

Swami Vivekananda: The Innovator of Management Values¹

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Swami Vivekananda was not only a multi-faceted personality but was also far ahead of his times. Swamiji understood the problems facing humanity. Through the cause and effect method he traced the problems and provided solutions which served beyond immediate relief and farther into the future. He was a social reformer, a nationalist, and a management specialist. His concern was to elevate human kind and subsequently conquer all environments and circumstances. These unique qualities made him a leader of the supreme kind. Any block to human progress was his concern and he brought his great mind and heart in pointing out the obstructions and thereby providing solutions.

Today we talk about globalization but Swamiji spoke of globalization more than a century ago. He said, 'Even in politics and sociology, problems that were only national twenty years ago can no more be solved on national grounds only. They are assuming huge proportions, gigantic shapes. They can only be solved when looked at, in the broader light of international grounds. International organizations, international combinations, international laws are the cry of the day. That shows the solidarity' (CW 3.241). Globalization needs a globally acceptable icon like Swamiji, who not only travelled across the world extensively, but also understood the nations- their people, history, culture, ideals, and hence their wants. Swamiji was certainly pre-eminently qualified for this, for he did not just look at things from the surface but from within and sometimes from deep within. It is only such personalities who can think of oneself as a human being and as part of a human civilization that can inspire people to think in such terms. This is the fulcrum of building a global citizen who can only think of globalization and can work for global peace, prosperity, and progress. It must

be always remembered that many great leaders came with temporal powers and vanished without making any lasting contribution to humankind. Swamiji's vision of globalization and global civilization was always spiritual that can permanently benefit and change humans. He said, "Doubtless I do love India. But every day my sight grows clearer. What is India, or England, or America to us? We are the servants of that God who by the ignorant is called MAN. He who pours water at the root, does he not water the whole tree?" (8.349).

Corporate Responsibility

When we speak of Swamiji as 'the Great Innovator of Management Values', we must remember that during Swamiji's time the science of management did not exist. Generally management is nothing but organized common sense, and that is from time immemorial. When nations became industrialized and new markets and products were discovered, industries and companies grew and exploited labour; tycoons and powerful politicians started making the rules and therefore money. The science of management started only after the World War I. It first went into organizing labour, work measurement, work study, production, and productivity. Then slowly other departments came up. Peter Drucker in *The Best of Peter Drucker* says, "We made a mistake, I do not know from why and where, from 1930 we started making a mistake that equating management with only business management, but business management is only one part of the management."

Latest Management techniques like 'values-based management' that we know, Swamiji unconsciously practised them. There is a beautiful book called *The Power of Ethical Management* by Kenneth Blanchard and Norman Vincent Peale, where it is written on the cover 'You need not cheat in order to win'. And one of the paragraph starts with the sentence 'To work only for

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profits is like playing tennis with your eyes on the scoreboard rather than on the ball.' Therefore we have to give emphasis on values. Second, not only profit, but the method in which we are making that profit. Swamiji opines about the value-based management that *if one really wants to succeed, one must have credibility. Credibility will come when one practices values.* And his words are proving prophetic.

In a globalized business environment following companies survive. The companies that have credibility, that believe in quality, that believe in total quality management (TQM), that believe in zero defect, that believe in quality and at the same time deliver on schedule, that believe in giving the product at the most competitive price, and that believe in productivity. Rest wipe out. In a long run, values that give the credibility only survive. In the long run those without credibility disappear. Today we are talking about corporate responsibility, which has become the need of the hour. Swamiji spoke about this social responsibility and corporate responsibility centuries ago.

Azim Premji was once asked during an interview by India Today. 'What is the secret of your success?' He answered, 'I believe in practising values.' And then he said 'I believe that the principle of trusteeship management is very relevant today.' If a multinational company wants to have success, it must practice trusteeship management, which was popularized by Mahatma Gandhi. But though it was popularized and practised by him, many people do not know that it was first articulated and introduced to the erstwhile business community by Swamiji.

Trusteeship Management

John D Rockefeller was one of the richest persons in the US who monopolized the oil industry. He was undergoing a very critical phase of his life in the 1890s. It was the peak time of his business. Swamiji once visited Chicago as the guest of a friend and a business associate of John D Rockefeller and who spoke highly of Swamiji. He often invited Rockefeller to visit Swamiji. One day, though reluctantly John D Rockefeller was persuaded by an impulse and went directly to the house of his friends. Excitedly brushing aside the butler who

opened the door said that he wanted to see the Hindu monk. The butler ushered him into the living room and not waiting to be announced, Rockefeller entered into Swamiji's adjoining study room and was much surprised to see Swamiji behind his writing table not even lifting his eyes to see who had entered. After a while, Swamiji told Rockefeller much of his past that was not known to anyone but him only. Swamiji made him understand that the money he had already accumulated was not his. He was only a channel and his duty was to do good to the world. Swamiji said that God had given him all his wealth as an opportunity to help and do good to people. Rockefeller was annoyed on Swamiji's courage to instruct him that way. He left the room in irritation, without a proper farewell. But about a week after, again without being announced, he entered Swamiji's study. He found Swamiji the same as before. He threw on his desk a paper which told of his plans to donate an enormous sum of money toward the financing of a public institution and said "Well, there you are, you must be satisfied now, and you can thank me for it." Swamiji didn't even lift his eyes, did not move. Then taking the paper, he quietly read it and said, rather it is for you to thank me. That was all. This was Rockefeller's first large donation to the public welfare.' ... We all know that Rockefeller was peculiarly religious. Once, almost echoing Swamiji, and explaining the reason behind his monumental philanthropies he said, "There is more to life than the accumulation of money. Money is only a trust in one's hands. To use it improperly is a great sin. The best way to prepare for the end of life is to live for others. That is what I am trying to do." (New Discoveries 1.487-8)

The principle and the seeds of trusteeship management are all in our scriptures. Isha Upanishad says: "All this- whatever moves on the earth-should be covered by the Lord. Protect (yourself) through that detachment. Do not covet anybody's wealth (Or-Do not covet, for whose is wealth?). The whole world is one. It is a holistic universe." Today, modern science has also proved it. In Physics, Bell's Theorem states '*all the particles of the whole universe are interconnected at a deeper level*'. That has also been verified experimentally. Schrodinger says, '*Consciousness is a singular of which the plural is unknown.*'

The whole world is permeated by one universal consciousness.

So what happens? '*Tena tyaktena bhunjitha*; which means enjoy yourself by renunciation.' How can I enjoy the world by renunciation, by giving up? One has to give up the idea of proprietorship, attachment, and selfishness. They cause sorrow. You need not give up your expensive car or your latest mobile or your latest designer clothes or the penthouse. No. What you have to renounce? *Ma gridhaha kasyasvid dhanam* which means do not covet others wealth.' Today all over the world so many rich people suffer, in spite of the wealth, only because of this. They are not able to give up the attachment to their wealth. They are not able to make charity to others. They are having a lot of money but they are suffocating because they are not having a free flow of that economy. Swami Vivekananda said, "*Unselfishness is more paying in the long run. Unfortunately people do not have the patience to practice it.*" Swamiji also says, "*You vacate the air out of this room. Fresh air will come automatically. Once you start giving charity, more will come to you, more will come to you.*"

The unselfishness and giving back to the society is a must. If you want happiness and peace, you must donate some percentage of your income in charity, after ensuring that it goes to the proper place. Many firms now run their own trusts and NGOs. If it goes to the proper recipients, you will get the blessings of those people and blessings of the Lord, who is present in those poor people. The blessings of Lord will bring immediate peace of mind. So, even this concept of trusteeship management and corporate responsibility that is now popularized by others was first introduced by Swami Vivekananda.

Servant Leadership

Another term 'servant leadership' is becoming very popular worldwide. Robert Greenleaf started this concept in 1976 in America. But now it is catching up all over the world. What is servant leadership? Servant leadership is, not taking the credit as a leader. You inspire your colleagues, you inspire your subordinates, not by preaching, but by your own example and by not mere dictating them. Just share your ideas with them,

inspire them and not order them. And this way you serve.

There is a beautiful book by Peter Drucker, *Managing In The Next Millennium*, where he says, managers and executives are going to be more and more ineffectual, with no authority whatsoever over their subordinates in the 21st Century. You can also experience that as no more you command absolute obedience from your subordinates. Peter Drucker further attributes it to upcoming knowledge society. The 21st Century is going to be a century of knowledge. Previously, the people you were working with were all blue-collared employees. Very few of them were in white-collared jobs. Now, on the contrary, most of them are white-collared employees. The blue-collared jobs are being done by computers and some of them are computer experts, IT Professionals. How do you control them, who have better IQ than you? You will not be able to control them through power and position and through order. But you can control them through love and the attitude of service. That is the new concept of management that is coming up.

Swamiji practised servant leadership more than 100 years back, when he started Ramakrishna Mission. Sri Ramakrishna gave the following message to human kind "*Shiva Jnane, Jiva Seva*" which means that the Lord is present everywhere but the greatest manifestation is present in each and every human being. Swami Vivekananda explained the message, wrote to his Gurubhais in a beautiful letter. He wrote, "*so far you had heard the mantras. What are the mantras you had heard? Matru Devo Bhava, Pitru Devo Bhava, Acharya Devo Bhava, Atithi Devo Bhava. I am giving you some additional mantras, which are more important for the modern age. Daridra Devo Bhava, Rogi Devo Bhava. Worship the Lord who is present in the poor people; worship the Lord who is present in the sick people.*"

It is an act of serving the God in human form. We are not doing social service. We are trying to worship the God, who is present in the temple, in the church, in the mosque, the same god is present in the poor people and in the sick people. So Swamiji gave that new mandate, Work is Worship, not just by false imagination of work is worship. No! He did not acquit it that you just pray

to Lord and then you offer your fruits to the Lord. That is Gita way of worship, converting work into worship. But Swami Vivekananda gave a new, holistic way of converting work into worship. According to him, *the same Lord is present everywhere, it is the one universal consciousness present everywhere, inside every human being and so what happens if one and many be the same reality. It is not only all modes of worship, but all modes of work also become worship.*

According to Sister Nivedita, *"This is the realization, which makes Vivekananda the great preacher of Karma, not as divorced from, but as expressing Gyana and Bhakti. To him, the workshop, the farmyard, the laboratory are as true and fit scenes for meeting God with man as the door of a temple or the cell of a monk."* So the whole thing becomes a very sacred thing. No difference henceforth between sacred and the secular, Nivedita says. Everything is sacred. To work is to worship. To labour is to pray and to renounce is to conquer. There is no difference between sacred and secular. This symbiosis between sacred and secular is the greatest gift of Swamiji to the modern age. According to him, this is the message of practical Vedanta. By application of this Vedanta, a fisherman will become a better fisherman, a manager will become a better manager, an executive will become a better executive. Wherever you are, by the application of this Vedanta you develop that supra efficiency.

This is a version of servant leadership, which was practised by Mahatma Gandhi and by Swami Vivekananda. When Swamiji drafted the trust deed of Ramakrishna Math, he made his brother disciple, Swami Brahmananda as the first president. He did not become the first president, he did not take the position and power.

Efficiency

The Bhagavad Gita says 'Possessed of wisdom, one rejects here both virtue and vice. Therefore devote yourself to (karma) yoga. Yoga is skilfulness in action' (2.51). Hundred percent efficiency; zero percent defect. That is how work gets converted into worship. Work can be converted into worship with full concentration, with hundred percent efficiency. But most important is the attitude and the correct attitude which is: I am

worshipping God who is present in the human form.

Inside each human being there resides the Atman. Why we do not realize this Reality is because of the many layers of delusion. In some the covering is thin in some it lies thick. But the covering does not affect the Reality in any way. That is why Swamiji said: *'Ye the children of immortal bliss, holy and perfect beings. Ye divinities on earth - sinners! It is a sin to call a man so; it is a standing libel on human nature. Come up, O lions, and shake off the delusion that you are sheep; you are souls immortal, spirits free, blest and eternal; ye are not matter, ye are not bodies; matter is your servant, not ye the servant of matter.* It is for this worship of the God in human beings that Swamiji started Shiva jnana, Jiva seva.

And Swamiji worked to bring this truth to the people: *'It may be that I shall find it good to get outside of this body, to cast it off like a disused garment, but I shall not cease to work. I shall inspire men everywhere until the world shall know that it is one with God.'*

That is what Swami Vivekananda says. What is the secret of leadership? He said, this is what is leadership: *Jo Sirdar, woh hi Sardar. Kaun sardar ban sakta hai...jo sir de sakta hai.* One who sacrifices his ego, one who sacrifices his selfishness, one who can sacrifice his prejudices, he alone can become a successful leader. *Jo Sirdar, woh hi Sardar.* For sacrificing, he was ahead, for getting the benefit, he was the last.

Then Swami Vivekananda said, "I have done enough for next 1500 years. Whatever the message I have given, it will take 1500 years for us to implement that message. So much of homework he has given to us and implementing each one of his ideas is a big thing. Not only that he talked theoretically, he put a machinery to demonstrate this model of, whether really this worship of God in man can be done? Yes, here is Ramakrishna Mission. The monks, who are supposed to meditate in the Himalayas, the monks, who are supposed to only meditate and take the name of the Lord are now going to the slums and wiping the tears of the widowed people, wiping the tears of the afflicted people, educating the poor, educating the masses, educating the women, this is what was never thought of. Swami Vivekananda was a revolutionary monk. He gave a new mantra:

Atmano Mokshartham, Jagadhitaya Cha. Yes, *Atmano Mokshartham* will be there. But not by remaining in the cave, not by remaining in the Himalayas, not by going to the forests but by remaining in the society and by serving it. So he was a leader, he was a visionary; not only visionary, a missionary, he started it and he gave the mandate: *Shiva Jnana Jiva Seva*. Worship the God in man. Not only that, he gave that emblem. He said emblem should be such that, that is the registered emblem. Nobody else, no other organization can use this emblem and he said, emblem should be such, that by that emblem you get the whole philosophy of Ramakrishna Mission or of Swami Vivekananda. By combination of four yogas: raja, bhakti, jnana, and karma. Swami Vivekananda Said, "EACH soul is potentially Divine. The goal is to manifest this Divinity within by controlling nature, external and internal. Do this either by work or worship or psychic control or philosophy- by one or more all of these- and be free. This is whole of RELIGION."

This is the whole of religion. Dogmas, rituals, worship, temples, churches, mosques are but secondary details. This is the best way to develop SQ. There is a book "SQ, spiritual intelligence, the ultimate intelligence", where Danah Zohar says "neurologically, physiologically, biologically, psychologically, from every point of view there is concluding evidence, there is something called SQ, which is the basis of both IQ and EQ." What is IQ? IQ will tell you how to play the game of life. What is Emotional Intelligence? Daniel Goleman made a research in 1991 and said EQ is more important than IQ. EQ will tell you how to play the game of life. Under changed circumstances, with changed strategies. And what is SQ? SQ will tell you whether to play the game of life at all or not. Well, that is your choice. What is the meaning of life? What is the purpose of life? That will be told by SQ. And she has given various measures of developing SQ. But you will find that the Western models of SQ developments are not so effective.

But Swami Vivekananda gives a very comprehensive technique of developing this SQ. One way is combining four Yogas in daily life. Just a little bit of meditation morning-evening; little bit of prayer morning and evening; little bit of inspirational reading morning and

evening and converting the work into worship. Thus, thinking that it is worship of the Lord. This is the fundamental way in which we can convert work into worship, in which we can practise this holistic management in our daily life by combination of four yogas.

The Goal is to manifest this divinity - that is infinite joy, infinite happiness and infinite peace. Then only you can keep smiling. When we practice these four Yogas and there is peace inside. Otherwise, you are bubbling from within, why my wife did not prepare this food for me, this particular dress for me and you are bubbling from within and what type of food she gave in the morning this breakfast, what a wretched breakfast she had given to me. You are bubbling from within, you are cursing your wife, your children, this and that and you are full of tension. How can you smile?

So smile will come when you have got this happiness from within, peace from within and that will come by practising these four Yogas, when you develop IQ, EQ and SQ and then you get total success in everyday life and you get eternal happiness and eternal peace and eternal life. Danah Zohar says *that... one of the most important persons, the pioneers, who practised this servant leadership in our own age was Swami Vivekananda.*

Become Universal

Swami Vivekananda had a very broad spectrum. He practised servant leadership and advocated trusteeship management. He was a global leader was a visionary and a missionary. Whatever he had told, has come true.

Swami preached to take the best of everything. He wanted both the eastern and the western thoughts should combine. He said we need western science coupled with Vedanta. Good things we must learn from other countries. But he also warned against blindly imitating the western materialistic culture, which is giving rise to so many suicides and mental patients. We have our own nectar of Indian spiritual culture. Of course, good things we must learn especially as far as modern science is concerned. Swami Vivekananda once travelled from Japan to Chicago with Jamshedji Tata. Swami Vivekananda inspired Jamshedji Tata to not to go for

imports. He told him to start industry in our own country so that we can give employment to our own people. He also gave him inspiration to start Indian Institute of Science at Bangalore. This is when he was travelling in the same ship with Jamshedji Tata. Jamshedji Tata was going for that International Fair that was going to happen and Swamiji was going for participating in the World Parliament of Religions. But Swami Vivekananda was so broad minded, so open-minded and so modern even then that he was far ahead of time.

Swamiji talked of Globalization during his time. According to him, science and technologies are must if you want to develop. Science and western science coupled with Vedanta, is what Swami Vivekananda emphasized. So he had a global perspective and that is why Federico Mayor, the Director General of UNESCO on the occasion of Centenary of Swami Vivekananda's participation in Parliament of Religions (1983) in 1993 said, 'why we are celebrating Swamiji's participation in Parliament of Religions, why UNESCO is celebrating?' And he gave the following reason. He said, 'when I went through the constitution of Ramakrishna Mission, that was drawn by Swami Vivekananda in 1897, I was surprised to see that that Constitution was exactly similar to the Constitution drawn up by the UNESCO in 1945.' Swamiji talked about the harmony of religions, serving the poor, and taking care of the underprivileged in 1897. And hence Federico Mayor said 'that is why, UNESCO is the proper place to celebrate Centenary of Swami Vivekananda's participation in World Parliament of Religions'. And now UNESCO is celebrating the 150th Birth Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda. So Swami Vivekananda is very relevant today.

When we go to the villages, the villagers doubt our intentions to be selfish. And we always admit that we have surely come with a selfish motive. We then explain the selfish purpose. We tell them we have all renounced the world. We have given up our parents, our children, our family members and everything. We have sacrificed

everything so that we can realize God in this very life. Atmano Mokshartham. But if you want to reach God quickly and get salvation and infinite joy and happiness, the best way is to worship God in human beings.

Swami Vivekananda was a multi facet personality. A. L. Basham, one of the greatest historians of our times said in 1963, 'it is very difficult to evaluate the importance of Swami Vivekananda in the scale of history as we are very near to his times.' Perhaps the future generations will be able to understand the importance better. We are even after 150 years also telling the same thing. We are too near the history to evaluate the importance of Swami Vivekananda. But we can hope that the future generations will be able to do the justice.

Swami Nikhileswarananda is the Head of Vadodara centre of Ramakrishna Mission. He graduated in Chemical Engineering (with honors) in 1970 and post graduated in Industrial Engineering in 1972. After working for a short period as a Management Consultant, he renounced the world and joined Ramakrishna Order at its Headquarter at Belur Math in 1976. From 1977 to 1986, he guided the rural and tribal development project titled, 'Divyayan Krishi Vigyan Kendra' at Ranchi (Jharkhand). From 1989 to 2000, he edited the Gujarati Monthly 'Shri Ramakrishna Jyot' published from Shri Ramakrishna Ashram, Rajkot (Gujarat). Before coming to Vadodara he was the Head of Porbandar centre for eight years. He was instrumental in constructing 37 school buildings and three colonies in Porbandar district as a part of earthquake rehabilitation project and in starting Vivekananda Institute of Value Education & Culture (VIVEC) which was inaugurated on January 12, 2006 by Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam, the then President of India. He tours extensively preaching the universal message of Vedanta in India as well as abroad. He has contributed a large number of articles on various topics in English, Hindi and Gujarati journals. He was one among the few selected Hindu leaders invited to participate in the Hindu-Catholic dialogue which took place in Mumbai on June 12, 2009 at the instance of the Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious dialogue headed by Cardinal Tauran, the representative of the Pope from Vatican.