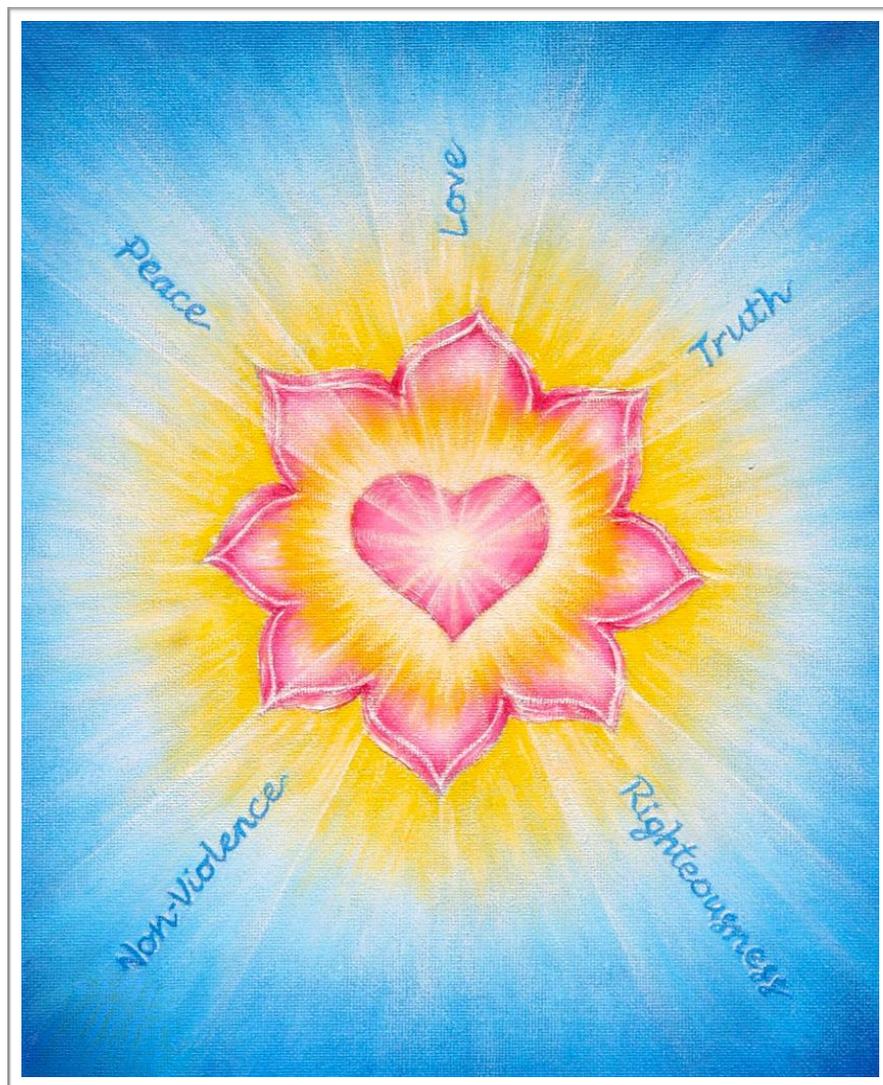


# God is:

## Nurturing the Spiritual Heart

A Spiritual Programme  
Based on the Teachings of Sri Sathya Sai Baba

### STAGE 6. THE SPIRITUAL HEART NONVIOLENCE



**God is: Nurturing The Spiritual Heart Programme**  
**Sathya Sai Organisation International Organisation, Australia & PNG Publications**  
The material in this presentation is from the text only book, Catalogue Number SSOAUSPNG/NL1402

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### **Note on Source Material**

This study guide ‘God is: Nurturing the Spiritual Heart Programme’ is a study guide largely from on-line discourses and quotes, from such sources as Sathya Sai Speaks, Vahinis and Summer Showers in Brindavan. This content is easily read from original sources by visiting the international website <http://www.sathyasai.org> and by selecting Discourses-Writings.

The compiler has attempted to remain faithful to the presentation of the quotes as they occur in the on-line editions from which they come, except for minor changes made to facilitate readability and coherence. This compilation is a small selection drawn from the vast number of discourses available on-line.

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Australian devotees of Sathya Sai  
Baba donated original photos.



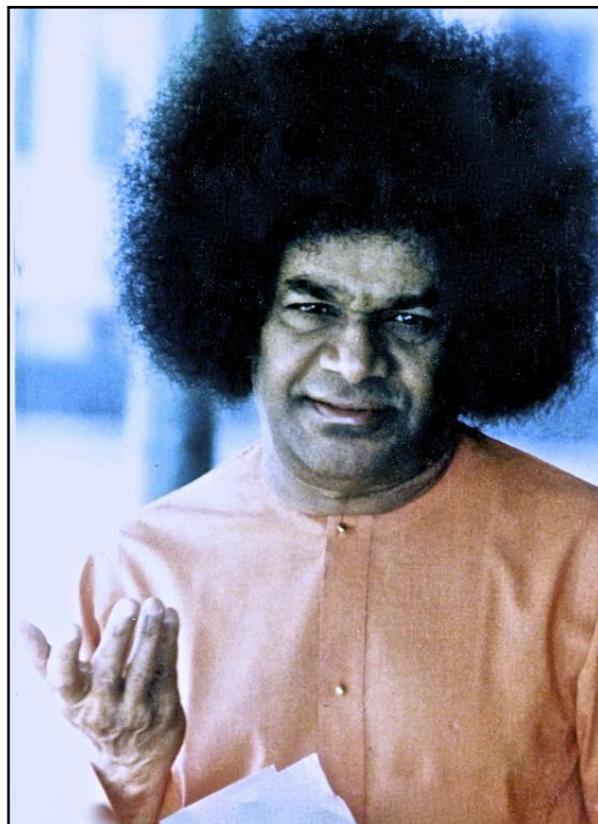
# SATHYA SAI BABA

Sri Sathya Sai Baba is revered as a world spiritual teacher. He is also known as Sai Baba, Swami, Bhagavan, or simply as *Baba* to millions of people in the world. His followers come from all faiths and races and meet regularly for devotional singing, to study His teachings, and to engage in service activities in order to practice His message of Love and Peace to unite all mankind. He is transforming the world by re-establishing the eternal values of Truth, Right Conduct, Peace, Love and Nonviolence in everyday living.

Sathya Sai Baba was born on November 23, 1926, in Puttaparthi, a remote village in the state of Andhra Pradesh in Southern India. At the age of fourteen, He announced that His name was Sathya Sai Baba and proclaimed His mission: *to bring about the spiritual regeneration of humanity by demonstrating and teaching the highest principles of Truth, Right Conduct, Peace, Love and Nonviolence*. With that announcement, He left His childhood home and began His mission.

In 1950, 'Prasanthi Nilayam' (this means Abode of Peace) was built in Puttaparthi, his birthplace. This spiritual abode can accommodate and feed many thousands of devotees who come to see and hear Sathya Sai Baba. Under His care and guidance, Puttaparthi has evolved to have high quality schools, an accredited university, a spiritual museum, a well-equipped modern hospital, and an airport.

Sathya Sai Baba left his mortal coil in April 2011 at the age of 85.<sup>1</sup>



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<sup>1</sup> Source: An Introduction to the Sathya Sai Organisation of Australia and Papua New Guinea

# PREFACE

On the spiritual path, Sathya Sai Baba teaches that we have two hearts: the physical and the spiritual hearts and, that each heart affects the health and wellbeing of the other. The physical heart beats within our body, while the spiritual heart beats within our soul.

We are aware of the importance of a good physical heart to the functioning of the body. We must eat and drink properly to maintain its health, but what of the spiritual heart? What food and drink must it have? It is known that stress adversely affects the physical heart; therefore it is necessary to find ways of replacing stress with inner peace to ensure our physical well-being. The spiritual heart is the repository of love, inner joy and peace. Therefore we need to be loving, joyful and peaceful within ourselves, no matter what is happening in our lives and no matter what kind of work we do - at home and/or in the world. When we have these qualities, we give the spiritual heart space to grow and to glow and our radiant heart affects and nourishes every part of our lives for the better - physical, mental and spiritual.

It is important to nurture and nourish the spiritual heart, to protect it from negative reaction, neglect and abuse. This requires inner strength and resolve to do right action. First, we need to believe in its existence, for it cannot be seen with the physical eyes. Then we need to develop the will power to tend to it, as much as one takes care of anything or anyone else in life. We need to treat our own spiritual heart with love, respect and reverence. Sai Baba says, the indwelling Lord lives within each of our hearts. It is therefore proper to ask our selves, "How am I treating God within?"

To have confidence in the Self, the indwelling Lord is the first step towards tending the spiritual heart, from which all else follows. Such an understanding will eventually give us freedom from suffering the effects of the inevitable ups and downs of life.

Sai Baba recommends the following integrated treatments for the spiritual heart, to make it healthy and strong:

1. We undertake spiritual practice such as meditation, devotional singing, chanting the Gayatri mantra, repeating the name of God etcetera, to purify the mind, to create a space through which Divinity within us can manifest.

2. We learn through study circles and workshops to develop self-awareness and to reflect upon the power and wisdom of the Omnipresent Divinity.

3. By serving others we learn that we are really serving our own spiritual heart, by giving it the fertilizer of 'Love in action'.

By coming together with a deep sense of unity and willingness to work and grow spiritually, our true and divine hearts will beat as one. Sai Baba's emblem, the *Sarva Dharma* Symbol signifies the five human values of Love, Truth, Righteousness, Peace and Nonviolence. As we work on the arteries of our spiritual heart, tending our inner spiritual health with the care and diligence of skilled surgeons, we will draw on study of the heart within each of these values to guide us like beacons on our journey. Through our diligent efforts, we will learn to *feel* our spiritual heart and how to act upon its promptings.

This book was developed as the Australian National Ladies Wing Programme 2011/2012. It is a universal programme that combines readings of Sathya Sai Baba with spiritual and devotional suggested activities, and thus all may enjoy it. The material herein is drawn from Sathya Sai Baba's discourses in Sathya Sai Speaks and other sources as noted. Many of the discourses in the modules overlap because the heart is bigger than just one category! Simply enjoy the journey of this programme from many different perspectives. Suggested activities and questions are intended as a guide only.

Christan Mackenzie, Compiler & Australian National Ladies Programme Coordinator, 2011/2012

# **THE RESOURCE MATERIAL**

The resource material is drawn from a small selection of discourses by Sathya Sai Baba from the international website. See <http://www.sathyasai.org>

The stages of the five human values form the arteries of this programme: Love, Truth, Righteousness, Peace and Nonviolence. Suggestions for Group Activities are made at the beginning of each module within each stage.

## **Stage 1. The Spiritual Heart Flower**

Module 1. Petals of the Spiritual Heart; Module 2. The Heart Garden of God.

## **Stage 2. The Spiritual Heart Love**

Module 1. God is Love in the Heart; Module 2. Continuous, Intense Love; Module 3. The Sweetness of Love; Module 4. Purifying and Offering the Spiritual Heart; Module 5. Connecting to God's Heart.

## **Stage 3: The Spiritual Heart Truth**

Module 1. Truth is the Spiritual Heart; Module 2. The Atmic Heart is 'I'; Module 3. Truth and Surrendering the Heart.

## **Stage 4: The Spiritual Heart Righteousness**

Module 1. The Heart Path of Dharma; Module 2. Purify the Heart Through Dharma; Module 3. Dharma as Duty.

## **Stage 5: God is: The Spiritual Heart Peace**

Module 1. Peace in the World; Module 2. Inner Peace; Module 3. Peace in Silence and Stillness

## **Stage 6: The Spiritual Heart Nonviolence**

Module 1. Practising Nonviolence; Module 2. Anger and the Importance of Self Control; Module 3. Transcending the Three Gunas; Module 4. Practising Forgiveness; Module 5. Repentance and Atonement.

## OVERVIEW OF THE SPIRITUAL HEART: NONVIOLENCE

What? Where? How?	Sai Answers on Non-Violence
What is the meaning of <i>Ahimsa</i> (Nonviolence)?	It is not merely refraining from causing harm or injury to others. It implies also refraining from man causing harm to himself. One who harms himself cannot avoid harming others. Whoever desires to observe <i>Ahimsa</i> must see that he does not do violence to himself.
How is Nonviolence to be understood?	Now, what is meant by Nonviolence? People consider only hurting and harming others as violence. No, no! Harming yourself is also violence. Talking unnecessarily, eating immoderately, and working too much - these are violence. Meaning, one should lead a life of moderation and balance. Anything done beyond limits is violence.
Does Nonviolence just mean avoiding injury?	It does not mean merely not injuring a living being. You should not cause hurt even by a word, a look or a gesture. Tolerance, fortitude, and equanimity - these help you to be steady in <i>ahimsa</i> . They will remove all chance of your causing pain to others. This is called <i>sahana</i> (forbearance) or <i>kshama</i> (forgiving).
What did Buddha teach about Nonviolence?	" <i>Ahimsa Paramodharmah</i> " (Non-hurting is the Supreme Dharma). No one should cause hurt to others by speech, action or in any other way. According to him, true Dharma (Righteousness) consists in refraining from causing harm to anyone in thought, word or deed.
How do I understand unity in all this diversity?	It has proclaimed that God is One, and that He is known and can be known through various names and forms. It has been declared that God is installed in the heart of every being. Look at the emblem of the Sathya Sai Organisation! It tells you that the Hindu, the Muslim, the Parsi, the Buddhist and the Christian all adore the same God for the same consummation. ... A heart saturated with love of God can never entertain thoughts of violence.

What? Where? How?	Sai Answers on Non-Violence
<p>What is the effect of human values not being practiced properly?</p>	<p>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 dacoit activities. 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 problems 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.</p>
<p>What advice on Nonviolence to members of the Sai Organisation?</p>	<p>Truth is My nature, My Mission, My Message. Organizations bearing My Name have to be strictly adhering to Truth. Ahimsa (non-injury) is another phase of Sathya. When once you are aware of the kinship, the Oneness in God, the fundamental <i>atmic</i> unity. No one will knowingly cause pain or distress to another. Let your Organizations promote Love, scatter Love, be fragrant with Love, and preach the Gospel of Love, through example.</p>
<p>What is a thought to inspire me to be good <i>all</i> the time!</p>	<p>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 humanness by the practice of the values, which are the unique qualities of man.</p>
<p>If my partner errs, should I be silent to avoid creating more conflict?</p>	<p>The conduct of Sita is in consonance with the scriptural injunction: The wife should advise her husband well when he indulges in evil; She should be like a Minister who advises the King properly. In fact women should follow the example of Mandodhari, who always struggled to mend the ways of her husband, Ravana.</p>

What? Where? How?	Sai Answers on Non-Violence
How do I know what is bad?	By consulting your conscience. Whenever you act against the dictates of your conscience, bad results follow. The conscience is the form of the Divine within everyone. Whatever you do, the conscience tells you whether it is right or wrong... That which hurts you is ahimsa (violence).
What if I kill little insects - what is the <i>karma</i> (consequence) of that?	Even in drinking water, you should observe restraints. Likewise, one's entire life should be governed by the principle of Nonviolence. Many germs die when one takes a bath or walks or does any other action. Even in the process of breathing many germs die. Violence is present in all these activities. Therefore, to avoid the consequences of such involuntary violence to living creatures. One is advised to dedicate all actions to the Divine.
Can I dedicate bad things I do on purpose to the Divine?	One is advised to dedicate all actions to the Divine. But there is no meaning in dedicating to the Divine conscious acts of violence. The conscience will not approve of such conduct. In Vedic parlance, the conscience is called Chit. It is also called Awareness. Awareness is total understanding. This total understanding is within the capacity of every human being. Everyone must strive to express this awareness. Thus, Ahimsa is the primary duty of man.
How do my feelings affect what I see?	Today unrest and violence have gripped the world, as <i>Sathya</i> and <i>dharma</i> have declined in the hearts of people. All that you find outside is nothing but the reflection, reaction and resound of your inner feelings. Human life is highly sacred, most precious and Divine. Do not fritter away this life by indulging in unsacred activities.

What? Where? How?	Sai Answers on Non-Violence
<p>How do I practice Nonviolence?</p>	<p>God is omnipresent; He is immanent in every being in equal measure. So, man must visualize Him equally in himself and in others. That is to say, he sees only God in all.</p> <p>So, how can he injure others or fear that he will come to harm through others? This is the basis of the Indian ideal of Ahimsa. We have such world-transforming truths embedded in the ancient texts, but having them there or even inside the heads does not help; they have to be put into practice, steadily and with faith.</p>
<p>How do the human values influence Nonviolence?</p>	<p>If only there is Truth, it is enough; Righteousness will follow. Where Truth and Righteousness go together like the positive and negative, there will be peace; Where there is peace there will be love. There will be no scope at all for violence when a human being is surcharged with the current of love. Today, violence is rampant everywhere. People suffer from sorrows and difficulties. Hence, you must strive to cultivate the innate human values.</p>
<p>Do love and violence mix at all? We always hear about ‘crimes of passion’!</p>	<p>If you are suffused with love, selfishness cannot approach you. Hence, develop love. Love is divine. When you are able to develop love, Nonviolence will come to you of its own accord. Where there is love, there can be no trace of violence.</p>
<p>What is violence against Nature?</p>	<p>As regards <i>Ahimsa</i>, in the context of industrial management, it has a wider social meaning than merely avoiding causing harm to others. The avoidance of pollution of the atmosphere or of natural resources like rivers is one of the ways in which an enterprise practises Ahimsa.</p>

What? Where? How?	Sai Answers on Non-Violence
<p>What are the 'gunas' and what is their relationship to violence/Nonviolence?</p>	<p><i>Thamas</i> is depicted in black. It symbolises darkness and ignorance. The <i>Rajo Guna</i>, which rouses anger and hatred in a person, excites his blood and turns his eyes red, is represented by the red colour. The <i>Sathwa Guna</i>, which is characterised by purity and dedication, is represented by the white colour. Everyone in the world is the creature of one or the other of these three <i>gunas</i>. One's actions are based on these <i>gunas</i>.</p>
<p>How do I control the gunas in me so my thoughts, words and deeds are peaceful?</p>	<p>Only through service to the Divine, cultivation of <i>Bhakti</i> (devotion) and <i>Virakthi</i> (detachment) can man transcend the three <i>gunas</i>. For this purpose, man has to acquire three qualities: <i>anasakthi</i> (desirelessness), <i>virakthi</i> (detachment) and <i>upeksha</i> (equanimity). <i>Anasakthi</i> is the absence of all desires except the desire of God.</p>
<p>Why is forgiveness important?</p>	<p>Forgiveness is truth, it is <i>dharma</i>, It is the essence of the Veda, It is Nonviolence and it <i>Yajna</i> (holy sacrifice), It is the source of joy and everything else.</p>
<p>How does forgiveness counter violence?</p>	<p>When you are confronted with problems and difficulties you should not get upset, and become victims of depression, which is a sign of weakness. In such a situation, you should bring tolerance and an attitude of forgiveness into play and should not get agitated giving rise to anger, hatred and revengeful attitude. ... This quality of <i>Kshama</i> (forgiveness) is the greatest power for a human being. If one loses this quality, he becomes demonic.</p>
<p>How can I secure God's forgiveness?</p>	<p>The inner meaning of seeking the Lord's feet is that thereby the Lord will forgive the sins of the penitent. But mere holding of the feet is not enough. One must be genuinely repentant and declare that he will not commit similar offences again. Only then he will secure atonement.</p>

## MODULE 1. PRACTISING NONVIOLENCE



## SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTIVITIES

### **Study Circle/Workshop**

What is the meaning of nonviolence?

What is moderation and balance in life?

How do moderation and balance contribute to nonviolence?

What is the conscience?

What things satisfy the conscience?

What things upset the conscience?

How does one listen better to the promptings of the conscience?

What is the relationship between truth, righteousness, love, peace and nonviolence?

What is the special role of women with respect to nonviolence?

How can women make a difference in the practice of nonviolence in the home and in the world?

Do Light Meditation with a candle and send rays of healing love and light to oneself, to friends, and to all peoples of the world, especially to those about whom one may feel conflicted or troubled. Imagine God upholding the world sending love and light, and to the Universe, and become One with this purpose.

Combine the study circle/workshop with a session on the Gayatri Mantra. Chant peace mantras on wings of love and light with the intent to help the world.

Combine study of this module with doing selfless-service.

### **Personal Introspection**

Does my life feel in balance right now? If not, what can I do to bring about balance? What am I holding onto as important? Is there anything I can let go of, to bring about a better sense of balance?

How does my conscience feel right now? Looking within, what does is conscience saying? Feel and listen into the heart to ask this question.

## NONVIOLENCE IS MODERATION IN ALL THINGS



Without human values you cannot deliver the fruits of your learning to society. Therefore, human values must be cultivated. Of these, *Sathya* is the most important. Truth is God.

Some people went to Buddha and argued about the existence of God. Buddha told them, “All these disputes are a waste of time. *Sathya*, *dharma*, and *ahimsa* are the same as God. Therefore worship God as the form of Truth first. Speak the truth. Practice dharma. Observe Nonviolence.”

What is meant by nonviolence? People consider only hurting and harming others as violence. No, no! Harming yourself is also violence. Talking unnecessarily, eating immoderately, and working too much - these are violence. Meaning, one should lead a life of moderation and balance. Anything done beyond limits is violence. Even writing excessively is violence. Why is it bad to transgress limits? Because it wastes energy. By talking more than necessary, we deplete our intellect.

Therefore, nonviolence can be defined as the regulation of human life along moderate and beneficial paths. The Vedas say, *Sathyam Vada, Dharmam Chara* - speak the truth and follow dharma. Truth is God. Right action is God. That is why the Vedas advise us to adhere to *Sathya* and *dharma*. This is true virtue.

## THE WIDER MEANING OF NONVIOLENCE



What does *ahimsa* signify? It is not merely refraining from causing harm or injury to others. It implies also refraining from causing harm to himself.

One who harms him self cannot avoid harming others.

Whoever desires to observe *ahimsa* must see that he does not do violence to himself.

How is this to be ensured?

By constantly examining whether his conduct is right or wrong.

For instance, in the matter of speech, he must examine whether his words are causing pain to others or not. He must see that his looks are not tainted by evil intentions or thoughts. He should not listen to evil talk. All these cause harm to the individual.

Hence, everyone should see that he gives no room for bad looks, bad hearing, bad speech, bad thoughts and bad actions.

How do you determine what is bad?

By consulting your conscience.

Whenever you act against the dictates of your conscience, bad results follow.

The conscience is the form of the Divine within everyone.

Whatever you do, the conscience tells you whether it is right or wrong.

However, to ascertain the directive of the conscience you have to wait for some time.

You should not be in a hurry.

When you want to say something, you must consider for a moment whether it would be proper or not and then speak.

When you want to listen to something, you must examine whether it is good or bad to listen and then decide what is proper. You should be careful not only about how you react to the five elements, but also with regard to your food. Excessive eating does violence to the body. Moderation in food is conducive to happiness.

*Ahimsa* (nonviolence) is thus what confers happiness on you.

That which hurts you is *ahimsa* (violence).

Nor is that all.

Even in drinking water, you should observe restraints.

Likewise, one's entire life should be governed by the principle of Nonviolence.

Many germs die when one takes a bath or walks or does any other action.

Even in the process of breathing many germs die.

Violence is present in all these activities.

Therefore, to avoid the consequences of such involuntary violence to living creatures,

One is advised to dedicate all actions to the Divine.

But there is no meaning in dedicating to the Divine conscious acts of violence.

The conscience will not approve of such conduct.

In *Vedic* parlance, the conscience is called *chit*.

It is also called Awareness.

Awareness is total understanding.

This total understanding is within the capacity of every human being.

Everyone must strive to express this awareness.

Thus, *Ahimsa* is the primary duty of man.

**Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 18/01/1996, Secondary School Hostel**

## THE HEART REMINDS US OF NONVIOLENCE



Today, every one wears a wristwatch; 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 (*Shiva*) - *Namah-Shiva-ya* has five syllables.

WATCH is as much a *pancha-akshari* (five-lettered) *mantra* as *Namah Sivaya*, and,

If meditated upon, is as meaningful and momentous.

### W Stands for Word

The first letter reminds us of the *sadhana* (spiritual practice) 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 Stands For Action

The second letter reminds us of the additional *sadhana* of watching, *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 must spread warmth and light and also 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.

### T Stands for Thoughts

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 *shanthi*, (peace) another precious human value.

*Shanthi* is the jewel won by the sages.

It resides in hearts free from pride and, greed.

### C Stands for Character

The fourth letter of the *Panchakshari* teaches one to watch the *Character*. Character is three-quarters of life. The *sadhaka* (spiritual aspirant) has to direct himself to the acquisition of the three values already mentioned, through steady vigilance.

Man is the very embodiment of Love.

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.

### H Stands for Heart

The fifth letter 'H' instructs us to watch the *Heart* and the feelings it originates.

It reminds us of the human value of *ahimsa* (Nonviolence).

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 dacoit activities. 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.

The watch will teach *Sathyam* (Truth).

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 *Panchakshari Mantra* derivable from the five letters WATCH are not enough to fulfil 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.

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 humanity by the practice of the values, which are the unique qualities of man.

**Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 07/03/1986, Prasanthi Nilayam**

## LOVE CANNOT ENTERTAIN VIOLENCE



The five Pandava brothers are five qualities in human character, all observing the norms set by the eldest, which is the noblest and the most righteous. Rama is the example of the uncompromising adherent of the principle of righteousness, whatever is the temptation to bypass it. Rama was charged with a love that transcended all considerations of advantage, of caste or creed, and extended to animals and birds, human beings. Love is the key to open the doors locked by egoism and greed. If you allow your behaviour towards others to be contaminated by contempt, scorn, cynicism or hatred, then, you are spoiling the fair name of India, its culture and tradition will not tolerate it.

It has proclaimed that God is One, and that He is known and can be known through various names and forms. It has declared that God is installed in the heart of every being. Look at the emblem of the Sathya Sai Organisation! It tells you that the Hindu, the Muslim, the Parsi, the Buddhist and the Christian all adore the same God for the same consummation.

The mind of man has to be a garden of many coloured flowers, a *Nandhanavana*. Krishna will certainly delight in dancing there, and playing on the enchanting Flute in the bowers of that garden.

A heart saturated with love of God can never entertain thoughts of violence. It is sheer hypocrisy, to kneel before God and, then, force men to kneel before you.

God is love. God is peace. God is strength.

How can a person be in contact with God, and yet, be proud and acrimonious, agitated and angry, weak and vacillating? His claim to be in contact with God is only a laughable foible; it cannot be true.

A tree is judged by its fruit.

Leaders of peoples have to develop this universal feeling of love,  
Not limited to political boundaries which change from decade to decade,  
Or religious labels which are affixed and erased to suit temporary needs.

The prayer that rose from millions in this country from all its *temples, yajnasalas, theerthas*, holy sea fronts, shrines and altars for centuries, has been:

*Sarve janah sukhino bhavanthu* "Let all the peoples of the world be happy and prosperous."

*Samastha lokah sukhino bhavanthu* "May all the worlds have peace and prosperity."

So, pray for all humanity, for the welfare and happiness, the peace and progress of Russia, China, Africa, Pakistan, all countries of the world, and all beings everywhere.

**Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, April 1973, Hyderabad**

*Love as thought is Truth. Love as action is right living. Love as feeling is peace. Love as understanding is nonviolence.*

## LOVE OUSTS VIOLENCE



Today it is necessary to recognise the importance of human values. People these days are unable to lead the life of a human being since they lost the human values. The qualities of a human being are of two types, internal and external.

### External Qualities:

*Kama* (desire)

*Krodha* (anger)

*Lobha* (greed)

*Moha* (attachment)

*Mada* (pride)

*Matsarya* (jealousy)

### Internal Qualities

*Sathya* (Truth)

*Dharma* (Righteousness)

*Shanthi* (Peace)

*Prema* (Love)

*Ahimsa* (Nonviolence)

These days we are letting go of the inner, eternal and truthful qualities and we are hankering after the worldly and transient matters. This is not correct. We must develop the inner vision of *Atma Bhava* (Atma consciousness/awareness).

If only there is Truth, it is enough. Righteousness will follow. Where Truth and Righteousness go together like the positive and negative, there will be Peace. Where there is Peace there will be love.

There will be no scope at all for violence when a human being is surcharged with the current of Love.

Today, violence is rampant everywhere.

People suffer from sorrows and difficulties.

Hence, you must strive to cultivate the innate human values.

Truth is eternal.

It cannot be destroyed.

It is said, *Sathyam bruyath, priyam bruyath, na bruyath sathyamapriyam*

(Speak Truth; speak pleasantly; avoid speaking Truth that is unpalatable).

Truth is not born out of an individual, nor does it go away with one individual.

Truth is universal. It applies equally to all human beings.

You must cultivate such universal Truth.

What you think, you must speak; what you speak, you must put into action.

That is real humanness.

Anger, desire, greed, attachment, pride and jealousy are unbecoming of a human being.

Today, man is limiting his love to his own wife and children. He is not developing broad-mindedness. As the saying goes *Ekam Sath viprah bahuda vadanthi* (Truth is only one; the wise men say it in different ways). *Sarvam khalvidam Brahma* is the declaration, which means everything in the universe is *Brahman* only. Truth is the very embodiment of *Brahman*. And that *Brahman* is omnipresent.

Hence, first and foremost, establish Truth in your heart. Thereafter, the other four human values of - Righteousness, Peace, Love and Nonviolence will reign in the world. Then there will be no violence at all in the world, and all human beings irrespective of religion and nationality will live in peace and harmony. A human being has enormous strength in him. That has to be channelled properly. Anger, desire, greed, delusion, pride and jealousy have to be controlled.

**Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 11/02/2007, Prasanthi Nilayam**

## LOVE FINDS EXPRESSION IN NONVIOLENCE



Human values cannot be promoted merely by repeating the words *Sathya, Dharma, Shanthi, Prema and Ahimsa*.

The *Vedas* declare "*Sathyam vada dharmam chara*" (Speak the truth; adhere to right conduct).

In practising *dharmam* there should be no *marina* (secret desires).

Actions performed with such secret motives result in bondage.

Truth and right conduct should be adhered to with pure intentions.

Both of these virtues are rooted in the eternal.

A righteous life leads to peace.

Love is to be experienced in the depths of peace.

Love should find expression in nonviolence.

Where love prevails, there is no room for doing harm or violence to others.

All these basic values have to be demonstrated in action and not limited to preaching.

**Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 26/09/1987, Valedictory discourse to the National Symposium on Value Orientation**

## NONVIOLENCE IS NATURAL WHEN YOU DEVELOP LOVE



The *panchabhutas* (five elements) are natural phenomena in creation. Similarly, the five human values of *Sathya*, *Dharma*, *Shanthi*, *Prema* and *Ahimsa* are natural to human beings. Man has to manifest them from his heart and lead a natural life. They should flow from the ‘source’ and not extracted by ‘force’.

Truth is pure and unsullied. Love is selfless. We have therefore to lead a selfless life; that is real love. Love does not expect anything in return. Selfishness troubles a human being in subtle ways; it is very cunning. Hence, one should not allow selfishness to come near him. If you are suffused with love, selfishness cannot approach you. Hence, develop love. Love is divine.

When you are able to develop love, nonviolence will come to you of its own accord. Where there is love, there can be no trace of violence. When man is able to manifest the five human values of *Sathya*, *Dharma*, *Shanthi*, *Prema* and *Ahimsa* his intellect becomes steady and he can walk the straight path.

Everyone has to face the consequences of their *karma* (actions). Who has made the bats to hang from the branches of a tree with their heads downward? Has anyone tied them upside down out of hatred? No! It is their fate. Likewise, nobody can escape from the consequences of *karma*.

**Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 29/09/2006, Prasanthi Nilayam**

## THE WILL TO PEACE AND NONVIOLENCE



Your education may help you to achieve a sharp intellect.

But, real happiness comes from 'educare' only.

That should in fact, be the basis for our life.

Bookish knowledge is not very important.

Even those who have acquired high academic qualifications have to give importance to 'educare'.

Devoid of 'educare' all the education and academic achievements are useless.

You may acquire high degrees, but your education is not complete without 'educare'.

Of what use is all your education?

Is it only for making a living?

There is no shortage in this world of highly educated people.

What is it that they are doing?

Did they contribute anything for promoting Nonviolence in the world?

Do they protect dharma in any manner?

Are they fostering *Shanathi* (peace)?

At least, are they able to live in peace?

No, not at all!

They are unable to live in love and harmony even with their own children.

Hence, first and foremost, cultivate love and share it with all.

Only then will you experience its taste.

Students have all the capabilities at their disposal.

They have a strong and healthy body and mind.

But, if they do not put them to proper use, they will become weak physically and mentally.

Such weak people cannot achieve anything in their life.

A strong will is a prerequisite in the spiritual field.

Having resolved what ought to be resolved, hold on to your resolution until you have succeeded.

Having desired what ought to be desired, hold on to it until your desire is fulfilled.

Having asked what ought to be asked, do not let go until you attain it.

Having thought what ought to be thought, hold on to it until you have succeeded.

With heart mellowed, the Lord must yield to your wishes.

With no regard for yourself, you should ask Him with all your heart.

Persevere, be tenacious, and never give up.

It is the quality of a devotee never to retreat, abandoning his resolve.

(Telugu poem)

If you wish to secure good marks in the test given by God, you must have a firm resolve. This is necessary even in your worldly education. You should not, however, be satisfied with getting high academic degrees. You should not be elated by good marks; avoid bad remarks. Only then will your education have value.

**Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 29/09/2006, Prasanthi Nilayam**

## DEPOSITS OF PEACE AND NONVIOLENCE



Your *sadhana* involves not reading or writing so much as actual experiencing.

Ravana was a postmaster in the four *Vedas* and the six *Shasthras* (spiritual sciences).

His ten heads were full of them.

But, of what avail?

He had no *Shanathi* (peace), nor could he give *Shanathi* to his kith and kin.

What is the profit if you simply repeat, "Delicious food, delicious food!" a thousand times?

You have to eat, digest and assimilate.

You have no deposits on your account in the Bank of *Bhagavan's* Grace and yet you dare issue cheques, expecting His Grace when in distress!

Have the deposits or, at least have some property on hand (like service to others, *prema* (love) towards all, *Ahimsa* (Nonviolence), etc. so that you can mortgage it and get help. If you have neither, why blame the Bank?

Through your daily avocations and activities you can realise the Lord, believe Me! The *gopis* are the best examples of this, the best proofs.

Remember ever the name of the Lord with agony of unfulfilled search and remember ever the beautiful Form with the agony of being forced to be away - and, you too can see Krishna in your midst.

That yearning must be there: then, the result is certain.

Prahladha was immersed in that *bhava* (thought) when he was thrown downhill and trampled by the elephant and tortured by the minions of his father. He paid no heed, for he heeded only his Lord. He needed only his Lord.

*The gopis* too, when they listened to the *murali* (flute), lost all attachment to the world, and to the senses, and to the manifold objective phenomenal things. They yearned for the most sublime spiritual merging with the Infinite that was always calling on the finite, to realise its finiteness.

By the purification of impulses one gets into the higher stage;

When the Mystery of the Divine is grasped - that is the *Salokya* (realm of spirituality) stage.

Then, by contemplation of the Divine, the *Sameepya* and the *Sarupya* -

(Proximity to the Divinity and likeness of the Form of Divinity) stages are won.

Many great mystic poets attained this height.

Jayadheva sang in that strain, but, if you sing that song in the same way, Krishna will not appear.

He wants sincerity not imitation.

The name uttered with sincere faith was the flower offering of the *gopis*.

**Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, March 1963, Prasanthi Nilayam**

## THE INDIAN IDEAL OF NONVIOLENCE



India has always laid down disciplines to cultivate Universal Love.

The *yajnas* and *yagas* (*Vedic* sacrifices and worship), which are recommended in the *Vedas*, are for *Loka kalyana* and *Loka sangraha* - the welfare and security of all mankind. That is why India is as the engine, which drags along all wagons that are coupled with it. The wagons are the different nations.

*Loka samastha sukhino bhavanthu* (May all the denizens of all the worlds be happy) is the prayer that rises from the children of this land for thousands of years.

God is omnipresent.

He is immanent in every being in equal measure.

So, man must visualise Him equally in himself and in others.

That is to say, he sees only God in all.

So, how can he injure others or fear that he will come to harm through others?

This is the basis of the Indian ideal of *Ahimsa* (nonviolence).

We have such world-transforming truths embedded in the ancient texts, but having them there or even inside the heads does not help; they have to be put into practice, steadily and with faith.

You are happy when you have a watch.

You are happy when you have a transistor radio hanging round your neck.

The happiness is due to the fact that you have them and, that others have no right over them.

The sense of possession, the sense of 'mine' (*mamakara*), that is at the root of the joy.

The thing by itself is powerless to evoke joy

If the thing itself was the source, every one having it must derive the same quantity of joy.

When a neighbour gets a transistor, you do not feel happy at all.

You might even feel it a nuisance.

Analysis will show that all joy is in us, for us and from us.

And it is but a reflection of the boundless joy that the *Atman* is.

So, instead of scattering attention in many directions,

Man must endeavour to attain that *Atmic* joy while here, with body.

The moon that shines in the waters of a million lakes is one.

The shine in the lakes is due to the reflections.

Look up and know the Truth.

Do not be deluded that inside each lake, there is a distinct moon.

The bodies are many but God is reflected in every one of them.

Establish contact with that Almighty Power, that Omniscience, that Omnipresent Entity and all things will be added unto you - power, wisdom, vision and liberation.

The way in which schools are now attempting to shape the tender minds of children is full of defects. They are not given the sustaining food of *Vedantic* truths. They are not trained to grow straight and strong, breathing the bracing air of virtue. They are not allowed to grow in an atmosphere of love and endurance. The hatreds and factions, in which elders indulge, are their examples and inspirations now. Their energies and enthusiasms are not canalised by means of restrictions and directions, precept and example, into beneficial activities.

Efforts in these directions, however elementary, will, if persisted in, yield good results. Begin this day this task of rousing in these students the keenness to become masters of their senses and the tasters of lasting joy.

**Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 14/11/1965/ Hindupur Municipal High School**

## BUDDHA TEACHES NONVIOLENCE



Because Buddha did not interest himself in the study of the *Vedas* or in the performance of *yagas and yajnas*, he was dubbed an atheist. This is utterly wrong. Buddha was a pure hearted person. When he was born, a renowned astrologer had predicted that he would be either a great king or a great renunciant. On knowing this, Buddha's father, Shuddhodhana arranged to keep out of his son's sight all unseemly worldly sights of happenings in this world.

From his childhood, Buddha could not bear the sight of anyone in pain. He was saddened at the sight of the old ill-treating the young, of men in authority harassing the people and the big fish swallowing the small ones. He realised that it was wrong for anyone to cause harm to others.

Hence he declared: "*Ahimsa Paramodharmah*" (Non-hurting is the Supreme *dharma*).

No one should cause hurt to others by speech, action or in any other way.

According to him true *dharma* (righteousness) consists in refraining from causing harm -

To anyone - in thought, word or deed.

Truth is God.

Buddha taught that people should adhere to truth and uphold it.

Among Buddha's teachings the foremost were *Sathya* (Truth) and *Dharma* (Righteousness).

These two are the teachings of the *Vedas*: "*Sathyam vadha dharmam chara*"

(Speak the Truth, practise righteousness').

The name given to Buddha at the time of birth was Sarvartha Siddha. Shuddhodhana had his son married to Yashodhara, daughter of his brother-in-law, Shuddhabuddha. He feared that his son might become a recluse and turn away from the world if he was left to himself. But Buddha did not feel that a married life was the proper thing for him. Buddha felt that man was bound by various attachments in worldly life. Friends and relations were the cause of this bondage. Various human relationships were the cause of sorrow in the world.

So he declared: "*Sarvam dukkham dukkham*" (All is sorrow).

He also declared: "*Sarvam Kshanikam, Kshanikam*" (everything is momentary).

"*Sarvam nashyam nashyam*" (everything is perishable).

Buddha felt that nothing was truly lasting.

Parents were subjecting their children to various kinds of bonds and making their lives miserable.

As soon as the children come of age the parents are keen to get them married.

They do not know what kind of happiness he can get from married life.

What happiness have they derived from their own married life physically, mentally or otherwise?

No person, however intelligent, thinks about this matter.

Even eminent scholars do not care to examine whether it is worthwhile pursuing sensuous pleasures instead of seeking what is beyond the senses. Buddha felt intensely unhappy that his parents and others combined to commit him to the bondage of married life.

One day, at midnight, Buddha left the palace, giving up his wife and young son, Rahul. He abandoned everything out of the conviction: "There is no mother or father, no kinsman or friend, no home or wealth. Awaken yourself!"

He resolved to find out something, which transcends all worldly relationships and pleasures.

Buddha asked himself: "What is this life? Birth is misery. Old age is misery. Wife is a cause of sorrow. There is misery at the end of life. Therefore, be alert and awake."

Happiness is not to be found in any of the things of the world. Everything is fleeting. Man is wasting his life in the pursuit of petty ephemeral pleasures. *Nirvana* is the only truth. It is the sense of oneness with all life. To turn the mind towards that which is permanent is *Nirvana*.

Before he attained *Nirvana*, Buddha summoned his stepbrother Anandabuddha. Buddha's mother Maya Dhevi passed away on the seventh day after his birth. Shuddhodhana's second wife Gauthami brought up the child. Because Gauthami brought him up, he was named Gauthama Buddha.

At the age of 28, he gave up everything and turned a renunciant. What is the significance of this step? Buddha declared: "*Sangham sharanam gachchami*", (Hands in the society, head in the forest.) He renounced everything to think about promoting the welfare of society.

He declared: "Dharmam sharanam gachchami." What is this dharma?

"Ahimsa paramodharmah." Dharma means causing no harm to anyone.

The Buddhist prayer must be properly understood. When the Buddhists say: "*Buddham sharanam gachchami, Dharmam sharanam gachchami, Sangham sharanam gachchami,*" the real meaning of the prayer is: You must divert your *Buddhi* (mind) towards *Dharma* (right conduct). And the right conduct should aim at serving society. When this is done, society gets purified.

It is not enough to read the lives of *avatars* and messiahs. Their teachings should be put into practice as much as possible. People must gradually outgrow their material attachments and develop divine love.

Shuddhodhana tried to protect his son from all external worldly influences by keeping him in the palace and not even sending him to school. What happened ultimately? Buddha decided to renounce everything in quest of the truth about human existence and he declared *Ahimsa* (non harming) as the supreme good.

What is it that people need today? These are three things: A heart pure and white like the moon, speech soft and sweet like butter, a face that is loving and kind. These are lacking in the world today. The entire atmosphere is frightening. There is harshness in speech. There is no softness in the heart. The heart should be pure and soft like butter. Today, on the contrary, people are hardhearted. Fill your hearts with compassion. Let your speech be sweet and truthful. You will then be truly human.

Buddha taught one great truth to the world. He declared that it is not what the *Vedas* and Scriptures say that constitutes truth. People should bear in mind that non-harming is the supreme virtue. Do not cause harm to anyone by thought, word or deed. The tongue is given to you to utter truth. Jayadeva exhorted his tongue to manifest its sweetness by chanting the names of the Lord Govindha, Dhamodhara, Madhava.

Whatever be the number of religions, their goal is one and the same. (Sai Baba sang a song pointing out how faiths may be many but God is one only). To carry on daily life in the world, people pursue many vocations. But does all this constitute real living? Can a life led without remembering God be called life at all? What kind of life is it where there is no purity, no morality and no spirituality? Morality and

integrity alone can lead to *Nirvana* (liberation). Today these two are absent. People must strive to base their lives on *Neethi* and *Nijayathi* (morality and integrity). They should become, as Jesus said, messengers of God.

*Embodiments of Love!* We are celebrating today Buddha Purnima or Buddha Jayanthi. What does *Purnima* (full moon) signify? It signifies wholeness. When the mind is filled with love, it achieves fullness. As long as the mind is filled with darkness (evil thoughts) there is no meaning in celebrating Buddha Purnima. Get rid of this darkness.

Without the light of love in the heart, what use is there in having illuminations outside?

Light the lamp of the Divine in your minds.

Banish hatred and envy from your hearts.

Man is the victim of two evil planets: attachment and hatred.

To escape from their grip, the only way is to cultivate love.

**Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 15/05/1997, Brindavan**

## THE FEMININE ROLE IN PROMOTING NONVIOLENCE



Sita was not happy in Panchavati, because almost every day Rama and Lakshmana indulged in violence. One day, while Lakshmana was away collecting fruits and tubers, Sita approached Rama and said, “Lord, those who have desires commit three evils: uttering falsehood, eyeing other ladies, and committing violence. Certainly, You are free from the first two evils. I firmly believe that You can never utter falsehood, for You are the Embodiment of Truth.”

Rama felt happy at these words of Sita and said, “It is certainly a qualification for a man to be described as a virtuous person by his own wife. Sita, I am happy that you have recognised My affinity to Truth.” Sita continued, “You are also free from the weakness of looking at the wives of others. This is another great virtue in You. But I cannot appreciate Your committing violence on the beasts and demons. These demons are in no way harming You.”

Rama smiled at these words and said, “Sita, though you have spoken the truth, My conduct is in consonance with the promise I gave to the sages and aspirants here. I am bound by My duty and will to stand by My promise. Though these demons are not harming Me personally, they are subjecting My devotees to untold suffering. They ruthlessly disturb the sacrifices performed by the sages. The sages perform sacrifices for the welfare and well-being of mankind. I cannot but resort to violence for the well-being of mankind.” Sita realised her mistake and sought the forgiveness of Rama by touching His feet. The conduct of Sita is in consonance with the scriptural injunction: The wife should advise her husband

well when he indulges in evil; she should be like a Minister who advises the King properly. In fact, women should follow the example of Mandodhari, who always struggled to mend the ways of her husband, Ravana.

**Summer Showers in Brindavan 1996 pp. 58 - 59**

## **MODULE 2. ANGER AND THE IMPORTANCE OF SELF CONTROL**



## SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTIVITIES

### Study Circle/Workshop

Discuss how it can be that God is never angry?

How can 'hurt never, help ever' be applied in family situations and in life?

How does one bring that value into focus in the family and at work?

How does sacrifice contribute to Nonviolence?

What does one need to sacrifice for Nonviolence?

How is sacrifice a strength?

What causes anger?

Discuss Sai Baba's advice to women on controlling anger.

How does anger feel to the heart - spiritual and physical?

Why is it important to control anger?

What measures can be taken to control anger?

How can anger be transmuted into love?

Ask these questions for anger also for jealousy.

Meditation: Do Light Meditation with a candle and send rays of healing love and light to oneself, to friends, and to all peoples of the world, especially to those about whom one may feel conflicted or troubled. Imagine God upholding the world sending love and light, and to the Universe, and become One with this purpose.

Combine the study circle/workshop with a session on the Gayatri Mantra.

Combine study of this module with doing selfless-service.

### Personal Introspection

Consider one's own level of self-control in different situations.

Perhaps consider developing a personal strategy to have a conscious response (rather than a knee jerk reaction) in difficult or confronting situations.

## GOD IS NEVER ANGRY



There is nothing greater than Love.

It is forgiveness and peace.

You should understand the distinguishing characteristics of love.

Love is never sad.

It is always cheerful and knows not what sorrow means.

It does not hurt others nor is hurt by others.

Love is the blessed thing that would get through any situation without causing hurt or getting hurt.

That is love in the form of communal coexistence.

You say God is angry with me.

In fact, God has no anger.

He is trying to know what anger is like -

It is always love and love alone for Him.

God has no hatred.

He even searched in darkness but could not find it.

For, there is no place in which love is not present.

Love has no hatred or jealousy.

Love alone is match for Love.

Love is Love.

It is infinite, immortal and has nothing similar to it.

It has no death.

It is wrong to think that love is not visible.

This is a big mistake!

Unable to see love within ourselves we search all over.

How can one find it outside?

For instance, if you want to see this kerchief, look for it where it is lying.

You cannot find it where it is not there.

On the other hand, love is everywhere.

There is no place or thing without love.

So how can one say he cannot see love?

How can such love get angry?

When something is against our wish, we consider it as anger.

There is nothing in this world that is against God's wish.

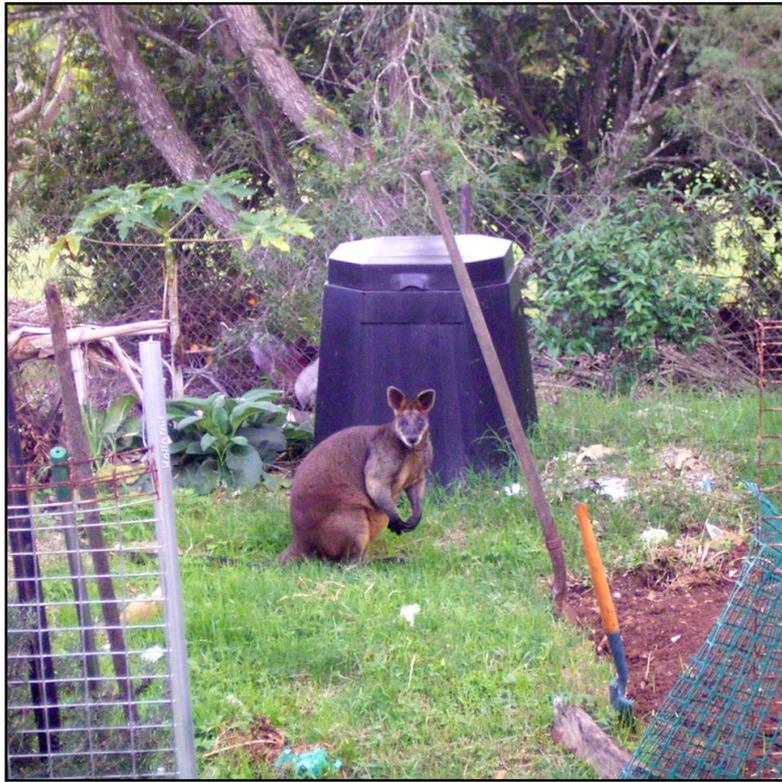
So how can He get angry?

It is just not possible.

He is by your side always.

**Summer Showers in Brindavan 2002, pp. 200**

## HELP EVER, HURT NEVER



Everyone should act up to the motto "Help ever, hurt never."

Every educated person should engage himself or herself in selfless-service to society, with humility and a pure heart. All academic distinctions or even observance of spiritual practices are of little use if there is no love in the heart.

The heart is called *Hridhaya*. It is made up of the two words, *Hri and daya* (compassion).

The Lord is described as *Hridhayavasi* (the Indweller in the Heart).

Love and Compassion are inherent in every person.

Each has to share his love with others.

Failure to share one's love is gross ingratitude to society, to which one owes everything.

One should give one's love freely to others and receive love in return.

This is the deep significance of human life.

**Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, Brindavan, 05/06/1994**

## PENANCE (THAPAS) AND NONVIOLENCE



As regards *thapas* (penance), there are three kinds - the *thapas* of the mind, of the body and of the speech.

Let me remind you that the *thapas* of the body involves a few disciplines.

The first is the process by which you revere and adore elders, teachers and God, serve them and honour their commands, put those commands into practice and earn their Grace.

The second discipline is cleanliness, inner and outer. Outer cleanliness includes the cleanliness of the area surrounding you.

The third is *Brahmacharya* (holy celibate). This does not mean merely desisting from marriage. It means becoming soaked in Holy Love for the Divine, through transparent sincerity, unselfish Will, pure consciousness and holy thoughts.

You all know that Hanuman is described as the Eternal *Brahmachari*. He was married to Sri Vathsala, yet he earned that description. How?

*Brahmachari* means 'He who moves in *Brahman*.'

Hanuman had no other thought than Rama (who is *Brahman*) and so was ever moving in *Brahman*, living in *Brahman*.

Your thoughts, feelings, desires and activities must all move in *Brahman* (the Universal Absolute). That is to say, whatever is spoken, whatever is seen, must be cognised as *Brahman*.

That is the real *Brahmacharya* stage,

Not merely observing certain disciplines to control the senses and the mind.

The next discipline is *ahimsa* (absence of violence). It does not mean merely not injuring a living being. You should not cause hurt even by a word, a look or a gesture. Tolerance, fortitude, and equanimity - these help you to be steady in *ahimsa*. They will remove all chance of your causing pain to others. This is called *sahana* (forbearance) or *kshama* (forgiving). Assess the worth of whatever others do to you or say about you, and cultivate fortitude and the understanding to appreciate their behaviour and pardon their faults. This capacity is as invaluable as truth, righteousness, wisdom, nonviolence, renunciation, delight and compassion. It is all that one need possess for spiritual advancement.

Living becomes a glorious experience only when it is sweetened by tolerance and love.

Willingness to compromise with others' ways of living and cooperation in common tasks -

These make living happy and fruitful.

Certain modes of behaviour have been laid down and proved beneficial by centuries of practice.

These have to be observed with modifications to suit the conditions of today.

We are developing in each department of life,

But it is a pity that we are not developing the unique qualities of human beings.

Develop the *Atmic* awareness, the consciousness of the Divine and the acquisition of Divine attributes. Expand love and understanding.

When students consciously and steadily strive to develop these distinct human qualities, education will give them valuable experience, and they shall be equipped to transform society. Then, the nation and all mankind will derive the benefits.

**Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 17/02/1980, Sri Sathya Sai College for Women, Ananthapur**

## THE IMPERATIVE TO CONTROL ANGER



The mind's speed is unparalleled. It is only because of lack of control of mind one gets into bad temper, which causes loss of discrimination and spells ultimate ruin. It is imperative that one should control the temper and avoid getting angry. Let me cite an incident from the life of Babu Rajendra Prasad, the first President of India.

Rajendra Prasad had a very good servant by name Rathna who was exceptionally faithful and served him for a long time to the satisfaction of his master. One day he was asked to clean his room. Rajendra Prasad had kept a pen given to him by Mahatma Gandhi, in one of his books. When the servant was cleaning the table the book fell down and the nib broke. He became nervous but told his master the truth begging his pardon for his mistake. On hearing this, Rajendra Prasad shouted at him in rage and asked him to get out and not to show his face again as the pen was a highly valuable gift from Mahatma, which he had broken. Then the servant pleaded that he could not survive without him and sought his forgiveness. But Rajendra Prasad was in no mood to listen to him and went out bidding his servant to get out of his sight.

During the night, Rajendra Prasad could not sleep as the memory of his having driven away his servant was haunting him. When he got up next morning he missed his usual morning coffee, which Rathna would usually serve him. He reflected over his behaviour and felt sorry for having sent out such a faithful servant for no big fault. He realised that it was his own mistake to have kept the pen carelessly in a book instead of keeping it in a safe place. He sent word to Rathna and took him back seeking his pardon

saying: "Rathna you are a good man. It was my mistake to have kept the pen in the book. So you must excuse me for my rash action." He asked him to continue to serve him till the end of his life.

Anger comes from temper inside and one who yields to this bout of temper is bound to suffer. You should control anger and avoid talking or acting while in an angry mood.

**Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, May 1994, Brindavan**

## ADVICE ABOUT CONTROLLING ANGER



The following is an edit summary from a discourse given in the year of Krodhana (Year of Anger, 1980) to ladies of Anantapur College.

When you find anger rising within you, you may (do any of the following):

Withdraw from the place to pass time for cooling your emotions.

You may drink a glass of cold water and sit quietly in a place.

Take a brisk walk for a mile to get over your anger.

Stand before a mirror and look at your face.

By any one of these methods, your anger will gradually come down. Do not, however, stay near the person who has provoked your anger, because there is no limit to what anger may lead you to.

Owing to anger and agitation the blood gets heated up. It takes three months for the blood to cool down. Within that period, the nerves become weaker and even the blood cells get destroyed. Weakness is aggravated and the memory power is reduced. Old age sets in prematurely.

All the aberrations that we witness today among men arise from anger. Our entire daily life is filled with anger...

Again, when you feel angry, start reciting some song in praise of the Lord... Let the entire family join in prayers at least for a few minutes in the morning and in the evening. (Here Swami sang a song sweet and soothing as a lullaby):

When the mother and children gather round to sing the Bhajan of Sainatha, loving Sai will stand beside them. Where, then, is the room for anger? And why despair when Sayeesa is there? Why despair when Partheesa is beside you?

The name of the year does not matter. What is really important is how we think and feel. If we do not fill our hearts with pure and sacred thoughts, any year will be unfavourable to us.

We should not be preoccupied with the external world.

Where, in reality, there is only One, it appears to us as two.

One is *Jiva* and the other is *Deva*.

The *Jiva* is absorbed in the external.

This is a sign of forgetfulness (*marupu*).

To turn the vision inwards is real awareness (*eruka*).

It reveals God.

The process by which the divinity in man is realised is known as *Tarakam*.

This divinity can be realised only by *thyaga* (sacrifice or renunciation of the worldly things). *Thyaga* is a supreme virtue in man. One who has no spirit of sacrifice will be sick in body and mind. What *thyaga* does to a man is to eradicate his selfishness. As long as self-interest is dominant, one cannot understand Reality.

The self-centred man cannot attain the Supreme. Hence, we must cultivate a broad mind and seek to serve the fellow-beings who need help. Even in the pursuit of *mukthi* (Liberation), there is no place for concern with one's self to be concerned about 'na mukthi' (my salvation) will lead only to *na mukthi* (no salvation). Those who are concerned only about their liberation will not achieve it.

To understand the true meaning of *Paratatwa* (Self-realisation), the first step is to grasp the significance of the love-principle. For everything, *prema* (love) is the basis, the cause and the consummation. If there is no love, there is no life. When love is developed, anger automatically ceases.

When you feel angry, sit down with a hearty laugh. Limit your speech. Too much talk leads to heated exchange of words. The lesson to be learnt ... is the cultivation of peace by keeping anger under check and developing a large-hearted love for all.

The values a man must cherish as his life- breath are: *Sathya* (Truth), *dharma* (righteousness), *shanthi* (tranquillity), *prema* (love) and *ahimsa* (Nonviolence). Of these five vital principles *prema* is the foremost. It is *prema* that flows as the under-current for the other four values. How does it flow this way?

When *prema* is associated with feelings it produces *shanthi*.

When *prema* animates actions, it results in *dharma*.

When *prema* is combined with understanding it becomes *ahimsa* (non-injury).

Therefore whenever you feel angry, think of *prema* (love), develop thoughts of love in your heart. Then you will have peace.

This is the way you have to develop human values. Anger and hatred are demonic qualities. *Asooya* (envy) is worse than either of them. You must get rid of these demonic qualities and attune your life to dignity.

When anyone regales you, do not retort in the same way. You then descend to the level of the other man. You should not do yourself what you consider bad in others. You must strive to develop sacred qualities not for this year alone, but for your entire life. Awareness is life. You must know everything that needs to be known, but make only the good things part of your life.

... Women in particular must be on their guard, because women are capable of making great sacrifices either for good or bad purposes. So, make all your sacrifices for good causes. Develop good traits and eschew all that is evil. When the housewife has such good qualities, the house becomes a miniature paradise. When the mistress of the house indulges in bad deeds, there will be no peace in the home. Controlling their tendencies to quarrel over petty differences, women should try to behave like sisters, developing harmony and mutual regard.

Men also should learn to behave like brothers, believing in the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man. Young people should realise that the nature of their actions will determine the nature of their future.

Bad actions will only result in bad consequences.

Moreover, in this year, it is advisable for everyone to practise the virtue of *mounam* (reticence).

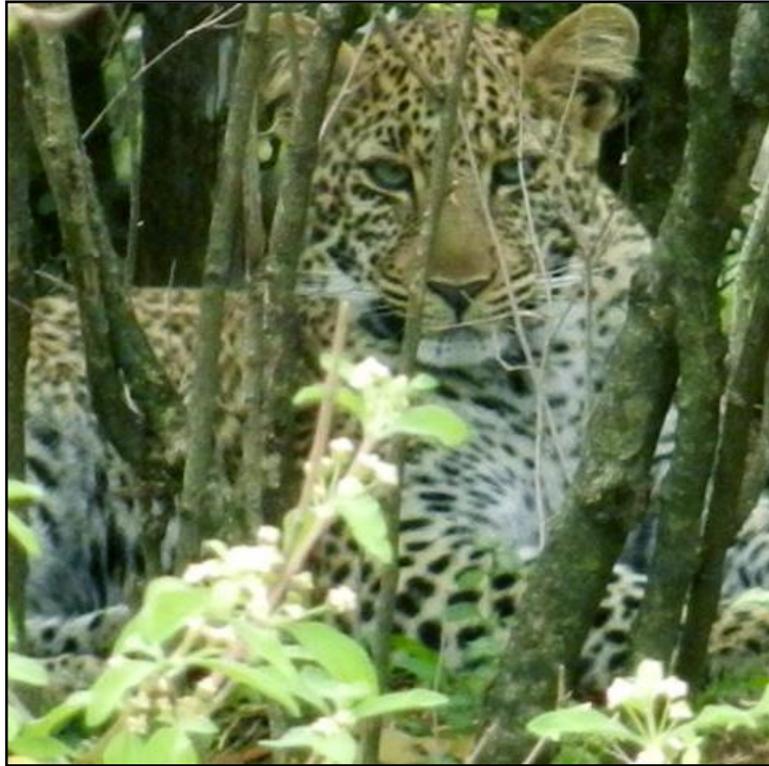
Control of speech is highly desirable.

Whatever thoughts may arise in the mind, let them not find expression in words.

It has been said that restraint in speech gives abundant peace.

Excessive talk harms the mind. Even in restrained speech, there should be sweetness and joy.

## THE WOMAN WHO WAS FULL OF JEALOUSY



One may raise the question as to how to get over these dangerous pests of jealousy and hatred. This is possible when you make all the sense organs function in unison. If you look at the functions of the sense organs you may notice that even if one organ stops functioning in harmony; life will be limping.

When mind conceives a thought, all the organs are coordinating to get the thought executed. If senses do not follow thoughts, life will become miserable. When there is forbearance, all organs coordinate harmoniously and work in unison.

Once the organs of the body like eyes, ears, limbs became jealous of the tongue, saying that they make all efforts for securing food, but the tongue enjoys this. They struck work and never sent any food! The tongue tastes the food and passes only palatable items of food inside, which is converted by the internal organs into energy giving blood. The tongue does not retain it. But for this vital part played by the tongue, the other organs would not be able to function at all. When the other organs became jealous of the tongue and stopped sending food, with a view to harm it, they spelt their own ruin by such action, as they could not function when there was no food. Consequently, no supply of energy was sent for these organs to function. Similarly, jealousy on the part of a person ultimately results in his own ruin.

Students must have studied the drama of Shakespeare in which a character was always filled with jealousy and finally met with his own end as his own jealousy made him very weak and forlorn.

Bhasmasura got a boon from Lord Shiva after doing severe penance that the person on whose head he keeps his hand will be reduced to ashes. Finally, he himself brought his end by keeping his hand on his own head.

Buddha was once confronted by a woman, who was full of jealousy against him, because of his great popularity. When Buddha came towards her she expressed her wish to attack him with a knife and kill him, but Buddha smilingly told her "I love you too demoness." This surprised the demoness who thought nobody would love her and she changed her heart instantly; she became a dove and surrendered at His Feet. Anger begets anger and jealousy begets jealousy. The only way to conquer this is the sense of unity and love.

Happiness and sorrow have to be experienced in the worldly life, as they are inevitable like the sunset and sunrise. You think New Year will give better experiences. It is not correct. It is the mind that is responsible for pleasure and pain. If your mind is good you will find anything good. You are embodiments of the Divine, which is nothing but bliss. While being so, is it not a folly on your part to say that you are suffering from pain and grieve over this? Today we find jealousy and hatred dancing like devils all over the world. People with jealousy and hatred are pursuing the wicked path and bringing ruin on themselves.

The best example for this is the Kauravas in Mahabhararatha. The brothers Dhuryodhana and Dhusshasana were the embodiments of the twin evils of hatred and jealousy. Krishna told Dharmaja, the eldest of the Pandavas, that the Kauravas who were surcharged with these evil qualities could never improve and imbibe human qualities. Karna who was embodiment of ego joined their company, with Shakuni as the evil adviser adding fuel to the fire. Though Dhuryodhana and Dhusshasana were born in a notable royal family, they discarded the human qualities due to jealousy and hatred and brought ruin to the family and the clan.

Krishna added that jealousy is a dangerous canker that eats at the root of the tree of life,

While hatred is a pest that attacks the trunk of the tree.

Thus the tree of life is completely destroyed by both these pests.

The Kauravas were victims of these two pests and sought their own ruin.

**Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 01/01/1994, Prasanthi Nilayam**

## MODULE 3. TRANSCENDING THE THREE GUNAS



## SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTIVITIES

### Study Circle/Workshop

Explore the qualities of the three *gunas*.

How do the *gunas* cause bondage to this material plane of existence?

How does *rajo guna* contribute to violence?

What is *rajo guna*'s proper purpose?

Ask these questions of *thamo guna*.

How is *sathwa guna* different?

Why must all *gunas* be transcended?

How are the *gunas* to be transcended?

Do Light Meditation with a candle and send rays of healing love and light to oneself, to friends, and to all peoples of the world, especially to those about whom one may feel conflicted or troubled. Imagine God upholding the world sending love and light, and to the Universe, and become One with this purpose.

Combine the study circle/workshop with a session on the Gayatri Mantra.

Combine study of this module with doing service activity through your Sai Centre.

### Personal Introspection

Which *guna* feels strongest in me right now?

How is that *guna* being felt in my heart and mind?

Maybe draw a picture of the *guna* you are feeling and dialogue with it. What is its message?

What do I need to do to bring about a sense of balance and well-being in myself?

## SAI ORGANISATION AND THE GUNAS



This (Sai Organisation) is not like any other Organisation. This Organisation does not seek to establish a new cult or sect, a new type of *Japa* or *Dhyana*, a novel ritual, an initiation that separates people as 'disciples' within the fold and 'non-initiates' without the fold. It seeks to restrain *Thamoguna* (dullness, ignorance, and all the evils that arise from these), and *Rajoguna* (passion, violent emotion, desire, egoism and consequent evils). It instils in men the Truth that all are kin *in Atma*, that the stranger is but oneself in another dress, and that service to another is the best service that one can do to oneself.

All are limbs of one body, nourished by the self-same life-blood, motivated by the same Will,  
The Will of God bound by the same Divine Law.  
That is the *Vishwarupa* (Cosmic Vision),  
That one must see and experience God in all, God everywhere.  
That endows you with everlasting *ananda*.

Feelings of hatred, malice, envy and pride that create separation between men, who are kin, arise from identification with the body.

You feel and believe you are the body.  
You know your body is separate from the other bodies.  
Your hunger, your thirst, your comfort, your family, your community, your state -

Thus, you create bounds for your love, and crib yourselves,  
Treating all outside the bounds as enemies, strangers, competitors.  
But the source is one, the sustenance is one: God the Father, mankind the children.  
Pay attention to the Fatherhood, more than to the brotherhood.  
That will underline the brotherhood more and more in your heart  
And remove the poison of distinction that has come through ignorance.

Man is a pilgrim, who has already come a long way from birth to birth.  
The journey so far accomplished decides how far he has to go still.  
If he has lost his way and meandered into the deserts or jungles,  
He will have a great distance to travel yet.  
If he has been led right, his pilgrimage will end soon successfully.  
Cultivate sympathy with fellow-pilgrims.  
Seek to know the right path.  
Learn to guide and be earnest to reach the goal, safe and fast.

These organisations are meant to broaden your love, to canalise your activities along lines of constructive service performed, as worship, not to confer on some people more power over others, or greater control over the activities of other members, or for the display of the devotion of some people.

All must be conscious of this, all the time.  
Help the weak and the unwary at all times.  
You have two eyes in your consciousness, namely, *Sathya* and *Ahimsa*.  
They are the guides, which will take you to the goal, the two lights -  
The sun and the moon of the inner firmament.

If you want to know the way in which you have to observe *Sathya* or Truth in speech, look into the Gita. It tells you that the best speech is "*anudvegakaram vakyam*" (speech that does not create pain or anger or grief to others).

The *Shasthras* also say, "*Sathyam bruyath, priyam bruyath na bruyath Sathyam apriyam*" - "*Speak the truth, but speak pleasantly. Simply because a statement will be welcome to the hearer, don't speak it out to win his approval; if speaking truth will cause grief or pain, keep silent.*" That is the vow of truth in ordinary daily life.

Do not have hypocrisy or crookedness in your speech.  
Both unpleasant truth and pleasant untruth have to be avoided.  
*Sathya* is God Himself, as the *Shruthi* says, *Sathya sarvam prathishtitham.*"

All this is established on the firm foundation of Truth," say the *Vedas*.

So see that no trace of falsehood contaminates your transactions in these organisations.

Truth is My nature, My Mission, My Message.

Organisations bearing My Name have to be strictly adhering to Truth.

*Ahimsa* (non-injury) is another phase of *Sathya*.

When once you are aware of the kinship, the Oneness in God, the fundamental *atmic* (Divine) unity,

No one will knowingly cause pain or distress to another.

Let your Organisations promote Love, scatter Love, be fragrant with Love, and preach the Gospel of Love, through example.

**Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 20/12/1967, Emakulam (Kerala)**

*The one advantage that Man has over lower animals is the vast treasure of human experience he has inherited from his ancestors through language. This is the treasure called Shasthra; if he ignores Shasthra, he is doomed to drag out an animal existence.*

## THE BONDAGE OF THE GUNAS



As the universe is constituted by the three *gunas* (*Thamas*, *Rajas* and *Sathwa*) and is permeated by them, the first stage in spiritual *sadhana* is to put to an end the *Thamasic* quality.

The *Thamo Guna* is characterised by *Murkhatvam* (foolish obstinacy).

A *Thamasic* person lacks intelligence,

And is inclined to indulge in meaningless questioning and argumentation.

It is essential to get rid of such tendencies.

Every issue should be deeply studied and the conclusions should be digested.

Only then will the experience be rewarding.

Endless verbal debates over every trivial matter should be avoided.

Such controversies result only in provoking bitterness instead of harmony.

They do not serve to reveal the truth.

The *Thamasic* person is incapable of perceiving the truth and cannot realise the Divine.

He will be caught in an endless cycle of birth and death.

The person with *Rajo Guna* is one who is excessively happy when he gets what he desires.

His ego gets inflated thereby.

When his desires are not fulfilled, he develops hatred.

Thus, for the *Rajasic* person, whether the desires are fulfilled or not, the effects are not good.

He is consumed by anger and bitterness.

*Rajasic* qualities make a person hot-blooded and hot-tempered.

The third quality is *Sathwa*.

Even this results in a form of bondage.

It becomes a redeeming quality when all pure and meritorious actions are done as an offering to the Divine.

The three *gunas* are represented by different colours.

*Thamas* is depicted in black. It symbolises darkness and ignorance.

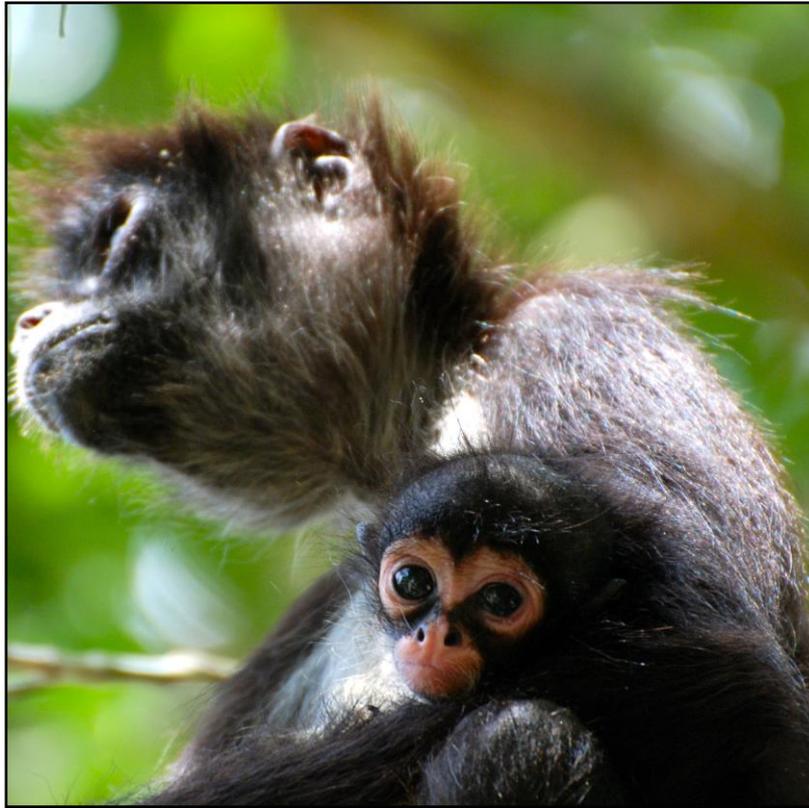
The *Rajo Guna*, which rouses anger and hatred in a person, excites his blood and turns his eyes red, is represented by the red colour.

The *Sathwa Guna*, which is characterised by purity and dedication, is represented by the white colour.

Everyone in the world is the creature of one or the other of these three *gunas*. One's actions are based on these *gunas*.

**Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 08/01/1988, Prasanthi Nilayam**

## TRANSCENDING THE GUNAS



Seeking liberation, if man worships a myriad deities, he will not get Freedom from affliction. If he destroys the ego in him, He has no need to seek Liberation. He will be Liberation itself!

Embodiments of Divine Love! The phenomenal universe that we perceive is the product of the three *gunas* (*Sathwa, Rajas and Thamas*). It is sustained by the three *gunas*. *The gunas* again account for its dissolution. The *gunas* are the life-breath of the Cosmos. They are responsible for all that happens in the Cosmos.

Only through service to the Divine, cultivation of *Bhakthi* (devotion) and *Virakthi* (detachment) can man transcend the three *gunas*: For this purpose, man has to acquire three qualities: *Anasakthi* (desirelessness), *Virakthi* (detachment) and *Upeksha* (equanimity).

*Anasakthi* is the absence of all desires except the desire of God. All other acquisitions are to be given up and one should rely only on the Divine. *Virakthi* does not mean renunciation of hearth and home and betaking oneself to the forest for penance. Giving up of bad thoughts and feelings is true *thyaga* (renunciation) and leads to *Yoga*. You may enjoy worldly things, but there should be no sense of possessiveness (of "mine" and "thine").

*Upeksha* is the absence of concern for the future. It is the freedom from expectations and hopes. God looks after the welfare of true devotees.

The desire for worldly objects can plunge one in endless misery.

Desires are like a green pumpkin, which will sink in water.

A desireless man will be like a dried pumpkin, which will float in water.

He will be able to overcome the pulls of the mundane world and even aspire for a Godly life.

He may not be keen about *Mukthi* (liberation) but he will not give up devotion.

God looks after *Yogakshemam* (progress and welfare) of such a person here and in the hereafter,

Because being desireless and detached, his thoughts are centred on God.

To secure the grace of the Divine in this way is itself a kind of *yoga*.

To preserve that grace is to ensure one's *kshemam* (well-being).

This is known in *Vedantic* parlance as "*Apraptasya Prapanam*" (securing what is not easily attainable).

It can be got only through grace-filled human effort.

Some spiritual exercises are necessary for this purpose.

**Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 08/01/1988, Prasanthi Nilayam**

## THE VARNAS AND THE GUNAS



The *Varnas* (men of different types in the Hindu religion) in the *Gita* has been made on the basis of their *Gunakarma vibhagashah* (Respective qualities and actions).

At birth every person is ignorant.

When he dies he should die as a *Jnani* (a man who has perceived the truth).

Likewise everyone is a *Sudra* at birth.

This means he is an *Ajnani* (ignorant person).

But when he dies he should die as a *Brahmana* (*ajnani*, who has realised Brahman).

It is on this basis that the four *Varnas* (*Brahmana*, *Kshatriya*, *Vaisya* and *Sudra*) came into existence.

Those with predominantly *Thamasic* qualities comprise one group.

The ignorant and dull-witted were described as *Sudras*.

Those who are prone to excitement and anger (*Rajasic* qualities) form another category.

The excitable, the courageous and the high spirited were described as the *Kshatriyas*.

Those who are inclined to renounce everything,

And who are pure in thought, word and deed (*Sathwic* qualities), form a third group.

Those who were devoted to God and led a pure and sanctified life were described as *Brahmanas*.

These categories were associated with qualities and actions.

Straying from this basic truth, the social system took a wrong turn.

The result is, that today, society is riven by innumerable divisions and conflicts.

Among the *Varnas* (groups), one cannot be called high and another low.

For instance, Sage Vyasa classified the single corpus of the *Vedas* into four different collections.

Among the four, can one be ranked higher than another?

All have equal status and authority, are equally sacred and preach the same path of righteousness.

Likewise, when men are classified according to their qualities and vocations.

One category cannot be regarded as superior to another.

No one is competent to determine such ranking.

It is through narrow-minded interpretations that such distinctions and divisions have been made to the detriment of social harmony and progress. The right to interpret the *Sastras* is given to the *Brahmanas*. But *Brahmanas* have been defined as those who have made a thorough study of the *Sastras*, who have no self-interest and who live up to *Sastraic* injunctions. Anyone may acquire these qualifications. They are not confined to any caste on the basis of birth. Only qualities and actions are determining factors and not birth.

A *Kshatriya* is one who is prepared to lay down his life for his country. The nation's safety should mean more to him than the protection of his body. This attitude of sacrifice may be displayed by anyone and he should be regarded as a *Kshatriya*.

All those engaged in agriculture have been described as *Sudras*. Everyone needs food. If food is not grown by the so-called *Sudras*, the world will perish.

The entire purpose of classifying people according to their qualifications and functions is to ensure that persons in each category carry on their duties with dedication. It is the failure to maintain the purity and sacredness of the system as envisaged by the *Sastras* that has resulted in indefensible divisions and social chaos.

**Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 08/01/1988, Prasanthi Nilayam**

## VARNAS ARE BASED ON QUALITIES AND ACTIONS



All are children of God.

He is the sole Lord of mankind.

People may seem to differ in their names and forms and in their beliefs and practices,

But the parent is One alone.

Recognition of this basic truth of oneness is *Brahmajnana* (Knowledge of the Absolute).

This knowledge is not gained by studying the scriptures or metaphysical discussions.

What has to be recognised is the truth that every being in the universe is an embodiment of the Supreme. Awareness of the unity that subsumes the diversity is the highest knowledge. Mere bookish lore is of no avail.

Practical living is what matters.

Expounding a philosophy is easy.

Living up to it is difficult.

He alone is a true *Siddhanti* (preceptor) who practices what he professes.

Time is wasted on metaphysical dialectics.

We need today men who practice what they have learnt.

Such persons should explain to the common people the truth,

About righteous living and transform them into good and honest men.

There is a statement in the *Gita* that it is best for a person to adhere to his *Swadharma* and that following *Para Dharma* is fraught with danger.

What is *Swadharma*?

*Swa* refers to the *Atma*. *Swadharma* means *Atma Dharma* (the *Dharma* of the Spirit).

Adherence to the Law of the Spirit is beneficial.

It will protect one from any kind of danger. It will ensure peace.

What is *Para Dharma*?

*Para* means that which is responsible for good and bad actions, namely, the body.

*Para Dharma* means all actions based on the body consciousness.

All such actions have consequences, which have to be gone through in successive lives.

Men are caught up in this perpetual cycle of birth, death and rebirth.

They do not know what is in store for them at any moment or place.

This is the perilous state of man.

*The Gita* reference to *Swadharma* is ordinarily interpreted as meaning one's own *dharma* or duties attaching to the caste or community in which one is born. With regard to Arjuna, for instance, it is considered that he was a *Kshatriya* and should adhere to the *Kshatriya dharma*. This view is not correct. *The Gita* does not speak about the *dharma* of *Kshatriyas*, *Vaisyas* or *Sudras*.

It only affirms that these categories are based on *Guna* and *Karma* (qualities and actions).

Therefore, if a person has the *Thamo Guna* and indulges in actions of a *Thamasic* nature, he must be regarded as a *Sudra*, even if he is a *Brahmana* by birth.

One who devotes his entire time to the contemplation of God and does sacred acts is a *Brahmana*, regardless of the caste in which he may be born. *Brahmana* is the one who seeks God.

Obsessed with distinctions of caste, creed and community and indulging in futile and meaningless controversies, people should not degrade humanity.

All are brothers and sisters.

This is the basic truth that must be propagated in our society today so that spiritual values may grow.

## REMOVING THE GUNAS



Whether our hair is dishevelled or not, is shown by the mirror.

To find out whether our mind is disturbed or not, devotion acts as the mirror.

This mirror also must be clean.

If the mirror is clean, it will be easy to see whether there is impurity in the mind or not.

When we recognise that the mind is disturbed, we have to correct it; for this purpose,

We need the comb of wisdom.

The cloth with which we wipe the dirt from our heart is *Vairagyam* (detachment).

This removes all the dirt.

In the journey of life, wherever we go, we need to have devotion, wisdom and detachment.

We must try to understand the different characteristics of *Rajo guna*.

A person who is full of *Rajo guna* will always be in a hurry.

In everything, he exhibits undue haste.

He has a lot of anger in him and develops unlimited desires.

He cannot keep still even for a moment.

These are the features of *Rajo guna*.

If you go to the zoo and watch the animals - be it a tiger, a fox or any other animal,

You will find that they do not keep still for a moment.

They are continually moving.

The reason is that they have *Rajo guna*.

If *Rajo guna* enters the heart of man, it makes him move all the time.

It doesn't merely make the person restless but makes him deluded as well.

Not merely does he become deluded, but he goes on desiring objects,

Desiring everything in the world, and thereby becoming more and more deluded and restless.

So, restlessness, desire and delusion are the three important features of *Rajo guna*.

The three gunas are represented in the Ramayana by the three brothers in Ravana's family. The embodiment of *Thamo guna* is Kumbhakarna, of *Rajo guna* is Ravana, and of *Sathwa guna* is Vibheeshana. These three gunas are brothers, but if you allow the first two into your heart, they will cause a lot of harm. When you enter the Kingdom of Liberation, you will have to remove *Sathwa guna* also. *Vedanta* (concluding essence of the *Vedas*) teaches that we must transcend these three *gunas*.

If a thorn were to prick your foot, to remove it you do not need a knife.

Another thorn would be enough to help you remove it.

Once you have removed the thorn, you could throw away both the thorns.

In the same way, with the help of *Rajo guna*, you have to remove *thamo guna* and with the help of *sathwa guna*, you must remove *rajo guna*. Before you can enter the mansion of *Brahmananda* (the bliss of oneness with *Brahman*) you have to cast off all these three *gunas*. As long as you have *gunas*, you won't be able to experience bliss. That is why Krishna commanded Arjuna to transcend all three *gunas*.

The most important cause for the three gunas is the mind. It is impossible to rise above our human nature and realise our divine nature until the mind is transformed.

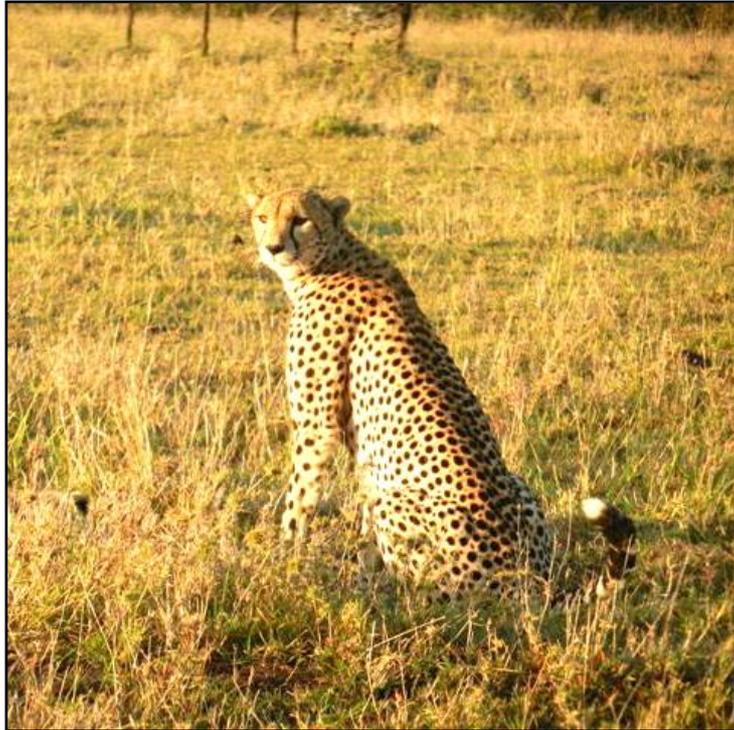
We have to offer our mind to the Lord.

Once we surrender our mind to God completely,

He will take care of us in every way.

**Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 12/09/1984, Prasanthi Nilayam**

## KING JANAKA TRANSCENDS THE GUNAS



King Janaka was able to get liberation when he offered his entire mind and the three types of activity, thought, word and deed, to Ashthavakra. The essential meaning of this episode is that one should become *Amanaska*, to realise unity with the Divine. As long as you have a mind, there is duality.

Cold and heat, day and night, sorrow and joy, loss and profit - all these pairs of opposites come about only when you have a mind. If you want to learn to treat all these things equally, you have to offer your mind to God. That is why in *Vedanta* it has been said that it is the mind that is responsible for liberation or bondage.

As long as you have the mind, *thamo* and *rajo guna* will not leave you alone.

As long as you have these two *gunas*, there will be no stillness of the body.

What is the reason for the restlessness of the mind?

On account of the desires of the sense organs the mind becomes restless.

Here is a small example for this.

When there is some water in a vessel, if the vessel moves, the water also moves.

If the vessel is steady, the water also will be steady.

In steady water, you are able to see your image,

But in moving water, your image will also be moving.

Therefore, if you want to enter into a state of meditation, you must keep your body still.  
The body is like the vessel, and the mind may be compared to the water inside it.  
If body moves, the mind inside will be agitated.  
Therefore, control your mind and make it steady by keeping your body steady.

For meditation, it is very important to keep the back straight.

The Kundalini power travels from the *Muladhara* (at the base of the spinal column) to the *Sahasrana* (thousand-petal energy centre) in the crown of the head.

Therefore, you must be steady. Head, neck and body have to be straight; there should be no bend. This is extremely essential for students and *sadhakas* engaged in meditation. That is why I tell the students often, "Why do you study? To become steady!"

If right from boyhood you can keep your body under control, it will be very useful in achieving many things in later life.

Krishna chose Arjuna as an ideal representative of mankind to set an example for humanity. He said to Arjuna, "I am using you as an instrument to make an example of you. Therefore, you must first become an ideal person."

**Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 12/09/1984, Prasanthi Nilayam**

## RADHA TRANSCENDS THE GUNAS AND MERGES WITH KRISHNA



Nowadays, the desires in us are on the excessive side. Anger increases such desires further. People who harbour desires and anger will only come to grief. What greater truth can I convey to you, good people, who are gathered here?

The place was the banks of river Yamuna. The atmosphere was peaceful and beautiful. One could hear the singing of the *murali* in the cool air. Radha entered the sand dunes with a pot in her hand. Having placed the pot on the ground, she began listening to the enchanting soft music of the *murali* and she stood stiff as a stick shedding tears of sorrow.

After some time, she heard someone calling, “Radha, Radha.” Instantly she opened her eyes and looked all around. It was a place where there were no other human beings. She then sat down and told herself that there may be places where there are no human beings, but there can be no place where Krishna is not present.

She decided that the call was from Krishna. She proclaimed:

What I could play, I have played.

What I could sing, I have sung.

From time immemorial, I undertook to play different parts.

I had participated in different acts and now it is enough.  
I wore clothes that may be described as anger and desire.  
I also wore jewels that may be described as attachments and *moha*.  
I wore anklets that may be described as greed.  
I heard about the blame and blemish that came because of this.  
My mind also supported my actions and provided the background music to my drama.  
What may be described as company of some bad people?  
Sometimes provided the rhythm and the beat.  
Attachment and ego have been keeping time.  
With so many ancillaries, my drama has come to an end.  
For some time I was performing my drama on water and at other times,  
I performed the same on the earth.

These attachments and human foibles have been responsible for my inability to put my whole life at the lotus feet of my Lord!

Like a parrot, which runs to a cotton fruit thinking it to be a mango fruit and gets disappointed,  
I looked at these worldly desires and attractions,  
Mistaking them for something good and wasted my life in disappointment.  
Krishna! It is enough; this drama of mine should now come to an end.  
I am requesting you to merge me in you.  
In earlier times, I used to take the name Dhara.  
Now, I am called Radha.

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In the aspect of womanhood, one must observe and draw attention to a great quality, which may be described as compassion. The next quality that we must note is their ability to sacrifice. The makeup of a woman is such that she will give protection in spite of many faults. She can also be compared to an educational institution where she will teach patiently like a good teacher, even if the recipient is not willing to learn. She may also be described as a happy home where she is arranging everything without thinking of any discomfort for herself. We can also think of a woman as a person of sufficient spiritual strength by which she can make Aja, Hara, Hari or God himself play like a child before her. She can also be described as one full of sacrifice and compassion.

The home of the wife is the school where the husbands can learn everything.  
Radha said that this sacred form of womanhood was taking a very distorted route these days.  
She further said: “Krishna! To be near you is my greatest ambition.”

In this prayerful manner, holding the pot in her hand, she was rolling in ecstasy in the sand dunes. As Radha was like this, Krishna himself was in Brindavan waiting anxiously for Radha's return.

While thinking about and recollecting Radha's actions, he was recapitulating all that he had learnt from Radha. Whatever forms one's ideas and thoughts take, God will respond accordingly.

Since Radha had Krishna in her thoughts at all times, Krishna was also thinking of her. Just as by having continuous knowledge of the *Brahman*, one can hope to become identical with *Brahman*, so also by constantly thinking of Krishna, Radha wanted to merge in Krishna. If you keep on repeating the word Radha continuously, it becomes *Dhara* and similarly if you keep on saying Radha Krishna continuously it becomes Krishna - Radha.

Therefore, Radha may be transformed into Krishna and Krishna may be transformed into Radha. The nature of God is such that the thoughts with which we think of him and the ideas that we ascribe to him will determine the kind of response that he will give.

God is like a clean, clear mirror.

The actions that you perform will be reflected in that mirror.

Radha said "Krishna! Will anyone want to see the image, if the original itself is available to him?"

Will the beauty of an object be fully reflected in its image?

Out of milk which has been broken, can we get curds?"

While Radha was thinking of Krishna in this manner, Krishna's divinity also came out in a bright and effulgent form. When this took a separate form, it left Krishna and began moving forward. In order to get back His brightness, Krishna was physically following the effulgence. Gradually, this effulgence came and merged in Radha.

In the context of this *Jyothi* coming and merging in Radha, she was also described as *Ahladini* - a name that signifies *Ananda*. Since this bliss came out of Krishna and merged in Radha, Krishna had to come to Radha for receiving back his effulgence.

God's bliss can be understood only by the devotees.

God is simply a witness.

His bliss and His happiness are merely for the devotees.

He gives the gift or the fruit of your work, but he does not make you undertake the work.

This experience of happiness is that of the devotee and not of God.

If one wants to experience divine bliss, one has to clean one's own mind and like Radha,

One has to print God's image in his mind.

For man to recognise the glory of divinity and to realise the divinity contained in all living things, he has also got to purify his own mind and clean it.

The love that is contained in man and in God are closely linked with each other in an inextricable manner. When the aspect of love in you is made to join divine love, it will become the sweetest kind of devotion to God.

While talking of devotion and faith, we should know that there are six different kinds described as *Santha Bhakthi*, *Sakhya Bhakthi*, *Dasya Bhakthi*, *Vatsalya Bhakthi*, *Anuraga Bhakthi* and *Madhura Bhakthi*. Of all these, the best is the *Madhura Bhakthi* or *Bhakthi* contained with sweetness.

In all these six steps, *Madhura Bhakthi* can be regarded as the highest and the final step.

It is not possible to find a higher or better form.

One can only experience the sweetness of this *Bhakthi*.

It cannot be described easily.

Just as the ghee is the end product of transformation of milk,

So also *Madhura Bhakthi* is the ultimate form of *Bhakthi*.

This may be explained by the following example.

By using a little curd as additive, you can convert milk into curd or buttermilk.

If this is churned, you can get butter.

This butter can be heated to form ghee.

This ghee cannot be transformed into anything better.

In the same manner, we can change *Santha Bhakthi* into *Dasya Bhakthi* and gradually move on to *Madhura Bhakthi* but this cannot be transformed any further.

An individual who undertakes to reach a village will complete his journey as soon as he reaches the village. In the same manner, a devotee or a *sadhaka* will complete his journey only when he reaches his destination.

This is the form of *Poorna Prema* or the totality of love.

Anything that comes out of this is also a total thing, and all that remains is also a total thing.

That is full and complete.

Out of that, will come something that is also full and complete.

What will remain will still be full and complete.

This fruit of fullness is present in the life of every individual.

On the tree of every life, there is the fruit of *Madhura Bhakthi*.  
If you want to enjoy that fruit, you should remove the cover.  
The cover is in the form of attachment.  
Moreover, there will be several seeds in the fruit.  
These seeds, which are our thoughts and desires, must also be removed.  
Only then, can you get the sweet pulp.  
This sweet pulp has been referred to as *vairagya*.  
*Vairagya* does not mean giving up your wife and children and running away to a forest.  
The removal of the bad qualities in you is the true meaning of *vairagya*.  
If you really want to get rid of the bad qualities in you, you must make an effort.

Radha's dress was her anger and desire.  
The word dress here refers to bodily illusions.  
She said that she had given up these illusions.  
She was wearing anklets of attachment.  
The sound that comes from the anklets is like a blemish.  
This implies that from attachment, we only get blame and blemish.  
She also said that she was wearing a garland made of sensory organs.  
This signifies that she had given up the desires coming from sensory organs.

She said that because of this, she had transformed herself into Radha and made herself like a ready-made juice. That is, the seed and pulp, the cover and such useless things have all separated out of their own accord. The reason for this is God's sacred love. Having obtained the sacred love of God, she is not concerned with the love to other persons. She prayed that her movements should merge in Krishna.

**Summer Showers in Brindavan 1978, pp 163-168**

## MODULE 4. PRACTISING FORGIVENESS



## SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTIVITIES

### Study Circle

What is forgiveness? What is forbearance?

Why are forgiveness and forgiveness essential?

How does forgiveness bear on Nonviolence?

How can we understand forgiveness from the perspective of Truth?

Examine the four kinds of purity (materials, mind, speech, body/action) and their relationship to forgiveness.

Why is forgiveness the greatest power of a human being?

If one gives up forgiveness, what gets lost?

How do we forget and forgive when someone has hurt us?

When must discrimination be applied with forgiveness?

Do Light Meditation with a candle and send rays of healing love and light to oneself, to friends, and to all peoples of the world, especially to those about whom one may feel conflicted or troubled. Imagine God upholding the world sending love and light, and to the Universe, and become One with this purpose.

Combine the study circle/workshop with a session on the Gayatri Mantra.

Combine study of this module with doing selfless-service.

### Personal Introspection

Examine the need to extend forgiveness to self and others and consider how best to apply Sai Baba's advice in this module.

How does my heart feel when I forgive? How does it feel if I hold onto anger or hate and resentment?

## THE QUALITY OF FORGIVENESS AND FORBEARANCE



...The quality of *Kshama* (forbearance) is the most essential for one and all.

Forbearance is Truth,  
Forbearance is Righteousness,  
Forbearance is Nonviolence,  
Forbearance is the teaching of the Vedas,  
Forbearance confers happiness and heavenly bliss.  
(Telugu Poem)

Forgive those who have harmed you and criticized you.  
Have faith that whatever happens is for your own good.  
If someone hurls abuses on you, do not retaliate.  
Enquire within yourself whether he has criticized the body or the *Atma*.

If he has criticized the body, indirectly he has done a favour to you because body is nothing but a heap of flesh, blood, bones and faecal matter. On the other hand if he has criticized the *Atma*, it amounts to criticizing his own self because the same *Atma* exists in both of you. One should cultivate this kind of forgiveness and broad-mindedness.

**Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 16/07/2000, Prasanthi Nilayam**

## FORGIVENESS IS KSHAMA (FORBEARANCE)



Among the qualities a man has to develop if he is to realise his divinity,  
The foremost is *Kshama* - *forbearance* or forgiveness.

It is essential for every human being.

It is supreme among virtues.

*Kshama* is Truth, Righteousness, Sympathy, Nonviolence and all else.

*Kshama* comprehends every quality.

How is *Kshama* to be acquired? It is acquired by practising four kinds of purity:

*Dravya Soucham* (purity of materials) this covers all things used by a person - from clothes, food and cooking utensils to houses and all the varied things used by a person. Everything that is in daily use should be completely pure.

*Manasika Soucham* (purity of mind) -

This calls for total elimination of attachments and aversions from the mind.

Hatred and envy should have no place.

One should cultivate large heartedness.

Return good for evil and do not to cause pain to anyone in any circumstance.

This is a mark of a pure mind.

Today people are filled with hatred and envy.  
They cannot bear to see others happy or prosperous.  
This is a sign of a polluted mind.  
Men with evil minds develop demoniac traits.  
To be truly human, one has to have a pure, unsullied mind.  
He has to recognise that the same divinity is present in everyone.  
He should realise that the pure spirit that dwells in him,  
And the power that animates him is present equally in every human being.  
One who is conscious of this unity will have an untrammelled mind.

*Vak Soucham* (purity in speech)

A vile tongue fouls the mind.  
This means that one must speak the truth.  
He must be sweet and pleasant in speech and avoid using harsh words.  
Excessive talking should be avoided.

Purity in speech implies avoidance of falsehood, garrulousness, abusive language, slanderous gossip and speech, which causes pain to others.

Today there is very little purity of speech.  
Bad thoughts and bad words are the order of the day.  
A vile tongue fouls the mind and de-humanises man.

*Kriya/Sareera Soucham* (purity in action or purity of body).

The body has to be purified by performing *achamana* with water (this ritual involves uttering the names of the Lord thrice and drinking three spoonfuls of water from the palm).

When these four kinds of purity are practised, the quality of *Kshama* develops to some extent.

**Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 07/01/1988, Prasanthi Nilayam**

## THE QUALITY OF FORGIVENESS IS ESSENTIAL



Of what use is all *sadhana* (spiritual practice) without sense control?  
Of what avail is practice of yoga without forbearance?  
Of what use is *japa* (ritual repeating the Name of God) without peace of mind?  
It is like ploughing a barren field.  
By diligent efforts success can be achieved, says the adage.  
An ant can cover miles by continuous movement.  
But even Garuda (the celestial eagle) cannot soar two feet if it has no will to fly.

Likewise, without good thoughts and good deeds based on them,  
A man cannot accomplish anything good.

The child Dhruva could achieve what he desired because of his firm determination and the spiritual austerities he observed, despite the ordeals he had to go through. By his sublime thoughts, he achieved the status of a star in the sky.

Likewise, any man irrespective of age or abilities, who has faith and determination, can accomplish what he wants. You are aware of the stories of many sages who embarked on severe penances but failed to complete them because of lack of faith and determination.

Vishvamithra was repeatedly foiled in this way, by either loss of self-control or succumbing to temptation.

In every field *sadhana* is essential. For instance, the participants in the *bhajans* (devotional songs) have improved their singing by constant practice.

The sage Dhurvasa, despite all his penances, could have no peace because he could not control his temper.

Together with peace, the quality of Kshama (forgiveness) is also essential.

Forgiveness is Truth.

It is *Dharma*.

It is the essence of the Veda.

It is Nonviolence and it is *yajna* (holy sacrifice).

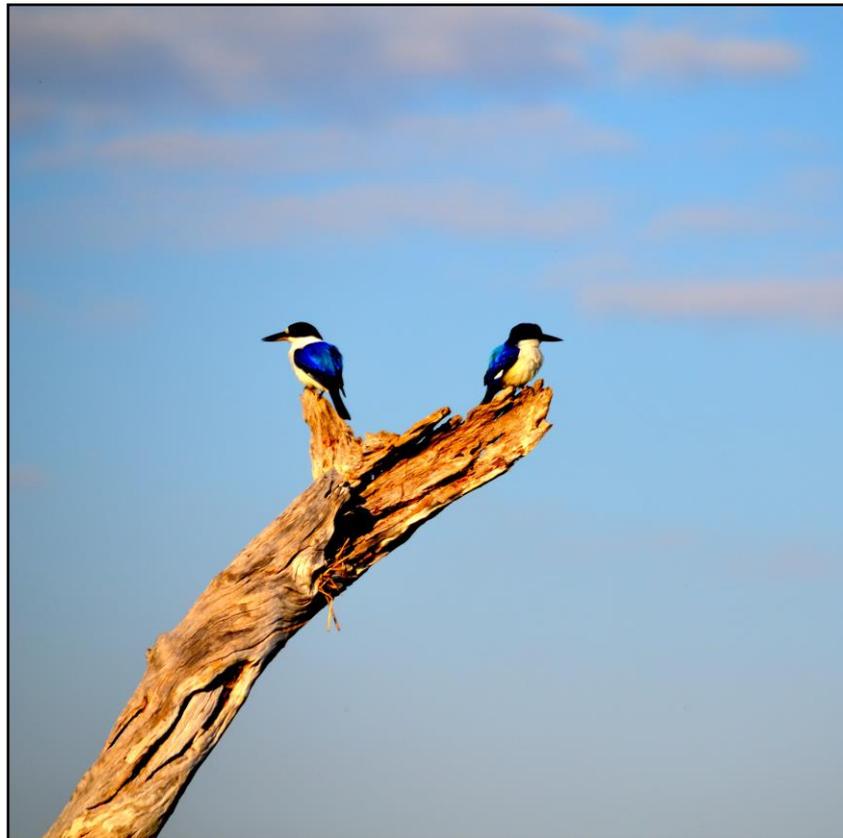
It is the source of joy and everything else.

(Telugu Poem)

*Kshama* (forbearance) is a third eye for every man.

**Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 05/07/1996, Location not stated.**

## FORGIVENESS IS THE GREATEST POWER OF A HUMAN BEING



*Embodiments of love! Brahman is full of love and, in fact, is the embodiment of love.*

Your love should merge with this love.

It is the only one and there is no second.

It is the non-dual state.

The essential nature of love is sacrifice.

Under any circumstance it does not give room for hatred.

It is love that brings even a person far away closer and more intimate to you.

It is love that drives away the feeling of separateness and promotes the feeling of oneness.

Love also raises a person from the animal to the human.

*Prema (Love) is the Prana (Life Force) of man and the Prana itself is Prema.*

One without love is like a lifeless corpse.

Love is shown only to persons who are alive.

No one will love a corpse.

Love and life are therefore inter-related and intimately connected.

In this worldly life love is manifesting in several forms such as the love between mother and son, husband and wife, and between relatives. This love based on physical relationships arises out of selfish motives and self-interest. But the love of the Divine is devoid of any trace of self-interest. It is love for

the sake of love alone. This is called *Bhakthi* (devotion). One characteristic of this love is to give and not to receive. Secondly, love knows no fear. Thirdly, it is only for love's sake and not for selfish motive.

All these three angles of love jointly cannot *Prapatthi* (Surrender). When one revels in this attitude of *Prapatthi*, one experiences the bliss of the Divine. For this, the prime requisite is *Kshama* (forgiveness).

Only a person who has this attitude of *Kshama* can be considered to be endowed with sacred love. This cannot be learned from textbooks. Nor can it be acquired from preceptors not from any one else. It is to be cultivated by oneself in rimes of difficulties, trials and tribulations that one is forced to meet.

Only when we face problems and difficulties that cause grief and misery this quality of forbearance and forgiveness has the scope for taking root.

When you are confronted with problems and difficulties you should not get upset, and become victims of depression, which is a sign of weakness. In such a situation, you should bring tolerance and an attitude of forgiveness into play and should not get agitated giving rise to anger, hatred and revengeful attitude. You are embodiments of strength and not weakness. Therefore, in times of despair, you should be filled with the feeling of forbearance and be ready to forgive and forget. This quality of *Kshama* (forgiveness) is the greatest power for a human being. If one loses this quality, he becomes demonic.

*Kshama* is *Sathyam*, Truth

*Kshama* is *Dharma*, Virtue

*Kshama* is *Ahimsa*, Nonviolence

*Kshama* is *Yajna*, Sacrifice

*Kshama* is *Santhosha*, Happiness

*Kshama* is *Dhaya*, Compassion

*Kshama* is everything in the world.

The moment one is giving up this great quality, the evil qualities of anger, hatred and jealousy creep in, making him lose his human nature itself, driving him to indulge in wicked deeds of demonic nature and even to descend to animal nature. Human beings should shine with human quality

**Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 01/01/1994, Prasanthi Nilayam**

## THE TRUE SON OF FORGIVENESS



Truth is your true mother, and Wisdom the true father.  
*Dharma* is the true brother, and Compassion the true friend.  
The true wife is Peace, and the true son is Forgiveness.  
These six are in fact the true relations of man.  
[Sanskrit *sloka*]

In this world, every individual has a mother.  
The entire humanity has also one mother, and we should try to know her.  
This mother is Truth.

Those who follow this mother will never face any problems in life. This mother, Truth remains the same in all periods of time and in all three worlds, and this mother transcends all the three attributes - *Sathwa* (purity, serenity), *rajas* (passion), and *thamas* (dullness, inertia). The physical mother may die or go to some other place, but this Divine Mother, Truth, remains one and the same, beyond time and space and to every individual. It is therefore necessary that every person follow this noble, Divine Mother (Truth).

Who is father?  
Wisdom is the true father.

Wisdom is not ephemeral, mundane, physical, secular knowledge.

*Advaita darshanam jnanam* (Wisdom confers the experience of non-duality).

So, Truth and Wisdom are the true mother and father of man.

*Dharma* is the brother.

*Dharma* may vary depending upon time, country, religion, and tradition.

However, *dharma* is loved by the entire humanity irrespective of caste, creed, nationality, and religion.

This brother is the very embodiment of love.

On this basis, the *Vedas* gave utmost importance to Truth and Righteousness.

In the great epic *Ramayana*, Lakshmana personified the Principle of *dharma*. When he fainted in the battlefield, Rama lamented, saying that he could get a consort like Sita and a mother like Kausalya, but not a brother like Lakshmana. Rama said that His divinity blossomed because He had a brother like Lakshmana.

Compassion is the true friend. In this world, a friend today may become an enemy tomorrow. But there is no greater friend than Compassion. Peace is the wife. Peace is the precious jewel of saints, and it is the royal path in the spiritual field. Forgiveness is the son. There is no greater quality than Forgiveness. It encompasses all the good qualities, like Truth, Righteousness, and Nonviolence, and it is the essence of all the *Vedas*.

Therefore, for every individual, the true relations are Truth, Wisdom, Righteousness, Compassion, Peace, and Forgiveness. The whole world is full of agitation and disturbance because of lack of these sacred qualities.

You should always remember your true mother and father.

You cannot exist without them.

The whole creation has emerged from Truth and merges back into it.

There is no place where Truth does not exist.

It is the good fortune of human beings to have this eternal Truth as their mother.

But, today, humanity does not follow such a sacred mother.

**Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 25/09/1998, Prasanthi Nilayam**

## FORGIVE EVEN YOUR ENEMIES



When Aswatthama killed the sons of Draupadi, Arjuna was very much agitated. He caught hold of Aswatthama, tied his hands and feet, brought him before Draupadi and told her, “Here is the villain who killed your sons. I shall cut him to pieces. You can anoint your hair with his blood.”

Draupadi pacified Arjuna saying, you should not do any such thing. Why?

The one who is full of fear and has lost all courage, or the one who is in deep sleep or dead drunk or has surrendered to you, or the one who is a female - O Arjuna, it is not proper to kill such a person.  
(Telugu Poem)

Thus saying, she held the hand of Arjuna from killing Aswatthama. She fell at the feet of Aswatthama and said:

*“It is at the feet of your father, Dronacharya that my husbands have learnt all that they know.  
Being the son of Dronacharya, was it proper for you to kill my children?  
How could you have the heart to kill them, who were unarmed, young, and quietly asleep?  
(They) were not having any grudge against you and were not contemplating any harm to you?”*  
(Telugu Poem)

Though she chided Aswatthama for his cruel act, she was calm all the while. Such an attitude of calmness often solves many difficult problems. You should not lose your peace even under the most trying circumstances. Under any provocation, you should not contemplate causing harm to anyone.

Draupadi asked Arjuna, “If you kill Aswatthama, will not his mother suffer the same pangs of sorrow as I suffer now?”

In spite of that Bhima was still bent upon killing Aswatthama. So high was his anger that he said:

*“This Draupadi is a stupid woman for she pleads for this wretch’s freedom!*

*She feels no anger against this murderer of her sons.*

*This assassin Aswatthama is not a Brahmin.*

*Do not release him but kill him.*

*If you do not do that, I myself will hammer his head with my powerful fist, for you to see!”*

(Telugu Poem)

Draupadi prevailed upon Bhima and Arjuna with her pleadings and saved Aswatthama. Such was the nobility of character of the women of those days.

Women are by nature forgiving. There were many women of fortitude, forbearance and purity in this country. It is because of such great women that India still holds its head high in spirituality.

Forbearance and forgiveness are the qualities that should be fostered by all individuals.

You must be able to forgive even your enemies.

This day is consecrated to Ganapathi teaches you forgiveness and love, so that you may realize divinity and enjoy bliss.

**Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 01/09/2000, Prasanthi Nilayam**

## SHIRDI: LEARNING ONENESS THROUGH FORGIVENESS



A controversy arose among the local people as to whether (Shirdi) Baba was a Muslim or a Hindu. At one time he used to say: "Allah Malik! Allah Malik!" At other times, he would say "Datthathreya Malik"! Whenever he shouted "Allah Malik!" Muslims used to come to him in the masjid. His appearance was very much like that of a Muslim. Hence, many Muslims used to come to him. Hindus also used to come and offer incense to him.

The Muslims did not approve of what the Hindus were doing. The Hindus did not like the way Muslims revered Baba. Consequently, bitterness developed between the two communities.

One day, Mhalaspathi was sitting near Baba and doing some service to him. Mhalaspathi was the priest in the Khandoba temple. The Muslims, who were opposed to the presence of a Hindu priest near Baba, came with sticks and beat up Mhalaspathi. At every stroke, Mhalaspathi cried out: "Baba!" "Baba!"

Each time he shouted the name of Baba, the blow was borne by Baba. Mhalaspathi fell to the ground. Baba came out.

Muslims had great reverence for Baba. Baba roared at the Muslim crowd; "Saithan! On the one side you worship me and on the other you beat me. Is this your devotion?"

Baba was bleeding all over the body. The Muslims saw it and asked Baba who had beaten him. "Did you not beat me? Did you not beat me?" said Baba pointing to several men in the crowd.

They said: "We did not come near you at all. We only beat Mhalaspathi."

"Who is in Mhalaspathi? I am in him," declared Baba. "He has surrendered to me and hence all his troubles are mine."

On hearing this, the Muslims fell at Baba's feet and craved his forgiveness.

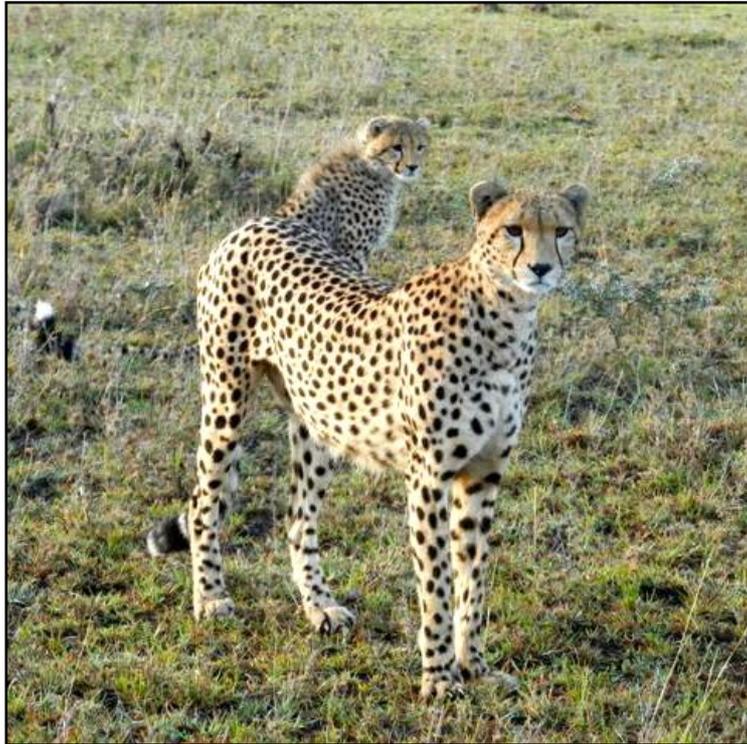
Baba then summoned the Hindus and Muslims and told them: "Dear Children, you are all the progeny of one mother."

Thereby Baba demonstrated the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man. He wanted all differences of caste and creed to be eschewed. What mattered for mankind was the heart.

One who is only concerned about his *matham* (creed) will never discover the Divine (*Madhava*). You must seek the Divine within you. Baba pointed out that all caste and creed distinctions related only to the body. Therefore, you should seek the Supreme in your inner consciousness. Baba, who came to Shirdi with Chandhubhai Patel in 1858, did not leave the place until his passing in 1918. Baba lived for eighty years.

**Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 27/09/1992, Prasanthi Nilayam**

## NONVIOLENCE AND FORGIVENESS



The great Mahabharata war was on. Each of the Pandava brothers was involved in separate encounters. Dharmaja, the eldest brother, was engaged in a fierce battle with Karna. The Pandava forces could not withstand the missiles coming from Karna. Dharmaja was under great strain. The Pandava forces were fleeing.

Dharmaja retired to his tent in great anguish, unable to bear reverses in the battle. At that moment Arjuna entered his brother's tent. On seeing him, Dharmaja flew into a rage. Burning with anger, Dharmaja burst out at Arjuna that all of his prowess and the power of his mighty bow, Gandiva, had been utterly useless. He went on railing at Arjuna. Unable to suffer these accusations, Arjuna lifted his Gandiva and was about to strike Dharmaja. At that very moment Krishna appeared there.

Krishna tried to pacify Arjuna. He said, "Arjuna! It is not mete that you should raise your arm against your elder brother. The primary trait of brothers is to show respect towards elders and earn their regard. Forgetting your duty you have allowed yourself to be provoked by words and resorted to wrongful action."

Krishna advised Arjuna strongly in this manner. He requested Dharmaja to withdraw and gave proper advice to Arjuna on how he should conduct himself. Assuaged by Krishna's appeal and accepting his wise counsel, Arjuna retired to his tent.

Proceeding next to Dharmaja's tent and seeing the agony he was experiencing, Krishna bent down and held Dharmaja's feet. Krishna told him: "Dharmaja! It is not fitting that an elder brother like you should behave in this fashion. It is not right that you should blame your younger brother Arjuna in such strong language. You may have used these words only in a fit of anger. You Pandava brothers, who have been an example to the world in brotherly love, should not allow discord to mar your unity. The Pandavas are looked upon as an ideal for the world. You should live up to that reputation. Therefore, you must go immediately to Arjuna and seek his forgiveness."

Listening to Krishna's loving words, Dharmaja was in tears. "*Swami*", he said, "for you, the prop and sustainer of the world, to hold my feet makes me feel ashamed." Begging Krishna to forgive him, Dharmaja went forthwith to Arjuna and appealed to him to forgive him.

Those who look at these actions as acts of God may consider them too trivial and small for the Divine to undertake. "Why should the Almighty Lord Krishna demean Himself in this way?" some critics might ask. But the ideals, which the Divine seeks to exemplify for mankind, are revealed only through such small incidents.

**Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 16/08/1987, Prasanthi Nilayam**

## FORGIVENESS AND THE MENDICANT



All pose as devotees.

All appear to be spiritual aspirants.

But when you enquire into their actions, you find they are shallow and pretentious.

The proverb says: "When troubles come, think of Venkataramana (God)."

Similarly these so-called devotees think of God when they have troubles,

But forget Him when the troubles are over.

True devotion should be firm and unwavering, unselfish and free from any expectation of reward.

Devotional activities should be unaffected by any kind of troubles and tribulations, by censure or praise. That alone is *Bhakthi* (devotion).

It is when a man develops such devotion that he would be able to experience the Divine. Students today are completely lost in worldly, ephemeral studies. Spiritual knowledge is ridiculed. Spirituality is treated as a kind of hysteria.

Once an ochre-robed person was in a bazaar. Schoolboys and college students followed him, talking flippantly about him. He took no notice of them. He was proceeding from one village to another. The

students indulged in all kinds of abusive language with a view to provoking the mendicant. But the mendicant walked on and sat under a tree on the outskirts of the village.

The students went on railing at him and exhausted all their stock of abuse. As they were silent the mendicant asked them, "Children, have you any more words to be used against me? Come out with them even now, as I have to go to the next village."

One insolent youth among them asked: "What will happen when you go to the next village?"

The mendicant replied ' "Child, I will do nothing. Praise or blame attaches only to this body and not to my Self. But, there are in the next village a large number of people who have high regard for me. If you indulge in your abuses of me there, the villagers will trash you. To save you from this experience I am informing you in advance."

On hearing this, the students had a change of heart. They felt: "In spite of all the abuses we levelled at him, this noble being was totally unaffected, did not lose his temper and taught us the right behaviour."

They prostrated at the feet of the mendicant and craved for his *Kshama* (forgiveness).

Forgiveness is a quality that every man should possess. That forgiveness is Truth itself. It is Righteousness. It is *the Veda*. It is the supreme virtue in this world. Hence, all people should develop the quality of forgiveness. People should remain unaffected by what others may say. A true man is one who overcomes the ups and downs of life with fortitude. One should not recoil before reverses of fortune. One should bravely face them and overcome them.

Whoever aspires to win the grace of God should cultivate at the outset the quality of *Kshama*. It is a divine quality. Man is permeated from head to foot by the six mortal vices' lust, anger greed, attachment, pride and envy. His heart is the source of qualities like sympathy, compassion, nonviolence and peace. The very term, *Hridhaya*, means the *place - Hridh - that has daya* (Compassion). People get agitated over trifles. They should not dissipate their energies in this manner. There are innumerable talents latent in man, of which he is unaware.

**Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 15/04/1995, Brindavan**

## FORGIVENESS IS PART OF SHAKTHI ENERGY IN TRUTH



Matter and energy do not exist separately.

Matter is energy, and energy is matter.

These two are inseparable and interrelated.

In fact, there is no matter in this world; wherever you see, you find only energy.

During these nine days, Goddess *Shakthi* (the Energy Principle) is worshiped.

Truth, Righteousness, Peace, and Forgiveness are all expressions of the Principle of *Shakthi*.

Truth is the primal cause.

There is nothing other than this.

All faculties of energy are present in this Truth.

So, consider Truth as your mother and follow it.

The *Vedas* proclaim, “*Sathyam vada; dharmam chara,*” which means: speak the truth and follow righteousness. Unfortunately, people today do not follow this. On the contrary, they follow *asathya* and *adharmam* (untruth and anti-dharma). That is the cause of all suffering.

The ancients gave utmost priority to Truth and Righteousness. Before undertaking any work, they enquired whether it was right or wrong. They followed the dictates of their conscience. But today, such an attitude is lacking.

## FORGIVENESS AND PEACE



Develop the quality of *kshama* (forgiveness) and refrain from harshness in speech.

Sai is the example for you in this regard.

All sorts of people indulge in calumny and criticism.

Swami remains totally unaffected.

Why should I follow their example?

I must follow my own way.

If I follow another I am a slave.

Therefore, I never follow another's ways. I adhere firmly to what I deem as good.

You must realize that if you give up forbearance and forgiveness, you will have no peace.

I am always at peace.

What is the reason?

Because I am always patient.

You must also remain likewise.

Whatever any one may do to you, do not bother about it.

What is it you lose on account of their behaviour?

If you resort to retaliation, you will worsen your condition.

You have no idea either of your strength or of your disability

You must face boldly such attacks and not allow yourself to get agitated over them.

Students should win by their forbearance.

Forbearance should be your life-breath and your ideal.

By your fearlessness set an example to the world.

It is an auspicious coincidence that today you have both the prize distribution function and holy festival of *Sankranti*. On this doubly blessed day you have to enjoy the sweetness of this combination, like the mixture of sugar and milk, and pledge yourselves to lead a dedicated life.

The *Upanishads* have described the Lord as verily sweetness *itself* - "*Raso vai sah.*"

You have *Karunarasa* (the sweet essence of kindness) in you.

You are also filled with compassion and peace.

Luckily you are free from *Shokarasa* (grief).

You are free from bad qualities.

Do not let them in.

Foster the spirit of kindness.

Treat life as a great game and be victorious in it by leading an ideal life.

Life is a game.

Play it!

Life is a challenge.

Meet it!

Life is a dream.

Realize it!

Life is love. Enjoy it!

This is what you have to achieve.

Therein lies your true human worth.

Human life does not consist in getting married, bringing forth children and being caught up in that endless round. They are the routine of worldly existence. There is nothing wrong in it, but it should, not be your ideal.

Whatever you may do in your ordinary life, base your life on the ideal.

**Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 14/01/1997, Location not stated**

## FORGIVENESS IS EVERYTHING IN ALL THE WORLDS



*Embodiments of Love!* Emperor Bali served the people of Kerala and sacrificed everything, including his body. That is why he has attained such an exalted position, not possible for others. The devotion of the people of Kerala is unparalleled. At one time, Kerala was considered to be a Communist state, but people have been going to the Padmanabha Swamy Temple then and now in large numbers. They get up early in the morning, have their bath, apply sandal paste on their foreheads, and offer their prayers. There is no change in their devotion.

Parties may come and go, but the '*Hridaya Party*' (Party of the Spiritual Heart) is permanent.

A Muslim should become a true Muslim. A Christian should become a true Christian and a Hindu should become a true Hindu. You should have full faith in your religion and lead an ideal life. That is true *bhakti* (devotion), true *mukthi* (liberation). To attain *mukthi*, practice the following principles. Forget all the harm done to you by others and the help you have done to others. Then you will have peace in your heart. If someone has done harm to you, do not be revengeful. If someone has hurt your feelings, in order to alleviate your suffering, the best way is to forget and forgive. Forgiveness is very important. It is Truth. It is *dharma*. It is *Veda*. It is nonviolence. It is happiness. It is heaven itself. This forgiveness is everything in all the worlds. So cultivate this sacred quality of forgiveness. This is possible only by developing Love for God.

**Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 04/09/1998, Prasanthi Nilayam**

## FORGIVENESS AS AN ASPECT OF DISINTERESTED SERVICE



Social service does not mean merely going out into the streets and cleaning them.

Whatever work you are engaged in, whatever duties you have to perform as an official or an employee, to do your duties efficiently and with diligence and devotion is also *Seva* (social service).

Those in authority who discharge their functions well enough to justify the salary they receive are rendering real service. But such persons are rare. Employees agitate for more wages but do not render commensurate service to justify the incomes they receive.

Disinterested service will ennoble man and raise his stature.

It endows man with the intelligence and the skills required to refine human nature.

Doing one's duty diligently is not enough.

Men have to cultivate other qualities like love, sympathy, fairness, compassion and forgiveness.

Only when one has these qualities will he be able to render dedicated service.

It is the sense of dualism of "mine" and "thine" which accounts for all the joys and sorrows, likes and dislikes experienced by man. This dualism is rooted in selfishness, which makes one think that as long as he is all right, it does not matter what happens to the world. Such a self-centred person, who regards his body, his wealth and his family as all that matter to him, looks upon truth as untruth and the

false as true. To get rid of this deep-seated malaise, men have to engage themselves in service. They have to realise that the body has been given not to serve one's own interests but to serve others.

Service should not be done in a spirit of condescension or to achieve some ulterior selfish objective.

Not recognising the sacredness and purifying power of service,

People hesitate to embark on social service.

It should not be imagined that one is promoting the well-being of the nation by one's service.

One should realise that he is bettering himself by rendering service.

Service should proceed from an awareness of what one owes to society.

One's name and fame, all the comforts one enjoys, are derived from society.

One finds fulfilment in society.

That being the case, if one does not serve society, whom else can he serve?

Sheer gratitude demands that one should serve society,

Which is the source of all benefits enjoyed by man.

Men without gratitude are worse than wild animals.

What is required for service are not money and materials.

A loving heart is the first requisite.

All service done without a love-filled heart is as dry as dust.

Fill your hearts with love.

When you are filled with conceit, everything looks out of shape.

When you are immersed in the Spirit, everything looks good and beautiful.

Forgetting this higher destiny of man, people are ceasing to be human.

**Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 21/11/1988, Prasanthi Nilayam**

## DAILY PRACTICE OF LIVING AND ASKING FOR FORGIVENESS



As soon as you get up, throw your troubles and burdens at the feet of the Lord and pray to Him to guide you through life and give you only good thoughts and noble ideas which always serve as uplifting factors in life. When you go back to bed at night, imagine that to be a state of death. Tell yourself that during the day, you have acted according to the Lord's orders. Ask for forgiveness if there is anything wrong and ask to be led on the path of righteousness.

If you begin and end your day with such prayers, it will help you reach higher attitudes of living. Even during your bath, if you remember the name of God, it will be like bathing the form of God. When you take food, all the evils are eliminated if you offer the first morsel to God. The food then becomes *prasad* of the Lord bestowed on man. *Prasad* is the very embodiment of elixir.

It may not be possible to insist that the vessel be pure, that the man who cooks the food be pure and that the food be pure, but if you offer the first morsel to God, it becomes utterly pure. When you return to your homes, you may find *seva samithis* and *seva dals* in your places. Take active part in them. Always try to help those who are in distress, those who are suffering and the poor.

**Summer Showers in Brindavan pp. 207-208**

## MODULE 5. REPENTANCE AND ATONEMENT



## **SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTIVITIES**

### **Study Circle/Workshop**

How is God's forgiveness secured?

What is important to secure God's forgiveness?

What steps does one take in the process of repentance and atonement?

How does discrimination come into our acting on forgiveness?

What are daily practices of forgiveness?

Do Light Meditation with a candle and send rays of healing love and light to oneself, to friends, and to all peoples of the world, especially to those about whom one may feel conflicted or troubled. Imagine God upholding the world sending love and light, and to the Universe, and become One with this purpose.

Combine the study circle/workshop with a session on the Gayatri Mantra.

Combine study of this module with doing selfless-service.

### **Personal Introspection**

Consider adopting the daily practice of forgiveness.

Is there anything I need to repent and atone for?

## REPENTANCE AND THE POWER OF GOD'S FORGIVENESS



Since Ramadhas had the extraordinary capacity to do many great things, he came to be known as Samartha Ramadhas, the appellation Samartha meaning a man of versatile skills. There is an episode in his life that describes the context in which the title of 'Samartha' was conferred on him. He used to dress himself and move about like *Kodhandapani* (Rama armed with his bow and arrows).

Once when he was walking along the banks of the Godhavari in this dress, some Brahmanas who were taking bath there questioned him whether he belonged to the community of Koyas (hunters belonging to a hill tribe were called Koyas). Ramadhas told them that he was Ramadhas (a servant of Rama) and not a Koya.

Thereupon, they questioned him why he was dressed and equipped with bow and arrows like Rama if he was only a servant of Rama. They heckled him saying, "What is the use of merely trying to imitate Kodhandapani in appearance only? Are you capable of wielding the bow and arrows as Rama did?"

Just then a bird was flying fast at a great height across the sky above their heads. The Brahmanas pointed the bird to Ramadhas and asked him whether he could shoot that bird. With Rama's name on his lips, Ramadhas immediately aimed an arrow at the flying bird and brought it down right in front of the Brahmanas.

Seeing the dead bird, the Brahmanas accused Ramadhas saying, "There is no harmony of thought, word and deed in you and therefore you are a *dhuratma* (a wicked person); you chant Rama's name and at the same time you have committed the sin of killing an innocent bird, to show off your skill."

When Ramadhas replied that he shot the bird at their instance only, they remonstrated, saying, "If we ask you to eat grass, will you do so? Don't you have your own independent thinking or discrimination?"

Then Ramadhas gently replied, "Sirs, past is past. Kindly tell me, what I should do now?"

They asked him to repent for his sin.

Ramadhas promptly closed his eyes and prayed to God wholeheartedly, repenting for his sin and asking for His forgiveness. Then he opened his eyes and pointed out to the *Brahmanas* that the dead bird had not regained life, in spite of his repentance.

The Brahmanas said reprovably, "What a madcap you are! Repentance cannot undo what you have done; but its purpose is to enable you to make up your mind not to repeat such misdeeds in future."

"That is no repentance in my humble view," countered Ramadhas. "God and His name are so powerful that if we pray sincerely, His grace will bring the bird back to life."

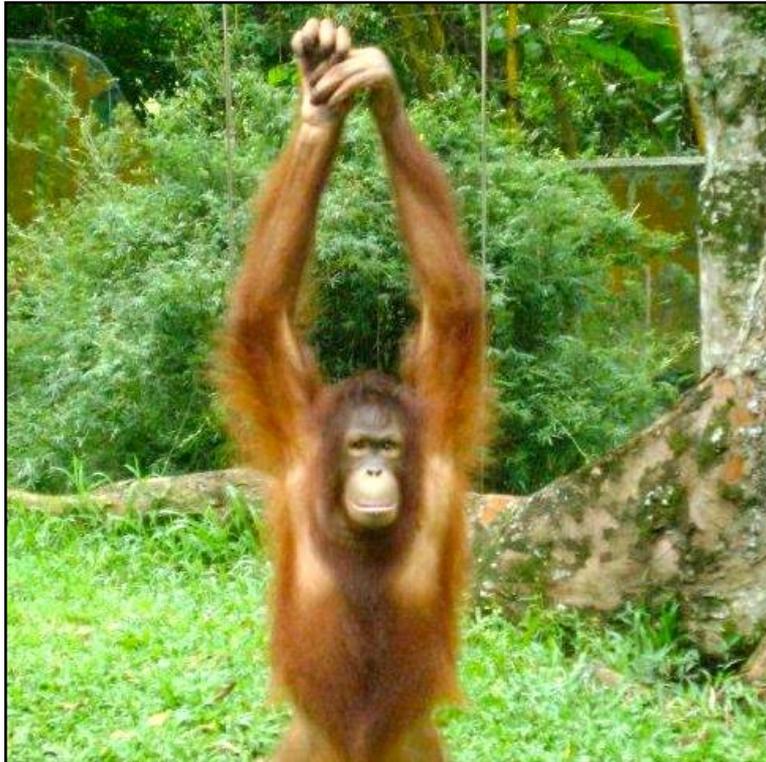
So saying, he picked up the dead bird, hugged it to his bosom, and with tears flowing down his cheeks, he wholeheartedly prayed, "O Rama, if I have been chanting your name with all my mind, heart and soul and if it is a fact that I have killed this bird out of ignorance and not with an intent to kill, may your grace either revive this dead bird, or take away my life also along with that of the bird."

As he concluded his prayer, the bird fluttered in his hands. Then he opened his eyes, thanked the Almighty and released the bird into the sky.

Astonished at this miracle, the Brahmanas exclaimed in one voice, "Revered sir, forgive us for not recognising your greatness. Since you have the capacity to kill a flying bird with a single arrow, and also the capacity to revive the dead bird, you will hereafter be known by the worthy name of 'Samartha Ramadhas.'

**Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, Brindavan, 19/03/1993**

## ASKING FORGIVENESS AT THE FEET OF GOD



‘Feet’ do not mean sandals made in silver or gold.

‘Feet’ refers to the Divine that sustains everything.

Why is such greatness conferred on the feet?

Viewing the matter from the point of view of science,

It will be noted that blood flows from the feet upwards to all parts of the body.

It is this blood that sustains the entire body.

The feet that bear the burden of the entire body are essential for life itself.

When you seek refuge in the Lord's feet, you can secure a vision of the Divine form.

Here is a small example from the early life of Lord Krishna in Gokulam to show what the Lord's feet mean. Krishna was known as one who used to steal butter from all houses and feed his friends and playmates too. As there were a lot of complaints about this naughty child, Krishna's mother Yashodha caught hold of him one day as he was running away and asked him: "Why are you stealing butter from other houses while I offer you so much at home? Your mouth always smells of butter. Give up this habit. Otherwise, I will tie you to a mortar to restrict your movement. How do you do such things, being so small a child?"

He smiled and ran away. Yashodha went from house to house in search of Krishna. He played a small trick. Yashodha could not move fast as she had a heavy body. She was in a fix how to trace Him. Krishna dipped his feet in milk in a house and ran from there, leaving behind the trail of his footprints

caused by the milk. It was only with the help of Krishna's own footprints that she was able to catch Him. In fact, because she was so eager to get at him, Krishna himself helped her to trace Him. Yashodha was able to catch the Lord only through footprints of His Feet.

The Lord's feet are glorious in many ways,

But they will confer blessings only if they are sought with real faith.

The Lord's feet contain the Divine insignia, of *Shankha* (Conch) and *Chakra* (Discus).

*Shankha* symbolises *Shabdha Brahman* (the Cosmic Divine sound).

The discus represents the Wheel of Time.

The Sound and Time together represent the different cosmic aspects of the Lord.

The entire universe originated from sound vibrations.

These vibrations are related to Time. Sound and Time are inseparable and interdependent.

It is a common practice among rural folk to advise anyone who has committed a wrong to hold the feet of the person whom he has wronged. Once a man holds the other's feet, it means that he has sought and secured the latter's forgiveness. Nowadays, with all the Courts and legal processes, no one attempts to hold the feet of anyone. In the old days in the villages, if a man fell at the feet of another, the latter had no options but to forgive the supplicant. The inner meaning of seeking the Lord's feet is that thereby the Lord will forgive the sins of the penitent. But mere holding of the feet is not enough. One must be genuinely repentant and declare that he will not commit similar offences again. Only then he will secure atonement.

*Embodiments of the Divine Atma!* Different persons pursue different kinds of *Sadhana*. To realise the benefits of this *Sadhana*, they go to *ashrams*. They adore elders and offer worship to them. As long as egoism remains in them, all these exercises are of no avail. Your egoism may even lead to your expulsion from the *ashram*. Hence suppress the ego, bury the sense of possessiveness and develop attachment to the *Atma* to realise your true humanness.

Envy, hatred and anger are causing havoc among men. Even residents of the *ashram* are filled with anger. Anger has been described as incense offered to sin. Therefore while you are worshipping the Lotus feet or writing the Lord's name, you have to get rid of these three evil traits. At the outset, the ego has to be destroyed, and then anger will subside. Do your duty. Do not project your ego. Develop mutual helpfulness. Carry on your work with joy. Be friendly towards each other.

It is only when you behave in this manner that you will realise the benefits of *Likhitha Japam* and worship of the *Padhukas* (Lord's Sandals).

**Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 07/10/1993, Prasanthi Nilayam**

## GOD'S FORGIVENESS AND HEART FELT PENITENCE



Everyone should be prepared to offer all his actions to God.

The cosmos should be regarded as the all-pervading form of God.

Only by realising the feeling of unity in diversity can the individual and the nation be redeemed.

Today divisive tendencies are rampant and there is discord between man and man.

The world is turning into a kind of madhouse.

All nations seem to be afflicted with some kind of lunacy.

To kill one man they are prepared to sacrifice a hundred lives.

They have no regard for life.

Men desire the fruits of good deeds, but do not perform good deeds.

Men want to avoid the consequences of sinful actions, but are engaged in sinful deeds.

How is this possible?

It is not easy to escape from the consequences of one's actions.

But there is no need for despair.

If one earns even a grain of grace from the Divine, a mountain of sins can be reduced to ashes.

If one feels genuinely penitent, seeks God's forgiveness and takes refuge in God,

All one's actions will get transformed.

But without heartfelt penitence, this will not happen.

**Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 24/08/1991, Prasanthi Nilayam**

## FORGIVENESS AND ATONEMENT



In one *Puranic* story it is stated that once Shiva and His consort Parvathi were playing a game of dice.

For any game there has to be an umpire, who has to declare who is the winner. Shiva and Parvathi agreed to have Nandhi (the divine bull) as the umpire. Nandhi is a favourite of Shiva, as he is Shiva's vehicle.

Although Shiva lost the game, Nandhi declared Him the winner. It is stated that Parvathi was indignant over Nandhi's partiality for Shiva and cursed him that he should die from an incurable disease.

Thereupon Nandhi fell at the feet of Parvathi and pleaded for forgiveness.

"Mother! Forgive me. Should I not show at least this amount of gratitude to one who is my master? Is it not humiliating for me to declare that my master has lost the game? To uphold his honour I no doubt uttered a lie. But am I to be punished with such severity for so small an offence?"

Nandhi prayed for forgiveness in this manner.

Parvathi forgave Nandhi and taught him the means to atone for his lapse. She told him, "The Chathurdhasi day in the month of Bhadrapadha is the day when my son's birthday is celebrated. On that day you have to offer to my son what pleases you most (green grass)."

This means that one atones for one's sins when one offers to the Lord what is most pleasing and enjoyable to him. For Nandhi the most enjoyable and relishing food is green grass.

As directed by Parvathi, Nandhi worshipped Ganapathi by offering green grass. Nandhi was then relieved of his dreaded disease. His health improved and by the grace of Parvathi he was redeemed.

This incident is the basis for the practice recommended for pilgrims to Gaya, Benares and other places that they should give up something they love most as an offering to the Divine. This means that they should give up something that they like most, and not something they do not like. Whether it is a fruit or a vegetable, what you should choose to give up, as an offering to God, is what you like most. This means that you give up consuming thereafter that vegetable or fruit. This practice has been prevailing from ancient times among pilgrims to Benares, Prayag or other sacred places for a holy bath in the Ganga or Yamuna.

**Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 29/08/1995, Prasanthi Nilayam**

## DISCRIMINATION IN FORGIVENESS



Despite all the progress in scientific knowledge, man has not learnt the real purpose of education and has not developed the sense of gratitude.

One without gratitude is worse than a wild beast.

Doing good in return for good done is nothing to boast about.

Real goodness consists in doing good even to one who has done you harm.

But in applying this principle, discrimination should be used.

History is full of examples of misconceived generosity and forgiveness. Mahomed Ghori invaded India several times and was defeated by Prithviraj, who let him go back as a sign of his spirit of magnanimity. Ultimately, Mahomed of Ghori conspired with Jaichand to take Prithviraj as a prisoner. Instead of showing gratitude to Prithviraj for his magnanimity, Ghori Mahomed gouged the eyes of Prithviraj.

History teaches that no quarter should be given to wicked persons who are treacherous and ungrateful. In rendering service to needy people, students should remember these lessons from life and use their discrimination and intelligence.

In the pursuit of education, students should take note of three things.

You should not talk about matters of which you have no knowledge. It is a mark of foolishness.

It is dangerous to pretend that you know something when you are really ignorant.

You must strive to acquire knowledge and impart it to others only after you have mastered the subject.

Today many pretend to be all-knowing.

This is a sign of *ahamkara* (egoistic conceit).

Egoism can bring about the complete downfall of a person.

It is like a pest that destroys the very root of a tree.

It has two accomplices: attachment and hatred.

The combination of these three is enough to ruin the life of any person. Hence, the primary need is to get rid of egoism, which is fostered by ignorance. Education can become meaningful only when you have developed humility and right behaviour.

**Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 26/06/1988, Sri Sathya Sai Institute Hostel, Vidyagiri**

## GIVE NO QUARTER TO EVIL



Holding both his hands, Dhritarashtra pleaded with Krishna: "My sons are wicked fellows. My infatuation for them has blinded my vision. The Pandavas are undoubtedly righteous. Their adherence to truth and justice is exemplary. I am unable to see a way out."

Krishna spoke to Dhritarashtra in strong terms: "Dhritarashtra! Fondness for sons is a good thing. But excessive attachment to them is likely to prove harmful and dangerous. Don't we try to get rid of urine and faeces from our body?"

Dhritarashtra said: "These are inanimate things, but how can I get rid of my sons who are my flesh and blood?"

Krishna replied that what is evil should be cast away without any compunction. He declared that those who are wicked, whether it be a son, a wife or one's parents.... should be given up without hesitation. "Strive your best to persuade them to return to the right path. But when these attempts fail they should be abandoned."

**Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 16/08/1987, Prasanthi Nilayam**