
BECOMING RECEPTIVE TO GRACE

GURURAJ: What shall we talk about today?

QUESTIONER: Beloved Gururaj, yesterday Doug talked to us of our task on the course as being that of making oneself receptive to shakti or grace. What does it mean to be receptive to grace? Can we do anything to open ourselves to it? Or can we only respond to grace once we [see it?]

GURURAJ: Both. Good Question. The basis of the question really is what is grace? How can something indefinable really be defined? But one could use analogies to explain it. It is like a plant growing and there are forces in nature and beyond nature which brings the right amount of minerals to it, the right amount of sun to it, the right amount of water to it to make the plant grow. Now, what is that factor that brings all these things about in its proper combination, in its right combination; for we know too much fertilizer could kill the plant. Now, that factor that brings about the proper combination is grace. When man understands grace with his mind he does not know what grace is. Grace is a force or a power we call it gurushakti. Grace is a force, a power that the mind cannot understand but it can be experienced within. Now, experiencing this grace within, man still needs to translate it outwardly and the only means he has to translate it or to have some inkling of it is his mind. So, that which is experienced inside has to be brought to a conscious level of the thinking mind.

Now how does this happen? What are the mechanics? When a person experiences grace, he always tries to find an object for the grace or otherwise he looks for a mirror in which he would view that grace flowing through him in the mirror. Now, everything in this world is a mirror. Everything in this world is a mirror in which we look at ourselves. Do we look at it clearly in its true value, or do we allow our own personal experiences to influence what we see. Therefore the old saying, "Beauty lies in the eyes of the beholder." To one person a certain object might seem so ugly while to another person it might seem so so beautiful. So, the mind the conscious mind and the subconscious mind act as filters through which grace flows through; for without grace you could not even see. So, man influences the purity of grace by the experiences, the patterning and conditioning of his own mind, and that is why different people would have a totally different perspective of any object in view. And yet grace is working all the time, for nothing else exists in this universe but grace that force, that spiritual force, that spiritual power. Now, to allow the purity of grace to shine through one has to clarify the mind. It is like a dirty pane of glass that has to be cleaned up so that true light could come through. Grace is like a crystal and whatever you put behind it the crystal

assumes the color. Now if you put a red flower behind a crystal the crystal would seem red; a yellow flower, it would seem yellow. So all these various colors of life are seen through the prism of one's mind. In reality, grace, or the true color, is only white. But because of the prism we view it differently in the colors of the spectrum. Now, like that, although grace and that spiritual force – the Kingdom of Heaven, whatever label you wish to put on it – is there all the time, the mind blocks its passage.

Now, what can we do to allow the grace to flow in its primal purity? This would involve clarifying the mind. How do we clarify the mind? The mind is clarified of its samskaras or its impressions and patternings by having an understanding of things. And that is why we have these satsangs and these courses so that we could look at a particular thing with a different perspective, from a different angle. Most people go through life with blinkers like a horse would do and it would only see in one direction and loses all that which is around him. So here to allow grace its fullest scope one needs this awareness.

Now, there are two ways of becoming more aware, more unfolded, though awareness is there already. For if it is not there, you could never achieve it. So actually and in reality it is not an achievement, it is not something which you gather from outside and add on to yourself. It is there all the time. So to have a better perspective of life, to be more aware, one needs spiritual practices and understanding. The greatest spiritual practice, as I've mentioned yesterday, I think, is gurushakti, grace; to tune oneself consciously by the mind at first, by thought at first that there is a greater force beyond us. And every theology, every religion, every philosophy does acknowledge the fact there is a power greater than us. That power we call it God or Grace.

Now, to allow this power to filter through, one opens a channel in this clouded samskaric mind. That channel is opened up by the practice of gurushakti and the other spiritual practices is to consciously direct one's thoughts to any idol you have or any concrete form you might have. It could be a stone. It could be a tree. It could be a flower. It could be a great personage that teaches of truth. And when the mind is focused to a true guru what happens is this, that the guru does nothing at all. But being a channel, being a channel, having within him that grace given power or force where he, through years and lifetimes of severe practices, has become a channel; like a flute he becomes hollow and allows the grace to blow its air through it so the world could enjoy the melody. That is how grace works.

So as we said in other talks, that we focus our minds. Like when I was doing severe practices in the Himalayas, my mind was totally focused on Swami Pavitrananji – I'm sure most of you might have heard those tapes and would be worth hearing for those who haven't. The tape was a talk on my experiences with Swamiji. So, in my own personal experiences and I speak only of my experiences – that I was so totally focused in him that through him I could discover that unique infinite universal force. I needed something concrete so that I could experience the abstract, and after experiencing the

abstract, one brings it out to the world again in a concrete form so that one's eyes become opened, and that is awakening. There is no difference between awakening and awareness. People live through this life, or just a mere existence in this life, asleep. They are in this dream world caught up in the pettiness, in their own little judgments of the world around them. And that is the great sorrow which true teachers feel. What true teachers do is try and awaken that, like [Sai Baba of Sildi?] used to say that it's not the present [Sai Baba?] who claims himself to be the incarnation of the original one [Sai Baba of Sildi?] used to say, "You look at me and I will look at you. But if you don't look at me how could you attract my gaze to you?" Now, my gaze is always there. It is not absent, but by saying "you look at me and I will look at you," it means that direct your attention to me. That of course is an ancient Eastern belief, but I would say, do not look at me but look through me. Look through me to that infinity, and by consciously, with conscious thought, if one practices this you would definitely as thousands of people have experienced, and most of you here in this assembly have experienced something happens. Something happens. A spark is lit in your conscious mind that goes deeper and deeper down through the various layers of the subconscious until you reach the purity of light in the superconscious.

Now, when one does spiritual practices, the whole aim is to go beyond the conscious mind and the subconscious mind with all its cluttered experiences some good or bad or whatever and one reaches that level of the superconscious that is uncluttered, that reflects the true Divinity. It reflects the true Divinity because it is uncluttered. So man's journey, man's evolutionary journey is but just this: to reach from the conscious mind through the subconscious to the superconscious, and that is the area where the totality of grace is to be found. That is the intuitive quality as some psychologists would say. Jung would say the unconscious mind, the unconscious area. For in that area no analysis takes place. You do not analyze that this is black and that is white, and this is good and this is bad; this is bitter and this is sweet. And then, having reached that area, you become so aware that you transcend all opposites. The trouble in daily living is because of our greater emphasis on opposites, and yet the law of opposites also have to function in its own sphere. So the true journey of man is to be in touch with this grace. And it is not reaching the grace only that matters that is only half the way but you become the grace. We have it in our daily experience: you're in the company of a certain person and you feel different. Something just happens. You can't explain it the mind can never analyze it and yet something wells up within you, you become more loving, you feel a certain kind of purity. There's a lovely Sanskrit word for it. It's called "darshan" to be in the company of. In the company of what? In the company of the grace that flows through the spiritual teacher. That is how we reach grace.

Now in turn what the spiritual teacher does he shows you not only by spiritual practices and the practice of gurushakti but also gives an understanding. And that is what life is all about is to have proper understanding. To have proper understanding means to have a greater awareness where we would look at an object not in a narrow way but in a far

wider way, a panoramic view of that which seemed so little. And then the appreciation of everything around you grows. We say "Love thy neighbor as thyself." That is just a mental concept which people can't do with the mind. How can you love your neighbor as yourself when he throws all the garbage over your fence? But you can love even that garbage thrower. You can love him. Yes, by saying that, "Oh Lord, has he got this sense to do this?" If he throws ten pounds of garbage over you do not need to throw twenty pounds of garbage over his fence, on his side. What do you do if you have a wider perspective? You take that garbage and use it as fertilizer in your ground. You see? And then you can still love that neighbor of yours. He is not apart from you. So what happens there? So many things happen there. You become more loving, more compassionate, more understanding. And then you will tell him, "Oh please throw more garbage over. I don't mind because I can put it to good use. You are actually feeding my plants. Thank you!"

So you see the perspective in life. And if we can look at everything in life with that perspective, then everything becomes joyous. Everything just dances around you. Everything is just beautiful, fragrant. Now if you have that perspective then only can you say that I love my neighbor as myself. You see? And this principle can be applied to every aspect of life. Husband and wife have a quarrel and the husband would say, oh you did not do this or did not do that. Okay, fine, she did not do it. Why? Have I perhaps not been the cause of it? So with this comes a self analysis and with self analysis your anger disappears and then you say if I have to be angry let me be angry with anger, and not with my beloved wife. You see? Perspective, perspective understanding how to look at any happening or any situation in its true light and you will find in spite of how wicked a situation might seem apparently on the surface, underlying that, too, is Divinity. Someone swears at you. A son went to his father and he said, "I was passing John on the road and he swore at me." So the father says, "Do you know John?" The son says, "Yes, I know John." "You're sure he's not a stranger?" He says no. He says, "Well, because you know him he swore at you. But if he was a stranger he would have not." Look at the perspective. John is my friend so he swore at me, so what? Perhaps didn't I say a bad word to him some other time? What prompted him to swear at me? Have I done something wrong? So here with this self analysis one fights one's ego. And the ego is nothing but all the patternings of past experiences. So this is how we do not annihilate the ego, we bring clarity to the ego. The analogy I always use is like a piece of latex rubber: the more you stretch it, the more transparent it becomes, and you can see through it. It loses its opaqueness. And that is what happens to the ego. That is what gets rid of all the samskaras we have in us that bundle, that burden of experiences that we have gained.

So, on this path, on this spiritual path when they say "lessen the burden," it means stretch that piece of rubber so you can see through it and see the true color of things. See the divinity that underlies everything. And then when one sees that, what are we returned with? By seeing truly we are looking at an object gracefully, and grace rebounds on us tenfold and

we become even more and more graceful. That is all that there is. People talk to me of enlightenment. And I say, "Why do you want to be enlightened?" You do not need to be enlightened. You can never find enlightenment. But you can find an equilibrium, and by bringing about this equilibrium within ourselves, enlightenment comes automatically. That is the end result of the integration we bring unto ourselves and this comes through spiritual practices, consciously focusing, always being reminded of that divinity. So, being abstract, to repeat this over and over again and over again, being abstract, your little mind can never comprehend that which is infinite. The finite mind can never comprehend that which is infinite. But we can comprehend Jesus, we can comprehend Buddha, we can comprehend Krishna. And through that we are in touch with that infinite grace, and once we touch it we're never the same again. That is why satsangs are so necessary. At least once a year or once in six months people must get together to receive of this grace, to receive of this grace. Did Jesus not say, "Where two are gathered in my name, I am there?" This is what is meant. This is the coming of grace and it is there, it costs you nothing, just a gentle remembrance throughout the day, the remembrance. For everything happens through grace. You can't lift your hand without the power of grace. Even while the housewife is at the kitchen sink washing her dishes she can still be reminded of how that plate is made, how the intellect was put into man to make the earthenware plate, how the molecules have all stuck together in this mud that you would not look at, and now it's a beautiful plate. The water running. Where does the water come from? Who makes the water? Why does it exist? How beautiful it feeds all the trees and the plants, quenches your thirst and you'd die without it if you did not have it for a few days. So even while washing those dishes which seems such a chore to everyone, it could be so beautiful. And you're constantly in remembrance of grace, of that Divinity. What greater spiritual practice can there be than to be in constant remembrance.

So, in everything we do, if we have this behind our conscious working minds, our conscious working mind will also act in a different way. It will act more lovingly, it will become more generous, more sacrificing, more all giving, more unselfish. And that is how the ego self is clarified. That is how all the samskaras are got rid of, and then we don't worry about enlightenment or any place in heaven.

It reminds me there was a guru's wife and she was so good to him. She looked after him his every need his clothes, his food, his this, that, everything was just perfect. She looked after him so so well. So one day a messenger came down from Heaven to her and the messenger says to her that, "We have reserved a special place in Heaven for you for looking after the guru so well." So the guru's wife says, "Well, I am so at one with him that I don't need to go up there, I'd rather stay with him wherever he goes." Down there.

So, with this understanding, we are of service to others. And by serving others we are doing no one any favor. We are just doing ourselves a favor. We are opening ourselves up to more and more grace until we become so grace filled that

man becomes the living grace, the walking grace. Who wants to know of a God sitting up there somewhere or down there, wherever? Who wants to know of that? We want living gods on earth. And that you really are verily so that you really are. The expressor is none apart from the expression. The artist is none apart from his painting. The flutist is none apart from her flute. To merge away, to melt away, forgetting the self and only knowing the flute. Then it is not just the wind that would blow through the flute, but your the whole heart your entire being flows through it for the ears of others.

So in every way through your flute, through your kitchen utensils, through the carpenter's hammer or the shoemaker's awl, or the teacher's teaching, we pour out that. We become channels some lesser channels, some greater channels depending what understanding we have of things. And as we proceed in life gaining greater and greater understanding, we become more and more human; then from animal to man and man to man god. And yet the outer trappings would be so much the same. If we see Buddha or Christ walking down the road, how many of us would be able to recognize them? How many of us? They would seem so ordinary. They would do all the things we do and so ordinary. But yet they are filled with this light. They have brought this unconscious, superconscious divine light into their conscious being, so whatever action they perform is tinged with that divinity, with that grace. And just a gaze into such a person's eyes is enough. The spark is lit. Huh? So, the second part of your question: we have to be receptive, and all these things I've talked about creates that receptivity, for the grace is always there. And that is why these great men, these sages, these gods on earth though ordinary like Jesus used to wine and dine with sinners and prostitutes. And yet such a man, and truly there are a few on earth today, whoever they touch there is some benefit there perhaps not just apparently so for the moment. But as time passes, some little word, one little whisper, one little glance, one little touch will be realized and say, "Ah, yes, is this what it was? How silly of me I did not know it then." That is receptivity. That is responding.

So the path to achieve this grace is by consciously directing one's attention to it through the object that you love. There has to be love and an understanding of what life is all about. We exist why? We must live; and when I say live, live the living God because all is God, all is Divine. On one hand we say Divinity is omnipresent God is omnipresent. Then on the other hand we say Thou that are somewhere else. It becomes a contradiction. These things are so necessary that from that "I" and "Thou" situation it becomes the "WE" situation. Like the word "ME" would disappear. If you put a mirror under the word "me" it would look like "we." Try it out. Then we come to this realization of the we; but in that we situation another recognition comes about: that wee ness little ness of ourselves. Scottish people use the word "weelittle" something. Then we find and we say, who am I, so insignificant in this great vastness, in this great infinity? I am infinite, yet I know that this little body and mind is so small a wee bit a speck of dust. Insignificant. And then the true surrender takes place. Many of these gurus teach "you surrender to me." No, that is totally wrong. That's what I told

Swami Muktananda when I spent some time with him about a year ago. I said, "What is this, what is this you're doing? We don't want 14th Century idolatry, 14th Century Hinduism in this world today. We need a universal belief, and surrender is the culmination and not the start." That's what I told him. Surrender is the culmination that after going through the spiritual practices, after gaining understanding, after tuning oneself to gurushakti, we come to realize our insignificance, and then true surrender takes place. You cannot create surrender by itself it is the culmination of a process, you see. And this process comes automatically. And then truly can we say, "Thy will be done." You see? That is how it works. People say "Thy will be done" only when they are in trouble. Only when they are in trouble, then they say, "Thy will be done." But not with true realization, for realization knows of no quality. Realization is a happening. Realization is a thing in itself. Then the I and Thou disappears and you just are. Brahmasmi, I am Brahma. I and my Father are one. Separation ceases because we have now clarified the ego self which is none other than the mind. This great clarity brought about, to repeat over and over again, by the practice the conscious practice of gurushakti and the development of a wider understanding. Now the guru cannot be around all the time with you, so you listen to his tapes. Many people most people have told me, that I listened to one of your tapes three years ago, and when I listen to it now I find it to mean something totally different to me now than what it meant three years ago. Do you find that? Good.

[END SIDE ONE]

So, all these things gather together in a wholeness, and this wholeness is grace. I have disturbed this trend of thought never mind, it doesn't matter. Disturb the meditation for me a talk is a meditation. Very seldom am I totally aware of the things I say. It's just the next day when I listen to the recording that I ummm, so, so.... We've got fifteen minutes left. Can we go on to another short question?

QUESTIONER: I guess, but I don't know whether it will be short or not maybe there's a possibility here...

GURURAJ: Or perhaps, just....

QUESTION: ... kind of like we do at the rapid fire... it just has to be spontaneous....

QUESTIONER: Can I ask about salvation?

GURURAJ: Good. Fine. Yes. We have been talking about salvation. To be saved is to be realized. And these realizations they come. Sometimes in little doses that amounts up to total realization. So, in salvation you are not going to be saved, you are already saved. We do believe in a Savior, but it means something different. It means one that shows you the path to tell you that you are a child of God, and if you are a child of God then you are saved. You are not lost. Only the cognition must come that you are saved. You don't require saving. You are grace. You only require that to be unfolded. So, in many theologies you would find contradictions and there is a purpose for it. And the purpose of the teacher is this: to teach according to the people he is teaching. Certain people would require a certain kind of teaching; others would require a different kind of teaching. And the Bible has illustrated this so very very well. Jesus would say to the peasants that had not much understanding, "Pray to thy Father in Heaven." A dualism, a separation is there for it is only that which those people could grasp. He placed the Father in Heaven far apart from the person of little understanding so that that person could go on the path towards that oneness. And to others that were close to him, he said, "I and my Father are one." And by that "I" he did not mean himself as little physical body, he meant the entirety of the human race which is one with the Father.

So the teacher a true teacher always has to speak according to the level of understanding of his hearers. According to the level of the understanding of his hearers, and they'd always teach a few steps ahead. You cannot give the lessons of M.A. to a child in form 3 or form 4. So slowly, slowly, slowly. But look at the joy in this process, this slow process, step by step. Like the beautiful hymn, "Lead Thou Me On Kindly Light." One step at a time one step enough for me. And like that we progress. We develop greater awareness step by step. But what pains us in this modern world is that people want things instantly: instant coffee, instant pudding, salvation instant, realization instant. We just go to a course and automatically we are saved. We go to a course and be with a guru and all the grace has descended upon us. It's a fallacy. You are being touched. The spark has been lit. What are you going to do about it? For no one can lead you to realization. No one can lead you to that oneness or the recognition of that oneness. That you have to do yourself. You have to walk with your own feet. Therefore it is said that the spiritual path is a path for heroes. And this applies in every facet of life. A little child going to school no teacher can teach the child. The teacher can only make the child learn. And how much the child applies himself is dependent upon the child. And so, that is why we said earlier that people grasp and understand whatever is said here according to their level of understanding. So, when the tape is listened to now, and three years later it assumes a different meaning, it proves one thing it measures one thing that my awareness has now grown more so that I could understand the words behind the words, the essence behind the words that have been spoken. [BELL RINGING IN BACKGROUND]

So what salvation means is that you are a wayfarer to truly find yourself. And when you find yourself the realization comes that I have already been saved! Divinity is within me. I am already saved. That is the true meaning of it. But the surface meaning is the path, the approach, for is the path and the end not but one? It is. So, this realization process is a happening within this process circles within circles within circles, and it continues on to infinity. And yet man has the greatest gift to recognize and experience this totality of all that exists. Descartes I wish I could meet him now he said: "I think, therefore I exist." That is not true very partly true. You exist even if you don't think. For existence is eternal. You see how these philosophers... all these various formulations of theories and theories and theories. There are no theories necessary. The mind is not necessary. Nothing is necessary. It's just that awareness that I am divine and with the conscious application towards grace one becomes more and more aware of Divinity, and through the eyes of grace a total perspective is found in the world that leads to greater and greater joy. That's what we want, for everyone hankers after happiness. They do it in such a wrong direction. A person thinks if I have a million pounds I will be so happy. He will not. The wrong way. What will happen, by having the million pounds he will inflate his ego more, clutter the ego more, and there will be more and more miseries. Yet by the same man if he has first gained if he has first gained the clarity and the vision, the awareness, then that million pounds that he wants or would make will assume a different value altogether, a different value altogether. And then he can really enjoy that without misery. Therefore it is said, "Seek ye first the kingdom within and all else shall be added unto thee."

So that is where we start. But we normally start in the opposite direction by seeking outer possessions. For who is really mine? Is my father mine? Is my mother mine? My wife, my children, are they really mine? No, no, no. Nothing is mine. Everything is of the Divine, and I am that little bubble on this vast pond of the Divine, now existing and now bursting to reformulate itself into another bubble. And when the sun shines the sun of wisdom when that shines look at the rainbow colors reflected in that bubble. But going in darkness the bubble is there without the glory and the beauty of the sun's rays. That is the real sun and every son of man has within him the beauty of that sun. I bring to thee words of cheer and hope and joy. It is there just to recognize recognize, feel, experience, live, laugh, love. That is life.

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