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Swami Vivekananda's Vision on "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam": A Paradigm for Peace and Harmony in the Contemporary Era.

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Abstract

This paper explores the philosophical dimensions of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (the world is one family) through the lens of Swami Vivekananda. By examining his advocacy for Advaita Vedanta, religious universality, and cultural synthesis, the study highlights the continued relevance of his teachings in mitigating modern crises such as religious bigotry, global conflict, and environmental degradation.

Introduction

Indian history has given rise to several great concepts, the adoption and practice of which have made the entire human society joyful and prosperous. One such great concept is "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam". The ethos of Indian culture is deeply rooted in the philosophy of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam', which translates to, 'the world is one family'. This profound concept underscores the interconnectedness and Unity that pervades Indian thought. The Parliament of India, as the epitome of public spirit, embodies this spirit of collective harmony & Peace.

This profound concept of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' is propagated by Swami Vivekananda, who was the Advocate of 'universal brotherhood'. In today's world where we are connected by technology but divided by ideology, Swami Vivekanand's Universal perspective seems remarkably relevant.

Swami Vivekananda's Global Vision

Swami Vivekananda was the great visionary. He believed that Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam - the world is one family - was the cornerstone for global peace. His iconic address at the 1893 Chicago World Parliament of Religions emphasized universal brotherhood, respect for all

faiths, and the divine in humanity. He championed Advaita philosophy, religious universality, and cultural harmony, leaving an enduring legacy.

Advaita (Non -Duality) Philosophy

Swami Vivekananda presented the Advaita perspective based on Vedanta philosophy, which is like nectar for entire humanity. Advaita philosophy means that there is only one all-pervading Brahma i. e. the Supreme ; the entire universe is a manifestation of that single ultimate truth, 'Brahma'. All human beings are a part of that ultimate truth . Swamiji gave humanity the vision to see God in every living being. Swamiji's Advaita philosophy states that, we are all connected by an invisible thread. 'Dvait' (Duality) is a path to Advaita (non-duality), just as rainwater falls on the ground, flows into a river, and finally merges into the sea—this is the process of moving from duality to non-duality. Here, Swamiji has explained how to eliminate discrimination and cultivate religious harmony. According to Swamiji, Advaita is a living experience that liberates every person from the sense of ego.

Religious Universality

At the Chicago World Parliament of Religions, Swami Vivekananda espoused the philosophy of universal acceptance, asserting that the notion of one's own religion being the sole truth and others being false is a parochial perspective. He eloquently likened the diverse religions to distinct rivers that converge into the vast ocean of spiritual enlightenment, underscoring that all faiths are viable pathways to the singular ultimate reality. Given the convergence of purpose, he advocated for an end to hierarchical comparisons and instead, implored individuals to cultivate mutual respect and understanding, thereby mitigating the discord sown by religious discord.

Cultural Harmony

The concept of cultural harmony denotes a symbiotic confluence of diverse cultural paradigms. Swami Vivekananda infused a novel perspective into this notion, situating it within the ethos of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' – the world as an integrated family. He posited that a synthesis of Eastern and Western cultural ethos would catalyse a harmonious fusion of scientific pragmatism, technological innovation, and spiritual wisdom. The Occidental emphasis on empirical inquiry and rationalism, when blended with India's profound spiritual heritage and moral rectitude, would usher in an era of unprecedented global concord.

Challenges of the modern world and Vivekananda's thoughts

Religious Bigotry

Religious hatred is a major issue today, with people believing their religion is superior and others inferior. This mindset has led to bigotry, violence, and division.

In this milieu, Swami Vivekananda's philosophy shines as a beacon, illuminating the path from the darkness of intolerance to the radiance of humanism and social unity. His iconic address at the Chicago World Parliament of Religions, commencing with the salutation "My brothers and sisters," epitomized his vision of universal brotherhood. By embracing the ethos of 'Sarva Dharmas Sama Bhava' – equal respect for all faiths – we can effectively counter the malaise of religious extremism and foster a harmonious coexistence.

War and Violence

War and violence are destroying God's creation. Today, humanity is plagued by narrow nationalism, leading to conflicts that threaten our very existence. Swami Vivekananda's philosophy offers a solution: recognizing the divine in every being. When we see others as part of ourselves, violence becomes unthinkable. By abandoning selfishness and serving those in need, we can prevent wars. Swamiji's thoughts on spiritual unity are crucial in dispelling the looming threat of global conflict.

Environmental crisis

Nature is a wonderful and priceless gift to man from God, but in the modern world, man is exploiting this environment for his own selfishness. While moving on the path of progress, he is giving immense torture to nature. Due to this act of man, nature turns into a natural calamity. According to Swami Vivekananda, nature and human beings are not separate but part of the same consciousness. Embracing the ethos of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' the world is one family we can transcend our narrow interests and recognize the interconnectedness of all beings. If we consider nature as a form of God, we'll protect it, maintaining environmental balance.

The path to peace and Harmony

Swami Vivekananda emphasized transcending narrow selfishness and prejudice to foster global peace and harmony. His mantra was 'Help, don't conflict; unite, don't destroy.' Nature's law is unity in diversity. Though we appear separate, we're one at the spiritual level – this realization is key to harmony. Inner peace is a prerequisite for global peace. Personal spiritual growth enables us to look beyond self-interest, cultivating empathy and compassion. Selfless love is the hallmark of spiritual progress, allowing us to participate in universal brotherhood.

Conclusion

We understood Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam through Swami Vivekananda's perspective, where universal brotherhood transcends geographical boundaries, serving as a spiritual bridge connecting hearts. Swamiji's concept isn't a mere fantasy, but the foundation of human existence. Amidst today's political and moral conflicts, the chain of spiritual unity is

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weakening. Hence, Swamiji's message of harmony and peace is more relevant than ever. His idea of universal brotherhood, rooted in Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, has been instrumental in fostering global peace and harmony, cementing his status as a visionary of international stature.

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