

Swami Vivekananda: His Humanism

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Abstract

The concept of humanism is a core concept. Human being has social as well as moral values. The concept of humanism had elaborately been discussed by many contemporary Philosophers like Rabindranath Tagore, M. N Roy, M.K Gandhi. Vivekananda is one of them. He is one of the important social reformers like Raja Rammohan Roy in the Bengal Renaissance. We have gained many concepts related to humanism from the ancient scriptures like-'Babujan hitaya, Babujana sukhaya' (For the welfare, peace and happiness of many), 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' (The whole universe is one family), 'Sarva Bhutabita' (For the welfare of all beings) etc. these are all vividly enumerated in our ancient scriptures, are also the source of humanism in modern India. Vivekananda was emphasized on seva to the poor people. Vivekananda believed that God not only exists in a mandira or girza or a mosque but that God always exists everywhere. Vivekananda believed that all type of social welfare is for the sake of human. He coins the word Daridranarayana, God in the poor, and asked us to serve them. So this paper is highlighted to show the different angles or points of humanism.

Keywords: Babujan hitaya, Babujana sukhaya, practical Vedanta, Universal Science-Religion, Common man, symphony

Article Publication

Published online: 15-June-2023

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doi: [10.31305/rrijm.2023.v08.n06.022](https://doi.org/10.31305/rrijm.2023.v08.n06.022)

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Last word of Vivekananda

My opinion is that Swami Vivekananda's universalism and humanism are the pinnacle of his philosophy of life. He appeared to be a wonderful patriot and a passionate supporter of national development. However, this was only a means to a goal. Because underneath it all, Swami Vivekananda is the universalist and humanist, whose true mission is for all people, but especially for the oppressed, downtrodden, and abused. With this motivating humanitarian goal in mind, he made a concerted effort to synthesize science and religion and develop what Romain Rolland refers to as a "Universal Science-Religion" to adequately meet the physical and spiritual needs of the suffering human race.

Revolt against Inequities in Hindu Society

Even though he was a fearless and strong advocate for Hinduism's core principles throughout history, he never missed an opportunity to rebel against the filth that accumulated around it, the social injustices in Hindu society that are in direct opposition to the idea of the unity of man and creation, the foundation of the Hindu religion, and the great philosophical systems of the Hindus. He identified the root of this disconnect between philosophy and daily life, between profession and practice, in just one sentence: "India's doom was sealed the very day they discovered the word Mleccha and stopped from communion with others."

Harmony of Religion

Swami Vivekananda's teacher was Sri Ramakrishna, who taught him via a variety of spiritual experiments that if one religion is true, all of them are true. Sri Ramakrishna was a fervent believer in the harmony of all religions and in the fundamental oneness of their goals. The humanistic philosophy of Swami Vivekananda is founded on a broad view of life. His humanism was a harmonious evolution of all aspects of nature, including the intellectual, emotional, and spiritual, to a degree of perfection that is rarely seen in man and that moved man to admiration and submission. The combination of the transcendent and the imminent is the fundamental tenant of Swami Vivekananda's humanism. His humanism goes beyond the notion of individual salvation. His humanism implies that helping people equals helping God. The titles of the reality of man and the appearance of man are God, self, and Brahman. Swamiji represents a deep, human, and global form of superior or divine humanism. The western humanism that is currently prevalent, especially its scientific humanism, is very different from a humanism that is nurtured and sustained by the igniting of the divine spark in man. His humanism is distinct in that it,

...is only one Atman, one self, eternally pure, eternally perfect, unchangeable, unchanged; it has never changed; and all these various changes in the universe are but appearances in that one self.¹

Once more, his practical Vedanta is significant and helpful from the perspectives of personal well-being, social well-being, national integration, and for the good of humanity as a whole. Practical or Neo-Vedanta is the name given to Swami Vivekananda's explanation of Vedanta. It may be summed up in three words: promoting the oneness of the formless and personal God, the identity of Brahman with His force Maya, and the all-pervasiveness of God. Duality and multiplicity lead to the ultimate unity. Theism and humanism can be said to be identified in his depiction of reality, or one and many can be said to be reconciled in a greater one.

The Vedantists historically held the view that this world is illusory and unreal. rejecting the notion that a "true doctrine" could really exist. In the history of Vedantism, Swami Vivekananda was likely the first philosopher to come out so forcefully in favor of the reality of this world. Practical-Vedanta has a special relevance because it seeks wisdom and the unity of reality. It is the true, eternally joyful life of the Brahman of Truth. Self-discipline, self-purity, self-emancipation, and service were all stressed by Swami Vivekananda. The idea that we must simultaneously become truly scientific and spiritual is one of Swami Vivekananda's most essential and significant teachings. He gave us the seeds for this problem's solution in the form of his teachings, which we must now sow in the best conditions across the fullest spectrum of human thinking and activity. Correctly, Swami Pavitrananda says,

...forget that the real situation will come from men who have seen the 'Ultimate Truth' who have solved the mystery of the universe and the problem of human existence, who stands high above human turmoil and earthly conflict on a plane from where all our fights and struggles seem like a play of ignorant children. Only they can save the world. Only they can give us help to build the world a new.²

No Patience for Other-Worldly Religious Cults

But because the core of his religion was humanistic, he had little patience for a transcendental outlook on religion that ignored the material concerns of the average person. He stated unequivocally that he is not a believer in religion or in a God who can provide for it if it cannot dry the tears of a widow or give a piece of bread to the hungry. He was very keen to use science to raise the living standards of the common people in this subcontinent, unlike many religious reformers. In his youthful exuberance, he once said that if he could have obtained sufficient funding for its quick industrialization, he would have changed the subcontinent's appearance.

Synthesis of Matter and Spirit

¹ Basant Kumar Lal, *Contemporary Indian Philosophy*, Motilal Banarssi Dass Publication, New Delhi, 2005, p. 22.

² S.B.P Sinha, *Perspectives of Philosophy*, Authors Press, New Delhi, 2005, p. 29.

He supported the integration of science and religion and held a fundamental belief in the similarity of matter and spirit. For him, there is no impenetrable wall separating natural forces from the cosmic spiritual energy or between matter and spirit. He pinpoints this issue in a London address and states openly: “The materialist is right. There is but one. Only he calls that one Matter, and I call it God.”³

Meeting of East and West

According to him, the goal of this synthesis was to bring the East and the West together, not via begging and bossing but rather on the solid basis of “give and take.” He fervently argued for human unity and a global civilization in which, whether he uses that term correctly or incorrectly, the spiritualist East—which is dominated by traditional religion—and the materialist West—which is dominated by modern science and technology—will converge into a universal symphony. He preached this message of synthesis fearlessly and attempted to implement it in a world that was excessively dependent on Rudyard Kipling’s hatred-cult as reflected in his famous dictum.

“East is East and
West is West,
And the Twain
Shall never meet.”

He brought the East and the West closer together, at least in terms of human ambitions and ideas, when the “changeless East” was, regrettably, a prime target for exploitation by its younger brother, the constantly evolving industrialized West.

One-world and the United Nation

Because of science’s destructive genius, everyone who is sane and sober can feel how urgently needed human togetherness is now. But for this, the already split human home against itself might crumble. Naturally, a replacement for Swami Vivekananda’s message of a cultural synthesis of the East and the West is being sought in the one-world of today, and many—among whom we claim to be one—are tempted to imagine its early inception in the UN with all of its flaws. The future of man is undoubtedly found in a global perspective built on a persistent feeling of the interconnectedness of all human beings and their interests, both material and spiritual. For this, Swami Vivekananda gave his life and died. Unfortunately, despite the fact that science has made the globe smaller for us and that our actions and thoughts should, for the long-term benefit of mankind, be global in scope, we frequently suffer greatly from a lack of spiritual unity and understanding. To do this, we must draw inspiration and guidance from a philosophy of unity that has deep compassion for all people and an unwavering love for all members of the human race.

Swami Vivekananda’s Vision of the Next Phase of Civilization

Vivekananda attempts to expound the same issue in a new role—that of a philosopher of history—with the combined wisdom of a philosopher, a historian, and a social scientist. He has made an analysis of the history of man to demonstrate that the development of the proletariat, who will dominate in human affairs, will characterize the next phase of civilization in a brief but incredibly insightful book in Bengali on the philosophy of history, a field of study not well known in this part of the world before him. He believes that the current economic structure, which is focused on individual enterprise, will be replaced by a socialist economy, which is based on collective endeavors in the interest of the collective, almost like a modern proponent of economic liberation of the masses. This, in his opinion, is the inescapable result of the historical law. But he achieves this in a distinctly different way from the radicals who attempted to weigh matter entirely above spirit in their scale of values, making matter the most potent ideological force influencing the course of human history. Naturally, he finds inspiration for a better world in the doctrine of human unity and its ethical counterpart, the gospel of universal love, which together make

³ Sister Nivedita, *The Master as I Saw Him*, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta, 1990, pp. 18-19.

up the essence of human spirituality. He was a prophet of the ordinary man, if such a thing could be termed a prophet in a time that does not feel particularly fond of prophethood.

He was a saviour of the common man, if such a thing could be said of a saviour in a time that does not hold much curiosity for salvation. His protest was against exploitation and repression in all spheres of existence and in all forms, if he could be considered a revolutionary at a time that nearly always saw the future of man in a revolution. He was a strong proponent of achieving balance between the opposing forces of life—reason and faith, substance and spirit, the individual and society, science and religion, the past and the present, the East and West, and last but not least, the haves and the have-nots—but he was not an extremist in this regard. It is clear from recent changes in human interactions seen in their broadest context that humankind's future does not lay in disagreement but in understanding, in strife but in unification, in disagreement but in agreement, and most definitely not in war but in peace. After a protracted journey through the labyrinths of unbridled materialism, I firmly think that returning to the idea of oneness can foster human solidarity, create a better world, and foster long-lasting growth. However, I must conclude with a word of caution, the essence of which can be found in an Islamic saying: "Verily there is no God but God to be worshipped." We must never lose sight of the fact that what ultimately matters and propels man ahead is not the man, but the message, the person, or the ideal. Otherwise, immortal thoughts might be transformed into mortal flesh, and a sect might develop based on the beliefs of a guy who was one of the most ferocious opponents of sects in human history.

An Inveterate Advocate of the Middle-of-the-Road Method

If he could be considered a prophet in a time when prophethood is not highly valued, he was a prophet of the ordinary man. He was a savior of the average man, if such a thing could be said in a time when there is little interest in salvation. And if he could be considered a revolutionary in a time when revolution is nearly always seen as the way humanity will progress, his uprising was against oppression and exploitation throughout all spheres of existence. He was a strong proponent of achieving balance between the opposing forces of life—reason and faith, substance and spirit, the individual and society, science and religion, the past and the present, the East and the West, and last but not least, the haves and the have-nots—but he was not an extremist in this regard. It is clear from recent changes in human interactions seen in their broadest context that humankind's future does not lay in disagreement but in understanding, in strife but in unification, in disagreement but in agreement, and most definitely not in war but in peace. After a protracted journey through the mazes of unrelenting materialism, I firmly think that returning to the philosophy of oneness can foster human solidarity, improve the planet, and foster long-lasting growth.

Sect, the Great Trap

But I must conclude with a word of caution, the essence of which can be found in the creed of Islam: "Verily there is no God but God to be worshipped." We must never lose sight of the fact that what ultimately matters and propels man ahead is not the man, but the message, the person, or the ideal. A cult may thrive on the ideas of a man who was one of the greatest foes of sects in human history if immortal concepts were to be transformed into "mortal flesh."

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How Cite this article?

Manna, B. (2023). Swami Vivekananda: His Humanism. *RESEARCH REVIEW International Journal of Multidisciplinary*, 8(6), 161–165. <https://doi.org/10.31305/rrijm.2023.v08.n06.022>