

Life Skills and Personality Development through *Manache Shlok*: An Indian Knowledge Systems Perspective

Dr. Kanchan Joshi
Department of English
Shri Niketan Arts Commerce College, Nagpur

Abstract: NEP 2020 has integrated Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) in the curriculum to integrate, rejuvenate, and revive India's traditional wisdom and heritage into contemporary education, research, and development. Indian Knowledge System (IKS) encompass indigenous philosophical, psychological, and ethical traditions that have guided human conduct for centuries. Samarth Ramdas Swami, 17th century saint-philosopher composed *Manache Shlok* - sacred verses in Marathi that offers profound insights into mind management, ethical living, and self-discipline. Being litterateur and visionary, his verses ranging from spirituality, love self-control, intention, goal setting, detachment, ethical behaviour, physical development, to politics. He travelled across the country and experience the ethos of the country. *Manache Shlok* (Verses of the Mind) is a collection of about 204–205 verses written as a dialogue with the human mind, the text provides practical guidance for regulating thoughts, emotions, and behaviour, which are essential components of life skills and personality development.

The present study examines *Manache Shlok* through the lens of Indian Knowledge Systems to identify and analyse the life skills embedded in its verses. Using qualitative textual analysis, selected shlokas are interpreted to highlight key life skills such as self-awareness, emotional regulation, self-control, critical thinking, moral reasoning, resilience, and goal-oriented conduct. The study further explores how this life skills contribute to holistic personality development.

Keywords: Manache Shlok, life skills, Indian Knowledge System, self-awareness, mind management.

Introduction: Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) is indigenous, and interdisciplinary body of knowledge, encompassing original philosophical, psychological, and ethical traditions that have guided human conduct for centuries. This rich traditional knowledge of the Indian subcontinent shaped India's intellectual and cultural fabric over thousands of years. Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) embody rich and distinctive body of thought that harmonizes life and science, the ordinary and the spiritual, action and righteousness, while maintaining a balanced perspective between enjoyment and renunciation. It evolved through ancient centres like Nalanda and Takshashila, blending science, arts, and governance. Indian Knowledge

system is integrated in National Education Policy 2020 to integrate, rejuvenate, and revive India's traditional wisdom and heritage into contemporary education, research, and development. The Indian education aims holistic development of the students with practical learning accompanied by modern technical education. In today's rapidly changing and technology driven world individual's mental health, community wellness is crucial. Our ancient literature is a rich treasure trove of the Indian Knowledge System, offering timeless wisdom that guides individuals to lead a life of grace, harmony, and inner peace.

Maharashtra has rich legacy of saints promoted equality, ethical living, and humility. Indian sant Parampara boasts a profound legacy of saints in the Bhakti tradition, particularly the Varkari Sampradaya, where figures like Ramdas Swami, Tukaram, and Eknath imparted timeless wisdom on living a balanced life through devotion, humility, and surrender.

Life and works of Ramdas Swami (1608–1681): Samarth Ramdas Swami, 17th century saint-philosopher and poet was spiritual figure in Maharashtra state. He was born in 1608 A.D. at Jamb, Maharashtra, to Suryaji Panth and Renuka Bai. His birth name was Narayan. He was a great devotee of Lord Ram and Hanuman. Ramdas was a contemporary of Sant Tukaram. Being a guru of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, he served as a spiritual advisor and mentor to him. He profoundly shaped Maharashtra's spiritual and cultural ethos by fostering the Bhakti movement, encouraging social reform, and revitalizing Hindu thought. He also composed impactful works such as *Dasbodh* and *Manache Shlok*, which continue to inspire generations. Being litterateur and visionary, his verses ranging from spirituality, love, self-control, intention, goal setting, detachment, ethical behaviour, physical development, to politics. He Promoted devotion (*Bhakti*) along with strength, discipline, and righteous living. He established many Hanuman temples in Maharashtra to emphasized physical fitness and moral character among youth. He travelled across the country and experience the ethos of the country. He profoundly perceived the inner workings of the human mind and guided people toward righteousness and a harmonious life. Through his spiritually charged discourses, he illuminated consciousness and revitalized society with moral strength and inner discipline.

Manache Shlok: Dialogue with our Mind

Manache Shlok (verses addressed to the mind) is a collection of 205 shlokas written by Samarth Ramdas to guide individuals toward moral strength, self-discipline, and spiritual growth. These verses are practical guidelines for personality development and righteous living. He directly addresses the mind (mana), recognizing it as the root of both human downfall and elevation. His deep observation of human psychology is evident in the way he speaks to the restless, ego-driven, and desire-bound mind, urging it toward self-control and righteousness. These verses

are timeless guidelines for individuals toward clarity of thought, sound decision-making, and purposeful living. It provides profound insights for personal growth and character development. Through its teachings, individuals are encouraged to cultivate rational thinking, distinguish between right and wrong, and exercise self-restraint in the face of temptation. From the 17th century onward, the timeless verses of Manache Shlokas have resonated deeply across Maharashtra, where people continue to recite them with devotion. This enduring practice serves as a vital reminder, encouraging individuals to adopt and embody moral principles and humanistic values in their daily routines. By invoking these shlokas, people reinforce ethical living, fostering virtues like discipline, compassion, and justice amid modern challenge. These shlokas not only impart ethical values but also offer guidance for building a stronger personality. They provide practical advice on living a better life and cultivating essential life skills.

Samarth Ramdas Swami through *Manache shlok* shows us that our mind can be our friend, our enemy, or even our guru. This focuses on our inner dialogue—with ourselves and our own thoughts. Certain shlokas emphasize the value of honesty, advise us to always speak truth. Others guide us for choosing positive company while avoiding harmful influences. Further, they warn against ego, promoting humility and an open-minded spirit.

Skills for Joyful Living:

Human beings naturally aspire to live a happy and contented life; however, achieving what we desire often proves challenging. In such circumstances, individuals require genuine guidance to maintain balance and harmony in life. It is essential to regulate impulses such as temptation, anger, and jealousy, which frequently disturb inner peace and social relationships. These verses provide practical wisdom to cultivate self-control, clarity of thought, and emotional stability, thereby enabling a balanced and meaningful life.

न बोलें मना राघवेवीण कांहीं।
जनी वाउगें बोलता सुख नाहीं॥
घडिने घडी काळ आयुष्य नेतो।
देहांतीं तुला कोण सोडूं पहातो ॥ २३ ॥

This verse tells that false words have no meaning, as it is spoken with malicious intentions which cannot give happiness. The ultimate truth is Rama. Hence, we should always be truthful. Further it says that no one will save you at the last moment of your life. Samarth Ramdas guides common people:

मना वासना दुष्ट कामा नये रे ।
मना सर्वथा पापबुद्धी नको रे ।
मना धर्मता नीति सोडू नको हो ।
मना अंतरीं सार वीचार राहो ॥ ४ ॥

He advises to examine our inner thoughts continuously separating noble, ethical impulses (good) from selfish or harmful ones (bad). It's like an internal filter that prevents sin by catching wrong intentions before they become actions. Further it tells that we should always abide to dharma and morality. Another key teaching records मनीं मानवा व्यर्थ चिंता वहाते । अकस्मात् होणार होऊनि जाते ॥१०॥ human being often worries without reason. What is destined to happen occurs suddenly. The events in life and whatever we experience are due to past karma. This encourages us to liberate ourselves from futile anxiety over the inevitable. It urges to pay attention to the present. Shlok 6 reinforces this by targeting inner vices:

नको रे मना क्रोध हा खेदकारी ।
नको रे मना काम नानाविकारी ।
नको रे मना सर्वदा अंगिकारू ।
नको रे मना मत्सरू दंभभारू ॥६॥

It means, “let us reject anger, which only brings regret. Let us avoid lust, which endlessly corrupts the mind. Let us never embrace pride in any form. Let us abandon jealousy and the arrogance.” Samarth Ramdas guides the mind to remove four root vices—krodha (anger), kama (lust), mada (pride), and matsara (jealousy)—that poison personal growth. Each evil creates vicious cycles: anger breeds revenge, lust continually diverts, pride blinds to truth, jealousy wastes energy on others. Whereas humility opens wisdom while gratitude drives progress. If human beings practice these things in their daily lives, they can be happier. Shlok 62 emphasises the concept of ‘sukh’(happiness):

निजध्यास तो सर्व तूटोनि गेला ।
बळें अंतरीं शोक संताप ठेला ॥
सुखानंद आनंद भेदें बुडाला ।
मनीं निश्चयो सर्व खेदें उडाला ॥६२॥

It highlights the danger of losing one's purpose, when a person forgets their true aim and moral direction, negative emotions such as grief, anger, and frustration dominate the mind. This mental disturbance destroys inner joy and weakens determination. This shlok emphasizes loss of purpose, emotional disorder, and failing determination when the mind loses its attention. This insight strongly aligns with the objectives of modern life skill education, which aims to develop emotionally balanced, goal-oriented, and ethically responsible individuals. Samarth Ramdas Swami warns people in the Shlok 102 against excessive involvement in emotions.

अती लीनता सर्वभावे स्वभावे ।
जना सजनालागिं संतोषवावे ।

देहे कारणीं सर्व लावीत जावें ।
सगूणीं अती आदरेंसी भजावें ॥१०२॥

Samarth Ramdas warns against over-immersion in emotions. This creates dissatisfaction regardless of company (good or bad), as people wrongly blame the body for their troubles. Instead of abandoning mistakes, they take pride in them—deceiving the mind in cycles of attachment and ignorance.

मना कोप आरोपणा ते नसावी ।
मना बुधि हे साधुसंगीं वसावी ।
मना नष्ट चांडाळ तो संग त्यागी ।
मना होड रे मोक्षभागीं विभागी ॥ १०७॥

The verse advises the mind to stay free from anger and blaming others. It encourages keeping one's mind in the company of good and virtuous people. One should avoid bad influences and negative associations. By doing so, the mind progresses on the path of spiritual growth.

All the above *Manache Shlok* deliver timeless mental training for modern stress, career pressure, and relationships. Collectively, they evolve the mind into a wise guru, fostering calm focus and ethical growth, universally applicable today.

Wisdom of Rational Mindset

Many of the shlokas contain the wisdom of rational thinking which can be a guide to live life peacefully and become happy. It prepares us to think reasonably and maintain the balance.

जगीं सर्वसुखी असा कोण आहे?
विचारे मना तुंचि शोधूनि पाहे ॥
मना त्वांचि रे पूर्वसंचीत केले।
तयासारिखें भोगणें प्राप्त जाले ॥११॥

Ramdas Swami asks us who is truly happy in this world? It challenges us to question worldly happiness through introspection. True joy eludes everyone because life delivers exactly what past karma dictates, "O mind, you must experience what past karma has accumulated." This helps us to handle the tough situation and control the extreme emotions. Samarth Ramdas in his shlokas warns against empty boasting or spiritual talk without practice he says:

फुकाचे मुखीं बोलतां काय वेचे ।
दिसेंदीस अभ्यांतरी गर्व सांचे ।
क्रियेवीण वाचाळता वेर्थ आहे ।
विचारें तुझा तूंचि शोधून पाहें ॥११४॥

Idle talk appears harmless but cultivates ego silently, wasting awareness without real change. Even memorizing verses without living them is pointless. It is an ego trap, reinforcing action over mere narration for true transformation. In today's world, it warns against social media bragging and empty motivational talk that builds ego without real effort.

True transformation comes from action instead of just posting quotes. "A man is known by the company he keeps" is an apt phrase. People are generally judged by the friends or companions they associate with. Here Ramdas swami warns to choose friends wisely:

धरीं रे मना संगती सज्जनाची।
जेणें वृत्ति हे पालटे दुर्जनाची॥
बळे भाव सदबुद्धि सन्मार्ग लागे।१३५।

It shows selective association as a rational strategy for mental transformation. Instead of fighting bad habits through willpower alone, surround yourself with virtuous influences that naturally reshape thinking patterns.

Communication skills

Communication is essential in every aspect of life. It helps in building strong relationships, encourages collaboration, and aids in resolving conflicts. Effective communication is key to achieving both personal and professional success. *Manache Shlok* highlights the importance of speaking truthfully and meaningfully, rather than engaging in unnecessary or idle talk.

जनीं वादवेवाद सोडूनि द्यावा।
जनीं वादसंवाद सूखे करावा॥
जगीं तोचि तो शोकसंतापहारी।
तुटे वाद संवाद तो हीतकारी॥१०९॥

It says one should avoid unnecessary arguments or disputes with anyone. However, engaging in meaningful discussions about philosophical matters and the divine is always beneficial and uplifting. Such conversations bring intellectual satisfaction and help in relieving mental distress. From a spiritual perspective, these discussions are truly beneficial and promote inner well-being.

तुटे वाद संवाद त्याते म्हणावें।
विवेके अहंभाव यातें जिणावें॥
अहंतागुणे वाद नाना विकारी।
तुटे वाद संवाद तो हीतकारी॥११०॥

Samarth Ramdas targets argumentative ego as a mind poison. Endless debates create division and wastes time, as it develops from ahankara (ego), not truth-seeking. Rational thinking requires killing ego first—only then does discussion become constructive rather than destructive. It suggests skipping blame games and concentrate on solutions.

विचारूनि बोले विवंचूनि चाले।
तयाचेनि संतप्त ते ही निवाले।
बरें शोधिल्यावीण बोलों नको हो।
जनीं चालणें शुध नेमस्त राहो॥१३२॥

This teaching emphasizes thoughtful communication and disciplined action as sources of profound influence. A person who always speaks thoughtfully and acts with careful consideration brings comfort even to those who are troubled by life's sufferings. Therefore, one should never speak without investigation emphasizing reflection before communication.

Conclusion: *Manache Shlok* by Samarth Ramdas Swami exemplify Indian Knowledge Systems' practical wisdom, transforming the mind through 205 verses of rational thinking, self-discipline, ethical communication, and karmic acceptance—core life skills for modern personality development. It emphasizes "mind as enemy" to "mind as guru," these teachings deliver discipline (focus), humility (learning), peace (stress mastery).

Works cited:

<https://medium.com/dialogue-with-the-mind/shri-manache-shlok-shloka-verse-186-a-dialogue-with-our-mind-d853d5fe0fae> 17/2/2025

<https://www.yuvanawellness.com/post/manache-shlok-for-a-strong-personality> 17/2/2025

<https://www.scribd.com/document/442075519/Samarth-Ramdas-Swamis-Manache-Shlok-A-Ps-pdf> 18/2/2025

<https://www.dlshq.org/saints/samartha-ramdas/> 22/3/2025

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/390478286_Indian_Knowledge_System_IKS_and_National_Education_Policy_NEP-2020 22/2/2025

<https://archive.org/details/1640SarthManacheShlokMarathiWeb/page/%E0%A5%A9%E0%A5%A8/mode/2up> 26/2/2025