



## **SWAMI VIVEKANAND'S IDEAS TOWARDS WOMEN**

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### **Abstract**

Swami Vivekananda was more sympathetic to the oppression of women than to their emancipation. In the nineteenth century, free-thinking social reformers like Raja Rammohan Roy, Keshav Chandra Sen, Jyotibaphule, AtmaramPandurang and Vidyasagar fought against the brutal injustice against women. But in the midst of the modern-day verdict on feminism is one name long forgotten or denied, the great Indian yogi Vivekananda. He is also known as a great nationalist leader, Karmayogi and a devotee of Vedas in modern Indian history. She said that the upcoming Indian women will make great achievements. Women, like men, should be allowed to enjoy freedom and accountability. Swami Vivekananda was the leading monastic to work for the freedom and fairness of women and to realize their importance for the proper functioning of home and society. Swamiji thought that the main reason behind the numerous shortcomings of women in our country was the lack of good education. Swami ji quantified that if women get good education then they can solve their difficulties in their own way and they should also understand what is the meaning of chastity as it is their heritage.

**Keywords:** Women, History, Karmayogi, Society, Education, Feminism

### **Introduction**

The ideas of Swami Vivekananda are also being accepted by the Western nations, because these ideas are fundamental in which the idea of the entire human race has been considered. Swami Vivekananda's view of women, whether Indian or foreign, was respectful to both. His practice of culture and philosophy was subtle. While talking about women, he used to say that the ideal of Indian women are Sita, Savitri, Damayanti etc. Vedas, Puranas may be destroyed but their characters should remain alive. We are his children. In the Vedic period, girls were given education along with boys. Many women like Gargi, Maitreyi, Lopamudra, Sulabha,



Vachaknavi, Lilavati etc. were learned and Brahmavadini. He was respected in the session of scholars. He had all kinds of freedom. In the history of India, many great women were included in the saint tradition here. Swami ji says that service and spirituality were in the nature of those women.

Women have always been the life-force of Indian civilization, and hence rightly considered as an expression of its age-old civilizational values, culture and traditions. Ours is an introverted, self-centred civilization that nurtures the values of self-restraint, patience, duty and suffering and leads the individual towards self-satisfaction and spiritual upliftment, and seeks beauty in the order of things. These values are intricately woven into the Indian concept of woman, where womanhood is seen as the living embodiment of the same. Rejecting the rigid western notion of masculinity pitted against femininity, Indic has made a conscious effort towards inculcating and developing a fine blend of these values among all.

We would also like to add a small caveat at this point. Our sole purpose in this article is to highlight Swami Vivekananda's views on women, which are worth discussing and cherishing, in so far as they contribute positively to our argument for the need to emphasize certain Indian values and notions of femininity. One's writings and thoughts must be seen and analyzed in the context of one's time. For all Swami Vivekananda's claims of gender bias, we must acknowledge the fact that he, Sister Nivedita (or BhaginiNivedita as they call her) and others contributed greatly to the upliftment of poor Indian women.

### **Women in the Vedas**

"In which scriptures do you find the statement that women are not capable of knowledge and devotion? In the period of decline, when the priests made other castes incapable of studying the Vedas, they also deprived women of all their rights given. Otherwise you will find that Maitreyi, Gargi and other revered women in the Vedic or Upanishad era have taken the place of rishis through their skill in discussing Brahman. In an assembly of a thousand brahmins who are the knowers of all the Vedas Gargi boldly challenged Yajnavalkya in a discussion about Brahman. Since such ideal women were entitled to spiritual knowledge, why should women not be accorded the same privilege now? What has happened once can surely happen again. History repeats itself. All nations have achieved greatness by giving due respect to women. Those



countries and nations which do not respect women never became great and will never be in future. The main reason for being is that you have no respect for these living images of Shakti in your mind. Manu says, "Where women are respected, the gods are pleased. And where they are not, all work and effort become fruitless."

"It is very difficult to understand why in this country [India] so much distinction is made between men and women, when Vedanta declares that there is one and only conscious soul present in all beings. You always criticize women, But say what have you done for their upliftment? By binding them with rigid rules, writing Smritis etc., men have turned women into manufacturing machines! If you don't nurture women who are Mother Goddess If you are the living embodiment of, don't think that you have any other way to rise."

### **Social background of Vivekananda**

Before entering into the examination of the primary and secondary evidence available in the form of Swami Vivekananda's writings, speeches etc., let us take a brief look at the family and social background in which Vivekananda was brought up and assess the psychological forces at work. Do it. In shaping their perceptions about women.

Vivekananda was born in an affluent Hindu family, his mother Bhuvaneshwari Devi was deeply religious. She was a woman of high presence and graceful demeanor who certainly looked like 'belonging to the old tradition of Hindu womanhood'. Like any other common people, who was a passionate lover of Indian knowledge traditions, she was deep in the religious texts Ramayana and Mahabharata,

In fact she would recite some passages from them to a young Naren (like Vivekananda, or Narendranath Datta, who was loved in childhood) after having memorized them. It has been noted that "she became the special refuge of the poor and commanded universal respect because of her quiet resignation to God, her inner peace and her dignified detachment in the midst of her many arduous duties". Digging into the complete works of Swami Vivekananda reveals some rich material that deserves to be viewed and reflected upon again and again. First of all, a disclaimer must be placed in Swami Vivekananda's own words:

### **Swami Vivekananda's thoughts towards women**



“The best thermometer for the progress of a nation is the treatment of its women. There was no difference in the status of men and women in ancient Greece. The idea of complete equality existed. No Hindu can be a priest unless he is married, the idea that a single man is only half a man, and incomplete. The idea of complete womanhood is complete freedom. The central idea in the life of a modern Hindu woman is her chastity. The wife is the center of a circle, the stability of which depends on her chastity. It was the extreme of this idea that led to the burning of Hindu widows. Hindu women are very spiritual and very religious, probably more so than any other women in the world. If we can preserve these beautiful features and at the same time develop the intelligence of our women, the Hindu woman of the future will be the ideal woman of the world. Swami ji was a very disinterested monk. His supreme disciple Sister Nivedita says that 'he was not afraid of women. He had many disciples, colleagues were women and friends too. He saw the best qualities and character of these people. They used to worship the ideal of purity that appeared before them. He used to tell his disciples that 'we should not forget that our aim is to uplift the backward people and women. He was introduced to many women during his stay in western countries. He saw the qualities of a well-educated, confident, fearless and loving woman. The women took care of him with affection. They say that words will also fall short for the son's love received by women. He saw many worlds, saw spiritually advanced women. He called Mary Hell, whose house was his residence in Chicago, as 'Mother'. His two daughters and two daughters of his brother-in-law, all four were Swamiji's sisters. Oli Bull of Cambridge, who gave financial assistance to Sister Nivedita's school in Calcutta, was called SwamijiDheeramata. Swamiji used to keep his money safe with Emily John Lion of Michigan, just like one keeps it with his mother. Once Swamiji said that 'I have fallen in love', Emily Lion asked, 'Who is that lucky girl?' The effect of Karma was so much that many foreign women came to India and started service work. Mrs. Charlotte Sovier from England became a disciple of Swamiji along with her husband and later the couple sold their property and came to India. As per Swami ji's wish, he established Advaita Ashram at a place called Mayavati in the Himalayas. Josephine Mallillaud, Henrietta Müller, Christine Green Steidl, Madame Emma Kauf, etc., many virtuous, wealthy women were inspired by spirituality. Swamiji used to consider ShardaMaa, the co-religionist of Shri Ramakrishna Paramhansji, who was eight years older than Swamiji, as his

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mother. And he considered Nivedita, only four years younger than him, as his daughter. His unique sense seems to be from this only.

### **Conclusion**

Swami Vivekananda, as a futurist, saw women as the harbingers of our civilization and the future makers of our country. He had great faith in Hinduism and our women and believed that we would be able to return to our rightful position as spiritual and moral leaders of the world. Most importantly their views on women need to be reconsidered as they expose the morals and values that we as a society need to develop once again.

Woman has been considered in our culture as a symbol of duty, patience, self-restraint and suffering. It is only these values that can help us deal with the menace of unbridled greed, indulgence and corrupt morality brought with the hegemony of capitalism and modernity.

Swami ji's thoughts are very noble and ideal. In today's situation, how to adopt these thoughts in real life? Is this the responsibility of women only? Swami ji's thoughts have to be practiced a lot to create a positive environment instead of sitting discussing the faults. Poet self. According to Padma Gole, I want to touch Shaktiswarupa – I have to do this work and I can do it, such confidence should be kept in mind. I-we will try to organize. Only then the future of this society will flourish. In the areas where there are women, they should not be jealous of each other, exercise, contemplation, meditation, balance of intelligence, diet, social, political, global world awareness, self-confidence, fearlessness, exercise, patriotism, tradition, etc. are not just words. Will remain Family is an organization. Everyone knows his tricks.

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