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The values of life as reflected in Rigveda

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Abstract-

'Veda' is the ancient religious book of Hinduism. The whole vedic literature presents enriched Cultural heritage of ancient India. All the Vedas consists of Samhitā, Brāhmana, Āraṇyakas and Upanishads. Rigveda is the oldest among them. Ṛk-means verses, Rigveda consists samhitā Brahmanā Āraṇyakas and Upanishads. Rigveda Samhitā is collection of hymns in its ten mandalas. These hymns are offered to the different Gods (deities) in such beautiful manner (Though some hymns are non religious). Through their prayers the sages gave us an important lesson about the true values of our social life, care for the mother earth, they gave us the message of peace. These all are important for us in this modern era also, when human moral values of life. Through this discussion I want to reveal this.

Keywords: Veda, rigveda, the values of life as described in rigveda, social values, care for mankind, conclusion

Introduction

Veda means knowledge, which derived from Vid dhātu, means to know. It is not such simple worldly knowledge, but the sacred knowledge handed down from generation to generation from the dawn of Indian civilization. The respected western scholar A.A Macdonell explained as -"This is indeed, implied by the term Vedic for Veda primarily signifying knowledge (from vid to know) designates sacred lore as a branch of literature. Beside this general sense, the word has also restricted meaning of sacred book"^[1].

Veda is indeed sacred religious book of Hinduism. Respected M. Winternitz also told that -"The word 'Veda' means 'Knowledge', then 'the knowledge per excellence, the sacred, the religious knowledge, It does not mean one single literary work but a whole great literature, which arose in the course of many centuries and through centuries has been handed down from generation to generation by verbal transmission"^[2] For this reason Veda known as 'Śruti', The famous Indian scholar Sāyaṇa told that "*Mantrabrāhmaṇatmaka shabdarashi Vedah*"^[3], after Samhitā and Brāhmanas Every Veda has Āraṇyaka and Upanishads. There in one thought, critics described that there are three Vedas Rig, Sām, Yajur, (trayi) in the other hand many of them considered 'Atharva' as the fourth Veda. In Upanishad literature we can find the reference of four Vedas, including Atharva^[4].

Though all the Vedas are equally significant but Rigveda and it's samhitā is considered as the oldest among them and made a high note in the history of ancient Indian literature which described by A. A. Macdonell as "The Rigveda is undoubtedly the oldest literary monument of Indo-European languages"^[5] Ṛṣis were the seeker of truth, thus known as 'Kavikratu' They were not the writers of mantras in popular belief, they were the observers of mantras in their core of heart. There is also popular traditional belief that Veda is not written by 'Puruṣa', thus the veda is not human creation. (apourēsheya) Ṛk meaning 'verse', Rigveda is the collection of one thousand twenty eight hymns in its vast ten maṇḍalas (though one thousand seventeen in opinion of śakalas) The ancient sages prayed to their Gods with beautiful hymns. Though there are few non-religious hymns also consists in this Veda. Rigveda has two Brāhmanas and Āraṇyakas named Aitareya and kaushitaki. The Upanishads of Rigveda are also Aitareya Upanishad and kaushitaki Upanishad. Indian culture always believe in the idea of goodness, always gives importance on the basic value of life, love and care for family. In our culture Lakshmi Devi, is not only the goddess of wealth she is the goddess of prosperity and goodness. Rigveda, the sacred book is not different from this ideology.

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- **Social values:** The Ṛṣis of Rigveda Always described the goodness of simple life through their sacred sacrificial hymns-

“*Sa nah pitévasūnavé,
Agné, sūpāyano bhava;
Sācasvā nah sastayé.*”^[6]

‘Agni, be with us as is a father to his son, be always present with us for our good.’

In this first hymns of Agni, the ṛṣi requested the deity Agni to be with the worshipper like the kind father to his son There is another verse –“*debānāmvabaḥ Śivaḥ sakhā*”⁷ Agni was the first Angiras sage, he was the auspicious (Śiva) friend of the deities

- **From the beginning** to the end of the Rigveda Saṃhitā, the melody of peace and goodness was enchanted.

In this hymn of the seventh maṇḍala the word ‘*Sām*’ used in the meaning of peace or auspiciousness “*Sām na Indrāgni....*”⁸ may lord Indra, Agni protect us with happiness, may Indra and Varuna give us prosperity.

The word ‘*Sām*’ is repeated in every verse of the hymn, In the third maṇḍala of Rigveda ‘*śivaṃ*’ used in the sense of auspiciousness.
The prayer of Goutama touches our heart
The sage prayed only for well-being, he had no mortal demand for wealth or livelihood^[9].
Here Sasti means welfare. Repeated use of the word made this verse beautiful too.

The worshipper prays before God that let us have only hear the good sounds With our ears, let us see with our eyes what is good, they don’t even won’t to see or listen anything that is not good

“*bhadraṃ karṇviḥ sṛnuyama devā*”^[10]

This is also a lesson for all of us. We should be proud as successors of this enriched culture with such great moral values. Our Vedas Upanishads always show us the path of truth- ‘*satyaṃ bada dharmāṃ cara*’

- **Family values:** In our Indian culture marriage is not only the tie of two people, It is a divine bonding between two families. Two people cannot start their journey without blessings of the God and elders. It is like being enlighten from the gloom of ignorance.

In the wedding hymn of tenth maṇḍala, the prayer is beautifully enchanted as-“*Earth is upheld by truth, heaven is upheld by the Sun, the Ādityas are supported by sacrifice, soma is supreme in heaven*”^[11].

In Atharva Veda we can also found a beautiful verse, where the sage prays that son should respect their parents and bride groom both should care for themselves. What a splendid idea is this!

“*anubrataḥ pituḥ putro matrā bhabatu samana*”^[12]

In the fifth maṇḍala there is a prayer, which meaning fortunate is this bride behold her give your congratulations and blessings to her.

“*Sumāngali badhurimaṃ samētā paśyata*”^[13]

- A home is not only collection of some bricks, woods etc. but true bonding with each other makes a family happy. In this modern days we can take a look back to the Vedic literature, the feeling of real bonding enchanted by the ancient seers. In another verse there is a prayer to the all god to unite the souls of the bride groom^[14].
- care for nature and mankind: The Ṛṣis always prayed for the betterment of the whole Universe. When comes to the discursion of the ‘*MadhuSukta*’ of the sage Goutama, he prayed for a beautiful world, prosperous future where everything will be beautiful. The sweetness may spread all over. This winds bring sweetness, the river may bring sweet water, may herb bring goodness to us may morning and night be sweet, may the Sun be spread brightness, may the cattle be sweet to us. The immense love for the earth reflects in the whole hymn.

“*Mādhubātā rtāyaté*

Mādhukṣharanti sindhabaḥ”^[15]

In the 6th maṇḍala– “*Madhu no dyabāprithivimikhatam.....*”^[16]

There is a prayer for all the universe may being (madhu) auspicious for us.

This is a simple prayer, but the idea is so great within. The real goal of life is to pray for everyone, never feel hatred. The real value of our life should be not only caring for our families but to save our nature from destruction. Nowadays we don’t understand the value of our nature but in the remote past the Vedic sages realized the importance of the nature. Rigveda Saṃhitā starts with the hymn of the lord ‘*Agni*’. He is the ‘*hotā*, Kavikratu with his radiant flame he cremates all the vices within us.

In the end of this saṃhitā there flows a melody of unity, piece. The message of equality touches the deep core of our heart forever.

“*Meet together, talk together, let your minds apprehend alike in like manner as the ancient gods occurring accepted portion of their sacrifice.*”

“*Saṃ gacchadhāṃ saṃ badadhamsam sam bo manamsi jantam*”^[17] The intention of all worshippers is common, their wishes are common in core of their soul, their thoughts are same also.

In the Atharvaveda there is also a hymn, where the sage made a prayer for all, he thought may everybody share foods and follow the brotherhood with everyone^[18].

They also prayed for peace for the whole Universe^[19].

These ancient seers taught us how to live life with true value, with true love for mankind. We should follow their way in this modern era also. Today we have no care for our mother earth, In the remote past they described the earth as their mother and they are the son of her. The ancient sages always show us the right path to move in the life always prays for the betterment and welfare. give us blessings for betterment.

“*yūam Pata svastiviḥ sadā na*”^[20]

Conclusion

Through this discussion we at last come to this conclusion that Rigveda tells us about the real values of life. The seers deal with high moral values, social ethics, immense love and care for mankind and for the whole Universe, which is made a high significance in ancient Indian history. In the whole

Rigveda we may learn lesson how to respect our parents, how to save our mother nature, how to care for mankind. Rigveda represents our enriched cultural heredity. We should be proud of our ancient literature and legacy.

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