

Swami Vivekananda - The Universal Man

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Rarely does humanity witness a combination of a great Guru (Spiritual Teacher) and equally capable Shishya (spiritual disciple) as Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda were. The Upanishads and the Gita do mention of such noble pairs, when a yearning aspirant seeking higher knowledge humbly bows down to the Teacher and says, 'Sir, please tell me: Which is that thing which having been known, all this becomes known, and nothing else remains to be known? Give me that, acquiring which all desires nullify. O gracious one, I surrender at your feet; please tell me what is right for me.'

And the compassionate Teacher describes the nature of Self or Atman, starting as external reality and culminating into the true knowledge of our inner Self.

As the Guru speaks, so does the aspirant (sadhaka) experience the Truth contained in those words. It is as if a film on Brahman is being run in front of the yearning aspirant. One such pair flourished in the last but one decade of nineteenth century, when Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa sculpted the most wonderful masterpiece in the form of Swami Vivekananda out of skeptical and rational, but fearless and dynamic Narendranath.

Their association has unleashed a tremendous spiritual force that has started destroying dreary ignorance covering the minds and hearts of mankind all over the globe.

Then, scientific knowledge based on reason and rationality was ushering in the era of Industrial Revolution; however, it also brought skepticism and contempt for religion. Science appeared to be partial and sectarian in its study of various phenomena, for it tried to leave religion out of its purview. As a result the majority of people started believing

that the goal of life was material progress alone.

Religion was on the defensive in the face of clattering advances of modern technology. Decline in religion (Dharma Glani) manifested as ritualistic monotony, crass materialism, and excessive engagement in sense pleasures with resultant lack of discrimination and renunciation.

Values of kindness and generosity, of forbearance and simplicity were relegated to the back seat. The priests and the rulers, the rich and the privileged became the custodians of religious truths. Selfishness replaced altruism, and religious fanaticism erupted as a legitimate weapon to spread "true religion" and destroy "false beliefs".

Such states of decline in Dharma come in cycles. However, as the Gita says, a Man of God also comes on the scene to destroy wickedness and to reestablish the path of spirituality. These great seers and teachers come to 'set in motion the wheel of dharma,' as did Lord Buddha 2500 years ago.

Such incarnations come from time to time, in every era, in every land, and help revive the noble path of transcendental realization as the source and proof of Knowledge and Truth. They give the sagging wheel of spirituality a powerful push for moving it again in right direction.

In recent times world faced such a situation when, to revive the declining faith in religion and to instill knowledge of the true goal of humankind, Swami Vivekananda entered the

world arena as a great disciple of Sri Ramakrishna.

Swami Vivekananda revived Hinduism on the basis of the interpretations and meaning given to the philosophy of Vedanta by great Rishis at various time-periods of history. The externals of Hinduism appear to change from Sri Rama to Sri Krishna, from Sri Chaitanya to Sri Ramakrishna, but the core of Sanatana Dharma (Eternal Religion) remains the same.

Swami Vivekananda preached the essence of religion by way of finding newer insights in and application of Eternal Religion as per the requirement of modern times and global perspective.

He highlighted the truth of the 'divinity of each soul' and the constant struggle and evolution of an individual to manifest this divinity fully. Transcendental realization of our true nature, I.e. Pure consciousness, is what Hinduism (Vedanta) preaches right through the eternity.

This is the essential teaching mentioned and elaborated in the Upanishads, the Gita, and the Brahma-sutras. The attempt to realize this truth is the beginning of religion, and getting established in transcendental divine state is the aim of human birth.

Every person succeeding in this attempt is the basis and hope for fresh human endeavour and struggle for self-realization in future.

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