

3. The Mantra round your wrist

THE five-lettered word WATCH can be as potent a *mantra* in promoting the five basic Human Values Truth, Righteous conduct, Peace, Love and Non-violence-- as the *Panchakshari mantra*-- *Namah-Sivaya* in promoting the spiritual progress of a *sadhaka*.

Three categories of people support and sustain human society---those who produce, those who guard and those who guide--the workers, the soldiers and the teachers--the *Karshaka*, the *Rakshaka*, and *Sikshaka*. A society can be strong only when those who produce the food, clothing and shelter are well equipped and active, when the guardians of law and order and those in charge of the frontiers are patriotic and skilled, and when those who open the eyes of children and unfold their innate richness are full of love and understanding.

These three are like the three legs of a tripod. But as a mere structure with three legs the tripod cannot be useful and efficient. The people who are the concern and under the care of the three categories form the plank on top of the three. The seat has to be screwed tight to the legs---the screws being peace, love and truth and the process of screwing and tightening being the eager enthusiasm for progress, prosperity, security and unity, the sincere effort to accept and promote the human values--Truth, Right Conduct, Peace, Non-violence and Love. These five values are as essential for a full and worthwhile life as a five vital airs or *Pranas* mentioned in the scriptures.

The Teacher's role

The teacher embodies these values and establishes them in society. That is his opportunity, his duty, the justification for his profession. Therefore, he becomes responsible for the efficiency and excellence of the other two categories also. He has to bear the burden of shaping and perfecting the producers and the guardians too. Why? The peace and prosperity of the world depend on the teacher--his personality, his character, skill and outlook. The fruit of his efforts must be liberation itself, from the dual sufferings of pain and pleasure, grief and joy. "*Yaa vidya, saa vimukthaye*" ("*Vidya* is That which liberates"), say the Upanishads. The teacher should not confine himself within books; the universe is his text. He must imbibe and transmit the knowledge and experience that the Universe is divine, true and holy. A good teacher is perpetual learner; for him, Nature or *Prakriti* is the best teacher.

The word *Prakriti* is usually rendered as Nature-to indicate all that the Divine Will has projected. People in Karnataka use that word to denote one's body. When one desires to convey that his health is not good, he says "My *prakriti* is not good." The meaning of the word *Prakriti* comprises not only the physical body but also the conduct, the activity, the feeling, the speech and the motives that govern and exemplify it. The teacher teaches not merely by his words or through books but more by his attitudes and aptitudes, his prejudices and preferences, the means and methods he employs and his conduct and habits. A good student is an offering that a good teacher makes to the nation. The student has learnt from the daily life of the teacher not to hurt others by harsh words and not to allow the mind to entertain bad thoughts.

The teacher must elevate himself by dedication

When Kalidasa was at the court, Emperor Bhoja pitted one famous scholar against another equally famous opponent. When he found that no one failed before the arguments of the other, he invited one pupil each from those taught by the scholars and encouraged them to engage

themselves in debate to discover which master-teacher was superior judging &om the performance of the students. But they too failed to overcome each other. The thousands who witnessed the end-products of the teaching by the masters acclaimed their greatness in unanimous appreciation.

A President or Prime Minister rises to that position because of the teachers who fostered him and implanted courage, confidence and elements of leadership in his formative years. The teacher should not condemn himself as weak nor think of his job as last desperate resort. He must give up lamenting his lot. He must elevate himself and his job by dedication to the five human values.

Message of the wrist watch

Today, every one wears a wrist watch; the watches are of many varieties--of shape, size and cost; the straps too are of different materials and monetary value. They tell us the time; they also serve as a decoration and an ornament. When they first came into the village of Puttaparthi, they created commotion and wonder. I was then nine years old. I wrote a limerick on the wearers of the strange contraption and on the leather strip round the wrists. Now, the watch has become a part of every wrist. Only, the wearer has not learnt the message of the watch, its potential to arouse the latent divinity in man. The name, WATCH, has five letters! The *mantra* that leads the *sadhaka* to God (*Siva*)---*Na-mah-Si-vaa-ya* has five syllables. WATCH is as much a *pancha-akshari* (five-lettered) *mantra* as *Namah Sivaaya*, and, if meditated upon, is as meaningful and momentous.

W: The first letter reminds us of the *Sadhana* of watching the *Word*. One should not revel in idle gossip, or spreading slander and scandal and wound others and pollute oneself. Examine the word before the tongue pronounces it; is it true, will it hurt, is it necessary? Warn the tongue against relishing falsehood, or indulging in outbursts of vilification and the like. Adhere to Truth, at all costs. It is the basic human value.

A: The second letter reminds us of the additional *Sadhana* of washing *Action*. Be vigilant that every activity conduces to your moral progress, to the welfare of society--that is to say, follows the moral code, *Dharma*. *Dharma* also means innate nature. Fire has to spread warmth and light and also to burn. These are its *Dharma*. Without them, it is but coal. Sugar without the sweet taste is but paltry powder. A rose without fragrance might as well be a plastic substitute. Man's *Dharma* is to love and serve fellowmen, practising truth without causing injury to others. 'A' teaches us to manifest *Dharma* in every action of ours. *Dharma* is another great human value.

Thoughts must reinforce innate Peace

T: The third letter 'T' indicates an additional *sadhana*, a third one watching our *Thoughts*. While adhering to the earlier two, one trains the mind not to react vehemently or vengefully when one is blamed or extolled. Why should one worry if the blame has no basis? Thoughts must reinforce the innate peace and tranquillity which are one's heritage. They should not create anxiety or anger, arrogance or envy, which are alien to the Divine Core of human beings. Thoughts, when watched and warned, promote *Santhi*, another precious human value. *Santhi* is the jewel won by the sages. It resides in hearts free from pride and, greed.

C: The fourth letter of the *Panchaakshari* teaches one to watch the *Character*. Character is three-quarters of life. The *Sadhaka* has to direct himself to the acquisition of the three values already mentioned, through steady vigilance. Man is the very embodiment of Love; so, his character finds expression through character saturated with love. A life without Love is really living death.

Every thought, word and deed must emanate from Love. Love must bind the community as one; it must strengthen the feeling of brotherhood and satisfy the craving for expansion. Love must reach out to all mankind and to God. When such a steady selfless character is absent in man, he is a lampless home, a barren cow, a runaway kite drifting helplessly down, a counterfeit coin. Is he observing Truth? Is he virtuous? Has he serenity? Does love motivate him for every action? These are the tests.

Watch the Heart and the feelings it originates

H: The fifth letter 'H' instructs us to watch the *Heart* and the feelings it originates. It reminds us of the human value of *Ahimsa* (Non-violence).

Heart does not mean the fist-size physical equipment we have to purify and pump blood. It is the centre of emotions, good and bad. It has to be watched, so that good emotions alone are manifested. It must expand to include all living beings to feel kinship with all creation. "My reality is the reality of all"--this truth must be ever springing forth. Then, the idea of violence can never find place in the heart. The sense of unity cannot produce competition and confrontation. The fifth human *value---Ahimsa--is* promoted by the *sadhana* indicated by the letter H.

For want of these five human values, mankind is in the throes of distress and disaster. The morning newspaper is full of murder, massacre, arson and dacoities. The brain and the mind have been polluted to a dangerous extent. Education aims only at providing information and promoting skills. It has not tackled the problem of moral degeneration, of the sublimation of low desires, of sense control and the development of spiritual insight. Man is converting himself into a brute with a human form. Vali, the monkey, is said to have argued that Rama wounded it with his mortal arrow, in spite of the fact that the sin it had committed was pardonable and even proper among monkeys. But Rama replied that Vali was only a monkey in appearance; it knew both right and wrong, and so deserved punishment. Man, today, is a beast in human garb. When he develops and demonstrates human values, he would have to discard the beast in him and become man, the pilgrim to God. Contemplation on the watch is the best means for achieving this end.

God can be attained by the wise use of time

The watch will teach *Sathyam*. It warns against evil, and alerts you to be good, *Sivam*. It is worn as a jewel so it is *Sundaram*, too, besides being a teacher and reminder of human values. The watch is the symbol of Time. We are powerless before Time but Time's Creator and Director can be won and attained by the wise use of Time. Instructing others on this inner meaning of the Watch and the *Panchaakshari Mantra* derivable from the five letters WATCH are not enough to fulfill your duty.

The watch advises you to watch yourself whether you have the credentials to teach. A hundred eyes will be watching every word and deed of yours to discover whether you have mastered the human values and whether you are practising them.

And, most important of all, God, the Universal Watcher, is witnessing and weighing your every thought, word and deed. The God in you examines and judges and you are able to acquire self-satisfaction through sincerity and serenity. Prove your human-ness by the practice of the values which are the unique qualities of man.

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The dull and the lazy will refrain from activity for fear of exhaustion or failure or loss. The emotional and passionate persons will plunge headlong and crave for quick results and will be disappointed if success does not come their way. The balanced persons engage themselves in work because it is their duty. They will not be affected either by success or failure.

Baba