

## **Aptness of Vedānta in Man's Pragmatic Life from the Angle of Vision in Swami Vivekananda**

**PRATAP CHANDRA DEBNATH**

Ph.D. Research Scholar

Department of Philosophy, Cooch Behar Panchanan Barma University, Cooch Behar (W.B.) India

### **ABSTRACT**

According to Swami Vivekananda, the Vedānta philosophy is not only a theoretical discussion or an amusement of curiosity, caused by wonderment, but it has a pragmatic aptness also. It has been claimed by him in his speech of Chicago (14th September 1893). He has mentioned in his speech that, the advice or principle of Vedānta helps in proper passing of our life, moreover it helps in proper controlling and proper construction of our social life. Vedānta is the philosophy of life. Main aim of this philosophy is to show the path of light from the path of dark. Self realization is the absolute word of Vedānta philosophy. Brahman is the greatest truth of universe. Due to ignorance we are unable to realize our own nature. Our social life is also variously influenced by the philosophy of Vedānta. The principle of Vedānta teaches us to arouse philanthropy by giving up narrowness, selfishness, by realizing the Brahman or God. According to Vivekananda, the Vedānta philosophy regards that, animal service or life service is the supreme virtue of men. So, finally we can say that, the pragmatic or practical aspect of Vedanta philosophy can never be denied.

**Key Words :** Vedānta, Aptness, Pragmatic Life, Individual Life, Social Life, Self-Realization, Lives Service, Brahman, and God.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Swami Vivekananda explained in his speech of Chicago(14th September 1893) that, the Vedānta philosophy is not only a theoretical discussion or an amusement of curiosity, caused by wonderment, but it has a pragmatic aptness also. Actually Vivekananda has described in his speech that, there have necessary connection between theory and application, there have nothing like pure theory. We can never separate the theory and application from each other. Without the knowledge of theory, nothing can be applied properly; moreover the knowledge of theory becomes significant through that application. The theory which has no application, that theory is torpid and meaningless. The aim of Vedānta is to proclaim and indicate the chief object of karma or activity of everyday life. Inactivity is not the

aim of Vedānta. He has mentioned in his speech that, advice or principle of Vedānta helps in proper passing of our life, moreover it helps in proper controlling and proper construction of our social life.

### **Aptness of Vedānta in Individual Life :**

Philosophy of Vedānta is the philosophy of life. Main aim of this philosophy is to show the affected people the path of light, from the path of dark. The meaning of this darkness is birth, death and sorrow. Enjoyment of pleasure cannot give us happiness. The main cause of destruction in human life is the desire for worldly enjoyment. Enjoyment of pleasure of one person stands as the cause of suffering of other. We will able to free us from this, if we pass out life in friendly and compassionately. True life can be attained through the path of right living and right rituals. Right ritual means practice of truthful lively

hood like amenity, compassion etc, and exclusion of passionate and materialistic lively hood like anger, malice, lust etc. If inactivity becomes the aim of Vedānta philosophy, then it is to say that, walls around us are more knowledgeable, because these are inactive, also a clod of Earth, or a piece of a tree are the most spectator of the world, because they are inactive.

In Vedānta philosophy the theoretical and pragmatic philosophy are co-existing as complementary of each other from ancient time. We can know from various Upaniṣads that, the theoretical philosophy of Vedānta is not only the result of meditation of mountain cave man, but it's best theoretical speeches are delivered from the brain of 'King' like the father of everyday diligent, than which we cannot think about more diligent person. For example, Vivekananda has mentioned about the compact karmayoga of Gītā, as the greatest commentary of Vedānta philosophy, where in behind of horrible battle field, Lord Krishna has taught Arjuna about yoga. Arjuna get time to discuss higher philosophical theory and to apply it in life also within the uproar and bustle of battle. Than this, when our life is free from burden, spontaneous and satisfied, then we should do many work in this life.... By means of our recess we can picture 200 ideals in our life, but we should not bring down the value of ideals in vile layer of reality.

The ideal of Vedānta is that, everything is Brahman or God. If everything is Brahman, then no men can be untouchable as low caste, no men can be despicable, no men can be abandoned as sinful. There is manifestation of one and non-dual Brahman in everyone. Everyone is proceeding towards the acquisition of Brahman. According to Vivekananda - The difference between weakness and strength is quantitative. The difference between heaven and hell is also quantitative. The difference between life and death is also quantitative. Every differences of the world is quantitative, not substantive, because oneness is the main principle of everything. With the help of idea of sin, the matter of 'quantitative difference' has been explained by Vivekananda. A person, who tells a lie, who thinks dishonestly, that person is sinful in our society. Our society considers a man as weak-hearted instead of considering him/her as powerful. But Vedānta philosophy considers a man in an opposite point of view. It considers a man as - You are pure, you are perfect, sin cannot touch you, which is ever luminous, that can never be melancholy.

Evil or sin is the lower manifestation of the soul, covered with ignorance. You are in essence eternal, pure, intellectual and free Soul or Brahman; you manifest your soul highly and absolutely. According to Vedānta, no one should tell like - 'no', 'I cannot' etc. Every person can do everything actively, there is nothing impracticable, because he/she is infinite, almighty Brahman (Ātmā Brahman). Here is the universality of Vedānta philosophy. The Vedānta philosophy inspires every person's of every caste, creed, property, knowledge, genealogy and country of this world to do universal auspicious work in purpose of acquisition of Brahman. Vedānta philosophy or Ceramic humanity is not only involved in theoretical discussion, but it is involved in how to apply this theory or religion in everyday life. The religion is meaningless, if that religion is not beneficial in human life. Pragmatic side of Vedānta philosophy is the instruction of effectiveness of Vedāntic religion. Thus religion has been succeeded only for its pragmatic side.

We know that, a person is heterodox, who does not believe in God. But Vivekananda does not accept this. Following Vedānta philosophy he says that, a person is heterodox, who does not believe in himself. But this self-confidence does not mean egocentric selfish belief, it means equal belief on everyone, because according to Vedānta there have no difference between own and other, all are the different manifestation of one and non-dual Brahman. If you believe yourself, then you believe everyone, because without believing all, no one can believe himself/herself. We all are equal or same or one. Similarly, if someone loves himself/herself, then he/she loves everyone, because we all are same. If someone works by awaking such self-confidence, then that work can never be egoistic, that work will be auspicious for all. The Vedānta philosophy inspires men in their work, by awaking such self-confidence in them. For this Swamiji says that, in self-realization or in acquisition of Brahma, the ideal of self-confidence is more helpful for us, and lack of self-confidence is the main cause of all evil power and misery. That means, Vedānta philosophy or Vedāntic religion is not merely a spiritual or divine truth.

According to Vedānta philosophy, proof for existence of God cannot be dependent on argument. It must depend on feeling or experience. Experiential proof of God's existence is that, everyone sometimes feel or perceive in himself/herself a divine most astonishing greatness or sometimes a most felonious person

sacrifices himself unexpectedly in save of others life. Existential proof of various noble men, like Goutam Buddha, Jesus Christ, is our internal feeling. Actually we always feel like them. This self-feeling is the main proof for their existence. That means our divine entity is the proof of God's existence. This is the pragmatic ideal of Vedānta. Everyone in born is God or noble man. Everyone have to realize this absolute truth. The process of this realization is lives service or worship. This realization will remove envy from human mind, and men will be confined in mystic chain of love. As a result, men will sacrifice themselves for the good of this world. So, such a great philosophy can never only be theoretical, it must have pragmatic aspect.

So, self-realization is the absolute word of Vedānta philosophy. Brahman is the greatest truth of the universe. Only Brahman is the main entity of the world. Without Brahman all are unreal. We are nothing except Brahman. Due to ignorance we are unable to realize our own nature. If we want to realize our own nature, then we have to be free from this ignorance.

#### **Aptness of Vedānta in Social Life :**

Our social life is also variously influenced by the philosophy of Vedānta. It helps in well-formation and well-control of our social life. The Vedānta philosophy inspired us in social welfare and in preservation of material world, by neglecting the fear of death. Caste, creed and gender discriminations are observed comprehensively in society at present. These social diseases create obstacle in national compactness. Only the principles of Vedānta can free our society from the above mentioned diseases. The principle of Vedānta teaches us to arouse philanthropy by giving up narrowness and selfishness, by realizing the Brahman or God. It also tells us to hug as brother, the distressed, oppressed and sinful persons, who are deserted from society. Actually the Vedānta thinks about the welfare of entire human society. The main aim of Vedānta is to do good for human nation.

According to Vedānta, Brahman is one and non-dual. So, oneness is the main ideal of Vedānta. It says about the abandonment of gender discrimination. Due to illusion we differ male from the female. Actually all men are self, and the self is without gender. If we eliminate the name and form (Nām rūpa), then we will see that, the whole world is one. That means life and world is only

one. There have nothing to speak about heaven and hell, because the all pervading God can never be established in any particular place of heaven or hell. Everything is Brahman or God. Following Vedānta, Vivekananda said that, "I am not male, not female, not demon - Soham. I am the great truth, great entity". Every place is God, every place is temple of God, and every place is holy, as place of God. There have no discrimination in the world. All creatures are the creation of God. We have to realize this Brahman or soul. There have discrimination between 'I' and 'You' in this world. The Vedānta teaches us to be free from the discrimination of 'We' and 'You'. It also teaches us to be free from all types of narrowness. "Tat-Tvam-Asi" that means "You are that". After this knowledge of indiscrimination, there will have no caste system. According to Vedānta philosophy, not honest or dishonest, not heaven or hell, not life or death, not sin or virtue - only one and endless Brahman is illuminated in everywhere. In such realization, everyone have to be involved in universal and welfare work for all. This is the theory of Vedānta philosophy and its aptness in pragmatic life.

For Vedānta philosophy, men are the manifestation of absolute Brahman. It holds that, no men are negligible or low, there have no difference among men. All men will be great, holy, opulent, and their heart will be lighted with the divine luster, if they believe on the theory of Vedānta. According to Vedānta, men will do well for mankind by conquering their lowness and insignificance. This is the exact application of Vedānta philosophy in our practical life. Further, the Vedānta philosophy says that, we have to do our work by realizing the Brahman in myself and being powerful through the divine power. In man's life there have no such work, which is unattainable, because his inherent power, that means the power of Brahman, which is not limited, rather it is limitless and endless. In Vedānta it is said that, when we are in danger, we pray help from outer power, such as from God. We don't even think about our inner power, through which we will be able to free our self from any danger. We think that, we have no such inner power. All these are due to our ignorance or wrong idea. All these are prejudices, which we have attained from our society and our ancestors. In this context ethical principle of Buddha philosophy is applicable. Goutam Buddha said that - "Ātma -Deepo-Bhava", which means, in yourself there have endless power, and you have to be manifested by

self-exertion. You do not need the help of Brahmin priest or the God for self-manifestation.

Similarly, Swami Vivekananda also said that, to get outer power the prayer is unnecessary or meaningless. Vivekananda asked the audience of London - You tell me about such an incident, where response has been gotten from such prayer? The responses, which you have gotten, these actually have come from your heart. These are nothing, but the superstition. These superstitions have been received by us from our family and our society. We have nourished and accepted the slavery of these prejudices. Conquering these prejudices we have to be master of these. We have to be more self-confident. We shall not be truthful to others. Being self-confident we have to do our duty. Without the unity of world and self-confidence there have nothing to learn from religion. We have to understand that, plurality of world, plurality of life are false. Actually pluralities are the diverse manifestation of one Brahman. We have to think ourselves as strong, not weak. We have to be powerful by self-power. Thus, being powerful by self-power, we have to be involved in our duty. According to Vivekananda, being powerful by self-power, if we do our work like a hero, then today a work, which is done in 100 days, that work will be possible in a moment. Thus our world will be transformed as a field of ceaseless performances. Addressing all men of this world, Swami Vivekananda said in his Chicago speech - Great powerful person, be wake, stand up, lethargy is not auspicious to you. You do not think yourself for a moment that; you are weak, sinful and miserable. Great powerful person, wake up, stand up, express your own nature through action. You see, how everything is being deported, manifested and depicted in an instant.

According to Vedānta philosophy, the God is perceived through heart, not through intellect. So, in Vedānta, the side of heart is more precious than intellectual side, although this side is important and essential. In this context Swamiji has said that, the intellect is like a dustman, who cleans our path, or the intellect is like a guard, whose duty is to curb chaos. In case of realization of truth or in realization of Brahman, the feeling is basic, because only the feeling is capable to show the God, but not the intellect. The love is originated from feeling, which can connect men, with men and world. Also, the love can create oneness or unity in this world. The intellect is the creator of division, but love is the creator of union. The love connects everyone, but the

intellect divides one from another. Love is the absolute existence, it is the God. Love is God, and God is love. The prophets, like Goutam Buddha, Jesus Christ have felt the sorrow and pain of men by heart. Their power was not inherent in their intellect. No one of them have written book on philosophy or logic. So, Vivekananda says - Feel like Buddha, you must be Buddha, feel like Jesus Christ, you must be Jesus Christ. The feeling is life, it is power. The intellect is without locomotive power. The intellect gain motion and effects on other, only when the feeling enters in it and delivers motion in it. This is the highest pragmatic aspect of Vedāntic Ethics. The Vedānta philosophy gives such lesson that, all men in essence are Brahman or God, and feeling this inherent God by love, everyone has to do work for good for all.

The Vedānta philosophy regards that, lives service is the supreme virtue of men. For Vedānta philosophy, there have nothing to say as individual discrimination. So, this philosophy says that, the freedom means universal liberation, it does not mean personal liberation. The Vedāntic freedom does not mean self-development of selfish individual. The actual meaning of liberation is all types of development for all, with the help of love. That means, doing all types of good for all through lives service. According to Vivekananda, this type of service is the supreme virtue of man. In this context it should mention that, in pre-ascetic life, Narendranath wanted to know from Ramakrishna about the path of worship of own liberation. Expressing anxiety, Ramakrishna said to Narendranath - You just want to be a worthless weed, not being a large tree, which gives shade to many people! You are so shabby and worthless creature that, not thinking about universal liberation, you only think about own liberation! Following instruction of Ramakrishna, Narendranath in his after-life accepted the lives service as supreme duty of life. So we never can disregard the pragmatic side of Vedānta philosophy, because it says to accept the lives service as desired of human life.

### **Conclusion :**

So, finally we can say that, for Vedānta this world is nothing, but the exposure of one and non-dual Brahman. We know that, effect always connected with cause. In our heart the self is that Brahman. Body is the external and mind is the internal cover of the self. So, we all are that Brahman or God. We have to return to our own reality. We shall not hurt anyone. We shall not annihilate

anyone. We have to help those persons, who are in depressed. This world is our field of action. All men are our brother. When everyone will realize this truth, then they will become as God. According to Vedānta, our soul is the only God, which is our only adorable. According to Christians, the God is the only creator. For Muslims, the Allah is mere God. For Vedānta, there is nothing without God. One and non-dual Brahman or God is everything of this world. Everything is false, except the God. Organism is God, and body of organism is the temple of God. Man's body is the highest temple. In this context Swami Vivekananda said - The Tajmahal among mansions. Worship of God in any church or mosque or any temple, is one kind of madness. Worship of God in the temple as man's body, that means service of men or lives-service is the highest religion. Such service will develop our society and it will give joy in our life.

### REFERENCES

1. *An Exposition of Swami Vivekananda's Conception of Vedanta*: D. V. Athlaye, Bombay.
2. *The Idealistic Philosophy of Swami Vivekananda* : G. Ranjit Sharna, New Delhi.
3. *The Philosophy of Man Making(a study in social and political ideas of Swami Vivekananda)* : Santa L. Mukherjee, Calcutta.
4. *The Philosophy of Vivekananda and the Future of Man* : Govinda Chandra Dev, Dacca.
5. *The Political Philosophy of Swami Vivekananda* : A. V. Rathna Reddy, New Delhi.
6. *Religious and Moral Philosophy of Swami Vivekananda* : Shalil Kumar Ghost, Patna.
7. *The Social and Political Philosophy of Swami Vivekananda* : Vijay Kumar Arora, Calcutta.
8. *The Social Philosophy of Swami Vivekananda* : Trilochan Das, Calcutta.
9. *The Socio-Political Ideas of Swami Vivekananda* : B. K. Ray, New Delhi.
10. *SamajDarshan O RashtraDarshan(Bengali)* : Dr. SamarendraBhattacharya, 5th Ed., Book Syndicate Private Ltd., Calcutta, 2011.
11. *Chintanayak Vivekananda(Bengali)* : Swami Lokeshwarananda(Secretary), 12th Ed., The Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Kolkata, 2016.

\*\*\*\*\*