Reaching for The Golden Ring
Category : August 1997
Published by Anonymous on Aug. 02, 1997

MINISTER'S MESSAGE

Reaching for The Golden Ring

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Blessed are they who dwell on the deepest purposes of human life, especially in a world tormented by crisis, violence, poverty and despair.

Yes, the news of the world is oppressive. It erodes confidence in the potential of humanity and your own life. Natural resources are shrinking. Cultures are becoming degraded. Corrupt governments, unwilling to respond to the ills of society, sell the future to the highest bidder. Inhumane crimes and ethnic genocide are commonplace. Suffering and ecological devastation abound.

The illusion of success, the possibility of laying claim to the good life beckons, a welcome escape from desperation. In a blind rush, people reach for the golden ring. It is an understandable defense from chaos and uncertainty.

But what is true success? Success is always a mixed blessing.

(Look closely at the Western world!!!) Success never comes without tentacles of attachment, maya, eventual crises, or haunting insecurities and fear. Success is never the end. It is inevitably followed by failure and difficulty. Ups and downs are unavoidable. That is the way of things in a self-balancing, ever-evolving universe. Life painfully brings to light all that is unfit for the next, new level of consciousness. Within struggle the seeds of Truth are hidden. Behind all superficial, transient struggle lies a brilliant reality waiting to be revealed through transcendence.

True success refines harmony and peace in the heart. It confers emotional and psychological balance, profound wisdom. It brings the blessings of health and vitality, not only to yourself but to the world around you. True success uplifts all life. Today, humanity is at the threshold of a new evolution of consciousness. The pathologies of the old world are erupting. But consciousness works out its destiny, emerging through crises, moving humanity inevitably toward perfection and realization.

The Vedas speak of dharma, which involves the expression of the intrinsic essence, property or quality. The dharma of fire is to give light and warmth. The dharma of ice is to give cold. And the dharma of the human being is to manifest innate divinity. All pain derives from the failure to understand and act in accordance with the waiting dharma of divinity. The Vedic rishis propounded the unchangeable principles which transcend the limits of time, geography and society to give insight into our manava dharma [human dharma] and to lead us back to our intrinsic, true nature. These principles are the natural, operational laws by which the Divine Cosmic

Intelligence unfolds in manifestation. That is the essence of manava dharma--the ultimate, deeper reality. Manava dharma liberates the divine being. It manifests the potential divinity in each human soul. It nurtures the humanizing qualities of sattwa guna--truth, non-violence, forgiveness, love and service to the less privileged--gradually developing a higher level of energy in the body-mind system. Whether visiting temples or churches or not, those nurturing the qualities of sattwa guna are on the path of dharma.

A close disciple once asked Baba Lokenath, "What is the benefit of contemplation on the higher qualities of human life?" The Living Siva replied, "Just as darkness disappears with the rising of the sun, just as the thief runs away when the householder wakes up, in the same manner if you contemplate the higher qualities, the lower instincts will run away from you, and your body will be transformed into a temple of the Divine. Later, when the power of Brahman awakens in you, you will become Brahman." Through these words the Awakened One calls us all to awaken from the sleep of unawareness and recognize our innate divine qualities. The Guru is the dispeller of darkness. He is the one who fans to fire the awareness of the highest purposes of human birth. Baba is only repeating the words of the Vedas: "You are what your deep, driving desire is. As your desire is, so is your will. As your will is, so is your deed. As your deed is, so is your destiny."

You are what you think. The need for contemplation of higher human values and for determined efforts to live up to them shapes your destiny toward the ultimate--the Brahman.

Your dream state continues as long as you are unconscious, but the moment you become aware of the dream, the dream stops. As long as you live the life of flesh and ego-identification, however high you may rise in the world, fall is inevitable. But one who builds on the rock of Self-contemplation and who performs all work as worship to the Divine, gradually awakens to the higher energy of the Cosmic Source. Drawing from the wellsprings of creativity, you are never exhausted, never cheated. You are continuously renewed by the Infinite. Become aware of that Infinite Fountain within your own Soul! Experience the rising Sun of eternal illumination in your inner being! You are the builder of your own destiny. Build it on the rock of faith in your true Self. It will stand against all odds. Finally, the Grace of the Divine will bring the highest transformation of Brahmanhood. For you are That.

The Divine Designer is Truth and Bliss. In the midst of deepening darkness, nature takes humans toward the dawn of higher consciousness, leading us from asat to sat, from lower to higher truth. May we all cooperate in our small, humble way with nature to manifest a higher culture of Spirit which breaks the shackles of all human bondage. May we work to usher in an era of conscious love and blessedness. You and I are born to achieve this in this birth!! No small effort goes in vain; all good actions must yield fruit of blessedness for all. Om shanti.

Swami Shuddhananda, 47, founder Lokenath Divine Life Mission, India and Lokenath Divine Life Fellowship, USA, works to alleviate poverty in Calcutta's slums and hundreds of surrounding villages.