

Message of Indian Philosophy to the World Today

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Indian civilization is more than five thousand years old. During this long period, it produced a unique type of highly advanced and variegated culture. In spite of the innumerable regional, social and linguistic diversities of the country, there has always been a basic unity in Indian culture. Moreover, this culture maintained unbroken continuity from Vedic times to the present day, in spite of countless wars within the country, invasions from outside and two centuries of subjugation by the British. This indestructible unity and unbroken continuity of Indian culture are derived from its deep spiritual foundations.

Swami Vivekananda has pointed out that every civilization or culture has a particular life-centre, a dominant characteristic or trend. According to him the life-centre of Indian culture is spirituality. By spirituality is meant a way of life oriented to the ultimate purpose or goal of life which is the realization of the Supreme Spirit or God. Indian spirituality is deeply rooted in the ancient philosophical and religious traditions of the land. Philosophy arose in India as an enquiry into the mystery of life and existence. A parallel situation arose in ancient Greece also. But, as Swami Vivekananda pointed out, the Greek philosophers confined their enquiries to the external world, and the method they employed was only speculation, whereas in India philosophical enquiries were carried out in the inner world. Indian sages, called *Rishis* or 'seers', developed special techniques of transcending the senses and the ordinary mind, collectively called Yoga. With the help of these techniques they dived deep into the depths of consciousness and discovered important truths about the true nature of man and the universe.

The sages found that man's true nature is not the body or the mind, which are ever changing and perishable, but the spirit which is unchanging, immortal, pure consciousness. They called it the Atman. The Atman is man's true Self, the true knower, the true source of man's knowledge, happiness and power. The *Rishis* further found that all individual selves are parts of infinite Consciousness which they called Brahman. Brahman is the ultimate Reality, the ultimate cause of the universe. Ignorance of man's true nature is the main cause of human suffering and bondage. By gaining correct knowledge of *Jivatman* and Brahman it is possible to become free from suffering and bondage and attain a state of immortality, everlasting peace and fulfilment known as *Mukti* or liberation. Religion in ancient India meant a way of life which enabled man to realize his true nature and attain *Mukti*.

Thus, philosophy provided a correct view of Reality, while religion showed the correct way of life; philosophy provided the vision, while religion brought about the fulfilment; philosophy was the theory, and religion was the practice. Thus, in ancient India, philosophy and religion complemented each other. In fact, they together constituted a single endeavour, an integral discipline. This integral religious philosophy or philosophical religion was called *Vedanta*. The term *Vedanta* comes from the fact that its basic principles constitute the last part or culmination of the ancient scriptures known as the *Vedas*. The *Vedas* are the oldest and most authoritative scriptures of Hinduism. All other scriptures are subordinate to them. They were not composed by anybody but were 'revealed' to the *Rishis*; hence they are also called '*Shruti*', 'that which is heard'. The earlier part of the *Vedas* may have been composed between 2000 B.C. and 1000 B.C. There are four *Vedas*: *Rig-veda*, *Yajur-veda*, *Sama-veda* and *Atharva-veda*. Each of these has four divisions: *Samhita*, *Brahmana*, *Aranyaka* and *Upanishads*. *Samhita* is the collection of hymns addressed to various deities. Many of these hymns have deep mystical significance. *Brahmana* deals with various rituals and also with moral principles. *Aranyaka* contains various meditations. Some of these meditations are mental recreations of external rituals. *Upanishads* are the records of the transcendental experiences gained by *Rishis* by following different contemplative techniques. These experiences are actually revelations about *Atman*, *Brahman* and other eternal, universal truths regarding the ultimate Reality. These eternal truths and principles of the spiritual world, lying scattered in the *Upanishads*, were brought together and codified by Badarayana in the form of *sutras* or aphorisms in the 5th century B.C. These *sutras* known as *Brahmasutras* form the foundation of the system of philosophy known as *Vedanta-Darshana*.

In this connection it should be pointed out that five more systems of philosophy arose in India in the early centuries of the Christian era. These are:

- 1) *Sankhya*, founded by Kapila
- 2) *Yoga*, founded by Patanjali
- 3) *Nyaya*, founded by Gautama
- 4) *Vaisheshika*, founded by Kanada
- 5) *Mimamsa*, founded by Jaimini

Vedanta alone remained the main philosophy of India from the *Vedic* period, and *Vedanta* alone got identified with the religion of the land. *Vedanta* is understood as both philosophy and religion. This combined religious and philosophical tradition of India came to be called ***Sanatana Dharma***, “Eternal Religion” and, still later, as Hinduism.

Although the Upanishads constitute the original and most authoritative source of *Vedanta*, they are not the only scripture of *Vedanta*. Several other books also came to be accepted as authoritative. Among these, the most important one is *Bhagavad-Gita*. It introduced several new concepts into *Vedanta* such as God incarnating Himself as the *Avatara* age after age, devotion to personal God as means to *Mukti*, discharging one's duties of life in a spirit of selflessness and self-surrender to God as a spiritual path, and so on. Over the centuries great teachers like Shankara, Ramanuja, and great saints of medieval period enriched *Vedanta* with philosophical concepts and devotional songs.

The Indian sages of antiquity believed that philosophy was an essential and practical element necessary to lead an optimised life. Therefore, philosophy had to be explained in terms of how it served the purpose of living. At the same time, Indian philosophy applies enormous analytical rigour to solving metaphysical problems, and goes into details regarding the function of the human mind and its relationship with ‘reality’. These analyses were also tempered by the underlying belief that there was a fundamental and unitary order in the universe—all pervasive and omniscient. Most of the Indian philosophical schools concentrated on explaining the existence of such an order and the extraordinary entity at the centre of it that was the sole source that created the universe.

The Indian approach to philosophy illustrates an inherent dichotomy in the overall socio-religious system that has been prevalent in the country from *Vedic* times. This system, while being reorganized through social experiments in modern India, still holds firm in the Indian psyche, manifesting itself in myriad subtle and not so subtle ways in the daily life of the modern nation. On the one hand, the Indian social structure is essentially communal with the society subsuming the individual as part of a group, the basic unit of the system being the joint family. The joint family system was designed to ensure that the weak and incompetent members, including the sick and the aged, were looked after and therefore inherently favored the weak. The corollary was that it hindered the strong from forging ahead since any chain is only as strong as its weakest link. This situation inhibited adventurous Endeavour and brought about a gradual acceptance and subsequent entrenchment of mediocrity across all levels of society. Even the much-maligned caste system was an offshoot of this group dynamics. On the other hand, Indian philosophy is highly individualistic and deals mainly with the growth of an individual's personality towards inner perfection. Philosophy provided the outlet to a person for free thinking and development of ideas, essentially the freedom to believe. In a paradoxical manner this process was also required to conform to the societal norms, although the more renowned thinkers, mainly sages and seers, broke free of these restrictive chains. The third phase of *Vedanta* was inaugurated by Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda in the 19th century. During this period *Vedanta* was transformed from an ethnic religious philosophy into a universal philosophy of life.

Sri Ramakrishna is the real link between ancient India and modern India. Through stupendous spiritual efforts Sri Ramakrishna revealed the entire range of spiritual experiences of the sages and saints of the past from *Vedic* times to his times. He thereby re-established the truths of *Vedanta*. He traversed the paths of *Vedic*, Shaiva, *Shakta* and *Vaishnava* traditions, including obscure and forgotten paths. He brought about the purification of spiritual life by emphasizing its moral foundation, and rejecting occultism, mysticism and miracle-mongering. He made God realization possible for all even in the midst of the distractions of the modern world. He imparted tremendous encouragement to the efforts to realize God. All this has resulted in a thorough rejuvenation of *Vedanta* in modern times.

Another modern sage, Swami Vivekananda's great work was to make ancient *Vedantic* concepts acceptable to modern minds by interpreting the eternal truths in the light of modern rational thought and science. This modernized version is what most of the present-day educated Hindus understand by *Vedanta*. *Vedanta* had split into different schools in the Middle Ages. Swami Vivekananda brought about the reintegration of these schools. He did this by stressing the common ground of different schools, especially the principle of *Atman*, and by showing that the different schools represent different stages of realization of the ultimate Reality.

Sri Ramakrishna taught, from his realization, that all spiritual paths lead to the same ultimate goal, *Yato mat tato path*. "As many views, so many paths to God". This principle, which forms the basis of his doctrine of *dharma-samanvaya* or Harmony of Religions, came to be applied within Hinduism itself in due course. This has given rise to a sense of unity among Hindu sects in modern times, in spite of many differences in customs and traditions. Till the eleventh century A.D. the only challenges *Vedanta* had to face were internal; these came mainly from Buddhism and Jainism and from dissensions of different schools of *Vedanta* and sects of Hinduism each of which claimed superiority over the others. From the thirteenth century Islam began to exert its influence on Indian society in a big way. Many great saints then arose in different parts of India and responded to the Islamic challenge by spreading the ideas of oneness of God, brotherhood of man and social equality among the common people.

However, the greatest challenge Indian society ever faced came from Western culture in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Western culture brought three major challenges to Indian society, which were: (1) modern rational thought and science puzzled the Indian culture, (2) an open society which values freedom and social justice, and (3) the idea of a saviour God who identifies himself with the poor, the sick and the fallen.

Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda met these Western challenges by revitalizing *Vedantic* spirituality, by interpreting the eternal truths of *Vedanta*, discovered by the ancient sages, in the light of modern rational thought, and by introducing a new gospel of social service based on the practical application of *Vedantic* principles in day-to-day life. By "Practical Vedanta" is meant the practical application of the basic principles of *Vedanta* in solving the problems of day-to-day life. For centuries *Vedantic* principles were intended only to help people to attain *Mukti* or liberation. Swami Vivekananda, however, showed that the highest principles of *Vedanta* can be applied even in ordinary life to solve the day-to-day problems of life. *Vedantic* principles can be applied not only in individual life but also in social life. In fact, Swamiji held that India's downfall took place mainly because the eternal spiritual principles were not applied in collective life.

For many centuries the essential, basic truths of *Vedanta* remained bound up with innumerable beliefs, myths, customs, castes, etc. Moreover, the higher truths of *Vedanta* were available only to a small group of privileged people, and it was believed that to follow the principles of *Vedanta* one had to be born in a certain Hindu caste. Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda separated the essential truths of *Vedanta* from the non-essentials. Swamiji showed that the essential truths of *Vedanta* constitute the eternal, universal truths of the spiritual world which form the rationale and basis of all the religions of the world. As a matter of fact, the eternal principles of *Vedanta* themselves constitute the Universal Religion of all mankind, and the different religions of the world are only manifestations of this Universal Religion in different places and times. Furthermore, through his lectures and books and through the *Vedanta* Centres which he founded, Swamiji made the life-giving principles of *Vedanta* available to all people without any distinction of caste, creed or race.

In this way, through the pioneering efforts of Swami Vivekananda, *Vedanta* has crossed the boundaries of India and has now become the common property of all mankind. The work started by Swamiji is now being carried on by many teachers and organizations around the world

Swami Vivekananda that, "Education is the manifestation of perfection already in man". He said that education which does not enable a person to stand on his own feet, does not teach him self-confidence and self-respect, is useless. Education should be man-making, life giving and character-building. He also said that children should be given "positive education", i.e they should be encouraged to learn new things till they gain self-confidence and self-respect. Since a country's future depends on the character of its people, Vivekananda stressed on character building education, he called it "man-making". According to Vivekananda, *Jiva* is *Shiva* or every man is potentially Divine. To become divine (or great), man must give

up suspicion, jealousy, conceit and learn to work unitedly for the common good. Courage, faith in oneself and in God, patience and steady work, according to Swami Vivekananda, is the way to success. He told that purity, patience and perseverance overcome all obstacles.

Swami Vivekananda said that since the *atman* (soul) has neither sex nor caste, it is wrong to discriminate between sexes. He suggested not thinking of people as men and women, but as human beings. According to Vivekananda, there is no chance for welfare in the world unless the condition of woman is improved. He felt that it was impossible to get back India's lost pride and honour unless the condition of women was improved. According to Vivekananda, the ideal of womanhood in India is motherhood and that Sita was the ideal of Indian womanhood. Vivekananda lived at a time when India was quite backward and that many improvements have taken place since that time. Let us now look at what has changed and how much has changed in Indian society. Consider the following statistics of the present-day:

Education: -- It is estimated that, 60 million children out of around 200 million children in the 6-14 years age group, in India, are not in school, and that, even of those children enrolled in school, only 47 out of 100 children enrolled in class I reach class VIII, putting the dropout rate at 52.78%. The figures for female literacy, male literacy, youth literacy and adult literacy are respectively, 65.46%, 82.14%, 82%, 74.04%. The stated figures are only for Primary Education (10th Std. and below), with the figures for Senior Secondary Education, Degree Education and higher being much worse (in single digits!). State wise, Kerala is the most literate state in India (almost 100% literacy), while Bihar is the least literate (63%).

Health: -- India's fares quite poorly in Health, by world standards. Indian children make up one-third of the world's malnourished children. 75% of Indian women suffer from Anaemia. Every year, HIV/AIDS, Malaria, TB, Polio, Diarrhoea, Respiratory infections, Pneumonia and other diseases claim thousands of lives. Infant mortality, maternal health and issues related to child protection, including trafficking and child labour are other serious health concerns.

Water crisis: -- As per the 2010 UN estimates, 626 million people in India (>60%) has practice of open defecation which leads to a very high risk of microbial contamination (bacteria, viruses, amoeba) of water that cause water-borne diseases. India has one of the highest numbers of people in the world without continuous access to water. According to Water Aid, an international NGO, by 2015, 29% of the rural population or 244 million people, and 23% of the urban population or 90 million people, would lack access to adequate safe, sustainable water. Even major cities and urban areas face shortage of continuous water supply. It is said that 13% of Delhi's citizens do not get water supply every day and 40% of households in Madhya Pradesh are not supplied even 40 litres per person per day.

Corruption: -- Corruption, in the form of bribes, evasion of tax, embezzlement, need of paying bribe or peddling influence to get a job done in a public office, is widespread in India. India is ranked 95 out of 179 countries in Transparency International's Corruption survey.

Violence: -- Women and children in India today live under deplorable conditions. Trust Law, a news service run by Thomson Reuters, has ranked India as the worst G20 country in which to be a woman. Female foeticide, domestic violence, sexual harassment, emotional abuse, inadequate healthcare, inequality, dowry deaths, rape and other forms of gender-based violence constitute the reality of most girls' and women's lives in India. Rape is one of the most common crimes against women and is seen as a "national problem" in India. With more than 24,000 reported cases in 2011 alone, the number of rape cases in India has doubled between 1990 and 2008. Deep-rooted social attitudes, deeply entrenched patriarchy, widespread misogyny and a strong preference for sons over daughters are believed to be at the root of bad treatment of women in India.

Although India is constitutionally a secular state, incidents of large-scale communal and caste-based violence occur from time to time. Major religious violent incidents include the Kashmir insurgency, Punjab insurgency, Delhi serial blasts and anti-Sikh riots, Ayodhya violence (1996), Bombay Riots and bombings (1992/1993), Gujarat violence (2002), Amarnath pilgrimage massacre (2000), attacks against Christians in Orissa and Karnataka, Naxal violence in West Bengal, Chhatisgarh, Andhra Pradesh, violence against Dalits & other minorities etc.

What inference can we draw from above figures for our country? Let us ask ourselves: Are the problems of our country related only to poverty, population and inadequate natural resources? What really is our understanding of the core human values viz. respect for women, social equality, individual freedom and justice for all citizens, tolerance towards other castes and religions, basic hygiene, purpose of education? Have we really understood Vivekananda? How much has changed at the basic levels of society during the last 150 years? Are we indeed on the path of improvement?

Let us reconsider once more the most important problems that we, as a nation, are facing. Water and sanitation, Literacy, Equitable distribution of food, Unemployment, Violence, slowly degrading Environment, Population growth, Pseudo-democracy, Corruption in most public systems, very limited opportunities for youth to pursue Higher Education or Research, highly inefficient or inadequate Public Health system, need to pay high price even for essential commodities and so on. Let us now try to develop a template for solving above problems based on Vivekananda's teachings. To solve the problems, we need to not only look at them from the National perspective, but also consider how they have to be implemented at the grass-roots level i.e., what needs to happen at the level of villages if it concerns a Taluk, at the level of localities if it is a city, at the level of families/households, at the level of ordinary people.

Consider a grass-roots level project such as the building of a hospital or the implementation of a modern curriculum for children in a remote village. Its implementation will involve the following phases:

- (1) A satisfactory and feasible solution has to be designed considering all details.
- (2) Moral values should be included in the syllabus from the very beginning of the educational life of the students.
- (2) The Government must frame policies that are fair to all. Then, it must authorize the project and then, it must promptly dispatch money, raw material, resources and expertise to the work-spot.
- (3) The ordinary people and community involved in the project have to play their role by following Vivekananda's teachings i.e., display the spirit of service, show due regard for divinity of fellow Atman, perform an unselfish action, etc.

The project will be implemented if all phases proceed quickly and smoothly. Hence, it should be clear from the above template that any grass-roots level project can be successfully implemented if everyone thinks pure thoughts and plan and discharge all their duties with a pure heart. Indeed, this is what all our leaders – Ishwara Chandra Vidyasagar, Rabindranath Tagore, Pt. Madan Mohan Malaviya, Sarojini Naidu, Mahatma Gandhi, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Jawaharlal Nehru, Lal Bahadur Shastri, – strived to achieve. They worked for the eradication of caste barriers, spread of education, socioeconomic development, emancipation of the weak and suffering, the nurturing of public works and industries and for the building of a strong, vibrant nation. Why are we then a “developing nation” even today? Are all of us working selflessly and unitedly for the common good, performing only pure actions with the spirit of service, with compassion and with due regard for the divinity of fellow *atmans*, as taught by Swami Vivekananda?

I said before that our country is near ruins. I'd like to conclude this essay by suggesting how things can be turned round. I will mention two recent examples that highlight the power of public rallies, Satyagraha and Social movements. Anna Hazare's call for “Anti-corruption Satyagraha” received widespread support from thousands of people all across India, forcing the Government of India to table the Lokpal Bill (Anti-corruption Bill) in Rajya Sabha. International reaction and nationwide protests demanding justice and more protection for women in the wake of the death of Damini, the Delhi gang-rape victim, prompted Central and several State Governments to immediately announce several steps to ensure more safety of women. In India today, Public rallies and Satyagrahas are the most effective ways of raising awareness and mobilizing support for social causes. Hence, more such social movements, public demonstrations and Satyagrahas are needed to create awakening among people on the basic issues or problems that we are facing. More and more Indian youth must enthusiastically organize and participate in Satyagrahas. More and more youth must volunteer to work in NGOs. The present time is the time for action for all Indians! In Swami Vivekananda's words: “Go, all of you, wherever there is an outbreak of plague or famine, or wherever the people are in distress, and mitigate their sufferings..... Die you must, but have a great ideal to die for and, it is better to die with a great ideal in life.... On you lies the future hope of our country. Set yourselves to work – to work!” There is a lot of work to do and the ball is squarely in the court of India's young men and women. If

all we were to follow Vivekananda's teachings, if all were to serve the country in this time of its need, we will achieve the ultimate goal that is Shiva or Brahman or liberation in true sense.

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Intuition includes Experience—an explanation after S. Radhakrishnan

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Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan is a versatile genius, universally recognised as teacher, scholar, and administrator, as philosopher, statesman, and India's cultural ambassador throughout the world. His deep learning and his absolute tolerance have brought him recognition not only as the greatest interpreter of Indian philosophy, religion, and culture, but also as an original and creative thinker of the first order. Radhakrishnan located his metaphysics within the Advaita (non-dual) Vedanta tradition (*sampradaya*). And like other Vedantins before him, Radhakrishnan wrote commentaries on the *Prasthanatraya* (that is, main primary texts of Vedanta): the *Upanisads* (1953), *Brahma Sutra* (1959), and the *Bhagavadgita* (1948).

I like to focus on Radhakrishnan's understanding of intuition and his interpretations of experience. It begins with a general survey of the variety of terms as well as the characteristics Radhakrishnan associates with intuition. For Radhakrishnan, intuition is an "integral experience". Radhakrishnan uses the term "integral" in at least three ways. First, intuition is integral in the sense that it coordinates and synthesizes all other experiences. It integrates all other experiences into a more unified whole. Second, intuition is integral as it forms the basis of all other experiences. In other words, Radhakrishnan holds that all experiences are at beginning intuitional. Third, intuition is integral in the sense that the results of the experience are integrated into the life of the individual. For Radhakrishnan, intuition finds expression in the world of action and social relations.

For Radhakrishnan, intuition is a distinct form of experience. Intuition is self-established (*svataḥsiddha*), self-evidencing (*svāsamvedya*), and self-luminous (*svayaṁ-prakāś*). Intuition entails pure comprehension, entire significance, and complete validity. It is both truth-filled and truth-bearing. Intuition is its own cause and its own explanation. It is a positive feeling of calm and confidence, joy and strength and above all it is sovereign. For Radhakrishnan intuition is the ultimate form of experience. It is ultimate in the sense that intuition constitutes the fullest and therefore the most authentic realization of the Ultimate Reality (*Brahman*). According to Radhakrishnan, the ultimacy of intuition is also accounted because it is the ground of all other forms of experience.

Finally, intuition, according to Radhakrishnan, is inexpressible. It escapes the limits of language and logic, and there is "no conception by which we can define it". While the experience itself transcends expression. The provocation of expression is, for Radhakrishnan, testimony to the creative impulse of intuition. All creativity and indeed all progress in the various spheres of life is the inevitable result of intuition.

1) Cognitive Experience

According to Radhakrishnan the other forms of experiences are cognitive, psychic, aesthetic, ethical and religious. Radhakrishnan recognizes three categories of cognitive experience: sense experience, discursive reasoning, and intuitive apprehension. For Radhakrishnan all of these forms of experience

contribute, in varying degrees, to a knowledge of the real (*Brahman*), and as such have their basis in intuition.

➤ *Sense Experience*

Of the cognitive forms of knowledge, Radhakrishnan suggests that sensory knowledge is in one respect closest to intuition, for it is in the act of sensing that one is in “direct contact” with the object. Sense experience “helps us to know the outer characters of the external world. By means of it we acquire an acquaintance with the sensible qualities of the objects”. “Intuitions,” Radhakrishnan believes, “are convictions arising out of a fullness of life in a spontaneous way, more akin to sense than to imagination or intellect and more inevitable than either”. In this sense, sense perception may be considered intuitive, though Radhakrishnan does not explicitly describe it as such.

➤ *Discursive Reasoning*

Discursive reasoning, and the logical knowledge it produces, is subsequent to sensory experience (perception). Logical knowledge is obtained by the processes of analysis and synthesis. For Radhakrishnan, discursive reasoning and the logical systems they construct possess an element of intuition. For Radhakrishnan, “In any concrete act of thinking the mind’s active experience is both intuitive and intellectual”.

➤ *Intuitive Apprehension*

While logic deals with facts already known, intuition goes beyond logic to reveal previously unseen connections between facts. Radhakrishnan holds that, “The art of discovery is confused with the logic of proof and an artificial simplification of the deeper movements of thought results. We forget that we invent by intuition though we prove by logic”. Intuition not only clarifies the relations between facts and seemingly discordant systems, but lends itself to the discovery of new knowledge which then becomes an appropriate subject of philosophical inquiry and logical analysis.

Radhakrishnan offers three explanations to account for the tendency to overlook the presence of intuition in discursive reasoning. First, Radhakrishnan claims, intuition presupposes a rational knowledge of facts. “The insight does not arise if we are not familiar with the facts of the case.... The successful practice of intuition requires previous study and assimilation of a multitude of facts and laws. We may take it that great intuitions arise out of a matrix of rationality”. Second, the intuitive element is often obscured in discursive reasoning because facts known prior to the intuition are retained, though they are synthesized, and perhaps reinterpreted, in light of the intuitive insight. Finally, intuition in discursive reasoning is often overlooked, disguised as it is in the language of logic. In short, the intuitive is mistaken for the logical. “Knowledge when acquired must be thrown into logical form and we are obliged to adopt the language of logic since only logic has a communicable language.”

Intuition is not the end, but part of an ever-developing and ever-dynamic process of realization. Cognitive intuitions “are not substitutes for thought, they are challenges to intelligence. Mere intuitions are blind while intellectual work is empty. All processes are partly intuitive and partly intellectual. There is no gulf between the two”.

2) *Psychic Experience*

Radhakrishnan accounts for psychic experiences in terms of a highly developed sensitivity to intuition. “The mind of man,” Radhakrishnan explains, “has the three aspects of subconscious, the conscious, and the superconscious, and the ‘abnormal’ psychic phenomena, called by the different names of ecstasy, genius, inspiration, madness, are the workings of the superconscious mind”. Such experiences are not “abnormal” according to Radhakrishnan, nor are they unscientific. Rather, they are the products of carefully controlled mental experiments. In the Indian past, “The psychic experiences, such as telepathy and clairvoyance, were considered to be neither abnormal nor miraculous. They are not the products of diseased minds or

inspiration from the gods, but powers which the human mind can exhibit under carefully ascertained conditions”.

For Radhakrishnan, psychic intuitions are suprasensory: “We can see objects without the medium of the senses and discern relations spontaneously without building them up laboriously. In other words, we can discern every kind of reality directly”. In a bold declaration, Radhakrishnan believes that the “facts of telepathy prove that one mind can communicate with another directly”.

3) Aesthetic Experience

“All art,” Radhakrishnan declares, “is the expression of experience in some medium”. However, the artistic experience should not be confused with its expression. While the experience itself is ineffable, the challenge for the artist is to give the experience concrete expression. “The success of art is measured by the extent to which it is able to render experiences of one dimension into terms of another.”

In Radhakrishnan’s view, without the intuitive experience, art becomes mechanical and a rehearsal of old themes. Such “art” is an exercise in reproduction rather than a communication of the artist’s intuitive encounter with reality. It is not simply a difference of quality but a “difference of kind in the source itself”. For Radhakrishnan, true art is an expression of the whole personality, seized as it was with the creative impulse of the universe. For Radhakrishnan, artistic expression is dynamic. Having the experience, the artist attempts to recall it. Radhakrishnan believes that, the recollection of the intuition is not a plodding reconstruction, nor one of dispassionate analysis. Rather, there is an emotional vibrancy: “The experience is recollected not in tranquillity... but in excitement”.

4) Ethical Experience

Not surprisingly, intuition finds a place in Radhakrishnan’s ethics. For Radhakrishnan, ethical experiences are profoundly transformative. By definition, moral actions are socially rooted. As such the effects of ethical intuitions are played out on the social stage. While the intuition itself is an individual achievement, Radhakrishnan’s view is that the intuition must be not only translated into positive and creative action but shared with others. The impulse to share the moral insight provides an opportunity to test the validity of the intuition against reason. The moral hero does not live by intuition alone. The intuitive experience, while it is the creative guiding impulse behind all moral progress, must be checked and tested against reason. There is a ‘scientific’ and ‘experimental’ dimension to Radhakrishnan’s understanding of ethical behaviour. Those whose lives are profoundly transformed and who are guided by the ethical experience are moral heroes. To Radhakrishnan’s mind, the moral hero, guided as he or she is by the ethical experience, who carves out an adventurous path is akin to the discoverer who brings order into the scattered elements of a science or the artist who composes a piece of music or designs buildings.

According to Radhakrishnan “Feeling the unity of himself and the universe, the man who lives in spirit is no more a separate and self-centred individual but a vehicle of the universal spirit”. Like the artist, the moral hero does not turn his back on the world. Instead, “He throws himself on the world and lives for its redemption, possessed as he is with an unshakable sense of optimism and an unlimited faith in the powers of the soul”. The moral hero is no longer guided by external moral codes, but by an ‘inner rhythm’ of harmony between self and the universe revealed to him in the intuitive experience. For Radhakrishnan “By following his deeper nature, he may seem to be either unwise or unmoral to those of us who adopt conventional standards. But for him the spiritual obligation is more of a consequence than social tradition”.

5) Religious Experience

For the sake of clarity, we must make a tentative distinction between religious experience on the one hand and integral experience on the other. Religions, for Radhakrishnan, represent the various interpretations of experience, while integral experience is the essence of all religions. “If experience is the soul of religion, expression is the body through which it fulfils its destiny. We have the spiritual facts and their interpretations by which they are communicated to others”. “The idea of God,” Radhakrishnan affirms, “is an interpretation of experience”. It follows here that religious experiences are, for Radhakrishnan, context relative and therefore imperfect. They are experienced through specific cultural, historical, linguistic and religious lenses. Because of their contextualisation and subsequent intellectualization, experiences in the religious sphere are limited. Radhakrishnan spends little time dealing with “religious experiences” as they occur in specific religious traditions. However, “religious experiences” have value for Radhakrishnan insofar as they offer the possibility of heightening one’s religious consciousness and bringing one into ever closer proximity to “religious intuition”.

Throughout his life, Radhakrishnan interpreted the Upaniṣadic *mahavakya*, *tattvamasi*, as a declaration of the non-duality (*advaita*) of Atman and Brahman. Radhakrishnan readily appropriates his acceptance of the non-dual experience to his interpretation of religious intuition. Radhakrishnan not only claimed to find support for his views in the Upaniṣads, but believed that the ancient sages expounded his interpretation of religious intuition. As the ultimate realization, religious intuition must not only account for and bring together all other forms of experience, but must overcome the distinctions between them. Radhakrishnan goes so far as to claim that intuition of this sort is the essence of religion.

With this, the present discussion of intuition and the varieties of experience has come full circle. Radhakrishnan identifies intuition — in all its contextual varieties — with integral experience. According to Radhakrishnan, the two expressions are synonymous. Integral experience coordinates and synthesizes the range of life’s experiences. It furnishes the individual with an ever-deepening awareness of and appreciation for the unity of Reality. As an intuition, integral experience is not only the basis of all experience but the source of all creative ingenuity, whether such innovation is philosophical, scientific, moral, artistic, or religious. Moreover, not only does integral experience find expression in these various spheres of life, but such expression, Radhakrishnan believes, quickens the intuitive and creative impulse among those it touches.

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New Directions in Research on Prostitution from Some Philosophical Aspects

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Abstract

Prostitution is the crudest manifestation of societies where women have been driven to sell their bodies as means of survival. Such women are expected to satisfy the uncontainable vice of male sexuality. Prostitution has been a part of our society since time immemorial. The article goes back into history of prostitution in India. The paper further examines the meaning of the term "prostitution" and the laws that define and deal with prostitution in India. Here the main aim of this article is to examine the countries where prostitution is legalized and determine the actual cause of prostitution, types of prostitution and a moral conclusion about prostitution.

Keywords: *Prostitution, Devadasi, Legalization, Moral Responsibility, and brothels.*

1. Introduction

The history of prostitution is perhaps as old as the male-female relationships. But it was born definitely along with the institution of marriage. In ancient India prostitution was firmly established as an institution. It had been prevalent in Buddhist and Mauryan period. The institution of Devadasi among the temples of south India is fairly ancient. In British period prostitution prospered in the form of glamour girls.

In contemporary India the greatest cause of increase in prostitution is industrialization and consequent rapid urbanization. These girls are known by several names such as dancing girls, massage girls, call girls and the ordinary prostitutes. Now a day, while most of the call girls are rich and educated, the ordinary prostitutes are generally poor and uneducated. Nevertheless, the causes of this most ancient profession in India are not much different from those in other countries but poverty is here a more important causative factor. In this connection I would like to discuss a new trend about prostitution in India as well as world. Of late, call boys like call girls have become popular in the society.

2. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the proposed study are as follows:

1. To identify the main cause of prostitution and,
2. To make a moral conclusion about legalization of prostitution.

3. What is Moral Prostitution?

For practical, law-enforcement purposes, the definition of prostitution has usually not been too difficult. A prostitute defines herself when she “agrees to have sexual intercourse with a person (not her husband) who offers his money for engaging in the intercourse” (Benjamin, 1964).

In the august 1951 issue of the *International Journal of Sexology*, Albert Ellis wrote, “commercialized prostitutes would certainly be included – whether they accepted many or a chosen few paying partners. But also included would be girls who trade their sexual favours for food, entertainment, or other gifts and wives who, having no love and no sex desire for their husbands, continue to have sex relations in order to maintain the socio-economic benefits of marriage” (Ellis, 1951).

4. Types of Prostitutes

According to H. Benjamin, writing in *The Prostitute in Society*, the following are the important types of prostitutes found in modern societies:

- a) The Call Girl: while the dictionary defines the call girl as independently operating prostitute, I am using the term in the special way in which I know it. The call girls are the aristocrats of prostitution. They live in the most expensive residential sections! They dress in rich, good taste.
- b) The Streetwalker: streetwalking is probably one of the most ancient methods of prostitution. In the nineteenth and early twentieth century, prostitutes were sometimes permitted to work in bawdy houses specifically with the aim of getting them off the streets, where they would not be able to solicit, or even have to be seen by, ‘decent people’. Her fees have traditionally been lower than those received by most other types of prostitutes.
- c) Bar Prostitutes: R. E. K. Masters talked over the past 15 years with hundreds of young bar prostitutes in most parts of the United States. Most of them are not full-time whores, but are girls supplementing incomes earned as barmaids.
- d) Child Prostitutes: Child prostitution is as ancient as civilization. Temple prostitutes were sometimes no older than 7 years, as in Babylonia. In ancient Egypt, also, the prostitution of young girls was a religious practice, so that, according to Strabo, some of the most beautiful and highest born Egyptian were forced into prostitution, and they continued as prostitutes until their first menstruation.

Apart from the above types of prostitution, there are many other types of prostitution in India which are not discussed here.

5. Causes of Prostitution in India

The social researchers made so far into the causes of prostitution in India reveal that females are drawn into it for a variety of reasons. A study of Kanpur prostitutes has revealed that though a majority of prostitutes have taken to their profession due to extreme poverty and hunger, there are many who have willingly adopted it after a series of love explores. Though the economic factor is quite important it is liable to be over-emphasized. Nevertheless, the main causes of prostitution can be classified in the following categories:

- i) Economic causes: Though economic compulsions constitute the major factor in the causation of prostitution it is by no means the only and exclusive cause of the phenomenon. It is not the cause that every prostitute accepts money for her services or that all prostitutes hail from indigent homes. There are many prostitutes who hail from well-to-do families. In India, of course, there are many prostitutes who are compelled to adopt prostitution to feed themselves and their dependants. However, poverty is not the only economic factor, there are many other factors

which are economic. Economic factors comprise of: (1) poverty (2) under age employment (3) unhealthy working conditions (4) immoral traffic in women and children.

ii) Social causes: following are the social causes of prostitution.

- A. Family factors: a study of London prostitutes published as *Women of the Street* reveals that most of the prostitutes are connected with family troubles. Their parents were either living separately or their family relations were so strained that as children they were left to their own machinations and received no love. If the mother is of bad character and has to carry on with her clandestine liaisons, she rarely escapes the eager eyes of her daughter.
- B. Bad neighbourhood: children living near brothels become so used to seeing sex trade that they come to accept it as normal. The brothel keepers usually haunt these areas for their prey. The children who get exposed to sex business want to have these exhilarating experiences at the first available opportunity.
- C. Illegitimate motherhood: the women who become pregnant as a result of their liaisons and who cannot get abortion get exposed in society. Nobody wants to marry them but everybody wants to enjoy them sexually. Desperately such women prefer to become regular prostitutes.
- D. Psychological causes: there are some psychological factors which tend a person towards prostitution. A woman who is frigid becomes desperate. She tries one man after another. Because of frigidity she is unable to experience pleasure and becomes a prostitute by trial and error.

iii) Biological factors: the persons born with defective sex organs or overactive glands may feel compelled to seek sex gratification in a bizarre manner.

iv) Religious and cultural factors: In India there has been religious sanction to prostitution. In the south, certain selected families were supposed to offer one daughter each to the temple where apparently she was supposed to serve gods with total dedication. They were known as Devadasis – god-slaves. But in actual practice they lived a life of prostitution.

All causes listed above contribute more or less to prostitution. Prostitution has a very long and varied history. As a matter of fact it is considered to be the oldest profession in the world. In modern times it is becoming fashionable to consider prostitution a necessary part of society.

6. Prostitution and Legality in India

According to the Indian Penal Code, certain activities related to sex are not considered illegal per se and contradict laws that are in place. However, activities as enumerated below if found to be true, one is entitled to be punished in accordance with laws of the legal arena in place:

- Soliciting services of prostitution at public places
- Carrying out prostitution activities in hotels
- Being the owner of a brothel
- Indulge in prostitution by arranging a sex worker
- Arrangement of a sex act with a customer

Now the situation is such that the activities mentioned above are very much real and exist alongside. So by outlawing them does the Indian legal system make prostitution illegal? Because in most cases, government officials tend to ignore this fact that illegal trafficking of women and children is the root cause of growing prostitution as a business.

7. Conclusion

While prostitution is legal in the India, there is a lively debate as to whether this is acceptable. Prostitution is often viewed as morally impermissible, and therefore, wrong. However, as John Stuart Mill states in *On Liberty*, it is not clear that the government is or should be in the process of regulating morals based in paternalistic reasons. Something should not be regulated for someone's 'own good.' Acts that are primarily self-regarding that do not harm or affect the interests of others should never be regulated for someone's own good. Things should only be regulated if they harm others. Whether an act is moral or immoral is beside the point. So, laws against prostitution, which is primarily a self-regarding action, which affects others only with their consent, should not be illegal.

Further, it is not at all clear from this point that prostitution is in fact immoral. Theories that condemn it as wrong and impermissible tend to call upon various ideas of impropriety and unnaturalness to show why it is immoral. St. Thomas and socio-biologists claim that the only proper function of sex is for procreation, and thus prostitution is morally impermissible on this account. Similarly, Roger Scruton claims that the only proper function of sex is to express love because of the interpersonal nature of the act. However, among other issues, the primary problem with these two theories is the failure to connect the morally improper with a failure to fulfill the function of sex. The morally proper and the natural or proper function of sex are never shown to be the equivalent. Additionally, it is not at all clear that there is only a single function for everything. The radical feminist view that any heterosexual form of sex is immoral because of the power differential between men and women present in society makes it such that women can never properly consent to sex because women are always in a state of subjugation has many problems as well, not the least of which is universalization of the position of women that does not account for individual experiences of women. To claim that women as a group are suppressed by men as a group is a common feminist claim that is accepted by many. However, to claim as Pateman and other radical feminists that because of this every woman is therefore coerced or forced or subjugated by every man is simply untrue. This fails to account for an interaction between a successful woman CEO and a poor man, or any woman in a place of power interacting with men. To say as Pateman does that this does not matter that she is still a victim of subjugation, is simply unfounded. To universalize such a general claim is a huge fault in such a theory. These theories simply fail to provide adequate reason to suppose that an act such as prostitution is immoral. The theories are weak in many senses because they insist that any act that does not fit within the parameters of the theory, which are already on shaky ground, is morally impermissible. If the theories instead represented the ideal situation, there would be little problem with accepting one or the other as a personal preference attempting to live up to the ideal. In which case, failing to live up to the ideal, which is less than good, is not immoral. So, not only should prostitution not be illegal whether it is moral or not, it does not even appear to be immoral.

By looking at theories of consent that are based on a concept of autonomy, one is able to understand that prostitution, when performed under certain parameters, is morally permissible. The idea of personal autonomy or sovereignty is a part of what it means to be a human. Everyone has a sense of self and self-rule that allows for one to act and make choices based on their own decisions. When one acts in a way that does not infringe another's autonomy or significantly harm their interests, then they should be free to do so. If one does want to act in a way that does affect the interests of others, they are permitted to do so only with the permission, authorization, or consent of the other. This consent that is obtained must be valid. In other words, it cannot be gotten through coercion or deception. It must be gotten from a freely (unforced), informed consenting adult who is competent to make such a decision. If the agent is underage, under the influence of alcohol, or mentally deficient or disturbed, then the consent obtained is not valid. Additionally, if the agent is forced or coerced in any way either physically or through lying and withholding relevant information, then the consent is invalid and the act is wrong. However, if the consent is validly obtained, not only is the act allowable, but it is morally permissible. Indeed, not only should prostitution not be illegal based on its moral impermissibility, it is not even morally impermissible to begin with.

To conclude, prostitution, as such, is not coercive or immoral, so long as valid consent is obtained. Indeed any sex act that occurs between freely, informed consenting adults is morally acceptable. Prostitution is a combination of consenting sex and contractual exchange. Any governing set of rules or morals that govern prostitution are based on this dual aspect of the act. If the act is between such validly consenting adults, who agree to the terms of the contract and fulfill the terms, there should be no immoral issue with prostitution at all.

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