God is: Nurturing the Spiritual Heart
A Spiritual Programme
Based on the Teachings of Sri Sathya Sai Baba

STAGE 6. THE SPIRITUAL HEART RIGHTEOUSNESS
Note on Source Material

This study guide ‘God is: Nurturing the Spiritual Heart Programme’ is a study guide largely from online 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 online 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.

Dharma Definition

In the ‘Dharma Vahini’, Sai Baba says:

“Those who hold the physical objective world as the all of life and the body as the Self lead wasted lives, live as meaningless as making God into stone. Making the stone into God is the holier, more wholesome task. So too, seeing divine duty (Atma-dharma) in an act transforms it into an act of worship, elevates it, and removes its binding characteristic.”

There is no single English word that quite captures the Sanskrit word ‘dharma’, although it is conveniently associated with Righteousness. Dharma is related to the Atmic way of life, a moral life, which is lived in consciousness of the Highest Truth.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

SATHYA SAI BABA .......................................................................................................................... 5

PREFACE ........................................................................................................................................... 6

THE RESOURCE MATERIAL ......................................................................................................... 8

OVERVIEW OF THE SPIRITUAL HEART: RIGHTEOUSNESS ....................................................... 9

MODULE 1. THE HEART PATH OF DHARMA ................................................................................. 14
  SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTIVITIES ................................................................................................. 15
  WHAT DHARMA IS AND IS NOT ................................................................................................. 16
  DHARMA IS THE MORAL PATH ................................................................................................. 19
  DHARMA IS DISCRIMINATION ................................................................................................. 21
  DHARMA, THE INNER IMPULSE ............................................................................................... 23
  THE GOLDEN AGE STARTS IN THE HEART ................................................................................ 25
  ON THE PATH OF DHARMA ....................................................................................................... 26
  GOD IS THE EMBODIMENT OF DHARMA ................................................................................. 28
  THE MANSION OF DHARMA ..................................................................................................... 30
  FOLLOW DIVINE DHARMA AND BE FREE ................................................................................ 31
  THE PURE HEART AND STAGES OF LIFE ............................................................................... 33
  BUILD YOUR LIFE ON THE ATOMIC BASE ............................................................................ 35
  THE DHARMIC WAY ................................................................................................................ 36
  DHARMA ALONE IS LIKE THE HEART OF OUR LIFE ............................................................... 38
  THE HEART AND THE MEANING OF DHARMA ...................................................................... 40

MODULE 2. PURIFY THE HEART THROUGH DHARMA ............................................................... 42
  SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTIVITIES ................................................................................................. 43
  THE BODY AND THE DIVINE PATH ......................................................................................... 44
  SPECIFIC PATHS TO PURIFY THE HEART .............................................................................. 47
  INNER AND OUTER PURITY FOR HEALTH ............................................................................ 52
  INTERNAL PURITY .................................................................................................................. 54
  PURIFYING THE HEART THROUGH DESIRELESS ACTIONS ................................................... 55
  THE FOOTBALL FIELD OF THE HEART ................................................................................... 57
  PURITY OF HEART AND RIGHT ACTION IN THE SAI ORGANISATION .................................. 59
  GOD ACCEPTS ALL ACTIONS OFFERED WITH A PURE HEART ........................................... 61
  THE SACRED WISH FULFILLING TREE IN THE HEART ....................................................... 63
  THE SUPREME DEVOTION OF VIBHISHANA ......................................................................... 65
  DUTY FULFILLED THROUGH DHARMA .................................................................................. 67

MODULE 3. DHARMA AS DUTY .................................................................................................... 70
  SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTIVITIES ................................................................................................. 71
  DHARMA AS DUTY ................................................................................................................... 72
  DUTY WITH A PURE HEART ................................................................................................... 74
  DHARMA OF WOMEN ............................................................................................................. 76
  WOMEN, EDUCATION AND DHARMA .................................................................................. 77
  WOMEN MUST ADHERE TO DHARMA ................................................................................... 79
  GAYATRI MANTRA, THE HEART AND DHARMA ................................................................... 81
  DRAUPADI AND THE HEART OF DHARMA ............................................................................ 83
  MEERA’S DEVOTION TO KRISHNA ......................................................................................... 85
  DRAUPADI AND FEEDING THE HEART WELL ......................................................................... 87
  DUTY WITH ALL YOUR HEART .............................................................................................. 89
  THE ARJUNA ATTITUDE .......................................................................................................... 91
  ASK HIM WITH ALL YOUR HEART ......................................................................................... 94
The photography of East Australian coastal rocks, trees, leaves, bark and plants are from the collection of keen micro-photographer, Mr. Neville Fredericks.

Many of us walk on beaches in Australia such as this one at Woody Head in Northern New South Wales, from which the coastal shots were taken, but do we really see what is in front, around and under us? This photography is a call to awareness and presence and the dharmic use of our gift of sight and observation. Meditate on these pictures and feel the Love and Joy of God in this Divine expression of life.
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 85.¹

¹ Source: An Introduction to the Sathya Sai International Organisation, Zone 3, Region 31
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 ourselves, “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 fertiliser 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.

*Christian 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: Righteousness

|-------------------|-------------|
| What is *dharma*? | Answer 1: Dharma is the very embodiment of the Lord. Since the world itself is the body of the Lord, the world is but another name for the moral order.  
Answer 2. Now, how are you to decide in any particular case what is dharma and what is not? I shall tell you some principles that you can use on such occasions. That which does not inflict pain on you and on others - that is right, that is *dharma*. So act in such a way that you get joy and others too get joy.  
Or, take another standard for your actions: Make the *manas*, the *vak* and the *kayam* (thought, word and deed) agree in harmony. That is to say, act as you speak, speak as you feel; do not play false to your own conscience; do not cover your thoughts in a cloak of falsehood; do not suppress your conscience by forcibly enslaving it and embarking on actions not approved by it. That is the *dharmic* way of life. |
<p>| What is true <em>dharma</em> and how can I follow it? | True <em>dharma</em> is to be immersed in <em>Atmic</em> bliss, the inner vision, the steady faith in the identity of one’s real nature with the Absolute, and the realisation that all is Brahman. |
| What are the attributes of <em>dharma</em>? | Dharma’s attributes are justice, sense control, sense of honour, love, dignity, goodness, meditation, sympathy, and nonviolence. |
| How is <em>dharma</em> characterised? | <em>Dharma</em> is characterized by holiness, peace, Truth, and fortitude. <em>Dharma</em> is <em>yoga</em>, union, merger; it is Truth (<em>Sathy</em>). |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How does <em>dharma</em> relate to Truth?</th>
<th>Truth is inseparable from <em>dharma</em>. Truth is the law of the universe, which makes the sun and moon revolve in their orbits. <em>Dharma</em> is the <em>Vedas</em> and the <em>mantras</em>, the spiritual wisdom (<em>jnana</em>) they convey. <em>Dharma</em> is the course, the path, and the law.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>How does dharma relate to the Inner Path?</strong></td>
<td>All that you do is a reflection of inner action. Hence, to act according to your inner impulse is dharma.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What underpins dharma in the yugas?</strong></td>
<td>The four legs of dharma are Truth, compassion, austerity, and giving (Sathyay, daya, tapas, and dana).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What does acting on dharma mean?</strong></td>
<td>Every unselfish act that prepares the ground for the merging of the soul with the Over-Soul, that broadens the vision toward the basic Brahman immanent everywhere, is a dharmic act.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What happens when dharma is not acted upon?</strong></td>
<td>When dharma fails to transmute human life, the world is afflicted by agony and fear, tormented by stormy revolutions. When the effulgence of dharma fails to illumine human relationships, humanity is shrouded in the night of sorrow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How are Grace and dharma linked?</strong></td>
<td>One cannot acquire real peace, nor can one win the Grace of the Lord, through any means other than the dharmic life. Dharma is the foundation for the welfare of humanity; It is the Truth that is stable for all time. God is the embodiment of dharma: His Grace is won by dharma; He is ever fostering dharma; He is ever establishing dharma; He is dharma itself.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>How can dharma, which sets limits on thoughts and words and regulates and controls, make a person free?</strong></td>
<td>‘Freedom’ is the name that you give to a certain type of bondage. Genuine freedom is obtained only when delusion is absent, When there is no identification with the body and senses, no servitude to the objective world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How can I feel near to the Lord through dharmic deeds?</strong></td>
<td>He dwells with all who are truthful, whose deeds spring from dharma. The Lord has declared therein that those who have these qualities, those who trust in Him as the only ultimate goal, those who are attached to Him single-mindedly - those are dearest and nearest to Him.</td>
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<tr>
<td>How do dharmic deeds lead to self-realisation?</td>
<td>Your acts and activities are all rituals in the worship of the highest <em>Atma</em>, which pervades the universe. Whatever is done in an attitude of dedication and surrender is a component of the <em>dharma</em> that leads to realisation. The strategy of the Indian (<em>Bharathiya</em>) way of life is directed toward the sanctification of every movement and every thought, word, and deed into a step towards that realisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why are so many bad things happening in the world? How can I be happy when there is so much misery?</td>
<td>People want <em>adharma</em> (unrighteousness) to be eradicated completely from this world. They want only dharma to exist, but it is not possible. In this world, dharma cannot exist without <em>adharma</em> and vice versa. The world is a combination of dharma and <em>adharma</em>; it cannot exist if one of them is absent. Man should use his power of discrimination and lead a life dedicated to dharma. There lies the secret of man’s happiness.</td>
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<tr>
<td>How can I obtain peace in this world of constant action, change and drama?</td>
<td>Man’s <em>dharma</em> is different from the dharma of animals. But man is unable to differentiate between the two. Man’s dharma is to adhere to the principles of Truth, nonviolence and compassion. Man can never attain peace and security so long as he does not give up bestial qualities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>How can I not feel controlled by the needs and urges of the body?</td>
<td>The body should not be regarded as a mere conglomeration of the five elements. Looking at it externally, it may appear as a structure of bones, flesh, blood and nerves. But just as a temple is not a mere edifice consisting of brick and mortar but is the Abode of the Divine, the body should also be regarded as the dwelling of the Divine Spirit. It is, therefore, the primary duty of man to ensure that the body does not indulge in wrongful practices, and fall a prey to falsehood and unrighteousness. He should use the body to promote his higher human qualities and pursue the divine path. It is for this purpose that <em>Yajnas, Yagas</em> and other religious rites have been prescribed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does dharma relate to the Spiritual Heart?</td>
<td><em>Dharma</em> alone is like the heart of our life. Forgetting this sacred <em>dharma</em> and taking to unjust behaviour will be ruining our own lives. We should pick out all the bad habits in us and abandon them. In their place, we should take the good from the characters in the <em>Ramayana</em> and put them into practice.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Answer</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do I overcome the feeling that I am caught up in events that make me feel bound and chained?</td>
<td>The true <em>dharma</em> of the individual is to taste the bliss of merging with the Absolute and to attain true liberation. A person who has reached that stage can never be bound, even if put in the grimmest of prisons; On the other hand, for a person who is the slave of the body, Even a blade of grass can become an instrument of death.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do I see goodness in people who don’t follow dharma? What about when people appear very bad indeed, even to the point of not being human?</td>
<td>We should try and understand the good qualities of even Ravana. It is not as if there are no good qualities in Ravana. When he was fully immersed in the thought of God, he was prepared to sacrifice even his entire body. He was truly a follower of <em>dharma</em> and protector of <em>dharma</em>. The bad qualities of Ravana did not come as natural qualities to Ravana. All the bad qualities and bad thoughts came to Ravana because of a certain curse to which he was subjected at one time. For such a curse, his own <em>karma</em> was responsible. The kind of work and <em>karma</em> that we do will determine the consequences. The kind of seed that we put in will determine the tree and the fruit that we can get out of it. Unknowingly, and in some ignorance, we do some bad things. Whether we do such bad work either knowingly or unknowingly, the consequences are inevitable. This is the nature of <em>karma</em>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>What is the highest <em>dharma</em>?</td>
<td>The ancients have declared that adherence to the Truth is <em>Dharma</em> (Righteousness). There is no higher <em>Dharma</em> than <em>Truth - Sathyannasthi paro Dharma</em>. Without the firm foundation of Truth, the mansion of <em>Dharma</em> cannot stand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How can I purify my heart through <em>dharmic</em> deeds?</td>
<td>Every action done without ego leads to divinity. The Gita refers to Swadharma (duties that accord with one's nature) and Paradharma (duties prescribed for others) and says that Swadharma is conducive to the ennobling of the individual, while Paradharma is fraught with fearful consequences.</td>
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<tr>
<td>What is the role of women in <em>dharma</em>?</td>
<td>Women who are full of knowledge, who are cultured, who are bound by love, and who are keen on discriminating whether their words and deeds are in conformity with <em>dharma</em> - such women are like the goddess Lakshmi, bringing joy and good fortune to the home. That home, where husband and wife are bound together by holy love, where every day both are engaged in the reading of books that feed the soul, where the name of the Lord is sung and His glory remembered - that home is really the home of the Lord, Vaikunta! The woman who is attached to her husband by means of love is indeed a flower radiating rare perfume; she is a precious gem, shedding lustre in the family. A wife endowed with virtue is really a brilliant jewel.</td>
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MODULE 1. THE HEART PATH OF DHARMA
SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTIVITIES

Study Circle/Workshop

What is dharma?
How does dharma relate to the Spiritual Heart?
How does one know the impulse to do any action is dharmic?
What sort of things does one need to do, to ensure actions and thinking are in tune with dharma?

Meditation: Send love in prayers and think kindly about, all peoples of the world. Send love to all sentient beings, for all are Atma.

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

Combine study of this module with doing selfless-service.

Personal Introspection

What is my own dharma? It may help to write this down and review this from time to time.
How is dharma being expressed in my daily life?
Is there anything adharmic in my thought, words and deeds that I need to correct?
How can I express dharma in my home and in the world?
How does my heart feel when it expresses dharma?
WHAT DHARMA IS AND IS NOT

Naturally, I always speak of Dharma. I have come to re-establish it. I have no other work here. I give what is Panakam (sweet drinks) for the ignorant and what is Amrita (nectar) for the illumined.

You cannot infer that Dharma is declining only in India, because all the Avatars you know took place here. The Avatar has to take shape in the place where the Dharma originated and where it is still studied and valued. The rest of the world is but the branches of this tree.

For Me, there is no native land or foreign land. All humanity has to be brought back to the path of Dharma.

The Veda is Apourusheya - "Not ascribable to human skill or authorship."

The Veda Purusha (Soul of Veda) is not ascribable to any one country. Veda emanates from wherever you yearn for it. All religions and Dharmas are but proliferations of Vedic truths.

Human nature has to be chastened, controlled and guided along certain channels; otherwise, like the flooded Ganga, it will bring disaster to millions who rest in security, believing it to be harmless.

The haste to secure an immediate advantage has to be cured, the later advantage may be more lasting and more healthy; benefits to the individual have to be given up in favour of benefits to the group, the
village, the community, the country or the whole of mankind. Ideas, principles, laws, customs, codes, habits, and actions - all are to be judged on the twin points of intention and consequence.

Is the intention pure, is it born out of Prema? Is it based on Truth? Does it result in Shanthi? If yes, dharma is enshrined in that action or law, custom or conduct. Intention and consequence are the two bunds that guide the floodwaters of the Godavari safely into the sea, which can swallow any amount of river water. In fact, it is the rule and the restriction that gives charm to the game of life. If in the game of football any player can do anything with the ball, and there is neither foul nor out, neither offside nor goal, neither throw nor penalty, then it will be a meaningless game incapable of giving ananda.

Now, how are you to decide in any particular case what is dharma and what is not? I shall tell you some principles that you can use on such occasions.

That which does not inflict pain on you and on others;
That is right - that is dharma.
So act in such a way that you get joy and others too get joy.
Or, take another standard for your actions:
Make the manas, the vak and the kayam (thought, word and deed) agree in harmony.
That is to say, act as you speak, speak as you feel.
Do not play false to your own conscience.
Do not cover your thoughts in a cloak of falsehood.
Do not suppress your conscience by forcibly enslaving it and embarking on actions not approved by it.
That is the dharmic way of life.
Frequently doing right makes it easier and easier, habit grows into conscience.
If you are once established in right conduct, you will automatically follow the right.
What you do depends on what you are.
What you are depends on what you do.
The two are interdependent to a great degree.

Or, there is another principle.
Dharma trains you to be calm, level-headed and secure in equanimity.
You know the transitory nature of success or failure -
Riches or poverty, joy or grief, appointment or disappointment.
You are not elated or deflated.
You are serene, unmoved.
Anything that helps you to maintain this unruffled stability is dharma.
Sensual life is *adharma*; the spiritual life is *dharma.*

*Dharma* is that which sustains, saves and sanctifies.

Man is born and is given a lease of life so that he may earn the knowledge of His identity with the Infinite.

There are differences between the limbs of the body but they all belong to the body.
It is foolish for them to imagine that they are unconnected with the body.
The Sun sends out a million rays but they all belong to the Sun.
The Sun is reflected in a million pots of water but though they all are tiny images of the Sun.
The Sun is the Truth and the reflections are all relatively unreal.

One common definition of *dharma* is that it is the adherence to the rule: "Do unto others what you wish them to do unto you; do not do unto others what you do not wish them to do unto you."

Do not have a double standard.

Treat all as your own self.
You must have faith in yourself and then only can you have faith in others.
You must respect yourself and respect others.
Egoism is the measure of altruism.
Mankind is one community.
You harm yourself and you harm all.
You make a man stand erect and that act makes you stand erect.
The treatment you wish others to render to you is itself the measure of your duty to them.

The *Vedas* and the *Upanishads*, which form the *Jnana kandha* and the *Upasana* sections of *Sanathana Dharma* (Eternal Religion), are the best guides to the path of *dharma* for mankind, for all classes, for the family, for society, for the professional group and for the individual.

Just as Delhi is the capital of India, India is the spiritual capital for all mankind. It is the responsibility of Indians to demonstrate in their lives that *Dharma* confers on them *shanthi* and *soukhya* (peace and happiness), so that the rest of mankind may get the inspiration to follow the same path.
Dharma is the moral path.
The moral path is the light.
The light is bliss (ananda).
Dharma is characterized by holiness, peace, Truth, and fortitude.
Dharma is yoga, union, and merger.
It is Truth (Sathya).

Its attributes are:

Justice
Sense control
Sense of honour
Love
Dignity
Goodness
Meditation
Sympathy
Nonviolence
Such is the *dharma* that persists through the ages.  
It leads one on to universal love and unity.  
It is the highest discipline and the most profitable.  
All this “unfoldment” began with *dharma*.  
All this is stabilized by Truth (*Sathya*).  
Truth is inseparable from *dharma*.  
Truth is the law of the universe, which makes the sun and moon revolve in their orbits.  
*Dharma* is the *Vedas* and the *mantras*, the spiritual wisdom (*jnana*) they convey.  
*Dharma* is the course, the path and the law.  
Wherever there is adherence to morality, there one can see the Law of Truth (*Sathyadharma*) in action.  
In the *Bhagavada* too, it is said, “Where there is *dharma*, there is Krishna;  
Where there are both *dharma* and Krishna together, there is victory.”  
*Dharma* is the very embodiment of the Lord.  
Since the world itself is the body of the Lord, the world is but another name for the moral order.  
No one can deny it, now or ever.

*Dharma Vahini Chapter 3. pp. 27-28*
Education without wisdom,
Mere wisdom bereft of discrimination,
Action without discretion,
Erudition lacking sagacity,
Power not justified by credentials,
Statements not based on truth,
Music wanting in melody,
Adoration not sustained by devotion,
A person devoid of common sense and character,
A student not endowed with humility,
And a discourse that fails to inspire -
These serve no useful purpose.

It is necessary to derive wisdom from experience, but it is equally essential to develop the faculty of discrimination, which enables us to employ the wisdom for the well being of the country.
Education without discrimination and wisdom without discernment are of no use. Education is one thing; discrimination, quite another. Discrimination is the faculty that enables us to distinguish good from bad, and confers upon us the ability to decide how much importance to give to various aspects in a given situation.

Discrimination is a component of wisdom.
Without discrimination, one cannot pursue the right path.
It is a mark of sagacity to display discrimination in all actions.

Through researches in atomic energy, one may invent destructive weapons that can reduce the entire world to ashes in a second. The same atomic energy might help us to generate millions of kilowatts of electric power, which could be utilized for industries and agriculture, transforming the country into a smiling garden. An educated person should display discrimination in such matters and take the right course of action. Discoveries and inventions should not be for evil purposes that lead to disaster and destruction. Discrimination guides us in properly employing them for augmenting production and promoting human welfare.

People endowed with wisdom and discrimination will be honoured and adored, even though they may not have wealth or position. People devoid of wisdom and discrimination can never blossom spiritually, even though they may be an eminent educationist, a prominent scientist, or a multimillionaire.

One without wisdom and discrimination cannot even distinguish between dharma and lack of dharma. Therefore, every student must acquire wisdom and discrimination without resting on their oars after gaining theoretical knowledge. The student should develop farsighted vision along with wisdom and use it for the uplift of society.

In addition to wisdom, discrimination, and experience, one should also possess inspiring common sense. This cannot be acquired through books. In order to gain it, one must travel extensively. It is for this purpose that our ancestors went on pilgrimages to see, speak to, and touch the feet of holy people in sacred places. They also saw many sights and objects in this diverse universe of God and derived many valuable lessons there from. Several objects in nature teach valuable lessons that impart wisdom. The development of common sense consists in comprehending the origin and nature of such objects.

Sathya Sai Vahini, Stream of Divine Grace, Chapter XXI, The Inner Enquiry
There are two different paths that may be pursued by the earnest aspirant. One path is bhava (consciousness/awareness/intense feeling) and the other path is sadhana (spiritual practice).

One who meditates on the Pranava (Om - the Universal sound principle) with bhava (intense feeling) may not be able to realise his Divinity. Even if he has some glimpses of the Divine, they do not last long.

The one who pursues the path of sadhana, reaches the Surya-mandala (realm of the Sun) And proceeds from there to the region of Brahman.
By the term Brahma, you may consider him as a four-faced deity or in some other form. But Brahman essentially means that which is all pervading.

To acquire Brahmabhava (the awareness of Brahman) means being aware of this infinite vastness.

Today's science is engaged in trying to explore the infinitesimally minutest particle in matter. But spirituality pursues a different goal.
It is concerned with exploring the Infinite - Mahatho Maheeyan, Which is vaster than the vastest.
It is concerned with "expanding" the consciousness. Brahman means the Infinite. Chandra (moon god) refers to the mind.
Surya (sun god) refers to the eye, the faculty of vision.

Only the person who is able to understand the Vedantic meanings of these terms can comprehend the nature of spirituality.

Here is this Lingam.
Is it to be found within the physical body?
In Vedanta it is described as Angushtamathram (the size of the thumb).
The reference to the Hiranyagarbha in the Hridaya is considered as a reference to the physical heart.
Not at all!
In the spiritual sense, the Linga is one that is golden-hued,
Absolutely immaculate (untainted by any pollution),
Gloriously resplendent, containing within it the entire cosmos.

There is an illustration for this. You might have been to Badrinath, Kedarnath or other places. Where are these places that you have seen? The moment you recall the visits, all the places are in your mind. If you close your eyes and think of your visit to Badrinath, the entire scene - the temple, the Himalayas, the Alakananda River and everything else appears before your mind's eye.

All that you have seen and experienced in life will appear before you in your mind, the moment you try to recall them. This means that the entire universe is within you.

All that you see is a reflection of the inner being.
All that you speak is a reflection of inner thoughts.
All that you do is a reflection of inner action.
Hence, to act according to your inner impulse is Dharma.
To speak what you feel inside is Sathya (Truth).
To contemplate on what you experience in your heart is Shanthi (Peace).
To understand properly the promptings of the heart is Ahimsa (Non-violence).

Consideration for all emanating from the heart is Prema (Love). Sathya, Dharma, Shanthi, Prema and Ahimsa are reflections of feelings emanating from the heart.

Summer Course in Brindavan, 28/05/1991
The ages (yugas) are classified on the basis of the dominant mental role. In the age of Truth (Krithayuga), it is said that dharma walked about on four legs, happy and safe.

In the second age (Threthayuga), dharma had only three legs, while in the third age (Dwarparyuga), it had to totter about on just two! In the present Kaliyuga, dharma has only one leg, according to this tradition. The four legs are Truth, compassion, austerity, and giving (Sathya, daya, tapas, and dana). A person with all four can be said to be in the Golden Age (Krithayuga), whatever the age in the calendar. If Truth is not steady but one has the other three qualities, one is in the Threthayuga. If Truth and compassion are absent, but austerity and giving persist, one is in the Dwarparyuga. If only giving remains out of the four, it is as if dharma is standing on one leg, and the person sticking to giving, in spite of everything else having disappeared, is in the Iron Age (Kaliyuga) - even if it is chronologically the Golden Age.

The ages (yugas) change only with the change in dharma, not with the mere passage of time. The wicked Hiranyakasipu and the pure-hearted Prahlada lived in the selfsame chronological yuga; the same yuga saw Dharmaja, the personification of righteousness and peace (shanthi), as well as the arch cheat Duryodhana. So, dharma is what makes the yuga for each; one can always be in the Golden Age (Krithayuga), if only one has all four qualities of dharma. The conduct of man makes and mars history and changes the Golden Age to the Iron Age.

Dharma Vahini Chapter 9. p.79
ON THE PATH OF DHARMA

Whoever subdues egotism, conquers selfish desires, destroys bestial feelings and impulses, and gives up the natural tendency to regard the body as the self that person is surely on the path of dharma; that person knows that the goal of dharma is the merging of the wave in the sea, the merging of the self in the Over-self.

In all worldly activities, you should be careful not to offend propriety or the canons of good nature;
You should not play false to the promptings of the inner voice;
You should be prepared at all times to respect the appropriate dictates of conscience;
You should watch your steps to see whether you are in someone else’s way;
You must be ever vigilant to discover the Truth behind all this scintillating variety.
This is your entire duty, your dharma.

The blazing fire of wisdom (jnana),
Which convinces you that all this is Brahman (sarvam khalvidam Brahman),
Will consume into ashes all traces of your egotism and worldly attachment.
You must become intoxicated with the nectar of union with Brahman;
That is the ultimate goal of dharma and of action (karma) inspired by dharma.

Sacrifice ignorance (ajnana) and ego (ahamkara) at the altar of wisdom (jnana) and install dharma therein. This is the message of the Vedas.
Every single unselfish act that prepares the ground for the merging of the soul with the Over-Soul, That broadens the vision toward the basic Brahman immanent everywhere, is a *dharmic* act. Each such act is a tiny stream that swells the river of holiness, Rushing towards the sea of knowledge of Brahman. Your acts and activities are all rituals in the worship of the highest *Atma*, which pervades the universe. Whatever is done in an attitude of dedication and surrender, Is a component of the *dharma* that leads to realisation.

The strategy of the Indian (*Bharathiya*) way of life is directed toward the sanctification of every movement and every thought, word, and deed into a step towards that realisation.

*Dharma Vahini Chapter 1. pp. 5-6*
People must dedicate themselves to dharma and always be engaged in dharma, so that they may live in peace and the world may enjoy peace.

One cannot acquire real peace, nor can one win the Grace of the Lord, through any means other than the dharmic life.

_Dharma_ is the foundation for the welfare of humanity;
It is the Truth that is stable for all time.

When _dharma_ fails to transmute human life, the world is afflicted by agony and fear, tormented by stormy revolutions.

When the effulgence of _dharma_ fails to illumine human relationships, humanity is shrouded in the night of sorrow.

God is the embodiment of _dharma_:
His Grace is won by _dharma_;
He is ever fostering _dharma_;
He is ever establishing _dharma_;
He is _dharma_ itself.
The Vedas, scriptures (Sastras), epics (Puranas), and traditional accounts (Ithihasas) proclaim aloud the glory of dharma. In the scriptures of the various religions, dharma is elaborated in language familiar to the adherents. The duty of everyone, everywhere and at all times, is to pay homage to the personification of dharma (Dharma-Narayana).

The stream of dharmic activity should never run dry.
When its cool waters cease to flow, disaster is certain.
Humanity has reached this stage only because dharma;
Like the Saraswathi River flows unseen, below the ground, feeding the roots and filling the springs.
Not only humanity but also even birds and beasts have to adhere to dharma,
So they may be happy and survive in comfort and joy.

Therefore, the waters of dharma have to be kept flowing perpetually and fully,
So the world might enjoy happiness.
Disaster now dances madly on the world stage,
Because right is neglected and there is disbelief in the essentials of dharmic life.
So, one has to understand clearly the very heart of dharma.

Dharma Vahini Chapter 1. pp. 1-2
THE MANSION OF DHARMA

There are two concepts: Sathya (Truth) and Ritha (conduct based on unity of thought, word and deed).

The triple purity of mind, speech and body is Ritha.

To adhere to Ritha and speak and act accordingly is Truth.

What is uttered with this triple purity is alone Truth, not other words.

The ancients have declared that adherence to the Truth is Dharma (Righteousness).

There is no higher Dharma than Truth - Sathyannasti Paro Dharma.

Without the firm foundation of Truth, the mansion of Dharma cannot stand.

A life built upon sankalpa (desires) cannot last.

The mansion of desires must be converted into a Mansion of Divine Will (Iccha-Bhavanam).

When the Iccha-Shakti (Will Power) is converted into Kriya-Shakthi (power of action), it results in Jnana-Shakthi (the power of Wisdom). It is through this Divine Wisdom that spiritual liberation Kaivalyam is secured.

Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 04/10/1992, Puttaparthi
To be free is your birthright, not to be bound.
It is only when you guide your steps along the path,
Illumined by the universal unbound dharma that you are really free;
If you stray away from the light, you get bound and you are caught.

Some might raise a doubt: How can dharma, which sets limits on thoughts and words and regulates and controls, make a person free?

‘Freedom’ is the name that you give to a certain type of bondage.
Genuine freedom is obtained only when delusion is absent,
When there is no identification with the body and senses, no servitude to the objective world.

People who have escaped from this servitude and achieved freedom in the genuine sense are very few in number.

Bondage lies in every act done with the consciousness of the body as the Self,
For one is then the plaything of the senses.
Only those who have escaped this fate are free;
This ‘freedom’ is the ideal stage to which dharma leads.
With this stage constantly in mind,
One who engages in the activity of living can become a liberated person (mukiha-purusha).
It is only because you bind yourself that you become bound and stray away from the dharmic path.
It is always so.
No other person can bind you!
You do it yourself.
If faith in God’s omnipresence were deep-rooted, you would be aware that He is your self,
And that you could never be bound!
For that faith to grow, you must grasp Atmic bliss firmly.
The reality of the Atma is the bedrock, the incontrovertible wisdom (nishchitha-jnana).
Devoid of that foundation, you become the target of doubt, despair, and delusion.
The maid of dharma will not wed such.

Therefore, first endeavour to become free.
That is to say, as a preliminary to successful living,
Cultivate faith in the Atma as the core of your personality,
And then learn and practise the discipline necessary to reach down to that core.
With that qualification acquired, you can engage fully in worldly activities,
Following the dharma prescribed for their regulation.
Then you become a moral individual (dharma-purusha).

Those who hold the physical objective world as the all of life and the body as the Self-lead wasted lives, live as meaningless as making God into stone.

Making the stone into God is the holier, more wholesome task.

So too, seeing divine duty (Atma-dharma) in an act transforms it into an act of worship, elevates it, and removes its binding characteristic.

Performing the duties of worldly life with no regard to genuine practice of the law of Truth (Sathyadharma) is as unholy as treating God as stone.

Dharma Vahini Chapter 2, pp. 13-14
Human life is a combination of physical and spiritual aspects, which are related respectively to the head and the heart. But man follows the head and has only the physical world in view, thereby forgetting the spiritual aspect.

So long as man follows his head alone, neither he nor the society nor the country at large can attain peace and security.

Peace and security will reign supreme in this world only when man gives up body attachment and follows the principle of love that originates from his heart.

The dualities of righteousness and unrighteousness, Truth and falsehood, merit and sin, heat and cold, etc., co-exist in this creation of God.

People want adharma (unrighteousness) to be eradicated completely from this world. They want only dharma to exist, but it is not possible. In this world, dharma cannot exist without adharma and vice versa. The world is a combination of dharma and adharma; it cannot exist if one of them is absent.
Man should use his power of discrimination and lead a life dedicated to dharma. There lies the secret of man’s happiness.

Man’s dharma is different from the dharma of animals. But man is unable to differentiate between the two. Man’s dharma is to adhere to the principles of Truth, Nonviolence and compassion. Man can never attain peace and security so long as he does not give up bestial qualities. Food, sleep, fear and procreation are common for men and animals.

Then, what is man’s dharma? To think that you are a human being constitutes only half of the total Truth. The other part of the Truth lies in understanding that you are not an animal. You should keep reminding yourself, “I am a human being, not an animal.” Do not stop at this stage.

Enquire further as to which sex you belong to and which stage of life you are in; Whether you are a Brahmachari, Grihastha, Vanaprastha or Sanyasin (Celibate, Householder, Recluse or Renunciant).

Follow the appropriate dharma according to the stage of your life. When you are a celibate, you should not follow the dharma of a householder.

There will be decline in morals giving rise to troubles and turmoil when man fails to adhere to the dharma appropriate to his stage of life.

Man today is unable to understand the principle of dharma corresponding to each of the four stages of life.

The code of conduct is different for different stages of life. Never be under the mistaken notion that dharma is the same for all people irrespective of their stage of life. The cause of adharma today is that man is trying to follow dharma that is not appropriate to his age or stage of life. Each should strictly adhere to the dharma corresponding to his or her age and stage of life.

Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 16/07/2000, Pranathithi Nilayam
Dharma expresses itself in a variety of forms.
Sometimes, it is known by the people who codified it, like Manu-dharma.
Sometimes it is known by the group that followed it, like caste-dharma.
Sometimes it is known by the stage of life to which it is applied, like householder-dharma.
But these are subsidiary practical details, and not the fundamental norm.
The Atma-dharma, the divine dharma, is what I am speaking about.

Practical dharma, or rules of good behaviour (achara-dharma), relates to temporary matters and problems and physical needs, to one’s passing relationships with the objective world. The very instrument of those rules, the human body, is itself not permanent, so how then can these dharmas be eternal? How can their nature be described as true? The Eternal cannot be expressed by the evanescent. Truth cannot reveal itself in untruth. Light cannot be procured from darkness. The Eternal can emerge only from the Eternal. Truth can emanate only from Truth. Therefore, the objective codes of dharma relating to worldly activities and daily life, though important in their own sphere, have to be followed with the full knowledge and consciousness of the inner basic Atma-dharma. Then only can the internal and external urges cooperate and yield the bliss of harmonious progress. If, in your daily avocations, you translate the real values of eternal dharma into love-filled acts, then your duty to the inner reality, the Atma-dharma is also fulfilled. Always build your living on the Atmic base; then, your progress is assured.

Dharma Vahini Chapter 2. pp. 11-12
That one is already liberated who tramples down egotism and declares with conviction thus:
I am not the bondsman of this body, which is the repository of all types of servitude;
The body is my bondsman.
I am the master and the manipulator of everything.
I am the embodiment of freedom.

All codes of duties must help in this process of destruction of the ego;
They should not foster it and make it grow wild.
That is the road to freedom.
If a person, finding life with the son miserable, goes to the daughter and lives in her house,
That is not winning freedom!
That is only a way of feeding the ego.

This search for sensual happiness cannot be elevated into “dharma”.
After all, what is a home for?
It is for the enjoyment of the bliss derived from the contemplation of the Lord.
It is for getting the opportunity to meditate on the Lord undisturbed.
All the rest can be ignored, but not these.
The true *dharma* of the individual is to taste the bliss, of merging with the Absolute and to attain true liberation. A person who has reached that stage can never be bound, even if put in the grimmest of prisons. On the other hand, for a person who is the slave of the body, even a blade of grass can become an instrument of death.

True *dharma* is to be immersed in *Atmic* bliss, the inner vision,
The steady faith in the identity of one’s real nature with the Absolute,
And the realisation that all is Brahman:
These four are the authentic *dharma*.

In this physical existence as particular individuals, these four are named Truth, peace, love and nonviolence (*sathya, shanthi, prema, and ahimsa*), for the convenience of practice (but yet saturated with the inner dharma of Atmic reality), so that particular individuals who are also personifications of that Absolute can follow them in daily life.

The mode of pursuit of *dharma*, now, as in the past, is to adhere to these high principles in every act and thought.

*Dharma Vahini Chapter 2. pp. 17-18*
The true strength one can have is the strength that comes from God and righteousness. You should adopt the two wings, namely the aspect of God and dharma.

Our movements in this world should be on a chariot that has two wheels - the wheels of God and of dharma. We should experience these two, God and dharma, as ideals in our life. Dharma alone is like the heart of our life. Forgetting this sacred dharma and taking to unjust behaviour will be ruining our own lives. We should pick out all the bad habits in us and abandon them. In their place, we should take the good from the characters in the Ramayana and put them into practice.

We should try and understand the good qualities of even Ravana.
It is not as if there are no good qualities in Ravana.
When he was fully immersed in the thought of God,
He was prepared to sacrifice even his entire body.
He was truly a follower of dharma and protector of dharma.
The bad qualities of Ravana did not come as natural qualities to Ravana.

All the bad qualities and bad thoughts came to Ravana because of a certain curse to which he was subjected at one time. For such a curse, his own karma was responsible.

The kind of work and karma that we do will determine the consequences.
The kind of seed that we put in will determine the tree and the fruit that we can get out of it. Unknowingly, and in some ignorance, we do some bad things. Whether we do such bad work either knowingly or unknowingly, the consequences are inevitable. This is the nature of karma.

Here is a rose flower. There is a very nice fragrance coming from this rose flower. Whether this flower is held in the left hand or in the right hand, the fragrance that we get is exactly the same. This fragrance is being given not only to us but also to all other people around us. If we hold in our hand a flower which gives a foul smell, that bad smell will be coming not only to us but also to everyone near us.

In the same manner, the bad qualities that were in Ravana were spreading and giving their evil results to the entire Lanka and they spread even to Vibhishana who was a sathwic person.

When Vibhishana went to surrender to Rama and seek his protection, people like Sugriva, Angada and others, who were with Rama, asked whether Vibhishana, who was the brother of Ravana, would also not have the same bad qualities which were characteristic of his brother. The reason for this suspicion and for getting a bad name was the company in which Vibhishana lived.

In this context:

We should take great care in choosing our company. We should take care to see that we absorb the good qualities from the society in which we live. If we join bad people and keep company with bad people, in a few days we will also get into bad habits. When we join good people and keep company with them, we will also absorb good qualities from them. The hearts of young people are tender and clean. They are like white pieces of cloth. On this white piece of cloth, whatever colour you may put, you will immediately see the colour. You must make an attempt to keep your heart sacred and join such company, which is sacred.

Summer Showers in Brindavan, 1977, pp. 176-177
**THE HEART AND THE MEANING OF DHARMA**

*Manavathva* (humanness) means the complete harmony of thought, word and deed. If there is divergence between thought, word and deed, what is the outcome? Fruitless action. What, then, is the meaning of *dharma*? It is to express in words what you think, and to act according to your words. This unity of thought, word and deed is *dharma*. Today there is no such unity in the conduct of people. The result is that the heart becomes a lump of clay. Why should the heart that is *Chinmaya* (enveloped in Consciousness) become a lump of clay? It is the selfishness and self-centredness in man that is the cause.

This self-interest should be turned towards the unsullied, the effulgent, the blissful and eternal Divine by worshipping *Hiranyagarbha* (the Lord seated in the heart) with the prayer: "*Hiranyagarbhyam Namah.*" This means that your vision should be turned towards that which is unchanging.

All the things of the world are transient and perishable. That is why, Krishna declared in the *Gita*: "Having taken birth in this impermanent and sorrow-ridden world, worship Me!"

The entire universe is subject to change sometime or other.

It is not permanent.

Only the consciousness in the heart is permanent and real.

What is done wholeheartedly by that consciousness leads to immortality.
The achievement of oneness with the *Hiranyagarbha* is like the shedding of its slough by a snake. All that is mundane drops off and only the consciousness remains. The body is impermanent. The *Hiranmaya* principle is the Reality. This reality is covered by *Maya* (delusion) like the slough, which encases the snake. This delusion is not something distinct. It is created by the individual. It arises out of ignorance.

You mistake a rope for a serpent in twilight. The mistake is due to the absence of light. When you see it with a torch, you realise that it is not a snake but a rope. The rope was there before you turned the torch on it and, What you saw was the rope in the light of the torch: There was no snake earlier or later. The appearance and disappearance of the snake were caused by delusion. The one unchanging reality was the rope.

The wise have declared: "There is only the One it is called by different names." It is changeless. Hence, the *Vedas* have declared:

"There is an effulgent, golden-hued Divine substance that is shining in the heart of everyone."

It is because of this Divine effulgence that the eyes are able to see, the ears are able to hear, and the mouth is able to speak. If that effulgence is absent, the eyes cannot see, the ears cannot hear and the mouth cannot speak.

The physical scientists have no faith in these Truths because they have made no effort to enquire into them. They are concentrating all their attention on the physical and the phenomenal world.

The researches of yesterday have become obsolete today. Science is caught up in this constant process of rejecting the old and discovering the new. But in the realm of spirituality, there is nothing like old or new. It is ever full, ever whole.

*Summer Course in Brindavan, 28/05/1991*
MODULE 2. PURIFY THE HEART THROUGH DHARMA
SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTIVITIES

Study Circle/Workshop

How does dharma purify the Spiritual Heart?
How can dharma be applied to silence unnecessary desires that arise in life?
What spiritual attitudes (or paths) can be taken to ensure that one walks through life in harmony with dharma?

What are pure/desireless actions?
How do pure actions affect health and well-being?
How do we offer actions to God?

Meditation: Send love in prayers and think kindly about, all peoples of the world. Send love to all sentient beings, for all are Atma.

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

Combine study of this module with doing selfless-service.

Personal Introspection

What are my greatest wishes? Are these wishes dharmic?
What do I want from/with God?
How can I action my dharmic goals?
What do I need to give up, to ensure success of my dharmic goals?
The *deha* (body), the *indhriyas* (senses), the *manas* (mind) and the *buddhi* (intellect) are the instruments through which man functions. The true nature of man can be understood only when the secret of each of these is understood. What is the real character of the body, the mind, the senses and the intellect? Once this is known we can discover the means to bring them under control.

**The Body**

The first *upadhi* (instrument) of man is the body.

"The etymological meaning of the word *deha* is *Dhahyathi-ithi Dhehah* (that which is burnt).

The burning does not refer only to the cremation of the body after death.

In fact, the body is all the time burning on account of worries.

The body is also called *sarira*, which means, "that which is subject to change and decay."

From childhood to youth, from youth to old age the body undergoes many changes.

The body is like a rented house.

It is also described as the Tabernacle of God. This means that it is a sacred dwelling.

Constant efforts are made to drive the tenant out of the house.

Ultimately death evicts the tenant.

Another name for the body is *kshethra* (as mentioned in the Bhagavad Gita).

The word *kshethra* has many meanings.

It may be regarded as a *Kavacham* (armour), which protects the indwelling spirit.
*Kshethra* also means that which is liable to destruction.
It also means a field (of action).
If the body is considered as a field its owner can reap only crops he cultivates in it.
If he sows sacred seeds he will reap a harvest of merit.
If he sows sinful seeds he will reap a harvest of sins.
When the body is regarded as a shrine,
It must be revered as the sacred abode of the Divine.
Religious *Kshethras* are places of pilgrimage because they are associated with Divinity.
Because the body is also the abode of the Divine it must be regarded as a *Kshethra*.
In the temple of the body the Divine Spirit is installed.
It can acquire purity and holiness only when it is purified internally and externally.
By bathing in water the body can be purified externally.
By speaking the Truth, the tongue is purified.
Through study and penance, the spirit is rendered pure.
The intellect acquires purity through *Jnana* (spiritual wisdom).

In these ways the body has to be made a fitting shrine for the Divine by pure thoughts, pure deeds and by meditation. Purity of mind, speech and body has been described as "*Trikarana Shuddhi*" (the triple purity).

The body should not be regarded as a mere conglomeration of the five elements.
Looking at it externally, it may appear as a structure of bones, flesh, blood and nerves.
Just as a temple is not a mere edifice consisting of brick and mortar but is the Abode of the Divine,
The body should also be regarded as the dwelling of the Divine Spirit.
It is, therefore, the primary duty of man to ensure that the body does not indulge in wrongful practices,
And fall a prey to falsehood and unrighteousness.
He should use the body to promote his higher human qualities and pursue the divine path.
It is for this purpose that *Yajnas, Yagas* and other religious rites have been prescribed.

**The Senses**

Next there are *Indhriyas* the sense organs. These senses pursue their own courses.
They are not easily subject to control or regulation.
They tend to go astray to any extent.
The senses are called *Mathras*. *Mathra* means that which measures or determines the quality.
The Tongue

The tongue, for instance, tastes something and declares whether it is sweet, sour or so on. The eye likewise determines whether something is beautiful and attractive or not. In this manner every sense organ in the human body judges the quality of the objects it experiences. Another meaning of Mathra is that it has to observe certain bounds or limits.

The tongue is intended to proclaim the glory of God and to speak the Truth. Instead of being used for this sacred purpose it is employed for abusing others or causing pain to them. It is a perversion of the divine purpose for which it is given.

The Nose

The indhriyas have thus got both a judging quality and a limitation. The nose, for instance, can only smell but cannot take up any other function.

The purpose of the limitation is that the nose should confine itself to the specific function of smelling what is pure or fragrant and rejecting what is impure.

The Ears

The ears, for instance, should listen to pure and holy matters and receive what delights the heart. They should not indulge in listening to words, which cause pain to the heart or affect its purity.

If the ears are used in violation of this rule and give heed to irrelevant matters and to evil gossip they become instruments for the commission of sin.

Because the indhriyas (the sense organs) are not used for the pure and sacred purposes for which the Divine has endowed man with them, they become the instruments for doing many evil things. All the sorrows and troubles man experiences are the result of abuse of sense organs. It is for this reason that in the spiritual journey one is enjoined indhriya nigraham (to control the senses) as the very first discipline.

Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 11/10/1983, Prasanthi Nilayam
SPECIFIC PATHS TO PURIFY THE HEART

There are many in the world who seek sensuous pleasures from moment to moment. Most people crave for such pleasures. This method is described in the Gita as *Preyo-Marga* (the pleasure seeking path).

**Sreyo-Marga - The Superior Righteous Path**

As against this (pleasure seeking path), there is another path, which confers the experience of Self-realisation and which transcends the senses. This is called *Sreyo-Marga* (the superior righteous path). This path is not easily intelligible to all. It is not also accessible to all. Consequently the general mass do not favour this path.

In the world, there is on the one side the attraction of the *Preyo-Marga* and on the other, the *Sreyo-Marga*. However, those who seek the pleasures of the senses take to the *Preyo-Marga*. Only the *Jnanis* (the spiritually wise persons), who are indifferent to the fleeting mundane pleasures derived from the senses, and who are austere and pure-hearted, pursue the *Sreyo-Marga*.

There is another path, which transcends the path of *preyas* (pleasure) and *sreyas* (virtue). These two paths encompass all the possible desires of human beings.
The Transcendent Path

1. Anapeksha - Freedom from Desires

Anapeksha goes beyond both of them.
Anapeksha is described as being free from desires.
But this is not wholly correct.
It is when a man gives up the feeling, in the performance of all actions, that "I am the doer"
(The sense of ego), "I am the experiencer," (the sense of fulfilment of desire),
That true Anapeksha emerges.
This means that conceit of doership and the sense of enjoyment of desired things
Should be wholly renounced.
This is the true state of Anapeksha (desirelessness).
It is only when all actions are done as an offering to God that Anapeksha prevails.
When such a feeling fills the heart of the devotee, the Divine confers beatitude on him.
Such a devotee is dear to the Lord.

If you want to earn the love of the Lord, you have to render service to anyone, anywhere, as an
offering to the Lord.

Suchi - Purity

The second quality is Suchi (Purity).
There should be both inner and outer purity.
Bodily purity relates to the physical.
It covers such cleansing acts as bathing, wearing clean clothes, eating pure food and the like.
Even in studies, the books should be wholesome and elevating.
But mere external cleanliness without internal purity is of no value.

Everyone, from the scholar to the common man, is concerned only about external cleanliness and not
about the purity of the heart within.

However pure the ingredients may be, if the vessel in which they are cooked is not clean,
The food will be spoiled.
For a man, his heart is the vessel, and he must see that it is kept pure and untainted.
For the purification of the heart, everyone must undertake selfless-service.
Attachments and aversions, which pollute the mind, should be eschewed by concentrating on Seva. It is only when the heart is pure that selfless-service can be performed. Hence both bodily and mental purity are essential for a good devotee.

**Daksha - Penance**

The third quality is Daksha. This means that everyone should regard his life as a form of penance. Everyone must have a Daksha (firm resolution) that as long as life lasts, He will dedicate himself to the service of his fellow men. Thereby he will realise his oneness with all mankind. Such a feeling of unity will lead to God-realisation. Service is the only way to get rid of selfishness and self-centredness. A devotee who has resolved upon such service is dear to the Lord.

**Udaseenatha - Indifference**

The fourth quality is Udaseenatha. This means indifference towards sorrow and joy, loss or gain, honour or dishonour. You must be concerned only to see whether your actions are pure and selfless, According to your conscience. Nothing else matters - neither the praise nor the blame of other people. When your conscience tells you that what you are doing is good, You may go ahead regardless of the opinion of others, Whether they are your kinsmen, friends or others. This is the true meaning of Udaseena (indifference). You should not be swayed by fears or threats. In this context, it is advisable for sevaks to keep away from politics. Sometimes, out of a desire for recognition or publicity, One may be tempted to cultivate men in power. This temptation corrupts your mind. By developing the Udaseenatha (spirit of indifference) in its best sense, You must seek to serve all with a feeling of love. "Indifference" should not assume the form of arrogance or ostentatious condescension. Adhere to what is right and turn away from what is bad. That is the highest Udaseenatha.
5. Gathavyathah - Free from worry

The next quality is Gathavyathah (free from worry).
This means that there should be no worry regarding what is past.
A man with worries can never accomplish anything.
One should not worry about what is past or what is in the womb of the future.
It is such worry that is the cause of all of man's troubles.
There is no meaning in worrying about the unknown future.
Keeping the present in view, men should engage themselves in right actions.
The past and the future are in the present.
Devotees who do their duty in the present are dear to the Lord.

6. Sarvarambha Parithyagi - Renunciation of all undertakings

The sixth quality is Sarvarambha Parithyagi (renunciation of all undertakings).
This means that there should be no ostentation or showing off in any undertaking by a devotee.
Unless ostentation is given up, egoism will not go.
The ego must be eliminated for purifying the heart.
No good deed can be done without purity in the heart.
It is through sacred deeds that the heart is purified.

Ostentation is a demonic quality.
It encourages egoism and megalomania.
One should seek to acquire a good name through selfless-service alone.
It should be done with humility and sincerity.
One who aspires to become a national leader must first know how to render service.
He should not seek office or position.
The Sai organizations have been set up for rendering service and not to establish official positions.
Seva should be done out of a sense of duty.

Seva brings out all that is great in man.
It broadens the heart and widens one's vision.
It fills one with joy.
It promotes unity.
It proclaims the Truth of the Spirit.
It drives out all the evil qualities in a man.
It must be regarded as a great spiritual discipline.
You are born to serve, not to dominate.
Everyone in the world is a servant and not a master.
All relationships - husband and wife, mother and child, the employer and employee,
Are based on mutual service.
The world is progressing because of such mutual service.
If the principle of service did not operate, the world would come to a halt.

Do you regard an "officer" as a superior?
It is not so.
Even he is a servant.
It is only when man is filled with the spirit of service that his divine nature is revealed.
He then experiences the peace that passes understanding.

What is the reason for the lack of peace in the world today?
It is because there is no harmony in thought, word and deed in the lives of the people.
Peace must begin in the family, in the home.
When there is understanding and harmony in the family,
Peace will spread to the community and from there to the nation and the world.
Hence unity is the primary need today.
Unity confers joy and peace.

Transformation must begin with the individual.
When the individual changes, the world will change.
This transformation has to take place in the minds of men.
Right thoughts will lead to right actions.
That is why the scriptures have declared that the mind is the cause of man's bondage or liberation.

INNER AND OUTER PURITY FOR HEALTH

Both inner and outer purity are essential for man's physical and mental health. Most people are concerned about external physical cleanliness. People tend to ignore inner cleanliness in the belief that the heart and mind are not visible to others. They should realise that the physical body is made up of five elements, and will return to the dust sometime or other. It is the state of the spirit that is important. Even the body should be regarded as the abode of the Spirit and cared for as such.

To ensure perfect health, it is essential to get rid of internal impurities and take in only wholesome food. Equally for preserving mental health, similar twofold action is necessary. The ills that afflict the mind have to be got rid of by eliminating bad thoughts and purifying the mind.

Man's destiny is determined by his actions. Through righteous actions, the mind is purified and a pure mind results in an awakening of jnana (spiritual wisdom). When you offer worship to God in the morning, you must offer your obeisance to whatever work you propose to do. You must pray to the presiding deity of Karma:

"Let me do today only pure, purposeful and helpful actions."

The circumstances of one's birth are a result of past actions.
Karma (action), Janma (birth), Dharma (righteousness) and the Marma (secret of life) are all connected with Brahman. They are like the four walls of a building.

The first wall is Karma (action).
One should not act as his fancies dictate.
Before doing anything, one should consider whether it is proper or improper.
Nothing should be done in haste on the impulse of the moment.
Only then will one's actions be Sathwic and free from Rajasic and Thamasic stains.

Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 03/05/1987, Brindavan
Man always craves for bliss. The first requisite for achieving *Brahmananda* (Supreme Bliss) is a pure heart. Man’s heart, which should be white like milk in its purity, is today filled with bad thoughts and feelings. Spiritual *sadhana* begins with the purification of the heart and transforming it into an ocean of milk. When the heart is filled with *sathwic* qualities, it becomes like a milky ocean. Only then does it become a worthy dwelling for the Lord (Vishnu), whose abode is described as *Ksheerasagara* (the Ocean of Milk).

By yielding to *Thamasic* and *Rajasic* impulses, man today has turned his heart into *Ksharasagara* (an ocean of salt). In the saltish ocean, we have sharks and whales. Likewise, in the heart of the evil-minded, bad qualities like lust, anger, greed and envy flourish. It is folly to give room to such evil forces; they must be removed totally, so that the Lord may find His rightful place in a heart that is pure and holy, filled with *Sathwic* qualities. Each one should perpetually examine whether good thoughts and impulses are growing in his heart, or whether bad thoughts are getting rooted. While doing daily worship, one should invoke the presence of various deities through appropriate *mantras* (holy sound formulae). Simultaneously, one should call upon the demoniac forces to quit the place.

*Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 03/05/1987, Brindavan*
PURIFYING THE HEART THROUGH DESIRELESS ACTIONS

Whatever scriptures one may study, whatever sadhanas (spiritual efforts) one may practise, or pilgrimages one may make, unless one succeeds in getting rid of the impurities in the heart, life will remain worthless and meaningless.

Purification of the heart is the essence of all scriptural teachings and the basic goal of life.

In this context, the Gita refers to Swadharma (duties that accord with one's Atmic nature) and Paradharma (duties of the body, prescribed for others) and says that Swadharma is conducive to the ennobling of the individual, while Paradharma is fraught with fearful consequences.

Swadharma nidhanam shreyah Paradharma bhayavaha,
"Adhering to one's dharma is commendable, while practising Paradharma is full of dangers."
Swadharma does not mean the dharma (duty) relating to any caste, community, race or religion.
Swa means Atma.
It is the dharma that is related to Atma, that is Swadharma (Divine duty).
Paradharma is dharma related to the body consciousness.
All duties associated with the external world are comprised in Paradharma.
These duties will inevitably involve one in the bonds of Samsara (worldly life).
Though they may confer temporary pleasures they are bound to result in fear and anxiety. In performing Yagas, Yajnas and other Vedic rituals, there is the danger that they may become instruments of bondage. We must ensure that in performing these good deeds, we do not develop ego or attachment.

When anything is done with attachment or desire, it results in actions, which lead to rebirth. Yagas and Yajnas are expected to take one to Swarga (heaven). But how long can the stay in heaven last? When the fruits of the good deeds have been enjoyed, one has to be born again on earth. "Ksheene punye marthya lokam vishanthi" (When the accumulated merit is exhausted, one re-enters the mortal world).

One must therefore seek what is permanent and eternal.
That can be realised only through nishkama karma (desireless action).
Every action done without ego leads to divinity.
Ignoring this Truth, man indulges in meaningless actions.
People recite the Gita, achieve proficiency in expounding it, but do not live up to the message.
The Gita is interpreted in many ways, according to one's whims and fancies.
The Gita and other scriptural texts are like the Kalpavriksha (the Wish Fulfilling Tree).
They lend themselves to varied interpretations and meanings.

But, what matters is not the manifold interpretation, but the understanding derived from actual experience. Without putting into practice the teachings of the Gita, we cannot derive the bliss that can be got from it. Reciting the Gita endlessly or listening to it will be of no avail if nothing is done to purify one's heart and get rid of evil qualities like ego, selfishness and pride.

It is better to put into practice a single stanza of the Gita than to get by heart all the 700 slokhas. No spiritual study or sadhana can help to purify one's heart unless one makes the effort himself. When the heart is purified, it becomes a worthy abode for the Divine. Whatever you do you must regard it as a duty done without any motive of self-interest or selfish gain.

It is only when all actions- whether they be Yagas or Yajus or Thapas or any kind of sadhana are done as offerings to the Divine, will they become sanctified and liberating. Through Icchashakthi karmas (desire filled actions) we take birth, through anasakthi karmas (desireless actions) we can attain freedom from re-birth.

Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 28/09/1984, Puttaparthi
I may refer you to the game of football, where some children are on one side and others are on the other side. There will be say, six children playing on one side and six on the other side. They have a ball put in the centre. This ball will be hit by the players who play on one side and the players who play on the other side. Not only will they have two fixed boundaries, two limits, on either side but also a rule that the game should be played within the limits which have been accepted on both sides.

Today, in the world, every man and every woman is continuously playing football during his life. Our heart is the football ground. It is not the physical heart but the spiritual heart. In this playground of our spiritual heart, on one side are the arishadvargas or the six bad qualities.

These six bad qualities are kama, krodha, lobha, moha, mada, and matsarya. That is lust, anger, greed, attachment, arrogance and jealousy.

On the other side are the six other players, Sathya, dharma, shanthi, prema along with two others ahimsa and poornathwa, that is, nonviolence and fullness.

These two contestants are having the ball, which is life, right between them. The good people are hitting the ball and the bad people are also hitting the ball. But the situation now is that we are not able to decide who is going to get the victory.
The bad people are having physical strength and the good people are having divine strength.

We also have to ask ourselves, while this game of football is going on in the field of the heart, what the two limits are, the boundaries which we talked of beyond which the ball should not be hit?

They are the Dharma Vidya and the Brahma Vidya.

That is, the education relating to our conduct in this world and the education relating to our conduct in the other world. These two are the limits within which the ball has to be kept. If during the play, we hit the ball such that it goes out of these two boundaries that we have established, we would only be scoring a fault as we will send the ball outside the limits of the court.

The essence of all the Vedas, what is being taught by all the Vedas, comes from within man. It is not coming from anywhere outside.
In the context of our belief that God is omnipresent,
That God is present in front of you, inside you and outside you;
There is no need for you to give any special importance to what comes from outside.
You will have to believe that everything is contained within yourself.

On account of ignorance, on account of some illusion and also due to some of your actions in past births,

You are thinking that there is something which is coming from outside into yourself which has got some sanctity. This is not correct. It is only when you are able to overcome this ignorance, it is only when you are able to throw away this illusion that there is something sacred which is coming from outside, then alone can you realise your own real nature.

Summer Showers in Brindavan, 1972 pp. 48-49
Through right action one achieves purity of heart, which leads to the acquisition of *jnana* (the higher spiritual knowledge).

When right action is coupled with *Jnana*, there is true service.

To feel that one should be the sole enjoyer of the results of one's actions is a sign of selfishness.

It is naive to think that one alone is the doer of one's actions.

All the things in the world are not intended for the exclusive enjoyment of any single person;

They are to be shared by all.

It is only when attachment to the fruits of one's actions is discarded that the action becomes *yoga* (Divine communion). Members of the *Seva Dal* (service workers) should overcome the sense of 'mine' and 'thine.' When they embark on service activities, they should regard it as a privilege to serve others and look upon it as a form of worship of the Divine. They should look upon service to society as the means of finding self-fulfilment in life. They should face whatever problems may arise with faith and courage and carry on their service activities without fanfare in a spirit of humility and dedication.

In the Sai organisation there is no room for distinctions of race, religion, caste, class, or community, all should regard themselves as the children of one God. When they are united by this sense of divine kinship, they will act with Love towards all. They should shed all narrow and limited ideas and engage themselves in
service with a heart full of love for all. True seva (selfless-service) can come only out of a pure and loving heart.

There are any number of service organisations in the world. The uniqueness of the Sathya Sai Seva Organisation consists in the fact that it regards seva as a form of service to the Divinity that is in each being. The bliss that is derived from such service is incomparable. It is a spiritual experience.

You should not be content with what you have accomplished so far. You should do a great deal more to make this great country an exemplar to the world of the great ideals of its seers and sages. Bharath should be made the land of thyaga (sacrifice) and not bhoga (indulgence in luxury). Thyaga is yoga. Bhoga is roga (disease). To live up to the ideal of thyaga is your duty today.

In the world today one does not see anywhere unity or love.
Life appears to be a totally mechanical affair.
Man does not mean merely the external appearance of a human being.
We should have the conviction that he is a soul dwelling in a body.
This may be an act of faith.
But without such faith life has no meaning.
Today we believe in things that should not be believed,
And have no belief in the things in which we ought to believe.
We should have faith in ourselves.
We should understand our true nature and rectify our failings.
Discovering our true self, we should live up to its demands.

Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 18/11/1984, Prasanthi Nilayam
There was a woman devotee, who was a worshipper of Krishna. Every morning she used to clean the Krishna shrine in her house with cow dung and throw the remnants of the cow dung outside saying "Krishnarpanam Asthu" ("Let this be an offering to Krishna").

The priest of the local Krishna temple noticed that every morning, after he had washed and decorated the idol of Krishna with garlands, when he was offering harathi (waving of lights) to the deity, a small lump of cow dung used to fall on the face of the idol. He was deeply distressed over this strange phenomenon and told the village elders about it. They also witnessed the phenomenon in the temple and sent a vigilance squad to find out who was throwing cow dung at that time.

In one street a scout found a woman throwing cow dung outside her house, uttering the word "Krishnarpanam." It was found that at the same time she was throwing cow dung, the apparent desecration of the idol by cow dung was taking place in the temple.

The Lord is not concerned what (items are) is offered to Him. He accepts whatever is offered to Him with a pure heart. In His eyes there is nothing good or bad in itself. When the woman devotee offered the cow dung as Krishnarpanam (offering to Krishna), it reached the Krishna idol.
The village elders went to the lady and reproached her for her unbecoming conduct in offering cow dung to Krishna. They did not consider how the cow dung thrown outside her house reached the temple. They thought only of the cow dung as such and did not reckon with the power and intensity of the devotion behind the devotee’s action.

The elders summoned the husband and other relations of the old woman to hold an enquiry. The woman pleaded before them: “I am incapable of hurling cow dung on the face of my Krishna. I am ready to lay down my life for Krishna.”

The elders told her to throw the cow dung and not to utter the words “Krishnarpanam Asthu.” At the instance of her husband and other relations, she agreed to this course.

But from that day onwards, the doors in the Krishna temple would not open however much the priest and others tried to open them. The village elders realised that they had done a grievous wrong to a great devotee and pleaded for pardon from her. That moment the temple doors opened.

The ways of devotees can be understood only by devotees. Others cannot understand them. Phenomena such as these are happening all over Bharat. It is because of such devotion that Bharat has remained a holy land through the ages.

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When one offers everything to God, the Lord submits Himself to the devotee. The old woman who did everything as an offering to Krishna was such a devotee. The words "Krishnarpanam" were on her lips all the time. But they were said with deep and genuine devotion.

Merely mechanical repetition of "Krishnarpanam" will have no significance. Engaging priests in temples to perform worship by offering money is totally wrong. Such worship is a mercenary exercise and does no good to the persons who get it done. The proper thing is for devotees to offer worship wholeheartedly in their own homes.

Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 03/05/1987, Brindavan
In the sacred field of the heart, you will find a *Kalpavriksha*,

The tree that gives you all you want.

Around this tree will grow an enormous number of weeds.

If you can remove these weeds,

You will get the vision of this boon-giving tree in the field of your heart.

This is called *Atma*.

In order that we may experience this *Atma Thathwa*, we only have to undertake certain types of actions that are related to the *dharmic* way of life.

Some people say that all the *karmas* that we do are different aspects of *dharma*. But it is not possible that all *karmas* are aspects of *dharma*. Yet others say only work which is *Sathwic* or relates to *Nivrithi*, can be called *dharmic karma*.

Since we are told that the *karma*, either *sathwic* or not, related to worldly matters can alone be described as *dharmic*, we should here make some enquiry. At times we are kind to individuals and at other

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2 *Kalpavriksha* Devangari: is a wish-fulfilling divine tree common in Sanskrit literature from the earliest sources onwards – see Rig Veda (1.75; 17.26). Along with the *kamadhenu*, or ‘wish-giving cow’, the *kalpavriksha* originated during the *Samuda manthan* or ‘churning of the ‘ocean of milk’ ‘ and the King of the gods, Indra returned with it to his paradise.
times we even kill our enemies in a battle. These are also karmas. In order to protect this body, which is ultimately responsible for the performance of karma, we do many kinds of work.

Work to fulfil our sensuous desires cannot be treated as related to dharma.
It is only when you remove selfishness and various kinds of desires from your mind while working,
Can that work be described as an aspect of dharma.
We can regard such karma as fulfilling the dictates of divine dharma.
Such actions will also help the individual to advance spiritually.

Although dharma reveals the notion of oneness to one and all,
Yet in practice it varies in different countries, with different individuals, and in different epochs.
If mind concerns itself with worldliness,
Then it is separated from the light of the Atma and this separation causes mental perturbation.

In order to have a vision of God you have to purify the inner instruments and conduct a virtuous life.

We should keep our intelligence disengaged from the worldly issues.
Intelligence should not be made a tool to satiate physical and mental obsessions.
On the other hand, it should be used for the revelation of Atma.
It should only be a witness and remain unaffected by the surroundings.
Then it is in a state of Nivrithi.
In this context, sacrifice of work cannot be something that relates to Nivrithi.
Sacrifice of one’s desires alone can be associated with Nivrithi.

People sometimes refer to the Karma Phala Thyaga (renunciation of the fruits of action) and say that one has to sacrifice the result of whatever work one does. If this is so, they argue that no work need be done at all and they assert that this is what Bhagavad Gita teaches us. Nothing can be farther from truth. No one can sacrifice all work and yet live. The body has been created for doing work. Therefore everyone must perform work. But in doing such work, if your thoughts are sacred, you will do good work without seeking the fruit thereof.

Some weak-minded people desire to sacrifice the body in their devotion. This is a poor sacrifice and this cannot lead them towards the goal. Your attempt should be to remain unaffected by the surroundings. On the other hand, if you sacrifice your body, you may again be reborn to do the same karma.

Summer Showers in Brindavan, 1973, pp. 249-252
64
THE SUPREME DEVOTION OF VIBHISHANA

When divine feelings do not surge in the heart,
Man becomes infected with two flaws.
He conceals his countless blunders,
And He criticises even minor mistakes of others.

The portraits of two personalities are very striking in the Ramayana. They are those of Sugriva and Vibhishana. Vibhishana went in quest of Rama, while Rama Himself went in search of Sugriva. Sugriva realised Rama’s greatness and goodness only after meeting Him, while Vibhishana knew of Rama’s excellence even before he met Him.

The Kurukshetra war lasted for eighteen days, but the war between Rama and Ravana lasted for seventy-five days. Though the warfare, in a physical sense, lasted for seventy-five days at Lanka, the inner war between Rama and Ravana, the Pandavas and the Kauravas, Truth and untruth, and righteousness and unrighteousness is being fought endlessly in the human heart. No one can tell for certain when the conflict and the clash between the positive and the negative forces will come to an end.

It is not possible for everyone to understand Divinity. The one who misappropriates the wife of another and the one who mocks the noble ones can never understand Divinity. Only those who are pure and compassionate can hope to understand Divinity.
Indrajit, the eldest son of Ravana, was bent upon burning Rama to ashes by performing certain sacrifices and rituals. The magic tricks employed by Indrajit wrought much havoc and confusion amongst Rama’s army. Vibhishana who was well versed in the tricks of the demons, employed counter tricks and nullified the power of their magic rituals.

Vibhishana drew the attention of Rama and Lakshmana to the blackberry tree under which Indrajit performed the magic rituals. The entire place under the tree was littered with bodies of sacrificed humans. Vibhishana cautioned Rama and Lakshmana about the magic practices of Indrajit and told them that they should see to it that Indrajit was drawn away from that tree. He informed them that Indrajit’s power and strength multiplied immensely when he was in the proximity of that tree.

Indrajit who watched Vibhishana helping Rama’s forces on the battlefield, raged in fury. His fury increased when he found Lakshmana coming toward him, carried on the shoulders of Hanuman, and guided by Vibhishana. He said to Vibhishana, “You are the betrayer of Lanka, you are the destroyer of your own people.”

Vibhishana retorted, “Indrajit, it is a quality of bad people to waste time by indulging in tall and unnecessary talk. Many a time I advised your father Ravana to desist from evil ways. But he never paid heed to me. I tried to put sense into the head of your father by advising him that it is a sin to misappropriate another’s wife. I also told him that he would bring dire disaster to himself and his people by resorting to adharma. I forewarned your father, in the presence of Kumbhakarna and Surpanakha. It is your father who, by deliberately indulging in evil, has brought himself and Lanka to this state. My good words had no effect. To your father, unrighteousness is the dearest thing. Untruth is his joy; wickedness is his life. How can the heart of a person, which is laden with so much evil, ever change? It is your father who is the architect of this misfortune to Lanka. The destruction of Lanka is his own doing. I am in no way the cause for all this.”

Unconvinced by these words, Indrajit screamed, “If you did not want to support my father, you could have at least remained neutral without joining the ranks of the enemy.”

To this Vibhishana replied, “You don’t have the wisdom to distinguish between Truth and untruth, righteousness and unrighteousness. Having realised the difference between them, I joined the side of Sri Rama. It is unjust and unrighteous on the part of a person to remain neutral when dharma is in danger. Society should be saved from Ravana. I enjoy the divine proximity of Rama and that is my greatest treasure.”

*Summer Showers in Brindavan, 1996 pp. 92-94*
DUTY FULFILLED THROUGH DHARMA

Krishna talking to Arjuna said, “The foremost duty of a Kshatriya is to stay on the side of Dharma and destroy Adharma. Consider your good fortune! You have on this battlefield worthy foemen like Bhishma and others. This same Bhishma fought in the past with his own Guru, the Brahmin, who taught him all the arts, the great Parasurama himself, in order, primarily, to carry out his Kshatriya duty. And now you, like a coward, are afraid to take arms against such stalwarts. A Kshatriya finds his duty fulfilled when he upholds the cause of Dharma, in spite of all odds. That is the path of progress.

“Kshatham means ‘Dukham’ (sorrow), and a Kshatriya is he who saves beings from sorrow. A chance like this to wage a war on behalf of dharma against the forces of Adharma comes but rarely to man. You have been blessed as a Kshatriya to take part in this Dharmayuddha. Just imagine how much merit you will acquire by the service to the world, which you are set to do now.

“The war that is waged to establish Shanthi and Soukhya (peace and plenty) in the world is referred to as Dharmayuddha, and this is just such a struggle, where Justice is bound to win. The Kauravas have desisted from no sin, no injustice and no vice. They insulted elders, deserted the virtuous, defamed the chaste, and wounded the self-respect of the good. Countless are their misdeeds. Now, the moment for retribution has come. They are about to answer for all their crimes. Just at this hour, if you behave like a poltroon, you bring dishonour to your parents, your brothers and indeed to the entire Kshatriya caste! You imagine that it is a sin to engage in war. That is a great error. The sin, on the other hand, lies in avoiding the
chance to destroy the wicked, in prolonging the agony of the virtuous. Give up your Dharma now...and you run the risk of falling into perdition. Hold fast to it, and you are untouched by sin. Be of fixed mind. Do not give way to either one or the other among all the dualities of the world.”

From the 31st Sloka of this chapter, Krishna has spoken of this Swadharmanishta, in eight slokas.

One should engage in activity, with a mind steady in the midst of fortune, good and bad. This was what Krishna advised in the 37th sloka. The 39th is a transitional verse for after speaking of “Esha thebhihitha samkhya” (I have described to you the Samkhya arguments), Krishna says that He will go on to teach him the Yoga Buddhi or Buddhi Yoga and asked him to listen with care.

When the desire to attain the fruit of action is renounced with full intellectual awareness, then, it becomes what Krishna calls, “Buddhiyogam.” The intellect has to be purified and trained. Otherwise, it is impossible to give up attachment to the fruits of action and to continue doing things, as either duty or dedication. Such a purified intellect is named “Yoga Buddhi.” Cultivate it and then, through it, liberate yourself from the bondage of karma.

Really speaking, you, the true you are above and beyond karma.

You might say that you will desist from karma rather
Than practise the difficult discipline of renouncing the fruits thereof.
But that is impossible.
No, Karma is inevitable.
One has to do some karma or other.
Not for a single moment can one free oneself from karma

“Nahi kaschith kshanamapi” says Krishna, in the third Chapter of the Gita.

“Arjuna! Every karya (deed) or karma (activity) has a beginning and an end. But Nishkama Karma (desireless karma) has no such. That is the difference between the two. When karma is done with a view to the gain there from, one has to suffer the loss, the pain, and even the punishment. But Nishkama Karma frees you from all these. Desire the fruits of karma, and you get born again and again, caught up in that desire.
Give up that desire, you are liberated from the flux. The practice of this type of renunciation ends the state of bondage. The main point is to stick to the goal. The goal is karma, not Karmaphala (Fruit of action). Let me tell you that the desire or the fruit of one’s acts is an indication of Rajo Guna (passion), which does not befit you. Perhaps you will prefer to remain inactive. That is an indication of Thamo Guna (dullness, ignorance)! It is even worse than Rajo Guna.”
The Lord has laid down four commands: the first one a “do” and the other three “don’ts.” The first is insisting on the cultivation of strength, the rest requiring the avoidance of weakness. Of course, it is not Arjuna alone that got such advice. The whole of mankind needs it. Arjuna is only the representative of man. Students of the Gita must learn this lesson first: that the Gita is primarily for every seeker.

Another point to be noted is this: Gita is addressed to Man, not to birds and beasts or to the gods or devathas. Man performs acts prompted by the desire for the fruits thereof. If the act does not yield fruit, he will not do the act at all. Profit, gain, reward and result - these man seeks. But this rule does not apply to those who take the Gita in their hands to drink the nectar of the Lord’s Message. Not all do yearn for the nectar.

If you do so, it is evident that you aspire for eternal joy, eternal liberation. Then you must pay the price, the giving up of the desire for the fruit of action, and dedicate everything at the Feet of the Lord.

Gita Vahini, pp. 39 - 43
SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTIVITIES

Study Circle/Workshop

How can one see all events in life, good and bad, as gifts of God?
How can the Gayatri Mantra help me to clarify spiritual goals?
What is the special dharma of women?
Discuss the inspirational example of dharma in famous women.

Meditation: Send love in prayers and think kindly about, all peoples of the world. Send love to all sentient beings, for all are Atma.

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

Combine study of this module with doing selfless-service.

Personal Introspection

Also Revisiting Module 1, what is my own dharma - my duty in life?
Do I always do my duty with a pure heart, as a dedication to God?
What spiritual guidance/assistance/education to help me fulfil my dharma?
Very often people who experience troubles in life complain: "Why is the Lord subjecting me to trials like these?"

The Truth is, the Lord neither punishes nor rewards anyone. The devotee has only to do his duty and leave the results to God. If the actions are good, the fruits will also be good. If the actions are bad, the results will be equally bad. Hence without examining the nature of one's actions, there is no meaning in blaming God for what one experiences.

One devotee has been said to exclaim: “Oh Lord! Among the millions of beings on earth, how will your eyes fall on me? You are not looking at me at all. Won't you see me?”

The devotee heard a voice saying: “Oh devotee! You are immersed in so many activities that you have hardly set your eyes upon Me. You have hardly devoted any thought to Me. Who, then, has forgotten whom? Is it you or I?”

People are involved in mundane concerns and are deeply immersed in worldly activities. All their thoughts relate to these actions. They worry about some relation or friend in some distant corner of the
world, but cannot think of God who is so near to them. And when they are in trouble, they wail: “Oh Lord, hast thou forgotten me?”

It is only when you recognise your own faults that you begin to understand the ways of the Divine. What we witness today is the tendency to forget one's faults And go about blaming God for one's sufferings. Every action, however small or trivial, has its reaction. Nothing happens without a cause. Every object has its reflection. The Lord awards fruits according to ones actions. Good actions earn good returns. Bad actions result in bad consequences. That is why the Lord is described as Karmaphala pradhata (the dispenser of the fruits of action).

Sathya Sai Baba Discourse 03/05/1987, Brindavan
Whatever scriptures one may study, whatever sadhanas (spiritual efforts) one may practise or pilgrimages one may make, unless one succeeds in getting rid of the impurities in the heart, life will remain worthless and meaningless. Purification of the heart is the essence of all scriptural teachings and the basic goal of life.

In this context, the Gita refers to Swadharma (duties that accord with one's nature) and Paradharma (duties prescribed for others) and says that Swadharma is conducive to the ennobling of the individual, while Paradharma is fraught with fearful consequences. Swadharma nidhanam shreyah Paradharma bhayavaha, "Adhering to one's dharma is commendable, while practising Paradharma is full of dangers."

Swadharma does not mean the dharma (duty) relating to any caste, community, race or religion. Swa means Atma. It is the dharma that is related to Atma, that is Swadharma (Divine duty). Paradharma is dharma related to the body consciousness.

All duties associated with the external world are comprised in Paradharma. These duties will inevitably involve one in the bonds of Samsara (worldly life). Though they may confer temporary pleasures they are bound to result in fear and anxiety.

In performing Yagas, Yajnas and other Vedic rituals, there is the danger that they may become instruments of bondage. We must ensure that in performing these good deeds, we do not develop ego or attachment.
When anything is done with attachment or desire, it results in actions that lead to rebirth. *Yagas* and *Yajnas* are expected to take one to *Swarga* (heaven).

But how long can the stay in heaven last?

When the fruits of the good deeds have been enjoyed, one has to be born again on earth.

"*Ksheene punye marthya lokam vishanthi*"

(When the accumulated merit is exhausted, one re-enters the mortal world).

One must therefore seek what is permanent and eternal.

That can be realised only through *nishkama karma* (desireless action).

Every action done without ego leads to divinity.

Ignoring this Truth, man indulges in meaningless actions.

People recite the Gita, achieve proficiency in expounding it, but do not live up to the message.

The Gita is interpreted in many ways, according to one's whims and fancies.

The Gita and other scriptural texts are like the *Kalpavriksha* (the Wish-fulfilling Tree).

They lend themselves to varied interpretations and meanings.

What matters is not the manifold interpretation, but the understanding derived from actual experience.

Without putting into practice the teachings of the Gita,

We cannot derive the bliss that can be got from it.

Reciting the Gita endlessly or listening to it will be of no avail if nothing is done to purify one's heart and get rid of evil qualities like ego, selfishness and pride. It is better to put into practice a single stanza of the Gita than to get by heart all the 700 *slokas*.

No spiritual study or sadhana can help to purify one's heart unless one makes the effort himself.

And when the heart is purified, it becomes a worthy abode for the Divine.

Whatever you do you must regard it as a duty done without any motive of self-interest or selfish gain.

It is only when all actions- whether they be *Yagas* or *Yajus* or *Thapas* or any kind of *sadhana* are done as offerings to the Divine, will they become sanctified and liberating. Through *Iccha-shakthi karmas* (desire filled actions) we take birth, through *anasakthi-karmas* (desireless actions) we can attain freedom from rebirth.

*Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 28/09/1984 Prasanthi Nilayam*
The Feminine Principle is spoken of as the illusion imposed upon Himself by the Lord, as the energy with which He equipped Himself out of His own will. This is the maya, the feminine form. This is why woman is considered as the embodiment of the highest energy (Parasakthi Swarupa). She is the faithful companion of man, his fortune; since she is the concretization of the will of the Lord, she is mystery, wonder, the representative of the protective principle, queen of his home, his beneficence, and the illumination of the house. Women, who are the repositories of the embodiment of energy (shakthi swarupa), are in no way inferior; how full of fortitude, patience, and love is their nature! Their self-control is seldom equalled by men. They are the exemplars and leaders for men to tread the spiritual path. Pure selfless love is inborn in women. Women who are full of knowledge, who are cultured, who are bound by love, and who are keen on discriminating whether their words and deeds are in conformity with dharma - such women are like the goddess Lakshmi, bringing joy and good fortune to the home. That home, where husband and wife are bound together by holy love, where every day both are engaged in the reading of books that feed the soul, where the name of the Lord is sung and His glory remembered - that home is really the home of the Lord, Vaikunta! The woman who is attached to her husband by means of love is indeed a flower radiating rare perfume; she is a precious gem, shedding lustre in the family. A wife endowed with virtue is really a brilliant jewel.³

³ See Chapter 4 of Dharma Vahini, ‘Masculine and Feminine Natures’ for more on the dharma of women.
Education is necessary for both men and women. 
But education for women has to be in accordance with their special needs. 
Educated women are really the promoters of dharma for the whole world. 
Parents must also cooperate in equipping women with proper education. 
Women should not be given freedom in certain matters. 
I will not approve of their being given such freedom. 
They must be made into ideal women; 
Their education must be so shaped.

Unbridled freedom is destructive of dharma, and it also harms the woman herself. 
Mixing in society without any discrimination produces ruinous results. 
Of course there were educated women in the past, 
But they never gave up their dharma, they never forgot the goal of Atmic dharma. 
Education (Vidya) must be built on the basis of discrimination (viveka).

Sulabha, Savithri, Anasuya, Gargi, Nalayani, and other such models of chastity, devotees of the Lord like Meera, yoginis like Chudala, all were born in this country of God (Bharathadesa) and strengthened dharma by their adherence to it.
Once, when Sulabha was discoursing on the *Atma* with all her scholarship and experience, even Janaka was astounded! It is through the example of such great and holy women, with their character and conduct inspired by devotion and spiritual wisdom, that even today simplicity, humility, and devotion shine in the hearts of the women of this country of God.

Today, women should draw inspiration from them; efforts must be made to live as they did in the past. The Hindu woman must always have before her as her guide the ideal of *dharma* and progress in spiritual discipline. She can master any subject related to the objective world that is prominent today, but the welfare of the spirit should not be forgotten; she must get interested in *Vedantic* study, which cultivates the inner vision. A woman without this training is a rock without support, a danger to herself and others, a very unbalanced individual.

Sulabha and others who pursued such studies became expounders of Brahman (*Brahmavadins*) of great fame. India produced several such female saints and scholars. Learned scholars (*pundits*) and wise persons (*vidwans*) used to approach such women for inspiration and guidance.

On what is progress based? The progress of the nation, the community, and the family depends on the proper education of women. The country can be lifted to its pristine greatness only through women mastering the science of realisation of the Reality (*Atma-vidya*).

If the nation is to have lasting prosperity and peace, women have to be trained through an educational system that emphasizes moral conduct and moral qualities. The cause for the present fall in moral standards and absence of social peace is the neglect of this aspect of women’s education. The earth and sky are still the same; the change is in the ideal of education, from dharma to adharma.

_Dharma Vahini Chapter 6. pp. 39-41_
Educated women can do useful service to the community around them according to their skill, taste, inclination, desire, character, educational status, mode of living, discipline, or scholarship. But they should avoid tarnishing the reputation of their parents, their family, or themselves.

A woman without a good character is as bad as dead;
So, women must be ever vigilant when they move about in the world.
They should avoid flippant talk or free mixing.

The discriminating woman will engage only in acts that will add to the lustre of her husband’s fame and honour, never an act that will tarnish it.

That is why it is said that “virtue (sadguna) is the sign of the educated person, the thing that makes education worthwhile.”

I do not declare that women should not be educated or should not move in society. Wherever they move, if they are endowed with good qualities and if the good qualities are accompanied by good actions, good habits, and adherence to the eternal (sanathana) dharma and spiritual discipline (sadhana), then their study is really worthwhile and society is indeed benefited.

Study and society are not harmful in themselves;
They react with the nature of the people who make use of them and yield good or bad results.
The cat holds the kitten as well as the rat in the same mouth, but with what a difference!
The kitten, it fondles;
The rat, it kills.
The bite is neutral;
The rat or kitten decides how it behaves.

So too, knowledge can develop discrimination, inspire the springs of service, prompt inquiry into the Reality, promote the search for the Absolute, and even pave the way for becoming a sage (*paramahamsa*). On the other hand, it might feed and strengthen the roots of falsehood, hypocrisy, cruelty, and injustice; it might teach people newer means of deceit and ruin the career of people on earth. It might turn love into poisonous hatred and Truth into a bone of contention.

Therefore, whatever the subject a woman might have studied and mastered, whatever the degree she has won, whatever the status of her husband or of herself, she must hold fast to these Truths:

Real charm consists in good character;
Morality is the very breath of woman;
Modesty is the very life force; adherence to Truth is her daily duty.
She must plant the seedlings of fear (of sin, of the Lord) in her heart,
And cultivate the charm of humility.
In the religious, moral, and physical fields,
She must adhere to the strict dictates of *dharma* and take that as the essence of all education (*vidya*).
She must be prepared to sacrifice even her life for the sake of maintaining honour;
She must nourish and preserve her chastity and her adoration of the husband.
This is the chief *dharma* of woman.
This is the reason for her very birth as woman.

*Dharma Vahini Chapter 6. pp 44-46*
All that is visible shines as Gayatri, for speech (vak) is Gayatri, and all objects are speech, are indicated by speech, and are subsumed in speech. It is speech that describes them, declares them, and denotes them. All objects are also of the world. Nothing can go beyond it. This world is the body of mankind. One can’t leap out of the body. The breath (prana) that sustains a person is inside the heart (hridaya), and it cannot move outside and beyond the heart.

The Gayatri has four feet and six categories. The categories are speech, objects, world, body, breath, and heart (vak, butha, prithvi, sarira, prana, and hridaya). The Supreme Being that is extolled by this Gayatri is indeed exalted, sacred and glorious. As has been said, all this objective multiplicity is but a fraction of His body. The number and nature, the measure and meaning of the objects are beyond understanding. Yet all this is but a quarter of His magnificence. The other three quarters are His effulgent immortal form. It is impossible to grasp the mystery of that splendour filled form. This Supreme Being indicated by the Gayatri is indeed referred to as Brahman.

He is the sky (akasa), beyond the comprehension of a person;
He is spoken of as “outside the personality of people” (bahirardha purushakasha).
This is the mark of the waking stage.
The Supreme Being is the sky, inside the personality (anthah purushakasha).
This is the mark of the “dream stage”.

81
He is the sky inside the heart of a person;
He fills and fulfils it.
This is the “deep-sleep stage”.
Whoever knows this Truth attains fullness and Brahman.

That is, the one who knows the three states of wakefulness, dream, and deep sleep (jagrath, swapna, and sushupti) is himself Brahman. How ridiculous it is that a person, known as a divine being and bearing the name of this embodiment of the Atma, should become the repository of egotism and consequent impurity, busy in the unholy pursuit of injustice! How calamitous! At least for being known even today as a “divine being”, one should try to practise the path that will endow one with an atom of that glory.

Then what should we say of dharma for people? How can people who have not cared to earn even the infinitesimal glory of the Primal Supreme Being be expected to practise dharma for people? Not even the most diligent search will now reveal a fraction of it! As the ancient sage (rishi) said, the twice-born who gives up the morning-evening (sandhya) worship falls into perdition. Those who neglect the morning-evening worship have no right for any other type of ritual.

_Samdhya heeno suchirnityam, anarhah sarva karmasu Yadh anyath kuruthe karmano thasya phala bhagbhaveth._ So say all the authoritative traditions (Smrithis) and Vedas. Because the sages of ancient times performed the morning-evening worship for many years they acquired long life, fame, glory, wisdom, and the splendour of divinity. Manu mentioned this also. Therefore, from whatever point of view we consider it, the Brahmin who does not meditate on the Gayatri does not deserve that status.

Of course, what Brahmin means in this context, is the one who has realized the Brahman principle (Brahmathathwa) and who has purified himself by the practice of the ceaseless contemplation of Brahman. This has nothing to do with caste or even religion. Nevertheless, those who have inherited the name Brahmin have a special responsibility to adhere to the morning-evening worship and the Gayatri

_Dharma Vahini Chapter 7, pp55-57_
All religions have laid stress on purity of heart. They have also declared that without a pure heart all spiritual exercises are valueless. How can purity of heart be realised if the mind is filled with egoism? The body can be cleaned by water. But the heart can be cleaned only by chanting the Lord's name.

Prahlada, who was the son of an Asura, Jatayu, a bird, and an animal like Gajendra, the Lord of the Elephants, redeemed themselves by relying on the Lord's name. As long as one is filled with ego and relies on his own strength, the benefit of the Lord's grace will not come to him. It is only when Gajendra declared that he knew no one other than God who could save him here or in the hereafter that the Lord rushed to his rescue.

When Draupadi was being humiliated by the Kauravas, who went to her rescue? All the prowess of her husbands could not protect her. She prayed to Krishna as her sole protector, as no relations or others could come to her aid. Men may help to relieve ordinary difficulties in life. But in times of grave crisis only Madhava (God) can save man. Believing in this, Draupadi prayed to Krishna for succour. The faith in the Lord's name saved her.
Tulsidas hailed Rama as the protector of the universe and declared that the very name Ra-a-ma represented the three powerful deities, Agni, Surya and Chandra (the Fire-God, the Sun-God and the Moon-God).

Valmiki, who was a hunter in his early life, became a sage and the author of the immortal Ramayana by meditating on the name Rama, taught to him by the Seven Sages. Association with the saintly persons and the chanting of Rama's name made him the Adikavi (the first poet).

The Lord's name is like a boat for a man crossing the ocean of life.
It is supremely important in the Kali Age.
It has been declared that there is nothing greater than the name of Hari in the Kali Age.
By no other spiritual or religious practices can peace be attained in this age.
The Divine name can turn poison into nectar.
It can revive a lifeless thing.
It is surcharged with infinite power.

Meera was so deeply immersed in chanting the name of Krishna that she was totally unmindful of where she was going and what others thought about her. Those who have firm faith in God should not bother about what others thought or said about them. They should adhere to their practices regardless of what others felt.

This applies to students when they go to their homes for the holidays, when some persons might comment about their uttering prayers before they took their meals. They should have the courage to practise what they knew to be right. They must be afraid to commit sin, but have no fear at all in chanting the name of God. The Lord's name will protect them up to the end of their lives even when all others desert them. You must practise chanting God's name from now on because no one can say when the end will come.

*Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 22/06/1989, Prasanthi Nilayam*
Meera was a devotee who had completely merged herself in Krishna consciousness. After her marriage, she requested her husband to build a temple for Krishna. The Rana built for her a temple in marble. Meera spent all the time in the temple singing bhajans (devotional songs) oblivious of the outside world. The Rana, who allowed Meera to carry on her worship of Krishna as agreed to by him before the marriage, got vexed with her complete absorption in Krishna and prohibited her from going to the temple and closed its doors to prevent her from going there.

Meera felt: "The Rana may bar me from the temple which he has built. But who can bar me from seeking the Krishna who resides in the temple of my heart?"

Meera's thoughts were centred on Krishna installed in Dwaraka. She ran towards Dwaraka through forests and hills, defying storm and rain, singing all the way and calling on "Krishna! Krishna!"

Reaching Dwaraka, she entered the temple but found the doors of the sanctum closed. Despite all her efforts, the doors would not open.

She cried out "Oh Krishna! Do you think with the cymbals in one hand and tambura in the other how can I hold your lotus feet? See, I am throwing them away. I shall not give you up and you cannot get away from me. Abandoning everything, I will cling to your feet."
Crying in anguish, Meera knocked her head against the door of the sanctum. That very moment she fell into a swoon. An effulgent flame emerged from her body and merged into the Krishna idol.

Few can understand the ways in which devotion manifests itself among the lovers of God. Human relations come and go. But the association with God is eternal.

*Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 03/05/1987, Brindavan*
When Duryodhana sought to disrobe Draupadi, the consort of Pandavas, she prayed to Krishna in various ways. Although Krishna heard her prayers, he could not respond immediately to her calls for help. The reason is the stern law of Nature.

This universal law operates always at all places and at all times.
For instance, if a man slips, he falls to the ground.
If a stone is thrown up, it comes down.
These are the results of the law of gravitation.
Whether he is a millionaire or a pauper, if his foot slips, he falls down.
That is how the laws of Nature operate, regardless of the persons.

Hearing Draupadi’s prayers, Krishna thought for a moment whether she had done any action in the past, which entitled her to secure protection in Duryodhana's assembly hall.

To merit Divine help one must have offered something or the other to God - a leaf, a flower, or a little sacred water. At the mundane level there is a simple role of give-and-take in daily life.

Krishna remembered something that Draupadi had done years ago. It was on a Sankranthi day. Krishna suffered a cut in His little finger while handling sugarcane. Immediately Rukmini sent a maid to fetch bandage cloth. Sathyabhama rushed to bring some cloth to bind the wounded finger. Draupadi who was
standing by, without hesitation, tore a piece of cloth of her sari and immediately bandaged Krishna's finger. Although what she gave was only a small bit of her sari, it was a spontaneous act of love and devotion. Krishna decided to make that little piece of cloth an endless sari. He uttered the word "Akshayam" (May it be unending). And Draupadi's sari became endless!

You feel happy when someone gives you something.
But you don't feel equally happy in giving to others.
Men desire the fruits of good actions, but will not do good actions.
They wish to be saved from the consequences of evil deeds, but will not refrain from bad actions.
As you sow, so shall you reap, is a relentless law.
You cannot escape from the consequences of your actions, whether good or bad.

If you wish to enjoy enduring happiness,
You have to fill your mind with pure thoughts and entertain fine feelings in your heart.
Through good thoughts and good kindly actions, the heart gets pure and holy.
In the journey of life, the body is like a cart and the heart is like a horse.
Unless you feed the heart well, the journey cannot proceed properly.
The heart has to be fed with good fodder -
In the form of Satsangam (good company), Satpravartana (good conduct) and good thoughts.
And whatever is done should be an offering to God.
There is a story to illustrate how God is pleased when actions are done in this spirit.

Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 03/05/1987, Brindavan
You must firmly resolve to hold on to the principle of unity and divinity.

What is the purpose of human birth?

Is it to spend your time in eating and drinking?

No, no!

You should make efforts to understand the underlying principle of unity of five elements, five senses of action, five senses of cognition and five life sheaths. If you make sincere efforts, you will certainly be able to experience the principle of unity.

Among all the living beings, only man is endowed with the ability to understand and experience unity and divinity. In fact, the very purpose of human birth is to experience unity in diversity.

Make every effort to experience unity and sanctify your lives.

It is possible only by following the path of love.

There is nothing superior to love in this world.

Today I have awarded the gold medal for all-round excellence to a girl student from Anantapur Campus. She has been a diabetic right from her childhood. Her parents and doctors have been trying their best to control her diabetes but all in vain. However, she has unflinching faith in Swami. That is why she had
no problem at all in spite of her blood sugar level being very high. She is not worried at all. In fact, when her parents get worried, she infuses courage in them, saying, “Don’t worry. God is with me.” In this manner, she has spent sixteen years.

She studied in Puttaparthi School and Anantapur College. Sometimes, her blood sugar level is very high. No medicine can control it. Her father becomes anxious. But she is protected by her steady faith. Swami told her firmly, “This disease cannot harm you. Have total faith in God. Do not pay heed to what others say.” She forgets her badha (suffering) remembering Swami’s bodha (teaching). She has followed Swami’s words implicitly and has remained steady in her faith. That is why she has come up in life.

She devotes all her time to studies. She will pursue higher studies. She has absolutely no worry even if her blood sugar level shoots up. She says, “It comes and goes. I have nothing to do with it.” She has faced her health problem with fortitude. In this manner, one should never be afraid of problems.

This body is a storehouse of dirt and a den of diseases.
One should never rely on such an ephemeral body.
The body may have to undergo suffering because of some diseases.
But whatever may be the problem, one should not worry about it.

Her father is teaching in Puttaparthi College. Sometimes, he gets phone calls from his daughter’s teachers in Anantapur Campus, telling him, “Your daughter’s blood sugar is very high today. She is unable to attend the classes. What should we do?” He comes to Me for guidance and I tell him not to worry. I infuse courage in him, saying she would be all right. Because of her devotion and steadfast faith, she is maintaining her health and carrying on her studies without any hindrance.

_Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 23/06/2005, Prasanthi Nilayam_
THE ARJUNA ATTITUDE

Eternity extends before man; space too is without horizon;
But, life is short and very unsure.
Therefore, man has to make the best use of the years allotted to him in this world,
And try to become one with the Absolute, so that these entrances and exits may be ended.
That is his Dharma, the duty he has to do for himself.
Know that Dharma, and live according to its dictates;
That is the meaning and purpose of life.

The Almighty has made creatures evolve unto human beings and comes down as Man, whenever that creature forgets or ignores his basic duty. The Rishis of India have, through the process of purifying their intuition, discovered this fact and sensed the message that the Incarnations bring - that the Avatars carry. Many times in human history, Avatars have come and awakened man. But, the animal past and the demonic delusion drag him into the mire, where he foolishly revels in sensual, physical and transient trivialities.

This is a splendid chance to fulfil your human existence.
The ananda (Bliss) that you hope to derive from kith and kin, from wealth and worldly fame,
Is but a pale shadow of the ananda that resides in the spring of your heart, where God dwells.
Try to contact that spring!
Go to the very source.
Be centred in the Atma or God within.
 Few seek real ananda.
The many are led away by the pseudo-ananda of the senses, the intellect and the mind.
Real ananda springs only from Truth.
And, Sathya is the Dharma or duty of each to himself.
Seek Truth, serve Truth, be Truth.

Truth will reveal itself when the heart is saturated in Love.
Man's nature is fundamentally Truth.
His breath is fundamentally Love.
His blood is fundamentally tolerance.

Falsehood, hatred and faction are characteristics of beastly or demonic natures.
They are acquired from society, or ignorance or greed.
Today, man is shaped by the head rather than the heart.
It is cleverness that is admired, that pays.
But, peace and joy emanate from the heart not the head.
The heart teaches compassion, awe, reverence, humility, equanimity and sympathy -
Qualities that bind men in love,
And turn them towards righteousness and the source and sustenance of the Universe, namely, God.
The pursuit of property and possessions cannot uplift the heart into the heights of Bliss.

You are contemporaries of the Avatar come to guard and guide;
You have the capacity to catch the message and canalise it into action and activity.
Make the utmost of this chance.

The Message (of the Avatar) can be grasped only by those who yearn to know the duty to which they must be loyal. Otherwise it will sound hollow and mechanical, like the prattle of a phonograph record.
However, if the heart is ploughed by that yearning and made ready for the seed, the harvest will certainly follow.

Arjuna was the brother-in-law of Krishna; he was a close companion and even a chum of the Lord, for many decades! Krishna, remember, was 84 years old, at the time of the Kurukshethra battle, when He served Arjuna as a non-combatant charioteer! Even so, it was only on that battlefield that the message of the Bhagavad Gita was imparted to him! Why? Arjuna developed the requisite attitude for the reception and retention of the message only then.
First, Arjuna was puzzled about his duty and was tremendously anxious to get light thrown upon it. He was torn between two paths, and in spite of all his discrimination and detachment, he was at a loss to discover what his Dharma was. Second, he surrendered his judgement to God, and declared, out of the deepest recesses of his heart, in indescribable agony, "I am your disciple; I dedicate my entire being to your Will; tell me what to do and I shall obey."

Arjuna is also called Partha - a name applicable to all men, for it is derived from prithivi (earth).
It means earthly, earthborn.
This situation is a reminder to every man on earth.

If only you cultivate a deep yearning for guidance about your appropriate Dharma, and if only you surrender your will, your intellect, your emotions, your impulses to God, He will lead you to Himself and endow you with Supreme Bliss.

Thirdly, Arjuna was overcome by Love, though it took on the colour of egoism and delusion. He felt that it was wrong and useless to kill his kinsmen, to plunge the land in misery, to slaughter the armies ranged against him. He preferred a life sustained on alms to ruling an empire won by the sword. This compassion, though misplaced and based on an unreal sense of values, had its own appeal, to the Lord, who resolved to transmute it into the renunciation of the attachment to the deed, and the fruits of the deed.

Every deed must take man nearer the goal.
It must be a step in the pilgrimage to God.
It must cleanse the emotions, correct the attitude, clarify the path and cooperate in the consummation.
This has to be the constant care and vigilance of every seeker and aspirant to Bliss.

Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, July 1970, Prasanthi Nilayam
ASK HIM WITH ALL YOUR HEART

Having resolved, what ought to be resolved, hold on to it till you have succeeded.
Having desired what ought to be desired, hold on to it till your desire is fulfilled.
Having asked what ought to be asked, do not leave the hold till you get it.
Having thought what ought to be thought, hold on to it till you have succeeded.
With heart mellowed, the Lord must yield to your wishes or forgetting yourself,
You should ask Him with all your heart.
Persevere, be tenacious, and never give up,
For it is the quality of a devotee never to retreat, abandoning his resolve. (Telugu poem)

Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 23/06/2005, Prasanthi Nilayam