

# LIMITS OF SCIENCE AND RELEVANCE OF INDIAN THOUGHT

*By*

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**Transaction No. 83**

**INDIAN INSTITUTE OF WORLD CULTURE  
Bangalore 560 004**

## TRANSACTIONS

Many valuable lectures are given, papers read, discussed and oral reviews of outstanding books presented at The Indian Institute of World Culture. These Transactions represent some of these lectures and papers and are printed for wider dissemination in the cause of better intercultural understanding so important for world peace and human brotherhood.

### TRANSACTION No. 83

In October 1989, the Indian Institute of World Culture invited the noted astrologer, Dr. B. V. Raman, to deliver Shri B. P. Wadia Memorial Lecture. Dr. Raman's subject — Limits of Science and Relevance of Indian Thought — has been in the fore-front of many a thinker in India.

Mr. P. Chidambaram, Honourable Minister of State for Home Affairs, New Delhi, presided over the lecture.

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Printed by W. Q. Judge Press, 97 Residency Road, Bangalore 560 025, and published by the Indian Institute of World Culture, 6 Shri B. P. Wadia Road, Basavangudi, Bangalore 560 004. Printed in India.

# LIMITS OF SCIENCE AND RELEVANCE OF INDIAN THOUGHT

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Never in human history has man experienced so much darkness within him in the midst of all round scientific progress outside of him.

The western scientists' over-reliance on materialistic premises as the sole fount of valid knowledge is so pervasive that it has blinded us to possible alternatives employed in ancient India, and has brought us to the present perilous impasse.

Science for all its benefits conferred on mankind is far from guiltless. Crimes, wars, nuclear arsenals, pollution, unemployment are all increasing. Science collaborates in massacres, and in this age of scientific thought, we stand on the brink of scientific destruction.

Its medicine has only created illness. Because of over-emphasis even on ordinary ailments, a morbid attitude towards life, and a general obsession with ill-health is being developed. Many doctors appear to treat diseases but do not appear to be interested in the patients. Of course there are honourable exceptions.

We see around us in our own country an alarming rise in alcoholism, violent crimes, accidents, suicides, terrorism, and disregard for ethical principles even in the highest quarters.

These are all symptoms of social ill-health and products of the age of science - science devoid of spirituality and human values. Nor does the staggering increase in heart diseases, cancer, diabetes - aptly called the diseases of civilization, because they are closely related to stressful attitudes, rich diet, drug abuse, sedentary living and environmental pollution, bespeaks of the blessings of science.

Western science thinks of man as a physical entity, a result of the fortuitous combination of some insentient chemical elements. And it only strives to cater to the physical amenities of mankind within the frame work of its empirical notions.

It looks as if the discoveries of material science have been elevated into a creed. This new creed of self-styled omniscience has taken upon itself the role of social reformer, dubbing religion and spirituality as ignorance and superstition.

Man's obsessive craze to control external nature without learning to control his internal nature has resulted in over-population, self-assertion, intolerance and violence in personal and public life that can ultimately lead only to self-destruction.

A general impression also prevails that the spirit of science is opposed to a spiritual view of the world and supports materialism.

Today we are surrounded by fanatical advocates of the one and only "method" and that is the so-called scientific method. Anyone who honestly stresses the limits of this scientific method is dubbed as an "obscurantist".

But the charge of "obscurantism" is a weapon which cuts both ways. To quote Whitehead: "The obscurantists of any age are the practitioners of the dominant methodology. In Galileo's time, it was the theologians who were the obscurantists. Today it is our scientists, who entrenched in their orthodoxy, are refusing to look at any evidence falling outside the purview of their own blinkered methodology".

In fact, the modern world and to some extent, our own country, are unsure about the value of, or even the necessity for an overall philosophy of life. It is obsessed by the overwhelming importance of science or the objective sciences. The result is that the modern world is unable to arrive at a harmonious picture of man and nature giving due place to reality as well as human values. The world of reality seems sundered from the world of values.

Very simply put, modern civilization is the isolation of the individual from another. Fear, animalism, avarice, hatred, greed, frustration, insecurity, a general feeling of meaninglessness of life and consequent misery mark what we call modern civilization. Gaining of wealth and power seems to be the sole goal of man. He sees in such an external life a compensation for the inner poverty and hollowness of his egoistic life.

The ancient metaphysical realities of justice, equity, beauty, happiness and love - all upheld only by faith and reason, have now been reduced, in the name of science, to matters of personal taste or customs. Human life is thus bereft of every meaning that transcends it.

The Indian concepts of *viveka*, *vairagya*, *thyaga*, *seva*, *yagna* etc., which permeated all aspects of our life in our country for thousands of years and which marked unitive knowledge are being pooohooed in the name of so-called “progressive thinking”.

It is no wonder then that secularism where all human values are confined to only hedonic values, common to men and animals, but differing only in extension and depth, has become the ruling philosophy of the modern world.

It incites one to acquire wealth by any means, provided that these means do not lead one to jail. Modern life allows one frequent excitation and the easy satisfaction of sensual appetites. It does away with constraint, disciplined effort and everything that is inconvenient and laborious.

To a great extent the present chaos in the ethical world is no doubt due to the emergence of the so-called scientific world-view.

However some thinkers in the West have begun to doubt whether this type of life — a concomitant of the so-called scientific age, laying too much stress on materialism — expresses a state of progress, as we are made to believe, or of degeneracy.

The modern mind has concocted a web-work of excuses and justifications for expanding the physical domain and underrating the ancient teachings. Most modern philosophies have been more concerned with justifying self-interest than with the infinitely more important subject of personal integrity.

As the well-known physicist Capra says “Western culture has been so obsessed with rational knowledge, objectivity and quantification that we have become very insecure dealing with human values and human experience. Our progress, then, has been largely a rational and intellectual affair. This one-sided evolution has now reached a highly alarming stage, a situation so paradoxical that it borders on insanity. We can control the soft landings of space craft on distant planets, but we are unable to control the polluting fumes emanating from our cars and factories. We propose Utopian communities in gigantic space colonies, but cannot manage our cities. The business world makes us believe that huge industries producing pet foods and cosmetics are a sign of our high standards of living, while economists try to tell us we cannot ‘afford’ adequate health care, education or public transport. Medical science and pharmacology are endangering our health. Those are the results of overemphasizing our *yang* — rational knowledge, analysis, expansion — and neglecting our *yin*, - intuitive wisdom, synthesis and ecological awareness.”

Unfortunately today it is exactly this paradigm that has been significantly influencing Indian thinking also.

It is clear that it is the neglect of the intuitive by western science that western man experiences agony. This schism between logical and analytical on the one hand, and intuitive and cognitive processes on the other hand, never characterized ancient Indian thought.

Prof. Brian David Joseph, F.R.S., the youngest Nobel Prize winner was in India some time back seeking guidance from Indian philosophy to incorporate what he calls “spiritual science into modern science” to meet “scholars and saints” — mind you not scientists — of this country. He is convinced that Indian philosophy shows the relationship between mind and matter. He opined that the so-called rationalists reject the evidence which is compelling. He said he was disenchanted with the excessive domination of science in the modern world, which drove him to meditation, the Vedanta and the Sankhya to find scientific explanation for the laws of the mind and thought-processes and their correlations to the puzzling aspects of quantum theory.

The most perceptive observation he made when asked about the origin of the universe was: “I cannot add more to what is said in Indian philosophy”.

In the words of Capra, “the mystic and the physicist arrive at the same conclusion — one starting from the inner realm and the other from the outer world. The harmony between their views confirms the ancient Indian wisdom that *Brahman* the ultimate reality without is identical with *Atman*, the reality within.”

It is said the modern world’s chief deficiency is the want of a science of consciousness. Science wants to explain everything in terms of physical phenomena. Niels Bohr, a noted physicist, says: “We can admittedly find nothing in physics or chemistry that has even a remote bearing on consciousness — yet all of us know that there is such a thing as consciousness, simply because we have it.” Pierre Teilhard, a noted thinker and biologist says: “In man the existence of a within can no longer be evaded because it is the object of a direct intuition and the substance of all knowledge”.

The realization of the intuitional perception of the existence of consciousness and its universal pervasiveness is the greatest contribution of Indian sages to human thought.

In an interview with Max Planck by J.W.N. Sullivan (Observer 25-1-1931) in answer to the question: “Do you think that consciousness can be explained in terms of matter and its law,” Max Planck answered that he did not. Max Planck continued “Consciousness, I regard, as a fundamental. I regard matter as derivative from consciousness. We cannot get behind consciousness. Everything that we talk about, everything that we regard as existing postulates consciousness.”

Western scientists have begun to realize what Indian thought said thousands of years ago that mind and matter are two aspects of the same reality.

In a paper on “Life and Mind in the Universe”, submitted in a Seminar— A.I.I.M.S. in New Delhi in February 1987, George Wald, Professor Emeritus of Biology, Harvard University says: “The ultimate basis of all existence is consciousness. The stuff of this Universe is ultimately mind stuff. What we recognise as the material universe, the universe of space and time and elementary particles and energies is then an *avatar*, the materialization of primal mind. In that sense there is no waiting for consciousness to arise. It is there always.

If this is not pure Vedanta, even if coming from a western thinker, what else is it?

It is a happy change therefore to note that of late many a scientist in the West in coming forward to emphasize the limitations of science.

It must be noted that theories of science are not ultimate facts of reality, but only temporary statements of ideas. And the history of western science has shown that the fact that a theory “works” and produces tangible results, does not prove that the underlying assumptions are correct. The revision of some of the current concepts is slowly coming in the west.

A similar situation had developed in India two thousand years ago when the materialists of that age — Charvakas tried to wield a similar influence on the thinking of the people. The Charvakas reduced minds and their states, beliefs, imaginations, feelings, etc. — to appearances of matter. They averred: “Let us lead the life of pleasure as nobody knows what happens after death — when the body is reduced to ashes how can it return again ?”

ಯಾವತ್ ಜೀವೇತ್ ಸುಖಂಜೀವೇ ನಾಸ್ತಿಮೃತ್ಯುರಗೋಚರಃ!  
ಭಸ್ಮೀಭೂತಸ್ಯ ದೇಹಸ್ಯ, ಪುನರಾಗಮನಂಕುತಃ!!

But the Charvaka mischief was refuted and halted by subsequent philosophers. In a sense, the situation that created Charvaka philosophy exists in greater strength today.

Coming to the Indian achievements, India, as the home of One of the most ancient civilizations, has developed an essentially cosmic view of the world in contrast to the predominantly anthropocentric view of the west.

India had reached the zenith of glory in every branch of knowledge long before the times of Buddha. Then began the period of continuous invasions from the west — beginning from the Greeks and followed by Scythians, the Huns, the Moghuls and the English. Notwithstanding all its development of science, during British rule the edifice of western civilization was built by a subtle propaganda leading to a gradual destruction of Indian thought and culture.

With the arrival of Independence imitation of western thinking and western culture confused as modern and universal is being continued even today to carry its adverse effects.

Many Indians appear to feel shy or even humiliation in talking of their Country’s past, its ancient culture, civilization and philosophy.

From times immemorial Indian thought teaches: ಆನೋ ಭದ್ರಾ ಕೃತವೋಯಂತು ವಿಶ್ವತಃ meaning “Let noble thoughts Come to us from every side.”

Indian thought postulates the operation of supra-personal laws and processes. And the various disciplines of Indian thought have grown out of one basic World view.

One of the greatest postulates of Indian thought, significant even from the point of western or modern scientific thinking, was that nothing was being destroyed in nature or that nothing could arise from Nothing. The Sankhya system postulated: ಕಥಮಸತಃ ಸಜ್ಜಾಯತೇ (Chandogya 6-2-2) i.e., nothing can be born from nothing or how can the real appear from the unreal. The Geeta also says:

ನಾ ಸತೋ ವಿದ್ಯತೇ ಭಾವೋಃ ನಾ ಭಾವೇ ವಿದ್ಯತೇ ಸತಃ!!

meaning what does not exist cannot come into existence and what exists cannot be destroyed.

The ancients did give due importance to what they called *Pratyak&ha Pramanam* or direct evidence also

ಇಂದ್ರಿಯ ದ್ವಾರಾಯಾ, ಬುದ್ಧೀರ್ಯಧಾರ್ಥಾ ವೃತ್ತಿಃ, ಸಾ ಪ್ರಕೃತ್ಯಂ ಪ್ರಮಾಣಂ

Even mechanical contrivances appear to have been employed to probe into the mysteries of Nature and natural phenomena. The Bhoutika Sutras say:

ದೃಶ್ಯಾಕರ್ಷಣ ದರ್ಪಣ ಪ್ರಸಂಗಃ! ತದ್ಭೇದಾಃ ಪಂಚ ದಶಾಃ!!

Realizing the limitations of sense perceptions (ದರ್ಪಣೇ ಮಿಥ್ಯಾವಾದಾಃ ಮಾಂಸನೇತ್ರ ನಪ್ರಸಂಗಃ) the sages felt that Divyo Drishti or divine vision or intuition alone (ದಿವ್ಯದೃಷ್ಟಿಯೋಗಚಕ್ಷುರ್ವಿನಾ) enabled them to study and understand the enigma of life and existence.

The *Mundaka Upanishad* advocates two kinds of knowledge *para* (transcendental) and *apara* (secular) in order to reach fulfillment in life.

Describing all science, art, literature, politics and economics — the knowledge of the changeful many — as *apara*, it proclaims, that one knowledge as *para* by which the imperishable, changeless- reality is realized. This is the basis of a holistic approach to life according to Indian tradition.

In other words Indian thought not only deals with science but with human life, experience, quality and values and consciousness which are indeed the central aspect of our inner world.

A study .of Hindu methodology reveals that the scientific method proceeded on the basis of observed instances carefully analyzed and sifted.

The science of mathematics saw a high development in the hands of the Hindus. They were the inventors of the decimal system and zero. The *Yajurveda Samhita* gives an account of numbers in ascending decimal scale upto *parardha* or  $10^{42}$ . It is the Indian numerals that are misnamed as Arabic numerals. The credit of discovery of the principle of differential calculus goes to the great Bhaskaracharya, who lived about 11 centuries ago. The rules of extraction of square and cube roots, the treatment of surds, etc., were all well-known.

In meteorology, the Hindus used the rain gauge in their forecasts for the year, made careful observations of the different kinds of clouds and their atmospheric phenomena, e.g. heights of clouds, distance from which lightning is variable or thunder is heard, the area of disturbance of different earthquakes and how phases of the Moon and certain mutual geometrical positions of planets caused rains, floods, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, etc.

Recently, Dr. Roberto Pinotti, an Italian scientist, asked the delegates of the workspace conference to examine in detail the Hindu texts instead of dismissing all the Vimana descriptions and traditions as myths. According to Dr. Pinotti who has made an exhaustive study of the history of Indian astronautics the text *Samarangana Sutrodhara* (ಸಮರಾಂಗಣ ಸೂತ್ರೋಧರ) had 230 stanzas devoted to the principles of building vimanas and their use in peace and war. Dr. Pinotti said descriptions of space travel, total destruction by incredible weapons and the fact that *vimanas* resembled modern unidentified flying objects would suggest that India had a superior but forgotten civilization. He says "It will be better to examine the Hindu texts and subject the descriptive models of the Vimanas to more scientific scrutiny"

Why Indian scientists feel shy of examining these texts is of course a different matter !

The Mimimsakas speak of three varieties of sound — *nada*, *dhwani*., and *sphuta*. The Nyaya system employs the *Vichitravarga nyaya*, according to which sound vibrations occur in circles. This is more or less the wave theory of sound. Matter is said to have three *gunas* or

constituents or properties. *Sattwa Guna* or essence, *Raja guna* or energy and *Thamo Guna* or mass or inertia.

The science of medicine or Ayurveda is indeed a rich heritage for us. It is a vast scientific system. But its very vastness makes it a sealed book.

But all this falls into the category of *Aparavidya*. What is remarkable is that in India no science nor any another-expression of thought, stands for itself alone as an independent separate factor.

The basic biological idea has also its ethical side. Nothing gets lost and every action once started goes on its development unimpeded and unavoidable till it reaches its acme. Thus from the biological starting point arises an ethical warning. If you do not want the fruits then be careful not to sow the seed. Everything though harmlessly small in the beginning will later assume dangerous dimensions of efficiency and driving power.

It is therefore clear that “nothing stands isolated. Everything has its repercussions in a wider sphere of time and space beyond its immediate present. This immediate present is responsible for effects in a wider unlimited future.”

“Every momentary present is already a result of a preceding past”.

Max Plank says: “Certain happenings may be called mysteries rather than miracles in the scholastic sense of the term. In other words as our minds are not capable of encompassing the laws which guide the universe, we must be content to treat certain happenings as beyond our power of explanation and refer only to the mysterious ways of ‘Divine Providence’.”

“To understand this ‘Divine Providence’ man needs a faith. Yes, we are always being brought, face to face with the irrational. Else we could not have faith. And if we did not have faith but could solve every puzzle in life by an application of the human reason what an unbearable burden life would be”.

In the words of Swami Vivekananda: “Faith is. a must. Reason is not enough. Faith is not reason. It is a grasp on the ultimate.”

Max Plank finally raises a more fundamental question like the seers of the Upanishads. “Science cannot solve the ultimate mystery of nature. And that is because, in the last analysis, we ourselves are part of nature and therefore part of the mystery that we are trying to Solve.”

How can the knower know himself? Ask the Upanishads.

Ramakrishna Paramahansa tells us we are like the salt doll who went to plumb the Ocean.

To Indian thought science and religion were two aspects of approach to life. They felt that science could not presume man to deduce a moral code from its observation of natural phenomena. The totality of the world cannot be captured within the categories of science. The approach of the ancient Indian sages to the life problems was always spiritual.

The awareness of the ultimate spiritual oneness of all existence, of which the human being is a part, revealed to him that the goal of life is to make man get rid of his foolish ego-centric attachment to his own little self and his insatiable thirst for self-gratification.

As Prof. Abdus Salam, a Nobel Laureate, said recently, the first thing that occurred to him on hearing that he had won the Nobel Prize was to go to the nearest mosque for prayers. He said, “Science does not cover everything. It does not cover moral values. We all believe in moral law, ‘thou shalt be done as thou doth to others.’” But is there a scientific basis to quantify

what would be done to you? All that we know is that we would be punished in some tortuous way.” He said “I change science every day. I change what is believed to be true. How can it have the eternal significance of religion?”

Vedanta philosophy believes that it is our own consciousness which creates the world outside.

According to Capra “*During their long history they have developed subtle techniques to change their followers' awareness of their own existence and of their relation to human society and the natural world.*”

‘Eastern thought has begun to interest a significant number of people and meditation is no longer viewed with ridicule and suspicion, mysticism is being taken seriously even within the scientific comity. An increasing number of scientists are aware that mystical thought provides a consistent and relevant philosophical background to the theories of contemporary science.’

Obviously modern or western science realizing its own limits, has been coming round to accept Vedanta according to which consciousness (*chit*) and the all pervading reality (*sat*) is the substratum of everything.

In Yoga psychology cosmic consciousness — Iswara — has always been recognized as a reality and the aim of our subjective progress and self-discovery.

Indian thought tar a great example of the organic unity of theory and practice. The validity of a doctrine does not rest upon logic alone, but on actual experience : ಅನುಭವಶ್ಚ, ಯಥಾ ಸಂಭವಂ, ಇಹ ಪ್ರಮಾಣಂ says Adi Sankara. A doctrine that fails to stand the test of life disappears, for Indian philosophy is a way of life, A Mode of approach to the spiritual realization.

While western thought is confined only to the waking state of human life, in India, Yoga tells us that we can understand, regulate and control the various stages and forms assumed by consciousness. These are the sub-conscious, conscious and super-conscious stages. Thus the Yoga system first revealed that there are modes or states of consciousness other than the waking one. The sub-conscious and super-conscious levels were analyzed, examined and related to the states of dream and sleep.

In this approach the Hindu mind was speculative and therefore synthetic, while the western scientific mind is analytic, discursive and separatist. The synthetic view of reality is a cosmic philosophy, a comprehensive vision. This tendency towards a synthetic vision is blended with a subjective interest, and the result is the emergence of the monistic idealism of the Upanishads.

Indian philosophy, an important aspect of Indian thought, is not merely metaphysical speculation but has its foundation in immediate perception. God and soul are regarded not merely as concepts, speculative and problematical, as is the case in western philosophy; but as things directly experienced. It is said that under suitable conditions, they can be known by all. This perception *is* not of the senses, nor of the emotions. It is transcendental.

Indian philosophy emphasizes that the seeker after truth must satisfy four important conditions called *Sadhana Chatushtaya* by Adi Sankara. The first is a theoretical or logical knowledge of the distinction between the eternal and the non-eternal (ನಿತ್ಯಾನಿತ್ಯ ವಸ್ತು ವಿವೇಕ) It is the inquiring spirit, the speculative bent of mind, that gives this knowledge. The second condition takes us to the practical side. One must give up the desire for the fruits of action

(ಇಹಫಲಭೋಗವಿರಾಗ) It is the renunciation of desire, of the involvement in utilitarian pursuits. This implies the need for clear, impartial thinking, honest judgment and universal outlook. Such a state requires a change of heart. Hence the third condition requires the realization of tranquility, self-restraint, renunciation, patience and peace of mind (ಶಮದಮಾದಿ ಸಮೃತ್). The trained mind and the refined heart are necessary for the realization of the highest end. The desire for *moksha* or spiritual liberation (ಮನುಷ್ಯತ್ವ) is the fourth condition. These are all intensely practical considerations.

There is then an intimate relation between psychology and ethics to Indian religious philosophy. According to westerners, psychology is man's attempt to explain the behaviour of his mind with reference to his body and the stimuli received through his senses. In fact it is an offshoot of so-called rational science. The behaviouristic thesis of western psychologists, giving free play to all impulses and all desires is creating a condition of moral chaos among the youth of today.

The alternative offered by the *Gita* is the direction of the thoughts and energies towards God. Direction rather than repression is the method of the Indians for achieving self control. Ethics is the science of conduct in relation to society as man faces his multifarious activities as a social being.

To the Indian mind, psychology has its roots in the thinking self and in the object of thought. Indian psychology is an integral part of Indian philosophy, for Yoga which is one of the *Shad Darsanas* is psychology par excellence and philosophy roiled into one. Indian psychology is not merely concerned with the working of the mind in the normal conscious plane or behaviourism. It aims at discovering the super-conscious and supra-conscious planes of the mind and how experiences in these planes are more real than experiences in the objective world.

While the psychologist Freud wants a free expression to the impressions of the sub-conscious mind, Indian psychology says that man is capable of controlling even the impressions of the sub-conscious mind.

While we are paying undue importance to western psychotherapists and psychiatrists, Carl Jung, the celebrated psycho-analyst, has the frankness to admit that western psycho-analysis and the lines of thought to which it gives rise "are only a beginner's attempt compared to what is an immemorial art in the East". Our own psychologists will perhaps take note of this.

The different Darsanas or systems of Indian philosophy present the different views to suit various levels of philosophic understanding.

Each Darsana discusses the philosophical problems in a practical manner. First it seeks to establish the nature of the means of knowledge, its origin and validity. Next it attempts to define the object of the system. Then the nature of the individual, the status of the external world, and the concept of reality are examined.

All this is intended to enable the seeker to realize Moksha. But this realization is possible only by practicing a certain way of life. This has made the concept of Dharma central to all the systems of Indian thought. This Dharma refers to the life of the individual as member of the family, as a member of the society, as a member of the world, and as a spiritual entity. It is all-pervasive. Consequently philosophy in India becomes a human interest.

If the mind of the finite being could be tuned in some way, its distractions could be

stilled. The flowing forth of sense-powers to outer objects constantly could be held back. It is said this could enable man to touch the unseen reality directly in the depths of his own self and spirit. This is the celebrated path of Yoga — the identity of finite and infinite becoming the path of contact between them by *Chittavrittinirodha* — control of the modify of the mind. Indian psychology is intimately connected with ethics also. Ways of achieving right conduct — in thought, word and deed — are explicitly revealed which if correctly practiced can enable one to instinctively live the ethical life.

The Vedas, the oldest and the most important scriptures of India, which still mould the lives of millions of Indians, are the earliest and the most venerated record of culture enshrining the highest aspirations, constitutive ideas and values of life.

They also offer the creative matrix of the ruling ideas of the Indian people in all branches of culture and civilization.

The Upanishads, like the Vedic hymns, were seen as in a vision, and recorded and taught to disciples as the deepest truth of reality. The scattered lights of the Vedic hymns are pondered over by various sages and the results of their insights and flashes of vision are recorded in the principal Upanishads in which we find a resolute and profound concern with the spiritual essence of the self and of the cosmos.

The implications of the Vedic visions are drawn out in several dialogues and meditations. The lines of thought stand out clearly so that the meditative person today can follow the hints on his own, if he has the requisite temperament and *adhikara* and can reach a vision similar to the one that irradiated the minds of the sages.

The truths dealt with here are of permanent import and can never become out of date, for they concern the eternal essence of reality of the individual and of nature and of God or ultimate spiritual reality, permeating the entire universe. As Paul Deusan says: “The original thinkers of the Upanishads, to their immortal honour found God. They recognized one Atman, one inmost individual Being; as the Brahman, the inmost Being of universal nature and of all her phenomena”.

Accordingly the identity of the Atman (individual self) and Brahman (universal self) was a vital portion of the wisdom of Indian thought known to the ancient Rishis from the beginning. In the Upanishads the idea is nearly everywhere either stated or implied.

But the vision of truth given to us in the great Upanishads include also life as we know it, at ordinary levels, and leads up to higher goals in a continuous way.

The truths taught in the Upanishads have been verified in the experience of sages and seekers, age after age, since they were first uttered, so that they have attained the rank of established doctrine, of revealed reality, in the only sense of revelation that is justifiable in terms of reason, experience and intuition.

The Upanishads declare that God is not a material object. He is the source of the reality and the value of the entire totality of the universe — not merely of our solar system but of all the galaxies in the remote space. He is both subject and object, knower and known, agent and field of action and therefore not tangible to human senses. Such a vision of life, nature and God (or whatever is the ultimate reality behind it all) is indispensable to make sense of life and to guide our course in life meaningfully.

Today Indian leaders are at sea and are helplessly floundering in their search for the principles and methods of education and nation (or) man-building. The work of Sage Vyasa provides a wonderfully suggestive object-lesson in the task of national leaders if only they

care to see the vision that lies clearly embodied in the codification of Vyasa.

At some stage the stress comes to be laid not merely on the ultimate philosophy concerned in India with Moksha, Nirvana, etc., but on values and goals of human life - moral, aesthetic, religious — in a word on the *purusharthas* as we say — *Dharma* (or morality, individual and social), *artha* (wealth), *kama* (fulfillment of instinctive needs accompanied by pleasure) and *Moksha*. But these *purusharthas* do not exhaust human interests. For man is more than individual and social. There is a transcendent side of this nature a spark of the universal divine.

Indian thought and civilization embodying the ancient Indian wisdom have never been rooted only in other-worldliness as some modern intellectuals are trying to propagate. On the other hand, since they are based on spirituality and Dharma they take a comprehensive and integral view of life unlike the fragmented view typical of the modern western technological culture.

It is a persistent charge against Indian philosophy, religion and culture generally that they are negative and pessimistic in nature. According to some western scholars, politicians, administrators and some Indians who ape western thinking Indian thought and way of life are profoundly sorrowful, deny the essential values of life and rooted only in other-world- liness.

While this depreciation of the Indian way of life is general in the West (and with some Indians also) men like Dr Radhakrishnan have clearly shown that ancient texts belie this gloomy view of life. The Vedic world is full of keen appreciation of life and its riches. The life required to be led by us was not paganism in the sense of being satisfied with the plane of physical well-being alone”

The Vedic hymns display a keen appreciation of good, and horror of evil. They show a clear consciousness of *rita* or cosmic order that rules the universe in all its planes. *Satya* is coined on to righteousness. And Dharma is the expression of *rita* and *satya*.

The message of Indian culture is : society will have no peace until rulers and subjects observe *Dharma* in mind, in speech and action.

The meaning of the word Dharma is wide and universal. Applying it to society and the individual, to time and place, to nature and morals, and to love and justice we get the derivative values — social order, social justice and social morality — individual duty, national virtue, the spiritual and moral sense, natural law, practice of equity, etc. If Dharma is neglected, the tenor of life is disturbed and a reign of terror grips the land. At such times it is said God descends in human form to establish Dharma.

Dharma does not dictate and enforce its commands by physical force. It declares the law and awaits patiently the evolution of man to rise to its heights for spontaneous adherence.

In the immortal Bhagavad Gita, Sri Krishna does not enforce his advice on Arjuna by jags command but expounds the right philosophy of God, Man and Nature and leaves it to Arjuna to do as he freely wills — (ಯತ್ಥೇಚ್ಛಸಿ ತಥಾ ಕುರು)

The *Srimad Bhagawata* gives the correct attitude to wealth when it says that living beings have a right only upto what is necessary for satisfying their hunger. This is the basic principle of a socialistic order of society. But charity with kind words (ದಾನಂ ಪ್ರಿಯ ವಾಕ್ ಸಹಿತಂ) knowledge without pride (ಜ್ಞಾನಂ ಅಗವಣಂ), courage with forbearance (ಕೃಮಾನ್ವಿತಂ ಶೌರ್ಯಂ) and wealth with renunciation (ವಿತ್ತಂ ತ್ಯಾಗ ಸಮೇತಮ್)— these four are difficult to attain but they make for man's progress.

Thus religion has been fused with moral inspiration of Vedic seers. The Veda presents a perfect vision of a full life. In its conception the individual and the society are not mutually exclusive elements but are interdependent entities.

Class and caste distinctions do not find a place in Indian philosophy. According to Narada Bhakti Sutra, “What is there special about being born in a higher caste? Who is there more blessed in the world than the Bhaktha whose heart is steeped in devotion to God?”

Today in our own motherland, when precept and practice are poles apart, and the forces of parochialism, linguism, casteism and materialism have been eating into the vitals of our national existence and destroying the larger and more pervasive character of Indian nationhood and cultural and moral values, the example of the lives of Sri Rama, Sri Krishna etc., could indeed be a beacon light for our leaders to follow.

Vested political interests also exploit the youth to secure political and personal gains. The youth by and large are very understanding, responsive and responsible in appreciating issues. What they need is guidance and concrete examples from their elders.

Education as ordinarily understood and pursued in the actual practice today does not necessarily mean development of character and culture. Education today is without moral and spiritual values and these can be provided only in the home. Much of the student- problem and the country’s problem could be solved if an important place could be given in our educational institutions to moral instruction and to the teaching of universal religion.

It is through the current education system that the obsession with western technological culture and consequent evils are spreading far and wide. Students are taught to exercise only the rational aspect. They learn to control computers, and even race in space-ships. But nothing is taught to them as to how to develop the mystical, intuitive aspect that inspires the heart, the altruistic feeling of oneness with others.

What I wish to emphasize is that unless social education is made to conform to our national ethos and cultural heritage and the truths and values enshrined in our ancient literature — the Upanishads, the Geeta, Ramayana and Mahabharatha etc., which are applicable to all mankind irrespective of the religion professed, are imparted to school-going and college-going youth, alien values and norms with all their absurdities will continue to play havoc with our youth. They will be neither Indians nor westerners.

Today, in India, an undue emphasis is being laid on the so-called “scientific temper”, which means denigrating religious observances, practices and beliefs, all of which are erroneously dubbed as superstition. Religious observances, practices and beliefs are not superstition but based on faith. Does science exclude faith and belief? Is not belief in the existence of truth in nature a sustainer of scientific spirit?

While inculcation of a scientific attitude may be necessary, its limitations must be understood and caution exercised in its over-emphasis.

An essential difference between the approach of the Rishis and the modern western science is that the former is comprehensive, integral, holistic and spiritual; while the latter is mostly *ad hoc*, fragmentary, reductionist and mechanistic.

It will be interesting to note that Dr. John L Lewis of England said when he -was at Bangalore some two years ago, “The most important aspect of science-education is teaching the learned the aims and limitations of science. The student should be made to, understand that science can be both beneficial and detrimental.”

Nobel Laureate Sir Edward Appleton said some years ago that “you should not, overrate scientific methods as you will learn from the story of a man who started an investigation to find out why people get drunk.”

This man offered some of his friends one evening a drink consisting of a certain amount of whisky and a certain amount of soda water and in due course observed the results. He repeated the experiment, the next three evenings by offering brandy and soda water, rum and soda water and gin and soda water. The results were always the same. He then applied scientific methods, used his sense of logic, and drew the only possible conclusion - the cause of the intoxication must have been the common substance, viz., the soda water. What a ridiculous conclusion and now revolting to our common-sense!

Real scientific attitude does not make an *a priori* decision as to what the answer ought to be, and then go about trying to prove it.

One of the greatest gifts of the Indian thought to the world is the point of view that envisages spiritual knowledge along with scientific knowledge as one organic whole with no gulf or conflict between them. The Vedas solved the problem of the right relation between religion and science for India (and for the world).

This feature of tolerance and understanding is an outstanding characteristic of Indian thought and culture.

It looks as if the West is beginning to recover her lost soul and a philosophy that justifies universal humanism irrespective of race creed, colour, wealth, scientific power and state power. And India has to resurrect her ancient philosophical thoughts and temper scientific progress with her spiritual heritage and develop an integrated outlook in life.

To look down upon the great spiritual heritage which we have received from a galaxy of saints and sages, as revivalist, and to glorify doctrines and modes of thought which are alien to us and out of tune with the thinking of the vast majority of our people, as progressive, is to be highly deplored. As Swami Vivekananda says: “Assimilate and practice the ideals of *Tyaga* (renunciation) and *Seva* (service) and we shall achieve the richness and steadiness of Vedantic character – (ತೇನತ್ಯಕ್ತೇನಭಂಜುತೌ) enjoy life through renunciation.

Indian philosophy which is the crux of Indian thought is not a mere way of thinking. It is a way of light and a way of truth. To become a philosopher is to become transformed in life and renewed in mind.

The message of Indian thought contained in the Upanishads has nothing dogmatic or sectarian about it. This spiritual knowledge, this wisdom is said to help one to swim across the sea of *Samsara*. As Erwin Schrodinger observed (in his “My View of the World) : “The only solution for the conflict between Science and Religion in to far as any is available for us at all lies in the ancient wisdom of the Upanishads.”

As Bertram Russel says: “Unless man increases in wisdom as much as in knowledge, increase of knowledge alone, will be increase of sorrow.”

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