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V. Social Philosophy

1. Social Ideals and National Dharma

Formerly sages like Shankara and Ramanuja specialized in religious philosophy, and Manu and Kautilya in social-political philosophy. But Vivekananda was extremely adept and influential in both areas, which was something new. Social philosophy deals with the concept and principles of the society in relation to moral, spiritual, and cultural standards. Vivekananda's ethical and social teachings are grounded in the basic principles of Hinduism. Among other things he advocated raising the standard of living of the lower classes, high levels of universal education, women's equality, universal religious pluralism, and ethical living while retaining the spiritual culture.

One of the main propositions of Swami Vivekananda's social and historical philosophy is that every country should follow its own "National Dharma." Then the country will have more autonomy in realizing its potentiality. Consequently, he opposed the idea of a violent break with the past, since social change should be the outcome of the process of the adjustment of old institutions and values to the new conditions. After returning to India in 1897 he told the people in Madras and Lahore, "We must grow according to our nature. Vain is it to

attempt the lines of action that foreign societies have engrafted upon us; it is impossible. Glory unto God, that it is impossible, that we cannot be twisted and tortured into the shape of other nations. I do not condemn the institutions of other races; they are good for them, but not for us. What is meat for them may be poison for us. This is the first lesson to learn. With other sciences, other institutions, and other traditions behind them, they have got their present system. We, with our traditions, with thousands of years of Karma behind us, naturally can only follow our own bent, run in our own grooves; and that we shall have to do.... Just as there is an individuality in every man, so there is a national individuality. As one man differs from another in certain particulars, in certain characteristics of his own, so one race differs from another in certain peculiar characteristics; and just as it is the mission of every man to fulfill a certain purpose in the economy of nature, just as there is a particular line set out for him by his own past Karma, so it is with nations—each nation has a destiny to fulfill, each nation has a message to deliver, each nation has a mission to accomplish. Therefore, from the very start, we must have to understand the mission of our own race, the destiny it has to fulfill, the place it has to occupy in the march of nations, and note which it has to contribute to the harmony of races.” “So, each nation has a mission of its own to perform in this harmony of races; and so long as that nation keeps to that ideal, that nation nothing can kill; but if that nation gives up its mission in life and goes after something else, its life becomes short, and it vanishes.”¹

Vivekananda continues, “Each nation has its own peculiar method of work. Some work through politics, some through social reforms, some through other lines. With us, religion is the only ground along which we can move. The Englishman can understand even religion through politics. Perhaps the American can understand even religion through social reforms. But the Hindu can understand even politics when it is given through religion; sociology must come through religion, everything must come through religion. For that is the theme, the rest

are the variations in the national life-music. And that was in danger. It seemed that we were going to change this theme in our national life, that we were going to exchange the backbone of our existence, as it were, that we were trying to replace a spiritual by a political backbone. And if we could have succeeded, the result would have been annihilation. But it was not to be. So this power became manifest. I do not care in what light you understand this great sage [Sri Ramakrishna], it matters not how much respect you pay to him, but I challenge you face to face with the fact that here is a manifestation of the most marvellous power that has been for several centuries in India, and it is your duty, as Hindus, to study this power, to find what has been done for the regeneration, for the good of India, and for the good of the whole human race through it."² "The object of my speaking of these things is to impress upon you the fact that the life of each nation has a moral purpose of its own, and the manners and customs of a nation must be judged from the standpoint of that purpose. The Westerners should be seen through their eyes; to see them through our eyes, and for them to see us with theirs--both these are mistakes. The purpose of our life is quite the opposite of theirs.... Our goal of life is Moksha [Liberation] ... The purpose of life in the West is Bhoga, enjoyment."³

National Dharma applies to the modern concept of a civilization. For example, we might think of an Indian or Chinese civilization that goes back thousands of years, and has continued up to the present. The continuing foundational elements over thousands of years include to some extent a similar national identity, ethnic group, geographical area, language, history, set of ideas, religion, customs, values, etc. Naturally over the centuries these entities are subject to some changes. The process of reincarnation is a major factor in preserving national dharma since many people are reborn in the same country or civilization. It has been written that the Chinese people accepted Communism because of its compatibility with traditional Confucius and neo-Confucian ideology.

Conversely Western individuality, democracy, and a strong theistic religion are not in harmony with Communism.

Influential philosophers of history like N. Danilevsky, O. Spengler, A. Toynbee, W. Schubart, A. Kroeber, and P. Sorokin all agree that each civilization or cultural system (such as the Indian civilization or the Hindu culture) functions as a real unity not identical with the nation, or any other social group. Russian born Harvard University Sociologist Pitirim Sorokin (1889-1968) tells us, "Each of the vast cultural systems is based upon some 'major premise' or 'philosophical presupposition' or 'prime symbol' or 'ultimate value' which the supersystem or civilization articulates, develops, and realizes in all its main compartments, or parts, in the process of its life-career. Correspondingly, each of the great cultural unities is either logically or aesthetically consistent in the meaningful aspects of its parts and compartments." The civilization or supersystem properties include, "differential dependence of its parts upon one another, upon the whole, and of the whole upon its parts; preservation of its individuality or its 'sameness' in spite of a change of its parts ... selectivity of the super-system, which takes in what is congenial to it and rejects what is uncongenial (otherwise it would not be able to preserve its individuality, consistency, and meaningful unity)."⁴ Sorokin describes this group characteristic thusly, "Organized sociocultural group. From the moment of its emergence, in accordance with its sociocultural nature, the group determines its main functions, whether they be political, scientific, economic, religious, criminal. From the moment of its emergence, it is largely a self-changing and self-directing unity that bears in itself the essentials of its life-career, the direction of its change, its phases, and its destination. As such it has always a margin of autonomy from the external forces. In widely different milieu, conditions, and situations it keeps its own identity and integrity. In all these respects, it is an immanent self-regulating and self-determining system."⁵

Sorokin continues with this line of thought, "The second fundamental implication of the principle of immanent change is the principle of immanent self-determination of the potentially given course of the existence of a sociocultural system. It may be formulated as follows: As soon as a sociocultural system emerges, its essential and normal course of existence, the forms, the phases, the activities of its life career or destiny are determined mainly by the system itself, by its potential nature and the totality of its properties. The totality of the external circumstances is relevant, but mainly in the way-of retarding or accelerating the unfolding of the immanent destiny; weakening or reinforcing some of the traits of the system; hindering or facilitating a realization of the immanent potentialities of the system; finally, in catastrophic changes, destroying the system; but these external circumstances cannot force the system to manifest what it potentially does not have; to become what it immanently cannot become; to do what it immanently is incapable of doing. Likewise, the external conditions can crush the system or terminate an unfolding of its immanent destiny at one of the earliest phases of its development (its immanent life career), depriving it of a realization of its complete life career; but they cannot fundamentally change the character and the quality of each phase of the development; nor can they, in many cases, reverse or fundamentally change the sequence of the phases of the immanent destiny of the system."⁶ Some social theorists would place more importance on the influence of external variables.

Vivekananda's "Theory of National Dharma" places more emphasis on immanent causation, on the historical inherent socio-cultural characteristics of Hinduism (that includes religion and philosophy) to perpetuate itself, and less on the external influences from the Western countries. National Dharma is an example of inherent internal self-causation of a social-cultural system such as the country of India, as distinguished from external causation. Modern India is a result of its past history, and the sum total of the karmas and samskaras (mental

impressions) of the people of the country. The karmas and samskaras of the individuals and groups of people combine and collectively form the dominant karmas and samskaras of the country. From a reincarnation standpoint a country is composed of many (not all) people whom in their prior lives lived in that country or a similar one and shared in its cultural-social ideals. According to this view, the religious culture of India and its component meanings, values, and norms, are an immanently determined, self-directing, unfolding of its potentialities. External forces can accelerate or slow up a full realization of its potentialities; but they cannot radically change its inherent properties or the phases in its life history.

As an architect and moulder of modern India, Swami Vivekananda realized that religion and spirituality are the basic themes of Indian society and culture. Religion is the common bases of Hinduism and its national consciousness should be awakened along that line. India will rise only through a renewal and restoration of the highest spiritual consciousness, "In India, religious life forms the centre, the keynote of the whole music of national life; and if any nation attempts to throw off its national vitality--the direction which has become its own through the transmission of centuries--that nation dies if it succeeds in the attempt. And, therefore, if you succeed in the attempt to throw off your religion and take up either politics, or society, or any other things as your centre, as the vitality of your national life, the result will be that you will become extinct. To prevent this you must make all and everything work through that vitality of your religion. Let all your nerves vibrate through the backbone of your religion.... So every improvement in India requires first of all an upheaval in religion. Before flooding India with socialistic or political ideas, first deluge the land with spiritual ideas."⁷ Indian society should be transformed so that its sociocultural system corresponds as close as possible to spiritual reality. Centering their life around religion is a Functional Imperative for the country of India necessary for the survival of the society.

Since India is a religiously oriented country, it was necessary for Vivekananda to develop a spiritual system of ideas, norms, and values that would bring about a modification in the thought consciousness of the people and consequently advancement in society. A major advantage of a religious oriented society (compared to a political or business dominated society) is the greater emphasis on moral behavior. As Vivekananda stated, "You have the saying that men cannot be made virtuous by an Act of Parliament ... And that is why religion is of deeper importance than politics, since it goes to the root, and deals with the essential of conduct."⁸ He emphasized selflessness, continence, purification, spiritual practices, hard work, self-control, and renunciation. An American devotee Susan Walters from the Vedanta Society of St. Louis stated, "The essential thing then is to change our outlook. We must learn to become unselfish, and thus to do what we have been told to do by every religion in the world: to love—unselfishly, disinterestedly. Vedanta gives us the philosophic basis for love—the oneness of all mankind. As Vivekananda has said, 'There is but one basis of well-being, social, political or spiritual—to know that I and my brother are one.' Vivekananda has also given us very definite instructions on how to change our narrow selfish outlook, how to learn to love others, seeing the divinity in all."⁹ As part of an ethic of unselfishness Vivekananda made clear, "Every selfish action, therefore, retards our reaching the goal, and every unselfish action takes us towards the goal, that is why the only definition that can be given of morality is this. That which is selfish is immoral, and that which is unselfish is moral."¹⁰

Swami Vivekananda wanted a renewal and actualization of the Indian tradition; a return to the ancient spiritual sources of Hinduism in order to regain its former creative power, establish its own distinct identity in the modern world, and to open up new perspectives for the future. He worked to awaken a new vigor and dynamism in his countrymen, a national identity and self-confidence. Therefore, he summoned his countrymen to practical service, and self-sacrificing work

for India to attain these goals. His method is evolution not revolution. Evolution is a process of growth characterized by orderly changes. Each stage is development, not a denial of that which preceded it. Modern ideas, values, and practices should be accepted if they are sanctioned by the Indian scriptures such as the *Upanishads* and the *Bhagavad Gita*, and traditionally accepted religious doctrines. His task was to give all strata of society a share in the glorious spiritual knowledge of India, so they could identify with the emerging nation. The ideal is to make everyone, people of all classes a Brahmin with the qualities of spirituality, knowledge, will power, and renunciation. Among the praises Vivekananda received for this endeavor the historian and statesman K. M. Panikkar (1895-1963) wrote, "What gave Indian nationalism its dynamism and ultimately enabled it to weld at least the major part of India into one state was the creation of a sense of community among the Hindus to which the credit should to a very large extent go to Swami Vivekananda.... It is Vivekananda who first gave to the Hindu movement its sense of nationalism and provided most of the movements with a common all-India outlook." This was a nationalism that went far beyond the political realm, and extended to all classes of people.¹¹

For Vivekananda, "Civilisation, true civilisation, should mean the power of taking the animal-man out of his sense-life--by giving him visions and tastes of planes much higher--and not external comforts."¹² At the international level "quality of life," the general well-being of individuals and societies is measured by such secular variables as: per capita gross domestic product, life expectancy, years of schooling, literacy rates, democracy, quality of environment, social support, and peoples self-rating of their level of happiness; and inversely the crime, divorce, and suicide rates.¹³ As important as these factors are, one wonders if they conclusively measure self-development particularly in the spiritual area. Higher civilization is not one of great wealth and power but the ability to make people better people. The best society is the one that promotes self-development toward a higher goal. This

means the manifestation of more sublime values such as knowledge, altruism, loving affection, productivity, friendliness, self-control, freedom from neurotic anxiety, a feeling of living a meaningful life, and being in harmony with the overriding universal values and ethical principles. Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) the French sociologist considered social cohesion and solidarity to be a major function of religion, but certainly self-development is equally if not more important.¹⁴

In the West religion has tended to in some degree become separated from life in the world, and consequently political leaders, economists, social reformers, university professors, mass culture, etc. are considered to be more potent in bringing about changes in society. But Vivekananda taught, "The Vedanta, therefore, as a religion must be intensely practical. We must be able to carry it out in every part of our lives. And not only this, the fictitious differentiation between religion and the life of the world must vanish, for the Vedanta teaches oneness--one life throughout. The ideals of religion must cover the whole field of life, they must enter into all our thoughts, and more and more into practice."¹⁵

The sacred and secular are one for Vivekananda. As expressed by Sister Nivedita (1867-1911), "If the many and the One be, indeed, the same Reality, then it is not all modes of worship alone, but equally all modes of work, all modes of struggle, all modes of creation, which are paths of realization. No distinction, henceforth, between sacred and secular. To labour is to pray. To conquer is to renounce. Life is itself religion."¹⁶

Swami Vivekananda always worked for national unity and the integration of Indian society. Professor Sorokin tells us why this is necessary for a well functioning society that can determine its own destiny, "Other conditions being equal, the highest amount of self-determination belongs to those social and cultural systems which are most perfectly integrated, causally and meaningfully, where the causal interdependence of the components and elements of the system is the

greatest; and their relationship is the most solidary (among human agents) and most consistent among the components, where, neither actually nor potentially, is there any contradiction, any inner tension, antagonism or conflict. Out of similar families or states—the family or state which is perfectly integrated, where the relationships are solidary, where all members spontaneously and deliberately strive towards the same ends; have the same mentality and objectives; have a unified system of aims, efforts, and activities—such a family or state is a builder of its own future much more than the family or state with lower causal and meaningful integration, where the causal interdependence of the members is loose, relationships less solidary, and where heterogeneous aims, conflicts, and antagonisms exist.”¹⁷

Social and cultural integration is related to the ancient Indian concept of dharma as defined by the Indologist Jan Gonda (1905-91) from the Netherlands, “Originally referring to the principle of universal stability, the power which sustains, [SEP]upholds, and maintains, the firmly established order, this term ... in general means the lawfulness and regularity, the harmony, the fundamental equilibrium, the norm which [SEP] reigns in the cosmos, nature, society, and individual existence. Dharma is the basis for the norms of individual conduct, it sustains the structure of the community and regulates the continuity in all the manifestations of reality.”¹⁸ The stability and regularity found in the cosmos is maintained in human society.

According to the “Principle of Ideological Determinism,” an important factor in the advancement of the quality of a civilization is due to its development of knowledge and understanding. A change in the state of knowledge is required to bring about any great social or historical change. This differs from Karl Marx’s (1818-83) idea of “Social Determinism” that states, “It is not the consciousness of men that determine their existence, but on the contrary, their social existence determines their consciousness.”

All groups of people in the world have had to face the problems of

life, the imperfections of human existence. As a result they have come up with different solutions to solve the problem, producing generalized Ethnic Stereotypes. Some societies might favor extroversion, others introversion; some physical development, others mental prowess, etc. As a result we have national dharma based on the generalized personality characteristics of the people in the country with some exceptions. This is more noticeable at the tribal level than in modern societies where people have so many options for individual variation.

Ethos is term used in sociology meaning the distinctive character of a society, its underlying spirit combined with its beliefs, values, ideals, norms, and social structure that are the outward expression of its nature. The ethos of a society can change as a response to new ideas or forces. It is similar to cultural configuration, cultural pattern, and Zeitgeist.¹⁹

2. Implications of Vivekananda's Theory of National Dharma

The basic principles of the ideology of "Cultural Relativism" were established by the German-American Jewish immigrant, Franz Boas (1858-1942). In 1899 Boas became a Professor of Anthology at Columbia University and was later recognized as the "Father of American Anthropology." His approach was soon developed by his prominent students who included Alfred Kroeber, Robert Lowie, Ruth Benedict, Margaret Mead, and Edward Sapir. Boas and his students realized in order to conduct scientific studies in other cultures (particularly tribal), they needed to employ methods that would help them escape the biases of their own ethnocentrism. Following the method of ethnography, they lived with the people of another culture for an extended length of time, and collaborated with the indigenous researchers in order to learn the local language, and be enculturated to some extent into that society. This makes it easier to understand an unfamiliar culture. The first three following implications were to a fair extent worked out by Boas and his anthropology students.²⁰

1) In attempting to evaluate other cultures, nations, and societies one should be as free as possible from negative ethnocentric biases: Cultural relativism is the idea that a person's beliefs, values, and practices should not be used to negatively judge other cultures that differ from ours. Anthropology refused to accept Western claims to possess the superior ideas, values, and norms, which is a form of cultural imperialism. In 1911 Boas wrote, "I hope the discussions outlined in these pages have shown that the data of anthropology teach us a greater tolerance of forms of civilization different from our own, that we should learn to look on foreign races with greater sympathy and with a conviction that, as all races have contributed in the past to cultural progress in one way or another, so they will be capable of advancing the interests of mankind if we are only willing to give them a fair opportunity." Cultural relativism is not to be confused with moral relativism, since it does not say that all value systems, however different, are equally valid.²¹

2) In studying the behaviors, beliefs, and symbols of another group of people, one must analyze them in a larger context of the entire configuration of that society: National Dharma and cultural relativism as a heuristic device, imply that other peoples beliefs and activities should be interpreted in terms of the categories and standards of their own culture. To understand the meaning of specific traits they should not be studied in isolation from one another, but in relation to their history and to the entire culture. What is right or good in one society might not be so in another if they have a different structure. Vivekananda wrote, "But it must be particularly remembered that the same ideals and activities do not prevail in all societies and countries; our ignorance of this is the main cause of much of the hatred of one nation towards another.... Much of the oppression of powerful nations on weaker ones is caused by this prejudice. It dries up their fellow-feeling for fellow men."²² Boas agrees, "To understand the thoughts of a people the whole analysis of experience must be based on their concepts, not ours."

3) There is more than one path of evolutionary development: During Vivekananda's time most Western social thinkers believed there was only one path to modernity that all of the countries would eventually follow, which included a decline in the influence of religion. Since they did not consider the factor of National Dharma, they did not realize that there are multiple paths to modernity. Consequently, today in the world we find a wide variety of countries that are in the process of modernization, one differing to some extent from the others. One might be a Democracy the other Communistic. Franz Boas rejected the then dominant anthropological belief, the Orthogenetic Notion of Evolution. It stated that all societies progress through the same stages in the same sequence, and consequently Western Europe has reached the highest level of development. His "Historical Particularism" showed that societies could reach the same level of cultural development through different paths. As Sociology Professor Yogendra Singh (d. 2020) of Nehru University in New Delhi points out, there is no single universal evolutionary pattern of development. For example, both India and China received a great deal of ideological material from the West, yet they reacted to these stimuli in different ways. Future modernization in the cultural tradition of India is apt not to be identical with that of other countries of the world, which is what Vivekananda desired for his country.²³

4) National Dharma affects every area of society: Societies are complex structural-functional systems composed of interrelated and interdependent parts. A change in one component of a society will affect the rest. Hence, positive modifications in religion will significantly influence other aspects of Indian society, bringing about a meaningful integration.

5) Cultural relativism differs from moral relativism (the idea that there are no universal moral standards): We cannot say that all cultures and value systems are equally valid. The appropriateness of any custom must be evaluated with regard to how this habit fits in with other habits

of the same group. All surviving societies have found it necessary to impose restrictions on the behavior of its members.

6) Individual variations within each society are desirable: Cultural types do not imply that all members of a particular society should act in the same way. Vivekananda stated, "Variation is the sign of life. Sameness is the sign of death."²⁴

7) It is of value to study cultures that vary from our own: A country has something to gain by appreciating a culture that is profoundly different from their own. This approach offers the opportunity to reflect self-critically and to reexamine their own ways of behavior. Vivekananda told his people, "That has been the one great cause; that we did not go out, that we did not compare notes with other nations--that has been the one great cause of our downfall ... Therefore we must go out, and the secret of life is to give and take."²⁵

8) Cultures are not static, the mode of expression of the core values change somewhat over time: Cultures have a history because their components are basically dynamic in a state of flux. In verification of the "National Dharma Theory," in 1964 the social anthropologist Milton Singer (1912-94) of the University of Chicago an expert on Indian society concluded, "The weight of present evidence seems to me to show that, while modernizing influences are undoubtedly changing many aspects of Indian society and culture, they have not destroyed its basic structure and pattern. They have given Indians new alternatives and some new choices of life style, but the structure is so flexible and rich that many Indians have accepted many modern innovations without loss of their Indianness. They have, in other words, been able to combine choices which affirm some aspects of their cultural tradition with innovative choices."²⁶

9) Cultural diversity is to be supported on a worldwide scale: Any understanding of the totality of humanity must be based on as wide and varied a sample of individual cultural as possible. Following the process of Globalization, modern technology, information, capital including

standardized consumer products, and mass culture are transcending geographical boundaries, tending to bring about a decline in cultural diversity. Cultural meanings, values, and tastes are becoming more homogenous in world society. This phenomenon is countered today by a counter force of the particularizing tendencies of Glocalization (Localization) that receives support from the Doctrine of National Dharma. Due to the limitations of the Thesis (Globalization) its Antithesis (Glocalization) has resulted. Consequently, national cultures prefer to retain their own particular distinctive individuality and uniqueness in terms of their local language, religion, traditions, food, dress, the ways societies organize themselves, in their shared conception of morality, and in the ways they interact with their environment. Some of the historical civilizations (e.g., Western Europe, Eastern Europe, Indian, East Asian, Islamic, African, the Americas, etc.) have continued on to this day maintaining significant differences from one another. Their motto is "Unity in Diversity" and "Harmony not Uniformity," implying that a variety of different cultures and traditions is a positive asset for the world. Each society has unique generalized virtues that might be lost if they over-assimilate with the predominant world culture. Societal strength results from the mixing and exchange between diverse cultures and sub-cultures of the world. Religion is a powerful force in maintaining to some extent separate national identities. There is also ultra-nationalization where a society rebels against diffusion from other cultures. Third world countries have the potential advantage in that at least theoretically, they can accept the higher aspects of Western societies and reject the rest.²⁷

As a result, a number international organizations promote cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue. In 2001, the General Conference of UNESCO (United Nation's Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) asserted, "Cultural diversity is as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature." Their Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity recognized cultural diversity as the "common heritage of

humanity," and consider respect for human dignity to be an ethical imperative. Cultural diversity is vital for the long-term survival of humanity.²⁸

3. Humanitarian Work

Indian: "The riches of the liberal [giver] never waste away, while he who will not give finds none to comfort him... Bounteous is he who gives unto the beggar who comes to him in want of food and feeble. Success attends him" (RV 10:117.1, 3). "Let him always—practice, according to his ability, with a cheerful heart, the duty of liberality, both for sacrifice and by charitable works" (LM 4:227; cf. 3:95; 4:228-35).

New Testament: "Give to him who begs from you, and do not refuse him who would borrow from you" (Mt. 5:42; cf. 10:42; 25:34-35, 40). "When you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you" (Lk. 14:13-14; cf. 3:11; 6:30; 14:13-14; 18:22; 19:8; Jam. 2:15-16).

A recurrent theme of Swami Vivekananda's Vedantic Humanism is to help the poor and lift them up. He had an ardent love for the working masses, a deep compassion for their needs and sufferings, and a fervent urge to free them from social oppression. Vivekananda realized for a country to be powerful it must have a strong and well-educated labouring class. "I consider that the great national sin is the neglect of the masses, and that is one of the causes of our downfall. No amount of politics would be of any avail until the masses in India are once more well educated, well fed, and well cared for. They pay for our education, they build our temples, but in return they get kicks. They are practically our slaves. If we want to regenerate India, we must work for them." "Can you raise them? Can you give them back their lost individuality without making them lose their innate spiritual nature? Can you become an occidental of occidentals in your spirit of equality, freedom, work, and

energy, and at the same time a Hindu to the very backbone in religious culture and instincts? This is to be done and we will do it. You are all born to do it. Have faith in yourselves, great convictions are the mothers of great deeds. Onward for ever! Sympathy for the poor, the downtrodden, even unto death—this is our motto."²⁹

Vivekananda applied the tenets of the Vedanta Philosophy to support social equality and the doing away with special privilege. Examples include, "I base my teaching on the great Vedantic truth of the sameness and omnipresence of the Soul of the Universe." "You and they, the poor and the rich, the saint and the sinner, are all parts of One Infinite Whole, which you call Brahman." The Vedantic Humanism of Swami Vivekananda realizes that the true real nature of all people is the Atman the Divine within them. In this sense we are all created equal. This is a practical compassionate philosophy of life that can only benefit people and human society. In manifesting their Atman nature people will act motivated by love and a spirit of service. Vivekananda teaches an ethical philosophy based on reason and science, motivated by compassion, while advocating universal education and religious pluralism.³⁰

So also Christian Liberation Theologists in Central and South America realize, "All theology and mission arises out of the preferential option for the poor. In the present revolutionary situation characterized by class struggle and conflict, the church must cast its lot with the oppressed, because in history God himself is on the side of the poor. [Gustavo] Gutiérrez explained: 'the poor deserve preference not because they are morally or religiously better than others; but because God is God, in whose eyes 'the last are first'.... Miguez Bonino was no less clear: 'Poverty ... is a scandalous fact which must be eliminated. God himself is engaged in the struggle against it; he is clearly and unequivocally on the side of the poor.... The task of Latin American theology, in contrast, is not conditioned by the nonbeliever's questions, but by the question of the 'nonperson': 'the human being who is not considered human by the

present social order—the exploited classes, marginalized ethnic groups, and despised cultures.’ ‘Our question,’ Gutiérrez explained, ‘is how to tell the nonperson, the nonhuman, that God is love, and that this love makes us all brothers and sisters.’”³¹

Vivekananda as a social philosopher through his writings wanted the leaders of India to put the social ideas he recommended into practice. But he worked through religion and not through politics. He avoided the Indian National Congress (formed in 1885) and did not want the Ramakrishna Order to get involved in political activity. If a religion becomes politically conservative or liberal, it will alienate the people on the opposite side. Also, according to religion the ideal political system will not lead to the highest goal if it operates independent of a spiritual transformation. Though the proper political system is beneficial to society, still its supporters realize by itself it does not solve life’s deeper problems. As a “Public Religion” the Ramakrishna Mission is engaged in the public arena providing education, hospitals and dispensaries, famine relief, and other charitable work. Yet, Vedanta is primarily a “Private Religion,” the goal being to realize Brahman (God) and your own inherent divinity while living on earth.³²

In November 1892, Vivekananda met the Maharaja of Mysore. From him he received some economic aid in getting to America, but turned down a more generous financial offer. On June 23, 1894, Vivekananda wrote a letter to the Maharaja from Chicago entitled, “Our Duty to the Masses.” He stated, “The one thing that is at the root of all evils in India is the condition of the poor.... The only service to be done for our lower classes is to give them education, *to develop their lost individuality*. That is the great task between our people and princes. Up to now nothing has been done in that direction. Priest-power and foreign conquest have trodden them down for centuries, and at last the poor of India have forgotten that they are human beings. They are to be given ideas; their eyes are to be opened to what is going on in the world around them; and then they will work out their own salvation.... My

noble Prince, this life is short, the vanities of the world are transient, but they alone live who live for others, the rest are more dead than alive. One such high, noble-minded, and royal son of India as your Highness can do much towards raising India on her feet again and thus leave a name to posterity which shall be worshipped. That the Lord may make your noble heart feel intensely for the suffering millions of India, sunk in ignorance, is the prayer of--Vivekananda."³³

The Maharaja soon passed away in December of 1894 and was replaced by his wife who ruled the state as Regent until his son reached eighteen years of age. It was the Maharaja's son Krishna Raja Wadiyar IV who fulfilled Vivekananda's wishes, reigning from 1902 until 1940. Known as the philosopher-king by Paul Brunton, Gandhi referred to him as the Rajarshi or "saintly king." Compared to Emperor Ashoka by the English statesman Lord Samuel, praised by the American author John Gunther, in 1930 Lord John Sankey stated, "Mysore is the best administered state in the world," and Lord Wellington called Mysore's industrial development "incredible."³⁴

The spiritually minded Maharaj successfully worked toward alleviating poverty and improving public health, industry, and economic development, rural reconstruction, education, and the fine arts. Mysore was the first Indian state to give women the right to vote (1923). In a lecture, Swami Prabhavananda (1893-1976) stated it was believed that Mathur Babu (1817-71) was reborn as Krishna Raja Wadiyar IV (1884-1940). Prabhavananda met him and mentioned he was humble, austere, and an outstanding ruler who helped the poor. We do not know if Krishna Raja Wadiyar IV met Vivekananda when he was eight years old in 1892 or if he knew of Vivekananda's 1894 letter to his father. He did meet Swami Ramakrishnananda and said it was a rare privilege to meet a brother disciple of Swami Vivekananda.

Julia Ward Howe (1819-1910) a member of the National Women's Hall of Fame for great Americans expressed approval for the Vivekananda and Abhedananda lectures she attended. As a reaction

against the Civil War (1861-65) and the Franco-Prussian War (1870-71), in 1870 she issued an "Appeal to Womanhood throughout the World," to come together across national lines and to rise up and oppose war in all of its forms. With the rise of women's suffrage women have become far more influential in the political arena and this could mean less wars.

Another supporter of Vivekananda who met him was Jane Addams (1860-1935) the first American woman to be awarded a Nobel Prize (1931). She and other women met at the International Congress of Women at The Hague in 1915, attempting to bring an end to the First World War. She was President of the Congress of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom held in Geneva, Switzerland in February 1932. In a letter she invited Mahatma Gandhi to attend the Congress and mentioned that some women in almost every country in the world have united against the act of war. It is quite possible that if women had been running the world in the past there would have been far fewer wars.³⁵

Nobel Prize winning poet Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) discussed Vivekananda's service to India. "If you want to know India, study Vivekananda. In him everything is positive and nothing negative.... In recent times in India, it was Vivekananda alone who preached a great message which is not tied to any do's and don'ts. Addressing one and all in the nation, he said, 'In every one of you there is the power of Brahman (God); the God in the poor desires you to serve Him.' This message has roused the heart of the youths in a most pervasive way. That is why this message has borne fruit in the service of the nation in diverse ways and in diverse forms of sacrifice."³⁶

Vivekananda has received many Western tributes for his devoted effort to awaken India. To give four examples; in 1913 Samuel Ratcliffe (1868-1958) a good friend of Sister Nivedita and a newspaper and journal editor summarized Vivekananda's achievements in the social realm. "Vivekananda was a man of action. Not only did he carry westward the message of Vedantism, but he had dreams of a renewal of the life of India through the infusion of fresh knowledge and renascent

ideals. He stood entirely aloof from politics, yet it is hardly surprising that his younger followers should have claimed him as something more than a teacher of Vedantism—as, in truth, the prophet of New India.... [He] dwelt upon the necessity, especially in the present stage of world's history, for the exchange of ideals between peoples, and especially between the East and West. He was, too, much more than a preacher. While glorifying the Indian past and the ancient contribution of his people to the intellectual wealth of the world, he was a man of modern outlook, incessantly framing concrete schemes for the social regenerating of India. He was bent upon the firm establishment of the Order of Ramakrishna, of which he was the head—an Order which he designed not for contemplation alone, but for social service; he would, if he could, have commanded vast resources for educational enterprise; and he was resolved to initiate some definite agency for the education of Indian women."³⁷

Years later in the definitive anthology *Sources of Indian Tradition* (1958), Stephen N. Hay (1925-2002) emphasized, "Vivekananda's example had a powerful impact on the thinking of his own and later generations. Despite his scorn for politics, his success in preaching to the world the greatness of Hinduism, gave his countrymen an added sense of dignity and pride in their own culture. His zeal to serve the downtrodden masses opened a new dimension of activity to Indian nationalist leaders, whose Western outlook had heretofore isolated them from the vast majority of their countrymen. Gandhi, the greatest to work for this new field, acknowledged his debt to the Swami in this respect. Vivekananda called India to become great by realizing her own possibilities and by living up to her own highest ideals. The heart and soul of his teaching was the message of his beloved master, Ramakrishna: That each man was potentially Divine, and so should both work to unleash the infinite power within himself, and should help other men to do the same."³⁸

In 1987, Eugene P. Chelyshev (Chelishev, 1921-2020) a leading Indologist in Russia expressed his admiration for Vivekananda's humanism, "I think that Vivekananda's greatest service is the development in his teaching of the lofty ideals of humanism which incorporate the finest features of Indian culture.... Vivekananda's humanism, we recognize that it possesses many features of active humanism manifested above all in a fervent desire to elevate man, to instil in him a sense of his own dignity, sense of responsibility for his own destiny and the destiny of all people, to make him strive for the ideals of good, truth and justice, to foster in man abhorrence for any suffering The great merit of Vivekananda, in my opinion, is that he was one of the first in India to pay attention to the masses, to the suffering and misfortune of his compatriots.... Together with the Indian people, Soviet people, who already know some of the works of Vivekananda published in the USSR, highly revere the memory of the great Indian patriot, humanist and democrat, impassioned fighter for a better future for his people and all mankind."³⁹

Three years later David D. Gilmore, a Professor of Anthropology and Head of the Department at the State University of New York at Stony Brook, described "the charismatic figure of the sage Vivekananda, a turn-of-the-century holy man activist.... he was also a convinced believer in the efficacy of practical action, a devotee of social change, and a dedicated advocate of scientific and technological enlightenment. He and his monks were among the first holy men to go out into the Indian countryside and engage in mundane improvement activities such as building schools, wells, and hospitals and assisting relief operations during famines and epidemics."⁴⁰

Prosocial behaviour is "voluntary actions that are intended to help or benefit another individual or group of individuals." It is motivated by feeling empathy and concern for other people in need. Most desirable is to possess the skills and knowledge to provide assistance. It has the

value of enhancing a person's sense of self-worth, in feeling happy, and reducing the negative effects of stress.⁴¹

4. More Specific Humanitarian Objectives

Vivekananda was very much interested in the philosophy of education. High on his priorities in the revitalization of India was to educate the people. Besides self-transformation, some societal transformation is necessary. Education of the mass of people would give them the understanding and strength they need to better their lives. They would thereby acquire self-awareness, and faith and self-confidence in themselves. He realized the strategic role of education as a mechanism to facilitate social change. In his words, "Education is not the amount of information that is put into your brain and runs riot there, undigested, all your life. We must have life-building, man-making, character-making assimilation of ideas. If you have assimilated five ideas and made them your life and character, you have more education than any man who has got by heart a whole library." "Mere book-learning won't do. We want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded, and by which one can stand on one's own feet." "A negative education or any training that is based on negation is worse than death."⁴² The aims of real education are positive, to help people to believe in and understand themselves, to be constructive not cynical, to learn human dignity. In April 1897 he wrote to Shrimati Sarala Ghosal, editor of *Bharati*, "Education, education, and education alone! Traveling through many cities of Europe and observing in them the comforts and education of even the poor people, there was brought to my mind the state of our own poor people, and I used to shed tears. What made the difference? Education was the answer I got. Through education comes faith in one's own Self, and through faith in one's own Self the inherent Brahman is waking up in them, while the Brahman in us is gradually becoming

dormant."⁴³ This type of education would not only develop the Intelligent Quotient (IQ) but also the Morality Quotient (MQ) resulting a higher level of integrity.

On this subject Reverend Glyn Richards (1923-2003) of the Congregational Church in Wales expounded, "He regarded the provision of education for the Indian people as a primary duty. It was essential for the upliftment of the lower classes, the restoration of their humanity and the development of their individuality. Given education they could work out their own salvation, and the aid of self-sacrificing sannyasins could be elicited to provide them with this service as they travelled from one village to another. His ambition was to institute a program of education that would enable all Hindus, whatever their status in society, to determine their own destiny, yet he recognized that caste was the greatest divisive factor in Hinduism and a form of bondage."⁴⁴

An important scientific study in India and five other developing countries discovered that education is the single most important causal factor leading to the "'psycho-social syndrome' of modernity as internalized values and attitudes, and manifested in behaviour, demonstrating a feeling of personal efficacy, autonomy from 'traditional sources of influence,' and openness towards 'new experience and ideas.'"⁴⁵

Another vital element in his social reform is to educate, raise the status, and provided more opportunities for Indian women. He signified, "It is very difficult to understand why in this country so much difference is made between men and women, whereas the Vedanta declares that one and the same conscious Self is present in all beings... All nations have attained greatness by paying proper respect to women. That country and that nation which do not respect women have never become great, nor will ever be in future. The principal reason why your race has so much degenerated is that you have no respect for these living images of Shakti. Manu says, 'Where women are respected, there the gods delight; and where they are not, there all works and efforts

come to naught.' There is no hope of rise for that family or country where there is no estimation of women, where they live in sadness. For this reason, they have to be raised first; and an ideal path has to be started for them."⁴⁶

Vivekananda held an exalted view of the heroic women in Indian history such as Gargi, Maitreyi, Sita, and Savitri who were well worthy of emulation. His advice to his brother disciples was that both men and women should be part of parallel monastic orders. In addition, he felt a "deep debt of gratitude" for what the American women did for him. "Last year [1893] I came to this country in summer, a wandering preacher of a far distant country, without name, fame, wealth, or learning to recommend me--friendless, helpless, almost in a state of destitution--and American women befriended me, gave me shelter and food, took me to their homes and treated me as their own son, their own brother."⁴⁷ Ann Myren, head of the Vivekananda Foundation in Northern California tells us, "He wrote in a letter from America in 1894, 'I shall not rest till I root out this distinction of sex. Is there any sex-distinction in the Atman? Out with differences between men and women—all is Atman!' He was referring to the fact that each individual person has to come to know the Self, the Divinity within. This is the message of Vivekananda's Vedanta. He knew this Divine knowledge to be the inherent right of women as mothers, as spiritual teachers, as single or married. Vivekananda was clear on this point. Women are endowed with power, but they need self-knowledge in order to use this feminine power for the benefit of humanity. As Vivekananda said, "Without shakti [feminine power] there is no regeneration for the world." Also, he thought that there must be a great respect for motherhood as a creative expression of feminine power. Motherhood he said "is the place to learn the greatest exercise of unselfishness."⁴⁸

As mentioned in Chapter IV, Federico Mayor (Zaragoza), the director-general of UNESCO (1987-99) was "indeed struck by the similarity of the constitution of the Ramakrishna Mission which

Vivekananda established as early as 1897 with that of UNESCO drawn up in 1945.”

There are an amazing number of similarities between the social humanitarian ideas presented by Swami Vivekananda, and those later taught by the contemporary Liberation Theologists of Latin America. What’s more, Vivekananda developed and expressed these ideas without the benefit of 20th century sociological and political concepts and ideas. A theological revolution was initiated in 1968 by the Bishops of the Roman Catholic Church in Latin America, gathering in the city of Medellin, Columbia: They concluded that, “The duty of solidarity with the poor, to which charity leads us. This solidarity means that we make ours their problems and their struggles, that we know how to speak with them. This has to be concretized in criticism of injustice and oppression, in the struggle against the intolerable situation which a poor person has to tolerate.”⁴⁹ Their approach to theology recognizes God and the Church’s presence in the struggle to throw off poverty, and political and social oppression. Vivekananda and the Liberation Theologists both advocate: It is our moral duty to help the poor and to go to them since poverty is dehumanizing, educating the people, supporting women’s rights, following the examples of the founders of religion like Buddha and Jesus, the oneness of humanity, work is a form of worship, understanding the historical trends, having faith in ourself, and realizing that we are responsible for our actions.⁵⁰

Five examples of the correspondence between their ideas follow. Four of the examples are from the teachings of Gustavo Gutiérrez (b. 1928) an outstanding Peruvian Dominican priest who is recognized as the “founder of Liberation Theology” in Latin America.

a) In time the oppressed people will help themselves: Gustavo Gutiérrez: “In the last instance we will have an authentic theology of liberation only when the oppressed themselves can freely raise their voice and express themselves directly and creatively in society and in the heart of the People of God, when they themselves ‘account for the

hope,' which they bear, when they are the protagonists of their own liberation. For now we must limit ourselves to efforts which ought to deepen and support that process, which has barely begun."⁵¹

Swami Vivekananda: "Kings having gone, the power is the people's. We have, therefore, to wait till the people are educated, till they understand their needs and are ready and able to solve their problems.... we had better go to the root of the evil and make a legislative body, that is to say, educate our people, so that they may be able to solve their own problems. Until that is done all these ideal reforms will remain ideals only. The new order of things is the salvation of the people by the people, and it takes time to make it workable."⁵²

b) Emphasis on practicality: Liberation Theology: "Rather than developing a series of abstract and deductive propositions about the relation of man to God, theologians engage in their profession as a 'second act,' following after the experience of involvement with the poor at a given moment in history. Theology grows out of the combination of theory and practice that the liberation theologians call praxis rather than through some formal, systematic, organized study."⁵³

Swami Vivekananda: "We have the doctrine of Vedanta, but we have not the power to reduce it into practice. In our books there is the doctrine of universal equality, but in work we make great distinctions. It was in India that unselfish and disinterested work of the most exalted type was preached."⁵⁴

c) Go to the poor: Gustavo Gutiérrez: "Love of neighbor is an essential component of Christian life. But as long as I apply that term only to the people who cross my path and come asking me for help, my world will remain pretty much the same. Individual almsgiving and social reformism is a type of love that never leaves its own front porch (If you love those who love you, what merit is there in that?) On the other hand my world will change greatly if I go out to meet other people on their path and consider them as my neighbor, as the good Samaritan did—if I

go out to meet other people on the street corners and byways, in factories and mines, in decaying inner cities and slums.”⁵⁵

Swami Vivekananda: “Go, all of you, wherever there is an outbreak of plague or famine, or wherever the people are in distress, and mitigate their sufferings. At the most you may die in the attempt—what of that? How many like you are being born and dying like worms every day? What difference does that make to the world at large? Die you must, but have a great ideal to die for, and it is better to die with a great ideal in life. Preach this ideal from door to door, and you will yourselves be benefited by it at the same time that you are doing good to your country.”⁵⁶

d) Allowing oppression to exist is immoral: Gustavo Gutiérrez: “The root of social injustice is sin, which ruptures our friendship with God and our brotherhood with other human beings.... For sinfulness occurs in the negation of human beings as brothers and sisters, in oppressive structures created for the benefit of only a few, and in the plundering of nations, races, cultures, and social classes.”⁵⁷

Swami Vivekananda: “That some people, through natural aptitude, should be able to accumulate more wealth than others, is natural: but that on account of this power to acquire wealth they should tyrannize and ride roughshod over those who cannot acquire so much wealth, is not a part of the law, and the fight has been against that. The enjoyment of advantage over another is privilege, and throughout ages, the aim of morality has been its destruction. This is the work which tends towards sameness, towards unity, without destroying variety.”⁵⁸

e) Scriptural foundations: Gustavo Gutiérrez: “In the *Bible* poverty is a scandalous condition inimical to human dignity and therefore contrary to the will of God.... Indeed, ‘the God whom we know in the *Bible* is a liberating God, a God who destroys myths and alienations, a God who intervenes in history in order to break down the structures of injustice and who raises up prophets in order to point out the way of justice and

mercy. He is a God who liberates slaves (Exodus), who causes empires to fall and raises up the oppressed."⁵⁹

Swami Vivekananda: "When the government of a country is guided by codes of laws enjoined by Shastras [Scriptures] which are the outcome of knowledge inspired by the Divine genius of great sages, such a government must lead to the unbroken welfare of the rich and the poor, the wise and the ignorant, the king and the subjects alike."⁶⁰ For more details on this subject see: G. Stavig, "Swami Vivekananda and Liberation Theology, *Bulletin of the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture* (Nov-Dec. 2009), pp. 509-15, 556-59.

5. Hinduism and Modern Industrial Society

Born in a small village in Poland, Milton Singer a pre-eminent Western scholar of India helped create the Center for the Study of South Asia at the University of Chicago. He is primarily known for his publications of the early 1970s including *When a Great Tradition Modernizes* (1972), where he reacts against the statements made by Max Weber (1864-1920) the German sociologists, in his writings later published in the book *The Religion of India*. Weber's basic thesis is that the tenets and practices of Hinduism are incompatible with modern industrial society. Weber thought Hinduism is otherworldly and therefore incapable of producing a social ethic that is required for the development of modern industrial capitalism and social progress. He contrasts Indian religion with the "Protestant Ethic" (a concept that originated with Weber) and the part it played in the rise of capitalism in Western Europe.⁶¹

Considered by many to be the greatest sociologists of modern times, Max Weber was no doubt a brilliant thinker who deserves great adoration for his many discoveries. He merits credit for undertaking a study of Indian society, but on this subject he falls short of his usual level. This is largely because he received his ideas about Hinduism not

from Indians but from Western Europeans, many of whom held false stereotyped notions about a homogenous solidified unchanging Indian culture and society. Often their ideas were derived from ancient social-religious-philosophical texts rather than from contemporary empirical studies. It is quite common for people of one religion to view other religions in a very stereotyped one-sided way. Another problem is a Scholarly Bias in that the religion is described by the attitudes of the intellectuals rather than the ordinary people. To give an example, of 2818 articles listed by Karl Potter dealing with Vedanta philosophy, 72.5% were about Advaita (Shankara), and only 8.8% covered Dvaita (Madhva). This is because Indian philosophers are often nondualists while the majority of people are dualistic (theists).⁶² For more details on this subject see: *Swami Vivekananda and Others on Religious Philosophy*, Ch. I. Advaita Vedanta and Nirguna Brahman, Section 1.

Milton Singer points out that Weber created an imaginative construction of Indian society that did not correspond with the empirical reality. Weber developed an "ideal type" construct based more on a limited interpretation of selected ancient religious scriptural texts, and not on the observed behavior of Indians in a specific social and cultural context. Many Western Indologists of the 19th century relied heavily on ancient religious texts, yielding as Benoy Sarkar (1887-1949) of the University of Calcutta pointed out a one-dimensional rather than a total picture of Indian society and culture in ancient and medieval times. These texts describe important aspects of India's past, but not necessarily its present. Just as the Protestant's reinterpreted Christianity to some extent, so also other religions including Hinduism can be reinterpreted to be compatible with modern ideas. Weber being an expert on the "Protestant Ethic" should have realized this possibility for Hinduism. Religious ideas should be in harmony with and not contradict the higher beliefs of other areas of thought. There was a tendency for some Westerners to think that Indian society and culture was static, unchanging over time. Weber assumes a uniform way of thinking for all

Hindu's in spite of the diversity of various sects. He concentrates on the path of jnana yoga and renunciation, and not on the more active karma yoga of the *Bhagavad Gita* that stresses an industrious dedication to ones "calling" as a moral duty. The *Gita* describes a path of liberation (salvation) by the performance of one's daily duties provided it is not motivated by selfish interests. Weber considered the following Indian practices and beliefs to be in opposition to the spirit of capitalism: the caste system; belief in fate (karma), rebirth, traditional duty requirements (dharma), excessive ritualism, and otherworldly paths to liberation.⁶³ One reason religions are reinterpreted is because they are part of the socio-cultural system and a modification in one area necessitates changes in another. So for example if a society becomes more socially pluralistic or a new theoretical discovery is made in science, these events could have some effect on the way a religion is interpreted.

Milton Singer related, "When I tell orthodox Hindus about [Max] Weber's theory, they are astonished. 'If that were true,' they usually reply, 'how could we have lived and done so many things—built temples, ships, and empires, fought wars and organized agriculture, crafts, and trade?' There must be some misunderstanding they feel, of the relations of religious belief and ritual to daily life. Even the sacred scriptures, they point out, recognize the need for rulers, administrators, traders, and artisans, as well as priests, scholars, and saints. Not everyone can be or needs to be an ascetic who renounces the world for a simple life of austerity and meditation. Most people must act in the world and meet their obligations to family, caste, and society. As they approach retirement, they will transfer their responsibilities to the next generation and turn more to meditation and prayer."⁶⁴

In *When a Great Tradition Modernizes* (1972) Singer made a "Contextual" (empirical social-scientific) study (as compared to a "Textual" study of religious, philosophical, and historical texts) by interviewing a number of Bombay businessmen to find out how they

apply these religious ideas in their everyday life. He discovered, "The personality traits expressed in the Madras industrial leaders' beliefs, attitudes, and behavior are surprisingly similar to those Weber attributes to his 'ideal type' of European capitalist entrepreneur." Concerning Indian industrial leaders who held to their traditional institutions, Singer concluded, "Far from being major obstacles to their industrial careers, these social institutions, beliefs, and rites have often proved adaptive in modern industry."⁶⁵ This is certainly one of Swami Vivekananda's major objectives, to make Indian religion compatible with modern life.

Milton Singer goes on to say that the Indian industrial leader "participates directly and personally in reinterpreting and restructuring the 'essential tenets' of his religion for an industrial age. In his reinterpretation he not only comes to see his industrial career as a source of necessities and luxuries for his family, but also may see in it his personal destiny (karma, kismet), an opportunity to fulfill his moral obligations to society (dharma), and a path to his ultimate spiritual salvation (moksha). These reinterpretations, supported in part by authoritative spiritual leaders, include the formulation of an ethical code for industry and a greater emphasis on the devotional and intellectual side over the ritual and social side of religion. At the level of philosophical and ethical beliefs, then, if not at the level of ritual observance, the industrial leaders are trying to integrate their compartmentalized traditional and modern cultures into a coherent and meaningful whole by converting Weber's 'theodicy of the caste system' into a 'theodicy for an industrial system'.... [They] are strongly motivated and committed to their work, and in their own minds they link this commitment and their success to their religious beliefs and social obligations. To develop industry is, they say, 'something we must do,' either because they feel that happens to be the way they must work out the consequences of their past actions or because they feel that it is their moral duty (dharma) as individual citizens to help provide the jobs and products so urgently needed. If they can carry on such activity without appropriating

all its fruits for themselves, but rather increase those fruits for future generations and dedicate them to God, their work will become, they say, a 'service' and a kind of 'sacrifice' in the sense of the *Bhagavad Gita*, especially as interpreted by Gandhi. Such 'this-worldly asceticism' does not mean for these industrialists a renunciation and withdrawal from this world and a denial of the reality of their own and India's social and economic progress. In spite of the prospect of endless cycles of rebirth and of world creation and destruction, they feel they must do what they can to overcome present obstacles and to improve the condition of this world as they pass through the 'corridor of time.' They are not so egoistic as to claim all the credit for whatever success they may have achieved, although they recognize the importance of personal effort, intelligence, and foresight. Beyond the ego, however, 'there must be something greater,' that is, God's will or God's grace, which along with luck and opportunity explains to them why they succeeded when so many other failed."

Singer adds, "Madras industrialists see the economic success they have attained as product of devotion to their calling and duty. They also see their careers as one path to their liberation. They believe that their individual prosperity and the material transformations wrought by their companies are expressions of a Divine will, not simply the private conceits of a few individuals. These views are endorsed by their highest spiritual advisers and by the pundits who specialize in traditional Hindu law and theology. The endorsement may not extend to approval of every detail of the industrialists' behavior, but it does give the industrialist the reassurance that as a good industrialist he is also an instrument of a Divine will and of a cosmic process. His Hinduism, therefore, is both a source and sanction for his commitment to an industrial career that represents his personal fate, his moral duty, and a path to his ultimate spiritual salvation... Even the traditional Hindu scheme of the ends of life is a quadrivium (taturvarga) providing for the inclusion of wealth and power (artha) and enjoyment (kama), as well as moral duty (dharma) and salvation (moksha)."⁶⁶ One cannot help from noticing the similarities

between the attitudes of the Bombay businessmen and Weber's famous Protestant Ethic (See: *Swami Vivekananda on Religious, Ethical, and Psychological Practices*, Ch. III. Karma Yoga, Good Works, and Moral Activity, Section 3).

6. The Philosophy of Non-Violence (Ahimsa)

Indian: "He who has equal regard for well-wishers, friends and foes ... for the righteous and the sinful-he stands supreme" (BG 6:9; cf. 29). "Against an angry man let him not in return show anger, let him bless when he is cursed" (LM 6:48). "Undisturbed calmness of mind is attained by cultivating friendliness toward the happy, compassion for the unhappy, delight in the virtuous, and indifference toward the wicked" (YS 1:33).

New Testament. "Do not resist one who is evil. But if any one strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also" (Mt. 5:39; cf. 18:21-22; Lk. 6:29; 1 Pet. 2:19). "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (Mt. 5:44; cf. Lk. 6:27-28, 32-36). "Do not return evil for evil or reviling for reviling; but on the contrary bless" (1 Pet. 3:9; cf. Prov. 20:22; 24:29; 25:21-22; Lam. 3:30; Mt. 5:7; Rom. 12:17, 20; 1 Thes. 5:15).

Ahimsa is a Sanskrit word meaning "non-violence" and "non-injury" in thought, word, and deed. It works physically through the body, and mentally and emotionally through the mind. Positively ahimsa involves loving other people, kindness, compassion, and forgiveness. Practicing ahimsa alters a person's personality both morally and spiritually. At its core ahimsa is based on the underlying unity in all creation that at the deepest level we are one and the same. It has a long history in Indian religious thought. The *Mahabharata*, one of the epics of Hinduism, has multiple mentions of the phrase Ahimsa, which became one of the primary virtues of moral life. It is the first of the five yamas of Patanjali

as described in the *Yoga Sutras*.⁶⁷

Swami Vivekananda specified, "The Karma-Yogi is the man who understands that the highest ideal is non-resistance, and who also knows that this non-resistance is the highest manifestation of power in actual possession, and also what is called the resisting of evil is but a step on the way towards the manifestation of this highest power, namely, non-resistance." "Never producing pain by thought, word, and deed, in any living being, is what is called Ahimsa, non-injury. There is no virtue higher than non-injury. There is no happiness higher than what a man obtains by this attitude of non-offensiveness, to all creation."⁶⁸ "No one is more powerful than he who has attained perfect non-injuring. No one could fight, no one could quarrel, in his presence. Yes, his very presence, and nothing else, means peace, means love wherever he may be. Nobody could be angry or fight in his presence. Even the animals, ferocious animals, would be peaceful before him." Yet, it must be cautioned that while fearless nonresistance to evil is the highest manifestation of power, it is attainable only by a few. "All great teachers have taught, 'Resist not evil,' that non-resistance is the highest moral ideal. We all know that, if a certain number of us attempted to put that maxim fully into practice, the whole social fabric would fall to pieces, the wicked would take possession of our properties and our lives, and would do whatever they like with us. Even if only one day of such non-resistance were practiced, it would lead to disaster."⁶⁹

The practice of ahimsa was revived in modern times by the Indian social-political leader Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948). He was able to put the ethical principle of ahimsa (non-violence) into practice in the socio-political realm to bring about India's political emancipation from Great Britain. For Gandhi the basis of religion is to serve your fellow man, being grounded in faith in the fellowship of all life, self-surrender to Brahman (God), renunciation and self sacrifice, and practicing the virtues of truthfulness, noninjury to others, fearlessness and patients. In Gandhi's words, "Non-violence does not mean meek submission to the

will of the evil doer. It means pitting one's whole soul against the will of the tyrant. Working under this law of our being, it is possible for a single individual to defy the whole might of an unjust empire." "Love never claims, it ever gives, Love ever suffers, never resents, never revenges itself."⁷⁰ "We will match your capacity to inflict suffering with our capacity to endure suffering. We will meet your physical force with soul force. We will not hate you, but we cannot in all good conscience obey your unjust laws. Do to us what you will and we will still love you.... But we will soon wear you down by our capacity to suffer. And in winning our freedom we will so appeal to your heart and conscience that we will win you in the process."⁷¹ "In passive resistance there is always present an idea of harassing the other party and there is a simultaneous readiness to undergo any hardship entailed upon us by such activity, while in Satyagraha [Truth-Force] there is not the remotest idea of injuring the opponent. Satyagraha postulates the conquest of the adversary by suffering in one's own person." "Indeed, violence is the negation of this great spiritual force which can only be wielded or cultivated by those who will entirely eschew violence. It is a force that may be used by individuals as well as by communities.... Only those who realize that there is something in man which is superior to the brute nature in him, and that the latter always yields to it, can effectively be passive resisters. This force is to violence and therefore, to all tyranny, all injustice what light is to darkness."⁷²

For Gandhi ahimsa is both a philosophy and an active strategy with diverse methods to bring about social change by not employing the use of violence. Practicing non-violence included avoiding both physical injury, mental states like evil thoughts and hatred, and using harsh words. According to Basant Lal interpretation of Gandhi's thought, "Ahimsa [Non-violence] and Truth are so intertwined that it is practically impossible to disentangle and separate them. They are like the two sides of a coin, or rather a smooth unstamped metallic disc. Who can say, which is the obverse, and which the reverse? Ahimsa is the means;

Truth is the end. Means to be means must always be within our reach, and so ahimsa is our supreme duty. If we take care of the means, we are bound to reach the end sooner or later."⁷³

Mahatma Gandhi came to Belur Math on January 30, 1921, to join Swami Vivekananda's birthday celebration. There in a lecture he stated. "I have come here (Belur Math) to pay my homage and respect to the revered memory of Swami Vivekananda, whose birthday is being celebrated here today. I have gone through his works very thoroughly, and after having gone through them, the love that I had for my country became a thousand-fold."⁷⁴ On June 15, 2007 the United Nations General Assembly voted to make October 2 the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi, the International Day of Non-Violence. Gandhi inspired non-violent movements for civil rights and social change throughout the world.⁷⁵

Albert Einstein said this of Mahatma Gandhi, "I believe that Gandhi's views were the most enlightened of all the political men in our time. We should strive to do things in his spirit: not to use violence in fighting for our cause, but by non-participation in anything you believe is evil" (1950).⁷⁶ "Generations to come, will scarce believe, that such a man as this one, ever in flesh and blood walked upon this earth" (1939).

In the United States, Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. (1929-68) the famous Afro-American Civil Rights leader and son of a Baptist pastor was profoundly impacted by the teachings, actions, and ideals of Mahatma Gandhi. He adopted Gandhi's nonviolent methods in his campaign to gain civil rights for Afro-Americans. Prior to that time, Howard Thurman (1899-1981) Dean of the Chapel at the Afro-American Howard University took a leave of absence without pay in 1935-36. He and his wife travelled to India; there he had a spiritual experience while climbing a mountain, met Rabindranath Tagore, and held a three-hour conversation with Gandhi. Before he left, Gandhi told him "that with a clear perception it could be through the Afro-American that the unadulterated message of non-violence would be delivered to all men

everywhere."⁷⁷ In the 1950's Thurman a chaplain and professor of spiritual disciplines at Boston University became the spiritual adviser of Martin Luther King Jr. Thurman urged King to adopt non-violence through loving rather than portraying opponents as wicked. Reverend King was greatly inspired by a "profound and electrifying" message on Mahatma Gandhi, delivered by Mordecai Johnson (1890-1976) the President of Howard University (1926-60). Johnson the son of former slaves had just returned from a trip to India where studied the ideas of its freedom struggle. King's "spiritual mentor" Benjamin Mays (1894-1984) met Gandhi in India in 1936, as did his colleague William Stuart Nelson in 1946. Another African- American friend of King who spent a month in India was Bayard Rustin (1912-87), where he conversed with young intellectuals who urged him to shape a mass movement in the United States modeled on Gandhian Satyagraha.⁷⁸

An inspirer of Martin Luther King Jr., W. E. B. Du Bois (1868-1963) an Afro-American professor at Atlanta University (now Clark Atlanta University) greatly admired Gandhi, stating, "He was the Prince of Peace and stood among living leaders alone, because of that fact...It is singular that a man who was not a follower of the Christian religion should be in his day the best exemplification of the principles which that religion was supposed to lay down." Du Bois considered it important that Gandhi had learnt and fashioned his methods in Africa, which was a center of European colonialism. Reverend James M. Lawson (b. 1928) a practitioner of non-violence read Gandhi and the of study non-violence during his college years. He lived in India between 1953-56, during which time he furthered his study of Gandhi and met Jawaharlal Nehru. After returning to America, he participated in the Black freedom struggle.⁷⁹

Martin Luther King then diligently studied Gandhi's doctrines and realized, "Prior to reading Gandhi, I had about concluded that the ethics of Jesus were only effective in individual relationship. The 'turn the other cheek' philosophy and the 'love your enemies' philosophy were only

valid, I felt, when individuals were in conflict with other individuals; when racial groups and nations were in conflict a more realistic approach seemed necessary. But after reading Gandhi, I saw how utterly mistaken I was. Gandhi was probably the first person in history to lift the love ethic of Jesus above mere interaction between individuals to a powerful and effective social force on a large scale. Love for Gandhi was a potent instrument for social and collective transformation. It was in this Gandhian emphasis on love and non-violence that I discovered the method for social reform that I had been seeking for so many months... the nonviolent resistance philosophy of Gandhi. I came to feel that his was the only morally and practically sound method open to oppressed people in their struggle for freedom... My study of Gandhi convinced me that true pacifism is not nonresistance to evil, but nonviolent resistance to evil. Between the two positions, there is a world of difference. Gandhi resisted evil with as much vigor and power as the violent resister, but he resisted with love instead of hate."⁸⁰

King adds, "I had come to see early that the Christian doctrine of love operating through the Gandhian method of non-violence was one of the most potent weapons available to the Negro in his struggle for freedom." As a civil-rights leader King pointed out that nonviolent resistance, "is not a method for cowards ... it does not seek to defeat or humiliate the opponent, but to win his friendship and understanding... the attack is directed against the forces of evil rather than against persons who happen to be doing the evil. It is evil that the nonviolent resister seeks to defeat, not the person victimized by evil... [there] is a willingness to accept suffering without retaliation, to accept blows from the opponent without striking back ... The nonviolent resister ... refuses to hate [his opponent.] At the center of non-violence stands the principle of love." Like Gandhi, King realized that the capacity to endure unearned suffering is redemptive, which as a form of persuasion has tremendous educational and transforming possibilities.⁸¹ His goal was to transform his opponent rather than to defeat them. King received the

Nobel Prize for Peace in 1964 and donated the money to the leading civil right's organizations.⁸²

In 1959, Martin Luther King Jr. and his wife visited India during a five-week trip meeting Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru in New Delhi and other activists and officials. King later disclosed, "I left India more convinced than ever before that non-violent resistance is the most potent weapon available to oppressed people in their struggle for freedom. It was a marvelous thing to see the results of a non-violent campaign." What impressed King was that "The aftermath of hatred and bitterness that usually follows a violent campaign was found nowhere in India. Today a mutual friendship based on complete equality exists between the Indian and British people within the commonwealth."⁸³ King met with the Gandhi family, as well as with Indian activists and officials, including Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, during the.

After the Supreme Court ruled that Montgomery's bus segregation was unconstitutional, King told a crowd in Brooklyn: "Christ showed us the way, and Gandhi in India showed it could work." King's peaceful approach led to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. By practicing ahimsa he was able to avoid a deadly race war in the United States. Employing the spiritual value and transformative power of ahimsa promoted a more harmonious, interconnected, and spiritual world. These principles became the shared values of those involved in the Civil Rights Movement.

Cesar Chavez (1927-1993) an American labor and civil rights activist was also influenced by Mahatma Gandhi the Indian independence leader. Chavez kept a large portrait of Gandhi in his office, alongside that of Martin Luther King and a bust of John F. Kennedy and Abraham Lincoln. Under Gandhi's influence Chavez used nonviolent tactics, which included pickets, boycotts, and peaceful demonstrations in order to achieve the goal of pressuring farm owners into granting Mexican American farm workers demands. Agricultural workers toiled long hours in the hot sun for very low wages and at times

were subject to dangerous pesticides. Like Gandhi, Chavez was a humanitarian employing a life-affirming approach to aid oppressed people and transform society. He also adopted Gandhi's practice of undergoing long fasts that lasted 36, 25, and 24 days.

Chavez co-founded the National Farm Workers Association with Dolores Huerta in 1962. In 1966, Chavez led his strikers and followers on a 340-mile, 25-day pilgrimage to Sacramento, California. In 1968, Martin Luther King sent a telegram to Chavez stating, "You stand today as a living example of the Gandhian tradition with its great force for social progress and its healing spiritual powers. My colleagues and I commend you for your bravery, salute you for your indefatigable work against poverty and injustice, and pray for your health and your continuing service as one of the outstanding men of America." Chavez like King was deeply religious and spent time in jail. Chavez's portrait appeared on the front of Time magazine in the July 1969 issue. In 1975, California passed the state's Agricultural Labor Relations Act, which established and protected the rights of all farm workers to unionize and bargain for better wages and working conditions. A poll conducted by the Los Angeles Times in 1983 found that Chavez was the Latino whom the Latinos of California most admired.

In recognition of his achievements, in 1994 President Bill Clinton posthumously awarded Chavez the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the country's highest honor for non-military personnel. Clinton signified that Chavez had been a "remarkable man" and that "he was for his own people a Moses figure." He was inducted into the California Hall of Fame in 2006 by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. Chavez was nominated three times for the Nobel Peace Prize by The American Friends Service Committee.⁸⁴

In South Africa, Nelson Mandela (1918–2013) like Gandhi struggled against British colonialism seeking justice, equality, and independence from foreign rule. Both were trained to be lawyers and spent time in jail. He was head of the African National Congress (1991-97) and was

elected the first President of South Africa (1994-99). Mandela received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1993 and was the first non-Indian to be awarded the highest civilian honor, the Bharat Ratna in 1990.

Mandela expressed his admiration for Mahatma Gandhi with the following statements, "His philosophy contributed in no small measure to bringing about a peaceful transformation in South Africa and in healing the destructive human divisions that had been spawned by the abhorrent practice of apartheid," "Gandhi is most revered for his commitment to non-violence and the Congress Movement was strongly influenced by this Gandhian philosophy, it was a philosophy that achieved the mobilization of millions of South Africans during the 1952 defiance campaign, which established the ANC [African National Congress] as a mass-based organization." "In a world driven by violence and strife, Gandhi's message of peace and non-violence holds the key to human survival in the 21st century." "Gandhi's political technique and elements of the nonviolent philosophy developed during his stay in Johannesburg became the enduring legacy for the continuing struggle against racial discrimination in South Africa."⁸⁵

One form of ahimsa is to avoid criticizing other people and see the good in things, since the tamasic maya of hypercriticism can put the mind into a negative, unhappy, hostile, paranoiac state.

7. Tributes to Swami Vivekananda from India's Most Exemplary Political Leaders

What follows is a sample of incisive statements made about Vivekananda by India's most outstanding political luminaries, who devoted their lives to the purpose of bringing political freedom to the country. Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920) the famous Indian nationalist leader and erudite scholar articulated, "It is an undisputed fact that it was Swami Vivekananda who first held aloft the banner of Hinduism as a challenge against the material science of the West.... It was Swami

Vivekananda who took on his shoulders this stupendous task of establishing the glory of Hinduism in different countries across the borders. And he, with his erudition, oratorical power, enthusiasm and inner force, laid that work upon a solid foundation."⁸⁶

Bepin Chandra Pal (1858-1932) was a distinguished Indian political leader. In the Indian National Congress, he advocated extremist measures like "boycotting British manufactured goods, burning Western clothes made in the mills of Manchester, and strikes and lock outs of British owned businesses and industrial concerns."⁸⁷ After visiting England, on February 15, 1898, he wrote to the *Indian Mirror*, "On coming here I see that he has exerted a marked influence everywhere. In many parts of England I have met with men who deeply regard and venerate Vivekananda.... I must say that Vivekananda has opened the eyes of a great many here and broadened their hearts. Owing to his teachings, most people here now believe firmly that wonderful spiritual truths lie hidden in the ancient Hindu scriptures. Not only has he brought about this feeling, but he succeeded in establishing a golden relation between England and India."⁸⁸

In his autobiography Pal added about Vivekananda, "His wonderful success as a powerful orator and defender of the religion of his people had immediately a remarkable repercussion in India, lending new force and inspiration to the infant national consciousness among us.... [His lectures] took his American audiences by surprise. It offered a stupendous shock to their old conviction and prejudice. There was no hesitancy, no suspicion of apology, no attempt to explain away, not the least trace of any inferiority complex in this bold challenge to civilized conceit in Vivekananda's message of Hinduism, to the crowded galleries of the Parliament of Religions. Vivekananda did not assign any reason, did not argue his position, but delivered his message with soul-compelling directness and simplicity, like the ancient seers and sages of our own country or the prophets of the *Old Testament* as truths that could not possibly be contested or controverted."⁸⁹

In 1901-02, Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948) returned to India from South Africa where he had been living since 1893. In his autobiography he relates, "Having seen enough of the Brahmo Samaj, it was impossible to be satisfied without seeing Swami Vivekananda. So with great enthusiasm I went to Belur Math, mostly, or maybe all the way, on foot. I loved the sequestered site of the Math. I was disappointed and sorry to be told that the Swami was at his Calcutta house, lying ill, and could not be seen."⁹⁰ Two decades later Gandhi disclosed, "I have come here [Belur Math] to pay my homage and respect to the revered memory of Swami Vivekananda, whose birthday is being celebrated today [6 February 1921]. I have gone through his works very thoroughly, and after having gone through them, the love that I had for my country became a thousand-fold. I ask you, young men, not to go away empty-handed without imbibing something of the spirit of the place where Swami Vivekananda lived and died."⁹¹

Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964), Gandhi's number one associate who in nine detentions spent a total of nine years in prison, later becoming the first Prime Minister of independent India from 1947 to 1964, had this to say about Vivekananda, "Rooted in the past and full of pride in India's prestige, Vivekananda was yet modern in his approach to life's problems and was a kind of bridge between the past of India and her present.... He was a fine figure of a man, imposing, full of poise and dignity, sure of himself and his mission, and at the same time full of a dynamic and fiery energy and a passion to push India forward. He came as a tonic to the depressed and demoralized Hindu mind and gave it self-reliance, and some roots in the past. I do not know how many of the younger generation read the speeches and the writings of Swami Vivekananda. But I can tell you that many of my generation were very powerfully influenced by him and I think that it would do a great deal of good to the present generation if they also went through Swami Vivekananda's writings and speeches, and they would learn much from them. That would, perhaps, as some of us did, enable us to catch a

glimpse of that fire that raged in Swami Vivekananda's mind, heart, and which ultimately consumed him at an early age. Because there was fire in his heart—the fire of a great personality coming out in eloquent and ennobling language... he was, I think, one of the great founders—if you like, you may use any other word—of the national modern movement of India, and a great number of people who took more or less an active part in that movement in a later date drew their inspiration from Swami Vivekananda.”⁹²

Vinoba Bhave (1895-1982) was recognized “as a National Teacher of India and the spiritual successor of Mahatma Gandhi.” He wrote, “Vivekananda went to America, and there he preached the message of Vedanta to the world. He also told everyone about India's supreme spiritual power. And his speech over there showered elixir throughout India. Indian people could find strength to stand with their head high. It was the consequence of Vivekananda's speech that the Indians were able to realize that they also had power, and moreover their spirit would remain ever free even if the country were conquered by external force. The peoples of distant lands could furthermore learn about India's long historical ancestry and they realized that the distinctive power of the land is worth assimilation.”⁹³

Jawaharlal Nehru’s heroic daughter Indira Gandhi (1917-84) who spent eight months in prison on charges of subversion (1942-43), served four-terms for fifteen years as India’s Prime Minister between 1966-77 and 1980-84. She related, “I had the special privilege of being introduced to the writings, sayings, and life of Swami Vivekananda and the Ramakrishna Mission. That was when I was very small. In fact both my parents and especially my mother had very close connections with the Mission. And I can truly say that the words of Swami Vivekananda inspired the whole of my family, in our political work as well as in our daily lives. Vivekananda's teachings, writings, and speeches which appear on every page of his works, are indeed stimulant Vivekananda provides us courage, strength, and faith and teaches us how to be self-sufficient. These

are the basic tenets of life which India needed most and which would be relevant for all time to come. Vivekananda has taught us that we are the inheritors of a glorious and sublime culture. He has at the same time shown us and analysed the root causes of our national malady. It was Swami Vivekananda who has given us the ways and means how to reconstruct a new India. Vivekananda preached the message of universal brotherhood. And a single word which echoed and reached in all his speeches, was *abhih* i.e. fearlessness."⁹⁴

She continues, "Swami Vivekananda and other great leaders of Indian thought have told us that all great qualities must come from within us. Others can show us the path, but whether to follow that path or not is the responsibility of each individual. The grand words that inspire us in every page, in every saying of Swami Vivekananda are courage, strength, self-reliance, and faith. This is what India has needed and what India needs today... The greatness of Swami Vivekananda lay not only in his great intellectual power and erudition but also in his burning passion to do good not only to the whole of India but to the entire world. His special intellectual gift was that he was keenly aware of the forces at work in the modern world. Just before coming here, I looked at the exhibition on Vivekananda's life and mission, which has been arranged here. And it was remarkable how Vivekananda could even at that time, visualize the present-day problems and could know fully well, then, the trends at work in modern times."⁹⁵

On April 2013, future Prime Minister Narendra Modi (b. 1950) meditated nearly half an hour in Vivekananda's room at the Belur Math. He again visited the Belur Math and paid tribute to Swami Vivekananda on January 12, 2015. Modi revealed, "On his birth anniversary, I bow to Swami Vivekananda. He is a personal inspiration, whose thoughts & ideals have influenced me deeply." Vivekananda is "one of the most prolific thinkers and guiding lights who took India's message to the entire world."

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- ² CW, III:314-15.
- ³ CW, V:514.
- ⁴ MHSP, pp. 275-79.
- ⁵ SCP, p. 155.
- ⁶ SCD, IV, p. 602.
- ⁷ CW, III:220-21; cf., III:108, 148.
- ⁸ CW, V:200.
- ⁹ Susan Walters, "The Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Movement--Its Western Aspects," *PB* (April 1998), p. 301.
- ¹⁰ CW, I:110.
- ¹¹ VATTP (Swami Bhajanananda), pp. 77-79.
- ¹² CW, IV:284.
- ¹³ Web: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_Development_Index;
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/OECD_Better_Life_Index;
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Physical_Quality_of_Life_Index
- ¹⁴ A good portion of this section appeared in an article by G. Stavig in the BRMIC (July 2016), pp. 23-30.
- ¹⁵ CW, II:291.
- ¹⁶ Sister Nivedita, "The Works of My Master," *PB* (May 1963), p. 176.
- ¹⁷ SCD, IV, p. 611.
- ¹⁸ Halbfass, p. 312.
- ¹⁹ Houlst, p. 124.
- ²⁰ Web: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franz_Boas, cover the following nine implications.
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- ²⁷ Roland Robertson, *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture* (London: Sage, 1992), pp. 1-2, 8, 27, 29, 59, 79, 102, 132, 175.
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- ²⁹ CW, V:222-23, 29-30; cf., I:76, 435; III:192, 216, 432; IV:362, 368; V: 7, 14-16, 51, 58, 215, 381-82; VI:288, 380-82, 404; VII:159-60, 172-73, 245-47, 279, 327. For an overview of Humanism see: Web: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Humanism

³⁰ CW, III:194, 432; HYSC, pp. 737-38. An interesting presentation of Swami Vivekananda's Vedantic Humanism is provided by Swami Ranganathananda (1908-2005) who later became a President of the Ramakrishna Order, Web: www.youtube.com/watch?v=qDEi0AYG-mE

³¹ "Liberation Theologians," in Stanley Grenz and Roger Olson, *20th Century Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992), pp. 215, 218; Gopal Stavig, "Swami Vivekananda and Liberation Theology," BRMIC (Nov-Dec. 2009), pp. 509-10.

³² For more on Private and Public Religion see: Jose Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, ???), after p. 40.

³³ CW, IV:361-64; cf. Web: rbalu.wordpress.com/2012/04/23/swami-vivekananda-in-mysore

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⁴³ CW, IV:483; cf., III:216, 290; IV:482; V:215; VI:489, 491; VII:149; VIII:94, 307; HYSC, p. 743.

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⁴⁸ Ann Myren, "Vivekananda and Feminism," *VK* (1994), p. 55; CW, I:68; VI:272-73, VII:484.

⁴⁹ Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation* (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1988), p. 68.

⁵⁰ This subject is covered in far more detail in Stavig (2009), pp. 509-15, 556-59.

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⁵³ Paul Sigmund, *Liberation Theology at the Crossroads* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 7; Stavig (2009), p. 511.

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⁵⁶ CW, V:383-84; cf., IV:362; V:381; VI:288, 404; VII:245-47; VIII:307 -08.

⁵⁷ Gutiérrez (1979), pp. 20-21; Stavig (2009), p. 511.

⁵⁸ CW, I:435.

⁵⁹ Gutiérrez (1988), pp. 69, 165; Stavig (2009), p. 513.

⁶⁰ CW, IV:441-42.

⁶¹ Singer, pp. 31-32.

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