

CHOICE OF AHIMSA

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Choice

Talk by Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati

This talk is by Pujya Swamiji for 25.46 minutes. This must have been given in Rishikesh for a group who were visiting *Chaar Dhaam* and *Swamiji* is blessing them at the end of the talk. I had transcribed this talk so I thought I should share this with everyone.

“In such a short time Pujya Swamiji has presented from Choice to Common Values to *Ahimsā* to Managing Trustee of the body(!!!) to Caring for oneself and others as *Ahimsā!*” – This is the analysis of a brilliant *mumukshu gurubhai*.

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(by Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati)

If anything has to be taught or learnt, it cannot be universal like a language you learn and that is why it cannot be Universal. In any discipline of knowledge, one has to go through steps of learning. Therefore any knowledge is localized and not universal. But certain things are universal because they need to be universal.

A human being has the faculty of choice. You have to choose what you eat, how you eat, when you eat, whether you want to eat; you have to make a choice. When you respond to a situation, you are supposed to make choices. Sometimes, human beings are impulsive. But one has to be deliberate. This choice making is a human privilege. On this planet, no animal has this privilege. A cow is a vegetarian, not by choice. If you are a vegetarian, in a country other than India you have to make a choice. In India, from childhood you are brought up as a vegetarian and communities for millions of years. To remain a vegetarian we have to make a choice (laughter). We are brought up as vegetarians turning to non-veg. A cow is a vegetarian by choice? Not by choice. Therefore even if a cow goes to America it will remain a vegetarian. If you throw a hamburger to a cow, "You are an American cow." It will eat the sides. It will eat lettuce or tomatoes and leave what is in the middle for a human being. (laughter) In fact what is in the middle is her own sister, okay. It is what they call steak, a dead cow.

What I say, "You have to make choices". When you have to make choices you have to have certain norms for choices. Norms to govern your choice; choice means it can be right, it can be wrong. We don't have a word for good or for bad. We have *saadhu/asaadhu noble/ignoble*. Right

and wrong is always there. In everything there is right wrong. Even while opening the door, there is a right way of turning the key and wrong way of turning the key. Right wrong is always there depending upon what you want. So you have to make right choices. A choice that goes by common value structure - I value, you value and everyone values the same. That common value can be universal only when it is sensed by common sense. Every human being has to make choices, correct?

You make a questionnaire –

1. Do you want to get hurt?
2. Do you want to be cheated?
3. Do you want to be robbed?
4. Do you want to be liked?
5. Do you want to be taken advantage of when you are in a weak situation?

Ask all these questions to yourself and go and ask everybody. Even an Arab, ask him. An Arab is not a bad guy, he is a human being. He is also a human being. He also has a heart. He is not a terrorist. He is a religious person, praying for a religion. What can we do? He is not a bad guy. He is sacrificing for religion. That is why the religious theologies have to undergo change. There is nothing wrong with people.

People are always informed of common values. That I should not be hurt, that I should not be cheated, nobody should rob me nobody should take advantage of me. Everyone is aware of this. One does not require to be taught. You don't need a Messiah to come and tell you this. You don't need a prophet to reveal this. It is commonly known. It is an open book. The problem is some of these theologies do not

accept the common values. They think that you can kill a person if he does not accept a religion. It is religious sanction going against the common values. Therefore values are common.

In the list of values what occupies the prime position is *ahimsā*.

'*himsā*' when you say it is not merely physical violence. There are different forms of violence –

Physical violence, economic violence, social violence, emotional violence, verbal violence, by certain physical actions, by words, by certain economic decisions one can make you can hurt people. When you are in power you can hurt people by enacting a law. It is all violence. Therefore violence is manifest in many forms.

Even suppose, some of you young people I find here go with this dress to your parents, it is violence. If the parents are there it hurts. There are many ways of hurting.

Therefore conformity also is a consideration for others,. It is not weakness. That is non-violence *ahimsā*. Conformity to norms, therefore you don't take people for a ride. You don't disturb people by being what you are as far as possible. Anyway whatever you are you are going to disturb others. As far as possible you lead a life of least resistance, least botheration for others. It is *ahimsā*.

When one takes to a life of *sannyāsa*, the classical form of *sannyāsa*, it is a commitment to *ahimsā*. That is why a *sannyāsī* does not compete. When you compete you hurt. You don't compete - you don't hurt, no competition, a life of caring, a consistent life of caring.

"I cared for this person for so many years but that person does not care for me therefore I don't care." That is not caring. With that consistency you care, you care for not only human life, human

emotions, human dignity. Respect human intelligence. When you talk, respect the other person, other persons reasoning and the capacity to understand; that is important. That is all *ahimsā*.

Ahimsā has shades and finer shades. *Ahimsā* is just not physical non-violence. There are shades of *ahimsā*. Therefore a word that you speak as a teacher, sometimes one may have to as an elder, or mother or father, one may have to raise one's voice. Even a child has its right to self-respect. There is no my child. There is a child, one can say born of me. The mother can say this. That's all nothing more. The privilege of bringing up a child, there is so much consistent caring involved. "My child", you can say. That is why there is no 'my body'. There is a body but it is given to you because you are self-aware. You are a self-aware person and you have that body.

We have a Sanskrit play. In the play there is an object of dispute. The legal object of dispute is body, one's body. *Devadatta* is the person's name. He gets into the box in the court.

He says, "This is my body. I can do anything with this."

There are other many claimants for this body.

Devadatta's mother gets into the box. She says, "This is my body. I brought this body into the world. I bore this body for so many months. I brought this body into the world. I brought up this body. The body belongs to me".

Father says, "I am responsible for this body. I have a claim over this body".

That fellow *Devadatta* is married. His wife gets into the box and says, "My other half – I am in fact the better half. Therefore the body belongs to me by marital right".

Children are represented by Attorneys. They have a claim over this body.

The boss who has appointed *Devadatta* says, "He has taken so much money. He is on our contract. He belongs to us. He has to pay back if he has to get freed".

The State gets into the box. The state is represented by the State Attorney. The State claims, "This fellow is the citizen of this country. We are providing the infrastructure and naturally we have the first claim. At the time of any conscription we will conscript the fellow. In time of need the State has a claim."

Devadatta is an Indian. A lot of amoebas are in his stomach. All these Indian amoebas are living permanently in the stomach and they have a claim. This is inherited property. We live in a co-opt situation. Once you say it is an inherited property nobody has a claim. Amoebas have been living in the stomach and they say it is their inherited property.

(A quote in Tamil) - "*eri enakkennum, nari enekkennum bhoomiyo sari enakkennum*"

The fire can claim, all the carnivorous animals can claim, vultures can claim and all the food that you have eaten so far can claim, wheat can claim, rice can claim, milk can claim, and all the veggies can claim, bananas, oranges and apples can claim. Now you can know if you have been a non-vegetarian, what all animals can claim! Some unknown animals also can claim this body. People eat hot dogs. We don't know what all animals have gone into that - all these can claim. Finally mother Earth can claim, "Finally you have to come to me, *bhoomiyo sari enakkennum*"

Now this fellow says, "This is my body". When all of them claim there is no claim for himself - he says, "I claim this is my body". The court has to decide now. The court is confused. The judge is confused because so many people claim. All of them have got a claim except Mr. *Devadatta*. Everybody has got a claim, mother has a claim, father has a claim and everybody has a claim except *Devadatta*.

Therefore the court said, "We are declaring that this body does not belong to anybody. This belongs to *sircār, bhagavān*. Therefore we are going to appoint a trustee. Is there anyone who is ready to manage this?"

Amoebas were silent as they don't know how to manage. They only know how to destroy. They are parasites. They were silent. Everybody else was silent. To manage this body you should know hunger, thirst, know back pain, know your headache. Nobody can know except this fellow *Devadatta*. He is in a better position to know all this.

Therefore the judge said, "*Devadatta* body, nobody is ready to manage nor has anyone else has the knowledge to manage. He is the one who has to manage. You are given this body to be managed by you. Nobody else is given the knowledge to manage this body. You are the only one who is given, given. This is called given. You are given this knowledge to manage this body. So you are a managing trustee appointed *Tak, tak tak...* You are appointed as the managing trustee."

Therefore, even this body you cannot do *himsā*. It is not your body. You have to take care of it. You can't be a devotee to your body. That is another nonsense. But you have to caring. Caring starts from your body.

Ahimsā starts with your body. *Ahimsā* starts with yourself. Even if you are self-critical you are committing *himsā*. You have to accept yourself as a person. Care for yourself and care for others. That is *ahimsā*. There is so much to learn. This much is enough.

Swami will be teaching. Listen to him properly. Have this good trip. *Chaar dhaam* is not easy and it is not very difficult also. It is meant to be rough okay. It is a rough trip. When we have a special big group there are so many logistical difficulties. These fifteen days are our grace. So, take whatever that comes as a *sādhu* would take - *yadṛcchā lābha santuṣṭah*. Whatever comes our way we will happily accept. Have a good trip and come back. Thank you.

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