

SWAMI SHIVANANDA

There is only one way out, and that is faith. If one has the sincerest faith that the Master [Sri Ramakrishna] is the Incarnation for this age, that he is none other than God Himself, and that one has been blessed by one of his sons, then one need have nothing more to worry—one has already reached the goal of life. One must have full faith in his being the Incarnation of God. It is the Master himself who sits in my heart as the guru and blesses the devotees.

- It is not an easy thing to realize the unreality of the world. One cannot have that realization without the grace of God. Cry to Him and pray and you will have His grace. He is right inside. You will realize Him the moment He lifts the veil of ignorance. It is grace and grace alone that we need. There is no other way.
- The grace of God is ever present but one must make an effort to deserve that grace. . . . He is ever ready to shower His grace. Take His name, worship Him, remember Him constantly and call upon Him very earnestly. You will see how gracious He is. So much grace will descend upon you that you will be overwhelmed; your life will be blessed.
- Unless work is accompanied by meditation, japa and other spiritual practices, its very spirit is lost. Then one forgets it is the Lord's work and not his own. Egotism and pride come and instead of being purified by the work, the heart becomes defiled.
- Compared with pains and sorrows there is very little happiness. But those who are devoted to God know some peace in this

world. They are not disturbed by whatever pains or sorrows may come to them, because they know that everything comes from God. It is the same God who gives us happiness and again trials and difficulties. That is why they can patiently bear everything as a blessing from God. They are never elated by happiness, nor are they upset by sorrow. Just as happiness is impermanent and short-lived, so is sorrow. It comes and goes; for nothing in this world is permanent.

- It is true that one feels bad if one has to deal with worldly people all the time. One thing I would specially advise you: Whenever you talk with a person, never indulge in criticisms of others nor listen to them. If you have any criticism, keep quiet without taking part in it. Mind this particularly. Gossip, active or passive, tarnishes the mind and lowers it very much. It is a handicap to devotion for God.
- Desire begets misery, to be without desires is bliss. Desire for enjoyment no doubt has to be given up. But then, all desires are not to be given up. It is only material desires that are to be given up. But the desire to realize God, the desire for knowledge and devotion are not to be given up.
- Don't you know it is very hard to digest fame? Those who do not have Self-realization can hardly rise above the desire for name and fame.
- Those who have real dispassion and sincere detachment have nothing to fear at any time. God will reveal Himself in their hearts; He will fulfil their life's goal by His blessed vision. ■