



Divine Message of the Vedas

Part 3

The Four Veds

**Rigved
Yajurved
Atharvaved
Samved**

Veds are the eternal utterances of God, the Supreme Father. Through the Veds we get the best type of material and spiritual knowledge. Regular study of the Veds keeps us away from sins and increases hope and joy in life. Making life peaceful, the Veds take us away from the bad path and lead to the good path and make life peaceful and pure. Whenever the mind gets disturbed, veds alert us and also guide us.

The reader is requested to read this book with faith, think deeply on its contents and become determined to go ahead on the path of duty.

Divine Message of the Veds

by Pandit Shriram Sharma Acharya

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Preface to the first edition published in 1958

The Veds are books on material as well as spiritual knowledge. Because their language is very ancient and not well-known, differences have been found among learned persons regarding their interpretation, but there is absolutely no doubt that high-level spiritual principles, learning, arts and practical knowledge are contained in them. Since all this knowledge has been given very concisely in the form of 'sutras' or axioms in one or two stanzas, all the readers are not able to understand their aims immediately. But on the basis of the 'richas', the learned ones have created great books of large size on spiritualism which have been providing inspiration and guidance for thousands of years to the spiritual seekers who want to progress on the path of excellence.

The speciality of the Veds is that their knowledge is not limited to any particular race, sects or sub-sects with differences of opinions but all persons in the world have the same right to it, because the Veds are universal in their approach and message. Hence they can prove useful at any time to the cultured and spiritually minded men and women in any country. The aims and guidance obtained from the Veds prove beneficial and uplifting to every human being.

The differences in interpretation of the Veds are not a present-day phenomenon only. It used to happen in ancient times also. It is also a widely held belief by the Indian public that the various aggressors who invaded India over more than a thousand years have misinterpreted the Veds in their fanatic zeal to reduce the importance of the Veds and have even gone to the extent of wickedly calling them the songs of the half-civilised shepherds and cowherds. Nevertheless, even ancient Indian learned men have made different interpretations of the Veds. Religious-minded good men have interpreted the Veds from a spiritual viewpoint and others have made distorted interpretations to suit their own ends according to the hideous principles of Vaam Marg (which is something akin to witchcraft). For example, the demon-king *Ravan* misinterpreted the Veds to encourage violence, and some of the followers are seen even to-day.

In this way, such pseudo-religionists have caused great harm to the Veds and have always tried to lower their status and usefulness. It is but natural that when three to four explanations are given for the same stanza and one expert expresses a completely opposite opinion to another's, doubts and lack of faith will raise their heads in people's minds.

But now the time is ripe to find a solution to these perverse and mutually opposing interpretations spread during the dark medieval periods. Modern scholars have revealed the original aim of the Veds by analysing

the Vedic mantras, and have represented in very clear and easily understandable form the core knowledge, advice and the principles of truth enshrined in them, so that even an ordinary reader can understand and benefit from them. The book in your hands contains the essence of selected 'richas' (stanzas) with explanations from an impartial view and with proper aims. By understanding them properly and putting them into conduct, the readers will be convinced that the Veds are in reality mines of gem-like thoughts. By such conduct man becomes free from faults and wickedness and starts living a life of high-level thinking. There is no doubt that every man can make his life successful by benefiting from the immensely valuable advice on the subjects of truth, non-violence, forgiveness, pity, generosity, helping others, good dealings, organisation and co-operative life.

Shriram Sharma Acharya

Preface to the revised third edition

The Veds are the immortal speech of God, the Supreme Father. All the critics of the world acknowledge the fact that the veds are the most ancient scriptures and that they are the jewels in the crown of the entire literature of the world. There is an endless treasure of knowledge and spiritual information, i.e. information on the soul and God in the Veds. Nectar flows forth from their every word. All the fundamental learning of this world has been born from the Veds.

We should very lovingly and with great faith read such invaluable books. We should decide to fulfil our duties by reflecting and contemplating upon them. We get material as well as spiritual knowledge of high level from the veds. The reading of Veds saves us from sins, creates hope and joy in life, makes life peaceful, pure and stable, turns us away from the wrong path and takes us to the right path and when we stray away, then it also warns and alerts us.

The more we reflect on the meanings of the Ved-mantras, the more it will make our life shine. Every mantra is capable of opening up the path to brighten every aspect of man's life.

The revered Gurudev has included specially selected mantras from all the four Veds in this book. With the aim of enabling even the most ordinary man to derive inspiration from this book, after giving the meaning of each mantra, its message has been added in very simple language. It also helps to increase knowledge. But the mantra is not limited to the message alone. With deep reflection and contemplation, we can get many types of messages and inspirations from the same mantra. The message of a total 185 mantras has been given in five parts as follows:

Part 1: *Brahmanatva* or the meaning of being a brahman: Nobody becomes a brahman merely by birth in a race or clan. He becomes a brahman by virtue of his qualities, deeds, excellence of nature and dedication of his life to people's welfare. The mantras included in this part give information on God's existence, His worship and the duties of the brahmins.

Part 2: *Atmabal* or the power of the soul: Man has to struggle continuously to achieve the objective of life. Tremendous will-power is required for facing the widespread bad customs, wicked activities and corruption and to adopt good activities and honesty in life. Information on mantras which help to achieve this aim is given in this section.

Part 3: Charitra nirman or the formation of good character: For the upliftment of the soul, the foremost requirement is the excellence of character. Lucid explanation of the mantras highlighting the importance of good qualities in life is given in this part.

Part 4: Dushpravrutti nivaran or the eradication of wicked activities: Wicked activities and addictions turn man's joyous life into hell. The inspiration and guidance for liberation from them is given in this part.

Part 5: Parivar aur swasthya or the family and health: Family-life is the backbone of the entire social organisation. Happiness, peace and heavenly atmosphere of prosperity depend only on its excellence. In this section the mantras which can make our lives bright and praiseworthy have been given. These mantras explain the importance of a happy family, a confident and cultured woman and health.

The person who wrote and translated the five parts must have really spent time and labour on it. However the thoughts presented here are of Revered *Gurudev* only and this work has been possible only by his inspiration. The aim of our life can be easily achieved by study, reflection and contemplation of the explanations of the mantras

Lilapat Sharma

Yug Nirman Yojana, Mathura.

A brief introduction to the life of Revered *Gurudev*

Born on 20-9-1911 at *Aanwalkheda* village in Agra district. Father - *Pandit Roopkrishore Sharma*, Mother - *Daankunvri Devi*.

Intense spiritual and devotional activity right from childhood. Always spiritual discussions with classmates. Unlimited love for the Himalayas. Ran away from home at the age of ten. When caught, claimed Himalayas as his home and insisted on going there.

Constructive thinking right from childhood. Accent on village development and self-employment through spinning and weaving in every home. Distribution of leaflets in village bazaars for public- awareness. Unlimited sympathy for untouchables and downtrodden. Treatment of a diseased old untouchable woman despite opposition from people at home.

Initiation into yagyopavit (wearing the holy-thread) and Gayatri mantra at Kashi (Varanasi) by the great Madan Mohan Malaviyaji (the founder of Banaras University) at the age of ten years.

On Vasant Panchami day (5th day of the spring season) visitation by his Guru from Himalayas as a manifestation in a mass of bright light in his own worship-room. He was 15 years of age at that time. His guru gave him a glimpse of his previous births and also gave five directions .

1. Accumulation of divine energy by recitations of Gayatri-mantra purashcharans (i.e. repetitive recitation, each purashcharan of 24,00,000 mantras, 24 such purashcharans were to be made. His only diet during this time was roti (flat baked bread from barley flour) and butter-milk. On the basis of an austere life to plan for nation building.

2. Continuous uninterrupted burning of the holy lamp. (This lamp continues to burn even to-day).

3. Journey into the Himalayas to meet his Guruji (mentor) for receiving guidance and for performing austerities.

4. To establish co-ordination between spirituality and science.

5. To use the householder's life as a support for high-level spiritual endeavours.

Teenager Shriram begins the practice of severe austerities. On the clarion call of Mahatma Gandhi, active participation in the freedom-struggle.

Enlisted as a Congress-worker, six imprisonments with hard labour, each for six months. During the freedom-struggle at Jaraar, getting severely beaten by the police and despite fainting, not releasing the national flag clenched between the teeth. Therefore nicknamed 'mutt' in Hindi language i.e. intoxicated (with love for the country). Incarceration in Asansol jail with the great Madan Mohan Malaviyaji, Swaruparani Nehru, Devdas Gandhi and Rafi Ahmed Kidwai. They became the foundations for the spread of the mission.

Entry into the field of journalism at a very young age. Active co-operation in 1927-28 in the newspaper '*Sainik*' (soldier) belonging to Shrikrishna Dutt Paliwal. Stoking the fires of freedom with his articles in the columns titled '*Mutt Pralaap*'. After independence, publication of religious books and pamphlets for public-education.

Publication of *Akhand Jyoti* monthly from Mathura and also *Yug Nirman Yojana*, *Yug Shakti Gayatri* and *Mahila Jagaran* from Gayatri Tapobhomi, Mathura. Publication and spread of inspiring literature for the formation and moral regeneration of the individual, family and the society.

Publication of *Gayatri Mahavigyan* in 3 volumes which became the basis for the development of culture, spiritual endeavour, sacraments and spiritualism. Writing, translating and publication of the four Veds, 108 *upnishads*, 6 *darshans*, 18 *purans* and 2700 books including the *Gita* and '*Brahman Aaranyak*' volumes.

108 *kundiya yagya* (1953) as a finale to the completion of 24 *Mahapurashcharans*, *Narmedh yagya* in 1956 (*Narmedh* means surrendering one's all for serving the public-at-large. In this *yagya*, Gurudev surrendered whatever personal belongings to the Gayatri-mission and himself for the sole purpose of public-welfare). 1008-*kundiya yagya* (1958) and auspicious beginning of the Gayatri-family.

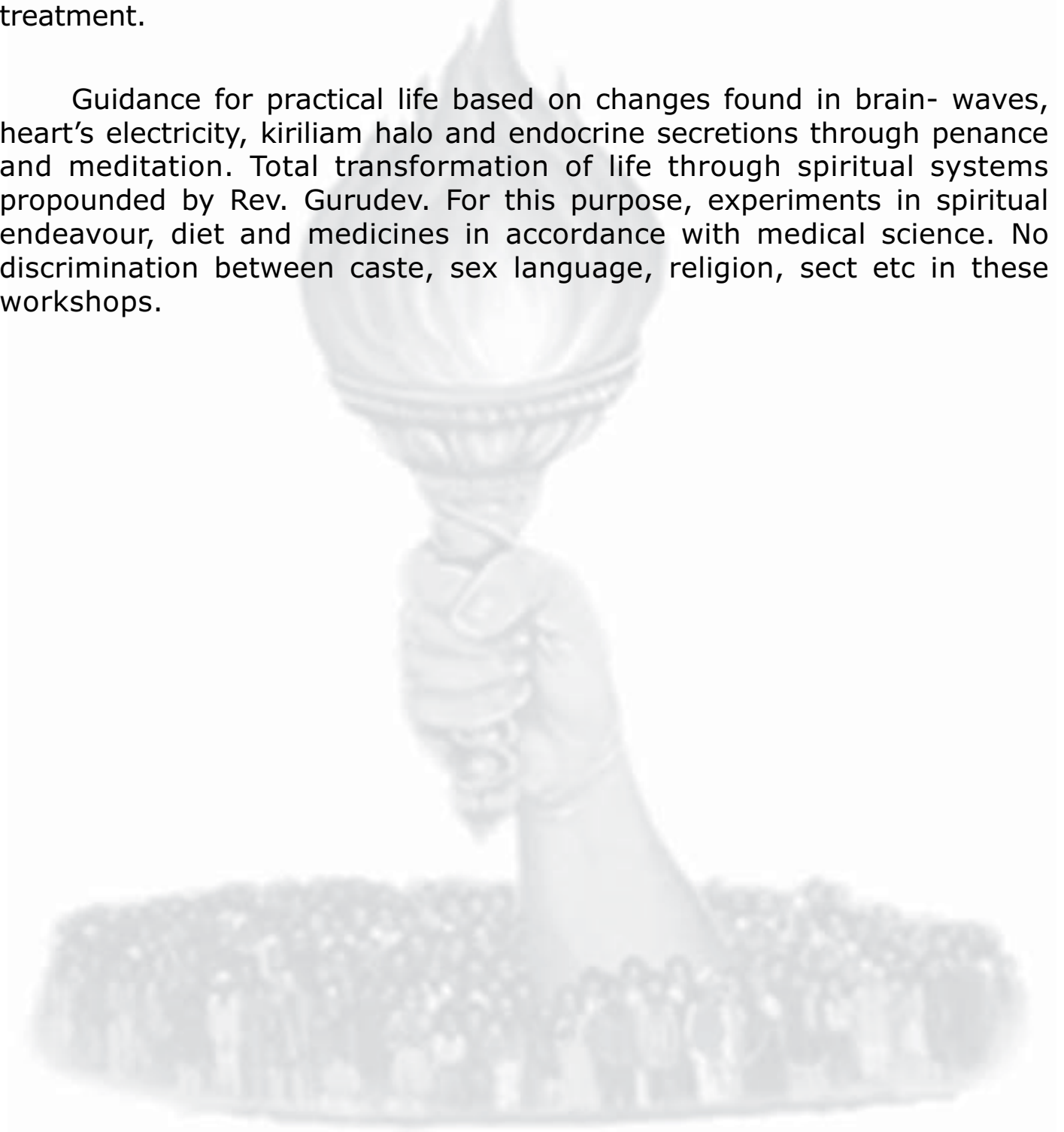
As a symbolic gesture of goodwill towards all religions, collection of water and soil from 2400 places. Also started an industry oriented school with education for self-employment at *Gayatri Tapobhoomi*, Mathura. Establishment of Gayatri-family's branches all over the country. Left Mathura permanently in 1971. Before that five 1008-kundiya Gayatri mahayagya throughout India on a vast scale.

After departure from Mathura in 1971, establishment of '*Shantikunj*' at Haridwar in the *sapta-sarovar* area (the area of the seven branches of river Ganga) and proclamation of the principles of the traditions of ancient sages as applicable for the current era.

Establishment of 2400 'pragya sansthans' for moral-spiritual awakening of the public. Rev. Gurudev's journey through the length and breadth of India in 1981 - 82 for inaugurating them.

Training of individuals in *japa* (recitation), *aasan* (yogic exercises), *pranayaam* (yogic breath-control), *mudra* (postures), *dhyana* (meditation) etc. Study by scientific equipment of a person's progress through spiritual treatment.

Guidance for practical life based on changes found in brain- waves, heart's electricity, kirilium halo and endocrine secretions through penance and meditation. Total transformation of life through spiritual systems propounded by Rev. Gurudev. For this purpose, experiments in spiritual endeavour, diet and medicines in accordance with medical science. No discrimination between caste, sex language, religion, sect etc in these workshops.



A Religious Duty

The fundamental basis of the divine Indian culture is the Vedic literature. The Veds contain high level of spiritual principles and knowledge on practical life. In this book 'Divine Message of the Veds' 185 'richas' (stanzas) from all the four Veds viz. Rigved, Yajurved, Samved and Atharvaved have been carefully selected and their explanation has been given in an easy-to-understand style. These stanzas are like pearls of wisdom. Daily study of this divine message makes life peaceful pure and free from passions. By reflecting and contemplating on the divine messages under the five divisions of this book, life's aims can be successfully achieved. The 5 divisions are Brahmanatva (brahman philosophy), Atmabal (Spiritual Power or power of the soul), Charitra nirman (character formation), Dushpravritti nivaran(eradication of wicked activities) and Parivar aur Swasthya (family and health).

The basis for '*vichar kranti*' i.e. bringing about a change in thinking and attitudes for moral regeneration is *sadgyan-prachar* i.e. spreading of the good-knowledge, that is, the knowledge of morality, spirituality and a code of simple life style. Keeping) his aim in view, a campaign has been started to make this book available in every home.

The Veds advise man to evolve to a higher spiritual level. For that man has to change his thinking and attitudes. This is very much required to-day. Only through a change in the individual, change in the world and the era is possible. To create a heavenly atmosphere on the earth, we will have to change the level of the mind for the removal of selfishness, narrow-mindedness, indiscipline and immorality which have spread their tentacles to-day and in their place establish the goodwill and good activities of gentlemen. This activity is not possible by mere listening, writing and reading. For this, an endeavour will have to be made so that people adopt a life-style in harmony with a pure spiritual viewpoint.

That was the aim of our revered *Gurudev Pandit Sriram Sharma Acharya* and to fulfil his desire is our religious duty.



The basic axiom behind all successes in the world is tremendous will-power. Based on its strength only learning, wealth and gadgets are produced. This is the support on which spiritual 'tapasya' (penances) and 'sadhanas' are dependent. This is that divine strength by which, the man who is born empty handed dazzles the world by becoming rich and powerful. Those who make their will power very strong and then try for progress & success in life, will never be unsuccessful nor disappointed.

- Shriram Sharma Acharya



All our problems can be solved by the Indian culture and the Indian way of thinking. The government can protect your rights but it cannot control the thought process which is the root - cause of all your happiness and misery. This can be achieved by spiritual upliftment only.

The Indian Culture alone has the real strength to turn man into a true human being. It teaches us that man is born to love man and certainly not for quarreling and fighting.

- Bhagwati Devi Sharma



Divine Message of Veds

Part 3

Character Formation



Character Formation

Charitra nirman or the formation of good character: For the upliftment of the soul, the foremost requirement is the excellence of character. Lucid explanation of the mantras highlighting the importance of good qualities in life is given in this Part.

मृत्योः पदं योपयन्तो यदैत द्राघीय

Mrutyoho padum yopayanto
yadaita draaghiya

आयुः प्रतरं दधानाः ।

aayuhu pratarum dadhanahaa,

आप्यायमानाः प्रजया धनेन,

aapyaayamaanaahaa prajyaa dhanena

शुद्धाः पूता भवत यज्ञियासः ॥

shuddhaahaa pootaa

bhavata yagyiyaasaha

(Rigved 10/18/2)

Meaning: Those who adopt good moral conduct in place of wicked conduct, achieve excellent life and longevity. They obtain physical and mental purity while being blessed with money and children.

Message: Human life is an invaluable gift from God. Man has received the facilities not granted to any other life-form. He has been granted a family, medical-care, industry, housing, vehicles and entertainment and the power to talk, laugh, read, write and think. Do other animals enjoy all these? Why all this special grace of God on man only?

Every animal born in this world, meets death after some time. No one knows when he will die. God has given the facility to man only to push death on one side and achieve immortality. He should not lead the life of a mortal, but live determinedly like an immortal.

By studying the history and the characters of excellent men, it becomes clear that some qualities are extremely essential for man's progress. These qualities by themselves are the test of man. Man will become excellent with immortality of name in proportion to the qualities possessed by him. The lives of all great men of the world are replete with these qualities. No man will achieve immortality of name without the help of these qualities. The grandeur of these qualities has been mentioned in many places in many ways in the holy *Gita*. These qualities are called '*Daivee Sampada*'. Man can become immortal in this world only by adopting these virtues in his life.

Ours is the country of great men. From the time of Lord *Ramachandra* (or *Ram*), up to to-day, world-famous men have been born here. But it will be of no use to create only great men. It is both improper and impossible that people who can be counted on finger-tips become great by imbibing divinity and the rest live the life of hell. The level of our ordinary, very ordinary people also should be excellent.

Our bodily requirements, like other animals, are ordinary and can be easily fulfilled. But we utilise our extra capacity for indulging in our desires, for luxurious living, for hoarding and for satisfying our ego. We stray from aims of this life and like a dying man just pull on with the burden of our lives.

By proper diet, proper daily routine, exercise, austerity etc we should keep the body clean and the mind pure and live '*yagyiya*'-life (i.e. live for others' welfare). In that case we can 'live over a hundred years by doing good deeds, enjoy the happiness of excellent wealth and children and enjoy the bliss of immortality of the soul.

अधेन्वा चरति माययैष वाचं शुश्रुवां अफलामपुष्पाम् ।

Adhenvaa charati maayayaisha

vaachum shushruvaam aphalaampushpam!

(Rigved 10/71/5)

Meaning: Those who do not practise moral conduct, they do not get benefit despite being educated, just as a cow produced by a magician does not give milk.

Message: How surprising it is that it does not occur to us to take advantage of the invaluable opportunity of human life and we waste it away just like that in childish games. Not only that, but we utilise the human life in various wicked activities and take away with us the heavy burden of mountains of sins and hellish tortures for our next birth. On the contrary, the animals are better, who leave just as they came into this world. Is this the only intelligence of man? Is man incapable of using proper discretion after obtaining so much knowledge, wisdom and education?

We may boast of ourselves as knowledgeable, clever, and shrewd by knowing the ways of success in the material world, but it is not the less important that we understand the fundamental aim of life and seriously think about it. We should also think 'who am I? what am I? and how do I achieve meaningfulness of my existence ? If man does not develop this knowledge, then he will be forced to live a contemptible life similar to an animal.

Every man with discretion must think on his current situation, and if possible should venture to employ his life in fulfilling God's expectation and thereby saving himself from repentance. When such an inspiration arises in the heart, then you should understand that God's brightness has started shining and God's grace is manifesting.

Most people are not prepared to amend their bad conduct. They are not willing to replace wicked conduct with good conduct and they expect God to fulfil their desires. They are doing ritual-worship, sing hymns etc with desires. They think that praising God, prostrating before him, by imploring or by making offerings, they can get their work done through Him. The real meaning of worship is that God's qualities be firmly impressed on our memory, and to create maximum cleanliness, discretion and purity in our minds.

Depending on his situation, every man can contribute in some way to raising the level of sentiments of the world's humanity. The extent to which we can devote our time, labour, intelligence, money etc for this purpose, to that extent we have ventured for fulfilling God's wish. For that we should include the maximum purity, generosity and excellent ideals in our thinking, attitudes, qualities, deeds, nature and activities. Simultaneously we should be dedicated to surrender with enthusiasm and feelings our insight and capacity for people's welfare.

सुगः पन्था अनृक्षर आदित्यास ऋ तं यते ।

sugaha panthaa anrukshara
aadityaas rutum yatey,

नात्रावखादो अस्ति वः ॥

naatraavakhaado asti vaha.

(Rigved 1/41/4)

Meaning: Only the path of truth is without thorns, easy and approachable therefore all should follow the path of truth.

Message: The message of Indian culture is '*Satyam vada, dharmum chara, swadhya yanmaprmadaha*' i.e. 'Speak the truth conduct yourself in a religious manner and do not be lazy in the study of scriptures'. In the above injunction, truth has been given priority over religion also. We should always conduct ourselves truth fully. Inner and outer unity, i.e. there is unity in thinking and behaviour, should be man's first and foremost quality. Let us present ourselves to others as we are. Let us reflect in our speech what we have in mind, and do such deeds only. There should be unity '*Manasa vacha karmana*' i.e. in our thinking, speech and behaviour. The purity of the inner-self is maintained in this way and the mind remains cheerful. Peace reigns in such a clean heart and the rays of divine light shine forth.

If we trust others with ease, only then can we live with mutual goodwill. The entire organisation of the society rests on mutual trust. If this trust is destroyed, nobody will trust each other and societal organisation cannot be stable. The basis of love, friendship co-operation, help etc. is truth only.

Untruthful speech includes also untruthful dealings, untruthful and false make-believe, to present something other than what we believe, to hide the actual situations and present something else, to hide one's motive etc. To tell a lie is not the only untruth. To make someone in some way to believe in something else, all this comes within the sphere of untruth. In other words such peoples are called conspirers and cheats. Even if one has not duped someone of his money, but to dupe someone of trust is no less a sin or a crime.

It is man's disgraceful downfall to lose the trust of others, to be ambiguous in speech and behaviour and to remain dishonest. Only the person who can be trusted, has a reputation. One whom no one trusts in the society is considered of the lowest level in the society. By telling lies, an atmosphere of doubt, anxiety, distrust and cheating is created and the joy of love and friendship is finished. The terror of anxiety makes a person look at others with doubt and distrust. How can the feeling of faith last in such a situation? He starts thinking of everyone as a cheat and worth condemning. When keeping promise and trust are gone from a man's conduct, that person will find himself alone and survival will become not only difficult but impossible also.

A liar is always afraid, because the original truth cannot be kept hidden, and if not to-day then to-morrow it comes to light. The influence of lies remains only for some time, but to conceal the lies, a thousand more lies have to be uttered and even then doubts remain. On the other hand, truth remains permanently stable like a rock and there is absolutely no burden on the mind. A man's personality shines with the halo of truth. The famous scriptural story of '*Satyanarayan katha*' - extolling the virtue of truth and truthful conduct and relationship of truth with God - is not merely for hearing. It must be imbibed in our lives also.

मधु नक्त मुतोषसो मधुमत्पार्थिवं रजः ।

Madhu naktemutoshaso
madhumatpaarthivum rajaha

मधु द्यौरस्तु नः पिता ॥

madhu dyourastu naha pitaa

(*Rigved 1/90/7*)

Meaning: Do such work in the world whereby everyone will enjoy happiness, peace and cheer.

Message: The corner-stone of man's stability and progress is his dedication. If we ignore our responsibilities and the prescribed duties, then such obstacles will be created, that life itself will become difficult, let alone progress and achievement. Every achievement in life depends on dedication to work. The stability and safety of every achievement depends only on dedicated faith in work. It is our own responsibility to keep this very valuable body healthy, nourished and long-lived so that we can perform maximum deeds for people's welfare and create an atmosphere of peace, happiness and cheer everywhere. It is our duty to save the mind from worry, sorrow, disappointment, fear, anger, impulsiveness etc; for maintaining mental capacity and excellence. With that only the qualities like joy, enthusiasm, patience, courage, satisfaction, balance, stability, concentration and trust can enter the heart. If the mind is allowed to grow like wild grass, it becomes our own enemy. It is every man's duty to bring his mind under control and make himself cultured.

The joy of family-life is incomparable. But it is possible only when every member of the family carries out his responsibility properly with full involvement, care and honesty for all the needs of every member regarding health, comforts, satisfaction and development. We must also fulfil the responsibility of giving our love, time and co-operation to make the children cultured and organised. Only responsible people are able to get the joy of family-life.

Every member of the society also is burdened with human responsibilities. Every citizen of a cultured society remains awake and alert towards his moral, societal and national responsibility and increases the reputation of the country. It is every man's duty to maintain the purity of thought, atmosphere and ecology in the society. The extent to which a man takes interest in the uplift of the society and personal abnegation for public-welfare, to that extent he is great.

It is necessary that all of us understand very properly our duties so that everywhere in the society. There is an atmosphere of peace and happiness and all can go easily on the path of progress. Let us listen to the voice of our soul and go on striving for making this human life meaningful by fulfilling the tasks decided by the God.

ये पायवो मामतेयं ते अग्ने

Ye paayavo maamteyam te agnay

पश्यन्तो अन्धं दूरितादरक्षन् ।

pashyanto andhum dooritaadarakshan

ररक्ष तान्सुकृतो विश्ववेदा

raraksha tantsukruto vishwaveda

दिप्सन्त इद्रिपवो नाह देभुः ॥

dipsanta idripavo naaha debhuhu

(Rigved 1/147/3)

Meaning: One must not be afraid of slander, stigma, ridicule etc in the works for others' welfare. God Himself protects such people. Therefore, free from all worries, one must become involved in activity for people's welfare.

Message: The word '*paropkaar*' means doing good to others or obliging others. The meaningfulness of human life lies in being useful to others. He, who does not help others despite having the power, is like an animal. Everyone lives for himself, but the excellence of a man's life can be guessed by how much he has lived for others. Man goes on working for maintaining his existence. But his divinity is revealed by how much he has worked for others.

Every man requires the co-operation of others. The biggest and the most capable man also needs co-operation from others. The human-life's grace and glory increases by works of welfare. A truly obliging person always remains cheerful and experiences inner joy and divine light. The extent to which a man obliges others, he comes that much closer to God. '*Satpurush*' (Good, saintly men) are those who do good to others without any type of selfishness. For doing good to others, it is necessary to give up narrow thinking.

What is '*paropkar*' or obliging others? If we look carefully, it is in 3 stages - advice, help in achievement and financial help. We should advise the people on the basis of personal worth, capacity and experience. Beneficial advice at the proper time works like a beam of light in a man's life. Similarly, whenever possible, wherever possible one should help others in carrying out their work properly and one should also not hesitate in giving financial help.

It is not easy to do welfare-work. Many obstacles come in the way and they disturb the mind. The fact is that the sentiment for helping others is aroused in us as a result of the influence of innumerable virtuous deeds and when we are trying to help others, friends and companions ridicule us, and by various allegations drain away our enthusiasm. It is also a fact that people have turned social-welfare work into a profession and under the cover of social-work, they are busy making money. In such an incongruent situation, a true social-welfare worker finds it difficult to protect his self-respect. He has to suffer all kinds of resistance. But he should remember that by obliging others, good tendencies leading towards purity fill his heart which guides him to the good path. A man doing good deeds is neither destroyed nor suffers downfall. God protects him every moment in every way.

We shall do our duty without worrying about "what others will say."

मा नो अग्नेऽमतये मावीरतायै रीरधः ।

maa no agneamataye maveertayaai reeradhaha

मागोताये सहसस्पुत्र मा निदेऽप द्वेषांस्या कृधि ॥

mogotaayai sahasasputra ma

nideapa dweshaansya krudhi.

(Rigved 3/16/5)

Meaning: Let us be intelligent, brave and wealthy for making our life successful. Let us not be slanderers, deceitful, back-biters and disrespectful. Let us not be deprived of intelligence, so that we can remain happy throughout life and continue worshipping God.

Message: Every man wants to be happy. For that he makes various plans and develops the means for that with his intelligence and capacity. Alongwith that, the undisputed fact remains that he is not liberated from sorrow. There are such a large number of reasons for causing sorrow that some kind of sorrow will overtake the man, howsoever much careful he may be. Even the highly knowledgeable and wealthy people cannot save themselves from it. In reality there are very many means of comfort in the world, but even men surrounded with such means too remain unhappy. In such a situation, when man is not able to save himself, he should desire that he be mentally prepared to welcome sorrow or unhappiness. In this way he will not be influenced by the intensity of sorrow.

The meaningfulness of our worth and insight is in our becoming calm, serious and brave and overcoming every type of trouble smilingly. We should always remember that when the days of happiness no longer exist, then these unhappy days will also be over quickly. A negative attitude towards life also makes a person unhappy. One must always try to save oneself from it. If a person always goes on thinking about a situation of shortages in life, then also he will be troubled by unhappiness. He should think that whatever he has received, or whatever he is receiving is because of the endless benevolence of God and is for his happiness only.

Most of the sorrows are created by man himself through his ignorance, perverse nature, deceit and selfishness. He Himself has invited his own destruction. This itself is the reason for his pitiable condition. First the man creates such an atmosphere by his bad tendencies and vices that difficulties surround him from all sides. In such a situation his discretion and patience get destroyed and he is not able to find a way out of these troubles. He finds unbearable the advice given to him by others. This type of mental distortion does the work of increasing his sorrow even more.

To be liberated from sorrows, man has to help himself. The consolation from others does not give any particular benefit. All the sorrows of man get destroyed by remaining happy according to the direction given in the holy *Gita*. If the person can cultivate a habit of laughing and smiling, then his mind becomes steady very quickly and in that way, he can definitely increase his happiness.

*‘Sukh dukh ya sansar mein, sub kahu ko hoy,
gyani kaate gyan se, murkh kaate roy’.*

This *hindi* saying means, ‘everyone in this world gets troubles, but the wise person cuts them away with knowledge, but the foolish whiles away his time in crying’.

This is the only measure of the meaningfulness of our knowledge.

कालो अश्वो वहति सप्तारश्मिः

Kaalo ashwo vahuti saptarashmihi

सहस्राक्षो अजरो भूरिरैताः ।

sahastraksho ajaro bhooriraitaaha

तमा रोहन्ति कवयो विपश्चितस्तस्य

tamaa rohanti kavayo vipashchitastasya

चक्रा भुवनानि विश्वा ॥

chakra bhuvanaani vishwaa.

(Atharvaved 19/53/1)

Meaning: The time that lapses to-day will never come back. The Time is very powerful-knowing this fact, the knowledgeable ones put it to good use.

Message: Time is the most valuable wealth in human life. Every type of success can be achieved in the world by the good use of time, and all comforts and luxuries can be purchased. Days, nights, months and years are passing and time is running on and on. How so even much you run after it, the time that has elapsed, can never return.

In the above mantra many qualities of time have been depicted. Just as the Sun is bright with the seven colours of light, similarly time also shines. Just as the authority of the sun is the main one in the world, similarly the importance of time is also accepted. Time with its hundreds of 'eyes' is continuously 'observing' everyone. In the cycle of days and nights and seasons and years and eras of time, the world is constantly on the move. Time remains uniform throughout and is extremely powerful.

All the works or activities in this world are bound within the boundaries of geography and time. Except for God and the souls, everything else is bound by the shackles of time. Only the knowledgeable, wise and intelligent man 'controls' time, which means that a person who has a high aim in life, he only can make good use of time and 'defeat' time.

Time is more valuable than money. In everything in this world, the importance of time is supreme, above all. Those who understand the value of time, never waste it. Those who waste it, are themselves destroyed by it. Time is a treasure for good life and prosperity. Only by the good use of time man's life becomes good and pure. Just because life is perishable, it does not mean that time should be wasted. On the contrary, from it we should get the inspiration that we should not allow this wealth to go waste and we should achieve the maximum benefit by the good use of time. The secret of success in the life is also that prescribed work should be carried out at the prescribed time. But to-day, whomsoever you see, merely goes on wasting his time. Every work is carried out with the only aim of 'passing the time'. People spend their time in laziness, sleeping and gossiping and claim that they are very busy. Even now if we keep our eyes closed to reality, then time will destroy us.

The Hindi proverb is 'kal kare so aaj kar, aaj kare so ab' which means 'whatever is to be done to-morrow, do it to-day and whatever is to be done to-day, do it right now'. We must adopt this view-point To-morrow, never dawns. It is available every moment in the 'present time'. Therefore only that person, who takes advantage of the present, creates his own future and wins over the time.

The best quality of man's character means making good use of time.

स्वस्ति पन्थामनु चरेम सूर्याचन्द्रमसाविव ।

Swasti panthaamanu charem

suryaachandra masaaviva

पुनर्ददताघ्नता जानता संगमेमहि ॥

punardadataaghndataa

jaanataa sangamemahi

(Rigved 5/51/15)

Meaning: O men! Just as the Sun and the Moon move on their prescribed paths with regularity, similarly man also should go on the path of justice.

Message: What is this creation? Merely a small part of the universe, which is extremely great and extremely vast! Despite their progress every day, the scientists have been able to learn only on infinitesimally small part of this vast universe. Nobody knows how many solar-systems, earths, and constellation etcetera God has created which, bound by a definite organisation, are moving in space since billions of years. There is never any distortion in that organisation and not one of them shows laziness or neglect in following the rules.

This is the biggest gift to humanity. Yet, despite actually seeing the miracle of God's organisation, man himself considers living by the rules as an imprisonment. Whether it is his personal, work or familial or social work, in everything he wants to behave wilfully, and considers it as burdensome and insulting to follow the rules. The guardians of the law, themselves consider it a feather in their cap to break the law. They forget that working by the rules in an organised manner, everyone gets much more facilities for development and an atmosphere of joy and enthusiasm is also created. It is possible that a few men will get undeserved benefit by unbridled conduct, but by and large it gives rise in the majority of them to frustration, which then develops into mutual enmity, malice, etc.

Once upon a time, man may have lived in solitude, but to-day he is a social animal. His stability, facilities, devotion, progress and cheerfulness, all are dependent on societal organisation. Who creates the innumerable means for his bread, clothes, shelter and comforts? How many million persons working day and night in fields and industries create these and reach out to him. If there is a slight disturbance in this arrangement, or someone does something with selfishness, then there is harassment to the society. Dark clouds of uncertainty, doubt and disturbance will spread everywhere if attention is not paid to organisation and rules in the society: Everywhere lack of interest and harshness will be seen and we will have to face improper and aggressive wickedness. In such a situation the hope for one's own security, peace, organisation and future will crumble to dust

We must cultivate the habit of doing every work with regularity and punctuality in personal, familial and social life. One's diet, daily schedule of work, exercise, worship, trade or profession, all these must be carried out in an organised manner, governed by rules. The members of the family, specially the children, must be explained its importance right from the beginning, so that progressing along, they will shine forth like the sun in the society.

One must cultivate the nature of following the rules.

मा नो निदे च वक्तवेऽर्यो रनधीररावणे ।

ma no needay ya

vaktavearyo ranadhirraavne,

त्वे अपि क्रतुर्मम ॥

tye api kraturmama

(Rigved 7/31/5)

Meaning: O men! Never speak harsh words to anyone, never slander anyone, do not be ungrateful, keep helping sorrowful people. May each good work of yours be dedicated to God.

Message: Pleasant speech gives happiness to everyone. Everyone gets pleased and satisfied. Whereas bitter speech pierces the heart and causes unbearable pain, sweet speech fascinates, attracts others to us, makes them co-operative like a magic mantra. That is why; man must be pleasant in speech. There is an atmosphere of happiness, peace and enthusiasm everywhere by pleasantly dealing with everyone.

Pleasant speech is like '*kamadhenu*' (the legendary wish-fulfilling cow in heaven). It fulfils all the desires and gives name and fame. Howsoever hard-hearted a person, he becomes ready to co-operate in every way by listening to a few sweet words. Every type of happiness is obtained by speaking pleasantly. But it does not mean flattery or sycophancy. When presenting one's view firmly, one must never forsake pleasantness. Neither pleasant cool water, nor the cool shade of a tree nor cooling sandalwood paste gives as much happiness and joy as gives pleasant speech. Therefore one must always speak pleasantly. The *Hindi* couplet says, '*aisi vani boliye manka aapa khoye, auran ko sheetal kare, aap hoon sheetal hoye*'. It means, 'dissolve your ego and speak such a sweet language, that it pleasantly cools the listener's heart and cools the self also'.

God has given the divine gift of speech as a help and he also does not wish that we should ever utter harsh words. That is why he has not put bones inside the tongue which would have made it angular instead of smooth. With this sweet speech we can make the world our own and like a friend to us. Tulsidasji too has given the same advice "*Tulsi meethe vachan se sukh oopjut chahoon our, vashikaran ek mantra hai, taj de vachan kathor*". It means happiness prevails all-round with sweet words, there is only one mantra for making the others our own, and that is give up harsh words.

Bitter language results in harm only. A man is not hurt as much by a piercing arrow as by piercing words. A wound produced by a weapon fills up and heals, but a wound from bitter speech never heals. Harsh and sharp language pierces man's heart, therefore bitter and harsh language should never be spoken. By describing the handicapped persons like blind, one-eyed, limp, and ugly one should neither ridicule them, nor hurt their feeling. It is equally hurting others to the heart when they are slandered, when people take joy in being ungrateful to those who have co-operated with them.

If we want God to grace us, then we should always involve ourselves in good deeds. Whereas God is destroyer of those who do bad deeds, HE is also fatherly guardian for those who do good deeds and also increases their power. HE destroys by His own power those using improper, opposing and bitter speech. Society looks down upon people who find faults with others, who use discourteous and cunning speech and those who are ungrateful. Their own conduct becomes the cause of their destruction.

Pleasant speech is the best quality of a man's character.

न स सखा ये द ददाति सख्ये

Na sa sakhaa yo na dadaati sakhye

सचाभुवे सचमानायः पित्वः ।

sachaabhuve sachamaanaaya pitvaha

अपास्मात्प्रेयान्न तदोक्तो अस्ति

apaasmaatpreyaanna tadoko asti

पृणान्तमन्यमरणं चिदिच्छेत् ॥

prunantamanyamaranam chidichchhet

(Rigved 10/117/4)

Meaning: Those who do not repay the debt of their obligation, who are stingy about giving their service to others, nobody in this world is their well-wisher. Therefore, man must always be generous by nature.

Message: Man is but an infinitesimal part of the vast creation of God. God has created innumerable, countless living species of animal-life and plant-life and among the plants various shrubs, trees, vegetables and medicinal plants and herbs. He has also created water, earth, sky, wind, Sun, Moon, stars etc. Among all these he has created the human-body with a special aim. Only because of the wonderful grace or benevolence of the Supreme Father this divine creation, i.e. the human body, has obtained the best skills. Whatever has been created in the world is for his use and consumption. Even though we know this fact, we show stinginess in expressing our gratitude to Him. Instead of being grateful to Him, we become proud ourselves.

God's directive is 'tyaktena bhoonjitha magrudhaha' which means consume with an attitude of renunciation and do not be greedy.' But we want to have everything and every moment we are immersed in selfishness. First and foremost we must express our gratitude to that vast Almighty and as directed by Him we should work for the welfare of all by giving up selfishness.

Man cannot be aloof even in the day-to-day life, every time he receives co-operation from one or the other, and therefore he has been able to achieve this much progress. No matter however much insight and capacity we possess, it is almost impossible to do anything without others' co-operation. We should liberally express our thanks to all our associates, big and small. Without making any distinction of young or old, high or low, we should try to repay them to the maximum extent for their help. Those who show stinginess in this are committing grave sins and are permanently deprived of God's grace.

It is unfortunate that man always thinks that his ultimate objective lies in nourishing his body, indulging his senses, loving the family members and relatives, and, as such, he spends his entire life in these only. Trapped in these worldly affairs he neglects the values of life and receives society's contempt. In times of his need, nobody comes to serve and help him. Nobody is his well-wisher. Even the society condemns a man who does not thank others, does not co-operate with others and is always immersed in his own world.

We should strive to firmly establish our ideal values of life and should not be miser in expressing our gratitude for the co-operation we receive from various living beings' from our birth to death. We should try to be of maximum service to them in return for all the obligations. It is our supreme duty to express our gratitude to God, our Supreme Father.

एकादृभूयो द्विपदो वि चक्रमे

Ekpaadrbhooyo dwipado vi chakrame

द्विपात्रिपादमभ्येति पश्चात्।

dwipaatripaadamabhyeti pashchaat,

चतुष्पादेति द्विपदामभिस्वरे।

chatuspaadeti dwipadaambhisware

सम्पश्यन्पङ्क्तीरूपतिष्ठमानः ॥

sampashyanpaktirupatishthamaanah

(Rigved 10/117/8)

Meaning: In this world all are not equal in status. All are in ascending order, someone wealthier than the other, someone more learned than the other, and so on. To compare one's own self with someone with more capacity is always painful, therefore whatever we have received should be considered as a favour from God and we should go on doing our duty.

Message: 'Gyanmay karna evam karmamay gyan' is a proclaimed truth of Indian philosophy which means our deeds should be backed with knowledge and our knowledge should be in action i.e. there is a need for harmony in knowledge and deeds. The goal of all our scriptures and learning is only this that the light of the ultimate knowledge within our heart~ should continuously brighten up our path of life.

All are not alike in this world. Not only the birds, animals and insects, but even men differ in their worth and capacities. Each man is not capable of carrying out every task, nor is he capable of every attainment. Mostly men themselves run away from work and keep on crying for not obtaining various achievements. Most men in this world are unhappy - not because of their own sorrows but - because of their thinking 'why should others be happy'? They themselves do nothing and expect that they should get all the happiness, comforts, money, wealth and achievements in the material world. Such ignorant people who keep building castles in the air create a hell-like life for themselves and simultaneously create an anarchic atmosphere in the society. Such distorted thinking only blunts their knowledge. Only their difficulties are visible to them and they always keep on crying. They neither have the time nor the knowledge to understand the sorrow of the millions of people living in want

When the proper knowledge of the reality enlightens the mind, then accordingly, man decides the actions to be taken. For this harmony, he requires constant practice. To cultivate this habit is at first difficult, even impossible, but gradually by practice it is achieved. The Hindi saying is, 'karat karat abhyaas ke jadmut hote sujaan' i.e. by constant practice even dull persons become knowledgeable. A person, who does not know swimming, becomes mortally afraid when taken into the water, but within the next few days he is able to swim like fish. Similarly by constant practice, the entire life can be made full of knowledge.

A knowledgeable person has a quiet and balanced attitude. He considers all his achievements as a favour from God and remains satisfied. He does not have any emotion of jealousy or malice. He does not have ill-feelings on seeing others' happiness, comforts and progress. Never does he cry or get irritated or angry. He knows the sanctity of deeds and with a broad outlook keeps a compassionate attitude for all animals. With the attitude that all animals possess a soul just like his own, he is not satisfied merely with personal progress, but understands that in the progress of all lies his own progress.

This is the identity of a man with character.

सत्यं चमे श्रद्धा च मे जगच्च मे धनं च मे

Satyum chamay shraddhaa

cha me jagachcha me dhanam cha me

विश्वं च मे महश्च मे क्रीडा च मे मोदश्च मे ।

vishwum cha me mahashcha

may krida cha me modashcha may

जातं च मे जनिष्यमाणं च मे सूक्तं च मे

jaatum cha may janishyamaanum

cha may sooktum cha me

सुकृतं च मे यज्ञेन कल्पन्ताम ॥

sukrutum cha may yagyena kalpantaam.

(Yajurved 18/5)

Meaning: Let me do such deeds that my truthful belief, faith, friendship, wealth, breadth of mind, play, humour, speech and good deeds are uplifted.

Message: How lucky we are that we have been granted this invaluable human body and simultaneously what misfortune that we waste it away in the animal-like activities of filling the belly and procreation. Our biggest and most important difficulty is of the proper, good use of life. Farsightedness lies in finding a solution to this difficulty. Only then will we be able to fulfil our life's objective and also fulfil God's wish.

Is the treasure of the power of knowledge, insight, capacity, worthiness and discretion given to us by God only for maintaining our bodies and families? If we recognise our capacity we will realise that after fulfilling our needs there still remains so much time, money and strength with us, which we do not put to good use and on the contrary, by its misuse, we are heading for the chasm of downfall. In trade or office, man has to spend maximum ten hours only. 6-7 hours are required for sleep and 3-4 hours for daily routine and meals etc. Even then daily four hours remain. We must sometimes think about what use we make of these four hours.

We must pay attention to our spiritual progress also. Believing this world to be a vast manifestation of God, all our remaining capacity must be utilised for making this world more fragrant and more developed. This will be possible only when we throw out our faults, bad activities, bad thoughts and bad tendencies and make tremendous efforts for their eradication. Alongwith it we try to achieve perfection by including to the maximum extent, more qualities, deeds, idealism and naturalness in our character. Let us believe that proper plans for public-welfare are the real worship of God and let us consider as high-level austerity the difficulties to be faced for removing the backwardness, ignorance and bad conduct all around us. Our spiritual progress will be in proportion to the attention that we pay to these matters and our will-power will increase accordingly. We should also listen to the voice of God within our conscience and determine' our deeds according to its direction. Otherwise the habit of crushing the interests of the soul under our feet and spending all our mental-capacities for bodily and worldly activities will prove foolish in the end and will prove costly.

The meaningfulness of life lies only in employing the self in good deeds. Let us always think, see, speak and do good only through our mind, speech and deeds. Let us create all around us an ionosphere of purity and inspiring all our senses for good deeds, let us go forward on the path of progress. “-

A man of character receives praise by making such a life his ideal.

य आत्मदा बलदा यस्य विश्व

Ya atmadaa baladaa yasya vishwa

उपासते प्रशिषं यस्य देवाः ।

Oopaasate prashishum yasya devaahaa

यस्य च्छायामृतं यस्यमृत्युः

yasya chhayaamrutum yasya mrutyuhu

कस्मै देवाय हविषा विधेम ॥

kasmai devaaya havishaa vidhem.

(*Rigved* 10/121/2, *Yajurved* 25/13)

Meaning: O Lord of the soul, the mind and the body! We remain alive when we follow your laws and rules i.e. carry out good deeds. We are destroyed by bad deeds; therefore may we always walk on the good path.

Message: The Lord of this creation is God. After creating everything he has also fixed its limits:. Every type of matter and animal fulfils God's aims by remaining within its fixed limits. It is only man who makes more bad use of his intelligence and nature and goes on the bad path. The entire structure of religion, its traditions, beliefs and faith are for the aim that man should spend his life within the limits prescribed for him. ‘

The basis of religion is faith and trust in God. When man plans his deeds under the rules of God by trust in God's omnipresence (presence everywhere) then, that belief is capable of preventing his bad activities. None of our conduct or emotion can be hidden from the eyes of the omnipresent God, and sooner or later that God, present in every particle, will punish us also for bad deeds. We can throw dust in the eyes of the society but one cannot hide anything from Him. This belief saves us from sinful deeds. Most of our bad activities go on because we are cleverly able to save ourselves from governmental or societal punishment. But such cleverness does not work before God. Only on that basis is man afraid of sins and forced to lead a gentlemanly life within the required limits,’ and his soul, mind and body, all three become clean and pure.

To-day perversities are a plenty in every direction. Faith has also been perverted. People falsely think that by a little sycophancy and by making presents of gifts, God can be bribed and taken on our side, big rewards can be obtained despite being unworthy and one can escape punishment for the sins also. Because of this wrong attitude only, people all around are busy in wrong deeds and destroying themselves. There is no solution except liberation from this false notion. Without following God's rules, it is not possible to achieve naturalness in life. God has given this human body to us for co-operating in the progress of all in the society by doing good deeds. It is our pious duty to follow this directive of God.

For that every day man must take out some time and worship God. One should try to imagine Him within the soul by thinking of His qualities. One who remains under His beneficial shelter does not have any mental anguish in his life and for him even death is like sweet nectar. That ‘*Paramatma*’ or Supreme Soul within our soul makes us immortal on the basis of our excellent deeds.

This is the secret of a successful life.

अकामो धीरो अमृतः स्वयंभूः

Akaamo dheero amrutaha swayambhuhu

रसेन तृप्तो न कुतश्चनोनः ।

rasena trupto na kutashchanonaha

तमेव विद्वान् न विभाय

tameva vidwaan na vibhaaya

मृत्योरात्मानं धीरमजरं युवानम् ॥

mrutyoraatamaanum

dheeramajarum yuvanum.

(Atharvaved 10/8/44)

Meaning: God patiently serves the living beings without selfishness. Those who follow these qualities of God, they always enjoy bliss by becoming free from fear.

Message: The Supreme Father, God has made this vast creation. He only is its controller, creator, is present everywhere and provides movement to it. Has he made this tremendous effort for Himself? He is always 'akaam' (i.e. without desire). Always complete, always whole, undivided, immovable, immortal, and without fear, that God is always sober. He has made the creation of this universe for the welfare of living beings like us. He has no personal interest; even then he has filled this world with abundance of various materials keeping in mind the interest of all.

Helping and obliging others is a great quality of God. We can obtain God's grace by adopting this quality of God. The meaningfulness of this human body also lies in that only. There is no religion comparable to helping or serving others. One whose mind is involved in helping others, for him nothing is difficult to achieve in this world. Only they are called saints in whose minds, speech and deeds, the sentiment of helping others is present.

There is great importance of *yagya* in Vedic religion. *Yagya* is necessary for the celibate, for the house-holder and for the *vanprasthi* (one who is a house-holder but who has given up the material activities of the world.). *Yagya* does not mean merely offering oblations of butter-oil and other things into the holy-fire. That is one meaning of *yagya*. The wider meaning lies in making the entire life like *yagya*. The real objective of *yagya* is to dedicate one's capacities and insight by giving up one's all facilities for making others' lives fragrant. Every man's aim should only be to oblige others. 'Idanna mama' i.e. all this is not mine, it all belongs to God, the Supreme Father. With that sentiment we should serve others with our body, mind and money, and help others. This only should be the objective of our life.

Fie upon that body which did not observe religion, did not perform *yagya* and did not do any work of service or help to others. Nobody can be meaner than those, who having got this human life do not help others.

This excellent body which we have received as compared to other animals, the blessing which God has given us of money, education, strength as compared to other men, what is it meant for? Is it only for our personal benefit? No, we should make its use for the good of others.

Everyday we should do some work of obliging others. It should be a part of our daily lives to 'show' the path to the blind, to those who have strayed from the moral path. Every deed of helping others is a step towards heaven. We should help others; oblige others if we wish to achieve heavenly joy and bliss.

Helping others is a sign of divinity of character.

वैश्वदेवीं वर्चसा आ रभध्वं

Vaishwadevim varchasa aa raabhdhvum

शुद्धा भवन्तः शुचयः पावकाः ।

shuddhaa bhavantaha

shuchayaha paavakaahaa

अतिक्रामन्तो दुरिता पदानि

atikraamanto duritaa padaani

शतं हिमाः सर्ववीरा मदेम् ॥

shutum himaahaa sarvaviraa madem

(Atharvaved 12/2/28)

Meaning: May our thoughts always be clean and pure. May we save others from going on the wrong path and take them onto the good path so that all together achieve full longevity of life.

Message: All the troubles of the world are because of warped intelligence and wicked activity. That is why after diagnosing the cause of a disease, it should be attacked at its very roots. The best method of social-service is to rescue the people from lowly thinking and activity and direct them towards excellence.

If people change their method\$, then on the strength of their tremendous inner capacity, they themselves can solve their backwardness and difficulties. We should co-operate in directing their activities on to the good moral path. They should be led with such qualitative leadership that they will give up their destructive activities and themselves start taking interest in constructive works.

The only way to self -development is that we spread our friendliness in a wider area. By considering others' happiness as ours and their sorrow too as ours, let us think and act to reduce their sorrow and increase their happiness. No man has that much capacity that he will employ all his wealth in removing others' wants. Neither can the 24 hours of the day be employed for public-service. Even then, there should be a strong sentiment that after fulfilling our minimum requirements, all the remnants should be dedicated for the removal of societal backwardness, difficulties, wants and grief.

To-day the world has discarded the robe of excellence and replaced it with the cloak of meanness. Life itself has become hellish because of the entry of meanness in our method of thinking and working.

Gradually we are proceeding towards collective suicide by being busy in internal squabbles, quarrels in homes, and mutual torture. In such a situation, human race can be served in only one way, that is, it should be saved from illusory, indiscreet and immoral thinking and prepared to develop logical discretion and to take shelter of '*rutambhara pragya*' (pure intelligence). In to-day's situation, that is the greatest service to the society. By revolutionary thinking, the current miserable condition can be changed and heaven made to descend on earth. There is unlimited strength in purity of thinking. Whenever thinking is done on any subject with purity in viewpoint, then a situation can be assessed in an impartial and neutral way and any decision taken is also in the interest of all. Divinity is the natural quality in men which they have received right from their childhood. This divinity gradually gets lost only because of polluted thinking. Therefore refinement and purity in thinking is extremely necessary.

Only those men are able to rouse discretionary thinking in people, who establish idealistic thinking for moral regeneration. It is our pious duty to include this excellence in our character.

ऋतेन गुप्तुं ऋतुभिश्च सर्वैर्भूतेन गुप्तो भव्येन चाहम् ।

Rutena gupta rutubhishcha

sarvaibhootena gupto bhavyena chaahum

मा मा प्रापत् पाप्मा मोत मृत्युरन्तर्दधेऽह सलिलेन वाचः ॥

maa maa praapata paapmaa mota

mrutyurantardadheha salilena vaacha

(Atharvaved 17/1/29)

Meaning: Human life will be safe only with good deeds and religious conduct. Therefore let us be sinless and praiseworthy and always go on acquiring higher knowledge.

Message: Religiousness means religious conduct. To respect religion in every field of life, to follow the injunctions of religion, is itself called '*dharma-acharan*' (or religious conduct). '*Dharma*' not only means religion (as regards spiritual science and worship), but it has several other meanings including 'moral duty'; but unfortunately politicians and the so-called intellectuals are twisting the interpretation of the word '*dharma*' to suit their selfish ends.

In reality religion is beneficial to man in every field. The question of narrowness does not at all arise in religion. In fact religion contributes to a wide and vast viewpoint. Real religion does not talk of putting blindfolds on the eyes, but enjoins us to remove them. No religion produces jealousy, malice and such perversities. Religion in the real moral sense creates an atmosphere of good thinking and love. Religion and humanity are mutually complementary. Man can never remain without religion, and religion cannot remain anywhere except in man.

Religion means a rule for carrying out one's responsibility, in other words, 'self-accepted imposition for achieving excellence'. Every field of activity has its own '*dharma*' such as, teacher's *dharma*, student's *dharma*, people's *dharma*, leader's *dharma*, soldier's *dharma*, servant's *dharma*, father's *dharma*, women's *dharma* etc. Religion does not mean mere worship or rituals. *Dharma* is a symbol of the entire life, because it pervades every aspect of life.

Dharma is good activities, good deeds and truthful conduct. A '*dharmik*' man is a man of good conduct, is satisfied, quiet (at peace), disciplined and restrained. Never does he get angry, has no malice, does not ridicule others, nor disrespect others. His main qualities are mental purity, truthfulness in conduct and excellent sentiments-for public-welfare. A religious man does not show off his religion. He is busy in his duties with a quiet and unselfish attitude. He relies upon excellence in thinking and simplicity in life. He always utilises his total capacity and insight for deeds of public-welfare and removes the obstacles in the path with patience and firmness. A life of simplicity propounds the ideal of high thinking. Prosperity lies in simplicity only and in that only lies one's reputation.

To disrespect religion is like discarding humanness and acknowledging animalness. For animals there is no religion except fulfilling the needs of their bodies. If an animal coming in the path creates an obstacle, then to drive it away with its horns, to frighten it or to kill it (i.e. selfish survival) is the only '*dharma*' of animals. Animals do not have a sense of respect, sentiments, discretion, tradition, society and culture. These exist for man only and therefore at every step in life he has to conduct himself according to the rules laid down in religion. The essence of religion lies only in obliging or helping others, mutual co-operation, compassion, and living together.

Conduct according to the rules laid down in the religion is the only basis for excellent character.

प्र यद्भन्दिष्ठ एषां प्रास्माकासश्चसूरयः ।

Pra yadbhandishtha eshaam
praasmaakasashcha surayaha

अप नः शोशुचदघम् ॥

apa naha shoshuchadgham.

(Rigved 1/97/3)

Meaning: Man should worship God, tread the good path, but he develops grace only when he takes others on the path of worship of God and the path of moral goodness.

Message: The reason for the progress of man, compared to other animals, is only because of his socially collective attitude. His nature of mixing and helping each other has made him progress in various fields such as education, health, culture, science, architecture, etc. Marriage, family, caste, sect, nation etcetera are also formed because of this tendency only. Man has understood that he can progress only by mixing and co-operating with each other, and not by remaining aloof. Similarly he can also remove his difficulties and faults.

This attitude is also necessary in the spiritual field. We may worship God, conduct ourselves according to religious rules and tread the path of moral goodness; but is life possible when all around in the society there is the pollution of bad customs, bad thinking and bad culture? Can our worship and spiritual endeavour be meaningful in such an atmosphere?

Alongwith increasing the spiritual wealth within us, and alongwith the adoption of good conduct and good activities we will also have to exert for the eradication of demoniac activities. For this purpose the qualities of abnegation, restraint, service, love and helping others have to be adopted.

In the majority of men and society the collective process gets reduced because of the tremendous strength of the demoniac elements and as compared to the gentleness in divinity, the real adoration of God lies only in removing this imbalance. Wicked temptations are capable enough to trap man in their net, with that only, his selfishness and ego increases and his activities for children, money and praise for the self increase. He looks only at his self-interest and does not shy away from harming others. It is well-known that gentlemen are of a quiet, peaceful and simple nature and do not like to come into conflict with wicked, demoniac elements. Only because of this attitude of theirs to avoid conflict, the wicked people get encouragement. Thus they go on increasing disturbances and anarchy in the society. The gap between good and bad people widens even more. Real '*Ishwar-bhakti*' (i.e. worship of God) lies in reducing this gap, reforming the wicked persons and making them full of divine qualities. That only is called spirituality and religiousness.

The detailed structure of spirituality is made only for the purpose that all the men in the society adopt within their hearts the thoughts, trust, sentiments and culture, for reducing their individual selfishness and in becoming enthused for changing their inferiority into greatness and in trying to merge their souls with the supreme for spiritual development.

The peace and happiness of man and world is dependent only on this sentiment in his heart for collectiveness or togetherness, which inspires all to tread the path of goodness.

With that only is formed the character' of the nation.

गम्भीराँ उदधीँरिव क्रतुं पुष्यसि गा इव ।

Gambhiraam uddheeriva

kratum pushyasi gaa eeva

प्र सुगोपा यवसं धेनवो यथा हृदं कुल्या इवाशत ॥

pra sugopa yavasum dhenavo

yatha hrudumkulya eevasata

(Rigved 3/45/3)

Meaning: They attain happiness who like the sea are of unshakable and sober intelligence, who have the capacity to be forgiving and nurturing like the earth, who are donors like the cow and always active like the river.

Message: The scriptures have asked the man to evolve from man into a deity. By resorting to this path, there can be happiness, peace and prosperity in this world. But to-day man has not remained as even a human being. His humanness is almost dead. All round only killings, beatings, stealing, rapes and wickedness etcetera are seen in the society and anger, dejection and disappointment are seen in man.

But man is not so helpless. He does not know that he has such unlimited power within him that he can become a deity. He is finding difficulty in achieving success in to-day's situations. But with that there is no loss at all in his aim and firm resolve. There is greater importance in man's will-power than in means, comforts and situations. If he desires, he can create all these or destroy all the means created by him. God does not come into man from outside. He is already there in each man's heart. But we are not paying any attention in that direction, do not listen to Him at all and that is why we feel personally helpless. God has given unlimited power to man. Nothing is impossible for him in the world. What is required is that he should adopt within himself divine qualities and with patient, sober and unshakable attitude donate and do charitable works. He should be active in the same manner as God and Nature who are looking after to establish divinity within our hearts, proper practice is required in relation to mind, intelligence and ego. A chariot's horses require reins which should be in the hands of the charioteer who obeys every order of the commander. In Man's life, the status of the mind is that of the charioteer. That is why it is said that the capacity for all the happiness, unhappiness and imagination is with the mind. Only the mind saves the man and only the mind kills him.

Such wilful mind requires some practice. If it has developed a taste for good things, it will not turn towards bad things. If it is filled with good thoughts, bad thoughts will not get a place in it and good qualities and good activities will increase.

For this reason only, it is necessary to adopt values for life for developing divinity within man and society. 'Values for life' means the ladder for reaching God, the Supreme, a test for humanness, the fundamentals of gentlemanliness and the basis for man's progress. Life's values create the dividing line between humanness and animalness. Adopting and then following the path of these values means treading the footprints of great men. Peace and happiness everywhere is possible only by adopting faith, *yagya*, austerity, compassion, charity, non-violence, forgiveness, abnegation, gentleness, generosity, etc.

Try to adopt these invaluable ideals from divine characters.

श्रद्धायाग्निः समिध्यते श्रद्धया हूयते हविः ।

Shraddhayaagnihi samidhyate

shraddhaaya huyate havihi

श्रद्धां भगस्य मूर्धनि वचसा वेदयामसि ॥

shraddhaam bhagasya moordhani

vachasaa vedayaamasi

(Rigved 10/151/1)

Meaning: Only the deeds performed with faith have the capability of achieving the goal. Therefore a man should be full of faith.

Message: Faith is the basis of human life. There is great inspiring power hidden in it. Nothing is possible without solid support. If someone wants to take a jump, the ground from where he wants to jump, must be firm. If it is hollow, granular or muddy, the jumper will fall down, and cannot reach the goal. The support must be strong. The support for water, i.e. its container must not be cracked. The stand for the pot must not be wobbly, and the ground must not be sloping or slanting. Similarly if we want to hang something on the wall, the peg must be strong, otherwise the peg will break and the material will fall down. In the same way, faith also must be traditionally strong and by observing, identifying and testing it, its due (important) place must be fixed.

A person, who wants to learn swimming, is at first afraid of entering the water. The teacher gives him an assurance that he will not allow him to drown and asks him to jump, but the learner does not develop faith. He has more faith in the rope kept for practising, so he gets down into the water while holding the rope. Gradually he gives up holding the rope and becomes bold to move his hands and legs. The teacher helps him and takes care to see that he does not drown. So after a few days his faith is transferred from the rope to the teacher. Then he becomes free from worry and jumps into the water with full faith in his teacher. Let any one call it blind-faith, but nobody can shake his faith in the teacher. Similarly those who have faith in the existence of God, they have this faith every moment that He will help their passage from this world and will not allow them to sink.

Faith, trust and love are the three steps of progress. Everything is possible with faith. Trust makes difficult things easy, and love makes them the easiest. Those who practice these three qualities, their path become free from difficulties and hardships. A person with faith finds that his every task gets performed with ease. When the faith becomes firm, it protects us like our own benevolent mother in every situation.

We too must keep the flame of faith burning. We will not be able to complete any task without faith. We can not take even one step forward. Let our life be fully soaked in faith. Our prayers should be with faith, meals with faith, charity with faith and attending religious discourses should also be with faith. Whatever work we do, we do with full faith. When there is faith in the work, there is concentration also. That develops a liking for the work. The possibility of smoothness in carrying out the work increases in whatever work is done with mental involvement. *Just* as the rays of the sun can be converged on a point with a lens and fire can be lighted, similarly through the medium of faith, all the powers of the mind can be concentrated. The power obtained with faith makes every task easy.

Make faith the basis of your character.

यथा देवा असुरेषु श्रद्धामुग्रेषु चक्रिरे ।

Yathaa devaa asureshu

shraddhaamugreshu chakrire

एवं भोजेषु यज्वस्वस्माकमुदितं कृधि ॥१॥

evum bhojeshu

yajvasvasmaakmuditum krudhi

(Rugved 10/151/3)

Meaning: The sentiment of dedication is produced towards the country, race, caste and culture when there is faith in the heart for them. Only faith has that strength to produce solid dedication for any work.

Message: No deed in this world can be carried out without the flame of faith and no renunciation, nor sacrifice can be made without faith. For any achievement, some sort of renunciation or sacrifice is necessary. Whatever direction we wish to progress, we should always be ready for self-sacrifice. The objective for which sacrifice is to be made, that objective should always be within our mind. It is not possible without faith.

Faith and intelligence are not mutually opposite. Some people make innumerable types of arguments to prove faith as blind-trust of fools and unintelligent people. But in reality faith becomes firm with arguments and intelligence, and intelligence develops with faith. Life becomes meaningful with faith, it gets a direction, it takes a definite turn. Gradually such a person's level of quality rises. With such qualities as responsibility towards his trade, profession, industriousness, humility, abnegation, life blooms again. Once this ripple of faith is produced, it spreads in the entire society. What did our sages and saints do? They had sowed the seeds of faith in the society. Only that produced good qualities which produced an all-round development of the society. With the establishment of faith in every part of the society, a vast disciplined power manifests and the nation achieves happiness, prosperity and supremacy.

A man without faith is full of doubts, scepticism and anxiety. To-day in all the fields like the nation, religion and culture only worry, instability, failure, dejection and sorrow prevail. The hearts of the people have become like the dead, and the bodies have become lethargic. The entire society is being attracted towards destruction. The situation is that to-day people have no faith in themselves, no faith in others, not even in God. The patient does not have faith in doctor, and if we purchase medicine, we are not sure of its quality and efficacy. The student has no faith in the teacher and does not have trust in the future after his education. The factory owner does not trust the workers and they do not trust the owner. What is all this? This entire downfall has occurred because of lack of faith.

Just like lack of faith, blind-faith and blind-worship also destroys man's vitality. Blindly following what others are doing, without using our own discretion, becomes the main cause of our downfall. Our faith should be focussed on only the proper subjects after testing on the touch-stone of discretion.

Unless and until real faith and deep dedication is aroused in our hearts for the nation, religion and culture, till then we will not have love for them, the sentiment of self-denial and sacrifice for them will not arise and the eagerness to give up our all will not manifest.

Let us make our life full of faith.

नमो ज्येष्ठाय च कनिष्ठाय च

Namojyeshthaaya
cha kanishthaaya cha

नमः पूर्वजाय चापरजाय च ।

Namaha poorvajaaya
chaaparajaaya cha

नमो मध्यमाय चापगल्भाय च

Namo madhyamaya
chaapagalbhaya cha

नमो जघन्याय च बुध्याय च ॥

Namo jaghanyaaya
cha budhnyaaya cha.

(Yajurved 16/32)

Meaning: The higher and the lower, the old and the young, all, when meeting should greet each other and say 'namaste' (1 bow down to you) and thus honour each other. With it' mutual pleasantness and harmony is maintained.

Message: The character of a man is, known by the way he deals with others. A person with wickedness, ego and bad tendencies will behave discourteously with others. His speech will be dripping with harshness and rudeness. He will speak with others in a way to show them as inferior, to tease, condemn and prove them foolish. Such persons are not able to impress others about their greatness; on the contrary they become despicable because of their malice. Harsh words penetrate the heart and the affected person is shaken up because of it and becomes a permanent enemy. A person with bitter tone increases his enemies and reduces his friends.

We have to live in the society then we must also learn to deal with others properly. Excellent, generous and gentlemanly people always respect others and speak sweetly with them. With politeness, we can get respect from others, make them our own and can also expect the same polite behaviour from them. Man's real greatness lies in his gentle manliness and its proof can be found in sweet speech and courteous behaviour

Politeness is the other name for humanness. One who lacks it must be called a human animal. Gentlemanliness begins with courteous behaviour with all, whether high or low. Whenever we meet others or when someone meets us, we should greet him by expressing pleasantness. Proper greeting is a part of common courtesy. By keeping both hands folded near the heart and saying 'namaste' (I bow to you) with bowed head, we declare that we are greeting the person with our mind, intelligence and heart. In this way mutual love, trust and friendliness increases. By addressing the youngsters with 'aap' or 'tum' and greeting them with love, increases their confidence. Without taking into consideration the age, education, wealth or status of others, the dealing or behaviour should always be polite and respectful.

In the great battle of *Mahabharat* prince *Yudhishtir* first went into the enemy camp, greeted with all respect his elderly relative *Bhishmapheetamaha*, his *Guru Dronacharya* and *Krupacharya*, the senior advisors in the enemy camp and then only commenced the battle. We must always honour those who are elder to us. The *mahabharat* says, *Abhivadanashilasya nityavruddhopasevinaha, chatvar tasva vardhante aayurvediya yashobalum*", which means the longevity, learning, fame and strength of the person increases when he respects and honours the elders.

व्रतेन दीक्षामाप्नोति दीक्षयाप्नोति दक्षिणाम् ।

Vratena deekshaamaapnoti
deekshayaapnoti dakshinam

दक्षिणां श्रद्धामाप्नोति श्रद्धया सत्यमाप्यते ॥

dakshinaa shraddhaamaapnoti
shraddhaya satyamaapyate

(Yajurved 19/30)

Meaning: By recourse to *vrata* (i.e. a religious pledge), man obtains excellent office and worthiness, and thereby he receives increasing honour. By receiving honour, one's faith and trust develops in doing good deeds.

Message: All the learned persons, thinkers, sages and great men in the world have praised the grandeur of truth. Truth itself is religion, austerity, yoga and the eternal Brahma (or God). Truthful behaviour by itself is the best *yagya*. The entire world is based on truth; religion too is established on truth. In no field, whether social, economic, political, or educational, is progress possible without truthful conduct. Truth is so gentle that it does not hurt at all, but is also so hard that it bores even through the rock and gets revealed. Only truth is victorious everywhere, hence the eternal truth enshrined in three *sanskrit* words, “*satya meva jayate*”. Truth means the mighty God. Man's spiritual union with God, the embodiment of Supreme Truth, is achieved only with truthful conduct.

If we want to get to the centre of all powers, we will have to worship the truth, will have to exert very hard to practise it and give up all petty matters. One can achieve truth only when the mind becomes restless and is burning with the desire for knowing, understanding and achieving the truth. To obtain the truth, one has to climb the four steps of ‘*vrata, diksha, dakshina* and *shraddha*’.

What is *Vrata*? *Vrata* means giving up bad tendencies and adopting good qualities. *Vrata* involves ‘*upvas*’. *Upvas* is nothing but freeing oneself from sins and adopting good qualities. Normally in ‘*upvas*’ people undertake a fast, i.e. remain hungry, but ‘*upvas*’ does not mean remaining hungry and reducing one's body. *Vrata* or *upvas* means such conduct, thinking, dealing and good resolves which should be adopted for making our life clean, pure, high and great. Let us take the ‘*vrata*’ (or pledge) of giving up our addictions and be good in conduct. Let us take the pledge of helping others and serving our country. Life will be uplifted by adopting such real ‘*vrats*’.

By understanding and implementing such *vrats* to the extent possible, we will soon become deserving of *diksha* or initiation. Initiation means entry into the empire of refinement, the right to reach the court of truth. By staying in the court of truth with truth-loving persons, one develops the ease, the naturalness of seeking and living according to the truth and we get the benefit of the experience of the companions.

After *Diksha* comes ‘*Dakshina*’. By implementing truth in our conduct, we can experience that our will-power is increasing, ‘*tej*’ and ‘*oj*’ is increasing. (*tej* means mental brightness and ‘*oj*’ means , mental alacrity) and we are progressing towards the goal of life, and the society is also honouring us by accepting our skill and progress. This four-fold progress is our ‘*dakshina*’.

Ultimately because of the influence of ‘*vrata, diksha* and *dakshina*’, unshakable faith (‘*sraddha*’) for truth is roused in us. After that there is speedy progress and all the difficulties in the path, automatically get destroyed.

Only truthful conduct is the spiritual power of our character.

धर्मैतत्ते पुरीषं तेन वर्धस्व चा च प्यायस्व ।

Dharmaintatte purisham tena
vardhasva chaa cha pyaayaswa

वर्धिषीमहि च वयमा च प्यासिषीमहि ॥

vardhishimahi cha
vayamaa cha pyaasishimahi

(Yajurved 38/11)

Meaning: O men, just as God protects and nurtures everyone by being everywhere, similarly you protect and nourish all the living beings by achieving excellence.

Message: The desire for progress and the fulfilment of one's material desires are two entirely different matters. The common form of both appears similar, but on minute observation, the vast difference, as between the sky and the earth, can be seen. Progress is the name for that need in life which illuminates the individuality, unfolds the personality and increases the worthiness. It means the development of those capabilities which can make the body, mind, nature and the deeds clean and well developed. This itself is realistic progress. Only such an evolved individuality is capable of taking courageous steps and achieving miraculous powers.

The condition of a man involved in satisfying material desires is like an intoxicated man's. Mostly, the man keeps uncontrollable desires of achieving heaven and earth without having any assessment of his own situation, worth and means. These desires are never fulfilled; on the contrary they make him restless and unhappy. If someone does achieve something, then such undeserving person, because of his unsuitability, causes harm to himself and others by the suddenly gained wealth.

The real meaning of progress is to achieve progress in the creation of a well-developed personality based on a clean body and pure mind. Only with progress do brightness and excellence arise in man and he shines like deities, complete with divine qualities.

The scriptures mention three classes, viz *devata*, *manav* and *danav*, Danavs (or demons) are inferior or lowly, *manav* or man is in the middle category and *devata* or deity or divine man is in the superior category. To-day man is heading towards '*danavta*' (or demonism). He is badly trapped in the sole desire for more and more money, for the welfare of his progeny (children), and achieving fame at any cost. He is ready to do anything for his selfish ends, and does not care at all for what is proper or improper. Every type of bad tendency and wicked action is becoming an inseparable part of his character and despite knowing it; he does not want to give up any of them. Such a man, trapped in demoniac activity, goes on destroying himself.

On the other hand, deities are complete with all the qualities. They have extraordinary capacity and brightness of intelligence. They are full of supremacy, enthusiasm, and wealth (of various types such as knowledge, wisdom; discretion and so on). A man replete with such divine qualities is called '*nara-ratna*' (or gem among men). Just like the deities, such a man, wishes always to protect and nourish all, seeing in them all, the same soul as is in him. All the great men in the world have seen the peaceful light of God, the Supreme Father, in all the living beings and opened up the path of uplift and progress for all.

If this divine sentiment becomes a part of our character, we too can go up to the highest step of progress.

सं जानीध्वं सं पृच्यध्वं सं वो मनांसि जानताम् ।

Sum jaanidhvum sum pruchyadhvum

sum vo manaansi jaanataam

देवा भागं यथा पूर्वे संजानाना उपासते ॥

devaa bhaagum yatha

purve sanjaanaanaa upaasate

(Atharvaved 6/64/1)

Meaning: It is every man's duty to obtain knowledge and live by mixing with others. May all be blessed with good culture! Just as our ancestors have been carrying out their, duties, similarly let us also carry out our duties completely.

Message: The activities of the life of a spiritual person are not based on filling the belly, producing children and desires like the ordinary men who are like animals, but his activities are bright and are inspired by idealism. A spiritual person knows the difference between the body and the soul and believes that the soul is the lord (or the controller) and the body is a means. The person who has clearly understood this aspect gives importance to the thought of the best ways of utilising this invaluable human-life for great projects like spiritual salvation and self-development, while ignoring bodily comforts, temptations for indulging the senses, false acclaim and pomp. If for fulfilling this objective there is a reduction of physical comforts and material wealth, he is not upset even for a moment, because he knows that the body is merely a means. If his privileges are snatched, the door for the upliftment of his soul is opened up. There is greater benefit and lesser harm in that

A spiritual person follows the ideals of plain living and high thinking. It becomes possible to save the time and money spent in pomp and luxury and spends it for idealistic works of public welfare. The needs, worries, difficulties and troubles of a person are in proportion to his spendthrift and pompous life. The person who reduces his desire for showing off and living a life of great comforts compared to others, will find meaningless his own and his families useless expenditure and pomp. That is why divinity starts with frugality (i.e. spending minimum for only basic needs and for a very simple life).

When a man realises the above, then he experiences joy only in mixing and living harmoniously with others. He understands others' happiness and sorrows as his own and finds his own happiness in the happiness of others, and sorrow in others' sorrow. His desire for sharing his happiness with others and desire for reducing others' sorrow by sharing their troubles takes him to the high level of considering the 'world as a family' as enshrined in the *sanskrit* saying 'vasudhaiva kutumbakam'. With the sentiments of sympathy, pity, helping others, love and oneness with others, there is an increase in mutual goodwill, affection and the feeling of equality and a heavenly atmosphere is created in the society.

Our rishis had fixed this very ideal for us, which is equally meaningful to-day. They were making use of their knowledge and intelligence only for societal welfare. Living in thatched cottages and leading very ordinary lives, they used to be busy in making the society happy and highly prosperous. What an excellent way of thinking! They loved to devote their entire lives busily in doing their duty.

We can be men of character only by putting into our personal conduct such excellent ideals of our ancestors.

मधुमन्मे निक्रमणं मधुमन्मे परायणम् ।

Madhumanme nikramanum

madhumanme paraayanum

वाचा वदोमि मधुमद् भूयासं मधुसंदृशः ॥

vaachaa vadomi madhumada

bhooyasum madhusandrasha

(Atharvaved 1/34/3)

Meaning: All people love him whose speech, dealings and actions are pleasant. Only they do good deeds and oblige others in the world whose nature is pleasant.

Message: Pleasantness, gentleness and humility are the characteristics of excellent men. As against that, people of mean activities are always hard and of harsh speech. Generous people, with a tendency to help others, are also very polite. *Just* as the fruit-laden branches of a tree hang downwards, clouds filled with water come downwards, similarly those who are excellent and obliging they are not proud of their wealth or luxuries and are always polite. One in whose heart there is the feeling of divine spirituality for every life; his dealings are also polite and pleasant. He always makes an effort not to cause pain or unhappiness to anyone.

Many people have that false belief that harsh behaviour or harsh speech is more impressive and gives an impression about their greatness. But if we give it a little thought, and experiment a little, then we find out that instead of harsh words, sweet and pleasant words influence more. There is very great capacity in pleasantness. Only because of the lack of capacity and self-confidence, people use harsh words and try to cover up their defects by falsely accusing others. People who are untruthful and who possess false beliefs get joy and fulfilment in obscene and harsh speech. Unfortunately to-day harshness and obscenity are getting into literature also. Harsh words influence somewhat temporarily, people may obey such words out of fear, but behind their back, speak ill of them. Although people get their work done with harsh words and egoistically move around in a vulgar manner, they are not able to understand that their respect has been undermined. No doubt, harsh words are occasionally necessary. Sometimes we have to resort to harshness to bring children, those working under us or bad men, on the good path, but the use of harsh words should be with discretion.

Gentleness does not mean weakness. To say 'yes' to whatever the other person says, sycophancy and cleverness cannot be termed pleasantness. It is worth observing the pleasantness and humility when people come to request for vote or for donations, but anyone can understand how much truth lies in it! A thug and hypocrite also uses very sweet language, but can we really call it pleasantness?

Real pleasantness lies in conduct, not only in speech. We find the ideal of pleasantness in the character of *Shri Krishna*, the incarnation of God. Whether it is playas a child, or *raasleela* (dancing), recalling childhood lovingly with, *Sudama* or battlefield, political negotiations or the use of '*Sudatshan chakra*' (the ultimate weapon), we find everywhere a harmonious blend of pleasantness and harshness. He is pleasant in all respects hence the Sanskrit; couplet from *Madhurashtakam*:

Vachanam madhuram, charitam madhurm, vasnam madhuram. lalitam madhuram, chalitam madhuram, bhramitam madhuram. madhuradhipate rakhilam madhuram.

इन्द्र प्रेहि पुरस्त्वं विश्वस्येशान ओजसा ।

Indra prehi purastvum
vishwasyeshaan ojasaa

वृत्राणि वृत्रहं जहि ॥

vrutraani vratruhum jahi.

(Atharvaved 20/5/3)

Meaning: Let us be powerful so that we can fight whatever obstacle coming in the path of progress.

Message: God has created this world not only for us. Innumerable living beings are partners in it. There are facilities and satisfaction for everyone as also innumerable difficulties, for which physical and mental efforts are required to solve them. It is impossible that all situations be created as we wish them to be, and every person should do as we desire. The heat of sunlight and the cool shade of the trees, day and night, suitability and unsuitability, everything is here only. Life would be uninteresting if we never had to face difficulties, unsuitable circumstances and failures. Competition and progress are the special qualities of human life, and because of them only, life becomes interesting. Life can be made joyous only with the development of competition, diligence, understanding insight, and balance of mind. Progress is possible only by struggling with situations. Difficulties, shortages, unsuitable circumstances and conflicts have been created for the purpose of the development of man's capacity and insight so that he can collect in his treasury the will-power and the strength of mental sharpness.

But most men become upset with slight difficulty in their lives. With ordinary obstacles or failures, they become disturbed and run away from homes or even commit the sin of suicide. The feeling of disappointment increases their difficulties even more. Many people even make their present painful by imagining the difficulties that may come in the future.

A man entering any field of work sometimes takes advantage of a situation, and sometimes faces opposition too. The situation of those jumping with joy when they benefit and crying when they suffer loss, is pitiable indeed. They do not get the joy of displaying their capacity and firmness in this struggleful world. Only they achieve success in this struggle, who possess will-power alongwith other powers. In the absence of discretion, mere physical strength creates only problems for a person. Only a constructive use of power is beneficial for all.

We must keep high hopes for success and dream of the success of our ambitions, but must also be ready to struggle smilingly against worst situations. Whatever the adversity of the situation, we must save ourselves from impulsive action, and never lose mental-balance. Failures help to increase our will-power by challenging our patience, courage, balance-of -mind. manliness, and discretion. We can actually feel for ourselves the tremendously pleasant taste of success, and the joy of the income from the sweat of our brow.

The strength itself for struggling against difficult circumstances sharpens our mental faculties, and makes us bright and authoritative.

विष्णोः कर्माणि पश्यत यतो व्रतानि पस्पशे ।

Vishnoho karmaani pashyata
yato vrutaani paspashy

इन्द्रस्य युज्यः सखा ॥

Indrsya yujyaha sakha

(Rigved 1/22/19)

Meaning: No benefit is achieved by mere parrot-like repetition of any religious scripture or a volume of the Veds. We must follow those rules in our life. .

Message: There is a tale of the time of the student-days of *dharmaraja Yudhishtir*. Once their teacher taught them the famous vedic mantra '*satyum vada, dharmum chara swadhyayaanma pramadaha*' i.e. speak the truth, conduct yourself religiously and do not neglect self-study and asked all the students to memorise it. The next day all the students recited the mantra before their teacher, but *Yudhishtir* said that as yet he had not memorised it. In this way four to five days passed and then one day he said, "Now I have memorised the mantra". All were very much surprised that *Yudhishtir* took so many days to memorise such a small mantra. On being asked the reason, he explained that despite making strong efforts, he could not prevent himself from uttering lies, but yesterday he had not uttered any lie at all, and in this way by implementing it in his conduct, he has now thoroughly memorised it

This is the essence of Indian culture. It will not do good to merely recite any mantra, or religious book or a passage. It must be absorbed in one's heart and become a part of one's conduct. There should be harmony of knowledge and deed. Only that is the real knowledge which manifests in beneficial acts. 'Knowledge' which produces arrogance, hypocrisy, desire for fame among people is not real knowledge. Only that is real knowledge which gives peace, satisfaction and spiritual uplift One which makes a person realise his ignorance, makes him humble and fully absorbed (in spirituality), is original knowledge. That which does not manifest in life, which cannot mould life, which cannot make for beauty, excellence and simplicity in every field, how can it be called knowledge?

To-day unfortunately, the opposite situation exists. Whatever moral policy we read about, we think it merely a decorative piece of literature. The best philosophies are ridiculed. It is believed by people that '*satya*' (i.e. truth), *ahimsa* (non-violence) etc. are all needed for lectures and religious discourses only. They think that in practical life, only those indulging in untruthful and violent conduct, become successful. Only this untruthful knowledge is the main reason for all the present-day ills. People talk big, (i.e. of high ideals), but the inferiority of conduct by itself disregards the rules of truth and indulges in wickedness in every way. They forget that by such pretence they deceive themselves only.

Unless and until there is harmony of knowledge and action, we cannot achieve success in personal life nor will there be peace and happiness in society. Whatever small and big philosophies we have read, we should try to implement them in our conduct If we start with small matters, then in future we can also fulfil big '*vruts*' (giving up bad tendencies and imbibing good qualities) and resolves easily. Learning the scriptures will be meaningful only when the knowledge of so many scriptures like the Veds, Purans etcetera enters the heart and becomes a part of our conduct

Character-formation means nothing but making our conduct shiningly bright with true knowledge.

उत त्वः पश्यन्न ददर्श वाचमुत ।

Oota tvaha pashyanna dadarsha vaachamuta

त्वः शृण्वन्न श्रुणोत्येनाम् ॥

tvaha shrunvanna shrunotyenaam

(Rigved 10/71/4)

Meaning: One who hears good advice but does not imbibe it in one's conduct is like a blind and deaf person.

Message: *Rishi-parampara* (the tradition of sages) is the main basis of Indian culture. The society consists of both intelligent and unintelligent persons. Every man is not able to read and write nor can a literate person be able to understand the real meaning in the scriptures, whereas the rishis used to spend their entire lives in studying and acquiring knowledge. Every time while thinking and contemplating they used to worry about the fulfilment of the mental needs of man. The religious heads and the learned ones have always very seriously and eagerly made an analysis of the human mind. By finding out the solution to unfavourable situations according to the requirement of the time, they have saved man from wandering in darkness. Religious programmes used to be conducted with this aim at pilgrimage centres and other convenient places. In these meetings people used to be given guidance through discourses, to enable them to be free from their difficulties. This knowledge us~ to give so much capability to the listeners, that it enabled them to discard their bad tendencies and fill the gap with good qualities and make their lives excellent.

This tradition is alive to-day also. The aim in the religious programmes and discourses in institutions, temples etcetera is this only. These discourses are not mere debates, but meant for implementing into one's conduct. The learned and knowledgeable sages by their own deep thinking, contemplation and experiments have found out the truth and kept before the audience what is useful for them. If we doubt them, then we are making ourselves laughable only.

But to-day the situation is somewhat like this, that the more ignorant a man, the more he wants to show himself as intelligent. He does not like to hear anything good at all. Even though the advice is from the parents or a learned saint, he thinks it insulting to listen to it and act accordingly; rather on the contrary he ridicules them.

No intelligent person can have any opposition to the spiritual principles of religion given to us by our ancient sages. What is religion? It is nothing but a collection of moral rules only. Without practising these rules, neither man's personal nor his social life can go on properly. Only by not observing these rules, man's life gets disturbed. If these rules are practised properly, then man's life will be full of peace, joy and goodwill. Where these rules are not adhered to, the atmosphere of sorrow, quarrels and mental-disturbance prevails.

The discourses of saints fulfil this aim (of bringing peace, joy and goodwill in man's life), but it is our misfortune that like the blind and the deaf we do not pay any attention to it and lose the golden opportunity for self-progress.

Putting into our conduct the good advice of religious discourses must become a part of our nature.

मा वो धन्तं मा शपन्तं प्रति वोचे देवयन्तम् ।

maa vo dhnantum maa shapantum

prati voche devayantum

सुम्नैरिद्वि आ विवासे ॥

sumnairidva aa vivaasay.

(Rigved 1/41/8)

Meaning: Those who befriend people who are religious and with good conduct, protect them and honour them with good dealing, meals, clothes etc, they always get happiness. One should always be away from wicked people. Those who befriend religious souls are learned.

Message: The relationship of father and son, mother and son and husband and wife exist in animal species also, even though it may be for a short time only. But the 'Guru-shishya' relationship i.e. the one between the teacher and the student, more specifically the one between the saint or sage and the disciple exists only among human beings. Animals and birds do not impart their knowledge and skill to others. This speciality is in human beings only. It is man's natural activity to give others the benefit of his knowledge and to benefit through others. Man constantly gives and takes knowledge, experience, imagination and feelings or sentiments. Because of this speciality only, the tradition of 'Guru and shishya' has developed.

Animals of various types are physically more powerful compared to man, but in intelligence, only man is the best, and the fruit of knowledge available through this intelligence is in itself like nectar. Everything in the world is perishable. Man also is subject to death, but becomes immortal because of his knowledge. There is great importance of sympathy and compassion in human-life. It is animalism to use alone whatever is available. The activity of distributing the available so that others too benefit by it, makes the person a human being. A *Guru* gives not only the knowledge from the books, but also contributes to a man's culture. Only school-teachers or some people in charge of a hermitage are not the only teachers. We keep on learning something or other from innumerable religious men of good conduct. Sometimes we come into contact with such people whose conduct has moulded our conduct, whose life has influenced our life, whose personality has shaped our personality. Without their saying anything, we imitated them and learnt quite a lot.

It is man's pious duty to serve, welcome and honour such learned, great men. The friendship of such men is always helpful in increasing the good qualities within us, and brings happiness peace and prosperity.

But to-day, the situation has turned upside-down. Why blame the teacher only? Everywhere in the society uncultured men with bad tendencies are found. At a very tender age, the minds of children are influenced with very bad type of culture. As a result, all-round indiscipline and anarchy prevail. Wherever you see, you find wicked men of bad conduct. Men of good conduct can be counted on fingertips only. Even then if we wish, good men also can be found.

We must always protect ourselves from wicked men of bad conduct and keep friendship of religious, gentlemanly persons of good conduct only.

अपाधमय कित्विषमप कृत्यामपो रपः ।

Apaadhamaya kilvishamaya

krutyaamapo rapaha

अपामार्ग त्वमस्मदप दुःष्वप्य ॐ सुव ॥

apaamaarga tvamasmadapa

dushwapnya ngum suva.

(Yajurved 35/11)

Meaning: The man who purifies his conduct and makes others clean, may we get their nearness so that the mind's dirt and wicked sins get destroyed.

Message: Fire gets lighted with fire, life gets brightened with life, love is enhanced by love and enmity increases with revenge. A chameleon changes colours on seeing another chameleon.

If we want to reform others, then first we will have to bring a revolution in our lives, will have to become a magnet ourselves, and will have to create some speciality in our lives. Only then is the uplift of others possible. One lighted lamp can light a million extinguished lamps, but a million snuffed lamps cannot light a single lamp. Similarly a great man with 'jeevan-jyoti' (the light of life), can bring others on the good path, and spread brightness in their lives.

One who is not at peace with himself, how can he bring peace to others? How can an ignorant person make others knowledgeable? How can a person teach swimming to others when he himself does not know swimming? A person who is himself lazy, neglectful, and a chatter-box how can he make others energetic and men of brevity? Before bringing peace to others, we ourselves will have to be peaceful. We ourselves will have to be knowledgeable and good in conduct before making others knowledgeable and men of good conduct. Just like the incarnation of Ram and Krishna, and like the saints Swami Vivekanand and maharshi Dayanand, let us first become a light house and others will automatically be attracted. When the flowers bloom, the honey-bees automatically come and take away the pollen.

Man must desire to include good qualities in his conduct and make it clean, pure and fragrant. Let us make our lives profound, and giving up laziness and neglect adopt regularity in life. Let us make ourselves centres of attraction by making ourselves shining- bright like the Sun by service, good conduct, courtesy and gentlemanliness and thus become bright, possess sharp faculties and become influential. When others come into contact with such evolved persons, they start treading the path of goodness, their bad tendencies get destroyed and good qualities increase.

Let us first detach ourselves from the bad path, let us first be generous, raise our own spiritual level and shine ourselves. Only then will others become bright by our contact just as a lamp gets lighted by another lamp. Only such knowledgeable persons achieve fame in the society and the people coming in their contact get influenced by them. As a result their faults and bad tendencies get removed and cleanliness, refinement and generosity develop in their conduct. A fish can spoil the whole tank, while a saintly person by the influence of his capabilities and personal good conduct has the capacity to change and properly develop an entire society. His brightness and sharp mental faculties provide strength and energy to all.

The contact of men of good conduct becomes helpful in character-formation.

ते अस्म भयं शर्म यंसन्नमृता मर्त्येभ्यः ।

Te asmabhayum sharma
yansannamrutaa martyebhayaha

बाधमाना अप द्विषः ॥

baadhamaanaa apa dwishaha

(Rigved 1/90/3)

Meaning: Let us learn only from those who are learned and doing good deeds. One should always keep away from men of bad nature. Every man's salvation lies in this only.

Message: In our country, the public has a lot of faith in monks, saints and learned people; therefore, it is also the responsibility of these respected persons to contribute in return for the faith reposed in them. In the days past, the people of this class used to give the total benefit of their high character, great knowledge and generous spirit of service to the public and used to be so selfless as to leave the worry of food and clothing to God. This class of people used to utilise a part of their time in God's worship, reading scriptures, increasing knowledge and purification of the soul, and spend the greater part of their time in helping the public for progress in material and spiritual life. That itself was the 'rishidharma' or the tradition of the *rishis* (sages) in doing their duty for the societal uplift, materially and spiritually. The learned souls and saints used to consider themselves duty-bound for this pious work. The increased will-power and increased power of knowledge was required not for self but for doing maximum important work for public-welfare. A vast army of social workers was available in the form of monks, saints and learned people. People used to venerate such really useful and generous-minded persons.

To-day the situation has become very hostile. If the ignorant public forget their duties, it may be pardonable, but if the symbol of India's soul, the learned class, strays from the right path, it is indeed unfortunate. The *rishis* had not established this class to obtain anyhow money and benefits. To-day these people are mostly busy in looting the public instead of making available the benefit of their knowledge to the people without any fee. Now they have become arrogant in thinking it as their birth-right to rob ignorant people. To grab gratis is a sin greater than stealing.

Of course, we are fortunate that to-day also there are learned men, whose thinking, enthusiasm, worthiness and sense of service are still alive. Only by their good efforts, the ancient glory will be maintained and the people's faith will also be strengthened further. The aim and objective of the life of these learned persons is only one, that is to employ all their worth and capacity for uplifting the thinking of the public and for increasing good activities in the society. This country, worn-out, tattered by bad social-customs and immoral and wicked activities requires radical thinking at every step. For that, many efforts, educational, constructive and struggleful, will have to be made. On their basis, concrete and beneficial efforts can be possible for human-welfare.

This work can be carried out by sentimental and learned people only. Their conduct must be excellent, they should carry out excellent deeds, and inspire every class of the society to adopt good qualities and trade the path of excellence.

वि द्वेषांसीनुहि वर्धयेलां मदेम शतहिमाः सुवीराः ।

Vee dweshaansinuhi vardhayelam
madema shatahimaaha suviraahaa.

(Rigved 6/10/7)

Meaning: It is the duty of learned men that they should carry out excellent deeds and make others do the same. By such deeds, bad tendencies get eradicated and there is an increase in strength, intelligence, learning and longevity.

Message: Whom can we call a learned person? Those who have the knowledge of physical matter and creation, those who keep themselves informed about the human society, those who understand the principles of life and are familiar with spiritual knowledge, they are called the learned ones. Knowledge means to know and understand anything in its proper form.

The learned person knows the difference between knowledge and ignorance. 'Avidya' or ignorance means to understand that the world and body and similar temporary matter as permanent, to understand meaningless, worthless talk, stealing etcetera as refinement, to understand the sorrowful activity such as indulging the desires as bringing joy and to understand the physical body and similar physical matter as live. The opposite of it i.e. the knowledge of reality and proper knowledge of the fundamentals means proper learning or 'vidya'.

Learning and knowledge is commonly expressed as social and scientific subjects and languages. Especially, it refers to spiritual knowledge, which includes the knowledge of God as well as the soul and regarding the physical matter (or 'jad') and 'chetan' (which means the vitality or spark of life). Knowledge is also expressed in the axioms which salvage a fallen person or which awaken an ignorant soul. Only the wealth of learning is the best among all the wealth. Only a man completed with such learning and knowledge is called a learned person. Austerity destroys our sins and with learning we achieve nectarine bliss.

With the contact of such knowledgeable and learned persons, there is constant increase in the willingness to donate for charity and good causes, in the sentiment of non-violence, and in acquiring the knowledge. With 'satsang' (keeping the company of truth, i.e. truthful saintly persons and God) there is always salvation. With 'satsang', terribly depraved men also have raised themselves from the mire of a depraved life and attained heavenly bliss. The change of the lives of the killer-dacoit *Angulimaal* and the dancer *Amraapaali* after meeting Lord *Buddha* are already a part of religious lore in India. *Maharshi Valmiki*, who was the terrible dacoit was changed by a chance meeting with the sage *Narad* and became a *Maharishi* so much so that when Rama wanted a safe place for his wife *Sita* to stay in the jungle, he chose the hermitage of *Maharishi Valmiki*.

It is the duty of excellent and knowledgeable men that they should not use their acquired knowledge only for self, but give its benefit to everyone coming in their contact. By imparting knowledge it never diminishes but increases. With the destruction of bad tendencies and increase in good qualities, people's discretionary powers are awakened, and men, doing 'satkarma' (good deeds) achieve longevity.

Those men, who are miserly in giving the benefit of their knowledge and experience to others, are like beasts. Their accumulated knowledge is not useful even to them and gradually their profundity is lost. It is man's duty to give the benefit of his knowledge to the entire society. They only are 'vidwan' (learned ones) in the true sense.

This is the only duty of knowledgeable men with character.

स नो बोधि पुराता सुगेषूत

Sa no bodhi puraeta sugeshuta

दुर्गेषु पथिकृद्विदानः ।

durgeshu pathikrudwidaanaha

ये अश्रमास उरवो वहिष्ठास्तेभिर्न

Ye ashramaas urvo vahishthaastebhirna

इन्द्राभि वक्षि वाजम् ॥

Indraabhi vakshi vaajum

(Rigved 6/21/12)

Meaning: Those who do good to others, tread the religious path and also lead others on the good path, they only are learned. This attitude is awakened by 'satsang'.

Message: Great benefit is achieved by the *satsang* of learned and religious men. Great is the grandeur of 'satsang'. The saying in Hindi is 'sath sudharahin sat sangat pai' which means even the foolish become reformed by the company of the saintly. The great poet *Kalidas* before his transformation was such a big fool that he was sawing the very branch of the tree on which he was sitting. Some people through a peculiar, strange procedure got him married to an unusually learned scholarly lady called *Vidyottama*. What a contrast! On the one hand the height of foolishness, while on the other hand the height of learning. But this contact created an intense desire in the heart of *Kalidas* for study, and finally he became the legendary poet *Kalidas* who wrote the Sanskrit epic 'Shaakuntal'. *Tulsidas*, who was a lecher, because of his wife's admonition became a 'mahatma' (great soul) and became a saint.

Innumerable men's lives have been changed by 'satsang'. The best means for making the life great and divine is the company of learned men only. The Sanskrit saying is –

*Chandanum sheetalum loke, chandanaadapi chandrama Chandanandrayormadhye
sheetalaa sadhu sangatihi.*

which means, sandal is cooling, but the moon is cooler and the company of excellent and learned men is cooler than both. The learned people have the treasure of knowledge and the energy of experience, by which they are able to charge or enliven anyone. They have the capacity to provide solutions to every kind of difficulty. They are patient, sober and restrained and they are always ready for every type of co-operation. Just a gentle smile from them is capable of giving peace to the man suffering from physical, material and other difficulties. There is only benefit, and nothing but benefit through their company.

In this world, full of disease and material-ills, the company of really saintly and knowledgeable people is extremely difficult. One will be able to get everywhere the wicked and hypocritical persons moving about with the religious marks on their foreheads and bodies. The bad company of such persons increases sins, corrupts the intelligence, destroys fame, kills morality, increases immorality and intensifies anger. Bad company destroys man's present in this world and his future in the world after death.

When a person sits under the *keekar*-tree, he is hurt by the thorns; similarly difficulty is certain with the company of wicked men. Therefore, one must keep away from people with bad tendencies. What can one get except bad thinking in the company of atheists, and those who deride Veds, religion and God? If we wish to do something good in life and become great, then we must keep the company of gentlemen, men of good conduct and men who are learned.

Satsang is helpful in the formation of character.

केतुं कृणवन्नकेतवे पेशो मर्याऽअपेशसे ।

Ketoom krunvannaketave

pesho marya apayshasay

समुषदिभरजायथाः ॥

samurshaadibharajaayathaa

(*Yajurved 29/37, Rigved 1/6/3, Samved 1470, Atharvaved 20/69/11*)

Meaning: We learn by being near the man who desires to see others happy like himself, as such our darkness of ignorance gets destroyed, we earn money and wretchedness gets destroyed. Therefore we should all be near spiritual people.

Message: These days spiritual persons are seen nowhere. See anyone and you find him busy only in worshipping the body and forgetting the soul. He is constantly involved in decorating the body, in indulging his senses and fulfilling his desires. But what is this body? What is the difference between this live-body and the body after death? Apparently nothing, but what is the liveliness of the body due to? So long as there is the spark of the soul within it, the body has a meaning. Otherwise it is a corpse. Then what remains in it, neither knowledge nor brightness; no feelings and no sensation? Man is considered impure by merely touching such a dead body.

So long as soul, a part of the Supreme Father is within this perishable body, it gives it the halo of form and beauty, and brings knowledge and life in this ignorant body. Only God himself manifests in the form of a spark alongwith all his living powers. Because of their presence and contact only, this body is pure. What a wonderful grandeur this, of God? Wandering in the darkness of ignorance, man is not able to understand that Ultimate Truth. Rare are the spiritual people who understand it. Let them be few, but even then such men exist in the present times also. Only those men are successful who try to seek help of such spiritual persons. But those who do not make any efforts and merely sit with folded hands; they are not able to recognise such great men even though they may come before them.

The *satsang* of such great men does the work of the philosopher' stone, it brightens the life like pure gold. It pulls out man from the darkness of ignorance and provides the knowledge of the meaningfulness and usefulness of light of life. With this knowledge, promising progress is made in achieving the objective of life. The bad tendencies and bad thinking do not increase, and actually, with mental strength and will-power, these get eradicated. Their place is filled with good qualities, thoughts of good activities, and they become joyous and cheerful. With the assimilation of excellence and idealism in greater and greater degrees in his qualities, deeds and nature, man becomes more enthused to make; this world, this vast manifestation of God, more developed and more fragrant Then he cheerfully plans the use of all his capacity and personality for public-welfare and for the removal of the widespread ignorance, corruption and backwardness in the society.

The entire society becomes heavenly with the influence of. *satsang*.

पावमानीः स्वस्त्ययनीस्ताभिर्गच्छति नान्दनम् ।

Paavamaanihi swastyayanistaabhirgachhati naandanum

पुण्याँश्च भक्षान्भक्षयत्यमृतत्वं च गच्छति ॥

punyaanshcha bhakshaanbhakshayamrutatvum cha gachhati

(*Samved* 1303)

Meaning: With the study of the literature which inspires men's thinking towards good deeds, men and women feel joy. Imbibing good thoughts, they ultimately get the benefit of salvation.

Message: Man's mind is like a blank paper or a slate or photographic plate. The situations, events and thoughts, which come before it, get etched on it and then that type of mental ground or mindset is created. By nature, man is neither intelligent nor foolish nor good nor bad, but in reality he is a very sensitive animal. He accepts the nearby influences and gets cast in the mould of whatever atmosphere exists before his mind. This speciality of his gets him swept in situations which either led him to downfall or to uplift. The path to uplift or progress opens up only with worship of God, *satsang* and 'swadhyay' or study of scriptures.

There are two meanings of the word 'swadhyay', first is the study of Veds and scriptures which uphold the thinking in the Veds. The second meaning is 'swa-adhyayan' ('swa' means self and 'adhyayan' means study, which means study or observation of the self). An individual closely observing himself daily for a few moments makes it a habit to find out personal faults and also makes an effort to remove them.

The main interpretation of the word 'swadhyay' is the study of scriptures and good books. Their study is like drinking the sweet nectar, and does the work of a beam of light in the darkness of life. The study of good, moral books is the basis of man's progress, whereas the reading of bad books becomes the cause of his downfall. Good books serve a man's need of good friends and through them he finds out the road of spiritual and moral uplift. The demoniac tendencies and events encourage us to adopt mean, lowly beliefs and activities. To annihilate this wicked influence, the contact of saintly, great men and the study of their books act like magic. With the study and contemplation of such books, in fact, our mind establishes a sentimental unity with that great man, by which day by day there is an enhancement in our character, personality and will-power. Good holy literature has provided the opportunity to innumerable men for uplift and to be men with strong will-power. The enunciation of the holy *Gita* benefited not only *Arjun* who was the first to hear it from Lord Krishna, but has helped millions of people in achieving their objectives of life.

To-day's irony is the availability of rotten, irrelevant, obscene and perverse literature at every street-corner. People buy it for its cheap entertainment. On the contrary, one must make an effort to get only the literature with good thoughts for self-study. If we employ regularly one hour's time for study, in a short time, our thoughts will become excellent.

The habit to study must be made the daily indivisible deed of our life.

येन देवा न वियन्ति नो च विद्विषते मिथः ।

Yena devaa na viyanti no cha
vidwishatay meethaha

तत् कृण्मो ब्रह्म वो गृहे संज्ञानं पुरुषेभ्यः ॥

tat krunmo brahma vo gruhe
sangyanum purushebhya

(Atharvaved 3/30/4)

Meaning: The learned people never quarrel or indulge in jealousy and malice. Study of good literature is required to make man's thinking appropriate.

Message: The world is full of men with different streams of thought. Each one's method of assessing a situation, arriving at a conclusion and then acting on its basis is different. It is not at all necessary that every man's thinking is in agreement with ours and that he will act accordingly. Jealousy and malice are born out of conflicts in thinking only. What follows is criticism and counter-criticism, increasing bitterness and difficulties on the road of progress. People slander each other as a result of obstinate insistence for their vain knowledge, vain pride, vain talk and falsehoods. The mind becomes malicious because of frequent slander and with repeated talking about others' bad tendencies; those very bad tendencies crop up in the slanderer also.

Spiritually inclined people must completely give up malice to make their material lives happy. Where there is malice, there is jealousy, arrogance and enmity, which create doubts and fear. It is necessary to free our hearts from malice. Love gives rise to love and despise creates despise. Only the atmosphere of love is the happy alternative of freedom from fear. For freedom from fear and for proper organisation, happiness and peace in the society, men who are always busy in their jealousies and malice, who create everywhere an atmosphere of quarrels, must be despised. Such men because of their selfishness, continuously exploit others, keep them trapped in arguments and quarrels, and try to humiliate them.

Only the study of good books has the power to inspire man's thinking for treading the path beneficial to all. Men develop real knowledge and their differences of opinion get dissolved and their thinking gets in the right direction. Through self-study the cobwebs of false thinking and false-beliefs get removed, the hunger of intelligence for proper guidance is satisfied and mental excellence gets enhanced. It develops the feeling of generous co-operation in the society, and doubts and fears are replaced by deep love and trust and the mutual feeling of brotherhood is increased. *Swadhyay* is like the '*kalpavruksh*' (the wish-granting tree in the Indian religious lore). Sitting under this *kalpavruksh*-like tree of self-study, one's desires are fulfilled, all worries are dispelled and life becomes pleasant and filled with moral simplicity. Through self-study we get the benefit of *sat sang* (the good company) of learned men who were the ornaments of this earth. Through their books, our contact is established with them and we get a feeling that we are actually talking with them and they are solving our difficulties and showing us the right path. Just like our daily prayers, we must also include self-study in our daily routine.

सूरसि वर्चोधा असि तनूपानोऽसि ।

Soorarasi varchodhaa asi tanupaanoasi

आप्नुहि श्रेयांसमति समं क्राम ॥

Aapnuhi shreyansamati samum kraama

(Atharvaved 2/11/4)

Meaning: O men! To make this human-life meaningful, obtain knowledge. be bright and be physically strong. Instead of being satisfied with your present situation, try to progress further.

Message: In the ancient times when the disciples left their Guru's hermitage, the Guru used to advise them, "*Sat yam vada, dharmum chara, swadhyayanam pramadaha*" which means, speak the truth, tread the religious path, and never neglect self-study. This advice is appropriate also because howsoever much one has acquired the knowledge, but if it is not revised again and again, then over a period of time it becomes useless. It does not do to scrub and wash the utensils once only. The atmosphere tarnishes them. To keep them clean and useful, they have to be scrubbed and washed daily. Similarly if knowledge is not made profound by self-study, then layers of ignorance start shrouding it and without revision, it gets lost from memory.

The best book for self-study is the *Ved*. One meaning of *Ved* is 'gyan' (i.e. knowledge). Knowledge-is the soul of God and is timeless and endless. The collection of the knowledge acquired by sages with great insight through severe austerities is the Veds. The knowledge of all the art, skills, science, political strategy, religious tenets and morality is collected in the Veds. The Veds have the capacity to throw new light on any subject of the past, present or future.

Through self-study we acquire the knowledge of the solution to the various problems arising in human-life. Self-study does not mean parrot-like repetition of books or a display of such learning. Endless and unknown meanings of even simple words manifest before us when we contemplate on the thoughts of great men in the books. The best way of worship of knowledge is through self-study only.

Who will talk to-day about self-study of great religious books, when even the books meant for a particular subject are not completely taught in the schools with the excuse of lack of time in completing the syllabus? The teacher himself does not read the book or the subject thoroughly and most students are also not interested in any way. They buy the guide-books solely for the purpose of passing the examination, cram a few questions- answers, or resort to copying in the exams. If they pass the examination, then it is alright. Most teachers have turned education into mere business. They teach only that which is necessary for passing in the examination. The teachers themselves do not have more knowledge than that. If there is no water in the well, how can the bucket be filled? Such a situation mostly prevails. The result of this itself is that there is less knowledge and more ignorance in the society. This also is a reason for the corruption which has spread everywhere.

The activity of self-study is declining day by day. People have no dearth of money. They have purchased plenty of gadgets and facilities for comforts. One will find gadgets from all over the world in their homes, but hardly can good books be seen in any home. Nowhere to-day the proper atmosphere of self-study is to be found. In reality, good books have an extraordinary place in human-life. The humanness of men is collected in such books. Such good books provide culture, good advice and teach the discretion between truth and untruth. They increase

man's joy in his happy times and in his times of grief; they provide the balm of sympathy in various ways and reduce his sorrow. If studied properly and with concentration, then they increase man's lustre and sharpen mental faculties.

With '*swadhyay*' man's character shines like gold, good qualities increase and the person is freed from bad tendencies. With the realisation of facts, one develops an automatic dislike for bad habits and addictions. As a result, physical health improves and peace and happiness increase. Man becomes bright and lustrous with better mental faculties and more influencing ability.

Man's greatest treasure is his character. Its protection is more valuable than the protection of our own life. Only that person achieves fame by reaching the life's objective, who succeeds in protecting his treasure, that is, character.

