



VIVEKANANDA'S APPROACH TO RELIGION

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Abstract

According to Swami Vivekananda, religion is not just a talk nor doctrine nor theories. It is a relationship between soul and God. Religion consists on realization. Self –realization is the path of the tradition known realization. The goal of our sadana or practices is the highest Joy which come from the realization in direct experience of the centers of consciousness. The self is Atmana or Purusa and it is one and the same with Absolute. The knowledge of Purusa can be achieved through self realization. This self realization comes through yoga meditation. Swami Vivekananda realized the nature of man. For him, mankind in the world has been trying to look beyond in the quest of his ultimate destiny. He has given equal importance to all the religions in the world. He said everybody can practice each religion. It is the harmony of the all religions, so that it is one of the best ways to solve all the religious conflicts. So, Vivekananda wants to establish the Universal religion. His religion is known as Universal religion.

INTRODUCTION

The topic, *Swami Vivekananda and his relevance today* is one of the important topics for modern times. Because in present time is a dynamic globalization and free market economic force upon people by other countries. Socio- economic change produces a transient or temporary phase of social confusion, unrest and apprehension. In such a situation Vikananda's philosophy can produce successful life style. Though science and technology gives birth of new knowledge but it can't solve human moral problems. There

is a wide gap between the rich and the poor, failing economic and feeling of insecurity all around. In such a situation one turns to something else for finding peace and balance of mind. Swami Vivekananda philosophy offers such a solution of the problem for human being.

Religion is deeply rooted in man and his blood since many centuries ago. Still it has been dominating man and his way of thinking and behaviour. Within the framework of human rights, religion is considered as an inherent and individual right of the man. Therefore religion is a very personal matter in man and his life. Within the Eastern philosophical traditions we can find a great thinker and the religious man who was not limited to the East but spread western world also. Swami Vivekananda was a man who contributes the tradition of the Vedantic religion and famous with his religion over the whole world.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To know the meaning of the religion of Swami Vivekananda.
- To explain necessary and importance of Swami Vivekananda's religion.
- To analyze Swami Vivekananda's universal religion.

METHODOLOGY

The present study is based on empirical and analytical methods. Data has been collected from secondary sources like- books, journals, newspaper, internet etc.

VIVEKANANDA'S RELIGION

According to Swami Vivekananda, "religion is not just a talk and doctrines or theories"¹. It is a relationship between soul and God. He explains that religion does not consist in erecting temples or building churches or attending public worship. Or it cannot find in the books or in words or in lectures or in organizations. Religion consists on realization. Realization does not consist in subscribing to a particular creed or faith but in spiritual realization. Therefore, spiritual realization is religion.

Swami Vivekananda believes that religion is inseparable with man and his life. In other words, it is within the man. Each and every one should understand God within their soul through self realization. Religion is the manifestation of the divinity already within man. Therefore, it is not necessary to have doctrines or dogmas and intellectual argumentation.“It is realization the heart of our hearts. It is touching God, it is feeling God and realizing that Iam a spirit in relation with the universal spirit and all its great manifestations. In a simple manner, his way of understanding of religion is that man must realize God, feel God, see God and talk to God”². That is the religion. For Swamiji, material prosperity and wealth is not an important thing. But the wealth of the spiritual thought in brain that is needed to the human progress. For him, Religion has been great healer as well as cruel killer. In this he try to explain if one religion given a true and bless to the people, it has capacity to heal evil thoughts in human mind, as well the false religion has a capacity to bring darkness in human mind. Therefore, Vivekananda believes that man must occupy the highest peace. Hence the true welfare of man is his predominant impulse and a true religion is the only agent for that purpose. He further said that the supreme reality is the only source of happiness. True religion teaches us that the goal of life has to be sought in Atman only. “The world is a vale of tears, but through such experience an ardent seeker has to find that the world is a vale of soul’s growth too. Vivekananda said that man is like an infinite spring, coiled up in a small box, and that spring is trying to unfold³”. His ideal of religion is a spiritual concept and without inner realization religion has no value. The very soul of religionis experience. To realize his suggestion yoga system is necessary. Through practices of yoga, people can achieve the inner divinity which is the highest goal.

THE CONCEPT OF GOD

The existence of God and nature of God is a major question in Vivekananda’s philosophy of religion. According to Vivekananda, God is within our own self. Therefore that is propelling and we seek for him to realize it. He is pure sprit. God is Atman. God is body, mind, soul and everything in this world. He is something still higher than known, unknown and unknowable. If it can be known, He will be no longer than God. God can only be known in a through man. This is the concept of God. Vivekananda’s suggestion

in this regard was that God is the actor of universe. According to him each and every man or woman in this world are God. His identification of God is in everything, in every work, every thought, in every feeling. Such realization of divinity in humanity leaves no room for arrogance. A man who purifies the heart he can realize this God. He is the part of God. He has Knowledge, Existence, Bliss and he is the absolute.

NEEDS FOR UNIVERSAL RELIGION

Swami Vivekananda realized the nature of man. According to him “mankind in the world has been trying to look beyond in the quest of his ultimate destiny or search for God”⁴. Therefore the whole of the world community is expecting a religion, which is acceptable to the whole world. Humanity in the society with different social organizations are responding different needs of the man. Man and his spiritual aspiration and struggles are represented by the various religions of the world. The various world religions have been indulging in mutual criticisms, verification and persecutions. We can see in the world several religions claiming universal empire in the field of religion over all mankind and engaged themselves in ruthless wars and bloodshed to achieve this end. To parallel this situation, some intellectuals and peace workers are searching away to establish peace among these. Vivekananda told that, we must understand all of those religions have proved their strength, their worth and their necessity for mankind.

Therefore Swami Vivekananda understood the equal status of all the religions and the religious plurality in human society. But he did not just jump into this conclusion. He said that if one religion is true then automatically the rest of other religion is false. All religions are not really contradictory but supplementary. He said that, each religion is takes up one part of the great universal truth. Therefore each religion is an addition but not exclusion.

Thus, Vivekananda gave equal importance to the all of the religions in the world. He illustrates from the Islam. Because the followers of Islam are equal. They bring universal brotherhood for all. This is the special excellence of that religion of Islam. Therefore, this ideal is necessary for the development of social harmony. In Hinduism, spirituality is its soul. According to Vivekananda, “in no other religion, in no other sacred books of the world will you find so much energy spent in defining the idea of God”⁵.

They tried to define the idea of soul so that no earthly touch mars it. The spirit must be divine and the spirit understood as spirit must not be made in to a man. The same idea of unity, of the realization of God, the omnipresent, is preached throughout. They think it is all no sense to say that he lives in heaven, and all that. Swamiji thought that, there may be different type of people with different mentality, with different habits, rituals and believes in world. Each and every one has one's place. All of these various minds and various types of people are needed to the society. That was his liberal idea formation of universal religion. He said that religion must be studied on a broader basis than formally. He believed that by merely physical means we have come into touch with the whole world. So the future religions of the world have to become as universal and as wide. The religious ideal of the future must embrace all that exists in the world and is good and great, and at the same time have infinite scope for future development.

CONCEPT OF UNIVERSAL RELIGION

According to swami Vivekananda, it is the direct realization of the truths of the spiritual world that forms the real essence of religion. True religion is a direct, transcendental experience of the ultimate reality. This idea of direct realization is common to all religions. The end of all religions is the realizing of God in the soul and this is the one universal religion. If there is one Universal Truth in all religions then it is the realizing of God. Ideals and methods may differ but this is the main point to be noted. Vivekananda built his theory of the transcendental unity of all religion based on the direct experience of the Ultimate Reality. He spoke on the oneness of all religions with regard to the transcendental aspect of each religion. Differences among religions would not be the cause of conflict. We have to understand them to be mutually complementary. For Swami Vivekananda, religion is a total concept. All the religions of away all old ideals, beliefs and superstitions, desire for this world or another and are determined to find freedom. He has to know from the start that all knowledge and all experience are in the soul and not in nature.

Every one wants to go beyond the visible and forces his way to the realization of God by the power of pure reason. All science even wills not Jnana Yoga based upon the teaching of the Upanishads, which from the philosophical section of the Hindu scriptures.

In Vedas shows the way to realize the oneness of the individual soul and the supreme soul through the discipline of discrimination between the real and the unreal. Jnana yoga in other words the path of knowledge based on direct experience of truth. Through Jnanayoga the divinity of the soul, non-duality of God, the harmony of religion and the unity of all soul can realize. Vivekananda said that we cannot know Brahman, but we are Brahman. The whole of it, not a piece. The variety and plurality of Jivas or centers of consciousness are like the reflections of the one sun in numerable drew drops. In Jnana this variety is overcome and we can see only the unity.

The object of Jnana Yoga is identical with that of Bhakti Yoga and Raja Yoga. But its method is different. The method is pure reason. According to the Jnana discipline, the highest good is realization of self. A jnana Yogi goes to the farthest limits of reason, eliminating all objects until he reaches that which cannot be thrown away, the real, the eternal subject who is the witness of the universe. In this we can see that to a jnana Yogi, self-realization is the one only way to realize the highest truth. Vivekananda explained Jnana Yoga is the important discipline to get real knowledge. It has given strength to life. To him the root cause of suffering is that the weakness itself. "We become measurable because we are weak. We lie, kill, and commit other crimes. We die because we are weak. When there is nothing to weaken us, there is no death nor sorrow. We are miserable through delusion. Give up the delusion, and the whole thing vanishes"⁶.

Vivekananda idea was to pin point to the world. The highest ideal of morality and unselfishness going together with the highest metaphysical conception. To realize that man needs the highest philosophical and scientific conception. To him human knowledge is not antagonistic to human well-being. On the contrary, it is knowledge alone that will save us in every department of life in knowledge is worship.

Vivekananda gave a remedy for weakness that is the thinking of strength. According to him strength, is already within man. Therefore, Jnana Yoga has given a way and means for that.

CONCLUSION

Vivekananda proved that man and his true nature is already divine. But that divinity is hidden. Therefore, the realization of that divinity is the purpose of life and this is the

religion of Vivekananda philosophy. To realize the religion, man should have to practice four Yogas. These are –Yoga of knowledge, control of mind, selfless work, and love of God. That is the realization of religion. Therefore, religion is the main essence of human life and it has the great motive power to life. Accordingly to him, religion is a value oriented concept too. His formation of new ideal or universal religion, we can call as universal love or universal brother-hood. It is given an equal value for all of religions of the world, as it is exist with truth. His identification of truth is not only absolute truth but also scientific. And his religion can be practice by each and every body. To understand that it is not necessary deep literacy knowledge, but the practice, it is very much needed. Therefore it can be applied for all nations, all societies and individuals. It is the harmony of the all religions, so that it is one of best solutions for the prevalent religious conflict in the world.

REFERENCE

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- [2] Ibid, p.419.
- [3] Complete works of Swami Vivekananda. Vol. 4, p. 254.
- [4] Tathagutanandas. p. 28
- [5] Complete works of Swami Vivekananda. Vol. 4, p. 482
- [6] Swami Vivekananda, “Jnana Yoga”, Advaita Ashrama, Kolkata, 23rd edn. 2001, P. 343

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