

Questioner. Guruji, It is often said 'What is past is past'. It is also said that 'We should learn from the past'. How should we best use the past to build a better future?

Gururaj. Good. I think tonight we can cover quite a few questions together. Is there another one?

Questioner. Guruji, with the law of opposites state if we create one pole, the other automatically comes into existence i.e. by creating goodness, badness is also brought into existence. If we then strive too much to the light, the patriarchal force do we not then create the darkness, the matriarchal force. Should we not aim to harmonise both forces in our being and if so how can we manifest this principle in our everyday life?

Gururaj. Beautiful. Beautiful. Good. We'll combine both questions tonight.

When we say let the past be the past or what can we do to learn from the past. Now when we say the past is the past, it contains a very great truth. What it really means is forget the past because remembering the past, you will be living in your mind in the past and by stirring up those old memories, you will only suffer in the present. The suffering would be in the present because you remember the past all the time. Some incident might have happened in your lifetime and if you keep on thinking about it, that memory is sure to bring about guilt in your mind. And I might have said this in England before, because I know I have said it somewhere, that the greatest disease in the world today is not heart disease and neither cancer but a sense of guilt. So in order to get rid of guilt what do we do is, while forgetting the past, not remembering the past, we analyse the sense of guilt. Now what makes me feel guilty? Because of some happening of the past when the past is not here anymore, why am I feeling guilty at the present moment? But then as soon as you think of analysing the guilt, the past reappears again on the screen of your mind. What to do? What can you do?

Now when we analyse the past, remember the word 'analyse' and not 'live' in the past. Analysis is something totally different than remembering the past, for you know well that the greatest gift God could give to a man is to be able to forget. If we had to remember everything that has happened in the past, life would become miserable. So now here we've got to discriminate between remembering the past and analysing the past. Because in analysis, you objectify the past while remembering the past, you subjectify it. You re-live the past. Now in analysis you observe what has happened in the past. You try and analyse what were the causes of it. Perhaps you are not to blame for your actions. You are not to blame for your actions. You might have been in a certain mental turmoil. There might have been circumstances that surrounded you at that time that forced you to do the action that you did. You know the lovely story by Victor Hugo 'Les

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Miserables', where he was forced into the circumstances, seeing his children starving, he went to steal a loaf of bread for which he suffered a lot. Now did the character in Victor Hugo's book do something wrong? Which was the lesser or greater evil? Which was darkness and which was light? Should he allow his children to die of starvation or was it better for him to steal a loaf of bread for them and not for him. So in life there are circumstances that one has to choose, between two evils. And we choose between the lesser evil. Now if that produces a guilt in your mind then you analyse, why did I do this. What caused me to do this? What was the mental chemistry then that forced me to do this? Because inwardly every person has that goodness and underlying the goodness there is also darkness. But now every person having that goodness in him - you know the old saying "Nobody's too good that has no little bad, and no one is so bad that has no good in him." Fine.

So remembering of the past is not the answer. That leads to greater misery and it leads to guilt. But analysis of the past means that we are trying to understand the past. We try to understand the motivation, what made us perform such an action. And if you find that you are forced into certain circumstances, which ninety nine percent of all actions would prove, then you do not need to feel guilty about it. I was invited to one of the biggest prisons near Chicago to give a talk last year. And as a matter of fact we have a prisons' programme going on in America for rehabilitation of the prisoners. Because a prison is not somewhere where you punish someone. A prison is a place where you rehabilitate someone. So we introduced this programme in this Chicago prison, one of the largest in America I believe and of course from there it is spreading to various other States at the moment.. Fine. And I had to give a talk there. So I told those prisoners there, "You are in prison, why are you in prison? You might have been a rapist. You might have murdered someone. You might have stolen. You might have done one of so, so many things. Why did you do it? It could have been due to many reasons. Firstly, force of circumstance. Secondly through an imbalanced mind, where at that time you could not discriminate between right and wrong. And all your actions were regarded to be anti-social because of the social norms society has put upon us. But does that make you a bad person. You are judged by society to be bad, but are you really bad. No. The spirit within you is forever Divine and forever good. So do not think of the actions you have done in the past. Better thing to do is repentance and repentance itself has analysis built into it, to try and find the cause. And when you find the cause the guilt would disappear."

So sometimes it is a fallacy to say that how can we learn from the past to build a future. Yes, you can. But it would become fallacious if you just remember the past. Then you cannot build upon it. You see. So the secret there, to get out of the darkness and into the light of life, how does one reconcile this issue? Firstly by analysis. Secondly, with the analysis you come to the cause of things and then you ask, 'Was I forced into this? What was my mental condition?' I

personally would love a rapist. I love a murderer. I love everyone. The saint or the sinner. For who is a sinner? You are not a sinner. You never have been a sinner. Only society brands you to be a sinner. But in God's eyes are you a sinner? Do you think that God's grace would fall equally upon those that are regarded to be bad and those that are regarded to be good? If you were a sinner, then Divinity would discard you. But in His eyes no one is a sinner. Everyone is equal but it is your mind conditioned by society, that makes you a sinner. And because everyone around you, right from the time you were born and started getting some understanding, your parents forced upon you, 'Don't do this and don't do that and don't do that.' Then you go to school and the teachers 'Don't, don't, don't do this and don't do that and that and that and that.' And then you grow up more and you mix with adults and they all have their particular norms. Something could be a sin in one country while it would not be a sin in another country.

These are all moral laws and all morality is made by man and not by God. The thing to think about is purity, not morality. Are you going to go on - my ideas might be very revolutionary but it is within the norms of Gods laws - are you going to live your life according to man's law or God's law? That is the question one must ask himself. So going back into the past and remembering it and feeling guilty and miserable, that is not the way of progress. The way of progress is to say "Okay, I have done this. Why did I do and if I find that person in my mind, if I find that I have done something wrong then I would pray, meditate, become in a peaceful quiet state of mind and then pray sincerely, Lord forgive me, for I did not know what I did." Did Christ not say that on the cross, "Forgive them Father, they don't know not what they do". You say that to yourself. You ask the Father the same thing. "Forgive me Father, I did not know what I do." For if you knew what you did, you would have not done it. It was a mental perversion, a kind of madness that made you perform an act which is anti-social or if not anti-social then harmful to others and harmful to yourself. Always remember one thing that when you harm someone else, you're harming yourself more. Because you will always remember that and there is the torture, there is the suffering for it.

But now after having done these things, what is the answer, what is the solution? The solution is to bring, to say again, mind to a quiet, the mind to a quiet state and then in that analysis repentance is involved and say "May I have the strength not to do it again". So at this prison talk I gave which was televised, I said, I gave them hope. "You are all children of the Divine. Some little thing happened that put you here behind bars. But now look at it from the other side when you were outside, you had so many million worries, you had this to do and that to do and that to do. But now you are inside. What can you do? Meditate." So we started teaching them meditation and spiritual practices. "Meditate and bring yourself together so when you leave these iron gates, you'd be a better person and not repeat the things that you have done. But have hope. Have courage that you are the children of God. And here you have plenty of time to sit and

think and analyse". Why don't all of you go to prison, the prison of your little room, the iron bars because then society will ostracise you. How many time don't we find a person with a criminal record not being able to get jobs. You find that. So you see how society treats. It's a cruel, cruel world. But I'm going to be cruel. Say that to yourself, I am not going to be cruel to myself by punishing myself by remembering over and over again the past, instead of analysing it. Because people say "Oh, forget the past." Forget, you forget it, that could never happen. You could never forget the past. It will always come up in the mind and the only time when it cannot come up in the mind, is when you resolve the problem within yourself through repentance and say through repentance, a sincere feeling within. So I've killed a man, why can't I go around and try and save some people's lives. Become a lifesaver or some other work you can do, where you can make people happy, if you have made someone unhappy before. You see? So repentance, which is a kind of self-analysis, can also be put into action and the repentance has the greatest value if it is put into action.

'So I have made my mother unhappy', you would say. Good. Are all the women in the world not your mothers? Make someone else happy for example, if your mother is not there anymore to make amends with. There are so many old age homes, so many poor old women living alone. So lonely. Because of your actions you have made someone blind. Go to some blind people, a Blind Institution for example, speak to them, give them comfort. They can't see, they can't read. Spend an hour or two reading for them, some book that they might want to, that are perhaps interested in and you'll bring joy and happiness to other's lives. And that is one of our principles in our BMS, is to bring joy into the lives of other people and that is one means whereby where we can get rid of our own karma and that is how we lead ourselves from darkness to light. Om asato ma sad gamaya. Lead me from untruth to truth. Tamso ma jyotir gamaya. Lead me from darkness to light. Mrityor ma'amritam gamaya. Lead me from death from mortality to immortality. It's a beautiful prayer.

So remembering the past all the time will not help you to build upon it into a better future. It is by resolving the past that one can build a better future. Although of course you learn by your mistakes. But let the mistakes not be so dominant in the mind all the time. Let the essence of the mistake, I've done so much wrong - two and two made four, I'm not going to think of the two and two anymore. Let me think of the four and how I can build it into five and six and seven and eight. Do you see? And that is how darkness and light could co-exist. And yet the light could be dominant. Take a little flame like on our emblem, a little lamp, a little lamp there. Now when the lamp is burning, you will find under the lamp, there would be darkness. Under the bulb, the light is there, there would be some darkness, shade there. So what do we take notice of? When you look at a lamp burning, do you look at the light or do you look at the darkness? You look at the light. For light and darkness will forever coexist. Without darkness there cannot be light and without light there

cannot be darkness. We've put the lights on in this hall. Do you think you have destroyed the darkness? No. No. You've covered darkness over with light. For as soon as you put these lights off, darkness is there. Now if it can return by putting off the lights then how can you say you have destroyed darkness? It can never be destroyed. Nothing is destructible. These forces will always be there but where is your emphasis. When you look at the lamp are you going to look under the lamp to find the shade, the darkness there? No. You don't do that. So likewise in life when you look at the light only, darkness does not exist for you, for you, not the darkness has disappeared. Now can darkness be merged into light? Yes. That is here and now because this light is on the darkness is merged into the light.

So it's a question of mergence and not of destruction. Like the individual mind which is so limited and limitation is darkness. It can be merged in to the limitless which is light and yet you can still preserve the individuality. It will be there. It is always there, until you reach the totality, even beyond the God that we worship, even beyond that, the eternal essence. When I say God, I mean the Personal Deities or the Personal Gods into the realm of the Impersonal then only everything is totally merged away and you are in the area of nothingness, as I said the other day. The Buddhists call it Sunita, nothingness. The nothingness that is the everythingness that empowers this entire universe. Yes. But then as one progresses on, you rise above light and darkness. You rise above the law of opposites, for in relative existence the law of opposites would always remain. So when you go beyond the law of opposites then you are not conscious anymore of the law of opposites.

So what is, is. What is, is. You cannot destroy relativity and you cannot destroy the Absolute. But transcending the law of opposites, you become the observer of the law of opposites. Then good and bad disappears. I think I've told you the story of the Tibetan Yogi Milarepa. He says "When I was young, I did black deeds and when I had some more sense and grew up, I did white deeds. But now having reached a stage, I do neither." It means you have risen above them. And when you rise above the law of opposites, nothing can affect you. For if you feel pleasure today, you can be sure the day after tomorrow you will feel pain. Pain and pleasure, good and bad are two sides of the same coin. They are made of the same energy and they co-exist as light and darkness co-exists. Forever so. So the secret is to go beyond, to rise above and the only way to rise above, is to rise above the conscious level of the mind and through spiritual practice you reach the superconscious level and then you are at a vantage point whereby you can observe all these happenings. You'll find the shade. You'll find darkness. You'll find light. You'll find night. You'll find day. For after all what is the difference between night and day. Nothing at all. You know its - the sun is there all the time. Light is there all the time. It is just the world rotating. That's all. And the sun is hidden on the other half of the world and then this half seems dark.

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But does that mean light has disappeared and darkness has come or darkness has disappeared and light has come? No. This is the way the universe functions as it will always function and as it has functioned since eternity.

So in order to get away from our sufferings and miseries, we rise above it. So, in the same way the past must remain the past. The past is gone, the future might not come, the present is here and when you stand in the middle of the seesaw that goes up and down, good and bad, past and future, and when you stand in the middle of the seesaw, the seesaw stands still, because no pressure is put on either side. You are standing in the centre and the seesaw stands still for you although either end still exists.

So to stand in the centre of light and darkness, past and future, you have to stand in the centre. And where is the centre? The centre is there within yourself. So to be rid of all these things in the world one reaches the centre of oneself, the Kingdom of Heaven within. One reaches the centre and that is the aim and goal of all life. That is where evolution is pushing us onward and onward and onward and we are, we are, our minds are the block in the path. If I can't see the truth in anything, there's nothing wrong with the truth. If I can't see the goodness in any man, there's nothing wrong with the man. What is wrong, is with me. I am the stumbling block. I am the block that prevents me from seeing the truth or prevents me from seeing the goodness in man. If I see anything bad in anyone then be sure to know that it is my own limitation and my own mental projection which I am projecting on the other person. Because who can judge who? You're only judging a person by his outward appearances or his outward actions. What do you know of his spiritual self? What do you know of his real self how good he is? A thief, smash and grab thief, he broke into a window and as he was running away he heard the police whistles. But as he was running away, he found a small child on the road and a car was coming fast. He stopped while running away picked up the child and brought it to the sidewalk, the pavement we call it in England - in America you say sidewalk, is it? Yeah. And took the child to safety and still started running away. Of course he was caught and he paid his just dues for what he did. So which is the greater good of the two? Stealing the few tins of canned peas or beans in the shop or saving the child. Isn't he good? Ain't he good! Yeh.

So we could never judge a man's action. Did I tell you the story of this guru - he always - he spent so much time in jail. Good man. People thought he was mad. When he saw a policeman nearby, he used to pinch a sweet from one of the shops or something and the police were called and he was arrested. And he would do some little petty silly thing, like throwing a stone into a little glass window and be caught and this that. So one day his chelas that couldn't understand him, approached him and said "Guru, this is not right you landing up in jail all the time, doing these things." So the guru says "Do you know I am so much needed inside the jail than outside the jail. Here outside you can have so many

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teachers to teach you but who are going to teach those poor beggars inside there? So therefore I go and so many of these people there have become better people". Then the chelas' eyes were opened. "Ah how stupid of us to think so badly of the guru, because we did not understand the guru".

How can we understand the guru's action when we are not gurus ourselves? He might do damn silly things but it's for a purpose. And can you understand the purpose of a guru? If you can't understand the motivations and the purpose of your friend that you know so well or your wife or your husband or your children, how dare we presume the doings of a guru or even of God for example? How many times don't we have thoughts in our minds and say "Oh what a God that is, I'm suffering here this is going through and I'm having a hard time"? And we blame Him, "What kind of God is that when he's supposed to be all loving and all merciful. Why does he not have that love and mercy for me instead of making me struggle and suffer so much?" Do you see? So we have the habit of judging our wives, brothers, sisters, children, our friends, our gurus and even God with our little mind. Isn't that stupid of us. So all this goes into the framework of the past because it is the past that has conditioned us to thinking that way. But now we have the chance, the opportunity to gain a greater awareness so that our whole perspective and viewpoint and angle of seeing things is totally different. You see?

So you cannot forget the past. But because of those experiences, with proper analysis, we can modify our future behaviour. If you have to judge, judge yourself and no one else. Judge yourself and judge no one else. 'Judge Ye not that you be judged.' Who are we to judge? Because everything in this world is doing good to me. The rain is doing good to me. The sun is doing good to me. It makes the food grow, so that I can survive and eat. The air is doing good to me, so I can breathe and live. Look around everything. Look at the meadows and the fields and the hills and the vales, there all doing good to me. They're filling my heart with their beauty and in looking at that beauty, reminds me more and more of the essence of the beauty that created that beauty. Do you see? Everything. A child's little gurgle. A child's little smile. How beautiful? How innocent? How much that little child is doing for me? How much? The suckling baby at the mother's breast. How beautiful the gurgle there? It reminds you how the Lord eternally feeds us. Even before the child is born, that Divine energy puts milk into the mother's breasts.

So these things, with a greater awareness we can observe and see everything is light. Everything is beautiful. Good and bad are but in the eyes of the beholder, parading the 'Beauty lies in the eye of the beholder'. But good and bad too is in the eye of the beholder. If I was not bad, I could never see bad. If I am good, I can only see good. 'Love Thine enemy'. It's easy to love thy friend. But love thy enemy, then you're a 'Man'. Then you're a 'Man'. Ah. Yes. Yes. Alright, come on. Let's have some jokes. You know.

You know this guide, an English guide was taking some visitors around and they took them to a castle. So this guide explains the castle, he says, "This castle is six hundred years old and not a stone has been touched and nothing has been altered. It's exactly the same as it was six hundred years ago." So the visitor says "Ooh, Blimey, it must be having the same landlord as mine".

You know the teacher asked, asked his class, "Which races were there after the Romans invaded England?" So the little boy replied "The Grand National and the Derby." (Gururaj laughs)

So life is but a play. What is the reality in this play of life? Nil. Nil. For it is so transitory, so temporary and then I sit and wonder that why do these people involve themselves so much in 'Me and Mine', 'Me and Mine', 'Me and Mine' creating so much misery for themselves when they know that this 'Me and Mine' is not going to last. For one thing that is certain in life, it is death. And having this 'Me and Mine' you might pop off tomorrow. And then where is the 'Me and Mine' going to take it away. Now these, this possessiveness as we said the other day, this 'Me and Mine' that is the cause of a lot of our miseries. This 'Me and Mine' makes us think and remember the past. 'Yes and I worked so hard to get this and I battled so hard for this. And I did this for that and I swindled that one for that (Gururaj laughs) Yeah. When I should have charged twopence, I charged him fourpence.' Yeah. You see. And then this 'Me and Mine' starts all the time. There's nothing wrong really in having things but to say again and I will repeat this over and over again, the attachment to it is no good. It is the attachment that produces this 'Me and Mine' business. And yet life must go on. And you know the story of the lilies of the field and the birds of the air and all provided for without 'Me and Mine'. The worm is there or the bird of the air all the time, it's not starving. And yet the bird does not say "Ah, that's my worm". Only we worms say that "That's mine, mine, mine, mine, mine." Do you see?

So the reconciliation of light and darkness is there. For if you can see light you will not see the darkness, although it is there, you cannot destroy it. So through our spiritual practices and far greater awareness, our attention is more on the light than the darkness. Good.

You know the Scotch man went to a shop to buy an attaché case, attache case - is that the way you pronounce it? Attache case. So the sales lady says, 'Sir, shall I wrap it up for you'? So the Scotch man says 'No don't wrap it up but put the paper and string in the case.' (General laughter).



Talking of Scotsmen - you know there were three Scotsmen - are there any Scottish people here (General laughter) my apologies - so these three Scotsmen go to church. And of course the church was in a dilapidated condition and the minister made an appeal that "Please", to the congregation "Please do donate something so we can have the church fixed up", you know. A Church like BMS, very poor, you know, we're going to have it fixed up and things like that. So the Scotsmen were there getting a bit nervous. You know they do love parting with money, I believe. Dorothy is that right? (General laughter)

So when the plate was coming - of course the Minister expected at least a quid from each person, a pound - so when the plate was coming along, these Scotsmen started getting nervous. So as the collection plate came nearer, the one Scotsman fainted and the other two carried him out. (General laughter). Oh yes, oh yes.

So do not allow the past to fill you with guilt. And even the actions of the present, if it is totally necessary for your mental sanity and well being, do not be guilty of that either. Because as I said before, any action done with purity, with sincerity is right action. So I go steal a loaf of bread if my children are starving, like in that story we mentioned just now, its right action. It's a sacrifice actually. I'll go and sit in jail for a month for that loaf of bread but I won't see these poor innocent children starve. You see. So from the past we can learn. What can we learn, is not to commit the mistakes again which might have been harmful to others. But then also know for yourself that those actions might have been committed due to force of circumstances or due to some aberration of the mind for which I now in my full senses am not responsible for and therefore I am not damn well going to feel guilty. But I am going to build upon that and do better. So by trying to live in the presence, present, we overcome the darkness and the light and we rise above it.

Let's see. You know the Minister says to Pat, "You were very ill in hospital for such a long time, so ill in the hospital for such a long time, you must have had a bad time of it." So Pat says "Sir, your Reverend Sir, yes, it was so." The Minister says "I'm glad to see you up and about now but tell me one thing when you were at death's door, were you not afraid to meet God?" So Pat replies "I was not afraid to meet God but I was afraid to meet the other gentleman." (Gururaj laughs) Yeah.

This guy was hauled up in front of the Magistrate. He says "You say that you are a man of peace, then why did you throw this brick at Casey?" That's Irish is it, Casey? Yeah. "Why did you throw this brick at Casey if you are a man of peace?" So he says "Your Honour, I did do that but after I threw the brick, Casey was very peaceful." (General laughter).

I think my hour is done. Good. There's one more here, I think. Let me see.

And then this Casey was involved again. There was - with all this trouble in Ireland and all the strikes happening there and what have you, such a shame really - there was an explosion in this plant. And so someone asked another friend what was the cause of the explosion. So he says "You know Casey was carrying a load of dynamite and when he heard the noon whistle go off, that's how the explosion happened. He just dropped it." People are so time conscious aren't they? In a timeless world, they are conscious of time. I think I'll just leave it at that now.

Yes, this Irishman was - I'm getting the Irish tonight - this Irishman was a teetotaller which might seem to you to be a contradiction of terms (General laughter) but it is true. Right. So this Irishman was a teetotaller, and he had to go into a Saloon, a Pub on some business - a Pub. He had to go there on some business and there was a cigar salesman there and he made a round for everyone. He invited everyone to have a drink. So of course this Irishman not being a drinker, he did not drink, so the cigar salesman noticed this and he went up to him and patted him on the back and said "Old chap, what are you having?" So the Irishman said, "Sir, thank you very much but I don't drink." Meanwhile this Irishman unfortunately had a red nose in spite of being a teetotaller. So the salesman asks, he says "You're a teetotaller, then how come you have a red nose"? And the Irishman at this impertinence replied "My red nose glows with pride because it does not poke it in other people's business." Oh that's all for tonight.

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