

# SATSANG

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Perform Agnihotra • Heal The Atmosphere

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**Total Love Parenting at Agnihotra University – Part III**  
**Modern Medicine**  
**Homa Therapy with School Children**  
**From Vasant's Correspondence**

**Editor**

Vasant V. Paranjpe

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**Cover**

Homa Therapy is used by Sun in Graz, Austria as part  
of her Yoga and meditation classes for children.

# Total Love Parenting At Agnihotra University – Part III

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In previous issues of *Satsang*, Total Love Parenting was introduced as the parenting model which incorporates parenting skills and practices to assist families in living together more harmoniously. Parents experiencing difficulties in addressing day-to-day situations, problems and crises confronting their families are finding, in TLP, skills which help family members communicate with each other. TLP maintains a list of seven basic rules which parents are instructed to learn and practice.

## Seven Rules of Thumb

- Do not find fault with others
- Use your power to discriminate between right and wrong
- Do not look for the fruit of your own action
- Be single-pointed
- Think something good
- Say something good
- Do something good

Following these seven rules enables parents to adopt the ever-positive mind-set required by Total Love Parenting. TLP also incorporates the practice of Homa – a process of removing tension from the atmosphere and from the mind through the use of fire. In families where Homa, followed by meditation, is performed daily as the occasion around which the family gathers, communication, both verbal and nonverbal, is enhanced and an atmosphere of acceptance and encouragement is maintained.

## Parenting Skills

Armed with the positive attitude and atmosphere, families then turn to TLP skills in order to address specific situations which

arise in day-to-day interactions. Skills are simple, logical and sequential. Parents are instructed to master one skill and then move to the next. TLP skills are used in the context of showing understanding. That is, in order for communication between family members to take place, TLP teaches people to show understanding – to let others know that you hear them and understand what they are saying and trying to do.

Showing understanding is a skill basic to most parenting models. TLP expands the concept by teaching parents to show understanding of the good qualities in their children and in the family. This model insists that parents use looking for the good as the primary objective. Parents are taught to identify what is good about what their child is saying or doing, first. Then the parent can move on to examine the situation or the behavior in more detail. Whenever parents are confronted by a given situation, no matter what it is, they have the option of thinking, "What opportunity does this situation or behavior present for me to do some positive parenting or to show understanding?"

Just how do you show understanding? TLP offers a series of simple and sequential skills needed to show understanding. The skills, listed below, are described in turn.

## TLP Skills

- Reflective listening
  - simple direct reflection
  - simple indirect reflection
  - reflection of relationship
  - summary
- Joining
- Reframing

Structuring  
Reinforcement  
Shaping  
Rules, Limits and Consequences

### Reflective Listening

Reflective listening is the skill which enables a parent to show understanding by listening and mirroring what the child is saying. It enables the child, simultaneously, to clarify. While using this skill, parents are open and receiving, not telling and instructive as they will be later in the interaction.

#### Example A

Child: I don't like you anymore.  
Parent: Oh, you don't like me anymore.  
Child: No. You won't let me go out.  
Parent: Seems like you are disappointed because I won't let you go out.  
Child: You always treat me mean.  
Parent: I think you are disappointed and hold me responsible.  
Child: Yes, because I really wanted to go.

#### Example B.

Child: I don't like you anymore.  
Parent: Don't you talk to me that way.

In Example A, reflective listening skills enabled the parent to show that she understood what the child was saying and feeling. It enabled the child to clarify and come to some conclusions on her own about what she was saying and feeling. In Example B, neither the parent nor child were able to understand what the other was thinking or feeling. Neither is likely to feel good about the interaction or their relationship.

### Joining and Reframing

After moving sequentially from one level of reflection to the next, parents are taught to reflect by joining, the skill which enables the parent to select a thing around which a relationship can be established. Joining lets a parent show that he sees the good in what the child is doing and wants to join the child around the child's capabilities, strengths and competencies.

Reframing is an aggressive form of reflective listening in which the parent changes what the child has said in order to reflect the deeper or more positive meaning which the child may or may not see.

Consider the example below and note how reflective listening skills help to address a very difficult parenting situation.

Example: A teenage boy has missed two weeks of school and his father learns about it via a phone call from the truant officer.  
Father: I heard you have not been going to school.  
Child: No, Dad, I'm tired of going to school.  
Father: It sounds like you don't want to go to school. (Indirect reflection. Father is mirroring what he thinks the child is feeling.)  
Child: See, it's like this. I think it's time for me to learn some things about myself and the world. School is a waste of time.  
Father: Sounds like you're telling me that you don't want to return to school, and you want my consent to learn on your own.

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(Father is reflecting what he thinks is happening in the relationship between himself and his son.)

- Child: Yes. I want to learn but not at school.
- Father: First you said you were tired of going to school; then you said school was a waste of time. Now you're saying that you want to learn but you want to learn on your own. (Father has summarized. Now the child is clear that his parent understands what he is thinking and feeling. Father is now in a good position to address issues raised by the situation or behavior.)
- Child: Yes. That's how it is.
- Father: Well, I am very pleased that you are interested in learning. You always were very curious, inquisitive and very intelligent. (Father has joined son around son's capabilities.) You have not been keeping your commitment to good school attendance, but you are demonstrating your interest in learning. I, too, think learning is important. You are intelligent and you are learning. (Father has reframed the son's actions to reflect the good in what the son is doing.)

The above example illustrates the various stages of reflective listening. The father is now in a good position to help the son work

through what needs to be done to correct the truancy and related issues.

### **Structuring**

TLP views parents as adults who want their children to do the best thing and to do as they tell them to do. It views children as younger people who want to do the best thing and sometimes need assistance and direction in doing so. Structuring is the skill which helps the parent help the child do what the parent wants done. A parent wants, for example, the child's room neat and tidy and so she says, "I want you to clean your room." Structuring, however, enables her to say instead, "I want you to place your shoes under the bed and hang up all your clothes."

Structuring is the conscious effort to set the environment in such a way that there will be success. Structuring takes into account the possibility of problems arising and, therefore, teaches parents to build into the system whatever is needed to enhance success. In toilet training, for example, parents 1). make the pot available 2). make it accessible to the toddler and 3). reinforce the practice each time the toddler uses the pot. Parents have the power, through structuring, to make a situation with their children successful.

### **Reinforcement and Shaping**

Reinforcement and shaping are very similar. These skills are essential when parents need to reward the effort being made. In the example of toilet training, each time the child uses the pot, the parent praises the child, thus reinforcing the practice. In the example of getting the child to clean the room by placing the shoes under the bed and

hanging up all the clothes, maybe the child does not do the job completely or maybe he doesn't do it well. Shaping enables the parent to reward the effort. In shaping, the parent selects the thing he wants to grow and develop and then mirrors that. TLP says the parent should reward the effort because the effort was in the right direction; it was good and positive. It, therefore, needs to be shaped. Once a parent learns to use this skill, he/she always has the option of saying to a child, "I see what you are trying to do and I like it."

### Rules, Limits and Consequences

If, after using reflective listening, structuring, reinforcement and shaping, things continue to break down, the parent can use skills related to setting rules, limits and consequences. In every family there are rules. Rules are good because they set limits beyond which members of the family do not go, thus promoting peace and harmony. When, however, someone does not follow the rule, thereby exceeding the limit, consequences follow.

Consequences can be viewed in three distinct categories – natural, related and unrelated.

- Example: The rule in some families is that the children should try to do well in school.
- Natural: Since you do not study algebra each night, you will probably fail and be forced to go to summer school.
- Related: Since you are failing algebra, you must stay in your room

and study for two hours each night.

(Suppose, however, the child stayed in the room for two hours each night and day-dreamed or played music instead of studying algebra)

Unrelated: Since you are not doing better in school, you will not be allowed to go skating for a month.

Consequences should be corrective and disciplined in nature. Consequences should say to the child, if you follow, you will avoid failure. In fact, you will have good results.

### A Final Note

TLP, with its seven rules, Homa and parenting skills, is proving to be an invaluable aid to parents and families. Agnihotra University is providing instruction and certification in TLP. You are invited, therefore, to schedule a TLP Workshop in your area by contacting Agnihotra University, P. O. Box 43288, Washington, D.C. 20009, (202) 797-0877. TLP training and Homa therapy will likely combine to impact on families for years to come.

# Modern Medicine

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Dear Satsang,

I am a frequent reader of *Satsang*, and I have watched its packaging unfold over the years from a mimeographed sheet to an elegant, self-mailing magazine. Recently an article sparked my interest; it was entitled "Back to Mother Nature, Natural Hygiene" (*Satsang* Vol. 10, No. 12; Nov. 4, 1982) and was written by Ramesh Lahiri of Calcutta.

What was arousing about the article was its heated denunciation of both the premises and the methods of modern medicine. Later in the same issue (as in many previous ones), it was reported that, in Bogota, Vasant stated, "It is important we go to the scientists...." Is it not possible that scientists in general and perhaps physicians in particular might not find this sort of thing a little perplexing? What is missing here is that modern medicine is a product of these same scientists.

It is true that there is great diversity of opinion and outlook in the field of modern medicine; this is the hallmark of a healthy scientific community. As history has shown, it is far more fruitful to approach such a community with fresh ideas than one which is truly monolithic. Indeed, what binds scientists together, what motivates them is a

healthy interest in truth and its application to the problems of health. Condemnation of the medical community will not hasten their interest in Homa Therapy. Already a broad variety of unorthodox phenomena and techniques for healing are being explored and evaluated through modern research. Polemics will not impress scientists; but results will.

The premises and methods of modern medicine criticized in the article mentioned above have achieved their pre-eminence for two reasons; first, because they are rooted in natural law, and second, because they work. They were arrived at by the same attitude to which *Satsang* exhorts us: believe what you experience.

The natural laws manipulated by modern medicine are quite specific, and they were discovered, tested, and verified by trial and error; and while this method is not the only one by which truth may come to light, it is nonetheless valid and does get results. To say that in the process human beings are used as guinea pigs is to misstate the case, for while a great many treatments and therapies are experimental, there are entire universes of diseases and disorders for which modern medicine offers virtual certainty of healing



and restored health. Polio, cholera, rabies, smallpox, and a whole host of other diseases have been driven into relative obscurity because of modern medical practice; and in other areas, such as disabling accidents or traumas, a person's chances for survival and return to an active, healthy life have been greatly enhanced. All these were at one time experimental; and nowadays those brave people who underwent experimental treatment for rabies or yellow fever may be seen to have rendered all mankind a great service. But at the time they took their great risk, they could have been described as guinea pigs. Great scientists and healers like Louis Pasteur or Walter Reed were denounced by their horrified contemporaries. But, as it was, they helped refine the fundamentals of that knowledge we describe as science, and they rendered all mankind relief from terrible disease.

Further, to lambast modern medicine as symptom-oriented is very shortsighted. Beyond the abundant evidence that this approach does work for most of us is the fact that treatment of symptoms requires a knowledge and understanding of causes; and when you get right down to it, this is really only dealing with karmic causes on a more

mundane level than most of us are accustomed to anyway.

Finally, to blame it all on the stresses of modern life – its pace, its pollution, and its complexity – and to indicate vaguely that if somehow all this stuff went away we would all get better, does not contribute anything positive. It does, however, indicate a willingness to assign responsibility for our karmic situation to a source other than ourselves.

Underneath all this, of course, is something more fundamental. It is this same scientific and medical community which will investigate Homa therapy and the natural laws which underlie it, and they will do so using the same methods which gave us modern medicine. Their standards of truth are experience and results. While we already know from our own experience that Homa therapy works, they will have to make their own experiments. Would it not be more fruitful to approach them with results, to regard them as partners in a mutual quest for an end to suffering? Perhaps in that way they might be more receptive.

# Homa Therapy With School Children

*Sun, Austria*

*Graz, Austria*

When I met Vasant in the States in December 1981, he told me to teach Yoga, Agnihotra and meditation at Austrian schools. "They will be ready!" he said.

Back in Graz, Austria I inquired at the Private Christian Elementary School "Sacre Coeur" if they were interested in meditation classes for children from ages 6 to 10.

I told them, "In the Yoga and meditation classes the children are given practical aids to reduce their stress, tension, anger and fear. Through simple techniques (physical exercises, correct breathing, etc.) blocked energies are released, concentration increases and the creative aspect is stimulated in order to reach the ideal: a harmonious, happy child."



Over seventy parents sent their children to the classes. The teachers, parents and myself were surprised to see how much the children changed from week to week. I noticed that children of this age seemed to be very receptive to the truth and the higher knowledge represented in the ancient science of the Vedas. When I did Vyahruti Homa with them and asked about their experience, one girl said: "While I was looking at the fire I had a vision of Jesus."

And when I did Om Tryambakam Yajnya with them for the first time, a girl sang the Mantra immediately with me, just as if she knew it already from somewhere.

Most of the children liked to sing the Agnihotra Mantras, which some of them learned within a few minutes.

I also did Agnihotra with the teachers' classes. I explained the beneficial effect of Homa Therapy on the body, mind and spirit as well as the purifying and healing effect on our polluted atmosphere. One of the teachers, after having experienced Agnihotra, said, "If there is a heaven, then it must be like that!"

Kingdom of Heaven is near at hand.

# From Vasant's Correspondence

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You have to rise above these "issues" between you and your husband. All of that is relatively insignificant when you consider all the other levels we exist in. You are getting caught in the web of physical reality and only concerning yourself. What one person said and what actions displeased you, well, there is so much more than that in a marriage as in any other relationship or situation. You have to look beyond the disagreements. We should never criticize the other person for his shortcomings. Only concern yourself with your own growth and not with other person. This is not indifference. It is simply practical as you cannot change another person's behaviour with words and judgements. The only way to effect a change (and even then it is the change they must make, not you) is through purification of atmosphere, through *Yajnya* performed regularly, then purification of thought, word and action, conscious practices of Fivefold Path principles, *Daan*, *Tapa*, *Karma*, and *Swadhyaya*. *Absolutely refrain from judging the other person*, even if you have to say nothing at all, it's better to be silent. When it becomes necessary to speak, then do so with love.

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All this anger is outside and all the love is inside. So now is the time to let it out. Begin in your home.

If anyone says anything bad about you to your face or behind your back, always respond with love. Keep silent and be the strong one. Suppose someone says something bad about you. If you react with anger, then people have reason to believe what has been said is true. Anger reinforces the negative. If you respond with love then people will say,

"This bad thing cannot be true of such a nice person."

If someone says bad things about anyone, you can stay away from that person and still be loving toward him. You can protect yourself because we should not turn our ears toward negative talk. Still if you meet that person you can be kind.

Your work is outlined for you. You know what your work is in this life. This is rare to be told as you have been. This in itself is a blessing, for this is *Vikarma*. Always be grateful.

Now you are progressing. Keep this effort steady. Do all the disciplines as you have been and every area of your life will be touched.

Once you do these meditations every movement is guided. So do them regularly. Then, if you miss a meditation you can sit quietly for a few minutes whenever you realize you have missed it. This will help you to have more clarity of thought. Decisions can always be simple.

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We cannot have disharmony among ourselves. All of us now must try to do the best we can under all circumstances.

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Of course everyone has his karma to work out. *Yajnya* and being guided by a Perfect Master speeds up that Karma.

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Do not concern yourself with what others are doing. You be the example.