

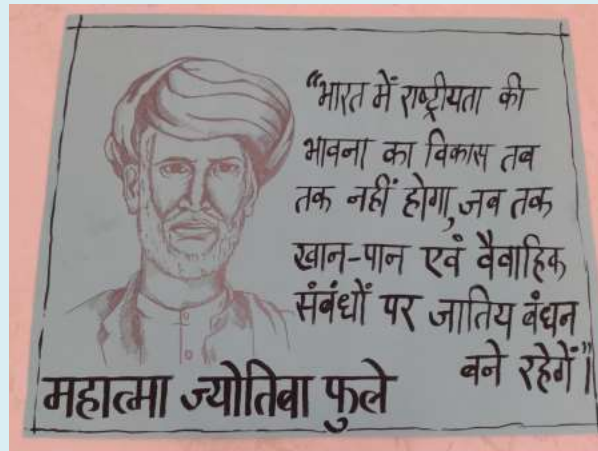
Mahatma Jyotiba Phule : A Modern Indian Philosopher

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अक्टूबर 14, 2013



JOTIRAO GOVINDRAO PHULE occupies a unique position among the social reformers of Maharashtra in the nineteenth century. While other reformers concentrated more on reforming the social institutions of family and marriage with special emphasis on the status and right of women, Jyotiba Phule revolted against the unjust caste system under which millions of people had suffered for centuries and developed a critique of Indian social order and Hinduism. During this period, number of social and political thinkers started movement against such systems and methods. These thinkers aimed at upliftment of the status of women socially, economically, educationally and politically. Of these socio-political thinkers Mahatma Phule, Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, and such other have organized movement for striving equality for dalits, backward classes and women. As such, Mahatma Phule was an earliest leader, who strongly opposed gender inequality. He was in the real sense a great thinker finder of truth... He was severely criticized by Brahmin samaj for his noble work and attacked by them. But he continued with his movement. He sacrificed his life for the upliftment of untouchables, peasants and women. Mahatma Jyoti Rao Phule is regarded as the most important figure of social reform movement in India. He is regarded as the father of Indian social revolution.



Some important Facts about Mahatma Jotiba Phule:

There are some important facts to consider about this great personality. He is a real inspiration and ideal reformer of India:

Phule had read biographies of George Washington and Chhatrapati Shivaji. They were source of inspiration for him. Phule was influenced by Thomas Paine's ideas and his book "The Rights of Man". Phule himself has recorded that he was influenced by the ideas of Paine. In place of exploitative Indian social order, Phule wanted to establish a society founded on principles of Individual liberty and equality and in place of Hinduism he would have like to put universal religion.

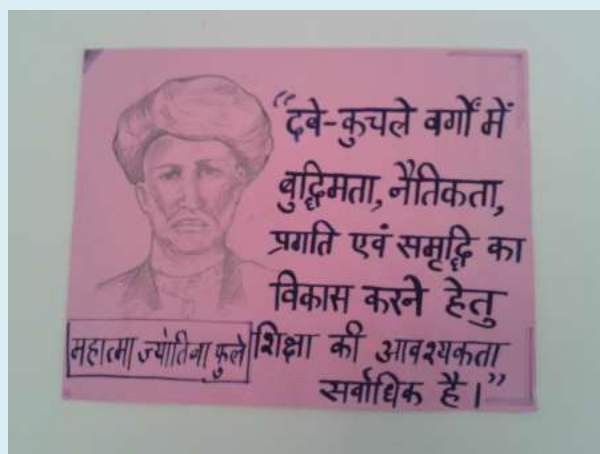
Mahatma Phule was the first defender of human equality and rights. We should understand and appreciate the profound significance of his unflinching espousal of the rights of man which remained till the end of his life a major theme of his writings and a goal of his actions.

He was First revolutionary and leader of downtrodden, peasants and supporter of women's education. He paved the way for the new era of social activism. He established many institutions and tried to remove manmade inequality. He was the first active leader of downtrodden and introduced us to humanity. He was propagator of Human unity and national progress.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar said "Mahatma Phule the greatest Shudra of modern India who made the lower classes of Hindus conscious of their slavery to the higher classes who preached the gospel that for India social democracy was more vital than independence from foreign rule."

Phule's views and philosophy was based on facts, reality, experiences and observation. In that sense his philosophy was not utopian but realistic. He was a source of inspiration for Maharshi Shinde, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, Gadgebaba and Sahu Maharaj.

He was a Founder of many movements – 1) Movement against discrimination (2) Movement of Dalit (3) Movement of women's education. (4) peasant's movement (5) movement against blind faith.

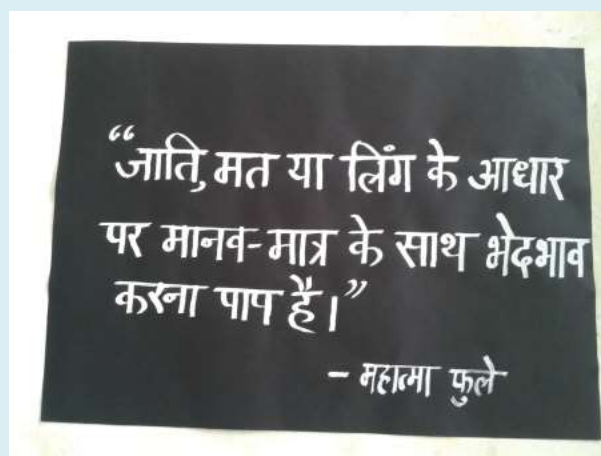


MAHATMA JYOTIBA PHULE AS A PHILOSOPHER

We can define "Philosopher" a person who establishes the central ideas of some movement, cult, etc., or a person who regulates his or her life, actions, judgments, utterances, etc., by the light of reason." There are several other titles which can be used for Mahatma Jyotiba Phule like educationist, social revolutionary, humanist, feminist and so on. But if we can use only single word for him it cannot explain his enlightening personality. Since we can find several ideas related to metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, socio-political philosophy in his writing, so here we used the title "Philosopher" for him. A philosopher is that person who contributed in more than one knowledge discipline. In modern Indian philosophy we can consider him and also include in the core philosophical courses which can be teach at graduation and postgraduate level. This is the tragedy of our Indian education system that those thinkers who really contributed in the educational, socio-political and other aspects of Indian peoples are remained far from core academic environment. This is the real need of our education system that ideas of revolutionaries like Mahatma Jyotiba Phule , Dr. B.R.Ambedkar and Shaheed Bhagat Singh should be reached to every Indian. Here we will discuss Mahatma Jyotiba Phule's ideas with the titles which have been already established:

- A. Feminism and Women Empowerment
- B. Philosophy of Education
- C. Ideas on Social Justice and Equality
- D. Philosophy of Politics and Economics
- E. Philosophy of Religion

Mahatma Jyotiba Phule do not want be a religious thinker, religious guru or a philosopher of religion. Also he was not interested to prove the existence of God, relation of God and the world etc. His intention was to show the dilemma created by religious authorities who bound man in religious rituals and made peoples enemy of each other. His thinking was that Hindu religion not only give spiritual knowledge to man but also bound his social and personal life in religious bigotries. He wants that religion which gives man a true freedom to grow socially and spiritually. Phule influenced by radical religious ideas of Thomas Paine could succeed in doing this kind of a theoretical exercise. Phule believed in one God (Nirmik). He regarded God as a creator of this world and all men and women his children. There are thirty-three articles in the Sarvajanic Satyadharma, which define the rules for the creation of a world-family based on basic human rights as well as the social and intellectual attitudes essential for it...



In the end, it is also added that various great personalities were inspired by the personality of Mahatma Jyoti Rao Phule who brought great changes in social and economic fields of India. Dr. Babasaheb Bhim Rao Ambedkar, first law minister of the Republic of India and the architect of Indian Constitution was inspired by his noble work towards humanity and he followed the philosophy of Mahatma Jyotiba Phule based upon justice, equality, liberty and fraternity. He followed all the suggestions given by Jyotiba as right to education to all, special provisions for women, minorities, downtrodden etc. It is also important to note that Mahatma Phule has left, grappling with issues that we have still not resolved more than 125

years after his death in 1890, he could have deserved better recognition in the society. Government should have to make proper provisions of Mahatma Jyotiba Phule books in schools and colleges. Mahatma Jyotiba Phule 's philosophy of education, human rights, women empowerment, socio-political and religious ideas needs to be initiated actively in the society for its betterment.

Reference:

This article is a collection of extracts cited from the research paper presented in Two-Days National Seminar on "Mahatma Jyotiba Phule: Life, Works and Vision" on 14-15 October 2013 organised by Mahtma Jyotiba Phule Chair, Department of History, Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra. Proper references can be found on the main paper.

Link:

The Philosophy of Liberation

<http://msesaim.wordpress.com/2013/10/14/mahatma-jyotiba-phule-a-modern-indian-philosopher-by-dr-desh-raj-sirswal/>