



FAITH AND DEVOTION (BHAKTIYOGA)

God's grace and self-effort

Extract from 17/2/04 Satsang

Om Shri Paramatmane Namaha

There are two elements - one is the self-effort of the seeker and the other is God's grace. Many people consider that they are opposed to each other but I wish to tell you that this is not the case.

Many people have the idea that one should depend upon God's grace only: "I have given up myself to God." Does this mean that God will even put the food into your mouth? Will water appear in your mouth by itself without the need to pick up a glass? Is that the idea? God has given you the energy to do your work, to think and to make decisions - this is also God's grace. Why do you think that the capacity, the energy and the ability given by God is yours? What is there in you that is actually yours? If you analyse it you will not find anything. Owning anything is but an illusion.

What is it on which you base the claim that you are someone special? Is there anyone in the whole world who can give a guarantee that the incoming and outgoing breath will continue during even the next five minutes? However, healthy a person may be there can be no guarantee that he will remain alive even for five minutes more! One could develop a chest infection and one's breathing could stop. Then all your boasting that so much depends upon you will be worth nothing! In five minutes a person could fall down dead on the ground and nothing would be left. You cannot assume that your effort means anything because everything comes from God.

I repeat that everything is given by God, so what is there that you can claim to be yours? To make any claim for this is all ignorance. What is there that is yours? You cannot even be sure that your body will remain healthy for the next hour - no one can claim this and when one falls ill you will not be able to regain your health with your own effort. No expert can be sure that this roof will not collapse within the next five minutes. There could be an earthquake - newspapers tell us that they happen every day in various countries. No engineer can say that the roof will not fall since it can happen at any time. Everything is a boon, favour or mercy given by God. A competent engineer could say that this roof is in perfect order but cannot give a guarantee that there will not be an earthquake which will make it collapse. We are talking about probabilities and there is no guarantee.

Human ego is a very artful and it tries to deceive human beings in many ways. The most beautiful woman in the world - Miss Universe - would become Miss Ugly in a few seconds if someone threw acid in her face! A very wealthy man, worth millions of dollars, could end up on the street if he had misfortune in his business. It is all a play of ego. As regards this journey of Self-realisation - knowing the Truth - the right path is to make best use of whatever you already have from God - mind, body, health and resources. When you have used them as best you can, you should leave the rest to God.

Those who think: “I will have Self-realisation myself” are the victims of ego. Ego does not win. Those who say: “I do not have to do anything as everything will happen by itself - I have left it to God” are the victims of lethargy and laziness. The right course is to use whatever capacity has been given to you by God. Intelligence is given by God and you should use it and then pray to Him. So you should make efforts for success but not depend only on your efforts. You should depend upon God and there is no contradiction in this.
