

Path to Siva

A Catechism for Youth

Satguru Bodhinatha Veylanswami

Lesson 48



Why Do We Practice Ahimsa?

We practice noninjury.



Our basic beliefs as saivite Hindus naturally inspire us to practice ahimsa, or noninjury.

Because we see God everywhere, we feel a deep closeness and affection for all beings.

We do not hurt.

We would never want to hurt that which we love and revere.

Knowing that God is in every person, every creature, every thing bestows an attitude of sublime tolerance and acceptance.



No one is to be treated badly.

We reject the idea that some people are evil and deserve to be treated badly.

People do act in evil ways, but deep inside they are all divine beings; they are experiencing a difficult part of their evolutionary path.



The law of karma and ahimsa...

The second belief behind ahimsa is the law of karma.

We know that any hurt we cause others will one day return to us.

Being aware of this basic principle, we wholeheartedly practice ahimsa—refraining not only from causing physical harm or violence, but also from hurting others with our words and our thoughts.



We appreciate and respect others.

Such gentleness gives rise to respect, courtesy and appreciation for others.

Noninjury is the product of spiritual consciousness.

Hurtfulness arises from lower, instinctive consciousness: fear, anger, greed, jealousy and hate. It is based in the mentality of separateness - of good and bad, mine and yours.



We never retaliate

We never retaliate.

It is wiser to accept the hurt as self-created karma and respond with understanding and forgiveness; to retaliate would only perpetuate that karma.



Ahimsa does not mean pacifism.

However, ahimsa does not mean pacifism.

We may defend ourself to protect our life or the life of another or turn to the police, who are authorized to use force.

And we support our country's use of military force to safe-guard its citizens..



Ahimsa is also a powerful tool.

Ahimsa is also a powerful tool for changing and improving society and government.

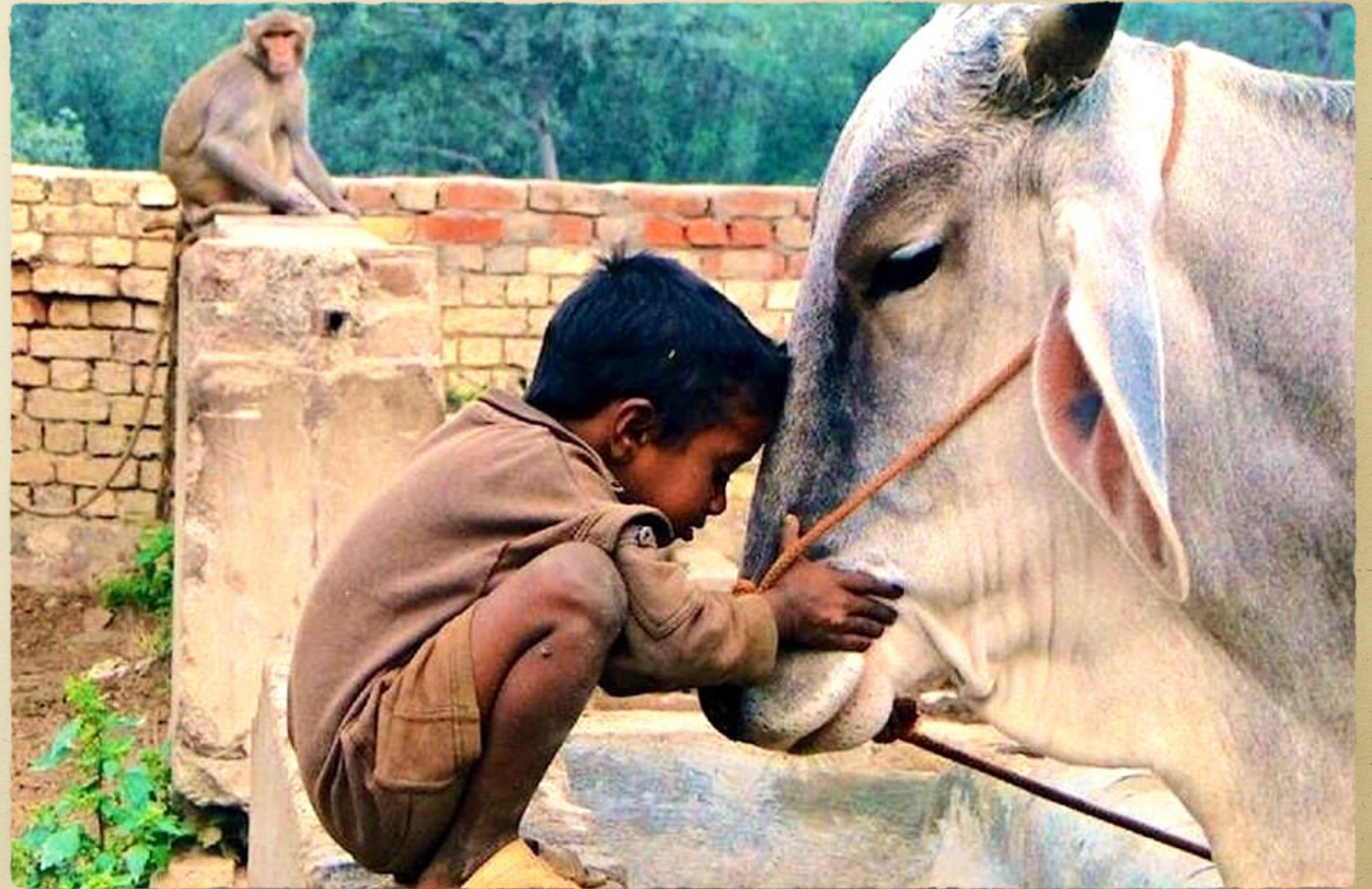
Gandhi proved this with his civil disobedience movement, which freed India without resorting to fights or force.



Ahimsa is a very important virtue.

Ahimsa is called the *mahavrata*, the great vow.

Among all the yamas and niyamas, it is the most important virtue.



Gurudeva says...

It is good to know that nonviolence speaks only to the most extreme forms of forceful wrongdoing, while ahimsa goes much deeper to prohibit even the subtle abuse and the simple hurt.



QUESTIONS

for Lesson 48



48.1 Check the incorrect answer.

- A. Some people are evil and desire to be treated badly
- B. God is in every person, every creature
- C. Because we see God everywhere, we feel a deep closeness and affection for all beings

48.2 Ahimsa only refers to causing physical harm or violence and does not include hurting others with our words and our thoughts.

- True
- False

48.3 Enter the letter from below of A - B for the phrase that correctly completes the idea.

___ Non-injury is the product
___ Hurtfulness arises

- (A) Of spiritual consciousness
- (B) From lower instinctive consciousness

48.4 When someone hurts us, we do not retaliate, because to retaliate would perpetuate that karma.

- True
- False

48.5 Ahimsa means we believe in pacifism.

- True
- False