

## **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 hightening 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 come 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 Gītā 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 implement 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 Upaniṣhad says, 'That thou art' (*tat tvamasi*). Swami Vivekananda laid emphasis on this *Mahāvākya* 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 as 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."4

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 *sādhana* he becomes weak, afraid and a coward, and hence, as said in the Upaniṣad, 'This *Ātman* can not be realised by the weak' (*Nāyamātmā 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."5

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 with out 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, shown 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 *Śarīramādyamī Khalu dharmasādhanamī*. 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 awful 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 *Mahāvākya*, '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 Bhujñithā 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 *Kenopaniṣad* :

“*Śrotrasya Śrotramī manaso mono yad Vāco ha vacamī sa u prāṇasya prāṇah. Cakṣuṣaścakṣur – alīmucya dhīrāh 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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