

Relevance of Swami Vivekananda Teachings in Today's India

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“Those who live under fear are not alive but like one's who are dead.”

Today's India is going through a very difficult period, characterized by a prevalent sentiment of insecurity caused by political parties. The number of violence and unrest prevailing in Delhi, West Bengal, Kerala and Uttar Pradesh has cast dark shadows on the future of mankind. The advances in Knowledge of science and technology, including the humanities has failed to arrest the social and economic confusion in human beings, leading to rapid decline of moral and ethical values.¹ Mostly People in present times are selfishly busy in accumulating material comforts. This race for amassing wealth has led to economic disparity also. Immoralities are becoming part of character. Degradation of values is seen in acts like murder, rape, corruption, theft, cheating, food adulteration, etc. The vote bank politics of most of the political party's sidelines national issues such as environment protection clean India, economic welfare and national security. Moreover, national security is also endangered as incidences of political parties instigating and leading violence between two groups of people is a frequent occasion. In a country where more than 37% of the population lives below the poverty line, where more than 10000 children die of hunger and thirst everyday, where almost 65 farmers commit suicide every day due to lack of ability to till their land and repay their debt, where corruption is enormously out of control, where almost a fourth of the Indian parliament members face criminal charges including kidnapping, extortion, human trafficking immigration rackets, rape and murder, and where terrorism, naxalism, inflation and poverty are major problems ; there is an urgent need for an extremely strong and clean political structure where all political parties work together in tandem.² At this time, we need to follow the ideals of individual like swami Vivekananda, so as to discover true serenity. Had the India considered the importance of what this extraordinary child of India had said” if every religion concede that every other religion could help a person reach the same god that they are trying to reach harmony alone would prevail”, we would not

¹ <https://nareshdixit.wordpress.com/2015/01/11/relevance-of-swami-vivekananda-teachings-in-modern-world/>

² <https://medium.com/@whoamanverma/indian-politics-6c52f85cf89a>

have witnessed one of the most heinous examples of cultural conflict in the form of Godhra kand and Mujjafarnagar Danga.³

Swami Vivekananda, known in his early life as Narendra Nath Dutta, was born in an affluent family in Kolkata on 12 January 1863. His father Vishwanath Dutta was a successful attorney and his mother Bhuvaneshwari Devi was gifted with deep devotion, strong character and other qualities. Born with a yogic temperament, he used to practice meditation even from his boyhood, and was associated with Brahmo Movement for some time.⁴ At the age of fourteen Narendra Nath Dutta had to pass through a period of spiritual catastrophe when Narendra was surrounded by doubts about the existence of God. Apart from removing doubts from the mind of Narendra, Shri Ram Krishna won him over through his pure, unselfish love. Thus began a guru –disciple relationship which is quite inimitable in the history of spiritual masters. During his travels all over India, Swami Vivekananda was extremely motivated to see the atrocious poverty and backwardness of the lots of people. Swami Ji was the first religious leader in India to comprehend and openly declare that the real cause of India's breakdown was the neglect of the masses. The immediate need was to provide food and other bare necessities of life to the hungry millions. For this they should be taught improved methods of agriculture, village industries, etc. It was in the context that Vivekananda grasped the root of the problem of poverty in India.

Making an objective assessment of Swami Vivekananda contribution to world culture, the eminent British Historian A L Basham stated that “in centuries to come, he will be remembered as one of the main molders of the modern world”.⁵ Some of the main contributions that Swamiji made to the contemporary world are mentioned below-

1. **New Understanding of religion-** One of the most important contribution of Swami Ji to the modern world is his interpretation of religion as a universal experience of inspirational reality, common to all humanity. Swamiji met the challenge of modern silence by showing that religion is as scientific as science itself. This universal conception frees religion from the hold of superstitions, dogmatism, priest craft and intolerance, and makes religion the highest and noblest pursuit- the pursuit of supreme freedom, supreme knowledge, and supreme happiness.⁶
2. **New view of man-** Swami Ji idea of potential divine nature of the soul gives another honoring idea of man. The present age is the period of humanism which holds that man ought to be the central concern and the focal point everything being equal and thinking. Through science and innovation man has accomplished incredible success and power, and present day strategies for correspondence and travel have changed over human culture into a worldwide town. But the degradation of man has also been going on apace,

³ <https://nareshdixit.wordpress.com/2015/01/11/relevance-of-swami-vivekananda-teachings-in-modern-world/>

⁴ <https://vivekanandahouse.org/about-vivekananda>

⁵ <https://belurmath.org/swami-vivekananda/>

⁶ <https://religiondocbox.com/amp/89322358-Hinduism/Swami-vivekananda-s-contribution-to-education.html>

as witnessed by the enormous increase in broken homes, immorality, violence, crime, etc in modern society.⁷

3. **New Principle of Morality and Ethics-** The pervasive ethical quality, in both individual life and public activity, is for the most part dependent on dread of the police, dread of open disparagement, dread of divine beings discipline, dread of karma and so forth. The present hypotheses of morals additionally don't clarify why an individual ought to be good and regard others. Vivekananda has given another hypothesis of morals and new rule of profound quality dependent on the natural virtue and unity of the atman. We should be pure because purity is our real nature, our true divine self or atman. Similarly we should love and serve our neighbors because we are all one in the supreme spirit known as Brahman.⁸

Cydonic Hindu Monk- Swami Vivekananda is a true globalist as every true Hindu is. His credo was “Vasudhaiva Kudumbakam” (the whole world is one family). He already had foreseen that a universal circumstance is developing and the time has come when even local problems have to be seen in the context of the global perspective and solutions to be sought from that point of view. “Think globally and act locally” was not a concept which was strange or unknown to him. In fact he followed that aphorism. Some of the most pressing problems of the day threatening the very survival of human civilization were foreseen by Vivekananda. Religious Intolerance, cultural exclusiveness and blind fanaticism were identified by him as dangerous portents.⁹ In his famous Chicago address Swami Ji very clearly brought out that these dark forces had deluged the world with rivers of human blood and brought beautiful civilizations to annihilation.

Bane of Exclusivity- He told “I accept all religions that were in the past, and worship with them all, I worship God with every one of them, in whatever form they worship him. I shall go to the mosque of the Mohammedan, I shall enter the Christian church and kneel before the crucifix, and I shall enter the Buddhist temple, where I shall take refuge in Buddha and in his law. I shall go into the forest and sit down in meditation with the Hindus, who is trying to see the light which enlightens the heart of every one” Swami Vivekananda spelt out his mission, “ We want to lead mankind to the place where there is harmonization of the Vedas, the Bible and the Koran. Mankind ought to be taught that religions’ are but the varied expressions of the religion, which is oneness, so that each may choose the path that suits him best.”

The Two Civilizations- Swami Ji affirmed that there existed two civilizations, which had developed and thrived upon two different approaches to life. Swami Ji said, the western approach was based upon the quest as to how much a man needed to acquire and possess

⁷ <https://belurmath.org/swami-vivekananda/>

⁸ <https://belurmath.org/swami-vivekananda/>

⁹ <https://nareshdixit.wordpress.com/2015/01/11/relevance-of-swami-vivekananda-teachings-in-modern-world/>

in order to be happy and the Eastern (Hindu) approach was a quest to what is the minimum that a man requires to possess in order to remain happy.¹⁰ The West built up a strong human progress of Bhoga (commercialization), while India delivered a development dependent on Tyaga (renunciation). For the sake of globalization the Bhoga motivated methodology is today immersing the entire world causing grave risk of condition corruption and conceivable destruction of every single living specie on earth. The main cure is Tyaga enlivened way of thinking of life lectured and rehearsed by Hinduism, mulling over each angle and yearning of people. The west has neglected to develop such an exhaustive perspective on life that could blend the person with society, man with nature.

Vedanta Philosophy- Vedanta has faith in the solidarity of presence. Man, nature and universe are each of the one, bury related, interconnected and reliant. One can't exist without the other. There is a cadence and a sensitive equalization known to mankind, which supports it in its totality. At the point when man abuses nature , there will undoubtedly be a backfire and subsequent disarray. This makes it basic that man and nature renew one another and both achieve most extreme prosperity.

¹⁰ <https://nareshdixit.wordpress.com/2015/01/11/relavance-of-swami-vivekananda-teachings-in-modern-world/>