

Spiritual Camaflouge

- Pujya K.C.Narayana

Now a days it is quite common to hear words like Natures' abundance, manifestation of the Divine and creative participation with the Divine and usage of these and similar sounding words and phrases is considered in the elite circles as signs of wisdom and also ones' spiritual enlightenment. Surely these words have meaning of their own but it is not all that certain, that they are the correct usage of these words and phrases in the context of which most of the time they are used. Many a time we find these noble words and phrases are used to serve the purpose of a thin veil of deception to hide selfishness, greed, and elitism.

The ideas behind these popular notions that are expressed are simple to comprehend. They state that if our actions and intentions are in tune with God or whatever other spiritual substitute like Guru, Mata Guide then money and other forms of material prosperity will come to us and we are fully protected. It is very obvious that these ideas are propagated or proposed as a strategy to get more comforts through health and wealth. It is clear that this theory works essentially as a system of reward for doing what's right or 'good' and punishment

for not doing 'good'. If we do happen to increase our wealth or health while we are implementing this theory, it will be argued that this is a result of these ideas, hence, our reward. If we do not on the other hand increase our wealth or health, it will be stated that we simply are not living to the fullest extent the idealistic criterion, otherwise we should increasing our health and wealth. It will be suggested then that it is time to consider changing beliefs and philosophies. These theories do not stand the test of objectivity and one chooses to live with a belief system not substantiated for fear of change or go on changing the ideologies as we change our clothes.

One of the problems of having an ideology based on reward and punishment is that every time we achieve something we desire, our ego tells us that we are being very spiritual, and every time something happens in our life that we don't want, naturally we face the option of being called unspiritual or not spiritual to the extent that is ideal. Our spirituality is questioned and we are asked to improve our spiritual orientation and all the unnecessary advices. This is essentially training people on the Pavlovian principle of conditioning. However the dogs seem to have a better trainer in that a good dog trainer always rewards the dog for doing what is expected but there are many good people trying to fulfill the idealistic criterion, who are not reaping the benefits

that others who do not follow any of these criteria seem to enjoy benefits. Under these circumstances we tend to feel we are spiritually defective, instead of thinking whether our ideology is correct or not. Those people who participate in the same ideology, and succeed, are the ones' whose egos have a hurting edge and those who fail are the ones' who are the receiving end.

If we are being rewarded materially for being on the right spiritual path, then, by default, everyone who has less materially than us become inferior to us in spirituality. Once we accept the ideology of reward and punishment in spiritual life, this kind of ego can not be avoided. If we accept this philosophy when we are succeeding and others are not, we will feel superior. Of course, we are prudent enough not to demonstrate this openly, but it will be a secret pleasure hidden behind false humility. Those who are not succeeding will be looking at us with wide-eyes admiration and envy, and this inflames our ego further. So far as we are succeeding we will believe this whole heartedly. There will be no doubt in our mind that we have got this spiritual cloak well stitched. But when the wheel of fortune has its movement to the other side, we will be totally disillusioned as we not only have lost our health/ wealth, but we find ourselves stripped of our spiritual identity that we humored ourselves with.

If an individual is seeking spirituality proper, it doesn't matter which path he takes, as the Divine being Just always shows him the true path when the time is ripe. When we have sound health and good wealth or we do not, it is due to our past actions only or Karma only either in this life or earlier. To find reasons outside ourselves for such money/ health and attributing it to a particular spiritual path would be self defeating logic. Under such logic, if we follow a new spiritual path and lose money, we will think this must be the wrong path because the god or universe or whatever we are calling spiritual is now punishing us. If we get sick, we would tend to think it is due to the path we are getting some kind of punishment. It appears then that the love of God is not universal but is conditional to the belief system we have.

What is being missed in all of this is the simple fact that there are many people who have no interest at all in spirituality and these people make millions and are of sound health. Some of these people are many times unfair, unjust and quite often very ruthless and cruel. If attribute the wealth/ health of a person to a Divine agency one might as well have to answer whether the Just God is rewarding them for all their characteristics

and accomplishments?

The fact is that there has to be resources available by way of past or present Karma to harvest and take advantage of to prosper. No past or acquired resources through Karma lead to any prosperity. It does not matter what we believe now. What we believe now and practice has implications for the future and in the making of ourselves in this life. We cannot change any ones' destiny for the better, but persistent purification in the thought of the Master/ Divine we can to some extent reduce the suffering due to our past actions. The life that shines in the eyes of the suffering arises from the same source as ours, and we are no better than they for having access to resources and the ability to harvest those resources. It is the spiritual resource that is widely available as the grace of the Master through Pranahuti that can enhance our Divine resource and by mutual cooperation and sharing make this world a Kingdom of God. The actual material wealth and robust health is not due to any Divine resource but is essentially due to our past Karmas getting reflected in us as biological advantage in our endowment of animal resource and with an additional environmental advantage the endowment of human resource. This is the natural way and there is no other way of manifesting the resources in our lives and we would be only fooling ourselves if we think that through the spiritual power of some one we can get

manifested what we desire.