there should be harmony between materialism and spiritualism, otherwise there will be an incompleteness in human life. A complete human life revolves around two things – materialism and spiritualism, but materialism should be gradually but ultimately be subordinated to spiritualism. This way of living is an ideal. The hopes, desires and aspirations of a human being could be achieved to some extent.

Swami Vivekananda experienced certain Indian spirituality ideals and ventured to make them comprehensive to the common man to gain knowledge about spiritualism and Truth. He spoke in ordinary language that could easily interpret the valuable thoughts. So, language is not a barrier but an easy conveyance of one’s thoughts. “His words in English have since become a new gospel. Through English he gave voice to his mission and expression to that which he himself was

the center of a spiritual world impulse” (LSV 29). His speeches made the audience spellbound, his voice invigorated the minds of audience and the gatherings over-poured with the divine grace, “He had a dynamic dominating and magnetic personality. The charm and power of his eloquence captivated all” (Jagtiani 5). Ideas and words were blended and held the audience minds with his flawless speech with vibrant words. He proved that he could convey to the audience any abstract idea in a lucid and simply way. Having had a personal and direct contact with Swami Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda knew fully well as to how to make the listener understand him.

Praising Vivekananda’s vigour of spirituality and personality, Arun Bhattacharya states, “His greatness lies in the fact that in the nineteenth century when India was considered a backward country which had everything to learn from Europe, he proved the world that India had a great religion and culture which Europe should learn” (P 13).

Swami Vivekananda considered religion is a growth from within till one reaches the last stage of human evolution, the essence of being own, when the individual realizes within his own self all of his dreams attain perfection and absolute freedom, and discovers the kingdom of heaven that has been lying all the human hearts.

To conclude, Swami Vivekananda was inspired by his own realization through his practical mind Vedanta. Unity or oneness in the cosmos, unshakable faith in oneself that may inspire not only one’s individual life but also the national and international life. Undoubtedly, he is remembered as a dynamic spiritualist who served God by serving others. “He leaves behind indelible footprints which none of the historical forces and none of the vagaries of fate can efface” (Bhajananda 464). Being the preacher of religion, he holds together the truths of all religions not based on bias but as a universal prophet appreciating the truths of all religions and developing a broader outlook in life in all respects.

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