

# Philosophical Dimensions Reflected in the Literature of Veer Vinayak Damodar Savarkar

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**Abstract:** - Veer Vinayak Damodar Savarkar was an accomplished poet, novelist, playwright and a writer of short stories. He was also a historian and champion of purification of language, a freedom fighter, a social and religious reformer and an Indian politician, who believed in democratic secular state. The life and literature of Savarkar had various paradoxical phenomena. Savarkar had written historical, political, non-political literature and also contributed as the first Marathi journalist in newsletters from foreign countries. His production of literature despite of his political activities has shifted him from a revolutionary patriotic to a founding father of the imagination of Hindu Rashtra or Hindutva. Hence, his name and his political thoughts and philosophy are almost synonymous with Hindu nationalism or Hindutva. His writing stands for today and not for the blind traditions of yesterday. All writings are like leaps through arches fixed with knives and blazing torches turned inside. As an active thinker and reformer Savarkar had not written his philosophy in book form for simple intellectual pleasure and his philosophy of life depicts in his literature. This paper aims to take a glance on the literature of Savarkar and to throw light on his philosophy.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The life and literature of Veer Savarkar had various paradoxical phenomena. At the first sight, it is difficult to understand Savarkar's literature and his thoughts, it needs to be examined his views on the basis of philosophical dimensions. Savarkar had not written his philosophy in the book form for simple intellectual pleasure. But his philosophy of life depicts in his writings such as plays, poems or autobiography [1].

Savarkar was a first-rate debater, orator, writer, and the leader of revolutionary organization in the Nashik at that time. He had the unique personality with pen and pistol [2]. His philosophy appeared in his literatures and depicted in his ideas which went beyond the bounds. And this philosophy was underpinned in all his writings and speeches over the years. When he was brought back to India, and forced for imprisonment at Ratnagiri, he had written a text called 'Essentials of Hindutva' in 1923. This production of literature, despite of his political activities had shifted him from a revolutionary patriotic to a founding father of the imagination of Hindu Rashtra or Hindutva. He had continued his writings and tried to revive his articulated thoughts on Hinduism and Hindutva, till the end of his life. This paper is an attempt to exhibit the philosophical dimensions of the Savarkar through his writings.

## II. PHILOSOPHICAL DIMENSIONS IN THE LITERATURE OF SAVARKAR

To understand Savarkar's philosophical dimensions in his literature/writings, it should be studied on the basis of agnosticism, utilitarianism, rationalism, nationalism, humanism, pragmatism, realism, activism and abolitionism. The detailed understanding of his literature and philosophy with respect to above dimensions is as follows:

### 2.1 Savarkar's agnosticism:

Savarkar was neither a religious nor an atheist writer; he did not discard religion but accepted nothing that was irrational. Savarkar's agnosticism found in his one of the best poems named 'The Closed Gate of the Unknowable'. In which, he had explained the gates leading to the understanding of God were always closed. He depicted how the words of bards and of the Puranas, devotion and revolutionary activities, enjoyment and renunciation, comfort and hardship were revealed to God and also hid the main intension at the same time [3]. To avoid the social evils implicated in the religion, Savarkar had recommended examining all religious scriptures in terms of their relevance for the present. Savarkar was also worth to the 'holy scriptures' on the grounds of their antiquity, sanctity and his scientific approach to history, which did not lead him to deny their historical or sociological significance and values. Savarkar appreciated it by giving their place of honor in the libraries of the world. According to Savarkar, 'religious books serve the purpose of fossils for the study of the existing socio-political institutions and organizations,

systems and patterns and so on [4].

Further, Savarkar exhibited about the Universe and the Nature. He argued that the Universe exists; however, functions of the Universe were carried out differently by certain rules. In his scientific essay, Savarkar explained about the place of human beings, the Universe and the Nature. In his agnostic approach to life, Savarkar endeavoured to learn laws of the Nature and the Universe as best for human being, as human beings live in the Universe but the Universe did not belong to them. He proclaimed that good one was beneficial for mankind, and bad one might suffer them. He pointed out in his essay that the need of the moment was to tap and apply them for the benefit and welfare of the mankind because man is the maker of his fortune and also responsible for his misfortunes. No divine power can affect any good or evil to human life, however, man himself was responsible for the successes and failures of his life.

Savarkar had described his views on the relation between religion and politics in the 'Essentials of Hindutva'. In this writings, the aim was not to advocate Hinduism as a state religion, but merely as a method of defining collective identity. This was to be a fundamental pillar of belonging, upholding the 'Hindustan'. Rather than it, he elaborated the definition of 'Hindutva'; Savarkar was aware of the potency of religious enthusiasm and claimed that 'man cannot remain without religion. However, religion is a source of stupendous strength for mankind [5]. Savarkar also stated about an icon of social and political visions in the book of Joseph Mazzini. He was tormented by a question of keeping religion and politics separate to upgrade the ideas of service to the nation. National worship ought to be the religion for each countryman. He also supported the principle of religious freedom in the postcolonial Indian state by proposing equal rights and obligations irrespective of caste or creed, race or religion. All citizens could enjoy the worship without any restrictions and 'one man one vote' will be the general rule irrespective of creed, caste, race or religion [6].

Another example of Savarkar's agnosticism is seen in the writings of 'Hindutva'. He described most critical terms, Who is Hindu? *Punyabhu, Pitrubhu and many other*. In this informative book, he described the origin and also the state of Hindustan. He suggested that, the story of the civilization of a nation may be in the form of thoughts, actions and achievements. One of the main purposes behind the concept of Hindutva described by Savarkar was to construct a collective identity to support the cause of 'Hindu-unity' and to avoid too narrow definition of *Hinduism* which would exclude Buddhists, *Sikhs* and *Jains* from the Hindu community. Savarkar's definition of Hindu was focused on the notion of patriotism in terms of the 'contextual interpretation'. Means, under certain conditions it was

possible for 'non-Hindus' to claim India as their 'Holyland' by accepting and assimilating Hindu *Sanskriti*.

### 2.2 Savarkar's Utilitarianism

Savarkar's utilitarianism was also found in his agnosticism and internalized utilitarianism as his leading ethical principle. Gopal Ganesh Agarkar was his idol in the field of social reform. Savarkar was a devoted follower of the utilitarian at the school of England. He also stated that they all belonged to a cultural unit [7]. He also insisted for individual freedom, equality, and omnipotence of education. To push the society of India on to a higher level utilitarianism is necessary as per the opinion of the Savarkar. Savarkar was guided for the concept of utility through ancient documents and tradition, and not the sanctity of social structures. Savarkar's writings also depicted intensely practical and shedding light on the various human aspects of life. In spite of the criticism, Savarkar emphasized utilitarianism by not only for the individual's selfish reasons of happiness and pleasure. But also was catered towards the public good and happiness of the largest possible section of society [8]. Savarkar's utilitarianism is not the replica of the foreign culture but it is the teachings of *Lord Krishna* [9] as per the *Bhagvadgita*. He had considered *Lord Krishna* as idol for the ideal utilitarian [10].

He also rejected absolutism that hindered the progress of humanity. The best example of Savarkar's utilitarian was the importance of the 'cow' in the Hindu society and his defence of non-vegetarianism. Savarkar argued for the protection of cow and not for worshipping. He proclaimed a practical and rational view for cow protection by pointing out usefulness of cow [11]. He emphasized the crucial role of cows in the agricultural sector in Indian society and highlighted the economical measurement for India's prosperity [12]. Savarkar was firmly convinced that the lack of food and the unbalanced nourishment of his countrymen could be solved by taking to non-vegetarianism including the consumption of cattle meat. He was the first who not only advocated abandoning the traditional and agreed customs of cow worshipping but also supporting the utilization of cow meat as nutrition. This was a great example of Savarkar's application of utilitarian directives which compiled his strong defense of cow slaughter combined with non-vegetarianism.

### 2.3 Savarkar's Rationalism and Positivism

In his article, 'Machine is a boon to mankind', Savarkar's passion towards science, technology and modernization was reflected through his thoughts. He was believer of adopting both an intelligent as well as a scientific attitude and approach. His adoption of positivism reflected in his deep admiration for the modern technological and scientific civilization of the western sphere [13]. As per the Savarkar's opinion, telescope is a human eye with a capacity of vision

increased a thousand times. He also explained that telephone is a human ear with an enormous increase in its power. He also appealed to the Hindus to discard the superstitions and religious aspects clinging to their usages regarding maternity. He suggested that send women to well-equipped, well-lighted, modern maternity homes. He also recommended that the corpses should be carried in a car/vehicle in a descent manner and burnt in electric crematorium, which he adopted in his will as a wish.

He was also supposed that one's intelligence ought to be the final reference point for moral and ethical values. Savarkar also identified the limits of rationalism in the article 'What a reformer should remember'. Savarkar pointed out his notion of the limitation of rationalism by warning of using human resources for the maximum benefit of a society. His rationalistic articles on The Machine, God or Gun Powder, God of Man and Lord of the Universe, Woman's place in *Manusmriti*, Woman's Beauty and duty, etc reflected his hard rod of rationalism and positivism.

#### **2.4 Savarkar's Humanism and Universalism**

As per the view of Savarkar, liberty and equality had equal values and importance which was depicted in his novel '*Malaa kaay tyache*' and '*Moplah Rebellion*'. These novels were acclaimed as the best form of an ideal theme and liberty treatment. However his definition of liberty and equality was came from Mazzini's Autobiography book. These thoughts of Savarkar were based on humanitarian values. He had a faith in science, equality, liberty and not on charity or religious considerations. Furthermore, at the core of his notion was the concept that liberty must not be separated from duty towards the Indian nation. Savarkar claimed not only to be rational and scientific but also professed love for humanism and universalism as ethical values. Savarkar became sensitive to the relationship between the conflicting interests of the individual and the national community due to the feeling of pain and pleasure.

Savarkar's scientific outlook never opposed universalism. With reference to the anti-brahmanic poet Gyanba Tukaram, Savarkar stated that 'where the limits of the universe end, Hindustan started to work. In a letter to Guy Aldred, editor of '*The World*', he wrote that the mankind of nationalism and federalism, who had ultimate political goal, could not be nationalism but Humanism. As per his opinion, human state must be the ideal of all political science and art. However, our ultimate political goal must be based on equality of rights and duties [14]. He argued that the non liberty retarded any evolution towards intellectual, moral, social, political as well as economic progress. His opinion was a colonial country could not contribute any share to the development of mankind. Foreign rules that stifled the growth of human dignity had to be extinguished and each

country had to contribute to the welfare of humanity. He also explained it the national as well as a religious duty through humanism and universalism [15].

#### **CONCLUSIONS**

Savarkar welcomed the prospects of reforming society along modern and egalitarian principles. Therefore, he interpreted various concepts like utilitarianism, rationalism, humanism (universalism), etc. in his literature and tried to apply them in the Indian context as goldstone for the progress of his countrymen. A worldly philosophy of life consisting of a portfolio of elements drawn from 'classical Indian thought', western social and political philosophy and own experiences and observations attempted to compose in his literature.

Therefore, it had seen the abandonment of religious scriptures, the rejection of symbols of traditional religiosity like idol-worshipping or the theory of rebirth as the basis of social reconstruction in his literature. Religion and spiritualism were purely and individually matters described in his literature on the basis of science and technology. His appealed to Nation for promoting science in everyday of life shows rationalism. He skilfully exposed treachery, superstition and hypocrisy in his literature. Savarkar's life and literature, is one of the makers of India, would be a beacon-light of hope, guidance, inspiration and courage.

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