



Mains Practice Question

Q. Discuss Indian saints who though untouched by western ideas have shown a progressive modern outlook. (150 words)

20 Oct, 2022 GS Paper 4 Theoretical Questions

Approach

- Discuss briefly the western ideas.
- Discuss at least two Indian Saints who propagated modern ideas without compromising on Indian Ethos.
- Conclude suitably.

Introduction

- Western idea, sometimes equated with Western civilization, is a term used very broadly to refer to a **heritage of social norms, ethical values, traditional customs, belief systems**, political systems, and specific artifacts and technologies that have some origin or association with Europe.

Body

- **Indian Saints who showed modern outlook:**
 - **Swami Vivekanand:**
 - He introduced **Indian philosophies of Vedanta and Yoga** to the Western world and is credited with **raising interfaith awareness, bringing Hinduism to the world stage during the late 19th century.**
 - He **established Ramakrishna Mission** in 1887, named after his Guru Swami Ramakrishna Paramhansa. The institution did extensive educational and philanthropic work in India.
 - **Core values of Swami Vivekanand's Philosophy:**
 - **Ethics**
 - Morality in both individual life and social life is mostly based on fear of societal censure.
 - But Vivekananda gave a new theory of ethics and new **principle of morality** based on the intrinsic purity and oneness of the Atman.
 - Ethics according to Vivekananda was nothing but a code of conduct that helps a man to be a good citizen.
 - We should be pure because purity is our real nature, our true divine Self or Atman.
 - Similarly, we should love and serve our neighbours because we are all one in the Supreme Spirit known as Paramatma or Brahman.
 - **Rationality:**
 - He did not discard reason in favor of faith.
 - He recognized intuition or inspiration as a higher faculty than reason. But the truth derived from intuition had to be explained and systematized by reason.
 - **Buddha:**

- **Core values of Buddha's Philosophy:**
 - To **avoid the two extremes of indulgence in worldly pleasure and the practice of strict abstinence and asceticism.**
 - He ascribed **instead the 'Madhyam Marg'** or the middle path which was to be followed.
 - According to him **everyone was responsible for their own happiness** in life, stressing upon the **individualistic component of Buddhism.**
- **Main teachings:**
- To encapsulating in the basic concept of **four noble truths or ariya-sachchani** and **eightfold path or astangika marg.**
- **Four noble truths:**
 - Suffering (dukkha) is the essence of the world.
 - Every suffering has a cause - **Samudya.**
 - Suffering could be extinguished - **Nirodha.**
 - It can be achieved by following the Atthanga Magga (Eight-Fold Path).
- **Eight-Fold Paths:** It consists of various interconnected activities related to knowledge, conduct, and meditative practices.
 - Right **view**
 - Right **intention**
 - Right **speech**
 - Right **action**
 - Right **livelihood**
 - Right **mindfulness**
 - Right **effort**
 - Right **concentration**

Conclusion

- Swami Vivekananda belonged to the 19th century, yet his message and his life are more relevant today than in the past and perhaps, will be more relevant in future.
- The Buddhist teachings inculcate compassion, calmness & composure, joy among humans and they can help maintain a sustainable balance between man and nature.
 - The ultimate goal of Buddha's teaching was the **attainment of nibbana** which was not a place but an experience, and could be attained in this life.