

# A STUDY ON THE WAY OF REALIZATION IN SWAMY VIVEKANANDA PHILOSOPHY

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## ABSTRACT

*Vivekananda 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 thoughts is obviously of ancient Hindu philosophy. 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 of most important elements of his spiritual Philosophy .He notifies that the four ways of realization like path of knowledge (Gnana yoga), path of action (Karma yoga), path of devotion (Bhakti yoga), path of Psychology ( Raja yoga). His thoughts are entirely different from the contemporary Indian Philosophers.*

**Keywords:** *Spiritual values, Self-realization, Devine Nature, Union, Discipline Atman and Brahman, Yoga*

## INTRODUCTION

Swamy Vivekananda's Philosophy arises from the awareness of the social, religious and economic conditions of the Indian masses. He had also 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 and accepted with gratitude whatever he could learn from faiths and disciplines emphasizing the ultimate of spiritual 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. The body of his thought is derived from Hindu scriptures- from the *Upanishads* and 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. His doctrine of *Maya*, again is derived from the same source. The distinction between 'an empirical point of view' and 'transcendental point of view' that he so often make and to which he refers time and again in order to solve certain apparent contradictions of his thought, is also borrowed from 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; in fact, his Philosophy itself is an attempt in that direction, but this remains a fact that some of the basic ideas of the Philosophy of Vivekananda are derived from ancient Hindu Philosophy specially the Vedanta

## THE SPIRITUAL NATURE OF MAN

This uniqueness of his physical nature is also 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*. In his description of the Atman, Vivekananda has feely used even exaggerated expressions. Following the *Gita* he describes the Atman thus "It is the self, beyond all thought, one without birth or death, whom the sword cannot pierce or fire burn, whom air cannot dry or water melt , the beginning less and endless , the unmovable, the intangible, the omniscient, the omnipotent being, that it is neither the body nor the mind , but beyond all" like a true Vedantist, Vivekananda never hesitates in identifying the true nature of Atman with Brahman itself. His reasons for identifying the two are generally similar to the reason given by Vedanta .The basic fact to be noted in that unless the two are identified, the strict monist character of reality cannot be maintained. Soul cannot be said to be an aspect or a part of the one, because in that case the one will become composite having parts or aspects with in itself. Souls cannot be conceived also as expressions or manifestations of the absolute, because even in that case they would become separate realities over and above the Brahman. Then, there is only one way of conceiving the relation between the two, that the two are basically identical and that their difference is only apparent.

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.

The self or soul is one all comprehend existence, and it only appears as manifold. He tries to illustrate this idea with help of various analogies. For example, look at the waves of the sea, different waves appear to be different. But in reality they are all one, they are not different from the ocean, adopting the Vedantic analogy of 'Pratibimba' Vivekananda says that the same sun may shine in reflections on water kept in different pots, but the different reflections are only apparent – "reflections" of the sun, the real sun is always the one, "There is, therefore, but one Atman, one self eternally, pure, eternally perfect, unchangeable, unchanged; it has never changed; and all these various changes in the universe are but appearances in that one self" Vivekananda admits that normally we do not have an awareness of this identity, but certain experiences and relations can be taken as pointers towards this. The most usual example of such an experience is the feeling that one is capable of having in the face of adversity and problems- when he persistently tries to fight them out and to solve them. In fact, the very realization that nature provides almost a challenge to man can universal the mysteries of nature, is itself an evidence of his Divine Nature. Another evidence of this fact is the inherent capacity of man to go "beyond". If we survey the list of man either in its collective aspect, or in its individuality, we find that there is no upper limit –no boundaries that can be set around him and beyond which he cannot go. His quest for truth, for his activities, knows no bounds. He comes to acquire knowledge, or comes to enrich his personality by doing something good and noble, and yet he can still go ahead. This capability of self transcendence is itself an evidence of the basic oneness of the Atman and Brahman.

### WAYS OF REALIZATION

The word Yoga is normally associated with the two kinds of meanings. It may mean Union or it may stand for a kind of a Discipline. Vivekananda uses the term in a very comprehensive manner, and therefore, incorporates both these meanings in his sense of the word Yoga. Thus, the path leading to the realization is the path of Discipline and Union. It would consist of certain disciplines- such disciplines that would have enabled the pursuer to have the feeling of union. This discipline might relate themselves to cognition, or to feeling or to action, or to synthesis of all three. Vivekananda favours the last, but his synthesis, although comprehensive to cognition, is of a particular type, he does not say that there is only one kind of Yoga incorporating all these in it, on the other hand, he says that all these – the way of cognition, the way of feeling, the way of karma –are themselves different ways for the realization of immortality. Vivekananda is so comprehensive in his outlook that he includes even 'Yoga' in the popular sense as one of the alternative ways. Before emphasizing their synthetic or complementary characters it is better to have an idea of these ways.

### THE WAY OF KNOWLEDGE (Gnana Yoga)

The way of knowledge is based on the realization that bondage is due to ignorance. Ignorance, according to Vivekananda, is the ignorance of the real nature of things; it is the inability to distinguish between the real and the unreal. This lack of discrimination is ignorance, and therefore, knowledge has to be discriminatory, it must have an awareness of the distinction between the real and unreal. Self knowledge, knowledge of the Brahman, knowledge of the unity of everything –all these are different names of the discriminatory knowledge mentioned above. Such knowledge cannot be had merely through study or by listening to the words of wise teacher. They are also necessary but they would not rise above the level of mere information, unless one is able to realize what he has been able to gather through study or through his teacher. For such a realization, he must be able to meditate upon the truths learnt. This requires the practice of concentration on the nature of the truths learnt. Concentration is not an easy process. It requires that the self should direct his entire energy on the object of concentration. The energy of the soul is wasted through body activities through the sense and motor organs. Energy must be withdrawn from them so that they may be utilized for the purposes of knowledge. That means that the senses and body have to keep under restraint, even the mind must be brought under control. This practically amounts to the suppression of bodily desires; it means that the demands of the senses have to be curtailed almost ruthlessly. This is what can be called renunciation. Vivekananda says that renunciation is necessary stage in the practice *Gnana Yoga*. Renunciation is demands getting rid of all selfishness and controlling the body, the mind and the senses. This is called *Vairagya*. But, according to Vivekananda, there is a positive side of renunciation also; it is being impelled by nothing else but the longing to know the Brahma. This positive aspiration for knowledge is an essential condition of Renunciation. After this, concentration can be practiced. The entire energy of the body can be concentrated in the direction of knowledge. In initial stage of concentration one can choose of any form- he may even try to understand the various characters. In course of time this concentration will become intense, and the individual may attain the stage of complete concentration or Samadhi. In which all

kinds of directions would went away. In which even the distinction between self and the Brahman will not remain, and he will have a realization of oneness of perfect unity. This is the *Gnana margā*.

### THE WAY OF DEVOTION (Bhakti yoga)

This is the way of knowing God through the intensity of feeling. Vivekananda says that strong emotion has the capacity to awaken and active the potential powers of man. As such it is possible to active it so much that man is able to know God himself. Ordinary emotion can be converted in to powerful feelings, ordinary love can be converted in to Divine love or Supreme devotion, this is the *Bhakti margā*. Devotion or love according to Vivekananda is natural to man. The only point is that ordinarily the object of our love is the finite object which is transitory, perishable and in the last analysis, unreal, love, in this sense, is not pure love but attachment. The *bhakti margā* is the way of pure love in which the object of love or devotion is the not the finite or the limited but the supreme. This love will be universal love, love for all because this will be based on the realization of oneness of everything. He says that it is possible to realize God simply by "loving" we may go on the extending the scope of our love, so as to make it more and more comprehensive till it becomes truly universal. 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, incarnations-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. Changing of religious hymns and singing the songs of God's glory would become prominent. 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. It is a feeling that there is nothing besides him. Thus, external worship, prayer, repetition of God's name, meditation is all stage of *bhakti*, through which the devotee attains a realization in feeling of the essential oneness of everything. Vivekananda says that this *margā* is the most convenient and the most popular of all the way.

### THE WAY OF ACTION (Karma yoga)

Vivekananda says "Karma yoga" is a system of ethics and religious intended to attain freedom through unselfishness and by good works. The karma yogi need not believe in any doctrine whatsoever. He may not ask what his soul is, nor think of any metaphysical speculation. He has got his own special aim of realizing selfishness and he has to work it out himself. Such a description of *karma -yoga* shows that it emphasize firstly the importance and value of action, and secondly of unselfishness. The first emphasize that it does not recommend asceticism or a flying away from the world. Man has to remain in the world, in the midst of evil and good and pain and suffering. And he has to work – has to keep on working as well as he can. The second emphasize is still more important. 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 a stranger to the world, he must not allow any work to dominate over him or to bind. Vivekananda says that one must work like a master and not like a slave. If one allows personal or selfish consideration to regulate his actions than he has become a slave of his desires. One must be attached. Vivekananda seems to be very much impressed by the Gita ideal of *Nishkamakarma*. The secret of action is that one must not expect anything in return of the action of done. One must assume the permanent role of a giver, in which everything given is a free offering to the world. Vivekananda very reverently takes the example of the life of Lord Buddha. Who after 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. Vivekananda says, "he works best who works without any motive, neither for money, nor for fame , nor for anything else; and when a men can do that, he will be a Buddha, and out of him will come the power to work in such a manner as well transform the world" this man represents the very highest ideal of karma Yoga. Now, a question arises; how can this lead to the realization of immortality? Vivekananda answers this question in a very simple manner. Immortality is the realization of oneness of everything; it is complete freedom from all kinds of bondage. A continues doing of selfless work , or content practice of non attachment in all action of life enables a man to rise above his self, and to have a feeling of oneness with everything. Moreover bondage is bondage of self –of personal motives and desires. Unattached action is evidently a transcendence of this kind of bondage. Thus through selfless work one's mind becomes pure and he is identifying himself with all. This is the realization of immortality.

**THE WAY OF PSYCHOLOGY (Raja Yoga)**

Raja-Yoga is the way to the realization of immortality by controlling the mind and the body. This control is not like the control recommended by the *Jnana –yoga*, it is controlling the mind and the body by subjecting them to certain physical and mental disciplines. Patanjali laid the foundation of such a *yoga* in his *yoga sutra*, and according to some, it is surest- the most direct and the quickest method for attaining salvation. That is why they call it *Raja yoga*, the kinds of all Yogas. By definition its aim is the realization of unity with God. It is believed that this *marga* consists in a ruthless suppression of all hindrances that create difficulties in the way of realization. Raja-yoga is the way of physical and mental discipline. 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 method. 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 psycho-physical nature. Even here the final stage is that of concentration, but the conviction is that perfect concentration cannot be practiced unless the psycho-physical organism is put completely at ease and under complete control of the individual. 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.

**CONCLUSION**

Vivekananda describes these four ways differently; he says that they are different ways for the 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. It is quite possible that a particular person is incapable of following the *Gnana maraga* and finds the way of devotion convenient and to his liking therefore, Vivekananda feels that one can choose the path he likes. If one follows any one of these paths with sincerity and earnestness, he will be able to reach the goal. Moreover, these paths are not completely exclusively of each other, in fact, in certain respects they overlap, it is not that the man of devotion has nothing to do with the way of knowledge; he also performs certain acts of self-sacrifice. These ways, these therefore, are not divided in water –right compartments. 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 realization 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.

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