

Bodh Vachanaani

Definition of Bodh and Vachanaani

Bodh , in Sanskrit, means perception, knowledge, observation or conception. What one learns from perception or observation and conceptualizing on what is perceived. Our Rishis in the past have observed and thought about a lot of things. Our Rishis are in essence scientists that have observed and studied various phenomena and come to an understanding. This understanding of theirs is given to us. Vachanam means utterance, repeating, recitation, rule, precept, and command. So Bodh Vachanaani stands for commands or rules come through perception and observation. These commands were recorded by the Rishis and passed on to the Gurus who conducted Tapovans and Gurukuls.

In the concluding section of the first chapter of the Taittiriya Upanishad, is a practical guide in the use of knowledge for a productive involvement in the world. After a student has finished his or her studies, the parting advice of the Guru to the student starts with the bodh vachanaani.

Satyam Vada (Speak the truth)

It is simple to say ‘Speak the truth’. Who do you speak the truth to? When do you speak the truth? Do I have to speak the truth always? When is it ok not to speak the truth? This world is complex and not everyone is sincere, so we have to be careful to whom we speak the truth. Some devious people may take advantage of our truthfulness and use that to harm us or others.

The first person you should speak truth to is to yourself. If you have done something wrong, be honest about it with yourself. This is the only way you can slowly start improving yourself. Second, be truthful to God, admit your mistakes to God and ask for forgiveness. You are building a relationship with God and only through truth can you build a stronger and powerful bond. Third, be truthful to your loved ones, like your mother and father. Know that they are here to help you and guide you; only being truthful to them will give them a chance to give you the right advice. Fourth, all people close to you with whom you interact.

Dharmam Chara (Pursue Righteousness)

Dharma is often characterized as righteousness, but it is more than that. It also encompasses philosophy and the way of life; it is the summation of the Vedic ethics. Both Satya and Dharma together exemplify the code of conduct and values spelled out in the immortal scriptures of India. To give an example, think of all the effort it takes to grow some edible grain. First one has to find a good piece of land, then plough it and enrich it with fertilizers. One has to use a good stock of seed for a good crop. One has to look after the plot and keep animals away, weed it regularly, irrigate it at the right times and eventually one will have a good crop. On the other hand, take harmful weed; it does not take any effort for gather a bumper crop of weed. Similarly, dharma (righteousness) has to be carefully tended and cared for, while adharma (unrighteousness) like the weed can proliferate without any effort. Know that Dharma is powerful and eternal so one should implement it in one’s life. There are many examples in our puranas of how one person stood for dharma and God protected them. Those who deviate from the path of Dharma will have to pay a price in the long run. The law of Karma states that the fruit of an action will return and all fruits of bad karmas will wreck havoc on the individual.

Maatrudevo Bhava (Respect mother as God)

Worship your mother as God. As we had mentioned in the discussion of Trikaala Sandhyaa, mother is the one who will do things for you without you telling her. She does not have to cook for you, but she does. She does so many things for you without you even knowing that she did them for you. She does not even ask for a thank you from you for all she does. This is her unconditional love for you. When you are little, since you spend most of your time with your mother, your mother also imparts knowledge to you and in this way sets you on the right path in life. In our scriptures the closest example one can give of God's love for us is that of a mother to the child.

Pitrudevo Bhava (Respect father as God)

Worship your father as God. Traditionally children spend more time with mothers than fathers. Most fathers are to an extent distant from the children, but that does not mean that they do not care for the children. Most fathers earn a living for the family; they do not ask for anything in return. Fathers are also responsible for the children's education and instilling common sense in the children. Most fathers are business minded, to an extent, and they instill this knowledge in the children also.

AAcharyadevo Bhava (Respect teacher as God)

Worship your teacher as God. We all have to ask ourselves what all we get from our teachers, the knowledge they instill in us. With their guidance we learn and learn how to think. The methods of solving problems come from them. The story of Eklavya demonstrates this idea of aacharya devo bhava. Eklavya wanted to learn archery from Guru Drona Aacharya, but due to Eklavya not having the proper credentials Guru Drona declined to be his formal teacher. However Eklavya was determined and so fashioned a murti of Guru Drona, and Eklavya meditated and practiced in front of the murti daily. Eventually, Eklavya became an expert in archery. When one day Guru Drona encountered Eklavya and saw his skills Guru Drona was surprised. Eklavya was so happy to see Guru Drona that he asked Guru Drona to make a request for any guru dakshina he could imagine, to which Eklavya immediately and happily obliged.

Atithidevo Bhava (Respect guest as God)

Treat a guest as God. Since we say that God resides in each one of us, we should treat others with reverence as if we are serving God. To serve is the highest honor, and service with a smile is needed when dealing with others. Remember the Golden Rule "Do unto others what you want others to do unto you." This means to treat others and behave with them in the same way that you would want to be treated or have someone else behave with you. Often we become busy in our lives and begin to feel that an unexpected visitor is a burden upon us or an interference in our schedule. However, it is this principle that is embodied daily by the humblest residents of the smallest villages, with the least resources. It is then that we begin to understand the depth of our culture and values and see how these principles have become ingrained after generations upon generations of constant effort.

Swaadhyayaanmaa Pramadah (Do not waver in Studying)

Do not procrastinate in the study of scriptures. One has to do the right actions in order not to incur sins. Pramadah is often roughly translated as laziness. However we must understand what

this laziness is. Is it just physical laziness? No, there is also our mental laziness when we don't want to think or just blindly follow a pattern of behavior. How does one know what are right actions? Our true, everlasting relationship is with God. Like a mother, God does things for us without us asking Him to do them. The way for us to express our gratitude to Him is to learn his words. This will give us the discretion to do the right actions, which in turn will benefit us.

Shraddhayaa Deyam (Give with faith)

All charity is to be done with sincerity and good intention, the underlying motive being an urge to be of help to the receiver. Thus giving, with the aim of receiving something in return, is not charity. Giving is also to be done with grace, and in a way that is not embarrassing or insulting to the receiver. The giver should not flaunt his wealth, nor should he remind the recipient of his poverty. Usually, the act of giving puts the giver's hand over and the receiver's hand under; an indication of superiority of the giver and inferiority of the receiver. Karna, from Mahabharat, used to pick coins while holding his palms together and then ask the receiver to take from both the hands. This way the receiver's hand was over his hand and there was not the feeling of inferiority by the receiver.

While giving one should have faith in the ability of the receiver to do the right thing with your donation.

The general understanding is giving of wealth, but there are many other kinds of giving. For instance, one can donate his/her time for a worthy cause. One can give rides to the needy is another giving. One can explain their understanding of knowledge to others and this is also giving.

Points:

- Definition
- Why truth is important.
- Dharma protects us.
- Without mothers, we cannot be who we are.
- Fathers do their share of raising us.
- Teachers mold us.
- Guests work on our behaviors.
- Study of scriptures help us have discretion.
- Give with an open heart