

## WHAT IS TRUE FRIENDSHIP?

GURURAJ: Good. Shall we start with questions?

QUESTION: Beloved Gururaj, you've often spoken about love and spiritual growth as seen in marriage; the deeply committed inter relationship of a man and a woman. Could you speak this evening on the subject of friendship? What is friendship? What is a true friend? Dearest Gururaj, father and friend, what function does friendship play on the spiritual path? Thank you, namaste. [Banging noise in background]

GURURAJ: Thank you. It's all to do with banging!

Yes, what is friendship? What is friendship? There could never be friendship on a total physical level. There could be an attraction which might seemingly be a friendship. Most friendships, like love, are based upon needs. You need companionship; you need support; you need someone to share things with: and that is what is commonly known as friendship.

But to me that is not real friendship, that is only the surface of what friendship could be; for real friendship, like love, should have no need. So here, in friendship, when there is no need there is a total acceptance of a friend.

Now where does friendship stem from? If friendship is based only on the mental level where two people think alike, that is good. There is a certain kind of mutualness in their ways of life, their likes and their dislikes. That is true on the surface level. But real friendship begins when a spark is ignited in the hearts of two people. Like love, friendship has to grow; and when this spark is ignited in the hearts of two people, then friendship really begins, and even when two people think differently they might agree to disagree and yet that friendship, that deep love, is always there.

So the first quality of friendship begins with accepting whatever that person is. And when one accepts someone, one has to accept the person totally.

Now the greatest mistake people make is this, that in friendships they introduce the element of expectation; and whenever there is expectation from anyone "I expect my friend to be this or that" then friendship ceases, then friendship just becomes a kind of acquaintanceship. You're acquainted with a person you expect. Then it becomes a kind of a business, where you are expecting something from a friend. You have a birthday and you expect your friend to send you a present or a card, and that does not happen perhaps, and you feel hurt that "my friend never thought of me on my birthday!" Meanwhile, he could really be a true friend and because of circumstances or whatever could have happened

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had not sent you a card wishing you well. But within his heart the welling up and the value of friendship remains constant. So in friendship there should be no expectation whatsoever.

Then with expectation there's another quality a person develops, and that is of receiving. You're always trying to receive from a friend. You want, be it in the form of love, or support, or anything of that nature. And that too does not constitute true friendship, if you always want to be, and expecting to receive.

Real friendship lies in giving; and not giving because he or she is a friend, but giving for the sake of giving. So when this quality develops in a person, giving for the sake of giving, it enhances the friendship without effort, for you are giving. Now giving does not only mean a present or something mundane or monetary. It is giving of oneself; it is giving of one's entirety. The greatest relationship between man and wife, for example, is based on that kind of friendship. For to be married is nothing else but a friendship which is stabilized, and two people live together as friends in the same ship in this ocean of life.

So when the idea of giving is there, what do you give? It is, as I said, that giving has nothing to do with mundane things. But what you do give is the core of your personality to the friend; and the core of your personality constitutes your every emotion, every feeling, good and bad. And yet there might be times in friendship where the friendship is very sincere and truthful, but you might feel some anger for something which the friend has done, not to you, but some other act in his life, and you feel a bit angry. And giving that anger to your friend is also a giving. It's not only a matter of giving love, but giving anger as well, for then you are a true friend. If I do not point out the faults in you to better yourself not to degrade the

friend, but for the betterment of the friend, then I am doing a [dis] service to my friend. Now in giving this service to a friend, a sacrifice is needed. Now what do you really sacrifice? You sacrifice the feelings that you have in you and put it at his feet. In other words, you are sacrificing your personality. All that composes you, you are sacrificing it at the friend's feet, and this could be love and anger and everything that's connected to that, every emotion, every kind of emotion, positive or negative. You are sacrificing that at your friend's feet.

The friend must be worthy too, in being able to accept the sacrifice, for that sacrifice is not a martyrdom, but that sacrifice is an offering. You are offering yourself entirely to a friend. Now, to be able to offer oneself to a friend, the quality of trust is needed. Do you see how these virtues, I'm going into them one after the other.... A quality of trust is needed. Now you ask the question, "Does that friend inspire trust in me?" That is a wrong question, because if the friend inspires trust in you, that trust will only be superficial. You have to have trust without the friend engendering the trust. So in that trustful way you offer yourself to the friend as a sacrifice of yourself.

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Now when we do this, we offer ourselves as a sacrifice in full trust, then faith develops. Then you start having faith in the friend. And if you have faith in the friend, then all the discrepancies of the friend are not seen by you. You would start seeing only the goodness in the friend, and because of your faith, he or she will change. Your thought forces of love and faith that have now been engendered will overcome his weaknesses. I've always said that thought is a thing. It is powerful; and that very power, being so positive, will override all the negativity in the friend.

So you are not going out to help the friend, but by having the qualities we have mentioned, you are automatically helping, and that is the real help that one could give anyone. "I want to help someone I want to help Gururaj." No, what you are doing is helping your ego. You are not helping me, you are bolstering your ego. It has to be so spontaneous in that love and that faith and trust and the sacrifice, then that constitutes real help; it constitutes real giving of oneself to a friend.

Now, how should the friend react to you? That is his business. For you should not be disappointed by a wrong action of the friend. You should not be elated by the right action of a friend. A young man was walking on the road and he met someone who swore at him said a nasty word, so this boy went and complained to his father, that "John said a nasty word." So the father asked him, "Do you know him?" "Yes." "Is he a friend of yours?" "Yes." "Well then, that's good, because if he did not know you and he was not a friend of yours he would not have said the nasty word." So friendship implies all this, and all this boils down to a kind of acceptance of what one is; not what one expects in the friend but just what the friend is.

If we have the sense of self sacrifice and the love and the acceptance of what he is, and the trust and the faith, then what do we see in the friend? We see none else but Divinity in the friend. So true friendship is to find Divinity in the friend, and as you find Divinity in the friend you will find a subtle transformation taking place in the friend as well. You would find him being uplifted and he wouldn't know why. He will only respond by loving you more, and he wouldn't know why he's loving you more. Meanwhile you are creating that love in his heart for you, because you have started loving the friend. And that is true friendship.

So the finality is this, that you do not have a friendship any more. Your mind and body is not the totality of the friendship, but that which is deep within you merges with that which is deep within the friend, and that is friendship. That is friendship. The body perishes, the mind might think wrongly, but if it is established in self, when the deeper qualities are awakened, then that's true friendship. Now this benefits you immensely. This is also a way to God, where you're using the friend using is the wrong word because you don't use people but having the friend as an object which could draw out in you all these positive qualities we have talked about, so you are evolving. And while you are evolving you are extending a hand to help the friend, if help could be used, that word could be used, to cross the hurdles of life. And as you sail in this boat of life with your friend, you would find that he would be using his oar exactly the way you are using it.

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A rhythm develops, and that rhythm is friendship. Where two people act in unison, where two people act in harmony, they are friends.

There is an old saying, "A friend in need is a friend indeed." That saying is a fallacy. It has surface values: if I'm not feeling well and I'm in need, the friend comes along and nurses me, looks after me. He has fulfilled a certain need. But that is not the basis of friendship, that is an outcome of friendship. It is something which is just naturally done, because if it is based upon need, then you are encouraging the friend to inflate his ego: "Ah, I went to look after Mary, and she's so well. And you know, Joan, I washed all her dresses and I cooked for her..." All that. That's not friendship just boosting the ego. She just talks about it to her other so called friends and says "Ah, I looked after Mary." No, no. The truest deeds done in friendship are never known, or never even thought about, and never even whispered even to oneself. Your left hand does not know what your right hand is doing. Because if you find the recognition, or if you ponder over what you have done for a friend, then you have done nothing at all. It is doing for the sake of doing.

We talk of karma yoga work for the sake of work, offering for the sake of offering. Start at home with your friend, with he or she who is nearest to you, and you act and not worry about that which reacts. For good will always rebounds in goodness, and a bad action will always rebound in a bad action. So practicing true friendship is practicing karma yoga; and it becomes easier when we start with those that we are fond of. We can be fond of people and not really not love people. We might like something and really not love something.

So by practicing these precepts of acceptance, of sacrifice.... Perhaps in the beginning one has to do these things with effort and consciously until they become totally spontaneous, and all actions are performed in the friendship totally unconsciously. You don't realize what it is you are doing. Then there is a kind of Divine impulsiveness. You pass a street and you just automatically pick a flower not from someone's garden, you'll be pinching them you pick a flower for a friend as an offering. You're not even conscious that you have picked the flower. You're not thinking, "I'm taking this flower to my friend to make my friend happy," you're not even thinking that. There's no thought involved, you are just doing, doing it here and now. You see? You see the difference between the conscious act and the spontaneous act? You just do that, you just do; you just blossom as the flower blossoms. You just give off the fragrance to the friend as the flower does, without being conscious of giving off fragrance. That constitutes love. So your friend can be an object, a concrete object that could lead you to the abstract, the abstract God. So here in the friend you see the personified Divinity that leads you to the abstract, total Divinity.

And yet, man knows that he cannot exist without friendship, and yet he abuses friendship because, in the friendship, self is involved instead of selflessness. I do an act for a friend, then I am thinking "Oh, what a wonderful thing I've done. I

hope he appreciates it." That's a waste of time, it's a waste of time. I hope he appreciates it why should I hope he appreciate it or if he does not appreciate it. I've done what I have to do. A spontaneous act, a spontaneous feeling, has welled up within me and I'm doing it. Because as soon as we bring in the thought of what the action is going to bring, then immediately the true value of friendship is lost, but just an exhibition of one's own personal ego. There is no friendship. You find other sayings like, "I love my friend so much I will give my life for that friend." Why? Why? What is the motivation behind it? That is important. Is the life given for self aggrandizement so that the world will say, "Ah, what a friend he was. He killed himself for his friend, to save his friend's life?" Most of the martyrs we find throughout history were motivated in the martyrdom, it was not a true sacrifice most of them, with the exception of a very few. So what is the motivation in you giving your life for your friend? Is it going to help the friend? Ask that, and am I doing it selflessly, or am I tired of life? Many times in war soldiers run to the forefront. It's madness, they're tired of life. I'm talking of 99% of the cases; you might find one genuine one they run to the forefront and if they get saved by some chance, then they get the V.C. Victoria Cross for the brave act. But was it really a brave act, or was it running away from life that they are tired of and that they cannot stand up to their responsibilities? Likewise, the same in friendship: there has to be a reasonable amount of reasoning, and then one goes beyond reasoning to the inner levels of oneself.

That is why you will find a greater depth of friendship in meditators, because every action stems not from the surface level only but from a far deeper level, a subtler level, which is a purer level. And that is why when they say "Gururaj, father and friend" what is father? What does "father" really mean? "Father" means a protector a protector. And "friend" means "the one that loves me selflessly" no motivation whatsoever. And to qualify that, if we could call it a motivation, would be to show the path to God. And that is a motiveless motive. A desireless desire. That why the hell should I be joyful and experience ananda let me share it. The cup runneth over why let it go down the drain. Huh? And if you are thirsty enough, have the whole cup. Why only that which runneth over? Have the whole cup, it's yours. That's a friend. Because I know I can replenish it. There's plenty from where it comes from: the eternal spring, undying, forever producing that life force, that water that gives life, the prana that gives life, the breath that gives life. That is friendship. I wrote a little poem some time ago on friendship. You remember it, do you? Tell us about it. Just a few lines, I think.

GITA: When friends and ships their sails unfurl [????] Swift be the path [????] For journey's end is where it all began.

GURURAJ: Yes, I wrote that about seven, eight ten years ago, something like that. And swift the path, for the journey ends where it all began. Where did man begin? Huh? He began from that inner self, and that is where you end: in the inner self. And your inner self is none different from that inner self within me.

So in true friendship there is a mержence of my inner self with your inner self. And then I find that there was never a separation at all. So the whole idea is to remove the idea of separation: that you are me and I am thee. That is true friendship. That mержence between two people is the same as the mержence of man with God. For here it is not the body or the mind; here it is the true spirit which is within. For the [herein?] within you is the same [herein?] within me. Hm? The little waves on the ocean dance and play in its own separateness. Yet it's the same ocean. One ocean of life. That is friendship. And the recognition of this evolves a person, evolves a person to the journey's end, which is actually just the beginning. For there is no beginning, in reality, and no end. There is just this oneness. That is friendship. A beautiful word, beautiful word. Ahhh!

So if you can't be a friend of God, be a friend of man. Huh? For if you befriend man in the way I have told you about, you automatically befriend that which is known as God. Huh? You see how simple it is? Living life in that way, life becomes joyous. For joy is only in the sharing.

And what do you share? What do you share? You share your plate of food with me, this evening I'll be hungry again. You share the \$50 you have with me, by the end of the week I'll be broke again. But if you share your heart with me, that remains eternal. For the heart of man is infinity itself. It goes beyond feeling, beyond all emotion. That is the true heart. When we see pictures of Jesus with a bleeding heart, how beautiful that picture. He is sharing his life essence with you, his totality with you. Why don't they show a picture with his big toe bleeding why his heart? That is the machine that keeps everything functioning, the heart. I know about it, yes I do. So there, when it comes from there, so it is there. That is friendship it's so easy really. And then when we can't really reach these principles, at least we can do one thing put your hand in the hand of the man of God, and then all these things develop in you. And you would enjoy your friendships more by doing that.

So, two ways of doing it. One, you very consciously and actively in karma yoga, practicing karma yoga, develop that friendship with a friend. And if you can't do that, then you just put your hand in the hand of the man of God, the man from Galilee. It's a lovely song, I love that song! "Put your hand in the hand... Galilee." [All singing] Do that. So what are you doing there now, by doing that? You are doing bhakti yoga, devotion, which you are seeking, very wrongly, for perfection in a friend. Why should your friend be perfect? What right have we to demand perfection in our friends? Am I perfect to demand that perfection? And if I see any imperfection, then it is only but a reflection of my personal imperfection. So the other way is just to surrender to a power, to a force, which your heart and mind tells you to be perfect. Because you can't find that in man, start with God; and that automatically will make you see the perfections in man and not the imperfections. There's no one imperfect really. It is just our minds that tell us that one is imperfect. No one is imperfect. How can the creation of Divinity be imperfect? Why should that which is perfect create something which is imperfect? It's an

impossibility. Beauty lies in the eye of the beholder, and it is I that see the imperfections in you because I have my mind clouded up with so called imperfections. I do not know myself that I am perfect. And once that realization dawns, I will know that I am perfect! "Man, know thyself." When I know that, then I would see no imperfection in anyone. And that is true friendship; then you would cease to see any imperfection in your friend. You start with one, and then you would see no imperfection in the multitudes: they all are perfect in their own way. In their own way every person is perfect.

You have a large bubble, a small bubble, a medium sized bubble on the ocean of life. Is the small bubble imperfect, or is the bigger bubble more perfect? No, it's not so, it's not so. The greatest imperfection, if we would like to use that word, is to concern ourselves or worry ourselves about imperfections, which are nothing but [bell ringing] (oh, that bloody...) You see the concern we have about imperfections that can be regarded as imperfection; and that imperfection is illusory. [END SIDE ONE] It is an illusion which we create in our minds, that this is perfect and that is imperfect. Why should these leaves be less perfect than that flower? They are perfect in their own right. The apple is just as perfect as an apple as the orange would be as perfect as an orange. And it requires this variety, it requires this diversity in this world, in this universe, to understand that there is a unity underlying all the diversities of life. All the varieties are but the expressions of Divine glory. Just the expressions.

Now when we find our friend to be an expression of that Divinity, then the thought of imperfection ceases, and by that ceasing you are helping yourself by getting rid of the illusion of imperfection. A man performs a certain act. Who are we to judge? Who are we to judge that that man has done a wrong act? That might be the very act that will lead him in his path of evolution. Who are we to judge? How do we know? Who knows? Very few do in this world one or two, three people perhaps, would know the totality of that person, how his psyche functions, what samskaras are in his subtle body, how much of that pure spirit is shining forth. And through all those samskaras how his mind is patterned for him to perform a certain act. How can we judge that the man is doing a wrong act? He is acting rightly according to his needs. That is the spiritual point of view. But then to run society there has to be a certain stability, and therefore.... [interrupted by a fly] (Mary... go away. Definitely female. You see.) So who are we to really judge? If you don't know yourself, how can you know someone else and form judgments; for that judgment is nothing but a machination of your own mind, and your mind at that level functions in illusion. So judge ye not that ye be judged, as the Bible would say.

So the man has performed the act, and yet in society we do need certain disciplines. We do need them, or else the world would be in a chaotic mess. That is why we have magistrates and judges and things like that, and they function on the level of sociology to preserve a certain kind of stability in this world which is necessary, or else people as they are today

might run wild and upset the balance which society might need. As a matter of fact, there are more insane people outside an asylum than in an asylum. That's very true. Oh, yes, oh, yes. So these disciplines are necessary. But I speak from the spiritual level, that not being able to see imperfection is to be able to love; and that is how we practice what is said in the scriptures, "Love thy neighbor as thyself." But know thyself, and automatically you will find "thyself" in the self of the other person, and love occurs. Love is a happening. Love is a celebration, for all else is celebrating all the time: the flower is celebrating, the tree is celebrating, the grass is celebrating; everything is celebrating, celebrating the glory of its own creation, of its own manifestation. That is the celebration which stems from the Manifestor. So what is the Manifestor doing? He is celebrating, too. You see how joyful it is? And celebration is always joyful. That is joy. And that's how it works. That is friendship; that's how you reach the finest levels of friendship; that is how you reach God; that is how you reach Divinity. For let me be a friend of God, and if I still do not understand that too well, let me be a friend of man, whom I know. True friendship to man is but another way of saying, or leading one to true friendship of God. What better friend do you want? What better friend do you want? It's all there, it's all there. And if it is not all there, it is here.  
Enjoy your lunch.

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