

Responsibility Of Women: Character Building

Divinity shines resplendently in the entire universe and the universe is encompassed by divinity. There is an intimate and inseparable relationship between God and the universe. Listen to this truth, Oh valorous sons of Bharat!

(Telugu poem)

FROM time immemorial, Bharat demonstrated the pristine values of friendship and harmony. Bharat is the very birthplace of spirituality, virtues, charity and righteousness. It is the land of peace and prosperity. Since ancient times *Bharatiyas* made intense efforts to establish these values upon the earth.

The Glory That Is Bharat

There is no country equal to the land of Bharat in proclaiming and propagating Truth. There are many in

Bharat who have made great progress in the field of spirituality. This is the sacred land which was ruled by Lord Rama. This is the very land where Lord Krishna taught the *Bhagavadgita*. This is also the land where sage Vyasa taught the Vedas and scriptures. It is the land where sage Valmiki composed the *Ramayana* and taught the principles of truth and righteousness to mankind. There is absolutely no equal to this country in spiritual values. Having been born in this sacred land of Bharat, and having been called *Bharatiyas*, the people of Bharat are now not coming forward to propagate the ideals that this country stands for. *Bharatiyas* should respect and revere their culture. They should follow their culture and set an ideal to others.

The wind that blows in Bharat is suffused with truth. The very dust that rises from our feet is full of dharma. The life of *Bharatiyas* is one of forbearance. The river Ganga that flows in this land is permeated with love. Why has Bharat, which is the fountainhead of Truth, Righteousness, Peace, Love and Non-violence, come down to such a deplorable state in spite of the fact that from ancient times, *Bharatiyas* have demonstrated great ideals?

“Forbearance is the real beauty in this sacred land of Bharat. Of all the rituals, adherence to truth is the greatest penance. The nectarous feeling in this country is like the feeling of love towards one’s mother.”

(Telugu Poem)

Fortitude is the greatest virtue in this land; peace is the protective shield. What a pity it is that we who have been born in this land of Bharat, are unable to uphold our own heritage of cultural values? Young boys and girls should study not to eke out a livelihood but with the sole purpose of demonstrating and propagating the ideals the country has stood for since ancient times. Modern boys and girls study for the sake of short-term benefits and not with an objective of experiencing and enjoying the tradition and culture of Bharat.

If women go out for jobs who will take care of the homes?

When husband and wife go out to offices who will do the household work?

If women go out to teach others' children who will look after their own children?

Just like men if women also go to work who will cook food in the kitchen?

Earning money may solve financial problems but how will it resolve domestic problems?

It seems unalloyed happiness is not the lot of womanhood.

(Telugu poem)

Home Is Women's Primary Responsibility

Today, women, because they are educated, compete with men to take up jobs. There is nothing wrong in going for a job. However, they must take care of their home needs

before taking up a job. When wife and husband go to offices, who will look after their children at home? As the mother is not at home to guide them properly, the children go astray. If both the parents go out for jobs, they may be able to satisfy their desire for money, but there is every possibility of their children getting spoiled as there will be nobody at home to discipline them. Whatever moral values you have learnt, you have to teach your children. Whatever you have studied will have value only when you care for your children's progress. Education is meant to bring out the innate potential of an individual.

Women should recognise their responsibilities and conduct themselves accordingly. There are many ideals set by women in this regard. Rajeswari Patel said, many women in the past developed virtues in them and led ideal lives. Savitri was exemplary in her conduct. Women of those days would not only discharge their household duties diligently but also would bring up their children in the most ideal manner. They would teach their children not merely by precept but by practice. However, we do not find many such ideal mothers today. They are interested in earning money rather than moulding their children into ideal citizens. They would have helped the nation to a great extent if only they could bring up their children in an ideal way. What is the point in women taking up jobs and earning money when their children are going astray with none to restrain them? So, first of all, women should look after their home and children properly. They should devote sufficient

time to perform their household duties. The educated women of today employ a cook and a servant-maid to perform the household chores. They spend much of their earnings in paying salaries to them.

Chandramathi was a woman of sterling character. She always followed her husband, Harishchandra. When they were passing through difficulties, she infused courage in him saying, “Oh king, you are highly intelligent and educated. You should never give scope to weakness and waver from your chosen path. We are swimming in the ocean of truth. We should not give up our resolve till we reach the shores.” In this manner, women of those days would encourage their husbands to follow the path of truth. Women of Bharat always upheld our sacred culture. Sita did not shed tears even in extremely trying circumstances. Though she was surrounded by demons, she was never afraid of them. She spent her time in the contemplation of her husband, Lord Rama, and thus set an ideal. The same can be said of Damayan-ti. She was one of virtues. With her strong determination, she helped her husband regain his kingdom. In this manner, women of those days earned a name for themselves with their sterling character and ideal motherhood. Today’s women should make them role models.

Earn The Wealth Of Virtues

The happiness that one derives from virtues is far superior to the happiness that one gets from the possession

of wealth. Unfortunately, the educated youth are striving for wealth, physical strength and friendship. But all these have little value without the wealth of character. For men or women, character is the foundation. If one lacks character, one becomes feeble in all other respects. People of those days strove for noble character. They were prepared to give up their very lives for a righteous cause. Women strove to uphold the honour of their husbands. The strength of an individual lies in his character, not in the wealth he earns. One should be prepared to face any hardship to lead a virtuous life. The country is in dire straits due to the absence of men and women of character. Materialistic wealth is not what we need today. We need to earn the wealth of virtues. Wealth cannot confer true happiness on you.

Women should develop the wealth of virtues and also safeguard the honour of their husbands. Both men and women should have good character. Without good character, all your learning will prove futile.

“In spite of his education and intelligence, a foolish man will not know his true Self and an evil-minded person will not give up his wicked qualities. Modern education leads only to argumentation, not to true wisdom. What is the use of acquiring worldly education if it cannot lead you to immortality? Acquire that knowledge which will make you immortal.”

(Telugu poem)

Modern education can help you only to eke out a livelihood. It is meant for a living and not for life. In fact, it is responsible for the present decline of morality in society. In olden days, people gave topmost priority to truth and righteousness. They considered divine love as their very life. The women of Bharat sacrificed their lives for the sake of truth.

This land of Bharat has given birth to many noble women like Savitri who brought her dead husband back to life; Chandramati who extinguished wild fire with the power of truth; Sita who proved her chastity by coming out of blazing fire unscathed and Damayanti who reduced an evil-minded hunter to ashes with the power of her chastity. This land of piety and nobility attained plenty and prosperity and became the teacher of all the nations of the world because of such women of chastity.

(Telugu poem)

From time immemorial, the sacred land of Bharat has occupied the exalted position of a teacher to the rest of the world. It has been extolled as *karma bhumi*, *thyaga bhumi* and *yoga bhumi* (the land of action, sacrifice and spirituality). You have to discharge your duty. You cannot progress in life if you do not follow the path of karma.

Time Is Verily God

Embodiments of Love!

You are wasting a lot of time in meaningless pursuits. *Time wasted is life wasted.* Our ancients never wasted even a minute. They considered God as the embodiment of time and extolled Him thus: *Kalaya Namah, Kala Kalaya Namah, Kaladarpa Damanaya Namah, Kalateetaya Namah, Kalaswarupaya Namah, Kalani-yamitaya Namah* (salutations to the embodiment of time, to the one who has conquered time, to the one who transcends time and to the one who ordains time).

Why have you forgotten the truth that time is verily God? You eagerly await a Sunday thinking that you can relax and enjoy. In fact, you should feel sad that you are wasting time without doing any work on a Sunday. You have to utilise your time in a proper way. If you do not have any work, undertake social service. Help your fellowmen. Be prepared to make any sacrifice for the sake of your motherland. The *Bhagavadgita* says, *Karmanyevadhikarasthe ma phaleshu kadachana* (you have a right over action but not on the result). You have to sanctify your karmas (actions). People talk of *punya karma* (meritorious deeds) and *papa karma* (sinful action). When the feelings are pure, karma becomes sanctified and the work will be transformed into worship. Life becomes meaningful only when you make proper use of time. *Kaaya* (body) has been given to perform *karma* (action). Every karma is associ-

ated with a *karana* (cause) and *kala* (time). It is the primary duty of man to understand the principles of *kala*, *karma*, *karana*, *karthavya* (duty) and act accordingly. This is the main teaching of *Bharatiya* culture. It is its pristine culture which has been safeguarding Bharat since ancient times. What is culture? You think it is a way of life. But it is not so. Indian culture is something that transforms your life into an ideal one. Today we do not find many who are interested in teaching about the greatness of Indian culture. Even if people are ready to teach, few are interested in listening to them. Even if they listen, they are not prepared to put it into practice. Some people want to practise but lack proper support and encouragement.

Embodiments of Love!

Perform all your actions with purity of heart. Actions performed without a pure heart are futile. Even if a little work is done with a pure heart, it becomes fruitful.

Develop Self-Confidence, Maintain Self-Respect

Embodiments of Love!

This day (19th November) is being observed as Ladies Day. What does it mean? You think that this day is meant to do some sacred acts, listen to Swami's discourse, etc. It is not merely that. You should spend time in a sacred manner. What you learn today should be an ideal for your lifetime. Develop self-confidence. Under any circumstances

uphold your self-respect. What is the use of living a life bereft of these two? You may not have money or strength and you may be put to disrepute, but always maintain your self-respect. Abraham Lincoln lived a life of self-respect under all circumstances. His mother taught him, “People may mock at you and ridicule you but never be perturbed. Always keep up your self-respect.” Lincoln followed her teachings implicitly. He studied under streetlights as there was no light at home. Ultimately, he became the President of America. It was only because of his self-confidence and self-respect that he could occupy such an exalted position. The teachings of mother play a vital role in shaping the future of her children. She should make every effort to drive away bad qualities from her children and infuse human values like *sathya*, *dharma*, *santhi*, *prema* and *ahimsa* in them. There are many who give speeches at length about the importance of these values in our daily life, but how many are translating them into action? Very few. They do not utter truth nor do they perform righteous deeds. Our ancients never deviated from the path of truth and righteousness under any circumstances. *Sathyannasti paro dharma* (there is no dharma greater than adherence to truth). The Vedas teach, *Sathyam vada*, *Dharmam chara* (speak truth, practise righteousness). Your thoughts, words and deeds should be in harmony. It is said, *The proper study of mankind is man*. Today nobody knows what man has in his mind as his thoughts, words, and deeds are in total variance. He is wasting his life with such unethical behaviour. The tongue is given to speak truth.

“O tongue, the knower of taste! You are very sacred. Speak the truth in the most pleasing manner. Chant the Divine Names of Govinda, Madhava and Damodara incessantly. This is your foremost duty.”

(Sanskrit verse)

The tongue which is meant to utter sacred words, is being used to criticise others. One cannot describe in words the fate of such a person. Our ancients had so much love for their motherland that they wanted to be born again and again in this sacred land of Bharat. But today people have neither *deshabhimana* (love for the country) nor *dharmabhimana* (love for righteousness). Instead they are developing *dehabhimana* (love for the body). Body is like a water bubble. How long can you protect it? It will burst sooner or later. Hence, develop *atmabhimana* (love for the atma), which alone can protect the entire world. Develop faith that the same atma exists in you and all others. When you have such strong faith, the whole nation would prosper. One with *atmabhimana* is a true human being. If one does not have *atmabhimana*, one's life is wasted.

Embodiments of Love!

This day (November 19th) is very sacred. Griham Ammayi, the mother of this body, used to speak to all with love. She could never withstand the suffering of others. She would come upstairs and plead with Me, saying, “Swami, they are in a sorrowful state. Please call them and

talk to them.” Her heart was filled with compassion. That is why her fame has spread so much. In order to attain a good name, you have to utter sacred words and help others. Whenever mother Easwamma came to Me with such a plea, I used to pretend to be angry and chide her, saying, “Why are you coming here with recommendations? I don’t want to listen to them”. But she would persist and continue to plead, “Swami, please take pity on them. They are in dire need of Your help. Please talk to them once.” I used to be happy thinking, “How compassionate and kind-hearted she is!” *Hri + daya = hridaya*. That which is filled with compassion is *hridaya* (heart). But, today man does not possess such a compassionate heart. He utters harsh words and thereby put to disrepute. One should talk softly and sweetly. Never hurt others’ feelings with harsh talk.

Lead An Exemplary Life

Embodiments of Love!

Primarily, women should keep their tongue under check. As men are involved with multifarious activities, it may be difficult for them to control their tongue. Hence, it is the duty of women to look after the home diligently and conduct themselves in a pleasing manner. Treat the guests in a cordial manner and to the extent possible, extend your help to those who are in need of it. Today people do only lip service, they do not translate their words into action. You should empathise with those who are in difficulties

and try to give them solace. You should comfort and console them with soothing words. Those who talk harsh words are verily demons. If you hurt others' feelings, you will be hurt twice as much. You cannot escape from the consequences of your actions. You have to bear this truth in mind. Your life will be sanctified when you conduct yourselves in such a manner as not to hurt others. People aspire to attain liberation. What is liberation? *Help ever, hurt never*. That is true liberation. To get rid of *moha* (attachment) is true *moksha* (liberation). Do not try to find faults with others. If you point an accusing finger at someone, remember that three fingers are pointing at you. *Sathyam kantasya bhushanam* (Truth is the true ornament to the neck), *Hasthasya bhushanam danam* (charity is the true ornament to the hand). Your hands are useless if they do not perform acts of charity. You have to sanctify each limb of your body in sacred activities. Your eyes should look at only sacred things. Do you know what an enormous power is latent in your eyes? There are crores of light rays in them. In olden days, people used to invoke the grace of sun god to have a better vision. When you perform *Suryanamaskar* (worship of sun god) and invoke his grace, the light rays in your eyes will become more effulgent. On the other hand, if you look for mistakes in others, the sun god will withdraw his rays from your eyes making you blind. Hence, make proper use of the limbs given by God.

Embodiments of Love!

These teachings are simple to practise in your daily life. Just because they are simple, do not take them lightly. Though they appear to be simple, they lead you to liberation. It is your good fortune (*adrishtam*) that you are blessed with eyes to see. What is *adrishtam*? *Adrishtam* means that which cannot be seen. You may not be able to see the results of your meritorious deeds. But they confer on you all the happiness and comforts in due course of time. That is *Adrishtam*. Many things that follow you cannot be seen by the naked eye.

Embodiments of Love!

This land of Bharat is highly illustrious one. It has given you the wealth of *vijnana*, *sujnana* and *prajnana*. But the unfortunate ones are unable to receive them. The Upanishads extol *manava* (man) in several ways. *Manava* means one who is sacred, one who is endowed with infinite power and one who imparts wisdom. But man is unable to understand the meaning of his own name and is taking to wrong path. Your fortune or misfortune depends on your actions. Without realising this truth, you are indulging in evil deeds. You feel sorry when the consequences of your sins haunt you. What is the use? You have to be careful right from beginning not to commit sin. You have to make every effort to earn divine grace. Whatever action you may perform, do it as an offering to God. Only then will your life be sanctified. What you have to acquire is not

worldly wealth and comforts. You have to earn the wealth of *sujnana*, *vijnana* and *prajnana* which will follow you eternally. When you acquire such true and eternal wealth, you would have acquired God's grace.

Embodiments of Love!

Many women have been eagerly awaiting November 19th to celebrate Ladies Day. It is really your good fortune to have such a noble thought. Give up all negative thoughts and develop sacred feelings. Lead an exemplary life. The Upanishads have accorded a great value to human life. You should live up to it. The Upanishads are the storehouse of knowledge. The Vedas contain mantras like *Purusha Suktam*, *Sri Suktam*, etc. One may have mastered the Vedas, but if one does not study the Upanishads, all his learning will prove futile. That is why people start the study of the Upanishads after they complete the study of Vedas. The Upanishads take you closer to God. I wish that you follow the teachings of the Upanishads and manifest your latent divine power. I bless you all and bring My discourse to a close.

*Ladies' Day, 19-11-2002,
Prasanthi Nilayam*

