



Harmonious Homes



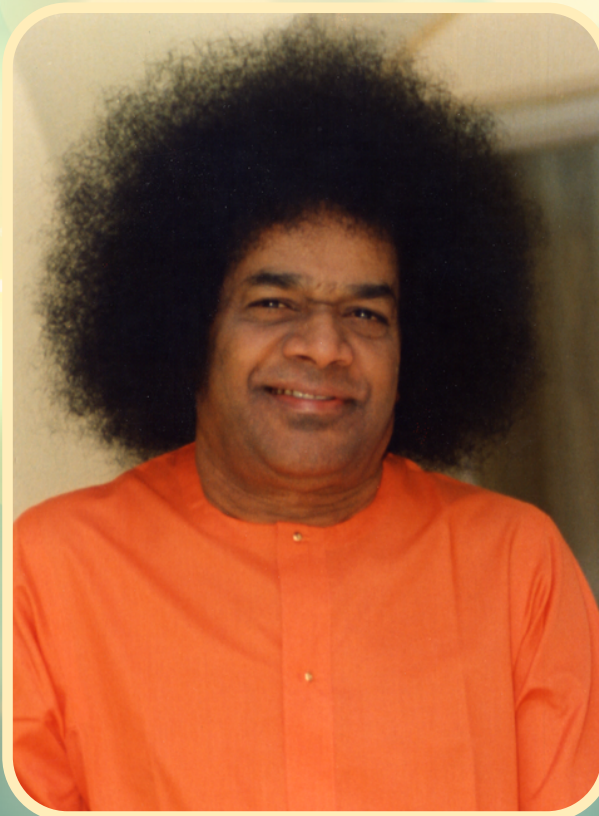
Human Values Parenting



Guide 6: January 2023

Creating a Harmonious Home

Part I



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Introduction

The home and family are basic social institutions around the world. Universally, a home is considered a safe haven where one's family is nurtured with love and understanding. When distrust and hostility prevail, a home gets destroyed. As the fabric of unity improves in every home, love and respect will flourish and the world will remain a peaceful place to live.

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba places enormous emphasis on creating and nurturing a harmonious home, not only for the spiritual growth and character development of children and family members, but also as the foundation for society itself.

Swami reminds us:

“People talk of world peace. But how can you ensure peace in the world? Here is the formula for it – If there is righteousness in the heart, there will be beauty in the character. If there is beauty in the character, there will be harmony in the home. If there is harmony in the home, there will be order in the nation. If there is order in the nation, there will be peace in the world.”

“It may thus be seen that the first link in the chain leading to world peace is righteousness or dharma. Dharma is only another name for right action. But the prerequisite for right action is right thought. In other words, peace should start with the individual and gradually spread wider and wider right along the line – from the home or family to the village to the nation, etc., till finally, it encompasses the entire world.”

- Summer Course, ch. 6, 1990



In this module, we will focus on Swami's guidance on what a harmonious home should be, who is responsible for creating such a home and how this harmony will radiate outwards to encompass the community, society and the world. In the subsequent module, we'll explore practical ways to actually create a harmonious home consistent with Swami's guiding principles.

Home is Different from a House

Every human being needs to be loved, respected and nurtured in the right ways to enable them to lead a meaningful life. Every human also has a mother, father and may have siblings and other loved ones collectively referred to as family. This family is essential for the blossoming of each human personality.

A home is ideally a place where a person lives with family and loved ones. It remains a dear place in one's heart with deep emotional attachments and commitments.

A home is distinct from a house. A house is merely the physical structure (building) where people reside. However, when a house is occupied by a loving family pursuing right conduct and living in harmony, it becomes their home.



“...what is a home? How is it different from a house? The home is filled with love, with the sacrifice that love involves, the joy that love radiates, and the peace that love imparts. The brick and mortar structure where parents and children spend their lives is not a home; children do not yearn for it; parents do not find peace therein!”

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba, Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 9, ch. 13, 1969

Discussion Questions

1. Growing up as a child what did your home mean to you? What did you like and dislike about your childhood home?
2. How do you understand the difference between a home and a house?
In what ways have you been able to turn your house into a home?

Harmonious Home is a Happy Home

Based on Swami's words of wisdom, a harmonious home is a happy home filled with unity, love, mutual respect and contentment among family members. It is a sacred place steeped in faith, devotion and discipline where good character is paramount and human values are practiced by every member of the family.

“The home is the temple where the family, each member of which is a moving temple, is nurtured and nourished. The mother is the high priest of this House of God. Humility is the incense with which the house is filled. Reverence is the lamp that is lit, with love as the oil and faith as the wick. Spend the years of your lives, dedicating them for such worship, in the homes that you will find. I bless you that through your faith and strength, devotion and dedication may increase in this land.”

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba, Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 9, ch. 13, 1969

“Make your home the seat of virtue, of morality, of love. Control anger and greed. That is the sign of the genuine bhakta, not unrestricted speech and movements.”

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba, Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 5, ch. 15, 1965

“Children must grow up in homes, where their parents honor their parents in turn, and are happy only when they serve their elders. Then only will children revere their parents! This must be taught to them by example, rather than by precept! Schooling is a waste, if children do not learn lasting virtues, do not develop strength of character, as a result of the process. They must learn reverence for parents, teachers, and elders.”

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba, Sri Sathya Sai Speaks Vol. 9, ch. 2, 1969



“The happy home is the basic cell of the national organism. It ensures a happy world, for mankind is one family, and if any one unit is sad or struggling in distress, how can the rest be safe or satisfied?”

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba, Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 9, ch. 2, 1969

Discussion Questions

3. Based on your efforts to create a harmonious home, what characteristics are important to you?
4. What spiritual practices do you undertake in your home to strengthen faith and devotion?

A Harmonious Home Creates Good Children

Blossoming of a child's mind and behavior depends on their home. Home is the first school for a child and father and mother are the first teachers. Parents play a critical role in creating the right environment at home for their children to learn and grow. The innate values in the heart of each child can only blossom when given the right environment. As we have seen, children learn by example more than precept, and will emulate the behavior they see around them.

"Parents of today don't bother to find out the ways and means of bringing up their children and keeping them under control. They think that their responsibility is over after admitting them to a primary school or a village school. The home is the first school for children. It is in this school that children should learn to respect their parents; to observe the truth, righteousness, peace, and nonviolence in the school; how to behave in the school; how to respect the teachers; how to behave with fellow students."

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba, Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 35, ch. 24, 2002

Discussion Questions

5. What positive behaviors would you expect to see in a child from a harmonious home?

A Harmonious Home is Created Jointly by Husband and Wife as Parents

Swami emphasizes that both husband and wife in their specific roles and as parents in their joint roles are equally responsible for fostering and creating a harmonious environment at home for their children and family to grow. It begins with proper understanding and adjustment between the wife and husband, each striving to live with harmony in thought, word and deed.

"Husband and wife are both equally responsible for establishing harmony at home."

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba, Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 30, ch. 30, 1997

"Today man is a contradiction in himself. His thoughts, words and deeds are incongruous. Without this harmony how can he contribute to harmony in the community and in the world? He can only create chaos. That is the misfortune in the world today. Man has therefore to understand himself, his own dignity and his inner spiritual reality, then only will he have the right perspective."

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba, Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 15, ch. 8, 1981

“Men should try to understand women, and women should try to understand men. It is the harmony, peace and mutual love between men and women that brings happiness and peace to the family. People want happiness in the family, but they do not lead exemplary lives. The fault lies with both the husband and the wife.”

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba, Ladies Day Discourse, Nov 19, 1995

“While learning home science, you may be getting trained in the art of making the home happy and full of harmony and health. You also have to learn how to steer clear of hatred, malice, greed, anger, anxiety, pride and other obstacles that come in the way of inner peace. It is not enough if the home budget is balanced; the wife (and the mother) must learn the art of having a balanced view of life, which will not be affected by triumphs and troubles, gains or losses, victory or defeat. This balance can be got only by reliance on God, faith in the in-dwelling God.”

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba, Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 9, ch. 13, 1969



“If the nation has to prosper, improvement must start with the parents. Without peace and harmony at home, there can be no peace in the nation...”

Men should realize the high status of women and honor and respect them accordingly. They should not make women weep and shed tears. A home where the woman sheds tears will be ruined. Men should give an honorable place to women and lead a respectable life. The archetypal woman is described as Adishakti (the

primal source of all energy) having a whole array of powers. She is hailed as the mother of the Amrithasyaputhrah (children of immortality).

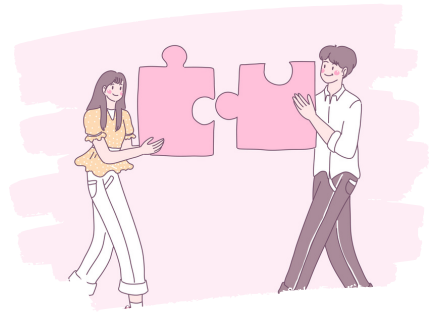
Men and women have to understand each other so that they can live in harmony, in the family.”

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba, Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 28, ch. 32, 1995

“Each limb of the body has a specific role to perform. While accomplishing a bigger task, all limbs coordinate and work in unison. When the eyes spot a fruit on the top of a tree, the legs will walk towards the tree; the hand picks up a stone and pelts at the fruit. When the fruit drops down, the fingers pick it up and put it in the mouth where it is masticated by the teeth and sent to the stomach. Thus we see that all limbs of the body have to work in a coordinated manner to perform even a small deed. With such unity prevailing in the house, anything can be achieved.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba, Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 33, ch. 17, 2000

“Understanding and adjustment between each other are very essential for the smooth functioning of any family. For example, when there is proper understanding between wife and husband, the wife will not mind even when the husband returns home very late from office. In fact, she will be anxiously waiting for him thinking that he may be busy in the office or is held up in a traffic jam. But if there is no proper understanding between the two, even if there is a delay of just five minutes, there will be a fight between them. Adjusting will become easy only when there is proper understanding.”



- Sri Sathya Sai Baba, Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 33, ch. 17, 2000

Discussion Questions

6. What are key impediments you encounter or contributions you provide as a spouse and parent that impact the creation of a harmonious home?
7. How do you try to overcome these impediments?

Extending the Harmony at Home to the Community

“When there is genuine understanding of the meaning and purpose of life, every step will be right, towards righteousness. And, if there be righteousness in the heart, there will be beauty in the character; if there is beauty in the character, there will be harmony in the home; if there be harmony in the home, there will be order in the nation; if there be order in the nation, there will be peace in the world. Righteousness consists in widening the horizon of your compassion. This will necessarily promote the sum of human happiness.”

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba, Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 9, ch. 30, 1969

As we extend the harmony from the home to the community, the role of the “goodness” of the individual is paramount. Swami has frequently emphasized the importance of teaching the child that it is goodness that is more important than aspiring for greatness.

For Swami’s words of wisdom on goodness over greatness, click the link below:

https://youtube.com/clip/Ugkxsx6vWnFtD9AUbI_XyKxokuKvIZaTTnKu

Discussion Questions:

8. Swami mentions: *“Righteousness consists in widening the horizon of your compassion.”*
What individual and family sadhana can we do to help in
“widening the horizon of your compassion”?



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