

[HOME](#) > [SUNDAY EDITION](#) > [AGENDA](#) > [SPIRITUALITY](#)

Time to give Vidya its due

Sunday, 02 February 2020 | Acharya Prashant

★★★★★

SHARE





0



Time to give Vidya its due

Sunday, 02 February 2020 | Acharya Prashant



Basant Panchami is dedicated to Devi Saraswati, the Goddess of vidya. Learning, says ancient wisdom, is of two types: *vidya* and *avidya*, writes Acharya Prashant

anyadevahurvidyaya anyadahuravidyaya |

iti susruma dhiranam yenastadvicaksire ||

(Isha-Upanishad, Verse 10)

‘One result they say is obtained by *vidya*, and another result, they say, is obtained by *avidya*, thus have we heard from the wise ones who explained it to us.’

The knowledge in the fields of science, arts, politics, economics, social sciences — all the university disciplines — is called *avidya*. In that sense, any knowledge about whatever can be found within the world is *avidya*. Using our senses and mind, when we look outwards into the world, and gather information and build knowledge, that is *avidya*. *Avidya* is also called *aparavidya*, or lower learning.

When we turn inwards and look at ourselves, we see the self, the ego, glimpses of the entire structure and movement of the personality. This self is the seer, observer, of the world. This knowledge, this perception of the self, is called *vidya*. *Vidya* is also called *paravidya*, or higher learning. How is *vidya* different from Psychology? *Vidya* encompasses not merely the study of the inner self — the ego — but also addresses the mystical cravings of the ego for spiritual liberation.

In our education system, *vidya* must be given importance so that the child, the student, must get to know about his mind. Who is he and what relation does he carry with the world? He must be introduced to this fundamental question in the most creative of ways. He must know whv he runs towards the world. relates with the world. and wants to achieve something in the world.



Friday, 03 June 2022



about himself. Under the circumstances, *vidya*, also referred to as education of the Self, is a thousand times more valuable than the rest of our education put together.

Know both Vidya and Avidya Together

vidyam cavidyam ca yastadvedobhya saha |

avidyaya mrtyum tirtva'mrtamasnute ||

(Isha-Upanishad, Verse 11)

'He, who knows both *vidya* and *avidya* together, overcomes death through *avidya* and experiences immortality by means of *vidya*.'

Due to our limited sensory experience and the failings of our education, we keep feeling and asserting that the existence of the universe is totally independent of our existence. We say, “We come and go, the world remains”, and so it is a common tendency to take the universe as an objective thing totally independent of the subject that we are. Therefore, we believe we can change something in the universe without fundamentally changing anything in us. We think *avidya* suffices in helping us, in improving us, in giving us a better life, even if we do not have *vidya*. So, our belief is that something can be bettered ‘out there’ without bettering anything ‘in here’. And that is how mankind has largely proceeded — wanting to improve things outside, it keeps disregarding what is happening inside. We don’t seem to realise that the world out there is the same as, is dependent on, and is organically linked to, what is within us. This has led to a disregard of, rather contempt of, *vidya*.

The scriptures say: 'only when you know vidya and avidya together, then you have known something.' This is of utmost importance for both – the seekers of material good, and the seekers of spiritual attainment. The materialist has to drop the notion that real material success can be attained without spiritual realisation. And the spiritualist had to drop the notion that spiritual progress is devoid of all materiality. The spiritual and material must walk hand in hand. One's material life must be in honest agreement with one's spiritual journey. These inner and the outer must be together. And when these two are together, the Upanishad says, that one verily conquers all fears and attains a timeless eternality.

We must realise why both *avidya* and *vidya* were considered important. We must also reflect on why *vidya* is called higher learning. This reflection will help us see the hidden root of the various catastrophic challenges facing us today — be it Climate Change, extinction of species, sectarianism, blind self-destructive consumerism, or the epidemic onslaught of mental disease. We will see that a lot of these are self-created problems rising from a neglect of *vidya* or spirituality.

Let us give vidya its due. Let us invest more of our attention, time and resources towards spiritual learning. Let the study of the highest philosophies like *Vedanta* be institutionalised, let the beautiful songs of the saints enter mainstream culture. Let the young and old alike discover the higher dimension of life. That alone can save us, and that alone would be a real celebration of Basant Panchami.

The writer is a spiritual teacher and the founder of PrashantAdvait Foundation

TRENDING NEWS



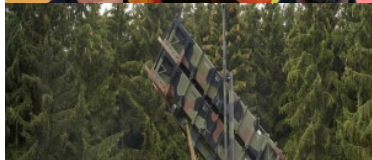
Santoor maestro Bhajan Sopori dies in Gurugram hospital



Johnny Depp celebrates trial win: 'Truth never perishes'



Brad Pitt's 'Bullet Train' to release in India in August



Germany to send Kyiv anti-aircraft missiles, radar systems

more

STATE EDITIONS

Maulana of a madrasa in Agra accused of raping minor girl

03 June 2022 | PNS | Lucknow

Police: Tikunia witness was planning attack on self to get arms licence

03 June 2022 | PNS | Lucknow

805 MSME projects to hit ground in GBC-3

03 June 2022 | Biswajeet Banerjee | Lucknow

GBC-3 set to add new channels **UP's transformation today**

03 June 2022 | PNS | Lucknow



Friday, 03 June 2022



29 May 2022 | HEALTH PIONEER | Agenda

29 May 2022 | HEALTH PIONEER | Agenda

29 May 2022 | Pioneer | Agenda

youth'

29 May 2022 | Archana Jyoti | Agenda

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

[Home](#) [About Us](#) [Contact Us](#) [Advertise with us](#) [Archives](#)

© 2022 The Pioneer. All Rights Reserved. Site Designed and Developed by: Infomedia Web Solutions

Page generated in 0.0121 seconds.