



The Patriotism And Spiritual Perspective In Swami Vivekananda's "India- Our Motherland"

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Abstract- Swami Vivekananda is a great philosopher, educationist and thinker of India. He dedicated his whole life for the upliftment of humanity. With his enthusiastic thoughts he laid emphasis on the amelioration of body and soul for human excellence. The central theme of his inspiring speeches for the whole world was man- his growth, development and fulfilment. Work and more work to strive for excellence of body, mind and spirit were conspicuous in all his teachings and preaching. He is famously described as the 'Patriotic Saint of India'. He appeared on the scene when was overwhelmingly struggling to break free from the throes of British Rule. This paper is an attempt to analyse his one of the most inspired and motivated speeches "India – Our Motherland" from the lens of Patriotism and Spiritual perspective.

Keywords- Patriotism, Spirituality, Unity, Indian Value System, Education.

Introduction- Swami Vivekananda, or Narendranath Datta, or simply Naren, as he was called in his pre-monastic days, was born to Vishwanath Datta and Bhuvaneshwart Devi in Calcutta in Monday, 12 January 1863. In his early childhood Narendranath was rather restless and given to much fun and frolic. But at the same time, he had a great attraction for spiritual matters and would play at worshipping or meditating on the images of Hindu deities. Traits such as courage, sympathy for the poor, and attraction towards wandering monks appeared spontaneously in him. In 1881, he met with Shri Ramakrishna, a great saint and surrender himself to his master. Shri Ramakrishna transmitted to Narendranath his own power and told him: 'By the force of the power transmitted by me, great things will be done by you; only after that will you go to whence you came.' After the passing away of the Master in August 1886, many of the young disciples gathered together in an old dilapidated house at Baranagore under the leadership of Narendranath. Here, in the midst of a life of intense austerity and spiritual practices, the foundation of the Ramakrishna brotherhood was laid.

Swami travelled to America via China, Japan, and Canada, and reached Chicago. In Chicago, the Parliament of Religions opened on 11 September 1893. The spacious hall of the Art Institute was packed with nearly 7000 people, representing the best culture of the country. The Swami had never addressed such a huge and

distinguished gathering. He felt extremely nervous. When his turn came, he mentally bowed down to Saraswati, the goddess of learning, and then began his address with the words, 'Sisters and Brothers of America'. Immediately, there was thunderous applause from the vast audience, and it lasted for full two minutes. 'Seven thousand people rose to their feet as a tribute to something, they knew not what.' The appeal of his simple words of burning sincerity, his great personality, his bright countenance, and his orange robes was so great that next day the newspapers described him as the greatest figure in the Parliament of Religions. The simple monk with a begging bowl had become the man of the hour. All the subsequent speeches of the Swami at the Parliament were listened to with great respect and appreciation. They all had one common theme—universality.

Our Motherland is a famous speech delivered by Swami Vivekananda at a public meeting in Lahore, now in Pakistan on November 2, 1897. In his speech he address to the people of India about the glorious culture of our country. He was a great patriotic and he has a firm faith in spirituality and divine power. In India: Our Motherland he dwells on the past glory and the present miserable state of India. In this speech he makes an impassioned plea to Indians, and in particular to the younger generation.

He starts with a question "Shall India die?" He is addressing to the youth of the India by asking them if there is no India, all the goodness and spirituality will disappear from this world; and lust, sin and deceit will take its place in the form of male and female deities. He further said that even today many great saints live in our India and from them he will borrow the lamp to show the path to the youth to follow him because in India religious life forms the centre, the keynote of the whole music of national life. Our motherland is indebted to the whole world because even before Greece and Rome existed in this world, our ancestors lived in forests and made new discoveries and gave knowledge to the world whose aim was to have only peace in the world.

The ideals of our country are sacrifice and service. Swami Vivekananda while addressing his compatriots says that since ancient times the civilization of India has enriched the entire world with its treasures of spiritual knowledge. He compares India to a national ship which has been ferrying across the ocean of life for many centuries. But today there is a hole in this ship and it has become weak. And being an Indian, it is our duty to save it from drowning and we should try together for its prestige even if we are not successful, we will all drown together with it but we will neither fight among ourselves nor harm each other.

For this the first work that demands our attention is that the most wonderful truths confined in our scriptures, in our Upanishads and Puranas, must be brought out from the books, the monasteries, and the forests and scattered broadcast over the land so that these truths many run like fire all over the country. Vivekananda says that the soul of India resides in its Hindu religion and therefore our religion has been prevalent for ages and will continue to exist in future too. He gave the example of a river and told that when a river flows from its source through the mountains, then it cannot return to its existence. No matter where the river flows it finally merges into the ocean. In the same way, our religion is ten thousand years old and if we do not follow our religion then it will lose its existence.

Swami Vivekananda believed in the power of love and faith in God. He says that man made the laws, laws did not make man, man made the money, money did not make man so he urges to his countrymen that ‘be a good human being first and how all those things i.e. name, fame and money will follow you.’ He further conveys that nothing can resist the power of love. If you are true and selfless then you need not fear anyone, not even death, because India is the only country that can illuminate and enlighten the whole world with its rich culture and civilization. He is a wandering monk so he says that our country will rise not by our physical power but by our spiritual power, love and peace. He has a great vision for the future of India. According to him “The ancient mother has awakened once more, sitting on Her throne- rejuvenated, more glorious than ever. Proclaim Her to all the world with the voice of peace and benediction.”

While delivering this inspiring message to his countrymen the Swami was not oblivious of his duty to emphasize the need of uplifting the sunken millions from the slough of torpor and degradation. He struck a sharp note of warning to his compatriots and gave vent to his own ideal of patriotism. He says if you want to build a new India, then people from all sections of the society will have to come forward and work together, no matter who they are, whether they are sweepers, fisherman or businessman, people from all sections will have to contribute together in building a new India.

We should learn the obedience first towards our nation. Although we have high spirit of patriotism but the spirit of obedience is equally strong. If we give more importance to our self rather than our country, it will never be good for ourselves and our nation. Therefore, boundless courage, tremendous energy and perfect obedience are the only traits that lead to individual and national regeneration. He considers that biggest sin is to neglect the commons and this is one of the reasons of our downfall. The politics of any country cannot be successful until the people of that country get good education, good food and good security. Our ancestors made many sacrifices for our education. They build temples for us but in return they got only kicks. Therefore, if we want to revive our nation, then we will have to work together.

The civilization of our country is very rich and glorious. We must study our past to build great future. We have the Vedanta doctrine and the doctrine of universal equality, but when it comes into practice, we make great distinctions. We became selfish. We are unable to think of anything besides our selfhood. He believes that besides all these India will awake again if we could love with the people of our country. He says “I too believe that India will awake again, if anyone could love with all his heart the people of the country – bereft of the grace of affluence, of blasted fortune, their discretion totally lost, downtrodden, ever starved, quarrelsome, and envious.”

He emphasized on the importance of the spirituality. Spirituality is the soul of our nation. It gets salvation and if we want the salvation of our country we have to work hard because the future of India depends upon our collective work. He addresses that we must have the sympathy for the poor and ignorant, love the downtrodden. It will give you the power to face the struggle. Do struggle. He said- “struggle, still say I. when it was all dark, I used to say, struggle, when light is breaking in, I still say, struggle. Be not afraid, my children.”

As Vivekananda was a great observer of the human mind and human society at large. He had a deep faith in the youth of the country. He said to them to be stick to truth, to have patience and success is yours. He understood that the undertaking any social change needed infinite energy and great will. While addressing the youth he tells that you were saints (Munis or Rishis) in your previous birth and now you have been reborn for the sake of the service of the poor, needy and common people of your country. He asked that what if you have collected a lot of name and fame or money in this life, it is only for some time because this world is not permanent how can be these worldly things like name, fame and money can be permanent. These are only illusions of Maya. Therefore, to make yourself immortal in this world of illusion, you should dedicate you entire life in the service of the common people who are needy and downtrodden. This is the ultimate goal of our life.

He wanted the youth to possess indomitable will and the strength to drink up the ocean. What he wanted was to prepare the youth both physically and mentally to face the challenges that would lie ahead of social workers. He was also practical enough in warning the youth of the pitfalls ahead and the way Society reacts to such endeavours. He reminded that the sacrifices of the ideal women of our country like Sita, Savitri and Damayanti and urges that not to forget their renunciation for the sake of their society. He said that he does not want mukti (salvation) even if, he gets hundred rebirths his mission would be to train the youth of India with such ideas and spread love and peace.

Finally, Swami Vivekananda wanted to see India as an independent nation. So, he considers we must look for any sort of foreign help. By making our country independent we show our real patriotism towards our nation. Therefore work unto death he says that- "It is far better to die on duty and preaching the truth, than to die like a worldly worm." He believed that religion constituted "the centre, the keynote of the whole music of national life of India. In him, the Hindu renaissance became "self-conscious and adolescent." He was born at such a critical period of the history of India, when all he higher impulses were overcome by the onrushing tide of materialism. The educated people were imitating foreign habits as they felt that the real solution to the problems of India and her progress lay in the acceptance of the western methods and institutions. Vivekananda tried to stem this tide, and placed before his countrymen the splendid and invigorating message of the Vedanta which combined the spirituality of the East with the spirit of social and service and organizational capacity of West.

Swami Vivekananda's views as a progressive Indian thinker played a positive role in the development of the patriotic and national self consciousness of the peoples of India and he made a considerable contribution to our national struggle and his teachings continue motivating the masses in their lives.

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