

CONTRIBUTION OF VEDIC LITERATURE IN PROMOTING PEACE

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Abstract

The Vedas constitute the back-bone of our entire culture and development through the millennia not only in India but also abroad. Every man in the world is greedy for power and money. To achieve these two things, intellectual capacities in various ways are used and this spoils the peace of the world. To overcome these problems Vedic literature plays a very important role. It is the most precious gift to humanity from our benign Creator and Lord. The hymns of the Rig Veda are considered the worlds oldest scriptures and most important of the Vedas. The Rgveda emphasizes the brotherhood. Rgveda preaches us commonality. The Yajurveda prays the peace in the world. Similarly, in the Atharvaveda, there is a prayer for peace. The Sritis occupy a place of pride in the pattern of the Hindu Society. Peace and love are interdependent concepts. Love is the alter ego of the god. Love is the second nature of the god. Vedas teaches us the same lesson. So present paper will talk about peace through Vedic Literature.

Keywords: Vedas, Love, Rgveda, Vedic literature, Yajurveda, Peace.

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The Vedas constitute the back-bone of our entire culture and development through the millennia not only in India but also abroad. For most of us, they constitute the first literature that dawned on us at the earliest time of man's appearance on this globe. In India, we regard them as the revealed knowledge. What the effulgent Sun is to animate and inanimate activity on the terrestrial earth, the Vedic enlightenment is to the prestigious life of man on this planet for the majority of humanity. Man with his most highly evolved physico-psychic complex in a gem in our divine creation, much above the animal level. For this fulfilment, the necessary code of conduct is incorporated in the Vedic texts. It is the most precious gift to humanity from our benign Creator and Lord.

Every man in the world is greedy for power and money. To achieve these two things, intellectual capacities in various ways are used and this spoils the peace of the world. In today's world the most popular human goals are economic power, comfortable living, sensual pleasure, technological expertise, etc., none of which are essential components of human excellence required to build a peaceful world, increase in armaments and war participations are no doubt financially productive investments. but for achieving a negative goal from the point of view of gaining the global peace.

Rgveda preaches us commonality; it says – “Oh mankind, let all your activities lead you to one common goal (for which) let there be a common language for all of you and let your mind be all of one accord to acquire the knowledge of various sciences fully and like the enlightened seers who lived before you, you ought to worship me alone who...the real object of your devotion. O ye mankind, let the object of your thought be the same, the place of your assembly ought to be common, your mind should be of one accord and let your hearts be united together. I initiate you in to the common inspired hymn and provide all of you with common objects for accepting and offering. Oh ye mankind, let your object of life be one the same, let your hearts be

equal (in feeling) and let your minds be united together so that there may be an excellent common status of life for all.

सं गच्छध्वं सं वदध्वं सं वो मनांसि जानताम् ।

देवा भागं यथापूर्वं सं जानाना उपासते ॥

समानो मन्त्रः समितिः समानी समानं मनः सह चित्तमेषाम् ।

समानं मन्त्रमभि मन्त्रयेवः समानेन वो हविषा जुहोमि ॥

समानि व आकूतिः समाना हृदयानि वः ।

समानमस्तु वो मनो यथा वः सुसहासति ॥ -- ऋग्वेदः १०.१९१.२-४

The Rgveda emphasizes the brotherhood; it says “let all these (men) who are brothers (to one another) advance forward unitedly for the attainment of prosperity, for there is non-high or low (among them). The most exalted ordainer (of the universe) and the just divinity is their father, let the earth abundant milk etc. bring auspicious days for the living creature”.

अज्येष्ठासो अकनिष्ठास एते सं भ्रातरो वावृधुः सौभागाय ।

युवा पिता स्वपा रुद्र एषां सुदुधा पृश्निं सुदिना मरुद्भ्यः ॥ -- ऋग्वेदः ४.६०.५

Again, it says, “May all the learned men be friendly to us: may the holy words with their pure thoughts be the source of universal peace and happiness. May the liberal ones and those who have taken the vow of serving all living beings be the promoters of general welfare aid may all the heavenly objects together with the creatures which dwell on the earth and waters be helpful to our noble undertakings”.

शं नो देवा विश्वदेवा भवन्तु शं सरस्वती सह धीभिरस्तु ।

शमभिषाचः शमु रातिषाचः शं नो दिव्यां पार्थिवाः शं नो अप्यां ॥ -- ऋग्वेदः ७.३५.१९

The Yajurveda prays the peace in the world, such as, "May there be peace in the heavenly region; may there be peace in the environment; may peace reign on the earth; may the waters be soothing and may the medicinal herbs be healing; may the plants be the source of peace to all; may the Vedas spread peace throughout; may all other objects give us peace; and may peace come to me (ever). Peace! Peace!! Peace!!!"

घौं शान्तिरन्तरिक्षं शान्तिः पृथिवी शान्तिरापः शान्तिरोषधयः शान्तिः ।

वनस्पतयः शान्तिर्विश्वेदेवाः शान्तिब्रह्म शान्तिः सर्वं शान्तिः शान्तिरेव शान्तिः ॥

सा मा शान्तिरेधि ॥ -- यजुर्वेदः ३६.१७

Similarly, in the Atharvaveda, there is a prayer for peace, such as, "May the earth be peaceful; may the medicinal herbs be peaceful; may all my shining objects be peaceful for me; may all the enlightened persons be peaceful for me, may all the peaceful actions be peaceful by means of peace. By the peace may we alleviate that which is terrific here, that which is sin here. Let all these be calmed and made auspicious. Let all be gracious unto us".

पृथिवी शान्तिरन्तरिक्षं शान्धिघौं शान्तिरापः शान्तिरोषधयः शान्तिं ।

वनस्पतयः शान्तिर्विश्वे देवाः शान्तिः सर्वे मे देवाः शान्तिः ॥

शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिभिस्ताभिः शान्तिभिः सर्वशान्तिभिः शमया ।

मोहं यदिह घोरं यदिह क्रूरं यदिह पापं तच्छान्तं तच्छिवं सर्वमेव शमस्तु नः ॥ -- अथर्ववेदः

१९.९

The Smritis occupy a place of pride in the pattern of the Hindu Society. The Hindu religion follows the dictates of the Srutis, the Smritis, and the Puranas. Smritis are the guides to actual conduct. The key-note of the Smritis is to make one's conduct so sublime in the nation that it may be... a model to every other nation, and person. Manu, the great Smritikara summarises the law viz., abstention from injuring(creatures) veracity, abstention from unlawfully appropriating(the goods of others), purity, control of organs are the laws for the castes'. The

same Manu, who puts Ahimsa as the first law, gives much importance on Ahimsa along with other laws. For example he says, "By not injuring any creatures, by the rites prescribed in the Vedas, and by rigorously practicing austerities men gain that (superme) state in this world".

अहिंसेन्द्रियासंगैवैदिकैश्चैव कर्मभिः ।

तपश्चरणश्चोग्रै साधयन्तीह तत्पदम् ॥-- मनुस्मृतिः ६.७५

Again, studying the Veda, (practising) austerities, the acquisition of the true knowledge, the subjugation of the organs, abstention from doing injury and securing the Guru (teacher) are the best means for attaining supreme bliss.

वेदाभ्यासस्तपो ज्ञानमिन्द्रियाणां च संयमः ।

अहिंसा गुरुसेवा च निःश्रेयसकरं परम् ॥ -- मनुस्मृतिः १२.२३

Moreover, one must abstain from injuring (living creatures), speak the truth, and keep himself free from anger and from dishonesty' He who injures innocuous beings from a wish to give himself pleasure never finds happiness, neither living nor dead".

Further, he declares that he who is preserving gentle and patient, shuns the company of men of cruel conduct and does no injury (to living creatures), gains, if he constantly lives in that manner by controlling his organs and by liberality, heavenly bliss.

दृढकारी मृदुद्वान्तः क्रूराचारैरसंवसन् ।

अहिंस्त्रो दमदानाभ्यां जयेत् स्वर्गं तथावेतरम् ॥ -- मनुस्मृतिः ४.२४६

According to the Upanishads the Supreme Reality is Brahman. The word Brahman means the biggest conceivable reality. Sankara states, "Modifications or effects are names only, exist through or originate from speech only, while in reality there exists no search things as

modification...” So this manifold world with its objects of ‘environment, enjoyers and so on as no existence apart from the Brahman’ ब्रह्मसूत्र शांकरभाष्य २.१.१.४

The Isha Upanisad states, “In the heart of all things, of whatever there is in the universe, dwells the Lord.” ईश १

The Kena Upanisad states, “This the truth in relation to nature; whether in the flash of the lightening, or in the wink of the eyes, power that is shown is the power of the Brahman” केन ४.५

“This is the truth of the Brahman in relation to men; in the motions of mind, the power that is shown is the power of the Brahman.” केन ४.५

Thus the philosophy of the Upanisads clearly tells us that the Truth has to be grasped through the Supreme Knowledge. The Upanisads are alive to the fact that this is possible only through systematic Supreme Truth-oriented education. This education should begin right from childhood when mind is more receptive and the mental personality is under formation.

The Rgveda wishes that our hearts and minds be united:

“Let your thoughts be one and single.

Let your hearts be joined in one

Both the mind at rest in union

At peace with all” ऋग्वेद: १०.१२९.४

The Mahabharata tells us to follow the truth as follows:

“Treat others as you would yourself be treated.”

“He who is always a friend of others and by his word, thought and deed

Is continuously engrossed in doing good to others”

महाभारतम्,शान्तिपर्व १६७

“Kindness is desiring happiness for all; straightforwardness is mental poise. Holy is he who is kind to all. Wicked is he who is cruel”

महाभारतम्,शान्तिपर्व २६२.९

The secret meaning of the Vedas is truth; of truth, self-control; of self control, freedom from all limitations. This is the sum of all scriptures. महाभारतम्,वनपर्व ३१३.९०

All religions even in the modern world, without a single exception preach and friendship. Jesus Christ preached peace. Lord Buddha preached Ahimsa. Islam stands for peace. Hinduism preaches peace as a main principle to follow and friendship with all.

There is one museum in America where numerous animals from various countries are displayed and their nature etc. is described. When a visitor comes to an end of his visit in this museum a big mirror is displaced before him which has written on it.” Now you are witnessing an animal, who kills his own species.” Lion hardly kills lion or a goat seldom kills goat but to our greater surprise we have to admit that a man kills man for his selfish motives.

On the other side it is said in Veda, “पुमान् पुमान्सं परिपातु विश्वतः-Let a man may protect man from all the sides.” In fact if I have right to live I must admit that other person has all the rights to enjoy the same right to live. We have no right to snatch away the life of others or pounce upon the livelihood of anyone else.

Man today is not a Robinson Cruzo living alone in an isolated island. He lives in the society and must live for the society too. In ancient Indian scriptures it is emphatically laid down that “न मानुषात् श्रेष्ठतरं हि किञ्चित्- There is nothing better than a human being.” So Veda has a command, “मनुर्भव-Be a human being.” In fact it is very difficult to be a human being. Today in the midst of millions and billions of human beings it is difficult to find out a one real human being-a man.

If you are a man and if you want to remain a man there are certain responsibilities which you cannot escape. You derive benefit from the various sources of the society. Hence you are supposed to share with them too. Veda says, “केवलाघो भवति केवलादी -He who eats alone devours only the sins.” While Gita says – तैर्दत्तानप्रदायैभ्यो यो भुङ्क्ते स्तेन एव सः |

“He who enjoys without sharing with one who has given to him is a thief” and according to Manu in Manusmrti, “Such a thief deserves punishment.” So one, while doing any business cannot afford to forget the famous Upanisadic principle. “तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथाः- Enjoy while renouncing.”

“Fifty zero five and ‘e’,
Gather it and give it to me.”

‘Fifty in Roman letter is written as ‘L’. zero is written as ‘O’, five is written as ‘V’ and ‘e’, now gather it and it becomes ‘Love’. So give it to me’. This is the play of children. They talk like this and rejoice. But this love is the source of all the pleasures of life and if it is employed in a wrong manner, undue direction or unworthy way, it turns out to be the root cause of the miseries too.

Love is the alter ego of the god. Love is the second nature of the god. The Lord is identified with Love. They say the Lord is Love and Love is Lord. ‘Parama Prema Para Brahma- The great love is the highest Brahman-the Highest Reality. See the forms of the Lord, the visible forms of the Almighty. The sun, the right eye of the Lord, who shines in the sky and sheds his splendid lustrous light on each and every thing that comes under Him. He never distinguishes between river and mountain, city or cave, tree or animal, man or woman. The moon, believed to be another eye of the Lord, never withdraws her cool rays from any herb, either useful to a man or a poisonous one. She also distributes her rays without any distinction between the rich or the poor, wise or fool, learned or ignorant. The river, a living flow of the love of Almighty, is meant for all. The river never restrains its water from a wicked and doesn’t reserves it for virtuous only. For the river all are equal. The wind, as the breath of the Lord, appeases all equally. The sky encompasses all without any reservation. The whole earth supports all either worshipped with reverence as Hindus do every morning before stepping on her from bed or a scientist who explores atom bomb in her womb. For her every existence, animate or inanimate, living or non-living, moving or steady, full of life or bereft of life is always worthy of support. So the distinction on any ground like country, city, cast, creed, class or capacity never exists in the eye of Almighty. Hence He is Almighty. His love pervades the whole universe because He and His love are not different just like the sun and his light or the moon and its coolness, or the river and its water are not different from one another. They are just the different names of one and the same thing. In Sanskrit it is said शक्तिशक्तिमतोरभेद:-there is no distinction between strength and the possessor of strength. The light is the strength of the sun, the heat is the strength of fire. So, light is not different from the Sun and the heat can not be set aside from the fire. In the same

manner is the strength of the Lord, the equality of the god. Hence it can not be differentiated from the god. Where there is god there is love, where there is love there is god.

Love is not meant to be limited. Love like the Lord, knows no boundaries, no limitations. Love all, Love everything. Look at the nature. According to the Vedic concept 'the world is the poetry of god, which never dies, never decays'. Try to love nature. See its beautifulness, its benevolent qualities. Each and every particle of the nature is created by the Lord to make man happy. The God loves us. He has proclaimed on oath that he loves his created beings. In the Bhagavad Gita he maintains, 'Pratijane priyo'si me' oh Arjuna ! I tell you on oath that I love you'. It is unfortunate that the man does not recognize the love of the Lord, which in fact he is enjoying at every moment of his life.

The bright light of the sun, the cool rays of the moon, the sweet water of the rivers, the delicious fruits of the trees, the charming breeze of the wind, the colors of butterflies, the beauty of the smiling child, the fragrance of a flower, the side glances of the young lady, the smoothing smile of an old person, the colorful rays of twilight, the cooling of a cuckoo, a roar of a lion, a jumping of a monkey, the galloping of a horse, a hiding of a nut by a squirrel, a love sports of a dog, sweetness of cookies or the bitterness of a wine, an interesting movie, or an enchanting race of a motor car, an inspiring games of players, piercing punch of a boxer or a loving patting of a mother, an acting of an actor, a melodious sensing of a singer, an outstanding dance of a dancer, even smoothly dancing fingers of a typist on the keyboard of a typewriter or a wonderful announcement on TV or an advertisement on the screen of a TV catching our attention, an attractive smell of spices from food being cooked in the kitchen, a beautiful song of a flowing stream or an unexpected roaring of the waves of an ocean, a soul-soothing note of a flute or any inspiring playing of a modern western instrument-all these are the out come of the love of the Lord. Enjoy them if you can. But our ego, capable of limiting all our experiences, reducing them next to nothing does not permit us even to appreciate the beauty of the nature, the out come of the love of the Lord. "Alas ! oh ego, kindly leave me alone with my love, my Lord, my infinite form so that I can enjoy infinite bliss." This should be our prayer to the god of gods from the heart of our heart.

A Vedic poet prays the god !

विश्वानि देव सवितर्दुरितानि परासुव ।

यद् भद्रं तन्न आ सुव ॥-ऋ. वे. ५.८२.५

‘Oh Savitr, oh god ! All that is harmful drive away from us, we pray. And bring to us only what is good.’

अनागसो अदितये देवस्य सवितुः सवे ।

विश्वा वामानि धीमहि ॥-ऋ. वे. ५.८२.६

‘May we be sinless in the knowledge of the sun through the grace of the god, son of Aditi. May we meditate on all that is beautiful.’

The more love opens, the more appreciation of the creation of god, would creep in the mind and it can deepen into a more ‘worldless wonderness.’ The touch of infinity (ब्रह्मसंस्पर्श) would take place and one reaches to the state of experience from where the speech, without reaching to it, returns along with the mind. The mind ceases to be the mind and turns into love itself. The result would be a perfect bliss, rich joy, profound respect and appreciation of everything in terms of love and love only. Now love, the lover and the object of love would be one. No duality persists, no fear can generate, no question of liberation arises. Who would be liberated from whom? This is called the oneness of love the ‘Monism of love’ (प्रेमाद्वैत-Premadvaita). Hence Jnanesvara, the most famous and realized yogi, saint of Maharashtra, has designated love as the ‘fifth aim’ (पञ्चमपुरुषार्थ-Pancama-purusartha) of human life along with Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksa.

For all these reasons, it will be profitable for the enlightened people to study the Vedas and take to heart the universal message contained in them. Only then, we can gain a comprehensive knowledge of the reality and gain creative wisdom to shape our thought processes. Let us pray to the Almighty to grant us enlightenment and show the path of truth-“Tamaso Ma Jyotirgamaya”.

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