

Let us adorn the new year 2021 with the sentiment of forgiveness

- a) *Whatever be the nature of the offence and whosoever be the offender, completely eradicating every trace of vindictiveness, despite having the power to retaliate, and wishing that the offender be exempted from all punishment in this as well as in the next world – such a sentiment is known as ‘forgiveness’.* (Translation of the Hindi commentary for Chapter 10, Shloka 4 from ‘Srimad Bhagavad-Gita : Tattva Vivechani’, published by Gita Press, Gorakhpur)
- b) Having read *Paanch Anand Bindu* (‘Five points for attaining bliss’) by Shri Dharmendra Mohan Sinha (Revered ‘Nanaji’), we are all well aware that any adverse behaviour received from others is nothing but a result of our own past deeds, which is now being served to us through the divine dispensation of God for our ultimate good – and thus it is foolish to think that someone else has committed any offence towards us. At the level of the intellect, we accept these principles – indeed, sometimes we even delude ourselves into believing that we have forgiven such a person. However, in the depths of our heart, in the recesses of our memory, we continue to harbour feelings of hatred, anger and enmity towards such a person – and on receiving such adverse behaviour again, these memories and grudges immediately resurface with great intensity and we fall prey to the same vicious thoughts. As a result, the wedges in relationships are driven deeper and deeper, even as our heart desperately yearns for a lasting solution.
- c) Lasting victory over these vicious thoughts can be obtained by contemplating on the guidance offered by Most Revered Radha Baba in these translations of excerpts from his article ‘Maanasik vish aur uske tyaag ke upaay’ (Poisons of the mind and how to get rid of them) published in the book ‘Satsang-Sudha’ by Gita Press, Gorakhpur :
- i. *These poisonous sentiments (animosity, hatred, enmity, anger etc.) are such that they stick to us across countless births, burn us incessantly, torment us in countless ways and force us into the heart-wrenching agony of births and deaths innumerable times.*
 - ii. *The moment a sentiment of animosity or enmity towards someone arises ... at that very instant, subtle thought-formations of a correspondingly vicious nature get created within us ... As soon as these thought-formations are created, they immediately travel towards the person against whom such thoughts are directed ... On reaching the destination, they cling to the aura of that person, and if similar seeds (latent sentiments of animosity) are already present there, then they act as catalysts and trigger similar sentiments of hatred in that person too.*

- iii. *Therefore, it is extremely important to completely eradicate these vicious sentiments from within. Else we will forever burn, and will never be happy ... Therefore, it is critical that we expunge them. However, it is not possible to expunge them by mere talk. In order to put these to rest, we have to proactively engage in focused sadhana ... For this, first we must firmly believe that these qualities are truly like dangerous poison for us and worthy of being expunged at the earliest.*
- iv. *After this, one must engage in sadhana. Whenever a tendency of animosity towards anyone arises in us, at that very instant, without losing a moment, one must awaken feelings of love towards that person within ourselves ... Even before the possibility of anger arises, one must start contemplating on thoughts of forgiveness and nurturing them. As a result, whenever anger raises its head by force of habit, it will be surrounded by feelings and thought-formations of forgiveness. Let us take a moment to think – when we commit an offence, don't we desire that 'nobody should be annoyed with us, we should be forgiven'? We have no idea as to how many offences we commit every day, every moment, against God? If God chooses not to forgive us, what would be our condition? ... So the lesson to be learnt is that if we know we are prone to getting angry, then with great alacrity, we should constantly strive day and night to cultivate feelings of forgiveness within ourselves ... These feelings of forgiveness will never fail to bear fruit; on the contrary, they will not only make us calm but will undoubtedly wash away such flaws in others as well.*
- d) In 'Srimad Bhagavad-Gita : Tattva Vivechani' (in Hindi), the meaning of Shloka 13 in Chapter 12 states that **a true devotee is one 'who is forgiving, i.e. who allays the fears of the one who has wronged him.'** This meaning resonates with a beautiful message that it is not enough to merely resolve one's own mental turmoil and hold on to thoughts of forgiveness. Along with this, **one must actively strive to allay the fears of the other person as well. By expressly communicating one's feelings of affection and concern, by being demonstrative of one's love, it is necessary to reassure the person that we do not harbour even an iota of negative emotion towards him. In this manner, when the minds of both parties – our own as well as that of the other person – are at peace, only then should the process of forgiveness be considered complete.**

So in this new year, let us all firmly resolve that in each and every one of our relationships, particularly those where there is even a little bit of ill feeling, enmity or grudge, we will without fail complete this entire process of forgiveness. Only then will our coming year be adorned with the sweetness of harmonious relationships and devotion to God.
