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## The Spiritual Ideals of William Wordsworth, Ralph Waldo Emerson and Swami Vivekananda for Emancipation and Redemption of Humanity

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### Abstract

Humanity is progressing by leaps and bounds. The inventions and discoveries in the scientific field have empowered humankind outwardly. Nature has gifted human beings the divine puissance to aspire and supersede the inconscient range of mind. Once again there is an opportunity and the call of time to rise above the mundane to establish peace and integrity in the world. The natural right of every individual for a perfect survival is the divine design of nature. The life; dignified, peaceful, healthy and equal in every aspect is the goal to be attained by humankind. The achievement of the best life goals by safeguarding the natural human rights is essential for peoples residing on the planet. The apostles of knowledge William Wordsworth, Ralph Waldo Emerson and Swami Vivekananda have worked tirelessly to achieve the goal which is to preserve the fundamental rights of every individual without any discrimination. The paper endeavours to highlight the ideals of Wordsworth, Emerson and Vivekananda for achieving spiritual living in matter. According to them, the utilitarian mind of man has attained all kinds of material comforts and has only added to its agony. The urgent need of the day is to come out of the worldly camouflage. The latent power which operates through nature leads human beings towards the transcendent state which is free from earthly bondages.

For the purpose, this paper is an effort to present the spiritual deliberations of Wordsworth, Emerson and Vivekananda which can pave the path for transmutation of mundane to spiritual in strengthening each individual completely. They enumerate that humanity is striving to up rise beyond transitoriness. The whole world is in the process of transfiguration. The spirit revealed in cosmic mind, life and matter seems to construct its own conscious energy for evolution of man's knowledge which leads towards the freedom and liberation of the whole humanity.

**Keywords-** Nature, Human Rights, Knowledge, Spirituality and God-realization.

### Introduction

The glory of humanity exalts through lustre of the consciousness which is potentially divine and true. The world is progressing remarkably but this growth is resulting to disintegration and dispassionate advancement. The industrialization and mechanical development exhibits the worldliness and utilitarian aspect of up growth which is paramount in this world. The phenomenal forward march is towards the destination which is quite unacceptable for human beings. Man searching for consolation through materiality is unable to perceive the inherent spiritual power. The intrinsic puissance of man, time and again has endeavoured for his up rise, but he is unable to realize it. The earthly being is incapable to handle the turbulent situation. The intellectual and moral development is dominated by superficiality and hypocrisy. The paper is an effort to explore the doctrines of Wordsworth, Emerson and Vivekananda which reverberate the message of taking the life's journey towards infinity through spiritual life force and equality of every human being. A comprehensive study of the literature by them,

which has an urge for spiritual elevation, achievement and descent of the higher form for establishing peace, light, bliss, universality in the very core of life seems to take the charge of bringing each entity on an elevated spiritual state. The idea diverted my attention to explore their thoughts which have the power to rejuvenate humankind with consistent efforts to protect human rights. The concord of splendid contemplation of the stalwarts is surely a great endeavour for amalgamation of the boundaries of nations.

Wordsworth the best known pioneers of Romanticism took the people beyond the levels of worldly existence. He very well understood the role of poet as prophet. Wordsworth worshipped Nature and perceived the Divine aura in it considering Nature as his friend, philosopher and guide. Nature for Wordsworth was not a separate entity but a spirit within himself. His disappointment with the French Revolution and anger at the industrialization of London along with the critique of the modern way of life reflects in his poem "The Excursion":

Of truth, of Grandeur, Beauty, Love and Hope,  
And melancholy subdued by Faith;  
  
Of blessed consolations in distress;  
  
Of moral strength, and intellectual Power;  
  
Of joy in widest commonality spread;  
  
Of the individual mind that keeps her own that keeps her own  
  
Inviolate Retirement, subject there  
  
To Conscience only, and the law supreme  
  
Of that Intelligence which governs all. (Wordsworth, xi).

Wordsworth experienced the loss of faith and was sorrowful on the decline of virtuosity. There is an urge to confer upon the grace on man so that he may conquer mundane and ephemeral subsistence. Wordsworth's belief in a mystic truth which is the Divine power and operates through Nature explicates his aspiration to advance towards the transcendent state, the 'blessed mood' elaborated in his poem "Tintern Abbey":

...that serene and blessed mood,  
  
In which the affections gently lead us on,-  
  
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame  
  
And even the motion of our human blood  
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep  
  
In body, and become a living soul.... (Wordsworth, 193).

Wordsworth reiterates that this temporal world is the place where human beings are allotted the task to be accomplished which is the understanding of infinity and eternity of the supraterrrestrial hemisphere. Wordsworth's declaration to speculate on the vast prospect of reformation of humanity is an illuminating effort. He proclaimed that the things which appear in front of man are the components

by which the Reality can be achieved. The instruments are trivial unless they are the part of the ethereal and intransitory universe. Wordsworth's rejection of the external world and acceptance of the internal province is a motivating endeavour which can manoeuvre for amalgamating the divergent forces. According to him, soul of man is a spark of the Divine manifested through materiality, itself being the immaterial. It is the revelation and essence of a human being's identity. The aim of humanity is to exhibit in the life a divine perfection, which is the very constitution of our inner self. This perfection is the understanding of the limitless power which is present in each and every aspect of life, nature and universe. After realizing the supreme nature of this perfection, Wordsworth contends that humanity should integrate and identify it with the instinctual self. The profound quote from "Tintern Abbey" again highlights the idea of Wordsworth:

Be but a vain belief, yet, oh! how oft—  
 In darkness and amid the many shapes  
 Of joyless daylight; when the fretful stir  
 Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,  
 Have hung upon the beatings of my heart—  
 How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee,  
 O sylvan Wye! thou wanderer thro' the woods,  
 How often has my spirit turned to thee! (Wordsworth, 194).

Wordsworth always propagates that the need is for elimination of vices and selfishness, sublimation of ignorance and ego for attainment of a supreme state of existence. Morality, truthfulness, selflessness are the certain imperishable aspects of human understanding which when brought forth are able to help us for transcendence to a beautiful world of the immortal existence. The realization of the ethereal divine self which in itself is the infinite blessing and knowledge confers upon us a state of highest joy. Wordsworth's rolling thoughts are substantiated with the lines from "Tintern Abbey":

A presence that disturbs me with the joy  
 Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime  
 Of something far more deeply interfused,  
 Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns, And  
 the round ocean and the living air, And the blue  
 sky, and in the mind of man:  
 A motion and a spirit, that impels  
 All thinking things, all objects of all thought, And  
 rolls through all things.

There is attained beatific joy in bringing down peace and harmony in every way into the universe. Our faith in the self and soul exhibits the eternal potentialities to rise and attain the strength of becoming a person characterized with tolerance, sympathy and empathy. Therefore all the national and racial barriers hampering the universality of human existence will experience a transformation and the world

will enter into a great, grand stage which will be self-fulfilled. Emerson, the major exponent of Transcendentalism advocates for the upsurge of humanity beyond the gross existence. The subtle domain is a grand and glimmering state where a being experiences peace and serenity. The chaos and turmoil prevailing in the world can be surmounted through calmness and understanding of the finitude of transitory existence, with upliftment of oneself towards the higher domain as Emerson enumerates. The identification of the self to the cosmic self is the cardinal message of Transcendentalism. Emerson remarks to divert oneself from conventionality and advance towards elevated and exalted territory. The realization of the divine providence and knowing the Unknowable through the instinctual vision is the radiant speculation of Emerson. He glorifies the unsubstantial ether of knowledge in his essay "The Over-Soul":

...within man is the soul of the whole; the wise silence; the universal beauty, to which every part and particle is equally related; the eternal ONE. (Emerson, 199).

Emerson believed that to experience the ultimate Truth every man has to search for the Divine beatitude within himself. This will manifest the One outwardly and a direct bond will be established with harmonized and dynamic celestial entity. Emerson's poem "Brahma" declares that the belief in affinity of Almighty to man will eventually lead towards the concord of life force and macrocosm. The poem is as follows:

If the red slayer think he slays,

Or if the slain think he is slain,

They know not well the subtle ways I  
keep, and pass, and turn again.

Far or forgot to me is near;

Shadow and sunlight are the same; The  
vanished gods to me appear; And one to  
me are shame and fame.

They reckon ill who leave me out;

When me they fly, I am the wings; I  
am the doubter and the doubt, I am the  
hymn the Brahmin sings.

The strong gods pine for my abode, And  
pine in vain the sacred Seven; But thou,  
meek lover of the good!

Find me, and turn thy back on heaven.

Emerson exclaims that the embodiment of love, light, peace, bliss and power can attain *Brahma* even though there is ineffectualness in seeking the All. His reiteration for gaining the greatest good in a large number is the message to mankind for securing spiritual good and attainment of the sublime state. Emerson proclaimed that the chief goal of a spiritual human life is attainment of

salvation, the *moksha*. He also developed a thought process explaining that the stages of understanding lead towards an enlightened state. Emerson like Wordsworth says that the soul travels through human life in the world again and again, until it attains redemption to lift up the veil of *maya*. The incarnate beings live in the world adhering themselves to the spiritual laws ruling and guiding the supramental level of existence. The purpose in life is the attainment of divine light and the realization. The divine impulse of a man brings out the good in him. The goodness prevails in the society and establishes a harmonious design for each one of us to sustain, survive and elevate. There is a grand concord, but to win the soul and the over soul which is not only natural but spiritual as well. The matter does not hamper this integration. The exalted soul always is in a process of receiving the subtle vibrations from the over soul. He enumerates:

The soul is superior to all the particulars of merit. The soul requires purity, but purity is not it ; requires justice, but justice is not that ; requires beneficence, but is somewhat better ; so that there is a kind of descent and accommodation felt when we leave speaking of moral nature, to urge a virtue which it enjoins. For to the soul in her pure action all the virtues are natural, and not painfully acquired. Speak to his heart, and the man becomes suddenly virtuous. (Emerson, 204).

The spiritual vision of humanity thus broadens and the being rises beyond the limitations of earthly existence and is in the conversation with the over soul. Emerson once being in the company of nature felt an inspiration by the spiritual impulses which he finds in the elements of nature. He reiterates that:

We see the world piece by piece, as the sun, the moon, the animal, the tree; but the whole, of which these are the shining parts, is the soul. It is only by the vision of that Wisdom, that the horoscope of the ages can be read, and it is only by falling back on our better thoughts, by yielding to the spirit of prophecy which is innate in every man, that can know what it saith.'(Emerson, 199).

The nature seems to motivate him to transcend the boundaries of material existence and seek a spiritual communion with the harmonious Whole.

Only itself can inspire whom it will, and, behold, their speech shall be lyrical, and sweet, and universal as the rising of the wind. Yet I desire, even by profane words, if sacred I may not use, to indicate the heaven of this deity, and to report what hints I have collected of the transcendent simplicity and energy of the Highest Law. (Emerson, 199).

The spiritual preceptor Vivekananda's advent and his preaching on practical *Vedanta* is the wonderful beginning of a novel era. His exuberant and powerful declamations inspired the masses. The sage's aspiration to endeavour for the betterment of humanity enlightened mankind and motivated the people for faith, surrender, renunciation and service. Vivekananda appealed and encouraged human beings to exalt towards that realm of consciousness from where the universe can be perceived in the Divine form. *Vedanta* proclaims about the potential divinity of the soul. The Supreme reveals itself wholly in every soul as Vivekananda enumerates. The seer's great faith in the divine character of human soul establishes him as an eminent and august entity.

The effulgence of the saint reflects in his notion of advancing humankind towards the paradisaical glory. Vivekananda asserted that the miseries of the world can never shake the confidence of man because he has an inherent celestial power. The sage established the ideal of *Vedanta* in a glorious and appealing manner. Vivekananda advocated to proceed towards incessant work for redemption. This advancement is the true mark of an illumined soul. The manifestation of divinity through various paths of action, knowledge and devotion will advance humanity from the lower hemisphere towards superconsciousness, as he declares:

Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this Divinity within, by controlling nature, external and internal. Do this either by work, or worship, or psychic control or philosophy- by one, or more, or all of these- and be free. This is the whole of religion. Doctrines, and dogmas, or rituals, or books, or temples, or forms, are but secondary details. (Vivekananda, Vol.1 124).

In the contemplation of Vivekananda, the expression of inner power of human beings is channelized for fruitful perfection. According to the seer, knowledge is inherent in human beings and they discover the ocean of infinite knowledge unconsciously present in themselves. The emphasis of Vivekananda is on the great requirement of man-making and character-building philosophy. Through *Vedanta* he promotes the idea of translating the thoughts into actions. The elevation of the soul from lower hemisphere to the upper region of existence, the being as truth; hovering in terrestrial hemisphere, can proceed towards the supraterrrestrial. He believed in the divine character of human beings and paved the path for not only the transformation of consciousness but also its upliftment and revelation. The seer enumerates:

The whole of this universe, therefore, is, as it were, a peculiar form; the Absolute is that ocean while you and I, and suns and stars, and everything else are various waves of that ocean. And what makes the waves different? Only the form, and that form is time, space and causation, all entirely dependent on the wave. As soon as the wave goes, they vanish. As soon as the individual gives up this Maya, it vanishes for him and he becomes free. The whole struggle is to get rid of this clinging on to time, space and causation, which are always obstacles in our way. (Vivekananda, Vol.2 136).

*Karma-Yoga, Jnana –Yoga, Bhakti-Yoga* and *Raja-Yoga*, provide the ways for attaining the life goals in their best forms. The goal of life is the urge to know the reality of our existence. Vivekananda contented the highest aim of all of us is the realization of God. Vivekananda had an aim to strengthen the humanity and elevate it towards the level of that existence where the superstitions and orthodoxy dissolve and there is a realization of infinite forms of existence. According to him there is a great strength in human beings. He proclaims that there is no misery, no sin in any human but there is a great power, energy and he is the reservoir of the courage and energy which is infinite. He advocates the spiritual integration of all parts of the world. The seer perceived the divine in human form and he spent every minute of his life in elevating and awakening humanity's spiritual possibilities. Vivekananda reiterates that the Absolute is beyond time, space and causation. He is the universe in its total form and realization. There is unity in diversity, unison in discord, completeness in incompleteness, in the philosophy of Vivekananda. The apostle motivates the humanity to transcend the earthly boundaries of class, creed, colour and cast. According to the sage, each and every individual is superior in its being an existence. The service to humanity is true service to the Almighty. Human beings are divine in their very existence and are the highest form of God. The attainment of

superconsciousness through the path of spiritual living will lead us to rejuvenate the ancient ideal of existence, which is exuberant and supreme. Vivekananda proclaims:

Just as unconscious work is beneath consciousness, so there is another work which is above consciousness. When this superconscious state is reached, man becomes free and divine, death becomes immortality, weakness becomes infinite power, and iron bondage becomes liberty. That is the goal, the infinite realm of the superconscious. (Vivekananda, Vol.2 35).

Vivekananda very profoundly shows the way, that each soul is the conglomeration of all the universal experiences which are present in the firmament. The experiences manifest knowledge, when the appropriate situation comes into the being's existence. All the outward elements of subsistence can console humanity for a limited period of time but the inner strength of each and every individual when realized, attained and brought forth into the universal existence is the glorious understanding felt on the earth. The struggles and evils in the life's journey are a part and parcel to keep on motivating all of us and thus the path towards eternity becomes more subtle. Vivekananda says that:

The doors are open for us, and we can all get out without the competition and struggle; and yet we struggle. The struggle we create through our own ignorance, through impatience; we are in too great a hurry. The highest manifestation of strength is to keep ourselves calm and on our own feet. (Vivekananda, Vol.5 279).

Vivekananda's powerful oration on the harmonization of all which is the crux of *Vedanta*, he sees that we have to create a world which is one. The sage mentions that; a man is neither born nor dies nor goes to heaven and that reincarnation is really a myth with regard to the soul. He elaborates the idea:

The example is given of a book being turned over. It is the book that evolves, not the man. Every soul is omnipresent, so where can it come or go? These births and deaths are changes in nature which we are mistaking for changes in us. (Vivekananda, Vol.5 281).

Vivekananda enumerates that each life seeks for the revelation of God within. The soul cannot be cut through a sword, no weapon can pierce it, neither fire can burn it and nor water can melt it. In this way he announces that the struggle of humanity is to be free from desires and exalt towards manifestation of freedom in each and every aspect of life's spiritual journey. The understanding of the inner power and listening to the voice of conscience has been eloquently expressed by Wordsworth, Emerson and Vivekananda. The awareness of an inherent divine potential has an urge for a transformed perception. The world which once seemed not so glorious will appear elegant and beautiful through inculcation of discourses of the stalwarts.

There would be freedom from weal and woe and the world which is in the process of evolution will experience unity in diversity. The conviction of the prophets which is the exaltation and upliftment of lower towards the higher hemisphere will gain leeway in the resurgence of the human vigour. As the lover of humanity their strive is for peace, brotherhood, harmony and integration on the higher foundation. It is an inspiring ideal, an establishment of a spiritual land continuously transcending to supramental attainment and the aspiration for whole humanity becoming a Gnostic being; the spiritual human governed by huge spiritual province in its state of self-awareness. Thus the earth will be blooming with flowers which would be the colourful blossoms of the tree planted on the world-soil. The world would be free from discrimination, commotion, instability and would unite as a complete whole. The propagation of spiritual ideals of the thinkers, in every way of life and society would actually build a strong world and earth-citizens.

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