



P1 / HAPPY NEW YEAR



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SELFLESSNESS



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# Sai Dharmam

SRI SATHYA SAI BABA CENTRE OF COOKSVILLE



One more night towards the brand-new year. The clock is ticking. Throughout the history of all nations, we have called it New Year's Eve. We celebrate New Year's Eve to remember the memories of our current year. All tasks that we have accomplished and succeeded in over the past year will be remembered as fortunate memories. We also call it New Year's Eve because December 31st is the last night before the first day of the New Year. Once the last day of the year ends, the New Year comes in. The sound of people screaming the praise of the

New Year, firecrackers, and joy will let us know that it has arrived. All will change, since the world has moved onto a new generation and that the future awaits it. Everything such as, technology, scientific discoveries, environment/nature, and especially life will be new, and this is one of the reasons why we call it a 'New Year'. There are many ways people celebrate the New Year, but the most common way is by using firecrackers. We use them because they are colourful and amazing when you light them up. It also expresses joy and happiness. There are different types of New

Years, like Tamil New Year, Chinese New Year, etc. They are each celebrated differently with their own tradition, but are still called the same.

Swami says, "Start the day with love, Spend the day with love, Fill the day with love, End the day with love, This is the way to God". In addition to days, this quote also relates to years. We can all celebrate by Thanking and Praying to Swami for giving us a wonderful year with love and gratitude.\*

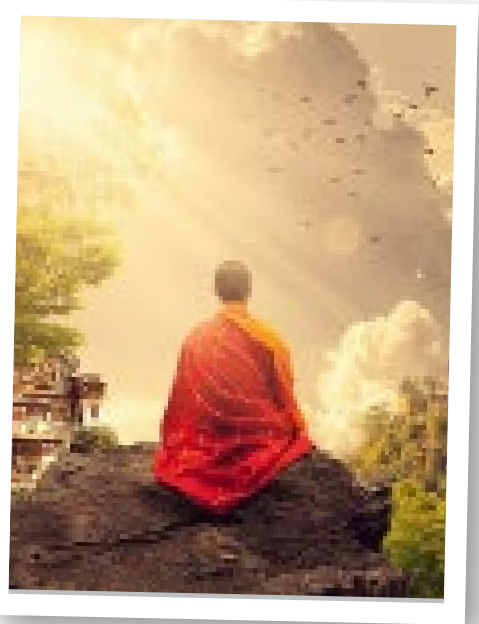
# Ceiling on Desires: A Student's Guide

As students, it is often difficult to see how we can make a mark on the world and cause change. Our actions can feel small, insignificant and lacking in purpose. However, it is important not to underestimate how our actions may impact others, no matter how small they may seem to us. When working together, even the most miniscule good deeds can accumulate to propagate widespread changes within a community. Never underestimate the power of kindness.

Swami's teachings emphasize placing a "ceiling on desires". By limiting our actions that are driven by wants and pursuing actions that aim to serve others, we will be able to live a more blissful life. As students, placing a ceiling on desires will allow us to live a more purposeful life.

The Sathya Sai International Organisation suggests a four-pillar approach to ceiling on desires. The first pillar is "Do not waste food. Food is God". As students, we sometimes seek for food for comfort, rather than for sustenance. When we are stressed or upset, a chocolate bar can bring us momentary relief. During such instances, instead take a minute to reflect. Money spent on temporary comforts can be set aside for more long-lasting

efforts, such as donating to a local charity. The second pillar is "Do not waste money. God is wealth". While money can be used to buy what is necessary, it can also be used to fulfill our desires. In a media-dominated world, our eyes are drawn to the newest gadgets and clothing. Remember that any money saved can be used to serve a better purpose. The third pillar instructs, "Do not waste time. Time waste is life waste". We are given twenty-four hours each day to live with purpose and with love. Time is finite and time wasted can never be retrieved. Sleep early and wake early to use your time effectively, fulfill your obligations and serve others. Finally, "Do not waste energy". Energy expended on bad thoughts, spending time with bad company and partaking in bad actions is energy misused. As young people, the opportunity to misuse our energy is ever present. Life is a gift, and our ability to think and act freely is a blessing from God. Guide your actions through kindness and optimism. ✨



## Generosity & Selflessness



Sam and Tom were identical twins. They were so identical that during their initial days on earth, even their mother found it difficult to distinguish one from the other.

However, they were very different from each other when it came to everything other than their appearance. Sam had no friends, while Tom was great at making friends. Sam loved sweets, but Tom loved spicy food and detested sweets. Sam was mommy's pet and Tom was daddy's pet. While Sam was generous and selfless, Tom was greedy and selfish!

As Sam and Tom grew up, their father wanted to share his fortune equally amongst them. However, Tom did not agree, and he argued that whoever proved to be more intelligent and strong would have to get a bigger share of the wealth.

Sam agreed. Their father decided to organize a competition between the two. He asked the two sons to walk as long as they could, and return home before sunset. The wealth would be divided in proportion to the distance

covered. As a rule of the competition, they were not permitted to carry a watch to keep track of the time.

The following day, Sam and Tom set out to walk. It was a rather sunny day. Sam walked slowly and steadily, while Tom broke into a sprint as he was bent on winning the race and winning a greater portion of his father's wealth.

Sam knew that it would be ideal to walk as far as possible till noon and start for home at noon as it would take the same amount of time to walk back home. Knowing this, Sam

decided to turn back for home at noon so as reach home on time.

However, Tom, with his greed to earn more wealth, did not attempt to return home even after mid-noon. He walked twice as long as Sam, and thought he would still be able to return home before sunset. He hurried back when he saw the sun turn orange. Unfortunately, he could not even make it half way home as the sun started to set. Slowly darkness engulfed his path and he had to drag his tired feet back home.

He had lost the race because of his greed. ✨



# Ceiling on Desires



It is during this time of year when many tend to spend the most with Christmas expenses and Boxing Day. Swami continuously reminds His devotees to put a “ceiling on desires” in his discourses. What does He mean by this?

“Ceiling on desires,” means to put a limit on the things that you want. Swami wants us to reflect on our expenditures and to separate what we need from what we want. What we need are those things that are essential such as groceries, simple clothing and modest shelter. Luxurious items are those things that we merely want such as fancy vehicles and an abundance of clothing. In an era where the use of social media is so widespread, we are often blinded by glamorous lifestyles of celebrities and want to achieve a similar lifestyle. What we do not realize is that the photos we see can be deceiving and that a glamorous lifestyle will not bring true bliss. What is key when placing a “ceiling on desires” is to ensure that it applies to your own desires and not someone else’s. We should give without any expectations in return. For the New Year, we should aim to put a ceiling on our own desires and to give more to those in need.

In a 2003 discourse in Brindavan, Swami states how man can look towards nature for

good practice of ceiling on desires. “Every man and every creature is an embodiment of love. All the birds, animals and insects aspire to attain happiness just as man does. They also enjoy happiness. But there is a difference between the happiness they enjoy and the happiness man enjoys. Birds, animals and insects are neither elated by happiness nor depressed by sorrow. They accept happiness and sorrow with equanimity. But man lacks such sense of equanimity. He feels elated when his desires are fulfilled and frustrated otherwise. Desire and anger are like pests that destroy the tree of human life. Today desire and anger have become rampant in man. One who is filled with anger will find differences and starts developing hatred. In the daily newspaper, you find many news items which speak volumes about the anger, hatred and jealousy in man. These evil tendencies are the bitter enemies of man. Desires should be under limit. Man sometimes has love in him and at other times goes into a fit of anger. Such a tendency is the result of improper food and habits. Never translate your thought into action in haste. Take time and enquire whether what you want to do is right or wrong.” \*



# Immense Are His Ways to Teach and Protect His Devotees

This happened in the year 2008 when I was laid off my first job in Canada. This was a very testing period for me as it was not even a year into the job. The concept of getting fired from work was new to me, as none of my previous employers had any negative comment about my work, let alone having a reason to fire me. Then, there was this consoling message from Swami in a dream. In my dream Swami was addressing a bunch of students in a classroom setting and I was standing near the entrance door. He looked at me and said, “Every step is a learning experience”. This message was an awakening for me and I realized that failures are our stepping stones to success.

Following this, we visited Parthi during the Christmas break. I was sitting in the darshan line and near me there was a lady with a plate holding an invitation and other items. I figured that it was a wedding invitation and she was going to seek Swami’s divine blessings. We were looking at the Yajur Mandhir entrance and craning our necks to get a glimpse of Swami. The gates opened, and Swami’s car moved towards the Sai Kulwant Hall. There was pristine silence in the atmosphere as though someone had pressed the pause

button even for the winds and the birds. Swami’s car glided in front of where I was sitting and stopped. Swami looked at the lady seated beside me for a second. As I was basking in His presence, He turned His head and looked at me, and I disappeared. When the Guru casts His glance at us, the little ‘I’ that we hold on to finds no place. There is a famous quote by saint Kabir that is fitting here. It is, “Jab Hari tha mein nahin, Jab mein tha Hari nahin” and it translates to “When Hari exists I do not, When I exist Hari is not there”. For a minute or so I felt everything was still. Later, I realised that tears were streaming from my eyes without my knowledge.

After this, I secured a job in a good company demanding much of my time. At this point, a family member was diagnosed with a health condition that needed surgical intervention. The surgery date was fixed, but unfortunately, I could not take time off from work on that day. I was very nervous and prayed to Swami. Since the hospital was close my office, I visited the person before the surgery and then went back to work before he was taken to the operating room. Within 30 minutes, I got a call at work saying that there was no surgery required and that the doctors

had dismissed the person. I was stumped. I called again to check the details and found out that the hospital procedure was to scan patients before surgery to confirm which side to operate on. However, when the scanned my family member, the scan revealed no signs of the ailment and he was discharged to go home.

Gratitude to the omnipresent One, who is guiding and protecting us all times.

Om Sri Sai Bhaktha Vatsalaaya Namah (Salutations to the One who has motherly love for His devotees). \*



# Games Corner



Sam and his family are going shopping at the mall. Help him pick the items he really needs in order to practise ceiling on desires. Then, use the first letter of each correct item to solve the puzzle below.

1. Chair or Video game?
2. Doll house or One doll?
3. Nuts or Candy?
4. Tea bags or Ground coffee?
5. Energy Drink or Soda?
6. Noodles package or Chips bag?
7. Toy Car or Remote-Control Car?
8. Juice or Milk?
9. Exercise Mat or Comic Books?
10. Nectarine or ice-cream
11. Tomatoes or Chocolate?

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## SSE National Poem Competition

### Canada!

Wondrous shapes created by snow  
Islands of snow balls grow and grow  
Night by night the children's laughter grows  
Through the neighbourhood their faith glows  
Enjoying the time with their sleds deep in the snow  
Racing through the hills saying "Let's go!"

Stunning flowers bloom to the sky  
Pristine drops coming from high  
Rolling down, giving life to sprouts that are dry  
Indicating love from mother earth who is up in the sky  
Nights of rain go away and a rainbow appears the next day  
Gorgeous little birds that are willing to try, in the end they learn to fly

Sunshine's warmth makes our day  
Umbrellas up as we lay  
Multicultural shows across the bay  
Marvelous waves run away, as we surf and play  
Endless nights cheering for the Blue Jays  
Roaring, shouting and saying "Hooray!"

Flawless colors of leaves bloom  
As the natural beauty of Canada resembles a ballroom  
Lucky Canada has its own resource  
Likely because it's the best country in the whole universe

- *Sehsty Thuray*

### United

Diverse and united we stand,  
with a smile on our face to welcome others into our land.

Our compassion gleams from coast to coast,  
always lending a hand to help them do the most.  
Acceptance and forgiveness are virtues we keep,  
since they are what makes our country unique.

We aid to others not for a beneficial gain,  
but out of the goodness of our heart so they won't feel pain.

While looking at past mistakes we have made,  
we never fail to come as a country and rise more awake.

Progresses in history are marks we make,  
to advance as a society with the whole world watching our take.

The entire world all on one land,  
which gives us the reason to lead as a unified command.

Inclusiveness of everyone we never forgot,  
for that is what made our country the way that it is.

- *Abiramy Srirangan*

