

## 22. Selfless love and firm faith

*A heart without love is lifeless;*

*Can you call that life*

*Merely because there is*

*Breath in the body?*

*It is just a pair of bellows.*

*EMBODIMENTS of Love!* The hall-mark of love is *thyaaga* (selfless sacrifice). Love seeks nothing from anyone. It bears no ill-will towards anyone. It is utterly selfless and pure.

Failing to understand the true nature of love, man yearns for it in various ways. Love has to be cherished with feelings of selflessness and sacrifice. In what is deemed as love in the world--whether it be maternal love, brotherly love, or friendship---there is an element of selfishness. Only God's love is totally free from the taint of selfishness. Divine love reaches out even to the remotest being. It brings together those who are separate. It raises man from animality to divinity. It transforms gradually all forms of worldly love to Divine love. To experience this Divine love, men must be prepared to give up selfishness and self-interest. They must develop purity and steadfastness. With firm faith in the Divine, they must foster the love of God regardless of all obstacles and ordeals.

However, even the feeling of universal brotherliness is not the same as the experience of *Ekathvam* (oneness). Even in such a fraternal feeling there is an element of self-interest. Those who really wish to promote universal brotherhood should develop the consciousness of the one Spirit dwelling in all beings. Even brothers are often found engaged in mutual bickerings and hatred. What is described as fraternity may not be real and unsullied love. True love should express itself in the awareness of the presence of the Divine in one and all. Names and forms may differ but the indwelling Spirit is the same in all.

### **One filled with Divine Love will be fearless**

Fill your hearts with love. One will be betraying himself if he entertains evil thoughts, but pretends outwardly to be full of love. No one having Divine love will ever fail to manifest it anywhere at any time. Students, who behave well during their stay in the Institute, should maintain the same behaviour wherever they may live or work after leaving the Institute. There should be no room for any outside association or circumstances to change their conduct. Love should be firmly implanted in their hearts. One filled with Divine Love will be fearless, will seek nothing from others, and will be spontaneous and selfless in expressing his love. There is no need to pray for gifts from God. God will give of His own accord what is good for any devotee. Did not Shabari and Jataayu get the grace of Raama even without their asking for it? God will decide what to give, when to give, and where. Hence, all actions should be dedicated to God and He should decide what the devotee is fit to receive. When everything is left to God out of pure love and total faith, God will take care of the devotee. People today lack such firm faith. In the path of devotion many ordeals have to be overcome. Great devotees in the past faced such ordeals with faith and fortitude. Ultimately they secured the grace of the Divine and experienced bliss.

### **Dhruva's example**

For example, take the case of Dhruva. He was a five-year old boy, who knew little about the affairs of the World. He acted upon the advice of Naaradha and through severe penance was able to have a direct vision of God. His faith enabled him to secure this experience. But, when Vishnu appeared before him and asked him what he wanted, Dhruva said: "Lord! You came to me, knowing where I was doing my penance. Is it conceivable that you could not know what I want?" The Lord said: "I know what for you performed the penance.. When you set out from your home you took a resolve that you will perform penance and secure a boon from the Lord that you should be enabled to sit on the lap of your father. I want to know whether your words and actions are in harmony." Dhruva said: "It is true that I came to perform penance for a small favour, a piece of valueless glass as it were. But, experience of your Form is like a diamond to me. What good fortune is mine that while seeking a glass bead I had found a brilliant diamond. I have no use for that glass piece." The Lord saw the contradiction between Dhruva's original resolution, his penance and his present desire. The Lord told him that he should stick to his original wish for which he had performed the penance and therefore return to the kingdom with the Lord's Blessings. This emphasizes the need for unity in thought, word and deed.

### **Recognise the Divine in the entire cosmos**

For achieving anything in life, two things are essential: firm faith and pure love. People should not think that pleasure and pain are caused by some external forces. It is not so. They are the result of one's own thoughts. There is no meaning in blaming others. If you develop love of God, that love will banish all sorrow and evil tendencies like attachment, anger and envy. Students should pursue both spiritual education and secular studies.

You have to realise that Nature is also a manifestation of God. Hence, Nature should not be ignored. Nature is the effect and God is the cause. Hence you should recognise the imminence of the Divine in the entire cosmos.

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