

Teacher Education for Peace & Harmony-A Vedic Perspective

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How Can the Teachers and the Taught Accept Peace Education?

Just as the objective laws govern the objective universe, so must there be subjective laws governing the subjective universe of human beings. Whereas, harmony is assured because of the inherent order in the objective world, this order must be introduced in the subjective world to assure harmony among all people of different geographies, races, cultures, faiths and genders. The most fundamental of this law is from the Rig Veda, "*Vasudeva Kutumbakam* - the whole universe is one human family." The only way to introduce this law into human beings is if they willingly subscribe to this law. **This can be done through teaching and training.**

The origin of human values is the source at the core of our beings. The source being non-physical, non-material, without any attributes and qualities introduces values through *Rita*, the universal order. The order does not delimit importance of one element of manifestation over the other, but provides an avenue for the universe to sustain itself. That order is called *dharma*, the sustaining principle. From that order follow the objective laws that govern the physical universe and the subjective laws that govern human beings. Consider for instance, if the sun decides not to shine any longer, or the earth decides not to revolve around the sun; there would be no world and life that we know of. Revolving around the sun, the earth does not diminish its role, but follows intrinsic value in the performance of the universal order. Similarly, the roles of a child and a wife in a family are not inferior or superior to the father or the husband, so long as all follow their intrinsic values in the performance of family order. The same goes with any relationship: the employer, employee; teacher, student and the like. **All human values follow from the universal order.**

Thus far, the world has not been successful in teaching the very simple precepts of the universal order - peaceful coexistence. The known history is replete with conflicts, strife and wars. We can avoid great suffering if someone stands up and teaches the way of true Peace. There is a way to effect peace in our time, and we must be willing to do something about it. The word 'peace' by itself may not mean much, but teaching certain practices may ultimately bring in the desired result. From Vedantic philosophy, I delineate three effective practices which may help us achieve peace.

Will and Repetition

It has been shown that the mind of both adults and children are greatly influenced by repetition, and this can be continued throughout our lives. The repetition of sight, sound and actions becomes ingrained in our mind and affects us in a number of ways including our thoughts and our emotions, and eventually shows up in our reactions. In the Vedic ways, one takes a *Sankalpa* (resolution, free will) before performing any work is a kind of declaration to ourselves and to the spirit within us. The Vedas say that the whole Universe is evolved through a *Sankalpa* of the Lord.

When a child is taught through diligent continual repetition that killing someone ends the existence of that person and destroys families, leaving those children without a father to lead, teach and provide for their families; and that the consequence among the affected children and families is the building up of great emotions of anger and thoughts of hatred and revenge that cannot ever be eliminated in their minds, that child will have a propensity in his mind to choose not to hate and not to murder.

Prenatal Education - Spiritual seeding

The higher souls have a freedom to choose their parents. They like to choose to be born in the pure hearted parents. Therefore, if a person loves to get a great soul as a child he has to be spiritual. The parents, who are pure hearted and have divine aspiration, are blessed with great souls as their children. But sometimes we see that right children are born to wrong parents. How it is possible? Sometimes the great souls deliberately choose the wrong parents or wrong clan for two reasons: 1) By choice, so that the clan or parents can be transformed, and 2) The great souls want to reveal that even with the lot of psychological pollution in the environment it is possible to grow spiritually. There is also a possibility of a great soul's birth in a wrong environment by mistake. But generally the great souls prefer to be born only to the spiritually qualified parents.

However, ordinary parents can be taught to have children born to them with certain knowledge, e.g., peace and harmony. **It has been shown that the minds of children are greatly influenced even while they are in the womb. There are also mantras for the wellbeing of the pregnant mother as well as health, security and prosperity in life for the unborn child.** Teachers can teach the parents the following preparatory steps:

Children of peace knowledge in the womb - Peace *Mantras* should be recited repeatedly to make the child's mind peace-loving. These children will be born with peace knowledge and a higher receptivity for peace, just as *Abhimanyu* learned in the womb about entering the *chakravyyuh* - a land war formation. Therefore, the parents should be educated enough to nurture their children with the knowledge they want to impart, such as peace and harmony.

Yoga

The substance of yoga is summarized in the verse - *Yogash chitta vritti nirodha* - Yoga is the cessation of mental modification or the way of being. The four words of the verse define the discipline in a practical way. *Chitta* is the mind field, which is the field of perception and reflection. A mind field connotes a subject and a separate object, which includes everything that can be grasped. *Vritti* is more than a thought. It is a mental activity of the form of consciousness outside of conscious thinking. There is a separation between a perceiving subject and a perceived object. The word *nirodha* carries in itself the complete essence of spiritual realization in the soul. It is the cessation, the silence—not control, which is an effort, an uneasiness of sorts. The discipline of yoga is the cessation of something that hardly ceases and which is described by the expression *chitta vritti*. Any perception in which the perceived object is perceived as separate from the perceiving subject is designated by the expression *chitta vritti*. Yoga is the cessation of mental activity - not a temporary cessation, but endeavors to achieve a state of peace depending on particular circumstances. Most popular meditation techniques propose a truce in mental agitation. But then it is perceived only in the absence of thought or perception. Yoga, on the other hand, with cessation of mental activity is its ultimate accomplishment.

Performing yoga offers the most practical and uncontested way to accept peace and harmony as your *dharma*.

Summary

Vedas state that both the teacher and the taught pray together for togetherness in thought, speech and action by reciting the following Vedic *Mantra*:

*Samane va Akootih, samana Hridayani vah;
Samanamastu Vo Mano, Yatha Vah Susahasati!*

(May common be our intention, may we be united in offering; may we be united in hearts; may we be united in thoughts; Let there be oneness in your resolutions, hearts and minds, so may there be perfect unity amongst you.)