

Purusharth : Ancient And Modern Indian Goals

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Abstract

Max Miller said, “one thing is certain namely, that there is nothing more primitive more ancient than the hymns of the Rig Veda, whether in India or in whole Aryan world. “Man is the most intellectual being in the creation. He is endowed with the power to receive knowledge, to think, to imagine, reflect & speculate about his past as well as his future. Down through the ages knowledge has been handed down from the master to the disciple & this master discipline & thus from generation to the next. In this hierarchy of education, the Vedas are the first to be revealed, the other being evolved from them.



The Purusharthas are described as the psycho-moral bases of Vedic theory. They are concerned with the understanding, justification, management and conduct of affairs of the individual's life in relation to the group in and through Ashramas. These help the individual in getting psychological training and preparing himself to deal with the actual society. According to this theory four purusharthas are there as aim of life, viz, 'dharma', 'artha', 'karma' and 'moksha', 'moksha' represents the end of life, the realization of an inner spirituality in man. 'Artha' refers to the acquisitive instinct in man and signifies his economic – wealth getting activity.

1. Introduction

The goal of Vedic Culture is self realization. A culture is made up of individuals. The ideals of the culture must be effectively transmitted to the individual by reshaping his values and activities. These ideals give rise of Vedic Education as an integral part of Vedic culture. Vedic culture would offer the best facility for the development of the individual. Once, trained, the individual has his place in the culture; but to the trained he must be removed from his conditional environment and be placed in a situation in which, under the guidance of the teacher, he can more objectively understand his position. This situation is ideally away from material/urban surroundings. It should be in the shelter of the teacher's Ashrama. Education must aid developing Krishna Consciousness in the individual. Education must aid developing individuals as highly learned. Highly learned means: “When a person is highly educated and acts strictly on moral principles, he is called highly learned.” The trust of education therefore must be to develop character and philosophical realization; external knowledge and expertise are in a supportive role.

2. The Need of Individualized and Personal Direction Under an Expert

Teacher.

Education must be individualized as each person has his own nature, abilities and problems of conditioning. To effect change in the students' outlook, habits and behavior, the teacher must give them personal attention, guidance and shelter. The relationship between student and teacher must be that of firm friendship based on natural, not artificial, respect. The child must come under the shelter of the teacher at the earliest age possible, so the relationship between them has developed before the child attains puberty with all its subsequent difficulties. The student must have suitable behavior and intellect for training. There is a testing period in which the prospective student may be evaluated.

3. The Duties of the Brahmachari.

- The importance of sādhanā, service attitude and menial service.



- The usefulness of the upanayanam □ samskara as a limb of pañcara □ tra and a preparation for spiritual initiation.
 - i) helps establish the student firmly in the mode of goodness.
 - ii) gives adhikra to perform homas and home Deity worship, thus cultivating attitudes of cleanliness, responsibility and devotion.
- Purascarya vidhi.
- Preparation for spiritual initiation.
- Chanting Hare Krsna and serving pras □ ad to the devotees.
- Worshipping the Deity, offering oblations and performing fire sacrifices.

4. The Concept of Vedic Academic Training and its Basis on the Fourteen Books of Vedic Knowledge.

- Knowledge must be realized and applied in one's life.
- Knowledge must be gained from Authority.
- The concept of para □ (superior) and apara □ (inferior) knowledge.
 - i) Vedanta as para □ and other Vedic subjects as apara □.
 - ii) Srimad Bha □ gavatam as the culmination of par □ a vidya □.
- Vedic education is based on the 14 branches of knowledge.
 - i) The 4 Vedas, the 6 Vedangas (Sanskrit; Astronomy and rules of worship), and the 4 Upangas (Vedanta, Dharma, Logic and Purana).
 - ii) Upa Purana (the 4 Upavedas).
 - iii) Ayurveda, fine arts, architecture, and economics.
 - iv) The 64 arts and sciences as a supplement to the Pur □ anas.
 - v) Miscellaneous useful knowledge.
 - vi) Various aspects of Vocational training.
- For those whose main training is philosophy, all other subjects become supportive of that thrust.
 - i) The Gaudiya Tradition keeps Srimad Bh □ gavatam as the central feature of education.
 - ii) All knowledge both theoretical and practical must be brought into line with the goal of Bhakti.

The Gurukula Training of Krsna and Balarama under the Care of Sandipani Muni, Perfectly Exemplifies Vedic Education.

- Living in the Asrama of Sandipani Muni.
- Krsna and Balarama's performance of s □ adhana and menial service.
- After being satisfied by Their attitude, Sandipani Muni then instructed them in:
 - i) The 14 branches of Vedic knowledge.
 - ii) Vocational training.
 - iii) The 64 arts and sciences.

5. Purusharthas: The Psycho – Moral Bases of Ashrama Theory





The Purusharthas are described as the psycho-moral bases of Ashram theory. They are concerned with the understanding, justification, management and conduct of affairs of the individual's life in relation to the group in and through Ashramas. These help the individual in getting psychological training and preparing himself to deal with the actual society. According to this theory four purusharthas are there as aims of life, viz., 'dharma', 'artha', 'kama' and 'moksha', 'moksha' represents the end of life, the realization of an inner spirituality in man. 'Artha' refers to the acquisitive instinct in man and signifies his economics-wealth getting activity.

These 'purusharthas' are considered psycho-moral bases of 'ashram' system because along with the provision of psychological training through different stages of life in terms of lesson in the use and management of aims of life, the Individual also deals with the society by translating these lessons into action.

The first and highest aim of life is 'dharma'. It is a comprehensive concept which comprises all the forms of human activity. The word 'dharma' is derived from the Sanskrit root 'dhri' meaning 'to hold together, to preserve, to support, to bear', 'to nourish.' The social implications and meaning of dharma as a principle for maintaining the stability of society is brought out by Srikrishna in 'Mahabharata'. In 'Mahabharata', Srikrishna tells Arjun what 'dharma' should be.

'Dharma' knows that 'Kama' and 'Artha' are means and not ends. A life that is dedicated to the unrestrained satisfaction of these urges is undesirable and even perilous. Therefore it is essential that the instinctual urges should be regulated by the ideal of spiritual realization and that is exactly what dharma is required to do.

By regulating the acquisitive and emotional drives in man, it makes the enjoyment of life consistent with man's spiritual progress. Dharma is the central concept of all our social institutions. It signifies the totality or entirety of privileges and obligations in different stages of life. According to the Hindu view, Dharma exists more essentially for the community and most of all for that universal self which is in each of us and all beings.

'Artha' refers to the satisfaction of acquisitive instinct in man. In general it relates to wealth and material well being. According to Zimmer "It includes the whole range of objects that can be possessed, enjoined and lost and which are required in daily life. The Hindu thinkers have rightly viewed the pursuit of wealth as legitimate human aspiration and have accorded the place of 'artha' as a scheme of life. Kapadia holds that "by recognising 'artha' and 'kama' desirable for man, the Hindu sages indicated that man unfolded his spirituality only when his life was not economically starved or emotionally strained". Again the reality of the world preached in the Upanishads loses its significance if these temporal interests are not fulfilled and asceticism or renunciation of this world and things other worldly are applauded as in Buddhism. But acceptance of sex instinct, emotional urges and economic drives as necessary and even desirable, never undermines the supreme goal of life. The ultimate end of life, 'moksha', is always held high and anything coming in its way must be abandoned.

'Kama' implies desires in man for enjoyment and satisfaction of the life of the senses, including the sex drive. The desire may also mean the desire for early possessions. Pleasure is given a place in the scheme of Hindu life, but the pursuit of pleasure when unbridled, can be detrimental to the individual as well as society.

Kama as the satisfaction of the instinctive life is recognized as one of the aims of marriage along with dharma and praja. It is given the least importance in marriage. It is said that sex is the first to go if one is to be renounced. According to Radhakrishnan "The Hindu ideal of marriage is essentially a fellowship between man and woman, who seek to live a creative life, a





partnership for the pursuit of the four great objects of life.” Bertrand Russel holds in this regard, “the essence of a good marriage is mutual respect for each other’s personality combined with that deep intimacy-physical, spiritual-which means a serious love between man and woman, the most fructifying of all experiences”.

These three Purusarthas, already discussed, are known as ‘trivarga’. ‘Dharma’, ‘Artha’ and ‘Kama’, are respectively known as moral, material and mental resources, accessories and energies available to man. From the ‘trivarga’, ‘Artha’ and ‘Kama’ refer to two of man’s earthly belongings. But ‘dharma’ stand on a higher level.

The ultimate end of the life of Hindu is said to be ‘moksha’ or the liberation of the soul. It represents the end of life, the realization of an inner spirituality in man. It refers to the appeals of the inner man to the individual, unaffected by the group. According to K.M. Kapadia “Moksha means that the true nature of man is spiritual and the mission of life is to unfold it and to derive thereby the meaning of joy of it.” P.H. Prabhu holds, “from the final purpose and meaning of life.

Moksha alone would prove to be the best guide. The purification and perfection of the ‘atman’ by pious acts and devotion to God is the aim of man in this world. Moksha or spiritual freedom is possible by inquiry into the true nature of the ‘atman’ and by founding the whole life of power and truth of the ‘atman’. The triage becomes the means for the attainment of that end.

The Hindu aesthetic view of life pre- supposes that “the material hopes and aspiration, the instinctive urges, the emotional and aesthetic outpourings stand in the way of man’s attainment of salvation or realization of inner spirituality.” On the contrary, the Hindu thinkers have accepted man’s satisfaction of sexual urges, his love of power and prosperity, his thirst for aesthetic and cultural life along with his hunger for the reunion with the Supreme Being. They have recommended the fulfillment of such urges for the healthy development of man’s personality.

The Hindu thinkers do not consider those as barriers in the way of man’s striving for realization of ‘moksha’. “The Hindu thinkers view that the struggle of life consisted, in evolving a harmonious blending of these different colours; a melodious symphony of these diverse tunes. This harmony constituted the integrated personality. The normal life was conceded its full expression and the attainment of spiritual progress was sought by assigning proper values to each of them and by prescribing the mode of its expression.”

‘Moksha’ literally means deliverance. Thus it is deliverance from all types of pains and sufferings, both worldly as well as other-worldly. It is a pure bliss. It is the liberation of soul from the cycle of birth and death. It is the achievement of other-worldly welfare and the union of the ‘Atman’ with ‘Brahman’. It is the realization of an inner spirituality of man and therefore is of the highest value.

The Hindu thinkers attempted on a scheme and proper mode of process through which the spirituality of man is unfolded. Indian philosophy maintains a harmony in metaphysics, epistemology and axiology. All these aim at the same reality which is ‘Atman’ in man ‘Brahman’ in cosmos and liberation as value. While all other aims are relative, ‘moksha’ is the ultimate end. According to P.H. Prabhu, “Moksha, on the other hand seems to be concerned mainly with the individual. It refers perhaps to the appeal of the inner man to the individual, unaffected by the group. It is perhaps too personal an outlook than defines the struggle and hope and justification within the individual for ‘moksha’.

This mystic realization has been in the Mahavakyas of the Upanishads such as Tattvamasi, Aham Brahmasmi etc. It is the state of identity between Atman and Brahman. “The goal of moksha does not possess the narrow individual outlook, for the Hindu. Nor it is to be pursued exclusively and directly by an individual unless and until he has duly satisfied all his social debts or obligations.” Forgetfulness of this truth is ignorance which results in the bondage. Bondage is the cause of pains and sufferings. Emancipation from this bondage depends upon the realization of the original truth of the identity of ‘Atman’ and ‘Brahman’.





6. 10 Salient Features of the Vedic System of Education

1. The ancient Indian education emerged from Vedas as they were the main sources of Indian philosophy of life.
2. The attitude of the people towards life was intellectual and spiritual, rather than materialistic. Their main objective was to attain salvation through education and that too through religious education.
3. Indian culture was surcharged with religious feelings and it was assigned prominent place in the field of education.
4. The forest home of the preceptor in the midst of calm, charming, natural surrounding served as the educational institution where the pupil lived after the Upanayana or initiation ceremony. The preceptor occupied the place of the father or guardian and was discharging the duties by shouldering the responsibility of his ward's maintenance. Much emphasis was laid on the formation of character through 'plain living and high thinking'.
5. The basis of admission was moral fitness and unimpeachable conduct. The pupils belonging to a lower order of moral conduct was forbidden to live in the house of the preceptor.
6. The discipline of Brahmacharya or Celibacy was compulsory for all. Education helped in the observance of celibacy, control over senses and purity of life.
7. To serve the preceptor was considered as the sacred duty by the pupils. Being a residential pupil he was looking to the comforts of the Guru. In thought, speech Development of Education in India and deed he pledged devotion to his Guru. The pupil worshipped the Guru as his own father or God.
8. Teachers were held in high esteem and students had great respect and devotion for them. Pupils who neglected their duties towards the preceptor were debarred from education and were expelled from the institution.
9. The practical aspect of life was not lost of sight. Side by side with art, literature, and philosophy students were getting working knowledge in agriculture and other vocations of life.
10. Individual was the teaching unit and all round development of the child's personality was the chief aim of education. The method of teaching was psychological in nature.

7. Salient Features of Buddhist System of Education in India

1. The chief aim of education was the spread of Buddhist religion and attainment of Nirvana through it.
2. Education was imparted in Mathas, Viharas and Monasteries and monks were responsible for its organisation and management. Monastic life of the Shramanas and monks had always been exemplary for the Indians so much so that the educational institutions attracted students from distant parts of the world, such as China, Japan, Korea, Java, Burma, Ceylon, Tibet and other countries.
3. Educational facilities were provided to all on an equal footing. All differences of caste and social status which had taken deep-roots under the Brahmanical education had been removed. The attitude of society towards education was broad and positive. Not only the sacred portals of





the institutions were opened to all but also all the students were provided equal opportunities for the development of their character according to their capacity and aptitude.

4. Along with religious and philosophical aspects of education secular education formed an essential part of it. Besides, rituals were in vogue while imparting education.

5. There existed harmonious relationship between teacher and the taught. Students had great respect for the teachers and the teachers had tremendous love and affection for the students. They led very disciplined life.

6. Though educational system was dominated by religion yet there was provision for imparting practical knowledge in Spinning, Weaving, Drawing, and Medicine etc. The medium of instruction was folk language—Pali.

7. Lecture, questioning and discussion were the main methods of teaching.

8. The system of education was purely Indian having been evolved by the Indian educationists. So education was closely wedded to the various problems of life and it aimed at finding out concrete solutions thereof.

8. Conclusion

Education system in the Vedic era was of the height & comprehensive. It was fully capable of development of physical & intellectual & character development, development of civis, social, moral & spiritual values, social efficiency & happiness, preservation & spread of culture, infusion of piety, & religiousness & development of best type of personality.

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