



## Integrated Value Education - India's Contribution to the World

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In 12<sup>th</sup> Century king Dhavalachandra asked his preceptor in the royal court, Narayan Pandit to teach his three naivesons, the art of ruling the state for greater common good. There are so many interesting tales narrated by him in the process of educating the princes. The moral of the story dwells on some human values established in an effortless manner. These story collections are called '*Hitopadesha*'. One of the stories is narrated as follows.

Once upon a time, there lived a tiger in a forest. With the passing years, he became too old to hunt. One day, the tiger was walking by the side of a lake and suddenly, a gold bangle came across his sight. Quickly he picked up the bangle and thought that he could use it as an allure to catch someone. As he was under the thought process, a traveller happened to pass through the opposite side of the lake.

The tiger instantly thought to himself, "What a delicious meal he would make?" He made a plan to attract the traveller. He held the bangle in his paw making it visible to the traveller and said, "Would you like to take this gold bangle ? I don't require it". At once, the traveller wanted to take the bangle, but he hesitated to go near the tiger. He knew that it was risky, yet he sought the

gold bangle. He planned to be cautious, so he asked the tiger, "How can I believe you? I know you are a beast and would kill me".

The clever tiger innocently said, "Listen traveller, in my youth, I was wicked unquestionably, but now I have changed myself. With the advice of a saint, I have left all evil. Now I am all alone in this world and have engaged myself in kind deeds. Moreover, I have grown old. I have no teeth and my claws are blunt. So, there is no need to fear me". The traveller was taken in by this smart talk and his love for gold soon overcame his fear of the tiger. He jumped into the lake to wade across the tiger.

But as per the plan of the tiger, he got trapped in the marsh. On seeing this, the tiger consoled him and said, "Oh ! You need not worry. I'll help you". Gradually he came towards the traveller and seized him. As the traveller was being dragged out, onto the bank, he thought to himself, "Oh ! This beast's talk of saintliness took me in totally. If only I had not let my greed overcome my reason, I could be alive". However, it was too late; the tiger killed the traveller and ate him up<sup>1</sup>. The Moral of the story is 'Greed never goes unpunished'. This is one of the most lucid and effective ways to teach the youngsters.



In 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C. such assignment was given to *Vishnu Sharma*. He too taught the ignorant princes about the conduct of wise person and five principles through animal fables called *Panchatantra*. *Hitopodesha* was inspired by *Panchatantra* collections, though it had its original flavour. Likewise *Jataka* stories are preached by Lord Buddha in his teachings, and from him his followers learned them and passed them into popular use in society. In all Buddhist countries the *Jataka* tales were the major sources for developing the character of the people and widely preached by the monks. Even earlier, the same types of stories were present in Vedic literature. These texts are translated in many languages and are available in almost all the parts of the globe. Sanskrit literature is full of such narrations where values are taught in a lucid manner for the young mind to practise and follow. Similarly the ancient India, which comprises geographically the present day India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Nepal, Bhutan etc. had a unique history of education, values, science and religion. In fact all the four subjects are integrated into one. There was no separation. The greatest example is *Vedas*. *Vedas* not only teach us a way of life / *Sanatan Dharma* (much later described as Hindu Religion) and rituals but also teach Architecture and planning according to natural laws (*Sthapatya Veda*, *anupaveda* of *Rg Veda*), science of machines and warfare (*Dhanurveda*, *an upaveda* of *Yajurveda*), music (*Gandharvaveda*, *anupaveda* of *Sama Veda*), Science of life/ Medical Sciences (*Ayurveda*, *an upaveda* of *Atharvaveda*). Also there are six *Vedangas* viz., *Siksa* (phonetics), *Kalpa* (ritual), *Vyakarana* (grammar), *Nirukta* (etymology), *Chhanda* (metre), and *Jyotisa* (astronomy). Though it is difficult to define the sacred texts viz., *Veda*, it can emphatically be told that *Vedas* are a

mirror of the rich cultural past of the land and constitute an integrated whole of everything that human beings undergo during a life time and even beyond.

*Vedas* also say, 'Let knowledge come from all sides<sup>2</sup>. This implies the magnanimity of the land in accepting knowledge and scholars from every corner of the globe. Chinese Pilgrim Hiuen Tsang appreciated Indian hospitality in his book '*Si- yu-ki*' or 'The Records of the Western World'. He also mentioned in his book that, education of the people of India was organized and used to begin at an early age. After the primer had been learnt, the boy or girl was supposed to begin the study of the five *Shastras* at the age of seven. '*Shastras*' are now supposed to mean purely religious books, but in those days they meant knowledge of all kinds. Thus the five *Shastras* were Grammar, Science of arts and crafts, Medicine, Logic and Philosophy. The study of these subjects went on in the universities and was usually completed at the age of thirty. Though, everyone could not reach the study till thirty years, but the primary education was comparatively widespread, as all the monks and priests were the teachers.

In ancient India scientists, philosophers and scholars used to get royal patronage and reverence for their erudition and scholastic pursuits. In sixth century AD, the Gupta emperor *Vikramaditya* had *Navaratnas* (nine gems) in his court. *Kalidas*, *Varahamihira*, *Ghatkarpar*, *Dhanwantari*, *Kshapanaka*, *Shanku*, *Amarsimha*, *Vetalabhata*, *Vanaruchi*. *Aryabhatta* of *Pataliputra* (modern Patna)<sup>3</sup> was also a great mathematician who contributed zero, value of  $\pi$ , algebra, quadratic equation etc. Further, in India spirituality and science were



never at loggerhead but they complimented each other. On the contrary, in the west, there were so many instances of intolerances for the new ideas by the religious and political head of the nation. Scientists, philosophers and many eminent scholars were tortured and even put to death for their scholastic outputs. Socrates was asked to drink poison for his virtue ethics theory and belief. In 1600 AD, Italian scientist and mathematician Giordano Bruno was burnt to death after seven years imprisonment by the medieval Church for his cosmological discovery that sun was essentially a star<sup>4</sup>. Scientists like Copernicus, Galileo, Descartes, Newton, Halley, Darwin, Hubble et al had to face the wrath of the church for their innovative ideas.

In medieval era India was plundered so many times for its richness and wealth and the scientific temper in the royal court gradually diminished. Nevertheless, the patronage to art, culture was still there. But with the British rule the education in India touched an all-time low. In fact in 1835 Lord Macaulay's elaboration in British Parliament after his India tour was the beginning of a planned move to replace the traditional education. He is quoted saying the following: "I have travelled across the length and breadth of India and I have not seen one person who is a beggar, who is a thief. Such wealth I have seen in this country, such high moral values, people of such calibre, that I do not think we would ever conquer this country, unless we break the very backbone of this nation, which is her spiritual and cultural heritage, and, therefore, I propose that we replace her old and ancient education system, her culture, for it the Indians think that all that is foreign and English is good and greater than their own, they will lose their self-esteem, their native self-culture and they will become what we want

them, a truly dominated nation."<sup>5</sup> Generations of Indians suffered for Macaulay's education system. Though English education opened a gateway to plethora of information, Indians lost its base and ethos which cost the country very dear. Social evils like unemployment cropped up due to the absence of traditional vocation (*Kaulikavritti*).

It is observed that, ancient Sanskrit literature proved to be the inspiration of many present day inventions. There was mention of *Pushpaka Vimana* (flying cart) in Ramayan much before Orville and Wilbur Wright gifted aeroplane to the world. Similarly in Mahabharat, queen Gandhari used the technology of cloning to produce 100 embryos. Though detailed description was not there, there must be some technology and experiences which gave rise to such scientific thoughts. Few publications like Bharat Gyan are proving these ancient historical facts of India through evidences<sup>6</sup>. We are aware of great scientists like Einstein and A.P.J Abdul Kalam are avid readers of Bhagawat Gita for inspiration and ideas. The ancient science of life, Ayurveda is still widely and effectively practised to cure patients. The beauty of Ayurveda is that, it does not treat a disease but it treats the patient considering the fact that a human being is constituent of Pancha Mahabhuta. Guidances are given for healthy body and mind considering its inherent nature called Prakriti viz., *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*. It heals from within. Other streams of science and Indian philosophy has the potential to be proved as the best in the world. So Education, Human Values, Science and Spirituality are ways of living. There was no watertight compartment among those subjects.

The ancient methodology is worth emulating and many present day academicians



subscribe to this idea. In fact not only the global community but also India can benefit from this knowledge. Let's take a step towards the positive transition. I made a study on the awareness of Human Values among students of Odisha, India. Empirical study shows more than 90% students are aware of values and appreciates the same in individual life. Let's be part of a silent revolution to bring back our values, teaching methodology, ancient Sanskrit texts, culture of honouring and patronising scholars, no gender discrimination, universal education, and create centre of excellence like Nalanda, Puspagiri and Taksila. Let the next generations not only study for getting a lucrative job but for wisdom and knowledge and to know the very purpose of coming to this planet.

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