

## Vedic Science: A credible Science or merely a belief?

In 18<sup>th</sup> century when the British's East India Company just tasted success in conquest of India, the British Government passed a resolution in the Parliament deciding to take over the conquest and governance of the captured India directly through the Britain's royal palace under Queen Victoria. They then decided to send a representative from British Parliament to study the culture and society of India who could thereby propose an effective strategy to successfully conquer the Indians. Lord Macaulay was appointed to take up this mission, and subsequently he visited India and travelled extensively for next four years.

After he went back to England, in his speech in the British Parliament he said, *"I have travelled across the length and breadth of India and I have not seen one person who is a beggar, who is a thief. Such wealth I have seen in this country, such high moral values, people of such caliber, that I do not think we would ever conquer this country, unless we break the very backbone of this nation, which is her spiritual and cultural heritage, and therefore, I propose that we replace her old and ancient education system, her culture, for if the Indians think that all that is foreign and English is good and greater than their own, they will lose their self-esteem, their native culture and they will become what we want them, a truly dominated nation."*

As a result of this, a systematic strategy evolved to introduce Victorian system of education and the result of this is still evident among us. Our education system is still in the lines of Victorian education, where the Indians are systematically brainwashed to assume that our very own Vedic literatures are unscientific mythologies! The word 'mythology' was introduced to translate Vedic writings deliberately by the scholar Max Mueller, intentionally to undermine the importance of Vedas! The word Veda actually means 'knowledge'.

Let us consider actually what Vedic science can and does offer which prove that it is scientific:

## **The Glory of the Vedic Literature**

When Europeans first came across Vedic culture and literature, they were filled with amazement and admiration. Here are a few quotes of the early European scholars:

German philosopher Johann Gottfried von Herder said, "The brahmins(the spiritual intelligentsia of India) have wonderful wisdom and strength to form their people in great degrees of gentleness, courtesy, temperance, and chastity. They have so effectively established their people in these virtues that in comparison, Europeans frequently appear as beastly, drunken or mad."

The Prussian minister of education, Wilhelm Von Humboldt, began published an extensive study of the Bhagavad-gita. He described the Bhagavad-gita as "the deepest and loftiest thing the world has to show."

The philosopher Georg Hegel compared the discovery of Sanskrit to the beholding of a new continent. He further eulogized the Indian subcontinent as the "starting-point for the whole Western world."

Another famous German philosopher, Arthur Schopenhauer, became completely enchanted by the Upanishads. Upon reading a translation into Latin, he called them "The production of the highest human wisdom" Considering the Upanishads to contain almost superhuman conceptions, Schopenhauer said , "It is the most satisfying and elevated reading which is possible in the world; it has been solace in life and will be the solace of my death."

Frenchman Voltaire, the quintessential Enlightenment thinker, became fascinated with Vedic culture. In 1775 he asserted. "I am convinced that everything has come down to us from the banks of the Ganges: astronomy, astrology, metempsychosis, etc."

Jules Michelet, the French historian known for his spirited seventeen-volume *Histoire de France*, felt certain that India was "the womb of the world."

That time-honored Vedic wisdom is even today available to us through visionary spiritual leaders like Srila Prabhupada, the founder of ISKCON, who have explained through their writings how these principles can empower us even in contemporary times. For our modern times, Srila Prabhupada envisioned an East-West synthesis; spreading Indian spiritual wisdom with Western material technology. He compared the coming together of Vedic spirituality and modern technology to the coming together of the proverbial blind man and the lame man. But for this synthesis to take place, the technologically advanced West has to recognize that it is lacking in spiritual vision. And the financially-crippled India has to shed its deeply-ingrained inferiority complex arising from material poverty and recognize its wealth of spiritual knowledge. If we acknowledge our respective endowments and deficiencies, we can become pioneers in bringing about an international spiritual revival. In our sadly misled modern world, this may be the only hope to usher in a new era of harmony and happiness. Are we ready?

---

## Straight from the Scientists and Sages

---

As we saw, Vedic literatures are not random baseless ramblings of an amalgamated set of tribes who migrated to India a few centuries ago, but are compilations of wise, self-realized souls of the great Vedic culture. These sages formed the intelligentsia of Vedic society and were held in the same esteem as modern scientists. The difference, however, was that these sages acted as transparent mediums to understand, assimilate and transmit perfect knowledge of the *Vedas*, while modern scientists themselves are groping in the dark for perfect and complete knowledge.

The following table contains a comparative study of the knowledge acquired through the scientific and Vedic systems. Quotes from authorities in the respective fields i.e. the scientists and the sages respectively, have been used to create the study. In the space provided below each quote, write down in your own words what you understand from the quote. At the end of the study, write down your conclusions about both the systems of knowledge after a class discussion.

| Point of Comparative Study             | What scientists say about modern science  | What sages say about Vedic knowledge   |
|--|---|--|
| What kind of phenomenon does it study? | <p>"...Science casts the spotlight which it uses to search for knowledge very selectively; in other words, what scientists choose to look at, to try to explain in scientific terms, is rather restricted, rather biased. And the content of science is biased in a materialistic direction. This applies to almost all the sciences, the physical sciences as well as the biological sciences.</p> <p>The reason is largely due to the fact that it is easier to study quantitatively the behaviour of matter and the grosser aspects of behaviour (both animal and human) than it is to study higher human behaviour where the influence of God might be significant."</p> <p><i>(B. D. Josephson, Nobel Laureate in Physics)</i></p> <p><b>My Understanding:</b></p> | <p>"Complete knowledge includes knowledge of the phenomenal world and the spirit behind it. "</p> <p><i>(Bhagavad-gītā 7.2, Purport)</i></p> |

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
|   | <hr/> <hr/>   | <p><b>My Understanding:</b></p> <hr/> <hr/>   |
| <p><b>How is knowledge acquired in this system?</b></p> | <p>“Equipped with his five senses, man explores the universe around him and calls the adventure Science.”</p> <p><i>(Edwin Powell Hubble in ‘The Nature of Science’)</i></p> <p>“Every great advance in science has issued from a new audacity of imagination.”</p> <p><i>(John Dewey in ‘The Quest for Certainty’)</i></p> <p><b>My Understanding:</b></p> <hr/> <hr/> | <p>“The Vedic system of acquiring knowledge is the deductive process. The Vedic knowledge is received perfectly by disciplic succession from authorities.”</p> <p><i>(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.9.18, Purport)</i></p> <p>“The Vedic knowledge is authorized and is acquired not by experiment but by authentic statements of the Vedic literatures explained by bona fide authorities. Simply by becoming an academic scholar one cannot understand the Vedic statements; one has to approach the real authority who has received the Vedic knowledge by disciplic</p> |

|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
|  |  | <p>succession, as clearly explained in the <i>Bhagavad-gītā</i> (4.2)."</p> <p>(<i>Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam</i> 2.2.27, Purport)</p> <p><b>My Understanding:</b></p> <hr/> <hr/>   |
| <p><b>How perfect and complete is the knowledge?</b></p> | <p>"We and our models are both part of the universe we are describing. ... One might therefore expect it (any physical theory) to be either inconsistent or incomplete. The theories we have so far are both inconsistent and incomplete."<br/>(<i>Stephen Hawking, theoretical physicist (currently holds Newton's chair at Cambridge)</i>)</p> <p><b>My Understanding:</b></p> <hr/> <hr/> | <p>"All Vedic knowledge is perfect because it is received directly from God by the <i>paramparā</i>, disciplic succession."</p> <p>(<i>Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam</i> 4.26.7, Purport)</p> <p>"Vedic knowledge is complete because it is above all doubts and mistakes, and <i>Bhagavad-gītā</i> is the essence of all Vedic knowledge."</p> <p>(<i>Bhagavad-gītā</i>, Introduction)</p> <p><b>My Understanding:</b></p> <hr/> <hr/> |

| <p><b>Is the knowledge subject to any deficiencies/ shortcomings?</b></p> |  | <p>“Vedic knowledge is infallible because it comes down through the perfect disciplic succession of spiritual masters, beginning with the Lord Himself. Since He spoke the first word of Vedic knowledge, the source of this knowledge is transcendental. The words spoken by the Lord are called <i>apauruṣeya</i>, which indicates that they are not delivered by any mundane person.”</p> <p><i>(Śrī Īśopaniṣad, Mantra 1, Purport)</i></p> <p>“The knowledge of the <i>Vedas</i> is knowledge received directly from God, and there is consequently no question of illusion, cheating, mistakes or imperfect senses.”</p> <p><i>(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 4.26.7, Purport)</i></p> <p>“We accept Kṛṣṇa as our <i>guru</i>. If He is perfect in knowledge, our knowledge is also perfect. As far as we’re concerned, we do not have to be perfect in ourselves, but if we receive knowledge from the perfect, our knowledge is perfect.”</p> <p><i>(Science of Self Realization,</i></p> |
|---|--|--|

*Chapter 6g: The Tiny World  
of Modern Science)*

**My Understanding:**

---

---

## Vedic Synthesis

India is renowned globally as the land of profound and peerless spiritual wisdom. Here are a few quotes of eminent Western thinkers:

1. "Whenever I have read any part of the Vedas, I have felt that some unearthly and unknown light illuminated me. In the great teaching of the Vedas, there is no touch of sectarianism. It is of all ages, climes, and nationalities and is the royal road for the attainment of the Great Knowledge." -*Thoreau (American Thinker)*
2. "The marvel of the Bhagavad-Gita is its truly beautiful revelation of life's wisdom which enables philosophy to blossom into religion." -*Herman Hesse (1877-1962), German poet and novelist, awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1946.*
3. "In the great book of India, the Bhagavad-gita, an empire spoke to us, nothing small or unworthy, but large, serene consistent, the voice of an old intelligence, which in another age and climate had pondered and thus disposed of the questions that exercise us." -*Ralph Waldo Emerson Eminent American Thinker*



Lesser known are the accomplishments and contributions of Vedic India to the field of science. Here are a few quotes from famous Western scientists acknowledging the scientific glory of Vedic India:

4. "We owe a lot to the Indians, who taught us how to count, without which no worthwhile scientific discovery could have been made." - *Albert Einstein*
5. "After the conversations about Indian philosophy, some of the ideas of Quantum Physics that had seemed so crazy suddenly made much more sense" -*Noble Laureate W. Heisenberg, pioneer of quantum physics*
6. "The Vedanta and the Sankhya hold the key to the laws of mind and thought process which are co-related to the Quantum Field, i.e. the operation and distribution of particles at atomic and molecular levels." - *Prof. Brian David Josephson (1940 - ) Welsh physicist, the youngest Nobel Laureate*



1. the grandeur of this achievement the more when we remember that it escaped the genius of Archimedes and Appollnius, two of the greatest men produced by antiquity.” -*Pierre Simon de Laplace, French mathematician, philosopher, and astronomer.*

Whether Vedic science equals - and sometimes even surpasses - the sophistication of modern science is a debatable subject, but what is beyond debate and what makes Vedic science truly unique is its highly theistic approach. And this is why Vedic science becomes crucially important for modern humanity – because it has the potential to bridge the yawning chasm that separates science and spirituality today. Indeed, by uniting reason and faith in a higher-dimensional paradigm, it can heal the wound that has torn the human brain and the human heart far apart.

In the Vedic paradigm, science had a spiritual purpose. This is vividly stated in the Srimad Bhagavatam (1.5.22) “Learned circles have positively concluded that the infallible purpose of the advancement of knowledge, namely austerities, study of the Vedas, sacrifice, chanting of hymns and charity, culminates in the transcendental descriptions of the Lord, who is defined in choice poetry.” In his purport to this, eminent Vedic scholar Srila Prabhupada, founder of ISKCON, states: “Science and philosophy also should be applied in the service of the Lord. There is no use presenting dry speculative theories for sense gratification. Philosophy and science should be engaged to establish the glory of the Lord. Advanced people are eager to understand the Absolute Truth through the medium of science, and therefore a great scientist should endeavor to prove the existence of the Lord on a scientific basis.”