

Gururaj. In the congregation, the minister was appealing for funds to build a new church. So a very wealthy man was there, and he was also a pillar of the Church. So they were in this dilapidated church, and they needed a new church very badly - as a matter of fact, this man was so wealthy, that he could build a whole new church on his own - so here this pillar, wealthy man got up, and he says, 'I contribute five dollars'. So at that time, at that very instant, a piece of plaster fell off the roof onto his head. So he got stunned and when he got stunned, he says, 'five hundred dollars'. So the minister was praying to himself. He says, 'Lord, strike him again!' (Gururaj laughs) Good. What shall we speak of to-day?

Questioner. This is a combined question, Gururaj, put together and formulated by John Milnthorpe.

Being mortal, we have to be concerned with material aspects of our life, earning money, so that we can eat, clothe ourselves, and have somewhere to sleep and also to be able to come on Courses. Why is there often so much difficulty experienced in mundane matters that make it difficult to pursue spiritual goals and what is the right way to relate to material things, from the angle of being on a spiritual path, so that we can obtain support instead of obstruction?

Gururaj. Good. The answer would be 'Are you ready for that spiritual support?' All difficulties would arise because of lack of readiness. And who says that material needs are not necessary? They are, totally necessary. Fine. Now being on this spiritual path does not mean one must shirk all one's worldly responsibilities. The body needs food, after all, what is your body? Nothing but food. It's the food that's eaten by a person that produces the muscles and the blood cells and all that, and all these things are necessary. And you know the saying that the world owes you a living, but you've got to work for it. You got to work. Now work is also a form of spirituality. To do one's job well can lead you to the highest spiritual goals. A doctor does his work dedicatedly and filled with devotion, can also become a spiritual path. A shoemaker puts all of his energies and whatever power he has within him to make that pair of shoes to such perfection, that in the very making of it, he brings forth that eternal spiritual energy that is within him.

Now many people want to be on a spiritual path not with total dedication, but with wishful thinking that 'I wish I was on a spiritual path', and because I wish that, I am on the spiritual path. Now the wishful thinker is not necessarily a seeker. Now that very search you have in you must bring about certain difficulties because, as I said many times, that in this worldly life, there are always polarities. The more you try and pull in the right direction, the wrong direction has some hold over you, and tries to hold you back. And the reason is due to your own making. Remember, we are creatures not of just to-day, but of many, many lives before us, and we are set in certain grooves, certain modes of thinking, certain ways. Now, one has to overcome that by exercising strict discipline within ourselves. Discipline is necessary. Until the time that we are well-established on the spiritual path then discipline, conscious discipline does not become necessary,

because your life itself is a discipline, not within the norms of man-made laws, but within the norms of spiritual laws where everything you do is just right, and it is just right for your personal spiritual evolution, your personal spiritual unfoldment.

So, when there are these difficulties, they must be welcomed because difficulty is the greatest teacher in life. If you had all the happiness and things that you think you need, or you want rather, then you would forget God, you'd forget Divinity. You never remember Divinity when you are totally happy and no-one is really totally happy, but you remember Divinity most when you are in trouble. You say, 'Oh God! What a life, what a business. If you are so merciful, oh, Lord, then why all these troubles and difficulties?' But the poor Lord has nothing to do with our difficulties. The Lord does not give you pleasure, and he does not give you pain. It is a neutral energy, given to you as your birth-right, from which you have originated, and you are that Divine energy, but here, because of all the conditionings of the experiences of previous lives and in this life, you block the Divinity from shining through. So it is you, you, and no-one but you that produces this Divinity. Now, the aim of these talks and spiritual practices is to bring about a certain understanding of the difficulties, for, as we do know, that every adversity contains within itself an opportunity. Now, what do we see? Do we see the adversities only, or do we see the opportunities? Now, if our attention, through understanding is led to the opportunities, the sting of the difficulties and adversities disappear. They just disappear. And all difficulties people have are normally exaggerated. There is really no foundation in a difficulty, a little perhaps, and that is necessary to goad you on. And if that was not there, you would just become a vegetable, a non-thinking being, that will not be able to function. So, if you have some difficulty, may you have some more. It keeps man awake. If I have a business, and the business would run on its own, no opposition, no competition, I would become so self-satisfied that the business will not progress. But, if there's competition, it will put me on my toes, I will be on my toes to try and overcome competition, do better, and that's how the business will expand, otherwise expansion is not possible. So, likewise, in our lives, difficulties are there for expansion, for greater awareness, for greater understanding of life. So difficulty is a blessing in disguise. But when man's mind is wrapped up totally in the difficulty, then he loses balance. He just sees darkness, and not the light. He sees the adversities, and not the opportunities that are there, in those very so-called adversities.

No man in this world has difficulties, if you look at it from the right angle. They are lessons to be learnt forever, after all, is life not but a school? If, if your whole mental make-up, if your whole Karmic self was not composed of difficulties, you would have not taken on this body, you would have not taken on this birth. The sole purpose of this life - I'm not referring to great Saints and Sages who purposely take on life and difficulties, like Christ did, or Krishna, or Buddha did, or Mahavir did, they purposely take on an incarnation, a life, to be able to help people and give them some understanding of what difficulty really is, to take the sting out of difficulty. So the snake of difficulty will bite, ah, but it will have taken out the

poison from its fangs. It won't poison you. So why should we live poisoned lives, and get our minds entwined in those difficulties all the time? Now this comes through understanding. And understandings are of course realisations and a realisation is nothing but an understanding gained, and assimilated. And when it is assimilated, when it forms part and parcel of the entire process of our mind and body, then it is called assimilation. Then you have really digested it, for assimilation will have no digestion. It is only when food is not well assimilated into the system that you have indigestion. You see?

So how do we overcome these difficulties whatever they might be? Fine. Hard work. Nothing comes without hard work. It could be mental work until you have reached the stage, where you don't need to work hard any more, you just think hard and things happen. So everything is governed by the mind, and I've told you this many times, that a thought is a thing. And if that thought is well-concentrated and that is why you have been given the Tratak Practice, candle practice, whereby without concentrating, you gather all your mental energies to one focal point which brings about visualisation. If man can visualise anything he wants, anything he needs, that very visualisation is a subtle happening of that which you want and that very visualisation concretises itself in what you want. So man wants to attain God or - say you or rather, he wants to make a million pounds. Now, this is possible for everyone, within five years, you can do it. Is your thought force strong enough? Is your yearning strong enough? Have you got that burning desire, whereby you want to put in all your energies to that aim in view, to that goal? And you'll find that your mind will be so conditioned that automatically, because of the conditioning of the mind in that direction, and because of bringing all those thoughts together into one force, things will happen to you without you even consciously wanting it to happen.

Now, that's the secret of worldly living. Therefore, we do the candle practice, which is a very, very important practice. It has been practised for thousands of years in the east, where all the mental energies, without effort, are gathered together into one focal point. Right. And, once one becomes habituated in that, then everything we do in life will always become a focal point with total concentration. So we have one difficulty, you need a roof, shelter. You need food, you need clothes, you need this, that. Now let that not be wishful thinking. If you want that, do something about it because when you translate a thought into action, you are automatically implanting that thought further and further into your sub-conscious, so that, not only in the waking state, but also in the sleeping state, it works, and helps you along. We have these experiences that anything we think about comes into reality.

So there is no difficulty but our failure to see the beauty of the energy that is within us, not understanding it and not allowing it free rein to play. And that is what is meant by nature is always supporting us but we block Mother Nature from

supporting us. That is the trouble. So why dwell on difficulties? Dwell on the opposite of difficulties. Think of those developed, constructive ideas. If someone's business is running at a loss, or is in the red, it is not going to help thinking of the red figures on the bank statement. No. What am I going to do to overcome it? I am not going to wait for any spiritual signs, and all these things that will fall out from heaven. There's no such thing. Mental quirks! We do not wait for signs, do or die, I want to be out of this problem, and I'm gonna do my best to get out of it even if I have to work twenty-four hours of the day, and I'm going to get out of it. Now if one has that aim and that determination, there are no difficulties in life.

So, firstly, we have to understand that these difficulties are created by me and no-one else. There is no outside agency. You say, 'Oh, a friend of mine did me down'. But really speaking not. You attracted that. Yes, always, always. Because if you did not, if you had that resistance, that external force will not affect you. And then, as we said, what is life without the fun and pleasure of difficulties? Because it is joy, too. Everything that happens is a joy. Ah and it is our attitude in life, how we look at things, that determines the outcome of that so-called difficulty. Like, you know, the stanza which I've been repeating over, it's my favourite one, I've repeated it all over and over again, where two men behind prison bars, one saw mud, the other saw stars. I've repeated that a million times, I love it so much. Two people in the same circumstances, meaning the same difficulty but one could see the glory, and the other the gloom. So that is the way out of any difficulty.

I knew a man that used to do door-to-door peddling, and he tried to work on the sentiment of people, and afterwards they nick-named him Uncle Bad-luck. Every time he used to come and knock on someone's door to sell something, oh, there comes Uncle Bad-luck. An old man, and he built up such a resistance and aura around him that he might have the best things to sell at a reasonable price, but nobody would buy, they would just shirk away from him. And that's how his nick-name stuck because he went with a negative attitude. 'These people are not going to buy, but let me, you see'. How wrong? Then, I've heard of a Jewish friend, used to sell corduroy cloth. Now, you know corduroy cloth has a smell to it. So, knock on the door, and the lady of the house would come, and he says, 'Lovely cloth, Madame, reasonable price. I got this thing as a bargain. I give it to you'. And the madam at the door would say, 'Oh, but this cloth stinks'. He says, 'No, no, madam, cloth don't stink, I stink'. (General laughter) That forceful, positive attitude made his sales for him.

Same thing, applying for a job. If you go there with the idea, oh, I'm not going to get this, you are not going to get it. But if you say, 'Oh, I'm definitely going to get it', you look at the boss in his eyes, tell him, you're going to hire me. Yeah;

---

you don't say it aloud, perhaps, depending what kind of person he is but have that in your mind. Before you go in for the interview, you just do five or ten minutes of Gurushakti, feel invigorated, there's power of Grace with me, too, I'm not alone. You are not alone, never alone. So who talks of difficulties? Bull. You see.

And then that's the first understanding. And the second understanding is this, that every difficulty is to teach us some lesson in life. Do you think my life has no difficulties? Plenty. There's this chela with this problem and that chela with that problem, and you're worrying about this one. Yes, I had a long distance call from America from someone, she tells me, myself and my boy-friend has broken up, what must I do? You see? More difficulties? So I explained to her how to overcome that, and what to do, and how to develop the attitude whereby the sting would be gone. So these things happen in life, all the time, because we are in the world. How we look at it, that is our business, no-one else's. And once we develop a positive attitude, if you wish to call it, once we develop some little understanding, some little realisation, then these difficulties fade away automatically. They just fade away. We're wanting to have a job, a place to stay, just make up your mind, what the devil, I'm gonna find that job even if I have to start chopping wood, it's still something, it's activity. And once one gets habituated into activity, then activity will go on and on and on, and on to better things and those difficulties are alleviated. But if one wants to sit and just mope, and worry about difficulties, you'll still be in the same mess that you think you are in. Good.

So spiritual practices help one to gain that strength of thinking in a proper way, right thinking and right action. Now by this we mean proper attitude towards the situation in question, and acting on it, and not sitting still. Because the proper attitude and right thinking naturally must bring about a right action. And that is the secret of life. That is the way out of all difficulties. Some person is ill, and the person thinks, 'Oh, look at this difficulty I am in'. Firstly, accept the fact that this illness has been brought about by myself. Now let me do something the reverse of that, so that I would feel better. We were discussing this morning of these positive affirmations that helps the mind, to put it in different grooves, because everyone wants peace, peace that passeth all understanding. Now this can come about by Grace. It's no use sitting there and saying, 'Grace, come, Grace, come', and she is a naughty girl, she won't. You see? But make yourself attractive. Don't walk around with a three-day beard and bad temper. Grace is not going to come and visit you, and she won't allow you to visit her, either. So in order to make ourselves conducive to Grace and Grace is all around, we can't even lift our hand, or breathe, without the power of Grace but are we doing anything to make ourselves conducive and receptive to the Grace which is there, free of charge? It is just us. If the receptacle is open, the water can be filled in it, but if it is closed, how can it? You see?

---

So difficulties, they have a relative existence, a very relative existence and most difficulties are just mental projections. People find difficulties where there are no difficulties in reality. It is an assumption. Fear, for example, is such a difficulty, too. It produces difficulties. And what do people fear? What's going to happen to me to-morrow, the day after, the day after. Now, that is not the way of thinking. Think of now, to-day. What am I gonna do to-day? Forget to-morrow, and those difficulties will disappear. It's such a simple thing and Psychologists make a very big thing of it. They do. Now these difficulties, as we said, are necessary to keep people awake, to keep them alive, because you will always have in the entire universe the principle of expansion and contraction, and this very conflict that expansion and contraction produces is what we regard as difficulty, because conflict is difficulty. Now the conflict itself exaggerates the difficulty. Any person, any person, could be old or young does not need to worry about a plate of food. It is there. It's not going to be delivered to your doorstep unless you become a great psychic being, where you command the elements and manifest food by the waving of a hand. There are psychic people that can do that, their psychic powers can be developed, but the spiritual person won't. He allows his mind and body to work in the world, because that is in the world. But then he infuses it with his spiritual force that is in him, so that everything assumes a beautiful shape. Everything becomes very beautiful. For example, if you go to the cinema, and you are in a bad mood, you won't enjoy the film. But if you are in a good mood, you are going to enjoy the film. So, so much is dependant upon you. So much is dependant upon you, and the very frame of your mind, the very basis of your understanding will give you the perspective to look at a thing adversely or conductively.

So that is how difficulties just come about. So when there are difficulties, people mope so unnecessarily. We have a friend here in this hall that has the attitude from very young days that things will just come my way and they do. He has that approach to life, that positive approach. He loses one contract, and he says 'Ah, to-morrow, I'll get another one'. He is not let down by it. Things happen, and he gets it. Because whatever we lose or we get, is because of our own mental attitude towards things. In that we're talking of mundane things, of mundane things. A man has an appointment during the week for a contract and he goes in with that attitude, 'I am going to get it even if at first I have got to cut my price. I'll have a little loss, I'll just cover. Next time, they'll build up the price a bit, because they'll know what kind of service I can give, and I'll get all the other contracts from that company thereafter. And then, I will make up, what I should have made this year, and ten, fifteen, twenty times more'. You see how it works? I talk of practical things, practical examples, problems of people, things that they think about or worry about.

So there is no difficulty as such. Most difficulties are just assumed difficulties. If any young, strong, healthy man worries about making a living and the shelter of his head, I don't know, he must have his head examined. Yes, yes.

Where is, where are our teachings? Where are those teachings that we have been learning for all these years, if we worry about these little things? It must come. You see? Simple really. So what do we do when we face difficulties is have the proper attitude. Analyse it, that how difficult is this difficulty? It's not. And when we start analysing it, we will know that it can be overcome, we find ways and means of overcoming it. And it will be overcome because you are the master of life. You are the master of the entire universe. You are Divine. You are Divine. And things which are not conducive to yourself is necessary, and secondly, we say, well, that's a lesson I am learning, why shouldn't I? Perfected beings have things in their lives and they recognise it, that this is a must, this is necessary. This is keeping me awake. This will make me strive harder for what I aim to do. Did Christ not have difficulties in his life? Oh, yes, he was crucified but how did he take it? How did he take it? Even his murderers - he says, 'Father, forgive them, they know not what they do'. So here was compassion, here was compassion, because he knew that these people are acting so childishly. They are acting from their level, their small little level and how can you blame them? How can you blame them? You can't blame a child in Form Four to know the work of an MA or a Ph.D. You can't. They are working at their level.

Then we have that understanding, then, we can only flow with love and compassion to those that are creating difficulties, that we think are creating difficulties for us. In reality, they are not. They have their own quirks, they have their own shortcomings. But how am I going to re-act to someone else's short-comings? That is my business because I must overcome what I think is difficult for me. Good. So let them react the way they want to or do what they want to, but I must be steadfast and firm. So, we are analysing this from one's personal point of view and also from some other one's point of view. And if we can love others, deeply enough, sincerely enough, then even they that produce difficulties later, as they learn more in life, they say, 'Oh we are so sorry that we did this to such and such a person'. And that is a great learning for them, too. So by your love, you are teaching them, also. You're teaching them, also, you are also uplifting them, in spite of them producing difficulties in your path. Now, is that not a great act of charity? So, to be charitable, to be charitable is not putting a silver coin in the collection box, that's not charity. It helps along, helps along a bit, but that is not real charity. Real charity comes from giving of oneself, totally with love, even to thine enemies.

Now these theological principles have great value. The whole idea is, by spiritual practices, to rise above the difficulties. The waves on the surface of the ocean do not bother or disturb the calmness that is deep down in the ocean. So we have to reach a deeper level within ourselves. By meditation and spiritual practices, we reach that level. If we are established in meditation, we reach that level, and then whatever happens on the surface means nothing. And when we have that attitude, when we have that attitude, and reach that calmness within, then all the surface thing assumes no importance. And actually, you help the waves to become calm, because the surface waves to become calm because you

have the calmness inside. You see? So simple, so simple. A simple point gets lost. We always try to achieve that we find difficult. But, we start with the simpler things of life. When that simplicity is realised then everything around us becomes simple, because Divinity is simple. It is uncompounded. It is not a mixture. It is. Difficulties arise within oneself because conflict of various emotions. Now, when we mix up various emotions through our experiences of course, then various kinds of conflicts arise within ourselves and that is the greatest difficulty.

Now, you cannot fight all these emotions one by one, because they form an integral part of each other, one stimulates or regenerates the other. So we tackle it from a different angle. We tackle it from the spiritual angle, whereby, when spiritual energies are drawn from within ourselves, drawn out, so that those very emotions get flooded by this energy, and those emotions get calmed, get calmed. We know of difficulties, even tragedies in people's lives, tragedies but yet they are so happy. They are so happy, that the tragedies don't bother them at all because they have gained that strength from inside which automatically brings about a greater awareness to their minds. Their perception changes and the perspective to life is also so well-changed, they come to the realisation that nothing is bad. Nothing is bad in this life. Something might not be conducive to one for a particular time, in a particular time. But is it bad in reality. If Divinity is omnipresent, that means present everywhere in every atom then how could it just be wrong. How can it be bad? How can it be difficult? For Divinity is joy itself but our interpretation of it because of our surface conditioning. And then remember the mind is nothing but on the surface of the spirit, it forms the obstacles, the veils.

So we have to control the mind. Now, mental control, there are many schools of thought that teach certain kinds of rigid mental control. Now, that very rigidity can produce far greater problems because you take the mind out from one particular mould and you put it into another mould. So it is still bogged down, it is still tied down and, as we said, moulds are binding. So the only way to free oneself from those moulds, from those patterns, is to infuse it with the power that is within, and all difficulties fade away. Oh, you can sit back and think I need a job and you get that job. I need that home, you get that home. We were discussing yesterday with someone that Divinity gives you what you need and not what you want. Yes. And all needs in life, true needs are legitimate. You have the right to it. You have the right to have a job, you have the right to earn a living. Oh, yes when people become lazy and go into wishful thinking, and, that things must just drop down in their lap and that is why people suffer and bring greater and greater miseries to themselves, greater and greater miseries to themselves, created by themselves. And then, of course, they blame everything, everybody around them. They blame their husband, they blame their wife, they blame the children and when that doesn't work, they blame God, that he is so unjust. He is a neutral force, as we said just now.



So the thing is to pull one's pants up, I mean socks up, do you see? There was this - to go in lighter vein - there was this teacher, preacher, and Oscar Wilde, the great English humorist, thought 'I'm going to play a joke on this preacher'. So after the talk was over, the sermon was over, Oscar Wilde said 'Oh, that was very, very beautiful but everything you said, you know, I have it, every word you said, I have it in a book'. So, the preacher says 'But that's impossible. That's impossible. How can you have that? My talk is not published in any book'. He says, 'No, I've got every word". So the preacher says, 'Show me the book!' He says, 'Okay. I'll send it to you to-morrow. Every word I've got it in this book. I'll send you to-morrow'. And then, next day he sent this book, it was the dictionary. (Gururaj laughs) Good. Next question?

And then of course, this one fellow fell asleep during the church service. So he said you know Robinson was snoring so much during the service. So the other fellow says 'I know, he woke me up.' (General laughter).

Questioner. Gururaj, how can we differentiate between freewill and Karma? It's so easy after an event to say, 'Oh, that was my Karma. Was it?' Also, is every murder Karma, or is it just someone else's free will? And how do we learn not to procrastinate, when faced with a situation, Karma or not?

Gururaj. Very beautiful, yes. The basis of the question is, what is the difference between free will and Karma? Good. Firstly, Karma has been produced because of free will. Divine Will does not produce any Karma, for Divine Will is non-binding. But free will can be binding. Now, there can be good Karma and bad Karma. They both are binding because all Karma has nothing to do with the spiritual self of man. Karma has only to do with the mental self of man. So when, as you said, if a person murders, is it his Karma to murder? Is it his Karma to kill? Now, it depends who is killing. Now if a lion kills a man, then it is not Karma of the lion because that is his duty, his natural way. He is forced by the processes of nature to kill to eat. No lion ever kills anyone for the fun of it. He would kill a deer or anything, for self-sustenance, for food. Now, man does not do that. Why does man commit a murder? For by committing that very act, he is adding to his Karma. But what were the conditions before he did that? So, the murder is not because of past Karma, but because of past mental conditioning. Now, how was that mental conditioning brought about? Because of his past Karma. So, who laid the egg, who comes first, the chicken or the hen? You see. So everything is Karma and everything is not Karma.

Now, when you talk of free will, what do we mean by free will? Free will means that you have thought power and because of that thought power, you have the freedom to do what you like. That is free will. You decide on something, good or bad, and you do it; you do it because of free will. Now Karma does condition free will. For it is because of your

past experiences in life, and in previous lives, that you can think in a certain manner. Now, if your experiences in life and conditionings were such that it would make you think to-day of doing good work, of helping people, constructive work, then you'd be doing constructive work spontaneously. But if your condition is such that you do destructive things then that too, is done spontaneously. Many a murderer, at least all of them do not do that because they want to do it. There is a compulsion in them, a need, for some personal gain perhaps, or to satisfy a mental aberration that this act is performed. There is this imbalance in the sub-conscious mind that comes to the fore in the conscious mind that makes him perform this action, although the conscious mind will argue the pros and cons. The conscious mind will stop him from committing a certain act, but the conditionings of the sub-conscious will over-ride the conscious thinking, and he will do that. How much is he to blame for that? He is to blame, not because of his conscious self, because his conscious self is in conflict, but he is to be blamed for his sub-conscious self, that contains the seed and the force for him to over-ride the conscious pros and cons, and make him perform the act.

So the subconscious levels that are there, contains all these thought patterns and experiences. He might have had some experience where he was hurt, or even killed. And then the subconscious that lingers on after the body has been discarded, wanted revenge. And that very sense that is born within this pattern is what we know as compulsion. Now, how is he to curb that instinct? How is he to stop from committing that act? Because if he does not commit that act, he can go insane. And most of these killers are in reality, psychopaths. How is he to curb that? If he curbs it consciously then he will suffer repressions within himself which will drive him insane. So this is where the conscious mind, although forced by this inner compulsion can do something, can do something. When the conscious mind argues the pros and cons of some wilful act, which we call free will, which we call free will, this wilful act, that person needs help; to help, not to alter his sub-conscious mind, but to strengthen the good thought in his conscious mind, so that that person himself can get that good thought deeper down and alter the sub-conscious pattern. Then he will not kill. You see? So many people that have these tendencies, I believe, should not be jailed, but should be treated. Yeah.

Now what is the free will's relation to Karma? Can you alter your Karma with free will? No. You can't alter your Karma, for what you have sown, you will have to reap. But you can put the same momentum in a different direction. That same force that is there, within the sub-conscious, can be diverted into a different channel very consciously. And for this again, great understanding is required. That means that we are not changing our Karma, but we are changing the force of our Karma, we are changing the direction, rather, of our Karma. For, what has been wound up and Karma is only a winding up, that has to be unwound. How it is to be done, that is the question. How do we unwind the Karmic debts so that we do not suffer the consequences so much? I've said in some talk somewhere that if you kill ten people, it would not

mean that you will have to be killed ten times. Use the free will, the conscious analytical powers you have, and save eleven lives. Then the debt of killing the ten people will be rubbed off. A balance is performed. There are no particular Karmas that will have its effect; no cause will have its effect in a similar way. Your free will has the ability to change the effect, in a different way. And yet, the momentum, the force of Karma, will not be lost. It will be there, but by free will, by gaining the understandings we have spoken about, we alter the course of that Karma which could be progressive for us. Evolutionary-wise, it could be progressive.

So difficulties, too has certain Karmic values. And that is why man has been given the thinking mind. We are talking of the average man, we are not talking of the aberrated mind that cannot think right. We are talking of the average person. So by the force of his free will, he changes the course of his Karma. Now, how is this understanding gained? There are so many ways understanding can be gained; knowledge can be gained by good advice from those that know. It has to be convincing, for the mind to be pleased. That is one way to approach it. The other way is surrender, where we would say, 'Not my will, but thy will be done'. Now free will is always ego-orientated, we call it free, but that's a misnomer. The will is not free. The will which we call free will is just a reflection of our personal, conditioned ego. So, instead of free will, it would be more appropriate to call it ego-will. It is not free, it is bound. For, underlying that ego, there is still a Divine Will, there's still a Divine Will, and, in order to develop that kind of surrender where we can truly say, 'Thy will be done', it would mean that the so-called free will has to merge into the Divine Will. Otherwise, it is just thinking, uselessly, of no avail or value. Good.

Now what is the procedure, and how do we merge the so-called free will into the Divine Will. It comes about not by annihilation or destruction of the ego, for that is impossible. The ego can never be destroyed or annihilated but the ego can be clarified, made more cleaner, more transparent. So that by spiritual practices, when our egos becomes transparent, the light of the Divine Will shines through. So when the light of the Divine Will shines through, it overcomes the ego-will which we term as free will. And when that is overcome, there is a spontaneous surrender. No surrender is ever true or total by the free-will itself. It is just a re-patterning. We say 'I surrender my will to thee. Let thy will be done.' That is a mental concept, and it is bluffing our own minds because to-morrow, we go and do according to what our ego-will wants to do. That is not the way. It is good for prayer, it is very good for prayer, and it has its uses, where, in that moment, in that utter emotional state, when all is lost, that's the only time people do it. When all is lost, you say, 'Oh, God, take my will. Let your will only be done'. Its good as a prayer, its good as an affirmation, it does help. It could be a path, you're on the path towards surrender; but it is not surrender. Surrender is a thing that has to be totally spontaneous. Otherwise, it is a conditional surrender, with so many strings attached.

When do people want to surrender their free wills to the Divine Will, when do they want to do it? Only when they're in trouble, when they've hit their head against the wall; when they can't find any way out, all the doors are locked which, incidentally, they have caused it to be locked. Then they say, 'Oh, God I surrender; you do now'. And that's a very important point. I wish more doors can be locked; more doors can be locked, because you reach that stage of utter desperation. Ah, so what have you reached there? By saying 'Thy will be done', you have reached desperation, not surrender. You see? But this desperation, as the stepping stone can lead one to surrender. Because in this desperation, you feel helpless. You feel totally helpless. You don't know what to do, then you pass the book. Yeah. 'Your will, now'. But, at this moment of desperation, when mind and body is lost, then Divine Will enters. So what is the stumbling block there? The mind, that produces what we call free will. And what is the mind, but your egoself? 'I want to surrender my ego to God'. Impossible, it's a mental concept. And Divinity is not attained by the mind or mental concepts. It is not attained that way. It is attained when you reach rock bottom. An alcoholic, he is so much in his compulsive drinking, it becomes a disease to him. And it is said that only when he reaches rock bottom that he changes his life-style, that the compulsion goes away from him and he stops drinking.

So, to reach that stage of desperation, call it difficulties, to reach the stage of desperation is a great boon to mankind. For from there, from rock bottom, you can only turn upwards. So man cannot reach surrender; he can reach desperation. But that is the stepping-stone where you allow, because the mind is gone, you allow the Divine Will to start doing its work. And Divine Will can only do its work when your mind is finished, when you are in a state of no-mind, then there's a chance of that force, that spiritual force which we call Divine Will, for it to enter, its path is not impeded, it is not blocked. And then surrender automatically happens. You see? Surrender cannot be brought about, it automatically happens. You cannot order the grace of God, the grace of Divinity, it automatically happens, only you have to be conducive to it. Now, the easier way is this, you don't want to reach a total state of desperation for that to happen but in our conscious state, through spiritual practices, through meditation, when we go beyond the mind, we allow that Divine force to enter through us. And that brings about, when the mind is pushed aside, when one transcends the mind, goes beyond the mind, then the Divine Will has its play. And that is called surrendering the ego. Remember, you can't surrender your ego. No. Divinity makes it surrender for you by, not forcing you, but by infusing itself in your very being. That Being, that higher being, infuses itself, in the lower layers of being. And that is what Divine Will is in relation to free will.

Now, free will is the producer of all Karma. Free will produces Karma, and Karma produces free will. It is a vicious circle. As I said just now, what came first, the egg or the hen? That is the whole theory behind it and not a mental theory. That is what IS. It is an IS-ness. So to be in that area where Karma can be controlled because Karma, Karma is but free will, Karma produces free will. The Karmic reflections and workings of Karma is what we term as free will. So, we can either do it through desperation, or we could do it through spiritual practices. As I have said many times before, open the window, and the fresh air must come in. Open the mind and allow the fresh air to blow in, the Divine Will to blow in. That's all. Simple. Okay.

Now, five to one, it's nearly lunch time, I think. Good. Thank you. What a lovely question.

END