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Knowledge is Sacred

Many religious leaders during the 19th century believed that science and religion were antithesis of one another- that they challenged one another's virtues. But a revolutionary man by the name of Swami Vivekananda used his experience and observations of the society to place science and religion as parallels of one another. Born as Narendra Nath Datta to a wealthy and religious family, Swami Vivekananda was well educated, had interests in many subjects, and was very religious. Swami Vivekananda used his profound understanding of the universe to predict the theory of relativity before Einstein did, he acknowledged the unity of the life forms through evolution and he emphasized the importance of education to promote progress in society.

Swami Vivekananda was able to deduce from his knowledge of the physical world that matter and energy were interchangeable. He said, "We have matter and force. The matter, we do not know how, disappears into force and force into matter. Therefore there is something which is neither force nor matter, as these two may not disappear into each other." The proof for this declaration was discovered ten years later, by Albert Einstein through his theory of relativity and formulation of the mass-energy equivalence ($E=mc^2$) concept. Furthermore, Swami Vivekananda applied his comprehension of physics to society; he stated, "One atom of the universe cannot move without dragging the whole world with it." Swami Vivekananda reasoned that a change in

an area or an individual of a society affects the whole society, just how a change in an atom affects the composition of a compound.

Charles Darwin's theory of evolution stated that all life forms evolved from a single common ancestor through natural selection. However, Swami Vivekananda further believed that evolution and involution, the process of the Divine coming into manifestation, are present throughout nature and has given humans their spirituality. Moreover, Swami Vivekananda concluded that, "To my mind, if modern science is proving anything again and again, it is this, that we are one — mentally, spiritually, and physically." Swami Vivekananda recognized that all human beings are alike, as they all came to exist through evolution and involution, and that unity is essential in spiritual development. Swami Vivekananda used his understanding of biological concepts to enforce unity between humans and between minds.

Swami Vivekananda was one of the first monks in India to realize that education played an important role in the future of a culture and a country. He said that science and Dharma both revolved around truth; science seeks truth in the physical world and Dharma seeks truth in the spiritual world. He proposed that this truth should be conveyed to all- rich or poor, through education. Swami Vivekananda believed that education is essential to the proper development of the soul, body and mind of an individual, as individuals constitute a nation. Education gives people intellectual strength, tolerance, open-mindedness and moral development, which leads to a peaceful and equitable society. If education can be provided to all, then there would be fewer conflicts in the world, decisions can be made rationally, and everyone will be able to grow spiritually and morally.

Hence, Swami Vivekananda wanted people to unify science and religion to create a world that was rich materially and spiritually. Swami Vivekananda had an extraordinary mind that

understood the laws of matter and human nature, and he applied it in explaining the physical, biological and spiritual world. He promoted education for all, as it leads to intellectual and moral development. Science instills people with reason and understanding and religion brings people together, leading to the achievement of Vedic spirituality in an individual.