

PHILOSOPHY OF INDIAN PEDAGOGY

Kireet Joshi

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Preface

To write on Indian Pedagogy systematically and scientifically would be a huge task, but such a task needs to be undertaken sooner rather than later. The contents of this book are meant only to stimulate thinking on this subject in our country, and the chapters included may only be regarded as introductory.

Kireet Joshi

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Concept of Education in Ancient Indian Tradition and Culture : Its Contemporary Relevance

Introductory Questions

Critique of the
present system

At the outset, let us ask the question as to why we need to explore the concept of education in the Ancient Indian Tradition, and why we want to ascertain the relevance of that concept to the present time. Justification for this exploration could arise if we ask a further question as to whether our present system of education is relevant to our own times, and if we are prepared to undertake a critique of the present system.

Do we need to
change the
present system
of Education?

There is a view that the present system of education is, after all, quite reasonable and what we need is to make it a little more sophisticated, much more polished, with some modifications here and there like vocationalisation and job-orientation, and what we further need is to ensure accountability of teachers and educational institutions. It has even been prominently asked, in defence of the present system, if we ourselves are not the products of that system and whether we are not, more or less, quite well-equipped to deal with our responsibilities.

There is, on the other hand, a more progressive view, which does not admit that we, the products of the system of education, are what we ought to be, that a better system could have made us better equipped, in terms of both personality and skills, and capable of

**Education should
be child-centred**

meeting the demands and challenges of our times. The spectrum of this view is quite wide, and at one end, it advocates some major reforms, and at the other end, it advocates a number of radical reforms. In any case, this view argues that education must aim at the integral development of personality and that we need to have complete education for the complete human being. Analysing the concept of the integral development of personality, it pleads for the harmonisation of the physical, vital and mental personality. It also recognises that the mental personality itself requires harmonisation of the rational, the ethical and the aesthetic. Two further propositions are also added: first, that the personality develops best when the educational atmosphere provides to every student a good deal of freedom; — freedom in pursuing inner inclinations, freedom in regulating pace of progress, and freedom in determining directions of education; and secondly, that education should be so child-centred that it not only puts the child in the centre of the classroom but also in the centre of the society itself.

**Innovations
and reforms of
education.**

Implications of these contentions are momentous. They require major changes in the attitudes of teachers, parents and educational administrators, even of the students themselves. They demand applications of new methodologies of education and transformations in the classroom situation, teaching-learning materials and in the established routine of the educational institutions; they also demand radical reviews of curricula, syllabi and the current examination system.

Closely connected with these demands, life-long education is also being underlined. Correspondingly,

great expansion of non-formal education and open system of education is also being advocated. Finally, the concept of learning society is being increasingly proposed as the right setting for all the innovations and reforms of education.

Difficulties

The major difficulty in implementing these important proposals is threefold:

- As noted above, these reforms call for great changes in the attitudes among all the partners of education and these changes are not at all easy or facile;
- They also imply difficulty in structural changes, which need to be conceived, designed and implemented on a sustainable basis and there are no agencies that could accomplish these tasks; and
- They require not only major funding but also prudent planning, prioritisation and delicate balancing between the act of modifying or dismantling the old and that of creation of the new.

Need for bolder Reforms

It is in the context of this situation that serious and sincere educationists feel hesitant to make some further and bolder proposals, particularly in the context of the Indian system of education, – the proposals which are indispensable and which can be postponed only on the peril of risking loss of cultural identity and even of crippling the very soul of India.

We are all aware that the current Indian system of education was designed by the Britishers for their

**Education was
designed by the
Britishers**

narrower purposes and for promoting in our country the Western view of India, — her past and her period of decline or backwardness and the cure by which they thought India could occupy some place among those countries, which could tolerably be described as civilised. Unfortunately, what the Britishers designed has hardly been altered even after our attainment of Independence, and whatever changes have occurred can only be regarded as cosmetic in character. Worst of all, those institutions which had come up under the influence of the nationalist movement, came to be closed down or they were obliged to fall in line with the normal system of education, designed by the Britishers. And the financial allocations made to the education departments were distributed among the increasingly multiplying number of institutions belonging to the normal pattern. Free India's money was thus pumped more and more vigorously to spread in India on a vast scale that very system which the nationalist leaders had dreamt to demolish once Independence was won. This situation is continuing with increasing vigour, and unless we bestir ourselves vehemently to think afresh, and design afresh, one does not see how else we shall be able to redress the harm that we are inflicting on generations upon generations and to the cause of Indian renaissance.

Free India's failure

It is noteworthy that the greatest representatives of the Indian renaissance, from Maharshi Dayananda Saraswati to Sri Aurobindo, had perceived in the ancient Indian system of education such an uplifting and inspiring model that they had all advocated for free India a national system of education rooted in the ancient Indian conception of education, which would,

A national system of education

at the same time, cater to the ideals of internationalism and universality. They had all dreamt of free India where students would relive the presence and guidance of the wise and benign and courageous Rishis who had sown in the soil of India the seeds of perennial inspiration. They wanted to recreate sanctuaries of living souls who could be fostered by teachers who would, like Vashistha and Vishwamitra, Vamadeva and Bhardwaj, remain unfettered by dogma or any restraining force of limitation or obscurantism. They wanted perfect harmony between the human and the natural, between the individual and the universal, between the mundane and the supramundane. Their message was clear that the ancient Indian concept of education should not only be revisited by free India but should also be resurrected, renovated and perfected by the aid of all that is modern and useful, by all that is Indian and universal.

There is no point in crying over the fact that free India has so far failed in giving shape to the dreams and aspirations of these great pioneers. But is it not overdue that we try to understand them, get into the heart of the ancient Indian system of education, evaluate it in the light of the needs of today and tomorrow and design for our children something new that will give to them the best fruits of their heritage and also the best fruits of modern advancement?

Three Characteristics of the Ancient Indian Concept of Education

If we study the Veda and the Upanishads, and the related literature from where we can get glimpses of

**Ancient pursuit of
individual and
collective
perfectibility**

the ancient Indian concept of education, we shall find that there were three special characteristics of that conception. The first characteristic stresses the fact that the educational process had resulted from the understanding of the fullness of life, its own methods of instruction and how these methods can be employed by teachers to secure acceleration of progress of students. The second characteristic is related to the astonishing fund of integral knowledge that could serve as the foundation of the contents of education. And the third emerges from the ancient pursuit of individual and collective perfectibility in the light of their laborious experiments related to the human potentialities.

Let us briefly elucidate them.

Education and Life: Methods of Education; Role of Teachers and Students:

Education was conceived as something springing from life itself, and it was conceived as a part of the organisation of life and it was designed to relate education with life and its highest possible fulfilment.

It was observed that life itself is the great teacher of life that life which is in its outer movement a series of shocks of meeting between individuals and circumstances, has in its inner heart a secret method of progression from untruth to truth, from darkness to light, and from death to immortality. It was further observed that this process of life can be systematically organised and methods can be built by which the intended progression can be accelerated. Accordingly,

**All life was
education**

education came to be conceived as a methodised organisation of life in which threads of progression are so woven that each individual can be aided to bring about judicious acceleration of the rate of his growth and development.

In this conception the home of the teacher represented the fabric of life in which educational process was subtly and methodically intertwined in such a way that all life was education and all educational activities throbbed with life-experience.

**The teacher looked
upon his task as
an observer, helper
and guide**

The home of the teacher, which came to be called the *ashrama* or *gurukula*, was centred on students, and each student received individual attention. The teacher looked upon his task as that of an observer, as a helper, as a guide, — not as that of a taskmaster. He taught best, not so much through instruction, as through the example of his wisdom and character and through his personal and intimate contact with the soul of each student. He had no rigid or uniform methods; but he applied every possible method in a varying manner in regard to every student. For Satyakama, the teacher would apply the simple method of learning through the activities connected with grazing the cattle; for Svetaketu, the teacher would apply the method of meaningful questioning and demonstration through apt examples; Pippalada asked his pupils to dwell for one year in holiness and faith and askesis before they could put their questions; and Bhṛigu was asked by his father and the teacher, Varun, to concentrate himself in thought and discover the truth of Matter, of Life, of Mind, and of the Supermind and of the Bliss by successive and higher and higher meditations. Often

the teacher communicated through silence so as to destroy the doubts in the minds of the pupils; the teacher taught students in groups but also individually; the teacher, in fact, utilised every incident of life for imparting knowledge and experience.

The student was
looked upon as a
seeker

The student was looked upon as a seeker, not to be silenced by any dogmatic answers but to be uplifted in higher processes of thought, meditation and direct experience or realisation. In the educational process, student's enthusiasm, *utsaha*, was of utmost importance. *Svadhya* was the cornerstone of the learning process. Nothing was imposed upon the student except the willing acceptance of the discipline. The pupil was the *brahmacharin*, devoted to self-control and askesis; he was asked to obey the command of the teacher, knowing very well that the teacher asked nothing arbitrary and only laid down the path by which self-perfection can be attained. The teacher was the Rishi who knew the inmost needs of the growth of the soul of the student, and he had the knowledge and power to place each student on the right road to perfection. It was left to the student to walk or run on that road, according to his ability, inclination and rate of progression.

The teacher and the pupil lived a joint life, a life of joint prayer, of joint endeavour, of joint conquest of knowledge. Just as the student sought the teacher, even so, the teacher, too, sought the student. As the teacher in the Taittiriya Upanishad announces:

“May the Brahmacharins come unto me. From here and there, may the Brahmacharins come unto me.”

**Life has a rhythm
of development**

An important element in the organisation of education was that of Time, *kāla*. The teacher knew that everything in life has a rhythm of germination and flowering, and every process of life has a rhythm of development, which can be measured in terms of time. The teacher, therefore, combined the methods that required patience with those that ensured perfection. He knew how the student can be enabled to arrive at progression, neither too quickly nor too slowly, but by slow building up of foundation and a rapid process of the blossoming of the faculties. Each student was, therefore, helped to obtain a judicious rate of progression and a judicious rate of acceleration.

The most important element in the educational process was the illumined condition of the teacher, — his state of knowledge, his command over different domains of life, his ripe experience, his wisdom, his realisation.

This brings us the second characteristic of the ancient Indian concept of education.

**Integral Knowledge: Importance of the Intellect;
Exploration and Realisation of the Superconscious**

**The Veda and the
Upanishads can be
regarded as the
records of integral
knowledge**

As we study the Veda and Upanishad, we are struck by the profundity and loftiness of the knowledge that the Rishis had attained. The Veda and the Upanishads can rightly be regarded as the records of “integral knowledge” — the synthesis of God-knowledge, self-knowledge and world-knowledge. The Rishis, the composers of these great compositions, had arrived at the secret methods of attaining deeper and higher states of consciousness; and they had formulated

various forms of concentration, which served as the key to knowledge. They had discovered that what the world revealed to us in response to our seeking and questioning depended on the state of sincerity, of impartiality, of complete identity between the subject and the object of knowledge. Thus they knew the secret of intuition, revelation, inspiration and discrimination. But they knew very well also the knowledge by separative means of knowledge, knowledge that can be attained by senses, and the knowledge that can be obtained by reasoning and intellectual thought.

**The faculty of the
pure intellect**

The famous Gayatri mantra of *Vishwamitra* singles out one faculty of the human being as of singular importance, without whose cultivation and concentration, the best or the highest cannot be attained. This is the faculty of *dhi*, the pure intellect. This mantra indicates that it is only when the intellect can be trained in the system of meditation and contemplation that the major step in the process of knowledge can be taken. This *Gayatri* mantra also indicates that *Vishwamitra* had discovered the highest domain of luminous knowledge, which is symbolised as *Savitri*. He had further discovered that intellect can be so trained that it can succeed in concentrating upon that higher Light. Finally, it indicates that the intellect can be properly directed when it joins itself with *Savitri*, with the most beautiful form of creative Light.

**World can be
known when its
source is known**

The Vedas and the Upanishads abound with thousands of statements and indications that the world can best be known when its source is known and only when its relationship with the individual is known, —

**Vedic Rishi tell
the secret of
immortality**

individuals who take it as a field of their experience, their enjoyment, their bondage and their liberation. The modern psychologist takes great pride in his discovery of the unconscious and the subconscious, but the Rishi, the Vedic teacher, had discovered even the inconscient, that which was wrapped darkly in the shroud of darkness. He had discovered also how the inconscient awakens and becomes the subconscious and how the subconscious and conscient are related to each other. He had also the assured knowledge of the deeper and deepest domains of consciousness that lie behind (not below) the outer layers of consciousness. He had also scaled the heights of the superconscient, and not stopping anywhere, he had declared that as one rises the ladder higher and higher, more and more becomes clear as to what still remains to be known. The Vedic Rishi declares his own state of knowledge where all darkness gets shattered and where his soul, like the falcon, liberates itself from the hundred chains of iron and soars above in the wide sky of consciousness in liberation, to the unmixed truth and to the unmixed bliss. The Vedic Rishi tells us of the secret of immortality and of the great path by which that secret can be attained by every human being.

The ancient Indian concept of education had its foundations in the Vedic and Upanishadic integral knowledge. Its aim was to transmit to the new generations this knowledge and to develop it further by means of fresh quest and experimentation.

Human Potentialities and Pursuit of Individual and Collective Perfectibility

Five sheaths in the human being

The third characteristic of the ancient conception of education was its emphasis on harmonisation of different aspects of personality so that the physical being of the individual is made a strong base for sustaining the growth and perfection of the vital, mental, and higher aspects of personality. The Taittiriya Upanishad speaks of five sheaths in the human being, all of which need to be integrated, – *annamaya*, the physical, *prāṇamaya*, the vital, *manomaya*, the mental, *vijñānamaya*, the supramental, and *ānandamaya*, the bliss that is conscious and self-existent. The Vedic and the Upanishadic Rishis had made a thorough study of the problem of integration and come to the conclusion that the mental being, *manomaya*, is the leader of the physical and the vital, – *prāṇa sharira neta*, and that it is by developing the mental powers that the vital and the physical can be controlled and mastered, although the real and lasting integration can come about only when one develops higher degrees of consciousness which transcend the mental consciousness.

Ancient Indian psychology

According to the ancient Indian psychology, the physical, the vital, and the mental can be uplifted to their higher perfection when the Spirit is made to manifest its four powers, the power of wisdom, the power of heroism, the power of harmony and the power of skill in works. The *Purusha Sukta* of the Rigveda makes it clear that these four powers are all spiritual in character and when all of them are fully manifested that the deepest divinity can become operative in our dynamic life. At the same time, the concept of *swabhāva* and *swadharma* was developed on the basis, a full exposition of which we get in the

The concept of
swabhāva and
swadharma

Bhagavad Gita. Each individual has, according to this system of knowledge, a predominant force which gives rise to a special tendency in the being, either of wisdom or of heroism or of harmony or of skill. This predominant tendency is what is called *swabhāva* and each individual needs to be given the freedom to develop on the line of one's own *swabhāva*. The Indian system of education made a special provision so that each *swabhāva* receives the necessary aid and framework of development as also the system of culture and the system of developing those qualities which can ultimately foster and nourish the totality of the personality. It was a later corruption of this great psychological principle of *swabhāva* that led to the development of caste system where *swabhāva* was the least to be considered and its inner truth was sacrificed in favour of the system of determination by birth and a system of privileges and handicaps — a parody of the ancient insights of profound psychology.

Development of
faculties and
capacities

Nonetheless, the ancient system of education in India, in its peak period, produced amazing results in terms of development of faculties and capacities, and their integration, a supreme example of which is to be found in the personality of Sri Krishna who was at once a spiritual teacher, a heroic warrior, a great harmoniser, and skillful worker, who could excel in the task of a charioteer in the field of Kurukshetra. If we consider the spiritual history of India and also its history of dynamic activities that built up great edifices of mathematics and natural sciences, medical sciences, numberless philosophies, teeming *dharmashastras*, profusion of literature, art and architecture, and powerful administration and system of governance,

we shall find that these great achievements were traceable to the ancient system of education. This system, though spiritual in character, did not reject the life on the earth but laid it down that the higher achievements are to be attained in the life on the earth, — here itself, *iha eva*.

Concept of *shreshtha*

This system put forward the conception of *shreshtha*, and pointed out various qualities that we should expect in the ideal personality. This conception was emphasised because it was consciously recognised that people tend to follow the best and distribution of the best qualities among the people at large can be effected only by encouraging and fostering the best.¹

In the heart of the *shreshtha*, these qualities blossomed: benevolence, love, compassion, altruism, long suffering, liberality, kindness and patience; in his character, the qualities of courage, heroism, energy, loyalty, continence, truth, honour, justice, faith, obedience, and reverence. These qualities included also a fine modesty and yet noble pride, and power to govern and direct.

Shreshtha was an ideal seeker of the spirit

The *shreshtha* was required in his mind wisdom and intelligence and love of learning, openness to poetry, art, and beauty, and dedicated capacity and skill in works. In his inner life, he had the urge to seek after the highest and nourish the spiritual turn. In his social

1. As Sri Krishna points out in the Gita:

यद्यदाचरति श्रेष्ठस्तत्तदेवेतरो जनः ।

स यत्प्रमाणं कुरुते लोकस्तदनुवर्तते । ।

Whatsoever a great man does, the same is done by others as well.

Whatever standard he sets, the world follows the same. (Bhagavad Gita 3.21)

relations and conduct, he was strict in his observance of all social responsibilities as father, son, husband, brother, kinsman, friend, ruler, master or servant, prince or warrior, or worker, king or sage. *Shreshtha*, the best, was an ideal seeker of the spirit endowed with robust rationality, both spirit-wise and world-wise, nobility, and devotion to dharma. He was tolerant of life's difficulties and human weaknesses, but arduous and self-disciplined.

The theory and practice of Yoga

The ancient system of education at once indulged and controlled man's nature, it fitted him for his social role, it stamped on his mind the generous ideal of an accomplished humanity, refined, harmonious in all capacities and noble in all its endeavours; and above all, it placed before him the theory and practice of Yoga, the theory and practice of a higher change, and it familiarised him with the concept of a spiritual existence and encouraged in him hunger for the divine and infinite.

Sixty-four sciences and arts

The scope of the ancient system of education was comprehensive; it rejected no discipline of knowledge, no means of expression, — literary or artistic, — no craft, and technology that could make for best utility of matter and substance. The Indian tradition speaks of sixty-four sciences and arts, and it catered to the education of women in such a liberal way that we still speak of great examples of *Lopāmudra*, *Gargi*, and *Maitreyi*. In the courses of study, apart from the study of the Veda, which was in itself a great science and art of living, emphasis was laid on comprehensive training of all that could equip each one for the role that was suitable to each individual on the lines of *swabhāva*

and *swadharma*. Study of healthcare and *Ayurveda* was also an important part of the programme of study. In course of time, six *Vedangas* had developed as also four *Upavedas* and a number of other sciences and *shastras*. With the development of Buddhism, a different system of education developed which laid great emphasis on practices of asceticism, rules of *dharma* and studies of philosophy, medicine and other sciences. This, also had effect on the orthodox system of education, and in due course of time, different systems of education developed. But the history of this development does not concern us here.

Image of the Ancient Indian System of Education

Of the ancient Indian system of education that flourished for a considerable period of time, we have in our mind an inspiring image as it is described in a few pages of the Upanishads. This image has been presented to us by Sri Aurobindo in the following words:

“The sages sitting in their groves ready to test and teach the comer, princes and learned Brahmins and great landed nobles going about in search of knowledge, the king's son in his chariot and the illegitimate son of the servant-girl, seeking any man who might carry in himself the thought of light and the word of revelation, the typical figures and personalities, Janaka and the subtle mind of Ajatashatru, Raikwa of the cart, Yajnavalkya militant for truth, calm and ironic, taking to himself with both hands without attachment worldly possessions and spiritual riches and casting at last all his wealth behind to wander forth as a houseless ascetic, Krishna son of Devaki who heard a single word of the Rishi Ghora and knew at

once the Eternal, the Ashramas, the courts of kings who were also spiritual discoverers and thinkers, the great sacrificial assemblies, where the sages met and compared their knowledge.”²

Question of Relevance

**Concentrate on
essence rather than
on outer forms**

It is not possible to go into greater details and delineate a more precise and comprehensive description of the ancient Indian conception of education. But while considering the question of the relevance of this concept to the needs and demands of our own times, we should distinguish between the essence and outer forms in which that concept was made operative in the ancient times. It is evident that we have to concentrate on essence rather than on outer forms.

Ideal Teachers

In the first place, it is not easy to find in our current times Rishis like *Vashishtha* and *Vishwamitra* and *Yajnavalkya* around whom the ancient system was built. But still, we can make use of the ideal and consider as to how that ideal can be brought nearer to actuality and what conditions of atmosphere, conception, vision, and equipment would be necessary to create among our teachers a new aspiration to embody in themselves those qualities and concerns which dominated the ideal teachers of that antiquity. It is not entirely impossible to build up a new system of teachers' training through which new roles of teachers can be visualised and imparted to the coming generations of teachers.

² Sri Aurobindo: *The Foundations of Indian Culture*, Centenary Edition, p.280.

**New system of
teachers' training**

The task of the teacher is not primarily to teach but to observe the students and to guide them on the proper lines which are suitable to their potentialities, inclinations and capacities can be emphasised. The teacher's instruments are not confined only to methods of instruction but include the example of the inner character of the teacher and his capacity to enter into the depths of students' inner souls can also be stressed. The teacher must concentrate and embody vast and true knowledge and continue to learn more and more can also be underlined. In any case, the country can take a major decision to create such conditions where the image of the ideal teacher is made vividly visible, so that we can have in the coming decades a growing number of teachers who can approximate in their qualities and in their character as also in their knowledge and skills to the ideal teacher of our ancient system.

This we should strive to do, not only to maintain our continuity of cultural development but also because the ancient Indian pedagogy was extremely sound, and India will stand to gain if that pedagogy can be brought back to life, and can be further enriched by applications of the results of various progressive educational experiments which have been conducted in India and in different part of the world during the last two centuries.

**Child-centred
education; Integral
education on the
lines of *Swabhāva*
and *Swadharma***

Modern emphasis on child-centred education is consonant with the care that was bestowed upon the child and the *brahmacharin* in the home of the teacher in our ancient system. And there is no doubt that the more will this emphasis be translated into practice, the

more will our modern system begin to resemble our ancient system in spirit, although not in outer form.

**Integral
development of
personality**

Among the idea-forces which have powerfully emerged in the modern world and which will determine the future, there are two which will stand out for the universal acceptance. The first among these is the conception of the right of all individuals as members of the society to full life and the full development of which they are individually capable. No ideal will persist which will allow an arrangement by which certain classes of society should arrogate development and full social fruition to themselves while assigning a bare and barren function of service to others. And the second idea is that of individualism, which proclaims that the individual is not merely a social unit, that he is not merely a member of human pack, but he is something in himself, a soul, a being, who has to fulfil his own individual truth and law as well as his natural or assigned part in the truth and the law of collective existence. The individual thus demands freedom, space, initiative for his soul, for his nature, for his *swabhāva* and *swadharma*, to use the Indian terms. These two ideas together are bound to force the contemporary system of education to undergo such a radical change that the ideal of the integral development of personality is given highest importance and, considering that the concepts of integral personality are getting increasingly enriched under the stress of modern search of the inner soul, the ancient Indian concept of education, in which integration of human personality was sought to be effected by the fourfold powers of the soul will be found directly relevant and useful. It is increasingly

Modern
educational
psychology

recognised that the human beings of the present day are so acutely torn by the inherent conflicts between the rational, the ethical and the aesthetic that they are obliged to look for something else, something higher than the rational and the pragmatic, something spiritual and much more truly effective in solving the problems of life.

It is often contended that the Indian system of education had for long been instrumental in sustaining the pernicious caste system and therefore, in the new atmosphere where casteless and classless society is being envisaged, the Indian system will be found to be entirely irrelevant. But this is a misreading of Indian history, and it commits the error of attributing what happened at one stage during the period of decline to the entire long history of Indian education. There was in the early times of Indian history, a system of four *varnas*, but this system was quite different from its degenerated and distorted caricature that the later caste system represents. In any case, without going into disputes regarding the ancient *chaturvarnya* and the later caste system, two things can be safely stated that the individual develops best when he develops on the lines of inherent propensities, potentialities, capacities and predominant interests; and secondly, that the individual develops perfection only when all the potentialities are developed and integrated into a harmony. This is now being increasingly acknowledged in the modern educational psychology, and this was already acknowledged and practised to a greater or a lesser degree in the ancient system of education. The Indian educational theory and practice laid special emphasis on *swabhava* and *swadharma* and on the idea

of fourfold personality which can be perfected by developing the individual soul, conceived not as an ego but as a harmonious entity which has its own uniqueness and which yet lives by mutuality and harmony with the totality. This theory and practice will be found most relevant to the task of rebuilding a new system of education.

Teacher education

It is also increasingly recognised that corresponding to the aim of the integral development of personality, the teacher also must have a personality that is very well developed and integrated. Our present system of teacher education is not only superficial but also mechanical and uninspiring. The time that we have allotted to the programme of teacher education, which practically comes to eight months, is hopelessly inadequate, and the wiser counsel that we are now hearing in our country is that we should institute an integrated course of teacher education, which can extend over to four to five years. This wise counsel seems destined to succeed, and we shall, therefore, be in a better position to design a comprehensive programme of teachers' education. In that design, all the valuable aspects of the ancient concepts of education and the ancient concept of the role of the teacher will find some kind of rebirth and renewal.

Environment

It is often contended that one of the most salutary aspects of the ancient Indian system of education was the setting that was provided to the *Gurukula*, — the setting of a forest, which was remote from the hustle and bustle of worldly life. It is, however, argued that this condition is hardly feasible in our times and this reduces the relevance of the ancient system. The

argument has some force, although it must be stressed that a large number of universities which have come to be developed in India after independence have been provided with beautiful settings, but unfortunately, many of them have been ruined by human misuse. Many private schools also are being developed in our country in beautiful settings. In any case, it is true that with the development of modern media, the isolation which was sought for the educational institutions in ancient times has now become almost impossible. But these practical difficulties do not contradict the truth that the educational institution must be set up in such a beautiful environment that the harmony between human being and Nature can become a part of the organisation of life and, therefore, a powerful medium of education. If this truth is kept in view, it will serve a great purpose when our country will be required to build increasing number of educational institutions, even in remote villages and groups of hamlets. The importance of environment, of surroundings full of vegetation, flowers and fruits, can never be underestimated, and the fact that our ancient system of education had underlined this important aspect will remain a permanent contribution to the higher causes of civilisation.

Contemporary
crisis; Value-
education;
Spiritual education

It is important to note that there is an increasing awareness both in India and the world that the contemporary crisis is fundamentally the crisis of the disbalancement, of an exaggerated development of the outer structures and organisations and means of physical and vital satisfactions, on the one hand, and the neglect of the ethical and spiritual dimensions of human life, on the other. One, therefore, hears of the

crisis of character, crisis of values and crisis of spiritual evolution. Grippled as we are in this crisis, we are bound to look for the knowledge of ethics and spirituality, of values and of the knowledge that can bridge the gulf between the life of matter and the life of spirit. In the West, increasing number of leaders are now speaking of return to basics, and in India we have begun to conceive of programmes of value-education. This subject has not yet received the attention that it deserves, but there is no doubt that under the pressure of circumstances or of our enlightened foresight, when we shall explore this subject, we are bound to raise three important questions, helpful answers of which will largely be found in our ancient Indian conception of education.

Meaning of Values

The first question will be related to the meaning of values, particularly when they are not to be restricted only to the domain of morality but will extend to the domain of aesthetics, rationality, and even to the domain of supra-rationality. This question will become complex when we come to consider values of physical education, vital education, and mental education in the context of integral development of personality and of the perfectibility of the individual and the collectivity.

Science and Values

The second question will be related to science and values, particularly when humanity is awaking to the necessity of directing scientific knowledge towards the goal of higher welfare of humanity. This question will again become complex when we examine the claim of scientific knowledge that knowledge by its very nature has to be scientific and that the knowledge of values is

not strictly speaking knowledge. The question will be whether this claim is sustainable in view of the growing idea that knowledge is not a matter merely of inductive or deductive process of thought but that even instincts, desires, emotions, aspirations, faith and intuitions give clues to knowledge and are themselves imbued with knowledge. This will necessarily lead us to the question of harmonising positive knowledge with axiological knowledge and of developing an integral system of knowledge.

Values and Self-knowledge

The third question will be related to relationship between self-knowledge and pursuit of values, particularly when it is seen that pursuit of values demands increasing self-control and self-mastery, which in turn, are related to self-knowledge. For, as it was realised by the ancient Rishis, the Self cannot be known except through self-discipline, and self-discipline cannot become perfect without the true knowledge of the self. Again, this question will become complex when it is realised that self-knowledge is intimately related to world-knowledge and God-knowledge.

It will be seen that these questions will oblige us to converge upon the profound psychological, ethical and spiritual knowledge which was so central to the ancient India's conception of education.

Modern knowledge; Physical, Supraphysical and Spiritual knowledge

We realise that modern knowledge is expanding at a tremendous rate of progression; in course of this rapid movement, materialism of yesterday is being increasingly over passed. Philosophical inadequacy of materialism has become obvious when we see that

Philosophical
inadequacy of
materialism

the advanced materialists of today refrain from making any metaphysical propositions, including those regarding materialism. The argument that science can deal only with matter is also being over passed. The development of life sciences, psychological sciences and humanistic sciences has shown that what is important in science is the scientific method but not the unsustainable assumption that this method can be applied only in the domain of Matter. As a matter of fact, the boundaries between the physical and the supra-physical are being broken up quite rapidly, and as against the earlier assumption of materialism that only that is real which can be physically verified, it is clearly proved that the basic sub-atomic substratum of matter is physically invisible although real. Even in technological matters, dependence on material means alone is being increasingly substituted by inventions which reduce dependence on material means, such as in the case of wireless telegraphy.

Increasing
importance of the
Yogic knowledge

With these developments, we can see that the knowledge of the physical will gradually or rapidly begin, for its further development or completion, to knock at the doors of the supraphysical knowledge. And, in that context, the importance of the knowledge – physical and supraphysical – that constituted the contents of the ancient Indian system of education will come to be underlined.

And this will lead also to the study of Yoga as a science. As Swami Vivekananda had declared, Yoga is science *par excellence*, since it proceeds by the scientific method of observation, experimentation and verification, of

*Yoga is science par
excellence*

repetition and of rectification as also of continuous expansion. And with the admission of the Yogic knowledge, it appears that the entire body of discoveries made by the Vedic and Upanishadic Rishis and by the subsequent numberless Yogic explorers will become the central focus of advancing research. Already some Western scientists are turning to the knowledge that Yoga can provide, and we can foresee that this movement is bound to move forward. And this will enhance the relevance of the heritage that we possess of the ancient Indian conception of knowledge and education.

*Renewal of the old
Spiritual
knowledge—
need for developing
new knowledge*

This is not to say that all that we need today and tomorrow was already contained in the ancient system; although loftiest and central discoveries of the secrets of the Spirit were made in those ancient times, there is still much more to be done in the coming days. New knowledge of matter and new knowledge of spirit are likely to be the preoccupation of the seekers all over the world. It is also possible that the older synthesis of knowledge will be replaced by newer synthesis. But still old foundations will always be found to be not only relevant but of basic value.

As we visualise these future developments, we can see at once how they will affect our present day curricula and our entire present system of educational aims, educational methods and educational contents. Radical changes will be required; and we shall need to revisit the ancient Indian concept of education and derive from it valuable insights, which can guide us in the right direction, provided we also take care to embrace the latest results of the latest educational

Upanishadic secret
of embracing
unending
knowledge

research and experimentation that has been conducted in India and elsewhere.

We have to realise that our present Indian curricula hardly provide to our students any adequate idea of the unbroken history of Indian culture, which extended in the past at least beyond five thousand years. If we are to give even a faint idea of this vast canvas of Indian culture, — which incidentally, is indispensable if we want to sustain our cultural identity, — and if we are to add, as we must, also the new and expanding horizons of knowledge, which are vastly developing, we shall be obliged to consider ways and means by which our entire system of curriculum-making and our system of educational methodology can undergo radical changes. We shall have to find a central answer to the question as to how to master knowledge when it is very vast and when it is expanding at an exponential rate. And shall we not be tempted to listen seriously to the Upanishadic declaration that there is a kind of knowledge having acquired, all can be known?

The Teacher and the Pupil

The ideals of truth,
light and
immortality

Ancient India conceived an intimate relationship between education and life. It looked upon education as a preparation for life and considered life a process of continuing education. It studied life in all its aspects and attempted to apply psychological principles and truths of life to education. One important consequence was to fix for education certain life-long objectives that require life-long effort to achieve and realize. These objectives were summarized in a triple formula which gave a wide and lofty framework to the ancient system of education.

Lead me from falsehood to truth.
Lead me from darkness to light.
Lead me from death to immortality.

असतो मा सद्गमय।
तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय।
मृत्योर्माऽमृतं गमय॥

This formula proved to be so potent that it governed the Indian system of education for ages. Even today, remote as we are from that ancient ethos, we refer to it constantly for fresh inspiration.

To the ancient thinkers and sages, the ideals of truth, light and immortality constituted a triune unity, each

subsisting in the other. Truth meant to them not an isolated fact, but one vast unity of the Objective Fact in which the multiplicity of facts and phenomena finds its essential oneness. Light meant to them a state of plenary consciousness in which essence and multiplicity is comprehended in a vast, undivided, unified and integral concentration. That state of consciousness in which the reality of unity and oneness is comprehended was found by them to be an imperturbable and imperishable state of immortality, a state in which one can permanently dwell and through which one can effectuate extraordinary transmutations of the process of the mind, life and body.

**One Existent which
the Wise call by
various names**

That Objective Fact, self-luminous and imperishable, which comprehends multiplicity in oneness, was named variously in the early records of Indian knowledge. The Veda, the earliest record, described it as the 'One Existent which the Wise call by various names' (*ekam sad vipra bahudha vadanti*)¹ The Upanishads, the later records, describe it sometimes as *Sat*, the Pure Existent, and sometimes as *Asat*, the Non-Existent or the ineffable that transcends any particular description. The Upanishads also describe it as the Unknowable, an indefinable 'x', the Brahman, That (*tat*), the other which can be seized only by a process that dismisses every description by pronouncing 'not that, not that' (*neti neti*). The largest positive description the Upanishads gives of that 'x', that Something Else, is Sachchidananda (the conscious and delightful Existent).

¹ Rig Veda. Mandela I, Sukta 164, Verse 46.

The Upanishads admit clearly and unambiguously that the knowledge of the *Sat* or the Brahman is neither intellectual nor anti-intellectual. Indeed, it is beyond the grasp of the senses, *atindriyam* but it is still *buddhigrahyam*², seizable by the intellect. Pure Reason, it may be said, has the idea of essence, and by developing this idea, can arrive at some concept of the Brahman, even though Brahman is more than essence. However, according to strict criteria, knowledge is determined both through idea and through direct, abiding and undeniable experience. The strength of the Vedic and Upanishadic assertions is that they were arrived at by centuries of experiment in discovering and practising certain profound methods by which the Objective Fact, the Substance, that Multiple One, the simple-complex, the mysterious 'x', the *Sat* or the Brahman can be seized and known in direct experience.

Quantity, quality,
relation and
modality

It is said that existence is what we knock into; it is something we cannot think away, it stands and cannot be obliterated. But in normal experience, our subjective apparatus imposes its own categories on the object of experience, and we are thus prevented from experiencing the truly existent object – if, indeed, there is such a thing. We experience, to use Kant's terminology, quantity, quality, relation and modality, in addition to two forms of intuition, Space and Time. But we fail to experience the Object-in-itself, the Existence-in-itself. The question is whether we can remove the blinders of our subjective mental consciousness, look freely at truth, and experience in a

² Gita, VI.21.

state of total objectivity the reality as it is.

The ancient Indian educational theory affirms that if it is possible to transcend the limitations of sense-bound experience and reason-bound consciousness, and that the most fundamental object of education is to prepare the pupil to free himself from those limitations and attain that level of knowledge where he can dwell permanently in existent reality, in light and in immortality.

Vidya and Avidya

The early Indian educators made a distinction between Vidya and Avidya, between the knowledge of Existence-in-itself, in its totality and multiple manifestation, and the knowledge of multiplicity alone, without the comprehension of the underlying unity. And it was laid down that the aim of education, of life-long education, was to lead the individual to the knowledge which liberates from the limitations of Avidya, *sa vidya ya vimuktaye*.

If we study the Veda and the Upanishads in a truly scientific spirit, unprejudiced by any *a priori* dogma that the human limitations of consciousness cannot be transcended, we shall find that the authors of these ancient records were themselves true scientists and experimenters. Those thinkers and seers devoted all their energies to the study of human psychology so as to discover the methods by which we can attain freedom from our ordinary limitations. This discovery was the most significant achievement of ancient India. As Sri Aurobindo pointed out, "... the seers of ancient India had, in their experiments and efforts at spiritual training and the conquest of the body, perfected a

discovery which in its importance to the future of human knowledge dwarfs the divinations of Newton and Galileo; even the discovery of the inductive and experimental method in Science was not more momentous..."³

Distinction between religion and Yoga

This discovery was the discovery of Yoga. The ancient seers made a distinction between religion and Yoga. Religion is a matter of belief, rituals and ceremonies, even though it may involve an inner practice of moral and spiritual discipline. Yoga, on the other hand, focuses on psychology and on developing the psychological faculties and powers by which the highest Object of Knowledge can be experienced. To the Yogin, what matters is that direct experience, attained by psychological enlargement, psychological purification and psychological revolution. Just as physical science starts with the natural phenomenon of lightning and utilizes various means to generate, control and distribute electricity on an increasing scale, even so Yoga takes up the ordinary psychological functioning of body, life and mind and discovers methods by which these psychological functionings can be brought to their highest pitch and then generated, controlled and used at will for the objects in view.

There were, indeed, specializations. Hatha Yoga, for example, concentrated on the subtle workings of the body, and by means of controlling and purifying these workings achieved astonishing results, not only of physical health and vigor but even of preparing the

³ Sri Aurobindo, *The Philosophy of the Upanishads* – II. p.355

individual for deeper spiritual realizations. Raja Yoga specialized in dealing with mental vibrations and discovered methods by which the stuff of consciousness can be controlled and brought to a state of complete stillness in which the Object of Knowledge stands out clearly and luminously. The Yoga of Knowledge, the Yoga of Divine Love and the Yoga of Action took up, respectively, the workings of cognition, affection and conation, and arrived at extraordinary experiences of higher levels of consciousness and their corresponding objects of knowledge.

Distinction between Yoga and philosophy

Those ancient seers also made a distinction between Yoga and philosophy. Philosophy was restricted to mean intellectual reasoning about the ultimate source of things or intellectual transcription of spiritual experience. It was recognized that Yoga transcended intellectual methods of thought and attempted to revolutionize the ego-bound operations of thinking, feeling and action so as to arrive at a new and heightened functioning of the higher self, the Atman or the Brahman.⁴

In spite of its specialized domains and crowning realizations, yogic research constantly strove to

⁴ In the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, it is said: "Therefore let the seeker, after he has done with learning, wish to stand by real strength (knowledge of the Self) which enables us to dispense with all other knowledge' (iii,5,I). In the same Upanishad, it is said again, 'He should not seek after the knowledge of the books, for that is mere weariness of the tongue' (iv,4,21). Describing the, higher Self, the Taittiriya Upanishad says: 'Before whom words and thought recoil, not finding him' (ii,4). The Katha Upanishad declares: 'Not by teaching is the Atman attained, nor by intellect, nor by much knowledge of books' (i,2,23).

combine various systems of Yoga for purposes of arriving at synthetic and composite results. The Veda itself represented a certain kind of synthesis. Upanishadic seers made further research, recovered the Vedic Yoga, and brought about a fresh synthesis. Yoga, like science, was never looked upon as a closed book; like science, Yoga encouraged fresh quest and fresh realizations. Yoga came thus to be recognized as a science *par excellence*.

**Rishi, the illumined
seer**

We have in the records of the Vedas and the Upanishads the names of those who developed this great science of yoga. The generic name is Rishi, the illumined seer, standing above the world and yet uplifting it by his upward gaze, unruffled concentration and compassionate wisdom. It was the Rishi who came to be acknowledged as the teacher and revered as Guru or Acharya. It is to the Rishi that the pupils went in search of training and knowledge, and the ancient Indian teacher-pupil relationship came to be determined by the profound and even inscrutable ways by which the teachers and pupils. Gurus and Shishyas, developed their modes and methods of exploring knowledge, discovering the aim and meaning of life, and practicing disciplines for arriving at psychological perfection.

The names of the Vedic Rishis still reverberate in the Indian atmosphere, inspiring veneration and obeisance — the names of Vishwamitra and Vashishtha, Vamadeva and Bharadwaja, Madhuchhandas and Dirghatamas, Gritsamada and Medhatithi.⁵ Some of the prose Upanishads have a vivid narrative which restores for us, though only in brief glimpses, the

**The soul of India
was born**

picture of that extraordinary stir and movement of enquiry and passion for the highest knowledge which made the Upanishads possible. The scenes of the old world live before us in a few pages: the sages sitting in their groves ready to test and teach the pupils; princes and learned Brahmins and great landed nobles; the king's son in his chariot and the illegitimate son of the servant-girl. We have here Janaka, the subtle mind of Ajatashatru, Raikwa of the cart. There is Yajnavalkya, militant for truth, calm and ironic, taking to himself, without attachment, worldly possessions and spiritual riches and casting at last all his wealth behind to wander forth as a houseless ascetic. And there is Krishna, son of Devaki, who heard a single word of the Rishi Ghora and knew at once the eternal. We have the Ashrams, the courts of kings who were also spiritual discoverers and thinkers, the great sacrificial assemblies where the sages met and compared their knowledge. We see here how the soul of India was born, and we come to recognize the Vedas and Upanishads as not only the fountainhead of Indian philosophy and spirituality, of Indian art, poetry and literature, but also of Indian education and of the Indian tradition of teacher-pupil relationship.

⁵ These great names are those to whom various parts of the Rig Veda are attributed. The Rig Veda, as we possess it, is arranged in ten books. They are called Mandalas. Six of the Mandalas are attributed each to the hymns of a single Rishi or a family of Rishis. Thus the second Mandala is devoted chiefly to the Suktas of the Rishi Gritsamada, the third Mandala and the Seventh Mandala to Vishwamitra and Vashishtha, respectively, the fourth to Vamadeva, the sixth to Bharadwaja. The Fifth is occupied by the hymns of the house of Atri. Other Mandalas contain the hymns of several Rishis and Rishikas. The prominent names of Rishikas in the Rig Veda are: Romasha, Lopamudra, Apala, Kadru, Vishwavara.

Perfection of the
total human
nature

The most important idea governing the ancient system of education was that of perfection, for developing the mind and soul of man. Indian education aimed at helping the individual to grow in the power and force of certain large universal qualities which in their harmony build a higher type of manhood. In Indian thought and life, this was the ideal of the best, the law of the good or noble man, the discipline laid down for the self-perfecting individual. This ideal was not a purely moral or ethical conception, although that element predominated; it was also intellectual, social, aesthetic, the flowering of the whole ideal man, the perfection of the total human nature. We meet in the Indian conception of best, *shreshtha*, the most varied qualities. In the heart benevolence, beneficence, love, compassion, altruism, long-suffering, liberality, kindliness, patience; in the character courage, heroism, energy, loyalty, continence, truth, honour, justice, faith, obedience and reverence where these were due, but power too to govern and direct, a fine modesty and yet a strong independence and noble pride; in the mind wisdom and intelligence and love of learning, knowledge of all the best thought, openness to poetry, art and beauty, an educated capacity and skill in works; in the inner being piety, love of God, seeking after the highest, the spiritual turn; in social relations and conduct a strict observance of all social obligations as father, son, husband, brother, kinsman, friend, ruler or subject, master or servant, prince or warrior or worker, king or sage. This ideal is clearly portrayed in the written records of ancient India. It was the creation of an ideal and rational mind, both spirit-wise and worldly-wise, deeply spiritual, nobly ethical, firmly yet flexibly intellectual, scientific and aesthetic, patient

and tolerant of life's difficulties and human weakness, but arduous in self-discipline.

**A higher self
beyond personal
ego**

The ancient Indian system of education developed as a part of the general system of Indian culture. This system at once indulged and controlled man's nature; it fitted him for his social role; it stamped on his mind the generous ideal of an accomplished humanity, refined, harmonious in all its capacities, ennobled in all its members; but it placed before him too the theory and practice of Yoga, the theory and practice of a higher change, familiarized him with the concept of a spiritual existence and sowed in him a hunger for the divine and the infinite. The pupil was not allowed to forget that he had within him a higher self beyond his little personal ego, and that numerous ways and disciplines were provided by which he could realize this higher self or at least turn and follow at a distance this higher aim according to his capacity and nature. Around him he saw and revered the powerful teachers who practised and were mighty masters of these disciplines.

**Emphasis on
discipline**

In the Indian system of education, there was a great deal of emphasis on discipline. The life of the pupil began with a resolve to impose upon himself the ideal and practice of Brahmacharya, which meant not only physical continence, but a constant burning aspiration for the knowledge of the Brahman. This one ideal uplifted the physical, vital and mental energies in unified concentration to achieve self-knowledge and self-mastery. For this reason, the pupil came to be called the Brahmacharin, one who has resolved to follow the discipline of Brahmacharya. *Vratam*

Pursuit of truth

charishyami — I shall resolutely follow my vow, is what the pupil resolves when he embarks upon his journey of discipleship.

Pursuit of truth was a part of the discipline of Brahmacharya; so also was the pursuit of kindness, harmony and love. Practice of renunciation of the sense of personal possession of things and relations, renunciation of covetousness that leads to theft and collection of personal possessions, were also part of a pupil's self-discipline. In addition, the pupil was expected to develop purity — purity of the body, purity of emotions and purity of thought.

Purity of the body, emotions and thought

Swadhyaya (self-study) was the cornerstone of the pupil's discipline and method of learning. The pupil was expected to develop extraordinary powers of memory, imagination and thought. The predominance of oral tradition necessitated the cultivation of the power of memory; the high content of philosophical and spiritual knowledge necessitated the cultivation of subtlety and complexity of thought; the natural setting of the Ashrams and Gurukulas in the open forest, where nature could be an intimate friend and companion, necessitated the cultivation of the power of inner communion, imagination and natural delight.

That the life of the pupil was vigorous and rigorous cannot be doubted. But it must not be supposed that there was any absence of mirth and joy. In some of the accounts of life in the Ashrams there is ample evidence to show that the system of education was flexible, free from the rigidities found in the lecture and examination-oriented system in which our present

Individual needs
of growth and
development

system of education is imprisoned. A good deal of individual attention was paid to every pupil. The teacher was not expected to demand from the pupil more than the highest effort of which he was capable. The teacher varied his method with each pupil, and education was devised to suit each individual's need of growth and development. In *Abhijnana Shakuntalam*, Kalidasa gives a beautiful portrayal of the Ashram of Kanva, a great Rishi revered by common people and kings alike. In this Ashram there were both boys and girls, and while the atmosphere was surcharged with tapasya, self-discipline, there was also fun and frolic among friends. No feeling of rigidity is portrayed in this beautiful drama. There is, rather, restrained charm, joy and beauty. Other accounts, too, such as those in the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, describe the color and warmth of the interplay of the forces of human nature, and give examples of how the teacher dealt with this interplay with gentle firmness guided by mature experience and wisdom.⁶

⁶ In the Mahabharata (i.70), there is a description of Kanva's hermitage. It was situated on the banks of the Malini, a tributary of the Sarayu River. Numerous hermitages stretched round the central hermitage. At this Ashram, there were specialists in each of the four Vedas; in Phonetics, Metrics, Grammar, and Nirukta. There were also philosophers well-versed in the science of the Absolute. There were logicians. There were also specialists in the physical sciences and arts. In this forest university, the study of every available branch of learning was cultivated. In the Ramayana (vi,126; ii, 90-2), we have an interesting description of the hermitage of Rishi Bharadwaja at Prayaga. This hermitage was one of the biggest of the times. The Ashram was equipped with stalls to accommodate the royal elephants and horses; there were mansions and palaces and gateways. A separate royal guest house was furnished with beds, seats, vehicles, coverlets and carpets, stores of food. The Ashram also entertained its royal guests with performances by musicians and dancing girls.

The teacher, the Rishi, was the seer who had lived the fullness of life and had often led the life of a householder. In some accounts the Rishi's wife was also a Rishi in her own right and lived in the Ashram along with her husband, providing material care for the pupils. The Ashram was veritable Gurukula, where the pupils were loved and cared for as members of the Guru's family.

**Task of the teacher
was to awaken more
than to instruct**

In those times the task of the teacher was to awaken more than to instruct. It was understood that true knowledge depended on the cultivation of powers of concentration, which in turn depended upon great quietude of the mind and absence of demands of impatient and hurried work. It was also acknowledged that some of the greatest truths needed to be practised by voluntary choice and persistent, dedicated discipline. The system of education provided ample opportunities for the pupil to experience the significance of free-choice, particularly the choice between the good and the pleasant, *shréyas* and *préyas*. What was discouraged was personal indulgence or undisciplined preference; but the very object of education implied free choice at every important stage of a pupil's growth. In other words, freedom of choice and an increasing experience of spiritual freedom blended together in that system of education.

It is sometimes argued that the ancient Indian tradition gave too much importance to reverence to the teacher.⁷

⁷ One well-known verse speaks of Guru as Brahma, as Vishnu and as Maheshwara. He is equated with the Supreme Absolute Being.

गुरुर्ब्रह्मा गुरुर्विष्णुः गुरुर्देवो महेश्वरः।

गुरुः साक्षात् परब्रह्म तस्मै श्री गुरवे नमः॥

Reverence to the teacher

It is contended that the teacher was unduly placed on the highest pedestal and that this developed authoritarianism in the teacher and slavishness in the pupil. How shall we meet this criticism? What truth lies behind it? In the course of history, when the Rishi came to be replaced by the pandit, the illumined seer by the erudite scholar, there was quite often a tendency on the part of the pandit to arrogate to himself the natural power, authority and influence of the Rishi, and this did injure the tradition. Further degeneration came about when the pandit was replaced by ordinary sophists, debaters and bookish teachers. At the same time, it must be said that the good pandits and ordinary teachers refrained from arrogating to themselves the authority of the Rishi. Indeed, the ideal we find in the ancient Indian system is that it is not only by obediently serving the teacher but also by repeated and full questioning that the pupil can gain the right knowledge, *pari prashnena, pari sevaya*.

Education strove to subordinate the demands of the ego

Actually, reverence for the teacher was enjoined upon the pupil for three main reasons. In the first place, Indian culture and consequently the Indian system of education strove to subordinate the demands of the ego to the demands of society, of the world and of the higher self. An attempt was made to create systems and practices — through rule, tradition or other means — by which the demands of the higher self were given a predominant position. In fact, not only the teacher, but the mother and the father and even the guest were given a place of high reverence. As the Taittiriya Upanishad says: *Matri devo bhava, pitri devo bhava, acharya devo bhava, atithi devo bhava*. ("Let thy father be unto thee as thy God, and thy mother as thy Goddess

whom thou adorest. Serve the master as a God, and as a God the stranger within thy dwelling.”)

**Spiritual endeavour
is the most difficult**

The second reason was that the Rishi represented not only a mature worldly and scholarly wisdom but also a high spiritual realization, and thus was to be doubly revered. In modern days, where knowledge is easily available through books and other means of communication, our full appreciation of knowledge is likely to be considerably diminished. Thus we may not be able to understand, why the Guru was assigned high and exceptional reverence. But we must note that the Vedic and Upanishadic periods were marked by an intense quest for new knowledge. There was, as it were, an unquenchable thirst, and only the thirsty know what gratitude is due to the one who quenches the thirst. In that context, then, reverence for the teacher was not something imposed upon the pupil; the real seeker became psychologically impelled to revere anyone who had knowledge and could transmit it effectively to him. This was particularly true when the knowledge sought after was not only pragmatic and intellectual but spiritual. For among all human endeavours, spiritual endeavour is the most difficult, beset with the greatest difficulties. In certain circumstances, the pursuit of spiritual knowledge requires vigilant direction and guidance. Spiritual search is like a search in a virgin forest, and the law of that search exacts from the seeker the highest price of self-sacrifice and consecration. The guide and teacher on the spiritual path, therefore, deserves the highest reverence. The intricacies and hazards of the spiritual endeavour are known to the teacher, and it is often unwise to reveal them to the seeker in advance. Spiritual discoveries

and realizations imply major psychological surgery. These operations the pupil cannot perform by himself; a teacher is needed. And just as a doctor demands from the patient a high degree of trust and obedience, so does the teacher of the spiritual path.

The seeker must discover the inner teacher and the inner guide

But there is a third reason for the reverence demanded of the pupil for the teacher. The Indian educational and yogic system recognized that the real teacher is the supreme Brahman seated within oneself, and sooner rather than later, the seeker must discover the inner teacher and the inner guide.

The necessity for the pupil to have the external word or the external guidance of a teacher is then seen to be a concession to human limitations. We require external aids until we realize the true inner Aid. This being the case, the external teacher comes to represent to the seeker the Supreme Brahman. Therefore, the reverence due to the Supreme is offered by the seeker to the external teacher. On his part, the external teacher, if he knows his true position, looks upon his task as a trust given to him from above. He realizes the relativity of his importance. Knowing that the real teacher is seated within the pupil, he hands over the task of guidance to that inner guide as soon as possible. Until then, he devotes all his energies to one single aim, the flowering of the pupil's faculties and the awakening of the inner guide seated within the pupil's heart. It is to such a teacher that the ancient tradition of India assigned highest reverence.

The flowering of the pupil's faculties

The good teacher is not content with his own self-knowledge. He constantly seeks fresh knowledge and

attempts to share it with other seekers. His prayer is that of the Rishi in the Taittiriya Upanishad, who says:

May the Brahmacharins come unto me. Swaha!
From here and there may the Brahmacharins come unto me. Swaha!
May the Brahmacharins set forth unto me. Swaha!
May the Brahmacharins attain to peace of soul. Swaha!⁸

आ मा यन्तु ब्रह्मचारिणः स्वाहा।
वि मा यन्तु ब्रह्मचारिणः स्वाहा।
प्र मा यन्तु ब्रह्मचारिणः स्वाहा।
दमायन्तु ब्रह्मचारिणः स्वाहा।
शमायन्तु ब्रह्मचारिणः स्वाहा।

**Togetherness is the
watchword of the
good teacher**

The good teacher as conceived in the ancient system of India interweaves his own life with the life of his pupils. He aspires and prays not for himself alone but also for his pupils. Togetherness is the watchword of the good teacher.

He prays:
Together may He protect us,
Together may He possess us,
Together may we make unto us strength and virility;
May our study be full to us of light and power.
May we never hate.⁹

And what is the advice that the good teacher gives to his pupils? He says, "Speak truth, walk in the way of

⁸ Taittiriya Upanishad, Shikshavalli, chapter 4.

⁹ Taittiriya Upanishad, Brahmanandavalli, chapter I.

thy duty, neglect not the study of knowledge. Thou shalt not be negligent of truth; thou shalt not be negligent of thy duty, thou shalt not be negligent of welfare; thou shalt not be negligent towards thy increase and thy thriving; thou shalt not be negligent of the study and teaching of the highest Truth”.

**Pursuit of an
integral aim of life**

During the Vedic and Upanishadic periods, and even later, there was an emphasis on the pursuit of an integral aim of life, which determined the discipline of integral education. Both the material and spiritual poles of being had their place in this system. The ancient Sanskrit adage, *shareeram adyam khalu dharma sadhanam* (a sound body is the veritable instrument of the pursuit of the ideal law of life) underlined the importance of physical education. There was also a clear recognition that the fullness of physical, vital and mental culture was necessary for arriving at spiritual perfection. And if we study the Yoga of the Veda in its inmost significance, we find that there was an intense research into the possibilities of spiritual manifestation in physical life. There was a secret knowledge that the highest light is contained in the darkest caves of the physical or the unconscious, and that one must descend into the depths of darkness to recover that highest light. In practical terms, this implied not rejection of physical and material life but an intensive cultivation and transformation of that life.

**Integrality of
spirit and matter**

It is true that there was a gradual deviation from the original Vedic conception of life and education. Much of it was recovered by the seers of the Upanishads, and the integrality of spirit and matter was preserved in some of their teachings. But already a kind of

exclusivism had become manifest during the Upanishadic Age. Later, sharp distinctions came to be made between Spirit and Matter, and a denunciation of material life became more and more predominant. The call of the spirit and a recoil from matter characterize powerful movements of Indian thought. This affected the educational system, and the original impulse of integral education was lost. The consequences have been disastrous, and today we are in a deep crisis.

Examine the spirit of the Indian Renaissance

But is it a question merely of recovering that original impulse? Are we to propose revivalism? This is a matter of controversy. Although what was valuable in the ancient system should be preserved and developed, if we examine the spirit of the Indian Renaissance and the task it has set out to accomplish, we find that a mere revival of the old will not suffice; we shall have to admit new elements and new attitudes which are valuable for preparing the future humanity.

The Indian Renaissance strove for an India that is genuinely Indian and genuinely universal. India became free not only for itself but for the sake of humanity. Free India has to take up the deeper problems that today confront humanity as a whole. As Sri Aurobindo points out:

“Mankind is passing today through an evolutionary crisis in which is contained the choice of its destiny.”

Manifestation of Spirit in Matter

It is in that context that Sri Aurobindo undertook a program of research involving the discovery of new knowledge in the light of which a new synthesis relevant to the needs of today and tomorrow can be created. The secret of that synthesis, as pointed out by

Sri Aurobindo, is the manifestation of Spirit in Matter, leading to an unprecedented perfection and even a mutation of the human species. Sri Aurobindo's discovery of the Supermind and its possibility of full operation in physical life may be regarded as the most significant gift of renascent India to humanity's effort to overcome its crisis.

New education

This has also a momentous consequence for education. The new education that must be built should be a new kind of integral education that will aim at organizing that discovery in more and more concrete forms. This is a matter of continuing experimentation and research.*

* In Appendix some passages are presented from the Veda and the Upanishads which will provide a few glimpses of the aspirations and realisations of the Rishis, who were teachers, and of the early system of Indian concept of education.

The Rishi and the Society

Vedic Rishis were held in highest esteem

It is difficult to assess the immensity of the influence that the Vedic Rishis exercised over the people in the midst of whom they lived and with whom they had direct or indirect contact. But there is no doubt that the Vedic Rishis were held in highest esteem by people of all categories and that their advice was sought and implemented so readily that they were able to cast the early forms of social life in some flexible mould so as to secure progressive unfoldment and development of culture on some sound and original lines over the centuries and millennia.

Three important points may, in this regard, be noted.

In the first place, the image and ideal of Rishihood was so strongly impressed upon the society that the Rishi has been held throughout the ages as the object of the highest reverence. The word of the Rishi, whether of the past or of the present, has had always an authority greater than that of any other leader of the society. Even the law of the state was very often obeyed and accepted by the people only when it received sanction from the Rishi. Often, the word of the Rishi had an automatic authority of the law of the state. Many rapid changes in society were effected in certain important periods of Indian history, not by any struggle of the people or by any legislative process, but simply by what the Rishi said or advised.

The Rishi had the knowledge of the past, present and the future

There was an explicit recognition in the society of a distinction between the Rishi and the priest. The mark of the Rishi is that he has lived in fullness the human life and *experienced* the true truth of man and the universe. He lives in the truth and hears the truth and reveals the truth and the limitations of time and space do not apply to him. At the highest, the Rishi has the knowledge of the past, of the present and the future, possessed of *trikalajnana* and *trikaladrishti* (the knowledge of the three times, past, present and future, and the perception of the three times). The Rishi has not only the knowledge but he has also the wisdom. The Rishi is not only a man of contemplation but also a warrior, a hero, capable of handling the most difficult situations of human life and giving an unambiguous and sure guidance. The Rishi is not a mere transmitter of tradition, but he can, if necessary, break the tradition and establish the new. The Rishi was not merely a scholar, often he was not a scholar at all, but he could command knowledge whenever needed. He was not a mental being, but one who had transcended the limitations of the mental consciousness and had a direct access to superior modes of knowledge and action. All this was recognized by masses of people throughout the Indian history, and it is a significant fact that throughout the ages India has thrown up a long and unbroken line of Rishis of various orders (even among the Rishis there are recognized gradations), and there is hardly a period in which there have not been at least a few Rishis recognized and revered by the people.

The Rishi alone was and has been recognized as the real teacher, the guru. He alone has the authority and

The real Teacher is seated in the heart of every living and thinking being

power to mediate between the seeker and the supreme Object of seeking. He has the power of evocation, and he can, if he so chooses and feels necessary to break the seals of the seeker's consciousness, lead him to the direct experience of the reality. He has the right word of instruction and the right mantra of initiation. He is himself an example of the ideal that he places before the seeker, and he has a spontaneous power of influence, not indeed of any external authority or arrogant arbitrariness, but that which flows from his inmost being to the inmost being of the seeker. He is, in fact, a teacher because he does not teach, he is simply a channel of the real Teacher who is seated in the heart of every living and thinking being. He is a brother of brothers, a child leading the children.

Such has been the concept of the Rishi as the teacher in Indian culture. And those who practised teaching but did not reach the stage of Rishihood were not accorded the highest reverence that is due to the guru. They were *acharyas*, but not Rishis. The *acharyas* were respected for their learning, for their proficiency, for their special standing in their respective disciplines of knowledge and art, but they received the highest reverence only when they rose to Rishihood. The Rishi was the ideal even for the *acharyas*, and every teacher has been enjoined in Indian culture to grow progressively into the image of the Rishi.

A remarkable feature of the institution of the Rishi is the special place accorded to the Rishis by the rulers, politicians, statesmen and administrators. Rishi was to them not merely a spiritual preceptor but also an adviser in regard to state policy and state affairs. The

Rishis were accorded a special place by the rulers, politicians, statesmen and administrators

Rishi was approached by them for counsel and his counsel was accepted. And this determined the major developments of the political and social activities and institutions. Often Rishis presided over the special sacrifices as *Rajsuya* and *Ashvamedha*. And there are traditions of Rishis acting as permanent political advisers. In fact, there arose in India an arrangement whereby Rishis became as a rule principal advisers or ministers, and they exercised supervening influence in kings' councils.

It was from this arrangement that, as varna system became more and more pronounced, there grew a tradition of Kshatriya king and a Brahmin minister. The Kshatriyas represented the qualities not only of courage, heroism, but also of power and strength, and ambition and desire for rule. The Kshatriyas represented, predominantly, the principle of vital force, and it was known in Indian psychology that the vital force, if left unbridled or untransformed, could easily become a source of mis-adventure and even of destruction. Happily, the Brahmin as a minister provided to the Kshatriya king the right guidance and inspiration which the pure intelligence of intellect and intuition can give. For the Brahmins, even when far below the Rishis in their attainments, represented the qualities of the clarity of the intellect and wise intuitive perception as also wide knowledge of sciences and arts and of affairs and men. The Brahmin often lacked the drive and intuition and force of action, and thus he needed as his complement the Kshatriya, just as the Kshatriya needed the Brahmin as his complement. This combination of the Brahmin and Kshatriya in regard to political power and activity constituted a

wise and powerful element in Indian culture, and this was certainly one of the important factors in the stability and ordered progress of many kingdoms and states that flourished from age to age. This system was not without its defects, and there were often rivalries between the king and the minister for supremacy. But, on the whole, these rivalries were a part of the natural friction among powerful personalities. In due course, however, the tradition began to break and after the first millennium of the Christian era, this system operated only in some parts and only for short periods from time to time. New systems of political organization were introduced, and after centuries, under the British rule, an alien way of rule and administration prevailed over most parts of India.

Vedic idea of the Rishi as the seer, knower and as a guide of the individual and collective life

It is, however, important to note that the basic Vedic idea of the Rishi as the seer and knower and as a guide of the individual and collective life has remained alive, at least to a certain degree, even in the present-day India. And there is even today an imagination and conviction in some deep recesses of Indian thought and feeling that there cannot be right and wise and ideal governance of society unless the Rishi or a group of Rishis guide and exercise political power. In some such conviction, Indian culture is today seeking, mostly secretly, to bring to the surface the wisdom and guidance of the Rishis.

Yoga and Education

The Meaning of Education and Yoga

Education is a rapid psychological process towards perfection

There is at present a need to clarify the meaning and aim of education, just as it is necessary to clarify the meaning and aim of Yoga. Yoga is often identified exclusively with Hatha Yoga and thus its true psychological nature remains quite veiled. Similarly, education is often identified with vocational training or with some kind of mental culture, but its fundamental nature of integral psychological process remains quite veiled.

“Yoga”, as Swami Vivekananda has said, “may be regarded as a means of compressing one's evolution into a single life or a few months or even a few hours of bodily existence.” And, education too, when rightly understood, would mean a rapid psychological process towards perfection. education is a search for knowledge, and it is a search for values. It is also an uncovering of the layers of faculties, cultivation of them and perfection of them. It is a process of the discovery of the self, and it aims at a true self-knowledge, which gives liberation from ego and imperfections. *Sa vidya ya vimuktaye*. education is a search for that knowledge which would fulfil oneself individually and as a harmonious member of the universe. But this is also the meaning of Yoga.

Sri Aurobindo says, (by Yoga)

“We mean ... a methodised effort towards self-perfection by the expression of the potentialities latent in the being and a union of the human individual with the universal and transcendent existence we see partially expressed in man and in the cosmos.”

In the right view of Yoga and of education, we find, education and Yoga are one and identical process.

The need for Research in Yoga for Purposes of New Education

Knowledge of Values

In our own times, there is a crisis in the field of knowledge. With the advancement of science, there has come about an accelerated process of accumulation of knowledge of Facts and also the manipulation of Facts. But it has also come to be realised that science cannot give the knowledge of values. And yet, it is increasingly felt that the knowledge of values is even more important than the knowledge of Facts. How then to attain the knowledge of values?

Moreover, mere knowledge of values is not sufficient. In education, we would like to develop those methods by which values would spontaneously grow and manifest among those who are being educated. What are then the best methods by which students can be so trained as to enable them to embody the highest values?

Yoga is the answer to these questions. Yoga gives the knowledge of values and the methods of embodying

Emphasis on
creativity and on
integral
development of
personality

values. But it should be stressed that Yoga is neither religion, nor morality, nor philosophy. Its attitude and method are entirely scientific. Yoga aims at a direct contact, verifiable experience and union with the Supreme Value.

It is noteworthy that the logic of modern experiments in educational methodology seems to point to the need of a yogic orientation in education. The ideas of individual differentiation, the stress on multiple methods of teaching for different categories of students, recognition of the phenomena of genius, insistence on the development of the latent faculties of the child, emphasis on creativity and on an integral development of personality, and an ardent attempt at implementing the idea of freedom and that of consulting the child in his own development – these have created a new atmosphere perfectly ready for a plunge in the direction where the truths of Yoga will be found increasingly relevant.

But in the past, Yoga has largely been and more particularly so in the middle past, life-negating. On the other hand, modern education is science-based; and in science and technology, there is the affirmation of Life and of Life in Matter. Science-based education is thus life-affirming education. If, therefore, Yoga is to be relevant to modern education, it will have to cease to be life-negating. A life-affirming Yoga is a necessity, and a research in this Yoga is centrally relevant to the solution of the modern problems of education.

It is also important to note that education Commission Report have directed that education in India should be

**Yoga reconciles
Spirit and Matter**

science-based and yet in coherence with the spiritual values. Indeed, if this recommendation is to be implemented, the research in Yoga which reconciles Spirit and Matter is indispensable.

Indeed, there has been a good deal of research in Yoga since a number of decades in the wake of the Renaissance in India, and a good deal of experimentation has been attempted to relate this research to the problems of education. It is in the light of this research and experimentation that we can make a few suggestions that would be useful in arriving at a new yogic basis of education and the way in which Yoga can permeate the entire spirit of education and even in the actual processes of education.

**New education in the Light of Recent
Research in Yoga**

**Perfection of the
body, life and mind**

Yoga and yogic research affirm that there are principles and means by which there can be achieved a greater perfection of the body, life and mind than can ordinarily be conceived or imagined. It is also affirmed that there are great hidden faculties and powers which can be awakened by a methodised effort. Finally, there is a supreme affirmation that there are great psychological superconscious states and powers which are central to the creative and integral perfection of personality.

But a mere learning about yoga is not Yoga, and even the most catholic book on yoga cannot be a substitute for the direct yogic practice. Nor can yoga be practised in a casual way or only as a part-time preoccupation.

Yoga must be taken up as a sovereign and central occupation

Yoga to be properly practised must be taken up as a sovereign and central occupation and it must govern and permeate every aspect of life and its activity. Yogic research affirms that there is no aspect of life or knowledge which cannot be dealt with by Yoga and that therefore there is no need to make a gulf between Yoga and Life, between yogic knowledge and mundane knowledge.

All disciplines of knowledge can in this view be made the vehicles of yogic knowledge. In the words of Sri Aurobindo:

“The Yogin's aim in the sciences that make for knowledge should be to discover and understand the workings of the Divine Consciousness-Puissance in man and creatures and things and forces, her creative significances, her execution of mysteries, the symbols in which she arranges the manifestation. The Yogin's aim in the practical sciences, whether mental and physical or occult and psychic, should be to enter into the ways of the Divine and his processes, to know the materials and means for the work given to us so that we may use that knowledge for a conscious and faultless expression of the spirit's mastery, joy and self-fulfilment. The Yogin's aim in the Arts should not be a mere aesthetic, mental or vital gratification, but, seeing the Divine everywhere, worshipping it with a revelation of the meaning of its works, to express that One Divine in gods and men and creatures and objects. The theory that sees an intimate connection between religious aspiration and the truest Art is in essence right; but we must substitute for the mixed and doubtful religious motive a spiritual aspiration, vision,

interpreting experience. For the wider and more comprehensive the seeing, the more it contains in itself the sense of the hidden Divine in humanity and in all things and rises beyond a superficial religiosity into the spiritual life, the more luminous, flexible, deep and powerful will the Art be that springs from the high motive."

Secret of life-long education

In the light of life-affirming Yoga, life is meaningful, and life itself could be so organised as to serve as a natural means of education. Also, a complete yogic education is a life-long process, and yet, in so far as it truly gives a meaning to the life-development, it must determine the entire process of the education of the child and the youth. The secret of this life-long education is a constant aspiration for progress and perfection, a thirst for progress, and a zeal, *utsāha*, for self-perfection should govern the rhythm and law of self-development. To progress constantly is to remain young perpetually, and constant progress comes by perpetual education.

To limit the hours of education during the day and during the year, to organise education on the idea of finishing it one day, to bifurcate education in curricular and extra-curricular courses, to regard studies as work and games as a mere play and pastime, to give exclusive value to reading, writing, reasoning and eloquence and to regard all else as secondary or a mere decoration, — these tendencies are inimical to the conception of all life as education, and all education as Yoga.

Yoga is essentially a creative process of the flowering

**Secret of the true
person behind all
personalities**

of personality, and yogic research gives us the secret of the perfection and integration of personality. In recent times, a stress is being laid on education for an all-round personality. There has come about recognition that there are in us various personalities, conflicting personalities, and thus conflicting potentialities of our profession. It has been pointed out that this entire domain of the secrets of the growth of personality has remained ignored, and the consequences are that most of us possess smothered personalities, and most often we are engaged in the work that has no correspondence with our real genius, with our inner delight of existence. Most of us live in deep suffering, alienated from ourselves. It is this inner suffering that causes ageing, and even in our youth we feel so often old and worn out. These are indeed excellent ideas and they will have a valuable place in the New education. But yogic research takes us to a still deeper perception. It fathoms into the secret of the true person behind all personalities and discovers there the real power of healing our conflicts and integrating the fullness of all personalities. This is a deep and precious Wisdom, the true self-knowledge of self-perfection, which reveals that the secret of perpetual youth is not a mere progression, but a deeper art of progression, namely, the constant harmonisation of our outer work and circumstances with the inner needs of the manifestation of the powers of the real Person seated deep within us.

It is this secret of eternal youth that will be the inner soul of the New education.

The deepest yogic research affirms that there is a

Supreme Reality that is constantly at work; it does not impose itself upon us, but manifests more and more effectively as we aspire to know it and to work for its manifestation.

It is this aspiration that must be lit in the temple of our hearts; and if it is lit and continues to burn, then, we are assured, we shall arrive.

**Infuse a new spirit
in education**

A thousand-rayed sun of solid mass of knowledge illuminating, by an incessant downpour of its sheer lustre, the universal skies and the hidden and distant secrets of Matter, a most potent drive of energy and action, and an irresistible bursting forth of love, joy and marvellous forms of beauty — these are the new ideals which result from the recent yogic research, and which, if accepted, would infuse a new spirit in education.

A Syllabus of Yoga

If all life is education, and if all education is Yoga, how shall we make and propose a programme of the study and practice of Yoga?

In a sense, there cannot be a formal syllabus of Yoga, which is a highly creative process, and which is to be the central and all-permeating thread of all processes of education right from the earliest stages.

And yet, Yoga is a *Shastra*, a science, and it is possible to study it and practise it with all the rigour and discipline of a scientist.

The recent research in yogic education promises to give us some help in formulating, not a rigid or flexible programme of Yoga, but certain broad hints so as to guide the entire educational process on yogic lines as well as to provide for a specialised study of Yoga.

What is attempted below is only in the form of a tentative formulation — a very brief one.

The following practical hints that result from the application of yogic methods of psychological development are suggested:

**Inner psychic
presence**

- It may first be noted that a good many children are under the influence of the inner psychic presence which shows itself very distinctly at times in their spontaneous reactions and even in their words. All spontaneous turning to love, truth, beauty, knowledge, nobility, heroism is a sure sign of the psychic influence.
- To recognise these reactions and to encourage them wisely and with a psychic feeling would be the first indispensable step.
- The best qualities to develop in children are:
 - Sincerity
 - Honesty
 - Straightforwardness
 - Cheerfulness
 - Courage
 - Disinterestedness
 - Patience
 - Endurance

Perseverance
Peace
Calm
Self-control
Self-mastery
Truth
Harmony
Liberty

These qualities are taught infinitely better by example than by speeches.

The child should
not be scolded

- The undesirable impulses and habits should not be treated harshly. The child should not be scolded. Particularly, care should be taken not to rebuke a child for a fault which one commits oneself. Children are very keen and clear-sighted observers; they soon find out the educator's weaknesses and note them without pity.

A fault confessed
must be forgiven

- When a child makes a mistake, one must see that he confesses it to the teacher or the guardian spontaneously and frankly; and when he has confessed it he should be made to understand with kindness and affection what was wrong in the movement and that he should not repeat it. A fault confessed must be forgiven.
- The child should be encouraged to think of wrong impulses not as sins or offences but as symptoms of a curable disease alterable by a steady and a sustained effort of the will — falsehood being rejected and replaced by truth, fear by courage, selfishness by sacrifice and renunciation,

malice by love.

**Affection that is
firm yet gentle**

- A great care should be taken to see that unformed virtues are not rejected as faults. The wildness and recklessness of many young natures are only the overflowing of an excessive strength, greatness and nobility. They should be purified, not discouraged.
- An affection that is firm yet gentle sees clearly, and a sufficiently practical knowledge will create bonds of trust that are indispensable for the educator to make the education of a child effective.

**Curiosity cannot be
postponed**

- When a child asks a question, he should not be answered by saying that it is stupid or foolish, or that the answer will not be understood by him. Curiosity cannot be postponed, and an effort must be made to answer questions truthfully and in such a way as to make the answer comprehensible to his mental capacity.
- The teacher should ensure that the child gradually begins to be aware of the psychological centre of his being, the psychic being, the seat within of the highest truth of our existence.
- With this growing awareness, the child should be taught to concentrate on this presence and make it more and more a living fact.
- The child should be taught that whenever there is an inner uneasiness, he should not pass it off and try to forget it, but should attend to it, and try to find out by an inner observation the cause of the

uneasiness, so that it can be removed by inner or other methods.

The will to find the truth of one's being

- It should be emphasised that if one has a sincere and steady aspiration, a persistent and dynamic will, one is sure to meet in one way or another, externally by study and instruction, internally by concentration, revelation or experience, the help one needs to reach the goal. Only one thing is absolutely indispensable; the will to discover and realise. This discovery and this realisation should be the primary occupation of the being, the pearl of great price which one should acquire at any cost. Whatever one does, whatever one's occupation and activity, the will to find the truth of one's being and to unite with it must always be living, always present behind all one does, all that one thinks, all that one experiences.

All the above suggestions are to be implemented from day to day under various circumstances and in the context of living problems of the growth of children.

Put the child upon the right road

The role of the teacher is to put the child upon the right road to his own perfection and encourage him to follow it, watching, suggesting, helping, but not imposing or interfering. The best method of suggestion is by personal example, daily conversation and books read from day to day. These books should contain, for the younger student, the lofty examples of the past, given not as moral lessons but as things of supreme human interest, and for the older student, great thoughts of great souls, passage of literature, which set fire to the highest emotions and prompt the highest

ideals and aspirations, records of history and biography which exemplify the living of those great thoughts, noble emotions and inspiring ideals.

Opportunities should be given to the students of embodying in actions the deeper and nobler impulses which rise within them.

An informal but profound study of the following questions would prove to be of immense value:

- What is Action? How does it operate normally? Can Action be controlled and guided? How can one achieve the maximum effectivity and largest scope of action?
- To whom should I belong? What does it mean to belong to the Divine? How can one belong to the Divine?
- What is the purpose of the human body? What are the means by which the perfection of the body can be achieved?
- What are the highest means of Knowledge? The Upanishads declare that there is Something, which being known, everything is known. What is that Something? And how can that be known?
- What is the nature of the Mind? How does it operate in (a) Scientific thinking, (b) Mathematical thinking, and (c) Philosophical thinking? How to transcend Thought?
- What is the nature of Yoga? What is the relation of

Yoga with Psychology, Science, Philosophy, Religion, Occultism, Art, Music, Literature, Technology and Life?

- How can we arrive at an artistic and creative experience?
What is the essence of Music?
What is the essence of Art?
What is the essence of Literature?
- What is the indispensable utility of Technology in the human life and its perfection?
- What is the meaning of “Story”?
Is history an interesting and meaningful story?
Is there an aim in history?
- What is my own specific role in the world-progress? How can I train myself to fulfil this role?

The above question can be studied in the context of the following and allied topics:

- The Human Aspiration
- The Methods of Knowledge
- Evolution
- What is Time?
- The Destiny of the Individual
- Infinity and Eternity
- Mind, Life and Matter
- In Search of the Soul
- Death and Conquest of Death
- Personal Effort
- The Meaning of Prayer
- The Supreme Teacher

- Varieties of Mystical Experience
- The Law of Sacrifice
- The Concept of *Lokasangraha*.
- What is Concentration? How to practise it?
- The Difference between Religion and Yoga
- Occultism — the Science of the Subliminal.
- What is Philosophy?
- Scientific Method
- Limitations of Science and Philosophy
- Is Mathematics Knowledge?
- Beauty of Nature
- Beauty of Poetry, Art, Music
- Six Limbs of Indian Art
- Yoga and Art
- The Secret Meaning of the Legends of the Veda
- Stories of the Upanishads and their Yogic Import
- Evolution and the idea of the Avatar
- The Great Greeks and Romans
- Augustus and World-Unity
- Puranas and Tantras
- The Bhakti Age of India
- Renaissance and Leonardo da Vinci
- Ideal of Liberty, Equality, Fraternity: A Call to Yoga in World-Action
- Ideal of Nationalism and Internationalism
- The Place of Yoga in India's Role for the New Future
- Has Man made Progress?
- What is the Meaning of Evolutionary Crisis of Man?
- The Role of Yoga for the Evolution of the Divine Superman.

Care should be taken to see that the above mentioned questions and topics do not get compressed within a

rigid framework of a formal study and examination. These are all living questions and the only thing that can be done is to see that they arise spontaneously during the educational process, and the courses of study regarding them develop in an evolutionary way, developing with the inner growth of the students. It is best when these questions arise in the context of the living experiences of the students.

The handling of these questions and topics should be informal and the following methods can be suggested:

- Each student should be free to choose the topics of the above study in accordance with his need of a deep inquiry;
- Students should study these questions individually with a possibility of consultation with their teachers when needed;
- To enable individual study, special work-sheets on these questions should be prepared; these work-sheets should be so designed that each student can study them individually at his own pace of progress;
- Informal talks on these questions can be arranged, but they should not take the form of any moral or religious preaching; the temper of these studies should be scientific and profound;
- There should be a room of Silence in every school and college, and students should be free to go to the Silence Room whenever they wish to have an inner

reflection, meditation or quiet study;

- Seminars on the above questions and topics should be held periodically in the schools and colleges and the students and teachers should be encouraged to participate in them;
- Debates too can be organised relating to these questions and topics, but an attempt should be made at the end of every debate to synthesise various points of view; an idea must develop that behind every point of view there is some truth, and we should grow into a comprehensive vision in which all truths can be reconciled and synthesised, and in which all conflicts of views can be transcended;
- Artistic pictures and sculptural pieces relating to these questions and topics should be displayed prominently not only in schools and colleges, but everywhere in towns, villages, etc.;
- Other media of communication should also be widely used for this purpose. In particular, films on these subjects should be produced and made easily available to students and teachers;
- Informality in instruction, joy in learning, utter dedication and strictness in training, and widest comprehension in student-teacher relationship – these will, in brief govern the methods of learning.

**Mental, vital and
physical education**

There are aspects of the mental, vital and physical education which contribute to the yogic education.

They can be briefly mentioned:

**Thesis, Antithesis
and Synthesis**

- In its natural state the human mind is always limited in its vision, narrow in its understanding, rigid in its conceptions, and a certain effort is needed to enlarge it, make it supple and deep. Hence, it is very necessary to develop in the child the inclination and capacity to consider everything from as many points of view as possible. There is an exercise in this connection which gives greater suppleness and elevation to thought. It is as follows. A clearly formulated thesis is set; against it is opposed the antithesis, formulated with the same precision. Then by careful reflection the problem must be widened or transcended so that a synthesis is found which unites the two contraries in a larger, higher and more comprehensive idea.

**Mind has got to be
made silent**

Another exercise is to control the mind from judging things and people. For true knowledge belongs to a region much higher than that of the human mind, even beyond that of pure ideas. The mind has got to be made silent and attentive in order to receive knowledge from above and manifest it.

Still another exercise — whenever there is a disagreement on any matter, as a decision to take, or an action to accomplish, one must not stick to one's own conception or point of view. On the contrary, one must try to understand the other person's point of view, put oneself in his place and, instead of quarrelling or even fighting, find out a solution which can reasonably satisfy both parties;

there is always one for men of goodwill.

A wide, subtle, rich, complex, attentive and quiet and silent mind is an asset not only for the discovery of the psychic and spiritual realities, but also for manifesting the psychic and spiritual truths and powers.

The vital is a good worker

- The vital being in us is the seat of impulses and desires, of enthusiasm and violence, of dynamic energy and desperate depression, of passions and revolt. The vital is a good worker, but most often it seeks its own satisfaction. If that is refused totally or even partially, it gets vexed, sulky and goes on strike.

An exercise at these moments is to remain quiet and refuse to act. For it is important to realise that at such times one does stupid things and in a few minutes can destroy or spoil what one has gained in months of regular effort, losing thus all the progress made.

Another exercise is to deal with the vital as one deals with a child in revolt, with patience and perseverance showing it the truth and light, endeavouring to convince it and awaken in it the goodwill which for a moment was veiled.

A wide, strong, calm but dynamic vital capable of right emotion, right decision, and right execution by force and energy, is an invaluable aid to the psychic and spiritual realisation.

New harmony will
manifest in the
body

- The body by its nature is a docile and faithful instrument. But it is very often misused by the mind with its dogmas, its rigid and arbitrary principles, and by the vital with its passions, its excesses and dissipations. It is these which are the cause of bodily fatigue, exhaustion and disease. The body must therefore be free from the tyranny of the mind and of the vital; and this can be done by training the body to feel and sense the psychic presence within and to learn to obey its governance. The emphasis on the development of strength, suppleness, calm, quiet, poise, grace and beauty in physical education, whether done by Yogic Asanas or by other methods of physical culture, such as games and sports, or Japanese Judo and similar exercises, will ensure the contact of the body with the psychic centre and the body will learn to put forth at every minute the effort that is demanded of it, for it will have learnt to find rest in action, to replace through contact with universal forces the energies it spends consciously and usefully. By this sound and balanced life a new harmony will manifest in the body, reflecting the harmony of the regions which will give it the perfect proportions and the ideal beauty of form. It will then be in a constant process of transformation, and it will be possible for it to escape the necessity of disintegration and destruction.

At a certain stage of development, when the seeking of the student is found to be maturing, he can be directed more and more centrally to the inner heart of Yoga and yogic discoveries and experiences.

One of the great aids in the practice of Yoga is a knowledge of the Shastra of Yoga, the knowledge of the truths, principles, powers and processes that govern the yogic realisation and perfection.

An outline idea of the broad principles and stages of Yoga, which can be useful for any student who is generally interested in Yoga is suggested below:

- Psychology and Yoga as Applied Psychology
- Psychology of Nature, Psychology of Life
- Life and Yoga
- Systems of Yoga: Hatha Yoga, Rāja Yoga, Jñāna Yoga, Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Tantra Yoga, the Synthesis of Yoga
- Analysis of Personality; Parts of the Being; inconscient, subconscient, physical, vital, mental, subliminal, psychic, superconscient
- Ego, Memory, Self-consciousness, Concept of dynamic nature of Prakriti and static Purusha
- The Jivatman and Psychic Entity, Psychic Being and its character, growth, development, fulfilment
- Psychic and Spiritual personality
- Soul-Powers and Fourfold personality of Knowledge, Power, Love and Skill
- Integral Personality
- Fundamental Experiences of the Yogi
- Experiences of the Witness Self, Cosmic Consciousness, Silent Self, Nirvana, Personal Divine, Supramental Consciousness and Power
- Yoga in the Veda, Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita, the Yoga Sutra, Yoga and Yogic Research; New Paths of Yoga
- Yoga and Knowledge of Sciences and Arts,

- Yoga and Medical Sciences, Yoga and Technology
- Yoga, Religion and Morality, Yoga and Collective Life, Yoga and change in the world-conditions: the idea of Cosmic Yoga, Yoga and the New World of Truth, Harmony and Liberty.

Books recommended:

The Principal Upanishads, Yoga Sutra, Collected Works of Swami Vivekananda, The Bhagavad Gita, The Synthesis of Yoga by Sri Aurobindo, Collected Works of Nolini Kanta Gupta.

In addition to the above, the following may be suggested for those who are more deeply interested in the study of Yoga, leading up to a specialisation in this study:

Schools of Psychology

- Functionalism, Structuralism, Gestalt Psychology, Behaviourism, Psycho-analysis, Analytical Psychology, Hormic Psychology, Personalism, Social Psychology
- Psychology and Yoga: Indian Schools of Psychology and Yoga. Higher Reaches of Yoga and Psychological knowledge
- Detailed Study of the Systems of Yoga: Hatha Yoga, Rāja Yoga, Karma Yoga, Jñāna Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Yoga of Tantra, Kundalini Yoga, Synthesis of Yoga
- Knowledge, Understanding, Concentration, Medi-

tation, Contemplation, Purification, Renunciation, Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana, Samadhi: Savikalpa and Nirvikalpa, Release from the identification with the Body, Heart, Mind and Ego, Realisation of Sachchidananda, Supermind

- Self-consecration in Works, Gita's way of Self-surrender, The yogic meaning of Sacrifice, The ascending stages of Sacrifice, Standards of Moral Conduct and Spiritual Freedom, The Divine Work, Supermind and the Yoga of Divine Works
- Emotions and Devotion, Aspiration and Prayer, The Divine Love and Grace, The Divine Personality. The Delight of the Divine Love, Ecstasy and Union with the Divine.
- Self-Perfection, Instruments of the Spirit and their purification, Psychology of Self-Perfection, Perfection of Personality by Yoga, Supermind, its descent and its action upon the earth, Supermind and Collective life, Divine life on the earth

Yoga and Health

- Psychology, Yoga and Health
- Esoteric Causes of Illness and Yogic Remedies
- Role of Hypnotism and allied Processes of Cure: Uses and Misuses
- Dangers of Psychoanalysis, Radical Difference between Psychoanalysis and Yoga
- Integral education for Integral Health
- Yogic Care of the Body

- Higher States of Consciousness and their power over the body's functions

Physical Transformation by the Methods of Integral Yoga

- What is Death?
- The Structure of the Body and the Problems of the inevitability of Death.
- Causes of the Resistance of Matter.
- Possibilities of the Radical Change in the Structure of the Body and the elimination of the necessity of Death
- The concept of *Ichchhamrityu*
- The possibility of a new stuff of Matter for a Transformed Body
- Perfection of the Body
- The Functions of the *Chakras* and their Mastery for the perfection of the Body
- The Powers of the Supermind and their operation on the Physical for its transformation
- The Divine Body
- Intermediary Bodies as a preparation for the Divine Body
- Projection of the Divine Body (without the intervention of animal means)

Yoga and Evolution

- The Modern Theory of Evolution, Indian Theory of Evolution: Samkhya, Vedanta, Integral Theory, Psychological basis of Evolution
- The Origin of species from the standpoint of Yoga
- Yoga as a means of Mutation of the Human Species

- Evolution by means of Yogic Transformation: Psychic Transformation, Spiritual Transformation, Supramental Transformation
- Conditions of the advent of the Supramental Being

Yoga and Collective Life

- Collective Aspiration: Its Necessity for General Health and Perfection
- Formation of the Collective Aspiration at various Psychological levels
- The formation of the Group soul by yogic aspiration and methods: Its necessity and purpose;
- Problems of Collective Life and Yogic Solutions
- Transformation by Yoga and its rationale as a collective achievement for the earth-life

Yoga and education

- Education and Life
- Life and Yoga
- Yoga and its distinction from Morality and Religion
- Yoga and the methods of learning: Learning by doing, learning by concentration, learning by purification, learning by creativity
- Yoga and the search for meaning and unity of Knowledge
- Yoga and life-long education and perpetual youth
- Yoga and the mental education, vital education, physical education
- Yoga and development of latent faculties and powers
- Yoga and development of spiritual experiences
- Yoga and education for values

- Methods of education, content of education and structure of educational organisation in the light of Yoga
- Yoga and education for self-perfection

A Special Note on Yoga and Physical education

Although Yoga is not identical with physical culture or the system of Asanas and Pranayama, a perfection of physical culture is a part of the total perfection that is achieved by the Integral Yoga.

The perfection of the body is primarily a question of the application of consciousness and powers of consciousness on the functions of the body. Given this basic assumption, the different systems of physical culture, eastern or western, can be found to be useful aids. Kundalini's awakening which is supposed to be the result of the Indian system of Asanas, can also be achieved by the systems of western physical culture, including games and sports.

Value of physical education

In India, physical education has been neglected almost completely and this neglect is one of the causes of the low morale of the people. It is, therefore, necessary to bring forth the value of physical education not only for the fitness of the body but also for the great contribution it makes for the intellectual, moral and yogic development of personality.

It has been found necessary by recent research in yogic education that students should develop a high sense of physical culture and a bodily need of daily physical exercise. Our programmes in schools and colleges

should be so organised that everyday a student is able to devote at least one hour for physical education, either in the form of Yogic Asanas and allied exercises or in the form of gymnastics, athletics, aquatics or games.

There are many sports which help to form and necessitate the qualities of courage, hardihood, energetic action and initiative for skill, steadiness of will or rapid decision and action, the perception of what is to be done in an emergency and dexterity in doing it. Another invaluable result of these activities is the growth of the sporting spirit. That includes good humour and tolerance and consideration for all, a right attitude and friendliness to competitors and rivals, self-control and scrupulous observance of the laws of the games, fair play and avoidance of the use of foul means, an equal acceptance of victory or defeat without bad humour, resentment or ill-will towards successful competitors, loyal acceptance of the decisions of the appointed judge, umpire or referee. More important still is the custom of discipline, obedience, order, and habit of teamwork, which certain games necessitate.

In the words of Sri Aurobindo:

The perfection of
the body

“If they (the above qualities) could be made more common not only in the life of the individual but in the national life and in the international where at the present day the opposite tendencies have become too rampant, existence in this troubled world of ours would be smoother and might open to a greater chance of concord and amity of which it stands very much in

need. ... The nation which possesses them in the highest degree is likely to be strongest for victory, success and greatness, but also for the contribution it can make towards the bringing about of unity and more harmonious world order towards which we look as our hope for humanity's future."

Physical culture is a matter of great yogic educational value. The physical body is the instrument for the final victory of the highest values on the earth. We need therefore to develop health, strength, plasticity, grace and numerous physical perfections so as to make the body fit for the service and manifestation of the highest ideals.

Philosophy of Indian Pedagogy

Presuppositions of Pedagogy

All systems of pedagogy, Eastern or Western, have certain presuppositions which are derived from a larger canvas of human experience. These presuppositions include the following:

- Human growth takes place by means of a natural process, supported or aided by certain deliberate processes and methods;
- Human growth implies increasing self-consciousness, development of skills and faculties, and the capacities required to meet the challenges of life and of the cultural context in which one is required to meet the demands of the individual and collective life;
- At a deeper level, human growth is aided by the development of arts, sciences, and technologies that enable the individual and collectivity to build up bridges between the past and the future through accumulation of experience and transmission of valuable lessons of that experience to the growing generations;
- Increasing effectivity of educational process depends on the degree to which natural processes of growth and deliberate processes of growth are blended harmoniously; and

- Deliberate processes that are employed for aiding human growth require to be constantly subtilised so that the processes of growth attain increasing acceleration at an optimum level, which may differ from individual to individual and from collectivity to collectivity.

Pedagogy and Aim of Life

The greatest educationists, who have played important roles in fashioning educational systems have, in their quest to develop ideal processes and structures of education, have found it necessary to understand the real meaning and aim of life, the real meaning and aim of culture, and the real meaning and aim of the highest human welfare; and it is in this context that educationists have differed among themselves, and different systems of pedagogy owe their differences to the differences that have developed in this regard.

Behaviourist pedagogy

Not long ago, education was merely a mechanical forcing of the child's nature into arbitrary groves of training and knowledge in which his subjectivity was the last thing considered, and his family upbringing was a constant repression and compulsory shaping of his habits, his thoughts, his character into the mould fixed for them by conventional ideas or individual interests and the ideals of teachers and parents. Even today, the behaviourist pedagogy prescribes principles and methods of teaching that aim at development of behaviour rather than the development of inner being and inner personality of the learner. Even today, even where behaviouristic

**Mechanical means
of imparting
information**

pedagogy is not preponderate, importance is attached to the external and mechanical means of imparting information and of the development of skills that are required to fulfil the demands of certain specific jobs or occupations. It is sometimes admitted that apart from skills, taste also should be developed, a certain sense of culture also should be promoted, and a certain sense of value should also be stimulated. But all this is still sought to be managed within the narrow formula of mechanical and external systems of methodologies. At the root of this methodology is a certain view of the aim of life. According to this view, life is a struggle in which one is obliged to adjust with the present system of inequalities and competition, and a system in which one is required to find a place within a narrow range of situations of life where one can earn one's livelihood and sustain a small family and its responsibilities.

This view also prescribes the need to learn and practise some kind of prudent economics, so that one can save for a rainy day, and one can lead a certain length of life so as to merit a tolerable amount of pension, in the process of enjoying which, one can wait for a smooth transition to the grave. The aim of life, according to this view, is to live, to perform duties appropriate to one's own station of life, to struggle through competition, to enjoy possible comforts and to enjoy some kind of security and learn a few lessons of life which teach prudence and tolerable human existence.

**New Ideas of
Pedagogy**

Fortunately, new ideas of pedagogy are marching forward, and behind these ideas we can discern a new vision of the aim of life and a new vision of a world order that demands building of defences of peace in

Pioneering educational philosophers

the minds and hearts of people and new attitudes required for living together through co-operation and through the processes of mutuality and interdependence. Thanks to the pioneering educational philosophers like Rousseau, Montessori, Pestalozzi, Bertrand Russell, Paulo Freire, and Piaget, it is now being increasingly recognised that education must be a bringing out of the child's own intellectual and moral capacities to their highest possible extent and must be based on the psychology of the child-nature. There is also a glimmering of the realisation that each human being is a self-developing soul and that the business of both parent and teacher is to enable and to help the child to educate himself, to develop his own intellectual, moral, aesthetic and practical capacities and to grow freely as an organic being, not to be kneaded and pressured into form like an inert plastic material. It is this glimmer of the realisation that we find in the two momentous Reports of UNESCO: *"Learning To Be"* and *"Learning: Treasure Within"*. The message of these two Reports is to develop a new pedagogy that is to be centred on learning to learn, learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together, and learning to be.

New Pedagogy and Ancient Indian Pedagogy

This new pedagogy impels a further realisation of the potentialities of the child and its soul, a realisation that was explicitly stated in the writings of the nationalist leaders who inspired and led the movement of national education in India, such as those of Dayananda Saraswati, Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore and Sri Aurobindo. These writings gave a clear expression of the deeper self and the real psychic entity within. They pointed

out that, if we ever give it a chance to come forward, and still more if we call it into the foreground as “*the leader of the march set in front*”, will itself take up most of the business of education out of our hands and develop the capacity of the psychological being towards the realisation of its potentialities of which our present mechanistic view of life and mind and external routine methods of dealing with them prevent us from having any experience of forming any conception.

New pedagogy
rooted in the
ancient soul of
India

The resultant new educational methods which were experimented upon were a kind of recovery of the methods of ancient pedagogy and knowledge that sought to express through spiritual and social symbolism. In this light, we seem to understand better the educational system which was envisaged by the Upanishads in India and it is in that light that we can understand properly what we can call distinctly Indian pedagogy. And while recovering it and expressing it in the context of the latest philosophies of education and the modern march of knowledge, we may be able to give to India of today a new pedagogy which would be rooted in the ancient soul of India and yet ever progressive soul of India which has the capacity to express itself in new forms appropriate to the needs of the contemporary culture of India and of the world.

Formulation of
Indian Pedagogy

The meaning of the symbolism in which the ancient knowledge of human life, of man and of the universe was expressed is practically lost to us, and if we are to profit from the recovery of that knowledge, a very great effort will be needed. Fortunately, a great effort has been made during the last two centuries, and we have today a considerable understanding of the truths

Secrets of the
growth of the
human soul
towards true inner
freedom

of the Veda and the Upanishads, of the recovered sense of Buddhism and also of the secrets of the knowledge of the soul that was expressed in the ancient Jaina texts. And we can say with confidence that the ancient Indian records of knowledge manifest profound knowledge of the deepest secrets of existence, of the meaning and aim of life, and of the secrets of the growth of the human soul towards true inner freedom and true inner and outer mastery that can lead to fulfilment of the human race.

The secret of
immortality

The composers of these records of knowledge had measured and fathomed the heights and depths of our being, they had cast their plummet into the unconscious, and the subconscious and the super-conscious; they had read the riddle of death and found the secret of immortality. The system of education which they founded had thus a vast basis of experience and a fund of verifiable knowledge.

The ancient Indian pedagogy has still not been ascertained in clear terms, and much research would be required before we can formulate it adequately. A few pages in the Upanishads give us the indication of teachers and the methods of their teaching; they also give us an idea of the stir of the quest which inspired young seekers in their inquiry and in their enthusiasm; in the Taittiriya Upanishad, in particular, we have a more direct indication of the ancient scheme of education; and in the Upanishads like the Isha and Kena, we have profound statements of the art and science of life as also of the distinction between ignorance and knowledge, *avidyā* and *vidyā*. Upanishads also speak of *aparā* and *parā vidyā* the

lower knowledge and the higher knowledge, of different states of consciousness and their inter-relationship. In the subsequent writings in Indian literature, we have further glimpses of the systems of education that flourished in ancient times and in the later periods. From all these accounts, we can gather an idea of the knowledge that was practised of the truths, principles, powers and processes that govern the human growth and development towards the liberating excellence and mastery. We can also formulate the process of interaction between the teacher and the pupil, as also an idea of the art to accelerate the progression of development.

Call of the Word

A basic foundation of Indian pedagogy is the perception that there is in the heart of every thinking and living being a growing bud of knowledge and perfection that can open swiftly or gradually, particularly when the right Word is heard. Ordinarily, the Word from without, from a living teacher is needed as an aid in the self-unfolding. The hearing of the right Word, *shravana*, is followed by reflection and meditation, *manana* and *nidhidhyasana*. The Indian pedagogy allowed the processes of questioning and free inquiry, but it also insisted on continuing questioning with increasing emphasis on gathering experience and on awakening to crowning discovery of truths. It was also underlined that the true knowledge is arrived at by living in one's own soul beyond written word. In the ultimate analysis, this pedagogy encouraged liberation from any binding influence of a text by emphasising that pursuit of knowledge and pursuit of excellence is a free pursuit of the sense of wonder and mystery that is infinite in

character. An absolute liberty of experience is the condition for the attainment of a true self-knowledge and world-knowledge.

**The great teacher of
life is life itself**

Indian pedagogy recognised that beyond written texts, the great teacher of life is life itself, and totality of life is to be embraced if one has to gain integral knowledge and integral realisation. It also recognised that each individual has his own unique method of experiencing life and it provided to each individual a free adaptability in the manner and type of the individual acceptance of the object of knowledge that one encounters in the experience of life. The Indian pedagogy also laid down the outcome of past experience as a help to future realisation; and the accumulated experience of the past was laid before the seeker as an aid to accelerate the pace of progression. The rest depended on the personal effort of the pupil and the uplifting power of the teacher. A great stress was laid on the cultivation of the quality of the aspiration in the mind and heart of the pupils. The entire process of learning was marked by a living message to the human soul that it has to rise from the egoistic state of consciousness absorbed in the outward appearances and attractions of things to higher states in which the true knowledge can grow, a knowledge that can constantly expand the individual mould and transform it. The pupil was constantly advised to develop the intensity of quest, the power of the aspiration of the heart, the force of the will, the concentration of the mind, the perseverance and determination of the applied energy.

Upliftment of Pupils Aspiration

Aspiration of the pupil needs to be uplifted, and the upliftment of the aspiration is the basic function of the teacher. The Indian pedagogy recognises three instruments of the teacher: instruction, example, and influence. Instruction was not limited merely to verbal discourse; it utilised the methods of conversation and dialogue; it included the methods of providing hints and suggestions, presenting riddles and puzzles, and it provided instructions to find, discover and invent; it also involved imparting of skills to the pupils by direct dealing with materials or by accompanying in the journey towards mastery. More important than instruction was in the Indian pedagogy the living example of the teacher. This example was not merely of the external behaviour of the teacher but that of inner integrity and inner mastery in regard to knowledge and character. More important than example was the living influence of the teacher. Influence is not the outward authority of the teacher, but the power of his contact, of his presence, of the nearness of his soul to the soul of another, infusing into it, even though in silence that which he possesses. Indian pedagogy did not encourage the teacher to arrogate to himself the sense of superiority in a humanly vain and self-exalting spirit. The teacher was looked upon as a man helping his students, a child leading children, a light kindling other lights, an awakened soul awakening souls, at the highest a channel, a representative of the higher truth and realisation.

Towards Fourfold Integral Personality

The method of Indian pedagogy did not consist of any fixed and mechanical framework. The teacher's system was a natural organisation of the highest processes and movements of which the nature is capable. Every

The good teacher
sought to awaken
much more than to
instruct

student, it was assumed, has in him or her certain combination of faculties and powers, a combination in the process of formation, with some tendencies predominant and central, others peripheral and even transient. The task of the teacher was to recognise in each student the four basic powers, their present status in the process of formation and in their interrelationship. These powers related to the pursuit of knowledge, pursuit of courage and heroism, pursuit of emotional upliftment and mutuality and interdependence in relationships; and pursuit of skills and their applications. The resultant aim was the development of integral personality that blended as perfectly as possible a harmony of four personalities of knowledge, power, harmony and skilful service. This pedagogy aimed at providing sunshine for the flowering of the inner soul of each individual, and it perceived and applied the truth that the secret of each one's profession lies in his or her personality. The skill of the teacher lay in his deep understanding of the nature of the pupil and in guiding the development of that nature so that it can flower into a fully bloomed lotus. The teacher was expected not to be offended by the ignorant reactions of the pupils. He was expected to have the entire love of the mother and the entire patience of the teacher. The good teacher, according to Indian pedagogy, used error in order to arrive at truth, suffering in order to arrive at bliss, imperfection in order to arrive at perfection. The good teacher sought to awaken much more than to instruct, and he aimed at the growth of the faculties and the experiences by a natural process and free expansion. He gave a method as an aid, not as an imperative formula or a fixed routine. He guarded against the turning of the means

into a limitation, against the mechanisation of the process. The good teacher, again, was not expected to impose himself or his opinion on the passive acceptance of the receptive mind; he threw in what is productive and sowed as a seed which would grow under the divine fostering within.

**Eternal perfection
of the spirit within**

The basic guideline of the Indian pedagogy is that nothing can be taught to the mind which is not already concealed as a potential knowledge in the unfolding soul of the individual. All perfection of which the power of personality is capable is only a realising of the eternal perfection of the spirit within him. In a deeper sense, all becoming is an unfolding. To be is the secret; to be is self-attainment, and self-knowledge and an increasing consciousness are the means in the process.

**Secret of the
process of
concentration**

All education is a deliberate process by which what can ordinarily be attained over a certain period of time can be attained more and more rapidly at an optimum rate of acceleration. The secret of this acceleration in Indian pedagogy is the secret of the process of concentration. And the first step in concentration is the process by which consciousness can be drawn more and more inward, *antarmukha*. By inward gaze of consciousness with increasing concentration and by the progressive discovery of the inner soul, knowledge can be commanded more and more readily, more and more creatively, more and more harmoniously.

Indian pedagogy recognises immense importance of Time in the process of development; for in all things there is a cycle of their action and a period of efflorescence. The secret of mastery over time-

movement is a harmonious blending of patience and an effort by means of which increasing power is developed for instantaneous achievement. If the students and teachers learn the art of carrying out activities as quickly as possible and yet as perfectly as possible, optimum acceleration and the right speed of progression will be achieved. All progress will be marked by a happy process of joy and continuous and increasing movement towards perfection.

Aparā Vidyā and Parā Vidyā

An important distinction has been drawn in the Indian pedagogy between two kinds of knowledge, lower knowledge and higher knowledge, *aparā* and *parā vidyā*.¹ Science, art, philosophy, ethics, psychology, the knowledge of man and his past, action itself are means

¹ शौनको ह वै महाशालोऽग्निरसं विधिवदुपसन्नः पप्रच्छ । कस्मिन्नु भगवो विज्ञाते
सवमिदं विज्ञातं भवति । तस्मै स होवाचः द्वे विद्ये वेदितव्ये इति ह स्म यद् ब्रह्मविदो
वदन्ति परा चैवापरा च । तत्रापरा ऋग्वेदो यजुर्वेदः सामवेदोऽथर्ववेदः शिक्षा कल्पो
व्याकरणं निरुक्तं छन्दो ज्योतिषमिति । अथ परा यया तदक्षरमधिगम्यते
यत्तदद्रेश्यमग्राह्यमगोत्रमवर्णमचख्युःश्रोत्रं तदपाणिपादम् नित्यं विभुं सर्वगतं सुसूक्ष्मं
तदव्ययं यद्भुतयोनिं परिपश्यन्ति धीराः ।

Mundaka Upanishad I.3-6

Śaunka, a man of reputation, approached seer **Aṅgiras** duly prepared for learning from him, and asked: "What, Sir, is that thing by knowing which all this becomes known."

Aṅgiras replied: "There are two sorts of vidyas which knowers of the Ultimate Reality call as the higher and the lower. The lower is the learning of the Rigveda, Yajurveda, Sāmaveda, Atharvaveda, education in phonetics, science of sacrifice, grammar, science of derivation, chandas and astronomy.

The higher vidyā, on the other hand, is that by means of which is understood the Immortal which can neither be seen nor caught hold of, which is beyond the range of caste and class, which has neither eyes, nor ears nor even hands and feet. He is rather eternal, all-embracing, all-pervading, absolutely subtle and imperishable. Him the wise realise as the source of the entire creation."

Overcome our
bondage to
appearances and
multiplicity

by which we arrive at the knowledge of the becomings of the world, of the multiplicity and of the appearances. That knowledge is lower knowledge.² But as we go deeper and deeper, a completer view and experience develop, and each of the lines of growth brings us face to face with knowledge of the ultimate Reality. That knowledge is *Parā vidyā*. We begin to grow in the sense of comprehensiveness and in the sense of universal harmony and progressive equilibrium of the manifestation of the underlying perfection. The more we begin to understand and experience the underlying unity, the more we perceive the key of multiplicity in unity, the more we surpass the limitations of the lower knowledge and the more we enter into the portals of the higher knowledge. The more we are occupied with multiplicity and different domains of knowledge, the more we remain entrenched in *aparā vidyā*; the more we overcome our bondage to appearances and multiplicity, the more we transcend into the knowledge of the imperishable and ineffable, the more we become liberated into the realm of *parā vidyā*. Knowledge attained by senses and even the knowledge that remains confined to intellectual processes, even the highest stores of information keep us confined to lower knowledge. The more we cross the borders of sense-knowledge and intellectual knowledge, the more we grow inward, the more we discover the inner self and inner unity through inner vision and inner intuitive concreteness of experiences that lead us into the secrets of higher knowledge.

²The Upanishad declares that even the records of the highest knowledge, the Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda and Atharvaveda are components of the lower knowledge *aparā vidyā*, since they are not themselves the direct experience of the Self and of the eternal that is beyond all becomings.

The knowledge
which seeks to
know the truth of
existence from
within

Aparā vidyā is a kind of knowledge which seeks to understand the apparent phenomena of existence externally, by an approach from outside, through the senses and the intellect. That gives us the lower knowledge, the knowledge of the apparent world. *Parā vidyā* is the knowledge which seeks to know the truth of existence from within, in its source of reality, by processes of intuition, inspiration, revelation and inmost and profoundest realisation. Both are two sides of one's seeking. *Avidyā* is the knowledge of multiplicity, and *vidyā* is the knowledge of unity and oneness. When knowledge of multiplicity is pursued by excluding the knowledge of unity and oneness, we remain in the field of darkness; if we pursue unity and oneness and exclude the knowledge of multiplicity, then also there is some kind of incompleteness, inadequacy, and as one Upanishad declares, one is led into even greater darkness.³ Both *vidyā* and *avidyā*, the knowledge of multiplicity and the knowledge of unity are to be synthesised.

Indian pedagogy does not exclude the pursuit of the knowledge of multiplicity or the pursuit of knowledge through senses and intellect; but it also insists on the pursuit of knowledge of unity and oneness, and it insists on the pursuit of that knowledge through the development of the faculties of intuition and concrete realisation. The knowledge of unity and multiplicity, and the knowledge as grounded in unity is the ideal that Indian pedagogy puts forward in its total scheme of knowledge.

³ *Ishopanishad*, verse 9

Jñāna: Illumination through intuition of the Self

There is another important word that is often used in Indian pedagogy, and that word is *jñāna*. This word is used in the sense of a supreme self-knowledge. To understand this properly, we have to make a distinction between knowledge and object of knowledge. Knowledge is the light by which the object of knowledge is lit, is perceived, is realised. When the object of knowledge is our true being or our true self, there is a special phenomenon of growth into our true being; it is not information about our true being, it is our inner enlargement by which the limitations of our egoistic consciousness are annulled, and there is the realisation of wideness, universality, and even transcendence; there is self-possession, there is self-knowledge. Knowledge about the self is *aparā vidyā*; knowledge that unveils the self, the knowledge that makes self revealed is *parā vidyā*. And Indian pedagogy has this distinct feature that the aim of its entire programme of education is to nourish the growth of the light by which we grow into our true being.

Knowledge and Information

There is, no doubt, the light of the senses and the light of the intellect; and through this light, too, the corresponding objects of knowledge, the corresponding multiplicity, become more and more known; but this knowledge increases our information and our intellectual riches regarding becomings, but not of the being. This is the character of the scientific or psychological or philosophical or ethical or aesthetic or worldly and practical knowledge. This informative knowledge helps us also to grow but in the realm of becoming and not of the being. If the highest learning is learning to be, then the appropriate method is the development, not of the light of senses or the light of

**Discrimination
between the real
and the unreal**

the intellect, but of the light of profounder and higher faculties of intuition, revelation and inspiration as also of automatic discrimination between the real and the unreal, and between the real and the appearance. Indian pedagogy also recognises that sense knowledge and intellectual knowledge can be used as aids to arrive at self-knowledge. In that case, scientific knowledge can be used to get through the veil of processes and phenomena and see the one Reality behind which explains them all. Psychological knowledge can be used as an aid to know ourselves and to distinguish the lower from the higher, so that we can renounce the lower and we can enter and grow into the higher. Philosophical knowledge can be used as an aid when we turn it as a light upon the essential principles of existence so as to discover and live in that which is eternal. We can use ethical knowledge as an aid when through that knowledge we can distinguish the wrong from the right, and distinguish the evil from the good, and we put away the wrong and the evil and rise above into the pure innocence of the divine Nature. We can use the aesthetic knowledge as an aid so that we can discover by it the beauty of the universal and the transcendental, the beauty of the ineffable and of the formless that manifests through the mystery and wonder of the form. We can use the knowledge of the world as an aid when we see through it the way of the glory of the higher being and consciousness, and learn how that being deals with movements and affairs of the world, and we can use that knowledge for the service of the highest in man. Even then, they are merely aids. According to Indian pedagogy, the real knowledge is that which is intuitive and supramental, of which the mind gets various kinds of reflections.

Jñāna from Within

According to the Indian pedagogy, we come to the true self-knowledge; we get first intimation of it from the men of knowledge who have *seen*, not those who merely by the intellect know its essential truths. The actuality of that knowledge comes from within ourselves; that knowledge grows within ourselves, and grows on as one goes on increasing in the state of equality, *śamatvam*, in self-control, in commitment and vision of the highest reality and the highest aim of life. It is when one grows in the realm of values that the light of self-knowledge grows. In fact, it is this pedagogical truth that renders the truly Indian system of education inherently value-oriented. For it is through value-oriented consciousness that the inner light grows, and that light manifests in our dynamic nature as a state of equality that enables us to rise above the turmoil of our nature and makes us seated high above where the world can be seen as to a spectator and the world can be dealt with a mastery that is not deflected by partialities and preferences. In the Indian pedagogy, to know oneself is to be liberated from the limitations of the turmoil of our nature; that is why we have the dictum *sā vidyā yā vimuktaye* that is the true knowledge which leads us to liberation, liberation from the bondage to nature and to its limitations. Self-knowledge is the seat of wisdom, and Indian psychology regards it as self-existent, intuitive, self-experiencing, and self-revealing. We arrive at it more and more readily when we conquer and control our mind and senses, so that we become more and more free from subjection to their delusions. In the process, the mind and senses become pure reflecting vehicles. In the final analysis, education becomes a process of yoga when we are enabled to fix our inner conscious

being on the truth of that supreme reality in which all exists, so that it may display in us its luminous self-existence or that which transcends the limitations of description in terms of existence.

*Jñāna, vidyā, Parā
vidyā*

The words, *Jñāna*, *vidyā* and *Parā vidyā* are normally used interchangeably; but they seem to have, in certain contexts, special connotation and point of emphasis. Thus, the word *Jñāna* is often used when our primary concern of emphasis is related to the state of illumination obtained through the faculty of intuition. The word *vidyā* is often used when our primary concern of emphasis is related to unity and oneness of the object of knowledge. The phrase *Parā vidyā* is often used when our primary concern of emphasis is related to the context of various kinds and systems or branches of knowledge. From the pedagogical point of view, what is important to note is that Indian pedagogy has developed the methods and facilities to develop the faculty of intuition, in contrast to the methods and facilities to develop sense-experience and intellectual ratiocination, the methods and facilities to nurture the sense and experience of unity and oneness, in contrast to the methods and facilities to nurture the sense and experience of multiplicity, and the methods and facilities for the growth of the sense and experience of transcendence of limitation inherent in varieties of systems of knowledge so as to arrive at the imperishable and ineffable, in contrast to the sense and experience of all that can be sublated. Pedagogically, again, Indian experiments in education have striven to bridge and harmonise lines of growth of sense-experience, rationality and intuitive powers of the soul and spirit, of the experience of the multiplicity

and of the various domains of knowledge and transcendences as also comprehensive methods of synthesis.

Indian Pedagogy and Indian Quest of Knowledge

Indian pedagogy and Indian quest of knowledge, experience and realisation stimulated and influenced each other throughout the ages. Indian quest passed through three main stages before the period of exhaustion of the life-force overcame the process of development of the integrality of Indian culture. The first stage of the Indian quest was that of the efflorescence of the intuitive knowledge; next, the age of intuitive knowledge gave place to the age of rational knowledge, during which metaphysical philosophy reached great heights of subtlety and excellence, during the third stage, metaphysical philosophy gave way to experimental science. This process which seems to be a descent is really a circle of progress. For in each case, the lower faculty is compelled to take up as much as it can assimilate of what the higher had already given and to attempt to reestablish it by its own methods. By the attempt it is itself enlarged in its scope and arrives eventually at a more supple and a more ample self-accommodation to the higher faculties. Without this succession and attempt at separate assimilation, we should be obliged to remain under the exclusive domination of a part of our nature, while the rest remained either depressed and unduly subjected or suppressed in its field and therefore poor in its development. With this succession and separate attempt, the balance is righted; a more complete harmony of our parts of knowledge is prepared.

The development of Indian culture and the trans-

Spiritual genius of Indian culture

mission of that culture from generation to generation played a major part in Indian pedagogy. Indian culture had reached over millennia great heights, not only in the fields of spiritual and philosophic domains, but also in the fields of science, technology, aesthetics and sociology, polity and other fields of life, pragmatism and administration and conquest. Spirituality is indeed the master-key of the Indian mind, and spiritual genius of Indian culture had moulded Indian pedagogy right from the beginning. India's first period of the known history was luminous with the discovery of the Spirit. Her second period completed the discovery of the *dharma*. Her third elaborated into detail the first simpler formulation of the *shastra*; but none was exclusive, the three elements were always present. An ingrained and dominant spirituality, inexhaustible vital creativeness and gust of life, and a powerful, penetrating and scrupulous intelligence combined with the rational, ethical, and aesthetic mind, these three created the harmony of a great part of the unbroken history of Indian culture. If India's spiritual disciplines, philosophies and her long list of great spiritual personalities, thinkers, founders, saints are her greatest glory, they are by no means her sole glories. It is now proved that India had gone farther than any other country before the modern era in the field of science, and even Europe owes the beginning of her physical science to India as much as to Greece, although not directly but through the medium of the Arabs. Specially in mathematics, astronomy and chemistry, the chief elements of ancient science, India discovered and formulated much and well anticipated by force of reasoning and experiments some of the scientific ideas and discoveries which Europe arrived

For three thousand years, India created abundantly and incessantly

at much later, but was able to base more firmly by her new and completer method. India was well equipped in surgery and her system of medicine survives to this day and has still its value. The mere mass of intellectual periods extending from the period of Ashoka well into the Mohammedan epoch is something truly prodigious. There is no historical parallel of such an intellectual labour and activity before the invention of printing and the facilities of modern science. All this colossal literature was not confined to philosophy and theology, religion and yoga but extended into the fields of logic and rhetoric and grammar and linguistics, poetry and drama, astronomy, mathematics, various sciences and medicine. This intellectual literature embraced all life, politics and society, various arts from painting to dancing, and even such practical minutiae as the breeding and training of horses and elephants, each of which had its *shastra* and its art, its apparatus of technical terms, its copious literature. For three thousand years at least, India created abundantly and incessantly. This creativity was many-sided and led to the development of republic, kingdoms and empires, philosophies and cosmogonies and sciences and creeds and arts and poems and all kinds of monuments, palaces, temples and public works, communities and societies and religious orders, laws and codes and rituals, physical sciences, psychic sciences, systems of yoga, systems of politics and administration, arts spiritual, arts worldly, trades, industries and fine arts. This vast canvas of Indian culture continued to be transmitted from one age to another, and this process of transmission contributed greatly to the development of Indian pedagogy. We must confess that a good deal of

research is required to ascertain more precisely and accurately the methods which were employed by Indian pedagogy to keep the Indian frontiers of knowledge constantly expanding and constantly transmitted. And this research is important because, as in no other country, India still requires to transmit the cultural heritage of an unbroken history of many-sided development that goes back to more than three or four thousand years. When this research matures, we shall be able to enlarge, alter and even revolutionise our present methods of teaching and learning and renew our pedagogy for greater tasks that lie ahead of us.

Macaulayan System of Education

From the thirteenth century or fourteenth century onwards, however, the Indian quest became weary and it reached a point of disastrous decline when the British arrived on the scene and disturbed totally our indigenous system of education and imposed on us an unfamiliar pedagogy. Macaulayan system of education grew, and it has become so hardened that in spite of great efforts at the recovery of Indian pedagogy, we find it extremely difficult to develop and establish in our country the real soul of the Indian pedagogy and its new and progressive forms.

This is the stage where we find ourselves today, groping in bewilderment and thwarted in our efforts by the rigidity of the system and the load it has accumulated of obstruction and mechanisation.

In fact, the problem is very serious, and a good deal of research is required before we can find the right direction and the right remedies to the maladies of our present system of education. As a part of this research,

we have to recognise that the greatness of the Indian system of education, during the periods when it proved to be more fruitful in producing great and multisided systems of knowledge, in developing profound and inspiring systems of conduct and character building, in creating economic, social, political and stable systems of civilisation, stability and prosperity, and in providing unfailing heroism and power of triumph in various directions, as also in creating inspiring multisided forms of art, literature and other aesthetic and pulsating activities, we shall find that there were the following elements which were dynamically operative.

Chief Elements of Indian Pedagogy

Firstly, and centrally, there was what may be called a comprehensive science of living. This science was a result of a long and detailed experimentation with the truths of life, mind and spirit as also with the truths of the relationship between Matter and Spirit. This science of living was that of self-knowledge and self-control. This science provided the basic ground for the art of life which aimed at development of value-oriented integral personality.

The science was also based on the knowledge of the physical world as also of the worlds of life and mind. This knowledge embraced the knowledge of what was called the fourth world, the world of Right and the Truth, the world of *ritam* and *satyam*. This knowledge was also based on the discovery of what was called "*the golden immortal, who is seated within the cave of the inner heart*". Finally, this knowledge had profound basis in the study of righteousness and of the secrets of self-mastery and of the conditions in which peace of the

Spiritual,
philosophical and
scientific
knowledge

inner being can be perpetually held in the body, life and mind. The Tattiriya Upanishad gives us, in brief, the quintessence of this science and art of living in brief but instructive terms.

Secondly, there was a great emphasis on the study of the secrets of Speech, which provided powerful grounding in the study of languages.

Thirdly, there was a harmonious blending in the courses of studies in the spiritual knowledge, philosophical knowledge, and scientific knowledge. In the harmony of the blending, the scientific spirit did not conflict with the philosophic spirit and the philosophic spirit was recognised as a prelude to the training by which intuitive spiritual knowledge can be gained and mastered.

Fourthly, physical education was widespread, and the development of health and the strength of the body were constantly nourished and developed under the illuminating dictum that body is verily the instrument of the achievement and realisation of the highest ideals. (*shariram ādyam khalu dharma sādhanam*).

Fifthly, a number of specialised studies were developed and imparted. Starting with grammar, prosody and astronomy, the field covered science and art of healing and longevity (*ayurveda*), science and art of aesthetic creativity such as drama, music and dance (*gandharva shastra*), science and art of warfare (*dhanurveda*), and science and art of prosperity, constructive and well-established infra-structure of civilisational stability (*arthaveda, vastu shastra*, etc.).

There was an emphasis on a comprehensive understanding of various domains of knowledge, their inter-relationship, and the methods by which unified knowledge can be gained.

Sixthly, there was an emphasis on specialisation against the background of general holism and unity of knowledge as also against the background of sixty-four arts.⁴

⁴ **Sixty-four Arts mentioned by Vatsyayana in his Kamasutra**

1. Singing
2. Playing on musical instruments
3. Dancing
4. Union of dancing, singing, and playing instrumental music
5. Writing and drawing
6. Tattooing
7. Arraying and adorning an idol with rice and flowers
8. Spreading and arranging beds or couches of flowers, or flowers upon the ground
9. Colouring the teeth, garments, hair, nails and bodies, i.e. staining, dyeing, colouring and painting the same
10. Fixing stained glass into a floor
11. The art of making beds, and spreading out carpets and cushions for reclining
12. Playing on musical glasses filled with water
13. Storing and accumulating water in aqueducts, cisterns and reservoirs;
14. Picture making, trimming and decorating
15. Stringing of rosaries, necklaces, garlands and wreaths
16. Binding of turbans and chaplets and making crests and top-knots of flowers
17. Scenic representations, stage playing
18. Art of making ear ornaments
19. Art of preparing perfumes and odours
20. Proper disposition of jewels and decorations, and adornment in dress;
21. Magic or sorcery
22. Quickness of hand or manual skill
23. Culinary art, i.e. cooking and cookery
24. Making lemonades, sherbets, acidulated drinks, and spirituous extracts with proper flavour and colour
25. Tailor's work and sewing
26. Making parrots, flowers, tufts, tassels, bunches, bosses, knobs, etc.,

Seventhly, a constant emphasis was laid on the study of human psychology, human history, and classical literature with a deliberate effort to provide education of the inner soul through poetry, art, and music, all set in the atmosphere of the harmony between the human and physical nature that up-lifted the aspiration of the individual to attain states of universality, oneness and transcendence.

out of yarn or thread

27. Solution of riddles, enigmas, covert speeches, verbal puzzles and enigmatical questions

28. A game, which consisted in repeating verses, and as one person finished, another person had to commence at once, repeating another verse, beginning with the same letter with which the last speaker's verse ended, whoever failed to repeat was considered to have lost, and to be subject to pay a forfeit or stake of some kind

29. The art of mimicry or imitation

30. Reading, including chanting and intoning

31. Study of sentences difficult to pronounce. It is played as a game chiefly by women and children and consists of a difficult sentence being given, and when repeated quickly, the words are often transposed or badly pronounced

32. Practice with sword, single stick, quarter staff and bow and arrow

33. Drawing inferences, reasoning or inferring

34. Carpentry, or the work of a carpenter

35. Architecture, or the art of building

36. Knowledge about gold and silver coins, and jewels and gems

37. Chemistry and mineralogy

38. Colour jewels, gems and beads

39. Knowledge of mines and quarries

40. Gardening; knowledge of treating the diseases of trees and plants, of nourishing them, and determining their ages

41. Art of cock fighting, quail fighting and ram fighting

42. Art of teaching parrots and starlings to speak

43. Art of applying perfumed ointments to the body, and of dressing the hair with unguents and perfumes and braiding it

44. The art of understanding writing in cipher, and the writing of words in a peculiar way

45. The art of speaking by changing the forms of words. It is of various kinds. Some speak by changing the beginning and end of words, others by adding unnecessary letters between every syllable of a word, and so on

Maladies due to Macaulayan System

We need to revisit of these elements that gave distinctness to Indian pedagogy, and we need to give to our country a scheme of education that would be appropriate to the soul of Indian pedagogy and which at the same time would be relevant to the progressive demands of today and tomorrow. While doing so, we shall need to diagnose more properly maladies that have been created by the Macaulayan system of education in India. Macaulay has succeeded in

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46. Knowledge of language and of the vernacular dialects
 47. Art of making flower carriages
 48. Art of framing mystical diagrams, of addressing spells and charms, and binding armlets
 49. Mental exercises, such as completing stanzas or verses on receiving a part of them; or supplying one, two or three lines when the remaining lines are given indiscriminately from different verses, so as to make the whole an entire verse with regard to its meaning; or arranging the words of a consonants, or leaving them out altogether; or putting into verse or prose sentences represented by signs or symbols. There are many other such exercises
 50. Composing poems
 51. Knowledge of dictionaries and vocabularies
 52. Knowledge of ways of changing and disguising the appearance of persons
 53. Knowledge of the art of changing the appearance of things, such as making cotton to appear as silk, coarse and common things to appear as fine and good
 54. Various ways of gambling
 55. Art of obtaining possession of the property of others by means of mantras or incantations
 56. Skill in youthful sports
 57. Knowledge of the rules of society, and of how to pay respect and compliments to others
 58. Knowledge of the art of war, of arms, of armies, etc.
 59. Knowledge of gymnastics
 60. Art of knowing the character of a man from his features
 61. Knowledge of scanning or constructing verses
 62. Arithmetical recreations
 63. Making artificial flowers
 64. Making figures and images in clay

Poetry, Music and
Art, constitute the
perfect education of
the human soul

demolishing the Indian art and science of living, it has succeeded in creating in our mind the inability to recovery of that special kind of scientific spirit that was sustained by high intellectual and philosophical culture and by the aspiration and power of climbing the peaks of higher levels of spiritual consciousness; and by knocking off Sanskrit from the mainstream of education, we have been robbed of the power to recover our true cultural heritage and of our power of assimilation, creativity and synthesis. Macaulayan system has enfeebled us physically, vitally, mentally and spiritually. It has omitted from our educational programme those arts and sciences which can make our body strong and healthy, which can make our vital being heroic and courageous, and our mental being subtle, complex and comprehensive. Philosophy, which was for long a part of the cultural education in our country, accessible even to the rustic, has been flung aside to such remoteness that even highly trained scientific and other professionals remain strangers to this noble pursuit which fostered love of wisdom. It has also omitted from our scheme of education those venues through which great quests of knowledge and effectivity can be stimulated. Our educational heights and horizons have been narrowed down to the study of English and to the study of other subjects, namely, mathematics, science, history and miscellaneous pursuits of other natural and human sciences. Astronomy, which was the great achievement of Indian scientific spirit, has been so eclipsed that our students and teachers remain blissfully ignorant of the vastness and wonder of the universe. Neglect of astronomy has also resulted in our inadequacy to appreciate the root-importance of the

study of mathematics and physical sciences. History is being taught within a narrow compass, and we fail to give to our students a true account of the human adventure and human thrill to explore and conquer vast stretches of psychological space and time. Poetry, Music and Art, which constitute the perfect education of the human soul, has no place in our educational curriculum, except at the peripheral boundaries. We have come to believe that to be educated is to be educated basically in five subjects prescribed in the Macaulayan scheme of education and that all that falls outside that limited scheme can be neglected altogether or can be prescribed to be cultivated during leisure hours, which are hardly available under the present circumstances of our daily life. We need to give to our self a new scheme of education.

Need to Develop a New Programme of Educational Research

This is where we stand today, and we need to explore, in greater detail, truths of Indian pedagogy and we need to initiate a new programme of educational research. New models need to be rapidly developed, and for that process, various workshops need to be organised continuously and effectively.

Nothing that is presented here is more than tentative and nothing presented here is more than indicative of the need to explore and to undertake new programmes of relevant research. Our aim should be to create for our country a new system of national education, rooted in the fundamentals of Indian pedagogy, which, when properly explored, will be found capable of providing to us today new and progressive forms that would respond to the highest needs of humanity's goals of integral fulfillment.

Philosophy of Spiritual Education

Why do we need Spiritual Education? What does it really mean? Is it practicable? And what reforms could we propose in our educational system so as to have the right place for spiritual education in it?

All these are important and difficult questions, we can only touch upon them very briefly and inadequately.

India's great
treasures of
spiritual
knowledge and
experience

We need spiritual education, firstly, because we want a true national system of education. Education, in order to be national, must reflect that basic urge, which is distinctive of our national history, which is the real genius of our country, which accounts for the amazing continuity of our long and complex history, and which continues to burn even in our decline and darkest periods and serves as the saving light. Veritably, it can be said that what distinguishes Indian cultural history from any other cultural history, is its genius for spirituality and profusion of spiritual developments and great treasures of spiritual knowledge and experience. If we are to search for our cultural identity, and do we not see the upsurge for cultural identity everywhere in the world today, even when there is an unprecedented demand for internationality, universal citizenship, and oneness of humanity? We can say that the first task of India is to understand what may be called Indian spirituality, its synthetic tendency, its catholicity, and its power to rejuvenate springs of

culture and irrigate the paths of perfection of intellectuality, vitality of heroism and vitality and capacity to build strong physical foundations in various domains of life. In this context, our need for spiritual education stands out as an article of supreme importance.

But this is not all.

Present crisis
through which
humanity is
passing today

We need spiritual education not only in India but everywhere because it is becoming increasingly clear that the present crisis through which humanity is passing today can be effectively met only if the entire humanity knocks the doors of spirituality, for that alone seems to hold out the promise of the power that can deliver us. This is evident from the way in which the West is turning to the East. This is also evident from the counsels of some of the greatest historians of our times, who have pointed to India and Indian spirituality for the cure of the decline and fall of the Western civilisation that is built upon the vital and pragmatic drives and intellect as the sole and highest governor of social building.

West is turning to
India for some
spiritual light

And when the West is turning to India for some spiritual light, what is it that will enable us to respond? The best way by which we can prepare ourselves to give the right response is to build up the sound edifices of a robust system of education with due place assigned to spiritual education.

Thirdly, with the growing stress on the creation of a classless society or a society that aims at equality and equity, freedom and brotherhood, there is an

Integral education
for the complete
human being

increasing stress on every individual to participate as fully as possible in the activities of the totality of the society. As a result, individuals are required to expand their horizons, develop multiple interests and responsibilities and equip themselves with the capacities and powers that can be chiselled only by the development of an integral personality. Hence, there has been unprecedented emphasis in our times on integral education for the complete human being. The complete human being is not a sum of its parts, each one put in juxtaposition of the other. Each part of our personality, physical, vital, mental, rational, aesthetic, ethical and spiritual, has its constitutional relationship with the other and it has to be discovered and, instead of juxtaposition, there has to be integration. And what is the integrating point in a personality is a matter today of psychological investigations. It is easy to admit the Indian psychological contention that nothing can integrate the physical and the vital as the mental, *manomaya pranashariraneta*, to use the expression of the Taittiriya Upanishad; but considering that the conflict in the mind itself of its rational, aesthetic and ethical elements as also the conflict between the Reason and the Unreason are becoming acute, we need to turn to still higher levels of integration and admit still higher principles, principles of spiritual consciousness, which are supramental in character, *vijñānamaya* and *ānandamaya*, to use again the terms of Taittiriya Upanishad. And this underlines, by implication, the theme of spiritual education as the overarching domain of integral education.

Conflict between
the Reason and the
Unreason

Fortunately, we have a good fund of spiritual

Spiritual
knowledge is in
the roots of our
cultural history

knowledge in the roots of our cultural history, if only we make the effort to recover it. We have also been continuously developing spiritual experimentation and renewing it right up to the present day. And the significant fact is that in our nascent India, our greatest experiments in education were inspired by the ideals of spiritual education.

Spiritual education,
confused with
religious education

But let us ask the central question: "What is spiritual education? And what are the real issues pertaining to spiritual education as far as its nature and methodologies are concerned?" There is here a great deal of inadequacy of inquiry, and a good deal of confusion. In the first place, spiritual education tends to be confused with the unexamined concept of "religious education". And it is argued that because religious education is constitutionally not allowed to be promoted by the State funds, even spiritual education, which is more or less religious education, has to be exiled from the portals of education in our country.

As against this, it must be stressed that there is a clear distinction between spiritual education and religious education. It may be said that the distinguishing feature of a religion is a doctrine or a belief or a dogma. Every religion has its distinctive doctrine, "prescribed acts", its rituals, ceremonies, social and religious institutions. On the other hand, what is distinctive of spirituality is its stress on the psychological contention that there is a vast domain of states of consciousness, which are beyond and deeper than mental consciousness and beyond and deeper than the realm of doctrines, beliefs or dogmas. Spirituality can be developed by Yogic methodised effort that is scientific

**Synthesises of the
sage, the hero, the
saint and the
servant**

in character, since it can be practiced without any prior belief, and the conclusions or results of that effort can be repeated, verified and expanded by questioning, correction, revision, enlargement, deepening, and heightening. Another distinctive feature of spirituality is its spontaneous attitude and effortless and abiding stability of consciousness that is marked by universality, silent concentration and contemplation, which is free from the fever of desires, clamours of egoism and prejudices of partiality and attachment. These states of consciousness, these attitudes and these abiding experiences are not states of opinions and beliefs; nor are they tied up with one or the other dogma, and they depend upon no rituals or ceremonies or social or religious institutions. Thirdly, various states of spiritual consciousness tend to constitute four psychological traits of personality, which are commonly found universally among all who have gone beyond mental consciousness or who stand on the borderlines of the mental and spiritual consciousness. These psychological traits are connected with those powers of the Spirit, which flower as the sage, as the hero, as a saint and as a servant. And integral spiritual education would aim at the integral personality that combines and synthesises the sage, the hero, the saint and the servant, the kind of personality that is illustrated so remarkably in the personality of Sri Krishna, who had, as the Gita testifies, both essential knowledge and comprehensive knowledge that marks the culmination of sagehood; he was dynamic and heroic, since he battled from early boyhood and throughout his life for the upholding of justice and unity of people; and he was full of divine love, which has been sung as an immortal theme of

harmonious unity, duality and multiplicity; and he readily agreed to serve with consummate skill as the charioteer of his friend and disciple, Arjuna.

Aims of spiritual education

Underlying the sage is the drive for knowledge, which does not rest merely on the questioning and opinion-making, but which strives for the discovery of the truth and certainty of the truth as also the certainty of comprehensive truth. Orientation towards truthfulness and indefatigable labour and arrival of mastery to live in truthfulness and to gain deeper and deeper knowledge in regard to any subject matter by means of concentration and contemplation, this entire process, this orientation and this mastery is what may be rightly termed as a process of spiritual education. To arrive at sagehood, to arrive at that quietude and tranquillity and calm and silence and peace in which knowledge can grow spontaneously, this may be regarded as one of the aims of spiritual education.

Another power of the spirit develops into what may properly be called spiritual heroism. Whereas the sagehood is the culmination of the powers of knowledge, the state of spiritual heroism is a result of the development of the powers of Will. It is often argued that spiritual consciousness encourages withdrawal from action and it leads to world-negation and to the belief in meaninglessness of world and life. It is true that the states of silence and peace point to world-transcendence, since there is something like going beyond all the dynamism of action. But it is not inevitable that world-transcendence must necessarily mean world-negation. Psychologically, knowledge always stands to be superior to Will, but knowledge

Will rooted in knowledge

can also inspire such dynamism of action that Will can never possess, unless it gets rooted in knowledge and gets issued from knowledge. What is the secret, we might ask, of the tremendous potency of action of Buddha that made him the greatest personality that ever walked on the earth? It was his utter silence, a silence that was not blank but that was filled with will and compassion. What is the secret of Christ of going up to the gallows so as to bleed on the cross and manifest that great heroism, which battles for the truth and sacrifices everything for the sake of the entire humanity and prays that his prosecutors be pardoned for they knew not what they were doing? It was that power of the Will, which was rooted in knowledge and in peace that “passeth understanding”.

Discovery of the universal will

Spiritual heroism involves the practice of the Yogic method of arriving at perfection of action, the path of Karma Yoga, just as the path to sagehood is the path of knowledge, Jnana Yoga. The methodised effort here involves a great psychological change brought about by three stages, first, of the control and abolition of desire for fruits of action, second, of the control and abolition of the sense of egoistic doership of action, and third, of the mastery that arises from the discovery and the operation of the impersonal and universal will without any hindrance from our subjective egoism or preferences.

The third power of the spirit flowers in sainthood. The state of consciousness that constitutes sainthood is marked by universal goodwill, sympathy and friendliness and harmony that extends to the totality of interrelationships. The methodised yogic effort here

Sainthood is marked
by universal
goodwill

involves, first, the awakening of our inmost being that is capable of intense sympathy, compassion, spiritual love and harmony, secondly, of concentration and contemplation of internal communion with the subjective and the objective forces of unity and diversity, and thirdly, of internal union with the highest possible source or sources of love, joy and beauty. Sainthood consists of effortless inspiration to be engaged in works of friendliness, charity and service inspired by compassion.

Spirit grows into
universal spiritual
servanthood

The fourth power of the Spirit grows into universal spiritual servanthood, which is reached by the combination of the yogic processes that are required for spiritual heroism and sainthood, but it has also a special mode, which insists on the development of skills that are required from the highest level to the lowest level of activity as also the sense of obedience to all that is considered to be issuing from the highest Knowledge, Will and Love. The true servanthood is scrupulous both in regard to the development and employment of all the skills that are required to accomplish the minutest demands of work; it is this consciousness which is ever vigilant and has spontaneous readiness to execute what is demanded from above; it omits nothing that is to be done, and when the work is done, nothing is found forgotten. To arrive at the state of spiritual servanthood is the highest glory of spiritual effort and spiritual education.

It will be seen that in attaining various states of spiritual consciousness and various traits or aspects of spiritual personality, various psychological processes,

and their scientific handling of materials of Knowledge, Will and Emotion are adequate, and the aid of dogmas, rituals, ceremonies is not indispensable. Thus spiritual education can be so conceived and designed as to be free from those methods and practices, which are uniquely related to religious education.

**Understanding the
relationship
between reason and
revelation**

At the same time, spiritual education need not be averse to what can be called the spiritual core of religions, the core, which transcends the limitations of doctrines, dogmas, rituals and ceremonies or prescribed acts or specific rules connected with social and other institutions rooted in religious doctrines. Religious education can be distinguished from education about religions, and spiritual education is quite consistent with the study of various doctrines and institutions connected with different religions, biographies of religious founders, a comparative study of religions, sources of their conflict and means and methods by which these conflicts can be resolved. This study should, however, be guided by a wide and strict philosophical discipline, which demands impartiality, rational scrutiny and detailed understanding of the relationship between reason and revelation, reason and dogma, and reason and spiritual means of knowledge such as intuition, inspiration, and discrimination.

Spiritual education will admit those elements of studies in ethics and practice of ethical values, which are not tied down to any particular religion and its exclusive claims. The aid that can be received from ethical education, which deals with purification of the

All ethics is
fundamentally a
process of
self-control

powers of knowledge, will and emotion, must be fully welcomed in the programmes of spiritual education. All ethics is fundamentally a process of self-control, and spiritual education will admit all processes of self-control, which are related to self-knowledge and to the development of sagehood, spiritual heroism, sainthood and spiritual servanthood. The programme of spiritual education will also encourage the philosophical study of standards of conduct that have developed at various stages of human history and will aim at establishing the clarity of the concepts of Freewill versus determinism, of goodwill, of the categorical imperative and others in the attempt to understand how this clarity is a great aid in the practice of ethical values, virtues and austerities that aim at purification, strengthening of will-power and transcending those limitations that lead to the conflict between the rational, ethical and aesthetic.

Spiritual education will have no quarrel with all that is rational and all that is scientific. The insistence on the pursuit of truth that is inherent in rational and scientific education must be welcomed in the processes and methods of spiritual education. True spiritual education will aim at the harmonisation of spiritual knowledge, philosophical knowledge and scientific knowledge; in the ultimate analysis, all knowledge tends to be one or holistic, and liberating oneself from the rigidities of the dogmatic assumptions that hinder the true processes of knowledge, one can arrive at a spontaneous harmony among all studies and practices, which aim at the discovery and practice of impartial search for the truth and a comprehensive truth. Spiritual education will never prohibit but

always insist on philosophy and science, their methods, and scrupulous adherence to their specific criteria and to critical and self-critical inquiry into these criteria.

Three great
domains of
aesthetics, —
music, art and
poetry

There are three great domains of aesthetics, — music, art and poetry, — which are normally encouraged and promoted among young people. If they are rightly interwoven in our educational system, they can constitute powerful means of spiritual education. In fact, art comes very close to spirituality because both art and spirituality insist on depth of experience. In art, experience of an object leads to the formation of images, and the artist employs various techniques for giving expressions to these images in forms of beauty. Intensity of experience, vision of the truth and its images and harmonious forms of expression so that the substance and style correspond to each other as intensely as possible, — these are the elements of all art. And music and painting and poetry — these three forms of art, when combined together, can become perfect education of the soul. In poetry, the instrument is the rhythmic word, in painting it is the colour and proportion and charm, and in music it is the melody and harmony of sounds. Colour, sound and word are extremely close to the Spirit, and that is the reason why the spiritual sage easily becomes a poet, and the spiritual saint easily becomes a poet-singer and a musician and every spiritual seeker becomes an artist of life and expresses his art of life in various other arts through which harmonious forms of joy and beauty can be expressed. In an ideal system of education, art will be used for spiritual education and spiritual education will be used for promoting artistic

expression. Essence of all art is the discovery and expression of *rasa* and one of the definitions of the Spirit is that it is *rasa* (*raso vai sah*).

Purify the vital impulses

Spiritual education will also take great care to train and purify the vital impulses, vital drives, vital emotions, vital desires, vital attractions and longings and vital activities of acquisition, possession, influence and enjoyment. Spiritual education will not kill the dynamism of the vital, but will employ the methods of illumination, love, harmonisation and heroism so that the potency of the vital can act effectively and victoriously. The vital will be purified, trained and perfected, so that the dynamic traits of human personality get their proper treatment of transformation. It will be realised that all that is heroic and noble, great and powerful but which is still raw or unripe or mixed will be purified but not discouraged, will be heightened and perfected but not blunted or impoverished. Spiritual education will not aim at weakness but at strength, not at escape from action but at mastery of action.

Just as mental and vital education can form part of spiritual education, even so, physical education, too, can be so conceived and practiced that it forms part of spiritual education. First is the question of attitude towards the body. There are those who consider the body to be the tomb of the spirit, but the right understanding of the body will show that the body is the indispensable instrument of the practice of every ideal. *Shariram adyam khalu dharma-sādhnam* — this is how the Sanskrit adage lays down. Secondly, the values of physical education are perfectly harmonious

How the physical and spiritual are interrelated

with the totality of values of vital, mental and spiritual education. One great value of physical education is that of health, and it is very well known that good health of the body is indispensable for the integral health of the entire being. Yogic methods of pranayama and *āsanas* clearly indicate how the physical and spiritual are interrelated, and in India we have elaborate science of the relationship between the gross body and the subtle body as also of the centres or charkas of subtle body, the opening of which is essential for the fullness or perfection of the body, life and mind as also of spiritual realisation and manifestation. The recent discoveries of the powers that lie embedded in the organic cell of the body are amazing, and it has been found that the spiritual and supramental powers, when captured by the cells of the body, can effect even the mutation of the human body. It is with this high aim that the possibilities of physical education that our educational system should provide full facilities for the perfection of the human body. For that perfection can be a vehicle of the highest possible spiritual manifestation.

Capacities of the body, life and mind are first maximised and purified

It may be remarked that spiritual states of consciousness can be obtained only when the capacities of the body, life and mind are first maximised and purified, and these capacities can again be perfected when the powers of spiritual states of consciousness can, by their descent, penetrate into them and spiritualise them. The total programme of spiritual education is, therefore, a very long one, and it should be undertaken as a life-long programme. But for that very reason, it can suitably commence as early as possible. An appropriate programme needs to be chalked out.

**Insistence on the
pursuit of truth**

Three principles characterise the programme of spiritual education, which necessarily includes education of the body, life and mind. First, there is insistence on the pursuit of truth, truth as it is and not as one would like it to be; and this pursuit demands a high degree of rigor and scrupulous care, which discourages hasty arrival at conclusions, exaggerations of claims, and disregard for patient processes, which are required for verification. Particularly, in matters connected with the development of higher faculties, one needs to learn how to avoid wishful thinking and clouding of clarity and sincerity. Haphazard experiences and sporadic experimentations with truth lead to disbalancement and avoidable pitfalls into error and misjudgement. In all scientific inquiries, these difficulties present themselves, and where spiritual education enters into the field, one has to be more scientific than the current sciences demand of the scientist; for current sciences deal with objective facts, whereas spiritual processes involve both objective and subjective facts. This is the reason why spiritual education should constantly be surcharged with relentless patience, perseverance and unfailing discrimination between appearance and reality, as also between darkness, confusion and light. *Asato ma sadgamaya, tamaso ma jyotir-gamaya, mrityor ma amritam gamaya* these three great aspirations should pervade the atmosphere of educational processes as they did in the Upanishadic times.

**Spirit of harmony
between the teacher
and the pupil**

The second characteristic follows from the first, and that is the cultivation of the spirit of harmony between the teacher and the pupil, between educational administrators and all the partners of education.

Teachers will have
to be themselves
children leading
other children

Spiritual education demands right attitudes among teachers and pupils. Spiritual education is totally child-centred, and this child-centeredness is so great that the teachers should expect to interweave their own outer and internal progress with the outer and internal progress of the children entrusted to their care. The teachers have always to be ready to uplift children's enthusiasm to inquire, to question and to explore and experiment in regard to various processes of learning; teachers cannot afford to be task-masters and create revolt in the minds and hearts of the children; teachers have to realise that they have no external authority, and the only authority that they have issues from their intense care to develop their own purity and their own increasing expansion and mastery over knowledge; the relationship between teachers and pupils should reflect the inter-relationship between inspirations from teachers and aspirations from pupils. Only on that basis harmonious teaching-learning processes can be assured. In the ultimate analysis, teachers will have to be themselves children leading other children.

Harmony depends upon goodwill from oneself and goodwill from others. Among teachers themselves, there has to be the reign of mutuality of goodwill; and similarly, educational administrators have to realise that if there is one place where administrators are real servants and not masters, it is in the field of education; and an educational administrator has to promote educational aims and ideals, and this can be done only where there is a good deal of consultation and absence of arbitrary decision-making. Administrators have to ensure that all support that is needed for a smooth

functioning of the educational processes will be forthcoming, and they will act as promoters of goodwill among the parents of children, management, pupils and teachers.

All this demands
an austerity –
tapasyā,

All this demands tapasyā, an austerity that aims at friendliness, right types of exchange and mutuality, co-operation and an inner sense of fraternity.

The third characteristic is that of liberty. If there is one field where freedom must rule without any abridgement, it is in the flowering of the spiritual consciousness; spiritual development cannot be brought about by compulsion; all that is desirable should be voluntarily accepted or voluntarily self-imposed. It is for the teachers to create such conducive conditions that all that is desirable comes to be valued among pupils as also in the general atmosphere. Even if something is to be compulsory, under certain circumstances, that compulsion fades away as soon as possible, and it becomes interwoven in the process of self-discipline. Problems of conflict between liberty and discipline often arise, but the solutions depend upon how discipline is enforced, not by external means, but by internal adhesion on the part of all the concerned. Discipline is best when it is self-discipline and when it is the child of freedom. It is only when the child comes to accept a process of discipline that the teacher has the right to demand from the child unwavering adherence to discipline, whenever there is deviation from discipline out of unjustifiable relaxation or idleness or a whim of momentary defiance or negligence. No education and much less spiritual education can be perfected without

**Discipline is best
when it is
self-discipline**

discipline, just as even in the functioning of the physical body, every part and every organ has to function with the perfect sense of discipline and co-ordination. In the very atmosphere of the educational process, there must be an overriding sense of self-imposed discipline and it must be the responsibility of everyone to adhere to what is accepted as a part of discipline. Absence of compulsion, minimum of rules and overriding self-discipline coupled with a freedom of choice given to every individual to pursue his or her own lines of inquiry, pace of progress and direction of progress, a combination of these elements would lead to the resolution of problems that are bound to arise when the entire education process is to vibrate with freedom, joy, creativity and happiness that comes from constant progress.

**Children respond
to truth, beauty
and goodness**

It is mistakenly thought that spiritual education should be pursued, if at all, only at advanced levels of education. Actually, a study of child's psychology indicates that children are, in many ways, budding angels; with their innocence, unpretentious sincerity, ready obedience and their sense of trust and confidence in all those who can deal with them with love and encouragement, children are often morally and spiritually superior to the adults. A number of children respond splendidly to truth, beauty and goodness, and if they receive the right encouragement in the right manner, the formation of the character can greatly be imprinted with orientation towards these great values. These values are imbibed by children, not so much by lectures as by encouragement that they receive from their teachers and parents. A good story, long or short, if told at the right moment can make a

**Synthesise science
and spirituality**

tremendous impact, which cannot be wiped out throughout the entire life, and it continues to inspire the right action even in times of crisis and under heavy pressures of temptations.

Three remarks may, however, be made which relate to the question as to how spiritual education can be introduced in our present system of education and what reforms in the present system would be necessary, if we are to make spiritual education an effective instrument of the aims that we have in view, particularly in regard to turning our system into a genuine system, as an instrument of enhancing the global effort to meet the challenges of the contemporary crisis, and as an aid to the fulfilment of the idea and practice of integral education.

It may be recalled that all major Reports on education, Commissions and Committees have acknowledged and underlined the theme of value-education, and even of moral and spiritual education. Dr. Radhakrishnan had recommended a series of measures by which moral education can be a preparation for the spiritual education; he had also recommended the need to provide for study of different religions. He had stressed the importance of the spiritual state of silence and made recommendations as to how this state of consciousness can be promoted. The Kothari Commission Report had also emphasised the need to synthesise science and spirituality and even brought out the truth of the ancient Indian ideal, which spoke of true knowledge as that which leads to spiritual liberation, *sa vidya ya vimuktaye*. Shri Prakasa Committee had given detailed recommendations in

respect of moral and spiritual education. Value-education came to the forefront during the seventies and eighties, and there was also a report on imparting value-orientation to teachers' training programmes. The National Education Policy – 1986 had one full chapter on value education and had underlined the need to foster eternal values and values embedded in Indian culture through the entire educational programme in the country. The duties of citizens as laid down in the Constitution include the promotion of Indian heritage, which implies the study of Indian spirituality. With all these enabling factors, there should be no great difficulty to propose and implement spiritual education.

Communalism can be combated only if we can foster universality and unity

There are, however, those who maintain that the mind is the highest faculty of the human being; that the limitations of mental consciousness can never be broken, and that there is no such thing as spirituality or that there are no spiritual states of consciousness. But this contention is now as outmoded as the contention that anybody unacquainted with modern developments of physics may hold out that the atom is the last limit of unimaginable outburst of energy. There are also those who feel that spiritual education will foster communalism; but this is only a superstition. In reality, communalism can rightly be combated only if we can foster universality and unity, – which in the ultimate analysis can be accomplished through spiritual education. The greatest antidote to communalism, we might affirm, is spiritual education. There are, however, those who maintain that the ideals of spiritual education cannot be made practicable in our present system of education. Here, it may be

acknowledged that since the present system of education was primarily designed to manufacture clerks, and since this system has changed only slightly since the advent of the British, and even after their departure, it is but natural that such a sublime theme as spiritual education may not find place in that so-called Indian system of Education.

But if we are to introduce spiritual education, three things will have to be undertaken :

Teachers' training

- we have to change the present system of teachers' training so radically that every teacher under training receives education for integral development of personality, which will, by implication, include the overarching programme of spiritual education;
- the present lecture-oriented, book-oriented, syllabus-oriented, and examination-oriented system will have to be replaced by child-centred and youth-centred education that will employ dynamic methods of exploration, experimentation, practice of values and those processes, which will lead to the fostering of spiritual states of consciousness and powers;
- we shall have to institute widespread education of parents and other partners of education so that the theme of spiritual education finds full support of the people.

None of these things is impracticable or impossible, but we cannot minimise the difficulties involved in

these tasks. It must, however, be emphasised that because the tasks are difficult, we tend to find excuses to escape from these difficulties. But difficulties have to be overcome, and we must chalk out a programme of overcoming these difficulties and implement that programme with perseverance and without any depressing or cynical thought.

**Confrontation
between the best
and the worst
possibilities**

And this brings us to the third remark. Our state, whether in the country or in the world, presents us a powerful confrontation between the best possibilities and the worst possibilities; it is a battle being fought at a critical point, and if we do not act, we shall automatically be registering ourselves as members of the army of those who are working for the realisation of the worst possibilities; if, however, we make a choice and join the army of those who are working for the realisation of the best possibilities, we can be sure that we shall have done the right thing and that, irrespective of immediate results, we shall have enhanced the power of that force which is best for our country and the world. To work for spiritual education is to my mind, to join the army, however small it may be, that holds out the promise of the eventual fulfilment of humanity.

Appendix

The Rishi and the Brahmacharin

Rishi connoted the highest ideal of the teacher

In ancient India, the concept of the Rishi connoted the highest ideal of the teacher. The teacher was a Yogin, one who had realized or was a seeker of true knowledge that comes through the practice of Yoga, which was at that time a developing science and art of psychological concentration and perfection. The Vedic Rishis described their aspirations and victories in the form of Mantra, inevitable expression born out of innermost vision and realization.

The Vedic Rishis refer to their 'forefathers' as great pathfinders, and spoke of them in legends and myths in order to describe what they had achieved. For example, Parashara says: "Our fathers broke open the firm and strong places by their words, yea, the Angirasas broke open the hill by their cry; they made in us the path to the great heaven; they found the Day and Swar and vision and the luminous Cows" (Rig Veda, 1.71.2). This path, he tells us, is the path which leads to immortality. "They who entered into all things that bear right fruit formed a path towards immortality; earth stood wide for them by the greatness and by the Great Ones, the mother Aditi with her sons came (or, manifested herself) for the upholding" (Rig Veda, 1.72.9). The meaning of these cryptic verses is that the physical being is visited by the greatness of the infinite planes above and by the power of the great godheads who reign on those planes. This breaks the

limits of the physical being, which opens out to the Light and is upheld in its new wideness by the infinite Consciousness, mother Aditi, and her sons, the divine powers of the supreme Deva or Lord. This was the meaning of Vedic immortality.

There are also references in the second hymn of the fourth Mandala to the seven divine seers, who are the divine Angirasas and the human fathers. Riks 12 to 15 describe the seven Rishis as the supreme ordainers of the world-sacrifice, and put forth the idea of the human being 'becoming' the seven Rishis, that is to say, creating them in himself and growing into that which they mean, just as he becomes the Heaven and Earth and the other gods; or, as it is otherwise put, man begets or creates or forms the divine birth in his own being. As Rik 15 says: "Now as the seven seers of Dawn, the Mother, the supreme disposers (of sacrifice, which in psychological terms means self-consecration, the discipline by which the separative sense of egoism is destroyed), may we beget for ourselves the gods; may we become the Angirasas, sons of Heaven breaking open the wealth-filled hill, shining in purity." These Riks bring out the idea of the human fathers as the original type of the great becoming and achievement.

The Veda as the Book of Knowledge

The word Veda is derived from the root *vid*, to know, and the Vedic Rishis looked upon the Veda as the Book of Knowledge. The Vedic Rishis discovered that the secret of victory lies in aspiration, which expresses itself in the form of burning flame, Agni. This burning flame rises higher and higher in our being, destroying impurities and obscurities, and there arise in us king-

ideas, master-wills, intense prayers. There is then a response, and the doors of secret knowledge and power swing open giving birth to creative action or event. Victory is achieved our being with its imperfect thought, will and emotion, is filled with vastness, luminosity and unfailing energy. The immortal in us is realized and becomes manifest.

The Veda contains the secrets of this realization. It is the science and art of the inter-relationship of our earthly being with the powers around it and above it, and of the processes by which our imperfections can be remedied. The Veda is indeed a book of discoveries, a record of research that the ancient fathers and their initiates carried on by personal verification, re-discovery and constant enlargement.

The legend of the Angirasas

One of the most important legends of the Veda is the legend of the Angirasas. Its theme is the spiritual life of man but, to make it concrete to themselves and while veiling its secrets from the unfit, the Vedic poets expressed it in poetic images drawn from outward life. The Angirasas are pilgrims of the lights. They are those who travel towards the goal and attain to the highest, “they who travel to and attain that supreme treasure” (Rig Veda, 11.24.6). Their action is invoked for carrying the life of man farther towards its goal. The journey is principally the quest of the hidden light, but through the opposition of the powers of darkness it also becomes an expedition and a battle. The Angirasas are heroes and fighters of that battle, “fighters for the cows or rays of light and knowledge” (*goshu yodhah*). They discover the supraphysical power or being, the king of the kingdom of illumined intelligence (*Swar*), and they

seek his help. This being is Indra, who marches with them (*saranyubhih*), travellers on the path (*sakhibhih*), comrades, seers and singers of the sacred chant, and fighters in the battle. Strengthened by them he conquers during the journey and reaches the goal. The journey proceeds along the path discovered by Sarama, the hound of heaven, the intuitive power that sees that path directly, the path of the Truth, *ritasya panthah*, the great path, *mahas panthah*, which leads to the realms of the Truth.

The drinking of the soma wine

The drinking of the soma wine as the means of strength, victory and attainment is one of the pervading figures of the Veda. The soma wine is the sweetness that comes flowing from the streams of the hidden upper world, it is that which flows in the seven waters, it is that with which the *ghrita*, the clarified butter of the mystic sacrifice, is instinct, it is the honeyed wave which rises out of the ocean of life. Such images, as pointed out by Sri Aurobindo, can have only one meaning: "It is the divine delight hidden in all existence which once manifest, supports all life's crowning activities and is the force that finally immortalizes the mortal, the *amritam*, ambrosia of the gods." The Angirasas are distinguished by their seerhood, Rishihood. They are the fathers who are full of the soma, they have the word and are increasers of the Truth. The Angirasas have been described as those who speak rightly, masters of the Rik who place perfectly their thought; they are heroes who speak the truth and think with straightness and thus are able to hold the seat of illumined knowledge (*vide* Rig Veda, X.67.2).

The ancient Indian idea of the teacher is conceived in the light of the image of the Angirasas, and it is for this reason that the teacher came to be placed so supreme. The verses we have presented here give only a few glimpses of the aspirations and achievements of the ancient teachers.

The meanings of the Vedic verses are not fully understandable; therefore, a great deal of research is required to discover the secret of the Veda. To understand exactly what the Vedic Rishis achieved, the reader may refer to Sri Aurobindo's luminous interpretation in '*The Secret of the Veda*'.

The Veda speaks of
Agni, the divine
Flame

The verses we have selected are hymns addressed to Agni, a word which is translated as power, strength, will, the god-will or the Flame according to the context. The Veda speaks of Agni, the divine Flame, in a series of splendid and opulent images. He is the rapturous priest of the sacrifice, the young sage, the sleepless envoy, the ever-wakeful flame in the house, the master of our gated dwelling-place, the beloved guest, the divine child, the pure and virgin god, the invincible warrior, the leader on the path who marches in front of the human peoples, the immortal in mortals, the worker established in man by the gods, the unobstructed in knowledge, the infinite in being, the vast and flaming sun of the Truth, the sustainer of the sacrifice and discernor of its steps, the divine perception, the Light, the vision, the firm foundation. We experience Agni as our upward aspiration, the will towards Truth, and the force that uplifts us from our limitations by renunciation, purification and right enjoyment. This aspiration, when it reaches its acme, is

what brings to us the victory — deliverance from falsehood into Truth, from darkness into Light, from death into immortality.

Knowledge of the hierarchy of the various worlds

One of the great discoveries of the Vedic Rishis was the knowledge of the hierarchy of the various worlds and the inter-relationship and interaction of the physical world with the supraphysical worlds. Based on this knowledge, they found and applied the means by which man in the physical world can attain perfection. In their system of knowledge, Agni is found to be the fundamental bridge between the lower and the higher, a messenger that travels and turns human aspiration into divine victory, a will that enables man to rise above human limitations so as to become a candidate for perfection.

Upanishads are also regarded as Vedanta

The Vedas were followed by the Brahmanas and Aranyakas. While the Brahmanas dealt with the ritualistic aspects of the Veda, the Aranyakas brought out the inner meaning of the teachings of the Rishis. The Aranyakas were followed by the Upanishads. The word Upanishad consists of three components, *upa*, *ni* and *shad*, where *shad* means to dwell, *upa* means near and *ni* means closer. Thus Upanishad means dwelling very closely to the secret knowledge. Upanishads are also regarded as Vedanta, which means the end of the Veda. The Rishis of the Upanishads attempted to recover the Vedic knowledge which had become obscured in the course of time. The language of the Upanishads is much clearer than that of the Veda, even though it has yielded to various interpretations.

There are more than two hundred Upanishads. But

the principal Upanishads are between eight and twelve. Isa, Kena, Katha, Prashna, Chhandogya, Brihadaranyaka, Mundaka, Mandukya, Taittiriya and Shvetashvatara are the most prominent. The stories that we have selected below for this book are taken from the Chhandogya Upanishad and Katha Upanishad.

The Upanishads give us a clear idea of the ancient system of education and of the role of the teacher and the pupil. Some of the examples that are given here clearly indicate that the pupil was supposed to approach the teacher and seek instruction from him, that the good teacher judged the pupil by his truthfulness and the earnestness of his seeking, and that the good pupil was the one who chose the path of the good rather than that of the pleasant. The Upanishads also point out that the knowledge sought by the teachers and pupils was the knowledge that transcends appearances and seizes upon Reality through direct experience.

Student who has an ardent aspiration to learn and study

In the story of Satyakama, we have an illustration of a young student who has an ardent aspiration to learn and study. His first quality is truthfulness, and the teacher rightly accepts him, convinced that his truthfulness is sufficient evidence of his qualification to be admitted.

In the next story, taken from the Katha Upanishad, we have Nachiketas, a young brahmacharin, who is offered by his father to Yama, the god who controls and governs the kingdom of death. We are told that Nachiketas, seeing his father giving away old cows as

Knowledge of the secret of death

offerings to Brahmins, feels that his father ought to give something valuable and asks his father to whom he (Nachiketas) should be given as a sacrifice and offering. Thrice he asks his father, and his father, annoyed with his insistence, pronounces that he is offered to Yama. The young Nachiketas visits the abode of Yama, where he waits for three days for Yama's arrival. When Yama comes, he is pleased with Nachiketas for his patience and sincerity, and offers him three boons. Nachiketas first asks for his father's appeasement and his well-being, which Yama grants readily. Next, he asks for the knowledge of the secret of the fire of austerity. And, lastly he asks for the knowledge of the secret of death, of what happens to man after death and what really is the secret of immortality. Yama does not intend to give away this secret and offers him the choice of worldly happiness in the form of riches and progeny and success. However, Nachiketas is firm in his demand and rejects the choice offered by Yama. Yama is pleased with the steadfast adherence of Nachiketas to his noble search, and grants him the secret knowledge. The short extract presented here in this book is a dialogue between Yama and Nachiketas, in which Yama explains the distinction between the good and the pleasant, and points out that since Nachiketas chose the good in preference to the pleasant, he considers Nachiketas a worthy pupil who deserves to be given the secret knowledge.

The third story, taken from the Chhandogya Upanishad, contains a famous dialogue between Aruni and his son, Shvetaketu. There are three important elements in the extract. In the first place, we

What is it knowing
which everything is
known?

have here an illustration of the method of teaching by dialogue and personal experimentation. Secondly, the central question raised by Aruni is one of the most striking questions that every good teacher and pupil should raise: "What is it knowing which everything is known?" Thirdly, the answer provided to the question is perhaps the quintessence of India's entire approach to the problem of knowledge. In brief the answer is that the knowledge of essence gives us the foundation of all that is manifested, and that the quintessence of all phenomena is the inner self which is identical with that which transcends all and manifests all. *Tat tvam asi*, 'thou art That', is one of the great pronouncements of the Upanishadic knowledge, and Aruni explains this knowledge by various examples, so that the pupil can grasp it.

Scientific inquiry
into self-knowledge

In modern times, science, after its triumphant discoveries and inventions, is slowly returning to the realization that knowledge depends very much on the knower, and that the most important object of knowledge is the self that is seeking knowledge. Schrodinger and others have come to the conclusion that this new orientation will press the scientific inquiry into the field of self-knowledge. Here we see the modern quest converging on the ancient wisdom.

In the fourth story, which is also taken from the Chhandogya Upanishad we have a dialogue between Narada and Sanatkumara. When Narada approaches Sanatkumara, Sanatkumara says: "Tell me what you already know; then I will impart to you what lies outside, it." Narada replies enumerating a large number of disciplines of knowledge that he has

already learned. Sanatkumara points out that what Narada knows is only name and that there is something greater than name. This brings out the real distinction between learning and knowledge. The aim of the good teacher is to help the pupil liberate himself from the cobwebs of learning and to lead him to the luminosity of true knowledge.

India had developed a wide variety of disciplines of the sciences and arts

In connection with the story of Narada and Sanatkumara, it may be worth noting that ancient India had developed a wide variety of disciplines of the sciences and arts. It is difficult to say whether these disciplines developed during the Upanishadic age, but to some extent they surely did, and we have some information about the curriculum followed in Taxila, the most important seat of learning in ancient India. It is said that Taxila was founded by Bharata and named after his son Taksha, who was established there as ruler. (Taxila was situated about twenty miles west of modern Rawalpindi). Apart from the Vedic knowledge, grammar, philosophy, and eighteen *shilpas* were the principal subjects of specialization. It is surmised that these eighteen *shilpas* were as follows: vocal music, instrumental music, dancing, painting, mathematics, accounting, engineering, sculpture, agriculture, cattle-breeding, commerce, medicine, conveyancing and law, administrative training, archery and military art, magic, snake-charming and poison antidotes, the art of finding hidden treasures.

Later literature mentions sixty-four *kalas*, which a cultured lady was expected to master. These included the art of cooking, skill in the use of body ointments and paints for the teeth, etc., music, dancing, painting,

garland-making, floor decoration, preparation of the bed, proper use and care of dress and ornaments, sewing, elementary carpentry, repair of household tools and articles, reading, writing and understanding different languages, composing poems, understanding dramas, physical exercises, recreation for utilizing leisure hours, and the art of preparing toys for children.

Devotion to the teacher

In the Upanishadic literature we come to know of a large number of good teachers and good pupils. In the selection presented here, there are Satyakama Jabala, Nachiketas, Shvetaketu and Narada. We may also refer to the traditional story of Uddalaka Aruni, the son of Aruna Gautama and father of Shvetaketu. Most of the important works of the period refer to him as an authority on rituals and inner knowledge. As a pupil, he is often cited for his devotion to his teacher. He was asked by his teacher to prevent the inundation of the ashram farm during a rainy day. Unable to plug a crack in the dam, he used his own body to plug the breach and thus prevented the inundation of the farm. The Chhandogya Upanishad makes reference to Krishna Devakiputra who received initiation and knowledge from his teacher, Ghora. He is indeed the one declared later to be the Lord Krishna. The Upanishads describe him as a student eager in his pursuit of knowledge. We may also mention Pippalada, a great sage in the Prashna Upanishad. Raikva is the name of the cart driver whom the King Janashruti approached for instruction. In the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, we have a vivid account of the supremacy of Yajnavalkya. According to the story, Yajnavalkya's guru, Uddalaka Aruni, could not hold his own in a disputation with

him in a vast assembly of scholars from the entire Kuru Panchala country which had been summoned by King Janaka of Videha. The Upanishads contain other great names of teachers and pupils, such as Ashvala, Jarat Karava Artabhiga, Bhujyu Lahyayani, Ushasti Chakrayana, Kahoda Kaushitakeya, and Gargi Vachaknavi. We should also mention Maitreyi, a learned wife of Yajnavalkya, who 'was conversant with Brahman'. One of the famous dialogues in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad is between Yajnavalkya and Maitreyi. This dialogue occurs when Yajnavalkya is about to renounce the life of a householder for that of a hermit, and he proposes to divide his wealth between his two wives, Katyayani and Maitreyi. But Maitreyi insists on his giving her instruction in spiritual wisdom.

According to tradition, Dhaumya was a great teacher, and stories are told not only of Aruni Uddalaka, one of his good pupils to whom we have referred earlier, but also of his other pupil Veda, who is reported to have himself become a very good teacher. Veda is especially noted for the devotion displayed by one of his pupils, Utanka. On the completion of his studentship, Utanka encounters every sort of experience and danger in order to procure the presents of Veda's choice before being free to leave his preceptor's home.

Another picture of ideal studentship is brought out in the story of Kacha and Devayani. Devayani's father Sukracharya was Kacha's teacher. She fell in love with Kacha, but he had taken the vow of brahmacharya and refused to enter into marriage with her. One passage in the Mahabharata gives Kacha's description of the life

he lived in that retreat of learning: 'Carrying the burden of sacrificial wood, kusha grass, and fuel, I was coming towards the hermitage and feeling tired, sat for rest under the banyan tree, along with my companions, the kine under my charge.' This brings out the fact that one of the traditional duties of the student was to tend his preceptor's cattle, and collect wood for fire and sacrifice, and this put him into intimate touch with Nature and subjected him to the influence and educational processes of Nature working through 'silent sympathy' as Wordsworth puts it. The Mahabharata gives the complete traditional story of Kacha and Devayani.

A number of books on the Upanishads are available. We have taken the extract from the Katha Upanishad from Sri Aurobindo's book *The Upanishads*. The other extracts are from the translation by V.M. Bedekar and G.B. Palsule.

Aspirations and Victories of the Ancient Rishis

(A few selections from the Rig Veda)¹

I

(The Rishi desires a state of spiritual wealth full of the divine working in which nothing shall fall away to the division and the crookedness. So, increasing by our works the divine Force in us daily, we shall attain to the Bliss and the Truth, the rapture of the Light and the rapture of the Force.)

1. O Will, O conqueror of our plenitude, the felicity which thou alone canst conceive in the mind, that make full of inspiration by our words and set it to labour in the gods as our helper.
2. They who are powers increased of thee in the fierceness of thy flame and strength, yet impel us not on the path, they fall away to division, they cleave to the crookedness of a law that is other than thine.
3. Thee, O Will, we take to us as the priest of the offering and the accomplisher of a discerning knowledge; holding for thee all our delights we call thee the ancient and supreme to our sacrifices by the word.

¹ These selections have been made from "*The Secret of the Veda*" by Sri Aurobindo.

4. Rightly and in such wise that, O forceful god, O perfect power of works, we may increase thee day by day, that we may have the Bliss, that we may have the Truth, that we may have perfect rapture by the Rays of the knowledge, that we may have perfect rapture by the Heroes of the Force.

Rig Veda V.20.1-4

II

(The Rishi celebrates the flame of the Will high-blazing in the dawn of knowledge as the King of Immortality, the giver to the soul of its spiritual riches and felicity and of a well-governed mastery of Nature. He is the bearer of our oblation, the illumined guide of our sacrifice to its divine and universal goal.)

1. The Flame of Will burning high rises to his pure light in the heaven of mind; wide he extends his illumination and fronts the Dawn. She comes, moving upward, laden with all desirable things, seeking the gods with the oblation, luminous with the clarity.
2. When thou burnest high thou art king of immortality and thou cleavest to the doer of sacrifice to give him that blissful state; he to whom thou comest to be his guest, holds in himself all substance and he sets thee within in his front.
3. O Flame, put forth thy battling might for a vast enjoyment of bliss; may there be thy highest illumination; create a well-governed union of the

Lord and his Spouse, set thy foot on the greatness of hostile powers.

4. I adore, O Flame, the glory of thy high-blazing mightiness. Thou art the Bull with the illuminations; thou burnest up in the march of our sacrifices.
5. O Flame that receivest our offerings, perfect guide of the sacrifice, high-kindled offer our oblation to the godheads; for thou art the bearer of our offerings.
6. Cast the offering, serve the Will with your works while your sacrifice moves forward to its goal, accept the carrier of our oblation.

Rig Veda V.28.1-6

III

Vanished the darkness, shaken in its foundation; Heaven shone out (*rocata dyauh*, implying the manifestation of the three luminous worlds of Swar, *diyo rocanani*); upward rose the light of the divine Dawn; the Sun entered the vast fields (of the Truth) beholding the straight things and the crooked in mortals. Thereafter indeed they awoke and saw utterly (by the sun's separation of the straight from the crooked, the truth from falsehood); then indeed they held in them the bliss that is enjoyed in heaven.

Rig Veda IV. 1.17

May he the knower discern perfectly the Knowledge and the Ignorance, the wide levels and the crooked that

shut in mortals; and, O God, for a bliss fruitful in offspring, lavish on us Diti and protect Aditi.

Rig Veda IV.2.11

Now as the seven seers of Dawn, the Mother, the supreme disposers (of the sacrifice), may we beget for ourselves the gods; may we become the Angirasas, sons of Heaven, breaking open the wealth-filled hill, shining in purity.

Rig Veda IV.2.15

We have done the work for thee, we have become perfect in Works, the wide-shining Dawns have, taken up their home in the Truth (or, have robed themselves with the Truth), in the fullness of Agni and his manifold delight, in the shining eye of the god in all his brightness.

Rig Veda IV.2.19

Brahmacharins in Search of Knowledge

(A few selections from the Upanishads)

I

Truthfulness²

"Satyakama Jabālā said to his Mother Jabālā: 'Venerable mother: I wish to join school as a brahmacharin (pupil wishing to learn the true knowledge). Please tell me from what family I hail."

She said to him: "My child, I don't know from what family you are. In my youth, I went about in many places as a maid-servant; during that period I begot you; I myself do not know from what family you hail; I am called Jabālā and you are called Satyakama; so call yourself then Satyakama, the son of Jabālā."

Then he went to Haridrumata Gautama and said: "I wish to join your school, venerable Sir, as a Brahmacharin, if you, venerable Sir, would desire to accept me."

He said to him; "My dear child, from what family do you hail?" He replied: "Venerable Sir, I do not know from what family I hail; I have asked my mother

² This passage is taken from the translation by V.M. Bedekar and G.B. Palsule.

who answered me: 'In my youth, I went about in many places as a maid-servant; during that period I begot you. I myself don't know from what family you hail. I am called Jabālā and you are called Satyakama.' Therefore I call myself Satyakama, son of Jabālā, venerable Sir."

He (the preceptor) replied to him: 'Only a Brahmana can speak so candidly. My dear child, bring here the fuel-sticks (which are requisite for the ceremonial rite). I will accept you, because you have not swerved from truthfulness.'

After he had accepted him, he separated from the herd four hundred lean and weak cows and said: 'My dear, go after them and tend them.' Satyakama then drove them forth and said to his teacher: 'Not before they have become one thousand, will I return.' So he lived far away for a number of years.

Chhandogya Upanishad, Ch. IV, Part IV

II

The Good and the Pleasant³

Yama speaks:

"One thing is the good and quite another thing is the pleasant, and both seize upon a man with different meanings. Of these who takes the good, it is well with him; he falls from the aim of life who chooses the pleasant.

"The good and the pleasant come to a man and the thoughtful mind turns all around them and distinguishes. The wise chooses out the good from the pleasant, but the dull soul chooses the pleasant rather than the getting of his good and its having.

"And thou, O Nachiketas, hast looked close at the objects of desire, at pleasant things and beautiful, and thou hast cast them from thee; thou hast not entered into the net of riches in which many men sink to perdition.

"For far apart are these, opposite, divergent, the one that is known as the ignorance and the other the Knowledge. But Nachiketas I deem truly desirous of the knowledge whom so many desirable things could not make to lust after them.

"They who dwell in the ignorance, within it, wise in their own wit and deeming themselves very

² This passage is taken 'from the translation by V.M. Bedekar and G.B. Palsule.

learned, men bewildered are they who wander about stumbling round and round helplessly like blind men led by the blind.

"The childish wit bewildered and drunken with the illusion of riches cannot open its eyes to see the passage to heaven: for he that thinks this world is and there is no other, comes again and again into Death's thralldom.

"He that is not easy to be heard of by many, and even of those that have heard, they are many who have not known Him, — a miracle is the man that can speak of Him wisely or is skillful to win Him, and when one is found, a miracle is the listener who can know Him even when taught of Him by the knower.

"An inferior man cannot tell you of Him; for thus told thou canst not truly know Him, since He is thought of in many aspects. Yet unless told of Him by another thou canst not find thy way to Him; for He is subtler than subtlety and that which logic cannot reach.

"This wisdom is not to be had by reasoning, O beloved Nachiketas; only when told thee by another it brings real knowledge, — the wisdom which thou hast gotten. Truly thou art steadfast in the Truth! Even such a questioner as thou art may I meet with always."

Nachiketas speaks:

"I know of treasure that it is not for ever; for not by things unstable shall one attain That One which is stable; therefore I heaped the fire of Nachiketas, and by the sacrifice of momentary things I won the Eternal."

Katha Upanishad, First Cycle: Ch.II, 1-10

III

What is it Knowing Which Everything is Known?⁴

Svetaketu was the son of (Uddalaka) Aruni. His father said to him: 'Svetaketu! Move and go to study the true Knowledge, because, my dear one, none of our family used to be unlearned and remain a mere appendage of Brahmanhood (a Brahman only in name).

Then he, while twelve years of age, went as a pupil to a teacher and when he was twenty-four years old, had thoroughly studied all the books of Knowledge. He returned haughty in mind, conceited and thinking himself wise. Then his father said to him: 'O dear one! Since you are haughty in mind, conceited and consider yourself wise, have you inquired into that instruction whereby what is even unheard of, becomes heard, what is not comprehended becomes comprehended, what is not known becomes known?'

"Venerable Sir, how is that instruction?"

'Just as, O dear one, through one lump of clay everything that consists of clay is known, modification being a clinging to words, only a name, it is only clay in reality.

'Just as, O dear one, through a copper pommel,

⁴ This passage is taken from the translation by V.M. Bedekar and G.B. Palsule

everything that consists of copper is known, modification being merely a clinging to words, only a name, it is only copper in reality.

'Just as, O dear one, through a nail-parer, everything that consists of iron is known, modification being merely a clinging to words, only a name, it is only iron in reality thus, my dear, is this instruction.'

'Certainly my venerable teachers must not have known this teaching; because if they had known it, why would they not have communicated it to me? But venerable Sir, you will now please explain it to me!'

'So be it, my dear!'

Chhandogya Upanishad, Ch.VI, Part I

'When, O dear one, the bees prepare honey, they gather the juice of manifold trees and assemble the juice into a unity.

'So also, in that juice of these, no distinction is preserved as that of a particular tree whose juices they are; so also, indeed, O dear one, all these creatures, when they enter into the Being (in deep sleep and death), have no consciousness thereof, that they enter into the Being.

'Whatever they may be here — a tiger, a lion or a wolf, or a bear, or a worm or a bird or a gadfly or a gnat, they are again born in these forms.

'This universe consists of what that finest essence is,

it is the real, it is the soul, that thou art, Svetaketu!'

'Venerable Sir, teach me still further,' he (Svetaketu) said. 'So be it,' (Aruni) replied.

Chhandogya Upanishad, Ch.VI, Part IX

'When one, O dear one, cuts this big tree here at the root, it trickles sap, because it lives; when one cuts it in the middle, it trickles sap, because it lives; when one cuts it at the top, it trickles sap, because it lives; thus it stands, penetrated through by the living self, prolific and rejoicing.

'Now if life departs from one branch, that branch withers; if life departs from the second branch, that also withers; if life departs from the third branch, that also withers; if life departs from the whole tree, the whole tree withers or dries up. Therefore, O dear one, you should mark this he (Aruni) said.

'This body indeed dies if it is deserted by life; but this life does not die. This universe consists of what that finest essence is; it is the real, it is the soul, that thou art, O Svetaketu.'

'Venerable Sir, teach me still further,' he (Svetaketu) said.

'So be it,' he (Aruni) replied.

Chhandogya Upanishad, Ch.VI, Part XI

'Fetch me a fruit of that Nyagrodha (banyan) tree there.

'Here it is, venerable Sir'

'Split it.'

'It is split, venerable Sir.'

'What do you see therein?'
'I see here, venerable Sir, very fine seeds.'
'Split one of them.'
'It is split, venerable Sir!'
'What do you see therein?'
'Nothing at all, venerable Sir!'

Then he (Aruni) spoke: 'That finest essence which you do not perceive, O dear one — out of this finest essence, indeed, this great Nyagrodha tree has arisen.

'Believe, my dear, the universe consists of what that finest essence is; it is the real, it is the soul, that thou art, O Svetaketu!'
'Teach me still further, venerable Sir,' 'So be it,' he (Aruni) said.

Chhandogya Upanishad, Ch. VI, Part XII

'Put this piece of salt, here, in water and come again tomorrow to me.' He did it. Then he (Aruni) said: 'Bring me the salt which you had put into the water last evening.' He groped, feeling after it and found nothing of it, because it was completely dissolved.

'Taste that water from this side! How does it taste?'
'Saltish.'
'Taste it from the middle! How does it taste?'
'Saltish.'
'Taste it from that side! How does it taste?'
'Saltish.'
'Let it be there; seat yourself by my side.'
He did it and said: 'It (salt in water) is always present.' Then the other one (Aruni said): 'Indeed,

you do not perceive the Being here in the body but it is, nevertheless, therein.'

'This universe consists of what that finest essence is, it is the real, it is the soul, that thou art, O Svetaketu!' 'Venerable Sir, instruct me still further!' 'So be it,' he (Aruni) said.

Chhandogya Upanishad, Ch.VI, Part XIII

'Just as, O dear one, a man who, with eyes bandaged, is led away out of the region of Gandhara and then forsaken in a deserted place, will grope breathlessly towards the north or towards the south, because he has been led away with bandaged eyes and has been left in an uninhabited place.

'But thereafter somebody had removed the bandage from him and said to him: 'there lie the Gandhara regions beyond; go thither from here.' He reaches home in the Gandhara region, inquiring further from village to village, instructed by others and now quite sensible; in the same way man, who has here found a teacher, attains knowledge: 'I would belong to this drift of worldly existence until I have been released; thereafter I shall reach my home.'

'This universe consists of what that finest essence is; it is the real, it is the soul, that thou art, O Svetaketu!'

Chhandogya Upanishad, Ch.VI, Part XIV

IV

Learning and the Knowledge of the Self⁵

'Teach me, venerable Sir!' With these words Nārada approached Sanatkumara. He (Sanatkumara) said to him: 'Tell me what you already know; then I will impart to you what lies outside it.'

And the other (Nārada) said, 'I have, O venerable Sir, learnt the Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda, the Atharvaveda as the fourth, the epic and mythological poems as the fifth Veda, grammar, the ritual concerning the Manes, arithmetic, mantik, counting or reckoning of time, dialectic, politics, divine lore, the lore of the prayer, the lore of the ghosts, the science of warfare, astronomy, spell against serpents, the art of the muse [literally, of demigods, *deva-jana*]. This it is, O venerable Sir, that I have learnt.

'And thus I am, O venerable Sir, no doubt learned in scriptures but not in the lore of the Atman. Because I have heard from such as are like you that he who knows the Atman, overcomes sorrow; but venerable Sir, I am afflicted with sorrow; that is why you will carry me, O Sir, to that yonder beach beyond sorrow!' And he (Sanatkumara) said to him: 'Everything that you have studied is mere name (nāman).

'The Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda, the Atharvaveda as the fourth, the epic and mythological poems as the fifth Veda, grammar, the ritual of the

Manes, arithmetic, mantik, reckoning of time, dialectic, politics, the divine lore, the lore of prayer, the lore of the ghosts, the science of warfare, astronomy, spell against serpents and the art of the muse – all these are a name, everything of this is a name. You may adore the name!

'He who adores the name as Brahman – so far as the name extends itself that far, over that extent, he will be entitled to move about according to his liking, that is why he adores the name as Brahman.'

'Is there, O venerable Sir, anything greater than the name?' 'Well there is one greater than the name.'

Chhandogya Upanishad, Ch.VII, Part I

⁵ This passage is taken from the translation by V.M. Bedekar and G.B. Palsule.

Kireet Joshi

Kireet Joshi (b. 1931) studied Philosophy and Law at the Bombay University. He was selected for the I.A.S in 1955, but in 1956 he resigned in order to devote himself to the study and practice of the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother at Pondicherry.

He taught Philosophy and Psychology at the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education at Pondicherry and participated in numerous educational experiments under the direct guidance of The Mother.

In 1976, the Government of India invited him to be Educational Advisor in the Ministry of Education. In 1983, he was appointed Special Secretary to the Government of India and he held the post until 1988. He was Founder Member-Secretary of Indian Council of Philosophical Research from 1981 to 1990. He was also Member-Secretary of Rashtriya Veda Vidya Pratishthan from 1987 to 1993 and the Vice-Chairman of the UNESCO Institute of Education, Hamburg, from 1987 to 1989.

From 1999 to 2004, he was the Chairman of Auroville Foundation. From 2000 to 2006, he was Chairman of the Indian Council of Philosophical Research. From 2006 to 2008, he was Editorial Fellow of the Project on History of Indian Science, Philosophy and Culture. (PHISPC).

He was also formally Education Advisor to the Chief Minister of Gujarat (2008-2010). Currently he is at Sri Aurobindo Ashram at Pondicherry, engaged in the tasks of research and guidance in themes related to 'Science and Spirituality' and 'Spiritual Education'.

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