

The Ultimate Guide on **RELATIONSHIPS**

Series of talks by Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar



The Ultimate Guide on Relationships

Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar

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Love

is not an emotion or an act.
You are made up of a substance called love.

Love is not saying,
"Oh, I can't live without you".
That is not love. Love is what you are!
The more you get centered,
the more your life is filled with love.

– Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar –



A note of thanks to
Gurudev for being the
guiding light in every
aspect of life.

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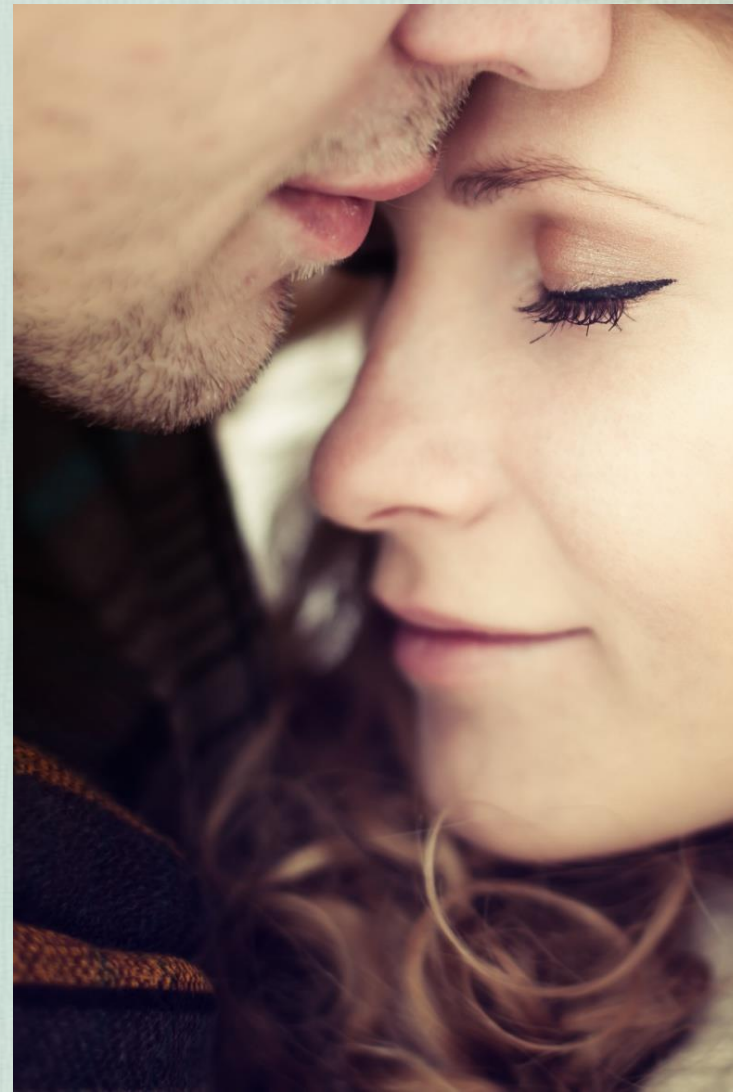
Entering Relationships

Entering Relationships

The Secret Behind Everlasting Love

There is confusion and chaos in the world in the name of love. Love with wisdom is eternal bliss. Love with selfishness or love for individual pleasure, sooner or later will bring misery and heartbreak.

If you are in love with somebody don't think that it will be forever, unless and until there is knowledge or wisdom in it. If your love is there to help others, nobody can destroy it, but if your love is to get something from the other, sooner or later, it will be broken into pieces.



Love with selfishness or love for individual pleasure, sooner or later will bring misery and heart break.

Find out what you think love is. Do you think love is only for getting pleasure from others?

If yes, then it is going to bring you pain. But if your love is there only to care, and you cannot be without it, then that is what true love is. It is your own nature. Then your relationship will be nurturing and it will last longer.

So, if you are entering a relationship, go with the attitude:

“I am going to be a part of this person, give whatever I can, and contribute whatever I can to this person’s life”.



What is love?

We need to understand that love is not all wiggly wiggly and mushy mushy, "Oh I can't live without you, I love you so much", and so on. It is not that. That is just an emotional something. Love is beyond this, and indescribable. You can't describe it, and there is not a creature on this planet who doesn't know it.

Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar explains What Love Is.



Building a Perfect Relationship

Love with Wisdom
is hat Makes Love
Eternal.

Without wisdom, without an understanding of love, and without an understanding of who we are, love becomes a fleeting experience.

Here are some pointers to develop a love soaked with wisdom, offering us a chance to build a perfect relationship with our loved ones:



#1 Always
Maintain Your
Lovingness

You feel a lot of love for someone and they don't receive it, what do you do?

- Get frustrated.
- Turn the love into hatred and wish for revenge.
- Again and again remind them how much you love them and how little they love you.
- Become fussy and cranky, or throw tantrums.
- Feel humiliated and try to protect your respect.
- Resolve never to love again.
- Feel hurt and mistreated.
- Try to be aloof and indifferent.
- Have patience and change your expression of love.
- Be centered and limit your expression of love. Sometimes over-expression of love puts people off.
- Take it for granted that they love you too and accept their style of expression. Like a mother's love which is the same irrespective of the child's behavior.
- Turn your demand into gratefulness. The more you are grateful in life, the more love comes your way.
- Know that hurt is part of love and take responsibility for it. When you move away from your center, you will definitely get hurt. The nature of worldliness is misery.

You have seen that none of these work. They only make the situation worse.

What is the way out of this? How do you maintain your lovingness?

One must maintain a positive outlook towards the expression of love. It's a delicate thing. You cannot force someone to love you. It's impossible. It's also impossible to force yourself to love somebody. It all has to dawn from within in a natural and delicate manner. This is where you need skill, and the skill comes to you from wisdom.



#2 Extend a Helping Hand

When there is great love, you take total responsibility for any

misunderstanding. You may express dismay for a moment on the surface, but when you do not feel dismay in your heart, you arrive at a perfect understanding.

You are in a state where all problems and differences slide away and only love shines through.

You can never see the holes in the ground from the top of a hill. From a plane the earth looks so smooth. So also, from a state of elevated consciousness, you do not see the pitfalls in others. But if you come to the ground

you always see the holes. And when you want to fill the holes, you have to see the holes. And when you want to fill the holes, you have to see them. You cannot build a home being airborne. You cannot till the land without looking at the holes, filling them, removing the pebbles....

That is why when you love somebody, you find all the faults in them. But finding faults destroys love. Instead of filling the holes we run away from them.

When you love somebody and see their faults, stay with them and help them fill the holes. This is wisdom.



#3 Express Just Enough Love

When there is a lot of love, we should not express our love too much. Love and admiration can become a burden, and when this happens, people try to unburden themselves by running away from it. Many love relationships fall apart

because of this - one partner expresses too much love towards the other, and the other is not able to handle it, and runs away!

Love should be planted like a seed. If you sow the seed too deep into the earth, then it won't sprout. And if you keep it on the surface of the mud, then also it won't sprout, it won't take roots.

We should take a middle path - express a little, but not too much.

We shouldn't talk too much about love because it is inexpressible, actually! Excessive expression diminishes our depth, luster and serenity.



#4 Be Centered

Have you noticed what you do when you find something beautiful, or when you love something? You want to hold on to it and possess it.

Trying to possess love robs the beauty from love and makes it ugly. Then the same love gives you

pain. Whenever you love somebody, you try to dictate terms to them. In a subtle way, you try to control them.



Love is the most powerful thing on the planet. Do not let anybody, any situation, any cause, or any reason destroy that

Whatever you try to control, hold on to or manipulate, turns ugly because the little 'I' in us itself is ugly. When you try to possess something, your love is lost.

Love that has a fear of losing somebody or something does not blossom. It becomes ugly, and jealousy comes. As long as you stay caught up in this pettiness, there is no joy, happiness, or peace.

You need to learn a new way: to love and still be centered!





Making It Work

Making Relationships Work

If you know how to row a boat, you can row any boat.

But if you don't know how to row, changing boats isn't going to help. Similarly, changing a relationship does not necessarily solve the issue. Sooner or later, you will be in the same situation in any other relationship, because in all relationships, what is most important is your understanding of your own emotions, your own mind, your own ability to be stable,

and your own ability to see things from a broader perspective. And for this, wisdom is important, because it is wisdom that gives you strength, stability and a broader perspective in life.

Most of the time, we look elsewhere for a perfect relationship; very few look within themselves, at the place from where they relate. To have a perfect relationship, you first need to see how you related with yourself.

Why don't you look inside?
You cannot correct the other person but
you can definitely correct yourself.

You need to look inside. It's your limited awareness of yourself and the limited experience of love that encapsulates you in a tiny compartment where you start suffocating in relationships.

Love is not an emotion or an act; you are made up of a substance called love. Love is not saying, "Oh, I can't live without you". That is not love. Love is what you are! The more you understand this, and the more you get centered in yourself, the more your life will be filled with love.



Love with wisdom is eternal bliss. Here are some pointers on how to bring forth the wisdom when relating to loved ones:

#1 Let Go of Control

Many have a problem of letting go of control. This results in anxiety and restlessness, and it sours relationships. Wake up and see, are you really in control?

What are you in control of? Perhaps a tiny part of your waking state! Isn't that so?

- You are not in control when you are sleeping or dreaming.

How to Relate Wisely in Relationships

- You are not in control of thoughts and emotions coming to you. You may choose to express them or not, but they come to you without your prior permission!
- You realize that most of the functions of your body are not in your control, and the same for your life and the whole universe.

Similarly, do you think you are in control of all the events in your life or in the world? That is a joke!

When you look at things from this angle you need not be afraid of losing control, because you have none!

Whether you realize it or not, when you let go of your sense of control, that is when you truly relax.

Your identification of being

somebody does not let you relax totally, and it keeps your domain limited.

#2 Have a Sense of Reverence

Whatever you revere becomes bigger than you. When you have reverence in your relationships, then your own consciousness expands. Then even small things appear to be significant and big. Every little creature appears to be dignified.

It is the reverence in every relationship that saves the relationship.

Often you do not have reverence for that which you own, and losing that reverence happens unconsciously. Reverence in ownership frees you from greed, jealousy and lust. Cultivate the skill of having reverence every moment of your life.

#3 Annihilate Conflict

When you are in a harmonious environment, your mind picks up any excuse to be in conflict. Often small things are enough to create a big turmoil. Have you noticed this?

When your survival is at stake, you don't complain that nobody loves you. But when you are safe and secure, you start demanding attention. Many people create conflict in order to get attention. So ask yourself this question:

Do you seek harmony in every situation, or do you seek to widen the differences and prove your righteousness?

#4 Have Common Goals

When two lines move parallel with each other, they can go on together forever. But when the two lines are focused on each other, then they cross and go away from each other. The same is true with relationships.

When both partners have a common goal in life, that makes their

relationship last longer and brings more harmony.

But when they are focused on each other, then they pick on each other; they love and hate, and all the fights happen.

If you can accept all the fights, all the misunderstandings, all the differences, all the diversities and move on, then you grow together.

#5 Know That You Have More Love Than You Deserve

You should always feel that you are not worthy of the love that you receive. Think that the love you receive is much more than what you deserve. If you come from this space of humility, then you will behave with magnanimity and dignity in all your dealings. You won't chew on the past, you will live in the present moment, you will honor the other's opinions, you will understand the other's predicaments; that magnanimity will come from within.

If you keep this in mind, that I don't deserve this love, you will not demand love. And when you don't demand love in your life, it keeps on increasing.

#6 Leave Some Room for Them to Give

Relationship means adjustment, it is giving. But at the same time, leave some room for the other partner to give. This needs a little skill - to make the other also contribute without demanding.

If you demand, the relationship is not going to last long. Demand and blame destroy love.



Marriage Advice

Institution of Marriage



Marriage – A Sacred Institution

Life energy, like water, needs two banks to flow. When water flows between two banks, it has a direction. Similarly, life force needs a direction, and the bank that gives it direction is commitment. Marriage is one such commitment.

Marriage is a commitment to share one's life and care for another. It helps one to come out of self-centeredness. In a marriage, you cannot always think about only yourself. After being married you have to also think about your spouse. If you want to go on a vacation, you cannot just wander around, you have to consult your better half, and all decisions need to be taken in consultation with one another.

Marriage means sacrifice. Sacrificing your desires for the good of the other. Marriage is compromise

Marriage is a very sacred institution where you tell your partner, "All my desires I give to you and I take all your desires". So each one has the responsibility to fulfill the other's desires and not their own. Growing in marriage is growing in responsibility, and love and responsibility go together.

Be Committed to Serve Together

Marriage is also that institution of commitment to serve the society together. If you are married only to serve yourself, then you start demanding from each other, and demand destroys love.

If you both have a goal to serve society, to make a difference in the world, then it is like two parallel lines that can move together till infinity.

Then, there is satisfaction; life finds a fulfillment.

Secrets to a Happy Marriage

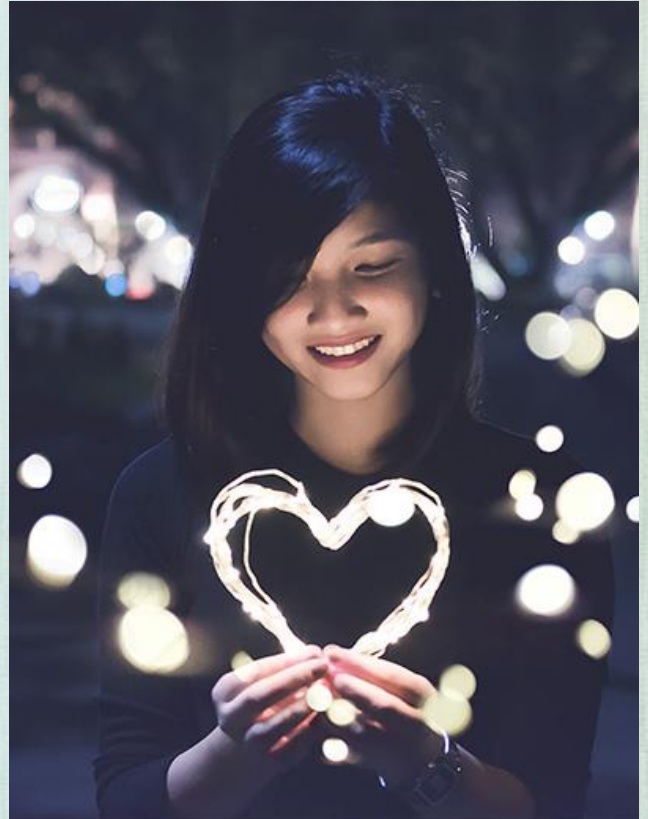
Every love relationship can mature and become devotion. It happens in a marriage of many years as well, people become so devoted towards each other. Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar talks about secrets to a happy marriage.



Do's and Don'ts to a Happy Marriage

#1 Don't Police Each Other.

Don't doubt your spouse's sincerity, or be suspicious. Sometimes, people call their spouse's office and find out what time they left work. Don't do this. Don't be suspicious about them. If someone doubts your sincerity and love, and you would have to prove it to them again and again, isn't that a big burden for you? Know that love is difficult to express and don't be suspicious, because suspicion and fear will bring you misery which in turn brings dejection and disappointment.



#2 Don't Demand Proof of Love

Do not ask your spouse, 'Do you really love me?' You should not ask such questions. Even if you have a doubt, don't

ask for proof of love, instead you should ask, "Why do you love me so much? You love me so much more that what I really deserve!" When you say this, your love grows.

Always remember, demand destroys relationships. Any demand on any one person will destroy that relationship, so do not demand.

You are here on the planet only to give and contribute, not to take.

When you take this step, you will see that whatever you need will simply come to you; you will receive ten times more of whatever you need or desire. This is the law of nature.



#3 Don't Go on Complaining

Many times when one spouse comes back from work and is exhausted, the other will complain and taunt them by saying, "You did not do this", or "This is not right", etc. So they end up facing problems at work and also at home.

Similarly, if one spouse does not work, but stays home, and the other comes back home in the evenings and does not share quality time with them, how will they feel?

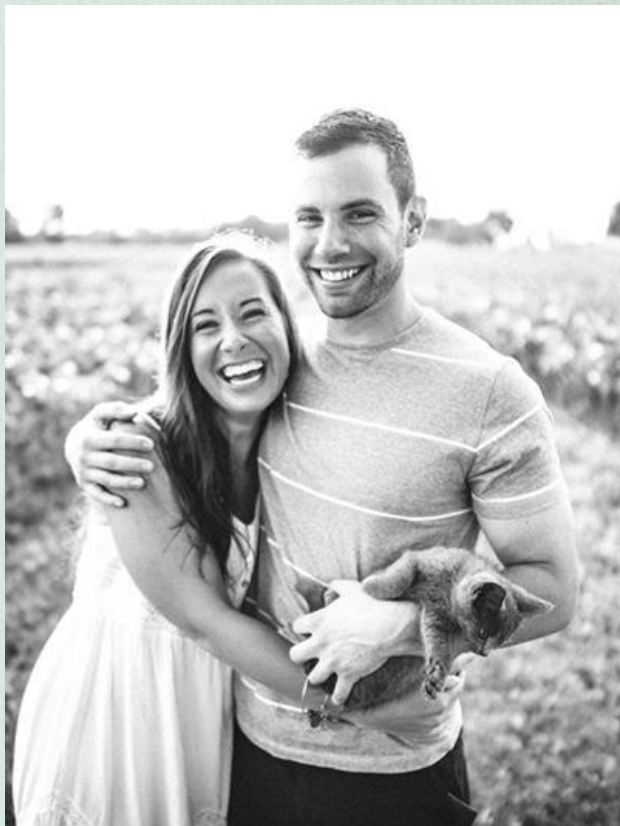
There needs to be understanding from both sides.

If a person comes and sits next to you, or if you sit next to someone who goes on complaining about something or the other, and finds faults in everything, do you feel like sitting with them? No!

You feel like running away from them that very instant. When you sit with someone, you want to feel uplifted in their company.

You should have this firm resolve in your mind that whoever comes to me should only go back happier and lighter, no matter what my own condition may be like.

Life is a mix of pleasant and unpleasant times, and it goes on. Do you think that everything will happen to your liking? Will everyone only keep praising you all the time? No, sometimes some people may insult you as well, and you have to listen to that also. What is so disappointing about it? It is nothing. Be strong and brave.



#4 Don't Step on the Ego or Emotions

A person should never step on the emotions of their partner. You need to respect their emotions, and not dictate terms to them. Similarly, you should not step on the ego of your partner. The whole world may say to them that they have no brains, but you should never say

that, or their self-esteem will go down and they will become like that. You should compliment and support them.

Your spouse shouldn't have to prove their talents or competency to you. Instead, with a sense of belonging, give them relief and comfort.



#5 Don't Get Upset at the Same Time

However compatible, no two people can think the same thing

all the time. There will be arguments and difference of opinions. So the best way to deal with this is to take turns getting upset. When one gets upset the other should be quiet. If both get upset at the same time, it is a problem. And if you compete by saying, "You got upset, now I will get more upset than you", then there is a bigger problem. So if one is getting annoyed, the other should keep quiet. The other can take their turn the next time. If you want, you can give back twice as much, but not at the same time and same place. To one bad day, you

can add another bad day, but don't make the days so horrible that you can't continue anymore.

Marriage is give and take, or compromise. You cannot say, "I want it only this way!" You have to let go of your wishes and desires and listen to what the other person wants. You have to compromise. If there is no compromise, then there are arguments.



#6 Don't Make Your Spouse Feel Guilty

Never make your spouse feel guilty. This is very important.

Anyone whom you make feel guilty will cease to be your friend somewhere deep inside. The bond gets loosened. Just imagine yourself in a position where you make a mistake and someone keeps asking for an explanation about your mistake. . It is such a burden to explain to somebody or to justify oneself.

There is a skill in making a person aware of his mistake without making him feel guilty.

However, the normal tendency in human beings is to make someone feel guilty and then feel happy about it.

We have to rise above this normal tendency, and not make the other feel guilty; then your relationship will be longstanding.



#7 Be Willing to Sacrifice

If you only keep thinking about your own wants then no marriage will work. You should see what “we” want. How “we” can progress and bring happiness to the family.

When there is a willingness to sacrifice, and when there is no selfishness in the relationship, then such a relationship becomes very beautiful; there will be a lot of love and peace.

In life, we need to have a sense of sacrifice. Sacrifice brings us great strength. In fact, nothing else can give you the kind of strength that sacrifice does. And the greater the sacrifices, the greater is the strength that comes.

Life is so short so be happy at all times and spread that happiness to everyone around you.

Witty Wisdom

How to Deal with a Difficult Husband?

Adding a little humor to life, Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar suggests ways to deal with a difficult husband.



How to Deal with My Wife's Mood Swings?

A simple solution to a common question, by Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar..

When you understand a person beyond his words that is when a real relationship builds up.



Sex & Spirituality

Sex and Spirituality

The Three Avenues of Sex

This body has come into existence through sex, and sex is the oldest impression in this body. There are three forms of sex:

#1 The Body Sex

The lowest form of sex is the animalistic sex. See even in sex there is a gradation, a growth. So the lowest form of sex is when all focus is on the genital organs. Nothing else is important. One does not care who the person is, but all one's attention is on the piece of flesh. It is like the eagle, it flies so high in the sky but its sight is always on a piece of flesh on the floor. You will find that most people in bars are stuck in this type of sex.



When you consider the basic instincts of food and sex as sacred, then aggression in you disappears and love dawn.

People who watch pornography and all these things, their consciousness, their whole mental make-up is very immature. It is on the level of the animals. It is just bound by the body. This is the basic sex, or the body sex.

#2 The Mind Sex

More grown up and mature people, their sex is not only with the organs of the body, but with some feeling, some vibration as well. It is more on the mental level. Their focus is the not only on the genital organs, but it is the partner that matters more. It is the sense of touch, the companionship that one craves for. It is choosy.

It is not just the body but also the mind that is involved.

The mind has some ideals and concepts.

#3 The Sex of The Soul

The third and the final form of sex is the sex of the soul. It is the mature and refined form of sex, union of the soul. It is the soul's longing to unite with the wholeness, with the entirety.

So sex is permeating your life, permeating the entire creation in one way or the other.

Even for a fruit to grow in a tree, pollination is necessary. The trees, animals, insects, birds, everything is born out of sex. And the supreme form of sex is the uniting of the mind, the soul, and the being within. We call it love.

Overcoming Lust

#1 Signs of Lust

In love even an object gains life. Stones speak to you, trees speak to you, the sun, the moon and the whole creation becomes alive and divine. In lust even a living being becomes an object. You want to use even people like objects. Love and lust are so different yet so close!

- Lust brings tension, love brings relaxation.
- Lust focuses on the part, love focuses on the whole.
- Lust brings violence, love brings sacrifice.
- In lust you want to grab and possess, in love you want to give and surrender.

- Lust says, "All I want you to have is what I want." Love says, "I want you to have what you want."
- In lust there is effort, love is effortless.
- Lust imprisons and destroys, love liberates and sets you free.
- Lust demands, love commands.
- Lust gets you mixed up and confused, in love you are focused and blissful.
- Lust is only dark and monotonous, love has many modes and colors.
- If someone's lust is interrupted they get angry and start hating. Hatred in the world today is not out of love, it is out of lust.
- In lust there is cunningness and manipulation, love is playfulness.



#2 Overcoming Lust

Lust is one of the main botherations that many face. Lust grips the mind, tires the body and dulls the intellect. Lust, when indulged, brings inertia, and when suppressed brings anger. Lust is nothing but primordial, un-harnessed energy. The same when harnessed manifests as enthusiasm, sparkle, sharpness of intellect and love.

What factors can sublimate or transform lust into love?

- Playfulness: People who are in the grip of lust cannot be genuinely playful. When you are genuinely playful, then there is no lust there.
- Generosity: When you realize that you are here only to give and give, and you feel that you are very generous, lust is sublimated. Lust makes one possessive and not generous
- Moderate intake of food
- Remembrance of death
- Cold water showers
- Creative challenges
- Being in love with God

Questions Relating to Sex

Q: I have come to know that sex is not good. How do I get over my desire to have sex?

Why do you think sex is negative? Through sex alone everybody has come to this earth., In the past people have been made to believe “Sex is the original sin”. Sex is not a sin, it is a basic function. Any plant, human, animal, everything comes out of it, and it is okay in moderation. Nothing should be done in extremes.

All that we need to know is that there is a difference between bliss and sex. Sex is energy draining and bliss is energy conserving.

Q: Isn't lust created by God?

God has put these tendencies in our lives for us to rise above them.

Without this there is nothing else in life to do.

We have also been given the wisdom and the tools to rise above them. So the solution has been given first and then the problem. We need to fit the right solution to the problem.

If we don't see the solution but remain caught up in the problem, then that is ignorance.

Q: How do I curb my desire to watch porn?

Yoga, pranayama, meditation change these tendencies in you. It changes your nature. You know that you are not just the body; you are scintillating spirit. With the help of these practices, you find yourself elevated to another level.

Q: I think I am addicted to sex. I have no self-control when it comes to sex.

I think you have too much free time. If you are busy and you work hard, then you will get so tired that you will be waiting to hit the pillow. The moment you hit the pillow you will fall asleep. You either have too much free time or you are eating too much food; then obsessions and addictions come up.

Too much food and sex are related.

So, keep a watch on your food, keep a watch on your company and keep yourself very busy, especially at the age when the hormones play havoc. If you follow the language of moderation then you will be all right.

When you have a goal, or something to achieve, then you do not think about sex. Just ask any student, during exam time are they bombarded with thoughts of sex? They'll say no. For that whole month when they have to achieve something, their mind is fully focused on it. They have a bundle of books to read and to prepare.

So engaging yourself in some creative activity is helpful.

Q: I am gay, is it wrong?

No, if the tendency is in you, just accept it. Why do you want to blame yourself? It is a biological tendency. Why do you have to be ashamed of it? Just accept it! We should not label and blame ourselves. If you have such a tendency, just recognize it and don't feel bad about it.

Q: I want to be honest with my parents about my sexuality. Yet my fear of losing their love and support has been stopping me from being honest with them.

What are you going to achieve by telling your parents? Is it going to make them any happier? When they are not going to be happy, what is the

point in telling them? Think about it. You don't have to pretend to be what you are not; at the same time you don't have to put a bomb where people cannot accept it. You could tell them gradually; prepare them in some way.

You have to study the situation. How fragile are your parents? How unhappy they will become by your saying that? Is it worth being that honest to them if this is going to make them miserable? You need to judge all these pros and cons.

In the ancient days, they used to say,

"Speak the truth but speak the pleasant truth. Don't speak unpleasant truth and don't speak pleasant lies".

This is the perfect balance.

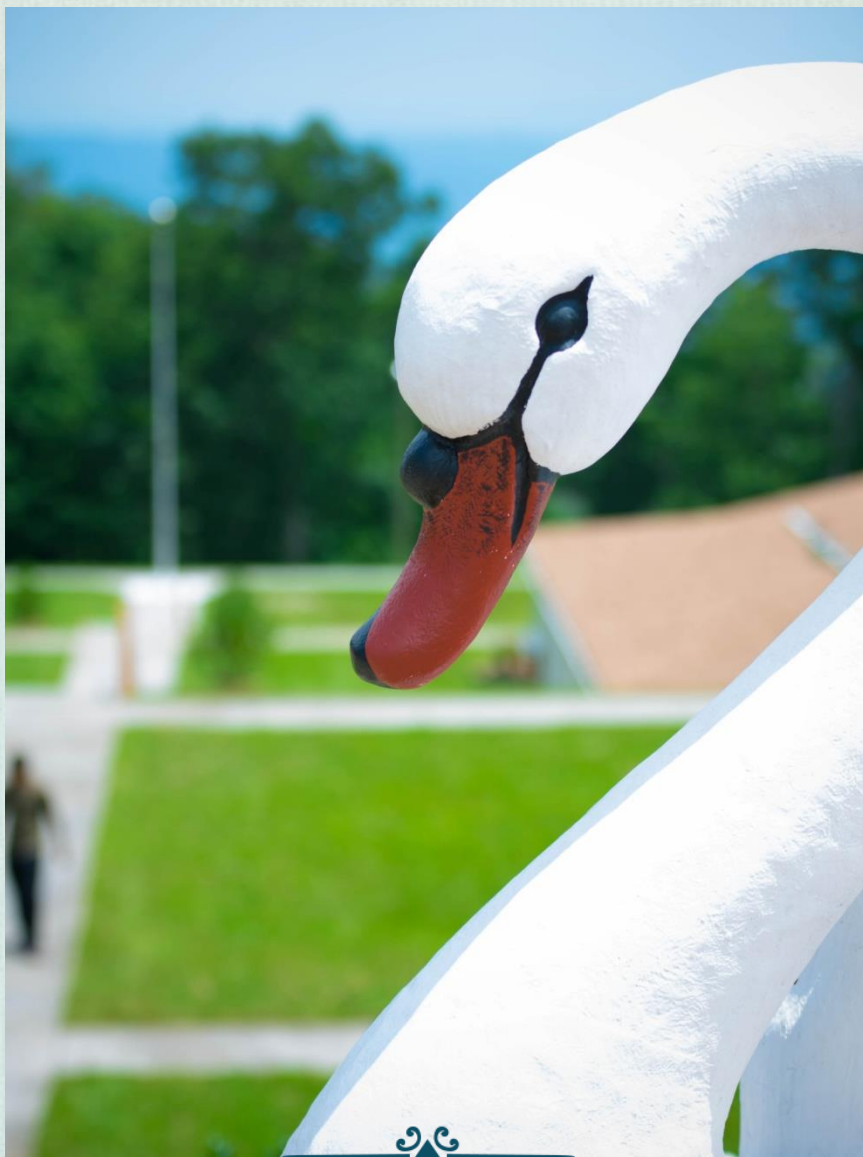


*You should make
this promise today that:
whether it be your friends, relatives,
parents, spouse or siblings,
whosoever comes to you
will leave with more peace and joy.
You will not give them a chance
to complain and
you will make their life happier.”*

– Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar –



All the content
of this book has been taken
from discourses of
Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar.
For any suggestions or comments,
write to us on
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