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**WHAT IS
SUCCESS ?**

MAHATMA
DEVESH BHIKSHU

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THE ESSENCE OF THE GITA

- The soul is immortal. It does not take birth. Nor does it die. Nobody can kill you. Then why feel worried? or fear anybody?
- Whatever happened in the past was for the good. Whatever is happening now is also for the good. Whatever will happen in the future will be for the good too. Hence do no repent over the past. Do not worry for the future. Just think of the present that is in progress.
- What have you lost for which you weep? What is there that you brought with you but have now lost? What is there that you produced but has now perished? You did not bring anything to this world. Whatever you have, you had it only here. Whatever you have given, you have given it only here. Whatever you have taken, it is from Him, the Almighty. Whatever you rendered, it was rendered unto Him. Empty-handed you came and empty-handed will you go. Whatever is yours today was somebody else's yesterday and will be somebody else's tomorrow. You take delight in the illusion that it belongs to you. Alas, this illusory happiness is at the root of all your suffering.
- Change is the law of the universe. What you deem as death is, in reality, life. A moment can turn you into a millionaire; another can reduce you to a pauper. Free your mind from such thoughts as 'this is mine—this yours', 'this is great—this petty' and the shackles that hold you captive will collapse. Then everything will belong to you, and you to everyone.
- Neither you belong to the body nor body to you. The body is constituted by the five elements: earth, water, air, fire and vacuum. After death, it will disintegrate and return to these elements. The soul, however, is eternal and unchangeable. What are you—the soul or the body?
- Surrender yourself to the will of God. He is the best anchor. He who knows about this anchor gets liberated from fear, anxiety and sorrow for ever.
- Dedicate all your actions to God. It will enable you to experience the happiness of a truly liberated one.

— Lord Krishna

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Mahatma Devesh Bhikshu



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1st Edition 1994

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Introduction

In this book I have tried to dispel the wrong notion prevalent in the minds of the people that success is either qualifying in some examination or earning money and wealth in this competitive world. This latter sort of success is achieved even by a smuggler or many others who are able to manipulate things in their own way, as was evident in scandals and scams that have occurred in our country in the past!

Success, in my view, is to remain on the right side of life, viz., good, noble and virtuous, simultaneously understanding the spiritual side of life, so that in the end, moksha is also gained. To my mind this is very important in present circumstances because materialism is taking us towards destruction, violent struggles and internecine warfare.

With blessings,

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Self-study

Self-study is as important for the mental development of students, as food and water are for the body. The home-work a student has to do can also be included in self-study, but besides this he must learn on his own.

What is self-study? The word has a double meaning—(1) a student must cultivate the habit of studying by himself, without any guidance, so that he is able to think on his own. The more he is able to do so, the better his performance in his class. (2) A student should think about his own self, *i.e.*, he should form the habit of self-introspection in order to assess his weak points and remove them as soon as possible.

In Sanskrit and Hindi, it is known as 'Swadhyaya'. The word has several meanings— (1) *Swadhyaya* is composed of *Su + Adhyaya* as also *Swa + Adhyaya*. *Su + Adhyaya* means that a student should study only good books and such other literature that may uplift his character. Because of their inspiring material, he

may like to read the autobiographies of great persons, like Swami Dayanand Saraswati, Swami Vivekanand, Subhash Chandra Bose, Mahatma Gandhi, Abraham Lincoln and so on. He may also take interest in historical and philosophical books, like the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, the Upanishadas and the Vedas. It is not difficult to study such books nowadays, as Hindi and even English translations are easily available.

The second meaning of Swa + Adhyaya is that a student must not only study on his own, as emphasised earlier, but should also do self-introspection. Swa + Adhyaya also means that a man should know his own self, viz., his own *atman*. For one who wants to go far in life, it is very important to distinguish between the body and the soul. To know Param + Atman, one must realise his own *atman* first. Swa + Adhyaya means: realising the Supreme Soul, viz., God, which must be the ultimate aim in life.

Our whole life has been divided into four *Ashramas*—(1) *Brahmacharya*—Student life, (2) *Grahashta*—Family life, (3) *Vanaprastha*—forest-dweller's life, and (4) *Sanyastha*—renunciation of worldly life. In Sanskrit, *Ashrama* means *a + shrama*, i.e., to work hard incessantly. So, in all the four ashramas, a man is expected to toil hard, and never be idle. While three Ashramas (*Brahmacharya*, *Vanaprastha* and *Sanyastha*) are exclusively for

Swadhyaya, even in the Grahastha ashrama, one is expected to devote some time to Swadhyaya daily, without fail. At the time of convocation, Acharyas used to tell their student disciples, who were taking leave from their Ashramas:

स्वाध्याय प्रवचनाभ्यां न प्रमदितव्यम् ॥ तैत्तिरीयोपनिषद् ॥

Never be indolent in respect of self-study and giving discourses. It should be your daily routine to give a talk on some good topic to the members of your family, so that the whole family may benefit.

Standing water stagnates. In the same way, in the absence of study our thoughts become impure and man is likely to fall prey to vices, like greed and lust. This is actually the bane of the present-day society and mankind is suffering from these ills because of ignorance of our Vedic literature. We are limiting our sphere and in this way becoming like a frog in the well. If we form the habit of studying good books, the result will be clear to all in the course of time, say, after a year or so.

Many people became great because they were studious. The name of Pt. Kshemkaran Das who began studying Sanskrit at the age of 55 is well-known to all, as he translated the Atharva Veda in Hindi and his translation is considered the best amongst all at present available. Swami Shivanand says: Good books are the repository of fine thoughts. Their study enables us to forget all our worries and there is no

question of indecisiveness as noble thoughts come to the mind, giving peace and bliss.

Shri Lokamanya Tilak says—"I shall welcome a good book even in hell, because these have such powers that they will change the place into heaven almost at once". In the *Shatpath Brahman*, Maharishi Yagyavalka has written that absence of swadhyaya is unforgiveable. He further states that the sun, the moon and the stars, the various rivers and the seas, the mountains and the trees, all these are performing their duties as they are bound, but it is only man, who does not think that after all what is going to happen if these inanimate objects of Nature do not perform their duties, annihilation and wholesale destruction of the entire universe. But Oh Man! in case you give up your duty of Swadhyaya, then something more ignoble will happen. And it is what we are witnessing today in our world. There is no doubt that it would be far better if the whole world is annihilated than this evil behaviour of mankind in general which has turned the world into a veritable hell.

Once a youngman went to see Swami Vivekanand and said to him, "I want to do something for my country, what should I do?" Swamiji enquired of him what he was doing, to which he replied that he was a student. Swamiji told him, "Go and carry on with your studies diligently and earnestly and that is your duty to the country."

When Khrushchev, the Prime Minister of Russia, visited India, Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru asked him as to what instructions were being given to students in Russia. Khrushchev replied, "We give them three instructions: "the first is 'to study', the second is 'to study', and the third is 'to study'."

Mahrishi Yagyavalka described the immense advantages of Swadhyaya in the Shatpath Brahman, which I may briefly recapitulate—through Swadhyaya, a man becomes like a yogi, *i.e.*, the ups and downs of life do not upset him, as he becomes the master of his fate and the maker of his own destiny. He does not look to others for guidance or help because he has confidence and trust in his own powers and ability. He remains unperturbed by material conditions and has a sound sleep, without any worry. For any ailments, he is his own doctor, because as a rule, such a person will not have any major disease, unless involved in an accident. Having controlled his passions, he should normally be healthy and strong. He always enjoys the company of noble souls through their writings and remains in peace and in a state of bliss. He is the real leader of the people and the public look to him for succour. He is honoured because of his innate qualities and glory and people consider it a privilege to have an opportunity to talk to him. He is above the mundane matters, as Swadhyaya bestows inner happiness.

The benefits of Swadhyaya have been summarised

in this small chapter. The habit of self-study is all the more important for a student if he wants to be successful in life.

Never miss self-study even for a day.

2

Utmost Understanding

The aim and purpose of education and learning is to mould an individual into a human-being, so that with the knowledge and understanding acquired, he or she can fulfil the role befitting the status bestowed by God amongst the creatures of the world. It is, therefore, essential for students to fully understand what is taught to them. Unfortunately as the medium of instruction is a foreign language, and most of our students' time is wasted in learning the language first and majority of the students have to remain satisfied with just some smattering of English and without proper knowledge and understanding of other subjects. This absurd situation needs to be remedied.

According to Atharva Veda, a student has to go higher and higher from darkness to light or say from ignorance to knowledge and understanding:

आरोह तमसो ज्योतिः (अथर्व. 8-1-8)

Acquisition of knowledge is the greatest duty of a student and he is expected to perform this duty most

sincerely and truthfully both in the interest of his own future and that of the nation. For this purpose, he is sent to an educational institution, where he is expected to gain knowledge and full understanding under the guidance of his teachers.

Most of our students get degrees and diplomas, but are actually ignorant as they possess little knowledge or understanding about anything, except English language and even that too is very meagre. Now, the system of education should be such that our students may be able to think deeply and thus be able to increase their intellectual understanding. For, true education consists in the simultaneous and balanced development of their physical, mental and spiritual faculties to the maximum possible extent.

This is the main reason for our losing our cultural heritage, which rested on behaviour, conduct and character. Its basic elements are austerity, penance, self-abnegation and service of others. These have been replaced by selfishness and narrow-mindedness of the western civilisation. Our educational system was cost-free: simple living and high thinking was the norm of ancient times.

From the Rig Veda, the following words are worth quoting:

अग्निना अग्निं समिध्यते (ऋग्वेद 1-40-3)

Fire enflames fire, *i.e.*, from one lighted candle or

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

A Hindi poet says:-

विद्या के वरदान की, बड़ी अनोखी बात।
ज्यों खर्चो त्यों-त्यों बढ़े, बिन खर्चे घट जात ॥

The boon of education has a special feature, in that the more you spend by imparting it to others, the more it increases; but if you do not spend it, this wealth is bound to decrease.

So, an intelligent student should help others who are weak at studies. It will not only make him a useful member of the society, but also prove helpful in his own intellectual growth. Teachers, Lecturers, Professors and Acharyas often take pride in telling that their students have made great strides in life and hold very high positions. It gives them great mental satisfaction to know that the education they imparted is becoming fruitful. There is a certain divinity in helping others to progress in life. I am certain that you will also like to share in such divinity.

The habit of helping others is acquired early in life while you are still a student. The students who have this urge or inclination in them are also hard-working

and distinguished in their studies. The desire to serve and the ability to serve have to go together. In case I am to guide someone, I must know the way myself. So, a student must equip himself well before undertaking the service of others.

‘सा विद्या या विमुक्तये’ | Education is that which grants you freedom. It makes you self-sufficient and self-reliant. If even after being educated, you are dependent on others for the fulfilment of your needs, it means clearly that the process of education has been lacking in something essential. Real education also makes a person understand the ultimate purpose of human life; it is selfless service, because this can free us from bondage. One who is educated in the real sense of the term, is even helpful to others in his life, but in particular, he dedicates himself to the service of society exclusively after he has successfully lived through *brahmacharya* and *grahastha ashramas*.

Even as a student, you can lead a glorious life, not in comfort or luxury at the cost of your parents, but by excelling in your studies, while some of you may excel in games or sports. There are multifarious activities spread over different fields and it is for the students to specialise in any or many of them, according to their own competence and aptitude. But one thing is certain that hard work can make you skilled in your chosen activity, making you magnificent and illustrious in the long run.

“First deserve and then desire”. In fact, you need not even desire, since success is bound to come to you as a natural result of your hard work, knowledge and understanding. A student must perform his duties well. He must remain healthy and fit at all times, so that his studies do not suffer.

In Sanskrit, there are many verses, eulogising the virtues of education, knowledge and understanding. Hereunder I am quoting a couple of these:

ज्ञानवानेव सुखवान्, ज्ञानवानेव जीवति ।

ज्ञानवानेव बलवान् तस्मात् ज्ञानमयो भव ॥

Only he who has knowledge leads a truly happy and peaceful life. Knowledge is power, and a knowledgeable man is, therefore, powerful. May you all be suffused with the knowledge of the self.

विद्वत्त्वं च नृपत्वं च नैव तुल्यं कदाचन ।

स्वदेशे पूज्यते राजा विद्वान् सर्वत्र पूज्यते ॥

Kingship and erudition cannot be compared with each other! A King is honoured in his own country alone, but a learned person is universally honoured.

In the Gita, Bhagwan Krishna says:

न हि ज्ञानेन सदृशं पवित्रमिह विद्यते ।

There is nothing holier here than knowledge and understanding.

Knowledge and understanding are the twin eyes of a man with which he can see all things in their proper perspective.

3

Character and Conduct

One who carries out his duties honestly, sincerely and truthfully without indulging in any evil way, and conducts himself well, can be called a person of character. He or she always remains on the right side of life, never having a thought that may disturb his peace of mind, and possessing moral qualities. The temple of humanity is built on the foundation of character.

Unfortunately, in the present age, we are passing through a crisis of character, because of the simple fact that we are following the western mode of civilisation. We have forgotten our ancient glory, as described by Manu Maharaj in his famous book, *The Manusmriti*:

एतद् देश प्रसूतस्य सकाशादग्र जन्मनः ।

स्वं स्वं चरित्रं शिक्षेरन् पृथिव्यां सर्व मानवाः ॥ मनु. ३/२० ॥

All persons of the world should sit at the feet of the Brahmans of this country and take lessons in character.

There was a time when people from all over the

world used to come here and showed their eagerness to learn about yoga or spiritualism, then in vogue in India.

What was yoga or spiritualism? It was character of the highest order. One Sanskrit poet has described:

अद्रोहः सर्वभूतेषु कर्मणा मनसा गिरा ।

अनुग्रहश्च ज्ञानं च शीलमेतद् विदुर्बुधाः ॥

Without any ill-feelings towards any living-being in thought, word and deed, endowed with knowledge and understanding by God's grace—this is character according to this couplet. This was practised by not only Rishis and Munis, but also by monarchs and the people, including students as a whole.

A Hindi poet has expressed his views on character as under:

मणि मुक्ता चाहूं नहीं, नहिं चाहूं निर्वाण ।

मैं चाहूं सच्चरित युत, जीवन शुद्ध महान् ॥

“I am not desirous of pearls and diamonds, nor am I desirous of salvation. My only desire is that I may be a man of character, so that my life may be pious and great. The light of my character may spread far and wide, like the fragrance of fame, which may never fade with the passage of time.”

Everybody wants to be great in life and for that he must work hard devotedly, doing service to the mankind unselfishly and that is character.

In this context, a shining episode from the life of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj comes to my mind. Once, after conquering a fort of the Mughals his commander was able to capture the beautiful daughter of the Mughai emperor. He presented her to Shivaji, thinking that Shivaji would be highly pleased, but was baffled, because, on seeing the young and beautiful girl, Shivaji nodded his head in reverence to the lady and ordered his people to hand over the girl safely back to the Mughals. He appreciated her dazzling beauty, saying— "Had my mother been so beautiful, I would also have acquired some beauty for myself." So, we see that noble and brave people never have evil thoughts about others' women. The dictum—

मातृवत् परदारेषु पर द्रव्येषु लोष्ठवत् ।

आत्मवत् सर्वभूतेषु यः पश्यति सः पण्डितः ॥

always remains in their minds uppermost. Consider others' wives as mother and other's wealth or money as a clod of earth; also consider all living-beings like your ownself—one who does so in life is really a Pandit, i.e., knowledgeable.

The standard of character in our ancient times was so high and praiseworthy that all the inhabitants of our country, known as Aryavarta in those days, were known as thirty-three crores of gods and goddesses.

Once it so happened that a few sages came to the city of a king, Ashwapati, and after the spiritual/scrip-

tural *shastrartha*, as was the custom in those days, the king asked them to have their lunch with him. The sages replied, "We cannot take food here because your food is tainted with *Rajsik* and *Tamsik gunas*. This will adversely affect our pious lives. So, please forgive us." Hearing this, Ashwapati replied as under:

न मे स्तेनो जनपदे न कदर्यो न मद्यपः।

नानाहिताग्निर्नाविद्वान् न श्वैरी श्वैरिणी कुतः॥

"In my whole kingdom, there is no thief; in the entire realm there is no miser either; there is no person fond of any intoxicant. And there is none who does not perform sacrificial fire (Yajna agnihotra); there is none illiterate either. Besides, there is no adulterer, then how can there be any adultress?" Such was the character of the whole nation in those days. Hearing this, the sages took their lunch with the king.

Again there is a saying: आचारहीनं न पुनन्ति वेदाः। The Vedas cannot purify a person who is without character. This means that one has to practise good and not think that by reciting Veda Mantras or verses, some magical effect will occur, and though he may continue in his bad ways, yet he will be purified. How can that be?

Maharaja Ram Chandrajī's life is a glorious example of a shining character and though more than nine lakhs of years have elapsed, yet he is remembered and will be remembered for all times to come till this

world comes to nought. His words always ring in my ears—रामो द्विर्नाभिभाषते —those which he spoke to his mother Kaikeyi, when she told Ram that Maharaja Dashrath had granted her two boons—one that Ram would go into exile for fourteen years and the other that Bharat would be crowned instead. Kaikeyi doubted whether Ram would be firm on his word about going to the forests. Thereupon, Ram uttered these words, viz., “Ram does not say a thing twice”. Once spoken his word is as firm as a rock.

The character of Ram was so splendid that even his enemies praised him for this.

When Ravana approached Maricha and began slighting Ram in order to seek Maricha's help in kidnapping Sita, then Maricha admonished Ravana as under:

न रामः कर्कशस्तात नाविद्वान् ऽ जितेन्द्रिय ।

अनृतं दुश्रुतं चैव नैव त्वं वक्तुमर्हसि ॥

O Ravana! Ram is not ungentle, neither illiterate, nor unchaste; he never speaks untruth and harsh words. You should not speak so about Ram.

When Ravana was killed and Mandodari, Ravana's wife, came to the battlefield to mourn the death of her husband, she uttered the following:

धन्या राम त्वया माता, धन्या राम त्वया पिता ।

धन्या राम त्वया वंशः, परदारा न पश्यसि ॥

O Ram! Blessed is your mother, blessed is your father and your race is blessed for you do not look at another's wife.

The following couplet is worth remembering:

वृत्तं यत्नेन संरक्षेत्, वित्तमेति च याति च ।

अक्षीणोवित्तते क्षीणो, वृत्ततस्तु हतो हतः॥

“We should safeguard our character with utmost endeavour; wealth comes and goes and if wealth is lost, nothing is lost. But if character is lost, all is lost because then it is worse than death.”

Hence the purpose of education is to be a person of character with humanity. But character and humanity are the same thing—these are two sides of the same coin.

Character is the bedrock of humanity.

4

Competence

The above heading, 'competence', means ability to compete in any sphere of activity, and coming out successful. The present-day world is of sharp competition in most of the activities, more so in our country, where thousands of candidates hanker after a job or seek some kind of employment from which they may be able to eke out their living. This is not a new phenomenon, as even in olden times competition for excellence was prevalent, though it was not a matter of seeking some means of living. There was affluence as a whole and the question of starving did not arise, as we see today.

We learn that in Raja Janak's court, Rishis, Munis and learned pundits were often having discussions on various spiritual matters. Usually some problem was posed in order to seek an answer. For example, once Raja Janak made the declaration that any learned person who replied to his question correctly would be given one thousand cows, whose horns were gilded. Many pundits tried, but failed. At that Maharishi

Yagyavalkya was able to give a satisfactory reply, and asked his disciples to take the cows to his ashram.

Similarly, on another occasion Raja Janak posed the question as to what was the method by which one could attain emancipation in a few seconds. Many Rishis, Munis and learned pundits came forward and tried to convince the King about their methods of salvation, but Raja Janak could not be satisfied with all their pleas. At long last one Rishi, known as Ashtavakra (i.e., one whose body was crooked in eight places, or who had eight crookednesses in his body) came up to accept the challenge and when confronted by Raja Janak, he told the king that before he answered his question, was it not proper for the king to offer him something, which must be his own only? The king said—"The entire kingdom is at your disposal and you may take whatever you want."

But Ashtavakra replied that the kingdom was not his own; it was of the people and something which the king could not term as his own. At this Raja Janak got perplexed and asked the Rishi to name the particular thing which he wanted, because he was not able to understand the enigma. At this point, Ashtavakra said, "O King! Give me your mind (मन)." The king readily agreed. The Rishi then quipped that that was the method by which he could attain emancipation in a trice. It has been rightly said:

मन एव मनुष्याणां कारणं बन्ध मोक्षयो ।

Mind is the only cause of bondage or salvation of all human-beings. This is so because it is our mind that thinks of good or bad things and if it becomes quiet, *i.e.*, silent, not thinking of anything, it submerges in God, as Maharishi Patanjali says in *Yoga-Shastra*:

ध्यानं निर्विषयं मनः।

When a person's mind becomes silent, *i.e.*, quite quiet, his meditation becomes complete.

When Raja Janak had given his 'mind' to the Rishi, he could not think anything and that was nothing but 'Moksha'. So, in ancient times, people were usually engaged in such discussions of spiritual science when free from mundane matters—unlike nowadays when a majority of the people are after satiating their passions.

A well-known episode relating to Guru Dronacharya in Mahabharata is of taking his disciples, *viz.*, Pandavas and Kauravas, to the forests for examining their competence in shooting. A wooden bird was fixed on some branch of a tree and Guru Dronacharya asked Duryodhana and brothers to come forward one by one. But before any of them attempted to shoot, Guruji put one question to each prince as to what he was seeing. The reply given was that he was seeing the tree, its branches, the wooden bird, etc. Thereupon, Guruji asked them not to try. Thus, all including the Pandavas, except Arjuna, were disqualified from the competition.

At last Arjuna was called upon to come forward and Guruji put the same question to him. But Arjuna's reply was quite different, as he said that he was seeing the eye of the bird only, viz., the target which was to be shot down. Guruji was pleased at the reply and allowed him to shoot, which Arjuna did and lo! The eye of the wooden bird had been shot at exactly.

There are many factual stories of competitions of olden times. Coming to the present, students have to compete at every stage from class to class in each and every examination and test. But the really tough competition they have to face comes after schooling is over. This is for admission to a good college and later on graduation, or post-graduation, to some professional or technical institution, viz., Engineering, Medical or Architectural, etc. Many of the students can, however, not pursue further studies for financial and other reasons.

Besides, for those who try to get some job, private or Government, they have to face further competition for getting a suitable employment. It is not easy and they have to face stiff competition, not only because of merit, but also because recommendations from some influential persons or political bosses have also become important these days. All the same, those students who are good at games or sports, find it easier to get an employment because the games and sports have also assumed great importance now-a-

days.

There are Public Service Commissions in all the States besides the one located in Delhi, known as Union Public Service Commission, which hold various competitive examinations for recruitment to the Government offices. The UPSC holds competitive examinations for recruitment to Indian Administrative Services and many other allied services.

Besides these, we have Military Services and paramilitary services, e.g., Army, Navy and Air Force; and Border Security Force, Industrial Security Force, Railway Security Force, etc. In addition, Railways hold their own competitive examinations as they require lakhs of employees. Yet our country's population, increasing day-by-day, minute after minute, is so large that our Government is unable to meet its demands, whether in agriculture or in industry or in many other fields of employment.

Many people take to business or self-employment, but here also they are not free from competition. And to make the matters worse, our Government has now opened the country's doors to foreigners as well. This has been done because the country's economy is in doldrums while the rulers have been looting the country through frauds and scams.

Competition inspires us to be meritorious.

5

Endeavour

When I was studying in a school in Ghaziabad (U.P.), soon after the ninth class annual examinations were over, the school was closed for the summer vacations for about two months. I, therefore, went to my home in our village which was about fifteen miles from there. Now, I had learnt Hindi from the very beginning. Therefore, when in our house I found a book printed in Urdu and seeing it, I thought of learning Urdu during those days. So, my father taught me the alphabets of Urdu just in an hour and I began reading the book that was of the fourth standard of those times, as it was of my father's student days.

In that book there were some very good poems. Three lines of one poem were:

किये जाओ कोशिश मेरे दोस्तो ॥
अगर ताक पे तुमने रख दी किताब ।
तो क्या दोगे कल इम्तहां में जबाब ।
न पढ़ने से बेहतर है पढ़ना जनाब ।
किये जाओ कोशिश मेरे दोस्तो ॥

Continue trying, my friends! In case you keep your book on the shelf, then what answer will you be able to give in your examination? It is, therefore, better to study than not to. Hence go on trying, my friends!

The story of Bopa-deva who was studying in some Pathshala, as was the custom in those days in our country, the language of Sanskrit and other subjects is a good example. But the poor boy could not learn anything and was given a good thrashing by his Guru. And his parents were also not happy at his lack of the requisite intellect. So, he was in distress and was so disappointed by the state of his studies that one day he ran away from the Pathshala. Wandering aimlessly, at long last he became tired of walking, and felt hungry and thirsty. So, he sat on the round platform of a well, built of bricks and stones. Of course, he was given water by some women, who came to fetch water from the well. On the platform of the well, he saw to his amazement some shallow pits created by the earthen pitchers kept while pulling water from the well. He also saw that there are many crevices created by the ropes tied to the buckets for pulling water from the well.

This stirred his imagination and he began to ponder: If such a fragile pitcher and rope made of jute could create such marks on bricks and stones through passing again and again, why could he not memorise his lessons? He returned to his Pathshala and there-

after began studying very seriously working very hard day and night. As a result, he became one of the most intelligent boys in the institution. Thus, he became so learned that he later on in his life wrote a book known as *Laghu Siddhanta Kaumudi*.

Hence it is quite obvious that hard work is the key to all problems in life. When a student, I read the story of Robert Bruce, who, after being defeated by his adversary, had run into the jungles and hidden himself in a cave. There a spider was trying to come out of the cave, but fell again and again. At long last, the spider was successful—after making seven attempts. Robert Bruce's mind was excited and he got out of the cave, with a new determination. Collecting his forces, he attacked his adversary and was victorious. The lesson we get from such inspiring stories is that we should not lose heart at our failures, but become more courageous and should keep trying again and again. It has been rightly said: Failures are the pillars of success.

What is most essential is that you must have positive thinking, never negative. You must never get discouraged but have strong will power to surmount the obstacles that impede your progress. It is said that Thomas Edison, who has hundreds of inventions to his credit, when trying to invent an electric lamp, failed ten thousand times; yet he did not give up. But with the experience of his failures that he got, he was at

long last able to give us the electric lamp. It was his positive thinking that prodded him on again and again. Every time he failed, he said, "Now I know one more method in which an electric lamp cannot be made." He, therefore, tried a new method. Finally, his efforts were crowned with success.

See what the Rig Veda says—यते महि स्वराज्ये । We have all to work hard to get self-government or self-rule. You may say that we are independent now; then what is this business of talking to attain self-rule? Literally speaking, you may be right, but when you consider dispassionately, you will agree with the above words that we have to strive at all times to be independent. First of all, are you satisfied with the working of the Government? Are our people happy on the whole, excepting the selfish politicians and rulers? When a majority of the people are unhappy and feel insecure and those in power are making costly and exhaustive security arrangements for themselves, how can you say that we are independent? Whether externally or internally, our position is very bad indeed!

Besides, we are dependent even on the tiniest country in the world, going with a begging bowl to seek help. There are dissensions within and if you cast a glance outside, we have no friends either, because our policies have all along been such that we make no distinction between friends and foes. A large section of people living in our country are disloyal, as

they harbour communal passions and always look to such countries that are inimical to us.

According to the Vedic verse, all of us must support in making our country strong; those who are learned and foresighted and are actually friendly, should be given the reins of power. They should conduct the affairs of the nation, but unfortunately most of our rulers are selfish and a large number of people occupying important positions are traitors. The public wants a clean administration, where there is no corruption; and progress in the sphere of agriculture, animal-breeding and education. Also, whatever we produce should have its proper and equitable distribution.

So, our student community has to be more vigilant. They should understand the affairs of the country, as quite a large number of them have become voters now.

Today's students are the leaders of tomorrow.

6

Supreme Creation : Man

Man is the supreme creation of God, because he has been endowed with three boons, viz., (1) power of intellect, (2) power of speech, and (3) power of action. These three powers of man should work in unison.

As a student, you must learn all that you can, for education is real wealth as described in our scriptures:

विद्या धनं सर्वं धनं प्रधानम् ।

The wealth of education is the chief wealth amongst all the wealths in the world.

In Gayatri Mantra, we pray to God Almighty that He may give us unerring guidance in our life and direct our intellect in such a manner that we may never falter in our duties, overcoming all difficulties and temptations. To adopt the right path in life is what is most required as students in modern times generally waver. Because of the atmosphere and surround-

ings it is indeed very difficult to continue doing their duty of studying in such trying circumstances. All the same you have to make the best of the situation. If you have the determination and strong will-power, these are nothing but trifles.

In your case, the importance of Mind or Brain is all the more important. How to make it strong and healthy, as also helpful to make you worthwhile in the world is its key role. Students have to be careful about their daily chores, viz., the company they keep, the food they eat, as also their habit of going about work and studies, besides their attitude and behaviour with all in whose contact they come. In the Vedas there are many verses, in which a prayer has been made to God to bestow on us a keen intellect and a good brain—because all other things in life, you can get by your hard work and intelligence.

A Hindi poet says:

जहां सुमति तहं संपति नाना । जहां कुमति तहं विपति निदाना ॥

“With good intellect, you get all things in life. But with bad intellect, you only encounter difficulties and troubles.”

In the Rig Veda, it has been advised that a man should speak through his actions and deeds. It is often seen that most of the people boast about themselves, knowing that praising oneself is not considered good and as far as possible we should shun this habit, because ‘self-praise is no commendation’. But

in modern times, we find that this has rather become a craze, as in elections, which are often held, we see the aspiring candidates beating their own drums, though these appear to be hollow, yet people are taken in by the propaganda thus made.

So many great personages have been before us from time to time and their name and fame are glorified in the pages of history. They became so venerable because they not only did their duty honestly and sincerely, but whatever they did, was all for the good and welfare of the people. They sacrificed their all for others and it is through their noble deeds, and not words, that they are remembered today. They were the living examples of their times and even after their death, they still inspire confidence in us.

Therefore, students should work hard in their studies. These days most of the students do not study, but adopt unfair means of copying from books and notes during the examinations. In this way, they are spoiling their own career. Without getting real knowledge, they want merely to pass and obtain degrees which are not going to help them in the long run. Hence what is required is knowledge, because in the end only your knowledge will stand you in good stead.

We have a proverb: 'An ounce of practice is worth a ton of precept.' You might have experienced this in your life as well. Then why not work hard and study sincerely, so that you may be able to walk with your

head high, without any sinful feeling in your conscience.

In a verse in the Sam Veda, we have been advised to worship God with our deeds, and not by words alone. What matters is our actions, and not words. Some people may question as to the need of worshipping God. We must not forget the fact that God does not want us to eulogise Him. He is complete in all respects and does not need our certificate, but we need His help and the best way is to act accordingly, *i.e.*, we must do our duty most sincerely and truthfully and this is the best kind of prayer or worship. By remembering His good and noble qualities and virtues, we yearn for such nobility and therefore work hard to attain these and with His grace we are bound to attain the divinity in us.

Bhagwan Krishna states in the Bhagwad Gita:

स्व कर्मणा तमभ्यर्च्य सिद्धिं विन्दति मानवः।

“Such people who worship God with their actions and deeds are able to achieve their mission in life.”

Not only does God but even the people also judge us by our actions, behaviour, conduct and character. The people cannot be duped by mere words, as nobody can fool all the people all the time.

Apart from the wealth of knowledge, other kinds of wealth also deserve our consideration. A Sanskrit poet says:

विदेशेषु धनं विद्या, व्यसनेषु धनं मतिः।
परलोके धनं धर्मः, शीलं सर्वत्र वै धनम्॥

“Learning is the wealth in a foreign land; intellect is the wealth in difficult times; righteousness or Dharma is the wealth in the other world; and character is the wealth at all places.”

So it is important that our students develop a noble character, learn to distinguish between the right and the wrong and tread the path of honesty and truthfulness.

Deserve to be called a human-being by your humanity.

7

Success

What is the definition of 'Success'? Is it that whatever we attempt may culminate in what we wanted? I define it somewhat differently, as follows:

S	=	Self-study
U	=	Utmost understanding
C	=	Character and conduct
C	=	Competence
E	=	Endeavour
S	=	Supreme-being
S	=	Success

The first six chapters, the headings of which are given above, should have made it clear that our youth and students must form these habits, in case they are desirous to attain success in life.

As explained in most of my books as well as in this, life can easily be divided into four stages —

(1) *Brahmacharya* (student-life); (2) *Grahastha* (family life); (3) *Vanaprastha* (forest-dweller's life); and (4) *Sanyastha* (renunciation of worldly life). The readers should have been able to understand these terms by now, as according to the Vedas the structure of human-life stands firmly on these four pillars. Such a system affords MAN all the requisite opportunities to make his life really successful, by spending one-fourth of the life-span on education and learning, knowledge and understanding, enabling him/her to spend the remaining three-fourths of life with peace and plenty, thus enjoying material and spiritual wealths.

Success does not mean amassing wealth or obtaining position, power and pelf, but much more. For a human-being, this is actually the only door open for emancipation, the last and only way to a truly successful life of man. Otherwise, he/she is no more than an animal or a beast. Maharaj, Bhartrihari has described this in one of his shlokas as under:

आहार निद्रा भय मैथुनं च;
 सामान्यमेतद् पशुभिः नराणाम्।
 धर्मो हि तेषामधिको विशेषो;
 धर्मेण हीनाः पशुभिः समानाः॥

“All the animals and human-beings are just alike in so far as food, sleep, fear and sexual intercourse are concerned. But man has the speciality of Dharma or righteousness, without which he is also like an

animal.

What is Dharma? There are many definitions of Dharma. And by giving all these, I do not want the readers to become confused. The most simple and appealing definition has been given by Maharishi Kannad in Vaishishik Darshan—यतोऽभ्युदय निःश्रेयस सिद्धि स धर्मः। Dharma is that by which a person gets on and on in this life and is able to attain salvation in the end. The Varna-Ashram system affords opportunities to one and all, if followed in letter and spirit. You can progress here in worldly life, enjoying the material wealth in *Grahastha* but thereafter you have to think seriously about the real aim of life, viz., *moksha* or emancipation, through release from the cycle of birth and death and relish and enjoying bliss and tranquility in the company of holy souls.

If we attain success only here on earth, it is nothing as compared to the overall success as explained above. Man must ponder over this factor very seriously, because today our entire attention is engaged by mundane life. Unfortunately we get so much entangled in this that the spiritual side of life is totally forgotten. Also, we do not hesitate to employ dishonest means in order to enjoy wealth and Kama—sexual desire. These two are great hurdles in life and we must enjoy these with restraint, as described earlier.

Unless man deliberates spiritualism and is taught about matter, Soul and God in student life, how can

he/she think of this aspect, so essential for human-beings? Otherwise life becomes not only lop-sided, but in his egotism, a man begins to commit all sorts of sins, thus making life miserable. If we want to lead a full life, it is essential that our affairs concerning the material sciences be controlled by spiritual science. But in our present educational system, this is badly missing and therefore we are making people brutes or giants. They may also be termed as Rakshasas, as clearly stated in—साक्षरा राक्षसा भवति । Though literate, yet they become devils, not trying to attain divinity, not because of their fault, but because of our foreign system of education. When will this curse be removed? Only God knows!

True success means progress both in material and spiritual spheres.

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