



# Self-reliance and Moral Values in the Philosophy of Vivekananda

**Miss Meenu Pandey**

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Research Scholar

PG Department of philosophy.

T.M.B.U., Bhagalpur, Bihar.

Bhagalpur, Bihar – 812001. India.

At the time when the world is suffering from a deadly pandemic, India plans to convert this crisis into an opportunity and strengthen its fight by becoming atmanirbhar or self-reliant with 'Make in India Initiative'. Self-reliance is the ability of being able to rely on oneself for one's need. A country can be self-reliant when it is capable of producing the majority of its needs. Swami Vivekananda is mostly known as a spiritual leader but the main concern of swami Vivekananda all through his life has been the economic prosperity of India. He sincerely tried to bridge between age old Indian moral and ethical approaches to life and economic needs of India along with added value and intellectual property.

'Self-Reliance' is an 1841 essay written by American transcendental philosopher and essayist Ralph Waldo Emerson, and there he proposed the theme of individualism with self-reliance and asked to trust thyself. In contemporary language, we could call individuality as self-esteem or self-respect, but in Indian term it is known as 'atmasraddha'. To swami Vivekananda atmasraddha is a lever through which millions can be raised. Today to be self-reliant India we first should stop using foreign goods and promote local goods. For this one has to develop the self-respect for oneself and for his country. When an individual develops 'faith in oneself', he or she views oneself as valid, significant, a single unit of 'free choice', an individual creating one's own destiny. This atmasraddha gives the individual power, energy, the will to work, the capacity to receive and enjoy freedom, and the desire to escape any form of dependence. Through atmasraddha. One becomes capable of using whatever resources are available and bettering one's state of living.

Denis Goulet was the founder of work on developmental ethics, gave three components of development; i.e., life-sustenance, self-esteem and freedom. Self-sustenance emphasizes the urgent necessity for providing life-sustaining amenities to the poor masses for liquidating poverty. Vivekananda also said that for the development of a nation, our prior aim should be on the development of the lower strata of the people, to free them from misery, from lack of food, shelter, health and protection. He also emphasized the urgent necessity for providing life-sustaining amenities to the poor masses. He further suggested that agriculture should be given proper place in our economy and modern methods of cultivation should be used for increasing productivity. As he remarked that agriculture sector can be helpful in reducing poverty, a greater expansion in employment and a more broad-based growth. He mentions that it is also necessary to ensure that there is adequate motivation on the part of its labour power and skill. Vivekananda reminded us in his brilliant essay 'Modern India' that the tendency of imitating others is a loss of self-respect and a sure way to national degradation.

The second component by Denis Goulet is self-esteem; a sense of worth and self-respect, which was just discussed earlier as *atmashraddha* in the words of Vivekananda. Secondly, Vivekananda also considers economic prosperity as one of the criteria of attaining self-esteem at individual and national, which is also the call of the nation in the post covid19 scenario. Along with economic prosperity, he also wanted greater attention on the national characteristics, cultural and humanistic values should go hand in hand. Vivekananda recognised economic as well as non-economic essential for self-esteem.

The third component for development is freedom. Swami Vivekananda 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”. Vivekananda also repeatedly stressed that social justice is a necessary condition to realize spiritual freedom for all, and the goal is always spiritual freedom for all and not for some. Furthermore, spiritual freedom for all can be achieved when political freedom for all, social freedom for all, and economic freedom for all are achieved.

If we talk about the moral values or ethics in the context of swami Vivekananda, it is nothing but a code of conduct that helps a man to be a good citizen of the world. Without good citizen, no system, social or practical can function in right ways. No nation is great or good because parliament enacts this is that, but because its men are great and good. Swami Vivekananda clearly makes distinction between two concepts of moral and immoral. He says that which is selfish is immoral and that which is unselfish is moral. In today’s scenario, to be self-reliant we also have to be unselfish i.e. moral. According to Swamiji the utilitarian wants us to give up the struggle after the Infinite, the reaching out of the super-sensuous, as it is impractical and absurd. That is why they cannot explain the ethical relation of men. It should be kept in mind that ethical laws cannot be derived from the considerations of utility.

The main principle of Kantian ethics. Is ‘Duty for Duties sake’. On this Swamiji Vivekananda says that love for love sake is the aim of ethics. Power of love is higher than the power of duty. Duty is situational. It comes only when situation demands. Otherwise it will remain behind the curtain, whereas love has no worldly boundary. Swami Vivekananda’s thoughts on ethics can be regarded as practical ethics based on normative ethics. It is practical as it throws lights on the practical life of a man.

The power of a nation lies in its vast majority. To be a self-reliant country it is also very necessary that the extraordinary strength of the masses must be raised. In this paper, I have tried to show how the philosophy of karma yogi Vivekananda, who was very good in reading human mind and human society can help each individual to prepare himself for the greater cause. Again, a time has come when the youth of India should come forward shedding their fears and take up the pledges to shape up India. Swami Vivekananda’s teachings and philosophy stressed on different aspects of religion, youth, education, faith, character building as well social issues. He urged Indians to leave laziness, be focused, persistent till goal not achieved. He supported strongness of physical strength so he placed sports before reading Gita.

Today to be self-reliant India we need to work hard. Swamiji said “work, work, work –I care for nothing else. Work, work, work, even unto death. By work alone men may get to where Buddha got largely by meditation or Christ by prayers. He said doing work is not religion but work done rightly leads to freedom.” He favoured that work best which is done for others.

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