

Integrated Personality: THE CRUCIAL NEED OF THE YOUTH

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Integrity

Before, after, and in the midst of everything, man needs to know one formula, the formula for achieving true manhood. What is that formula? This saving formula according to the teachings of Confucius is working to integrate one's own personality and helping others to do the same simultaneously.

There are varying needs of different individuals, societies, and nations. But there is one universal need of all individuals, societies and countries--the need of *Integrated Personality* (hereafter in short IP). It makes man a true man. A true man alone can solve his own problems and help solve those of others. Confucius said: 'One who is not a true man cannot long stand poverty, nor can he stand prosperity for long.' How true! Poverty brutalises and affluence barbarises man if he does not have an IP.

Wanted Enough Harnessed Strength

Above all what we need is enough IP to go round. When we do not have this, our weaknesses will be more than our strength, our misfortunes greater than our fortunes, our weal less available than our woes, our past more glorious than our future. Without an IP our enemies will become more powerful than our friends, there will be more wars than peace, more killing than healing. When we do not have enough IP, young men and women will be without self-control, old men and women would behave as though they were vigorous and young, requiring governments to open more and more mental homes.

When we do not have enough IP, in society there will be more quarrel and fight, agitation and unrest, corruption and nepotism than peace and harmony, control and happiness, honesty and uprightness. We will corrupt the taste of people, nay, our own children in order to make money by selling goods which would pamper their low and vulgar tastes.

When we do not have enough IP, as students we will not devote our time to hard study, we will be more interested in extra-curricular activity than in curricular activity, and we will busy ourselves with

thoughts and occupations which distort our budding lives and we will wither away before blossoming. When we have to face the struggle for existence we shall find that we are nowhere in the grade.

When we do not have enough IP, right thinking will be impossible for us. And from wrong thinking how can desirable results ensue? We will either live in the past or in the future and not in the living present. Our energies will be spent in endless negativism complaining about the rottenness of the world and not in heroic struggle for self-betterment or for social well being.

IP Can Achieve Everything

Granted enough IP, our friends will be more powerful than our enemies, peace more enduring than war, healing more than killing. Granted enough character, our trains will run on time, factories will produce more goods than expected; industries will flourish in peace and plenty; fields will yield more crop than expected. Granted enough IP, as students we will have the intelligence to see that the real issue on hand for us as students is to conserve our energy, study well, build up our physical, mental, and spiritual strength and fully equip ourselves for the struggle for existence. We will then easily see through the game of people trying to use us for their purpose at the cost of our life's interest.

Granted enough IP, young men and women will be full of grace, dignity and self-control, staying youthful to advanced age, and old people will become entities of beauty to behold.

How to Build IP

Swami Vivekananda says that the IP of any man is but the aggregate of his tendencies, the sum total of the bent of his mind. We are what our thoughts have made us. Thoughts live; they travel far. And so take care of what you think. Every work that we do, every movement of the body, every thought that we think, bears an impression on the mind-stuff. What we are every moment is determined by the sum total of these impressions on the mind. If good impressions prevail, the IP becomes good, if bad, it becomes bad. These ideas suit to our building an IP.

An integrated man develops upwards, the man without integration slips downwards. The man of integrated personality makes history, the man without it is marred by history. The man of character is the hope, solace, well-being, peace and inspiration of mankind; the man without character causes trouble, strife, and misery in society.

Becoming an integrated personality is so important for life that to have to live without it will be worse than not living at all. There is no wound IP cannot heal, no want it cannot fill, and no loss it cannot make good. Hence, the most important thing among all creative endeavours of life is to know how to build one's own IP and help build the IP of others with whom one associates.

Influence of Parents: As Hindu psychology would bear it out, the personality of the child begins to get formed even in its prenatal state. Thoughts of the parents some way impress the yet unformed personality-stuff of the child. The parents knowingly or unknowingly, mould the personality of the child by their thoughts and actions. The child catches passively, to begin with, all behavioural contagion, good or bad, without being able to discriminate or resist. What kind of IP the child will manifest when it is grown up almost entirely depends on the family.

When the child is able to watch consciously, it begins to build its own IP by seeing, watching, and imitating its parents. So, if it has good, noble, and worthy things to sense, watch, and imitate, we can be more or less sure that in fullness of time the child will manifest a worthy character. IP-building depends much on what kind of food for its mind the parents supply to the growing child. In the family again, mother's influence in moulding the character of the child is enormous.

Saints are normally born of men and women of great character. For building IP the earlier, it is better we catch our children early. And this catching can even start before the birth of the child by the parents cultivating a good mind and helpful thoughts. Only those parents who throughout their life continue to gradually build up their own character, can truly build the character of their children.

Influence of Teachers: Next to parents, come teachers' influence in moulding the IP of children. If parents and teachers are persons of confirmed noble character then their wards will most unmistakably bear the same stamp. This was why education in ancient India was entrusted in the hands of ideal men, the sages; to be instructed by them was a benediction.

If parents and teachers are persons of disorganized personality so will be their wards in all probability. But children who will be nurtured by parents of good character, but teachers of dubious personality or vice versa, will have in their personalities the conflict between these two influences.

Influence of Environment: Besides influences unknowingly but surely exercised for good or bad on children by parents and teachers, there is

the powerful influence of social environment. This influence can be creatively handled for building character only through homes.

There are several disciplines for building IP which can be knowingly cultivated.

Helpful Means for Developing IP

There are several disciplines for building IP which can be knowingly cultivated. These are:

1. Acquiring knowledge and training of the physical and mental systems in an integrated manner.
2. Practice of three austerities of body, speech and mind as taught by Sri Krishna in the *Bhagavad Gita*.
3. Training in acquirement of divine treasure (*daivi sampad*).
4. Practice of the disciplines of Yama and Niyama, as prescribed by Patanjali.
5. Cultivation of approved or ethical conduct.
6. Commitment to the higher scheme of values.
7. Developing the powers of discrimination, concentration, detachment, and will power.
8. Training in developing the five powers of the true learner.

Acquired IP, practically speaking, is self-mastery. Self-mastery presupposes the knowledge and the mastery of the instruments, the body and mind. Let us now go into some details.

Practice of the three austerities of body, speech and mind are thus taught by Sri Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita:

'Worship of gods, of the holy people, of teachers, and of the wise, cleanliness, uprightness, continence and non-violence--these are said to be austerity of the body.' (17.14)

'Words that do not give offence and that are truthful, pleasant, and beneficial, and also the regular recitation of the Vedas--these are said to be the austerity of the speech.' (17.15)

'Serenity of the mind, gentleness, silence, self-control and purity of heart--these constitute the austerity of the mind.' (17.16)

A careful study of the threefold austerities enjoined by Sri Krishna will reveal that these are basically prescriptions for attaining psychophysical efficiency for being able to effectively live a higher life.

Daivi sampad or divine treasure as detailed by Sri Krishna in the Gita':

'Fearlessness, purity of heart, steadfastness in knowledge and yoga; charity, self-control, and sacrifice; study of the scriptures, austerity and uprightness.' (16.1)

'Non-violence, truth, and freedom from anger, renunciation, tranquility, and aversion to slander, compassion to beings and freedom from covetousness; gentleness, modesty, and absence of fickleness.'(16.2)

'Courage, forgiveness, and fortitude; purity, freedom from malice and overweening pride--these belong to him who is born with divine treasure.'(16.3)

Most of us may not have been born with divine treasure. Even then this can be acquired. How? First, we have to develop an insight into the inner meaning of these words through repeated deep thinking. By continuing to do so, we shall understand why these virtues are called *daivi sampad*.

Then our inner struggle will begin. This struggle must be faced and gone through without being nervous and despondent. Our own *purva samskaras*, acquired past tendencies, particularly the evil ones will put up stiff resistance. But if we are well convinced that without the acquisition of divine treasure, life cannot but be abominable, and are inflexibly determined to acquire it, then through required struggle, by God's grace, it can be obtained.

Practice of disciplines of Yama and Niyama:

In his *Yoga-sutras* (II. 30-32) the great teacher Patanjali prescribes two disciplines called Yama and Niyama for laying the foundation of such a viable IP. Life is short and building one's IP a long process; no one should waste any further time.

What is *Yama*? Patanjali says: 'Non-killing, truthfulness, continence, non-stealing, and non-receiving are called Yama.' He further says: 'These, unbroken by time, place, purpose and caste-rules, are *sarva-bhauma-mahavratam*, universal great vows.' In the following aphorism Patanjali teaches: Internal and external purification, contentment, mortification, study and worship of God are the Niyamas.

Let us now consider the last item, namely: *Cultivation of the Five Powers of a Learner*. In the *Anguttara Nikaya* Buddha teachers his disciples to cultivate five powers of a learner.

1. The power of faith: The true learner has faith in his teacher and believes in his enlightenment and his ability to teach of the Supreme Truth.
2. The power of conscientiousness: The true learner is naturally conscientious and has qualms of conscience when acting wrongly in thought, word or deed.
3. The power of fear: The true learner is afraid of the blame that comes from acting wrongly in thought, word or deed.
4. The power of energy: The true learner has an abiding energy to discard all wrong things and adopt the right ones.
5. The power of insight: The true learner has an insight into the real nature of things and he sees the decay inherent in growth and thereby prepares himself to destroy the root cause of sorrow.

We have been provided here plenty of precious material for building great IP. Now let the architect use his imagination, will, energy and enthusiasm to build that magnificent structure of life which is called IP.

The Secret of IP

We have undoubtedly discussed some of the grand ideas known in human thought which are open-ended and unlimited. But in the actualization of these ideas, the secret is held by a well-disciplined life. Only through such a life lived from day to day, can these grand ideas be reduced to habit patterns which, as a matter of course, become one's IP.

Sri Krishna teaches in the *Gita*:

'Yoga is not for him who eats too much nor for him who eats too little. It is not for him, O Arjuna, who sleeps too much nor for him who sleeps too little.'

'For him who is temperate in his food and recreation, temperate in his exertion at work, temperate in sleep and waking, yoga puts an end to all sorrows.' (6.17)

'When the disciplined mind rests in the Self alone, free from longing for objects, then is one said to have attained yoga.' (6.18)

In the above verses, the obvious emphasis is on the supreme importance of a well-regulated life for the seekers who aspire to succeed in the practice of yoga. No one living a haphazard and chaotic life will be able to build IP.

A person without an IP can never become a yogi. Whatever our aspiration, either to become a worthy person, or to become a yogi, the foundation in both cases has to be laid on a well-regulated life.

Tiruvalluvar said:

'Discipline of life is more precious than life itself, for it is out of that discipline that life derives value. One may study many philosophies and clear his doubts but it is the well-regulated life that ultimately avails and nothing else. Therefore, guard it whatever may be the difficulty involved.'

'The well-regulated life ennobles every rank of life. Where this fails, good or noble parentage will not save the man.'

'The Brahmin can read again what he has forgotten of the scriptures and make up for lost memory. But if he neglects regulation of life he forfeits for ever the advantage of his birth.'

'A well-regulated life brings honour. Neglect of it will lead to utter disgrace.'

'The learned really betray ignorance when in spite of their learning they fail to regulate their lives in accordance with the principle of co-operation.'

Sri Ramakrishna said:

'Sacred books only point out the way to God. Once you have known the way, what is the use of books? Then comes the time for the culture of the soul in solitary communion with God. A person received a letter from his village-home asking him to send certain things to his

kinsmen. When he was going to order for them, he wanted to ascertain again from the letter the articles requisitioned. So he searched for the letter which was then missing. At last, to his great delight, it was found after a long search. He took it up eagerly, and went through the contents which ran as follows: "Please send five seers of sweetmeats, a hundred oranges, and eight pieces of cloth." Knowing the contents, he threw the letter aside and set about procuring the articles.

'How long then does one care for such a letter? So long as one does not know the contents. The contents being once known, the next step is to put forth the necessary effort to get the things desired. Similarly the sacred books tell us only the way to God, i.e., of the means for the realization of God. That way being known, the next step is to work one's way to the goal. Realization is the goal.'

We have worked sufficiently to have an idea about an IP. Let us equate it with the word 'character' and observe its effect.

Character and Conduct

Character in good part is conduct. You *behave* as you *are*. You cannot behave better for any length of time unless you are better. How do you become better than yourself? This can be done by deliberately practising approved or ethical conduct. What is to be considered approved conduct should not be decided impulsively according to one's fancy but, learnt from scriptures. About ethical or approved conduct *Apastamba-Dharma-Sutra* (22.14) enjoins:

Absence of anger, elation, indignation, avarice, delusion, vanity and enmity; speaking truth; moderation in eating; refraining from exposing others' weak points; freedom from jealousy; sharing one's good things with others; sacrifice; straightforwardness; gentleness; quietude; self-control; friendliness with all beings; absence of cruelty; contentment--these form the approved conduct for men of all stations of life. By observing them duly one becomes universally benevolent.

It is significant that many items of approved or ethical conduct are identical with divine treasures, *daivi sampat* as taught in the first three verses of the sixteenth chapter of the Gita.

But ethical conduct cannot stand the strain of various trying situations of life for any length of time unless we have a cultivated firm commitment to a sound scheme of values which takes care of the totality of the human personality and its fulfilment. Indian scheme of values names four in the list; pleasures of life, wealth, righteousness and attainment of spiritual illumination. The psychology of the person is to be so trained that he finds meaning in pursuing the pleasures of

life and wealth through righteousness and he discovers an increasing purpose of righteousness in spiritual illumination.

Character is the acquired dynamics of the self-chastening process set going within oneself through self-effort. This process is initiated through an unremitting but well-regulated struggle within oneself by way of habituating discrimination between the true and the untrue, discarding what is untrue and concentrating with love and tenacity on truth. Cultivation of the powers of concentration and the powers of detachment must go hand in hand. The secret of success in all worthwhile undertaking is the development of the will-power. By loving to do what we ought to do, we can develop will-power.

Though there is much to learn as to how we should conduct ourselves in various situations of life, it is hardly possible to know beforehand all about the situations we shall be required to face. And no one need feel concerned on that score. Right conduct cannot be designed for all occasions and times. Premeditated right conduct may prove to be artificial, our good intention notwithstanding.

Perfection of Integrated Personality

There are varying needs for various individuals, societies and nations. They are worked for in various ways. But there is one universal need for all lands, for all mankind. That need is of IP.

Mankind has come to a pass today when every thoughtful person anywhere in the world needs to have a fresh look at this desideratum--building of ampler IP, growing in abundant IP, and helping members of his family and society to do the same in any way he can, combining all the methods mentioned above or by devising other methods but in any case becoming a truer, and worthier human being. So Vivekananda taught--'Be and make. Let this be our motto.'