



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

Importance Of The Human Values As Reflected In The Rigveda: An Estimation

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Abstract

The term 'value' covers the entire field of human life. All kinds of rightness, forgiveness, tolerance, co-existence, truth, love, non-violence etc. are well recognized human values adopting which the human being can rise himself into divinity and make his life truly meaningful. The *Vedas* have emphasised that man will be truly human only when he lives up to human values and practises the good life. Many who chant the *Vedas* these days have difficulty in understanding their purport. When they fully understand the meaning and chant the *mantras*, they will derive greater joy.

Ancient Indian concept of human values has been stated in the *Vedas*, *Upanisads*, *Puranas*, *Gita*, *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* etc, which have been considered as the vehicle of Indian culture. The *Rigveda*, which comes first among the four *Vedas*, is embedded with abundance of human values. It teaches to maintain a friendly social relationship. The *Rigveda* also advises to be broad hearted towards dealing with others and to be franked with non-hypocritical love to all. It can be said that the *Rigveda* provides ample scope study different aspects of human values revealed therein. the whole universe, right now, is facing lots of crisis and turmoil like religious and language conflicts, economic crisis, corruption in every sphere of life, deteriorated law and order situation, cultural decay etc. which appear to be endless. Here, the morals teachings provided in the *Vedas* and *Upanisads*, perhaps, is the only way to overcome these challenges, as the great teachings of the *Veda* and *Upanisads*, ancient Indian scriptures, only can modify the human mind creating the spirit of universal love in them.

Key words: Rigveda, Upanishad, Value, personality, non-violence, truthfulness, equality, peacefulness, honest.

The term 'Value' is a helping force to us in ascertaining the real knowledge and goal of life in a righteous manner. So, the values contains concern for others welfare. Social values are organized within the personality of the individual. They regulate their thinking and behaviour. The process of socialism aims at accommodating those values in one's personality. Values represent basic convictions that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence. They contain a judgmental element in that they carry an individual's ideas as to what is right, good or desirable. All of us have a hierarchy of values that form our value system; this system is identified by the relative importance we assign to values such as freedom, pleasure, self-respect, honesty, obedience and equality. Values tend to be relatively stable and enduring. Ethical values of the Vedic traditions have been variously summarized and codified in the subsequent Vedic literature as well. For example, the *Taittiriya Upanisad* refers to *rta* (right or real), *satya* (truth), *tapas* (austerity), *dama* (self-control), *sama* (tranquility) and *svadhyaya-pravacana* (study and teaching), Study and teaching is verily, *tapas* (*Taittiriya Up.I. 9*) *Tapas* (sacrifice) leads to various attainments, as it is the most sacred act of selfless dedication.

The Vedic view of life is based on a compromise between desire and duty. The philosophical background of Indian thoughts incorporated into religious practices ensured the observance of norms. It is wrong to suppose that Vedic people ignored the worldly life and the practical values in their pursuit of the higher values. The Vedic value system resulted in the later concept of fourfold *purusarthas* viz. *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kama* and *Moksa*. Indeed, the *Vedas* are the first source of the knowledge, ever come to mankind. The various branches of knowledge and sciences were just the offshoots sprung from the first nucleus of the *Vedas*. Ancient Indian concept of human values has been stated in the *Vedas*, *Upanisads*, *Puranas*, *Gita*, *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* etc, which have been considered as the vehicle of Indian culture. The *Upanisads* are the concluding portion of the *Vedas*. Chronologically they come at the end of the Vedic period. When we have Vedic recitations as religious exercises, the end of these recitals is also generally from the *Upanisads*. The chief reason why the *Upanisads* are called the *Vedanta* (end of the *Veda*) is that they represent the central aim and meaning of the teaching of the *Veda*. The content of the *Upanisads* is *vedanta vijnanam*, the wisdom of the *Vedanta*. The *Upanisads* represent the *jnana-kanda* or the knowledge portion. The learning of the hymns and the performance of the rites are a preparation for true enlightenment. *Vedanta* is basically the quint essence of the *Vedas*, which origin is also traced to 'vid' which being knowledge, ultimately leading to the spiritual side of knowledge. The *Vedas* have been declared to be infinite and hence beyond the comprehension of common people. *Veda* is the earliest record of Indian wisdom in the history of human civilization. The contribution of Vedic seers towards human civilization is universal indeed. It should be remembered that ancient Indian seers were concerned not only with India's welfare, but for the welfare of the whole universe also. So, the Vedic seers addressed human being of the whole world as *Amritasya Putrah* (sons of god).¹

The term ‘value’ covers the entire field of human life. All kinds of rightness, forgiveness, tolerance, co-existence, truth, love, non-violence etc. are well recognized human values adopting which the human being can rise himself into divinity and make his life truly meaningful. The *Vedas* have emphasised that man will be truly human only when he lives upto human values and practises the good life. Many who chant the *Vedas* these days have difficulty in understanding their purport. When they fully understand the meaning and chant the *mantras*, they will derive greater joy. Only then they will experience the full sacredness and potency of the *Vedas*. The *Vedas* have a universal outlook, embracing all that is noble and sacred.

The *Rigveda*, which comes first among the four *Vedas*, is embedded with abundance of human values. Equality (*samyatvam*) has been well revealed in the hymn - “*sam gacchadhvam sam vadadhvam sam vo manamsi janatam*”.² It means “*let us work together, let us speak together, let our minds and hearts be united for a great cause.*”

‘*Sadacara*’ or ‘*Sumati*’ (good behaviour) is the basis of human value which has been expressed in the hymn- “*mahaste visno sumatim bhajamahe*”.³

It teaches to maintain a friendly social relationship. The *Rigveda* also advises to be broad hearted towards dealing with others and to be franked with non-hypocritical love to all.⁴ So, it can be said that the *Rigveda* provides ample scope study different aspects of human values revealed therein.

In regard to educational value, it has been observed that the Vedic society was mainly based on four *Asramas* viz. __ *Brahmacarya*, *Garhasthya*, *Vanaprastha* and *Sanyasa*. Of these four, the *Brahmacarya Asrama* has been regarded as the high time for acquiring formal education. From childhood up to the age of 25 years, a person is called *Brahmacari*, during which he has to abide by all the rules and customs instructed to be followed in *Brahmacaryasrama*.

The Vedic education system was completely based on the Guru-Sisya tradition. The sisyas or pupils had great reverence towards their Guru. They never hesitated to obey the commands of the preceptor.⁵ The Gurus were also ideal, well-disciplined and with great scholarly personality. The motto of the Vedic education system was - ‘*Tamaso ma jyotirgamaya*’—it means, take us to towards the light of the knowledge from the darkness of ignorance. *Moksaprapti* or attainment of liberation was regarded as the ultimate goal of education ‘*sa vidya ya vimuktaye*’.

At present, people, being devoid of the invaluable teachings regarding moral values, has become the victims of various miseries and panics. The Rigvedic people translated the unparalleled Vedic teachings based on human values in their practical life and therefore enjoyed a happy and prosperous life for hundred years.⁶ India, our motherland and also the whole universe, right now, is facing lots of crisis and turmoil like religious and language conflicts, economic crisis, corruption in every sphere of life, deteriorated law and order situation, cultural decay etc. which appear to be endless. Here, the morals teachings provided in the *Vedas* and *Upanisads*, perhaps, is the only way to overcome these challenges, as the great teachings of the *Veda* and *Upanisads*, ancient Indian scriptures, only can modify the human mind creating the spirit of universal love in them. In the words of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, *“Besides, at a time when moral aggression is compelling people to capitulate to queer ways of life, when vast experiments in social structure and political organization are being made at enormous cost of life and suffering, when we stand perplexed and confused before the future with no clear light to guide our way, the power of human soul is the only refuge. If we resolve to be governed by it, our civilization may enter upon its most glorious epoch. Thus, the task set to our generation is to reconcile the varying ideals of the converging cultural patterns and help them to sustain and support rather than combat and destroy one another. By this process, they are transformed from within and the forms that separate them will lose their exclusivist meaning and signify only that unity with their own origins and inspirations.”* Let us, therefore, turn over together the treasures of each other. *Om Santih, Santih, Santih.*

Footnotes :

1. *Svetasvataropanisad*, II. 5
2. *Rigveda Samhita*, 10.191.2
3. *Ibid.* 1. 156. 3
4. *Ibid.* 6. 53.6
5. *Ibid.* 7. 32.29
6. *Sukla Yazurveda*, XXXX. 2
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