CHAPTER II

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History is replete with the phenomena of the rise and fall of the nations. Different nations came into existence and dazzled the world in soaring high like an eagle in the firmament of glory and prosperity, but in the twinkle of an eye they have burst like the bubbles in the ocean of events of history and passed in to oblivion. History only records their meteoric rise and meteoric fall. In this process of rise and fall, the great Greek and Roman nations, whose civilization and culture once reached the highest pinnacle of glory, have been effaced from the surface of the earth. The most obvious reason of such effacement is that they failed to cope with the changing needs of the time.

Every nation, of course, has to wade through such ordeals of misfortune. But if it manages to pass through the ordeals successfully, it survives on the earth. Tagore the great nationalist poet has observed, "...difficulties have been different in different peoples of the earth, and in the manner of our overcoming them lies our distinction."(1) This distinction, is the distinctions of nationalism - the common sentiment or instinct that integrates the individuals in to a coherent whole - a nation. Nationalism in order to achieve such distinction must conform to the canons of higher social life. So if nationalism fails to cope with those canons, it invites ruin. As it has been observed, "When this organisation of politics and commerce, whose other name is nation, becomes all

(1) R.N. Tagore, Nationalism, P. 1
powerful at the cost of the harmony of the higher social life, then it is a evil day for the humanity."(2) So nationalism in order to promote a higher social life among its people must have sound bases. A well-based nationalism is not to crumble. The mighty edifice of nationalism stands firm for all times inspite of severe quakes and tremors, if its bases are strong and concretised—gone deep in to the national character. The events of recent past bears out the truth of this fact. The Fascist nationalism, which was based on the vain glory of military conquest and territorial aggrandisement, crumbled like a house of cards after an ephemeral existance, paving the path for the greatest catastrophe that has ever gripped the earth in the history of modern world.

Nationalism as a Western concept has developed on the background of materialism. It is based on common geographical background, common historical background, common culture, common race, common religion, common language, common political aspiration etc. But the theory of nationalism as chalked out by Swami Vivekananda, a great mystic and philanthropist, is based on values that are non-materialistic in nature. It visualises the basis which conforms to the canons of higher social life, that have permanent appeal and value for the whole mankind. Though it owes a lot to the Western basis of nationalism, unlike the Western concept of nationalism it directs the whole mankind to-wards effulgence and light of divine order. Such values shall sustain their appeal for the mankind to reach its goal till the sun continues to shine in the Eastern horizon

(2) R.N. Tagore, Nationalism, P. 7
and the moon in the West.

(A) RELIGIOUS BASIS

Swami Vivekananda was an advocate of a strongly built and homogeniously organised viable nation. However, not a politician by profession or connection he was not concerned with the political aspect of a nation and least of its political agitation. As he made it amply clear, "Nothing I say or write should be given any political interpretation; I do not wish to have anything to do with political follies, I do not believe in any politics."

But he called upon his countrymen to build up a strong, progressive and dynamic nation with religion as the keynote of the whole music of national life in India. Religion is the life-blood of every people of India. It is the most integral part of our life. It tingles in every drop of our blood that runs through our veins. It has become the nature and habit of the people of India. It is the trait of our national character. Our great nationalism lies in it. The Hindus can withstand all sorts of persecutions upon them but when it hits upon their religion, that constitutes their national sentiment, they become most formidable.

Bertrand Russell has observed, "National sentiment is a fact, and should be taken account of by institutions when it is ignored, it is intensified and becomes a source of strife." History abounds in such phenomena. The Pathan rulers, according to Swami Vivekananda interfered with the

(3) Quoted from Romain Rolland, Life of Swami Vivekananda, P.275
(4) Bertrand Russell, Political Ideals, P.79
religion of the native population of India. That is why no Pathan dynasty ruled for more than a few decades. The Moghuls knew it better and did not persecute their Hindu subjects and they would have ruled much longer, but for the principle of religious discrimination, introduced by Aurangzeb. For the first few decades after the Battle of Plassy the British rulers in India were busy in consolidating their power and did not touch the religious sentiment of their subjects. But as soon as they tampered a little with the religion of the native Hindus, the result was the great uprising—The Sepoy Mutiny of 1857. Though the awakening was crushed ruthlessly, in less than a century after the upheaval the British rulers had to quit India. The British, according to Swami Vivekananda should not have committed this blunder.

For Swami Vivekananda, "India—our motherland, has religion and religion alone for its basis, for its backbone, for the bedrock upon which the whole building of its life has been based."(6) Politics and even intellect are secondary to the people of India. But what is primary, is religion. It is the language of our heart. As he said, "The Englishmen can understand religion through politics, the Americans through social reforms; but we understand even politics and sociology through religion,....."(7) As he further said, "The voice of Asia has been the voice of religion. The

(5) S.C.Sengupta, Swami Vivekananda and Indian Nationalism, P.58
(6) Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda Vol-III, P.177
(7) Quoted in V.S.Narvane, Modern Indian Thought, P.97
voice of Europe is the voice of politics. (8) The Hindus, he felt will never accept politics without religion. He believes only in religion - the lifeforce. Therefore he appealed to all the reformers, "Before flooding India with socialistic or political ideas, first deluge the land with spiritual ideas." (9) The common populace never understand politics-an alien element, but they understand only religion. The Hindus can understand politics only when it is given through religion. Therefore Swami Vivekananda made religion the basis of his nationalistic doctrine. To him power and intellect are also insignificant as they are not consistent with our national tradition.

Swami Vivekananda asserted that since religion is the basis of our national unity, caution should be practised to effect reforms in social and political sphere with religion as the mooring. As he pointed out, "Political and social reforms must always be carried out in India, proceeding from her religious life......" (10) The result of the reformation, if they fail, to cope with the religious sentiment of the people will be disastrous. So, 'he addressed all people in the language of their own orthodoxy'. (11)

Swami Vivekananda saw that the eyes of the world were now turned towards this land -India, for spiritual solace. Westerners were striving to understand the spiritual ideas of the East. Religious search had discovered that there is

(8) Quoted in Swami Gambhirananda, A Short Life of Swami Vivekananda, P.114
(9) Swami Vivekananda, Lectures From Colombo to Almora,P.126
(10) Quoted in Romain Rolland,P.278-79
(11) Life of Swami Vivekananda, Advaita Ashram, P.533
not a country, that possesses a good ethical code, as we do have in our country and there is not even one religion in the world having correct ideas of the immortality of the soul as we do have in our religion. (12) We may be degraded or degenerated now, but however decadent and effete we may be, we can become great once again if only we begin to work in the lines of our national ideal, i.e. religion.

Each nation according to Swami Vivekananda appears to have a particular ideal - a prominent ideal, running through its whole life and this ideal is the back-bone of its national life. Politics, military power, commercial supremacy, mechanical genius etc. are the fields of specialisation for different nations. But spiritualism has always become the way of life in India - her field of specialisation. If any country throws off its national vitality, the nation will die. So if we succeed in throwing off religion from India to take up another field of specialisation like politics or social refinement as the ideal of our national life, then extinction of the nation will be the obvious consequence. To prevent this we have to vitalise our religion first and subordinate everything else to it. As he said, "That intense faith in another world, that intense hatred for this world, that intense power of renunciation, that intense faith in God, that intense faith in immortal soul is in you. How can you change your nature?" (13) So every improvement of India should be preceded by an upheaval in religion. The great truth, confined in Upanishads and the

(13) Swami Vivekananda, Lectures From Colombo to Almora, P.126
Puranas must be broadcast all over. Let the people hear it first and all who help in this process are practising the highest form of gift, namely the gift of the spiritual ideas. Dissemination of these spiritual ideas should not be confined to India alone but should spread to all parts of the world. This has been the mission of India since the pre-Buddhist time, the remnants of which are still found in China, Asia Minor and the heart of Malayan Archipelago.

This religion which is the prime concern in India, is the secret of its strength. "To the other nations of the world religion is one of the many occupations of life.... and among all these various occupations of life.... there is perhaps a bit of religion. But here in India, religion is the one and the only occupation in life."(14)

To Swami Vivekananda, religion is the source of all vigour and vitality of our life. It is the chief unifying force of the nation. Hence this religion must always remain pure, immune to contagion. If it remains so, the vitality of body politic will be reassured.

Hence religion which forms the very vitality of India is the basis of nationalism of Swami Vivekananda. He thought that if religion is interpreted in its correct sense and realised by everybody, much of our miseries, mental conflict and social evils would be automatically resolved. He considered religion to be the healthiest exercise that the human

mind could have. He said, "Of all the forces that have worked and are still working to mould the destinies of human race, none, certainly is more potent than that, the manifestation of which we call religion." (15) Religion according to him has always worked as a great motive force.

In order to make religion an effective force in the field of national unity and emancipation of the masses, Swami Vivekananda firmly believed that Hinduism must broaden the scope of religion, associating it with the field of practical work and not of abstract judgements. He observed, "Religion is not words and not theory..... its essence is not in listening and accepting, it is in being and becoming." (16)

Religion not only teaches man to refrain from evil but must insist on doing good to others. It awakens the spirit within man. As he said, "Religion is the idea which is raising the brute unto man and man unto God." (17) As he further said, "Take religion from human society and what will remain? Nothing but a forest of brutes." (18) Hence according to him, if religion is taken away from human society, the residue will be a mass of brutes. It constitutes man's very nature and unites him to his fellows. It gives vision and inspiration to man. It exerts tremendous influence on the life of man. Its significance is enormous and far reaching. It is this religion that constitutes the basis of nationalism of Swami Vivekananda.

(16) Quoted from Swami Vivekananda - Studies in Soviet Union, P.294
(18) Quoted in Swami Gambhirananda, A Short Life of Swami Vivekananda, P.116
Admitting the apparent contradictions in different faiths and conflicting tenents, Swami Vivekananda taught love and mutual tolerance as the cardinal principles of religion. As he said, "Love and charity for the whole human race - that is the test of true religiousness." (19) He preached tolerance and religious universalism as the basis of his nationalism. If religion is true then all must be true. Hence he insisted on harmony, peace, and goodwill and discarded fanaticism, rivalries and blood-shed in religion.

The aim of all religions, according to Swami Vivekananda, was the spiritual integration of India and of mankind as a whole. Unity of India - a land of diverse faiths and religions can be had only through spiritual integration. So this spiritual integration of the world is another feature of the nationalism of Swami Vivekananda. He said, "Our minds are like vessels and each of us tries to arrive at a realisation of God. And God is like the water that fills the vessels of different shape. In each vessel the vision of God takes a different form. Yet he is one; he is God in every case." (20)

His aim of attending the Parliament of Religions at Chicago in 1893 was to show that the apparent contradictions in different faiths are not real. It was for this catholic approach that the won admiration of each delegate, attending the Parliament. After his address a man remarked," Every delegate spoke of the God of his won religion. Swami Vivekananda alone spoke of the God of all." Pleading for the

(19) Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol- , P.325
(20) Swami Vivekananda, Idea of Universal Religion (Selected works), P.180
unity of faiths Swami Vivekananda said that the human society would have made far greater advances, had there been no sectarianism, fanaticism and violence in the name of religion. In a very painful tone he also said, "The earth was beautiful, but had, alas! been tormented by sectarianism, bigotry and fanaticism. They have destroyed the civilization. They have sent whole nations to despair."(21)

Religious harmony and tolerance, felt Swami Vivekananda is the only way leading to spiritual integration of mankind. There must be harmonious relations among the various faiths and religions of India and of mankind as a whole. As he said, "We believe not only in religious toleration, we also accept all religions are true."(22) For this harmony, toleration and co-ordination he suggested Vedanta to be the most suitable Philosophy. It alone could become the basis of universal religion of man. Manifesting the common ground among all religions of the world, it harmonises all the various aspirations of man. Therefore he said, "...it is Vedanta and Vedanta alone that can become the universal religion of man, and that no other is fitted for the role."(23)

In the context of Indian conditions, Swami Vivekananda was particularly concerned about good relations between the votaries of the two great religions i.e. Hinduism and Islam. He considered the term 'Mlechchha' as a most

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(21) Quoted in T.L. Vaswani, The Voice of Vivekananda, P. 59
(22) Ibid, P. 59
unfortunate expression. He preached love for all, irrespective of the faith one professes. As he said, "Love makes no distinction between man and man, between Arya and Mlechchha, between Brahmin and Pariah nor even between man and woman. Love makes the whole universe as one's own home."(24) In the words of Romain Rolland, "Vivekananda wanted India to have an Islamic body and Vedantic heart."(25) This kind of compromise between Hindus and Muslims, he considered to be the only solution for all communal feelings in India.

In a letter to Mohammad Sarfaraz Hussain on June 10, 1898 Swami Vivekananda wrote "The truth is that Advaitism is the last word of religion and thought and the only position from which one can look upon all religions and sects with love. I believe, it is the religion of the future enlightened humanity."(26) He wanted the two religions to form a synthesis for the promotion of national unity in India. In the same letter Swami Vivekananda wrote, "I am firmly persuaded that without help of practical Islam, theories of Vedantism however fine and wonderful they may be are entirely valueless to the vast mass of mankind. We want to lead the mankind to the place where there is neither Vedas nor the Bible nor the Koran."(27)

Karl Marx said about Luther - a great religious reformist of the West, 'Religion was for him the direct truth and so to say nature.'(28) But for Swami Vivekananda

(25) Romain Rolland, Life of Swami Vivekananda and the Universal Gospel, P.155
(26) Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol-VI, P.415
(27) Ibid, P.415
religion was mainly a means of coming together, a language understood alike by all sections of people and serves as a basis of Hindu nationalism as propounded by him.

(B) CULTURAL BASIS

The sublimity of Indian culture is as old as that of Indian religion. "The culture of India has been one of the great civilizing and humanising factors evolved by man."(29) For centuries together the general spiritual life of the larger part of the continent of Asia "meant mainly its response to the call of the eternal ideas, discovered systematised and humanised by the sages and saints of ancient India."(30) In other words culture of Asia has been a complex fabric of life, woven by several different strands of which India is most prominent. That is why Romain Rolland, a French philosopher observes, "If there is one place on the face of the earth, where all the dreams of living man have found home from the earliest days, when man began the dream of existence, it is India."(31)

Undoubtedly India was a great civilizing force for many backward countries of Asia. "India was the civilizer" from the beginning of the 1st millennium B.C. down to the closing centuries of the 1st millennium A.D. It was during this long period that there was the cultural unification of

(28) Karl Marx and Engles, Vol-I, P.28
(29) Cultural Heritage of India, Published by R.K.Mission, Vol-III, P. 87
(30) Ibid, P.87-88
(31) Discovery of India by Nehru P.77-78
India and it went on simultaneously with the cultural expansion of India in to overseas countries like Lanka, Burma, Siam, Indochina, Malaya, Indonesia and to a large extent in to the countries of North-West like Afganistan, Beluchistan, Turkistan in central Asia. The transformation of the Eastern countries like China, Korea and Japan was achieved through their close contact with the spiritual forces from India. Thus in the moulding of Asian cultural Indian share has been very significant. As B.N. Luniya writes, "India or more precisely, the Hindu culture of India, was not merely a civilizing force, it brought to them intellectual awakening, social consciousness and material prosperity." (32)

With many backward races of Asia, the sense of social order and organisation, arts and crafts seem to have dawned for the first time with the advent of the merchants and the Brahman and Buddhist missionaries from India. It not only brought material uplift to these backward peoples but their dormant intellectual and other powers and talents were quickened to life and they were enabled to attain the fulfilment of those powers without any difficulty or hindrance. Indian culture, thus, helped other peoples to make their own contributions to world civilization, while it absorbed them and participated in their deeper and wider life. Indian culture brought to other nations their own spiritual ideas and values. As it is said, "In the case of ancient and highly cultured people like the Chinese, contact

(32) B.N. Luniya, Evolution of Indian Culture, P. 231
with Indian thoughts gave the finishing touch in the formation and in the highest expression of their culture. Buddhism, which was carried to China by the Indians, brought home to the Chinese, the necessity of going into to the fundamental questions of existence and endeavour. *(33)* Java, Siam, China, and Japan enjoyed richness of life and witnessed the astonishing afflurances of their minds and spirit, manifesting itself in literature, fine arts, and religious ritual: as a result of contact with Indian culture. Assimilation and unfoldment and not hindrance and suppression was the keynote of Indian cultural expansion. Indian philosophy and culture went abroad not to destroy and cause ruin but to awaken and fulfil. B.N. Luniya wrote, "It went there like the refreshing showers and life giving rain and not like the burning wind or the killing blight." *(34)*

It is when Islam came to India in the form of political conquest that there arose severe conflict between the two divergent cultures. But subsequently, inspite of fundamental difference and bitter strife between the Hindus and the Muslims, there began to flow a genial current of mutual harmony, tolerance and co-operation in different spheres of life and in course of time a beautiful synthesis of Hindu-Muslim culture was achieved. As Maulana Abul Kalam Azad said, "... many historical races and cultures and religions should flow to her, finding a home in her hospitable soil and that many caravans should rest here...... One of the last of these caravans,

*(33)* The cultural Heritage of India, Vol-III, P.90,(Published by R.K. Mission)

*(34)* B.N. Luniya, Evolution of Indian Culture, P.232
following the foot steps of its predecessors, was that of the followers of Islam.....This led to a meeting of the culture currents of two differents—the Hindus and the Muslims. Like the Ganges and the Jamuna, they flowed for a while through separate courses. But nature's immutable law brought them together and joined them in a 'Sangam'. The thousand years of our joint life have moulded us into a common nationality."(35)

Hindu culture absorbed most of the elements of Islamic culture and regained its vitality and force over Islamic culture. As Jawaharlal Nehru has observed, "On the one hand it encouraged the tendency of Hindu society to shrink still further within its shell; on the other, it brought a breath of fresh air and fresh ideals and thus had a certain rejuvenating influence."(36)

Where ever the Indian went settled they spread their own culture but at the same time were absorbing the native culture trends. Consequently they evolved a new culture, the key-note of which was Indian. Thus they created culture in other Asiatic countries, the values of which were "awareness of the unity of life and love for the ultimate and the universal in preference to the immediate and the particular." (37)

As Nehru describes it, "...... it was ever searching for the ultimate and universal."(38) Hence its achievement unlike that of the Western culture, is more than that of a mere force

(35) Quoted in Lanka Sundaram, A Secular State for India, P.27
(36) Jawaharlal Nehru, India Today and Tomorrow, P.11
(37) The Cultural Heritage of India, Vol-III, P.93 (Published by R.K.Mission)
(38) Jawaharlal Nehru, India Today and Tomorrow, P.4
of material civilization or civilized organisation.

But to our greatest misfortune, this unique and sublime culture, that forms an essential ingredient of our national life, although the history, dimmed with the advent of the British in the 18th century. With the establishment of political supremacy, "the British barred all the doors and stopped all the routes that connected us with our neighbours in Asia. They opened new routes across the sea to Europe and more particularly to England."(39) As a result, the storm of Western influence began to rage violently in the country. It darkened the most luminous firmament of Indian culture. As prof. Rapson has written, "This sudden isolation from the rest of Asia has been one of the most remarkable and unfortunate consequence of British rule in India."(40)

Western culture and civilization strongly affected the evolution of Indian culture. Supremacy of Western culture gave a rude shock to our effulgent Indian culture. Indian culture reached the lowest ebb. It lost all its evolutionary urge and creative power. Social evils like spiritual blindness, superstitions, and untouchability crept in to Indian society, that gravely affected our socio-religious life. The vitality of Indian life collapsed. The economic life of the people received a terrible setback due to the British economic policy. The flourishing craft and industries were ruined. Poverty and starvation became the most glaring

(39) Jawaharlal Nehru, Discovery of India, P.46-47
(40) E.G.Rapson, The Cambridge History of India, Vol-I, P.52
phenomena. The course of Indian economic life was clogged. This economic ruin adversely affected the social life of India. Life became dull and sluggish.

When this was the state of affairs, Swami Vivekananda resolved to awake India from the age-long morass and prostration by reviving India's decadent culture. He had strong conviction that "Culture is the totality of learned devices for problem solving."(41) So referring to the wondrous beauties of the cultural heritage of our country he said, "Where stood the earliest cradle of ethics, arts, science and literature and the integrity of whose sons and the virtues of whose daughters have been sung by all the travellers."(42)

The sole aim of Swami Vivekananda was to revive Indian ancient culture and regenerate Indian nation on the basis of such cultural heritage. He made earnest appeal to his country-men to look back upon our cultural past and revive the nation on that footing. He had tremendous faith in the pristine qualities of such cultural heritage and its capacity to rebuild the nation in wreckage. He believed that Indian nation could be made to awake only through the revival of her ancient culture. Her cultural heritage should constitute the most prominent force to tie together all divisive forces. Man is the product of his culture. Culture forms the sentiment or thought process of the people. Cultural affinity is

(41) F.L. Schuman, International Politics, P.7
(42) Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol-II, P.510
the greatest cementing force to hold all people together for national emancipation. It is the life-blood of the nation and the vitality of the race. So Indian nation shall have to be awakened through the vigour and vitality of our culture.

The Vedic culture of India, Swami Vivekananda felt, is the richest culture in the world. It is the mother of all cultures - the classic home of world culture. Vedas - the fountainhead of Indian culture, is the source of all knowledge, which can alone provide solutions to all the problems of India - social, political and economic. If this Vedic culture of the country is revived, other aspects of our national life will be reinvigorated. This led M.N. Roy to remark, "Vivekananda endeavours to utilise mass energy for the perpetuation or revival of that heritage of national culture...."(43)

It is knowledge that awakens the sense of dignity in man, impelling him to throw off the bondage of slavery. Knowledge makes man realise the integrity and the solidarity of his being and becoming. But knowledge without culture, according to Swami Vivekananda is only skin-deep.(44) All the knowledge imparted to man, must be based upon culture. So the culture of India should form the basis of nationalism. Hence Swami Vivekananda tried to rouse his people by harping on this supreme culture. As he said, "India is the ancient land where wisdom made its home before it went to any other

(43) Selected Works of M.N.Roy, Vol-I, P.345
(44) Swami Vivekananda, Lectures From Colombo to Almora, P.200
country. Its rolling rivers, its towering mountains represent, as it were, its greatness on the material plane. Its soil has been trodden by the greatest sages that ever lived. The highest ideals of religions and philosophy have attained their culminating point here. From here the waves of spirituality have again and again rushed out and deluged the world. It is the land that withstood the shocks of hundreds of foreign invasions of hundreds of upheavals of manners and customs and yet stands firmer than ever with its undecaying vigour and indestructible life."

"I refer you to the past of India because its future is to take shape from that background. Out of the consciousness of our past greatness we must build an India yet greater than what she has been. Periods of decadence there have been, but out of these India emerged always as something greater, as a mighty tree from a decayed fruit." (45)

Thus Swami Vivekananda's concept of Indian nationalism was firmly planted on the culture of India that appealed to all the people and touched their sentiment. This cultural basis of his nationalism influenced almost all the subsequent leaders of the country. The view of D. Reincourt is that Ravindranath Tagore, Aurovindo Ghose and Mahatma Gandhi all acknowledge their debt to Ramkrishna and Swami Vivekananda. (46)

(46) Amaury De. Reincourt, The Soul of India, P.151
The theory of Swami Vivekananda's nationalism is based on his deep concern for the masses. His concern for the masses was very great. As Dr. I.P. Chelishev points out, "The great merits of Vivekananda, in my opinion, is that he was one of the first in India to pay attention to the masses, to the suffering and misfortune of his compatriots; thereby he raised the paramount problem of India of his day." (47)

During his wandering days Swami Vivekananda came in direct contact with the masses of India. Everywhere the grim misery and privation of the masses afflicted him. He failed to retain his patience. Once when he came to know from the newspaper, about a starvation death in Calcutta he sobbed and cried out in anguish "Oh my country! Oh my country." He beat his breast and interrogated himself "What have we done, we so-called men of God, the sannyasis what have we done for the masses?" (48)

The misery of the masses that he witnessed, through out the length and breadth of the country moved his heart so much so that it changed the course of his life and whipped up his nationalistic passions. The misery of the millions, their degradation and helplessness, according to Romain Rolland, "Pursued him like a tiger following his prey

(47) Swami Vivekananda - Studies in Soviet Union, Published on 150th Birth Anniversary of Sri Ramkrishna, P.209
(48) Quoted in Romain Rolland, The Life of Swami Vivekananda, P.26
from the north to south in his flight across India. It consumed him during sleepless night."(49)

Swami Vivekananda had not only a compassionate heart, he also had pragmatic head to discover the ways and means for the solution of these problems of poverty and degradation. He decided to bend all his strength to uplift the condition of the masses.

Apart from the poverty and degradation of the masses the unparalleled prosperity of the Americans and other continental countries, he came across, during his tour to U.S.A., gave a positive push to his nationalistic feeling and widened his sympathy for the masses. The main purpose of his visit to America was to collect funds for the amelioration of the lot of the downtrodden masses. He himself has confessed "It is for this reason to find more means for the salvation of the poor of India that I am going to America."(50)

While residing in a luxurious lodge in U.S.A. the woeful panorama of poverty and starvation of the Indian masses in the face of unparalleled prosperity of the Western countries, did not let him sleep in peace. The bed became a bed of thorns for him. He rolled on an empty floor and in agony of his heart he cried, "Oh, mother, what do I care for, name and fame, when my motherland remains sunk in utmost poverty? Who will raise the masses of India? Who will give them bread? Show me, Oh Mother, how can I help them?"(51)

(49) Quoted in Romain Rolland, The Life of Vivekananda, P.25
(50) Quoted in V.K.R.V.Rao, Swami Vivekananda, P.67-68
(51) Quoted in Romain Rolland, The Life of Vivekananda, P.31
Having seen, all around, the miserable plight of the Indian masses, he appealed to his followers in India, "Gird up your lions, my boys, feel for the miserable and look up for help - it shall come. I have travelled twelve years with this load in my heart and this idea in my head. I have gone from door to door of the so called rich and great. With a bleeding heart I have crossed half the world to this strange land seeking for help. I may perish of cold and hunger in this land, but I bequeath to you, young man, this sympathy, this struggle for the poor, the ignorant, the oppressed......go...... down on your faces before Him and make a great sacrifice, the sacrifice of a whole life for them...... these three hundred millions going down and down every day."(52)

Swami Vivekananda argued that ever since India ignored the great Vedantic principle of giving due consideration to the masses, there started the doomsday of India. For centuries, the vast masses - the sudras had been treated loathsome and untouchable which was a great national sin. India was to undergo suffering and hardship for such sin. As he said, "I consider that the greatest national sin is the neglect of the masses and that is one of the causes of our downfall."(53) India would arise again and get her proper position in the comity of nations, if this vast mass of people

(52) Quoted in Romain Rolland, The Life of Swami Vivekananda, P.70-71
would arise and get proper place in the society. The mass is the strength of the nation. It is the steel pillar of the nation. If the mass is neglected, ignored and underestimated the strength of the nation will give in. The whole nation will collapse.

In emphasising the strength of the masses he said that through the ages the source of all power in India has been the masses, who are sleeping Leviathan. Whenever those in power were alienated from the subject masses, they were overthrown. The power of the Brahmins was overthrown when they were alienated from the masses. The Kshatriyas came to power as they took their stand on the strength of masses. They also lost their power when they were alienated from the masses. The Vaisyayas came to power because they took their stand on the strength of the masses. Swami Vivekananda declared that the Vaisyayas would also lose their power because they were being alienated from the subject masses. He believed in the concept of popular sovereignty. His view was that the future of India was tied up with the future and the power of the Sudras of the country. As everybody belonged to that caste, that meant a state of castelessness and the masses as a whole will be supreme in future as against one group of people or the other. That's why he said, "A time will come when there will be rising of the Sudra class. They will gain absolute supremacy in the society."

To Swami Vivekananda, the poor people in India sacrifice their stamina for our happiness. They make us live happily but we bother little about them. We hire their labour to make the society congenial to our living but in return we

never pay them their legitimate due. On the other hand they are ignored and underestimated in every sphere of the society. 'They pay for our education, they build our temples, but in return they get kicks. They are practically our slaves. If we want to regenerate India we must work for them.' (55) Drawing the attention of the upper class people of India specially the educated elites he said, "So long as millions live in hunger and ignorance, hold every man a traitor who having been educated at their expense, pay not the least heed to them." (56) He argued that if India was to revive her vitality as a nation, the poor mass, the ignorant, the downtrodden illiterates must be made conscious of their lost individuality and manliness. There is leonine beauty of strength in them to constitute the vitality of the nation, but it has been ignored like anything.

Swami Vivekananda had tremendous faith in the masses of India. As it said, 'He was able intuitively to arrive at the idea that the only working class which was just coming in being in India at that time, was the decisive force in social development.' (57) When he saw the Bengali workers engaged in their tasks, his feelings of hopelessness about his compatriots vanished almost completely. He saw how they were gradually developing courage, becoming physically strong, fearless and energetic.

(56) Romain Holland, The Life of Vivekananda and the Universal Gospel, P.72
(57) Swami Vivekananda - Studies in Soviet Union, P.212
Swami Vivekananda was convinced that only the people who became the masters of their destiny, could be the builders of the nation. He pointed out, "The only hope of India is from the masses. The upper classes are physically and morally dead." (58) That is why he held that it was the duty of all upright men of India to advance the cultural level of the people to sow the seeds of truth and knowledge in the hearts of the millions of men - the mass.

Swami Vivekananda not only expressed his sympathy and compassion for the well-being of the oppressed mass of India, as did at that time many liberal reformers, who through practical reforms in the way of life sought some how to ease the lot of their compatriots, he also criticised the crying inadequacy of such reforms and told those who thought it possible through half-hearted measures and the begging of favours from the colonialists to solve the cardinal social and political problems of the age: "you talk of social reforms? But what do you do? All that you mean by your social reform is either widow remarriage or female emancipation or something of that sort........... Such a scheme of reform may do good to a few no doubt but of what avail is that to the whole nation." (59)

Swami Vivekananda sought to put up in contrast to such half-hearted reforms affecting only narrow spheres of society's life, cardinal demands for a change in

the condition of the working masses. 'The one problem you have is to give the masses right,' he stressed. He called upon the reformers to go deep in to life of the masses and ameliorate their lot. As he said, "Most of what you talk of social reform does not touch the poor masses." "Go down to the basis of things, to the very roots. That is what I call radical reformation. Put the fire there and let it burn upwards and make an Indian nation." He told the reformers that he himself was a big reformer than anyone of them. They wanted only partial, miserly reforms, while he called for radical reforms.

Swami Vivekananda was a spiritual man, who was supposed to be concerned with the spiritual aspect of life. But material backwardness of the Indian masses was a constant source of harrowing mental agony for him. He realised that spiritual progress is achieved only through material progress. A hungry man knows no religion nor spiritualism. He once asked himself, "What have we several millions of Sannyasins been doing for the masses? Teaching them metaphysics? It is all madness. It is mockery to offer religion to a starving man." Hence he laid stress on the improvement of the condition of the Indian masses in all spheres of life to restore India's long-lost vitality and said, "India must rise, the masses and the poor are to be made happy."
Swami Vivekananda, putting forward the ideal of service to the masses, placed in the centre of his spiritual system not God but man. He advised his disciples "Where have you to go, where to search for God?" he asked, "are these poor, the unfortunate, these weak people not really the Gods? Why not first pray to them? Why dig a well at the banks of the Ganges?"

Turning to his followers he appealed to them for working in the name of spiritual liberation and material progress of the masses. As he said, 'Swear to devote all your lives to the work of saving these 300 millions, going lower and lower each day.'(66)

Swami Vivekananda believed that service to mankind is service to God. He considered love for mankind to be the surest path leading to God. His love for man was so great that he made his religion and God subordinate to it: 'I do not believe in a God or religion which can not wipeout the widow's tears or bring a piece of bread to the orphan's mouth.... I believe in helping the miserable, I believe even in going to hell to save others.'(67)

Thus Swami Vivekananda's love for the poor and ignorant mass of India was so great that he drowned himself in ceaseless activity for the cause of their upliftment. His celebrated biographer Romain Rolland appropriately observed, "He dedicated his life to the unhappy masses."(68) Hence prosperity and happiness of the masses was one of the cornerstones of Swami Vivekananda's concept of nationalism.

(65) Swami Vivekananda- Studies in Soviet Union, P.400
(66) Ibid, P.400-9
(67) Quoted in V.K.R.V.Rao, The Life of Swami Vivekananda, P.169
(68) Romain Rolland, The Life of Swami Vivekananda, P.27
Swami Vivekananda's nationalism is based upon the democratic concepts of freedom and equality of all men. His concept of freedom and equality of all men is a remarkable contribution to the doctrine of nationalism. He declared that freedom is the essence of the universe. It is the spirit - the life-force, with which the universe is created, sustained and forges ahead. It is the very go of the universe. As he said, "Freedom is the motive of the universe, freedom its goal."(69) As he further said, "In freedom it rises, in freedom it rests and in to freedom it melts away." (70)

Every thing and every being, according to Swami Vivekananda is manifestation of freedom and they feel an unremitting urge to be free. Freedom is the destination towards which everything moves. As he said, "Every thing that we perceive around us is struggling towards freedom from the atom to the man, from insentient lifeless particle of matter to the highest existence on earth, the human soul. The whole universe is, in fact, the result of this struggle for freedom."(71) Thus freedom is the ultimate goal of nature and consciously or unconsciously every sentient or insentient being or object is struggling for attainment of that goal.

What is true of each sentient and insentient

(69) Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol-V, P.434
(70) Ibid, Vol-II, P.125
(71) Ibid, Vol-I, P.108
beings or objects is more true of man. Man according to him is the final manifestation of passion for freedom. As he said, "The universal struggle for freedom attains its highest expression in man, in the conscious desire to be free."\(^{(72)}\)

Not only man is the highest expression of freedom and is moved by the consummate desire to be free; he aspires for complete freedom. Complete freedom is essential for the attainment of freedom. Accordingly Swami Vivekananda said, "To be more free is the goal of all our efforts for only in perfect freedom can there be perfection."\(^{(73)}\)

Believing in this grand concept of freedom of man he declared, "Freedom is the goal of all the noblest aspirations of mankind."\(^{(74)}\)

This aspiration for freedom is quite natural to man. It is his instinct, that forms a part of his innate nature. It is his birth right. As he said, "Freedom is its (human nature's) watchword. Freedom is its nature, its birth right."\(^{(75)}\)

To Swami Vivekananda freedom is the divine endowment, bestowed upon man because of his divine descent. Hence this privilege for freedom is in the nature of divine rights. As he said, "Freedom is ours by divine rights."\(^{(76)}\)

Swami Vivekananda as a spiritual man, not only stood for spiritual freedom, but also for material, social and political freedom. Freedom is the condition under which the individual develops his own self towards perfection.

\(^{(72)}\) Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol-I, P.434
\(^{(73)}\) Ibid, P.333
\(^{(74)}\) Ibid, P.97
\(^{(75)}\) Ibid, Vol-II, P.323
\(^{(76)}\) Ibid, Vol-II, P.283
It provides the positive conditions for the unfoldment of various potentialities of life. As he said, "Freedom is the first condition of growth. What you do not make free will never grow."(77) In the ancient Vedic society there was complete freedom. There was no chain or clog of any sort that stunted the growth of evolution of the society. Society was altogether progressive and individual was all the more pioneering and enterprising. It was only when the freedom and equality of all men of the Indian society was put under restraints, the once progressive Indian society crumbled, yielding to untold misery of privation of all sorts. On the other hand the Western society that unfurled the banner of individual right and liberty along with equality of all men, made tremendous headway in every walk of life. That society is a well-knit, well-built and altogether progressive. He felt that to advance towards freedom—physical, mental and spiritual and help others to do so is the supreme prize of man. Those social rules which stand in the way of the unfoldment of this freedom are pernicious and steps should be taken to destroy them speedily. On the other, those institutions should be encouraged by which men advance in the path of freedom.(78) Again "It is our natural right to be allowed to use our own body, intelligence or wealth according to our will without doing any harm to others and all the members of the society aught to have the same opportunity for obtaining wealth, education or knowledge."(79)

(77) Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol-II, P.115
(78) Ibid, Vol-II, P.115-16
A mystic, Swami Vivekananda championed the cause of individual liberty—both material and spiritual. To him material freedom is the first condition of spiritual freedom. He advocated individual liberty and equality and strove to secure liberty through various channels. He asserted that liberty in thought and action is the only condition of life, growth and well-being, where it does not exist, the man, the race and the nation must go down. (80) In his plea for individual freedom he said, "In India, we have to take off the sackles from the society, there will come a wonderful growth and development of man." (81)

As a devout Vedantist, Swami Vivekananda upheld the doctrine of equality of all men irrespective of caste, creed, faith, birth and colour. In this sense he was true democrat. He said that no nation could gain physical freedom without physical equality. To him all men are alike. In 'Modern India' he said "Forget not that the lower classes, the ignorant, the poor, the illiterates, the cobbler, the sweeper are thy flesh and blood, the brothers." (82) He thought that social inequality is a curse upon mankind. It is the root of all miseries and degradations. It is the source of all bondage—physical, mental, and spiritual. Equality is essential not only in spiritual field but also in material fields. It is as important for the householder as it is for sannyasi. As he said, "This is the bane of human

(80) Manomohan Ganguly, Swami Vivekananda— A Study, P.69
(81) Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol-II, P.115
(82) Ibid, Vol-IV, P.480
nature, the curse upon mankind, the root of all misery - this inequality. This is the source of all bondage - physical, mental or spiritual."(83)

Swami Vivekananda was dead against caste system, which in its wake brought feelings of class distinction of superiority, of untouchability and other social evils. He called upon his compatriots to discard all those customs which formed the basis of such unhappy differences among man. In a letter he wrote, "The conviction is daily gaining on my mind that the idea of caste is the greatest dividing factor and the root of Maya; all castes, either on the principle of birth or of merit is bondage."(84)

According to Swami Vivekananda caste-system exists in every society in some form or the other. In the West wealth and power have divided men in to classes, while in India, the basis has been 'Varna' or caste. He was against this misuse and misinterpretation of this 'Varnashram' or caste system. 'Varnashram' is nothing but a social plan of division of labour but this has been misunderstood and misused in India, which has brought vengeance to Indian Hindu society. Varnashram provides equal opportunity to the people of all castes to rise higher and attain the best self. It is no more a barrier in the path of social progress. As he said, "Caste is good. That is the only natural way of solving life. Man must form

(83) Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol-IV, P.329
(84) Ibid, Vol-VI, P.392
themselves in to groups and you can not get rid of it. Wherever you go there will be caste. Wherever you go there will be caste. Caste makes a man perform his duty efficiently in social life. In India caste distinction has become a barrier for social progress as it formed the basis of seperation but not of unity in social life. He was much shocked to find that India, the land of the Vedas, where equality was the basis of society right from the dawn of human civilization, had been divided by the walls of castism - the source of all inequalities. He considered this inequality as "fictitious and monstrous."

To him this attitude of inequality is the "Primal sin." Although Swami Vivekananda was a spiritual personality, his view on society and social justice are more realistic and pragmatic than any other modern social thinkers. He considered society as a divine institution. He said, "That society is the greatest where the highest truths become practical. That is my opinion and if the society is not fit for the highest truths, make it so, and the sooner the better." Swami Vivekananda strongly pleaded for a democratic set up and social justice. He said, "Grant liberty in social matters and so have a splendid social organisation."

Integral freedom - physical, mental, and spiritual, has been the watch-wards of the Upanishads. As a staunch believer in Upanishads, Swami Vivekananda launched

(85) Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol-III, P.245
(86) Ibid, Vol-IV, P.358
(87) Ibid, Vol-VIII, P.18
(88) Ibid, Vol-II, P.85
(89) Ibid, Vol-II, P.115
a vigorous campaign all along to make these watch-words more real and practical. To him, "The whole life of society is the assertion of that one principle of freedom."(90) He hoped that the freedom, which dawned in America on 4th July 1776 would become universal in the world. In the words of Dr. Y. Chelysev, "He flayed social injustice and dreamed a harmonious order in a society founded on the lofty ideals of freedom and equality."(91)

Swami Vivekananda presented a very balanced view both for society and the individual. In a perfect society there must be proper harmony between man and man and the aim should be a synthesis between spiritualism and matrialism. In the individual life there must be a balance between the higher and the lower nature of man, again a synthesis of the spirited body.

(E) SPIRITUAL INTEGRATION OF THE WORLD

Swami Vivekananda as a nationalist stood for spiritual integration of the entire world. Upanishads stand for the universal brotherhood and solidarity of the universe. Swami Vivekananda, inspired to the core by this Upanishadic message, gave a call to shed all ignorance that divides the world and kames the people hate one another. He called upon his country-men to give up such ignorance and work for the integration of the world and promotion of universal brotherhood through spiritualism. Advocating this cause

(91) Swami Vivekananda, A centenary volume 1963, P.150
of universal brotherhood and solidarity of the universe he said, "Why it is that all great men have preached the brotherhood of mankind and greatermen, the brotherhood of all lives? because whether they were conscious of it or not, behind all that, through all their irrational and personal superstitions, was peering forth the eternal light of the self, denying all manifoldness and asserting that the whole universe is but one."(92)

Spiritual integration of the world, that his master Shri Ramkrishna Paramahansa taught him was the core of Swami Vivekananda's spiritualism. He stood to unite the whole world in to one family with the thread of spiritualism. He assumed the role of a world-teacher and tried to infuse in to mankind the essence of absolute unity. For propagating this principle of universal unity he resorted to Advaita Vedanta or the philosophy of non-duality of God and the universe and non-duality of all individual entities. In explaining the Advaita philosophy he made the assertion of one man, one God, one religion and one universe, the centre of which is Brahma-the Absolute, source of all existence for both, living and non-living. He believed in such unity or oneness of the universe, as upheld by the Vedanta. This provided the clue to all ethical, moral and spiritual values. It is also the source of all morality, ethics and spirituality. As he said, "......there in lies the explanation of all ethics of all morality and all spirituality in the universe." (93)

(92) Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol-II, P.252
(93) Ibid, Vol-II, P.252
Swami Vivekananda had not only profound faith in Advaita philosophy or universality and individuality of the absolute Atman; he also made it his life's mission to unravel this intricate doctrine and make it accessible to the whole mankind. As he declared, "We shall beat in all hearts, in all markets, at the height of hills and in the plains, the dream of Advaita." (94) Accordingly he carried the message of Advaita philosophy to the West - the citadel of materialism, the strong-hold of non-believers. As Romain Rolland has observed, "He not only made himself the peripatetic salesman of the Advaita Vedanta philosophy in the Western world; he established Vedanta societies in U.S.A. to popularise the doctrine in the Western hemisphere." (95)

On the issue of spiritual integration of the world Swami Vivekananda said that several time in the past different conquering nations linked the different parts of the world by their military conquest, but it was short-lived. India, the land of ethics and spiritualism, does not believe in such military conquest. She believes only in spiritual conquest, which will provide a stable and permanent bond of unity among different nations of the world. As he said, "There have been great conquering races in the world. We also have been great conquerors. The story of our conquest has been described by that noble emperor of India, Ashoka, as the conquest of religion and of spirituality. Once more the world must be conquered by India...... The best work that you ever did for

(94) Quoted in Swami Vivekananda - Studies in Soviet Union, P.198

(95) Romain Rolland, The Life of Swami Vivekananda, P.157
yourselves was when you worked for others, trying to disseminate your ideas in foreign languages beyond the seas. This is the great ideal before us, and everyone must be ready for it. The conquest of the whole world by India—nothing less than that and we must all get ready for it, strain every nerve for it. Up, India and conquer the world with your spirituality." (96)

Referring to the flooding of the world with Indian spiritual philosophy that was silently taking place at the beginning of the century the great German philosopher Schopenhauer foretold, "The world is about to see a revolution in thought more extensive and more powerful than that which was witnessed by the Renaissance of Greek Literature." (97)

Swami Vivekananda when saw the Western fascination growing more and more towards Indian thought and philosophy, said that the prediction of the German philosopher had come true.

Spiritual integration of the world through the Advaita philosophy of Vedanta, was the be all and end all of Swami Vivekananda's life. He dedicated his whole life to this cause. As he said to Mr. Erie Hammand in London in 1896 "It may be that I shall find it good to get out my body to cast it off like a wornout garment. But I shall not cease to work. I shall inspire men every where, untill the world shall know that it is one with God." (98)

Emerson, Thoreau and Whitman of the "Transcendenc-

(96) Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol-III, P.276-77
(98) Quoted in Swami Budhananda - Swami Vivekananda - His Call to the Nation, P. 25
talist Movement" were the advocates of interlinking of the East and West. But their dreams remained unfulfilled because of civil war and hasty development of science and technology. Swami Vivekananda whipped up the interest of the nations and people of the world once again in this cosmopolitan, universalistic outlook and in the mitigation of national antagonism and racial prejudice and professed cultural, racial and linguistic synthesis. As Swami Vivekananda contended, "Now the time is ripe for the fulfilment of Thoreau's dream of marriage of East and West or a real synthesis of science and religion. And to bring this about no worthier person would have been found than Swami Vivekananda of India." (99)

Swami Vivekananda was against the tendency of isolationism and urged the Indians to assimilate the best that had been accumulated by the people of the Western world. "The mere material brilliance of the West could not dazzle him, nor could the emphasis on spirituality in India hide her social and economic drawbacks." (100) He tried to combine Indian spiritualism with the Western materialism in order to produce a wholesome culture and a balanced life for the people of the world.

Swami Vivekananda studied the life and philosophy both of the East and the West and said to Sister Nivedita, "Social life in the West is like a peal of laughter, but underneath, it is a wail. It ends in a sob.......Here in

(99) Swami Nikhilananda - Swami Vivekananda - A Biography, P.134
(100) Swami Budhananda, Swami Vivekananda - His Call to the Nation, P.21
India, it is sad and gloomy on the surface but underneath are carelessness and merriments. The West had tried to conquer external nature and the East had tried to conquer the internal nature. Now the East and the West must work hand in hand for the good of each other, without destroying the speciality of each. The future in fact, is to be shaped by a proper fusion of the two ideals. Then there will be neither West nor East but one humanity.

Criticising the Western materialistic civilisation Swami Vivekananda said that mere material progress can never give peace and happiness to mankind. Unless the West accepts spiritualism as its prop, the entire scaffolding of the Western civilization is sure to crumble. The West has seen the life on its surface but has not gone deep in to the sea of life. Matter is not enough. Matter with spirit completes the circle of life. The circle of life is incomplete without the arch of spiritualism. Spirit is innerself, but matter is the outer body. Only when matter and spirit are made to advance side by side, life becomes perfect. Wholesomeness and balance of life depends upon the proportional development of both spirit and matter. For this the West must accept spiritualism and the East materialism. As it is said, "Science of the West and philosophy of the East must meet at a point where humanity stood as an indivisible entity. Vivekananda visualised a new type of civilization and culture for the good of the humanity in which the difference between the

East and the West would be eliminated."(102)

Swami Vivekananda asked the Indians to learn from the West their great concern for the masses and reverence and freedom for women. He also pointed out that the Indians lacked organisation and obedience to leadership. Organisation is key to the understanding of one's strength against all exploitation and oppression and people of India must learn it. Without imitating the Western culture India should learn from the West what is good in it and absorb it within the folds of her culture. Blind imitation of the West and forgetfulness of what is our own will bring ruin to the nation. As Jawaharlal Nehru has observed, "If our race forgets the Buddha, the Upanishad's and the great epics, what then will it be like! It would be uprooted and would lose the basic characteristics which have clung to it and given it distinction throughout these long ages. India would cease to be India."(103)

The interest of mankind always remains common. Therefore mutual accord and love are essential, which will yield immense benefit to both the cultures and to the humanity at large. He asked the people of the West to accept the Vedanta that preaches oneness of the universe as the religion because it alone can fulfill the life of the mankind. The immense reverence for all religions, which the Vedanta teaches, can overcome religious dissensions and racial prejudices and erase mutual hatred and conflict from our minds. The West should also accept the Vedantic concept of God — i.e. every

(102) Dr. D.R. Bali, Modern Indian Thought, P. 40
(103) Jawaharlal Nehru, India Today and Tomorrow, P.
individual is a manifestation of divinity. They should have faith in Man-God, the highest embodiment of divinity. As he said, "It is impossible to find God out side of ourselves. Our own souls constitute all the divinity that is outside of us. We are the greatest temple."(104)

Thus the spiritual integration of the world and blending of the East and the West for promotion of world peace and goodwill, progress and happiness of mankind was Swami Vivekananda's prime concern and it formed the basis of his nationalism. His nationalism was not narrow nationalism, blind to the demands of larger humanity. His mission was not only to regenerate India but to regenerate the whole mankind and deliver to them the messages of peace and goodwill. Wellbeing of the whole humanity was his sole concern. He voiced his concern from the world scenario time and again and said that although the history, India has served as the forerunner of world peace and progress and now India will pickup her traditional role and become great again. As he said, "India will be raised not with the power of the flesh but with the power of the spirit, not with flag of destruction but with the flag of peace and love......"(105)

Swami Vivekananda's clarion call to humanity has tremendous appeal for all times. It has been observed, "Vivekananda's soul stirring message will continue to inspire the


(105) Swami Tapasyananda, Nationalistic and Religious Lectures of Swami Vivekananda, P. 96
millions of men and women for ages to come, to work for the unity of mankind and its happiness." (106)

In fact Swami Vivekananda's doctrine of nationalism gave a galvanising shock to the demoralised and denationalised Hindu race, that had been long derailed from her traditional path. As it has been observed, 'This broad-minded and large-hearted Indian nationalist monk was the discoverer of India's long lost mission in the world.' (107)

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NON-ATTACHMENT, NON-COVETOUSNESS AND NON-POSSESSIVENESS.

Swami Vivekananda's concept of nationalism is also based on the great Vedantic doctrine of non-attachment, non-covetousness and non-possessiveness. To fulfil his mission of spiritualising the world, Swami Vivekananda wanted to popularise these Vedantic doctrines. He realised that unless man is selfless and non-covetous he can not realise the essence of any religion. If a man, after giving up all his material comforts and pleasures concentrates all his thoughts and actions upon God, only will he have God—realisation. Without utmost sincerity, devotion and total-surrender, God-realisation is unattainable. As it has been said, "He (God) is to be worshipped as the one beloved, dearer than everything in this and next life." (108)

(106) Dr. D.R. Bali, Modern Indian Thought, P. 144
(107) The Life of Swami Vivekananda by His Western and Eastern Disciples, Vol-IV, P. 193
The world is too full of desires and temptations. We have to live amidst them all, but we should not be obsessed with all of them. For spiritual realisation we should develop a sense of dispassion and complete aversion towards all these material desires of life. If life is indulged in all these earthly temptations, there will be no liberation for man. Life must be detached from all these tendrils of passions that tend to pamper our senses and get supreme hold over our life, and deviate us from the path of God. Therefore Swami Vivekananda has said, "Cut down the banyan tree of desire with the axe of non-attachment and it will vanish utterly. It is all illusions. He from whom blight and delusion have fallen, he who has conquered the evils of association, he alone is azad (free)".

This Vedantic doctrine of nonattachment is fully developed in the Gita. Lord Krishna teaches, "He who works, having given up all attachment, resigning his actions to God, is not touched by sin even as a lotus leaf (is untouched) by water." Hence man must live in this world like a lotus leaf, which though grows in water, does not get moistened by water. He must work without any attachment, which would finally bring him to supreme height of bliss and freedom. As Lord Krishna further teaches, "Therefore without attachment, perform always the work, that has to be done, for man

(110) S.Radakrishnan, The Bhagvad Gita, P.179
attains to the highest by doing work without attachment." (111)

Swami Vivekananda accordingly holds that man, though lives in the midst of all earthly desires he should not be obsessed with them. He should give up all his passions and desires that darkens his path from celestial light. As he said, "To work without motive is to work unattached that brings the highest bliss and freedom." (112) As he further said, "The less the sense enjoyment, the higher the life of man." (113)

For Swami Vivekananda, worldly attachment is opposed to God-realisation. Comforts and enjoyments, desires and passions can not lead man to God. As he has said, "He who desires for a comfortable and a nice life and at same time wants to realise the self, is like a fool, who wanting to cross the river, caught hold of a crocodile, mistaking it for a log of wood." (114)

To Swami Vivekananda non-attachment is a means to an end, but not an end in itself. If God-realisation or moksha or salvation is the end of life, non-attachment is the means to it. As he said, "Vairagya (non-attachment) is the only way to freedom." (115)

Non-attachment according to Swami Vivekananda also implies love of God without expecting anything in return.

(111) S.Radhakrishnan, The Bhagvad Gita, P.138
(112) Nationalistic and Religious Lectures of Swami Vivekananda P.193
(113) Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol- IV, P.13
(114) Nationalistic and Religious Lectures of Swami Vivekananda P.194
God should not be loved with the expectation of some rewards, but for the sake of loving Him. Hence he presented the prayer, "Lord, I do not want wealth nor children nor learning. If it be Thy will, I shall go from birth to birth, but grant me this, that I may love Thee without the hope of reward—love unselfishly for love's sake." (116)

Swami Vivekananda said that if man lives according to the principle of non-attachment,— "with his heart to God and hands to work," success or failure does not overwhelm him. He feels, "I work for work's sake." and derives infallible zeal and infinite patience for work. In such case whole world bubbles with actions and activities. As "non-attachment is complete self abnegation," selfishness does not find any place in human mind. All men work in a spirit of sacrifice. As a result disturbance and disorder of all sorts vanish and peace and progress of high order come to prevail in human society. As he has observed, "When we come to that non-attachment, then we can understand the marvellous mystery of the universe; how it is intense activity and vibration and at the same time intensest peace and calm; how it is work every moment and rest every moment. That is the mystery of the universe." (120) Hence Swami Vivekananda appeals to his countrymen to practise this Vedantic principle of non-attachment in their private and

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(117) Ibid, P.12
(118) Nationalistic and Religious Lectures of Swami Vivekananda P.190
national life and show the ideals of the principle to the world.

This Vedantic doctrine of non-attachment does not appeal to Western nations. They on the other hand, believe in sense enjoyment and comforts of life. They hold, "enjoyment of senses, possessions and wealth to be the end of life. To them enjoyment is the goal of life but not God-realisation. As Swami Vivekananda has pointed out, "They worship God because God is the means to attain this end. The goal of life is enjoyment of sense objects and they come to know there is a Being who can give him a very long lease of these enjoyments and that is why they worship God." (121) Swami Vivekananda also has pointed out, "In the Western countries as a rule, people lay more stress on the body aspect of man; those philosophers who wrote on Bhakti in India, laid stress on spiritual side of man; this difference seems to be typical of the Oriental and Occidental nations." (122)

Though Swami Vivekananda highlights the great Vedantic principle of non-attachment as one of the basis of his nationalism, he dislikes poverty, wretchedness and squalor that debilitate the moral fibre of the nation and degrade its people to the level of slavery. To him non-attachment means non-covetous and non-possessive attitude in the midst of all wealth and affluence. As a matter of fact spiritualism can not progress amidst poverty and starvation. Religion and spiritualism are meaningless to a man who cries out for a

(122) Ibid, Vol- IV, P.12
piece of bread with a parched throat. As he has said, "It is an insult to a starving man to teach him metaphysics."(123)
But it does not mean material comforts or luxurious living. Dharma (righteousness), Artha (wealth), Kama (pleasure) and Moksha (liberation) have all been recognised by the Indian scriptures as values, relevant to human life, but the pursuit of them must be regulated in a way that they ultimately lead to Moksha. Hence non-attachment is also an essential condition of material life of man. It is a secret to all morality. As he has said, "Only by practice of non-attachment can we conquer our mind."(124)

Besides, one should not have any greed for the wealth of others nor should he have any greed to possess more wealth than what one actually needs. As Ishopanishad reads,

"Tena tyaktena bhunjitha
Ma grudha kasyachit dhanam." (125)

To Swami Vivekananda, 'with the sense of possession comes selfishness' and under its influence man never thinks for common good, that clears the path for starvation of others. Therefore he condemned the possessive nature of the Western nations and criticised their government as "the tyranny of Shylocks" (127) and contemptuously branded their civilization as "Merchantile civilization with all pretention and humbug."(128) Pointing out the great evils of Western possessive nature Bertrand Russell has also observed,
"Material possession, in fact or in desire, dominate our outlook, usually to the exclusion of all generous and creative impulses. Possessiveness—the passion to have and hold—is the ultimate source of war, and the foundation of all the ills from which the political world is suffering. Only by diminishing the strength of this passion and its hold upon our daily lives can new institutions bring permanent benefit to mankind."(129)

This possessive nature of the Western nations has given rise to capitalistic system of economy with its evils of exploitation and injustice to the backward peoples of the globe. The miserable wage system of capitalism, which is the prime cause of poverty and starvation in other backward nations, has been subject to scathing criticism all over the world. As it has been pointed out, "Capitalism and the wage system must be abolished; they are twin monsters which are eating up the life of the world. In place of them we need a system which will hold in check man's predatory impulses and will diminish the economic injustice that allows some to be rich in idleness while others are poor inspite of unremitting labour."(130)

Swami Vivekananda hated the wretchedness, poverty and privation that confronts the dignity of the individual and stunts his growth, finally leading to the moral death of the nation. Both the individual and the nation, thereby lose their moorings paving the path for serfdom and servility. The grim poverty and squallor of India of his time was the

(129) Bertrand Russell, Political Ideals, P.24
(130) Ibid, P.25
prime cause of India's servitude and suffering. So before
doing anything else Swami Vivekananda embarked upon the plan
of socialism, which is the panacea for all socio-economic
ills, to awake India from the anguish of poverty and improve
the standard of living of the masses. He felt it to be the
foremost need of the hour. As he has said, "It is my firm
conviction that it is futile to preach religion amongst them
without first trying to remove their poverty and their suffering." (131)

Thus Swami Vivekananda's nationalism that seeks
to satisfy the material needs and spiritual salvation of man,
is based upon the lofty Vedantic ideal of non-attachment,
non-covetousness and non-possessiveness.

(G) RELIANCE ON KARMA YOGA

Swami Vivekananda, although a sannyasin, was
a firm believer in Karmayoga and expected that Indian
nationalism should be based upon Karmayoga. This Karmayoga
which has been elaborately dealt with in the II and III
chapter of the Bhagvad Gita is a special attraction. Therefore
Bal Gangadhar Tilak aptly observed, "The principal subject-
matter of the Gita, is the exposition of the Karmayoga." (132)

Karma or action is considered the supreme need
of life. Life can not be conceived of without action. Expla-
ining this Karmayoga, Dr. Radhakrishnan says, "So long as we

(131) Quoted in Tejesananda, A Short Life of Swami Vivekananda
P. 39

(132) B.G.Tilak, Gita Rahasya or the Science of Karmayoga,
P. 909
lead embodied lives, we cannot escape from action. Without work life cannot be sustained." By the very nature of things one cannot remain actionless even for a moment. It is the very innate nature of man. As the Bhagvad Gita says, "No one can remain even for a moment without doing work; every one is made to act helplessly by the impulses born of nature." Accordingly Swami Vivekananda has said, "Intense activity is necessary; we must always work. We cannot live a minute without work." Even saints and sannyasins are not exempted from the obligation of work. Even God, who is the source of the universe, from whom the entire creation proceeds is not free from such obligation. As Lord Krishna says to Arjuna,

"Look at me!
Thou son of Pritha in the three wide worlds,
I am not bound to any toil, no height
Awaits to scale, no gift remains to gain,
Yet, I act here." (136)

Besides, God by His incessant activity and action also preserves the world and prevents it from being ruined. As Lord Krishna again says to Arjuna, "If I should cease to work, these worlds would fall in ruin and I should be the creator of disordered life and destroy these people." (138)

(133) S.Radhakrishnan, The Bhagvad Gita, P.133
(134) Ibid, P.133
(135) Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol-I, P.34
(136) Arnold Edwin, The Song Celestial, P.16
(137) Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol-I, P.58
(138) S.Radhakrishnan, The Bhagvad Gita, P.141
Hence, to Swami Vivekananda, Karma or action is the root of all existence - from individual to universe.

Life is a 'Karma Bhumi'. Karma or action is the religion of man. It is the only way to reach the goal of life i.e. freedom. As Swami Vivekananda said, "Our goal is freedom ..... and that goal is to be reached through works." But Karmayoga provides the clues to such works. It lays down the process, the way, the mode, and the manner of performing the works, that lead to freedom. As it has been observed, "It is the secret of work, the method of work the organising power of work. A vast mass of energy may be spent in vain if we do not know how to utilise it. Karmayoga makes a science of work; we learn by it how best to utilise all the workings of the world." Hence, to Swami Vivekananda, "Karmayoga is a system of ethics and religion intended to attain freedom through unselfishness and through good works."

Karmayoga, according to Swami Vivekananda, is not only to be practised in individual life, it is to be sincerely practised at national level also. As he has said, "In whatever you do, for a particular person, a city, or a state, assume the same attitude-expect nothing in return." Therefore Swami Vivekananda's mission was to enlighten and inspire the people of India and the mankind as a whole, with the ideals of Karmayoga, that provides a cogent basis to his theory of

(139) Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol-I, P.115
(140) Ibid, P.99
(141) Ibid, P.111
(142) Ibid, P.59
nationalism.

Explaining Karmayoga, Swami Vivekananda said that every man is the architect of his own destiny. Others cannot make him happy unless he tries to make himself so. It has been said, "As long as we require someone else to make us happy, we are slaves."(143) So dependence on others is nothing but a sort of slavery. By dint of karma one makes himself happy and prosperous. Without karma life is bound to suffer. It is only out of ignorance that we blame others or our fate for such suffering. As said Swami Vivekananda, "We reap what we sow. We are the makers of our own fate. None else has the blame, none has the praise. The wind is blowing; those vessels, whose sails are unfurled catch it and go forward on their way, but those which have their sails furled, do not catch the wind. Is that the fault of the wind?"(144)

Swami Vivekananda, whose love for the starved and the down-trodden was very great, tried with all sincerity to arouse the spirit of unremitting toil or activity or karma among man. To him karma is the only passport to human happiness. It alone can mitigate our misery and sufferings. He exhorted his country-men, "...stand up, be bold be strong. Take the whole responsibility on your own shoulders

(143) Nationalistic and Religious Lectures of Swami Vivekananda, P.190
(144) Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol-II, P.224
and know that you are the creator of your own destiny.
All the strength and succour you want is within your-selves. —
Again, he exhorted, "This world is a great gymnasium,
where we come to make ourselves strong."

To Swami Vivekananda, 'Work is worship', 'Duty is God'. Duty of any kind is not to be slighted. It has been pointed out, "The man who does what is considered a lower work, is not, for that reason alone, a lower man than he who does what is considered a higher work." It has been further pointed out, "Even the lowest form of work is not to be despised." Hence, a man is not to be judged by the nature of his duties but by the manner in which he does them or the purpose for which he does them — whether they conform to the ideals of Karmayoga or not. But every duty is holy and devotion to duty is the highest form of worship to God. It is certainly a source of great help in enlightening and emancipating the deluded and ignorance-encumbered souls, the bound ones.

It is sincerity and devotion to duty that brings success in life. There must be co-ordination and consistency between word and action of every man. Man should not be platform-hero, he must be a hero of action. He must have leonine vigour in the practical field. As it is said, "The great leaders of mankind belong to higher

(146) Ibid, Vol-V, P.410
(147) Nationalistic and Religious Lectures of Swami Vivekananda, P.190
fields than the fields of platform works."

There are two types of works - good works and bad works. Man should abstain from bad works though he feels tempted to perform it. Since he is the manifestation of divinity, he should involve himself only in those works which will provide a positive push to his soul for higher development. Such works, though initially discouraging should be taken up with a strong conviction that God is there to help. As said Swami Vivekananda, "..........you must always remember that each word, thought and deed lays upon a store for you and that as the bad thought and bad works are ready to spring upon you like tigers, so also there is inspiring hope that the good thoughts and good deeds are ready with the power of a hundred thousand angels to defend you always and for ever."(150)

Non-attachment, which has been described in the previous section, is the essential hallmark of 'Karmayoga'. It implies that every man should work for work's sake. He should not be deluded by any attachment to work. This attachment comes from expectation of a reward or fruit. As Swami Vivekananda has said, "Attachment comes only where we expect a return."(151) This expectation of reward that begetts attachment, encumbers the soul. Swami Vivekananda realised the truth of the version of the Gita, "Man has right to work but not to

(149) Nationalistic and Religious Lectures of Swami Vivekananda
P.190

(150) Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol-II, P.225

(151) Ibid, Vol-I, P.59
aspire for any result." In the light of this version he held that man should leave all result to God, but he should do his work with utmost sincerity and devotion. As he said, "Work unceasingly but refuse to have any attachment to work." As he further said, "The only true duty is to be unattached and to work as free beings, to give up all work unto God. All duties are His." (153)

To Swami Vivekananda, "Non-attachment is perfect self-abnegation and utter unselfishness." Works must be performed with a spirit of sacrifice or service for the community. The Bhagvad Gita says that those who enjoy the fruits of action without sacrifice or service to the community are thieves. They commit violence against the Divine and their acts become the acts, tainted in sin. Hence, the Bhagvad Gita emphasises on the actions for the service of God or for the welfare of His creation, but not actions with the ultimate objective of self-aggrandisement. That is why Annie Besant in the preface of her Gita has remarked, "Teachings of the Gita lift man from lower level to the loftier heights, where desires are dead; it can be a practical guide to action." (157)

Swami Vivekananda says that one of the special characteristics of the Bhagvad Gita is its emphasis on "Niskama-karma" or "Work without desire or attachment." (158) He understood

(152) Romain Rolland, Universal Gospel of Vivekananda, P.22
(153) Quoted in Swami Gambhirananda, A Short Life of Swami Vivekananda, P.118
(154) Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol- I, P.93
(155) S.Radhakrishnan, The Bhagvad Gita, P.136
(156) Ibid, P.136
(157) Annie Besant, The Bhagvad Gita, P.11-12
the message of the Gita, "Work constantly; work but be not attached; be not caught. Reserve unto yourself the power of detaching yourself from everything, however beloved, however much the soul might yearn for it, however great the pang of misery you feel, if you are going to leave it; still, reserve the power of leaving it whenever you want." (159) But Swami Vivekananda, a great believer in Man-God, thought the poors, the down-trodden to be the real living Gods. As he said, "The only God who exists, the only God in whom I believe ..........my God, are the unfortunates, the poor of all nations." Therefore he went further to say that the essence of this "Niskamakarma" or work without attachment is love, sympathy, and service to the whole world. As he said, "The true "Niskamakarma" is neither to be like a brute nor to be inert nor heartless.......His heart is so full of love and sympathy that he can embrace the whole world with his love. The world at large can not generally comprehend his all embracing love and sympathy." (161) Hence, according to Swami Vivekananda Karmayoga provides tremendous impetus to universalism and cosmopolitanism. Sincere pursuit of Karmayoga at national and international level will accelerate the process of achieving the goal of universal brotherhood, peace and progress of perennial nature.

(158) Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol-IV, P.7
(159) Ibid, Vol-II, P.3-4
(160) Romain Rolland, Universal Gospel of Vivekananda, P.86
Man lives through action. Action prepares
his path for Moksha or salvation. But all sorts of work
can not lead man to Moksha or salvation. Only the Niskama-
karma or work without attachment entitles him to salvation.
The Gita gives the most lucid interpretation of the doctrine
of Niskamakarma and lays down that man should not be guided
by any motive—motive for money, power or reputation. Swami
Vivekananda also said, "He works best who works without any
motive neither for money, nor for fame, nor for anything else;
and when a man can do that, he will be a Buddha, and out of
him will come the power to work in such a manner as will
transform the world."

Most of the people now a days think that working
without any motive means not to be affected by any pleasure
or pain but this is not true. As said Swami Vivekananda,
"If that were its real meaning then heartless brutes and
the walls would be the best exponents of the performance of
the 'Niskamakarma'. It will make man stony-hearted and the
worst criminals will have to be considered saints."

What the Gita has taught us is work with the
intention of attainment of higherself and forgetfulness of
lowserself. This is the meaning of working through yoga.
There are many functions of the body that we perform sub-
consciously and many other consciously. So also there can
be work with the mind, immersed in samadhi, eliminating the

(163) Ibid, Vol-IV, P.107
smaller ego. This is what happens to some extent when a painter or an artist performs his best. His lower ego is kept in obeyance. So while explaining Karmayoga Swami Vivekananda said, "Let your soul remain free......Do not bring egoitism in to it, I........My......." (164) The Gita further teaches that he who is one with the Lord through yoga performs all his works immersed in concentration and not looking for any personal self or personal benefit. Such works really brings good to the world. The whole mankind is benefited by it. Personal interest is not sought. Common interest or common good is the basis of such work. Individual interest is identified with common interest. As it has been said, "It is only work that is done as a free will offering to humanity and Nature that does not bring with it any binding attachment." (165)

The Bhagvad Gita, according to Swami Vivekananda teaches that we must do those works only which will exalt and ennoble us in accordance with the ideals and activities of the society in which we are born. But we must remember that same ideals and activities do not prevail in all societies and nations. There are different societies and different nations. They have different customs and different activities. So we should not judge others on the basis of our own and conceive any prejudice against others. In most cases, according to Swami Vivekananda, this ignorance is the main cause of much of the hatred of one nation towards another. As he

(164) Romain Rolland, The Universal Gospel of Vivekananda P.22
(165) Nationalistic and Religious Lectures of Swami Vivekananda, P.90
has said, "An American thinks that whatever an American does in accordance with the custom of his country, is the best thing to do, and that whoever does not follow his custom must be a very wicked man. A Hindu thinks that his customs are the only right ones and are the best in the world and that whosoever does not obey them must be the most wicked man living. This is quite a natural mistake, which all of us are apt to make. But it is very harmful.... Much of the oppression of powerful nations on weaker ones is caused by this prejudice. It dries up their fellow-feeling for fellowmen." (166)

Therefore we ought to always remember that we should always try to see the duty of others through their own eyes and never judge the customs of other peoples by our own standard. We, each should know that we are not the standard of the universe. We have to accommodate ourselves to the world and not the world to us. We must also know that environment changes the nature of duty in different societies and nations. Besides, we must judge others not by the nature of their work but by the manner and spirit in which they perform - whether in an unselfish manner and in a spirit of sacrifice or not. As Swami Vivekananda has observed, "Man is not to be judged by the mere nature of his duties but all should be judged by the manner and the spirit in which they

(166) Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol-I, P.65
(167) Ibid, Vol-I, P.66
perform them." (168) Hence according to Swami Vivekananda Karmayoga provides an international ethics for a sound international behaviour and relation.

Swami Vivekananda says that all works are covered by some evils always like fire by smoke. We should therefore do such work as brings the largest amount of good and the smallest measure of evil to the people. To explain his point he said, "Arjuna had to kill Bhismas, Drona and Karna etc. in the battle field of Kurukshetra. If he had not done that the country would have been usurped by a body of proud and unrighteous kings to the greatest misfortune of the mankind." (169) Hence those who do not work for their personal interest, are not affected by any evil, for they work for the good of the world. This motiveless works bring the highest bliss and freedom to the individual, to the nation and to the mankind as a whole.

(H) VENERATION FOR WOMAN

Swami Vivekananda's concept of nationalism was based on the veneration for woman, which is the keystone of the whole system of Indian religion, philosophy, culture and civilization. Woman in every sphere of Hindu society is held in high esteem because the Hindus treat woman as the symbol of 'Divine Mother'. From his childhood Hindus learn to adore their motherhood. As Swami Vivekananda

(169) Nationalistic and Religious Lectures of Swami Vivekananda, P.193
said, ".....the ideal woman in India is mother, the mother first and the mother last. The word woman calls up to the mind of the Hindu, motherhood; and God is called Mother." 

The mother is the ideal of Indian womanhood. The idea that every woman is an embodiment of Divine Mother, runs through our national veins. It has assumed the form of our national ideal. Whenever this ideal of veneration for woman has been disgraced in our land or when tear is caused in the eyes of a woman - the mother, great national catastrophe has overtaken the nation. The two great wars of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, which were fought against the disgracing of woman - Sita and Droupadi, respectively bear ample testimony to it. Besides Hindus identify nationhood with divine motherhood and considers mother and motherland holier to Heaven, which finds its expression in the great Vedas.

In the West woman is essentially a wife - an instrument of procreation. In the West it is the wife that rules the homes, but in India it is the mother that rules. In the concept of mother woman stands above all carnality. As said Swami Vivekananda, "No, No! woman! thou shall not be coupled with anything connected with the flesh. The name has been called holy once and forever, for what name is there which no lust can ever approach, no carnality ever come near than the one word mother? That is the ideal in India." In a Hindu home the mother walks at the front,

(171) Ibid, Vol-VIII, P.58
the wife only follows. The mother is the mistress of the family. A son places his children under the governance of his mother but not under his wife. A son does not like to see his wife over-riding his mother. A Hindu family is identified with mother - the centre of all attachment. As Swami Vivekananda has said, "But the mother is the ideal of love, she rules the family, she possesses the family." (172)

Mother is the source of infinite love in this mortal world. In this earthly existence mother's love is the nearest approach to God's love. Father takes his wicked son to task. There is abundant evidence of it. But in the entire Indian religious literature and philosophy we do not find a mother punishing her wicked son seriously. As the great saint Ramprasad has said, "Mother, O'mother, be merciful; I am wicked! Many children have been wicked, but there never was a wicked mother." (173) Mother shields her child against all evils. She is the most selfless in her affection to her child. She embraces all miseries and hardship gladly for the up keep of her child. To Swami Vivekananda, "Woman as mother is marvellous, unselfish, all suffering and ever forgiving." (174)

To be the mother of a child is a sacred task of an Indian woman. How to produce a good child, who will build up the nation is the sole concern of the Indian woman.

(173) Ibid, Vol-VIII, P.59
(174) Religious and Nationalistic Lectures of Swami Vivekananda, P. 104
For this purpose she picks up a very conspicuous role. She keeps her body and mind always pure and prays to God to bless her with a good child. A child must be born in prayer but not in a lust. The great Hindu lawgiver Manu says, "He is Aryan, who is born through prayer." (175) A child born otherwise is illegitimate according to Manu. This attitude of sanctity with which the Hindu mind regards motherhood, springs from the conviction that it is the prenatal influence that gives the impetus to the child to be good or evil. Education and all the rest are secondary. As Swami Vivekananda said, ".....our books teach that it is the prenatal influence that gives the impetus to the child for good or evil. Go to hundred thousand colleges, read a million books, associate with all the learned men of the world - better off you are when born with the right stamp. You are born for good or evil. The child is a born god or a born demon; that is what the books say. Education and all these things come afterwards - are a mere bagatelle." (176) The mother has to maintain a strict rule of morality and ethics, chastity and purity of body and mind, if she is to conceive a noble son. Commenting on the purity of woman in India Lepel Griffin in the introduction of the book - Famous Women of India - remarked, "The women of the East are not so much an evidence as those of Europe, but their influence within the legitimate circle of their

(175) Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol-VIII, P.59
(176) Ibid, Vol- VIII, P.60
domestic relations is quite as great, their manners are as good and their morality is as high." (177) The woman invokes the blessings of God with top sincerity and devotion so that a divine soul will land on her womb. Slightest aberrations might frustrate her hope. So the responsibility for a good child is solely on the mother. As Swami Vivekananda said, "For that which brings forth the child is the holiest symbol of God himself. It is the greatest prayer between man and wife, the prayer that is going to bring in to the world a soul fraught with tremendous power for good or for evil." (178)

Napoleon Bonaparte realised the role of a good mother in building up a good nation. As he said, "Give me a good mother I shall give you a good nation."

Another stage of woman's life that appears to be very miserable to the surface is widowhood. To the ordinary mind widowhood is a curse. But to Swami Vivekananda it is a boon in disguise. All miseries and hardships of widowhood are preparation for spiritual elevation. A true widow never curses herself for her miseries and misfortune. As it has been said, "She (widow) lives a life of asceticism and devotion, thus elevating her life to higher levels of perfections." (179) Thus while widowhood is a hardship to many it is a doorway to higher spiritual perfection to many others.

(177) John J. Pool, Famous Women of India
(179) Nationalistic and Religious Lectures of Swami Vivekananda, P. 106
Further Swami Vivekananda was of the opinion that woman as a daughter in her father’s family does a very noble work i.e. a purely motherly work. The sanskrit word for daughter is 'Duhita'. The word 'Duhita' comes from the root verb 'Duh' which means to milk the cow and supply nutrition to the members of the family, which is purely a motherly function.

Thus in all phases of life a woman in India renders her divine, selfless service to the society without expecting anything in return. This ideal of womanhood in India has become an example for the whole world. It has attracted the world attention that led J.J.Pool to remark"...... Woman in Eastern land also, not withstanding the fact that she is immured in a zenana and is invinsible to the eyes of the world, exerts a powerful influence, not only over her friends at home, but a society at large." (180)

But Swami Vivekananda was much shocked to see the terrible degeneration of women in India. Their low, inferier and miserable position in the orthodox Hindu society became a constant source of anxiety for him. He repeatedly called upon his countrymen to recognise women as the symbol of Divine Mother and not to treat her as a door-mat or an instrument of procreation. For regenerating Indian women, he once disclosed his plan of establishing a Women's Math, for providing appropriate training to unmarried girls and widows.

(180) John J. Pool, Famour Women of India - (Preface)
It was his conviction that no nation could progress which trampled on women, neglected them, and kept them in bondage and perpetual backwardness. He said, "We are horrible sinners and our degeneration is due to our calling women despicable worms, gateway to hell and so forth." (181) Though he was not very enthusiastic about the reforms such as abolition of early marriage, remarriage of widows etc. he realised in the words of Annie Besant, "Indian greatness will not return until Indian woman obtains a large, a freer and a fuller life, for largely in the hands of Indian women must lie the redemption of India." (182) He wanted the ancient Indian condition to be restored under which women were treated with great veneration and played a very significant role. As he said, "Oh, India! Forget not that the ideal of thy woman-hood is Sita, Savitri, Damayanti; forget not that the God thou worshipest is the great Ascetic of ascetics, the all renouncing Sankara, the Lord of Uma, .......; forget not that thy social order is but the reflex of the Infinite Universal Motherhood." (183)

Later on Gandhiji also emphasised on the revival of this ancient Indian tradition of woman in his national programme and said, "India's salvation depends on the sacrifice and enlightenment of her women......Women used to be honoured and their work and worth were regarded as of special value. Let us continue the tradition in letter

(181) Quoted in Dr. D.R. Bali, Modern Indian Thought, P. 43
(182) Annie Besant, The Education of Indian Girls, P. 10
Thus veneration for woman constitutes the basis of Swami Vivekananda's nationalism, which aims at reviving the old Indian traditions.

To sum up Swami Vivekananda's nationalism rests on an octagonal foundation. As far as the octagonal foundation is concerned religion constitutes one of the sides of this foundation. Religion constitutes the very bed-rock of Indian life, both private and public. Swami Vivekananda, a Hindu saint, felt that the Indian nation survives in the strength of religion. Religion is the only source of her national vitality and vigour.

The second side of the octagonal foundation of Swami Vivekananda's nationalism has been provided by the cultural heritage of India. India with a very ancient and rich culture stands out as the unique land, whose culture has outlived all other ancient cultures that were contemporaneous with it. This is so because of its inherent vitality to absorb and assimilate various influences. This assimilative and synthetic aspect of Indian culture according to Swami Vivekananda should constitute an essential arm of the octagonal foundation.

The third side of the octagonal foundation of Swami Vivekananda's nationalism is furnished by his passionate love and concern for the masses. The sight of poverty, hunger, destitution and deprivation of millions struck a

(184) Mahatma Gandhi, Harijan, December 27, 1936
vital chord of Swami Vivekananda's saintly personality. He wanted that such disabilities of the Indians should be removed and for the sake of the same India must be constituted into a mighty nation. Hence his concern for the masses provides another arm of Swami Vivekananda's nationalism.

Swami Vivekananda, a Vedantic saint, witnessed Atman all along. He considered the entire universe as manifestation of the freedom loving Atman. Hence he considered freedom to be the very essential hallmark of the universe. This spirit of freedom should not only animate all organisms including human beings; it should also enliven all group and communiterial life. Hence this freedom should manifest itself in form of national freedom. Accordingly this consciousness of freedom provides another arm of Swami Vivekananda's concept of nationalism.

Swami Vivekananda, a Vedantist was also a universalist. He was opposed to all sorts of narrowness and sectarianism. He was opposed to religious, linguistic, racial and cultural isolationism. Hence, while advocating national resurgence, he also emphasised on spiritual integration of the entire world. Hence spiritual integration of the universe constitutes another arm of Swami Vivekananda's nationalism.

Swami Vivekananda, a saint of the Ramkrishna's order was by nature and commitment a real sannyasin who not only renounced the world but also desired for earthly
possessions and worldly reputations. Renunciation, non-
possession and non-covetousness constituted his philoso-
phy of life. He also found that culturally speaking
India consisted of people who were non-possessive and non-
covetous in nature. Hence he advocated that non-possessive-
ness and non-covetousness should constitute one of the essential
hallmarks of Indian nationalism. Thus non-possessiveness
and non-covetousness shall constitute another arm of 'the:
 octagonal foundation of Swami Vivekananda's nationalism.

Although Swami Vivekananda is a sannyasin, he
believed in the doctrine of 'Karmayoga' as preached in the
Bhagvad Gita. He was a saint to be contented with
meditation in mountain caves, seeking his own salvation.
Instead he was a saint of different type, who shall have
his hand in the society with his heart in salvation. He
wanted to rebuild the society by individual and collective
effort. Hence he was a passionate advocate not of passi-
vity but of action and activity. Hence a nation for him
shall bubble with activity. In otherwards 'Karmayoga'
constituted another arm of the octagonal foundation of
Swami Vivekananda's nationalism.

Above all Swami Vivekananda was a disciple of
Ramkrishna Paramahansa, who was an adorer of female
deity or Prakriti or divinity expressed through the
medium of mother deity. Hence although a sannyasin, Swami
Vivekananda realised the significance of woman in the
creation. Accordingly he worshipped not only his motherland, which he wanted to be welded to a mighty nation; he also wanted that woman should play a significant role in the building of the nation. Hence veneration for woman constitutes the eighth and the final arm of the octagonal foundation of Swami Vivekananda's nationalism.