

**HUMANISM IN SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S PHILOSOPHY***Nijara Saikia**Panigaon O.P.D. College, Deptt. Of Philosophy, Panigaon, N.L. 787052
email. nijarasaikia.nlp@rediffmail.com***Abstract**

Humanism literally stands for some sort of deviation to human interests. The history of humanism can be traced back to ancient periods. Protagoras, the Greek philosopher gave the famous maxim “Man is the measure of all things.” In other words, what appears to me is true for me and what appears to you is true for you. This is known as scepticism. Its modern advocates are seen in the writings of Schiller, the great English pragmatists. But according to Encyclopedia dictionary of philosophy, humanism is an attitude of mind attaching prime importance to man and human values. Humanism is a protest against naturalism on the one hand and religion on the other.

Swami Vivekananda was a great intellectual and spiritual figure of the present century, who makes philosophy mere universalistic and dynamic. His philosophy of humanism was a harmonious development of all sides of nature, intellectual, and spiritual, to perfection which is seldom found in man and which drew man to his feet in love and adoration. The key note of Vivekananda's humanism is a synthesis of the transcendent and the immanent. Humanists must be concerned with the welfare of mankind in general.

In the present context, lack of understanding among different faiths / beliefs in the Indian community is due to certain useless dogmas and superstitious thinking. This state of mutual disbelief and distrust has given rise to ill feeling and thereby there is the undesirable growth of hatred, tensions and strife among the Indians. So Vivekananda's

first mission was to find out a meeting point of harmony among different faiths. So, in this paper an attempt is made in brief to highlight the relevance of Vivekananda's universalistic and dynamic philosophy of humanism.

Key Words. :

Humanism, Sort, Deviation, Traced, Maxim, Universalistic, Dynamic, Seldom, Adoration, Transcendent, Immanent, Dogmas

INTRODUCTION

Humanism literally stands for some sort of deviation to human interests. The history of humanism can be traced back to ancient periods. Protagoras, the Greek philosopher gave the famous maxim "Man is the measure of all things." (Sinha 209) In other words, what appears to me is true for me and what appears to you is true for you. This is known as scepticism. Its modern advocates seen in the writings of Schiller, the great English pragmatists. But according to Encyclopedia dictionary of philosophy, humanism is an attitude of mind attaching prime importance to man and human values. Humanism is a protest against naturalism on the one hand and religion on the other.

Vivekananda (Swamiji) is unquestionably one of the foremost spiritualists of modern India. His philosophy arises from awareness of the social, religious and economic conditions of the Indian masses. Vivekananda was noticed that lack of understanding among different faiths/beliefs in the Indian community due to certain safeless dogmas and superstitious thinking. This state of mutual disbelief and distrust has given rise to ill-feeling and thereby there is the undesirable growth of hatred, tensions and strife among the Indians. So, his first mission was to find out a meeting point of harmony among different faiths. The deepest influence upon his thought is obviously of ancient Hindu philosophy especially of the 'Vedanta'. His approach to Vedanta is mere positive, constructive and dynamic. He also influenced by Buddhist concept of 'mass-liberation', samyak-karmanta and ajiva. Swami Ramkrishna Pramahansa was the master of Vivekananda who had taught him the divinity of the soul, the non-duality of God-head,

the unity of existence and one more great things that the universality or harmony of all different religions.

Swami Vivekananda's humanistic approach is based on a grand philosophy of life. His humanism was a harmonious development of all sides of nature, intellectual, emotional and spiritual, to perfection which is seldom found in man and which drew man to his feet in love and adoration. The key note of Vivekananda's humanism is synthesis of the transcendent and the immanent. His humanism transcends the idea of personal salvation. His humanism implies that service to humanity is a service to god. God, Self and Brahman are names of the same Being. On this concept of identity of god and self one can claim to understand the reality of man and the appearance of man. Swamiji stands for a superior or divine type of humanism which is intense, human and universal... a humanism that is strengthened and sustained by the ignition of the divine spark in man is far different from the current humanism of the west, including its scientific humanism. The uniqueness of his humanism is that, "There is only one Atman, one self, eternally pure, eternally perfect, unchangeable, unchanged; it has never changed; and all these various changes in the universe are but appearances in that one self." (Lal 22)

Again, we see that his practical Vedanta is also important and useful from the point of view of individual good, social good, national good or national integration and for the good of the humanity as a whole. The exposition of Vedanta by Vivekananda is called practical or Neo-Vedanta. It could be briefly stated as advocating identity of Brahman with His power Maya, oneness of the formless and personal God, all-pervasiveness of God. The ultimate unity is reached through duality and multiplicity. It can also be said that he has visualized reality in such a way where theism and humanism may be said to be identified or where one and many are reconciled in a greater one. Traditionally the Vedantists believed this world to be, 'unreal', illusory, rejecting also the right of a 'true doctrine' of it to exist. Vivekananda was probably the first philosopher in the history of Vedantism to speak so openly and definitely in defense of the reality of this world. The unique significance of practical-Vedanta is that it is the goal of wisdom and oneness of reality. It is the actual life of perennial joy in Brahman of Truth. Vivekananda laid stress on self-discipline, self-purity, self-emancipation and service. One of the most fundamental and important teachings of Swami Vivekananda is that the challenge of the

time requires us to become truly scientific and truly spiritual of the same time. In his teachings he left with us the solution of this problem, in seed-form, which we require to cultivate in the world of today in the best possible manner in the widest possible areas of human thought and action. Swami Pavitrananda rightly says, “we forget that the real situation will come from men who have seen the ‘Ultimate Truth’ who have solved the mystery of the universe and the problem of human existence, who stands high above human turmoil and earthly conflict on a plane from where all our fights and struggles seem like a play of ignorant children. Only they can save the world. Only they can give us help to build the world a new.” (Sinha 29)

People in the modern times have become mere egoist and self-seeking. So, Vivekananda’s ideals of renunciation, social justice and equality are very much needed today. His philosophy of practical Vedanta is quite meaningful as it furnished the social basis for the altruistic ideal of morality. If we try to realize Vedantic wisdom, that is oneness of reality then the problem of discord and disharmony should not arise at all.

Then coming to the field of religion, it may be observed that his approach appears to be more universalistic and dynamic. Vivekananda clearly observes that religion has three elements in it, the cognitive elements, the feeling elements and the conative elements. Religion is an attempt to transcend the limitation of the senses. It is the power of reasoning or of pure intellectual deliberation. Swamiji takes religion in a realistic, rationalistic and universalistic sense. He preferred serving the suffering human being to religious ritualism. Here, it can be mentioned that different religions emphasise different qualities of religion. For example Islam lays emphasis on universal brotherhood, Hinduism on spirituality, Christianity on self-purification for entering in to the kingdom of God. But Vivekananda stands for universalistic and synthetic approach to religion. Universal religion is that it must be acceptable to all minds. Vivekananda says that the ideal religion must harmoniously balance all the aspects of religion, namely – philosophy, emotion, work and mysticism. “This religion is attained by what we, in India, called Yoga–union. To the worker, it is union between men and the whole humanity, to the mystic between his lower and higher self, to the lover, union between himself and the God of love, and to the philosopher, it is the union of all existence. This is what is meant by Yoga.” (Lal 46) Vivekananda says, “Religion is realization, not talk, nor doctrine, nor

theories... it is being and becoming, not hearing or acknowledging; it is the whole soul becoming changed in to what it believes.” (Lal 46)

Hence the Swami’s personality was notable for its comprehensiveness and deep sensitiveness to the evils prevalent in the socio-economic and moral structure of the country. His personality was so potent, so complex and so all-comprehending, with infinite facts, each fact representing a variation of the light within. In his humanistic approach the dignity of man has been so much exalted that because of which his humanism is popularly known as ‘super humanism’. We talk about global family but our outlook and approach to life has become parochial and narrow. In this age of value crisis, saint philosophers like Swami Sivananda, Swami Vivekananda, Swami Pavitrananda have to play an important role. Swamiji clearly declares, “One soul abide in all. There is one humanity. There is one brotherhood. There is one Atmahood. None is high. None is low. All are equal. Vain are the distinctions. Man made barriers should be ruthlessly broken down. Then alone there will be peace in this world.” (Sinha 334)

So, we have to practice and realize this sense of unity in a more comprehensive sense of the term. By preaching their literature the future of mankind can be made more healthy and happy at individual, social and national levels of life.

Lastly, it can be observed that, at present where people sometimes quarreled among themselves in the name of religion, Vivekananda’s approach to religion is very much needed today. In present context, the prime duty of human being is the established world peace. In various parts of the globe, we may see that violence and science both joined together not only to destroy the peace of the universe but also to threaten the very existence of humanity. It is the high time for us to preach and practice Swamiji’s approach to religion which can remedy many problems of the modern times. If the world brotherhood and unity of existence is the goal of globalization then Vivekananda’s humanism, the knowledge of harmony and universal religion is the means to it.

At last, we can be inspired by the clarion call of Swamiji here, “teach yourselves, teach everyone his real nature. Power will come, goodness will come, purity will come and everything that is excellent will come, when this sleeping soul is roused to self-conscious activity.” (Sinha 212)

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