

Contribution of Vedic Culture In National Development & Prosperity

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In the beginning of creation, there was no system of teaching or learning nor were there any books to read. How could men acquire knowledge? It is true that God had endowed man with a conscience to discriminate between right and wrong, good and bad, virtue and vice, but in that case man will decide things as dedicated by his own conscience influenced by the environment. Hence, the verdict will vary from man to man. Without a universal code of conduct issued by our Central unerring authority, no society can function smoothly. That is why the Supreme Creator, Preserver and Destroyer of the world gave man a complete code of conduct in the beginning of the creation in the form of Vedas. Through Vedas, God has advised the human being how to live, conduct and behave in this world. Maharishi Patanjali in Yoga Darshan (1.26) writes

“God is the preceptor of even the earliest man of the Universe. Being eternal, he can not be circumscribed by the time and hence does guide the first of human race in the beginning of the creation”

Vedas do not advocate any religion in the sense Latin word religion is understood in modern parlance. But they talk of ‘Dharma’, meaning duties and essential characteristics without which a thing cannot retain its very existence. It has many other connotations such as truth, justice, virtue, duty, morality, metaphysics, spiritualities, righteousness, piety, knowledge etc. Religion may be a personal affair but Dharma is a universal affair. Religion makes people narrow-minded and differentiates while Dharma makes people broad minded and as such binds and holds them together. Vedas expect every human being to be humane in the true sense and thus advocate humanism as the Dharma of entire humanity. ‘Be humane and humanize others’ 1. This is the clarion of the Vedas since eternity.

Ours has been the first culture of the world³ that is why human beings all over the world come here to learn practical lessons of character. The value system, it evolved, knows no limit of geography, history or sociology. These are cosmopolitan in the true sense of the world not meant for the citizens of a particular state only but for human beings as such, hence they are human in essence. The most important thing about it is that Vedas do not link religion, philosophy and lifestyle to any particular school of thoughts, community or a path. They represent the expressions of the truth experienced by the seers of the truth. This universal truth transcends all boundaries of time and space. And therefore Vedas only have stood the test of time.

The Vedic philosophy nowhere suggests that the world is false or an illusion or a mere reflection of God, the creator. Every life has a meaning and all the creatures have their respective identity. The world is a place where everyone is expected to act, achieve or accomplish. Vedas openly declare ‘O man keep on weaving your life in the light of the knowledge and attain divinity of the highest order. Let you be the protector of the enlightened path carved out by wise sages with their rationality and imagination. Let your actions be guided by knowledge which should be inspired by devotion and divine force. Hence O weaver, be prepared to weave a divine life and preserve the divine virtues, which are invaluable 4.

The Vedic poetry is not a mere intellectual rhetoric but it offers a very practical solution to the problems of life by coordinating them with world progress and attainment of total spiritual bliss. According to Vedas, the world is being governed by eternal laws operating under the laws of God Almighty. Those laws which regulate the external world have been called as ‘Rit’ and those governed by internal spirit are known as

'Satya'. The place 'Rit' occupies in the phenomenon of nature, the same place 'Satya' occupies in ethical behaviour of human beings.

High moral character is the cornerstone of Vedic thesis. The Vedas are the root of all Dharma "Vedokhilo Dharmamulam". A steady adherence to Dharma leads to truth in all its aspects. Truth, non- violence, benevolence, honesty, perseverance, charity, virtues, abhorrence to vices the path of virtue, self reliance, honesty, unity, vigilance, purity, fame, progress, sweetness, welfare, peace, happiness, cheerfulness, hospitality and so on.... are the constituents of our absolute truth on human plane which are sought to transform the human nature from a state of its declension and degradation to dharmic existence.

At present the whole world is divided into different religions, races, groups, cultures and ideology and therefore is undergoing various miseries and pains. But in terms of Vedas, the entire mankind is one form of a big family⁵. If Vedic precepts were followed in letter and spirit, human beings would have no conflicts either in the inner or outer world. There would have been no hatred with anybody, the living world would have been simple and thoughts quite high. The modern concept of Globalisation is in essence a Vedic concept only. Vedas state that 'he, who sees all beings in his own self and his own self is all beings, he hates none'⁶. Vedas proclaim that 'he, who sees the self in living beings finds world clustered like a nest'⁷ not like a cage.

The cordial message of the vedic mantras is to be good and promote welfare of the world as a whole i.e. to promote physical, spiritual and social development of all human beings. The individual good is always latent in the collective good, that is what Vedas proclaim. In the last hymn, Rigveda enjoys a gospel for collective life, 'a life in which people would walk together, would think together, would speak together, would agree together, all in harmony ⁸. And the climax of this message comes to us with its inspiring force of guidance 'May your resolve be one, may your hearts feel alike, may your thinking be one and may all of you live happily with thorough union'⁹.

Today's crisis is the sum total of many problems i.e. unethical practices, insecurity psychic and emotional instability, depression disputes among the countries, disturbance in the family life and constant fear of destruction through nuclear missiles and space warships at any moment. Only Vedas can solve all these problems. According to Atharveda, 'the cementing forces that can sustain peace on the earth are; truth, strict adherence to the divine laws, vow for the service of the mankind, living a simple and austere life, faith in the universal divine Power i.e. God and selflessness to the extent of sacrificing one's interest for the welfare of others ¹⁰. The opposite of these viz untruth, lawlessness, selfishness, luxury, denial of the Supreme power and violence can only help in creating turmoil and prevailing devastation on the earth. Vedic philosophy of humanism and humanisation that proclaim human values put into practice is the only way for the preservation and protection of human rights and bringing peace in the whole world. Only then will we notice a social structural transformation of present society where freedom goes with discipline, justice goes with merit, right goes with duty, moral and spiritual values go with material welfare.

Now the question arises how to imbibe and inculcate the above values in man? It is education alone which is capable of developing strong and abiding values in man. Man-Values-Education is a sacred triangle of vedic times.

Where education has been a vital meaning to imbibe, foster and perpetuate values in man. Since the time we changed the goal of education and implemented a new education system, we started facing a value crisis. It is true that no system or philosophy of education can be perfect if it is one tracked only i.e. aiming either at the material prosperity or at the spiritual upliftment a synthesis between the three purusharathas (attainments) namely dharma, artha, kama is vital for all round development of human personality. But how to make proper use of artha and kama is to be guided by the dictates of dharma. Thus our education should be so as to guide how to reach the ultimate goal of life. India's most urgent and immediate educational need is to adapt her own early ideals of education to the modern changing conditions. Let me conclude with the famous divine revelation in Yajurveda

“Just as I (God) have addressed this auspicious divine speech of mine (i.e. The Vedas) for the benefit of the people of all classes, i.e., intellectual class, warrior class, business class, service class and all people of related classes, whether high or low; same way you pass it on to all and act upon this knowledge for all without any distinction. Love all and serve all as I do. May this will of mine be fulfilled leading to prosperity and happiness of all”.¹¹

Vedas are the bedrock on which the edifice of Aryan culture and civilisation has been raised. They propound the most complete holistic perspective of the universe. The tremendous progress that the human mind has been able to make in the fields of learning and knowledge is only due to the fact that the God Supreme imparted true knowledge with regard to every aspect of human conduct, behaviour, and activity and of all the things and objects that are to be known through knowledge in the form of Vedas. There is no substitute of Vedas in so far as code of human behaviour and conduct is concerned. This is so because the ‘human beings’ and ‘human values’ have the most pivotal place in the Vedas. Vedas have a universal relevance and an intellectual appeal to all and this gives them a special status unrivalled by any other scripture in world history.

References

- 1 Rigveda 10.53.6
2. Encyclopedia Britannica Vol XI pp.877
3. Yajurveda
4. Rigveda 10.53.6
5. Atharva Veda 2.1.1
6. Yajurveda 40.6
7. Yajurveda 32.8
8. Rigveda 10.191.2
9. Rigveda 10.191.4
10. Atharveda 12.1.2
11. Yajurveda 40.

