

# Lessons of Education and *Vedic* Preachings in Wordsworth's Nature Poetry

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## Abstract

Society and man depends upon education for growth. Through education society transfers lofty ideals, expectations, traditions and cultural assets to the forthcoming generations in a way that they feel a spark for sacrifice and universalism. So, Education and Morality blossom after the ages long intellectual and artistic activities. And it is the right and duty of every being to continue with this perennial flow. to search the internal truth and apply them for the welfare of the whole universe.

**Keywords:** Educations, Doctrine , *vedic* preaching , Nature,

Present paper is sheer an effort to locate the imprints of *vedic* preaching both in East and West in the light of *Vedas*. *Veda* extends our consciousness to what is commonly known as subconscious or unconscious. This helps us get what we want out of life, resulting into self-fulfillment. Based upon its fundamental definition, *Veda* must have been around as long as the Universal Energy has been in existence; that is forever. *Vedas* are the oldest of scriptures known to mankind that were stated in Pre-Sanskrit language and initially carried over generations in form of orally memorised hymns. Let us have a cursory glance at the meaning of Education. The term 'education' emerges from Latin words 'Educatum' meaning to train, act of teaching or training, 'Educere' meaning to lead out and 'Educare' meaning to educate, to bring up or to raise. Thus 'education' means to raise the innate potentials. Prof. Drever defines its narrow meaning:

*Education is a process in which and by which the knowledge, character and behaviour of the young are shaped and moulded.* (Shiksha Siddhanta, N.R. Swaroop Saxena,)

In wider sense' education' means:

*Education in its widest sense includes all the influences which act upon an individual during his passage from the cradle to the grave*

(Dumvile). (Shiksha Siddhanta, N.R. Swaroop Saxena,10)

*Education means the bringing out of the ideas of universal validity which are latent in the mind of every man (Socrates).* (Shiksha Siddhanta, N.R. Swaroop Saxena,13)

*Education is a process by which the child makes its internal external*

(Froebble). (Shiksha Siddhanta, N.R. Swaroop Saxena,14)

*Education is the manifestation of perfection already reached in man (Vivekanand).* (Shiksha Siddhanta, N.R. Swaroop Saxena,14)

*And last but not the least the true definition given by T. Raymont is:*

*Education is that process of development in which consists the passage of a human being from infancy to maturity, the process whereby he adapts himself gradually in various ways to his physical, social and spiritual environment (T. Raymont).* (Shiksha Siddhanta, N.R. Swaroop Saxena,17)

Veda also instructs to be real humane and give birth to a divine creature :

*Manurbhav ajanay davgam janam.*

*मनुर्भव आ जनय दैव्यं जनम्।*

Similarly :

*Yesham na vidya na tapo na danam*

*gyanam na shilam na guno na dharmah*

*te mratuloke bhuvibharbhuta*

*manushyarupena mragashcharanti* (Bratrihari, neetishatak,13)

*येषां न विद्या न तपो न दानं*

*ज्ञान न शीलं न गुणो न धर्मः।*

*ते मृत्युलोके भुविभारभूता*

*मनुष्यरूपेण मृगाश्चरन्ति।।*

Veda also asks to make life yagna as the light of yagna creates sweet and lovely emotions in the heart of man. The life of man is like celebration. May the activities occurring in the celebration be pious and attain blessings. This wish makes human life a complete yagna :

*Yagno Vai Shreshthatam Karma* .(Shatpath Brahmana,1,7,1,5)

*यज्ञो वै श्रेष्ठतमं कर्म।*

meaning that the duty obeyed in the best way is yagna.

Usually tragic literature ends with Hero's fall or tragic death in the West as there is no other option at the climax whereas in India our ancient scriptures, like *Vedas* are our torchbearers in the moments of tragic effect. They direct us to cull ray of hope and positivity even in crucial hours. We can, if we wish to hear the always present *vedic* echo through our practical life. We, actually live every inch *Veda* in the sphere of life. There are various rituals as the great *Vedic* moral messages, for example during marital ceremonies we have *shila rohna vidhi*, where the bride puts her leg on a *shila* which teaches or makes her commit to be as strong as a *shila* or *rock amid* the complex situations of married life.

Different Philosophical doctrines have defined education in various dimensions. Idealism is the first doctrine which prones to exaltation of personality or self-realization. This doctrine gives importance to the 'being', personality development, spiritual values and life goal. Here, instead of spiritual world i.e. immortal, mortal world has been glorified and hence man has been imagined as 'god'. Idealists view unity i.e. 'God' in diversity and no doubt India is known for unity in diversity. The ultimate stage of Idealism is the meeting with *Parambrahma Parmeshwar* i.e. ultimate reality. Here, at this point we find unison of East & West:

***Yatha pinde thatha brahmande.*** (Mahabharata ,Vedvayas ,Shantiparva)

**यथा पिण्डे तथा ब्रह्माण्डे ।**

Our *Vedas* celebrate this '*ekatva bhava*' in the present verse:

**Ekam sat viprah bahuda, Vadanti.** (Rig Ved)

**एकं सत् विप्राः बहुधा वदन्ति ।**

and

**Rupam Rupam pratirupo vabhuv.** (Rig Ved, 6,47,18.)

**रूपं रूपं प्रतिरूपो बभूव ।**

Similarly, William Wordsworth, the great poet both of nature and man defines poet not as a pleasure giver but as a seer who sets more truly and consequently feels more deeply than ordinary man. The poet can see through the heart of things and brings lessons of morality and wisdom for the guidance of humanity. Wordsworth notices a sublime spirit in the objects of nature which provides wisdom to man :

**And have felt**

**A presence that disturbs me with the joy  
of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime  
of something far more deeply interfused,  
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns?  
And the round ocean, and the living air,**

**And the blue sky, and the mind of man.** *(Tintern Abbey, complete works of William Wordsworth )*

It was because of this harmony between man and Nature that Nature could teach and educate human beings:

**One impulse from a vernal wood**

**May teach you more of man**

**Of moral evil and of good**

**Than all the sages can** *.(complete works of William Wordsworth)*

Thus, Wordsworth seems nearer to Indian scriptures when he announces that :

***An unbroken chain binds all things in the outward world, and that the spirit of man can  
commune with God through Nature.*** *.(complete works of William Wordsworth)*

***Let us penetrate into the message through following verse :***

***Samano mantrah samitih samani samanam manah sah chittamesham. samanam  
mantrambhimantrye vah samanem samanem vo havisha juhomi***

*.(Rigved 10,191,3)*

***समानोमन्त्रः समितिः समानी समानं मनः सह चित्तमेषाम् ।***

***समानं मन्त्रमभिमन्त्रये वः समानेन वो हविषा जुहोमि ।।***

Next, Wordsworth's consent to the Platonic doctrines of Pre-existence, Reminiscence and immortality as an evidence of immortality that he could never die, has imprints of the 'Geeta':

***Vansasi Jirdani yatha vihaya***

***Navani grahnati naroprani***

***tatha sharirani vihaya jirna***

*nyanyani sayati nawani dehi.* (Shri Mad Bhagwat Geeta, 2,22.)

वासांसि जीर्णानि यथा विहाय  
नवानि गृह्णाति नरोऽपराणि  
तथा शरीराणि विहाय जीर्णा  
न्यन्यानि संयाति नवानि देही ।

In our childhood, when we are still fresh from heaven, we have recollection of the divine. This vision of blessed divine world, makes the child see on earth the light of heaven. Hence nature appears to him:

*Apparelled in Celestial Light.* (Ode On Intimations Of Immortality, complete works of William Wordsworth)

Froebel, the famous socialist has highlighted this fact :

*In all things there reigns an eternal law ..... this all pervading law is necessary based on an all pervading energetic self-conscious and hence eternal unity. The unity is God. Education should lead and guide man to face with nature and to unite with God. (Froebel, Education of Man.)* (Shiksha Siddhanta, N.R. Swaroop Saxena.)

Sir Plato, the true idealist said that the aim of life is to approach God' and it is possible only through the achievement of 'satayam' (truth) shivam (prosperity) and sundram (beauty).

Veda Unnayak Swami Dyanand Saraswati also aims at the point of self-realization, unity and prosperity:

**1- Our only object is that mankind may progress and prosper, man may know what truth is and what untruth is, they may forsake untruth and accept truth.** ('Wit and Wisdom' of Swami Dayanand, 179.)

Idealism prepares the child for a holy life :

The object of education is the realization of a faithful, pure, inviolable and hence holy life. (Froebel)

Lord Krishna in Bhagwat Geeta describes :

***Lust, anger and greed are gateways to hell.*** (Ved Vayas, Bhagwat Geeta,16-21)

This self-control, what Maharishi Manu and other seers call as 'Indriya Nigrah' may be exercised in expression and conduct and thought as well. In the modern context it is true about society. Sir Francis Bacon also condemns love for senses as it corrupts mankind :

***Nuptial love maketh mankind; friendly love perfecteth it; but wanton love corrupteth and embaseth it.*** (Bacon's Essays,)

Secondly, there stands doctrine of Naturalism in Education. In west the ultimate authority is 'Nature' or *Bhautik* i.e. material not the spiritual. The famous literary minds like Rousseau, Aristotle, Bacon and G.B. Shaw stuck to accept *prithvi*, 'vau', 'jala,' 'agni' as 'sthai tatva'. Since *vedic* age India is related to these and worships them as 'devas' –

***Dauh Shantirantariksham shantih prithvi shantirapah shantiroshdhayah shantih.***

***Vanaspatayah Shantirvishra devah shantirbahma shantih***

***sarvam shantih shantirev shantih sa ma shantiredhi.*** (Reg Ved,36,17.)

द्यौः शान्तिरन्तरिक्षं शान्तिः पृथिवी शान्तिरापः शान्तिरोषध्यः शान्तिः ।

वनस्पतयः शान्तिर्विश्वे देवाः शान्तिर्ब्रह्मा शान्तिः सर्वशान्तिः शान्तिरेव

शान्तिः सा मा शान्तिरेधि ।।

Naturalism preaches the social institutions to be based on 'liberty', 'equality' and 'fraternity'. This doctrine emerges as a method of the teaching which was not based on books or imposings but to systemize the life of the disciple following nature. So back to nature was their motto.

Rousseau describes four different stages of education: (1) Infancy (2) childhood (3) Adolescence (4) Maturity.

***Nature wills that children should be children before they are men. If we seek to pervert the order, we shall produce forward fruits without ripeness or flavor***". ( *Shiksha Siddhanta* , N.R.Swaroop Saxena,) (Rousseau)

Naturalists also supports learning by doing or self preservation. As Francis Bacon, father of English essays prohibits man to be the lover of senses. He underrates wanton love and welcomes the secret moral inclination in everyman:

*There is love of others, which if it be not spent upon someone or a few, doth naturally spread itself towards many, maketh men become humane and charitable; as it is seen sometime in friars. (Bacon'sEssays)*

Next there comes Experimentalism or Pragmatism in Education. It Naturalism is Naturo-Centric, Idealism, Psycho-Centric, then Pragmatism is Anthro-centric. according to which man's personal experience is the centre point of reality. ***It focuses on a temper of mind, an attitude, a theory related to the nature of ideas and truth and finally it is a theory about reality.*** ( *Shiksha Siddhanta , N.R.Swaroop Saxena,*) (William James).

It suggests that the utility or importance of any work or action depends upon its results. It also prones to creativity, change and says that all the moral issues like truth, reality, good and bad aspects are compensatory to each other. Thus experiment is the only testimony of truth as it is proved when practically applied by society. Pragmatists do not believe in fixed truths, According to them truth always changes with time, place and situation, problems & challenges are the motives of truth. On the one hand they have faith in social & democratic values, on the other hand oppose fixed ideals and values. Welfare of society is their priority. Similarly, in *veda* the word 'satya' emerges from 'es' meaning 'to be in existance'. *Veda* proclaims gods as truth and hence 'agni' has been accepted as a 'truth'.

***Yuvam devastrayam ekadashasah satyah satyasyam dadrsho purastatam.*** (Rig Ved 80,57,2.)

***युवां देवास्त्रयं एकादशासः सत्याः सत्यस्यं ददृशो पुरस्तात् ।***

Thus, education is a continuous reconstruction of experiences, growth and creation of new values, a social process & responsibility of state. According to famous thinker Rusk, ***it is merely a stage in the development of a new idealism that will do full justice to reality, reconcile the practical and the spiritual values & results in a culture which is the flower of efficiency.*** ( *Shiksha Siddhanta , N.R.Swaroop Saxena,*)

During 19 century Wordsworth's poetry also highlights the changes and growth in thinking in his famous doctrine of Man and Nature. He traces three stages of development. The child, who first discovers the simple and then the finer things of Nature's workmanship, accepts these gifts without reflection; the child is:

*Careless of Nature's presence, and unawed  
And his own person, senses faculties  
Centre and soul of all.* (William Wordsworth, Study, Mundra)

The child then begins to display a thoughtful wonder, and even fear, and as the period of childhood ends, the sensations are translated into simple ideas:

*Then everyday appearances, which now  
The spirit of thoughtful wonder first pervades  
Crowd in and give the mind its needful food;  
Nature's unfathomable works, or Man's  
Mysterious as her own.....* (William Wordsworth, Study, Mundra28)

As the child grows, the instinct of wonder, no longer to be satisfied merely by natural objects, or by the world of fable and romance, leads the Mind to the contemplation of:

*Another soul spring, centre of his being  
And that is Nature.* (William Wordsworth, Study, Mundra29)

At this stage, if the child looks upon mankind and on the human maladies, he finds there 'sordid men' and transient occupations, and desires ignoble and depraved.' He, therefore, cleaves :

*Exclusively to Nature as in her  
Finding his image, what he has what lacks,  
His rest and his perfection.* (William Wordsworth, Study, Mundra 30)

In the final stage, as maturity is reached. 'the subtle virtues' of Nature find their way insensible to nourish in the heart its tender sympathies'. The grand as well as the commonest images of Nature- a beautiful sunbeam, the roaring ocean and the waste wilderness-all thus become subservient to one end:

*One service have in which they all partake  
Namely, to make those gracious charities  
Habits of ear and eye and every sense,'-  
Endearing union, without which the earth  
Is valueless, even in its Maker's eye.* (William Wordsworth, Study, Mundra 31)



Wordsworth, from his contemplation of Nature, learns:

*To look on nature, not as in the hour  
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes  
The still, sad music of humanity,  
Nor harsh nor grating, through of ample power  
To chasten and subdue.* (William Wordsworth, *Study, Mundra 32*)

The mighty world of eye and ear becomes co-existent with the mind of man.

Thus implicit knowledge in *veda* has continuously been appreciated by serious scholars for thousands of years in one way or another. So much so that well known thinkers have raved about them as great repositories of advanced knowledge and high thinking. **Henry david Thoreau** said “.....In comparison, our modern world & its literature seem puny and trivial...” **Arther Schoepenhauer** said “..... I encounter in the *Vedas* deep original lofty thoughts suffused with high and holy seriousness.....” **Robert Oppenheimer** (father of Atomic Bomb) said “..... *Vedas* are the greatest privilege for the mankind.....” **Max Muller** during his last years praised *vedas* by saying “.....*Veda*’s have their own unique place and stand by themselves in the literature of the world.....”

Thus it can be said that education means to shine inwardly, to search the internal truths and apply them for the welfare of the whole universe. As has been well said in the lines echoing the vedic sense of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*:

2- *Nasti vidya samam chakshuh.* ( Vedvyas, *Mahabharat*, Shantiparva, 17, 5, 35.)

*नास्ति विद्या समं चक्षुः।*

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