



Habits and Vows

(Since June 1995, people around the world began to eagerly await for the weekly note of practical wisdom from Sri Sri. It started out as a simple exchange with people wherever Sri Sri was travelling. Later, people began to add a weekly “news flash” to convey the events surrounding Sri Sri on his extensive travels.

Sri Sri gave this knowledge sheet on July 30, 1995 in Brookfield, Connecticut, United States of America.)

How to get rid of *vasanas* (impressions)? This is a question for all those who want to come out of habits.

You want to get rid of habits because they give you pain and restrict you. The nature of a *vasana* is to bother you – bind you – and wanting to be free is the nature of life. When a soul does not know how to be free, it wanders lifetimes craving freedom.

The way to come out of habits is vows.

A vow should be time-bound. For example, suppose someone says, “I will quit smoking;” but cannot do it. He can take a time-bound vow not to smoke for five days. If someone is used to cursing and swearing, he can take a vow not to use bad language for ten days.

Don’t take a vow for a lifetime – you will break it immediately! If you happen to break it anyway, don’t worry; just begin again.

When you fulfill your vow, pick a new starting time and renew it again. Slowly increase the length of your vow until it becomes your very nature.

This is *samyama*. Everybody is endowed with a little *samyama*. When the mind falls back into its old patterns, two possibilities can happen. One is, you feel discouraged, you blame yourself, and you feel you have not made any progress. The second possibility is that you see it as an opportunity for *samyama* and feel happy about it.

Bad habits will clog you and drain your life energy. Without *samyama*, life will not be happy and disease-free. For example, you know you should not eat three servings of ice cream or eat ice cream everyday. If you do, you will get sick. Just give a positive direction to your life energy and you can rise above any habit through *samyama*.

All those habits that bother you, bind them in vows, in *samyama*. Take a time-bound vow today and make a note of it. If you break a vow, make a note of it and share the time and date at the next Satsang. Continue it again. Tie those habits which bring you pain in *samyama*.

