

# Teachings of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Volume 3



Who Is Dear to the Lord

.....

Twenty Virtues Essential for Wisdom

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Ten Types of Purity

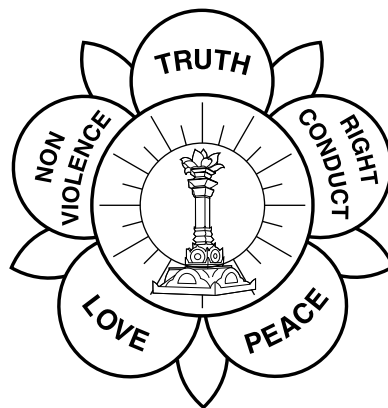


**Dedicated with love and reverence at the Divine Lotus Feet of**

*Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba*

# Teachings of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

## Volume 3



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Topics covered:

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# Who Is Dear to the Lord

*Devoid of Desires*  
*Absolutely Pure*  
*Firm in Determination*  
*Completely Detached*  
*Free from Grief*  
*Renounced Pomp and Ostentation*

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 is to realise 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*

—*Bhagavad Gita*: (12.16)

He who is totally devoid of desires, absolutely pure, firm in determination, completely detached, free from grief, and has renounced pomp and ostentation— such a one is dear to Me.<sup>1</sup>

## SIX QUALITIES ONE SHOULD POSSESS TO BECOME DEAR TO THE LORD

### ANAPEKSHA

(Devoid of Desires)

.....

#### **There Must Be Control over Desires**

*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 sacrifice. The yearning for righteousness 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. Although some consider being righteous as very important, others think that achieving [worldly] greatness is the best goal. 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.

#### **Perform Actions Exclusively for the Pleasure of the Lord**

The Lord has stated very clearly that He wants you to attain the state of desirelessness. How does one do that? One does this by strictly confining oneself 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 would secure His approval. If a devotee conducts himself in this fashion, he becomes dear to the Lord.<sup>2</sup>

#### **Man Has Taken Birth to Perform His Duties**

When man 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 desireless actions. One has to recognise 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 the doer and 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 realises God.<sup>1</sup>

#### **The Lord Is Present in All Righteous Actions**

In the *Bhagavad Gita*, the Lord has declared that He is present in all righteous actions. Therefore, those who perform righteous actions can develop desirelessness. This means that when a man performs all actions as offerings to the Lord, they become desireless actions. The Lord is the one who, from within, makes a person act, speak, listen, see, and perform 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 spiritual aspirant should regard his actions as offerings to the Divine.<sup>3</sup>

### **Lead Your Life without the Feeling of “Mine and Thine”**

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.” “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 and 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.<sup>4</sup>

### **Desirelessness Prevails When All Actions Are Offered to God**

It is only when all actions are done as an offering to God that desirelessness 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.<sup>5</sup>

SUCHI  
(Pure)  
.....

### **Both Inner and Outer Purity Is Essential**

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 cleanli-

ness 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.

### **Undertake Selfless Service to Purify the Heart**

For the purification of the heart, everyone must undertake selfless service. Attachments and aversions, which pollute the mind, should be eschewed by concentrating on selfless 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.<sup>5</sup>

### **Purity Is Vital for All Aspirants**

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 perform in the external world, if you have no purity of mind and heart, all of them are valueless.

The food cooked in an un-tinned vessel will be spoiled even if all the ingredients are good. Likewise, in the vessel of the heart, the inside must be purified by 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.<sup>1</sup>

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

All the actions a man performs 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 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? Every word you utter should be free from causing excitement or agitation. It should be true and pleasing, says the *Bhagavad Gita*.

There are four factors that account for pollution of the tongue. One is uttering falsehood; two, excessive talking; three, carrying tales against others; and 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 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.

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 become totally purified.

Then comes purity of the body. One must have a body that is free from the taint of 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 practising 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.<sup>3</sup>

## DAKSHAH

(Firm in Determination)

.....

### Have Strong and Unshakable Determination

The third quality that the devotee must have is *dakshah* or strong and unshakeable 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 it is fulfilled.*

This is determination.

*Having asked what you want,  
Hold on till you get it.*

This is what is meant by determination.

*Having thought what you wish to have,  
Hold on till the thought is realised.*

Such is the quality of determination. In the end, what should happen?

*Due to your perseverance, 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.<sup>2</sup>



## **Realise Oneness with Mankind through Selfless Service**

Everyone should regard his life as a form of penance. Everyone must have firm resolution that as long as life lasts he will dedicate himself to the service of his fellow men. Thereby he will realise his oneness with all mankind. Such a feeling of unity will lead to God-realisation. Service is the only way to get rid of selfishness and self-centredness. A devotee who has resolved upon such service is dear to the Lord.<sup>5</sup>

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.<sup>6</sup>

### **Do Not Engage in Impure Acts**

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 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 resolute person.<sup>3</sup>

### **Be Equal-Minded at All Times**

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 become disheartened by trials and tribulations that come your way. Be equal-minded in times of both pleasure and pain. That is true determination.<sup>4</sup>

UDAASEENA

(Detached)  
.....

### **Be Totally Detached**

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 expectation 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 organisations, 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.<sup>2</sup>

### **Perform Your Duties Selflessly**

You must be indifferent towards sorrow or joy, loss or gain, honour or dishonour. 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.<sup>5</sup>

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 right action. Indifferent to fame or blame, not seeking power or position, one should perform one's duties selflessly.<sup>1</sup>

### **Always Remain Serene and Unruffled**

One must be free 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 mere witnesses. They should be treated with equanimity. To treat them seriously is to give rise to agitations in the mind, which may lead to demonic tendencies.<sup>3</sup>

## GATAVYATHAH

(Free from Grief)

.....

### **Do Not Brood Over the Past or Worry About the Future**

After this, *gatavyathah*, which 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.

Regarding 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 would be alive then? Are you sure you would be alive? No one can speak with certainty on such matters. Therefore, what is the point in worrying about the future?

### **Focus Your Thoughts on the Present**

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 and 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. Focus 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.<sup>2</sup>

## **Mental Worry Should Be Eliminated**

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.<sup>1</sup>

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 ensured. 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.<sup>3</sup>

### **Engage Yourself in Right Actions**

A true devotee is one who lives in the present without brooding over the past and worrying about the future. 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.<sup>4</sup> 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.<sup>5</sup>

## SARVARAMBHA PARITHYAAGI

(Renunciation)

.....

### **Who Is a True Renunciate?**

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* (quality of passion).

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.

### **Never Hanker After Publicity**

Today there is show and publicity everywhere. The person may spend just five rupees on charity, but he is prepared to invest five hundred rupees in publicising 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 would one become eligible for God's attention.<sup>2</sup>

### **Eliminate the Ego to Purify the Heart**

There should be no ostentation or showing off in any undertaking by a devotee. Unless ostentation is given up, egoism will not leave. 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 Organisations have been set up for rendering service and not to establish official positions. Selfless service should be done out of a sense of duty.

### **Selfless Service Broadens the Heart and Widens One's Vision**

Selfless 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, 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.<sup>5</sup>

### **Your Devotion Must Be for Pleasing the Lord**

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 parithy-aagi* means one who is prepared to relinquish all his possessions and acquisitions including wealth, knowledge, and strength.<sup>1</sup>

One should give up all desires and ego. Ego leads to attachment, hatred, jealousy, aggrandisement, 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.<sup>4</sup>

YEARN FOR GOD'S LOVE AND BE  
DEAR TO HIM  
.....

**Secure God's Love through Sacred  
Actions**

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.

As you think so you become. 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.

**Lovingly Obey God's Commands**

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 in 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.

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.

**Do Everything to Please God**

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 do or have to do. However, before rushing to adopt this course, pause, reflect, and make sure that God would 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 them for God's pleasure.

**Saturate Every Action with Love**

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 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 end up only in the dead-letter office. Therefore, if you really want your offering to reach God, you must affix the stamp of 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.

**Do Good Work Solely for God's Pleasure**

Slowly but surely you must develop all the qualities enumerated in the *Bhagavad Gita* verse. The acquisition of these virtues is possible; have no doubt about it. 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 inquiry leads one to wisdom and Divinity. You realise the truth: *Tat Twam Asi*—that Thou art.

Is it possible to obtain 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.

### **Happiness Comes Only after Hard Effort**

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. Recognise the cosmic unity that pervades everywhere. Recognise that this substratum of unity is nothing but God. You will then automatically experience God. All this may sound very difficult to practise. Know the truth that happiness comes only after hard effort. Without difficulty, there cannot be joy.<sup>2</sup>

### **The True Devotee Is One Who Practises 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 practises what he has learned is a true devotee.

Your practices are different from precepts. You are leading selfish and self-centred 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 practise one or two of the teachings. This calls for purity in thought, word, and deed. Without such triple purity, man ceases to be human.

### **Earn Respect through Sincerity**

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 practise, he will be ignored. How can such a person expect to win the grace of the Lord?<sup>1</sup>

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.<sup>4</sup>

### **Man Is Redeemed by Six Qualities**

Only the devotee who has these six qualities 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 described in the above mentioned *Bhagavad Gita* 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.<sup>1</sup>

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# Twenty Virtues Essential for Wisdom

*Humility*  
*Absence of Vanity*  
*Non-violence*  
*Patience, Fortitude*  
*Integrity*  
*Reverential Service Rendered to the Spiritual Teacher*  
*Cleanliness*  
*Steadfastness*  
*Control of the Senses*  
*Detachment*  
*Absence of Egotism*  
*Awareness of Birth-Death-Old Age-Illness-Grief*  
*Withdrawal of Desire for Objects*  
*Absence of Attachment to Family and Home*  
*Equanimity*  
*Devotion*  
*Solitude*  
*Absence of Interest in the Company of the Worldly Minded*  
*Awareness of the Distinction between Atma and non-Atma*  
*Experience of Atma*

Arjuna asked, "Oh Lord! You said that twenty virtues are essential for becoming entitled to wisdom. What are they? Please describe them to me in some detail."

"Arjuna! I am delighted at your earnestness," said Krishna. "Listen."

## TWENTY VIRTUES ESSENTIAL FOR WISDOM

**1**

### **Humility**

“The first virtue is humility, the absence of pride. As long as you have pride, you cannot earn wisdom. A person’s behaviour should be like the behaviour of water; whatever colour you pour into water, it absorbs it and never asserts its own colour. It is humble without conceit. But now the behaviour of people is quite contrary. When they do the smallest service or donate the slightest amount, they are anxious for people to know about it. For this, they go about prattling or arranging to get it published. The absence of such pride and ambition is what is recommended as humility.”

**2**

### **Absence of vanity**

“The second is absence of vanity. This is a very great virtue in people. It means the absence of pretence, pompousness, boasting that one is great when one is not, claiming that one has power when one has nothing, that one has authority when one has no such title.”

Here, readers will note one point. The world today is full of this false pretence, this hypocrisy. Whichever field of activity you watch, whomever you observe, you discover this dire defect. The governments of nations are in the hands of people who are pretenders to power, authority, and capacity. Those with no knowledge claim to know everything. Those with no one even to help them at home claim that they have a huge following.

In every activity, this hypocrisy is the very first step. It ruins people in every field, like a pest that destroys the crop. If this hypocrisy is wiped away, the world will be saved from disaster. Pretence will make you lose this world and the next. It is harmful at all times and places. It does not suit ordinary people; how can it then be beneficial to the spiritual aspirant?

**3**

### **Non-violence**

“The third virtue is non-violence. This also is an important virtue. Violence is not simply physical; it means even more: the mental pain that is inflicted, the anxiety and worry that are caused to others by your actions and words. Even if you desist from causing physical pain to others, you cannot claim to have non-violence. Your activities must not cause pain and must be unselfish. Your thoughts, words, and deeds must all be free from any motive to cause such pain.”

**4**

### **Patience, fortitude**

“The fourth is patience or fortitude. It means that you should consider as unreal the evil others do unto you, the loss you suffer through them, the hatred they evince toward you. Treat these as you treat a mirage. That is to say, you must develop that degree of patience or fortitude. It is not the helpless putting up with the evil that others do because you are powerless to retaliate. It is the expression of the peace that reigns in the heart, this outer behaviour.”

It is true that many people put up with the injury that others inflict because they lack physical, economic, or popular support; this suffering cannot be honoured as real fortitude.

**5**

### **Integrity**

“Next, let us consider the fifth: straightforwardness, integrity, sincerity. It means the agreement of action, speech, and thought; this applies to secular and spiritual activity. This is a facet of the second virtue, absence of vanity.”

6

.....  
**Reverential service rendered  
to the spiritual teacher**

“The sixth is reverential service rendered to the spiritual teacher. This virtue will promote affection for the pupil, so one will benefit a great deal. But the *guru* who has no goal will only mislead the disciple into perdition. The *guru* must shower grace on the disciple as freely and as spontaneously as the mother cow feeds the young calf with milk. The teaching of the *guru* is the source and sustenance for attaining God and acquiring liberation.”

7

.....  
**Cleanliness**

“The seventh virtue is cleanliness—not merely outer cleanliness but inner cleanliness. And what is inner cleanliness? The absence of affection and hatred, of desire and discontent, of lust and anger; and the presence of good, i.e., godly, qualities. Water cleans the body; truth cleans the mind. Knowledge cleans the reasoning faculty; penance and discipline clean the individual.”

8

.....  
**Steadfastness**

“The eighth virtue is called steadfastness, fixity of faith, the absence of fickleness or waywardness. Aspirants must hold fast to what they have once fixed their faith upon as conducive to their spiritual progress. They should not flit from one ideal to another, changing their goal from day to day. This is also referred to as dedication. Fickleness, the product of weakness, has to be scrupulously avoided.”

9

.....  
**Control of the senses**

“The ninth is control of the senses. Be convinced that the senses have to subserve your best interests, not that you should subserve the interests of the senses. Do not be the slave of the senses; rather make them your slaves.”

10

.....  
**Detachment**

“Next, the tenth virtue: detachment or renunciation (*vairagya*)—the loss of appetite for sound, touch, form, taste, smell, etc. The senses run after these things because they titillate and give them temporary joy. However, the senses are not interested in the goals—righteousness-wealth-desire-liberation (*dharma-artha-kama-moksha*) of the sublime type. The *Atma* can be discovered only through pursuit of the sublime.”

11

.....  
**Absence of egotism**

“The eleventh virtue is absence of egotism—the breeding ground of all vices and faults. The ego-centric individual pays no regard to right and wrong, good and bad, godly, and wicked. That person doesn’t care for them, doesn’t even know about them. That person is completely ignorant of *dharma* and morals and will not conform to justice. To be devoid of this poisonous quality is to be endowed with absence of egotism. Egotism is a foe in the guise of a friend.”

12

.....  
**Awareness of birth-death-old  
age-illness-grief**

“The next virtue is called *janma-mrithyu-jaraa-vyadhi-dukha-dhoshha-anudarsanam*, meaning only this: awareness of the inevitable cycle of birth and death, of old age and disease, of grief and evil, and of other signs of the temporariness of this created world and life in it. Although people see these things happening to them as well as others, they do not investigate the reasons for them and the methods of escaping from them. That is the greatest mystery, the wonder.

“If only you go to the root of the problem, you will realise that whatever else you may escape, you cannot escape death. What people conceive as happiness now is, in reality, only misery in the guise of happiness. So understand the truth of these things; reflect upon the flaws in the reason-



ing that delude you. Then, as a result, detachment is strengthened, and through that, you attain wisdom. Therefore, Oh Arjuna! liberate yourself from birth, death, old age, illness, and grief (*janma, mrithyu, jaraa, vyadhi, dukha*).” Thus spoke Krishna, exhorting Arjuna with a great deal of affection.

### 13

#### **Withdrawal of Desire for Objects**

Then He spoke of *asakthi*, the withdrawal of desire for objects.

The greed to possess things that you see is caused by egotism. “I must have this,” “I must be the proud owner of this valuable thing,” this is how egotism prompts. It is a strong cord that binds you to objects. Withdraw the mind, and treat all as manifestations of the Lord’s glory. Love all things as expressions of His glory, but do not delude yourself into the belief that possessing them will make you happy. That is an illusion. Do not dedicate your life for their sake; use them for your needs, as and when necessary, that is all. That kind of impulse activating you will be a great handicap in your progress toward liberation. Whatever you may acquire as property will have to be given up some day. On that last journey, you cannot take with you even a blade of grass or a pinch of dust. Keep this fact ever before the mind’s eye, and then you can realise Reality.

### 14

#### **Absence of attachment to family and home**

Before birth, one has no relationship with this world and its material objects. After death, they and all kith and kin disappear. This sojourn is just a game played in the interval. Getting fascinated with this three-day fair is foolish indeed. Desire tarnishes the mind and makes people unfit for higher pursuits. Aspirants who seek liberation and realisation must rid themselves of desire, for, like grease, once contacted it sticks and is difficult to remove.

### 15

#### **Equanimity**

After this, attention has to be paid also to another virtue, the state of equanimity, of undisturbed peace during joy and grief, prosperity and adversity, happiness and misery. This is the fifteenth virtue of a wise one. Being elevated or depressed by success and defeat, profit and loss, honour and dishonour is a futile activity. Accept all equally as the grace of God, His consecrated food (*prasadha*). Just as you wear shoes to tread over thorny places, or hold an umbrella to escape getting wet in rain, or sleep inside a mosquito curtain to escape the stings of insects, so too, arm yourself with an unshaken mind that is confident of the Lord’s grace and bear praise or blame, defeat or victory, pleasure or pain with equanimity. To live bravely through life, this equanimity under all circumstances is declared essential.

### 16

#### **Devotion**

Next is devotion without any other feeling or thought. When grief overtakes you, you run to God. When difficulty overpowers, you take refuge in the Lord of Venkata (Vishnu). When joy is restored, you throw Him overboard. When you are down with fever and your taste is ruined and your tongue is bitter, you crave some hot pickle; but when the fever subsides and you are normal again, you do not relish the same pickle. Devotion is not a temporary salve. It is the unbroken contemplation of God without any other interposing thought or feeling. Whatever the activity, recreation, or talk, it must be saturated with the love of God. That is undivided, undistracted devotion.

### 17

#### **Solitude**

Thereafter comes practise of solitude. 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 turned away from the objective world.

## 18

### **Absence of interest in the company of the worldly minded**

The eighteenth virtue that helps to promote wisdom is mentioned as absence of interest in the company of people, that is to say, absence of the desire to mix with people engrossed in affairs that concern the objective world. One can attain equanimity even in the midst of wild animals, but it is difficult to win it while among worldly minded ones. 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 into the company of good people; Rathnakara, who was a cruel hunter, got 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.

## 19

### **Awareness of the distinction between *Atma* and non-*Atma***

The nineteenth virtue is “awareness of the distinction between *Atma* and non-*Atma*.” Fix your consciousness always on the *Atmic* Reality, and discard the body and senses as unreal and impermanent. *Atma* is the eternal, so establish yourself

only in that and not in the transient non-*Atmic* illusions or objects. Life is a struggle to achieve victory over the illusion that haunts: I am the eternal *Atma* in you and in all. So fix the mind on Me, and engage yourself in the struggle, confident of victory.

## 20

### **Experience of *Atma***

The twentieth and last qualification one has to earn is “vision of the true nature of That (*Thath*)” (*Thathwa-jnana-darsanam*), the universal principle of which the particular is but a shadow. It means that the spiritual aspirant should have a keen desire to visualise the universal.

Of the above-mentioned twenty virtues, if honest efforts are made to earn even two or three, the rest will come naturally to the seeker. No special effort is needed to earn them. As progress is made on the path, one acquires not only the twenty, but even a larger number of virtues. The twenty are mentioned here because they are the outstanding ones, that is all. Spiritual discipline based on these virtues takes one easily to the goal. That is why Krishna emphasised these.

Equipped with these, one can realise the Self; there need be no doubt on that, for they lead to the knowledge that the body, the senses, the intelligence, the inner consciousness—all are affiliated with the worldly (*prakriti*) aspect. And one who is distinct from all this is the perfect person (*purusha*). The perfect person is the one who is aware of the body (*kshetra*), the knower of the body (*kshetra-jna*). When one is able to distinguish between the soul (*purusha*) and nature (*prakriti*) or, which is the same thing, between the body and the knower of the body, one becomes the witness and is free from all touch of want or wish.

—*Geetha Vahini*, Chapter XXIII.

# Ten Types of Purity

*Purity of Your Residence*

*Mutual Understanding and Cooperation in the Family*

*Pure Food*

*Pure Water*

*Pure Thoughts and Feelings*

*Pure Vision*

*Pure Reading and Writing*

*Pure Service*

*Pure Spiritual Discipline*

*Pure Work*

To develop one's moral and mental strength, one should engage in spiritual practices for disciplining the mind. For this purpose, one has to promote ten kinds of purity (*satwa*).

## TEN TYPES OF PURITY

The **first** is purity of the place in which one lives. It is necessary to fill the room in which one resides or studies with a *satwic* (pure) atmosphere. The pictures or other objects you see should fill you with peace and pure thoughts. Objects that arouse agitation and bad thoughts should have no place. The room should be clean and free from anything that is impure.

**Second:** In the family in which you live, there should be mutual understanding and cooperation and a sense of harmony. There should be no discord in the family that will create a bad atmosphere. A harmonious atmosphere will give you true peace of mind.

The **third** need is *satwic* food. This means that none of the edible items should be excessively sour, bitter, or hot. You should eschew *rajasic* (passionate) food like fish or meat. Even good *satwic* food should not be taken in excess. Some people consume so much *satwic* food that even though it is *satwic*, it develops *rajasic* qualities. It is only *satwic* when you sit for the meal with a light stomach and get up from it with a light stomach! If you sit with a light stomach and get up with a heavy stomach, it becomes *tamasic* (slothful).

**Fourth:** Whatever fluids you take should also be *satwic*. You should not drink whatever water is available. It should be pure water. Alcoholic spirits should be eschewed.

**Fifth:** *Satwic* thoughts and feelings are of great importance. Students tend to neglect this factor. Only if your thoughts and feelings are pure, can you get the full benefit of a clean room, a good family, and pure food.

**Sixth:** If you want to develop *satwic* feelings and thoughts, your vision must be pure. All *sr-ishti* (creation) is based upon *drishti* (sight). It is only when you have wrong vision that you have wrong thoughts. You must look upon every elderly woman as your mother and all women who are younger as your sisters. When you are filled with such pure thoughts, you will have pure feelings. It is because you are students that you have to be told this. Imagine how offended you would feel if someone looked at your mother or sister with an evil eye. Realising this, you have to entertain pure feelings towards other women. You should not commit the sort of offences that you would not tolerate in others.

**Seventh:** Whatever books you read or whatever you write should be pure. This is the spiritual practice relating to study—*sahitya satwika*. If you read or write that which is not pure, it warps your mind. A good book makes for a good mind. Any book you may study about physics or chemistry or other subjects, does not affect your character. But books that are literary are not always good literature. If improper books are prescribed for study, treat them as mere textbooks and do not attach any high value to them as guides for life.

**Eighth:** Pure *satwic* service. With regard to service, you have to decide what is *satwic* and what is *rajasic*. We clean streets, build roads in villages or dig wells and do them all as a service to the community. But the kind of service that we do should give real happiness to the people. In the name of “social work” you go to a hospital and approach a patient. This is not real service. Any person whom you wish to serve, you should regard as an embodiment of the Divine. Going to the help of the destitute and the neglected is rendering service to God.

*Narayana* has two forms: one is “*Lakshmi Narayana*,” the other is “*Daridra Narayana*.” This “*Lakshmi Narayana*” is full of wealth. He is able to help any number of people. He will be able to get many persons to serve him. But for “*Daridra Narayana*,” there is nobody to serve him. It is to such persons that we should do *satwic* service.

**Ninth:** *Sadhana*. This is spiritual discipline. This must be *satwa*. Some people do *hatha yoga*. Some strive to develop the *kundalini sakthi*. Some invoke evil spirits to do harm to others. These forms of *sadhana* are not *sadhana* at all. The individual is *Chith* (Consciousness), God is *Sath* (The Eternal Absolute). When *Sath* and *Chith* combine, you have *Ananda*—*Sath-Chith-Ananda*. Only the *sadhana* undertaken to realise *Satchidananda* is true *sadhana*. Where is this *Sath*? This *Sath*, the Divine, is in everybody. So, you must be prepared to serve everybody, regarding everyone as the Divine. You may have a normal relationship with your kith and kin. There is nothing wrong in this. You must perform *sadhana* in the spirit that the One pervades the many. In this process, you must cultivate the feeling of love. There is no higher *sadhana* than the cultivation of love!

### **Gopikas’ Devotion to Krishna**

Uddhava was an adept in the path of *jnana yoga* (knowledge and wisdom). He wanted to teach the *gopikas* (the cowherd girls of Brindavan) the path of wisdom. So he approached Krishna. Krishna told Uddhava: “The *gopikas* are totally devoted to me. Their devotion is fundamental to their life and reaches My heart! Their purity and devotion are like a light that shines! You cannot understand the hearts of such devotees! I am completely enshrined in their hearts.” Uddhava doubted whether ignorant illiterate *gopikas* could understand the Divine. To dispel the doubts of Uddhava, Krishna sent him to Repalle. Uddhava summoned the *gopikas* and told them: “I will teach you the path of *jnana* (wisdom) to realise the Divine.” The *gopikas* came to Uddhava and told him: “We are not interested in learning any scriptures! Teach us one

simple means by which we can realise Krishna! We are not aware of any *yoga* or *bhoga* (sense pleasure) or *mantra*. Krishna is everything for us, our *yoga* or *bhoga*. Please, therefore, tell us the means by which we can obtain Krishna! We do not want to waste our time on *yoga*.”

Uddhava asked the *gopikas*: “How can you become one with Krishna?” One *gopika* answered: “If Krishna were a flower, I would be a bee whirling round Him. If He were a tree, I would be a creeper twining round him. If He were a mountain, I would be a river cascading from its top! If Krishna were the boundless sky, I would be a little star, twinkling in the firmament. If He were the deep ocean, I would be a small stream, joining the ocean. This is the way I would be one with Krishna and merge with Him.” Another *gopika* said: “If Krishna were a flower, I would be a bee that goes on sucking every drop of honey in the flower tasting the nectar that is there! This is our approach to God.” So, spiritual *sadhana* means to regard a mountain or a tree, or a flower, or the ocean as a means of God-realisation.

**Tenth:** Your occupation or profession. What is the kind of work you should take up? It should be work that can benefit the nation, the community. The nation enables you to earn a living. You must see what you can give to the nation, in return. You must ask yourself: “What is the service, what is the help I can do for the community?” You must see that there is no untruth in any work you do, no unfairness, no fraud, no evil motive.

### **Ensure Freedom from Birth by Present Karma**

These are the pure things that you have to observe in your life. If you engage yourselves in right action, you will not be bound by the consequences of *karma*. Because of past *karma*, you have your present life. By your present *karma* you can ensure freedom from birth. Through love, you develop faith; through faith and earnestness, you acquire knowledge; through knowledge, you develop *sadhana*, and through *sadhana*, you achieve

the goal. So for practising *sadhana*, you require wisdom, and for acquiring wisdom, you require *sraddha* (earnestness and faith), and for *sraddha*, you must cultivate love. So love is the means and for this you must acquire control of the senses. If you gradually reduce your desires, you will be able to bring the senses under control.

You should strive to get rid of all your bad thoughts, give up all your bad traits, discharge

your obligations to your parents, render selfless service to the community, and thereby redeem your lives and earn the grace of God. This is my blessing for all of you.

Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume XVIII  
Chapter 31: Students and *Satwic* Purity.

### Glossary

#### ***Atma/Atmic***

Self; Soul. Embodied Self is *jiva* (the individual soul). Self, with no limitations, is *Brahman* (the Supreme Cosmic Reality).

#### ***Rajas/Rajasic***

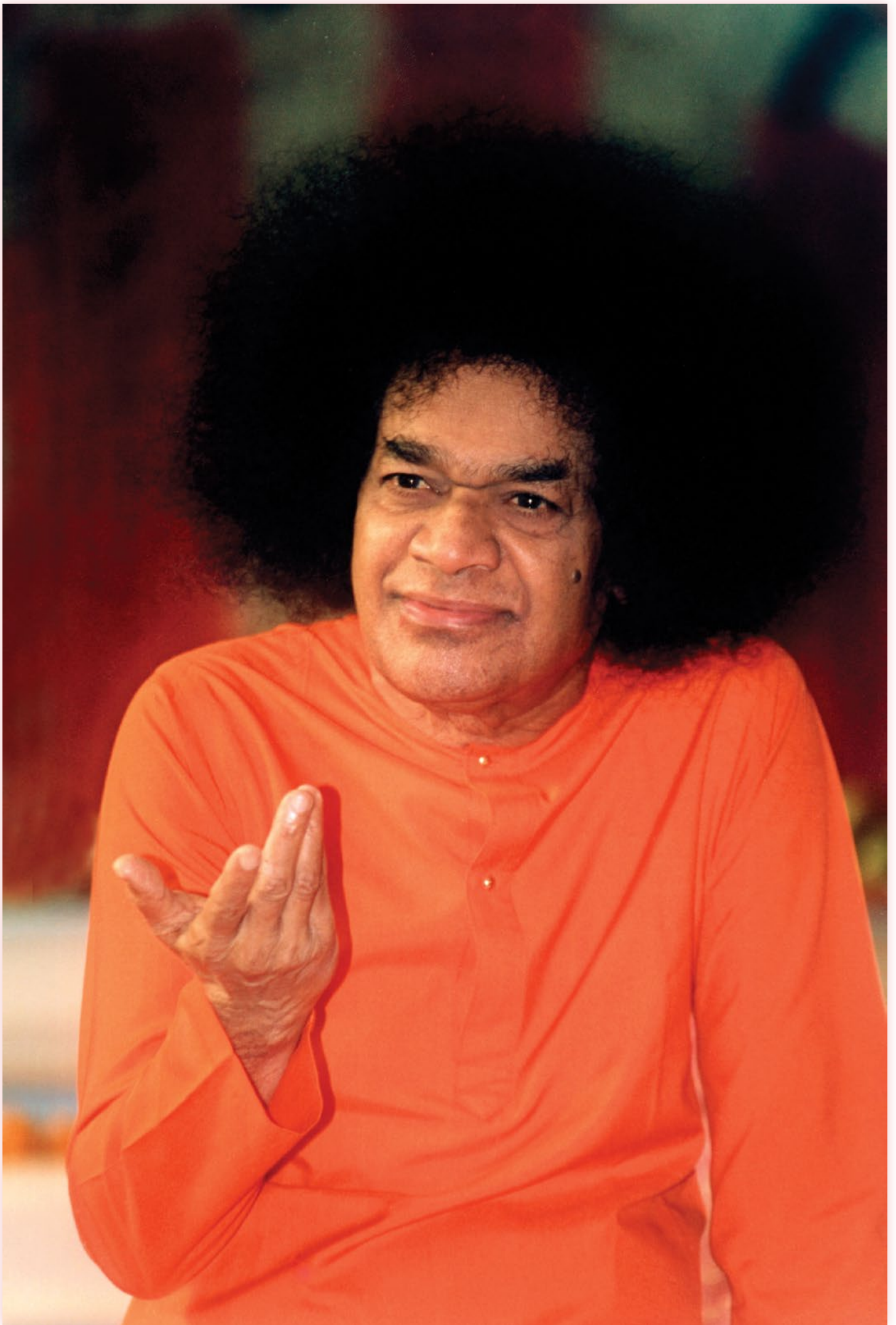
Passion, activity, restlessness, aggressiveness.

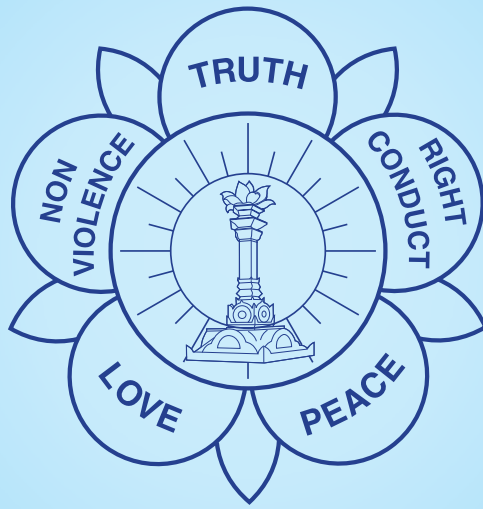
#### ***Satwa/Satwic***

Purity, calmness, serenity, joy, strength, goodness.

#### ***Thamas/Thamasic***

Dullness, ignorance, delusion, inactivity, passivity, inertia, sloth.





LOVE ALL, SERVE ALL