

## Devotion and wisdom

Of course, such love will dawn only after knowing the glory and splendour of the Lord as well as His innate characteristics of omniscience, omnipotence, and immanence in all creation. One who is endowed with love of this nature, one who lives always with the Lord—that one will certainly be liberated.

What does the expression “to know God” mean? It means “to love God”. Knowledge without devotion produces hatred; such knowledge leads to misused power; it is not knowledge worth the name; it is ignorance, mistaken for its opposite. It is only through devotion that wisdom becomes established and deep rooted.

What is the sign of a wise person (*jnani*)? It is love, the possession of ever-widening love. When devotion, or in other words love toward the Lord, dawns, ignorance will vanish step by step. Devotion and hatred cannot coexist; they are contradictory. Devotion and love, however, are of the same nature.

The worldly person is infected with love only toward material objects, but the same love, when it assumes the form of devotion or love of God, leads one on to the realization of Godhead itself. The phrase sweet essence (*rasa*) indicates the attraction of worldly objects as well as the longing for the joy of God-realization.

The consequences of activity are diminished by undergoing them and then you are born again. But the fruits of devotion are never diminished. They last forever. Liberation lasts; it doesn't end. Truly, devotion is the real technique for human liberation. It is the spiritual discipline par excellence; every other technique is built on it.

Devotion and wisdom are like the pair of bullocks for the cart. Both have to pull in unison. Each must keep pace with the other and help the other to drag the weight quicker. Wisdom has to help the increase of devotion; devotion has to contribute to the growth of wisdom.

It is because of this mutual help, this collaboration, that the cowherd maids of Brindavan were able to attain liberation. Their devotion toward Lord Krishna also endowed them with the highest wisdom.

Now, the essence of devotion as well as wisdom is peace, the highest type of peace, the supreme peace. Supreme peace (*prasanthi*) leads one on to the glory of spiritual effulgence (*prakanthi*), and thence to the super effulgence of the highest revelation (*param-jyothi*).

Wisdom is a concomitant of devotion, its component part. Love fixed on God is most beneficent. It produces the greatest good. It will not bind people to the earth. It will take them by the hand along the road to liberation. It will automatically release them from all types of bonds and attachments; they have only to strive to avoid evil company. Constant association in good company will promote the feeling of detachment.

More than the adherent of the path of activity, wisdom, or *yoga*, the follower of the path of devotion is declared fortunate and superior. The spiritual aspirant who takes up the discipline of activity is better than the *yogi*, better than the one who has renounced everything (*sanyasin*), and better than the wise person (*jnani*).

This is why Krishna directed Arjuna in the *Gita* to become a great *yogi*. He also said, “Among *yogis*, one who steadfastly meditates on the Self as merged in Me is indeed with the highest devotion.”

Then, Arjuna asked Him, “Among those who worship Thee ever like that and those who worship Thee as Indestructible, Imperceptible, etc., who among these, Oh Lord, have triumphed in *yoga* more?”

Krishna replied, “Whoever fixes the mind on Me and worships Me, whoever is steadfast and exulting in this, that one has achieved greater success.”

So, faith (*sraddha*) is ever essential in matters spiritual, related to God. Faith has no limitations, so its results also have no decline. The fruits of all acts done in the pursuit of God-realization depend upon spiritual disciplines; wisdom, more on internal spiritual disciplines; and devotion, more on external spiritual disciplines.

When *Brahman* itself is the object, it becomes spiritual wisdom. Listening to discourses on the scriptures, calling to mind what has been heard, and ruminating on things thus recalled to memory —until devotion is fully developed, these have to be gone through without interruption. Instead, devotees often deal with God in a bargaining spirit or in the spirit of a tradesman! This attitude should be given up. Whoever one is, one should not ask from God anything other than devotion or love. If one does, one is not a true devotee. Real surrender is uninterrupted flow of love toward the feet of the Lord. Such surrender alone guarantees and ensures peace, genuine peace.