

## 11. Spiritual Pancha Sheela

FIVE principles have to be observed for realising the divinity in man. They are: *Ahimsa* (Non-injury), *Sathya* (Truth), *Soucham* (Purity), *Daya* (Compassion) and *Asthikyam* (Faith in God).

**Non-harming** (*Ahimsa*): It is a supreme virtue. But, in daily life, almost at every step some harm or other is being caused. When we breathe in or breathe out, countless microbes perish. There are occasions when wittingly or otherwise injury is caused to some being or other. Complete non-violence is not a practicable ideal. What should be ensured is that there is no deliberate causing of injury or harm to anyone.

**Truth** (*Sathyam*): Truth is Divine. Where there is Truth there is Divinity. When Dushyanta forgot that he had given a ring to Sakuntala when he met her near the sage Kanva's *ashram*, Sakuntala declared in the open court of the king that Truth was the supreme *Dharma* and a king should uphold truth at any cost. She pointed out that in the order of merit, starting from digging wells to performing horse-sacrifices, the horse-sacrifice ranked higher than having a hundred virtuous sons. But greater than a hundred horse-sacrifices (*Aswamedha Yajna*) was honouring one's plighted word. While the king was ruminating over this exhortation to uphold truth, some fishermen brought to the king a ring which they had found in a fish caught by them. The king then remembered the incidents that happened when he had gone for hunting near sage Kanva's *ashram*, his encounter with Sakuntala and the ring he had exchanged with her. He accepted Sakuntala as his queen and the child born to them was Bharata, after whom this country has been named.

### Importance of physical and mental purity

**Purity** (*Soucham*): Both internal and external purity are essential. We should try to ensure cleanliness of the body and purity of the mind. Our ancients used clay for cleaning the body. In naturopathy mud bath is used for the treatment of many physical ailments. The body is made of clay. But it is also the abode of the Divine. The importance of physical cleanliness could be illustrated from a story in the Mahabharata. Once, the disciple of a *Guru*, after completing his studies, requested the *Guru* to state what he would like to receive as *Guru-dakshina* (offering) from the disciple. The *Guru* asked the disciple to offer the earrings worn by a certain queen. The disciple ascertained who the queen was and went to the king to inform him of the mission on which he had come. The king permitted him to visit the queen's apartments to make his request. But he could not see the queen anywhere and reported his failure to the king. The king then told him that no person who was physically and mentally impure could see the queen. The disciple then went through a process of purification and was able to see the queen.

Another example of the serious consequences resulting from personal impurity was the case of King Nala, who had to face many ordeals because of a single lapse on his part. He lost his kingdom, became deformed after a snake-bite in the forest, separated from his wife and had to serve as a charioteer. It was only after he had purified himself by strenuous performance of *Gayathri japa* that he could get back his kingdom, his original form, reunion with his queen and his prosperity. (Incidentally Swami spoke about the unique efficacy of the *Gayathri manthra*).

### Spirit in which service should be rendered

**Compassion** (*daya*): *Daya* is not mere display of kindness or sympathy to someone in distress. It calls for complete identification with the suffering experienced by another and relieving that

suffering as a means of relieving the agony experienced by himself. By way of illustration, let me relate the story of a calf which was caught up in a slushy pond while trying to reach a small pool of water. A crowd of urchins were watching with glee the plight of the calf which was unable to move forward because of the slush. An ascetic who was passing by saw the plight of the calf and taking it out of the mud, carried it on his back to the pool of water. The urchins asked him why he had done this, while they were watching to see how the calf was going to get near the water. The *sanyasi* told them that the sight of the struggling calf caused him great anguish and to relieve himself of his agony, he had gone to the relief of the calf. When any service or help is rendered to anyone, this is the spirit in which it should be done. You must feel you are helping yourself when you are helping another.

### **All troubles should be treated as tests**

**Faith in God** (*Asthikyam*): Faith in God implies recognition of the omnipresence, of the Divine in the universe and seeking to experience that divinity within one's self. The Divine is One, though it may be called by many names. It must be realised that God is all-pervasive and nothing exists without the power of the Divine. One should not allow one's faith in God to be affected by the ups and downs of life. All troubles should be treated as tests and challenges to be faced with courage and faith.

You should learn from the example of Ranthi Deva, who retained his faith in God and exhibited his compassion for the suffering despite the extreme privation to which he was reduced by the vicissitudes of life. To feed a hungry man, he and his family gave up the meagre food they had gathered and denied themselves even water, to relieve the thirst of a man crying for water. The Divine had subjected him to these ordeals and later blessed him with grace.

Prahlada was unaffected by all tortures to which he was subjected because he saw in everybody and everything in the form of Vishnu. He exemplifies the strength derived from the love of God to the exclusion of everything. Worldly love is blind and fickle. Divine love is all-embracing and defies description. When the heart is freed of all impurities, it can experience the Divine. It will revel in the bliss of that experience and will not seek any other trivial pleasure. When one is immersed in the nectar of divine love, he experiences ineffable bliss. Such a person experiences *Saakshaatkaaram* (direct experience) of the Divine.

*Discourse to a gathering of students and older devotees at Trayee Brindavan on 3-6-1986.*

*The worldly kind of friendship is mostly selfish where each person has primarily his or her own self-interest at heart. Only God is totally devoid of selfishness and self-interest. God can be called the selfless Self. In the various worldly relationships there may be love present but it is not real love because it is tinged with selfishness.*

*BABA*