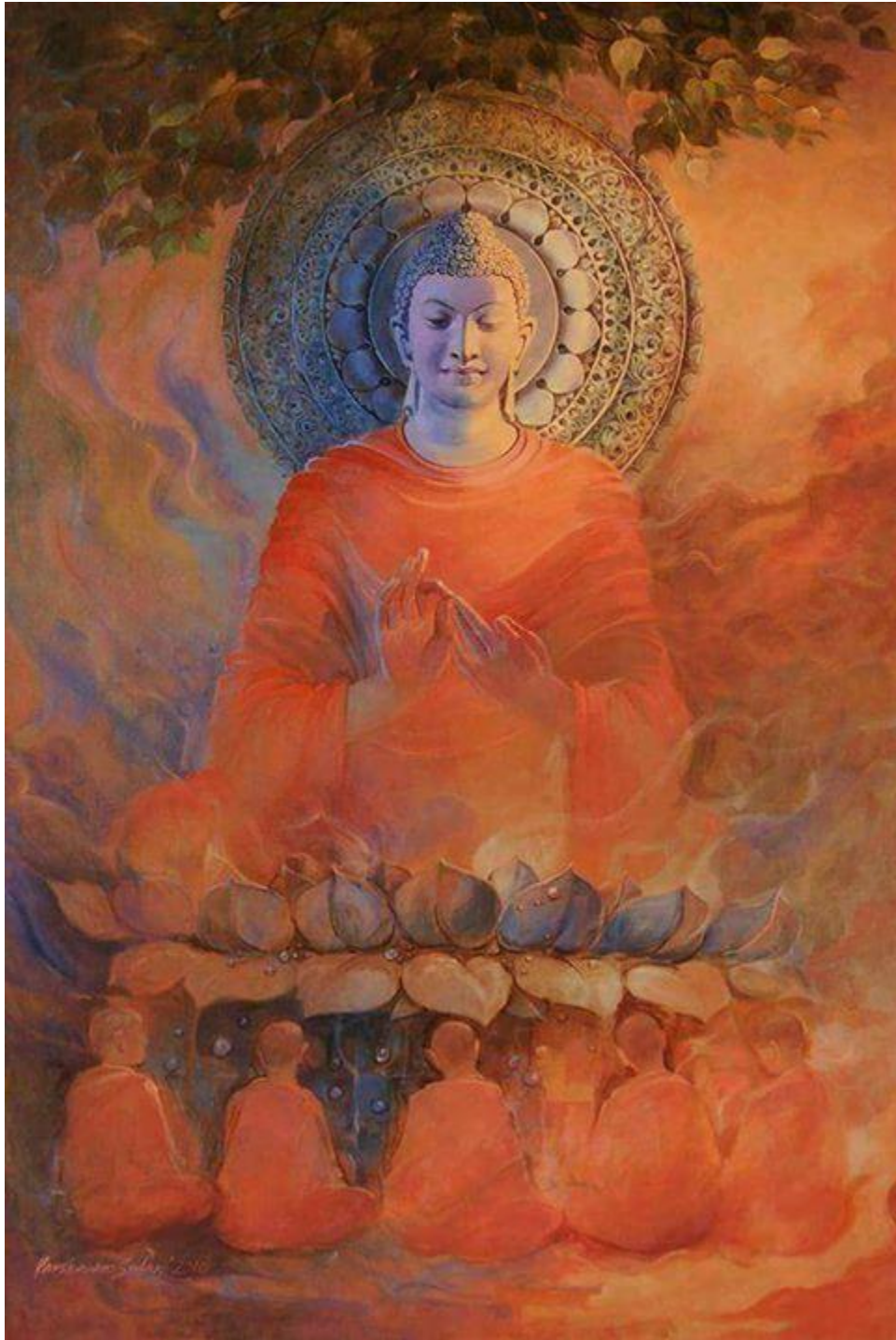


|| Shri Hari ||

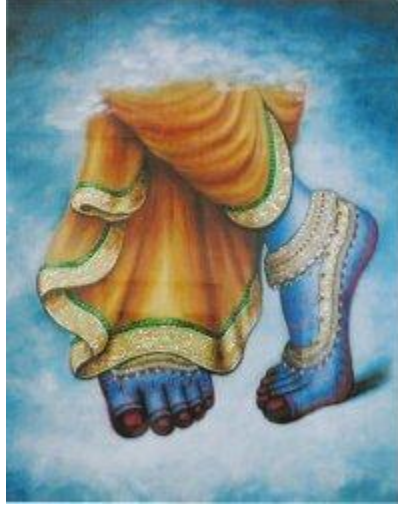
## Invaluable Advice



**Swami Ramsukhdas**

|| Shri Hari ||

## Invaluable Advice



tvameva mata cha pita tvameva  
tvameva bandhuscha sakha tvameva |  
tvameva vidyā dravinam tvameva  
tvameva sarvam mama devadeva ||

**Swami Ramsukhdas**

## **|| Shri Hari ||**

### **Invaluable Advice**



In fact, every human being is a 'sadhak' (a learner). The bodies of all moving and unmoving beings such as demi-gods, gnomes, devils, beasts and birds etc., aim at reaping the fruit of their past actions. But human life aims at attaining the knowledge of the Supreme rather than attainment of ignorance and pleasures.

The human body has been bestowed upon us only to realize God. So a human being is indeed he who realizes God. The purpose of human life is to follow the spiritual path. If a human being feels happy and sad in favorable and unfavorable circumstances, it means that he only reaps the fruit of his past actions. Again if he performs new actions in order to reap their fruit, it means that he attaches importance to the fruit. Therefore humanity consists

in the performance of duty according to scriptural ordinance in order to realize God by making the favorable-unfavorable circumstances the spiritual means. From this view-point every human being can be called a 'sadhak' (a striver, a learner).

The human life has been divided into four stages - celibate, household, retired and renounced. The four stages respectively are from birth to twenty-five years, from twenty-six to fifty, from fifty-one to seventy-five years and from seventy-six to one hundred years. The main duty of the persons of each stage respectively is obedience to the preceptor, being hospitable, undergoing penance (austerity) and meditation on the Supreme (Absolute).

A celibate (learner) is of two kinds - "*Naiṣṭhika*" and "*Upakurvāna*". The former are those that have renounced attachment to pleasures by use of power of discrimination (*vivek*). They observe celibacy throughout their life and follow the spiritual path of God Realization. While the latter are those that cannot renounce attachment to pleasures through discrimination, and therefore they enter the householder life in order to root out attachment to pleasures. They get married according to the ordinance of the scriptures, earn money and enjoy pleasures by following righteousness from the viewpoint of renunciation. In them there is predominance of righteousness. By following the path of righteousness they naturally develop dispassion for pleasures and prosperity - "Righteousness leads to dispassion" (Manasa 3/16/1) and they start following the path of God Realization.

**Question** - Who is called a learner (student) ?

**Answer** - A learner is he who wants to study only. What does he want to study ? He wants to study the science of the soul (metaphysics), the best science of all. The Lord declares -

*'adhyātma-vidyā vidyānām'* (Gītā 10/32)

'Of sciences, I am the science of the soul' (Gītā 10/32)

**Question** - What is real science ?

**Answer** - Knowledge of any kind is science. Knowledge of several scriptures, arts, crafts and languages etc., is science. But in fact real science (knowledge) is that in which nothing remains to be known and a man attains salvation - 'That science leads to salvation' (Vishnu Purana 1/19/41).

If anything remains to be known, it means that it is not real science or real knowledge.

One is '*Shabda Brahma*' (Veda) and one is *Para Brahma* (God). 'If one has known '*Shabda Brahma*' without knowing '*Para Brahma*' his labor has been in vain' (Srimad Bhagavata 11/11/18)

Therefore the knowledge of God is the main science (knowledge) and it makes this human life successful.

The science which helps us in earning our livelihood is also science, but it is not conducive to God realization. It sometimes proves to be an obstacle to God-realization because it gives birth to pride. The man who is proud of his knowledge (wisdom) will rebut the point of the God realized soul with his

arguments, will strike him dumb and thus will be deprived of the real benefit. Therefore it has been said -

'There is no use of a person's study of the Scriptures and the Vedas, as well as, of his fine prose and poetic compositions if his mind is not concentrated on 'Yashodanandana' (Lord Krishna).'

**Question** - What is the need to gain knowledge?

**Answer** - Without knowledge human life is futile and a man remains just like an animal. So knowledge is very essential.

Every action is performed with an aim. Human life aims at God-realization in which there is total absence of sorrow. Without achieving this aim, a human being is just like beasts and birds who reap the fruit of their past actions. If a human being without availing of the opportunity of God-realization, remains entangled in pleasures in order to reap the fruit of his past actions, it leads him to a downfall. In the scripture such a person is called '*Arppdjachyuta*' i.e. one who has fallen after reaching the pinnacle (*Srimad Bhagavata 11/7/74*)

Is it human to follow the cycle of birth and death and go to eighty-four lac forms of lives ? So in human life a student (learner) should realize God because there is no greater gain than in God realization. Lord Krishna declares in the *Gītā*

-

*yam labdhvā cāparam lābham*

*manyate nādhikarṁ tataḥ  
yasmin sthito na duḥkhena  
guruṇāpi vicālyate  
(Gītā 6/22)*

Having gained which a man does not reckon any other gain greater than that and wherein established he is not moved even by the heaviest affliction. (Gītā 6/22)

In fact, the knowledge-divine is the real knowledge, other knowledges are nothing but ignorance because having gained the knowledge-divine, nothing remains to be gained. But it does not mean that other sciences (knowledges) should not be studied. Other sciences should also be studied. It is proper to gain knowledge of other languages and scripts etc., but it is not proper to remain engrossed in them; because by remaining engrossed in them, human life will go in vain. Secondly by being well-versed in mundane sciences, a person gets proud of his knowledge which strengthens his bondage. It is said - 'Even having studied the scriptures people continue to be foolish. In fact a scholar is he who acts according to the ordinance of the scriptures.'

The aim of human life is God-realization and the means to realize Him is rendering service to the world. So the mundane sciences, riches and ranks etc., should be utilized in the service of the world. They can be utilized in rendering service to the world rather than in God-realization, because God-realization does not depend on mundane sciences. He who possesses the mundane sciences is responsible for the service of the world, because a

man has to pay octroi on goods and tax on income. If there are no goods, there is no question of payment of octroi; and if there is no income, there is no question of payment of income tax.

If a man is praised because of his mundane sciences, riches and ranks etc., in one way he is censured. the reason is that it is his mundane sciences etc., which are praised, he himself is censured/ Therefore, he who regards himself superior because of his mundace sciences etc., in fact proves himself inferior.

**Question: Should a person study only boyhood or throughout his life ?**

**Answer:** The rule of study only in boyhood applies to a 'Upakurvaana' celibate (the celibate who enters the household life after celibacy). But "Naisthika" celibate (He who observes celibacy throughout his life) should go on studying the scriptures and the knowledge divine throughout his life.

**Question: What fate does a learner meet with if he dies while studying ?**

**Answer:** Study is the practice of austerity which purifies the learner - 'Practice of the study of sacred texts is called austerity of speech' (Gītā 17/15). Therefore he is far better than those persons who are entangled in mundane pleasures and prosperity. He is superior to them to the extent he has renounced pleasures and prosperity.

Inclination to whatever study a learner has when he leaves the body at the time of death, the same he will study in the next birth according to the

past impressions.

If a person studies with the aim of earning his livelihood and while studying if he dies, he will meet with the fate of a common man because it is the 'bhaav', (the emotion, the sentiment or the spirit) rather than action which leads to salvation.

If the person who studies to humiliate others and to nourish his pride dies while studying, he becomes a ghost, an evil spirit, or a devil.

If a person dies studying volumes with interest in order to know their contents, he in the next birth of a human being will study those volumes. If such a learner again receives human life, it is no less reward for him. If he dies while studying knowledge-divine, having the curiosity to know the truth (reality), he will attain salvation. But if he has no curiosity to know the reality, he will become a 'Yoga-Brashta' (he who deviates from Yoga i.e. God-realization).

If a person dies while performing his duty in the form of study treating it as a bidding of God and at that time he thinks of God, he will attain salvation (God-realization)\*. But if the thought of God does not come to his mind, he will become a 'Yoga-Bhrashta.'

\* He who departs from the body, thinking of Me alone even at the time of death, attains My being; there is no doubts about this (Gītā 8/5) .

**Question:** What is the difference between the ancient and the modern

student ?

**Answer:** The more the ancient learners studied, learnt, experienced, and used their learning for others, the more polite and humble they became. Whatever subject they studied, they went in its depth without thinking of what others did. Whereas modern students, study and learn, but don't experience learning. So they feel proud of their learning. Moreover the knowledge thus gained without experience, proves to be harmful (dangerous) for one's own self as well as, for the world.

Students of modern times who are attached to mundane pleasures and prosperity, having gained knowledge think that unlike the ancient students they possess right knowledge. They laugh at old students and hold the opinion that ancients philosophy was superfluous. Why do they laugh at ancient students ? The reason is that they have merely learnt, they have not experienced knowledge. But those who have experienced it honour ancient philosophers and their experience.

Ancient scholars besides gaining knowledge worshipped God. So they instead of possessing valour possessed discrimination. But students of today possess valour rather than discrimination because they don't go in the depth of the subject.

Ancient scholars also felt proud of their knowledge. But the deeper they went in knowledge, the more their pride melted away and they became light (humble) from within, in the same way as a patient suffering from fever, feels when his fever is abated. Bharatrhari declares

'Having gained a little knowledge, I was intoxicated with pride, like an elephant and I held that I was omniscient. But when in the company of learned persons, I gained some more knowledge, I realized that I was a fool and thus as fear abates, my pride abated (*Nitisataka*).

Those philosophers had a little egoistic notion and their philosophies were different from each other. So each of them had his different style of evaluation and proved his philosophy superior to those of others. But having realized God, that subtle egoistic notion was wiped out. It means that so long as philosophers had the egoistic notion, they differentiated their philosophy from those of others and regarded their philosophy superior to others. But when their egoistic notion was wiped out, in spite of their different procedure (process) they ceased to differentiate between their philosophy and those of others. The philosophers of today have an access only to that differentiation rather than realization which is beyond it.

In ancient times students received education from their teachers by revering them while the students of today regard their teachers as their servants i.e. they order them. Education received from servants does not develop. In ancient times a teacher expelled any student from seminary and admitted any student according to his own sweet will. But today, the case is revers. In the past teachers imparted education, by taking high seats while students sat on low seats. But today, students sit on benches and chairs while teachers teach standing near the black-board.

In ancient times students besides receiving education for mundane dealings had an eye specially on spirituality. They knew the mundane

science as well as, the spiritual one. They had high and noble aims. But students of today, are not well-versed even in the mundane science. So there is no question of their knowing the spiritual science. They cannot teach properly the subjects which they have learnt. They pass in an examination to get certificates (degrees) by adopting foul means and get pleased by receiving degrees of B.A, M.A, shastri and Acharya etc. they receive only practical mundane education which is useful in earning more money and enjoying more pleasures. they don't think of the main aim of human life which is salvation or God-realization.

As two lamps kept in vicinity remove the darkness underneath each other, so did students in the past discuss and debate mundane and spiritual topics and thus gained a thorough knowledge while it is rarely seen in the students of today. They hold that they have become learned (expert) and this thought blocks their progress.

In ancient days students were polite and obedient while today they are lacking in discipline and impertinent. They ridicule people in schools, colleges and at stations etc., play mischiefs with them and cause harm to people. They instead of having devotion and reverence for their teachers slight and insult them. The result is that they themselves are slighted by their offsprings in future. Thus they are happy neither here or hereafter.

Ancient students went in the depth of books, got master over them, understood reality and were able to invent with that knowledge. Such students were called 'Aachaarya'. But modern students understand neither reality (essence) of education, nor do they want to understand it. But if they

are devoted to study and have a curiosity to know reality (essence), they can understand it.

If ancient students received any new fact, they stuck to it, attached importance to it, valued it, understood reality about it and by reflecting on it, retained it. So that fact or knowledge became their permanent possession. But if modern students receive any uncommon fact, they don't find anything uncommon in it, because they do not go in its depth.

Ancient students without getting entangled in the outward glamour understood the deep thoughts and had curiosity to know more and more as their ignorance pinched them. But students of today are not so much eager and zealous, and their imperfect knowledge does not pinch them.

Students in ancient times rendered service to their preceptor, acted according to his order and considered their preceptor's pleasure their own pleasure. They identified themselves in thought, principle and assumption etc., with their preceptor. Therefore the student became an incarnation of his teacher (preceptor). Students thought that they could gain knowledge only by their preceptor's grace. It is also a fact that knowledge which is gained by the preceptor's grace can't be gained by one's own labour and effort.

Students in olden days thought of their teacher before beginning their study or work and so they were successful. Lava and Kusha learnt the art of archery from their mother, Sita and so they regarded her as their preceptor. When Lord Rama released the horse of religious-sacrifice, Lava and Kusha caught the horse and there was a fight between them and Shatrughna. At

that time, before the fight, Lava and Kusha thought of their mother (preceptor) and became victorious. They defeated the opponent army and arresting Hanumanji (monkey-god) and Angada presented them before Mother Sita. It means that ancient students were grateful to their preceptor while modern students are ungrateful. They get agitated in front of their teacher, so their knowledge does not bear fruit. It is because of their pride that they think that they have become specially learned because of their study. So their learning is limited (meagre).

Students in ancient times led a self-controlled life and observed celibacy. They remained aloof from fashions and tastes while modern students have a craze for ornaments, fashions, tastes and luxuries. So they don't lead a life of self-control and celibacy. A few of them hold the opinion that it is wrong to lead a self-controlled life because the senses have been given to enjoy sense-objects.

In ancient times students went to their teacher in His seminary to study. So they were humble like the mango tree which bends when fruits well. But students of today call a teacher to their own home and say that they will pay him less amount because he comes late. They instead of becoming polite become more impertinent like the castor oil plant which instead of bending, goes straight upward when it fruits well. \*

\*The fact is that there is pride in imperfect knowledge. The more perfection a man gains, the more polite and simpler he becomes.

In the past students worked with a sense of duty. They considered their right

to work only but never to the fruit thereof (Gita 2/47). so they attained liberation (salvation). But students of today being attached to the fruit of actions are bound (Gita 5/12).

Students in ancient times studied promptly and whole heartedly by devoting their full time, while students of today get entangled in party politics and don't study promptly by concentrating their mind.

Students in ancient times were believers and their knowledge (science) proved useful here as well as, hereafter. But students of today are mostly non-believers. Their knowledge (science) does not prove to be useful even here; then how will it be useful hereafter ?

**Question - What is the difference between ancient and modern education ?**

**Answer -** Ancient (spiritual) education provides peace to the self, rotting out disquietude, wrangles and shortage. But modern (mundane) education is a means only to earn money, it does not provide peace, it rather enhances disquietude and wrangles. As more wealth enhances more greed and shortage, so does modern education enhance shortage.

Today in spite of several inventions a person is unable to attain peace, because he is controlled by these inventions, he is not independent. But a man is not controlled by ancient knowledge, he rather realizes the self by it.

Ancient education enables a man to have an inclination for God, while modern education conduces him towards the perishable.

Modern education is useful in worldly dealings. So importance should be attached to it only so far as dealings are concerned. It is wrong to attach the topmost priority (importance) to it. In fact education (knowledge) is that which leads a man to salvation (Vishnu Puran 1/19/41)

**Question** - Who is called learned and when is a student (learner) called learned ?

**Answer** - Generally a person is considered learned in a subject if he possesses a thorough knowledge of that subject. As far as mundane knowledge is concerned, a person is known to be learned if he has knowledge of four Vedas, six scriptures and eighteen Puranas, Upapuranas etc. But a really learned man, is he who knows the real (God) even though he has not got any formal education (Gita 4/19; 5/18)

When a person considers a student more education than himself, he calls him learned. But the student should not hold that he is indeed learned. He should try to find out his deficiency and should promptly try to remove that deficiency. By doing so his deficiency will be removed and he will become learned. But the thought that he is learned will block his progress and will conduce him to have pride which is the root of all evils. Saint Tulasidasa declares -

‘Pride is the root of the worldly existence in the form of birth and death and it causes all kinds of sufferings and sorrows.’ (Manasa 7/74/3)

‘God has aversion to pride and attachment to humility’ (Narada Bhakti Sutra

27). It means that God does not like pride as it leads a man to a downfall while He likes simplicity and humility, as it leads him to salvation.

**Question** - Which is better for a student - study of science or that of commerce ?

**Answer** - A student should study science and commerce both as both are necessary. Out of these two, the study of commerce is more useful in dealings of practical life and it is of immediate use.

There is one special point which needs attention. If a person understands spirituality by going in its depth, his mundane as well as, spiritual life is improved. But only the mundane knowledge does not lead to salvation, because the limited knowledge bears limited fruit, while the knowledge of the limitless (God) enables a man to understand everything in the right perspective.

**Question** - Should a student study Medical Science and Law?

**Answer** - Study of Medical Science involves violence and study of Law involves falsehood and fraud. There is nothing wrong if they are studied by renouncing violence, falsehood and fraud. People take it for granted that violence, falsehood and fraud are essential in these professions and so they get involved in them as a part of their duty. Therefore there is predominance of violence, falsehood and fraud in these professions and people feel that it is difficult to work with honesty in them.

**Question** - Is it necessary for a student to study Sanskrit ?

**Answer** - It is necessary for a student to know all languages, but the knowledge of Sanskrit is very essential. The reason is that the wisdom which is available in the books of Sanskrit language is not found in the books of other languages. This language possesses great refinement and ethical decorum. The rules of its grammar are exact and perfect which are not found in any other language. Knowledge of Sanskrit-grammar enable one to learn other languages easily, while the knowledge of other languages does not lead a learner to learn Sanskrit easily.

He who having abandoned his culture learns western knowledge and language becomes western himself. Indeed, he instead of gaining knowledge loses his identity. So a learner should gain knowledge and learn a language by safeguarding his culture.

**Question** - What kinds of knowledge should a learner gain?

**Answer** - A learner should gain every kind of knowledge. But the knowledge which entangles him in pleasure and prosperity, is in fact ignorance. He need not gain such knowledge as that of dramas, cinemas and novels etc., and he should not gain it. Only that knowledge should be gained which is not unfavorable to the attainment of one's real aim (God-realization).

**Question** - What type of conduct should a student possess and how should he act ?

**Answer** - A man behaves and acts according to his egoism (sense of 'I'). So a student should predominantly think "I am a student and I have no other primary duty except studies." He should eat and drink for the bare

maintenance of the body by remaining absorbed in studies. He should not waste even a single moment without studies. He should stick to studies every time even while performing the activities of daily routine such as sitting, moving, eating, drinking, sleeping and waking etc.

Self-control is very necessary for a student. When both Ashvinikumaras, the physicians to gods went to sage Dadhyan to gain knowledge-divine, he ordered them to observe celibacy. As ordered by the sage, they observed celibacy and again went to him and requested him to impart knowledge-divine to them. The sage again sent them back ordering them to observe celibacy and they carried out his order. they again went to him the third time and again he sent them back to observe celibacy. Thus they observed celibacy (continence) for a hundred years. Again when they went to the sage to gain knowledge-divine, he said to them, 'when you had gone, Indra, the king of gods came to me and requested me to impart the knowledge-divine. But I told him that he did not deserve it.' Hearing this answer he got irritated and said, 'If I don't deserve it, who deserves it? If you impart knowledge-divine to anyone, I'll behead you.' Thus the sage showed his inability to impart knowledge-divine and asked them to go to someone else to gain knowledge-divine, They said, 'O noble sage, if you order we can solve this problem. We will keep your head safe by cutting it off and fix another head to your body. You can impart us knowledge divine with that head. When Indra, the king of gods cuts it off, we'll fix the original head to your body. The Indra will have no right to cut off that head. Thus the problem will be solved and we'll gain knowledge-divine.' The sage agreed. so they having cut off his head provided him with the head of a horse. When he began to impart knowledge-divine to them with the head of the horse, Indra, according to his

pledge, cut off the head of the horse and threw it off. *Ashvinikumaras* fixed the sage's head to his body again. being angry with them, Indra deprived them of their share of the religious sacrifice. Afterwards when *Ashvinikumaras* restored eyesight to the sage Cyavana, he enabled them to get their share of the religious sacrifice. Thus by observing celibacy *Ashvinikumaras* gained knowledge-divine and also share of the religious sacrifice. It means that continence (celibacy) is a must for students because without it they can't hold knowledge.

A student should always be on the alert that he is a student. He who is a student does not waste even a single moment without study. It is said that knowledge and wealth should be gained in small measures steadily and he who wastes small measure can gain neither knowledge nor wealth.

There is a saying that grammar is learnt by learning the rules by heart, by questioning teachers and by reflecting upon the lesson which a learner has learnt. Similarly it has been said about a student of grammar that he should look at the sky so that he may neither feel drowsy nor may have projections and distractions because shutting of eyes conduces to drowsiness, while opening of eyes conduces him to the thought of the world.

It is mentioned in 'Chanakyaneti' that a student should totally renounce attachment to pleasure because he who hankers after pleasure can't gain knowledge and he who wants to gain knowledge, can't enjoy pleasures (10/3)

Study is an austerity which is totally free from pleasure. When a student has

not to derive any pleasure, there is no question for him to indulge in fun, display, movies, and entertainment on television etc. They are to be totally renounced because they besides wasting time, leave an impression which is a great impediment to studies. So a student should stick to studies by remaining totally indifferent to the world, holding the view that the world does not exist for him and he does not exist for the world. Thus he will become learned because a good student becomes a good scholar.

A student should have the only aim of study or God realization because 'determinate intellect is one pointed' (Gita 2/41). All his actions should lead him to the attainment of his aim. When he possesses such promptness and determinate intellect, then God, saints (great souls), righteousness (Dharma), scriptures and ethics etc., all prove to be favorable to him and he attains his aim without doubt.

The five characteristics of a student are:

1) Carefulness like a Crow: A crow is very careful in every activity. A crow is so careful that no one can catch him. Similarly a student should always be careful in his studies and not waste a single moment.

2) Attention like a Heron: A heron moves slowly in water, but its attention is single-pointed on the fish alone. Similarly a student while performing all activities such as eating and drinking etc., should pay attention to his studies only.

3) Sleep Light like a Dog: A dog does not sleep completely carefree. His

sleep is light. Similarly a student must sleep lightly, which is essential for good health, and must not be very carefree.

4) **Take Food in Small Quantities:** A student should neither overeat nor under eat. His diet should be regulated and reasonable so that he may neither feel lazy, nor think of the empty stomach.

5) **Celibacy:** A student should observe celibacy.

**Question:-** *What are the factors which conduce a student to progress?*

**Answer:-** There are seven factors which conduce to student to progress. They are as follows:

1) **Enthusiasm:** A student should have enthusiasm to study, because for a enthusiastic person even a difficult task becomes easy, while without enthusiasm even an easy task become difficult.

2) **Lack of procrastination:** A student should work very promptly and careful. He should not devote more time to the work that does not require as much time. He who devotes more time than what the work requires, will be ruined.

3) **Right Knowledge of the method:** A student should know the right method of performing an activity such as ablution, eating, drinking, walking and worship etc. He should properly act accordingly.

- 4) **Freedom from Addiction:** A student should not be addicted to evils. Gambling, drinking, eating meat, prostitution, hunting/killing, stealing, and adultery are the seven evils that lead to the worst of hells. Besides them, the use of tea, coffee, opium, smoking, playing cards and games with dice, fun, frolic, movies, etc, are all impediments to spiritual progress and honest livelihood. These are all evils and a student should not be addicted to any one of them.
- 5) **Bravery:** A student should be brave (free of cowardice) and fearless while performing every activity.
- 6) **Gratefulness:** A student should always feel grateful to his benefactor. He should never be ungrateful to him and should show respect to him.
- 7) **Firmness in Friendship:** A student should offer the hand of fellowship to his friend in all circumstances. As travelers seek a hospice, so does perfection seek a person possessing the above qualities.

**Question:** *Should a student participate in politics?*

**Answer:** If a student participates in politics, he can't pay proper attention to his studies and spiritual practice etc., and thus his precious time that could be used to enable him to gain knowledge or realize God is wasted. By participating in politics, he attaches importance to mundane matters that are an impediment to his studies and devotional practice.

**Question:** *Is it proper for students to form a Union?*

**Answer:** By forming a Union, students become undisciplined and unrestrained. They perform acts of sabotage and cause loss to their own property, because they are the future owners of this property. How will students become responsible and good citizens if they participate in agitations against teachers, trouble passengers in trains and buses and shopkeepers in the markets? How will they make a good society? And how can the country be good and progressive without a good society? Students are the future support of the country. So their reform will lead to the progress of the country and they are responsible for this progress.

There is nothing wrong if students form a union to train themselves in military science in order to defend their community and society. They should always be on the alert to set things right. But it is wrong if by forming a union they show arbitrary conduct, rule over others by unlawful means, pressurize their teachers and insult or slight them.

It is also unjust to tolerate unjust and improper rules of the government. So students should always be bold and enthusiastic to oppose injustice.

**Question:** *What should be the daily routine of a student?*

**Answer:** He should rise early in the morning before sunrise. If he gets up after sunrise, he should observe a fast throughout the day as penance. He should make the best possible use of his time without wasting even a single moment. As soon as he gets up, he should recite the verse –

***“twameva maataa ca pitaa twavmeva  
tvameva bandhusca sakhaa tvameva  
tvameva vidyaa, dravinam tvameva  
tvameva sarvam mama deva deva.”***

*“O Lord, You are my mother, You are my father  
You are my brother, You are my friend  
You are my knowledge, You are my wealth  
You are my everything.”*

After reciting this verse he should bow in front of his parents, teachers and elders. Then he should perform activities such as ablution and bathing etc., Thereafter according to the scriptural ordinance, he should perform morning prayer, recite the Gayatri verse and worship God. He should practice hatha yoga postures for good health.

A student should learn his lessons so thoroughly that he is able to explain it to others even without the book. The method to get mastery over the lesson is that he should revise the lesson, which he learnt during the day when going to bed, and once again revise it in the morning when he wakes up. By doing so, he will be able to learn the lesson thoroughly without much effort. Studies (learning and specially rote memorization) should be in the morning time because that is the best time when the lesson is learnt quickly.

A student should also perform the domestic duty according to the need of the hour as ordered by his parents, before he goes to school or college.

He should reach school in time and bow to the teachers and study as they instruct. He should pay proper attention to what is being taught, understand it and have a thorough grasp of the subject. If there is any doubt about the subject, he should get it removed by his teacher. He should leave no stone unturned in his studies.

A student should have so much confidence and enthusiasm that he can teach the topic which he has learnt to others. Thus having studied in the school or college, he should come back home and take his meal with his parents with courtesy. The good eaten by him should be Sattvika, rather than Rajasika or Tamasika (Gita 17/8-10). Sattvika food makes intellect Sattvika (good), which is very useful for studies. It is said - 'The kind of food a man eats, so is his intellect, in the same way as an oil lamp having devoured darkness produces soot.'

After taking a meal, a student should walk for a short while; and then lying down straight facing up, breath eight times, lie on the right side and breath sixteen times, and lie on the left hand side and breath thirty-two times. Thereafter he should rise and start his studies. etc.

In the evening he should person "Sandhyaa" (prayer) before sunset that is superior and recite the Gayatri verse. As far as possible, perform superior prayer at proper times. Morning prayer performed in star-light is superior. With the disappearance of the stars, it is medium, and after sunrise it is inferior. similarly the evening sandhya is said to be superior if it is performed in sunlight, medium at sunset and inferior in star-light. Therefore as far as possible, a student should perform superior prayer

(Sandhya).

After dinner, he should walk for a while. Thereafter he should study his books and the scriptures such as Gita and Ramayan etc. He should reflect on that which he has studied at bedtime.

Student life is the base of a human being. If the student life is noble, the rest of the life will also be noble. Therefore a student should very carefully make his sentiments and conduct Sattvika (good and pure). In the *Bhagavata* it is mentioned –

“Scriptures, water, people, place, time, occupation, birth, meditation, sacred text (mantra) and past influence – if these ten are Sattvika (pure and good), the mode of goodness is enhanced, but if they are rajasik (mode of passion) and tamasika (mode of ignorance), passion and ignorance respectively, are enhanced.”

Therefore if they are Sattvika (Pure and good) then intellect and nature will also be Sattvika.

**Question:** *What should the student do for intellectual and physical development?*

**Answer:** Meditation on the Supreme develops the intellect. Therefore every student whether he wants to attain the mundane or the spiritual aim

should meditate on the Supreme. We have noticed that those who perform worship, chant God's name, meditate on God and perform such other spiritual activities never fail in examinations. The reason is that these activities develop the mode of goodness that develops the intellect. So even if a student devotes less time to studies, it proves to be much more fruitful.

Dependence on God specifically develops intellect. The reason is that he that depends on God follows the right path. So every kind of thing or person or object or circumstance becomes favorable and helpful to him. Thus he spontaneously attains his aim. There are impediments in a person's life only so long as he does not decide the aim of his life. But when the destination is decided, there are no impediments at all.

When a student observes celibacy and leads a self-controlled life, he gains knowledge of several subjects even without study and effort. He grasps every subject very quickly.

Self-control is automatically conducive to good health. Physical strength that is gain by practicing self-control and by eating Sattvik food is not gained by leading an unrestrained life and by eating rajasik and tamasik food in order to relish it. Self-control, celibacy, meditation on God and service of elders provide sattvik strength to the body, mind and heart. By this Sattvika strength, evils such as lust, anger, greed, delusion, pride and jealousy automatically subside and virtues such as patience, equanimity, quietude and happiness etc., are naturally cultivated. These virtues have a good effect on the gross body and a student possessing them naturally

get free from diseases. If he suffers from a disease as the fruit of his past evil actions, it does not affect his mental equilibrium.

A student should practice yoga postures and breathing (*pranayama*) exercises. They help him in studies because by removing heaviness and laziness they make the body light and active. Thus he remains energetic and enthusiastic. And even a difficult task becomes easy for him. However, he that lacks enthusiasm loses heart and for him even easy work becomes difficult.

**Question:** *These days students are very much addicted to smoking and drinking Why? How can they get rid of these bad habits?*

**Answer:** The reason is foolishness. Students by aping others get addicted to smoking and drinking, but, they themselves don't think that these intoxicants spoil intellect. So if they are addicted to them, how will they gain knowledge ? Therefore they should neither smoke nor drink, because smoking and drinking are harmful to intellectual, physical and mental health. In this connection parents and teachers should pay special attention to their children and see that they don't get spoiled.

**Question:** *A few students commit suicide while failing in an examination. Why ? How to solve this problem ?*

**Answer:** They commit suicide because their failure is an obstacle to

their honour and praise which they desire. There is no joy in committing suicide. Those who try to commit suicide, but somehow escape it, explain that suicide involves great suffering. He who commits suicide commits the deadly sin of murdering a human being and in future he has to suffer the worst tortures. So students should study the sacred books and keep company with great souls. Their company can root out such sins (evils).

**Question: Should students take part in games and sports?**

**Answer:** Students should take part in those games and sports that lead to their physical or intellectual development. Games and sports should be regarded as exercise of the body rather than the means to indulge in party politics that lead to conflicts. This sort of activity often leads to groups whereby they may engage in slighting and humiliating others. Thus it will prove very much harmful to them.

They should never play games (e.g. cards etc) that do not lead to physical and intellectual development. Therefore students should be very careful in their participation in games and sports. etc.

**Question: How should students amuse themselves?**

**Answer:** Students should amuse themselves by studies. Discussions and question and answers on the studies is good amusement. They prompt new ideas. For students – movies and TV are the worst amusement, as they spoil the eyes and the mind and they leave bad impressions that are impediments to studies, adoration and meditation. There is no use stuffing the mind and intellect with rubbish. Therefore students need not indulge in such amusements.

**Question: How to gain knowledge ?**

**Answer:** While attending the class a student should look at the eyes and face of the teacher and pay attention to each and every sentence uttered by him. He should listen promptly to him without thinking of anything else. He should not feel proud of his promptness in studies, thinking that he is superior to other students as he studies more promptly. Pride reduces knowledge to ignorance and that ignorance enhances pride.

He should revisit and revise (repeat) the lesson time and again without the help of the book. He should study in such a way that he may impart this knowledge to others by teaching them with full confidence. Self study does not make the topics so clear as it is done by teaching others.

A student should be humble towards his teacher and others because knowledge leads to humbleness.

**Question: How to learn a subject by heart ?**

**Answer:** In youth, the meaning of a verse etc., becomes clear after it has been learnt by heart. But in old age, it is easy to learn by heart after knowing its meaning.

Morning is the best time for it as a lesson is easily learnt in the morning time. Therefore a student should rise at 3 or 3:30 am and after ablution, washing and clearing the mouth with water, should start learning the lesson by heart. While learning a verse he should first learn the first foot of the verse. When he has learnt it, he should learn the second foot. When the

second foot has been learnt, then he should learn the first and second feet together by heart without looking at the book. Similarly, he should learn the third foot and then the fourth foot separately. When he has learnt them separately by heart, then he should learn both of them together by heart, without the help of the book. In the same way he should learn the second verse. Then he should learn both the first and the second verses together without the book. Then having learnt the third verse by heart, he should revise the first, the second and the third verses without the book. Thus he should learn as many verses as he has to learn and then he should stop. before going to bed, he should once again revise the verses, which he learnt, without the book and then he should sleep. When he rises in the morning, he should again revise those memorized verses. Thus he will be able to learn the verses in a very quick succession.

The verses which have been recently learnt by heart, should be recited three or four times a day for three or four days without the book, and the verses which were learnt in the past should also be revised once a day without the book. A student should form the habit of revising the verses, which he has learnt, without the book. If a student revises the topic learnt by heart, looking at the book, he will forget the lesson in a few days.

The second method of learning a lesson by heart is that a student should read (recite) the lesson everyday looking at the book. For example - if a person wants to learn the Gita by heart, he should recite all verses of the Gita attentively by looking at the book everyday. This process should continue for a year. After a year he should recite all the verse without the book. If he forgets any verse he should learn that verse or a foot of that

verse at that moment and then continue his recitation. Thus when he has learnt the whole Gita by heart, he should continue reciting whole of the Gita without the book. By doing so, he will not forget the Gita. But if he recites by reading from the book, he will forget it.

Question: How to develop the power of memorising ?

Answer: Power of memory (intellect) can be developed by observing celibacy. Preservation of seme (sperm) provides a special power (vigour) which develops intellect. An elephant possesses more physical power than a lion, but as far as vigour (vitality) is concerned, a lion has more vitality because a lion has sexual intercourse with a lioness only once in life. Thus preservation of semen in a lion provides special vigour to him. Similarly, by observing celibacy a student's vigour increases which develops his intellect and virtues such as enthusiasm, patience and quietude etc., are cultivated in him.

The less desire a person has for pleasures, the more helpful it is in observing celibacy. Sound, touch, sight, taste and smell - these five sense enjoyments and honour, hospitality and praise provide Rajasika joy (joy of the mode of passion). Heedlessness, indolence and sleep provide Tamasika joy (joy of the mode of ignorance) . Renunciation of Raajasika and Taamasika joys is helpful in observing celibacy.

A deep study of books also develops intellect. exclusive desire and devotion for God-realization also develop intellect because this devotion is of the self. So it naturally leads to self-control. When a man holds firm to his aim of God-realization, he becomes a man of steadfast wisdom, his

intellect becomes stable and so it becomes specially active to understand a subject.

The use of cow-milk, 'its churned butter, Brahmi (a medicinal herb), sweet Baca, and Shankpushpi (medicinal herbs) also develops intellect. Worship of (1) Lord Shiva, the destroyer (2) Lord Ganesha and (3) Goddess Sarasvati (the goddess of learning) also develops intellect. The methods to worship them are as follows -

- (1) Every night at 11 p.m. a person should sit on a woollen cloth or on any cloth with his face towards north-east side and chant the sacred text 'om namah shivaaya' by counting all beads of the rosary made of 'Rudraaksha' (seed of a tree used for making rosaries worn by Shaivites) 120 times. By following this routine continuously for six months, intellect is developed and the cherished objective is attained. If this sacred text is changed by sitting on the land along the side of a water channel or by standing in the flow of water, greater success is achieved.

The ceremony of chanting the sacred text should begin on the thirteenth day of a dark fortnight. If it is begun on the Shivaratri (a hindu festival sacred to Lord Shiva), it is excellent. It can also begin on some monday but it is better if it is begun on a monday of the month of Shraavana (fifth month of the hindu calendar), and Lord Shiva should be worshipped before this ceremony begins. During this ceremony, the person should keep fast on both the thirteenth the dark and the bright fortnights. On the day of fasting, he should eat

fruit diet only once. But at one time overeating is not proper. It is better to have a light fruit diet two times a day, than overeating once.

(2) Everyday in the morning a person being free from ablution and bath etc., should sit on a red cloth (seat) with his face towards the east and should recite the sacred text 'Om gam Ganapataye namah', by counting all the beads of the rosary made of 'Rudraaksha' or coral at least twenty-one times. By following this routine continuously for six months, his intellect gets developed.

This ceremony should begin on the fourth day of the bright fortnight. It is excellent if it is begun on the fourth day of the fortnight of the month of Bhaadrapada' (sixth month of the Hindu calendar). At the beginning of the ceremony Lord Ganesha should be worshipped and during this ceremony he should fast on the fourth day of the dark and bright fortnights.

The recitation of 'Ganeshastotra' (eulogy of Lord Ganesha) 'Ganeshasthaka', (eight verses eulogizing Lord Ganesha) and 'Ganeshasahasranaama' (one thousand names of Lord Ganesha) etc., also develops intellect.

(3) Every morning the person wearing red clothes should sit on a red cloth (seat) with his face towards the east and should recite the sacred text 'airn Srisarasvatyai namah' by counting all the beads of a rosary made of 'Rudraksha' or coral eleven times or twenty-one times or fifty-one times or a hundred and one times or as many times as he

can. By following this routine for about a year intellect is developed.

This ceremony should be begun on the eighth or the ninth day of the bright fortnight. At the beginning of the ceremony goddess Sarasvati should be worshipped with red flowers.

As soon as a person rises in the morning, he should think that 'Aim' is written on his tongue and beholding it on the tongue with the mind, should recite this basic sacred text a hundred and eight times. It also develops intellect.

Any of the ceremonies pertaining to Lord Shiva or Lord Ganesha or Goddess Sarasvati should be begun with a resolve that he is performing it in order to develop his intellect.

The recitation of whole of the Ramacaritamanasa every month for a year (twelve recitations) also develops intellect. If whole of the Ramacaritamanasa is recited everyday for nine days or there are nine recitations by reciting whole of the Ramacaritamanasa once in nine days, it also develops intellect. If the Ramacaritamanasa is recited a hundred and eight times in any of the above-mentioned two ways, it besides developing intellect, brings in great affinity for God.

As far as the name of God (divine name) is concerned. it is the best. It is the life-breath of knowledge (Vidya) bride. It is the experience of several saints and great souls that by reciting the divine name a singularity is developed in the person. There was a recluse who once

on the holy occasion of Kumbha fair went to Tryambakesvara (Nasika). There some men of great learning were discussing a deep and scholarly topic in order to come to some conclusion. The recluse interrupted their discussion. Those learned persons said to him, “O recluse, you can’t understand the discussion of these men of great learning. You should go from here and devote yourself to devotion and adoration.”

In fact the recluse was illiterate. He went to the jungle and having made a hut of straw and dry grass began to recite the sacred text of sixteen words “Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare, Hare Krsna Hare Krsna Krsna Krsna Hare Hare.” It was the outcome of this recitation that he had knowledge of Samskrta without study and began to speak Samskrta. This anecdote has been written by a learned man. He writes, “Once I went to Dvaraka. I lost my way and went astray in the jungle. By chance I reached the hut of that recluse. That recluse talked to me in Samskrta. I asked him what his qualification was in Samskrta. He answered that it was because of chanting of the divine name that he had gone through several Samskrta books without studying Samskrta and at that time he was studying ‘Advaitasiddhi’.

Therefore a student should certainly remember, chant and sing the divine name.

(1) Remembrance—Calling the divine name back to mind is remembrance.

(2) Chant—It can be of three types (a) chanting the name by mind is mental chant. In it there is no movement of lips and throat nor is any sound produced (b) If the divine name is chanted so loudly that the sound reaches only one's own ears, it is called 'Upaamshu' chant (c) If it is chanted a bit more loudly so that the sound is heard by others, it is called common chant. 'Upaamshu' chant is ten times more glorious than common chant while mental chant is ten times more glorious than 'Upaamshu' chant.

(3) Singing! (Kirtana)—In it the divine name and God's glories are sung by making musical sounds with musical instruments. It is of three kinds—(a) Singing the divine names 'Rama', 'Krsna' etc., loudly by making musical sounds with a set of musical instruments is 'Nama-Kirtana', (b) 'Singing glories and virtues of God in the form of verses and hymns is 'Guna-Kirtana' (c) Singing in which God's sports (pastimes) of His childhood or boyhood are described is called 'Lila-Kirtana.'

Out of these three—remembrance, chant and singing, the more useful is that in which one's mind gets more absorbed.

**Question:—Which divine name should a student chant?**

**Answer:—**A student should recite (chant) the name in which he has more faith, more belief and more devotion. ~ The more he is absorbed in a name, the more useful it will prove for him, so he should recite the

divine name of his own choice.

**Question:—What is the duty of a student to his teacher?**

**Answer:—**As a student treats his parents with reverence, so should he show reverence to his teacher. In these days a teacher can be of any social order (Varna). If the teacher belongs to the priest class (Brahmana) and the student has received good training (education) from him, he should regard him as his teacher throughout his life. But if the teacher does not belong to the priest class, he belongs to a lower social order than the student, the student should treat him with reverence while studying and remain grateful to him forever after the completion of his studies but he need not regard him as his preceptor afterwards.

**Question:—**In these days in schools and colleges a student receives knowledge of different subjects from different teachers. Whom should he regard as his teacher?

**Answer:—**He should certainly show reverence and feel grateful to them according to the benefit he has derived from them.

There are three means of receiving knowledge from a teacher.

Knowledge is gained by rendering service to the teacher. If a student possesses money, he should receive knowledge by paying money. If he himself has any knowledge and the other person needs this

knowledge, he can give him his knowledge in exchange for his knowledge. Besides them there is no other means to receive knowledge.

If there is a learned man who is interested in teaching others without receiving any payment, knowledge can be received from him also. But the student will remain indebted to him. When the student becomes learned and becomes famous for his learning, and the learned man who imparted him the knowledge, having heard his fame gets pleased, the student can get out of debt. He can also be free from his debt if having become learned, he also imparts knowledge to others. It means that as offspring can be free from their debt to their parents by pleasing them through service, though they can't pay them their debt, so can the student be free from his debt which he owes to the learned man who taught him without receiving any sort of payment but he can't pay him the debt.

If a student has a burning desire and devotion for gaining knowledge, God makes arrangement for him somehow or the other by making a teacher available—'A true lover meets the object of his love without doubt', Moreover God (Lord Krsna) Himself is the world-teacher. A student can also gain knowledge by only chanting the divine name. When no teacher could be available to a saint who wanted to learn grammar, Sage Patanjali himself taught him 'Mahabhasya' (the great elaborative commentary on Panini's Ashthaadhyaya). Sukadeva himself taught the Bhagavata to Carana Dasa.

**Question:**—With whom should a student have friendly relations?

**Answer:**—He should have friendly relations with those students who love knowledge, devote themselves to studies, and lend a helping hand to others. He should not keep company with those who are not devoted to studies. But he should try to find out the remedy for their slackness. If he finds one, he should put it into practice. As far as his own studies are concerned, he should be very careful.

**Question:**—What is the duty of a student to his friends?

**Answer:**—He should have fair dealings with them for their welfare by renouncing his selfishness and pride. He should think that all his friends and companions should become noble and learned so that he may compete with them and he himself may become more learned. It means that if his friends don't rise, he will have no desire to rise higher, he will feel satisfied with his knowledge and his progress will stop. But if his friends progress, he will get an opportunity to excel them. Therefore a student from his heart should wish progress to his friends and should feel very happy at their progress.

A student should behave towards his friends as Lord Krsna behaved towards His friend, Sudama. In the Ramacaritamanasa the characteristics mentioned of a friend are as follows

“A friend should divert his friend from the wrong path to the right one. Having concealed his vices he should reveal his virtues. He should have fair dealings with him without any doubt and do good to him

according to his power. He should love him a hundred times more in adversity. The Vedas declare that these are the characteristics of a noble friend” (Kiskindha. 7/2-3).

**Question:**—What is the duty of a student to his parents?

**Answer:**—Every student whether he wants to gain spiritual knowledge or mundane one should please his parents because their pleasure helps him in studies. In the scripture it is mentioned.

“Age, knowledge, glory and power - these are enhanced of the person whose nature is to bow to his elders and who always serves them” (Manu. 2/121).

If the parents because of certain circumstances ask him to stop his studies, he should seek permission with a tearful face, to continue his studies because that is the most suitable period for studies. If the examination is at hand, he should burn the midnight oil for studies. Sometimes it is noticed that mothers are worried lest their sons should fall ill by burning the midnight oil for studies. The fact is that hard study has a bad effect on health only if he has no self-interest in studies but he is forced to study hard, otherwise there is no question of his falling ill.

Noble men are those who don't give up the attempt in despair in the face of difficulties. When a man works promptly and whole-heartedly, it becomes natural for him to be advanced and victorious in every work. Such a man is noble and he proves to be an ideal for others.

Therefore a student should form a nature like this.

A student should possess the same patience and enthusiasm in failure as he has in success. Thus a student who performs his task of gaining mundane knowledge by studying with sincerity and enthusiasm becomes well-versed in spiritual knowledge. Lord Krsna in the Gita declares, "By doing duty without attachment man verily attains the Supreme" (Gita 3/19).

**Question:**—What is the difference between a spiritual student and a striver (Sadhaka)?

**Answer:**—There is no difference between the two. Both are one and the same. In fact the only aim of human birth is God-realization. So every human being is a student, a striver by birth. It is upto him whether he practises Spiritual discipline or not.

**Narayana ! Narayana ! Narayana !**

From "Be Good" in English by Swami Ramsukhdasji

*A Note to the Reader*

*The special quality of the original is difficult to capture in a translation. Readers are earnestly requested, that if they have the knowledge of the Hindi language, to read the original works in Hindi.*

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## **Contact:**

[sadhak@swamiramsukhdasji.net](mailto:sadhak@swamiramsukhdasji.net)

