HINDU RELIGIOUS STUDIES
For Class VIII

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Preface

Education is the key to development. A progressively improved education system largely determines the pace and the quality of national development. To reflect the hopes and aspirations of the people and the socio-economic and cultural reality in the context of the post independent Bangladesh, new textbooks were introduced in the beginning of the 1980s following the recommendations of the National Curriculum and Textbook Committee.

In 1994, in accordance with the need for change and development, the textbooks of lower secondary, secondary and higher secondary were revised and modified. The textbooks from classes VI to IX were written in 1995. In 2000, almost all the textbooks were rationally evaluated and necessary revision were made. In 2008, the Ministry of Education formed a Task Force for Education. According to the advice and guidance of the Task Force, the cover, spelling and information in the textbooks were updated and corrected.

To make assessment more meaningful and in accordance with the need of the curriculum, Creative Questions and Multiple Choice Questions are given at the end of each chapter. It is hoped that this will reduce the dependency of students on rote memorisation. The students will be able to apply the knowledge they have gained to judge, analyse and evaluate real life situation.

The textbook of Hindu Religious Studies has been written keeping in mind the curriculum and learning outcomes. Religious Studies is the main source of civilisation and key to Humanity, because religion and education are closely linked or one completes the other, The Slokas and mantra of Veda and Upanishad has enriched the texts. The lives and advices of divine religious personalities and their sacrifices give the learners examples of social and human values. It is hoped that these values will build the learners in such a way so that they grow up to be honest, sincere and good citizens of the country.

This book of Hindu Religious Studies for class VIII is the English Version of the original textbook entitled ‘Hindu Dharma Shiksha’ written in Bangla.

We know that curriculum development is a continuous process on which textbooks are written. Any logical and formative suggestions for improvement will be considered with care. On the event of the golden jubilee of the Independence of Bangladesh in 2021, we want to be a part of the ceaseless effort to build a prosperous Bangladesh.

In spite of sincere efforts in translation, editing and printing some inadvertent errors and omissions may be found in the book. However, our efforts to make it more refined and impeccable will continue. Any constructive suggestion towards its further improvement will be gratefully considered.

I thank those who have assisted us with their intellect and efforts in the writing, editing and rational evaluation of this book. We hope that the book will be useful for the students for whom it is written.

Prof. Md. Mostafa Kamaluddin
Chairman
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Chapter One
THE CREATOR AND CREATION

On the blue sky of the autumn white cloud flies. On the other hand, in the rainy season the sky may be covered by the deep black cloud. The cloud roars and the lightning flashes. Sometimes it rains cats and dogs. Sometimes it rains in a very gentle motion making a rhythmic sound tapur-tapur. Fields become full of water from the rain-fall. Then the rain stops. The sun shines brightly and with the rays of the sun the trees and creepers smile. On the trees and creepers there are different types of leaves and flowers. How many types of fruits there are!

Somewhere there are very high mountains, somewhere we can see vast seas or oceans. From the mountains many rivers have come down. Through the forests, fields and habitants making a humming sound, the rivers are flowing and going up to the sea where they have got their end. In nature and environment there are such wonderful varieties.

There is such variety in the beasts, birds and insects also and such variety is not less among the human beings! One has got black complexion and another is of white skin, one is tall and the other may be very short in height.

Though there is variety in the beings and the things of the world, there are resemblance and unity in them. In human beings, there are some common characteristics. So a poet says,

Black or white is apparent only,

Inside all of us

are equally red.

In all living beings there is a common feature, what is called 'life'. All the animals possess hunger and thirst. All the animals have senses. After their birth all the animals gradually develop for a certain period. A time comes when their growth is stopped and a time must come when their lives must come to an end. Trees, plants or creepers also have lives like human beings, beasts, birds and insects. Yet they have got a limitation. They have no conscience or they cannot move from one place to another. On the other hand inanimate things never develop after their creation. Because they do not possess life.
The unity and diversity among the animals are not occurring automatically. Behind it there is a Creator. All the things of this universe are the creation of this great Creator. We call this Creator as Ishwara or God. The varied things or beings of the creation are related to each other in many ways. What Ishwara or God does is called Lila i.e., a sort of sport. What is done by God is known as the sport or the Lila of God. The creation to the beings and the universe is also a Lila and through the beings and the universe we can realize the manifestation of the beauty and power of God. The variety and the wonderful harmony and beauty in various beings and things around us is the beauty of God. In short, God exists in man and nature i.e., in all things.

In the ancient age wise persons of our country praised the scenic beauty and form of the beings and things of the world and they worshipped and adored these beings and things as the manifestation of God. In the ancient scriptures and literature the beauty and power of the fire, the sky, the forest, the dawn, the night etc. have been worshipped and adored as Devata i.e., beauty and power of God.

In our worldly life and for the beauty and equilibrium of the environment the necessity of trees, plants and creepers knew no bounds. That is why we plant trees and creepers, we nurse and preserve them with proper care and attention. At present from the scientific point of view, the necessity of trees and creepers and the importance of the preservation of them is being publicised with proper care. In the ancient age also, realising this truth and feeling the power of God in the trees, efforts had been made to draw the attention to take care for the well being of the trees and creepers and at the same time hymns or mantras and poems had been composed praising the trees and creepers.

Our original religious scripture is the Veda. In the hymns of the Vedas, there are some mantras about the vandana or praise of the trees and creepers. In the Rigveda, the Oshadhi or one time crop- yielding trees and plants were praised depiction them as good as a mother. We see in a hymn about peace of the Yajurveda that prayer was performed for the peace of the universe, of water, of the cow and of the sky and at the same time the peace of the trees was also prayed. It is also said in the Rigveda, “Madhwirna santvoshadhih” it means may the Oshadhi or one time corp yielding trees or plants be more delicious to us. We see in the Vrihadaranyaka Upanishad also that the Rishis or the saints who were spiritual 'seers' prayed for the 'Oshadhi' plants when they used to pray for the deliciousness of even the dusts of the earth and other objects. After the Vedic age
the tradition of worship and adoration of trees is noticeable in the Puranic age also. At that time the worship of the ‘Navapatrika’ i.e the worship of nine kinds of trees and plants was also introduced with the tradition of the worship of Devi Durga, i.e the goddess of power. These nine trees or plants are plantain, paddy, ‘Bela’ (the marmelos), Black Kachu (an edible root), Man Kachu (the arum), Dalim (the Pomegranate) “Ashoka (the flamboyant), Jayanti (a kind of tree) and raw turmeric. In side of the banyan tree ‘Devi Durga resides – with this belief in mind the worship of Vanadurga (the forest goddess) is still prevailed. Besides, at the time of the Bodhana (ceremonial awakening) of Goddess Durga, the goddess of power and at her worship on the seventh tithi (day counted according to lunatic system of calendar) the Bela tree (the marmelos) is worshipped as a ritual to be performed at the beginning stage of the worship.

Through religious formalities and performances planting of the Ashwatha tree (an Indian big tree considered as sacred) is a prevailing tradition.

For human life trees are of bare necessity. From that point of view the devinity and importance of the trees and plants has been realized. Within the ‘Ashwatha tree Sri Vishnu (the supreme god of preservation) himself resides. So uttering the following mantras (hymn), water is poured on the root of the Ashwatha tree:

Om Ashwatha vriksharupo’ asi mahadeveti vishrutah /
Vishnurupadharo’ asi twam punyavriksha namo’ astute //

It means: O the pious tree, You are a great god in the form of the Ashwatha tree. You are ‘Vishnu” (the god of preservation). I salute You.

Ishwara (God) preserves us taking the form of the god Vishnu. Trees are also helpful for our lives. So the trees have been worshipped and adored as the god ‘Vishnu’.

Different gods and goddesses love different kind of flowers. For example, the god Vishnu loves the Tulsi leaf (the leaf of the basil). To cure so many diseases leaf or juice of Tulsi is very effective. Shiva the god of destruction loves the leaf of Vilwa (marmelos), saraswati’s (the goddes of learning) favourite flower is the palasha (a kind of beautiful red flower having no fragrance.)
Through this difference in choice we have a sort or variety in the kingdom of the trees and plants and at the same time our necessity of different type of trees is also being fulfilled.

Through ages so many poets have composed their poems on the beauty of trees, creepers, flowers and leaves.

Adoring trees with special emphasis, vishwakavi (world famous poet) Rabindranath Tagore wrote a lot of poems especially praising trees. In his Vanavani, Mahua and many other collection of poems, a lot of poems on this topic have been collected. To adore the trees, poet Rabindranath Tagore said with respect:

From the blind womb of the earth we heard the call of the sun.
At the first awakening of life You, o, the tree are first life.

Ishwara exists in the trees and plants as life. So not only considering the necessity and usefulness but as the manifestation of God we should love them and look after them.

Precisely the great Creator exists in all this creation including trees and plants. So we should love the creation realizing the existence of the Creator in it. And we know, if we love the creation it will be similar to the love of God.

**EXERCISE**

**Multiple choice questions**

1. The nine kinds of trees are together called –
   a. nine goddesses  
   b. nine trees (plants)  
   c. leaves of nine plants  
   d. nine gods

2. What is the favourite flower of Devi Saraswati?
   a. rose  
   b. palash  
   c. bokul  
   d. rajanigandha

3. In the Rigveda the annual tree has been termed as mother, because a tree-
   i. saves life  
   ii. relieves pain  
   iii. gives shelter
Which one of the following is correct?

a. i  b. i and ii  
c. ii and iii  d. i, ii and iii 

4. We nurse the trees because-
   i. they supply us oxygen
   ii. they are mysteries of creation.
   iii. for their gradual growth

5. Which one of the following is correct?
   a. i  b. ii  
c. iii  d. i and iii

Read the following paragraph and answer questions nos. 5 and 6.

Tree-lover Rabindra feels the importance of trees and plants and he has planted various kinds of trees at his house. He takes care of them and preserves them as well.

5. Rabindra feels the need of trees and plants because they -
   i. maintain environmental balance
   ii. protect the beauty of environment
   iii. are the creations of God

Which one of the following is correct?
   a. i  b. ii  
c. ii and iii  d. i, ii and iii

6. Rabindra preserves the trees, because they
   i. maintain variety
   ii. enhance beauty
   iii. protect barrage

Which one of the following is correct?
   a. i  b. ii  
c. ii and iii  d. i, ii and iii
Creative Questions
Hinduism is the religion of Nature. After a thorough review it appears that there is a deep relationship of God with Nature. This is because, the followers of this religion can see the various forms of God through the different forms of Nature. In fact, this is the reason why there occurs thirteen puja festivals in twelve months of the year. As a result, through worship the varieties of trees have increased on one hand and the requirements have also been on the other. The Hindus love and nurse the trees not only because they fulfil their needs, but they also find in them the manifestations of various forms of God.

a. Who is God?
b. Why can the followers of this religion find the form of God among the varieties of Nature?
c. ‘The varieties of trees have increased through worship’- Justify the truth of the statement through your experience.
d. ‘The importance of and care for the trees have not only increased for their needs only, but also for the manifestations of God in various forms’ – Explain the idea.
CHAPTER TWO

EULOGY, HYMN AND PRAYER

(A) EULOGIES AND HYMNS

Shwetashwatera Upanishad
Yasmat param naparmasti kinchid
Yasmannaniyo na jayo’ asti kashcit /
Vriksha iva stabdho divi tishtiyeke-
stenedam purnam purushena sarvam //( 3/ 9)]

Meaning:
There is nothing better or worse, there is nothing smaller or larger than the Purasha who exists without movement like a tree as unique, absolute soul and it is He by whom the universe is pervaded.

Kathopanishad
Nayamatma Pravachanena labhyo
Na medhaya na vahuna shrutena /
Yamevaisha vritnute tena labhya-
stasyaisha atma vivritnute tanum swama // ( 1/2/23)

Meaning: Atma (Absolute soul) can not be perceived by studying the Vedas properly or by merit or listening to so many things form the scriptures. Atma expresses His image and greatness to him who is considered by Him (Atma) as describing one.

Shrimadbhagavadgita
Pashyami devanstava deva dehe
Sarvamstatha bhutabishhasanghan /
Brahmanamisam kamalasanastham
Rishimshca sarvanuragamshca divyan // (11/15)

Meaning: I see all the demigods and various other living entities assembled in your body. I see god Brahma sitting on lotus as well as Lord Shiva and all sages and divine serpents.
Yatha pradiptam jvalanam patanga
Vishanti nashaya samriddhavegah /
Tathaiva nashaya vishanti loka-
Stavapi vaktrani samriddhaavegah /// (11/29)

**Meaning:** I see all people rushing into your mouths as insects plunge into a blazing fire for death.

**(B) Verses and Songs of Prayer**

**Shuklayajurveda**
Drite dringha ma mitrasya chakshusha
Ma sarvani bhutani samikshamantam /
Mitrasyaham chakshusha sarvani bhutani samikshe
Mitrasya chakshusha samikshamahe /// (36/18)

**Meaning:** Oh Lord; please make me such firm and strong that all the living beings may see me through the eyes of friendship and I also may see them like wise. We may see one another through the eyes of friendship.

**Shri shri Chandi**
Devi! Prapannartihare! prasida
Prasida matarjagato’ akhilasya /
Prasida vishweshwari! pahi vishwam
Twamishwari devi! Characharasya /// (11/16)

**Meaning:** O goddess, you remove the sorrow who surrender to you. You be pleased with him. O, mother of the universe, owner of the universe, be pleased and save the world.

**A Prayer from Bengali Literature**
Namaste Sharvani Ishani Indrani
Iswari Ishwara-Jaya /
Aparna Abhaya, Annapurna Jaya
Maheshwari Mahamaya
Ugrachanda Uma Ashutosharama
Aparajita Urvashi /
Rajarajeshwari Rama –ranakari
Shankari shive shorashil
He ma parvati ami dina ati
Apade parechi vada / 
Sarvada chanahal padmapatre jala 
bhayebhita jadasada / 
vipade amar na hay tomar 
vidamvana kara ar, 
Mama prati daya kara go abhaya 
bhavarnave kara par //

(abridged)

[ Lanka kanda, the Ramayana of Krittivasa]

Note : [ Here ‘Devi’ the great goddess is praised in prayer, she has so many names for so many deeds and activities. She is mother –god.]

Meaning : 
I salute you, oh, Sharvani (wife of Shiva) Oh, Ishani (wife of Ishan or shiva) Oh Indrani. You are Ishwari, the wife of Ishwara. You are Aparna, Abhaya— you have no fear, you are Annapurana as you always possess ‘food’. You are jaya or victorious. You are Maheshwari, you are Mahamaya as you are the mother god of magic and illusion. You are sometimes very furious, you are Uma, you make Ashutosha (shiva) pleased as your consort. You are undefeated and you are Urvashi, a nymph of the heaven.

You are a great queen and queen of the kingdom of all the kings. You have a pleasing personality at the same time you have a great power and skill in war. As the consort of Lord Shiva you are called as Shankari, Shiva. You resemble a girl of sixteen, hence you are ‘Shorashi’.

Oh mother Parvati, I am very poor, and distressed – always in anxiety, like water on the leave of lotus, always crippled in fear. My troubles make you worried and embarrassed, I am sorry for this. Oh Abhaya, (fearless), be kind to me and help me in crossing the sea of the troublesome worldly life.

Short notes
Shwetashwatara Upanishad : It is one of the twelve Vedic Upanishads such as Isha, Katha, Kena etc. Origin of life, our present position, our future life. after death and destruction of the world – these three are the principal topics of discussion of the Shwetashwatara Upanishad. Here God or absolute power is
determined as the root cause of the creation, preservation and destruction. This Upanishad is written in verse fully.

**Kathopanishad**: Katha + Upanishad. Kathopanishad is a part of the katha Brahman of the Taittiriya branch of the krishna (black) Yajurveda. For this it was named, as Kathopanishad. In this Upanishad through the episode of Yama and Nachiketa, the philosophy about the ‘soul’ is discussed. It has got a simile with the description about soul in the Gita in this regard.

**Shrimadbhagavat Gita**: Shrimadbhagavatgita is a part of the chapter named Bhishmaparva of the Mahabharata and which was composed by the great sage Krishna Dwaipayan Vedavyasa. There are 18 chapters in the Gita (Shrimadbhagavatgita is called as Gita, in short). The Gita is the gist of all Upanishads. On the eve of the battle of Kurukshetra what ever Lord Shrikrishna said to Arjun is known as the Gita. As it is sung or told by Lord or God or Bhagwan, so it is named as ‘Shrimadbhagavatgita’. The Gita the scripture of the Hindus is to be read everyday.

**Yajurveda**: Yajurveda is one of the four Vedas. It is divided into two parts. Shukla and Krishna. The Shuklayajurveda is in verse fully. Krishnayajurveda is composed in prose, the subject matter of the Yajurveda is the Yajna or sacrificial ceremonies and rites.

**Shrishri Chandi**: Shrishri Chandi is a part of the Markandeya Purana. In its thirteen chapters the origination of the goddess Duraga, the songs and praise to her and the stories of the assassination of Madhu and Kaitabha, Mahishasura, Chanda and Munda, Raktavija, Shumbha and Nishumbha etc. Another name of the Chandi is ‘Saptashati’ i.e. a book of seven hundred verses or mantras. An integral part of the Durgapuja is the recitation of the Chandi.

**Disjoining the compounds**


**Eulogies and hymns**: To praise one’s attributes, qualities, greatness, kindness etc. in the form of verses or songs is known as stava or stotra i.e. eulogies and hymns. For example Durgastotra, Saraswatistotra Shivastotra, Vishnustotra etc.
**Prayer** : To ask or desire anything is known as prayer.

**EXERCISE**

**Multiple choice questions**

1. How many mantras are there in the book, Sree Sree Chandi?
   - a. six hundred
   - b. nine hundred
   - c. seven hundred
   - d. eight hundred

2. Vasudev read out the stavs and stotras. Whose praise did he uphold through them?
   - a. the gods and goddesses
   - b. the world
   - c. the rakshas
   - d. the heaven

**Read the following paragraph and answer questions Nos. 3 and 4.**

There exists a difference of opinion about trifling family matters between pious Seema and Tandra devi. Both of them worship the Supreme Lord (God) through the medium of Shuklayajurveda mantra.

3. According to the mantras of Shuklayajurveda both of them pray, so that we may -
   - i. consider ourselves as mutual friends
   - ii. consider ourselves as mutual enemies
   - iii. consider ourselves as relatives in order to maintain a friendly relationship.

   Which one of the following is correct?
   - a. i
   - b. ii
   - c. i and ii
   - d. i, ii and iii
4. The main objective of worship by both of them through the aforesaid mantras is -
   a. spiritual union with God
   b. establishment of friendship
   c. worshipping of gods and goddesses
   d. to solicit welfare of all creatures

**Creative Questions**

The reading of the Geeta everyday enables one to attain piety. Knowing this, Paresh reads the Geeta every morning. He was reading –

Pashyami devangstav deva dehe
Sarvangstatha bhutavishhesanghan /
Brahmanamishang Kamalasanastham
Rishingshcha sarvanuragangashca divyan // (11/15)

a. Of which chapter of the Mahabharata does Sreemadbhagabadgeeta belong to?

b. ‘Brahmanamishang kamalasansthram rishingshca sarvanuragangashca divyan.’ --- Elucidate.

c. Explain in the light of the Geeta the kind of influence that can fall upon Paresh for reading it regularly.

d. ‘Sreekrishna exists in the whole world ’- Give the substance of this statement in the light of the above – mentioned verse (sloka) of Sreemadbhagavadgeeta.
CHAPTER THREE

RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY

(A) EDUCATION AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES.

Generally ‘education’ means knowledge. Again, ‘education’ means practice or exercise. We may say that acquiring knowledge through practice is education or learning. Similarly religious studies is to us the practice of such traditions, customs and principles through which knowledge about religion is acquired.

There is a close relation between religion and education. One is the complement to the other. Education is incomplete without the study of religion. Again the study of religion cannot be meaningful without proper education. The aim and object of the both is the welfare of the human being and the world.

Generally we divide life into two tiers: worldly and spiritual. The knowledge which man exercises for prosperity, happiness and worldly development is called education. On the other hand, religious studies means the exercise of religious rituals to achieve spiritual happiness.

There was as light difference between education and religious studies in the ancient time also. Then education was divided into two parts namely- ‘Para’ and ‘Apara Vidya’. The subject matter of the Apara vidya was to get knowledge about worldly matter such as warfare, medical science etc. On the other hand knowledge about such spiritual subject as Brahma, soul or God is called the ‘Para Vidya’. Through ages the ‘Apara Vidya’ has become the mainstream of education and the ‘Para vidya has turned into religious studies.

Education in the ancient time

In the ancient time a student had to remain in the abode of the preceptor or teacher to have his education. Learner was given the sense of religion through ‘Upanayana’ (a ritual investing with the holy thread). ‘Brahmin’ ‘Kshatriya’ and ‘Vaishya’ by caste had right to be invested with Upanayana’. Taking ‘Brahamacharya’ (a mode of life with complete obstinence from sexual and worldly pleasures) to serve the preceptor to performing his domestic and household works and to acquire knowledge was the duty of a student. The aim
of this kind of education was to make a student educated in both kinds of knowledge – worldly and spiritual. The relation between the teacher and the student was cordial. They used to pray to God, “Oh, Brahma save us both. Bring up us together. May we have the ability to acquire knowledge together. May we have fully illuminated with the light of knowledge. May malice never grow within us”.

After the completion of education, the teacher gave the students permission to enter the family life through a ceremony called Samavartana (convocation). The teacher advised the students. “Always tell the truth, perform the assigned duties, be devoted to religion. Don’t withdraw yourselves from the study of Shastras (scriptures), Don’t depart from the truth. Always follow the path of religion and duty. Respect yours parents. Respect your Acharyas (teachers), respect the guests. Abstain from evil deeds. Perform your duties to the family. Donate or contribute with respect. Be devoted to God. This is the instruction of God. And this is also my advice be the ideal of your lives.”

Through the advent of time this education system has got a changed form to a great extent. Now-a-days students have not to stay in the teacher’s lodge to acquire knowledge. Now special arrangement of accommodation has been made. The students are getting knowledge there through regular studies.

**Religious Studies**

Religious studies gives man worldly and spiritual welfare. Religion helps the religious go through the way of truth. It is essential for the students to be pure in body and mind to acquire the main objectives of religious students. The Brahmacharya and to be truthful is the main part of the religious studies and it is acquired through exercise.

In the ancient age the religious studies of the students started through the Upanayana. One of the duties of the student life was to supply fuel woods for the fire of yajna i.e. sacrifice of the preceptor’s abode. To have bath in the morning and to study the vedas were the duties to be performed regularly. Besides they had to perform prayer three times in a day at morning, noon and evening. In the Vedic age man could achieve desirable things through Yajna (Vedic sacrifice). But permanent welfare was not achieved by it. The reward of virtue gained through yajna is molested.
To realize this and for the salvation of soul, the meditation of the Nirguna Brahma was introduced in the society. But the meditation of the Brahma by taking the path of sannyasa (i.e. renunciation) could not be able to give full satisfaction. So the meditation of the Saguna Brahma (i.e. Brahma having primordial qualities) was introduced in course of time. By Nirguna Brahma it is meant the incorporeal absolute God. And Saguna Brahma means Brahma having a particular form or body i.e. the form of any god or goddess. The Vedic age is followed by the Puranic age and in Puranic age the worship of gods and goddesses was introduced. And through this kind of worship the religious activities were going on. But this system faced a bit change later on. A system of prayer to God through love and devotion was started. God possesses unlimited power and sentiments. Due to this one prays to God treating Him as a master and looks Him as a friend. Thus religious studies is going ahead through gradual changes.

The legacy of the earlier system of prayer to God still exists. But without performing any ritual like sacrifices and worship, one can pray to god by enchanting his name and this form of prayer to God has become popular. One can pray to God by chanting and glorifying the name of God. Yet a devotee can adopt any system of prayer to God in accordance with his ability and liking. There is no restriction regarding this. Sree Rama Krishna, the great became successful in his prayer to God following different systems of prayer of different schools. He said, “If there is proper attention to the prayer, following any system the contact with God can be achieved”. He said, “Ways are many as opinions are many.” About the station of God various opinions are noticeable. Sometime it was said that He remains everywhere in all beings. So realizing the existence of God in the beings the service of the beings is called to the service of God. In this sense God is not perceived a stranger rather. He exists in all beings. He is manifested in man’s noble qualities. These are reflected in the following five virtues namely- non violence, not to steal, to maintain purity, to be truthful and to have self restrained. In modern sense service to mankind is the service to God. Thus we can notice the evolutionary change in the learning of religion.

Both education and religion are aiming at human welfare. Education supplies with the materials of livelihood. And through religious studies, we get instruction for controlled behaviour and spiritual welfare. So the study of
religion is also essential with the imparting of general education to get peace and welfare in our personal and social life.

B. “Karma Yoga”

Karma Yoga means the meditation for Ishwara or liberation through duties or action. In Karma Yoga, Karma or duty is to be made taking the path way of Yoga. Yoga means the cessation of mental states i.e. Yoga is to keep the mind free and controlled from the natural oscillation. In happiness or sorrow in delight or pain the mind will show no reaction. Mind will remain in tranquility. God will be prayed with calm and quiet mind. On the other hand Yoga is a technique. The riddle of that technique is to change the natural course of the karma. In Karma one comes under bondage. But if the Karma (duty) is performed with Yoga i.e. technically one may be free from the bondage and gets liberation. From Karma Yoga the riddle and the appropriate process of Karma can be perceived.

Speculation on Karma is going through ages because we can not live without karma or worldly activities. In this sense karma is called life. The activities of body and mind continue even worldly activities are given up. Yet a particular attribute of karma is to produce fruit or result. And to enjoy this Karmaphala is a primary desire for a being (Jiva). Without enjoyment, Karmaphala is not decayed. So either good or bad the jiva must enjoy it. If the enjoyment of Karmaphala does not come to an end in one’s life cycle, to enjoy karmaphala the Jiva remains far from Ishwara or liberation. Realizing such nature of karma the Rishis i.e. the sages, who were the followers of the school of jnan (knowledge) instructed to give up karma. According to them without karma karmaphala will not be produced and the question of enjoyment of karmaphala will not arise. In this circumstances Jiva will be able to be liberated. The opinion of the followers of the school of jnan about karma is not accepted in the holy Gita by Lord krishna. He explain that the bondage of Jiva happens for the attraction of karmaphala and not for karma. Those who advocate to give up karma also remain engaged in some karmas like remembrance, thinking, felling etc. So in no circumstances karma can be given up fully. Lord Shrikrishna says that for liberation one should remain engaged in karma with a technique. And that technique is karmayoga.

Karmayoga has three characteristics:

(a) To give up the desire of the enjoyment of karmaphala: The karma (duty) is to be performed without the expectation of
enjoyment of the result. If the karma is performed in such a way success or failure will not give rise to joy or sorrow. Then with a calm and quiet mind the meditation for Ishwara will be easier.

(b) **To give up the authorship of the karma** : A distinct instruction of karma yoga is to do a work without any authorship. I am doing it – such attitude should not be maintained. God is the owner of all the creations. He is the only author of all sorts of activities. He appoints me to perform the work. If any work is performed in this sense the work will be an example of karmayoga.

(c) **Unconditional surrender to God** : The karmayogin will bear in mind that being appointed by God, he is performing the work of God assigned to him. he has no right to enjoy the karmaphala (result). Karmayogin dedicates his karmaphala to God and becomes free from the responsibility of karmaphala.

About this karmayogin Swami Vivekananda said, “What does ‘karmayoga’ tell?” Work continuously but give up attraction for the work, sorrow grows from attraction not from ‘karma’. In the biographies of many sages like king of ancient age, the examples of such karmayoga is available. Janaka, the king of Mithila was one of such karmayogins and a great man alike. Though he was a king but he possessed a sage like heart. He performed his state affairs, protected the state and took necessary measures for the development of the state as his duties and at the same time he thought that as if he was doing all state affairs as a representative of God. The head of this state was God and he was appointed by God to maintain it.

On the other hand, the instruction of saint Tukaram to Shivaji, we get another example of karmayoga. Chatrapati Shivaji was highly respectful to the saint Tukaram. He gave up the duties of king and took shelter at the foot of Tukaram.

Listening to the Bhajanas, the songs of devotion sung by Tukaram, a deep devotion arose in the heart of Chatrapati Shivaji. He became indifferent to the royal duties and worldly affairs. Tukaram then instructed Shivaji to meditate Ishwara following the path way of karmayoga. He said, ‘there is no need to leave worldly affairs and home for the meditation of God’. It should be remembered that the master of this world and of our homes is only God. Jiva has arrived here to perform as bounded duties assigned by Him. The
assignment should be performed as bounded duty even the result or effect of
the work is done to God. Thus meditation in which one connects one’s own
activity to God is karmayoga.

In karmayoga swakarma is given more importance. Swakarma means the work
of the self (i.e. one’s work), whether it is great or trifling, it is always
praiseworthy. Karmayogin does not wait for the karmaphala i.e. the result of
his work. He performs his own work as a matter of his duty. The result of such
work becomes good. Karmayogin works for the welfare of others and for the
satisfaction of God. Swakarma may be trifling yet it is not discreditable. About
this we can remember the puranic episode of Dharmavyadha.

There lived a karmayogin named Dharmavyadha. He was a butcher. He
chopped meat and sold it. Occasionally he discussed religion. He always
thought of God. But as a son of a butcher he took the profession of hunting
beast and selling meat. This type of work is condemnable to others, but it is
the duty of Vyadha. The butcher was running his profession unhesitatingly to
maintain his parents. This work is Dharmavyadha’s karmayoga. It was in his
realization that he was doing his duty assigned by God. Performing swakarma
as duty in his daily life, Dharmavyadha drew the favour of God.

Karmayoga in one hand, liberates the karmayogin, on the other hand, makes
welfare of the world. So the work of a karmayogin remains free from self-
interest. In the world of work, having the opportunity of doing something,
karmayogin thinks himself blessed. The aim of his work is to do good to the
world. So there is a necessity of karmayoga for the welfare of man, society and
the world. The more will be involved in karmayoga, the more will be the
welfare of the world.
C. YOGASANA (Posture of Yoga)

There is an important role of Yogasana to religious performances. Aiming at both worldly welfare and spiritual development religious activities are performed. Through the formal ritual development religious activities, one is made to achieve mental purity and social welfare.

Body and mind are the means and objects of meditations. So proper care must be taken to keep these two healthy. If the body does not remain in form or well, no work can be done properly. On the other hand, if mind oscillate and restless nothing can be performed smoothly at that state.

The Rishis of ancient time realized this truth deeply. They said that to achieve worldly and spiritual welfare, body and mind must be kept well. And for this the exercise of yogasana is very essential. Exercise of yogasana keeps the body free from disease and makes the mind quiet and meditation with a disease free body and quiet mind gains success.

Now we discuss about two yogasanas mentioned bellow:

**Bhujangasana**

The word ‘Bhujanga’ means snake. So another name of the Bhujangasana is Sarpasana.

When a snake expands its hood, the upper portion of its body bends slightly to the back. The Asana that keeps our body in such a position is called ‘Bhujangasana’.

**Mode of Exercise**

Lie down on your face and chest and put your palms of the hands by the sides of your shoulders, keep the legs straight. Stick your toes to the ground, Knee, thigh and ankle will remain straight. Then keeping the weight of the body on the hands, pull your chest and face up. Your neck will remain slightly bended towards the back. You will feel a pull in your throat. Giving little weight on the hands you will have to raise your head and ribbons. Your elbows will remain
half-folded sticking to your body. Muscle below the waist may be contracted. Eyes will remain open to have an extended look. In this condition, pull your body up breathing in and while breathing out get your body down on the ground. In this way practice the asana four or five times. After practice take a rest in Shabasana (An asana lying like a corpse).

**Usefulness**

(a) Dullness of body goes a way and the body gets a new vigour.
(b) Glaze or charm of the body is increased.
(c) Elasticity of the spine is kept.
(d) Heart and lungs become strong.
(e) The shape of the chest remains beautiful and fat of the waist decreases.

**Gomukhasana**

The asana which at the time of practice, makes the position and shape of the legs look like the head of a cow is called Gomukhasana.

**Mode of Exercise**

Sit on the ground spreading your legs forward. Fold your left leg at the knee and touching the right side of the hip by the ankle. Similarly fold your right leg at the knee and touch the left side of the hip by the ankle of the right leg. Right knee will remain on the left knee like the same manner. Now pull your right hand straight up near the head and thus keep the right elbow folded towards your back. Folding the left hand keep the left elbow folded on your back. Try to catch the fingers of the left hand by those of right hand. The spine will remain straight. In this condition breathe in and breathe out slowly ten to fifteen times. You may change your hands and legs. After the practice take rest in Shavasana.

**Usefulness**
(a) Insomnia goes away.
(b) Rough shoulder becomes plain and the crooked spine becomes straight.
(c) It cures the troubles of the stomach.
(d) It recovers the muscle pain of the back.

EXERCISE

Multiple choice questions
1. In how many parts is life divided according to Hindu scripture?
   a. 2   b. 3   c. 4   d. 5
2. The right to accept holy thread (upanayan) rests with -
   i. the brahmans and the kshatriyas
   ii. the brahmans and the vaishyas
   iii. the brahmans, the kshatriyas and the vaishyas
Which one of the following is correct?
   a. i   b. ii   c. i and ii   d. i, ii and iii
3. Sunil is regularly practising this posture of yoga. He thinks that yoga exercises are essential for both the mind and the body in order to maintain good health and also for spiritual welfare.
   a. Which particular posture of yoga is being practised by Sunil?
   b. Why is Sunil practising this posture (ashan) of yoga?
   c. How is he practising the above posture?
   d. ‘Not only for good health of the body and the mind, but also for the spiritual welfare, yoga exercises are essential’- Explain the idea.
Read the following paragraph and answer questions Nos. 4 and 5.

In order to obtain permission to enter into family life Ramesh got initiations (diksha) from the teachers through the arrangement of a function after completing his education. These initiations or instructions are nothing but the directives of God. These are the directives of teachers also. So, these instructions should be the ideals in everybody’s life.

4. Through which function (ritual) will Ramesh enter into family life?
   a. convocation  
   b. upanayan  
   c. churakaran  
   d. simantonnayan

5. As a learner he should follow God’s directives which are-
   i. to follow the honest path and to speak the truth
   ii. not to do evil deeds and choose religiously the approved path.
   iii. to marry and lead a family life

Which one of the following is Correct?
   a. i  
   b. ii  
   c. i and ii  
   d. i, ii and iii

6. Why are the directives of God to be inevitably followed?
   a. to build up an ideal life  
   b. to attain worldly welfare  
   c. to enter into family life  
   d. to be renouncer of the sansar

7. To have spiritual union with God through actions signifies-
   a. bhaktiyog  
   b. karmayog  
   c. jhnanayog  
   d. mahendrayog
Creative Questions

1. Alpana devi is a learned and pious lady. She remains busy in puja, rituals and songs in praise of kirtan. Besides, socially she speaks to the learner about the importance of education and convocation. She also preaches the ambrosial (nectar-like) messages of noble qualities of human being. She considers humanity, as service to God. She always asserts that education is the subject for livelihood and the study of religion ensures restrained behaviour and the guidance for the attainment of spiritual good (welfare).
   
a. What is learning?

b. What does Alpana Devi speak to the learners about convocation?

c. How does the learning of religious education guide you to ensure restrained conduct or behaviour?

d. ‘Education and the study of religion are complementary to each other’ – Explain.

2. Uma charan Datta the landlord was a believer of the purification of the soul by means of action (Karmayogi) as well as a learned person. As proofs of social activities she set up many schools, colleges, market-places, and made roads, dighi and canals. She often used to say that work is religion and the soul does not derive complete peace or tranquility without work (karma). He thought that he was doing what God wanted him to do. His idea was that karmayog offers a karmayogi salvation on the one hand, and worldly good on the other.

a. What is Karmayog?

b. Why did Uma charan Datta construct these social institutions?

c. ‘Work is religion ‘- How did Uma charan Datta reflect this idea on his life?

d. ‘Karmayoga affords a Karmayogi salvation on the one hand, and worldly good on the other’ - Explain the statement.
CHAPTER FOUR

SCRIPTURES

The Four Vedas

The Vedas
We know the books that contain the themes of religion and human welfare is called scriptures. The Veda is our original scripture. The word ‘Veda’ means knowledge – sacred knowledge or the knowledge about ‘Brahman’. To gain knowledge one is to be absorbed with deep attention. Absorption with deep attention is called ‘Sadhana’ i.e. Meditation. Through meditation the knowledge about the origin and variety of the world and leaving being can be achieved.

Those who could perceive truth or knowledge, the greatness, of the Supreme Creator and the creation were known as ‘Rishi’. The Vedas are the sacred knowledge of the Rishi perceived through meditation. This kind of perception is about the universe and living beings and about their Creator who is perceived as the Absolute Being or Brahman or Ishwara.

The Classification of the Vedas
In the Vedas many things of truth and knowledge are described. Initially the subject matters of the Vedas was undivided. Afterwards Krishnadwaipayana Vedavyasa, a great seer, divided the Vedas into four principal branches. The four Branches of the Vedas are (1) The Rigveda, (2) The Yajurveda, (3) The Samaveda and (4) The Atharvaveda.

The brief descriptions of the subject matter of the Rigveda, the Yajurveda, the Samaveda and the Atharvaveda are given below.

1. The Rigveda

The word ‘Rigveda’ means to praise or hymns. Praise of whom? The answer is the praise of Ishwara or the devata. When different kinds of the power of Ishwara are manifested, we denote them as Devatas or gods and goddesses. Realizing the inexhaustible power of Ishwara (the great God) in the natural phenomena like
Agni (fire), Bristi (rain fall), Bayu (air), Usha (dawn), Night etc. The rishis eulogist them. The eulogies, hymns and glorification coming out from voice of Vedic rishis took the form of verses. These sayings or verses were revealed from the God through meditation by the endless grace of God. That is why the Rishis said that they were not the authors but only the seers of the Vedas. For this reason the Veda is called Apaurusheya. It means the Veda is not the creation of any person of the world, it is seen i.e. perceived through meditation.

The Riks are also called mantras or hymns. The Riks or mantras are the short verses of three or four lines. Once these verses were recited as poems. There are 10472 Riks in all in the Rigveda. A Sukta consists of some Riks and the whole Rigveda is divided into 10 Mandalas. Each Mandala consists of some Suktas and every Sukta consists of some Riks. There are in all 1028 Suktas in the Rigveda. The Suktas are the hymns of prayer to gods and goddesses and these prayers were made to get happiness and peace. As for example Indra is the god of rain and dew. Praising Indra, it is said in a Rik:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Indram vayam mahadhana} \\
\text{Indramarbhe havamahe} \\
\text{Yujam Britreshu bajarinam //}
\end{align*}
\]
(Rgv, 1st Mandal, 7th Sukta, 5th Rik)

Indra is our promoter and Bajradhari i.e. possessor of the thunders bolt to the enemy. We invoke Indra for more wealth or for even a little of it.

The Devata (god) of this Mantra is Indra. Indra is adorned here as the promoter of the eulogizer and as an armed person with the weapon named vajra to the eye of the enemy. And to him prayer is made to get wealth. The seer of this Rik is the Rishi Madhuchhanda. Each of the four Vedas is named Samhita (Compilation or anthology). The Rigveda is the Samhita (anthology) of the Rik Mantras.

2. The Yajurveda

Yajur means the mantras for Yajna (sacrifice). In the ancient age the Rishis recited the mantras from the Vedas at the time of the performance of the Yajna and religious and ritual ceremonies.

It should be noted here that in the Vedic age the method of Upasana i.e. prayer was based on Yajna. The method of prayer and worship in front of the statues of
gods or goddesses was yet to be introduced. The Rishis felt the power of gods and goddesses and prayed to them with the recitation of the mantras. They ignited fire and invoked the devatas. The matter needs a little elaboration. The Rishis divided Devatas into three group: (1) Devata of the heaven (2) Devata of the sky and (3) Devata of the earth.

The power of the Devats of heaven can be felt. They do not descend to the earth. Such Devatas are Surya, Varuna etc. The Devatas of the sky come to the earth but they do not stay here. Indra, Vayu etc. are the examples of such Devatas. Devata of the earth is noticeable. He stays in the earth also. Such Devata is Agni. As agni is available in the earth, so he is worshipped direct and through him other Devatas are invoked to the earth. Delicious objects are sacrificed to the igniting fire in honour of Devatas. The prayer following this method is called Yajna.

At the time of the performance of Yajna, selected mantras about the intended Devatas are recited. Thus the Yajurveda Samhita consists of the collected mantras used in the Yajnas. The formalities relating to the rules and methods of the ceremony of Yajna are compiled in the Yajurveda. The calendar or the concept of the seasons is evolved on basis of the Yajna. Sacrifices were performed in many ways and during different spans of time. Certain Yajnas were daily, some were performed during a week or a fort night, some were performed during a year. Even some Yajnas were performed during the twelve years. Different types of altar were made in different Yajnas. From this technique of making of the altars, the study of geometry was evolved.

The Rigveda and the Samaveda were composed in poetic diction. But in the Yajurveda both prose and poetic style were used. Yajurveda is found in two main divisions (1) Krishna or black Yajurveda and (2) Shukla or white Yajurveda. Another name of the krishna Yajurveda is Taittiriya Samhita and that of the Shukla Yajurveda is Vajasaneya Samhita. The krishna Yajurveda consists of 7 kantos (chapters) and 2184 kandika or mantras. In shukla Yajurveda there are 40 chapters and 1915 mantras.

3. Samaveda
The meaning of the word ‘Sama’ is song. At the performance of Yajna music was set to same mantras and were sung. This mantras set to music were called as ‘Sama’. The Veda where the mantras to be sung were compiled is known as the Samaveda Samhita. From the Samaveda the knowledge about the music of the ancient age can be achieved from the Samaveda. The original source of our songs and music is the Samaveda. The scale in music like Sharaja, Rishabha etc. is originated from the Sama. Mainly the mantras of the Rigvedas were set to music. The mantras of the Samavedas are 1810 in number. Of these, except 75, all the mantras were taken from the Rigveda and were set to music.

The Samaveda Samhita is divided into two volumes: (1) Purvarchika and (2) Uttarachika

4. Atharvaveda

Now it is known to us that the anthology of the recitable eulogical mantras or hymns is called the Rigveda Samhita. The mantras applied to the Yajnas are known Yajurveda. And mantras set to music are called the Samaveda. The fourth part of the Veda is called the Atharvaveda. The Atharva samita is the compilation of the mantras relating to various spiritual and worldly knowledge.

The older name of the Atharvaveda was atharvangirasa. The term Atharva denotes medical science and activities relating to nutrition and tranquilization. The term Angirash implies the rites and ceremonies to destroy the opponents and win over the persons who are not under control.

The Atharvaveda is famous for the source of information about the ancient medical science. The Rigveda and the Yajurveda inform about diseases, their treatment and about physicians. But it has explain in very short. In the Atharvaveda different kinds of diseases and as a means for their cure, various trees, plants and shrubs have been discussed in detail. The origin of the medical science named ‘Ayurveda’ is this Atharvaveda and the osteology and surgery are also mentioned in it. The Atharvaveda consists of 20 kantos (chapters), 731 Suktas and about six thousand mantras. This Veda is composed in both prose and poetic diction but verses form the major portion – one sixth portion is composed in prose.
EXERCISE

Multiple choice questions

1. Who is the god of rain and dew?
   a. Fire  b. Indra
c. Varun  d. Usha

2. Atharva means -
   i. herbal medical treatment
   ii. modern medical treatment
   iii. homeopathic medical treatment

Which one of the following is correct?
   a. i  b. ii
c. i and ii  d. i, ii and iii

Read the following paragraph and answer questions nos. 3 and 4
Manohar worships the gods by uttering mantras. He says that the gods of the Heaven and the sky cannot be seen, but their power can be felt. Hence Manohar performs meditation and worship of Agni (fire) more than any other God.

3. When gods are worshipped by uttering mantras, it is then called—
   a. puja  b. Yajna
c. bhakti  d. aradhana

4. Manohar worship fire because-
   a. fire is more powerful
   b. fire is available on the earth
   c. fire is very useful in everyday life
d. there is none worthy of worship except fire
5. How can the unlimited power of the gods be realized?
   a. through meditation  b. through the power of nature
   c. through worship    d. through acquiring knowledge

Creative Questions
Rabindra knows about the four Vedas. He says, ‘In the different branches of the Vedas, God’s glory, the rules and principles to perform religious sacrifice (yajna), hymns and mantras, and various spiritual and worldly practical items of knowledge have been discussed. Knowledge as found in the branches of the Vedas has similarity of different practical items of knowledge in modern time. For example, the knowledge of ayurvedic treatment of medicine comes from the Atharvaveda. Moreover, there is compilations of various kinds of earthly knowledge in the Atharvaveda.’

   a. In which particular branch of the Vedas have God and the other gods been glorified?
   b. Why does Rabindra say that the scriptural rules and rites of religious sacrifice (yajnanushthan) have been described in the different branches of the Veda?
   c. Discuss the relationship between modern sources of acquiring knowledge along with the sources of holy ideas as found in the Veda.
   d. ‘Atharvaveda is nothing but the compilation of various kinds of worldly knowledge’ -Justify the Statement.
CHAPTER FIVE

GODS AND GODDESSES

Ishwara transforms of his qualities or power into visible forms and they are called Devata i.e. gods and goddesses. Brahma, Vishnu, Durga etc., are the examples of such Devatas (gods and goddesses). Brahma is the god of creation, Vishnu preserves us and Durga is the goddess of power. The Devatas are worshipped to achieve their qualities or power. Their deeds and attributes are praised through eulogies. The worship of any god or goddess is the worship of ‘Parameshwara’ (the supreme God). Ishwara and the Devatas become satisfied if they are worshipped. It begets welfare for the mankind.

We know, the Puranas, The scriptures are composed on the basis of our original scripture, the Veda. The Devatas of the Veda are changed in form and importance in the Puranas. Moreover there are some Devatas who are not cited in the vedas and puranas. But age after age they are being worshipped. These Devatas are called Laukika i.e. customary or folk-based gods and goddesses. In this sense, we can divide the Devatas into three groups:

The Vedic Devatas
The Puranic Devatas
The customary or folk based –Devatas.

The same Devata is mentioned as a Devata of these three groups also. Here we are giving a pen–picture in brief, of three Devatas namely – Surya, Jagaddhatri and Vishwakarma.

A. Surya

Surya or the sun is one of the principal Devatas. He has all of the three fold forms i.e., the Vedic, the pauranic and the Laukika. Surya has several names viz: Aditya, Savita, Aryama, Pusha, Mitra, Vaskar, Divakar, Rabi etc. In the Mahabharata we get 108 names of Surya. In the Vedas Surya is described as ‘Tejas’ i.e. energy and the source of life. He is called the soul of the whole universe. Surya is as if the eyes of Mitra, Varuna and Agni. Here the word ‘eye’ denotes the exposers of all the things of the whole universe.
Surya has a chariot i.e. a vehicle. That chariot has only one wheel and seven horses. Aruna is the charioteer of the chariot of Surya.

In the scriptures like Mahabharata, Markandeya Purana, Bhavishya Purana etc. Surya is denoted as the eye of the Devatas. In a book named Brihaddevata, Surya is depicted as the source of origination and the place of extinction. Surya is the energy of Ishwara.

The worship of Surya has been going on for a very long time.

It is said in the Ramayana that Rama eulogized Surya before the killing of Ravana.

Raktajava i.e. a species of China rose is very fond of Sruya. In the worship of Surya the leaf of wood apple is prohibited. On the seventh tithi (day) of the bright fortnight of the month of Magha of the Bengali year the female worshippers worship Surya gorgeously. This ceremony is known as the ‘Araghya Saptami Vrata’ i.e. vow to attain cure of from diseases. This Brata which is performed with a prayer to be cured and to achieve wealth is also known as the Bidhan Saptami Vrata.

At the advent of the worship of the desired Devata, some other gods or goddesses are worshipped together. Surya is one of those Devatas. Moreover at the beginning of the worship of any Devata Surya must be given Arghya i.e. offerings. He is also worshipped as folk or customary deity having the name of Itu, Bhadu, Tusu etc. The worshippers of Surya are known as ‘Saura’.

There are many temples of Surya in different places. The temple of Konark of Orishya in India is to be cited first. There is a very fine temple of Surya at Modhera of Gujrat. From the writings of Hu-en Tsang and Alberuni, we come to know that there was an icon of Surya in a temple of Surya in Multan.

Surya possesses uncountable qualities. The worshipper of Surya is rewarded with energy an vigour and infinite blessings. By the blessings of Surya one gets cure from the diseases. Praying to Surya a poet of Sanskrit literature named Mayura was recovered from Leprosy. The name of the scripture, composed by mayura, named as suryashataka. In Shukla Yajurveda, prayer was made to Surya in this way. Oh! : Surya, you are the source of energy. Give us energy please. (31/20)
Rabindranath Tagore perceived Brahma or Ishwar in the energy of Surya.

In his own language:

Prabhat suryer antare
Dekhte pelam apnake
Hiranmaya purusha /

The English translation of this stanza: – In the heart of the morning, Sun! oh Hiranmaya, Brahma I saw you. Here Hiranmaya means Brahma or God. Realization of energy is achieved through the worship of Surya. The light and heat of Surya cures from the diseases. This instruction is also attainable from the worship of Surya. To salute Surya early in the morning is one of the activities to be performed daily. With the following mantra Surya is saluted.

Om Javakusuma samkasham kashyapeyam mahadyutim /
Dhwentarim sarvapapaghnam pranato’ asmi divakaram //

I salute Surya, the son of kashyapa whose colour is like the Java flower (a kind of china roses) very radiant, remover of darkness and the destroyer of all sorts of sin.

B. Jagaddhatri

The power of Ishwara (God) is revealed in the form of Devi Jagaddhatri. The word Jagaddhatri is a combination of the two words ‘Jagat’ (world) and dhatri (one who bears, or mother). So the meaning of the word Jagaddhatri is one who bears the world i.e. mother of the world.

The full name of the goddess Jagaddhatri is Jagaddhatri Durga. Actually Jagaddhatri is none but Durga in another form. This goddess took a lion as her riding animal or a vehicle and the lion has defeated a big elephant. Devi Jagaddhatri has four hands, wears red garments and is ornamented with various ornaments. The colour of her body is as like as the colour of the morning sun. A snake is used as her sacred thread, on her two hands of the right side there are chakra, a weapon like a discus and five arrows respectively. In her left two hands there are conch shell and a bow. She is seated on the bloomed lotus. The strong lion is the symbol of purashakara or strength and the drunk elephant is that of oscillating mind. Our mind is very oscillating, drunk and strong. Mind should be controlled with vigour and strength—this instruction one may also acquire from the worship of Jagaddhatri.
Jagaddhatri puja is performed on the ninth tithi at the bright fortnight in the month of Kartika. The worship of the Devi (goddess) is performed three times of the same days; morning, noon and afternoon. At the later part of the worship ‘Anjali i. e. offering of flowers and leaves etc. is offered to the goddess and then the devotees salute her. Afterwards sacrificial ceremony (Yajna) is performed according to the scripture known as the Tantras. On the next day morning usual worship is offered to the Devi followed by the symbolic Visarjana (immersion of the statue of god or goddess). In some places sacrificial ceremony and visarjana are held on the same day.

At the time of worship of Devi Jagaddhatri, chandi is enchanted three times. In many places the ceremony of the worship of Devi Jagaddhatri is held during three days on the seventh, eight and ninth tithis. On the tenth tithis the idol of the Devi is immersed. With Devi Jagaddhatri Nilkanthas (i. e. blue-necked) shiva is also worshipped.

**C. Vishwakarma**

The literary meaning of the word Vishwakarma denotes the maker of the universe. The literal meaning is accepted in the Veda. It is said in the Rigveda that Vishwakarma is an all pervading seer. His eyes, face, arms and legs are spread to all directions. Using the arms and legs he builds the heaven and the earth. He names the gods and goddesses. He has got also many other names such as Dhata (maker) Vishwadrashta (seer of the world), Prajapati (creator), possessor of all knowledge, master of speech, doer of welfare etc. According to Purana Vishwakarma is the god of art and craft. He is the originator of an Upaveda namely the Sthapatyaveda i. e. the knowledge of architecture. At the same time he is also the god of 64 kinds of art. Drawing his favour one becomes skilled in art and machinery. He is first maker of ornaments and the air craft of gods. He made the weapon of gods also. All kinds of artistic decoration and ornamentation are started by him. He is maker of the heaven also.

Directed by Brahma, Vishwakarma made the city of kishkindhya. He is the maker of the palace of Yama, that of Varuna, the heavenly flying chariot named Pushpaka, the vajra and the bow named Vijaya of Indra, circular weapon of Vishnu namely – skudarshana chakra, the weapon of kuvera, Lanka city etc. By
order of Lord Shrikrishna he built the city of Dwaraka. It was said that the idol of Jagannatha in Puri was made by him.

An elephant is the riding animal of Vishwakarma. The worship of Vishwakarma is performed making an idol of him or Ghata (i.e. metal or earthen pitcher) on the last day of the month of Bhadra. Especially the artists and the labourer worship this god. For the development of the artistic skill, the determination should be taken for worship. In course of the worship of Vishwakarma, anjali (i.e. offering of flowers, leaves etc) is offered and the worshippers bow to him with the following mantra.

Devashilpin mahabhage davanam karyasadhaka /
Vishwakarmannamasthubhyam sarvabhistaphalarprada //

Oh, Vishwakarma! you are the artist of the god adorned with good qualities, the performer of the activities of gods and the author of the fulfilment of all sorts of desire. We bow to you.

As a power for all sorts of art and craft including architecture of God, Vishwakarma is imaged. Vishwakarma is the inspiration for art and craft. Through the worship of Vishwakaram, we get this kind of lesson prevalent in the minds of people.

EXERCISE

Multiple choice questions
1. The carrier of Vishwakarma is -
   a. swan      b. elephant
   c. peacock   d. lion

2. According to Hinduism, to lie prostrate to the morning sun is an everyday affair because-
   i. the sun is larger than the earth in shape, and is round.
   ii. the light and the heat of the sun cures diseases
   iii. one may be strong and be endowed with welfare profusely if the sun is worshipped.
Which one of the following is correct?

a. i  
b. ii

c. iii  
d. ii and iii

Read the following paragraph and answer questions nos.3, 4 and 5

Mother of Nakul spoke to her restless and naughty son (Nakul) about the worship of Jagaddhatri Devi on the ninth day of a lunar fortnight, in the month of kartik in order to pacify him. In this context she said, “The Devi will be displeased if the restless mind of a person is not pacified by his manliness. The goddess has free movement amidst everything of the universe. She is a form of God”.

3. Mother told her son, Nakul, about Jagaddhatri Devi to pacify him -

   i. to restrain the mind through strong manliness
   ii. to restore peace in his mind
   iii. if Nakul becomes peaceful, his brothers and sisters, too, will be so.

Which one of the following is correct?

a. i  
b. ii

c. iii  
d. i and iii

4. From Jagaddhatri Puja, what particular lesson (teaching) will Nakul apply to the religious way of life?

   a. he (Nakul) will shun restlessness and pay attention to industrial works.
   b. he will devote to religious activities.
   c. his respect and devotion to his mother will increase.
   d. through strong self-will he will control his mind from the influence of all evil deeds.

5. Jagaddhatri Devi has been called a symbol of God, because---

   a. she has made people absorbed in religious activities
   b. she has done good to mankind.
   c. she has assumed everything of the world
   d. she has given to man the conception or idea of the world.
Creative Questions

The boy Jatin had a strong interest in industrial works. He visited a fair of cottage industry with his mother. There he found beautiful metal utensils especially used for household and asked his mother, “Did they are make by human beings?” Mother replied, ‘Vishwakarma or the heavenly architect, has given people creative knowledge and talent. He is a celestial artisan, a craftsman and heavenly artisan designer. The labourers and the craftsmen worship this god. He is the controller of all creative thoughts.

a. What is the meaning of ‘Vishwakarma’ in the literal sense?
b. Why did Jatin’s mother tell him that Vishwakarma has given to human the creative knowledge and talent?
c. In which articles of our regular use do we find the contribution of Vishwakarma?
d. ‘Vishwakarma is the controller of all creative thoughts’ – Explain the idea.
CHAPTER SIX
RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

The word dharma mean’s which retain us. The essence of Hindu religion is to make the welfare of the world, at the same time the salvation of one’s self. There are some rules and regulations in religion to run the life keeping faith on God. And this rules and regulations should be obeyed. There are three aspects of religion:

(i) What is religion? What does it mean and what is the aim of religion? And so on.
(ii) What is the usefulness of practicing religion?
(iii) How are the religious activities performed?

We know that, to practise religion we are to observe some rites and rituals. This is called the observance of religious rites.

Through ages human beings are practising their respective religions by observing the rites and ritual. Of course, some changes and modifications occurred in practice of religion there. For this, trend of various ages religions differ from each other.

We do not know the beginning or the end of time, still efforts were made to count it and time is divided in large or small parts like ages, years, months, days etc. A long slab of time is called an ‘age’. The method of counting the ancient time differs from that of modern age. The way of observing religious rites and ceremonies of Vedic age is changed in the Pouranic age. In the Vedic age various kinds of Yajna or sacrifice were performed and at that age the tradition of worship before the idols of gods and goddesses was not prevailed. Afterwards idolatry was introduced.

The whole life cycle of a person was divided into four stages. Each of these stages is called the Ashrama. The four Ashramas are named as Brahmacharya, Garhastya, Vanaprastha and Sannyasa. The characteristics of each Ashrama are different.
Now, we will describe, in brief, the trend of the ages, Vedic sacrificial ceremonies and the system of Ashrama respectively.

A. Trend of the ages (Yugadharma)

According to the Hindu scriptures, there are four principal ages namely-(Yugadharma) ‘Satya’, Treta, Dwapara and ‘Kali’. The behaviour and the pattern of the life of one age differs from those of others. The particular behaviour and pattern of life of any age is denoted as Yugadharma i.e. the ‘Trend of the age’.

In different Puranas, Tantras and the Smriti i.e. the holy law-books trends of the four ages are described. According to the Puranas the duration of the Satya age was 17,28000 years, the Treta age was 12,96000 years, the Dwaparasa age was 8,64,000 years and that of the Kali age is 4,32,000 years.

(1) The Satya age (The first of the four age of the world according to Hinduism): The other name of the Satya age is the Krita age. The trend of this age is described in a book named ‘Manu-samhita’ as follows:

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Chatushapat sakalo dharmah satyamchaiva krite yuge / 
Nadharme nagamah kashchinmanushyan prativartate // (1/81)
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In the Satya age, the four quarters i.e. the whole age was full of Dharma i.e. pious deeds. At that age the truth prevailed fully. No body tried to get wealth and education applying unfair means. The greatest attribute of the Satya age was religious austerities. At this age the average longevity of man excessively high. Men were free from the diseases. All of their desires become fulfilled. According to a book named ‘Mahanirvanatantra’ the men of Satya age were pious. They tried to satisfy the gods and the soul of the late ancestors. They had mastered their passions. They became very strong and very powerful by dint of the study of the Vedas keeping in mind about God, kindness and charity. They acquired the qualities similar to the gods. Having corporeal body, they were able to wander in the heavenly world.

In this time, people looked at wealth of others as if it were lump of soil. Then there were no thieves, liers or cheats. There was no prematurated death, famine or the fear to be diseased. The Brahmins, the Kshatriyas, the Vaishyas or the Shudras (four forms of castes) performed their respective duties. The earth was green.
with plentiful corn, the clouds showered rains at proper time and trees remained bended for the heaviness of the abundances of fruits.

2. **The Treta Age** (the second age of the world according to Hinduism):

In the age of Treta religion had been reduced one quarter from the religious practices. Some immoral activities came into practice. Then most of the people used to earn wealth and education by unfair means. At that time the longevity of man had been reduced than that of satya age. The main trend of the Treta age was knowledge. According to the ‘Mahanirvantantra’ in the Treta age, people were unable to serve their purpose following the pathway as instructed in the Vedas. Then their minds became full of anxiety. Then Mahadeva, one of the three great gods, introduced Smriti i.e. law books following the instruction of the Vedas. Thos who were unable to go through the Vedas, rescued the people of that time from sorrow, grief and sin by studying smriti.

3. **The Dwapara age** (the third age of the world according to Hinduism):

In the Dwapara age two quartet or half of the total Dharma or purity had been reduced. Then Dharma and Adharma i.e. purity and impurity turned to be equal i.e. one half was Dharma and the other half was Adharma. Longevity was reduce more. The main trend of this age was to perform Yajna (Sacrifice). According to ‘Mahanirbantantra’ at that time activities recommended by the Smriti had been reduced, people were attacked with different diseases. In the Dwapara age as the power of Adharma (impurity) was one-half of the total strength different types of injustice and sinful activities degenerated the people. The kings became tyrant. One hundred brothers headed by Duryodhana in Hastina, the king Kamsha of Muthara, Jarasandha, the ruler of Magadha, Shishupala, the king of Chedi etc. were the examples of such tyrants. For their tyranny the world faced suffering to a great extent. Lord Sri-krishna killed or subdued these sinful kings and established Dharma or Justice in the world.

4. **The kali age** (the fourth age of the world according to Hinduism):

In the Kali age three fourths of the total strength turned to Adharma i.e. Dharma turned to one quartet only. At that time longevity had been reduced more than that of the Dwapara age. The present age is the Kali age. From the time of the advent of the emperor “Parikshita” this age was started.
According to the ‘Bhagavatpurana’ the characteristics of the Kali age are falsehood, idleness, excess of sleep, envy, sorrow, grief, fear, poverty, etc.

According to ‘Vishnupurana’ in Kali age people express much pride having a little wealth. Usually none is willing to spend money for religious purpose, or to remain respectful to the Vedas. Most of them do not obey their parents. Though there are demerits in the age of kali, there is a merit also. The virtue, which could be achieve by hard religious austerity in the Satya age, can be achieved in the Kali age by a little effort of the uttering (repeatedly) the name of lord Hari the main trend of the Kali age is charity. In the fifteenth century of this age, Chaitanyadeva was revealed to preserve Dharma or justice. He preached the doctrine of love to remove a fatal trend of untouchability from the society. To utter or to sing the name of Hari was the pathway of religion. He said –

Harernama Harernama Harernamaiva kevalam /
Kalau nastyeva nastyeva nastyeva gatiranyatha //

The name of Hari, the name of Hari and the name of Hari is only the means of support. There is no, no, and no way to survive without taking this name.

Afterwards many great men came and try to bring the people to the way of religion who were disinterested on the way of religion.
B. The Vedic Sacrificial ceremony

There are different ways and means to worship god, such as – Puja, singing, psalms or hymns, to utter or to sing the name of God repeatedly, act of praying silently, meditation, yajna etc. In the Vedic age, prayer to god or desired deity was made through Yajna only. Lighting fire and invoking the desired Devata particular things or substances and ghee, leaves of bd etc. various things were offered towards that god. This ritual performance was known as Yajna (sacrifice).

Vedic Yajna was performed on the altar. To build this altar definite measurement was prescribed. The Purohits i.e. priests who performed Yajna built the altar as perfectly as possible according to the instruction of the scriptures. They were very much attentive to the correct pronunciations of the mantras. In the performance of a ‘Yajna’ it required four chief priests namely Hota, Adhvaryu Udgata and Brahma.

The meaning of the term ‘Hota’ is a priest as an invocator. He, who invokes gods or goddesses enchanting the mantras is called ‘Hota.’ Udgata adds music to the mantras or hymns and sang them. The duty of the Adhvaryu was to offer things into the fire of the altar of the desired god with the recitation of the mantras. Brahma’s duty was to correct the errors, of the three types of priests mentioned above. So Brahma was the most honourable priest or ‘Rittik’. Each kind of the priests were assisted by three assistants. Then sixteen priests were required in all.

The vedic Yajna were of five kinds. Homa, Isti, Pashu, Soma and Satra. Each kind of Yajna has two parts: Prakriti and Vikriti. Prakriti Yajna (sacrifice) is called the principal yajna. Each Prakriti yajna has got variations. Those varieties of the Yajnas were known as vikriti yajnas. Now we will describe in brief the five kinds of Yajnas.

(i) Homa: The gods of this kind of Yajnas are Surya (sun) and Agni (fire). At the time of the performance of this kind of Yajna on the enclosed fire place of the house of the person milk, curd, cake etc. were sacrificed every day in the morning.

(ii) Isti: The Isti Yajna was performed at the Purnima tithi i.e. the day with the fullmoon and Amavasya tithi i.e. the last day of the dark fortnight. In the case with the first one sacrificial ceremony was started in the morning of the
Purnima Tithi and was ended at noon of the Pratipada (i.e. the first day of the next fortnight). In the case of Amavasya, the ceremony was started in the morning of the Amavasya Tithi, and was ended similarly as the Purnima.

(iii) **Pashu Yaga:** Animal is the sacrificed object of this kind of Yajna. For this its name is the Pashu Yaga. The gods of this Yaga are Prajapati, Surya or Indra and Agni.

(iv) **Soma Yaga:** The juice of Soma, a kind of creeper, is the main sacrificed thing of the Soma Yaga. At the time of the performance of this Yajna twelve hymns were sang, the name of the last hymn was Aganistoma. Every year in the spring the Yajamana (the sacrificer) accompanied by his wife performed this Yajna.

(v) **Satra Yaga:** The Yajna which had been performed in more than twelve days are known as the Satrayaga. Different types of Satrayagas took different span of time such as one year, ten years, or even one hundred years to be completed.

The books about the code and rules of the performance of the ‘Yajna is called ‘Brahmana’ . Following the ‘ode of the Brahmans’ Yajanas were performed.
C. The System of Ashrama.

In the Vedas it is calculated that the longevity of a man is one hundred years on average. No matter what ever the longevity of man the whole life cycle of man is divided into four stages. Each of these stages is called the Ashrama. There are four Ashramas namely the Brahmacarya, the Garhasthya, the Vanaprasthya, and the Sannyasa. The system of Ashram is described in different Puranas, Tantras and the Smritis (law books). According to these scriptures the systems of the Ashrama is described below:

1. Brahmacarya (a mode of life marked with devoted study of Vedas and other scriptures and books of knowledge, 1-25 years): The student life in modern sense was denoted as the Brahmacaryaasharma by the Rishis, the truth seers. The Brahmacaryaasharma is a very valuable part of life.

   After the Upanayana, the boys had to live in the abode of the teacher. There they had to serve the teacher with care of sanctity and rules. A Brahmacari should have his bath thrice a day. He will never sleep in the day. He will leave his bed at the Brahma moment i.e. an hour before the sun rises. He will say prayer to Surya and Agni in the morning and evening. After finishing the prayer he will salute his teacher and never behave indecently, with his teacher. Having the permission he will go through his lesson attentively sitting in front of his teacher. He will observe the prescribed religious vows and ceremonies. Every morning he will collect the kusha, (a kind of grass) water and flower for the teacher. A Brahmacari will be well behaved, abstemious, skilled and subduer of his passions. Eyewash, painting, meat, honey, garlands, sandal paste, cosmetics and ornaments are strictly prohibited for a Brahmacari.

2. Garhasthya (family life 25-50 years): The Garhasthya Asharma is the best of the four Ashramas. Because the Garhasthya Ashrama maintains the Brahmacari, the Vanaprasth and the sannyasi with donations.

   According to the Vishnupurana, a Grihastha i.e. house-holder is the shelter of the wandering Brahmacaris who live on his gracious gift. Hence the Garhasthya Ashrama is the best. The Brahmacarya Ashrama is followed by the Garhasthya Asharana. A Brahmacari first completes his course of studies in the Veda. Then he offers the dakshina (i.e. fee or gift to be given after the completion of educational course as Brahmacari) to the priest teacher and seeks his permission
of entering the Garhasthyashrama. Afterwards he will get married and pass his life in a well disciplined way.

A house holder is to bring up his son upto five years of age and then he will teach and train him (the son) with all virtuous qualities to sixteen years. After then he will be appointed to the house-hold works. He will also look after the daughter with proper care and hand over the well-educated and well-ornamented daughter to the deserving bridegroom. A house-holder will never tell a lie and will never deceive anybody. He will not be addicted to any matter beyond the limit. He will be heroic to the enemy, humble to the elders and will earn education, wealth, fame and Dharma carefully. He will perform Pinda offerings (i.e. the rituals and ceremonies for the satisfaction of the souls of the departed ancestors), satisfy the gods by offering sacrifice, please the guests by giving food and worship the world by truthfulness.

3. The Vanaprastha (50-75 years): After fifty years of the age a householder will go to the forest either keeping his wife to his son or accompanied by her. To live in the forest from the fifty to seventy five years age i.e. twenty five years of life is the stage of Vanaprastha. Persons having Vanaprastha will have fruits and vegetables as their meal and will lie down on the ground. They will show hospitality to the guests. They will have their bath thrice a day. They will perform their prayer in a lonely place. They will never accept any gift and will not go to the human habitation.

4. The Sannyasa (ascetic life 75-100 years): A Sannyasi (an ascetic) must live alone. He will earn his livelihood by gracious gifts only. He will shave his head. He will be free from attraction to his son, daughter, wife and to all materials. He will accept all the animals either great or small, enemy or foe as his friend and not do harm to any living being. He will remain always in Yoga posture or (meditation) and avoid the company of all.

According to the Shrimadbhagvadgita, to give up the sakama karma (i.e. activities aiming at the benifit of the persuit) is the Sannyasa or ascetism. He who does this is called Sannyasi. Hence, living in human habitation if one gives up the sakamakarma can be a Sannyasi also.
EXERCISE

**Multiple choice questions**
1. According to Hindu religious doctrine in how many parts can life-span be divided?
   - a. 2  
   - b. 3  
   - c. 4  
   - d. 5

2. The characteristics of ‘Kali Yuga’-
   - i. deception, falsehood and idleness  
   - ii. sleep, jealousy and sorrow  
   - iii. mourning, fear and extreme poverty
   Which one of the following is correct?
   - a. i  
   - b. ii  
   - c. i and ii  
   - d. i, ii and iii

3. In the Vedic age, by which was the prayer of God performed?
   - a. puja (worship)  
   - b. hymn (stav)  
   - c. song in praise of one’s idol  
   - d. Yajna

4. What does the term, ‘Hota,’ mean in Vedic age?
   - i. Reader of mantras  
   - ii. Music composer of mantras  
   - iii. Caller
   Which one of the following is correct?
   - a. i  
   - b. ii  
   - c. i and ii  
   - d. i, ii and iii

5. Brahmacharyaashram is a highly precious period of life. Its period of time is -
   - a. from 1- 25 years  
   - b. from 4- 25 years  
   - c. from 6- 25 years  
   - d. from 8- 25 years
6. who does not accept any gift
   a. a brahmachari   b. sannyasi
   c. Vanprasthi      d. grihastha

Read the following paragraph and answer questions nos. 7 and 8.
Yajna is a way of union with God. In Vedic age Yajna was chiefly a way of worship. Yajna was of various types. In Yajna the principal four priests used to perform their respective works. Yajna was performed after building a platform or an altar.

7. In Vedic age, the four priests were -
   a. Hota, Arjuna, Yudhishthir, Brahma
   b. Hota, Adhvarju, Ravana, Udgata
   c. Hota, Adhvarju, Udgata, Devi
   d. Hota, Adhvarju, Udgata, Brahma

8. In the making of altar was considered-
   i. scriptural injunction
   ii. the directive of the priest
   iii. definite measurement

Which one of the following is correct?
   a. i         b. i and ii
   b. i and iii  d. ii and iii

Read the following paragraph and answer questions nos. 9 and 10
Sukumar Babu is a brahmin pandit. He had devoted himself to acquire knowledge while practising brahmacharya. He has free access to various branches of knowledge. This scholarship (panditya) of Sukumar Babu has brought him fame, reputation and honour in the society.
9. In the best period of time for trying arduously to obtain knowledge Sukumar Babu has -
   i. acquired knowledge
   ii. lived in the abode of his guru or teacher
   iii. studied the various branches of knowledge

Which one of the following is correct?
   a. i   b. ii
   c. i and iii  d. i, ii and iii

10. For gaining fame and reputation in society is required –
   a. adequate earning of knowledge   b. To live in harmony
   c. To do benefit to others   d. To show kindness to living being

Creative Questios
1. Jatin, the grandson of Jadav Babu, is a student of class VIII. He observes that his grand-father sings kirtan everyday. One day the grand-father told Jatin that it was kaliyuga, so, people had totally forgotten to observe religious rites and practices. They can easily attain salvation from it if they profusely distribute things in charity and utter the name of Lord Hari repeatedly. He further said that piety or virtue which the people gained after severe meditation in Satyayuga was now possible to achieve through repeated utterances of the name of Lord Hari.
   a. what is the only religion of kaliyuga?
   b. Point out the similarity of the present age with kaliyuga.
   c. ‘the present age is kaliyuga’ – why has Jatin’s grand-father told him so?
   d. ‘Repeated utterances of the name of Lord Hari is the only religion of Kaliyuga – Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer.
2. Somnath is 75 years old. Will he be able to observe well the duties or rites of the last stage of life according to the system of Ashrama? At the outset of life, he stayed in the residence of his teacher (guru) and acquired knowledge. Whatever he has done so far is for the purpose of performing duties or rites of a hermitage or asylum. He has shown his two sons the way to be enlightened persons. He has rendered his only daughter good education and has bestowed her ceremonially to a worthy bridegroom. He has never been cruel to his wife and has always offered and services to the relatives. He cannot remember to have told a lie at any time, but even in his own abode he lived like an ascetic or sannyasi.

a. How many stages are there in Ashramdharma?

b. Explain clearly why the second stage is the best.

c. Describe how Somnath was an ascetic or sannyasi by living in his own house.

d. ‘Brahmacharyaashram (the first stage of human life) is the only suitable period to build up life’-- Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer.
CHAPTER SEVEN
MORALITY

The knowledge about morality is known as ethics or the study of morality. Morality means some rules and regulations for the welfare of man and society. There is a close relation between morality and religion. Morality is reflected on religion. On the other hand religion is traceable in morality. Service, devotion, love, kindness, magnanimity, humanism, dutifulness, sacrifice etc. are different components of morality.

Now we will discuss some aspects of morality, namely-service, devotion, affection and kindness.

A. Service

The term ‘service’ carries different meanings. It means waiting or attending e.g. attending the guests or living beings. It may mean nursing e.g. nursing the patients. Another aspect of service is ‘Prayer’ e.g. pray to God. Precisely, Service means the virtuous activities to be performed for the satisfaction to others. Services may be rendered by donation on charity. But charitable deeds and service does not always bear the same connotation. In case of ‘Charity’ anything in kind is to be offered. But service may be rendered physically or mentally also without giving any materials. Service may be rendered by giving suggestions, showing sympathy, sharing the trouble in difficult situations applying many other ways likewise. We know Ishwara stays within the living beings as their souls. So if anybody serves the living being, he serves God. Therefore we will serve the living beings and the world for their welfare and for the salvation of the self. In this way Ishwara will be pleased. If Ishwara becomes pleased, we will get rid from all sorts of sufferings and get peace.

Now I tell you a story about this, listen-

The Glory of service

Once Yudhisthira, the emperor initiated a Yajna (i.e. sacrificial ceremony). He was donating open handedcy manner simultaneously. The distributors were serving food sufficiently and peoples were eating food coming in groups. A groups had just finished their meal and got up, another group took their seats.
Precious wealth including jewels was lumped in rows. Those who had asked, were donated from the lot. All on a sudden, a mongoose arrived at the altar and rolled itself repeatedly there. Do you know mongooses? Mongoose is an animal named Veji. The mother is more astonished that the face and a half of its body became golden. What was the matter? Such peculiar mongoose was never seen! The mongoose was asked curiously, “Why is your face and a half of your body golden?” The mongoose began to tell-

There was a poor Brahmin in Kurukshetra. He had no greed for wealth. He spent his time in study and religious activities. He managed his livelihood by what he could earn. One day he procured some barley at the cost of earnest effort. The wife of the Brahmin powdered that barley and divided into four parts. The Brahmin, his wife, their son and daughter-in-law would get one part each. In the mean time, a guest arrived there. The Brahmin stood up hurriedly and gave water to wash his hands and face, a seat and drinking water. The tiredness of the guest went away. Then the Brahmin gave the barley his own part to the guest. Oh, for a guest so meagre an amount! Then the wife of the Brahmin offered her part of the barely to the guest. But the guest’s hunger was not satisfied with it. Then the son of the Brahmin gave the guest his part.

- Any more? The guest asked. One looked at another.

- Yes, but that is the part of the daughter in-law, if it is given, she will suffer from starving.

Though the daughter-in-law was tender aged, she was influenced by the family tradition of service. She said, father it is you who has taught us that service is a great virtue. A guest is similar to Lord Narayana. I have decided to serve the guest offering my part of the barley.

The Brahmin became very glad to hear the words of the daughter-in-law. He then, poured the part of daughter-in-law on the dish of the guest. The guest became satisfied. He stood up.

How strange!
Why are all the directions lighted? Of what is the light, where is the guest? All of them saw that in the place of the guest the god Dharma was standing there in front
of them. Being satisfied at the service of the devotees, the god Dharma appeared before them.

The Mongoose continued:

Some powders of barley struck to the dish of the guest. As soon as my face and a half of my body touched that barley, they turned into gold. Since then I have been wandering from one place to another place, from one sacrificial place to other sacrificial place. My such effort is to see the other half of my body would become golden.

Listening to the story of the glory of service by the mongoose, everybody became amazed there.

B. Devotion

The attraction of the mind to the honourable persons is called ‘Bhakti;’ or devotion. i.e. devotion to parents, to the teachers etc. In religious sense ‘devotion’ means especially the attraction for the god. In a book named Naradiya Bhaktisutra it is said that the earnest love for God is devotion. God is the creator of all living beings, the world or the Universe. So it is our duty to make prayer to Him. To make this prayer there are so many methods. For example, the way of karma an action, the way of Jnana or knowledge and the way of ‘Bhakti’ or devotion. The austere maintained that through all of the said ways one can reach God. But the way of devotion is an easier one. Devotion is of two kinds such as-

Haituki and Ahaituki: Haituki is a prayer behind which there remains a definite desire or purpose. For example, a devotee becomes devoted to a God with a prayer for wealth, supporters, fame, honour etc. Here we see a definite end for devotion and this kind of devotion is called Haituki i.e. purposeful.

On the other hand when the devotee becomes devoted without any definite desire, the devotee becomes devoted only for the satisfaction or love of God. This sort of devotion is known as Ahaituki i.e. purposeless. Ahaituki devotion is the best. Devotion has got enormous power. It is very glorious. It is said by God Himself that I stay at the place where my devotees remain engaged in uttering or singing my name. God is favourite to the devotees and the devotees are also equally favourites to Him.
God bears the burden of His real devotees. God stays within the living beings as their souls. Out of this feeling a devotee serves the living beings and the world. Let us listen to a story about such an earnestly devoted woman.

**The Devotee Shavari**

A forest. It’s name was Panchabati. A shavari, i.e. a girl of the Shavar tribe lived there.

The society of that time determined the position of the Shavari a member of the working classes at a lower hierarchy. But the Shavari’s heart was filled with the devotion to God. She, with the heart filled with devotion, desired to do something for the devotees and be thankful to herself.

She decided to dedicate herself to the service of the devotees and to work physically would be her way of meditation. But how? Who would accept her service publicly as she was a member of a lower caste. So she made up her mind to discharge her service secretly.

In a forest near by there were the abodes of some sages. The sages lived there and kept themselves engaged in meditation. But the concept of caste-system made its nest within their heart. They too believe in the difference of the castes. That’s why the Shavari engaged herself in the service of the sages at night. She brought the firewoods from the forest and kept those in the abodes of the sages. Wiping out the weeds she tried to keep the way to the river clean and removed the prickles and small prickles of stone carefully. The sages thought, ‘who is the performer of such activities? But they could not come to know the person as the activities are performed at night. At one night some disciples of the sages did not fall asleep and saw that a Shavari had come with fire-wood and kept them near by. All of them surrounded her. She was trembling in fear with bended head.

One of the saints was great devotee and wise. Seeing the attraction of great devotion in Shavari, he initiated her with absolute love by then name of Rama. The race conscious saints be come burst in to loud lamentation. They boycotted the saint who had initiated Shavari. The old saint was not agitated by that. But he could not bear the shock of insult. He had died. Before death he said to shavari
that if she would have absolute devotion of Rama, of course, she would be able to meet Ram Chandra.

The Shavari felt very distressed at the death of the sage. One day in the morning the sages went to the river to have their bath. That Shavari also was having her bath at the same ‘ghat’. A shavari was having her bath at the same ‘ghat’? How a girl of lower caste could dare!. The sages scolded the Shavari very much. Within a moment the water of the river turned into blood. Enormous worms and insects were seen floating on the surface of the river. The sages could not find out the cause behind it.

Being disgraced Shavari returned to her hut. She made a hut using dry creepers and leaves and lived there and prayed to Lord Rama with keen devotion. She used to go to the forest, bring fruits and shrubs. She preserved those fruits for Lord Rama which was more sweet.

One day Lord Shri Ramachandra arrived and called Shavari with his sweet voice, where? Where is my dear Shavari? On hearing the sweet and pleasing voice, Shavari became utterly astonished. Looking around she came to see that a living idol having deep blue skin like the cloud of early rainy season was standing at the door Lord Shri Ramachandra and he was smiling.

Shavari wept with joy. Lord Shri Ramachandra also wept. God also shares the same feeling of the devotees.

Shavari brought and gave those dry fruits which she gathered for Lord Ramachandra with deep devotion. She offered water to drink in a broken earthen pot. Lord Shri Ramachandra accepted the fruits and water of his devotee with full satisfaction. To him there is no question of the caste. All the devotees are equal to him. Among the sages some were happy and some became annoyed. Lord Shri Ramachandra went to them and asked, - why did the water of the river turn to blood?

The sages could not answer to his questions. Lord Shri Ramachandra smiled and informed them – “If Shavari touches the water of that river the water will be pure again.”
The sages got Shavari down in to the water of that river and within a moment the water had been pure.

After some days the Shavari died and her soul went to Vaikuntha the abode of Lord Vishnu.

Shavari did not remain in this world. But the glory of her devotion becomes memorable for ever.

**C. Affection**

Affection is a great virtue. The term affection denotes satisfaction, attraction, friendship etc. Affection makes the life nice and tolerable and also makes the society peaceful. Affection, devotion etc. infact, implies the attraction of the heart. Attraction for younger one and the friends is affection. The attraction for God or any respectable person is denoted as devotion. Attraction of the heart toward friends and persons is generally known as affection. If the affection grows in the heart of a person he can not be selfish. Then he feels delighted to make others free from sorrows. It is a matter of his satisfaction. A heart filled with affection remains always satisfied. He bears all the sufferings of life gladly. Due to affection one takes the suffering of his friend as if it was his and a keen desire arises in his mind to eradicate that suffering. We know that God exists the living beings. So to behave affectionately with the living beings is similar to that with God and God becomes satisfied at this.

The affection is a tender attribute and a part of religion. Lord Shrikrishna had profound affection for his classmate Shridama.

Let us listen to a story regarding this affection from the Shrimadbhagavata:

**Shrikrishna’s affection to friend**

It was that time when Lord Shrikrishna just killed the king Kamsa.

The peoples of Mathura were rescued from the tyranny of the king. The devotees with a delightful mind were singing the psalms of Hari (God).

Accepting the request of Shrikrishna and Balarama, Nandaraja went back to his adorned Vraja. Lord Shrikrishna and Balarama then began to perform new ‘Lila’ i.e. dalliance in the guise of human being. They made Ugrasena, the father of Kamsa, the king of Mathura. Afterwards they went to the hermit of the sage,
Morality

Sandipani. There they got Shridama as one of their classmates. Intimately he was also addressed as Sudama.

After the completion of the educational course, the classmates went back to their respective homes.

Many days passed. Shrikrisha became the king of Dwaraka and Shridama was passing his life as a poor house holder. Shridama was a pious Brahmin. He passed his days in religious activities and studies. Whether regular meals of the day would be managed or not was uncertain due to his poverty. His wife also passed her life in sufferings as starving fully or partially.

One day wife of Shridama said to him,

- Attention please. I am unable to stand as I have been very weak for want of food. Shrikrishna, the king of Dwaraka is your friend. Once he was your classmate.

That’s true, but why are you remembering that?

- I have heard his fame of affection and kindness. He is famous for his charity also. Nobody returned back from him with empty hand.

- But shall I go to beg alms to friend?

- Not to the friend only, you are also going to a munificent king.

Shridama thought over the matter. But could not come to a clear decision whether he would go or not. At last he made up his mind to go thinking that he would have the opportunity to meet Shrikrishna.

But it was against the custom to visit a friend’s house without taking any gift.

But, alas, there was nothing to give in his house. Then his wife brought some ‘Chirha’ (paddy moulden into flattened rice) from the neighbours and put that on a piece of old cloth and fastened it. Shridama reached Dwaraka.

Passing through many palaces and palacious rooms, Shridama reached and entered the palace of Shrikrishna. From a little distance Shrikrishna saw him and coming hurriedly he embraced him with deep affection.

One was the king of Dwarka with Royal garments. The other was a poor Brahmin with torn and unclean clothes.

Both of them wept out of overwhelming joy meeting one another after a long time.
Shrikrishna, then, made Shridama sit on his own divan and washed Shridama’s feet by his own hands and satisfied his friend with proper entertainment. Both of them talked to each other on various topics. Shrikrishna said,

-‘Oh, Shridama, I think you can remember, one day both of us went to a forest to bring fire-woods for the wife of our teacher. In the forest we suffered much in the storm and rainfall! On the next day after the incident our teacher, honourable Sandipani found us out.

-‘Yes, I can remember everything of the incident.’

It was true that Shridama received proper entertainment. But what would be the case of his own side! What he brought, was a little amount of flattened rice which was only four handfuls in count. How embarrassing to give this trifling present! There was no information and incident which were beyond the knowledge of Shrikrishna. He almost snatched the packet of the flattened rice, took a handful from that and ate gladly.

Shridama passed the night with joy. But the purpose with which he had come did not come to a success. He suffered from hesitation and did not express his desire.

Shridama was followed by Shrikrishna for some time on the way home and said good-bye to him. Then sportive Shrikrishna called something to his mind and felt amused.

How strange!

The hut of Shridama was replaced by a palace! In front of the palace there was a garden and a lake. In the lake a lot of lotus and water-lily bloomed there. Sweet smell of them spread all around.

Shridama’s wife came forward. He wept for overwhelming joy. Though the desire was not expressed, Shridama and his wife received a plenty of wealth.

Lord Shrikrishna, in this way, exemplified an ideal of affection towards the friend.

D. Kindness

Kindness is a virtue. The intention to make others free from a problem or grief is called kindness. Humanity is expressed through kindness. When a man is
sympathetic at the grief or sorrow of others and wishes to remove it, the sentiment behind this is known as kindness.

Kindness is one of the essential attributes for the society. For whom is kindness rendered? The answer is for the distressed, aggrieved, diseased for affected living beings. Within the living beings, God exists as their soul. Hence, God becomes satisfied if kindness is rendered to a living being, if his problem on grief is removed.

It is interesting to note that Ishwara or God Himself moves around to get kindness as a distressed or aggrieved person. Because, by the attribute of kindness human mind will remain soft and pure. Kaviguru Rabindranath Tagore said,

‘I move around in the world for kindness, I remain in his home who manages home for others.

Lord Shrichaitanya considered kindness as very important, one of his teachings is-

“Name ruci jive daya vaishnav sevan,
iha haite dharma ar nahi sanatan/”

“Eagerness to utter the name of God, kindness to the living beings and services rendered to the Vaishnavas are considered by Lord Shrichaitanya as principal characteristics of the Sanatana i.e. Hindu religion.”

Like charity, service, sacrifice, kindness is also a tender habit or attribute and a part of religion.

Now listen to a story about kindness.

**The Kindness of Siddhartha**

Siddhartha – the name of boyhood of Gautama Buddha.

From his boyhood, there was magnamity, kindness, affection and pity in his heart. He was sympathetic not only for human beings but also for the beasts and birds. He became passionate in sympathy for the grief of all.

At an afternoon, the boy Siddhartha remained sitting in a garden. At that time, a certain thing fell to his feet making a sound. He saw that it was a duck and there was an arrow pricked on its leg. Somebody threw the arrow and it struck to its foot. From the wound of the duck it was bleeding continuously. What a pity! Who
was that person to make this poor state of this duck! Siddhartha’s mind as if wept in pity. He pulled the arrow off from the leg of the duck carefully and began to nurse it with proper care.

In the mean time Devadatta, a playmate of Siddharatha came there running. There was a bow on his shoulder. Devadatta said,

- ‘Oh, it is you who has got the duck in possession. It is my duck as I hunted it throwing an arrow from my bow. Give my duck to me.’
- ‘No, Devadatta, I’ll not give it.’
- ‘Why?’
- ‘How is the duck yours? It is rather a wild one.
- ‘That’s true. But a hunter is the owner of a hunt. Isn’t it?
Siddhartha, then, began to say weeping.
- ‘Devadatta, what are you telling?
Is there no affection in your heart? You feel pain if you receive a hit. The feeling of others in this case is very similar to you.
- It’s true.
- Then? This duck also, being wounded by your arrow, is suffering from pain.
- ‘Hang it! It is a duck trifling creature. Who is that poor fellow to feel pain for it?
Give it, give it to me and I’ll go back.
- Oh Devadatta, it is easy to take one’s life, but very difficult to save it. Be kind, Devadatta. Don’t push the duck towards the grip of death. Never mind, Devadatta. In lieu of this duck, I will give you anything you desire. But I don’t leave this duck.
-Oh Siddhartha!
-Devadatta, my brother, you have a life. By that life, try to understand the feeling and pain of another life. Take the Shakya kingdom, I have no desire for it. Instead, please be kind to the duck. Set it free.

Understanding the firm determination of Siddhartha to save the duck and his kindness to the living beings, Devadatta became fascinated. The attitude of
kindness of Siddhartha to the living beings created the same emotion in the heart of Devadatta.

Siddhartha made the duck well with intensive care. Then he flew it in the sky. Out of joy for freedom, the duck was going on flying in the sky. With a satisfied heart Siddhartha remained looking at the flying duck.

EXERCISE

Multiple choice questions
1. What happened to the face and half of the body of the mongoose?
   a. made of iron
   b. made of silver
   c. made of gold
   d. made of dust

2. A devotee renders welfare the creatures, because -
   a. God abides with the creatures in the form of soul.
   b. God exists in the world as the Supreme Being
   c. God exists on the earth
   d. God exists the mortal world

Read the following paragraph and answer the questions nos.3 and 4.
Naren’s father rears dog. A dog is devoted to its master. So Naren too is very fond of dogs. When it falls ill, he takes care of it and cures it.

3. From the religious point of view, what kind of work shall we call the rearing of dog by Naren’s father?
   a. of love
   b. of kindness
   c. nursing
   d. of devotion
4. In what category does the principle of moral sense of Naren’s caring a dog?
   a. love   b. nursing
   c. respect   d. devotion

Creative Questions
There was a severe storm last night. Vijay, got up from sleep at early dawn. When he got out he found a bird lying under the large mango tree spreading its wings. Going near it, he found that the bird had sustained injury in one of its wings. He remembered the sayings of the religions teacher Khagendra Babu. He said, “To serve creatures means to serve God”. All these moral teachings are the part and parcel of religion. Vijoy nursed and cured the bird, and let it fly in the sky.
   a. What is moral teaching?
   b. ‘Moral teaching is the part of religion’ – Explain-
   c. How is Vijay’s service to the bird different from charity ?- Explain ‘To serve creatures means to serve God’ - Explain clearly.
CHAPTER EIGHT

VICE AND VIRTUE

Which can hold us is known as religion. Bearing it the welfare of the society and person alike can be obtained. God is the Creator of all things. So He is the creator of religion also. Hence God is the origin of religion. Religion is also expressed through different attributes. It is said in ‘Manusamhita’.

‘Dhriti kshamadamo’asteyam – shauchamindriyanigrahah /
dhirvidyasatyamakrodho dashakam dharmalakshanam //

- Patience, forgiveness, kindness, not to steal, purity, self control, honest intellect, knowledge, truthfulness, wrathlessness – these ten attributes are the external manifestations of religion. Through these attributes religion expresses itself.

It is also said in the scriptures – “Dharmamulo hi Bhagawan”: God is the origin of religion. Keeping faith on god and following the pathway of virtue is called religion. Religious faith again is expressed through some rituals and ceremonies. So faith, rituals and ceremonies – these three elements are the constituents of religion.

We know that the Vedas, the Smritis (law), the virtuous practice and conscience – these four are the identities of Sanatan or eternal religion. The Veda is the sayings of God, the Smritis are the books of law, rules and regulations following the Vedas and the Smritis to pass life. The behaviour of great men are known as virtuous practices and conscience is one’s own sense of morality. Following these four, virtue or vice can be determined. Vice is against religion. For example, patience is virtue, impatience is vice, not to steal is virtue and to steal is vice, honesty is virtue, but cheating or falsehood is vice. To be derailed from religion is vice. Not only that, if religion is not followed properly, religion takes retaliating measure.

So it is said in Manusamhita:

‘Dharma eva hato hanti
Dharma rakshati rakshitah /
Tasmad Dharmo na hantavyo
ma no dharma hato’avodhit //
It means if anybody destroys religion, religion does him harm. On the other hand, if religion is protected, it saves the protector. A religious or virtuous man becomes victorious with the help of religion. If one goes against religion, it causes one’s ruin.

Let us listen to a story about the victory of virtue and defeat of vice:

**Dharmavuddhi and Papavuddhi**

There lived two friends in a village. The name of one of them was Dharmavuddhi and the name of the other was Papavuddhi. Dharmavuddhi was really virtuous. Actually his name was not Dharmavuddhi. He became famous for his deeds on the path way of religion and became so reliable to others that every one called him as Dharmavuddhi (i.e. a person having virtuous intellect). The other was addressed as Papavuddhi instead of his real name for his vicious deeds.

Once Dharmavuddhi and Papavuddhi went abroad for trade. Wandering around so many countries, they were running their business. Papavuddhi, if he could find out a chance, tried to deceive anybody. But Dharmavuddhi prohibited him from doing so. He said,

- what is the use of deceiving anybody? Normally we are making much profit. It is not wise to be more greedy. There is a proverb: Temptation leads to sin and sin to death.

Papavuddhi then told him,

- ‘You are very fool. If we deceive others, we will be able to make more profit and will be able to return home with more wealth.’

But Dharmavuddhi remained unchanged. He said,

- Whatever you say, I am not following the vicious means.

By virtue of Dharmavuddhi, even keeping the honest way both the friends returned with a lot of wealth.

Dharmavuddhi said,
- Look forward, my friend, it is our village. How nice the trees and plants with their dense shadow are! How affectionate it is! Wherever I go, my heart cries for this village.

Within a very short time, they reached the familiar banyan tree of their village. They were tired for the journey. To be fresh from tiredness they sat under the shadow of that banyan tree.

After a while, Papavuddhi said,

- 'My friend, I have got an idea in my head.

- What is it? What is that beguiling ghost who has possessed you? My friend, won’t you be a man of honest will? I think, once you may deceive even me!

- ‘Of course! I must avail, if I get a chance! – Papavuddhi said smiling.

- ‘Listen to me. It will not be wise to take home such a big amount of money.

Many persons who will get information of our money, may come to borrow or get it showing so many excuses. The king may impose taxes at a higher rate. Many men will come to know that we have much money. Thieves and robbers will wait for a chance. Much money has got much problems.

- I understand. Then what do you want to do? – Dharmavuddhi asked.

Papavuddhi answered,

- ‘Keeping some of the money with us, let us bury the rest under this tree. When we need, we will come and take any amount according to our necessity.

Dharmavuddhi thought over the proposal and found reasons behind it. Then they buried three-fourths of the amount of money, took one fourth with them and sharing out them and started for home.

After some days Dharmavuddhi felt the need of some money. Then Dharmavuddhi and Papavuddhi went together to bring money. They dug the soil and saw that there was no money at all.

Papavuddhi was as if as a loss setting his hand over his head, he began to utter repeatedly exclamations of regret. He said, to Dharmavuddhi,

- Oh, so mean you are! You have come alone and have taken all the money, I believe. Fie on you! fie!
Dharmavuddhi felt embarrassed. He said,

- What do you say? It was decided that both of us will come together and take our money out. I have come alone and taken money – how could you imagine this improper matter regarding me! Instead, it is you who has taken the money. I will not be satisfied until I am getting my share.

Both of them made each other guilty for the money and began to quarrel.

At last the matter moved to the court of the king. Both of them wanted justice and demanded his own share. The king heard their complain and asked,

- It is difficult to judge a case without the witness. Have you any?

Both of them remained silent. Papavuddhi had a ready wit to get the idea of mischievous action. he answered the king.

- Yes, your excellency. That banyan tree under which we have buried our money, is my witness. It will give evidence. It will tell the name of the guilty.

The king said,

- Well, the judgement will be held tomorrow under that banyan tree. Good-bye.

But Papavuddhi, did not tell so taking the banyan tree a real witness. He returned home and narrated the whole matter to his father.

- It is fact that I have taken the money. You, please, will take the trouble to save me, father!

- But how?

- You will go to the spot and hide yourself in the hollow part of the banyan tree. In the next morning when the king comes to take evidence from the banyan tree, you will tell from that hollow ‘Dharmavuddhi has stolen the money. Otherwise, money and my life, both will be lost.

To save the life of the son, the old father agreed to give false witness.

Next day the case was trialed under that banyan tree.

Following the plan of the son, Papavuddhi’s father shouted,

- Dharmavuddhi is the real thief. He has stolen the money.’
Hearing the statement of the banyan tree, everybody became astonished. All of them scolded Dharmavuddhi, - It was you who have got the title ‘Dharmavuddhi’, from us! Such a vice you have committed! . Fie on you, fie! Dharmavuddhi’s ears had been poured into as if with hottened lead. He did never fall in such an insulting situation.

The king also became speechless! Dharmavuddhi involved himself in such a vicious activity! Dharmavuddhi became reddened with anger, grief and perturbation. His eyes also became red as if fire was flaming there!

Dharmavuddhi shouted,

- I have not committed any vice in my life. Always I have been following the order of religion. The banyan tree has told a lie. I will burn it.

Saying this, Dharmavuddhi gathered some dry creepers and leaves and set the hollow of the banyan tree to fire.

The blazing flames of the fire were going up.

Then from the hole of that banyan tree, the father of Papavuddhi came out shouting for a rescue.

-Oh, I am going to be burnt and die! I following the plan of my son and to save him, I have told a lie. It is not Dharmavuddhi, but Papavuddhi is a thief. He came alone and took the whole amount of money and shifted the charge of the crime to Dharmavuddhi.

Papavuddhi’s father begged pardon to Dharmavuddhi. He was groaning out of the severe pain of burning. After a while, he died.

The king looked at Papavuddhi with anger. Papavuddhi was trembling in fear. He repeatedly fell down at the feet of the king and Dharmavuddhi. Weeping bitterly he said,

- I beg pardon. I will never do any vicious deed in future.

But he did not get pardon. According to the order of the king he had to pay the money of the share of Dharmavuddhi.

The king punished Papavuddhi severely.
In this way virtue became victorious and vice was defeated.

EXERCISE

Multiple choice questions
1. How many are the introductories are there in ancient religion?
   a. 2  b. 3  
   c. 4  d. 5
2. Why did the father of Papavuddhi give false witness?
   a. Being tempted to greed  
   b. To defend his own religion  
   c. Being deprived by father’s affection  
   d. To punish (Dharmavuddhi)
3. Papavuddhi proposed Dharmavuddhi to bury (hide) money under a banyan tree
   i. for fear of thieves and dacoits  
   ii. for fear of paying more taxes to the king  
   iii. for the hope of enjoying the total money alone
Which one of the following is correct?
   a. i  b. ii  
   c. iii  d. i, ii and iii

Creative Questions
1. Suranjan, a student of class VIII, ofen used to steal note books (khata), pens, money, etc. from his class-mates, and created chaos in the village by doing various misdeeds. When asked by any body for doing so, he replied that he did that what his mind wanted to do. This is because, he thought what his mind dictated him to do that was religion. After hearing this, one day his religious teacher, Ranajit Babu, called him and gave him adequate knowledge about religion and particularly about the religion of humanity. Besides, he showed the difference
between pious acts and sinful acts and said, ‘A pious person wins through religion.’ This explanation of religion by the teacher impressed upon the mind of Suranjan and he there after changed himself to follow the honest path.

a. What is religion?

b. Why did the explanation of religion by Ranajit sir influence Suranjan?

c. How you can differentiate between the pious acts and the sinful acts?
   - Illustrate with examples.

d. ‘A pious man wins through religion’ - Evaluate and justify the statement in the context of the story Dharmavuddhi and Papavuddhi.
CHAPTER NINE
ANECDOTES

A. Firm Faith and Belief

To have a bath in the river ‘Ganga’ makes our body and mind fresh and pure. Having bath in the ‘Ganga’ at the Churhamani Yoga one becomes free from sin and gets redemption. Do you know what Churhamani Yoga is? If solar on lunar eclipse happens on any Sunday, it is called Churhamani yoga.

Haridwar is a holy place, as pilgrimage (Ghat station or place of having bath of the Ganga) was there. At one Churhamani yoga the devotees gathered there to achieve virtue through the bath in the river ‘Ganga’. The Ghat of Ganga in Haridwar had been over crowded. It was, as if, a competition of having bath earlier than other devotees.

At that time Shiva and his spouse- Parvati was going in a heavenly air craft from their abode, Kailasha to Vaikuntha, the abode of Lord Vishnu.

Looking at the crowd of the devotees, a question arose in the mind of Devi Parvati. ‘To have bath in the river Ganga makes one free from sin. So many devotees are having their bath here. Would all of them be free from sin?’

Lord Shiva who is able to read the feeling of anybody, smiled in mind. The great ‘Yogi’ and the great humorous god wanted that Parvati would get the answer from example. So he said to Parvati, - ‘Observe it yourself. But you are to take some trouble. I, in the guise of an ordinary man, will lie down like a dead body, You, in the guise of an ordinary woman, will sit by me and begin to weep. Looking at your many of the persons here who are desirous to achieve virtue will ask you, ‘Why are you weeping oh good woman? Then you will tell them, ‘My husband expired just now. His cremation must be performed. I am unable to do it alone, please help me. But there is a condition: He, who is sinful, is prohibited to touch the dead body.”

Accordingly the plan was materialised. Lord Shiva lied down as if a dead body and Devi Parvati turned herself to an ordinary woman and sat by the side of the dead body. She began to weep. Many men were coming and are asking her the
cause of her weeping. Parvati was saying, - ‘Please help me for the cremation of my husband. But be aware of it, a sinful person is prohibited to touch the dead body. So many persons were going back after having their bath in the river Ganga. But nobody could dare to think him as a person free from sin. they did not try to help her in the cremation of the dead body.

In the mean time, there came a sinful person. He committed a lot of sin in his life. Yet he repented for his sin. He had his bath in the Ganga every day and eulogized the Ganga with devotion- Oh pure Ganga, make me virtuous. Please take away my sins through your flow and oh mother Ganga, free me from sin.’

That sinful man also asked Parvati, - why are you weeping? Parvati then told the cause of her weeping. The sinful man thought that bath in the Ganga at the Churhamani Yoga frees one from sin. Just now he would go to have his bath in the Ganga and this would bring him redemption from sin. Then he would be able to touch the dead body without any hesitation. He exclaimed, ‘what a poor woman she is! In what an adverse situation she is!’

He went to the Ganga, had his bath and prayed to her prasing verses. He chanted in praise of mother Ganga.

- Oh Ganga, oh mother, you are the saver of three world (heaven, earth and world under the earth), please take away all of my sins. I am eager to help in the cremation of the dead body of the husband of this woman, who has been widow just now. Bless me so that I may perform this deed.’

Finishing his bath and saying his prayer to mother Ganga, he went to Parvati and said,

- ‘Having my bath in the river Ganga and being free from sin, I have come here. Let us take the dead body of your husband for cremation, my lady.

- Where the dead body was! Where the widow! where her lamentation! Lord shiva and Parvati disappeared all on a sudden.

They are again on the air route. Lord Shiva, then, asked Parvati,

- Hello, have you got your answer?’

- Yes.
- What have you understood, then?
- Those who could not dare to touch the dead body, have no firm faith and reverence. They could not believe firmly that having bath in the Ganga at the Churhamani Yoga causes redemption from sin.
- Certainly. To have bath only in the Ganga will not make one free from sin. One must possess faith and reverence in it. Parvati said with a smile – not only the case of having bath in the Ganga, in the Churhamani Yoga it is true to all sorts of religious ceremonies and festivals too. The show of the performance of rituals brings no result. To be free from sin and to achieve virtue faith and reverence is required.’

Lord Shiva said,
- Right you are.

Lord Shiva and Parvati stopped their talking.

The heavenly air craft was flying ahead through the lump of clouds towards Vaikuntha.

B. Good Company

There lived an adolescent boy in a village. His name was Shridhara.

He was a naughty boy and he was very strong. His contemporary play mates could not be his equal in strength. At any time he began to quarrel and they began to beat each other.

Yet he was very intelligent. He used to tell a lie in such way that everybody believed that it was a fact. For such a naughty boy the villagers became very annoyed and complained against him to his parents. But he was beyond the control of them. Moreover, he had been habituated in theft and had turned to a skilled one – so skilled that no body could catch him.

He did not stay at home for a long time. He wandered hither and thither. In course of such a wandering, once he reached the holy place of pilgrimage-Vadarik ashrama, i.e. the hermit of Vadari. He went to a temple there and saw that there was a necklace made of pearl in the neck of an idol. A strong greed grew in him.
and he desired to get that. He waited till the night came. At deep night he stole the pearl-necklace from the neck of the idol very tactfully and went away.

Putting that beautiful necklace on the neck he was going on. Wandering hither and thither he arrived at a hermitage of a saint.

He saw that in a corner there were some wounded beasts with broken hands and legs. A room was there nearby. He peeped into the room and saw that there were some diseased birds and the saint of that hermitage was nursing them.

For some days together he observed that the saint remained busy in nursing those sick and diseased beasts and birds. Looking and looking this monotonous scene he became tired and being annoyed. One day he asked the saint,

- ‘Oh, reverend saint, what a non-befitting work you are doing! Is it a hermitage or an animal-care centre? Neglecting religious rituals and meditation you have been nursing the beasts and birds. If you have an urge for surviving the beasts and birds, you would better remain a family man. What is the use to be a hermit!’

The saint answered,

- ‘Listen, my boy. To love a living being is as good as to love God. So the aode or temple of God and the house of the animals bear equal value to me. However, would you please help me, my boy? ‘Would you?’

Shridhara said,

- ‘Well, tell me please, what is to be done?

- ‘This pearl is dropped from the necklace of a some one.

I have heard that the owner of the necklace has come from ‘Vadarikashrama’ and he is on his way home. I like to hand over this pearl to you. If, on the way, you meet him, you will please give it to him.

Taking the pearl in his hand Shridhara saw that the pearl was dropped from his own necklace. When and how, it was not noticed by him.

Shridhara became astonished. The mind of the saint which was free from greed and his relentless service for the living beings made him as if, a new man. He said,

- ‘How could you come to know that the pearl has dropped from my necklace? But the fact is this that it is not mine. I have stolen it form the necklace of an idol
of god placed in a temple of Vadarkashrama. What I should do! – telling this he began to weep.

The saint understood that the ice was about to be melted. In a vicious heart virtue was growing. He said with deep affection.

- ‘Never mind, my boy. It is not true that if one commits sin once, he has to do it through out his life. Follow my boy, follow the way of virtue. Give the necklace back to god. He will surely forgive you.’

At that moment Shridhara started for Vadarkashrama and put that necklace on the neck of the idol of god. He lay prostrate in obeisance infront of god and said aside on weeping, -‘Oh, Lord, please forgive me, forgive me please. I will never do any vicious act.

Giving back the necklace Shridhara returned to the hermitage of that saint. He decided that he would not go back home, would not wander hither and thither to and for, he would never relate himself to any sinful act and would do penance for his sin.

The saint had his bath every day early in the morning. Shridhara also began to have his bath everyday early in the morning. The saint sat under the Tulsi plant (i.e. basil) and recited aside something which was not known to Shridhara.

He also said aside – Oh Lord, make me honest, make me honest, Lord! the saint nursed the beasts and birds. He assisted the saint in that work.

One day Shridhara was walking on the bank of a river. He then, saw that a man threw a kitten into the river. The kitten was about to drown. Shridhara felt for the kitten. He jumped into the river and picked the distressed kitten up from the river.

He returned to the hermitage and told the saint,

- ‘Reverend Father, I have picked this kitten up from the stream of the river.

The saint said, - ‘Very good, my boy, the suffering of the living being is that of God Himself. Swab its body and give it some milk to drink, my boy.’

An event of another day. A beggar died of Cholera. Out of fear and hatred none went to him. But Shridhara took the dead body on his shoulder and went to the cremation ground. Then he finished the cremation of the dead body and came
back. In this way, Shridhara dedicated him to the service of the distressed. The saint initiated him to a religious order and renamed him as Sevananda.

After this, one day Sevananda went to his own village. Nobody could recognize him except his mother.

- You are Shridhara, I am sure!
- Yes my dear mother! I am your son, Shridhara. Now I am renamed as Sevananda by a saint.’

Then he told the whole matter in detail. All the villagers became happy for the change in him caused by the company of the saint. Everybody thanked him very much.

Sevananda saluted his parents with great respect and went back again to the hermitage of that saint. Keeping good company, a thief and rouge was turned into a saint.

C. The Victory of a Devotee

In the Satya age, there lived a pious king. His name was Amvarisha. His father Nabhasa was also a pious one. Being a king, Amvarisha, followed the ideal of his father, passed an ordinary life like an ascetic. For this people called him as ‘Rajarshi’ i.e. a king who leads an ascetic life. He looked after his people as his son. There was no unholy practice in his kingdom. There was no scarcity of anything. There peace and happiness always remained.

Lord Shrivishnu, being satisfied for the devotion of Amvarisha, gave him the power to use powerful weapon, a wheel name ‘Sudarshana chakra’ which was dangerous to the enemy and was protector of the peace-lovers. But he never used that chakra to attack the kingdom of others, for wealth or illusion.

Amvarisha became absorbed in the intensive meditation of Lord Shrivishnu. On the other hand, he performed the duty as king with proper care.

Once he was performing the ritual Ekadashi. (Ekadashi is a ritual to be performed on the eleventh day of the fortnight according to lunar system of calendar and the ritual is performed without taking any food even without drinking water). At the
same time on the next thithi. Dwadashi (12th day of the fortnight) one must break his fasting having food, at least having a drop of water, otherwise one must be condemned to hell. The name of this ritual in Paran. However, it was a regular practice of Ambarish to have his meal after entertaining at least one guest. But unfortunately at that Dwadashi no guest came. Then the king fell into the horns of dilemma: Without entertaining a guest would not have his meal. One the other hand, Dwadashi was about to be expired. He had to break his fasting within the Dwadashi. He took a drop of water on his hand for breaking the fasting.

At that time Rishi (saint) Durvasa arrived there. He was quick tempered. For a trifling cause he used to get angry and when he had got angry, he cursed the concerned person.

Durvasa said,

- Oh the king, you should not have your drink keeping me in fasting.

Amvarisha said,

- Of course not, I am rewarded to day, oh great sage. Because to day I have received an honourable guest like you. Dwadashi is about to expire. Please have your bath within the Dwadashi. You are well-known with the ritual rules and customs. So What shall I explain more.

Durvasa went to have his bath. Some time passed. Dwadashi was at the eleventh hour. But Durvasa was yet to come back. In fact, he was testing the strength and intensity of devotion of the king Amvarisha.

The royal sage, Amvarisha was in hesitation under the present situation. It was improper to have meal keeping the guest unfed. On the other hand, if ‘Paran’ was not done within the Dwadashi tithi he would be condemned to hell. Then the Royal sage Amvarisha followed the rules of the scriptures. It is stated in the scriptures that to drink water does not break the fasting, again, one may break his fasting by drinking water. So he decided that he would follow the rules of the scriptures and by drinking a little water he would break his fasting within Dwadashi.
Remembering Lord Vishnu by uttering his name, Amvarisha took a little water in mouth, just then the great sage Durvasa arrived there. Durvasa became very angry to see that the king was drinking water.

- ‘Keeping the guest unfed, you have finished your Paran! You are called ‘Rajarshi!’ Such is your principle! I think, being a devotee of Lord Vishnu you care nothing.

- ‘Please be quiet, the revered sage, please be quiet.

- ‘Of course I shall be quiet. After giving you proper punishment I shall be quiet’

Telling this he had torn one tuft of his matted hair. At the same time a terrible creature who was made of fire arrived in front of them. There was a falchion in his hand. The fiery creature advanced to attack Amvarisha.

When *Rajarshi* Amvarisha observed that all of his requests had failed and he was being attacked by the terrible creature, he uttered the name of Lord Vishnu aside; Oh Lord Vishnu, please ignore my offence, the situation compels me to express my wrath. Uttering this aside king Amvarisha saluted Lord Vishnu in imagination one again and called *‘Sudarshana Chakra’.*

It is the Sudarshanachakra of Vishnu. It is very powerful. It never fails its aim. Sudarshana turned up with a high speed and had burnt the fiery creature who was created from the curse of a ‘Brahmarshi’ as conflagration (forest fire) burns an angry snake in a forest.

Durvasa’s efforts failed. The *Sudarshana Chakra* did not stop. It rushed towards Durvasa. Durvasa began to run out of fear. *Sudarshana Chakra* followed him. To any place of the world where Durvasa went, he was followed by Sudarshana. Finding no alternative, he went to god Brahma. Brahma said to him, I am unable to save you. The *Chakra* of Vishnu is not under my control, you have dishonoured a devotee of Vishnu, I am unable to protect you.

Then Durvasa went to god Shiva’s abode. God Shiva also spoke in the same language- you have done harm to a devotee of Vishnu. I have not the ability to save you, go to Vishnu, beg his shelter. He is an image of welfare. He will do something for your good.

Then the distressed Brahmarshi went to Lord Vishnu at Vaikuntha. He fell down on the feet of Shrivishnu and said,
- Oh, Achyuta (He who is not dropped i.e. perished), oh Ananta (endless), oh, the protector of the refugee, please save my life.

Shrivishnu said,

-Oh, Brahmin, I am under the control of my devotees. My devotees are my favourite. The saints and devotees have captured my heart. So please take the shelter of my devotee. My devotee, Amvarisha will not remain angry with you – I am sure of it.

Then Durvasa went to that Ambarish and said to him,

-‘Oh, Rajarshi, please save me, I could not understand about the greatness of a devotee. Going to test you, I have fallen in such a disgraceful condition.’

Rajarshi Amvarisha then, embraced the Brahmarshi Durvasa and said, - ‘You are a Brahmarshi. Let me not to do any offence to you, sir. For self resistance I was rather compelled to call the Sudarshana Chakra.’

Rajarshi then eulogized Sudarshana Chakra and pacified it. Then Sudarshana Chakra went back to Shrivishnu. The king, Amvarisha was still fasting. He entertaine the guest Durvasa with meal.

Brahmarshi Durvasa said,

-Oh, Rajarshi, you, please, now have your meal.’

Rajarshi said,

- I am grateful as my guest is satisfied.

- He then, had his meal.

- Brahmarshi Durvasa went away. The Devotee became victorious.

D. Perseverance

Long ago, there was a boy Brahmin by caste, had been having his education remaining in the abode of his teacher.

His name was Vopadeva.

Besides his studies, he looked after the cattle of his teacher and supervise the fair of farming. In these aspects he had proper care and skill. But in his main purpose, the studies, he was less attentive. Giving excuse for looking after the cattle or
farming affairs or some business if he could go outside home, he would not come back during the whole day.

Many years passed. Vopadeva could not be able to learn the introductory knowledge of grammar like ‘Sandhi, (Euphonic combination).

His teacher, one day, became angry and said,

- Vopadeva, my boy, you are here for many years. Those who come after you, went back having there education. But you can not proceed, if you do not want to carry on your studies, what is the use to lose time? If you are not in a position to set your mind in study, it is better to go back home.

Telling this, the teacher went elsewhere making a hard sound of his wooden sandal. Vopadeva became very unhappy. The teacher was willing to drive him out, he thought. On the next night he left the house of his teacher and wandered hither and thither – Village after village, field after field. He passed market places and business centres. He had his meal where and when it was available and slept at a market place or under tree or elsewhere.

One evening, Vopadeva was passing by the bank of a large tank. The tank was wide. Its water was as clear as the eyes of the crows. There was a brick built ‘Ghat’ (i.e. place for having bath or washing). Vopadeva felt a strong urge of thirst. He stopped his walking there to drink water. He went down to the ‘Ghat’. Descending through the steps of the ghat, he stop ped on the nearest step of the water of the tank. He sat there and took water in the fold of the palm of his hands. He drank it. His thirst went away. Just then he was going upwards, suddenly he saw that there was a hole on a step. It was almost round but not so deep. Why there was such a hole on a brick built step, he thought. In the mean time, a woman came there. There was a pitcher on her waist. She will take water. She descended downwards and put her pitcher on that hole. When the woman was about to leave the place. Vopadeva could not suppress his curiosity. He asked her,

-Oh mother, can you tell me please why there is a hole only on this step and you put your pitcher on the same hole. The hole is newly made I see.

The woman said,

-Oh, about this matter! then you can say that I have made the hole’.
-How is it?

-Everyday I put my pitcher on this place. So due to rubbing and being decayed the hole is formed.'

Saying this the woman went away. Vopadeva remained still looking at that hole.

He thought ‘A brick-built step is decayed by repeated rubbing, I an also be educated if I make effort’s. I shall start my studies again. I will make my efforts again! I will try again and again.

Vopadeva stood up and walked on quick steps. No, this time it was not aimless wandering, his destination was the abode of his teacher. He reached infront of his teacher.

-Vopadeva! Oh, you are here!

The teacher became very glad to see him. As he had been living there for a long time, so an affection grew in the mind of the teacher for him. The teacher gladly accepted him. With deep respect Vopadeva bowed down and saluted his teacher touching his feet by the hands.

This time Vopadeva was, as if, a new one!

What a deep attention! What a strong perseverance. Even his teacher became captivated. Within a very short period he became a properly educated man. Then he returned home. Every body became charmed at the depth of the knowledge of Vopadeva. And Vopadeva himself, aiming at the slow learners, wrote his well known book of grammar. Its name was ‘Mugdhavodha Vyakarana’. Besides, he wrote some other books including kavikalpadruma. If you fail once, then try hundred times’. –This is what is called perseverance carry on. If one sticks to any work with patience, success is must. At the root of the changes in the life of Vopadeva there was this perseverance. Perseverance was the key to his success.
E. DOMESTIC AND ASCETIC LIFE

Navadwipa is a place of pilgrimage, a centre for meditation. Once in this Navadwipa, there lived a devoted Brahmin. His name was Krishna Kamal Goswami.

His livelihood was lila kirtana i.e. to sing the songs in praise of Lord Shrikrishna. His family consisted of his wife and four sons. There were the images of deity Radha and Govinda. Every day food was offered and ‘arati’ was done (arati means greeting a deity by waving a lamp, fan etc). Guests were entertained when they came. Being a house holder he performed all the family duties in the mood of Nishkama (i.e. he did his work desiring nothing for himself).

One day fire caught the prayer room i.e. the room for the worship of gods and goddesses burnt fully. His youngest son said, Father, the room for worship has burnt!’ Krishnakamal answered, - Don’t be sad, my boy, he who is the owner of the room has burnt it. If he feels it necessary then he will rebuild it.’

An event of another day. His wife, getting up from early in the morning, saw that the door of the prayer room had remained open. She went ahead to the prayer room and noticed that there was not a single ornament on the body of the images of gods and goddesses. All were stolen. Now what is the way out- she thought.

He went to Krishnakamal running.

-Hello, hear me. The ornaments of gods and goddesses have been stolen, the door of the prayer room is open. The ornaments were of a large amount of money. What is the way out, now?

The wife of Krishnakamal began to weep. But Krishnakamal remained unhanged. He consoled his wife and said,

-Why are you weeping? Perhaps Radhagovinda are not willing to put on ornaments. So they gave those up. We have nothing to do. If they become willing to put on ornament again, they will manage the means.

Krishnakamal wandered in so many places and performed ‘Kirtana’ songs. The story of the deeds of Radhagovinda was narrated and sung by him with his sweet voice. He became passionate when he uttered the words oh Krishna, oh Krishna.’
It was not only a song but it was the expression of the overwhelming sentiment out of devotion and meditation of God through the music.

Krishnakamal was outside of his house for long six months. One of his fans asked him, "Sir, you are out of home for a long time-six months at a stress. How are the household works being performed? Do you not feel anxiety? Krishnakamal smiled and said, "My home? Where is my home, dear? I have no house. The home is of Radhagovinda. Yes, the servants of Radhagovinda remain at home.

-Who are they?

-My wife and children. One day, Krishnakamal’s wife told Krishnakamal —’you are passing your life by singing kirtana. Do you count that seventy five years of the life have passed? Now it is the proper time to adopt ascetic life.’

Krishnakamal answered,

-That’s right but perhaps you know that sannyasa does not mean to go to forest discarding the family life. In its real sense ‘Sannyasa’ means the giving up of the desire. If desire is left, family life and ascetic life become equal.’

The wife of Krishnakamal became charmed and kept looking at Krishnakamal. Krishnakamal continued – this house, this room, this family or anything is of Radhagovinda. We are dependent on him.

One day, Krishnakamal's wife told him—Rice is scarce in the house. How is the food of Gods to be offered.’

Krishnakamal smiled and said,

-It is known to God. God will manage his food. Just then from the village nearby a devotee named Premananda arrived there. He said, Sir, tomorrow please perform kirtana at the ground near the temple of the goddess Shasthi. I am paying you taka twenty in advance. Please take it.

In this way, Radhagovinda managed himself the food to be offered to him.

Krishnakamal was bed-ridden. He could understand that it was his last stage. He would never get up. The call of the next world was knocking at the door. His sons were weeping. He said to them,
-Why are you weeping my boys? I have looked after you taking you as the gift of Radhagovinda. You should weep for Radhagovinda and not for me. Radhagovinda will bless you.

Thus the life of a greatman came to an end who followed a life of an ascetic living in the domestic life.

F. GOD AT SERVICE OF HIS DEVOTEE

Long long ago, there lived a professor named Arjun Mishra. He was a great scholar, and at the same time, he was a devotee. But he was very poor. What he received as alms, he maintained his family by that. He passed his days in meditation and study. Arjuna Mishra wrote an explanatory note on the Gita. His pen was stopped by him when he came to the 22nd shlokas (verse) of 9th chapter. The verse is:

Anaanyaschintoanto mam ye janah paryupasate/
Tesham nityabhijuktanam yougakshemam Vahamyaham//

It means:

But those who always worship Me with exclusive devotion, meditating on My transcendental form – to them I carry what they lack, and I preserve what they have.

The point of stumble of the verse was the word ‘Vahamyaham’. God may award gift, but it is not proper that he carries the load of the devotees.

At that time there was no printing system like this modern age. Those who copied from one manuscript and made a number of copies were called the ‘Lipikara’ i.e. the copyist.

At the time of writing, to make error was natural. So Arjuna Mishra thought that it was the mistake of the copyist. God awards us gift. That’s why he says that Dadamyaham – I award gift. He corrected the manuscript which was used as text. He struck off ‘Vahamyaham’, in that place wrote Dadamyaham. Therefore the means stood to I award gift instead of I carry the load.
After this one day pandit Arjun Mishra fell in a distress. He wandered in so many places but got nothing as alms. There were five to six dependants in his family. All of them would have to starve.

There was a shady tree nearby. Arjun Mishra sat down under that tree. He imagined the faces of his wife and children stricken with sorrow and hunger. Then he began to utter the name of God with earnest devotion. Eventually he felt asleep. All on a sudden he woke up and saw that it was evening.

-Oh god! I have fallen asleep. With an empty pot of alms and a broken heart Arjun Mishra returned home and saw that his wife was awaiting for him at the door.

-What’s the matter? Why are you too late? Here I have offered food to the deity and awaiting for you,” said his wife.

-Offering food to the deity! By what? Arjun Mishra thought that for his abnormal late, his wife had ridicule him. With a distressed mind and in a very low voice with sorrowful mind and sudued voice Arjun Mishra said,

-What would be the food to offer? I have got nothing as alms. Today-Lord Shrihari has not arranged anything.” The wife of the pandit as if fell down from the sky.

-What are you talking about? Sending so many things to be used as food, you are talking like this. Are you mad?

Arjun Mishra said,

-What are you telling?

-Yes, two handsome boys came and gave a huge quantity of various commodities. They said that you had gone to the royal palace and the gift has come from there. All those things were carried y those two handsome boys. They brought one lot and then ran to bring another one. Our room is full of so many things. Please come and you will see.

Being astonished Arjun Mishara remained standing.

His wife said again – ‘Suddenly I saw blood at their back. I asked them, the cause of it. They said that they had been beaten by your because they were not able to bear loads, you have told them.
Arjun Mishra became spell-bound. The wife of the pandit continued slightly agitated,

-You, usually, do not hit upon an ant even but you have beaten such a nice sweet and active boys! Though they are of tender age, they have unlimited strength.

-‘What did happen then?’ –Arjun Mishra asked his wife. She said, - Then I told them that I would wash your wound and arrange bandage over it. You would not go unless you had your meal. But they did not agree at all.

-Did you ask where their residence is?

- I did that. They answered that their residence is in cow herd’s area. They feed the cattle in the forest. One of them was black and the other was very bright. Both of them were very beautiful to look at. Eyes are satisfied to see them. But you caused to bear loads by such boys and you beat them again. I think your head is off due to poverty, grief and suffering.

Tears rolled down from Arjun Mishra’s eyes.

After some time, he said very softly – I have not gone to the royal palace. Even I have not got any alms. I rather suffered thinking your faces stricken with starvation. I sat under a tree and uttering the name of God I fell asleep. When I woke up I saw that it was evening. I thought that you were making fun of my delay.

-Then? asked his wife with astonishment.

-You are very lucky, my dear. Those boys were none. They were Lord Shrikrishan and his elder brother reverend Balarama. In the guise of boys they came to carry my load. I am an ill fated man. So I failed to see them.

-And that matter of hurt? I could understand. God says in the Gita: I carry the load of my devotee ‘Vahamyaaham’ taking it as a mistake of the copyist I struck off the word and made it ‘dadamyaham- I award gift. The gita is as good as the body of Lord Shri Krishna. To strike of a word from the Gita is as good as a hurt to the body of God. That is why blood is found on the back of Krishna and Balarama.

‘Oh Krishna, oh krishna. Uttering the name of Lord krishna, Arjun Mishra opened the manuscript of the Gita and struck off the word, Dadamyaham and again put
‘Vahamyaham’ there. If a devotee serves God, God serves him in return and God also carries the load of the devotees.

EXERCISE

Multiple choice questions

1. In which ghat of Haridwar was the rush of virtue-seekers?
   a. Belur    b. Kali
   c. Dakshineshwar   d. the Ganges

Read the following statement and answer questions nos. 2, 3 and 4.

‘Why only in the case of bathing in the Ganges? It is equally true in any kind of religious functions. For display of that rituals and other functions do not bring any benefit.’

2. Who has made the above-quoted statement?
   a. Shiva   b. Parvati
   c. Sinner   d. Virtue-seeker

3. In what context he/she make the statement?
   i. Virtuous deed
   ii. Salvation from sin
   iii. Churamani

Which one of the following is correct?
   a. i       b. ii
   c. i and ii   d. i, ii and iii

4. What result or benefit has been mentioned in the statement?
   i. Spiritual union with God
   ii. Absolution from sin
   iii. Virtuous deed
Which one of the following is correct?

a. i  

b. ii  

c. i and ii  

d. i, ii and iii

5. After acceptance of asceticism (Sannyas) Sridhar was given a new name which is –

a. Jnanendra  
b. Punyanda  
c. Satyananda  
d. Sevananda

Read the under – mentioned statement and answer questions nos. 6, 7 and 8.

‘Return God’s garland to God, then Thakur will forgive you.’

6. Who made the above statement?

a. Sreedhar  
b. Shadhu  
c. Thakur  
d. Beggar

7. Why has he made this statement?

i. to return to the path of virtue from the sinful path.

ii. in order to please God.

iii. there being no right the garland.

Which one of the following is correct?

a. i  

b. ii  

c. iii  

d. ii and iii

8. In the statement Thakur has forgiven in order to -

i. inspire to do works of virtue.

ii. to change the Cruel-hearted person.

iii. to infuse good feelings or thoughts into dishonest heart

Which one of the following is correct?

a. i  

b. ii  

c. iii  

d. i, ii and iii
9. Which deed can save one from the sufferings of hell?
   a. To take the first meal after the completion of a fast within the twelfth day of a lunar fortnight.
   b. To take the first meal on completion of a fast after the end of the eleventh day, but within the beginning of the twelfth day of a lunar fortnight.
   c. To take the first meal on completion of a fast after the end of the Eleventh day and within the beginning of the twelfth day of a lunar fortnight.
   d. to take the first meal on completion of a fast after entertaining guests.

Read the following paragraph and answer questions nos. 10 and 11
Kuntala Devi did not receive any food on ekadashi. She never broke her paran without entertaining the devotees. The twelfth day of the lunar fortnight was about to end when a beggar suddenly appeared at the door. He was given the food offered to the deity. But he was not pleased with the entertainment. He cursed her and left the place. Still the devotee (bhakta) triumphed.

10. Kuntala Devi did not receive any food on the ekadashi
   i. To practise self-control
   ii. To gain virtue
   iii. to recover from illness
Which one of the following is correct?
   a. i          b. ii
   c. i and ii   d. ii and iii

11. According to religion, what kind of punishment can Kuntala Devi face?
   i. condemnation to hell
   ii. enjoyment of heaven
   iii. triumph of the devotee (worshipper)
Which one of the following is correct?
   a. i          b. ii
   c. iii        d. i, ii and iii
12. What weapon did god Sree Vishnu give Amvarish to use?
   a. Gandiv   b. Trishul
   c. Kharhga   d. Sudarshan Chakra

13. To whom did he ask Durvasa to go?
   a. Brahma   b. Kartik
   c. Amvarish, the devotee   d. Raja Nabhas

14. The meaning of Dadamyaham is-
   a. I sacrifice   b. I give kindness
   c. I carry   d. I see

15. To achieve success in an unsuccessful life requires-
   i. Endless patience
   ii. Repeated attempts
   iii. The blessings of gurudev

Which one of the following is correct?
   a. i   b. ii
   c. i and ii   d. i, ii and iii

Creative Questions:
1. Niladri came to the bathing ceremony of Langalvandh following the auspicious churamaniyog. In adolescence, in religious instruction he studied the story of journey of Shiva and Parvati from Kailash to Vaikuntha. There he learnt about the absolution from sin through bathing in the Ganges. He met his friend, Nilmani at the bathing ghat. Nilmani told him, not only bathing in the Ganges or at Langalvandh, but any religious function can also act as a medium for gaining virtue and absolution from sin. Absolute faith and great devotion to religion are required for this.
a. What is churamaniyog?

b. ‘Why the Ganges or Langalvandh, one can be absolved from sin through any kind of religious celebration.’ - Why did Nilmani say this?

c. How can you put into use in your religious life the teaching of the story concerning Shiva and Parvati?

d. ‘Achievement of virtue is possible through faith and devotion’ Explain the statement through religious illustration.

2. Nithila, Prajna and Mihika were three girl-friends. Of them, Mihika was a liar, a thief and of a wicked nature. But Nithila was very honest, intelligent and pious. Other students of the class were frequently disturbed by Mihika’s evil activities. One day Mr. Jatin, the religious teacher, told all the students in the class that association with honest people enables one to attain Heaven; yet, the thieves and the wicked people also become good in the company of honest and virtuous persons. He also related to them the story of how Sreedhar became Shevananda. This context left a deep impression on Mihika’s mind.

a. Who gave Sreedhar the new name, Shevananda?

b. Why did the story of Sreedhar put a deep impression on Mihika’s mind when she heard it from her teacher, Mr. Jatin?

c. Explain how you can restore your known dishonest friend to the right path.

d. ‘The thieves and the wicked people can also become good through the company of honest and virtuous persons.’- Discuss the inner significance of the statement with examples.

3. In the class on Hindu religion the class teacher while discussing perseverance drew the context of Vopa deva’s story and said, ‘Perseverance is the key to success.’ Even the unmindful people in a certain stage being inspired with this virtue reached the pinnacle of success. They wrote many books also. This story deeply impressed student Santosh and he became highly persevering in his lessons for good results. He gained success at one stage.
a. What is the name of the Grammar book written by Vopadeva?
b. Why did the story of Vopadeva deeply impress Santosh?
c. How will you make your inattentive brother attentive to his studies in the light of the teaching from Vopadeva’s story?
d. ‘Perseverance is the key to success’ - Discuss the importance of the statement in the life (field) of education.
CHAPTER TEN

IDEAL BIOGRAPHIES

A. Shri Aravinda

It was the early part of the 20th century. This country was then under the British administration.

For the independence of the country movement was gaining strength. In an attack of bomb two innocent English lady lost their lives. The police became very active and arrested some of the suspects. Among them there was a distinguished personality named Shri Aravinda. He was also taken to the jail being tied with a rope.

People fied on it. The trial of them was going on in the jail of Alipore. Chittaranjan Das, a new barrister pleader the case in favour of the accused. The net of argument of the government pleader was torn by him. He proved that the accused are not guilty. To ventilate the ideal of independence cannot be against any rule. Patriotism is not condemnable in the eye of any law. ‘He added, - “After a long time, when this controversy, chaos and movement will stop, after a long time of the departure of this person, human society will show respect to him as a great poet of the epic of patriotism, the initiator of nationalism and a lover of humanity. After a long time of the departure of his soul, his speech will be sounded not only in India, but also in many distant places of the sea shores.”

He, about whom the prediction was made by the renowned lawyer here, was turned to Rishi Aravinda afterwards. The trial continued the whole year and then he was released. When he was living lonely in the jail, a sort of change happened in the life of Aravinda. The jail became his hermitage of meditation. He felt the presence of Bramha (God) in everything on the wall of the jail, in the sentry, the trees and plants of the garden. One day in meditation he saw Lord Krishna. He handed over a copy of the Gita to Aravinda. When meditation was over, he became a devotee of God and his devotion to god increased more.

Aravinda was born in Calcutta on 15th August 1872. His father krishnadhan Ghosh was a physician who studied in England. His mother Swarnalata Devi
was the daughter of Rajnarayan Basu, a very respectable person in the Brahma society. Rajnarayan Basu was renowned as Swadeshi’ leader i.e. a nationalist leader. It was a vow of his life to make the ‘Bengali nation renowned and great in all respects. These qualities of the maternal grand father influenced Aravinda’s life to a great extent.

Aravinda’s father was interested to educate his son in English medium school. So he admitted Aravinda in a English medium school in Darjiling at the age of five.

After two years Aravinda was taken to London and was admitted to Saint paul’s school. Aravinda’s student life was very glorious. He passed the entrance examination having scholarship. At the age of 18 he passed the civil service examination. In that examination Aravinda stood first in Greek and Latin language. But he was not appointed in the civil service, excusing that he did not turn up in the test of riding horse.

Aravinda remained fourteen years in London. He got an appointment in Baroda state and came back home in 1893. This time he began to know his country, religion and culture. He studied the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Gita, the Puranas and other scriptures of Hindu religion. In this way, a close relation of Aravinda was established with the religion and philosophy of India. Aravinda married Mrinalini Devi when he was in Baroda. Though he led family life, he was indifferent to it. His wife Mrinalini Devi took the responsibility of the family and helped her husband in all respect.

In the later part of his staying in Baroda, Aravinda was involved in revolutionary activities. The grief and pain of subjegation moved his mind. So he began to work for the independence of the country. To reach the message of Independence from door to door he published a journal.

In 1905 a movement was organized to stop the breakage of ‘Banga’. Political agitation was launched everywhere in Bangladesh. Aravinda took leave without pay for a long period from the service at Baroda and joined the on-going movement. He was given the charge of the extremists of Calcutta. At the same time he had to work as the editor of the paper named Vandemataram. It was the chief mouth speach of the extremists. Through Vandemataram he trained the people of the country to respect the country as one’s own mother. The separations of Bangla was set aside, but the movement was not stopped, rather it turned to the movement for independence.
The attention of the government felt upon Aravinda. In 1907 a case was framed against him for sedition. But there was no evidence and for that poet Rabindranath greeted him writing a poem where there is a line-

“Aravinda Rabindrer laha nameskar”. It means, Aravinda, please take the salute of Rabindra. Aravinda suffered very much for taking active role for the independence of the country. He had to remain in jail more than once. In the life at jail another revolution started in him. In the outer world the revolution for independence was going on and in his heart he felt the hints of Lord Shrikrishna. He responded to the all of inner revolution and went ahead through the way of meditation.

At that time he was guiding two journals namely –‘Dharma’ and ‘Karmayogin’. In 1909, sister Nivedita informed him that British government was about to take a decision to arrest Aravinda soon and he would be banished from the country. Aravinda handed over the responsibility of the editorship of karmayogin to sister Nivedita and went away to Pandicheri. It was 4th April of 1910. There was an important chapter of his life when activities of spiritual attainment was started. He remained engaged in religious activities for forty years including 12 years of his lonely life. He founded his famous ‘Ashrama’ in Pandicheri.

Shri Aravinda was an extra ordinary ‘yogin’. His ‘yoga’ was not aiming at his own salvation. He wanted the development of divine power in the life of the nation. He published a journal named ‘Arya’. Through this journal he published the explanation of the Upanishad, ideal of divine life, philosophy of religion etc. In his two essays, ‘Divyajivan’ and ‘Yogasamanvaya, he pointed out the way to lead life keeping faith on God and to make effort for the welfare of the society. To him religion was life and power. He was a devotee of universal truth and beauty.

One of the important incidents in his life at Pandicheri was the visit of Mira and Paul Richard. They were a french couple. They were searching a person with spiritual attainment and knowledge. Mira and Richard became charmed coming in contact with Aravinda in Pandicheri and dedicated themselves the service of Shri Aravinda. Afterwards this Mira was know as Shri Ma-i.e. reverend mother. This Shri Ma took the charge of the administration of the Ashrama.
Shri Aravinda wrote six books in Bengali; such as – Karakahini (story of prisonment), Dharma, Jatiyata and thirty two in English.

This powerful ‘Mahayogin’ died on 5th December 1950. His body was buried in the compound of the ‘Ashrama’, he established.

**Message of Shri Aravinda**

i. In Bengal there are ‘Bhakti’ and 'karma' (respect and duty). You add knowledge with them.

ii. Through repression purification is not achieved. It can be achieved through conscience and pure intellect.

iii. Complete surrender is difficult for a man, but by a little effort. God himself inspires him to go ahead on the pathway of yoga by giving encouragement, being a devotee, protector and friend.

**B. Swami Vivekananda**

It was the month of November in 1880 and the residence of Surendranath Mitra at Simulia. Thakur Ramkrishna came there. A young handsome boy was singing a song to Thakur with melodious tune.

"Mana cala nija niketane
sansar videshe videshir veshe
Bhrama Kena akarane //"

As if drops of nectar were dropping from the heaven. What a high and deep tune it was! What a solemn song it was!

Shri Ramakrishna fell in ecstasy. Tears of joy were coming out from his eyes. Thakur told the young man,

-Would you please come to Dakshineswar, my dear!

The young man agreed to the proposal. The name of this young man was Narendra Nath Dutt alias Naren. Afterwards this Naren had earned world wide reputation as Swami Vivekananda.
In riches and fame the Dutt family of Simulia, a village in Calutta was familiar all around. In this family Vivekananda was born on 12th January in 1863.

His father, Vishwanath Dutt was a reputed lawyer and his mother Bhuvaneshwari Devi was a devoted housewife.

Vivekananda’s nick name at his childhood was Vireshwar alias Vile. In his boyhood Vile was very restless. Yet his power to give attention in a particular matter was unparalleled. A favourite game of Vile was ‘Puja’ i.e. worship and meditation. One day in the evening Vile sat for meditation with some of his friends. One of the groups opened his eyes, and saw a big snake in front of them. Except Vile all of them went away with shouting “Snake, Snake,” but Vile was absorbed in deep meditation. His parents rushed there and saw that a poisonous snake expanding its hood was as if standing. All were in fear. But the snake equalized its hood and went away. Still then Vile was in meditation. It was a strange incident.

Vile was named as Narendra Nath when he was admitted to school. After finishing the primary education Narendra Nath got himself admitted into Metropolitan Institution. He was meritorious in his studies, at the same time he showed his skill at games, sports and music. Passing the Entrance examination in first division, he got himself admitted into a college. In B.A. class he studied philosophy. The treatise on god in philosophy made him think. Does god exist? Narendra Nath became absorbed in this question. If he came in contact with any ascetic or saint he put this question to them. “Have you seen God?” But their answers could not make him satisfied.

One day Narendra Nath went to Dakshineshwar with his companions. Thakur Ramakrishna became overwhelmed with joy- “I have been awaiting you for long. I am distressed by discussing with serious persons about worldly affairs. From today I shall get peace talking with a person having real sacrificing attitude. When he was uttering these words, the eyes of thakur began to shed tears. Not only that he brought palm of his both hands together and began to say to Naren- “I am sure that you are Narayana in the form of a human being. You have taken a corporeal body for the welfare of the living beings.”
Naren became astonished. What a peculiar talk it was! This person was really a lunatic one.

It was an event of another day. Thakur, addressing his devotees, said to them, “through deep thinking, I have come to a conclusion that eighteen powers, which is in Keshava, exist in Naren. In him there is a sun of Knowledge. On the third day Naren asked thakurs, “Have you seen god yourself?” Without any hesitation thakur answered him, “certainly as I see you – I have seen God more clearly than this. Do you like to see? I can show you.”

All on a sudden thakur Shri Ramkrishna raised from his seat and placed his right leg on the shoulder of Naren. Immediately a change occurred in the mind of Naren. Out of fear and astonishment, Naren shouted, “oh reverend person, what a wrong you have done on me, I have parents.”

Thakur placed his hands on Naren’s chest and with that Naren came to normal position.

Narendra Nath passed B.A. examination, at that time a set back happened in his family. All on a sudden his father expired and the responsibility of the family took place on him.

The family was not solvent as it was before. He had to bear the kick of poverty. Naren went door to door for a job but he could manage none. He went to Rama Krishna and told him all about his position. Thakur said to him, “Today is Tuesday, I suggest you, go to the temple of goddess Kali to night. There bow to her and what you will pray, mother goddess will give you that.

One fourth of night passed on. Naren entered the temple. The temple was lighted with the beauty of Jagadamvai.e. Mother of the world. What a strange matter with Naren! He could not pray money or wealth. He prayed, “Oh mother, give me consciences, apathy towards worldly interests, love for knowledge and devotion.”

After his coming out from the temple, thakur asked him about his prayer. Thakur sent Naren to goddess thrice but at any time Naren could not pray to her for worldly solvency. In this condition thakur said, “well, as you could not want any worldly things, you will not get any worldly happiness. This is your fate. But I tell you, your family will not suffer from the want of essential commodities.” To meet
Shri Ramkrishna and to come to his close contact was the greatest event in the
life of Narendra Nath. One day Shri Ramakrishna said “I have come to the
world this time only for him (Naren). In fact Ramakrishna was born to turn
Naren into Vevekananda for the welfare of the world.

Many minds many ways, to serve the living being as god Shiva etc. were the
ideals of Ramkrishna and these ideals influenced the life of Nanendranath
particularly. Once Narendranath attained ‘Samadhi’ (absorption in meditation)
by the grace of Thakur. He wanted to remain absorbed in ‘Nirvikalpa
Samadhi’. Thakur scolded him and said, Fie, fie on you! At last it is you! You
want to walk on the easier way to reach the destination! You want to be a
‘yogi’ without considering the deplorable condition of the world. I eagerly feel
and expect, you will be like a banyan tree, you will remove the grief of so
many distressed persons and give shelter to a lot of sufferers. On the contrary,
you are thinking about your own salvation and liberation. No, no, you should
not be so mean, so narrow.

The advice of Thakur made a turn in the life of Narendra Nath. He was directed
to serve the living beings. He left the idea of ‘Samadhi’ and became a
‘Karmayogi.’ He dedicated his life to serve the living beings as the god Shiva
and for the welfare of the country, nation and even the whole world.

The soul of Ramkrishna left the corporeal body on 15th August, 1886. Narendra
organised an association of the ‘Sannyasis’ with all co-disciples. Adoption
‘Sannyasa’ Narendra was renamed as Vivekananda. As an wandering ascetic
he travelled so many places of pilgrimage. Travelling the whole India once he
remained sitting on the stony altar of kanyakumari. The real picture of the
country flashed in front of his eyes. There is hunger, want of clothes, illiteracy
and the people of this country have lost their morality and are drowned under
superstition. He was a penniless Sannyasi. Still he had to do something. He
then remembered the saying of his preceptor, Ramakrishna, “In a living being,
God exists.” Vivekananda decided that he would go to western countries and
would earn money and spend that money to serve the people of his country.

He got an opportunity. A world conference on religion would be held in the
city of Chicago in America. Vivekananda started for Chicago on the 31st May
in 1893. Suffering much trouble, Vivekananda got the opportunity to attend
that world conference on religion. It was that memorable day the 11th September
in 1893 Vivekananda, came forward and stood on the dias wearing red ochre dress
in ascetic manner. He addressed “My American brothers and sisters.” On hearing
this address, the whole auditorium clapped and burst into joy. Swamijee discussed the philosophical aspect of Hindu religion briefly. He said, in Hindu religion there is respect for others religion and there is perseverance.’ After this, he delivered five lectures on different days. He said, ‘Every religion of the world is resourceful. So no religion is inferior or negligible. Peace will be restored in the world if we do not quarrel with each other and show mutual respect and maintain the attitude of co-operation.

All the people of that meeting became charmed at the speech of Swamijee. the whole American became attentive to him. Vivekananda earned world victory in this respect.

At the beginning of 1897 vivekananda returned home. A sannyasi came back earning world victory. He was highly greeted. This time he gave attention to build up the nation. He realized that in the heart of the weak country men strength and courage should be developed. Aiming at the young folk he called- rise, awake up, attain the good, remember-weakness is sin. Gather power, you are the sons of immortality. Endless power exists in you. God exists in all living beings. He said in one of his poems, – “Ishwar is with you in various forms. Those who loves living being, he worships Ishwar”.

For the welfare of the country Vivekananda established Ramkrishna Mission, Ramkrishna Savashram, Sarada temple etc. He was a noble friend of mankind.

This great man who would know the Brahma departed from his corporeal body at Belurmath in 1902.

**Message of Swami Vivekananda**

i. Dharma (religion) is such an idea which makes a beast into a man and a man into a divinity.

ii. Get up, awake up, do not remain in sleep any more; you possess the power to remove all wants and sorrow within you. Believe in it and then that power will awake you up.

iii. To love others is virtue. To hate others is vice.

iv. It is true education which helps one to be self reliant.
It is not by money, but by the heart and brain all great works came to a success.

C. Ramthakur

In Assam, the place of spiritual power of kamakya. The festival of amuvachi was going on. Hundreds of pilgrims from different corners were coming to pilgrimage. A group of Bangladeshi pilgrims were coming to pilgrimage. With them there was a devotee boy. He had no any relation with him. Arriving at the place of the festival the boy lost his companions in the crowd. He tried his best to find them out, but he failed. He had no money with him. So he had to starve the whole day. The festival came to an end and all the participants were going back to their respective destinations. The boy was undone. Gradually the night became condensed.

One night he, in a dream, had an esteric hymn from a sage. He was then twelve years of age. Sitting by the side of the temple he began to recite repeatedly the ‘Mantra’ which he had learnt before in a dream. Suddenly he heard a voice. He was called by his name – ‘Rama’. He stopped himself from recitation. Who was calling him by his name at this dead of night? ‘No.’-he thought ‘I am wrong.’ Again he heard that call, -Rama do you hear me, my boy? Get up and come to me. On the next moment he saw a sage of Tantrik school with a strong spiritual power in front of him. Being thundered with astonishment and out of devotion the boy fell on the feet of the sage. And this boy became Ramthakur of the later period.

Ramthatur was born in a village named Dingamanik under greater Faridpur district on 21st Magha in 1266 BS. His father Radhamadhav Chakravorty was a devotee under Tantrik school and attained success in Tantrik rituals. His mother, kamala Devi was a devoted woman. So their family was religiously very sound. Ramthakur was devoted to religion from his boyhood. He was given admission to a primary school for his studies. But he did not make progress. Very often he wandered in the meadows and bushes of his village. On the other hand, he passed his time in the places where Harinamkirtan i.e. a performance of religious songs praising God Hari, the performance of Ramayana in songs, songs of the deeds of Lord Krishna. Yatra (a traditional theatre) etc. were held. At the age of
eight, Ramthakur lost his father. Their family felt in poverty. His mother became very worried about the fact that the son of a Pandit (scholar) family would pass his life remaining uneducated. His relatives and well wishers thought that after the ritual Upanayana (a festival of starting educational life giving a sacred thread to wear), he might change. But the result became opposite. After his Upanayana he left home and went away to a town named Noakhali. Then he took the service of a cook in the house of an engineer. His monthly pay for the job was taka 5 (five) only. On his request his master sent that money by post to his mother.

Ramthakur cooked every day carefully and served them. But his meal was very few in amount. Moreover he did not take his meal every day. After everybody’s meal he said his prayer and performed the rituals out of the sight of others he always kept his meal to nearby forest. Two jackals used to come and ate the food. At night he did not go to sleep. He was in meditation after the way of yoga. From here he went to the festival of kamakhya in Asam. He met his preceptor there who appeared in his dream, in the temple of kamakhya.

He, as advised by his preceptor, followed him. The preceptor was going ahead and the follower was behind him. The name of this preceptor was Anangadeva.

Ramathkur and three of his co-disciples toured with their preceptor so many regions, which were difficult to access, in the Himalayas. They saw there so many yogis, Rishis and Meditators and Sages. With the preceptor, they went to the hermit named kaushika and they met some greatmen there. In a deep forest near Gaziabad, Ramthakur remained absorbed in deep meditation for a long time. Here he attained success in his meditation. As directed by the preceptor, Ramthakur, who was adorned with a great spiritual power had come to human habitation. Everybody in his village was almost confirmed that he would never come back. But Ramthakur returned to his mother. The joy of the beloved mother knew no bounds. He kept in secret the matter that he had attained success in meditation and acquired great spiritual power. Like a simple son, he remained with his mother for some time. Again suddenly he became traceless.

For a long time he remained in the places the address of which was given to none. Afterwards he lived in Shantipur and Uttarpara near Calcutta. Gradually his super human power of Yoga was being expressed. People found the way of
truth in him. He behaved in such a way that no one was unrelated to him. He said, “No one is unrelated in this world. It is pride for which one feels one related and takes the others unrelated.”

Ramthakur was, as if, a nearest relation to the distressed, diseased and sufferers. He served the distressed with a sympathetic heart. Once thakur was remaining in a house of a devotee, which was nearer to Bashberhe. At that time a little son of his devotee had become bedridden due to the attack of rheumatism. In spite of the treatment of a lot of experienced physicians, the condition of patient did not improve. At this stage the parents of the boy fell on the feet of the thakur and kept on weeping. The heart of thakur was melted by pity. He went to bank of the Ganga’ and set his seat of meditation in the bush of the kash (a tall species of grass). Ramthakur became absorbed in meditation. And here it was seen that the diseased boy was becoming well. In such a way, Ramthakur served the diseased and distressed people.

Ramthakur led his prayer and meditation following the opinion of different schools and different ways. He was a Vaishnava and at the same time austere endeavourer of shakta, and other religious schools. He suggested the ways of meditation as a disciple wishes. He showed the way of prayer to God through the service to the mankind irrespective of caste, creed or religious communities.

With the zeal and vigour of his devotees Ashramas i.e. centres for religious practice of Ramthakur were established in the different parts of the country. Before the establishment of the Ashrama at Pahartali, Thakur went to see the spot. He said, “This is a very holy place. Many tired and aggrieved people would get here peace and tranquility.” Looking at the banyan tree under a hill he said, “the power of goddess Kaivalya exsists here. A brick built altar is to be erected around the tree. Afterwards in this pahartali Kvaialyandhama i.e. centre for worship of Kaivalya was established. The literal meaning of the word Kaivalya implies the freeness from ritual bias. At the time of inaugural function of the establishment of Kaivalyadhamtha thakur stayed there for three nights. He did not remain static in any Ashrama. In his later life, he stayed mainly in Chowmohani. There, in the house of an esteemed devotee Shri Upendrakumar Saha, he left this world on 18th Baishkha in 1353 B.S.

Some message of Ramthakur

1. His pity is gained through surrender to guru, i.e. the preceptor with patience and forbearance.
2. Bhagawan i.e. God exists in every living soul. He is visible if guru shows pity.

3. Bhagawan can be perceived only through devotion.

**D. Swami Pranavananda**

It was hundred years ago. Then this country was under British administration. Aiming at the independence of the country, the movement for homeland started. At that time Vinod Brahmachari was a leading personality. He was born at village Bajitpur in the district of Madaripur on 29th January, 1896. His father Vishnucharana Bhuian was serving the post of a Nayeb (administrator or rent collector) in the estate of Raja Surjakanta Roy, the Zamindar of Bajitpur. His mother Sarada Devi was a devoted woman. Vishnucharan Bhuian had four sons and two daughters. Vinod was the third among them.

Before the birth of Vinod, Sarada Devi dreamt a dream that Mahadeva (the earliest of all gods) was lying on her lap as her son. She informed her husband what she dreamt and both of them were awaiting the arrival of that god with joyful mind. In time, Shiva had descended as a son to their family.

Vinod was devoted to Shiva from his boyhood. From this time, he practiced ‘Omkara’ i.e. uttering the word ‘Om’ repeatedly following the rules of Yoga in meditation. With this religious practice, his education in primary and secondary level was going on. Vinod was a student of High English school in Bajitpur. At that time the movement for homeland had already started. It seemed that Vinod could not be able to give proper attention to his studies. From that school, he appeared at the Matric examination (now renamed as S.S.C). Afterwards Vinod was turned to a Brahmachari. It was a time when Hari-Samkirtana (enchanting and singing the name of Hari repeatedly) prevailed largely in different villages. Vinod himself was very fond of kirtana. So he himself organized a troupe of Hari Samkirtana.

Vinod’s body was very strong. He possessed great physical strength yet he was a symbol of self control. In his meal he had boiled potato, dal (pulse), rice such type of vegetarian food.

During the whole day and night he slept not more than an hour. He performed physical exercise regularly and talked leid. He lay down on a plank of wood. In this way, Vinod built his character. He suggested his friends to observe Brahmachary and to be self controlled. Vinod, gradually, became familiar as Pious Vinod. His Ashrama in Bajitpur became very popular.

Bholanandagiri, an esteemed devotee, once had come to the Ashrama at Bajitpur. Binod’s mother bowed to him and said, this son of mine (vinod) did not take
academic education properly and he is also indifferent to family life. What is the remedy of it? Bholananda Giri looked at Vinod and said to his mother, “O, my affectionate daughter, this son of yours is, as if a king of the kings. Don’t be worried”.

The fore saying of Bholananda Giri Maharaj was proved a correct one. Later on that Vinod became renowned as Swami Pranavananda.

The movement for homeland was gaining more strength gradually. Madaripur was a famous centre of the revolutionaries. Purnadas, a revolutionary was a son of this region. Being informed about the organizing capacity of Vinod, he met him in Bajitpur. To set up the organizational tie among the freedom fighters Vinod came forward. Conceived with the urge of revolution, young participants were coming to Vinod’s Ashrama from the districts of Dhaka, Barisal, Chittagong etc. Gradually, the matter spread around. In 1914 police of British govt. arrested Vinod as an accused of ‘Faridpur conspiracy case’. But finding no evidence, they released him.

Brahmachari Vinod thought about the future prospect and development of the society. He realized that through an ideal organization, it would be possible to lead this nation towards prosperity. The ideal of the organizational life would be to render service to the distressed, the diseased and the aggrieved. After some days from this time, Vinod lost his father. As suggested by his mother, Vinod went to Gaya, a holy place of Pilgrimage, to offer pindi, (a ritual for the satisfaction of departed soul). There he observed the oppression of the pandas (a sort of helpers of the priests and guide of the visitors) and became very annoyed. He took a vow to reform the holy places of pilgrimage of the Hindus and it would be his first and foremost duty of his life.

He came back home and dedicated himself to the services of mankind. Due to his efforts some Sevashramas i. e. service centers were established in Madaripur, Bajitpur, Khulna and many other places. Brahmachari Vinod was serving the worker of this service centres for the rescue of the people from the claws of natural calamity, epidemic and famine. His service was being praised everywhere. In 1921 an acute famine occurred in the Sundarban region of the present Bagerhat district. Brahmahari Vinod, with his five hundred followers, distributed food among the famine affected people. For this social service, Acharya Prafulla Chandra Roy, and eminent inhabitant of Khulna, praised him a lot.

In the month of January, 1924 a religious fair took place in Prayaga namely “Ardha (Half) Kumbha fair”. There he was initiated of Sannyasa mantra by swami Govindananda Giri. After embracing the Sannyasa he was renamed as Pranavananda. He dressed with red ochre.
Then he gave his attention to the centres of Pilgrimage. He observed that in different centres of pilgrimage of the Hindus immoral practice, unlawful conduct and oppression were going on regularly. The pilgrims were being oppressed by the Pandas. Just then a report was published in Newspapers about the oppression of the Pandas. Swami Pranavananda rushed to Gayadhama.

He opened a service centre to save the pilgrims from the oppression of the Pandas. The name of this service-centre or ashrama was Bharat Sevashrama. The interest of the Pandas was hampered. They took their stand against Pranavanandajee. But Pranavanandajee, whose courage was unlimited, overcame all sorts of hindrance and established service centres in Kashi, Prayag, Vrindavan, Kurakshetra and in many other places. The main objectives of the Sevashramas (service centres) were not only looking after the pilgrims, but with that he wanted to maintain the purity of the holy pilgrimages. And for fund to meet the expenses of the service centres he organized a group of a holy minstrel who sings the glory of a country. They sang the songs of the glory of the past of the Hindus in towns and many other places of the country.

In 1927 A.D. in the festival of Purnakumbha fair at Haridwara Swami Pranavananda expressed himself as a Sadguru i.e. a good religious teacher. He, then, was absorbed in deep meditation. When he came to normal position, he said to his disciples, - We should start movement for the formation of moral and spiritual social life.”

Moreover aiming at the erradication of untouchability and to spread education, he said, - “through education a nation awakes and man flourishes to be great. The dirt of untouchability must be removed from the society. To create the sentiment of co-operation a holy centre of union is to be established.

In 1935 A.D. Swami Pranavananda arranged a conference of the Hindus in Bajitpur Ashrama. Participants in lacs gathered in that conference. Listening to the sayings of Swami Pranavananda, they found the way of a new life. People of underdeveloped classes in lacs, became his disciples and got rid of inferiority complex.

The great Swami Pranavananda lived alive only 44 years. On 8th January in 1941 he breathed his last at the centre of Bharat-sava Sangha in Baliganj.

**Message of Swami Pranavanandajee.**

1. Organize yourself according to the ideal of Sanatana (universal) religion take the seats befitting for an Aryan Rishi (the seer) to lead the downtrodden nation through the way of morality and religion.

2. Practise self control over your meal, enjoyment and conversation.

3. A weak person cannot acquire spiritual knowledge and devotion to God.
4. Organization, strength of organization and its leadership when these three are put together, they are turned into a unified powerful one.

**E. Miravai**

Miravai was born in Rathor family in the village of kudki of Rajasthan in the first part of sixteenth century. There is different opinion about the birth era of Miravai. The modern historian mentioned about the birth era of miravai is 1498 A.D. Father Ratnasingh had been living at kudki by establishing a frotress after getting the jaygir by inheritance.

Miravai had been brought up with great affection from childhood. A little incident of childhood. One day, a bridegroom, adorned with garland, sandal paste and flowers, had been going to a wedding ceremony with accompanies a bridegroom. There are hundreds of lamp-lights, various types of music with bridegroom. The ladies of the house were looking after bridegroom with great eager. Tiny girl Mira asked again and again, “Mother on which day my bridegroom will come?” At that time mother was busy for looking bridegroom. So, she told to satisfy her daughter, “Oh! Your bridegroom is at home. Giridhari Gopaljee, is in the prayer hall. He is your bridegroom. Your marriage will be with him. Go, now keep quite”. Who knew this speech would be clinged in the mind of Mira?

From that day Mira started Worshiping Giridhari Gopal as her bridegroom with flowers on faith upon the speech of mother. She has loved Giridhari. Siting infront of him she hums song in mind herself. Mother unconsciously sowed that very seed of devotion which was growing up day by day in the mind of the daughter. She had loved Gopinath from her childhood. Gopaljee became the playmet to her. Her mother died when she was only eight years old. The father became helpless along with his dauther. Thinking the miserable condition of grand dauther, the grand father Rao Dudajee took Mira near to him in Medata. In one hand Rao Dudajee was wealthy, on the other hand devoted. There was a magnificent temple of Caturbhujajee (a deity with four hands) near by the palace. Here, Mira was growing up within the thought of devotion. Many devotees and saints were coming to the temple.

One devotee presented an image of Giridhari Gopal to Mira. Mira also accepted the image and passed her days by worshiping and serving him. Mira composed song overwhelmed with emotion being extremely eager in loving Krishna from adolescent age and sang that song in sweet voice. The women of the gynaecium was charmed by hearing her song. One day she sang a self composed song to hear for the women of gynaecium.
Mai Manhane supne ma parana gaya jagadisha
anga anga halada manya kaya jee sudhe bhijyo gata /
mai manhane supne ma parana gaya dinanatha /
chappana kota jahan jana padhare dulah shrubhagavan /
supne, Me torana vandhiya jee supne me aijan /
mirake giridhara milyasi purava janamake bhaga /
supne me manhane parana gaya jee he gaya acala suhaga //

Mother, my garland is exchanged with God. We smeared termic upon whole body at wedding time. My briedegroom God himself came to the palace. I have seen in dream, charming gate was framed, my beloved soul has come. I have got Giridhara as my lord of soul due to the absolute goodfortune. He has married me in dream, I have no boundary of prosperity.

In this mental condition Miravai came to the Rayal family of Mever as housewife. The king Bhoja, the first son of great hero Rana Samgram singh, became her husband. But there was no obstacle for her devotional love in the palace of citor. Husband Bhojaraj established the image of shyamanath on request of wife. Invite the priest of caturbhuja temple absolute vaishnav Gadadhar pandit had been taken to citor from the father’s house at Medata. Miravai was changed as a hermit Miravai within some years of married life. Not in erthly pleasures and luxury, but passed most of the time of the day by singing, worshiping and also serving the image of Shyamanath.

Seeing extremely eagerness of mind of wife Bhojaraj asked, “What do you want? And tell me by what getting do you happy.?” In answering to that Miravai started sing a song in sweet voice. Answer to husband with self composed song.
Mere to giridhara gopala dusara na koi /
Janke shira mora makuta mere pati soi /
---------------------------------------------
Tavai yai bhagati kaja, jagata dekha moi /
Dasir mira giridhara prabhu, taro tava meli /
---------------------------------------------

Means, I don’t have anybody except giridhari. He is my husband who has pea-cock crown in head. I have come here for devotion, world is observing me. Oh! Giridhari, Mira is your maid servant. O God! Please you rescue her.

Husband king Bhoja was became charmed hearing the song flowed out from the wind-pipe of the pretty wife Miravai with fascinated heart. The common people and devotees of Citor came to know the eagerness to love Krishna of the queen consort. They knew Miravai, not as a queen- consort, but devoted
saint. The news of sweet vocal music and devotion to love of Miravai was circulated through whole Rajasthan. Within this condition, husband of Miravai died unexpectedly in 1528. At that time it was full of youth of Mira. Her father-in-law Samgram singh also died within short time of this incident. Miravai had to face various oppressions and injustice by the guardian of Royal family in her miserable widowhood life. Here, at that time, the greedily looking of the new king Vikramjit singh of Citor, felt upon Miravai. Vikramjit was trying to capture Miravai by means of different tricks. He was rambling to the meditation room and bed room of Miravai as like as a ferocious wild beast stricken with desire for sexual gratification. The owner of the palace and sister Udavai has been appointed to capture Miravai. But Udavai became embarrassed after came in contact closely to Miravai and became a devotee of Mira. Then Vikramjit was engaged in conspiracy to kill Mira. He poured poison in the pot of the water with which the feet of a deity has been washed (caranamrita), put poisonous snake in the busket of flowers. But the life of Miravai was saved by the grace of Krishna. Vikramjit became more cruel and obstructed to study scripture. Miravai was leading as an imprisoned life in the palace. But internal meditation could not be stoped.

At last one day Miravai returned back to father’s house at Medata. From there to Vrindavan. At that time Shrirupgoswami as the Acarya of Gouriya vaishnavas. Miravai wanted to meet him as a visitor at Vrindavan. Acarya refused Miravai due to an woman. But Miravai was an obstinate person. She said, “Has Goswamijee forgotten the message of Bhagavat? Shrikrishna is only male of Vrindavan. And all others are nature. Then, why having theological knowledge, Goswamijee is so much stricken with hesitation to meet me?”

Shrirupgoswami was pleased of hear the comment about the spiritual knowledge of Miravai and told about the massage of Krishna. Extreme eager of Krishna of Mira charmed Goswami and Miravai was embarrssed to see the humbleness of vaishnava of Shrirupa and being influenced spontaneously by the trend of thought of great lord Caitanyadev the song of Hari was thrown up from her heart. The name of devotee Miravai circulated everywhere. The name of Miravai was well established even in the mind of a single human being in Rajasthan and all - over North - West India. Miravai, devotee of Krishna showed the way to get God through love. In the song, composed by her, there are so many songs of love to Krishna, devotion of Krishna and arduous practice to God, showed the new way. The friendly terms were made between the Hindu and Muslim communities by this musical trend. This friendly terms which expressed through an alliance the name of that trend is called “Bhaktivad”. All classes of human being are equal in the eye of the religion of Bhagavat and Bhaktivad and in the sufism of Islam.

Henceforth, again one day Miravai started journey to Dwaraka after giving u the activities in Vrajadham. Coming to Dwarka she passed her last days of life by
meditating and worshiping the image of Ranachorjee. In this Dwarakadham her earthly activities were concealed.

Exercise

Multiple choice questions:
1. At what age did Aravinda pass the Civil Service examination?
   a. 16    b. 18
   c. 20    d. 22
2. The reason for which Aravinda was denied civil service was-
   i. for his involvement in revolutionary activities.
   ii. for not appearing in the test of horse-riding
   iii. for undergoing imprisonment on change of national movement
Which one of the following is correct?
   a. i    b. ii
   c. i and ii d. i, ii and iii

Read the following paragraph and answer questions nos. 3 and 4
Sree Aravinda went under imprisonment several times in his 78 years of age. Even during the period of imprisonment began another revolution within his own self. Externally there was the revolution for freedom struggle and internally it was the signal from Sreekrishna.
3. Why did Sree Aravinda suffer imprisonment again and again?
   a. On the charge of killing Englishman by bombing.
   b. for writing books against British.
   c. for activities relating to freedom of the country.
   d. for responding to the spiritual revolution.
4. ‘Internally it was the signal of Sreekrishna’----- What does the signal signify or imply here?
   a. patriotism   b. spirituality
   c. hostility   d. Accepting asceticism (Sannyas)

5. What was the favourite sport (pastime) of Vile?
   a. to worship and meditate
   b. to please others by singing songs
   c. to shout repeatedly saying ‘snake’, ‘snake’.
   d. to ask a sannyasi or an ascetic questions whenever coming across any.

Read the quotation below, and answer questions nos. 6 and 7.
‘I know you are Narayana in a new form or shape of man, you have assumed the body with the purpose of doing good to creatures.’

6. Whose quotation is this?
   a. of Viswanath Datta   b. of Bhubaneswari Devi
   c. of Narendra Nath   d. of Sree Ramkrishna

7. What is the reason here of calling Narendra as Narayana in new form of man?
   a. for preaching religion   b. for setting up ashram
   c. for reforming the society d. for rendering service to creatures

8. At what age did Ram Thakur lose his father?
   a. 16   b. 18
   c. 20   d. 22

9. Ram Thakur even after achieving divine grace through austere and arduous practice, kept it concealed from his mother. The reason is -
   i. he feared to lose divine grace (Siddhi)
   ii. he feared to lose the affection and love of his mother
   iii. to gradually manifest spiritual power (yogashakti)

Which one of the following is correct?
   a. i   b. ii
   c. i and ii   d. i, ii and iii
Read the following paragraph and answer question nos. 10 and 11

In order to cure rheumatism of the little son of his devotee (bhakta) Ram Thakur spread out a seat in the Kashvan beside the Ganges, near by his house, and became absorbed in meditation. After a short while, the boy recovered from illness and became well.

10. Where does the above devotee (bhakta) of Ram Thakur hail from?
   a. Banshbere  b. Kaivalyadham
   c. Kaushikdham  d. The Himalayas

11. Which particular aspect of Thakur’s character has been revealed here?
   a. To attract people to meditation
   b. To attract people to supernatural power
   c. To serve the sick and the destitute
   d. To show the (right) path to the people while in distress

Read the following passage and answer the questions no. 14 and 15:

He poured poison in the pot of caranamrita (the water with which the feet of a deity has been washed), put a poisonous snake in the basket of flowers. But the life of Miravai was saved by the grace of Krishna.

14. What did he pour in the pot of caranamrita.
   a. Amrita    b. Poison
   c. Honey     d. Milk

15. By whose grace the life of Miravai was saved?
   a. Mahadev    b. Poisonous snake
   c. Rupagoswami.  d. Shrikrishna

16. In which century Miravai was born?
   a. 20th    b. 19th
   c. 16th    d. 14th

17. Whose image had given to Miravai by a devotee?
   a. Giridhari Gopal.  b. Shri Durga
   c. Narayan    d. Radhagovinda
Creative Questions:

1. Rishi (wise ascetic) Aravinda was arrested by the British government on the charge of taking part in national movement. He started praying to God even while in prison. While absorbed in prayer he saw Krishna. The austere ascetic practice of his spiritual life started here. He has shown people the way how they can lead a good life and sincerely endeavour for social welfare keeping absolute faith in God. He said that purification or sanctity cannot be achieved by worshipping the image of a deity or any idol. He also said that the mind or the heart can be purified by self-restraint with the help of conscience and clear intelligence or thinking.

   a. Who conducted the case in the court on behalf of Aravinda?
   b. Why was there a change of thought or mood in the life of Aravinda?
   c. Write down how you can be a devotee (bhakta) to God utilizing Aravinda’s love of God.
   d. ‘Purification or Sanctity cannot be achieved by worshipping the image of a deity, but the heart or mind can be purified by self-restraint through the help of conscience and clear intelligence or thinking’-Evaluate the statement.

2. Vivekananda, receiving grace or favour from Thakur (Priest) Sree Ramkrishna paramhansadev, wanted to become a yogi (ascetic) developing his own soul, after remaining in profound meditation or trance. But Thakur did not think about his (Vivekananda’s) own salvation, but told him about the salvation of all creatures. At the instructions of Thakur he started working assiduously for the superstitious, foodless, clothless, illiterate nation in order to relieve them from the wretched condition. He discovered the existence of God among his created beings. ‘He who loves creatures, serves God’-Being imbued with this mantra or motto he dedicated himself fully for the salvation of the creatures.

   a. What was the boyhood name of Vivekananda?
   b. Why did Vivekananda not become a Yogi?
   c. How will you utilize the teachings of Vivekananda for the children of your locality who are deprived of education?
   d. ‘He, who loves creatures, serves God’-Write the inner significance of this message.
3. Ram Thakur travelled to many inaccessible parts of the Himalayas to observe the arduous spiritual practices of the worshippers (sadhaks), Yogis and rishis (hermits). He attained divine grace through austere religious practice and started giving service to the sick and the distressed. Ram Thakur being he devotee of Shakti, Shiva, etc, set up Kaivalyadham at Pahartali, Chittagong. He believed that God can be attained only through utmost devotion to Him. So, he has established ashrams (hermitages) in various places for the spiritual practices of his devotees, and these ashrams have now become the meeting-places of the devotees.
   a. What is the meaning of the term, ‘Kaivalya’?
   b. Why did Ram Thakur establish Kaivalyadham in Chittagong?
   c. Write down how you will inspire the people of your area about the importance of building up ashram.
   d. ‘God can be attained through utmost devotion only.’ - Give your opinion in favour of this statement.

4. Vinod Brahmachari brought reforms to the Adarsha Sangha, that is, the holy places of the Hindus for developing Hindu religion. He also built an ashram at Gayadham. The Pandas (The brahmin priests who act as guides to pilgrims at holy places) were displeased with Vinod at his work, and opposed him. But he ignored everything, worked with unlimited courage, and reached his goal. He has endeavoured persistently throughout his life for awakening morality and spirituality, spreading education, among the nation, thereby to make the people lead a developed life.
   a. What is the name of the ashram established at Gayadham?
   b. Why were the Pandas displeased with him (Vindod)?
   c. Why is courage or boldness necessary for good or reformative works?
      - Elucidate the answer in the light of your experience.
   d. Evaluate properly the reformative works of Vinod Brahmachari.
5. Miravai, the devotee of Krishna, showed the way to get God through love. In the song composed by her there are so many songs of love to Krishna, devotion to Krishna and arduous practice to God, showed the new way. The friendly terms were made between the Hindu and Muslim communities by this musical trend. The friendly terms which expressed through an aliance the name of that trend is called ‘Bhaktivad.’ All the classes of human being are equal in the eye of the Bhagavat and Bhaktivad and in the sufism of Islam.

a. What did Miravai compose?

b. What was the way showed by her?

c. What is the greatness of Bhaktivad?

d. “Salvation is attainable by means of devotion only” – Explain the statement.
মন যার সংশয়ী তার বড় কষ্ট
-শ্রী সারদা দেবী

দেশকে ভালোবাসো, দেশের মঙ্গলের জন্য কাজ কর
-মাননীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রী শেখ হাসিনা

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