

SOME PHILOSOPHIC THOUGHTS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

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Vivekananda's philosophy is the product of the awareness of the social, religious and economic conditions of the Indian masses. He was deeply influenced by Ancient Hindu Philosophy- especially by Vedanta. However, he asserted the need to re-interpret Vedanta in accordance with demands of the present time. Therefore, he being a philosopher of Contemporary India, he was deeply aware about the social evils prevailing in society. He believed that some of these social evils were due the prevailing orthodoxy and superstitions of the society of the time. He was of the belief that a loss of spiritual values was responsible for these social evils. He desired a spiritual awakening that would help the society to rid itself of such evils.

Appreciating the contribution of Sankara in Philosophical thought and Buddha as a living example of his teaching, Swamiji combines the contributions of these two great architects of Indian thought and culture in his Philosophy which is termed as Neo-Vedantism. In Swamiji's words, "Feel like Buddha, you will be Buddha. It is feeling that is life, the strength, the vitality without which no amount of intellectual activity can reach God. Intellect is like limbs without the power of locomotion. It is only when feeling enters and gives them motion that they move and work on othersit is one of the most practical things in Vedantic Morality, for it is the teaching of the Vedanta that you are all Prophets, and all must be Prophets".

Swami Vivekananda regarded Sri Ramkrishna Paramhansa as his 'Master'. Ramkrishna's influence on Vivekananda was tremendous and his Master was responsible for bringing about a spiritual regeneration in Vivekananda. Undoubtedly, the basic concept of Neo-Vedantism is to be found in the life and teachings of Sri Ramkrishna. As Dr. S. C. Chatterjee commented that the main outline of this new Vedanta was drawn by Sri Ramkrishna and it was Swami Vivekananda who filled in it elaborate reasoning so as to work up as philosophy proper. Vivekananda's work is a commentary on Sri Ramkrishna's thoughts. But the commentator with his giant intellect and profound understanding made such a distinctive contribution that his commentary becomes itself a philosophy, just as Samkara's commentary

is itself a philosophy. Swami Nikhilananda in 'Vivekananda, a Biography' commented: "It was his Master who had taught him the divinity of the soul, the non-duality of God-head, the unity of existence and one more great thing- that it is the universality or harmony of all different religions".

Vivekananda's Pratical Vedanta differs from the orthodox traditional Vedanta of Samkara. Samkara's approach was metaphysical and other-worldly while Practical Vedanta of Vivekananda is a philosophy-cum- action-oriented. Swamiji supplements Samkara's interpretation of Vedanta by his philosophy of action. In fact, the formulation of Practical Vedanta explains the philosophy of Swami Vivekananda.

Vivekananda's greatest contribution to Vedanta lies in his emphasis on collective liberation as opposed to individual liberation. He says that we should feel oneness with all. We cannot go forward unless we take all with us. The idea of collective liberation which Vivekananda envisages has a clear similarity with the Buddhistic ideal of Boddhisattva.

Swamiji interpreted Advaita Vedanta and larded with karma-vada of Buddhism and applied it for practical purposes of social upliftment and amelioration of the social, moral and economic condition of mankind. In other words, the Neo-vedantic doctrine of Swamiji, in all practical purposes, may be given the real and credential of 'Practical Vedanta'. The theoretical principles of potential divinity of the soul, direct intuitive experience of God and harmony of all fields of human endeavour forms the manifesto for Swami Vivekananda's plan of campaign for welfare of all which he called "Practical Vedanta".

In Vivekananda's philosophy, we find the possibility of the realisation of immortality in the embodied state itself. He makes a distinction between 'Jivan-mukti' and 'Videha-mukti', similar to the description give about them in Vedanta Philosophy. But how can the soul be immortal? He describes through one word- 'Yoga'. Yoga stands for, in one sense, 'Union or in the second sense for, 'Discipline'. Vivekananda incorporates both the senses in his understanding of 'Yoga'. Vivekananda is so comprehensive in his outlook that he does not hesitate to include the modern and popular sense of the term Yoga- meditation through postural adjustments. He elaborates on the different types of Yoga Jnāna Yoga (the way of Knowledge), Bhakti-Mārga (the way of Devotion), Karma-Mārga (the way of Action) and Rāja-Yoga (the way of Psychology). One can choose any path he likes. But he should follow the path with sincerity, sense of purpose and earnestness.

According to Vivekananda, Religion is a necessary aspect of life. Religion is inherent in the very constitution of man. Religion can be understood only by arousing and analysing the

religious sense in man. True religion must be above the all disruptive tendencies. Swami Vivekananda asserts: "when we come to the real, spiritual, universal concept, then, and then alone, religion will become real and living, it will come into our very nature, live in our every movement, penetrate every pore of our society and be infinitely more a power of good than it has never been before". (Jnana-Yoga, page 19) Further he is of the opinion that religion is realisation, not talk, nor doctrine or theories. Religion is being and becoming, not hearing or acknowledging; it is the whole soul becoming changed into what it believes. □

References:-

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