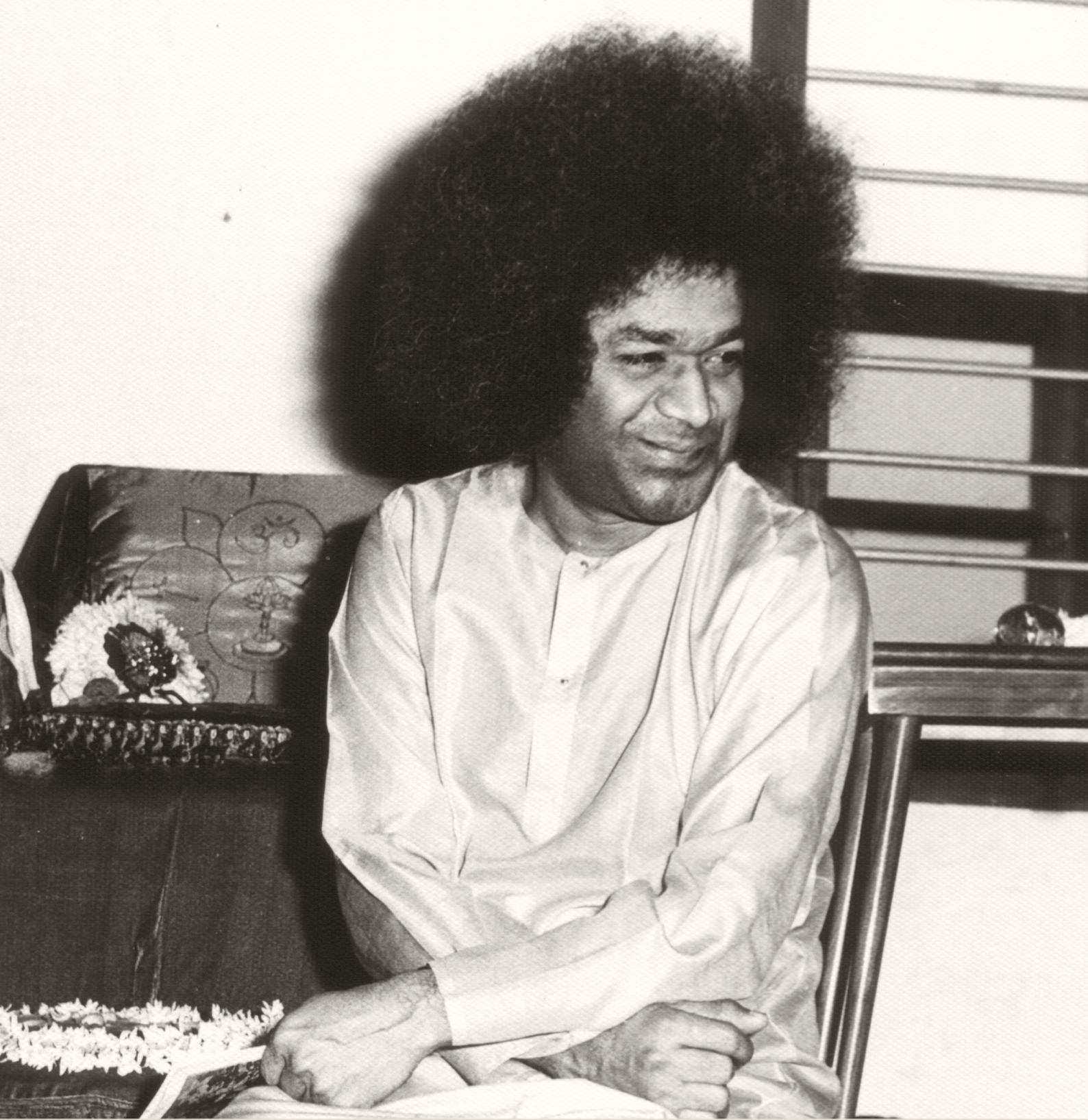


Ceiling On Desires

*A metaphysical reconstructive insight into
the modern-day problems of humanity*



Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations, India



Nature is more progressive than man, and to protect Nature, man has to exploit it within limits. When man tampers with Nature recklessly, it reacts adversely and trouble arises. In order to protect Nature, man has to practise ceiling on desires. He should not trigger the negative aspect of Nature.

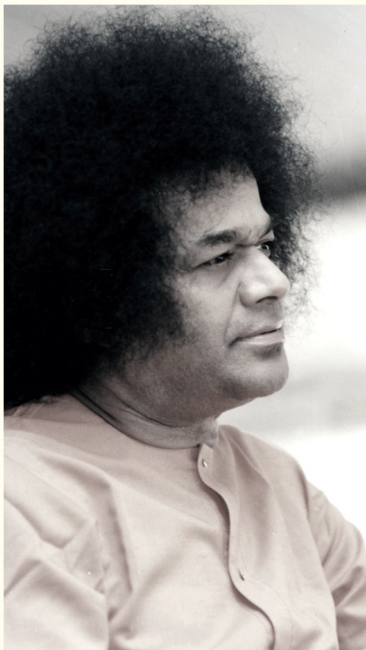
In this respect, scientists have no concern for the harmful effects that may accrue to society by their inventions. They do not care for the welfare of mankind and go on making use of intelligence to produce their weapons of destruction. Care should be exercised in providing comforts, as excessive comforts may spoil man's mind and cause misery instead of happiness. "Na Shreyo Niyamam Vina " (Nothing good can be achieved without certain restraints).

Sri Sathya Sai, Divine Discourse, 21 January 1993

INTRODUCTION

Man is making every attempt to be happy. Who does not want to be happy? However, this quest for happiness always appears to be endless. We are happy one moment and the next moment happiness fades away. He, thus, gets perplexed and agitated at the futility of his efforts.

The prime reason for this is that man has not been able to truly understand the meaning of 'Happiness' and is, therefore, ignorant of how it can be attained. He relates happiness with the satisfaction or fulfilment of his desires and is thus ceaselessly engaged in the pursuit of acquiring or amassing objects of comfort and pleasure, thinking that they are capable of granting happiness. Of course, they may appear to make him happy, but it is a mere delusion as such pleasures are very short-lived and in turn, only contribute to a craving for



One always seeks happiness by trying to satisfy one's desires. If a desire is fulfilled, one feels joy, and when it is not, one feels grief. But the trouble is, desire is a bonfire that burns with greater fury, asking for more fuel. One desire leads to ten, and one exhausts oneself in trying to exhaust the demands of desire. One has to be turned back from this path of never-ending desire to the path of inner content and joy.

- Sri Sathya Sai

Divine Discourse, 14 December 1958

further pleasures or comforts. Real happiness results in contentment and not further craving for pleasure.

In his misguided quest for this illusory happiness coupled with a self-centred approach, Man has today endangered his own survival by recklessly exploiting nature and usurping the happiness of his fellow human being.

Man thinks that he can be happy at the cost of the happiness of all others. He does not realise that it is only a myth. An individual cannot remain happy without all others around him being happy. Each individual is a unit of this creation and every one of us is strung together with each other by the invisible cosmic thread of universal consciousness just as the beads of a rosary are strung together with the thread which is not visible but is the fundamental truth and basis of the rosary. Therefore, if one bead suffers or struggles for survival, the existence of the rosary and consequently the other beads is verily threatened.

DESIRES - WHAT ARE THEY?

Sri Sathya Sai Baba says, ***"Desire is like the shadow caused by the morning sun; it gets longer when you run to catch; it makes you a fool."***

To understand the nature of desires, we must understand how they are born. Desires are essentially born in our mind when we interact or come in contact with the world through our senses. The primary nature of desire is that it never gets satiated. A desire when fulfilled breeds more desires. You fulfil one, and you have many more automatically born. It is a bonfire that burns with greater fury, asking for more fuel. If not controlled, they continue to manifest themselves manifold and

are capable of ruining human life.

UNCONTROLLED DESIRES AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES

If we deeply contemplate, we will realise that desire is the sole cause of sorrow and distress. Any unfulfilled desire steals away peace and creates an imbalance within, making us restless to the extent that we lose discrimination and end up fulfilling the

desire even through undesirable means. Thus, desires are capable of leading Man astray.

Most often, desires ultimately turn into greed and result in anger. It is the fuel for the furnace in which attachment, ego and jealousy are produced. Thus, out of the six enemies of Man that keep him away from progressing on the path of righteousness and happiness, desire lies at the bedrock and that is why Sri Sathya Sai Baba says, *"Desire is storm, Greed is whirlpool, Pride is precipice, Attachment is avalanche, and Ego is volcano. Discard desire and you will be liberated."*

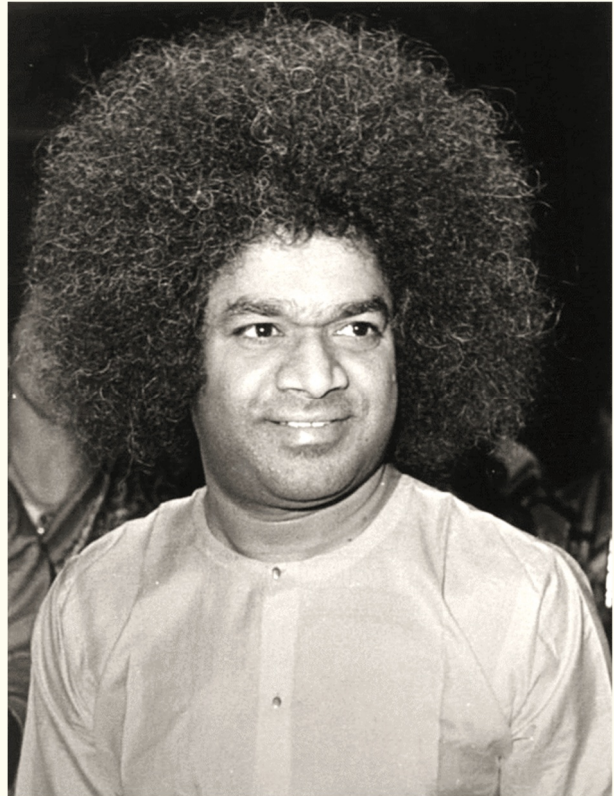
DESIRES AND MOTHER NATURE

Man is intrinsically related to nature and human life is sustained only through the inherent balance in nature and its elements.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba reminds us, ***"Man is a limb of society, society is a limb of nature, and nature is a limb of the cosmic form of the Lord, and all are just one."*** Thus, every action of Man affects nature, be it positive or otherwise.

Every desire that a man tries to satisfy, entails the consumption of natural resources. Resource consumption is therefore a function of the number of desires, the attachment to satisfy desires and the capability to consume. Thus, the more the number of desires, the more the toll on the natural resources. With a population of nearly 7.8 billion people and each trying to satisfy one desire every day, can we comprehend the extent of demand and exploitation of natural resources that takes place daily?

According to the Ecological Footprint Metric, which compares the resource demand of individuals, governments and businesses against Earth's capacity for biological regeneration, humans use as much ecological resources as if we lived on 1.75 Earths. (<https://footprintcalculator.org>). Yet, we remain indifferent to the plight of mother nature.



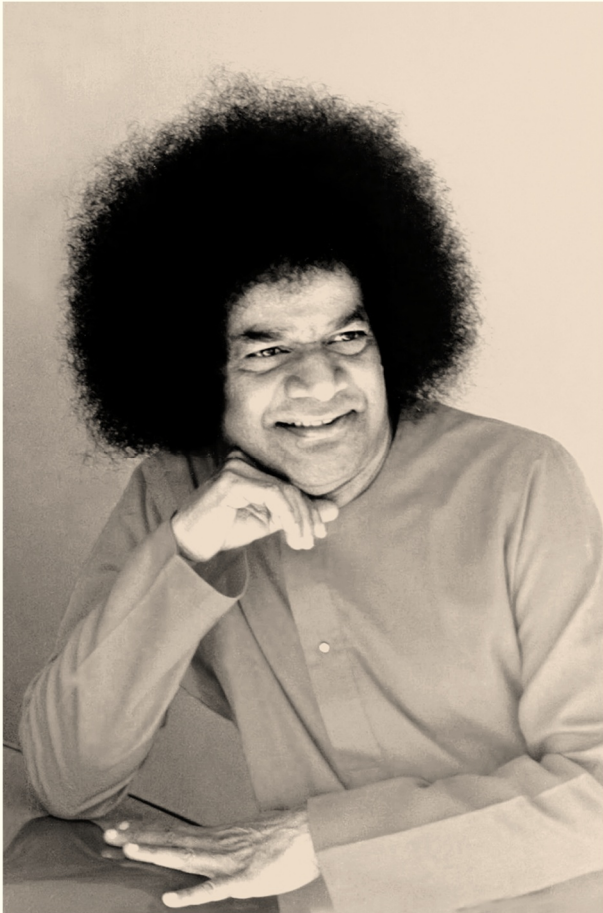
The mind has no independent identity of its own. It is a conglomeration of the desires that sprout from the impulses. A cloth is essentially a bundle of threads. Threads, in their turn are basically cotton. Similarly, desires arise from basic impulses and the mind is constituted of these desires. Just as a piece of cloth disintegrates if threads in it are pulled apart, the mind too can be destroyed by the eradication of desires.

- Sri Sathya Sai
Summer Showers in Brindavan, May 1979

Mahatma Gandhi rightly said ***"The earth has enough to satisfy everyone's need, but not enough to satisfy anyone's greed"***.

While Sri Sathya Sai Baba has always emphasised the need for ensuring balance in nature and its five elements and its susceptibility to Man's conduct, experts off-late, widely agree that human activities are harming the global environment. Since the Industrial Revolution, the world economy has grown dramatically. Overall, this is a success story since rising incomes have lifted millions of people

out of poverty but it has been fuelled by increasingly unmindful consumption of natural resources. Rising demands to meet the needs of nearly 7.8 billion people have transformed land use and generated unprecedented levels of pollution, affecting biodiversity, forests, wetlands, water bodies, soils and air quality.



Today scientists are interested in new inventions. The advancement in science and technology has also led to imbalance in Nature. As a result, there are earthquakes and no timely rains. Science should be utilised only to the extent needed. Science has its limitations, and crossing those limits leads to danger.

- Sri Sathya Sai

Divine Discourse, 21 February 2001

It is remarkable to note, that before the Industrial Revolution, people had to look after the environment around them because that's where they got their products from and if they didn't look after it, they would face the consequences. Now

with globalisation, there are massive environmental impacts but we are under a misconception that we are insulated and therefore remain indifferent.

If we turn to the latest statistics that have been released as part of 'The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2022' published by the United Nations, which reviews the progress of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development using the latest available data and estimates to track global progress of the 17 Goals, out of which six goals are related to Environment and Green Jobs, we will realise that Man's conduct has been totally in contrast with the promises that he has made. For the sake of brevity, the statistics are not presented here. However, the report can be sourced from <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2022/> and the summary overview through infographics can be referred to at https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2022/SDG_report_2022_infographics.pdf.

The result is that the resources of our planet are depleting at a rate faster than they can be replenished. Therefore, it would not be wrong to state that, **"Humans are the real threat to Earth"**. We may not be doing it on purpose, but our presence is harming our environment. **Whatever**

Once a greedy person owned a duck, which used to lay a golden egg every day. One day, he ripped open the stomach of the duck thinking that he would get many golden eggs at a time. Today man also is indulging in such foolish and greedy acts. Instead of being satisfied with what Nature is giving him, he aspires for more and more, and in the process, he is creating imbalance in Nature.

- Sri Sathya Sai

Divine Discourse, 21 February 2001

we do affects everything around us – our air, our water, the land, our natural resources and even the animals. Did we fail to realise that the Earth's supply was not infinite? It would rather be more appropriate to ask ourselves - Have we

been careless and insensitive towards our planet and its well-being in the pursuit of fulfilling our demands and wants?

CEILING ON DESIRES - THE ONLY SUSTAINABLE & EFFECTIVE SOLUTION

If we analyse the evolution of the problems that mankind is faced with today, we will certainly agree somewhere that it is the insatiable and limitless desires for comfort and pleasures that are responsible for the gloomy state of affairs. The spiritual quotient, which is founded in the ethos of righteous living and used to be an integral part of our daily living, has been eroded by our unending and indiscriminate pursuit of fulfilling our desires. This is at the root of man's irresponsible and insensitive way of living.

According to Ernst Friedrich Schumacher, a German-British statistician and economist who is best known for his proposals for human-scale,

You have to exercise a ceiling on your desires. There are rules for a ceiling with regard to land and property. But you have no ceiling on your desires. Ceiling on desires means exercising control over them. You can be happy once the desires are controlled

- Sri Sathya Sai
Divine Discourse, 14 March 1999

decentralised and appropriate technologies, "The problems of our civilization can be traced to a failure of metaphysics, the loss of a "vertical dimension," which means that while we have the answers to all kinds of technical questions we no longer know how to answer the question, "What am I to do with my life?" The task of the current generation, is, therefore, one of metaphysical reconstruction." (Schumacher E.F, 1977, A Guide for the Perplexed, Harper and Row).

"Krishna taught Arjuna, 'Desire and anger, born of rajas are the greatest enemies of man. They stifle his innate goodness. Out of the three basic traits in man, the rajasic and the thamasic traits oppose his interests. Kama or desire, derived from Rajas, knows no satiation, even as a raging fire does not. It shakes man's inner poise and leads him astray. It creates a breach in man's heart and enters therein. After its entry, anger and the attendant vices join the invasion and steal the jnana rathna (jewel of wisdom) kept therein.

"Desire makes man forget his real nature and reduces him to the status of a beast. It robs him of all his virtues and jeopardises his honour and reputation."

- Sri Sathya Sai
Summer Showers in Brindavan, May 1979

The toll of Man's Desire on Environment

- Every year, we extract an estimated 55 billion tons of fossil energy, minerals, metals and biomass from the Earth.
- The world has already lost 80% of its forests and we're continually losing them at a rate of 375 km² per day!
- At the current rate of deforestation, 5-10% of tropical forest species will become extinct every decade.
- Every hour, 1,692 acres of productive dry land become desert.
- 27% of our coral reefs have been destroyed. If the rate continues, remaining 60% will be gone in 30 years.
- We have a garbage island floating in our ocean, mostly comprised of plastics - the size of India, Europe and Mexico combined!

Source: <https://www.theworldcounts.com/stories/environmental-degradation-facts>

While the Indian ethos, from time immemorial, has always centred around this metaphysical essence, its endorsement from modern-day western intellectuals is only a testimony to the fact that in order to be effective and sustainable, true solutions



Your life is a long journey. You should have less luggage (desires) in this long journey of life. Therefore it is said, "Less luggage, more comfort, makes travel a pleasure." So, ceiling on desires is what you have to adopt today. You have to cut short your desires day by day. You are under the mistaken notion that happiness lies in the fulfillment of desires. But, in fact, happiness begins to dawn when desires are totally eradicated.

- Sri Sathya Sai

Divine Discourse, 14 March 1999

have to be found in the deeper insights of spirituality and metaphysics, that are enshrined in the cultural heritage of this land of Bharat. This goes without any debate as all our endeavours based on worldly pragmatism and sophistically crafted theories or approaches, as is evident from various

information that is in the public domain, have miserably failed both in restoring the glory and dignity of our planet as well as in ensuring peace and happiness for man, which is his most basic need and true nature.

Wherever you look today, there are only desires, desires, and more desires. Put a ceiling on these desires! Only then will your mind become steady. You say, "I want this, I want that," etc. Thus you develop many wants. They are like passing clouds. Why should you multiply your wants, these passing clouds? Ultimately, nothing accompanies you at the time of your leaving this mortal body.

- Sri Sathya Sai

Divine Discourse, 25 December 2008

The fundamentals of the required solution, therefore, have to be undoubtedly crafted around controlling the human mind and putting a ceiling on desires. This would entail a drastic change in the outlook and the lifestyles of modern man. It will automatically contribute to a better happiness quotient in one's life while also restoring the balance in and glory of nature. Hence, control of desires by Man lies at the bedrock of any sustainable solution.

CEILING ON DESIRES - HOW?

While knowledge of the root cause is important the problem to address it, the 'how' aspect of the solution is equally significant, if not more.

'Waste not; Want not' is the mantra given by Sri Sathya Sai Baba which is the underpinning of the concept of 'Ceiling on Desires'.

'Ceiling on desires' does not mean that one has to give up all desires in life or achieve complete annihilation of desires. Based on the dictum of 'Waste not, Want not', the concept revolves around two fundamental pillars as stated below:

Pillar I : 'Needs or Wants' - exercising control over excessive desires

Pillar II : Conservation and efficient use of resources

The first pillar calls for detachment and refraining from unnecessary indulgence in worldly or materialistic pleasure while the second

There is a limit for everything in this world. There is nothing without limit. In fact, the world is a "limited company". What will happen to the limited company if it crosses its limits? Hence, everyone should conduct himself within his limits. When a doctor prescribes a particular medicine to a patient, he also indicates the dosage. If the patient takes the medicine without regard to the dosage and exceeds the limit, he may contract another disease. Similarly, God has set a limit for every individual. But modern man has limitless desires. It is necessary that he keeps his desires within limits. He will be put to great danger if he exceeds this limit out of his ego. Whether it is the individual or society or the world, all should observe the prescribed limits.

- Sri Sathya Sai

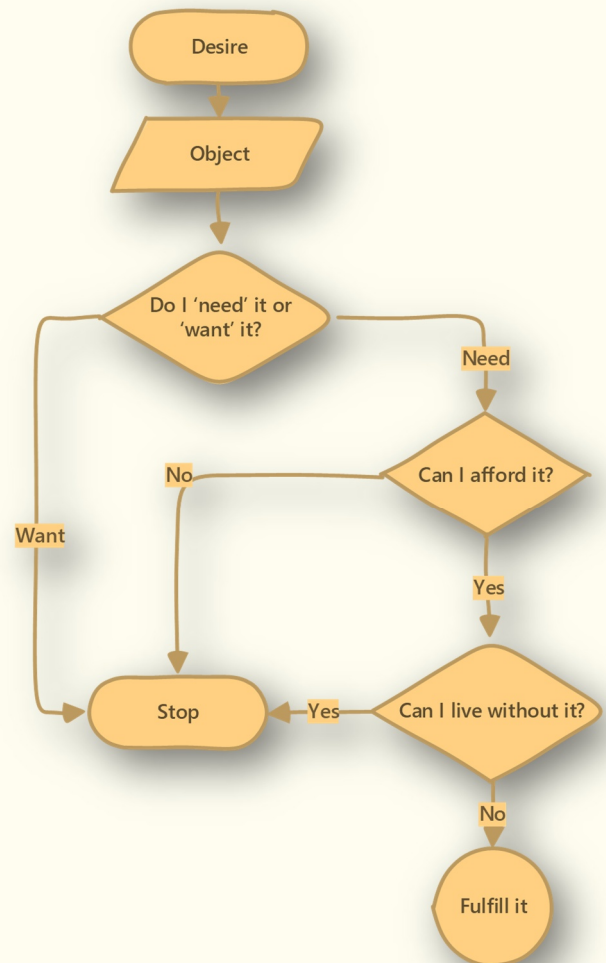
Divine Discourse, 02 May 2006

underscores the need for being responsible and sensitive in consuming resources. One relates to drawing a 'contentment threshold' while the other relates to adopting a more disciplined way of life.

Practising Pillar I

The contentment threshold for every individual is different and there is no single metric that can define it for everyone. This requires personal judgement, sincere introspection and a strong determination to refrain from gratifying the desires that provide momentary pleasure but ultimately result in increased craving; or desires. These, if not fulfilled do not affect our living and can therefore

be done away with. For instance, when a new model of a mobile phone is launched, one may get tempted to acquire it despite having a working mobile phone or when one sees a very attractive saree or dress, one may get enticed to purchase it, irrespective of the fact that he/she may already have enough sarees or dresses to lead life comfortably. Both may be avoided.



Decision Tree for practicing Pillar I

Of course, if left unsatiated, these desires may cause discontentment and restlessness which is a 'natural' consequence and is related to disciplining the mind by exercising sense-control. Such discontentment is bound to wane gradually and the 'contentment quotient' is bound to increase.

Thus, fundamentally speaking, we need to differentiate between our '**Needs**' and '**Wants**'. '**Needs**' should be assessed judicially and addressed

through righteous means but 'Wants' should be curbed even if one has the wealth to afford it. Gradually, we should work towards decreasing our needs as well. It is not a one-day exercise but a way of life that is critical to our collective survival and happy living.

Practising Pillar II

Under this pillar, judicious use and avoiding wastage of resources is how the concept of 'Ceiling on Desires' aims to address the problem that is looming over mankind today.

To understand it objectively, we must first correctly comprehend the meaning of the word 'Waste'. Waste generally means 'spending thoughtlessly or using inefficiently or inappropriately'. Thus, in the context of Ceiling on Desires, 'Waste' would encompass inefficient use of any resource that is at our disposal. 'Inefficient use' would mean, using or consuming the resources in excess of what is essentially needed or required. For instance, one needs two chapatis but three are cooked and to avoid wasting it, the third chapatti is eaten. In this scenario also, would it amount to waste? The answer is 'yes'. Prevention of waste of resources does not only mean preventing them from being thrown away without being used. It also includes using or consuming those resources in excess of what is optimally required, and this is intrinsically related to the first pillar where we have highlighted the necessity to discriminate between 'Needs' and 'Wants'.

Waste of resources is also directly linked to the impact of our living on the environment and nature. Environmental destruction takes place when people consume more than what they need.

To practically imbibe this practice in our daily living, four key focus areas need to be emphasised:

- i. Do not waste Food; consume optimally
- ii. Do not waste Money, spend it diligently
- iii. Do not waste Time, utilise it effectively
- iv. Do not waste Energy, conserve it assiduously

The first ceiling on desires is "Don't waste food. Food is God." Your body is made of food, and you are the result of the food eaten by your parents. Food is God. Eat as much as it is necessary to eat. But do not throw away food by taking too much on your plate. By wasting food you will be wasting the energy divine.

The second instruction is "Don't waste money. God is wealth." Since God is wealth, misuse of money is evil. Practice charity by gifting away money, food, clothes, houses, etc., instead of misusing money in extravagance. Misuse of money is not only evil but a sin as well. The third instruction is "Don't waste time. Time waste is life waste."

God is exalted as time. He is beyond time, transcends time and is the embodiment of time. Spend the time by using sanctifying words. Do not waste time. Wasting time is wasting God.

The fourth instruction is "Don't waste energy." People waste their energy by indulging in bad thoughts, seeing bad things, hearing bad things, and taking bad actions.

The right royal road is the following:

See no evil—see what is good.

Hear no evil—hear what is good.

Speak no evil—speak what is good.

Think no evil—think what is good.

Do no evil—do what is good.

By translating the above instructions into practice, you will be sanctifying your time.

– Sri Sathya Sai

Divine Discourse, 24 March 1993

If Man can practise these four principles in his daily living, not only will the environmental issues be addressed forever, but he will also be able to elevate himself as happier, contented and a better human being compared to what he currently is.

Let's understand these in a little more detail.

Do not waste Food; consume optimally

Food is considered as God for it sustains life. It is the main source of man's life, body, mind, and character. Despite the abundance of resources that our planet has, millions of people go without food daily. Hunger and poverty are the two major issues that the Sustainable Development Goals 2030 adopted by the United Nations aim to address. The divide is so big that on one side there are people in the society whose lavishness knows no boundaries while on the other side, there are many who do not know when they will have their next meal.

As per the United Nation's latest report on Sustainable Development Goals, around 14 percent of the world's food is lost after harvest, up to - but not including the retail stage of the supply chain, and an estimated 17 per cent is wasted in retail and at the consumption level.

This food loss and waste account for 8 -10 per cent of the total global GHGs (Green House Gas) - contributing to an unstable climate and extreme weather events such as droughts and flooding. These changes negatively impact crop yields, reduce the nutritional quality of crops, cause supply chain disruptions and threaten food security and nutrition.

Thus, the wastage of food is inherently related to the overall well-being of the earth and humanity. When we waste food, all the resources used for growing, processing, transporting and marketing that food are wasted too. *We must not forget that even those having enough money to secure meals for themselves and their families are affected by the wastage of food.*

When it comes to Food, the following cautions may be integrated into our daily lives:

1. Eat only what you need to eat.
2. Don't be greedy
3. Do not take more than you can eat and waste the rest
4. Share food with those in need

Do not waste Money, spend it diligently

Money is one of the primary basis for our living. Without money, one cannot think of even getting water today, leave aside other fundamental needs of life.



Don't waste money. God is wealth." Since God is wealth, misuse of money is evil. Practice charity by gifting away money, food, clothes, houses, etc., instead of misusing money in extravagance. Misuse of money is not only evil but a sin as well

*- Sri Sathya Sai
Divine Discourse, 14 March 1999*

However, instead of treating money as a necessity, Man tends to seek money and power in his pursuit of success without realising that it may be getting in the way of the things that really matter - happiness and love.

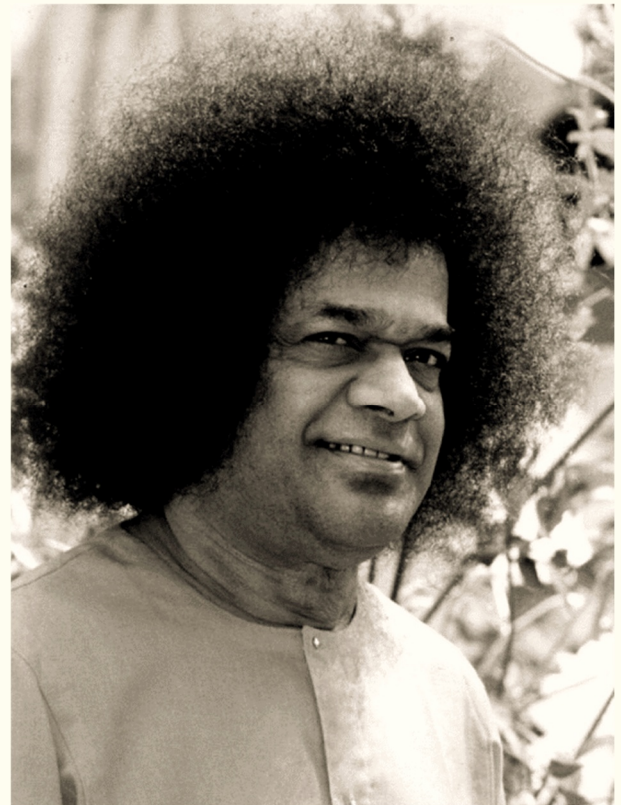
The 'addiction', if it can be called as, of amassing wealth and its unrestrained spending makes Man blind to the universally accepted truth that after a certain level of income that can take care of basic needs and relieve strain, wealth makes hardly any difference to overall well-being and happiness and, in turn, only harms well-being. Scientists have proved and it is well-accepted that there is no direct correlation between income and happiness.

While money is essential, it is also important to realise that money if not used in moderation, impacts our sense of morality, our relationships with others, and our mental health too. Psychologists who study the impact of wealth and inequality on human behaviour have found that money can powerfully influence our thoughts and actions in ways that we are often not aware of, no matter what our economic circumstances may be.

Injudicious use of money acts as fuel for our desires and results in their exponential multiplication. Thus, restraint in spending money is one of the key aspects of putting 'Ceiling on Desires' into practice.

A few pointers that may help us in ensuring that money is used diligently are:

1. Plan your essential expenses and set a budget; strive not to exceed the set amount.
2. Do not spend on things that are not needed; put an end to making impulsive purchases
3. Do not spend all that you earn; put some money into savings
4. Do not take loans for unproductive expenses; avoid credit cards
5. Help others in need.



Today our lives are tainted by a desire for wealth. Wealth makes a man intoxicated and mad. Money is necessary but it must have a limit. Excessive money can be harmful to the 'mind'. It is more difficult to spend money than to earn it. It is even more difficult to take care of money. This difficulty has an advantage - put the money to good use by spending it for the rural folk and people in distress. It is not 'Dhanamoolam idham jagath' (money is the basis of this mundane world) but 'Dharmamoolam idham jagath' (righteousness is the basis of this world). If money grows, unrest also grows.

- Sri Sathya Sai

Divine Discourse, Ugadi, 28 March 1979

Do not waste Time, utilise it effectively

'Time and tide wait for none!' is the age-old saying. ***'Time waste is life waste', says Sri Sathya Sai Baba.***

We all have time to either spend wisely or waste and it is our decision that determines the outcome but once passed, the moment is gone forever. Time is the yardstick of life. Seconds become hours, hours become years, years make ages and so on. Thus one should not waste this most valuable resource called 'time'. Time lost in wasteful pursuits cannot be regained by any means.



Today we waste time on unnecessary and unwanted things, in indulging in unnecessary talk and doing meaningless actions. In all these actions we are sacrificing the body to time. Instead we should try to make time our servant. It means spending our time in good thoughts and good deeds. Every second of your daily existence you must ask these questions: "How am I utilizing time? Is it for a good or bad purpose?"

- Sri Sathya Sai

Divine Discourse, 14 July 1984

Though we all fully understand this, we are unable to practice this important virtue and often struggle in its attempt.

Wasting time creates ripple effects by jeopardising important priorities in life. It is important that we consciously start the practice of putting time to proper and effective use early in life. It is through spending time that we acquire or attain anything in life. Therefore, spending time in unproductive, unwise or fruitless acts or tasks not

only takes away other better opportunities but also affects our mind and body negatively.

It is only by making use of time for satiating our desires that we contribute to their multiplication. Hence, to curb desires, we not only need to stop allocating the resource of time to useless and uncalled-for desires but use it wisely for those that would yield positivity and satisfaction. This way, we can devote more time for undertaking good and worthy pursuits and also sanctify the time at our disposal by engaging in service activities to help others with a pure and unselfish spirit.

A few pointers that may prove beneficial in this endeavour are:

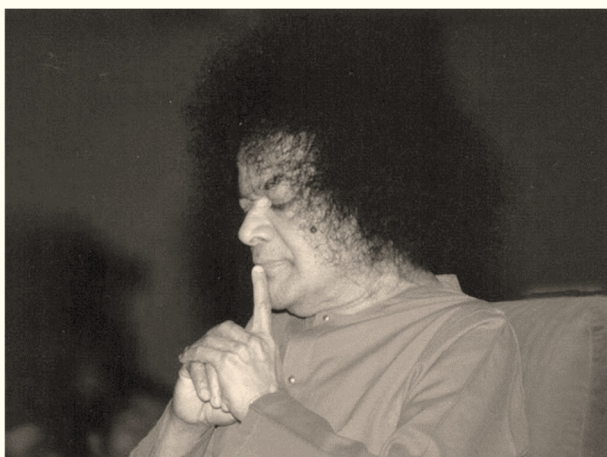
1. Prioritise and allocate time according to priorities
2. Plan properly; poor planning is a time waster
3. Avoid procrastination; in doing something, the hardest task is to get started.
4. Think about what regrets you might have for not accomplishing something that you ought to
5. Avoid unnecessary indulgence in social media
6. Allocate some time for service activities and helping others.

Do not waste energy, conserve it assiduously

Energy is one of the most wasted resources available to Man. Man is unable to comprehend that by making a proper use of energy, he can achieve the impossible.

For the contextual purpose of Ceiling on Desires, we may bifurcate energy into two categories viz. External and Internal.

External energy refers to such forms of energy that are available to us for consumption such as electricity, fuel, gas or any other form that is derived from the consumption of natural resources. It goes without saying, that misuse or excessive use or wastage of external energy is certainly a dangerous practice that takes an unnecessary and insurmountable toll on the environment and nature. Thus, we should, by all means, not only stop wasting it but concertedly and proactively ensure the conservation of energy.



Do not waste energy! Energy is God. Today, students are wasting a lot of energy through unsacred vision, bad thoughts, bad hearing, and excessive talk. Our body can be compared to a radio. When the radio is turned on continuously, the cells get discharged quickly. Likewise, if you indulge in excessive talk, you will be losing a lot of energy. That is why the ancient sages and seers used to observe silence. So, conserve energy by observing silence at least one day in a week. I often tell the students, talk less and work more. Only then the latent energy develops. This was the sole aim of sages and seers in undertaking various spiritual practices. Once the latent energy develops, your memory power as well as the power of concentration will increase.

– Sri Sathya Sai

Divine Discourse, 21 November 1999

Internal energy refers to our inherent energy that is physical, mental and spiritual. We waste our inherent energy by indulging in excessive talk, seeing bad or undesirable things, hearing bad things, speaking evil, thinking evil thoughts, and doing evil deeds. These, in turn, pollute our minds and we lose discrimination, which is the fundamental basis for righteous living. Thus conservation of internal energy is extremely critical for responsible and righteous living and is, therefore, an important factor for practising Ceiling on Desires.

A few pointers that may help us in conservation and preventing the wastage of energy are:

1. Do not leave any electrical equipment like fan or light etc. running unnecessarily.
2. Do not always use your car to commute. Make use of public transport, where feasible pool, the commute to save energy.
3. Do not indulge in gossiping or speaking about others.
4. Practice silence whenever possible and if feasible, for a day, every week.
5. Control and avoid anger
6. Indulge in good thoughts
7. See good, be good, do good
8. Read good literature.

Call to Action: Individual Social Responsibility

When nations and governments are grappling with the seemingly unending crisis for survival, the concept of 'Ceiling on Desires' given by Sri Sathya Sai Baba is the only feasible, sustainable and effective solution. If we revisit the 2030 SDGs, we will realise that each of the SDGs can be addressed and achieved by practising Ceiling on Desires.

The current state of the world is like that of a house that has been put on fire by its inhabitants without having any means to put it out. In such a situation, when the vision of mankind is blinded by the black fumes of this fire, the message of Sri

Sathya Sai Baba is the only means that is capable of extinguishing the fire that is engulfing mankind and restoring normalcy.

In the following simple words, Sri Sathya Sai Baba gave humanity, the eternal way of living peacefully and purposefully:

*"When there is righteousness in the heart,
there is beauty in character;
When there is beauty in character,
there is harmony in the home;
When there is harmony in the home,
there is order in the nation;
Where there is order in the nation,
there will be peace in the world."*

Thus, the journey towards a better world has to begin with the individual. Despite the efforts of the governments and all other international bodies, unless the individual transforms, thinking of reforms will be merely daydreaming! **Hence, the call for Individual Social Responsibility.**

Yes, you read it right – Individual Social Responsibility! Governments, in order to augment their efforts and to ensure synergy, have been trying to imbibe the virtue of social responsibility by the corporates by bringing in, or rather imposing on them, the concept of 'Corporate Social Responsibility' whereby corporates are made socially accountable to themselves, their stakeholders and the public. However, the missing link in this chain is the 'Individual'. It is the individuals that constitute or make up the corporate. In fact, the individual is the most basic unit which permeates and surpasses the 'corporates'. Hence, unless each Individual acts responsibly towards the society, the distance between the dream of achieving the result and reality shall ever keep increasing.

Therefore, if the solution to the current situation is to be ensured, each one of us should evaluate our contribution or otherwise, to improving the environmental conditions as well as our spiritual quotient, daily. An indicative list of **Individual**

Social Responsibility Indicators is annexed to this document to promote the first step in this direction by each one of us. This is merely an indicative list prepared to provoke more such indicators by everyone that may vary from person to person.

We must acknowledge that without each one of us taking responsibility and becoming accountable for our thoughts and actions, Mankind cannot take the 'U-turn' from the path of its own destruction. Individual Social Responsibility will result in the metaphysical reconstruction of mankind and ensure that Man is able to lead a purposeful and meaningful life and realise the main purpose of living.

In the modern world, every person tries hard to attain peace. Peace cannot be attained by spiritual precepts, nor can it be obtained from a market as a commodity. It cannot be acquired even by knowledge of the texts, or a high position in life. Peace can be attained only by God's grace.

Though man is eager to attain peace, he confronts many obstacles in the path. Those who travel by train may be well acquainted with the slogan "Less luggage, more comfort, makes travel a pleasure." Now, man is burdening himself with limitless desires. Because of this extra heavy luggage of desires, he finds it extremely difficult to carry on the journey of life. By such proliferation of desires, he loses his balance, moves far away from his goal, and even tends to go mad.

It is for this reason that I have been stressing the need for ceiling on desires. By limiting your desires, you can attain peace to a certain extent. You have to exercise a check on your desires and make efforts to get the grace of the divine.

- Sri Sathya Sai
Divine Discourse, 25 April 1998

ANNEXURE: INDIVIDUAL SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY INDICATORS*

Resource	Indicative questions
Food	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is my plate left clean without any food going to waste after I have finished eating? 2. How often do I overeat? 3. How much of the food that I eat is unprocessed, unpackaged or locally grown? 4. How often does my household trash contain perished food or food items that could not be consumed? 5. Do I share food with the needy and the hungry? 6. Do I keep the tap of the wash-basin open while shaving or applying soap on my face or brushing my teeth? 7. Do I throw water as waste? 8. Can I reduce the amount of water I consume in taking a bath?
Money	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Do I have more pairs of shoes or other similar items than I can actually survive with? 10. How many watches do I have? 11. How many mobile phones do I use? 12. How often do I change my mobile phone? 13. How often do I purchase household appliances or electronic gadgets? 14. How frequently do I eat out? 15. How often do I purchase new clothes? 16. Do I regularly use my money for helping people in need? 17. What is the amount of money that I think I can save annually by avoiding unnecessary expenses? 18. What percentage of my earnings do I save regularly?
Time	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 19. How regular I am in completing my tasks on time? 20. Do I procrastinate? If yes, how often? 21. How much time do I spend daily on various social media platforms? 22. Do I spend time on tasks or pursuits that can be avoided or are unnecessary? 23. Do I allocate time for good deeds and service activities? 24. How much time do I spend reading unnecessary literature or novels?
Energy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 25. How often do I indulge in gossiping or talking ill about others? 26. Do I spend time watching unnecessary things on TV or other platforms? 27. How often do I get angry? 28. Do I think of harming someone? 29. How much time do I spend praying and thinking good of others? 30. For what amount of time do I practice silence daily? 31. How much paper or plastic do I recycle? 32. How far do I travel by car or motorcycle each week? 33. Do I drive where I can easily walk? 34. When I travel by car, how often do I carpool? 35. How much of my total travel do I undertake on public transportation? 36. How many hours do I fly each year? 37. How many hours of air conditioners do I use that can be avoided?

*This is merely an indicative list prepared to provoke more such indicators by everyone that may vary from person to person.

“Doctors know that the body temperature is normally 98.4 degrees. If this temperature goes up to 99, they say fever has set in due to some disorder in the body. We inhale and exhale at a normal rate. If there is a slight increase or decrease in the rate it indicates disorder in the body. Changes in the pulse rate or blood pressure also indicate disorder. So you find that if you cross the limits even to a little extent it is dangerous or harmful to the body. There is a limit for everything to function in a normal way. When your eyes happen to see a flash of lightning or a flash light while taking photographs, they automatically close because they can't withstand such high illumination. Ear drums also cannot tolerate hearing beyond a certain volume and we close our ears or keep cotton inside the ears. Our life thus is a limited company! Similarly our desires also should be limited.”

Sri Sathya Sai

Divine Discourse, Jan 19, 1983.



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