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■■i ■loka
@AdiShloka

Knowledge & Bharat : Part V

The Curriculum of Vedic Education :
According to the Ancient Indian theory of education, the training of the mind & the process of thinking, are essential for the acquisition of knowledge.

#Thread



Vedic Education System delivered outstanding results. These were an outcome of the context in which it functioned.
Understanding them is critical in the revival of such a system in modern times.
The Shanthi Mantra spells out the context of the Vedic Education System.



It says:

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“Aum. May we both (the guru and disciples) together be protected. May we both be nourished and enriched. May we both bring our hands together and work

with great energy, strength and enthusiasm from the space of powerfulness. May our study and learning together illuminate both with a sharp, absolute light of higher intelligence. So be it.”

The students started the recitation of the Vedic hymns in early hours of morning.

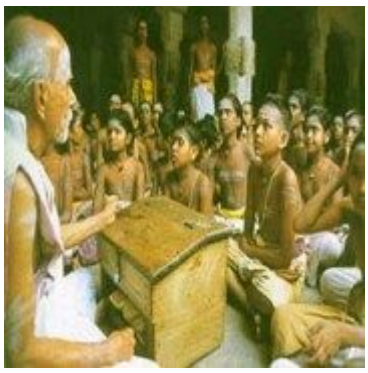


The chanting of Mantras had been evolved into the form of a fine art. Special attention was paid to the correct pronunciation of words, Pada or even letters. The Vedic knowledge was imparted by the Guru or the teacher to the pupil through regulated and prescribed pronunciation,



which the pupil would commit to memory, having listened to it attentively. Only that knowledge, which was received from the lips of the teacher, was regarded as purely Vedic. Thus, the teaching was oral.

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.
Though the Rigvedic education, being essentially religious and philosophical in



character, was imparted only to those who were fit to make quest of Eternal Truth and acquire Supreme knowledge, yet there was arrangement for secular education and vocational training for the masses. The people would receive training in diverse arts and crafts for material gain.

Agriculture, horticulture and animal husbandry attained to a high norm of progress. Thus, we can safely conclude that secular, social and practical form of education was in existence during the Rigvedic era.



Method of Teaching :

Two methods of teaching were being practiced during the Vedic period.
- The first method was ■ruti (Oral) &
- The second was based on Chintan i.e. thinking.

In the oral method the students were to memorize the Mantras (Vedic hymns) and



Richayas (verses of Rigveda) in order that they might not be changed wrongly and they might remain preserved in their original forms.
Thinking method was another part of the teaching method. Through this an attempt was made to reserve the Veda Mantras and Richayas.

The thinking principle, Manana Shakti was reckoned higher than the subject of thinking. So the primary subject of education was the mind itself.
According to the Ancient Indian theory of education, the training of the mind and the process of thinking, are essential for the



acquisition of knowledge. So the pupil had mainly to educate himself and achieve his own mental growth.
Education was reduced to the three simple processes of :
Sravana,
Manana &
Niddhyaasana.
‘Sravana’ was listening to the truths as they fell from the lips of the teacher.



Knowledge was technically called ■ruti or what the ear heard and not what was seen in writing.
The 2nd process of knowledge called ‘Manana’ implies that the pupil has to think out for himself the meaning of the lessons imparted to him orally by his teacher so that they may

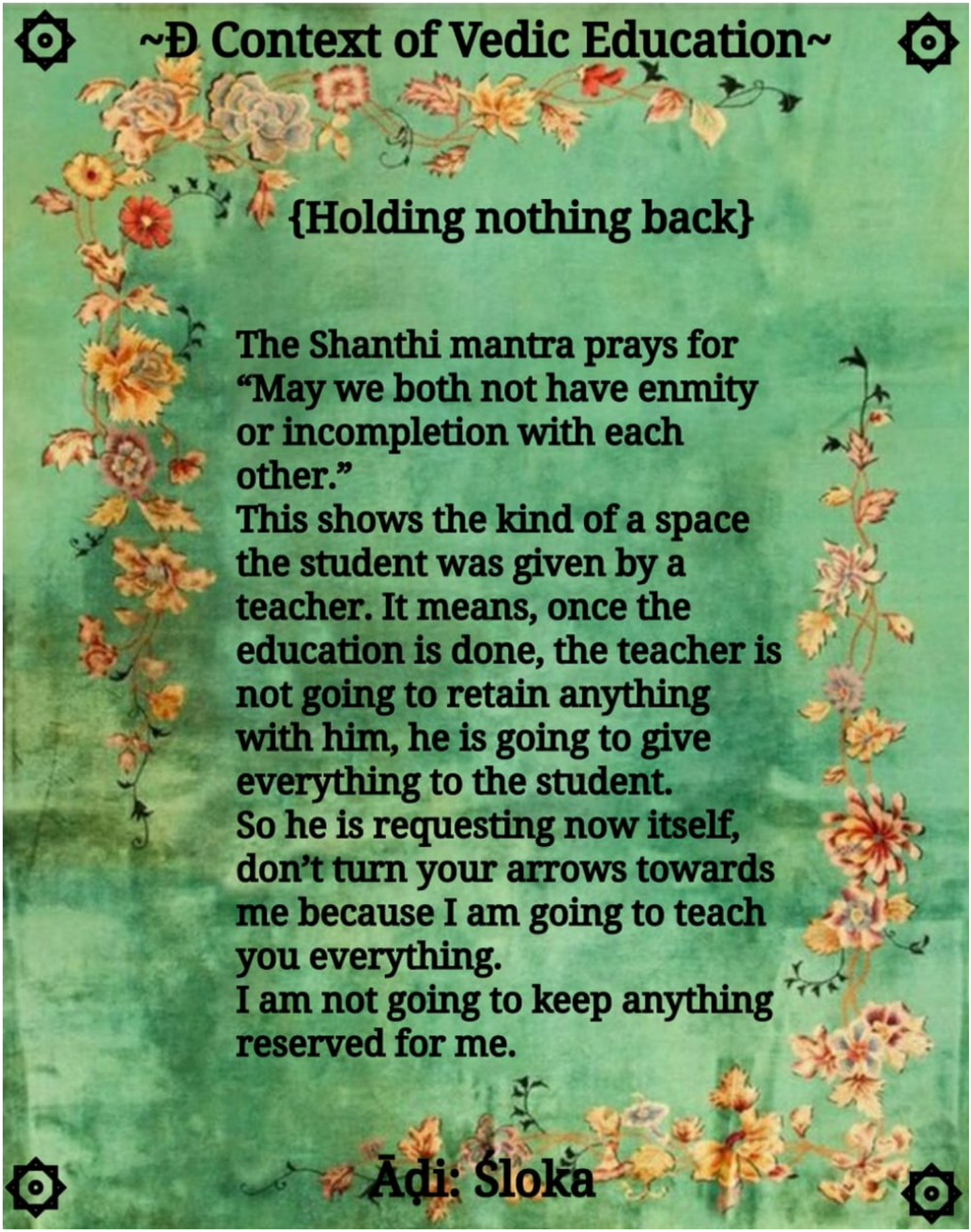
assimilate fully.
The 3rd step known as ‘Niddhyasana’ means complete comprehension by the pupil of the truth that is taught so that he may live the truth and not merely explain it by word. Knowledge must result in realization.
Just as in modern days teachers encourage



intelligent students by guiding them to make research, similarly in ancient days Manan (reflection) was a method especially for highly intelligent students.

Conclusion Remarks :

Thus, the ideal of the Vedic education was lofty. Ample opportunities were provided to the pupil



for the development of his personality. The preceptors took personal care of the pupils, which resulted inevitably in a multi-dimensional development.

It is imperative that we revive such a glorious education system again for the benefit of humanity.



@RituRathaur @ikkmurugan @Mishti_in @shallakaul @BeenaPP1 @IshaSattva @geetaraavi @armykafan @kachnarr @apparrnnaa @ushanirmala @lokagatha @bangadvedant @aneelgs @pburavalli @mysql_sync @deshmata @VamseeJuluri @HinduMediaWiki @vishalshahani11