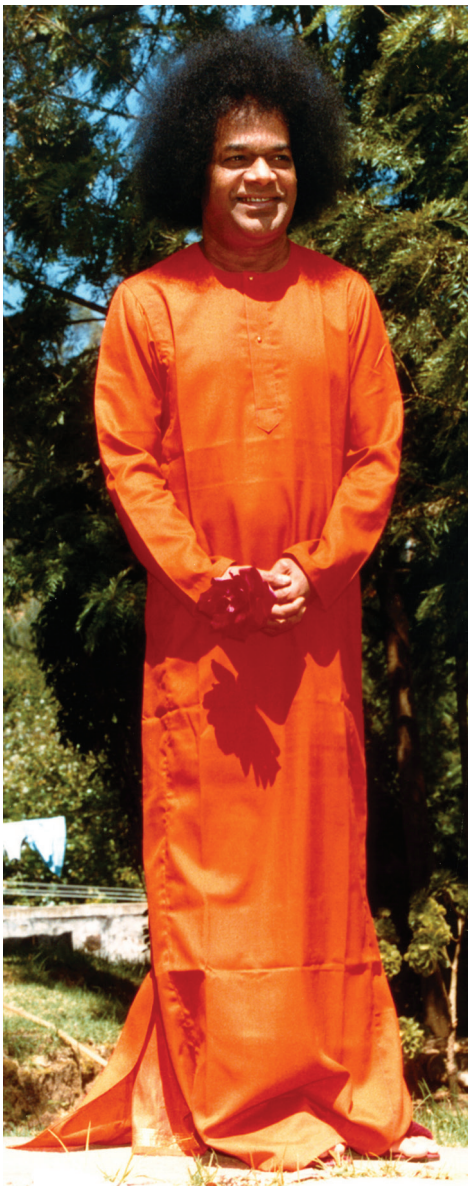


# DIVINE TEACHINGS OF Sri Sathya Sai Baba

VOLUME 9



## Who Is Dear to the Lord

*Anapeksha Shuchir Dakshah  
Udaaseena Gatavyathah  
Sarvarambha Parithyaagi  
Yo Madbhaktah Sa Me Priyah.*

*(That devotee is dear to me who is free from  
desire, who is pure in body and mind, who is  
resolute, unconcerned, and free from sorrow  
and has renounced all sense of doership  
—Bhagavad Gita.)*

- (1) *Anapeksha (Devoid of Desires)*
- (2) *Suchi (Pure)*
- (3) *Dakshah (Firm in Determination)*
- (4) *Udaaseena (Detached)*
- (5) *Gatavyathah (Free from Grief)*
- (6) *Sarvarambha Parithyaagi (Renunciation)*



*Divine Teachings*  
*of*  
*Sri Sathya Sai Baba*

**Volume 9: Who Is Dear to the Lord**





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**Dedicated with love and reverence**  
**to**  
***Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba***





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# Who Is Dear to the Lord

## 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 9. It includes the topic, “Who Is Dear to the Lord.” The discourses are selected from *Sri Sathya Sai Speaks* and *Summer Showers* 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.



# Who Is Dear to the Lord

The following are highlights of the full quotations that begin on page 16.

*Anapeksha Shuchir Dakshah  
Udaaseena Gatavyathah  
Sarvarambha Parithyaagi  
Yo Madbhaktah Sa Me Priyah.*

(That devotee is dear to me who is free from desire, who is pure in body and mind, who is resolute, unconcerned, and free from sorrow and has renounced all sense of doership—*Bhagavad Gita*.)

## **Anapeksha (Devoid of Desires)**

*In this world, man, with his body, senses, and mind cannot be free from desires. But how is he to become anapeksha (free from expectation)? When he performs actions, regarding himself as the doer, the actions become fetters that bind him. All actions that are performed with the feeling that they are intended as offerings to please the Divine do not lead to bondage. They become anapeksha (desireless actions). One has to recognize that it is the Divine Principle in all beings that is getting all actions done through human beings as instruments. As long as man regards himself as karthruthva (the doer) and bhokthruthva (enjoyer) he cannot escape from the consequences of his actions.*

*The Bhagavad Gita teaches that when actions are done as offerings to God, they become "desireless" actions. Man has taken birth to perform his duties and not to enjoy power or assert his rights. When one's duty is performed, the right comes of its own accord. Men today fight for their "rights" and forget their duties. Hence discharge of duty comes first. It is through duty that man realizes God.*

*Anapeksha means that the devotee is beyond apeksha, i.e., desires or expectations. Is it ever possible for man, bound as he is by the body and the senses, to be without desires? Hardly. Some desire or the other will always be there. However, there must be control over the desires that one has. What sorts of desires are permitted? Recall what Krishna has to say about this matter. He says that all righteous actions are Divine. Thus, among the permissible desires, the best is the desire for thyaga or sacrifice.*



*The Lord has stated very clearly that He wants you to attain the state of anapeksha. How does one do that? One does this by strictly confining to righteous activities alone, performing such actions exclusively for the pleasure of the Lord, and by offering all such actions in their entirety to the Lord. Actions performed in this spirit rise well above worldly desires and expectations. Thus the word anapeksha ought not to be interpreted in a very rigid sense. What it really means is having the irresistible urge to work only for the Lord and for His sole pleasure. However, that does not mean one can do anything and everything. Our actions must be such that they please Him and secure His approval. If a devotee conducts himself in this fashion, he becomes dear to the Lord.*

*In the Bhagavad Gita, the Lord has declared that He is present in all righteous actions. Therefore those who perform righteous actions can develop anapeksha (desirelessness). This means that when a man performs all actions as offerings to the Lord, they become anapeksha (desireless actions). The Lord is one who, from within, makes a person act, speak, listen, see, and do many other actions. He is the doer and the enjoyer. If a person performs all actions with the conviction that the Indwelling Lord is the real doer, then his actions become desireless. Hence every sadhaka (spiritual aspirant) should regard his actions as offerings to the Divine.*

*What is the way to lead a desire-free life? Lord Krishna has shown the way for this. He said, "Son, there is nothing wrong in having desires, but all of them must be pleasing to God." Let all your actions be pleasing to God. You should put into practice the eternal principles based on truth and dedicate all your activities to God. Lead your life without the feeling of "mine and thine," and offer everything to God. Only then can you attain the state of desirelessness. Today, man has both worldly desires as well as desires that lead to the inward path, but the number of desires that lead to the inward path pale in comparison to the number of worldly desires in him.*

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

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

### **Suchi (Pure)**

*Suchi: This refers to purity. It is not enough if the body is clean. Inner purity is essential. The latter, in fact, is more essential than the former. For the proper enjoyment of all things, purity of mind is essential. Whatever sacred acts you may do in the external world, if you have no purity of mind and heart, all of them are valueless. The food cooked in an untinned vessel will be spoiled even if all the ingredients are good. Likewise, in the vessel of the heart, the inside must be purified by prema (love). Then, all that one consumes will be wholesome. Hence purity is vital for all aspirants; without it, all man's actions are tainted. Actions done with an impure heart can only produce undesirable results. Whatever good results you want to secure in the external world, inner purity is the basis.*

*What sort of cleanliness does the Lord expect from us? Is it outer cleanliness or inner cleanliness? Both are required. God loves cleanliness; cleanliness is godliness. However, one cannot confine oneself to external cleanliness alone; inner purity also is very necessary. In fact, it is of prime importance. God is omnipresent. He is present both outside as well as inside. However, we must first try to recognize the Divine Principle within.*

*Inner purity is essential for achieving external purity. What exactly is meant by external purity? It does not mean washing yourself with soap and water. It means performing selfless service to society and doing such action for the pleasure of God. It is such service alone that produces external purity. If inner purity is lacking, the service rendered will inevitably be tinged with selfishness, thereby diminishing external purity.*

*It is only when man has pure feelings within him that his actions can be pure. When he is polluted within, all his actions will be impure. How are the internal impulses to be purified? These relate to the mind, speech, and the body. Of the three, speech is the most important. How is purity in speech to be achieved? "Anudhvegakaram vaakyam sathyam priyahitham cha yath," says the Bhagavad Gita. Every word you utter should be free from anudhvegakaram (causing excitement or agitation). It should be sathyam (true) and priyam (pleasing).*

*There should be both inner and outer purity. Bodily purity relates to the physical. It covers such cleansing acts as bathing, wearing clean clothes, eating*

*pure food, and the like. Even in studies, the books should be wholesome and elevating. But mere external cleanliness without internal purity is of no value. Everyone, from the scholar to the common man, is concerned only about external cleanliness and not about the purity of the heart within.*

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

### **Dakshah (Firm in Determination)**

*Dakshah refers to the determination that is needed to accomplish anything. One must have the fortitude and resoluteness to achieve one's purpose, whatever might be the obstacles in the way. To accomplish any sacred task one has to possess this determination. Dakshah signifies this quality of unwavering determination in the devotee.*

*The devotee must have dakshah or strong and unshakable determination. What sort of determination must you have? You must say, "Come what may, I shall not rest till I accomplish this or achieve this." This is the sort of resolve you ought to have.*

*What is meant by determination? It means having the firm resolve: "I should definitely see God, have God, and secure His grace." God loves dearly the devotee who has such firm determination.*

*Dakshah means that one should have firm determination in performing actions. The determination should be confined to actions that are pure, helpful to others, and sublimate man. No man can refrain from action of some kind or the other even for a moment. In no circumstance should one engage himself in an impure act. This is the way to achieve purity through firm determination. Only such a person can be called a dakshah (resolute person).*

*You should be one of determination in order to attain Divine grace. Once you have taken refuge in God, never lose faith, come what may. Do not get*

*disheartened by trials and tribulations that come your way. Be equal minded in times of both pleasure and pain. That is true determination.*

*Dakshah means that everyone should regard his life as a form of penance. Everyone must have a dakshah (firm resolution) that as long as life lasts he will dedicate himself to the service of his fellow men. Thereby he will realize his oneness with all mankind. Such a feeling of unity will lead to God-realization. Service is the only way to get rid of selfishness and self-centeredness. A devotee who has resolved upon such service is dear to the Lord.*

*The devotee should be steadfast and unwavering in any situation. With his mind firmly rooted in God, he should engage himself in service to others and perform actions in a spirit of detachment. Only such a devotee is eligible for God's love. He is unaffected by pleasure or pain, gain or loss, or what happens in the mundane world.*

### **Udaaseena (Detached)**

*Udaaseena: One who is unaffected by whatever happens. This means that one should be totally free from selfishness. He must consider the performance of his duties as the sole purpose of his existence. The human body is the result of past actions. Man is bound to the world by his actions. The body is the primary requisite for the performance of dharma (right action). Indifferent to fame or blame, not seeking power or position, one should perform one's duties selflessly.*

*Udaaseena means detachment. You must be totally detached with respect to whatever you are doing. You can do any kind of work; you may, for example, be engaged in service activity. However, you should not have an expectation of any type [including of the outcome], and also not seek any reward, praise, appreciation, etc., for what you are doing.*

*Udaaseena means freedom from attachment to anything. It means remaining serene and unruffled by fame or blame, peace or sorrow, loss or gain, pleasure or pain, not elated by prosperity or depressed by failure. One should not succumb to calumny. Nor should one exult over fame. Fame and censure are like passing clouds. One should look upon them as a mere witness. They should be treated with udaaseena (equanimous feeling). To treat them seriously is to give rise to agitations in the mind, which may lead to demonic tendencies.*

*You should lead a life of total detachment without entertaining the feeling of “I” and “mine.”*

*Udaaseena means indifference toward sorrow or joy, loss or gain, honor or dishonor. You must be concerned only with whether your actions are pure and selfless according to your conscience. Nothing else matters, neither the praise nor the blame of other people. When your conscience tells you that what you are doing is good, you may go ahead regardless of the opinion of others, whether they are your kinsmen, friends, or others. This is the true meaning of udaaseena (indifference).*

### **Gatavyathah (Free from Grief)**

*Gatavyathah: Vyathah refers to anguish in the mind. Falling prey to mental anguish, man is totally confused. Man has a tendency to brood over the past. Of what use is it to worry about what has happened? Nor should one worry about the future, which is unknown and uncertain. Bear in mind only the present. This is the way to get rid of mental anguish—gatavyathah. The present is the product of the past and the parent of the future. When you act properly in the present, the future will take care of itself. Do what is appropriate for the present moment. If there are no expectations, there will be no disappointments.*

*Gatavyathah means being impervious to the ups and downs brought about by time. Acquisition of this particular virtue also calls for strong determination. You should neither brood over the past nor worry about the future. Why all this pointless contemplation? No matter how much you think, reflect, and brood, the miseries of the past cannot be corrected or set right.*

*In regard to the future, no one can say anything definite about it since it is so very uncertain. You are keen about achieving something tomorrow; is there any guarantee you will be alive then? Are you sure you will be alive? No one can speak with certainty on such matters. Therefore what is the point in worrying about the future? The future is hidden in the womb of time; no one can see it. So, why spend time imagining all sorts of future scenarios?*

*As for the past, it is gone and lies buried in the sands of time. The past cannot be revived, recovered, or resurrected. The future belongs to time. Why therefore waste time reflecting about both the past as well as the future? If you do want to think, then do so about the present. Man cannot live without thinking. Waves of thought constantly assail you. Channelize your thought on the present. Why? Because both the past and the future are contained in the present. The*

*present is a seed that came from a tree called the past. This seed also contains the tree called the future. Thus the present is very important, being the embodiment of both the past and the future; therefore go by it.*

*Don't worry about the future, but concentrate on the present. If you take proper care of the present, the future is bound to be bright; of that you can be sure.*

*Vyathah (grief) represents the greatest weakness in man today. Man ignores the duties he has to perform in the present. He broods over what has happened in the distant past. He is constantly speculating about what is likely to happen in the future. Why worry about the future or about the dead past? The past is beyond recall or remedy. Forget the past. The future is uncertain. No one can be sure about what is likely to happen the next day.*

*Don't think about the future, as you cannot be sure about it. Concern yourself with the present, which is the child of the past and the parent of the future. This attitude is represented by the term gatavyathah. Brooding over the past and speculating about the future, man is failing in his duties in the present. This is the cause of his misery. Make right use of the present, and a good future is assured. The aspirant should bear this truth in mind and concentrate his attention on the present. Mental worry about the past or the future is a rajasic (passionate) quality. It should be eliminated.*

*A true devotee is one who lives in the present without brooding over the past and worrying about the future. The past is past; forget the past. Do not worry about the future for the future is uncertain. So live in the present; it is not ordinary present. It is omnipresent. The past can be compared to a tree; similarly, the future. The present is the seed. This seed is a result of the past and the basis for the future. Therefore one should live in the present with firm determination. Only then will success be ensured. It is only a waste of time brooding over the past since it cannot be retrieved and no remedial action can be initiated. Likewise, there is no point in worrying about the future since it is not in your control. So live in the present, and discharge your duties with determination.*

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

## **Sarvarambha Parithyaagi (Renunciation)**

*Sarvarambha parithyaagi means do not give room for ostentation in any of your undertakings. The world today is immersed in ostentation and egoism. What does it matter whether the world praises you or decries you? For instance, why should a devotee show off his devotion to earn the approbation of others? His devotion must be for pleasing the Lord and not for earning the approval of the world. In the spiritual path, what matters is the inner joy you experience. That is the key to self-satisfaction. Sarvarambha parithyaagi means one who is prepared to relinquish all his possessions and acquisitions, including wealth, knowledge, and strength.*

*Sarvarambha parithyaagi implies total renunciation. Who is a true renunciate? He who remains perfectly calm at all times and under all circumstances is the one who merits such a description. Such a one is beyond pomp and ostentation. God distances Himself from the ostentatious type. In fact, exhibitionism is the first thing that one must renounce. Pomp is a sure sign of rajo guna (tendency to be pushy and aggressive). The craving for ostentation is the starting point for all desires. Seeking publicity is a reflection of worldly desires. Do not go after worldly goals for they represent the temporary and the evanescent. Shun pomp, show, and publicity. Krishna declared that it was such a recluse that was dear to Him.*

*Sarvarambha parithyaagi calls for the renunciation of ahamkara (egoism) in any form. The ego is rooted in the mamakara (possessive instinct). When egoism and possessiveness come together in a man, he is utterly ruined. Hence one should be free from egoism and attachment.*

*One should give up all desires and ego. Ego leads to attachment, hatred, jealousy, aggrandizement, and other vices. It is ego that is responsible for the downfall of man. One with ego cannot accomplish even a small task. An egotistic person is not respected even by his near and dear ones. Ego is the worst of all the enemies of man. Develop humility in order to get rid of ego. No amount of spiritual practices will help a man of ego in attaining tranquility and bliss.*

*There should be no ostentation or showing off in any undertaking by a devotee. Unless ostentation is given up, egoism will not go. The ego must be eliminated for purifying the heart. No good deed can be done without purity in the heart. It is through sacred deeds that the heart is purified.*

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

*Seva (service) brings out all that is great in man. It broadens the heart and widens one's vision. It fills one with joy. It promotes unity. It proclaims the truth of the Spirit. It drives out all the evil qualities in a man. It must be regarded as a great spiritual discipline. You are born to serve, not to dominate. Everyone in the world is a servant and not a master. All relationships—husband and wife, mother and child, the employer and employee—are based on mutual service. The world is progressing because of such mutual service. If the principle of service did not operate, the world would come to a halt. Do you regard an "officer" as a superior? It is not so. Even he is a servant. It is only when man is filled with the spirit of service that his Divine nature is revealed. He then experiences the peace that passeth understanding.*

*One who possesses the above-mentioned qualities is a true devotee. Only such a person is near and dear to the Lord. You should cultivate these qualities to be a deserving recipient of God's love.*





# Who Is Dear to the Lord (1)

Man's joys and sorrows, happiness or misery, are not dependent on time. They are based on man's actions. Time has no relations or friends. Time is not subordinate to anyone. All are subject to time. Hence, if one has to realize the Divine, who is the Lord of time, one has to carry out His injunctions. God looks with love only at such a person.

In this context, the *Bhagavad Gita* has described the traits of the devotee who is dear to the Lord:

*Anapeksha Shuchir Dakshah  
Udaaseena Gatavyathah  
Sarvarambha Parithyaagi  
Yo Madbhaktah Sa Me Priyah.*

(That devotee is dear to me who is free from desire, who is pure in body and mind, who is resolute, unconcerned, and free from sorrow and has renounced all sense of doership.)

## True Meaning of "Desireless" Actions

**Anapeksha:** In this world, man, with his body, senses, and mind, cannot be free from desires. But how is he to become *anapeksha* (free from expectation)? When he performs actions, regarding himself as the doer, the actions become fetters that bind him. All actions that are performed with the feeling that they are intended as offerings to please the Divine do not lead to bondage. They become *anapeksha* (desireless actions). One has to recognize that it is the Divine Principle in all beings that is getting all actions done through human beings as instruments. As long as man regards himself as *karthruthva* (the doer) and *bhokthruthva* (enjoyer) he cannot escape from the consequences of his actions.

When a man regards a certain piece of land as his, the crops grown on it will belong to him. The *Bhagavad Gita* teaches that when actions are done as offerings to God, they become "desireless" actions. Man has taken birth to perform his duties and not to enjoy power or assert his rights. When one's duty is performed, the right comes of its own accord. Men today fight for their "rights" and forget their duties. Hence discharge of duty comes first. It is through duty that man realizes God.

## Inner Purity Is Vital for All Aspirants

**Suchi:** This refers to purity. It is not enough if the body is clean. Inner purity is essential. The latter, in fact, is more essential than the former. For the proper enjoyment of all things, purity of mind is essential. Whatever sacred acts you may do in the external world, if you have no purity of mind and heart, all of them are valueless. The food cooked in an untinned vessel will be spoiled even if all the ingredients are good. Likewise, in the vessel of the heart, the inside must be purified by *prema* (love). Then, all that one consumes will be wholesome. Hence purity is vital for all aspirants; without it, all man's actions are tainted. Actions done with an impure heart can only produce undesirable results. Whatever good results you want to secure in the external world, inner purity is the basis.

**Dakshah:** This refers to the determination that is needed to accomplish anything. One must have the fortitude and resoluteness to achieve one's purpose, whatever might be the obstacles in the way. To accomplish any sacred task one has to possess this determination. *Dakshah* signifies this quality of unwavering determination in the devotee.

**Udaaseena:** One who is unaffected by whatever happens. This means that one should be totally free from selfishness. He must consider the performance of his duties as the sole purpose of his existence. The human body is the result of past actions. Man is bound to the world by his actions. The body is the primary requisite for the performance of *dharma* (right action). Indifferent to fame or blame, not seeking power or position, one should perform one's duties selflessly.

Do not be swayed by any consideration other than your duty. Whether it be in a political organization or in regard to a personal matter or in relation to national issues, you should act according to the dictates of your conscience, without any other concern. One can become a courageous leader only if he performs his duties in this spirit. All actions must be done in a spirit of service. Only one who serves is fit to become a leader. Can the man who seeks a position be pure hearted? No. Forgetting power and position, concentrating only on one's duties, men should engage themselves in action. This is the true import of *udaaseena*.

## Act in the Present to Get Rid of Mental Anguish

**Gatavyathah:** *Vyathah* refers to anguish in the mind. Falling prey to mental anguish, man is totally confused. Man has a tendency to brood over the past. Of what use it is to worry about what has happened? Nor should one worry about the

future, which is unknown and uncertain. Bear in mind only the present. This is the way to get rid of mental anguish—*gatavyathah*. The present is the product of the past and the parent of the future. When you act properly in the present, the future will take care of itself. Do what is appropriate for the present moment. If there are no expectations, there will be no disappointments.

***Sarvarambha parithyaagi***: This means do not give room for ostentation in any of your undertakings. The world today is immersed in ostentation and egoism. What does it matter whether the world praises you or decries you? For instance, why should a devotee show off his devotion to earn the approbation of others? His devotion must be for pleasing the Lord and not for earning the approval of the world. In the spiritual path, what matters is the inner joy you experience. That is the key to self-satisfaction. *Sarvarambha parithyaagi* means one who is prepared to relinquish all his possessions and acquisitions, including wealth, knowledge, and strength.

Thus it is only the devotee who has these six qualities that is dear to the Lord. It is such a devotee whom the Lord loves. Man is ruined by six enemies: lust, anger, delusion, greed, pride, and envy. Equally man is redeemed by the six qualities mentioned in the above-mentioned *Bhagavad Gita sloka* (verse).

Without cultivating these qualities, without cherishing such pure feelings, what is the use of immersing one's self in so-called devotion? It is only a hallucination, which cannot lead man to the experience of the Divine.

### **The True Devotee Is One Who Practices What He Has Learned**

If you are true devotees, examine for yourselves how long you have been listening to Swami's discourses. Years have gone by. To what extent have you grown spiritually? How far have you put into practice Swami's teachings? What is the use of merely listening? Is it not all a waste? You are listening, but not putting the teachings into practice. Hunger can be appeased only when the cooked food is eaten. Only the devotee who practices what he has learned is a true devotee.

Your practices are different from precepts. You are leading selfish and self-centered lives. Such a life is led by birds and beasts. Even these exhibit selflessness often. Man alone leads a totally selfish existence. It is a shame to call such persons devotees. One must strive at least to practice one or two of the teachings. This calls for *trikarana shuddhi*—purity in thought, word, and deed. Without such triple purity, man ceases to be human.

Today, human values have given place to demonic tendencies. Animality has become dominant. The Divine has been forgotten. Consequently, all spiritual exercises are filled with ostentation. What is needed is sincerity. One should not do anything for the sake of earning others' approbation. If one acts with sincerity, he will be duly respected. But if one merely preaches and does not practice, he will be ignored. How can such a person expect to win the grace of the Lord?

Self-interest cannot be totally given up, but there should be a limit to it. Everything in the world, including the body, organs like the eyes, and other things are governed by strict adherence to limits. When the limits are exceeded, disease sets in and the consequences may be serious. . . .

People talk about what Swami has been saying. How many are practicing what Swami says even to the slightest extent? No. What, then, is the use of all this? Whether it is Swami's teachings or the instructions given by elders, whatever is good you should put into practice. You must act according to whatever your conscience tells you is good. This is the way to honor the great ones. Not to practice their teaching is to disrespect them. . . .

If you carry out the injunctions of the Divine, all will be well with you. Everyone is selfish in this world. God alone is selfless. He alone has the authority to confer joy even on selfish persons. He alone is the master. Follow the master.

1. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 26, Chapter 1: Purity—the Path to Divinity.



## Who Is Dear to the Lord (2)

*Anapeksha Shuchir Dakshah  
Udaaseena Gatavyathah  
Sarvarambha Parithyaagi  
Yo Madbhaktah Sa Me Priyah.*

(He who is totally devoid of desires, absolutely pure, firm in determination, completely detached, immune to the play of time, and has renounced pomp and ostentation; such a one is dear to Me.) *Bhagavad Gita*: (12.16)

Embodiments of Love! God loves dearly those who possess the qualities enumerated in this *sloka* (verse) of the *Bhagavad Gita*.

## The Qualities Needed to Become Dear to the Lord

*Anapeksha* means that the devotee is beyond *apeksha*, i.e., desires or expectations. Is it ever possible for man, bound as he is by the body and the senses, to be without desires? Hardly. Some desire or the other will always be there. However, there must be control over the desires that one has. What sort of desires are permitted? Recall what Krishna has to say about this matter. He says that all righteous actions are Divine. Thus, among the permissible desires, the best is the desire for *thyaga* or sacrifice.

The yearning for *dharma* (right conduct) also is important. The desire for God is mandatory. Although what must truly be desired is very clear, people have widely different types of expectations and desires. While some consider being righteous as very important, others think that achieving [worldly] greatness is the best among goals. Some even try to combine these two objectives. Truly speaking, no one has the freedom or the authority to do as one likes. One must do exactly as the Lord says.

***Anapeksha:*** The Lord has stated very clearly that He wants you to attain the state of *anapeksha*. How does one do that? One does this by strictly confining himself to righteous activities alone, performing such actions exclusively for the pleasure of the Lord, and by offering all such actions in their entirety to the Lord. Actions performed in this spirit rise well above worldly desires and expectations. Thus the word *anapeksha* ought not to be interpreted in a very rigid sense. What it really means is having the irresistible urge to work only for the Lord and for His sole pleasure. However, that does not mean one can do anything and everything. Our actions must be such that they please Him and secure His approval. If a devotee conducts himself in this fashion, he becomes dear to the Lord.

***Suchi:*** The second quality that the devotee must possess is *suchi* or cleanliness. What sort of cleanliness does the Lord expect from us? Is it outer cleanliness or inner cleanliness? Both are required. God loves cleanliness; cleanliness is godliness. However, one cannot confine oneself to external cleanliness alone; inner purity also is very necessary. In fact, it is of prime importance. God is omnipresent. He is present both outside as well as inside. However, we must first try to recognize the Divine Principle within.

Here is an example. There is a brass vessel, and you are using it to prepare soup. If the vessel is not tinned inside, the soup will be spoiled and even poisoned. Our heart is like the brass vessel. This vessel must be coated inside with *prema* (love). If this precaution is taken, the inside will be clean. Inner purity is essential for achieving external purity. What exactly is meant by external purity? It does not mean washing yourself with soap and water. It means performing selfless service to society and doing such action for the pleasure of God. It is such service alone that produces external purity. If inner purity is lacking, the service rendered will inevitably be tinged with selfishness, thereby diminishing external purity.

***Dakshah:*** The third quality that the devotee must have is *dakshah* or strong and unshakable determination. What sort of determination must you have? You must say, “Come what may, I shall not rest till I accomplish this or achieve this.” This is the sort of resolve you ought to have. Swami occasionally says:

*Having resolved what ought to be done,  
Hold on till you succeed.  
This is determination.*

*Having desired what ought to be,  
Hold on till they are fulfilled.  
This is determination.*

*Having asked what ought to be,  
Hold on till you get it.  
This is what is meant by determination.*

*Having thought what ought to be,  
Hold on till the thought is realized.  
Such is the quality of determination. In the end, what should happen?*

*Out of sheer disgust, the Lord must yield to your wishes!  
Persevere, be tenacious, and never give up.  
It is not the characteristic of a devotee to retreat,  
Abandoning his resolve.*

What is meant by determination? It means having the firm resolve: “I should definitely see God, have God, and secure His grace.” God loves dearly the devotee who has such firm determination.

***Udaaseena:*** Next comes *udaaseena*, which means detachment. You must be totally detached with respect to whatever you are doing. You can do any kind of work; you may, for example, be engaged in service activity. However, you should not have expectations of any type [including of the outcome] and also not seek any reward, praise, appreciation, etc., for what you are doing. Especially while working for service organizations, you should be very careful; you must not have any craving for fame and name. You must not seek praise and respect. You should not lament, “I am working so hard and doing so much, but there is no mention of it whatsoever in the newspapers!” If you do your work with such cravings and expectations, then the good that you might be doing is nullified and the sanctity of the work is destroyed. Therefore you must do service work sincerely, being immune to success and failure, praise as well as criticism.

***Gatavyathah:*** After this, *gatavyathah*; this means being impervious to the ups and downs brought about by time. Acquisition of this particular virtue also calls for strong determination. You should neither brood over the past nor worry about the future. Why all this pointless contemplation? No matter how much you think, reflect, and brood, the miseries of the past cannot be corrected or set right.

In regard to the future, no one can say anything definite about it since it is so very uncertain. You are keen about achieving something tomorrow; is there any guarantee you will be alive then? Are you sure you will be alive? No one can speak with certainty on such matters. Therefore what is the point in worrying about the future? The future is hidden in the womb of time; no one can see it. So, why spend time imagining all sorts of future scenarios?

As for the past, it is gone and lies buried in the sands of time. The past cannot be revived, recovered, or resurrected. The future belongs to time. Why therefore waste time reflecting about both the past as well as the future? If you do want to think, then do so about the present. Man cannot live without thinking. Waves of thought constantly assail you. Channelize your thought on the present. Why? Because both the past and the future are contained in the present. The present is a seed that came from a tree called the past. This seed also contains the tree called the future. Thus the present is very important, being the embodiment of both the past and the future; therefore go by it.

*He who speaks and conducts himself,  
Judging properly the situation and circumstance,*

*And without wounding or hurting others,  
And without himself being hurt in the process,  
Such a one is wise and blessed.*

Don't worry about the future, but concentrate on the present. If you take proper care of the present, the future is bound to be bright; of that you can be sure.

***Sarvarambha parithyaagi:*** Lastly, *sarvarambha parithyaagi*—this implies total renunciation. Who is a true renunciate? He who remains perfectly calm at all times and under all circumstances is the one who merits such a description. Such a one is beyond pomp and ostentation. God distances Himself from the ostentatious type. In fact, exhibitionism is the first thing that one must renounce. Pomp is a sure sign of *rajo guna* (tendency to be pushy and aggressive). The craving for ostentation is the starting point for all desires. Seeking publicity is a reflection of worldly desires. Do not go after worldly goals for they represent the temporary and the evanescent. Shun pomp, show, and publicity. Krishna declared that it was such a recluse that was dear to Him.

Today, everywhere it is a case of show and publicity. The person may spend just five rupees on charity, but he is prepared to invest five hundred rupees on publicizing his act in the newspapers. Is this not show? It is only the one who seeks fame that needs publicity; on the other hand, the one truly interested in service has no need for it. Never hanker after publicity. As long as you are after pomp, you will never be able to experience Atmic bliss. How can one who is ignorant of the Self ever earn God's love? While seeking God's grace, one must be very patient in everything and in every aspect. Then alone can it be said that one is treading the spiritual path; then alone will one become eligible for God's attention.

### **Selfless Service Alone Begets God's Love**

Embodiments of Love! If you wish to become eligible for God's love, then your actions must be consistent with love. It is impossible to secure God's love without appropriate and sacred actions. Can the one who is always hankering after rewards ever be truly happy? The only compensation you ought to seek is the pleasure and joy of doing your duty properly. The joy of service is the true reward. If you go against the command of God, then everything is bound to go wrong.

*Yad bhavam tad bhavati.*



As is the feeling, so is the result. If you desire God's love, then your actions must match and be compatible with your desire. If you do not want God's love, then you are at liberty to do as you please. However, if God's love is what you want, then you must act in an appropriate manner.

In this world, you first have to pay the price before you acquire the authority to possess what you desire. You go to a shop to buy a towel. The shopkeeper quotes a price of twenty rupees. When you pay twenty rupees cash, the shopkeeper packs the towel and gives it to you. No cash, no towel! God also follows a similar "transaction" procedure. What kind of "business" does God do? Divine business! If you lovingly obey God's command, then you are sure to receive love. God's love has no limitations or stipulations. Only one condition: you give, and then you receive. As Swami said earlier:

*Offer selfless service,  
And receive love.*

Without offering selfless service, how can you expect to receive God's love? To receive God's love, you must be totally free from worldly desires and constantly engage in selfless service. The service must be of a pleasing nature. All actions must be performed exclusively for God's pleasure. For this, you do not have to give up anything. Just keep on doing your normal duty in the manner ordained by destiny. You wish to study; by all means do so. But in what manner should you study? You should do it for God's pleasure. You are employed in some place. How should you do your work? Do it as if you are trying to please God. Tell yourself, "I am doing this job as an offering to Him." Install this feeling in your heart, and do whatever you want to or have to. However, before rushing to adopt this course, pause, reflect, and make sure that God will really be pleased with what you are trying to do and offer to Him! You cannot do all sorts of silly and stupid things, claiming that you are doing it for God's pleasure.

If you act just according to your fancies, do you think that God will accept your actions as an offering? Every action of yours must have the stamp of quality that is acceptable to God. Without that stamp, your action will be a counterfeit. God should acknowledge that your action is good. When you affix the proper postage stamp, your letter can go to far-off places. But if there is only an address on the envelope and no stamp, it is of no use. An unstamped letter dropped into the mailbox will only end up in the dead-letter office. Therefore, if you really want your offering to reach God, you must affix the stamp of *prema* (love). It is only

when love saturates every action of yours that God will shower His grace. He will do so in many forms too.

### **Nothing Comes without Perseverance**

Slowly but surely, you must develop all the qualities enumerated in the *Bhagavad Gita sloka* (verse). Do not ever doubt that the acquisition of these virtues is possible.

*Go on rubbing two pieces of wood,  
Fire is sure to emerge.  
Go on churning curd,  
Butter is sure to be formed.  
Engage constantly in enquiry,  
Wisdom will certainly blossom.*

Sparks of fire are produced when two pieces of wood are rubbed hard together. Butter is formed when curd is churned in a sustained manner. Similarly, in spirituality, sustained enquiry leads one to wisdom and Divinity. You realize the truth: *Tat Twam Asi*—That thou art. Is it possible to get fire without rubbing and butter without churning? The fire is latent in the wood and is not visible. You have to rub hard to make the fire emerge.

Butter is latent in the curd, and you have to churn hard to make it come out. In the same way, if you want God's love, you must constantly do good work, do it solely for God's pleasure, and also offer it all to God. It is only when you work with such a spirit of surrender that you become eligible for God's love. Surrender does not mean that you are vanquished and that the other one has emerged victorious. In spirituality it means that the two merge into one—there is nothing like giving or receiving. Recognize the cosmic unity that pervades everywhere. Recognize that this substratum of unity is nothing but God. You will then automatically experience God.

Students! All this may sound very difficult to practice. Know the truth that happiness comes only after hard effort. Without difficulty, there cannot be joy.

*Na sukhat labhyate sukham.*

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 will 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. . . .

God yields only to love. Anything you offer to Him, no matter how inconsequential it might be in a material sense, is acceptable to Him if the offering is accompanied by pure love. Even a single *tulsi* leaf is enough. God cannot be secured with wealth but only with love. There is in fact no wealth greater than love. So, offer love to God. If you offer Him pure love, then God will be very pleased and will always be with you. If you want to be worthy of God's love and the recipient of His grace, then you must obey His command. What does He say?

*Anapeksha Shuchir Dakshah  
Udaaseena Gatavyathah  
Sarvarambha Parithyaagi  
Yo Madbhaktah Sa Me Priyah.*

He says, "If you have all these qualities, then you become dear to Me." God will readily claim you if you do what He says. You must understand fully what God wants of you and conduct yourself accordingly.

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



### **Who Is Dear to the Lord (3)**

*Anapeksha Shuchir Dakshah  
Udaaseena Gatavyathah  
Sarvarambha Parithyaagi  
Yo Madbhaktah Sa Me Priyah.*

***Anapeksha*** means one who is free from any kind of *apeksha* (desire or expectation). Is it possible in this vast world for any man to be free from *apeksha*?

This is not possible. Some things may be attractive to some persons, and some high aims may interest others. The objects that are desired are sensual pleasures and comforts and things of the world. The *sreshtha* (higher aims) relate to the non-sensual, non-physical, and ultra-mundane. Almost all desires fall into one or the other of these two categories. How, then, is it possible to be rid of both kinds of desires? This is possible.

In the *Bhagavad Gita*, the Lord has declared that He is present in all righteous actions. Therefore those who perform righteous actions can develop *anapeksha* (desirelessness). This means that when a man performs all actions as offerings to the Lord, they become *anapeksha* (desireless actions). The Lord is one who, from within, makes a person act, speak, listen, see, and do many other actions. He is the doer and the enjoyer. If a person performs all actions with the conviction that the Indwelling Lord is the real doer, then his actions become desireless. Hence every *sadhaka* (spiritual aspirant) should regard his actions as offerings to the Divine.

**Suchi:** This means purity. This term does not merely refer to the external cleanliness of the physical body. *Sadhakas* (spiritual aspirants) need internal purity also. What are the implications of inner purity? All the actions a man does issue from internal impulses and not from external forces. They are a reflection of his inner being. It is only when man has pure feelings within him that his actions can be pure. When he is polluted within, all his actions will be impure.

### **How Is Purity in Speech Achieved?**

How are the internal impulses to be purified? These relate to the mind, speech, and the body. Of the three, speech is the most important. How is purity in speech to be achieved? "*Anudhvegakaram vaakyam sathyam priyahitham cha yath,*" says the *Bhagavad Gita*. Every word you utter should be free from *anudhvegakaram* (causing excitement or agitation). It should be *sathyam* (true) and *priyam* (pleasing).

There are four factors that account for the pollution of the tongue. One is uttering falsehood; two, excessive talking; three, carrying tales against others; four, abuse or criticism of others. The tongue is prone to indulge in these four types of offences in speech. Unfortunately, in this *Kali* (Iron) Age, all four of these are rampant. Untruth has become ubiquitous. People freely indulge in slandering others. Tale-bearing goes on. Indulgence in loquacity is widespread. It is only

when one gets rid of these four evil tendencies that his speech can become pure and unpolluted. Hence the first task is to purify one's speech.

### **How to Purify the Mind and Body**

Next comes the mind. The mind is polluted by wrong thoughts and bad feelings. Man should strive to keep away all bad thoughts from invading his mind. When a man is ceaselessly filled with bad thoughts, he can only reap bad consequences. To purify the mind, all bad thoughts have to be expelled. No room should be given to them. Bad feelings should be banished from the mind. Only then will the mind be totally purified.

Then comes purity of the body. One must have a body that is free from the taint of *himsa* (violence or harm). Men commit many acts of violence and many sinful acts with their hands. The body has been given to man primarily for practicing *dharma* (righteousness). Such a sacred gift should be used only for rendering service to others and doing godly actions. This is the way to purify the body. Therefore, when speech, mind, and the body are purified, internal purity is ensured. *Suchi* thus calls for internal purity as well as external cleanliness.

***Dakshah:*** This means that one should have firm determination in performing actions. The determination should be confined to actions that are pure, helpful to others, and sublimate man. No man can refrain from action of some kind or the other even for a moment. In no circumstance should one engage himself in an impure act. This is the way to achieve purity through firm determination. Only such a person can be called a *dakshah* (a resolute person).

***Udaaseena:*** This means freedom from attachment to anything. It means remaining serene and unruffled by fame or blame, peace or sorrow, loss or gain, pleasure or pain, not elated by prosperity or depressed by failure. One should not succumb to calumny. Nor should one exult over fame. Fame and censure are like passing clouds. One should look upon them as a mere witness. They should be treated with *udaaseena* (equanimous feeling). To treat them seriously is to give rise to agitations in the mind, which may lead to demonic tendencies.

### **Be Free from Worries**

***Gatavyathah:*** *Vyathah* (grief) represents the greatest weakness in man today. Man ignores the duties he has to perform in the present. He broods over what has happened in the distant past. He is constantly speculating over what is

likely to happen in the future. Why worry about the future or about dead past? The past is beyond recall or remedy. Forget the past. The future is uncertain. No one can be sure about what is likely to happen the next day.

Don't think about the future, as you cannot be sure about it. Concern yourself with the present, which is the child of the past and the parent of the future. This attitude is represented by the term *gatavyathah*. Brooding over the past and speculating about the future, man is failing in his duties in the present. This is the cause of his misery. Make right use of the present, and a good future is assured. The aspirant should bear this truth in mind and concentrate his attention on the present. Mental worry about the past or the future is a *rajasic* (passionate) quality. It should be eliminated.

***Sarvarambha parithyaagi:*** This quality calls for the renunciation of *ahamkara* (egoism) in any form. The ego is rooted in the *mamakara* (possessive instinct). When egoism and possessiveness come together in a man, he is utterly ruined. Hence, one should be free from egoism and attachment.

The aforesaid six qualities are sacred virtues. The opening stanza declares that a devotee with these six qualities is dear to the Lord.

### **The Six Enemies of Man**

Apart from these six good qualities, man has six vices: *kama* (lust), *krodha* (anger), *lobha* (greed), *moha* (delusion), *madha* (conceit), and *mathsarya* (envy). These six enemies of man have to be eliminated and the six good qualities should be cultivated. Only then can human life be made meaningful. . . .

How far are you practicing Swami's teachings? Every human being has a heart. This heart is filled with love. With how many are you sharing the love in your hearts? With none at all. What, then, is the use of that love if it is not shared? You must share with all the love in your hearts, not with humans alone, but with all beings in creation. Love, which is the gift of God, has to be shared with everyone in the world.

3. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 26, Chapter 29: A Righteous Emperor and Virtuous Subjects.



## Who Is Dear to the Lord (4)

*Anapeksha Shuchir Dakshah  
Udaaseena Gatavyathah  
Sarvarambha Parithyaagi  
Yo Madbhaktah Sa Me Priyah.*

Embodiments of Love! This *sloka* (verse) mentions the qualities of a true devotee as taught by Lord Krishna in the *Dwapara Yuga*. The first quality is *anapeksha* (desirelessness). A devotee should not have any desires. How is it possible for man, being endowed with body, senses, mind, and intellect, to be in a state of desirelessness? He is bound to have some desire or the other. On the one hand, there are desires pertaining to the senses that confer momentary joy. On the other hand, there is a desire that transcends the senses. Today man is filled with various desires.

Then what is the way to lead a desire-free life? Lord Krishna has shown the way for this. He said, “Son, there is nothing wrong in having desires, but all of them must be pleasing to God.” “*Sarva karma Bhagavad pretyartham*” (Let all your actions be pleasing to God).

### Ways to Attain the State of Desirelessness

You should put into practice the eternal principles based on truth and dedicate all your activities to God. Lead your life without the feeling of “mine and thine,” and offer everything to God. Only then can you attain the state of desirelessness. Today, man has both worldly desires as well as desires that lead to the inward path, but the number of desires that lead to the inward path pale in comparison to the number of worldly desires in him.

The second quality is *suchi* (cleanliness). Is it *bahir suchi* (outward cleanliness) or *anthar suchi* (inner cleanliness)? One has to develop both. Physical cleanliness alone is not sufficient; inner cleanliness is essential. *Bharatiyas* (Indians) are aware of this. If *sambar* (lentil soup) is prepared in an uncoated vessel, it will be spoiled. Likewise, if the vessel of your heart is not coated with love, all that you do becomes unsacred. Sanctify your heart by filling it with Divine love. Never entertain any unsacred or wicked feelings.

The third quality of a true devotee is determination. You should be a *dakshah* (one of determination) in order to attain Divine grace. Once you have taken refuge in God, never lose faith, come what may. Do not get disheartened by trials and tribulations that come your way. Be equal minded in times of both pleasure and pain. That is true determination.

The fourth quality is *udaaseena* (total detachment). You should lead a life of total detachment without entertaining the feeling of “I” and “mine.”

The fifth quality is *gatavyathah*. A true devotee is one who lives in the present without brooding over the past and worrying about the future. The past is past, forget the past. Do not worry about the future for the future is uncertain. So live in the present; it is not ordinary present. It is omnipresent. The past can be compared to a tree; similarly, the future. The present is the seed. This seed is a result of the past and the basis for the future. Therefore one should live in the present with firm determination. Only then will success be ensured. It is only a waste of time brooding over the past since it can neither be retrieved nor any remedial action be initiated. Likewise, there is no point in worrying about the future since it is not in your control. So live in the present, and discharge your duties with determination.

The sixth quality is *sarvarambha parithyaagi*. One should give up all desires and ego. Ego leads to attachment, hatred, jealousy, aggrandizement, and other vices. It is ego that is responsible for the downfall of man. One with ego cannot accomplish even a small task. An egotistic person is not respected even by his near and dear ones. Ego is the worst of all the enemies of man. Develop humility in order to get rid of ego. No amount of spiritual practices will help a man of ego in attaining tranquility and bliss.

One who possesses the above-mentioned qualities is a true devotee. Only such a person is near and dear to the Lord. You should cultivate these qualities to be a deserving recipient of God's love.

4. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 32-2, Chapter 6: Install *Padukas* in Your Heart.





## Who Is Dear to the Lord (5)

*Anapeksha Shuchir Dakshah  
Udaaseena Gatavyathah  
Sarvarambha Parithyaagi  
Yo Madbhaktah Sa Me Priyah.*

"That devotee of mine who, expecting nothing, is pure, dexterous, unconcerned, free from distress, and renounces all undertakings, is dear to Me." (Bhagawan began His discourse with this *sloka* (verse) from the twelfth canto of the *Bhagavad Gita*.)

The first quality figuring in this *sloka* is *anapeksha*. This term means "to be free from any kind of *apeksha* (expectation or desire)." Can a man having a body, mind, and intellect be free from desires at all? It is impossible. But such a state can be realized by an effort of will.

### ***Preya and Sreya Margas***

There are many in the world who seek sensuous pleasures from moment to moment. Most people crave such pleasures. This method is described in the *Bhagavad Gita* as *preyo-marga* (the pleasure-seeking path). Against this, there is another path, which confers the experience of Self-realization and which transcends the senses. This is called *sreyo-marga* (the superior righteous path). This path is not easily intelligible to all. It is not also accessible to all. Consequently the general mass does not favor this path.

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

There is another path, which transcends the path of *preyas* (pleasure) and *sreyas* (virtue). These two paths encompass all the possible desires of human beings. *Anapeksha* goes beyond both of them. *Anapeksha* is described as being free from desires. But this is not wholly correct. It is when a man gives up the feeling, in the performance of all actions, that "I am the doer" (the sense of ego), "I am the experiencer" (the sense of fulfillment of desire) that true *anapeksha* emerges. This

means that conceit of doership and the sense of enjoyment of desired things should be wholly renounced. This is the true state of *anapeksha* (desirelessness).

It is only when all actions are done as an offering to God that *anapeksha* prevails. When such a feeling fills the heart of the devotee, the Divine confers beatitude on him. Such a devotee is dear to the Lord. If you want to earn the love of the Lord, you have to render service to anyone, anywhere, as an offering to the Lord.

### **Purity of Heart Is Required for a Good Devotee**

The second quality is *suchi* (purity). There should be both inner and outer purity. Bodily purity relates to the physical. It covers such cleansing acts as bathing, wearing clean clothes, eating pure food, and the like. Even in studies, the books should be wholesome and elevating. But mere external cleanliness without internal purity is of no value. Everyone, from the scholar to the common man, is concerned only about external cleanliness and not about the purity of the heart within.

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

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

### **Do Not Be Swayed by Fears or Threats**

The fourth quality is *udaaseena*. This means indifference toward sorrow or joy, loss or gain, honor or dishonor. You must be concerned only to see whether your actions are pure and selfless according to your conscience. Nothing else matters, neither the praise nor the blame of other people. When your conscience tells you

that what you are doing is good, you may go ahead regardless of the opinion of others, whether they are your kinsmen, friends, or others. This is the true meaning of *udaaseena* (indifference).

You should not be swayed by fears or threats. In this context, it is advisable for *sevaks* (volunteers) to keep away from politics. Sometimes, out of a desire for recognition or publicity, one may be tempted to cultivate men in power. This temptation corrupts your mind. By developing the *udaaseena* (spirit of indifference) in its best sense, you must seek to serve all with a feeling of love. "Indifference" should not assume the form of arrogance or ostentatious condescension. Adhere to what is right, and turn away from what is bad. That is the highest *udaaseena*.

### **The Past and the Future Are in the Present**

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

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

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

### **Men Are Born to Serve, Not to Dominate**

*Seva* (service) brings out all that is great in man. It broadens the heart and widens one's vision. It fills one with joy. It promotes unity. It proclaims the truth of

the Spirit. It drives out all the evil qualities in a man. It must be regarded as a great spiritual discipline. You are born to serve, not to dominate. Everyone in the world is a servant and not a master. All relationships—husband and wife, mother and child, the employer and employee—are based on mutual service. The world is progressing because of such mutual service. If the principle of service did not operate, the world would come to a halt. Do you regard an "officer" as a superior? It is not so. Even he is a servant. It is only when man is filled with the spirit of service that his Divine nature is revealed. He then experiences the peace that passeth understanding.

What is the reason for the lack of peace in the world today? It is because there is no harmony in thought, word, and deed in the lives of the people. Peace must begin in the family, in the home. When there is understanding and harmony in the family, peace will spread to the community and from there to the nation and the world. Hence unity is the primary need today. Unity confers joy and peace. Transformation must begin with the individual. When the individual changes, the world will change. This transformation has to take place in the minds of men. Right thoughts will lead to right actions. That is why the scriptures have declared that the mind is the cause of man's bondage or liberation.

5. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 23, Chapter 31: The Devotee Dear to the Lord.



## **Who Is Dear to the Lord (6)**

Embodiments of Love! Human life is precious, noble, and virtuous. It is a pity human beings do not realize this. The whole purpose and goal of human life is to know one's true nature. Forgetting one's true nature, man is caught up in worldly concerns and plunged in misery. The ancient sages indicated the path to be pursued for the redemption of mankind. They commended nine forms of worship, any one of which could confer bliss and redeem a man's life.

To experience the proximity of the Divine the easiest path is *namasmarana*, remembering constantly the name of the Lord. Sage Veda Vyasa declared that in this *Kali Yuga* (Iron Age) there is nothing greater than chanting the name of Hari for realizing God. It is the easiest path for one and all, the scholar and illiterate, the rich and the poor.

In the *Bhagavad Gita*, the Lord has indicated the qualities that a devotee should possess to enable him to earn the love of the Lord. Among these qualities, Krishna declared *anapeksha* (desirelessness) as important. Today there are few without desires of one kind or the other. All sensual pleasures are ephemeral. But most people are content with them. Greater than the sensual is the transcendental path, *shreyo marga*, which confers lasting bliss. When one does any action as an offering to God, it becomes sanctified. Such an act becomes *anapeksha* (desireless act). Every selfless act of devotion becomes an action free from the taint of desire.

The second quality is *suchi* (purity). What is required is both internal and external purity. God cares only for *chittha-shuddhi* (internal purity of the mind).

### **Faith and Service**

The third quality is *dakshah*. This means that the devotee should be steadfast and unwavering in any situation. With his mind firmly rooted in God, he should engage himself in service to others and perform actions in a spirit of detachment. Only such a devotee is eligible for God's love. He is unaffected by pleasure or pain, gain or loss, or what happens in the mundane world.

The fourth quality is *udaaseena*, indifference to external happenings. The fifth quality is freedom from egoism and possessiveness. One should get rid of the idea of doership and ownership and surrender everything to God.

Today all spiritual exercises are ostensibly undertaken for realizing God. But there is no need for undertaking them. Human birth itself is a mark of Divinity. What is essential is to recognize the indwelling Divinity and live on that basis. Where is God? Not in temples or pilgrim centers or other places. He dwells in the heart of everyone. To experience the Divinity within, one has to see the Divine in all others and render them service in that spirit. . . .

### **The Lord Is with You**

Gradually you have to give up animal qualities and develop godly qualities such as truth, righteousness, justice, and morality. By a process of self-enquiry you can eliminate your animal qualities like anger. How long are you going to remain in the same round of birth and death without realizing the goal of human existence? All *pujas* (worship), rituals, and penances are performed for this realization. You have secured an extremely precious gift by your present birth. Do not waste it. Utilize every available moment for a worthwhile purpose. . . .

Whoever carries on the Divine mission, unaffected by success or failure, joy or sorrow, will be the recipient of God's grace. Krishna has declared that such a devotee is dear to Him. Such a devotee develops detachment toward all worldly concerns and is indifferent to the happenings in the phenomenal world. He is indifferent to praise or censure, pleasure or pain.

The next quality a devotee should have is giving up attachment to the fruits of one's actions. Even the egoistic sense of doership should be given up. Everything belongs to the Divine. Engage yourself in good acts, and experience the Divine.

6. Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 29, Chapter 48: Who Is 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>





## Who Is Dear to the Lord

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 9, contains the topic “Who Is Dear to the Lord” selected from *Sathya Sai Speaks* and *Summer Showers*. Sri Sathya Sai says: *“One who possesses the above-mentioned qualities is a true devotee. Only such a person is near and dear to the Lord. You should cultivate these qualities to be a deserving recipient of God’s love.”*

