



## Mains Practice Question

**Q** Swami Vivekananda emphasized the harmony of spiritual and material values for societal progress. Examine the relevance of his philosophy in tackling modern-day ethical dilemmas. **(150 words)**

21 Nov, 2024 GS Paper 4 Theoretical Questions

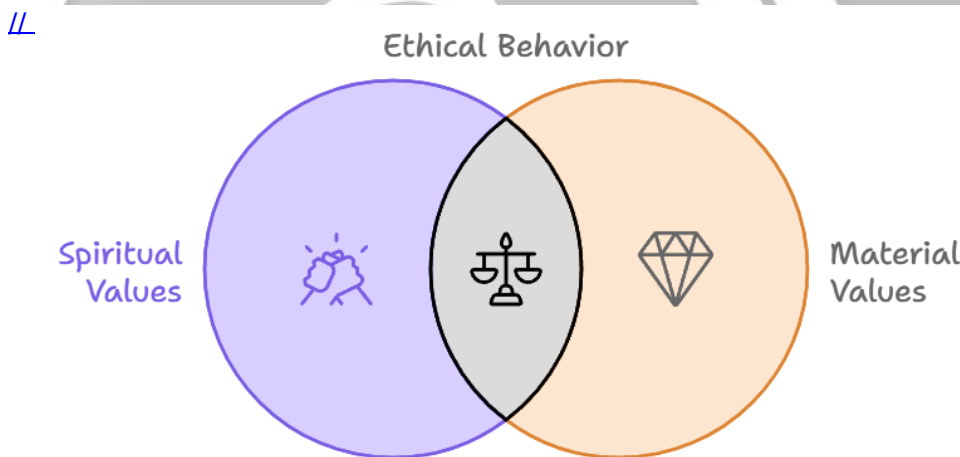
### Approach

- Introduce the answer by highlighting Swami Vivekananda's emphasis on harmony of spiritual and material values
- Give Relevance of Swami Vivekananda's Philosophy to Modern Ethical Dilemmas
- Conclude suitably.

### Introduction

**Swami Vivekananda**, a 19<sup>th</sup>-century spiritual leader and reformer, **emphasized the harmony of spiritual and material values**, advocating for a balanced approach to individual and societal development.

- His philosophy promotes **ethical conduct, spiritual growth, and material well-being**, providing a framework for addressing modern-day ethical dilemmas characterized by conflicts between values, self-interest, and societal responsibilities.



### Body

#### Relevance of Swami Vivekananda's Philosophy to Modern Ethical Dilemmas

- **Balancing Self-Interest and Collective Welfare**
  - **Ethical Dilemma:** The pursuit of **material wealth often conflicts with the broader social good**, as seen in issues like environmental degradation.

- **Philosophy's Relevance:** Vivekananda emphasized **selflessness and service**, advocating for individual prosperity aligned with societal well-being.
  - For instance, adopting sustainable business practices balances profit motives with environmental conservation.
- **Resolving Conflicts in Governance and Leadership**
  - **Ethical Dilemma: Corruption, favoritism**, and a lack of accountability in governance undermine public trust.
  - **Philosophy's Relevance:** Vivekananda's stress on **integrity and spiritual discipline encourages ethical leadership**.
    - His teachings inspire **decision-making based on dharma (duty)** rather than personal gain, crucial for public servants.
- **Promoting Social Justice and Equity**
  - **Ethical Dilemma:** Disparities in wealth and access to resources create ethical concerns about fairness and equity.
  - **Philosophy's Relevance:** Swami Vivekananda championed upliftment through education and equality.
    - His idea of **Daridra Narayana** (serving the poor as a form of worship) encourages policies and actions aimed at reducing inequality and ensuring social justice.
- **Ethics in Technology and Innovation**
  - **Ethical Dilemma:** Issues such as **data privacy, misuse of AI**, and widening digital divides pose challenges.
  - **Philosophy's Relevance:** Vivekananda's vision of harmonizing progress with ethical and spiritual values calls for **ethical use of technology** that serves humanity rather than exploiting vulnerabilities.
- **Addressing Moral Relativism in Personal Lives**
  - **Ethical Dilemma:** Modern society often faces **moral ambiguity in issues like lifestyle choices and consumerism**.
  - **Philosophy's Relevance:** By emphasizing **self-control, self-awareness, and spiritual grounding**, Vivekananda offers a guide to making value-based personal decisions that align with inner peace and societal harmony.
    - He also stated that, "Anything that makes you weak – physically, intellectually and spiritually, reject it as poison."

## Conclusion

**Swami Vivekananda's** philosophy offers timeless guidance for tackling modern ethical dilemmas. By harmonizing **spiritual and material values**, individuals and societies can navigate the complexities of **modern life with integrity, inclusiveness, and a focus on collective progress**.