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Jai Guru!

SRF/YSS PRESIDENT'S INDIA TOUR

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SATSANGA BY SW. SMARANANANDAJI

Love and greetings to each one of you. Normally the head bends down but today I have to raise my head to look at you all. Happy to see a sea of devotees.

The topic for today is: Attuning our will to the Divine Will.

What is attunement – it means acting the way God wants me to live. Seeking and receiving divine guidance every moment of my life.

Sw. Sri Yuktेशwarji says, (Autobiography of a Yogi):

“Human life is beset with sorrow until we know how to tune in with the Divine Will, whose ‘right course’ is often baffling to the egoistic intelligence,” Master said.

“God alone gives unerring counsel; who but He bears the burden of the cosmos?”

Human life is full of sorrow until we attune our will to the Divine Will. The Divine's Will for us is to be in perpetual joy. Gururji tells us to go about our goals with all our will power, but sometimes there is a danger of going against the Divine Will. Is it possible to use our will power and yet to be in tune with the Divine Will? Yes.

There is Divinity in each one of us. And it is possible to express that divinity. See the example of Jesus Christ. When he was on the cross, he said, “Father, all things are possible unto Thee. Take this cup (of crucifixion) away from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but let Thy will be done.”

Imagine yourself on the cross. Saying ‘Let Thy will be done’ takes tremendous will power. It is not easy. And Jesus Christ was not saved. Crucifixion did take place, but after that there was also the Resurrection. And this incident was forever preserved in history.

Spirit is permanent, the body is temporary. Jesus Christ lost the body, but gained in Spirit. Also, mankind learnt the lesson of forgiveness. It was so easy for Jesus to punish his wrong doers, but he said, “Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

If Jesus Christ had been saved then mankind would have forgotten this incident. And looking at the life of Jesus Christ I too would have expected that every time I am in trouble I should be saved and there would be no importance of forgiveness.

A sledgehammer has no will of its own, but the person operating it can use it according to his will. God has given me a will power, but God wants me to use my will power to be in tune with his wishes, to use it or not to use it. God wants perpetual joy for me but he has given me a free choice and he doesn't impose himself upon me. I have to use my will power to carry out his will. Most people do not know that they have a will power and discrimination power.

E.g. One person finished his office duties and was returning home by car. On the way there was a theatre and he had seen the advertisement of one of the movies going on in the theatre. He thought, 'Let me go and watch the movie today.' He knew that was the time for him to return to his family, his spiritual duties. But then he reminded himself that God does not rule out entertainment. He was caught between whether to go home or to watch the movie. So, he decided to seek God's will. He told God, "God I don't know whether I should go home or watch the movie. Both are your creations. But if I find a parking place for my car, then I will know that it is your will that I should watch the movie." At least he had the desire to know what is the Divine Will. So, he took his car to the Parking lot, went around once, but he could not find a parking place. Then he used the logic, 'See I just told God about the choices, about 2 minutes back. Let me give God a little time to be able to arrange things. Let me take another round.' And then he took a 3rd and a 4th round also, and at the end of 8th round, he found a parking place and he went to see the movie. God's will or human will?

Common man is influenced by 3 forces: prenatal tendencies (past life tendencies), environmental tendencies and Will power.

It is because of prenatal tendencies that two brothers from the same family may be so different. Environmental tendencies influence us e.g. whether we come from a city or a village.

Will power: We don't have much control over our prenatal tendencies and environmental tendencies. But God has given us a will power and expects us to use it to go beyond our prenatal and environmental tendencies. When we consciously realize that only by achieving God's will can we progress in this life, that God has a plan for me. Whatever my outward mode of living, skill, if I attune myself to God's will, then I will find fulfillment, otherwise not. As Sw. Sri Yukteshwar said,

"Human life is beset with sorrow until we know how to tune in with the Divine Will, whose 'right course' is often baffling to the egoistic intelligence," Master said.

"God alone gives unerring counsel; who but He bears the burden of the cosmos?"

When we are in tune with Divine Will then we have the joy of seeking and receiving divine guidance. We need the divine guidance not just to be a doctor, or engineer but in countless situations in our day to day life. They could be simple things, but could lead to serious consequences later in life.

According to Madame Chiang Kai Shek, in the traditional Chinese painting one thing is important, everything else is subsidiary. All other things are props. Similarly an integrated life has that one important flower – object – God's will.

What is that one important thing in my life? Some people may say, 'it is my profession, everything else is secondary.'

Similarly, what is that one important flower in a devotee's life? It is the will of God. Trying to know what is the will of God for me. Whatever I do, whatever role I am playing, ask yourself, what does God want me to do in this life?

I used to pray 'God do this or that'. Now I only want to do God's will in this life. It could be very baffling to our ego, but you must be honest.

Mrinalini Ma said, there are three ways to do something: ***The right way, the wrong way and God's way.***

These are relative depending on time and situation. What is right now or here, may not be right some years from hence or in a different place.

For e.g. when Jesus was on the cross, and he said, "Lord, take this cup away" that was the right way, for he was being unjustly crucified. But that was not God's way not only for the good of Jesus Christ, but for all mankind. How nicely Mrinalini Ma put it. Things may be seemingly painful, but that is God's way. That is the flower in my life. It may be painful for me.

There is confusion when we have many options. If we have no other option, it is easy. There are so many influences acting on man, likes, dislikes, desires, experiences. These often guide our decisions. But the most reliable guidance comes from intuition.

"Beyond the semi-intuitive conscience is pure intuition, the soul's direct perception of truth—the infallible Divine Voice. All of us are endowed with intuition. We have the five physical senses, and also a sixth sense — all-knowing intuition... Intuition will always bring forth the correct positive response for the good of one's own life or that of someone else. Only time and experience will enable you to tell always whether a strong inclination is imagination or a natural, intuitive feeling."

One of the Master's students had made a serious error, and was lamenting, "I have always formed good habits. It seems incredible this should have happened to me." And the Master said, "Your mistake is this: you rely too much on your good habits. They tell you what to do when you get into a situation that is familiar, but they don't guide you when a new problem comes up. That is where discrimination comes in. You must learn to choose the right course even in situations you have never before experienced." When a new problem arises then discrimination is necessary. If you meditate deeply, and regularly, you acquire calmness and your intuition develops. Intuition helps in the development of good judgement.

Guruji has two favourite prayers. The first one is the universal prayer:

"Lord, may Thy love shine forever on the sanctuary of my devotion, and may I be able to awaken Thy love in all hearts."

Daya Ma says, the other favourite prayer of Guruji is:

"Lord, I will reason, I will will, I will act; but guide Thou my reason, will and activity to the right thing that I should do in everything."

But even if you are not comfortable saying this prayer, there should be sincerity. Guruji said,

“God is the whisper in the temple of your conscience, and He is the light of intuition. You know when you are doing wrong; your whole being tells you, and that feeling is God's voice. If you don't listen to Him, He becomes quiet. But when you wake up from your delusion, and want to do right, He will guide you.”

Often our intuition tells us we are wrong, but because of our tendencies, likes, dislikes we go ahead with our wrong decision. Conscience is the inner voice within you. If you don't listen to him, if we ignore it and go ahead with our likes and dislikes then He stops speaking to you; but whenever your conscience awakens, when we wake up from delusion and want to do what is right, He will guide you again. God doesn't want to leave you. However, when you want God to guide you don't expect him to come and give his decision on a stamp paper. Then how will he let you know?

When you sit to meditate, don't think of your problem. Then after meditation, when you are sitting in the calmness and stillness, ask for a solution to your problem. Repeat this in every meditation, morning and evening and even the next day. Depending upon the seriousness of the problem, it may take weeks or months or even years to solve the problem. But always bring up the problem only after meditation, again and again.

And then we should remain open to God's guidance.

One ship was about to sail. The signal was given, everyone was eager to take off, but the Captain of the ship started praying. There were some young people in the ship. They started becoming impatient and started saying, “What is the need to pray, the signal is given. Why doesn't he start the ship?” The Captain ignored them. Then the ship took off. A couple of days later, a storm broke out. When things started going out of hand, the youngsters became worried and thought let us pray. Then they remembered that the Captain knew how to pray, so they decided to go and ask him to lead the prayer. The Captain said, “When it is calm, I pray; when it is storm, I work.” There is a time for prayer, a time for effort and a time for surrender.

You may have to make course correction. There should be frequent introspection for course correction and deviation. It should be a continuous process of turning to God, tuning in with God. Once you realize that the light is coming from God, and you accept God's plan for you, it gives you a deep sense of relief and joy. Even if there is a difficulty you accept it as coming from God.

A devotee once wrote – “I do not always get what I want. Regardless of how much I deserve it, how much I want it, how much right it is for me to have it, I don't get it.” That is acceptance. I fantasized what a friend should be. In the process she ignore the powerful effect of love and concern of two people. Then she realized what I already have.

She was always visualizing how a friend should be. She could not accept life. She fantasized how friends should be. There should be joyous acceptance. Don't find faults. He is doing this, she is doing that. If you say, may be she did that, but it was also done by God, it will be better. It can

happen with friends, colleagues, family. Realize and rejoice with what you have and be grateful for it.

1 Corinthians 13:4-5:

“Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful...”

Today we willingly accepted God's will regarding the change of venue. This is a nice set up. No need to worry. Just sit and enjoy. The volunteers worked in tune with Guruji's will. They had to make a course correction and they did very well. We have all accepted it and so let us enjoy. This is the result of Divine Grace and human effort.

But remember Divine Grace is not a substitute for human effort. Divine Grace does not fall into the lap of lazy people. Make sure you are not being lazy, when you say, “Let Thy will be done.” Instead say, “I will not wait for Divine Grace to descend upon me. I will walk towards God and meet him halfway.”

The Koran says, “If you walk towards God, God starts running towards you.” Who will cover more distance? Then you have to walk only $\frac{1}{4}$ the distance. 25% of devotees effort and 75% is the Grace of God.

There is a quotation, “Pray as if everything depends on God and then work as if everything depends on human effort.” And then relax, leaving the fruits in God's hands. Like the Captain. He first prayed as if everything depended on Divine Grace and then when there was a storm he worked as if everything depended on human effort. There is a time for prayer and a time for surrender.

But let us not wait for a calamity to strike. Some people say, I will start being serious about the spiritual path after retirement. It is not that they do not believe in God, or prayer. Let us not wait for a calamity to strike. Let us start now.

Divine guidance and introspection are very important. Our receptivity is affected by prenatal tendencies, desires, rationalization, environmental influences etc. Ask yourself, do I really want divine guidance or have I already made up my mind?

For e.g. Children know in their heart of hearts that the parents are their greatest well wishers. Children know parents love them, parents care for them, they have respect for the parents. But when they want something they often go to friends for help because the help that they get from friends will be as per their will. Parents help will be with conditions as per what is right for the child. It may not be as per the child's will. The parent says, ‘It's not that I am more wise or intelligent than you, but I have more experience in making mistakes.’ And the child says, ‘I don't want your experience in making mistakes. I will make my own mistakes.’

So, you have to ask yourself ‘Do I have faith in God's divine will. I have desires, I have set my goal. Do I really want Divine guidance?’

An Indian company exported a machine to an Austrian company. The machine broke down and the foreign company sent a cable to the Indian company saying, “The machine has broken

down, kindly send someone to fix it.” An engineer was sent. The engineer who came looked so young and inexperienced that the Austrian company sent another cable saying, “Please send someone mature and experienced.” The Indian company replied back, “Please give him a chance; he is the inventor of the machine.” If as a poor, poor operator I have messed up, can’t I give a chance to the inventor of this human machine, God, to fix it.

We must have faith in God who is the inventor of this machine. If God is great, omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, then we must have faith in God who is the inventor of this machine. But I feel that in His grand schematic, I am just a little dot. Does God know about the desires of this little dot? Why bother to go to Him, I know my circumstances, I can fix my life. I can handle my problems.

Autobiography of a Yogi:

The great guru (Lahiri Mahasaya) taught his disciples to avoid theoretical discussion of the scriptures. “He only is wise who devotes himself to realizing, not reading only, the ancient revelations,” he said. “Solve all your problems through meditation. Exchange unprofitable speculations for actual God-communion.”

We are supposed to be seeking Ever new joy, instead we are seeking ever new thrills and ever new problems. Then you pay for so many machines and get a head ache.

Attunement, introspection. Do I have the patience to meditate, to practice stillness? The goal of meditation is not practicing techniques, but to achieve stillness through techniques. Do I contemplate serious problems in the stillness of meditation? Do I carry the effects of meditation into daily life?

Sw. Anandmoyiji said, “Don’t think that the whole picture will be shown to you. You will get to see one step at a time.” So many people, elements, factors, may drop an obstacle. The whole picture will not be shown to you in the beginning.

Sw. Bhavananda said, “We are not given insights into the details of the future. God and Guruji will guide you into the details of each day. Keep up your daily meditation and keep in tune with the guidance of God and Guruji.”

What is the Right Attitude Towards Our Mistakes?

Mistakes do occur in spite of all good intentions. Let us not ponder too much on why did this happen. Remember only a man of action makes mistakes. A man of inaction makes more mistakes.

What should you do when you make a mistake: Admit, Analyse, Act and Advance.

Admit your mistake at least to yourself. There is no point in justifying. If required admit to others that you made a mistake, but it is not always necessary to admit to others.

Analyse and find out why the mistake happened.

Act on the correct steps to be taken.

Then Advance.

Guruji said that if you brood over your mistakes you will never advance.

John Ruskin, British writer, poet, philosopher and painter, once gifted a little girl with a laced handkerchief. It was preciously kept by the girl. But a blot of indelible ink fell upon it, and the child started weeping. Ruskin asked if he might have the handkerchief. With his painting brush, Ruskin put a few strokes of colour. Beginning from the blot, and making the blot the centre of the whole matter, Ruskin had drawn the most intricate and beautiful pattern and design. Now it was even more beautiful than before.

This is what the touch of a Master does. Guruji is the Master.

This is what Guruji can do. You may make mistakes, but if your intentions are good, then Guruji will correct them. Don't get bogged down when you make mistakes. Life is a series of tragic flaws from me and saving graces from above. I can recall a number of times when I made mistakes. But when I look back I realize that Guruji corrected my mistake and made the situation even more beautiful. This is the importance of having the Guru in one's life, if you have surrender and attunement.

I also feel that life is a series of tragic flaws and saving graces. Tragic flaws on my part and saving graces from Guruji's part. Faith and attunement makes it possible.

What is the ultimate Divine Will for you and me? Realizing my true nature. Not just as an engineer, or a doctor. One may not become an accomplished artist, movie director, but everyone can become Self Realized.

One person was very poor. He only had a small plot of land. He built a hut on that land and lived there. He used to beg to earn a living. Slowly his health went bad, ordinary treatment failed, he couldn't find money to cure himself. So he sold his land for treatment. He got some money, got a treatment but finally died. The person who got the land thought of making a building and broke the hut. There he found a pot of gold. The beggar too had that pot of gold. He was the heir to it, but he lived in poverty.

Similarly, I am the heir to the perpetual Joy. But I am not taking it. I am a beggar. I am begging through my senses, my tongue, nose, eyes, but I don't dig for the gold through the divine axe of meditation.

Many people under the influence of maya are trying a little bit here and there. But they are not trying sufficiently to find the divine joy by meditation.

Guruji has said,

“By deep concentration in union with other seekers, a devotee transmutes his will into God's Will. Remembering his identity with God, he recovers his divine heritage of God-perception. Every devotee should strengthen his realization of Divine Will through prayer, through God-communion in meditation, and through spiritual company.”

A farmer was working in a storage room arranging stacks of paddy after the harvest. After working for 2 – 3 hours he realized he had lost his wrist watch. It was an expensive and special gift. He was heartbroken, and he could not find the wrist watch on his own. He saw a dozen boys playing outside. He called them and told them about the watch and said that anyone who found his watch would be rewarded. All the boys searched but could not find the watch. They were very dejected and started going away. But one little boy came back and said, “Sir, give me another chance.” The farmer thought, “What can I lose?” He gave him another chance. After an hour the boy came and said, “Here is your watch.” Astonished the farmer asked him, “How did you find it?” The boy said, “I did not do anything. I went inside, quietened myself and sat in one corner. When it was so calm, I could hear its tick ticking. I became quiet and went closer, closer and finally picked it up.”

All the time the watch was announcing its presence but no one was looking. God too announces His will, but we are not listening. We are so caught up in our own thoughts, ambitions, desires. So, quieten yourself, calm the body and the mind. It is not that God is heartless. The question is are we listening to His will?

Gandhiji would often listen to his inner voice. People would ask him, why did you choose to do this particular thing and he would say, “It is the inner voice.” God is not silent. We are not able to pick up his voice.

A devotee once asked Sw. Bhaktananda, ‘Swamiji, how do I know what is divine will for me?’ Swamiji answered, ‘You may not know what is the divine will, but you know what is your will. Don’t do it.’

Your prayer should be an expression of gratitude. By constantly following the inner voice of conscience, which is the voice of God, you will become a truly moral person, a highly spiritual being, a man of peace.

Let me read to you the Blessing of Unanswered Prayer:

**I asked for strength that I might achieve;
I was made weak that I might learn humbly to obey.
I asked for health that I might do greater things;
I was given infirmity that I might do better things.
I asked for riches that I might be happy;
I was given poverty that I might be wise.
I asked for power that I might have the praise of men;
I was given weakness that I might feel the need of God.**

**I asked for all things that I might enjoy life;
I was given life that I might enjoy all things.
I got nothing that I had asked for,
but everything that I had hoped for.
Almost despite myself my unspoken prayers were answered;
I am, among all men, most richly blessed.**

We may not get what we asked for, what we wanted, but if you continue with your spiritual exercises, you will get much more than what you ever asked for.

Let us review:

1. ***“Human life is beset with sorrow until we know how to tune in with the Divine Will, whose ‘right course’ is often baffling to the egoistic intelligence,” Master said.
“God alone gives unerring counsel; who but He bears the burden of the cosmos?”***
2. Mrinalini Ma said, there are three ways to do something: ***The right way, the wrong way and God’s way.***
3. Common man is influenced by 3 forces: prenatal tendencies (past life tendencies), environmental tendencies and Will power. God has given us a will power and expects us to use it to go beyond our prenatal and environmental tendencies.
4. Daya Ma says, one of the favourite prayer of Gururji is:
“Lord, I will reason, I will will, I will act; but guide Thou my reason, will and activity to the right thing that I should do in everything.”
5. After meditation, when you are sitting in the calmness and stillness, ask for a solution to your problem. Repeat this in every meditation, morning and evening and even the next day.
6. Accept the will of God. Like the Chinese painter make the will of God the most important thing in your life.
7. Divine Grace and guidance is not for the lazy person. There is a time for prayer, there is a time for effort and a time for surrender.
8. Without honest introspection i cannot get far. Ask yourself, 'Do i have the patience for honest introspection, do I really want divine guidance or have I already made up my mind?
9. The touch of a Master can rectify a mistake beautifully. It is allright to make a mistake, but don't repeat it.
10. When you make a mistake Admit, Analyse, Act and Advance.

11. Divine perpetual joy is my birthright. God's will will be known to me when i .am on the right track at the right time.