

# **PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS OF AN IDEAL SOCIETY: IN THE LIGHT OF MODERN INDIAN THINKERS**

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PHILOSOPHY (ARTS)**

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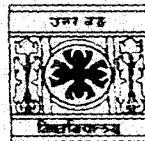
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## **TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

*This is to certify that the thesis entitled: 'Philosophical Foundations of an Ideal Society: In the Light of Modern Indian Thinkers' written by Sri Noni Gopal Dey is the result of his systematic and analytic study on the philosophical foundations of an ideal society from the modern Indian standpoint. The thesis has not been submitted earlier for the PhD degree or any other degree either to this University or any other degree. Hence I recommend its submission for the award of the PhD degree of the University of North Bengal.*

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## Transliteration

a	अ	ka	क	tha	ठ	ba	ब	m	मं	k	कं	kau	कौ
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## PREFACE

This dissertation on the *Philosophical Foundations of an Ideal Society : In the light of Modern Indian Thinkers*, is a comparative and critical study. Here, I have relied heavily upon published philosophical books. On thorough examination of major philosophical works, this research is a modest attempt to find out a new direction on the Study of *Philosophical Foundations of an Ideal Society: In the light of Modern Indian Thinkers*.

My passion for the study of *Philosophical Foundations of an Ideal Society: In the light of Modern Indian Thinkers* was first kindled when I came across some published books of Vivekananda , Sri Aurobindo and Swami Swarupananda since my student life. There is huge number of books in different philosophical systems on this vast subject. Due to time constraint, it was simply not possible for me to read all these books. Instead, I consciously choose some major original books written by Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo and Swami Swarupananda. Beside these I also chose some books edited by others on Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo and Swami Swarupananda.

To the scope and contents of the subject matter, this thesis is the result of an intensive study of *Philosophical Foundations of an Ideal Society*. This thesis cites and analyses these works in order to

compare and contrast differing view-points about *Ideal Society* I have cited and analysed only those portions of the books that are relevant to *Philosophical Foundations of an Ideal Society* and its interpretation in a broader aspect.

A few researchers, scholars and authors have compared and analysed different views about *Ideal Society* earlier but none has tried to decipher or use the concept on *Philosophical Foundations of an Ideal Society* as I have attempted in this dissertation. As I have already hinted above, the main purpose of this research, is to cite, decipher and contrast varying ideas of several dimension of thought in Indian Philosophy on *Philosophical Foundations of an Ideal Society*.

I have tried to understand the reasons of the emphasis laid on *Philosophical Foundations of an Ideal Society : In the light of modern Indian Thinkers* through theories and concepts propagated by several dimension of thought in Indian Philosophy. This study analyses critically the theories of the three thinkers which may help future researchers of this field.

Throughout the dicussion I have made the English rendering of Sanskrit and Bengali words and sentences for the sake of clarity. This work is divided into six broad chapters and a bibliography.

Some errors might have crept in here, inspite of my best efforts to avoid the same for which I apologise from the scholars in

this respect. I humbly submit this work for discerning judgement of the learned.

First I take the opportunity to record my deep sense of gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Raghunath Ghosh, Professor and Head of the Department of Philosophy, Dean, Faculty of Arts, Commerce & Law, and Co-ordinator UGC's Special Assistance Programme, North Bengal University, Siliguri whose untiring help, valuable guidance and strong support are gratefully acknowledged.

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In the completion of the present work I always got encouragement from Dr. Biswajit Chakraborty, Former Professor, Department of Bengali, Radhamadhab College, Silchar, whose kind affection and timely suggestions have led me to keep steadily on my path.

In understanding my subject , I was much inspired by the scholarly expositions of Dr. Jashobanta Roy, Senior Lecturer, Department of Philosophy, Radhamadhab College, Silchar, who had

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I express my deep sense of gratitude of Dr(Mrs) Subhra Ghosh, Senior Reader & Head, Department of Sanskrit, Ananda Chandra College, Jalpaiguri, West Bengal, with whom I had the opportunity to discuss some of the problems dealt with in this dissertation and I was immensely benefited by her reflections. I am also indebted to Mrs. Kabita Majumder, Senior Lecturer & Head, Department of Philosophy, Radhamadhab College, Silchar, with whom I had the opportunity to get guideline regarding my research work.

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Thanks are also due to Dr. Romesh Kumar Majoo, Reader, Department of Education, Assam University, Silchar, with whom I had the opportunity to discuss some of the problems dealt with in this dissertation. It would be failing in my duties if I do not acknowledge the name of my elder brother(gurubhai) Sri Joyti Prakash Das, Senior lecturer and Head, Department of Commerce, Karimganj College, Karimganj for his keen interest and for the supply of some study materials, specially during my preparation of the chapter Swami Swarupananda's Concepts of Man and Ideal Society. Thanks are also due to Dr. Mrinal Kanti Roy, Former Senior Lecturer, Department of Chemistry, Alipurduar College, Alipurduar, West Bengal, helps me all through in completion of my research work. My sincere thanks are due to him. I would also like to

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I am also under an obligation to place on record the name of Sri Bijay Kanti Dhar, who extended help by giving me books, study materials from time to time. Besides, there are may others who have been directly or indirectly responsible for the successful completion of the present work in minimum time. The mentionable among them are, Mr. Bobotosh Roy, former Vice-Principal, Maibung Higher Secondary School, N.C.Hills, Assam, Dr(Mrs) Sandhya Roy, Lecturer, Department of Education, Womens' College, Silchar, Mr. Subhash Talukdar, Former Principal, Ramkrishnanagar College, Karimganj, Assam. I thank them all for their interest in my research work.

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Last but not least my heartfelt appreciation for all my family members especially my father, Sambhu Charan Dey, my mother Smt. Bimala Rani Dey, my younger brothers, Sri Nirmal Chandra Dey, Ramkrishna Dey, Babu Chandra Dey respectively who have stood by my side when I lost confidence and have given me moral support and courage.

This work could not have been submitted in a proper manner without the patience and labour of Mr. Asis Kr. Nag who took meticulous care in typing this thesis. My affectionate thanks are due to him.

I also acknowledge my indebtedness to all those whose works I have consulted, referred to and quoted.

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## CHAPTER – I

### **INTRODUCTORY: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

When and how the felt to be grouped is uninferentiable. Whether the human beings individuals were supposed to imitate the way of life adopted by the ants, bees, or the human being themselves felt it necessary to be related with each other for the sake of their survival ? Whether the process of making relation with each other would be taken as an essential condition ? These are the probable questions that inspire us to enquire into the concept of *society*. While analyzing the human nature it might have been noticed by the social scientists that there are some distinct and overwhelming innate instincts in them which might stimulate the impulse to make relation with each other ; such relation might occur depending on some geographical, economical, and security factor. It is asserted that humanity is the combination of animality and rationality by which it is differentiated from other animal groups. Where animals develop their relation with others simply on the bases of physical assimilation of the creed; the human relation on the other hand is materialized; not merely on physical appearance but on some subtle essence of likingness. Thus, the concept of the society may be taken as the product of men's instinctive desire for

association which finds expression in the aggregation of people having common interest and united together by what we may call ‘Consciousness of the Kind’. The people who live together think alike, associated with one another and make common efforts for a common purpose or plan. The process of such association helps to form particular type of ‘group’.

As per sociological attribution such a group may be primary or secondary. “By primary groups I mean those characterized by intimate face-to-face association and co-operation ..... they are fundamental in forming the social nature and ideals of the individual”<sup>1</sup> stated by H. Coole in his book “Social Organisation”. But some other thinkers opined that face-to-face association might not be the sole impulse for forming such type of primary group; because merely physical association might not be associating so long a heartly “*we fellowship*” (*Āmarābodh*) feeling is developed among the people who like to associate and cooperate with one another for certain common interest. This is why it is noticed that the members of the various national and International organizations having scattered around the country or abroad feel united. In this respect we may quote the observation of McIver and Page that “The face-to-face groups is the nucleus of all organization ..... It is the group such as play mates and comrades through which we first give creative expression to our social impulses.”<sup>2</sup> It is therefore impulse or instinct whatever it may be in the nature of mankind which help to relate one another for common interest.

On the other hand, secondary group does not require any such intimate cause for making a relative group. Such type of group may exist for the time being with a temporary fruitfulness. This type of group may be dissolved after the attainment of the goal for which it was formed. Besides the primary and secondary group there are some other groups existing in the society with a different type of characteristics, such as ‘Community’, ‘association’ etc.

Community is to be understood as a group of human beings living a common life, including all the infinite variety and complexity of relations. As such community may be formed on the following elements namely language, rites and rituals, religion etc. Sometimes we call Punjabi Community, Tamil Community etc. on the basis of language. Again, we may call it a Naga Community, Mizo Community etc. on the basis of rites and rituals. And whenever we call it a Christian Community, Buddhist Community, Hindu Community, Muslim Community etc. on the feeling of religion. It is astonishing to observe that even after forming a community of such a group, people may have varieties of customs and complexity, but such complexity will not make any hindrances to becoming a community. In this respect we may quote the opinion of McIver and Page “whenever the members of any group small or large live together in such a way that they share, not of this or that particular interest, but the basic conditions of a common life, we call that group a community.”<sup>3</sup>

Again there might be a group of people related to one another by the fact that they have instituted an organization with a view to securing a specific end or ends, which may be termed as an association. There may be some rules and regulations through which they may perform the activities of the association. Conditional factors of association may be economical, cultural, medical. As for example LIC, Trade Union Association, Motor Vehicle Association etc.

Multifaceted institutions might be the instrumental factor in forming the aforesaid associations which might have possessed some specific qualities through which urges of grouping are developed. Such type of institutions are concerned in apprehending the Concept of Society such as language institution, economical institution, religious institution, primitive institutions etc.

The term ‘language’ is being used not in the context of modern terminology but it may be taken into account of expression through some particular code-echoing factor. Language may be taken to include all modes and feelings of individual or individuals to express or to communicate their liking or disliking. These expressions or communication may be out of joy or out of fear. Without the use of language one can not communicate with others. All functions of an individual are fulfilled by language for development of human activities promoting the sense of togetherness which may help to constitute association, community or primary and secondary groups.

Economic institution is taken as a vital part in to the association. Here it is not taken the economic institution of modern time, rather it expresses the views of the primitive period. In that period as per needs of an individual or individuals goods were exchanged though some institution which helped to build the relation between individuals and also help to unite them.

In the earlier stage religion comprised of some rites and rituals. In this period individuals felt some groups as their choice and interest of rites and rituals. These might have had the scope of uniting the individual or individuals and may help to draw up togetherness among the individuals.

It might not be out of place to state that at the preliminary stage of human civilization the individual and individuals might have enjoyed their love and strive through some institutions which were classified as the barbaric institution or primitive institution. Even in the modern time some institution one found to exist to promote the entertainment activities among the people for instance wrestling, combating, bull fighting, cock fighting etc. For the sake of enjoying the individual or individuals find the chance of assembling in a certain place at a certain time. Thus, in the primitive time also the individuals might have used some effort to organize such type of activities for the fulfillment of their love and strive, basing which the individuals come together which might to promote the wantings of united- ness.

Beside these there are some other institutions which build up the social unity, cultural institution, which help to unite human beings with some cultural group or groups, where we may get togetherness between the individuals and there may be scope to find out the elements, which helps us to find out the concept of 'Society'.

These institutions are discussed here for the purpose that, In these institutions we may get some elements which helped to unite each other and may get the possible scope to the formation of 'Society'.

Thus we may draw some points to sum up the concept of society – its nature and function towards individual or individuals.

All above discussions are made here in the light of the Western thinkers. They think about the society in the light of materialistic point of view. But in the perspective of Eastern thinkers specially in the thought of the Indian thinkers the Concept of 'Society' is not only the basis of the materialistic point of view rather it is conceived in the light of 'Divinity' depending on the idea of spirituality. It is also referred to in the *Vedas* and the *purānas*.

In Indian society most of the peoples believe in the *Vedas* and *Puranas*. Various Indian social thinkers give their opinion on the society to make it an ideal one based on the *Vedas*. Some of the Indian social thinkers are mentioned here specially in this context that they contribute a lot to build up an *ideal society*, such as Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo, and Swami Swarupananda.

Swami Vivekananda considers an individual as potentially Divine having infinite possibilities. An individual should think himself as identified with the Divine (*Śivohamī*) and treat others as the manifestation of the same Divinity. He was deeply influenced by the first *mantra* of the *Īśa**ṇīṣad* – *Īśāvasyamidam Sarvam yat Kiñca jagatyām jagat*, that is, each and everything is the manifestation of the Divinity. This is the premise from which the conclusion follows ‘*Tena tyaktena Bhūñjīthā mā grdhah Kasyasiddhanam*’ i.e. one should enjoy through renunciation without being greedy to others properties. Vivekananda thinks that the seed of morality remains in the first statement. First, why does an individual ‘feel’ for other social beings ? In reply it can be said that as all human beings are the part of our ‘self’, we should ‘feel’ for them morally. Otherwise it should be taken as a suicidal case (*ātmahana*).

Secondly, a man feels for others even if he does not believe in the existence of Divinity, because an individual may not have belief in Divinity but he believes in humanity as such. It is tantamount to Divinity. According to Swami Vivekananda to serve human being is to serve God.

Swami Vivekananda’s thought can be considered materialistic. His materialistic outlook is revealed when he considers ‘bread’ as a prime factor in an individual’s life than religion. Without food one cannot be able to make himself strong. A weak person cannot be

able to do any thing for the welfare of himself or for the welfare of the society. Swami Vivekananda harmonises Islamic body with Vedāntic brain, advises to play football than to read the Gita. To him material needs are to be fulfilled first if some one wants his spiritual awakening.

Swami Vivekananda introduced the practical Vedānta into the society. His approach that if the societal being obey the rules and regulations of the practical Vedānta than it can make a society morality developed and can be able to establish an ideal society. All the principles of Vedānta can be applicable to our life. The new attitude to the world as the manifestation of Brahman can enable us to do selfness work, moral work, service to the society without being narrowly attached to it. The Concept of *Loksamgraha*, *Jīvanmukta*, *Niskāma Karma* etc are related to the practical aspect of morality, which, I believe, Vedānta alone can teach. If the Vedāntic principles as laid down by Vivekananda are taken into consideration, the social harmony or an ideal society would come up. Swami Vivekananda highlighted the principle of the traditional Vedānta in a new way which common people of the society can easily understand.

Sri Aurobindo also has prescribed some philosophical foundations of forming an ideal society. To him an ideal society is a Divine society (*Bhāgavata Samāja*) which is constituted by an individual through the power of supra-mental consciousness. The social existence of man is an intimate portion of the total universal

existence. He has prescribed the method of 'yoga' through which an individual can awaken his power occupying the nuclear position of human personality called 'Rtacit' i.e. (Creative faculty of *Saccidānanda*). To him natural body is constituted with physical, vital and mental self. Our internal potential power called Rtacit is not free in normal condition as it is surrounded by the above mentioned three selves. This natural order can be changed through yogic practice and the 'caityapurusa' or 'Rtacit' can be brought forward. In this way he can enlighten himself and can be transferred into the Divine being. The society of such superman is an ideal one which was designated as the symbol of the Divinity.

According to Aurobindo, the object of all society should be and must 'become' as man grows conscious of his real being nature and destiny and not as now only of a part of it, first to provide the conditions of life and growth by which individual man or all individual men according to their capacity and the race through the growth of the individuals may travel towards this Divine perfection.

Aurobindo's theory of social evolution differs from scientific theory of social evolution. The same society will not be repeated as it was. According to him social evolution follows or non linear pattern and precedes by uniform, gradual and progressive adjustment from lower to higher forms. This society will be advanced in technology and engineering but the spiritual out look

will remain the same. Sri Aurobindo however maintains that the evolutionary process is not advancing in a straight line, but in a series of cycles. He has described this change as '*spiral*' what is available in the symbolic stage will be repeated at the age of the superman spirally which is an ideal society. His theory of evolution is regarded to the future development of man and society.

Aurobindo advocates that a society can be treated as an ideal one when all of its members are considered as equal in all respects through the *Sarvodaya* as conceived by Gandhiji. All social members can be uplifted morally, economically if they can manifest their Divine power which is within.

Aurobindo's social teachings offer the widest guidance and the most effective help to mankind. The necessity of having a proper understanding of his social teachings at least by the intelligent minds of the race.

There are also some other element of existence which are necessary for the upliftment of society – these are God, freedom and unity. God is the first essential element because the individual cannot realise the freedom and unity unless he possesses the God.

Sri Aurobindo finds a harmonious synthesis of the relation of individual and society in Divinity. Individual salvation pre-supposes universal salvation. A realisation in isolation of the social self, is an one-sided vision. Thus Sri Aurobindo revives the ancient ideal of *Bodhisattva*. The basis of altruism is not philosophy but the

realisation of the Reality underlying all. Divine is not a dead unity but a rich multiplicity . Hence, men and societies may develop their individuality and yet maintain the common bonds. Such a catholic, integral and clarified vision can alone lay down the foundation of a world society.

In the philosophy of Swami Swarupananda ‘character’ is one of the major factors in man’s life. To give a moral foundation of Society Swami Swarupananda engaged himself on various works in society. As his concept of society bears a normative and critical overtone and serves more as a pointer to what a society should be, the conflict between the image of an ideal society and the real society is to be set to the innumerable evils like various types of unrest, religious, communal riots, cultural crises, problem related to women and children and overall lacking of self-confidence and self reliance. Swami Swarupananda’s ‘Ayācaka’ way of life as a socio-philosophical ideal is to be considered as revolutionary in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the context of Indian society. He did not stop with theoretically propagating the ideal of being *Ayacaka* but practiced it in his life and inspired his followers to stand on their own legs without the least mentality for begging.

Swami Swarupananda’s propagation of simplified mode of religious rites and rituals are in fact an attempt to develop a commonality among people and avoid divisive forces of hierarchy in religious life of beings.

Swami Swarupananda's approach of man-making ideology has been reflected in his effort to build up the character of the individual being in society. The ideal of '*charitragathan*' or 'character-buildings' is thus a revolutionary factor in modern India's societal development and progress. Swami Swarupananda's philosophy and thought would reveal a '*unity in diversity*' as the message of Indian culture. He built up his opinions and acted as a visionary with 'farsight, foresight and insight', and firm conviction that unless we can bring change in individual members of the society, there is no hope of building up a good society he dreamt.

In the thinking of Swami Swarupananda man is expected to live in this world in accordance with the rule '*live and let live*' far from trampling upon others rights. He is supposed to be just and fair in his dealings with other people. Thus when a person acts upon the principle of might is right or in other words, behaves unfairly and cruelly towards others, he is considered by others to be devoid of humanity. This evidently means that good-will towards fellow beings fair play sympathy, non-violence and mercy are some of the essential human qualities or moral qualities. Forgiveness is, of course, a part of these. Without forgiveness there can be no mercy which in fact gets circumscribed and becomes limited in scope for the lack of it. There are other moral attributes such as tolerance, patience etc. are an indispensable part of an ideal man and can help to build up an ideal society.

## Notes and References

1. H. Coole : *Social Organisation* : Punthi, Delhi, 1909, p.93.
2. Mc Iver & Page : *Society*, ..... p. 219.
3. Mc Iver & Page : *Society*, ..... pp. 8-9.

## **CHAPTER – II**

### **RELIGION AS A WAY OF LIFE**

On the basis of historical perspective, we understand that religion is one of the major constituent elements of human civilization and it is as old as human civilization itself. As rational beings, we feel urge to know the nature, problem and the role of religion at the dawn of civilization. Moreover, the present world is changing mere rapidly and propoundly. The modern person is facing new challenges with respect to his or her capacity to change him or her and to adjust to new life conditions and to new social environment. The mysteries, that are associated with religious matters, make us curious to know the conditions prevailing in the then societies. To know these matter we must consider historical study of religion which has immense influence upon the culture and tradition of any society. Religion and history both are the creation of human efforts to understand and respond to the relation between individual and society.

To understand this view, first we have to know what religion is. The term ‘religion’ is very wide and it has been defined in various ways. Its real significance is mystical and more inward than outward. Generally the English word ‘religion’ is translated from the

Sanskrit word ‘*Dharma*’. It is necessary to examine the corresponding meanings of these two words. The word ‘religion’ is used to signify the satisfaction of hunger of man’s heart. Its only significance is its mystical experience and search after the everlasting and heavenly peace and the awakening of human mind and existence and realisation of God. In a wider sense ‘religion’ means ‘belief in Heaven’ (*Pāralaukik*), ‘Faith in God’, different ways of knowing Him’ including its religious festivals and fastings etc. leading to different rituals.”<sup>1</sup> So religion means different forms of worship of God. Religion moves either by individual or by a collective group. It is the most important and indispensable aspect of human life.

Man is a rational animal. Man is different from other creation because of his higher power of judgement and because of certain values which distinguish him from other creatures. Man has the power of interpretation, anticipation, imagination, understanding of situation and so on. Rationality or intelligence is the main factor of man’s life, his sole monopoly, through reason in him varies from person to person. Its variation may be from vanishing point to super human intellect. Man is not merely a rational being. Man is primarily a religious animal. It is his constant enquiry for knowing the thing which is ‘beyond’. He is not satisfied simply by the knowledge of things existing near him and therefore his eternal question relates to the ‘why’ of a thing. As the *Kena Upanisad*, suggests that there is the perceptual enquiry on the part of man. This is what is called

(*Jijñasā*) or ‘desire for knowing the truth’ or philosophical enquiry (*Darśana*).

Man is in search of the Ultimate Reality. He hankers after *ānanda* or bliss. But not being able to find it outside, in the world of mundane activities and spheres, he naturally turns *inward* and within. He cultivates this consciousness which is religious in nature and then involves himself in the cultivation of practices too. The instinct responsible for this activity is religious in man’s nature. This universal religious instinct in guiding him to search the Truth is the cause which goods him to know the infinite and sends him towards religious practices too. Man is a religious animal and the more a man advances in civilization, the more refined his concept of religion. He considers that the Supreme power is not an evil spirit any more or a malicious friend, but the Supreme power is the Creator called God. To man this Supreme Creator is not an object of his awe and fear any more but he then recognizes Him to be infinite goodness and love. Religion develops a sense of love and veneration.

As men differ from each other in taste, temperament, education, and imagination etc, there is a variety of tastes and temperaments. In the same way, the essence of religion is one and the same. But these come up different forms of religion. Different religions come up in different stages of human civilization. Men differ in their religious ideals just as they differ in other respects.

Two men may be alike but cannot be identical. Their ideas, beliefs, practices are different and there is a scope for various creeds, various ideas, and a variety of forms of religion. Religion is not a distinctive feature of human life in moulding his individual life but it also moulds the history and life of a nation. It is said that the history of man is the history of his religious beliefs and practices which determine the history of a nation.

From the historical study we know that, as religion entered into the historical period, passing a long pre-historic period, it presents men in the process of civilization, shows how the different religion have moved forward along with the on-goings of civilization, and how they played different roles and performed different functions. One of the most important features of religion is that it is subject to growth or development. Inspite of the so-called scientific progress, religion is a force which cannot be ignored. On the contrary, religion is increasingly seen as a renewed force and is recognized as an important factor in the modern world in all aspects of life. It is indeed interesting to see that, the religious development is connected with the phase of human civilization. This phase of civilization can be traced under tribal, national, and universal development of religion.

Among the on-going progress of civilization human beings are trying to subjugate nature, but men have not been able to master nature completely. In primitive days man tried to make nature



surrender to his desire by worship. By applying his intellect and will, men tried to control nature's destructive aspect and also bring constructive aspect of nature in his favour. The worship of nature found in advanced religions even in modern times.

Historically religion is linked up with human life as existence. From the historical study, we know that religion as a historical pheno-menon played a vital role in the process of development of human civilization as a way of life with the basic elements of cognition, conation and emotion and with its belief in transcendental reality in addition to phenomenal one. These elements of cognition, emotion and conation are overlapping constituents of any form of religion – be it Christianity or Islam or Hinduism or Buddhism. In the history of on-going process of human culture and civilization, religion in some form or other plays an important role. History of religion has made us acquainted with two types of theology – one is *Dogmatic* and the other is '*Problematic*'.

Epistemologically dogmatic theology is one, which blindly gives defence of one particular *religious faith* and considers the claims of religions other than one's own as false. Contrary to this, problematic theology shows the fatalistic consequences of '*One-religion-ism*' and paves the way for epistemological examinations of the '*exclusivistic*' and '*inclusivistic*' claims of different religions. Religious pluralism as a theory about inter-religious understanding gets its appearances in the philosophical consideration in present

day multi religious society. It also expounds the basic outlines of religious pluralism and its contra-distinction from ‘*Exclusivism*’ and ‘*Inclusivism*’ regarding religious matters. Plurality of religions refers to the ‘*plurality of faiths*.’ In other words, in order to reveal that in all major religions in addition to belief in transcendental Holy or ultimate Divine Reality, there is commitment to justice and universal brotherhood of human-beings respect for human rights and love for each fellow-beings, moral direction to control one’s lust and greed for, recognition, power and acceptance of other faiths as one’s own Religions. Pluralism suggests that though the experience of one Transcendental Reality or ‘*Holy One*’ is the same for all mankind irrespective of culture and ethnicity as the interpretation or the meaning of this is a historically and culturally conditioned phenomenon, which varies according to variation of culture and accordingly uses mode of thinking, symbols and concepts, that have emerged within this cultural milieu.

The reality is one in the thought of Vedānta Philosophy, wise persons described the same in various ways’ (*Ekam sad viprāḥ vahudhā vadanti*). As the cultural traditions are verily different, so also different gods worshipped in different parts of the world, are not separate and distinct divine beings, but on the contrary, different images or ‘*personae*’ formed in the interaction of divine presence of the ‘*holy one*’.

One who is Absolute or Brahman from the transcendental point of view, is *Īśvara* or from the personal point of view it is personal God.

There is no justification for a follower of *Siva* to quarrel with the followers of *Viṣṇu*, because both of them; according to Sankara, worship the same God, though with different forms and names. The implication here is that the principle which holds good in respect of the different sects of Hinduism we have proposed to apply the same with regard to understanding the different religions, such as Christianity, Jainism and Islam. We have also tried to develop pluralistic ideals from the vedic tradition up to modern Indian thought as represented by Swami Swarupananda – Vivekananda tradition, as this tradition preached that the same transcendental reality can be experienced by multi-dimensional human mentalities in characteristically different ways.

To Swami Swarupananda ‘God with structural form and God without structural form are not two different things.’ For Him, since all religions being the pathways of one transcendental reality are equally valid, there is no question of inferiority and superiority among them. Now a days the very way of life offered by each religion is made relevant to the historically growing religious consciousness in multiple ways. Then each religion would be considered ‘*One among many*’ responses bounded by cultural and historical conditions to the one transcendental reality. All religions

say Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam or Christianity, are culturally conditioned responses to the One Absolute Transcendental Reality. And we are to cultivate religion with the spirit of pluralism in order to promote peace, harmony and goodwill. A man can never be a fanatic who is truly religious. He cannot hurt others or claim any thing for himself, he is prepared to give to others. It can serve also as a ground for cultivation of true spirit of secularism. A careful handling of the '*scriptures*' of major religions with '*Openeness*' and '*reasonableness*' as we have found, would lead us to discover pluralistic ideals and if we cultivate them, we find commonality of all religious in their approach to God, it would tell us that men's search for *Truth* is an ongoing process without fanality. We claim that the '*mingling of religion*' with politics forgetting the fundamental '*ethos*' of each religion, leads to mutual hostility among the members of different faiths. It is very important to a philosopher who always emphasises on the distinction between '*Religionism*' and '*True religion*'. True religion frees men from the dogmatic conception of '*One-religion-ism*' and exclusive claims like '*My God is better than yours*'. True religion shows the rational grounds to enable to appreciate other responses or faiths to the Ultimate Divine Reality. It is the only foundation for the basic unity of all religions, cultures and ways of life.

The root cause of most of the miseries and persecutions perpetuated in the name of religion was owing to man's inability to recognize the fact that through the ultimate goal may be One,

approaches to that goal can be many; and different religions are only so many different dimensions of the same *dharma* ideal.

Religion is the greatest motive power for realizing that infinite energy which is the birthright and nature of every man. In building up character in making for everything that is good and great, in bringing peace to one's ownself and peace to others, religion is the highest motive power, and therefore ought to be studied from that standpoint. Religion must be studied on a broader basis than formerly.

As the human mind broadens, its spiritual steps broaden too. The time has already come when a man can record a thought with its reach to all corners of the earth; by merely physical means, we have come in touch with the whole world; so the future religions of the world have to become as universal and as wide.

The religious ideals 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. "The power of religion, broadened and purified, is going to penetrate every part of human life. So long as religion was in the hands of a chosen few or of a body of priests, it was in temples, churches, books, dogmas ceremonial forms, and rituals. But when we come to the real, spiritual, universal concept, then and then alone, religion will become real and living, it will come to our very nature, live in our

every moment, penetrate every pore of our society, and be infinitely more powerful for good, than it has been ever before.”<sup>2</sup>

The Central truth of religion is the divinity of man “The kingdom of God is within you” says Jesus Christ. To realise this divinity is the goal of spiritual life. In Swami Vivekananda’s words, “Religion is the manifestation of the Divinity already in man.”<sup>3</sup>

The knowledge of this divinity is the secret of man’s development both in individual and collective life, secular as well as spiritual. It finds expression in two distinct ways, ‘I am divine’ and ‘Thou art divine’. As a man becomes aware of his own divinity he becomes aware at the same time of the divinity of his fellow beings. Along with the development of his faith in himself his regard for others develops. His potentialities grow as his self faith is intensified. His capacity for serving his fellow creatures necessarily increases, says Swami Vivekananda : “This infinite power of the spirit, brought to bear upon matter evolves material development, made to act upon thought, evolves intellectuality, and made to act upon itself, makes of man a God ..... manifest the divinity within you, and everything will be harmoniously arranged around it.”<sup>4</sup>

Religion is an attempt of the human soul to transcend the limitation of senses and of mind that are inadequate to comprehend the Reality in full. Such an attempt has been made in all societies and cultures from time immemorial. In the Indian culture and society this endeavour attained the thoroughness and exactness of a science,

the reality and pervasiveness of a way of life, in what is known as Hinduism. The word ‘Hinduism’ means both philosophy and religion for us. Max Muller has pointed out, ‘the two have blended harmoniously in India alone.’ Max Muller goes on say, “ And if I were to ask myself from what literature we, here in Europe, we, who have been nurtured almost exclusively on the thoughts of Greeks and Romans, and of one semetic race, the Jewish, may draw that corrective which is most wanted in order to make our inner life more perfect, more comprehensive more universal, in fact more truly human, a life, not from this life only, but a transfigured and eternal life – again I shall point to India.”<sup>5</sup>

Swami Vivekananda speaks of the Divinity of man. By this expression ‘Divinity’ or the ‘Divine’ ; Swamiji meant *Brahman*, who is identical with self or *Ātman*. Swamiji has repeatedly pointed out that God is within each one of us. Each one of us is born to rediscover his own God-nature. That is why, he opines ‘No man is born into any religion but every man has a religion in his soul.’ “Religion is realisation; not talk, nor doctrine, nor theories, however beautiful they may be. It is being and becoming, not hearing or acknowledging; it is the whole soul becoming transformed into what is believes.”<sup>6</sup>

“If there is but one religion to be true, all the rest must be true ..... All religions are so many stages. Each one of them represents the stage through which the human soul passes to realise God.

Therefore, not one of them should be neglected. None of the stages are dangerous or bad. They are good.”<sup>7</sup>

According to Swamiji’s interpretation of this ancient Vedāntic doctrine, every soul has behind it the infinite power and glory of the Divine which it is trying to manifest, the main problem in this process of self-manifestation is the removal of obstacles in the form of selfishness and ensuring vices. Ethical life is the removal of these obstacles but is not in itself religion. When the obstacles are removed, Divinity manifests itself more and more and this divine life is true religion.

For this removal of obstacles, for manifesting one’s potential divinity, *karma-yoga*, *Bhakti-yoga*, and *Jñāna-yoga*, are in fact equally efficient.

As has been alluded in the preamble, in his Neo-Vedānta, Swamiji combines *Jñāna*, *Karma*, *Bhakti* and *Yoga*. What he wants is, “a religion that will be equally acceptable to all minds, it must be equally philosophic, equally emotional, equally conducive to action.”<sup>8</sup> In his opinion, “All men were so constituted that in their minds all these elements of philosophy, mysticism, emotion, and of work, were equally present in full.”<sup>9</sup>

A Harmonious balance in all these four directions is his ideal of religion. But it should be noted here that although for Swami Vivekananda an integrated cultivation of all these paths is the ideal of religion, yet he is ready to admit that pursuit of any one of the

paths sincerely and entirely will lead to the Ultimate good of human life, namely liberation.

Swami Vivekananda held that all religions are different stages of the development of mind revealing aspects of the realisation of divinity through it. It is an Advaita Vedānta that full view of that realisation is revealed. When Sri Ramkrishna says – ‘As many are the principles of religion, so many are the paths, that lead to God or (religion), he does really mean that all religions are alike true. What he expresses is that all religious paths or principles are good as all of them are stages or steps to the full realisation of divinity which is again identified with individual soul. That identification is highest and truest form of religion, that is salvation. Hence salvation is possible even in this life. It is the supermost stage of the development of the soul. Realisation of ‘*Sarvam khalvidam Brahma*’ ‘the whole universe is Brahman’ is only possible for a man whose soul has attained this stage of full identification of one’s individual soul with Brahman or Eternal soul. At this stage only the enlightened can see that entire universe as the manifestation of Brahman. Sri Ramkrishna had this realisation. He passed it on to Swami Vivekananda. Swamiji found justification of this realisation in the Advaita Vedānta in its basic creed free from the tentacles of Controversy surrounding it, shorn of ramifications.

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## **CHAPTER – III**

### **SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S CONCEPT OF MAN AND IDEAL SOCIETY : SOME PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS**

Swami Vivekananda, one is the finest flowers of Indian Culture and one of the profound interpreters of Vedānta philosophy, strove to extend the frontiers of human freedom by heightening a man's faith in the eternal varieties. His every concept of man is rooted in the philosophical background of Vedānta and the practical relevance of Vedāntic thought. He dealt with the multidimensional aspects of freedom as expression of a single existential urge in a man *to be free* and this is derived from the intrinsic freedom of man. For Vivekananda, this very concept of freedom is necessarily connected with another significant concept called Fearlessness (*Abhīh*). Because, according to Vivekananda, fear comes only from the false notion of the self that is the not-self. Therefore, self-knowledge which is freedom is such is integrally non-different with fearlessness. Vivekananda held freedom to be the primary motive behind human actions. Man's quest for freedom to eradicate the veil of ignorance, so that the potential powers of the major aspects – a negative aspect expressed as *freedom for*. In Indian culture, it is

understood in the sense of *freedom to be*. Freedom has different variety in its expression – social, moral, intellectual, spiritual etc.

Swami Vivekananda appeared as a champion of the orthodox faith. His whole endeavour was directed towards the perennial truth inherent in the Upaniṣads. The Upaniṣads, the *Brahmasūtra*, and the *Bhāgavadgītā* are the triple basis of Advaita philosophy. The Upaniṣads contain the wisdom of Vedānta, the Gitā supplies its Cream and the sūtras expound its philosophical basis. Advaita Vedānta of Vivekananda may be said to be an attempt for a harmonious interpretation of the Upaniṣadic text. All works of Swami Vivekananda were directed towards one purpose of helping the individual to realise the identity of his soul with *Brahman*, which is the means of liberation from human bondage.

Swami Vivekananda takes the form of living Vedānta entering in our ordinary life and conduct. The core of Vivekananda's role lies in his bold attempt of bringing down the sky-high elevated thoughts of Buddha and Sankara down to the level of practical life and application. His philosophical thoughts drawn from different studies of Indian philosophy particularly Sankara's Advaita Vedānta and Buddhism have this uniqueness about it. Their philosophy inspires and stimulates further thoughts, which can be translated, applied and implemented into the framework of human society.

Swami Vivekananda has highlighted some principle of Vedānta which can bring about harmony among all people. He

realised the truth of Vedānta and said that the theories of Advaita Vedānta are not to be confined to the Śāstras only, but for the fulfillment of our needs. These can enrich our lives by way of their application in our daily life. If these principles are practiced and implemented properly, they can give rise to peace and harmony in society and can provide the younger generation with courage, strength, vigour, self-confidence, and a broad outlook. Swami Vivekananda has taken up some aspects of Advaita Vedānta and has given his own novel interpretation, keeping the spirit intact. His thought is an attempt to bring into focus the much-needed concept of harmony which is one of the fundamental themes of Vivekananda's philosophy.

Swami Vivekananda realised the Vedāntic truth that the self is in the Divine and the Divine is in the self and handed down this truth to the society. According to him different expressions of the Vedānta are not antagonistic to one another but stages in the final spiritual fulfillment. The philosophical positions of Dvaita, Viśiṣṭādvaita, and Advaita were to him not absolute systems but stages in spiritual growth. To quote Swamiji, "In these three systems we find the gradual working up of the human mind towards higher and higher ideals till everything is merged in that wonderful unity which is reached in the Advaita system."<sup>1</sup> By solid reasoning Vivekananda extracted from the Vedas the truth of the Vedānta and on them built up the wonderful system of *jñāna* that is preached through his

commentaries: He unified all the conflicting descriptions of Brahman and showed that there is only one infinite Reality.

In the philosophy of Swami Vivekananda, an individual is not considered as an ordinary human being but potentially as powerful as the Divine. He has tried to bring about harmony between an individual as he appears and the Divine being that he actually is. This view is found in the dictum, *Jīva*, the individual, is verily Brahman (*Jīvo Brahmaiva nāparah*). Each and every human being even the fallen – is respectable, powerful, and eternal like the Divine. It has been stated in Advaita Vedānta that each and every object in this universe, including the human being is a manifestation of Brahman : all that exists is verily Brahman (*Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma*). If an individual realises Brahman, he gets identified with Brahman; a knower of Brahman verily becomes Brahman (*Brahmavid Brahmaiva bhavati*) though until then he labours under the misunderstanding that he is a limited being. In order to point out this very truth to the bound soul, the Upaniṣad says, ‘*That thou art*’ (*tat tvamasi*). Swami Vivekananda laid emphasis on this *Mahāvākyā* which identifies an individual with Brahman and has given a broader interpretation to it. If some one is potentially identical with divinity, he should not and would not think that he is weak, and a result, we will have much strength and vigour in him, which according to Swami Vivekananda is very much needed for the people of any nation. Not quaking before an Almighty God who sits in judgement of our actions, but thinking of oneself as powerful,

fearless, as being identified with Divinity – this is positive or true religion. Vivekananda has said that one should think under all circumstances-both good or bad – that one is Brahman.

Vivekananda was not an ordinary man who lacked *foresight*, *farsight* and *insight*. He was a prophet in the real sense of the term. So with a prophet's unerring insight he made profound discoveries about India. He pointed out that the main cause of India's degradation lay in the neglect of the masses and is moral crisis in all fields of activities. This may not appear to be a discovery at all in the present day context.

Swami Vivekananda observes that –“Our aristocratic ancestors went on treading the common masses of our country under-foot, till they became helpless till under this torment the poor, poor people nearly forgot that they were human beings. They have been compelled to be merely hewers of wood and drawers of water for centuries, so much so, that they are made to believe that they are born as slaves, born as hewers of wood and drawers of water.”<sup>2</sup> The poor, the low, the sinner in India have no friends, no help they can not rise, try however they may. They sink lower and lower every day, they feel the blows showered upon them by a cruel society, and they do not know whence the blow comes. They have forgotten that they too are men. And the result is slavery.”<sup>3</sup>

As a result of social tyranny and neglect, the conscience of India was suppressed for centuries. This forgotten conscience of

India found its expression in the following words of Swami Vivekananda "I consider that the greatest national sin is the neglect of the masses and that is one of the causes of our downfall. No amount of politics would be of any avail until the masses in India are once mere well educated, well-fed, and well-cared for."<sup>4</sup>

A study in depth of certain human trends of today will reveal Vivekananda to be more a wave of the future than of the past. The force of his thoughts was so tremendous that men and women arose by millions to give shape of action to his thoughts and millions more continue to rise.

This uplifting idea gives us the inspiration to work fearlessly. The Upaniṣad says that an individual attains fearlessness if he realises the self one forgets this truth. During one's *sādhanā* he becomes weak, afraid and a coward, and hence, as said in the Upaniṣad, 'This Ātman can not be realised by the weak' (*Nāyamārtmā Bala hīnena labhyah*). This constant thinking and reposing faith in the truth that '*I am He*' will activate a tremendous force or energy which is already within and will also transform the thought into realisation. Vivekananda therefore says, "The help comes from yourself ..... There is no help for you outside of your self, you are the creator of the universe ..... Ever tell yourself, "*I am He*". These are the words that will burn up the dross that is in the mind, words, that will bring out the tremendous energy, which is within you already, the infinite power which is sleeping in your heart."<sup>5</sup>

Swami Vivekananda lays a great stress on moral conduct as a preparatory step to spiritual progress in all the various systems of thought and belief-systems of India. In other words, ethical values come first in the process of spiritual progress. In fact, Swami Vivekananda has laid great emphasis on the upliftment of the masses – the scheduled castes, tribals and backward sections of society. His creed of humanism and humanitarianism has been drawn from Buddha's teachings and philosophy. In his great appreciation of Buddha, Swamiji drew extensively from Buddha's thought of social activities and creed of *karma*. In fact, Swami Vivekananda was thrilled and overwhelmed by the life and teaching, love and charity and selfless service as manifested in Buddha's life.

Swami Vivekananda was the foremost personality who salvaged Buddha's historic role in India's cultural build-up and re-creating its cultural heritage. Fore-thought of Swamiji and his vision of 'India to be' are all assuming shape and image through our national aims and aspirations, social and economic planing.

India needed such men to secure freedom to the country. The call of the nation brought forth men who could face death with a smile and cry out 'Vande Mātaram'. Modern India needs as badly persons having such courage, vigour, and fearlessness which is possible only if one has faith in one self. Faith in oneself is tantamount to faith in God. Such a faith can provide an individual with a tremendous force which none can resist. To Swami

Vivekananda “Vedānta teaches the God that is in every one, has become everyone and everything ..... There is a chance of Vedānta becoming the religion of your country because of democracy. But it can become so only if you can and do clearly understand it, if you become real men and women not people with vague ideas and superstitions in your brains and if you want to be truly spiritual.”<sup>6</sup>

Swami Vivekananda pointed out an aspect of spiritual truth which is very novel and noble. He says that ‘if someone believes in millions of Gods but not in himself, it is all in vain.’ To become free from the bonds of nature, to become freedom weakness, reliance on the self is highly essential. Our existence and growth depends on clinging to the spiritual basis.

According to Swami Vivekananda, that action is justified which conduces universal welfare, peace and happiness. Hence such actions based on universal considerations bring about harmony and equality among all people. Equality is the way to freedom and inequality is the way of bondage. No person and no nation can attempt to gain physical freedom without physical equality, nor mental freedom without mental equality. “Ignorance, inequality and desire are the three causes of human misery, and each follows the other in inevitable union.”<sup>7</sup>

Swami Vivekananda’s heart was broad enough to embrace the whole of humanity. He himself remarked once that he would get in

to a sort of ecstasy sometimes and feel that he must bless everyone and everything, that he must embrace everything.

There is the reflection of Vivekananda's doctrine of religious impartiality or identity of all religions – 'As many are the religions – as many are the paths that lead to heaven'. Swami Vivekananda's speech in Chicago was a clarion call proclaiming the brotherhood of mankind. That trumpet sound was not propagandists, blare or a mere congregational convention or ceremonial decorum. It is deeply rooted in his philosophy of life – Advaita Vedānta. It came from the very core of heart, deepest understanding and realisation.

It is for Swami Vivekananda that, if the universe wants to survive and live in amity and perfect cooperation, mankind will have to be imbued with the spirit of Vedāntic principle and Buddhist's creed of humanism and humanitarianism. If the world wants to establish lasting peace, the path lays through Vedāntic concept of life, not by eliminating religion but by embracing religion, shorn of all false ritualism, mystic rites and magic art.

Vivekananda is the foremost man who could integrate science with religion in his vision of life. 'The special contribution of the orient to world culture is religion, the special contribution of the occident to world culture is science.' In Swami Vivekananda's view the present age needs the union of the two, this will bring about a unique civilization. He has explained that there is no contradiction between science and religion, and that modern science has

strengthened the position of religion rather than weakening it. Science shall be the hand maiden of religion but not an antagonistic force pulling mankind in opposite directions. Here the controversy between the communism and freeworld gets resolved and a new synthesis is made that will bring perpetual peace, progress and high morality. That Religion serves as the basic spirit and source of inspiration for the entire activities of mankind.

Swami Vivekananda observes that "Our country now wants muscles of iron and nerves of steel, gigantic wills which nothing can resist ..... That is what we want, and that can only be created, established, and strengthened by understanding and realising the ideal of the Advaita, that ideal of the oneness of all."<sup>8</sup> Only the realisation of spiritual oneness of will of all can develop such universal thoughts and love at all. It is bliss of freedom at the same time, says Vivekananda from his own experience. Universal sympathy, universal love, Universal bliss, that never changes, raises man above everything and bears the perfect happiness and perfect love and peace in everybody's life. To include these ethical values in human mind one should be educated. That is why, Swami Vivekananda lays stress on education for the upliftment of the human personality and develop the ethical and moral values of man.

Swami Vivekananda has made an attempt to establish through his words and deeds that the end of all education is man-making. He

prepares the scheme of this man-making education in the light of his overall philosophy of Vedānta. According to Vedānta, the essence of man lies in his soul which he possesses in addition to his body and mind. In tune with this philosophy, Swamiji defines education as 'The manifestation of the perfection already in man'. The aim of education is to manifest in our lives the perfection which is the very nature of our inner self. This perfection is the realisation of the infinite power which resides in everything and everywhere-existence, consciousness and bliss (*saccidānanda*). After understanding the essential nature of this perfection we should identify it with our inner self. For achieving this, one will have to eliminate one's ego, ignorance and all other false identifications which stand in the way. Meditation fortified by moral purity and passion for truth, helps man to leave behind the body. The senses, the ego and all other nonself elements which are perishable. He thus realises his immortal divine self which is of the nature of infinite knowledge, infinite existence and infinite bliss. At this stage man becomes aware of his self as identical with all other selves of the universe, is different selves as manifestations of the same self. Hence Vivekanda's thoughts enable one to comprehend one's self within as the self every where. The essential unity of the entire universe is realised through education. Accordingly, man-making for Swamiji stands for rousing man to the awareness of his true self. However, education thus signified does not point towards the development of the soul in isolation from body and mind. We have

to remember that the basis of Swamiji's philosophy is Advaita which preaches unity in diversity. Therefore man-making for him means a harmonious development of the body, mind and soul.

Swami Vivekananda lays great stress on physical health because a sound mind resides in a sound body. Vivekananda's Vedānta does not make us shy away from the world of activity and take to the life of recluses, but it induces us to perform action intelligently. One who is strong in the physical and spiritual alone can do action for the welfare and happiness of all. (*Bahujana – hitāya Bahujana – Sukhāya*). Physical weakness, which is the cause of all our misery, is to be over come. Physical weakness makes us lazy, we do not exert, we do not love one another, we become intensely selfish. Physical strength gives rise to a strong brain which can penetrate the mysteries of soul and nature. Without this physical strength we will have an idle and weak brain which cannot take up any selfless social welfare activity. However, along with physical culture, he harps on the need of paying special attention to the culture of the mind.

According to Swami Vivekananda, the mind of the man has to be controlled and trained through meditation, concentration and practice of ethical purity. All success in any line of work, he emphasises, is the result of the power of concentration, which necessarily implies detachment from other things, constitutes a part of *Brahmacarya* which is one of the deciding mottos of his scheme

of man-making. Brahmacharya stands for the practice of self-control for securing harmony of the impulses. By his philosophy Swami Vivekananda thus brings it home that man-making education is not a mere accumulation of information but a comprehensive training for life. To him it means that process by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, and intellect is sharpened as a result of which one can stand on one's own feet. He realises that it is only through education that the uplift of masses is possible. If society is to be reformed, education has to reach every one high and low, because individuals are the very constituents of society. The sense of dignity rises in man when he becomes conscious of his inner spirit. Swami Vivekananda strives to harmonize the traditional values of India with the new values brought through the progress of science and technology.

It is in the transformation of man through moral and spiritual upliftment that he finds the solution for all social evils. Through his thought and philosophy he tries to materialise the moral and spiritual welfare and upliftment of humanity, irrespective of caste, creed, nationality, or time. However, Swamiji's scheme of thoughts, through which he wanted to build up a strong nation that will lead the world towards peace and harmony is still a far cry. It is high time that we gave serious thought to his philosophy and remember his call to every body – 'Arise, Awake and stop not till the goal is reached.'

Swami Vivekananda has emphasised that all young people should be strong first and then adopt a religious way of life. According to him, “you will be nearer to heaven through football than through the study of the Gitā.”<sup>10</sup> The only way to think of oneself as strong is to believe that ‘I am the soul’. This makes us physically, mentally and spiritually strong. The thought, ‘I am the self of all’ makes all our actions motivated by universal love. This conviction is the mother of all unselfish actions. An individual can assert his real nature through the performance of selfless actions. Therefore Vivekananda says, “I will tell you in plain language that you work best when you work for others. The best work that you ever did for yourselves was when you worked for others . . . .”<sup>11</sup>

Here is the gem-like quality of Vivekananda’s message which accepts all that is good in all activities of man, rejects what is base and derogatory to the soul and soul-power moulds and reshapes the entire structure of society and which preaches openness of heart, mind, brain, and soul which urges upon mankind to undertake newer investigation of nature and natural forces. Scientific advancement and exploitation of fresh ground are essential for a perpetual striving for opening up newer vistas of life. Life is so sweet, so fresh, so various, so everlasting but it must be constantly nourished and nurtured by Vedāntic principle that it is the eternal spirit of mankind.

Young generation of the country is requested to arise and awake to protect the spirituality of the world. But it should be clearly borne in mind that spirituality is not to be taken into a traditional sense. But '*Bringing down the Advaita into the material world.*' The spirituality without the association of the material world is of no use. To him 'First bread and then religion,' which is similar to *Sarīramādyam Khalu dharmasādhanam*. This interpretation of the Advaita doctrine is to be followed by the youth. If they are introduced with such interpretation, each of them will love others and think for the welfare of others. One will sacrifice for the good of many and for the happiness of many. If someone fails to perform this, he is to be taken as coward. One should forsake one's fear or cowardice attitude, which is against the Advaita position. If an individual thinks himself weak-physically, mentally or spiritually – he becomes weak. On the basis of the faith upon his/her muscles every citizen of the West has achieved material development. The westerner says, 'I can do it' or 'let me have ago at it'. If likewise Indians and others too have faith in the infinite soul, we can achieve material, mental, moral, intellectual and spiritual development. That is why Swamiji gave us the advice to give up the aweful disease of ridiculing everything belonging to our ancient traditional wisdom and of lacking in seriousness. We need to proceed with faith in the spiritual discoveries of the ancient seers.

In the path of action Swami Vivekananda considers superstitions as one of the obstacles. Those who believe in

superstitions are afraid and weak and hence they cannot do any real work. "It is fear that is the great cause of misery in the world. It is fear that is the greatest of all superstitions ..... It is fearlessness that brings heaven even in a moment."<sup>12</sup> This fearlessness comes when one feels that one is united with the universe. This expression of oneness is called love and sympathy, which is the basis of all morality and ethics. Other persons and objects are considered to be one's own self. Each and every one in the world is a part of me, and hence in hurting another I am hurting myself, and in loving another I am loving myself. This knowledge follows from the *Mahāvākyā*, '*Tat Tvam asi*', If some one considers all has his own self, looks upon no one else as a stranger, there will be total harmony. For Swami Vivekananda, the spiritual oneness of mankind is the foundation of ethics. As stated by Swami Vivekananda, "The infinite oneness of the soul is the eternal sanction of all morality, that you and I are not only brothers ... every literature voicing man's struggle towards freedom has preached that for you .... but that you and I are really one. This is the dictate of Indian philosophy. This oneness is the rationale of all ethics and all spirituality."<sup>13</sup> The core of Swamiji's message is Advaita Vedānta or religion that looks at the entire humanity as one and which preaches spiritual identity of all created beings with God or soul.

Swami Vivekananda has harmonized between material and spiritual needs. He has given emphasis on both the sides. To him the doctrine of Advaita Vedānta not only quenches our spiritual thirst

but it serves the needs of our day-to-day life too, which is also essential.

To Sankara, the whole world and an individual's body, mind, sense-organs etc. become illusory after realising *Brahman*. In Advaita Vedānta, an individual's body and materialistic world are therefore neglected. After considering its practical aspect Vivekananda has given a new interpretation of Advaita Vedānta . He has taken the material world and human body as manifestations of Divinity or as real as the Divine. In his philosophy, culture of the body and mind are as important as the manifestation of the spirit. To him bread is first and then religion. This implies that the material needs are to be met first and thereafter comes religion or spirituality. Thus he has harmonised the material and the spiritual worlds. To him both are to be considered.

Vivekananda himself says that he has brought down the doctrine of Advaita Vedānta from the forest to serve an individual's day-to-day needs. He says,- "What we want is not so much spirituality as a little of the bringing down of the Advaita into the material world. First bread and then religion."<sup>14</sup> we generally try to convince ordinary person about religion when what they actually need is food. Dogmas or theories about religion will fall flat if their hunger is not appeased. For this we require a feeling of heart. This *feeling* possesses us automatically if we consider others as our own and if we realise that all persons rich and poor – are

manifestation of the ‘Infinite’. With such an understanding, an individual would not feel greedy for earthly possessions, through sharing with others, which is indicated in the mantra : “*Tena tyaktena Bhūñjīthā mā grdhah kasysviddhanam.*”<sup>15</sup> In other words, if each and every person has this realisation, there will be no room for exploitation of any type in society, and this will help in forming an ideal society, which Swamiji wanted to establish.

Swami Vivekananda’s message is a beacon light to all. To quote Swami Vivekananda, “No civilization can grow unless fanaticism, bloodshed, and brutality stop. No civilization can begin to lift up its head until we look charitably upon one another; and the first step towards that much needed charity is to look charitably and kindly upon the religious convictions of others. Nay more, to understand that not only should we be charitable, but positively helpful to each other, however different our religious ideas and convictions may be.”<sup>16</sup>

In order to fulfill this mission in life, each and every action performed by us should be for a good cause and for the sacrifice of our little self. If it is not engaged in the well-being of other, our body is of no use. In the same way, the mind, which we possess, is of no consequence if it is not applied to the well-being of others. Similarly, the sense-organs too are states as having no causal efficacy if they are not associated with the welfare of others. This reminds us of the following *mantra* of the *Kenopanisad* :

“Śrotrasya Śrotram manaso mono yad Vāco ha vacām sa u  
prāṇasya prāṇah. Cakṣusaścaksur – alīmucya dhīrāḥ pretyāsmāl –  
lokād – amṛtā bhavanti.”<sup>17</sup>

Since “He is the Ear of the ear, the Mind of the mind, the Speech of speech, the Breath of the breath and the Eye of the eye, the wisemen, knowing Him, giving up the wrong notion of self or dispelling egoism, attain immortality.”

This mantra can be interpreted in the light of Vivekananda’s philosophy as follows : the eye become the eye in the true sense of the term if it can see to the welfare of all (not only of one’s own). In the same ways the mind can be described as mind if it can think of others’ well-being. If someone understands the functions of the sense-organs also in this way, he can easily forsake his egotism and can extend his ownself to overlap with others, which is described as attaining immortality. For Swami Vivekananda, “Immortality is knowing ourselves as one with all, living in all bodies perceiving through all minds. We are bound to feel in other bodies than this one ..... It is quite possible that the time will come when I shall feel through the whole universe.”<sup>18</sup> The eye, mind etc. of such a person become cosmic.

Considering this aspect of human value, Swami Vivekananda says that an individual, when born a human being, should leave an indelible mark in the world. That mark is to become a transformed personality with a cosmic identity.

Swami Vivekananda had two opposite poles of thoughts in his mind. Basically, he was a person of deep reason, contemplation and judgement. So whatever was thought illuminating, metaphysical and contemplative appealed to his mind as it gave his mental and spiritual thought. Plainly speaking these metaphysical speculations have little relation to gross reality of life. It does not solve the needs of daily life. Condition of suffering humanity has little relevance to these highly philosophic considerations. Swamiji was not all aloof from life's terrible reality. He had the bare eyes, (as he had also the Divine vision), to see the plight of wretched beings under going brutal hardship, oppressions, neglect and hatred from the society of the affluence. His deep human spirit revolted like a blazing fire at this injustice done to the common men. His bleeding heart suffered with those who were suffering. He was restive and restless as to how to retrieve this humanity from the shackles of bondage of social oppression and injustice. In this quality of his heart he has an affinity with another great son of India Gautama Buddha who was equally restless to see the agony of mankind. His heart was equally surcharged with the feeling of compassion for this suffering humanity.

Swami Vivekananda has brought harmony between an individual's emancipation as well as that of others. Not only in materialistic thinking, but in spiritual pursuit also, an individual should not seek his own well-being and emancipation neglecting those of others. An individual's personal emancipation or freedom is

not really freedom if others who are not different from him are also not free. To Vivekananda freedom or emancipation is to be achieved in and through the freedom and emancipation of others, it is not a selfish self-seeking endeavour or an act of cowardice or escapism. It is spiritual truth made living, made practical.

That the philosophy of Vivekananda is of harmony is evidenced from the fact that it is not acceptable, if some one engages oneself in meeting the material needs without spirituality. On the other hand, it is also not desirable, if oneself seeking spiritual bliss, without caring for the material help others need. Vivekananda believed in the salvation of all and not in the salvation of a single individual. He observed : “An ideal which is too high makes a nation weak and degraded ..... On the other hand too much practicality is also wrong..... we must not lower our ideal, neither we are to lose sight of practicality. We must avoid the two extremes. To go ahead of others in salvation is wrong. One must learn sooner or later that one cannot get salvation if one does not try to seek the salvation of the brothers.”<sup>19</sup>

In practical life Sri Ramkrishna also advised Swami Vivekananda to be balanced in behaviour after keeping both the extreme situations in view. He narrated a beautiful story. “Once a Guru asked his snake-disciple to forsake violence. Hence, the snake decided to remain quiet all the time without injuring others by injecting its venom. It could not gather food and grew weak.

Cowherds pelted stones at it in order to have some fun. This happened everyday, once, on repeated questioning by the Guru, the snake informed him about the situation also adding that the little boys were not to blame as they did not know its change in attitude. The Guru there upon told the snake that he had asked it to adopt non-violence, but had not dissuaded it from frightening others with the hissing sound if there was a need for it.”<sup>20</sup> If some one adopts either extreme, of resistance or of non resistance, he will no doubt suffer due to the absence of balance.

Swami Vivekananda has brought harmony between the East and the West. Swamiji said, “The West is groaning under the tyranny of the Shylocks, and the East is groaning under the tyranny of the priests, each must keep the other in check.”<sup>21</sup> He declared that the East required the knowledge of science and technology as much or as badly the West needed the spiritual culture of the East. He said : “Europe the centre of the manifestation of material energy will crumble into dust within fifty years if she is not mindful to change her position, to shift her ground and make spirituality the basis of her life. And what will save Europe is the religion of the Upaniṣads.”<sup>22</sup> Thus, Swami Vivekananda worked for a synthesis between the old and the new the East and the West.

Swami Vivekananda’s spirit had many facets like those of a diamond; it had splendoured beauty and brilliance. In one aspect of it he caught the reflection of Buddha’s humanitarianism and the

magnanimity of his heart. But through the other aspect of it which was perhaps far more predominating he caught the vision of Advaita Vedānta of Sankara.

Another practical aspect of Swami Vivekananda's Vedānta is not mere tolerance but the acceptance of the paths of other religion. Religious life is a journey from truth to truth, from lower truth to higher truth, we should look upon others with love. So the Advaita Vedānta of Swami Vivekananda accepts and respects all religious approaches as different paths leading humanity to the same ultimate goal. In the language of Sri Ramkrishna 'As many faiths so many paths'.

In the words of Dr. Satish Chandra Chatterjee, "Vivekananda's practical Vedānta, is a living Vedānta and not a dry and dead theory of the Vedānta. It is the Vedānta of the forests come back to our homes, our city and our society. It is the Vedānta entering into our ordinary life and conduct, it is the Vedānta that may inspire our individual life, social life, national and International life. Swami Vivekananda wants us to carry the eternal message of the Vedānta to every door and to every corner of the world."<sup>23</sup>

Vivekananda shall have for mankind this life of mundane existence, dignified and glorious position in the world of philosophic thought. Advaita Vedānta must come out of its spell and advance with wide open heart and embrace the earthly men and the entire humanity vigorously and with deep cordiality. Nothing sort of this

will satisfies Vivekananda however great devotion. One might have for the philosophy of Advaita Vedānta of Sankara . It is not merely a bare matter of logic or extension of metaphysics. It is the great spiritual realisation of Sri Ramkrishna that came to his rescue. He is the great teacher who taught Swamiji that ‘*Jiva* is *Shiva* Himself’. And that the worship of *Jīva* is worship of *Shiva*. In fact, *Jīva* is the real *Shiva*. It is nearer to God. To him every soul is divine and it is identified with the eternal soul.

Man has lost peace for ever in this storm-loaded material life. Apart from jealousy and bickerings in social life, there is the constant rivalry between one capitalist and another. It is the teaching of Advaita Vedānta that can curb the longings of men for more and more pleasure. Vedānta holds out a promise of liberation.

Vivekananda never repudiated the claims of Science and Technology in this world. Men must be fed, advancement of knowledge should be achieved, conquest of nature and natural forces, all these are welcome achievement of men. Men must live heroically and brave the world. But these achievements of Science and Technology shall never be used as instruments of destruction or oppression or as special privileges. The fruits of scientific knowledge should be shared by all. There should be no privileged class and unprivileged one. It will be a classless society based upon a feeling of kindness and love not comradeship as such as advocated by Marx, because our fellowmen are more than blood brothers. Here

is Vedānta or true religion coming to the rescue of people bewildered in this world of material conflicts and rivalry. Religion as professed by Swami Vivekananda can never be called a poison to the people. It is the genuine path-finder or in other words, it is the path itself which all the travellers of the world shall tread along in order that they can live in happiness here on earth with no worries for the world hereafter, because the moment the sense of oneness dawns in one he is set free from the travails of life. His soul becomes liberated. There should be no hankering for any other heaven beyond this world. Such a promise is there in the Advaita Vedānta of Vivekananda.

Vivekananda had no reservation about the necessity of economic self-sufficiency of man. He knew more than any body else like his Guru Sri Ramkrishna that a hungry stomach can have no religion. So he exhorted for education, he exhorted for all round perfection of men in all fields of activities. Yet all these will be meaningless unless the stream of consciousness of Advaita Vedānta is made to flow through the society.

This is the image of Swami Vivekananda , the eternal spirit of mankind, who left nothing out of his keen observation, who rejected nothing, accepted everything, embracing even the lowly and the base, who stood for expansion, growth, progress and all round perfection physical, mental, and above all spiritual, who is the symbol of revolt against all injustice and oppression and privilege,

who is the emblem of light like the Sun-God Apollo illuminating the entire world with the light of *Advaita Vedānta*. Here is a man who is not in a finite age but of all ages. Sooner the world accepts him as the leader of mankind, as the man of God, the better for the world.

**He is the future man.**

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## **CHAPTER – IV**

### **SRI AUROBINDO ON MAN AND IDEAL SOCIETY**

Social Philosophy is a systematizing of facts and values of social development i.e. that of the dynamics of the ‘web of social relationship’. It is based on a harmonious vision of the social ideals consideration with the facts regarding human society. As Philosophy, it views society in the cosmic perspective. It discusses its past as well as the future and also its place in the cosmic whole. The society considered here, obviously is not this or that particular society, but human society in general. Thus, social Philosophy deals with mankind as a whole. Its approach is synoptic and integral. It is based on an integral vision of the relations of individual in the social whole, the inter relation of various groups, associations, institutions and collectives and above all the relation of mankind to the whole ‘Cosmos’ and to the spirit behind it. Like Philosophy in general, it is growing to an ever near approximation to wisdom Sri Aurobindo has rightly said “a certain kind of agnosticism is the final truth of all knowledge.” Social Philosophy is based upon the experience of the fundamental nature of the social self and upon the facts of human nature. It is an integral and synoptic vision of the social whole.

It is a science “per excellence” of social values. The social philosophy guides the development of mankind. It studies social

relations in the light of the '*summum bonum*' of mankind. Social Philosophy enquires the validity and finds out higher and more ultimate values as social ideals.

Sri Aurobindo's philosophy is literally integral. In it, the physical, vital, mental and spiritual worlds, the individual and collective life, have all been accorded their deserved places. Sri Aurobindo has shown that the character of the spiritual category is such that the entire variety of mental, vital and physical existences derives its being and is manifested from it naturally. By a reverse process but under the stress of the same natural principle, an association from the physical to the vital, from the vital to the mental and then from the mental to the spiritual level takes place. Not only does there occur such a divinisation of mind, life and body in the physical world as a result of a touch of the supermind in the consciousness of natural man, but also, consequently, life ceases to be merely centred in the individual and spontaneously becomes larger and yet larger till it embraces, in the end, the whole of humanity. The glory of the superman is then seen through out the living universe. That the supermind which is the essence of matter, life and mind has its own distinct reality.

Sri Aurobindo has given the name supermind to the manifestation of the directly realised spiritual Reality on the level of the understanding. The touch of the supermind on this level is another name for its descent in to the mental world. We may apply

intelligence and come face to face with the solution of a problem, but we must also realise that though the function of intelligence can continue to a considerable extent, ultimately the solution comes down, as it were, from a higher level of consciousness of its own accord. The ascent and the descent ultimately meet. The supermind also descends from heaven to earth in the same way. Another name for this is the Grace of the Supreme called spiritual truth.

This Spiritual truth to Aurobindo, is the integral experience of *Saccidānanda*. It is the absolute experience which includes and explains all other experiences. "The cosmic truth is the view of things of a cosmic consciousness in which things are seen in their true essence and their true relation to the Divine and to each other."<sup>1</sup> Every truth is a part of this cosmic truth.

Sri Aurobindo's philosophy is an intellectual interpretation of his experience through integral yoga. It is in yoga alone that the spiritual intuition manifests in its fullness and the integral knowledge is attained. Yogic knowledge is the authentic knowledge of the Divine. It is the *Saccidānanda*, but at the same time it is also the Cosmic Reality, the becoming. In the words of Sri Aurobindo, "The becoming is one but this oneness is infinite and contains in itself an infinite plurality or multiplicity of itself; the one is the all; it is not only an essential existence but an All-Existence."<sup>2</sup>

With *Upanisads*, Sri Aurobindo takes *Saccidānanda* to be the ultimate Reality. The Absolute is *Saccidānanda*, Existence,

Consciousness and bliss. But again, according to Sri Aurobindo, “*Saccidānanda* is the one with a triple aspect. In the Supreme, the three are not three but one, existence is consciousness, consciousness is bliss, and they are thus inseparable, not only inseparable but so much like each other that they are not distinct at all.”<sup>3</sup>

Sri Aurobindo believes in the reality of change. Just as the temporal change all the objects consisting of Matter, Life and Mind are real. Sri Aurobindo accepts the view of the *Upaniṣad* that the whole universe is covered by Consciousness and hence, it is as real as *Saccidānanda*. Matter is, according to him, a covered *Sat* element of *Brahman* in the same way, life is the non manifested from the *Cit* element of *Brahman* and Mind is an inferior manifestation of Supermind existing in each and every man. The position of *Caitya puruṣa* in human personality is nuclear and hence it is always surrounded by the physical (*annamaya kōṣa*) vital (*prāṇamaya kōṣa*) and mental (*manomayakōṣa*) selves. The *Caitya puruṣa* functions are guided by them, but not independently. The mind which is given by Nature is the inferior manifestation of the Supermind, but this position of mind can be changed through *Yoga*. Though the Yogic process the *Caitya puruṣa* is brought forward, the physical, the vital and the mental selves thus get transformed. At this stage the psychic element in man freed from all faults like desire etc. can serve as the guide rendering the physical self enlightened. As Matter, Life and Mind are the lower manifestations of the

*Saccidānanda*, they are real, and not illusory, or *Māya* as advocated by the Advaitins.

In the *Srimad Bhāgavata* also an account of social change has been given. The four cycles of society known as *Satya*, *Tretā*, *Dvāpara* and *Kali yuga* are accepted. In the first cycle known as *Satya yuga*. The Pure Religion consisting of four *Pādas*, meditation, purity, mercy and truth prevailed. The same scheme i.e. the pure religion having four elements did not occur in the next *Yuga*, i.e. *Tretā yuga* as only three elements (among four) were found to be existing in this age, in the same way, two elements were found to be present in the *Dvāpara yuga* and one element in *Kali yuga*. Both the *Bhāgavata* and Sri Aurobindo do not accept the occurrence of the identical ontological scheme in each cycle. In Sri Aurobindo's analysis it is found that some individual will revolt against the conventional system in individualistic are, *Bhāgavata* also states that in *Tretā yuga* some invidials will revolt and try to abolishes the non-religious institutions.<sup>4</sup> Sri Aurobindo said that after the expiry of the subjective age an individual being will form of the Vedic society in a new spirit with the help of individual reason. The coming of *Satya yuga* after the expiry of *Kali yuga* has also been foretold in the *Bhāgavata*. But *Satya yuga* can be re-established through God's incarnation. The Pure Religion existing in *Satya yuga* can be regained through Divine interference from which it follows that the individual beings cannot re-establish *Satya yuga* with the help of their reason. In the *Bhāgavata* limited

potentiality has been accepted in an individual being, while in Sri Aurobindo's philosophy the individual person has been accepted as having unlimited potentiality. So an individual being can form the *supre-mental* Divine incarnation. The pattern of social change as advocated by Sri Aurobindo is *spiral*.

Let us give a brief account of the five scales of society as described by Sri Aurobindo.

(a) *The Symbolic Stage* : At the stage called symbolic all objects are looked as symbols of the Divine. In the Vedic society all the activities were taken to be the symbols of the Divine. Even the social institutions like marriage etc. were taken as symbols. In this connection, some *Mantras of Rgveda* may be put forward in order to strengthen and enlighten Sri Aurobindo's thought. In a *Mantra of Rgveda*, the whole universe is described as being covered by *puruṣa* having thousand heads, thousand eyes and thousand legs.<sup>5</sup> From this it follows that the whole universe is the abode of the Divine. Whatever is happening within this world will be His manifestation or symbol. That is why different seasons have been described in another *Mantra of Rgveda* as being engaged for serving Divine sacrifice in which spring has taken the place of butter, summer that of wood and autumn that of oblation. The implication of the *Mantra* is that the whole universe is a sacrifice performed by *puruṣa* in which everything is engaged in serving the Divine purpose. Different seasons have got different functions in the Divine

sacrifice. Given the four *Varnas*, *Brāhmaṇa*, *Kṣatriya*, *Vaiśya* and *Śūdra* have got a Divine origin. The *Brāhmaṇas* are stated to be originated from the mouth of the *puruṣa*, *Kṣatriyas* from His hands, *Vaiśyas* from His thighs and *Śūdras* from His feet. From the implication of the *Mantra* it is known that the *Brahmanas* are the men of wisdom which is known from the symbol of the mouth of the Creative Diety, the *Kṣatriyas* are the men of power (known from the symbol of Hands of the *puruṣa*) the *Vaiśyas* are producers (known from the symbol of thigh of *puruṣa*) and *Śūdras* are the servants (known from the symbol of feet of the *puruṣa*). *Manusamhitā* also echoes the symbolism of the four *Varnas*. Moreover, the Moon has been originated from His mind, the Sun from His eyes, and air from His *Prāṇa*. The relation between man and woman is looked upon as respectable as the relation between *puruṣa* and *Prakrti*.

(b) *The Typal Stage* : The symbolic age of human civilization gives way to the typal age. The *Varna* system which is treated as a Divine symbol becomes psychological human types of which each has got as particular ideal. According to Sri Aurobindo, "The first, the symbolic stage of this evolution is predominantly religious and spiritual, the other elements, psychological, ethical, economic physical are there, but subordinated to the spiritual and religious.<sup>6</sup> As the second stage is predominantly psychological and spiritual and religious factors are subordinated to the psychological idea, each and every person and his activities are not treated as Divine. Religion is nothing but the sanction of ethical ideals, i.e. *Dharma*.

The idea that all activities are Divine became gradually lost. The *Varna* system which becomes psychological types gives the idea of social honour after this age. The Brāhmins are honoured for having wisdom, purity and disinterested possessions, the *Kṣatriyas* for their courage, strength, nobility of character etc., the *Vaiśyas* for their good dealings, mercantile facility, liberality etc., and the *Sūdras* for obedience , faithful service, disinterested attachment etc.

(c) *The Conventional Stage* : At this stage a caste is determined in terms of an individual's birth without adhering to his function. When the race instead of the inner morality of function becomes prominent, the conventional age begins. In this age, the son of a *Brāhmaṇin* becomes *Brāhmaṇin* the son of a *Kṣatriya* becomes *Kṣatriya* whatever their functions may be. That is, without having education or power a man becomes *Brāhmaṇin* or *Kṣatriya* conventionally. An individual's race is more honoured than his duty. At this stage the outward expression of the ideal becomes more important than the ideal. Birth, economic function, religious rituals, family customs are the criteria for determining the *āśrama* which an individual belongs to. The similar statement has been made in the *Srimad Bhāgavata* also. It has been stated there that a Brahmin will be known from his sacred thread, but not from his education. The particular *āśrama* to which an individual belongs will be known from his wearing of the deer skin. Even the change of *āśrama* will be cognized through his knowledge or wisdom.<sup>7</sup> It is necessary to state the characteristic features of Kali yuga, as in the *Bhāgvata* in order to understand Sri

Aurobindo's concept of conventional age. The characteristics features of *Kaliyoga* have got striking similarities with those of conventional age. It has been mentioned in the *Bhāgavata* that the duties laid down in the *Vedas* for the people of different *Varnāśramas* will be ignored by them leading to the abolition of the same, i.e., *Varnāśramas*. Moreover, the religion which is opposed to the Vedic ideal will be practiced by them.<sup>8</sup>

(d) *The Individualistic Stage* : The conventional stage cannot last for long as some individuals revolt against it. This individualistic age is otherwise known as the age of revolt or the age of self-consciousness. The revolt which is supported by reason gives the scope for social progress after providing freedom to the members of society. An individual starts enquiry through reason whether the convention can be supported or not, which is nothing but the search for the truth. In the individualistic society democracy prevails and hence, each and every individual has been given scope of arrange his life through his own reason. But in reality a struggle between the rich and the poor or a competition between two parties in society is not provided even with the vital needs. In order to remove this situation socialism comes into being. For, Sri Aurobindo believes that collective freedom (but not individual freedom) is actual freedom. In order to provide vital needs to each and every individual in society, an individual is subjugated more and more to the state and totalitarianism comes into being. At this stage there is total eclipse of reason and individualism. As no stage is final, according to Sri

Aurobindo, this stage also gives way to the subjective age or the age of Superman.

(e) *The Subjective Age* : This age is the final aim of human civilization. Through other four ages an individual arrives at the last destination. In this age, man will come to possess the Supermind through which he can know that Matter, Life and Mind are the non-manifested forms of *Sat*, *Cit* and Supermind of *Brahman* respectively. Through the Supermind or enlightened reason an individual will know that like *Saccidānanda Brahman* the world-phenomenon consisting of Matter, Life and Mind is real. Subjectivism prevails in the symbolic stage in infrarational stage, But in subjective age it will remain in supra rational level. An individual will harmonise two hemispheres, one consisting of Matter, Life and Mind accepted by the materialists but denied by the ascetics and another having *Sat*, *Cit* and Supermind of *Brahman* accepted by the ascetics but denied by the materialists. In this stage each and every member of society will realise this harmony resulting in the Age of Divine or Spirit which is the ultimate goal of society. In this way, society will turn into a Divine one where each and every member possesses Divine body. It has been stated earlier that man can make his body Divine after bringing the *Caitya Purusa* in front through some Yogic process. How can all the members of the society know this truth ? The man who has realised the truth can, Sri Aurobindo suggests, communicate it to others. But another problem will crop up in this case. As the common people have got ordinary minds influenced by

physical and vital selves, they cannot take the image of the Divine though they may have faith in the teachings of the man having Supermind. To prepare to make them accept the Divine image the subjectivism of the mental self of a man is highly essential. This subjectivism of the mental self is possible only by awakening and bringing forward the *Caitya purusa* which can master and enlighten the physical, vital and mental selves. When this becomes possible through some Yogic process, a man can realise the Divine image and the Age of Superman begins.

In the spiritualised society all knowledge and practices which are present in the Vedic age will come in a new form and will be absolutely God-centric again. As each and every person is inwardly a conscious power of the Divine, the real purpose of education will be to awaken the Reality, the knowledge of which is the cause of the feeling of a man as to the fact that all things and activities of this world including arts, politics etc. are those of the Divine. "That was the knowledge which the ancients sought to express through religious and social symbolism, and subjectivism is a road of return to the lost knowledge."<sup>9</sup> In this stage a man becomes free as he is governed by his own Divine law. Freedom is freedom from egoism. When a man attains Divine body, he becomes free from ego. The symbolic stage returns with some change. The spirit of Divinisation will remain the same, but it will go along with technological and electronic development. People at this stage will enjoy the modern technology along with the old belief in Divinity.

‘Man’ according to Sri Aurobindo, “is a spirit using the mind, life and body for an individual and a communal experience and self-manifestation in the universe.”<sup>10</sup> The *Saccidānandā* itself descends in the finite for the delight of self-manifestation. Self is the same as Absolute. Thus, in the integral absolutism of Sri Aurobindo, the individual is as much real as the universal or Transcendent. Such a view steers clear of both the extremes of a complete affirmation and absolute denial. The individual is neither a mere shadow nor something existing apart from the Divine. It is real and yet real only in the Absolute. Separative tendency leads to what Sri Aurobindo calls, “Original ignorance.”<sup>11</sup> From the point of view of Creation, the individual is the concentration point of the consciousness-force. “The individual is a centre of the whole universal consciousness.”<sup>12</sup> Integral knowledge does not result in the abolition of the individual since this concentration of the consciousness force is not an illusion but a real purposive activity, the attainment of the return of the force to its original home in *Saccidānanda*. Nature becomes self-conscious in man. The manifestation of Divinity in the individual is the condition of the evolution of Nature back to its source. Consciousness-force creates through diffusion and concentration. Universe is the diffusion of the Absolute in infinite space and time, the individual, its concentration within spatio-temporal limits. In the individual, Prakṛti turns back to perceive puruṣa, world seeks after self, God having entirely become Nature, Nature seeks to become progressively God. Individual is true and lives even in unity with

the universal. Man's aim is to universalise and impersonalise himself in order to manifest to Divine. Yet, he is called upon to preserve his individuality, even when he reaches the widest universality of consciousness. It is the ego that is to be uprooted. Individual is an ontological reality, eternal as the Absolute, not co-existent but existent in and through him.

The Ultimate Reality, according to Sri Aurobindo, is a unity manifesting in trinity of essentiality, commonality and individuality. The unity, however, is not organic but more complex than that. It is a spiritual relation expressed in the famous Upaniṣadic formula of a whole coming out of a whole and living whole behind it. Individual is closely related with universal and can not exist without it and the universal is closely related with the Transcendent which expresses Himself through individual and Universal. As Sri Aurobindo points it, "For the particular, the individual can have no self-existence, no truth, no valid force except in so far as it reflects rightly and relates and confirms itself justly to the universal to the all-being, the all knowledge, the all will and follows its true drift towards self-realisation and vast delight in itself." So far, Sri Aurobindo agrees with the absolutists, but as he goes on to add, "..... The universal also has no self-existence, truth or validity except as it expresses the Divine being, knowledge, will, power, Delight of Him who surpasses all universe, so much so that with a petty fragment of His being and a single ray of His Consciousness He has created all these worlds."<sup>13</sup> Sri Aurobindo believes that the universal is individual,

but then in the tradition of *Vedānta* he maintains the self to be equally real and truly individual.

Evolution begins with the involution of *Saccidānanda* in Matter. Hence, it is the gradual emergence, of Existence, Consciousness and Bliss through higher and higher forms. Existence first appears in Matter. Consciousness first appears in vital and then in mental life. The emergence of man is the turning point in evolution. Physical man, vital man and mental man are the evolutionary steps of nature towards the emergence of spiritual man. In the spiritual man, Nature has to make a fresh ascent. It is different from the past process in two respects. It requires a conscious effort of the human mind and extends the man in-wards, outwards and upwards, to psychic self, world and God. Here the ignorance is radically transmitted into knowledge.

Sri Aurobindo scheme of evolution, there is not only ascent but also transformation and psychicisation. ‘Psychicisation’ according to Sri Aurobindo, “means the change of the lower nature bringing right vision in to the mind, right impulse and feeling in to the vital, right movement and habit into the physical all turned towards the Divine, all based on love, adoration, bhakti, finally the vision and sense of the universality every where, in all as well as in the heart, this force working in the being etc. faith, consecration, surrender.”<sup>14</sup> The evolution of the inner psychic being is the central note of all yoga and human evolution. This psychic being is the

true self, the real individual within man. The evolution is also inner, it is cosmic as well as individual. The greatest contribution of Sri Aurobindo is the revelation of the true nature of spirituality. *Upanisads* and *Gitā* also had an integral view of spirit, but it was Sri Aurobindo, who for the first time discovered subtle distinctions, in the realm of spirit and divined an integral yoga for its achievement. As he points out, Brahman consciousness is only a lower grade in the march to *Saccidānanda*. Thus absolute is para Brahman. Even supermind is above Brahman. Sri Aurobindo claims to have reached Brahman consciousness much earlier than Supramental. There are many luminous regions from mind to supermind. Sri Aurobindo never claims to arrive at an absolute Philosophy or an experience of the absolute as such. Sri Aurobindo, for the first time emphasises the role of psychification, and integration in spirit. The concept of spirit is not new in philosophy. Spirit, according to Sri Aurobindo, integrates and transforms physical, vital as well as mental. Hence, spiritual philosophy finds place for all kinds of experience.

In the tradition of the *Upanisads*, Sri Aurobindo admits the claims of both Philosophy and religion for the re-generation of man. Both are equally indispensable on mental level through as man transcends himself they would give place to Supramental knowledge and Supramental delight. Hence, the conception of Ultimate Reality must satisfy both philosophy and Religion. It must be both theoretically consistent and practically realisable. A Philosophy

which subordinates God to Absolute or assigns it only a phenomenal reality, has no place for religion and hence falls short of the complete truth. Again, since neither infra-mental nor mental, nor both together in the whole man, both should be integrated in spirit. Hence, Sri Aurobindo subordinates Philosophy and religion to *yoga*. One should however, note that here subordination does not mean negation or even derogation. New field of enquiry requires new methods. Philosophy, religion and even science and ethics are supreme in their own fields. But in view of Aurobindo for the realisation of spirit *yoga* is indispensable.

The key to understand Sri Aurobindo's philosophy is the spiritual evolution. All ideas are centered around this central theme. *Yoga* is a method for its realisation. Philosophy, religion, science and ethics are stepping stones to this supreme purpose of man and Nature and the inherent Divine in both. Sri Aurobindo has traced the phenomenon of evolution in philosophy, history, culture, science, religion etc. and every where advanced speculations consistent with the general scheme of the evolutionary purpose.

Sri Aurobindo finds a harmonious synthesis of a relation of individual and society in Divine. Individual salvation pre-supposes universal salvation. A realisation in isolation of the social self, is a one sided vision. Thus, Sri Aurobindo revives the ancient ideal of *Bodhisattva*. The basis of altruism is not philosophy but realisation of the Reality underlying all. Divinity is not a dead unity but a rich

multiplicity. Hence men and societies may develop their individuality and yet maintain the common bonds. Such a Catholic, integral and clarified vision can alone lay down the foundation of a world society.

In consistency his general scheme of evolution, Sri Aurobindo proclaims the advent of the Gnostic stage. Like all serious thinkers he takes conscience of the present crisis in human civilization and warns us of the danger. The remedy, which he suggests in the transition of man to superman and his entire life was a dedication to this cause. However, pessimistic the present state may be, Sri Aurobindo optimism is not without reason. The whole thing is consistent with the general scheme. Sri Aurobindo himself never insists on the exactness of the details but only on the bare outline. Man has experimental with so many solutions. Theoretically speaking, Sri Aurobindo presents a more consistent solution and there is every reason to hope that practically also it would prove to be better, if it is given a chance to present its credentials.

Sri Aurobindo's philosophy is the philosophy of our age. It represents all the crying needs of the time. It is an integral synthesis of old and new, east and west, realism and idealism, pragmatism and spiritualism. The static, and cosmic and idealistic theories have led to escapism, pessimism, and socio-political disintegration. Sri Aurobindo finds a place for all the aspects of human life and yields all knowledge in an integral whole, can alone, serve humanity. He

shows the way in this direction. It is left for the future philosophers to follow the outlines and develop a philosophy worthy of its name, truly performing its role in the regeneration of the human race.

Sri Aurobindo has devoted himself to discover the actual religion of humanity. He has given us the true nature of the religion of humanity according to his own ways of thinking.

The chief aim and duty of human spirit, as Sri Aurobindo observed, are respect, service and progress of human being. The religion of humanity is the religion against the oppression, cruelty and exploitation of man, no other considerations are to be taken for determining the religion of humanity.<sup>15</sup> Sri Aurobindo also has realised that a man cannot engage himself in welfare of another man due to the existence of his ego. This ego of class or nation etc. is the enemy of the manifestation of religion of humanity.<sup>16</sup> Sri Aurobindo again has emphasized that the Spirit within can bring real unity of a man with another man. Till the attainment of this spirit, the religion of humanity, which can give love, mutual recognition of human brotherhood, sense of human oneness in thought and feeling cannot emerge. Action within the animal man is biological due to its origin from his this worldly desire. The same type of action performed by animal-man who is not associated with spirit is described Sri Aurobindo as mechanical. This situation of mechanism can be overcome if a man can develop or extend his own self to all beings, Brotherhood exists in the soul and by the soul. In the same way, the

state and nations are to be respected, as they are images of human spirit. Sri Aurobindo thinks that the human brotherhood existing in Self and by the Self is the most fundamental thing from which liberty and equality follow. Sri Aurobindo has observed: "Freedom, equality and brotherhood are three god-heads of the soul .... Yet brotherhood is the real key to the triple gospel of the idea of humanity. The union of liberty and equality can only be achieved by the power of human brotherhood, which exists in the soul and by the soul .... Liberty and equality without the touch of spirit is formal or mechanical."<sup>17</sup> Sri Aurobindo also has diagnosed the main root of our problems of harmony. If there is the absence of harmony among man, ego and self, materialistic world and spiritual world, there will be the problems in the form of non-unity, disintegrity etc. It has been admitted in a clear-cut manner that there is harmony (but no contradiction) between materialistic world and spiritual world; hence former is the echo of the latter.

Sri Aurobindo has gathered the seeds of this theory from our ancient scriptures and given his own interpretation.

Sri Aurobindo has admitted that this physical or material body bears 'something more' or surplus thing which cannot give us satisfaction within this material world.<sup>18</sup>

To Sri Aurobindo each and every person has not enormous potentiality which may be described as superman. Sri Aurobindo is found to use 'Super man' after a man's transformation. The theory of

transformation from the ordinary man to Super man is also clearly given by Sri Aurobindo. As he has accepted the possibility of being transformed, he is indirectly admitting that there is some surplus power in a man. Sri Aurobindo is kind enough to us that he has shown how this power comes through the awakening of *Caityapurusa* existing in human body and has given a full picture as to how a man, able to attain this infinite power.

After the realisation of the Divine, the phenomenal world i.e., body, ego etc. is not *Bādhita* or contradicted as the Advaitins admit. According to Sri Aurobindo all these are taken as true as the Divine, as the reflection of Him lies there also. Hence, all these cannot be ignored thinking them as mere unreal or *Māyā*. That the world is as true as the Divine has been admitted by *Rāmānuja*.<sup>19</sup> In this system it has been stated clearly that an individual, though the part of the Divine, cannot be transformed into infinity or *Māyatita*. But in the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo a man remains in the middle stage. In the same individual there is *Viśva* i.e., the whole world and *Viśeṣatva* or ego.

Sri Aurobindo has shown that a man possesses Superman in him. He has given the name of the Absolute as Superman which is new in Indian tradition. Here the highest honour is given to mankind. From the coinage of these terms it is proved that a man may not remain confined within himself but can extend himself to all persons and times. He has emphasised on the fact that the Superman

comes in a man. He has intentionally used these terms instead of God in order to point out that the Divinity does not come from outside but it lies in the heart of a man, which, I think, is a peculiar path of showing the truth to mankind.

Both Tagore and Sri Aurobindo have given a prediction about the arrival of the age of Supreme by virtue of the fact that they are *Kavi* or *Krāntadarśi*. Sri Aurobindo has described this age as subjective age.<sup>20</sup>

Sri Aurobindo has shown a path of a man's transcendence to the Superman. Sri Aurobindo has put forward a yogic process through which an individual can be transformed into a *Superman*. According to Sri Aurobindo, the body which is given by nature in a particular order can be changed through yogic practice. The surplus portion of human body is identified by Sri Aurobindo. It has been pointed out by him that this surplus power lies in the *Caitiyapurusa* which is called *Rtacit* in the Vedas, the creative faculty of *Saccidānanda*. If this faculty is covered by mental self, vital self and physical self, it cannot function due to the fact that it cannot show the right path. If this *caityapurusa* is brought forward by way of changing the natural order of body through yoga, it can illumine an individual as it is no more covered by the said selves. As all are illuminated by *caityapurusa*, an individual can expand himself. So, the excess, which we get in Aurobindo's philosophy, is the physiological explanation for the spiritual development.

The evolution has reached the stage of man – the mental man. But this mental man is not totally different from animal, although man is infinitely greater than animals and plants. Man at his highest is the half-god, but not all god, because he could not discard animality altogether. So a transformation in his life is necessary. But what sort of transformation ? Man is a vital being, a physical being, a mental being. Still he is imperfect. He needs perfection, and any transformation should be towards this perfection. A man must be a spiritual being. This spiritual transformation in man is the present necessity.

But how can transformation be effected? “The secret of the transformation lies in the transference of our centre of living to a higher consciousness and in a change of our main power of living. This will be a leap or an ascent even more momentous than that which Nature must have at one time made from the vital mind of the animal to the thinking mind still imperfect in our human intelligence. The central will implicit in life must be no longer the vital will in the life and the body, but the spiritual will of which we have now only rare and dim intimations and glimpses.”<sup>21</sup> So for successful transformation we will have to depend on the spiritual will instead of the vital or the mental will.

There is the spiritual idea in man – it is not fully developed, it is very indistinct and in a rudimentary form. Unless this very important aspect is fully manifested in life, human beings cannot

cross over their limitations. They will have to move in the blind path of ignorance. Through the transcendence of mental or vital limitations man will be able to unite himself with all others and the Reality, because through transcendence he becomes universal man and there lies his perfection.

The lower perfection of Nature in plants and animals comes from an instinctive, subconscious obedience to the vital nature of its own being, but the spiritual perfection of man comes from intuitive experience. "The higher perfection of the spiritual life will come by a spontaneous obedience of spiritualised man to the truth of his own realised being, when he has become himself, when he has found his own real nature. For this spontaneity will not be instinctive and subconscious, it will be intuitive and fully, integrally conscious."<sup>22</sup>

In fact, perfection means the unfolding of the ever-perfect Spirit which is the innermost reality in man. Man will be fully free and perfect whence the Spirit will burst through the forms of mind and life and turning them upward it will transform them into its own image.

What is necessary for man is perfection, which, in other words, may be called spiritual supermanhood. This may be open to him when "he boldly declares that all he has yet developed, including the intellect of which he is so rightly and yet so vainly proud, are now no longer sufficient for him, and that to uncase, discover, set free this greater Light within shall be henceforward

his pervading preoccupation..... (Then) we shall be on the right road to become ourselves, to find our true law of perfection, to live our true, satisfied existence in our real being and divine nature.”<sup>23</sup>

Why does the question of spiritual evolution come at all ? It is because the very Spirit is the original evolutionary element and so it cannot but be the last emerging principle. So perfection consists in spiritual realisation. The liberation of spirituality to man means transformation of his mind and life and even body into spirituality. His mental thought is transformed into spiritual consciousness. The characteristic of the spiritual consciousness lies in intrinsic awareness of identity and of inherent self-existence. Nay, more, “... the spiritual being, once inwardly liberated, can develop in mind the higher states of being that are its own natural atmosphere and bring down a supramental energy and action which are proper to the Truth-consciousness, the ordinary mental instrumentation, life-instrumentation, physical instrumentation even, could then be entirely transformed and become parts no longer of an ignorance however much illumined, but of a supramental creation which would be the true action of a spiritual truth-consciousness and knowledge.”<sup>24</sup>

What is meant by spirituality? We commit error by identifying spirituality with high intellectuality or idealism or moral purity or religious performances of conative and affective forms, Neither of them is called spirituality. These may be helpful for spiritual

preparation, but are not by themselves spiritual. Spirituality means a becoming conscious of our inmost reality. "Spirituality is in its essence an awakening to the inner reality of our being, to a spirit, self, soul which is other than our mind, life and body, an inner aspiration to know, to feel, to be that, to enter into contact with the greater Reality beyond and pervading the universe which inhabits also our own being, to be in communion with it and union with It, and a turning, a conversion, a transformation of our whole being as a result of the aspiration, the contact, the union, a growth or waking into a new becoming or new being, a new self, new nature."<sup>25</sup>

The spiritual man is not detached from the life of the humanity. The spiritual consciousness is the awareness of one with all, a cosmic consciousness, hence there is no rejection of anything but transformation to the greatness, vastness. The spiritual truth is the truth of the Infinite. The truth of the Spirit is the truth of being and consciousness, and not of thought. It is the truth of unity-in-difference, not unity-above difference or without-difference. The Spirit is one but not unmanifest. Every part and parcel of the manifestation shares the same spirit.

Sri Aurobindo has brought out harmony between material world and spiritual world. If a stone is worshipped, it is permissible as it is the covered *Sat* element of *Saccidānanda*. He admits that from matter one can go to life as it is done in the *Tantra*. The matter sometimes may become medium for realizing *Saccidānanda*. Hence,

at the initial stage also the role of matter in the field of spiritual realisation is not denied.

Sri Aurobindo has clearly said that the human body becomes a Divine Body. Sri Aurobindo has accepted the fact that the transformation of body or specific change in human body gives rise to the spiritual transformation. In other words, the change of natural body is the precondition of spiritual evolution.

The social philosophy or Sri Aurobindo provides a notion of equality among all men. The attainment of Divine society (*Bhāgavata Samāja*) where no inequality prevails among men in respect of dignity, status and honour is the ultimate goal of his philosophy. The reality that every man enjoying equal facility and honour will be perfect, happy and powerful provides the idea of equality in society. The standpoint of Sri Aurobindo that individual freedom is not freedom or salvation is really appreciable in the sense that a man cannot live in a society honestly or perfectly if others are not honest or perfect. In other words, a man cannot enjoy his own property or exercise his own right if others do not cooperate with him. Keeping in view the idea that our peaceful existence depends on that of the fellow members. Sri Aurobindo's approach to man who knows the Truth to inspire other members of society for realising the Truth is justifiable. The only route through which the collective freedom or salvation can be attained.

Sri Aurobindo has shown that each and every man can possess infinite power by awakening *Caityapuruṣa* existing in him, which provides honour and respect to mankind. The doctrine that a man is not only above God but he may be God with the help of awakening the *Caityapuruṣa* has given highest dignity to mankind. From the philosophical thought of Sri Aurobindo, a man will learn to honour another man as he is also the abode of Infinite, which helps to form a maliceless and peaceful society.

Prediction about the arrival of the subjective age is possible, since the social change has been accepted as temporal one. According to the principle, ‘That which occurs in course of Time is subject to change’, the coming of the subjective age can be foretold. For one may have the knowledge of present, past and future objects through transcendental perception (*Yogajapratyakṣa*). The past existence of the symbolic age and the coming of the subjective age in future are transcendently perceived by Sri Auribindo.

There are four human ends (*Purusārthas*) – *Dharma* (righteousness), *Artha* (wealth), *Kāma* (desire) and *Mokṣa* (liberation). *Mokṣa* has been accepted as the highest goal, others are subsidiary and transitory. When liberation is attained, the other *purusārthas* cannot remain. But in Aurobindo’s philosophy, all the *Purusārthas* may remain together. When a man reaches the suprarational level, he attains salvation and he considers *Dharma*, *Artha* and *Kāma* as Divine.

Finally, Sri Aurobindo's social theory can be described as teleological. The purpose of this theory is, as stated earlier, to bring about the subjective age. In other words, all the changes of society are purpose-oriented and the purpose is to form a Divine society. The Sāmkhya philosophy is also teleological, but its purpose is completely different from that of Aurobindo's philosophy. According to Sāmkhya the change which occurs within *Prakṛti*, is for the enjoyment of *puruṣa*, a metaphysical concept. But in Sri Aurobindo's philosophy change occurring in society is for the attainment of Divine society. In this way Sri Aurobindo had accounted for his dream of an ideal society which is unlike other Indian views.

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21. Rishabchand and Shyamsundar Jhunjhunwalla : *The Destiny of Man*, 1980, p. 82.
22. *Ibid*, p. 84.
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## **CHAPTER – V**

### **SWAMI SWARUPANANDA'S VIEW OF MAN AND IDEAL SOCIETY**

*"AKLĀ AĀMI MUKTA HOTE CHĀI NĀ PRĀNAÑĀTH  
AĀMĀY TUMI YUKTA KORO BISVAJANĀR SĀTH."*<sup>1</sup>

“Oh | Beloved, I do not want to be liberated alone let me be with one and all.”

Swami Swarupananda Philosophy known as ‘Akhandā Philosophy’. It gives us a philosophy of Man or particularly a philosophy of human action, which rests on some key concepts, which are (i) Cultivation of *fearlessness* through the awakening of one’s inner *spiritual force* and freedom as one’s birth right. (ii) Integral *Akhandā* approach to life and society (iii) Morality campaign & character building (iv) Realisation of *Oneness* of all human beings despite their apparent multiplicity (v) Maintain the ideals of non-begging *Abhikṣā* into life and society (vi) To maintain the Self-reliance and *Karmayoga* into life and society, (vii) Theistic view that is the ultimate truth exists whether we name it God, Allah, Brahman or by any other term and (viii) Restraining of senses, i.e. maintaining *Brahmacarya* in life. These key concepts have their

manifestations in unselfish actions towards the good of all, the action which every man can do with the same unselfishness.

Man has to rise above his selfish motives and desires; his mechanical rituals and ceremonies because these have no meaningful influences on the actual life of man. Rather these are obstacles to the process of realising the higher self or in realising that he himself is the finite. Man has to transcend his limited, finite character by his own power of realisation which are within himself.

*"Paramesvar ye Śubha Sambhāvanā Samūha Diya Tumāke  
Aāmāke Sakalke sṛṣti Karechen, Tāhār Pūrṇa bikāsh Deoyār janya  
Niyata ya Sajāg Sacetan cesta Tarai Nām caritragathān."*<sup>2</sup>

"God created all creatures with good potentialities. Character making is the continuous and ceaseless effort to manifest these potentialities." This inner spiritual force elevates man from finitude, from his limitations, so there is no real bondage, real obstacles to man's action. Man is born free, and he should act purely because he has the tremendous inner spiritual force. This spiritual force is required for the over all growth of man. In short, it can be said that spirituality is the supreme need for man particularly in the context of present day social scenario of India.

Swami Swarupananda firmly believed in India's endless spiritual potentialities. He thought that these potentialities could be actualised if man knows his own inner self, grows fearlessly having faith in his own actions and serves his fellow beings with the feeling

that all are one and within all dwells the same supreme spirit which is above all conflicts. As a matter of fact, Swami Swarupananda believes that every man's action, if it is good, will always be free from any conflict. He wanted that every individual human being has to build his character upon firm determination and goodwill for others. Selfishness, according to Swami Swarupananda, is the root cause of all evils. This selfishness gives rise to greed and power which ultimately leads to exploitation. Thus the poor is exploited by the rich, the illiterate is exploited by the learned, the physically weak is exploited by the physically strong and so on. He wanted to eradicate all these evils of society which are stumbling blocks in the process of the awakening of man. He believes that all evils may be conquered by love which is real living force of mankind. "Love is courage, love is strength, love is life's eternal length."<sup>3</sup> We commit evils because we are greedy, and we are greedy because we are selfish, we are selfish because we are ignorant about the power of life, which introduces oneness amongst us where all exploitation or alienation would disappear. The ideal of love inspires man to sacrifice all his individual limitations for the realisation of the eternal spirit of religion and through this process he develops an idea of inter-relationship among the dis-integrated beings and universal unity. It is the power of love which prompts us to actions which are universally accepted, morally good and conducive to the welfare of society. Thus universalisation of action is what prompt us to do good to others and such actions will always be morally good. Action

should always be un-universalised, because all human beings are basically one and the same. This universalisation of action is of course, is a matter of inner feeling, a matter of realisation of the ‘Ultimate Truth’ that all human beings are potentially divine irrespective of caste, creed and religion. “I belong to all and all sects are mine”.<sup>4</sup> This feeling of divinity in man develops his infinite or universal personality through love and work for human beings. This establishes harmony in the individual, the social, and the universal life of man, and thus solves all individual, moral, and social problems of life and the world. Thus Swami Swarupananda has given stress on the universal brotherhood and equality of man.

Swami Swarupananda advocates a spiritual concept to the society. “*Akhanda Dharma*”<sup>5</sup> which is very essential to the society for maintaining equality of man. It is the *Dharma* of the whole humanity to be ethical and moral in discharging their duties and they should try to make an “*Akhanda*”<sup>6</sup> society which is the universal human society with full of love for each other and universal brotherhood among the member of the society. “*Bhālo bāsāi jiboner param, caram, anupam satya.*”<sup>7</sup>

For performing the *Akhanda Dharma* man should be ethical and morally good and he should have the quality to look all persons as equal because all are the creature of the Same. Swami Swarupananda gives to the society a universal meditation for all ‘*Akhanda Nāma*.’ He explains it as “It is the source of all strength

that you need on your long, lonely and tedious journey towards perfection.”<sup>8</sup> An essential characteristics of an *Akhanda* is to sacrifice oneself at any moment for the welfare of others. He has to possess the distinctive characteristics of needful to the society. An *Akhanda* requires a brotherly feeling towards the whole human family. He has to love all without evershowing any contempt towards any religious group and caste a pure look devoid of any hatred if any towards all religious ideologies, ways and methods of meditation.

In the view of Swami Swarupananda, the *Akhanda* has the fullness of manhood. An “*Akhanda* is not a Hindu, not a Muslim, not a Christian, not a Buddhist; he is a man, who hates no other man, and considers no other man as a stranger. He is a man who does not sacrifice himself at the alter of any kind of sectarianism, who is constantly committed to discovering the way of bringing men together, who without denying the value of the past, has the courage required to amend past errors, who lives in the present with his eyes turned towards the future, who believes in the fundamental unity of all sects, who sees all persons as brothers and sees the image of every man in himself and sees every nation as his own, considers every tongue as a vehicle through which he can express the name of God which appeals to him most, and who acknowledges the presence of the truth contained in his own beliefs in the path which he follows.”<sup>9</sup>

In the light of Swami Swarupananda's ideology, an *Akhanda* can be identified by his behaviour in every circumstance. He has to show the divine quality. He cannot desire to obtain salvation alone, it includes the salvation of the others too. His striving for perfection is a striving for the good of the world. All his desires always include the desires of the others. He will try for his own salvation by his activity but at the same time work for the salvation of the world; live for the good of the others and at the same time promote his own good. An *Akhanda* is a man who realises the identity of his own good and the good of the others, of the good to be achieved in the present and of the supreme good. “*Kāhākeo bād Nā Diyā, Kāhākeo bañcita nā kariyā, ye din mukti Aāsibe, se dinei mukti Tāhār svarūpe Aāsibe.*”<sup>10</sup> That is, “freedom in its own nature does not exclude, does not deprive others. When one realises freedom from this perspective, it is called the real freedom.” *Akhanda* always spread love to man and to please God is the ornament of his life. For Swami Swarupananda his devotion to God brings about the salvation of the world, and salvation of the world brings about the spiritualisation of man. For this salvation he has to surrender all his desires for personal happiness for the sake of others happiness and offer to the Lord the happiness of the whole world.

To Swami Swarupananda , akhandas are not bound within limits of any religious group such as the shaktas, shaivas, or Baishnabos. *Akhanda Nāma* is their fundamental “Scripture.”<sup>11</sup> The *Nāma* is their supreme refuge; as the respect the *Nāma*. The *Nāma*

teaches them what form of God they should worship and who should be their “*ISTĀ*.<sup>12</sup>” In the view of Swami Swarupananda, ‘*Akhanda Nāma*’ is universal *Nāma*. Its symbolic identity is as Praṇava ‘OM’ means ‘yes’, Lord, yes, i.e. God exists and is omnipresent. To Swami Swarupananda. “OM is not the name of Krishna or Vishnu, or Kali, or Durgā, etc. However, it contains all at once, the names of Krishna, Vishnu, Kali, Durgā”<sup>13</sup> etc. For this reason, to Swami Swarupananda, ‘Akhandas are neither *Vaishnavas*, nor *sāktos*, nor *śaivas*, nor *Gāṇapatyas*, yet they belong to all at once, to all religious groups. ‘*Akhanda Nāma*’ is the fundamental and universal, it is all at once, the Vedas, the Korana and the Bible, their explanations and commentaries when an *Akhanda* grows old in the domain of *Sādhanā* (meditation), he accepts as truth the explanations which are suitable to old people. He does not consider any scripture as false or erroneous, he knows them to be relative truths. He really belongs to all groups, he does not confine him to a particular religious group. His way of thinking is universal as all religious denominations should fall into on fellowship name the ‘*Akhanda* (catholic) fellowship. And he remains entirely faithful to one’s allegiance, to show full respect and understanding towards all. Akhandas serve the *Akhanda Mantra* “OM.”<sup>14</sup> They do not form a limited sect. Their fellowship is embracing the whole mankind. For maintaining this quality in man and understanding the universal way of thinking man should develop the character of fullness and try to remove the crisis of character.

Character is the great important factor of a man. Man often tend to forget that the attainment of nobleness and purity of character is the most important factor than any other things. A man should have deep faith in his religion, because of the spiritual power, he derives the purity of character.

Swami Swarupananda talked a lot about the Morality campaign and character building education. Swami Swarupananda observes that the only permanent solution lies in effectively launching a widespread morality campaign throughout the length and breadth of the country. His thinking is that even a person could not escape its tremendous impact. Swami Swarupananda gives stress to the younger generation to ractify their character. He advise to the young generation to perform their duty to the welfare of the society as well as the whole nation. His thinking is that the nation will be automatically developed, if the character of the younger generation is uplifted in a proper way. He makes effort among the younger generation as well as the old people to develop their devotion and love to God. Swami Swarupananda who is able to give full confidence in his ownself and faith in oneself, have faith in others as well as in God. To become a man of character and a moral man one has to practice uninterrupted and sustained good habits over a long period from the childhood.

Character and truth are inseparable. One cannot succeed in the attainment of nobleness of character avoiding one's devotion to

truth. Truthfulness lies at the root of all success. Men are unable to attain success depending on falsehood. Duryodhan of the *Mahābhārata* was a great military power with many brilliant generals and soldiers in his army group including Dronacārya. On the other hand Pāndava had no such type of group except Srikrishna. But the *Pāndavas'* won the victory over the *Kouravas'* because of the *Pāndavas'* devotion to truth. Ramachandra's victory over Rāvana in the war of the *Rāmāyana* is also an example of supremacy of truth.

Swami Swarupananda has said many things about different aspects of striving for the attainment of nobility of character. Striving for the attainment of purity and nobility of character lies at the root of all striving for spiritual betterment. One who is always busy in thoughts of selfish interest cannot find himself blessed with true peace of mind. A selfish man cannot feel himself a perfect man. One can spend one's life time properly if he always believe in the God and himself. It is not possible for a human being to develop humanism in himself unless he comes out of the bounds of his narrow sectarianism. To be a perfect human being, one must have moral courage and honest thought. Deeper the thought and idealism is nearer to the success. Swami Swarupananda says about man, "Friend, I do not care to what extent you are Hindu or a Muslim , I want to find out to what extent you are humane in thoughts, speech and action. I want Humanatarian man. No matter what community he belongs to. I will worship them, if I find them truly humane."<sup>15</sup>

Character and morality according to swami Swarupananda, do not come spontaneously into man's life like the ability of breathing which comes automatically with one's birth. But it is to be achieved like all other good things, through continuous process of practice over a long period of time. It will not at all be difficult for a child or an old man to be come an honest, sincere, dutiful and self-sacrificing man in his life, if he practices it through his every day conduct. Swami Swarupananda advocates the morality campaign or character building education to achieve these qualities in a man's life.

In the view of Swami Swarupananda , real education is that by which increases the strength of the mind, character is formed, expanded the intellect of a man by which one is able to stand on one's own feet. Morality campaign or character building education has higher objectives and values which almost all the time have been helpful not only for oneself but also for others as well as for the society. Swami Swarupananda gives stress on national education. He says, “*ye śikṣā aāmāder svārtha-budhike sankucita kare, nijer duhkher apekṣā parer duhkha ke bāda kariyā dekhite śikhāy, āmi tāhākei bali jātiya siksā ..... porātha paratāi jātiya siksār mūlamantra.*”<sup>16</sup>

“Doing good to others is the essence of national education. I call it national education that teaches us to reduce selfishness and to see others' sufferings with more importance than one's own sufferings.”

The basic objective of character building education is to achieve strength, confidence and character of men. The cultivation of these attributes should be the aim of any educational system. In this age of science and material power, Swami Swarupananda's thought becomes essential for the cultivation of character. Character is the basic foundation of all education. Swami Swarupananda says, "Oh my country man, oh the inhabitants of the world, give me good characters, spotless characters and shining characters, I will give you food, cloth, shelter, employment, peace, heaven, mukti and supreme freedom of human life."<sup>17</sup> There is a need for evolving a system of education which would mould character and spiritual qualities. To Swami Swarupananda, it is one of the challenges before the educationists to realise that the accelerating forces in the society are impacting young people to a large extent and this need to be reflected in the educational opportunities offered to them.

Swami Swarupananda attaches the greatest importance to "Primary Education."<sup>18</sup> Education for Swami Swarupananda is absolutely worthless if it is not built on a solid foundation of truth and purity. It is not a perfect education if it does not mould character and develop morality in human mind and purity of life.

Swami Swarupananda initiated experiments to demonstrate liberating education for the humanity and integrating economic principles by which individual may grow with strength from within. His experiments were based upon his own experience and those of

millions of flowers from the East and West cutting across lines of caste, creed, language, and religion. His thoughts have attracted thinkers in search of alternatives in several spheres including education and economics.

The country is now in search of a better alternative for structural changes in main stream education and for addressing the problem of ever-increasing gap between haves and have-nots. For last sixty years we have all most followed the structure of education introduced by the British for the subjected Indians with some cosmetic changes. The result is manifested in the tendency of imitating others, lacking patriotism and creativity for accepting Western model in every sphere of life while paying lip tribute to our own great men who try to show the path of developing from within the cultural fabric of a country. Recently search for alternatives from within has been restarted. In this context, his innovative experiments on character-building education have drawn attention for their broadness, scientific basis, cultural root, cost-effective ways.

The attainment of the purity of character, for Swami Swarupananda , is the realisation of the Ultimate Unity. It is impossible to be a man of character unless one realises in life the *Akhanda* i.e.(Akhanda religion). *Akhanda* religion for Swami Swarupananda is the religion of universal mankind and universal humanity, and *Akhanda* or unsegmented means same-ness and it

recognises no difference between man and man. It is a possessor of a quality which prevents him from hating others and feel others as his own kith and kin. It is the quality which prevents him from sacrificing his conscience at the alter of communal religious feelings. It inspired him to find a proper basis to establish his relationship with others. One of the basis of the *Akhanda* ideal, the people can get inspiration to follow an integral family life. In the ages of sages and seers, men had faith in the words of the saint and led their lives in accordance with the principle laid down by the sages and this is why a rise of the heroic men was possible in the age of the epics. But today we do not follow the path shown by the saints.

Men must start their struggle against their lacking, against immorality and beggary. Swami Swarupananda says, - "*BhiKṣāy  
ātmār Śakti kamiyā yāya, karmākānsā dīnatāya nuyiyā pade.  
Bhikṣā kariyā svarga mile nā, svarga mile vīratve. Parntu bhiksāy  
mile paśutva, bhiksāy mile hinatā, nicatā ār anupaneyā kalanka.*"<sup>19</sup>

"In begging the power of Self becomes reduced, inspiration for work becomes reduced, a heavenly abode can be achieved, courage brings heavenly bliss. Begging on the contrary brings animality, complex of inferiority , weakness and unrecoverable blemish." This needs a movement aimed at moral progress or moral character. Political independence of a country can be attained by means of a spiritual movement and agitation. But this freedom can not be retained or protected without the strength of character.

In this respect Swami Swarupananda introduces morality campaign movement to the societal people. The word ‘morality’ is being used here by Swami Swarupananda as a synonym for character. It is the force of character that makes you a true human being and invests you with all the innumerable qualities of real manhood and confers upon you all the virtues of a genuine man.

This morality campaign movement or character building movement for Swami Swarupananda has got nothing to do with one’s religion. It does not matter whether one is a Hindu or a Muslim or a Christian, Jaina, Śikha, or Buddhist. It only matters whether one is sincerely trying to attain a reasonable level of morality; one element of the struggle for the attainment of the purity of character is raising one’s mind above one’s nation, country and community. When men succeed in this, all members of the human race feel happy.

In the practical world there are limits in the sphere of activities of ordinary human beings, otherwise they cannot survive. One has to acquire qualities to cross those limits by stepping outside the limits only, after acquiring those qualities, a man can represent the interest of his own community, the community which he himself belongs to, or his own country. If a man is to live a truly human life, he must come out of the narrow sectarianism . Our hatred and neglect have distracted all our fellow human beings from us. But our love for all others in the world bring them closer. It is love which

makes others our dear and near ones. Love, for Swami Swarupananda, is the only thing which can ensure equal place and equal treatment for all. One has to strive for purity and nobility of character, to be able to have love for all. Let us first devote ourselves to this task and follow his universal path of humanism.

Humanism is the spirit which inspires us to have respect for the down-trodden and draw the poor closer with brotherly love. Man should go on striving for being more and more truly humane. Honest thought, courage and devotion to truth are the basic qualities of human beings. To devote one self to the service of the living being is true service. Swami Swarupananda upheld this ideal. He said, "He who loves God's creature, renders service to God."<sup>20</sup> Love makes it imperative to give something and opt nothing in return. Friendship is also something akin to love and a binding force. Noble duty of a man is to sympathise with one another. To be a true philanthropist requires one to love men and help others love fellow human beings.

Man is expected to live in this world in accordance with the rule 'Live and Let Live', far from trammeling upon others rights, he is supposed to be just and fair in his contextual interactions with other people. Thus when a person acts upon the principle of *might is right* or in other words, behaves unfairly and cruelly towards others, he is considered by others to be devoid of humanity. This evidently means that good-will towards fellow beings, fairplay, sympathy, non-violence and mercy are some of the essential moral values. It is

this qualities and such other values which distinguish man from others beings.

Thinking of others with an eye to their welfare or even the relinquishment of ill wishes is in reality for our own good, a reasonable and farsighted step. This quality is needed to ensure our proper succession in our present life and in this world. The proverb goes ‘Honesty is the best policy’. When we wish others well, those others will be our well-wisher. When men are kind and sympathetic to others, they will receive kindness in return. One of the peculiar things to all virtues is that while doing good to others we are being good to ourselves. The obvious effect of cultivation of virtues in oneself is the removal of bad traits. All the vices take their hells as soon as the virtues arrive. For Swami Swarupananda *vicelessness* is verily the key to happiness and peace of one’s ownself as well as of others. The Philanthropic outlook is one such virtue, by acquiring which man benefits not only others but themselves also.

In His life and activities, Swami Swarupananda has attached the greatest importance to the progress of the humanity as a whole. He felt that all-round progress of the human race is possible through the betterment of the moral character of human beings. He has always tried to bring about a change in human character and aimed at the moral progress of the humanity. He has also made various effort for social progress. According to Swami Swarupananda, if people can attain better moral character, it will be easier to achieve

progress in other fields. The attainment of a good moral character is possible by finding out faults in our selves and by getting rid of them. This implies the ability to go on striving to achieve noble goals with practice and again Swami Swarupananda says,

*“Āmi cāi manusā, kouje nā ye parer dosā*

*Nijer bhram nijer truti samsodhanei ātmatosā.”<sup>21</sup>*

“I am in search of such a human being who does not see the short coming of others such as human being who is satisfied in correcting one's own faults.”

In the view of Swami Swarupananda, every human being has something divine in him lying inert. Building a good moral is activating the Divinity in him. Swami Swarupananda has made various observations about human life and religion. To him man's life is his struggle. Human life reveals itself in the development and broadening of the self. Different Communities follow different religions. Hindus, Muslims, Shikhs, Buddhists etc have their own religious beliefs and practices. But if we take a closer look, we find that all religions want men to become men of character and they all aim at making mankind moral and truthful. Swami Swarupananda does not lay importance to the questions, whether someone is Hindu or Muslim, but on whether such a person is honest, truthful and not-harming others. According to Swami Swarupananda man has to raise his moral sense and attain the noble thinking of oneness. They need to grow their self-respect. For this man has to acquire strength

and ability to stand on his own feet. Swami Swarupananda says, “śvāvalambanai śaktimāner paricayapatra.”<sup>22</sup> “the identity of the powerful lies in self reliance with confidence and conviction.”

The study of history reveals to us that the main factor of the success and glory of an individual, a society and even a country is the self-reliance. It is a great and more useful weapon for success in one's individual life. Some times some people say 'We are mean, we are slaves, we are sinners. O Lord, release us from these vices.' When these persons are asked to become holy in speech, actions and thought, they would at once declare that it was impossible for them to have control over their sense organs or mind. They betray there by their own self. Being the children of the Omnipotent, Supreme Soul, they would still consider themselves to be poor, helpless and weak. 'Nāyamātmā balahīnena labhyah' 'the weak cannot attain self'. They are unable to improve their lives. It has been proved by phychologists that there are many kinds of faculties lying hidden in the sub-conscious and the unconscious mind of a man. Man has not yet come to know about these faculties and therefore, feels that he is weak.

There is a saying 'Faith can move a mountain'. Undoubtedly self-reliance has such great power. Metaphorically speaking, a high peak is but a small rock to a self-reliant person. One of the most powerful generals Napolean is a shining example of this quality. When his generals expressed their inability to cross the Alps and to

carry their cannon across, he turned upon them saying the word 'impossible is found only in the dictionary of fools.' He thus gave proof of his individualistic spirit and firm faith. Soon, he announced his final decision, and history witnessed the fact that, by means of his own spirit, he brought new life in others.

Man who realises others to be able to fulfill his needs, to perfect him, to earn livelihood for him and to resolve the difficulties which he has to face in everyday life, is considered to be a weakened and backward and no better than a handicapped person. He brings himself down in the estimation of those on whose small mercies he is in the habit of depending. He cannot hold his head high. A person like him can never know what is to be noble and self-respecting. He is under such a deep obligation to his patron that even though conscious of the short comings of his beneficiaries he feels obliged against his own conscience to admit that the latter has praiseworthy qualities. Thus not only he loses his own individuality but his own life, and his aim and his effort become unstable. Hence, it is no exaggeration to say that dependence upon others in this manner is to accept slavish obedience to them and to hand over the reins of his existence to them.

The world is so made that all members of the society are directly or indirectly dependent upon one another. Just as in a small well-knit family, its members depend upon one another in matters of daily needs, amenities and for the preservation of the family so also

it is the case in a large society among its members or among citizens. Not only this, owing to the availability of the means of quick communication, the world has become so small that one country is linked to another. Here it is necessary to state clearly that self-reliance points to our individual outlook, our social order, financial aims, and above all our spiritual views. In every sphere self-dependence is required for an individual or individuals.

In the sphere of self-dependence, our needs should be as few as possible. We should not multiply our wishes and, in order to fulfill them, we should not lose our inner happiness, mental rest and spiritual progress. The wise men should limit his needs according to his ability to fulfill them.

In the domain of financial activities, self dependence implies that we do not depend on others to strengthen our own financial structure. In other words, we should guard jealously our self-respect and status and never involve in begging favour of others as well as for own self. Swami Swarupananda pointed out “*Bhiksuker jātir dharma o hay nā, karma o hai nā. Tomāder jānte habe bhiksārthī parādhīn hīnamanāh durbal.*”<sup>23</sup> “A begger nation cannot have any religion, cannot have any great work to be done. You are to know, a beggar is always weak, always suffers from inferiority complex and is never free.” Even while facing hardships we should try to fulfill ourselves our needs or if it is not at all possible, maintain good-neighbourly relations and get their cooperation rather than accept

help out of their pity. It is important to note that the principle of self-dependence relates not only to the materialistic but also to the spiritual point of view. Self consciousness and yoga is truly the key to the right *karmayoga*. To Swami Swarupananda , the panacea for the evil of *tamas*, which had enshrouded the country. This sublime *yoga* is narrated by the Lord in the *Bhāgavadgīta*. In the course of time, this great *yoga* had fallen into oblivion, and Swami Swarupananda re-delivered it.

The central idea of *karmayoga* is non-attachment , not to desire the fruits of our actions in any form. We must work incessantly, but there must grow up the idea of non-agency. We cannot be karmayogins if we are grossly attached to the fruits of our actions. *Karmayoga* thus teaches us the science of work. We must work scientifically. The aim of all work is to bring out the hidden powers of the mind. The result of work done with a restless and distracted mind is dissipation of energy. So *karmayoga* teaches us how to stop fritter away our energies.

Desire can only be conquered by unselfishness and love. *Karmayoga* harps on continuous action – to be done through love. Love makes the road of work smooth; and yet this love must be turned to the highest, the lord of the universe. The heart's love is due to only one who never changeth i.e. Lord is the only one who never changes. His love never fails. One may also choose the path of knowledge and assert his real self.

*Karmayoga* is put into practice through self sacrifice. We eat to nourish our bodies, and our physical bodies are sacrifices in the great fire of service of humanity. It is right for man that should serve their millions of brothers rather than aggrandize his little self as because the whole world is one, and men are insignificant parts of it. Whatever word of happiness is perceived goes hand in hand with the fruits of work. So long as the body remains, work must continue in one form or another. Unselfish works serves to shelter the bonds of ignorance and lead one to God-realisation. The performers of such works are the *karmayogins*.

Swami Swarupananda moreover, extended the field of *karmayoga* and gave it a form suitable to the present age. First, the service by man of the afflicted in society is a unique way of sacrifice. Swami Swarupananda extended the domain of work to nursing of the sick, scavenging of streets and famine-relief in addition to more traditional works such as preaching and the like. Secondly, *karmayoga* itself was set on a firmer footing with greater respect (*śraddhā*) for the receiver of the benefits of work. Serving men and loving God must mean one and the same thing because *jīva* and *Īśvara* are in essence the same. When a person serves a man with the idea that he is a *jīva*, it is compassion (*dayā*) and no love (*Prema*). But when a man serves him with the idea that he is the self, it is love (*Prema*). People should not the feeling of compassion but of love and feeling of self in each and all. The *karmayogi* must have a heart as broad as the ocean, able to embrace every one with out-

stretched arms. And yet the sword of discrimination must always be ready, lest he mistakes mere emotional as love, the snares and temptations of the world for real compassion.

By the term ‘*yoga*’ is meant the action or process of joining, connecting, or linking together. ‘*Yoga*’ a term used in the context of spirituality is connecting oneself with the supreme soul by means of remembrance of Him. Hence, remembering Him while doing our daily duties is, correctly speaking, the practice of ‘*karmayoga*’. All living beings act in one way or another but do not have *yoga* with Him, while doing actions, because the enjoyment of actions, appealing as it does not one’s senses, make man’s intellect run after the object of this world in pursuit of gratification. In short, a *karmayogi* should be in intellectual Communion with Him, instead of letting his *buddhi* run after one thing or another without the aforesaid link with Him.

Every action is motivated by desire, good or bad. Hence, there can be no action without an incentive and desireless action is therefore a misnomer. The *yogī* has the desire for the bliss that lies in his remembrance of God or the wish to burn out all ‘*vikarmas* i.e. evil propensities which are the results of bad actions of the past, or to obtain salvation and blessedness. Similarly the ‘*Bhogi*’ i.e. the sensual person, has the impious desire for sense-pleasures. Desire in man is ever present, even when giving up the sensual life to adopt the yogi’s (*holy*) life. Hence a *karmayogī* can not subsist without

there being the desire to prompt him to act. His desire is not for sensual-pleasures, but for spiritual happiness and for doing social service. A good desire, indeed he considers it his duty to do good actions but, at the same time, he always intends to stay in tune with God. He knows that all the bodily relationships are perishable and the Souls' relationship to the Supreme Soul is imperishable. It is to Him that he should be fixed by the silken cords of love. To become a *karmayogi* one should require control over the senses and to maintain the ideals of *Brahmacaryya*. Swami Swarupananda performed the vow of celibacy in his childhood in order to preach and establish in the heart of millions of youth. The noble ideals of *Brahmacaryya* forms the very foundation of a sound character.

‘*Brahmacaryya*’ is a highly important rule of life, a code of conduct in daily life. By means of chastity, which *Brahmacaryya* means, a very large stock of high-grade power collected and also conserved. This power gives health to the body, strength of all kinds, luster and beauty of sunshine in his countenance, and longevity of life. It increases one’s will power, and renders his speech impressive and forceful, and endows his countenance with divine beauty. Any one, who is chaste, has his eyes charged with extraordinary glow, with his forehead shining in a unique light, and his personality highly attractive, besides these being injected in his whole being, a strange animation and ardour.

The power which he acquires and stores by dint of chastity, is of great use to him in developing his good qualities and in doing service to the society. It is because of this power that he becomes a great, courageous and skilled warrior in the battle field of life.

By employing this kind of power, one can make tremendous progress in the intellectual and spiritual spheres. Having acquired self-control by means of meditation and *yoga*, he earns happiness contentment and gets rid of slavery to desires. Thus *Brahmacaryya* is such a spiritual effort that it brings about alround bodily, intellectual, spiritual and moral development simultaneously. From the physical point of view, it is the essence of man's food and the foundation of his strength.

Swami Swarupananda regarded *Brahmacaryya* as essential to success in spiritual effort. It is one of the forms of self-control. With the help of *Brahmacaryya*, one can control over the senses. It has high significance which helps human life. By means of the power obtained through continence, men can put an end to their vices and also have self-control and, by virtue of concentration thus gained, can have the supreme bliss in being deeply absorbed in Divine ecstasy.

In the process of forming an ideal society Swami Swarupananda laid emphasis on two main points – (a) the need for equal rights for all and (b) the need for a social environment that will safeguard the development of personality. Man, according to

Swami Swarupananda , is a true individual by virtue of being universal and not by being a particular person. This universal nature of man tends to express his infinite or complete nature that finally helps him to solve all contradictions of morality, religion in society through a proper development of moral and spiritual side of his nature. The moral or spiritual development of man's personality directs him to lead a good life in society, which is well-balanced, well-conducted and well-regulated social life. The social and moral development, thus presents the ethics of the universal personality of man. Swami Swarupananda conceived of re-constructing society in such a way that each and every person would have the opportunity for the development of his personality.

Thus it can be said that in Swami Swarupananda's ideal society the relationship of *Samasti* the whole and *vyāsti*, the individual as part of the whole must be balanced. "*Sabāre āpan kara viśvera kara ghar nikhil bhuvane yena keha nāhi thāke par.*"<sup>24</sup> "Believe that the whole world is your home, realise identity with all beings of the world". This relationship is based on the fundamental oneness and divinity of the universe. Every one should try to manifest the divinity within himself. From this belief in the fundamental divinity of man. Swami Swarupananda insisted that the relationship between man and man should not be determined by material wealth. He criticises the hankering after of material wealth as well as the spirit of competition moulding the whole life and value system in the West. He thinks that material wealth can give us

physical pleasure sometimes, but it will not give us the mental peace. He opines that the human greed for material wealth and the Spirit of Competition are liable to bring disaster. Swami Swarupananda tried to synthesise the Western concepts of Social Equality and Democracy, and the Indian spiritual values based on the belief in the fundamental divinity of everyone and everything. Therefore, there is no need for India to give her religion but keep religion within its proper limits and give freedom to society to grow. Having witnessed the terrible conflicts during the last century all over the world . We can realise the importance of Swami Swarupananda's plea for mutual understanding and love based on a belief in the fundamental unity of the universe. He tells us to conquer everybody by the supreme power of love. We can now grasp the importance of his appeal to mankind to awaken the power of tolerance, the basic force of, which is love. The motive power of the whole universe i.e. renunciation, love, unselfishness, are only living force in existence. Love at its fullest, is an indissoluble combination of the elements of delight, well-wishing and knowledge with a definite end in view. It should be directed against all kinds of despotism and corruption in the name of religion. In connection with his appeal for mutual understanding he calls for charity, love, devotion and service to men which can be considered as another fundamental feature of Swami Swarupananda's future society. He is firmly convinced that in every living being God is present and who serves the God creature, serves God indeed. Thus, it becomes evident that human action has to be

interpreted as service to mankind. It means that the philosophy of human action which Swami Swarupananda has worked out in to the society harmoniously coincides with the philanthropic aspects of human beings. The primary obligation of man is to serve oneself by raising one's status from his kingdom of narrow selfish desires to the world of endless benefits to others. Thus to serve oneself is to serve all. The ideal of unity or universality, according to Swami Swarupananda, is at root of human existence. If all of us realise this innate divinity of man and essential spirituality of life, we can make our society free from the destruction and intolerance, dogmatism and violence which have plagued our society today. The realisation of oneness with all human beings will make us strong, united, fearless dynamic, absolutely selfless and will prompt us to work for the happiness and welfare of the many.

Swami Swarupananda was himself a great socialist – who wanted the poor *to be lifted up* from the economic quagmire, who wanted equality of opportunity to be given to all irrespective of caste or creed or religion; never could think of a society which envisaged so-called equality of man based upon demolishing caste barrier by artificial and brutal means such as forced inter-marriage or by financial inducement and other *vulgar* processes. He wanted that all shall be turned into '*Brāhmaṇ*', which means imbibing the spirit of Brahman, acquiring the attributes of Brahman. That is real culture, that is real religion. It is through this process only upliftment of the society is possible.

Thus it can be said that if mankind is to be saved from total annihilation, degradation and disintegration, we should take recourse to the eternal truths that were given by Swami Swarupananda . The vision of his ideal society may lead us to strengthen man's belief in man, which is the need of the hour for the survival of human race.

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2. Swami Swarupananda's lectures published by Ayachak Ashram in His *Sambeta Upāsanā* recorded cassettee, by H.M.V., Kolkata.
3. Swami Swarupananda : *His Holy words*, Ayachak Ashram, Varanasi, 1986, p. 45.
4. Swami Swarupananda : *Akhanda Samhitā* vol. 6, Ayachak Ashram, Varanasi, 1990, p. 132.
5. 'Akhanda Dharma' for Swami Swarupananda is undivided religion, lthere is no divisions of religion in the real sense. All religions are meant for the welfare of all human being as it is the different ways to reach in the goal.'
6. 'The term 'Akhanda' means full entire, unbroken, unseparated, in Swami Swarupananda's perspective it means universal Catholic.'
7. Swami Swarupananda : *Dhritang Premnā*, part I, Ayachak Ashram, Varanasi, 1365 B.S., p.7.
8. Swami Swarupananda : *Akhanda Samhitā* , vol. 6, Ayachak Ashram, Varanasi, 1981, p. 224.

9. Swami Swarupananda : *Akhanda Samhitā*, vol. 7, Ayachak Ashram, Varanasi, 1982, p. 247.
10. Swami Swarupananda : *Karmer Pathe*, 15<sup>th</sup> edn, Ayachak Ashram, Varanasi, 1409 B.S., p.60.
11. *Scripture* : To Swami Swarupananda, it is the *Akhanda scripture*. He explain scripture as – ‘which increases my spiritual relish when I am at the service of the most sweet *Nāma*. The Lord exists and is present, this is my first article of faith. His name is Truth, this is my second article, the service of the *Nāma* is man’s supreme one, this is my third article. All the books in the world which are in conformity with these three beliefs, where ever they are, whoever be their authors, are my scripture.’ *Akhanda Samhitā*; vol.5, Ayachak Ashram , Varanasi, 1982, p. 371, edited by Swami Swarupananda.
12. *ISTA* : “This term designates the name or form of God which appeals most to one. It must be noted that for Swami Swarupananda every image form or name of God has its value in reference to the name which designates God in the fullness of his life and being and finds its expression in the symbol *OM*, a symbol which, while it is plenitude of expressiveness, designates a living presence who transcends all expression” Winkelmanns S. J. : *Indian Journal of Theology*, vol. 27, no.2, April and June, Kolkata, 1978, p. 30.

13. Swami Swarupananda : *Akhanda Samhita*, vol.5, Ayachak Ashram, Varanasi, 1981, p. 207.

14. OM MANTRA : "The *OM-mantra* contains whatever I can express me in my relation to the Transcendent God, it expresses God as immanent in me, God-for-me, God-in-me, God-as-me, God is expressed by the *OM-Mantra* is myself as a relation to and participation in the Transcendent God, it is God as expressed in terms of my existence and experience. This is why I can say of God as thus expressed : "Without you I am not, without me you are not."

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16. Swami Swarupananda : *Karmer Pathe*, 15<sup>th</sup> edn, Ayachak Ashram Varanasi, 1409 B.S. pp. 48-49.

17. Swami Swarupananda : *Akhanda Samhitā*, vol.9, Ayachak Ashram Varanasi, 1981, p. 35.

18. According to Swami Swarupananda primary education would include elementary principles of doing their own work by the men themselves for becoming self-dependent in hygiene, Sanitation, nutrition, Swami Swarupananda : *Saral Brahmacharya*, Ayachak Ashram, Varanasi, 1972, p. 25.

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## **CHAPTER – VI**

### **A COMPARATIVE AND CRITICAL ESTIMATE**

The spectrum of the term ‘Philosophy’ is wide. Its scope is considered as consisting of reflections upon experience as a whole. It includes all varieties of experience, man’s experience in relation to himself, to other beings and to the world he lives in. It is indeed true that any worthwhile study of society must be ultimately philosophical in its nature and any philosophical theory must be concerned with the study of human society. Philosophy must include within its scope, the study of values, ends, ideals, not primarily what exists or has existed or may be expected to exist, but rather the meaning and worth of these modes of existence.

In the proposed dissertation, we intend to explore in terms of philosophical reflection the relevance of what Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo and Swami Swarupananda say regarding some important aspects of individual and society, in their various writings and lectures. We shall argue that a philosophical enquiry of their thinking about society would reveal that their message and vision are philosophically relevant even in present day social context.

Swami Vivekananda considers an individual as potentially Divine having infinite possibilities. An individual should think

himself as identified with the Divine (*śivoham*) and treat others as the manifestation of the same Divinity. He was deeply influenced by the first Mantra of the *Īśopaniṣad* – *Īśāvasyamidam sarvam yat kiñca jagatyām jagat*. That is each and every thing is the manifestation of the Divinity. This is the promise from which the conclusion follows ‘*Tena tyaktena bhuñjīthā mā grdhah karyasiddhanam*, i.e. one should enjoy through renunciation without being greedy to others properties. Vivekananda thinks that the seed of morality remains in the first statement. First, why does an individual ‘feel’ for other social beings ? In reply it can be said that as all human beings are the part of our Self, we should ‘feel’ for them morally. Otherwise it would be taken as a suicidal case (*ātmahana*).

Secondly, why does a man feel for others if he does not believe in the existence of Divinity at all etc ? In reply, it may be said that an individual may not have belief in Divinity but he believes in humanity as such which is tantamount to Divinity. To him to serve human being is to serve God.

Thirdly, can Vivekananda’s thought be considered materialistic? The answer is in the positive. His materialistic outlook is revealed when he considers ‘bread’ as a prime factor in an individual’s life than religion, harmonises Islamic body with Vedāntic brain, advises to play football than to read the *Gitā*. To him

material needs are to be fulfilled first if someone wants his spiritual awakening.

Fourthly, can really Vivekananda's philosophy be called practical Vedānta ? It is claimed that Vivekananda has propagated practical Vedānta in modern time, which is taken as a tremendous contribution to the philosophy. In fact I have a little reservation to accept this theory. Our ancient classical Vedānta was not impractical in this sense. All the principles of Vedānta can be applicable to our life. The world is *Māyā* or illusory according to *Sankara*. It does not mean that it has no utility in our life. If we think this world as the manifestation of Brahman or *ātman* the present attitude to the world is changed which is called *Māyā*. The new attitude to the world as the manifestation of Brahman can enable us to do selfless work, moral work, service to the society without being *narrowly* attached to it (in a disinterested way). The advice of the *Bhāgavadgitā* is regarding the same Self. After knowing if Arjuna is inspired to action. It is a purely misconception that the Vedāntic principles are applicable in the forest and hills. The concepts of *Lokasamgraha*, *Jīvanmukta*, *niskāma karma* etc. are related to the practical aspect of morality, which, I believe, Vedānta alone can teach. If the vedāntic principles as laid down by Vivekananda are taken into consideration, the social harmony or an ideal society would come up. Swami Vivekananda highlighted the principles of the traditional Vedānta in a new way and hence it may be called 'Old wine in a new bottle'.

Sri Aurobindo also has prescribed some philosophohical foundations of forming an ideal society. To him an ideal society is a Divine society (*Bhāgavatasamāja*), which is constituted by an individual the power of Supra mental consciousness.

First, how can an individual attain such consciousness ? He has prescribed the method of *yoga* through which an individual can awaken his power occupying the nucleas position in human personality called *Rtacit* i.e., (Creative faculty of *Saccidānanda*). To him natural body is constituted with physical, vital and mental self. Our internal use potential power called *rtacit* is not free in normal condition as it is surrounded by the above-mentioned three selves. This natural order can be changed through *yogic* practice and the *Caityapuruṣa* or *rtacit* can be brought forward. In this way he can enlighten himself and can be transformed to the Divine being. The society of such Superman is an ideal one which was designated as the symbol of the Divinity.

Secondly, a question may be raised : Is a society belonging to symbolic stage at Vedic time an ideal in the modern stage? Sri Aurobindo replies that the same society will not be repeated as it was. This society will be advanced in technology and engineering but the spiritual outlook will remain the same. He has described this change as '*spiral*'. What is available in the symbolic stage will be repeated at the age of the Superman spirally which is an ideal society.

Lastly, how can a society be treated as an ideal one by Sri Aurobindo ? The reply can be given in the following way. A society can be treated as an ideal one when all of its members are considered as equal in all respects. *Sarvodaya* as conceived by Gandhiji. All social members can be uplifted morally, economically if they can manifest their Divine power which is within.

According to Swami Swarupananda ‘character’ is one of the important major factors in man’s life. To give a moral foundation of society Swami Swarupananda engaged himself to various works in society. As his concept of society bears a normative and critical overtone and serves more as a pointer to what a society should be, the conflict between the image of an ideal society and the real society be set to the innumerable evils like various types of unrest, religious, communal riots, cultural crisis, problems related to women, children and overall lacking of self-confidence and self-reliance. Swami Swarupananda’s *ayāchak* way of life as a socio-philosophical ideal is to be considered as revolutionary in the 21<sup>st</sup> century context of India’s society. He did not stop with theoretically propagating the ideal of being *ayāchak* but practiced it in his life and inspired his followers to stand on their own legs without the least mentality for begging (*Bhiksā*). His propagation of simplified mode of religious rites and rituals are in fact an attempt to develop a commonality (*akātma bhūdha*) among people and avoid divisional forces of hierarchy in religious life of beings. His approach of man-making ideology has been reflected in his effort to build up the

character of the individual being in society. The ideal of '*charitragathan or character buildings*' is thus a revolutionary factor in today's India's societal development and progress. A careful study of Swami Swarupananda's writings would reveal how forcefully he argued in favour of *unity in diversity* as the message of India's culture. A comprehensive study of Swami Swarupananda's social thinking from philosophical perspective and evaluation of his thinking about society covering his writings and lectures has still been a long felt desideration. Our proposed dissertation is a humble attempt in this direction.

The main objective of the proposed dissertation is to give an exhaustive exposition in philosophical terms of Swami Swarupananda's view of ideal society. But in order to have a comprehensive understanding of his views on man and his relation to society, it is necessary to know the historical background upon which Swami Swarupananda built up his opinions and acted as a visionary with '*far sight, fore sight, and insight*'. Swami Swarupananda has firm conviction that unless we can bring change in individual members of the society there is no hope of building up a good society. So he emphasised on the character building of individual being through proper moral training. It is interesting to see thus what are the devices introduced for building up a future society he dreamt. But the importance of thoughts and actions of Swami Swarupananda are yet to be explored properly to focus on the relevance of his social thinking in the present day context. We shall

also endeavour to determine his place as a social philosopher and a humanist in modern India.

Let us summarise the contributions of these three thinkers.

Vivekananda has propagated a peculiar type of materialism, which may be described as an Advaitic one. He has made a significant contribution to the world of philosophy by harmonising Islamic body and Vedāntic brain, and material wants and spiritual needs. To him first bread has to be taken care of and afterwards religion. No religion or performance of ritualistic rites is possible without proper and adequate food (*khāli pete dharma hai nā*). Moreover, Vivekananda has emphasized the physical fitness for the attainment of spiritual upliftment. A sound body always gives signal to the betterment of mind, which leads one to the attainment of spirituality. That is why, he favours to play football than to read *Bhāgavadgitā* in the house. Vivekananda is the first Indian modern thinker who has shown his equal respect to the downtrodden people of the society. Each and every man, however poor or downtrodden he may be, is thought as worshipable as the Divine being. He thinks "My heart ached when we think of the poor, the low, in India, .... they feel the blows showered upon them by a cruel society..... They have forgotten they too are men..... Religion is not at the fault ..... Logical development of Hinduism – Buddhism.... Nerved with Lion's courage by their sympathy for the poor and the fallen and the downtrodden.... go down in length and breadth ... the gospel of

equality ... if you cannot do this then fie upon your education and culture, and fie upon your studying Vedas and Vedānta" (Collected works , vol. IV, p. 381).

Vivekananda's analysis of socio-political history was that society is ruled in terms by the four castes. The priestly (*Brāhmaṇa*) class assumes power first, and at such a time there was a great intellectual activity. In this age *sattva* is dominant. This is followed by the supremacy of the *kshatriya* caste which rules by the sword, and in this age *Rajas* prevails. Later *Vaishyas* begin to rule, as is the case in modern times, at such a time business flourishes and there is great generation of wealth. Finally, the *Shudra* class rules, that is the rule of the working class; at such a time *Tamas* is everywhere. We must here bear in mind that to Vivekananda the four castes were a kind of division of labour. A person belongs to a particular caste owing to the kind of work he chooses, not because of his birth in a particular caste. Thus, on his view, caste should not be made hereditary, it should change according to one's station in life. Even the general composition of society changes in different ages, so does its dominant national character.

For Vivekananda, religion and morality are inseparable. Usually a distinction is made between morality and religion. Morality is said to be practiced in the web of human interactions here and now whereas religion transcends the wordly relationship in quest of God. Religion is regarded to be other worldly, human

relationships do not play any significant role in the realisation of God. Vivekananda shows the close-knit relationship between religion and morality. He argues that religion does not belong to a transcendent realm cut off from the historical realm. God is not distant heaven isolated from the individual. In fact, each individual being is divine. Religion is realised by living activity in the world, serving humanity inculcating fellow-feelings and bridging the gap between the other and oneself.

Vivekananda defines morality in terms of unselfishness – ‘that which is selfish is immoral, that which is unselfish is moral.’ To be moral is to go beyond the naturalistic realm. It is to break the bondages of senses and the material forces working in the world. When one makes an effort to realise this then, one enters into the sphere of morality. At the materialistic end there is a mad eraze for the fulfillment of selfish interests at all costs even by roughing other beings. The result is immoral actions giving rise to vices like hatred, jealousy and violent struggle. For the sake of one’s selfish interests, one is ready to go to any extent to harm the other. The materialistic pursuits resolve around the ‘I’ when the centre is ‘I’, it is called *pravṛtti* (inclination), the other is only a means to serve my ends. ‘Me’ and ‘mine’ (*ahamkāra and mamatā*) are the sources of all evils. In the realm of morality the centre is ‘thou’, which Vivekananda calls as *nivṛtti* refraining from actions. It is to rise above the narrowness of ‘me’ and ‘mine’. *Pravṛtti* stands for ‘evil work’ while *nivṛtti* stands for good work. *Nivṛtti* is the basis of morality, which

leads to self-abnegation to sacrifice one's selfish interests for the sake of the other. The aim of religion is the realisation of freedom that is attained through morality which follows the path of *nivrtti*. The latter leads to selfless actions in search of intrinsic values. Love, charity, endurance, self-sacrifice, fellow-felling, treating others as ends-in-themselves are the moral values to be practiced.

Sri Aurobindo also highlights that human body can be transformed into a Divine Body by way of following Yogic procedure and can bring Divinity in this mortal body. To him *yoga* has a tremendous power of changing the internal cells deadling him a Divine one. Nucleas in the body as said in the *yoga* is the key factor of an individuals transformation. To him a man's road to spiritual supermanhood will be opened when he declares boldly that all he has yet developed, including the now no longer sufficient for him, and that to uncase, discover, set free this greater light within shall be henceforward his pervading pre-occupation. Then will his philosophy, art, science, ethics, social existence, vital pursuits be no longer an exercise of mind and life, done for themselves, carried in a circle, but a means for the discovery of a greater Truth behind mind and life and for the bringing of its power into one human existence.

We shall be on the right road to become ourselves, to find our true law of perfection, to live our true, satisfied existence in our real being and divine nature.

Swami Swarupananda's contribution to Philosophy lies in the fact that he has given emphasis on building of character (*Charitragathan*), taking the vow of not wanting (*ayācaka*) and self-reliance. His philosophy based on the theistic and spiritual approach. According to him, theistic view is that the Ultimate Truth exists whatever name it may be. This truth may be called God, Allah, or any other name. Integral (*Akhanda*) view approaches to life and society by way of *Akhanda omkār sādhanā*. *Omkār sādhanā* is meditating on *omkāra* or indivisible reality and collective prayer (*Samabeta Upāsanā*). These bring the commonality and harmony among the social beings. Morality campaign (*caritragathan*) is possible through maintaining hereditary (*Bangśānukramik*) Brahmacharya; continuous process upto 9<sup>th</sup> generation throughout the family to probity, and appearance divine man (*devamānava*) into the family. It is also require to restraining of senses, not misusing the power, power utilisation in a proper way. Maintaining ideals of non-begging (*Abhikṣā*) *karmayoga*, loving and respectful all the social being without maintaining any caste and creed. A man should build his own character in a moral way so that he receives power from within. To him also body is as real as Brahman is Self.

Three thinkers have affinities in their thinking all of them discover Divinity in Man and hence human body is the temple of God. For this reason it can never be illusory (*māyā*) as believed by the Advaitins. All the thinkers owe- the origin of their thinking in the tradition, but it is not taken into. They have freshly interpreted the

tradition and made it up-to-date for the upliftment of the society. All the celebrated thinkers have invented different paths for the realisation of the Truth as per their own *Sādhanā*. Vivekananda followed the path of *Jñāna* and *karma*, Swami Swarupananda followed the path of *Jñāna*, *karma* and *Bhakti* while Sri Aurobindo followed the yogic path. Paths, though different in nature, destination is the same.

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