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## SWAMI VIVEKANANDA – A MAN BEYOND RELIGIONS

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### Abstract

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In this paper, the thoughts of Swami Vivekananda about several religions have been discussed. Though Swami Vivekananda is a Hindu saint, his thoughts prove that he is a man beyond religions which shall be analysed in this paper.

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## Introduction

Swami Vivekananda is a Hindu saint of India who is popularly known across the globe for his famous address in The Parliament of Religions at Chicago on 11<sup>th</sup> September 1893. Though he belongs to Hindu religion by birth, he respected all the other religions and remains as a man beyond religions.

While each nation is seriously concentrating in upgrading its weapon power so as to prevent its country men from the attack of the neighbouring country at anytime, certainly at this juncture Swami Vivekananda's messages will sow humanity in the hearts of each soul in this world. Beyond the tremendous progress in the field of Science and Technology, to enjoy its benefits and to rejoice in harmony we are in need of Universal Peace. Religion is the major threat which divides people even within a nation. Hence accepting Swami Vivekananda's words can only be the possible solution.

Swami Vivekananda was born on 12<sup>th</sup> January 1863 at Calcutta to Vishwanath Datta and Bhuvansahwari Devi. His parents named him Narandranath. After his meeting with his guru Sri

Ramakrishna, Narenopted for spiritual path and named himself Swami Vivekananda.

Though Swami Vivekananda is identified as a Hindu saint, this paper containing his ideologies about various other religions will certainly prove that he is a man beyond religions.

### All Religions are Good:

After the thought provoking speech at Chicago in the Parliament of religions, Swami Vivekananda was loved by most of the Christians in America. Though Swami Vivekananda was a representative of Hindu religion, at the end of his speech he remained as an universal hero. He was invited by several Christian missionaries to deliver lectures. In one of his lectures in a church, he said "**There is good in the foundation of every religion, that all religions, like languages, are descended from a common stock, and that each is good in its corporal and spiritual aspects so long as it is kept free from dogma and fossilism.**" "**I claim no affiliation with any religious sect, but occupy the position of an observer, and so far as I may, of a teacher of mankind. All religion to me is good.**" [Washington Post, October 29, 1894, Complete Works:2-Pg 497]

These are not simply the words uttered by a philosopher but indeed he has shared his own

experience after experimenting various religions. He himself claims that he is an observer which hence admits that he is a man beyond religions. In another lecture among Christians, he narrated his analysis among several religions.

**“By the study of different religions we find that in essence they are one. When I was a boy, this scepticism reached me, and it seemed for a time as if I must give up all hope of religion. But fortunately for me I studied the Christian religion, the Mohammedan, the Buddhistic, and others, and what was my surprise to find that the same foundation principles taught by my religion were also taught by all religions”**[Complete Works:1-Pg 317]. Most people literally speak that the principles of all the religions are same but they might have studied only their own religion that to for some extent but Swami Vivekananda had too many questions regarding the existence of God. During his childhood the only question he put while meeting some wiser men is “Have you seen God?”. The quest for searching answers to his questions led Swami Vivekananda to study different religions and experiment them. Later he came to a conclusion that all the religions preach the same truth in different forms. He then justified the same with a simple example which even a common man can understand. **“For instance, if I have six fingers, and no one else has, you may well say that is abnormal. The same reasoning may be applied to the argument that only one religion is true and all others false. One religion only, like one set of six fingers in the world, would be unnatural. We see, therefore, that if one religion is true, all others must be true”** [Complete Works:1-Pg 318].

### **See God in Every Person:**

Most of us considering our neighbours as the opponents in the race of our life, compare ourselves with others and feel mightier with someone’s weakness. But to picturize the real ‘You’ without any sort of comparison is the most difficult task. Swami Vivekananda’s following words will certainly help us to identify the

divinity hidden in each soul. **“See God in every person — working through all hands, walking through all feet, and eating through every mouth. In every being He lives, through all minds He thinks. He is self-evident, nearer unto us than ourselves. To know this is religion, is faith, and may it please the Lord to give us this faith! When we shall feel that oneness, we shall be immortal. We are psychically immortal even, one with the universe. So long as there is one that breathes throughout the universe, I live in that one”**. These words are not only powerful but meanwhile invest peace within us as well. “God is omnipotent – God is present everywhere”, this is what most of the books teach us but “God is present in everyone, see only the Godly part of each soul” is something different but sounds so pleasant enough such that we feel that we are surrounded by love all around.

Swami Vivekananda further continuous, **“I am not this limited little being, I am the universal. I am the life of all the sons of the past. I am the soul of Buddha, of Jesus, of Mohammed. I am the soul of the teachers, and I am all the robbers that robbed, and all the murderers that were hanged, I am the universal. Stand up then; this is the highest worship. You are one with the universe. That only is humility — not crawling upon all fours and calling yourself a sinner. That is the highest evolution when this veil of differentiation is torn off. The highest creed is Oneness. I am so-and-so is a limited idea, not true of the real “I”. I am the universal; stand upon that and ever worship the Highest through the highest form, for God is Spirit and should be worshipped in spirit and in truth”** [Complete Works:1-Pg 341].

Now it is evident that Swami Vivekananda is a man beyond religions. Infact by following his words and if each one see only God in each fellow being, then peace is the reward this Universe can attain.

### **Sisters and Brothers of America:**

Swami Vivekananda proved he is a universal hero by his astonishing speech in the Parliament of Religions at Chicago on 11<sup>th</sup> September 1893. As soon as he addressed the huge gathering “Sisters and Brothers of America”, he received a standing ovation and the crowd welcomed him with a non-stop clap which lasted more than couple of minutes. Later he delivered the historical speech which made a leading daily in America to mention in its headlines as follows: ‘A cyclone from Southern Asia!’.

His very first address in abroad itself made the world identify him as an Universal hero. In his lecture he said, **“I am proud to belong to a religion which has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance. We believe not only in universal toleration, but we accept all religions as true. I am proud to belong to a nation which has sheltered the persecuted and the refugees of all religions and all nations of the earth. I am proud to tell you that we have gathered in our bosom the purest remnant of the Israelites, who came to Southern India and took refuge with us in the very year in which their holy temple was shattered to pieces by Roman tyranny. I am proud to belong to the religion which has sheltered and is still fostering the remnant of the grand Zoroastrian nation”**. It is to be noted that he was present there as a representative of Hindu religion and he was suppose to speak about his own religion. But he remained as a man beyond religions. He also added, **“I will quote to you, brethren, a few lines from a hymn which I remember to have repeated from my earliest boyhood, which is every day repeated by millions of human beings: “As the different streams having their sources in different places all mingle their water in the sea, so, O Lord, the different paths which men take through different tendencies, various though they appear, crooked or straight, all lead to Thee.”** [Complete Works:1-Pg 03].

### **Conclusion:**

Couple of days later, again when Swami Vivekananda addressed, he recited a story of two frogs – a frog from the sea and a frog in a well. Even in this 21<sup>st</sup> century this story sounds good as like the frog in a well, we each one claim that nothing can be bigger than us without knowing the fact that we are in a nut shell. Showering love and paying attention to the needs of the man-kind is what needed now. Accepting the thoughts of Swami Vivekananda and seeing God in each soul will certainly result in Universal peace so that no individual in this world can cry for his bread. Barriers among the nations will shatter and everywhere you can just experience of the presence of the Almighty.

**“Each Soul is Potentially Divine”** – Swami Vivekananda.

### **References:**

The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda [Volumes 1 – 8]