

Being Positive

As we all know we live in a world of the pairs of opposites. It is the very nature of this world: hot and cold, thick and thin, pleasant and unpleasant. Everything has its opposite. Everyone knows this fact although that is not the way we always see it. Sometimes we think certain other people have nothing but good happening to them. Perhaps sometimes we feel that we are victims; nothing except bad happens to us. Perhaps, in fact, ultimately everything is in balance. We choose how we see it.

Do we choose to see that the glass is half full, or do we say it's half empty? Many of us never think that we have a choice. We're just caught up in our emotions and by our environment. We don't recognize that whether we see the glass as half full or half empty, determines what we attract to ourselves and determines to a large extent how our life turns out.

Gurudev says, "Be cheerful always. Have a smile on your face. Be positive." But some will object: "That's not being real. It is a denial of the truth of our situation." That may be true if it becomes a mask, something that we put on, but Gurudev saw it from a different point of view. He was ever cheerful because he abided ever in the truth. Even earlier in his life he took a positive attitude to things, even though (as Pūjya Swāmī Chidānandajī reported in his biography of Gurudev) in the early years Gurudev would have his withdrawn periods, periods where he wasn't communicating in the very positive way he did towards the end of his life.

So one reason that we too should act in a positive manner is that ultimately life is total positivity. But then, even now there is a very practical reason for positivity. Let us assume that we clearly see the difficulties in life, we don't pretend that they don't exist; but at the same time we recognize that ultimately everything is happening for the best, that everything is positive because God, who is all positivity, alone is. Therefore, while from a human point of view we can see the glass as being half empty or half full, we recognize that neither are we going to do ourselves any good, nor are we going to attract good to ourselves, nor are we going to benefit others, if we constantly see that the glass is half empty, if we constantly take a negative attitude towards life.

On the other hand, if we take a positive attitude, we are not only reflecting the ultimate truth, but we make ourselves feel better, we attract

positive things to ourselves and we help to make others feel better as well. Thus without it becoming a mask, without in any way avoiding or ignoring the difficulties of life, Gurudev wants us to choose to be positive, to choose to see that the glass is half full rather than considering it to be half empty.