

Comprehensive Contributions of Literary and Vedic Philosophy of Swami Vivekananda to Indo-Anglian

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Abstract- The present paper is a comprehensive survey of Indo-Anglian literature. The paper tries to see how Indo-Anglian emerged as a result of contact with different foreign cultures and how it went developed as an independent variety of English literature with the passage of time. The paper shows the emergence and development of Indian English literature through its survey of different phases and so the author has provided samples from the writings of different important phases with due regard to the themes that they have touched on. The process of learning develops character and personality, and those who develop these qualities will experience a feeling of dignity. He was lover of mankind, he strove to promote peace and human brotherhood on the spiritual and real through the Vedantic Philosophy. A discussion of Swami Vivekananda's philosophical thinking on Vedanta philosophy and its relevance today is also discussed in this paper.

Keywords: Indo-Anglian, Passage of time, feeling of dignity, philosophical thinking, Vedantic philosophy

INTRODUCTION

Swami Vivekananda, one of the most shining stars in the galaxy of Indo-Anglian literature, is greatly considered orator and poet of India. Literary critics by and large have shown indifference to Swami Vivekananda's literary contributions to Indo-Anglian literature, though his historical relevance is well-recognised. He seems to me no less a literary figure than a philosopher or a prophet, particularly when we consider the point that he wrote and spoke in English at a time when English literature in India was at its infant stage. His English language and the art of writing and speaking was well appreciated by American and the English media. His writings and speeches that run in nine volumes and include letters, poems, articles, four treatises on Yogas and other miscellaneous prose pieces are a great contribution to English literature in India in more than one way. They enriched English language with new phrases and terms culled from Indian scriptures. The way he translated the abstruse philosophy of Vedanta in concrete terms and images in a language that is simple and expressive was a singular feat of his time. He was the first Indian scholar who ably and convincingly translated the Vedanta philosophy into English and propagated it in India and abroad: As Swami ji maintains:

"The dry, abstract Advaita must become living- poetic-- in everyday life, and out of bewildering Yogism must come the most scientific and practical psychology and all this must be put in a form so that a child may grasp it. That is my life's work. "¹

This is a very pertinent comment of his on his own literature. And this led to the development of a style that is simple, expressive and graceful. As Gandhiji wrote in a letter to Avinashlingam "Surely Swami Vivekananda's writings need no introduction from anybody. They make their own irresistible appeal."²

He broke away from Macaulayan tradition of writing and initiated the process of writing bare, simple but expressive English. Though like Macaulay many of his prose pieces, like "Reincarnation" that appeared in Metaphysical Magazine display amplitude and richness of phrasing and weight of philosophic learning. His writings in general are rhetorical prose replete with repetition, rhetorical questions, anecdotes and other rhetorical devices. One might well say that in Vivekananda's Literature language takes care of itself. It is natural and spontaneous. He did not find time enough to refine his sentences as Srinivas lyengar maintains.

"Vivekananda spoke and wrote so often with such intensity of feeling that he could hardly find the time or be in the mood to pause and refine his sentences. The words gushed out as it were, and carried with them the native energy and impetuosity of his mind and his feeling for the common people."³

His writings and speeches collected in nine volumes constitute the part of India's cultural history and we cherish them as

our national literature.

Swamiji like Tolstoy and Gandhi refuted the autonomous state of art or literature and made it a handmaid to life. Art for him is not just the imitation of Nature. As he writes with reference to Art (Painting):

"Now, true art can be compared to a lily which springs from the ground, takes its nourishment from the ground, is in touch with the ground, and yet is quite high above it. So art must be in touch with nature, and wherever that touch is gone art degenerates yet it must be above nature."⁴

Vedantic and philosophic literature and 'mantric' poetry are two other major contributions of Swamiji. His works show that a philosophic content is perfectly compatible respecting artistry or literary study. Indeed, given the spiritual genesis of his works such a reading is unavoidable for his philosophic literature. In philosophic writings the Swami stands next to none in Indo-Anglian literature. His literature can be placed in the tradition of Carlyle, Henry Newman, Herbert Spencer, John Ruskin and others. In England there has been a long chain of philosophical writers like these four in all ages, whose chief concerns were philosophy, theology and religion. They were studied in both discipline, philosophy and literature.

There has always been critics like Leslie Stephen who approached philosophical works from the literary side. So there is no reason why Swamiji should not be studied as a litterateur. The theme of Advaita -universal, eclectic and perennial religion, practical teachings to realise the self, the concept of Daridranarayana, the burning desire to weld the world together, to awake India from its long stupor, to uplift the humanity find an elaborate treatment in his works that have been stirring us into action. His poetic sensibility was so rich that he could make himself one with the agonies and joys of mankind in general. He created an interest in philosophic writings. Tagore, Aurobindo, Binoba Bhave, Radhakrishnan, Sister Nivedita and many other inherited a rich treasure from him. Tagore rightly said,

"If you want to know India study Vivekananda."⁵

What is applicable to Newman in English Literature seems applicable to Vivekananda in Indo-Anglian Literature. Like Newman, Swamiji's "Addresses in the Parliament", "Addresses from Colombo to Almora", miscellaneous speeches, theological and philosophical writings and his letters have their own interest ethical, philosophical and literary. But his four treatises on Yoga have a status as literature in their own right by virtue of their quiet luminosity of style and the personal, persuasive and pervasive way in which he interpreted the whole of Hinduism specially for the modern age and developed a system of philosophy-Advaita- of his own stamp that harmonizes in itself monism, dualism and qualified monism, and religion and science as well. V. K. Gokak professes,

"His writings on Bhakti, Jnana-, Karma- and Raj-Yogas, on Advaita, on practical vedanta, on personal and impersonal deity are classic documents in the field. It is difficult to find mind closer to reality, more philosophic, more comprehensive, more modern than that of Swami Vivekananda."⁶

Above all in truth doctrine, truth itself has the supreme-value. "The infinite is made to blend itself with the finite, to stand visible, and as it were attainable there. Of this sort are all true works of art..." And of this sort is the literature of Vivekananda and with him began a trend of mystic writing and an interest in metaphysics in Indo-Anglian literature.

His contribution extends to poetry also. Though his poetic output is not substantial and his poems are occasional, they are unified by the central theme of his Advaita Vedanta that leads to the development of a new tradition in English poetry. Swamiji's spiritual creativity and mystical out-pourings gave birth to a mantric poetry that was later developed by Aurobindo. "A Hymn to the Divine Mother", "A Hymn To Shiva", "Kali the Mother", "And Let Shyama Dance There", "Six Stanzas on Nirvana", "The Hymn of Creation" are some of the examples of his mantric poetry. In one of his poems without caption sent to Prof. J. H. Wright he arrives at a mystic union between man and God and successfully welds the microcosm and macrocosm.

"Thou art", "Thou art" the Soul of souls In the rushing stream of life.

"Om tat Sat om". Thou art my God. My love, I am thine, I am thine."⁸

His contribution was no less in the field of oratory. He was called "divine orator". and orator by birth. He showed his mastery over all types of oratory viz. forensic, deliberative, occasional and philosophical. Even a cursory glance of his speeches reveals how forceful, how moving are his speeches. His words are emotionally charged, well picked up and sensational like those of Donne "Brothers and sisters of America" or "Allow me to call you, brethren, by that sweet

nameheirs of immortal bliss- Yea, the Hindu refuses to call you sinners."

or "Hail, columbia, Mother land of liberty."

He employed the whole range of rhetorical tools, rhetorical questions of different types, pauses, irony, exemplum, fables, scriptural quotations and references etc. not only to make his audience understand but render it impossible for them not to understand. And his speeches had a wide and a forceful appeal even without the modern means of communication available to modern orators like Churchill and Nehru.

By virtue of his prolific literary output, he appears to be a seminal mind in Indo-Anglian literature who introduced a new trend in Indian literature- philosophic, mystic and Vedantic writings with a holistic approach to life born of spiritual creativity that have kept Indian writers inspiring in one way or another and will keep doing so.

CONCLUSION

To sum up, From the above discussion now, we can securely say that the teachings of Vivekananda had worked as a building block to create modern India. It can be stated that Swami Vivekananda was foreseen that mankind is passing through a crisis. His literature is certainly distinct and excellent in composition. His poetry is not the expression for external world but is the result of a man's search of his own permanent identity and to convert that identity to the identity of others and thus from the soul to "the super soul". This unique quality made him a leader of the total human beings. Vivekananda described many laws and methods which are much more relevant today. His Vedantic interpretation brings a beautiful combination of thematic and aesthetic aspects. His philosophy is not the harsh presentation of life, he always inspires us to reach to our home - the abode of Peace- without neglecting our mundane duties. And yet Swami Vivekananda stood up to the most difficult challenges of his time and became a beacon light of hope and inspiration for millions of people across the world. His personality has an everlasting charm and appeal for the modern youth of all nationalities. In the year 1984, the government of India declared 12th January, Swami Vivekananda's birthday, as the National Youth Day.

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