

Spiritual education in Vedic philosophy

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Abstract

The paper deals with spiritual education regarding Vedic Philosophy which falls in the philosophical and psychological foundation of educational context. The paper develops the spiritual education with special reference to the Vedic Philosophy influencing people's life philosophy. The paper also develops with philosophical, psychological, sociological, pedagogical, moral, ethical, and aesthetical contexts which are the integral part of spiritual education. In this paper an attempt has been made to recognize, analyze, evaluate and critically examine the dominant factors responsible for strengthening spiritual education in Vedic philosophy. The paper concludes 'Spiritual Education' as "the education which helps to fulfill the potentialities of the individuals through the virtues of control of mind, control of senses, celibacy, Purity, meditation, non-violence, self-knowledge, thinking, Wisdom, self-study based on Vedic philosophy and to prepare them to solve the everyday problems for life creatively and constructively in the new situation of the socio-psycho-physical environment for attaining the highest values and ideas of education, if the teachers enable to modify such kind of behavior patterns of individuals, - this is spiritual education." However, the present study suggests that spiritual education regarding Vedic philosophy would be beneficial for the teacher educators and prospective teachers for the betterment of the global society as a whole.

Keywords: spiritual education, vedic philosophy

Introduction: Formulation of the Study

Why does the journey start from Vedic philosophy to spiritual education necessary in our society? Vedic philosophy is based on the Vedas, Shastras, Upanishads, and Gita put forth by Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati, the greatest Vedic scholar and founder of Arya Samaj.

The Indian Philosophy is generally enriched by the Indian Scriptures which gives a glimpse of the ancient Indian literature with a focus on the spiritual education and its philosophical thought and action expressed in the Vedas for recreating spiritual culture in our country. The Indian literature is the glorious gift for spiritual education to the world. Indian scriptures are classified into two categories- the Shruti Literature and the Smriti Literature. Shruti is derived from the Sanskrit word meaning to hear and is concerned with the 'heard'. The Vedas are considered as Shruti Literature. Smriti means to remember and is concerned with remembered based on the knowledge acquired through the experience known as Smriti Literature. Manu Smriti, Shastra, Ramayana and Mahabharata are the Smriti Literature. The Veda is Sanskrit word means 'knowledge'. The Vedas are large body of knowledge texts. The Vedas are the most important spiritual heritage of the human mankind and reflect the growth and development of human thought and action since before Christian era. The Vedas present a picture of the transformation of the spiritual education of a natural man into a real man. There are four- Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda and Atharvaveda. Each Veda is sub classified into four major text types namely Samihitas, Aranyaka, Brahmanas and Upanishads. Some scholars add a fifth subcategory, Upasana.

Rigveda has 10552 mantras with 64 adhyayas, is the work of 403 sages, and having 10 Upanishads. Yajurveda has

1975 mantras with 40 adhyayas, is divided into two subcategories namely Shukla Yajurveda having 19 Upanishads and Krishna Yajurveda having 32 Upanishads. Samaveda is composed of 1875 mantras with 6 adhyayas having 16 Upanishads and Atharvaveda is composed of 5977 mantras with 6 adhyayas having 31 Upanishads. Thus a total number of mantras are 20379 in all the Vedas and they are regarded as divine truth. They constitute the spiritual knowledge to our society what presented by our great ancient sages.

Many Philosophers of Vedic age (2000-600 BCE) such as Rishi Narayana who was the seer of the Purusha Sukta of the Rig Veda, seven Rishis- Atri, Bharadwaja, Gautama, Jamadagni, Kashyapa, Vasishtha and Vishvamitra, and other Vedic Rishis Gritsamada, Sandilya Kanva, Rishaba Rishi mentioned in Rigveda, Yajurveda, one of the Vedic Sages, Angiras- seer of the Atharva Veda and author of Mundaka Upanishad, Uddalaka Aruni- an upanishadic sage, author of major portions of Chandogya Upanishad, Ashvapati – who authored Vaishvandra vidya of Chandogya Upanishad, Ashtavakra, author of Ashtavakra Gita enriched spiritualism fascinated by the subtle philosophy expressed in the Vedas.

Rationale of the Study

Garrido (2013) ^[4] writes that Vedic philosophy tells us about the existence of another type of particle called the *atma*, the soul, the self, having different properties from those of ordinary particles. This is not unusual in physics, as is the case with antimatter particles. But unlike the ordinary matter and antimatter particles, the *atma* has 3 main qualities: eternity, knowledge and bliss. Eternity can be analyzed as follows:

the *atma* does not come into or out of existence, it is always present. It does not decay or degrade, it maintains its individuality always, it's infinitesimally small and it's not composed of more elementary particles. It's unchangeable, which along with the individuality property implies that it does not unite with other particles to create more complex structures, nor does it merge with others. The *atma* does not interact directly with matter, but given that the *atma* is the source of consciousness and the life force in a living entity, any entity displaying them reveals the presence of an *atma* in it—whether human, animal, plant, etc. The living entities are not made up of *atmas*; rather, they are these particles and are animating the material bodies that encase them. As soon as the *atma* leaves one body for another, the old body no longer exhibits consciousness or life symptoms, and begins to degrade. The knowledge property refers to its cognizance about its constitutional position, its source and its interactions with the source. Bliss refers to its natural state of happiness in service to God.

The study is needed and significant from several points of view not only in bringing excellence among individuals but also in revealing the probable interplay between cognitive and non-cognitive aspects of education. Besides cognitive competency, there is a need of social skills which will build up spiritual development. National Curriculum for School Education, NCERT (2000) [5] has observed that curriculum has to provide learning experiences which will improve individual's thoughts, feelings and actions. Very few researches have been developed to study spiritual education with respect to Vedic Philosophy in India and its contribution to the field of education, spiritual education is less explored.

The study is philosophical in its nature because it indicates normative aspect of education with respect to aim of education, curriculum, and method of teaching, discipline, students, teachers and schools. This study has sociological bases of education because of being related to social needs according to society. This study covers psychological aspect of education for instance growth and development of the students, learning, motivation, personality development and adjustment, etc. It is well known to all that Indian society is a spiritual based society. Spiritual education and its implications are increasing day by day. For the appearance of the spirituality in the development of the educational system, in this connection, Kothari Commission (1966) points out, "In the development that we envisage in the future, we hope that the pursuit of men, material affluence and power would be subordinated to that of higher values and the fulfillment of the individual. This concept of the mingling of 'Science and Spirituality' is of special significance for Indian Education."

An analysis of the various problems of spiritual education in India in the philosophical, sociological and global perspectives, may be accepted by the researchers and practitioners of spiritual studies for carrying out research on what is required is that the individuals as well as society internalize the understanding of the Spiritual Education and bring about a dynamic change in their living patterns In this paper an attempt has been made to recognize, comprehend, find out, analyze, synthesize,

evaluate and critically examine the dominant factors responsible for strengthening spiritual education in Vedic philosophy and its impact on education of today and tomorrow in Indian society. This study may help the students to understand and to solve the problem of education more efficiently. They may flower into excellent of our nation. Hence the investigator has decided to conduct the present study. On this background the problem may be stated as "Spiritual Education in Vedic Philosophy"

Objectives of the Study

1. To recognize and define spiritual education, find out to factors responsible for strengthening spiritual education, critically examine factors responsible for strengthening spiritual education, to analyze factors responsible for strengthening spiritual education, to comprehend factors responsible for strengthening spiritual education, to analyze factors responsible for strengthening spiritual education, to synthesize factors responsible for strengthening spiritual education and to evaluate factors responsible for strengthening spiritual education with respect to the Vedic philosophy and their metaphysical thought and action in the field of spiritualized education and their impact on present educational system.
2. To pursue their educational development goals for purposeful and meaningful personality development of individuals
3. To create a platform to draw educational resource input for better output of the Education
4. To create a pool of educational resource material for teachers as learning moderator

Research Questions

Now questions may be raised from research point of view as given below:

1. Is spiritual education based on Vedic philosophy in our country?
2. Whether Vedic Philosophy can elicit dominant factors of spiritual education?
3. Whether Vedic philosophy can contribute a lot to the spiritual education?
4. Whether spiritual education based on Vedic philosophy can contribute to multi-dimensional personality development of individual?
5. Does the Vedic Philosophy influence the concept of spiritual education?

Limitation of the Study

Keeping in view the limitation of time, resources and energy, the study is limited to one aspect of the subject which is spiritual education based on Vedic Philosophy. It is entirely based on the secondary data as for examples-books, journals, periodicals, newspapers etc. this constitutes a major constraint of the study as the journals and periodicals are sometimes subject to manipulations and information available in them is in theoretical nature.

Literature Review

Vidya Sagar Garg highlights on Vedic Scriptures as all Vedic Ancient scriptures are in Sanskrit language.

Sanskrit is the first language on the earth. Most of the languages of the world including English have been derived from Sanskrit. Hindi, English and other translations are available for most of the following scriptures:

1. Veda: The Vedas are the most important scripture. The meaning of the word Veda is knowledge. The Vedas were revealed in 4 sections at the dawn of the creation to the 4 saints (Rishis): Rig Veda Agni Rishi, Yajur Veda Vayu Rishi, Sam Veda Aditya Rishi and Atharva Veda Angira Rishi
2. Upanishads: The word Upanishad means "to sit near". In ancient days, devotees sat near the Rishis to listen to the discourses. Those discourses compiled into the books are called Upanishads. The Upanishads are many in number, but eleven are considered most important. They are Ish, Ken, Kath, Prashna, Mundak, Mandukya, Aitareya, Taitareya, Chhandogya, Brihdarnayak and Shvetashvetar.
3. Manusmriti: The Manusmriti is famous among scriptures, and the author is Manu. Rules for religion, political and social conduct are contained in Manusmriti.
4. Ramayan: The Ramayan is the first great composition of Sanskrit literature written by Valmiki Muni. It portrays a picture of the society in the Vedic and Upanishadic ages. Religion's principles of the Vedas and Upanishads were not just found in theory but practiced in real life.
5. Mahabharat: The Mahabharat is also a great epic written by Vyas Muni. The Mahabharat depicts how people resort to injustice and oppressive means because of their greed, pride, selfishness and hypocrisy. Alongside this picture, it shows how the virtuous have undergone troubles and sufferings in upholding the path of truth and justice.
6. Bhagvad Gita: The Gita is a part of the great epic, Mahabharat. Its significance is so great that it stands out as a scripture in itself. Commentaries on the Vedas, are found in the Upanishads; while the essence of the Upanishads is contained in the Gita. Arjun was standing confused to fight with his own relatives in the battlefield. It was on this occasion the Yogiraj Krishan imparted true knowledge to Arjun and enlightened him with his course of action.
7. Darshans: The word 'Darshan' means observation and a detailed examination. Darshans explain the relationship between God, Soul and Matter. Their teachings lead us to our goal of God realization. These teachings have been discussed very deeply in the six Darshans. The six Darshans and their authors are: NYAYA Gautam Muni, VAISHESHKA Kanad Muni, SAMKHYA Kapil Muni, YOGA Patanjali Minu, MIMANSA Jaimini Muni VEDANTA Vyasa Muni
8. Satyarth Praksash (Light Of Truth): Satyarth Prakash has been written by Swami Dayanand. Just as other Scriptures have been prepared on the teachings expounded by the Vedas, Satyarth Prakash also contains explanations and clarifications of Vedic principles on all walks of life.
9. Rigvedadibhashyabhūmika (Introduction to Vedas): This is also written by Swami Dayanand.

Methodology

Methodology takes a significant role in any type of research as the reliability and validity of the findings depend upon the methods adopted and applied in the study. This paper is descriptive in nature. It is mainly based on secondary data and is largely collected from different sources like books, journals, articles, and periodicals. This study is conducted mainly by applying analytical cum descriptive method for the research. The investigator has made effort to express spiritual education in Vedic Philosophy critically.

Analysis and Interpretation

The Vedas are considered to be the oldest among the spiritual literatures of the world, which highlight the philosophy of life in ancient Indian culture. The Vedas will enable us to get a complete knowledge not only of the philosophy of life but also about philosophy of education, educational philosophy, and spiritual philosophy for the betterment of the society. The entire literatures of Ancient India accept the superiority of Vedas. The Vedas encompass a value caring education in the Indian life. The true picture of Indian culture lies in the Vedas, which are four in number-Rigveda, Samaveda, Yajurveda and Atharvaveda. Vedas have their own characteristic features. Through them we are able to know about the culture, civilization, life and philosophy of people in ancient India. Vedas highlight the chief objective of human life, which has been complete renouncement from this world of births and deaths. Before orientating a detailed account of the Vedic Education, it is the need of the hour to make a short appraisal of the four Vedas as the education of that period was based on them. The Rig Veda is on a foundation of low living and high thinking. In the Rig Veda, Gayatri mantram was given more important, also found in Samaveda and Yajur Veda touch the highest point of knowledge and sustain human souls to this day. The Rig Veda itself exhibits an evolution and the history of the Rigveda is a history of the Vedic philosophy. The compilation of all the hymns recited on the occasion of the Soma Yajna came to be known as the Sama Veda. Yajurveda is the collection of prose Mantras We get in the Yajurveda glimpses of the religious and secular aspects of life in India.

In the beginning only three Vedas were popular. The fourth Veda called the Atharvaveda was also recognized. It is more original in contents. The Atharvaveda is secular in nature containing a description of various arts and sciences. The aim of the Vedic philosophy was the knowledge of the Ultimate Truth and the God realization. When the highest knowledge was thus determined by these Seers and revealed and composed in the hymns, there the methods were then necessarily evolved by which such knowledge could be acquired, conserved, and transmitted to posterity. Rishi was a teacher who would start by imparting to his son the texts of the knowledge he had personally acquired and such texts would be the special property of his family. Each such family of Rishis was thus functioning like a Vedic school admitting pupils for instruction in the literature or texts in its possession. The relations between teacher and taught was well

established in Vedic period. The methods of education naturally varied with the capacity of pupils. Self-realization by means of tapas would be for the few. It is believed that these sages, by virtue of their asceticism and Yoga, were gifted with the vision of a clairvoyant, capable of knowing about the past, present and the future. The system of education in the Vedic period concerns itself with the acquisition of the Supreme knowledge, wisdom, self-realization and God realization. The Vedic knowledge was given by the Guru or the teacher to the students through prescribed pronunciation, which the pupil would commit to memory, having listened to it alternatively. Only that knowledge, which was received from the lips of the teacher, was regarded as purely Vedic. Thus, the method of teaching was totally oral. Two methods of teaching were being practiced during the Vedic period. The first method was Oral and the second was thinking. Various subjects were incorporated in the curriculum of Vedic education. Grammar, rhetoric, astrology, logic, Nirukti (etymological interpretation of words) was the main subjects. Vedang was the synonym of all these subjects taken together- the performance of sacrifice, correct pronunciation, knowledge of prosody, etymology, grammar, and jyotishi or the science of calendar. The study of logic occupied a special place, because knowledge of any other subject was tested on its basis. Debates and discussions were organized for training in logic. The pupils would receive training in arts and crafts for material gain. Agriculture, horticulture and animal husbandry attained to the highest place. Thus, we may conclude that intellectual, social, emotional, and spiritual forms of education were in existence during the Vedic period.

Discussion

Tiwary (2013) [6] observes that education has four pillars-knowledge, wisdom, spiritual perception, and eloquent speech. It has been said that knowledge is power. Knowledge is the source by which all worldly powers could be grabbed. It is the source of all material resources. This is why knowledge in any field makes a man powerful in that field. The next pillar is wisdom-which is not the synonym of intelligence, rather intelligence with sensitivity and sensibility. It is a sense of right or wrong, emotional stability, flexibility and maturity of mind. It is closely related to spiritual perception which builds up divinity in human being. Here, the man of spirituality believes in the principle of 'Live and let live'. It believes in peaceful coexistence for better and brighter tomorrow and the last is eloquent speech. Those who are well versed in particular branch of knowledge with wisdom and spiritual perception do have eloquent speech.

The present day education system, however, lays great emphasis on moral education. Perhaps, this is precisely the cause why the learner seeks only to learn and study about the Great Soul. With this consideration of mind, the Vedic Philosophy is purely and surely to please the modern educators and modern learners. It is, however, a spiritualized education in which there is emphasis on all round development of body, mind, heart and spirit. Therefore, Vedic Philosophy helps a lot in determining

aims and objectives of education, curriculum development and transaction in modern education regarding spiritual learning, method of teaching, teachers' personality, and students' personality. Vedic philosophy was developed through Vedic ideas and images and the poetic and aesthetic spirituality of the religions of devotion that inspired from their regional literatures. The; language of the literature was Sanskrit. Some special features of the educational system of the Vedic period were Upanayana which means that the admission was made by the formal ceremony and the discipline of Brahmacharya or celibacy which was compulsory. At that time, the nature of education was religious; but this sort of education was meant only for those persons who were interested in capable of attaining spiritual knowledge and wisdom. Vedic philosophy had the prominent place in ancient Indian society, and now at this time also it has. It has been considered as pious and important for society. Vedic philosophy reveals, thus, a system of education in which "hearing, chanting and memorizing, self-study, played a great part, assimilation of idea took place through a well- planned life of service to teacher, contemplation, all under his guidance. Education is an integral part of everybody for becoming operational cultured. Education is the fully responsible for development of physical and intellectual and character development, development of civics senses, social, moral, and spiritual values, social efficiency and happiness, preservation and spread of culture, infusion of piety, and religiousness and development of integral personality. By means of education efforts is being made to infuse—Satyam Shivam and Sundaram inside the students.

Conclusion

After reviewing the four Vedas, Shastra, Upanishads, and Gita, it is felt that there is a great deal has been done in Vedic philosophy to trace the development of philosophical thought and action with special reference to spiritual doctrines and assumptions, much has also been done to spiritualize education in ancient time and then to draw in broad an outline of spiritual wealth and much has so far been also done to investigate the spiritual intelligence of individuals' work for recreating and reconstructing a spiritual society in our country. Greater emphasis is being paid to spiritual world and a great deal has also been done. Thus, the four Vedas, Shastra, Upanishads, and Gita are a knowledge-hub of spiritual education.

Review literatures of Vedic philosophy, of course, yield useful information regarding spiritual learning and training, and also give details of spiritual basis of education as well as help in progressive basis of education for the betterment of the pupils of the society as a whole. Although, the author has no much intelligence, competence and skill to evaluate the four Vedas, Shastras, Upanishads, and Gita with special respect to spiritual wealth and essence and their subsequent doctrines and assumptions as well as their development, yet when he thinks of the Vedic philosophy, the feeling science arises in his mind that spiritual based on virtues of love, sympathy, honesty,

truth, wisdom, and non-violence significantly remarks, of course, the Vedic philosophy guides the human beings to live in the society in a good manner way.

Keeping in view the Vedic Philosophy, the author concludes the 'Spiritual Education' as "the education which helps to fulfill the potentialities of the individuals through the virtues of control of mind, control of senses, celibacy, Purity, meditation, non-violence, self-knowledge, thinking, Wisdom, self-study based on Vedic philosophy and to prepare them to solve the everyday problems for life creatively and constructively in the new situation of the socio-psycho-physical environment for attaining the highest values and ideas of education, if the teachers enable to modify such kind of behavior patterns of individuals, - this is spiritual education." However, the present study suggests that spiritual education regarding Vedic philosophy would be beneficial for the teacher educators and prospective teachers for the betterment of the global society as a whole. That is why, therefore, it may be said that the four Vedas, Shastra, Upanishads, and Gita appear to have made a considerable progress and development with spiritual education.

Educational Implication

The educational system of Vedic period achieved a pronounced success in connection with character formation, development of multi-dimensional personality, and contribution to knowledge in all branches of learning as well as social well-being and material prosperity. The Vedic philosophy is expected to immensely help all the aspiring teachers and educators of Engineering, Sciences, Mathematics, Humanity, Social and Behavioral Sciences in developing their concept, aims and objectives, curriculum, and method of teachings.

In this connection, the author concludes with the words of David Storoy, in his article entitled "Did the Vedic Philosophy Influence the Concept of Free Energy and Quantum Mechanics?" that in the 1920's quantum mechanics was created by the three great minds: Heisenberg, Bohr and Schrödinger, who all read from and greatly respected the Vedas. They elaborated upon these ancient books of wisdom in their own language and with modern mathematical formulas in order to try to understand the ideas that are to be found throughout the Vedas, referred to in the ancient Sanskrit as "Brahman," "Paramatma," "Akasha" and "Atman." As Schrödinger said, "Some blood transfusion from the East to the West to save Western science from spiritual anemia" Vedic texts such as the Bhagavad-Gita and the Upanishads were collectively considered the most influential books ever written by eminent people like Thoreau, Kant, Schopenhauer, Schrödinger, Werner Heisenberg, Tesla, and Einstein, among others.

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