

DIVINE TEACHINGS OF Sri Sathya Sai Baba



Forgiveness

If one feels genuinely penitent, seeks God's forgiveness, and takes refuge in God, all one's actions will be transformed. But without heartfelt penitence, this will not happen.

Love gives and forgives; ego gets and forgets.

Nourish love in your hearts. Love will drive away all bad thoughts. It will promote the spirit of forgiveness.

Man should develop the qualities of love and forbearance. Love grows by giving and forgiving.

Divine love gives and forgives and does not receive. It does not expect any return.



Divine Teachings
of
Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Forgiveness





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Dedicated with love and reverence
to
Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba





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Divine Teachings of Sri Sathya Sai Baba

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Forgiveness

Preface

During His sojourn on Earth, Sri Sathya Sai Baba delivered more than 2,000 discourses, most of which were subsequently compiled in *Sri Sathya Sai Speaks* and *Summer Showers*. In addition, He wrote 16 books in the *Vahini* series. You can find these at this website: <http://sssbpt.info/>.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba was born in a small village in India on November 23, 1926. He left His body on April 24, 2011, having become one of the most revered spiritual teachers in the world. He exhibited love, wisdom, and knowledge beyond our comprehension. His devotees regard Him as an incarnation of God in human form (an *Avatar*).

Sri Sathya Sai Baba did not come to establish a new religion. Instead He exhorted people to practice their own religion and to respect the differences among faiths. His mission is best described in His own words:

I have come to light the lamp of love in your hearts, to see that it shines day by day with added luster. ... I have not come on any mission of publicity for any sect or creed or cause; nor have I come to collect followers for any doctrine. I have no plan to attract disciples or devotees into My fold or any fold. I have come to tell you of this universal unitary faith, ...this path of love, ... this duty of love, this obligation to love.

All religions teach one basic discipline: the removal from the mind of the blemish of egoism, of running after little joy. Every religion teaches man to fill his being with the glory of God and evict the pettiness of conceit. It trains him in the methods of detachment and discrimination so that he may aim high and attain liberation. Believe that all hearts are motivated by the One and Only God; that all faiths glorify the One and Only God; that all names in all languages and all forms man can conceive, denote the One and Only God; His adoration is best done by means of love. Cultivate that attitude of Oneness, between men of all creeds, all countries, and all continents. That is the message of love I bring. That is the message I wish you to take to heart.

His discourses and writings focused on what He had come to give us: a path toward realizing our own Selves, toward realizing and experiencing the oneness of

all creation. His discourses and writings are filled with simple explanations of how we should live and how we should treat our fellow humans in order to further ourselves along the path to enlightenment.

We are pleased to offer our readers *Divine Teachings of Sri Sathya Sai Baba*, Volume 3. It includes the topic, “Forgiveness.” The quotations are selected from *Sri Sathya Sai Speaks* and *Summer Showers*. Each quotation is numbered, and references are provided.

In one of His Divine discourses Sri Sathya Sai Baba said: “Practice what I teach. That is enough. That is all I ask.” Let us imbibe His words, apply them in daily practice, and find fulfillment in life.



Forgiveness

The following are highlights of the full quotations that begin on page 10.

If one feels genuinely penitent, seeks God's forgiveness, and takes refuge in God, all one's actions will be transformed. But without heartfelt penitence, this will not happen.

Love gives and forgives; selfishness gets and forgets.

Self gets and forgets; love gives and forgives. Love can never entertain the idea of revenge, for it sees all others as oneself.

Man should develop the qualities of love and forbearance. Love grows by giving and forgiving.

Make love the basic impulse for all your actions. Share your love with others. Be unselfish. Self lives by getting and forgetting. Love lives by giving and forgiving.

Develop the quality of forgiveness, and refrain from harshness in speech.

Cultivate the sacred quality of forgiveness. This is possible only by developing love for God.

Forgive those who have harmed you and criticized you. Have faith that whatever happens is for your own good. If someone hurls abuses on you, do not retaliate.

Love lives by giving and forgiving. Self lives by getting and forgetting.

Nourish love in your hearts. Love will drive away all bad thoughts. It will promote the spirit of forgiveness.

When one revels in the attitude of surrender, one experiences the bliss of the Divine. For this, the prime requisite is forgiveness.

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

individuals. You must be able to forgive even your enemies.

Love can forgive any blemishes and mistakes. It has such a great quality.

Never give scope to differences of opinion even in trivial matters. If any differences were to arise, each should be prepared to forgive the other. All are the children of God.

Even those who injure and insult you have to be forgiven and loved, for love alone can shower ananda (bliss).

Men have to cultivate qualities like love, sympathy, fairness, compassion, and forgiveness. Only when one has these qualities will he be able to render dedicated service.

Forgiveness is a quality that every man should possess. That forgiveness is truth itself; it is righteousness; it is the Veda. It is the supreme virtue in this world.

Love gives and forgives; ego gets and forgets.

You should forgive even those who harm you.

To have a compassionate heart is the attribute of human nature. It is giving and forgiving. It is not at all keen on getting anything.

For every individual, the true relations are truth, wisdom, righteousness, compassion, peace, and forgiveness.

Forget and forgive all that has happened amongst you until this very moment; start a new chapter of love and brotherhood from now on.

Divine love gives and forgives and does not receive. It does not expect any return. In worldly love, there is no spirit of sacrifice.

By “giving and forgiving” man develops love within himself. In relation to God, this implies that you should always have the attitude of offering your

heart to God.

We may commit sins knowingly or unknowingly, but if we love God wholeheartedly and surrender ourselves to Him, He will surely forgive us.

Once you tap the pure and unpolluted love within you, you will become the recipient of God's love. God would even overlook and forgive your mistakes.



Forgiveness

Take Refuge in God

Men desire the fruits of good deeds, but do not perform good deeds. Men want to avoid the consequences of sinful actions, but are engaged in sinful deeds. How is this possible? It is not easy to escape from the consequences of one's actions. But there is no need for despair. If one earns even a grain of grace from the Divine, a mountain of sins can be reduced to ashes. If one feels genuinely penitent, seeks God's forgiveness, and takes refuge in God, all one's actions will be transformed. But without heartfelt penitence, this will not happen.¹

1. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 24, Chapter 22: Honor the Plighted Word. Divine Discourse on August 24, 1991.



Love Gives and Forgives; Selfishness Gets and Forgets

Love as thought is truth; love as action is righteous conduct; love as feeling is peace; love as understanding is non-violence. Love is selflessness; selfishness is lovelessness. Love gives and forgives; selfishness gets and forgets.²

2. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 5, Chapter 38: Well or Ill. Divine Discourse on September 26, 1965.



Self Is Lovelessness—Love Is Selflessness

When *prema* (love) is tainted by selfishness, it cannot illumine at all. Self is lovelessness; love is selflessness. Self gets and forgets; love gives and forgives. Love can never entertain the idea of revenge, for it sees all others as oneself. When the tongue is hurt by the teeth, do you seek vengeance against the teeth? No, for they both belong to you and are integral parts of your body. So, too, when some other person insults you or inflicts pain, allow wisdom to have mastery over you. Discover the truth, and do not rush to conclusions, always keeping love as your guide.

Of course, it is a difficult task, but not beyond the capacity of man. A task

that can be finished without struggle and sustained effort is not something to be proud of. It is the difficult task that provides the challenge and brings forth the best and highest in man. Embark upon this task with ardor and faith; that will be sweeter. Once victory is achieved, the rest will be added unto you.³

3. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 13, Chapter 30: The Victory of Victories. Divine Discourse on February 16, 1977.



Perform Meritorious Acts

Men today seek the fruits of good deeds without engaging themselves in good actions. They wish to avoid the consequences of sinful actions while indulging in such actions. If you want to avoid the results of bad deeds, you should avoid such actions. If you desire the fruits of meritorious deeds, you must perform meritorious acts.

Man should develop the qualities of love and forbearance. Love grows by giving and forgiving. Selfishness grows by getting and forgetting. Students! You should realize even at this tender age the infinite preciousness of life. There are innumerable things that you have to learn in life. You must make good use of every minute of your time. See that your hearts remain pure and unsullied.⁴

4. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 22, Chapter 11: God's Response. Divine Discourse on June 18, 1989.



Through Self-Confidence You Can Achieve Self-Realization

Arguments over the existence or non-existence of God are entirely futile and foolish, as Buddha pointed out. According to the minds of different persons, views and beliefs are bound to differ. But irrespective of these controversies, the truth is one. That truth is God. *Dharma* (righteousness) is God. *Ahimsa* (non-violence) is God. Adhere to these three: truth, righteousness, and non-violence. Follow the path of truth. There is no greater virtue than truth. The truth you speak must emanate

from the heart and should be filled with love. Where there is love, there is truth.

Stick to truth in whatever you do. This may not be easy. But through persistence truth will become a natural habit. Act according to the dictates of your conscience and not the promptings of your senses. Make love the basic impulse for all your actions. Share your love with others. Be unselfish. Self lives by getting and forgetting. Love lives by giving and forgiving. Develop confidence in yourself. Through self-confidence you can achieve self-realization.⁵

5. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 28, Chapter 34: Spiritual Significance of Loving Service. Divine Discourse on November 21, 1995.



Refrain from Harshness in Speech

Develop the quality of forgiveness, and refrain from harshness in speech. Sai is the example for you in this regard. All sorts of people indulge in calumny and criticism. Swami remains totally unaffected. Why should I follow their example? I must follow my own way. If I follow another, I am a slave. Therefore I never follow another's ways. I adhere firmly to what I deem as good.

You must realize that if you give up forbearance and forgiveness, you will have no peace. I am always at peace. What is the reason? Because I am always patient. You must also remain likewise. Whatever anyone may do to you, do not bother about it. What is it you lose on account of their behavior? If you resort to retaliation, you will worsen your condition. You have no idea either of your strength or of your disability. You must face boldly such attacks and not allow yourself to get agitated over them. Students should win by their forbearance. Forbearance should be your life-breath and your ideal. By your fearlessness set an example to the world.⁶

6. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 30, Chapter 1: Let *Prema* and *Thyaga* Be Your Ideals. Divine Discourse on January 14, 1997.



Forget All the Help You Have Given to Others

You should have full faith in your religion and lead an ideal life. That is true

bhakti (devotion), true *mukti* (liberation). To attain *mukti*, practice the following principles. Forget all the harm done to you by others and the help you have given to others. Then you will have peace in your heart. If someone has done harm to you, do not be revengeful. If someone has hurt your feelings, in order to alleviate your suffering, the best way is to forget and forgive.

Forgiveness is very important. It is truth; it is *dharma* (righteousness); it is *Veda*; it is non-violence; it is happiness; it is heaven itself. This forgiveness is everything in all the worlds. So cultivate this sacred quality of forgiveness. This is possible only by developing love for God.⁷

7. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 31, Chapter 29: Subjugate Your Ego. Divine Discourse on September 4, 1998.



Do Not Retaliate

Forgive those who have harmed you and criticized you. Have faith that whatever happens is for your own good. If someone hurls abuses on you, do not retaliate. Inquire within yourself whether he has criticized the body or the *Atma* (Divine Self). If he has criticized the body, indirectly he has done a favor to you because body is nothing but a heap of flesh, blood, bones, and fecal matter. On the other hand, if he has criticized the *Atma*, it amounts to criticizing his own Self because the same *Atma* exists in both of you. One should cultivate this kind of forgiveness and broad-mindedness.

Guru is one who dispels the darkness of ignorance arising out of body attachment. Body is but an instrument. God has given you the body to take to the path of action. It is God's gift. Body is the temple and the indweller is God. Consider all bodies as temples of God, and offer your salutations. Salute even your enemies. Whomsoever you salute, it reaches God, and whomsoever you censure, it also reaches God.⁸

8. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 33, Chapter 10: Real Name of God Is Love. Divine Discourse on July 16, 2000.



Become the Embodiments of Love

Love alone can reveal the Divinity latent in all. Love is God. Live in love. Love lives by giving and forgiving; self lives by getting and forgetting. Love is selflessness; selfishness is lovelessness. Do not waste your life pursuing the narrow interests of the self. Love! Love! Become what you truly are—the embodiments of love. No matter how others treat you or what they think of you, do not worry.⁹

9. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 14, Chapter 45: The Way of Jesus. Divine Discourse on December 25, 1979.



Cultivate Good Thoughts

Love lives by giving and forgiving. Self lives by getting and forgetting. Everybody seeks liberation. Everyone wants immortality. But how is immortality to be obtained? Removal of immorality is the only way to immortality. If we are filled with hatred, envy, pride, and other evil qualities, how can we hope to achieve immortality? You must cultivate good thoughts and perform good actions. You must engage yourself in service to society. By this process you purify yourself. You cannot reach the Divine unless you are pure. The unchanging, eternal, ever pure, blissful Supreme is the goal. By your steady pursuit of *sadhana* (spiritual practice), you must strive to reach that goal.

While remaining in the world of business, you must keep this high goal in view and carry on your business, whatever it may be. Do not regard all your various possessions, houses, vehicles, wealth, etc., as permanent. There have been great emperors in the past who ruled over vast empires. When they passed away, what did they take with them? Posterity does not care even to remember their names.

What you cannot take with you, does not really belong to you. You are filled with fear, like the ticketless traveler who gets into the train. In the journey of life, if you want to travel without fear, you must have the ticket of a good conscience. If you adhere to right conduct, you will have no need to fear anyone.¹⁰

10. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 17, Chapter 12: Combine Morals with Business. Divine Discourse on May 14, 1984.



Love Promotes the Spirit of Forgiveness

The most important quality is purity. Today everything is polluted. Water, air, and all the five elements are polluted. As a result the mind of man is also polluted. How is purity to be achieved? Fill your minds with thoughts of God, dedicate all your actions to God, and consider God as the inner motivator. Contemplation of God is not a matter for derision. You need have no fear on that account.

You must have full faith in God, who is the universal sustainer. He is the protector, but not the punisher. The punishment you receive is the consequence of your own actions. Therefore chant, sing, perform good deeds, and engage yourselves in service of your fellow beings. Nourish love in your hearts. Love will drive away all bad thoughts. It will promote the spirit of forgiveness.¹¹

11. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 26, Chapter 36: Purity, Patience, Perseverance: Steps to Divinity. Divine Discourse on November 23, 1993.



Forgiveness—the Greatest Power For a Human Being

The essential nature of love is sacrifice. Under any circumstance it does not give room to hatred. It is love that brings even a person far away closer and more intimate to you. It is love that drives away the feeling of separateness and promotes the feeling of oneness. Love also raises a person from the animal to the human. *Prema* (love) is the *prana* (life force) of man and the *prana* itself is *prema*. One without love is like a lifeless corpse. Love is shown only to persons who are alive. No one will love a corpse. Love and life are therefore interrelated and intimately connected.

In this worldly life, love is manifesting in several forms, such as the love between mother and son, husband and wife, and between relatives. This love based on physical relationships arises out of selfish motives and self-interest. But the love of the Divine is devoid of any trace of self-interest. It is love for the sake of love alone. This is called *bhakthi* (devotion). One characteristic of this love is to give

and not to receive. Secondly, love knows no fear. Thirdly, it is only for love's sake and not for a selfish motive. All these three angles of love jointly connote *prapatti* (surrender). When one revels in this attitude of *prapatti*, one experiences the bliss of the Divine. For this, the prime requisite is *kshama* (forgiveness).

Only a person who has this attitude of *kshama* can be considered to be endowed with sacred love. This cannot be learned from textbooks. Nor can it be acquired from preceptors, nor from anyone else. It is to be cultivated by oneself in times of difficulties, trials, and tribulations that one is forced to meet. This quality of forbearance and forgiveness can take root only when we face problems and difficulties that cause grief and misery.

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

Kshama is sathyam, truth

Kshama is dharma, virtue

Kshama is ahimsa, non-violence

Kshama is yajna, sacrifice

Kshama is santosha, happiness

Kshama is daya, compassion

Kshama is everything in the world.¹²

12. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 27, Chapter 1: Cultivate Forgiveness and Love. Divine Discourse on January 1, 1994.



Do Not Have Selfishness

The doctor removes the ulcer from the stomach by cutting it open with a knife. Just because he uses a knife, can you call him a wicked person? No. He does

it for your own good. Similarly, God punishes you only out of love. Love lives by giving and forgiving; self lives by getting and forgetting. There should not be even a trace of selfishness in you. Do anything with love, the result will certainly be good. Love is God; live in love. Talk to your friends with love. Help them in times of need.¹³

13. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 31, Chapter 30: Knowledge without Practice Is Meaningless. Divine Discourse on September 11, 1998.



Forgive Even Your Enemies

Forbearance and forgiveness are the qualities that should be fostered by all individuals. You must be able to forgive even your enemies. This day is consecrated to Ganapathi, who teaches you forgiveness and love, so that you may realize Divinity and enjoy bliss.¹⁴

14. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 33, Chapter 13: Ganapathi Confers *Buddhi* and *Siddhi*. Divine Discourse on September 1, 2000.



You Can Achieve Anything with Love

Love can forgive any blemishes and mistakes. It has such a great quality.

Love lives by giving and forgiving

Self lives by getting and forgetting.

Where there is love, there is no selfishness. Where there is selfishness, there love does not exist. There is nothing in this world that cannot be attained by love. You can achieve anything with love. Therefore, if you want to conquer anger, you must develop love. There is another method. If you are able to realize that the same Lord who dwells as *antaryami* (indweller) in your heart is residing in everyone's heart, there is no scope for hating anybody or showing anger to others.¹⁵

15. Bhagavad Gita Part I, Chapter 10: The Method of Controlling *Kama* and *Krodha*.



All Are Children of God

You should always be united. You call yourself a Hindu. What does the term HINDU signify? H - Humility, I - Individuality, N - Nationality, D - Divinity, U - Unity. These are verily our five life-breaths (*pranas*). Just as five elements, five senses, and five life-sheaths constitute our physical body, these five principles constitute the very essence of spirituality. Hence you have to safeguard these five principles and stand united.

Never give scope to differences of opinion even in trivial matters. If any differences were to arise, each should be prepared to forgive the other. All are the children of God. All are brothers and sisters. You should understand this truth and conduct yourself accordingly. There is love in everyone. Only when man develops love in him, can all be united. When we develop love and give up hatred, our innate power will manifest. Elders are bogged down by a number of worries that weaken their mental power. But the youth are endowed with immense power of mind and senses. They should develop it by putting the senses to sacred use.¹⁶

16. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 40, Chapter 8: Develop Love and Lead the Life of a True *Manava*. Divine Discourse on March 20, 2007.



Love Alone Can Shower Bliss

Even those who injure and insult you have to be forgiven and loved, for love alone can shower *ananda* (bliss). The spring of love is in one's own core. The source of *ananda* is your innermost reality. But, like the man who searched everywhere for his glasses and found them at last on his own nose, man too becomes aware that the search for truth has to proceed in the inward direction within himself.¹⁷

17. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 15, Chapter 38: The *Shivam* Night. Divine Discourse on January 14, 1982.



Dualism Is Rooted in Selfishness

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

them. Whatever work you are engaged in, whatever duties you have to perform as an official or an employee, to do your duties efficiently and with diligence and devotion is also *seva* (social service). Those in authority who discharge their functions well enough to justify the salary they receive are rendering real service. But such persons are rare. Employees agitate for more wages but do not render commensurate service to justify the incomes they receive.

Disinterested service will ennoble man and raise his stature. It endows man with the intelligence and the skills required to refine human nature. Doing one's duty diligently is not enough. Men have to cultivate other qualities like love, sympathy, fairness, compassion, and forgiveness. Only when one has these qualities, will he be able to render dedicated service.

It is the sense of dualism—of “mine” and “thine”—which accounts for all the joys and sorrows, likes and dislikes experienced by man. This dualism is rooted in selfishness, which makes one think that as long as he is all right, it does not matter what happens to the world. Such a self-centered person, who regards his body, his wealth, and his family as all that matter to him, looks upon truth as untruth and the false as true. To get rid of this deep-seated malaise, men have to engage themselves in service. They have to realize that the body has been given not to serve one's own interests but to serve others.¹⁸

18. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 21, Chapter 31: The Spirit of Service. Divine Discourse on November 21, 1988.



Forgiveness Is a Divine Quality

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

Whoever aspires to win the grace of God should cultivate at the outset the quality of *kshama* (forgiveness). It is a Divine quality. Man is permeated from head

to foot by the six mortal vices: lust, anger, greed, attachment, pride, and envy. His heart is the source of qualities like sympathy, compassion, non-violence, and peace. The very term, *hridaya*, means the place—*hridh*—that has *daya* (compassion). People get agitated over trifles. They should not dissipate their energies in this manner. There are innumerable talents latent in man, of which he is unaware.¹⁹

19. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 28, Chapter 10: Fill Your Hearts with Love of God. Divine Discourse on April 15, 1995.



Buddha Instilled Sacredness and Wisdom in People

Once Buddha entered a village along with His disciples. A lady approached Him and invited Him to have food in her house. Buddha blessed her and accepted her invitation. Seeing this, many villagers, including the village headman, warned Buddha, saying, “O Buddha, you are one of wisdom and have renounced everything. She is not a woman of good character. It is not proper for you to have food in her house.”

Buddha smiled and asked the village headman to come forward. Buddha, holding the right hand of the headman, asked him to clap. The headman said, it was not possible for him to clap since one of his hands was in Buddha’s hand.

Buddha said, “True, it is possible to clap only when two hands come together. Likewise, this lady cannot turn bad by herself unless there are men of bad character in the village. The men of this village are the root cause of her bad character.”

The villagers realized their folly, fell at Buddha’s feet, and sought His forgiveness. Through His teachings, Buddha instilled sacredness and wisdom in people. Buddha’s teachings are highly sacred, with profound inner meaning.²⁰

20. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 32-1, Chapter 15: Control Your Senses. Divine Discourse on May 30, 1999.



Life Is a Challenge—Meet It

More than physical prowess, man needs power of the mind. Man should have control over his emotions and keep them under check in times of distress.

Life is a challenge, meet it.

Life is a game, play it.

Life is a dream, realize it.

Life is love, enjoy it.

Man bereft of love is lifeless. Love, love, love. Love is everything. Live in love. Love lives by giving and forgiving; self lives by getting and forgetting.²¹

21. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 32-2, Chapter 3: Recognize the Principle of “I.” Divine Discourse on August 25, 1999.



Cultivate a Loving Disposition

Lord Krishna repeatedly exhorted in the *Bhagavad Gita* to cultivate *prematatwa* (loving disposition) in order to arrest bad qualities like tension, envy, jealousy, pride, etc. *Prema* (love) knows no *dwesha* (hatred). It does not allow scope for selfishness. It does not seek favor from anybody. Love always gives and forgives. That is why love is Divine. In order to attain such Divinity, we must cultivate Divine qualities in us. To look at the moon, it is not necessary to use a torchlight or a hurricane lamp. The moon can be seen with moonlight itself. Similarly, the loving God can be attained by love itself.

It is not necessary to perform any *sadhanas* (spiritual practices) like *japa* (chanting), *tapa* (penance), or *dhyana* (meditation). However, until our love reaches the fructification stage, these *sadhanas* are necessary. Even though the moon is shining brightly, if we close our eyes, how can we see the moon? The sacred *karmas* like *japa*, *tapa*, *dhyana*, *bhajana*, etc., will enlarge our vision. But, at the same time, we must recognize the truth that these *sadhanas* will acquire a purpose and meaning only when we put into practice their inner meaning. Thus, if we spend at least one hour a day in such sacred activities, our body will be sanctified. We will also accumulate some *punya* (merit). I wish and exhort you to develop such Divine feelings and sanctify every minute of your time and become

blessed souls.²²

22. Bhagavad Gita Part I, Chapter 5: The Self-Effulgent Flame in One's Own Body.



Love Gives and Forgives—Ego Gets and Forgets

When you win the love of God, His compassion will flow unto you. Love gives and forgives. Ego gets and forgets. When your son steals some money from the house, you do not hand him over to the police; but, when your servant steals a spoon, you have no such qualms. For you have no love for the servant. Live without hating others, condemning others, and seeking faults in others. Vyasa, who wrote eighteen voluminous *Puranas*, summarized all the *Puranas* in one single line of a short couplet: “Doing good to others is the only meritorious act; doing evil is the most heinous sin.”

When you feel you cannot do good, at least desist from doing evil. That itself is meritorious service! Do not try to discover differences; discover unity. Creeds, castes, countries of origin may differ, but the inner hunger is the same for all men. Understand that the purpose of life is to know the embodiment of love, namely, God, through love, and demonstrate through your own love that you have known Him.²³

23. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 13, Chapter 9: Himachal. Divine Discourse on April 4, 1975.



Bury the Sense of Possessiveness

It is a common practice among rural folk to advise anyone who has committed a wrong to hold the feet of the person whom he has wronged. Once a man holds the other's feet, it means that he has sought and secured the latter's forgiveness. Nowadays, with all the courts and legal processes, no one attempts to hold the feet of anyone. In the old days in the villages, if a man fell at the feet of another, the latter had no options but to forgive the supplicant.

The inner meaning of seeking the Lord's feet is that thereby the Lord will forgive the sins of the penitent. But mere holding of the feet is not enough. One

must be genuinely repentant and declare that he will not commit similar offences again. Only then he will secure atonement.

Different persons pursue different kinds of *sadhana* (spiritual practice). To realize the benefits of this *sadhana*, they go to *ashrams*. They adore elders and offer worship to them. As long as egoism remains in them, all these exercises are of no avail. Your egoism may even lead to your expulsion from the *ashrams*. Hence suppress the ego, bury the sense of possessiveness, and develop attachment to the *Atma* (Divine Self) to realize your true humanness.²⁴

24. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 26, Chapter 31: Glory of the Lord's Lotus Feet. Divine Discourse on October 7, 1993.



Act with Full Faith in God

True devotion consists not in merely chanting the name of Rama but in rendering help to the society and offering help to the needy. Only then can you become worthy of God's grace. Hanuman exemplified the ideal of implicit obedience to God's injunctions. The true devotee should give no room to doubt. He must act with full faith in God. He must realize that everything belongs to God. He should give up all senses of "I" and "mine." This was the lesson that Rama taught to Kaikeyi when she sought His forgiveness for all the wrong things she had done to Rama.²⁵

25. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 30, Chapter 3: Have Firm Faith in God. Divine Discourse on January 23, 1997.



God Is Utterly Selfless

You should forgive even those who harm you. The youth should cultivate the quality of forbearance. Forbearance is a supreme virtue in man. Man should be free from fear. Animals cause fear, and birds are subject to fear. But man should neither cause fear in others nor be afraid himself. Today's young men and women should develop fearlessness as a principal quality. You should be afraid of only one thing: fear of sin. God is the only being to be loved. All other forms of love are

transient and selfish. Love of God is selfless and everlasting.

God seeks nothing from you. He is utterly selfless. Today if you wish to earn the esteem of society you have to secure *Daiva preeti* (the love of God). For this you have to entertain fear of sin. What is sin? It covers all those activities that are motivated by selfishness born out of regarding the body and sensual pleasures as the primary things in life.²⁶

26. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 30, Chapter 14: Role of Sai Youth in World Crisis. Divine Discourse on July 16, 1997.



Cast Off the Attachment to the Body

Parents have given you the physical body and name. But the heart (spiritual) is given by God. No one else can give this. To have a compassionate heart is the attribute of human nature. It is giving and forgiving. It is not at all keen on getting anything.

Develop oneness with love. People do several types of spiritual exercises like turning the *japamala* (rosary beads) and meditation. While the body may be still, the mind goes about wandering all over! Even a little mosquito disturbs you; you strive to kill it while engaged in meditation. You should cast off the attachment to the body. Body is the temple of God. But God is the indweller. This truth you should never lose sight of. Nature is also a manifestation of God.²⁷

27. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 31, Chapter 18: Love and Surrender. Divine Discourse on April 23, 1998.



The True Relations

Compassion is the true friend. In this world, a friend today may become an enemy tomorrow. But there is no greater friend than compassion. Peace is the wife. Peace is the precious jewel of saints, and it is the royal path in the spiritual field. Forgiveness is the son. There is no greater quality than forgiveness. It encompasses all the good qualities, like truth, righteousness, and non-violence, and it is the

essence of all the *Vedas*.

Therefore, for every individual, the true relations are truth, wisdom, righteousness, compassion, peace, and forgiveness. The whole world is full of agitation and disturbance because of lack of these sacred qualities. You should always remember your true mother and father. You cannot exist without them. The whole creation has emerged from truth and merges back into it. There is no place where truth does not exist. It is the good fortune of human beings to have this eternal truth as their mother. But today humanity does not follow such a sacred mother.²⁸

28. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 31, Chapter 31: Worship of God as the Energy Principle. Divine Discourse on September 25, 1998.



Divine Love Is Essential for Man

Unable to recognize his true identity, man is wasting his life in the pursuit of temporary, fleeting, transient, and ephemeral pleasures. As I told you gold loses its value, brilliance, and identity when it is mixed with different metals such as silver, brass, and copper. So also the heart, which loses its value, brilliance, and identity on account of its association with the impurities of worldly desires. This is the present plight of mankind. Man is behaving like a demon, a devil, and a beast because he has forgotten his Divine nature. Divine love originates from *Hiranyagarbha*. This selfless Divine love lives by giving and forgiving, whereas selfish love lives by getting and forgetting. Such Divine love is essential for man.²⁹

29. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 32-1, Chapter 3: Manifesting Divinity in *Lingodbhava*. Divine Discourse on February 15, 1999.



Do Not Bother about What Others Think

You must sow the seed of love in loveless hearts. Water it with love. Let love flow in a flood and reach all. You should cultivate this pure, steady, unselfish love in this New Year. Modern man directs his love toward worldly objects and gets entangled in several complications. “Love lives by giving and forgiving; self lives by getting and forgetting.” Selfish love is like the foul smell of fish. Cultivate

selfless love. Love all. Let others feel and think as they like. Do not bother about that. There is no need to fear anyone. Make your love pure. Then the whole world will become pure.³⁰

30. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 33, Chapter 1: Unity and Divinity in the New Year. Divine Discourse on January 1, 2000.



What Influences Man's Behavior

Man's behavior is influenced by *sthanabala* (power of the place), *bhujabala* (power of the physical body) and *dhanabala* (power of wealth). For instance, in the *Ramayana*, when Sita, Rama, and Lakshmana were taking a stroll in the forest, Lakshmana suddenly felt tired and told Rama that he was exhausted and would like to go back to Ayodhya as quickly as possible to have a more comfortable living. Rama smiled at him and said, "Let us proceed further; I shall explain everything later." How did Lakshmana, who previously had declared that Rama was everything to him and that he would not live without Rama even for a moment, suddenly develop this attitude?

How did this concern for bodily comfort arise in him suddenly? After they walked some distance, they sat under a tree. That moment Lakshmana felt the pangs of repentance for his impertinent behavior. He realized his mistake, caught hold of Rama's feet, and implored, "Rama! Forgive me for what I had said. I cannot understand how these devilish qualities and bad thoughts entered me. What could be the reason?"

Rama thought over the matter for some time and explained, "Lakshmana! The region through which we passed just now was the haunt of Surpanakha. She used to rest under that tree. Hence the place is surcharged with all her devilish qualities. The vibrations of those evil qualities aroused bad thoughts in you. The moment you came out of the place, you are your normal self again. Your inherent good nature asserted itself." Thus one's association with a particular place also has its effect on one's behavior. That is what is called *sthanabala* (power of the

place).³¹

31. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 38, Chapter 19: Truth and Righteousness Are the Foundation for True Education. Divine Discourse on November 22, 2005.



Everything Is God

No work of an angry man becomes fruitful. Anger distances even your relatives and friends from you. Therefore do not allow anger to come near you. Lead your life, chanting within you constantly the name of God who is the embodiment of peace and love. When all individuals develop peace in them, then the entire country will become good and peaceful. Those who aspire for the welfare of the country should live always in love. Lead your life without causing any harm to anybody. We sing this prayer after the conclusion of *bhajans*: *Loka samasta sukhino bhavantu* (may all the people of the world be happy!). Remember God with love. The entire world will be good by the power of love.

Devotees should never do away with love. Even if others criticize, abuse, or beat you, you should lead your life with love. Live in love. Love lives by giving and forgiving; self lives by getting and forgetting. Fill your life with love. Even if someone beats you, do not abuse him. Think that it is only God who has punished you like this. Everything happens according to what God wills. It is God who gives you troubles and joys; it is He who protects you and punishes you in many ways. Everything is God. Therefore offer everything to Him. Whatever you get in your life, consider it as the gift of God. Do all actions to please God. When you think like this, then you will attain great blessedness.³²

32. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 41, Chapter 7: *Namasmarana* Is the Highest Spiritual Practice. Divine Discourse on May 24, 2008.



Forget and Forgive All That Has Happened until This Moment

Love... love... love...first... love, as long as life lasts. For Myself, I can say I shower more blessings on those who decry or defame Me than those who worship and adore Me! For those who spread falsehoods about Me derive joy therefrom; I

am happy that I am the cause for their exultation and joy. You too must accept this line of argument and be very happy when someone derives joy by defaming you.

Do not respond by defaming that person; then the chain of hatred will bind both and drag both down. Life will become a tragedy. Conquer anger by means of fortitude; conquer hatred by love. Do not feed anger with retaliation; do not feed hatred with fury. Forget and forgive all that has happened amongst you until this very moment; start a new chapter of love and brotherhood from now on.³³

33. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 13, Chapter 12: Why I Love Villages Most. Divine Discourse on April 28, 1975.



Cultivate Fortitude and Understanding

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

Living becomes a glorious experience only when it is sweetened by tolerance and love. Willingness to compromise with others' ways of living and co-operation in common tasks, these make living happy and fruitful. Certain modes of behavior have been laid down and proved beneficial by centuries of practice. These have to be observed with modifications to suit the conditions of today.³⁴

34. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 14, Chapter 46: Be Human. Divine Discourse on February 17, 1980.



Divine Love

On the basis of what happens in the world, people talk about sin and merit,

but inherently there is nothing of the kind. There are misdeeds no doubt, but these should not be characterized as sins. Wittingly or otherwise man is prone to commit wrongs. Man should not commit such wrongs, because actions arising out of attachment or aversion, anger or hatred are expressions of the animal nature. When a man is filled with lust or hatred, he is prey to a grievous illness.

Vices like envy, anger, ego, and hatred are various kinds of diseases. These cannot be cured by ordinary medicines or by professional doctors, who can deal only with physical ailments. These maladies are related to the *antah karana* (the internal instrument of action). There is a Divine panacea for curing these diseases. That is Divine love.

Once that Divine love is obtained, one can experience the “I” (higher Self) present in the *Prajna* principle. When the diseases go, health is ensured. Hence the first requisite is to develop the love principle as the supreme quality of a human being. But this love should not be mixed up with the myriad forms of affection and attachment found in daily life. These may be called “love,” but they are only different forms of *anuraga* (attachment).

Students should understand the difference between worldly love and Divine love. Worldly love knows only how to receive and not to give. Divine love gives and forgives and does not receive. It does not expect any return. In worldly love, there is no spirit of sacrifice. The *shruti* declares firmly that immortality can be attained only through sacrifice and by no other means.³⁵

35. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 25, Chapter 19: *Prajnanam Brahma*. Divine Discourse on May 28, 1992.



Offer Your Heart to God

God is complete love incarnate. This love shines equally in every human being. The fragrance of a flower remains the same whether it is held in the right hand or the left. Likewise God has no distinctions such as the favored and the excluded. Different persons, proceeding from their own likes and dislikes, attribute to the Divine the differences existing in their own minds. God has no feelings of difference such as the good and the bad, the likable and the unwanted, the wicked

and the virtuous.

The sandalwood tree imparts its fragrance even to the axe that fells it. Likewise God is ever prepared to love, foster, and protect equally everyone without any distinction. But narrow-minded persons cannot easily grasp the Divine's equal-mindedness. Indeed, how can a fishmonger know the value of diamonds? Everyone understands God's powers and attributes according to his own limited conceptions and experiences.

To get rid of such narrow ideas, the first requisite is the cultivation of love. How is love to be promoted? By "giving and forgiving" man develops love within himself. In relation to God, this implies that you should always have the attitude of offering your heart to God. Today, far from having such a sacred attitude, what we witness is the habit of "getting and forgetting." Today man receives the love, the blessings, and the grace of God but shows no gratitude and is immersed in his own selfish pursuits. This accounts for his narrow outlook.³⁶

36. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 22, Chapter 38: Where to Find God. Divine Discourse on December 25, 1989.



Love God Wholeheartedly

We have to love God like our father and establish an intimate bond of affection with Him. We must deserve His boundless love and infinite grace. We may commit sins knowingly or unknowingly, but if we love God wholeheartedly and surrender ourselves to Him, He will surely forgive us.³⁷

37. Summer Showers in Brindavan 1979, Chapter 24: The Perennial Philosophy.



Happiness Is Born Out of Difficulties

Happiness does not beget happiness; happiness is born only out of difficulties. If there are no difficulties to start with, how can you enjoy the sweetness of pleasure? So, you must struggle to some extent and face difficulties. Without darkness, does brightness have any value? Without hunger, does food have value? Similarly, you must discover the true taste and value of happiness. In

what way must you do this? Discover first the love within you, and then use it to receive God's love. Once you tap the pure and unpolluted love within you, you will become the recipient of God's love. God would even overlook and forgive your mistakes. However, do not take this for granted and commit mistakes endlessly! You have to safeguard all the treasures God has deposited in you.³⁸

38. Summer Showers in Brindavan 2000, Chapter 11: How to Become Dear to the Lord.



Glossary

For a comprehensive translation of Sanskrit words into English, please go to the following website: <http://sssbpt.info/vahiniglossary/entries.htm>





Forgiveness

Sri Sathya Sai Baba, one of the most revered spiritual leaders in the world and regarded as an incarnation of God in human form by His devotees, delivered more than 2,000 discourses, most of which are compiled in *Sri Sathya Sai Speaks* and *Summer Showers*. He also wrote articles for His devotees in the spiritual monthly *Sanathana Sarathi*, which were later published in 16 books under the *Vahini* series.

This compilation of *Divine Teachings of Sri Sathya Sai Baba*, Volume 3, contains quotations on the topic “Forgiveness” selected from the discourses and writings of Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Sri Sathya Sai says: “Forgive those who have harmed you and criticized you. Have faith that whatever happens is for your own good. If someone hurls abuses on you, do not retaliate.”

