

**THE IMPORTANCE OF VEDIC THANATOLOGY IN THE
CONTEXT OF THE MODERN WORLDVIEW CRISIS
(THE EXPERIENCE OF PHILOSOPHICAL DISCOURSE)**

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Abstract: *The article is devoted to the study of the possibilities of using the axiological potential of vedic thanatology in the context of a worldview crisis. The purpose of the article is to reveal the axiological potential of vedic thanatology in the context of the crisis of modern worldview positions, the philosophical development of human existence. The study was conducted in the framework of a critical analysis of European philosophy, modern worldview crisis, the consideration of ancient Indian philosophy, in terms of Puranic writings, Katha Upanishad, Garuda Purana, Srimad-Bhagavatam, Bhagavad Gita, Vairagya-Shatakam, Briharadaranyaka Upanishadi, heuristic synthesis, comparative approach in the study of Eastern and Western approaches and theoretical generalization. The article is devoted to a philosophical study of the causes of the objective need for stabilization, harmonization of the state of modern society through of the socio-philosophical analysis of the axiological foundations of vedic anthropology as a resource of modern worldview potential. In the light of the formation of a new philosophical paradigm, it is necessary to use the whole worldview diversity of the treasury of world philosophical thought; therefore, ancient vedic spiritual knowledge may be interesting from the point of view of applying this sacred knowledge. The authors point to an obvious link between the crisis state of the modern worldview and the comprehension of the fact not only of one's own life, but also of death. Thanatology as a science of death and life allows one to be aware of the fact of one's own existence and even of dying. The key idea of the authors is the importance of the formation of the correct worldview already throughout life; the vedic knowledge cultivates the choice of conscious existence.*

Keywords: postmortal reality, worldview paradigm, axiological base, marginalism.

Being in a state of global crisis, modern society, in fact, confronts philosophy with the urgent need to form a common methodological, axiological base. It is known that throughout the history of mankind the fundamental achievements of science were the worldview base for the humanities. The classical rationalism that existed from Descartes to Einstein dominated the minds of European thinkers, in particular, Newtonian classical mechanics to the greatest extent embodied the absolute correspondence of human cognition to reality.

With the advent of the theory of relativity, it turned out that human cognition does not reflect reality to an absolute degree, which led to a crisis of

rationalist worldview in philosophy¹. In particular, the post-positivist school (Kuhn, Popper, Feirabend, Lakatos, etc.), based on the paradoxes and contradictions of physics, argues that there is no single method of justification at all. The crisis of classical rationalism, and especially the recognition of the lack of a unified method for substantiating scientific theories, led to the vagueness of scientific criteria, and, therefore, contributed to the disappearance of a clear worldview paradigm².

A. Schweitzer at the beginning of the last century noted that the worldview crisis is primarily associated with the violation of the most important connection between the "external" economic, technical, educational progress and spiritual perfection of man. Human culture, losing its connection with moral ideals, has lost its own purpose, namely, to contribute to the spiritual elevation of man and humanity. "Our culture is experiencing a severe crisis," Schweizer writes in a quotation from the fifth source in *Culture and Ethics*³. Schweitzer points out that the most important things in culture are not material achievements, but only if each individual will begin to work on improving themselves and society, then it will be possible to solve the problems generated by society and to ensure social progress in all respects⁴. The thinker believes that it's harder to become and remain a person in the conditions of modernity⁵. In fact, Schweizer argued that if thinking humanity is able to put forward an outlook that can offer a reasonably correct order of values, this will allow us to return to true values in culture again. , since the situation of anthropological crisis is the potential for the implementation of a paradigm leap, namely, a new fundamental paradigm in understanding man and the principles of his existence.

It should be noted that modern knowledge has completely changed the nature of man and the meanings of his existence. In particular, J. Deleuze

¹ B. Freyer, V. Aversano-Dearborn, G. Winkler, S. Leipold, H. Haidl, K.W. Brand, M. Rosenberger, T. Wollnig, "Is there a relation between ecological practices and spirituality? The case of benedictine monasteries", in *Journal of Agricultural and Anvironmental Ethics*, 2018, vol. 31, no. 5, p. 559-582; R.T. Jensen, D. Moran, "Transcendental intersubjectivity and normality: constitution by mortals", in *The Phenomenology of Embodied Subjectivity*, Springer, Cham, 2013, p. 83-103; D. Heijer, J.R. Maarten, T. Spijkerboer, "Coersion, prohibition and great expectations. The continuing failure of the common European asylum system", in *Common Market Law Review*, 2016, vol. 53, p. 607-642.

² H. Jan, J. Klouda, "The institution of life in Gehlen and Merleau-Ponty: searching for the common ground for the anthropological difference", in *Theoretical/Philosophical Paper*, 2018, vol. 4, no. 3, p. 371-394; L. Patton, "The dimensions of the experiment in experimental Dharma: a responce", in *International Journal of Dharma Studies*, 2017, vol. 5, p. 22-27.

³ A. Schweitzer, *Culture and ethics*, Progress, Moscow, 1973.

⁴ A. Rambachan, "Śabdapramāṇa: Hindu contributions to understanding the meaning and function of scripture", in *International Journal of Dharma Studies*, 2014, vol. 2, p. 2-5.

⁵ A. Schweitzer, *Culture and ethics*, Progress, Moscow, 1973; C.T. Shattuck, *Pathways to sustainability: the greening of US faith communities*, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 2016.

introduces the category “simulacra” – an empty sign, “a false copy of a copy”⁶, that is, modernity fills the symbols of the past with its own, often distorted meanings. The powerful implementation of information platforms in turn also leads to the unknowability, fuzziness of the semantic context, social anomie; man creates his own world, in which real reality is abolished and absorbed by virtual reality, these are the characteristics of the postmodern era.

Modern man is in a virtual world filled with simulacra, and existence in it is characterized by dynamics, everything is saturated with elements of the game, the spiritual and moral principle is abolished⁷. Then the most important values of human existence, such as love, respect for people, the meaning of life, the correct awareness of death, become a burden for the majority, an annoying circumstance, as the symbols of the era require lightness, but in reality, they are “poor” signs of modern culture. This paradigm of existence is transferred to the external, real world. Under these conditions, it becomes clear that Western rationalism in its classic version has exhausted its heuristic potential. M. Foucault argues that, first of all, it is necessary to stop talking about the power of modern man. Today he is not just not free, he generally “disappears”: “Man, as the archeology of our thought easily shows, this is a recent invention. And the end of it, perhaps, is not far”⁸. Thus, modernity can be characterized as a time of rapid political and socio-economic transformation, a person is forced to exist in a constantly changing world. This trend of rapid change, innovation, technological breakthrough is not at all an indicator of true progress, since the goal of true progress of mankind is the improvement of the inner state and spirituality of a person. Which leads to the need for a different paradigm of human existence, when an awareness of attachment to material values, well-being, and the comfort of technological civilization indicates a loss of true human fundamental values⁹.

What am I eating (am I) outside of material culture? What is my immediate need? That is, people in the conditions of modern socio-economic processes are considered only as tools of purchases, they live for the market, and the value scale is purchasing power. The emergence of a number of problems, in particular, marginalism, mass depression and suicides, separatism,

⁶ J. Deleuze, *Empiricism and subjectivity: the experience of human nature according to Hume*, PER SE, Moscow, 2001.

⁷ R. Schacht, “Gehlen, Nietzsche and project of philosophical anthropology”, in *Naturalism and Philosophical Anthropology*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2015, p. 49-65; T. Spijkerboer, “Gender, sexuality, asylum and European human rights”, in *Law and Critique*, 2018, vol. 29, no. 2, p. 221-239; M. Ossewaarde, “Crises of modernity” discourses and the rise of financial technologies in a contested mechanized world”, in *Philosophy & Technology*, 2017, vol. 3, no. 1; E.A. Avtandilyan, M.V. Mayevskaya, “The study of the Vedic rituals of Hinduism in the works of M. Eliade”, in *Scientific Almanac*, 2015, vol. 8, no. 10, p. 1430-1435.

⁸ M. Foucault, *History of sexuality III. Caring for yourself*, Dukh i litera, Kiev, 1998.

⁹ V.V. Chubar, *Bodhisattva of hell. Sutra of the basic vows of the bodhisattva Ksitigarbha*, Yevraziya, St. Petersburg, 2002.

the destruction of the institution of the family, which do not have answers and solutions within the existing philosophical paradigm, urgently requires the emergence of a new philosophical strategy, or a return to the existing value reference points in the human community. That is, the current situation is associated with the formation of an updated picture of the world in connection with active processes of informatization and globalization¹⁰.

The novelty of the approach is due to a non-standard approach to the study of the theme of the worldview crisis through the study of the topic of death. As a tool, the ancient vedic thanatology is proposed – the science of death, the main ideas of which contribute to the conscious understanding of life-sense landmarks, the choice of worldview platform. The phenomenon of death is not deeply presented and studied in the history of philosophical thought. Of course, the very fact of awareness of their own mortality makes humanity to philosophize, and, therefore, to develop its own world view.

The study was conducted in the framework of a critical analysis of European philosophy, modern worldview crisis, the consideration of ancient Indian philosophy, in terms of Puranic writings, Katha Upanishad, Garuda Purana, Srimad-Bhagavatam, Bhagavad Gita, Vairagya-Shatakam, Brihadaranyaka Upanishadi, heuristic synthesis, comparative approach in the study of Eastern and Western approaches, theoretical generalization.

Factors of worldview formation through the prism of Vedic treatises

In the new era of postmodern human civilization, fundamental breaking of consumer philosophy is necessary for survival, but this process is possible if an alternative is provided. And such an alternative to the modern worldview can be the ancient vedic knowledge, which in reality is non-confessional. In modern philosophy, which is in a situation of deconstructurization in understanding the essence of man, there is a process of anthropological inversion, a return to the problem of man and, above all, his awareness of life and death. At present, the fact of the lack of spiritual culture and moral potential has become apparent. Consequently, there are such parameters for measuring the strength, efficiency, and success of a society that are not measured by material categories, but are basic, fundamental for society. These categories should include spiritual and moral values, which have always been

¹⁰ O.F. Volkova, N.B. Kondyreva, *Brihadaranyaka upaniṣada*, Ladomir Nauka GRVL, Moscow, 1992; A.K. Shaposhnikova, *Ancient Egyptian book of the dead. The word of the aspiring to the light*, EKSMO, Moscow, 2003.

the basis of religious knowledge, which should be considered, first of all, as a sphere of acquiring the meanings of human existence¹¹.

Carl Gustaf Jung emphatically and sharply speaks about the causes of the current crisis in society, that one of the most fatal sociological and psychological misconceptions is the idea that something could change from a certain time, for example, a person would suddenly change or a formula or truth would be discovered, opening up completely new horizons. Departure from the truths of the blood generates neurotic anxiety, which is very characteristic of modern man. Anxiety necessarily generates a loss of meaning – mental illness, according to the psychoanalyst, has not yet been realized by the present epoch in the whole scope and scale of its consequences¹². The modern world has largely rejected the traditional way of life, faith in the divine world order, which means there are no landmarks, touchstones or signs for the modern person. Each creates himself and his own spiritual and moral doctrine. Which reinforces even more fragmentation of society. Everyone lives the way he came up with. But since morality is determined by the needs of society, which is a dynamic, changing value, then, therefore, society cannot produce universal, stable, definite, fundamental norms.

Spiritual norms are of divine origin, they are not the fruit of an imperfect human mind. In vedic practice, such knowledge has the characteristics of Sat-Chit-Ananda (Eternity, Truth, Bliss), that is, spiritual knowledge, firstly, shruti – sacred knowledge, true, secondly, eternal, unchanging and gives the soul true bliss. That is, a society that follows the divine commandments, according to the parampara (chain of disciple succession), without distortion, can raise the level of human consciousness, and thus contribute to the progress of a given society. Spiritual culture in the life of society goes through the process of assimilating the norms and values of previous generations of mankind, adhering to spiritual values that play an important role in mastering and changing the world, serve as a compass in this process. Truth does not need speculation, everything is hidden in antiquity, in particular, the vedas, have a rich experience in the dissemination of spiritual knowledge. In vedic philosophy, spirituality can only mean serving God, the vedas are not defined as religion, but as the science of spiritual life¹³.

Thus, to find spiritual guidance means to find God. And thus, understand what your self-realization is, because the main purpose of vedic literature is to tell of the science of self-consciousness (self-realization), thereby

¹¹ O.V. Gordeeva, “Near-death experience: a comparison of modern Western and ancient Indian Vedic representations (based on the Upanishads)”, in *Bulletin of Moscow University*, 2012, vol. 3, p. 121-137; V.E. Smolenkov, *History of Western philosophy*, Azbuka, St. Petersburg, 2001.

¹² K.G. Jung, *Memories. Dreams reflections*, Kharvest, Minsk, 2003.

¹³ O.F. Volkova, N.B. Kondyreva, “Kaushitaki Upanishad”, in *Upanishads*, Lodomir Nauka GRVL, Moscow, 1992, p. 47-67.

leading a person to liberation from suffering. But as long as people believe that their path is the path of material happiness, they will not look for ways to truly transform themselves, their own personalities, or will have to fall into illusion, replacing happiness with pleasure, developing society with technological progress, spiritual richness with temporary material joys¹⁴. What should be understood under the worldview crisis? There is only one truth in reality, so, a pluralism of opinions, any kind of democracy is not an indicator of the true state of affairs, of understanding the events taking place.

The opinion of the majority does not indicate the truth of what is happening, the multiplicity of worldview positions is also not an indicator of the actual state of affairs, since a person is imperfect and then many imperfect individuals give rise to many imperfect paradigms. Also, the pluralism of worldview positions tends to be explained by the multiplicity of values, which, in turn, are based on differences in tastes of people. Numerous worldview positions are mostly illusory, do not reflect the real state of affairs¹⁵. The process of getting rid of illusions is possible only if there is true knowledge of the existing state of affairs. Therefore, a person is in a state of searching for being, roots, the knowledge of which contributes to overcoming the meaninglessness of the surrounding world and realizing oneself as a necessary part of this being. H. Ortega y Gasset wrote that “they become thinking not because of utility and not from causeless caprice, this is the hunt for the One – for Being ... why we are not satisfied with what we see in the world without any understanding ... seeing a flying arrow it is obvious that we cannot but remember the hand that sent it.

The same happens with the reality inside us – at every moment we see only a tiny part of our inner being. We do not see our complete Self¹⁶. Eastern philosophy figuratively explains this idea so that to satisfy a bird, it is not enough just to clean its cage. Similarly, for finding happiness and peace, it is not enough just to meet the needs of our body. There is a need to understand what is necessary for our soul. But since the soul is the most subtle and invisible substance for us, in modern society they know nothing about it, and forgetting about its needs, people condemn themselves to pain and suffering. This circumstance is the reason for the existence of misunderstanding, lack of agreement between individuals, nations, countries, the emergence of a number of sciences and disciplines trying to develop methods of settlement, mechanisms of association.

¹⁴ R. Moody, *Life after life*, Interkontakt, Moscow, 1990; I.Yu. Krachkovsky, *Koran*, Oriental Publishing Center, Moscow, 1990.

¹⁵ Yu.A. Krysova, “The formation of liberal ideas in the philosophy of Bertrand Russell”, in *Comparative Vision of the History of Philosophy*, Slavia, St. Petersburg, 2008, p. 119-125.

¹⁶ X. Ortega-i-Gasset, *What is philosophy?*, Nauka, Moscow, 1991.

But all attempts, one way or another, are in vain, unsuccessful, because there is no acceptance of a common, universal, single value, an absolute point of reference, a point of unification, when everyone accepts this provision without exception. This diversity of attitudes, the dissimilarity of all living beings, phenomena in this world in Sankrit is: “Acintya bheda abheda tattva”, which means “Incomprehensible unity in diversity”. That is, the existing state of affairs, the dissimilarity of all phenomena in this world is a necessary part of the world order, which should have a common platform that will lead to unity. “Incomprehensibility” refers to the transcendental source of this unity, which is beyond human cognitive possibilities, it is God. That is, overcoming disagreements is possible only on the basis of spiritual principles, when humanity as a whole will determine what is good for the soul, for the spirit¹⁷.

And ultimately, it is important to realize that the difference in worldview positions is primarily due to the difference in the vision of one’s own human nature, it is stated in vedic practice that everyone should answer the most important question that will determine the subsequent worldview base: who am I? Body or soul? And here you will find different answers and, as a result, different worldview platforms. The uniqueness of the authors' approach is characterized by an appeal to the ancient vedic treatises, Katha Upanishad, Garuda Purana, Srimad-Bhagavatam, Bhagavad Gita, Vairagya Shatakam, Briharadaranyaka Upanishad, which reveal the essence of human nature, possible obstacles to human progress and their paths overcome. The authors found a connection between the ancient Indian treatises and modern processes in a society that is in a state of disunity, heterogeneity, and polarity of their worldview positions.

The conceptual attitude of modern man to the existence of death and soul

In the modern world there are two fundamental axiological concepts, vitalistic and thanatological. Vitalism prevails, science, medicine in particular, proclaim the idea of the preservation of life, by all means, of understanding the category of "life" as an absolute value. Undoubtedly, life is valuable, but not only in bodily form. Western civilization rammed into the sphere of the "unconscious" the very fact of death, as if it should not be talked about. Death is perceived as a sad event, tragic. The comparative view on this problem is in the ratio of the western and eastern visions of the category of "death", or

¹⁷ K.A. Kudaibergenov, A.Kh. Zholomanova, *Philosophy: a handbook for medical universities*, AK, NYR, Karaganda, 2018; M. Heidegger, “The basic concepts of metaphysics”, in *Time and Being*, Moscow, Respublika, 1993, p. 331-332; P. Posted, “*Ars moriendi*” – *the art of a worthy life and a worthy death*, 2012, Available at <http://waking-up.org/iskusstvo/ars-moriendi-iskusstvo-dostoynoy-zhizni-i-dostoynoy-smerti/>

rather the answer to the question: who is the man? Soul or body? What does the western concept offer? Arthur Schopenhauer argued that people are born from movable blind parents, meaningless world will of parents, born people – the result of the lust of their own parents¹⁸.

Charles Darwin in the theory of evolution claims the animal origin of humanity: “Since man, from the genealogical point of view, belongs to the narrow-nosed monkeys of the Old World, we must conclude, no matter how much our pride protests against this conclusion, that our ancient ancestors should be referred to this blood line¹⁹. That is, the author of the psychoanalytic theory unambiguously identified man with animals, thereby giving sanction to the “animal form” of existence.

In the early stages of his work, Sigmund Freud, who had a great influence on the modern world consciousness, argued that libido – sexual attraction is the main motive of human actions. Thus, recognizing that man is an animal by nature, bodily needs prevail in him and he is a sexually preoccupied being, and this seriously changed the attitude of mankind towards its purpose, mission, lifestyle, value orientations, the bodily materialistic concept began to prevail, that is, at first, matter is born, the body and consciousness is born already in the depths of the body. Such a paradigm forms animal permissiveness, not limited by norms.

In particular, modern science has a concrete answer to this question, we are the body, this statement corresponds to the concept of Darwin, the materialistic trend in the development of the world, where being determines consciousness. This worldview foundation forms the race for sensual pleasures, extreme concern for their physical condition, material goods. This can be found in the modern society. The media cultivates infantilism, unconscious existence, the pursuit of pleasure, irresponsibility in matters of meaningful existence. And the reasons for the fear of death of most of humanity become clear, as the bodily concept of life and death prevails. And then, despite all the progress in improving the means of material existence, despite all the comfort, a high degree of freedoms, humanity did not come close to the goal of humanity. This goal is to overcome death.

Modern humanity chose to simply forget about death, as it prevents people from living peacefully and happily in a modern, technologically equipped, comfortable world. Extremely schematizing, all civilizations can be divided into two types – the soteriological and eudemonic, the first sacrifice earthly life for eternity, the second – eternity for earthly life. For the former, the last enemy is death, for the victory over which many pleasures and joys of

¹⁸ A. Schopenhauer, *The world as will and representation*, Eksmo, Moscow, 2016.

¹⁹ C. Darwin, *The origin of man and sexual selection. Expression of emotions in humans and animals*, Publishing House of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, Moscow, 1953.

temporary existence can be neglected²⁰. For the second ones, the enemy is the inconvenience of earthly life, when overcoming which death is somehow forgotten. Hence the logical chain: the body dies – a person dies; the birth of each person is the result of randomness of biochemical processes, death is the death of the brain, decay, decomposition, oblivion. Thus, the materialistic tradition has formed a fear towards death, since along with the death of the body, man disappears. The prospect of total dissolution of oneself in the global universe gives rise to desperate attempts to escape from the topic of death, so as not to come into contact with an undesirable topic. It demonstrates infantilism, immaturity. And at the same time, a modern person with academic education, a high level of information awareness has a very vague idea of the phenomenon of death, a process that has already been launched since the moment of birth. Comprehension of the theme of death and the process of dying remains on a superficial level.

The human being is in the illusion of his death, while he is full of life, he forgets about the inevitable death. But, in reality, a modern confused person, who has lost much of his guides and benchmarks, right now needs such a clear, precise explanation: what is his human nature, what should be developed in himself, where to go, how to relate to what is happening to him. Philosophically boldly about the weakness of the rational approach to the phenomenon of death, Carl Gustav Jung writes: “Maybe a person needs to touch death in order for him to acquire the necessary freedom and looseness for this?”²¹. The problem of man and his vision of the world is not only associated with the process of life, living in this world, this problem is associated with death. Heidegger believes that the desire for ontological knowledge – “this is nostalgia, this is a craving everywhere to be at home”²². To be at home everywhere is to relate to the world as a whole, to being, to try to realize oneself, one's place in this world. Everywhere to be at home is a need that encourages humanity to the questions: what is a man, the world, life, death? The desire to understand being begins with the realization that no one will die for you, you will die yourself – this actually means that no one will live instead of you.

Therefore, the path to understanding reality is to extract oneself from the rational thinking of oneself, to extract one's own being from oneself as an empirical one, to extract oneself from the living one from oneself automatically and mechanically existing. This is the path to a global worldview that cleans the

²⁰ T.Ya. Elizarenkova, *Rigveda Mandala I-IV*, Moscow, Nauka, 1989; M. Roolingz, *Beyond the threshold of death*, Kormchiy, St. Petersburg, 2003; O.R. Signaevskaya, *Man in poly-paradigm networks: the crisis of the meaning of the 21st century*, Ural State Pedagogical University, Ekaterinburg, 2009.

²¹ K. Jung, “Soul and death”, in *Olten und Freiburg im Breisgau*, 1987, vol. 7, p. 445-455.

²² K.Yu. Yeskov, *Lecture at the Paleontological museum named after Yu.A. Orlov*, 2016, Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BFkLYMigs0M>

individual from illusions, gives a true knowledge of the foundations of being. Eastern philosophy to a greater extent adheres to the installation – man is the soul. The soul is fundamental. According to Hinduism, the soul has the qualities of Sat-Chit-Ananda, sat means eternity, cit – truth, knowledge, ananda – bliss, happiness. The body is the carrier of the properties of Asat-Achit-Niranad, that is, the body is eternal, perishable, in ignorance and subject to suffering. And accordingly, Indian philosophy advances a different understanding of the phenomenon of death. Ancient Indian vedic knowledge considers the four phases of death, and life as a phenomenon represents the first phase, which indicates the intrinsic value of death, as a phenomenon and the inclusion of life in death²³. Life and death are usually distinguished as two separate, distinct processes. In particular, often the world in duality is presented as an opposition of happiness and suffering, life and death.

C.G. Jung believed that most people are convinced that death is just the end of the road, while it is the goal and accomplishment, here reveals a similarity with ancient Eastern thought²⁴. Also, Christianity, in particular medieval Europe, gave rise to the phenomenon of “Ars moriendi” – “The Art of Dying”, a kind of dying guide that allows you to enter the world of another in the right and best way in conditions of epidemics and shortages of clergy. Thus, the Christian thought took care of the souls of the dying. Pavel Florensky also spoke about the importance of thinking about death: “A man dies only once in his life, and therefore, having no experience, dies unsuccessfully. A man does not know how to die – his death happens gropingly, in the dark. But We must die safely, death must be learned”²⁵.

That is, death is not a meaningless act that everyone fearfully expects, not just the end of the path, but a necessary goal and fulfillment. If birth has a goal, then death in a necessary way, has meaning and purpose. So, death not an annoying hindrance to life, but a necessary end to life, a reasonable end. Ancient Vedic knowledge, in turn, contains a deep vision of the life of society and of an individual in all its manifestations, a philosophical paradigm, a serious worldview base that has not received due recognition in modern society. The Vedas claim that an intelligent person knows that his death is born with him. He knows that he dies every moment, and the point will be set as soon as his life expires. And there is a practice of both conscious existence and correct dying. Ancient teachings such as the Garuda Purana, Srimad-Bhagavatam, Katha Upanishad, Bhagavad-Gita, Vairagya-Shatakam, Briharadaranyaka Upanishad offer a way of putting this into practice.

²³ T.V. Cherkozyanova, “Trends in the karmic conditionality of the phenomenon of fate”, in *Vedanism. Bulletin of OSU*, 2010, vol. 10, no. 116, p. 52-56.

²⁴ K. Jung, “Soul and death”, in *Oltén und Freiburg im Breisgau*, 1987, no. 7, p. 445-455.

²⁵ L.F. Lelyavsky, *The Vedic book of death of Garuda Purana Sarodhara: an ancient Indian treatise*, Amrita, Moscow, 2006.

Death is absolute truth, this is confirmed in the Bhagavad Gita: “He who was born will surely die, and after death he will be born again. This is inevitable...”²⁶. But, if a person does not know what will happen to him after death – he will not be able to live correctly, so say the Puranic scriptures. In the vedic scriptures, 4 stages of death are considered: “oceanic phase”, “apocalypse”, “light at the end of the tunnel”, “liberation”. So, in Srimad-Bhagavatam, the death of an ordinary person who has lived an unconscious life is described:

SB 3.30.30
Evam kutumbam bibhana
Bhara eva va
Visrijayhobbayam pretya
Bhunchete tat phalam idrisham

“Leaving the body, a person who was engaged in sinful activities in order to feed himself and family members suffers in hell and condemns his relatives to the suffering”²⁷.

SB 3.30.31
Ekah prapadyate dhvantam
Hitvedam sva-kalevaram
Kushaletara-patheio
bhuta-drohena yad bhrtam

“After leaving the body, he goes to the darkest areas of hell in complete solitude, and the money he obtained at the cost of suffering of other living beings covers travel expenses”²⁸. In the vedic book of the dead “Garuda Purana”, the process of dying is likened to a snake who has crept in, creeps up and stings, causing physical and mental pain in a person eager to live. In such a depressed state, thinking about the fate of the family, with untamed feelings, losing consciousness from pain, he dies among crying relatives²⁹. Apurva or adrishta are actions of a previous life that do not die with the death of a body, ancient scriptures call it the seed that grows into character and fate in real life. Indian philosophy asserts that the current human destiny is the past, since the mental and moral inclinations that the soul acquires in this life, as a result of its intentions and actions, manifest themselves in appropriate conditions in the next life. Hence, the key idea is that the quality of death is the most significant element by which the soul is “embedded” in the conditions of post-mortal

²⁶ A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, *Bhagavad-gita as it is*, The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, Moscow, 2015.

²⁷ A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, *Srimad-Bhagavatam: canto three, volume three*, The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, Moscow, 2013.

²⁸ *Ibidem*.

²⁹ L.F. Lelyavsky, *The Vedic book of death of Garuda Purana Sarodhara: an ancient Indian treatise*, Amrita, Moscow, 2006.

reality, due to its personal karma. Undoubtedly, vedic theory played an invaluable role in understanding and conceptualizing the category of “fate”.

Ancient Vedic knowledge as the basis of the worldview

The concept of death is set forth in the ancient Puranic scriptures, raised in Srimad-Bhagavatam, Bhagavad-Gita and Garuda-Purana. Garuda Purana teaches correct death, according to this scripture, the first stage of death is life itself, since from the moment of birth a person begins to die. What is this period for? Vedas insist on a reasonable, conscious existence of man. Formed worldview – this is a map that a person is guided in this life. Therefore, the formation of a correct worldview in this life is important, goals are set: why do I live? What is the perfection of my life? This means the choice of awareness, the choice of values that will contribute to spiritual growth. At the present time, humanity is focused on achieving material values, but they will not have any value at the time of death. Mankind wants to rule this world through desires, but they need to desire the right things.

Also, at the time of death, people think about what they used to think during their lives. Then it is important now to realize what thoughts, emotions, feelings are most significant for a person, they will become our main asset, our acquisition by the end of our life. Hence, a certain practice of acquiring the skill of conscious thinking, conscious living, forming the right emotions, and so on is very important. Srimad Bhagavatam says that people who are drawn into the whirlpool of vain worries for the most part do not ask themselves who they are and why they were born. A person finds thousands of worthless and meaningless activities and subjects for discussion. And only the most important subject – the goal of life, he carefully ignores. Without answering two main questions, “who am I and why I live,” people are looking for immortality in their flesh, the flesh of descendants, or the memory of their fellow tribesmen. No matter how much success you achieve in the life, whether the structure of the world has comprehended or the well-being of your loved ones, all your successes are nonsense compared to a real treasure – the possibility of listening to the Lord God at the hour of death.

The second stage, death itself, takes nine days. At this stage, the thin body is detached from the gross, in other words, the soul in the subtle body will see its body lying on its deathbed. The Garuda Puranas explains in detail what happens to a person outside this material body. The personality is in a very vulnerable state, strongly attached to the body and does not understand what is happening to it, contact with the material world is one-sided; the person sees and hears everything that happens, but living people no longer perceive the person. This is a very important period when relatives can give a departed person knowledge about the nature of the soul, about the nature of the Creator, it is recommended to read the second chapter of Bhagavad-Gita,

where a detailed description of the soul is given. By the end of the ninth day, the karmic layer responsible for the connection between the senses and the external world is destroyed, and the soul can no longer perceive this reality.

The third stage lasts for forty days, the attention of the deceased is immersed in its mind, travels through one of the channels of the subtle body – nadi, this creates the effect of light at the end of the tunnel. This stage is regarded as the most important, since the nature of the experience gained during this period is determined by the dominant thoughts, emotions lived through life. This stage in Christianity is called the “ordeals of the soul”, in Buddhism it is called “one hundred angry and one hundred peaceful buddhas”, where peaceful buddhas mean contact with auspicious energies, angry buddhas mean contact with destructive energies. But the cause of all this is the man himself, the quality of his life. The so-called "work on the bugs". The last stage ends with the release, the receipt of a new birth. The key positions regarding the correct perception of death are in the Bhagavad Gita:

*Sri Bhagavan Uvaca
Asocyan Anvasbochas Tvam
prajna vadams ca bhasasa
Gatasun Agatusamsb cha
nanusochanti panditah*

“The Supreme Lord said: When you lead scholarly discourse, you lament that you are unworthy of grief. Wise people do not grieve either for the dead or the living”³⁰, since the next sloka, the verse, tells us that there has never been such a time when God and all souls exist and no one will ever cease to exist in the future. And the text 17, chapters 2 of Bhagavad-Gita indicates the true nature of the soul, immortality, that which the material body is permeated with, is indestructible. No one can destroy the immortal soul³¹.

The problem of realizing the true meaning of human life and death is described in the Katha Upanishads, where Nachiketu, the son of Vajashrava, began to ask reasonable questions about his existence, the end of his life with his father, and then the Bhagavan Yama is the god of death. Once the son of Vajashrava, desiring a result, distributed everything. A person renounced from material attachments receives a great blessing, and the son asked his father: "Father, to whom will you offer me?" He spoke to him a second time and a third time. His father said: "I will give you death"³². The son's answer was: “Among many, I am considered to belong to the highest; among many, I am considered to belong to the middle. What could be the goal of Death, which

³⁰ A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, *Bhagavad-gita as it is*, The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, Moscow, 2015.

³¹ *Ibidem*.

³² O.F. Volkova, N.B. Kondyreva, “Katha Upanishad”, in *Upanishads*, Ladomir Nauka GRVL, Moscow, 1992, p. 95-112.

the father will achieve today with the help of me?”³³ Nachiketu then turned to Death, so that out of the three blessings he asks, the most important was the deliverance of his father Gautama from anxiety³⁴. On what Death, wanting to check Nachiketu, began to offer him all the most desirable, but difficult to attainable pleasures of the world, but asked only not to ask about death³⁵. The answer to Nachiketu was flawless, he replied that all this is short-lived, moreover, it drains the strength of all human senses. Also, the life of all people without exception, in fact, is too short, so it is foolish and impossible to be satisfied with the wealth³⁶.

Due to the understanding of the immortal nature of the soul, *Srimad-Bhagavatam* states that at the last stage of the life path it is necessary to resolutely reject the fear of death. But first one should cut the knot of attachment to the material body and everything connected with it³⁷. And in reality, the true human needs and the essence of the human being are to satisfy the needs of the soul. The vedas determine the fullness of the purpose and reason of human life, as they consider both material issues and spiritual, both this world and the hereafter. This can be found in modern society. Therefore, now spiritual vedic science is a certain guidebook that teaches an understanding of its purpose in the conditions of this world, it is the art of life, but it is also the art of death. Ancient texts say that a person who has a sense of responsibility should always remember that the human form of life imposes certain obligations on him, it is not limited only to the satisfaction of immediate needs. In particular, an animal has such four needs as: food, sleep, mating, defense, but if a person cultivates the same thing throughout his life, he is refined, but an animal. But due to the fact that man is endowed with reason, this imposes on him higher goals and objectives that go beyond the limits of animal mastering the world.

The worldview crisis of postmodern society, the confusion of modern man in matters of self-development, his place, based on the axiological basis of corporeality and marginalism make it impossible to work out constructive ways to solve a whole layer of meaningful life issues. The urgent task of philosophy is to ascertain the reasons for the choice of such a destructive paradigm by society, and to justify the need for a different alternative, a different worldview base, in particular, the authors justify the importance and relevance of ancient vedic knowledge. Consequently, it is interesting that the ways to overcome the crisis of the modern crisis, the dead-end model of success, the widespread idea

³³ *Ibidem*.

³⁴ *Ibidem*.

³⁵ I.Yu. Krachkovsky, *Koran*, Oriental Publishing Center, Moscow, 1990.

³⁶ O.F. Volkova, N.B. Kondyreva, “Katha Upanishad”, in *Upanishads*, Ladomir Nauka GRVL, Moscow, 1992, p. 95-112.

³⁷ A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, *Srimad-Bhagavatam: the second song*, Moscow, The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, 2009.

of ubiquitous hedonism must be sought in the most ancient sources of human history, in Vedic writings such as the Katha Upanishad, Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, Garuda Purana , Srimad-Bhagavatam, Bhagavad-Gita, Katha Upanishad, which already contain the developed model of society, reasonable dharma – the duties of representatives of various varn – estates, values communities depending on the level of consciousness. Unique is the fact that the authors consider vedic thanatology as the fundamental aspect of Vedic knowledge in developing the axiological basis of the new worldview paradigm. Only a fundamental assimilation of the categories of “life” and “death” will in fact allow you to make an informed choice and choose the worldview model that will bring humanity to a new level of human resource use, which will allow you to find constructive ways out of the current crisis of worldview.

Conclusions

Thus, the crisis of human existence, the loss of life-sense guidelines, the inability of modern philosophical and scientific thought to give a positive interpretation of the current situation, to formulate ways out of the world outlook impose the authors to turn to ancient vedic knowledge, which, in fact, can act as a kind of instruction for life. The study points to the obvious link between the crisis state of the modern worldview and the comprehension of the fact not only of one’s own life, but also of death. Thanatology as a science of death and life allows one to be aware of the fact of one’s own existence and even of dying. Thus, the philosophical categories of "life" and "death" are fundamental in the human understanding of their own existence.

Modern Western philosophy has formed a fear of death and life-affirming "vitalism", as if people never die. While death is absolute truth. This is evidence of a sober perception of all events occurring in a person’s life, including his own death. Vedic knowledge emphasizes a person's attention on what is a chronic emotion lived by a person in life? Pride? Envy? Offense? Since, in reality, all the products of our mind, that is, all emotions, thoughts, world view in general, are important for the formation, as subsequent life, and the situation immediately at the moment and after death. The key idea of the authors is the importance of forming the right outlook already throughout life, so people need to ask questions: why do I live, what is the perfection of my life? The perfection of life, each individually and humanity as a whole, what is it? That is, humanity should ask this crucial question, what is the best version of me? What are the ways and methods to achieve this, what makes human life filled, meaningful? That is, Vedic knowledge cultivates the choice of mindfulness, which begins, at least with gratitude, as this indicates acceptance of various circumstances of life that, at first glance, may seem unfair, but with a conscious approach a constructive way of responding to them is developed. An attempt is being made to understand why these events are present in life, to

which they contribute, to the development of what qualities? In search of answers to these meaningful life questions, Vedic knowledge offers, like no other knowledge, a full-fledged platform, a serious philosophical base, in terms of Puranic scriptures.

Modern humanity does not make a choice in favor of awareness, it prefers an imposed surrogate: born – worked – died; philosophy – enjoy and exploit. The rationalistic approach did not justify itself in mastering the existential questions of humanity. The processes of globalization, technological civilization and consumer culture have revealed a serious worldview crisis, the impossibility of mastering the full extent of all the consequences of such processes.

Therefore, the factor of coming death, in fact, becomes the only powerful sobering factor that allows you to make a choice in favor of truth. Vedas argue that a person who does not know what will happen to him after death does not learn how to live correctly, and if human nature is not the body, but the soul, then this is the choice to spiritualize your own life, fill the soul with spiritual actions, refer to the source of spiritual strength, to God. Summarizing this study, you can use the opinion of K.G. Jung on this occasion that if the birth of a person is fraught with meaning – why is death meaningless? And if a person develops his own personality in a certain number of the first years of his life, then why haven't he spent the last twenty years preparing for it? He also believed that most religions are nothing more than complex systems of preparation for death, and this confirms the paradoxical formula: life is preparation for the last goal, for death.

According to the major modern religions, Christianity and Buddhism, the meaning of earthly existence is fully revealed at the end of life. Since philosophy is responsible for the formation of a worldview, modern philosophical thought should pay attention to the formation of a constructive platform for building a worldview base, without neglecting the ontological categories of life and death. And, in this case, the authors propose the oldest layer of philosophical thought, vedic thanatology, represented by a number of writings containing the developed value potential, which can be used by modern humanity as a new, but “already known and forgotten” paradigm of the modern worldview.