

Religion and Spirituality

Views of Master EK, Vivekananda and Sadguru

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Abstract

Most unfortunately and paradoxically, maximum violence and destruction happened on the globe, is in the name of Religion for the sake of God who has been hailed as an embodiment of love and compassion by all religious people. Why is it so? What does it imply? The difference between emotion and devotion has been completely blurred. The higher the emotions of senses, the greater seems to be the violence in the name of devotion. The leaders of spirituality argue that all religions demand humans to love one another and this can be achieved if one evolves to be a spiritual being, but not remain as a religious person. In this backdrop, the present paper discusses the views on spirituality propounded by some leading Indian spiritualists – Swamy Vivekananda, Master EK, and Sadguru Jaggi Vasudev.

Keywords: Swamy Vivekananda, Master EK, and Sadguru Jaggi Vasudev, Spirituality, spiritual dimensions, religious restrictions.

Introduction

Why people in every nation and every society are looking for a God? Why they want perfect ideal somewhere, either in man or in God, or elsewhere? Because, Vivekananda explains, “the idea of religion is very much within you. It is your own heart beating, but you are not aware of it.”

Indeed, Religion is deeply rooted in the blood of men & women for centuries. Still it has been dominating man and his way of thinking and behaviour. Religious thought itself is in man's very constitution, so much so that it is impossible for him to give up religion. Man is like an infinite spring, coiled up in a small box, and that spring is trying to unfold. Religion would help men and women in unfolding their potential. But, as many think, religion doesn't mean doctrines, dogmas, nor the principles nor the philosophies. Religion doesn't live in sects and societies. Religion doesn't mean erecting temples or building churches or attending public worship only. Religion cannot be found in books or in sermons or in organizations. It is a relationship between soul and God. It is the gist of all worship. Religion is the manifestation of the divinity already within man.

Indeed, spiritual realization is religion. The ultimate goal of religion is the identification of oneself with the universal spirit- i.e., Spiritual realization. The very soul of religion is experience, experience of the divinity in all the forms.

A man of spirituality finds life always new, incredibly new at every step. For he doesn't look through the mind. Life is new, only the mind is old.

Many people consider themselves spiritual as well as religious. However, there is a subtle dichotomy between religiosity and spirituality. The obvious difference between these two, in the popular view, is that religion is driven by ceremony and ritual, whereas spirituality is devoid of all these practices. In fact, religion is a spiritual concept.

Kulapathi Ekkirala Krishnamacharya, popularly known as Master EK, says that spiritualism includes every religion. It is expressed in different parts of the globe in different times and in different languages. Each time a prophet, or a saint is born, a new faith or religion is born and the truth is expressed in a novel fashion, though there is nothing new in the content. The content of every system is spiritual. In fact, every religion speaks of a way of living. While the content is the same, the technology is different. For a spiritualist, there is only one universal religion – the religion of love.

According to Master EK, religions are like schools, the pious schools and the wisdom teaching is like an education. The same syllabus is taught in different schools of thought. If anyone thinks that every school has a separate education, it is mere ignorance. Each religion is like a page in a calendar. Even if all the twelve pages of the calendar are torn off, again the year is there revolving. Similarly, religions may be torn off after the purpose is served, and there may be the birth of a new religion every time, according to the need.

A spiritualist sees the one spirit in whom everyone moves, lives, and have their being. Spiritualism teaches us how to align thought, word, and deed. Spirituality is being inwardly awake.

For a spiritualist, there is nothing like good and bad, right and wrong, beautiful or ugly, divine or devilish in the universe. The seemingly opposites become complimentary in a truly religious person. All conflicts dissolve and become cooperation. Without inner growth, religion has no value. When a person is realised, his whole being becomes a prayer, a devotion, a sacrifice to the divine. It all lies in the attitude through which one beholds the outer world.

In the modern times, most unfortunately, religion has been exploited for personal & social gains which can be seen throughout history. Sadguru Jaggi Vasudev keeps saying that, the moment one thinks of Religion, it should be the end of all violence and hatred, but paradoxically, religion has become the very source of all sorts of sorrow, remorse, and distress. Religiosity and animosity have become the two sides of the same coin. Religion has been a great healer as well as a cruel killer. It has become the main cause of maximum pain on the planet. Lot of bloodshed has happened in the name of religious wars.

It doesn't make any sense to which religion you belong. How does it make any sense? How does it help you to know your real self? To know Truth, you need not be a religious person, you need not be identified with anything – i.e., either with a nation or with a religion or even with masculinity or femininity according to Master EK. Indeed, to know truth, you have to get rid of all this baggage, drop all these labels, leave out all ideas about God, and be just yourself. Truth has nothing to do with all these labels. Truth is naked, isn't it?

Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev says that people keep on collecting garbage continuously through their thoughts - may it be social, political, educational, or even religious and spiritual - heaps of thoughts which are nothing to do with the reality or existence. What ideology you believe in, doesn't matter. The real thing that matters is – you, your consciousness, and your state of consciousness.

Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev says that moving from one religion will not make a difference. Because you will be doing the same things and behaving in the same way. Man remains the same unless he changes his dimension. Unless you know that everyone is right in his own way, you can never find the ultimate truth of this creation, because the ultimate creation lies in the totality of whole creation. However great a philosophy may be, however rare a thought may be, it cannot be an ultimate truth.

Indeed, God is a tremendous paradox- He is beyond logic. You cannot make the image of a God in wood, or in stone, or in concepts and ideas. What many of us call God is only an impression of God, not God. Everyone has his own God. Everyone has his own photo of God. God exists behind all impressions. Swami Vivekananda exhorted that we may worship a picture of God, but not God as the picture.

Sacred scriptural writings are beneficial in stimulating desire for inward realization. The deeper the self realization of a man, the more he influences the whole universe by his subtle spiritual vibrations. But Master EK says that we are dead to the scriptures and read scriptures through the people of religion.

Spiritualists emphasize that all the religions have proved their strength, their worth, and their necessity for mankind. To enrich one's life, one can accept and follow that which attracts him in other religions. If one religion is true, all the other religions must also be true. Religions are not contradictory but complementary. Swami Vivekananda gives an example. If, someone takes the pictures of a building from different angles, we can see different faces of the same object and they are not contradictions, but many-sidedness of a single unique entity. According to Swami Vivekananda, we are colouring the truth with our own intellect and grasping it with the dim light of the mind. Saints and spiritual masters have identified the need for a universal religion.

All the spiritual leaders of the world from different religious backgrounds preached the oneness of all religions with regard to the transcendental aspect of each religion. They generally claim that all religions are valid means to the same end.

Conclusion

Spiritualists focus on spirituality, not on religion. Self-realization becomes an important focus here.

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