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### **Man and the Quest for Spiritual Liberation: A Revisiting the Idea of Swami Vivekananda**

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#### **Abstract:**

*This paper extensively examines humanity's quest for spiritual liberation using Swami Vivekananda's teachings as a guide. This study explores the practicality of that distinguished spiritual leader's thought in the modern world by revisiting his principles. The analysis highlights the complex interactions between the person, society, and cosmic order by thoroughly examining Vivekananda's thoughts on the freedom of spirituality. Using a multifaceted analytical method, the paper explores the relevance of Vivekananda's core philosophical tenets for today's searchers. The essence of self-realization, the contribution of social interaction to spiritual development, and the synthesis of various spiritual paths are among the main subjects that are examined. Through an in-depth review of Vivekananda's ideas, the essay aims to bring light to the timeless value of his insights for anybody pursuing spiritual liberation in the complicated world of today. In addition, the research focuses on the historical and cultural context that influenced Vivekananda's ideas, offering a sophisticated comprehension of how his concepts developed over time. The essay also discusses various criticisms and interpretations to provide a comprehensive study and encourage readers to reflect on the relevance and resonance of Vivekananda's philosophy in their spiritual journeys. In the end, this essay contributes to a revitalized conversation about the ancient quest for spiritual freedom by providing a critical re-evaluation of Swami Vivekananda's teachings and their significance for anyone looking for a more profound comprehension of what they are along with the cosmos.*

**Keywords: Man, Spiritual liberation, Insight, Humanism.**

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**Introduction:** Swami Vivekananda, born Narendranath Datta on January 12, 1863, in Calcutta (Kolkata), India, was a prominent Hindu monk and a key figure in the introduction of Indian philosophies to the Western world. Influenced by the teaching of his guru, Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Vivekananda played a pivotal role in spreading the message of *Vedānta* and Yoga on the global stage. At the 1893 Chicago World's Parliament of Religions, Vivekananda won recognition from all around the world with the unforgettable opening remarks, "Sisters and brothers of America."<sup>1</sup> Through this address, Vivekananda

not only delighted the audience but also established himself as a spiritual ambassador, arguing for the universality of *Vedānta* and promoting the idea of religious harmony and tolerance. His lectures placed a strong emphasis on the shared fundamental ideas of all religions and their universality. Swami Vivekananda maintained a strong emphasis on the significance of fulfilling one's spiritual potential and held that every person possesses inherent divinity. He promoted a well-rounded way of living by fostering a harmonious fusion of spirituality and intellect. He has emerged as a beacon of spiritual wisdom and a champion of the harmonious co-existence of diverse faiths. His eloquent articulation of the spiritual path and the quest for self-realization left an indelible mark on the global stage. As we navigate the complexities of the modern era, characterized by rapid technological advancements and the hustle of daily life, Swami Vivekananda's insights offer a poignant reminder of the need to cultivate inner harmony and transcend the materialistic trapping that often entangles us. This exploration into the life and philosophy of Swami Vivekananda is not merely a historical retrospective but a contemplative journey, inviting readers to reflect on the timeless pursuit of spiritual liberation<sup>2</sup>.

### **Objective of the paper:**

- 1) To study Vivekananda's philosophy in the man and the quest for liberation.
- 2) To know the impact and relevance of Swami Vivekananda's philosophy of the man and the quest for liberation and its relevance in the present era.
- 3) It is revisiting ideas in the man and quest for liberation.

**Methodology:** This paper has been prepared following analytical approach on Swami Vivekananda's Philosophy of the Man, and the quest for human liberation through revising ideas. The paper has been discussed on Vivekananda's concept of Man, and human liberation and in his spiritual value which purely based on primary as well as secondary data, i.e., books, journals, internet, internet archive etc.

**Analytical discussion of the paper:** It is important to investigate the notion of spiritual liberation for several reasons, particularly in light of individuals like Swami Vivekananda. The following salient features emphasize how important it is to explore the idea of spiritual liberation. A strong sense of purpose and fulfillment in life is frequently linked to spiritual liberation. Gaining an understanding of and exploration of this idea enables people to consider their own lives, values, and objectives, increasing their sense of purpose beyond worldly efforts. It discusses important issues such as what true happiness is and why life is worth living. A well-known philosopher in Indian philosophy, Swami Vivekananda stressed the significance of spiritual understanding and self-realization. By investigating this concept, people can establish a connection with their philosophical and cultural legacy and get insight into timeless wisdom and tenets that have influenced societies for ages. Self-awareness, mindfulness, and reflection are frequently part of the spiritual liberation journey. By encouraging inner serenity, resiliency, and a deeper comprehension of one's thoughts and feelings, studying and reflecting on these elements support mental wellness. For managing stress and mental health enhancement, it can be a useful tool. All beings are interrelated, according to many spiritual traditions, notably the ones that Swami

Vivekananda supported. Beyond borders and distinctions, investigating spiritual emancipation cultivates a sense of oneness and compassion for others. This knowledge can play a vital part in fostering empathy, tolerance, and harmonious relationships in a multicultural society. Spiritual guidance frequently offers a moral and ethical foundation for leading a good life. Learning about the concept of spiritual freedom could motivate people to develop virtues like self-control, compassion, and honesty. Consequently, this stimulates the growth of a society that is more moral and just. Personal development and evolution are integral parts of the transforming process leading to spiritual freedom. Examining this concept inspires people to set out on a quest for self-improvement, self-discovery, and the pursuit of greater goals<sup>3</sup>. Spiritual emancipation is a pursuit that knows no physical or cultural bounds. Many spiritual concepts are relevant to all people and can find resonance with individuals from a wide range of backgrounds. People can discover points of agreement and shared values by investigating these concepts, which helps to create a world that is increasingly connected and globalized. Examining spiritual freedom from a variety of perspectives, especially as it relates to Swami Vivekananda's teachings, provides a wealth of knowledge encompassing ethical, mental, cultural, and personal aspects. It offers a comprehensive way of living that transcends material achievement and contributes to a more fulfilling and meaningful life.

Analyzing Swami Vivekananda again is done to draw eternal insights into the modern human quest for spiritual freedom. Vivekananda's teachings are still relevant today because of the themes he explored, and this essay tries to show readers how to apply his teachings as a guide to their spiritual path. This re-visitation offers insightful advice for societal harmony, interfaith understanding, and personal development. It acts as a bridge between the past and present. An in-depth examination of the enduring relevance of Swami Vivekananda's teachings in dealing with modern issues, promoting interfaith dialogue, encouraging personal development, cultivating cultural and philosophical appreciation, and improving both individual and collective well-being is made possible by revisiting his ideas.

**Influence on Advaita Vedānta:** People are inspired by the depths of self-discovery by Swami Vivekananda's principles, which stand as a light of guidance in the infinite quest for inner peace. Taking a more in-depth look at Swami Vivekananda's profound views, this paper positions it within the broad context of *Advaita Vedānta*, a philosophical tradition that greatly inspired his ideas on the nature of existence and the road to awakening to oneself. The basic principle of *Advaita Vedānta* is non-dualism, which asserts that *ātman*, the individual soul, and Brahman, the ultimate reality, are inseparable<sup>4</sup>. Proponent of the interdependence of all beings, Vivekananda was greatly impacted by this idea. He advised people in his teachings to see the connection that exists beyond outward distinctions and to realize the divine inside oneself.

Vivekananda provided a society that celebrates the unity of existence, based on *Advaita Vedānta*. This section examines how Vivekananda's advocacy for a peaceful coexistence—which emphasizes the inherent divinity that exists in all living things—was influenced by

*Advaitic* philosophy. The essay explores several situations in which Vivekananda expressed the *Advaitic* concept of oneness within a multicultural and globalized society.

Self-realization is emphasized by *Advaita Vedānta* as the means of achieving freedom (*Mokṣa*)<sup>5</sup>. In line with this notion, Vivekananda advised everyone to set out on a path of self-discovery. In this section, we draw comparisons between *Advaitic* approaches and Vivekananda's teachings, explaining how both schools of thought agree that discovering one's actual nature is a transformational process that leads to spiritual freedom. Spirituality in Real-Life Practices, applying spiritual principles to everyday life is one of the lasting impacts of *Advaita Vedānta* and Vivekananda<sup>6</sup>. This section clarifies how both schools of thought support a holistic approach to spiritual development, stressing the incorporation of wisdom into practices and mind-sets.

A coherent story that emphasizes the eternal pursuit of spiritual liberation emerges when we re-examine Swami Vivekananda's profound concepts in the context of *Advaita Vedānta*. In the acceptance of non-dualism, unity in diversity, self-realization, and the useful application of spiritual understanding, people can make their way through life's path and get to their ultimate destination—liberation. We discover a path that leads the contemporary pilgrim on the eternal path to spiritual liberation by weaving together the principles of *Advaita Vedānta* with Vivekananda's doctrines.

**Nature of Man:** Swami Vivekananda is a true *Vedāntic* philosopher, who sheds light on the existence of the world; He did the same about the true nature of man<sup>7</sup>. What is man? Why or how man was created, Does it exist after the death of people? What is the real goal of human life? All these questions, He explores the tradition of Indian philosophy and says the nature of man. So far, we have two views on knowing. One is nihilism, which says that everything is nothing human beings, He also has no character. He has no ghost, future, or even present. Another is theism always speaks of efficiency. In this doctrine, it is said that everything is non-empty in the ever-changing world. Find out what is true within. Similarly, there is a real entity within this human body, Seek him out. Vivekananda followed this second opinion. Humanity is empty or illusory, by not saying, he tried to make a proper inquiry into his nature. Vivekananda did not, like Gautama Buddha, speak only of human existence consisting of body and mind. Buddhists say that there is no need to believe that there is a substance called soul in addition to this body-mind. If this body and mind mechanism is self-evident, then the true nature of man is revealed. So there is no need to imagine an additional third substance. But Vivekananda does not accept this. He acknowledges the body and the mind but speaks of the eternal presence of the spiritual entity called the soul. According to him, a human being is a mixture of body and mind on one side and a spiritual entity called soul on the other<sup>8</sup>. Basant Kumar Lal said, "The picture of man that emerges in the philosophy of Vivekananda is an organized unity of the physical and the spiritual<sup>9</sup>." But, he concluded that the true nature of man refers only to the soul. Body-mind is the limited form of man's true self. The spiritual force called *ātman*, always active behind the body-mind, is the real reality. Therefore human nature refers to the concentrated form of human spiritual energy (Concentration of Spiritual Energy)<sup>10</sup>. But

while he identified man as a spiritual force, he did not completely belie his physical condition. He recognized the importance of the physical form of man but did not call it the true human form. He identifies the spiritual aspect or spiritual nature of man as the real human nature. Before we get to the identity of the true human form, we can follow Vivekananda to see what exactly is meant by the physical form of man.

**The finite nature of man:** Vivekananda understood the physical aspect of human beings together with the psychological aspect. According to him, the human physical form is developed by adopting the human body or body. What is the body? In answer to this question, Vivekananda said that the body is the best instrument of man, though it is only a series of changes. Just as the water in a river is changing every moment, the body is also changing every moment. He considered the gross body or body to be composed of inert atoms and to be inert and unconscious. The gross body is the reservoir of gross energies. Gross forces work through this gross body. On the other hand, atoms in a subtle body are so fine that they cannot be seen even by a microscope. Following *Sāṅkhya's* philosophy, he says, this subtle body is needed as a receptacle for the substance called the mind. But he never said that the gross body and subtle body are two different bodies. The body is one, it only manifests in subtle and gross forms.

Vivekananda recognized the functional role of the mind in the description of human beings. He identified the mind as the instrument of the soul. It is through the mind that the soul perceives external things. So, all knowledge is possible through the mind. The mind has insight again. By this power, man can see the deepest regions of his heart. He spoke of three states of mind – active, passive, and calm. Inactivity is characterized by a slow pulse, activity is characterized by a fast pulse, and quiescence is characterized by the strongest pulse.

Swami Vivekananda laid special emphasis on the physical nature of man, composed of mind and body. He also claimed that man is the best creature in the world because he has the best physical condition. Human beings are superior to all animals and even gods. According to him, the gods also have to assume the physical condition of humans to attain enlightenment and liberation. Again, animals, being only dominant, cannot have higher ideas than humans. But humans are capable of higher ideals simply because they are not self-centered beings and because their physical nature is more organized and representative of harmonious unity. Man is somewhat mechanistic or blind to the environment due to the structured organization of his physical condition. His physical behaviour is also guided by a plan or schedule. The presence of the brain in man and the use of his mind sets him apart from other living beings and occupies the seat of excellence in this universe<sup>11</sup>.

**The infinite nature of man:** Vivekananda recognized the importance of the physical nature of man but did not call it the true nature of man. He said, “The real nature of man is one infinite all-pervading one, and this practical organism is only a limited reflection of the real nature of man. The practical organism, no matter how big, is only an unfulfilled reflection of that transcendental real nature of man.”<sup>12</sup> These words of Vivekananda are particularly

meaningful. He referred to human beings as ‘practical beings’ in physical form. In this form of self, people face everyday life. But this form does not indicate the true nature of man. Because man’s physical form is limited by country, so he is closed. The true being of man is the all-pervading Eternal Consciousness of man. He said, “It (soul) tries our nature and we don’t have to be like that.” So, self is the true state of man which is never bound and which no one has the power to bind. He said, “The true nature of man is ‘soul’ - the past of action-causes, the past of time, must be freedom.<sup>13</sup>” Vivekananda asserts that man is superior to his physical form through his efforts. Therefore, in Vivekananda’s thinking, man’s self or spiritual nature is his true form.

According to Vivekananda *Vedānta’s ‘Tattvamsi’<sup>14</sup>, Mahāvākya*, the soul is identical to *Parabrahman*. So the soul is one and non-dual. But the same soul appears in many forms in the human body due to *māyā* or *avidyā*. Just as the sea and the ocean waves are the same, the self-substance in different human beings is the manifestation of the same eternal cosmic spirit. Vivekananda again says with analogy, that the same sun is reflected in different reservoirs. Sun mirror and reflection of the sun in reservoirs. The world called the Sun is the same, this is the real truth, and reflections are illusions, not true reality. Similarly, the soul is one, non-dual, unchanging ultimate truth. Thus Vivekananda denied the multiplicity of souls following the *Vedāntic* view. If the soul is non-many and if the soul is the true nature of man, then all men are recognized as real examples of the eternal, universal unity. So Vivekananda advises that our body and mind should rise from the thought of petty airs. If life can be elevated to a universal entity by making ‘I’ mean self-object and operationalizing the thought ‘I am that infinite’, then man’s existence is worth living. And the more we concentrate our life in the tiny finite matter of the body, the more we move toward death. In Vivekananda’s thought, the true nature of man is perfect, he is eternally free. He does not have to strive for perfection. The perfect ideal exists within man. People seek in temples, mosques, churches, heaven, and earth, in various places, in various ways, but find God as a soul within themselves. Therefore man is pure; he does not have to be pure. But the man himself is imperfect, closed, and impure to cover the ignorance present in nature. As that veil thins, man becomes exposed to the light of the infinite power of the soul within him. So Vivekananda said in a strong voice, the eternal power of the world is within you. Remove the superstitions that have clouded your mind. However, it can be undoubtedly said that Vivekananda has been the face of *Advaita Vedānta’s* philosophy in describing the spiritual nature of man. Many have criticized Vivekananda's thinking as lacking in innovation. But this is not true. In *Advaita Vedānta*, the physical nature of man is called a lie. But Vivekananda did not follow that path. He very rationally recognizes the reality of man’s physical-mental effort in this world to attain enlightenment in a physical being.

**Concept of Spiritual Liberation:** It is essential to make a path through the complex and numerous facets of this revolutionary thought while examining the idea of spiritual liberation in the context of Swami Vivekananda's teachings. According to Vivekananda, the process of realizing one’s divine essence, transcending oneself, and finding oneself is spiritual freedom. Spiritual emancipation fundamentally entails severing the bonds of

material attachments that bind the soul<sup>15</sup>. Vivekananda fervently emphasized the transient nature of earthly belongings and argued for a deliberate disengagement from the ceaseless pursuit of worldly pursuits. According to this perspective, the attainment of ultimate freedom involves releasing oneself from the constraints of materialism, enabling the pursuer to walk the spiritual path free from the load of ephemeral things. The deep realization of divine consciousness is essential to Vivekananda's philosophy. His understanding of spiritual liberation is a journey toward realizing one's inherent divinity within, it is not just a way out of the ordinary. The seeker is invited to recognize the sacred spark and come to terms with the fact that the individual soul (*ātman*) and the global soul (*Brahman*) are related. This insight serves as the starting point for the pursuit of spiritual liberation. Transcending the ego and personal identity is another aspect of the notion. The road to spiritual freedom is immobilized by the ego, according to Vivekananda, because of its constricting ideas and aspirations. One can reach a higher state of consciousness where the lines between the divine and the self-disappear by ascending beyond the constrained limitations of individuality. The idea of unity is the divine lies at the heart of Vivekananda's teachings<sup>16</sup>. One definition of spiritual liberation is the deep union of the individual soul with the global consciousness. This connection transcends simple academic understanding; it is an experiential journey that unites the seeker with the ultimate reality and frees them from the constraints of the physical world. According to Vivekananda, achieving spiritual emancipation requires a tenacious quest for self-realization. Self-discovery is a transformative process that calls for people to recognize and live up to their potential. In this sense, liberation is a process of fulfilling one's inherent spiritual potential rather than a far-off destination. Vivekananda's vision incorporates the unity of faith and goes beyond personal salvation. According to him, spiritual freedom emphasizes the universality of spiritual truths and goes beyond theological borders. Within this all-encompassing structure, people can choose from a variety of spiritual paths that ultimately lead to the same goal, freedom from the delusions of the physical world. There are strong obstacles in the way of achieving spiritual liberty, including fear and ignorance. Vivekananda championed the idea that knowledge and comprehension may overcome these obstacles. In this perspective, liberation entails gaining a profound understanding of one's actual self and the interconnection of all things, which allows one to cast aside the darkness of ignorance and overcome the paralyzing grasp of fear. Crucially, Vivekananda did not advocate for a solitary withdrawal from the world to achieve spiritual liberation. It is an active interaction with the human experience. The freed person actively advances societal progress rather than remaining inactive. Self-less service and constructive action become essential elements of the spiritual path, highlighting the relationship between global well-being and personal emancipation. According to Swami Vivekananda's ideas, spiritual liberation is essentially a transforming and holistic process. It demands a peaceful union with the divine, a transcendence of self and personal identity, an awareness of divine consciousness, and a deliberate separation from materialism. It is an on-going process of self-discovery, an open investigation of many spiritual trajectories, and a proactive interaction with the outside

world. For individuals seeking transcendence and a deeper meaning in life, Vivekananda's idea of spiritual emancipation provides valuable and everlasting guidance.

Self-realization is the ultimate purpose of human life, according to Vivekananda. He held that the path to spiritual freedom is discovering one's actual essence and the divinity that resides within. His teachings included practices like meditation and introspection that gave people the means to explore their inner selves and achieve self-realization. In conclusion, Swami Vivekananda's teachings on the unity of existence, the synthesis of yoga, the stress on selfless service, the advancement of a universal religion, and the pursuit of self-realization constitute his distinctive contribution to the search for spiritual liberation. He offers a profound and comprehensive approach to the pursuit of spiritual liberation through these principles, which continue to inspire others on their spiritual journey.

**Conclusively**, an examination of Swami Vivekananda's philosophy and its central concept of spiritual liberation unveil an in-depth process of self-realization and transcendence. Exploring more into Vivekananda's principles, we come across a vision that transcends over time and cultural barriers, providing timeless guidance for individuals seeking spiritual enlightenment. Vivekananda's emphasis on the pursuit of a greater purpose, self-realization, and humanity's interdependence resonates with people of all ages. According to Swami Vivekananda, the concept of spiritual emancipation is more than just following religious teachings; it is a complete personal development that results in harmony with both the self and the outside world.

By re-examining the fundamental principles of Swami Vivekananda, we see that spiritual liberation is a continuous process of inner development rather than a far-off, unreachable destination. Reflection, awareness, and a deep comprehension of one's actual essence are necessary on this path. People can start on a transforming journey toward spiritual liberation by adopting the values of self-discipline, compassion, and constant learning. Vivekananda's lessons encourage us to look beyond life's surface-level experiences and explore the depths of our awareness as we make our way through the challenges of contemporary life. We learn about the interdependence of all living things and that genuine freedom comes from mastering oneself rather than from external circumstances as we work toward spiritual liberation.

Re-examined through the prism of Swami Vivekananda's philosophy, the idea of spiritual liberation is essentially a timeless and universal invitation to awaken the higher self. It invites people to go on an inward journey that opens doors to compassion, self-realization, and a deep sense of oneness with the cosmos. When we consider Vivekananda's profound insights, we are reminded that the pursuit of spiritual emancipation is a transforming process that is constantly evolving and has the power to create a world that is more harmonious and enlightened than it is essentially a philosophical notion.



**Notes & Reference:**

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