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Health

Health is wealth. But in our country, we see many people who are very healthy, yet poor. They do not get even two square meals a day, have no proper clothing and have no roof over their heads for shelter. It is true, but the fact remains that such people care less for wealth and do not work hard to get rich. In case, they also join the mad race for money and wealth, they are sure to lose their health because of worries, which are sure to come in its train. If we go deep down at the root of all, we will find that a beginning has to be made from health onwards. That is why, our *Shastras* proclaim clearly 'शरीरमाद्यं खलु धर्म साधनम्'. Body is the means, through which a man progresses in life. He cannot perform his duty properly if his health is not good and he remains sick. It has been truly said 'Healthy mind in a healthy body', A person who is always afflicted by some disease or the other, can never think of doing worthwhile in life, because of his pains and suffering, he will be hindered at every step and will thus find himself unable to do the task *i.e.*, hand.

We may take the example of a newly born baby. His parents first of all try their best to give him milk and other

nourishing food, so that he grows up well and is healthy in all respects. For a few years all facilities are afforded to the child within his parents' means and their only concern is to see that he grows unhampered, with all his senses normal, *i.e.*, he becomes a healthy boy of his age. In cities and towns, even health competitions are arranged for children and prizes given to those who come out successfully according to their standards. When the child grows to be of the age group 3-5 then only the parents think of putting the child to game school. Hence we see that here also health comes first and schooling later.

A student should always be careful about his health and for this nothing much needs to be done, except that he should maintain a regulated life. He should form the habit of getting up early in the morning, finish his daily chore bath, etc., and devote some time for studies, before school or college. In all the schools and colleges, physical training instructors, games or sports teachers are appointed and a period or two are allotted for games and sports. The purpose of all this is to see that the health of the children properly maintained. Inter-school and inter-college competitions of various games and sports are arranged periodically. In olden times, education, knowledge or learning was given the highest regard and respect in the world in all the countries, but nowadays things have changed and we find that games and sports are not taken only as a matter of play alone. but they have now become a sort of profession. The examples of cricket, football, tennis and many other games and sports is

there, in which many boys and girls have excelled themselves to such a height that they have earned not only money in its wake but also name and fame thereby.

Some Sanskrit poet has described the duties of a student as under:

व्यायामो विनयो विद्या विवेको वीर्य-रक्षणम् ।

एते पंच वकारास्यु विद्यार्थिनः युगे-युगे ॥

Daily exercise, to study politely and humbly, with wisdom and discretion and to preserve the vital fluid, semen are the five 'Vakaras' which the students have to accept its life from times immemorial. In this couplet also, have to accept in "complete also, we see that daily exercise has been stated to be the very first duty of a student. Undoubtedly nobody can ignore the importance of health in life, without which a person can do nothing. If a student maintains a poor health and remains sickly, he cannot be regular in his studies either. And God forbid, in case he falls sick at the time of the examinations, he cannot appear in the examinations and thereby loses a year or two, falling behind his fellow students.

“All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy” is a proverb which means that if we devote all our energies to the work in hand and have no time to spare for play, then a saturation point comes, when we lose all interest in the work,

it becomes boring and in course of time our intelligence also gives way to dullness. Hence, rest and recreation, games, play or sports have all their place in life, whereby we get a new lease and feel afresh to accept the challenges in a more spirited way. The English poet, Wordsworth says:

“What a life full of care;
If you have no time to stand and stare”.

Here, of course, the poet is pointing towards the beauty of nature. He tells us that we should not be so much engrossed in our daily affairs that we may not have the eyes to see the beautiful spectacles of nature on a cloudy day in the sky, hear the sonorous sounds of the clouds. Similarly, for a student whilst studies are his foremost concern, he should not do this at the cost of his health. That is, he should maintain his health at the same time, so that his brain is whetted and the grasp of his intelligence is sharp and quick.

In *Vedas* there are many verses to this effect, whereby all the people have been advised to maintain a good standard of health at all times. Look at the following verse:

एह्यश्मानमा तिष्ठाश्मा भवतु ते तनुः ॥
कृण्वन्तु विश्वे देवा आयुष्टे शारदः शतम् ॥

*Oh Men! come and put your foot on this stone.
Your body may also be as strong as this stone,*

Fire, Air, Water, Earth all these divine powers may make you live for hundreds of years in full health and glory. Our body is made up of these basic elements and these are divine indeed, but we make them base by our misdeeds. In another verse, it has been told that a man should never be sick and remain stout and healthy throughout. He should not be weak or timid but all his limbs ought to be strong. He should grow day by day and shine like the moon. Such are the inspirations given in Vedic verses. Not only our body be strong and healthy, but all our senses and organs be powerful. Actually, when we pray to God twice a day in the mornings and evenings, we fervently pray that our power of speech should be divine and powerful; our breathing system be strong and healthful, our eyes should see good and noble: similarly our ears should hear truthful voices all over, our navel centre be powerful, our heart be broad and full of the milk of human kindness, our neck be strong and our head above all should be pure and divine, as also powerful in all respects. Our arms be very strong and our thighs full of vigour and strength. All in all the parts of our body should be stout and healthy and be thus able to perform their respective functions smoothly.

To be successful in life a student must always be careful about his health and he should daily do some exercise. As a matter of fact, the ages of students generally vary from 5 to 25 and this period is such that even with simple food twice a day, he can easily remain healthy, without much nourishing diet. This is the period of growth and normally the students find themselves gay and happy, if they do not fall in bad company. They have to be watchful against it, lest they may fall prey to some bad habit of smoking, drinking or any other vice which may prove harmful for their health and study the long run. This is a tender age and good or bad generally take root during this period. The lives of many a student have been ruined because of such vices and their career cut short, without properly growing ripe. Unfortunately, owing to the western influence, these vices are becoming very common these days in schools and colleges. Students should beware of these powerful enemies, who destroy them from within, unseen and yet their attack is so devastating that hardly anything remains which can be salvaged. In other words, these vices do irreparable harm; hence I would like to warn the student community to be cautious on this score, because prevention is always better than cure.

Generally, no drug or medicine is necessary to remain healthy for a student. What is needed is a well-regulated life, good nourishing, simple food consisting of seasonal fruits and raw vegetables, salad, etc., in plenty, all vegetarian. In rainy season, use of lemon in addition will keep away small afflictions. Next to food is proper sleep. Go to bed early *i.e.*,

between 9.30 and 10 p.m. and make it a point to rise early, say by 4 a.m. latest. Daily exercise, besides games or sports is necessary. Have a brisk walk for a mile or so after taking your food and thereafter do your work of study, etc., whatever you have planned for the day. Never eat in haste, but whatever you eat, masticate it properly. In case of any small ailment the reason is not far to seek, it is always because of indigestion. Hence, miss a meal or two, and take some juice or milk instead, if considered necessary. Otherwise, do not take anything but water and your ailment will vanish along with the indigestion.

Last of all, you have to keep healthy. so that you can study and attain success in the examination in the end. Therefore, please do your work daily without fail – Never put till tomorrow what you can do today: lest it will get accumulated and you may have to cut a sorry figure at the time of the examination. Remember the wise saying – ‘Slow and steady wins the race’.

Happiness

We all want to be gay and happy, but happiness deludes us. Because real happiness comes from within the heart and only to those who have honestly and sincerely finished their day's work, which gives them a sort of satisfaction, bordering on inner happiness which actually emanates from the soul, But the man is a strange creature; he wants to be jovial and happy even without doing his allotted task. To this end in view, we have many means of entertainment, e.g., Cinema, theatre, games, consisting of indoor and outdoor games. Circus is also a very good means of enjoyment, but this is scarce nowadays. In big cities, we have zoos also and these also provide a healthy type of entertainment to the children and grown-up alike.

The famous French politician of the last century used to say 'I get special pleasure in useless gossip'. There is a hidden philosophy behind this – Laugh and be healthy. If everybody comes to know of this secret that laughter is a tonic for health and contains life-giving substance, then many doctors and physicians would be rendered useless. Our energy may be recouped – for this purpose we have been granted the gift of laughter. Nature uses laughter as a means

so that the inner organs, parts and all nerves of our body do some exercise. Along with, we also get pleasure out of it. It has been said that laughter gives as much exercise and pleasure as horse-riding or swimming. The liver and the digestive system get toned up by laughter. When you take a full breath or laugh heartily, a special pressure is felt on liver in the stomach and by this the whole system gets rejuvenated. The speed of heart-beat becomes fast and the circulation of the blood gets a flow, which are very useful for health.

According to Dr. Greene even the tiniest blood cells are enervated by laughter, which in turn gives heat and beauty to the body and increases the eye-sight. This process also purifies the body as the poisonous substance which normally saddens us, escapes in the shape of gaseous air. Therefore, happiness is a gift of God to man. In reality it influences our material, mental and moral fibre of life. We see that whenever any picnic or excursion trip is arranged the students and teachers all join in fun and frolic and enjoy tit-bits or humorous talks or stories. The famous tales of Akbar and Birbal are the shining examples, which are enjoyed in all companies and gatherings, whether social or religious, as they are exhilarating and spread happiness all round. In olden days, even kings and monarchs used to have jesters in their courts, who would not only entertain them, but at times they were able to convey to the rulers through their jests, the actual thinking of the people, which otherwise would have remained unknown to them.

Happiness, sweetness and sound sleep keep the diseases away. To be happy and cheerful is your duty, so that people may like you. A jovial fellow in a group of persons always moves in such a way that he regales them with mirth and merriment and while doing the most tedious job, they pass the time lightly. Those who remain happy, always do good work and think of good thoughts. There is no end to the power of happiness. It has been truly said ‘Sorrows shared, sorrows halved; joys shared, joys doubled’. It is a sort of infectious charm and mirth and merriment spread throughout the whole throng of people, unknowingly. In the opinion of Dr. Wender Holmes ‘Happiness is a divine medicine’.

Everybody should be full of this God-sent nectar. Hurry, worry and peevishness, etc., make life miserable and wretched; these should be ointed by happiness and thoroughly cleaned by mirth and laughter. A good smile makes the face shine. A wise man once said, “In case you have to go to a doctor, then select the one who has a jovial mood”. Dr. Hall when prescribing medicines to his patients, would ably ask them to smile, if they cannot give a loud laughter. He generally advised them to be happy and optimistic because in his opinion, the attitude of the patient helps in his cure than the medicine.

Dr. Bardick of New York was known as ‘Merry Doctor’. He was very jovial and generally shared jokes with patients. Always with a smile on his face, whatever he spoke had a jovial twist and the happiness he spread through his patients was so infectious that all shared the mirth merrily and would

leave his clinic half-cured. He was a very successful doctor of his time and people came to him from far and wide to seek his company and advice. In *Vedas* we find many verses which exhort us to be happy under all circumstances. विश्वदानीं सुमनमः स्याम. In all conditions, whether favourable or unfavourable, smile like a flower. As a flower spreads its fragrance even in the bushes and thorns, similarly in pain and distress, we should learn to smile. A Hindi poet has expressed his thoughts on the subject as under:

घर से निकलो तो मुस्काओ, पथ पर फिसलो तो मुस्काओ।
मुस्कान न छूटे होठों से, गिर मुस्काओ उठ मुस्काओ ॥
तन में उमंग, मन में उमंग, नस-नस में जीवन में उमंग।
मुस्कानों की खुशियाली से, पुलकित कर दो तुम अंग-अंग ॥

Smile when you step out of your house: smile even when you slip on your path; smile should never leave your lips – smile when you get a fall and smile when you get up. There should be happiness in your body, there should be happiness in your mind. Each and every nerve should be full of mirth and merriment. With your smile, spread the happiness all round, so that all the parts of your body overflow with the blessings of that Bliss.

In *Rig Veda*, the following verse inspires us to be happy:

प्राञ्चो अगाम नृतये हसाय द्राघीय आयुः प्रतरं दधानाः ।

It means that for a long and progressive life, you should dance with merriment, keep smiling and spread happiness whilst advancing on your journey. 'जायाः पुत्राः सुमनसो भवन्तु' Our women, sons and daughters all should be happy. There ought to be no trace of sadness or sorrow. In another Mantra, it has been advised that all family people should remain happy at all times and in this way lead a blissful life. They should go to sleep with their heart full of happiness, get up in the morning in a happy state of mind and in this way all the members of the family doing their respective duties sincerely and honestly be happy always because of their good conduct and character.

In Bhagwad Gita, Bhagwan Krishna has said:

प्रसादे सर्वदुःखानां हानिर स्योपजायते।
प्रसन्न चेतसो ह्याशुः बुद्धिः पर्य वतिष्ठते ॥

All pains and afflictions get away from a man who remains happy and has peace of mind. Such a person's mind does not waver and he is able to decide his course of action unflinchingly. Such persons are clear-headed and even temporary failures can never discourage them. They know that 'failures are the pillars of success'. Hence with greater courage, they gird up their loin and try hard to achieve the desired goal.

'How can one be happy' is a question which requires to be answered. The first requirement I have already pointed out at

the very outset. It is that those who discharge their duty sincerely and honestly, toil hard during the day, can sleep with a clear conscience with a feeling that with God's grace they have done their best to their satisfaction. The second requirement to be happy is that we should be able to give something to others. In so far as students are concerned they can easily fulfil the first requirement of doing their duty towards their studies, towards their parents and family towards their institutions and teachers, as also towards the society as a whole if they devote their time sincerely and honestly on their studies only. In so far as the second requirement is concerned, a student should try to be helpful to others. In other words, his behaviour and conduct should be an example and whenever or wherever possible, he should lend a helping hand in times of difficulty.

It is a philosophy to have a happy frame of mind. We can inculcate this habit in the children from the very beginning. Dr. Chevis says:

“Encourage your children to keep smiling or laugh heartily, without any reservation. Such a laughter which comes forth direct from the heart, broadens the chest and blood flows in the veins quickly and speedily. They should laugh so loudly that the house may echo with their merriment-just showing your teeth is not enough. Such a laughter is useful not only to those who laugh, but even to the neighbors who listen to their laughter. If your mind is engrossed in some sorrow or frustration, this is

the best way to drive away the sadness. Happiness and laughter have a great attraction. It spreads soon all around and very few people can remain unaffected by its charm. In reality, it is difficult to control your feelings in such a company and one gets swayed along. Happiness is a song and this song is the best of all the songs”.

A great writer has said that the children who do not remain happy, can never become great persons of importance in life. As the trees who do not flower, cannot give fruits. Humour and wit have very important place in life. Sir Walter Scott used to insist on his friends and acquaintances – ‘Please laugh once honestly’. He always welcomed his guests with a broad smile on his face. The famous historian Hume when searching for the hand-written papers of King Edward II, found an item of expenditure – ‘spent on making the king laugh-one crown?’ Carlyle once said: ‘Oh, how much wealth lies hidden in happiness and laughter!’ Hence, happiness and laughter are a divine blessing.

Therefore, my dear students! the true happiness comes by doing your duty well and by helping others in times of need. Hence laugh whenever you can. This is the cheapest medicine to be honest and healthy.

Honesty

Honesty is the foundation-stone of the house of Man. A man who is not honest in his dealings cannot be called a human being. He falls from the pedestal of humanity and hence in order to maintain his own existence, honesty is the first and foremost requirement of a Man. There are many kinds of wealth in this world and honesty is the greatest wealth amongst them all. In the *Vedas* and *Shastras*, this world has been compared with the sea. Greed or temptation is a mighty and cruel crocodile living in this sea. Honesty is the only boat which can ferry you through safely from such crocodiles. It has, therefore, been advised in a *Mantra* in *Yajur Veda* :

ईशावास्यमिदं सर्वं यकिन्च जगत्यां जगत् ।
तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथा मागृधः कस्यस्विद्धनम् ॥

God is pervading in this world and many such other worlds through and through. Therefore, Oh Man! enjoy the pleasures of this world with non-attachment; do not be greedy because all this wealth belongs to the Almighty. In other words, the wealth has all been bestowed to us by God and it is

for the benefit and use of all, not that of a few. If we understand the philosophy of the verse, then everybody should be honest and hard-working. There will be no place for greed or temptation in the society. But we find that Man succumbs to these vices and the result is misery and hatred.

As a roof is essential for a house, a stick to a blind or a lame person, water to a well, oil to a lamp, audience to a preacher and pen to a writer, similarly honesty is *must* for a Man. Because man is a social creature and if in his behaviour and conduct, he is dishonest, then peace will be disturbed. There are bound to be chaos and quarrels, thus the very basic need of all dealings in a good society will be lost and everybody will suffer thereby. Alexander Pope says – ‘An honest man is God's best creation’. Extolling the role of honesty, the famous English poet, Shakespeare has said – ‘No legacy is so rich as honesty’. Hence, we should all be honest in our dealings at all times. Never be tempted by the wealth of others. Even if you chance to find some valuable thing somewhere, locate its owner and try to return it to him. It is our duty, which we should do gladly and even at the cost of some trouble.

Some students may think that they only study and for them honesty as such has no meaning. But it is not so, because in student life also, one comes across such opportunities, when he gets tempted to achieve something by dishonest means. Here I would like to quote from the

autobiography of Mahatma Gandhi. He has narrated the incident as follows – “During the first year at the school, when I was studying in the first class, Inspector Guiles of the Education Department came to inspect our school. He asked us to write five words in English. Out of these, one word was ‘Kettle’. I spelt it wrongly. Our teacher slightly hit me with the toe of his boot to warn me about my mistake. But I could not understand what he meant. My teacher wanted me to copy the spellings from the boy’s copy sitting next to me. But I did not copy, as desired by my teacher and the result was that I was the only boy whose all the five words were not correct. Later on, the teacher explained to me about my folly, but I was not influenced by it. I could not learn to copy in this manner, as I considered this a dishonest practice”. Students are apt to such like corrupt practices these days and their parents and teachers alike encourage them to do so, in order that the children get through the examinations. But in this way, are they not harming themselves? For one thing, they remain ignorant of the subject and of the true knowledge for which purpose they attend their schools, colleges or institutions. *Secondly*, they become dishonest in the process and form a very bad habit which in the long run is going to prove very harmful to them.

In the modern world, hypocrisy has taken the place of honesty. But is not the world more miserable and troublesome for this? Generally, people have lost faith in honesty and truthfulness. This does not auger well. The sooner we realise the importance of honesty in life, the better

would it be for the whole. Otherwise, Man is doomed to destruction and in the present day affairs of the world, there are discords, rifts and disputes at all places and the courts are over busy sorting them out. Hence, there is greater necessity for honesty in the present day world, if we want to save it from doom. Therefore, in your own interest, take a vow now to be honest in the face of all temptations. If the businessmen, traders and shop-keepers practice honesty in their profession, then the hue and cry which the people raise from time to time against adulteration, cheating and such like things, will subside and the nation will heave a sigh of relief. We have read in the newspapers how our business community lets us down by supplying inferior type of goods and commodities to other countries. This brings a bad name to the country as a whole and our reputation is tarnished. On the other hand, we read about the honesty and dignity of Japan in their dealings with the foreign countries.

As a matter of fact, it is for all the citizens of our country to be honest, whether you are an advocate or barrister. Never accept false cases, because in such a matter you are bound to help a dishonest person. Again, the example of Gandhi ji while practicing as a barrister is worth emulating. Munshi Ram, who was later known as Swami Sharddha Nand, never accepted false cases. Once it so happened that his Munshi had taken such a case, but when Munshi Ram came to know of this, he refused to plead on his client's behalf in the courtroom. Similarly, if you happen to be a doctor, always keep this fact in mind that yours is a noble profession.

Hence, give the right medicine and charge reasonably. If the patient is poor, have pity and do not charge any fee from him. If you are in the teaching profession, then think of the responsibility that lies on your shoulders. You are the builders of the nation, because your young students will be the masters of the ship of our nation in times to come and you are thus the makers of the destiny of the nation. Your own behaviour, character and conduct should be above board, so that your students may feel proud in following your glorious examples. Similarly, in case you are engaged in some office, please work hard honestly. Because your work affects the life and business of others and it is, therefore, your moral responsibility not to take any undue advantage out of this situation.

Remember, the peace and happiness which you get by earning wages and wealth through honest means, that can never be yours if you adopt dishonest and corrupt practices. No doubt, too much of wealth cannot be amassed by honest means, but money is only a means and not an end in itself. The end being to get peace and happiness and if the wealth becomes a source of trouble and mental worry, then it is much better to do without such a wealth. A dishonest person loses his place of respect in society and generally people begin to hate him. A learned man has said – ‘Just as health is to the body, same is honesty to the soul’. Hence if we want to save our souls and remain untarnished, we should be honest in all our affairs. An honest servant gets the of the

treasury, but a dishonest son is not allowed to touch them even.

So, we come to the conclusion that it is the lure of money that makes man dishonest. Besides, there are two other temptations – Man is apt to do wrong things and adopt dishonest ways in life for doing something favourable to his own kith and kin, because of his attachment. In Hindi and Sanskrit we call this '*Moha*'. Therefore, we should be cautious against this trap and never allow ourselves to be duped by this. The third reason why a man goes astray and does not lead an honest life is of achieving a position of power, of name and fame. This is quite explicit in the case of elections to various bodies, whether it be a Municipality or Lok Sabha; for the post of a simple Member or that of the Prime Minister. These three temptations are known as '*Vitteshna*' (lure of money and wealth); '*Puttreshna*' attachment of some near relatives, son or daughter; and '*Lokeshna*' to yearn to get some position of power, which also gives fame. But it seems ironical that a person seeks name and fame through dishonest means. These ultimately degrade him in the eyes of the people, though he may succeed in such a fray or elections by foul means. How can then such persons, when come to power, serve the people, nation or the country? They are selfish and dishonest. Public service demands self-sacrifice. Unfortunately, most of the politicians these days come in this class. They have made politics a sort of profession and they serve their own ends

instead. That is why it is truly said ‘Politics is the game of scoundrels’.

People say that times have changed vastly. The word “Honesty is found today only in the books, because it is rarely practiced”. I beg to differ in this respect. In my opinion, honesty is the best policy for all time and at all places. You may find temporary setback, but ultimately truth prevails – Truth triumphs, not untruth. Honesty and truth are just two sides of the same coin. Therefore, if you want to be great, you must follow honesty and truthfulness in life.

4

Habits

What are habits? From where do we get them? Habits are generally formed in a society in which we live. Most of these are formed in the family itself. Habits are just the sort of second nature, which a person is apt to do without giving any thought to it. For example, a child born in a *Brahman's* family would learn what his parents do; speak their language and most of his actions are likely to be as are being followed in the family. On the other hand, a child born in a Muslim family would imbibe most of the traits of his parents and in case they are non-vegetarians, he is likely to follow suit. That is why, it is often said that a man is known by the company he keeps. But habits can be changed for good or for bad, as one can change his company. This requires firm determination in case you want to form good habits. It entirely depends on you and you alone. You have to help yourself, and none else can be of much help to you.

Bad habits take a strong hold and it becomes rather difficult to get rid of them. He who is the victim of such vicious habits, generally, does not ponder over their ill-effects, and even if he does, he feels that he is helpless. In my opinion, it is not so. Because there are examples galore

of men and women who once resolved gave up smoking, drinking or meat-eating in a trice. Thereafter, they were never tempted to retrace their steps. It was all due to their strong will-power and firm faith in themselves that they could overpower their habitual instincts. But the weaklings always remain at the mercy of their habits and express their helplessness when confronted by someone who has their good at his heart. Not only that, some people even try to defend their bad habits by giving counter-arguments in support of their vices. In Sanskrit, there is a *Shloka*, written by some scholar:

नर : कुव्यसनासक्ता, मात्रा पित्रा परेणवा ॥
उपदिष्टं हितं मार्गं, पश्यन्नपि न पश्यति ॥

A man who is in the grip of some bad habit does not listen to the advice of his elders—parents or anybody else. Because he does not see any harm, though he suffers from it. He becomes blind to his faults and thus ignores the sagely advice given to him.

In newspapers, we read that students of growing age group are taking to such vices as smoking, drinking, use of LSD, *hashish* or smack in greater numbers today than previously. These things are very harmful to their health, body and mind both. Their intelligence will get blunted and in course of time such students are likely to wreck their health. This will shorten their life-span and their life will become miserable in

the long run. Best is not to come in contact of such people, as prevention is always better than cure. But those who unfortunately have knowingly or unknowingly fallen prey to any of these bad habits, they should immediately leave them. It is better to do away a bad habit as soon as possible, if you want to save yourself from its adverse effects. Some students may argue that it has now become their habit and therefore it is not so easy to give it up, as they feel they cannot do without it. But this opinion is not correct. A Hindi poet writes:

बनी जो चीज है इस खाक से वह टूट जाती है ।
करो कोशिश कमर कस कर पड़ी लत छूट जाती है।।

Whatever has been made from this earthly substance, is to perish one day. By trying hard, even the life-long bad habit can be given up. What matters is your firm resolve and determination. These are just trifles before you and as you are the master of your own sweet-will, how can these loathful habits stay on, once you think of doing them away.

Veda says – ‘आरोह तमसो ज्योतिः’ Advance towards the light from darkness. Here darkness is the embodiment of all bad things and ignorance while light signifies all good things and knowledge. Similarly we daily pray – ‘मृत्योर्मा अमृतं गमय’ we may proceed towards immortality from death. What is

the way to proceed towards immortality? Nothing, but to give up all that is bad in life and to court all good qualities and virtues. An English writer has written – “If every year you rooted out one of your faults, you would soon become a perfect man”. There are many verses in the *Vedas* which inspire us to abandon bad ways and in their place to follow noble ideals, so that our life may indeed be purposeful and just not go waste and in vain.

कस्य मृजाना अति यन्ति रिप्रमायुर्दघानाः प्रतरं नवीयः

It exhorts us that we should make ourselves pious by sifting our bad habits in the sieve of our souls. In this way we can remove them and get a new lease of long life. Mahatma Buddha says – “As a goldsmith does away the dross and filth of gold and silver, in the same way intelligent people should do away with their bad habits and vices from their hearts one by one”. Swami Dayananda Saraswati has written – “This is the custom of gentle people that after knowing the virtues and vices of others and their own, they acquire the virtues and give up the vices”.

Never be on the look-out of others’ faults and weaknesses. See your own faults instead through self-introspection. In *Sabarmati Ashram*, an Ashramite committed an offence. Another Ashramite wrote an anonymous letter complaining about this to Mahatma Gandhi. After his daily prayers, Mahatma Gandhi used to say a few words. On that day, he mentioned about the letter and said – “*First* it is wrong to write an anonymous letter on

such a matter. *Secondly*, when one points out one finger towards others, he should not forget this that the remaining three fingers point towards self’.

The best way to reform oneself is to attend some good congregation, which we generally call ‘*Satsang*’ and for that purpose, I would recommend you to attend the *Satsangs* of *Arya Samaj*, whose learned people come to give discourses on *Vedas*, *Upnishads*, *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata*, *Gita* and on such other exalted subjects which change the course of life for betterment. *Veda* itself says – ‘दूरे पूर्णेन वसति ऊनेन हीयते’ *i.e.*, the company of learned, great souls, man advances towards nobility, whilst in the company of characterless people, he goes downwards and becomes sinful. A Sanskrit poet has described the advantages of *Satsang* as under:

यदि सत्संग निरतो, भविष्यसि भविष्यसि ।

अथ दुर्जन संसर्गे, पतिष्यसि पतिष्यसि ॥

If you have the company of good people *i.e.*, if you attend *Satsang* as already explained above, your life will be made and you are bound to be someone meriting recognition. But if unfortunately you have bad company, then there is no end to your downfall. Shankaracharya has also advised that attend *Satsang* without fail. Maharishi Narad says – महरसंगस्तु दुर्लभो गम्भो इमोषश्च the company of great and learned people is difficult and scarce to come by; it is of utmost importance and makes life worth living. As a matter of fact, a person begins to realise his own self about

which he generally remains ignorant. This may appear ironical that we spend so much time, rather all the time at our disposal, to know about others, but never try to know our own self. Chanakya says सत्संगद भवति हि साक्षुना खलानाम् by *Satsang*, even bad and wicked people are changed to good ones. Goswami Tulsidas has also written in his famous '*Ramacharit Manas*':

सट सुथरहिं सत्संगति पाई।
पारस परस कुधातु सुहाई॥

As the touch of Paras (a stone which can change base metals into gold) changes base metals into gold, similarly foolish people are reformed in the company of good people.

In this context, I would like to illustrate here a very good discussion between Vishnu Bhagwan and Raja Bali. Once Vishnuji asked Raja Bali, “Would you like to go to hell in the company of good people or to heaven in the company of bad people?” You will wonder at Bali's reply, “I would like to go to hell in the company of good people”. Bhagwan Vishnu then asked him the reason for choosing hell, and not heaven. Bali replied – “Where there are good and noble people, there is heaven and where there are bad and evil people, there is hell. Because the bad people will make hell of the heaven by their base actions, whilst good people will change hell into heaven by their noble deeds”.

Hence my dear students! do away with bad habits if there are any in you now and at once. No dilly-dallying on this – procrastination is not going to help you. You have to help yourself by firm determination and perseverance. Remember this life is a boon to you from God, because in this human body all divinity resides. And the golden opportunity is awaiting you since you are the fortunate ones who are studying in schools, colleges and other educational institutions, while many of your brethren have been denied this opportunity. Then why barter away this divine and golden opportunity for such trifles which are meaningless. Hence resolve and advance further; there is no such impediment which can stop you.

5

Help

Man being a social animal, he has to take help from others in all his activities, without which he could not have been what he is today. From the time of birth, the child is looked after by the parents and up to the time of his youth, it is the society which makes him worthwhile. When just a baby, in what a helpless position he is! For all his needs, it is the mother who cares. Not only feeding him from her breast, but also keeps him clean; she washes the child's urine and excreta, gives her bath, because at that age, a man's child is worse than an animal. That is why in our *Shastras*, a child has been called "*Pashu*", i.e., animal, since he has no knowledge whatsoever and has to be made a Man after giving him proper education. So, we all require help from others, to reach the stage of being a Man. First from parents, then from teachers and subsequently from the society as a whole. As a matter of fact, at all stages the help of the society in which we are born and brought up is

available in the shape of various facilities which we all enjoy.

Think for a moment, if a man is stranded on an island where there is no one and no facilities either on which we subsist. Then how much labour he will have to do even to procure his daily requirements of food and clothing. With all his labour, he cannot get such fine food and clothing as he is getting now. You might perhaps have read the tale of Robinson Crusoe, which gives a clear idea if one has to face such a situation. Thus, we are all indebted to the society for all that we get and is it not our duty to pay this debt? Therefore, we should also lend a helping hand to those who need it. Herein comes the role which we should consider our basic responsibility to undertake, because it is not good and respectable to take and take and never give. This requires us to make ourselves able to discharge this onerous duty. If we are ourselves good for nothing, then how can we help others!

In this world there are good as well as bad people, which in our *Shastras* have been referred to as '*Devas*' and '*Rakshasas*'. Some poet of Sanskrit has very nicely

described the tendency of these two in the following *Shloka*:

विद्या विवादाय, धनं मदाय, शक्ति परेषां पर पीडनाय ।
खलस्य साधो विपरीतमेतत्, ज्ञानाय दानाय च रक्षणाय ॥

This means that the bad people if educated and learned will quarrel amongst themselves on small issues and make it a point of prestige; if wealthy, they will be proud of their wealth and in case they are physically strong, they will torment the weak. But on the other hand, good and gentle people if educated and learned, they will converse with each other to gain some more knowledge; if wealthy, they will give alms to the poor and needy, and in case they are physically strong, they will protect the weak. That is why, there is greater need for making people good and gentle, so that they help others, and not trouble them as the bad people do when in power of any or all of the three kinds, described in the Shloka, viz., education, wealth and strength. Hence, we should always have this feeling of helping others in any way we can, if we want this world to make worth living.

In *Vedas* it has been said that the house which cannot give to a beggar or needy, cannot be called a house – it is not worth

this epithet. In another *Mantra*, man has been exhorted शतहस्त समाहर सहस्त्रहस्त संकिर. Oh Man! you earn with hundreds of hands and disburse that with thousands of hands. In other words, we should be able to earn as much as hundred people can, but through hard work and intelligence. And distribute that wealth so earned in thousands of people. Do not be greedy and selfish, because nothing material is going to accompany you; only your good or bad deeds will. Whatever you give, give it with faith and earnestness. In another Sanskrit *Shloka* it has been said that the ornament of a hand is giving alms – हस्तस्य भूषणं दानम्। Mahatma Vidur has stated about the dignity of alms-giving as under:

द्वावम्भसि निवेष्टव्यौ गले बध्वा दृढां शिलाम् ॥
धनवन्तमदातारं दरिद्रं चातपस्विनम् ॥

He says that these two people should be drowned in water after tying a heavy stone in their necks – who (i) a rich man who does not give alms and does not help the poor and the needy and (ii) a poor man who does not work hard and observe austerity and penance. In brief, it means that a rich man must help the needy and poor, whilst a poor man must work very hard and lead a life of austerity and penance. Because this is a great opportunity so afforded to these two to help themselves in the best manner possible.

There are many verses in the *Vedas* on this subject. Here I give the gist of a few. A businessman or trader, who does not help the needy and poor, even though he is wealthy, such

a man is not respected among the good people. On the other hand, the wealthy persons who always give alms and are ever ready to help the needy and poor, they are respected by all and such people are considered as the glory of an assembly. They shine like the sun and because of their large heartedness, they are loved by the people. Thus, they carve their name in the temple of fame and become immortal for all times to come. Who does not know the names of Raja Dilip, Raja Raghu, Raja Ramachandraji, Raja Vikramaditya and Raja Bhoj! Besides, there have been many ordinary people also, who because of their habit to help others, have become immortal **कीर्तियसस्य रा जीवति** Fame or renown makes a person live forever.

Charity or giving help to others never goes in vain. When you help someone, you must be feeling in your inner the pleasure, which it is difficult to express in words. The giver gets inner pleasure, as also the blessings of those whom you help. So, giving something to others has double advantage.

You might have heard this Hindi proverb **नेकी कर कुएं मे डाल**. It means that give charity or help others and forget it at once. But in case you expect something in return, then it is neither charity nor help, it becomes business. Even to advertise that you have done this or that, given so much in charity and help to others, is not desirable. Man has never been granted inner happiness or pleasure by wealth or riches because there is no such ingredient in wealth which can give

you pleasure. But when it is spent in helping the poor and needy and given in charity, then the real happiness and pleasure comes in life. The famous well-known writer John Ruskin received Ten lakh dollars once and he spent all the money in charity and helping others. He helped poor students with his money so that they could continue their studies, got houses constructed for the labourers. He also made a plan and executed it to convert some infertile land lying on the outskirts of London into fertile land. He distributed that land to the landless farmers. In addition to whatever income he had from his books, he spent that all for the good and uplift of the poor. Ruskin has written about eighty books and all of his literature consists of themes and ideas which relate to the welfare of mankind. Mahatma Gandhi has acknowledged in his autobiography that Ruskin's book '*Unto the Last*' had a great influence on him.

God has created this universe on the basis of help—the sun the moon and the innumerable stars are all giving us help: the mountains and the rivers, the trees and all the animals are always helping man. Then how can man ignore this universal tradition? If he does so, he will be hastening his own doom. There is a quotation in Sanskrit यथा ब्रह्माण्डे तथा पिण्डे As the universe, so is the body. We may now think of our body—how it works? This is a very complex machinery, consisting of 72,72,10,202 nerves and tissues. And all of them are so interwoven that they assist each other in their functioning. Even in our daily routine, hand picks up

the morsel of food, it quickly passes on to the mouth, but before the mouth grasps it, the eyes inspect it in a quick glance; the teeth fully masticate it and then pass it on the stomach through the throat; stomach does not keep it to itself, but distributes it to the various parts of the body. If this procedure of passing on to the next, stops somewhere, then you know, you will become sick. Hence this chain of giving to others or helping each other makes our existence possible. So, life is a chain of 'give' and 'take' and the entire universe expends on this unending chain or process.

This is a divine process and man must contribute his own share in this divinity. Because Man is the best creation of God, the superior most in all the beings. He is virtually the king in this world. He should, therefore, copy his creator, who has bestowed so much to us – this whole earth full of gold and treasures and from the womb of which we get all types of foodstuffs, grain, fruits, vegetables, flowers, medicinal plants and what not! Hence, we should make ourselves able to give to others. Students can also contribute in this noble task in whatever way they can according to their different positions. Those who cannot give physically or materially, can at least wish good to all.

6

In Harness

To keep oneself busy in his duty is known as to be in harness. Man has been born in this world, not to spend his life like other animals and birds, but to acquire as much knowledge as possible in his childhood and thereafter to put that knowledge into use in such a way as to make this world more prosperous and leave a better world behind. Hence, the necessity to keep on doing something useful to the society and in case you are really able to contribute worth remembering, then you will certainly make a landmark in the history of mankind. This is possible only when you discard selfishness altogether and work with a zeal for the cause which you have endeared to your heart. It needs constant vigilance and sacrifice of your own comforts and pleasures for the good of others. Such people rise above petty gains and remain undisturbed by the greed and

temptations of this world. Those who devote their lives in this manner, about them Longfellow writes:

Trust no future, however pleasant,
Let the dead past bury its dead.
Act—act in the living present,
Heart within and God overhead.

Remember 'Actions speak louder than words'. Those who only sing their own praise and do little, lose their respect and such public men are ultimately discarded by the people. We should be sincere in what we do and need not proclaim, because we are to be judged by our actions. The one cardinal fact which nobody should forget is that the importance of life is in action. Idlers have no place in this world which itself keeps on moving without any pause. Similarly, all stars and planets move and revolve in their spheres. Not only that, even the smallest atom is action packed, then Oh Man! how can you think of taking test and break the norms, laid down by God almighty, which even the smallest particle of nature follows. Scientists tell us that the existence and life of the whole cosmos depends on their movement and if they stop, catastrophe or wholesale destruction will follow. In the same way, a

man if idle is worse than dead. This existence and life demand that he should keep on moving and working all the time. As a matter of fact, we are always at all times doing something or the other, though we may not realise this. Therefore, why not do something useful to yourself and to others and that can also be doing your duty well in such a way that others may also get inspiration from you.

The world is very much competitive these days and life has become a root of struggle and only the fittest can survive in such an atmosphere. *Veda says* only the brave can enjoy the pleasures of this world. The weaklings are likely to be elbowed out. And this world has no place for weak, coward and powerless people; they are a burden on society and the nation. A country is as much strong or weak as the number of such people and, therefore, it is most essential for the rulers to manage the affairs by adopting such measures that not even a single hand remains idle. In so far as students are concerned, they have all the work to do in their daily life in the shape of studies and such other things which their elders and teachers or professors expect of them. Remember that no work is big or small because even the smallest task is important in life. Every cog has a

place in a big machine, without which it cannot function.

Hence, obey your elders and put your heart and soul in whatever you do. This is going to help you in your life in long run.

Your life may be worthwhile and you may be great, for this it is essential that you should have a storehouse of patience and indomitable courage. When you thus acquire confidence in your ability and power, which actually come by constant practice of doing your duty in the best manner possible, then you will realise that there is nothing that which you cannot do. In this way, your trust in self will motivate you to undertake great tasks in hand and these will look very ordinary to you to accomplish, whilst others will gasp with wonder at your competence and magnifying personality. There is no doubt that you can do wonders, but for this it is necessary that your aim should be high and to that end you must work hard with devotion and intelligently. All the great men of the world worked hard and honestly to attain their aim and they were successful in their endeavour. Idleness and procrastination are the two great enemies and we have to be ever watchful, lest these may not ensnare us in their trap.

Do not be discouraged by any temporary setback; march onward and onward. Leave aside Man, even a tiny bird works hard in making her nest. You might have seen how carefully she carries the twigs in her beak and then places them one by one in an order. But many a time the twigs fall down; she does not lose courage, picks them up again and again and at last her nest is ready. So, difficulties and problems are bound to arise, more so if your aim is high. Only small things can be achieved by small efforts and great tasks would certainly need great efforts commensurate to their height and greatness. Never lose courage and patience; persevere in your endeavour all the more, as a Hindi poet has said, encouraging us:

कभी निराश न होकर बैठो, कभी न दुःख में घबराओ ।
कर्तव्यों को पालन करके, आगे ही बढ़ते जाओ॥

Never lose hope and get disappointed. Never be perplexed by troubles. March forward, doing your duties well. Life's path is full of thorns and weeds; you may have to face difficulties and hurdles all the way but be prepared for them. A young man like you does not even care to look at them because he surpasses them all in no time and makes his way clear amongst them all.

He has no time to ponder over these trifles, because he has to go far.

Rabindra Nath Tagore, when appearing in the I.C.S. examination in England, fell down from the horse in the horse race. He was not disappointed, but he said, 'I fell to rise'. These are memorable words and indeed he did rise to such a great height in his life that on his immortal book "*Gitanjali*" he was awarded the Nobel Prize. Because of his name and fame, he is still alive and will live forever. Never make excuses of your adverse circumstances and the absence of proper means. This is nothing but cowardliness. You are not to be guided by the circumstances, but it is within you to change them in your favour. Therein lies your greatness. The illustrious example of Ramachandraji Maharaj is there for all to see. He was banished to exile for fourteen long years and remember that Rama was the son of a king, who led a luxurious life. Yet he is remembered today because he did almost impossible task of annihilating the mighty King Ravana of Lanka and thus the *Rakshasa* culture which was fast spreading in Ravana's reign all over the globe, was put to an end, and the *Vedic* culture was once again resurrected. Rama was able to accomplish this formidable task against all

odds. Then how can the world forget him and he will never be forgotten till the last.

Alexander Pope writes – “Only the brave deserves the fair”. This world does not care for weak; it respects the mighty and powerful. Therefore, young men! it is your time and why don't you therefore seize this golden opportunity and take a ride on the horse of time. The laborious bee gets the honey. The Sun, the Moon and all the Stars are moving constantly and they exhort us also not to fall asleep, but move on. Carlyle says:

Like a star,
That maketh not haste,
That takes not rest,
Be each-one fulfilling,
His God-given hest.

I may now tell you some very important points:

Perform the easy and routine jobs, as if they are difficult. Prepare yourself well and take keen interest. And do the difficult jobs in a mood and manner as if these are quite easy.

Make it a habit to do such jobs daily, which you generally want to put off. In this way, you will be habituated to do your duties without much trouble.

Keep account of two things – (i) of your money and (ii) of your time. If you can without any compunction speak about these two things as to how you spend these, money and time (a pice and a second), then you are certainly a student of character.

Having taken a decision. when you have started to work accordingly, do away with all the doubts from your mind and just wait for the outcome.

If you do your work carelessly, then its charm an importance is lost, and how can you expect success then?

Do your work with such a confidence that failure is impossible.

Having done your work, forget about it. Relax and get fresh air so that your mind may become fresh, as it is more important.

Do not always remain scared that you may not commit mistakes. This timidness is very harmful in life.

Forget your worries before going to sleep. In this way, your sleep will give you more power to work the next day. Hard work brings good sleep.

It is not waste of time if you are engaged on some small task, in case you are able to utilize your experience with ability and intelligence in future.

Concluding, I may quote the words of a great statesman, who said that our places of duty or work are our Temples and Mosques, our Churches and our Gurudwaras; doing our duties well, honestly and sincerely is our best worship. In this connection, a story comes to my mind when a king, who was very much worried about the affairs of his State, as the administration was not doing well, approached a *Mahatma* for his advice in the matter. The *Mahatma* thought for a moment and then told the king that it was very simple. The king became happy at this and eagerly asked for the simple remedy. You know, what the *Mahatma* said – If all the functionaries of your State, down from a sweeper to a Minister – be he a professor, teacher or judge, businessman or farmer, trader or

customer, in short, all the citizens of your State, do their duties in their respective spheres honestly and sincerely, then all the ills of your State will vanish in no time.

Remember that this sense of duty has to be inculcated in the young minds, so that they understand the importance of their work and not neglect it for one reason or the other. Therefore, if you want to do well in your life, as also to be an asset to your country and the nation, then be ever-ready to do the bidding of the call of your duty – Be in Harness.

Humanity

Man is the best creation of God. In *Vedas*. Man has been called as the immortal son of the Almighty. But all who are born have to die one day, sooner or later. This is correct. Our bodies comprising of the five elements are sure to perish, but if we do some noble deeds in our life, our name will live forever. And this is the purpose of humanity which we should never lose sight of at any moment in our life.

To the students here, I want to put one simple question – For what purpose have you come to your school or college? If I am asked to answer this, I would say that the purpose of sending our children to educational institutions is that they may learn something worthwhile, thereby doing away with their ignorance. In *Vedic* language, it is known as 'Making them human-beings from animals.' In *Shastras*, a child has been called, '*Pashu*' i.e., an animal, who has no knowledge of most of the things. He moves by instinct alone and

hardly knows the difference between good and evil. Unfortunately, this aspect of education is being ignored these days and the result is before us to see. In *Rig Veda*, there is a *Mantra*, which is worth quoting:

तन्तुं तन्वन् रजसो भानुमन्वि हि ज्योतिष्मतः पथो रक्ष धिया
कृतान् । अनुल्वणं वयत जोगवामपो मनुर्भव जनया दैव्यं जनम् ॥

Here Man has been asked to follow the path of light while doing his worldly duties, whatever these are. He should protect the illuminated paths, already shown by learned people before us. Spread the knowledge and do deeds in an unselfish and straightforward manner constantly. BE A MAN and light the path of humanity which is divine. In this verse, it is clearly told that Man's purpose is to acquire knowledge as much as possible and impart it to others. *Veda* says – Be a Man. We are all human beings in shape and size, in form and contours, but what the *Veda* hints at is that we should have those qualities of virtuous conduct and good behaviour, our habits should also confirm to those of noble souls and last of all our actions and deeds should be beneficial to all.

I have to say ruefully that Man does not come up to this expectation today. He has slipped from his high pedestal which was given to him and feels pleasure in doing base actions, not behaving a human being. Alexander Dumas says:

Wanted men,
Not systems fit and wise,
Not faiths and rigid eyes,
Nor wealth in mountain piles,
Nor power with gracious smiles,
Not even potent pen –

Wanted men.

It looks like an advertisement. But he has only told what is not wanted in a Man; what is required, that he has not cared to specify. These he considers that a Man ought to know! A Hindi poet has written:

मनुष्य सोई जानिये, जाहि विवेक विचार ।
जाहि विवेक विचार नहि, सो नर ढोर गंवार ॥

A man can only be known by his thoughts and understanding. One who does not possess these, he is just an animal in the shape of man. In schools and

colleges, children ought to be taught what to think, how to think, as also they should acquire the knowledge of understanding. So, physical and mental development is the aim of education. That ought to be in the right direction, so that he is able to appreciate the problems which the mankind is facing today and is able to contribute his mite in solving them. We all have to accept this challenge boldly, lest the coming generations may curse us for our lapses.

Another Hindi poet has sung the qualities of a Man as under:

आपदा के अग्रिपथ पर, जो कभी रुकना न जाने ।
दैन्य के अभिशाप में भी, जो कभी झुकना न जाने ।
प्रलय झंझावत में भी, भंवर में फंसना न जाने ;
गीतमय जीवन बना ले, गीत को ही धर्म माने ।
गा सके संघर्ष में हंसकर सदा जो स्वर वही है ;
जो हिमालय सा उठ, जीवन धरा पर नर वही है ॥

One who does not know to stop in the face of difficulties and goes on treading on the fire-path ; who does not know to bend in poverty and in adversity; who does not know to be trapped in a whirlpool even in a storm or tempest; who goes on

singing merrily as if his life is but a song; who can sing in the same voice even in the most adverse circumstances, and rises like the Himalayan Mountain, such a person can really be called a Man on this earth. With his indomitable courage, he advances fearlessly on his chosen path and no obstacle on earth can stop him. Such souls have the good of others in their heart, as they make life worth living for others whilst sacrificing their own comforts and life.

The well known poet Maithili Sharan Gupt writes on this subject:

विचार लो कि मर्त्य हो, न मृत्यु से डरो कभी,
मरो परंतु यों मरो कि याद जो करें सभी।
हुई न जो सुमृत्यु तो वृथा मरे वृथा जिये,
मरा नहीं वही कि जो जिया है और के लिये।
यही पशु प्रवर्त्ति है, आप-आप ही चरे,
वही मनुष्य है कि जो मनुष्य के लिए मरे ॥

Think that you are mortal; then never be afraid of death: die such a death that people may remember you. If such a good death has not been achieved, then life and death is useless. Because he does not die, who lives for the sake of others. This is the

tendency of the animals to think of self only; He is the Man, who dies for the sake of others. We find such noble thoughts on the role of man, and many writers and poets have written and sung in praise of Man. Indeed, Man is the most divine creation of God and he has to discharge his obligations as is expected of him.

Saint Confucius says that a good human being should have the followings traits:

One who does not blame others for his failure, nor does he laugh at those who fail in their attempts.

One who is of firm resolve and never quarrels with his opponents. He meets everyone with love and never takes side of this group or that group.

One who accumulates virtues and shuns vices.

One who remains happy and keeps away vanity.

One who always tries to know the truth.

One who comes to everybody's help unasked. But it is difficult to please him, because he can be pleased by truth alone, and not by flattery.

One who sees his own fault, and not of others.

One who is friendly with all, but is not attached to any.

One who considers his ability as his wealth, and not the money.

One who is always mild and sober.

Now we can easily see whether we have these qualities in us or not, and judge ourselves. It may be that we possess some and not all. We should, therefore, endeavour to attain those attributes also which we lack. But one thing is certain that only a person with understanding and knowledge would try to rediscover his own self.

Concluding, I would like to advise you to have some hobby. In my opinion, the gardening of words and phrases should be very useful to you. Once you develop your interest in this hobby, you will see its magnetic effect which it will have on you. Your personality will

enhance, with the increase of your knowledge simultaneously. As a gardener looks after the plants and flowers, similarly you will find yourself garnering different types of words and phrases. You may note those which you like in your notebook and in your spare time, you can read them through in your leisure hours. What can be the source of this gardening? Words, phrases, proverbs, quotations, *Mantras*, *Shlokas*, etc., can be found in all good books of literature of any language. Once you inculcate this interest, it will open a new horizon for you. Remember – ‘where there is a will, there is a way’. If you devote only ten to fifteen minutes in reciting these daily loudly, then these will become yours for all time. You will feel elated in expressing your thoughts and this is going to be very easy soon. Because words, phrases, *Mantras*, *shlokas* will come on your tongue automatically, without much effort.

In this gardening, there is no fear of sun or rain, you can do this anywhere and everywhere, even while travelling in a bus or train. Therefore, begin this practice from now on and it is going to take such a strong hold on you that soon after you would never like to give it up. In this simple manner, will become a very good orator and writer, which are bound to give you a name and fame in

the long run. As I said earlier, knowledge is humanity. Thus, you will be a noble human being and you will guide others also to be like you.

8

Holy

The dictionary meaning of the word 'holy' is that which is sacred, pious and free from sin and is perfect in a moral sense. All of us want to be holy, sacred and pious and for that purpose, we take daily bath, because 'Cleanliness is next to Godliness'. But cleanliness or holiness is of two kinds – one is of the body and we may call this external holiness and the other is of heart and soul. This latter one is more important and our ancient sages and saints laid great emphasis on maintaining the inner cleanliness or holiness. In this connection, Manu Maharaj has written as under:

अद्भिर्गात्राणि शुध्यन्ति मनः सत्येन शुध्यति ।
विद्यातपोभ्यां भूतात्मा बद्धिर्जानेन शुध्यति ॥

In this verse, Manu says that the body is cleansed by water. Only we can clean our bodies with water but our Minds are cleansed by truth. Soul can be cleansed with

education and penance, while your brain or intelligence can be cleaned by knowledge and learning. So, in this verse, Manu has told us, how to clean your heart and soul, your mind and your intelligence. If we practise these in our life, we will make ourselves pure and sacred. But these days, people have acquired a sort of blind faith and think erroneously that our sins can be washed if we take bath in the river Ganga. They are mistaken in their belief. Ganga's water is pure and, of course, it gives great pleasure to take a dip in this holy river, but again I want to draw your attention to the fact that inner holiness can only be acquired by truthfulness, education, knowledge and learning. Kabir says in this context:

न्हाय पोये क्या भया, जो मन का मैल न जाय ।
मीन सदा जल में रहे, धोये बास न जाय ॥

What is the good of washing and cleaning, if the dirt of your Mind has not been removed? A fish always remains in the water, yet it gives bad and foul smell. In another couplet, Kabir says:

भीतर से मैलो हियो, बाहर रूप अनेक ।
नारायण तासो भलो, कौआ तन-मन एक ॥

The inner heart is dirty, but from outside really beautiful. A crow is better than such a person, because it is just the same both in body and mind.

In *Vedas* there are many *Mantras* or verses extolling the virtues of holiness and a votary always prays and acts to acquire purity in his life. In order to acquire holiness our food should also be pure, because the kind of food we take, has a great influence on our mind. 'जैसा खाये अन्न, वैसा बने मन' The mind is as holy or pure, as the food we eat. Then besides the quality of food, it is also a factor as to how we have earned it. Then money utilized to procure food should also be earned by hard and noble work and the means employed to get the money should also be good and pure. Because Manu says 'अर्थ शुचिः परम शुचिः' The best form of purity is the purity of the wealth we earn. It should not have been earned by exploitation of the poor and by such other methods which are un desirable. Our *Shastras* say:

आहार शुद्धौ, सत्त्व शुद्धिः, सत्त्व शद्धौ, ध्रुवा स्मृति,
स्मृतिलंभे सर्वदोषानां विप्रमोक्षः ।

If the food is pure and holy, then the heart becomes likewise; by heart being pure, the memory becomes

firm; such a memory becomes ultimately the cause in the removal of all the ills and shortcomings. In *Gita* also, Bhagwan Krishna has narrated that pure and holy food has a great and permanent effect on the life of a man. But we are most careless about our food these days and we eat at all places and at any time, without any consideration, whatsoever. Also, the means must be in consonance with the ends. Food prepared by the money, earned by theft or deceit or through such ignoble means can never uplift a Man. It is bound to create bad thoughts in his mind.

In the ancient past, our *Rishis* and *Munis* had such a good memory that they remembered all the Vedas by heart and could recite them as and when they thought fit. Students need have a very good memory and for this if they adopt the method as was used by our *Rishis*, they can also perform such feats, which they think mysterious nowadays. As a matter of fact, there is no mystery in this, but *sattvic* food and constant practice. In the following *Mantra*, a devotee is praying that he should be pure and holy:

पुनन्तु मा देवजना, पुनन्तु मनसा धियः ।
पुनन्तु विश्वाभूतानि जातवेदः पुनीहि मा ॥

I may be purified by the educated and learned people; all the actions which I perform may purify me. All the living beings, earth, water, fire, air and sky, *etc.*, *viz.*, the five basic elements may purify me. God may also purify me. Now this prayer has a great significance in that if one leads the company of educated people, he is bound to be like them. One's actions can purify him, if he does good, holy and noble deeds, because actions beneficial to all can only have virtuous effects. In so far as the five elements are concerned, our bodies are composed of these and if we purify them by *yajna* (sacrifice in fire—*Agnihotra*), then these devas will be pure and thereby our body will also become pure. Lastly, how God will purify us? God is all divine, holy and pure. His thought alone makes the thinker pure because any impure thought or idea can never pass through the mind of a person, who is fully engrossed in His prayer. In another verse again, he prays:

द्रुपदादिव ममुचानः स्विन्नः स्नात्वा मलादिव ।
पूतं पवित्रेणवाज्यं विश्वे शुम्भन्तु मैनसः ॥

As an animal gets free from the stake with which it is tied, as a man becomes pure after taking bath from perspiration, dirt, *etc.*; as *Ghee* becomes pure after it is

filtered through a sieve, in the same way, educated people, mother, father and teachers, *etc.*, may purify me of my sins and thus make me holy. Actually, we all want to do away with our bad traits, but only a few try in their life to curb these evils, and so long as we remain complacent and dilly-dally, nothing is going to be achieved. Because even after trying hard, these weaknesses overcome us sometimes and we feel helpless and become their prey. Therefore, we have to be very cautious against their attack, since it appears pleasant outwardly, but most harmful in the long run.

Someone has very wisely said – ‘The foolish seek for wealth, the wise for perfection’. As a student, you are trying your best to garner knowledge and the end-result of that knowledge is that you be a perfect Man. Wealth or money matters little, it is bound to come to you, once you have the qualities in you, for which you are eagerly looking forward and the time is not far off when you will have to face the world. To own good qualities, having virtuous traits and noble ideas is nothing but holy. These will stand you in good stead in your future life. In *Upnishads* and also in *Veda*, our body has been called ‘*Ayodhya*’, i.e., which cannot be conquered by anyone. It is invincible, but when? Only if you are of firm determination and resolve to advance towards

divinity and holiness. Man is nothing, but what he thinks. Hence your thoughts should be pure and elevating, never of bad things. Our body has also been called as the abode of Gods. In our body, '*devatas*' all good, pure and holy being exist. Our origins are known as '*Devas*' because they help always and it is up to us to maintain their character as Gods lest by our thinking and actions we may not convert them to devils.

You get weekly holiday, besides many other holidays which come too often, more so in the schools and colleges. But have you ever thought what holiday means? Obviously, its terminology suggests that it is a day on which you have to do some holy task, which because of our carelessness, we have altogether forgotten. In my opinion, all days ought to be holy-days, because we should never do any such thing which is unholy in character or appearance. But on a holiday, students should take stock of their past six days, whether they have per chance or by mistake erred somewhere, or done any such act which may bring bad name not only individually or personally, but also to the institution and to the family to which they belong. You are here to learn all good things – the purpose of education is not only to limit you to the three R's. I am sure, you all understand this quite well. Then shoulder

this responsibility with courage and honour and try to be an asset to the organisation to which you belong. In case a student wastes his time in undesirable activities, he not only darkens his own future, he is also bringing bad name to all.

So, please never forget this fact that you are the hope of future and people look to you, so that the name of our holy land be able to preserve its heritage.

9

Honour

What is honour and how can it be achieved in life? Honour means name, fame, glory or respect and reputation which a person is given by the people because of the nobility of his mind and excellence of character and overall his love and service to the mankind at large. Of course, this must be selfless service, without any limitations and reservations. In our country twice in a year—on Republic Day and also on Independence Day, our Government honours some people from all walks of life and bestows them with various titles, decorations, encomiums, *etc.*, for their excellence in arts, science, sports, bravery and so on. Also, in schools and colleges, students who are able to achieve a distinguished position either in their class, or in any subject are given various kinds of reward either from their institutions or from the Government. Even the selected teachers and professors also get special awards and honours for their excellent work, which they had done in their profession.

These awards and honours are introduced so that others may get inspiration and the awardees may have some satisfaction about the recognition of their services, so well performed by them even at the cost of their comforts. In this connection, Milton, the great poet, says

Fame is the spur that clear spirit doth raise,
The last infirmity of noble minds,
To scorn delight and live laborious days.

For noble persons, it is not money or wealth. But name and fame honour and respect, which goads them to work hard and lead a life of austerity and hardship. Because to achieve fame is the last weakness of noble minds, for the sake of which, they labour hard day and night and kick all the pleasures of life.

A Hindi poet has written the following couplet in this context:

अधम चाहते सम्पत्ति, मध्यम धन अरु मान ।
उत्तम चाहे मान को, ताको धन सम्मान ॥

Inferior persons always want money or wealth, middle class persons want wealth and honour both. But the

excellent people always want honour and respect because for them their honour is their wealth. It is the mark of nobility who care little for anything else when it comes to save one's honour. They even stake their life, but would never brook the loss of their honour under any circumstances. For them, life without honour, is useless. As a matter of fact, only under such conditions, their tenacity and character come to the fore and when they come out successful through such a fire, their name shines all the more and people remember them for their deeds of glory for all time to come. Their name is firmly imprinted on the page of history and the coming generations get inspiration from them. That is why, such people are never dead, because they become immortal in their name and fame. People coin songs of their deeds of nobility and valour, which are fondly sung by young and old on important occasions.

A Hindi poet says:

घटने न देना मान, करना मोह मत धन-धाम का ।
यदि मान ही जाता रहा, तो धन रहा किस काम का ॥

Never let your respect and honour diminish because of the love of wealth or place. Because if honour goes,

then what is the value of your wealth! Wealth is only a means to make our life graceful and happy but in case under certain circumstances, it becomes the cause of disgrace, then it is better to discard such wealth.

Nowadays many people are engaged in ignoble and undesirable activities, which are harmful to the country, for the sake of earning wealth. For example, gambling, smuggling and dealing in narcotics, *etc.*, are such activities which any good person would not like to undertake. Even the business or trade of cigarettes, liquor and meat is not conducive to the interests of a healthy society.

In *Vedas*, there are many verses or *Mantras*, in which the excellence of honour has been described. For example, see the following:

यथेन्द्रो द्यावापृथिव्योर्यशस्त्वान् यथाप ओषधीषु यशस्वीः ।
एवा विश्वेषु देवेषु वयं सर्वेषु यशसः स्याम ॥

As in between the sky and the earth, the sun shines in his glory, as in the vegetation, water becomes glorified because it is the main cause of their life, similarly, we may also become glorified among the educated and learned people. Here, how nicely it has been told to us

that glory comes only when we do such good and noble deeds which are in the interest and welfare for the humanity as a whole. We have to break the four walls of selfishness to earn respect and honour from the people. Besides, we should have the capacity and qualities and many other good and noble traits, so that we are able to serve the people in the best manner possible. The examples of many great men are there to follow – Raja Harish Chandra, Maharaja Ramachandraji, Bhagwan Shri Krishna, Yudhishtir, Ramakrishna Param Hansa, Swami Vivekananda, Mahrishi. Dayanand Saraswati, Gautam Buddha and Mahatma Gandhi. Besides these great men, many young men and women who laid their lives for the sake of our country like Subhash Chandra Bose, Ram Prasad Bismil, Chandra Shekhar Azad and hundreds of others can never be forgotten, because they lived and died for the sake of our country. Now, it is for us to see that the independence won by these martyrs with their blood, remains intact, lest by our carelessness and selfishness it may be in jeopardy.

Remember the purpose and chief object of education is the formation of character. And it is the character which embodies all the fine qualities, a person ought to have. Unfortunately, this aspect is being ignored these days

and the result is there for all to see. To what degradation our student community has gone! The subject of education is controlled by the Government and it is for them to lay down a policy which should be in consonance with our culture and tradition. But the students go on strike for various other trifle issues. I wonder why they never think about their own future and force the authorities concerned to do away with this type of educational system which is not proving beneficial. The present system is a legacy of the British rule in India and the sooner it is scrapped, the better it would be for all. If we read through the ancient history of the hoary past, we find that disciples and students used to study in the *Ashramas* of the *Rishis* where all, be he a son of a monarch or a son of a beggar, was getting the same treatment, the same food and clothing. From these, they came out initiated into the four *Varnas*, according to their ability and inclination, without any other consideration, whatsoever. Usually, majority of them made name and fame in their respective fields of activity, because of their education and learning in their student life. That is why, our history is replete with great men and women who made their mark in life – they were not in dozens or scores, but in hundreds and thousands.

To this connection Manu Maharaj has written in his memorable book *Manusmriti* as under:

एतद् देश प्रसूतस्य सकाशादग्र जन्मनः ।
स्वं स्वं चरित्र शिक्षेरन् पृथिव्यां सर्व मानवाः ॥

In this verse, Manu Maharaj says that the people from all over the globe from far and wide, *i.e.*, from various other countries should come here and learn the lesson of behaviour and character from the learned *Brahmins* born in this country. This book was written about twenty-five lakh years back. Such was the character of the people of this country in those days. Even as late as two thousand years back, when the Chinese traveller Fahiyen visited this country, he wrote in his memoirs about the character of Indians. He says people did not lock their houses, there was never any theft and even the most valuable things, if left somewhere, were found intact by the owner. As an example, he has written that in those days Patna, then known as *Patliputra* was the capital of India. A purse made of cloth, containing one hundred gold coins, was thrown on the main road of *Patliputra* when there was nobody. When we went to see the purse next day, it was found tattered and the gold coins had spread all over the place. The purse was

obviously torn by the wheels of the carriages, but not a single coin was found missing. This shows the character of the people, as also their condition of living, *i.e.*, people were generally well-off and there was no poor to be seen.

In the end, I may once again request you to be vigilant and careful about your studies and do not let yourself be led away by useless trifles, because this is the most valuable time in your life, which is going to stand you in good stead, if spent well for the purpose for which you are here. Therefore, beware so that life may be worth-while, as a Hindi poet has said:

हंस के दुनिया मे मेरा कोई रोक मरा।
मौत बस अच्छी उसकी है, जो कुछ होके मरा ॥

Some people die laughing, enjoying life, while others weep throughout. But die they must one day. Those who become something and then die or die for the sake of something great, even death is good for them. Because such people such people never die—they live in the memory of the people forever.