

A Manual for Character - Building **(Source: Sri Ramakrishna Math, Chennai)**

- Generally the responsibility of shaping the personality of youngsters lies with the parents in the initial years and then by Gurus or teachers during their studies.
- What kind of help a youth need to assimilate and grow by his own nature? The best help he/she can get is proper and timely guidance to build up his/her character and personality.
- Character-power is the greatest power in the hands of a person.
- If a person has developed a sound and noble character (good thoughts and actions), he/she can face even some challenging situations and fight against all odds and live meaningfully.
- Swami Nirvedananda (1893-1858), a scholarly monk of Sri Ramakrishna Math composed verses of Sanskrit in the form of Vows (Pratijna or Resolve or Pledge) how to lay foundation for a strong and pure character.
- These five vows are named as Vidyarthi Homa Mantras for the students studying in Sri Ramakrishna Math schools/colleges.

1. The First Vow (Resolve or Pratijna or Pledge)

“Human body is the primary means of practising all virtues and duties – In view of this discerning truth, I shall try my best to keep my body healthy and fit for hard work. I shall do this by meticulous observance of all health rules.”

Why we need to keep our body healthy and fit?

- A healthy body is prerequisite for every thing like studies, sports, entertainment and for any hard work we need to do.
- All persons should regularly exercise his/her body. Physical exercises like running, jogging, yogasanas will greatly help,
- Eating the right kind of food having nutritional value is very important to keep our body healthy.

The First Vow is the resolve to pay attention to one’s health with proper attitude and care.

2. The Second Vow (Resolve or Pledge)

“Students must undergo the austerity called Study – In view of this advice of the scriptures, I shall try my best to develop my talent (pratibha vikasa) and devote myself to studies in disciplined manner.”

- To study systematically and regularly is the primary duty of the student.
- One should learn the right method of study from the seniors and the teachers.
- The student should study not only for passing the examination but for acquiring the knowledge. Knowledge grows if one shares with others.
- He/she should read the books of great people that develop personality and talent and expand his/her mental horizon.

- Education does not mean to get degrees, but teach a way of life with ethical and moral values.

The Second Vow is the resolve for the pursuit of knowledge and sharing with others.

3. The Third Vow (Resolve)

“Truth alone wins and not untruth. By truth we attain the path of devayana (the path of Gods) – in view of this Vedic statement, I shall try my best to be truthful in body, mind and speech.”

- If only a person remains truthful always, he/she gain strength and power.
- Truthfulness makes a person normal and healthy.
- Falsehood on the other hand needs effort to maintain it and generates worry and fear of exposure.

The Third Vow is the resolve to practice truthfulness in life.

4. The Forth Vow (Resolve)

“One who considers others well-being as his own good is great among good people – in view of this counsel of great men, I shall try to the best of my ability to cast away all impure and selfish tendencies such as meanness, cruelty and hypocrisy. I shall instead try to inculcate broadmindedness, humility, respect for others, love for the country and service of man as to God.”

- A selfish person seeks only his/her good, but that also makes him/her miserable over a period of time, for the fear of losing the object of his/her happiness.
- Selfishness makes the people cruel and narrow-minded.
- Unselfishness makes a person service-minded.

The Forth Vow thus draws a student’s attention to be service-minded and kind towards the people and as a whole to the Society.

5. The Fifth Vow (Resolve)

“Well managed, rightly focussed and unified collective-power is the only way for social well being. Therefore, “Be thou all of one mind, be thou all of one thought, be thou all of one in speech” – in view of this Vedic statement, which promotes unity and evokes the power of integration, I shall be honest and being a member of any institution/ organization, strive for unity among all.”

- Unity is strength. But one should unite for a good purpose and not for a bad one. Every one owes something to the Society as some of our basic needs are provided by the Society like food, water, shelter etc.
- An enlightened citizen is a responsible member of the Society and willing to contribute to others well-being too. So become an enlightened citizen of the country.
- One should develop philanthropic (donating) attitude for good causes.

The Fifth Vow aims at inculcating Social amity and responsibility.

A few Messages of Swami Vivekananda to the Youth

- Arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached.
- Stand on your own feet.
- Believe in yourself. (Spirit of self- reliance).
- Be bold and fearless.
- Expand your heart.
- Be open to learning from any one.
- Develop will-power.
- Have spiritual thinking. We need religion to help the Society and upholds the dignity of all living beings, but not superstitions.
- Have integrity, compassion and love towards your colleagues.
- Have humility, but firmness and courage to do things which you believe good at large to the Society.

SELF- DECLARATION BY SCHOLASHIP AWARDEE

It gives me great pleasure that I am selected for the award of Loan-Scholarship under Financial Assistance Program of Vadlamudi Kotaiah Choudary Charities, Tenali to the academically deserved/ financially needy students to pursue higher education. I declare that the particulars and the information furnished in the application for the award of Loan-Scholarship are true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

I am profoundly grateful to the Trust for providing the financial assistance to pursue my education and acknowledge that such assistance greatly helps the students like me to fulfil the aim of self-reliance and reaching to greater heights in the society. I will return the financial assistance provided to me after I am gainfully employed or financially sound, in a reasonable time period, which would facilitate the Trust to help more number of needy students.