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NETAJI SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE — INFLUENCE OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND SRI RAMAKRISHNA PARAMHANSA DEV HIS LIFE

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The life and teaching of Swami Vivekananda, Thakur Sri Ramakrishana Param-hangsha and Sri Sri Sarada Maa will help us to understand our goal in life. We all know that Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose was one of the best flowers of Swami Vivekananda's garden of cactus. We can also call Subhas Chandra Bose the true heir of Vivekananda. Subhas Chandra Bose seized on the activist principal in Vivekananda's teaching.

Here in this paper I would discuss Netaji's life to fulfill the mission of Swami Vivekananda. In the eighties of the last century, two prominent religious personalities appeared before the public who were destined to have a great influence on the future course of the new awakening. They were Ramakrishna Paramhansa the saint and His disciple Swami Vivekananda. Ramakrishna Himself was the God-incarnate in man .He had the vision to see the things as they really are .In the gospel of Sri Ramakrishna,-as recorded by his lay-disciple Mahendra Nath Gupta - the unity of all religions and the acceptance of the faiths of the different communities have been well projected, and therein the urge of the cessation of inter-conflict among the religions and their assuming strives find a new dimension.

As we all know that Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose played a key role to fulfill one of the Missions of Swami Vivekananda, who not only was the greatest spiritual leader of the world, but also was the greatest patriot in India. The mission was to free India from British shackles. Every Indian knows the contribution of Subhas Bose in history of Indian freedom struggle. We hear may quote that Swami Vivekananda was the real power behind Netaji

Foot Note 1. Ourlifehismission.blogspot.in 20Wednesday 23 January 2013

Subhas Chandra Bose, though these two never met each other. Had they met each other by any chance? I presume that India would have been free before 50 years. Subhas Chandra Bose, a self-sacrificing young man deeply influenced by the thought of Vivekananda and destined to play a conspicuous role in Indian politics.²

Netaji's family background and mastery of English in any case won him respects and gave him a sense of self-confidence. Subhas Chandra Bose was greatly influenced by his Head-Master, Beni Madhav Das from whom he learnt social, political and economical thoughts and ideas.³

Subhas Chandra Bose himself wrote "I was barely fifteen when Vivekananda entered my life" when Bose was a student of class IX Ravenshaw Collegiate School, then he first saw few books written by Swami Vivekananda in a neighbor's house. He borrowed those books and read few pages casually. Soon he realized those were the books, the teachings that he had been looking for. Now he started reading those books with full attention and very soon finished reading all those books. Later he read the works based on the teaching Vivekananda's master Ramakrishna too.⁴

Subhas Chandra Bose believed that the Bhagavad Gita was a great source of inspiration for the struggle against the British Swami Vivekananda's teachings on universalism, his nationalist thoughts and his emphasis on social service and reform had all inspired Subhas Chandra Bose from his very young days.⁵

2. Ourlifehismission.blogspot.in 20 Wednesday 23 January 2013

3. M.C.Gupta, Joytilak Roy — Man Mission & Means p. 12

4. Gopal Krishna Gandhi — An Icon of Icon — The Oracle 31 no. 1 p. 11 – 15

5. Sugata Bose — His Majesty's Opponent Subhas Chandra Bose & Indian's Struggle pp. 12.56

The message of this great Hindu sage, who had preached a life of service to suffering humanity and died at the early age of thirty-nine, 4th July 1902, gave him 'an ideal' to which he could devote his 'whole being'. Swami Vivekanand inspired an entire generation, but none so profoundly as the young Subhas. From a comprehensive reading of Swami Vivekananda's letters and speeches, Subhas "emerged with a vivid idea of the essence of his teachings" captured in the Sanskrit maxim, 'Atmano Mokshartham Jagaddhitaya'. That aspiration—"For your own salva-tion and for the service of humanity"—was to his "life's goal". The *Hita* ("good") of humanity was rendered here as achievable through *Seva* ("service"). To this formulation Subhas Chandra added another element: the service of humanity included the service of one's country.⁶

The path prescribed by Vivekananda led Subhas toward a combination of individualistic *Yoga* and social service in the form of voluntary work in the villages. The practice of *Yoga*, representing the individual's pursuit of union with the godhead, was supplemented with an effort to relive human suffering. The summer vacation of

1914 Subhas Chandra quietly left home with a guru or a spiritual preceptor. He visited all of the major pilgrimage sites of northern India, including Lachhman-Jhola, Hrishikess, Haradwar, Mathura, Brindabam, Benares, and Gaya. At Haradwar, a third friend Joined the search party for a Guru⁷

Subhas Chandra Bose told:

“In the eighties of the last century, two prominent religious personalities appeared before the public who were destined to have a great influence on the future course of the new awakening. They were Ramakrishna Paramahansa, the saint and his disciple Swami Vivekananda Ramakrishna preached gospel of all unity of all

6. Bose op.cit pp. 12.56

7. Gupta & Roy op.cit — pp 12 — 14

religious and urged the cessation of inter-religious strife. Before he died, he charged his disciple with the task of propagating his religious teachings in India and abroad and of bringing. Swami Vivekananda therefore founded the Ramakrishna Mission and order of Monk, to live and preach the Hindu-Religion in its purest form in India abroad, especially in America and he took an active part in inspiring every form of healthy national activity. With him religion was the inspirer of nationalism. He tried to infuse into the new generation a sense of pride in India's past of faith in India's future and a spirit self confidence and self respect. Through the Swami never gave any political message everyone who came into contact with him or his writings developed a spirit of patriotism and a political mentality. So far at least as Bengal is concerned Swami Vivekananda be regarded as spiritual father of the modern nationalist movement. He died very young in 1902. But since his death his influence has been greater.”

“I cannot write about Vivekananda without going into raptures few indeed could comprehend or fathom him-every among those who had the privilege of becoming intimate with him –Swami Vevekananda. His personality was rich, profound and complex and it was this personality-as distinct from his teachings and writings – which accounts for the wonderful influence he has exerted on his countrymen and particularly on Bengalees”.

“Swamiji was a full-blooded masculine personality-and a fighter to the care of his being. He was consequently a worshipper of Sakti and gave a practical interpretation to the Vedanta for the uplift of his countrymen”.

“Subhas Chandra Bose worshipped him: “If he had been alive, I would have been at his feet.How shall I express in words my indebtedness to Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda? It is under their sacred influence that my life got first awakened. Like Nivedita, I also regard Ramakrishna and Vivekananda as two aspects of one indivisible personality. If Swamiji had been alive today, he would have been My Guru, that is to say, I would have accepted him as my Master. It is needless to add, however, that as long as I live, I shall be absolutely loyal and devoted to Ramakrishna – Vivekananda. The idea of complete freedom is manifest only in Ramakrishna-Vivekananda towards the end of the nineteenth century. ‘Freedom, freedom is the song of Soul’ – this was the message that burst forth from the inner recesses of Swamiji’s heart and captivated and almost maddened the nation ...Swami Vivekananda ...laid the foundation for true nationalism in India”.

“The foundation of the present freedom movement owes its origin to Swamiji’s message. If India is to free, it can be a land of different religious communities inspired by the ideal of nationalis. India must accept whole hearted by the gospel of harmony of religions is which is the gospel of Ramkrishna Vivekananda”.

“Swamiji harmonized, East and West, religion and science, past and present. And that it why he is great. Our countrymen have gained unprecedented and self – respect, self- confidence and self – assertion from his teaching”.

“Swami Vivekananda on the other hand , called man to be real man freed from all fetters and, on the other, laid the foundation for true nationalism in India by preaching the gospel of harmony of religion”.

The appearance of Vivekananda’s life in 1912 caused ‘a revolution within and everything was turned upside down’. It was with his own country and own people that Subhas could be ‘in touch with humanity in all its concreteness’. Vivekananda had famously described his motherland as the queen of his adoration One under the spell of the sage’s magical word, Subhas’s love for the country was tinged with a religious sensibility and expressed as devotion to the Mother.⁸

8. Gopal Krishna Gandhi — p. 11 – 15, www.swamivivekanandaquote 0/30 November 2013.

Rolland has called Aurobindo ‘the intellectual heir of Vivekananda’. We can call Subhas Chandra ‘the true heir of Vivekananda’. Subhas Chandra has declared specifically and all clarity “Vivekananda’s ideal is my ideal”.

To quote *Romain Rolland* again, 'Vivekananda's Neo- Vedantism spread like burning alcohol in the veins of his intoxicated nation'.⁹

At this hour of mental conflict the work of the Swamiji the saffron-dressed Hindu monk of India—came to be the greatest help to young Bose. Young and highly sensitive Subhas 'was thrilled to the marrow' when he in his own words 'devoured' the books of Swami Vivekananda, the Neo-Vedantist Hindu monk, gave a new interpretation to the ancient scriptures of India. To him service to mankind was the service to God.

Young and enthusiastic Bose pored over the works of Swamiji and got a satisfactory solution to the problems which tormented his sensitive and thoughtful mind. From Ramakrishna and Vivekananda young Bose learnt that selfless service to the suffering humanity was a means to spiritual development. No wonder that Bose dedicated his entire life to the amelioration of the wretched plight of the down-trodden with the zeal of a missionary.

Bose also says in the introduction to his to his famous work. The Indian struggle, 'With him religion was the inspirer of nationalism. He tried to infuse into the new generation a sense of pride in India's past, of faith in India's future and a spirit of self-confidence and self-respect. Though the Swami never gave any political message, everyone who came into contact with him or his writing developed a spirit of patriotism and a political mentality'.

There is little doubt that Vivekananda deeply influenced the revolution movement, particularly of Bengal. Vivekananda said after his return from West for the second time, 'What India need to day is a bomb'. The speeches and teaching of Vivekananda were a permanent source of inspiration to the revolutionaries of Bengal. There was a time when Swamiji's speeches and writing were read by every revolutionary nationalist of Bengal.

9. Gupta & Roy op.cit p. 12 - 14

The Sedition Committee observes: Vivekananda died in 4th July 1902; but his writing and teachings survived him, have been popularized by the Ramakrishna Mission and have deeply impressed may educated Hindus. The Ramakrishna Mission, founded by Swami Vivekananda in 1st May 1897 at Kashipur Auddhan Bati, the patriot saint of India, in the name of his guru Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, put the name and fame of Hinduism on the world map.¹⁰

Again it is Vivekananda who kindled the spark of patriotism in Subhas Chandra. It has been said earlier that Vivekananda stood for selfless service to suffering humanity. To him, again, service to humanity included service to one's motherland. Sister Nivedita, one of his chief disciples, says, "Throughout those years in which I saw him almost daily, the thought of India was to him like the air he breathed. True, he was a worker at foundations. He neither used the word 'nationality', nor proclaimed an era of 'nation-making,' he said, was his own task. But he was born a lover, and the queen of his adoration was his Motherland".¹¹

There is little doubt that Vivekananda deeply influenced the revolution movement, particularly of Bengal. Vivekananda said after his return from West for the second time, "What India need to day is a bom". The speeches and teaching of Vivekananda were a permanent source of inspiration to the revolutionaries of Bengal. There was a time when Swamiji's speeches and writing were read by every revolutionary nationalist of Bengal.

10. . Gupta & Roy op.cit p. 15

11. Swami Bedhaamatmananda — Vivakanandaghatapran Netaji Subhas p.— 41

Thus, although Vivekananda left this phenomenal world in 1902, he had in Subhas one of his most illustrious and steadfast disciples. In thought and practice, Subhas remained true till the very last days of his tempestuous life to the spiritual discipline he had readily accepted early in his life. This side of his personal life was never on display; and yet, as he once said, it met a pragmatic necessity of his inner being. During the war years in Southeast Asia, Bose was conscious that he had probably missed the strategic opportunities for intervention in India in 1942. But he accepted with equanimity the great surge of —and also some act of treachery—he had seen in the Indian National Army and the settled communities of Southeast Asia. While rushing from one battlefield to another to succor INA soldiers who had been forced to retreat from the Indian borders by Japan's decision, Subhas Chandra Bose, president of Provisional Government of free India, would, on the quiet, without any display of his religiosity, find time for meditation and the reading of the Gita.

His (Subhas Chandra Bose) personal luggage was a little leather bag containing a rosary, a small Gita, and his spare reading glasses. Often when in Singapore he would commune with the missionaries of the Ramakrishna Mission, or, late at night, he would drive to the mission, there change into a priestly sik dhoti, shut himself up in the prayer room, rosary in hand, and spend a couple of hours in meditation.

A critical analysis of the social and political ideas of Subhas Chandra Bose must take into account all these sources. Any discussion of Bose's social and political ideas must take cognizance of the fact that Bose was not a

theorist but empiricist. The only isms he knew and cherished were ‘nationalism and humanism’. The thought of India’s liberation from the foreign yoke was to him like the air breathed and relieving the sufferings of the toiling millions was the goal of his life.

What was the role model Subhas cherished? Was it perhaps the one he in Vivekananda who Dad Subhas as his posthumous disciple! In his own words : Reckless in his sacrifice, unceasing in his activity, boundless in his love, profound and versatile in his wisdom , exuberant in his emotions , merciless in his attacks but yet simple as a child—he was a rare personality in this world of ours. Nature endowed Subhas with some of the qualities he attributed to Vivekananda.¹²

Foot Notes

12. Swami Bedhaamatmananda op.cit. p — 37

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