CHAPTER : IV

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4.1. Introduction :

Rabindranath sets up Āshram Vidyāshram at Santiniketan like the ancient Rishis on the lap of Nature to offer the tender-hearted boys and girls a congenial environment of Nature of the ancient type. Deeply moved by the spiritual inclination and sadhana of Maharshi, his father on one hand and the Upanishadic educational principles contained in the concept of Tapovan on the other he resolves to implement some such lofty ideas of the Upanishads taking Tapovan as a model for man-making education centre and in pursuance of this he sets up Āshram Vidyālaya so to say Brahmacharya Vidyālaya at Santiniken in 1901 when man-making programme is conspicuous by its absence in English schools scattered here and there throughout the country and run by the instructions of the British rulers. Here he is bent upon employing the ancient spiritually based Indian educational model particularly because such universal educational tenets of the Upanishads are compatible with his aims and objectives —

56 Kathleen M O’Connell, Rabindranath Tagore: The Poet as Educator (SS)
57 Sarkar, Prafulla Kumar, Gurudever Santinikatan, p.31 (SS)
While Rabindranath set up a centre of learning at Santiniketan he had been deeply absorbed in his personal study and inclination towards the ideals of the Tapovan of the Upanishadic age as the comprehensive idea contained in the Upanishadic education served the purpose.)

Since his childhood Rabindranath has been brought up in an environment of the Upanishads and he is found to have close contact with the details of the Upanishads –

(Rabindranath was immensely drawn towards the pedagogic system that is found to have prevailed in the tapovan or the education centre of the Upanishadic age.)

Rabindranath himself mentions that right from his adolescence he has been familiar with the slokas of the Upanishads as he has been in the habit of chanting them again and again. In his family as well as social life the impact of the Upanishads on him comes from all directions. Before him Maharshi

58 Sarkar, Sri Sunil Chandra, Rabindranather Sikshadrashan O Sadhana, p.100 (SS)
59 Das, Sri Sudhiranjan, Amader Gurudev, p.17 (SS)
Debendranath, his father himself is a living illustration of the messages of the Upanishads⁶⁰.

Thus, from the early days of his life Upanishads shed light on him immensely like the spontaneous gifts of Nature. “चृःक्ष इव स्तव्यो दिवं तिर्तत्वेक:” - this Upanishadic mantra creates in his mind a great resonance⁶¹. Later, he explains this massage of the Upanishads magnificently and he is found accustomed to citing such Upanishadic slokas – ‘सदा जनानां हदये सत्यिकित्’, ‘यथिन्य लोकः निधित्वा’, ‘सर्वमाकृत्ति तिर्तति’, ‘सर्वभूतसहायकः’ – many such massages of the Upanishads have similarly been used by him.⁶² In the initial stage his educational thought begins with the project of Brahmacaryāshram at Bolpur and in course of time there is the advent of Shriniketan with multipurpose streams in Santiniketan which further develops and gives birth to the University of Viswabharati.⁶³ The objective of this centre of learning is to create channels or avenues for manifesting and bringing out innumerable streams out of the spring contained in the infinite resources of humanity in all possible ways. This Upanishadic ideal of the unity in diversity finds here a new dimension in the awakening of humanism. Citing the following

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⁶⁰ Dasgupta, Sri Sasibhusan, Upanishader Patabhumikaye Rabindramanas, p.2 (SS)
⁶¹ Ibid. p.10 (SS)
⁶² Ibid. p.66 (SS)
⁶³ Ibid. p.107 (SS)
mantra from the Upanishads in his famous tome ‘Santiniketane’(‘শান্তিনিকেতনে’) Rabindranath writes saying –

‘শান্তিনিকেতনে’ রবীন্দ্রনাথ উপনিষদের এক্ষেত্রে পরম্পরা গত্তি: এক্ষেত্রে পরম্পরা সম্পন্ন, এক্ষেত্রে পরম্পরা লোক এক্ষেত্রে জন্ম আনন্দ: বাগিচে উদ্ভিত করিয়া সৃষ্টির মধ্যে ভুক্ত একের মধ্যে অমরতার সম্পন্ন লাভ করিতে হইবে - বলিয়াছেন।

(We are to find out the inhaustible and motionless element of the One that pervades on all over the creative world – এক্ষেত্রে শিক্ষা গত্তি: এক্ষেত্রে পরম্পরা সম্পন্ন, এক্ষেত্রে পরম্পরা লোক এক্ষেত্রে জন্ম আনন্দ:)  

Rabindranath himself admits his inheritance from the Upanishad. He is drawn towards lofty ideas of the Upanishadic system of academic learning. How much helpful and congenial the environment of the āshramic centre of education of the Upanishadic age is! As Rabindranath, the great world poet comes to know the details of the environment created for the seats of learning by the seer poets of the Upanishads it occurs to him what a tremendous impact on the minds of young learners, full of exuberant enthusiasm and unmixed feelings must be when they are allowed to live and communicate their simple ideas and receive genuine light from their teachers living in the same premises for years together since their early days. How essential it is to maintain simple living particularly in the formative

64 Dasgupta, Sri Sasibhushan, Upanishader Patabhumikaye Rabindramanas, p.121 (SS)
part of life – these questions and some such things as are envisaged in the āshramic schools of the Upanishadic age exerts enormous influence on the mind of the great poet surely when he sets up a centre of education at Santiniketan –

(Regarding the educational environment of a seat of learning in the hermitage, its mode of life, its reciprocal amity of feelings in teacher-taught relationship etc. Rabindranath came to know all these things from the ideas that had developed out of the loftiest ideals and fulfilment of vows in times of intimate cooperation on the occasions of invocation as well as convocation addresses contained in the Upanishads at the opening and concluding sessions.)

Rabindranath himself says –

It (Upanishad) has followed the current of my temperament from early days until it suddenly flashed into my consciousness with a direct vision⁶⁶.

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65 Sarkar, Sri Sunil Chandra, Rabindranather Sikshadrashan O Sadhana (SS)
66 Tagore, Rabindranath, The Religion of Man, p-7 (PS)
According to the great world poet the highest education is that which does not merely give us information only but makes our life in harmony with all existence around us\textsuperscript{67}. As he is intent upon awakening the real man within\textsuperscript{68} Rabindranath thinks that it is the duty of all concerned of the Āshram Vidyālaya at Santiniketan to lead the learners to the light and perfection right from the beginning. He further thinks that the learners should also make efforts to strengthen their faculties and instincts in the right direction under the able guidance of their teachers as they have to attain manhood with positive and broader view of life –

\begin{quote}
(\textit{In our centre of learning the adroitness of all the sense-organs including the mind must be practised in all its activities and this should be considered as a serious duty of the arduous training.})
\end{quote}

When we read the following lines in Sunil Chandra Sarkar’s book entitled ‘\textit{Rabindranather Sikshadarshana O Sadhana}’ we feel how much Rabindranath owes to Upanishads in the matter of constructing educational programmes chiefly on the basis of self-development in his Brahmacharya Vidyālaya at Santiniketan–


\textsuperscript{68} Where the words came out from the depths of truth… - “Gitanjali”, 1912 (PS)

\textsuperscript{69} Rabindrarachanabali, Chaturdaskhanda (Prabandha, Siksha), p.416 (PS)
(The impact of the Upanishads as well as that of the Gita in the matter of all sorts of individual efforts and self-advancement in public life can hardly be denied. Although there might not be any testimony to account for this still it would not also be untenable to accept all those endeavours belonging to the unwritten chapters in the history of Indian education system that have all along been influenced by the various ideals of some of the Upanishads.)

4.2. Philosophy of Education

Rabindranath, the world poet makes sincere and careful attempt to awaken and develop the innate cognitive disposition of the learner. Never does he load the unwilling mental frame since genuine thirst for knowledge alone leads to the real growth of knowledge. In Svetasvata Upanishad71 the self-same idea has been expressed. Prafulla Kumar Sarkar says –

70 Sarkar, Sri Sunil Chandra, Rabindranather Sikshadrashan O Sadhana, p.72 (SS)
71 Svetasvata Upanishad, II (PS)
Rabindranath was bent upon that which might enable a learner to have total flowering of his inner being. He (the great teacher) was vigilant and meticulous in inducing the learner to develop his innate cognitive disposition or inclination in respect of attaining knowledge. The manifestation of human mind takes place in phases. His self-assertion and such other things follow certain definite tracks. According to Swetaswatara Upanishad one’s thirst for knowledge happens to be the most opportune moment for imparting lessons to one.

Here Rabindranath endorses the educational ideals of the Upanishadic education in a large measure. The curiosity that arises out of inquisitiveness in the mind of the students has to be satisfied by providing him with the right knowledge.

72 Sarkar, Prafulla Kumar, Gurudever Santinikatan, p.29 (SS)
To him the chief aim of education should be not merely education of the instincts or acquisition of knowledge but should be bringing out universal truth consciousness from the depth of one’s being - the cultivation of which can be found in the premises of the *Tapovan*. The suggestion is that provision for attaining knowledge of the higher mind has to be made in our school education. What Upanishad has pointed out has been executed in the Tapovan. This ideal has been reiterated again and again by the great teachers of this land of ours. Rabindranath’s views in this connection may be noted here:

> (It is not the training of the sense-organs only nor the exercise of the intellect alone but we have to give priority to the flowering of the wisdom in our school curriculum for the intended chief aim is illumining light to the Indians. The ancient Indian Tapovan accomplished such a truth and it is the Upanishad that articulated it. Later in the successive periods the luminous personages equally expressed some such Truth.)

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73 Rabindranath Tagore, *Tapovaner Siksha* (PS)
To make it effective Rabindranath has offered a variety of creative things before the mind of the students in the following ways –

(Rabindranath has portrayed vivid living pictures of aphorisms and hints relating to his educational philosophy not only in a number of articles, but also in many of his composition of songs, presentation of characters along with their dialogues and course of conducts introduced in Santiniketan.)

From Sunil Chandra Sarkar, the author of ‘Gurudeber Santiniketan’ we come to know that at the time of setting up Āshram Vidyālaya at Santiniketan Rabindranath is found immensely absorbed in the ideals of Tapovan and the Upanishadic culture.

As there is a spark of the Transcendental in the individual learner’s being he is required to keep constant contact with the source without which unfolding of his being by degrees cannot be expected and from this standpoint the Upanishad says ‘তাহের তদন্তিকে’

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74 Sarkar, Sri Sunil Chandra, Rabindranather Sikshadrashan O Sadhana, p.83 (SS)
75 Ibid. p.100 (SS)
76 ইশ্বোপনিষদ.৪ (PS)
Let us see what Rabindranath has said in this connection –

(To walk unbent every man has to strike a balance against gravitation for carrying on his forward movement along with his own weight. He would not have in need of it had he moved like a beast. Having his humanity maintained he makes constant effort in respect of continuing his journey on foot – apprehending a fall at every step. And this is a conflict between human quality and animality for rescuing humanity from danger. Make austere endeavours to excel in humanity – on one side, there is the periphery of the individual life and on the other the limitless omnipotent. Neither of the two is ignorable. Man knows that ‘তদ্রুতে তদস্তিকে’ – he is in the infinity as well as in the proximity. Regarding the awareness of the presence of the Transcendental One in every finite thing of the universe the Upanishad says –‘प्रतिविद्यादशिदतम्’).

77 Tagore, Rabindranath, Manusher Dharma, p.27 (PS)
The message of the Upanishads has a penetrating effect on the mind and thought of Rabindranath. He categorically points out that the true source of all our ideal of education of this land comes from the Upanishads –

आमादेबे झेड सेते तपस्या धर्म र कर्म से बृहत मानव के आम्ना आत्मबिन्दुबन्द करि। ऐस तथाके उपनिषद आर एक रकम करे बनेते हैं – ‘एषां परम गति एषां परम सम्बन्, एषां स्वर्ग स्वर्ग लोकः एषां स्वर्ग वन आनन्द’।

(In quest of true truth whether in austere endeavour or for faith pure and simple or in performing duties we are inclined to adore the Supramental Being for having bliss in our lives.)

The concept of self-opening as well as self-realization of the Upanishads through the contact with the supreme has a special appeal to Rabindranath and he resolves to make use of it in his man-making programme and incorporates the idea in his curriculum meant for the students in his āshram Vidyālaya at Santiniketan79 –

अत्तमाजै तुम श्रद्धु एक एकाकी,  
तुम अत्तमाजै।  
जगतेर नाणे कत बिचित्र तुम हें,  
तुम बिचित्रपिली॥

78 Tagore, Rabindranath, Manusher Dharma, p.38 (PS)  
79 Sarkar, Sri Sunil Chandra, Rabindranather Sikshadrashan O Sadhana, p.73 (SS)
In the core of my heart

Thou art a lone figure

In the depth of the being – simply unaccompanied

Thou art the only resident there.

In the wide world how multitudinous

Thou art appear to be, a diversity incarnate!

Precisely this is a massage of Rabindranath’s teaching. In fact, this concept of education belongs to the Upanishads. This is nothing but the impact of the teaching of the Veda and the Vedanta from which does Rabindranath, the seer-poet and the seer-teacher receive the comprehensive idea of the inner being and the unification of all its shades? Surely he has not expressed some such ideas under the influence of the western ideas. This unique element in teaching makes him not only a great teacher of Santiniketan but also accepts him as a great world teacher, gurudev. 80

Sri Sudhiranjan Das, the author of ‘Amader Gurudev’ is of opinion that the basic principles of Rabindranath’s Viswabharati retain the real message of the Upanishads. He writes –

80 Sarkar, Sri Sunil Chandra, Rabindranather Sikshadrashan O Sadhana, p.8 (SS)
81 Das, Sri Sudhiranjan, Amader Gurudev, pp.51-52 (SS)

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(As the source of the message of India is the Upanishad so also the fundamental essence of the preceptor’s (Rabindranath’s) Viswabharati may be ascribed to the Upanishad.)

We are already aware that the great educators of the Upanishadic age are the Rishis. In Rabindranath we also find both the seer poet and the great educator. According to Rabindranath education not only accomplishes unfoldment it equally helps self-realization as it paves the way for beginning to evolve one’s eternal truth out of one’s depth of the being. Thus, he is led to believe that education means manifestation of truth of one’s being in the light of the Universal Truth. This idea has been endorsed by another distinguished author Prafulla Kumar Sarkar in his ‘Gurudever Santiniketan’ –

(He, (the teacher is engaged in the arduous endeavour to accomplish the aim of humanity. To make the higher mind of his disciple supple by dint of his dynamic course of austere endeavour happens to be an essential part of his devoted effort.)

82 Sarkar, Prafulla Kumar, Gurudever Santinikatan, p.31 (SS)
The Upanishadic system of education requires the dedication of the entire human life. Of course, the process of education starts in the early part of life and continues for a period of twelve years in the first phase. The concept of Brahmacharya\textsuperscript{83} embraces not merely the preparatory phase of life only but the entire life.

The importance of the Bhahmachayāshram in the Upanishadic age has again been brought before our notice by Rabindranath. In the following words he mentions how he himself makes attempts to come in close contact to the students to make his lessons very simple to them in the beginning –

\textit{(Collecting five or six boys under a rose-apple tree I used to impart lessons to them. While teaching I would infuse them with lofty ideas, suit them with flavour, make them laugh and coming in close contact with them – in this way I would bring them up.)}

In the following lines Sri Sudhiranjan Das, one of Rabindranath’s disciples also gives us to know that after prayer and meditation on every Wednesday

\textsuperscript{83} Mukherjee Radha Kumud, Ancient Indian Education, p.102 (SS)
\textsuperscript{84} Sarkar, Prafulla Kumar, Gurudever Santinikatan, p.31 (SS)
Gurudev himself in his own sweet voice takes part in chanting one of the Upanishads and subsequently explains the deeper idea contained in it –

A congregational prayer used to be held on every Wednesday. Soon after an opening song our preceptor would in a melodious voice recite mantra – ‘আরো যো দেবো মাই যো অস্ত’ . After the prayer on some of the Wednesdays he would explain certain mantras of the Upanishad and at the end gave his advice. Till this day we have not forgotten it. Such a thing has penetrated and reached the depth of our beings in the tender age unmarkedly and has been at work in silence – we can now declare with much emphasis that not even a little of it has gone in vain and here lies the distinction of the educational methodology of the Brahmacharyashram (followed at the first stage of life).

85 Das, Sri Sudhiranjan, Amader Gurudev, pp.21-22 (SS)
4.3. Environment – the centre of learning

When Rabindranath sets up Bramachayāśram Vidyālaya at Santiniketan he does not copy Tapovan from end to end although he looks upon Tapovan as his model of man-making centre of learning. The world-poet assimilates the principles of man-making education that is found to obtain in the Tapovan, the ancient centre of learning. In fact, these principles, ideals and objectives of the Upanishadic age form the fundamental part and parcel of Rabindranath’s Bramachayāśram Vidyālaya at Santiniketan –

(The impact of the Upanishads on Rabindranath is universally known. Rabindranath himself has admitted this fact and with great pride he has introduced his own self as one of the inheritors of the Vedic Rishis or seer-poets).

The message noted below is what Rabindranath says on the occasion of inauguration of Viswabharati. That he has been greatly influenced by the Upanishadic ideas (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad) can be clearly noticed from the following lines –

86 Dasgupta, Sri Sasibhushan, Upanishader Patabhumikaye Rabindramanas, p.14 (SS)
87 Ibid. p.9 (SS)
Even in the age of the Upanishads such centres of learning came into existence elsewhere. It has a reference in Brihadaranyaka Upanishad of Satapatha Brahmana that Swetaketu, son of Āruni had been to Jaibāli Prabahan of the Pāñchal state council and there also existed such a centre of learning at the hermitage in collaboration with highly advanced and dedicated scholars.)

From his own words we may know how deeply Rabindranath is moved by the modus-operandi of the education system that prevails in the Tapovan of the Upanishadic age. Like the ancient Rishis Rabindranath also looks upon the little learners as ensouled beings and a greater destiny waits them in their fronts. In the circumstances, for unfoldment of knowledge that lies within the learners need entering into a sacred life for which they must again prepare themselves right from the primary stage of their lives. Rabindranath’s view in this context has been expressed in the following words –

88 Rabindrarachanabali, Chaturdaskhanda (Prabandha, Siksha), p.406 (PS)

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What sort of education and discipline did our ancestors resort to? In their childhood they (the learners) would put up at their residence of their Guru (teacher) in seclusion of their respective homes. There they had to lead an austere way of living – keeping thorough sanctity in body and mind. No weak-point could touch their characters. They were accustomed to lie on hard-bed. And they engaged themselves severally with an all-out effort towards receiving and attaining truth by doing away with mischievous leanings for the ultimate purpose of excelling in their saner qualities respectively. Now you are to live in the house of the Guru similarly accepting the hardship of following the strict discipline by disregarding ostentatious display of wealthiness.

Similarly, the Upanishad\textsuperscript{90} says that the Brahmacharin who aspires after the highest knowledge should be plastic, calm and unperturbed in mind (শান্ত)\textsuperscript{91}. He

\textsuperscript{89} Tagore, Rabindranath, Tapovaner Siksha (PS)

\textsuperscript{90} Brihadaranyak Upanishad, IV.4.23 (PS)
must also be self-restrained (दान्तक), self-denying (उपरत), patient (तितिश्व) and collected (समाहित) with purity in nature (सत्यशुद्धि)⁹². The Upanishadic education also means application of the mystical doctrine throughout the life in all its aspects and it is not meant for the early stage of life only as it is also spread in the entire span of life i.e., it must continue in the stage of a house-holder on his return from his āshramic part of education⁹⁴ – of which we know from the dialogues of Svetaketu Aruneya & Goutama in Chhāndogya Upanishad⁹⁵ and Yajnavalka & Mattreyi in Brihadaranyaka Upanishad⁹⁶.

In the following lines of ‘Rabindranather Sikshadarshana O Sadhana’ Sunil Chandra Sarkar points out that in the early part of his life the world poet himself bathes in the fresh thoughts of the Upanishads and now after growing in years he is found very much interested to see that the little learners of the Āshram schools taking dips in the same fresh streams of thoughts of the Upanishads –

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⁹¹ Katha Upanishad, II.24 (PS), Mundaka Upanishad, I.2.13, (PS), Svetasvata Upanishad, IV.22 (PS) & Maitra Upanishad, IV.29 (PS)
⁹² Katha Upanishad, I.b (PS)
⁹³ Chāndogya Upanishad, VII.26.2 (PS) & Mundaka Upanishad, III.2.6 (PS)
⁹⁴ Mukherjee Radha Kumud, Ancient Indian Education, p.94 (SS)
⁹⁵ Chāndogya Upanishad, VI.1.6 (PS)
⁹⁶ Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, II.4/ IV.1. 3-4/ III.8.2.13 (PS)
Regarding Rabindranath’s view on the concept of complete man Sunilbabu further adds -

Accepting the principles like integral education, education of the whole man Rabindranath reveals all the aspects of human nature in the unhindered bright rays of some such tenets.

Let us also see what Sunil Chandra Sarkar says in regard to Rabindranath’s ideals and experiences that have been successfully employed at Santiniketan-

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97 Sarkar, Sri Sunil Chandra, Rabindranather Sikshadrashan O Sadhana, p.4 (SS)
98 Ibid. p.7 (SS)
At Santiniketan he has shown how by dint of streams of living experiences a promise may turn a truth; how by following the basis of the ideal principles of the ancient Tapovan (a centre of learning in the hermitage) a society may turn a simple and spontaneous hermitage. In view of developing ties of man-to-man relationship with feelings of affinity in order to awaken insight for moving forward with a sense of cooperation and service is essential in the process of learning for the ashramites.

4.4. The Teacher & The Taught

The latent creative force lies hidden in the being of the child and its utility can be had by its unfoldment – it is said in the Upanishads “तत्क्रिया रुप हि जीवनि, जीवनि मृगपञ्चायानं, स जीवित मनो वस्त्रम्, मननेन जीविति।” The idea contained in these words has been truly reflected in the educational ideal of the world poet.

99 Sarkar, Sri Sunil Chandra, Rabindranather Sikshadrashan O Sadhana, p.34 (SS)
100 Sarkar, Prafulla Kumar, Gurudever Santinikatan, p.16 (SS)
Rabindranath marks the significant efforts of the Rishis of the Upanishads in respect of creating a congenial environmental infrastructure in the heart of Nature, -- offered to the young learners full of enthusiasm and seekers of the Truth and not victims of unhealthy habits and abuses. Kireet Joshi remarks in this regard –

The goals of education are the attainment of self-realisation, and cultivation of the capacity for truth and righteousness ..... requires the synthesis of the powers of harmony, vastness, and austerity through the instrumentality of the illumined mind and the power of the expression of the soul\textsuperscript{101}.

To the great poet such an environment at the early days of human life is essential for positive growth of human faculties. To him it is also a unique instance and the essence of this idea is fruitfully used by the poet at Santiniketan for bringing out the natural development of the finer elements in the little ones – as suggested by Sunilbabu\textsuperscript{102}.

The importance of an educator or a teacher in the real sense of the term can hardly be comprehended properly. In fact, he is a friend, philosopher and guide, nay; the leader of the march. His presence is supposed to speak and hence, such a

\textsuperscript{101} Joshi, Kireet, Taittiriya Upanishad, p.97 (SS)
\textsuperscript{102} Sarkar, Sri Sunil Chandra, Rabindranather Sikshadrashan O Sadhana, p.72 (SS)
man cannot be looked upon as an ordinary being. He is not a task-master. He must be a luminous person having magnetic personality and integrity.

Rabindranath says:

(For purposes of setting up a hermitage to facilitate imparting lessons essentially we are in need of a preceptor.)

The prime role of the teacher must also be to help the student to enlarge, develop and attain height, width and depth of the mental faculties on the one hand and on the other study child psychology with a view to help the student to attain the height and width of the layers of their mind. Prafulla Kumar Sarkar says –

103 Siksha, Rabindranath Tagore, p.49 (PS)
(In Rabindranath’s system of education stress has been laid chiefly on the role of the learner. It is the learner’s urge that demands proper arrangements for imparting lessons and it is also to satisfy his need that the teacher is engaged. The key aim of the teacher in the system of education obtaining at Santiniketan is to satisfy the learner’s inquisitiveness by involving him to acquire knowledge, help him to develop the ever expanding mind and above all to act as a custodian to take care of the psychology of the child. The teacher is supposed to keep vigilance on the manner in which the learner’s latent character gradually has been blooming so that the learner might take the shape of a self-sufficient one. His (teacher’s) life would now be mixed inseparably with the mode of life of the learner and without hesitation he would also become inextricably one with the learner. In the circumstances, there would be an intimate tie of kinship between the two sides – the teacher and the taught at Rabindranath’s centre of learning. Hence, the teacher also used to impart lesson with affectionate as well as sympathetic feelings.)

104 Sarkar, Prafulla Kumar, Gurudever Santinikatan, p.31 (SS)
The teacher-taught relationship in the Upanishadic age is remarkably an ideal one\textsuperscript{105}. The guru or the preceptor is looked upon as father of a family while the Brahmacharins are his children. The guru and his disciples are so close and integrated that as the day dawns a common aspiration and aim of preserving and propagating the sacred learning starts vibrating and creating an atmosphere showing its worth in their lives and conducts with the chanting of the mantra. Here runs the mantra -

आ ओह नावबतु, सह नौ भुनकु, सह वीर्य करवाहें।

तेजस्मिन्नावपीलमस्तु, माहिद्रिष्टाहें।\textsuperscript{106}

This is a common prayer which invokes Almighty God to give protection to both the teacher and the taught and to give more and more powers in their beings and to embolden both of them and see that they always remain as an integrated whole and never develop enmity amongst them. In this context Kireet Joshi observes –

\textit{Prayer in the Upanishad was regarded as a process by which the individual is facilitated in connecting himself or herself with the objects that are to be attained. The prayer in the Upanishad was a process by which consciousness is psychologically awakened and put into an}

\textsuperscript{105} Mukherjee Radha Kumud, Ancient Indian Education, p.101 (SS)
\textsuperscript{106} केनोपिष्ट, शान्तिपाठः (PS)
operation by which the individual and the object of realisation can be linked. The linking process, when effectively accomplished, brings about the state of peace\textsuperscript{107}.

In such an environment Antevasins are found residing in the house of the teacher and are also permitted to continue further studies to acquire the qualities of seer-teachers.\textsuperscript{108} In the long run such seer-teachers become capable of running independently the centres of learning – old and new and impart lessons to the young learners and some such centres of learning may be looked upon as ancient counterparts of our Teachers’ Training Institutes. Kireet Joshi further adds –

\textit{Without good teachers and good pupils there can be no good educational system. Today’s educators, therefore, need to work on all three fronts simultaneously; the teacher, the pupil and the system……. If we are teachers, we should strive to become good teachers; if we are pupils, we should strive to become good pupils; and if we are in charge of the educational system, we should set about creating new conditions in the system as to encourage and foster good teachers and good pupil}\textsuperscript{109}.

\textsuperscript{107} Joshi, Kireet, Taittiriya Upanishad, p.80 (SS)
\textsuperscript{108} Chândogaya Upanishad, II.23.2 (PS)
\textsuperscript{109} Joshi, Kireet, The Good Teacher and the Good Pupil, p.20 (SS)
Rabindranath is so much absorbed in the educational thoughts and ideals of the Upanishads that it seems he cannot do away with the role of the Rishis as educators from his mind. So when he thinks in terms of placing one as the teacher of the Brahmacharyāshram he gives serious thought to it and says –

(In the flashes of my mind I find the seer-teacher seated at the centre of a Tapovan and does'nt seem to be an image of a machine – out and out he appears to be a perfect human being, since he has undertaken the responsibility of fulfilling the purposes of humanity.)

He (Rabindranath) is of opinion that the teacher himself must at least be a man of lofty character otherwise the aims and objectives of Brahmacharyāshram will ultimately go in vain. Below we will find his own statement in this regard –

(If the teachers themselves do not resort to self-sacrifice and self-restraint all their functions of counselling and teaching would be ineffectual and the glory of Brahmacharyashram would be tarnished.)

110 Sarkar, Prafulla Kumar, Gurudever Santinikatan, p.31 (SS)
111 Ibid. (SS)
According to the Upanishads the first criterion of a teacher is that he must without fail always cling to the truth and speak the truth - ज्ञातं वदिष्यामि। सत्यं वदिष्यामि। The role of the teacher in the Upanishadic age is indeed very significant. Right from the Vedic period the tradition of Rishis as great educators continues. As the teachers are the seer-poets they always move along the sunlit path and never budge an inch from the true Truth. They are quite aware that the tender-aged pupils are in the habit of imitating them. Hence, whatever they say or do directly prevails on the pupils. The teachers’ responsibility to the disciples and to the society is very great and fortunately here as the Rishis are the teachers they quite realize the gravity of the question. Never do they indulge in lying or committing a sin. The teacher of the Upanishadic age is out and out a conscientious person and he is equally on the alert so that no abuse can damage a learner’s life and ultimately damage the whole social fabric. Kireet Joshi says –

*The ancient Indian tradition gave too much importance to reverence to the teacher. What truth lies behind it? The Indian education system recognised that the real teacher is seated within oneself, and sooner rather than later, the seeker must discover the inner teacher and the inner guide*.

112 Taittireeya Upanishad, 1.1 (PS)
113 Joshi, Kireet, The Good Teacher and the Good Pupil, p.34 (SS)
Kireet Joshi further says –

*Knowing that the real teacher is seated within the pupil, he hands over the task of guidance to that inner guide as soon as possible. Until then, he devotes all his energies to one single aim, the flowering of the pupil’s faculties and the awakening of the inner guide seated within the pupil’s heart. It is to such a teacher that the ancient tradition of India assigned highest reverence*\(^\text{114}\).

According to the Upanishads a teacher must have a vision of the future. He is the chief architect of the society. So to say, he is a friend, philosopher and a guide of his disciple who in turn is supposed to be the torch-bearer of the rest of the people. The duty of a teacher nay, his great responsibility is to emerge as a man of integrity, purity, honesty and unperturbed leader of the march. Through a series of challenging performances he has to prove his worth. In the circumstances, he is looked upon as a burning example before the taught. And most of the business of education is required to be accomplished by him smoothly and positively and without a fuss.

Nor is this all. The profile of the teacher has been portrayed on a very large canvas in the Upanishadic period. In fact, here a seer-poet or Rishi plays the role of an educator. The teacher, according to the Upanishads is not only a man of

\(^{114}\text{Joshi, Kireet, The Good Teacher and the Good Pupil, p.35 (SS)}\)
vision but also a pure and luminous soul engaged in a joint venture with his disciples in seeking the Light and Truth and for the greater good and welfare of the entire society nay, humanity.

In the next place, the Upanishadic education enables the learner to communicate with the Transcendental Force. Through prayers both the seer-teacher and his disciple pray - "तन्मामवलुः वद्वकार्मवलुः अवतु मामुः अवतु वक्तारम्" ¹¹⁵ Thus the pupil learns how to bring down the Transcendental power for the safety and well-being of all concerned. Through such joint prayers not only the safety of the individual pupil is achieved but also a regular guidance of the lofty preceptor who is capable of moulding tender-aged learner honesty and tolerance and perseverance are attained effectively by the learner.

Prof. Bhabatosh Dutta has mentioned among other things that the simple and unsophisticated life style of Brahmacharyāśram at Shanitiniketan especially of the little learners living in close contact with their teachers remind us of the ideals of the ancient India’s Tapovan –

¹¹⁵ Taittireeya Upanishad, 1.1 (PS)
¹¹⁶ Dutta, Sri Bhabatosh, Rabindra-Parichaya, p.72 (SS)
(The mode of life in the Brahmacharyashram maintained the ideal of the ancient Indian Tapovan. It was a simple and ostentatious sort of living that developed through the coordination of the teacher and the taught.)

Sri Bijan Bihari Bhattacharya, an eminent educationist also points out that ancient tapovan happens to be a residential house of the teacher and there the students are allowed to live like his own children with the Guru and other inmates of his house–

(Once, Tapovan was meant for the residence of the Indian preceptor as well. Those who lived in the ashram (hermitage) were family members of the preceptor and his disciples who would receive education as children of the same family.)

The entire system of education has been pitched in such a manner that the learner has the sufficient scope for rising above all sorts of pettiness and egotistic fervours, which in turn as a consequence may again give effect to the flowering of their higher selves to facilitate devoting their energies to the greater cause of the society and humanity in greater perspectives. The emphasis on the reverence for

117 Bhattacharya, Bijan Bihari, Sikshacharya Vivekananda O Rabindranath, Chintanayak-Vivekananda, p.830 (SS)
the teacher is laid in the system for creating a sense of reverence towards all other superiors in the family as well as that of the society. To this effect Taittiriya Upanishad states –

मातृदेवो भव। पितृदेवो भव।
आचार्यदेवो भव। अतिथिदेवो भव।

In the circumstances, the seer-teacher has hardly any time to take rest as he constantly has to carry on his efforts for more and more knowledge like the Brahmacharins. Here is another reference from Taittiriya Upanishad –

आ मा यन्तु ब्रह्मचारिणः स्वाहा।
वि मा यन्तु ब्रह्मचारिणः स्वाहा।
प्र मा यन्तु ब्रह्मचारिणः स्वाहा।
नमावन्तु ब्रह्मचारिणः स्वाहा।
रमावन्तु ब्रह्मचारिणः स्वाहा।

In fact, a true teacher always feels that he has been appointed from above and like a trustee his responsibility is to awaken and hand over his work to the omnipotent guide having his living presence in the heart-centre of the learner. This system of education indeed makes the role of the teacher very significant and the interweaving of both the lives of the teacher and the taught comes to such a pass that the teacher does not have a separate identity; his aspirations and prayers

118 Taittiriya Upanishad, 1.11 (PS)
119 Ibid. 1.4 (PS)
are not meant for himself only. Regarding such feeling of togetherness one may find its portrayal in the Santipatha of Taittiriya Upanishad\textsuperscript{120}.

The teacher is all the while found making joint ventures with his pupils in respect of speaking and seeking truth ceaselessly with a view to attaining the highest Truth; extending the horizon of light by gaining more and more knowledge from the unconscious physical plane to the highest plane of effulgent light; performing duties in all spheres of life for the welfare of all concerned.

Let us come back to our discussion on the education system of ancient India particularly in the age of Upanishads. In the Upanishadic age the Tapovan of the Rishis emerges as the heart centre of learning, meditation and sadhana. Prafulla Kumar Sarkar says –

\begin{quote}
চিরদিন উদার বিশ্বপ্রকৃতির ঘনিষ্ঠ সংগ্রামে ধারিয়াই ভারতবর্ষের মন গড়িয়া উঠিয়াছে। জগতের জড় উন্মিদ, চেতনার সেবা নিজেকে একাত্মভাবে বাণী করিয়া দেওয়া ভারতবর্ষের রত্নবিগ্রহ হইয়াছে। ......
তাই বালকদের হৃদয় যখন জীবন এবং সমুদয় ইতি যখন যখন সত্য তখনই তাহারিকে মেহ ও রৌদ্রের লীলাভূমি অবর্তিত আকাশতলে খেলা করিতে দাও, তাহারিকে ভূমর আলিঙ্গন হইতে বন্ধ করিয়া রাখিও না। ...... শিশুর পেলের কোমল মনে প্রকৃতি তার চোখের পরশ নিবিড়ভাবে দিক। ছয় ঋতুর বিশ্ব রূপ তার চোখে অবরিত থাকুক। ...... আমাদের যথার্থ শিক্ষা তপন্বনে প্রকৃতির সেবা নিলিত হয়ে, তপস্যার দ্বারা পরিণত হয়ে।
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{120} কেন্দ্রনিষ্ঠ, শালিপথ: (PS)
\textsuperscript{121} Sarkar, Prafulla Kumar, Gurudever Santinikatan, p.13 (SS)
(The Indian mind has been formed living all along in close contact with the wide world and its nature. Pervading all the animate plant and inanimate things of the world and having been identified with them intimately India maintains her own innate spontaneous nature. In the circumstances, it is better to let the boys play under the open sky particularly when it becomes a field of activities of the sunshine and the cloud and the centres of emotions of the boys are vivacious and all the powers of the sense organs are full of vigour do not please deprive them from embracing the sublime Omnipresent. Let Nature give her affectionate touch deeply on the soft-hearted and delicate mind of the child. Let all the six seasons display their appearances full of diversities before its eyes unhindered. We receive education proper at Tapovan when we are in harmony with Nature and when we become sanctified by practising self-discipline.)

It occurs to Rabindranath, the great educator that in the silence of Nature Tapovan offers such a fresh and congenial environment to the little learner that its impact goes deep into the subconscious layer of his mind and the accumulated feelings becomes more powerful than that of the surface consciousness. As a matter of fact such a system helps one to attain self-realization as well by
repelling the blind inclination of the instinctive mind. Let us listen to what Rabindranath says in this regard –

*Children have their active sub-conscious mind which, like the tree, has the power to gather its food from the surrounding atmosphere. For them the atmosphere is a great deal more important than rules and method, building appliance, class-teaching and text-books. The earth has her mass of substance in her land and water. But, if I may be allowed figurative language, she finds her inspiration of freedom, the stimulation of her life, from her atmosphere …. I tried to create an atmosphere in my institution, giving it the principal place in our programme of teaching (A Poet’s School)*\(^{122}\).

The macro view of the seer poet has again been reflected in the following words –

*(The world around and the wisdom within – both of them are manifestations of the same omnipotent source. When I come to take notice of my relation with the wide world as well as the ever-blissful Omniscient*

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122 Sarkar, Prafulla Kumar, Gurudever Santinikatan, p.18 (SS)
123 Rabindrarachanabali, Chaturdaskhanda (Prabandha, Dharma), p.591 (PS)
I feel deeply a genuine bond and I also find an opportunity for making myself free from narrowness, fear and grief.)

Rabindranath is equally aware that the phenomenal world always undergoes changes progressively whereas the spiritual entity is eternal –

आध्यात्मिकताइ मानुषेर सकल शक्तिर केन्द्रित, केनना ताहा आत्मारेश शक्ति। परिपूर्णताइ ताहार स्वतः।⁸

(Spirituality is the source of all human faculties for it belongs to the soul.

The state of being replete is its original nature.)

He points out that the dynamic force of the spirit has to be practised right from the tender age of man for it awakens man and helps him to cling to the true truth. The system of education that Rabindranath strives to introduce at Santiniketan is to give opportunity to the young learners to grow in the pure light of higher consciousness of the spirit and attain knowledge along the swift-revealing steps. Rabindranath, the great seer-poet realizes that the system of education that prevails in the Rishis’s Tapovan is a unique system of education and without which the desired result cannot be had. When one receives wealth of true knowledge from Rishis or a saintly character seated in the heart of a wonderful environment of Nature and especially when through a close tie of relationship between the teacher and the taught education not only becomes

124 Sarkar, Prafulla Kumar, Gurudever Santinikatan, p.21 (SS)
meaningful but it also gains momentum. Such a system equally helps to promote the urge for learning in the minds of the young learners. Regarding the thirst for learning the Upanishads also hold the same view. In this connection Kireet Joshi remarks –

The natural setting of the Āshrams and Gurukulas in the open forest, where nature could be an intimate friend and companion, necessitated the cultivation of the powers of inner communion, imagination and natural delight\textsuperscript{125}.

Rabindranath, the seer-teacher is aware that the Rishis of the Upanishads who set up Tapovan for imparting lessons to the young learners have a broader and comprehensive view of human life and as they are found to inspire to attain the inner truths of the evolving beings they try not only to help retaining the subtler and higher faculties of the learners but also pave the way for their positive growth and preserve all such things from debasing and perversion and decay. The great poet is highly impressed and becomes drawn towards the concept of totality and the relevant measures to be taken at the very outset of life’s journey and to him it is an essential thing to be accomplished at the right moment. Of course, Rabindranath is on the alert. To him it is clear through the passage of time that the mental frame of man has undergone a dynamic change and in the

\textsuperscript{125} Joshi, Kireet, The Good Teacher and the Good Pupil, p.32 (SS)
circumstances the Tapovan (hermitage) type of centre of learning may not be acceptable to the contemporary man. Our poet is not a poet of the ordinary sense. He is a world poet and he is capable of feeling the throb of the heart centre of the mankind. So he does not totally copy the ancient type of Tapovan when he sets up a centre of learning at Santiniketan. But the importance of the fundamental object of the Rishis for the furtherance of the human consciousness among the young learners has been kept in his view all through along with thwarting the lower instincts that usually debase higher values of life. The poet is a worshipper of the true truth. So the fundamental idea contained in the Upanishadic system of education cannot be set aside by our poet. To the world poet every bit of positive idea that might help the manifestation of the higher faculties of man whether it belongs to the ancient school or to the modern whether in this country or abroad he becomes at once interested in it and tries to make use of it without any hesitation.

*The spirit of Tapovan in the purity of its original shape would be a fantastic anachronism in the present age. Therefore in order to be real, it must find its reincarnation under modern conditions of life and be the same in truth, not merely identical in fact*\(^{126}\).

\(^{126}\) A Poet’s school (PS)
Hence, the model used at Santiniketan by Rabindranath regarding the type of the environment of the school bears testimony to the fact that it has on it great impact of the Tapovan of the Upanishads. Another feature of the education system that prevailed in the Tapovans in the age of the Upanishads makes Rabindranath also interested tremendously. It is on the stress of meditation which enables every learner to have contact with the transcendental source regularly. The poet realizes that the advantage of such a system is that if it is carried on unceasingly it opens before the learner a channel of psychic light that elevates him to a level of a higher consciousness through self opening. As the world teacher is greatly moved by the system of meditation that was practised by the learners in the Tapovan with great enthusiasm he introduces Dhyana or meditation in the curriculum of the school programme of his time –

127 Rabindrarachanabali, Chaturdaskhanda (Prabandha, Dharma), p.590 (PS)

(We meditate upon that power of the Supreme Being which is evident in the world of creation. We have to realise once that from the same source
the huge universe is being radiated this moment as well as every moment at the same time.)

4.5. **Brahmacharya (ব্রাহ্মচর্য) (Privation in education)**

Rabindranath strongly approves of privation in education. A learner has to face sufferings and uncertainties of various kinds – he should always remember that he has to strive hard and proceed by removing problems after problems. He must be ready to believe ‘come foul come storm, must I go’. He will have to undertake a long journey and cross many a hurdle and reach a position of seeing truths through experience. The world poet reminds: ‘নাযামাল্পা বলহীনে লম্বা’. He means that the learner through the sufferings and ordeals has to attain purity.

Regarding self-restraint and discipline Rabindranath refers to the ideas of the ancient system of Brahmacharya –

বালকদিগের অধ্যায়ের কাল একটি রূপকামনের কাল। মনুষ্যতুল্য স্বার্থ নাহ, পরমার্থ, ইহা আমাদের পিতামহেরা জানিতেন। এই মনুষ্যতুল্যের ভিত্তি যে শিক্ষা তাহাকে তাহারা ব্রাহ্মচর্যত বলিতেন। ব্রহ্মচর্যতে ছাত্রদিগকে কাঠিন্য অভ্যাস করিতে হইবে।

*The period of time meant for the boys undergoing academic courses is also the time for practising austere endeavours to observe and fulfil vow. The act of attaining humanity is surely not meant for satisfaction of one’s own individual’s interest only – it is also for realising the greatest reality*
of which our fore-fathers were aware of. The course of training which happens to be the basis of attaining humanity was termed Brahmacharyabrata by them. The trainees had to practice severe austerities.)

Here Rabindranath has used the term ‘पितामहरा’. Surely by ‘पितामहरा’ he does not mean our forefathers of two three generations before, there is no doubt in it that he refers to the ancient Rishis of the Upanishadic age who set up Tapovan and carried on the man-making mission through the system of Brahmacharya and other disciplines in this land of ours.

Almost all the Upanishads have laid emphasis on practising Tapas in every stage of human life. Brihadaranyaka Upanishad\(^{128}\) says that the learner is required to practice Tapas by increasing privations of an ascetic life and only then\(^{129}\) he can attain perfect knowledge. Kireet Joshi in his “Taittiriya Upanishad” reviews –

\[\text{The process of concentration is a psychological process; it involves no rituals or ceremonies, and it is free from any doctrines of religion. The cultivation of the powers of concentration is independent of any religious activity necessitating faith, belief or religious prescriptions. The process}\]

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128 Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, II.4 (PS)
129 Chāndogya Upanishad, IV.10 (PS), Taittiriya Upanishad, I.9, (PS), Prasna Upanishad, I.10 (PS) & Mundaka Upanishad, I.2.11 (PS)
of concentration can be scientifically experimented with, and if the Object of Knowledge on which concentration is employed is that which transcends the body, life and mind and purely by a process of concentration, ending in knowledge and illumination\textsuperscript{130}.

The world poet realizes that to keep human nature transparent and positive the little learner is in need of overcoming perversion\textsuperscript{131}. In support of this view Sunil Chandra Sarkar has pointed out that the basis of such a view of Gurudeb has been taken from the similar ideas of the Upanishads –


\begin{quote}
শিক্ষাচিত্র প্রাচীনতম নিদর্শন খুজতে হলে অবশাই চলে যেতে হয় উপনিষদে ...... মানুষের ব্যক্তিত্বের সমস্ত দিক, .... এসবকিছুই তাকে হিসাবের মধ্যে রাখতে হবে।\textsuperscript{132}
\end{quote}

(With a view to trace the oldest instance of educational thoughts one is have to go back to the Upanishads ... one will have to take into account of all the aspects of personality of the individual man.)

Sri Prafulla Chandra Sarkar’s view in this regard has been stated below –


\begin{quote}
কেননা তিনি জানতেন মানুষের সকল শিক্ষারই মূলে সংযমের শিক্ষাসাধন।\textsuperscript{133}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{130} Joshi, Kireet, Taittiriya Upanishad, p.96 (PS)
\textsuperscript{131} Elmhirst, L.K., Pioneer in Education Pioneer in Education – Rabindranath Tagore (SS)
\textsuperscript{132} Sarkar, Sri Sunil Chandra, Rabindranath Srikshadrashan O Sadhana, p.1 (SS)
\textsuperscript{133} Sarkar, Prafulla Kumar, Gurudever Santinikatan, p.41 (SS)
(For he was aware that self-disciplined austere endeavour is at the root of all type of education.)

In the following words Sri Prafulla Chandra Sarkar in his tome ‘Gurudeveb Santiniketan’ once again refers to the discipline of the Brahmacharya system of ancient India and categorically says that it is the only basis of attaining humanity and it ought to be practised at Santiniketan as well\textsuperscript{134}.

Rabindranath believes that one can acquire inner qualities of one’s being by getting in touch with one’s inner light for which the practice of Brahmacharya can help him a lot –

(If the inclinations and desires cannot be brought under control equilibrium of mind cannot also be achieved. So perversion arises in perception. For this one must undergo a training of austere endeavour of the Brahmacharya discipline.)

The seer poet Rabindranath again and again reiterates the aims and objectives of Brahmacharya which is essential for the young learners for keeping them free from artificialities, luxuries and all that –

\textsuperscript{134} Sarkar, Prafulla Kumar, Gurudever Santinikatan, p.41 (SS)
\textsuperscript{135} Rabindrarachanabali, Chaturdaskhanda (Prabandha, Siksha), p.360 (PS)
Right from the outset of one’s life it is essentially necessary to keep one’s nature in the normal state by thwarting all sorts of perversions. Brahmacharya aims at keeping the newly growing stage of humanity calm by doing away with the untimely performances of one’s nature as well as indulging in violent excitement.

Preparation for keeping the mind and instincts pure from the beginning of the academic career as it is found in the cases of disciples of the ancient Tapovan is of great importance to the great educator, Rabindranath. He says –

In our centre of learning the adroitness of all the sense-organs including the mind must be practised in all its activities and this should be considered as a serious duty of the arduous training.

136 Rabindrarachanabali, Dwadaskhanda, p.300 (PS)
137 Ibid. Chaturdaskhanda (Prabandha, Siksha), p.416 (PS)
To the poet ethics is no substitute for Brahmacharya. He points out—

(Nowadays there has been unnecessary outbreak of moral instructions instead of Brahmacharya. Ethical impertinence spoils prudence and tender feelings of the innate normal qualities.)

Without practising Brahmacharya, nay; without meditation intuitive knowledge and the knowledge of the higher mind cannot be had. That is why Rabindranath states—

(The impediments caused by passion stand on the way to austere endeavour for higher consciousness. In view of this self-discipline of the Brahmacharya training is needed to make one’s consciousness free from the hindrances.)

In this context the poet also reminds us—

__________________________________________
138 Siksha, Rabindranath Tagore, p.43 (PS)
139 Ibid. p.96 (PS)
(The diversity in man knows no bounds. He does not erect himself straight
towards the haven like a fan-palm tree, on the other hand, he spread him
in unnumbered branches as it is found in the case of a banyan tree.)

Considering the problems that the young learners have to face Sri Bijan Bihari
Bhattacharya gives us to know that –

... Hence, having the ancient practice regarding the observance of
Brahmacharya re-installed Rabindranath moved forward ... to him
Brahmacharya was an imperative.

Sri Bijan Bihari Bhattacharya further says –

(Rabindranth is so much drawn towards the ideals of Tapovan that he
himself resolves to set up Tapovan type of Vidyālay at Santiniketan.)

In ancient India Gurukul happens to be the centre of learning and here every
intending pupil right from his tender age has to live with a guru or a teacher for a

140 Siksha, Rabindranath Tagore, p.96 (PS)
141 Bhattacharya, Bijan Bihari, Sikshacharya Vivekananda O Rabindranath, Chintanayak-
Vivekananda, p.830 (SS)
142 Ibid. p.401 (SS)
considerable or reasonable period of time to undergo training and practise Brahmacharya (ब्राह्मचर्य) or observe celibacy along with hard labour and physical, intellectual and moral exercise with a view to attaining pure knowledge and true truth. As Satyakama (सत्यकाम)\textsuperscript{143} appears before the seer-teacher Rishi Goutam the latter customarily wants to know all about the candidate’s heritage - ब्राह्मचर्य भवति विश्वामि कि गोष्टी न्यायमस्मीति\textsuperscript{144}. Satyakama (सत्यकाम) makes a clean breast of himself and he gives the Rishi to know all about his family background. He points out that he knows nothing about his father, nor does his mother know anything regarding the antecedents of his father. He relates that his mother is a maid-servant and she has to serve different families regularly. He also points out boldly and unhesitatingly that to him his mother is an incarnation of truth – pure and simple and regarding his inclination in respect of such a venture on his part he has derived inspiration all along from his mother Jabala. However in the next place, Satyakama (सत्यकाम) surrenders to Rishi Goutam and humbly expresses his whole-hearted inclination for undergoing the training course under his (Rishi Goutam) guidance. He further adds that he is quite aware that the gurukula system demands staying with the guru and practising Brahmacharya or celibacy and the question of comfort or relaxation during the course of training is never

\textsuperscript{143} Chhândogya Upanishad, 4.4.1 (PS)

\textsuperscript{144} Ibid. (PS)
taken into consideration. In the circumstances, once again he with a resolute mind submits his candidature as he sincerely prefers to opt for the training under the great guru. Although the statement made by Satyakama (सत्यकाम) does not bear any testimony or proof that he is a Brahmin by birth Rishi Goutam still accepts his candidature as he has been fully satisfied with the straightforwardness and innocence of Satyakama (सत्यकाम). By the grace of the Almighty Satyakama (सत्यकाम) also attains Brahmavidyā with flying colours after carrying on a rigorous training sincerely under the able guidance of his great guru.

Among other things the disciples of the Tapovan are used to chant Gayatri Mantra along with the practice of Brahmacharya and it happens to be a regular feature with them. Rabindranath also tries to bring home to the students the ideals contained in the Gayatri mantra and Brahmacharya and inculcate the essence of these ideas in them\footnote{145 Rabindrarachanabali, Chaturdaskhanda (Prabandha, Dharma), p.590 (PS)}.

For a comprehensive growth of the young learners in his Brahmacharya Vidyālaya at Santiniketan Rabindranath lays stress not only on the regular exercise of body and mind but also the exercise of the spirit through Dhyana or meditation. He says –
(With a view to attaining success as well as power of the body and mind he laid stress on performing some of the scheduled daily-duties. Besides, he preferred the practice of meditation on Gayatri Mantra ‘भूर्भुव भव’ - Vedic incantation at prayer)

Kireet Joshi in his “Taittiriya Upanishad” discusses about the relevance of Gayatri in this formative stage of life –

*Prayer of Vishwamitra is the famous Gayatri mantra which is based on the secret knowledge of the process of concentration and the methods by which concentration can be achieved on the object of knowledge in order that the contents, powers and states of knowledge concerning that object become manifest and can be possessed or realised by the seeker.*

As Rabindranath pays immense importance to one’s making contact with the Transcendental force with great conviction he himself comes forward to explain and convey the idea contained in the *Gayatri* mantra to the students a number of times and this is why he asks some of the teachers of Santiniketan to see that the

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146 Rabindrarachanabali, Chaturdaskhanda (Pabandha, Dharma), p.590 (PS)
147 Joshi, Kireet, Taittiriya Upanishad, p.95 (SS)
pupils of this centre of education carry on exercise of the *Gayatri* mantra meticulously, sincerely and devotedly.

For this he prefers to build a close and intimate tie of relationship between the teacher & the taught and in leisurely hours he advises the teachers to chant *Gayatri* mantra before Students & hold discussion with them regarding the inner significance of the mantra –

ছাত্রদিগকে গায়ত্রীমন্ত্র মুখ্ত করাইয়া বুকাইয়া দেওয়া হইয়া থাকে।

*(After having the learners inspired to get by heart Gayatri Mantra - Vedic incantation at prayer, its significance is also made clear to them by dint of explanation.)*

Kireet Joshi further opines that –

*It is on account of the method of concentration which has been emphasised in the Upanishad as a process of education that today, when we are looking for methods of spiritual education, which are free from various prescriptions of religious practices, the relevance of the Upanishads becomes more direct*148.

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148 Joshi, Kireet, Taittiriya Upanishad, p.96 *(PS)*
In the Upanishadic system of education\textsuperscript{149} the guru offers the degrees to the students and in his convocation address points out the essence of the guiding principles that may lead them to attain higher life such as –

- One must always speak the truth and one has to take the right path and one has to always maintain justified attitude in one’s life and maintain the same regarding others. While carrying on studies one must not idle away time – सत्यं वद। धर्मं चर। स्थायित्वायाम् मा प्रमद।\textsuperscript{150}

- One has to look upon his teachers, parents, and guests as gods – मातृदेवो भव। पितृदेवो भव। आचार्यदेवो भव। अतिथिदेवो भव।\textsuperscript{151}.

- The learner is required to perform actions that are compatible with real knowledge and wealfare of the society. One must not take part in those actions which oppose the fundamental principles of one’s learning – यान्यनवधानि कर्माणि। तानि सेवित्वानि। नो इतराणि\textsuperscript{152}.

- The learner must practise good conduct. The learner has also to pay respect and homage to a true teacher and should always honour him by offering a

\textsuperscript{149} Taittiriya Upanishad, 1.11 (PS)  
\textsuperscript{150} Ibid. (PS)  
\textsuperscript{151} Ibid. (PS)  
\textsuperscript{152} Ibid. (PS)
The learner has to accept such advices and treat them as final commands and fundamental teachings. The learner has now to go back and observe the instructions and lead life accordingly – एवं आदेश। एवं उपदेश। एवंदुःशसनम्। एवमुपासितव्यम्।

By Aksharabrahma we mean nothing but satyam and without any change whatsoever it continues its existence with all its forms and characteristics – सत्यं ज्ञानम्। अनन्तं ब्रह्म।

Every bit of thing in the universe which remains alive and sustained issues forth from the blissful Paramatma and it loses its separate existence when it flows back to the blissful Paramatma – आनन्दाद्भाय खल्लिमानि भूतानि जायन्ते।

Rabindranath Tagore also takes into account the essences of these instructions of the Upanishadic education in his own light and he recommends them for implementation by the students of the Brahmacharya Vidyālaya at

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153 Taittiriya Upanishad, 1.11 (PS)
154 Ibid. (PS)
155 Taittiriya Upanishad, 2.1 (PS)
156 Ibid. 3.6 (PS)
Santiniketan maintaining regularity all through in their daily life with all sincerity of purpose and not turning it to a mechanical drilling –

- During celibacy pupil has to do away with attachment to affluence and all that and go through the life process practising simplicity, and innocence even if it is rigorous and problematic –

(While observing Brahmacharya-Brata severity or firmness has to be practiced and hopishness as well as insolence from wealth must be done away with.)

- It is also diserable that such a student is required to develop certain subtler qualities and human values that reflect in their behavioural life for their own transparency in thoughts and customs as well as their attitudes towards others in the society –

(Secondly, comes the question of the zealous observance of self-discipline. All kinds of the rules of conduct concerning cleanliness and

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157 Rabindrarachanabali, Chaturdaskhanda (Prabandha, Dharma), p.548 (PS)
158 Ibid. (PS)
sanctity have to be essentially followed with all earnestness and firmness whether it is standing up or sitting down or participating in games or taking bath or partaking of meals.)

- Especially it is expected that the relationship between the teacher and the taught is maintained all through with mutual regard, devotion and respect for each other and their courteous behaviour ultimately develop into an ideal thing for all concerned –

(And thirdly, it is to follow with profound admiration as well as devotion. The learners are supposed to have unquestioned reverential disposition of mind towards their teachers. It is desirable that the learners pay due respects to their teachers by offering salutation to them everyday with profound admiration. It is expected that the teachers equally exchange their wishes with each other. It is also desirable that such polite reciprocal courtesies remain alive as an ideal before the taught.)

159 Rabindrarachanabali, Chaturdaskhanda (Prabandha, Dharma), p.548 (PS)
4.6. Conclusion:

Thus, we find an attempt is being made by the poet to introduce both outward features as well as features of the central being from the *Tapovan* school of the age of the Upanishad – of course, making some changes here and there for incorporating them in the contemporary world. There is no denying that the influence of the seer poets of the Upanishads on Rabindranath in the matter of making programme of the education system at Santiniketan is surely a thing of great significance but the seer poet in Rabindranath executes some such programmes in his own style suiting to the conditions of the time and place.