

Material Progress and spiritual Vacuum: A Study of Sree Sree Thakur Anukulchandra's Integral Philosophy in the Contemporary World

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Abstract

The twenty-first century confronts humanity with a profound paradox: unprecedented advances in science, technology, and global communication coexist with an escalating crisis of meaning, morality, and existential belonging. Despite remarkable economic growth and intensified global connectivity, contemporary societies continue to experience alienation, ethical fragmentation, ecological disequilibrium, and a pervasive sense of spiritual emptiness. These conditions suggest that material progress alone is insufficient to sustain human fulfillment or social harmony. Against this backdrop, the present paper critically examines the philosophy of Sree Sree Thakur Anukulchandra (1888 - 1969), as a substantive response to the contemporary global spiritual and ethical vacuum. Sree Sree Thakur's thought articulates a distinctive integrative framework that reconciles science and spirituality, faith and rational inquiry, individual fulfillment and collective responsibility, as well as intellect and emotion. Central to His philosophy is devotion to the *Ideal*, conceived as the living and evolving manifestation of the divine principle, which functions as both an ethical compass and a dynamic force for personal and social transformation. This devotion is not merely meditative but is operationalized through disciplined service, value-oriented education, and sustained moral self-cultivation. The paper argues that such a synthesis offers a holistic vision of life capable of addressing the root causes of contemporary discontent rather than its symptomatic expressions. Employing an interdisciplinary methodology that draws upon philosophy, sociology, and educational theory, this study reinterprets Sree Sree Thakur Anukulchandra's integrative thought as a constructive paradigm for human progress. It demonstrates how His ideas preserve inner vitality while simultaneously fostering social order, ethical responsibility, and cultural continuity. By situating His philosophy within contemporary global discourses on ethics, economics, sustainability, and civilisation, the paper establishes its enduring relevance as a viable framework for addressing the crises of meaning and value that define the modern age.

Keywords: Sree Sree Thakur Anukulchandra, Integral Philosophy; Science and Spirituality; Ethics and Moral Evolution; Being and Becoming; Spiritual Humanism

Introduction: The Paradox of Progress

Contemporary civilization frequently celebrates itself as an era of unprecedented progress. Rapid advancements in artificial intelligence, genetic engineering, medical science, and space exploration have significantly extended the boundaries of human capability and control over nature. Yet, alongside these remarkable achievements, there persists a profound disorientation in ethical, spiritual, and existential terms. Material abundance and technological sophistication have not attained inner fulfillment or social harmony. Instead, modern humanity appears increasingly alienated from its moral foundations and integrative sense of purpose. As Dr. Alexis Carrel incisively observes in his book *Man, the*

Unknown, modern civilization has fostered an excessive fixation on material gain at the expense of imagination, moral courage, and holistic intelligence.

“Man has sunk into indifference to almost everything except money... Modern civilization seems to be incapable of producing people endowed with imagination, intelligence, and courage.” (Biswas 4).

The contemporary crisis, therefore, is not one of scarcity but of direction; not of information, but of wisdom. Despite intellectual refinement and scientific mastery, modern individuals struggle with self-integration and moral coherence. Technological systems, though efficient and expansive, often operate independently of ethical accountability. Education has largely shifted from value-centred formation to information-driven training, while social structures increasingly privilege competition over cooperation. Escalating tendencies toward violence, consumerism, and moral erosion reflect a deeper erosion of human essence. As noted in *New Light from the East*, humanity has been progressively deprived of compassion, civility, and intrinsic dignity, leading to widespread alienation and existential despair.

“Humanity has been drained of its final remnants of love, compassion, civility, and the innate sense of human dignity, leading many toward alienation and despair” (Biswas 3).

In a similar vein, Dr. F. Peterson acknowledges the imbalance in modern knowledge systems, remarking that while the sciences of inert matter have advanced rapidly, humanity remains profoundly ignorant of itself.

“The science of life has progressed more slowly than those of inert matter, our ignorance of ourselves” (Biswas 93).

Against this backdrop of moral and spiritual disintegration, Sree Sree Thakur Anukulchandra offers a penetrating diagnosis and an integrative corrective. He cautions that the degeneration of humanity commenced when the abstract conception of an infinite, unseen God replaced the living guidance of realized Seers, and when doctrines replaced lived spiritual exemplars. His exhortation calls for the transcendence of sectarian divisions, reverence for all past Prophets, and conscious attachment to the living Ideal who embodies and consummates their collective spiritual essence. This vision situates spirituality not as dogma but as a dynamic, living process rooted in personal transformation and social responsibility.

“The degeneration of humanity began at that moment when the unseen God was made infinite and, ignoring the Seers, the worship of their Sayings began. Oh Mankind! If you desire to invoke your good, forget sectarian conflict. Be regardful to all the past Prophets. Be attached to your living Master or God and take only those who love Him as your own. Because all the past Prophets are consummated in the divine Man of the present” (Satyanusaran 5).

The present study examines how Sree Sree Thakur Anukulchandra’s integral philosophy responds to the ethical and existential vacuum of modernity. Drawing upon India’s spiritual heritage while articulating its insights through scientific temper and universal humanism, His thought proposes an alternative civilizational paradigm, one that begins with self-organization and culminates in the harmonization of collective life. Specifically, this paper analyses:

- i. The global condition characterized by material progress and moral crisis;
- ii. The foundational principles of Sree Sree Thakur’s integral philosophy;
- iii. His concept of the Ideal and its role in self-regulation and social equilibrium; and
- iv. The contemporary relevance of His teachings for education, ethics, and global harmony.

The Global Crisis of Human Civilization

The world today suffers not from lack of knowledge, but from the separation of knowledge from wisdom. Science has liberated human intellect but enslaved the heart to mechanistic thinking. The ecological crisis, moral decay, and social unrest visible across continents stem from a common cause - the loss of inner anchorage.

Sociologists like Zygmunt Bauman describe the present condition as “liquid modernity,” where values, relationships, and identities dissolve in the flux of consumerism and rapid change. Economic systems treat human beings as instruments of production rather than bearers of purpose. Political conflicts intensify in the absence of a shared moral foundation. Even religion, often reduced to ritual or dogma, fails to offer the living link between spirit and society that ancient seers envisioned.

“In a liquid modern life there are no permanent bonds, and any that we take up for a time must be tied loosely so that they can be untied again, as quickly and as effortlessly as possible, when circumstances change - as they surely will in our liquid modern society, over and over again.” (Bauman 2000)

Sree Sree Thakur Anukulchandra diagnosed this crisis as a disjunction between *being* and *becoming*. Progress without purpose is but a procession toward peril. In His view, human civilization must be guided by the Ideal - a living personality who embodies the divine principle in daily conduct. Without such a living Ideal, collective life becomes mechanical, driven by greed and imitation rather than inspiration. The Ideal does not negate reason but He illuminates it. By aligning personal actions with the living Ideal, human discovers the rhythm of order within self and the world.

This integrative perspective challenges both materialistic reductionism and escapist spirituality. Sree Sree Thakur saw no conflict between science and faith, provided both served the evolutionary impulse of life. He proclaims:

“To know a thing
with all its components
and their co-ordinating adjustments,
peculiarities with their action,
differences and similarities,
in all specific specifications
is science -as I call.” (*Message VIII*, 174)

His worldview thus transcends the binary of East and West, sacred and secular offering instead a unified field of human endeavour grounded in devotion, duty, and dynamic adaptation.

Sree Sree Thakur Anukulchandra's Integral Philosophy

Born in Himaitpur, Pabna (now in Bangladesh), Sree Sree Thakur Anukulchandra Chakraborty (reverently and lovingly addressed as Sree Sree Thakur by His devotees and followers) emerged as a spiritual reformer whose message combined the empirical spirit of science with the compassion of the mystic. Educated in medicine, He practiced as a physician while initiating a movement that evolved into *Satsang*, a socio philanthropic organisation devoted to the Ideal and the upliftment of humanity. His philosophy cannot be confined to any one discipline; it is simultaneously scientific, religious, ethical, psychological, social and so on.

At its core lies the principle of integration, the coordination of thought, action, and emotion around a central Ideal. For Sree Sree Thakur, progress means “becoming through being,” where each individual realizes his/her higher possibilities in tune with the Ideal. Be guided by the living Ideal.

His integrative philosophy rests on the following interlinked pillars:

1. **The Ideal (*Ista*):** The living embodiment of divine consciousness in human form. The Ideal acts as a model, regulator, and inspirer for the devotee's growth. He functions as a guiding principle or ‘pole star’.
2. **Initiation:** Devotional attachment to the Ideal through initiation. It is the bond between the Ideal and the individual.
3. **Jajan:** Knowing and realising the Ideal, activities for self-elevation, especially meditation, reading holy books and chanting prayers
4. **Jaajan:** To impart the Ideal to others, activities done for others' elevation, particularly speaking about the Ideal.
5. **Istavriti:** The practical expression of devotion, a contribution of one's earnings and energy to sustain the Ideal and collective welfare. It transforms economic activity into spiritual service.
6. **Swastyayani:** Balanced development and continued progress in life with environment
7. **Sadachar (Rectitude):** Maintaining good health and hygiene of body and mind.
8. **Satsang (Company of the Truth):** The social structure that arises from collective adherence to the Ideal, creating a dynamic community where moral discipline and social service coexist. Satsang is a socio philanthropic organisation founded by Sree Sree Thakur.

In Sree Sree Thakur's system, spirituality is not an escape from the world but an immersion into life's responsibilities with love and discipline. The fulfillment of life lies in adjustment with the environment for the evolution of existence, a universal law of survival and progress.

Unlike many traditional mystics, Sree Sree Thakur valued scientific inquiry and education as divine tools for realizing truth. He founded schools, workshops, and cooperative models where intellectual training and moral cultivation went hand in hand. For Him, science without spirituality leads to arrogance, while spirituality without science becomes

superstition. His message thus anticipates what contemporary thinkers like E. F. Schumacher termed “Buddhist Economics” or what modern philosophers call “integral humanism.”

The Ideal and *Istavriti* as Mechanisms of Harmony

At the heart of Sree Sree Thakur Anukulchandra’s social and spiritual system lies the harmony of the *Ideal* and *Istavriti*. These two are not abstract doctrines but living mechanisms of balance. The **Ideal** (*Ista*) serves as the personal and collective nucleus of order, the point around which individual instincts, emotions, and intellects find alignment. Without such a centre, Sree Sree Thakur argued, the psyche becomes centrifugal: energy dissipates in contradictory impulses. The Ideal acts as the centripetal force of love and reverence that binds the scattered fragments of personality into coherent purpose.

Istavriti, on the other hand, translates this inner devotion into outer activity. Derived from the roots *Ista* means the Ideal and *Vriti* means preserve or nurture, it signifies a voluntary contribution of one’s earning, time, or skill toward the sustenance of the Ideal and the service of society. *Istavriti* is the token of one’s love in action. It links economics with ethics, making livelihood a sacred trust. Thus, the act of giving is not charity but participation, a devotional offering that purifies the motive of work and creates social cohesion through the rhythm of shared responsibility.

In the present world, where economic systems are driven by competition and self-interest, *Istavriti* proposes a model of **economic ethics** rooted in devotion and duty. It anticipates the cooperative ideal as discussed in social economics and Gandhian trusteeship. By aligning personal gain with collective good, it transforms the economy into an instrument of evolution rather than exploitation.

The spiritual significance of *Istavriti* extends beyond monetary offering. It disciplines desire by subjecting it to the Ideal. It refines emotion into devotion, and transforms duty into joy. When millions of individuals practice *Istavriti*, the social organism vibrates with a common purpose, a living fellowship of service that transcends sectarian boundaries. In this way, Sree Sree Thakur’s system offers a practical theology of action, merging the sacred and the secular in daily life.

Contemporary Relevance: The Crisis of Meaning and Sree Sree Thakur’s Response

The twenty-first century, while materially advanced, suffers from what sociologist Viktor Frankl called the “**existential vacuum**.” Suicide rates, mental health disorders, environmental degradation, and socio-political fragmentation reveal a humanity cut off from its inner source. The question “What is the purpose of life?” echoes more urgently than ever.

Sree Sree Thakur Anukulchandra’s philosophy offers a pragmatic spirituality that directly addresses this crisis. Unlike abstract metaphysics, His system begins with the living man his hunger, relationship, work, and faith. It restores meaning by reconnecting man to a transcendent centre manifested in the Ideal. Through this link, individual aspiration finds moral direction, and social behaviour gains ethical coherence.

His principle of “Being and Becoming” presents an evolutionary model of progress where self-realization is inseparable from social contribution. In His view, the divine impulse within human seeks fulfillment through creative adjustment with environment, not through withdrawal. This reconciles spirituality with activism, and devotion with development.

In the field of **global ethics**, Sree Sree Thakur’s vision anticipates the call for sustainable and compassionate civilizations. He warned that technology without morality leads to destruction, and nationalism without universal love breeds conflict. His insistence on sympathetic cooperation, service to the Ideal, and obedience to the laws of life provide what might be termed a **spiritual ecology** a pattern of existence that preserves the balance between man, nature, and God.

Even contemporary discourses on leadership and management echo Sree Sree Thakur’s insights. His concept of the living Ideal integrates charisma with character, authority with affection. Leadership must evolve from devotion and self-restraint, not from domination. This resonates with modern models of servant leadership and transformational ethics.

Thus, Sree Sree Thakur’s thought bridges the gulf between tradition and modernity, science and spirituality, local culture and global humanity. It transforms religion into a rational, life-sustaining force capable of guiding human civilization through its present turbulence.

Conclusion

Human progress without spiritual orientation has produced a civilization dazzling in power yet deficient in peace. Sree Sree Thakur Anukulchandra's philosophy responds to this condition with a comprehensive vision that integrates knowledge, faith, and conduct. His Ideal-centred humanism offers a methodology for self-development that naturally extends to collective harmony. Through the twin disciplines of the Ideal and *Istavriti*, He reconciles economics with ethics and converts devotion into social service. *Istavriti* makes one humble and charitable. Through Ideal-centred education, He transforms learning into a means of moral reconstruction. His call for 'adjustment with the environment for the evolution of existence' remains a timeless law of survival for humanity.

In the contemporary world fragmented by ideological extremes and moral fatigue Sree Sree Thakur's message emerges as a beacon of integrative wisdom. It reminds humanity that progress is not merely the conquest of nature but the cultivation of character; not accumulation, but consecration. The future civilization, if it is to endure, must rediscover the principle of life that He embodied, the synthesis of science, spirituality, and service rooted in love for the living Ideal.

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