

A Study on the way of Realization In Swami Vivekananda's Philosophy

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Abstract

Vivekananda's Philosophy is the scientific approach to way of life. His thoughts are unique identification of spiritual aspects of Human values and also essentially religious, cultural values. The deepest influence upon his thought is obviously of ancient Hindu-Philosophy – especially of the Vedanta, it can safely be said that to a very great extent, Vivekananda also a Vedantist. His basic belief in the essential unity of everything that is in the completely monistic nature of reality, owes its origin to the Vedanta. Realization is the process of inner feeling of Human being. His thoughts are implications of the way of realization in soul with divinity. Self-realization is the most important elements of his spiritual philosophy. Swamiji spelt out the four path ways of attaining moksha from the worldly pleasure and attachment in his books – Raja Yoga, Karma Yoga, Jnana Yoga and Bhakti Yoga. Yoga is thus the generic name of all those methods which bring about realization and leads to liberation in the end. Yoga means “Yoke”, to join, that is, to join the soul of man with the supreme Soul or God. Thus the worker or the Karma Yogin realize his own divinity through work performed unselfishly; the emotional man or bhakta realizes it through devotion and Love for a personal God; the mystic or the Raja Yogin realizes it through control of the mind, and the philosopher – Jnana Yogin, through knowledge. These are not rival ways, rather all the complement any to each other. Different people have different temperaments; these different Yogas cater to these different temperaments. Besides temperament, the three instruments of knowledge, instinct, reason and inspiration help to determine the right path for the aspirant.

Keywords: Self-realization, Devine Nature, Union, Yoga.

Introduction

The best introduction to Vivekananda is not to read about him but to read him. In his writings we can feel his personality, courageousness and spiritual authority. As a man of enlightenment he said that truth is never contained in arrangement of sentences, but within the speaker himself. His mission was spiritual, never political or even social, because he knew that only the spiritual upliftment of man can help him to the path of self-realization. He represented a philosophy of India, which is called the Vedanta Philosophy. The Vedanta Philosophy stands as the background of all religious systems of the world without any fight and antagonism. One principle of Vedanta which is found in every religion of the world is that all these which we see around us is the outcome of the consciousness of the Divine. There is no potential difference between man and man. All are essentially Devine. Every man is trying to unfold that divinity.

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Swami Vivekananda believed that India is the blessed punyabhumi, the land of virtue. It is India where humanity has attained its highest towards generosity, towards purity, towards calmness, above all, the land of introspection and of spirituality. According to Swamiji the Indian culture is deeply rooted in spiritual and ethical values, unless these values find their way into the life of individuals, education will lose its significance and will not fulfil its aim. Swami Vivekananda's Philosophy arises from the awareness of the social, religious and economic conditions of the Indian masses. He had a realization that at least some of the social evils were due to the orthodoxy and superstitions prevalent in the society of the time. He had deep conviction that this was due to loss of faith in spiritual values. Consequently he aimed at, what could be called, a spiritual awakening. The deepest influence upon his thought is obviously of ancient Hindu Philosophy – especially of the Vedanta. His basic belief in the essential unity of everything that is in the completely monistic nature of reality, owes its origin to the Vedanta. It is true that Vivekananda always emphasize the need of re-interpreting Vedanta in accordance with the demands and needs of the time.

The Spiritual Nature of Man

The uniqueness of man in his physical nature is due to the presence of spirituality in him. Although Vivekananda, at least initially, does not deny reality to the physical side of man, he is convinced that this represents only his inferior nature. His real nature consists in his capacity of going beyond his physical nature. Vivekananda describe the true nature of man as soul force or Atman. Like a true Vedantist, Vivekananda never hesitates in identifying the true nature of Atman with Brahman itself.

In the words of Vivekananda, "Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this divine within, by controlling nature, external and internal. Do this either any work, or worship, or psychic control, or philosophy, by one, or more, or all of these and be free. This is the whole of religion. Doctrines, or dogmas, or rituals, or books, or temples, or forms, are but secondary details."⁽¹⁾ According to Swamiji all individual spirits are parts or reflections of the Supreme Spirit. That is to say, one and the same Supreme Spirit or God dwells in all people as individual souls or selves. Thus each individual soul is divine but, owing to ignorance, most people are not aware of this fact. This wonderful truth forms one of the central principles of the ancient system of philosophy known as Vedanta. But it had remained in the possession of small groups of privileged people in India. It was Swami Vivekananda who could understand the immense

practical significance of this doctrine. He interpreted it in the modern idiom and made it available to the common people.

Vivekananda brings out equation between soul and ultimate reality. Atman and Brahman are thereby sketches the nature of man. The real man therefore, is one and infinite, the omnipresent spirit. All the human beings, who are instantiations of that great spirit, are called apparent man. Vivekananda tries to explain the difference between soul's real nature and its apparent nature in various ways. He consistently maintains that apparent diversity in no way affects the true nature of man. He looked upon human evolution and progress as the untold ment of inner spirit. His ideal is to preach unto mankind their divinity and how to manifest it in every movement of life. It was the manifestation of the inherent Divinity in man that Swamiji called Religion. According to Swamiji the core or essence of religion is the realization of the true self of man which is divine. This is the main doctrine of the Upanishads. Swamiji gave this ancient doctrine a new turn and importance. It was the manifestation of the inherent Divinity in man that Swamiji called Religion. In popular usage religion is always associated with creeds-rituals, customs, festivals and so on. But Swamiji regarded these only as 'secondary details' of religion. The core essence of religion is the realization of the true self of man which is divine.

Ways of Realization

The basic aim of Indian culture is self-realization. Its originators, the seers and mendicants, arrived at the conclusion that the primary duty of man is to know himself because that is the only way in which the truth of this world and here after can be known. It is for this reason that Indian seers emphasized introversion.

Self-realization is a term used in Eastern religions, yoga philosophy, psychological theories and other spiritual schools of thought. It denotes a state in which an individual knows who they truly are and is fulfilled in that understanding. According to various western psychological and philosophical traditions, self-realization is the fulfillment of our personal potential in life. According to Eastern spirituality, self-realization is the knowledge and embodiment of our true nature or the higher self beyond the ego. Self realization determines our purpose in life and in an answer to our ultimate existence in this human form. It paves the path towards improvement in various aspects of life, our personal and creative growth is possible, only if we are aware of our abilities and potentials. Therefore, self-realization mean fulfillment by oneself or the possibilities of one's character of personality. The importance of self-realization lies in the fact that it

allows us to understand and evaluate our real self, we break free from false beliefs that hold us back from attaining true knowledge. Self-realization determines our purpose in life and is an answer to our ultimate existence in this human form. Self-realization is a journey that could take us a few years, decades, or most commonly an entire life time. But it is a sacred and worthy path that is worth even bit of our time, effort, sincerity, and dedication. Ultimately, it is the path of enlightenment, the path of freedom, and the path of love. With the dawn of self-realization, fear of death will go away and we would realize our true self. The moment these self-realization dawns, man becomes liberated. Vivekananda called such a man *jivanmukta*. One who is liberated while living, in this very life. Self-realization, which has been the ideal of Indian philosophy, can be brought about by various ways. Ancient Indian seers have enumerated different methods to achieve liberation or *mukti*. It can be achieved through disinterested action, as propounded by *Gita*. Vivekananda called it *Karma Yoga*. It can also be brought about by constant worshipping of the Absolute in the form of personal God or *Ishwar*. This method is called *Bhakti Yoga*. Another method is attaining knowledge which Vivekananda calls *Jnana-Yoga*. It can be achieved by concentrating mind so that it delves on its true nature. Vivekananda called it *Raja-Yoga*. According to Swami Vivekananda, each of the four *Yogas* represents the development of one particular mental faculty – reason, emotion or will. Swamiji wanted total development of personality. Hence he advocated a combination of all the four *Yogas*.

Yoga is the method to understand reality. The ultimate goal of all mankind, the aim and end of all religious, is but one-re-union with God, or, what amounts to the same, with the divinity which is every man's true nature. But while the aim is one, the method of attaining may vary with the different temperaments of man. Both the goal and methods employed for reaching it are called *Yoga*. The word '*Yoga*' is derived from the Sanskrit root, 'to join', or 'to yoke' or 'to unite'. *Yoga* is controlling the senses, will and mind. The benefit of its study is that we learn to control instead of being controlled. Mind seems to be layer on layer. Our real goal is to cross all these intervening strata of our being and find God. The end and aim of *Yoga* is to realize God. To do this, we must go beyond relative knowledge, go beyond the sense-world. The world is awake to the senses, the children of the Lord are asleep on that plane. The world is asleep to the Eternal, the children of the Lord are awake in that realm. These are the sons of God. There is but one way to control the senses to see Him who is the Reality in the Universe. Then and only then can we really conquer our senses. Every man must develop according to his own nature. As every science has its methods, so has every religion. The methods of attaining the

end of religion are called Yoga by us, and the different forms of Yoga that we teach, are adapted to the different natures and temperaments of man. We classify them in the following way, under four heads:

The Way of Psychology (Raja Yoga)

Raja Yoga is the science of ‘restraining the chitta (mind) from breaking into vrittis (modifications).’⁽²⁾ It thus teaches concentration of mind and purification of intention. These ultimately free man from the limitations of the senses and makes him transcend reason and thus reveal the potential divinity within. This control of Chitta or meditation is necessary in all Yogas and hence Raja-Yoga can be said to be the basis of all of them. It is controlling the mind and the body by subjecting them certain physical and mental disciplines. Its aim is the realization of unity with God. It is believed that this merga consists in a ruthless suppression of all hindrances that create difficulties in the way of realization. It is based on the pre supposition that bondage is due to the distracting activities of the body and mind. They waste the energy of the soul and dominate over it. Therefore, they must be brought under control so that the energy wasted by them may be saved and directed towards the supreme. But, to control the body and the mind, a direct and forceful has to be adopted. That is why in Raja-Yoga a plan of physical and mental disciplines has to be worked out. That would involve certain Yogic exercise of the psychophysical nature. Vivekananda is aware that this method is not for the weak, as it requires an immense faith in oneself and also physical and mental strength. It gradually enables the yogi to acquire certain excellences and powers, and finally the yogi is able to practice complete concentration leading to the realization of unity with the divine.

The Way of Action (Karma Yoga)

Karma-Yoga is the science of right action Vivekananda says ‘Karma-Yoga’ is a system of ethics and religious intended to attain freedom through unselfishness and by good works. It teaches a man to be in the world, but not of it, like the lotus leaf whose roots are in the mud but which remains always pure. No one can escape the wheel of Karma. Everyone must work in the universe. ‘Karma-Yoga’, said Swamiji, “shows the process, the secret and the method of doing it to the best advantage. Instead of being knocked about in this universe, and after long delay and thrashing getting to know things as they are, we learn from Karma-Yoga the secret of work, the method of work, the organizing power of work. A vast mass of energy may be spent in vain, if we do not know how to utilize it. Karma-Yoga makes a science of work.”⁽³⁾

The Karma-Yogi has to work for unselfishness, which means his works has to be non-attached. He has to work as if he is stranger to the world, he must not allow any work to dominate over him or to bind. Vivekananda seems to be very much impressed by the Gita's ideal of Nishkamakarma. The secret action is that one must not expect anything in return of the action of done. Doing karmas in disinterested way, enjoins the doer to do action like a duty and not to seek the fruits of those actions. The doer always relegates the fruits of those action to god. It enables the doer to adopt a dispassionate stance to worldly temptations like wealth, power, beauty, happiness etc. Vivekananda very reverently takes the example of the life of Lord Buddha, who attaining Nirvana, kept on working throughout his life. His works can be taken as the ideal of non-attachment. He did not fly away from the world he remained in the midst of men, kept on working for the good of men and expected no return. A continuous doing of selfless work or content practice of non-attachment in all action of life enables a man to rise above himself, and to have a feeling of oneness with everything.

The Way of Devotion (Bhakti Yoga)

Bhakti-Yoga is the path of love for the emotional type of man, and it is called the easiest path because it is the most natural way to reach the Divine. Swamiji speaks very highly about this religion of Love. 'Bhakti is greater than Karma, greater than Jnana, because these are intended for an object in view, while Bhakti is its own fruition, its own means and its own end'.⁽⁴⁾ And yet he has no sympathy or pity for sentimental devotion which is a mark of weakness. One has to be strong in Love too. 'Be strong and stand up and seek the God of Love. This is the highest strength. This love of God cannot be reached by the weak; therefore, be not weak, either physically, mentally, morally or spiritually.'⁽⁵⁾ Vivekananda is able to determine the steps through which the Bhakti Yoga progresses towards the realization of the supreme. The first stage is the stage of external worship. The ordinary man is not able concentrate on the subtler expression of God and hence he begins his worship in a gross manner. In this stage idol and images, representation of Gods and Goddesses, in carnations – even prophets and god-men-are all objects of devotion and worship. Idol worship is the most popular form of external worship, then in the next stage, prayer and repetition of God's name. In the third stage, this kind of prayer is transcended and in its place a sort of a salient meditation starts. Vivekananda says that in these stage there exists for the devotee nothing but God. Then, in the final stage even this distinction vanishes, the devotee becomes almost one with Supreme. This is a kind of inner

realization, a vision of the omnipresent God.

The Way of Knowledge (Jnana Yoga)

Jnana-Yoga is called the path of knowledge or the path of non-dualism. Weeding out the darkness of ignorance through the light of knowledge, it brings the 'fire' and 'light' alive by burning all the impurities of the mind. The mind does not give up its attachment to worldly pleasures unless it has tasted something greater and higher self-knowledge according to Jnana-Yoga, is true liberation. Jnana Yoga is the path of attaining knowledge of the true nature of reality through the practice of meditation, self-inquiry and contemplation. This practice allows you to realize the temporary and illusionary nature of maya and to see the oneness of all things. Jnana-Yoga can be defined as awareness of absolute consciousness and is a comprehensive practice of self-study (Svadhya).

In Jnana-Yoga, the mind is used to inquire into its own nature and to transcend the mind's identification with its thoughts and ego. The fundamental goal of Jnana-Yoga is to become liberated from the illusionary world of maya and to achieve the union of the inner self (Atman) with the oneness of all life (Brahman). This is achieved by steadfastly practicing the mental techniques of self-questioning, reflection and conscious illumination that are defined in the four pillars of knowledge. Jnana Yoga utilize a one-pointed meditation on a single question of self-inquiry to remove the veils of illusion created by your concepts, world views, and perceptions. This practice allows you to realize the temporary and illusionary nature of maya and to see the oneness of all things. Jnana-Yoga or the science of the self, is not a subject that can be understood and realized through mere intellectual study, reasoning, discussion or arguments. It is the most difficult of all sciences. Jnana-Yoga is the Yoga of knowledge – not knowledge in the intellectual sense but the knowledge of Brahman and Atman and the realization of their unity. Here the devotee of God follows the promptings of heart, the jnani uses the power of the mind to discriminate between the real and the unreal, the permanent and the transitory. It is knowledge of freedom from worldly miseries which are caused due to bondage which is turn is due to our ignorance. Jnana-Yoga is the path towards that self-realization through knowledge. Once we realize that we are beyond birth and death, our fears subside. We become more pronounced and confident in our dealings.

According to Vivekananda, a jani must mediate only on what he is – which is the Atman the self, which constitutes of Satchitananda – existence (immortality aspect), knowledge (no

ignorance) and bliss (no misery). True Jnana consists in complete separation from matter and in its falsity. The only reality is that of Brahman. Vivekananda sums up the entire Jnana-Yoga in, 'Brahman alone is true, all else is false, and I am Brahman.'⁽⁶⁾ This needs a little elucidation. Its first clause – Brahman alone is true – maintains the unique existence of the ultimate reality, which is Brahman such that beside Brahman, there is nothing else. Its second clause – all else is false – maintains everything except Brahman as non-real as far as Brahman is concerned, and third clause – I am Brahman – maintains the Atman equal to Brahman stand of Vedanta according to which Atman is no different from the ultimate reality Brahman. Thus, Vivekananda beautifully captures the gist of the Vedanta and Jnana Yoga both in one stand. Only by mediating and realizing this truth that soul can rise above the contradiction of life found because of maya, and consequently rise above bodily pleasure and sorrows. These are all different roads leading to the same centre – God. Indeed, the varieties of religious belief are an advantage, since all faiths are good, so far as they encourage man to lead a religious life. The more sects there are, the more opportunities there are for making successful appeals to the divine instinct in all men. Each one of our Yogas is fitted to make man perfect even without the help of the others, because they have all the same goal in view. The Yogas of work, of wisdom, and of devotion are all capable of serving as direct and independent means for the attainment of Moksha.

Conclusion

In his exhaustive discourses on each of the four Yogas Swamiji has tried to show that each path is efficacious if pursued with sincerity, good intent, reason, non-attachment and renunciation. Vivekananda describes these four ways differently. He says that they are different ways for realization of the same goal. These four different ways are recommended in view of the fact that men differ in their temperaments, dispositions and capacities. He has also made it clear that none of these paths is exclusive. He said, "There is not really so much difference between knowledge (Jnana) and Love (Bhakti) as people sometimes imagine. We shall see, as we go on, that in the end they converge and meet at the same point. So also is it with Raja-Yoga, which when pursued as a means to attain liberation, leads us also to the same goal".⁽⁷⁾ Vivekananda gives perfect liberty to the individual in choosing and pursuing the course that he likes best. The only thing is that there must be very strong and intense sincerity and a sense of purpose. Vivekananda asserts that sincerity requires a very radical regeneration of the individual,

he must be transformed morally, religiously and spiritually. Therefore, whatever be the way, the entire energy of the soul has to be put into it.

References

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