

Four Responsibilities of Every Human Being

In His Divine Discourse to students on September 11, 1986, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba spoke of the 4 sacred paths that assure safety in worldly life and the blessed attainment of the Lotus Feet of the Lord.

Among all the living beings, man is sacred. In this world it is but natural that a person who is occupying an important or high position will have great responsibilities. Similarly, man occupies the highest position among living beings and is charged with important responsibilities. What are these responsibilities? The first responsibility is with respect to sin. The second one is *shasanam*, the ordinances and laws. The third one is *shastram* or scriptures. The fourth is the one that cannot even be imagined as it is in the form of a curse. Man is bound by the above mentioned four responsibilities.

The first one is *Papam* or sin

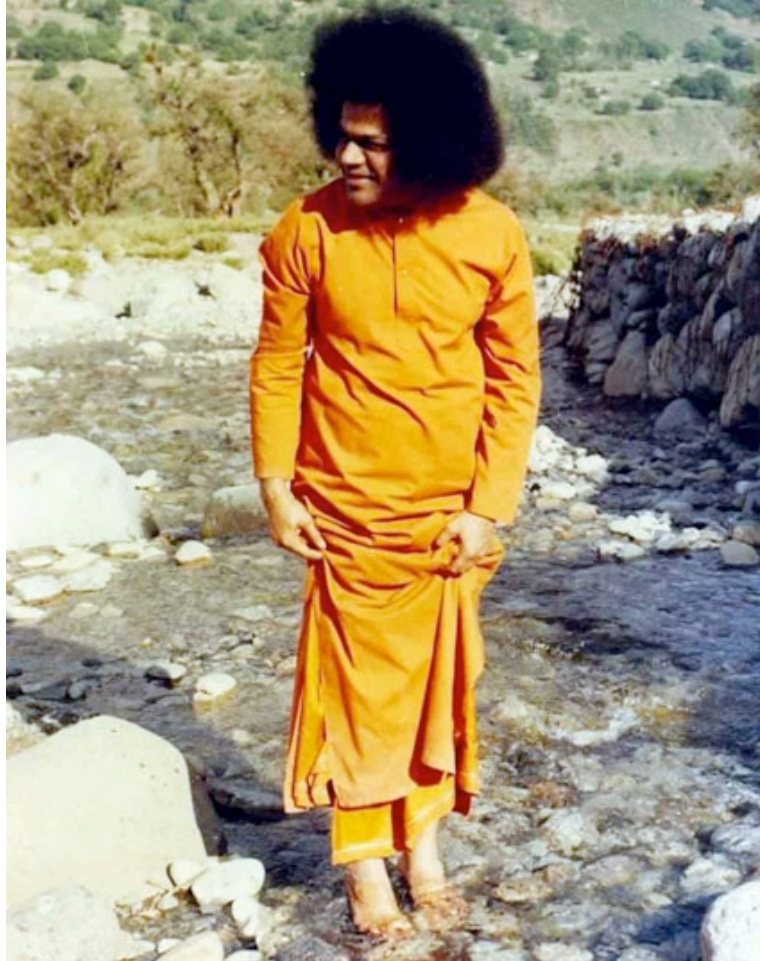
Among living beings, man alone is capable of committing sins. That is because man alone is endowed with the power of discrimination that can distinguish between good and bad. Only man, with the power of discrimination, will face situations in which he may commit sins. What is the meaning of sin? Sin refers to any act committed even after knowing that it is bad. If you know that an activity is bad and must not be done, and you still do it, it amounts to sin. Though man has been endowed with the power of discrimination, on account of his ego and jealousy, he commits sins. Even among men, children, and mentally challenged people are not affected by sins. The reason is that these people will not have the discrimination power. These people are ignorant, and they do not know what they are doing. Innocence and ignorance free a person from being attached to sin. The realized soul, a *jnani*, would not have any attachment or selfishness in him. He will always have a sense of equality and equanimity. He will not commit any sin. Selfishness and other such vices do not exist in a realized soul.

Whatever he sees, whatever he utters, and whatever he does is entirely for the welfare of the world. Therefore, this realized soul would not be suffering from sins. A man who does not belong to these three categories, who is having attachment to body and is selfish, he alone will be committing sins. He who allows the mind to waver, giving unbridled freedom to it, will be subject to the dualities of happiness and misery, joy and sorrow, profit and loss, etc. Every man is prone to commit sins. He has to avoid this by using his power of discrimination, by finding out what is good and what is bad and doing good actions only.

The second one is *shasanam* or law

In the world there are two courts of justice. These courts of justice are places where punishment is given to people who have not obeyed the law, who have been cruel, and those who have committed sins. These courts of justice award punishment to people who have transgressed the court, the laws of the nation, and those who have done injustice. The laws are established for giving justice to man and not for the sake of animals and birds.

Here is one small example: Imagine that some animals have gone into the fields, destroyed them and caused a great loss. No court of law will give a verdict that those animals, which were responsible for destruction of the crops, will have to pay any fine or undergo any punishment. If it becomes so essential give some punishment for such acts, the punishment will be awarded to the master who owns the animals that caused the destruction. This makes it clear that law courts of justice are established to dispense justice and award punishment to people who are responsible for breaking the law.



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You hear of many such incidents that take place in day-to-day life, like stray dogs entering into the house, eating and spoiling food and breaking the pots in which food is kept. Is there any court of law, which can ask these dogs to pay compensation for breaking the pots and eating the food in the houses? Instead of these animals, if man were to do the same thing, the courts of justice would award punishment to the man who is responsible for such destruction. The substance of this example is that human beings must recognize that these courts of law are established to award punishment to people who indulge in breach of law and they must conduct

themselves in such a way that they are not subjected to any type of punishment. Only then, it can be assumed that things have been clearly understood.

The third one is *shastras* or the scriptures

These scriptures have laid down a code for people in the four stages of life: *Brahmacharya*, *Grihastha*, *Vanaprastha*, and *Sanyasa*. (Youth/student, householder, recluse, and renunciate) These scriptures have also laid down, as a part of the code, all the acts that have to be done and those acts that should not be done from the birth of a child until he reaches the last stage of his life, such as the naming ceremony, marriage celebrations, etc.

The procedures and *mantras* [religious formulas] for performing the *Yagnas* and *Yagas* (ritualistic sacrifices and ceremonies) that are performed for the welfare of the world and humanity, are laid down in these scriptures. While conducting a marriage, the promises that the bridegroom must make to the bride and vice-versa, are all laid down in such a way that family life will be safe and happy. Today people undergo various problems and difficulties in their family lives. This is only because people do not conduct themselves according to the promises given to their spouses, with the fire as the witness. If we conduct ourselves according to our promises, we will be able to lead happy and peaceful lives. Man has been endowed with two eyes through which he can see. He has been given two ears to hear good as well as bad. But man has only one tongue. Man has to stand by the word that he has given. If he goes contrary to the promise he has given, then he is like a poisonous snake. If a man stands by his word and acts accordingly, then he would be able to see the unity in life as well as the Divinity.

Importance of Right Understanding

In Indian culture, there are two important statements: '*Satyam Vada, Dharmam Chara*' (Speak the truth and follow the path of righteousness). Truth means that there is only one reality. Truth is only one and not two, as illustrated in the statement: 'There is only one *Brahman* (God) there is no second entity.' If one does not follow the code laid down by the scriptures, scriptures also punish you. There are four types of sins that a tongue can commit: speaking untruth, criticizing others, making fun of others, and indulging in too much talk.

By these four types of activities, the tongue commits sins. The students of today should make an effort to take the path of truth and observe truth. But what you find in the modern age youth is that they utter one thing and contradict it the very next second. The *Bhagavad Gita* has declared, "You have to dedicate your life for truth." But you do not find people living their lives based on this statement. If a person undergoes these three states: *yoga* (spiritual practice), *bhoga* (pleasure), and *roga* (disease) in a day itself, how can we describe that person as equal minded?

By the movement of the sun and the earth, morning, afternoon, evening and night, are all observed. But in reality, there is no such change in human nature and human beings. Students should know that when the sun is on the equator, there is day and

when it moves away it is night. Really speaking there is nothing like sunrise and sunset. In God's creation, everything has been created for the welfare of humanity, for the preservation and the good of humanity.

Creation is so sacred, but it has been misunderstood on account of artificial understanding and wrong interpretation given to it. Such an attitude is likely to harm the nation. Students of science know very well that the moon is comparatively closer to earth with respect to the other celestial objects. The moon is at a distance of 245,000 miles from earth. On full moon day and new moon day, the moon comes little closer to earth by a few degrees. But for such a small change itself, there is a tremendous response in the oceans, and the waves rise to great heights. What if the moon were to come two or three miles closer to the earth? There would be *pralaya* destruction. Only when the moon is at the usual distance of 245,000 miles, is the earth safe.

When the five elements are in the right proportion and in the place where they ought to be, and when the senses also perform their functions properly, then everything is okay. God would be able to take care of your welfare and offer you all the protection necessary, when you observe laws as laid down in the scriptures. You must design your life according to the code laid down. When you hurt or harm the great sages, you come in the way of the welfare of the world. They may utter out of agony a word of anger, and it becomes a curse.

Unfortunately, there are quite a few people who think that what sages are doing is wrong on their part. Whatever curse is given, that curse is going to be a sort of protection. Only when a wrong act is punished, would one be able to correct himself. If you go on forgiving the mistakes that are committed, then more and more [mistakes] will be committed. As more acts go unpunished, man also loses the power of discrimination. In order to awaken the people to what is reality and what is discrimination, this curse or *shapam* is also prescribed as a part of the *shastras*.

Story of the Eleventh Shankaracharya

Once upon a time, certain laws were laid down for people who were occupying the places of *Peethadhipatis* (watchmen, gatekeepers.) During the days of the 11th Shankaracharya, there was one gatekeeper who was standing near the entrance of the *Matha* (monasteries). His name was Ubhaya Bhaskara. He was constantly uttering, '*Tasmat jagrata jagrata*', ("Be careful, be careful"). Shankaracharya, while sitting for meditation, was thinking of the wealth that he possessed, number of disciples that he had and all such worldly matters. When his mind was going in this wrong path, there was a declaration coming from the watchman, "Be careful, be careful." That became an eye-opener for Shankaracharya, and he reminded himself that he is going on a wrong path. There was another disciple, who was uttering from behind:

*'Mata Nasti, Pita Nasti, Nasti Bandhu Sahodaraha
Artham Nasti, Griham Nasti Tasmat Jagrata Jagrata'*

“There is no mother, no father, no relative, no brother, no wealth, and no property. Be careful, be careful.”

Another disciple, from another side was declaring that:

*‘Janma Dukham, Jara Dukham, Jaya Dukham, Punah Punah,
Antah Kale Mahadukham, Tasmata Jagrata, Jagrata’*

“Birth is sorrow, life is sorrow, and everything in the world is full of sorrow. When the last moment of life arrives, it is also a great sorrow. Always be careful.”

You have to recognize therefore, that all these laws and declarations that have been laid down, are meant to correct the wrong thinking of man and put him on the right path of thinking so that he will be safe. These sacred paths alone can lead you on to the Lotus Feet of the Lord. Only when you follow these paths, will you be able to reach an elevated state. For whom are these four—peace, love, scriptures and curse—required? Only a sick person, who really wants to cure his sickness, needs the medicine and diet control. For a person who does not want to cure himself from the disease, he will not require any medicine or diet control. All these four, in the same way, are required only for those who want to free themselves from bondage. A person who does not care to free himself from bondage, who indulges himself in worldly ways, does not need any of these four things. For him, his own words are curses.

Source: Sathya Sai with Students [My Dear Students Volume 1, Mind, Body and Atma, Discourse 12, Divine Discourse at Sathya Sai Hostel on September 11, 1986]

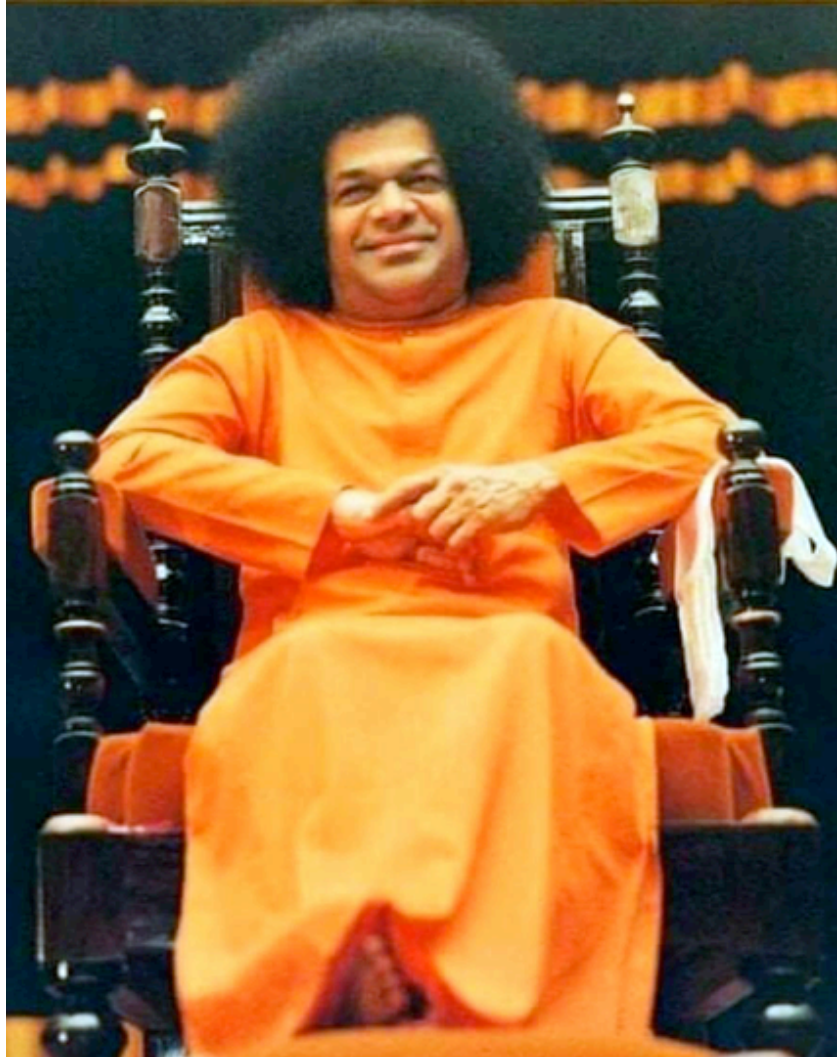
How Can We Satisfy God with Our Actions?

When Rama visited Shabari [elderly devotee from the *Ramayana*], He told her, “I am hungry.” She gave Him some berries that she found in the forest. The Lord went to everybody. He went to Emperor Bali and asked him for three footsteps of land. But He occupied all the three worlds. God keeps going to everybody and keeps asking. We have to give something when God asks us. Always try to attain the grace of God. Just give Him what He asks you for. That is your fortune.

You should surrender yourself completely to God. That is what Emperor Bali did. Other people offered something to God, but Bali gave himself to God. That is why God sent him to the nether world. He attained great fame, name, and reputation. He merged himself with the Lord. We have to offer ourselves completely to God. You do not have to get any materials. No gold, no diamonds. Give yourself to God that is

enough. Then He manifests Himself there. Everybody speaks, but they cannot do it. That is why they are not enjoying bliss. They try to satisfy God with words, but not with action. When you satisfy God with your actions, there God manifests Himself. It is the mistake of people to think that God will manifest sometime later. Any moment, any minute, anytime, and anywhere He can manifest Himself. All the time you should contemplate on the name of God.

Many people ask questions, "If all the time we keep praying to God, then how can we do our jobs? How can we run our family?" Do not keep your mind on the job. Do your job. Think that this job also belongs to God. It is so easy. Think that all the actions that you do, you are doing it for God. Offer everything at His feet. Whatever I am doing I am doing it out of love for God. You need not give up anything. Go to examinations. Do not give up examinations. Even the examination is God's work. If you do that, easily you can attain God. But we say that I am eating food, this food is mine, and this is God's.



You are dividing by saying that this is God's and this is mine. Because you divide, everything remains divided. Do not divide. When you feel and say that everything is God, you can get great joy and peace. Today's men say everything, but they are not experiencing the unity of everything. When you experience the unity, you can understand Divinity. Since you are young boys, you have to do work. You have to try to attain higher status. You have to serve the world. You have to do jobs and other tasks as well. Think that all that you do is God's work. Then you will get the right

reward. Do not think, “This is my work and that is God's work.” If you think so, then God will not give you the reward. Realize that everything is God's work.

Gopikas did the same thing. They would churn the milk. Early in the morning at *Omkaaram* time they would get up. They would put curd [yogurt] in the pot. They had lot of bangles on their hands. They were churning the curd, and all the time they were uttering Krishna’s name.

Uttering Krishna’s name was like the *shruti* [lyric]. The bangles became the rhythm, the churning was the pitch, and what they uttered was the song. While churning the curd they were getting butter. Where did this butter come from? It came from the curd. But the butter that comes out of the curd does not merge back to the curd. Similarly, you have come out of God. You have to go and merge with God. You remain separately like the butter. But you have come from God, just like the butter from milk. If you understand this unity you can experience it everywhere. Physically, mentally and spiritually there is no difference.

Man has the three principles—*Bhur*, *Bhuvaha*, *Suvaha*. What are these *Bhur*, *Bhuvaha*, and *Suvaha*? ‘*Bhur*’ means materialization. This body is nothing but materialization. The human body consists of 7 buckets of water, 1 bucket of lime, 1,200 iron pieces, 900 matchsticks. With all these materials man’s body emerges. Secondly is moves, vibrates—that is life principle. That is vibration. ‘*Bhuvaha*’ is vibration. ‘*Suvaha*’ is radiation; that is *Prajnana* (Consciousness). All the three exists in us. The body is with us, the vibration is with us, the radiation is also with us. We are the cause for all of this.

Master the Mind and be a Mastermind

We think that we are weak. Thinking in this manner is a big mistake. We are not weak. There is nobody as powerful as a human being. But he is afraid. Man is afraid even of a small ailment. Why this fear? Why is man afraid? This is because man has committed many mistakes. Without a mistake there is no fear. You think that you are this body that is why you commit mistakes. We are not this body. Body, mind, senses, and intelligence are instruments. They are the instruments; we are the Masters.

Master the mind and become the mastermind. Be a mastermind. You are the Master, become the Master, then you can merge in everything. Students! It is not enough if you study books. Enquire into the activities of daily life and understand the truth. It is possible that children can become the teachers of the father. Wife can teach the husband. Without any sense of difference, Shuka, the son of Vyasa became the teacher of his father. He advised the father.

God First; World Next

Once the King Maharana came and told Meera to get away from the temple. She was wondering how she would be able to protect herself. Meera’s contemporary was

Tulsidas. He was on the Chitrakuta Mountain. She wrote a letter to Tulsidas through a messenger. What did she write? Husband is God for wife. We say that you should not hurt mother, father, teacher, and God. What can I do now? Husband asked me to go away from here. Shall I go away from here or stay here? Then Tulsidas replied, "It is wrong if you run away for the sake of world. There is no mistake if you run away for the sake of God."

Kaikeyi sent Rama, who was the very life of Bharata to the forest. She wanted Bharata to be crowned the king. But Bharata said, "Rama is God for me. He is like my father. Kaikeyi has hurt Rama who is Divine. Therefore, she is not my mother." Even if you refuse mother for the sake of God there is no mistake. You can disobey father for the sake of God. Not for other's sake. For the sake of God you can do anything.

Prahlada's father Hiranyakashyap told him not to utter the name of Narayana. But he said, "I can only utter the name of Narayana. Narayana is everything for me." He refused to obey his father. So, his father tried to poison him. But nothing happened. He felt that everything is God. Bharata refused to obey his mother. Prahlada disobeyed the father.

Lord Vamana went to the Emperor Bali. Bali's *Guru* told him, "Do not think that this person is an ordinary person. God Himself has come here. Do not give promise to Him." Who was the *Guru*? It was Shukracharya. Shukracharya told Bali, the Emperor not to give his word. Then Bali said, "There is no greater sin than breaking a promise. I have given the word. I will not break my word. I may disobey you, but I will not break my promise." He refused to obey his *Guru*. Hence Tulsidas wrote to Meera, "If you refuse to obey your husband, there is nothing wrong. For the sake of God, you can refuse him. It is not for the sake of property or house."

There is nothing wrong in disobeying others for the sake of God. In the world many things happen. You can do anything for God. There is nothing wrong. You recognize this principle. As long as you are in this world, as long as you don't realize that Divinity within you, respect your parents, respect the teacher. Look after the wife and children. It is our duty. These are the worldly duties. Once you have the Divine relationship, you need not care for anything else. Other things are small things. When you have the mountain of gold why do you look for gold and silver elsewhere? When you have the wish fulfilling cow why do you want to purchase another cow? When you have the wish fulfilling tree why do you go anywhere else? When you have God who gives you everything why do you bother about other things? So put in a lot of effort to attain God.

Source: Sathya Sai with Students [Pathways to the Lord, Discourse 2, My Dear Students Volume 3; Divine Discourse on March 19, 1998 at Trayee Brindavan]

To submit articles or photos, please email them to "editor@SaiSarathi.com."

The Advent of Sai Avatar

With just three more days to celebrate the advent of Sai Avatar,
My memory recalls the joyous day of His glorious, divine form,
The multitude of eager devotees who came in droves to attend,
Jostling with each other to catch a glimpse of our Dear Lord Sai
As He was feted and honored by all with pomp and divine glory
On the twenty third of November with reverential pious worship,
What a miracle, what a lucky destiny to be with Sai on that day!
I bowed my head in gratitude to be alive to see heaven on earth.

As the world plunged in darkness, losing ever its pristine purity,
As the evil form of wickedness stalked humanity in hot pursuit,
As hunger, disease, negative passions held full sway all around,
As humans, the crown of creation, floundered in terrible agony,
The supreme consciousness, the mighty Creator Himself stirred,
In His divine compassion, at the earnest pleas of *yogis* and saints
Made His *sankalpa* [will] to appear amongst us to dispel the darkness,
He appeared in the far, remote village five and ninety years ago.

Nature rejoiced at the birth of the Divine descent, a sweet form,
That drew with a magnetic charm all seekers of the eternal Truth,
At the tender age of thirteen drew a multitude of eager devotees,
Renouncing the worldly kith and kin, to teach all, poor and rich,
He spent all His life on earth teaching us the path to pure Love,
Showed us the glory of service, to find joy in the joy of others,
His holy brightness cast its benevolent rays all around the world,
Then on Easter day, nine years ago, His task done, He was gone.

His life amongst us left an impact, unparalleled in its Divine nature,
He taught us all, seekers and non-seekers as well, what true life is,
To us who searched for Truth in places of worship, in scriptures too,
Who went on arduous pilgrimages on hill tops and cavernous spots,
He said, look within, deep within you, hidden under layers of sheaths,
Lies that *Atma*, your own divine spark, that part of eternal brilliance,
Once you find it, then all around you, temples and scriptures of yore,
Places of worship, birds and beasts, every atom shines in Divine aura.
What a divine teaching sorely missed in our ignorance! We learnt anew,
We dipped into the silence in our hearts, in that silence lost ourselves,
We felt a peace beyond our understanding, saw such dazzling energy,
That embraced all creation, our horizon vastly expanded to the beyond,
He taught us how to purify our hearts within before the spiritual journey,
Get rid of the internal enemies that bind you with iron fetters mercilessly,
Anger, jealousy, hatred, and such poisonous traits that held you in sway,
Cleanse yourself and in the space so purified, so sanctified, let love enter.

Let your love expand, Sai taught us, a love without barriers and bonds,
A love beyond your own kith and kin, a love that soars in the joy of all,
A love that embraces the birds on the trees, the animals in the jungle,
The plants and the blossoms that shed beauty around, all that crawl,
Yes, He, our Lord Sai taught all this and more, Love is God, God is Love,
Experience the joy and grief of others, He taught, help ever, hurt never,
See unity in diversity, our hearts cleansed with the teaching of Lord Sai,
We saw and felt a new world, saw only the beauty and joy in one and all.

Nine long years have passed since He withdrew His physical form forever,
He taught us to seek Him formless in all the supreme Divine energy around,
The beloved form had gone but true to His teachings we learn ourselves,
To see and experience the formless Divine energy, the basis of all creation,
In my life, my Divine Savior, Beloved Lord Sai, was the true goal of my life,
He changed my life's path to one of seeking always His sacred proximity,
He taught me, my late spouse and my four children ways to live righteously
With tears welling up in me, I thank Lord Sai for His sacred blessings to all.

~ Kanaga Ranganathan,
November 21, 2020.

Forty Years to Find God

Mr. Lucas Ralli, born in London in 1920, educated in Eton and Oxford, served as Major, Royal Signals, during World War II, and subsequently as Company Director and Chairman of various Companies. Since 1979 he was a Sai devotee; President of Sathya Sai UK Council (1982-89), in 1988 he was appointed Central Co-Ordinator for Europe. He has authored 'Messages for You and Me—Volumes 1 to 5'. He merged at the Lotus Feet in 2003.

Sometimes disaster proves to be a steppingstone in life and so it proved with me when I broke by neck in the summer of 1949. Throughout the 1950s, I suffered periodic spells of intense pain, due to a slipped disc in my neck resulting from the original injury. Medical treatment was of no avail, but in 1958, a friend told me to go and see a famous spiritual healer called Ted Fricker. I went there in great pain, hardly able to move my head, but a few minutes later I was able to turn my head virtually back to front, and for good measure, I bent forward to touch my toes.

On any basis, it was a miracle and showed me that there was more in the world than I realized. More important, Ted Fricker asked me if I realized that I had the same healing gift and told me to get started! A month later, a clairvoyant whom I met at a party told me exactly the same thing, so I started my healing work, with very

interesting results. I joined the National Federation of Spiritual Healers who published a monthly magazine. But, as the years went by, I seldom opened it, realizing that there was nothing to learn, except that I was a channel and God was the healer.

Years later, in November 1979, the magazine dropped through my letter box and I opened it at random. My eyes were immediately drawn to some indented words in the middle of the page.

There is only one God, He is omnipresent
There is only one religion, the religion of love
There is only one caste, the caste of humanity
There is only one language, the language of the heart

The article was entitled *Love Walking on Two Feet* and was about our beloved Bhagavan Baba. I knew at that precise moment that I had found God, even before I read the article. And I had been searching for God since 1940.

After my awakening in November 1979, I quickly read all the books I could find about Bhagavan Baba and His teachings. I found immediate confirmation of so much that I had worked out the hard way during the previous forty years and, of course, much more. The truth was at last revealed. What a revelation. I read in one book that Bhagavan had said:

"I am like a radio set; anyone can call me up." This fascinated me as I had been a radio ham since 1938 and the idea of communication always interested me.

So, I called up Bhagavan during my meditation and was not unduly surprised when I seemed to receive a reply instantly. I assumed everyone else, all His devotees, were doing the same thing. Early communication was short and simple. However, this early experience of the omnipresence of God gave me the urge to dash out to India to find this extraordinary holy man, apparently God incarnate. But when I meditated on it, I received such a clear response... "not now, later." That was early in 1980, and during the summer of that year when I was on holiday in Greece, I received another message which said... "I will speak to you in Bombay." The date was 13th August.

It was not until January 1981 that I made my first pilgrimage to find Bhagavan, although by this time I was in daily contact with Him in meditation and through the messages. We spent two and a half weeks in Bangalore as Bhagavan was at Brindavan, and we attended *darshan* there twice a day. I was longing for an interview, but although Bhagavan looked at me and right through me on several occasions, there was no interview. Then Bhagavan left for Madras and was due to go on to Bombay.

In a message, He told me to go and wait for Him in Bombay which is what we did. Then He arrived and we had the most wonderful *darshans* at the Dharmakshetra. Again, Bhagavan looked at me and right through me. And on the last morning, just

before He left Bombay, He called our little group of four people for an interview. Once inside the interview room, time became timeless and it seemed as though Bhagavan enjoyed playing with us, His children, and would give us anything we wanted. The whole atmosphere was utterly divine.

We returned to London but knew that we would be back in India before the end of the year. And in October 1981, we arrived at Puttaparthi just in time for the *Dasara* festival. What an incredible experience it was. Once again Bhagavan looked at me, sometimes looking right into me or right through me, and at other times giving me that divine smile that melts the heart. Then one day, without warning, I discovered that I was in the "repair shop"! Bhagavan totally ignored me and did it in such a way that there could not be any doubt about what was happening.



One day when I was [sitting] in the front row, Bhagavan came out of the Mandir and walked very slowly straight toward me. He seemed to be looking straight at me and I thought I was in for some wonderful experience. So, I was! He stopped right in front of me and then called in for interview everyone around me. But I was ignored and found myself sitting in a sort of void. What a message!

When I got back to the room, somewhat shattered to say the least, I sat down and decided to meditate and try to find out what was wrong. In an instant, I got the answer, just one word, "*surrender.*" However, I had no idea how to surrender or even what it really meant. Years later, I came across some words of Bhagavan that seemed very relevant... "How can you surrender when you do not know what you are surrendering?" Yes, that is so true and even today I am still struggling to surrender. Fortunately, I have received some lovely messages from Bhagavan that throw light on the meaning of surrender, but in the end we have to make our own effort and find our own way.

Early this morning, before I had given any thought of writing this article, I asked Bhagavan to give me a message for the day. This was the message: *Sacrifice and Surrender*. What is the meaning of sacrifice? Sacrifice is a steppingstone toward a better future, an essential step on the spiritual path. What is the most important sacrifice in life? It is to give up desire, and in particular, desires for your own personal pleasure, comfort, satisfaction, and gain. Desire is the biggest challenge that man can experience. Inevitably all desires are related to selfishness and act as a brake on spiritual progress. How can a man progress spiritually if he spends his whole life thinking about himself, his body and its many desires? Desires of the senses, which can become unlimited unless strictly controlled. And yet these same senses are there for a purpose, and if used correctly, fulfil that purpose. Everything depends on balance, and that is in your own hands.

When you surrender to God, you do everything for Him. At that point, a perfect balance is established, and your own life is transformed. It is like stepping out of the darkness into the sunshine where you can see everything as it really is, the real and the unreal, the permanent and the transient. Everything is revealed in its true state and the divine hand can be seen everywhere. Sacrifice is indeed a steppingstone to enlightenment and to the realization of your own divinity.

Every visit to India is a new experience, and a new learning opportunity. Will I ever learn? Will I ever put all the divine teachings into practice in my daily life? These are questions that I ask myself as each year passes. Am I making the most of this unique opportunity, when I am here on earth at the same time as our Lord, and with the chance to be so close to Him on all my visits to India? I think everyone should ponder this question for they are not here at this time by accident.

I have been doubly blessed as the recipient of so many divine messages, direct from Bhagavan. And it was some years before I had the courage to ask Him whether they were genuine and directly from Him. I will always remember His simple reply ... "Yes, yes, where do you think they come from, the sky?" He then told me to put the messages together and publish them in a book so that everyone could share the teachings. Today there are two books, *Sai Messages for You & Me* and the third book should be ready for the 65th Birthday. The first book has already been translated and published in seven foreign languages so that Bhagavan's teachings have reached many different parts of the world in this way.

If I have learnt one thing about Bhagavan, it is that God is inscrutable! He Himself tells us so. And when we look out into the universe, at the Milky Way and beyond, it is not difficult to understand why we are puzzled. Light from the nearest star takes four years to reach us, travelling at 186,000 miles a second. The universe is so vast that no human mind can begin to understand how it all began. And yet our beloved Bhagavan holds the whole world and indeed the entire universe in His Divine hand.

Sometimes I wonder how we can reconcile Bhagavan Baba, God the Ultimate, with the divine playful Baba that we meet in the interview room. At that time, He is our

Mother, and we witness such love and sweetness. I have come to the conclusion, long ago, that we will never understand Him. He is indeed inscrutable. But we can experience Him, and equally important study His teachings and put those teachings into practice in our daily lives. We learn to see God in everyone, and eventually we treat them as though they are God. In this way, we also transform our own lives and become aware of the presence of God everywhere.

Bhagavan also teaches us to live in the present, often by creating so much uncertainty. For Him, time is timeless; past, present, and future are all one. For us, we try to understand that the moment is now. Every moment is now, and we must live in that moment and take action now. Only when we do this and concentrate our minds on the divine teachings can we hope to progress along the spiritual path and return to our source, God Himself.

What source of energy can we use for such an incredible journey? Love, and love alone can propel us forward. Love is the divine energy that created the world, the whole universe, and everything within it. Love is that unlimited source of energy that is there for everyone, there for the world. Love can move mountains, cure the sick, purify the mind. God is love. It is God's gift to the world and in truth He has given Himself to the world, for there is nothing in the world other than God.

Source: *Sai Vandana 1990* (65th Birthday Offering)

Q&A

WITH BHAGAVAN

Sai Explains

Hislop: Swami, something has happened here. Water is around this box. These *saris* will get wet. (Swami removed the cover of the box and those of us who were standing there could see that the edges of the *saris* were wet. The cardboard box with four *saris* in it was sitting on a table in Dharmakshetra, Bombay. Swami had selected 96 *saris* for distribution to some lady volunteers, and of the 100 brought for His inspection, four were replaced in the box to be returned later to the merchant. The table was not close to any source of water; Hislop, several other men, and Swami had been standing there from the time the *saris* were examined one by one, by Swami.)

Sai: The *saris* are weeping because Swami has rejected them. Now I will take them.

Hislop: Swami! How could that be? Does Swami say that inanimate objects have injured feelings and can weep?

Sai: Inanimate objects are also capable of feeling joy and grief. When the bridge toward Lanka was built by the monkeys so that Rama could march to Ravana's kingdom where Sita was held captive, one last mountain peak was carried to the bridge site. But it was too late. There was no need for it. At this circumstance the mountain shed tears of anguish, and news of this was quickly taken to Rama. His compassion was great, and He sent word that the mountain should no longer sorrow, that He would surely use it on a future occasion. In the Krishna *Avatara*, it was this very mountain peak, the Govardhana Peak, which the youth, Krishna, lifted on His finger to shelter the cowherds of Gokul from Indra's deluge of rain.

Hislop: Swami! This great drama of Rama and Krishna and the mountain peak has been recapitulated here in Bombay on this day before our very eyes. The *saris* came and could not be used. They wept tears of anguish; and in His compassion Swami relented, and the rejected *saris* will be used, although not for the original purpose of gifting to the volunteers. (Mrs. Hislop and three other ladies were given the rejected *saris*.) It is the self-same drama of ancient days played again on this day.

Sai: Yes. And it is also the self-same Rama and the self-same Krishna who is here this day.

In another interview:

A Visitor: One sees oneself in a mirror. As one moves away from the mirror, the image becomes smaller and smaller. I sit here and look at Hislop. The further away I move, the smaller Hislop becomes. But Hislop is not smaller; he has not changed. Therefore, I cannot be looking at Hislop. But Hislop is certainly there. So, what did I see when I thought I was seeing Hislop? And if Hislop is not that which I see, then what is Hislop? Do I, in some way or other, see a reflection of Hislop?

Sai: It is indeed true that you do not see Hislop. You see a reflection of Hislop, the reflection exhibits that particular form and characteristics. Then what is Hislop? Hislop is God. The image, the form is not God, but all forms together, the totality of all forms can be taken as God. God is the reality behind the form. The world is there, but its reality is not seen. The reality is God. One may see the reality, that the truth behind every form is God. Once this perception arises, it is never lost. Although one sees the forms, he is always aware of the truth, the reality.

Visitor: There is an experience that I have. The Scriptures name it *Nirvikalpa Samadhi*, pure consciousness, consciousness without any object. After having had experience of that state of being, I lose it. Can one do anything to stem that loss?

Sai: It is like this. When rain leaves the clouds, it is pure but becomes contaminated when it reaches the ground. That water may be purified by some technique, but it cannot be equated with the purity of the rain. In like fashion, you lose the *Nirvikalpa Samadhi* state when duty calls you to your work. *Sadhana* [spiritual effort] will purify that worldly life, but that purified life is not the same as *Nirvikalpa Samadhi*.

Visitor: Should I leave my work?

Sai: No. Just do the work not for your employers, but for God.

Visitor: I will try to apply this lesson when I return to my home and my work.

On another Occasion:

Sai: There is One, not two. If one sees a second, then *maya* [illusion] is in operation.

Hislop: Life appears to be somewhat a jungle of unexpected dangers!

Sai: *Maya* is harmless to the devotee of God. That same *maya*, so dangerous to the person who does not believe in God, protects the devotee from all harm. The cat carries the kitten in the mouth from here to there, and the kitten is unharmed. But a rat is killed by a cat. It is the same mouth in both cases. *Maya* brings trouble, yet it is the same *maya* that tenderly protects the devotee of God.

Hislop: Then, the devotee of God may just do his work and not worry about penetrating the illusions of *maya*?

Sai: Yes. The devotee may do work for God and pay no attention to the powers of *maya*. God protects His devotees. His devotee is near and dear to God, and He carries the devotee safely through life. In Indian kitchens there is an instrument—tongs—that is used to pick up and move the cooking utensil. The instrument can seize everything except the user. *Maya* is the tongs held and used by God.

Hislop: Then God holds *maya* in one hand and the devotee in the other?

Sai: Two hands are not needed; one hand is enough. If God held the devotee with one hand, the tongs might still seize him! So, God holds both in the same hand.

Source: Conversations with Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

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Thought of the MONTH

The Search for Fulfillment

From the point of view of spiritual progress, persons can be grouped under three heads: *pushthi* (the full-filled or complete), *maryaada* (the part-filled or limited), and *thepravaaha* (empty or heedless).

The first group, the *pushthi* people, win the grace of God through adherence to good conduct, good work, and good faith. They are loved by God and are thereby blessed with unbroken *ananda* (bliss). Love is the effect of love only. Love can be earned only by love. The ordinary men do not hanker after the love of God; they yearn after material goods and the satisfaction they can confer. They are prompted by the lower self to cater to the senses. But the *pushthi* persons have the higher love that is free from selfishness. Their thoughts, aspirations, and deeds are all saturated with love.

The *Gopis* [milk maidens] prayed to Krishna, “Lord! Play on the flute the song that can plant the seeds of love in the loveless desert of our hearts; shower thereon the rain of love and let the plantings grow and yield the rich harvest of love. The *pushthi* group of devotees might be undistinguished in appearance but they can be recognized by the spiritual glow of inner bliss. To be blessed by the Lord with divine love, one must have passed through many lives of *sadhana* (spiritual discipline), the *sadhana* of love.

The *maryaada* people have attained limited achievement through spiritual effort, but even that is a noteworthy accomplishment. They have learnt about the glory of God through ardent scriptural studies, and after deep meditation on that glory, they have cultivated lasting love for God. But you may dial the correct number in order to contact another on the telephone, and if the other does not lift the receiver, you have not benefited at all. It is not enough if you calculate the amount of your *sadhana*, or the hours you spend in study and *sadhana*. God cares more for the transformation achieved through *shravana* (listening), *manana* (revolving in the mind what is heard), and *nidhidhyasa* (actual experience of the lesson that was heard). He does not count the recitations and adorations you offer as more valuable.

Next, the *pravaaha* category, the heedless individuals who do not resist the pulls of the senses or of the ways by which they can cross the sea of *samsara* (worldly life and perpetual change). They fall into the whirlpools of misery. They do not have any knowledge of the Savior. So, they are caught in the wheel of birth and death. The flood is in a state of motion and it does not allow them to get established anywhere. They are born to die and they die only to be born again. But this is not the true destination of human life. How then can man escape from this wheel?

The tree originates from the seed. Desire is the seed from which man appears on earth. If man has no desire and no resolution to satisfy them, then man need not be born to realize the unfulfilled desire. And he need not die. So, man has to minimize desires and give up

seeking the fulfilment of desire. Desire is what makes man feeble and fearful. He cannot rise to his full of stature when burdened with desire.

The heart filled with compassion is the temple in which God likes to install Himself... Purity of the heart has to be the goal of *sadhana*.... Divinity is his own nature. He is himself God. His Divine nature must express itself in daily living.

In order to elevate oneself to the full filled *pushthi* category, one must learn self-confidence and self-satisfaction, to be content with one's self, to derive joy from the *atma* (Divine Self) that one is.

~Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. XIV, *The Search for Fulfilment*



Happy New Year 2021!