CHAPTER V

PHILOSOPHY OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA
Swami Vivekananda has provided man with the quintessence of a comprehensive philosophy of life. The humblest and the highest can put it into practice and in the process grow in all dimensions, physical, mental and spiritual. The secular and the sacred blend in this process, providing man with a practical design for a peaceful as also a useful earthly career. And in today’s murky atmosphere of character crisis due to the erosion of moral values all around, the gospel of Vivekananda gains in relevance and importance. Swami Vivekananda’s philosophy can be best reflected in the following lines:

ARISE AWAKE AND STOP NOT
TILL THE GOAL IS REACHED!
Be strong! Be brave!
Strength is Life; Weakness is Death.
Strength is one thing needful
Know you are the creators of your own destiny.
Never forget that all your strength is within.
Dare to be ‘abhaya’ – fearless and you will be truly free.
Let our youths be strong, - strong first.
India calls for infinite energy, infinite zeal, and infinite courage.
Religion will grow out of strength

- Swami Vivekananda

Awake and Arise

You are the pure one, awake and arise, O mighty one this sleep does not become you. Awake and arise, it does not befit you. Think not that you are weak and miserable. Almighty, arise and awake and
manifest your own nature. It is not fitting that you think yourself a sinner. It is not fitting that you think yourself weak. Say that to the world, say it to yourselves and see what practical result comes, see how with an electric flash everything is manifested, how everything is changed. Tell that to mankind and show them their power. Then we shall learn how to apply it in our daily lives.

Let us take our stand on the central truth of our religion – the spirit of man – the Atman of man – the Atma of man is immortal, birthless, all pervading, eternal soul of man. Swamiji says that the Infinite Being is also the same finite soul. This is, therefore, true knowledge: that the soul of our souls, the Reality That is within us, is that which is unchangeable, eternal is ever blessed, ever free...

Therefore, there is hope for all. None can die, none can be degraded for ever. Life is but a playground, however gross the play may be. However we may receive blows, and however knocked about we may be, the soul is there and is never injured. We are that Infinite.... Be not afraid. Think not how many times you fail. Never mind, Time is infinite. Go forward, assert yourself again and again, and light must come...

Swami says that there is an ocean of infinite power and blessedness, behind the human body. Never think there is anything impossible for the soul. It is the greatest heresy to think so. If there is any sin, this is the only sin, to say that you are weak.

Never forget that all your strength is within yourselves. All power is within you, **you can do anything and everything**.

Arise, awake, sleep no more. Within each of you there is the power to remove all wants and all miseries. Believe in this, and that power will be manifested. If you can think that infinite power, infinite knowledge and indomitable energy lie within you, and if you can bring out that power, you can also become like me.
**Be Strong and Fearless**

Be strong! Be brave! Strength is the one thing needful! Strength is life! Weakness is death! Stand up! Be bold! Be strong! Be heroic! Stand firm like a rock! India calls for infinite energy, infinite zeal, infinite courage. Let our youths be strong-strong first. Religion will grow out of strength.

Strength is goodness, weakness is sin. If there is one word that is coming out of the Upanishads like a bomb-shell upon masses of ignorance, it is the word fearlessness. And the only religion that ought to be taught is the religion of fearlessness.

The best guide in life is strength. In religion, as in all other matters, discard everything that weakens you, have nothing to do with it. The remedy for weakness is not brooding over weakness, but thinking of strength. Teach men of the strength that is already within them. Instead of telling they are sinner, the Vedanta says, “You are pure and perfect and what you call sin does not belong to you”.

**Practice Spiritual Boldness**

“... The sun cannot dry, fire cannot burn, sword cannot kill, for I am the birthless, the deathless, the ever living, Omnipotent, Omnipresent Spirit.” This is Spiritual boldness... Stand up, men and women, in this spirit, dare to believe in the Truth, dare to practice the Truth! The world requires a few hundred bold men and women. Practice that boldness which dares know the Truth, which dares show the Truth in life, which does not quake before death, nay welcomes death, makes man know that he is the spirit, that is the whole universe, nothing can kill him. Then you will be free. Then you will know your real soul.... Talk not about impurity, but say that we are pure. You are lions, you are souls, pure, infinite and perfect. The might of the universe is within you.
Be Kind and Benevolent

Our duty to others means helping others, doing good to the world. Apparently, to help the world, but really to help ourselves. We should always try to help the world, that should be the highest motive in us, but if we consider well, we find that the world does not require our help at all. This world was not made that you or I should come and helping. In the long run, we shall find that helping others is only helping ourselves.... The only help is that we get moral exercise.

Build up Your Character

The character of any man is the aggregate of his tendencies, the sum total of the bent of his mind. This is really what is meant by character.

Work like a master

In his Essay 'The Secret of Work' Vivekananda has emphasized that we should take 'Work as Worship'.

Swamiji says that "Work as if you were a stranger in this land sojourner, work incessantly, but do not bind yourselves, bondage is terrible." This world is not our habitation, it is only one of the many stages through which we are passing. Remember that great saying of the Sankhya, "The whole of nature is for the soul, not the soul for nature."

The whole gist of Vivekananda's teaching is that one must work like a master and not a slave, one must work incessantly, but not to do slave's work. We should 'Work through freedom! Work through Love!.

Seek for the Highest

Do not go for glass beads leaving the mine of diamonds! This life is a great chance. Swamiji says, "Seek for the highest, aim at the highest and you shall reach the highest."
Swami Vivekananda’s Philosophy of Life

Swami Vivekananda was a true Vedantist. He regards the Vedanta as perfectly impersonal. The Vedanta is eternal. It is not originated by any person or prophet. So it is not built around any particular individual as the centre. The Dvaita, the Visista-dvaita and the Advaita are the different expressions of the Vedanta according to Swami Vivekananda. So to him, they are not opposed to each other. They are not absolute systems. They are merely the stages for helping the individual to proceed progressively towards the realization of higher and higher ideals till everything is merged in the wonderful unity with Creator.

Concept of God : As staunch Vedantist, Swami Vivekanand gives three attributes to God : (i) He is Infinite Existence, (ii) He is Infinite Knowledge, (iii) He is Infinite Bliss.

God is Omnipresent and Impersonal. He is manifested in all the creatures on earth. Man is an incarnation of God. Worship of man is the true worship of God. To quote the Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, (Vol. II) "Existence without knowledge and love cannot be; knowledge without love, and love without knowledge cannot be. What we want is the harmony of Existence, knowledge and Bliss Infinite For that is our goal. We want harmony, not one sided development. And it is possible to have the intellect of a Sankara with the heart of a Buddha. I hope we shall all struggle to attain that blessed combination". Thus Vivekanand places very high ideal before man.

Faith in man : Swami Vivekanand has intense faith in man and realizes the dignity and diversity of human beings. In fact, he finds the manifestation of God in Man. According to him, “The only God to worship is the human soul, in the human body. Of course, all animals
are temples too, but man is the highest, the Taj Mahal of temples. If I cannot worship in that, no other temple will be of any advantage. The moment I have realized God sitting in the temple of every human body, the moment I stand in reverence before every human being and see God in him – that moment I am free from bondage, everything that binds vanishes, and I am free.” To him, the ideal of Vedanta is to know man as he really is. This is the message of the Vedanta. He asks, “If you cannot worship your brother man, the manifestation of God, how can you worship a God who is unmanifested? If you cannot see God in the human face, how can you see in the clouds, or in the images made of dull, dead matter or in mere fictitious stories of your brain? I shall call you religious from the day you begin to see God in man and women.” Thus Vivekananda teaches eternal communion of man with the God.

Faith in universalism and spiritual brotherhood: Swami Vivekananda emphasized universalism and spiritual brotherhood. The saint after having realized the self sees the self in all creatures. Therefore, he devotes himself entirely to the service of all beings.

Perfection as one’s heritage: According to Vivekanand, “Perfection is not to be attained, it is already within us. Immorality and bliss are not to be acquired, we possess them already, they have been ours all the time.” Thus perfection is one’s heritage.

**CONTRIBUTION OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA IN MAN-MAKING, NATION-MAKING AND CHARACTER-BUILDING EDUCATION**

a) Man-Making Education

Vivekananda says, “Education is not the amount of information that is put into the brain and runs riot there, undigested all your life. We must have life-building, man-making, character-making,
assimilation of ideas." Education should unveil the divinity in man and this divinity should be seen in treating lunatics in punishing criminals and in everything that is connected with human life.

In any case it is the thought force of a nation that determines the character of its people. He says, “Thoughts live, they travel far. And so take care of what you think.”

Vivekananda suggests that education should lay proper emphasis on creativity, originality and excellence. To him good education is only that which unfolds the hidden powers in man.

Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man. The ideal of all education, all training, should be thus man-making.

Swamiji says that, “We want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded and by which one can stand on one’s own feet.”

The philosophy of Vivekananda is a call of action. This appeal is directed to man the doer and not merely the thinker. He never regarded knowledge, devotion and action as roads moving away in different direction, he looked upon them as different approaches to self-realization.

Vivekananda’s philosophy of education is a combination of ethics, religions, science and culture. It also comprises secular education, vocational skills, sports and games, each contributing its share for a man-making education. To Vivekananda, the ultimate aim of education is self-realization. For this, man must do God’s work in a spirit of self-abnegation and renunciation. Believing that the individual can realize his best self only in and through service to humanity. He wants education to promote right thinking, right feeling and right action. His firm faith is that character is more important than intellectual attainment and duties more than rights.
The central theme of all the Vivekananda's writings and utterances and what he wanted to see in India was a free society where man enjoyed full freedom to realize his best self. He stated that behind the differences of creed, caste and colour, behind there lay the real man. Like Tagore and Gandhi he believed in the concept of the Universal Man.

To sum up, Swami Vivekananda pinned his faith for his country's regeneration on the youth. For this purpose, he wanted them to get the right education and go about the right way of getting the best out of education. He also wanted them to share their education with the masses and thereby uplift the entire nation, in the process also uplifting themselves. He wanted man-making education for the young and he wanted such educated young men to use their education to make men out of others. This is the message of Vivekananda to the youth regarding education. Use of the intellect rather than accumulation of information, concentration rather than memorizing, integrated development of the human personality in the ascending scale of body, mind and heart, cultivation of fearlessness in pursuit of and compassion and fraternity in dealing with fellowmen, science instead of superstition, rationality in place of observation and absorption of the spirited message of the Vedanta that all men are divine and it only needs will, strength and effort to realize their divinity, and in the process recognize the common bond that makes all humanity kin – this is the message that Vivekananda gives for those who seek education. And I trust that his message will reach both teachers and students and help to give our country the man-making education of his dreams.
A successful nation, in modern times, requires that the citizens must be participants in its social, cultural, economic and political activities, well-informed and influential. This requirement can be satisfied only by making the masses prepared for an effective commitment to a sense of unity in line with its cultural heritage. This idea was strongly projected in India, during the pre-independence era, more than any one also by Swami Vivekananda, the illustrious apostle of Sri Ramakrishna whose great mission was “to preach into making their divinity and how to make it manifest in moment of life.”

Swami Vivekananda says, “The first task of education is to make the people of the country strong. The first gods we have to worship are our countrymen.” To Vivekananda, the education, which does not help the people to equip themselves for the struggle for life, or which does not bring strength of character cannot be treated as worth its name.

The greatest task of education is to reform the human mind. “The ideal for India, therefore, is that we must have the whole education of our country, spiritual or secular in our own hands and it must be on national lines, through national methods as far as possible.” To Vivekananda the dominant theme of Indian history is to find out the underlying unity in diversity. He accepted the immense worth of the spiritual heritage of India and the cultural synthesis it had through ages.

Education is a continuous process. It should cover all aspects of life, physical, material, intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual on all stages of life from birth to death. Moreover, it must meet the needs and problems of men and women in all walks of life.
Sri Ramakrishna used to say “As long as I live so long do I learn.” Vivekananda practiced the idea throughout his life.

b) Patriotism and Freedom

Vivekananda believes that education must provide three things for the development of patriotism and freedom. They are: (1) love for the mother country, (2) a strong will to desist evil (3) steadfastness in achieving the desired goal.

The Indian Ideal

India is a land of religion and to the Indian mind “Religion is the manifestation of divinity in man.” In his opinion religion is the innermost core of education. Religion is the treasure house of eternal truths and these truths have been realized by the ancient Rishis of India.

Religion is the way of the heart. It is the heart which takes one to the highest plane, which intellect can never reach. Religion is actually the heart’s possession, “The inner love that humanity has ever known has come from religion.”

In India religion is the nation’s soul. Whether it is right or not, the nation is bound by it and so it must be strengthened. Religion is the discipline which touches human conscience, it helps man in his struggle with evil, frees him from greed and saves him from lust and hatred. It is the religious inclination that unifies a society.

In the West, tyranny of the wise and priest-craft are not degenerated as they are in India.

Swamiji says, “Stand up and reason out, have no blind faith.” It is high time that Indians have assimilated their ancient ideals. They must feel the fragrance of their flowers contained in the Vedanta. “If you have assimilated five ideas and made them your life and character,
you have more education than any man which has got by heart a whole library."

Education should be something in the line of positive teaching. Mere book learning won’t do for assimilation of ideas. India wants a type of education by which strength of mind is increased and intellect is expanded and by which one can be a real man. “What we want are western science coupled with Vedanta.”

**The Yoga-way in Education**

To Vivekananda Yoga is one of the great practical things and this is the secret of all education. In the yoga system, there are impersonal principles that one can practise and find full expansion of his inherent powers. Proper food, exercise, sleep and wakefulness are required for keeping the mind steady, in its pursuit of knowledge. The yoga-way is to keep the body and mind pure and strong for self-development as well as total fulfillment. The teacher should make a careful study of the nature of the trainee and show him the path which suits him best.

The practice of yoga requires a high degree of concentration. In fact all success in any line of work is the result of concentration. As soon as a person tries to concentrate on a particular object of knowledge, thousands of undesired impulses may rush into the brain and consequently disturb the mind. “How to check these impulses and bring the mind under control is the whole subject of study in “Raja-Yoga”.” The physical body is the gross part of the mind and so in the training of mind it is easier to reach it through the body. Swamiji is fully convinced that the Yoga-way will help the students to develop his innate qualities like fearlessness, love, sympathy etc., and equip him to lead an ideal life. It always brings about culture of the human heart.
Character Building Education

Vivekananda says, “Neither money pays, nor name, nor fame, nor learning, it is character that can cleave through adamantine walls of difficulties.”

Swami Vivekananda in his essay “The Secret of Work” has described exquisitely what is meant by character.

It is the sum total of all the impressions on the mind. This is really what is meant by character. Each man’s character is determined by the sum total of these impressions. If good impressions prevail, the character becomes good, if bad, it becomes bad. If a man thinks good thoughts and does good works, the sum total of these impressions will be good, and they in a similar manner, will force him to do good. When a man has done so much good work and thought so many good thoughts that there is an irresistible tendency in him to do good and even if he wishes to do evil, his mind as the sum total of his tendencies, will not allow him to do so, the tendencies will turn him back, he is completely under the influence of the good tendencies. When such is the case, a man’s good character is said to be established. The character of that man who has control over his motives and organs is unchangeably established. He controls his own inner forces and nothing can draw them out against his will. By this continuous reflex of good thoughts, good impressions moving on the surface of the mind, the tendency for doing good becomes strong, and as the result we feel able to control the Indriyas (the sense-organs, the nerve centers). Thus alone when character be established, then alone a man gets to truth. Such a man is safe for ever, he cannot do any evil. You may place him in any company, there will be no danger for him.

To Swami Vivekananda, without humanity and character there is no education. Character is nothing but a bundle of habits. When a
desire, thought or act is constantly repeated, it becomes a habit. Right thoughts and right actions will lead to right habits and these habits will serve as character traits of a person. What is required for the information of character is only a change of heart and a change in one's own conception of the world which is actually a projection of one's own mind.

In Vivekananda's opinion, an unsophisticated cobbler or fisherman who is possessed of character is more educated than many who have modern schooling which is nothing but literary training. As Whitehead puts it “Education with inert ideas is not only useless, it is above all things harmful.” Vivekananda fully agrees with this view and says that the misery of man will continue to exist until man's energy is fully utilized for the re-establishment of desirable values of character and human life.

**Karma and Character**

There are two tendencies in human nature, one to harmonise the ideal with life and the other to elevate the life to the ideal. The Karma or action of a person determines the quality of his education. To Swami ji, all the actions in the world and all the movements in human society are simply the manifestation of the will of man. All the scientific discoveries are also manifestation of the will of man, and this 'will' is caused by character and character is manufactured by 'Karma'. As a 'Karma' so is the manifestation of the will “Karma in its effect on character is the most tremendous power that man has to deal with.”

There are certain objective values of education which are fundamental and eternal like Truth, Beauty and Justice. The real task of education according to Vivekananda is the training by which the current and expression of the will are brought under control for the benefit of society.
To him the human will or mind is the infinite library of the universe. A person comes to know of his will when it begins to operate in a given environment. All knowledge the world has ever received comes from the will of man and all discoveries are the result of the activity of the will. Education alone can bring to light the wonderful capacities of the human mind which is a part of the universal mind. Education must, therefore, aim at formation of character, strength of mind, expansion of intellect and ability to stand on one’s own feet.

Religion

Concept of religion: According to Vivekananda, no religion is inferior to any other. All religions lead to the same goal. So one must remain in one’s own religion. He had a very liberal concept of religion. He advocated a religion of universal oneness and cosmopolitanism. He urged people to believe in universal religion. Religions are not contradictory. To him, “Religions are different forces in the economy of God, working for the good of mankind.” He observes that every religion is progressive. He is of the view that universal religion is existing in the same way as the universal oneness between man and man is already existing. Realisation of Divinity or the knowledge of Brahman is the ultimate goal for man.

Swami Vivekananda felt strongly that religion must be the keynote of Indian national life and it must be the only means of implementing any new programme.

Religion in India has only one meaning, it is realization of the Eternal. The idea of Indian race is freedom of the soul. In India, God is known as Truth and it is the fruit of realization.

Vivekananda says, “Religion does not consist in erecting temples or attending public worship, it is not to be found in books or in words...
or in lectures or in organizations, it consists in realization." The old religion said that he was an atheist who does not believe God. The new religion says that he is an atheist who does not believe in himself. In Vivekananda’s opinion education and religion have the same method of assimilation of ideas in the light of personal experience. To him, the entire psychology of education in India is based on 'Yoga and Advaita'. If Advaita is the principle, religion is the medium and Yoga the proper way.

To Vivekananda the Hindu religion is the synthesis of all religions. The Indian heritage is dynamic, growing ensemblage of all ideal elements contained in all the holy scriptures including the Koran, the Bible and the Gita. In other words, India is the land of spirituality which is mainly based on the Advaita Philosophy. According to the Advaitist proper, the whole universe is the apparent evolution of God. In India, "we have a social communism with the light of Advaita." The central concept of the Advaita doctrine is the ‘Brahman’ or ‘Atman’.

Vivekananda wants every Indian to proclaim to the world that his is the life of renunciation, of love infinite. Every one should formally believe that the soul never dies and so no fear of death. He says, “It is therefore that I preach this Advaita, and I do so not as a sectarian, but upon universal and acceptable grounds.” In his address at the final session of the parliament of Religions in America, Vivekananda said “The Christian is not to become a Hindu or a Buddhist, nor a Hindu or a Buddhist to become a Christian. Each must assimilate the spirit of the other and yet preserve his individuality and grow according to his own law of growth.”

The entire gospel of his religion can be summarized in the following lines:

"Each soul is potentially divine."
The goal is to manifest this divine within by controlling nature, external and internal.

Do this either by work or worship or psychic control or philosophy by one or more, or all of these and be free.

This is the whole of religion. Doctrines or Dogmas or rituals or books or temples or forms are but secondary details."

Religion is a synthesis of value and an integration of experience. It stands for the entire personality of man. Since divinity and perfection are one and the same there can be no antithesis between religion and education. In fact they spelt the same thing, the same message of universal truth and love.

Vivekananda says that all the religions of the world have been built upon one universal foundation of direct experience. The teachers of the science of yoga declare that I serve as the technique of religion and it teaches man to get the right perception of his existence in this world. The highest education lies in getting the right perception of human life and the role of religion in this context is unquestionable and invaluable. The informal education which a person gets through religion has immense value in shaping his character and quality of life.

As a practical vedantist and a social realist Vivekananda envisage a scheme for educating the masses of India to develop their inner powers and to make them potentially strong.

**Division of Human Society**

According to Sankhya Philosophy, nature is composed of three forces Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. Vivekananda believes that these three elements in varying degrees, are reflected in every individual. Tamas represent inactivity or darkness. Rajas activity and Sattva, the equilibrium of the two. The Karma of a person depends upon the
dominance of any one of these qualities. He also believes that “there are three grades of manifestation in living beings (1) sub-conscious, mechanical, unerring, (2) conscious-knowing, erring. (3) super conscious-intuitional, unerring, and these illustrate in animal, man and God.”

The Value of Symbols

There are three parts in every religion philosophy, mythology and ritual. Philosophy is the essence of every religion, mythology explains it by means of stories and fables, and so on, and ritual give to that philosophy a still more concrete form. This ritual is ‘Karma’. The ritual part may be necessary in every religion because most of the people cannot understand abstract things until they grow much spiritually.

The external aspects are not to be discarded in the growth of man. It is a mistake to think that a man can at once jump to the highest state. Realization of religion is a long process. Although the goal is the same each one has to take a different road according to the tendencies of his mind. The great symbols in religion are the natural expressions of human thought.

Symbols are, therefore, of great help as tools of learning. Everything in the universe may be looked upon as a symbol and there must be some natural association between such symbols and the human mind. The study and practice of such symbol thus constitute part of education through religion.

Methods of Realization – Philosophy

As reiterated by Vivekananda, realization is the chief aim and meaning of religion and there are various ways or methods of realization. In India the most widely accepted methods of self-realisation are generally known as ‘yogas’ which are four in number,
viz., **Karma yoga, Bhakti yoga, Raja yoga and Jnana yoga.** The scope of all these yogas is one and the same – to remove ignorance and allow the Atman to restore its original nature. In all human experience the ‘mind’ a ‘manas’ is the central factor. The mind functions through the sense organs which are ten in number, five of cognition and five of action. A realized soul will have absolute control over the mind. Faith, concentration, peace of mind and universal love are essential prerequisites for the realization of truth and the final emancipation of the soul.

**Karma Yoga**

Karma yoga is the path which suggests to us to work without any motive. Karma yoga teaches man to work without any attachment, without any desire.

According to ‘Karma Yoga’, the action one has done cannot be destroyed until it has borne its fruit and no power in nature can stop it from yielding its results. The cause must have its effect whether good or bad. Every karma belongs only to the body or the mind, never to the Self or Atman.

The Karma yoga is regarded to be the most valuable contribution of the Bhagavat Gita.

The ideal of Karma yoga leads man to carry out his struggle for ‘realisation’ of his own nature where Jnana, ‘Shakti’ and ‘Karma’ all come to a single point. The highest ideal of Karma is eternal an entire self-abnegation where there is no ‘I’, but all is ‘Thou’ and whether he is conscious of it or not, karma yoga leads him to that end. “He works best who works without any motive, neither for money, nor fame, nor for anything else.”
In the third chapter of the Gita, Lord Krishna elaborates the secret of Karma Yoga. Arjuna asks: 'If Jnana Yoga is superior to Karma Yoga, why is it that Sri Krishana is persuading him to engage in the dreadful act of war?' Lord Krishna answers 'undoubtedly no person born as a human being can live without performing actions'. Actions are forced upon every individual according to his mental make up, which in turn is determined by his inherited nature and past and present impressions. It would do no good to a person by feigning to be hypocrite that he has controlled the mind, but inwardly he continues to hanker for sensual enjoyment.

The secret of 'Yoga of action' is to do all the righteous activities skillfully, but without getting attached to them. Lord Krishna also exhorts Arjuna to be busy in his activities in this way, because work done without attachment leads one to subduing one's ego. Moreover, the common folk follow the example set by the leader or a wise man. Therefore, also it is imperative that a person should be busy in righteous and skillful actions. Not only this, just as the ignorant people are busy in the activities seeking selfish ends, so also the wise men of illumination should work ceaselessly to achieve selfless end for the welfare and benefit of many. In this deep impressive style, Swami Vivekananda has elaborated this Yoga in great detail. He says, "You must remember that freedom of the soul is the goal of all Yogas, and each one equally leads to the same result. By work alone man may get to where Buddha got largely by meditation or Christ by prayer. Buddha was a Jnani, Christ was a Bhakta, but the same goal was reached by both of them. The difficulty is here. Liberation means entire freedom-freedom from the bondage of Good, as well as from the bondage of Evil. A golden chain is as much a chain as an iron one".

Then should we not work? Work incessantly, but let the impressions of the results of work—even in thought not enter your
mind. Work as worship. Doing ‘good’ to others helps initially to develop purity of mind, and in this purified mind arises the intense desire to become totally free. The aspirant also develops sharpness of reason so essential to transcend the reason itself, so that power of intuitive thinking can take its place. Every action and every work done from this point of consideration takes the aspirant from bondage to freedom, from selfishness to selflessness, from hedonistic preoccupation to altruistic broadness.

The saints also are busy in all sorts of activities. One should attempt to reach that stage of a wise man that can snatch the world by a few thoughts of intense spirituality, sincerity and concentration. Let some people do good to the world. Let them engage themselves in their trade of loss and profit; and man of understanding. The person trying to learn the teaching of Karma Yoga should become utterly ‘selfish’ from a different point of view. He should become ‘selfish’ to seek liberation from a bondage of both good and bad effects of Karma. Thus, establishing himself in the plane of total disinterestedness, a Karma, Yogi works. The good of the world and of self is inherent in such Yoga – as a bye product, sometimes, without even the knowledge that the wheel of dharma is set in motion.

Every action and thought is thus conducive to learning this great truth. It is a blow given to the soul in the form of experience to learn from. The idea of ‘renunciation and service’ becomes established more and more firmly in aspirant’s mind through the practice of Karma Yoga. Such Yogis of action write a new epic in every age. Sri Krishana is a shining example, and the Buddha no less. Mahatma Gandhi and Swami Vivekananda of the recent times are a few great examples, along with numerous in every field of science and art. They all got their inspiration from the perennial fountain of Vedanta, either directly or indirectly. Every phase of human history will find karma yogis of
different stature who knowingly or unknowingly will continue to work in this fashion.

**Bhakti Yoga**

Bhakti-yoga is the way of realizing God through intense feeling of devotion or love. The union with God through intense love is the most convenient and the easiest of all the ways leading to liberation. Love is a natural instinct of man and as such it does not require any strict and special training in man to realize God.

Bhakti is the science of higher love. Bhakti-Yoga does not say, “Give up”, it only says “Love, love the highest”. Love is the natural impetus of union in the human heart, and though itself a great cause of misery, properly directed towards proper object, it brings deliverance.

The object of Bhakti is God. Bhakti is greater than Karma, greater than Yoga because these are intended for an object in view. Bhakti is its own fruition, its own means and its own end. The Jnanis hold Bhakti to be an instrument of liberation, the Bhakta looks upon it both as the instrument and the thing to be achieved. The infinite love of God which enters one's heart leaves no place for any other love to live there. Love banishes all fear and grants supreme bliss. Vivekananda says “Our various yogas do not conflict with each other, each of them leads us to the same goal and makes us perfect.”

There is a certain class of people for whom intense “Love For God” plays important role in defining their religious attitude. These are emotional persons who believe in personal God in a particular form or idea. This form of God becomes their chosen ideal-the 'Ishta Deva". Swami Vivekananda in his discourses on Bhakti Yoga defines “Bhakti"
as intense love for God without any expectation of reward, favour, or fear.

The natural tendency of sectarian love love towards spouse, children, and the relatives, love for wealth, name and fame, etc. is directed towards God in this Yoga. Initially there is no suppression of thoughts or tendencies, on the contrary, every mental tendency is directed towards God and thus sublimated. The whole world is seen as the manifestation of glory of the God head-Ishta.

Bhakti Yoga is therefore, the most constructive, non-sectarian, and simple path for majority of people to begin with. This is particularly true because non dual Vedenta is very difficult to grasp even conceptually. However, the main danger on the path of Bhakti Yoga is the likelihood of developing fanaticism if one ignores that other persons also have, like him, the right to reach God through their own Ishta Deva and rituals. A feeling of hatred and jealousy may creep in his mind on this count. Hence we see quite a few devotees on the path of Yoga behaving in a fanatical way when dealing with the persons and ideas of other religions.

Is the initial stage of Bhakti the devotee takes help of 'Pratika' and 'pratima' - symbols - to worship his chosen ideal. Rituals like Puja, Upasana, and Prayers, chanting and singing the glory of one's chosen deity are common. The individual worship may culminate in group worship with the formation of a sect where the participating devotees have a common ideal. Such sects are very common in the Vaishnave tradition of bhakti. Chatannya Mahaprabhu and Vallabhacharya have had nice tradition of such bhakti cult.

Soon this lower bhakti – of puja and rituals, stabilizes the mind of the Sadhak. The person involved in bhakti develops 'one pointed' concentration by losing himself in the beauty and love of his Ishta by
developing a particular bhava (attitude). Such attitude towards the God may be of friendship – Sakhyā servant-dasya, mother-vatsalya, lover-madhur, or plain divine attachment shanta bhava. Consciously developing any one of these five attitudes, in the beginning the Sadhak reaches the higher plane of bhakti-para-bhakti. Sri Ramakrishana used to call it prema-bhakti or ragatmika-bhakti.

Para-bhakti creates a stage where feeling of total devotion and surrender to the wishes of the Godhead is established. The devotee does not expect anything from his chosen ideal, rather he enjoys giving to the God whatever best he has, be it new clothes, food, fruits, etc. The devotee is very happy to surrender his life, money, wealth, fruits of actions, and mind at the lotus feet to his Ishta. A feeling of total renunciation gradually comes in the mind of the devotee. Bhakti becomes the path and the goal, action and its own fruit, simultaneously.

**Raja Yoga**

“The Raja Yoga” is path leading to liberation through bodily and mental exercise. The science of Raja-yoga propose to give us the means of mastering the internal state. The mind is the instrument through which internal states can be observed. So, by means of concentration, mind can know the nature. In this context, it is rightly held that mind has got the tremendous power in itself, so, when the power of mind is regulated in a proper way, it is illumined by light. But to regulate the mind in a proper way is not an easy task. So, when a yogi controls his mind, the whole nature comes under his control. He becomes the master of the whole universe. Thus, he is able to control the whole course of nature – the external and internal by controlling his mind. The Raja-yoga wants to attain the reflective power through the concentration of mind.
There is no limit to the power of the human mind. But this power is aroused only by controlling the mind. The purer the mind, the easier it is to control.

Raja-Yoga enumerates eight steps with which a man can attain this goal. The first is ‘yama’ – non killing, truthfulness, non-stealing and not receiving of any gifts. Next is ‘Niyama’ – cleanliness, contentment, austerity, study and self-surrender to God. The ‘Yama’ and ‘Niyama’ are moral training and without them no practice of Yoga will succeed’. The next step is ‘Asana’ or ‘Posture’. The one thing necessary for the correct posture is to hold the spinal column in a straight line. Then comes ‘Pranayama’ or control of Prana through restraint of breath, ‘Pratyahara’ or restraint of the senses from their objects, ‘Dharana’ or concentration, ‘Dhyana’ or meditation and finally ‘Samadhi’ or super consciousness. When a man reaches the super conscious state, all feeling of the body melt away. Vivekananda points out that all these techniques, particularly concentration and meditation are of immense educational value.

Raja Yoga is a special class in itself. Literally it means ‘king of yogas’. Patanjali has elaborated this Yoga as “Yoga of Eight limbs”. These are 1) Yama, 2) Niyama, 3) Asana, 4) Pranayama, 5) Pratyahara, 6) Dharana, 7) Dhyana or Meditation, and 8) Samadhi. Sadhana of this Yoga is to be undertaken under the supervision of a qualified teacher. It is absolutely essential for the sadhaka on this royal path to be pure in words, deeds, and thought (total continence is called for), along with fulfilling the basic criteria of leading ethical and moral life. These are the persons who right from their early age are pure, contemplative, and mature, much ahead for their age. They have no desires to gratify – either of body and mind. They are able to renounce sense pleasures with ease to the extent that they think that possessiveness is an obstacle in their search for super conscious state-God. They are true
scientists in the field of spirituality. Their method is most scientific, as if they perform the experiment to seek super conscious state-samadhi. Their working laboratory is mind, and the instrument, object and subject are all one the mind alone.

By controlling the outgoing tendencies of sense organs towards the sense objects, the yogi stabilizes his energies. These are then directed to the internal world to explore the truths hidden in the depths of mind. The search for divinity lying hidden may lead to many visions and attitudes (Bhava) and occasionally one may get a glimpse of that state which we term as samadhi. The energy of concentrated mind is focused on Atman that is perceived as Absolute Consciousness, Bliss, and Existence. This is a state of Nirvikalpa Samadhi-non dual state of consciousness. If the mind, on the other hand, is concentrated on one divine idea of form, it becomes one with it and takes that form. The idea is exclusively perceived as the only reality and the person is said to experience Savikalpa Samadhi – consciousness with duality.

By concentrating the mind the Yogi develops the faculty of intuition. The intuitive knowledge that he gains cannot be obtained by ordinary sense perception. Intuition means going beyond reason, although not contradicting it. Such clearing of inner vision is called as obtaining “Divya Chakshu” – Divine Vision as mentioned in the Gita (X1 :8). The state of samadhi the yogi achieves by psychic control of mind and sense is said to be very blissful and it prompts the sadhaka to strive for more and more inherent beatitude therein. Hence, visions or Bhavas themselves stimulate and encourage the yogi to go ahead and reach the state of Nirvikalpa Samadhi. As the mind itself is transcended, the language also fails here. Hence this state cannot be described in words. It can only be experienced. The experience brings a new knowledge that is ineffable and everlasting. Such a person is
Jeevan Mukta, liberated from the ocean of worldliness (Samsara sagara).

Jnana-Yoga

The Jnana-Yoga is the path of liberation through which man is capable of knowing that everything except Brahman is unreal. After getting this discriminatory knowledge about real and unreal, the individual meditates on Brahman and in the end he realizes Brahman in his own self. This is called Jnana-Yoga.

The Jnana Yoga is divided into three parts. First hearing the truth that Atman is the only reality and that everything else is ‘Maya’. Second, reasoning upon this philosophy from all points of view. Third, giving up all further argumentation and realizing the truth. This realization comes from:

- being certain that Brahman is real and everything else is unreal.
- giving up all desires for enjoyment
- controlling the senses and the mind
- Intense desire to be free.

On this reality always stand reminding the soul about its real nature are the ways in this yoga. It is the highest and the most difficult step. Many persons get an intellectual grasp of it, but very few attain realization. Swamiji says ‘Jnana’ is taught very clearly by Sri Krishna in the Bhagavat Gita. This great poem is held to be the crown jewel of all Indian literature. It is a commentary on the Vedas’. The Vedas teach that the soul is infinite and in no way affected by death. The Jnani has to come out of all forms, to get beyond all rules and books and be his own book. This is well said in the Bhagavat Gita ‘Nahi Jnanena
Sadrisam Pavitramiha Vidyathe’ – Nothing in this world is as sacred and valuable as Jnana.

The capacity to discriminate what is real and what is unreal, and the ability to renounce the unreal, makes the person fit to himself through Jnana Yoga. It is very difficult path and razor sharp precision is required to follow it. Such persons are of philosophical bent, intensely analytical and are often mistaken as dry intellectuals. They appear to tread their path all alone, and are very bold and fearless.

What ever is deduced to be unreal by intellectual analysis is rejected outright and renounced, as some one may discard poison. Swami Vivekananda compared the courage to face the spiritual conviction of a Jnana Yogi to that of facing the cannon. While he was preaching this Yoga, many got the impression that the Swami favoured the practice of this Yoga over other yogas. This was not the case, however, because Swami Vivekananda had something for everybody according to his or her capacity and aptitude.

The discrimination between real and unreal ultimately leads to a state of divine consciousness. This is perceived as the only reality for which all other planes of relative consciousness are given up. This is very bold demand on an ordinary human being; born as they are of the weaknesses of the body and mind. Therefore, only a few souls are fit to undertake sadhana of Jnana Yoga.

**The Technique of Concentration**

The power of concentration is the theme and essence of self realization. Concentration of the mind takes a long time and constant practice. It is partly physical, but in the main mental. If the body is healthy, the mind remains healthy and strong. But what is required here is to get control over the body first which should be followed by
control over the mind. Once the mind is thus manipulated it can reveal its own secrets and answer many of the questions like God, soul, happiness, life and death.

The man who practices concentration will come to know that the external world is but the gross form of the internal. The finer or internal is always the cause of the effect of the external world. Vivekananda enumerates several techniques of concentration which we found in the various systems of Indian philosophy. To cite one example, he suggests that the symbol or word like 'Om' can be made the companion of the mind during concentration. The repetition of that work and directing the mind towards its meaning will make the mind detached from all other thoughts. One may experience destructions in the initial stages, but constant practice will improve the introspective nature of the mind.

Meditation

Meditation may be of two kinds, Saguna with form and Nirguna without form. Meditation is a process of leading the mind towards the realization of the self. Meditation takes the mind to the subtlest aspects of creation and finally to Reality. Whereas concentration fixes the mind on the outer form of the object, meditation is a process to carry the mind inwards to find out its own source. To Vivekananda "Meditation is the one moment in our daily life that we are not material the soul thinking of itself." But actually concentration and meditation are complementary rather than contradictory. To develop the power of meditation, to turn the mind inwards and not letting out, requires concentration. They are useful techniques for the development of the powers of the mind and are of immense value of spiritual and education pursuits.
Religion, according to Swami Vivekananda, is something to be lived and experienced. In his own words, 'Religion is realization; not talk no doctrine nor theories, however beautiful they may be. It is being and becoming; it is the whole soul becoming changed into what it believes.' 'No scripture can make us religious. We may study all the books that are in the world, yet we may not understand a word of religion or of God. We may talk and reason all our lives, but we shall not understand a word of truth until we experience it ourselves.' Again he says, 'Religion is not going to church or putting marks on the forehead or dressing in a peculiar fashion; you may paint yourself in all the colours of the rainbow, but if the heart has not been opened, if you have not realized God, it is all in vain.' 'Our scriptures declare again and again that that, is religion which makes us realise the unchangeable one. Only he who realizes the transcendental truth, he who realizes the Atman in his own nature, he who comes face to face with God, sees God alone in everything, is a man of religion.'

Another great idea of Swami close to the above is that 'Religion is the manifestation of divinity already in man.' He said that each soul is potentially divine and the goal is to manifest this innate divinity. To Swami, this was not just a matter of faith or belief but one of actual experience and observation. The difference between man and man, he found was not due to a difference in their external manifestation or revelation. Truth is one but its outward forms are many and varied. Atman is the same, but it puts on innumerable bodies for the sake of variety and play. The ultimate Reality – call it God, Atman, Brahman or Truth – exists in its entirety in a stone, plant,
animal or man. The external differences are secondary and unimportant. Declare our Upanishads: 'That (Brahman) is purnam (infinite) and this (universe) is infinite. The infinite arises from the infinite. Taking away the infinitude of the infinite, the infinite alone remains.' 'As from a blazing fire, sparks essentially akin to it fly forth by the thousand, so also, do various beings come forth from the imperishable Brahman, and unto Him again return.'

So to the yogi of the highest vision, all are forms of pure consciousness and bliss - Akhanda Satchidananda Swaroopa. He does not distinguish even between a sinner and a saint. He sees his own Lord or Beloved in everything. Swamiji used to quote the story of a Sadhu during Sepoy Mutiny who when stabbed by an unknown person, fell down uttering 'Thou art also He.' Says the Gita: "Rare is the Mahatma who sees everything as Vasudeva."

Sri Ramakrishna says this universal vision comes at the last stage of one's spiritual evolution. A person who gets this vision is totally merged in the Cosmic Consciousness and goes beyond all pairs of opposites and the three gunas - dwandwathitha and trigunathitha. It is then that the Light Divine within is fully revealed outside, like a lamp in a glass cask. In other people also, there is the Light within but it is obscured and hidden like a lamp in a cask of iron. The grace of God or a saint can change an iron cask into a glass cask. Instances of such transformations are to be found in the lives of all great saints.

Another idea which Swamiji used to emphasize very much is that the Atman is indestructible. It is absolute, pure, all-pervading and all transcendent. The body may perish but the Atman does not. It is absolute existence, absolute consciousness and absolute Bliss. As the Gita says, 'Him the weapons cannot cut, the fire cannot burn, the water cannot wet and the wind cannot dry.' He is the background or
substratum of the whole universe and also transcends it. In Swamiji’s words, ‘Where is that unity which we call the Atman? The idea is this, that in spite of this continuous change in the mind, there is in us something that is unchangeable... something permanent upon which all our ideas, our sensations fall to form a unity and a complete whole and this is the real soul, the Atman of man.’

‘The mind and the body are like two layers in the same substance, moving at different rates of speed. One being slower and the other quicker – relatively speaking – we can distinguish between the two motions. But still something else is necessary. Motion can only be perceived when there is something else which is not moving. Behind this never-ending chain of motion is the soul, changeless, colourless, pure. All these impressions are merely reflected upon it, as images are thrown upon a screen by a magic lantern without in any way tarnishing it.’

One who realizes this Atman becomes free from all bondages and fetters. He realizes his identity with the whole universe and remains unaffected under all conditions and situations. He beholds all beings in the Atman and the Atman in all beings and so he has none to hate. ‘When to the knowing one, all things have verily become the Atman, who delusion, what sorrow can there be for him who beholds that Supreme Oneness?’

Swami Vivekananda in accordance with our ancient scriptures and traditions delineates four ways of realizing God. ‘Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this divinity within by controlling nature, external and internal. Do this either by work or worship, or psychic control or philosophy – by one or more of all these and be free. This is the whole of religion. Doctrines or dogmas, or rituals or books or temples or forms are but secondary details.’ Work
refers to Karma Yoga, worship to Bhakti yoga, psychic control to Raja Yoga and philosophy to Jnana Yoga. From the above passage it is clear that Swamiji considers these four paths as of universal application irrespective of religious, national or other differences.

**Lord Krishna Observes**

Karmanyevadhikarastha ma paleshu Kadacana

One with an emotional bent of mind may rely on Bhaktiyoga for the attainment of God. The Bhakti-yogi uses rituals, flowers, incense, and such other things. Let not them be criticized. Bhakti-yoga enjoins love for its own sake. It defines how to love without any ulterior motives, loving God and loving the good because it is good to do so. The Bhakti-yogi is not worried about such things as going to heaven or attaining wealth and so on.

Jnana-yogi believes God is the life of his life, the end of his soul. Jnana yoga tells man that he is essentially divine. It proclaims the real unity of being and that each one of us is the Lord God Himself manifested on earth. All of us, from the crawling earthworm to the highest god men are manifestations of the same Lord.

Mere theories of these yogas do no good. One has to practice these yogas. Religion must enter our very self. True religion never changes. Religion is realization; not discussion nor debate, nor intellectual window dressing however subtle it may be. It is being and becoming, not hearing or asserting. It is whole soul becoming changed to what it believes. It is the physical man becoming the God-man. That is religion.

The Gita has a unique place in the realm of Indian philosophy and religion. Along with the Upanishads and the Brahma sutras it consistitues what is called Prasthanthraya. Gita is a literature of all
times and has a specific message to humanity. The message is true even of our times and will hold true for all times to come. Karma-yoga is the specific message of the Gita, the philosophy of action. In the Gita, Karma yoga means applying oneself to discharging one's duties and obligations without any motive. Lord Krisna advises Arjuna to perform action without attachment.

Yogasthaha Kuru Karmani sangam thyaktva dhananjaya

Sri Krishna explains equanimity as yoga. The Gita offers Karma yoga as the golden mean between action and contemplation preserving the merits of both. It enjoins a life of activity with detachment as the guiding factor and spiritual blossoming as the goal of all one's activities. Karmayoga gives due regard to social welfare on the one hand and on the other helps the individual to go step by step in the spiritual ladder. The Gita therefore is concerned with the society as well as with the individual. The Gita does not recommend a life of inaction but hails a life of intense action in which there is complete self-effacement and self-surrender to God's will.

The Gita assigns a pre-eminent position to work. Work does not becomes superfluous at any stage of one's life. A man has to work even when he has become perfect. A realized soul may not need to gain for himself by doing work, but the society at large has everything to gain by his action. So with the idea of the welfare of the society at large a Jivan-Mukta does work. Janaka and Lord Krishna are two illustrious example of perfect men engaged in ceaseless work for the good of the world at large.

First let us realise that at the intellectual level one can never convince another by mere argumentation that God exists. One has to see God to believe it. It is said by men of Science that to live in this world one must have the will to live. The will is important – it is
precondition for living. So also one must have the zeal to see God. It was with that desire, in dire distress Swamiji went up to Sri Ramakrishna and asked him, 'Have you seen God? Can you prove God to me?'

The answer came, 'Yes, I have seen God. I have seen Him much more intensely than I see you here.'

As Dr. Radhakrishnan observes, 'it is the seeing of God that makes a man truly religious.' Blessing are the pure in heart for they shall see God. Such a direct vision is a rare gift to an individual.

Views of Sri H. Visveswaran

Swamiji’s universal uplifting message may be treated to the depth of his love for man and the breadth of his understanding of human affairs.

Listen, friend, I will speak my heart to thee,
I have found in my life truth supreme –
Buffeted by waves, in this whirl of life,
There is one ferry that takes across the sea -
Formulas of worship, control of breath,
Science, philosophy, systems varied,
Relinquishment, possession and the like.
All these are but delusions of the mind;
Love, love – that’s the one things, the sole treasure.

We should not care for pleasure. We should not be overjoyed by praise or depressed by blame. We should always choose the right alternative which will lead us further. We should use our leisure time in a constructive way which will be useful for ourselves and others.
That mind which always thinks that it should give something is a religious mind. That something should be nobler. That is realization. Each forward step is a realization. He who does not know the broader objective and does not do what he speaks, is irreligious.

In general, the highest goal in religion is not attained by developing intellectual niceties. It goes beyond intellectual understanding. Let us ask ourselves, what is meant by realization, in our daily life. If not practical, and relation is nothing. We should distinguish between the ceremonials and practical things. All attempts should be made to give up AHANKARA and petty desires in our daily life.

We should plan a good routine. Meditation is very important in daily life. It helps us to develop concrete thinking. Thinking deeply; think that you must go further. By thinking constantly while you are in meditation, that you have to go a long way. We avoid bad company; but it is not easy. To find ourselves in a good company is an achievement. Read always good books. Impure food also is stimulative. Avoid bad cinemas. Cinemas which teach great ideals may however be seen.

**Views of Shri T.S. Avinashilingam**

In the name of religion the greatest good has been done. In the name of religion, most horrible cruelties have also been perpetrated. Schools, hospitals,, flood and famine reliefs as well as individual or collective help has been given with the greatest love. Terrible things such as the inquisition and torture of human beings have also been invented in the name of religion. Wars resulting in rivers of blood have been fought in its name. Thus we see of all the forces that have worked and are still working, to mould the destinies of the human race, none certainly is more potent than religion. All social organizations have as their back-ground the working of that peculiar force, and the greatest
cohesive impulse ever brought into play amongst human units has been derived from this power. In very many cases the religions have proved stronger than the bonds of race, or climate. It is a well-known fact that persons worshipping the same God, believing in the same religion, have stood by each other, with much greater strength and constancy, than people of merely the same descent, or even than brothers.

Therefore as Swami Vivekananda has said, our watchword, their, should be acceptance, and not exclusion. Not only toleration, for so called toleration is often blasphemy, and I do not believe in it. I believe in acceptance. Why should I tolerate? Toleration means that I think that you are wrong and I am just allowing you to live. Is it not blasphemy to think that you and I are allowing others to live!

Coming to the context of the modern world, the recent inventions of Science have obliterated the age old geographical boundaries. The oceans and the mountains are no more obstacles to inter-communication between nations and people. Even languages are no more the inseparable barriers that they were some centuries ago. No more do the customs of one country look prohibitive or barbarous to another. There has been much more inter-mingling of people, than ever before. Those who were considered barbarians in the last century, countries which were considered enemies for ages past, have recognized or have been forced to recognize that they are neighbours and the welfare of both depends upon the welfare of each. The tragedy of two world war in one generation and the fact that another world war will result in the destruction of all, without chance of survival for any nation, has resulted in the recognition that nations should learn to live with each other despite differences of culture and religion. This has resulted in the setting up of the United Nations Organisation and that
in its turn has helped in the sympathetic study of the culture and religion of all nations.

Intellectual acceptance does not mean religiousness. Moral knowledge is not moral value. Neither knowledge nor birth makes anyone religious. Often we belong to a religion by accident of birth; seldom by conviction. It is a usual practice to call one by the name of the religion of one's parents. Even these parents can easily be proved to be non-religious. A religious person will also be a spiritual person and he would be the first person to discover truth in other religions. Religious people, like the scientists are always in search of universal truth.

Great scientists are religious in the sense that they are also the great seekers of eternal truth. Those who have seen the different aspects of truth have already become spiritual. They now give astonishing reasons why they believe in God. According to their observations by unwavering mathematical law we can prove that our universe was designed and executed by a great engineering Intelligence. The earth rotates on its axis one thousand miles an hour; if it turned at one hundred miles an hour, our days and nights would be ten times as long as now, and the hot sun would then burn up our vegetation each long day while in the night any surviving sprout would freeze. If the sun gave off only one-half its present radiation, we would freeze; if it gave half as much more, we would roast. Such facts have been understood by the Sannyasins too. No scientist had ever seen an electron when there was so much talk about the atom. "Electron" is simply the name for a consistent set of things that happen in certain circumstances. Yet nothing is more "real" to a scientist that an electron. So is the religion to them and to the spiritual people. Only the half-learners, like some of us, who are in large number are highly doubtful.
Swami Vivekananda always believed ‘that religion is the life of India and when that goes India will die, in spite of politics, in spite of social reforms, in spite of Kubera’s wealth poured upon the head of every one of her children.’

When Swamiji addressed the Parliament of Religions at Chicago the first words that came out of his mouth were ‘Sisters and brothers of America’. He did not wish to emphasise this religion or that ism but proclaimed in prophetic words the creed of man, the faith of Soul. His religion is for all. He said never ask the question what our religion is whether we are theists, or Atheists, whether Christians, Jews or Buddhists; we are human beings, that is sufficient.’ His valiant call to the parliament of religions help and not fight; assimilation and not destruction, harmony and not dissension was the echo of the time-honoured OM Shanthi, Santhi, Santhi. He paved the way for the acceptance of a universal Religion. He affirmed his faith in the following words:

I accept all religions that were in the past and worship with them all; I worship God with everyone of them, in whatever form they worship Him. I shall go to the mosque of the Mohammedan; I shall enter the Christian’s church and kneel before the crucifix; I shall enter the Buddhist temple, where I shall take refuge in Buddha and in his law; I shall go into the forest and sit down in meditation with the Hindu who is trying to see the light which enlightens the heart of everyone. Not only shall I do all these but I shall keep my heart open for all that may come in the future. This exposition of Swamiji is truly the message of his master, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa.

Born with an excellent physique which may well be the pride of a fine wrestler, endowed with strong arms containing muscles of iron and nerves of steel, gifted with powerful captivating eyes that at once
kindles the fire in others and calms the passions, blessed with a
magnetic personality, Swami Vivekananda is a purushothama and
represents the quintessence of all religions. May he inspire us is our
humble prayer.

View of Sri M. Feroze

Could there be any immediate use of reading Swamiji’s teachings
is a natural question. I would like to narrate my personal experience.
This little experience I wish to share with you because it has removed
from me a misconception which for some years, I believed to be not
wrong. The passage is very small but could not be found in most of the
scriptures with so much clarity. The defect in me was the result of
narrow-mindedness and was as follows:

After reading several books and in coming contact with different
religious people I started to have belief in all the religions and hated
none, including that of mine. However, I developed some sort of strong
disliking for people who have caste feelings. Today you can see caste
feelings or caste favouritism in appointments, promotions and in
general and local elections. A friend of mine with very high caste
feelings keeps an up-to-date list of his caste people who are high
officials, principals and merchants and feeds this information to his
caste people. He is also aware of every transfer and the subcastes of
these persons. I do not like him for this. After reading Swami
Vivekananda. I am convinced that I could not hate even castes, creeds
and sects. Now I am presenting Swami Vivekananda in his own words.

“Creeds and sects have their parts to play. Every sect has a
meaning, a great idea, embedded within itself, and therefore it is
necessary for the good of the world and ought to be helped. All the
religions and all the sects have to remain. Each must assimilate the
spirit of the others and yet preserve his individuality and grow
according to his own law of growth. Variation is the sign of life and it must be there." This is the passage that has changed my attitude towards the caste-system.

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