



Mains Practice Question

Q. Swami Vivekananda had revolutionized and awakened the Indian philosophical mind. He can be viewed as great Master of Philosophy of unity in diversity. Discuss (250 words)

31 Oct, 2022 GS Paper 1 History

Approach:

- Give a brief introduction of Swami Vivekananda.
- Discuss the philosophy of swami Vivekananda.
- Discuss briefly how his philosophy promotes unity in diversity.
- Conclude accordingly.

Introduction:

- Swami Vivekananda was originally named Narendra Nath Datta. He was influenced by both Indian and western culture. His exposure to Hindu deity form of worship and Christian religion often conflicted with his beliefs. This was until he accepted Ramakrishna as his guru and became a monk. His vast knowledge of culture also earned him the respect and recognition of raising interfaith awareness.

Body:

- **Philosophy of Vivekananda is based on Vedanta, its main tenets are as follows:**
 - It was **based on Upanishads** and their interpretation.
 - Its aim was to **enquire about 'Brahman' (ultimate reality)** which was the **central concept of Upanishads**.
 - It saw **Veda as the ultimate source of information** and whose authority could not be questioned.
 - It emphasized on path of knowledge (jnana) as opposed to that of sacrifice (karma).
 - Ultimate aim of knowledge was '**Moksha**' i.e., liberation from '**sansara**'.
- **Core Values of Swami Vivekanand's Philosophy:**
 - One of the most significant contributions of Swami Vivekananda to the modern world is his **interpretation of religion as a universal experience of transcendent reality, common to all humanity**.
 - This **universal** conception frees religion from the hold of superstitions, dogmatism, priest craft and intolerance.
- **Influence of his philosophy in promoting unity in diversity:**
 - He **believed in the basic oneness of existence seen through different constitutions** such as earth, heavens, gods, hell, ghosts, men, etc. and **advocated strongly the eternal sameness or homogeneity beyond all differentiation, the unity of all personalities**.
 - His message was essentially of **sacrifice and service to others, to serve others without distinction of caste, class and sex**. He believed that in each being there was God and thus each being should be served with humility and especially the poor. **Serving others fostered the spirit of humanism which was dear to him**.
 - His **nationalism is based on Humanism and Universalism**, the two cardinal features of

- Indian spiritual culture.
- Unlike western nationalism, which is secular in nature, Swami Vivekananda's nationalism is based on religion which is life blood of the Indian people.
 - **The basis of his nationalism are:**
 - Deep concern for masses, freedom and equality through which one expresses self, spiritual integration of the world on the basis of universal brotherhood.
 - "Karmyoga" a system of ethics to attain freedom both political and spiritual through selfless service.

Conclusion:

- Swami Vivekananda belonged to the 19th century, yet his message and his life are more relevant today than in the past and perhaps, will be more relevant in future.
- Persons like Swami Vivekananda do not cease to exist with their physical death - their influence and their thought, the work which they initiate, go on gaining momentum as years pass by, and ultimately, reach a fulfilment which they envisaged.

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