

# Vedantic Influence in William Wordsworth's Poetry

Dali Palia

Research Scholar, Jiwaji University, Gwalior, M.P. (India)

## ARTICLE DETAILS

### Article History

Published Online: 07 September 2018

### Keywords

William Wordsworth, Vedantic  
Philosophy and Wordsworth's poetry

## ABSTRACT

William Wordsworth one of the renowned name in English poetry. As this is a known fact that English poetry and literature has always been influenced by culture and philosophies of other nations and in this contribution of India is a landmark. This can be marked in his poems by interpreting his poems in light of vedantic philosophy. Indian seers occupy the highest post in seeking and exploring the depths of the spirit. In Wordsworth poems we come across the concept of one God or one supreme soul, life after death, worshipping nature and many more. All these concepts are justified to their fullest by vedantic philosophy. in this paper I explore his poems for their vedantic influence.

## 1. Introduction

English poetry or literature is not just confined to the United Kingdom only. The other nation's contribution in the development of English Literature is remarkable, especially India, is a landmark. It has always been a controversy that Plato's mind was shaped by vedic thoughts 'Upanishad'. No one can ever deny the influence of Indian Philosophy on Yeats, Arnold and so many other writers and poets. Wordsworth poems are very close to the philosophy of the Vedas which made him a outstanding genius in English Poetry.

It is non-doubtable fact that the Indian seers always occupied the highest post in the realm of exploring and seeking the depths of the spirit. When there was not a single ray of dawn of civilization in Europe, the marvelous songs of the spirit were sung by the Vedic Rishis.

Vedanta a Sanskrit word, meaning as end of Vedas. There are four Vedas naming as Rigveda, Samaveda, Yajurveda and the Atharvaveda. A Veda has four parts such as the samhitas, the Brahmanas, the Aranyakas and the Upanishads. This last constitute of Veda(upanishad) is also called as Vedanta. Vedanta philosophy is based on three main books(A.)Upanishads- from vedas (B.) Gita -gist of Hinduism (C.) Brahma Sutras-elaborates the various Upanishadic statement, together called as prasthanatrayi. Initially Vedanta meant Advaita Vedanta. According to Advaita, the soul is one with the supreme soul and there is no difference left at the final state. Later came up many other sub schools. All used the same three books but interpreted it differently. Vedanta make men to understand his purpose on this earth and make him realize that knowledge leads to liberation.

At first we must shed some light on the relation between poetry and philosophy, which will enable us to have a comprehensive idea about the impact of Vedantic philosophy on poetry of William Words worth.

According to Aristotle the poetry is the most philosophical of all writings where Truth is carried direct and alive into the heart of passion. Wordsworth comprehends it well rather goes one step further to declare that "poetry is the

breath and finer spirit of all knowledge." One can say that like Vedic rishis, his poems are not only the composition of mental faculty to the fullest but in fact Words worth, falls in the line of Vedic seers, he declares that his poems are "meditations passionate from deep recesses of man's heart."

All these things point out that only mental faculty alone cannot be responsible for a creation of a piece of art or a poem. It does not mean that it is below the mind but in actual it is just beyond the mind. So like the Vedic seers, When the poets go beyond the ordinary mind or enter into meditation and can 'see' the 'truth' and 'beauty' only then the composition of sublime poetry is possible. Coleridge described Words worth as : "The rapt one, of the godlike forehead. The heaven-eyed creature."

In the 'Prelude', we have a statement -- "The light of sense goes out, but with a flash that has revealed the invisible world."

The Upanishad declares that there is a presence of highest Truth which is beyond human mind. There is an existence of someone beyond senses and mind. The mind, vital and body receive capacity 'from the source' unknown ever. In that state of being, "we see into the life of things" or 'sees' the mystery of the world. The line quoted from the poem 'TinternAbbey' "that blessed mood...We see into the life of things," also gives expression to a state of trance, which is called 'Samadhi' in Indian tradition and Yoga. It is a condition of 'mind-sleep' and 'body sleep' but activeness in the higher region of our being, enabling one to see things beyond. "That serene and blessed mood" in which the lightning takes place. Here it is to be marked that the serenity is not merely of the physical being but rather is of the mood -- "The motion of human blood almost suspended." One's spirit experiences the soothing calm and the profound peace that enables the poet to cross the human limitation and transcend to a higher plane.

In 'The Prelude', Book VI. Wordsworth, looking back, tries to go in depth of its implications and realizes how "that awful power," imagination, rose from the mind of abyss: "But to my conscious soul I now can say I recognize the glory, in such

strength of usurpation, when the light of sense goes out, but with a flash that has revealed –

The invisible world, doth greatness make abode,  
There harbors, whether we be young or old,  
Our destiny, our being's heart and home  
Is with infinitude, and only there."

In the oft-quoted lines of Geeta a beautiful comparison of it(soul) is done with the changing of clothes: "When the garments are worn out man changes them, similarly the man changes the body when it is old or becomes useless for the soul."(Bhagvad Gita, Chapter 2 - verse 22). Time cannot touch; it is present -- in life, after life. Wordsworth smoothly presented his view of soul's immortality in his famous poem, "Ode to Intimation of Immortality": -

"Our birth is but a sleep and forgetting,  
The soul that rises with us, our life's star  
Hath had elsewhere its setting  
And cometh from a far  
And not in utter nakedness  
But trailing clouds of glory do we come from God, who  
is our home."

Upanishad claims that there is a supreme soul and the same soul dwells in everybody and every molecule. This supreme soul whose reflection is all around is only called as 'God' who dwells in the whole of this universe. Now we come to Wordsworth, according to him Nature is not a non-living mass. It has its presence and its own being. Poet says that every object of nature not only exists but also enjoys its existence: "Every flower enjoys the air it breathes" (lines written in Early Spring).he felt the presence of stones and rocks too:

"Every form, rock, fruit and flower

Even the loose stones that cover the highway."  
The poet says: "I saw them feel." (Prelude)

From all the poems in which Wordsworth expressed his realization of Nature, we may acquire some idea of what realization is. This realization of nature made his vision, the vision of something or someone in the world which is the very self of all things that it contains, a presence and conscious force other than its forms and manifested in them. We perceive that he had not only the vision of this but also the joy, peace and universality which its presence brings.

## 2. Conclusion

Wordsworth's devotion towards nature is more of a worshipper than a poet. His poems shows his connection with nature. For Wordsworth nature was never a physical form but rather it touched his soul and composed his thoughts, molded his mind. Which could now go beyond his own self like vedic seers. A creation of a piece of art or a poem is only possible when the poets go beyond the ordinary mind and enter into meditation. Vedanta also declare the same, that highest truth is beyond our mind and there is an existence of a being beyond senses and mind. When the devotee is engrossed in his devotion he reaches a different stage. Where his mind receives a capacity and sees the mysteries of the world. In Indian tradition and yoga this stage is called 'samadhi' where a person crosses the limitation of his body and mind to see into the life of things. So is the realization of Wordsworth for nature where he could see things beyond his mind and created many fine pieces of art or poetry. He could see life in objects of nature his realization of nature made his vision of something which is the very self of all things. Nature not only built him up with a different vision but he could understand the joy, peace and universality which its presence brings.

## References

1. Swami Vivekananda. vedanta: Voice of Freedom,(Ed.) Swami Chetanananda, AdvaitaAsharam.
2. Upanishadic Influence in Wordsworth Poetry.
3. Creative.sulekha.com > General
4. Burway, MukundWamanrao. Glimpses of the Bhagwatgita and the Vedanta .philosophy. MW Burway, Judge Small Causes Court Indore.