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## Vedic Philosophy and Teacher Education

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“There are certain conditions necessary in the taught and also in the teacher- purity, a real thirst after knowledge and perseverance.” \_\_\_\_\_  
Swami Vivekananda

### ABSTRACT

Like today, there was no such institution in the Vedic age where teachers were taught to become teachers or there is no description of any syllabus which would know that there was a system developed to become teachers. So, the question arises then who were the teachers in the Vedic age or what are the criteria to become a teacher? Although the word teacher-education is not mentioned in the Vedic philosophy, still some characteristics of teachers are mentioned in the Vedas and Upanishads, which every teacher used to imitate. The most prominent of these is the awakening of the soul. The teaching was considered as an internal experience rather than as an external object. According to Vedas complete knowledge is pervaded within the individual, the teacher only works to awaken it. In order to awaken the knowledge some parameters were fixed for the teacher, on which only the true teacher could be made. All the lower or higher knowledge and ethical conduct were the first condition for the teacher. Apart from this, special emphasis was given on purification of thoughts. It was also necessary to have wideness of conduct and knowledge and high mental ability. Teachers should always strive in search of truth. They use the knowledge obtained through self-consciousness and self-knowledge with his intellect and understanding. Vedic philosophy also lays great emphasis on the all-round development of teacher. The personality of a teacher should be an example. The presentation of teaching or imparting knowledge should be easy and vigorous. True teaching is possible only when the teacher uses all his consciousness to choose the right path according to his discretion.

### KEY-WORDS

Thoughts; Mind; Consciousness; Self-knowledge;

### INTRODUCTION

Vedic philosophy describes education as a teaching of inner soul. An education that stays with us even after death, the description of such education is given in Vedas. Ghosh says “the central idea of the Vedic Rishis was the transition of the human soul from a state of death to a state of immortality by the exchange of the Falsehood for the Truth, of divided and limited being for integrality and infinity. Death is the mortal state of Matter with Mind and Life involved in it; Immortality is a state of infinite being, consciousness and bliss. Man rises beyond the two firmaments, Rodasi, Heaven and Earth, mind and body, to the infinity of the Truth, Mahas, and so to the divine Bliss. This is the “great passage” discovered by the Ancestors, the ancient Rishis.” The same indication seen in Vivekanand thoughts on Vedic Rishis. He said, “The function of the teacher is indeed an affair of the transference of something, and not one of mere stimulation of the existing intellectual or other faculties in the taught. Something real and appreciable as an influence comes from the teacher and goes to the taught. Therefore, teacher must be pure.” Purity in thought, speech and work is essential.

In Vedic philosophy great importance has been given to all round development in education. The aim of the development is transcendence. The attainment of Nirvana is considered to be its final link. Nirvana is the extinction of the self-ego. For the development of the individual, it is very important to conquer the ego. It raises and purify the action and made perfectly.

In Vedic philosophy, no particular word like ‘teacher education’ is mentioned, but whatever qualities have been told for teachers in its philosophy or whatever conduct or path it is recommended to follow, is noteworthy. Ghosh said for this, “Creation is not a making of

something out of nothing or of one thing out of another, but a self-projection of Brahman into the conditions of Space and time. Creation is not a making, but a becoming in terms and forms of conscious existence.”

## OBJECTIVES

- 1.To study about the teacher education in the context of Vedic philosophy.
- 2.To find out the elements followed by the Vedic Sages(teachers).

## METHODOLOGY

Descriptive method has been used. The views based upon given references.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

According to Vedic philosophy there are two types of knowledge- lower and higher.

tatrāparā ṛgvedo yajurvedaḥ sāmavedo'tharvavedaḥ śikṣā kalpo  
vyākaraṇaṁ niruktaṁ chando jyotiṣamiti |  
atha parā yayā tadakṣaramadhigamyate |

Ghosh describes this in own words “Of which the lower, the Rig-veda and the Yajur-veda, and the Sama- veda and the Atharva-veda, chanting, ritual, grammar, etymological interpretation, and prosody and astronomy. And then the higher by which is known the Immutable.” Vedic education was given under this and there were sages to impart it.

- ✓ Higher nature (para prakrti)- consciousness-power-bliss.
- ✓ Lower nature (apara prakrti)- mind-life-body.

The aim of the teacher is to develop both these types of nature of the individual. It is necessary for the teacher to move from the lower nature to the higher nature. The Vedic sages laid special emphasis on this. In Vivekananda words “There must be a continuous struggle, a constant fight, an unremitting grappling with our lower nature, till the higher want is actually felt and victory is achieved... The students who sets out with such a spirit of preservice will surely find success and realization at last.”

The teaching-learning process in Vedic philosophy was based on psychological principles and methods. According to Joshi “The Vedic Rishi built up and perfected a system of education by means of which children and youths can systematically be trained and perfected. They sought to build the bridges between past and the future; they developed not only goals of education but also means and methods of education; they also became themselves teachers and gave example of their conduct by their deeds, by their very life of how to become ideal teachers.”

Vedic philosophy describes the quality of a teacher. Joshi said “The teacher represented not only mature worldly and scholarly wisdom but also a high realization. The teacher was the Rishi, who had seen the Reality. His task was to uplift the aspiration and knowledge latent in the pupil. The teacher furnished to the pupil the external word or shruti that is needed in the beginning and for a long time on the way. But it was recognized that the real teacher is the Supreme Brahman seated in the heart of the pupil, and sooner rather than later, the pupil must discover the inner teacher and inner guide.”

Although the word teacher education is not mentioned in Vedas but the element describes for teachers which is necessary to fulfill are:

### Thoughts

Joshi writes “The Vedic Rishis have described, in detail, the path by which that triple perfection and immortality can be achieved. In an impressive and clear statement, Parashara describes the path that Vedic Rishis followed:

Dadhananritham dhanyanasya dhitim,

Aada Idam aryo dw vfbgynnrhidhijwo a vibhritrah.

“They held the truth, they enriched its thought; then indeed, aspiring souls they, holding it in thought, bore it diffused in all their being.” That is, both his thoughts and soul were inspired by truth.

Teachers need to pay very serious attention to their thoughts. His thoughts should always be inspired by truth. Thoughts inspired by truth are reflected in his principles. Vivekananda said “It is our mental attitude which makes the world what is it for us. Our thoughts make things beautiful; our thoughts make things ugly. The whole world is in our minds. Learn to see things in the proper light.”

### Comprehensive

Joshi writes “These experiments need to be understood properly and we need to draw lessons from there to design a comprehensive process of learning and teaching that can foster the manpower and woman-power that is urgently required at the present moment.”

The full development of teacher’s internal and external powers is the main aim of Vedic education. Ghosh explains this in his book “Parashara speaks of the path which leads to immortality:

Aa ye Vishwa swapatyani tathastu krisnawaso amritway gautum,  
Mahna mahadbhi Prithvi wi tathaste mata putraishadititharyaayse we ha.

‘They who entered into all things that bear right fruits formed a path towards immortality; earth stood wide for them by the greatness and by the Great Ones, mother Aditi, with her sons manifested herself for the upholding.’

This is an extremely important statement and it underlines the fact that the Vedic Rishis achieved their goal, not by escaping from life but by developing powers of our being, including the physical.”

### **Mental ability**

Ghosh says “The Vedic Rishi always relay in mental capacity of a human. There is a word ‘daksaya kratve’. ‘Daksaya means ‘capacity or will’ and ‘Kratye’ indicates ‘effective power or discernment’. All relates to mental activities of a person. is dhī, thought or intellect. Another word used is ‘Dhī’ the thought- mind or intellect. Dhī is as understanding it holds all that comes to it, defines everything and puts it into the right place, often dhī indicates the activity of the intellect, particular thought or thoughts. One another word is ‘mati’ which means mentality or mental action sometimes thought, sometimes feeling, sometimes the whole mental state.”

According to Vivekananda, “All knowledge that the world has ever received comes from the mind; the infinite library of the universe is in your own mind. The external world is simply the suggestion, the occasion, which sets you to study your own mind, but the object of your study is always your own mind.”

### **Truth**

There is conception of truth in Vedas. The three words are quoted-

Satyam Rtam Brhat- The truth, The right, The vast.

In Vedic term the truth means a path leading to felicity or immortality, The right means the search for self-knowledge is the right path and the vast means there is no limit to knowledge. Vedic sages used to walk on these routes. He used to search for truth through deeds and words and believed in the growth of knowledge. The world is infinite and limitless and its knowledge is essential. Vivekananda said about truth, “truth is purity, truth is all-knowledge; trust must be strengthening, must be enlightening, must be invigorating.... Truth can be stated in a thousand different ways, yet each one can be true.”

### **Self-consciousness**

Vedic Rishis gives the great stress upon self-consciousness. There are seven types of consciousness-

Physical consciousness (annamaya puruṣa)- related with the material being.

Vital or nervous consciousness (prānamaya puruṣa)- related with the vital or dynamic being

Mental consciousness (manomaya puruṣa)- related with the mental being.

Supra-intellectual consciousness (satyam ṛtam brhat)- related with the truth or formal idea.

Universal beatitude consciousness (ānandamaya puruṣa)- related with blissful, enjoying and productive being.

Infinite divine consciousness (caitanya puruṣa)- related with self-awareness, an infinite all-effective will (cit-tapas).

Pure divine consciousness (sat puruṣa)- related with the pure divine self-existence.

As much as physical consciousness is needed for a teacher, it is equally important that he should also aware of spirituality. He is interested and cautious of ethical behavior, idea and innovation.

### **Self-knowledge**

Another characteristic indicated in Vedic philosophy is self-knowledge. Ghosh describes this, “We must learn to see things as they are, see ourselves as we are. Our present action is one in which self-knowledge and will are divided. We start with a fundamental falsehood, that we have a separate existence from others and we try to know the relations of separate beings in their separateness and act on the knowledge so formed for an individual utility.”

Vivekanand said, “No one was ever really taught by another; each of us has to teach himself. The external teacher offers only the suggestion which rouses the internal teacher to work to understand things.”

### **Understanding**

The understanding of the person is considered paramount in Vedic principles. Understanding is necessary for the acquisition of knowledge. Ghosh says, in ‘Kena-Upanishad’ it is mentioned,



na tatra cakṣurgacchati na vāggacchati no mano  
na vidmo na vījānīmo yathaitadanuśiṣyāt |  
anyadeva tadviditādatho aviditādadhi |  
iti śuśruma pūrveṣāṃ ye nastadvyācakaṣire |

“There sight travels not, nor speech, nor the mind. We know It not nor can distinguish how one should teach of It: for It is other than the known; It is there above the unknown. It is so we have heard from men of old who declared That to our understanding.”

According to Vivekananda “The only true teacher is he who can immediately come down to the level of the student and transfer his soul to the student’s soul and see through the student’s eye and hear through his ears and understand through his mind. Such a teacher can really teach and none else.” For this teacher must be capable of high understanding.

### Development

Continuous development of teachers is very important. Vivekananda said “A complete system of education implies a balance and harmony between the properly developed body, mind and soul.” It is mentioned in the Vedas that till the complete attainment or final culmination of knowledge; one should strive to acquire knowledge. To support this Ghosh writes “The Rishi who employed these faculties, had acquired them by a progressive self-culture. Knowledge itself was a travelling and a reaching, or a finding and a winning; the revelation came only at the end, the light was the prize of a final victory. There is continually in the Veda this image of the journey, the soul’s march on the path of Truth.”

### Personality

Vedic philosophy lays great emphasis on the personality of the teacher. Joshi says “But more important than instruction or example was the influence of the teacher, emanating not from any arbitrary authority but from the nearness of the soul of the teacher to the soul of the pupil.” Vivekananda said, “One should live from his very boyhood with one whose character is like a blazing fire and should have before him a living example of the highest teaching.” Once he was asked “Why should we look into the character and personality of a teacher?” He answered “Truth for one’s self or for imparting to others is the purity of heart and soul...He must be perfectly pure and then alone comes the value of his words.”

### Presentation

Presenting ideas logically is one of the essential qualities of a teacher and it is possible only if he is inclined towards enlightenment. According to Ghosh “But, in fact, speech is creative. It creates forms of emotion, mental images and impulses of action. The ancient Vedic theory and practice extended this creative action of speech by the use of the Mantra.” The speaking power must be effective and flow full with the input of activity.

Whatever knowledge you acquire, it should always be used wisely. Do not blindly follow the knowledge gained by controlling your senses and make proper use of logic and intelligence. Such knowledge is correct. Ghosh has quoted hymns from the Vedas,

yastu vijñānavānbhavati yuktena manasā sadā |  
tasyendriyāṅi vaśyāni sadaśvā iva sārathēḥ |

“But he that has knowledge with his mind ever applied, his senses are to him as noble steeds and they obey the driver.”

“Mind to express first the idea of the object and then ideas about the object.” This means first you grasp the full knowledge about the object and after that find the way to apply.

In Ghosh words “There are three sheaths of consciousness in us-

- ✓ the material (annakoṣa)- in which the physical contact and image are received and formed,
- ✓ the vital and nervous (prāṇakoṣa)- in which there is a nervous contact and formation,
- ✓ the mental (manaḥkoṣa)- in which there is mental contact and imaging.

We dwell centered in the mental sheath and therefore the experience of the material world has to come through the other two sheaths before it can reach us.”

### CONCLUSION

“Mind and body are not our real self; they are mutable formations or images which we go on constructing in the drive of Time as a result of the mass of our past energies.” This one is the true line said by Ghosh which describes the philosophy of Vedas on the need of teacher education.

Vedic Sages used to impart knowledge to the disciple according to his ability. Some of those skilled disciples used to take the place of the sages and carry forward the education. In this way the process of knowledge acquisition and teaching-learning went on continuously. Even though the word teacher-education is not mentioned, the tradition of preparing a series of teachers has been there in the Vedic period, which used to make teaching-learning process systematic and easy.

Once Vivekananda said, “You cannot make a plant grow in soil unsuited to it. A child teaches itself. But you can help it to go forward in its own way. What you can do is not of the positive nature, but of the negative. You can take away the obstacles, but knowledge comes out of its own nature. Loosen the soil a little, so that it may come out easily. Put a hedge round it; see that it is not killed by anything; and there your works stops. You cannot do anything else. The rest is manifestation from within its own nature. So, with the education of a child; a child educates itself.” Teacher education should be based on this Vedic philosophy.

If the behavior and principles of the teachers described in Vedic philosophy are followed, then an accurate and firm education values is possible.

### IMPLICATIONS

If we include the above-mentioned features in teacher education, then the ego of teachers will continue to be lost. Ego hollows out even infinite knowledge, therefore teachers should not be included in the ego.

A controlled life and restraint on the senses, prudent and rational thoughts make teaching effective. Therefore, it must be followed in teacher education.

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