

1. RAJA RAMMOHUN ROY : (INAUGURATOR OF INDIAN RENAISSANCE)

Raja Rammohan Roy formed a consistent philosophy guided by “*lokasreya*” or *public good*. He translated that philosophy of common good of the public into reality. He, with his multcentred personality, did multifaceted activities and brought reforms in the sphere of society and education. In every activity, he kept his personality integral and intact.

He in his reformatory activities emphasised over individual progress and welfare, but he knew very well that without the progress of the society as a whole, that progress of an individual was not possible. Raja Rammohan Roy knew it very well that the mark of social progress was individual progress and the very basis of individual progress was the organization of the social progress.

He had profound faith in truth, reason, rationality, justice and humanity. He believed in the Almighty power. He held the view that the universe should be governed by morally.

SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY

- The philosophy by means of which he was guided throughout his life was “*universal humanism*”. He made glorious synthesis of nationalism with internationalism by interpreting religion with rationalism.
- Another crux of his social philosophy was *service to mankind*. Social service, away from self-centeredness and bounded by inter religious harmony, was always preferred by him for its purification.
- He believed in harmony of Individual Progress through Social Progress.
- He was a great religious reformer. He truly interpreted the Hindu scriptures and Shastras before his countrymen. He quoted passages from those texts to establish the superiority of disinterested works to the works performed with the desire of future reward.
- To him, human service or service to humanity alone could bring the knowledge of God and social, moral, religious upliftment of the people. His life was dedicated to that notion of humanity.
- **ON SATI:** He mainly grouped the important points under three heads, those important points which had been scattered through many essays and tracts. Those were: - according to the sacred books of Hindu, Sati was:
 - Not obligatory but at most optional.
 - Not the most commendable but the least virtuous act a widow could perform and
 - Must be a voluntary ascending of the pyre and entering into the flames- a mode never practised in the conventional Sati.
- **Belief in Western Ideals of Social Democracy:** A firm believer of democratic society, enriched with the ideas of freedom, equality and fraternity sufficient for bringing changes in the mental outlook of the people. western ideals of social democracy greatly influenced him as personally he believed in mental freedom, personal independence and liberty

RELIGIOUS PHILOSOPHY

The main essence of Roy’s religious beliefs was the doctrine of universal religion that meant to worship one true God. He believed that such a feeling would broaden the minds of his countrymen from the narrow sphere of superstitions and irrationality. Those high and lofty ideals of one true God would relieve men from sectarian bias and would guide them to the cardinal principle of service to man.

- He knew that social upliftment was possible only if religious modernity is achieved.
- **Rites and Rituals:** He did not believe in useless *hardships and privations* regarding purity and impurity. Those useless rites and rituals, he considered as detrimental to the social life of the individual and would be the source of all sorts of discomforts.

- His rational view was that: men in general were suffering from the influence of habit, custom and blindness.
- In his religion, he had made two points clear. **Firstly**, he attached more importance to character than forms and ceremonies, and **secondly**, preferred a life of charity and service towards the society and world at large.

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

Education should have *twofold objectives* of *spiritual and moral upliftment* of people by means of which they would understand the true notion of God in a comprehensive manner.

- ***Synthesis of Past and Progressive Future :***
 - He was interested in synthesising ancient spiritual resources with the western culture and literature.
 - He synthesised vernacular with the language English. He personally worked tirelessly for the improvement of vernacular and at the same time he was equally interested to make his countrymen well verse in the language English.
- ***Advocacy for Modern Scientific Education***
 - Proposed for Science oriented English education.
 - His Support for English Language was based on his understanding that it would bring scientific knowledge to the natives.
 - to liberate his countrymen from numerous dogmas and slumber, Roy advocated for modern, western and scientific education to the exclusion of the external factors which were responsible for debasing the texture of the society.
 - He even helped to Missionaries for Spreading Useful Western Education.
- ***Education for Girls:*** Today the present generation is very much conscious about women emancipation and girls' education. But two centuries earlier to support the women's cause was farsighted vision, he declared that the education of women was equally necessary as for men.

“Rammohan never attempted to make his reforms more palatable by toning down his rejection of what was wrong. He would have no playing with words, no shifting of responsibility.” -- Max Muller

2 SWAMI DAYANAND SARASWATI

INTRODUCTION

Swami Dayananda devoted himself to the mission of uplifting the country, the rescue of the sacred books, the removal of sectarianism and finally, the promulgation of Vedic religion throughout the world. He was an important Hindu reformist whose views did much to promote gender-equality, democracy, education, as well as a new confidence in India's cultural past and future capabilities.

Of all Swamis' work the most Important and the most widely known is **Satyartha Prakash**. It has the same place among the **Aryas** as the *Bible among the Christians* and the *Koran among the Muslims*. It embodies the teachings of Swami Dayananda Saraswati in all most all matters be it religious, social, educational and moral; his beliefs, disbeliefs, teachings and the way of life he prescribes for men. So, at the end of the **Satyartha Prakash**, Swamiji has given a statement of his beliefs and disbeliefs, which has been summed up here.

ON RELIGION AND GOD

- He believed in a religion based on universal and all-embracing principles, which have always been accepted as true by mankind, and will continue to command the allegiance of mankind in the ages to come.
- True religion is the one which is above the hostility of all human creeds.
- He discarded those who are blinded by ignorance or have been led astray by sectarians, as they are not worthy of being accepted by the wise.
- His **conception of God** and *all other objects in universe* is founded on the teaching of the Vedas and other *true Sastras*, which is in conformity with the beliefs of all the sages.
- **“Ekam Sad Vipra Bahudha Vadanti”**-- (It means, He is one, sages call Him by many names)
- He offers a statement in support of beliefs of all good men. That is he believes in **worthy –being**, believed in by all men in all ages.
- He States: *“I do not entertain the least idea of founding the new religion or sect. My sole aim is to believe in truth and help others to believe in it, to reflect falsehood and to help others, in doing the same.”*
- He stated that *“had I been biased I would have championed any one of the religions prevailing in India. But I have not done so. On the contrary, I do not approve of what is objectionable and false in the institutions of this or other country.”*

CONCEPT OF MAN

- According to him, He alone is entitled to be called a man, who possesses a thoughtful nature and feels for others in the same way as he does for his own self. Also, does not fear the unjust, powerful, but fears the truly virtues, however, weak.
- He should always exert himself to protect the **“righteous Man”** and advance their good cause. A man should conduct himself worthy towards them even though he may not be resourceful i.e. extremely poor and weak and destitute of material resources.
- On the other hand, a man should constantly strive to destroy and oppose the wicked sovereign rulers of the whole earth.

ON ETHICS

- **Dharma** is the practice of **equitable justice** together with that of truthfulness in word, deed and thought and the like virtues - in a word, that which is conformity with the Will of God as embodied in the Vedas.

- Righteously acquired wealth alone constitutes **artha**, while that which is acquired by foul means is **anartha**.
- The enjoyment of legitimate desires with the help of honestly acquired wealth constitutes **Kama**.
- The class and order, i.e. the **Varna and Asrama** of an individual should be determined by his merits. Those who are wise and learned are **Devas**. and therefore, Devapuja is honour shown to the wise and the learned - to one's father and mother, to the teacher, to a just ruler, to those who lead righteous lives, to women who are faithful to their husbands and to men who are faithful to their wives.
- Those who are foolish and ignorant are **Asuras**, those who are wicked and sinful are **Rakshas** and those are filthy in their habits are **Pisachas**.

ON EDUCATION

- According to **Swami Dayananda**, education (begins) starts from the mother's womb. A mother should after the birth of the child and when he learns to speak, teach him to pronounce letters correctly.
- When the child understands a little he should be taught how to address his elders, superiors and interiors and a love for knowledge inculcated in his mind. The mother should impart religious tone to the child.
- The first teacher of the child according to **Dayananda**, was his mother and the important thing to be taught to the child was regard for religion and ethics.
- To make children morally strong and healthy he has advised the parents to develop in their children such sterling qualities as truthfulness, heroism, patience, cheerfulness etc.

PRINCIPLES OF ARYA SAMAJ

- God is the Primary source of all true knowledge and of all that is known by its means.
- God is existent intelligent, and blissful. He is **formless, Omniscient**, just, merciful, unborn, endless, unchangeable, beginning less, the support of all, the master of all, Omnipresent, immanent, immortal, fearless, eternal, and holy, and the maker of all. He alone is worthy of being worshiped.
- The Vedas are Scriptures of all true knowledge. It is the paramount duty of all Aryas to read them, to teach them (others), recite them, and hear them being read.
- All persons should ever ready to accept truth and renounce untruth.
- All acts ought to be performed in conformity to Dharma i.e., after the consideration of right and wrong.
- The Prime objective of Arya Samaj is to do good to the world i.e. to ameliorate physical, spiritual and social condition of all men.
- All ought to be treated with love, justice, righteousness and due regard to their merits.
- Ignorance ought to be dispelled and knowledge disseminated.
- No one should remain content with his own well-being, but on the contrary he should regard his well-being lying in the well-being of others.
- In matters affecting the well-being of the society (all others), the individual should subordinate his personal likings, in matters affecting him alone, he is to enjoy the freedom of action.

In some respects, he qualifies as an architect of modern India as an emerging scientific and technological power. He spoke of the superiority of Hindu culture and religion in defence of Europeans denigration of Indian culture and religion. However, Aspects of his views impacted negatively on inter-religious relations and contributed to extreme forms of Hindu nationalism.

3. MOTHER TERESA

BACKGROUND

Mother Teresa was born in Eastern Europe to Albanian parents, shortly before the outbreak of World War I. She first came to India as a missionary nun with the Catholic Loreto Order, when she was still a teenager. For nearly two decades, she lived a secluded and relatively comfortable life, teaching geography to middle- and upper-class Indian girls in the vast Loreto compound in Calcutta. On her few forays out of the gated complex, Teresa was stunned by the desperate poverty in the squalid neighborhoods that lay just beyond the convent walls.

In 1946, while traveling to the Loreto convent in Darjeeling, India, Mother Teresa's life changed forever. She heard God calling her to work and live among the destitute and forgotten men, women, and children who inhabited Calcutta's teeming slums. It took nearly two years for Mother Teresa to secure the Catholic Church's permission to abandon her cloistered lifestyle as a Loreto Sister and begin her mission of mercy in the streets of India's most populated city.

In 1950, the Vatican officially recognized the small band of women—many of them former pupils—who had gathered around Mother Teresa as a new order: the Missionaries of Charity. For the next 47 years, Mother Teresa, assisted by her sari-clad Sisters, founded scores of schools, medical dispensaries, orphanages, and homes for the dying. They worked first in Calcutta, then throughout India, and by the late 1960s, in cities and towns all over the world. In the process, Mother Teresa became an international celebrity, a symbol of compassion and hope for people of all religious and ethnic backgrounds.

ETHICAL TEACHINGS OF MOTHER TERESA

- Justice and Fairness
- **Everyone needs to feel loved:** God has created us for great things: **to love and offer love**, to experience tenderness toward others, as he did.
- Follow in Gods footsteps
- Persevere (Never Stop Trying)
- Her ethical reflections: True love is the sort that gives until all that can be given has been given.
- Guild, help and give to others
- Spread love everywhere you go
- Eeveryone has equal rights
- Christ Commandment: "Love as I have loved you,"

4. ANNIE BESANT

She was British socialist, theosophist, women's rights activist, writer, orator, educationist, and philanthropist. Regarded as a champion of human freedom, she was an ardent supporter of both Irish and Indian self-rule. She also became involved in politics in India and joined the Indian National Congress. When World War I erupted in 1914, she helped launch the Home Rule League to campaign for egalitarianism in India and dominion status within the Empire.

She was also elected as First women president of the Indian National Congress in 1917.

HER CONTRIBUTIONS

- She gave lectures and supported the Indian independence movement and condemned the British policies openly.
- She advocated for two **main approaches** to the re-awakening of India and the achievement of independence. It included the **religious and education** reforms simultaneously.

EDUCATION

- As an educationist, her contributions included the founding of the Banaras Hindu University.
- Annie Besant's educational philosophy is based on theosophical ideals of education according to which each child should receive an education suited to develop his particular and individual faculty.
- He should be imparted education which makes him useful citizen of nation.

WOMEN EMANCIPATION

- She fought for the just causes such as women's rights, freedom of thought, secularism, birth control, Fabian socialism and workers' rights etc.
- In Pursuance of women welfare and feminism, she led in the publication of Charles Knowlton's *The Fruits of Philosophy*, an early text that **supported birth control**. She was a leading member of the National Secular Society and the South Place Ethical Society.
- Annie Besant began numerous reforms that have given women the equality of status and rights which they enjoy today.

5. SAROJINI NAIDU

BACKGROUND

She was recognized by the sobriquet *The Nightingale of India*, was a child genius, Indian independence activist and poet. She was the first Indian woman to become the President of the Indian National Congress and the first woman to become the Governor of Uttar Pradesh state. She was a great patriot, politician, speaker and administrator of all the famous women of India. Her birthday is celebrated as *Women's Day*.

In 1925 she reached the height of her fame when she was the first Indian woman elected President of the National Congress. At her inauguration, she was led to the podium in a great procession that included Mahatma Gandhi and both Motilal and Jawaharlal Nehru. With the eyes of the nation on her she acknowledged the honour done to her as a "generous tribute to Indian womanhood."

HER CONTRIBUTIONS

- During 1915-1918, she travelled across India, preaching on social welfare, women empowerment, liberation and nationalism.
- She was motivated by Jawaharlal Nehru and embarked on providing help and support for the indigo workers in Champaran who were being subjected to violence and tyranny.
- She played a vital role in awakening the women of India. She re-established their self-esteem and often said, "*When there is oppression, the only self-respecting thing is to rise and say this shall cease today, because justice is my right*".
- She joined the Non-Cooperation Movement, against Rowlatt Act in 1919, organized and led by Mahatma Gandhi.
- She was chosen the Home Rule League's ambassador to England. In 1924, she became a delegate to the East African Indian Congress.

LINKING MOTHERLAND AND FEMINISM

- She recited poem at congress session "*ode to India*" the centre of the poem lies the image of India as a "*slumbering Mother*" who must be awoken by the daughter's cry.
- The liberation of India is held to be inseparable from the liberation of its women.
- She envisioned India as the image of the maternal home-*the locus of earliest nurturing, consoles and bonding*- What could be a more fitting desire for a feminist and Nationalist?
- As a woman, she equated Independence for India as nothing more than a proposed and "mere modest domestic programme."
- It was one she was willing to die for: "to restore to India her true position as the supreme mistress in her own home. . . . It will be my lovely though difficult task, through the coming year, to set my mother's house in order.
- Not that this feminine image should be misinterpreted as quiescent, for Naidu goes on in her speech to argue for resolute, even war-like measures to combat the British, measures that were in conflict with Gandhi's posture of total *ahimsa*.
- She wanted compulsory military training for all children, remobilization of the villages, and the organization of urban workers so that both women and men could arm themselves. This arming of the nation against colonialism seemed to her a "natural and indispensable auxiliary of political emancipation."
- It seemed to her that there was no other way of overthrowing the enemy that lay both within and without: those "deadly forces of repression that challenge our human rights of liberty."