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## Philosophy in transforming lives

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### **Abstract:**

Philosophy as a discipline in many institutions of the country has not attained the desired objective of the subject. The interlinkage between Philosophy and Science got disconnected only after renaissance. Earlier the organic connection between the two could lead to a society with knowledge and humanity on one hand and modernity and technology on the other hand. It is very fundamental to know and perceive the sustainability of what the world is doing in the name of inventions and discovery. If those discovery and inventions cannot protect the true interest of human being then it is meaningless to invest lion's share of the scarce resources. On suffering from good amount virus and disasters, it is high time for both developed and developing countries to appropriate the divinity advocated by Swami Vivekananda, an instance only.

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*"Philosophy is to be understood as an invitation to each human being to transform himself. Philosophy is a conversion, a transformation of one's way of being and living."*<sup>2</sup>- Pierre Hadot

Philosophy in today's world is mistaken by most people as something abstract, theoretical and detached from life but in reality philosophy is used in everyday life as it changes our approach towards life by making us capable of living our lives as human. Philosophy is known to all as the mother of all science but gradually philosophy is being dethroned from its status. It is rightly stated by Tuomas K. Pernu in his research paper "Philosophy and the Front Line of Science" that "According to one traditional view, empirical science is necessarily preceded by philosophical analysis. Yet the relevance of philosophy is often doubted by those engaged in empirical sciences."<sup>3</sup> As knowledge grew, as people learned more about the world, the sciences dealing with different departments of nature split off from philosophy. It was

the pre-Socratic philosophers who first tried to study the nature of the world. Science evolved because of the contribution of ancient philosophers like Democritus' atomic theory, the studies of space and substance of Thales. The contributions of these Greek thinkers were followed by Aristotle's establishment of Physics, Zoology and Logic. Philosophy and physics were organically interconnected particularly in the works of Galileo, Descartes, Kepler, Newton and Einstein and generally in the works of other scientist. But later the Western Renaissance period, the revolutions most specifically like Copernicus and Cartesian changed the scenario of the glorious ancient days. The objective scientific material worldview has created the individualistic attitude for which even today humans are the sufferers. Philosophy bridges the gap between Nature and Humanity through which people starts understanding the main motive behind their existence as only a part of that whole. "The individual and

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<sup>2</sup> Pierre Hadot. *Philosophy as a way of life*. Willey-Blackwell. 1995

<sup>3</sup> Toumas K. Pernu. Philosophy and the Front Line of Science. *The Quarterly Review of Biology*. Vol.83

the world co-exist and subsist together.”<sup>4</sup>

One of the most famous aphorisms of Socrates was, “I know one thing that I know nothing.” Only a true philosopher can think of in such a way. Lack of humility in the learning process is the root of all trouble that we encounter. Philosophy develops from curiousness. There should always be an urge to strive more wisdom. This is the attitude that every human being should have in order to develop insight into life, the nature of reality, existence; that is he should aim at wisdom, seek wisdom. The scope and meaning of philosophy is so comprehensive that it will be a mistake to recognise it simply as one specific subject among others. Because of its comprehensiveness there is no fixed definition of philosophy. The Greeks defined philosophy as “love of wisdom”. In India, the Sanskrit term *Darśana* is used for the english word Philosophy as philosophy helps in developing the intuitive perception, that is the insight to know the reality lying within that what is supplied by our intellect. Spiritualism in Indian thought changes the perspective of

looking at the world around through the intuitive insight. Humans can make their lives better as philosophy enables a person in widening their analyzing and evaluating capacity of different situations that they face in their lives. They will be in a state of enlightenment where they can realize a complete view of life and world free from all limitations of subjectivism.

It is high time for us to understand the meaning of our lives, our purpose of being on earth and the impact that we are going to leave for the next generation. Our fights with ourselves, our fellow beings and the world where we reside are excelling to that magnitude after which the entire society will collapse. We have no time to give to ourselves, as the other things around like our cellphones, televisions and other tech gadgets have occupied that space. As a result our lives already being pre-occupied we have stopped listening to our own voice. The universe is not just what the scientific instruments show us. We are not what we think ourselves to be and this is because we have stopped reflecting on our own lives. We need to reflect our

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<sup>4</sup> S. Radhakrishnan. *An Idealist View of Life*. Blackie and Son Ltd. 1979. Pg. 216

inner world. By knowing ourselves we can understand that our thinking is being confined to what we can do instead of what we should do. Here the motto of the Upaniṣhadic seers - 'Know thy self' can be mentioned. Our lives can be more happy and peaceful if the 'being' inherent in us is understood. Only thinkers who are knowledgeable can have this type of realization. Philosophy nourishes our thinking as it teaches us how to think correctly and thus enlighten our lives with lasting peace; or else for not realising the 'being' the Reality within our own selves, the more we run after peace and happiness the more we will get deprived.

Through deeper reflection one can reach the state of equanimity and peace. But it seems most people fail to do so as they have lost their urge to know. In fact it appears that almost all except a few have lost their thinking capacity and so they do not feel the necessity of discovering the nature of truth and knowledge. The earth today where we are living is mostly overcrowded by such a species that we call humans and these so-called

humans feel proud for being higher animals. They through their own action have turned out to be higher animals for namesake. There are instances where humans have deteriorated their position than the animals. Even animals in some situations are more sensitive having high level mental capacities and can feel more pain and fear to pleasure and joy than some of the humans.

Due to crisis of humanity, human values are at its lowest ebb. Today the large-scale outbreak of Covid-19 is making us realise our inability to bring the situation under control though we think ourselves to be the most intelligent species on planet. It is being rightly said that the activity of the humans is mainly responsible for emergence and outbreak of pandemics of this nature. The crisis situation that we all are facing today is also the result of disruption of our entire ecosystem. "Humans struggle to achieve a harmony between himself and his environment."<sup>5</sup> So, right time has come to awaken the divinity within man which is lying dormant. In the words of Vivekananda it can be said, divinity is

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<sup>5</sup> S. Radhakrishnan. *An Idealist View of Life*. Blackie and Son Ltd. 1979. Pg. 217

the potential of every human being. So that divinity within have to be realised and for that our intellect have to be steady. Philosophy can nurture the seed of full enlightenment which is within us. Through proper care the seed will grow and we can perceive the universality, the One amidst the differences, the whole within the parts. Right thinking can guide us towards right action. Only then our society can make progress and nation can rise. Through philosophical understanding, reconciliation and proper balancing can be done between tradition and modernity. To introduce ourselves as human, we need to have the right vision and mission. Being the noblest of all creation we are capable of making the right judgments to shape our ethical behaviour and develop respect for the world in which we reside.

