



# Vedanta Philosophy in Present Era: A Discussion

Sunil Dutt

Research Scholar  
Kurukshetra University

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## ABSTRACT

Chinmayananda (2003) asserted that from time to time ancient philosophies like Vedanta needs intelligent re-interpretation to apply effectively in the context of modern times. Vedanta recommends a management approach, which focuses on exploring the inner world of the self. It begins with the manager's awareness and development of the self, as the greatness in any field is never achieved without tremendous self-realization and self-discipline (Avinashilingam, 1975).

## I. INTRODUCTION

The concept of Vedanta philosophy that the ultimate and absolute truth is the self, ... effect of enhancing the importance of learning and performing these skills to the best ... In the modern ashram schools a great deal of time is spent outdoors.

Religion is spiritual and spirituality can also be considered to be religious. There are people who are spiritual but not religious and vice versa. Spirituality is concerned with self-realization and growing into and experiencing the Divine consciousness and realization; religion on the other hand usually entails adhering to a certain dogma or belief system. For many people, spirituality and religion within the context of management at workplace have little in common. However, spirituality and religion have a great impact to workplace and there has been a tremendous growth and interest in this area lately (Arunsimha, 2008; Muniapan, 2010).

Spirituality and religion have the power to shape the management vision and their ethical and moral decision making (Muniapan & Dass, 2008). Apart from the spiritual and religious schools of thought such as Islam, Christianity, Vedanta, Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism, people are also exploring philosophy, transpersonal psychology, meditation, yoga and astrology and its relevance to their work. There has also been an increasing interest in integrating spirituality and

management as the numbers of articles on spirituality in management journals are increasing (Kale & Shrivastava, 2003 cited in Muniapan 2007). Besides, numerous conferences, articles, books, courses springing up on the subject of spirituality also confirm the explosion of interest in spirituality as new dimension of management (Howard, 2002). Abraham Maslow's "hierarchy of needs" suggests that if work helps to fulfill personal and security needs, and social needs, and self esteem need, the employee would tend to become more oriented towards self actualization needs and being (spiritual) needs (Butts, 1999 cited in Muniapan, 2007).

In the analysis of workplace spirituality, there are three most popular viewpoints of spirituality namely intrinsic-origin view, the religious view and the existentialist view. The intrinsic-origin view of spirituality argues that spirituality is a concept or principle from inside an individual. Guillory's (2000, p. 33 cited in Krishnakumar and Neck, 2002) definition falls within this perspective as he defines spirituality as "our inner consciousness" and "that which is spiritual comes from within-beyond our programmed beliefs and values". This perspective of spirituality argues that spirituality is something, which is beyond the rules of religion.

## Definition of Vedanta

: an orthodox system of Hindu philosophy developing especially in a qualified monism the speculations of the Upanishads on ultimate reality and the liberation of the soul.

## Views on Vedanta Philosophy

The religious views of spirituality are those that are specific to a particular religion. For example, the Christians believe that spirituality is the "call for work", the Hindus believe that spirituality is in doing the work with utmost devotion, the Buddhist's view hard work and devotion are the tools to modify an individual's life, Islam preaches its followers to be more committed



to their organization and encourages cooperation and consultation. Other views like Taosim and Confucianism also propose the importance on teamwork and togetherness (Krishnakumar & Neck, 2002).

Existentialist view of spirituality on the other hand according to Krishnakumar and Neck (2002) is connected to the concepts such as the search for meaning of what we are doing at workplace. Some of the existential questions, which come up are why am I doing this work, what is the meaning of the work I am doing, where does this lead me to and is there a reason for my existence and the organization's, etc.

Research suggests that the encouragement of spirituality in the workplace can lead to benefits in the areas of creativity, honesty and trust, personal fulfillment, and commitment, which will ultimately lead to increased organizational performance Krishnakumar and Neck (2002); Muniapan (2006)

Karan Singh, MP and president of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, on Thursday said: "Six cardinal concepts of Vedanta philosophy need to be understood as we are moving towards global society. Many of these concepts are becoming more and more relevant in the globalised world and they are not intimidated by science and technology."

Delivering a lecture on "The relevance of Vedanta in today's context" on the last day of D.D. Kosambi Festival of Ideas 2011 here, Dr. Singh said: "Ours is a dialogic civilisation, everything has emerged out of dialogue, no text from any prophet, which is why I think our philosophy is open to interpretation from age to age, perhaps more than any other religion."

Speaking on Vedantic relevance in the context of pluralistic India, Dr. Singh said: "We have this rich pluralistic multi-dimensional culture in India. But Vedanta Upanishads are the watermark of wisdom of world philosophy."

Dwelling on the paths of yogas, Dr. Singh opined that all the four Yogas represent an all-inclusive philosophy of life.

"Life is not just a meaningless journey from womb to doom, but an exciting opportunity for spiritual bloom," he said.

Espousing various concepts such as "Vasudaiv Kutumbaka" which considered whole world as a family, he pointed out the essence of the philosophy where despite all differences and hatred spread all around, the noble thought was "spiritual link must connect the world".

"Science and technology has given us an opportunity to become one world. But one world is

not market, because market is perhaps a naturally exploitative structure. Family is not an exploitative structure, mind you," Dr. Singh said.

"If we are to connect to the concept of Vasudaiv Kutumbaka, then we have to restructure the economy of country and world. And suggest a way through this mess of poverty," he said, and opined that it was in a way a minimum necessary input for civilised co-existence.

Dwelling on the Vedantic philosophy, he said: "We must accept Vedantic dictum of basic unity of world religions. There are multi-paths to divinity and no religion has a sole monopoly to reach the divine." In that context, he called for more movements promoting inter-faith dialogue. He said: "India is a multi-faith pluralistic country and our concept is based on Rigvedic Satya, not clash of civilizations, but confluence of civilizations."

### Values

In reply to a question, he called for introduction of concepts such as values and morals in the curriculum alongside extracts from great religions of the world to inculcate these values in the minds of children at the young age.

"Yes, it is important we introduce value system in our curriculum with extracts of great religions of world. Take these concepts and introduce with secularism. In the name of secularism what we have done is thrown the baby away with the bath water and we come to a situation where a nation based on the principle of "Satyameva Jayate" is today sinking in mire and morass of corruption," Dr. Singh said.

He said: "Whether it is religious or ideological, any type of fundamentalism is bad. It ultimately breeds disaster. So we should try and have a holistic approach on issues. The real danger is if we allow these fanatics and fundamentalism to grow, they will blow up the whole world one day," he warned.

### Reforms

In reply to a question why no reforms were introduced for Muslims while Hindu Code Bill was passed by the country post-Independence, Dr. Karan Singh said: "I think soon after partition Jawaharlal Nehru and others felt that Muslim community was already disturbed over fallout of partition and they thought let them realise the importance of reforms.

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