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## SACRIFICE AND MERCY

RAMACHANDRA: Beloved, Guruji, recently I've started reading the Bible, and there is a passage I've found that I love but that I don't understand. Christ tells his disciples in Matthew that God requires mercy, not sacrifice. Could you please explain? Namaste.

GURURAJ: We will wait until Randy settles down. He requires mercy. [Laughter.]

RAMU: Well timed.

GURURAJ: Yes. Mercy and sacrifice. What is mercy, and what is sacrifice? The passage referred to there was against old traditions where there were so many sacrifices made of animals, and people were unmerciful to life. But can we examine this in different contexts, for in the daily living of life, mercy is required and sacrifice is required. What kind of sacrifice? Sacrifice of our greeds, wants, lusts. That requires to be sacrificed at the altar of Divinity. Now what condition should the mind be in to be able to perform this great "yagya," as they would call it in Sanskrit? What should be the condition of the mind where man becomes capable of sacrifices and sacrifices not with effort because that becomes too belabored. It becomes a chore. It becomes effortful. But a spontaneous sacrifice, that is what is required. The incense stick burns itself to cinders so it could give us fragrance. What a sacrifice! The beautiful green grass on the lawn gets scorched by the sun. What a sacrifice! A spontaneous sacrifice given by man wherein his whole mind, body, and soul is involved. And that sacrifice to the altar of Divinity. But where is this Divinity you talk of, you would ask. Here. Here. Here. Here. Sitting around. If you cannot conceive of Divinity by the mind, you can still conceive of the expression of Divinity. If you cannot see the flower that is behind a screen, you can still smell its fragrance, for is there any difference between the flower and the fragrance? It is but one. And the very fragrance that emanates from the flower are but minute, infinitesimal particles of the flower. So true sacrifice in daily living, practical life, is towards man to man, brother to brother.

For am I not my brother's keeper! If I am my brother's keeper, then life should automatically be a sacrifice towards the good of my brother and not because of my personal, selfish need. It is so easy to sacrifice to boost one's ego. I know of an instance in a cultural organization that I was involved in that was building a school and a community center. So this man comes along and says, "I would give fifty thousand pounds towards the project, but there must be a plaque in front saying Mr. XYZ gave fifty thousand pounds." So what is he trying to do? He's trying to boost his ego and perpetuate, and

perpetuate his name which means nothing at all. But if he had given this without expecting this recognition, then it would have been a sacrifice of some sort of a far greater value.

And yet, giving a sacrifice should not even produce self satisfaction. There's one for you. You are not to be elated by that which you do good and not to be deflated by that which is not so good done unto you. Then you are in a state of equilibrium. Then you are in a state of balance. There you are in a state of non disturbance. And that makes for an integrated man, a whole man, where mind, body and spirit functions in totality. So through meditation and spiritual practices, we gradually move to the totalness which is us. And in that totality that you would find, you would find a total rapport, a total union with all that which is around you, and as a pebble thrown in a pond, the ripples widen and widen until you embrace the entire universe. For you are not only a part of the universe, for you could never be apart from the universe, you are the universe. And that realization dawns, that very realization which in other words is an assimilation not of the mental concept but a mental concept in the beginning turned into a total realization where you become it. And that is the reward of true sacrifice. Now by true sacrifice if you can gain the entire universe, what more do you want. People look for rewards that are tomorrow never thinking in the long term policy. For if you look at rewards in the immediate future, then you put a stoppage to your spiritual progress in life. For man is forever pushed through the processes of evolution, ever pushed onward and forward and forward until he reaches the goal. But we very consciously with our selfishnesses bring about obstacles. And when we cannot flow smoothly by the forces that are pushing us forward, and we create that resistance, then all our troubles begin. That is the source of all our troubles. "Resist not evil," said Jesus. What evil? The evil of obstacles that we ourselves have produced because we do not have the attitude of sacrifice.

And yet life itself is a sacrifice. Every moment of the day you are... your life span is becoming shorter and shorter and shorter. The string is shorter and shorter and shorter. Yet, man thinks he is going to live forever. He clings to his body and the five senses in temporary seeking and searching night and day for temporary pleasures when the real bliss is waiting at his door step. And then they say, "Why do I suffer? Is Divinity so unfair to make me suffer and be filled with misery?" No, Divinity is a neutral force given to you and at the same time giving you a free will to use this neutral force in whichever way you wish to use it. So the choice is ours, and that choice can only be put into action if we assume a sense of responsibility for ourselves and for our actions.

So here in the word "sacrifice" are contained all these virtues that would lead man to Divinity, or at least lead him to greater happiness and harmony in his personal life. And is that not what man is seeking on a short term basis even? So even for the short term if man practices that, then life could become smoother. Everyone wants happiness in every field

of life. He wants money. He wants a beautiful wife or a husband and all the various comforts that he feels will comfort him. Be it as it may, it may even be a delusion, an illusion; yet, without this illusion, life does not seem to evolve. For man is in this evolutionary stage where these illusions and delusions are even necessary. For if the delusions were not there, how is he going to overcome them? So, as I said yesterday, the law of opposites will always exist. It is from unreality that you reach reality. Hmm? But what do we do? We take the real and make it unreal. So instead of gaining wisdom and knowledge, we go deeper and deeper into nescience, ignorance. What is the way out? Sacrifice.

And sacrifice does not mean monetary sacrifice. There are many ways of sacrifice. Someone says an unkind word to me. Someone tries to blaspheme me. Someone tries to distort truth against me. What do I do? Retaliate? No, I forgive and would say, "Father, they know not what they do. Forgive them." Sacrifice. For here you are sublimating your immediate reaction into something which is far greater. You have risen above the pettiness of mundane reaction to the action inflicted upon you. So when man learns not to react, then that too is a sacrifice, and this non reaction with spiritual practices comes spontaneously. For that is the nature of sacrifice. I do a certain duty for a friend, and I say, "Oh I've done this. Auntie Mary was ill, and I went to look after her. Ah, what a sacrifice. I neglected my home." The meaning of sacrifice is lost. You do it for the sake of love. You work for the sake of work. As I said yesterday, you love for the sake of love. You loved Auntie Mary. You are doing Auntie Mary no favor by looking after her for a few days. You are doing yourself a favor! Who is the greater gainer going to clean up Auntie Mary's kitchen and her home and cooking for her? That's nothing. That's nothing in comparison to what you are gaining: a labor of love, an expression of love like the flower expressing its fragrance, like the sun giving light and heat, wanting no reward not even in thought form. Because as soon as you think of the reward, you have gained the reward. It might not be tangible; yet, the reward is intangible, and it gets implanted more and more firmly in the mind so that your mind would whirl in the pattern of wanting a reward. So how far away that takes you away from Divinity because you start acting not for the sake of action, you work not for the sake of work but for the sake of gain, temporary gain which is here now and gone tomorrow. And before you know it whatever temporary gain you have just slips through your fingers. So sacrifice gives you the opportunity to have permanent gain. That's what we want.

And what is there permanent in this universe? Only the essence of the universe, the changeless, is permanent. All change is impermanent. We chase, chase shadows instead of the real article. Hmm? Yes. And when you chase a shadow, it will always be behind you I'm sorry when you chase a shadow, it'll always be in front of you, but when you chase the light, the shadow is behind you. So we leave the shadows behind and chase the light. And this is sacrifice. This is sacrifice of one's entirety. And this sacrifice without any expectation that we spoke about last night brings its own

reward. Not wanting reward but the rewards are there. When you plant a seed and keep on nurturing it and watering it, that flower must grow. The flower will come to show its beautiful face to you. And so we do not need to chase even after Divinity, but if our lives are lived in such a manner, then Divinity comes to you! In some of the Vedic scriptures it is said that Divinity will chase you. You don't need to chase the Divine. You can't catch it. But if life is lived in such a manner, you create such a force that even God comes down to you. Has He not in the past in the form of a human? And how many times has He not come as Mahavir, as Rama, as Krishna, as Buddha, as Christ? That eternal consciousness is always there, but when the need arises, then it takes form so that pure consciousness which cannot be grasped by the human mind materializes itself to help humanity to show the way of sacrifice. You see the far reaching effects of sacrifice. In olden times, or still prevalent today among many churches and theologies, they have a tithing system. And they believe that whatever you earn for example, ten percent does not belong to you. Ten percent belongs to God. And whatever charity you do after that, that is charity. But the first ten percent, write off. Now what does this actually mean? It is not the tithing that is so important, but theology has found a way whereby man's mind could be conditioned so that he tithes. From there he is led on so that in all fields of life he becomes giving. There was this psychology underlying this. Not that the churches did not need the help. They did need it. But those wise old men knew how the human mind can be trained and can be patterned in such a manner that it will look upward, Godward. Do you see? So in sacrifice the first three letters, S A C, to me is sacred. So one of the elements of sacrifice is sacredness. And the very act performed in a spontaneous giving is sacred. Now what is more sacred in life than love? If you are established in love, then sacrifice and all the other virtues we mentioned that are attached to sacrifice becomes spontaneous; and then we start experiencing the living God, the practical God, and not a concept of God. What do we worship today? We only worship a concept. We are not worshipping God, if God is not a living God. And it is only by sacrificing, it is only by sacrificing that God becomes alive to us, and we see Divinity face to face. How do we see Divinity face to face? When we can see that force in everything, in every living being, in every creature, in anything animate as well as inanimate.

This word inanimate, it's totally wrong. For there is nothing inanimate in this world. Even a stone contains life. Even a stone has a certain form of consciousness, latent, potential, requiring the forces of evolution to unfold the stone into the various higher stages until the stage of man is reached. And when the stage of man is reached, then he becomes conscious of life and living. Now that is the tragedy. In spite of the consciousness that we have of living, we cease to live. The living dead. We just exist. We have not really evolved from the animal kingdom. We are living animals but dead humans. Yes. The animal functions instinctively. It is swayed and pushed forth by the forces of evolution. Man, when he reaches the stage of man, he is given the power to think, and that is all that differentiates us from the animal. Nothing else. Nothing else.

Now having the power to think naturally gives us the power of discrimination. Now is this power of discrimination to be used for greed, or is it to be used for sacrifice. Is this power of discrimination to be used to take or to give? For haven't we been given so much? What have we returned? Can a person live for five minutes without the oxygen in the air given to us free? Can a person live without the food that is given to us grown in God's earth? How much we are given. How much we are given. And we have been taking, taking, taking, and never giving or sacrificing. Now this does not apply to money only. That is only a fractional part of it. But the sacrificing of life to become that burning inferno so that I could light up my environment. And that is done by the expression of love, for love contains within itself understanding, forgiveness, compassion. Now you can't do this with a forethought. That helps a bit. It starts you off by planning and working out things. But when it becomes spontaneous, that is what we have to aim for; where we become a human inferno, as I said, that burns on its own. It becomes self luminous. We have enough fat in us to make it burn. [Laughter.] Yes. Yes. And the reward is so great, for with that burning, with that sacrifice, you are burning away all your karma. All the sins that you might have committed, all the wrongs that you might have done, is burned away in the sacrifice for your brother man. So who gains more? You gain. The giver always gains more than the receiver, and I'm not referring to the Receiver of Revenue. [Laughs.] You call it something else here, don't you? I R A or something. [Laughter.] Do you see. So in human relationships, the greatest communication can be established by the sense of sacrifice. People talk of communicating, which has become quite a thing in America and all over the world: that I want to communicate. Many levels of communication, yes, physical, mental, and spiritual. But all of this can come about... (there's that fly again from Windsor) [Laughter] all this can come about if one has the sense of sacrifice. Then mercy enters into the picture.

Now to be merciful is good. Mercifulness is good. We have to have mercy on those that are more unfortunate than us. But how about having mercy on those that are more fortunate? Hmm? Hmm? Hmm? For who is more unfortunate, and who is more fortunate? There's no such thing! You don't measure the unfortunateness or fortunateness of life by material possessions or by temporary adversities that someone goes through or you go through. We are all fortunate. We are potentially divine. Every cell in our bodies is filled with love, God's love or else they will not function. Billions of cells are working in your body in a systematic manner. A man with his mind can disrupt the workings of all those cells, and therefore, he becomes ill, physically and mentally. We don't allow that love contained within us to flow because our very actions that we perform impede the flow. We create our own obstacles. We are what we are today because of what we have done. We interpret fortune or misfortune through our own minds. It is the mind, that cunning animal, that leads us astray. And yet this very mind can be used as the instrument of sacrifice to lead us deep within ourselves to the Kingdom of Heaven within and draw from there this infinite love that could embrace the entire world, embrace the entire the entire world in your bosom.

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Where does this universe exist? Does it really exist? Or is it a projection of your mind? If it is not a projection of your mind, then why do different people view it differently. So the universe is dependent within its own relative reality upon the conceptions that you have, upon the patterning that you yourself have created within your mind. And through that patterning, through that haze of samskaras or impressions, you view the world and the universe. So by sacrifice a cleansing takes place. You clean off the dirt so that a true view of the light can be seen, not a blurred view.

So sacrifice is one of the greatest words in any language. You cannot sacrifice if you don't have love. You cannot sacrifice if you don't have kindness and compassion. You cannot sacrifice if you don't have any of these hundreds of virtues that are required to live a harmonious, balanced life, an integrated life. And this is brought about not by blind belief; but this is brought about by realization and experience. This is not brought about by theory, or else all, as I've said many times before, all the university professors of philosophy would be self realized men. They only know theories. What we want is experience. And how does one experience this that could transform our lives is by diving deep within through various types of individualized meditational and spiritual practices. And gradually as we approach the path.... And it is quite a steep climb, but when we reach the hilltop, the panoramic view we have of existence, that scintillating abode of the gods, is there for you to enter.

[END SIDE ONE]

GURURAJ: But once you reach that hill top and see that beautiful city, the citizens emerge, and all the men will come running up to welcome you because you have reached. That is what we want to do. That is why we say, "You take one step towards Divinity, and He takes ten steps towards you." And that one step is sacrifice. So to live a life of harmony requires sacrifice. This applies to our home life in every way, in the relationship between husband, wife and children. Yes. Where the wife has to do something and you see she is not too well, and you take over her chores from her because of the love you have for her. Not because of a duty that she will tell me tomorrow that you saw me ill yesterday but you never had the decency to help. That would be a sense of duty, but sacrifice becomes automatic: "Oh my love, please, please, please, you sit down and rest. I'll do this." It begins at home. It begins at work where you make certain leeways for your fellow co workers. You do it in the street. You do it everywhere. You do it this very moment you are sitting here listening to me where you sacrifice old patterns of thought, patterns of greed, patterns of lust, patterns of wrong doing. You do it now every moment of the day. It becomes a burning torch. For you have the quality. It is in there within you. You do not need to seek for it outside. The candle and the match is there. You do not need to borrow a match. It is all within you, all within you just to be expressed. And that kind of sacrifice is love.

Many times we read stories where people martyr themselves. Do they really sacrifice their lives for a cause? There might be some, but the majority of them are and were ego boosting. Or they are escaping some life, and this would be a nice way. You'll gain some name and fame as well and yet escape. That is not what we want. We want to live an ordinary, simple life. Simple. Simple. Simple. I've said this before. It is so simple to be happy, but so difficult to be simple. [Laughter.] Yes. Yes. Yes.

So we have come into this world to burn. Burn what? Burn the samskaras, those impressions, the burden that we have brought with us, the burden, the load of impressions we have come with. And that is why according to the size of the burden, we have taken different kinds of lives and placed in different environments. Yet, no one is here free of that burden. So we have come to burn that burden, the burden of karma, the burden of wrong impressions. For once that burden which is bondage is burnt away in that sacrifice, then you are free, and to be free is to be one with God. Yes. The quotation you made was of a historical nature and not a philosophical one. Right. OK. Fine. Next question.

VOICE: [Unintelligible.]

GURURAJ: Do you think it will be a short one?

CHELA: Yes.

GURURAJ: Good.

CHELA: Right. Beloved Guruji, how can I face with equanimity my advancing infirmity and coming death?

GURURAJ: Aha, good. [Laughter.] How can I face with equanimity my coming death? Huh? You are not going to die. No one dies. There is no death. There is only life. That which people regard to be death is just leaving one room and entering another. There is no death. What makes you fear death is the attachment that one has for worldly, mundane things. If the spirit within man that is immortal, how can it die? Divinity did not create death. Divinity created life. But if you wish to interpret life as death, then all the misery is yours. But if you believe in eternal life and which is so you do not need to believe it; you can experience it then there is no misery.

Now to find that calmness of mind, to face death, requires two things: an understanding of what death is, and a strength, a spiritual strength, to back up the understanding. Now the spiritual strength is gained through spiritual practices where you draw from within yourself. Man is dying, if you wish to use that word, in the physical sense, he is dying every moment. One dies thousands of times every day. Between two heart beats, there is a stop. There is a gap. And that is death. When the heart stops for a split second before it starts the next beat, that is death. And you are reborn again every second of the day. That is the physical body. Now how important is the physical body? How important are the senses, hearing, touching, seeing, smelling, tasting? So we lose the calmness within ourselves, the inherent calmness, because we do not want to let go of the sensual pleasures. And yet everyone knows that associated with these sensual pleasures are sensual pains. They are two sides of the same coin. If you have a high one week, be sure to know you'll have a low the next week. The only way out is to rise above. To rise above the body and the mind, and enter the realm of the spirit where there is no death, but only life.

And yet even this body is indestructible. Every atom is indestructible of which your body is composed. It only disintegrates and goes back to its original elements: fire to fire, water to water, ether to ether. All the elements that composes this body, even they too are indestructible. The forces of the mind, the thought forces for mind is none else but thought they too go back to their original thought. Wrong thoughts are attracted to an area or to people where wrong thoughts exist. So it is so important to think rightly. If you think negatively, then there are millions of negative thoughts of a like nature floating around here which you are attracting and that will strengthen the negativity that is in your mind. It is like a broadcast from a radio. There are so many broadcasts floating in this very hall, so many different stations. But we don't hear it because we haven't got a radio or the radio is not properly tuned. But that does not deny the existence of those sound waves. Likewise, thoughts of all natures, good and bad, negative and positive, are floating around here. Try feeling a little depressed, and you will see how much more depressed you become. Why? Huh? [Laughter.] Huh? You have become a magnet of attraction, for you are forever a magnet. And have one joyful, cheerful thought, and you draw cheerful thoughts that are floating around of like nature. And you attract them, and you become more cheerful. So likewise, likewise this body and mind functions forever changing, changing, changing. And it is this very change that we call death.

In reality there is only life. Divinity cannot create death. And there is a very simple reason for this. If it creates death, then it will die itself; and Divinity is eternal, immortal. It cannot die. So Divinity has only manifested. The Manifestor has only manifested life, for if life is destroyed, then Divinity too is destroyed. If manifestation is destroyed, then the Manifestor cannot exist. Man cannot exist if there was no God, and God cannot exist if there was no man. By "man" I mean the relative creation. So there is no death. There is only life.



But we go through certain phases. When this body gets tired or due to other chronic mechanisms this body is discarded like we discard one suit and put on another suit. And yet the life force within you is eternal, deathless, immortal! So there is no death. Now if we have this understanding that there is no death, the mind will find some peace. It will find some tranquility knowing that there is no death, but that is not enough. This mental logic has to be realized, and that can be realized through spiritual practices where we dive into the region of no death. We dive into the region which is life, for the spirit in man is forever alive and deathless. It goes from place to place, from room to room, deathless, forever the same, unchanging, pure, untainted, unstained.

So who's afraid of death? Hmm? It is not death that disturbs the human mind, but it is the fear that disturbs the mind. It is the clinging that disturbs the mind. "Oh, I'm going to lose all my millions. Or, I'm going to be away from my loved ones." Or whatever the case might be. That fear. For where have you come from, and where are you going? You have come from nowhere! And you are going nowhere! Now listen to that word, "nowhere." Cut it up with the same spelling: now here. Do you see? N O W H E R E. Now here. You have come from nowhere, and you are going nowhere. You are here, and that is eternity captured in a moment. William Blake was right. He said eternity in an hour, but he miscalculated. [Laughter.] It's eternity in a moment.

So there is no need to fear death because you will pick up the strings from where you left it off in your spiritual unfoldment. It is a continuum. No division at all. Just a change of bodies. And who knows, Lee, that when you leave this body, you might have a more handsomer body. Huh? [Laughter.] Be happy, and as Jesus said, "Be of good cheer!" Here! Right. Your bell has rung for lunch. Good.

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