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## Swami Vivekananda

Swami Vivekananda's life span was from 1863 to 1902. There were many ups and downs in the social life of India. The time before Swamiji's birth was not that good from the social point of view. Untouchability was prevalent in the society in the name of religion. People had forgotten about the equality of social reformers, saints. The condition of the untouchables living in India was very bad. Hindu society was divided into castes. It can be said that the corrupt image of religion was in front of everyone at that time. At such a time, Swami Vivekananda emerged in front of everyone in the form of Sun to remove the darkness that prevailed over these three religion, nation and society. Swami Vivekananda followed the teaching that he had received from his guru Ramakrishna Paramhansa to improve the society without attaining his own salvation.



Swami Vivekananda had studied the then social conditions closely. He knew the smallest things related to the society. He was also aware of what was going on in Bengal, Punjab, Maharashtra at that time. He had acquired full knowledge of social revolutions in foreign countries, changing thoughts, through his foreign travels.

Swamiji toured India from 1888 to 1890 with the desire to see India closely and with the idea of solving those problems by hearing the cry of the downtrodden, the oppressed. He studied the bad conditions of Indian society. Understanding all the small and big changes in the history of India, he also kept the reasons behind those changes in front of the society.

Swami Vivekananda said that Indian society is a religious society. He used to say that spiritual thoughts should flow on this land before the ideas of socialist and state imagination in India. Religion means civilization cannot survive in this country without mutual good behaviour among the people, so religion should be well established, they say.

In Swamiji's view, caste system and caste discrimination are two different things. Caste system is the social structure of the time and caste discrimination is terrible. The original caste composition was good, but due to caste, the distinction between human beings is a perversion, he has presented such ideas many times. From the Upanishads to the present times, everyone tried to destroy caste discrimination. That is, if not the original caste system, then everyone tried to destroy the distorted caste distinctions that were in the society at that time at their own level. Swami Vivekananda says that Lord Buddha tried to restore the caste division in its original form. Ref: जाति, संस्कृति और समाजवाद: स्वामी विवेकानंद, रामकृष्ण मठ नागपूर, पृ. १८/ स्वामी विवेकानंद ग्रंथवाली खंड क्र. ७/ पृ. २०) Swamiji believed that there is chaos, not a system that discriminates among human beings on the basis of birth.

Swami Vivekananda never used such words as caste end or monochromatic society, but caste discrimination was introduced in the original religion as a perversion. To remove caste discrimination from such efforts as acceptable to the society and by the spiritual development of everyone, such a flawless society should be created, Swamiji is seen showing such desire many times. Swamiji's idea that a human being is born superior to another is a fantasy which is meaningless from the point of view of Vedanta. It was Swamiji's idea that true religion would begin only after Vedanta took out the concept of privilege, without its religion would not exist.

Swami Vivekananda says that even if there is disparity in nature, everyone should get equal opportunities. If someone gets more and someone less, then the weaker should get more opportunities than the stronger. Clarifying his view further, he says that the Brahmin does not have as much education as the Chandala has. If the son of a Brahmin would need one teacher, the son of a Chandala would need ten teachers.

Swami Vivekananda has 20yrs of social life, such deep social thought and divine efforts for the development of the underprivileged, the desire to awaken fraternity, the accurate knowledge of the efforts to be made for social reform, the longing for the development of the underprivileged by the plans of social development, all these qualities of Swami Vivekananda. Tatvgyan proves that Swami is a true social thinker.

## **Thoughts of others for Swami Vivekanand –**

### **1) Mahatma Gandhi**

"My homage and respect to the very revered memory of Swami Vivekananda... after having gone through [his works], the love that I had for my country became a thousand-fold."

## **2) Jawaharlal Nehru**

"His whole life and teaching inspired my generation... he brought his great spirituality to bear upon his patriotism and thus his message was not confined to India only, but was for the whole world. I pay my homage to his memory."

## **3) Romain Rolland**

"The thought of this warrior prophet of India left a deep mark upon the United States . . . . I cannot touch these sayings of his... without giving a thrill through my body like an electric shock. And what shocks, what transports must have been produced when in burning words they issued from the lips of the hero!"

## **4) Christopher Isherwood**

"[Vivekananda is] one of the very greatest historical figures that India has ever produced. When one sees the full range of his mind, one is astounded."

## **5) William James**

"The man [Vivekananda] is simply a wonder for oratorical power... the Swami is an honor to humanity."

## **6) National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution (from "Abroad in America: Visitors to the New Nation")**

"At this exposition [the Parliament of Religions], the Swami charmed audiences with his magical oratory, and left an indelible mark on America's spiritual development."

## **7) The Brooklyn Standard**

"It was the voice of the ancient rishis of the Vedas, speaking sweet words of love and toleration."

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**References –**

- 1) <https://ramakrishna.org/>