

## “Vedanta and Its Application to Day to Day Life after Vivekananda”

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### Abstract

**Vedas and Upanishad** are the fundamental principles on which Neo-Vedantism and its practical applications are based. Vedanta has a certain metaphysical orientation if approached from the Indian point of view. It has a comprehensive outlook. Advaita, Visistadvaita, Suddhadvaita and other forms of this school have a common line of approach to reality. The view of Brahman as Atman, looking at the one-alone-without- a –second is also as the Self of all selves. It can be traced as a reality of science. The concepts of Brahma, Atma and Mukti have come down in human society not merely as the subject matter of theoretical speculations but as truths which can be verified through supra-sensuous experience at the super conscious level of mind called Samadhi (absorption) as such Vivekananda’s principles and practice have contributed to a large extent in understanding and exploring.

**KEYWORDS:** Vedas, Upanishad, Mukti, Atma, Brahma, Vivekananda

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1.OVERVIEW OF VEDANTA:

We don't deny the fundamental concepts on which Neo-Vedantism and the practical application rest of its might be traced to the Upanishads and the Vedas. Vedanta as the specifically Indian approach to reality, has a definite metaphysical orientation. Vedanta has a comprehensive outlook. Advaita, Visistadvaita, Suddhadvaita and other forms of this school have a common interioristic approach to reality, the view of Brahman as Atman, looking at the one-alone- without- a –second also as the Self of all selves.

It is well known that Vedanta presents the quintessence of the Vedas. It is a science Reality behind the universe and humanity. The fundamental concepts of Vedanta –the concept of Atma (the Reality behind the individual personality), the concept of Brahma (God or the Absolute, the Reality behind the ever –changing universe), the concept of mukti (liberation), and the like –have come down in human society not merely as the subject – matter of theoretical speculations but as truths or principles that can be verified through supra-sensuous experience at the super conscious level of mind called Samadhi (absorption). As the Upanishads are the ground of the Vedantic philosophy, so Vivekananda’s sayings about general spiritual matters and about his own spiritual experiences are the ground of a philosophical system of Vedanta.

The philosophy of Hinduism is Vedanta, but Vedanta is preached in such a way that it forms the essential part of every religion. Swami Vivekananda in 1890s stressed upon this aspect, and orientalist earlier popularized the teachings of The Upanishads and Vedanta. The term Vedanta is Veda plus anta, meaning end of the Vedas. The Upanishads embodying the philosophical ideas are the last literary products of the Vedic period, There are four sections called the Samhitas, Brahmins, Ārayanyakas and Upanishads were studied after the Samhitās and the Brahmanas. The vedantic literature is vast, but the Upanishads, Brahmasutras and Gitā are its principal books.

Vedas are the holy books of the Hindus. Upanishads are the basic books of the Vedanta; in fact, Upanishads themselves are called Vedanta. In the Upanishads we get varieties of references of philosophical thinking and ideas, all in germ forms. Latter philosophers came and gave a cogent philosophy. The earliest is Gaudapada. His grand –disciple is Acharya Shankara. Shankara is the main philosopher who organized the monistic system of Vedanta philosophy. He was the greatest philosopher India has ever produced. The main system of the Vedanta philosophy is Advaita. But then there are various other systems which accepted the theistic aspects, accepted a God deriving from the same Upanishads. So they are also called Vedantic systems, but theistic. There are various teachers teaching the different systems of philosophy. Shankara first, teaching non-dualistic philosophy. Ramanuja is qualified non-dualistic-Vishistadvaita, and Madhva is famous for dualistic system. Then there are some teachers –Vaishnavite as well as shaivite teacher – who gave theistic interpretation of their philosophy, making either Vishnu, Krishna Shiva, or Devi as the most important, or the highest deity. Then we have Vallabha in western India, Chaitanya in the East, Nimbarka in Vrindavan. Srikantha the Shaivite philosopher of the Shaiva Siddhanta philosophy. How these different systems arise? These are all not merely academic systems, thousands of people live their life by these philosophies. The knowledge of these systems becomes imperative to understand the background of the people, the attitudes with which they accept things.

The questions in philosophical systems are mainly three: what is the ultimate nature of the God, what is the ultimate nature of the world, and what is the nature of man, the ultimate reality. There are three major views in Vedanta. The dualistic says that all these three are different: man, nature and God are all different, but man and nature are dependent upon God. The qualified non-dualistic system of Ramanuja, which is followed by Ramananda and others in northern India consider the ultimate reality as One, God, Soul is the summation of all souls. His body is the summation of all material bodies. There is an in between position between dualistic and non-dualistic system. The Advaita, non-dualistic or monistic system believes that all three are One in their essential nature. That is the position taken by Shankara, and that normally known as the Vedanta philosophy.

## **1.2. NEO-VEDANTA AND VIVEKANANDA:**

Swami Vivekananda was acquainted with the Sanskrit sources of this philosophy from the Upanishads to the medieval commentaries. Most likely Swami Vivekananda was the very first Indian who discussed Vedanta in the West in a specific manner. Naturally, Light of other books and Asia had actually created some great opinion on the western head and Orientalists had been there, who somewhat primed the means for Vedanta. Carlyle presented a message of the Gitā to Emerson. The message continues to be preserved in the National Library near Boston. Thus, a little coverage to Vedanta were currently there although not much. Swami Vivekananda made it a lot common, not merely the concept but even more in the useful expertise of things<sup>1</sup>.

According to Swami Vivekananda, the Vedanta doesn't in fact denounce the globe. What it seeks to teach will be the deification of the planet rather than the annihilation of its. It does not give us a suicidal advice to kill ourselves and annihilate the world. What's actually meant by it's the deification of the planet - stopping the planet as we ordinarily consider it, as it seems to us - and also to learn what it truly is. The Swami says ; "Deify it (the world); it is God alone; and he cites the opening verse of the

Ishopanishad which says; 'whatever exists in this whole universe, is to be covered by the Lord . He goes on further and says , You is able to have the wife of yours; it doesn't imply you're abandoning her, but you're seeing God in the wife.' So likewise, you are' to discover God in the children of yours. Therefore in anything. In daily life and in demise, on well-being and in misery, the Lord is also existing. The entire planet has the Lord. Widen the eyes of yours and see Him. This's what Vedanta teaches" As additional proof of Swami Vivekananda's affirmation of the earth in God, we could look into what he claims with regard to the attitude and the way with that we're working on the planet. This particular, he claims, will be the Vedantic manner and also the Vedantic mindset. We're working by giving up, i.e. quitting the obvious, illusive planet. What this means is we're working by watching God everywhere.' Desire to follow a 100 years', he claims, "have all earthly wants, in case you want, just deify them, turn them in to paradise..,Thus operating, you are going to find how out there. There's not one other manner. In case a male plunges headlong into foolish luxuries of the planet without understanding the real truth, he's skipped the footing of his, he can't attain the objective. Plus in case a male curses the planet, moves straight into a forest, mortifies the flesh of his and kills himself very little by small by starvation, can make the heart of his a barren waste product, destroys away virtually all sensing, and also gets strong, base, plus dried up, that male also offers skipped the manner. These're the 2 extremes, the 2 errors in one or the other end. Each have dropped the manner, each have skipped the goal."<sup>2</sup> All this may be summed up in one single and simple utterance of Sri Ramakrishna; 'Do whatever you like with the knowledge of the non-dual Brahman tied up in a corner of your cloth (i.e. in your possession).

Like Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda can hold that Advaita as well as Vishishtadvaita and Dvaita are same and which the explanations of Brahman provided by them relate with exactly the same truth. Inside Advaita, Brahman doesn't have a quality, without type (nirguna). It's impersonal and indeterminate. It's neither a creator neither sustainer, neither destroyer of the planet, neither omnipotent nor omniscient, neither gracious nor merciful. But for Vishishtadvaita and Dvaita, Brahman has most great attributes. He's additionally styles (saguna). He's an individual Being as well as will be the omniscient and omnipotent originator, destroyer and sustainer of the world,

The actual pragmatic aspect of Neo Vedanta is seeing God in everything, and as everything. The heaven and the earth, sun and fire, the moon, the water and the stars tend to be kinds of Brahman. Most women and men, as well as creatures are types of Brahman. An additional useful aspect of Swami Vivekananda's Neo Vedantism could be the phone call to us being very first gods, after which aid others to become gods. We need to look in each male, female, then everybody as God. So we are really to serve them and not help them. But if it be our good fortune to help any one of them, we should do it only as a worship. The poor and the miserable give us opportunity to serve. God coming to us in the person of the diseased, the lunatic, the leper and the sinner. It was this conviction that inspired one of Swami Vivekananda's memorable utterances: "May I be born again and again and suffer thousands of miseries, so that I may worship the only God that exists, the only God I believe in, the sum total of all souls and above all, my God the wicked, my God the miserable, my God the poor of all races, of all species, is the special object of my worship"<sup>3</sup>

Another significant pragmatic aspect of Swamiji's Neo Vedanta is validation, not simple tolerance, of various other types of worship. Based on it, different types of worship, like the worship of God through forms and ceremonials, aren't in errors. It's the trip from fact to fact, out of reduced fact to a greater truth. We ought to observe others with eyes of like, with sympathy, realizing they're going by yourself exactly the same course that we trod. And so the Advaita of Swami Vivekananda not just tolerates but accepts as well as respects some other religions of the earth as but various paths which result in similar objective - God.

This kind of is Swami Vivekananda's functional Vedanta, a lifestyle Vedanta, moreover not a dead and dry principle of the Vedanta. It's the Vedanta of the woodlands come to our society, our city, and our home; it's the Vedanta entering to the ordinary life of ours as well as conduct; it's the Vedanta which could motivate the individual life of ours, cultural life and also international and national life. Swami Vivekananda wants us to carry the eternal message of the Vedanta to every door and to every corner of the world. It is this Vedanta that inspires the Ramakrishna Math and Mission and their vast and varied humanitarian activities. Let them go on for long till the whole world comes to realize the truth: Tat-tvamasi', and is transformed into heaven.

Swami Vivekananda advocated the practical Vedanta. The Vedanta holds not only that all men are one in spiritual brotherhood, but that the last word in religion is man's realization of his essential oneness with the entire universe. The central teaching of the Vedanta - the Upanishads - is how to realize the oneness. In the sense of spiritual oneness alone comes love and fearlessness; separation leads us to hatred and fear. Swamiji also taught that ...oneness is the secret of everything and everywhere we are one.<sup>4</sup> In his Harvard address on Vedanta philosophy gave on 25 March 1896 he said about the Vedantic systems that "there have been various interpretations and to my mind they have been progressive, beginning with the dualistic or the Dvaita and ending with the non- dualistic or Advaita"<sup>5</sup>

When he gave a new dimension and a new depth to Vedanta philosophy, when he developed this Neo – Vedanta without in any way distorting its basic principles, he only affirmed his faith in evolution and progress. In his address 'The Spirit and Influences of Vedanta' he says, 'It (Vedanta) is the flower of all the speculations and experiences and analyses in the vast mass of literature (the Vedas ) – collected and culled through centuries.<sup>6</sup> When you examine Swami Vivekananda's observations on Vedanta the first thing you notice is his reliance on the Upanishads in preference to the Brahma-Sutra and its commentaries. Secondly, you notice that he does not favour a fragmentation of Vedanta into different systems, Advaita Vishishtadvaita, Dvaita and Dvaitadvaita. He knew these systems or schools and valued them, but he himself took a holistic view of Vedanta. 'It would be wrong', he said in his Lahore address of 12 November 1897, 'to confine the word Vedanta only to one system which has arisen out of the Upanishads. All these are covered by the word Vedanta. The Vishishtadvaitist has as much right to be called a Vedantist as the Advaitist'<sup>7</sup> Swami Vivekananda enthralled his Western audience by the Vedantic message of the divinity of man, the realization of the divine as the goal of life, harmony of religious, and the unity and solidarity of humanity. His genius could make the abstract Advaita poetic, living and a matter of strengthening everyday life. What the Swami did was but a reinterpretation of the Vedanta in a contemporaneous

context. And for this, he relied more on the Upanishads and the Gita in preference to the Brahmasutra and its commentaries.

Swamiji brought the East and the West closer to each other on the platform of Vedanta. The catholicity and universality of Vedanta opened the gate to bring all people of the world together. Highlighting the wonderful idea of the sameness and omnipresence of the Soul he suggested pulling down the artificial barriers that had divided man from man, community from the community, Each religion, he asserted, was but a language to express the highest truth and men travel not from error to truth, but from truth to truth. According to Vedanta, every life was a manifestation of the divine. He gave a call to the educated young men in India to get enlightened by the message of Vedanta and to dedicate their lives to the welfare of the poor and needy. Consequently, the traditional Vedanta underwent a total rejuvenation.

Swami Vivekananda broadcast the life –giving a message of Advaita Vedanta to one and all in India and abroad. Swami Vivekananda believed that every sincere soul can try the lofty teachings of Vedanta. Even an ounce of practice would make a man both good and strong. Weakness is the only sin and strength is the medicine to free men from sin. Vedanta teaches fearlessness. It gives man strength, wisdom, happiness.

Vivekananda had observed the widening chasm between the vedantic theory of oneness and the problem of social inequality denying social justice to the weaker sections of society. ‘The Vedanta, consequently, as a religion, should be extremely sensible. We have to be ready to haul it out there in each aspect of the lives of ours. And not simply this particular, the fictitious differentiation between religion and also the lifetime of the planet should disappear, for Vedanta shows oneness. The ideals of religion have to protect the entire area of daily life, they have to enter into all our more, more, and thoughts into practice.’<sup>8</sup>

Inspired by what he had seen in his master’s life and also by his own realizations of the Vedantic truths, the Swami wanted to utilize Vedanta for the good of humanity. The expression ‘Practical Vedanta’ may mean practicable Vedanta, Vedanta in work – a-day life, application of Vedanta in life situations, practices for realizing the great truth of the Vedanta, etc. He, however, made it clear what he meant by the word practical when he said, ‘Therefore I will ask you to understand that Vedanta, though it is intensely practical, is always so in the sense of the ideal.’<sup>9</sup> To make the ideal of Vedanta practical, one must not drag the idea down to the life of passion and impulses. On the contrary, the actual should be reconciled to the ideal.

Not compassion for living beings, but service to them in the spirit of worshipping God. Not compassion to the Jiva, but serving the Jiva as Shiva. He told people around him that he had got a new light in life. He elaborated the concept on various occasions. For example, he wrote in a letter dated 3rd July 1897 to Sarat Chandra Chakraborty: “When you serve a jiva with the idea that he is a jiva, it is Daya (compassion) and not Prema (love); but when you serve him with the idea that he is the self, that is prema...for us, Advaitists, this notion of jiva as distinct from god is the cause of bondage. Our principle, therefore, should be love, and not compassion. The application of the word compassion even to jiva seems to me to be rash and vain. For us, it is not to pity but to serve. Ours is not the feeling of compassion but of love and the feeling of self in all”<sup>10</sup>

Swami Vivekananda believed that every sincere soul can try the lofty teachings of Vedanta. Even an ounce of practice would make a man both good and strong. Weakness is the only sin and strength is the medicine to free men from sin. Vedanta teaches fearlessness. It gives man strength, wisdom, happiness. "The highest Advaitism cannot be brought down to practical life. Advaitism made practical works from the plane of Vishishtadvaitism."<sup>11</sup> Swami Vivekananda says about the worship "It is feeling that is the life, the strength, the vitality, without which no amount of intellectual activity can reach God ... It is only when a feeling enters and gives them the notion that they move and work on others"<sup>12</sup>

## 2. ANALYSIS

### APPLICATION OF VEDANTA IN DAY TO DAY LIFE:

Vedanta is both a view and a way of life. It is a living philosophy and not mere speculation, for thousands of people have been shaping their lives according to its teachings. The main ideas of Vedanta are the unity of existence, non-duality of the Godhead, the divinity of the soul and harmony of religions. Vivekananda wanted twofold application of Vedanta in our practical day-to-day life - one, for awakening man's faith in himself and his own strength, and two, selfless work in the spirit of serving all men in the spirit of serving God. Swamiji says, 'Look in each male, female, then everybody as God. You cannot always help anyone. You can only serve; serve the children of the Lord, serve the Lord Himself if you have the privilege. The best parts of the Vedanta philosophy, he thinks, were not the outcome of meditation in the forests only, but were thought out and expressed by brains which were busiest in the everyday affairs of life. "The Vedanta can be carried into our everyday life, the city life, the country life, the national life, and the home life of every nation"<sup>13</sup> A religion that cannot be put into practice, that cannot help man wherever he may be, is not of much use and value. Judged by this test Vedanta will be found practical.

The specific contribution of Swami Vivekananda in the age of his is they've produced Vedanta powerful, much more beneficial in our real day to day life. Their preaching and teaching of the Brahma concept hypothetically will come very near to philosophical and scientific feelings. Simply folks just like it. Modern life is complex. It has several outstanding problems too. The Vedantic idea of the purpose and scheme of life and the different ways of realizing the goal can help in the solution of some of the problems, as a sort of by product. They can be directly applied for specific problems too. For example, in this age man has to live a life of tension. Sometimes drugs are used to bring calmness and composure to the mind. But tranquilizers are found to have only temporary efficacy. Vedanta through its philosophical tenets as well as yogic practices offers a much better substitute. For one thing, it takes away the minds of men from the conflicts of competition and hunger after pleasure by placing a non-material aim before them. For another, by its practical technique of meditation and yoga it produces mental calmness and spiritual poise.

### CONCLUSION:

Vedanta has scientific reality both as principle as well as practice. Even Scientist like Einstein has accepted the reality of Vedanta. The specific contribution of Swami Vivekananda is he projected as well as applied Vedanta, rendering it powerful, much more beneficial in our real day to day life. Their preaching and teaching of the Brahma concept hypothetically will come very near to philosophical and scientific

thoughts. It has been accepted to a great extent by the humanity across the World and the scope of further exploration is always there.

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