

30. Education Should Not Make One Neglect One's Parents

Students!

For the past one month we have been learning many things about Indian culture. We have also learnt that for all our culture, the source is the *Veda*. There is a sacred meaning for every *manthra* in the *Veda*. It is necessary for students to know about these aspects. Also, we have understood, to some extent, the inner meaning of the *Vedas*. It is only by understanding the inner meaning of the *Vedas*, is it possible for human nature to blossom and flourish. It is necessary to recognise the truth that fulfilment of man's aspirations and his pleasures is not limited to worldly aspects. Permanent happiness and bliss are things which have to be generated from within your heart. They cannot be brought from outside and given to you. These are things

which you cannot search for and obtain from the external world. Such education which cannot confer bliss and provide the security and firmness you seek, cannot be called true education. Only that education which can give you bliss in your heart, peace in your mind and happiness in your life is true education. To convert education as a prop for your life and a breadwinner is a mistake. Your life itself should give you the strength to live. Education should not be made a breadwinner. There are crores of people in this country who are not educated and are still living a good life.

To think that education is necessary to enable man to live is quite wrong. Education should enable you to lead an ideal life and set an example to others. Your knowledge is not to be used just to fill your stomach. That education is the correct type of education which enables you to lead an exemplary life and provide you the discrimintaory power. Education should promote humility in you, should enable you to become more humble than the uneducated person. It should enable you to serve your mother, father and country selflessly. If you become a selfish person and simply acquire degrees which become a burden on your shoulders, that kind of education is of no use.

Selfishness, exhibitionism and immorality are seen in an extensive measure only in the educated class of people today. Education that makes you proud and removes all the good qualities such as humility and simplicity cannot add to the prosperity of the country. It can only cause harm to the country and create confusion and trouble. As you become more and more educated, your ideas should become broader and broader. As our knowledge increases more and more, humility should also increase more and more. You should be prepared at all times to spend your energy in providing help and encouragement to others. The moment a student acquires a degree or two, he becomes a burden to his own parents. He brings tears of sorrow to the parents. The father of the house struggles hard even in his old age to provide for the family. In spite of the son being aware of struggle, he does not raise even his little finger to help him.

This kind of education which makes one not to serve even his father, how is it going to help him serve the country? Mother and father would have struggled and starved on many occasions to feed and support their son as a student. When the parents are in difficulty, if the son would not do anything to help them and relieve their distress, but eats and sleeps like Kumbhakarna, it is utter

selfishness. What is the use of education which he has received if it does not teach him to look after the welfare of the mother and father when they are in difficulties?

Pavitratma Swarupas, students!

Do not join the company of such youngsters who are doing bad things. Remember the sacred Indian culture and Indian traditions. I am hoping that by not joining this band of youth, you will maintain the culture and traditions of Bharath and you will proclaim its greatness by putting it into practice. Use all the strength of your mind, body and speech to do hard work and get results of a good kind. If we do not come forward and involve ourselves in hard work, then the country itself will deteriorate. In this workshop of the universe, a group of people is like a machine and in this machine each person is like a small part. In this workshop, whatever duty is allotted to an individual, it must be done diligently, however small it may be. If you fail in your duty, not only would you harm yourself as an individual, but you would be harming the whole country in which you are living.

The culture of India teaches you the aspect of *Soham*. It does not approve of idleness or sloth.

Laziness is dust and rust, whereas selfless work is rest and the best. If you really want rest, you should involve yourself in work that is ordained by the scriptures. If you do not work during day time and exert your body, even if you go to bed in the night you will not get sleep. You will simply be tossing around in the bed. On the other hand, if you give the necessary physical exertion to your body, you will get rest and in this manner rest follows hard work.

There is a saying that one who cannot sleep well will be having all kinds of bad thoughts and schemes. If you sleep well, there is no room for such bad planning in your mind. Thus, you young people should work hard and bring good name to your own home, village and to the society to which you belong and thereby bring good to the whole country itself. In the old days, those who were enrolling themselves as students of the *Vedas* were involved in doing hard work and thus had developed good qualities. Their parents were also happy. Today's education is such that even the teachers do not understand the lessons they are teaching. It is not giving us peace of mind or security in the daily life.

The *Vedic* learning is not like that. Whosoever wants to learn the *Vedas* has to necessarily undergo

physical exertion and should not waste even a second. If an individual wants to learn thoroughly all the sections of the four *Vedas*, he will have to spend nearly forty-eight to fifty years. There are thirty-one sections in the *Rig Veda* and one hundred and one sections in the *Yajur Veda*. There are a thousand sections in the *Sama Veda*. There are nine sections in the *Atharvana Veda*. For learning each *Veda*, it would take at least twelve years, and for four *Vedas* it used to take something like fifty years and for these fifty years the disciple had to remain in the *guru's ashram*.

Many people used to feel that it is difficult to learn all the four *Vedas*. Hence, a number of students used to confine themselves learning one or two *Vedas*. Also, those who were not able to completely learn even one *Veda* would learn a few sections depending upon their family tradition. Learning only a few sections of the *Vedas* has been referred to as *swadhyaya*. *Swadhyaya* refers to reciting what is customarily natural to him. This word is not used in a narrow sense. There is a meaning here for *swadhyaya*, that is to be able to recite what is necessary for understanding Brahman.

Swadhyaya does not mean reciting *Veda* with a selfish desire to earn reputation or money. Unfortunately, today one does not learn or recite *Veda* for the noble

purpose of realising the supreme being. Most people recite *Vedas* either for getting monetary benefit or reputation or for some selfish reason. That is why the power of the *Vedas* is on the decline and people's faith in the *Vedas* is eroding. In the ancient times, the *Vedic* scholars had the ambition of realising the *Atma thathwa*, which was the real purpose of learning the *Vedas*.

In the early years, when one would be doing all the *karmas* prescribed in the *Vedas*, he would be called a *vasuvu*. Later when he begins the practice of the *Vedas* and takes to *swadhyaya*, he would be called a *rudra*. *Vasu*, the student of *Veda* moves on from the early years to the time when he is doing *upasana* and is called *rudra* and then he moves on to the stage of wisdom or acquiring *jnana*. Then he is called *Aditya*. This aspect of *Aditya*, when he is in the final stage of acquiring wisdom, is also referred to as *swadhyaya*. It can also be stated here that the stage of *Aditya* is associated with the stage of Bharatha. In the intermediate stage of *upasana* or *rudra*, Saraswathi is present.

In the early stage, *Vasu* has to be identified with the aspect of *Ida*. This disciple of *Vedas* or of the *vedavidu* has also been called *Swasa*. For this word *swasa*, there

is an alternative meaning called sister and for this feeling of the sister the other name given is Saraswathi or Bharathi. The same Bharathi has also been called Deepti. As was mentioned yesterday, the kind of inseparable relationship that exists between the Sun and the Sun's rays also exists between Bharathi and Bharatha. Thus for words like Bharatha, Bharathi and Bhaarathi, the *Sruthi* has been giving meanings which are synonymous with each other. When we want to understand the aspect of God, it will be possible for us to come to a conclusion only when we understand the meaning of Bharathi.

As the next step, it is only when we understand the meaning of Bharatha that we can say proudly that we are citizens of Bharath and that we understand the meaning of that word. The students of the *Vedas* who really understood the *Vedas*, or those who understood the real meaning of the *Vedas* were prepared to sacrifice anything and everything. The kind of devotion which they used to proclaim cannot be described easily. That could only be experienced. They could never be described easily either by words or thoughts. But the devotion of today is continually changing. What there is in the morning is not there in the evening and what there is in the evening is not there the next morning. If one's

desires are fulfilled, he will praise the Lord very much; but, if one's desires are not fulfilled, there is no room for any respect for God in the mind. Whether it is loss or gain, our faith must be unshakeable. This kind of faith is also called *ananya bhakthi*. We must be prepared to accept failures as well as successes with equanimity.

There is a small story to illustrate this point. There was an individual who had a desire that others should accept him as a great devotee and so he was using several exhibitionist methods. Everyday he used to go to the temple early in the morning and sit with closed eyes doing some *japa*. This individual used to sit till very late and long after all the other devotees had left. Because of him the priest also had to remain late in the temple and return home very late. This priest was feeling that he was being detained every day and was wondering how he could attend to his normal duties if he was detained like this every day. At the same time he was not prepared to disturb this man who was sitting in deep meditation. He thought that there was something strange in this person who was sitting in the temple late every day as if he could not do it in his own home. He thought that there must be definitely something wrong about this individual.

The priest with the intention of finding out the truth behind all this went behind the idol and said, “I am very much satisfied with your devotion and will take you into myself.” The moment this devotee heard this, he thought that God was really speaking and was so much afraid that he never came to the temple again.

Our devotion and our attitudes today are of this kind. If you really want relief from this life, then even while God is prepared to take you away any moment, you should be prepared to give up your life and become one with God. If you do not want this and you still want to become a realised soul and merge in God how is it possible? While it is necessary for you to plan for your future, you must not have a fear of death. Do not be afraid of death, do not forget God, do not get yourself involved too much in this world. It is necessary for you to remember all these three and have faith in the divine.

Therefore while you are doing work, fill your heart with the thought that Ida is the presiding sacred deity. When you are in *sadhana* and entertaining good thoughts, remember that all the words that are coming out of your mouth are coming from the Goddess Saraswathi, the Goddess of speech. Instil the aspects of Ida, Saraswathi,

and Bharathi in your heart and get them firmly implanted in your mind and have faith that these are responsible for all your actions.

It is not easy for anyone to understand and unravel the strength and power of God. All the descriptions which we give of the Lord are not really descriptions of the strength and power of the Lord but are merely being given for our own satisfaction. They are not the true description of the infinite strength of God. To some extent you must understand the limitations of your own speech and strength and you must be prepared to do your work consistent with your strength of thought word and deed. But today we are hesitating even to utter the name of the Lord. We are willing to utter useless and purposeless words.

At one time, there was an individual who had great respect for our traditions. He had one son. This father who was tradition-bound, performed the *Upanayanam* of his son. While putting the sacred thread, he told his son that he must chant the Gayatri *manthra* at least one hundred and eight times every day. Unable to bear the pressure that the father was bringing on him, the son was repeating the Gayatri *manthra* under compulsion. As time went on, the son wanted to decrease the number

of times he had to repeat the Gayatri *manthra*. One day the father remarked, “It looks as if you have not been repeating the Gayatri properly. Let me see how you do it today.” At first he did repeat the Gayatri *manthra* properly and thereafter he simply said “Ditto, ditto.” Not knowing what this means, the father asked him what “Ditto, ditto” meant. The son said that it refers to the fact that the same was being said several times. This word “ditto” has no specific meaning and in turn the original sentence also turns out to be one which has no significant meaning. The father was very much upset at this and lamented, “Oh what a son have I got. He is not able to repeat even the Gayatri *manthra*.” He thought that he should somehow bring him back to the old traditions. This boy went to the college, passed out of the college and even while he was in college he corresponded with institutions abroad and arranged to go abroad. The father was very desirous to see that the son maintained the traditions even if he went abroad; and so he told him that he should try to chant the Gayatri *manthra* every day even while living abroad.

The father wanted the son to return from foreign countries with good qualities. Hence, he took the son to the Devi temple and asked him to pray to the Devi so

that he may return with good qualities. Although unwilling, the son prayed to the Devi because he thought that if he prayed to Devi his father would let him go abroad. He therefore offered his prayers to the Devi and went abroad. After living for three years abroad, he changed his mind and did not want to return to India. However, because of the father’s pressure, he reluctantly returned to the mother land.

Since the son was returning after a long gap of three years, the father and mother went to the airport with great hopes to receive their son. But they were very much disappointed to find their son speaking to them in a foreign language. It looked as though he had forgotten his mother tongue. The Mother requested her son to speak in Telugu as she was not able to understand the foreign language, but the son immediately replied that he had forgotten his mother tongue. The father was very angry and was feeling hurt, but he controlled himself as he felt that he should not displease his son as soon as he landed from a foreign country. He controlled himself and sarcastically told his son that he was glad that atleast he had not forgotten his father and mother, even though he forgot his mother tongue which he had been speaking from his childhood. He felt thankful for this.

From the airport, the parents took the son directly to the Devi temple to offer their grateful thanks to the Devi for having brought back the son to his country. Before going inside, the parents asked him to remove the shoes, but he said that he cannot walk if he removed the shoes. The father was again very angry at this and he asked his son why he was so proud even while going into the presence of the Devi, and he said that it was a shame that he forgot the traditions of the country. Somehow, yielding to the compulsion of the father, the boy removed the shoes and was going into the temple; but as soon as he entered the temple he addressed the Goddess and said, “How are you, mummy, how do you do?” He wanted to give the Goddess a hand shake. The father was very angry and in spite of the fact that he was in the presence of the Goddess in a temple, he gave the boy two or three good beatings. The youth of today are developing attitudes which are more or less like this. One who forgets his mother land, his mother and father and his divine and noble traditions cannot in fact be called a human being.

In this story, since the father belonged to a time when the traditions were respected, as soon as he realised that the son had gone astray, he hit him hard.

Unfortunately, the parents of today would have taken a different approach and felt proud of the change that has come over the son. In fact they would have felt happy that their son has become very modern, so modern that he has even forgotten his mother tongue. This is the unfortunate situation today. In several cases it is the parents who are responsible for the wrong path which the children are taking to. The responsibility for ruining the children squarely rests with the parents. They must learn the correct attitude they should take to put their children on the right path. The children will accept the advice given by the parents and will take to the right path only if the parents conduct themselves in a correct manner.

Teachers who wish that their students should go on the right path should themselves practise what they preach to the students. Today, in my assessment, the students are faulty to some extent, but the teachers and the parents are largely responsible for this pitiable situation in which the students are.

It is in this context that Kabir in one of his famous songs advised *Dil me Ram, hath me kam*. Here the *dil* or the mind is like the tank, and out of the tank will come good water; and devotion is like the pipe and out of the

pipe will come good water if the tank of the mind is filled with good water. The teachers and the parents are like the tank and it is only when the teachers and the parents have good ideas and adopt good conduct, out of them will flow good ideas to the students.

Giving the students excessive and uncontrolled freedom and more money than they really need are the primary reasons for this state of affairs. When the son requires a hundred rupees, if the parents give him a hundred and twenty rupees the surplus of twenty rupees will be used by him for a wrong purpose. On the other hand, when the son wants a hundred rupees, the father should give him only ninety rupees. Only then will he take to the right path. Such a restriction will at first appear to be harsh, but as time goes on, they will find that this very restriction is helpful to them later in their life to develop strength of character.

Students!

You must understand the purpose for which the various traditions are laid down. You must also understand the significance the language in which they are conveyed. You must learn to respect your parents. You must also be able to put all these things into

practice. In future, you will have to shoulder many responsibilities. You must learn to explore how you can deserve God's grace and distinguish good from bad. I am hoping that you will have all these capacities and earn God's grace. It is not enough if you have devotion to Swami. Your *prema* towards Swami is not necessarily going to result in Swami's *prema* on you. Unless you find ways and means by which you can earn Swami's grace, your effort is useless.

You should follow a path by which you will be able to experience and enjoy *prema*. To know the path by which you will receive *prema* is more important than simply saying that you have *prema*. Your *prema* alone is simply like one-way traffic. If your *prema* results in your receiving *prema* from the other side, then it becomes two-way traffic. It is give and take. If you have good ideas, develop good thoughts, and adopt good practices, then you do not have to ask for God's grace. God by Himself will shower His grace and *prema* as a reward for your good conduct.