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## JNANA AND VIJNANA AS VEDIC KNOWLEDGE APPLICABLE TO PRACTICAL LIFE

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### Abstract

Science began its journey from the early era through the observation of natural phenomena which they analysed from the perspective of their experience and intuition. The scientific component in Vedic literature when judged in this perspective can trace the root of scientific thought pattern in that era. Vedas are taken as pramana of dharma. Here jnana in the context of Vedanta refers to knowledge of Brahman or paramatman, highest consciousness or knowledge of the individual souls, the phenomenal world and their inter relationships. Vijana can be taken to mean special knowledge of a more detailed nature or in-depth knowledge of the world and worldly matters. In this sense vijnana correspond to empirical knowledge. Science can be described as the establishing of truth or reality at an empirical level, and the rejection of what is false. The Vedas contain everything spiritual, scientific and intellectual knowledge from life and death to nature's secrets. Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha are the essence of Vedas. Moksha is considered the highest goal of human life. Moksha is impossible without acquiring the knowledge of absolute reality, and it pre supposes a thorough understanding of the worldly processes. Vedas form the basis of our philosophical knowledge. In this paper we attempt to examine the two concepts jnana and Vijnana as vedic knowledge applicable to practical life and necessary of human life.

**Key words**-Natural Phenomena, Intuition, Phenomenal world, consciousness.

### Introduction

The word Veda is derived from the word 'vide' which means knowledge. Vedas are considered as one of the oldest records of human knowledge. Vedas gives us lot of information touching various topics spiritual as well as mundane. Vedas are considered as apauruseya Vedic knowledge has been preserved through the oral traditions. There are four Vedas viz. Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda, Atharvaveda. Each Veda comprises three parts mantras, Brahmanas, and the Upanishads Vedas are the first efforts to human mind to understand the nature and solve the mystery of the world. The various schools of philosophy were emerged in India. They are classified mainly into two groups viz, Astika or Orthodox and Nastika or Heterodox. They are also classified as empiricism, rationalism and authoritarianism.

According to Vedic knowledge basically they identified two types of knowledge Jnana and Vijnana. Jnana means knowledge received through disciples' succession from the scriptures, and vijnana means practical application of such knowledge. A jnani is one who has jnana. The texts distinguish these two types of knowledge clearly. Jnana is spiritual knowledge or the knowledge of self-gained from observation and experience. Vijnana is also translated in some contexts as the discovering power or the ability to distinguish the dualities or pairs of opposites. The word vijnana means consciousness according to Vedanta. It also means supra-consciousness. Brahman is that vijnana. The three concepts of Vedanta namely, Atman (individual soul), Brahman (universal soul) and vijnana (consciousness) are one the same. For example, the Mundaka and Chandogya Upanishads declare: "All this is Brahman," "There is no diversity here. He who perceives diversity here goes from death to death". Thus, to say all this is Brahman or amounts to saying that all this is vijnana. In other words, all this is vivarta (illusory manifestation) or parinama (transformation) of Brahman or vijnana<sup>1</sup>.

When the modern science began to develop along its own lines, the earlier scientist believed that science would reveal the true and absolute nature of the universe. Indian Philosophy had its starts in an inquiry about the nature of man himself, and the nature of the universe is known only as a part of the understanding of man's own nature. It is man that



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knows and the knowledge depends on a knowledge of the knowing man. Man is both the agent and the object of philosophical inquiry. In India, on the contrary barring the materialistic school and some thinkers belonging to it, no one has entertained materialistic hypothesis. Either there is dualistic position or spiritualistic monism. There is a predominance of spiritualistic stance which is the key note of Indian culture. A clear distinction is drawn between empirical and transcendental forms of reality. In a dualistic framework the distinction is between living and non-living but the empirical state the two are experienced to be conjoined. The doctrine of man's supremacy in the world, starting in the Vedas, continued uninterrupted in the channels of thought in India until very recent times.

### 1.Knowledge in Indian Tradition

In western philosophy truth and falsity are usually ascribed to statements, propositions, or beliefs. In the Indian tradition truth and falsity are ascribed to a cognition or an awareness. The most common term jnana, but there are a relatively large number of synonyms, or quasi synonyms, such as vijnana. The word jnana is derived from the root jna, which is etymologically related to the English word know. The rendering of jnana as knowledge is generally avoided because jnana can be true or false, whereas false knowledge. Knowledge in general as referring to an organized body of knowledge, or even a science, is usually called veda or vidya. When the word veda is mentioned without further qualification, it always refers to the four collections of texts known as Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda, Atharvaveda. These contain the knowledge, the knowledge par excellence. The vedas are the primary scriptures of Brahmanism and Hinduism. According to Brahmanical orthodoxy they are neither of human nor Godly origin, for they are eternal and infallible. The text of the vedas was revealed (not created) by omniscient Gods such as Brahma, or directly heard by inspired seers (Rishis) of old. Various enumerations and classifications of systematic knowledge or sciences have been transmitted; perhaps the most common ones refer to fourteen or eighteen locations of knowledge (vidyashtana). The four Vedas and the six auxiliary sciences to the vedic texts. (The sciences of articulation or phonology, prosody, grammar, etymology, astronomy/astrology and ritual/ceremony) religious and social law. (dharmastra), collection of ancient myths (purana), hermeneutics (Mimamsa), and dialectics (tarka): the eighteenfold enumeration adds medicine (ayurveda) archery or the science of weapons in general (dhanurveda), and arthashastra which include politics and economy.

Science itself is primordial it is not accumulative and can only decrease with time. In Buddhist texts (both in India and Tibet) one encounters a list of five places or locations of knowledge. (vidyasthanas) that are to be cultivated by the Bodhisattva on his own way to enlightenment. The first of these, the inner science or the own science (adhyatnavada) is specific to Buddhists, the other four, the science of logical reasons, grammar, medicine and art and crafts are external and considered common to Buddhist and non-Buddhists.<sup>2</sup> The status of the science of reasons, that is philosophy, dialectics/logic was ambiguous. Its position following the inner science clearly implies that it is an external (or non-Buddhist) science, it was sometimes considered to be part of the Buddhist teachings.

The relationship between jnana and soul is the relationship between quality and substance. It is the same relation that occurs between the colour and the material substance like a pot in which it inheres. In contrast, the Buddhists reject the idea of substance in general and of a permanent soul or self in particular. According to them an awareness (jnana) is primitive (non-derivative) element of existence (dharma) that depends only on its cause and conditions. The Samkhya and Yoga are unique in the Brahmanical traditions in calming that the cognitive and psychological process occur in the realm of matter and have no direct contact with the conscious soul, which is distinct from them and completely passive.<sup>3</sup>

According to the materialists, an awareness, or consciousness, arises from the combination of the material elements earth, water, fire and wind when they evolve into body, sense, and object, just as the power of intoxication rises when certain substance.....<sup>4</sup>



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## 2.Vedic knowledge

Indian Philosophy is essentially spiritual. Philosophy and religion are intimately connected with each other in India. Religion is not a system of dogmas, but a living experience. It is a practical realization of the spiritual truth. Philosophy is the theory of Reality. It is an insight into the nature of Reality, which leads to liberation. Indian philosophy is not idle theorizing which means vision of the Reality as a whole. It is an insight into the nature of the whole reality. The word Darshana is derived from the Sanskrit root 'Dris' which means to see. So Darshana means that through the instrumentality of which something is to be seen. The term Darshana used in the temporal and the spiritual senses. The word Darshana means vision and also the instrument of vision. It stands for direct immediate and intuitive vision of reality, the actual perception of truth and also includes the means which lead to this realization.

The most ancient Indian philosophy contained in the four Vedas-Rig Veda, Yajurveda, Samaveda and Atharva Veda. The Sanskrit word Veda "knowledge wisdom" is derived from the proto-Indo. European root Eid, meaning "see" or "know". The Vedas are a large body of texts originating in ancient India. The Vedas are apauruseya. Each Veda has four parts-Samhita, Brahmanas, Aranyakas, and Upanishads. The Upanishads recognised that the fruits of rituals are of an impermanent nature and that permanent fruits can be obtained only from a realization through knowledge. This is also the Vedic principle found in the earlier stages of the development of Vedic thought. The Vedas refer to the main literature and knowledge of ancient India, and its philosophical sections are called the Upanishads. The philosophy of Upanishads is known as Vedanta, and as the implications of this philosophy are the underlying principle of all the factors that comprise a Vedic life. The main purpose of Vedas is to find the ultimate goal of life self-realization through Karma so that it is not meant for the creation of armchair speculators but for the formation of character as the power to analyse existing materials, prakriti (nature) and purusha (supreme power) in the proper perspective. The mind is the friend of the conditioned soul, his/her energy as well <sup>5</sup>.

Knowledge of the truth or Reality is an integral part of Dharma. If not an integral part, it is an essential principle without which Dharma cannot remain complete. Hence Dharma is not merely an external practice or show but it is a sacred code of conduct or performance or accomplishment which is closely linked with the knowledge of truth. The development of the knowledge of the self to its fullest extent means acquiring knowledge of the fundamental nature of the self which leads to the emancipation of the self. It is only after emancipation of the self that the paramatma can be attained. The practice of Dharma, the striving for the knowledge of the truth, the emancipation of the self, and the final attainment of the paramatma are all possible only in the Bhartiya or Indian Darshanas and the Truths expounds therein.

The Indian Darshanas contain answers to many such profound questions. The search for the "I" (the Atma or the Self) is but the search for the paramatma. What is the nature of the relationship between the material world and the Atma and the Paramatma. All such doubts have been clarified through the Darshanas. Our Rishis were not only great scholars but also constantly strived for perfection in actual price. The science of the material world dealt with many things therein which can be obtained after a thorough search. The science of the material world, the science of the self and the Paramatma have been clearly explained in these Darshanas.

The Hindu systems of knowledge of Truth or Reality are not just a matter of traditional reverence of blind faith. It is the end product of most advanced and lofty thinking, and a unique special science. The Darshanas contain the fundamental values of Santana Dharma or the Ancient eternal code of conduct. The Rishis and Acharyas who created all these Darshanas did so out of their actual first-hand experience of these Truths. All the Darshanas are based on the Vedas. The repeated application in real life of the Vedas. The repeated application in real life of the teachings of the Darshanas facilitates the eventual understanding of the Vedas with relative ease. The Hindu culture based on the first Mandala of the Rig-Veda the most ancient sacred text of the human history which influenced and inspired human thought in all corners of the world. Thus, the foundation of noble Hindu culture is enshrined in Vedas especially in the Upanishads which are called Vedanta, the end of the Vedas as the account of their representing the essence of the vedas. The Rahasya (secret) of vedic Jnana or Brahma Vidya is the ultimate reality of the universe (Totality of All Things) which can be experienced through sense-



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organse (perception), reason (conception) and are more directly by transcendental knowledge. Goal of life prescribed in the Upanishads is to escape his/her deficiency by struggling life with ethics (Dharma), artha (security). Kama (pleasure) and Moksha (liberation) that is also known as purushartha.<sup>6</sup>

In the land of Barath (India), there are different traditions of religion and philosophy handed down in regular succession. The exposition and interpretation of all the Darshanas are different from one another they have a common goal which is to acquire knowledge of highest truth and to attain supreme bliss. All the Darshanas have their own separate code of conduct and propriety. The scientific theory of creation presented by the Vedas is undoubtedly the oldest in the world. The injunctions of the Vedas are to be admitted as duty for the sake of duty, because they are based on discoveries of eternal truths and it would be impossible to explain to every individual their scientific significance and their intuitive import. The purpose of science, as that of philosophy, is only to know, and there is no further purpose in such knowledge. But science is gradually giving up its position that through science man can understand the true nature of the world. The absolute nature of the universe has ceased to be the business of the scientists.

### 3.Vedas As Basis for Science

The vedas cover all fields of knowledge both material and spiritual. The vedas constitute the principal source of ancient wisdom and the upavedas and Upanishads are an integral part of the vedic texts. The Upanishads are of philosophical nature and it is actually the upavedas that contain information which could be regarded as forming the basis for modern science. The vedas and its concepts of science have always been linked to spirituality and this happens to be one of the reasons for their lack of recognition. The vedas have science as integral part of the religion and the ascetics and seers who have contributed were tireless seekers of knowledge and wisdom. Their pursuit of knowledge was very much akin to those of modern discoveries have been referred to the in the vedas and these are not mere literary concepts but proof is available for their existence. The vedic concepts as the basis of science of India would be useful to examine its impact modern science. scientists confine themselves to the sphere that can come within their observations and what such observations can naturally yield as legitimate conclusions. The scientists see only the surface, and science may never reveal what is behind the surface and below it.

Vijnana is not opposed to jnana but is necessary for practical life, which depends upon the recognition of the manyness and the relativity of the spatio-temporal order, similarly karma, which is the very basis of the physico mental and intellectual life of differentiation is not opposed to jnana or the knowledge of unity of the self. But it should be remembered that just as the recognition of the basic unity of unavoidable for the successful conduct of life. This is the pragmatic and realistic attitude towards life is the key note of the ethical and activistic philosophy of Mimamsa.

### 4. Vedic Science and the pursuit of Truth

Real science consists of an objective pursuit of truth through observation and experimentation. It occurs apart from any beliefs or preconceptions about what it is going to find. It is based upon reason and direct perception, in which the reality is allowed to reveal itself to the unbiased observer. The universe we live in is a multidimensional reality from the subatomic to the supra galactic in the realm of physics alone. Biology, medicine, psychology and the social sciences require different perspectives and approaches to deal with appropriately. Besides any knowledge of the external world is the knowledge of the internal world, the perennial quest for self- knowledge or knowledge of our true nature, as evidenced by the most primary and important of all life's many questions. "Who am I". This inner quest or inner science can be very different in approach than the outer sciences.

From an Indian perspective. we can call this inner science of self-knowledge, 'yogic science'. Traditional yoga and Vedanta also have its goal as the objective pursuit of truth. But it aims at the supreme truth which is the eternal-that truth which is the eternal that truth which never changes. It regards relative truths-up to and including the very existence of the



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external world itself-as ultimately an illusion because these eventually, at one time or level or another, are found not to be valid. This yogic science aims not just at the knowledge of the world but an understanding of knower.

## 5.Science and Spirituality in India

In India, science and spirituality have always gone together. Experiential spirituality through yoga and Vedanta has always been conceived of as a science, a way of knowledge to be approached with reason and experimentation through yoga and meditation leading to the direct perception of truth. The vedas address all aspects of existence through Dharma, the natural laws that uphold the universe, which reflect not only matter and energy but life, mind and consciousness. As such, the vedas constitute what could be called a science in the modern sense of the word and much more. We can find among the vedic sciences from astronomy and chemistry to psychology and surgery, extending to astrology and to the science of yoga itself. We can call this integral approach to both the spiritual and material sciences as ‘vedic science’.

In the vedic view, one can approach the outer sciences with an inner vision and turn them into inner sciences as well. In this way the outer science can become inner sciences. It remains possible to approach such outer sciences as physics as spiritual paths or paths of yoga. They can be part of an inner science of Self-realization if one uses them to connect to the universal Being and consciousness within the world and within ourselves. Much of modern physics is heading in this direction as it looks for an underlying consciousness to explain the underlying unity of the laws of physics.

## 6. Means of Knowledge

Science rests upon a definition of what constitutes the right means of knowledge through which something can be known. Science, like the classical philosophies of India, recognizes the validity of sensory perception and reason as the main means at our ordinary disposal for gaining authentic knowledge about the world and about ourselves. Science is not content with what the senses present us as reality, any more than the mystic or yogi is, though science builds upon rather than rejects what the senses show. Science has created a vast array of special instruments and equipment from microscopes and telescopes that can greatly increase the range of our physical senses. It has added other instruments like radio telescopes which bring in information about the universe from means that are related to but outside the scope of our ordinary senses. It has created special computers to extend the range of computation as well. Vedic science recognizes the importance of sensory perception and reason, it considers that there is another, more reliable and internal source of knowledge, particularly necessary for understanding the inner or spiritual world. This is the direct perception of the silent or meditative mind, the state of samadhi.

Meditative mind as the best instrument of science. Vedic thought holds that the best instrument of knowledge is the silent mind. This allows the mind itself, like an unflawed mirror, to directly reflect reality inside oneself. The mind becomes a reliable instrument of direct knowledge beyond the limitations of the senses. This silent mind is clearly defined in the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali and other texts as the state of samadhi. When the mind is in a state of peace and balance it becomes capable of directly perceiving the nature of things, which is consciousness and bliss. This is samadhi -pramana, samadhi as a means of knowledge in yogic thought, which opens up the inner world of the mind as clearly as our eyes open up the outer world of the senses. In Vedic science, the meditative mind in samadhi is regarded as the appropriate instrument for knowing the inner reality. Pure consciousness, God or Brahman, after all, is beyond name, form, number, time, place and a person or it would just be another object or entity in the outer world. That which comprises the totality but is not limited by the totality cannot be examined by the instruments that work to provide knowledge of limited things. The traditional Hindu Philosophers have declared long ago that consciousness is not visible as it is a subjective reality one has to resort meditation and introspection for realizing that subjective reality <sup>7</sup>.

Modern science and vedic science also differ in their view of the universe. In vedic science the universe is a manifestation of consciousness. It is pervaded by consciousness as a universal power. This universal consciousness is



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different than the embodied consciousness in living beings, though it is related to it. In modern science, consciousness has been mainly limited to living organisms and identified mainly by the development and functioning of the brain. Modern science has begun to look for and many scientists recognise such a universal consciousness extending into a life intelligence in all organisms or even a planetary intelligence in the Earth itself. So, we gain a greater understanding of the conscious universe, the approaches of yogic and Vedic science are bound to become more relevant.

Vedic science does not recognise just a background universal consciousness, but a cosmic intelligence and a universal life force to explain how that absolute consciousness is connected to the world of our ordinary experience. It posits God as the universal creator as the supreme intelligence behind the universe and pervading it, not as a mere article of faith or belief. In this way religion can be integrated into a spiritual science as well. The outer or material science has its value in helping us to understand and utilize the forces of the outer world. It gives us better technology which can make our lives easier. When it comes to the inner world, scientific knowledge is often either indirect or misleading. For the inner knowledge, we need to cultivate the yogic sciences with their understanding not only of the physical universe but of the subtle forces behind the senses and of our true nature beyond time and space. The field of yogic science is vast. It includes practices like asana, pranayama, ritual, mantra and meditation. It can reveal knowledge not only of our ordinary body and mind, but of all aspects of the collective and cosmic minds, extending to the very processes of creation. Yoga contains special ways of knowledge relative to the body, mind, prana, senses and consciousness internally and to the powers of energy, light, matter and space externally.

## Conclusion

Once we recognize the place and value of both the outer and inner sciences, we can learn to use both to improve our lives on all levels. The ultimate unity of science and spirituality can provide a light forward to a true global age of peace and harmony. In such a world the inner technologies of yoga will be found to be as important as the latest advances in technology.

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