

## 22. Learning and Humility

India is a sacred land, and in this sacred land, tolerance has always been the cardinal virtue. Of all the *vratas*, or the accepted codes of conduct, the *vrata* of truth plays a high role. The highest and the sweetest of all emotions is that of maternal love. People in India always considered honour greater than life. Alas, today we have let all those laudable ideals slip away, and we have begun to ape the cult of the west. We have reached a stage where we have lost the sense of our own greatness like the elephant who does not know its own strength.

In the front row are seated the wise elders who have striven all through the month to inculcate into the minds of the young students gathered here, knowledge of the soul. They have been expounding our sacred texts, the *Sastras* and the *Vedas* reminding you about the glory of ancient India. We think of wealth as consisting of buildings, property, material goods and we have lost ourselves in the mad pursuit of temporal values. These do not constitute real wealth that is capable of giving us abounding joy. Character is our wealth and good conduct is our treasure. Knowledge of God is the foundation for both. We should not lose that abiding, precious and eternal wealth, which is knowledge of God, for fleeting and temporary things that are like the passing clouds. We should also know that in our country, many *rajās* who were very rich at one time are today reduced to the level of common people. On the other hand, some of the common people have come up to the position of kings, enjoying greater material wealth; therefore, we should not equate lasting happiness with changing material wealth.

When a pond is full of water in the rainy season, there are a million frogs in it; but when the water runs dry, the frogs jump out of it. In the same way, when one has power and wealth, people gather around him in this world but as soon as he falls upon evil days and

adversity stares him in the face, all his best friends leave him. It is the paramount duty of man to know what will not leave him and to gain that wealth which will always be with him. The history of India has given us examples of great incidents and illustrious people. We remember people like Ravana, Hiranyakasipu, and others who had all material wealth but forgot the values of life and started insulting others. They ultimately had a great downfall. Today, those who are proud of their material prosperity and ignore the higher values of life must know that the same ruin awaits them. Viswamitra felt proud of his physical strength and the strength of his *thapas*. He even challenged Vasishtha but realised that Vasishtha had something he did not possess and that was the strength of God, which is superior to all other kinds of strength.

There is an incident in the *Mahabharatha* that every student should know and bear in mind. Krishna posed a question to Arjuna and Duryodhana. He said, "Duryodhana, there are two things, namely, my army and myself. Which of the two do you want?" He asked the same question to Arjuna, too. Because Duryodhana was ignorant, he foolishly thought that all the physical prowess of the army would provide him stronger support than Krishna, who was only one individual. He therefore asked for the army and not for Krishna. But Arjuna realised that if he had Krishna by his side, he would have everything. So he said, "Lord," be the charioteer of my chariot and not only of my chariot but the charioteer of my life. Your proximity is my eternal treasure." Arjuna cared for quality and Duryodhana cared for quantity.

Today we must focus our attention on the higher values of life and not lose sight thereof in the mad pursuit of baser values. Man today is behaving in such a way that there is no trace of Divinity in him. He behaves like a monkey exhibiting his baser instincts, losing sight of the higher values of life. The four wheels of the chariot that lead man safely to his destination are character, truth, sacrifice and tolerance. Man today loses sight of the fact that he is an eternal spirit and lives only for the present moment losing sight of

the sublime values of life. Good education is only that which unfolds all the hidden powers in man. People are wasting their lives just by reading many books. They do not try to understand the spirit nor do they implement that which they read. Book knowledge has increased, and experience has not correspondingly increased. If we look at the records in any college, we see more remarks on students than marks for each one of them. The real marks we should aim at are such as to get rid of remarks.

Real education requires the cultivation of a sense of humility. Great learning brings great humility. Without humility, there is no education. This is wanting in the youth of today. Several differences are cropping up between the teacher and the taught. Differences are developing between students and the centres of learning. When we look at this problem and try to understand what is at the back of all this, how these sad situations have developed and where the responsibility lies, the answer comes that it is generally not the teacher, nor the student, but it is the politician who has much to do with it. Students are pure; their minds are pure. The white dress that they have put on as a uniform this day is the emblem of the innate purity of the young. They have been living for the past month in Whitefield. The white uniform is in tune with the spirit of Whitefield. Your heart is the field, which is the *kshetra*. It is not enough for you to remain pure only as long as you are in Brindavan, your hearts must be pure wherever you may be.

A number of people approach the youth, pervert them, mislead them, use them as instruments to be provoked while whipping up their emotions. Students should not let such people ruin their future. They should not become pawns in the hands of the selfish people and be exploited by politicians. You must first of all work for yourselves and enjoy happiness for your own sake. In the beginning, you must try for self-satisfaction. Only after attaining self-satisfaction can you be self-confident. As students, you must spend all your time in studying, and later serve your country when you leave the portals of your institution. When your heart is not pure and your

powers are not developed, you cannot become a leader of your country. Only when a tank is full of water, can it be made to flow into the taps. Only when you fill your hearts with noble thoughts, powerful ideals and sublime emotions will you be able to distribute them to the country, just as water is distributed through taps.

When there are any differences between students and the centres of learning, it is up to the students to make a peaceful and gentle representation to the authorities. Then the authorities will also be in a gentle mood to consider the representation. On the other hand, if the students indulge in violent demonstrations, they are forgetting their natural role in life. If the student is a seeker of *vidya*, he should not behave in a manner that tells us that he is going on the path of ignorance. Even if you win your point through violent agitation and by creating trouble for others, such gains will not be permanent gains for the student body.

Several people want to whip up a revolution but do not know what they want to achieve. What we can achieve through love, tolerance and peace is always greater and more lasting than what we can achieve through a violent revolution. What we gain through violence will be temporary and unholy. Indians achieved their freedom by adopting the technique of peaceful agitation and not through violent revolution. When we want to gain something good, naturally we will be confronted with certain difficulties. We should not be deterred by these obstacles, but go ahead focusing on the goal that shines ahead of us.

During the period of your studies, you must realise your responsibility as students. You must show proper regard to the parents and teachers and thereby fill your minds with happiness and peace. In the ancient *Gurukula*, the relationship that existed between the teacher and student was as intimate as that which should exist between a parent and their offspring. The student would always try to give mental and physical happiness to the *guru*. That service pleased the *guru* and he would impart very vital secrets to the disciple and a very sacred holy atmosphere prevailed in the precincts. Arjuna

served Dronacharya in several ways. He was able to win the heart of Dronacharya through that service. Dronacharya loved Arjuna more than his own son and used to send his son away on some pretext and then impart some vital secrets to Arjuna.

It is very important that all the girl students be trained into good housewives and good mothers. Just as they have the sweetness of the love of *Sai Matha*, so also they must taste by their actions of dedication, the love of *Desa Matha* (the Motherland) and train themselves into ideal mothers in future. I hope that you will all treasure these gems of wisdom you have extracted from the discourses in the last month, preserve them in the casket of your heart and then bring them up as ornaments on your person.

At one time there was a severe famine in Bihar. A family consisting of father, mother and two children started from Bihar to find livelihood elsewhere. The father of the family, being responsible to feed his family, underwent many difficulties and hardships. He even starved himself on some occasions and because of frequent starvation, he died after some time. The mother, having lost her husband, suffered from loneliness and had to bear the burden of keeping the family alive in this wide world. She went begging from house to house for food and if she got some and if it was not enough, she starved herself and let her children eat. In course of time, she became so debilitated that she found it difficult to walk from house to house and beg. The boy of twelve looked at the pitiable sight of his mother and sitting on her lap said, "Oh mother, please take rest for some time. I shall beg and bring food for you." As she listened to the words of her son, her heart melted. She felt very miserable that she had to send her son to beg for food. No mother wants her child to become a beggar. But because the boy insisted, the mother consented. From that day the little boy was begging for food and giving it to his mother and the little brother and he himself would starve. After some days, he felt he could not walk and go out for begging. He went to a house and found the master of the house reading a newspaper sitting on an easy chair. In a feeble voice, he asked the

master for food. The master replied that it would be useless to give him alms and said that he would give him food on a leaf. The boy, out of weakness, fainted. The master of the house lifted the boy and put him on his lap. The boy was mumbling some words. To be able to understand what he was saying, the master put his ear close to the mouth of the boy. The boy was inaudibly whispering, "The food that you wish to give, please give it first to my mother." After uttering those last words, he passed away.

We do not now find this kind of love, this intimate love existing between the members of a family. Here we find that the head of the family starved himself to death for the sake of his family; the mother starved herself for the sake of her children and the son starved and killed himself to save his mother from begging. Look at this noble example of affection that bound together the different members of the family. When these three are united together as father, mother and child, they look like the Holy Trinity. Therefore, each member of the family must discharge his own responsibility. Only then, will the family be in a state of prosperity and happiness. All the householders in ancient India tried to follow their duties of discharging all obligations and never claimed any rights for themselves. Wherever we go today, we find agitation for rights by people who do not recognise their responsibilities. If you discharge your responsibility in the right spirit, that will give you real power from the well-deserved authority.

Our students always remember the two great principles—work and worship—and follow them every minute of their lives. Whatever job you take up, do it to the best of your ability and do your duty to the best and utmost satisfaction of everyone concerned. Even in your home, you must discharge all your obligations and responsibilities. If you are able to satisfy your parents today by discharging your duty in the proper spirit, tomorrow your children will offer you similar satisfaction. If you aspire for a happy and secure life in future, you must lead your present life in a conducive way by discharging all your obligations in the right spirit.

I have been talking to you these thirty days about several things. I hope that you will follow the ideals you have imbibed in the past month. When you are out of Brindavan, you should show the same sense of discipline and follow the same principles in any walk of life or in any place you may go to. In course of time, you may come back in a different role, in the role of teachers who teach youngsters. All the wise elders who gave you messages during this course were also students at one time. You must try to preserve in your mind and put into practice all those good things that those wise elders, who had the benefit of wisdom of years of learning, have given you. There may be summer courses in several places, but they will not offer the same kind of training that you get here and the type of atmosphere in which you have been living. Those students who have attended this summer course are fortunate and this surely is the result of the merit that they have accumulated through a number of births. They had the benefit of many wise teachers and their teachings should not be ignored. Every teacher who has delivered lectures has delivered not only lectures but delivered drops of love that had emanated from his heart. You have seen how these teachers were touched to leave you and how they broke down. This is the true quality of a *guru*. Where else can you find it except in a summer course of this kind? These *gurus* are feeling very much for the separation from you. You must also be feeling pained at the thought of getting separated from your *gurus*. You should not feel pained by the mere thought of separation. When you put into action the wise things that your *gurus* have taught you then they and Swami also will be with you. Only through action, can you have the vital presence of the *guru* deep down in your heart. He will be a living presence within you.

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