

PARENTING

This is a satsang with Gururaj Ananda Yogi, 1981 Number 36, recorded at Techny Towers in Illinois.

GURURAJ: What shall we talk about today?

DOUG: Gail?

GAIL: Gururaj, as a loving parent, how does one discipline and guide one's children without breaking their spirit?

GURURAJ: Um hm! We first have to understand what we mean by guidance, and we also have to understand what we mean by the living spirit. Now guidance could take many forms. Guidance necessarily as far as children are concerned, must have some form of discipline. Discipline is to be a disciple. The word "discipline" comes from the word "disciple" or the other way around. So the child is your disciple.

Now if you are the guru and the child is your disciple, how are you going to treat the child? Now, a teacher and here the parent is a teacher, a guru would always show the utmost love and affection to the disciple. But at the same time, because he has to guide the disciple, he would find different ways and means of expressing that love. It is no use always saying to a child, "Oh, my child, you're so nice, you're so good, you're so beautiful." And the child might be misbehaving totally. So there are times when the child has to be spanked or reprimanded very very severely.

Now what happens in family life today is the mother disciplines the child and the child runs to the father and the father starts pampering it. Now that is wrong. The discipline there fails entirely. It fails because the child is finding some form of compensation in the father to overcome the disciplinary measures of the mother. So here in bringing up children there has to be a total understanding between mother and father. That's important because if they do not cooperate with each other and that cooperation can only come by understanding and love for each other then all disciplinary measures, or all demonstrated affection, does not have effect upon the child.

So the love has to be deep. Now how deeply can you love a child? And if you do love your child, ask yourself, "Why do I love my child?" Is it totally selfishly or is selflessly? Most parents, 90 percent of them, love their children because of selfishness. And this they do not want to admit to themselves. The child does more for the parent than what the parent does for the child. Actually speaking, the parent should be the disciple and the child the guru. Yes. Have you ever looked into the eyes of your child? Could be naughty or not naughty. Have you ever watched that beautiful flow in the

child? Have you ever watched the spontaneity in the child, even if it climbs up on a chair and gets all over the cookie jar? Yet there is such a beauty and spontaneity. Watching the child pinching that cookie is a work of art. Huh? It is a work of art.

Have you ever seen how determined your child can be? A child has greater determination, has greater steadfastness, and greater one pointedness than the parents have. But we parents of course we always blame the child, my child is naughty and I am very good. It could be the other way around. Fine.

Now observing the child, is the child always making a mistake, even in its naughtiness. How to recognize that, or are you only projecting your insecurity and your inadequacy upon the child and find the child to be naughty? Because within your memory box as we have talked about many times, there are memories of similar behaviors which might have not been very conducive to your own personal pleasure, and therefore seeing that in the child we automatically trigger off that memory and say this is so or this is so. The child is good. You give a child a knife to play with the child wants the knife. Now nothing wrong with the child playing with the knife, but we having more intelligence the child has more heart having more intelligence, we know that the child could hurt itself. So with love you take that knife away from the child and explain to the child how he could hurt himself. Now that is the basis of discipline. That is the basis of discipline. And it comes to the time when if you can't get it in from upstairs you get it in from downstairs.

This Benjamin Spock, the American, for 30 years he preached that the children must be given total freedom. Very good. But 30 years later, he admitted himself to the world that he was wrong, that discipline is totally necessary. I for one would say do not spare the strap. But let that strap be covered with love. Because when you spank a child it hurts you more than what it should hurt the child. That is the right way unless you want to let off your steam and your personal hatreds inside. Good.

So dealing with the child, as we all would know, utmost love is necessary, and at the same time, discipline is necessary. But the question remains, how is the love to be given and how will the child be disciplined?

We find this among grownups where we, as we do with our children, we with others project our own feelings and our own inadequacies and our own insecurities. Things go wrong and we always blame someone else but we never think that, look have I not been spending so much time in my own personal negativity. Right. And to find the release valve they try and find it in the object rather than finding the release valve within themselves. For example, say I... if I should sit idle and do nothing for six months I will definitely go potty, that's for sure. And this applies to everyone. So here we must have activity. Now as the grown up needs activity for the health of mind and body, so does the child also need activity. So you motivate the child in which ever activity the child likes. So here we have motivation, motivation with a disciplinary measure. So we have discipline, we have motivation, and the very activity of the child becomes fun to the child. Because

you are motivating the child in such a way that whatever activity it is involved in does not become arduous, but it becomes pleasurable to the child. So it remains no work or activity for the child, but it becomes fun for the child. And as grownups do, children want fun.

Human beings by nature are pleasure seeking. But the pleasure that is sought is always of the senses: the sense of taste, the sense of smell, the sense of touch, the sense of hearing. All these five senses are forever seeking pleasure.

Now how do we teach the child a deeper kind of joy? And that teaching

of the child of the deeper kind of joy you'd be implanting in the child something that will last for eternity.

Now this can only be done... a child copies, it emulates. And this can only be done by the parent showing such extreme love between the relationship of husband and wife, and the child emulates that. If you want to have a quarrel with the husband, or the husband wants to have a quarrel with the wife, do it privately in the bedroom, and not in front of the children.

A child is very sensitive. And even if there is some negativity in the house, the child even without hearing a word feels it. And it feels it at a deeper level than the conscious mind because it cannot rationalize yet. And when it feels it at a far deeper level than the conscious mind, it becomes more lasting. It creates a samskara, it creates what psychologists call blockages. Today in this world, unfortunately, we destroy our children. We destroy our children. But with the sugar coated pill of calling it love. We are selfish, as I said a moment ago, we can learn so much more from the child than what we can teach the child. Now when we take the child at his own basic value of its innocence, of its spontaneity, of its feelings a child loves deeper than a grownup although it might not be demonstrated so well. Little daughter comes and grabs daddy by the neck when he comes home from the office. Who gains greater pleasure by that? Just think. The child gives a spontaneous expression, but you are getting more pleasure out of it. You come tired from the office and here the child smiling and falling all over you and kissing you and grabbing you around the neck and takes all your tiredness away. It makes you relax, it makes you unwind. Look at all the things a child is doing for you. So why should we destroy the child in return.

Now when it comes to affection, there's a great difference between affection and love. Affection is demonstrated both necessary as far as children goes affection, demonstrated affection, is necessary for the child to make the child feel secure in some way that I am needed by my mommy and my daddy. But underlying that affection, if there is a totally unselfish love, that demonstration of affection assumes a far greater power.

Now I'll tell you something which 99.99 percent of the people will not admit: that we don't really love our children. We don't really love our children. Because there is something selfish about it. Now Benjamin Spock was right to a certain extent. Now when I say there is something selfish about our love for the child, it is because we have desires in us for the

child. We are not developing the child's desires, no. We are implanting our desires that my child when she grows up she must be very pretty and beautiful. Of course everyone's child is the prettiest child in the world. Huh? Right. Your own child is always nicer than someone else's child. Yes. Yes. If two children are fighting, having a scrap, your child is right, the other child is wrong. That's the way we look at things. Fine.

Now it is because of our selfishness that we do a great amount of psychological harm to the child. Now what form does this selfishness take? It is our own projection of what the child should be. So we are setting standards for the child. My child must be pretty. The daughter 7, 8 year old might like... they start thinking they're beautiful. They might like their hair to be done up a bit. But no, mommy says it must hang down because you look prettier if your hair hangs down instead of it being done up. So what do you do? Explain to the child that this is nice and look, in your school everyone has their hair down, but you can have your hair up sometimes. Why not? Do you see.

As the child grows, we now look, I'm pointing out all the negative qualities of the parent in relationship with the child. As the child starts growing up, you have the desire in you that the child must be tops in the class. And some parents unfortunately, although the child does not have the ability to come first in the class, the parents will push and push and push. So bringing the child to such a tense state because of the parents' pushing, excessive pushing, there should be some pushing, of course. Good encouragement and motivation. But with extensive pushing, the child, instead of reaching a certain level, reaches a lower level because we are creating tension in the child for our expectation so that I could tell Mary or Jill or Jane, "Oh, my child came first in the class." So what are you doing? You are boosting your ego. You're doing nothing for the child.

Then the child grows up a bit further and you have all the expectations oh, my child must become a dentist, my child must become a lawyer, my child must become an architect or an engineer or blah, blah. Fine. But how many of us ever think that let my child become a human being! And the seeds of humanity are planted in the child from infancy, and not only after the child is born. Even before the child is born you plant those seeds.

There are not many customs among the Hindus I was brought up in a Hindu family born from a Hindu family but there are many customs I do not agree with. They are absolute, could have applied 5000 years ago, but they are no good today, and I tell this to the Hindus, I hammer it in. But there are certain things that come down from ancient times which are very good also. When the woman is pregnant and reaches the seventh month of pregnancy, there is a big prayer meeting held they call it puja, [hoven?], and all these various names. And the Sanskrit name of that ceremony is [Shremontsamskara]. After that prayer meeting is over the injunctions by the teacher is given to the woman that you must always be thinking of good things. The books you read must always be uplifting books. The emotions you feel must always be that of love. Therefore we have this pregnancy practice for our meditators. And those that have used it have

found great benefit. Right. Good. So then in the ceremony the woman is also told keep holy company, listen to good things. You know the story of the three monkeys: hear no evil, see no evil, speak no evil. Now these things are done for one purpose: because the fetus becomes so sensitive and forms such a togetherness... look, that fetus has consciousness, remember. It has consciousness. Not intellect yet, it has to be developed, but it has a consciousness which is very impressionable. So the teaching of the child starts from the womb. Because whatever the mother thinks, whatever her behavior is, has some effect on the fetus. So that is one good thing amongst many I like about those ancient traditions.

So the education of the child begins from there. Now when Spock said that the child must be given total freedom to develop by itself, I would agree with that partly. He has not explained it well. The total freedom must be given to the child to the extent of the capacity of the child. A certain tree can only grow ten feet high. So freedom must be given to the extent of ten feet, another 15 feet, another 20 feet. So freedom must be given to that extent, but while it is still a sapling, you put in this stake, that is the discipline so that grows up straight. Now you are not curtailing the freedom of the growth of the plant. So that stake or whatever you call it is guidance, you're guiding the plant to grow straight. So that is guidance with discipline and with love as we nurture the plant. If we give the plant the fertilizer and the water and the sunlight and the air, we allow it to have it, and yet there is freedom for the child. Where the child feels free and yet the child.... The best way to give discipline, and this is my method, is to make the person feel that he is not disciplined. That has always been my method since I'm doing the work I'm doing now, and in those business days as well. So the best way to discipline a child is to make the child feel it is not disciplined.

So here we have the qualities of freedom and discipline so beautifully interwoven that the child begins to sense the joy within himself. Now we project upon the child our own sense pleasures. And the child will emulate that. But if we through our own spiritual practices and our own personal self integration can just exude that in the environment of our home and the child being very sensitive to these things, yet not understanding with the mind, the child's pleasures will also assume a higher form which goes beyond the senses yet through the senses. You see.

Bringing up children is an art. One day, through the grace of Divinity, I would like to start schools all around the world. That is the problem you know, that stuff you call dough. That is the problem. I would not start like some teachers start things at university level no. I'd love to start them toddler schools, kindergarten schools. Because psychologists today will tell you too that whatever impressions the child is put into certain molds the first three years of his growth are the most important. There you can give it limitlessness or total limitation. Right.

Now the child grows a bit older. Daddy goes to work, mommy goes to work. And the child is left in the care of a nanny, perhaps, those that can afford that. And today's society... there's a lot of things wrong with the society. People blame juvenile delinquency, but they don't blame society. They say, "Ah, he's a juvenile delinquent," and send him to reformatory or some kind of prison thing. Society does not want to blame itself. So the child grows up, the mommy goes to work. The father has a good job but the mommy also has to go to work. Now why does the mother go to work? Mother goes to work because the mother feels, let me contribute extra money to the family, which is a very good, noble thought. But now, see the implications of this. The mother is occupied from nine till five at the office or factory or whatever she does. So now to make the workload lighter, she has to buy a washing machine. She can't wash by hand any more, she hasn't got the time. Understood. She has to buy every kind of conceivable electric gadget because she hasn't got the time. Things have to be done. Ok.

Now if she was at home she would cook a meal for a family of four which might cost \$10.00. And you can do a beautiful meal for \$10.00 at home. But no, mommy comes home tired from work. So we're not going to cook tonight, let's go and eat out. So instead of the \$10.00 for four people we spend \$50.00 in a restaurant and I could tell you one little instance now, we went were taken to one of Spain's top la de da restaurants where the chef has won so many awards a whole arm long Charles will tell you, he was with me. But after the meal it was very very beautiful. Good. So Charles, owning a very very large catering firm he was interested in seeing the kitchen. And believe you me, after we saw the kitchen, oh, yuchh! If I'd seen the kitchen first I would have not eaten, that is for sure!

So now the mom goes to work, and believe you me, all the money she earns, whatever she earns \$400, \$500, \$600, \$800 is spent this way. There's not a penny profit. The child is looked after by someone. There's no parental control or discipline there. And that's how delinquency starts. We feed our children and ourselves with the food from restaurants it's fine to go out and now and then, nothing wrong with that. That's a part of life, it's fun. Have a nice meal and a glass of sherry, white wine, red, nothing wrong, nothing wrong. Nothing wrong with that. But if it is done as it is done in the Western society today and I'm not speaking of America only I'm sure if there was not so much poverty in India and China, they would be doing the damn same thing. So all the human beings are the same, there is no differentiation. Right.

It does not only end there. All gadgets are bought which would have been unnecessary if the woman was at home. So now she has no exercise so she goes to a gymnasium, she gets fat, she goes to slimming classes, because eating junk foods, her whole wardrobe is filled with every kind of vitamin you could think of A, B, C, D, right to Z. It's needed.

The other day when I was a guest at Vidya and Sujay's home they showed me around the little town, Kankakee. And we popped into a supermarket. Believe you me, I've never seen something like that. Anything your heart can think of was

there. In the one cooler I saw all the pizzas oh you could eat them raw, they looked so beautiful, so well dressed. Chinese food, one with noodles and chicken, another with noodles and pork, another with this and that. You know. Everything. Then she showed me spices. There is a whole big row, long as this building, perhaps, with all different kind of spices. And that is just a bloomin' racket. Celery salt, pepper salt, this salt, that salt, and you pay, pay, pay, pay, sales gimmicks.

Now that is how our society is based. The poor woman neglects the child because now once you start buying all those extra devices at home, then it's mostly on the never never. So even if a woman was to get out from her job, she's tied up in this vicious circle that she and her husband has created. So those installments have to be paid so that the woman still has to go on working.

The ideal society and this is an ideal would be such like the ancients where the husband is the breadwinner and the wife is the homemaker. That's one American word I love very much. In other countries we call them housewives. This word in America, homemaker, she makes the home. And she can break the home, too. Beautiful word.

Now the ideal in society should be where the husband is the breadwinner and the wife looks after home and children and cooking and the housework. You do a bit of scrubbing of the floors yourself, huh? Or polishing this, that, the other. You don't need to go for exercise where you stretch your limbs. There's automatic stretching. If you bend your back picking up things from the floor you won't develop a tummy. So here, so many things in daily life, if you're conscious of it and if it is done properly you don't need all these external aids. This is what I'm trying to say.

But now for this you have understanding. Now if the woman feels that she has still enough time and she would like to pursue a hobby although they say a housewife's work is never done, but housewives have more hobbies than their husbands. That is true. These hobbies are good. One must have them. They are pleasing to the mind, relaxing to the mind, and they could also be such that without going to work they could produce a few pennies coming home. That is the ideal society. Now if such a relationship could exist, the children would really become integrated, spiritual people. So what have we covered? Discipline is necessary, and within the discipline freedom is given and the discipline is such that the child feels entirely free and yet it is disciplined. Point number two: we must not project our own thoughts or our own ideas upon the child, that my child must be such, and my child must be such, and my child must be such.

I know people that would spend hundreds and hundreds of dollars taking the children to dentists. Why? Because we have been feeding the children with junk food, haven't we? And their teeth rots, naturally. And same thing applies in every sphere, in every sphere. There are a lot of genuine cases, too. I'm generalizing, as you would appreciate by now. So the ideal way is the two people, husband and wife, to be integrated within themselves, and by that integration of themselves there's a greater atmosphere of love which the child feels very deeply. And in that very love the child finds

security and of course that inner feeling also has to have its outer expression in demonstrated affection. That is how children could be brought up so so well. The most important person in the world is the mother. She is the mother of the world. A woman is more important than the man. Charles won't agree with me, of course. [He laughs] We always have jokes about this. It's fun. Because I do believe, never a dull moment. Life, love and laughter, that's our principle. So the most important person in the world is the woman. Dad is out working, this, that, and it is in the hands of the mother to cultivate that beautiful plant which we call our child. And then naturally being your own flesh and blood, you would be more concerned for your own children which is a natural human tendency. Then as you develop you will find that every child is your child, and this I talk of personal experience. I've not found any separation between my children and someone else's children. For example, when I'm at Doug's house I play around with Peter, his little boy who is of the same age as mine, as if my little Biren, that's his name, is there with me in the form of Peter. Like that. And then one develops to the stage where every child is our child and with that sense a greater caring develops, not only for our children and other people's children, and when the caring develops for other people's children, you automatically start caring for society as a whole. And you in your our little way, in whichever way try to make this world a better place to live in. Right.

So we require stability within ourselves in order to give stability to the children. Now stability within ourselves, naturally in our organization, we talk of meditation and spiritual practices. But then do remember one thing, that although our title is American Meditation Society, it is only a part title, for want of a better word. We do not only teach meditation and spiritual practices. Those are the tools we give a person to use. But we do far more than that. Teaching meditation forms a vital part of our systems, but the other thing we do is change people's attitudes toward life; make them see the other side; generate in them that spiritual force that goes through the channel of Divinity to you. And to utilize, to be receptive to it. But if I'm going to sit on my bloomin' ass and do nothing, nothing is going to happen. I'll just become more and more depressed and more and more morose.

So a lot is dependent, to repeat again and again, that the proper understanding must be developed. [END SIDE ONE] This could be gained by satsangs, for one, because we look at things from so many different aspects, and with new perspectives that would widen our own horizon where a new awareness, a wider awareness, a vaster awareness, an expanded awareness could be achieved where all these things, all our actions become so spontaneous. Where you start understanding the theory which is pleasing to the mind and felt by the heart and backed up by regular spiritual practices which like children, each child is a child on his own. If a kindergarten teacher has 20 pupils in his or her class, remember it's not one class, it's 20 classes. Each child is unique, like grownups are.

So with our practices that are so tailored for the person, and a communication exists through the channel of love, through the channel of the spiritual force, understanding this grace, our practices. So our attitudes change. We become more and more integrated. And as we become more and more integrated we become more and more stable. So if a thing that happened five years ago you found very very disturbing to you, today the same thing can happen and it will not disturb you to that extent because you have an understanding. You view it from a different angle. So that is the purpose of life. So the betterment of our children depends upon the betterment of ourselves, always. A child has chosen you. I was told you have to be at lunch exactly 12:00. Can you go over that? Well, it's ten to. We still have ten minutes.

DOUG: We should leave by 12:00.

GURURAJ: So a child chooses you. I think I've talked about this in some other satsangs, I don't know if it was here. You have not chosen your child. The child has chosen you. When a person passes away into the other dimension, the entirety of its jivatman that's a Sanskrit word the entirety of the soul is evaluated by itself. And the soul being forced on by the law of evolution would always try and find an environment which will teach him to progress further on the path of evolution. Therefore if we have chosen adverse circumstances to be born in, if we are born ill, we have chosen it in that other sphere, the other dimension. If we have chosen poor parents, remember we have chosen that, that poverty so that we could learn. If we have chosen rich parents that was also for the same purpose and the purpose is but one: to learn and to evolve.

So a child has chosen parents because that was the exact vehicle, the combination of the two, the combination of that sperm and ovum was the exact vehicle for the child to be born through. So you are nothing else but God's instrument in giving birth to the child. The child owes you nothing. You owe the child nothing. But we do the best we can for the child, and the child can only repay you in one way. So therefore there should be no expectation from the parents that oh, my child must become the President of the United States. Or this, that, or the other. No expectations. We have been the instruments of Divinity, of a Divine law when this child chose to be born through us. And then of course, science talks about heredity. There is some truth in it. But that truth only begins in the third dimension of life and not from that other dimension where the real choosing of parents takes place. So heredity is partly true.

So how can the child repay you? Not by pleasing you or becoming what you want to come. No, the child can only repay all your kindness, all your help, all your love, all your good upbringing by doing likewise with their children. That's the only

repayment there should be. So no expectation, but we do our duty to allow total freedom to the child, yet the discipline is interwoven in the child.

Now this would go to make a better society. We cannot change this world, but we as individuals, as parents, we can definitely change our environment. So when we say "charity begins at home" that has nothing to do with money. Perhaps something, yea, Ok. But that's not the totality of the meaning of that word charity. "Charity begins at home" means to improve the environment so that it becomes so charitable that it allows the law of grace to flow freely. We open the windows and the fresh air comes in.

Good. Well, I think we've about done it. Let's see something here. There are three fellows, this Spaniard, Englishman, and an American. All woke up that morning with the same dream. They all dreamt that they were millionaires. They woke up feeling millionaires, lovely dream. So they asked the Spaniard, "If you have the million, what would you do?" He says, "Well, I'm going to build a bull ring." So they asked the Englishman, "What are you going to do with the million?" So the Englishman says, "I'm going to build myself a castle cawstle, sorry." So then it came to the American, his turn to say what he was going to do with the million. So the American said, "I'm going to go to sleep again and see if I can't make another million."

Oh well.

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