

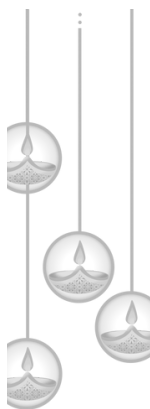


# WHO RECEIVES GOD'S GRACE



HER HOLINESS SRI SATHGURU  
SWAMI GNANANANDA SARASVATHI

Divine Grace can be quite difficult to attain, very hard maybe and the process is heart-rending sometimes, but it still comes. It is worthiness that matters. How worthy is the Devotee to receive it.



# WHO RECEIVES GOD'S GRACE

**T**here was a question asked about the Mahabharatha. It takes a little explaining.

## **How does divine grace come and fulfill all the inner ambitions of Bhaktas, giving Divine Guidance and Protection, and how, and under what circumstances is it obtained?**

Divine Grace, can be quite difficult to attain, very hard maybe and the process is heart-rending sometimes, but it still comes. It is worthiness that matters. How worthy is the Devotee to receive it. There is a law that governs all this, just like cosmic laws and laws of the world. In the moral world, there are moral laws that are strong and unchangeable. This must be understood. If there is a transgression of any moral law by anybody, there is always a severe punishment – just like a punishment for crimes in this world. That is the Divine Justice, which nobody can escape. Whatever you do comes back to you. So, we must live with the knowledge that we are accountable for all our actions, whether words, thoughts or deeds.

These shape your character, your Destiny. “How did we come to be born, as we are in this life!” We shaped this in our last birth.

Now we are experiencing the good and the bad results of our actions – we are reaping the harvest. So that is why we should take things as they come.

Somewhere we must have erred. Take whatever comes in this spirit, the right spirit. If you take things in the right spirit, they will pass over your head.

Take things easy. When you take things hard, it shows not only as mental stress but also physical illness.

These are things you cannot change, so then what is the use of getting upset over it? So, learn to be detached.

The Pandavas suffered a lot, but it was not their fault. They came to establish Dharma as an instrument of the Divine. See, how much they suffered – and that was only the Dvapara Yuga – there was fifty per cent of Dharma still there.

Now, this is the Kali Yuga with only twenty five percent of Dharma remaining. Can you image, even with a little good in you, how hard it will be to live life? This should not scare or deter you, and you should not compromise on your ideals. In this world this will not work. You should not find an excuse. Always remember that anyway you have to die sometime – this is marked out when you are born.

Sit down and think. Animals don't have the brains that humans do, and yours must be used in the right manner.

The Pandavas who were Saintly people, Divine souls, who came to serve God, suffered. Sri Krishna told them, "Don't think, I am on your side because of our family relationship, it is because you stand for Dharma. I have come to establish Dharma and it is because you stand for Dharma, that I am on your side". He made this very clear.

When you surrender to God, and you don't have a Guru at that moment to tell you what is right and what is wrong, what should you do – you must pray to God. Remember the words of your Guru – do that which is right, do that which is Dharmic, and you will automatically have God on your side. Dharma will never forsake you and will always look after you. Dharma is invincible. Truth is invincible.

Once, the Pandavas were arguing about what to do during the Kurukshetra war – such great armies, millions and millions of people. (The Kurukshetra war was perhaps the first nuclear war, it was the greatest war. They have discovered descriptions of it which are similar to nuclear radioactivity. It was fought with both physical and spiritual power. Physical power or power from machines are not as powerful as spiritual power). So, they were worried and arguing – you

must remember the Pandavas were cousins of Sri Krishna, and so were quite used to arguing and talking to Him, as an equal. Sri Krishna was there and told them, "If, you do not listen to me, I will pack up my bags and go back to Dwaraka. You manage your war". At once, the Pandavas fell at his feet to beg his pardon. The importance of this is to show that even in an army or navy, when there is a crisis, you need one leader, not two. It will lead to confusion, disunity and finally to failure. So this, is the reason why in the spiritual life, you cannot have two Gurus, you can only have one Guru. This is not in the interest of the Guru, but in the interest of the Sishya. He will definitely be befuddled in his mind, when he takes different advice from different people. You can't have so many doctors treating one disease. You can't take all types of treatment. It doesn't take much intelligence to understand this.

This is very easy.

So, when Pandavas had gone to the dice game, they lost naturally to Sakuni and his loaded dice. So, I wanted to tell you about the special grace and special protection given to people, who surrender totally to God. The surrender must be total. Whatever happens, understand that God can never be wrong. We can be wrong. These are things you should know very well. If something good or bad happens, it is a result of your karma. God did not do it. You might have hurt somebody else and that sorrow or pain you caused somebody else is now coming back to you. This is Divine Justice. You hurt somebody, caused pain. Where did the action go- it is like an arrow that need to finds it target. You throw a ball up in the air and it has to fall down. So, it is a result of your actions.

God watches everything. He sees, know, understands and in the absence

of your call to Him, there is no call upon Him to help you. If you trust and have faith in Him, you would have called Him. You can't forget God, you can't afford to forget Him because all help, all strength, all guidance, all blessings, all power, courage to live life comes from him – you cannot afford to dispense with Him.

So, these Pandavas left Hastinapura for the second time, after losing to the cheat with his loaded dice. Putting on their deerskins, they went into exile with Draupadi, leaving their mother Kunti with Vidura. The citizens cried out shocked, and wanted to follow them and Yudhistira begged them not to follow them but to remain in the kingdom to do their work. The artisans, warriors and others sorrowfully agreed. It was not so of thousands of Brahmins and other holy men, who refused to stay in Hastinapura ruled by the evil-minded Kauravas. So, Yudhistira and his party marched westward.

Then, they passed the Saraswathi and the Yamuna, across the desert country, and finally reached the Kamyaka forest at the source of the Saraswathi. The forest that was full of birds and beasts, flowers and fruits was sanctified by the penance of generations of sages.

Yudhistira was perplexed as to how to feed the whole host of them and thought of sending every Brahmana and holy man back. But Dhaumacharya told him to solve the problem by obtaining an Akshayapatra – an all-providing vessel that can provide food for all. He taught him how to invoke the Sun God Aditya. The Sun is the giver and sustainer of food, the Providence of God. Dhaumacharya told Yudhistira to stand in water after a purificatory bath, repeating the great mantra that he had taught him, and Aditya would give him the Akshayapatram. Yudhistira did as directed and the Sun God appeared before him, and gave him a copper

vessel telling him to let Draupadi cook using this vessel, and this food would be sufficient for any number of people. But after Draupadi ate her food – the pot would become empty. The Sun God told Yudhistira, that He only gives the Akshayapatra to those who give freely to other, those who are pure in heart and those who are befriended by the Lord. “So, is it Krishna’s gift?” asked Yudhistira, and the Sun God said “Yes, and it is my gift too,” and disappeared. In the Sastras, it is said that whatever be your income or earnings, ten per cent of it must be given to charity. You must give others as God gives us. God gives us in His mercy, in His kindness, in His compassion – in the same way, when we live our lives today, we must be charitable and give to others. The Sun God said, “This is only given, to those who give freely to others and those who give freely to others and whose who are pure in heart.”

A good hearted person, who does not have any evil wishes against other people, does not get angry, and does not think evil about others. Even if somebody has done something bad to you, you must forgive them, never mind what they have done. A good hearted person has no evil passions, no madness for wealth, madness for power, or position in this world – these are just temporary, transient things. This of what is permanent, that which is eternal. Build your house on that solid rock foundation. Don't build it on these quick sands. Hold on to that which is permanent, eternal- that is God. So therefore, when you understand that, your heart and mind becomes pure. When you're purified, then alone, can any knowledge of God beget God's blessings. It is only when you get God's blessings, knowledge can come to you. Knowledge is so many things in this world, in this creation. And more than anything else, the greatest and highest knowledge is Atma Vidhya; this can

come only to pure people. Your hearts and minds must be cleansed of all evil impurities of this world. A clean good mind, a good-hearted person ready to help anybody in distress, ready to give, not thinking of just hoarding it for yourself, for tomorrow. You may not live to see tomorrow, that's the best part of it – that you may not be living tomorrow to enjoy it! How do you know what's going to happen? Purity of heart automatically brings knowledge. Not the final knowledge, but the knowledge that makes you understand, that is called Viveka. You are able to see the real and the unreal. That which is transient, that which is permanent and eternal, you are able to see, this difference only when you have a clear good mind, a pure mind. When you're pure in heart, and that knowledge flashes into your mind, it will be knowledge of the eternal, not in the highest way, because you still haven't renounced. The renunciation comes when you have Viveka.

Viveka leads to Vairagya. Once you get that Viveka, the knowledge you're so sure that these are not things that are worth keeping. Once you come to that conclusion, you will automatically renounce it and throw it away, you don't want it. It doesn't mean that you straightaway go and take sanyasa. In your mind you renounce it. It is out of knowledge. You have intelligence to understand and to use it. And when you get that renunciation, true renunciation, then alone will that final knowledge come. That is Atma Jnana. That will come only when that absolute renunciation comes because your identification with the body also will cease then. Now the identification of the self, with this body, mind – my relations, my things – that identification will also cease in the last days, when you come to have that real renunciation. See how easily He said it, 'I give it only to those who give freely to others, and are pure in heart'.

He just said it in once sentence but it means so much!

And the third trait- "... those who are befriended by the Lord" – now you can see the Pandavas had all these three – they were befriended by the Lord. Now whom does the Lord befriend? Only those who are his Bhaktas – true Bhaktas – not so called Bhaktas. Those who are totally dependent on Him – look upon Him as the greatest friend and help in every way. It is not so much in saying it, but as in living it. It comes automatically to you. "Well, whatever happens, it may be my good or bad karma, but it cannot take place until God allows it". He must approve it. All karma must generally take its course, but it can be mitigated, it can be reduced. See how much the Pandavas went through, even though the Lord befriended them. But you will see, they went through it very easily. That is the way we must follow. If any bad things are happening to you,

understand that it is your bad karma taking its course, something that is beyond your power. First, see if it is within your power, and then do your best to get out of it. But if it is beyond your power, then leave it to Him, understanding that it is your own bad karma that is taking its course, which is allowed by God. Now if He thought you should not be going through it. He would have stopped it. See, He stopped the disrobing of Draupadi. He wouldn't allow it. In so many places. He has intervened like this. Like in the case of Gajendra – the Crocodile would have killed Gajendra and eaten him, had He not come. God is always there for you, provided you want him. If you take one step towards God. He takes ten steps towards you. That is something we must always remember.

**So, remember the three, firstly, one who gives freely to others, secondly, one who is pure in heart and thirdly, those who are befriended by the Lord. These are the three conditions. Fulfill them and the Akshyapatra is yours. [Laughter]**

This is something I have to keep pointing out to you, that you must be worthy of God's Grace. Pray for worthiness, for humility. You must have humility – this is most important. One thing is certain – as long as you have real true Bhakthi, then humility, and detachment will follow. Because you are born towards Divinity, when you have Bhakthi – that is unselfish devotion to God. That means you are drawn, and attracted towards God, who is purity, kindness, compassion, the Almighty Supreme Power. Naturally, as we get closer, we get more attracted towards it. So we have to pray till we get linked to Him.

When we get close to God, you learn He does everything for you. You learn this through experience, not through book learning. I am not telling you not to read books. Book reading is good because it gives you an outline as to how things are. You get the knowledge theoretically – but theory is not going to help, you need practice and practice alone will help. If you don't have the experience, a hundred books that you have memorized will not help you even a little. Doing Saranagati completely is like a double promotion – you get all the knowledge stuffed into you; it comes to you automatically. He takes over. Dhruva went and sat in the forest and Narada gave him the Vasudeva mantra. He was repeating that, finally he got the vision of Maha Vishnu. Vishnu blessed him and Dhruva burst into divine poetry, that is the touch of the Divine. This comes when you surrender totally to God.

So time is short. Don't waste time. Use this life to reach much higher planes in the next. Try your very best. You must always aim for the stars – it is only then will you find that you will slowly go into a groove. You understand things, your mind changes, your character changes and in the last instance, you will see a physical change. You must think well, deeply as you go home tonight on what Sri Sathguru has said to you. Think well about it and you must go and practice it. Even if you do a little. He will be pleased. Try it. If it is a sincere effort, He will pat you on the back. It is His Grace that we need. Divine Grace is very hard to get. When you look at all your human faults and failings, it appears difficult, but when you look upon yourself as a true Devotee of God, with unselfish, loving devotion towards God, you won't have problems.

Whether it is good, or bad, it is the mind that does such a lot of harm –

a bad or weak mind goes on working against you and finally affects your body. There was a little child dying with cancer. I was feeling so sorry for it, but the child had no trace of sadness. It was running about and playing. The parents were feeling so sad and unhappy about it. You see, it is all in the mind. The body feels the pain; the mind does not get affected. Through the mind, we must control the body. When the mind is calm, serene, and tranquil, you can look at life clearly – you see all its troubles, difficulties, tribulations, and sadness as a part of life. If you want sunshine, you must be willing to accept rain. There will be a certain acceptance, “Oh Lord, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference”. You must have the serenity, acceptance and resignation to the will of God.

Here I am not talking like the Christians do, they have a will of God as if it's only God's will – they don't have the law of karma.

They say that all that happens is what God does. I don't accept that. I can't think of a God who will give disease, illness, poverty and suffering to one and all happiness and joy and good health to another. I can't think of God being so partial as all that. It doesn't fit in. There must be something beyond that.

The attribute of Kali Yuga is speed – this is the age of jet planes, missiles. But, it is also the age of Bhakthi. It is not possible for all to do the yajnas and homams in this age. Very few, and rare are the ones who can keep to them. It is very difficult to do it properly and strictly. It is very rare to find people who can do that. Bhakthi is much easier than Gnana Yoga and Raja yoga. They don't fetch the results that

Bhakthi does. In this age and day, we need something, which will fetch us results immediately. Everybody is in a hurry now; there is no time. The life that is led, brings on so much stress and strain. The mental stress and strain brings an illnesses of different types. Everybody suffers from hypertension, and it has become a status symbol nowadays. [Laughter]

Bhakthi is very easy. Bhakthi increases detachment and purity. In the early stages, it will be difficult to sit down and pray. You might pass through some dry spells when you don't get true bhakthi, get doubts and you are not able to dispel them, this should not deter you. The first thing that you must realize, is that you must have an organized and systematic life whether in your home or office – bath, prayer and the rest must follow like clock work. I am telling you this because I lived like that, and I am still living like that.

Everybody can do it. Doing so you will find ample time. Do things, which are necessary. Then your mind is at peace. Then, you will be able to sit down and pray and be able to read some of the great scriptures – Bhagavatam, Mahabharatam, Gita, and the Narayaneeyam with understanding. Listening to the discourses here, as well as going to temples help to purify the mind and direct it to God. When I ask you to visit certain temples, there is a need and necessity as that particular point of your life for you to see that aspect of God. It is according to your needs, temperament, and your Purva Janma Karma.

So, Kali Yuga is an opportunity for you to practice Bhakthi, and as speed is its nature, if you apply yourself totally towards it, you will quickly reach the end-that is the contact with God. After you get totally in contact with God, you don't have to do anything. Till then, we have to do something, till that ego gets

totally weakened and subdued. This ego causes all the trouble. When you bow your head in true bhakthi, your humility rises and arrogance, conceit is forgotten. You will become a humble person and a pure person – one who has totally surrendered to God, knowing that whatever happens to anyone is one's own karma, but allowed by God. If it is too bad. He knows and reduced the strength of the illness or whatever you are suffering from. You don't have to know it, and yet you would have passed through it, but without knowing the suffering and sorrow that it entails. It is as if a cobra bites you. He takes the poison, but you will have to take the pain of the bite. So, it is for you to work hard as long as it takes to purify yourself. The struggle is there. Once you get purified and the mind gets totally immersed in God, then you will not be interested in what people do or say to you. Control your anger. And as your bhakthi increases, you get control of yourself.

Self control finally leads to self-conquest, 'He conquers all who conquers self'.

So that little ego, that "I" should give no trouble to others. Train it well, turn it towards God, and it will become one with God. The highest stage is reached when you come to para-bhakthi, that is the same as the aham-brahmasmi of the Advaita.

Narayana.



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