

## Maintaining Dignity in Difficult Situations

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I was in Amritsar on 13 and 14 June, 2011. It was an official trip. I utilized the evening of 13 June to visit the Golden Temple. It had a lot of emotional meaning for me. 'My husband, my son and his wife were to visit Amritsar on 28 November, 2010. We were to travel by Air India. We had planned to take Manu and Priya to the Golden Temple and then take them to the Wagah Border for the Retreat Function'. This did not happen as my husband passed away suddenly in his sleep on 13 November, 2010. However, I did see Devendra in my dream on November 28 asking me to find out the timings of flights to Amritsar. I realized that he wanted me to go to Amritsar. My in-laws were in Amritsar when I got married. My son was born in Amritsar. My husband had taken me around in Amritsar. I had lovely memories which gave me an immense happiness in October 2010 when I was on an official trip. This time the visit brought tears in my eyes, and breakdowns, although, I did manage my official lecture somehow as well as

giving *Ardas* (prayer) for my husband at the Golden Temple.

Hundreds of people were patiently waiting for their turn to reach the inside of the *Darbar Sahib* in the Golden Temple. A young woman with an amputated leg was making a great effort with a rustic thick stick to move forward somehow. She was carrying her five-year-old son who was continuously holding on to his mother's rustic stick. The little son did not realize that he was adding to the weight which his mother was carrying with an amputated leg. He was feeling satisfied that he was helping his mother walk and was not letting his mother know that he was tired as well. Both mother and son exchanged smiles whenever the crowd let them stand without pushing. As they reached inside, the smile on this young lady's face was one that exuberated happiness, satisfaction and peace. After the *darshan* which was a rushed one, as the crowd was moving on rapidly, the mother and the son moved out, they found some place to sit outside. The

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mother made a great effort to sit on the floor. Not even once did they request anyone to let them have *darshan* first! Or lost their temper whenever they were pushed by the crowd.

I tried to give some money to this young lady for her rikshaw, bus fare, stay and food, as she was very poor. I did not believe myself when she said '*Rab ne bathera ditta hai. Tussi dena he hai te saanu ashirwad de ke jao*'. (God has given us enough, if you want to give us, give us your blessings). The mother had passed on these values of self respect and dignity to her son. Throughout the night, the peaceful faces of the mother and her son did not

let me sleep, as to how, in such difficult human situation, these two were able to give up temptations to guard their dignity and self respect. The two remotely reminded me of my husband, who, after an accident, completed his Ph.D on the crutches and never complained of pains and aches. He continued to be cheerful and had a great sense of satisfaction that his thesis was a high quality academic exercise. My husband maintained his dignity and self respect till the last day of his life. Devendra always believed that overuse of facilities can weaken a person's own resolve.