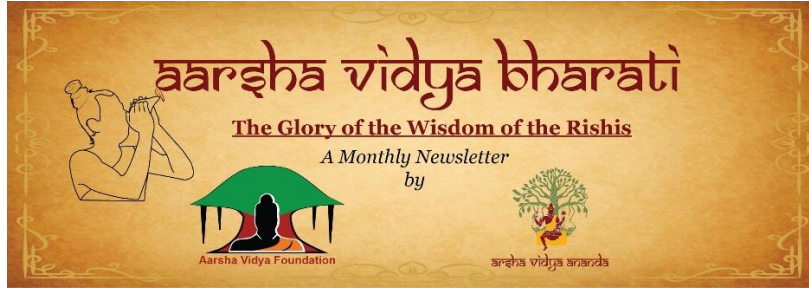

Aarsha Vidya Bharati - Oct 2022

Ashvina – Kartika 2079

A monthly newsletter that will bring you more happiness, more wisdom and more freedom



This is one of many articles from our monthly newsletter. Access the [Oct 2022 issue](#) or read any of [the articles](#).

Parenting in the Light of Dharma

Value Parenting a Mind

By Naveen Niverthy, Pune

The Oxford dictionary defines parenting as the process of caring for your child or children. Parenting is usually seen as the responsibility of providing a child with nourishing food, security, care, shelter, discipline and education. In the light of dharma, parenting goes deeper and aims to build, shape and fine-tune the *antaḥ-karaṇam*, the inner instrument of a child. If I were to describe my 10-year-old daughter, I would say that she is curious, compassionate, self-driven, harmony-seeking and routine-loving. Is it any surprise all these words are attributes of the mind? When you see a child as a mind that interprets, analyses and transacts with the world, it transforms your approach to parenting, altogether.

The mind is the only place where knowledge takes place and hence is the only place where liberation can also take place. It is also the only place where ignorance is found and removed. The primary content of the mind is *vṛtti*-s, thoughts of motivation, desire, evaluation, decision, action, habits and biases. A well-prepared mind is better positioned to become independent and to interact with and thrive in this world. Students of Vedanta also understand that the mind is made up of four functions working closely together viz. *manah* (knowing and desiring capability), *buddhiḥ* (decision-making capacity), *cittam* (memories), *ahaṅkārah* (sense of identity). In the light of dharma, a parent attends to, nourishes and protects all these aspects of the mind.

This can be done by taking the value parenting approach – instilling the value of values in the child's mind and teaching them how to live them. A parent by one's own example teaches primary personal values like *ahiṃsā* (non-hurting), *satyam* (truthfulness), *asteyam* (non-stealing), *śaucam* (cleanliness) and *indriya-nigrahaḥ* (restraint of the senses or self-control). There are several other values like *svādhyāya* (self-study), *īśvara-praṇidhānam* (Keeping *Īśvaraḥ* always in one's heart), *santoṣa* (contentment) and so on, which can be introduced at different stages of growing up, step by step. Mind, like any fine instrument, needs to be sensitised and calibrated- right action should feel right and wrong should feel wrong.

Conscience cannot be forced simply by laying down rules or following the carrot & stick approach. Children need to see the reasons and the causal chain that results from their thoughts and decisions. Only with such a moral sense can one discriminate *Śreyas* from the *Preyas*. Parents should keenly observe and provide measured appreciation, correction or

guidance where needed, without micro-managing, demotivating and hurting the child. While doing this, respect the child's individuality and do not it too dependent or too attached, thus robbing it of the capacity to mature and be self-reliant.

My biggest learning is that our biggest challenges are psychological, and their cause and cure reside in the recesses of our minds. More than the Intelligence quotient of a child, it is its emotional quotient that predicts success in a career or relationship. Parenting can be one of the most rewarding and joyful experiences in the life of a householder. In the light of Dharma, it can flourish and forge emotionally intelligent, resilient minds. To such minds, *dharmā-aviruddha-karma* or action unopposed to *dharmāḥ* comes naturally. This lays the foundation for the child's future in Karma Yoga and also helps in the parent's *antaḥ-karaṇa-śuddhiḥ* or purification of the mind, preparing it for *ātma-jñānam* and *mokṣaḥ*.



Naveen is a Marketer by profession, a student of Vedanta and a single father of 10-year-old Aanya. His blog is valueparenting.in

[Subscribe](#) | aarshavidyabharati@gmail.com | [Aarsha Vidya Foundation](#) | [Arsha Vidya Ananda](#) | [SHINE](#)