CHAPTER I

THE MAIN GOAL OF MORAL TRAINING

CHARACTER BUILDING

In ancient India the main aim of moral education was self-realisation or the acquisition of direct knowledge of the absolute. Though to all appearances it seems to be something unattainable or unnecessary in our worldly life such an environment was created in the different centres of learning forming part and parcel of Indian culture and civilisation that no student was carried away by the lure of worldly pleasures and forgot his own self. On the contrary such an environment prevailed there that the students became averse to worldly pleasures and devoted their whole mind and energy to the realisation of their own selves.

These centres of learning were often thatched cottages with an extensive stretch of verdant field lying in front with a sprinkling of shady trees standing
here and there. In the shade of these trees
the teachers taught their students and the
students learnt what they were taught in
these open air classes. In this picturesque
surroundings full of natural beauty man's
outlook became wide and his mind more liberal.
It will not be out of place to mention in this
connection, that Rabindranath, the prince of
poets followed this ideal at Santiniketan.

In fact the system of man's education
in those days was itself like a great sacrifice
(yajna). The high priest of this yajna was
the acharya (the head teacher). The true
meanings of the word Acharya, Upadhyaya, guru
have been given as follows: one who is well-
versed in all the Shastras and strictly follows
their tenets in one's life is Acharya. The
next in rank is Upadhyaya and ordinary teachers
were called gurus. Still in this vast system
of education all had responsible work to do.
Acharyas were not satisfied merely with
teaching their students. They kept an eye
on the students' daily activities from dawn
to dusk and after that to the hour of their
retirement to bed at night according to the rules laid down in the shastras. For this reason students were called Anteshri which means one living always close at hand. Students had to rise from their bed long before the sunrise. After making their morning ablutions and brushing their teeth they had to bathe. After taking their morning bath they had to make offerings to the sacrificial fire preserved and maintained in hermitages. This practice had to be strictly followed. Then the students had to wear a piece of cloth dyed with red ochre and throw twigs dipped in clarified butter as offerings into the fire and chant Vedic Mantras (incantations). The whole atmosphere of the hermitage was filled with sweet fragrance of the burning twigs smeared with clarified butter. The hymn chanted in praise on the fire-god ran thus: "Oh, God of fire, Give unto me vigour and strength, preserve my health and life and make my words, thoughts and senses pure and strong."
After chanting this prayer they had to worship the Sun-God standing before the rising sun. Vedic Mantras had to be chanted in a sonorous voice. In these mantras there was a prayer:

"Oh, Sun you are the soul of this animate and inanimate world. You rise to reveal everything to our eyes. Let me have power to see for hundred years, live for hundred years, have power to hear for hundred years and let me also have power of speech for hundred years. Let me not be poor and lowly and give me a long life of more than hundred years."

Fire, Sun, Water and other material substances and objects that sustain life in this world are not non-living substances. They also pulsate with life, such was the genius of ancient India. By worshipping the fire-god the disciples felt that they had become one with the fire-god and a new energy and vigour permeated through their bodies. They became sound in life and limb by inhaling the fragrant smoke containing minute
particles of clarified butter offered to
the sacrificial fire. The students had some
portion of the energy that this helio-centric
world derives from the Sun. The joy that they
felt in a uttering enthusiastically the Vedic
mantras in a melodious voice with proper intona-
tion and accentuation is unparalleled. With
this system of invocation and prayer moral
training was interlaced through and through
in such a way that the students were not in
the least annoyed or bored rather they felt
an attraction to it. This was the practical
way of imparting moral training.

In modern times we speak of ultra
violet rays of the sun. The sages of those
days made the bodies and mind sound by
exposing the body to the ultra violet light
of the Sun. After finishing the morning
prayer and the milking of the cows, the
disciples led them to the pasture land in
accordance with the usual practice. After
being lead to the verdant grassy pasture
field they were let loose to graze and the
disciples came back to hermitage to begin
their lessons. Sometimes when the lessons
were over the students were engaged in
attending cows.
Leading the cows to the pastureland to graze and gathering twigs were the responsibilities of the students. This served the purpose of the physical exercise and morning walk. This was therefore conducive to health. There was an arrangement for serving midday meal to the students at the hermitage. It has been mentioned in many places that sufficient quantities of food were served. Bullocks and Brahmacharis have their desires fulfilled by having a hearty meal. The principal items of their food were milk, melted clarified butter and fruits and roots. Items of food were chosen after careful consideration. Wine, fish and meat were banned lest these should create an excitement in the body, a craving for sensual gratification. Particular care was taken so that this restriction might be observed by the students and not be violated in any way. Students went a begging for alms at noon. Whatever they got by begging was handed over to the preceptor. The preceptor accepted that and had it cooked by his wife and fed the students on the food so prepared.
Sufficient quantities of nutritious food nourished their bodies and their minds were purified by their taking only permissible food. The Upanishads say "If any food is consumed, it is converted into stool, flesh and mind. Mind is the product of food or in other words mind is formed of minute parts of the kind of food that is taken." Thus a pious mind is formed by taking pious food and retentive power is generated by the moral excellence attained. Similarly even if water is drunk it is converted into three things (1) Urine, (2) Blood and (3) Life itself. So the pious drink the water specially of a flowing stream. The water of the Ganges and Jamuna and other rivers are holy. The use of this holy water augments the soul force. It is for this reason that Brehmcharis had to gather water from rivers and tanks. By taking only pious food and drink they purified their body and mind and by drinking only holy water they acquired longevity and thus could

* Chhend. Upa. V Khand 1, 2.
attain salvation by constant meditation. Sleeping during day time was strictly forbidden to the Brahmacharis.

The true end of education then was to control the mind and well-organise all mental activities of students along with cultivation of learning. The word "upasana" (meditation) has already been mentioned. Now the true meaning of this word will be explained to the students. The root meaning of the word "upasana" is "sitting near" ("upa" means near and "asana" means "sitting"). The true meaning of the word upasana is to conceive in the mind the deity to be meditated on or the supreme being. The difference between knowledge and meditation is that in the case of knowledge there is an object on which knowledge centres and this knowledge disappears as soon as the object matters are revealed; whereas in the case upasana (meditation) the subject of meditation is personal god (god having all the attributes and powers). This mental
attitude will remain ingrained in one's nature in continuity. Knowledge centres on an external object whereas meditation (upasana) centres on an internal process of thought. When this thought process, this contemplation becomes concentrated one enjoys perfect bliss. This bliss attracts the mind of a Brahmachari. Then the Brahmachari disciple considered the pleasure derived from external worldly enjoyment to be something trivial. This experience of bliss is the greatest achievement in life. The next higher stage is the realisation of the absolute.

Man hankers after mental pleasure. This joy or pleasure gives birth to living beings but this joy is trivial. The Supreme joy is the realisation of the absolute. Man's life reaches its perfection when man has a taste of that Supreme joy of realisation of the absolute. In those days many Brahmachari disciples did not enter domestic life. Even Gargi and Maitreyi, the two learned wives of sage Yajnavalkya refused to take any share of their husband's properties.
when at the time of renouncing the world, he told them to divide all that he had between them. The Gargi said in reply, "what shall I do with what will not give me eternal bliss". Men considered this craving for bliss as their greatest achievement in life. One who had an experience of this mental joy considered one's life blessed. In this way when man realised his own self by inward contemplation, his purpose in life was completely changed. A Brahmachari entered the stage of renunciation of worldly life direct from the first stage namely Brahmacharya stage of life and this is also still done.

The students were inspired with higher thoughts when their mind and body were in unison in this way and they became indifferent to worldly pleasures and ultimately felt an aversion to it. Not that all the students had an inclination to rise to a higher plane but if a man practises self-control and has a regulated life he is bound to experience unalloyed mental peace and contentment. An irresistible hankering for...
earthly enjoyments agitates the mind of a man. If a moral code is interlinked with education, man's mind is guided accordingly. There were other ways of controlling one's mind. At the time of meditation students had to sit on a seat. The sitting posture was to keep the spine and the body erect and the neck straight and to learn to practise pranayama or breath control by withholding breath by way of religious austerity. By practising pranayama men attained longevity of life and mental steadiness. He had to draw on the life breath through the nostrils and holding that breath for some time had to exhale that breath slowly. This peculiar sitting posture, pranayama and meditation were the means of forming the character of the students. They also felt a thrill of joy slowly if they could manage to concentrate their mind for sometime on the object of their contemplation.

The principal aim of the formation of one's character was that his mind might be free from all sorts of sensual cravings
and this freedom from such cravings would enable him to control himself. Our ten senses are always dragging us towards external things for enjoyment. Eyes (organs of the sense of sight), ears (organs of the sense of hearing), nose (organ of smell), tongue (organ of taste), skin (sense of touch), organs of speech, limbs (organs of movement), breathing organs, and reproductive organs—these ten senses are attached by external objects and these senses again are always eager to enjoy earthly pleasures. It is the mind which is the prime mover of the sensual activities and thoughts, is controlled by the soul. On account of the prejudices formed in the previous birth, many mundane desires arise in the soul. In spite of all these prejudices existing in the mind of one and ingrained in one's nature, can be resisted to a considerable extent, if one practises self-control but while doing so one must be sincere. It is then that one's mind becomes somewhat steady. This mental steadiness is desirable. The social environment in those
The calm and serene beauty of nature helped much in directing the mind of a man towards a peaceful life. In the midst of this beauty and solemnity of nature, an unruffled state of the mind was generated. So this Brahmachari student community of those days could acquire strength of character. Brahmachariya was practised only for the formation of one's character. As a result of this practice of Brahmachariya, the mind and body of men became strong. The blossoming of the human traits in man is the characteristics of a man of character. A man of character must possess courage to defend himself and desire and ability to save others from dangers, sympathy for his country and countrymen and gratitude should be inborn. The great virtue of ever remembering the good done by others has been highly eulogised in the shastras. The preceptor imparts training to his disciple. Having received that training, the disciple occupies the position of the preceptor and acquires the capability of doing various things. It is for this reason that the shastras say "If the teacher teaches one
only a single letter there is nothing in this world with which one can repay that debt". In previously mentioned moral precept the sayings Pitrdevo Bhava (Respect your father) Matrdevo Bhava (Respect your mother) Acaryadevo Bhavo (Respect your preceptor), etc. that we meet with, are meant for the development of the great virtue of gratitude. Men of character only are adored in this world and their memory remains ever enshrined in the hearts of the people. The greatmen of India who have been always revered since the days of yore did various good deeds in this world by virtue of their uncommon strength of character. So formation of character is the prime necessity for making one a man in the true sense of the term. The principal traits of character are fraternal love, sympathy, satisfaction and patience and forgiveness. Fraternal love means the acquisition of the mentality to see the people of the

Taittiriya Upanishad, II:14.
whole world with feelings of brotherly love that soothes the hearts. Sympathy means the spontaneous desire to mitigate the sufferings and distress of others. Satisfaction means to be always in a blissful mood and patience and forgiveness means to forgive others and to bear patiently the misdeeds of others without any retaliation. If a Brahmachari acquires all these virtues he will be really a man in the strict sense of the term by attaining manliness.
Healthy Body and Healthy Mind are the Very Basis of Good Character

Sound mind in a sound body generates the firmness of one's character. The true import of the word character is that quality of one's mind which enables one to ignore all difficulties that stand in one's way and continue the work which to one's mind is conducive to one's good. This is an important trait of one's character. The sages of ancient India understood that one's soul is so to say the charioteer, the passions and the instinctive urges are the horses and the mind the bridle and the body in which these passions abide is the ground. So if the mind is serene one can easily realise God which is the ultimate goal of one's life. The object of the lives of Brahmachary students was the realisation of God. To reach that goal of life one

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** Ibid. 6.
must have zeal and the firmness of one's character which is at the root of this zeal. 
An instance of this fervent zeal has been given in a short narrative in the Mahabharata. Dronacharyya was training the Kaurava and the Pandava boys in the art of using various weapons properly. He had placed a wooden bird on a tree and told every boy to cut off the head of the wooden bird by shooting an arrow at it. He then told them to take a precise aim. He first asked Yudhistir if he could clearly see him as well as Krishna and others. Yudhistir said in reply, "Yes, Sir, I see everybody. Dronacharyya, thereupon told Yuddisthir to step aside when Duryodhan, Dhima and others fixed arrows to their bows to take aim. Dronacharyya asked each of them the same question, "What do you see". All of them said that they were seeing everybody but as soon as Arjuna came forward, Dronacharyya asked him that very question. At once came out his reply, "I am seeing only that artificial bird". Dronacharyya then asked Arjuna to repeat what he had
said. Arjuna said that he could see only the head of the bird and then taking an accurate aim he cut off the head of the bird (Mahabharata Adi Parva).

From this instance of zeal we know that an inner soul power is needed to control one's mind and to concentrate it upon one object. To acquire that inner soul power one must have firmness in one's character.

In order that this object of life may be fulfilled, the disciples in ancient India had to pass their days in strict discipline. We also learn that even in modern times in the west the iron-guards had to practice austerity in life. But their purpose was to acquire ability to destroy and the purpose in the case of ancient India was how to preserve. The sole and ultimate aim of one's life was the ultimate fulfilment of one's life which is nothing but the realisation of God. Not that everybody succeeds in realising God; still if he

Mahabharata Adi Parva Chap. 13 Verses 5-8 (Bangabasi Edition).
follows this path his physical and mental aptitudes are developed. One's health is inspired if one takes food at any hour of the day and at any place of his choice. Physicians of modern times, caution people to take care of their meal time and the items of food to be consumed by them. One's mental energy is augmented if one possesses sound and robust health. So the Upanishads say that if one's food is pure all the saintly traits of one's character are developed and if that be so one's retentive power also becomes strong. Development of retentive power in students is desirable. For that purpose moral character must be formed. From the conversation between Kaka and Dabiani in the Mahabharata it is found that even the eagerness of Dabiani and her physical attraction could not deviate Kaka from his vow of Brahmajya (austere and celebrate life). This strength of mind is needed for the preservation of one's character Kalidasa, the famous
poet has said, "Preservation of health is the first step to tread the path of self realisation."

So there was provision for the supply of proper nourishment to the students in order that their body might develop and become sound. So fruits and roots, milk and clarified butter were kept in the hermitage. In those days plenty of wild rice grew without any cultivation and the grains of rice were collected by the preceptors while living in the hermitage and they fed the students and also their dependants with that. Fodder grew in plenty in the field. The cows and buffalos gave plenty of milk being well-nourished by feeding on that fodder. It has been mentioned before that tending of cattle was one of the duties of students. This tending of cattle served as a sort of physical exercise to them. Though this has already been discussed this cannot but be repeated during the discussion on the formation of one's character as sound.

Kumara, Cante V.
health and mental serenity only can develop one's character. A person who has bodily weakness and a wavering mind and is sceptic cannot bend his energy and will to the path of truth and virtue to reach the desired goal of his life. So it is said in the Gesta that the ultimate destiny of a sceptic is his destruction. The intimate relationship between body and mind has been discussed before. The Sutras say, "Self-realisation is not possible for a weak person. So if one's mind is strong and one's character is fully developed and integrated then and then only one's religious austerities and asceticism will have their fulfilment, otherwise not. Self-realisation, or in other words, fulfilment of one's life is possible only when religious austerities become fruitful. It is said in the Yajur Veda Man expresses in words what he thinks and carry into effect by his action, whatsoever he expresses in words. "As he sows, so he reaps". It means that there is close

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Maya Atma Balpragna labhayah \* \* \* 
Mudako. III. II. 
IV. Ch. 40 Verses.

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Manu II. 3 \* 5 Verses and ChhazMo Upar 7th Adhyaya 4th Khanda.

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Manu II. 3 \* 5 Verses and ChhazMo Upar 7th Adhyaya 4th Khanda.
relationship among the four things—body, passions, mind and soul. So character building is the basis of all education. In order to build up one’s character one must observe certain rules. The observance of these rules is apparently a bit difficult but in reality where is the possibility of a pleasure seeking man to acquire knowledge. Does a real learner seek pleasure or a life of luxury. A seeker of worldly pleasures must forsake knowledge and a seeker of knowledge all worldly pleasures. One must keep aloof from a gathering of people who indulge in playing at chess or at dice or in music, vocal or instrumental or in any intoxicating drug as one avoids a serpent and one must also regard the taking of sweets as some thing akin to taking poison. He who avoids a woman regarding her as a female demon can alone acquire knowledge. Though these precepts are thought to be useless now there is no gain saying the fact that education is gradually deteriorating now from bad to worse. Many rules and precepts for observance were in vogue in ancient India in order that the six passions might not exert their baneful influence.
upon the human body. How to carry out these precepts and also how to lead a regulated life were explained to the students. It is so said in the Upanishads that if you have to be angry with anybody for doing any harm to you why should you not be enraged with that very anger which is harmful to your piety, worldly interests, your desires and also your final emancipation which are the price necessities of human life. Carnal desires, anger, greed, arrogance and malice are the six passions innate in man. The principle of true education is to train one to control these passions and keep them in check. Manu says, "one's body is purified with water, mind by resorting to the path of truth and virtue, or in other words by never deviating an inch from truth in one's speech or action. One's soul is purified by one's learning and austeres living and one's intelligence is purified by the knowledge gained."

A child receives true education by virtue of the good moral lessons he receives from his parents in his childhood and later on...
from the precepts that he receives from his preceptor at his house while a student. Now-a-days parents are callous and indifferent and the children are in contact with their teachers for a few hours only. If the ideals of the past are infused into the present system of education, the moral character of the students may be reformed and developed. Though the social environment has changed in course of time and it is not possible now to follow strictly the ancient ideals, still some changes may possibly be made.

It is noticed that in the benedictory readings in the Upanishads there is a prayer to be made by the students before the actual lessons of the day begin each day which runs thus, "May Brahma, the supreme being protect the preceptor and the disciples in the same manner and defend them from all evils, may our study be vigorous and animating and may we not envy one another." This prayer for the maintenance of an espirit de corps between the preceptor and his disciples was to be made

Sahanavavatu etc the benedictory readings in the beginnings and in the ends of Katho Tattiriya-Brahmandavatta Syetaavatara etc.
always on each day as the best way of moulding the character of students. A firm belief in the existence of a life after death in the next world or in other words other-worldliness is implanted in the minds of the learners by the story of Yama, the god of death and Naciketa in the Kathopanished. Naciketa is nothing but a mere boy who has not yet reached his adulthood. The sight of the offering of old cows made at the time of performance of a sacrifice by his father made him feel a mental agitation out of reverence. He thought, within himself "The sacrifice performed by my father would have been more fruitful if he had offered me instead of these cows". So thinking, he asked his father thrice, "To whom will you offer me, father?" His father angrily cried out, "I shall offer you to Yama". As his father expressed his desire at the place of sacrifice, Naciketa thought, "He who acts strictly according to the hints given by his father is a good son and the son who acts only on receiving a clear directive from his father is a middling son and the son who does not act despite of getting the command
of his father is a bad son. Let me therefore obey my father acting like a middling son."

With this thought in his mind he entered the mansion of Yama as one seeking hospitality. Yama was then abroad. Naciketa stayed there in the palace of Yama for three nights without a morsel of food. Yama returned. Then the counsellors of Yama counselled Yama to pay proper respect to the Brahmin guest and wait upon him. Yama greeted Naciketa by washing his feet and making offerings to him and said "Oh ! Brahmin, you have remained in my palace without food and drink for three days, I offer you therefore three boons to placate you. Do ask me for three boons one after another." Naciketa said, "Oh ! God of death, if you wish to give me three boons, the first boon that I ask of you is that my father may not cherish any feelings of anger against me. May his anxieties for me be removed from his mind and if I am sent home by you, may he recognise me as his lost son who has come back". Yama said, "In consequence of the boon given by me your father will recognise you and will regain as much affectionate to you as he had cherished feelings of affection.
again "Man goes to heaven performing sacrifices and when he reaches there, there is no fear of any attack of any disease and you too cannot hold sway over him. Those who live in that heavenly kingdom overcome all the pangs of hunger and thirst and have the strength to bear all the woes of life like grief. I want to acquire the knowledge of the principles of the sacrificial fire into which offerings are made at the time of performance of a sacrifice as a result of which every man performing the sacrifice goes to heaven and attains saintliness. This is the second boon that I want of you. Yama said, 'Oh, Haciketa I know well that eternal fire that helps one in the attainment of one's heavenly life. I am going to tell you all about it. Listen, know for certain that it is this fire that leads one to that eternal heaven. This fire is the shelter of the universe. It is enshined in the hearts of all beings'. When Yama explained to him in detail how a sacrifice was to be performed, how many bricks were required to build the altar and such other particulars regarding the performance of a Yogon (sacrifice),
Naciketa repeated his words. Quite pleased Yama again said, "I name this Fire Naciketa fire after your name on account of the manner in which you repeated my words regarding the fire. I also present you with a garland set with precious gems. He who will perform sacrifice three times with Naciketa fire according to the instructions of his parents and his preceptor will be able to realise his own self and attain bliss." Thereafter Yama reminded him of the third boon to be sought for. Naciketa then said, "Some say that soul exists even after death and some others again say that soul has no existence after death and the other world is a myth. I pray to you to state your views on this matter. This is the third boon that I want of you." Yama answered, "Oh Naciketa, Even the gods had doubts about this matter in the past. Common people do not understand well even when they hear this philosophy of the soul as this philosophy is extremely subtle and difficult to understand. Oh Naciketa pray for any other boon. Do not make this request to me again. Drop this question altogether."
Haciketa said, "Oh Yama, when even the gods have doubts and you also say that the matter is not easy to understand, still it is difficult to find one who can elucidate this matter clearly like you. I think there is no other boon that may be prayed for." Yama said, "You just pray for hundred years of life, wife and children, large herds of cattle, elephants, gold and horses. Pray for a boon for extensive land and a long life as long as you want it to be. 'O' Haciketa you may, if you like, pray for any other similar boon which seems to be desirable to you. You may pray for a long life and a lot of money to sustain your life. You will be the owner of vast tracts of land and I shall make you worthy of enjoying all the desirable worldly pleasures. Pray for that boon. Pray, as you like, for those things that are covetable and worth having but rarely to be had. Accept the boon for having women with musical instruments, and chariots and for being waited upon by these women whom men cannot easily get. Donot ask me questions on death. Haciketa said in reply, "O, Death the things to be enjoyed..."
that you spoke of are all perishable and there is doubt if they will remain fresh till tomorrow and these things to be enjoyed weakens the strength of the sense organs of mortal men. You just spoke of a long life which is also quite insignificant; so let the horses and chariots and other conveyances be in your possession and let the women also be with you. I have no need of them. Men cannot have his satisfaction with money and wealth only when I have been blessed with your presence before me. I have, in a sense, come into possession of wealth and so long you let me possess that wealth I must live up to that time. I again pray for the boon already asked for by me. Oh Death, can any person subject to inhuman, death and decay feel pleasure in having a long life in spite of his knowledge of transitoriness of physical beauty and life? pleasure derived from sports and games when coming in direct contact with a divine being enjoying immortality he gains sufficient experience in this. Since people have doubt about the existence of life after death, please explain to me the science of the philosophy
of soul that would be conducive to 'good in the life after death. Naciketa will not ask for any other boon.'

In reply Yama said, "The influence of knowledge and ignorance and egotism pervades the world. They are of opposite nature and produce quite opposite results. O! Naciketa I regard you as a seeker of knowledge since many convetable things mentioned by me could not tempt you. Those ignorant people living in the midst of ignorance and great lack of restraint of conscience have to reap the bitter fruits of their actions like a blind man led by another blind man. To those who are either childish by nature or have no conscience, knowledge of the other world does not become intelligible. They think that this world is the only one that exists and there is no world beyond this. People who have this false notion come under my control again and again. There are many people who do not like to know anything about the other world and cannot understand it even if they hear all about
As the people who can explain it are rare. People having common knowledge cannot fully realise the nature of soul even if it is explained to them by wise men. Only those who have real wisdom can alone explain it but such introspective wise men are rare. There are many debatable matters such as whether soul exists or not or whether soul is the motive force or a passive onlooker and the existence of the other world and the existence of the soul are also similarly debatable matters. No doubt arises if they are explained by a preceptor who has realised that God is inseparable from human soul. In fact this soul is more microscopic than an atom so it is beyond one's perception or guess. One cannot have the conception of the soul or God by arguments and this conception should not be effaced by reasoning. What you have wanted to know from me is more intricate so one acquires grounding on it with great difficulty. A person who is temperate overcomes all joys and sorrows by the realisation of God by deep meditation, who is none but the soul itself which is ever obvious and ever revealing and abides
in the immost recess of the bodies of all. A person, who hearing from his preceptor these tenets of philosophy that professes to enable one to attain to the knowledge of God by intuition, realises his own soul knowing for certain that this microscopic soul is something different from material substances like the body and other material things and enjoys this after self realisation. O Kaciketu I regard you as a person worthy of appreciating the true nature of the soul". Kaciketu said, "If I am really worthy of being initiated in that knowledge and if you are pleased with me, be good enough to tell me all about the matter well-known to you which is beyond the limits of time, past, present or future and quite separate from piety and impiety and actions and their consequences". Yama said in reply, "Let me say in brief what according to all the Vedas is worth having and which is accomplished by deep meditation and to attain which the ascetics practice austerities of life and total sexual abstinence. It is the word "Sum". The meaning of "Sum" is God, the supreme being. One who is well grounded in spiritual
knowledge knows that soul is neither born nor is it destroyed. It does not originate from anything nor does anything emanate from it. It is without any origin and is something immortal, everlasting, and abiding in bodies. It is not destroyed even when the body is destroyed. If the murderer thinks that he will kill his victim and the victim on his part thinks that he is going to be killed, both of them are not fully cognisant of the soul. It is more microscopic than an atom and at the same time bigger than the biggest. This soul abides in the immost recesses of the hearts of living beings. When a man who has fully controlled his desires, and come to possess placidity of his mind and passions without ever being stricken with grief then and then only he realises the greatness of the soul. The soul, though stationary still, projects itself far and wide and though inactive, it is always everywhere, who, except me, can have knowledge of the soul which has two contradictory virtues at the same time namely joyfulness and lack of joy. If one is able to comprehend that the soul, though it abides
in a perishable body has no corporeality, one possessing serenity is sure to be free from all grief. One cannot have a true conception of the soul only by listening to the exposition of shastric injunctions or by listening to the reading out of passages from the Shastras or by means of one's power of intellect. To him who seeks nothing but the knowledge of his soul the soul reveals itself. The person who is up to his eyes in sin and has no control over his passions and whose mind is always agitated cannot realize that divine essence. Only those who have concentration of mind and do not hanker after fruits of his meditation can only by means of their wise intuition have a real conception of the soul."

Thus Yama gave him a clear idea of the soul.

The real purport of this story is that the ideals of the students of ancient India were firmness and strength of character, aversion to affluence and the pleasure of sexual enjoyment. It was the duty of the
preceptor to guide the minds of the students towards the fulfilment of these ideals in their lives. The study of the Vedas of the Shastra was not the principal aim of their education. So control over their actions according to the injunction of the Shastras was also a subject matter of the training imparted to them. Backets was a young body, still his aim was to acquire the philosophy of the soul. He was able to exact from Yama what he had desired to know from him. No amount of temptation could make him waver. This is what is to be learnt from the Kathopanisad.
In ancient India it was considered compulsory for students in their student life to observe sexual abstinence and austerities of life. The real purpose for which the students were strictly enjoined to do this was to purify their minds of all carnal desires by constant meditation on the Supreme Being. Beauty, flavour, sweet fragrance, touch and musical sound - these five things always excite the five sensual organs namely eyes, tongue, nose, outer layer of the skin, and ears and the mind becomes disturbed. On account of this mental disturbance acquisition of learning is impeded. So one may have mental concentration only when one's mind is kept above these things. It is found that the true sense of the term "Brahmacharya" is the preservation and retention of semen by observance of sexual abstinence. The principal aim of the practice of Brahmacharya, i.e. sexual abstinence, is to preserve this semen which is one of the seven constituents

Hariv. Chap. Verse. 180
of the body namely serum blood, fat, flesh and bones and its nervous. This results in the development of the memory and the power to think deeply and as a result of that one gains proficiency in knowledge specially because there is mental concentration and all mental disturbances subside. The Yoga philosophy says that there are five states of the mind - (1) State of extreme excitement (2) state of infatuation in which the mind is full of ignorance and darkness and without any moral consciousness (3) State of distraction when the mind is sometimes tranquil and sometimes perturbed (4) state of concentration when one is single minded (5) and the state of the mind absorbed in deep meditation. Of these five states of the mind the state of concentration of mind and the state in which mind remains observed in deep meditation are fit for the realisation of God. If one is able to acquire concentration of mind it becomes helpful to him in the acquisition of knowledge and the realisation of God. If one observes sexual abstinence and leads an austere life.

* Yogadīrśaṇa Sutra
* Pāṇini II. Chap. Verse 190.
one should surely have concentration of mind.

So the students in India practised specially Brahmacharya i.e. total abstinence from all sexual pleasures. In order to practice Brahmacharya strictly each student had to lie on a separate bed. They had to live on restricted diet and they had to concentrate their mind on the practice of Vedic rites according to the injunctions laid down in the Vedas and also an understanding the Vedas. This mental restraint was the first step to education and training. In order that the students might get proper education there was the rule to study attentively. So long they studied, the teacher was all along present before the students to guide them in their studies and he kept an eye on the progress made by them in their studies i.e. whether they were studying with close attention or divided attention. The teacher took particular care of this in order to make the students concentrate their minds on their studies. The students had to practice Yogic exercises under the guidance of

a Manu Ch. II. 180.
their teacher for the acquisition of the power of mental restraint. Three purposes were served by this practice of Yogic exercises, namely development of the body by means of these exercises, acquisition of concentration of mind and love of games and sports inherent in the nature of adolescent boys and girls. There were three different types of Yogic exercises but of these three types, the students had to practise specially sitting in different peculiar postures adopted by Yogis. By practising to sit in different postures the students tried to acquire mental peace and calmness. Restlessness of mind hinders one from concentrating his mind on a particular matter. Generally boys who are prone to mind wandering and are fickle by nature cannot do any work well or complete the work taken by them. So if the students are taught to practise sitting in particular postures adopted by Yogis, in course of their studies, their organs of five senses such as their limbs, upper and lower, eyes, ears etc. can help them in assimilating properly, what they study. This is a sign of mental steadiness.

4 Yogadarsana II Pada Sutra 46.
IV) Restriction of Food but Food in Sufficient Quantity and Non-Indulgence in Luxury and Indolence

There was a belief current among the Hindu community in ancient times that pure food taken sharpens the intellect and if there is any defect in the food taken health as well as one's intellect is impaired. This restriction at food, specially in the case of students observing Brahmacharya, had to be followed strictly. The taking of wine, meat, eggs and any stimulant was banned. In order to observe celibacy particular care had to be taken so that there might not be any physical excitement causing seminal emission. Restriction of food to be taken. In adolescence and in youth plenty of food was prescribed, for consumption. So Swami says, "A Brahmachari (one who observes celibacy) and a bull have their desires fulfilled by taking food. It has also been mentioned in the Upanishads that during the first stage of life when one observed Brahmacharya there is prayer for being a voracious eater. The purpose of this prayer was that insufficiency of food might not
weaken the body at the time of bodily growth.

One who was a Brahmachari (i.e. who observed celibacy) had to enter domestic life, the second stage of life with robust body and the prime duty of a householder was to be the father of good healthy children or in case of he renounced the world and led his life in a forest or took to asceticism, still he had to acquire necessary strength and vigour to bear cold, heat and rain. Their idea was that Brahmag fields i.e. sexual abstinence was the very basis of their future life.

It has been pointed out before that a Brahmachari had to get up from bed four dandas (one hour and thirty-six minutes) before sunrise and after purification of the body by means of morning ablution he had to make offerings to the sacrificial fire and say his morning prayers and worship the morning sun.** He must not display any indecency in this regard. It was enjoined that one must not indulge in anything which gave ease of any intoxicant. The warmth of rays of the rising sun early in the morning

* Java Upanisad 4.
** *Mann Ch. III. verse 10
which fell on one's body could unconsciously be enjoyed when one was engaged in uttering his morning prayers. Though it was beneficial to bodily health, no youngster or youth would do anything merely for the benefit of the body. The body was merely a vehicle for their religious practices and acts of piety, but the principal aim of life was self-realisation yet the help of the body in the fulfilment of this aim is unavoidable. It was an unimportant affair to receive the warmth of the sunrays which invigorate the body. So much stress was laid on the observance of these rules of performance of their daily duties in order that the care of the body might not be the sole purpose of life of those whose principal aim should be the realisation and contemplation of God and self-realisation might be achieved along with the development of the body. The development of the body is needed for the enjoyment of worldly pleasures, whereas as the aim of education was the attainment of the ultimate goal of life which is self-realisation by giving up all worldly pleasures.

The items of food prescribed were those that were regarded as pure such as fruits and roots,
milk and clarified butter, curd, pulses, sesame, barley, autumnal rice etc. For the students fish, meat, onion, garlic, honey and wine were forbidden items of food. If there was any violation of these restrictions or any deviation from the restrictions or any deviation from the austere life of a Brahmachari there was provision for expiation by offering prayers to the sun god by uttering mantras (incantations) invoking him for the rectification of his errors. In this way, a Brahmachari had to mould his future life by leading the well-regulated and austere life of a Brahmachari. As a result of this habit of observance of strict regulations of life, the future domestic life and the ascetic life did not appear to be hard to them. This was the initial step to true education. If one indulges in luxury and worldly pleasures one's mind becomes fickle and indolent. One's body becomes insured to any way of life to which it is subjected. The teachers were always on the alert lest the students should indulge in any intoxicant or luxury. A time-table and routine of daily duties were framed in order to make the daily life of each student full of

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Manu Ch. II 177-180.
Manu Ch. II 181.
activity. They found no spare time to engage their minds in any other thought. This is going to be discussed further later on.

(V) MEMORY CULTURE BY REPEATED RECITATION OF TEXTS TO BE TAUGHT

There was a special method of impartation of education in the system of education in vogue in those days. It was development of retentive powers so the Vedic mantras (Vedic hymns of prayer) had to be repeated again and again daily. It was the solemn daily duty of each and every student to study those portions of the Vedas that he should have to keep in memory according to his capacity in order that the Vedic mantras might remain engraved in his mind. He had to practice those rites prescribed in the Vedas and appertaining to his Vedic studies that he may be able to grasp the true purpose of the mantras in stead of cursing them. Niyagita was like a lexicon of modern times. Students had to study Niyagita to understand the meaning of Vedic words. In fact as a way sharpening the memory every student
Had to repeat again and again chapters of a Veda daily. The speciality of this recitation lay in three steps:

(1) reading of each syllable separately with correct pronunciation

(2) quick reading of two syllables at a time with correct intonation and

Lastly reading of each of the three or four words of the text repeatedly and then recite them with proper pronunciation and accentuation.

On account of the repeated recitation of the same text, their retentive power was developed. Still this method is followed in different provinces of India specially in the Deccan in teaching and studying the Vedas and the sharp intelligence and extra-ordinary retentive power are noticeable among the students there. If a few words of any mantra were uttered the whole mantra following those words flashed upon their mind and the words were uttered with correct pronunciation and intonation.

* Vide Introduction to RgVeda by Sayanacarya and Pratispakhyas of different Vedas.
It must be mentioned in this connection there was a measured portion of the Texts that had to be studied with proper observance of phonetic rules i.e. clear and correct pronunciation. There were three ways of modulating one's voice namely (1) udatta (2) anusvatta and Svartit (highest pitch, lowest pitch and medium pitch). By reading the Vedas in this way, a common practice followed in the studies of the Vedas, students of the Vedas and Vedangas did not find any difficulty in memorizing the Vedic Texts on account of their reading them with proper intonation, pronunciation and modulation of voice. It should be known that pronunciation of letters is controlled by the voice of the student. When breath causes vibration of the vocal cord, it becomes articulate — voice has been divided into types in the book on phonetic rules which have been already mentioned. There is another tone named Prahlita which is similar to udatta. In order to have a deep impression regarding the modulation of voice, the prevalent practice was to move rhythmically a particular line of the chanter. Rhythical movement of the head is a common to chanters.
of the Rigveda, the Black Yajurveda and the Atharva Veda movement of the righthand among chanters of the White Yajurveda and the movement of the finger among chanters of the same Veda which was sung strictly in accordance with the rules of the science of music. The musical tone was also helpful to the students in committing the mantras to memory. As this system of teaching the Vedas in consonance with proper intonation and pronunciation of words is still in vogue, the Vedic texts are still firmly fixed in the memory of the students and so this system has not been done away with and is still in existence.

(VI) **WHOLE-TIME OCCUPATIONS - STUDYING, COLLECTING THINGS, GATHERING OF FLOWERS ETC. OFFERING MADE TO THE SACRIFICIAL FIRE.**

For the development of their character the students were brought up in such an environment that their minds might have no occasion to remain vacant. A vacant mind becomes the abode of all evil thoughts. So the minds of the students
were always kept engaged in some work, from early morning throughout the whole day till the time for retirement to bed to sleep. They had to live with their preceptor's family in his house. Rising up early in the morning they had first to do their daily duties which they were enjoined to do by their religion and after doing them they had to study the Vedas. When their study was over or before that they had to tend the sacrificial fire and present offerings to the fire. After that they had to take the cows of their preceptor to the pasture land to graze them. Letting loose the cattle in the grazing ground they had to come back to their preceptor's house to study Vedangas and Hirukta and other books for the clear comprehension of Vedic Texts. While studying them they had to practice pronunciation and intonation according to the phonetic rules. At noon there was arrangement for feeding the students in the house of their preceptor. Preceptor's wife cooked their meal and fed them. In some places the students themselves cooked
their meal and took it. Sleeping by day after taking meal was strictly forbidden.* The students had to learn their lessons or practise writing after taking meal. In the afternoon they had to bring back the cows from the grazing ground to home by leading them homewards. During the interval they had to collect wood and twigs and in the morning they had to gather flowers. At dusk the sacrificial fire had to be kindled to make offerings to the fire-god. The sweet aroma of clarified butter charred from cow's milk permeated the house and minute particles of that clarified butter purified the atmosphere of the place of study. Not only human beings but also birds and beasts became healthy by inhaling this air. After dusk cultivation of learning and composition work continued. The teacher sitting on a seat in front asked questions to each and every student on the practice of chanting the mantras studied by them and their meanings. Through the medium of these questions, and answers the teacher tested the progress of the students in their studies. If any student forgot any mantra the preceptor made

* Madiva svapath - the instruction of the preceptor at the time of thread ceremony.
an enquiry as to why it was forgotten. If any student complained against any of his fellow students and if that proved true on an enquiry made to test the veracity of that complaint, there was provision for corporal punishment of the student concerned.

Students were flogged with a piece of rope or a bamboo stick. This corporal punishment struck terror into the hearts of the students. In fact the preceptor never inflicted any severe punishment by flogging them severely. At meal time the preceptor himself and his wife remained present at the spot and fed the students contentedly. There was no facility for enjoyment of midday siesta, they engaged themselves in revising their old lessons and in writing what they had learnt. In the after-moon they had to collect water and other things according to the instruction of his preceptor. Being thus engaged in work during the whole day, from morning till the time to go to bed, they feel asleep as soon as they lay on bed and got up from bed early in the morning.
How to behave with one's teacher was also one of the subject matters of their training. While sitting before the preceptor no one was allowed to do whatever they liked. They had to wear cloth properly and had to sit cross-legged after covering their knees. It was strictly forbidden to stretch one's legs towards the preceptor. Students had to touch the feet of their preceptor before commencement of the lesson. They had to touch the left foot with the left hand and right foot with the right hand. The students had to keep standing so long the teacher did not take his seat, and they took their seats only after the preceptor had taken his seat. The students had to listen attentively and with rapt attention when the lessons were given. After the lesson had been finished the students had to make obeisance to the teacher again. They had always to obey their preceptor. That is to obey his orders. Even if the work was difficult, students did it in consideration of the fact that they knew that the orders
of the preceptor were inviolable. He who did what was to the liking of the preceptor before receiving any orders to do so from his preceptor was deemed to be a first class student. He who tried to carry out the orders of his preceptor as soon as he received it was considered a second class student. He who did not carry out such orders even on receiving them was regarded as the worst type of student. The preceptor who imparted education and training was more honoured than the student's father of whom he was born. On many occasions the preceptor engaged them in tasks difficult to perform simply to test them. The disciples too tried their level best to accomplish that task, though difficult. The preceptor too did not remain at ease after setting that task to the student on the contrary he always enquired about whether the student was in hazard while performing it.

The disciples never took their meal before the preceptor had done so. The disciples never did any thing disliked by his preceptor. A student used to sit
on a lower seat after seating his preceptor on a higher seat. Generally the student received his education free. There was a convention of payment of an honorarium to the preceptor after his education had been finished. In consideration of the pecuniary condition of the student, service rendered to his preceptor by him was regarded as the honorarium paid by him. On many occasions the students paid the honorarium by making collections from elsewhere if they were able to do so. The preceptor was satisfied with whatever the disciple paid according to his pecuniary circumstances. Then again if the preceptor made no demand or did not mention the amount the student asked his preceptor's wife how much he would have to pay and the preceptor was satisfied with the amount of honorarium suggested by her. It was generally a duty of the students to lend the cows of the preceptor, to hold his wife in respect, like their own mother and also to pay respects to the sons and daughters of their preceptor. The preceptor at once forsake a student who disregarded him or disobeyed him.
A disciple who wanted to become a student approached his preceptor with twigs in hand after making obeisance to him. This showed that he was modest in his behavior.

In the eighth chapter of Chhandogya Upanishad it is so written that once Prajapati (the Creator) said that the soul is sinless, without any infirmities on account of old-age deathless i.e. immortal and without any grief and without any hunger and thirst. It is the lover of truth itself so one should enquire about it. Those who after having the true conception of the soul specially feel its existence in their inmost heart have all his desires fulfilled and reach the goal of his life. Both the gods and the asuras heard this message from the creator which had spread from mouth to mouth and they said thus, "well and good, let us seek that soul that enables one to attain to all the worlds and get all the desirable things". Then Indra among the gods and Virochana among the asuras took

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Sa gurum evabhigachhet sanitpanih

Uundoko. 1st Mundako II. Kh.12.
to asceticism and approached Prajapati (the Creator) with twigs in hand. They had observed austerities of life which a student had to undergo, for thirty two years. Then the Creator asked them one day, "Why did you remain here so long undergoing all the austerities of life?" They said, "It is so said that it is by your message that the soul is sinless and never subjected to infirmities on account of old age and so all should be eager to know it fully and he who feels that he has a vivid conception of the soul attains to all the worlds and has all his desires fulfilled. To know that soul we had recourse to ascetics". The Creator said to both of them, "What you see, a shadow of an individual (in the retina of your eyes is the soul. This soul is undaunted and immutable. This is what is soul". Then they said, "My Lord, which one of those two images which are seen through a mirror and on the surface of water kept in an earthen vessel is the soul?" The Creator went on saying, "Look up on the surface of water kept in an earthen
vessel and see yourself and then ask me whatever you like to understand about soul". They then cast their eyes on the surface of the water kept in a vessel.
The Creator asked them, "What do you see now?" They said, "We see the images of two fingers dressed in the same manner as we are". The Creator said "This is the soul. This is the Supreme Being". Then they went away fully satisfied and with their hearts full of peace. Virochan, the King of the Asuras went away to the Asuras fully satisfied while Indra in stead of going to the gods was full of apprehension. He came back to the Creator and related to him the cause of his apprehension. On hearing him the Creator revealed to him the true form of the soul. From this story it is clear to us that a preceptor taught each student according to his power of assimilation. A disciple should have regard for and faith in his preceptor that he is teaching him after knowing fully his abilities and propensities.