



Challenges Make You Stronger

Why is that - a spiritual seeker seems to be plagued with so many vexing problems, obstacles, hurdles and various complicated situations that do not seem to be present in the life of a normal being? The answer is because spiritual life is going against the stream of life. It is like the difference between a person swimming downstream going along the current, and a person swimming upstream against the current. Whereas the person going downstream takes the means of least resistance and flow along, the person swimming upstream has a great deal of counter-force to overcome. All other forms of life change their direction when they come across a formidable obstruction. Man alone asks how he can overcome it. He does not think of changing his direction. If a river comes, build a bridge to cross it! If a mountain obstructs a railroad, bore a tunnel through it! This has something to teach us.

You have set a great goal. And to move towards it with the minimum of difficulty, one method is to walk in the footsteps of the great ones. They went the same way, encountered many difficulties and attained the goal. Follow the steps they took to overcome everything until they reached the goal. So contemplate the lives of saints. Be guided by their wisdom teachings. They have left valuable pointers through their own personal teachings and words of advice.

A second method is to look at it with a different angle of vision. Welcome it! Say: "No, this is not a problem. This situation is necessary for me; otherwise it would not come. God knows my degree of evolution. At this point in my spiritual evolution, this is what I require in order to learn many insights and to put forth my inner resources so that I may progress further. If I go into a higher dimension or plane of evolution, then such things will not come." Thus, we take the problem not as a problem, but as an opportunity to manifest whatever inner resources we have developed till now through our spiritual life and our dispassion. Whatever, we have learnt, now we have to test it in the field. The seeming problem is giving us just that opportunity to convince ourselves that we are not standing on a foundation of sand, but of rock. So, take everything in a positive, constructive and creative attitude. This is the way to keep up enthusiasm and thus thrive in your spiritual life. See the inner value of these situations. Know that we can gain from them! Your entire life takes in a new attitude and nature. It reacts in a positive way: "God has sent these things; they are necessary. I must try to understand in what manner I can utilise them." This is the light in which we should view the world in which we have to live and to carry on our spiritual Sadhana. May God bless us all!

God Bless You!

■ *Swami Chidananda*