

ARTISTIC NECESSITY: A SWAMI'S PERSPECTIVE ON BEING CREATIVE

Sudhir Kumar

Ph.D Candidate (UGC-JRF)
Department of Fine Arts
Aligarh Muslim University
Aligarh, (U. P.)
India -202002

Dr. Zeba Hasan

Associate Professor
Department of Fine Arts
Aligarh Muslim University,
Aligarh, (U. P.)
India -202002

Abstract

The only reason behind transformation of man's awareness from being mere a cave dweller in the past to a universal entity today is his continuous pursuit of creativity. And, on the face of time he has left innumerable imprints of his artistic faculty throughout this whole process of his transformation. Yet at times we see him fall; this is because forgetfulness of his true nature of being spiritual and using his creativity to its opposite. Swami Vivekananda being fully aware of this artistic necessity has frequently emphasized on harmonious integration of art in life for spiritual advancement of man. He considers art, beauty and creativity as the most essential elements in ones spiritual progress. Reviewing Swami's ideas that are at crossroads between art and spirituality, the paper is an effort of highlighting the significance of aesthetic sensibilities for a true appreciation of life and conscious arousal of awareness for man's real nature.

Key words: Aesthetics, Art, Architecture, Creativity, Music, Poetry, Spirituality.

INTRODUCTION

Swami Vivekananda always exhorted to the masses to live life in its fullness. The life which is full will always be spiritual. That which is spiritual cannot be ordinary. It will always be fresh and maintain itself anew. It will keep evolving manifesting new vistas. This evolutionary process comes from creativity. It is because of this creativity the man has arrived at universal awareness and found life's purpose. There is an intimate relationship between spirituality and creativity. Spirituality cannot be understood without knowing the actual process of creativity. Creativity not only enables one to perceive beauty around but also provides necessary stimulus for its appreciation. The quality of appreciation at its culminating height produces creation which is called art. In the context of Swami Vivekananda's views, this relationship between spirituality, creativity and art can be confirmed from his appreciative statement for his own Master when he said "The artistic faculty was highly developed in our Lord Shri Ramakrishna, and he used to say that without this faculty none can be truly spiritual" ("On Art"). The statement also absolutely fits Swami Vivekananda. As his monumental achievements in spirituality speak of itself, his creative side also cannot be ignored altogether. Though, Swami Vivekananda himself was not an embodiment of creative professional like an artist but there are many such examples and incidences from his biographies and the other literatures available which show him to be an unmatched spiritual combination of intellect and creativity. This is evident from his artistic use of language; eloquent presentation of arguments in his lectures and papers on spirituality; elegant use of examples and anecdotes to elaborate upon his teachings or conversations; ("Reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda" 42) his enthusiastic visits to the places of art and architecture, thereupon the statements of appreciation for their spiritual significance to masses; his solemn sense of dressing (42); and his interest even in the activities like cooking, etc (171). Many references can be cited from his lectures that boldly emphasize the importance of creativity and art for the spiritual development of life and how an artistic vision is necessary for developing such an outlook.

A lot of discussion on the other dimensions of Swami Vivekananda's personality and his multifaceted contribution to the modern world has taken place. But, the aesthetical dimension, an important aspect not only in his personality but also an invaluable component of his thoughts on spirituality, has not been substantially touched. As a prelude for discussion, following statement delivered in unequivocal voice by Swami Vivekananda may be taken: "If you cannot appreciate harmony in Nature, how can you appreciate God, who is the sum of all harmony?" (Sastri). Certainly, the statement gives an insight on how artistic necessity should be essentially considered in every activity that is done; because, every activity comes out of the necessity in nature, and is finished only with the help of nature. So, the actions must be in tune with appreciation of nature. It will be evident from the review of similar statements by Swami that such artistic consideration has a capacity to catalyze man's spiritual growth. Discursive in approach, this paper efforts briefly recounting the aesthetical suggestions of Swami Vivekananda with an objective to shed fresh light on contemporary discussions on art and aesthetics and their rightful place in life. The text runs through four sections. The first section has been dealt on creativity and its universal applicability. Analyzing couple of anecdotes from the life of Swami Vivekananda an attempt has been made to comprehend the meaning of creativity in relation to the nature. In the later part the section focus has been given to its significance with an interrelationship of life, education, religion, and spirituality. In the next section Swami's views on nature of art and perception of beauty has been discussed. The third section deals spiritual value of music and its effect on psyche. It further deals with poetry's role in enhancing heart's

receptivity. The last section in short highlights the impact of Swami's aesthetical ideas on the Art World.

I. ON CREATIVE AMBIT - SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY

In view of Swami Vivekananda the relation between creativity and spirituality is not something that is limited up to a level of an individual. He sees it in much larger spectrum. According to him the spiritual progress can appear also up to a national or the universal level. This progress can be marked by the progress in artistic and intellectual development in a society at any point of time in the history. These artistic and intellectual achievements of a nation or the world according to him signal the advent of its spiritual height. In this context he articulates:

... (when) a great spiritual force comes into the world, a force which protects the good, destroys evil, preserves the Dharma (righteousness), revivifies religion, draws thousands into the current of living spirituality, and brings new life. This influence is felt not only on the spiritual plane, but on the intellectual and physical planes as well. In the realm of intellect, it expresses itself as a revival of art, literature and music, of learning in every field. Men of genius appear and become famous in these realms. There is new life. . . It manifests itself in a greater prosperity, in a renewed love of freedom . . . ("RSV" 151)

Swami Vivekananda viewed this whole world like an artistic creation. This universal artistic vision establishes man's joyful relation with every other object, living or non-living, in the world. Generally it is seen almost every individual has at least some amount of regard for the artistic creations. This outlook helps men come out of their selfish tendencies. Swami says "The artist is a witness of the Beautiful. Art is the least selfish form of pleasure in the world" (Sastri). Getting rid of such petty things like - mine or thine - is the first marker of the spiritual progress. On how we need an aesthetic sensibility for a spiritual view of the world Swami Vivekananda vividly speaks: "... this whole universe is a picture, and when these desires have vanished, men will enjoy the world, and then this buying and selling, and these foolish ideas of possession will be ended. The money lender gone, the buyer gone, the seller gone, and this world the picture, a beautiful painting" (*God in Everything*). He looks at the cosmos in poetic terms; establishing its relation with God he exclaims, "He, the great poet, the ancient poet: the whole universe is His poem, coming in verses and rhymes and rhythms, written in infinite bliss" ("God in Everything"). Even in his translations of the hymns of Vedantic scriptures we get similar ideas regarding necessity of viewing God and universe in terms of art or poesy. "He the Omnipresent, the One without a second, the One without a body, pure, the great poet of the universe, whose metre is the suns and stars..." ("Thoughts on the Vedas and the Upanishads"). Extending this idea to its widest he further adds "Of a truth, Art is Brahman" (Sastri).

Yet, such a broad aesthetical outlook of Swami Vivekananda towards spirituality does not delimit his vision for the differences and diversities. For him 'spiritual unity is the ultimate ground of all diversity' (Dasgupta 36-42). He knew that a single rule cannot be applied to whole of the universe. So the people's ways of defining culture, art, religion, beauty, etc. will vary according to the times and spaces. Their moral compass, 'mental attitudes' and even the way of appreciating beauty will not always be same ("RSV" 32). They will be moulded in accordance with the circumstances. Diversity is a positive thing in Swami's view of the world and its phenomena. Only diversity can maintain the creative process. It is an indicator of creativity. He gracefully puts it in following words: "Unity is before creation, diversity is creation. Now if this

diversity stops, creation will be destroyed. So long as any species is vigorous and active, it must throw out varieties" ("A Plan of Work for India"). Diversity tends to move away from the dullness of monotony. It fills the heart with totality. Then it finds expression through whatever possible outlets available to it. Ultimately it has to bloom. The aim of spirituality is to find unity amidst diversity. This underlying unity is the real expression of beauty.

One has to be cautious that Swami Vivekananda's perception of beauty in nature and art lies on a higher platform than that of mere sense enjoyment. His perception of beauty demands a sympathetic view. Human relation with nature and art cannot be disregarded while the enjoyer is indulged in the sensuous experience of these. To develop the spiritual vision for beauty one must first establish the empathetical relation not only with the object of aesthetic experience but it must also be gestated in its relation with the aspirations of the beings and the demands of nature. As per the documentations of his mental visions and experiences it can be summed up that the beauty gives one the vision to connect with the others, understand their circumstances. It enables one feel more efficiently the pain and happiness of others and to see the things in unison. In this context an incidence from Swami's life is worthy to be mentioned- Once, Swami Vivekananda with some of his younger friends was out for the sightseeing of the beautiful mountains and valleys in Darjeeling. He was enjoying the lovely sights around; then, suddenly he became frozen at a point as if in a great pain and his gaze was fixed on far lying object. His face paled. He cried "Oh! I feel great pain here, and cannot walk any further". When he was asked where he was feeling pain. He replied "It is here; did you not see that woman fall?" In fact he had a vision of a Bhutia woman who with her heavy load on her back had slipped from the rocks and had survived with some injury ("RSV" 276). So, the beauty with both its qualities of empathy and joy has its roots inside us, the heart, the '*chit*'. It is something of eternal value which connects all on the same eternal plane, the '*chidakasa*'. Every picture or sight is the result of the manifestation of this *chit*. Whenever Swami had to express his aesthetical judgment on a painting or a picture he would turn inward and contemplated upon this internal '*chidakasa*'. It was Swami's own method of coming at the core of the meaning and details of an artwork and its spiritual value (280). For a true aesthetical judgment he took an approach of disregarding all the dualities and meditating just upon the given object for appreciation. In this regard he once said: "If I meditate on the brain of a Shankara, I become a Shankara; if I mediate on the brain of a Buddha, I become a Buddha...I concentrate on a particular subject and I could visualize all of them, so that I go on speaking whatever I feel, forgetting myself" (280).

Meditation has tremendous value both for aesthetics and spirituality. Meditation purifies heart. A relationship can be developed between perception of beauty and spirituality linking them through meditation. Meditation as Swami claims, "is the nearest approach to spiritual life - the mind meditating. It is the one moment in our daily life that we are not at all material – the soul thinking of itself, free from all matter – this marvelous touch of the soul" (Chetanananda 225). The greatest works of arts or poetry are inspired from this soul, which according to him manifest itself on diverse planes of colours, sounds, forms and structures. Only the enlightened heart can perceive that. For that one has to develop intense love and sympathy in it. Swami Vivekananda explains: "A pure heart sees beyond the intellect. It gets inspired. It knows things that reason can never know." Swami Vivekananda is very critical of intellect. 'It only makes ten times more selfish.' He suggests that when there is conflict between the heart and the brain, only heart should be followed because the brain works only in one dimension which is intellect and the brain cannot surpass it. 'The heart takes to the highest plane and reaches what is called inspiration. The intellect can never be inspired' because it never works independently (236-38).

It has to work under the influence of the 'sedimented structures of human existence' which invariably tend to prove the established structures of the physical domains of existence (Roy 62-64). But the spiritual domain lies higher. Only the spiritual domain can give vent to flight of imagination and creativity that produces art.

Swami Vivekananda believes a spiritual personality should have a good eye for details; only then he can understand in any artwork and appreciate the efforts of artists. He advised some level of training to appreciate subtle sweeps of brush-strokes and nuances of shades and tones in a piece of art which he considers as the 'inner genius of an artwork' (Sinha). Once he was invited to attend a theatrical performance in France. The backdrop of the performance was created by a celebrated contemporary painter. This was among the best theatres in the Paris. He had a keen observation during the play not only on the acts performed but also on the details of the props and the backdrop paintings. He found something erroneous in the backdrop painting that he considered against the overall harmony of the entire set. At the end of the play he called the manager and the artist and made them aware of the technical shortcoming which no one up to now had noticed, even by the best of the trained eyes present there. The artist felt highly indebted for Swami Vivekananda's suggestions and he was astonished at his sharp eyes for details of expressions and his knowledge about the techniques and principles in the paintings ("RSV" 279). Swami Vivekananda was a personality which shows that a spiritual person is also a man of art and culture. The fondness for art and culture is an integral component of the individuality of a spiritual person. Highlighting Swami's profound knowledge and keen interest in arts Swami Sadashivananda (279) refers to his conversation with Kalidas Mitra, a man well versed in fine arts:

As soon as Kalidas Mitra seated himself in the room his thoughts and ideas vibrated in Swami Vivekananda's mind, and his normal expression of face, voice, and modes of movements changed altogether. He looked at him and went on speaking on fine arts, painting, and its allied branches, even dresses of different countries and their relation to nature and modes of expression. He spoke as if he were delivering a very learned and interesting lecture to an assembly of artists and painters. None could guess at that moment that he was anything else than a painter and artist himself and all his life he could have done anything else than its culture and practice.

The passage gives an idea how much admiration Swami Vivekananda had for creativity and art and their essential place in life. But, this creative vision cannot be developed overnight, so it must be incorporated in the academic curricula since the child starts his education. Education with artistic vision added with orientation towards spirituality can provide a man his all round development in a true sense. Swami had a vision of education that in its totality included environment in its all aspects- natural, physical, emotional and spiritual. Questioning then status of education and also probably fitting in present context he has opined: "Just as in theology, we no longer teach that man is a child of sin and sorrow, born and conceived in iniquity, but is a child of God, pure and perfect, why should we not change our attitude towards education, and look upon the student as a creature of light and knowledge, unfolding the leaves of his destiny in joy, freedom, and beauty?" (Christine). Swami looks at religion as the necessary part of education as it helps develop one's spiritual side. His idea of religion was spiritual, not theological. So, instead of emphasizing on intellectual side, he viewed religion from the standpoints that are aesthetical and spiritual. According to him religion originates in joyful

appreciation for life and nature. It originates from the human urge for enquiry. It is in fact his fearless attempt “to transcend the limitations of nature”. He says ‘Religion is the greatest motive power for realizing the infinite energy which is the birthright and nature of every man’. He believes religion to be a source of immense creativeness in man (Dasgupta 36-42).

Swami Vivekananda finds knowledge of divinity in man as the core concept of all religions. This knowledge makes him aware of his infinite potentialities which find expression in diverse forms of creative emanations that ultimately also benefits the society. Stressing religion as an integral component in education he simultaneously gave importance to science and metaphysics. But, he warned against the mixture of these all, as it may not only destroy their individual characteristics but also may devoid all of them with the most essential element, the spirituality (“Religion, Civilisation, and Miracles”). Speaking on intent necessity of spirituality in life he claims- ‘Spirituality brings life, power, joy, fire, glow, enthusiasm - all the beautiful and positive things’ (Dasgupta 36-42). The teaching of fine arts and aesthetics is equally necessary according to him. It is like fulfillment of education. He wanted to see art in its ubiquity with its intense relation with everyday life of man. He was quite appreciative of such practices which were already a part of Indian culture. He poignantly expresses his concern on gradual loss of such traditions: “It is our arts that have fared the worst of all. In the days gone by, our old women used to paint the floors, doors, and walls of their houses with a paste of rice-powder, drawing various beautiful figures; they used to cut plantain leaves in an artistic manner, to serve the food on; they used to lavish their art in nicely arranging the different comestibles on the plates. Those arts, in these days, have gradually disappeared or are doing so” (“The East and The West”). Citing Japan’s example on how she has developed herself as a great nation through pragmatic blend of art in life Swami in appreciation says, “Such love of nature and art have I seen nowhere else, except in Japan. The palatial structures, the gardens resembling Indra’s paradise, the groves, even the farmer’s fields — everywhere and in everything there is an attempt at beauty, an attempt at art, remarkable and effected with success, too” (*Ibid*). The Love for art also plays a crucial role in development of habits of cleanliness and sanitation. If it could be inculcated in the child, the youths, the women, their country will certainly develop as a great nation. He equates France and China for their artistic inclinations even in the modern industrial age. In their appreciation Swami says: “That play of beauty in water and fascination in land, that madness in the air, that ecstasy in the sky! Nature so lovely — the men so fond of beauty! The rich and the poor, the young and the old, keep their houses, their rooms, the streets, the fields, the gardens, the walks, so artistically neat and clean — the whole country looks like a picture” (*Ibid*).

II. ON ART AND BEAUTY

Swami Vivekananda compares art with a water lily. Art needs same tenderness of precaution in its handling as it required for a lily. Art for him is not something to be imitated completely from nature. It is subtler. It is also not the representation of the ideal either. Art has to be in-between the two. For art to be sublime it must have a subtle reference to nature in the manner similar to the stem of a lily, which to keep itself erect needs support from the nature, yet the lily remains above the nature. In eastern traditions too water lily stands at high regard for its symbolic significance for knowledge. This subtle reference to nature in artwork instills it with genuine artistic spirit, which is in fact a precondition for it (Sinha). He warns of having motive of achieving super-sensual in art-forms as it may lead to their ‘degenerative states’ (“On Art”). Only that form of creation can be categorized as art which represents beautiful. Swami

Vivekananda defines art in relation to the beauty of the essence in an artwork not its external appearance: "...art sees the inner beauty of nature by drawing away with its own hands the covering veils." He emphasizes on inherent idea that is the fundamental principal for an artwork. "In art, interest must be centered on the principal theme" (*Ibid*). He claims that though, it is not easy to handle several things in an artwork (painting or drama) but there must be consistency in dealing with the center of interest. He was of the opinion that a real work of art which has been created whole-heartedly, focusing on the expression of a single idea, certainly gets the appreciation in due course (Chakravarty). By differentiating architecture from a normal building probably he wants to emphasize the expressive capacities of an artistic form whether it is an artwork or a building: "The difference between architecture and building is that the former expresses an idea, while the latter is merely a structure built on economical principles. The value of matter depends solely on its capacities of expressing ideas" ("On Art"). In general this may mean, that for a creation to qualify as an artwork it should communicate a beautiful idea. An artwork should be judged for its underlying beauty, not just for their form.

The next question is- What is beautiful according to Swami Vivekananda? As it has been already discussed, that for Swami Vivekananda, behind all existing diversity there is underlying unity. Very idea behind pursuit of this unity according to him is beautiful. In other words, it is man's thirst for unity which is beautiful. It is the necessity of the orderly accomplishment of an idea. In order to slake this thirst one has to develop an attitude for acceptance of all, love for all. Beauty leads man from being an individual to become a universal being. So beauty is becoming. Beauty is knowing of the man's unity with cosmos. The aims of all arts, the aims of all yogas, the aims of all knowledge are to comprehend this unity. An order for harmony is required to achieve beauty. Beauty is the eternal process of becoming, the center of all spiritual joy. Beauty is the revelation of Supreme in the artistic creations and the things we see around. Though, it may occur in different degrees in different individuals, but when this revelation occurs it prompts for its appreciation. According to Swami Vivekananda beauty is to be appreciated for its own sake. This is clarified from his statement when he says: "Behold, ...the Himalayas, how grand and beautiful they are; I love them. They do not give me anything, but my nature is to love the grand, the beautiful..." ("Paper on Hinduism"). This sort of appreciation too has the capacity to drag others towards the same plane of beauty. Beauty is participation of one's self in cosmic order. It is the experience of underlying rhythm in the cosmic process of creation and dissolution. Appreciation for beauty comes through love for realizing this process, the truth. Beauty is sublime that is why Swami claims it to be divine. He claims: "...Thou art my love. Thou art beautiful, Oh, Thou art beautiful! Thou art beauty itself." ... What is the beauty in the human face, in the sky, in the stars, and in the moon? It is only the partial apprehension of the real all-embracing Divine Beauty" ("The Bhakta's Renunciation Results from Love").

III. ON MUSIC AND POETRY

Swami Vivekananda was a progressive supporter of the scientific approach towards art especially in music. He was of the view that the scientific approach helps in maintaining music's purity. He suggests "Unless each note is given full play in every scale, all the science of music is marred. ... in music, you can display any amount of skill by keeping to science, and it will be pleasing to the ear" (Sinha). Swami Vivekananda himself was an authority in music and singing and had a profound knowledge of their details. In "Sangeeta Kalpataru" a comprehensive book written by him on Bengali singing he discusses broadly on the Hindustani Music and its status in

the 19th century. In a poignant voice he has criticized the contemporary *ustads* of music for not being innovative as the ancients did to touch the creative heights:

The stagnation in the flow of free thinking visible in all spheres of our country (India) today is noticeable in musicology too. The belief that nothing can surpass past achievements was firmly rooted in our national psyche. It is ignorance that gives rise to such beliefs. People do not care to find out the ideas that guided the ancients in creating those *ragas* and *raginis* and merely mastering what they have left behind is considered amply sufficient (Choudhury 36).

Appreciating spiritual value of music Swami Vivekananda states: “The art of music ... is the source of universal happiness, which brings solace in all suffering and liberates one from earthly ties...” (36). He further adds “Music is the highest art and, to those who understand is the highest worship” (“A Letter to an American Lady”). He has emphasized the importance of music for elevating concentration. A good piece of music according to him has the power to hold the mind of the listener. Explicating it he says: “Music in which the notes follow each other in rapid succession holds the mind readily. A child loves lively music, because the rapidity of the notes gives the mind no chance to wander.” Discussing on different degrees of music he claims that classical music demands high level of concentration; that is why many people are not able to appreciate it and turns toward common music. The reason he gives is that in most of the cases people do not control their mind, instead they are controlled by the mind that is why they are not able to concentrate on the higher things such as the classical music. Yet through practice mastery over mind can be gained and concentration can be developed. Along this process the detachment should also be developed, otherwise it will be a suffering. Thus, concentration is instrumental in checking of selfishness, an indispensable step towards spiritual quest. On detachment Swami explicates, “We must learn not only to attach the mind to one thing exclusively, but also to detach it at a moment's notice and place it upon something else.” Revealing creative benefits of concentration he states: “High achievements in art, music, etc., are the results of concentration” (“Concentration and Breathing”).

Discussing poetry Swami Vivekananda claims that it comes only through a cultivated heart. Poetry is the voice of God which finds its outlet through the heart of a poet. So the heart should be cultivated to make it pure. All jealousy, hatred, malice should be eliminated out of it; only then it may resonate the music of Lord. He calls the authors of Vedanta as the poets who ‘... raised above humanity to show these truths through poetry. They never preached, nor philosophised, nor wrote. Music came out of their hearts’ (“The Absolute and Manifestation”). To put it in other words, poetry like other arts is again a joyful expression of a poet's experience of the universal elements in nature and its rhythm. Poetry, in fact, is the process of actualizing the divine vibrations that only a receptive heart can sing. Here the joy does not mean ‘mental excitement’ which is roused by any curious event in ‘external sense-world’. Swami proposes that for an experience to take shape of poetry it must be restrained within for some time, be not given vent for sudden burst with the emotion. Emotion should be kept apart from the experience of curious or an exciting thing. On this inner profoundness Sister Nivedita (146-47) resonates with Swami Vivekananda. She says: “Any constant pointing-out of the curious or the beautiful appears ... an unwarrantable intrusion on the privacy and self-directedness of thought...” The restraint of the ‘curious’ experience, at later stages through imaginative channels manifests itself in diverse forms of creation. Now it becomes an expression, direct from the Self, ready for universal appreciation.

IV. IMPACT OF SWAMI'S ARTISTIC THOUGHTS ON ART WORLD

Though seem to be diverse at first glance the central idea of his lectures and writings are intended to make humanity realize what actually they are. His ideas are like essential threads that co-connect common aspirations of masses and lift them up, to make them realize the higher meanings of their existence. His ideas have global impact on various fields. It is noticeable in the field of arts too. Professor Partha Mitter of University of Sussex England, an expert on the art of colonial period, observes Swami Vivekananda's influence on the art scene of Europe and India in the first half of the 20th century: "The Yogic system expounded in Swami Vivekananda's Chicago lectures played a part in the art of Malevich (a Russian abstract artist) and his Circle. In this fascinating world, 'upside down,' the Indian painters turned to the West while the European avant-garde headed East for inspiration." The spiritual leanings in the paintings of another Russian artist, Nicholas Roerich who later immigrated to India dedicated his life solely searching through his paintings his spiritual identity with Himalayan landscapes, reflect Swami Vivekananda's influence not on his art only but on his soul also (Tathagatananda 2012, 93-94). Describing spiritual influence of Swami Vivekananda on culture and art of America and on psyche of her people Mrs. Wheeler Wilcox, one of the best known poets and writers of America, states:

Vivekananda came to us with a message . . . ' . . . I want to teach you to live the truth, to reveal the light within your own soul.' He gave the message that strengthened the man of business, that caused the frivolous society woman to pause and think; that gave the artist new aspirations, that imbued the wife and mother, the husband and father, with a larger and holier comprehension of duty (2013, 75).

Swami Vivekananda gave a vision of ideal to the world, an aim of attaining what is the highest, and the noblest possible thing in whatever one does. He had a great faith in the art and literary heritages of ancient India and felt privileged of belonging to such a land. He made known to the world what spiritual achievements the Indian Subcontinent has attained and kept this cultural heritage safe through thousands of ages for humanity, in a language that is understandable to the modern world. From the writings of the famous Japanese art critic Okakura Kakuzo, a crusader of pan-Asian art and culture, who was contemporary of Swami Vivekananda, becomes evident that he was also highly convinced with these ideas of Swami Vivekananda on Indian cultural heritage. Okakura has highlighted at several instances that the Indian cultural heritage has a vital role in providing entire Asian continent a unifying identity. Inaga Shigemi, an expert on Japanese culture quotes several instances of Swami Vivekananda's influence on writings of Okakura Kakuzo. He observes- 'Okakura was planning to realize in the artistic world what Vivekananda was realizing in the spiritual world' (120-22). Though, it is yet to ascertain what direct influence did the ideas of Swami Vivekananda have upon Indian art, but it is Okakura through which it may be said that Swami's ideas of spirituality and art did influence contemporary art of India. Okakura is famously known in Indian art of the first quarter of the 20th century for his visit in India, upon whose initiative two Japanese painters Yokoyama Taikan and Hishida Shunro came to India and synthesized two traditional art-forms of the Asian Continent. In Indian art historical context this event became a landmark that paved the way for well-known Bengal School of wash painting (Mago 59). The school was highly influential in national and spiritual awareness among the Indians which proved to be the two great factors in the Freedom Struggle of the country.

CONCLUSION

Aesthetic necessity is in fact the inherent quality of man that drives him to seek what is beautiful and lets him be aware of the purpose of his existence. This is why Swami Vivekananda ardently advocated for creativity and art to have special place in one's life. Appreciation of art and beauty purifies heart, in this way they are essential for universal integrity of the mankind. He believed various art practices should not be a venture exclusive for a few talented ones but a common necessary medium for connecting to all, which assist man's spiritual growth. To him the persons with creative qualities, who can appreciate beauty of forms in nature, identify their sublime strains, recognize their harmonious relations are more capable of experiencing the lofty ideas revealed through spiritual pursuits. The art-forms for him are not something the external sense oriented expressions of momentary flashes of emotions, but they are the profound ways to understand the truths and ones responsibilities towards fellow beings in joyful manners. The creative pursuits help mankind become aware of its divine potentialities otherwise it may take long time through other intellectual ways. Creative methods and aesthetic sensibilities not only make life simple but meaningful too. The aesthetic necessity in life and its relation with spirituality are more relevant today as the world needs the same empathetic eye for beings in nature and surrounding that have been envisioned by Swami Vivekananda and the ancient seers. Disseminating Swami's these ideas becomes even more pertinent today as the larger part of humanity forgetting its true purpose is again running selfishly after material gains.

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