Gratitude & Surrender

Gratitude flows out of you when you are overwhelmed by what is being given to you,
writes JAGGI VASUDEV

In my whole childhood, my mother never told me that she loved me. It was never even a question, because her life and her very breath was an expression of her love. Her whole life was dedicated to us, how could we miss it? Today we are coming to a situation where every day one has to say, “I love you, I love you.” If you forget the nighttime “I love you,” by evening, there will be a doubt.

All the beautiful things that human beings express need not be systematised, cultured, and taught to people. However, if people are living in an insensitive way, it is better that they at least say it — even if they do not mean it. If they keep on saying it, maybe one day, they will mean it!

So Much Team Work

If we look around and observe all that is involved to make our life happen, we cannot help being grateful. What you exhale, the trees are inhaling. What they exhale, you are inhaling. If you are aware of this, if you go out and look at them, tears of gratitude will naturally come to you. If you become more sensitive to the life process, you will always be grateful for everything that is in touch with you, because there is no other way to be.

Let us say a plateful of food appears in front of you. To make bread, do you know how many people have worked? From the farmer who sowed the seeds to all the things that happen on the land, the one who harvested, the one who sold it, the one who brought it to the shop, just look at the whole lot of things involved.

Look at every aspect of life, from your breath, to food, to everything that you are enjoying and experiencing. If any of these people in this whole chain were not there or did not do what they have to do, it does not matter how much you pay, you would not have those things. Just open your eyes and see how you are nurtured and supported by every kind of creature on this planet and beyond. If you see this, you do not have to develop an attitude of gratitude. Gratitude is not an attitude. Gratitude is something that flows out of you when you are overwhelmed by what is being given to you. If it is an attitude, it is horrible. It is not just about saying, “Thank you, thank you.”

If you are grateful, you are also receptive. If you are grateful to someone, you look up at them. If you look up at something, you are more receptive. The whole process of yoga is to make you receptive in deeper and deeper ways, in ways that you do not know right now. That is the only goal, to become more receptive to life around you and above all, to life within you. So being overwhelmed by gratitude is definitely a beautiful way to be receptive. It opens you up to a certain extent because gratitude is also a state of surrender.

When you are grateful, you naturally bow down. You will see, even if someone belongs to a culture where bowing down is not a part of the culture, when they are grateful, they will naturally stand a little bent because there is a need to bow down. Being overwhelmed with gratitude and surrender are not different, but surrender is too pure. There is no room for any of your nonsense in surrender. In gratitude, you can still be there a little bit. So if gratitude happens as step one, surrender will naturally follow.

Submitting Naturally

In Indic culture, people have been trained to surrender. Right from their childhood, wherever you take your children, the children are told, “The first thing is, bow down. Any elderly person you see, first bow down, touch their feet.” This is because in this culture, everyone at one time lived with a single-minded purpose of ultimate liberation. Mukti was the only goal in their life. Because of that, the culture trained people right from their childhood not to make too much of themselves.

Many devices were built like this so that surrender becomes natural, but then we got English education, and it became very difficult to bow down. In the west, it was always taught to people, “Never bow down to anybody. You stand up straight. Never bow down,” because bowing down was seen as a weakness. Surrender is unthinkable. But to the evolved, surrender is beautiful.

When you talk surrender, you are talking about moving from the limitations of one dimension to another. Surrender is a certain realisation that in your present form you cannot pass through the gate. So you find a more intelligent way to pass through. You transform yourself with gratitude and surrender.

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