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## The real nature of man in Swami Vivekananda's philosophy

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### Abstract

As man's capacity to think and speculate grew, it became apparent that the real men were not the man that was apparently seen moving and living. Vivekananda seeks for the real in his own way. According to him, real men are a sort of a 'concentration of spiritual energy'. Man, according to him, is a spirit. His emphasis on spirituality is so great that even the bodily aspects of man get spiritualized. This paper aims to explore his views on nature and potential of human beings.

**Keywords:** Potential, spiritual, unity of existence, karma yoga

### Introduction

Swami Vivekananda, a renowned spiritual leader and philosopher, played a pivotal role in introducing Vedanta and Hindu philosophy to the Western world. His teachings and philosophy have had a profound impact on individuals seeking spiritual growth, self-realization, and a deeper understanding of the nature of humanity. This essay will delve into Swami Vivekananda's philosophy of men, exploring his views on the potential, nature, and purpose of human beings.

**Introduction to Swami Vivekananda:** Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902) was a disciple of the great Indian mystic and saint, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. He was a dynamic speaker, thinker, and advocate for religious harmony and social upliftment. Swami Vivekananda's teachings, based on the principles of Vedanta, emphasized the unity of all religions and the importance of direct experience of spiritual truths.

Swami Vivekananda's philosophy of men encompasses a wide range of teachings and principles that shed light on the nature, potential, and purpose of human beings. His profound insights continue to inspire individuals in their spiritual journeys and personal development. In this section, we will delve deeper into specific aspects of Swami Vivekananda's Philosophy of men.

**The Divine Nature of Human Beings:** According to Swami Vivekananda, human beings are not mere mortals bound by limitations; they possess a divine nature. He believed that every individual is essentially divine, with an inherent potential to manifest the divine qualities within. Swami Vivekananda often stressed the idea that human beings are divine sparks of the ultimate reality, often referred to as the Atman or the Self.

**Self-Realization and Inner Transformation:** Central to Swami Vivekananda's philosophy is the idea of self-realization. He believed that the true nature of individuals is divine and that self-realization involves the direct experience and understanding of this divine essence within oneself. Swami Vivekananda emphasized the importance of looking inward and exploring one's inner being through introspection, meditation, and contemplation.

Swami Vivekananda's teachings emphasize that self-realization is not merely an intellectual understanding but a transformative process that leads to a profound shift in one's perception of oneself and the world. Through self-realization, individuals awaken to their true potential and discover their innate qualities of love, compassion, wisdom, and strength.

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**The Potential of Human Beings:** Swami Vivekananda emphasized the immense potential that lies within each human being. He believed that individuals have the power to transform themselves and the world around them through self-realization and self-discipline. Swami Vivekananda encouraged individuals to recognize their inner potential and strive for excellence in all aspects of life.

**Harnessing the Power of the Mind:** Swami Vivekananda recognized the immense power of the human mind and its role in shaping one's thoughts, emotions, and actions. He emphasized the need for disciplined and focused thinking, as well as the cultivation of positive and constructive thoughts. Swami Vivekananda believed that by harnessing the power of the mind, individuals could overcome limitations, transcend obstacles, and manifest their highest potential.

#### **Karma Yoga: Action with Detachment**

Swami Vivekananda popularized the concept of Karma Yoga, which is the path of selfless action. According to this philosophy, individuals should perform their duties and responsibilities without attachment to the results or personal gains. Karma Yoga teaches the importance of dedicating one's actions to a higher ideal or to the service of humanity, rather than being motivated by selfish desires.

Swami Vivekananda believed that by practicing Karma Yoga, individuals could purify their minds, cultivate a sense of selflessness, and contribute positively to society. This philosophy encourages individuals to perform their duties with diligence, integrity, and a spirit of service.

**Vedanta and Unity of Existence:** Swami Vivekananda drew heavily from Vedanta, a philosophical system that explores the nature of reality and the relationship between the individual and the universe. He emphasized the Vedantic teaching of the oneness of existence, asserting that there is an underlying unity that connects all beings and the entire universe.

According to Swami Vivekananda, the perception of separateness and division is an illusion caused by ignorance. He urged individuals to recognize the interconnectedness of all life forms and to embrace a sense of universal brotherhood. This understanding of unity forms the basis for compassion, love, and the realization of the divinity in all beings.

#### **On the Unity of Humanity**

Swami Vivekananda strongly advocated for the unity of humanity. He believed that all human beings are interconnected and share a common essence. Swami Vivekananda emphasized that true spirituality lies in recognizing the divinity within oneself and seeing the same divinity in others. He promoted the idea of universal brotherhood and the importance of embracing diversity while recognizing the underlying unity of all beings.

**Service as Worship:** Swami Vivekananda considered service to humanity as a form of worship. He believed that genuine spirituality is not confined to temples or rituals but is expressed through selfless service to others. Swami Vivekananda emphasized the importance of identifying the needs of society and actively working towards its betterment.

By engaging in acts of service, individuals not only contribute to the well-being of others but also purify their own hearts and minds. Swami Vivekananda saw service as an essential aspect of personal growth and spiritual evolution.

#### **Education and Empowerment**

Swami Vivekananda recognized the transformative power of education in shaping individuals and society. He emphasized the importance of holistic education that nurtures the physical, intellectual, moral, and spiritual dimensions of human beings. Swami Vivekananda advocated for education that empowers individuals to think critically, cultivate virtues, and develop a sense of social responsibility. He believed that education should not be merely focused on acquiring knowledge but should also instill moral values, character development, and a sense of purpose. Swami Vivekananda envisioned education as a means to awaken the inner potential of individuals, enabling them to contribute meaningfully to society and lead fulfilling lives.

#### **The Role of Faith and Belief**

Swami Vivekananda emphasized the significance of faith and belief in spiritual growth and personal development. He encouraged individuals to have faith in themselves, in their inherent divinity, and in the power of higher principles. Swami Vivekananda believed that faith provides the strength and conviction to overcome challenges and persevere on the spiritual path.

He also recognized the importance of faith in a higher power or the divine. Swami Vivekananda emphasized that faith is not blind acceptance but a result of direct experience and realization. He encouraged individuals to seek their own direct experience of the divine through sincere spiritual practice and inner exploration.

#### **The Integration of Science and Spirituality**

Swami Vivekananda sought to bridge the gap between science and spirituality. He believed that both disciplines aim at understanding the truth and exploring the nature of reality. Swami Vivekananda emphasized that science deals with the external aspects of reality, while spirituality delves into the inner realms of consciousness and the ultimate truths.

He advocated for a harmonious integration of scientific knowledge and spiritual wisdom, recognizing that both are essential for a comprehensive understanding of human existence. Swami Vivekananda encouraged individuals to embrace scientific inquiry without losing sight of the spiritual dimensions of life, fostering a balanced approach to knowledge and personal growth.

#### **The Power of Positive Thinking**

Swami Vivekananda stressed the importance of cultivating positive thoughts and attitudes. He believed that the mind is a powerful force that shapes one's reality and experiences. Swami Vivekananda encouraged individuals to maintain an optimistic outlook, to cultivate positive emotions, and to consciously choose thoughts that uplift and inspire.

By harnessing the power of positive thinking, individuals can overcome negativity, self-doubt, and limitations. Swami Vivekananda emphasized that a positive mindset not only enhances personal well-being but also influences the

surrounding environment, creating a ripple effect of positivity and transformation.

### **Living a Life of Purpose and Meaning**

Swami Vivekananda emphasized the importance of living a life of purpose and meaning. He believed that each individual has a unique contribution to make in the world, and it is through the pursuit of one's inherent calling that true fulfillment and happiness are attained.

Swami Vivekananda encouraged individuals to reflect on their passions, talents, and values, and align their actions with their innermost aspirations. He believed that living a purpose-driven life not only brings personal satisfaction but also benefits society at large.

### **The Purpose of Human Life**

According to Swami Vivekananda, the purpose of human life is to realize one's divine nature and manifest it in all spheres of existence. He emphasized that the ultimate goal of human life is the realization of the Self or God-consciousness. Swami Vivekananda believed that the path to self-realization involves the integration of spirituality and practicality, where individuals can serve society selflessly while nurturing their spiritual growth.

**Self-Discipline and Character Building:** Swami Vivekananda placed great emphasis on self-discipline and character building. He believed that the development of a strong and virtuous character is essential for spiritual growth and the manifestation of one's potential. Swami Vivekananda emphasized the practice of ethical values, such as truthfulness, compassion, and selflessness, as a means to purify the mind and cultivate a strong moral foundation.

### **Service to Humanity:**

Swami Vivekananda considered service to humanity as an integral part of spiritual practice. He believed that true spirituality is expressed through selfless service to others. Swami Vivekananda advocated for social reforms, upliftment of the poor and marginalized, and the promotion of education as means to empower individuals and create a just and harmonious society.

### **The Practice of Meditation**

Meditation played a significant role in Swami Vivekananda's philosophy of men. He regarded meditation as a powerful tool for self-realization and spiritual growth. Swami Vivekananda encouraged individuals to cultivate a regular meditation practice to quiet the mind, develop concentration, and attain higher states of consciousness. Through meditation, he believed that individuals could directly experience their true nature and transcend the limitations of the material world.

### **Swami Vivekananda's Influence and Legacy**

Swami Vivekananda's teachings and philosophy continue to inspire millions of individuals around the world. His emphasis on the divinity and potential of human beings, the unity of humanity, and the importance of self-discipline and service to others resonates with people from different walks of life. Swami Vivekananda's ideas have influenced not only spiritual seekers but also individuals in various fields, including philosophy, psychology, education, and social reform.

### **Conclusion**

Swami Vivekananda's philosophy of men highlights the divine nature and potential within every individual. His teachings emphasize the importance of self-realization, self-discipline, and selfless service to humanity. Swami Vivekananda's ideas continue to inspire individuals to embark on a path of self-discovery, character building, and spiritual growth. Through his teachings, he has left a profound impact on the understanding of human nature, spirituality, and the pursuit of a meaningful and purposeful life. In conclusion, Swami Vivekananda's philosophy of men encompasses profound insights into the nature, potential, and purpose of human beings. His teachings highlight the significance of self-realization, the harnessing of the mind's power, selfless service, and the unity of existence. Swami Vivekananda's philosophy continues to inspire individuals to embark on a transformative journey of self-discovery, compassion, and spiritual growth.

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