CHAPTER - 4
PRACTICAL VEDANTA
A THEMETIC APPROACH

The word Vedanta is a compound word. It consists of two words, 'Veda' and 'Anta'. Veda means knowledge or wisdom, and anta means end. Therefore Vedanta means 'end of Wisdom'. In fact, Vedanta is the only philosophy which is considered as a living philosophy amongst the people of India.

"Vedanta is no audacious claim."

The strong point of the Indian tradition is, the spiritual dimension of the human personality, and the scientific tradition of religion in which this vision is embodied. The Indian tradition frees religion from all dogmatic and creedal limitations and blends with the spirit of modern sciences. This Indian spiritual tradition has within it the energy and the power to deepen the scientific humanism of the modern West.

As Swami Vivekananda expresses the Vedanta,

"The oneness of all existence is the message which Vedanta teaches. The immediate implication of this message in life and thought is another great idea which seems to run counter to the very spirit of religious sectarianism, but which breathes truly the scientific spirit."

The Western tradition, similarly, has the energy and the power within it to broaden the scope of the Indian tradition, channeling its blessing from a small minority of the spirituality gifted to the millions of ordinary men and women. This synthesis of the inner and the outer, of the sacred and the secular, had already been achieved in the plane of thought in the unifying philosophy if Vedanta, and especially in its great formulation, namely, the Gita. Its achievement in the plane of the work-a-day world is what Vivekananda gave to modern India as his unique contribution in his philosophy and programme of Practical Vedanta. Vedanta proclaims that there is such a thing as the spiritual growth of man, this is more significant than his more obvious physical
growth. All ethical values are essentially spiritual values. They proceed from the trans-
sensual dimension of the human personality.

The Vedanta deals with the nature and knowledge of Brahman. Its central
concept is Brahman. It systematizes the teachings of the Upanishads. There are two
schools of the Vedanta.

1. The Advaita Vedanta founded by Samkara and

2. The Visistadvaita Vedanta founded by Ramanuja.

Samkara advocates absolutism or spiritualistic monism. He regards the
indeterminate Brahman or the Absolute as the ontological reality, and God, the
individual souls and the world as phenomenal appearances which have only empirical
reality. Sanskara is a staunch advocate of pure monism.

"The social monism may be called Sinism."

"Yet it must be granted that the Brahman theory that the self is an integral
part of the all-encompassing whole or Brahman."

He believes in degrees of reality,--the ontological reality of Brahman or Atman,
the empirical reality of God, the individual souls and the world, and the illusory reality
of dreams, reveries and illusions. He recognize gradual release through the worship of
God and the performance of the prescribed duties, and embodied release here and now
through integral knowledge.

Ramanuja is the founder of the Visistadvaita Vedanta or qualified monism. He
identifies Brahman with Ishvara,--the Absolute with God, and regards Him as the
creator, preserver and destroyer of the world, and the Lord of the Law of Karma. He
conceives of God as endowed with excellent qualities and devoid of impure qualities.

The literal meaning of Vedanta is the end portion of the Vedas or the essence of
the Vedas which contains the universal truths discovered by enlightened people.
Vivekananda say's that,
"In one word, the ideal of Vedanta is to know man as he really is, and this is the message, that if you cannot worship your brother man, the manifested God, how can you worship a God, who is unmanifested?"²⁵

At another place Swamiji said,

"Your godhead is the proof of God himself. If you are not a prophet there never has been anything true of God. If you are not God, there never was any God, and never will be. This, says the Vedanta, is the ideal to follow. Every one of us will have to become a prophet, and you are that already. Only know it. Never think there is anything impossible for the soul. It is a greatest heresy to think so. If there is sin this is the only sin—to say that you are weak, or others are weak."²⁶

Since these truths were revealed to them in deep meditation, we call them seers, Mantra Drashta or Sages. They were great scientists and their laboratory was the human body. They had only one equipment to discover these wonderful truths and that was the human mind. The process of experiment was simple. That is turning this restless mind within. By nature, the mind is an extrovert and also tries to go out through different windows to enjoy the beauty of nature. These windows are our senses always running after the beautiful objects of enjoyment offered by nature. The triumph of the Vedanta has meant the triumph of the positive ideal of life. This is shown not only by the social basis of the ethical discipline which the Vedanta as an orthodox doctrine commends, but also by its conception of the highest good which consists, as we shall see when we come to consider the several systems in detail, not in isolating the self from its environment as it does for the heterodox schools but in overcoming the opposition between the two by identifying the interests of the self with those of the whole. Both ideals alike involve the cultivation of complete detachment; but detachment in the case of Vedanta is of a higher and finer type. Kalidasa, who, as the greatest Indian poets, may be expected to have given the truest expression to the ideal of practical life known to the Indians, describes it as owing the whole world while disowning oneself; The Vedantic idea of the highest good also implies the recognition of a cosmic purpose, whether that purpose be conceived as ordained by God or as inherent in the nature of Reality itself, towards whose fulfillment everything consciously or unconsciously moves.
Every nation-state has a particular role to play in the making (or breaking!) of the world order according to the task it inherits in the process of evolution of spiritual intellect and thought. Politics and organizational skills, economy and commerce, statesmanship and visionary qualities, art and literature, religion and spirituality are a few tasks or onuses that we can cite. In this division of world labour, it can be said, to India's lot has come the last mentioned responsibility. As we can see easily, the British and the Europeans, the Americans and the first world nations have had scientific and technological, political and military clout, and they are respected for that in today's world order. Similar is the Indian role in the field of spirituality.

This is corroborated by the fact that giant wave after waves of spiritual power come to surface in this vast ocean, we call India. Sri Rama, Sri Krishna, Lord Buddha, Bhagavan Mahavir, Guru Nanak, Acharya Shankara, Ramanuja, Madhva, Vallabha, Jnaneshwar, Kabir, Raman Maharshi and Aurobindo, and of late Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, and Ma Saradadevi, but to name a few, have made this land the storehouse of spirituality. They did not talk of politics, or of poverty and social reforms; they talked of the basis beyond all these, the Self. They emphasized the need to lift ourselves higher than mere worldly concerns so as to reach the still higher stages of human evolution.

Vedanta believe in the authority of the Vedas. There are four Vedas, Rig Veda, Sama Veda, Yajur Veda, and Atharva Veda. The first three constitute the triad which are the original Vedas, and which enjoy higher authority. The Atharva Veda is a later addition. Each Veda has three divisions, viz., the Samhitas, the Brahmanas, and the Aranyakas. The Samhitas are mostly verses. The Brahmanas are commentaries in prose. The Aranyakas are forest treatises. The Upanisads are mostly parts of the Aranyakas. The Sama Veda contains the hymns of the Rig Veda, which are to be chanted in sacrifice. The Yajur Veda contains large portion of the Rig Veda. The Atharva Veda also contains many mantras of the Rig Veda, which is the earliest. The Vedas may be assigned latest to about 1500 B.C.

At the end of the Veda the Upanisads came to be known as 'Vedanta' or 'end of the Veda'—much as the metaphysics of Aristotle owed its designation to its being placed after Physics in his writings. We shall take in to account here only the order or
canonical Upanishads. Their date can not be exactly determined, but they may all be regarded as pre-Buddhist. They represent the earliest efforts of man at giving a philosophical explanation of the world, and are as such invaluable in the history of human thought. They are the admitted basis of at least one of the most important system of Vedanta,' which controls at the present time nearly all the higher thought Brahminical India. Their importance is much more than historical, for their unique spiritual power and the elements of universal appeal which they contain may exercise a considerable influence on the re-construction of thought and realignment of life in the future. Among the works comprising Vedic literature, the Upanishads were the first to attract the attention of foreigners.

One of the oldest literatures of the Vedas. Vedas are known as Shruti which means what has been heard. Vedas consists of revelation. Max-Muller devoted more than four decades to a critical examination of the Vedic Philosophy. The Vedas are larger than the Odyssey and Iliad put together. The Vedic people enjoyed a unique socio-politico-economic civilization. There was equal distribution of goods. In Vedic hymns a very optimistic Vedic outlook on life is revealed. Shruti consists of Chaturveda i.e. four Vedas. Veda means knowledge or what is known the following are the four Vedas

In Rig Veda –Hymns, as Max Muller says,

"There is nothing more ancient than the hymns if the Rigveda." 7

Sam-Sacred chants, Yajur-invocation accompanying sacrifices, Atharva- it is a collection of sacred formulate and of verses. The Veda is divided into four parts. Mantras consisting of rhythmical or phonetically sentences or Samhita, Brahmans consisting of prayers, Aranyakas related the books for forest, Upanishads consisting of supreme sciences. There were nine shakhas in Rig-Veda, one hundred shakhas in Yajur-Veda, one thousand shakas in Samveda and twenty one shakhas in Atharvaveda. Thus, there were 1130 shakhas in all the four Vedas. Out of nine shakhas of Rig-Veda only one shakhas viz. Shakal Shakha is available now. Two shakhas of Shukla Yajurveda and four shakhas of Krishna Yajurveda are available. Each Veda does not have Brahamana, Aranyakas and Upanishads of its own. Upto 13 kandas there is ShatpathBrahaman of Rig-Veda and the 14th kanda is known as Brihadaranyakopnishad
amalgamating characteristics of both Aranyakas and Upanishad. Taittiriya is Brahamana, Aranyakas and Upanishad—all the three for Shukla Yajurveda. Rig Veda too has Aitareya Brahamana, Aitareya Aranyakas and Aitareya Upanishad. Samveda has only Chhandogya Upanishad; it does not have any Brahamana or Aranyakas.

The Vedanga consist of grammar, astrology, poetry, etymology, sixty four sciences and arts including astronomy, medicine, geometry, laws, customs etc. There are six Vedanga. Veda gas may be regarded as treatises on science. They are the complement of Brahmanar portion of the Vedas. Vedangas are in the form of sutras. The following are formally known as: -Shikhas, kalpa, Vyakarana, Nirukta, Chhandas, Jyotish.

The six Vedopangas, which may be regarded as treatise on philosophy. Vedopangad still bear the name of ‘Shad Dardhan’, i.e., six philosophies which are an elaboration of the Upanishads. The number of Upanisads vary from 150 to 170. Brihadaranyak, Chhandogya, Isa, Kena, Aitareya, Taittrita, Kaushitaki, Katha, Mundaka, Svestasvatara, Prasna, Maitri and Mandukya are regarded as very important Upanishads.

Swami Vivekananda believed in the ancient saying of ‘The Upanishads.’ He said “Every Soul”, is potentially Divine.”

SALIENT FEATURES OF VEDANTA

Swami Vivekananda the right person to propagate the message of universal solidarity and divine brotherhood. Swami Vivekananda. We shall see in brief their role in safeguarding and revival of Hinduism in its purest form: The Vedanta.

About the time when the Arya Samaj was trying to call for Vedic Culture, India saw in the mirror of her destiny another spiritual genius Swami Vivekananda, the upholder of Vedanta religion.

Vedanta preaches the ideal. The real activity is the goal of Vedanta. It teaches oneness one life throughout. The Vedanta teaches men to have faith in themselves. Vedanta declares that what we are searching for is within us. If we search in the right
place, we will get lasting peace, infinite bliss and eternal life. Vedanta says that the soul is eternally pure, eternally free and ever-existing reality behind all these apparent manifestations. Vedanta says that the mind is the cause of bondage when it is impure and attached to the sense objects, the same mind can lead us to freedom when it is free from the attachments of worldly things.

Vedanta declares oneness of existence. According to Swami Vivekananda, the main characteristics of Vedanta is that it is perfectly impersonal, it does not owe to its origin to any person or perfect, it does build itself around one man as centre. Yet it has nothing to say against philosophy, which do, build themselves around certain persons.

The Vedanta philosophy, as it is generally called at present day really comprise all the various sects that now exist in India. Thus, there have been various interpretations, and they have been progressive, beginning with Dualistic or the Dvaita and ending with non-dualistic or the Advaita.

According to Swami Vivekananda, the different expression of Vedanta, like Dvait, Visistadvait and Advait, are not antagonistic to one another, nor are they absolute system but they are stages in the progressive relations of the higher and higher ideals by the human mind. In the two words, equilibrium and synthesis, Vivekananda’s constructive genius may be summed up.

Vedanta says that entire universe is pervaded by that supreme divine consciousness, and that oneness can be experienced in the state of Samadhi or trace by transcending this limited mind through spiritual discipline. Vedanta declares that what we are searching for is within us. If we search in the right place, we will get lasting peace, infinite bliss and eternal life. The nature of the soul is Sacchidananda---existence-knowledge-bliss absolute. We can understood the salient features of Vedanta under these points.

THE GOAL OF LIFE

The supreme goal of life is freedom (moksha). In ancient times, in order to achieve this goal, society was divided into four Ashramas, i.e. Brahmacharya, Garhasthya, Vanprastha Sannyasa. This ideal of freedom was taught to student from the
very first Asharama and they used to practice Gayatri, Sandhya and Upanayanam in order to purify their minds to achieve that goal. Only through Self-knowledge one attains to freedom, which is the purpose of human life. The religion which help us to achieve that freedom is true religion.

SELF – NATURE

From time immemorial man is in search of infinite knowledge, infinite bliss, infinite peace and eternal life. Though these things are present within himself all the time, out of ignorance he is searching for them in the outer world. In spite of all modern amenities and comforts, wealth and power, name and fame he feels emptiness and vacuum in his heart. His condition is like that of the musk deer—though the Kasturi is always present in its navel, out of ignorance the deer runs hither and thither in search of fragrance. Vedanta says that the soul is eternally pure, eternally free and ever-existing reality behind all these apparent manifestations. It is one of the nature of pure knowledge and self –effulgence. It is the intelligent and conscious spirit, the eternal witness. It is the consciousness of all conscious beings, because of it’s power the body and the senses are performing their respective functions. It is the eye f eye, ear of the ear, mind of the mind and life of life, hidden within this body but nay bound by the limitations of the body. The body is the product of matter and will go back to matter, built the soul within is immortal. There is no freedom unless we realize that immortal Being hidden within this mortal body.

MIND IS THE CAUSE OF BONDAGE

Vedanta says that mind is the cause of bondage when it is impure and attached to the sense objects; the same mind can lead us to freedom when it is free from the attachment to worldly things. No one can escape from the law of Karma. As the popular Hindi proverb goes,' Jashi Kami Vaisi Bhami". ‘As you sow, so you reap’ Self –accountability is the cardinal principal of Sanatana Dharma. We are personally held responsible for our good or bad actions. We may be able to escape from the civil law and punishment but no one can escape from the law of Karma. There is a popular dictum, ' sow a though and reap an action, sow an action and reap a habit, sow a habit and reap a character , sow a character and reap a destiny , you are the maker of your own destiny.'
HUMAN BEINGS REAL NATURE

The divine self or the Atman or spiritual consciousness is the real nature of man. The body, the mind, the intellect, etc. are but the external coverings which hide the real self. They could clearly perceive body and soul as two separate entities and the immortal soul hidden within this mortal body. Atman dwells in the heart of everyone. All are entitled to realize this truth irrespective of caste, creed, sects and genders. Even women like Gargi, Maitreyi, Madalasa, got enlightenment. So, they declared that man or woman is not just a bundle of flesh, bones, blood, and marrow, but essentially he or she is divine and it is his/her birthright to discover this truth. Identification with this mortal body is the only cause of bondage.

UNITY IN DIVERSITY

Vedanta declares oneness of existence. The differences we see in the world are apparent and behind this apparent diversity there is an underlying unity which Vedanta calls Atman or Brahman. It is like one real sun being reflected in different pots filled with water. Truth is one, God is one, and sages call it by different names. To realize the truth sages suggested four yogas, and by practicing these yogas one attains the Truth in this very life.

PRACTICE OF VEDANTA

The greatness of Swami Vivekananda is that he has perfectly harmonized four yogas in his personality and also preached the same ideal for the modern age. He expressed his ideal in Ramakrishna Math and Mission which he himself designed.

There are four yogas. They are; Bhakti yoga, Karma Yoga, Raja Yoga, and Jnana Yoga. The uniqueness of human body is that it has all the faculties necessary to practice these four yogas simultaneously; that is, heart to love, intellect to discriminate, mind to contemplate and energy to work.
CONCLUSION

The human body is a combination of matter and spirit. Spirit is always superior to matter. Matter drags us down whereas spirits lifts up. That education which does not provide equal opportunities to develop both matter and spirit is no education at all. In ancient times, under the guidance of a Guru students used to learn both the secular and the spiritual aspects of the human personality. Vedic samskara system like Gayatri, Upanayana, Sandhya, Vedapatha, etc. used to help them to assimilate lofty ideas. By leading a self-disciplined life they could develop wonderful character. Today, unfortunately, only the matter is being attended to and the spirit is completely neglected. The result is all-round decline of human values. Let us work together to inculcate those long cherished values among our children and youth to make India a glorious country—a place where people will live together in peace and happiness.

NEED OF VEDANTA FOR SOCIETY

The Vedanta philosophy, as it is generally called at present day really comprises all the various sects that now exist in India. Thus, there have been various interpretations, and they have been progressive, beginning with Dualistic or the Dvaita and ending with non-dualistic or the Advaita.

The Upanishads, the Brahma –Sutra and the Gita are called Prasthan-traya’ or the three basic works of Vedanta on which almost every great Acharya has commented. For Swami Vivekananda Vedanta is not hostile to the sciences. According to him the scientific teacher asserts that all the things are the manifestations’ of one force, it reminds the God to whom we her in the Upanishads. As the one fire entering into the universe expresses itself in various forms, even so that one soul is expresses itself in every soul and yet is infinitely more besides. Both Vedanta and science maintain common principles. The first principle of reasoning is that the particular is explained by the general—until we come to the universal. Asecond explanation of a thing must come from inside and not form outside.

Swami Vivekananda does not talk of any particular religion His religion is called universal. For him what is needed is a fellow feeling between the different types
of religions and between that types of religions and between the types of religious expressions coming from the study of mental phenomena.

With his firm belief in the Vedantic theory of Atman, Vivekananda held that all knowledge whether secular or spiritual is inherent in man. Knowledge remains covered and when the covering is being slowly taken off, we learn, and the advance knowledge is made by princess of uncovering. The man from whom this veil is being lifted is more knowing man; the man upon whom it lies think is ignorant, the man from whom it has entirely gone out is all knowing omniscient. Like fire in a piece of flint, knowledge exists in mind; suggestion is the fiction which brings it out.

Swami Vivekananda totally agrees with the ancient system of education, in which pupils used to live with their Gurus, there being personal contact between.

Vedanta must cover the whole ground of Indian religious life, and being part of the Vedas, by all acceptance it is the most ancient literature that we have; for whatever might be idea of modern scholars, the Hindus are not ready to admit that parts of the Vedas were written at one time and parts were written at another time. They occurs still hold on to their belief that the Vedas as a whole were produced at the same time, they always existed in the mind of the Lord.

Vedanta is necessary to rouse up the hearts of men, to show them the glory of their souls. Vedantic approach is the special contribution of Swami Vivekananda to modern society. Vedanta says God is in everything. It is he who has manifested Himself in the form of different beings and therefore our worship should no be confined only to the temples and images but we must learn to feel the presence of the Divine in everyone and offer our worship in the form of devoted service to them.

Vedanta can help people to improve the quality of work and will help to divert the mind from evil thoughts. Aldous Huxley put it.

*Essentially speaking, it gives us three propositions: 1-that man’s real nature is divine. 2- That the aim of life is to realize the divinity of man and 3- that all religions are in agreement regarding this.*
Vedanta does not agree with this idea that animals are separate from men, and they were made and created by God to be used for food. Vedanta recognizes error. To say about himself that I am weak, a sinner, a miserable creature, can’t do anything according to Vedanta.

It is Vedanta which says that all the powers in the universe are already ours. It is we who have put our hands before our eyes and cry that it is dark. Many people do not like anything narrow or parochial, anything that makes for dogmatism, anything that finally leads to violence; they do not also like to be atheists as well. To such people, Vedanta came a tremendous message of hope. Here one can be spiritual and yet respect all religions, one can be happy with inter-religious relationships. This kind of influence of Vedanta has spread among numerous people.

A practical Vedantist, Swami Vivekananda wanted one and all to translate the Upanishadic doctrines into action in everyday life. The Swami himself practiced the ideal in his own life; he flung himself wholeheartedly into the whirlpool of activity and thus inspired others to follow in his footsteps and render service to the suffering humanity even under the most trying circumstances.

No wonder, Swami Vivekananda is the most popular but at the same time the least understood saint of modern India. Swami Vivekananda forcefully maintained that we should become broad in our outlook and try to see religion as a process or a method to reach the goal of experiencing inner Divinity. 'Religion is realization,' he was never tired of repeating this truth. Realization of our nature as divine is true religion. In the final analysis we are none other than God, but our attachment to the transient body and senses, and erroneous belief of thinking ourselves less privileged, acts as a stumbling block that prevents us to reach/realize/manifest this Truth in our daily life. He introduced the concept of Practical Vedanta as the religion of the day, the aim of which was to manifest Vedantic Truth of oneness of all beings interconnected by that one 'all pervading divinity'.

Ethics is oneness, said Swami Vivekananda. This idea of oneness is the ultimate reason why man should love his neighbor and not cut his throat. Vedanta stresses the essentials of religion and says that a man can realize the highest goal even without rituals. In modern life we have gelatinized all values. By stressing this basic reason,
Vedanta can help ethics in bringing about a more stable order. Vedanta while provisionally accepting these values leads us beyond them to the Ultimate.

Vedanta through its philosophical tenets as well as yogic practices offers a much better substitute. For one thing, it takes away the minds of men from the conflicts of competition and hunger after pleasure by placing a non-material aim before them. For another, by its practical technique of meditation and yoga it produces mental calmness and spiritual poise.

Swami Vivekananda declared Vedanta does not try to convert anyone; it seeks to make a Hindu a better Hindu, a Mussalman a better Mussalman, and a Christian a better Christian. The universe according to Vedanta is not what it seems, for at the core of all this there is one substance. Vedanta adopts the discoveries of the spirit of man and finds a higher reality behind matter which it calls Atman.

Vedanta provides a background of clear understanding of various faiths and supplies a fundamental unity for all of them. Vedanta can also harmonize other religion. Vedanta is capable of liberalizing other religions and paving the way for co-existence and also for full integration.

Swamiji said,

"The Vedanta philosophy teaches that man is not bound by his five senses. They only know the present, and neither the future nor the past; but as the present signifies both past and future, and all three are only demarcations of time, the present also would be unknown if it were not for something above the senses, something independent of time, which unifies the past and the future in the present."

REligion and SCience

According to Indian tradition every knowledge is sacred. Swamiji quoted an Arab scientist of Cadova, Moorish, Spain, by name Quadi Sa’id (1029–1070). He writes: The first nation (that has cultivated the sciences) is (the people of) India who form a nation vast in numbers, powerful, with great dominions. All former kings and past
generations have acknowledged their wisdom and admitted their pre-eminence in the various branches of knowledge. Among all the nations, during the course of the centuries and throughout the passage of time, India was known as the mine of wisdom and the fountain head of justice and good government, and Indians were credited with excellent intellect, exalted ideas, universal maxims, rare inventions, and wonderful talents."

"A sect ' in the sociological sense of the word is an exclusive association of religious virtuous or of especially qualified religious persons, recruited through individual admission after establishment of qualification."

Religion is a constitutional necessity of human mind. According to Encyclopedia of Social Sciences,

"The development of religion is also permanently influenced by political and civic forces. It is always instructive to study the terminology and linguistic symbolism of a religion, in view of the tremendous power exercised by conceptual association over the inner religious sense of the individual."

The proof of one religion depends on the proof of all the rest. All religions are more or less attempts to get beyond nature. The origin of the religious experience, says Vivekananda, is man's instinctive urge to transcend the sensual world. He believes that man is a compound of two fundamental elements, sense and mind. While through the senses he receives impressions of the objective world, he cannot remain satisfied with his senses, simply because he wants to go beyond them. Therefore, through his mind, at certain moments he transcends the limitations of the senses. But he also transcends the power of reasoning. He then comes face to face with the facts which he could never have sensed, could never have reasoned out.

According to Vivekananda,

"this fact is the main basis of all the religions of the world"

Swami Vivekananda does not talk of any particular religion. His religion is called universal. For him what is needed is a fellow feeling between the different types of religions and between the types of religious expressions coming from the study of
mental phenomena. Today we have not only one kind of religious doctrine, ritual and experience, but almost every group has its own faith and rituals. That is why most of us, as religious beings in the contemporary world, claim to be a Hindu, a Muslim, a Christian, or a Buddhist, much before accepting ourselves as a religious person.

During the last decade of 19th century, when Swami Vivekananda was active in spreading the message of Vedanta to the world, the scientific discoveries and inventions of the time, the attempt to introduce modern methods in education, the impact of 'progressive' materialism, and contempt of religion as the 'opium of masses', such and similar concepts created confusion in the minds of thousands of educated youths of India and the world around. That there is a larger dimension to human consciousness was not thought of. The only aim was to treat and accept sense-comfort as the fulfillment of life. The truth that manifestation of Divine Consciousness is a natural and logical culmination of human endeavor was about to be forgotten in the din and bustle of modernism.

According to Vivekananda Vedanta is not hostile to the sciences. He says,

"when the scientific teacher asserts that all the things are the manifestation of one force, does it not remind you of God of whom you hear in the Upanishads. As the one fire entering in the universe expresses itself in various forms, even so that one soul is expressing itself in every soul and yet is infinitely more besides."

This diversity of religions is accepted as fundamental by Sri Ramakrishna as the will of God. He explains that it is by God's will that different religions and opinions have come into existence. God gives to different people what they can relish and digest. The mother does not give fish pilau to all her children. All cannot digest it; so she prepares simple fish soup for some. Everyone cherishes his own way and follows his own nature.

Supernatural beliefs are present in every known society. Their variety seems endless. The belief in supernatural is the religion. Religion is not a mere personal creed but it is a spiritually elevating principle, encompassing individual, social and national life.
Religion is the heritage of human beings. Vivekananda's view about religion is, "Religion is the idea which is raising the brute unto man, and man unto God."  

It is the informal way of social control. Religious beliefs give the strong base to the traditions of the society. By doing good things society is organized and by evil things society may be disorganized. By all means religion balances and systematizes the society. Vivekananda also says that,

"The secret of religion lies not in theories but in practice. To be good and do good—that is the whole of religion."

Religious thoughts are based on the feeling that all the things of this universe are the orders of some supreme powers when man follows these orders he is united with oneness with God. Religion places a moral sense of humanity on a very solid ground.

"The basic aim of religion is to bring peace to man it is not a wise thing for one to suffer in this life so that one can be happy in the next. One must be happy here and now. Any religion that can bring that about is the true religion for humanity."

Both Vedanta and Science maintain common principles. The first principle of reasoning is that the particular is explained by general—until we come to the universal. A second explanation of knowledge is that the explanation of a thing must come from inside and not from outside.

God has given a unique instrument called the 'mind' to all living beings including animals. But He bestowed his special grace only on human beings in the form of freedom. Animals are controlled by nature; human beings are capable of conquering nature. This conquest is possible only through the power of concentration. Swami Vivekananda said,

"Herein is the difference between man and animals—man has the great power of concentration. The difference in their power of concentration also constitutes the
difference between man and man. Compare the lowest with the highest man. The difference is in the degree of concentration. This is the only difference.²⁰

Concentration gave Vivekananda knowledge gave him confidence finally leading to success and made him the world conqueror Swami Vivekananda. Vivekananda says that,

"Experience is the only source of knowledge. In the world, religion is the only science where there is no surety, because it is not taught as a science of experience. This should not be. There is always, however, a small group of men who teach religion from experience. This should not be. They are called mythics, and these mythics in every religion speak the same tongue and teach the same truth. This is the real science of religion. As mathematics in every part of the world does not differ, so the mystics do not differ. They are all similarly constituted and similarly situated. Their experience is the same; and this becomes law. Religion deals with the truths of the metaphysical world just as chemistry and the other natural sciences deal with the truths of the physical world. The book one must read to learn chemistry is the book of nature. The book from which to learn religion is your own mind and heart."²¹

Vedanta is the science of religion. It supplies us with a philosophical basis for all religions. The discoveries of science are more tangible and spectacular. They can be shown objectively too and are not confined to a privileged class. Religions are often esoteric and their results are not so spectacular. As W. N. Sullivan says:

'Science deals with but a partial aspect of reality. There is no faintest reason for supposing that everything science ignores is less real than what it accepts....We are no longer taught that the scientific method of approaching is the only valid method of acquiring knowledge about reality. Eminent men of science are insisting, with what seems a strange enthusiasm, on the fact that science gives us but a partial knowledge of reality, and we are no longer required to regard as illusory, everything that science finds itself able to ignore."²²
Prof. W. J. Sollas, says

In matters of philosophy and religion, Science is not the arbiter; the final judgment on ultimate questions must always rest with philosophy and religion themselves.\(^\text{23}\)

Prof. Lecomte, the noted botanist, goes farther saying;

'Incompatibility between Science and faith exists only in the minds of those who want such an incompatibility.'\(^\text{24}\)

**ALROUND DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN BEING—PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL**

With the development of secularism, belief in God has been undermined. By work alone men may get to where Buddha got largely by meditation or Christ by prayer. Doing work is not religion, but work done rightly leads largely by meditation or Christ by prayer. Largely by meditation or Christ by prayer. Doing work is not religion, but work done rightly leads largely by meditation or Christ by prayer. Doing work is not religion, but work done rightly leads largely by meditation or Christ by prayer. Doing work is not religion, but work done rightly leads largely by meditation or Christ by prayer. Doing work is not religion, but work done rightly leads largely by meditation or Christ by prayer. Doing work is not religion, but work done rightly leads largely by meditation or Christ by prayer. Doing work is not religion, but work done rightly leads largely by meditation or Christ by prayer. Doing work is not religion, but work done rightly leads largely by meditation or Christ by prayer. Doing work is not religion, but work done rightly leads to freedom. We have to work, for it is the only way to get out of Maya Buddha is the ideal *karma* yogi, acting entirely without (personal) motive.

Swami Vivekananda said,

"in spiritual life, a certain stage may come when you may feel, 'I don't need non-vegetarian food, I don't want it.'\(^\text{25}\)

Whosoever listened to Swami Vivekananda was impressed by his one-pointed spiritual zeal. Their shaky faith in scriptures and Indian religious traditions found stabilizing support in the life and message of Swami Vivekananda. Many of the visitors were married, engaged in earning money, and leading a worldly life, but his unsurpassed cordiality and humility attracted them towards him. His teachings and sayings convinced the devotees that God should always come first, before worldly concerns. Human life becomes drudgery, boring, and painful if materialistic longing is
the goal, but the same life becomes meaningful, joyous, and inspiring, if spirituality is the goal.

Sri Ramakrishna was the epitome of spiritual realizations; in his life he had experienced every spiritual truth directly. Nothing was left to imagination or conjectures, or to philosophy. Swami Vivekananda was quick to pick up this essence of his Master's teaching. The ability to grasp the essential and invaluable contribution of his Guru made Swami Vivekananda the right person to propagate the message of universal solidarity and divine brotherhood.

Swamiji was not a man to be easily categorized. He himself had a distinct distaste for any "isms", and it would be a mistake to try to categorize his beliefs as falling within any particular school of thought, such as humanism, socialism, or the like.

All attempts to exercise exclusive rights at the expense of others were seen by him to be both an affront to the human dignity of man and a contradiction of the spiritual fact of unity.

By spiritual culture, Vivekananda, of course, never meant the quarrel some outer crust of modern denominational religions. He was against all caste-privileges, religious, intellectual and economic, and denounced them in virulent language.

Vedanta represents the essence, the core, the cream of all the faiths and it is free from all coloring by limitations of any country or society. Vedanta proclaims the unity of existence of all creatures and Swami Vivekananda pointed out its implication that service to man, therefore, is service to Divine.

Sound mind is prerequisite not only for mundane but also for religious matters. The fulfillment of this need is not only felt in Modern days but was also emphasized on the mind of the pupil in ancient days so that he may attend to the proper development of the body. According to our Upanishads the life eternal constituted the satisfaction of the body, mind and spirit. The body was supposed to be an instrument which had to be kept in perfect order through Asnas and Pranayam. Radhakrishnan says,
"Human beings are psycho-physical in nature. They have bodies which obtain certain definite laws of growth. They must be kept in a state of health and physical fitness. Education of body through physical exercises, sports and athletic activities helps to develop qualities of initiative courage, discipline, fair play and team spirit. We can not realize fully our intellectual possibilities without health and physical vigor. No strong nation can be built without strong physical foundation."26

All privilege is based on tyranny. Where privilege is more, tyranny also is intense. So he wanted the abolition of all privileges, physical, intellectual and spiritual.

Thus Practical Vedanta represents the essence, the core, the cream of all the faiths and it is free from all coloring by limitations of any country or society. Vedanta proclaims the unity of existence of all creatures. By these vedantical thoughts Swami Vivekananda wished to change the thinking of society in a true way.
REFERENCES


4. Ibid. O. Cit. p. 76.


12. Ibid op. cit.


