

4. Live in the Divine

THERE are five requisites for developing true devotion. The first is Dedication (offering everything to God). Egoism is the bar to developing the spirit of dedication. It manifests itself in various forms of pride - pride of physical strength, intellectual pride, the arrogance of wealth and the like. But as all these are impermanent and may be lost at any time, it is unwise to make the body, the mind or property the basis for one's conceit. Hence egoism should be renounced as the first offering to God.

Next, devotion should be regarded as an expression of gratitude to all that one receives from Providence--the air that we breathe, the light and the heat that we get from the sun, the water we drink and the food we consume. All the essential necessities of life are got by the grace of God. The expression of gratitude through devotion is a primary obligation. All that is done by the way of *bhajans*, *japa*, meditation and prayer must be done in the spirit of gratitude.

The third requisite is discipline. In almost every action in life, the recognised limits and regulations have to be observed. This applies equally to the spiritual field. You must observe discipline in matters relating to dress, your general behaviour outside the *mandir* or during *bhajans* in the *mandir*, the way you speak and the food you eat. All your actions should be filled with sanctity and purity.

Discrimination is the fourth requisite. Discrimination has to be used in every aspect of daily living--in what you see, what you listen to, what you speak and what you consume. Avoid eating all kinds of food in strange places.

Last comes determination. Without firm determination no great thing can be achieved in life. It is all the more needed in the spiritual field so that you may face all difficulties and obstacles and overcome them. You must hold fast to what you consider as good, what you regard as sacred and what you recognise as the truth. That is real penance.

End of wisdom is true freedom

People in the West talk about freedom? Does it mean acting as you please, doing what you like? Not at all. True freedom consists in keeping the senses under control. A man wants to drink. But he gets tipsy after a drink. What happens to his freedom? He has lost the little sense he had. Freedom does not consist in indulgence. Real freedom comes from realisation of the Self. The end of wisdom is freedom.

Of the different kinds of knowledge, that which really matters is the knowledge that is put into practice. All other knowledge is either verbal or pompous scholarship. When people are asked: "Where is God?" some give the reply: "He is everywhere." But these are mere words. No doubt the statement is correct. But how real is the answer to the persons concerned? Does it arise from their experience? The consciousness of the omnipresence of God should be based on the feeling that everything and every being is in God. You must feel the presence of God wherever you go, whatever you may do, whether you are eating or speaking or working. When you cultivate such an attitude that is the highest form of devotion.

From confidence to Bliss

Look upon the body as a moving temple. Wherever you go, God is with you. Do not indulge in debates over what is God and where is God. God has to be experienced through faith and confidence. Where there is confidence, there is Love. Where there is Love, there is Peace. Where

there is Peace, there is Truth. Where there is Truth, there is Bliss. Where there is Bliss, there is God.

Bliss is everywhere. The bliss that is in you is limited by your body-consciousness. You must extend that bliss and make it all-embracing. When a child is born, he is a lone individual. As he grows, he has wife and children. When the children get married the kinships get wider. This widening of relationships occurs in a single family. You have to widen your outlook to cover the entire human family.

The Sai Family

Here in Prashaanthi Nilayam there are people from many countries. You have Italians, Australians, Indonesians, Americans, Argentinians and people from scores of other countries. The countries from which they come are different. But they consider themselves as belonging to one family--the Sai family. This is an expression of unity in diversity Human beings may be diverse, but God is one. The concept of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man should inspire your daily life.

You have all come from distant countries, at great expense and trouble. You do not seek any personal favours. You are not concerned even about your comforts. You are content if Swami talks to you or grants you an interview. Be steadfast in this attitude. Having come all the way, you must attend *bhajans*, whether you are able to follow their meaning or not. Avoid strolling outside the Nilayam. If the body wanders, mind also wanders.

Consider what a great waste it would be to wander away from the sacred atmosphere of Prashaanthi Nilayam even for a moment. I am speaking out of concern for your good and well-being. Remember always that you have come here to experience sacred thoughts and to sanctify your lives. You should observe the discipline of this place. You have to behave with decency and respect towards everyone. Self-realisation can be attained only through sacrifice. But some are not prepared to give up smoking or non-vegetarian food. If you cannot give up even small things which are undesirable, how are you going to develop the spirit of sacrifice?

When you go back to your respective countries, your conduct must be such that your countrymen have high regard for you. They should recognise the transformation wrought in you by your visit to Prashaanthi Nilayam and seek to follow your example. When you constantly remind yourselves, "I am God", you develop Godly behaviour. Listen to your Inner Voice---- the Voice of Conscience. Your conduct will then be spontaneously Godly.

Do not waste money, food, time and energy

It is because of your devotion and earnestness that you have come all the way here. You must make full use of your stay to realise your goal. Do not think only of the weeks and months you spend here. What matters is how you use your stay. Swami judges you not by quantity but by quality. To what extent you have transformed yourselves and advanced spiritually is all that matters. How far have you given up your old ways and practices? It may be cheaper to live in Puttaparthi than in your own country. But that does not mean that you should spend money as you please. Misuse of money is evil. Don't waste money. Don't waste food. Food is God. Don't waste time, because time wasted is life wasted. Don't waste energy. Energy is wasted in idle talk and meaningless wanderings.

I know how deep is your devotion. Do not dissipate it by indulging in unbecoming activities. Conduct yourselves in such a way that it pleases Swami. When you are happy, I am happy.

Remember your goal is nothing less than realising your inherent Divinity. It is difficult for any one to get; an opportunity like this. Among the billions of people in the world, how many can come here to experience the Divine? You are among the blessed and the fortunate few. Make the best use of this supreme good fortune and transform yourselves into godly persons and help to transform others. Be always happy. Share your joys with others. This is true spirituality. Remember, Love is God; live in Love. Truth is God; live in Truth. Bliss is God; live in Bliss. Be fearless. God is with you. When you go about with the conviction, "God is with me; I am in God," you will have no fear. I hope by acting in this way, you will spread peace and harmony in your respective countries.

Discourse to the devotees from overseas countries in Prashaanthi Mandir, on 17-2-1989.

So long as you are in Avidya, so long as you are untrained and ignorant, you cannot taste the Bliss; you cannot attain it. You are still bound by the three-corded rope--the black cord of Tamas, the red cord of Rajas and the white cord of Satwa. Hence regulate your life in such a way that you do not harm your inner nature.

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