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## The universal appeal of Vedanta: Insights into self-realization and unity

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### Abstract

Religion plays a significant role in human culture and values, yet its impact on society is complex. While its primary aim is to foster peace and love globally, it can also become a source of violence. According to Swami Vivekananda, the exclusivist claims of different world religions can breed conflict. He argues that despite their differences, religions can mutually reinforce each other rather than being inherently conflicting. Vivekananda defines religion as the recognition of the divine nature within oneself, positing that the ultimate goal of all religions is this self-realization, forming a universal religion where loving humanity equates to loving God. This perspective offers a potential solution to religious discord by embracing diverse cultures and paths to truth. Religion addresses fundamental existential concerns such as salvation, death, and the sacred, making it integral to human experience. Vivekananda contends that religious thought is intrinsic to human nature, suggesting that abandoning religion would require transcending thought and life itself. Initially, fear of God facilitated moral behavior, but as society progressed, realism eroded confidence in religious rituals and doctrines, prompting critical inquiries into the nature of God and creation. This paper explores Vivekananda's teachings on the universality of religion, clarifying its essence and dispelling misconceptions that reduce it to narrow, temporal interests.

**Keyword:** Vedantic philosophy, modern ideas, education, self-realization

### Introduction

Religion is profoundly established in man and from days of yore it has been running through his blood. Religion has been a ruling element in man and his ways of reasoning and conduct. From multiple points of view, religion has been a very intimate matter in man and his life. Inside the advanced worldwide city, different religious devotees need to live physically near each other on account of the financial and social reasons. To make a quiet conjunction inside worldwide society regard for religious assorted variety and acknowledgment of religious pluralism is essential. Contemporary Indian thinker Swami Vivekananda has found a unique clarification to the idea of religion. He contended for the need of a universal religion or acknowledgment of religious pluralism. As indicated by him, religion is not only a discussion on principles or hypotheses, nor is it sectarianism. Religion does not live in groups and social orders. It is a connection among soul and God. He explained that religion does not comprise in raising sanctuaries or building houses of worship or going to open love. Additionally, it can't be found in the books or in words or in addresses or in associations. Religion comprises of acknowledgment. Religion does not comprise in subscribing to a specific statement of faith or confidence yet in otherworldly acknowledgment. Therefore, spiritual acknowledgment is religion. He called attention to that the various individuals on the planet approach spirituality in various ways. Moreover, he affirmed that man and his actual nature is already divine. In any case, that godlikeness is covered up. Subsequently, the acknowledgment of that heavenliness is the motivation behind life which is the pith of religion. To understand that religion, according to Vivekananda, man ought to need to rehearse four yoga's. Religion is profoundly established in man and from days of yore it has been running through his blood. It has been an overwhelming element in man and his perspective and conduct. From numerous points of view, religion has been an extremely cozy issue in man and his life. Indian thinker Swami Vivekananda has found an interesting clarification to the idea of religion. He contended for the need of a universal religion. For him, religion isn't only a discussion on precepts or hypotheses, neither life in groups and social orders. It is a connection among soul and God. He

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clarified that religion does not comprise in raising sanctuaries or building houses of worship and going to open love, additionally not accessible in the books or in words or in addresses or in associations. Religion comprises of acknowledgment. Religion does not comprise in buying in to a specific statement of faith or confidence yet in profound acknowledgment. In this manner profound acknowledgment is a religion. To make a serene concurrence inside worldwide society, acknowledgment of genuine religion is fundamental. The soul of Swami Vivekananda's message might be brought out by citing a portion of his essential statements. He needed Indians to be solid; he didn't accept that genuine religion could prosper on void stomachs. It would do well to recollect what he stated: "Our young fellows must be solid; Religion will come a short time later. Be solid, my young companions, that is my recommendation to you. You will be closer to Paradise through football than through the investigation of Gita. You will comprehend Gita better with your biceps, your muscles somewhat more grounded. You will comprehend the powerful virtuoso and the relentless quality of Krishna better with a little solid blood in you. You will comprehend the Upanishads better and the greatness of the Atman when your body stands firm on your feet and you feel yourselves as men." Swami Vivekananda called attention to the various individuals on the planet approach profoundly in various ways. He attested that man and his actual nature is as of now divine. In any case, that eternality is covered up. In this way, the acknowledgment of that heavenly nature is the reason forever which is the quintessence of religion. To understand that religion, as per Vivekananda, man ought to need to rehearse four yoga's. Those are the yoga of information, control of humankind, benevolent work and love of God. Along these lines religion is the embodiment of human life and it has the extraordinary persuading power in one's life including his social, monetary and political viewpoint. This paper will dissect Swami Vivekananda's idea of universal religion, as a universal love or universal fraternity. Vivekananda thought about the need of the idea of universal religion for the general public. He understood the idea of man, as per which humanity in the entire world has been attempting to look past in the mission of his definitive predetermination or quest for God. In this manner, entire of the world network is anticipating a religion, which is adequate to all. Vedanta, rooted in the ancient texts known as the Upanishads, represents a profound school of Hindu philosophy that delves into fundamental questions about existence, consciousness, and the relationship between the individual soul (Atman) and the universal soul (Brahman). This paper explores the philosophical principles of Vedanta and discusses its potential as a source of universal insights, applicable beyond its Hindu origins.

**The Application of The Concept of Universal Religion in Plural Society:** - Vivekananda, in his appraisal of the need of universal religion, found out the significance of the mankind and universal brotherhood to keep religious harmony in the public arena. At that point he attempted to wipe out the powers of disdain and destruction from the hierarchical religion and recognized the genuine religion with universal love. As a precondition for this universal religion to be a reality, Vivekananda said that man and his temperament ought to be immaculate, and he suggested four yoga techniques to accomplish this reason. He characterized the idea of man into four classes, to be specific, the dynamic kind, the spiritualist sort, the scholarly sort, and the reverential sort.

Four yoga's were intended for these four sorts of human types, and this

#### **Historical Context and Philosophical Foundations:** -

Vedanta emerged as a prominent philosophical system within Hinduism, drawing heavily from the Upanishads, which are considered the culmination of Vedic thought. These texts explore metaphysical concepts such as the nature of reality (Sat), consciousness (Chit), and bliss (Ananda), encapsulated in the concept of Brahman - the ultimate reality that pervades everything. Key philosophical ideas include:

**Unity of Brahman and Atman:** Vedanta teaches that the individual soul (Atman) is fundamentally identical to the universal soul (Brahman), emphasizing the underlying unity of all existence.

**Concept of Maya:** Maya refers to the illusion of separateness and the transient nature of the phenomenal world. Understanding Maya is crucial in realizing the true nature of reality according to Vedanta.

**Paths to Self-Realization:** Vedanta outlines various paths (Yogas) to attain self-realization (Moksha), such as Jnana Yoga (path of knowledge), Bhakti Yoga (path of devotion), Karma Yoga (path of selfless action), and Raja Yoga (path of meditation).

#### **Universal Principles in Vedanta**

Vedanta's teachings offer several principles that hold potential universal appeal, transcending cultural and religious boundaries:

**Unity and Oneness:** At its core, Vedanta emphasizes the unity of all existence. The idea that all beings are interconnected and share a common essence resonates with universal values of interconnectedness and harmony.

**Search for Self-Realization:** The quest for self-realization, understanding one's true nature beyond superficial identities, is a universal human pursuit found in various spiritual and philosophical traditions.

**Ethical and Moral Foundations:** Vedanta underscores ethical living and moral values as essential for spiritual growth, advocating virtues such as compassion, non-violence, and truthfulness.

**Pluralism and Tolerance:** Vedanta accommodates diverse paths to spiritual realization, promoting religious pluralism and tolerance towards differing beliefs and practices.

#### **Contemporary Relevance and Application**

In today's globalized world, Vedanta's teachings continue to resonate and find relevance beyond Hinduism:

**Interfaith Dialogue:** Vedanta's emphasis on unity and the interconnectedness of all beings fosters dialogue and understanding among different religious traditions.

**Psychological Insights:** Concepts such as mindfulness, meditation, and the exploration of consciousness in Vedanta align with modern psychological principles and practices.

**Environmental Ethics:** Vedanta's reverence for nature and emphasis on non-harm resonate with contemporary environmental ethics and sustainability movements.

**Vivekananda's Views on The Need for Universal Religion:**

- Vivekananda thought about the need of the idea of universal religion for the general public. He understood the idea of man, as indicated by which humanity in the whole world has been attempting to look past in the journey of his definitive predetermination or quest for God. Along these lines, entire of the world network is expecting a religion, which is satisfactory to all

Distinctive social organizations are speaking to various needs of the man, and they try to rehearse altruism in the public eye. Religions, then again, speak to the profound yearnings and battles of humanity. The unpleasant reality, nonetheless, is that different world religions have been enjoying mutual criticisms, attack, and mistreatments. We have perceived how a few religions in the world, guaranteeing all-inclusive realm in the field of religion over all humanity, have engaged themselves in merciless wars and slaughter to accomplish this end. Vivekananda has watched these two commonly restricting parts of religion, which he clarifies in the accompanying words: "There is nothing that has brought to man a larger number of favors than religion, yet at a similar time, there is nothing that has brought more frightfulness than religion. Nothing has made more for harmony and love than religion; nothing has caused fiercer scorn than religion. Nothing has made the fellowship of man more substantial than religion; nothing has reproduced more severe ill will among man and man than religion. Nothing has manufactured more charitable organizations, more emergency clinics for men, and notwithstanding for creatures, than religion; nothing has deluged the world with more blood than religion."

**Conclusion**

- The concept of religious pluralism is the most critical and important debate within the current thinkers in this field. This research paper is meant to understand Vivekananda's identification of the concept of universal religion and.

Its application to the cutting edge worldwide city. During the previous 150 years we have discussed the philosophical significance of the idea of universal religion. Now it has clear that during this century we need to actualize this idea to modern city life as opposed to examining it once more. Following Swami Vivekananda, we may conclude that we have just a single answer for this multi-social and multi-religious world. It is to cling to the idea of one universal religion, which is not changing over disciples of every single other religion into one religion yet tolerating the concept of religious pluralism. It is the quintessence of Swami Vivekanand's vision to the world. This universal perfect can be drilled by devotees of different religions as well as similarly by non-adherents for it is established on the perfect of unity of humankind and it is designed for human self-acknowledgment which isn't an imposing business model of a specific religion. This genuinely worldwide vision can shape the establishment for quiet conjunction of all in the globe.

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