CHAPTER - 19

Conclusion

In today's heterogeneous world, where everything is in a divided state, mankind finds itself submerged in the oceanic disparities of life. Never before was mankind found to be in the midst of so great a crisis as it finds itself today. This crisis of mankind is not a mere material, nor economic, nor intellectual crisis, but on the contrary, it is a moral, social and religious crisis. In spite of our tremendous advancements and achievements in the field of science and technology, yet it is found that peace is still in peril, and this is due to a certain cussedness in human nature. A moral blindness and a spiritual affliction that enshrouds all humanity.

Again it under the influence of science and technology accompanied by the new trends of modernism that religion is being transformed into a messianic materialism. As man's dependence in nature is diminishing, so also is his need for faith and religion receding. This noticeable decline in religious faith, one finds is due to the spirit of scepticism, scientific attitude, condemnation of religious attitudes with regard to various social problems. The new social order of modern society stresses different social needs which are predominantly materialistic and as such creating the attitude of self centredness in man. Over and above all this is the very exclusive and intolerant character of so called religions which only result in persecution, hereby
hunting and religious wars, which are all characters militating against peace and unity of mankind.

It is in this scenario, that the religion of the Advaita Vedānta, as professed by Śvāmi Vivēkānanda, finds itself, faced with numerous challenges. But Advaita Vedānta as the true religion of Śvāmi Vivēkānanda takes up all challenges as those coming from human ignorance and delusion and forges ahead to refute them, by bringing the mind of man into the vital contact with reality, for it is Truth alone that conquers all. But in order to stand up to these challenges, it is also of utmost importance that this religion be understood, realised and lived by modern man in the true spirit.

Taking into account the background of Śvāmi Vivēkānanda's life and thoughts and surveying briefly the history of Advaita Vedānta, in this work, I have discussed the different views of Śvāmi Vivēkānanda concerning the ultimate reality, which he strongly believes to be the one and only Brahman, his conception of God or Īśwara as the Saguṇa and casual aspect of the Nirguṇa Brahman, his concept of the Ātman as that which is the all pervading self and which is none other than Brahman, his concept of Maya as that which veils the truth of Brahman and projects in its place the world of appearance, and his view of the world as not one which is self caused or dependent but as one which has Brahman as its ground and essence. Śvāmi Vivēkānanda believes that Jīva or the individual soul is the empirical side of the Ātman, clothed in ignorance and hence which wrongly identifies
itself with that which is the non-self, and appears to be in bondage. But this veil of ignorance or avidya is destroyed on self-realization, where the individual self realizes itself as none other than the all-pervading Pure Ātman and thus is liberated in this very life.

Taking into consideration the various views of Śwāmī Vivēkānanda as discussed in the earlier chapters, it is found that the central theme of the Advaita Vedānta of Śwāmī Vivēkānanda is what can be rightly called as "Spiritual Humanism". As a spiritual, secular whirlwind, Śwāmī Vivēkānanda exhorts that each soul is essentially divine and that all religion and the very goal of life is to realize this divinity in humanity. It is the same Ātman that is the inmost truth of all alike. This, view a very significant way proclaims the unity of all existence and brings to light the basic unity of mankind which forms the edifice to the concept of universal brotherhood. Advancing on the central theme of Advaita it was Śwāmī Vivēkānanda who pointed out that service to man, is therefore service to God. This contribution of his goes a long way in making every so-called duty a way to self-realisation.

Again, Śwāmī Vivēkānanda's 'Practical Vedānta' or service of society with a religious motivation, is a very important original contribution of Śwāmī Vivēkānanda. Śwāmī Vivēkānanda is the one who brought the high and lofty ideals of Advaita into the living present day practical life.
Another important feature that Swāmi Vivēkānanda brought out in the reinterpretation of the Advaita is the belief that the potentialities of man can be best brought out by making him conscious of the immense potentialities of the self. Preach the glories of the Ātman was his cry. For by creating awareness of the reality of self produces tremendous confidence and enthusiasm in men and this awareness expresses itself in the various creative activities of life. Swāmi Vivēkānanda never dismissed life in this world as unreal, but taught that life is precious, for it forms the ethical platform which leads to life eternal. At the same time he never subscribed to the view that religion will be progressively weakened with the advancement of science. He believed that science and religion or science or spirituality are complementary. He believed that "Religious thought was in man's very constitution, so much, so that it is impossible for him to give up religion, until he can give up his life and thought."

Again, Swāmi Vivēkānanda as the Messiah of renascent India re-asserted in the most emphatic terms the fundamental faith of Advaitism, that all religions are branches of the same tree, and that the same sap or spirit flows in all of them. This being true, not mere mutual tolerance but acceptance is of utmost importance in all matters affecting religious belief and practice, for truth is not the monopoly of any one to the .1si

exclusion of others. If this idea of truth is understood by all, much of the erring and hatred it gives rise to within and without religion may be erased.

Thus, the practical outcome of the religion of Advaita as the religion of humanism and universalism, as preached by Swami Vivekananda can be summed up to the ideals of divinity in man, equality, social service, the ideal of universal religion and the eternal gospel of love. And this brings one to the feeling of not mere sameness but oneness of all existence and it is on this basis of such valuable contributions that a peaceful and loving relationship between man and man can be established. But by using the word 'contribution', it does not mean that the idea of divinity and its associated implications was not there before, but what we mean is that, it was Swami Vivekananda who unleashed them unto the masses and presented with all emphasis & conviction, the truth as one which was practically realisable.

Although it is found that religion has still a hold on people, it is seen that the state in which it exists amongst the people has not much depth of understanding. For religion which comes to people untaught, through mere ritual and story is generally of the vaguest kind and such religion cannot stand its ground when challenged by the call of modernism. Hence it is essential that proper religious education be imparted so that the common man realises that the essence of religion consists not in
mere external rites and symbols, but in the constant awareness of
the presence of God and of loving fellowship with Him, through
fellowship of his beings on earth. Both religion and education
should be man making ones. Vivēkānanda says, "Stand on your feet
and be men and extend the hand of help and strength to your
fellowmen." Thus men should develop character excellence and
when this is developed all men's behaviour and work will express
that human excellence that lies within him. For by attuning
one's life to the Divine, which is the source of all strength is
like a tributary merging in a mighty river, and thereby gaining
the capacity to make the entire area of life fertile.

Today, when we are on the precipice of an existential
crisis, where humanity is faced with the whole danger of
extinction, where eternal values are being undermined, where loss
of faith in the essential goodness of man is an outrage on his
dignity, where one sees all around destruction, fear and
hopelessness, here the only way to hope is the road of faith
which inspires us with the strong hope of things to come. It is
here that the ideal of Swāmi Vivekānanda, to rely on the
spiritual resources in man, comes as a great boon to save mankind
from all impending disaster. A resurrection of the practical
values of Advaita Vedanta, its ideal of oneness and the
enthronement of the principle of universal love, alone can save
mankind, plunging into whole self destruction.

So long as one nation thinks that it has the right to rule over others, so long as one class monopolizes all claims to right to the exclusion of others, so long as one sect thinks that it has the right to propagate its beliefs by employing force—peace & happiness will be only a dream unrealised. But if we want to get out of this state of the divided world, we can do so by replacing the hatred & ignorance entrenched in humanity with the pure and simple truth of the Advaitic religion of Swami Vivekananda, which has in it the divine discipline for man's fulfilment, the life of the spirit in God and the unity of mankind. But again oneness of mankind can be best brought about by the oneness of our purposes and aspirations. A united world can be only the material counterpart of a spiritual affinity, unless people of the world discover their highest human dignity in themselves, in their depth of their souls, in the freedom of their consciousness, there is no hope for mankind and its peace in the world. Thus man should awake from his dogmatic slumber to the clarion call of Swami Vivekananda to awake and arise and stop not till the goal is reached.

Swami Vivekananda, thus has contributed in his own way much towards Advaita Vedanta and its religion of spiritual humanism and universalism. And there is no doubt that he would have imparted more of his divine potentialities towards the upliftment of the construed humanity, and also seen his mission of work come through to the common masses in a more pronounced and effective way, if only the pangs of death had not enclosed on him, at so
early an age. But then all hope is not lost, for he has left behind in the world the light of his visions to be understood, developed and realised in both, living life and religion, by the whole of mankind. For Swāmi Vivēkānanda's thoughts show mankind the way towards a constructive reorganisation of life and not the mere destruction or rejection of life's possibilities.