

# Shreyas The Art of Living

By: Dr. Maulik Trivedi

Namaste. Last month, you read about raising children who maintain spiritual awareness. It proved a huge challenge to incorporate deep-rooted Vedic ideas in the space of one article. There was so much more to say. In this month's article will expand on last month's theme of raising spiritually aware children to cover the conduct of interaction between parent and child as rooted in Vedic knowledge.



According to the Vedas, all beings are spiritual. Hence, children are the same spiritual entity as everyone else. In the design of this universe, they take birth in flesh through their parents' flesh. You see, the fact that the child is born unto us through us makes our mind believe that we created the child. The reality is different. In fact, all the necessary ingredients for producing that child were provided by nature. A man and a woman simply put them together to produce the offspring. For example, if you planted a tree in the past that is now full grown, you might say, "I grew that tree from a seed." Now really, can we truly claim that? Did you really grow that tree? After all, the seed, the water, the sunlight and the soil needed to grow a tree were all provided by nature. We had nothing to do with creating any of these ingredients. We simply put them together and the tree happened. But we told ourselves and others that we grew the tree. Truthfully, we can take no more credit for producing the child than we can for growing a tree.

But, we tend to take credit for every action we take in life. Whether it is growing a tree or producing an offspring. If it happens through "my" involvement, then "I" did it. **You see, because our children take birth into the material world through us, we say, "they are ours."** Then, as we engage in raising the child by investing time and energy, we become even more emotionally attached to this sense of 'my' child. Going at this rate, by the time the child is of school age, we have thoroughly taken over ownership of their body, mind and spirit and either made them an extension of ourselves or made them another one of our accomplishments in life. The result is, when our children measure up well on the social yardstick, we feel good and take pride in our parenting. If the child does not grow up to our expectations, we are not so quick to claim responsibility for that. We blame them or something or someone else in their environment for that. Is that what we want? Is it the best way? How does one properly relate to their child? What can we take credit for as a parent?

Very simply put, the role of the parent is to nurture the children physically, emotionally and mentally, to keep them safe until they can do so for themselves and to guide them as and if necessary.

Children have a natural capacity and curiosity for learning. As they grow, this need expands with their growing brain. The only thing a parent needs to do is to support this process by creating the best-suited conditions for this to occur. As parents we can only nurture and cultivate our children's natural curiosities and motivations. Simply doing this will allow the child to have their best course through life. Parents can do so by providing opportunities for the child. The types of opportunities provided will determine that child's exposure to certain experiences and knowledge. These experiences and knowledge build 'Sanskar' in that child. A responsible parent gives their child exposure to the proper 'Sanskar' in many ways. The parents' conduct towards the child is a great determinant of the 'Sanskar' that the child receives. The richer and deeper rooted the 'Sanskar' in a child, the greater the chances for them to have a balanced and successful life.

When a child is constantly measured using a social yardstick, parents can only get trapped in rewards and punishments relationship with that child. Instead, when a parent is dedicated to building up the child's 'Sanskar', the child gains the ability to do the right thing in the right situation for the right reason. They become a productive part of society now and forever.

To fill a child with 'Sanskar', a parent needs to incorporate a certain way of family living – a lifestyle that supports and nurtures the entire family's physical, emotional, mental and spiritual needs. Vedic prescriptions provide many different ways to conduct such a lifestyle for the family. Remember, 'Sanskar' does not happen in a day and it is never complete. It is a process of enrichment that continues through a child's upbringing. Here are some ideas for creating, growing and maintaining a family life that fills the child with many 'Sanskar'.

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1. Have as many activities as possible take place as a family. Eating together and praying together are two great places to start. Also carve out some time on a regular basis (schedule it, if you are too busy) to give your total attention to the child. This usually means playing with the child. It is in this play time that you will learn a lot from your child.
2. Regularly visit and support a place of worship as a family. Learn the symbolism behind each of the deity and share it with your children.
3. Bring the essence of the worship into your own home by lighting a 'diya' regularly at the altar in your home. (The significance of the 'diya' was discussed in the article on *Diwali*)
4. Learn and teach your native Indian language to your children. There is a ton of good literature and culture that opens up when you do this.
5. Listen to and sing the songs that carry forth the message of love among humanity. This can be in the form of *bhajans*, *gazals*, or *geet*. Spend some time translating it and discussing it with your children.
6. But most importantly, be involved in your child's life. Remember, if you can't relate to your child's life, then you can't have a relationship with them and vice-versa. Be involved so you can relate to each other now and later.

My best wishes to you and your family as you incorporate some of these suggestions and reap your own rewards from working with nature's design. Namaste.

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## TechTalk

Skydrive: [www.live.com](http://www.live.com) – Online hard drive space allowing you to store password protected documents, photos and videos, offers 250GB of space for free.

This month I also want to share some interesting facts on technology with my readers, which always makes for good reading and a great conversation subject.

- The Cigarette lighter was invented in 1816 before the match. Matches have been around since 577 AD but required an external source to ignite, in 1826 a few years after the invention of the lighter came the "friction match" which we use in modern times.
- The normal static electricity shock that zaps your finger when you touch a doorknob is usually between 10,000 and 30,000 volts!
- Car airbags kill 1 person for every 22 lives that they save.
- Over 220 million tons of old computers and other technological hardware are trashed in the United States each year.
- Bill Clinton's inauguration in January 1997 was the first to be webcast.
- Since its invention, the Blackberry was used for the 1<sup>st</sup> time in the US Oval Office after President Obama took office in 2009.