

Contextualising 'Free' Religion on the Intersects of Tagore & Vivekananda

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ABSTRACT

The present article connects the two world personalities who separate by a little distance in time & space, in Kolkata and that too within a period of just two years. So celebration of one's anniversary is not far from the other by time & if celebration is about celebration of thoughts, then also, the two intellectual giants although seem mutually divergent, intersects at some interesting & thought-provoking areas. The present endeavour is exploration in one such area 'the religious thought' with background of Tagore & Vivekananda's works & messages primarily through content analysis.

KEY WORDS: Intellectual Awakening, Spirit of Nationalism, Reform-Revival-Integration, 'Free' Religion, Religiosity, Bigotries, Atheism, Materialism, Intersections, Spirituality, Emancipation.

INTELLECTUAL BACKDROP

Religion for both are dynamic principles that touch every aspect of life and guiding principles that 'leads human existence from partiality to fullness.' Let us have a pithy journey of the intellectual backdrop that has given shape to the fabric within which we can situate & analyze the respective stances of Tagore & Vivekananda. The 19th Century Bengal has witnessed an intellectual awakening or Renaissance whose core anthem was liberation from hegemonic & oligarchic confinement of thought & belief—— an intolerance towards age-old, despotic cultural controls that have emanated out from rigid mental faculties & enclosed exercises nourished by unquestioned loyalties & endorsements from around. Oriental education served as a fresh air to such enclosures mainly with effort from Christian missionaries. Although their effort was off course politically religious, still it catalyzed the hunt for one's prodigious past heritage & glory through self-introspection & self-illumination. The way Christian missionaries of Shreerampore endorsed Bengali prose & grammar, newspaper & press, spread of English education & so on, highlighted their intense conviction towards educational reforms particularly through