

Struggle

During the retreat the different speakers have been opening up to us a wonderful variety of new possibilities to meet our individual needs at whatever level we may be at. One real possibility that has not been mentioned, perhaps for obvious reasons, is the possibility of struggle.

It is not possible, finally, to have a new life without leaving an old life behind, if not literally, figuratively to some degree. Usually it is our psychological way of looking at things. But ultimately, it is the way we function. There is a modern Jewish spiritual teacher who will frequently say that the essence of the spiritual life is contained in the words, Not my will, but Thy will be done. The new possibilities that the spiritual life promises are a result of gradually attuning ourselves with God's will, indeed, ultimately, becoming an expression of God's will. That means that our old will, which is often an expression of selfishness, has to be left behind.

Even if our will is not an expression of selfishness, even if it is a giving will, wanting to do the best, there is still another way of looking at it. For example, Arjuna was embarking on a righteous war. No one could argue about his motivations. It was the only honorable thing for the Pāṇḍava brothers to do. And yet he was faced with a conflict. In order for the Pāṇḍavas to win the war, he had to kill people he revered as his elders and teachers. It brought within him a terrible struggle. "Indeed," he said, "it is better to give up the kingdom than kill these elders." Lord Kṛṣṇa taught him differently. And the whole of the Gītā is Lord Kṛṣṇa trying to give Arjuna, in Gurudev's words, a different angle of vision.

The climax of the Gītā is the 11th chapter when Arjuna sees that, in fact, everything is happening by God's will, because everything is that One alone. Even that vision didn't make Arjuna totally understand. So Lord Kṛṣṇa had to go through many more chapters before the real climax, which is when Arjuna says, "I have recovered my memory. I will do as you say." In other words, not my ideas, not my will, but Thy will be done.

Struggle itself, if seen correctly, is really a new spiritual possibility. The very thing that we would like to avoid that is causing us so much pain and perhaps confusion can be resolved finally only by fulfilling the purpose of the spiritual life. The whole purpose is to lead us from our will to God's will. It is to lead to surrender. So if we are going through agony, if we don't

know the way out, Jesus says, "Follow Me." Lord Kṛṣṇa says, "Abandon all your ideas of right and wrong and take refuge in Me."

That Me is within us as our reality. We can identify with the body and mind and all its ideas of right and wrong, or we can identify with that inner witness that is always there and that can see clearly what to do. This resolving of the struggle is a letting go of our will and a desire to do the will of God. That will of God is our real Self; it is within each one of us. It is our consciousness as we are listening now. Give ourselves to That, and gradually the struggle will resolve itself.