



Vedic Philosophy and Globalization: A Civilizational Dialogue

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ARTICLE INFO		ABSTRACT
Paper ID	The link between Vedic philosophy and globalization is examined here in the context of civilizational discourse. Though globalization is facilitating the economic, political, and cultural integration of the world, it is also raising profound issues of identity, values, and ethics. Vedic philosophy is very much a concept that offers a unique paradigm to re-conceptualize globalization rather than a material reality — as an integral part of spiritual and cultural convergence — which is encapsulated in eternal principles of spirituality like <i>Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam</i> (the world is one family), <i>Dharma</i> (cosmic duty), and <i>Rta</i> (cosmic order). This study explores how Vedic philosophy can play an important role in rewiring globalization as a fairer and more moral way to ensure more sustainable paths forward, leading to intercultural dialogue, world harmony, and environmental equilibrium.	
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Introduction

The well-known sociologist Giddens notes that “Modernity is inherently globalizing in its tendency” (22). Globalization has usually been conceptualized as the intensification of global social relations, in which local conditions are increasingly affected by transnational flows of information, capital, technology, and culture. While their economic and technological facets are much more clearly identified, globalization also raises profound cultural, ethical, and philosophical questions about how various civilizations perceive and engage with global

connectivity. It prompts questions of epistemic hegemony and cultural homogenization, and of the tension between localities and global imagination. (Giddens 23) Against this multifaceted landscape, the Vedic tradition — among the globe's oldest and richest knowledge systems — presents an engaging frame with which to approach globalization outside its pragmatic borders. Vedic ideology holds the cosmic view. It considers every human being a citizen of Earth. It doesn't deal with narrow divisions of ethnicity, nationality, or religion. The Vedic concept

of “*Vasudhaiv kutumbkam*” propagates that all humans on Earth form one family. another concept of Lok-samgraha teaches us the lessons in empathy. Thus, it propagates a vision that promotes global unity and oneness. Despite its focus on unity, it does not deny diversity. This is astonishing in the sense in which ideology celebrates unity in diversity. This is a unique approach that is not traceable in any other school of thought across the world. In today's world, where materialism has become dominant, such a perspective appears to be a refreshing breeze of hope for humanity. This paper invites scholars, policymakers, and all stakeholders to make a connection with the ancient philosophical perspectives to seek answers to the complicated questions of today.

Concepts of Vedic Philosophy and Globalization

Vedic philosophy encourages a deep appreciation for the interconnectedness of all existence. This idea is articulated in the beautiful Vedic maxim “*ekam sat viprā bahudhā vadanti.*” *Rgveda*. One such maxim is the following of the Vedic philosophical approach: “The cosmos” is “the Vedic vision,” says Eliade. He goes on to explain that “In the Vedic vision, the sacred and the cosmic are inseparable.” It is the ethics that serve to guard individual and collective life. It is situational and dynamic, adaptive to time, place, and condition, but forever guided by the principle of harmony. Radhakrishnan says, “The heart and soul of Dharma resides in the unity among man, nature, and the cosmic will” (90). *Rta* is older than *Dharma* in Vedic texts. All things considered, *Rta* represents the natural and moral order of the universe. *Rta* means that, in a natural universe, we live in harmony with it, and the soul has a calm mind through harmony and success in life. That is, the ideal of *Rta* gives spiritual

grounding to *Dharma*; it shapes the ethical and ritual-level life of mankind. As Frawley notes, “*Rta* corresponds to the Vedic belief in an ordered cosmos supported by truth and sacrifice” (51). The fundamental doctrine of Vedic cosmology is Brahman, the absolute, infinite nature of reality, on which all existence is built. Unlike the Abrahamic understanding of the concept of God as personal creator, *Brahman* is impersonal, formless, and all-encompassing. “*ahaṁ brahmāsmi*” (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upanishad* 1.4.10) - The highest hope of life (Liberation or Soteric Awareness) (aka knowledge); The deepest goal of life is liberation and being one with Brahman, and is known as *Moksha*. Sivananda observes, “Brahman is the eternal truth and the source of all existence” (104). Panikkar further develops this idea as he explains, “The Vedic cosmology is not dualistic but dialogical; it confirms relationship more than it disengages” (118). Vedic life is also centered on *yajña*, or sacrificial ritual. It symbolizes self-donor, interdependence, and cosmic balance. *Yajña* was not only a fire ceremony but also the portrayal of upholding the cosmic order by virtue, beneficence, and gratitude. From a wider philosophical standpoint, life itself is envisioned as an ongoing *yajña*—a continuous cycle of offering and receiving. The other outstanding characteristics of Vedic philosophy are *Atman* (individual soul), *Karma* (law of action and effect), and *Samsara* (reincarnation). These concepts are carefully elaborated in the Upanishads, which in fact are the philosophical explications of the Vedas. Vedic philosophy is not particular to a religion, but it espouses a universal philosophical foundation. It preserves harmony between self and society, between humanity and nature, and between the finite and infinite. In the current era of pseudo-modernism that

has led to alienation and many divisions, Vedic wisdom gives an ageless model of oneness, human ethics, and inner change. Globalization can be characterized as a multifaceted and accelerating phenomenon of international integration, marked by increasingly unconstrained movements of capital, information, commodities, and populations across national boundaries. It is fueled by many driving forces, mainly economic liberalization that has produced fewer trade barriers and formed global markets, and breathtaking technological innovation, notably in communications and transportation, which connects remote localities intensely to each other. The deepening of global social relations ensures that events at the local level are increasingly influenced by what takes place thousands of miles away, forming a highly interdependent global fabric. (Giddens 45-46) Sen argues, “Globalization is not a monolithic force—it has its victims and beneficiaries, and both must be heard” (64). Globalization has really been a pretty big deal. It has opened up some awesome doors for making money, learning about cultures, and getting our hands on the latest tech. But it’s not all just fun and games. It has also brought along a bunch of tricky problems and hurdles that we just can’t pretend aren’t there anymore. Undoubtedly, globalization has brought a boom in the flow of money, but the distribution of wealth has never been equal and uniform. Developed countries and multinational companies became more and more prosperous, while the rift between the rich and the poor became wider. In developed countries, the trend of outsourcing offered jobs to many remotely, but caused an increase in local unemployment. Another major crisis, which is much discussed, is that of cultural homogenization. It stands for a phenomenon of dominance of global

norms and practices, which result in diminishing indigenous traits and traditions. As a result, people feel and sense a loss of their identities. In this connection, Balasubramanian rightly observes, “The crisis of modern globalization is not of resources, but of values, for it has lost sight of the integral nature of human existence” (77). Environmental degradation and climate change are other prominent challenges that are haunting us today. It is a direct consequence of the adoption of the globalized economic model. This model has intensified industrial production, which requires high transportation. All this development has resulted in the forest station and the degradation of natural resources. In some instances, these issues are exacerbated by a ‘race to the bottom’ in environmental standards, as countries lower regulations to attract foreign investment (Krishna 67). Krishna further remarks, “Humanity’s imbalance with nature is not a failure of science but a failure of consciousness” (98). Addressing these ecological crises requires a collective, moral approach that traditional or localized solutions alone cannot provide. These deep and often contradictory challenges highlight a pressing need for alternative pathways and models. The current paradigm, often characterized as materialistic and fiercely competitive, fails to prioritize the well-being of both humanity and nature.

Vedic Philosophy as a Global Ethical Paradigm

The vibrant and timeless principles of Vedic philosophy make the most compelling argument for a different conception of globalization, refashioning it as an ethical, equitable, and sustainable process from the present materialistic, exploitative one. It offers a moral framework that is above national identities and temporary economic interests and centers on

universal values and long-term well-being. (Ghosh 223) At the heart of this thinking is the Vedic idea of “*vasudhaiva kutumbakam*”—seeing the whole world as one family. (*Mahopanishad* 6.71) This directly challenges the competitive and often exploitative dynamics of contemporary global capitalism. Rather than seeking national or individual gain, it speaks of a vision of global oneness based on collaboration, common good, and a profound sense of spiritual brotherhood of all things. Ghosh observes that “*vasudhaiva kutumbakam* is not mere idealism but a call for ethical global citizenship” (230). Under this framework, globalization will cease to be a means for exploitation but a powerful means for shared enrichment, creating a shared prosperity and harmonious coexistence among various cultures and nations. It implies a transition from a contractual relationship to a family relationship in which the health of every global family member is inextricably entwined with that of all the rest. The Dharma also provides a robust moral and ethical standard for individuals and institutions that operate in the globalized world. Moral obligation, righteousness, and cosmic order are beyond legal compliance to represent a holistic approach to coexisting with the inner self and the universe. In today's globalized world, it demands ethical business practices in the shape of fair labor practices, transparency, and accountability in supply chains. It also demands rigorous environmental stewardship, acknowledging our individual actions have long-term impacts on the world and future generations. (Radhakrishnan 118) In addition, it requires unflinching defense of human dignity, so that globalization does not generate exploitation or exclusion of marginalized groups. For instance, corporations that operate on a global scale

would not only be responsible for their bottom-line profit but for their profound influence on social and environmental well-being, thereby following the Vedic philosophy of *Loka-samgraha* (well-being of the world). This indicates a move towards a stakeholder-centric philosophy where the interests of employees, communities, and the environment are given equal, if not greater, consideration than shareholders' returns. In Vedic philosophy, the law of *Rta* offers an even deeper insight into cosmic order, reflecting a sharp ecological consciousness, perceptive of a cosmic rhythm underlying existence. The environmental problems of today, including climate change, unparalleled loss of biodiversity, and widespread pollution, are generally known to be the immediate result of mankind's failure to respect this natural cosmic balance. Krishna mentions, “When we align our actions with *Rta*, we realign ourselves with the universal rhythm” (78). Vedic philosophy, with *Rta*, emphasizes the necessary condition of balance—a balance between consumption and giving, between personal rights and collective obligations, and between economic development and ecological moderation. This approach lays a solid metaphysical and ethical basis for creating a genuinely sustainable world society, where human actions are deliberately harmonized with the universal laws of the cosmos to protect and nurture the planet for the well-being of those who come after us. It opposes the anthropocentric vision, which goes in favor of present-day development, and instead comes in favor of a biocentric or ecocentric vision, where humans are a part of a large, integrated system, and it has the responsibility to maintain it in balance. Together, all these concepts constitute a unified and coherent system of ethics that can guide globalization towards

a more equitable, accountable, and spiritually ennobled future. They espouse a model of the world in which cooperation is paramount over competition, in which ethical conduct is paramount, and where the welfare of the entire world, as well as its natural environment, is the ultimate measure of advancement.

Vedic Universalism vs. Western Individualism

Halbfass explains, “The Western worldview, with its secular rationalism, often overlooks metaphysical interdependence” (105). Globalization, particularly the prevailing Western variety, has been roundly criticized for helping to create a ubiquitous culture of hyper-individualism and consumerism. This culture tends to place emphasis on success as an individual, self-profit, and material gain as the top measure of achievement, at the expense of public welfare or spiritual advancement. (Halbfass 102) Conversely, Vedic universalism presents a different paradigm where individual freedom and well-being are inextricably tied to, and ultimately not dissociable from, being in harmony and good health with the greater body. This is a significant difference in philosophical tenets that signifies one of the significant areas for civilizational dialogue towards shaping a more harmonious world future. Doniger notes, “The Western narrative of progress often marginalizes spiritual insight in favor of technological mastery” (64). The concept of Vedic philosophy is precisely that of interdependence, rather than isolation. Ancient Vedic texts eloquently declare, “*īśā vaśyam idaṃ sarvaṃ*” - All this is pervaded by the Divine (*Īśā Upaniṣad* 1). This profound utterance expresses a world view in which everything that lives—human, animal, vegetable, even mineral—is charged with a divine essence and is, in effect, interdependent. From such a perspective, harming

others, human or environmental, is not merely an act external to oneself but is tantamount to an act of harming oneself because all are emanations of the same reality. This holistic understanding is directly opposite the atomistic understanding associated with hyper-individualism, which may foster a sense of isolation and competition. In today's era of globalization, this Vedic principle calls for empathy, collective responsibility, and collective destiny, propelling cooperation and collective action towards world problems rather than personal self-interest. It reminds us that we're not separate, but part of the larger web of life. Kak observes, “Vedic cosmology anticipates a unified field of consciousness where mind and matter are continuous aspects of the same reality” (55). Vivekananda emphasizes, “True freedom is not in indulgence but in mastery over self” (213). Moreover, Vedic philosophy in depth explores the philosophy of *Anasakti* (non-attachment), which promotes moderation, mental toughness, and equanimity in life. (Vivekananda 210) This is a direct counter poison to the ceaseless accumulation of material possessions and relentless consumption that often characterizes globalized consumerism. In a globally ideological context of never-ending economic expansion and commodification of all but a few areas of life, *Anasakti* provides an emancipatory vision, in that happiness and satisfaction are not to be found in external gain but in inner liberation from desires and expectations. This is a powerful potential remedy against anxiety, depression, and burnout, increasingly linked to the stress of hyper-consumer global societies. Through inculcating detachment from results and respect for moderation, *Anasakti* can translate into increased inner peace, emotional equanimity, and a more enduring way of life that is

less dependent on over-consumption and external approval. At a higher plane of individual well-being, Vedic universalism also inspires respect for the diversity of cultures and inter-civilizational understanding. The Vedic ideology strongly affirms, “*ekam sat viprā bahudhā vadanti*” - Truth is one, the wise call it by different names. (Rgveda 1.164.46). While it’s helpful to compare Vedic universalism and Western individualism, we shouldn’t oversimplify the differences between them. Both traditions are rich and varied, and reducing them to a few distinct virtues misses the bigger picture.

Vedic Thought in Global Movements Today

Sharma notes, “Hinduism’s genius lies in adaptation—it has redefined itself through every epoch” (79). Instead of an archaic system of thinking, Vedic principles are increasingly finding new and widespread popularity in movements everywhere on the globe today, demonstrating their timelessness and living wisdom for contemporary issues. The width and depth of this popularity testify to the global appropriateness of Vedic principles beyond and above their origins to yield solutions to issues of today. (Sharma 75) Sivananda states, “Through Yoga, the individual discovers unity with the Infinite” (147). The global rise of Yoga and Meditation perfectly illustrates this trend. Practices once esoteric and within the domain of particular traditions now find universal application everywhere as mainstream wellness practices. Yoga postures (asanas), breathing exercises (*prāṇāyāma*), and meditation (*dhyāna*) are practiced by tens of millions of people from across the globe for integral benefits to health, such as stress reduction, enhanced physical well-being, mental clarity, and emotional equilibrium. Apart from physical training, most practitioners venture into the

inner philosophical roots of yoga and learn its relevance to peace within, consciousness, and a higher, balanced state of being, much like the Vedic focus on spiritual consciousness and inner transformation. (Sivananda 144) The International Day of Yoga, celebrated annually, is testimony to its global practice and recognition. Likewise, Ayurveda, the ancient Indian healing tradition, is gaining significant popularity across the world, especially for its focus on preventive medicine and holistic medicine. In contrast to many Western conventional medical practices that deal with symptomatic treatment, Ayurveda seeks to balance the individual by promoting diet, lifestyle modification, herbal medications, and medicinal treatments, closely following the Vedic dictum of coexisting in harmony with one's inner self and the cosmos. Its personalized approach, refined to identify unique body constitutions (*doṣa*), resonates with a global interest in natural and complementary health practices expressing itself in a holistic model of well-being for body, mind, and spirit. (Krishna 89) Frawley writes, “Spiritual ecology recognizes the divine presence in every form of life” (191). Eco spirituality is another major sphere where Vedic thought and concepts are affecting the worldview as well. In the same vein, Panikkar insightfully remarks, “Ecology is not an ideology but a spiritual imperative. To harm the Earth is to wound the divine presence within oneself. (205). It serves as a tool to forge bridges of piety and faith in a divided universe. Taken together, they show that Vedic philosophy is not the legacy of an ancient religion—it has much to contribute living and thriving wisdom that is as directly applicable to the contemporary issues as it was in antiquity, from being healthy at our individual level to ecological

sustainability and intercultural peace.

Challenges in Integrating Vedic Thought with Globalization

Halbfass reminds, "Dialogue among civilizations must arise from equality, not dominance" (206). The famous philosopher here meant to focus on the mutual respect among multiple civilizations. Civilizations should not be viewed through the lens of ethnicity or national wealth. Today, when globalization has brought many distinct civilizations together, it becomes essential to understand their features in the real context and true meaning. Kak reminds us, "Inter-civilizational understanding must emerge from a recognition of shared consciousness, not competitive knowledge" (88). When Vedic concepts are removed from their original cultural, philosophical, and ritual spheres, they may be applied or interpreted in ways that are significantly different from their intended meaning. For example, Karma might be shrunk down to a superficial "what goes around comes around" without grasping the sophisticated philosophical overtones it carries regarding action, intention, and cosmic rectitude. This decontextualization can potentially lead to shallow application of Vedic knowledge, and its complete realization in addressing the problems facing the world remains impaired. The second major challenge lies in opposition from dominant Western paradigms. (Coomaraswamy 54) Modern-day globalization has been informed to a large extent by Western Enlightenment values, which give priority to scientific rationalism, material progress, individualism, and secularism. (Giddens 48) Vedic philosophy, with its focus on spiritual awareness, interconnectedness, cosmic harmony, and non-materialism, is likely to shake such firmly planted paradigms. So, the most probable reaction, in such a

situation, is to reject Vedic philosophy by stamping it as unscientific and religious. This kind of labelling will assist them in hindering the way of Vedic philosophy to reach the global mainstream. Lastly, the internal fragmentations in Vedic traditions itself is a big challenge, as there is enormous internal diversity which proposes conflicting views and interpretations

Toward A Vedic Globalization: A New Paradigm

Sen insists, "Globalization has many faces—it can connect cultures as much as it can divide them" (19). He points out that globalization may function in either way -constructively or destructively. When functioning constructively, it may bless the world, but when functioning the other way, it will bring dark and dreary results. These challenges include cultural homogenization, economic inequality, environmental degradation, identity crises, and a decline in moral and spiritual values. To meet the challenges, Vedic ideology offers a new perspective which is based on concrete factual measures rather than abstract theories (Sen 21). This new paradigm sees globalization redirected by the ageless spiritual values of Vedic philosophy away from a system perceived to be driven by unbridled greed and towards one envisioned on the inspiration of Dharma. Eliade emphasizes, "Global humanity can only flourish when the sacred order is rediscovered within modern structures" (119). Such a paradigm would insist on ethical economics rather than exploitative capitalism. The present system of global economics has been generally criticized for valuing profit maximization at all costs, sometimes to the extent of labor exploitation, draining natural resources, and heightened social inequalities. (Deutsch 67) A

Vedic solution, based on the concept of cosmic order and moral obligation, would necessitate that economic processes have to be ethical in terms of codes and beneficial for all. This would translate into promoting business processes that are clean, fair, and green. The paradigm change would also entail global responsibility and not just nationalism. In a globalized world where local events are determined by what is happening far away, the Vedic maxim offers a good antidote to the nationalistic feeling of division. This vision stimulates a sense of shared humanity and worldwide responsibility for the planet, knowing that one corner's well-being is inextricably linked with all the others. It encourages global collaboration, the equal sharing of the resources and wealth of the world, and shared global problem-solving for common problems, transcending national self-interest to a broader consciousness of global family and shared well-being. (Ghosh 235) Frawley says, "To live according to Rta is to live in conscious harmony with all creation" (217). Finally, a Vedic approach would center on harmony with nature instead of exploiting nature. The current environmental issues like climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution are all largely due to ignoring the cosmic order (Rta). Vedic philosophy lays a strong emphasis on a deep ecological sensitivity, advocating harmonious coexistence of human beings with nature. It fosters balance between consumption and sacrifice, rights and duties, growth and restraint, providing a solid foundation for a genuine, sustainable global society. (Frawley 212) This means engaging ecological ethics into every aspect of world policy and practice,

recognizing that disrupting the natural order inevitably leads to adverse consequences for all. Balasubramanian concludes, "Vedic ethics is not about domination but participation. The human being is not the master of creation but its conscious custodian." (134).

Limitations and Internal Contestations Within Vedic Philosophy

Even if Vedic philosophy can also shed useful light on contemporary controversies around universal ethical principles, we should be aware that the Vedic tradition is by no means homogeneous. The Vedic corpus transformed over centuries, giving rise to so many different texts such as ritual hymns, philosophical dialogues, and interpretations. *Vedānta, Sāṅkhya, Yoga, Nyāya, and Mīmāṃsā* are the few schools in which such notions as Dharma, Action, Knowledge, and Liberation appear. All these variations clearly tell that Vedic ideology is not a single unified model. It is quite natural that the early Vedic literature was deeply influenced by the social structure and societal system. At that time, Vedic society was purely an agrarian society, which had a lineage-based community and ritual authority. So, we cannot be fully assured while mapping those ideas with the modern global society, which is shaped by the forces of technology and urbanity. We need to be careful and should engage responsibly while applying ancient ideas to a generation that has undergone an evolution of 3000 years. In the same way, modern appropriation of the Vedic concepts should also be taken care of. It is quite common that such an over appropriation of the Vedic ideas may result in the loss of their true philosophical depth and profoundness. It should also be mentioned here

that the identification of these limitations will not degrade the value of this ancient philosophy. It will, rather, help in positioning this ideology as a dynamic tradition that requires contextual understanding.

Conclusion

We all agree to the point that globalization has completely transformed human life; it has revamped life and living by infusing technology in day-to-day affairs. All this has elevated the quality of life, but has also changed the face of society. Globalization is such an impactful phenomenon that it has redefined our social institutions and societal functions. This transformation has created a cultural lag in our lives. Despite material advancements and prosperity, we experience a vacuum in our lives. This paper has discussed this pinpoint. Can Vedic ideology prove to be helpful in filling this vacuum? Can the problems like cultural homogenization, economic inequality, environmental destruction, and alienation be addressed through Dharma, *Rta*, Anasakti, and Yoga? It may be concluded that the ancient Vedic school of thought is still relevant to provide humanity with the solutions to its problems today. Technological advancements cannot change the psychic unity of mankind. Thousands of years ago, the Vedic ideology framed the principles that still guide us to keep the glitter of humanity sparking. Dharma guides to act justly, ethically, and in a socially approved manner. *Rta* guides us to keep affinity with Nature and adore the cosmic system. Anasakti teaches us to refrain from consumerism and prefer interdependence to individualism. Yoga aims for holistic health. All these concepts promote harmony across the world. Thus, we can say that a thoughtful, wise, and sincere engagement with

Vedic wisdom is a prospective solution to the problems that we are facing today. It may influence globalization to a more humane, equitable, and sustainable future, in which we have shared spiritual truths and shared values at the base of a genuinely flourishing world civilization.

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