



Did you know

In the Vedic Age the rituals were meant for Inner Discipline?

Begging for alms. The practice of begging for alms was the usual rule for the Brahmacharin [the student]. It was prescribed to develop in him a proper spirit of humility: “Having made himself poor, as it were, and become devoid of shame, he begs alms.”

Tending Fire. Another of his duties was to tend the sacred fire. The *Chhandogya Upanishad* [iv, 10, 1-2] mentions about Upakosala, a student, who tended the sacred fires for twelve years and yet his teacher did not allow him to return home and went away on a journey without having taught him. The spiritual significance of ‘tending the sacred fires’ or ‘to put on the fuel’ is explained thus: “to enkindle the mind with fire, with holy lustre.” Thus, the physical act of tending the sacred fire had a deep psychological meaning.

Inner Discipline. These external practices and regulations were a means to develop in the young pupils those internal conditions [*‘pratyasanna*, as opposed to *vadhyā*’], and mental and moral attributes, which could prepare them for the later learning of the highest knowledge, the knowledge of the Brahman - the special subject-matter of the Upanishads.¹

☐ Selected by Aditi

“If you remain in meditation or contemplation without working, well, you don’t know if you have progressed or not. You may live in an illusion of your progress; while if you begin to work, all the circumstances of your work, the contact with others, the material occupation, all this is a field of experience in order that you may become aware not only of the progress made but of all the progress that remains to be made...”

The Mother

¹ Source: Radha Kumud Mookerji (1989) *Ancient Indian Education: Brahmanical and Buddhist*, pp.93-95, Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass