

## What is discipline

An orderly existence means discipline. Driving on the right, giving way to traffic, obeying the red lights, in short, a sacrifice of a certain degree of personal freedom to achieve a general order, as a universal measure, for general and universal welfare. And the more the well-being or the greater the degree of well-being that we desire, the greater the sacrifice of personal freedom.

**Discipline means conforming to the need of the moment.** You see, without discipline you cannot control your body, you cannot regulate your intelligence and your intellectual functioning, least of all can you regulate your mind. This is what happens to those who have neglected discipline totally, become totally self-indulgent. They become the prey of cigarettes, drugs, alcohol - everything. They have lost control over themselves, and now they are the prey of things which their desire made them approach.

So, when is the time to avoid something which is bad? From the first moment. When is the time to accept something which is good and beneficial to us? From that moment itself. Therefore in spiritual parlance, my Master used to say, "Here and now." When should I be good? When should I be well-behaved? Right now is the moment. When should I eat? Now, when I am hungry, not day after tomorrow. Isn't it? So, it means regulation over my body. I must move only when I want to move, when I desire to move, when I must move. Otherwise if a man walks in his sleep, you go to the doctor. He is a sleepwalker. Isn't it? Similarly, I must have regulation over my mental, intellectual equipment. I must be able to think when I must. So we must have our body and mind oriented towards the regulation of the inner self, the ultimate mastery of the inner self, which alone leads you to a Master.

We must remember Babuji's definition for a disciple, "**One who is disciplined alone is a disciple.**" Now in the ancient tradition, there are so many definitions for who a disciple is - one who serves, one who learns under a Master, one who is obedient. But our concept of a disciple is a total one. When Babuji said 'discipline', He did not mean worship of a guru, or cooking his food, or pressing his feet at night. That is by way of service, you see. Service is one expression, one way of expressing one's love.

Very often we do not know what we have to do and how to do it. How to know what we have to do with discipline? Just obey. Leave everything to the Master. Do what He says.

You may do all the yoga in the world, but if you have no discipline you cannot be anybody's disciple. This is my Master's definition. How can I possibly be a disciple of my Master without obedience to the principles, that he has put before me first? You know that famous principle, that the maker of the law must be its first servant.

### Levels of discipline:

First Level: The first one is a level of discipline for mutual understanding, like we have grammar in language. Certain words must have certain meaning, certain words must be associated with each other in certain ways, if they are to convey the same meaning to all of us. We cannot each one have a German language for ourselves and claim independence and say, "This is my German, that is your German, this is his German," because nobody would understand each other. So mutual understanding means; not only means, it demands that there is a structure, a common structure, and common rules formulated so that we can understand each other in our human intercourse. So that is the level of understanding. I am only giving grammar as an example.

Second Level: You can think of so many things like the rules of the road - traffic rules - obedience of the red lights, green lights, yellow lights....., which shows a second level: not only for understanding how to move on the roads, but how to protect each other by obeying these rules. Because at that stage it is not only understanding which suffers, but we can kill each other and many others too. So the second level of discipline is protection; protection of ourselves, protection of others. And here the protection of the others takes precedence over the protection of the self. I have to respect your life more than I respect my own. Therefore governments, traffic authorities, they punish. Punishment is not something of which we should be afraid, or which we should abhor. I find repeatedly people referring to Babuji wanting to discipline us with love. What is this love which disciplines us, and yet fails? The proof of the pudding is in the eating. So if you have more concern for another person than for yourself, you have to subjugate your desire, your dominance, your wishes to the requirements, to the safety, to the welfare of the other person. Traffic rules therefore say that you shall not overtake at certain places, you don't glare your headlights in the other man's eyes and lead him into an accident, you can overtake only when the road is free....., things like that.

So, the first level is understanding, the second level is mutual protection: the other more than myself.

Third level: It is only related to personal growth. A discipline which we formulate for ourselves, which we obey by ourselves not subjugated to any external authority, not in obedience to anybody else, but I obey myself, I formulate rules for myself, so that I can grow. When a man is self-restrained and refrains from alcohol, for instance, it is his welfare he has at heart. It is not that he is obeying the government which says, don't drink. It is a very wrong way of looking at things to say prohibition is an imposition. That it failed does not disqualify the wisdom of the act, because in that way all religions are failures, all moral movements have been failures, our lives themselves are failures.

When we wish to develop, when we wish to grow, our inner Self dictates to us what we should do, what we should not do, and the obedience is not to somebody outside myself, it is to myself. If this is very clearly understood, there will be no rebellion against moral law, against moral authority, because the moral law is my own formulation for my own benefit; the moral authority is my inner self, telling my external superficial, rowdy self what I should do and what I should not do for my own welfare, for my own growth.

Nowadays parents, without self-discipline want to impose discipline on their children. And largely we fail because when the son grows up or the daughter grows up, and they are old enough to understand what is going on - they say, "What are you doing? How are you behaving? How are you conducting your business?" This is how family structures are disintegrating, are being destroyed by corruption, where there is truthless existence, where father dare not tell the truth to his son, where the son dare not face the truth of his father's existence, and we are frittering away our existence in foolish trivialities.

A discipline which cannot come from within yourself is no discipline at all. It is enforced, and when the force that is enforcing it is removed, then will come the situation, which we say, you know, 'when the cat is away the mice are at play'. That is no discipline at all. So, the only lasting discipline is that discipline which a man creates from within himself.

So the most important aspect of discipline is self-discipline. We are all obedient, especially in India, when we see a policeman. We do not spit anywhere, we do not enter a "No Entry" street, we do not park in a "No Parking" place. That is why there are so many policemen in

our country you see, because signs are not enough. There must be a policeman even when multimillionaires who are educated at Harvard say, "It does not matter," - nobody is looking at you, you go through the street - "I will save half a litre of petrol." This is the fallacy and tragedy of this country that, discipline has to be imposed upon us at all levels from the highest to the lowest.

If the highest were disciplined, automatically the lowest would be disciplined. It is a truth, that if the father is a disciplined person, he obeys the natural laws and is disciplined in his existence, the son automatically patterns himself on the behaviour of the father. Now here lies the tragedy that unless you are disciplined, you cannot discipline your son or your daughter. Unless you are obedient, you cannot make your son obedient. Those who are in authority at the highest positions in the land, unless they are disciplined, moral, ethical, how can they enforce ethics and morality upon the people?

There is yet a fourth level of discipline which perhaps we have all realised without being able to give a word to, without being able to give expression to, and that is the discipline of a person like my master, who consumes himself, who gives up his life so that others may grow. He had achieved what he had achieved. He could have very well said, "good bye, Lalaji; good bye world! I am going to my holiday home, so that I can spend the rest of my life in peace." But that level of discipline says, "No more shall you think of yourself. Your comforts are meaningless, your hunger is meaningless, you don't exist anymore for yourself, you exist for them. And their welfare is your welfare; their happiness is your happiness; their growth is entrusted to you. In the fulfilment of that growth is the fulfilment of your own law, is the fulfilment of the obedience of the promise you gave to Lalaji.

You see it is very glib, and it is very easy to praise Master and sit and laugh, and weep sometimes, how much he did for us, how much he loved us; but if any of us have one percent of the admiration for Him that we speak about when we talk about Him, we should touch our hearts and ask, "Am I willing to be like Him?" Not only in discipline, not only in teaching others, not only in sitting and giving transmission - this everyone is able to do, preceptors are able to do it, we don't need masters for that - Am I willing to consume myself for the welfare of others? Babuji used to give the example of a candle as an expression of a spiritual life. He said that it consumes itself, it burns itself, it destroys itself to illuminate others!

So this is the highest level, the fourth level of discipline - that He exists only to destroy Himself; He exists only to give us comfort; He exists only to give us knowledge; He exists only to teach us without a single moment of thought for himself. And if we just stop with praising Him and writing about Him and talking of His love and don't emulate Him, it would be the most shameful treatment of the Master that you can give. If you want to fulfill His purpose, His existence, and make of it a success, we have everyone to become like Him, and that means that we have to start with the first level of discipline - not in obedience to any external authority, but in obedience to our own inner voice, then proceed to the second level, go on to the third level, and when we end up at the fourth level, then we will make true, Master's statement that He did not create disciples, but that He created masters.

*Salient features of Sahaj Marg – volume 4*