The Snakes and Ladders of Life

BY SADHGURU

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Whatever the past karma, it is like this: let us say, until the age of thirty you earn ten million rupees. Now you can either squander it or make it grow. In the past, you might have created some riches within you. In this life you may either add to it or squander it; but definitely some quality of that will be there in your life, though unconsciously it may go to waste. So because of your spiritual practices, those riches may manifest now in terms of material comfort, like a good house, the right kind of atmosphere, or maybe good people around you. In spite of all this, you may not make use of it and just become complacent. That is the whole cycle.

I repeatedly say that life is like the Snakes and Ladders game; you climb the ladder and there you're happy. The very comfort that comes out of it, that comes out of good karma, may make you complacent. Then once suffering comes, you start looking. You may squander it and go down again. This is the way of the fool, wasting his energy; but someone who has sufficient intelligence in him must take each breath as a step towards growth. It is very much possible. Even after reminding a person a hundred times, if he still does not wake up, if he is still lying down in his comforts, what can we do? He will be lost. He has to suffer once again, and then maybe seek growth.

This whole spiritual process is not happening to even one percent of the population. For all others, when things are going well they laugh, and when things go wrong, they are cry. There are very few people in the world who, whichever way it is, are balanced. For them nothing is a great benediction, nothing is a problem. Everything is just another life situation through which they can become free. The rest of the people are of the type where they will go the way the situation pushes them. They are like cattle. Between the way animals live and generally the way people live, is there any great difference qualitatively? Maybe quantitatively there is a lot of difference. There is more variety to your activity; you drive a car, you watch television. All this you do, but qualitatively, where is the difference?

If the difference has to come, it can only come with awareness; there is no other way. Generally, mental alertness is mistaken for awareness, but awareness is a far deeper dimension than just mental alertness alone. When awareness arises within you, love and compassion will be the natural follow-up; then each breath becomes a step towards growth.

(Sadhguru, founder of Isha Foundation is a yogi, mystic and spiritual master with a difference. An arresting blend of profundity and pragmatism, his life and work serve as a reminder that inner sciences are not esoteric philosophies from an outdated past, but a contemporary science vitally relevant to our times.)

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