

DIVINE TEACHINGS OF Sri Sathya Sai Baba

VOLUME 1



Silence

*It is only in the depths of silence
that the voice of God can be heard.*

*You need not escape into a forest
to gain silence and the chance of
uninterrupted spiritual practice.
You can make the place where you
are a citadel of silence.*

*When the mind withdraws from
the external world, the tongue also
becomes silent; all senses follow suit;
that is genuine silence.*

*When you practice silence, you can
easily experience peace of mind.
Love manifests from peace.*

*Silence is the speech of the spiritual
seeker. Soft, sweet speech is the
expression of genuine love.*



Divine Teachings
of
Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Volume 1: Silence





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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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Silence

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 1. It includes the topic, “Silence.” The quotations are selected from *Sri Sathya Sai Speaks*, *Summer Showers*, and the *Vahinis*. 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.



Silence

The following are highlights of the full quotations that begin on page 11.

It is only in the depths of silence that the voice of God can be heard.

One of the first principles of straight living is to practice silence. There will be no temptation for others to shout when you talk to them in whispers.

You need not escape into a forest to gain silence and the chance of uninterrupted spiritual practice. You can make the place where you are a citadel of silence.

The silent man has no enemies, though he may not have friends.

Practice silence for at least ten minutes a day. Meditate on Swami's teachings at that time.

Silence is the only language of the realized. The tongue is liable for four big errors: uttering falsehoods, scandalizing, finding fault with others, and excessive articulation.

Be silent yourself; that will induce silence in others.

When silence is practiced, bliss will manifest itself.

When the mind withdraws from the external world, the tongue also becomes silent; all senses follow suit; that is genuine silence.

The illumination of the soul is silence. Silence is ever with you. You have only to remove all things that disturb it!

The ancients practiced three kinds of silence—silence of the tongue, silence of the mind, and supreme silence.

Practice silence. That will save you from squabbles, idle thoughts, and factions.

When you practice silence, you can easily experience peace of mind. Love manifests from peace.

Develop good habits: group singing, practicing asanas (yogic postures), meditation, silence—these will give you peace and joy, a clear brain, and concentration. They will discipline the wayward mind.

Observe silence as far as possible and be quiet. Too much talk is not good, even from the health point of view.

The very first spiritual practice one must adopt is the cultivation of inner silence, to put an end to the endless dialogue with the mind. Let the mind rest for a while.

Silence is the best spiritual practice to guard faith.

Silence is the speech of the spiritual seeker. Soft, sweet speech is the expression of genuine love.

Turn your vision inward, and observe absolute silence. Only then can you realize the all-pervasive Divinity.

Silence is the first step in spiritual practice. By loud talk you undermine your own peace and disturb others.

You can experience Divine bliss only in absolute silence. That is why it is said, "Silence is golden."

Speak softly and sweetly with a smiling face. That will silence the critic. A smile is the best answer to criticism.

Kindness has to be fostered in the silence of the mind.

By curtailing unnecessary talk and keeping silent, you can conserve energy.

Silence serves to conserve energy, improve the memory, and experience the Divine.

You must make it a practice to observe silence for at least one hour daily.

Practice silence as a means of preventing the tongue from straying away from truth. The ancient sages practiced and preached silence for this purpose.

When the tongue becomes silent, the mind begins to talk.

Some people may not pay heed to you if you talk softly and sweetly. It is their fate. They may listen or not, but you should always talk in a pleasing manner.

Silence should prevail during eating. Even sound waves enter us and affect our minds. Hence people should avoid TV while eating.

If speaking the truth will cause grief or pain, keep silent.

You should not become a victim of the feelings of anger, hatred, ego, or pride that may arise in you. When such feelings arise in you, sit silently for a few minutes.

In times of anger, observe silence. The less you talk, the purer your heart remains.

Work silently; definitely, God will shower His grace on you.

Remain silent when you are criticized.

Be vigilant, even while engaged in little tasks. Maintain silence in the recesses of the heart, as well as outside.

All the hours now spent in gossip, in watching sports or films, in hollow conversation, can best be used for silent contemplation of the name and form and splendor of the Lord.

Any mighty task can be accomplished by prayer. Hence pray to God silently. Do not pray for the fulfillment of your petty desires.

Spend a few minutes every morning and evening in the silence of your own shrine or home.

Repeat His name, in the silence of the heart.

Hear properly the instructions, dwell upon them in the silence of meditation.

Spiritual practice is to be done in silence, away from the public gaze.

The ancient Indian sages practiced silence because they realized the myriad benefits derived from silence.

Conserve energy by observing silence at least one day a week.

In case the utterance of truth is likely to lead to some danger, remain silent.

Solitude means to be in communion with God, wherever you may be.

Annihilate the mind by quietude.

Encourage silence and solitude, for the sake of introspection.

Reason out things in silence and solitude.

Solitude is when you are not aware of the crowd around you.

Being alone is not solitude.

Spirituality does not mean living in solitude.

Ancient sages went into solitude to overcome bodily attachment.

There must be solitude and silence in the mind.

Joining the company of wise people is better than being in solitude.

Silence does not mean mere cessation of talk or conversation. For the sages, it also meant cessation of the thought process.

Guard your reputation by enforcing silence on the tongue.

All the ills of man today are due to his mind never being restful and quiet.

Spirituality is not living alone in solitude.

The company of the wise and the good will develop into detachment and love of silence and solitude.

Silence helps you avoid entangling yourself in the affairs of others.

Only those who observe silence are good people. Silence fosters purity.

Silence is the first step in spiritual practice; it makes the other steps easy.

Strife does not arise out of silence. Salute those who offend you.



Silence

The Voice of God Can Be Heard Only in the Depths of Silence

It is only in the depths of silence that the voice of God can be heard. Speak as low as possible, as little as possible, as sweetly as possible.¹

One of the first principles of straight living is to practice silence. For the voice of God can be heard in the region of your heart only when the tongue is stilled and the storm is stilled and the waves are calm. There will be no temptation for others to shout when you talk to them in whispers. Set the level of the tone yourself—as low as possible, as high as necessary to reach the outermost boundary of the circle you are addressing.² You feel the presence of God when silence reigns. In the excitement and confusion of the marketplace, you cannot hear His footfall.³

1. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 8, Chapter 33: The Creeper and the Tree. Divine Discourse on September 22, 1968.
2. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 10, Chapter 4: The Very Breath. Divine Discourse on February 19, 1970.
3. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 6, Chapter 28: Economy and the Elements. Divine Discourse on October 15, 1966.



Make the Place Where You Are a Citadel of Silence

You need not escape into a forest to gain silence and the chance of uninterrupted spiritual practice. You can make the place where you are a citadel of silence; shut off the senses, let them not run after objects. Your home becomes a hermitage; your spiritual practices will then move on, without any obstacle.⁴

4. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 2, Chapter 6: Steps in *Sadhana*. Divine Discourse on April 23, 1961.



The Silent Man Has No Enemies

Loud talk, long talk, wild talk, talk full of anger and hate—all these affect the health of man. They breed anger and hate in others; they wound, they excite, they enrage, they estrange. Why is silence said to be golden? The silent man has no enemies, though he may not have friends. He has the leisure and the chance to dive within himself and examine his own faults and failings. He has no more inclination to seek them in others. If your foot slips, you suffer a fracture; if your tongue slips, you fracture someone's faith or joy. That fracture can never be set right; that wound will fester forever. Therefore use the tongue with great care. The softer you talk, the less you talk, the more sweetly you talk, the better for you and the world.⁵

5. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 5, Chapter 21: The Rare Chance. Divine Discourse on March 29, 1965.



Meditate on Swami's Teachings

Promote love in your hearts, and share it with others. That is the best form of worship. Love is the only property of Sai. My life is love. That is what I offer to one and all. I go on giving, giving. But to what extent are you putting into practice Swami's teachings? Practice silence for at least ten minutes a day. Meditate on Swami's teachings at that time. Realize that in this transient world the eternal is immanent. Hold fast to God. Experience the bliss of union with the Divine. Make love your life-breath. With love of God in their hearts the ancient sages could transform even the wild animals in the forests.⁶

6. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 29, Chapter 11: The Triple Transformation. Divine Discourse on April 13, 1996.



Practice Moderation in Speech

Silence is the only language of the realized. Practice moderation in speech. That will help you in many ways. It will develop love, for most misunderstandings and factions arise out of carelessly spoken words. When the foot slips, the wound can be healed; but when the tongue slips, the wound it causes in the heart of another will fester for life.

The tongue is liable for four big errors: uttering falsehoods, scandalizing, finding fault with others, and excessive articulation. These have to be avoided if there is to be peace for the individual as well as for society. The bond of brotherhood will be tightened if people speak less and speak sweetly. That is why silence was prescribed as a vow for spiritual aspirants by the scriptures. You are all spiritual aspirants at various stages on the road, and so this discipline is valuable for you also.⁷

7. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 1, Chapter 10: *Viveka* and *Vairagya*. Divine Discourse on July 22, 1958.



Be Silent and Induce Silence in Others

Be silent yourself; that will induce silence in others. Do not fall into the habit of shouting, talking long and loud. Reduce contacts to a minimum. Carry with you an atmosphere of quiet contemplation, wherever you happen to be.⁸ Today people indulge in excessive talk over the trivial and the unimportant. When silence is practiced, bliss will manifest itself. The one who talks much will do little. One who acts will talk little.⁹

8. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 29, Chapter 21: Importance of Discipline. Divine Discourse on June 19, 1996.

9. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 30, Chapter 7: *Bhajans* and Bliss. Divine Discourse on March 8, 1997.



The Illumination of the Soul Is Silence

What is silence? Not simply keeping the mouth shut. It means getting beyond the influence of all the senses and getting established always in the consciousness of one's own reality. Perpetual bliss is also perpetual peace. When the mind withdraws from the external world, the tongue also becomes silent; all senses follow suit; that is genuine silence.¹⁰

The illumination of the soul is silence. How can there be silence without the *Atma* (Divine Self) being illuminated? Without that, merely keeping the mouth shut is not silence. Some adopt the vow of silence, but they communicate by writing on paper or a slate, or they point successively to the letters of the alphabet

on a chart! All this is pseudo-silence! It is only another way of talking without interruption! There is no need to attain silence. Silence is ever with you. You have only to remove all things that disturb it!¹¹

10. Prasanthi Vahini, Chapter: The Practice of Silence.

11. Sandeha Nivarini, Chapter 10.



Three Kinds of Silence

The ancients practiced three kinds of silent penance to control speech. The first was silence of the tongue, the second one was silence of the mind, and the third was supreme silence. Silence in speech meant confining one's speech to the limit and the needs of the occasion. By this discipline, excessive talk was avoided. As a result, the power of their speech was conserved and enhanced. Discipline in speech also resulted in truthfulness. Speaking the truth served to purify their thoughts. By this means they acquired realization of truth and acquisition of the highest wisdom. Therefore purity in speech is vital. It has to be achieved by restraint in speech.

Then, there is silence of the mind. The mind is a bundle of thoughts and fancies. These thoughts have to be reduced gradually. When thoughts are reduced, the mind naturally comes under control, like a clock that is unwound. When the activity of the mind is reduced, the power of the *Atma* (Divine Self) manifests itself. As a consequence, intellect becomes more active than the senses. When control of speech and control of the mind have been achieved, the state of supreme silence is easily realized. Students should strive to reach the third stage by the disciplines of the first two stages.¹²

12. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 27, Chapter 7: Imbibe *Bharat's* Ideals. Divine Discourse on February 3, 1994.



Talk Sweetly without Anger

The first step in spiritual discipline is the cleansing of speech. Talk sweetly without anger. Do not boast of your scholarship or attainments. Be humble, eager to serve; conserve your speech. Practice silence. That will save you from squabbles, idle thoughts, and factions.¹³ We can certainly talk when it becomes necessary, but it is not necessary to talk and use words when it is not required.¹⁴

13. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 2, Chapter 6: Steps in *Sadhana*. Divine Discourse on April 23, 1961.

14. Summer Showers in Brindavan 1977, Chapter 13: Talking Too Much Harms One's Memory and One's Strength.



Remain Calm and Composed

Always speak the truth. Apart from speaking the truth, you should remain calm and composed in the face of criticism. Only then can there be peace. Our ancient sages used to observe silence as part of their spiritual practices. Observance of silence helps you to progress on the spiritual path. When you practice silence, you can easily experience peace of mind. Love manifests from peace. When you are filled with love, you will have no enemies. Therefore lead your life with love. Only through love can we establish peace in the world.¹⁵

15. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 41, Chapter 13: Love Is Truth; Truth Is Love. Live in Love. Divine Discourse on July 22, 2008.



Never Bother about What Others Say

Do not worry about the faults of others. Try to look at your own and correct them. For the disease from which you suffer, the drug must be taken by you only. If you are not at fault, never bother about what others may say. But, first, examine your behavior and see that it is above criticism. Grow straight; do not grow crooked. Do not read trash and attend bad films; they warp character and extol violence and wickedness. Spend the money you have on good food instead. Develop good habits: *bhajan* (group singing), practicing *asanas* (yogic postures), meditation, silence—these will give you peace and joy, a clear brain, and concentration. They will discipline the wayward mind.¹⁶

16. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 8, Chapter 29: The Two Mothers. Divine Discourse on May 13, 1968.



Do Not Indulge in Excessive Talk

Too much talk is very bad. Do not indulge in excessive talk. Try to mend your nature. Observe silence as far as possible and be quiet. Talk as much as is needed. Just answer to the point. If you talk more, you will be branded as a chatterbox. Too much talk is not good, even from the health point of view. This is very important, especially in the case of children. You have to keep your mind steady right from a young age. What is important is not studying textbooks, but steadying your mind. Textbooks, you can always study, in the classroom, in the hostel, etc.¹⁷

17. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 42, Chapter 5: Love God and Meditate on Him. Divine Discourse on February 23, 2009.



Cultivate Inner Silence

The very first *sadhana* (spiritual practice) one must adopt is the cultivation of inner silence, to put an end to the endless dialogue with the mind. Let the mind rest for a while. Do not project on the mind irrelevant details and pollute it with fumes of envy and greed. Every idea we entertain, either good or bad, gets impressed on the mind, as on carbon paper. An element of weakness and unsteadiness is thus introduced in the mind. Keep the mind calm and clear. Do not agitate it every moment by your non-stop dialogue.¹⁸

18. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 15, Chapter 42: The Triple Purity. Divine Discourse on May 20, 1982.



Silence Is the Best Practice to Guard Faith

Silence is the best *sadhana* (spiritual practice) to guard faith; that is why I insist on silence here also, as a first step in your *sadhana*.¹⁹ Silence is the speech of the spiritual seeker. Soft, sweet speech is the expression of genuine love.²⁰

Silence has to be started with oneself; that is to say, one must talk less, and think more deliberately, more discriminatingly. One must try to empty the mind of impulses and prejudices and preferences.²¹ Turn your vision inward, and observe absolute silence. Only then can you realize the all-pervasive Divinity. Mere intellectual exercise will not help you in this regard. Whatever you see, hear, and

experience is the manifestation of Divinity. Only God exists everywhere. Such being the case, is it possible to attribute a particular name and form to Him? He is present in all forms.²²

19. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 5, Chapter 42: Pay the Price. Divine Discourse on September 30, 1965.

20. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 10, Chapter 4: The Very Breath. Divine Discourse on February 19, 1970.

21. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 5, Chapter 41: Silence and Solitude. Divine Discourse on September 29, 1965.

22. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 37, Chapter 20: Experience Divinity Within in Total Silence. Divine Discourse on November 22, 2004.



Silence Is the First Step in Spiritual Practice

Silence is the first step in *sadhana* (spiritual practice). By loud talk you undermine your own peace and disturb others. Do not cause more noise than necessary.²³ In silence can be heard the voice of God, not in the revelry of noise. Through cleanliness you earn purity. By forbearance, you cultivate love.²⁴

23. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 5, Chapter 46: Have No *Desh*: Seek No *Upadesh*. Divine Discourse on October 4, 1965.

24. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 8, Chapter 45: Give the Giver the Gift. Divine Discourse on November 23, 1968.



Silence Is Golden

When God is all-pervasive, where is the need to go in search of Him? You should make efforts to experience your innate Divinity by observing total silence and turning your vision inward. You can experience Divine bliss only in absolute silence. That is why it is said, “Silence is golden.”²⁵

25. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 37, Chapter 20: Experience Divinity Within in Total Silence. Divine Discourse on November 22, 2004.



Each One Has to Bear the Consequences of His Actions

There are many obstacles along the path of devotion. Some people accuse, criticize, and censure God in times of difficulties. Each one has to bear the consequences of his own actions. God remains unaffected. God is pure, unsullied, and sacred. Let people say anything; be cool and calm. Do not enter into unnecessary arguments with them. It only breeds enmity. Speak softly and sweetly with a smiling face. That will silence the critic. A smile is the best answer to criticism.²⁶

26. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 31, Chapter 46: Sacrifice Leads to Immortality. Divine Discourse on December 25, 1998.



Kindness Has to Be Fostered in Silence

One great temptation for weak minds nowadays is the opportunity for publicity. Even a gift of five rupees to some charitable organization is announced in thick banner headlines! Conceit is thus encouraged, and man slides into paltry pomp. Kindness has to be fostered in the silence of the mind.²⁷

27. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 4, Chapter 52: *Anna* and *Amritha*. Divine Discourse on December 8, 1964.



Energy Is a Divine Gift

Spiritual practice consists of speaking good, thinking good, seeing good, hearing good, and doing good. Excessive talking must also be avoided, as it is a waste of energy. When one gets weak due to wastage of energy, he is prone to get angry and develop hatred. You must therefore use your God-given energy for good purposes. Energy is a Divine gift. By curtailing unnecessary talk and keeping silent, you can conserve energy. “Talk less and work more” is the golden rule to be adopted.²⁸

28. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 27, Chapter 10: Foster Love: Eschew Hatred. Divine Discourse on April 11, 1994.



Silence Helps to Experience the Divine

It is essential to limit one's desires and keep the senses under control. This is the only way to true happiness. The most important organ that has to be controlled is the tongue, which, unlike the other sense organs—the eyes, the ears, and the nose—has a double function, speech and taste. The ancient sages practiced silence for a variety of reasons. Silence serves to conserve energy, improve the memory, and experience the Divine. Restraint in speech and avoidance of gossip and slander are commendable virtues.²⁹

29. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 29, Chapter 10: *Srishti* and *Dhrishti*. Divine Discourse on April 12, 1996.



Practice Silence to Conserve Energy

Spiritual energy has to be conserved by all possible means. The sages practiced silence to conserve the energy lost through speech.³⁰ You must make it a practice to observe silence for at least one hour daily. It saves your cosmic energy and ensures peace of mind. You should develop also the discipline of simple living and high thinking.³¹

30. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 17, Chapter 6: Students and *Sadhana*. Divine Discourse on March 11, 1984.

31. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 30, Chapter 17: Cultivate Character: Lead an Ideal Life. Divine Discourse on July 19, 1997.



Triple Purity That Pleases the Lord

Three things are immensely pleasing to the Lord: a tongue that never indulges in falsehood, a body that is not tainted by causing harm to others, and a mind that is free from attachment and hatred. These three constitute the triple purity. Refrain from uttering falsehoods, inflicting pain on others, and entertaining ill will toward others. Practice silence as a means of preventing the tongue from straying away from truth. The ancient sages practiced and preached silence for this purpose.³²

32. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 21, Chapter 9: From *Annam* to *Ananda*. Divine Discourse on March 13, 1988.



Two Functions of the Tongue

The tongue has two functions: speaking and eating. Whoever is able to master these two faculties will be able to raise himself to the level of the Divine. When the tongue becomes silent, the mind begins to talk. To control the mind's talk, the *buddhi* (intellect or intelligence) has to be awakened. Then one should strive to turn the intellect or intelligence toward the *Atma* (Divine Self).

True spiritual striving consists in turning the tongue toward the mind, the mind toward the intellect, and the intellect toward the *Atma*. Although this royal road is available to man, he chooses to immerse himself in worldly pleasures and becomes submerged in sorrow.³³

33. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 23, Chapter 13: Royal Road to Realization. Divine Discourse on May 23, 1990.



Always Talk in a Pleasing Manner

Why has God given you a tongue? Is it to partake of delicious food? No, not merely for that. The tongue is given to chant the Divine name and to talk sweetly and softly. Do not talk as you please, which may hurt the feelings of others. Some people may not pay heed to you if you talk softly and sweetly. It is their fate. They may listen or not, but you should always talk in a pleasing manner. If that is not possible, observe silence. When you are silent, there can be no conflict. Only those who do not recognize the Divinity act in a foolish manner. In fact, man himself is Divine. Only then can he become a perfect human being. Whatever you do, do it in a perfect manner.³⁴

34. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 34, Chapter 18: The Life Principles of Man. Divine Discourse on October 9, 2001.



Harm Done by Television

Television sets are installed in every room in the houses of the rich. From the moment television made its appearance, the mind of man has been polluted. Before the advent of TV, men's minds were not as polluted. Acts of violence were not so rampant previously. Today TV is installed in every hut. People watch TV even while eating. The result is that all the foul things seen on TV are being consumed by the viewer. Concentration on TV affects one's view of the world. The scenes, thoughts, and actions displayed on the TV set fill the minds of the viewers. Unknowingly, agitation and ill feelings enter their minds. In due course they take root and grow in their minds. Hence while eating, you should not discuss dreadful incidents. No room should be given to subjects that excite the mind. Silence should prevail during eating. Even sound waves enter us and affect our minds. Hence people should avoid TV while eating.³⁵

If you talk while eating, the digestive system will be spoiled. Once the digestive system is spoiled, several diseases will confront you. Pray to God silently, keeping your eyes closed, and then partake of your food. Most children do not know this rule. Take your food in silence in a calm atmosphere.³⁶

35. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 29, Chapter 3: Triple Transformation: *Sankranthi's Call*. Divine Discourse on January 15, 1996.

36. *Soham—the Right Sadhana*. Divine Discourse on October 12, 2002.



Keep Silent if Speaking the Truth Causes Grief or Pain

If you want to know the way in which you have to observe truth in speech, read the *Bhagavad Gita*. It tells you that the best speech is speech that does not create pain or anger or grief to others. The scriptures also say, "Speak the truth, but speak pleasantly. Simply because a statement will be welcome to the hearer, don't speak to win his approval. If speaking the truth will cause grief or pain, keep silent."³⁷

37. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 7, Chapter 46: Truth and Love. Divine Discourse on December 20, 1967.



Tips on Controlling Anger

You should not become a victim of the feelings of anger, hatred, ego, or pride that may arise in you. When such feelings arise in you, sit silently for a few minutes. You must not vent your anger by scolding or beating others as you like. How to put this into practice? As soon as you get angry, you should immediately leave that place and go out into the open and quietly walk a furlong. Then your anger will disappear. An easier method than this is to stand before a mirror and look at your own angry face. You will dislike your own face and look upon it with disgust or aversion. Then try to laugh heartily and your anger will leave you.

If you find it difficult even to do this, go into your bathroom and turn on the water tap. To the accompaniment of the tune of the sound created by the water flowing from the tap, begin to sing a good song. Then your anger will certainly disappear. Or else, drink a glass of cold water. Like this, you have to seek ways and means of regaining a calm and peaceful mood. If, instead of doing so, you allow your anger to grow, restlessness will also grow along with that anger, depriving you of peace of mind. You should never give tit for tat, or word for word.

The less you talk, the more your mental power will grow. With the increase in your mental capacity, there will be an increase in your power of discrimination too. Consequently, you will give up “individual discrimination” and resort to “fundamental discrimination.” Because of this, you will begin to consider the good of the world at large rather than your own individual welfare. You must cultivate such broad feelings from a young age itself.³⁸

38. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 25, Chapter 15: Rise from Animality to Divinity. Divine Discourse on May 24, 1992.



Exercise Proper Control over the Tongue

While all other senses do only one type of work each, the tongue alone has the capacity to do two types of work, namely, to taste and to speak. That is why one has to exercise proper control over the tongue lest it should indulge in sinful activities like talking ill of others. In times of anger, observe silence. Our ancients taught: Talk less, work more. The less you talk, the purer your heart remains.³⁹

39. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 34, Chapter 4: Have Steady Faith in the *Atma*. Divine Discourse on February 22, 2001.



Work Silently—God Will Shower His Grace on You

Serve without any expectation of reward. That is *nishkama yoga*. No benefit accrues to you if you expect reward for the service rendered in various villages. Do not boast that you have served in many villages. Work silently; definitely, God will shower His grace on you.⁴⁰

40. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 32-2, Chapter 14: Seek God Within. Divine Discourse on November 21, 1999.



The Same *Atma* Is Present in All

A person remained silent though he was being criticized. When his friend wanted him to react, he replied, “The same *Atma* (Divine Self) is present in me as well as in the person who is criticizing. So, why should I be annoyed when he is criticizing himself?” A deep inquiry into the truth will reveal that when you love or hate others, you love or hate your own self. In fact, there are no “others.” You consider yourself different from others because of body attachment. Once you give up body attachment, you will realize that there are no others and all are yours. That is the true vision of the *Atma*. The *Atma* does not have a specific form.⁴¹

41. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 34, Chapter 12: Human Birth Is to Experience Atmic Bliss. Divine Discourse on July 4, 2001.



Maintain Silence in the Recesses of the Heart

God is omnipresent, so do not act differently when you are away from My presence. Be always and everywhere conscious of the presence. Be vigilant, even while engaged in little tasks. Maintain silence in the recesses of the heart, as well as outside. The *Bhagavad Gita* says, “God's hands and feet are everywhere.” You can hear His footfall only when no other sound hinders.⁴²

42. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 14, Chapter 59: The Search for Fulfillment. Divine Discourse on November 24, 1980.



Remembrance of the Lord Does Not Need Any Special Time

Enter from now on into a discipline of *namasmarana*, the incessant remembrance of God through the name of the Lord. It does not need any special time or extra allotment of time; it can be done always, in the waking stage, whether you are bathing or eating, walking or sitting. All the hours now spent in gossip, in watching sports or films, in hollow conversation, can best be used for silent contemplation of the name and form and splendor of the Lord.⁴³

43. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 3, Chapter 14: *Sathyam, Shivam, Sundaram*. Excerpts from Divine Discourses during May 1963.



Pray to God Wholeheartedly with Love

Any mighty task can be accomplished by prayer. Hence pray to God silently. Do not pray for the fulfillment of your petty desires. Give up all desires, and pray to God wholeheartedly with love. You will certainly find fulfillment in life. You can understand and experience Divinity only through love. Nothing can be achieved without love. Love makes all your tasks successful. Some people complain, “Swami, we are making fervent prayers, but our prayers are not fruitful.” I tell them, “The mistake lies in your prayer and not in God.” If your prayers are sincere, they will certainly be answered. There is nothing that God cannot accomplish.⁴⁴

44. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 37, Chapter 22: My Power Is the Power of Love. Divine Discourse on December 25, 2004.



Spend Time with the Highest of All Powers

It is best that you stay away from companions who drag you to distractions that weaken and worry you; spend a few minutes every morning and evening in the silence of your own shrine or home; spend them with the highest of all powers that you know of. Be in His elevating and inspiring company; worship Him mentally; offer unto Him all the work you do; you will come out of the silence nobler and more heroic than when you went in.⁴⁵

45. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 3, Chapter 38: Project Site, *Puuja* Site. Divine Discourse on December 6, 1963.



Repeat His Name in the Silence of the Heart

The magnet cannot draw to itself a bit of iron that is covered with rust and dust. You cannot yearn for God when your mind is laden with the rust of material desires and when the dust of sensual craving sits heavy on it. Clear the rust, know the glory of God and repeat His name, in the silence of the heart. Any one of the names that denote Him can be selected. Do not listen to people who canvass for one particular name and cavil at others.⁴⁶

46. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 7, Chapter 45: The Treasure under Your Feet.



All the Joy Is within You

All the joy you crave is in you. But, like a man who has vast riches in the iron chest but who has no idea where the key is, you suffer. Hear properly the instructions, dwell upon them in the silence of meditation, practice what has been made clear therein; then, you can secure the key, open the chest, and be rich in joy.⁴⁷

47. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 9, Chapter 3: *Mahashivarathri*. Divine Discourse on *Shivarathri* Day, February 1969.



Spiritual Practice Should Be Done in Silence

There are many who go about the country preaching about *japa* (chanting the Divine name) and *dhyana* (meditation), pretending to be highly advanced experts. They claim to be masters, so that they can collect huge audiences and show off their skills. But, such exhibition of talent is not a sign of spiritual attainment. Spiritual attainments shun publicity. Spiritual practice is to be done in silence, away from the public gaze.⁴⁸

48. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 10, Chapter 33: Faults and Failures. Divine Discourse on November 21, 1970.



God's Grace Is Secured by the Sacred Use of the Senses

The ancient Indian sages practiced silence as a spiritual discipline because they realized the myriad benefits derived from silence. Swami Vivekananda learnt a valuable lesson when he found that after ten days of endless talk he had forgotten all the *shlokas* (verses) he had learnt by heart. By practicing complete silence for a fortnight he regained his memory powers. People should realize that God's grace is secured by the sacred use of the senses endowed on man by the Divine.⁴⁹

49. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 30, Chapter 25: Sacred Use of *Indhriyas*. Divine Discourse on October 6, 1997.



Divinity Can Be Recognized Only by the Pure Hearted

If you are aspiring for good results, offer only good feelings to God. There should be perfect harmony in your thought, word, and deed. He is a noble soul whose thought, word, and deed are in perfect harmony. Do not hate anybody. On November 24, 1926, Aurobindo broke his prolonged silence only to declare that God had incarnated the previous day. After making this significant statement, he continued with his vow of silence. Divinity can be recognized only by the pure hearted.⁵⁰

50. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 32-2, Chapter 11: Devotion—the Supreme *Yagna*. Divine Discourse on October 19, 1999.



Conserve Energy by Observing Silence

Do not waste energy! Energy is God. Today, students are wasting a lot of energy through unsacred vision, bad thoughts, bad hearing, and excessive talk. Our body can be compared to a radio. When the radio is turned on continuously, the cells get discharged quickly. Likewise, if you indulge in excessive talk, you will be losing a lot of energy. That is why the ancient sages and seers used to observe silence. So, conserve energy by observing silence at least one day a week. I often tell the students, talk less and work more. Only then the latent energy develops. This was the sole aim of sages and seers in undertaking various spiritual practices.

Once the latent energy develops, your memory power as well as the power of concentration will increase. Some students are not able to perform well in examinations because they are not able to concentrate even for a moment. They are

constantly engaged in listening to radio news, cricket commentary, etc., with the textbook in their hand! With such distractions, how can they concentrate and retain their memory? ⁵¹

51. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 32-2, Chapter 14: Seek God Within. Divine Discourse on November 21, 1999.



Remain Silent if Uttering the Truth Leads to Danger

Love is your greatest asset. Develop love, and always speak the truth. Truth sounds bitter, whereas people are easily pleased by falsehood. People do not relish milk, which is brought to their doorstep, whereas they are prepared to traverse miles together to consume a bottle of liquor. Falsehood has become the order of the day. Falsehood may please others but not your conscience. Strive to satisfy your conscience before satisfying others. Under all circumstances follow the path of truth. In case the utterance of truth is likely to lead to some danger, remain silent.

A hermit was deeply engrossed in the contemplation of God. He had vowed to speak “truth always.” Lord Easwara wanted to subject him to a test. He assumed the form of a hunter and started chasing a deer, which, out of fear, hid in a bush close to the hermitage. This was noticed by the hermit. On being questioned by the hunter about the whereabouts of the deer, the hermit was in a dilemma. He could not feign ignorance and say that he had not seen the deer as that would amount to uttering a lie. At the same time he could not reveal the whereabouts of the deer, lest the hunter should kill it. In that case he would be a party to the crime. He prayed to Lord Easwara fervently to show him a way out.

A brilliant idea flashed in his mind by God’s grace. God is always with you, in you, around you, above you, guiding and guarding you. Why fear when He is near? The hermit replied, “O hunter, that which sees cannot speak; that which speaks cannot see.” By such a tactful answer, the hermit not only upheld his adherence to truth but also protected the life of the deer. Then Lord Easwara manifested in His true form and declared, “Such tact that safeguards your interests as well as those of others is true *yoga*.”⁵²

52. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 35, Chapter 4: Idols Are Pointers to Divinity. Divine Discourse on March 12, 2002.



Solitude Means to Be in Communion with God

God is the embodiment of truth. Truth is God. Therefore, you should rely on truth. In fact, you are the embodiment of truth. It is not something new to be discovered afresh. Truth will manifest in you if you sit in deep silence and solitude. What does the word “solitude” mean? People have wrong notions about this word and misinterpret it in many ways. They think that sitting alone in a room with all doors and windows shut is solitude. This is not solitude but loneliness. Many others think that sitting under a tree in a forest or in a mountain cave is solitude. That also is not the true meaning of solitude.

Solitude means to be in communion with God, wherever you may be—in the bazaar, in a meeting, or in the midst of a large number of people. Wherever you are, your mind should be focused on God without being distracted by worldly and family matters. Solitude is total communion between you and God. Nothing else should divert your attention from God. That is the real meaning of solitude. Whatever you may be doing or even traveling in a bus or train or plane, always keep your mind firmly fixed on God. While meditating or contemplating on God, do not allow any other distraction to divert your mind. Only then can you have the experience of Divine light.⁵³

53. Lack of Values Is the Cause of Violence in the World. Divine Discourse on July 11, 1996.



Annihilate the Mind by Quietude

You should not use your tongue to abuse others. Abusing others is a sin. Do not let your tongue indulge in such sins. You cannot escape the consequences of your sinful acts. Everything has a reaction, reflection, and resound, and it comes back to you in some form or the other. Hence, exercise control over the tongue.

Buddha observed *mounam* (silence) and became quiet. Every sacred act has manifold rewards. By being quiet, Buddha began to experience *Soham* within Him. You may chant the names of Rama, Krishna, Govinda, Buddha, and Sai to steady your mind. Once the mind becomes steady, you do not need to chant. Observe total silence. That is why it is said, silence is golden. Once words are reduced, the activities and vagaries of the mind also are reduced. As words increase, the vagaries of the mind also increase.

Annihilate the mind by quietude. However, it is easier said than done. Man may die, but the mind will not die. The mind vanishes when words vanish from it. Observing silence is one of the ways of silencing the mind. That is why our ancients practiced silence. We should not allow the mind to go wherever it likes and do whatever it likes. We should not allow the mind to ridicule, hurt, and hate others. If you hurt anybody, you will be hurt ten times more. You may take pride that you have abused somebody. But there will come somebody who will abuse you also someday. The sin you commit today will bring retribution to you later amplified manifold.⁵⁴

54. Summer Showers in Brindavan 2002, Chapter 11: Sense Control Is the Highest *Sadhana*.



Contentment Is a Mental Condition

Peace comes from within; contentment is a mental condition. Do not feed the roots of attachment to worldly comforts more than is absolutely necessary. They lead only to anxiety and fear; they can never satisfy the innermost craving of man. Lead them into the path of devotion and dedication; for them that will be the path of contentment and joy.

Emphasize the universal *Atma thathwam*—essential nature of the Self; encourage prayer, meditation, quiet contemplation of the grandeur and glory of God, reflected in nature; encourage repetition of the name of the Lord; encourage silence and solitude, for the sake of introspection and contact with the springs of joy inherent in man.⁵⁵ Practicing meditation in silence and solitude, one can in due course establish silence and solitude in the heart, even in the busiest thoroughfares.⁵⁶

55. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 5, Chapter 51: The Daily Diet. Divine Discourse on November 4, 1965.

56. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 5, Chapter 41: Silence and Solitude. Divine Discourse on September 29, 1965.



Reason Out Things in Silence

Lust and anger are the two archenemies of man that undermine his Divine nature and drag him down into the mire. The *Ramayana* story is woven round the

anger of Manthara and the lust of Surpanakha. The *Ramayana* of each individual too is woven round these two elemental passions. When the first intimations of these evil influences threaten to invade your mind, stop and inquire coolly into the nature of the urge, the manner of the promptings, the type of the consequences for you and others. Reason out these things, in silence and solitude.⁵⁷

57. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 6, Chapter 13: Unrivalled Mastery. Divine Discourse at Anantapur High School for Girls, School Day, 1966.



Solitude Is Best Used to Cure Our Own Defects

Solitude is when you are not aware of the crowd around you. It is what you create out of the solitude of your own mind.⁵⁸ People retire into solitude and attempt to contact God, but solitude is best used for discovering and curing defects of character and conduct. To contact God, one has to open his eyes and serve his brother man. He is the God Incarnate one can worship and adore to his heart's content. The greatest joy springs from the utmost sacrifice. That is the utmost *bhoga* (enjoyment), though it is called *thyaga* (sacrifice). It is the utmost fulfillment.⁵⁹

58. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 8, Chapter 35: Transmute Every Minute. Divine Discourse on September 24, 1968.

59. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 11, Chapter 28: Radiate Rays of Love. Divine Discourse on July 8, 1971.



Being Alone Is Not Solitude

Some aspirants wish to seek solitude. But being alone is not solitude. People go to Hrishikesh, Haridwar or Tapovanam in search of solitude. Only those who have not understood the real meaning of solitude will resort to such things. There is real solitude (alone-ness) only when the mind is completely stilled. If while sitting alone in a forest your mind is ruminating on affairs of the world, how can it be called solitude? Without curbing thoughts, loneliness cannot be found anywhere. Either thoughts have to be eliminated, or all thoughts should be turned toward the Divine.⁶⁰

60. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 20, Chapter 6: Who Am I? Divine Discourse on March 30, 1987.



Spirituality Does Not Mean Living in Solitude

Spirituality does not mean a life of solitude. True spirituality lies in understanding the unity of all humanity and giving up the sense of attachment and hatred. The principle of *Atma* (Divine Self) is the same in everyone.⁶¹ People in general cannot understand what is spirituality and what is individual freedom. Spirituality does not mean living in solitude, far away from society. On the other hand, true spirituality consists of sowing the seeds of love in the hearts of all people and facilitating the blossoming of peace and Divine love among all mankind.⁶²

61. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 33, Chapter 5: Sheaths of the Self. Divine Discourse on March 4, 2000.

62. Summer Showers in Brindavan 1990, Chapter 13: What Is Freedom?



Solitude Overcomes Bodily Attachment

Don't cultivate attachment to the body beyond limits. That is why our ancient sages went into solitude to overcome bodily attachment. They took care of their bodies but at the same time, decreased their physical attachment. Those who aspire for Divinity must necessarily embark on this path. However, if you don't want God, you can remain preoccupied with the body for as long as you wish, because that will give you the temporary happiness you seek.⁶³

63. Summer Showers in Brindavan 1995, Chapter 7: Vishwamitra.



There Must Be Solitude and Silence in the Mind

One must be fond of being alone. This does not mean keeping the body in some solitary place, far from the haunts of humanity. There must be solitude and silence in the mind; all its occupants must be forced or persuaded to quit. The mind should be contentless (*nir-vishaya*) turned away from the objective world.⁶⁴

64. Gita Vahini, Chapter XXIII: Number 17: Dwelling in Solitude.



The Company of Wise People Is Better than Solitude

Spiritual discipline will be affected by the company you keep. Good people keep you good; bad people drag you away into badness. Of course, it is hard to find out who are good and who are bad and then settle among the good. So, it is advisable to avoid people and concentrate on spiritual discipline. The human mind is like iron; if it falls into mud, it rusts and disintegrates; if it falls into fire, it loses dross and becomes pure. Therefore, joining the company of wise people is better than being in solitude.

Note how Narada, who was the son of a housemaid, became a sage because he fell in the company of good men; Rathnakara, who was a cruel hunter, obtained the company of the seven sages, so he was transformed into the first among poets, the *adi-kavi*. Evil company is highly detrimental. A red-hot iron ball is capable of causing more damage than a flame of fire; a sinful one is more to be avoided than sin itself. Aspirants have to be vigilant about the company they keep.⁶⁵

65. Gita Vahini, Chapter XXIII: Number 18; Absence of Interest in the Company of Others.



Ancient Sages Prescribed Silence as a Spiritual Practice

Whenever we talk disparagingly or defamingly or sarcastically or hatefully of others, these words are recorded on the tape which is our own mind. When we record on tape a talk given by someone, it lasts even after his passing away. So too, even after we pass away, the impressions and impacts of evil thoughts, spiteful words, and wicked plots survive physical disappearance. Never, therefore, use or listen to words that ridicule, scandalize, or hurt others. Slander is a direct sin. The ancient seers have prescribed silence as a *sadhana* (spiritual practice).⁶⁶

66. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 15, Chapter 20: Purity—the Real Value. Divine Discourse on August 31, 1981.



Be Determined to Talk Less

The tongue commits four sins. It speaks untruth, blames others, carries tales about others, and talks too much. The tongue thus commits four sins. In order to guard ourselves from the tongue committing these sins, we must make a

determination to talk less. This is most important for students. The energy that is present in you will diminish if you talk too much. It will also bring you disrepute. By talking too much, our friends will call us a bore when we approach them. Talking too much will weaken your nerves also. When your nerves become weak, you become a nervous wreck, and your tongue will also not be under control. It is because of this that our ancestors gave so much importance to silence. They observed silence over long periods of time.⁶⁷

67. Summer Showers in Brindavan 1978, Chapter 21: By Talking Too Much, We Make the Tongue Commit Four Sins.



Silence Means Cessation of the Thought Process

Talk leads to more talk, and eventually one runs the danger of speaking falsehoods. Excessive talk can also trigger undesirable actions. That is why our *rishis* (sages) preferred to be silent most of the time. Silence does not mean mere cessation of talk or conversation. For the sages, it also meant cessation of the thought process. Thought is a ripple in the mind. A series of thoughts can become a wave, and many waves become a storm. Therefore, it is best to be in a quiescent stage, devoid of thoughts. This was the feeling in those days. Today, the mind is characterized by excessive thoughts.

What is this? You would say it is a piece of cloth. It is in fact a bundle of threads. If the threads are all removed, there will be no cloth left. In the same way, the control of speech and the removal of thoughts will help to subdue the mind. One must talk less in order to be able to experience Vishnu. You are capable of speech, thinking, and feeling. The word represents Brahma, the mind represents Vishnu, and the heart represents Ishwara. Thus you yourself represent the Divine Trinity!⁶⁸

68. Summer Showers in Brindavan 2000, Chapter 3: The Trinity Within.



Excessive Talk Leads to Untruth and Unpleasantness

First and foremost, man has to purify his speech. Only then will his life be safe and secure. If you slip and fall, the injury can be cured, but the injury caused by a slip of the tongue is incurable. It will make your life miserable. So, you should

have control over your speech. Excessive talk will lead to untruth and unpleasantness. That is why the ancient saints and seers used to observe silence. You can uphold truth and attain fame only by talking less. Limited talk will confer happiness. Excessive talk will put you in grave danger.⁶⁹

69. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 33, Chapter 4: Sanctify Your Life by Chanting *Gayatri Mantra*. Divine Discourse on February 10, 2000.



Vagaries of the Tongue

Be specially warned of the vagaries of the tongue. Guard your health by disobeying it wisely; guard your reputation by enforcing silence on it. The tongue revels in five ungodly games: uttering falsehood, indulging in slander, maligning others, gossiping endlessly, and justifying one's faults.⁷⁰

70. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 14, Chapter 38: Devalued Man. Divine Discourse on October 1, 1979.



Maintain Control over the Food You Eat

“*Mouna*” does not mean simply abstaining from talk. Mental agitations must also be silenced. For this purpose, you must also maintain control over the food you eat. You should not give to the tongue whatever type of food it demands. You must develop a sense of discrimination as to what is *Atma* (Divine Self) and what is *Anatma*; what is *nitya* (permanent) and what is *anitya* (impermanent). This is called *buddhiyoga* (the power of discrimination). You must assess whether the food you eat is *satwic*, *rajasic* or *tamasic*. You must also see whether it is *hitha* (promoting health) and *mitha* (limited in quantity) for you. When you thus inquire and eat *hitha* and *mitha* food with full knowledge, you will not be disturbed by any external forces. On the other hand, without making any such inquiry, if you eat food simply to satisfy your palate, you will be subjected to *raga* (attachment or desire) and *dwesha* (hatred).

Because of the food we eat, we are easily falling prey to praise and scorn and becoming disturbed and depressed. These disturbances and mental depressions reduce a full man to a one-fourth man. The whole world appears to be a vacuum for such a person. He drowns himself in deep sorrow. He feels life is not worth living. The reason for this weakness is his food. On the other hand, if somebody

showers a little praise on him, he becomes elated. His joy knows no bounds. To feel elated when praised and become depressed when scorned is not proper. Neither feeling elated nor becoming depressed is *samatatwa* (a sense of equanimity). To develop such an equanimous state of mind, the *Bhagavad Gita* has advised *ahara shuddhi* (purity of food).⁷¹

71. Bhagavad Gita Part I, Chapter 7: Sense Control—Main Entrance to *Yoga*.



Observe Silence Daily for a Few Hours

When there are good feelings and good thoughts in the mind, man feels happiness outwardly also. While man is suffering great mental agony within himself, if he puts up a smiling face, it looks artificial. We can easily identify such a man's mental feelings. We should not be like this. We must attain a stage where we are always happy, both inwardly and outwardly. When do we attain this stage? Only when we entertain good thoughts constantly. For this purpose, it is necessary to control our tongue as far as possible.

We must observe *mouna* (silence within and without) daily for at least a few hours. Only then, the mind will have some rest. It is also possible to purify the mind by doing some *japa* (chanting the Divine name) and *dhyana* (meditation). All the *japa*, *tapa* (penance), and *dhyana* as well as *Vedadhyayana* (reading of the *Vedas* and scriptures) are meant for purifying the mind. It is said that one should maintain purity internally as well as externally. Just as we take a bath every day to keep the body clean, similarly we must constantly contemplate on Divinity to remove bad thoughts in the mind. Today, we are trying to keep our body clean, but we are not making any efforts to keep our mind clean and pure. Good thoughts, good intentions, and good feelings help maintain our mind clean and pure.⁷²

72. Bhagavad Gita Part I, Chapter 12: *Vairagya* and *Thapas*.



Without Sense Control All Spiritual Practices Are Futile

First of all, man should exercise control over his senses. Never listen to anything that is evil. If any situation arises, leave the place immediately. Hear no evil, see no evil, and talk no evil. Make every effort to be away from evil. Only then will spiritual power grow in you more and more. Why did our ancient sages

and seers go to forests to spend their lives in solitude? It is only to control their senses. True spiritual practice lies in controlling one's senses. Without sense control all spiritual practices will prove futile. Instead of using the tongue to utter evil words, why don't you chant the Divine names like Rama, Krishna, and Govinda? You are piling up sins because of the misuse of the senses. The sins that you have piled up may not be visible to the naked eye, but they are sure to cause you suffering.⁷³

73. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 34, Chapter 13: I and You Are One. Divine Discourse on July 5, 2001.



The Mind Is Preoccupied with Worries

All the ills of man today are due to the fact that his mind is never being restful and quiet. The mind is preoccupied with worries. Even an inanimate machine needs some period of rest. But no rest is given to the mind.

If we desire peace for the individual, for the society, and for the nation, it can only be achieved through spiritual means. Hence, recognizing the truth, without attaching excessive importance to worldly comforts, we must make every effort to acquire peace of mind. No doubt physical comforts are necessary up to a point. But they should be limited to meeting the basic demands of nature.⁷⁴

74. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 21, Chapter 13: The Scientist and the Saint. Divine Discourse on May 6, 1988.



Spirituality Is Not Living Alone in Solitude

You are the mirror of society. Think always of the welfare of society. When others are happy, you should feel happy. When others are unhappy, help them to become happy. It is not blood circulation or the movement of the body that is important; your actions are important. Spirituality is not living alone in solitude. Spirituality connotes having equal vision for all, living among all, and serving all with a feeling of oneness.⁷⁵

75. Develop Love for God and Experience Unity. Divine Discourse on April 26, 1997.



Desist from Speaking and Keep Silent

Nowadays, people resort to telling lies, fearing that they may get into trouble otherwise. Why should you fear to speak the truth? You have to fear only when you commit mistakes. Today, there is fear rampant everywhere. Life is fear-stricken! Practice *sathya* (truth) and *dharma* (right conduct). If you practice these, you need not fear. When you aren't able to utter the truth, you may desist from speaking and keep silent.⁷⁶

76. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 31, Chapter 12: Man, Truth, Love, and God. Divine Discourse on April 17, 1998.



Start Early, Drive Slowly, Reach Safely

Shankara suggested *sathsanga* (good company) as the very first step in *sadhana* (spiritual practice); the company of the wise and the good will develop into detachment and love of silence and solitude.⁷⁷ Never use harsh words. Never speak untruth. Sometimes, telling the truth may lead to danger. In such a situation, speak neither truth nor untruth; remain silent. You should transcend the dualities of truth and untruth. As you are all in the prime of your youth, this is the best time to embark on the sacred path. Start early, drive slowly, reach safely.⁷⁸

77. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 3, Chapter 12: Shankara's *Adhwaitha*. Divine Discourse on April 28, 1963.

78. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 35, Chapter 22: Listen to the Master of the Universe and Transform Yourselves into Ideal Human Beings. Divine Discourse on November 23, 2002.



Avoid Entangling Yourself in the Affairs of Others

Detachment is the first step in *sadhana* (spiritual practice). Silence helps you avoid entangling yourself in the affairs of others; that is why it is encouraged as a preliminary. Be like the ant. When the ant gets a mixture of sand and sugar, it selects only sugar. It neglects the sand. See only the good in others; pay no attention to the bad. They may criticize and cavil at you, but preserve your equanimity and do not take them to heart! Keep them out; they are sand particles.⁷⁹

79. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 9, Chapter 19: Counsel for the Chosen. Divine Discourse on October 11, 1969.



Silence Fosters Purity

Only those who observe silence are good people. Silence fosters purity. Therefore observe silence at all times. It is a waste of time if you carry tales about others. What have you come here for? Vain gossip causes harm to many. So refrain from indulging in it.⁸⁰ Silence is the first step in *sadhana* (spiritual practice); it makes the other steps easy. It promotes self-control; it lessens chances of anger, hate, malice, greed, pride. Besides, you can hear His footsteps only when silence reigns in the mind.⁸¹

80. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 32-2, Chapter 8: Cultivate Discipline and Love. Divine Discourse on October 15, 1999.

81. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 10, Chapter 16: Labels Are Libels. Divine Discourse on July 19, 1970.



Strife Does Not Arise out of Silence

What is silence? One should never speak ill of others. Strife does not arise out of silence. Salute those who offend you. Don't return offence with offence. If you act in the same manner as your opponent, how can you become greater? While saying that the other is acting wrongly, will you be right if you act in the same manner? Never act in this manner. Let those who commit an offence continue their offensive behavior. Never react. Wish for the welfare of everyone.⁸²

82. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 35, Chapter 4: Idols Are Pointers to Divinity. Divine Discourse on March 12, 2002.



Glossary

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





Silence

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 1, contains quotations on the topic “Silence” selected from the discourses and writings of Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Sri Sathya Sai says: “The very first spiritual practice one must adopt is the cultivation of inner silence, to put an end to the endless dialogue with the mind. Let the mind rest for a while.”

