CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION
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According to humanism man is the highest being in this world. Humanists do not believe in God as a centre of truth and any kind of supernatural entities. But those who believe in the existence of God, think that God has created everything in this world for the benefit of man. The entire universe is created by God for man to enjoy, to work and to prove his worth. But the humanists reject this type of anthropomorphism.

Humanity is the sole truth. The difference of race, religion, etc., is only the practical manifestation of that truth. This was not told as such by anyone before Vivekananda. Humanism was nascent in Rammohan. In Vivekananda, this turned into panbrahmaism. The ordinary man became the extraordinary in the society, life and literature. Respect to all men is called humanism in the western world. The Vedāntic outlook was at the root of the respect to all men which appeared during the renaissance of the nineteenth century in India. In this view it can be said that Vivekananda is a humanist. It is also noticed that Vivekananda’s philosophy is concerned with the suffering humanity and rooted in Vedānta. For this reason Vivekananda’s humanism may be called ‘Vedāntic Humanism’. Vivekananda’s philosophy is based on the following fundamental principles: non-duality of ultimate reality, divinity of soul, unity of existence, harmony of religion and existence of God in man.

Swami Vivekananda is a great prophet, both in India as well as abroad. He is an ideal yogi and monk, teacher and leader,
mystic and ascetic, worker and philosopher. He is one of the famous exponents of Vedānta philosophy. His philosophy originates as a result of re-interpretation of the great tradition of the country to suit the condition of the time. He is not a system maker philosopher, but a great interpreter of Vedānta philosophy. Swamiji does not only preach Vedānta, but also was deeply concerned with human welfare. He had a lot of love for the oppressed, the ignorant and the helpless. He is a great preacher of philanthropy. He preaches the Vedāntic humanism in his own way. He proclaimed the religion of humanism in the new age and made India prominent in this world. He loved India and her people, but his love was only a part of his universal love.

Vivekananda’s love for his motherland and the people is greater than his faith in divinity since he believes that the only God who exists is people. It is true that according to Vivekananda only his people is God, but not only his people, people of every country, every living being is God and the actual meaning of his Vedāntic teaching is that ‘everything is Brahman’. The love for people is the result of his faith in divinity.

Indian scriptures like the Upaniṣads, the Brahma Sūtra and the Bhagavad Gītā which are all known as prasthānatrayas, have different suggestions stimulating our great ācārayas like Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja, Madhva etc., to interpret them differently. As a result Śaṅkara’s Advaita, Rāmānuja’s Viśiṣṭādvaita and Madhva’s Dvaita Vedānta etc., came into existence giving birth to different Hindu sects without unifying them as one single body of Vedānta. According to Vivekananda, these doctrines are ‘text torturing’. They are also confined to the intellectualists for their scholastic
and abstruse nature but fail to satisfy masses, the poor, the illiterate, the ignorant and the afflicted. Vivekananda also finds that there are ingredients treasured in these scriptures for these masses, which may be interpreted as to their need and taste without distorting the true spirit lying in the scriptures.

His meticulous study of Indian scriptures, religious books of different religions, philosophical books of the East and the West, his depth of knowledge in history, his anxiety for the degradation in caste system, for the misinterpretation of śāstras, for the unnecessary quarrel among religions due to misconception, for the indescribable sufferings of the down-trodden of millions of India due to ignorance, poverty, priest-craft and tyranny, prompts him to propound a philosophy related to the over-all development—material, mental, moral and spiritual, of man and accessible to all irrespective of caste, creed, religion, age, economic status, nations, intellectual and ignorant.

His philosophy is of Advaitic nature in a special sense, because it is a combination of both Advaita and Dvaita Vedānta. Here the reality is One termed as Brahman (Absolute), Īśvara (God) and some other name, but all these terms refer to the same reality. ‘Ekaṁ sad viprāḥ bahudhā vadanti’. Absolute and God are two when seen from different perspectives but they refer to the same Reality. God is in all, all is in God. Thus Vivekananda says ‘He is in the universe, he is universe Himself’. God is not outside of man He is within man. ‘Tattvamasi’, so one should not seek God outside to worship. Service to all living beings of the world is service to God. The difference between man and man, man and animal, plant and stone is not in kind but only in degree.
Vivekananda is an Advaitist of the first rank, while commenting on the high philosophy of Advaita. He comments that individual soul is identical with supreme Soul. Every soul (Atman) is higher than the sun, moon and heaven. No books, no scriptures, no science can ever imagine the glory of the Self that appears as man, the most glorious God that ever was, the only God that existed, exists or ever will exist.

In Vivekananda’s philosophy, the relation between Absolute and God, God and man, God, religion and man have been nicely woven. Gods of different religions are different names of the same reality. No religion is absolutely true, inferior or superior. All religions are different paths leading to the same goal. Religion is for the good of humanity. It is for remaking a man. To Vivekananda, religion is not just a question of belief, not doctrine, nor theories, however beautiful they may be. It is being and becoming. In a letter written from Washington on October 27, 1894, Vivekananda made his position very clear. “However sublime the theories, however well spun may be the philosophy, I do not call it religion as long as it is confined to books and dogmas.”¹ All true religion is true philosophy. Thus this philosophy brings the God of heaven to earth.

In his philosophy, matter and spirit are not treated as separate entities. They are of the same kind. Both are nature (matter), only the former is crude and the latter is fine. Both are phenomena of the world and both are the forms of the Absolute. It sounds like the objective idealism of Hegel.

¹ C. W., V, p 50
Vivekananda is the greatest figure in the Parliament of Religion. It is admitted by the scholars that as a world teacher, everywhere he has gone and to whom he has spoken, he preaches the world unity on a basis of spiritual background. The most popular and influential man who represents Hinduism captures the large audiences in the parliament of world Religions by addressing them as ‘Sisters and Brothers of America’. These words tempted the large crowd with thunderous applause. Vivekananda continues to deliver his speech by saying that he boasts of belonging to a religion that is Hinduism which has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance. Swami Vivekananda believes that, while all religions are true and good, every one should remain in the religion in which he has been brought up. The Hindus, he believes have no need to seek elsewhere for the spiritual basis of practical life in the world. Swami Vivekananda concluded his speech in the Parliament of Religions at Chicago by pointing to the common centre of all religions which he considers to be the heart of all faiths culminating in the same truth.

Vivekananda treats Vedantism as the religion of the Vedas or ancient Hindu books which he said is “the mother of religion”. The heterodox people may not believe in the authority of the Vedas. The result of rational modern inquiry might contradict the true perceptions of the old religious writings like Bible, Korān and Vedas without realizing their true meaning.\(^2\)

In a letter written to Mohammed Sarfaraz Hussain on 10\(^{th}\) June, 1898, Swami Vivekananda firmly persuades that without the

\(^2\) C.W., IX, p 512
help of practical Islam, the theories of Vedantism though fine and wonderful may becomes entirely valueless to the mankind. He says everybody wants to lead mankind to the place where this is neither the Vedas nor the Bible nor the Korān; yet this has to be done by harmonizing the Vedas, the Bible, and the Korān. Mankind is to be taught that religions are but varied expressions of the Religion which is Oneness, so that each may choose the path that suits him best.3

From the above discussion, it can be said that Swamiji is a pragmatic, a nationalist and a humanist. He is an idealist as well as a socialist. As a humanist, Vivekananda preaches universality, love, unity and divinity. He advocates identity of humanity with divinity, thus it can be said that his humanism is spiritualistic humanism, because his humanism protects the purity of human nature, regards man as God, attacks social, economic and religious evil of society and establishes faith and strength in the individual. Spiritual humanist is not doing good to other but includes the whole of humanity.

Man making is the important task to Vivekananda. This message is delivered by Swamiji at the turn of the nineteenth century. The divinity and dignity of man, freedom, love for others, service to humanity, self-confidence, truth, absence of jealousy and selfishness, sacrifice, renunciation, charity, dedication, strength, humility – these are the ideals of Swamiji’s man-making humanism. It proves when Vivekananda says, “It is

3 C.W., VI, p.416
man-making religion that we want. It is man-making theories that we want. It is man-making education all round that we want."

Humanism of Swami Vivekananda is metaphysically rooted in the Vedāntic vision of man as Ātman. Thus it is rational, spiritual, universal and integral. He realised that divinity is both outside and inside and that it is both physically and spiritually omnipresent. Advaita Vedānta is the foundation of Vivekananda’s humanism. It proves when he speaks, “Do not injure another. Love everyone as your own self, because this whole universe is one. In injuring another, I am injuring myself; in loving another, I am loving myself.”

Vivekananda’s humanistic thinking reveals in the following letter: “I have lost all wish for my salvation. I never wanted earthly enjoyments. I must see my machine in strong working order, and then knowing sure that I have put in a lever for the good of humanity, in India at least, which no power can drive back, I will sleep, without caring what will be next; and may I be born again and again, and suffer thousands of miseries so that I may worship the only God that exists, the only God I believe in, the sum total of all souls — and above all, my God the wicked, my God the miserable, my God the poor of all races, of all species, is the special object of my worship.”

Swami Vivekananda’s philosophy may be termed as the Vedāntic Humanism as it is concerned with the suffering humanity and rooted in the Vedānta. This Vedāntic Humanism

4 C. W., III, p 224
5 C. W., I, p 364
6 C. W., V, pp 136-137
admits universality of Religions i.e. a religion which is unity of all religions retaining underduality in it. So it is a philosophy of synthesis and peaceful co-existence. It is a new interpretation of the Vedānta presented before us by Swami Vivekananda as a philosopher although he humbly declines to be a philosopher. He says “I am no metaphysician, no philosopher, nay no saint. But I am poor. I love poor.”7 In support of feeling for the masses, he may be quoted, “You must give your body, mind and speech to the welfare of the world. You have read Mātr Devo Bhava, Pitr Devo Bhava, meaning ‘Look upon your mother as God, look upon your father as God’, but I say ‘daridra devo bhava, mūrkha devo bhava’ meaning – ‘the poor, the illiterate, the ignorant, the afflicted – let these be your God’. Know that service to these alone is the highest religion.”8

Vedāntic humanism indicates that all human being are equal at metaphysical level. They are integral with cosmic soul. All human beings are soul-mates of each other. Thus there are no differences between two souls.

‘The Vedāntic Humanism’ has brought nearer materialism and idealism, theism and atheism. Even an atheist or materialist will not hesitate to accept it though it has some idealistic bias accepting faith in God for spiritual attainment. It cannot be said that Vivekananda is a materialist, because a materialist thinks that every thing have come out of matter. But Vivekananda admits that all hope and religion emerge from Brahma. Vivekananda

7 V.K.R.V. Rao, Swami Vivekananda, third print 2001, p 146
8 ibid., p 147
believes that there is only one reality which he calls God, but materialist calls it matter.

*Tat tvam asi* is the profound truth about man and this truth must be taken into account if all want to realize the Reality. The Chāndogya Upaniṣad (VI.ix.4) reveals the profound truth:

Āitad ātmyamidam sarvam, tat satyam, sa ātmā, tat tvam asi, Śvetaketu.⁹

This whole manifested universe has this [Reality] as its Self; that is the Truth; that is the Ātman [the Self]; and thou art That, O Śvetaketu. This is the vision of the One behind the Many, the One that never changes, that never dies, behind the Many that change and die.

The Purport of the mahāvākya, ‘*Tat Tvam Asi*’ as expressed by, ‘The *Katha Upaniṣad* sounds the clarion of all Vedānta (3.14): Uttisthata! Jāgrata! Prāpya varan nibodhata— ‘Arise, Awake, and stop not till the goal is reached’, as freely rendered by Vivekananda, the paragon of Vedāntic teachers of the modern age, as eulogized by his contemporary, the American philosopher William James.¹⁰

Swami Vivekananda always advises that everybody should love his neighbours as himself. Because every soul is related with Supreme Reality. Vivekananda beautifully expresses his humanistic thought in the following lines. “in hurting anyone, you hurt yourself, in loving anyone, you love yourself. As soon as a

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current of hatred is thrown outside, whomsoever else it hurts, it also hurts yourself; and if love comes out from you, it is bound to come back to you. For I am the universe; this universe is my body. I am the Infinite, only I am not conscious of it now; but I am struggling to get this consciousness of the Infinite, and perfections will be reached when full consciousness of this Infinite comes.”

Unity is the background of Swamiji’s philosophical thinking. Many and the One are the same Reality, but the same truth is perceived by the mind at different times with different attitudes. Swami Vivekananda thinks that pluralistic vision must end in monistic vision and seers see unity in diversity. External worship is only a symbol of internal worship, it is not important for men, but important thing is internal worship and internal purity of mind. Without them, external worship would be of no avail. After long spiritual realization Swamiji realises that it is God that dwells within all embodied souls or jīva, and who serves these embodied souls, serves God, because God is present in every jīva, there is no other God besides that. He had the direct perception of the Vedāntic truth that every living being is Brahman, that Jīva is Śiva. He had the genius to realize that this was a message which could revolutionize the future world.

In Srimad Bhāgavatam (3.29.27) Sri Kṛṣṇa says to worship him in all beings because He is the Self of all beings. Vivekananda also says to worship jīva as Śiva. But how to worship God in man? It is not easy for us. Worshipping an idol is easy. But to worship God in man, some different methods are needed. Those people who are uneducated, give them education,

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11 *C.W.*, I, p 390
who are suffering, give them consolation and who is helpless, help them. Through this path if one can help people, it will be a true worship. But it is only possible when everyone feels that there is no difference between ‘I’ and ‘You’.

According to Swami Vivekananda, the living God actually means human beings and his main principle is the service to man that leads actually the service to God. Swamiji beautifully expressed his ideas of humanity in his poem ‘The Living God’. The First Stanza may be quoted for reference:

He who is in you and outside you,
Who works through all hands,
Who walk on all feet,
Whose body are all ye,
Him worship, and break all other idols!

In the first stanza of the poem this idea has been reflected. The humanity of a worldly man makes him more devotional to the worship of God. Swamiji calls him to worship the living God – the poor, the needy, the suffering humanity who dedicated themselves to all works of life to toil the land, to produce the food, to build the road, to weave the clothe with two hands, two feet, are the real God. So instead of lifeless idols placed in temple, worship the living God that resides in every living Human being. Vivekananda believes that Śiva is more pleased to him who serves and helps poor man without thinking of his cast, creed or race.

12 C.W., VII, p 169
‘Service to man is service to God’ is based on this principle of Vedānta where the Lord is immanent, the innermost Self of all living beings. This idea we find in the Srimad Bhāgavatam, when Sri Kṛṣṇa says he is the inherent in all beings as the antarātmā, who neglects this Self, immanent in all beings, and worships only in the temple, in the images, he worships in vain. Seeing one God in everything – is most important to everyone for today’s world.

Vivekananda accepts Ramakrishna as his master and devotes his life for the propagation of his ideas and the founding and the guiding of the Ramakrishna Mission for humanitarian service. He introduces into Hinduism the missionary zeal of Christianity, imparted to the monistic Vedānta a practical shape by emphasizing its positive aspect – that all is Brahma, and, therefore, that service of man as God (nara-nārāyaṇa) is better than quiescent meditation.\textsuperscript{13}

Roman Rolland most aptly chooses to call Vivekananda a ‘living hymn of work’. His philosophy, in truth, is a Dynamics of Action. It is also a rousing call to awaken our souls, ‘to recreate our Being’ and to set on to build the ‘City of Mankind’ or ‘One World’ on the basis of his Universal Science-Religion, or true Scientific Socialism.\textsuperscript{14}

Vivekananda not only preaches Advaita Vedānta in Bengal, he also gives it a new depth and a new dimension by affirming its value in our individual and social life. Vivekananda goes deep into the philosophy of Advaita Vedānta to discover

\textsuperscript{13} D. M. Dutta, \textit{Chief Currents of Contemporary Philosophy}, 1961, P 573

\textsuperscript{14} Santwana Dasgupta, \textit{Social Philosophy of Swami Vivekananda}, 2005, pp 473-474
there the well-spring of man’s moral sensibility. And it is a philosophical task of great magnitude and complexity and he accomplishes that task in a heroic endeavour to make room for morality in monistic metaphysics.\textsuperscript{15}

Swamiji brings the East and the West closer to each other on the platform of Vedānta. Through the wonderful idea of uniqueness of soul he tries to break down the artificial barrier which has created division from man to man, community to community, religion to religion. The universality of Vedānta opens the gate to bring all people of the world together.

Swami Vivekananda, if compared with other Śādhus and Saints and Vedāntins of contemporary India, it appears that he is totally different from them. He is not satisfied to give importance of Unqualified Vedānta, but he also gave a new dimension to progress the world where man lives and moves.

Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose has paid his deep homage to Swami Vivekananda by the following words, “Reckless in his sacrifice, unceasing in his activity, boundless in his love, profound and versatile in his wisdom, exuberant in his emotions, merciless in his attacks but yet simple as a child – he was a rare personality in this world of ours....”\textsuperscript{16}

Swami Vivekananda’s great contribution is of course practical Vedānta which leads to the same ethos and conduct for all human beings, irrespective of the nature of the belief in God

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\textsuperscript{15} R. K. Dasgupta, \textit{Swami Vivekananda’s Vedantic Socialism}, 1995, pp 76-77
\textsuperscript{16} Swami Lokeswarananda (edited), \textit{World Thinkers on Ramakrishna-Vivekananda}, The Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Golpark, 1983, p 46
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and the kind of Yoga which is preferred for reaching Him. Secularism, socialism, mass uplift and mass power, women’s liberation, abolition of untouchability, inclusion of social service as a part of religious worship, Hindu-Muslim unity etc., are contribution of Swami Vivekananda to the building of modern India.

In recent times we have taken new inspiration from the slogan of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda that every service to jīva (Man and others) is service to God. But whatever course the aspirant takes, be that devotion and surrender or service and sacrifice, the Vedāntic vision of identity inculcated by the great Upaniṣadic saying is constantly at the root of all his endeavours and all will say that it permeates his being.

‘Service’ is ‘Sevā’ which means, to be exact, ‘worship’ i.e. ‘pūjā’. Swami Vivekananda says the twin ideals of service and sacrifice inspire man to develop. This is possible only when a man believes in the power of the Spirit, power of the Ātman within. And this is the essence of spirituality.

It is acknowledged by the scholars in modern times that meditation, yoga and various technique of Hindu Meditation are popularly applied by the west. It is quite clear that this is possible on account of direct or indirect influence and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. Swami Vivekananda’s profound belief in the acceptance of all religions based on the intellectual side on the interpretation of Vedānta and admission of all four kinds of yoga recommended by the Hindu scriptures for the realization of God. For the emotional side it depends on love of
God which crosses all barriers and takes all human beings. The combination of yoga and the synthesis of all schools of Vedāntic system is the important feature of Swami Vivekananda’s humanism.

A total man, man-making religion, man-making education, man-making theories, Naranārāyaṇa, Daridra-nārāyaṇa – Vivekananda pronounced these words many a time. In the ancient times the hermits shut themselves in caves and temples and spent their time in meditation only for freeing themselves. But Vivekananda is not that kind of sannyasins, who squats in a temple, shut their eyes and keep themselves busy with worship of God, rather he keeps his eyes open, looks at the outside world, dedicates himself and his life to this society, with the help of religion and science in the service of man for arousing awareness in him.

Vivekananda tries to introduce a world where man constitutes the central point. Everyone worships man as God. God is not outside man. He is in man. God of others and God of Vivekananda are not the same. God of others is outside the world, but Vivekananda’s God is inside the world. He converts the static form of God into the dynamic form of man.

The humanism of Swami Vivekananda is very relevant to modern society for the betterment of the society and individual. The present society is replete with selfishness, demoralisation, spiritual crisis ignorance, poverty, tyranny, religious conflicts, wars, caste and colour complex, misunderstanding, intolerance and hatred. This humanistic philosophy of Vivekananda will
arouse all people from their dogmatic slumber of various misconceptions and superstitions. Specially in respect of religion, and caste system. It will help man, specially the youth for revival of faith and self-confidence in the young generation of the day. It will remould the nature of a man for making a better world. It will save the mankind from moral degradation and spiritual crisis and change a man with the supreme qualities, of fearlessness, compassion, love, tolerance and service to humanity.

Vivekananda’s humanism is called Vedāntic humanism as it is in the Veda and Upaniṣads. This Vedāntic humanism will bring forth peace, order and unity in India. This will ensure peace in India and the world. If man is considered God, there will be no difference among men and men and as a result this world will turn into Heaven. It is, therefore, desirable that Vivekananda’s humanism is followed by all.

The message of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda is the message of peace, amity and world brotherhood. That message indicates the path of survival in the fear-stricken world of today. It is very much essential to disseminate the message of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda all over the world. There is no doubt that their message was necessary and relevant in India and the world of their times, but it is still more necessary for and relevant to the present-day Indian context and the contemporary world.\(^\text{17}\)

It is true that religion is the unifying force of the society, but it is also a cause of social conflict. All these conflicts arise due to the ignorance of real nature of religion. Thus Vivekananda

\(^{17}\) Santwana Dasgupta, *Social Philosophy of Swami Vivekananda*, 2005, pp 473-474
wants to stop all the religious conflicts of the world through the universal religion which unifies all religions (parliament of religions) retaining their individualities. In fact, man cannot live without religion, but in the modern age man can accept that kind of religion which is rational, realistic and universalistic which considers man as God – Naranārāyaṇa.

The religious man has faith in a deity whereas the humanist has faith in humanity. If everyone believes that the same Brahman is residing in each and every man then all bad feelings like hatred, jealousy, greed, anger etc., will automatically vanish. It is a message of hope to the young generation as well as to the humanity in general. It is an inspiration to the youth. His message is not for one time but for all times to come not for one aspect of life but for all aspects of existence.

So Vivekananda’s philosophy, ‘Vedāntic Humanism’ brings a message to the humanity at large teaching tolerance, mutual understanding, acceptance of all religions as true, all men rich or poor, irrespective of creeds, castes and religions, different senses to be equal for the establishment of world peace and universal brotherhood. Thus it is not only relevant to India and abroad for the present but for all the time to come.