



Inspiring Ideas

Mahatma Devesh Bhikshu

Sultan Chand & Sons

Publishers of Standard Educational Textbooks



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PREFACE

The Vedas are the repository of great knowledge. But our students do not find an easy access to them. Whether the fault lies with the parents or with the system of education that has utterly neglected our cultural heritage, the fact remains that our students are deprived of a great deal of vital knowledge that could be immensely helpful to them in their life. Keeping this situation in mind, I decided to choose a few seminal ideas from the Vedas and expand them into short passages relevant to the modern context. I feel concerned for the right upbringing of the Indian youth, for they are the only pledge that India will shortly get out of the social, political and moral morass. I shall feel eminently rewarded if our students go through this booklet, ponder over the ideas and seek inspiration to develop their personality physically, intellectually and spiritually.

With blessings,

Mahatma Devesh Bhikshu

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1

आरोह तमसो ज्योतिः {अथर्वेद }

From Darkness to Light

A student has to go higher and higher from darkness to light or say from ignorance to knowledge. Acquisition of knowledge is the greatest duty of a student and he is expected to perform this duty most sincerely and truthfully both in the interest of his own future and that of the nation. For this purpose, a student is sent to an educational institution, where he tries to gain knowledge under the guidance of his teachers.

According to the Vedic scriptures, illiteracy and ignorance are the greatest curse on mankind.

विद्या विहीनः पशुः

An illiterate person is just like an animal". Hence it is the first and foremost duty both of the parents and the Government to provide educational facilities to all. The knowledge of only three R's (viz., Reading, Writing and

Arithmetic) is not enough. True education consists in the simultaneous and balanced development of the intellectual and spiritual faculties of a person.

No human being deserves to be described as human unless properly educated. It is education alone that imparts knowledge and learning to a person and enables him to discharge his duties efficiently and effectively thereby making his own life qualitatively better and making this world a more congenial place to live in.



2

अश्मा भवतु नशतनूः {यजुर्वेद}

Body Strong as Stone

A student must possess a body as strong as stone, which remains unaffected by sun or rain. The mind inhabits the body and the two are integrally related.

शरीरमाघम खलु धर्म साधनम

Body is the means by which an individual is able to perform his duties well.” If a student remains sickly, his mind will become dull and listless, his entire approach to life will become lackadaisical and he will soon fall far behind the other students. Ultimate results are bound to be even more disastrous.

It is not very difficult to maintain good health provided students adhere to some norms in their daily life. Here are some points that all students will find useful in order to keep fit:

1. ***Food:*** Two vegetarian meals a day, rich in nutrients and properly balanced, should be quite adequate. Indiscriminate consumption of snacks or beverages in between the meals ultimately weakens the digestive system.
2. ***Sleep:*** A student should not sleep for more than six to seven hours at night, say from 10 p.m. to 4 or 5 a.m. Early rising not only keeps a student active and alert throughout the day but also provides him with ample time for comprehensive study.
3. ***Exercise:*** A student must take some exercise daily. Regular exercise is the key to physical fitness.

A student who is able to maintain good health will find it easy to do well in studies.



3

अग्निना अग्नि समिध्यते {ऋग्वेद}

Fire Enflames Fire

From one lighted candle or lamp, you can light many more candles and lamps. So is the case with education. One educated person can impart education to hundreds and thousands of others, without any loss to his ownself. In fact, sharing knowledge with others is bound to increase one's own knowledge.

— “ —
विद्या के वरदान की बड़ी अनोखी बात
ज्यों खर्चों त्यों त्यों बढ़े बिन खर्चे घट जात
— ” —

So, an intelligent student should help others who are weak in studies. It will not only make him a useful member of the society but also prove helpful in his own intellectual growth.

Teachers, Lecturers, Professors and Acharyas often take pride in telling that their students have made great strides in life and hold very high positions. It gives them great mental satisfaction to know that the education they imparted is becoming fruitful. There lies divinity in helping others to grow. Won't you like to partake of this divinity?



4 अभृत्यै स्वप्न {यजुर्वेद}

Sleep is Death

If a student is negligent in his studies, he is bound to fail. And to a student, failure in his examination is nothing short of death. It is a common experience that some unsuccessful students even commit suicide. Nothing can justify suicide. Suicide is escapism. It is also cowardice. But it does point out how important it is for a student to pass his examinations creditably.

A student must learn to work hard. He must take his studies with sincerity and earnestness. It must be realised that what is normally called intelligence is the cumulative effect of incessant toil. It is 10 per cent God-given talent and 90 per cent sweating 'and slogging. Every stone can produce a spark; only it needs brisk rubbing. So do not fight shy of hard work. Do not go to sleep.

It is also important to be awake to your weaknesses. These weaknesses may be of academic nature, or they may have their roots in your temperament. If you are

faced with an academic problem, seek prompt guidance from your teachers. If your weakness is temperamental, i.e., you are being unnecessarily lethargic or negligent, pull yourself up and apply yourself to the main task in hand.

आलस्यं हि मनुष्याणं इह लोके महान रिपुः -

Idleness is a great enemy of man in this world." No success is possible without a decisive victory over this enemy.



5

अक्षौर्मा दीव्यः {ऋग्वेद}

Do Not Gamble

Students should avoid gambling in any form whatsoever. The habit or desire of getting something for nothing is not only sinful but suicidal also. As should be evident to anyone familiar with the disastrous consequences of gambling in the lives of the Pandavas and Raja Nala, once a person falls a prey to the vice of gambling, it becomes very difficult to redeem him. His life becomes an unending tale of misfortunes and miseries. In most cases, it leads to total ruin.

Any undeserved or unearned gain or profit is spurned by noble people. They are contented with what rightfully belongs to them. They realise that gambling breeds greed, and greed is at the root of myriads of immoral practices that destroy one's peace of mind. Therefore, they curb this urge right in the beginning.

Students often resort to another form of gambling. They gamble in their studies. They leave out large chunks of their syllabus and prepare only selected portions. They do not realise that such a practice not

only makes them vulnerable to the element of chance but also means inadequate preparedness for life. A student passing his examinations by using short-cut methods will never have confidence in his own abilities.

Some other bad habits like smoking, drinking and the use of drugs like opium, marijuana, smack, etc., may be bracketed with gambling. It is very unfortunate that college and university students fall an easy prey to these habits. Students should beware of the damaging effects of these habits and keep off in the interest of their own future.



6

अमृत आयजामहे {ऋग्वेद}

Attain Immortality

“**कीर्तिर्यस्य स जीवति** – *One who gets name and fame becomes immortal.*” *Death, no doubt, is the ultimate destiny of man.*

Anyone who is born is to die one day. But those who work, live and die for others find their names permanently inscribed in the temple of fame. They perform yajna – sacrifice, which not only purifies and consecrates the atmosphere but also perpetuates the memory of their noble and virtuous deeds.

The habit of serving others is acquired early in life while one is still a student. Those students who have this urge or inclination in them are also hard-working and distinguished in their studies. The desire to serve and the ability to serve have to go together. If I have to guide somebody, I must know the way myself. So a student must equip himself well before undertaking the service of others.

Besides immortalising a person, education also liberates him.

— “
सा विद्या या विमुक्तये
” —

Education is that which grants you freedom.” It makes you self- sufficient or self-reliant. If even after being educated you are dependent on someone else for the fulfillment of your needs, it means that the process of your education has been lacking in something essential.

Real education also makes a person understand the ultimate purpose of human life. The ultimate purpose is selfless service of mankind. For it is only this that can free us from bondage. One who is educated in the real sense of the term is helpful to others at all times in his life but, in particular, he dedicates himself exclusively to the service of others after he has successfully lived through Brahmacharya and Grihastha Ashramas.



7

अन्यो अन्यमभिहृत {अथर्वेद }

Love Each Other

Love is a divine quality. It can enable us to create a halo of peace, amity and cheer all around us. Unfortunately, we are not able to curb our selfish tendencies. We forget that the edifice of peace and happiness is raised on the foundation of love, which calls for a great deal of self-sacrifice.

Yajna-sacrifice teaches us to love all, without any reservations whatsoever. According to the yajna - norms, students are expected to show proper regard for their elders, behave politely with their equals and be kind and helpful to the younger ones. As a matter of fact, this kind of behaviour is expected of all but it is the hall-mark of a good student.

There should be no room for cruelty in our hearts. Cruelty is an animal trait. It degrades a man to the level of a beast. A person harbouring cruel inclinations in his heart does not deserve to be called a human being. He is a beast masquerading as a human being.

In addition to providing enlightenment, an important purpose of education is to enable students to overcome negative tendencies like cruelty and replace them by positive, constructive tendencies like love. If education does not kindle love and fellow-feeling in a person, his education has been a futile process. Education does not consist in mechanical assembling of facts in one's mind; it is a process of self-purification and upliftment. A Hindi poet says:

— “
पोथी पढ़ पढ़ जग मुआ, पंडित भया न कोय ।
ढाई आखर प्रेम के, पढ़े सो पंडित होय ॥
” —

People have wasted lives in reading books to acquire knowledge, but mere reading of books does not make anyone learned. A truly learned person is he who understands the value of love in life.

Selfless love is the strongest binding force in all families, societies and nations.





अयं मे हस्तो भगवान्{अथर्वेद }

Son Follows Father

Majority of children in our country take up the occupation of their father when they grow up. They imbibe its essentials in their formative years and the transition from a student to a professional is smooth and easy in their case. Even otherwise, job opportunities in India are scarce. But the above words from the Atharva Veda also imply that the son naturally inherits the moral and spiritual values of his father.

We often hear parents complaining about the conduct of their children. One of the usual complaints is that their children don't obey them. They forget that their children are merely emulating them. Children learn from the examples set before them. If parents do not adhere to any moral values themselves, how can they expect moral standards in their children? If their own conduct betrays moral vacillation, how can they expect moral impeccability from the younger lot? It is quite possible that the man accusing his son of disobedience was himself defiant towards his parents. He encounters

defiance because he has set before him the example of defiance. Let the parents understand this simple fact that pride begets arrogance while humility begets respect and let them cultivate moral values in their own life and it will follow as the day follows the night that their children will measure up to their moral standards.

A question naturally arises here: *from where are the parents to get their principles? Logically, they should have got them from their parents, or teachers, or other elders in the society, but if they haven't, let them turn to the Scriptures, the Vedas, and the Bhagwad Gita, and they will have all these principles neatly laid down there.*



9

अयं मे हस्तो भगवान् {ऋग्वेद}

This hand is Glorious

Man is the supreme creation of God. And God has been gracious to grant all human beings three boons:

- (1) the power of thought
- (2) the power of speech
- (3) the power of action

These three boons complement one another. Man is ultimately able to translate into action and give a concrete shape to whatever he thinks and says.

The hand, it should be obvious, symbolises all action. And the Veda describes the hand as glorious. It is hand indeed that brings all thought to its logical consummation. All thought would be vain and inconsequential if it were not to be followed by action.

In Manusmriti, Manu Says:

मनस्येक वचस्येक कर्मस्येक महात्मनाम ।

One whose thoughts, words and deeds are in unison is a great soul. He is free from vanity, hypocrisy and other kindred vices that corrupt the human psyche. In fact, the surest way of self-purification is to strive towards harmony in thoughts, words and deeds. For if I were to speak out as I thought, I would take pains to ennoble my thinking lest I be put to shame, and if I were to act according to what I spoke, I would think twice before speaking anything.

These words from the Rig Veda have a special significance for the students. They emphasise the dignity of labour. They teach the students not to be ashamed of working with their hands. One of the legacies of a distorted education system is that our students have a fascination for white-collared jobs.

This fascination is adversely affecting our nation in two ways:

- a) It is hampering economic growth of the country
- b) It is multiplying the number of unemployed people.

If our students could take pride in working with their hands, as they should, they would not only make their own future secure but also work towards the social and economic upliftment of the country.



10

अव ब्रह्म द्विषो जहि {सामवेद}

Love Knowledge

Very often students develop a kind of indifference towards their studies. In certain cases, this indifference gets intensified and grows into contempt. Whatever may be the reasons for this indifference, it is the most unfortunate thing to happen to a student.

A student is required to work hard, usually harder than other people. He is also required to practice self-denial and self-restraint in order to pursue knowledge with a unity of purpose. So his life is full of rigors.

— “ सुखार्थिनः कुतो विद्या , विद्यार्थिनः कुतो सुखम् —

One who desires ease or pleasure can never get education and one who desires education has to forfeit ease and pleasure,” says a Sanskrit verse. But some students fight shy of hard work, seek easy escape in pleasant distractions and start lagging behind in their

class. Gradually they become indifferent towards their studies.

Another category of students experience certain initial difficulties in their subject. If their difficulties are not removed promptly, they -keep on getting accumulated. Very soon a stage comes when they are unable to understand what is being taught in the class. Their incomprehension leads first to indifference and then to hatred. So, it is very important for a student to seek guidance and have his doubts removed as soon as they arise. If students understand a subject, it will promote their interest in it. Manu Maharaj says in Manusmriti :

— “ —
यथा यथा हि पुरुषः शास्त्रं समधिगच्छति
तथा तथा विजानाति विज्ञानं चास्य रोच्यते
” —

As a student becomes more familiar with his books, his interest in them proportionately increases. As he starts understanding his subject, he will develop an ability to appreciate its subtleties and complexities and the subject will start fascinating him.

It follows that a student should bring passion to his study of a subject. Knowledge should be an obsession with him. In this world, where people often get obsessed with unworthy and trivial things, there is nothing deplorable about being obsessed with knowledge. So a student should never spurn hard work. The ability to work is a great gift of God and he should work when he can.



11

अग्ने वर्चसिवनं कृणु {अथर्वेद }

God! Make Me Glorious

Who does not want to earn fame and glory? But only a few are able to rise to this height. In the case of students, we see that many students excel in studies, where others excel in games and sports. And still others excel in extra-curricular activities in their schools and colleges.

There are multifarious activities spread throughout the vast fields and it is for the students to specialise in any or many of them, according to their own competence and aptitude. One thing is certain that hard work can make you skilled in your chosen field of activity, making you magnificent and illustrious in the long run.

We should never forget the hard fact of life – *“God helps those who help themselves.”* We must try our best by working hard and surely and certainly God will be kind to us to bestow on us the glory we deserve. We should never forget the fact – *“First deserve and then desire.”* As a matter of fact, one need not even desire, as

success is likely to come automatically, because we have worked for it.

A student must be satisfied in performing his duties well. He should remain healthy and fit at all times, so that he may be able to undertake the task in hand seriously and not found wanting for any reason whatsoever. Remember that it is knowledge and learning which are going to make him glorious at last, as nothing else can. Therefore, students should not miss the golden opportunity that has come in their life, which many of their brethren are deprived of because of adverse circumstances of poverty, etc.



12

आ नो भद्रा क्रतवो यन्तु विश्वतः {ऋग्वेद}

Noble Ideas from All Directions

Students should seek noble ideas from all quarters in order to improve their life qualitatively. Thoughts are things. All actions are first conceived as tiny thoughts and then nurtured in the laboratory of the mind before being put into practice. Hence the importance of thought.

Modern students seem to have lost all sense of purpose. They may be likened to a rudderless ship drifting with the current. What they urgently need is proper channelisation of their energies, which is possible only through a process of self-purification. Manu Maharaj says,

मनः सत्येन शुध्यति – *The mind is purified by truth;*

बुद्धिज्ञानिन शुध्यति – *Intellect is purified by right knowledge.*

So students should seek truth and right knowledge.

Students have to develop their intellectual and mental faculties in the right direction. It is through purity that

this can be achieved. Otherwise they are likely to become evil-minded intellectual grants with destructive tendencies that would prove harmful not only to the self but also to the society at large. This is what is going on in western countries. That is why we should seriously think about bringing changes in our educational system in accordance with our ancient culture.

If we have to build a new India fit to occupy its lawful place among the topmost nations of the world, we shall have to preserve the positive aspects of our culture, discard whatever has outlived its utility, be open-minded towards the progressive elements in western culture and reject its decadent elements that might obstruct our progress. This is possible only if

we are mentally and intellectually alert, if we are receptive to new ideas but also have the discrimination to separate the grain from the husk. Let ideas come from all directions but let us imbibe only such ideas as are noble.



13

इन्द्रो जेता हितं धनम {ऋग्वेद}

Education - the Chief Wealth

A brahmachari, endowed with true education, knowledge and learning is revered even by kings. He is engaged by the rulers as a minister or an adviser in order to carry on the work of public administration smoothly and efficiently. Even monetarily, his expertise is well rewarded. So a knowledgeable person can also acquire affluence. On the other hand, he who is ignorant and illiterate can earn his living only by virtue of his ability to undertake physical work, which usually does not get paid handsomely. Since education can be used as a means to wealth (though that is not the chief purpose of education), it has been rightly said:

विद्या धनं सर्व धनं प्रधानम – “*The wealth of education is the chief of all wealths.*”

There is a well-known saying in Sanskrit:

स्वदेशे पूजयते राजा विद्वान् सर्वत्र पूजयते – “*A king is revered in his own country, but a learned person is universally revered.*”

It means that learning occupies the highest place in the hierarchy of values or priorities. Students should realise the importance of learning and make the maximum use of the opportunity that has come their way. They should look at the miserable plight of lakhs of their unfortunate brothers and sisters who are deprived of getting education on account of their poverty and not only acquire more and more knowledge themselves but even help others to become literate.

In the end, a word about bodily strength as well. It should be recognised that bodily strength plays a vital role in life. While it is true that one who has intelligence is powerful, it is equally true that intelligence becomes ineffective if it is not adequately supported by physical fitness and stamina. Intelligence is a rough diamond often lying in obscurity. Only hard work can chisel and polish it and publish its value to the world at large. And hard work is impossible without a sound health. So a student should aim at both education and health, both intellectual and physical fitness, and if he acquires these two, wealth is bound to follow.



14

इयं ते यज्ञिया तनूः {यजुर्वेद}

Body Like Yajna

The divine message contained in the above words says, “*O Man, this body of yours is like sacrificial fire in a yajna-kund*”. So one must ensure that it spreads fragrance. Let it not be defiled lest it should begin to emit foul smell instead. What a person wants to do with his body, or what shape he wants to give to his life is in his own hands.

Man is the maker of his destiny. No doubt, heredity and environment play a significant role in shaping it. The component of heredity is beyond human control. But even if it is unfavourable, its negative effects can be neutralised to a certain extent through judicious rational exercise. Environment it is certainly possible to change. We can create an environment congenial to us. A lighted lamp, wherever it is, creates an environment of light. Put the sandalwood anywhere, it will fill everything around it with fragrance. So like the lighted lamp or the sandalwood, we can carry our environment with us.

God has created this universe on the principle of yajna, *i.e.*, give-and-take. Symbolically, our bodies also function on this pattern, for even breathing consists of two operations – exhaling and inhaling. According to the Vedas, all actions should be performed in the spirit of yajna. It means that duty should be performed sincerely and honestly without any consideration of return, though the return is bound to follow. It also means that our actions should be done in a spirit of sacrifice; for if that be the spirit, we shall never be guilty of an undesirable action.



15

ऊधर्वो भव {यजुर्वेद}

Be the Best

Ours is a fiercely competitive world. It is a world governed by the survival of the fittest. It is said that the trees in the dense forests of Africa are engaged in a sort of competition to grow taller, for it is only the relatively taller ones that are able to get sunlight. If we think of sunlight as a symbol of reward, it means that you can earn a reward only if you are better than others. So your aim in life should be to be the best.

Students often discuss among themselves the prospects of rise various fields offer them. Such a discussion is almost irrelevant. For the prospects of rise do not in here in any field, they lie in human personality. An intelligent and hardworking person can create openings anywhere. On the contrary, a careless and indolent person will waste openings even if they are offered to him on a platter. Seize any opportunity offered to you and show your worth; after that opportunity will themselves start knocking at your door, eager to be grabbed.

Progress in life is like climbing up a steep hill. As you ascend higher, the hill starts getting narrower, till, when you reach the top, there is room only for one person. If you want to be that one person, you will have to be the best. If you have attained the summit, remember two things :

- a) descent is easy and needs no effort, so you are in danger of accepting it
- b) there is a large number of other people struggling hard to displace you, so the moment you become lax, or negligent, they will take your place and then it will be very difficult to retrieve the lost position.

Work hard to reach the pinnacle of glory and then work hard to retain it.



16

जिह्वाया अग्रे मधुमे {अथर्वेद }

Honey on My Tongue

In a prayer, a student requests God that honey - like sweetness be on the tip of his tongue, i.e., he or she should always be polite with others. The word 'madhu' has two meanings – *honey and knowledge*. It should not surprise anybody that knowledge and honey have been treated as virtually synonymous, for knowledge inevitably makes a person polite and cultured.

विद्या ददाति विनियम – *Education bestows humility.*

Humility is indeed the hall-mark of a truly educated person. Unfortunately our experience does not confirm this. We find quite a large number of students rude and arrogant with their parents, teachers, and others senior to them in age. A general lack of respect towards the elders has become a distinguishing characteristic of our students' conduct. This is the result of blindly aping the western culture.

A person totally in the dark does not know the intensity of darkness surrounding him. An illiterate person does not realise the magnitude of his ignorance nor perhaps the importance of light, for he has not seen the light. But an educated person should realise that his learning is no more than a small oasis in a vast sandy expanse in a desert and this realisation should instil a sense of humility in him.

Being sweet-tongued has a practical aspect to it also. Nothing can win people over better than sweet words. A sweet-tongued person carries an element of brightness and cheerfulness around him; even hostile people become his friends and the journey of his life becomes smooth. Thus he continues to progress in life.

The Vedas lay great stress on humility and polite speech. If the teachings of the Vedas could be accepted the world over, it would be a great blessing to mankind.



17

देवो देवेषु यज्ञियः {ऋग्वेद}

Sharing Noble Deeds With Noble People

The noblest of the deeds is to disseminate knowledge. No action directed at self-advancement deserves to be called noble. On the other hand, all actions focussed at the betterment of other people deserve to be commended as noble. An ignorant person is no better than an animal. Steeped in darkness, he is unable to realise his existence. To transform him into an enlightened being capable of understanding the significance of life is a very noble action indeed. In Vedic language, such an action is termed as 'yajna'. To perform a yajna is a holy deed that will cause divine blessings to be bestowed on the one who performs it.

Knowledge is also one of those possessions which increase on being shared with others. Imparting knowledge to others broadens one's own intellectual horizons and ennobles and enlarges one's vision of life. So parting with one's knowledge is the surest way of enriching one's own treasure. -

Sharing our possessions with others is also a great source of divine joy. To be able to give is a great privilege. It is a much greater privilege than receiving. If we are in a position to give knowledge, in particular, we should consider ourselves to be among the most fortunate. Manu Maharaj also says in Manusmriti :

सर्वेषामेव दानानां ब्रह्मादानं विशिष्यते –

Imparting education occupies a unique place among all the alms in the world. May the student community understand the value of imparting education to others !



18

देवस्य पश्य काव्यम {अथर्वेद }

Look at the Divine Epic

These words have been taken from a Vedic hymn, Which says that man does not see God, though He is so near, nor is man able to leave Him. God can be seen only with the inner eye, i.e., can be experienced by Atman only. It is also a fact that man invariably rushes to God whenever in difficulty to seek His help, not able to forsake Him, because God is man's last resort.

We have been told to look at His divine literature that is not subject to decay or death. It means that we should try to learn and understand the knowledge which is garnered therein, thus making our own life divine. How unique and wonderful is the creation of the Cosmos, with countless planets and stars, so large in shape and size, circling around each other, luminous and shining, bound together by the power of magnetic attraction!

On our globe itself, there are deserts, fields, hills, mountains and the vast expanse of seas around.

Whatever a man has thought of and written in millions of books on varied subjects of art, commerce or science draws material from God's unlimited space and time. However fertile the power of imagination of man may be, still it has some limitations, while God recognises no limitations whatsoever.

The bards all over the world have sung songs in God's praise, using their imagination as best as they could.

— “
जहां न पहुंचे रवि । तहा पहुंचे कवि —
” —

A poet's imagination is able to traverse regions inaccessible even to the rays of the sun.” We may get such an imaginative insight from the study of the Vedas, which contain all the true knowledge, both on material and spiritual sciences.



19

धिया विप्रो अजायत {सामवेद}

A Brahmin is Born by Intellect

In Sanskrit, the word 'Vipra' is used for a Brahmin well-versed in the knowledge of the Vedas. In the Vedic hymn from which the above words have been taken, it is stated that a 'Vipra' or a 'Brahmin' is one who retires to caves in the mountains or goes to live near the confluence of rivers, where great Rishis have their ashrams. But these Rishis were highly learned people. People actually sat at their feet and sought knowledge. Thus the disciples or students, or Brahmacharis who stayed in these ashrams in quest of knowledge ultimately became Brahmins.

The word 'dhee' used in the above excerpt has four meanings – (1) intellect; (2) propensity; (3) devotion; and (4) sacrifice. Intellect is the basic requisite for the acquisition of knowledge. But if a person has intellect but no inclination, he would be given to pursuits other than of knowledge. So propensity or inclination is also an important quality. Besides, for a satisfactory pursuit of knowledge, we also need devotion and sacrifice. We

shall have to sacrifice our comforts and luxuries. So all the four – intellect, propensity, devotion and sacrifice – are essential if we want to attain our goal of gaining knowledge.

A student learns first from his mother and then his father. Then follows the role of the Guru or teacher. Last of all, he is able to learn from any learned person. That is why the Upanishada says : –

— “ ————— ” —
मातृदेवो भव; पितृदेवो भव; आचार्यदेवो भव; अतिथिदेवो भव;

These are all teachers – Mother, Father, Guru or Teacher and any learned person. These are gods for us all as they have divinity in them."



20

धर्मोय समाचरम {यजुर्वेद}

Assembly to Protect Righteousness

Mahatma Chanakya has said :

माता शत्रुः पिता वैरी येन बालो न पाठितः ।
न शोभते सभा हंस मध्ये वको यथा ॥

Those parents who do not give education to their children are their enemies. Uneducated people appear incongruous in an assembly of the learned like herons amongst swans. Those students who are engaged in the pursuit of knowledge are among the privileged few in our country since a vast majority of our people do not get an opportunity to get educated. So they should avail themselves of this golden period of their life well and become graceful like swans.

The purpose of an Assembly or Parliament or any meeting of educated people is to protect righteousness, without any prejudice or bias and to make laws or lay down policies for the welfare of all, without any

discrimination whatsoever on any ground. Maharishi Vyas says in *Mahabharata* :

— “ —
न स सभा यत्र न सन्ति वृद्धाः , ये न वदन्ति धर्मम ।
न स धर्म यत्र न सत्यमस्ति,, न स सत्यं यत छलनानुविद्धम ॥
— ” —

An assembly in which old experienced, educated and learned people are not present does not deserve to be called an assembly; such people as do not support righteousness or Dharma do not deserve to be called old and learned; a Dharma is not real and cannot be called Dharma if there is no truth in it; and lastly truth is not truth if it is fraught with fraud or deceit.

We must fully understand the fact that education develops our intellectual and mental faculties, thus making us human beings of excellent behaviour, character and conduct.



21

नमो मात्रे पृथिव्यै {यजुर्वेद}

Bow to Mother Earth

Humility and gratefulness are two important qualities of a truly learned person. We should understand the role of the inanimate gods (the basic elements) in our life, for our existence depends upon the contribution of these gods. These gods are : पृथ्वी, जल, वायु, अग्नि, आकाश ? *Earth, Water, Air, Fire and Ether*. Of these also, we ought to feel most indebted to Earth that supplies us with all that we need to feed ourselves and remain alive.

In Vedic parlance, Earth is called Mother. All that we need in life is supplied to us by Mother Earth. She is the supporter and sustainer of all of us. She is the mother even of our mother. In fact, she is the mother of all living beings. We should feel grateful to her for all the bounties she offers us and we should properly utilise them in the interest and welfare of all.

It is possible to run away from our mother but can we run away from the Mother Earth ? After our death, it is she who gives us a place in her lap. Therefore it is our

duty to take care of her and we can do so by keeping our deeds noble and virtuous.

Once, a great convulsion caused excessive rains. Harassed people complained to Lord Indra. He explained that those rains had been sent at a special request of Mother Earth. When questioned, she said, “I had been sullied by the sins of the people. So I had a yearning to purify myself. I approached Lord Indra, who thought it best to give me a good bath.” This parable reminds us to be more thoughtful in our deeds lest we cause so much misery to Mother Earth.



22

पुत्रातु मा देवजनाः {यजुर्वेद}

Learned People May Purify Me

A well-known English proverb says that birds of a feather flock together, i.e. people invariably seek the company of those with whom they share personality traits. The noble enjoy the company of the noble while the wicked feel comfortable only in the company of the wicked. It follows from this observation that it should be possible for us to judge anyone from the company he keeps.

But sometimes people with contrasted traits are thrown in the company of each other. Fate can make strange bed-fellows. It is possible that the wicked are thrown in the company of the noble and the noble in the company of the wicked. The wicked may then get reformed and the noble may be led to a wicked course. So we should be very careful in the selection of our friends. Isn't it strange that we bestow so much care on the purchase of a woollen suit or a pair of shoes but we are so careless in choosing our friends ? If we are students, we should make deliberate efforts to seek the

friendship of those who are better than ourselves and the guidance of the learned Acharyas who can show us the right path.

The best friend that anyone of us can have is our own Atman, our own conscience. Our Atman carries a spark of the Almighty. We can communicate with God through our Atman. So we should try to listen to and follow the advice of our Atman. Alternatively, we should listen to the Almighty's instructions as given in the Vedas, or as explained in the discourses of the learned people, particularly in Arya Samaj Mandirs.

Bhagwan Krishna says in Bhagwad Gita :

न हि ज्ञानेन सदृशं पवित्रमिह विद्यते

There is nothing so pure or holy in this world as knowledge." Hence the foremost duty of a student is to devote all his faculties to the acquisition of knowledge.



23

प्रातमृक्षु धियावसुः{ऋग्वेद}

Attain the Wealth of Knowledge

The wealth of knowledge is attained with intellect. For this purpose it is essential that students carefully preserve their health. They should remember that a healthy mind can inhabit only a healthy body. Unfortunately, some grown-up students get into bad habits, waste their vital energy and lose the most significant element responsible for their intellectual and moral growth.

The early morning time when the atmosphere is quiet and peaceful is most suitable for studies. Whatever is read at this time is properly grasped and assimilated and gets permanently imprinted on the mind. What cannot be done in the long hours of the rest of the day is easily accomplished in a couple of morning hours, thus giving the student a feeling of achievement and elation.

Apart from the wealth of knowledge, another wealth too deserves our consideration. A Sanskrit poet says :

विदेशु धनं विद्या व्यसनेषु धनं मतिः ।

परलोके धनं धर्म शीलं सर्वत्र वै धनम ॥

Learning is the wealth in a foreign land; intellect is the wealth in difficult times; righteousness or Dharma is the wealth in the other world; and character is the wealth at all places. So it is important that our students develop a noble character, learn to distinguish between the right and the wrong and tread the path of honesty and truthfulness.



24

ब्रह्मणा वेदयामसि {ऋग्वेद}

Become Learned by Vedas

The Vedas, given to us by God himself at the time of creation, are the repository of all true knowledge. It is the duty of all good people to read, teach, recite and hear the Vedic hymns. They can help us to overcome all our problems. It is most unfortunate that we have discarded this divine knowledge because of either our ignorance or our deplorable tendency to ape the west blindly.

For this state of affairs, our present education system is responsible to a very great extent. In this connection, Mahatma Gandhi says, “I am convinced that the present system of education is not only wasteful but positively harmful. Most of the boys are lost to their parents and to the occupation to which they are born. They pick up evil habits, affect urban ways and get a smattering of something which may be anything but education.” It is evident that our education system is in need of drastic reforms.

In his Autobiography, Mahatma Gandhi also condemns the use of foreign language as a medium of instruction. Most of our leaders, particularly Jawahar Lal Nehru, who was the Prime Minister of the country for long eighteen years, knew little about the advantages of the Vedic system of education or of using Hindi as the medium of education. So they never cared for our national language and never gave any chance to it. They subjected our students to avoidable burden and jeopardised the unity and integrity of the country. It is time that the entire student community rises in protest and demands the implementation of the nation's language policy. Their own future is at stake and with them is tied the future of the nation.



25

बलं दधान आत्मनि {ऋग्वेद}

Muster Soul Power

All the great personages of the world mustered their Soul-Power, with the strength of which they were able to change the course of the events during their time. They fully realised the enormous difficulties and impediments that they had to cross during their crusade. But their aim was to show beacon light in the pitch darkness that enveloped the entire globe, with people groping for some succour of true guidance, and this could be achieved only through soul-power.

Such great men rise above the wishes of the temporal world. They have little consideration for money or wealth, have no attachment filial or otherwise and disregard even name and fame. They are motivated by a spirit of selfless service :

— “
न त्वहं कामये राजयं न स्वर्गं नापुनभरवं
कामये दुःख तप्तानां प्राणिनामार्तिनाशनम
” —

I seek neither a kingdom, nor heaven, nor salvation from re-birth; my only desire is to annihilate the pain and agony of all living-beings.

For them, the whole world becomes their family, as they make no distinction whatsoever between one or the other. It is all because they get inspiration from God Almighty to carry on their missionary work with zeal and enthusiasm, without in the least caring for the opposition that they have to face from vested interests. They are always prepared to sacrifice their all for the sake of truth.

विद्या तपोभ्यां भूतात्मा शुध्यति

Education, knowledge and learning, austerity and penance, as well as the courage and self-confidence to face all problems and difficulties, purify the soul or atman.” These great men have these qualities in abundance and thus acquire endurance by mastering their Soul-Power to carry on their work undaunted by adversities.



26

भगः सरस्वती जुषन्त {ऋग्वेद}

Union of Prosperity and Learning

Many learned scholars of the Vedas generally say that it is a rare experience to meet a well-read man who is also prosperous and wealthy. To me it does not sound reasonable. Most of the people who say so are quite well-off themselves, while a few of their colleagues who graduated with them from the same Gurukuls and later took to business or industry have even become millionaires. Almost all of these scholars are leading a happy and peaceful life with adequate means of livelihood. So if they complain, it only suggests lack of contentment.

Most of the ancient kings were highly learned people, and so were their ministers and other advisers, which shows that they were a confluence of learning, power and wealth. In this context, one name that instantaneously comes to mind is that of Raja Janak. His spiritual knowledge was so profound that even Rishis and Munis regularly visited his court to hold discourses on religious and spiritual issues. He had no attachment to

physical existence. That is why he was called 'Videh'. In course of time 'Videh' and 'Janak' became titles for kings who displayed exceptional spiritual advancement.

Our epics like the Ramayana and Mahabharata bear testimony to the fact that the rulers were expected to be great warriors as well as scholars. In Europe, the Renaissance man was expected to be versatile. Thus there is absolutely no antagonism between learning and prosperity. A learned man should not be avaricious, or it will distract him from the pursuit of knowledge. But he can be reasonably well-to-do.



27

भद्रा भद्रस्य रातयः {ऋग्वेद}

Good People to Work United

Union is strength. Lack of unity leads to dissipation of vital energies. If a family, an army or a nation functions as a cohesive unit, it can move ahead triumphantly from one achievement to another. In a nation, in particular, all noble and righteous people should collaborate with one another in the stupendous task of making it strong, prosperous and progressive. It is also the duty of those at the helm of affairs to forge unity among the individuals.

It is unfortunate that election system is becoming expensive and cumbersome in India. Sincere and knowledgeable people are excluded from the work of administering the country. The entire election system stinks on account of the misuse of money, muscle power, media and government machinery. Criminalisation of political activity, aggressive, intimidating styles of campaigning, large-scale rigging and booth-capturing are other lamentable features of our election system. Each successive government has been emphasising the need of radical electoral reforms, but

since they stand to lose from these reforms, they are not sincere in their assertions. Until elections are funded by the government and campaigning is conducted scrupulously, there is very little hope of the good people coming together to work in unison for the welfare of the nation.

In the words of Will Durant, it is high time that all good people unite to declare publicly that (i) corruption in politics, (ii) dishonesty in business, (iii) unfaithfulness in married life, (iv) obscenity in literature, cinema, etc., (v) impurification of language, (vi) disorderliness in music, and (vii) meaninglessness in art, sculpture, etc. are not liked by them because these are harmful to the society and should not be allowed in the name of modernity and progress.



28

मा भ्राता भ्रातरं द्विषत {अथर्वेद }

Brother Should Not Be Jealous of Brother

Jealousy is a cankerous vice infecting all spheres of life. Even learned people fall a prey to it. The desire to excel is not bad; in fact, it is commendable, for it is at the bottom of all progress. But that desire is called envy, and not jealousy. Jealousy is an utterly negative feeling. It destroys the physical and mental health of a jealous person and often creates bad blood between brothers, neighbours and colleagues. We should all be wary of this enemy and effectively counter it by cultivating the positive values of contentment and magnanimity.

The great war of Mahabharata was waged only because of the jealousy on the part of Duryodhana for his cousins, the Pandavas. Duryodhana could not get reconciled to the growing prosperity and glory of the Pandavas and unleashed forces of destruction that not only totally annihilated his own kingdom and caused many a severe blow to the Pandavas but destroyed a large number of neighbouring kingdoms as well. Even

today, this monster of jealousy is affecting the relations between India and Pakistan.

In the case of students, it is good to be envious. It is a fiercely competitive world and the desire to rise up to the level of others and then excel them is a constructive force and should be welcome as such. But one should always beware of the ‘green-eyed monster’, as Shakespeare called it, for it destroys the heart that harbours it, it produces holes into the dish that it feeds off.



29

मित्रस्य यायां पथा {ऋग्वेद}

Follow the Pain of Friend-God

Some people may question as to what is the path of God, who is our dearest, most worthy and Supreme friend. Obviously the Vedas tell us about it. But we human beings have gone astray and consider ourselves wiser than even our creator. All the troubles in this world have arisen only because we have forgotten the divine path shown to us

through the Vedas and have adopted many other devious ways temporarily suiting our selfish narrow ends.

In our prayer, we say :

— “
त्वमेव माता च पिता त्वमेव ; त्वमेव बन्धुश्च सखा त्वमेव ।
त्वमेव विद्या द्रविणं त्वमेव ; त्वमेव सर्वं मम देव देवः ॥
” —

O God! you are our Mother and you are our Father; you are our Brother and you are our Friend. You are our Education and you are our Wealth; you are our All-in-All and our God – the only God.

So, we all revere Him, but it is strange that we do not follow the guidance and rules given to all humanity by Him through the Vedas, the right and true meanings of which have been provided to us by Mahrishi Dayanand Saraswati. In this connection, Mahrishi Patanjali writes in Yog-Shastra :

— “ ————— ” —
स एष पूर्वेषामपि गुरु कलेनानवच्छेदात् ॥
————— “ —

He, i.e., God is our prime teacher, who remains unaffected by time also, as it is He who has created time as well. If God had left mankind ignorant and at the mercy of nature, He could not be called just and a good Father and Friend.

God is a Friend of all. He looks after everyone of us, provided we care to listen to His advice. We should realise that by ignoring His advice, we are digging our own graves.



30

मा गृधः {यजुर्वेद}

Do Not Be Greedy

When students are sent into various educational institutions to be educated, they are also expected to grow into young men and women of good moral character, And one of the cardinal principles of character is to be unselfish, or not being greedy. Greed is responsible for most of the evils rampant in our society. It is the bane of modern life.

Mother Earth had adequate stocks to feed all the mouths, but there is not enough to quench the greed of even one person. Greed is like a bottomless well, which no pourings can fill. Most of the quarrels not only between the families but even between the nations are caused by greed. If we could curb our grabbing tendencies and learn to live by accommodating the needs of one and all, there would be harmony and prosperity for each one of us.

A recent phenomenon which should make us hang our heads in shame is the harassment and even burning of young girls, who bring poor dowries in marriage.

Demand for dowry is the most blatant manifestations of our greed. We don't even realise that it has slowly dehumanised us and degraded us to the level of beasts.

Our greed is a symptom of our neglect of spiritual values. We are greedy because we have forsaken God and chosen not-God. Besides, if we remember that riches is fickle, it was mine yesterday, could be anyone else's today and will stick to none tomorrow, perhaps we would be able to control our greed.

The desire to get more marks than we deserve and the use of unfair means for this purpose is also a kind of greed. As a matter of fact, we should only concentrate on our work, without thinking of the ultimate result, and the desirable result will inevitably follow.



31

यज्ञं दधे सरस्वती {ऋग्वेद}

Education Leads to Nobility

Education is the master key which can open all locks. It can enable a person to solve any problem whatsoever and to overcome even the most adverse circumstances. It can help him to tread the right path, always.

A learned but poor Brahmin lived in the kingdom of Raja Bhoj. Driven by poverty, he decided to sneak into the King's palace at night and steal something.

He succeeded in entering the palace unnoticed but could not persuade himself to steal anything. Whenever he was on the verge of laying his hands on something, his conscience reprimanded him and he checked himself in time. Minute by minute the night wasted away but the poor Brahmin could not make up his mind to steal anything.

A little before dawn, the Brahmin hid himself under the bed of the King. Soon the Queen, the maid-servants and many others assembled beside the King's bed and began to chant Ved-mantras to waken him up. Raja Bhoj was a learned man. He sat up in his bed and recited.

— “
चेतोहरा युवतयः सुहृदो अनुकूलाः सदबान्धवाः प्रणय नम्र
गिरश्च भृत्याः ।

वल्गन्ति दन्ति निभस्तरलास्रतुरंगा ---

With God's grace, I have beautiful and attractive young maids, obedient ministers and servants, a powerful force of elephants and horses; in short, everything that a king may desire... But howsoever hard he tried, he could not complete the verse. He repeated the first three parts two to three times but each time he got stuck up and could not think of any appropriate ending to the verse.

Seeing the King's predicament, the Brahmin could not restrain himself and, still hidden under the bed, spoke out:



सम्मिलने नयनयोरनहि किंचिदस्ति -

nothing remains when the eyes are closed. Everybody was amazed at this. The Brahmin emerged from under the bed, apologised to the King, and narrated his story truthfully. Raja Bhoj was sorry at his plight and not only pardoned him but even engaged him as one of his advisers.

This story convincingly demonstrates that in addition to protecting our moral being, our education can also help us to steer clear of our difficulties.



32

यदन्तरम तद बाहाम {अथर्वेद }

Harmony in Thoughts, Words and Deeds

Hypocrisy is a great curse of modern life. There is no harmony between what we think, what we say and what we do, between our inner being and our external appearance. Our hypocrisy has tainted our business and corrupted our dealings. Even our student community is not free from this evil. Their main aim is to study and they do pretend great commitment but their reality is not hidden from anybody.

First of all, we must understand clearly that nobody can deceive all the people all the time. One day the cat is out of the bag, the truth is revealed, and we have to face great embarrassment. Besides, we should also realise that by being hypocritical, we try to deceive only ourselves and our God. The first is not desirable, the second is not possible. Ignominy is the only logical culmination of hypocrisy and we should try to guard ourselves against this outcome.

A Chinese sage was asked by his pupils what he would do if he had power to arrange the affairs of the

country. He said, *“I should see to it that the language is used correctly.”* *“But surely”*, his pupils said, *“that is a small matter. Why do you say it is important?”* The sage replied, *“If language is not used properly, what is said is not meant; if what is said is not meant, what ought to be done remain? undone; and if that happens, morale and art will be corrupted, justice will be undermined, and people will be stranded in helpless confusion.”*

Hypocrisy vitiates relations not only between individuals but even between the rulers and the ruled and between the neighbouring countries. Mutual trust is the basis of all relationships. Hypocrisy breeds mistrust and wrecks relationships. Thus we should try to be straightforward in our dealings with others.



33

यतेमहि स्वराज्ये {अथर्वेद }

Public Effort in Self-Rule

These words have been taken from a Vedic hymn, which states that both the rulers and the ruled should be persons of foresight and comprehensive vision. They should act as the members of one family with the interest of the family, uppermost in their minds. The ministers as well as other functionaries of the government should be learned people, gifted with both understanding and sincerity, and the people should extend them unqualified support.

Unfortunately, a large segment of the population of our country shows total apathy to the interests of the country under the protection of personal law and sectarian self-interest and our government tolerates them for fear of losing their vote bank, if we sacrifice the interests of the majority to appease the minorities, isn't it reducing democracy to a farce? The pity is that such unfriendly people are sharing even the seats of administration at the highest level. What kind of co-operation can we have in the country when we are

governed by discriminatory laws based on communal lines? We have perverted secularism in the name of secularism.

Several decades have elapsed since we won independence. And where does India stand today? In cities – traffic jams, leaking water mains, scarcity of water, stinking dry latrines, with leaking sewers side by side, five-star extravagance with pavement dwellers, communal violence, strikes, bunds, uncontrollable inflation, hordes of unemployed youth, corruption, over-staffed offices with unwilling hands, terrorism, violence, fear, hatred all around. In villages – unsafe drinking water, non-existent medical facilities, disease, illiteracy, sub-standard living conditions, growing insecurity of life, thefts, toiling in the fields in rain and scorching heat and cold winter nights, exploitation at the hands of government functionaries and middlemen at every stage.

Only God can save India to let it remain Bharat!



34

युजं कृणुते ब्राह्मणस्पतिः {ऋग्वेद}

A Learned Man Does Glorious Deeds

One who has acquired knowledge and understanding not only of this world but also of Atman and Parmatman, i.e., soul and God, or in other words one who has realised one's self is the most learned of the learned ones. Such a man with tremendous powers at his command is capable of performing glorious deeds, changing the course of events and showing right path to the misguided world.

Such a man is not deterred by the impediments put in his way by vested interests. Moved to pity by the misery of the suffering humanity and imbued with divine inspiration, he considers himself to be on a divine mission and keeps on working incessantly day in and day out. He identifies himself with the people and fully shares their joys and sorrows.

Actually such great people are learned in the real sense of the term. They do not tread the beaten path; they do not feel bound by effete customs and conventions, but with prophet-like perception they

transcend time and facing all the challenges, they guide the world into a bright future.

Do not think lowly of yourself. You too have a divine spark inside you. Only it needs determination and commitment to make it grow into flame that will make your being resplendent with divine glory. You must bestir yourself out of slumber and realise your innate greatness.



35

रणे- रणे अनुमदन्ति विप्राः {अथर्वेद }

Learned People Enjoy All Wars

A war is not fought only in the battlefield. Each one of us is engaged in some kind of war at every moment of our life. There is a war going on between the forces of good and evil, the forces of right and wrong. The struggle in which people want to rise higher than others in economic and social fields is also a kind of war. Among students, war takes the form of competition and they work hard to excel each other in studies, games and sports, as well as. extra-curricular activities. Since fighting is the essence of life, it need neither be condemned nor shirked. Only, fighting should be for right purpose and in the right spirit.

Life must have some purpose, a noble and worthy one, that may lift life intellectually and spiritually. One such purpose, most relevant during student life, is the acquisition of knowledge. Knowledge dispels darkness and lights up uncharted vistas of progress. Knowledge generates self-confidence in a student, which will also make him intellectually adventurous and enterprising.

In a war what is more important even than winning is the quality of fighting. It would be naive to say that we are not concerned with success. We are. But before we think in terms of success, we should put into action all our faculties and should be committed to the struggle. With this kind of attitude, success will follow, but even if it does not, since we have enjoyed the struggle itself, we shall not end up in being frustrated. No struggle ever goes waste. One unrewarded struggle will make us more determined and since we will also have learnt through experience, our renewed efforts will surely be crowned with success.



36

व्रतेषु जागृहि {ऋग्वेद}

Be Awake to Your Vows

Man is said to be the acme of God's creation. But he cannot take his 'humanity' for granted. It is so easy to slip down to the level of an animal. And it takes great effort to retain the status of 'man'. For this, he has to be ever watchful about his behaviour and conduct in life. Every society has certain norms and standards of behaviour. Or we can say that every society upholds certain principles as ideal and worthy of adherence. Man is required to follow those principles, 'व्रती आर्याः', says a Sanskrit verse, meaning that *all noble and virtuous people adhere to the principles most cherished by them.*

Both human and animal (noble and evil) instincts co-exist in human psyche. It is difficult to predict when an evil instinct may raise its ugly head in our heart. So we have to be on guard against them all the time. If they are not overcome at the very outset, they may strike roots and then it may be impossible to eradicate them. Our well-known saying 'Nip the evil in the bud' has a great deal of practical wisdom in it.

Truth is at the root of all goodness. So adherence to truth is one principle that we should all try to embrace. To tread firmly on the path of truth,, we may seek the help of God as well as our own soul, our own conscience. Before we follow truth, we must know what truth is, and this knowledge is to be sought within our inner self or in God, for truth is nothing but God. And having discovered truth, we must seek strength and courage to stick to it.



37

शिक्षा शचीवः शचीभिः {सामवेद}

Education Graces with Divinity

We seek education and knowledge in order to make our life meaningful through selfless service of others. In case we forget this, we shall have to acknowledge regretfully that our life has been wasted. Man was not made just to 'eat, drink and be merry'. That is the level at which animals exist and man has to rise far higher in order to justify his being a man.

Our Creator, God Almighty is the store-house of all divinity. All human beings, being His sons and daughters, partake of His divinity. In Shatpath Brahmin, it has been stated:

विद्वांसो हि देवाः – *Learned people are definitely gods.* But just as volcanoes can be active or dormant, godliness in human beings can be manifest in their day-to-day conduct or it may lie suppressed. We must keep godliness ever activated through austerity, penance and sacrifice for the sake of truth and righteousness. At the

same time, we must never yield to anger, greed, attachment, hatred, jealousy, lust, sloth, timidity, etc.

Our education must teach us to remain steadfast on the path of truth in face of all adversities. Truth is the basis of a noble character and we must ‘protect the character whether wealth comes or goes’. If required, we should be prepared even to go through the ‘test of fire’ (अग्नि परीक्षा) in order to safeguard truth, bearing in mind that we shall emerge from this test purified and strengthened. Mud bricks are always in danger of disintegrating and giving way when subject to heavy rains but not the fire-baked bricks. Having once been through fire, they are strong enough to face rain or storm.



38

माधीगार्वो भवन्तु नः {ऋग्वेद}

Our Sense Organs Be Melodious

The word 'go' (गो) has multiple meanings – earth, rays of the sun, cow – an animal that gives us milk – our sense-organs (इन्द्रियाँ), etc. The Sanskrit excerpt quoted above may therefore mean that the cow milk we take may be so sweet that it makes our sense-organs reverberate with melody. It would not be out of place to observe here that in our ancient literature as well as medical treatises, cow. milk, being highly beneficial to human health, has even been compared to nectar. It is specially useful for the development of the brain and is strongly recommended for students. It is commonly said

जैसे खाये अन्न वैसा बने मनः

One's mental make-up depends upon the quality of food one takes." Cow milk being satvik in nature, it can keep one's mind full of noble thoughts.

Insofar as our sense-organs are considered, they are totally governed by the mind. So if we are able to take care of our mind, our sense-organs are automatically taken care of. It is said:

— “
मन एवं मनुष्याणां करणं बंधमोक्षयोः
” —

Mind is the only cause of a man's bondage or salvation.” Mind, tamed and trained, is one's best friend; but unrestrained, it is one's worst enemy. If the mind is engrossed in sensual pleasures, it results in bondage; if it does not meekly surrender to them, the result is salvation. So control the mind and the sense-organs will produce celestial music capable of transporting us to divine ecstasy.



39

सुगा ऋतस्य पन्थाः {ऋग्वेद}

May the Paths of Truth Be Simple

It is normally believed that the path of untruth is mazy and labyrinthine. Once having stepped on to the path of untruth, it is difficult to retrace one's steps or find a way out of it. One has to tell many lies in order to conceal one lie, so one gets irretrievably entangled. The path of truth in contrast is simple and straightforward.

But if truth were simple to follow, why would not everyone choose it ? Apart from the problem of determining what truth is, the path of truth is beset with great hardships. It is said :

क्षुरस्य धारा निशिता दुरत्यया दुर्ग पथस्तत
कवियो वदन्ति:—

Traversing the path of truth and righteousness is like walking on the sharp edge of a sword.” Those who seek to follow this path are called upon to display eternal vigilance.

According to the scriptures, God and Truth are identical. An English philosopher also observes that ‘Truth is God and God is Truth’. It is helpful to evoke divine aid in following truth. Students should regularly pray to God in the twilight hours of morning and evening to give them sufficient strength and courage to follow truth. In their day-to-day conduct they should strive to bring about harmony between their thoughts, words and deeds. A truthful man cannot afford to think or act ignobly, for it will bring him humiliation. So his thoughts and deeds also will get sanctified and ennobled. Besides, he will never act rashly. In fact all noble qualities converge to the heart of a truthful man as all rivers converge towards the ocean.

Truth is not simple to follow but adherence to truth is an ideal worthy of any sacrifice.



40

अग्निस्वेदं करिष्यथः {यजुर्वेद}

Put Your Heart and soul Into Your Duty.

In Bhagwad Gita, Lord Krishna says:

योगः कर्म सुकोशलम

Yoga is to perform your duty with dexterity.

These words equally apply to all but they are relevant to students in particular. Efficient performance of duty in student life is a kind of guarantee for a bright future. Negligence of duty, on the other hand, will spoil their career, for which they may have to repent throughout their life. Some of them may be able to repair the loss, but how are they going to retrieve the time lost by them? In this fiercely competitive world, a single lost opportunity may wreck all chances of success. So it is imperative for students to be ever watchful about their duty.

What duty is assigned to the students? Their major duty – or may be the only duty – is to study wholeheartedly and to develop their personality.

Their parents provide them facilities and the teachers offer guidance so that they may not have to face any difficulties. What is expected of them is sincerity and hard work. They should not while away their time in idle pursuits. They should put their heart and soul into seeking knowledge and education.

Education and knowledge refine a student's personality. They are the two assets that will come to his rescue at any place or time. He may be abroad or in his own country, enjoying prosperity or thrown on adverse circumstances, these two possessions will see him through safely. Besides, wherever he goes, he will be accorded a warm welcome. Even the government will honour him. He will not only make his own future bright but help in the progress of the country as well.



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