

# **Spirit of Vedanta Ushering Hinduism to The Idea of Universalism (Discourse on Swami Vivekananda's Thought)**

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## **Abstract**

In its development, Hinduism experienced many changes to its modern era. Apart from all its traditions, Hinduism tries to introduce its existence on the world stage. Reformers of modern Hinduism such as Sri Ramakrishna, Rammohun Roy, and Swami Vivekananda themselves contributed greatly to this new idea with their respective models of practice. Departing from Swami Vivekananda attending the World Religious Parliament in Chicago in 1893, he brought the vision of his spiritual teacher Sri Ramakrishna about the Harmony of Religions are true. In the Parliament, he upheld his Vedanta teachings, which have been reinterpreted according to his Ideal concept, that Vedanta is the teaching of the future. Based on its Universal concept, Vedanta is able to take the World's attention to its teaching in the West. In an effort to realize this idea, 1897, Swami Vivekananda disseminated the religious message of his teacher by establishing the Ramakrishna Mission, an organization to strengthen and expand

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the Vedanta idea. Since its inception, the Ramakrishna Mission has been dedicated to improving spiritually and social service, as well as developing religious teachings.

**Keywords:** Vedanta, World Religious Parliament, Ramakrishna Mission.

### Abstrak

Dalam perkembangannya, Hinduisme mengalami banyak perubahan hingga menuju era Modern nya. Terlepas dari segala ketradisionalnya, Hinduisme mencoba untuk memperkenalkan eksistensinya di kancah dunia. Para reformis Hinduisme modern seperti Sri Ramakrishna, Rammohun Roy, dan Swami Vivekananda sendiri, turut berandil besar terhadap ide baru ini dengan modelprakteknya masing-masing. Berangkat dari Swami Vivekananda menghadiri sebuah Parlemen Agama Dunia di Chicago pada tahun 1893, ia membawa visi guru spiritualnya Sri Ramakrishna, tentang 'Harmony of Religions', suatu kesatuan yang menganggap bahwa semua agama itu benar. Dalam parlemen itu, ia menjunjung tinggi ajaran Vedanta miliknya, yang telah dimakni ulang menurut konsep idealnya, bahwa Vedanta adalah ajaran masa depan. Dengan berlandaskan konsep Universalnya, Vedanta mampu mengambil perhatian dunia untuk diimplementasikan ajarannya di Barat. Dalam upaya merealisasikan gagasannya ini, pada tahun 1897, Swami Vivekananda menyebarkan pesan religi gurunya dengan mendirikan Ramakrishna Mission, sebuah organisasi guna memperkuat dan memperluas gagasan Vedantanya tersebut. Sejak awal didirikan, Ramakrishna Mission didedikasikan untuk peningkatan rohani dan pelayanan sosial, serta pengembangan ajaran agama.

**Kata Kunci:** Vedanta, Parlemen Agama Dunia, Ramakrishna Mission

### Background of Study

When the discussion about, "what is Hinduism?" it is initiated, it always gets a multitude of confusion and contradictories. It is because there are a lot of religious practices carried out in Hinduism. As a religion, it possesses a great number of Gods and Goddesses, thick scriptures, uncounted saints, sages, and even avatars -divine incarnations-<sup>1</sup> more than any other religions in the world. Moreover, Hinduism is attractive as its followers are always able to

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<sup>1</sup> David Frawley, *A Hindu Call for Religious Pluralism*, (Greece: Vedanta Study Circle, 1998), 3

identify two major statements in Hinduism: either as acceptance by all of one religion or as an acceptance of all the religions by one.<sup>2</sup>

The question is almost similar to the understanding of Pluralism<sup>3</sup> that derived from Western teachings.<sup>4</sup> As it will be found the concept of unity in Hinduism as a way of life,<sup>5</sup> life about the nation of One Being by concentration on the ethical core of each religion and worship of the "One True God". The point to be noted in the context of religious pluralism is that the statement regarding all religions is one religion that indicates a theological unity. Pluralism, in a nutshell, is an attempt to harmonize different religious beliefs in a spirit of tolerance and mutual appreciation. Nowadays, Pluralism is frequently accepted as a way in which people come to terms with otherness and come to treat others.<sup>6</sup>

Swami Vivekananda was a India reformer intended to assimilate European society with Hinduism. As it is interesting to know that the world that Vivekananda embraced was rational, scientific, masculine, sane, normal, orthodox, and nationalistic; contrasted with traditional views of religion especially Hinduism.<sup>7</sup> His thought contributed to the construction of national life in India

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<sup>2</sup> Arvind Sharma, *The Concept of Universal Religion in Modern Hindu Thought*, (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1998),135

<sup>3</sup> Hinduism meaning about Pluralism is tolerant of religious differences. It does not seek to reduce all religions to a common model. It lets their differences stand out as they are and does not seek to cover them over with a veil of unity. Pluralism says that it is fine for Hindus to have different or even contrary views about religion and this does not have a problem. The Important thing is to seek truth or God in a way that is most meaningful for us. David Frawley, *A Hindu Call for Religious Pluralism*, (Greece: Vedanta Study Circle, 1998), 6

<sup>4</sup> See for instances: John Hick, Dennis L. Okholm, and Timothy R. Phillips, eds., *Four Views on Salvation in a Pluralistic World*, Counterpoints (Grand Rapids, Mich: Zondervan Pub. House, 1996); Thomas F. Banchoff, ed., *Religious Pluralism, Globalization, and World Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); Vincent F. Biondo and Andrew Fiala, eds., *Civility, Religious Pluralism, and Education*, Routledge Research in Religion and Education (New York: Routledge, 2014); Chris Beneke, *Beyond Toleration: The Religious Origins of American Pluralism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); D Okholm and T Phillips, eds., *More than One Way? Four Views on Salvation in a Pluralistic World* (Michigan: Harper Collins, n.d.); Milda Alisauskienė and Ingo Schröder, eds., *Religious Diversity in Post-Soviet Society: Ethnographies of Catholic Hegemony and the New Pluralism in Lithuania* (Farnham, Surrey, England ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate Pub, 2012).

<sup>5</sup> Margaret Chatterjee, Reflections on Religious Pluralism in the Indian Context, *Journal of Hindu-Christian Studies*, Vol. 7, Article 5, January 1994, 8

<sup>6</sup> Wendy Doniger, *Many Gods, Many Paths: Hinduism and Religious Diversity*, (Chicago: Religion and Culture Web Forum, 2006), 7

<sup>7</sup> Jyotimaya Sharma, *A Restatement of Religious Swami Vivekananda and the Making of Hindu Nationalism*, (London: Yale University Press, 2013), xii

altogether with a balance preservation of the Hindu religion.<sup>8</sup> Accordingly, Vivekananda was powerfully influenced by Western social ideals adopting The Christian pattern of devotion as well<sup>9</sup> as reconstructed a viable pluralistic worldview that holds meaning for practitioners past and present.<sup>10</sup> This paper will elaborate Vivekananda's idea about the Spirit of Vedanta and its relevance to the design of Universalism.

## Swami Vivekananda Biography

Leaving a side his supra-sensual background of the personality known as Swami Vivekananda,<sup>11</sup> his worldly origin has to be traced to the ancient and well known Kayastha family of Dattas of Calcutta,<sup>12</sup> the famous Datta family of Simla, in Calcutta. His family name was Narendra Nath Datta. Vivekananda was born on January 12, 1863, in Calcutta (Kolkata) West Bengal.<sup>13</sup> Her mother is Bhuvaneshwari Devi.<sup>14</sup> Bhuvaneshwari was a great woman, her calm resignation to the will of God in all circumstances, strength, and reserve characterized this Hindu woman.<sup>15</sup>

His father Vishwanath Datta renounced his worldly life after the birth of his son Vivekananda and became a monk. He was proficient in English and Persian and took delight in the study of the Bible and the poems of the Persian poet Hafiz. He a well-known lawyer<sup>16</sup> and became a successful attorney-at-law in the High Court of Calcutta. He was a man of deep compassion and great sympathy, and his charity very often knew no discrimination.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Swami Tapasyananda, *Swami Vivekananda, His Life, and Legacy*, (Chennai: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1988), 2

<sup>9</sup> Swami Tapasyananda, *Swami Vivekananda, His Life, and Legacy...*, 14

<sup>10</sup> Elaine M. Fisher, *Hindu Pluralism, Religion and the Public Sphere in Early Modern South India...*, 207

<sup>11</sup> For the further term, the writer is going to use Vivekananda only instead of Swami Vivekananda

<sup>12</sup> Swami Tapasyananda, *Swami Vivekananda, His Life and Legacy*, (1988), 4

<sup>13</sup> Constance A. Jones, D. Ryan, *Encyclopedia Of World Religion, Encyclopedia of Hinduism*, (New York: Fact on File, 2007), 494

<sup>14</sup> Bhuvaneshwari Devi was Vivekananda's mother, 'Bhuvaneshwar' Lord of The World is an ancient name for Shiva that now serves as the capital of the southern Indian state of Orissa. Constance A. Jones, D. Ryan, *Encyclopedia Of World Religion, Encyclopedia of Hinduism*, (New York: Fact on File, 2007), 84

<sup>15</sup> Bhuvaneshwari Devi was exceptionally intelligent and have a royal dignity,

<sup>16</sup> Swami Lokeshwarananda, *Swami Vivekananda The Friend of All*, (Golpark, Kolkata: Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, 1991), 4

<sup>17</sup> Swami Tejasananda, *A Short Life of Swami Vivekananda*, (Kolkata: Advaita Ashrama, 1995), 7

Naren in his childhood, was an original thinker, bringing the general conception of philosophical inquiry to bear upon the vital elements in the culture of his own race. And the thought was deep. And so much known about him as an accurate historical record, the great Indian patriot, restored national heroes in Indian society, in a people subject to a foreign rule, self-confidence and Indians are very proud of their great heritage.<sup>18</sup>

It was a classic story of Swami Vivekananda's life that illustrates the Hinduism perspective of experiencing God. When he was still a collegian, he asked many of the foremost religious leaders in the Calcutta area where he lived if they had seen God. However, he never got a clear and authoritative answer from anyone, but his Master Sri Ramakrishna.<sup>19</sup>

Gradually, since he met Ramakrishna. He abandoned his plans for a legal career and became an ascetic. In 1893 he traveled to Chicago for the Parliament of Religions,<sup>20</sup> for carrying his Master Ramakrishna message of harmony of religions to the west in different parts of the USA and England.<sup>21</sup> There, He spoke a well-known phrase before the global audiences; standing in his part as a member of Hinduism:

Mankind ought to be taught that religions are but the varied expression of the religion, which is Oneness, so that each may choose the path that suits him best.<sup>22</sup>

This statement which was delivered bluntly at the Chicago World Religious Parliament appeared like an Eastern comet in the Western spiritual sky and brings the word Vedanta into circulation of Western rheological tradition. The idea, moreover, seems most appropriate to reflect the core of the Hindu view<sup>23</sup> as he declared, "all religions are one". Afterward, Vivekananda was known traveled to

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<sup>18</sup> Chaturvedi Badrinath, *Swami Vivekananda The Living Vedanta*, (India: Penguin Books, 2006), 12

<sup>19</sup> Dharma magazine collection, *What is Hinduism, Modern adventures into a profound global faith*, (United State America: Himalayan Academy, 2007), 169

<sup>20</sup> The interaction between Hindu communities has led to a considerable interest within Hinduism in interfaith dialogue. Hinduism is present at all such interfaith events. The move toward this dialogue looks back to the 1893 Chicago World's Fair and the role that Swami Vivekananda played in opening the idea of faiths working together. Madhu Bazzaz Wangu, *World Religions Hinduism*, (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 2009), 131

<sup>21</sup> Swami Bhajanananda, *Harmony of Religions from the Standpoint of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda*, (Kolkatta: Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, 2008), 36

<sup>22</sup> Pujyasri Candrasekharendra Sarasvati Swami, *Hindu Dharma The Universal Way of Life*, (India: Bhavan's Book University, 1995), 12

America and United Kingdom spreading his idea, which turned out successfully accepted by people from multiple backgrounds. His greatest achievement was indeed reviving all-around interest in Hinduism throughout the world.<sup>24</sup>

The spiritual terms as the resounding success from Vivekananda's participation of World Congress of Religions at Chicago had shown 1897 deriving from the putative spiritual and cultural domination that India exerted over the world in ancient times.<sup>25</sup> The pinnacles of all of his religious thought and practice were, of course, Hinduism.<sup>26</sup> Let us see again another of his statements delivered at the World Parliament of Religions held in Chicago<sup>27</sup>:

We find then that if by the idea of a universal religion it is meant that one set of doctrines should be believed in by all mankind, it is wholly impossible. It can never be, there can never be a time when all faces will be the same, again, if we expect that there will be one universal mythology, that is also impossible; it cannot be. Neither can there be one universal ritual, such as the state of things can never come into existence; if it ever did, the world would be destroyed, because variety is the principle of life.

Vivekananda's perception regarding Universalism was brought up based on his re-interpretation of the ancient scriptures in the light of Sri Ramakrishna's experience. His idea improved the main teaching of his Master helped to establish inter-religious harmony to modern integral Hinduism and have given shape to the progressive-integrated Hinduism teaching which stresses an interreligious harmony as a basic tenet.<sup>28</sup>

## **The Ideal of Vedanta as a New breakthrough for Hinduism**

Principally, Vivekananda tried to reclaim spirituality, advance intelligence, then establish the main ideas of Sanatana Dharma by rectifying it by upholding Vedanta within modern society.

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<sup>23</sup> Hans Torwesten, *Vedanta Heart of Hinduism*, (New York: Grove Press, 1991), 7

<sup>24</sup> Madhu Bazzaz Wangu, *World Religions Hinduism*, (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 2009), 83

<sup>25</sup> Christophe Jaffrelot, *Hindu nationalism A Reader*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2007), 50

<sup>26</sup> Frank Morelaes, *Radical Universalism: does Hinduism teach that all religions are the same?* (New Delhi: 2008), 18

<sup>27</sup> Swami Bhajanananda, *Harmony of Religions from the Standpoint of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda...*, 38

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 7

Furthermore, Vivekananda was able to reconcile sects, doctrinal differences, and historical misunderstanding within the traditions.<sup>29</sup> Such an effort indeed appealed to global communities, especially in part an exploration of dharma as one's duty in its universal and particular aspects, elsewhere tradition, law, and religion).<sup>30</sup> In another word, Vivekananda liberated a specific-Hinduism concept to be allowed and even practiced by non-Hindu publics. Besides, because Vedanta is a spiritual idea in Hinduism, it should not be understood and as same as the worldview of other religions. Rather than concealing a different point between religion, Vivekananda seeks to find out 'what deep within it holds this universe together' aims at the human center, its deepest institution, where the light of truth suddenly shines forth. The teaching of Vedanta emphasized personal experience and how it is realized in real life.<sup>31</sup> Consequently, according to the idea of Universalism, an external form of religion is less important than its core.

These teachings of Vedanta, especially as contained in the Upanishad and the Bhagavad Gita, aroused the interest of Western scholars, philosophers, and literary figures to become acquainted with Vedanta teachings. All these scholars found their spiritual home in Eastern wisdom or proved to be at least inspired by this wisdom, Vedanta.<sup>32</sup> From what was mentioned earlier, one of the Vedanta teachings that became the attraction of Western scholars is the Ideal concept. Through this concept, Vivekananda put away the 'practical matters' besides, as this concept focuses only on the core of the faith itself. This idea was the essence of Vedanta.<sup>33</sup>

In accordance with such a concept, there are a lot of Hindus assumed that it is the future universal religion. Vivekananda was one of them. What makes his idea special is because he studied directly under the guidance of his Master, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. Ramakrishna, as he was claimed as one of the greatest of a mystic saint, had transmitted all of his knowledge and spiritual insights to Vivekananda. As such, Vivekananda had work to do, as a superior student of his master to illumine the human horizon. The insights led him later to conceptualize the common truth of all religions; implying

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<sup>29</sup> Jyotimaya Sharma, *A Restatement of Religious Swami Vivekananda and the Making of Hindu Nationalism...*, 98

<sup>30</sup> John Brockington, *Hinduism and Christianity*, (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd, 1992), 25

<sup>31</sup> Hans Torwesten, *Vedanta Heart of Hinduism...*, 4

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 6

<sup>33</sup> Swami Vivekananda, *Practical Vedanta*, (London: 1896), 3

the same God that lives in all different faiths.<sup>34</sup> Accordingly, Vivekananda's breakthrough was in accordance with the famous Vedic line "Truth is one, wise people talk about it with variety".<sup>35</sup>

Vivekananda's contribution is to give a new meaning to the Vedanta,<sup>36</sup> away from its usual definition, and talked of the living Vedanta which meant living relationships in a new light; especially implying the existence of 'the others'. Vivekananda brought out in his personality the true meaning of Vedanta, which in its literal sense, is often called the embodiment of true Vedanta.<sup>37</sup>

As Vivekananda said in his book *Practical Vedanta*:

Be master of all these. What is there to be taught more in religion than the oneness of the universe and faith in one'sself? All the works of mankind for thousands of years past have been towards this one goal, and mankind is yet working it out. It is your turn now and you already know the truth. For it has been taught on all sides. Not only philosophy and psychology, but materialistic sciences are declared it. Where is the scientific man today who fears to acknowledge the truth of this oneness and universe? Who is there who dares talk of many worlds? All these are superstition. There are only one life and one world, and this one life and one world are appearing to us as manifold.<sup>38</sup>

Vivekananda also founded the Ramakrishna order of monks and preached Vedanta to India and the West. An important aspect of this movement was its involvement in social work, and this Western-inspired practical assistance came to be a feature of many later Hindu movements. The organization whose task is to spread the Vedanta teachings to the West was Ramakrishna Mission, and it has centered around the world and publishes many keys of Hinduism scriptures.<sup>39</sup> He even stated that the one central ideal of Vedanta is this oneness; There are no two in anything, no two lives, nor even two different kinds of life for two worlds. For Vivekananda, there is only one life,

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<sup>34</sup> Chaturvedi Badrinath, *Swami Vivekananda The Living Vedanta...*, 15

<sup>35</sup> Wendy Doniger, *Many Gods, Many Paths: Hinduism and Religious Diversity*, Journal of Religion and Culture Web Forum, University of Chicago, February 2006, 15

<sup>36</sup> Once he described his own mission as follows. Answering the question "What do you consider to be the function of your movement as regards India", the Swami said: "To find a common basis of Hinduism and to awaken the national consciousness to them."

<sup>37</sup> Chaturvedi Badrinath, *Swami Vivekananda The Living Vedanta...*, 10

<sup>38</sup> Swami Vivekananda, *Practical Vedanta ...*, 6

<sup>39</sup> David Smith, *Hinduism, and Modernity*, (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 174



one world, and one existence.<sup>40</sup> Everything is that one, will be a difference only in the level of degree and not in its kind.<sup>41</sup>

The great exhortation of the Vedanta is that every soul, in whatsoever sphere of the universe, shall rise above all mortality to the realization of Brahman. That is to say that the personal soul shall come to realize that It alone is Reality, the process being a gradual expansion of consciousness. All relative ideas and relationships about which consciousness builds itself in the weaving of desire must be transcended.<sup>42</sup>

Speaking on the Vedanta as the universal basis of life, Vivekananda was saying:

...Behind everything the same divinity is existing, and out of this comes the basis of morality. Do not injure another. Love everyone as your own self, because the whole universe is one. In injuring another, I am injuring myself, in loving another, I am loving myself. From this also springs that principle of Advaita morality which has been summed up in one word 'self-abnegation. The Advaitist says this little personalized self is the cause of all my misery. This individualized self, which makes me different from all other beings, brings hatred and jealousy and misery, struggle and all other evils. And when this idea has been got rid of, all struggle will cease, all misery vanish.<sup>43</sup>

All of that knowledge of the unity of the soul must not be an abstraction. It is not that negative kind of universalism that belongs neither to one nor to another.<sup>44</sup> Then, all Hindus ought to understand it well. Vivekananda emphasized again that the truth may be expressed in a hundred thousand ways, and that each of these ways is true as far as it goes. Vedanta was simply comprehended in that way. Vivekananda, therefore, preached only one principle while admits various methods on the other hand.<sup>45</sup>

Furthermore, Vivekananda's concept of Universalism is characterized by a certain measure of fluidity; Sometimes he uses the term universal religion to emphasize the multiplicity of religion, sometimes the eternity of religion, sometimes the complementarity

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<sup>40</sup> Glyn Richard, *Studies in Religion, A Comparative Approach to Theological and Philosophical Themes*, (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1995), 122-123

<sup>41</sup> Swami Vivekananda, *Practical Vedanta...*, 4

<sup>42</sup> Swami Virajananda, *The Life of The Swami Vivekananda*, (Calcutta: The Lakshmi Printing Works, 1847), 217

<sup>43</sup> Chaturvedi Badrinath, *Swami Vivekananda The Living Vedanta...*, 197

<sup>44</sup> Glyn Richards, *A Source Book of Modern Hinduism*, (Britain: Curzon Press Ltd, 1985), 116

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 67

of religions, at other times the humanity of religions, yet again the harmony of religions, and yet again, the unity of religion, and sometimes he even discusses the possibility of Vedanta as a universal religion.<sup>46</sup> Because of Vivekananda himself. Finally, he reinterprets the universal definition according to his ideal definition.

## **Islam and Christian Response to Universalism in Global**

Islam is the last religion that Allah SWT sent to humans through His Messenger Muhammad SAW as the closing Prophet and Apostle for previous Prophethood. Islam is present in the midst of humanity who at that time desperately needed a handle on life and a means of control for themselves. Islam is present in the framework of universalism which implies that Islam can fit all the characteristics of people in every place and time.

There are differences regarding the understanding of Universalism between Christian term and Islam term. According to Christian sense, Universalism is a deep understanding or has overall implications. Universalism in Christianity is explained by John Hick that there is salvation outside the church. In the theory developed, soteriology religious pluralism; with the view that there is still salvation outside the church -even he is not a Christian- which will lead to respect and tolerance for people outside the church or non-Christians.<sup>47</sup> Hick' pluralism idea was briefly rejected by Marianne Moyaert; regarding the ambiguity of theology and philosophical aspect within his idea.<sup>48</sup>

While the case of Universalism in Islam is quite different. For some, Universalism was a subject that focuses on core pain or the main elements of humanity; such as the principle of equality before the law, protection of citizens from injustice and arbitrariness, safe guarding the rights of those who are weak and suffering, including lack and restriction on authority the holders of power. A series of teachings

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<sup>46</sup> Arvind Sharma, *The Concept of Universal Religion in Modern Hindu Thought...*, 54

<sup>47</sup> Hick, Okholm, and Phillips, *Four Views on Salvation in a Pluralistic World*; John Hick, *Faith and Knowledge: With a New Pref*, 2. ed. reissued, [2. Dr.]; [Nachdr. v. 1966] (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1996); John Hick, "The Myth of God Incarnate," n.d., 224; John Hick, *God Has Many Names* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 1980), <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-16308-3>; John Hick, *God and The Universe of Faiths: Essays in The Philosophy of Religion* (Oxford: Oneworld, 1993)

<sup>48</sup> Marianne Moyaert, "Why Are Theologians Annoyed by John Hick?," *STUDIES IN INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE* 22, no. 12 (2012): 191–208

covering various fields, such as religious law (fiqh), faith (tauhid), ethics (akhlaq), and attitude to life.<sup>49</sup>

The idea of Universalism was accepted indirectly by figures who agreed with religious pluralism as well; pioneered by some figures such as Nurcholis Madjid, Abdurrahman Wahid, and many others. These scholars uphold the spirit of high tolerance, as it was stated by Abdurrahman Wahid, for example, there is a form of Rahmatan lil'alaminin Islam means 'mercy for all nature'. Such a conception initiates grace applied to universal, all-encompassing, to all the world of mankind.<sup>50</sup> Seyyed Hossein Nasr also implied that the earliest philosopher such Al-Kindi and Al-Farabi inhabit a universal interest in nearly every branch of the sciences and the arts as well as in philosophy and theology, who combine the general interests of Renaissance scientist and philosopher in the arts and sciences with the special interest of a medieval theologian and philosopher in religion.<sup>51</sup> According to Nasr, Because both philosophers possessed a universal idea, they successfully found their intellectual needs. Assuming that the source of the sacred science was initially the same, Nasr concluded that the foundation of global faith was unity as well; claiming that it was a unity between different religious traditions.<sup>52</sup> The idea was not accepted globally by Scholars, though. As I have quoted in my previous research, it is unacceptable to divide religion per se its 'esoteric' and 'exoteric' dimension.<sup>53</sup> Islam should not be divided into two multiple elements, as Islam itself is complete unity (Tawhid) between its internal and external essences. It is suitable to quote Ismail Raji al-Faruqi in this sense that, "... al Tawhid is a general view of reality, of truth, of the world, of space and time, of human history and destiny."<sup>54</sup>

## Conclusion

Vivekananda's remarkable contribution to modern thought was an integration of the doctrine of Hinduism within Western

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<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 43

<sup>50</sup> Marcel A. Boisard, *Humanism dalam Islam*, (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1980), 183

<sup>51</sup> Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Three Muslim Sages*, (New York: Caravan Books, 1976), 13

<sup>52</sup> Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *The Need For a Sacred Science*, 2005, <http://public.ebookcentral.proquest.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=242330>

<sup>53</sup> Abdullah Muslich Rizal Maulana, "Kesatuan Transenden Agama-Agama dalam Perspektif Tasawuf (Kritik atas Pemikiran Frithjof Schuon)," *KALIMAH* 12, no. 2 (September 15, 2014): 197, <https://doi.org/10.21111/klm.v12i2.236>

<sup>54</sup> Ismail Raji al-Faruqi, *Al Tawhid: Its Implications for Thought and Life* (Virginia: International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), 1992), 9.

Civilization. Following history, he conveyed his idea collaborating with all modern reformers of Hinduism to voice the truth of all religions in a universal concept. The goal is nothing but to maintain the existence of his religion and be recognized in the eyes of the world. Vivekananda was a pioneer of the Ramakrishna Mission to channel his ideas about the concept he held in high esteem. To bring it to world sight, he proclaimed a universal idea in the World Religious Parliament in Chicago in 1893. There, he reinterpreted the teaching of Vedanta according to his model declaring Vedanta is the ideal teaching of interreligious harmony for a global society.

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