

Lessons in *Karma* and *Dharma* from the *Mahabharata*

The edifice of man's life is erected on four walls: *janma*, *karma*, *dharma*, and *Brahman* (birth, actions, duties, and Supreme Reality). These four walls are interdependent and inextricably connected with each other. For what does birth take place? To perform actions. How are actions to be done? Actions should be filled with *dharma* (righteousness). Through righteous actions one should realize the Brahman.

Man has forgotten this goal. Today actions are related to physical needs and *dharma* is concerned with getting on in the world. There is no awareness of the Supreme. Without four bare walls even a cottage cannot be erected. The mansion of life must be supported by the four essential walls of *janma*, *karma*, *dharma*, and *Brahman*. *Karma* (action) is the cause of birth. It is the life-sustaining force. The body is the instrument of this vital force. *Karma* sustains life in the body, through the body. Every action done by man is described as *karma*. Man performs actions for the fruits thereof. He takes birth again to experience the results of his actions. That is why it is declared in the *Gita*: "*Karma Anubandheeni Manushyaloke*" (Man's life in the world is bound by his actions). It is not possible to get away from action, but it is essential to perform actions properly. [KK: I wonder if there is a source to check the Sanskrit verses in the *Gita*, unless you can tell if it is accurate]

Our condition in life is determined by our actions. Our habits are governed by our actions. Habits determine conduct. And conduct determines our future. Hence it is supremely important how we act. Good and evil in life are determined by the nature of our actions. To claim that "I am the doer, I am the experiencer, and I am the enjoyer," is a sign of egoism. Good and evil result from actions, whether one is aware of their consequences or not.

Krishna and Dharmaraja

After the end of the *Mahabharata* war, Krishna approached Dharmaraja and told him, "Dharmaraja! The battle is over. You have been victorious. You must now be crowned as king." Dharmaraja did not accept Krishna's advice. He told Krishna, "Did I kill so many of my kinsmen and friends only to assume the crown? For whose sake should I become the ruler? I killed many of my kinsmen and I was also responsible for the death of many others. Over whom should I rule? What joy can I derive from such rulership? I have no use for this paltry kingship. I do not wish to be crowned." Dharmaraja pleaded in this way with Krishna and would not agree for his coronation. Krishna realized that it was no use arguing with Dharmaraja.

The ways of the Lord are mysterious. In everything He does, He sets an example to the world. No action of the Lord is without a purpose, though its meaning may not be obvious. When the Lord comes in human form, proximity to the Lord may conceal the full import of His words or actions.

Bhishma asks Dharmaraja to follow Krishna

Krishna thought that Dharmaraja would be more amenable to advice if it came from a venerable elder like Bhishma. So He took Dharmaraja to the grandsire of the Pandavas, who was lying on a bed of arrows. Krishna knew that Dharmaraja would heed Bhishma's counsel. If Bhishma advised and encouraged Dharmaraja to go through the coronation and accept the burden of kingship, Krishna felt that Dharmaraja would not refuse. After leaving Dharmaraja with Bhishma, Krishna retired.

Bhishma looked at Dharmaraja with tears streaming from his eyes and said, "Dharmaraja! Will you wholeheartedly respect my words?" Dharmaraja held the hands of his grandsire and reverently promised him that he had never gone against Bhishma's injunctions in the past and would never do so in the future.



Bhishma then said, "Dharmaraja! Before the war you relied on Krishna. You regarded Him as your mentor. He, whom you revered as your mentor before your ends had to be realized, is worthy of the same regard even after your purposes have been realized. It is unworthy of you to ignore Krishna's advice now. You are looking upon Him only as a kinsman. Krishna is God incarnate. No doubt He is your kinsman and friend, but you have no conception of His powers. Looking at the world externally, you are wasting your time. Look within and see the truth," advised Bhishma.

Dharmaraja replied, "Grandsire! I know full well with what love you brought us up when we were left fatherless. You fostered us with greater care than even a father could have bestowed. But we fought against you in the war and brought you down. We resorted to a deceitful stratagem to make our Guru Dronacharya, lay down his arms. We killed numerous dear kinsmen and friends in the war. After all this, what joy can I derive by ascending the throne? Please spare me from the ignominy of coronation." Dharmaraja piteously pleaded with Bhishma in these words.

The Bonds of *Karma* and Time

Bhishma smiling at Dharmaraja said, "The world is bound by *karma*. Dharmaraja! You are well versed in the scriptures. Nevertheless you speak about killing so many people. Who are the killed? And who are the killers? You do not have the power to kill or to make others kill. Killing and getting killed are consequences of past *karmas*. *Karma* is responsible for everything that happens. Let me illustrate this by a story."

Bhishma then related the following story, "A woman who had an only son lost her husband. Taking her son with her she was going through a forest to go to another village. On the way she rested under a tree with her son sleeping on her lap. Suddenly the boy woke up with a shriek and started crying. The mother woke up and noticed that a cobra had bitten her son and was wriggling back into an anthill. Within a few moments the boy died. While the mother was wailing helplessly over the death of her son, a highway robber, who was passing by that way, heard her cries and enquired about the cause of her grief. Learning about the death of her son from a snake bite, the robber decided to dig up the anthill and kill the cobra.

At that stage, the woman took hold of the robber's hands and pleaded, "Dear man! Please do not kill the cobra. Will my son get back his life if you kill that cobra? I cannot escape my fate." The robber said, "That poisonous snake can cause the death of others who may come here. I have a duty to destroy poisonous creatures." Then the mother replied: "Son! It is by the dictates of *kaala* (time or fate) that this poisonous cobra bit my son. His death is the result of his own past *karma*."

***Karma* is Responsible for Everything**

"We are not aware of the consequences of our actions when we do them. We grieve over our calamities when they occur. Behind every good or bad event there is a cause, Dharmaraja! People talk about Yama, the God of death. He comes in innumerable forms to take life at the appointed time. Yama is called time or destiny, Dharmaraja! *Karma* is responsible for everything. How is it that you could not see what a simple woman realized so clearly? You are well versed in all the *Shastras* (scriptures) and know what is wrong. Knowing that gambling is among the five great sins, you succumbed to play the dice and as a result had to endure innumerable difficulties including living in the forest as an exile with your family. Were not all your ordeals the consequences of your action? No one can escape from the consequence of one's deed. With God's grace the results can be overcome. But if one disobeys the command of the Lord, no one can save him. By going against Krishna's command, you will not save yourself from the consequences of your actions," concluded Bhishma.

Submit to the Divine Will

Finally, Bhishma exhorted Dharmaraja in these words, "The Divine Will is the basis of all action. The Divine can annul the consequences of these actions or provide the means of expiation for them. Hence, your duty is to carry out faithfully the Divine command. If you act to the contrary, you will be ruining your life. Bow to Krishna's command and get yourself crowned."

Dharmaraja, however, continued to be racked by doubts as to how the law of *karma* operated. Was the boy's death from the cobra bite a decree of fate? Bhishma reassured Dharmaraja, the Lord grants the fruit of every action according to each person's deserts, in any form, in any situation, through any agency. All results follow from the actions. The wicked Kauravas, although they knew the principles of morality and justice, subjected the noble Pandavas to such troubles and ordeals that ultimately their entire clan was destroyed. Because the Divine was on their side, the Pandavas were victorious. Bhishma, therefore, advised the Pandavas not to ignore Krishna's advice in the hour of their success.

It is not easy to explain in what form and in what manner *karma* follows a person. A cow that feels proud about its horns and its size finds itself controlled by a rope through its nostrils on account of its *karma*. Hence one must bear with whatever troubles that may come, treating them as the consequences of past actions. But the effects can be mitigated or removed by earning the Divine grace.

As you sow, so shall you reap

Men today do not view things in this manner. Considering some person as the author of his misfortunes, they tend to abuse him without thinking about their own actions. They should realize the truth of the saying, "As you sow, so shall you reap." Your present state is the result of your past actions. Therefore, by doing good acts in the present, you must ensure beneficial results in the future. Everyone should realize that for happiness or sorrow, profit or loss, his own actions are responsible.

Of all actions nothing is so reprehensible as the violation or ignoring of the Divine's injunctions. The *Vedas* have emphasized the important role of *karma* and urged that due regard should be had for its operation.

Students should try to understand the inner meaning of all teachings. They should not concern themselves with the actions or words of individuals. They must concentrate on their respective duties. Intelligent persons may discuss matters of moment. The small-minded may discuss personalities. Both types of discussions are likely to be exercises in futility. What should be realized is that nothing happens without a cause and that every result is the outcome of a particular action. Once the cause is understood, one should act on that understanding, avoiding actions that are bound to have undesirable consequences and performing actions that will yield beneficial results. Do not be concerned whether someone is watching your actions or not. God is certainly watching your actions. Therefore, you must take care to act righteously at all times and in all situations.

Today people claim to be working for world peace. How can those who have not achieved peace within themselves hope to achieve world peace? Those who have not learnt to look within themselves and cultivate a broad spiritual outlook are not competent to work for peace in the world.

Education is for acquiring Wisdom

Students! Your actions are responsible for your good or ill, your fame or disgrace, your joy or grief. Do not get excited over petty demands and desires. Fix your minds on permanent ideals. The discipline you observe should not be confined to your tenure in the college. When Bhishma questioned Yudhisthira whether his faith in Krishna endured only as long as the war lasted, Yudhisthira was bitten to the quick. He realized his mistake and felt repentant deep in his heart.

Today's students, however, seem to be immune to such appeals. Do you need Sai Baba only for obtaining a seat in the Institute? Don't you need the help of Sai after you have finished your studies? You will need Sai always. You must not forget how you completed your studies and what the Sathya Sai Institute has done for you. If you forget this, you are in for all sorts of troubles. You should not forget the pledge you have given to the Institute, whatever difficulties you may confront. Remember the example of Emperor Harishchandra who went through every kind of ordeal to honor his plighted word. Treat your word as a sacred expression of the Divine. Do not speak ill of others. Do not give room for attachment and hatred in your hearts. Education is for acquiring wisdom, not for getting material wealth.

Bear in mind the Message of the Sages

Do not treat lightly your human birth. Show respect for words of elders, parents, and teachers. The Yadava clan, in which Sri Krishna was born, was totally destroyed because of the disrespect shown to a sage. Bharat's history is full of the lives of great souls. Bear in mind their message, which will be of use to you sometime or other. Their teachings are wholesome medicine for the spirit.

Mundane existence is subject to a variety of diseases. For all of them, remembrance of the name of the Lord is the panacea. When you install the name of the Lord in your hearts, revere your parents, and respect the Divine that is present in all beings, you will be able to lead ideal lives. Pursue your studies for achieving consummation. Cultivate good habits. Thanks to your good *karmas* in previous lives, you are having the good fortune of studying here. Take full advantage of this precious opportunity.

Krishna operates "Cancer" in the body politic

Dharmaraja once asked Krishna, "Krishna! Why did you bring about this disastrous war for the sake of this contemptible rulership over a kingdom? Forty lakhs of warriors died in this battle. Only the Pandavas have survived. Is there any justice in sacrificing the lives of 40 lakhs of men for the sake of the five Pandavas?" Krishna replied, "Dharmaraja! You are looking at the numbers involved, I am looking at the principles at issue. Can any crores of insects equal a lion?"

"Kuruksheetra is comparable to the body. *Kuru* means work. The body is the instrument of action. Because it is the field in which action takes place, it is called *kshetra* (field). Supposing in the back of the body, there is gangrene. If it is allowed to grow, it will spread throughout the body. If the gangrene is on the arm or the leg, you can remove it by the amputation of the limb concerned. But when it is in the

back, how do you deal with it? A major operation will be necessary. Likewise, the evil qualities in the Kauravas were like cancer in the body politic. If they had been ignored, the entire nation would be infected. Hence, acting as a surgeon I carried out the operation of the Mahabharata war with Arjuna as my assistant. In the process, 40 lakhs of "microbes" died. For the sake of saving these microbes should we let the patients die? To save the individual you have to eliminate the cancerous microbes. Likewise, persons with evil qualities are like cancer cells. I saved the nation by destroying these bacteria. There is no sin in this," declared Krishna.

How the Divine acts

If for doing a good deed you have to cause a little harm, even that should be regarded as a help. But in all such cases, there should be absolutely no element of self-interest. Whatever help is rendered with a selfish motive behind it is no help at all. Because the Divine is totally free from self-interest, whatever He does is utterly blameless and is solely for the welfare of the world. It is foolish to question the propriety of God's actions. There is nothing beyond His powers. He is the creator, the protector, and the destroyer. When He protects, no one asks why He protects. But when He does not protect, questions are asked about His inaction. When the Lord punishes, the question is asked, "Why does God inflict punishment? Is it not wrong on His part to do so?" Such questions are motivated by selfishness and self-interest. God is totally free from any taint of self-interest. To indulge in controversies over the Divine actions is supreme folly.

There is a valid reason behind every action of the Divine. Therefore, your duty is to pray to God and secure His grace. Take, for instance, the case of Sakkubai. When Sakkubai wanted to join the pilgrims going to Pandharpur, Krishna could have openly arranged for her joining the party. But He did not do so. If she would have gone against her husband's will, she would have got a bad name. To maintain her good reputation and show her as an example to the world, Krishna assumed Sakkubai's form and subjected Himself to all kinds of harassments of the mother-in-law while the real Sakkubai was sent to Pandharpur. Why did Krishna do this? The Lord is ready to assume any form and subject Himself to any hardship to uphold *dharma*. On the one hand, public opinion must be respected. On the other side, the devotee should not go astray. Only the Divine knows how to reconcile these opposites.

Men, in general, can look at things only from their personal point of view. They cannot have an integral view of things. Students should note that on one side they have to set an example to the world by their behavior. At the same time, they have to conform to the will of the Divine. They have to follow both these courses. They must please their parents who have done so much for them. They have to bring credit to the Institute that has been their Alma Mater. Whether you are here or elsewhere, your conduct must be the same. It is unworthy of a human being to vary his behavior according to place and time.

Sanctify every Act

Recognizing the supremacy of action, you must see that everything you do is pure and holy. Action is not limited to what you do with your hands. What you hear, what you see, what you speak and even what you think—all of them constitute action. This means that the things you see, the words you hear, the thoughts you think, and the speech you make should all be pure. All that you take in through your five senses should be wholesome and pure, and not merely your food alone. Only then can it be *satwic* [pure]. Devotion is not confined to *bhajans* [religious music] and exhibiting a yearning for Swami. Every one of your actions should be filled with devotion. Each one is the architect of his destiny. And as Bhishma pointed out to Dharmaraja, no one can avoid the consequences of his actions. What he can do is to pray to the Lord and show him how he can atone for his wrong doings.

It is essential to suffuse all our actions with *dharma*. That *dharma* should be dedicated to the Divine. When this happens, life becomes sanctified. There may be no rebirth at all. Therefore, build your lives on the four pillars of *janma*, *karma*, *dharma*, and *Brahman*. This is my benediction for all of you.

Source: Divine Discourse to Students of the Prasanthi Campus Hostel, Feb. 21, 1988

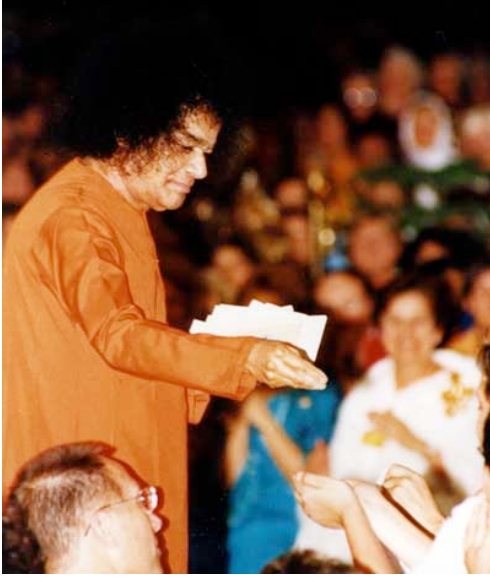
The Miracle in Reverse

Long ago, about 2,000 years in the past, Lord Jesus Christ trod on the surface of the earth in the small region of Palestine. He only preached for 3 years. He spoke to the simple folk in a very simple language, in the form of stories and parables to show them the way to the truthful path of life and righteousness. His life on the earth was a great message for humanity.

At a marriage party, when the wine being served was exhausted, Jesus turned water into wine.

Last year a couple stayed in one of the flats in *Prasanthi Nilayam* [abode of peace] and the man, who was a habitual drunkard, took along with him two bottles of whisky in his baggage to the room.

In the night he started drinking in front of Swami's photo that was hanging on the wall. He poured the drink in a glass and started drinking to Baba's health in spite of his wife telling him that he should not drink in the holy place. But when he drank he found that the liquor had turned into water. As he could not remain without his drink, he opened the new bottle and to his utter amazement that, too, had turned into water! Therefore, the man had to remain without his crutch for that fateful night.



The next day both the husband and wife attended the *bhajan* meeting and Baba came to him and made similar gestures [as if raising a glass to His mouth] as the man had made in front of Baba's photo while drinking the liquor!

He was amazed and shaken by Baba's omnipresence and sat silent with folded hands. After that the couple left *Prasanthi Nilayam*. From then onward he gave up this bad habit for good.

~A. S., Calcutta

Source: *Sanathana Sarathi*, July 1983

Sri Sathya Sai on Non-violence

“I take birth in different *Yugas* for protecting the righteous and destroying the unrighteous and for establishing righteousness” - Gita.

In *Treta Yuga* on appeal from sages for protection from men with demonic qualities, God came in human form as Lord Rama, took Lakshmana and Hanuman as His assistants and performed the operation, and saved *dharma*. During *Dwapara Yuga*, taking the form of Lord Krishna, God came to the rescue of the Pandavas, “men of righteousness.” In that operation 40 lakh ‘germs’ were killed. And He protected *dharma*. In the *Kali Yuga*, to make men follow the path of righteousness God sent at different times His messengers—Buddha, Zarathushtra, Jesus, Muhammad, etc. Their scriptures are their precious gifts to mankind. But instead of following the path laid down by the messengers, their followers cornered the messengers and their respective scriptures, raised high walls, and created watertight compartments. As a result, wars became the routine of the day: 15,000 wars have been fought, millions of innocent lives lost during the last 5,000 years.

Violence is still on the increase. Weapons of Mass Destruction have been piled up; these WMD could destroy the World 70 times over! Men of righteousness, in microscopic minority, prayed. And they had their prayer answered. God has come in human form to save mankind, taking birth in Ratnakara Raju family at Puttaparthi, with the name: “Sathyanarayana.”

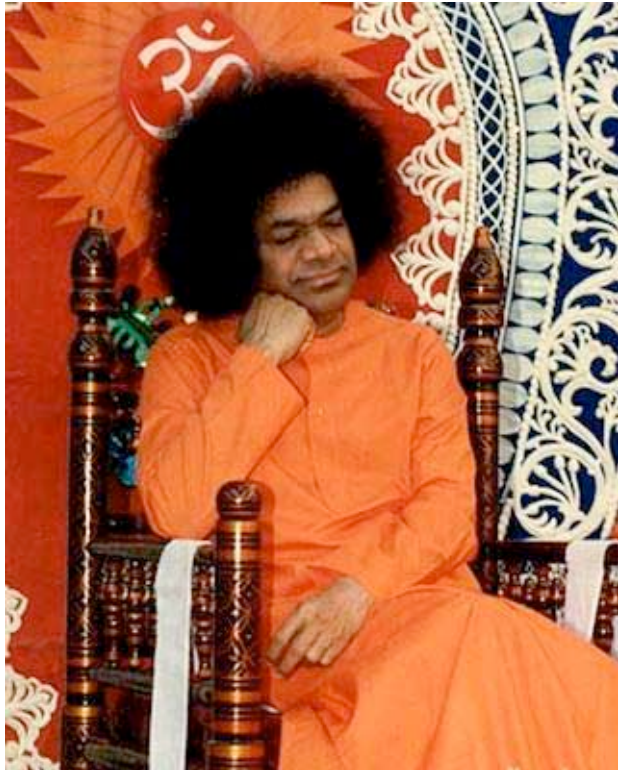
If He had come with destructive weapons, who would have been left out! He has come not for annihilation but for transformation. He has come with a powerful

medicine, a panacea, and a perfect antidote to violence—“non-violence.” All the religions of the world—Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Christianity and Islam—have glorified “non-violence.”

Right from His childhood every action of Sathya has been suffused with “non-violence”. He alone could say, “My life is My message.”

The Ratnakara Rajus were non-vegetarians. The Divine child refused the food prepared in the vessels previously used for cooking non-vegetarian food. As the grandfather Kondama Raju was a strict vegetarian, the Divine Child would go to his house for His food. There was another great soul in the village to feed the Divine Child, a Brahmin lady, Karanam Subbamma.

At the tender age of three or four, He had a heart that melted at human suffering. He would not allow a beggar to pass by His house unless alms were given. He would not even pass across places where any cruelty was perpetrated on animals and birds. When the village went to watch cockfights, He would sit lamenting in a lonely place. He would avoid the tank where fishing was on. On Tholi Ekadashi, when the entire village moves to witness the bullock-cart race on the Chitravati riverbed, He would sit in a corner and bemoan the suffering of the animals. He would persuade His playmates not to attend such functions.



In due course devotees started coming to Puttaparthi in large numbers. Once He called back some devotees who had just taken leave of Him. They hurriedly returned. He said, “So many of you have come in a single cart. It will be a burden on the bullocks, especially in the sands of the River Chitravati. So, until you cross the riverbed you walk along. That was what I wanted to tell you.” This is non-violence in Action.

Non-violence is the result of the total blossoming of the soul and the state of *advaitic* [non-dualistic] awareness. It is a state and sense of feeling of total identity with all life and creation. It is the quality and the attribute of the awakened soul. It sees only God in every bit of creation. It is pure and impersonal love flowing from the spirit.

While the other four values, *sathya*, *dharma*, *shanti*, and *prema* are mostly subjective in their implications, *ahimsa* or non-violence refers to our social obligations and general attitude toward the entire world and all beings without exception. It is all-expansive and all-encompassing love.

Ahimsa or non-violence according to the *Shrutis* [scriptures] is the first of the eight flowers (qualities) with which *Bharatiyas* [Indians] worshipped God. The other flowers are: *Sathya* [truth], *dharma* [righteousness], *shanti* [peace], *prema* [love], *daya* [compassion], *kshama* [forbearance], and *dhyana* [meditation]. Clarifying about the *ahimsa pushpam*, Lord Sai has said, “The true meaning of *ahimsa* is not to hurt or harm any being either through thought, word, or deed.” This kind of flower of *ahimsa* has been described as ‘*Trigunam* [3 qualities—satisfaction, frustration, and confusion], *Triputi*, *Ekabilvam*’. All of these should be harmonized and brought together to one unit of flower.

Further Lord Sai has explained, “Nonviolence does not mean merely not injuring a living being, you should not harm anyone through your vision, hearing, or talking.” The Buddha also has said, “Non-violence is the Supreme Right Action.” We should interpret non-violence as not causing any harm to any individual by any means. Tolerance, fortitude, equanimity—these help us to be steady in non-violence.

It also implies refraining from causing harm to yourself. If you harm yourself, you cannot avoid harming others. How is this to be ensured? This is to be ensured by constantly examining whether your conduct is right or wrong. You should see that you give no room for a bad look, bad word, bad thought, and bad action.

Whenever we act against the dictates of our conscience, bad results follow. Our conscience is the divine within each one of us. Whatever we do, the conscience tells us whether it is right or wrong. However, to ascertain the directive of the conscience we need time. When we want to listen to something, we must examine whether it is good or bad to listen to and then decide what is proper. We should be careful about our food. Moderation in food is conducive to happiness.

Thus, *ahimsa* is what confers happiness on us. That which hurts us is violence. Likewise, our entire life should be governed by the principle of non-violence. Violence is present in all routine activities. To avoid the consequences of such involuntary violence to living creatures, we are advised to dedicate all actions to the Divine. But there is no meaning in dedicating conscious acts of violence to the Divine. The conscience will not approve of such conduct. In *Vedantic* parlance the conscience is called ‘*chit*’, ‘awareness’. Awareness is total understanding. Total understanding is within the capacity of every human being. And *ahimsa* is the primary duty of man.

Non-violence and the Omnipresence of God

All religions of the world have declared: “God is Omnipresent, Omniscient, and

Omnipotent.” Lord Sai has said, “God is Omnipresent. He is immanent in every being in equal measure. So man must visualize Him equally in himself and in others. That is to say, he sees only God in all. So how can he harm others or fear that he will come to harm through others? This is the basis of the Indian ideal of *ahimsa*.”

“You must examine every act to find out whether it will cause pain to others; if it does, withdraw from it. Don’t do to others what you do not like to have done unto you. This is called the Golden Rule—yes, it is the best test for distinguishing right from wrong.”

Jesus was the Messenger of God on earth. Lord Sai narrates the episode of his crucifixion, “When the nails were being driven into him on the cross, Jesus heard the voice of the Father saying, ‘All life is one, my dear Son. Be alike to everyone.’” Jesus said, “Lord, pardon them, for they know not what they do.” Lord Sai says, “Jesus sacrificed himself for the sake of mankind.” [KK: the words for ‘Lord pardon them’ on the net are different. But since Swami has said this, we leave it as is?]

Non-violence and Unity of Faith

“The scriptures of different creeds—the *Bible*, *Koran*, *Upanishads*, and *Zend Avesta*—appear different, but their aim is the same; to establish the Brotherhood of Man and Fatherhood of God as the basis for the peace of mankind,” declares Lord Sai.

Non-violence: A Ceiling on Desires

Who is the richest man in the world? He who has fewest desires. Who is the poorest man in the world? He who has more desires. Lord Sai has said, “Desires are a prison. Man can be freed only by limiting his wants. You should have desires only for life’s bare necessities. The first ceiling on desires is: ‘Don’t waste food. Food is God.’ The second instruction is: ‘Don’t waste money. God is wealth.’” Practice charity by giving away money, food, clothes, etc. The third instruction is: ‘Don’t waste time. Time waste is life waste.’ The fourth instruction is: ‘Don’t waste energy.’ People waste their energy by indulging in bad thoughts, bad looks, bad hearing, and bad actions.”

Non-violence and Truth

Love in thought is truth. It is eternal. Lord Sai has said, “You have two eyes in your consciousness, namely truth and non-Violence. They are the guides, which will take you to the goal, the two lights, the sun and the moon of the inner firmament. To know the way in which you have to observe truth in speech, look into *Bhagavad Gita*.” It tells us that the best speech is that which does not create pain or grief to others (*anudvegakaram vakyam*). The scriptures (*Shastras*) also say, “Speak the truth, but speak pleasantly (*sathyam bruyaat, priyam bruyaat na bruyaat sathyam apriyam*). Simply because a statement will be welcome to the hearer, don’t speak it out to win his approval. If speaking truth will cause grief or pain, keep silent. That is the vow of truth in ordinary daily life. Both unpleasant truth and pleasant untruth have to be avoided.”

Non-violence and Right Conduct

*“Dharma eva adharmahanti
dharmo rakshati rakshitah”*

(Dharma destroys the one who harms it. Dharma protects its protector)

Lord Sai has highlighted these three concepts, “*preeti, bheeti, neeti*”

Preeti pertains to the love for God—*Daiva preeti*.

Bheeti is related to the fear of sin—*Papa bheeti*.

Neeti is related to the morality in society—*Sangha neeti*.

If these three are observed there will be Peace and Non-violence.

Non-violence and Peace

Lord Sai has said, “It is the state in which the senses are mastered and held in balance.” “Peace is a shoreless ocean; it is the light that illumines the world. Having it is having all.”

Non-violence and Love

In ancient days the seers and the sages lived in the forests often surrounded by wild animals. But they lived in amity. What is the secret? Their hearts overflowed with love and non-violence. Lord Sai has said, “The weapon of love will disarm every opponent. Love begets love, it will be reflected back; and it will have only love as reaction. Shout ‘love’, the echo from the other person’s heart will also be love.” The *Gita* says, you must be “without hatred to all beings, you must positively love all beings; actively love and actively engage yourself in acts of love. That alone wins the grace that you crave for. “Love is Selflessness; Self is lovelessness; Love gives and forgives; Self gets and forgets.” “Love can never entertain the idea of revenge, for it sees all others as Oneself.”

Lord Sai has emphasized that the five human values are related to the different instruments of the body:

- 1) *Dharma* is related to *Annamaya Kosa* [physical sheath].
- 2) *Prema* is related to *Pranamaya Kosa* [energy body forces].
- 3) *Shanti* is related to *Manomaya Kosa* [mental sheath].
- 4) *Sathya* is related to *Vijnanamaya Kosa* [wisdom sheath].
- 5) *Ahimsa* is related to *Aanandamaya Kosa* [innermost blissful sheath].

But where is the scope for their promotion when the heart is the abode of six evil tendencies—lust, anger, greed, attachment, arrogance, and envy? Let us burn to ashes all these evil forces. When we promote these values, our heart will be the abode of peace. During *Treta Yuga* Lord Rama established *Rama Rajya* with truth as the foundation. In *Dwapara Yuga* Lord Krishna established *Dharma Rajya* with Righteousness as the foundation. But their field was limited to India, that is *Bharata*.

In this *Kali Age* Lord Sai has come with His own *Sankalpa* [resolution] to establish Golden Age with *shanti* as the foundation, where “Love and Non-violence” will reign supreme. There truth and righteousness will be the beacon lights. This Golden Age will travel beyond the boundaries of India and will cover the entire world. It will be a global phenomenon—“*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*” (The world is one family).

~Late D.S. Habbu, Former Principal of Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School
Source: *Sai Sparshan* 2005 (80th Birthday Offering)

To Our Dearest Lord Sai on His 96th Birthday

Almost half a century ago, Lord Sai entered our lives, lives of all,
What a sweet change swept over us! From mundane to sublime!
Lost in a dark and dull slumber that must have lasted many ages,
His glance cast at us, a family of me and my consort with four kids,
As we went in search of a savior who could teach the sacred truth,
A search that ended in the far away valley of the Abode of Peace,
We became transfixed, silent, and still under the magic spell of Sai,
Words lose their power, struck dumb to express the glory of Sai.

Was it some deep longing within that drew us to Sai? We know not,
Perhaps His compassion to save humanity from its piteous plight,
A plight that let us all wallow in the murky slush of negative forces,
A sorry state that set man against man, divine gift of earth ruined,
That stirred the supreme consciousness to descend amongst us all,
The descent of divine power into the sweet form of Sai grandeur,
Manifested in a humble abode in a village tucked away in a valley,
And taught the truant humanity the sacred path to find eternity.

At this sunset stage of my life, my mind is steeped in Sai memories,
Recalling my first sight of our Lord as He walked amongst devotees,
Thrilled to the core of the divine spectacle of the Lord in His glory,
In a garb of orange hue with a divine halo that stretched far and far,
He came, He walked amongst the gathered crowd, exuding divinity,
He smiled, He talked, He patted some, He collected letters from us,
A splendid figure of divine charm, He exuded love and compassion,
As He walked through, there was stillness, not a stir, not a murmur.

Ever since that miraculous day when we beheld His brilliant shine,
A shine that surpassed the brightness of thousand suns in the sky,
Ever since our *karmic* merit led us to the powerful Presence of Baba,

We as a family, surrendering at His Lotus Feet, hailed Him as *Guru*,
Our supreme *Guru* who would lead us all from darkness to light.
He graciously did, taught us to find within gem of our own divinity,
Shrouded behind layers of illusion, beset in darkness so tragically,
He taught us internal purity, freed us from the iron grip of vices,
He patiently showed us how to open the fountain of love in us,
That could embrace all creation with expansive love and a smile,
Like a shining star in our horizon, He powerfully led us to the end.

All the first forty years passed with His physical Presence in India,
Beckoning us now and then, from the early years of close proximity,
To the latter years of difficult access with thousands milling around,
We had *darshans* when His divine energy poured in plenty as always
As we sat there open to His flow of energy that embraced everyone,
We had personal interviews where He rained His love in a free flow,
We listened to His discourses that set us astir to search for Truth,
We truly became dearest devotees to our Lord Sai in full surrender.

But alas, to the dismay of devotees, our Lord decided to withdraw,
From form to formless, from visible to invisible for us to grow fully.
Like a loving mother who weans her children from utter dependence
To grow sturdy and strong on their own right to find their own truth,
So did our Lord Sai on a sad Easter Sunday withdrew from our sight,
And left us first to mourn yet instilled the wisdom to find Him within.
Ten years have passed since He left us, with all His teachings intact,
We soon shall celebrate six and ninety years of His glorious entry.
As November dawns, we wait to rejoice in our memories of Lord Sai,
Hail to Thee Our Beloved Sai! Hail to Thy ninety-six years of Glory!

~Kanaga Ranganathan, November 2nd 2021

The Secret of a Happy Life

*The way to happiness lies through a track of pain and suffering, clarifies Bhagawan
Baba to his students. Pleasure is simply the interval between two pains.*

Sometimes certain feelings originate in our heart. Clouds that originate from the sun cover the sun itself. Water that is not used for many days is covered by the moss that has grown in the water itself. Cataract, which is born of the eye, covers the vision of that very eye. Ash that comes out of the fire covers that same fire. So, too, compassion is present in our very heart. But we neglect it or divert our heart in a wrong way. A seed has oil in it, but you should know the procedure of extracting oil from it. Without thrashing the sugarcane, you cannot make sugar out of it. First, you

must crush the cane and then extract the juice. Then you have to boil the juice to make sugar out of it. On the other hand, if out of compassion you do not remove the juice from the cane, you will never get sugar. The flower of compassion doesn't work over here.

In the same way, our body is like sugar cane. Unless it is crushed by sufferings and pain, it doesn't give the sweet juice of compassion and kindness. This is known as 'samskara' or refinement. Refinement involves removing all bad qualities and fostering all good qualities. This is the main principle and the secret for leading a happy



life. Unless you feel hot, you would not purchase an air conditioner. Unless you are hungry, you won't be eating anything. Likewise, unless you face difficulties, you will not remember God. In times of happiness and joy, people don't pray to God, but in difficult times they realize the need for God. In times of pleasure and comfort, man becomes egoistic. Pleasure is the interval between two pains. Therefore, first we have to suffer pain and then only can we enjoy pleasure.

Develop Faith in God and Yourself

Since ancient days, *Bharat* [India] had set these cultural thoughts. If you take gold to the goldsmith, what does he do with the gold? He places it in the fire and hammers it to mold it into a particular shape. Then he carves it into a particular design of a jewel. If you don't want the goldsmith to hammer your gold, how do you expect to get the jewel? Likewise, we should offer our mind to God and ask Him to make a jewel out of it.

In this *Kali age* (Iron Age), if you offer your wavering mind to God, He will surely take care of it. You may be facing serious hardships, but you should not waver. You should develop one-pointed vision and an unwavering mind. But you get these only when you have faith in God. Therefore, first develop faith in God and yourself. You should know the greatness of faith. If you don't have faith in yourself, then how will you develop faith in God?

Who is God? You are God. You are not able to know this truth. Why do you search for God when God is present in you? Body is the temple, and the indweller is God. What sort of a temple is this body? It is like a moving temple. And God will follow you wherever you go. That is why God is in you, around you, above you, and below you. So,

we should have full faith in this eternal truth. We have to live in a manner that satisfies our conscience.

Narada and Sanata Kumara

Practice whatever you learn. You may learn many things in spirituality, but you should try to practice at least one or two. Once Narada [a celestial sage] approached Sanata Kumara [a self-realized sage] and prayed to him for supreme wisdom. Sanata Kumara, in turn, inquired about Narada's eligibility for receiving the highest wisdom. Narada replied that he had studied the four *Vedas* [Hindu scriptures] and the six *Shastras* [Hindu scriptures]. He had understood the secrets of all rituals and the fruits gained by the actions as expounded by the *Vedas*. He also claimed to have understood the meaning of each and every word.



Having listened to all this, Sanata Kumara asked Narada, "It is good that you have gone through all these sacred texts, but how many things you have practiced from the *Vedas*? You would have gained wisdom if you would have practiced even one of them." Bliss or happiness does not lie in education. Modern education is confined to textual knowledge, but it is not enough if you are familiar with texts. You keep on reading all your life, but when are you going to practice all that you have learnt, and when will you attain permanent bliss? All the food served in the plate should be partaken and digested; Only then will it give you strength. Narada was well versed in all the 64 kinds of knowledge, and yet he could not experience bliss. We should, therefore, gain practical experience. We should realize what we are reading so that we practice at least a fraction of it in our daily life.

Cultivate Spiritual Knowledge

Students! Instead of lecturing in tons, it is enough if you practice in pounds. One pound of practice can cure all your diseases. You don't know what is to be taken in. You take into your mind all the happenings in Japan and Russia. All unnecessary material is taken inside, and hence there is no place for necessary material. Stuff your minds only with that which will help you in leading a peaceful life.

There were so many great people who were born in this country who excelled everywhere. But do you find their name in the world today? You all know the city of Calcutta [in India]. It is the city of great people such as Bipin Chandra Pal and many

others who were highly intellectual and highly educated. But does the present generation remember them? Their names are there only in books. But the name of Ramakrishna Paramahansa [a self-realized devotee], a person who didn't even learn alphabets, is present in the heart of every person.

Therefore, we should try to enter the hearts of people and not into books. Students, along with your regular studies you should cultivate spiritual knowledge. Only then there will be harmony. Just as a bird cannot fly without two wings and a car cannot drive without four wheels, you should have perfect balance between studies and spiritual knowledge. The text '*Grantha* [spiritual texts]' and the fragrance '*gandha*' are our hearts itself. You should win all praise and acclaim so that people follow you later. [KK: Grantha is translated as ancient south Indian script. The above sentence doesn't make sense in that light, and also is not clear the way it is. I don't have a suggestion.]

Along with education, refinement is also necessary. Many people like Elliot [a leading philosopher and poet] did research on this topic but could not come to a conclusion. Finally, Elliot concluded that culture is the way of life. What is this way of life? Even bad way is a way of life. Therefore, you should select that path which can directly take you to bliss. You get eternal bliss if you follow the direct path to God. That path is the path of love. This bliss is wisdom and is attributeless. Therefore, we should try to reach that God who is attributeless. This whole world is full of attributes. What are these attributes (*gunas*)?

They are *satwa* (the pious), *rajas* (the emotional), and *tamas* (the dull). A violin, for instance, has only four strings, but you can play all tunes on these four strings. In the same way, many things originate from these three attributes only.

Source: *Follow Your Conscience, Discourse 6, My Dear Students, Volume 4*

Q&A

WITH BHAGAVAN

Swami Answers

Hislop: Swami, on the road to Simla [hill station in North India], drivers were very reckless in trying to stay close behind Swami's car. At one moment our car, which was going at a high speed, swerved to miss another car and was about to run down a policeman at the side of the road. It seemed sure there was neither time nor space to avoid striking him, but at the last second only his uniform was brushed by the car, and he was not harmed. Surely, it must be Swami who is driving every devotee's car, is it not?

Sai: No. It is the driver's responsibility. He must exercise caution and responsibility. It is only at the moment of an accident that Swami takes over the situation.

Hislop: Why does Swami conduct a marriage ceremony for older people who are long married?

Sai: In India, at age 60 people have a second marriage as rebirth of the marriage into spiritual life directed to God and not concerned with the senses. Prior to age 60, the couple were entitled to enjoy the fruits of the senses. At the age of 70, seven also has a significance. There are seven great rishis (sages) and at age 70 a person should be merged with these saints. At age 80, there are eight deities reigning over the directions. At age 90, there are nine special planets, and we should be merged with them. At age 100, one should be master of the five working organs, and the five sense organs, and should be merged with God. The five working organs are talking, taking, walking, rejecting (excrement), and eating. The five sense organs are hearing, touch, sight, taste, and smell.

An Indian Visitor: These Hindu rites, is there anything to them?

Sai: We owe debts of gratitude, and this gratitude must be expressed at the appropriate time and in such a way as will enable the message to be delivered. Our gratitude is due to the two parents, *guru*, God, nature, and the sages. If a letter is sent correctly addressed, it will reach its destination, and one need not know about or worry about the transit terminals through which the letter passes en route. In the case of the parents, their bodies have died, but the *atma* [soul] has suffered no change. The correct address for the expression of gratitude is provided by the *mantra* [spiritual formula] used in the ceremony. *Mantras* are very powerful, and in olden days they were relied upon. Nowadays machines are relied upon. The experts in *mantras* were called saints. The experts in machines are called scientists.

(A visiting scientist raised a doubt about science vs. what Swami says.)

Sai: Science is highly fragmentary, and its approach to reality is through *maya* [illusion], and this is a highly dangerous procedure. Science does not even know the truth of chemistry and physics. Each ten years or so, the old truths are discarded or modified because of research results. So when man tries to compare science and the spiritual world of Baba, he is comparing a science whose finality is not known to spiritual truth of which he is also ignorant. Science is from the senses downward. Spirit is from the senses upward. Science does not even know of the great holes in the sun through which winds rush to regulate the temperature. Science is just hit and miss. For one to really know, he must have the total, over-all knowledge of Baba.

Hislop: Is there a reliable English translation of the *Vedas* [scriptures]?

Sai: The *Vedas* come from certain fundamental sounds and their variations. The slightest modification of the sound changes the meaning of what is said. No written language is able to represent all of the *Vedic* sounds. It is impossible to write many of the words. The *Vedas* are God's breath and can be transmitted from person to person only by voice. In all of India there are only a handful of people who can recite the *Vedas* correctly. Some attempts have been made in recent years to write the *Vedas* and print them in books. The effort is wasted.

Source: Conversations with Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Thought of the MONTH

Face Difficulties with Courage

We should not allow trivial matters to dampen the spirit of enthusiasm. We should march forward with courage and conviction, unmindful of any hurdles and inconveniences in the way. A few minutes ago, when all of you were blissfully immersed in the celebration, all of a sudden, My nose started bleeding. I went inside, wiped the blood, and came out cheerfully as if nothing had happened. ...We should not lose our self-confidence on such minor physical discomforts. They are transient in nature; you should not get distracted by them. Ailment and suffering are but natural to the physical body. Sometimes even the sun is covered by clouds. But can the clouds ever diminish the effulgence of the sun? No. Just as the sun is not affected by the clouds, you too should remain unaffected by ailment and suffering. When you develop such courage, conviction, and determination, you will not be depressed or dejected by any suffering.

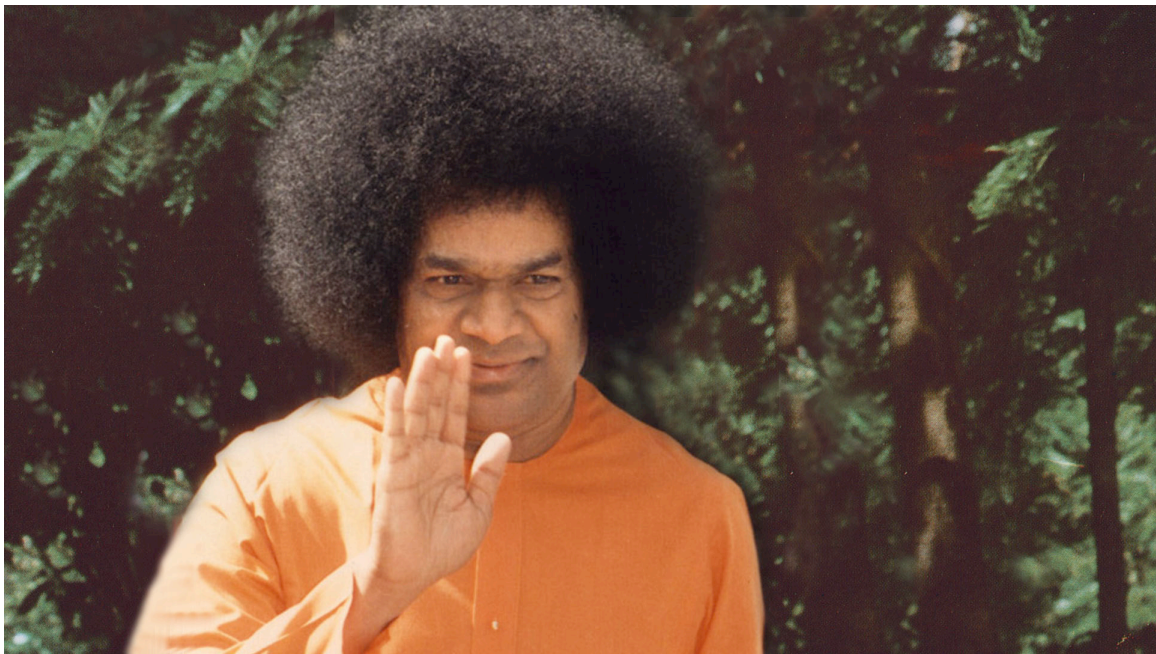
You cannot experience happiness without undergoing difficulties. *Na sukhat labhate sukham* (one cannot derive happiness out of happiness). Happiness gains value in the face of difficulties. Even insurmountable difficulties will vanish like thin mist when you face them with courage and self-confidence. The problems may appear to be mountainous in nature, but you should not give scope for fear or anxiety in your mind. Mind is like a mad monkey. It easily gets swayed by difficulties. Hence, you should brush aside the difficulties that come in your way. Never allow them to get the upper hand...

The same divinity that is present in an ant is also present in man. Likewise, difficulties are also common for all. The suffering that an ant undergoes is similar to that of man. When such a tiny creature like an ant is able to withstand suffering, why can't man do the same? He is influenced by his food and habits and thus has become a slave to his mind. That is the reason he is unable to withstand suffering. We should face the challenges of life with fortitude and brush aside the difficulties. Never be

cowed down by difficulties. You can attain God only when you face difficulties with courage and overcome them.

What is meant by personality? Does it mean height, weight, and a strong body? No, it is a mistake to think so. Undeterred by the sorrows and difficulties, one has to march forward with courage and adventure to attain God's love. That is the real meaning of personality. In fact, God has already granted such personality to every human being. Unfortunately, we fail to realize this truth. The word "person" implies a great Divine force that is granted by God to man. Our ancestors called this Divine force as "persona". This is a great gift of God, granted to every individual. We are unable to safeguard this great treasure. These sorrows and difficulties are like passing clouds that come and go. Why should we be afraid of them? We have the eternal divine principle immanent in our personality. Therefore, there is no need at all to be afraid of anything as long as we are constantly aware of our latent divinity. March forward with courage and conviction and achieve your life's goal. It is only to instill this feeling of courage in you and reinforce your faith in God that you are subjected to face certain anxious moments.

Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 37 (2004)



Sai Sarathi welcomes submissions of articles, transcriptions of talks, and student stories about Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, His teachings, and personal experiences at His lotus feet. Email them to "editor@SaiSarathi.com."