INTRODUCTION
The ancient Indian culture that is a vibrant living culture to this day has a lot to offer us in every sphere of life. The spiritual, psychological and metaphysical concepts of the great Maharishis hold true even today and it is up to us to delve into them and reap the extraordinary benefits of psycho-physiological health, happiness as well as personal and social harmony. The Rishis were visionary seers who codified innumerable concepts that may be used to produce physically, emotionally and mentally healthy individuals who would be of value for the betterment of society at large. This paper takes a look at some of these concepts culled from our ancients that would be of great value to the development of the concepts of school psychology.

The Indian culture is based on the understanding that each individual has different inherent potentialities that need to be cultivated for their ultimate manifest expression. This is found in both the educational and well as health systems as evidenced through the Shat Darshanas and the Chikitsa methods of Yoga and Ayurveda. There is no, “One size fits all” in the Indian approach to either education or health care.

Children are the future and it is important to help them manifest their inherent potential in a positive manner. In the Tamil language it is often said, “vilayum payir mulayileye theriyum” meaning thereby that the potential of the tree is seen in the tender shoots themselves. The educational process must create an environment in which the learning process blossoms from within by creating an environment furthering the positive educement of healthy values and character.

GURU KULA
The Indian system of education was centered around the Guru Kula that literally means the, “Womb of the Master”. This was a mentor centric process similar to that seen in higher education with possibilities of one-to-one interaction on a regular basis. It was a 24-hour relationship based learning process where the Guru or mentor and the student lived in the same environment facilitating interaction at multiple levels that were not limited by time or place.

This was based on the principle of stimulating a yearning for the higher concepts of being, while learning the norms of natural living. The students developed themselves physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually during this period of intense study at the feet of the Master.

Development of the concepts of Karma, Bhakti and Jnana Yoga occurred in a seamless non-compartmental manner that enabled the student to understand the oneness inherent in all approaches without fanatical one-upmanship. Sublimation of the Ego was a major lesson that was learnt by the student and innumerable opportunities were provided for this to occur. The emphasis was on the development of a Purna Purusha, a complete human being through all round development of physical, mental, emotional and spiritual qualities.
PROCESS OF LEARNING

The Indian scriptures and Vedanta give us a deep understanding of the process of learning. The first step in learning is Shravana that is the attentive auditory imbibing of the knowledge by the student. This is followed by the second step that is Manana or the reflective contemplation on the knowledge so obtained. This is an important step because if it is not facilitated, then the learnt knowledge is easily unlearnt by the student once the examination process is completed. There is anecdotal evidence of students failing exams that they had passed a month earlier when that same examination was given again! Studies have shown that students of higher education are found wanting when given simple questions that would be otherwise solved easily by middle scholars! The final step in learning is Nidhidhyasana which is the step where after the learnt knowledge has been contemplated the student can abide with consciousness in the attained knowledge. Once this step is completed the knowledge is one with the student’s consciousness and can be retrieved at any time with the addition of their own life experiences. When asked, “What is the best Asana?” it is reported that Ramana Maharishi said, “Nidhidhyasana”, implying a stability in the inner wisdom. Truly a great answer from one of the greatest of the modern Rishis.

TYPES OF STUDENTS

Indian culture understood that all are not the same and that one size doesn’t fit all. An understanding of the nature and capabilities of the student helps the teacher to bring out the best in the individual by applying different methods.

The first type of student is the one who is only capable of mild effort, the Mridu Samvegin. The second is the Madhya Samvegin who is capable of moderate effort. The third is the Adimatra Samvegin who is capable of intense effort and the highest quality of the student is the Adimatratma Samvegin who is capable of supreme effort. Maharishi Patanjali tells us that the process is easy for the one of the highest nature (tivra samveganam asannah). Once the type of student and their nature is understood the teacher must judiciously apply the methods of teaching to maximize the inherent potential.

The Vedanta Darshana gives us also the important qualities of studentship that are known as the Sadhana Chatustaya. These four fold qualities include

- Viveka – possession of a discriminatory intellect capable of knowing the truth from the untruth and endowed with the Iccha, Kriya and Jnana Shaktis of the Buddhi.
- Vairagya- possession of a dispassionate objectivity that is vital for the development of scientific attributes and research both of the external and internal nature.
- Shat Sampatti – possession of the six healthy qualities that are also termed as the six vital wealth as the one who is endowed with them will be a success at all times. The six qualities are Sama (mental control), Damas (sensory control), Uparati (introspective withdrawal), Titiksha (fortitude), Samadhana (concentration) and Shraddha (faith)
- Mumukshuttva: possession of a burning desire for the ultimate knowledge and the inner quality of never giving up the search for reality.

DEALING WITH STUDENTS

The biggest challenge facing teachers today is how to deal with their students. Teachers have been robbed of most of their authority and are left with very few tools to deal with students on a day-to-day basis. Responsibility without power is impotent! The Indian approach to dealing with students is four-fold.
The first step is known as Sama and is the dealing with student with equanimity and treating them as equals in the search for truth. This can only be applied with the noble ones and will be misused by others as seen in today’s chaotic scholastic environment where the teacher is placed on par with the students or worse even lower!

The second step is of Dana, which implies the affording of concessions towards the needy ones. This may be in the material, physical, mental or emotional form and is the giving of a bit of leeway that can help the student to come up to par with the others and develop into one who can be treated then at the Sama level.

Dealing with difficult students puts the teacher in a quandary and the scriptures suggest Bheda that can be inferred to be the separation of the troublesome elements to reduce the extent of the problem. When used in a proper manner this can reform the student sand then they can be treated in the Dana method and be brought up to Sama level at another time.

The big challenge is with repeated offenders and that is where sometimes Danda or minimal deterrent action through judicious punishment can be of use considering the holistic picture. In modern times the “spare the rod” mentality is prevalent and we do seem to end up spoiling the youth by making them weaker in all aspects. We take away their ability to be responsible citizens by teaching then indirectly that “anything that happens is not your fault- you are the victim”. I am not a supporter of corporal punishment but realize the need for a determent in order for the betterment of the whole. One rotten apple is all that we need to spoil a barrel and the same can be said of the repeated offenders. Such situations need to be nipped in the bud and the Danda method has its uses too in such situations. Of course this takes a lot of Viveka on the part of the teacher and also the need of safety precautions that it is not misused by ignorant egotistical teachers who want to be the “star of the show” at the cost of the poor students.

Maharishi Patanjali has advised us to develop a peaceful and stable mind by adopting the following attitudes in regard to relationships at all levels. He advises us to cultivate a sense of friendliness towards those who are happy and comfortable with themselves (Maitri - Sukha), compassion towards those who are miserable (Karuna - Dukha), cheerfulness towards the virtuous (Mudita - Punya) and indifference towards the wicked (Upekshanam - Apunya). These attitudes are very vital and need to be applied with discriminatory intellect (Viveka) and dispassion (Vairagya) in order for us to develop a healthy physical, emotional and mental state of being. Both the teachers and the students should be encouraged to develop these qualities to create a positive environment conducive towards attaining the higher goals of real education.

**INDIAN CONCEPTS IN LEARNING**

One of the most important concepts in the Indian system of education has always been the development of a sense of gratitude for the teachings. The worst of sins according to Yudhishtthira in the Yaksha Prasna of the Mahabharata is that of ingratitude. The development of a sense of responsibility for the Self has also been another important concept in regard to Karma and Dharma.

There has always been a fostering of the understanding towards the process of self exploration that may be cultivated through Swadhyaya or self analysis that leads to the attainment of a relaxed state of being that is yet ever ready to face the challenges of life

Indian teachings have given importance to the attainment of the legitimate goals of life (Chaturvidha Purusharthartha) namely Dharma (leading a righteous life), Artha (materialistic prosperity), Kama (emotional prosperity) and Moksha (spiritual prosperity) thus helping students realize the noble ways of self fulfillment.
An understanding of the stages of human existence (Chatur Ashrama) helps the student to realize that there is a time and place for everything in life. The realization of the three earlier stages of Brahmacharya, Grahasta and Vanaprastha prepares them for the ultimate stage of Sanyasa when they have fulfilled all the world duties and are ready to seek salvation.

One of the most important teachings of the Indian tradition has been that of developing an awareness of the oneness of the universal existence. This realization of Vasudaiva Kudumbakam enables the student to overcome all the man made barriers of nationality, regionalism, chaste, creed, colour, religion and language thus creating a universal being without prejudices. Such a being is a God send for humanity.

With these concepts culled from the great Indian traditions we can witness the evolution of the student into the state of realized Guru-hood by a steady and continuous life long process of learning fuelled by the energy of discipline, dedication and determination.

CONCLUSION

Even with all of these concepts the educational process often tends to create a friction and disharmony between the teacher and the taught and our great Indian culture has foreseen this and preempts it with the wonderful Shloka that says, “May he protect us both and nourish us. May we both work together with great energy and may our study be enlightening and fruitful. May we never hate each other and may there be peace at all planes of existence”

Om sahanavavathu sahanaubhunakthu sahaveeryam karavavahai
tejaswi navadhithamasthu ma vidhvisavahai

Om shanti shanti shantih Om

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