CHAPTER - III

NATURE OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S NATIONALISM
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I.

Nationalism is not a doctrine that provides an invariable standard. It is not a doctrine that is constantly fixed, unchangeable at all times and in all places irrespective of the prevailing condition in the country and the nature of the people who advocate it. Instead, the doctrine changes its nature and character depending on the social, religious, political and economic condition of the country from which it emanates, the nature and character of the leadership that motivates the people, and the attitude of the authority in possession of the political power against which it is enkindled. Hence, while describing the nature of nationalism H.J.Laski has remarked, "Nationalism is broadly speaking, hardly older than first partition of Poland and it differs from all previous form and character in to which its ideology has been cast...........(1) Even the nationalism of the same country, for the attainment of the same goal of nationalhood differs in its nature at different phases of national struggle. In India the moderate nature of its nationalism changed when the militant nationalists dominated the scene of Indian polity during the freedom struggle. The great nationalists of India like Dadabhai Naoroji, Ferozsaha Meheta, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, M.G. Ranade, W.C. Banargee, Surendra Nath Banargee etc. not only took the British rule in India for granted but they considered it as divine dispensation for India's progress and prosperity. They had

(1) H.J.Laski, A Grammar of Politics, P.218
profound faith in the British sense of justice and fair-play, their inherent goodness. M.G. Ranade observed, "The aegis of British protection is an acknowledged necessity." W.C. Banargee in the same tone remarked, "It is to England that we must turn, if our political aspirations are ever to be realised." Thus the moderates believed in the potency of technique of appeal, persuasion, resolution etc. But with the advent of the extremist nationalists like Lala Lajpat Roy, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal, Aurobindo Ghose etc., the nature of Indian nationalism assumed a militant nature. They argued that a colonial and imperial power, accustomed to the privileges of governing a country and exploiting its economy can not be persuaded to renounce its privileges. They believed that the imperial power will never concede to the request of the governed for self-government. So they scornfully branded the nationalism of the moderate nationalists as "Political mendicancy." Lala Lajpat Roy observed, "The line of least resistance of empty resolutions, on a paper, of simple resolutions, memorials and not petitions, backed up by anything which would place our earnestness beyond the shadow of doubt; is a line of action more worthy of women than of men." So the extremist leaders advocated extreme measures for reaching the goal of nationhood and Indian nationalism assumed a different nature under their leadership. The moderate nationalism of India was transformed

(2) P.R. Jagindar, M.G. Ranade, P.133
(3) Bangalee, 22 March 1896
(4) Modern Review, 1907, P.288
in to militant or extreme form of nationalism.

II. NATURE OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S NATIONALISM

(A) SPIRITUALISM

Though nationalism of the West emerged as a secular doctrine, in India the country with a profoundly religious and spiritual background, nationalism could not but assume spiritualistic a tone. As Rabindranath Tagore has observed, "In fact our history has not been of the rise and fall of kingdoms, of fights for political supremacy. In our country records of these days have been despised and forgotten, for they in no way represent the true history of our people. Our history is that of our social life and the attainment of spiritual ideals." Swami Vivekananda - a mystic of the modern world, had a thorough study of the ancient history of India, from which he gathered that in all ages, spiritualism has become the secret of all strength of national life of India. It is the bed-rock upon which the edifice of our national unity has been built up. It is the vital force that determines our national character. It is the source of all power that kindles confidence, courage and faith in us. It has upheld the existence of our nation in the history of the world. Politics or anythingelse as in case of the Western

(5) R.N. Tagore, Nationalism, P.3
nations did not constitute the vitality of our race. He was firmly convinced that "India is immortal if she persists in her search for God", "If she holds to her treasure—house of religion and spirituality." So the theory of nationalism that Swami Vivekananda sought to propound is primarily spiritual in nature. Spirituality forms the soul of his nationalistic doctrine. It is the unique norm, nature and the character of nationalism that Swami Vivekananda intended to diffuse among his countrymen to galvanize the drooping spirit against the British yoke.

According to Swami Vivekananda, "...there is a certain point where the life of a nation centres, where lies the nationality of the nation and until that point is touched, the nation can not die." It is just like certain serpents as we hear in our childhood stories that can not be killed unless the jewel in their heads is not destroyed. Again some giants and aggresses, as we hear in our grand-mother's tale, keep their soul living with some birds, hidden under the hollow of a mighty trunk of a tree, who can never be killed by any power on earth, unless that bird is killed. Similarly our national life, the soul of which lies in spiritualism can never receive any setback of any sort so long that spiritual core of our nationalism is retained. As long as we keep our soul of nationalism, living with spiritualism, no power on earth

(6) Swami Gambhirananda, A Short Life of Swami Vivekananda, P.114
(8) Ibid, Vol-III, P.369
can destroy it. That is according to Swami Vivekananda is the reason why the Hindus have still survived as a nation inspite of numerous calamities and catastrophies of foreign invasion in the past. As Swami Vivekananda has said, "Wave after wave of barbarian conquest has rolled over this devoted land of ours. "Allah Ho Akbar" has rent the skies for hundred of years and no Hindu knew what moment would be his last. This is the most suffering and the most subjugated of all the historic lands of the world. Yet we still stand practically the same race."

Swami Vivekananda felt that our ancestors in the past, finding that the quest for the secret of Nature through external investigation is useless, turned their attention inward. They focussed their attention on this inward quest, which is grander and infinitely higher, infinitely more blissful till it has become the national characteristic, till it has become our sacred nature. Thus spiritualism and Hindu life have become one. This is our national characteristic - the source of all vitality of our race. As long as we hold on to this grandest of all our inheritances, namely spirituality, said Swami Vivekananda no external force can destroy us. Spirituality is the greatest immunity of our national body. So he said, "Bearing this in our mind we shall be in better position to understand why for our national welfare, we

(9) Swami Vivekananda, Lectures From Colombo to Almora, P.285
must seek out all the spiritual forces of the race. National Union in India must be gathering up of its scattered spiritual forces - a union of those whose hearts beat to the same spiritual tune."

Swami Vivekananda believed that nationalism in India is the concomitant of spiritualism. There can be no regeneration of India unless India sticks to her century-long tradition of spiritual goal. He said, "Each nation has a destiny to fulfil, each nation has a message to deliver, each nation has a mission to accomplish. Therefore we must have to understand the mission of our own race, the destiny it has to fulfil, the place it has to occupy in the march of nations, the role of which it has to contribute to the harmony of races."

Revival of spiritualism is not only efficacious for India but upon it depends the welfare of the whole world. Nation after nation has risen and based its greatness upon materialism, declaring man is all matter. All such civilizations as based upon the sandy foundations of materialism, have disappeared from the face of the world. One after another after a short period of meteoric appearance. But the civilization of India lives even up to the present day and there are signs of its revival. Its life is like that of a phoenix, a thousand times destroyed, but ready to spring up again more glorious. But a materialistic culture once dashed down can never come up again.

(11) Ibid, Vol.- III, P.369
Swami Vivekananda's nationalism is didactic in nature. It is highly educative, with a deep moral tone. He realised that moral power is the highest power of the individual and a nation that serves this power all along must reach its goal. So he decided to strengthen the moral fibre of the people by insisting on character building, discipline and strength of mind. To him character is destiny. Hence in almost all of his lectures and writings that aimed at promoting nationalism, he laid stress on strong moral character of the people, which he considered to be the keynote of all success. To him morality is the essence of all religions. As he said, "No religion for you, my children, but morality."

A man with strong moral fibre is perfect and he has complete control over his mind. He does no bad things. He does no harm to others but makes peaceful co-existence with others imperative. As a result society becomes progressive both spiritually and materially. As he said, "Perfect morality is the all in all of complete control over mind. The man who is perfectly moral, can not possibly hurt anything or any body."

The sole aim of Swami Vivekananda was thus manmaking. Therefore he very often laid stress on honesty.

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(12) Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol-V, P.1
(13) Ibid, Vol-VI, P.126
and sincerity as the key to success. As he said, "Every successful man must have behind him somewhere tremendous integrity, tremendous sincerity and that is the cause of his signal success in life."

Truth, purity and unselfishness, according to Swami Vivekananda should be the special traits with all individuals, constituting the nation. As they keep strength of mind intact that finally brings success to all individuals against all adversities. Therefore Swami Vivekananda observed, "Truth, purity and unselfishness - wherever these are present, there is no power below or above the sun to crush the possessor thereof. Equipped with these one individual is able to face the whole universe in opposition."

Swami Vivekananda was of the opinion that man is the maker of his own fortune. But unfortunately he blames his fortune or star for the failure in his life. As he said, "This is tale" - so says sanskrit proverb. But it is the strong man who stands up and says, 'I will make my fate.' It is the people who are getting old who talk of fate. Young men generally do not come to astrology."

Swami Vivekananda believed in slow and steady progress of the society and nation. Therefore he advised his compatriots not to be in haste and have full patience

(14) Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol - V, P.240
(15) Ibid, Vol-IV, P.279
(16) Ibid, Vol-VIII, P.184
and perseverance. Sincerity, accompanied by patience brings success to all men. It has no failure. Therefore he has said, "Purity, patience and perseverance are the three essentials to success and above all love." Everything will come right if people are sincere and hardworking. Such people, according to Swami Vivekananda will herald a new era of life and truth for whole mankind.

Swami Vivekananda let loose his passionate anger at the weakness, cowardice and lethargy among the people of his country. He inspired all his country-men against all these chronic maladies of national life and said, 'Above all be strong and manly.' He admonished his country-men and said, "Anything that makes you weak physically, mentally and spiritually, reject as poison, there is no life in it. It can not be true. Truth is strength. Truth is purity. This Truth is all knowledge."

His recognition of divinity in all men and worship of man-God, opened a new chapter in the history of nationalism of the world. It changed the concept of worship of both East and West. As he said, "This is the gist of all worship - to be pure and good to others. He who sees Siva in the poor, in the weak and in the diseased, really worships Siva and if he sees Siva only in the image, his worship is only preliminary." His call to the world

(18) Romain Rolland, Life of Swami Vivekananda and Universal Gospel, P.112
for worship of man-God unfolded the inner chamber of consciousness of the great diplomats and statesmen of the world for universal organisation for service of the mankind. As a result world organisation like W.H.O., U.N.E.-S.C.O. evolved into full fledged institution.

Swami Vivekananda's concept of unity in the midst of diversity - the great Vedantic truth, changed his world outlook. He established the great Vedantic truth of non-duality i.e. man is one, religion is one and the whole universe is one - All are subject to one Absolute Soul - the Brahma. It is only in ignorance that we see the difference. As it has been observed, "There is nothing else, for Brahma is all! There is nothing else but Brahma. He is all and the Universe is in Him. Its manifestation is only a manifestation of Himself." His preachings of the Vedantic concept of unity in the midst of diversity led him to spread the most cardinal democratic principle of equality, fraternity, and fellowship. Since all are manifestation of the same Brahma, have the same origin, they are all equal. Hence he advocated that all prejudices of caste, colour, rank, sex etc. should disappear from the mind of the people of the world. The whole mankind should realise the Vedantic truth of divine unity of all men.

Swami Vivekananda preached that neither by 

"acquisition of property or wealth or knowledge nor propa-

(20) Annie Besant, The Wisdom of Upanishads, P.5
gation of the race, man attains the best self that he is capable of attaining. On the other hand the surest path to salvation consists in selfsacrifice and renunciation. As the Upanishad says, "Not by progeny, nor by wealth, but by renunciation, alone immortality is reached." This appeal for renunciation and sacrifice had tremendous effect upon the imperial capitalistic policy of the west and paved the path for materialisation of the socialistic doctrines of distribution of wealth among all.

Through his living touch and fiery speeches, the mental, emotional and inborn lethargy of Indians shaken and they arouse from the inertia to the fully developed, active, sincere, zealous nationalists. His insistence on the true end of life - Dharma, Artha, Kama, Moksha brought about a psychological ferment, that stirred the individual to the very depth and endowed them with a new bent of mind that inflamed our nationalism. Divinity of nation, revelation of national ideal, glorification of human life, realisation of God as the prime goal of life - all these constitute the norms and natures of Swami Vivekananda's nationalism that make it highly didactic and moral.

(C) SOCIALISTIC IN NATURE

The most unique aspect of Swami Vivekananda's nationalism is that it combines both materialism and

spiritualism - the two sides of human life. So though Swami Vivekananda invariably insists on the spiritual ideal of the nation it does not mean that his nationalism does not provide any scope for upgradation of the material condition of life of man. In his scheme of nationalism, there is abundant place for eradication of poverty and improvement of man's material condition of life. He was of the view that religion will have little hold on hungry man. As he said to his disciples, "For want of food and clothing, and plunged in anxiety for it, the country has come to ruin. Throw aside your scriptures in the Ganga and teach the people first the means of procuring their food and clothing and then you will find time to read to them scriptures. If their material wants are not removed, none will listen to words of spirituality." He also recalled the words of his great Master, "It is no good preaching spiritual doctrines to hungry stomachs." Spiritual message would melt in the air before the wrath of hunger, penury and sad spectacle of the poor, demoralised and degenerated mass of people, devoured by senseless credulity and fetishism. So according to Swami Vivekananda's scheme of nationalism man has to be above poverty line and posses sound physical health if he is to undergo spiritual discipline. With his compassion for the poor and the down-trodden he appealed, "My boy, if you have any respect for my words, the first thing I will advise you to do is to throw open all the doors and windows of your room.

(22) Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol-VII, P. 183
(23) Nationalistic and Religious Lectures of Swami Vivekananda, P.X
In your quarter there are lot of poor people sunk in degradation and misery - you will have to go to them and serve them with your zeal and enthusiasm. Arrange to distribute medicines to those who are sick and nurse them with all care, supply food to him, who is starving, teach with as much as lies in you the ignorants; and if you begin to serve your brethren in this wise, I tell you my child, you will surely get peace and consolation. What right have we to preach any religion, metaphysical idea or high moral principle to poor millions if we fail in our primary task to give a morsel of food to hungry stomachs and elevate them from dark, dingy hovels to bring sunshine and glimmering surface of life?

Swami Vivekananda branded him a traitor, who having received education accumulates wealth at the cost of the blood of the toilers, and does not bother about them. As he said, "I call him a traitor, who having been educated, nursed in luxury by the hearts blood of the down-trodden millions of toiling poor, never even takes a thought for them."

Swami Vivekananda was conscious of the fact that India through the ages adores poverty; but it is not the wretchedness, poverty, want and privation but non-covetous and non-possessive attitude of the ancient sages, rich in the wealth of spirit. Hence his concept of spiritual

(24) Reminiscence of Swami Vivekananda, P.330
upliftment did not neglect the upliftment of the material condition of life in India. So in all his lectures and writings we find powerful exhortations by Swami Vivekananda for the improvement of the standard of the people of India; at the same time he warned too against the material comforts and luxurious way of life of the West. Dharma (morality), Artha (wealth), Kama (pleasure) and Moksha (liberation) have all been recognised by the Indian philosophy as values relevant for human life. But the pursuit of them must be regulated in a way so that the fulfilment they offer, ultimately lead to Moksha. Spiritual value is most vital. Material values are desirable to the extent they subserve the development of the former. However they should not be treated as end in themselves. He condemned the Western view of nationalism that 'revived and developed the theory of Colbertism and made each nation by means of the Tarif and Free-Trade, a complete economic unit.'

Subash Chandra Bose has clearly stated that socialism in India owes its origin to Swami Vivekananda and only its later development are due to Karl Marx. Gandhiji's movement for the uplift of the scheduled caste and scheduled tribe got tremendous inspiration from Swami Vivekananda's crusade against castism and untouchability. Swami Vivekananda's concept of Vedic equality impressed Gandhiji very much.

(26) H.J.Laski, A Grammar of Politics, P.218
(27) Swami Vivekananda, Proletariate! Win Equal Rights, P.VII - I
Swami Vivekananda, who declared, "I am a socialist not because I think it is a perfect system but because half a loaf is better than no bread," derived his socialism from the spiritual heritage of India. His socialism is not a product of mere emotional upsurge or expression of human compassion. It is based on the solid philosophy of man and his infinite possibilities - the philosophy of Advaita, which proclaims the divinity and solidarity of all human beings. As he said, "You are the veritable Gods of the universe, nay, there are not two, there are but one. It is the mistake to say 'you and I'....." He thus connects the modern political and social democratic demand for freedom and equality with India's ancient Vedic spirituality.

Swami Vivekananda's view of society was just like that of C.E.M. Joad, who said, "...society is an association of human beings formed with the object of giving all its members equal opportunity to satisfy their desire for spiritual freedom and the good of life." That is why according to Swami Vivekananda there is no place for any special privileges for any group or class of people in the society. He was the first spiritual personality of modern India who dealt with the socio-economic problems of man along with his religious cravings and aspirations. His socio-economic thoughts are based upon the 'philosophy of

(28) Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol-VI, P.381
(29) Ibid, Vol-VI, P.381
(30) C.E.M. Joad, Introduction to Modern Political Theory, P.53
Advaita, which he and also his great Master Sri Ramkrishna upheld - a unifying philosophy, oriented to action in the world so as to change it and not merely to contemplate on Reality.' Advocating the cause of abolition of the social privileges he said, "Where ever you go there will be caste. But that does not mean that there should be these privileges.. .... If you teach Vedanta to the fisherman he will say ' I am as good a man as you, I am fisherman, you are a philosopher, but I have the same God in me as you have in you. And that is what we want, no privilege for any one, equal chances for all". Again he said, "The work of the Advaita therefore, is to break down all these privileges."

According to Swami Vivekananda this privilege that one enjoys over another has become the source of all discontent and resentment in all societies, leading to all revolutions. This is a global problem. So without elimination of privilege human society can not progress. As he said, "What can be attained is the elimination of privileges. This is really the work before the whole world. In all social lives there has been that one fight in every race and in every society."

Swami Vivekananda has deep aversion for bourgeois society and capitalistic system of economy, which

(31) Swami Vivekananda, Proletariat ! Win Equal Rights, P.VIII
(34) Ibid, Vol-I, P.435
according to him degenerates man to low level. As he said, "The Western society is governed by a handful of shylocks. All the things that you hear about constitutional government, freedom, liberty, and parliaments are but jocks." He foresaw that socialist system shall emerge in countries like Russia and China and declared, "The next great upheaval which was to bring about a new epoch would come from Russia or China."

As his ear was keenly attuned to the voice of the epoch, Swami Vivekananda discerned in these countries indistinct grumbling of the toiling masses, rising to fight for their rights. As he said, "The lower classes are gradually awakening to this fact and making a united front against this, determined to exert their legitimate dues." Pointing out that the workers of Europe and America were already fighting for their legitimate rights, Swami Vivekananda wrote, "Signs of this awakening have shown themselves in India, too, as is evident from the number of strikes among the lower classes now a days."

(D) REFORMATIVE IN NATURE

Though Swami Vivekananda exhorted his countrymen to retain their hold on the spiritual ideal as the ideal of their nationalism he is not asking them to relapse into the nightmare of social and religious superstitions, but to be

(35) Lectures From Colombo to Almora, P.59
(36) Swami Vivekananda, Proletariate! Win Equal Rights, P. V
(38) Ibid, Vol-VII, P.149
progressive and forward looking. The practice of village customs, caste rules, don't-touchism, irrational practices in eating and drinking according to him have nothing to do with spiritualism. Too much insistence on them is rather detrimental to the real progress of spiritualism, that has vitiated the socio-religious life of India.

Albert Einstein, the great scientist said, "Religion without science is blind and science without religion is lame." Hence religion should base upon science. Religion or spiritualism is barren if they deviate from the path of science. This is what had happened in India, said Swami Vivekananda. He pointed out that when the whole world marched forward with science and technology India remained smug in its own shell, glorifying itself in its don't touchism, caste obsession and kitchen religion. As Swami Vivekananda has said, 'There is danger of our religion getting in to our kitchen. We are neither Vedantist nor Puranics nor Tantrics, we are just Don't touchists.' Our religion is is the kitchen, our God is in the cooking port and our religion is 'Don't touch me', I am holy.' This kind of orthodoxy and dogmatism, Swami Vivekananda felt should be done away with and progressive spirit of the West be captured without losing our moorings in spiritualism.

Swami Vivekananda held that religion for a long time had become static in India. It must be made dynamic.

(39) Nationalistic and Religious Lectures of Swami Vivekananda P.XI
(41) Ibid, Vol-III, P.383
Social traditions should change according to the changing needs of the society so that the society will be more progressive. If some social customs are to be changed we should not think that we are going to lose our religion. Customs must change in order to meet the need and suit the time, and society thereby becomes more progressive. So he said, "As time rolls on, new Smritis will come, sages will come and they will direct the society through better channels according to the need of the age." 

But progressivism according to Swami Vivekananda also does not mean forgetting the origin. It means all progress must be made on the basis of Hinduism. In other words we must be progressive but with all sincerity and devotion to our Hindu traditions. As he said, "Let us be progressive and at the same time be as faithful and conservative towards our traditions as Hindus."

Swami Vivekananda explained that we have to learn many things from the West in the field of organisation, science, politics, and technology for the improvement of our socio-economic conditions of life. Our deficiency in these respect is largely due to our ignorance and illiteracy. So he said, "We have to find our way between the scylla of old superstitions and orthodoxy and the charybdis of materialism of Europeanism of soullessness of the so called reforms, which has penetrated

(42) Nationalistic and Religious Lectures of Swami Vivekananda, P.35

(43) Ibid, P.35
to the foundation of Western progress. These two have been taken care of.

According to Swami Vivekananda reformation does not mean the blind imitation of the West. It is the sincere study of the West and assimilation of what is scientific and real for our life and growth. Blind imitation is very dangerous. It paves the path for being ridiculed, leading finally to national degeneration. As he said, ".... imitation is not civilization. I may deck myself out in a Raja's dress, but will it make me a Raja? An ass in a lion's skin, never makes a lion. Imitation, cowardly imitation, never makes for progress. It is verily the sign of awful degradation in a man."

Many reformers emerged for about a century and they voiced their concern against the socio-religious degeneration of the society. But according to Swami Vivekananda they achieved nothing except creating a body of vituperative literature. Therefore he suggested that for effecting social changes revolutionary and disruptive methods are of little use. Public opinion or mind is to be educated first. A few intellectuals, trying to solve the problems of reforms by condemning fanaticism and orthodoxy, said Swami Vivekananda, is not reformation. The reformers, on the other hand, are to touch the very life of the masses what our great ancient masters like Sankara and Ramanuja did.

(44) Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol-III, P.172
(45) Ibid, Vol-III, P.381
They knew that changes cannot be accomplished overnight. The only way left for them was slowly to bring the masses up to the highest ideal, held forth by the existing religion.

Hence Swami Vivekananda believed in the policy of gradualism in the sphere of social change. Hence it is said, "Vivekananda, like Aristotle was a believer in moderation with regard to social change. Social customs are the results of the arrangements of society for self preservation. But if these regulations are perpetuated, society may suffer decadance. But the way to do away with social regulations is not to destroy them violently but gradually to remove the forces which had necessitated the incorporation of those customs. Thus the particular social custom will wither-away. Mere denunciation and condemnation create unnecessary social tension and entagonism and are not of much avail."

Thus the aim of Swami Vivekananda was fixed on socio-religious reformation for the cause of national regeneration. Socio-religious evils, he thought, would weaken the foundation of the nation. So to build up a strong moral nation he fought tooth and nail to root out these evils first. As it is rightly said, '......Swamiji's personality was unique in its comprehensiveness and deep sensitiveness to the evils, prevalent in the socio-religious and moral structure of the country.'

His scheme of reformation for national

(46) V.P. Varma, Modern Indian Political Thought, P. 108
(47) Ibid, P. 636
reconstruction greatly influenced the leaders of India during the subsequent period of national history like Jawaharlal Nehru. As the latter writes, "Science today challenges the old concept of religion. But if religion deals not with dogmas and ceremonials but rather with higher things of life, there should be no conflict with science or inter se between religions. It might be the high privilege of India to help in bringing about this synthesis."  

EXPANSIONIST IN NATURE

Expansionism is one of the unique features of Swami Vivekananda's nationalism. The nation according to him shall spread, grow, develop, and expand. However according to him expansion does not mean military conquest or territorial expansion but expansion of the spiritual culture of India to the four corners of the world. As he said, "By conquest of the world I mean the conquest by religion and spirituality and not conquest by armies." Besides by expansion he also meant that the nation should expand itself intellectually and spiritually by absorbing that are best in other nations. As he felt, "No individual or nation can live by holding itself apart from the community of others and whenever such an attempt has been

(48) Jawaharlal Nehru, India Today and Tomorrow, P. 44
(49) Nationalistic and Religious Lectures of Swami Vivekananda, P. 56
made under false idea of greatness, policy or holiness - the results has always been disastrous to the excluding one. To my mind the most important cause of the downfall and the degeneration of India was the building of a wall of custom, whose foundation was hatred of others round the nation and the real aim of which was to prevent the Hindu from coming in to contact with the surrounding Buddhist nations."

Reciprocation has characterised Indian nationalism in all ages of history. This is the law of existence for our nationality and whenever there has been violation of this law it has brought about the degeneration of India. As he said, "...give and take is the law and if India wants to raise herself once more it is absolutely necessary that she brings out her treasures and throws them broadcast among the nations of the earth and in return be ready to receive what others have to give her. Expansion is life, contraction is death.....Love is life and hatred is death."

According to Swami Vivekananda thoughts like merchandise require channels and roads for their expansion. Whenever in the world's history conquering races have established communications with India, Indian thoughts also moved along those lines and influenced the life of the people. Thus even long before Buddhism, Vedanta

(50) Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol-IV, P.365
(51) Ibid, P.365
had penetrated into China, Persia, Islands of Eastern Archipelago etc. When Greek conquest established the link between East and West, Indian thoughts penetrated into those regions and Christianity with its boasted civilization is but a collection of little bits of Indian thoughts. The Greek ambassador Megasthenes, sent by Syrian king to the royal court of Chandragupta Maurya, is said to have admitted this fact in his accounts of travel (written in form of a book) to India. As Prof. Henry Rowlinson writes, "The accounts written by Megasthenes, supplementing as it did the earlier works of Alexander's companions, gave the Greek world a vivid impression of the Greek and opulent civilization of contemporary India." Greek world was surprised to see the similarity between Indian and Western philosophy. To Swami Vivekananda Hinduism is pretty older to Christianity and so Christianity is undoubtedly an imitation of old Hinduism. As it has been said, "Ours is a religion of which Buddhism is a rebel child and of which Christianity is a very patchy imitation."

For last two generations India has remained aloof from the world at large and narrowed herself into a shell of misery and downfall. So he made fervent appeal to his country-men to embark upon the plan of spiritual conquest and flood the world with Indian spiritualism. As he said, "Let foreigners come and flood the land with their armies, never mind. Up, India and conquer the world.

(52) Prof. H. Rowlinson, Contact between India and the West.
with your spirituality."

According to Swami Vivekananda this narrow wall of Indian exclusiveness and isolatedness has begun to break down from the time of Raja Ram Mohan Roy. India has got something very precious for all times, which the world at large wants very much - the greater spiritual ideals that are enshrined in her scriptures. Whole world is awaiting that treasure. Little do we know how much of hunger and thirst there is outside of India for these wonderful treasures of our forefathers. Swami Vivekananda said, "Therefore you must go out and exchange our spirituality for anything they have to give us. From the marvels of the region of the spirit we will exchange the marvels of the region of matter."

India has to fulfill its age-long mission by allowing its thoughts to flow out to all parts of the world and enlighten the whole mankind with the ultimate goal of the humanising the whole world. So Swami Vivekananda called upon his countrymen to conquer the world and fulfill the traditional mission and bring glory to the country. As he said, "It is not only that we want to revive our own country, that is a small matter. I am an imaginative man and my idea is the conquest of the whole world by Hindu race."

This programme of world conquest influenced

(54) Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol-III, P.277
(56) Ibid, Vol-III, P.276
very much the young Indians. It aroused a new hope and spirit in their minds for implementing the task. As M.N.Roy has remarked, "This romantic vision of conquering the world by spiritual superiority, electrified the young intellectuals...." However conquest of the world did not mean for Swami Vivekananda, conquest by armies, but conquest by religion and spirituality - the true conquest, as described by the story of the great Hindu conqueror Ashok.

(F) SMOOTH, SILENT AND TACIT NATURE

India is the fountain head of spiritualism and the whole world awaits with greedy look, the ambrocia of Indian spiritualism as an antidote against the utter dissatisfaction, arising out of gross materialism of the West. Through the ages India has assumed the role of spiritual guide to the whole world by diffusing her spiritual message all over. It has become our customary rule - a part of Hindu national tradition. But the modus-operandi of this customary rule is quite unique. India has accomplished this role without indulging in high sounding, ear-rending publicity. She has never held any banner or flag nor has she blown any trumpet or beaten any drum to announce to the world, the operation of her mission. She has never led any procession or slogan as she believes in action rather than vociferous propaganda. Though silent

(57) M.N.Roy, India in Transition, P.169
and tacit the result of her plan of action has always been very tremendous. Describing the mode of operation of India's plan for spiritualising the world Swami Vivekananda has observed, "Gifts of political knowledge can be made with the blast of trumpets and march of cohorts. Gifts of secular knowledge and social knowledge can be made with fire and sword, but spiritual knowledge can only be given in silence like the dew that falls unseen and unheard, yet bringing to bloom masses of roses."

Whenever a conquering race brings the nations of the world together making roads and transit possible, immediately India has contributed her quota of spiritual power to the sumtotal of world progress and culture. This happened ages before Buddha was born, the remnants of which are still found in China, in Assia Minor and in the heart of Malayan Archipelago. When the Greek conqueror united the four corners of the world India rushed out with her spiritualism to the west and the boasted civilization of the west is but the remnant of that deluge.

According to Swami Vivekananda, the same opportunity is available once again. The British nation has linked the world together as was never done before. English roads and channels of communication rush from one end of the world to the other. The trade centres have sprang up such as had never been before in the history of

(59) Ibid, Vol-III, P.223
mankind. So immediately India should pick up her traditional role to pour forth her gifts of spirituality placidly over the world like the gentle dew drops to cool down the tension of the day of grim materialism. But the deluge must be very smooth, slow, silent and unperceived. It should be free from blood-shed or brutality or violence of any sort, that have stained the pages of history of Islam and Christianity. As Swami Vivekananda has observed, "The one characteristic of Indian thought is its silence, its calmness. At the same time the tremendous power that is behind it, is never expressed by violence. It is always the silent mesmerism of Indian thought."

Swami Vivekananda further held that a foreigner feels disgusted with our literature at the first study as he does not find any thrill or the stir of the European literature that rouses him instantly. European tragedies are full of actions that rouses him forth with. But the moment it is over, there comes the reaction and everything is gone—washed off from his brain. Indian tragedies, on the other hand, are like the mesmerist's power—quiet, silent. But as we go on studying them they fascinate us, we can not move; we are spell-bound and who ever has dared to touch our literature has felt the spell and is there bound forever. Like the gentle dew there has been the contribution of India to the thoughts of the world. As said Swami Vivekananda, "Silent and unperceived yet omnipo-

(60) Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol-III, P.274
tent in its effect, it has revolutionised the thoughts of the world, yet no body knows when it did so."

Thus Swami Vivekananda's spiritual nationalism is smooth, silent and tacit that abhors brutality, blood-shed or violence of anysort.

(G) **LIBERALISM**

Swami Vivekananda, the nationalist was also a great liberal. A nation free from external bondage must provide liberty or freedom to its members. Liberty or freedom he considered to be the very core of his nationalism. To him freedom is the life-spirit of the universe. It is the ultimate goal, the destiny and the destination towards which the whole universe moves. As he said, "Freedom is the goal of the universe. Nor love nor hate, nor pleasure nor pain, nor death nor life, nor religion nor irreligion, not this, not this." Everything animate or inanimate and every being of the universe are activated by the passion for freedom. To quote him, "We see that the whole universe is working. For what? For salvation, for liberty; from the atom to the highest being working for the one end; liberty for the mind, for the body, for the spirit. All things are always trying to get freedom, flying away from bondages."

Thus the passion for breaking to pieces the

(62) Ibid, Vol-VIII, P.344
bondages of all sorts and emerging to the realm of freedom is very common to inanimate and animate objects, from the minutest atoms to the mightiest planetary bodies. This passion is the propelling force that set things in their respective places and make them operate as per the law of the Nature. As Swami Vivekananda has said, "All human life, all nature is struggling to attain freedom. The sun is moving towards the goal, so is the earth circling round the sun, so is the moon circling round the earth."

Besides, Swami Vivekananda argues on the basis of the history of human civilization that all social, economic and political institutions also aim at this goal and aspire to reach the destination of freedom. As he said, "What is it we all seek? Freedom. All the efforts and struggles of life is for freedom. It is the march of Universal of races of the worlds and of systems."

Above every thing freedom is the most distinguishing characteristic of man. Passion for freedom is his special trait. It is more discernible in man than in others: "Where as men are capable of visualing freedom and pursuing it others are incapable of the same." Hence he said, "This freedom that distinguishes us from mere machines, is what we are striving for." Love for freedom, he believed to be the characteristic feature of more

(64) Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol-II, P.126
(65) Ibid, Vol-VIII, P.401
(66) Ibid, Vol-I, P.333
developed and evolved in the process of evolution. As he said, "Freedom is the test of the higher being."

Swami Vivekananda believed that the urge for freedom in man is irrepressible and illimitable. There is an eternal call from within and a dictate of the supra self urging each of us persistently for assertion of the right of freedom. Hence he said, "Within ourselves is the eternal voice, speaking of eternal freedom."

Swami Vivekananda believed that freedom is indispensable for spiritual realisation of man and it is also equally indispensable for him for the realisation of his personality in social, economic and political spheres. He therefore wanted to make freedom the natural possession of all citizens of a nation. He expected that every individual should cultivate his body, mind and the spirit to the utmost extent. As he said, "Liberty does not certainly mean the absence of obstacle in the path of misappropriation of wealth etc. by you and me, but 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."

Passion for liberty is the urge for the unhindered expression of our personality. It is the liberty that provides necessary condition under which the individual develops his various potentialities of life. In the words

(67) Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol-VIII, P.40
(68) Ibid, Vol-II, P.325
(69) Ibid, Vol-V, P.145
of H.J. Laski, "Freedom are the opportunities, which the history has shown to be essential to the development of personality." It is natural with man to enjoy liberty and flourish in the society. Liberty makes man happy and society progressive. So according to J.S. Mill, "Freedom is one of the principal ingredients of human happiness and quite the chief ingredient of individual and social progress." Vindicating the same cause, Swami Vivekananda also said that liberty in thought and action is the only condition of life, growth and wellbeing, where it does not exist, the man, the race and the nation must go down. Explaining his attitude towards freedom he further said, "Freedom is the watchword. Be free! A free boy, a free mind and a free soul! That is what I have felt all my life. I would rather be doing evil freely than be doing good under bondage."

According to Swami Vivekananda the individual perfects himself by acting freely and the perfect individual, in turn, perfects the society, the nation. The strength and vitality of the nation depends on the individual's initiative and freedom. When individual's growth is obstructed state or nation ceases to flourish. Hence the individual must be made free and not be hindered in his quest for freedom. The state, he felt is only a social agency and it should not encroach upon the domain of individual's liberty.

(70) H.J. Laski, A Grammar of Politics, P. 44
(71) Quoted in C. E. M. Joad, Introduction to Modern Political Theory, P. 28
(72) Monmohan Ganguly, Swami Vivekananda- A Study, P. 60
(73) Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol-III, P. 515-16
and freedom with multiplicity of laws, rules and regulations. Too much of rules and regulations is a positive danger: to the individual initiative and growth. Hence he said, "This life is a tremendous assertion of freedom. Too many laws are sure sign of death. Wherever in the society there are too many laws, it is a sure sign that the society will soon die." (74)

Swami Vivekananda's belief in individual freedom led him to advocate equal rights of men in the society. Liberty is meaningless without equality of man. His faith in the inherent individual freedom is the basis of his defence of equal rights and opportunities for all individuals for their growth. Hence he emphasised on the abolition of all privileges in the society and upheld the right of each individual to equality. Like H.J.Laski by equality he meant the "absence of special privilege" and "adequate opportunities, laid open to all equally." So he condemned existence of privileges as baneful and tyrannical. As he said, "The idea of privilege is bane of human life. And whenever privilege is broken down, more and more light and progress come to a race." (75)

Swami Vivekananda's concept of individual freedom and equality of rights is based upon the democratic principle - 'To live and let other live.' The individual

(74) Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol-V, P.287
(75) H.J.Laski, A Grammar of Politics, P.152
(76) Ibid, P.154
will enjoy all his freedom and rights in such a way that he will not hinder the interest of others. He will live freely and allow others to live so. As he pointed out, "No one deserves liberty who is not ready to give liberty." He suggested that for proper progress of the society people must cultivate an assimilative outlook and identify themselves with others by which social freedom shall be furthered. In other words by social liberty Swami Vivekananda meant, growth-oriented social life, based on individual freedom and equality. As he said, "The whole life of society is the assertion of that principle of freedom."

Thus Swami Vivekananda advocated the cause of liberty and equality very ardently and inspired his countrymen to grow and prosper luxuriently in an atmosphere of liberty and equality without being rotten under the bondage of British rule. Nehru therefore has befittingly remarked, "Again and again Swami Vivekananda laid stress on the necessity for liberty and equality and raising of the masses." His very insistence on liberty and equality gave a severe jolt to the authoritarian outlook of the British. It also kindled a new spirit among the degenerated mass. Millions of people came forward to claim their freedom, liberty and equality by over throwing the fetters of the British regime.

(78) Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol-IV, P.368
(79) Ibid, Vol-II, P.115
(80) Jawaharlal Nehru, Discovery of India, P.315
In Swami Vivekananda's theory of nationalism we find an organic nature of the nation. This organic nature of the nation refers to nationalism as a living organism. To Swami Vivekananda each nation is like an individual that has one special theme in its life. This theme is the principal note and all other notes come to identify themselves with this principal note to produce the national harmony. As he said, "I see that each nation, like each individual has one theme in this life, which is its centre, the principal note round which every other note comes to form the harmony." As in case with individuals so also in case with nations, the individual speciality differs. In one nation it may be political power as is the case in England, in another artistic excellence in case with Rome and philosophic uniqueness as with Greece. However in case of India religion forms the centre, the key-note of the whole music of national life. The individual if abandons his speciality, that he has attained since his birth, sinks to ruination. Same is the case with a nation, if it violates its theme or speciality. As Swami Vivekananda said, "If any nation attempts to throw off its national vitality - the direction, which has become its own through the transmission of centuries - that nation dies, if it succeeds in the attempt." If India throws off

(81) Swami Vivekananda, Lectures From Colombo to Almora, P.125
(82) Ibid, P.125
her religion - her life-force overboard and picks up politics or social refinement as the centre of her national life, then she will pave the path for her own extinction. In order to prevent this, India has to vitalise her religion first and subordinate everything to it. Therefore 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?"

Further according to Swami Vivekananda, India's life blood is spirituality. If it courses pure, strong and vigorous everything will get right. If the disease-carrying germ is thrown out of our body, then the vitality of our body is reassured. We become strong, stout and immune to ailment. In the same way when national body is weakened all sorts of disease-carrying germs creep into the social, educational and economic fields and paralyse the whole national organism. Various organs of the national organism become weak. The spirit of nationalism becomes dim. The ship of the nation faces storms and shivers. As he said, "When the life blood is strong and pure, no disease germ can live in that body. Our life-blood is spirituality. If it flows clear, if it flows strong and pure and vigorous, everything is right; political, social, any other material defects, even the poverty of the land, will be cured if that blood is pure." So we must

(83) Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol-III, P.221
(84) Lectures From Colombo to Almora, P.197
guard the vitality of our national life with full vigil to keep the spirit of our nationalism immune from attack against disease-carrying germs that seek to crowd in to the social system and paralyse our national back-bone.

Although spiritualism and religiosity are the key-notes of our nationalism other aspects of national life - social, political etc. should not be neglected. Yet spiritualism and religiosity are primary whereas other aspects are secondary. As he said, "if religion the prime factor of our national life, is strengthened all other aspects of our life, too will be invigorated."

(1) RELIGION AS A UNIFYING FACTOR

After having studied world history thoroughly well Swami Vivekananda arrived at the conclusion that religion is the most cardinal ingredient for the integration of human society. It is as a matter of fact is the most important unifying force of a nation. As Dr. Radhakrishnan has observed, "Religion is a social cement, a way in which men express their aspirations........" A nation is strong if it has no ethnic problem and people have a common religious sentiment. Misunderstanding and misinterpretation of religion is the cause of all nefarious

(85) Nationalistic and Religious Lectures of Swami Vivekananda, P.61
(86) Dr.Radhakrishnan, Recovery of Faith, P.27
upheaval. Swami Vivekananda was much shocked to see how humanity is broken up in to a number of separate worlds, each with its particular religious tradition. Hence he felt that religion should form the unifying factor of a nation. He felt that when religion is estranged from this spiritual urges towards oneness, it is degenerated in to dry formalism or dry mechanised drilling, a routine affairs of life that causes untold misery to human society in the long run. True religion according to him should lift us out of our ruts.

Swami Vivekananda realised that in a multi-religious country like India unity and concord at national level can not be expected unless people are made to understand the true essence of religion. So he tried to solve all religious conflicts and dissention and gather all the scattered spiritual forces of India to concentrate themselves in to one focus. As he said, "National union in India must be a gathering up of its scattered spiritual forces. A nation in India must be a union of those whose heart beat to the same spiritual tune."

Swami Vivekananda felt that 'Variety is the very nature of man' and as philosophy of life differs, various sects and creeds are obvious in human society. But there should not be for this reason, sectarian quarrels and conflicts

(87) Swami Vivekananda, Lectures From Colombo to Almora, P. 286-87
that rend the sky and the air. There should be co-ordination, harmony among the various faiths, creeds and sects of people as religion is one, the end of which is to uphold human existence.' Therefore he said, "Sects......, as a matter of fact must exist here. But what need not exist is sectarian quarrel.  
Sects must be, but sectarianism need not."  

To bring the people of various creeds and faiths home to the oneness of Godhead and religion, Swami Vivekananda referred to the most ancient book of the Hindus-the Vedas, that declare, "That which exist is one, but sages call Him by various names."  

Unification of religions to lead mankind to one path and one goal was the most fundamental principle of Swami Vivekananda, which he inherited as a genuin successor from his great Master - SriRamkrishna, about whom he said, "To proclaim and make clear the fundamental unity underlying all religions, was the mission of my Master....... He felt every religion undisturbed because he had relaised that in reality they are all part and parcel of the one eternal religion."  

For unification of all these religious sects, faiths and creeds of India and elimination of the meaningless diversities that hinder the great national unity, Swami Vivekananda visualised that there are certain principles that are

(88) Swami Vivekananda, Lectures From Colombo to Almora, P.287  
(90) Ibid, Vol-IV, P.187
common to all sects, who call themselves as Hindu. Of all these principles the first is that all sects believe the Vedas to be the eternal teaching of Hinduism. People of all faith believe that this holy literature, without beginning and without end, coeval with nature, is the source of all spiritual solace. Before this all our sectarian quarrel and conflicts melt in to oneness of belief. As he said, "We all believe that this holy literature is without beginning and without end, coeval with nature ...... and that all our religious differences all our religious struggles must end when we stand in the presence of that holy book; we are all agreed that this is the last court of appeal in all our spiritual differences."

The second point of agreement among various faiths he felt is that all faiths believe themselves to be different paths leading to the same goal i.e. realisation of God. This conviction, enshrined in the Hindu scriptures, appeals to people of all faiths. Swami Vivekananda was much impressed by his great Master on this point who said, "I have practised all religions - Hinduism, Islam, Christianity and I have also followed the paths of different Hindu sects. I have found that it is the same God, towards whom all are directing their steps though a long different paths. You must try all beliefs and traverse all the different ways once. Where ever I look I see man quarreling in the name of

(91) Swami Vivekananda, Lectures From Colombo to Almora, P.288
religion - Hindus, Mohammedians, Brahmos, Vaishnavas and the rest but they never reflect that He who is called Krishna is also called Siva and bears the name of primitive Energy. Jesus and Allah as well - the same Ram with thousand names."

The very declaration that all faiths have but one goal and one destination mesmerised the people of all faiths who forgot their ideological differences and merged in the ocean of Hinduism that served as a boost to Hindu national unity.

The third principle on the basis of which Swami Vivekananda sought to unify all sects of people is the belief of all in God - the creating and preserving power of the whole universe. The conception of God of different sects may be different; still they believe in God. As he said, "We may differ as to our conception of God. One may believe in a God, who is entirely personal, another may believe in a God, who is personal and yet not human and yet another may believe in a God, who is entirely impersonal...... Still are all believers in God..... Man, who does not believe in a most marvellous infinite power from which everything has come, in which everything lives and to which everything must in the end return, can not be called a Hindu."

The fourth common point of agreement among the various faiths is the theory of Samsara and the eternity of soul. Nature and man were not created at one point of time.

(92) Romain Rolland, The Life of Ram Krishna, P.84-85

(93) Swami Vivekananda, Lectures From Colombo to Almora, P.288-89
There is a cyclic movement of time and of the universe. For certain period of time the gross material universe is in manifested form and then it dissolves in to its primeval elemental nature to come out once again after an equally long period of abeyance. Man is involved in this cyclic process, living and dying and again getting a new body until he evolves in to his highest possibility and is released from the cyclic process of Samsara. He is not only a gross material body, not only even a finer body constituted of mind but basically the Atman, which has neither a beginning nor an end and knows not what death is. There will be differences in the conception of soul as in that of God, but we are all one in the basic belief that the soul was never created, that it will never die and that it will evolve passing through various bodies till it attains perfection through the human form.

But contrary to it, according to Swami Vivekananda, other races of the world hold a different view. They believe that this world was created only so many thousand years ago and is going to be destroyed eternally on a certain day. They also believe that the human soul has been created along with this Universe just out of nothing.

Another common point that according to Swami Vivekananda marked all Hindu sects - a point in respect of which we differ from the Western religion, is the acceptance of the idea that the soul in its essential nature is spirit,

(94) Swami Vivekananda, Lectures From Colombo to Almora, P.289
pure and perfect, infinite and blissful. As he said, "It is
this that we hold whether we are Shaktas, Sauras or Vaishnavas,
even whether we are Buddhists or Jainas, we all hold in India
that the soul is by its nature pure and perfect, infinite in
power and blessed." Therefore we close our eyes and look
within when we try to find God, where as in other religions
they look outwards for their God, who is dangerous. As George
Bernard Shaw remarked, "Beaware of him, whose God is in the
sky." The Hindus therefore do not suffer from self-depreciation.
They are conscious of their divinity within. This
faith in oneself, according to Swami Vivekananda, made us
great at one time and its loss has brought us to degeneration.
We have been reduced to slavery under the foreign rule and
Hindu nationalism has suffered.

Last but not the least is the idea which
is special to all sects of Hindu religion, the idea that
religion means realisation. It is not a theory or some
doctrine, enshrined in the holy books only. Mere believing
in certain theory or doctrines won't bring any realisation
of the soul to any individual. Knowledge of soul is to be
acquired only through realisation that prepares the path
for salvation. As Swami Vivekananda said, "Religion is to
be realised, not only heard; it is not only learning some
doctrine like a parrot....... And there is no salvation for
man until he seeks God, realises his own soul." Further as

(95) Swami Vivekananda, Lectures From Colombo to Almora,
P.290-91
(96) Ibid, P.293-94
he said, "Religion is not speculation, not argumentation, but realisation, and he is truly spiritual who lives and moves and has his being in the vision of the One in all."

Thus Swami Vivekananda sought to unify all the Hindu sects of India by pointing out their common bases, which are rooted in old Hindu religion. He declared that Hinduism is the main religion and these sects are its offshoots. If they are estranged from the main stream, they will lose their way. Therefore he asked the Indians to forget all their sectarian bickerings and fightings and merge with the main stream to save the great religion and their great nationality. As he said, "Therefore make way for the life-current of the nation. Take away the blocks that bar the way to the progress of this mighty river, clear its path, clear the channel and out it will rush by its own natural impulse and the nation will go on careering and progressing."

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**SECULAR IN NATURE**

It is true that Swami Vivekananda was deeply devoted to religion and spirituality. Yet he is also described as the 'Father of Hindu Secularism.'

The secular philosophy of Swami Viveka-

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(97) T.L. Vaswani, The Voice of Vivekananda, P.60
nanda, was greatly influenced by the philosophy of his great Master - Sri Ramkrishna, who took to the religious practices of various creeds like Tantrism, Vaishnavism, Advaitism, Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity and realised God through all of them. To him "The worthiest object of life is the realisation of God as the highest human ideal attainable only by development of high spiritual life and turning all actions and thoughts towards God. It is the essence of religion to a man, who has realised; and all religions are the paths that lead to the same goal." He deprecicated all metaphysical subtilities and philosophical discussions. The one thing that is essential for realisation of God, according to him, is the intensity of yearning for God and love for God. This is the only way to reach God.

Like his great Master Swami Vivekananda believed that religion is a means to an end but not an end in itself. All religions are alike, leading to that one end i.e. realisation of God. He thought that races and religions like Hindu, Christian, Islam etc. are the greatest bars to fraternal feelings between man and man, and it shatters the very fabric of human society. As Dr. Radha Krishnan said, "Racial discrimination is opposed to the teachings of world brotherhood." Swami Vivekananda therefore asked the people to break down these barriers

(99) B.N. Luniya, Evolution of Indian Culture, P.492-93
(100) Dr. Radha Krishnan, Recovery of Faith, P.29
as they had no significance in promoting the spiritual attitude of men. Instead it had some baneful impact on human mind, turning human beings into satans and demons. His attitude towards other religions is best expressed in his own words, "I accept all religions that were in the past and worship God with everyone of them in whatever form they worship him. I shall go to the mosque of Mohammedan; I shall enter the Christian church and kneel before the Crusifix; I shall enter the Buddhistic temple where I shall take refugee in Buddha and in his law. I shall go in to the forest and sit down in meditation with the Hindu, who is trying to see the light which enlightens the heart of everyone."

Hence as one who had profound faith in secularism, Swami Vivekananda emphasised on religious toleration and the sameness of truth in all religions. He took pride in declaring that 'India is the only country that believes in religious toleration and accepts all religions are true.' He criticised the Western countries for their religious persecution and once again felt proud of his nation "which has sheltered the persecuted and the refugees of all religions and all nations of the earth." However his secularism went much beyond mere religious toleration. The secular constitution of Indian Republic owes a lot to Swami Vivekananda.

(102) T.L. Vaswani, The Voice of Vivekananda, P.59
(103) Ibid, P. 59
Swami Vivekananda is said to have observed that what India needed was not more of spirituality as she needed bread too. The material demands of the poor is as important as their spiritual demands. He stood for a complete separation between religion and social laws. As he said, "Social laws are created by economic conditions under the sanctions of religion. The terrible mistake of religion was to interfere in social matters. What we want is that religion should not be a social reformer but we insist at the same time that society has no right to become a religious law giver. Hands off! keep yourself to your own bounds and everything would come right." (104)

According to Swami Vivekananda what we want is not so much of spirituality as the bringing down of Advaita into the material world. Bread must be taken care of first and then religion. We stuff them with too much of religion when the poor fellows have been starving. As he said, "Man is guided by stomach. He walks and the stomach goes first and the head afterwards." Hence for the eradication of the poverty of the people of India Swami Vivekananda advocated a secular policy. Swami Vivekananda had really felt the pulse of India. He realised that religious discrimination touches the very sentiment of the people. So he sought to place, in his plan of national reconstruction, all sects and faiths on equal

(104) Quoted in V.D. Mohajan, Modern Indian Political Thought, P.61
(105) Swami Vivekananda, Proletariat ! Win Equal Rights, P.57
footing, after having eradicated all parochialism of religious outlook of the people of different faiths. He held that the human society would have made far greater advancement had there been no sectarianism, fanaticism and violence in the name of religion. So in a multireligious country like India secularism is the only panacea to solve the socio-religious problems and pave the path for national integration and build up the edifice of a viable and powerful Indian nation. This was really the true mission of Swami Vivekananda.

CULTURAL REVIVALISM

Swami Vivekananda after his study of the history of India was surprised to discover its glorious heritage and culture. The eternal values of her religion and philosophy struck him with awe. The unending glorious panorama of her heritage flashed in his mind's eye. As an illustrious and worthy son of the land, he could hardly withstand the cultural extinction of his mother country under the influence of the West. He was upset to see the predicament of his country. He took firm decision to revive India's past heritage and rejuvenate India on the basis of her scriptures like the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Gita and the Puranas.

(106) D.R. Bali, Modern Indian Thought, P.36
It has been said, "This sentiment of revivalism was generated as a reaction against the great challenge thrown by an alien aggressive and arrogant civilization, politically dominant and economically powerful." Even Jawaharlal Nehru, a thoroughly westernised man, vindicating the cause of revivalism in the regeneration of India said, "The future has to be built on the foundation laid in the past...... To deny the past and break with it completely is to uproot ourselves and sapless, dry-up." Swami Vivekananda tried to awake Indians by presenting to them the glorious picture of India's past, her customs and traditions, and not by imitating the West. He was of the view that blind imitation paves the path for further extinction. However he had abiding faith in Indian customs and traditions and he wanted to revive them for national awakening. As he said, "Our ancestors were great. We must first recall that we must learn the elements of our being, the blood that courses in our veins; we must have faith in that blood and what it did in the past; and out of that faith and consciousness of the past greatness, we must build an India yet greater than what she was." He appealed to all the reformers of the country to make the country-men understand the past as the past he felt is the source of all aspirations to

(107) V.P. Varma, Modern Indian Political Thought, P.618
(108) Jawaharlal Nehru, India Today and Tomorrow, P.8
rebuild the future of the nation. As he said, "The more therefore the Hindus study the past, the more glorious will be their future and whoever tries to bring the past to the door of every one, is a great benefactor to his nation."

Swami Vivekananda's aim was to stimulate the pride of the Indians in their own customs, civilization and way of life. He projected the Indian religious culture and civilization even in the world scenario. In India he travelled to every nook and corner and presented before his country-men the glorious picture of their hoary past and established its superiority over the West. Swami Gambhirananda has observed, "He (Vivekananda) was never tired of showing to his country-men the value and significance of the culture they had inherited from their ancestors - a culture in comparison with which any other civilization, past or present, paled in to insignificance - till their hearts throbbed at the very name of India."

Swami Vivekananda tried to convince his people that indiscriminate imitation of the West is pernicious to national integrity. He deplored the growing despiritualisation and denationalisation of the Indians under the influence of the West. So emphasising on the revival of India's way of life he said, "We must grow according to our nature. Vain is to attempt the lines of

(110) Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol-IV, P.324
(111) Swami Gambhirananda, A Short Life of Swami Vivekananda, P. 92
action that foreign societies have engrafted upon us: it is impossible. Glory unto God that it is impossible, that we can not be twisted and tortured in to the shape of other nations. I do not condemn the institution of other races; they are good for them, but not for us. With other sciences, other institutions and other traditions behind them they have got their present system. We, with our traditions, with thousands of years of karma behind us naturally can only follow our own bent, run in our own grooves and that we shall have to do."

According to Swami Vivekananda Indians can not be Westerners. Therefore imitating the West is very dangerous. If we try to copy the West, we will die, we will have no more life in us. In support of his argument he said, "A stream is taking its rise away beyond where time began, flowing through millions of ages of human history; do you mean to get hold of that stream and push it back to its source to a Himalayan glacier? Even if that were practicable, it would not be possible for you to be Europeanised. If you find it is impossible for the European to throw off the few centuries of culture, which there is in the West, do you think it is possible for you to throw off the culture of shining scores of centuries? It can not be." Therefore according to Swami Vivekananda to Europeanise India is an impossible and foolish task.

(113) Ibid, Vol- III, P.172
Though the whole theory of Swami Vivekananda's nationalism aimed at reviving the old valuable culture of India, it is not repugnant to assimilate any new things to suit the need of the time and make Indian nationalism more dynamic and resourceful. So the assimilative nature of Swami Vivekananda's nationalism is very noteworthy. It is evident from his own statement: "In the remote past our country made gigantic advances in spiritual ideas. Let us today bring before our mind's eye that ancient history. But the one great danger in meditating over the long past greatness is that we cease to exert ourselves for new things and content ourselves with vegetating upon that bygone ancestral glory and priding ourselves upon it. We should guard against that."

Thus both revivalism and careful assimilation characterise Swami Vivekananda's nationalism, that inspired all the great leaders of the country like Tagore, Aurobindo and Gandhi. Indian freedom movement received tremendous impetus from it. Jawaharlal Nehru in his famous essay - Synthesis is Our Tradition writes, "Vivekananda brought back some thing of the vigour of old Indian thought and dressed it in a modern garb. Political and cultural movements grew up and culminated in Gandhi and Tagore."

(114) Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol-III, P.454
(115) Jawaharlal Nehru, Synthesis is Our Tradition, Living English Prose, Edited by J. Mohanty, Calcutta, 1990, P.95
Swami Vivekananda’s nationalism is universalistic in nature. Unlike the exclusive and racial nature of German nationalism, it is of universal nature. It has wide and universal application and importance. His concern for the poor and downtrodden of India is his concern for the poor and downtrodden of all nations. His vigorous drive against social injustice, communal discord and caste prejudices in India benefits the whole human society. It is a solution for similar problems of all nations. His clarion call for general fraternity and unity of India’s people to rise against the alien oppression is a great lesson for other countries, rotting under foreign domination. His synthesis of the two divergent ideals - spiritualism and materialism, bridged the age-long gulf between East and West and ushered in an era of international peace, goodwill and fellowfeelings. Hence his nationalism is not narrow nationalism, meant for India only; it is wide open for the whole world to share and enjoy through India as a stage. As I.P. Chelishev has observed, "Vivekananda’s impassioned call to the general fraternity and unity of India’s people to the abolition of religious and communal discord and of caste prejudices, were combined with an appeal for peace and friendship among all nations of the world, which is the corner-stone of the Indian tradition, the main content of the Indian national character."

(116) Swami Vivekananda - Studies in Soviet Union, Published on 150th Birth Anniversary of Sri Ramkrishna, P.217
Swami Vivekananda's nationalism is fraught with cosmopolitan view that upholds the doctrine of solidarity of all human beings and of all nations, irrespective of race, religion and culture. It seeks to solve the problems of the world - of all nations, East and West - whether Hindu or Muslim or Christian. As he said, "To become broad, to go out to amalgamate to universalise is the end of our aims." His nationalism is a move against all sorts of racialism, sectarianism, linguism or regionalism. It treats the whole world to be one family, where the whole mankind is its member. It envisages the idea of "Oneness of all, the infinite, the idea of the impersonal, the wonderful idea of the eternal soul of man, of the unbroken continuity in the march of being and the infinity of the Universe." This is what the Vedanta teaches to the world.

Though Swami Vivekananda some times talks of Hindu nationalism yet his concept of nationalism is universalistic in nature. As he said, "I know my mission in life and ......; I belong as much to India as to the world."

After a through study of the world history, Swami Vivekananda expounded the theory of survival of all nations of the world. He said that from human history we come to know that every nation has to give a quota of its own in the field its specialisation for the general

(118) Ibid, Vol- III, P.454
advancement of humanity and when it is forgotten the nation decays and dies. Nature replaces it by more vigorous and younger races to pick up the role. For it is the nature's law to get rid of an atrophied part of an organism and let some others take up its function. Thus there emerged the great nations in the past - Egypt, Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome etc., whose civilizations were very rich and flourishing. But they all went out of the scene and are occupied by nations whose culture and national history have nothing to do with these ancient nations. The reason for it, said Swami Vivekananda is that they failed to accomplish their national purpose or ideal, which were either political, social or military etc. After a short period of meteoric appearance they lost their moorings in their national theme or ideal that led to their extinction and the emergence of new power in their place. As he said, '....each race and each nation appears to me to have a particular ideal - a prominent ideal, running through its whole life and this ideal is the back-bone of the national life. He further said, ".....no nation can rise, can become great, can work at all, without enthusiastically coming under the banner of one of those great ideals in life."

Swami Vivekananda's concern for the mankind is best expressed in his concept of individual liberty, right and equality - that he considered to be the greatest

(120) Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol-III, P.137
(121) Ibid, Vol-III, P.315
contribution for healthy progress of human society. He asserted that 'Liberty, Right and Equality are the noblest aspirations of man-kind that unfolds human personality towards -allround development - both material and spiritual.' These are the divine possessions, endowed with divinity for the happiness of the mankind. Liberty, Right and Equality are the birth right of every individual. It reminds us of the words of Jefferson in the 'Declaration of Independence' ".........that all men are created equal, that are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable Rights that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

Swami Vivekananda's epoch making and unprecedented call for strength and fearlessness is no less renowned. It is his fiery message to the mankind to fight the dark forces of evils that chain him to the dungeon of suffering. The nefarious imperialistic design of the West met with a fatal blow at his call. I.P. Cheleshev has observed, "Urging people to be fearless and bold to fight the dark forces for their happiness and better future, Vivekananda at the same time declared that it was hopeless and useless to try and rule the world by force of arms."

Thus Swami Vivekananda's nationalism is not narrow and selfish nationalism of India, blind to the interest of mankind. It provides a positive milieu for

(122) Dr. Radha Krishnan, Recovery of Faith, P.28

(123) Swami Vivekananda - Studies in Soviet Union, Published on 150th Birth Anniversary of Sri Ramkrishna, P.217
peaceful coexistence of all nations of the world. His whole theory is based on love for man-God. So we can regard Swami Vivekananda in the words of I.P. Chelishev* as "one of the initiators in India of the most human movement of our time - the peace movement."

To sum up Swami Vivekananda nationalism is spiritualistic in nature. Himself a spiritualistic personality, he considered spiritualism to be a secret of national life and the cementing factor for bringing about national unity and national integration. His nationalism is also didactic in nature. He has preached the secret doctrine of making a nation strong, united and prosperous. He has called upon his country-men to be truthfull, pure and unselfish to build up a mighty nation. Himself a saint who not only renounced the world but also worldly desires wanted to remove all poverty of the people and establishment of socio-economic equality in the nation. A universalist by faith and profession, he believed in spiritual expansionism of the nation. A saint who moved round the East and West to preach the philosophy of Vedanta, himself believed that India as a nation should make its presence felt round the globe not by shouting high sounding slogans but by smooth and silent work of service and sacrifice. He was an advocate of liberalism and desired that such liberalism should constitute the core of his nationalism and Indian nationalism.

(124) Swami Vivekananda - Studies in Soviet Union, Published on 150th Birth Anniversary of Sri Ramkrishna, P. 117
He believed in the organic nature of the nation and felt the utility of religion as an integrating factor of the nation. Although a saint under a religious teacher, he believed that the nation and the Indian nation should be a secular one, accommodating and assimilating within its bounds of people of different faiths and religious persuasion. For the sake of building of a mighty nation he felt the need of cultural revivalism in India. Above all Swami Vivekananda, although a nationalist, believed in universalism. His nationalism was not exclusive, arrogant and jingoistic nationalism.