

Mātri Upadeshāmrita

I am only a child and do not know how to lecture or give discourses. Just as a child, when it finds something sweet and good takes it to its mother and father, so do I place before you what is sweet and good. You take whatever pleases you. Mine is only a child's prattle. In fact, it is you alone who question and you alone who answer. You beat the drum and you hear the sound.

—Mataji

Mātri Upadeshāmrita, "The Nectar of Mother's Teaching", comprises excerpts from various sources of Sri Ma's spiritual instruction on selected subjects.)

On Grace

(Continued)

To be able to engage in sādhanā is itself the grace of God.

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If anyone has been so blessed as to feel that the spiritual path is all-beneficial if God bestows His grace on anyone in this way—it is necessary that he should exert his will-power to the utmost and devote day and night to the service of God.

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Although it is true that without His touch the child sādhanā cannot reveal itself, nevertheless one must

keep one's winkless gaze fixed on the light obtained so far. Every moment is pervaded by Him, by His contact, His touch, His advent, His acceptance, His victory.

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He grants and will grant His touch in His own time. But we have to do our duty, which is to call out to Him.

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You must do your own work; He will look after His.

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"God is everywhere. Why then should we have to call out to Him? Surely He does not want anything from us!"

Words of this kind can often be heard from young and old. Precious gems and metals lie hidden in the interior of the earth. How much strenuous labour is not required to bring them to light! Similarly, although He dwells in every human heart, man must by prayer and meditation, by delving deep into the mysteries of Truth, purify his mind and remove his ignorance, so as to become fit to receive divine grace which alone can induce the Supreme Experience.

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"Unless one is blessed with His grace is it at all possible to pray to Him?" Such considerations sometimes serve as an excuse. If His grace were not upon you at all times you could not even be alive. Take the trouble to examine your life patiently and you will get some idea of His mercy.

Scattered all over the earth there are innumerable things. In order to collect and convert them into useful commodities,

machines and factories are at work, and science is constantly inventing new expedients and gadgets. If with similar zest you put your heart and soul into calling down His divine grace, you will very soon become aware of it distinctly and undeniably.

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Question : When can we get the grace of God ?

Mataji : It will come whenever necessary.

Question : How can we know it ?

Mataji : When you have eaten, you know that your hunger has been appeased. Similarly, God's grace is known.

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Question : By practising *sādhana* one cannot attain. Does it not depend on God's Will, on His grace? Please explain how we can attract God's grace ?

Mataji : God's grace is streaming down at all times. If you keep your vessel turned upside down the grace will flow down the sides. Keep your vessel straight up and open and it will be filled. This is one aspect of the matter. And for those who proceed along the line of grace, how is it possible to be vouchsafed the vision of God without His grace ? You say attainment does not come by effort. But the Lord is present right in front of you; you have only to look in His direction from here. You have to advance towards Him. Truly, God (*Svayam Bhagavān*) is ever present. You come and go, but actually neither come nor go. The veil of ignorance is cast over you but God is ever present. He has left only this little bit of distance for you to traverse. This is called *kriyā*.

He is ever present right here and everywhere. His revelation cannot come by any *kriyā* (practice). Why then have you taken to spiritual exercises ? Lives and lives you have spent trying to gratify your desires and longings. If after wasting countless births in this manner a person has the intelligence (*sad buddhi*), the good idea (*subuddhi*) to decide, "Let me get out of this endless round of birth and rebirth, let me not be born again", what does he do ? He takes to serious *sādhana*. While the person who does otherwise suffers misery life after life due to his cravings and longings, his desires and passions.

There is only God and nothing else. Not to aspire to Him, this is the veil of ignorance. You should engage in the practice (*kriyā*) that is appropriate at your stage, that is within your line of approach. Who is disguised as *kriyā* ? Who am I who is practising the *kriyā* in order to realize God ? So long as this is not revealed, so long as the knots (*granthi*) that constitute the ego are not cut asunder, it is but natural that questions should arise.

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Question : God lavishes His grace on some and not on others. How can one speak of equality and justice ?

Mataji : He does according to His pleasure.

Question : Why should His pleasure be at our cost ?

Mataji : Where there is "mine" and "thine" it appears as you complain. Actually He claps His own hands and hears Himself the sound—just the one Self.

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Without God's grace it is difficult to become a pilgrim on the Path, this is perfectly true. All the same, after having set out on the journey it is not right to keep the mind vacillating—that is detrimental. Strengthen your mind and lead a life of *tapasyā*. The Supreme Lord of this path is God Himself.

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The awakening of a painful awareness of His absence must also be regarded as an expression of His grace. So long as the result of one's spiritual practice (*kriyā*) cannot be perceived, it must be understood that it has not been carried out in exactly the right manner or spirit; still, the wayfarer has progressed on his pilgrimage. However, in such a situation one will have to make one's faith very firm.

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If at all times you cultivate a spirit of dedication, who can tell but that perhaps some day, by His grace, by His mercy you may really become wholly His. This is why it is so important always to foster a spirit of self-dedication.

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Question : Why is the individual born into this world ?

Mataji : To fulfil his own desires, to experience happiness and sorrow.

Question ! Is it not possible to go beyond desire and experience ?

Mataji : If everything is possible, why should not this be possible as well ?

Question : Is there any short cut towards this goal ?

Mataji : By the grace of God such a short cut may sometimes be found.

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Question : Man's life is conditioned by his *prārabdha karma*. Where does free will (*puruṣkāra*) come in ?

Mataji : You must use your free will to find the Supreme. The practice (*kriyā*) by which you advance towards Him (*Puruṣottama*) that exactly is called *puruṣkāra* (free will or the power to decide for oneself). By God's grace even your destiny may be modified. If a devotee has firm faith that his *prārabdha karma* can be changed by God's grace, then this may become possible. There certainly are laws in God's creation, yet nothing is impossible for Him. If you think that God's grace is also within destiny, this is so for you. If on the other hand you are convinced that God is more powerful than destiny, then He may do anything at all for you. He provides for the worldly as well as the spiritual needs of His devotees.

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One of God's names is *Chintāmani* (fulfiller of desires). At first men turn to God because He fulfils all desires, but by and by they become so absorbed in the contemplation of Him that there is no room left for any other thought; that is to say, they become infused with the divine Presence. One must pine for God as keenly as the miser craves for wealth, as the childless long for a son. Throughout life's journey keep Him first and foremost in your thoughts and He will become your sole aim. If anyone can thus enshrine Him in his heart, He will take all burdens off His devotee and give him freedom to con-

template exclusively the Divine. There have been numerous instances of this, not only among saints and *saṁnyāsis* but also among men of the world. Even beasts, birds and plants are within the pale of His mercy. Laying all cares at rest, take shelter in Him with a tranquil mind. Keep your kite flying with the string held firmly in your hand; the wind will of itself seize it and carry it soaring into the sky.

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Question (from a letter) : To know you always near although physically you may be far away, this experience can only come by your grace. It seems impossible through my own efforts.

Mataji : You must know Him in such a way that no place remains where He is not. According to Vaiṣṇava terminology, there is *viraha* and *milana* (separation and union). But this *viraha rasa*, this experience of profound yearning for God after having known union, is not like the wordly sense of separateness, which means not knowing the other—being unfulfilled.

Everything comes by His grace alone. This, of course, is a fact. You experience as your own the power He has vested in you. Apply it in His service to the utmost of your capability—whatever the nature of your approach, whatever your line.

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That you have become aware of not knowing is also God's grace, and your aspiration is equally God's grace.

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The sense of want arises spontaneously—it is the Divine that awakens it.

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Question : Does God's grace depend on the receiver or the Giver ?

Mataji : Divine grace is pouring forth all the time. If you hold your vessel the correct way up, it will get filled. All of you without exception invariably desire to receive something : you are in want. So try to keep your receiving vessel the right way up, with simplicity and sincerity. Just carry on with your sādhanā and He Himself will, out of His grace, do the rest—He always does. Wherever there is man or woman there is God. When there is a question of receiving, there is also effort. Grace streams down in torrents like rain. When grace is received in its fullness there is full Enlightenment. You receive in proportion to your effort. This is one thing. Then, where there is no more question of action or non-action, this is grace without cause or reason : the realization that God's grace is being showered on me not because of any particular effort on my part. "Without reason" means it does not depend on your or my personal effort or deed. When this realization comes, then there is hope of obtaining God's grace without cause or reason.

Question : Does the manifestation of His grace depend on the performance of any particular action or rite ?

Mataji : It does not.

Question : Is it then due to merit from a previous birth ?

Mataji : No. His grace is without cause. You perform an action or a rite and you get a certain result, but when you talk of His grace you must not look at it from this angle.

Your effort is designed to tear down the veil of ignorance. God has given you intelligence; therefore, you must carry on with your duties. But His grace is without reason. The question may be raised, "Why does His grace not descend on all?" That is precisely His divine dispensation. All creation is His very own; He is free to do as He pleases. Where there is the feeling, "I am responsible for my action; I am the doer", there is and will always be cause and effect.

What is the cause for realizing one's own Self? I alone. You yourself are the cause. So long as there is a cause, there will be the desire to receive which produces the fruit of your action. I have toiled, so I have reaped. Whose fruit? The fruit of what? Who toiled? Your own deed and your own reward. But God is your own. He is the one Self of all. Because you do not realize this you ask this type of question. In the state in which such queries arise it appears like this.

Question : When His grace is unlimited in His boundless store, why is He so miserly in dealing it out?

Mataji : He certainly keeps on bestowing His grace, but man is not aware of it.....The desire to obtain grace, its fulfilment, a glimpse or touch of divine bliss, these are certainly manifestations of divine power (*vibhuti*). All manifestation is an expression of God's divine power. He alone is revealed as divine power—He, the One-without-a-second, the Self. Again, who appears in duality? He Himself. Nobody can remain on this path without experiencing some realization of this sort. To be turned in this direction means there must have been some prior involvement, there still is—

this eagerness to attain something. How can one continue on this path if one does not gain anything ?

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God Himself draws you towards Him.

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Question : Does God's grace operate according to laws ? Does He consider how much sādhanā anyone has performed and accordingly bestow His grace ? Or is grace without cause and reason ? Is it lavished without strict relation to one's worthiness and entirely dependent on God's Will ?

Mataji : In God's kingdom everything is possible. Listen to a story : Lord Narayan was having his meal. Suddenly he got up and hurried away, saying, "One of my devotees is being beaten. I have to go and rescue him." But after a little while he returned leisurely without having gone to his destination. On being asked why he had rushed away in the middle of his meal and then returned so quickly, the Lord replied, "My devotee was invoking me in dire distress. I hastened to his help. But when I saw that he had started defending himself there was no need for me to help him and so I returned."

A lesson can be learned from this. One has to invoke Him and to the very end depend on Him alone. Remembrance of His Name, forbearance, seeking His shelter and complete self-dedication are man's duty. Although grace has this motive, it still remains without cause and reason. When a devotee receives divine grace he realizes that it is infinitely greater than what he could have deserved by his devotion

and the conscientious performance of his duties. Thus grace is unmerited divine favour—without motive, cause or reason. God's whole creation is such. But unless one has attained to a certain state of achievement one will not be able to understand the complete causelessness of grace.

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You want to know whether grace (*ahetuka kṛpā*) is without cause or reason? Certainly; for grace is by its very nature beyond cause or reason. When working one reaps the fruit of one's actions. If, for instance, you serve your father and he, being pleased with your service, gives you a present, this would be called the fruit of action : one does something and receives something in return. But the eternal relationship that by nature exists between father and son does surely not depend on any action. The Supreme Father, Mother and Friend—verily, God is all of these. Consequently, how can there be a cause or reason for His grace? You are His, and in whatever way He may draw you to Him, it is for the sake of revealing Himself to you. The desire to find Him that awakens in man—who has instilled it into you? Who is it that makes you work for its fulfilment?

Thus you should try to arrive at the understanding that everything originates from Him. Whatever power, whatever skill you possess—why, even you yourself—from where does everything arise? And does it not all have for purpose the finding of Him, the destroying of the veil of ignorance? Whatever exists has its origin in Him alone. So then, you must try to realize your Self. Are you master even of a single breath? To whatever small degree He makes you feel

that you have freedom of action, if you understand that this freedom has to be used to aspire after the realization of Him, it will be for your good. But if you regard yourself as the doer and God as being far away, and if, owing to His apparent remoteness, you work for the gratification of your desires, it is wrong action. You should look upon all things as manifestations of Him. When you recognize the existence of God He will reveal Himself to you as compassionate, or gracious, or merciful, in accordance with your attitude towards Him at the time. Just as, for example, to the humble He becomes the "Lord of the Humble".



God fulfils a Truth-seeker's desire. Appearing in the form that is longed for, He does what is needed. It is He who kindles the mind's desire and He Himself fulfils it.

