

Divine Message of the Veds

Part 5

The Four Veds

**Rigved
Yajurved
Atharvaved
Samved**

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

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

Divine Message of the Veds

by Pandit Shriram Sharma Acharya

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Preface to the first edition published in 1958

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

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

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

In this way, such pseudo-religionists have caused great harm to the Veds and have always tried to lower their status and usefulness. It is but natural that when three to four explanations are given for the

same stanza and one expert expresses a completely opposite opinion to another's, doubts and lack of faith will raise their heads in people's minds.

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

Shriram Sharma Acharya

Preface to the revised third edition

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Lilapat Sharma

Yug Nirman Yojana, Mathura.

A brief introduction to the life of Revered *Gurudev*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

As a symbolic gesture of goodwill towards all religions, collection of water and soil from 2400 places. Also started an industry oriented school with education for self-employment at *Gayatri Tapobhoomi*, Mathura.

Establishment of Gayatri-family's branches all over the country. Left Mathura permanently in 1971. Before that five 1008-kundiya Gayatri mahayagya throughout India on a vast scale.

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

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

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

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

A Religious Duty

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

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

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

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



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

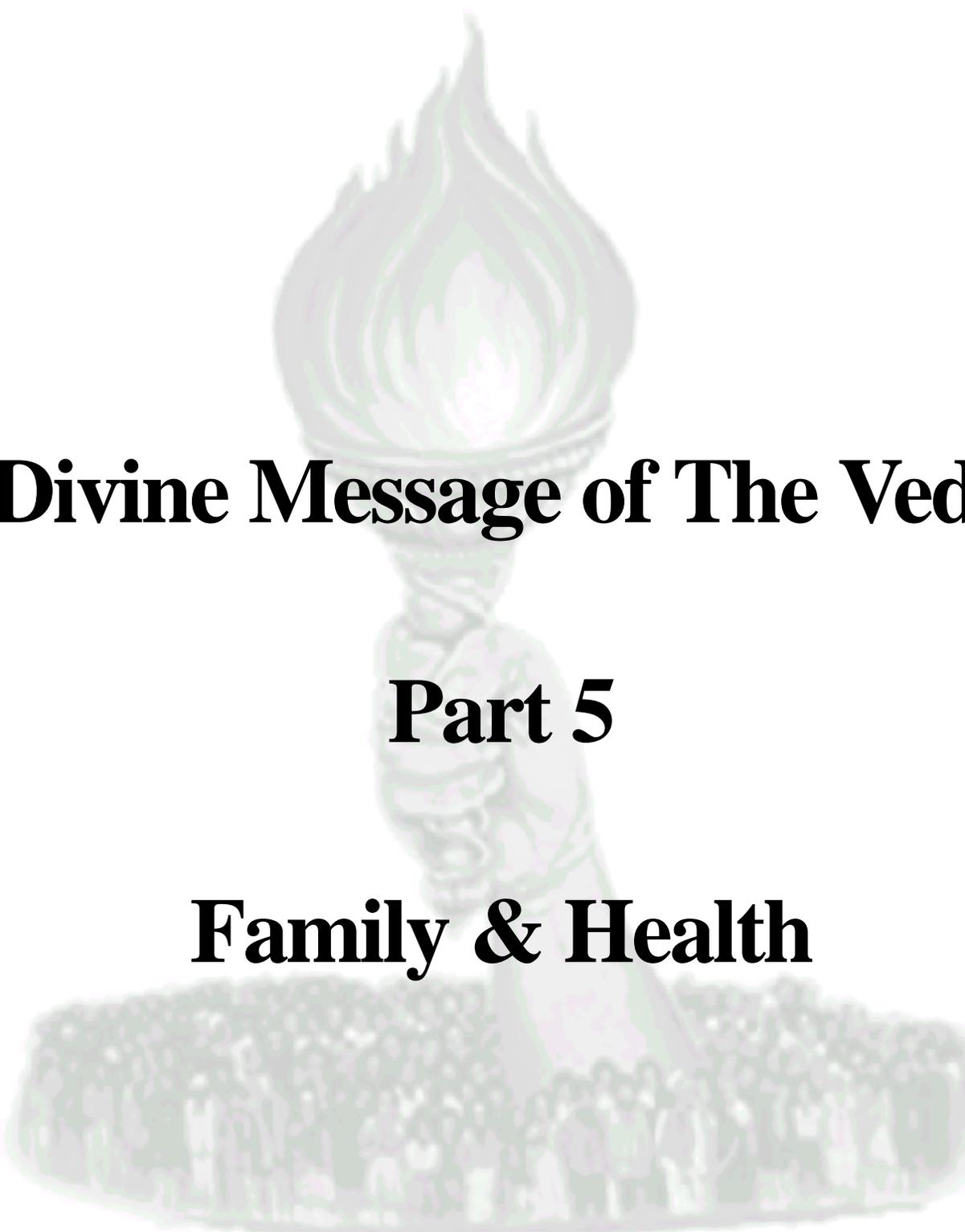
- Shriram Sharma Acharya



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

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

- Bhagwati Devi Sharma



Divine Message of The Veds

Part 5

Family & Health



Family & Health

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

अनुव्रतः पितुः पुत्रो मात्रा भवतु संमनाः ।

Anuvrataha pituhu putro

maatras bhavatu summanaaha

जाया पत्ये मधुवती वाचं वदतु शन्तिवाम् ॥

jaayaa patye madhumatim

vaachum vadatu shuntivaam

(Atharvaved 3/30/2)

Meaning: In an ideal home, children are obedient to their parents. The parents are well-wishers of their children. The husband and wife's mutual relationship is sweet and happy. Only such families always thrive and are happy. 7

Message: On the basis of the Veds, the *rishis* (sages) have divided the human-life into 4 'ashrams'. The four ashrams are - *brahmacharya ashram*, *gruhastha ashram*, *vanprastha ashram* and *sanyas ashram*. Considering a life-span of a hundred years, these *ashrams* have been specified. Only in the Vedic religion, these ashrams of 25 years each have been categorised and this is the speciality of the Vedic stream of thought. The word *brahmacharya* is made of two words i.e. 'brahma' or God and 'aacharan' means conduct. Thus it implies the conduct as followed by God. The second Meaning of *brahmacharya* is celibacy. Thus the combination of two Meanings implies the attainment of physical, mental intellectual and spiritual strengths, through celibate living upto attainment of 25th year for a successful material and spiritual life. During *gruhastha ashram* which means the life of a householder, the above powers are used and the man employs his earnings in deeds connected to a householder's duties and to fulfil to his wife's and children's needs. Then he reinforces his powers in the 3rd phase i.e. *vanaprastha ashram* through 'brahmacharya' (i.e. celibacy), self-study, *japa* (i.e. recitations) and 'tapa' (or austerities). In the *sanyas-ashram* he distributes to the society his acquired knowledge, wisdom and experience. This organisation of a man's life into four ashrams is a very great speciality of Vedic religion.

If *brahmacharya ashram* is the foundation of life, then *gruhastha ashram* is a beautiful building constructed on it. *Gruhastha ashram* has its own importance, usefulness and achievements. In *gruhastha ashram*, the sentiment of self-denial gets strengthened. The family members with love and co-operation for each other are eager to bear hardships for the sake of other members of the family. And in what words to describe the great sacrifice of a woman? She is the very incarnation of self-denial. As wife, sister and daughter or as mother her self-denial contributes to the divine joy in the family. A restrained life contributes to excellent health. The householder making a living through pure means maintains sweet relationships with his relatives, associates and neighbours. Through these means he manages to get the facilities for making his life happy, peaceful prosperous, and so also the society.

A family is made up of more than one person living together. Thus besides the husband and wife, there are: son, daughter, brother, sister, mother, father, aunt, uncle, grand-father, grand-mother, father-in-law, mother-in-law etc. The sweetness and purity of relationships between them creates an atmosphere of a special cheerfulness, happiness, joy and lively bustle. If there is a closeness of love and trust between the husband and wife, then the feelings of love, affection, faith and service for each other will be created. All will think of the interest of each other and will do beneficial work, and the situation of giving importance to money above everyone else, including family members, will not arise. With a sense of belonging, generosity and co-operation, all will serve each other and there will be joy and happiness in the family.

Only love and friendliness are the foundations of an ideal family.

तमस्मेरा युवतयो युवानं

Tamasmera yuvatayom yuvaanum

मर्मृज्यमानाः परि यन्त्यापः ।

marmrujayamaanaaha pari yantyaapaha

स शुक्रेभिः शिक भी रेवदस्मे

Sa shukrebhihi shik bhi revadasme

दीदायानिध्मो घृतनिर्णिगप्सु ॥

Didaayaanidhmo ghrutanirnigapsu.

(Rigved 2/35/4)

Meaning: Those young men and young women should marry whose hearts are clean and pure. A man possessing physical strength should brighten his family by getting married.

Message: Born and brought up at two different places in two different families and in different atmospheres an adult man and woman, although of different nature and different physical forms. Fulfil the aim of life by joining in total unity. The real meaning of marriage is to end the separate identity of two different persons and to be dedicated to each other. Only by this dedication and harmony a joint authority develops which can be termed as ‘two bodies but with one soul (or one identity)’.

Marriage means not only a union of two bodies but also a union of two souls. This is a spiritual endeavour. The basis of spiritual progress is love. A man is an ideal man in proportion to the deep and pure love in his heart. Devotion means sentimental love for God and a devotee means a lover of God. The spiritual endeavour of love for God is to make our life full of the divine sentiment of love. Only love is God. The experience of God in a man’s heart is expressed as a surge of love. The practical experience of this spiritual grandeur of love learnt in childhood is possible only in the laboratory of married life. Unique inseparable belonging and dedication for each other, faith, goodwill, equality and faithfulness makes the life full of love and warmth. A sense of belonging is a unique feeling. The one for whom this feeling develops, becomes very dear to us. The husband and wife do have human weaknesses and faults, but if, by understanding the aim of life, there is a mutual sense of belonging, dedication, unity and warmth, then the householder’s life progresses with joy. A man will automatically reform personal weaknesses and faults if he thinks ‘nothing for me but everything for my life-partner’. Experiencing an inner love, both the husband and the wife, experience goodness at every moment

To-day the people have forgotten the high aims and ideals of marriage which has now become a certificate for animalism of sex. Boys seek beautiful girls who will excite them so that their lust can become intense. Along with this the girls look for a moneyed boy so that along with sexual gratification, they also get luxury and comforts. People forget that the foundation for success of marriage is the mentality, culture and idealism of the life-partner. The principal aim of marriage is spiritual and with it the married life becomes happy and only then happiness, peace, prosperity and bright cheer reign in the family.

This is the spirituality of married life.

अक्षयौ नौ मधुसंकाशे अनीकं नौ समञ्जनम् ।

Akshyow naou madhusankaashe

anikum naou samanjanum

अन्तः कृणुष्व मां हृदि मन इत्रौ सहासति ॥

Antaha krunushya maam hrudi

mana eennaou sahaasati

(Atharvaved 7/36/1)

Meaning: Let us husband and wife, look at each other with the gaze of love, always speak sweet words and reside in each other's heart. Let us be two bodies but with one mind only.

Message: What is the aim and ideal of marriage? Right from the beginning of civilisation, why is this institution of marriage still continuing? If satisfying only the sexual desire is the reason for marriage, then this deal is very costly and troublesome. In this deal both sides seem to be heavy losers. Like the oil-miller's bullock tied to the grinder's beam and moving round and round throughout 8 to 10 hours, man also is crushed under the drudgery of earning for the family and the woman ruins not only her health and personality but also her life in the vicious circle of producing children. The aim of marriage is never like this. If that was the aim, the organisation of the human society would have been completely destroyed and had been at a level lower than that of animals.

Marriage is a spiritual endeavour. This is a union of love which is nourished on the high ideals of self-denial and generosity. This is for men of goodwill and men who are brave. For a happy home-life, the life of the would-be groom and the bride-to-be should be of a high level, and both should be persons with quality and virtue. The groom should be knowing the Veds, properly educated, cultured and tolerant. The bride-to-be should be pure and impressive. With internal cleanliness of the body, the mind and intellect become pure. If the mind is clean, then the intellect and the mental tendencies too would be pure. With the body's inner and outer cleanliness comes the purity of conduct, good qualities develop and the light of knowledge and determination spreads around. The test of man's life is based on knowledge and character. Bright men and learned women, proven true on the above test, can achieve spiritual progress by joining in marriage and by living a 'yagiyaa-life'. If the bond of marriage is made on the basis of capacity, learning and worthiness, then the life of husband and wife becomes happy.

The situation in the present times is indeed very strange. Maximum importance is given to pomp and wealth, but inner beauty (i.e. virtues) and personality in the form of qualities are ignored. As a result generally dissatisfaction and distrust are seen. In the absence of real sympathy, warmth and unity, despite living together, they live like lifeless strangers. They remain deprived of the inner joy and enthusiasm of the happiness, naturalness and tolerance of married life. A woman attuned to modernity turns the peace of home into restlessness.

Husband and wife are complementary to each other. The objective of a successful family-life will be achieved if both consider each other venerable and work diligently for the success of marriage with mutual faithfulness, closeness, service, honour, co-operation, goodwill and generosity. For this holy objective, the husband and wife must be completely loyal to each other, and not think of any other woman or man.

By doing this, a heavenly atmosphere will be created in the family.

ममेयस्तु पोष्या मह्यं त्वादाद् बृहस्पतिः ।

Mameyamastu poshyaa

mahyum tvaadaad bruhaspatihi

मया पत्या प्रजावति सं जीव शरदः शतम् ॥

maya patya prajaavti

sum jeeva sharadah shatam

(Atharvaved 14/1/52)

Meaning: O wife! God has handed you over to me. The responsibility of maintaining you lies with me. Let us both have children and live up to hundred years.

Message: The responsibility of a happy home-life lies with both husband and wife, although of course, the responsibility of the husband is more because the wife leaves her family to join the husband's family. God, the Supreme Father has created the opportunity for the union of two souls and the conduct of both must be excellent. By doing this, happiness in family and good luck are achieved. Good luck of married life does not lie merely in getting married, but there should be loving adjustment between the husband and wife and only by that type of behaviour, permanent happiness is achieved. Good-luck remains stable where there is mutual sharing of love and happiness or sorrow between the two. To maintain this happiness of married life, it is necessary to maintain this tradition and to have healthy children. In this way both remain happy and achieve longevity with good luck.

For a happy future of the bride-to-be, it becomes necessary to evaluate the qualities of the husband-to-be. A worthy, learned and addiction-free man can carry the burden of a successful and happy family. He should not only be highly knowledgeable and with good qualities, but simultaneously physically strong and free from bad tendencies, bad activities and addictions. Addictions are like poison in a family. A man trapped in liquor, gambling, etcetera destroys the family's happiness and peace, and gets insults and bad name, and along with him his wife also undergoes mental pain.

From a practical view-point, the wife's area of work is within the home and the husband's area of work is outside the home. His responsibility is to look after the family with a proper display of his worthiness, learning etc. The woman's work-area lies in properly organising the home. It is the woman's duty to make proper use of money earned honestly by the husband, to maintain house, cleanliness etcetera and to feed the family. Both must make proper adjustments in their above duties and make arrangements to run the family satisfactorily within limited means. It is the wife's duty to maintain a cheerful atmosphere within the family even by bearing hardships. A man is not as skilful as a woman in organising the home. A heaven I y atmosphere prevails in a neat home.

A man must be prosperous as far as food-grains and other means of comfort are concerned. He should be bright and cheerful. Only such husband can fully satisfy his wife and keep her cheerful.

सम्राज्ञी श्वशुरे भव, सम्राज्ञी श्वश्रवां भव ।

Samraagni shwasuray bhava,
samraagni swashravaam bhava

ततान्दरि सम्राज्ञी भव, सम्राज्ञी अधि देवृषु ॥

Tataandari samraagni bhava,
samraagni adhi devrushu

(*Rigved* 10/85/46)

Meaning: O daughter -in -law! Lead your life in such a way that your mother-in-law, father-in-law, sister-in-law and brother-in-law, all respect and honour you.

Message: After the marriage, the wife leaves behind everything in her father's home and comes to her husband's home. Everything is left behind including her mother, father, brothers, sisters, family home - everything. She leaves behind the entire milieu of love where she was born, spent her childhood, studied and entered her youth and after becoming related to an unknown stranger, goes to his home. Is she at a loss by this renunciation of her previous family? No. In return for her renunciation, her total surrender to her husband's family, she becomes a very important member of her new family, now that family becomes her own family, where she gets the status of the lady-of-the-house. She becomes the owner of the family and the entire responsibility of the family comes on her head.

In this new family she becomes the Empress over her mother-in-law, father-in-law, sister-in-law, and brother-in-law. Just as an Emperor looking after the happiness, comfort, and maintaining cordial relations among all, pays attention to the progress of the kings and their populace under his rulership, similarly by becoming the chief member of the family, the new bride has to carry a very big burden of properly organising the comforts, meals and the family paraphernalia for all the members of the family. It becomes her duty to think of the interests of all the family members, big or small. Because of maintaining all these duties, she is aptly called the owner or the Empress of the family.

The meaning of becoming the Empress or owner of the family does not imply that she establish her supremacy over the others. The implied meaning of the above title is that she should fulfil her important responsibilities, deal courteously with all and administer the house with the guidance of the elders by benefiting from their experience. By coming to the new milieu, she should not consider herself as a servant and feel inferior in any way that is why she has been given the glorious status of an Empress. All the members of the family should conduct themselves with love and warmth towards her by giving her proper respect.

But to-day, most men ignore this loving, healthy viewpoint and do not accord the proper status to the new bride. By considering her as a servant, mother-in-law, sister-in-law and others keep on ordering her every moment. They find fault in her proper work. She is ignored, neglected, beaten and sometimes even killed. Why does this come to pass? It is a matter of great sorrow, grief and worry. There is smoothness in dealings when the parents-in-law consider the daughter-in-law as their own daughter and she also considers them as much more than father and mother. The question is, 'who should make a beginning? Parents-in-law or the daughter-in-law?' Being the elders, the parents-in-law should give her the love and warmth which they would accord to their own daughter, so that the void she feels in her heart because of separation from her own parents, is filled up. After that her enthusiasm for looking after the needs and comforts of her empire will automatically double-up.

In this only lies the glory of the Lady-of-the-house.

यथा सिन्धुर्नदीनां साम्राज्यं सुषवे वृषा ।

Yathaa sindhumadinaam

saamraajyum sushuve vrusha

एवा त्वं साम्राज्येधि पत्यरस्तं परेत्य ॥

evaa tvum saamraagyedhi

patyarastum paretya

(Atharvaved 14/1/43)

Meaning: When the ocean creates the rain (through evaporation of its water into clouds), the rivers get water, that is, the ocean controls the rivers. Similarly, O wife! You too make the entire family happy by becoming the owner of the house

Message: The life of a householder is full of responsibilities. Only men with deep insight, understanding and practical skills can be successful in this phase of life. Even educated men commit mistakes because of lack of practical skills, then what to say about uneducated persons? One develops practicalness by living with experienced men. It is not possible merely by getting high education. A person must obtain the knowledge from experienced people about the practical conduct with parents, parents-in-law, brothers, sisters and other family members after matrimony.

The joint-family system in our country is a blessing in disguise and a person gets exposed to family's responsibilities right from childhood. There is great importance of the joint-family system from the spiritual and sentimental viewpoint also. Service to parents, help to brothers and sisters and to think of problems of the family members as one's own and getting involved in their solution, reduces one's selfishness, and increases generosity of mind and heart. Those thinking of only their own bodies and the comforts of their wives may obtain certain facilities in early life, but they have to suffer the punishment for their narrow-mindedness for the remaining life. The usefulness of a joint-family is realised during illness, weakness, calamities, and quarrels and fights and at that time the other members of the family help in their own way and lighten the burden on the family. The inclusion and maintenance of unworthy, incapable, mad and wicked is possible in a joint-family system. Left to themselves, such men would have found even begging and survival difficult.

The new bride is the centre of the family and all family members have some expectations from her. The maintenance of the family's cheer, joy, enthusiasm and harmony depends on her practical skills. If mutual goodwill, warmth, courtesy, respect and co-operation are maintained, then dissatisfaction and malice are never produced. Every member of the family must fulfil his duties properly and must not claim undue rights. It should not happen that because of being seniors some persons keep enjoying and the juniors have to work like ox carrying the burden of drudgery in an oil-mill. This leads to the division of the family.

The administration of a family should be like the mutual relationship between the ocean and the rivers. The ocean is the master of all the water in the world. The water of the rivers also flows down into it, but the ocean never considers the water as his exclusive property.. Through clouds, he rains down the water to every nook and corner of the world. Similarly it is expected of the new bride that, becoming the mistress of the happiness and comforts of all members, she should consider as her supreme good-luck to think of their interests with sobriety and gain the love and rest of the family members.

अघोरचक्षुरपतिघ्नी स्योना

Aghorachakshurpatighni syona

शग्मा सुशेवा सुयमा गृहेभ्यः ।

shagma sushevaa suyamaa gruhebhyaha

वीर सूदेवृकामा सं

veera surdevrakaamaa sum

त्वयैधिषीमहि सुमनस्यमाना ॥

tvayaidhishimahi sumanasyamanaa

(Atharvaved 14/2/17)

Meaning: a bride! By your pleasant nature, do good of the family members with a pure heart. That will increase happiness and wealth in the home.

Message: If the home has to be made happy and beneficial, then the family atmosphere should be peaceful and amiable. Even the animals and birds live in peaceful and pleasant surroundings. Just as the birds and animals like peaceful and safe places, in the same way man also desires a peaceful family atmosphere to remain cheerful. It is the joint responsibility of the husband and the wife to create a heavenly atmosphere in the home. Under the '*pativrat dharma*' (i.e. faithfulness to the husband) and the '*patnivrat dharma*' (i.e. faithfulness to the wife) they should enthusiastically discharge their respective duties and it should be their constant endeavour that the role of either partner should be better than the other's.

This type of conduct is expected of the new bride. With her lies the reputation of the family. The dignity of the family and the clan depends on her character and conduct. She is the guardian of the traditions of the clan and gives birth to worthy children.

The responsibility of making the family stronger rests on her. Her duty is not merely to fulfil the household duties, but to increase the prestige of the family, to observe excellent ancient traditions, to give proper respect to members of the dynasty, welcome and honour the guests, to eliminate the bad tendencies in the family, give birth to children who will be full of knowledge, wisdom and prosperity and to educate them about excellent thoughts and conduct. These are her important functions. Only that woman is liked by everyone in the family, who considers her happiness only in the happiness of the family and always strives for the same.

The qualities like modesty, character, warmth, and love in a woman are such that they attract man without effort. She has a natural attraction mostly because of her beauty. Physical beauty, qualities, knowledge, dignity, and a liking for art etcetera contribute to excellence of her personality. The basis of attraction is the purity of heart, simplicity and lack of deceit, which attract a man with similar virtues easily. A woman's beauty has a certain intoxicating effect. By this magnetism, she attracts all the family members like a fragrant flower. But more important than external beauty is inner beauty, purity of feelings, purity of thinking etc. The home of the woman, who thinks in the interest of all in the family with sincerity, sympathy and co-operation etcetera, and strives in this direction, remains filled with happiness and peace. Only a hard-working and dutiful woman makes her family happy.

Only a skilful woman with inner beauty has the capacity to eradicate the troubles of the family. Thinking of the interests of all, she makes her own life happy and makes the family also prosperous.

आ पवस्व हिरण्यवदश्वत्सोम वीरवत् ।

Aa pavasva hiranyavadashwa

vatsoma veeravat

वाजं गोमन्तमा भर स्वाहा ॥

vaajum gomantamaa bhara swaahaa

(Yajurved 8/63)

Meaning: To run the household properly men must earn gold, animals and money by their efforts. The household is not complete without them. The progress of family-life lies in diligent work.

Message: No work in this world can be carried out without money, then how can the household run without it? The reality is that man earns money as a householder only and simultaneously provides for the economic and other needs of those in *brahmacharya ashram*, *vanaprastha ashram* and *sanyas ashram*. To earn the money for the family's expenses and to put that money to good use, both are important. Without that, proper administration of the household will become impossible. It is necessary for man to earn for maintaining his family, but the means for the income must be pure.

There are four media for earning: farming or agriculture, business, service and labour. The earning from agriculture can be considered pure, only when there is no exploitation of the labourers and they are paid proper wages. The earning of a businessman is pure when he does not adulterate the goods and does not sell at exorbitant rates by creating artificial shortages. He should charge only the proper interest and pay full taxes to the government. A person in service, whether big or small, should discharge his duties with sincerity, should not accept bribes and should not take advantage of the property of the government or the institute for personal use. A labourer must not shirk work and work with full dedication. Money snatched from the poor, the orphans, accumulated by exploiting others and earned through improper means, is impure. For the happiness and prosperity of the household, economic purity is very essential.

Just as one should be alert and cautious about the (purity of) means for income, similarly one must also pay careful attention in putting the income to good use. The husband and the wife are two wheels in the chariot of the household. Whereas it is the duty of the husband to earn, it is the wife's duty to do various works in the house. If the husband treads the wrong path, is given to addictions or is suffering from disease, the economic arrangement for the family will break down and all will suffer hardships.

Religious books have beautifully described the good use of money as '— *dharmaya yashasearthaaya aatmane swajanaayacha.*' The earned income should be divided into five parts. One part should be given for religion and one in donation for achieving fame. With that only the activities of *vanaprastha ashram* and *sanyaas ashram* are carried out and arrangements made for schools for *brahmchaaris* and so on. One part should be ploughed back into business for earning more or should be kept in reserve for future. The remaining amount should be used for self and near ones.

Those householders who strictly stick to purity in earning and are discreet as described above in using the income always remain happy, contented and prosperous.

धाता दधातु नो रयिमीशानो जगतस्पतिः ।

Dhaataa dadhaatu no
rayimishaano jagataspatihi

स नः पूर्णेन यच्छतु ॥

Sa naha poornena yachhatu

(Atharvaved 7/17/1)

Meaning: Let the householders by their diligence and God's grace achieve happiness through money and strength.

Message: The Veds do not prohibit the earning of money. They ask the people to earn in a religious and just manner. That man is ideal, who earns money in accordance with religious tenets through excellent means, who never thinks of earning under the pressure of greed through unjust and irreligious means, or by exploiting others or by depriving others of their rights. He always prays to God, “*agne nayaa supathaa raaye*” which means “O God! Make us tread the good path for earning money.”

Money earned through immoral and unjust means shines like the glow-worm, makes us happy for some time and then darkness reigns. It is the duty of the gentleman that he never leaves any stone unturned in his diligence, and remain contented in whatever he earns through maximum hard work. Without causing sorrow for anyone, without bending down before wicked persons and without giving up the path of goodness, whatever little is earned is itself enough. Immorally earned money can create an overflow of facilities and comforts, but also, simultaneously makes the family members indulgent in pleasures, lazy, shirkers, greedy, lecherous and diseased. Little happiness and more sorrow is obtained with that money, through which many types of bad tendencies and addictions also enter into the family. Because of its bad influence there is physical and mental downfall of the family members, and mutual malice, doubts and ill-feelings are created among them.

That is why; great emphasis is laid in our scriptures on the purity of a householder's earning. Simultaneously it is also necessary to put that money to good use. Householders must try to provide for the necessary articles for a proper home but must not allow things for luxury and indulgence of the senses. This Vedic sentiment is being ignored everywhere. Billions of rupees worth cosmetics and other luxury items are imported from the foreign countries. Our diet, style of living, style of dress, everything is full of artificiality and pomp. It is not only improper but even harmful from the viewpoint of health in the Indian atmosphere and lifestyle.

Such diligence for maintaining the purity of money is possible when the man has sufficient will-power, the courage to ignore material temptations and there is unity of thinking in all the members of the family. This type of education is given to children right from childhood in cultured families and therefore they develop right from the beginning the self-confidence to resist bad customs. All the family members in such families achieve spiritual progress in the heavenly, atmosphere of happiness and contentment and become helpful in the creation of a healthy society.

अश्लीला तनूर्भवति रुशती पापयामुया ।

Ashlilaa tanurbhavati

rushati paapayaamuyaa

पतिर्यद् वध्वोः वाससः स्वमङ्गमभ्युर्णुते ॥

Patiryad vadhwoho vasasaha

swamangamabhyurnutay

(Atharvaved 14/1/27)

Meaning: That man becomes impure who makes use of the money and material brought by the woman: in other words to take dowry is a great sin.

Message: The Empire of 'agni' or fire is throughout the world because it sustains and nurtures mankind by its heat energy for cooking and warmth. No work is possible without energy. Similarly a person, who is profound and bright like the fire, becomes reputed and receives love. Those who are like the Sun, like kings and are brave they too receive respect, honour, name and fame. The Sun gives light, dispels darkness and nourishes the whole world. Men of excellence work for the welfare of all by the light and power of their virtues by destroying the ignorance and wickedness in the world. Just as a king protects the country, looks after the interests of all, and deals with all like a well-wishing friend and therefore becomes popular, similarly a king-like person also remains busy in the interest of the family and the society and protects them and serves them with the feeling of 'aatmavatsarvabhooteshu' i.e. everyone has the soul within him or her just like his. A brave man defends his country and society at the cost of his life.

For such virtuous men, the scriptures have given the permission to marry and enjoy marital bliss. Only those who are knowledgeable, well-built and diligent should marry a beautiful, virtuous woman of good qualities and fulfil the responsibility of a householder. Like the fire, Sun and king, they should make arrangements for the sustenance of the family. They should keep their wives happy with clothes, ornaments, money and provisions. Only a prosperous and cheerful husband can fulfil all the wishes of the wife. Like the sun, he should be industrious and dynamic, should earn sufficiently to fulfil the needs of the family and like the king should keep his wife and family contented, happy and protected. Only therein lies the glory of householdership.

Marriage should always be between deserving and cultured man- woman. A lazy and ignorant man always remains poor and unhappy and always looks for free helpings. Such men make marriage also a trade for earning money and resort to the meanness of collecting dowry forcefully from the bride's family by sheer force. What can be lower than this? Whatever money and material is given to a woman at the time of her marriage is hers only and in Indian society called 'streedhan' i.e. woman's property. The husband has no right at all to make any use of this. The difference between something given willingly as a gift to the daughter, and that collected under duress is like the difference between heaven and hell. It is an indication of the lowest level of man's character to demand dowry and to use various tricks to get it. Not only is taking dowry crime, but also it leads to man's spiritual downfall and crumbles to dust his respect, honour, name and dignity. No one can be meaner and more wicked than those who plan to run their family with the wife's money.

Man's honour is restricted to his diligence only.

लोकं पृण छिद्रं पृणाथो सीद ध्रुवा त्वम् ।

Lokum pruna chhidrum prunatho

seeda dhruvaa tvum

इन्द्राग्नी त्वा बृहस्पतिरस्मिन् योनावसीषदन् ॥

Indraagni tvaa bruhaspatirasmin

yonaavasishadan

(Yajurved 15/59)

Meaning: Benevolent women carry out every work of the home with interest. They should not be lazy for any work. They educate other women about the proper conduct of the house as is done by every woman of learning and excellence.

Message: What is the basis of married life? What is its root? The basis of a household is the wife. The responsibility for the home's safety, organisation, administration, supervision and progress is on her only. A house is not a home until there is a 'gruhini' (mistress of the home) in it. There is also a proverb that a house without a woman is a shelter for ghosts. A home without the lady-of-the-house feels forlorn and desolate. With the presence of a woman, there is increase in 'shree' (it has several meanings such as wealth, decor and beauty) and 'aishwarya' (aishwarya also has several meanings such as supremacy, superiority, something extra in the personality, wealth etc). For increase in 'shree' and 'aishwarya' in the family, the woman must have the gentle qualities of will-power, moral simplicity, purity, virtues and discretion. Only such a morally simple, virtuous and skilful woman is beneficial for the family. Just as the plants and trees grow and bear flowers and fruits with proper watering, similarly with a virtuous and learned woman, there is all-round progress in the family. A virtuous woman is like *Lakshmi* (goddess of wealth) for the family.

Fortunate is the husband who has a beautiful, virtuous, faithful and soft-spoken wife. The wife is also called 'dharma-panti' (dharma means religion and patni means wife) because she conducts herself according to religious tenets and takes part with her husband and the family in religious duties and deeds. The basis of happiness in marriage is the sameness of the conduct of both. If both are thoroughly attuned to each other and experiencing oneness of mind, honour each other and co-operate in the organisation of the home, the life of both becomes pleasant and harmonious.

The responsibility of running the households lies on the wife. The man hands over the earned income to the wife and she has to make all the arrangements. Only that woman becomes popular who works cheerfully for enhancing the 'shree' in the family. To be full of sweetness, beauty, diligence and faithfulness to the husband is an indication of the woman's good-luck. That woman's dignity is enhanced who believes her husband to be the best and with it she never gets a feeling of inferiority. Married life will be automatically happy where a woman has the fine qualities of moral simplicity, gentleness, humility etcetera.

Only an industrious and dedicated woman can make a family happy. She should be eager in thinking of the benefits for all members of the family. It is the duty of the wife to serve her parents-in-law, her husband, to deal lovingly with all family members and to organise the meals etcetera for the family members. There should not be bitterness or cruelty in her attitude. If she creates a bitter atmosphere, then the harmony of the family will cease. Her own life will become unhappy and she will become a problem for others also. It is her responsibility to constantly strive for the happiness of the family.

Only this is the duty for the home of excellent women.

स्योना पृथिवी नो भवानृक्षरा निवेशनी ।

Syonaa pruthivi no

bhavaanruksharaa niveshani

यच्छा नः शर्म सप्रथाः अप नः शोशुचदघम् ॥

yachh aanaha sharma saprathaahaa

apa naha shoshuchadghum.

(Yajurved 35/21)

Meaning: That woman is worthy of running the house who has forgiveness like the earth's and is able to remove the faults of others.

Message: A woman receives respect in the family based on her worthiness. The more worth she has, the more respectable she will become. If she is capable in all the household duties, then she will be dear to all and respected by all. Her duty is to create an atmosphere of bustling joy in the family and honour the elders and the deities. The deities become pleased with *yagya* (oblations in the holy-fire) and other worship and all the elders too are pleased when looked upon with faith. Just as the father is kind and dutiful towards his sons, in the same way the woman also should keep all members happy by her good dealings and by looking after their comforts. Closeness, co-operation and goodwill increase with loving behaviour towards all and the lady-of-the-house gets the strength to tackle successfully the family-problems.

It is the wife's prime duty not to think of any harm to her husband nor act in a way which harms her husband's interest. She should sustain him throughout life. Her conduct towards all the family members should be loving. She should not bear malice, enmity or get angry without reason with anyone. The best virtue of woman is forgiveness and she must have large-hearted forgiveness like the earth's. She must have the capacity to forgive a person, despite his/ her ill-feelings towards her, and then making that person her own by loving behaviour. This does not mean that the wife should forgive the wickedness and faults of everyone in the family and allow them to go ahead on the wicked path. On the contrary she also has the responsibility to exercise strict control over all and firmly crush the wicked tendencies and faults before they increase. If sometimes there is a difference of opinion between the husband and the wife, then keeping in view the larger interests of the family and keeping aside their differences, they should continue to be engaged in creating a stronger family. The husband and wife are the two wheels of the chariot of married life. With harmony and co-operation between the two, life goes on happily and mutual respect increases.

The wife also must have spirituality, faith and devotion to God. With devoted worship of God, moral simplicity, mental strength and will-power increase and because of them there is development and progress in life. Her brightness, which depends on the strength of her character, increases with worship. Pure character makes a man a '*devata*' (deity) and makes woman 'sati' (pristine pure like '*satya*' or truth), '*saadhvi*' (devoted like a nun) and '*devi*' (a deity in female form). With that her reputation in the family increases. If alongwith the strength of character, there is also the strength of knowledge, it makes the woman '*poojya*' (one whom we worship) and '*shraddheya*' (one in whom one puts faith) and she becomes venerable by all.

Such a woman, full of the strength of character, knowledge and faithfulness to her husband takes everyone ahead on the good path of good intelligence, good thinking and good qualities; makes them worthy and long-lived and becomes helpful in achieving the goal of life.

Only a virtuous and skilful woman is the decor of the house.

सूयवसाद्भगवती हि भूया

Sooya vasadbhagavati hee bhooya

अथो वयं भगवन्तः स्याम ।

atho vayam bhagavantaha syaam

अद्वि तृणमध्न्ये विश्वदानीं

addhvi trunmadhnye vishwadaanim

पिब शुद्धमुदकमाचरन्ती ॥

peeba shuddhamudakamaacharanti

(Rigved 1/164/40)

Meaning: The mothers should become knowledgeable to make their children properly educated. The glory of the society increases when women produce children after marriage with men of good conduct and make the children cultured. Her sacrifice is as pure as of cows.

Message: In her various roles, woman always spends her life by renunciation, sacrifice, patience, sympathy, love and faith for the human race. One sees in her eyes compassion, beauty and joy. Her speech is the source of nectar for the life. Her sweet smile has the incredible capacity to remove all the disappointment and bitterness-of the world. As a wife, she is her husband's partner, and co-performer of religious duties and rituals. The wife's tender skill saves the husband from rudeness and animal-like behaviour, keeps him in the organised atmosphere of family-life and lends him the dignity of a householder. When a woman adorned with learning, grandeur, bravery, good tastes, warmth and compassion marries a man of culture, good conduct and character, then both in the family as well as in the society their names and fame spread.

The best identity of a woman is as a mother and through motherhood her personality becomes complete. To give birth to a child is not a result of physical entertainment, but a grave responsibility with far- reaching effects. Many and varied problems like the development of the foetus in the womb, the bringing up of the baby after the terrible pain of child- birth, the feeding and exercising of the baby, education etcetera are connected with it Ultimately only the parents have to make proper arrangements for it If the husband and wife have the capacity to bear all the above responsibilities, then they should try to bring forth a new life into this world. In advance, they must make their physical health, mental background and family atmosphere so excellent that the child to be born will prove pure and cultured from every angle. Just as we prepare for any work in advance, similarly for this very important plan, there should not be any mistake in the preparation. The influence of the culture of the parents comes into the child right from the time of conception and remains for lifetime in the individual.

Without proper preparations, to give birth to uncultured and undeveloped children not only creates troubles for the parents, but simultaneously it becomes a breach of trust with the society and the country. A society filled with citizens who are wicked and addicted is collectively pushed into the chasm of downfall. Such children become a stigma on a woman's motherhood. Only when the pious deed of giving birth to proper, virtuous, well developed and cultured children is carried out with full faith and dedication, can the number of impressive and excellent men increase.

पुनन्तु मा देवजनाः पुनन्तु मनसा धियः ।

Punantu maa devajanaahaa

punantu manasaa dhiyaha

पुनन्तु विश्वा भूतानि जातवेदः पुनीहि मा ॥

punantu vishwaa bhutaani

jaatavedaha puneehi maa

(Yajurved 19/39)

Meaning: Every good householder must fulfil his duty to make his sons and daughters learned, graceful and strong in character through *brahmacharya*, good conduct and education.

Message: Man receives the education for good culture in the school that is home. The gems of the society also graduate from this school. The individual and the society are two wheels of a chariot whose axle is the institution of home. If this fact can be understood, then just like the need for making a man capable and the society completely clean, the necessity of making the families also cultured will be understood. Every member of such a cultured family gets heavenly bliss and the vital wealth of progress in the small nest of home.

After the birth of the child, the responsibility for his proper upbringing, food and clothing, education etcetera also rests on the householder. Not only that, but it is also the duty of the elders to build the character of the children. If this is not properly carried out, then children become the victims of many bad tendencies and they become a curse for themselves, their families and the society. It is also their duty to save them from bad tendencies and to inculcate good habits in them. It is true that children are born with certain hereditary habits and culture, but their development or destruction depends mostly on the prevailing circumstances. The main basis of the children's mental development is the mental condition of the parents and the family- atmosphere. It is also a mysterious fact that the child starts learning as an embryo in the womb and by the age of his 5th year, completes almost three- fourth of the work of forming his mental attitude. During this period, the child is extremely sensitive. Knowledge, wisdom, practical conduct etc, he learns afterwards, but the age during which his nature and character are formed and his culture and faith develop is up to the fifth year.

That is why the '*garbhadhan-sanskar*' is the first of the 16 sacraments during a person's life in the Vedic-culture. And, description has been made in the Veds about the requirements of the husband and wife before pregnancy is achieved. The husband and the wife must remove their faults and bad tendencies and refine their conduct, dealings and speech. In the formation of the child, the father's seed (sperm) and the mother's soil (the womb) both have equal importance. The foundation of capable children starts from here. Here the example of the great ancient warrior *Abhimanyu* is well-known.

Giving birth to children is not a subject of individual entertainment. The birth and formation of a new personality is a great responsibility. If we forget this duty, then we will be creating the demons who themselves remain unhappy, make their families unhappy and increase wicked activities, and thus by our own sins, we will be creating hell for ourselves as well as for all others.

उप नः सूनवो गिरः शृण्वन्तमृतस्य ये ।

Oop naha sunavo giraha

shrunvantvamrutasya yay

समृडीका भवन्तु नः ॥

samrudika bhvantu naha

(Yajurved : 33m)

Meaning: For the benefit and welfare of the children their parents should make them spiritually strong by giving spiritual and other excellent education.

Message: When man gives birth to children, then naturally it is his responsibility to look after them, to educate them, to have them religiously initiated, to get them married and to help them to earn their livelihood. It is proper for a man to arrange for the nourishment, clothing, and education and look after their health during the childhood and teenage of his children, and help them stand on their feet so that they can be physically and mentally independent in future. It is the duty of the elders and parents to provide nutritious diet, proper education, simple healthy entertainment and proper friends to the children. Such media and atmosphere should be provided to them for improving their qualities, deeds and nature, that they get the direction for becoming cultured gentlemen. An elder who does not carry out this duty should be considered a criminal for neglecting his duty. If because of their indulgence, the children become lazy, given to luxurious habits, fond of only tasty food, arrogant, rude and wicked, then they have done injustice to their children by such ruinous indulgence.

After the birth of a child, the entire condition of the house should be such that there should be no possibility of dirtiness, malice, impudence and immorality. Everyone must carefully keep this in mind. Like a very skilful and sensitive spy, the child goes on constantly observing our conduct and dealings and learns many things. His nature will be formed only on the basis of whatever is taught to him during this period, and on his growing up, his future will be shaped accordingly. For those understanding this fact, it becomes an unavoidable duty to control their wicked tendencies, create gentle conditions of goodwill and good behaviour and willingly give up whatever is necessary to be rejected. Parents should not quarrel and have maximum restraint on sex so that they do not find their children getting spoilt.

The education of the children is not dependent on lectures and advice, but on imitation. Their tender mind is incapable of understanding long sermons of advice, but their heart is completely capable of understanding and accepting whatever is happening. Therefore, whatever has to be taught to them must be actually demonstrated to them. Now the ancient 'gurukul system' does not exist. (In the *gurukul* system, the child used to live with the teacher in his heritage in the jungles upto the time of his youth and learn from him.) To-day there is no atmosphere of good character and culture in the schools, colleges and the streets. The children are bombarded with only bad thinking and bad culture from all sides. Therefore it becomes necessary in such a situation that the atmosphere in the home must be extremely clean, peaceful, and full of gentle and moral conduct, so that the children get inspiration for adopting good qualities.

एषा वा अतिथिर्यच्छ्रोत्रियस्तस्मात् पूर्वो नाशनीयात् ॥

Esha vaa atithirychhrowtriyastasmaat poorvo naashniyaat

(Atharvaved 9/6 (3) /7)

Meaning: O good householder men! You should first feed the 'atithi', the guest who comes unannounced and then eat

Message: *Atithi* has been considered as the fourth great deity after the mother, the father and the Guru (i.e. the spiritual teacher). As such thieves, cheats and criminals may also pose as 'atithis' and ask for food, just as the demon-king *Ravan* cheated the venerable *Sita* by coming as a monk. In reality the implied meaning of the word 'atithi' is those generous souls who come to someone's home, even if they may have to undergo hardship, for doing good and by their co-operation and grace, give benefit to the householder. In the ancient times, generous minded saints similarly used to grace householders by their visits and tried to make them happy and prosperous by their virtuous influence. It is but proper as well as necessary to welcome such excellent human beings as one would welcome deities. That is why the scriptures advocate that the 'atithi' should be considered as a deity and to honour him properly by the injunction — 'atithi devo bhava' i.e. consider the *atithi* as a deity.

Great importance is attached to five *yagyas* in the Veds, and 'atithi yagya' is one of our daily duties. When a man comes to our home, who is learned in the Veds and scriptures and who has dedicated his life to the welfare of the world, then we should be hospitable to him by offering food, clothes etcetera. In addition if some poor, sorrowful, helpless person or orphan comes at our doorstep or meets us at some place, then we should help him in every way. That too is 'atithi seva' or service to the 'atithi'.

In the ancient times, the householders used to take meals only after feeding the 'atithi', and used to consider themselves unfortunate when they did not come across any *atithi*. We too should have such sentiments in our hearts. The meal fed to an *atithi* never goes waste. If by getting energy from our food someone works for the upliftment of the society or country or someone's life is protected, that itself is important. An *atithi* should never be disappointed by us and asked to go, but it is also necessary to be cautious about wicked and bad men.

These days special hospitality is shown only to friends, guests, government servants etcetera because of the possibility of benefits through them. Under any excuse, whether a child's birthday, marriage, or if someone has passed an examination people are invited with insistence and lavish arrangements made for food. Not only that, but arrangements are also made for liquor and dance. Is this really *atithi satkar*? Is it not 'give-and-take' that just because someone had invited us for a feast on his child's birthday, then we too should go one better? Is it not pure business that by spending something on the guest, the path to earning a much larger amount is cleared? Is it not a means to get one's work done by bribing the higher executives? We should also remember that the amount spent thus on one person's food, liquor etc can go towards helping ten-twenty helpless persons who are really needy. This itself is real pious deed.

स्वाक्तं मे द्यावापृथ्वी स्वाक्तं मित्रो अकरयम् ।

Swaaktum me dhyavapruthivi

swaaktum mitro akaryum

स्वाक्तं मे ब्रह्मणस्पतिः स्वाक्तं सविता करत् ॥

swaaktum may brahmanaspatihi

swaaktum savitaa karat

(Atharvaved 7/30/1)

Meaning: Man should perform such good deeds as will give him the love of his mother, father and spiritual teachers.

Message: The cornerstone of man's stability and progress is his responsibility to his duty. If we give up our responsibilities and ignore the prescribed duties, then such obstacles will also be created that, life as a human being will also become impossible, leave alone progress. Every achievement of life depends only on responsible accountability. The stability and protection of every achievement depends only on dedication to duty. We have been granted the invaluable body. It can be made healthy, strong and long-lived only when bathing, cleanliness, work and exercise, punctuality, disciplined diet and restraint on pleasures of the senses are observed. The mind becomes powerful and capable when it is saved from worry, grief, disappointment, anger, excitement etcetera and fortified with enthusiasm, joy, daring, contentment, balance, patience, confidence, concentration or engrossment and similar qualities.

A person gets many facilities and a proper organisation through the family. But these facilities are available only to those who fulfil their duties towards other family members with full eagerness, care and honesty. A wife is not obtained only for service. It is also one of the duties to fulfil all the needs for her development, comforts, contentment and health. A cow gives milk only when the owner feeds her sufficient hay. Only he will get the joy of married life, who will win his wife's heart by doing his duties. Also, the children of only those persons will be cultured and well developed, who give them their love, time and co-operation and are always eager for their development and culture. And only they will receive the love and blessings of parents and spiritual teachers who, will look after their comforts and honour them. Only they should hope for receiving the overwhelming love and co-operation of their brothers and sisters who are willing to sacrifice their lives for them and give them plenty of love. Only the people dedicated to their duties can get the joy of family-life. Contrary to this, those who only claim their rights for facilities but forget the condition of doing their duty, for them there will be no difference between home and hell. The atmosphere of the home will be poisonous because of malice and quarrels. Neither will the wife be a life-companion nor will the children be obedient. The discontent of the parents and jealousy from the brothers and sisters will make the home like a crematorium.

For those who are ready to carry out their duties at every step and bear with the defects of other family members, the home is like heaven. But, for those who have big expectations from family members and are themselves negligent towards their own duties, home is like hell.

Our responsibility is towards self as well as God. Our existence is also for God. It is also necessary that we listen to the voice of conscience and go on striving for making the human life meaningful by doing our duty for the tasks ordained by God.

Only by such good deeds do we receive everyone's love and family-life becomes heavenly.

उपहूता भूरिधनाः सखायः स्वादुसंमुदः ।

Oopahoota bhooridhanaahaa

sakhaayaha swaadusammudaha

अक्षुध्या अतृष्या स्त गृहा मास्मद् विभीतन् ॥

akshudhya atrushya sta

gruhaa maasmada vibhitun

(Atharvaved 7/60/4)

Meaning: All the members of the family should earn and be happy. They should not be upset with hunger and thirst nor should they be afraid of each other.

Message: We may not have money a wealth, we may not even be in a position to give anything to anyone, but we are always capable of one thing and that is cheerfulness. We can constantly get the benefit of virtue and contentment by distributing cheer. If you include cheerfulness in your nature, develop a sense of humour, and then wherever you be, you will be spreading cheer and whosoever comes in your contact will feel pleasant and will be impressed.

In its purest form, cheerfulness is a state of mind which depends on inner culture. There are innumerable men who keep smiling in poverty and can laugh whole-heartedly in troubles. People with a generous and balanced personality are able to laugh in any situation. They know that human life is full of facilities as well as difficulties, favourable and unfavourable circumstances. Upto now no such man has been born who received only facilities and favourable circumstances and had never to face any troubles. In the tales of our ideals *Ram* and *Krishna*, there is a description of only struggle against difficult situations in their entire lives. Whatever the great men of the world, they all have smilingly fought adverse situations and have turned them in the right direction by changing them.

The same is the basis for a happy and prosperous family. In every family, the situations of happiness or unhappiness, troubles and hardship arise. A man who keeps on weeping over his troubles, adversities and hardships will always be unhappy. If he keeps comparing himself with more prosperous people, then he will be continuously angry over his bad luck, and will express his frustration with every person in the form of anger. His entire life will be like a symbol of mental imbalance.

As against the above, the person who compares himself with a person of lower status and is contented with whatever he has achieved, then he will always be cheerful, he will always feel that whatever he has got by the great grace of God is much better than what millions of others have got. In addition God has given us that something for which millions of people hanker. Such person will consider himself lucky. Only persons with refined temperament are blessed with this mental attitude. Such men find joy everywhere and have tremendous faith in people's goodwill.

The family of people with such thinking always has a happy and peaceful atmosphere. Even by bearing hardships, but living with love and contentment, they cooperate with one another. This creates an atmosphere of freedom from fear and worry and through that the path to everyone's financial, social, religious and spiritual progress, is opened up.

अर्चत प्रार्चत प्रियमेधासो अर्चत ।

Archata praarchata priyamedhaaso archata

अर्चन्तु पुत्रका उत पुरं न घृष्णवर्चत ॥

Archantu pootrakaa oota

puram na ghrushnvarchata

(Atharvaved 20/92/5)

Meaning: O God! May we, along with our sons, daughters, brothers and friends, always be involved in deeds for the progress of the soul.

Message: To go ahead for personal and spiritual progress, it is necessary for us to have within us the courage to fight against difficulties and lack of facilities. Man should give more emphasis on increasing his will-power instead of increasing the material means. In real progress there is not as much contribution of means and situations -as of thinking and ambitions. The proper blend of all these is possible through profound resolve.

All the members of the family must make a firm resolve for spiritual progress and undertake their daily work. With that their personality will become excellent and the family will be uplifted. The formation of man's personality is the result of his own insight, engrossment and valour, and is much more important than many other achievements in this world. One has to give an introduction of one's will-power, daring and vision and one has to go in the opposite direction to the one adopted by common people regarding morals and methods. The common people are involved in achieving prosperity and praise in return for a price, while, on the contrary the spiritual persons have to satisfy themselves with little under the policy of 'simple living and high thinking' and also face the ridicule, non-co operation and opposition from their colleagues.

One, who wins on the spiritual front, may not receive cheap praise, may suffer from want in material comforts, but becomes vitalised through the continuous grace of God. Only some rare individuals are lucky enough to achieve deep contentment and the glory of leaving behind an ideal worth following. Greatness is achieved only with idealism in thought, character and conduct.

Every member of the family must strive for spiritual uplift in individual life in this way. This itself is the education of good conduct. What kind of behaviour should we have towards our own and others, those of the same group and those of the opposite group, with friends and enemies, known persons and strangers, with external enemies and internal enemies (like anger, lust, greed, attachment etc)? Only they are able to achieve the proper answers to all these questions and doubts, who are constantly engaged in the uplift of their soul. Man's life is formed according to the results of his deeds. With good deeds he achieves progress and with bad deeds his moral down fall occurs. The Veds teach us to constantly increase virtues in us and give up bad tendencies. In this way the life will become pure and excellent.

In a happy and prosperous family, all members should behave in this way. It is the special responsibility of the parents to provide the children the experience of excellent behaviour and be helpful in their spiritual uplift.

इमं जीवेभ्यः परिधिं दधामि

Eemum jeevebhyaha paridhim dadhaami

मैषां नु गादपरो अर्थमेतम् ।

maisham nu gaadaparo arthametum

शतं जीवन्तु शरदः

shatum jeevantu sharadaha

पुरुचीरन्तर्मृत्युं दधतां पर्वतेन् ॥

puruchirantarmrutyum

dadhataam parvatena.

(Rigved 10/18/4, Yajurved 35/15)

Meaning: God has granted a longevity more than a hundred years to mankind. Therefore, man should live with restraint and celibacy and not die a premature death.

Message: The Creator has made this creation with his remarkable skill. He is everywhere. He is the guardian and decides the destiny of all. Everything works according to His rules and control. He does not allow disorganisation anywhere. There are 84,00,000 forms of life in this world, each form of life more wonderful than the other, some so small that they cannot be seen with the naked eye and the weight of some of them is ten, twenty, or even fifty times more than a human being's. Every life has a definite life-span ranging from one to two seconds for some to several hours, for some others to some days, and for yet some others years. If we see all around us with open eyes, then by seeing this definite order, our mind fills with awe.

God has granted innumerable blessings including that of life-span to all forms of life. Everyone's life-span is decided. He has fixed the life-spans of even trees and plants. The life of the wheat-plant is around four months, during that time it sprouts from the seed, grows and bears grains and then dries out. If we wish that wheat-grains should be ready within one month or that the plant should remain lush green for one year, then it is against the rules of Nature and also not possible. The same applies to all trees, plants and other forms of life.

In the same way He has decided man's life-span as of one hundred years and it is expected of him that he should not break this limit and not cross it, i.e. all human beings should live; for about a hundred years and should not die before that. We should push away premature death through our diligence. This is the promise of God to his dear children and His order also.

God has graced us and given this human body complete with all qualities for fulfilling certain special aims. These special aims can be fulfilled only when we maintain our schedule of diet and daily routine in such a way as not to fall ill. Except for man, other forms of life do not fall ill. In their rhythm with nature, they live their full life-span and die when their time is due, but never fall ill. In contrast to this, man always conducts himself against the nature and is always suffering 'from one or the other illness. More money is spent on medicines compared to the amount spent on food, and man dies prematurely by leading a life of burden.

Man Should take labour, austerity and diligence a part of his life while observing restraint and celibacy in life so that even if death comes to his door, it will turn away, seeing that the man is still busy and it is not yet time for him to depart from this world.

आ रोहतायुर्जरसं वृणाना

Aa rohataayurjarasam vrunaanaa

अनुपूर्व यतमाना यतिष्ठ ।

anupoorva yatamaanaa yatishtha

इह त्वष्टा सुजनिमा सजोषा

eeha twashtaa sujaneemaa sajoshaa

दीर्घमायुः करति जीवसे वः ॥

deerghamaayuhu karati jeevasay vaha

(Rigved 10/18/6)

Meaning: God has given longevity to all in this world, but man reduces his life-span by improper diet and way of living. Therefore it is the duty of every human being to achieve full life-span by leading a disciplined life.

Message: God has not just given away this gift of human life. He has sent us in this world as his responsible prince so that by remaining healthy for a hundred years, we lead a praiseworthy excellent life by working for the welfare of all in the society, and keep the flag of our fame flying high. Life is a very valuable gift, and it is not good to waste it in any worthless deeds. Therefore we must become diligent and by giving up bad tendencies, become men of good moral conduct to obtain the full life-span of man. Every man must wish to be excellent, praiseworthy and famous. He must always do beneficial works for the society. Just as the sun, moon and wind are continuously obliging the world, we too should do likewise. Never should we do any work which tarnishes our names.

The best way for becoming praiseworthy and excellent is to save our lives from faults and wicked tendencies and completely crush demoniac tendencies. Men of wicked conduct may obtain some benefits by their mean deeds, but in their heart of hearts they are found constantly sad, unhappy, upset and weeping. We should make the best use of life, and keep ourselves away from the desires of the senses. Getting trapped in such desires always brings disrepute.

We should go on reviewing and judging ourselves; should go on punishing ourselves for our bad conduct. Our sentiment should be that the leg which goes on the bad path should be cut off, the hand which cannot be helpful to others should be cut off, the tongue involved in others' slander should be cut away, the eye which is unable to shed tears of compassion should be destroyed. Reviewing continuously in this manner, let us be praiseworthy through diligence and good conduct.

To achieve excellence of character and conduct, one must have high level of knowledge, healthy body, stable mind and excellent will-power. Only a knowledgeable, learned, generous, and obliging man of good character can get the status of excellence among men. Only with that can he dare to go on adding to his divine qualities and save himself from the temptations of wicked deeds. Divinity comes with divine qualities and with it there is an increase in virtue, the person shines with the qualities of compassion, pity, love, generosity, goodness, courtesy and humility and he gets the honour of being incomparable, unique and leading in the society.

This is the only means of achieving longevity.

मा नो हेतिर्विवस्वत आदित्याः कृत्रिमा शरुः ।

Maa no hetirvivasta

aadityaahaa krutrimaa sharuhu

पुरा नु जरसो वधीत् ॥

pura nu jaraso vadhit

(Rigved 8/67/20)

Meaning: Our life should be such that we should live the full life-span. We should live a life of restraint to avoid premature death.

Message: There is a never-ending treasure of powers in man's body and mind. If these can be saved from destruction and put to good use, then promising success can be achieved in the expected direction. By not understanding this fact, we go on unnecessarily wasting our invaluable powers and with emptied powers, lead a hollow, diseased, weak and unsuccessful life, waiting for death to overtake us.

The body and the mind go on producing their powers constantly through their diet and the store of our powers gets restored. If this production can be used in the proper direction by saving it from worthless spending, then promising progress can be decidedly achieved in any field. Restraint means to avoid worthless depletion of powers. This worthless expenditure is mostly through our organs, the chief among them being the tongue and the organ of sex.

We waste our power through the tongue by absurd talk, slander, back-biting, boasting and gossip. If the tongue is restrained from untruthful and bitter speech, then our speech can be astonishingly influential. It will develop the capacity to bless. 'Maun' (observing silence) is considered an austerity. It is not possible for everyone to observe silence like the sages, but absurd talk can be controlled. Let our speech be properly controlled so that it is beneficial for 11"; and others. The other indiscipline of the tongue is because of its desire for new and exotic tastes. As the tongue gets jaded, we start eating undesirable foods to tickle the taste-buds. We overeat some very tasty food and because of over-eating, develop indigestion. This leads to fermentation and decay of food in the digestive tract and makes it weak, causing overall weakness. The toxins produced, ultimately reach various organs and produce disease. We forget the fact that health is more important than taste and then suffer from the bad effects of this fault.

Discipline of the sex-organs is of utmost importance, It's over-indulgence destroys the essence of the body. It is only because of this essence that there is alacrity in the body and lustre on the face, authority in the speech, shine in the eyes, intelligence in the mind and daring in the nature. Man becomes physically and mentally weak in proportion to the waste of this essence of the body. A man with sexual lust is not able to remain healthy and cannot enjoy a long life-span.

The meaning of self-restraint is accumulation of energy. Indiscipline means ruin of one's capacity. It is a major fact of life that a man becomes bankrupt through such ruin and the man who saves regularly drop by drop, ultimately gains.

अपाङ्ग्राडेति स्वधया गृभीतोऽमर्त्यो

Apaangapraangeti swadhayaa

grubhitoamartyo

मर्त्येना सयोनिः ।

martyena sayonihi

ता शश्वन्ता विषूचीना वियन्तान्यन्यं

taa shashwantaa vishucheena

viyantaanyahnnyum

चिक्युर्न नि चिक्युरन्यम् ॥

chikyurna ni chikyuranyum

(Rigved 1/164/38, Atharvaved 9/10/16)

Meaning: The soul is immortal and the body is mortal. The soul is the master of all the activities of the body, because the body can function only as long as there is soul in the body. Even highly learned men and highly intelligent men do not know about the soul. The goal of life is to know the soul.

Message: Almost all men are ignorant or have false ideas about the mysterious relationship between the soul and the body. From where the soul enters the body, and where it goes after the body's death has always been a matter of debate. The *Gita* very clearly states that the soul cannot be cut or pierced, no fire can burn it, nor water wet it nor can the wind dry it. Thus it is clear that the body does die, but despite its death, the soul does not die. The soul is immortal, always exists and is eternal. Despite the death of the body, the soul remains as it is.

Although the soul and the body are different in nature, they stay together. The sage tells us in the scripture '*kathopnishad*' that the body is like a chariot with horses harnessed to it. The reins of the horses are in the grip of the charioteer, and he drives them although his boss is sitting behind. The charioteer drives the chariot according to the orders of his boss. The body is the chariot, the senses are the horses, the mind is the harness and the intelligence is the driver or the charioteer. The soul is the lord and master of this chariot and hence the intelligence has to do whatever the soul orders. The mind and the senses have then to act accordingly. As long as this process is followed, the chariot reaches the destination i.e. achieves spiritual uplift and salvation, otherwise no one knows in which species the soul will have to migrate in the vicious circle of births and deaths.

There is a paradox of immortality of the soul and mortality of the body, and yet there is an unbreakable relationship between the two. As long as the body is alive, the soul does not leave it despite whatever disregard man shows for his soul. For practical living, both spiritualism and materialism are necessary. There should be material comforts, proper diet for both the body and the organs and simultaneously an attempt must be made for the uplift of the soul. We should review every moment our deeds and go on purifying our attitudes. Self restraint should be made regular feature. Attention must be given to mental health along with physical health also. Pure thoughts are born only when both remain healthy.

The usefulness of the body lies in deeply imbibing this truth deed within the heart and bringing it in one's conduct.

जुषस्व सप्रतस्तमं वचो देवप्सरस्तमम् ।

Jushasva sapratastumum

vacho devapsrastamum

हव्या जुह्वान आसानि ॥

havya juvhaana aasaani

(Rigved 1/75/1)

Meaning: If you wish to achieve bodily and spiritual happiness, then be simple in your diet, in your daily routine and deeds and observe celibacy.

Message: Physical capacity is a very important requirement of the human life. No work is possible without good health. The labour for money, learning, status and honour is not possible for an unhealthy man. A man who is healthy can progress in carrying out the necessary works as well as working for the achievement of his ambitions. Proper alertness must be maintained for keeping good health and strength for sustaining physical capacity.

Proper diet, exercise, daily routine and restraint are required for individual health. If this system is disorganised, ill-health results. Bodily and spiritual happiness is achieved only by controlling the organs through restraint. The organs themselves are a means for the soul, they are the servants of the soul. God has provided the organs for fulfilling the soul's needs and thus making man happy. All the organs are very useful and their activity is for the soul's uplift and joy. If the organs are put to good use then man can continuously enjoy happiness in life and make it successful.

The fact is that the organs are an excellent means for satisfying the hunger of the conscience. Just as the body becomes weak if hunger and thirst are not satisfied with food and water, similarly the balance of the inner field (the heart or the conscience) gets disturbed if the hunger of the sense-organs is not properly satisfied and then many types of mental troubles occur. These days most men have become slaves of unbridled desires for indulging the senses and the uncontrolled desires devour the master himself.

Only self-control is the door to heavenly happiness and its main mantra is self-restraint. With self-restraint man obtains divine knowledge and peace of mind by the development of divine qualities. The person who does not realise the great glory and the extreme need of self-restraint cannot achieve spiritual freedom and spiritual wealth. As a result he becomes a slave of lust. The main reason for the senses going astray is the variety of temptations. Most of the material temptations in life are so attractive and intoxicating that they make us indiscreet, short-sighted and restless and we become the victims of desires of the senses, the desires for quick economic benefits, selfishness and similar temptations. We should strive for self-control by tremendous will-power and adopt the ideal of 'simple living and high thinking'.

Self-control is the first ladder on the good path. With it, one achieves good virtues. This is the first and foremost requirement for real and organised religious life.

दधिष्वा जठरे सुतं सोममिन्द्र वरेण्यम् ।

Dadhishva jatharay sutam

somamindra veranyam

तव द्युक्षास इन्द्रवः ॥

tava dhukshaas indavaha

(*Rigved* 3/40/5)

Meaning: Our diet should be such as to contribute to the constant growth of our intelligence, longevity and strength.

Message: Life is not possible without food. Every man must pay more attention to his diet. It will be health-giving in proportion to its cleanliness, and simplicity. It has been clearly said in *Geeta* that simple or 'saatvik' foods are those which increase longevity, intelligence, strength, health, happiness and love, which are viscous and juicy, which remain stable and by nature are pleasing to the mind. We should always take 'saatvik' and balanced food. Instead of gorging ourselves we should eat frugally. *Gautam Buddha* also advises that, "A person who takes one meal a day is a mahatma (great soul), one who eats twice with restraint is intelligent and one who eats more than that is unfortunate, a great fool and is like an animal". That is why there is a saying that one who eats once a day is a yogi', twice a day is a 'bhogi' (i.e. a man of the material world) and three times a day is a 'rogi' (i.e. a diseased person). Control over the tongue is extremely necessary. One should decide one's diet by careful attention to what is proper and improper, what should be eaten and what should not be eaten. In that 'saatvik' food and fruits must be included. That increases 'saatvikta' (moral simplicity and moral goodness), forbearance and spirituality, and all other sense-organs remain under control.

One very great and easy means of diet-control is 'asvaad vrat' i.e. a vow to eat only boiled food without salt, sugar and condiments. It implies that we should not become slaves of taste. It does not mean that we do not eat all the food worth eating in this world and lose the natural power (of taste) of our tongue. The meaning of this vow is that we do not neglect adopting the foods that are necessary for the nutrition, health and protection of the body, and always keep the tongue under control. For cultivating that habit we should eat boiled food without salt and sugar and also eat fruits.

By taking 'saatvik' and limited food, there is no loss in any way neither bodily, economic nor societal, on the contrary there is benefit only. Whereas the simplicity in food habits is necessary, regularity is very important from the viewpoint of health. Going to bed, getting up in the morning, taking bath and similar daily routine must be punctually done. Disorganisation in daily routine spoils the health. Some people are very lazy and do not maintain any schedule of daily routine. They are haphazard; they have no fixed time for eating and do not keep any fixed time for bathing, sleeping and toilet etcetera. Everything in their lives is topsy-turvy. The body's energy bears this misconduct for some time and in the flush of youth, nothing is visible. But by the time the body is middle-aged i.e. 35 to 40 years, the body becomes a house of diseases and in some cases hardly has the age of youth started, when old age takes over.

Only by proper food and daily routine including exercise does the life become interesting which in turn contributes to our longevity by increasing intelligence, and bodily and spiritual strength.

शतं वो अम्ब धामानि सहस्रमुत वो रुहः ।

Shatum vo amba dhaamaani

sahastramoota vo ruhaha

अथा शतक्रत्वो यूयमिमं मेऽअगदं कृत ॥

adhaa shatakratyo yooyamimum

meagadam kruta.

(Yajurved 12/76)

Meaning: Body is the principal means for '*dharma, artha, kama and moksha*'. Therefore, good health must be maintained by proper diet, disciplined daily routine and benevolent conduct. Only a disease-free body is the source of all happiness.

Message: The joy of heavenly bliss and salvation is possible in this life itself. But it so happens that we do not properly understand our life's objective and make all attempts in the wrong direction for attaining it. We can achieve the above four goals of life i.e. '*dharma, artha, kama and moksha*' only by a healthy body. We can remain alive by maintaining physical health. Unhealthy, ill and weak persons are already like half-dead. This is because they suffer not only the bodily ailments, but the simultaneous incapacity and the pain of failure also breaks them mentally, thus, neglect of health is very costly for everyone.

Good health does not depend on medicines. It cannot also be bought by money. It is also foolish to think of protecting health by imbibing costly materials. Good health depends only on diet, proper routine exercise and restraint or discipline. The royal road to maintaining proper health and increasing it is to live life in harmony with nature regarding food-habits, daily routine, and lead a natural life. People fall ill with unnatural, artificial, pompous and luxurious life-style and die at an early age. All the living beings, insects, birds, animals etcetera follow the rules of nature, as a result they never fall ill. If by some accident or fights among themselves, they do fall ill, they automatically come back to normal by the grace of Mother Nature. Those animals and birds who have come under the control of man, they only require veterinary dispensaries.

Only man is a very foolish animal who himself invites illness because of wrong conduct, indiscipline and irregularity. This disregard for food and routine is a result of carelessness, laziness, negligence etcetera. Nature has made man as the most beautiful, healthy, shapely and long-lived animal complete with physical, mental and spiritual powers. The best and easy way for excellent health is that as far as possible only natural (uncooked) food should be taken. The essential elements of the food will be alive within the food to the extent that it does not come into contact with fire (or heat) and that way these elements will provide strength to the body. Ripe seasonal fruits, raw vegetables, sprouted grains and boiled or steam-cooked food is excellent from every point of view, is '*saatvik*' and nutritious.

If the body is healthy, the mind also is healthy; it gets pure and pleasant thoughts, and is filled with pleasant and good imagination. The mind gets engaged in work, there is no laziness or uneasy feeling and the heart is cheerful and light like a flower.

The ideal of proper diet, proper routine and proper conduct must always be the guiding principal of our lives.

ऋजीते परि वृद्धि नोऽश्मा भवन्तु नस्तनूः ।

Rujite pari vrudagdhi

Noashma bhavatu nastanuhu

सोमोअधि ब्रवीतु नोऽदितिः शर्म यच्छतु ॥

somoadhi bravitu

noaditih sharma yachhatu

(Yajurved 29/49)

Meaning: Just as man builds a home for himself on this earth and lives in it, similarly the human-body is the home of the soul. Therefore it should be kept healthy and free from disease through celibacy, simple food and discipline.

Message: The importance of the human body is because of the fact that for the salvation of the world, God also has to come into the world in human form only. As such also, among the entire creation ranging from insects and birds to man, only man's body is the most excellent in every way. God has given this human body, complete with all qualities, with a special objective. God has created man as his assistant and companion for peace, good organisation, prosperity, beauty and progress of the world. He has put all his powers and specialities in him so that he can be fully capable in fulfilling these pious goals. Not only that, but also God himself resides within every human being's soul and keeps guiding him. Even then man hits his own feet with an axe by ignoring, disregarding and disobeying the voice of his soul through his own foolishness.

It is man's responsibility to keep his body or the home of the soul clean, pure and healthy. With that he also benefits and easily gets God's grace. Health is an invaluable wealth. With it there is rosy lustre on the forehead, brightness on the face, shine in the eyes and other organs, and the mind and the soul remain cheerful. What is the use of wealth, grains, supremacy, learning and intelligence without a healthy body? Without health a man's life becomes burdensome even though he is replete with wealth, very learned and his name and fame spread everywhere. Not only is good health required for material progress, but it is no less important for spiritual uplift. A man suffering from disease is not even able to think of God. Thus, this life and life after death, both are spoiled without good health. Not only the life here is ruined but because of the inability to do good deeds, the next birth also is spoiled, and hence man is neither happy here nor there. Let man progress a lot, earn plenty of money, collect various means of comfort and other things, but it is necessary for him not to lose health. What is the use of the money which gives indigestion? If we want to live, let us live in good health, otherwise there is no benefit in living.

For remaining healthy celibacy must be observed and simple food should be taken. Eggs, meat, fish, cigarettes, bidi, liquor and similar intoxicating things should never be consumed. Man becomes uncouth and discourteous by consuming them. Physical exercise must be made a part of the daily routine. The mind and the thinking should also always be kept clean and pure and good moral conduct must be very firmly put into practice. A healthy and well-built man becomes the centre of attraction. The light of his soul spreads everywhere and enhances his name and fame.

अयं लोकः प्रियतमो देवानाम पराजितः ।

Ayam lokaha priyatamo

devaanaam paraajitaha

यस्मै त्वमिह मृत्यवे दिष्टः पुरुष जज्ञिषे ॥

yasmai tvamiha mrutyave

dishtaha purusha jagyishay

स च त्वानु ह्वयामसि मा पुरा जरसो मृथाः ॥

sa cha tvaanu huyaamasi

maa puraa jaraso mruthaha

(Atharvaved 5/30/17)

Meaning: The human body is more important than the bodies of other animals. All the powers and means of spiritual salvation are present within it. Therefore man's diet, routine, thinking and conduct should be such that he can live the full life-span.

Message: After having wandered through 84,00,000 species of life, the soul finally attains the human body, and all the paths for his progress automatically open up. Then it does not take long for salvation, i.e. for achieving liberation from the imprisonment and bondage of life. But only by observing celibacy does the man achieve the capability for completing the tasks for people's welfare while utilising the .100-years' life-span given to him by God.

The word '*Brahmacharya*', meaning celibacy, is very much misunderstood and very narrowly interpreted as protection of semen and control over sexual desire. This is only a part-interpretation. The correct meaning of the word '*Brahmacharya*' is meditating upon or thinking of God, study of the Veds (or religious scriptures), acquiring knowledge, and protection of semen or sperm. 'Brahma' refers to the Creator and to greatness and '*Charya*' means to move. Thus to move with greatness, to become great and to conduct ourself befitting greatness is the all-encompassing meaning.

Therefore it is necessary that we think of the divine qualities of God for achieving greatness and try to put them into practical conduct. It is also necessary that we study the Veds and other scriptures and acquire true knowledge, and thereby develop our intelligence to arouse the power of discretion to distinguish between proper and improper, moral and immoral. But this becomes possible only when good health is established by protecting the semen. One who observes celibacy in the real sense explained above, is full of divine brightness, his eyes have a piercing shine, cheeks are rosy and the face shines with lustre. The body becomes well-built with '*Brahmacharya*' and qualities like cheerfulness, firmness, daring and patience develop. In addition, by observing '*Brahmacharya*' the depletion of our powers is prevented and we are able to utilise them for moving forward on the path of greatness.

For his own progress, man must observe '*Brahmacharya*'. Seen in a wider perspective the society too needs '*Brahmacharya*'. To-day the entire society is becoming weak, dispersed and narrow-minded. Everywhere the signs of selfishness, incapability, obscenity, restlessness, fear and ruin only are seen. The reason for this is that the '*Brahmacharya*' of the society too has become depleted and therefore its powers have become scattered. In the "*devasur sangram*", the fight between the deities and the demons, when the deities were being defeated, God collected all their scattered powers and by combining them produced a single, tremendous power in the form of the female deity called *Durga*. To-day not only the man has to organise and concentrate his scattered powers, but the society too by observing '*Brahmacharya*' has to gather together the powers of unity, co-operation, goodwill and good moral virtues. The body, the mind, the soul, the society and the nation, all should observe '*Brahmacharya*'.

ब्रह्मचर्येण तपसा देवा मृत्युमपाध्नत ।

Brahmacharyena tapasa

deva mruityurnapaadhnaata

इन्द्रो ह ब्रह्मचर्येण देवेभ्यः स्व राभस्त ॥

Indro ha brahmacharyena

devebhyaaha swa raabharat.

(Atharvaved 11/5/19)

Meaning: Just as the Sun dispels darkness with light and produces excellent materials (by nurturing plants and trees), similarly man should dispel disease, laziness, wretchedness etcetera and obtain the bliss of salvation.

Message: “*Tamso maa jyotira maya* “ means a prayer to God to kindly lead from darkness to light. The meaningfulness of man’s life lies in removing the darkness of ignorance on all sides and to spread the divine light of knowledge. Its main basis is *Brahmacharya*. With it the ‘*sattoguni rutumbhara*’ (i.e. *saatvik* pure intelligence) develops which gives us the capacity to differentiate between the philosophy or the essence and the chaff, truth and untruth, beneficent and harmful and also the ability to take the proper decision. In its divine light it becomes easy to decide about what should be done and what should not be done. With the daily routine attuned to Nature through discipline, simplicity and labour, strength and semen increase, the body remains active and attains longevity. The sentiments of self-denial, helping others, service, renunciation, pity, sympathy, friendship, compassion, humility, religiousness, faith, devotion to God etcetera are awakened in those observing ‘*Brahmacharya*’, which increases physical energy, mental brightness and spiritual strength and they can even trounce death.

A man trapped in the mire of luxury and gratification of senses cannot even imagine the divine happiness of a disciplined ‘*Brahmachari*’. Such a person can never know the joy which lies in ‘*phakiri*’ (monkhood) instead of ‘*amiri*’ (wealthiness). The best endeavour for the control of the sexual desire is in married life. Ram, *Krishna*, *Shankar*, *Parvati*, *Sita* all were married and are the best symbols of the best ideals of celibacy as a part of *Brahmacharya*. From their lives we get the inspiration for the incomparable daily routine with discipline and simplicity while simultaneously carrying out family responsibilities. It was the miracle of the power of ‘*Brahmacharya*’ that Ram accepted with equanimity his coronation as well as banishment into the jungle. There was neither the joy of reigning over a kingdom, nor any sorrow for banishment. The entire life of Lord *Shri Krishna* was nothing but observance of *Brahmacharya* whether it was the company of the cowherds or the divine dance with his supreme devotees the gopis (women-cowherds), whether the political tactics or the battlefield, we always found his supreme self-restraint or discipline. Is such a control of the mind, speech and deeds possible without *Brahmacharya*, which is the greatest power in the world?

Observance of *Brahmacharya* in conduct is necessary to learn about the mystery or secrets of the world. Indulgence of the senses gives birth to diseases and the mind cannot concentrate on God. The observance of *Brahmacharya* arouses the desire for knowledge and leads to spiritual development.

Not only does man’s will-power increase with *Brahmacharya*, but also his daring, forbearance, fearlessness, and freedom from disease. He becomes peaceful, engrossed and responsible. Laziness, negligence and wretchedness do not dare to come near him. He is always diligent and achieves self as well as society’s benefit. With this only the human-life becomes meaningful.

सूयवसाद् भगवती हि भूया

Sooyavasaad bhagavati hee bhooya

अधा वयं भगवन्तः स्याम ।

adha vayum bhagavantaha syaam

अद्धि तृणमध्ये विश्वदानी

Addhi trunamaghnye vishwadaanim

पिब शुद्धमुदकमाचरन्ती ॥

peeba shuddhamudakamaacharanti

(Atharvaved 9/15/20)

Meaning: O men! Just as the cow, by eating hay and drinking clean water, gives to the world the excellent materials like milk and ghee (butter-oil), similarly you too oblige the world by taking 'saatvik' (simple) food.

Message: The cow has been considered the most pure and venerable in the Indian religious scriptures and has been kept on a pedestal, and the protection of cow, cow-rearing and maintenance and worship of the cow has been given the maximum importance. The human-race gets mother's love and loving help from the cow only. For man's health and protection, cow's milk is an excellent and nutritious diet. No other diet contains the number of useful minerals, salts, disease - resisting and strength-giving elements as found in cow's milk. According to the text of *Ayurved*, cow's milk is the best from every view-point, physical, mental and spiritual. It is a 'saatvik' drink and its use increases spiritual qualities in man.

The cow gives us not only milk and ghee (butter-oil) but also dung and urine which are very good antiseptics and fertilisers. After cow's death, her skin is very useful as leather. In this way the entire life of the cow is spent in benevolent service for the progress of man. The best example of 'plain living and high thinking' can be seen in the life of the cow. Her requirements are the least and yet she does maximum good to the world.

If man too would adopt these ideals in his life, this earth would become heavenly. Simplicity in meals and moral simplicity or moral goodness are most important in this. We must always pay attention to the fundamental questions of what to eat, how much to eat, when to eat, and how to eat? Eating a meal is a very pious responsibility of man. This is a 'yagyiya prakriya' in the God-given body to make it strong and taking food is a 'pavitra yagya-karma' (pious ritual of yagya). When putting food into the mouth, we must have the same feeling of excellence, purity and cheerfulness that we have in our mind when giving 'aahuti' (offering) into the holy-fire of the yagya. Food and drink taken with this sentiment increase spiritual qualities in the body. Even insufficient and simple food when taken with love and contentment, becomes like nectar. Clean, simple, 'saatvik' and fresh food is beneficial for our body, mind, intelligence and the soul. The intelligent person's way of thinking is, "we eat to live, not live to eat We must not eat merely for the sake of taste."

In this way with 'saatvik' diet, the resolve for observing 'Brahamcharya' is easily carried out. Each pore of his body is filled with joy and enthusiasm and the person develops the courage to offer his body, mind and money for doing good to others.

Only the 'saatvik' diet is the basis for excellence in life.

यो वः शिवतमो रसस्तस्य भाजयतेह नः ।

Yo vaha shivatamo rasastasya

bhaajayateha naha

उशतीरिव मातरः ॥

ushatiriva maataraha

(Rigved 10/9/2)

Meaning: Water is beneficial to man. By using it, the outer and inner dirt is removed.

Message: The glory of motherhood lies in the welfare of the children. A mother is always alert about her child's good health and good habits, and God knows how much hardship she suffers for the child's sake. A woman's life becomes glorified by children with good qualities and good habits and right from the time of conception to the child's birth and even thereafter her remaining life she spends for the welfare of her children. Similarly, God the Supreme Father, keeps this world going with the desire for the welfare of His children. He gives happiness, like the happiness through a mother's tender care, for all the living beings and makes arrangements for feeding them all. Among the innumerable types of help given by God, the importance of water is maximum and it is beneficial for all.

Water has been described as life and nectar in the Veds. Water has wonderful health-giving medicinal properties and it can remove a number of diseases. *Ayurved* recognises the great importance of water for the treatment of diseases. The percentage of water in man's body is 70 percent, in the brain it is 90% and in solid bones it is 25 per cent. Man's body is made up of the five elements of water, earth, air, space and fire. The entire beauty of this earth is because of water. The pleasant greenery, the beautiful fragrant flowers and plants, the trees laden with tasty fruits, ghee (butter-oil), milk, curds, butter, etcetera - all this is produced through water only. When the water filled with the rare minerals of the mountains reaches the fields, the earth yields a golden harvest. All the works of the world are dependent upon the benevolence of water. The authority or supremacy of water is all pervading. Water possesses many great qualities and it is the nectar of our life.

By drinking clean and cool water all the dirt of the body is flushed out (through bowel-movements and urine). *Ayurved* mentions '*usha-paan*' (i.e. drinking of water on getting up in the dawn). The man who drinks about two glassfuls of water, always remains healthy. This is because the bowels move and with the emptying of the bowels, the mind becomes cheerful, man develops a good appetite and the digestive system works efficiently. With '*usba-paan*' many diseases and weaknesses are removed. If instead of drinking water with the mouth, practice is made of drinking water through the nose, it is extremely beneficial for the health. It increases the brightness of the eyes, raises the level of intelligence and drives away old age.

Bathing is extremely necessary for the cleanliness of the body. A daily bath is useful for strength, energy, and health. A bath with clean and cool water removes dirt, perspiration and tiredness. It increases physical strength and lustre and gives longevity. As far as possible, avoid bathing with warm water. Bathing with cold water is beneficial for the health. Water itself is life.

यदद्य सूर उदितोऽनागा मित्रो अर्यमा ।

Yadadhya soora

ooditoanaagaa mitro aryamaa

सुवाति सविता भगः ॥

suvaati savitaa bhagaha

(*Samved* 1351)

Meaning: The air in the dawn, i.e. before sunrise, is clean. Therefore one must breathe this pure air by getting up early in the morning. With that the health remains stable and one earns wealth.

Message: There is every type of strangeness and abundance in the nature. There is no limit to joy and good health for us. Enjoying good health, all the living creatures, whether insects, birds or animals enjoy their lives. Drawing their requirements from water, air, light and food they enjoy the happiness of longevity.

God has put health in every particle of nature, in leaves, flowers fruits and in every drop of water. Every part of air, every gulp of water, every particle of fruit, grain and vegetable, which we take in our breath, drink and food is very health-giving and strength-giving for us. For all-round development and strength Nature possesses every type of means.

Daily life begins by arising during the dawn only. All birds and animals get up in the dawn and giving up their laziness, join in their daily routine. There are many benefits in getting up early. The air at dawn is health-giving and pollution-free. It is also called 'praan-vayu' or 'veer vayu' because it contributes to life and strength. By breathing in this fresh air, there is increase in strength, in the lustre of the face, the mind always remains cheerful and the intelligence becomes sharp and all the organs of the body remain disease-free. By getting up early in the morning, the body feels fresh and energetic. Contrasting with this, those who remain sleeping after sunrise, their laziness and carelessness increase, they suffer from various types of diseases, they feel dull throughout the day and they cannot apply their mind in any work.

Dawn has been lovingly called 'Usha Devi' (the Goddess dawn) because of its benevolence like a mother. She gives generously with both her hands health, intelligence, strength, and the blessing in longevity and all those get these, who get up at that pleasant time. Those who get up early, they gain in life, those who sleep late, they lose in life. Man's life starts at this pious time in the dawn only. The gentle breeze of this pure air fills every pore of the body with energetic freshness and stirs up enthusiasm in life's creation, progress and development and the feeling arises in the mind to go ahead and do something for the world to see. The beautiful and pleasant atmosphere of the dawn, the singing of the birds and the play of the animals help greatly in awakening our inner vitality for a new life.

We should never keep away from this blessing of Nature. All birds and animals breathe this air in the dawn and never fall ill. Getting up at dawn is very useful to man for his health, mind, intelligence and soul. It stirs up vitality in the body.

Men wishing bodily, mental and spiritual progress must get up at four O' clock in the morning, get out of the bed and come out into the open air.

उत वात पितासि न उत भ्रातोत नः सखा ।

Oota Vaata pitaasi na
oota bhratota naha sakha

स नो जीवातवे कृधि ॥

sa no jeevaatave krudhi

(*Samved* 1841)

Meaning: Air is life, it is health-giving and hence taking in this life-giving air in the dawn gives as much happiness as a father, brother or a friend.

Message: Real beauty in the world is in Nature only. Whatever attempts we may make to increase our beauty with artificial means, but the health, energy and beauty obtained by our body through contact with Nature is superior in many ways. By observing the rules of Nature and by exercise and natural food, balanced development of the muscles takes place and every limb shines with beauty. By regular breathing of happiness-giving air in the dawn and by physical exercise, man becomes disease-free and long-lived. If we wish to be strong, powerful and brave then we must adopt this regular daily routine.

Regularity has great importance. Most people get up in the dawn just for 3-4 days, do a little exercise and then put a full-stop to it. In this way, it will only cause harm instead of benefit. One should cultivate a habit of getting up daily at a fixed time and taking exercise. Doing regular exercise is a very good habit, which has a surprisingly good effect not only of increasing physical strength but also mental strength. The best and cheapest medicine for producing good appetite and good sleep is to do hard labour throughout the day. But the magic of exercise is special. Its effect is not limited to the body only, but it also facilitates cleansing up of one's nature and increases will-power. The wrestler exercising for two hours in the gymnasium is more powerful than the blacksmith beating the iron by the forge throughout the day. The reason for it is the enthusiasm connected with exercise. The feeling at that time is of the worship of health and the psychological effect of that faith influences our health.

The body becomes rock-like, beautiful and well-proportioned by regular exercise and regular games, the power to bear hunger, thirst, heat and cold is produced, the muscles become energised, the lungs become strong, the blood purified, intelligence sharpened, longevity achieved, disease and old-age do not dare to come even nearby and death always remains away. Depending on the region and the kind of time prevailing, indigenous and light exercise, and *yogaasans* must be performed and games played. To imitate foreign countries and to run after cricket, tennis and other such costly games is a crime against the nation. This does not also mean that we should spend the entire time in exercise or games. One should arrange a time-slot according to one's needs and partake of the fresh air of the dawn and take exercise. This is the best arrangement for remaining healthy. The evening can be utilised for some game or taking a walk, but it must be remembered that even though the available time may be less, there should be regularity.

A regular routine makes the life pleasant.

ईयुष्टे ये पूर्वतराम

eeyushtay ye poorvataram

पश्यन्व्युच्छन्तीमुषसं मर्त्यासः ।

Pashyanvyuchhantimushasum martyaasaha

अस्माभिरु नु प्रतिचक्ष्याभूदो

asmaabhiru nu pratichakshchabhoodo

ते यन्ति ये अपरीषु पश्यान् ॥

te yanti ye aparishu pashyaan

(Rigved 1/113/11)

Meaning: God makes those men intelligent and religious, who, upon getting up at dawn meditate upon Him. Those men and women maintain harmonious relationship with God as witness are always kept happy by God.

Message: Among all the natural elements, air is subtler than earth, water, and fire. Because of that, its qualities and influence are also more. Man can live for some time with food and water, but cannot remain alive for even a moment without air. The pollution of other elements is not as harmful as the pollution of air. It becomes difficult to breathe in dirty, unclean, rotten, stinking air and one feels suffocated. During day-time we have to go to various places for our work and can hardly get pure air to breathe. In such a situation, it is foolishness of the first order to ignore the easily available life-giving air of the dawn.

After the ablutions after getting up in the dawn, along with breathing the fresh air, exercise and thinking about God must be carried out. This wonderful nature, fruits, flowers, grains and water, all this has been produced by our Supreme Father for our use. By meditating upon that God, we must express our thanks to Him. To resolve to observe his commands is in itself thinking or meditating upon God. It is not necessary to go to a temple, offer flowers, fruits, water and milk, to light a lamp and incense, to ring the bell, and to bow down and prostrate in reverence. The good use of life is in obeying God's advice or orders. We must be alert to see that demoniac tendencies do not enter our daily activities, and that our individual, familial and societal activities be inspired with divine qualities and that the demons of selfishness, attachment, greed and anger do not harass us. This is realistic thinking about God.

Our most important problem is how to put our life to good use and farsightedness lies in solving it. For this the best period is the dawn. By meditating for some time, we are able to obtain the divine message regarding the objective of life. Whatever wickedness and faults we have will disappear, good qualities will increase. Wicked thoughts and sinful sentiments will disappear from our mind. A direct connection is established with the omnipresent authority of God by contact with nature in the dawn and the mind vibrates with waves of pleasant, pure and beautiful thoughts.

God's grace is bestowed on this type of conduct of man, who obtains happiness, peace, name and fame by doing his deeds throughout the day with energy and enthusiasm.

वाङ्म आसन्नसोः

Vaangma aasannasoho

प्राणश्चक्षुरक्ष्णोः श्रोत्रं कर्णयोः ।

praanashchakshurakshnoho

shrotrum karnaayoho

अपलिताः केशा अशोणा

apaalitahaa keshaa ashonaa

दन्ता बहु बाह्वोर्बलम् ॥

dantaa bahu bahavorbalam

(Atharvaved 19/60/1)

Meaning: May the power of air never get destroyed from my mouth, nor the vitality of air from the nose, nor vision from the eyes, and hearing from the ears. May my hair not turn grey, may my teeth remain firm and may there be strength in my hands.

Message: According to Indian tradition, man's life is divided into four phases called 'aashrams' God has granted a life of one hundred years to man and the rishis (sages) have allotted 25 years to each phase of life called *brahmacharya aashram*, *gruhastha aashram*, *vanaprastha aashram* and *sanyaas aashram*. The first 25 years of life are for observing *brahmacharya* (celibacy and closeness to God), learning and developing the body. The next 25 years are for discharging one's responsibilities to the family, the next 25 years are for the joint-endeavour of self-development and doing public-welfare activity while simultaneously making the family self-dependent and cultured. The last 25 years are for freeing oneself from the attachment to the family, and complete surrender to God and nation while moving around in the country. This wise and practical division of life-span is applicable and useful for the present times also.

Will it be enough if we get a hundred-year life-span by the grace of God? To enjoy the happiness of this long life, full energy and freedom from disease are necessary. Only then one gets happiness in life. Otherwise dragging around a diseased-body for a hundred years is like severe punishment. Therefore it becomes a man's duty to maintain his diet, conduct and dealings etcetera in such a way that he remains fully healthy while achieving longevity, keeping his eyes, ears, nose and teeth working at full capacity and there is no slackening of life's vitality.

Suppose by the grace of God, alongwith a 100-year life-span, good health is also maintained, then will that be enough and life's objective achieved? No. What is the use of mere physical fitness? Even more important is mental and spiritual health. In their absence, the physical strength will be misused as it was misused by the demon king *Ravan* and by the wicked *Duryodhan* and man will not be able to see beyond selfishness, attachment and greed. All his energies or powers will be used in the pursuit of wealth and more wealth and still more for all the facilities and comforts. By being immersed in the desires for children, money and fame, his activity will increase for exploiting others. Everywhere there will be an atmosphere of plunder, robbery and fights. Their energies will be utilised in creating the scenario of 'might is right'. The man trapped in the whirlpool of desires will neither himself be happy nor will allow others to be happy.

Alongwith physical health, mental, personal and spiritual level also should be excellent for achieving happiness, peace, prosperity and contentment in individual, familial and societal life. We can achieve the objective of life on the basis of such good efforts.

ममाग्ने वर्चो विहवेष्वस्तु
Mamaagne varcho vihaveshvastu
वयं त्वेन्घानाहस्तन्वं पुषेम् ।
vayum tvenghaanaastanvum pushem
मह्यं नमन्तां प्रदिशश्च
mahyum namantaam pradishashcha
तस्त्रस्त्वयाध्यक्षेण पृतना जयेम ॥
tastrastvayaadhyakshena prutana jayema

(Atharvaved 5/3/1)

Meaning: For victory in the struggle in this world, it is necessary that the body be healthy and strong. A weak body does not have that strength and lustre by which to rule and lead.

Message: Man is a social animal. He shines with the qualities of mutual co-operation and generosity. He opens many varieties of doors to knowledge, experience, means, production, contemplation and development by co-operating with others through intellectual and active co-operation and can move forward on the road to progress. But not every man can do this. There are also wicked, men with bad tendencies and bad conduct in the society who work for harming others, instead of mutual co-operation. They go on spreading bad thoughts, bad habits, bad customs and anarchy everywhere. Government can punish some criminals, provide the means for economic progress, but it is beyond Government's control to abolish individual foolishness, wickedness, social corruption and disorganisation.

In a democracy, the responsibility for human and societal reforms is that of public servants or social workers. They have to provide leadership to the society on this front. Only such men can be capable in raising high the level of the society and the nation. For that, first one's own individual life has to be made of a high level so as to be able to influence others properly. He has to lay an ideal before the society by his own conduct. By looking at the sorrows and difficulties of others, he has to reduce his own facilities, has to deal courteously and in a civilised manner with others, speak pleasantly and keep his promises, has to adopt the policy of honesty and present the ideal of fulfilling properly his responsibility to the society. It is very difficult to change the bad customs in the society. For that he has to establish the traditions of healthy customs. For reforming the society, for running it and for spreading healthy traditions, constant struggle is required.

To develop such capacity for leadership, physical and spiritual strength is necessary. It is most important that the body be well-built and disease-free. *Gandhiji* was extremely weak in built and very thin, but he had the brightness of spiritual strength which astounded the whole world. The daring produced by profound spiritual strength becomes capable of battling the bad customs of the society. In this battle, there is resistance from every side, ridicule and non-co-operation from the people and the social-reformer has to make the tremendous effort of swimming against the current. Only with strong health at both individual and societal levels, the bliss and contentment of material and spiritual progress like that of civilised and organised people can be achieved.

This is the only royal road to victory in the struggle in this world.

उपस्थास्ते अनमीवा अयक्ष्मा,
Oopasthaaste anamivaa ayakshma
अस्मभ्यं सन्तु पृथिवि प्रसूताः ।
asmabhyum santu pruthivi prasutahaa
दीर्घं न आयुः पृतिबुध्यमाना,
deergham na aayuhu prutibudhyamaanaa
वयं तुभ्यं बलिहृतः स्याम ॥
vayam tubhyam balihrutaha syaama.

(Atharvaved 12/1/62)

Meaning: O motherland! we grow up in your lap only and obtain health-giving materials. Hence when the time comes, may we not retreat from sacrificing our lives for you.

Message: The human mother merely gives birth, but the motherland looks after us, nourishes us, protects us and does many more things for us. She not only gives us shelter for living. We get food-grains, water, air, fruits, medicines, vegetables, animals, wealth, all this from our loving mother land. In her healthy protection we achieve physical, mental and spiritual progress. There is no end to her unlimited benevolence and it is our duty to try to discharge our obligation to her.

O Lord! may we develop the intelligence to repay (our debt to our motherland), may we become more and more knowledgeable, be individually awakened and carry out our duties to our motherland with body, mind and wealth.

Our duty towards mother-earth is to maintain the ecological balance. We go on taking out every type of mineral, vegetable and medicinal plants from the earth but do not pay attention to nourishing her. Not only that, we go on spreading more and more pollution by spreading various kinds of filth in all directions. Fie on us for this ignorance and selfish-conduct! This is a grave sin against mother- earth and we must immediately repent for it. This is the cry of the times and by not hearing it, we are hitting the axe on our own feet. The most essential philosophy is of planting trees and their protection for protecting life on earth. By disregarding this fact we ourselves are inviting our destruction.

It has been a glorious tradition of Indian patriots to sacrifice their lives smilingly for the land of their birth. But to-day's political leaders, the so-called religious leaders, the so called intellectuals, all of them blinded with selfishness, are not hesitating from looting and selling this country. When will our sense of duty be awakened? When will we develop the good sense to be eager to surrender our all for the sake of our motherland. Only those who understand the importance of the necessity of sentimental regeneration and having the courage to renounce and sacrifice for that can discharge their obligation to their motherland. Only those gems of men achieve fulfilment in their lives whose "hearts are surging with the enthusiastic sentiments of patriotism, service to the society, helping others and working for the, welfare of the people and only they fulfil the important roles of the times.

To-day the country requires such great sons who can join in the movement of sentimental regeneration with the support of religiosity in their hearts and who can sustain the tradition of the brahmans and monks despite leading lives as householders. That will make possible the cleansing of the public's mind and the whole country will bloom with the fragrance of good activities and virtues.

The ancient India was full of divine-like men and heavenly atmosphere because the national-character of the countrymen was of a very high level. They used to fulfil their responsibilities to the country with total piety and honesty, and personal interest was of no consequence before national interest.

Let us fulfil our duty to the motherland which gives us strength, intelligence, longevity, happiness, wealth and everything else.

