

A STUDY ON LIFE STYLE OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

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Introduction

Religion is deeply rooted in man and from time immemorial it has been running through his blood. Religion has been a dominating factor in man and his ways of thinking and behavior. In many ways, religion has been a very intimate matter in man and his life. Within the modern global city, various religious believers have to live physically close to one another because of the economic and social reasons. To create a peaceful co-existence within global society respect for religious diversity and acceptance of religious pluralism is essential. Contemporary Indian philosopher Swami Vivekananda has discovered a unique explanation to the concept of religion. He argued for the necessity of a universal religion or acceptance of religious pluralism. According to him, religion is not just a talk on doctrines or theories, nor is it sectarianism. Religion does not live in sects and societies. It is a relationship between soul and god. He explained that religion does not consist in erecting temples or building churches or attending public worship. Also it cannot be found in the books or in words or in lectures or in organizations. Religion consists of realization. Religion does not consist in subscribing to a particular creed or faith but in spiritual realization. Therefore, spiritual realization is religion. He pointed out that the different people in the world approach spirituality in different ways. Furthermore he asserted that man and his true nature is already divine.

But that divinity is hidden. Therefore, the realization of that divinity is the purpose of life which is the essence of religion. To realize that religion, according to Vivekananda, man should have to practice four yoga's. Those are the yoga of knowledge, control of mind, selfless work, and love of God. Therefore, religion is the essence of human life and it has the great motivating power in one's life including his social, economic and political aspect. We may call Vivekananda's formulation of this new ideal of universal religion as a universal love or universal brotherhood. It gives an equal value for all religions in the world as exemplifying truth. This research paper will analyze Swami Vivekananda's concept of universal religion and its implications on the prevalent religious conflicts in the world. In addition, the paper will scientifically investigate his views on the nature of postmodern man and his lifestyle in global city.

Swami Vivekananda, known in his pre-monastic life as Narendra Nath Datta, was born in an affluent family in Kolkata on 12 January 1863. His father, Vishwanath Datta, was a successful attorney with interests in a wide range of subjects, and his mother, Bhuvaneshwari Devi, was endowed with deep devotion, strong character and other qualities. A precocious boy, Narendra excelled in music, gymnastics and studies. By the time he graduated from Calcutta University, he had acquired a vast knowledge of different subjects, especially Western philosophy and history. Born with a yogic temperament, he used to practise meditation even from his boyhood, and was associated with Brahmo Movement for some time.

Concept of Religious Pluralism

To give a clear definition to the concept of religious pluralism is a very difficult task. But Within the new philosophical debate some thinkers have tried to identify the concept of religious pluralism according to their experience and practice. There are many controversies about the concept of religious pluralism, because the term covers a wide variety of theological and philosophical discussions. The general perception of religious pluralism, from a practical point of view, is that the different religious belief systems should work together. Some thinkers have argued that the religious tolerance is another aspect of religious pluralism. This argument has been presented by some recent philosophers, and they have pointed out that religious pluralism sometimes is used as a synonym for interfaith dialog. But the central idea of religious pluralism is identified as different religious belief systems are true in their own right. In this way religious pluralism argues that claims to absolute truth are a hindrance to peace and harmony.

Harmony of Religions

Swami Vivekananda felt, the greatest misfortune of the world is we do not tolerate and accept other religions. In his lecture in Parliament of religions on September 15, 1893, he told a story of a frog who lived in a well for a long time, he was born there and brought up there and he used to think that nothing in the world can be bigger than that. Swami Vivekananda concluded the story.

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“I am a Hindu. I am sitting in my own little well and thinking that the whole world is my little well. The Christian sits in his little well and thinks the whole world is his well. The Mohammedan sits in his little well and thinks that is the whole world.”

Swami Vivekananda told, we must not only tolerate other religions, but positively embrace them, and that the truth is the basis of all religions.

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