

His Work Is On

Some people ask why we do not see much influence of the life and teachings of Swami Vivekananda on society even after 110 years of his passing away. Such questions come from people who can only see the surface and have no idea about what is going on beneath it. Vivekananda's work is spreading. The work is silent, but firm and sure to deliver. His influence indeed changed the course of Indian history within three decades of his passing away. And it is only the beginning.

After the passing away of Swamiji, Sister Nivedita said that it was the Patriot Vivekananda that spoke to India at that time, as time had not yet come to gauge the spiritual significance of his life. She was correct. If one reads the history of Indian freedom struggle between the lines, one will find how greatly his spirit worked through the revolutionaries and other leaders. Rabindranath Tagore, who was two years older than Swamiji, observed, 'Vivekananda's gospel marked the awakening of man in his fullness and that is why it inspired our youth to the diverse courses of liberation through work and sacrifice.' He said what he witnessed: 'There at the source of the adventurous activities of today's youth of Bengal is the message of Vivekananda...'

During the second half of the nineteenth century, as a result of subjugation under the British, Indians as a nation suffered from a terrible inferiority complex. It was Swami Vivekananda who for the first time brought to us a sense of national dignity and the desire for freedom. "Freedom, freedom is the song of the soul" – this was the message that burst forth from the inner recesses of Swamiji's heart and captivated and almost maddened the entire nation,' said Subhas Chandra Bose. Undoubtedly he was *the father of modern Indian Nationalism*, agrees many eminent historians like RG Pradhan.

Unfortunately, the national leadership later fell in the hands of people who could not see the importance of his message. Important historical factors like the World Wars, political movements, economic crises, and the post-War economic boom and spread of rank materialism were also there to divert the attention of the world temporarily. Now things have started to change again. Attention of the nation is again coming back to Vivekananda. Thousands of youths are spontaneously taking him as their role model, as the best source of ideas and inspiration. They have to be organized. Swamiji said, 'I am born to organise these young men; nay, hundreds more in every city are ready to join me; and I want to send them rolling like irresistible waves over India, bringing comfort, morality, religion, education to the doors of the meanest and the most downtrodden. And this I will do or die.'

Commonly we expect all the desired things to happen in our life time. That is illogical. Ups and downs in a society or a nation do not happen overnight, they take a much longer time. Historical trends cannot be viewed or understood on a time scale of fifty or hundred years. But those who can read the signs of the time can see that the youth of India are again listening to the call of the *Voice without a form*. And, in spite of the loud and shrill cacophony of hedonism all around, that *Voice* is gaining in strength day by day. And see, the cacophony is fading away, for the call of Love is capturing the hearts with full force!

It has only begun. It will take time to engulf the nation. It always takes time to understand Prophets. For Prophets think much ahead of their times. The common man cannot keep pace with them. Their inertia provides resistance to the onrush of the New Wave that the Prophet generates. Objective analysis demands that it will take many more years for us, Indians, to grasp the master plan Vivekananda gave us and work it out to rebuild India. Several centuries may pass before the world can fathom the full significance of the message he broadcast for the good of mankind. Swami Vivekananda said, 'The great seers of ancient India saw so far ahead of their time that the world has to wait centuries yet to appreciate their wisdom, and it is this very inability on the part of their own descendants to appreciate the full scope of this wonderful plan that is the one and only cause of the degeneration of India.' So with Vivekananda. This means ultimately it depends on us. Miracles cannot do that.

Doctors can prescribe medicines. But it is upon the patient to take it. As Shankaracharya said, '*Na gachchhati vinā pānam vyādhiraushadhi-shabdatah*' – a disease is not cured by uttering the word 'medicine', but only by actually taking it. According to Sri Ramakrishna, the best doctor, the *uttama vaidya*, is he who does not leave the patients after prescribing medicine, but ensures, by any means, that they take it. Swamiji was an *uttama vaidya*. He said, 'I know they (people of India) have to be treated like the insane; and anyone who administers medicine to a madman must be ready to be rewarded with kicks and bites; but he is the true friend who forces the medicine down the throats of such and bears with them in patience.' And he assured us that he would not rest till the work is done:

'Till men and women, with uplifted head,
Behold their shackles broken, and
Know, in springing joy, their life renewed!'