

1. The End of Education is Character

You may gain mastery over sciences, reign among scholars,
Fight bravely in battles,
Take birth as an emperor and rule over kingdoms,
And donate untold gold and cattle in charity.
You may be able to count the number of stars in the sky,
Name all the species of living beings,
Study the eight limbs of scholarship¹,
And even travel to the moon.
But can you control the body and the senses,
Steady the mind and turn it inward,
And acquire a firm, selfless heart?

Embodiments of Love!

Students, teachers, and patrons of education!

The world is ruled by science and technology. First, scientists have made astonishing strides in the fields of plastics, electronics and computers, atomic power and space research. Satellites have been sent into space. Boundless time, effort, and money is spent on the investigation of atomic power, but there is no corresponding benefit. In the anxiety to exceed each other's achievements, scientists have set aside morality and human values. Second, we have political and financial turmoil. Men quarrel and wage wars on the basis of religion and nationality. Attachment to family and power is untrained. Regional differences and hatred are dividing the sacred and ancient land of *Bharat* (India) into pieces. Violent agitations by students have grown beyond limits. Science has become all-important and morality

¹ Panini's eight texts on Sanskrit grammar, considered as definitive references on the language. Not to be confused with Sage Patanjali's eight-fold path of *Raja Yoga*.

has declined. What is the cause of such retrograde progress in these two aspects?

Human values: today's prime need

What must humanity desire today? We need virtuous, selfless boys and girls. We need heroes who are ready to sacrifice for the welfare of the motherland. Unfortunately, people wrongly expect happiness from wealth and comforts. Truly, worldly objects bestow no happiness. If one feels joy in their midst, it is only temporary.

Chatrapati Shivaji² had no dearth of wealth and power. Then what is the significance in his surrendering to Samartha Ramdas³ and requesting his guidance? King Janaka⁴ also abounded in material prosperity. Then why did he seek refuge with Sage Yagnavalkya⁵? Since ancient times, even the most powerful emperors of India have approached penniless renunciates to earn peace and security. Peace, the prime need of man, is available only through Knowledge of the Self⁶.

It is essential for students to understand why morality and spirituality have disappeared from society. Education without character, science without human values, commerce without ethics, and politics without truth are responsible for the erosion of virtue. Students have a duty to develop patriotism and restore these

² Founder of the Maratha kingdom in western India during the 17th century

³ Great devotee of Lord Rama from the state of Maharashtra

⁴ King of Mithila in ancient India, father-in-law of Lord Rama

⁵ A great sage to whom certain sections of the Vedas are attributed.

⁶ *Atma Jnana*

forgotten values. Today's education makes one clever but does not instill virtue. Students transform their heads (*mastakam*) into books (*pustakam*) without practising human values.

There is no benefit in turning your head into a book or vice versa. Recognise the path of Truth and demonstrate it in day-to-day living. How can we develop human values?

Sinning by losing fear of sin,
Adopting a path devoid of love for God,
People have destroyed their human qualities.
This is the cause of unrest in the world.

You must fill your heart with love for God (*daiva preeti*), fear of sin (*paapa bheeti*), and morality in society (*sangha neeti*). Instead of restricting yourself to pride in your state or province, develop love for the Motherland and help bring about prosperity in the country.

Present-day education develops cleverness,
But not even a trace of virtue.
You may master a million subjects. But devoid of
virtue,
What fruit can they bear, what is their use?

"The proper study of mankind is man." Unity in thought, word, and deed is most essential. The world can be benefitted only by those who demonstrate humanness in actions, not by those who are human only in name. Scientists and politicians set many destructive precedents for youth of the country. The world has no need for slogans written on walls, statements issued by politicians, and speeches made from high platforms. The world needs people imbued with integrity. All that is learned must culminate in behaviour. Life today is based on show, expenditure, and comfort. Humanity's problems can be solved not by money or science but by humanity alone. People must transform themselves to live as human beings. People live like demons, like animals.

Education must develop selflessness

Students, you see education as a means to secure a job. Education and a job must be disjoined. "Education should be for life, not for a living." Animals and birds also feel the pangs of hunger and try to fill their stomachs. So, mere living is not enough. We must understand the secrets of life. Schools propagate knowledge about living but not about life. Human birth is divine. Unmindful of the sanctity of our birth, we aspire for pleasures of the world.

Worldly comforts are necessary, but life should not be dedicated to their pursuit. Worldly pleasures are subject to change and destruction. People are bound to die, but ideals remain immortal. Students should not merely cultivate ideals but spread them in the world.

Since ancient times, India has propagated the endless stream of Knowledge of the Self (*Atma Jnana*). But today we find discord, falsehood, injustice, and devilish qualities ruling people's minds in *Bharat*, the birthplace of spirituality. Students alone are the inheritors of these problems, and they alone are capable of solving them.

Students, embodiments of Love!

Fill your hearts with the aim of dedicating your lives to the Motherland. Selfishness is unworthy of you. "Fish is better than selfish!" People are not able to rid society of wickedness and immorality because they act with selfishness. Love must be developed, and the heart must be expanded.

Love lives by giving and forgiving.
Ego lives by getting and forgetting.

In ancient *Bharatiya* (Indian) heritage, we have 18 *Puraanas*⁷. Their essence is: "Help Ever, Hurt Never." Follow these principles tenaciously. By neglecting these guideposts, people descend into unrighteousness with every step. In every statement, truth is absent. In every look, love is diminished. In every desire, foresight is put aside. Every ambition is selfish. Ideas that promote long-term progress are nowhere to be seen. Divine Consciousness in humanity is asleep, while differences based on religion and caste are uppermost in the mind. Attachment and hatred roam the world. Truly, human qualities have been devastated in the world today. We need "quality", not "quantity". A teaspoon of cow's milk is useful. Why have barrels of donkey's milk?

Money is desirable, within limits

Money, money, money... Earning (*sampaadana*) is not as important as values and traditions (*samskaaram*). Excessive money makes people mad. I advise students always to earn whatever is necessary for daily living. There can be no progress without limits (*Nah sreyo niyamam vinaa*). Our body temperature is 98.4°F. A reading of 99°F is a fever. Our eyeballs can see only a limited brightness. Excessive brightness burns the retina. Blood pressure is normal at 120/80. Variation beyond these limits signals heart-trouble.

⁷ Gist of the *Vedas* written in parable form by Sage Vyasa for the benefit of laymen.

Yes, to lead an independent life, to avoid reliance on others, money is indeed essential. But it is surprising to see what 'educated' people do in the interest of money. Even illiterate villagers have a sense of sacrifice, but educated people have none. Wherever there are more universities and law colleges, we find more uncultured behaviour and injustice! In remote hamlets and forests devoid of such institutions, people lead peaceful and simple lives.

What is the reason for this despicable state of morality in our country? Selfish desires are growing beyond limits. Less luggage, more comfort. Reduce your responsibilities and desires. Money is like a shoe. When the shoe is loose, we cannot walk; if tight, it causes pain. Excessive money as well as shortage of money are undesirable. Keep as much as you need. That is the way to peace. Peace is within ourselves, not outside. Do not look for peace in degrees and positions.

What is the use of all your education?
Who can change the destiny written on your forehead?
As soon as wrong ideas enter your mind,
Your intelligence dries up like a pond in summer.

Education does not mean collecting facts about the world in your head. "May all the worlds be happy (*Lokaah samastaah sukhino bhavantu*)."
When everyone is happy, your happiness is automatically assured. Educated people care only about themselves and their family, not about society. Can we exist independent of society? Our life is intermingled with society. The welfare of society alone is our welfare. The journey of life starts with the individual, but it must progress to the family and then, to the society — from "I" to "We".

Who am I?

What is the "I"? There are two kinds of "I": The single-letter "I" and the three-letter "eye". "Eye" is the body, "I" is the soul. You are not the body, the senses, or the mind. They are only instruments. Using them as tools, base your life on the letter "I".

Many new students are attending today. Students! From waking to sleeping you say, "My house, my car, my pant, my shirt, my book, ..." Everything is "my, my, my". Who are you? I cannot see students who ask themselves, "Who am I?" When you say "my body," you are different from the body. Then who are you? Enquire along these lines, and the foundation of spirituality will dawn in you.

"Skill" your knowledge

Science has advanced but ignorance has also grown correspondingly. They have moved together, balancing each other. A person's entire life is developed on the basis of knowledge. How does one use this knowledge? When we "skill" our knowledge, life is well-balanced. When we "kill" our knowledge, the balance is upset. Today's students are "killing" their knowledge. How?

See no evil, See what is good.
Hear no evil, Hear what is good.
Talk no evil, Talk what is good.
Think no evil, Think what is good.
Do no evil, Do what is good.

Bad looks, bad thoughts, bad talk, bad work: This is "killing" knowledge. Tongue must speak sweet, speaking truthful and beneficial words (*Jihve rasagne madhura priyatvam, satyam hitam tvaam paramam vadaami*). Our tongue is sacred. We should not allow bad words to form on it, especially words finding fault with others. We should not speak about others' faults, make fun of them or belittle them. If possible, help others. If you cannot, sit quietly without harming anyone. That too is a big help!

*Brahmacharya*⁸ is the foundation for life. The householder stage is like the walls. *Vaanaprastha*, the forest-dweller's, is the roof. In the same way, self-confidence is the foundation, Self-satisfaction the wall, Self-sacrifice the roof. Self-Realisation is the life. These four stages depend on the strength of the foundation. Our life can be full of happiness and peace only when these years are well-utilised.

Students, practise the precepts you learn here and transform yourself into exemplary men and women. Science and technology are very necessary. Science is not evil but it is being misused. You can use a knife to slice a fruit or to slash someone's throat. The fault lies with the hand, not the knife. Science is similar.

Science, science, science ... Without the support of spirituality, science is blind and cripple. We must see science and spirituality as "positive" and "negative" and use them harmoniously. Science grants worldly happiness while spirituality grants happiness hereafter. Science is incomplete because it does not encompass the mind and *Atma*. Science is just knowledge, a collection of facts... it is "gas". Humanity got the name *manishi*⁹ from the word *manas* (mind). The mind, the disting-

⁸ Four stages of life: *brahmacharya* (student, till 25 years), *grihasta* (householder, 25-50 years), *vaanaprastha* (forest dweller, 50-75 years) and *sanyasa* (renunciant).

⁹ Man, in Telugu.

uishing feature, must discriminate between the permanent and the temporary.

Today, there are five types of knowledge. First, *bookish knowledge* is found everywhere. This turns later into *superficial knowledge*. Everybody has these two but the third, *general knowledge*, is zero! The fourth, *discrimination knowledge*, is being used but in the wrong way. Today “individual discrimination” is used: “Is it convenient and beneficial to me and my family?” No, no. We must exercise “fundamental discrimination”: Is it good for me, my family, for the world... Is it the Truth? Only with such discrimination does the fifth knowledge, *practical knowledge*, dawn.

Practical knowledge is scarce. Based on bookish and superficial knowledge, people enter into lengthy arguments. If one says “yes,” another says “no”. We spend our lives in such shallow thinking. No, we must descend deep into life! We must face everything!

Life is a challenge, meet it!
Life is a game, play it.
Life is love, enjoy it.
Life is a dream, realize it.

Control your senses

We must stand up against life’s situations! Only when we face and conquer circumstances will our conscience exude contentment and satisfaction. We must walk the path that satisfies the conscience. Students are interested in satisfying only their “conscious”, not their “conscience”. Conscience is our real power, strength, and awareness. It is unchanging, beyond understanding. How can scientists, who do not even understand themselves, grasp anything about the conscience?

Even Churchill declared, “Scientists today struggle to understand everything, but they make no efforts to understand themselves.” Scientists exert to control everything external, but they are not able to control their senses. This is exactly what young Prahlada advised his father, Hiranyakasipu¹⁰:

You, who have won supremacy over all the worlds,
Father, cannot control your own mind and senses.
Father, you have won over the worlds, even
subjugated the five elements of Nature.

¹⁰ Hiranyakasipu, a hater of Lord Narayana, tried to kill his own son, Prahlada, in many ways because the boy was a devotee of the Lord. Finally, the Lord assumed the Narasimha (Man-Lion) *Avatar* and vanquished Hiranyakasipu.

But your senses and your mind remain beyond your control.

So what are your undisputed power and strength worth?”

Therefore, control of the senses is most important for students. The world abounds in violence only because students are slaves of their senses. We must be “masters”, not “slaves”. When can we be masters? Only with control of the senses.

Too much freedom is harmful

Students! Young children are pure at heart. Only due to faults in the education system do they seek destructive paths. Students are selfless and sacred. Parents at home and teachers in schools lead them astray. It is natural for parents to be attached to their children, but it should be within limits. Parents must always be watchful about their children’s behaviour. Today’s parents themselves do not know what is right conduct. How can they guide children? There is too much freedom. Yes, freedom is desirable. What kind of freedom?

The end of wisdom is freedom.
The end of culture is perfection.
The end of knowledge is love.
The end of education is character.

Yes, this kind of freedom is definitely worth pursuing. But by giving children the liberty to act as they please, by letting them return home at 1a.m. or 2a.m., by not questioning their whereabouts, parents totally ruin them. Students have no manners and discipline. However, this is not entirely their fault. Excessive love of the parents encourages their waywardness.

Serve your motherland

Students, strive to demonstrate your purity in every field of activity. Do not study for degrees alone. Study for self-satisfaction. Serve your country, serve your country, serve your country — This is absolutely essential. To depart to Iran, Iraq, Germany, the USA, or Japan soon after securing an engineering or medical degree is treason to the Motherland! You must serve Mother India, which gave birth to you and brought you up. Every individual should serve their country. Is it proper to leave one’s own mother and consider some other lady as mother? The mother and motherland are worth far more than heaven itself (*Janani janma-bhoomischa svargaadapi gariyasi*¹¹).

¹¹ Sri Rama’s words from the epic *Ramayana*

If all the educated children go abroad, what will become of our nation? Rather than earning hundreds of thousands outside, you will enjoy greater peace of mind if you earn hundreds here. This is morality. “Money comes and goes, morality comes and grows.” Students, develop patriotism. If you do not have love for your country, how can you love your body? The country (*desa*) and your body (*deha*) are reflections of each other. We do not need to go abroad and beg for a living! What is available in *Bharat* is not present anywhere else.

Loving Mother India is not a matter of shame! Since ancient times, India alone has propagated spirituality and various kinds of knowledge throughout the world. But Indians are in the same pitiable state as an elephant unaware of its strength. The elephant, unaware of its own strength, shudders at the sight of the small iron rod shown by its master. In the same way, we become a prey to attraction, attraction, attraction... We get attracted by the money and glamour of foreign countries. No, no. We do not need this attraction.

Mind determines bondage and liberation

We do not need different kinds of “information”. We need “transformation”. This is the difference between worldly and spiritual education. Science is “outlook”. Spirituality means looking inward. What is the use in looking outward? Even animals experience the world through the five senses of touch, sight, hearing, taste, and smell. We must cultivate inner vision. We must introspect in every situation, “Is it right or wrong?” Our mind alone is accountable for both bondage and liberation.

Students! Your heart may be compared to a lock. It is not possible to open it with any key. Your mind alone is the key. When you insert the key of the mind into the lock of your heart and turn “right”, it opens. When you turn left, it locks. When we turn our vision to the world, we develop attachment. When we turn to Divinity, detachment results. Therefore, for attachment and liberation, our direction alone matters, while the lock and the key are the same. Cultivate inner view. This is true education.

Yes, worldly education is necessary. I do not ask you to give it up. Whatever you do, do it with dedication (*sraddha*). “The secret of happiness is not doing what you like, but liking what you do.” Every act must be suffused with Love. If you say, “I can do only those acts with Love that I like to do”, that is the wrong approach. Whatever you do, infuse it with interest and Love. See all work as spiritual exercise, as an offering.

Then, work is transformed into worship. This is the way to serve our nation and set the right examples for the progress of India.

Honour Your Parents

Students! For your birth, for your upbringing, for your education in *Bhaarat* – For these invaluable boons, you must bring a good name to your parents. Our culture teaches four guiding principles:

Treat the mother as God: *Maatru Devo bhavah*
Treat the father as God: *Pitru Devo bhavah*
Treat the teacher as God: *Acharya Devo bhavah*
Treat the guest as God: *Atithi Devo bhavah*

No matter how high your position in life, even if you become the Prime Minister, you are still your mother’s son. First and foremost, love and respect your mother. Second, respect your father. The world can never honour one who does not respect his own parents.

Students! Each of you must sit alone in solitude and ponder upon this important issue: “Food, blood, and head” are gifts from parents. First comes gratitude to the parents. Everywhere I look, I find students who do not even *feel* gratitude to their parents! Parents also indulge their children, instead of pointing out this deficiency in their character. Children consider parents as “friends”! Parents should not permit such reckless behaviour. Why? It will only ruin the children’s future.

I know I am taking a lot of your time, but I want to tell you this significant point. You may have heard of the poet, Premchand¹². There is a nice example in his life. He had two sons studying in Allahabad. Premchand and his wife planned to depart to Nainital one day. They told their sons, “You must come and see us off at the railway station”. Both the sons went to the station as instructed.

The older son bowed low at his parents’ feet and said, “*Namaste*¹³, father. *Namaste*, mother”. The second son walked-up arrogantly with hands in his pockets and exclaimed, “How are you, mummy and daddy?” [Laughter] He did not salute them or show reverence. Premchand was shocked, but he kept quiet, talking only of their studies and health. The train started moving. The older son stood respectfully with folded hands on the platform till the train went out of sight. The younger son shouted out, “Ta ta, bye bye”!

¹² Munshi Premchand, a famous novelist and poet of the Hindi language

¹³ Traditional Indian greeting. *Namaste* = *Namah* (my salutations) + *Te* (to you). Also, *Namaskaaram*.

Summer Showers in Brindavan 1991

In the train, Premchand was very restless. He paced up and down nervously. His wife asked, "What is the problem?" He explained, "Didn't you notice? Our younger son showed us no reverence?" His wife said, "Poor boy, he is young and inexperienced. Why should you find fault with him? Why worry over such a triviality?"

Premchand lay down. Before falling asleep, he told his wife again, "Our younger son didn't show us respect". He could not think about anything else. He spoke of this incident on many occasions. His wife always replied in defense of their son, "Has he caused us any harm? You should stop worrying about it". Premchand would tell her strongly, "You think I'm concerned for myself? No. Such behaviour will jeopardise his own future."

Only a student who honours the parents can enjoy a safe and secure future. This truth was amply demonstrated in the lives of Premchand's sons. The older boy passed his examinations in flying colours and, in due course, became a judge in the Allahabad High Court. Wherever he went in the city, people bowed down to him. The younger son worked as a clerk, also in Allahabad. Instead of receiving respect, he had to salute everyone! Do you see? One who respected his parents became worthy of everyone's respect. The one who did not respect his parents was compelled to bow down to all. This inevitable law can never be changed by anyone.

Regardless of your degrees and positions, first respect your parents. Parents may give you freedom due to their attachment. Love and respect them, and do not misuse that freedom. From their point of view, they have given you certain liberties. From your perspective, you can use the freedom constructively. Respect your parents.

During this fortnight learn the right ways to think, speak, and act in different situations. With the hope and blessing that you imbibe sacred ideals, I bring My discourse to a close.

[The National Anthem of India, *Jana Gana Mana*, was sung upon Swami's instruction]

20 May 1991

