

# Idea, Thoughts and Relevance of Practical Vedanta of Swami Vivekananda

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**Abstract:** Swami Vivekananda was the Modern Times' Indian Philosopher. In the western world, he introduced Vedanta and Yoga Indian Philosophy. He was a significant factor in India's reformation of the Hindu religion. In his search for God, He scientifically approached the mystic Ramakrishna Paramhansa and became an outstanding Neo-Vedānta spiritualist. It laid the philosophical foundations for Hindu and Indian society reformation, using the logic of Advaita. His success has been focused on Advaita Vedānta's thoughts that paved the way for social reform in India. He described Neo-Vedānta as connected to new thought, theosophy of transcendentalism. He introduced four yoga models that made him Vedāntin realistic to execute the spiritual power within every human being. He combined Western materialism effectively with Indian spiritualism. In the everyday life of peoples linked to society, it promoted the practice of Advaita Vedanta. He preached moral stages through the humanist stage and rejected evil Indian priesthood, the Prince Class, and commercial practice in this process, responding sensibly to poverty and the poor working-class conditions (the Shudras). He hated untouchability practice and laid a solid foundation for nationalism. He studied Indian philosophy and developed ethical structures based on Advaita Vedānta which provide solutions to human salvation. He understood human energy as a form of divinity and created immense psychology optimistic for humanity. He used Advaita Vedānta's philosophy to create spirituality and humanity. This all reflected his practical Vedānta idealism. Therefore, Vivekananda served in colonial India as Advaita Vedānta's major philosopher and social reformer. This particular article gives the Swami Vivekananda's views on Vedānta.

**Key Words:** Vedānta, Advaita Vedānta, Spiritual, Social, Self-less activity, Practical Vedānta,

## 1. INTRODUCTION:

Vivekananda attempts to explain in The Neo-Vedānta doctrine how Vedānta can be exercised in a human being's real life. He also decided to discover that Vedānta's ideal is important in the real world and not only in an ideal world. He thinks that in the New Vedānta world of philosophy, Brahman is just a worldly practise and that worship is all selfless. Every selfless action is both spiritual and social. Vivekananda's New Vedānta philosophy aims to inspire people to perform selflessly. It aims to bring social oneness as well as equality in society. Therefore, he attempts to give a modern type to the philosophy of Vedānta that is very realistic and very necessary for human development. Vedānta the philosophy of Vedānta was evolved from the Upanishads which occur at the end of the Vedas. Its key-note is strength, and unity in variety its immortal theme. It demonstrates the essential unity of all religions, recognizing them all as so many paths of the same Truth. It accepts all the great prophets, teachers, and sons of God, for it holds that all are manifestations of the one Godhead; and accepting all, it does not attempt to make converts. It does not inculcate dogmas but offers a rational basis for the principles and practices common to religions everywhere. Therefore, it's teaching appeal to men and women irrespective of race, nationality and religious persuasion. In the light of its teaching, the followers of different religions have a better understanding of their respective religions, and other religions as well. The practice of Vedānta is usually called Yoga, a general name for the practical techniques by which the theoretical knowledge of philosophy is realized. It is a much more comprehensive scheme of life than the posture and breathing exercises which sometimes pass for yoga. It is concerned not so much with the subnormal and the abnormal, as with the normal and its evolution into the supernormal.<sup>1</sup>

Practical Vedānta Vivekananda, the person who could perform the colossal feat of finishing the first eleven-volume of the Encyclopedia Britannica (out of a total of twenty) had a passionate urge to experience directly the ecstatic absorption with the subject objectless (*asamprajñānta*) beatific supernal state. The late Brajendra Nath seal testifies to the deep and restless passion of Vivekananda to apprehend the highest truth from his early young days. Although the Swami was a revered teacher of the monistic Vedānta, still the devotional mood characteristic of the great Vedantic Āchāryas, like Mādhava and Vallabha – was also prominent in his person. The world knows him as a gigantic mind who employed his stupendous will power and energy to bring about a regeneration of India. This monk, social energies and humanist philanthropist wanted, as he said, to fall on the society like an avalanche. He was a pilgrim of the city of god and a warrior for the cause of the suppressed. Hence The personality of Swami has been noteworthy for his comprehension, strong attention to the evils prevailing in the country's social and spiritual system. He preached social service as well as monistic asceticism. His intellectual visualization has been extremely clear as

well as he could quickly penetrate the currents and cross-currents, which have been manifested in Indian history. Vivekananda advocated the monism of the Upanishads as systematized by Bādarāyana and Śaṅkara. The ever-conceit blissful reality was to him the supreme extent and the eternal reality and could be realized as a result of philosophic thinking and living. The world, according to the view of Śaṅkara, is the *vivarta* of Brahma.<sup>2</sup> But Vivekananda did not wholly deny the reality of the cosmos, although he was bound to do so philosophically. He was inspired by his great teacher who believed in the "motherhood" of the governing principle of the universe, a tantric doctrine and formula, which in its incipient forms is also found in the religious systems of the ancient Indus valley and western Asia. Vivekananda has pointed out in his American lectures that the Vedāntic metaphysics. Which teaches spiritual equality is the reading guarantee of equal treatment to the vast masses. After all, genuine ethics and social morality are meant for good behaviour and the development of freedom, right, self-consciousness and good in the world. The Vedāntic metaphysics does not neutralize the subjective disposition to ethical life because of its Māyāvāda but strengthens moral action by providing to that a rock-like spiritual foundation.

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

According to Swami Vivekananda 1. The inherent divinity of man. 2. The non-duality of the Ultimate Reality, of Brahman or Ātman. 3. The ultimate Reality as Brahman or the Absolute of Philosophy, is also the Intimate Reality as *Īśvara* or God, of religion. 4. The Ultimate Reality as the Ātman becomes capable, of not just a belief in Him, but of the realization or experience or *anubhava* of Him, by man. 5. Such *anubhava*, and the struggle towards it, constitute dynamic spirituality, and the true meaning of religion, and not just a belief in His existence and static piety based on it. 6. Such dynamic spirituality means the steady spiritual growth of man, or his growth in his spiritual dimension, by developing increasing awareness by him of his inborn divine nature. 7. Such spiritual growth is to be achieved by man in the context of his life and work by the comprehensive spiritual technique of Yoga as taught in the Bhagavad Gītā, which bridges the gulf between the secular and the sacred, between life and religion.<sup>3</sup> The previous researches carried out on the Vedāntic thoughts of various philosophers and their relevance to the modern society, the researches have done earlier show that still so many other aspects of Vedāntic thoughts of these thinkers have not been picked up and explored. Although there are some researches which are quite significant as they extend their horizon and take initiative to include multifarious themes of Vedāntic yet the number of such is quite less. Hence there is still a gap in the previous research done which can be noticed with the review of these following papers:

**1.1** C, D, Sharma (2012): studied the Vedāntic ideas of Swami Vivekananda. The aim of Vedānta is not to acquire knowledge but to get to know about the Brahman and its nature and help the man with these ideas. He believed that the aim of Vedānta was to an awake man from ignorance and to guide him to knowledge. Love, peace, co-operation, equality, mutual understanding were some of the saint's ideals based on which he propounded his theory of education. He emphasised the role of concentration in Vedānta. The Guru is very significant in Vivekananda's philosophy of Vedānta.

**1.2** Sengupta (2014): studied the contribution made by Rabindranath Tagore, Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo in the field of Practical Vedānta. He brought out the influence of Upanishadic thoughts on the three mentioned educators. At the time of setting up Ashram Vidyalaya at Shantiniketan, Rabindranath was influenced by the ideals of the Upanishads. He emphasized the real pursuit of knowledge which has been expressed in Śvetāśvara Upanishad. Vivekananda, influenced by Upanishadic thoughts, thinks that concentration is very important for self-exploration. Aurobindo talks about the role of the teacher as a facilitator.

**3. MATERIALS:** For the Research Study I chose a Hundred students to discover the understand Effect of chosen Vedāntic thoughts and their practical base on human life. Every one of the students that were chosen for the Research, were under physical and mental Training Classes to discover and understand the practical view, idea and thoughts of Vedānta.

## 4. METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION :

Here the method is Practical. Advaita Vedānta of Śaṅkara Vedānta philosophy influenced the Vivekananda and here we gave a short discussion on Advaita Vedānta philosophy. Brahman is the absolute truth as per Advaita Vedānta's philosophy. This is the existence and perfect. The essence of everything is Brahman. It is a less and unconditional attribute. The only truth for him is Brahman, and the delusion is this universe. The soul is not unlike Brahman's own. In mind, word and action, we cannot define Brahman. It's better defined by the negative formula of *Neti's* or not. By doing this method one can understand the reality of Brahman.

## 5. DISCUSSION:

Swamiji's Neo- Vedānta is also Advaitic in that Brahman, the absolute truth is without a second. Nonetheless, this is the Vedānta of the synthesis which distinguishes dualism or Dvaita from non-dualism and Advaita, along with

other reality theory, from a workaround conventional Advaita. It can also be defined as concrete monism in that it considers that Brahman is both *nirguna* or quality less and *saguna* or qualified. Vedānta Philosophy, which is also recognized as the Practical Vedānta Philosophy, is attempting to give Swami Vivekananda a new form. We know that Vivekananda has debated the realistic dimensions of spirituality throughout his life. His professor Sri Ramkrishna lays the base of his Neo-Vedānta philosophy (1836-1886). They all underline Vedānta's realistic essence. The theory is really interesting, Vivekananda thinks that but every theory must be practical. If it's impractical, no hypothesis is of any importance. Thus, he feels that the Vedānta should be as realistic as a philosophy. Vedānta shows us all peace. The difference between faith and world life disappears. Swamiji points out that, "The Vedānta, therefore, as a religion must be intensely practical. We must be able to carry it out in every part of our lives. And not only this, the fictitious differentiation between religion and the life of the world must vanish, for the Vedānta teaches oneness – one life throughout. The ideals of religion must cover the whole field of life, they must enter into all our thoughts, and more and more into practice." <sup>4</sup>Swamiji speaks about Bhagavad Gītā when he talks about it that, "... it is the best commentary we have on the Vedānta philosophy – curiously enough the scene is laid on the battlefield, where Krishna teaches this philosophy to Arjuna; and the doctrine which stands out luminously in every page of the Gītā is an intense activity, but in the midst of it, eternal calmness. This is the secret of work, to attain which is the goal of the Vedānta." <sup>5</sup>

## 6. ANALYSIS:

Vivekananda says Vedānta never taught something impossible. "Tatvamasi" or "Thou art That" is also known as "Mahāvākya" which means that you are divine. The harmony between infinite life and infinite soul is implied. The human soul is omniscient and pure. <sup>6</sup> A Mahāvākya Swamiji tells to give real meaning that, "The Vedānta teaches men to have faith in themselves first." <sup>7</sup> Various religions instruct us that those who don't believe in God are an atheist, but the Vedānta tells us that a person who didn't believe is an atheist. Vedānta teaches, in the universe, there is no darkness. The ignorant people imagine that there is darkness surrounding us. In reality, the universe is not dark or fragile. Swamiji thinks a fool may believe he is impure or weak. Swamiji argues that "All the powers in the Universe are already ours. It is we who have put our hands before our eyes and cry that it is dark. Know that there is no darkness around us. Take the hands away and there is the light which was from the beginning. Darkness never existed, weakness never existed. We who are fools cry that we are weak; we who are fools cry that we are impure." <sup>8</sup> So Vedānta maintains not only that the ideal is practical, but that it is always practical; and that ideal, that truth, is our very existence. It's all fake, it's all untrue that you see. As soon as you say, "I am a little mortal being, you are saying something which is not true, you are giving the lie to yourselves, you are hypnotizing yourselves into something vile and weak and wretched." <sup>9</sup>

## 7. FINDINGS:

The followings are the major findings of the present study :

- One of Vedānta's core principles is oneness. Swamiji thinks that Vedānta completely rejects that teaching if any unique method teaches that animals are different from humans.
- Vedānta proposes all soul's oneness. There is no distinction between man's soul and the animal's soul. Swamiji points out that, "The difference between our lives is not in kind. The Vedānta entirely denies such ideas as that animals are separate from men, and that they were made and created by God to be used for our food." <sup>10</sup> Some people claim that killing animals for our diet is very valid. That is what Swamiji utterly refuses. He considers that the soul of other species is still immortal if man's soul is immortal.
- Now this is just a degree and not a varying child. The amoeba and man are equal; only in the degree is the difference. In absolute terms, Swamiji understands all this difference that people might not have been very strict vegetarian, but they must feel that it's unethical to kill an animal for their meal.
- People must be conscious that eating meat is an inhuman activity. Swami Vivekananda says, "Oneness includes all animals. If man's life is immortal, so also is the animals. the difference is only in degree and not in kind. The amoeba and I are the same, the difference is only in degree; and from the standpoint of the highest life, all these differences vanish.
- A man may see a great deal of difference between the grass and a little tree, but if you mount very high, the grass and the biggest tree will appear much the same. So, from the standpoint of the highest ideal, the lowest animal and the highest man are the same. If you believe there is a God, the animals and the highest creatures must be the same.
- A God who is partial to his children called men, and cruel to his children called brute beasts, is worse than a demon. I would rather die a hundred times than worship such a God. My whole life would be a fight with such a God. But there is no difference, and those who say there is, are irresponsible, heartless people who do not know.

- Here is a case of the word practical used in the wrong sense. I may not be a very strict vegetarian, but I understand the ideal. When I eat meat I know it is wrong. Even if I am bound to eat it under certain circumstances, I know it is cruel. I must not drag my ideal down to the actual and apologies for my weak conduct in this way. The ideal is not to eat flesh, not to injure any being, for all animals are my brothers. If you can think of them as your brothers, you have made a little headway towards the brotherhood of all souls, not to speak of the brotherhood of man! That is child's play. You generally find that this is not very acceptable to many, because it teaches them to give up the actual, and go higher up to the ideal. But if you bring out a theory which is reconciled with their present conduct, they regard it as entirely practical. <sup>11</sup>

## 8. RESULT DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION :

At last, I want to discuss the relevance of Swamiji's Neo-Vedānta or Practical Vedānta philosophy. We want to mention before we reach the importance of his Neo-Vedānta theory that Swamiji is important to the present period in his life and metaphysical thought. If someone is ignorant or educated, it would inspire you with some aspect of Swamiji's philosophy, and this would transform his mind and nature. If I say something about the importance of Swamiji's Latest Vedānta philosophy, I would say his philosophy Neo-Vedānta has given Vedānta a true nature. He added to the life of common people Vedānta philosophy. We may see false controversy about religion as the cause of disagreements and war in the western world. Aggressiveness among men for faith is arriving violently. This is time to recall Swamiji's religious teachings, in which Swamiji thinks about universal faith In this situation. His Neo-Vedānta theory teaches everyone to be equal. We have discussed this already. His reflections on universal brotherhood are described in the book Practical Vedānta. This is also real-time for Swamiji to understand how to preserve and grow human beings. Swamiji says, To be good and to do good unto others – that is the essence of religion. He, therefore, assumes that the truth is the cornerstone of all religion; he showed that people must be inclusive of other religions – this may be Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, or other religion. Vivekananda concludes that people must see God in all existence to give realistic shape to Vedānta Philosophy. In one's children and others, he proposed seeing God. The Lord is present in every life similarly. He sees the whole universe as the Lord's fullness. He opines that "What existed was the Lord Himself. It is He who is in the child, in the wife, and the husband: it is He who is in the good and the bad; He is in the sin and the sinner; He is in life and death." Furthermore, not only human life but all life must be adequately valued. In them, we can see divinity. Any cruelty in us should be stopped. And then such an evolved human civilization can be seen in the world. We understand that the Neo-Vedānta of Swamiji is a living and realistic Vedānta from the above discussion. At the stage of common citizens, he has sought to apply Vedānta values. Of course, the philosophy Vedānta was a precious idea before his period. He is, moreover, the first man to do so and to apply his precious teaching in the world. Finally, let us conclude that Swami Vivekananda's Current Vedānta philosophy is not only important in real life but will remain equally relevant forever.

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