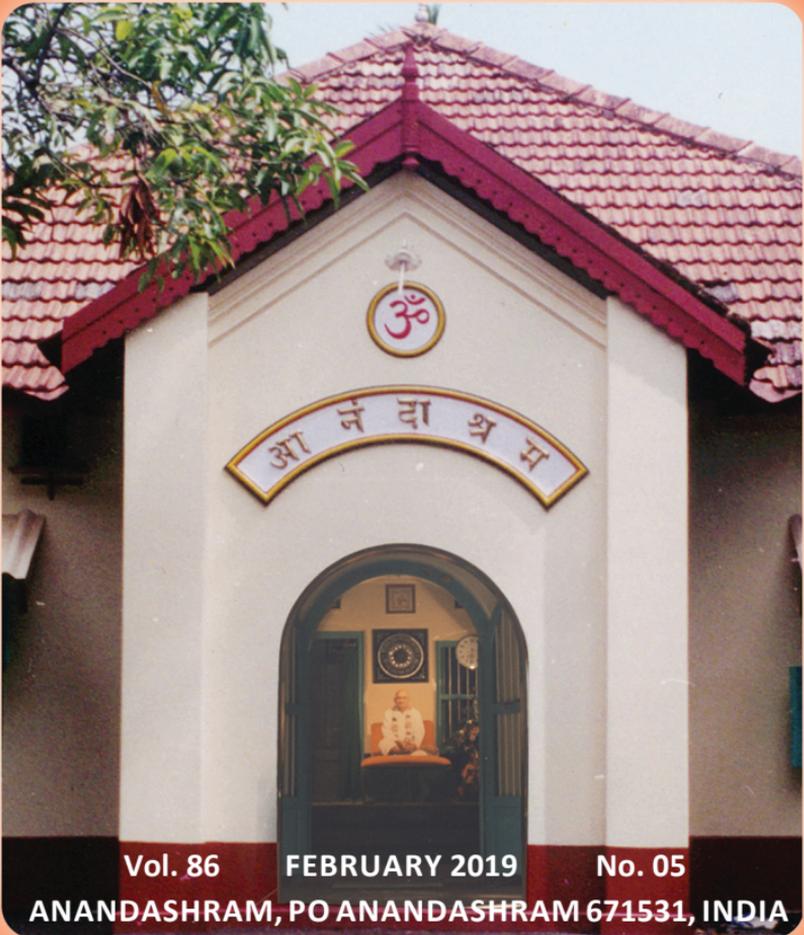


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DEDICATED TO UNIVERSAL LOVE AND SERVICE

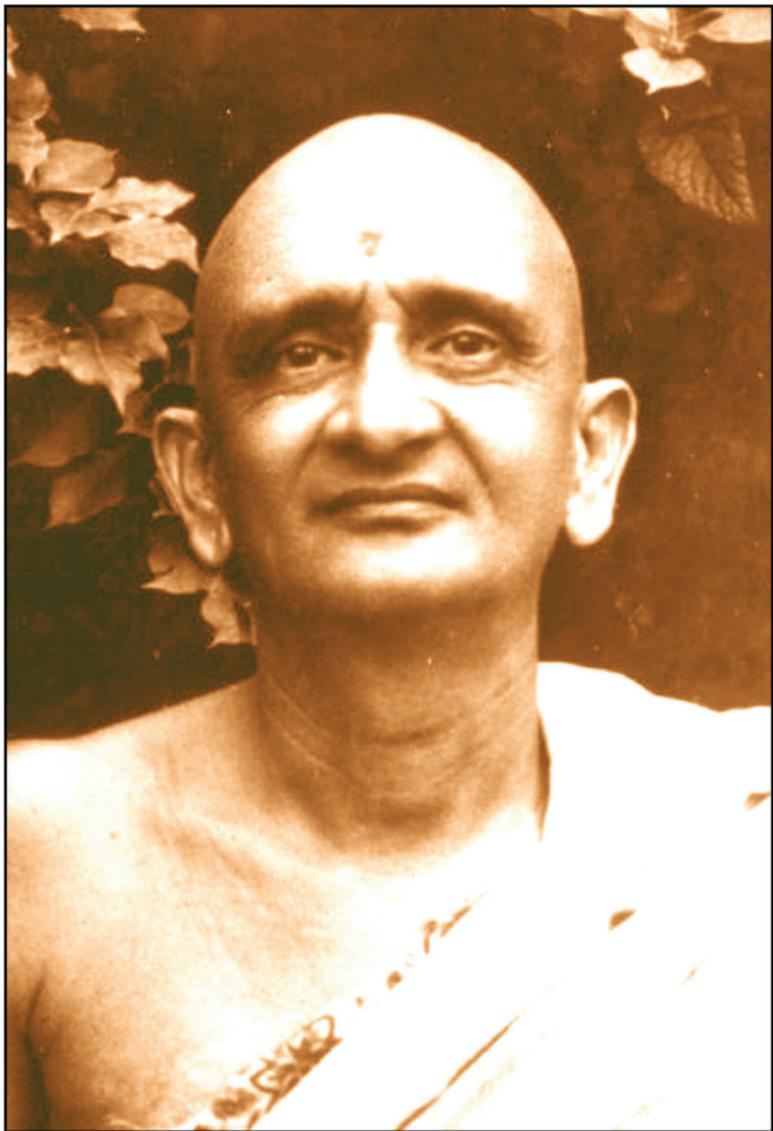


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Om Sri Ram jai Ram jai jai Ram

ॐ श्री राम जय राम जय जय राम

Om Sri Ram jai Ram jai jai Ram

MY ETERNAL BELOVED



Beloved, Thou art the light that gleams
in my eyes;

Thou art the joy that plays in my heart;

Thou art the wisdom that shines in my soul;

Thou art the sweetness that permeates my senses;

Thou art the power that moves me to act;

Thou art the love that tingles in my veins;

Thou art the ecstasy that thrills my being;

Thou art the breath of all my breath;

Thou art the never-ending rapture of my life;

Thou art the beauty that lends charm to my form;

Thou art the majesty seated on my brow;

Thou art the fascination that radiates from my looks;

Thou art the scent that emanates from my body;

Thou art the halo — the ethereal glow around me;

O Beloved, thou art my life, my soul, my breath, my all;

Thou art mine — I am Thine — this bliss is mine.

— **Swami Ramdas**

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THE VISION

A Monthly Magazine

ANANDASHRAM

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FROM THE EDITOR

When we think of devotion, what wells up in our mind is love and adoration for our Chosen Deity. It is a normal practice for everyone to pray to their Chosen Deity and engage in many devotional practices for fulfilling one's desires or to seek some form of relief from mundane problems. Though we do get a feeling of joy and elevation at the time of worship, most of us are back in the clutches of our lower self immediately thereafter. This is because our prayers are mostly for making our external life comfortable. This external life is always subject to constant change and therefore cannot give us joy that is abiding.

As Sadhakas we have been asked to take to devotional activities with the specific purpose of keeping up constant God-remembrance so as to submit all our thoughts, words and deeds to Him who is the indwelling and all-pervading Lord of the Universe. Expansion from 'me' to 'we' at the outer level is considered to be the prerequisite for making our prayers and meditation fruitful.

This month's issue of THE VISION carries articles on various aspects of devotion.

— **Editor**

BHAKTI

By Swami Ramdas



Bhakti means making God the supreme ideal of life. For the Bhakta there is no other thought but of Him, and no other ambition but to attain Him. His mind runs towards God through a ceaseless flow of remembrance. The Bhakta's heart is ever agitated with the waves of hope and aspiration for the vision of God. His restless nature, besides urging him to dwell constantly in the thought of God, directs his steps to the feet of saints and drives him from place to place on visit to noted shrines. As the child away from its mother is stricken with anguish and sorrow for the sight of her, so the Bhakta insistently

weeps with the longing for the Darshan of God. He finds life dry and tasteless until he meets his Supreme Beloved. The more he meditates and contemplates upon the great attributes of God, the more he begins to feel his own littleness and unworthiness, and prays to his Beloved to elevate, enlighten and purify him, so as to make him fit to be accepted as His child and servant.

For the Bhakta, God is the very embodiment of love, compassion, forgiveness and grace. He visualises his God in the recesses of his own heart. He surrenders

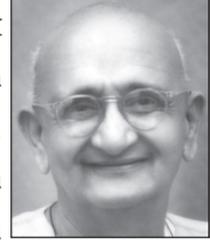
completely in thought, word and deed to his Beloved, and adores Him with an unflinching devotion. By a constant meditation of the Lord, the Bhakta imbibes into his own being the Divine attributes, ultimately reaching a status of perfect union and oneness with Him. Compassion, mercy and love now illumine the nature and therefore all actions of the Bhakta. He becomes the very image of God, for the impurities and weaknesses having been removed by the grace of the Lord, he stands revealed as the very sun of Truth, radiating all around him the rays of love, kindness and peace.

Now the greatest virtue that shines forth in all its splendour in the Bhakta is forgiveness. As God has forgiven him, so he forgives all in the world who wrong or have wronged him. He ever returns good for evil both in thought and action. He is self-sacrificing to a degree. He is ever willing to serve and toil for others, to give them solace and relief. He loves all with an equal vision, be he friend or foe, rich or poor, good or wicked, high or low, wise or ignorant. He endures peacefully ignominy and persecution and gives himself away in every manner for the good of others. He is ever contented, ever pure and ever cheerful. He is unassuming and humble in all he does. He recognises God as all-in-all. He experiences God seated in his heart as causing, by His power, all movements in the world. He beholds and feels God's presence everywhere. Verily, he always lives and moves in God and is the very being of God.

BELOVED PAPA

SWAMI RAMDAS ANSWERS

Papa: Para-bhakti is Bhakti that comes to you after the realisation of God in His Nirguna aspect, the realisation that you are the Atman which is Nirguna, Nirvikara, which pervades the entire universe. As this Nirguna Tattwa, He is the substratum for the manifestation. Ramdas was made to go along this path leading to the vision of the world as the manifestation of the Lord. It is said that Shiva is lying down motionless and on his chest Kali or Shakti is dancing. This is the Lila of Shiva and Shakti. Shakti, the dynamic force, having Shiva who is static as the base, is playing the Lila of creation, preservation and destruction of all the worlds. In fact, the universe itself is She. We speak in terms of male and female in regard to living creatures in the world, but, in truth, there is not such a thing. It is all the manifestation of Prakriti or Shakti, and there is only one Purusha, the static, calm and silent Shiva who is the ground or support of this manifestation.



Devotee: In what way does Ramdas see Ram everywhere? Does he see Ram's Murti everywhere?

Papa: That is not it. Just as gold is seen in all the different pieces of gold ornaments, Ramdas sees the same immortal Reality manifested in all the things of the universe. Out of one lump of clay, you make various kinds of pots and, when you look at them with a view to see the clay, you will see in them all equally nothing but clay. Apparently, they are different from each other, having a separate shape, name and form. But as clay, they are all one. So also, God has manifested Himself in a variety of forms. God is the thread in which the beads of manifestation are strung. Jnaneshwar Maharaj puts it more appropriately: 'God is a gold wire in which gold beads of His own manifestation are strung'. So, God is inside and outside. Every form is He and the formless One that pervades everywhere is also He. In this sense Ramdas says that Ram is everywhere for him.

If you want to see Ram, you have to be Ram Himself! This is a mystery. Being one with Him, how can you see Him? It is a sight that sees not! There is now absolutely no separation from your Beloved because you have known that you and He are one. You always feel His presence and enjoy perennial ecstasy. You are then not afraid to move in the world, as you see

only your Beloved in every form and, therefore, every contact and sight in the world give you nothing but pure joy and ecstasy. You have found the root of your very existence which is pure bliss.

Bliss alone can come out of bliss and so the manifestation that has come out of bliss cannot be anything other than bliss. In this state, talking is joy, giving is joy and receiving also is joy. The eater is He and the food eaten is also He. Everything done gives joy, because all actions are the manifestation of the Supreme Spirit which is pure joy Sat-Chit-Ananda. Out of Sat-Chit-Ananda this world has evolved and there is nothing but Ananda.

Devotee: When Jiva himself is Brahman, what is the necessity for Sadhana?

Papa: When the Sadhaka realises that he is Brahman, Sadhana ceases. In the Bhakti path, his position is that he is a servant and God is his master. Ultimately, he merges in God and becomes one with Him. What one gets by Vichara in the Jnana path, he gets by devotion in the Bhakti path. In both cases, ultimately, the sense of separateness from God disappears and he realises his identity or oneness with God.

WITH THE DIVINE MOTHER

By Swami Shuddhananda

Mataji: “In my Sadhana days, I used to be so engrossed in Papa’s Dhyana, Smaran and Seva that I never bothered to find out what state I was passing through. But, looking back later, it seemed that Papa had taken me through all the different phases of Navavidha Bhakti. On reflection, I would find that I had gone through each phase for a week or more. It was, of course, all Papa’s doing.”

Sriram: “Of all the nine states of Bhakti, which state did Mataji find most delightful?”

Mataji: “Papa alone knows. I do not know. I would know that I had gone through a particular state only later on, when Papa would compare my progress with the various states and tell me. All that I knew then was that I was eager to serve Papa, to do whatever I could for Him. I would tell Papa: ‘You are so full of LOVE, Papa. But I have no love in me. I am completely dry inside.’ Then, Papa would remark: ‘That cannot be. You cannot have come so far



without having LOVE within you also. You may say that you do not have love, but that is not correct.”

“That is why I ask you all to do Guru Seva, rendering service to all persons, looking upon them as different forms of your Guru.”



For some people, their chosen path is Dhyana and Dhyana only and, going by this path, they gain everything that is to be gained on the spiritual path. For some, it is Bhakti and for some it is Seva. But, in my case, Beloved Papa taught me to do all the three and that is what, in turn, I am telling you all to do. Papa taught me to consider every thought that came into my mind as His Dhyana, every act I did as His Seva and whatever I spoke as His Name. Thus, Papa granted me the supreme experience of all the three paths, until there was nothing that was not encompassed by these three paths.



When you sing any songs in invocation of the Divine Mother, make your tone melodious and soft, and not strident as if you want to quarrel with the Mother. If you want the Mother to come to you, you must welcome Her with love and devotion and this must show in your tone.

BHAKTAS

By Swami Satchidananda

We are all Bhaktas. When we say we are Bhaktas, we know that we all Bhaktas belong to one God. We may be followers of different saints but all the same we are all Bhaktas. There is no division at all in it. We should not feel that because we are devotees of a particular saint, we are not to be devoted to other saints. When we are devoted to one saint, we should be equally reverential and respectful to all other saints. Our Guru whom we revere, as also all other saints, are the manifestation of God only. By respecting our Guru, but at the same time showing disrespect to other Gurus, we are actually disrespecting our own Guru. So, the first thing we have to understand is that all saints are manifestations of our own Guru and as such they should be respected by us as we respect our own Guru.



Bhaktas are a class by themselves. They can be easily identified – not by appearance but by their

behaviour, by their attitude. Bhaktas are very loving to others. They are perfectly peaceful. They serve others selflessly. Their life is dedicated to God. They try to see God in everything and therefore their life will be a great blessing to humanity. They keep chanting God's Name constantly and thus remember Him. Because of that they are always happy. Happiness means not this worldly happiness but happiness of the Eternal, because they are in tune with God who is eternal. If you enter the house of Bhaktas, you will find the entire atmosphere surcharged with the peace and power of God's Name. May the all-merciful God bless you all with real Bhakti, His constant remembrance, an attitude of perfect surrender to His will and may He take you to the supreme goal of God-realization.

I may worship the image of the Lord; but that act is worthless if it is not accompanied with devotion. In the absence of devotion, the idol will just be a piece of stone, and so shall I; and the worship will only mean that a stone is facing a stone!

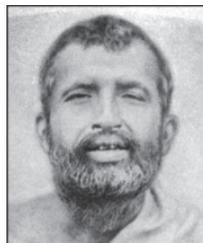
— Acharya Vinoba Bhave

PATH OF BHAKTI IS EASY

Excerpts From The Gospel Of Sri Ramakrishna



Master: “One can attain the Knowledge of Brahman by following the path of Bhakti. God is all-powerful. He may give His devotee Brahmajnana, if He so wills.



But the devotee generally doesn't seek the Knowledge of the Absolute. He would rather have the consciousness that God is the Master and he the servant, or that God is the Divine Mother and he the child.”

Vijay: “But those who discriminate according to the Vedanta philosophy also realize Him in the end, don't they?”

Master: “Yes, one may reach Him by following the path of discrimination too: that is called Jnana Yoga. But it is an extremely difficult path. The path of Bhakti is best for the people of the Kaliyuga. It is an easy path.

I never feel like saying, ‘I am Brahman.’ I say, ‘Thou art my Lord and I am Thy servant.’ My desire is to sing the name and glories of God. It is very good to look on God as the Master and oneself as His

servant. Further, you see, people speak of the waves as belonging to the Ganges; but no one says that the Ganges belongs to the waves. The feeling, 'I am He', is not wholesome. A man who entertains such an idea, while looking on his body as the Self, causes himself great harm. He cannot go forward in spiritual life; he drags himself down. He deceives himself as well as others. He cannot understand his own state of mind.

It isn't any and every kind of Bhakti that enables one to realize God. One cannot realize God without Prema-Bhakti. Another name for Prema-Bhakti is Raga-Bhakti. God cannot be realized without love and longing. Unless one has learnt to love God, one cannot realize Him.

Devotion to God may be said to be 'green' so long as it doesn't grow into love of God; but it becomes 'ripe' when it has grown into such love. A man with 'green' Bhakti cannot assimilate spiritual talk and instruction; but one with 'ripe' Bhakti can. The image that falls on a photographic plate covered with black film is retained. On the other hand, thousands of images may be reflected on a bare piece of glass, but not one of them is retained. As the object moves away, the glass becomes the same as it was before. One cannot assimilate spiritual instruction unless one has already developed love of God.

Vijay: Is Bhakti alone sufficient for the attainment of God, for His vision?

Master: Yes, one can see God through Bhakti alone. But it must be 'ripe' Bhakti, Prema-Bhakti and Raga-Bhakti. When one has that Bhakti, one loves God even as the mother loves the child, the child the mother, or the wife the husband. When one has such love and attachment for God, one doesn't feel the attraction of Maya to wife, children, relatives, and friends. One retains only compassion for them. To such a man the world appears a strange land, a place where he has merely to perform his duties. It is like a man's having his real home in the country, but coming to Calcutta for work; he has to rent a house in Calcutta for the sake of his duties. When one develops love of God, one completely gets rid of one's attachment to the world and worldly wisdom.

Single-minded devotion engenders deep thought which expresses itself in action. The Lord's light descends on the devotee, His power awakens him and as a result profound inner inquiry blossoms forth.

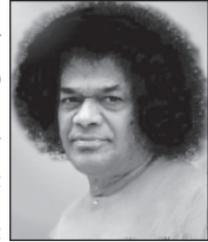
— Sri Anandamayi Ma

THE ESSENCE OF DEVOTION

By Sathya Sai Baba



Among all forms of spiritual practice, Bhakti (devotion to the Lord) is the easiest and holiest. Bhakti calls for utilising the mind, speech and body to worship the Lord. It represents total love. Devotion and love are inseparable and interdependent. Bhakti is the means to salvation. Love is the expression of Bhakti.



Love is present in every human being in however small a measure. The Jiva (individual) is an aspect of the Divine, who is the supreme embodiment of Love. Man, also is an embodiment of Love, but because his love is directed towards worldly objects, it gets tainted and he is unable to get a vision of God in all His beauty. Ordinarily people regard offering worship to God, reciting His name and meditating on Him as constituting Bhakti.

True devotion really means installing the Divine in the heart and enjoying the bliss of that experience. It is the mystic union of the individual soul and the Universal. When the devotee prays ardently from the depths of the heart and his love gushes forth,

Bhakti is manifested. Winning love through love is the vital aspect of devotion. Prayer does not mean merely appealing to God for favours. It is a means of conveying to God one's troubles, desires and aspirations and offering all one's merits and the fruits of one's actions to God. The basic quality of devotion is the yearning for realising oneness with the Divine.

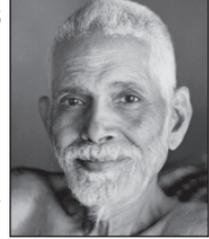
Love is flowing in an endless stream through humanity all the time. By turning this love towards worldly objects and fleeting pleasures man is missing the opportunity to make life purposeful and to secure enduring bliss. Man should direct this love towards God to attain the true goal of life.

Bhakti is not formal exercises in Japa or worship of various kinds. Worship should be offered to the Divine who resides in all beings. Love is God: live in love. Love is the means of realising the bliss of the Self, which is centered in ourselves. It need not be sought elsewhere. It can be found within one's self when all thoughts are controlled and the mind is turned inwards. Dedicate all actions to the Lord. This is the highest knowledge. It is the summum bonum of existence. Love should become a way of life. That alone is true devotion.

Source: <http://media.radiosai.org>

WORDS OF RAMANA MAHARSHI

Investigation into the Self is nothing other than devotion.



On scrutiny, supreme devotion and Jnana are in nature one and the same. To say that one of these two is a means to the other is due to not knowing the nature of either of them. Know that the path of Jnana and the path of devotion are interrelated. Follow these inseparable two paths without dividing one from the other.



Only if one knows the truth of Love, which is the real nature of Self, will the strong entangled [ego] knot of life be untied. Only if one attains the height of Love will liberation be attained. Such is the heart of all religions. The experience of Self is only Love, which is seeing only Love, hearing only Love, feeling only Love, tasting only Love and smelling only Love, which is bliss.

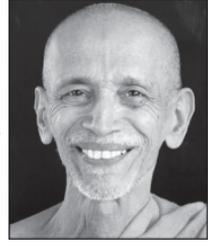


Bhakti is Jnana Mata, meaning, Bhakti gives birth to Jnana as a mother gives birth to a child.

DEVOTION THAT LIBERATES

By Swami Chidananda

Bhakti or devotion is of two kinds. The more common is the ceremonial and ritualistic method of expressing our devotion through elaborate external worship. This



Bhakti always has a tinge of self-seeking through the meticulous following of the injunctions of the scriptures regarding Puja: “May the Lord be propitiated and pleased. May He grant me prosperity, good health, well-being, progress on all fronts — domestic, social, professional, financial.” So, there is always a give and take. But the Bhakti that crowns us with liberation, illumination, is Nishkama (selfless). This Bhakti seeks nothing but the great privilege of loving the Lord. This Bhakti seeks nothing other than the Lord Himself — God for God’s sake, devotion for the sake of devotion. It not only seeks nothing else, but it goes one step further. Even if something is given, it refuses to accept it: “I seek no boon. I seek no favour other than one-pointed devotion at Thy lotus feet.” It is this Bhakti that is to be practised if you want to make this life worthwhile, attain the supreme Goal and become forever blessed.

The Bhakta realises that all created things are temporary, transitory, subject to decay and dissolution. They are perishable and imperfect. They are useful, but they can become a diversion, a bondage, a net, a nuisance and a prolific source of sorrow also. Therefore, the Bhakta does not run after them. He says: "I shall be wise; I shall not be foolish. I do not want petty things. Everything created is Alpa (petty). Everything here from the Creator down to a blade of grass is only a delusion. Out of these perishable names and forms, I cannot get imperishable satisfaction and happiness." Therefore, the Bhakta rejects them. That is the Bhakti that one should practise. This Bhakti becomes possible if we use our intellect to do Vichara (enquiry) in order to generate Viveka (discrimination). Vichara and Viveka will produce a Vairagya (dispassion) that is real, that is enduring. Vairagya is the essential condition for progressing in devotion, meditation and illumination.

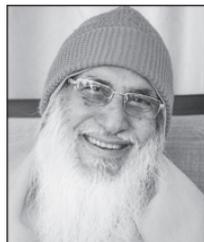
Bhakti, Jnana and Dhyana are to be supported by Vairagya. Then alone one perseveres until the attainment of illumination and enlightenment. Bhakti, Jnana, Vairagya, these triune streams, have to exist together, flowing in an unbroken current within the hidden inner dimension of our spiritual being.

Source: A Call To Liberation

LOVE GOD

By Sri Chandra Swami Udasin

For God-Realization there are so many paths. Broadly they have been classified into three paths — Bhakti Yoga, the path of devotion, Karma Yoga, the path of selfless service in the name of God, and Jnana Yoga, the path of knowledge. The moral and social discipline, which involves self-control — control over one's thoughts, emotions and desires — is almost the same in all these paths. We should practise meditation and prayer with sincerity and commitment if we want God-Realization or Self-Realization.



You have not only to love God, but to love only God. Every breath, every thought, every action, every emotion must be transformed into Sadhana, into the remembrance of God. Only then one can Realize God. That is the price of God-Realization. Nothing less than that can work for God-Realization.



Remember God through the practice of Japa — repeating the holy name of God in which you have

faith and devotion. The practice of Japa is a very scientific method of stilling the mind and purifying the subconscious.



Mantra Japa is also a means to fall in love with God. If you are constantly remembering God through repeating His name, you are bound to fall in love with God eventually. Whatever you are thinking or remembering continuously, you become attached with. It may be a thing, person or situation. Japa means repetition. Constant repetition of any idea transforms your mind, your outlook, your life and your values of life. It is a psychological fact.

Source: <http://www.sadhanakendra.org>

Bhakti Yoga is the science of higher love. It shows us how to direct it; it shows us how to control it, how to manage it, how to use it, how to give it a new aim, as it were, and from it obtain the highest and most glorious results, that is, how to make it lead us to spiritual blessedness. Bhakti Yoga does not say, "Give up"; it only says, "Love; love the Highest!" — and everything low naturally falls off from him, the object of whose love is the Highest.

— Swami Vivekananda

MATA AMRITANANDAMAYI ON DEVOTION

Love is not something that can be taught by someone or learned from somewhere. But in the presence of a perfect Master we can feel it and, in due course, develop it, because



a Sadguru creates the necessary circumstances for love to grow within us. These circumstances created by the Guru will be so beautiful and unforgettable that we will truly cherish these moments as something precious and invaluable. They will remain as a sweet memory forever and ever. One incident of this kind will create a big wave of love in us. More incidents like this created by the Guru will make a chain of exhilarating memories which will produce waves and waves of love within us, until at last there will be only love. Through these circumstances the Guru will steal our heart and soul, filling us with pure and innocent love.



Don't we get some relief when we confide our problems to those who are dear to us? We should feel that same love and closeness to God. We should feel

that He is our very own. We need not hide anything from Him. It is in that sense that Amma says we should tell Him everything. It is good to lighten the burden in our hearts by telling God about all our sorrows. We should depend only on Him in all our difficulties. The true devotee never tells anyone else about his troubles. Our strongest relationship should be with God. If we decide to tell Him about our sorrows, it should only be for the sake of getting closer to Him.



Crying to God for five minutes is equal to one hour of meditation. If tears are not coming by themselves, try to cry by thinking, 'Why am I not able to cry?' Try to develop devotion. That is the easiest way.



A real devotee considers everything as the will of his Lord. His whole being is constantly in a prayerful mood. For him, every word and deed is a prayer, a worship of his Beloved. Having surrendered everything to his beloved Lord, a true devotee is always in a blissful mood.



Devotion in principle means recognising that it is the one and the same God who manifests in all living beings and in all the deities, in all names and forms. It means surrendering selflessly to Him.

WHAT ARE YOU, MY LORD?

By Swami Ramdas

Mysticism is a poor word to express the beauty of my relationship with You, my dearest Lord. Bhakti only denotes my separateness from you, Jnana only my oneness with You. Yoga — union with You — is not yet a correct word. I am baffled.

Whatever it be, I am Yours. You are mine. You are myself. That is all I can say about Yourself and myself.

As child is to the mother, as fruit is to the tree, as light is to the sun, as fragrance is to the flower, as blueness is to the sky, so am I to You, my Supreme Beloved. Do these similes well explain? No.

Are You Love? Are You Joy? Are You Wisdom? Are You Power? Are You all these at once and still beyond all? I know not. You may know Yourself what You are or You are not. O, Mystery, all hail!

You are worshipped as images. Your names are sung with devotion. You are meditated upon as the all-pervading Truth. You are gazed at as all-enveloping light. O, in how many ways You are adored and loved!

For me You are the unutterable, invisible Presence, the manifested countless worlds, all-encompassing Spirit and Truth, the all-inclusive and the all-transcendent, cosmic, infinite Reality.

Poets in exalted moods compose inspiring verses on You. Painters paint in bewitching colours Your gracious face and figure. Musicians attune their voice to charming melody, singing Your glory that thrills the ear and the heart. Devotees dance in ecstasy to the rhythm of Your nectarine name. O, how great, splendidous and magnificent You are!

My thought flew into space and finding You everywhere returned to its Source and dissolved into it. My eyes searched for You and seeing You everywhere returned to its Source into which it melted away. My mind meditated on You and knowing You as God, Supreme Source, merged in You and realised that it is Yourself.

If You ask me who I am, I answer, "I am You. I am all. All bodies are mine. I am the indwelling Spirit of all beings. I am the Power that activates all things. I pervade the manifestation. I am the manifestation. I see Myself as all existent, apparent and non-apparent objects. I am inside and outside of all forms and still I am above them all. Can you fully know who I am, who You are? I cannot. You cannot!"

DEAR CHILDREN

God Hungers For Devotee's Love

There was a butcher in a small town. He was a great Bhakta. Even when he was plying his trade, he used to take God's name mentally, and in course of time he found it hard to kill animals. He, therefore, stopped killing. But he had to carry on his business as he had no other means of livelihood. So, he purchased meat and sold the same at a small profit. For weighing the meat, the butcher was using a stone which happened to be a Salagram of whose sanctity he had no idea. He did not even remember how the stone came into his hands. He had been using it for a long time.

One day, a Brahmin who was passing in front of his shop chanced to see the butcher placing the Salagram on the balance for weighing meat. Naturally, the Brahmin was pained and shocked. He, therefore, asked the butcher to have the stone washed and handed over to him for closer scrutiny. Confirming himself that it was a Salagram he enquired why the butcher used such a sacred stone for weighing meat. The innocent butcher replied that he did not know anything about a Salagram or its sanctity. The Brahmin then explained to him that Salagram was a sacred object worthy of worship with flowers, sandal paste, etc. The Brahmin

asked for the Salagram so that it could be worshipped along with the other deities in his shrine room. The butcher readily agreed.

The Brahmin took it home and kept it in his shrine room along with other images of God, and carried on the worship as usual with elaborate rituals and offerings of food, etc. But the deity embodied in the Salagram did not like the change. It missed in the Brahmin's house the spirit of true love and devotion with which it was handled in the butcher's shop. Unable to bear the loveless worship and company of the Brahmin any longer, the deity appeared to him in a dream and said, "Why have you brought me here? I was very happy with the butcher who is a true devotee. He was always chanting my holy names and, now and then, putting me gently on the balance with his own hands. Oh, what a soft and loving hand he has! His touch is like a warm embrace. His heart is full of devotion. He used to talk with his customers mostly about my glories. But here for want of love and devotion, I am not at all happy though you give me rich offerings, and perform elaborate Puja. Please take me back to the butcher so that I can again be happy."

God hungers only for love. He is not satisfied with mere rituals and ceremonial worship. Pure love and devotion alone satisfy Him.

Source: Stories As Told By Swami Ramdas

EPISTLES OF SWAMI RAMDAS

Beloved Ram,

...Bhakti is the beginning; Bhakti is the end. Bhakti is the way; Bhakti is the goal. Jnana and Karma are only necessary props on which is hoisted the majestic dome of Bhakti. God says, "I am the same to all beings but My devotees are dear to Me". So, true devotion is based on the equality of vision. Samadarshan gives knowledge and peace. Bhakti gives pure love and Premanand. Knowledge enlightens and upholds; devotion yields thrills of joy and ecstasy. The two combined make Purna Yoga. Behold God as all, and still be His child and servant. You are at once He and His child. God is His own devotee. He is a mystery, but a revealed mystery — revealed in love and joy.

To be ever singing His name and glories is to be in tune with Him. Beloved Ram is captured within our heart. "Where can You go, O Beloved? Thou art always in Thy child." Surrender to Him, and He looks after you, plans and arranges everything for the best for you. He is the all-loving Divine Mother... Let the Name ring, and ring on, to awaken in the hearts of you all, the inexpressible bliss of Prem.

Love to you all!

Ramdas

IN MEMORIAM

Sri Adige Madhava Rao, an ardent devotee of the Ashram from Mangalore, was called by Beloved Papa on the 14th of December 2018.

We pray for the Lord's blessings on the dear departed soul for eternal rest and peace at His lotus feet.



ANANDASHRAM NEWS

15,500-CRORE NAMA JAPA YAGNA FOR WORLD PEACE: The total Japa received in the third round of the 15500-Crore Nama Japa Yagna For World Peace in the month of December is 210 crores. The grand total of the Japa done so far in this round now stands at 4576 crores.

AKHAND RAM NAM IN TIRUVANNAMALAI: In connection with the Birth Centenary Celebrations of Param Pujya Swami Satchidanandaji, an Akhand Ram Nam and Satsang were organised by Smt Jyothi Keshavaraj at Yogi Ramsuratkumar Ashram in Tiruvannamalai.

Beloved Papa, out of His unbounded grace, made it possible for Swamini Chandranandaji and

a group of devotees to visit Tiruvannamalai for participating in the same.

The party was received at Katpadi railway station on the 5th January by Jyothiji and her husband Keshavarajji and taken to Revered Yogiji's Ashram.

Ma Devaki, of Yogiji's Ashram, personally guided all of them to the massive Satsang Hall where there was a photo gallery depicting various stages of the spiritual journey of Revered Yogiji Maharaj. All were then led to the place where Yogiji Maharaj dropped the mortal coil.

The programmes on the 5th of January commenced with the playing of the video recording of Param Pujya Swami Muktanandaji's blessings message for the occasion.

The party, along with other devotees from India and abroad, later visited Sri Ramanasram and paid homage at the shrine of Bhagavan Ramana and Mathrudevi. Thereafter, Alamara Guha was visited and the 10th chapter of IN QUEST OF GOD was read.

The group also visited the famous temple of Lord Arunachaleswara. After visiting the temple, all returned to Revered Yogiji's Ashram.

By the abundant grace of Param Pujya Beloved

Papa, the Akhand Ram Nam and Satsang programmes on the 6th of January at Yogiji's Ashram and the Giri Pradashina on the 7th of January, went off blissfully. Over 250 devotees enthusiastically participated in the programmes. The entire Yatra of around 3 days was blissfully spent by all in deeply dwelling on the Divine.

Meticulous and loving care was reflected in the wonderful arrangements made by Ma Devaki, Ma Vijayalakshmi, Sri Swaminathan and others. The bonding between Anandashram and Revered Yogiji's Ashram got stronger by this visit.

PUJYA MATAJI'S MAHASAMADHI DAY

On 12th of February 2019, we observe Pujya Mataji's 30th Mahasamadhi Day. Pujya Mataji was a personification of Universal Love and Service, as well as Guru-Seva. May this day be instrumental in reminding us of these noble ideals that she epitomised, and may she bless us to live up to the teachings of our Guru and thus make our lives blessed.

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS IN ENGLISH

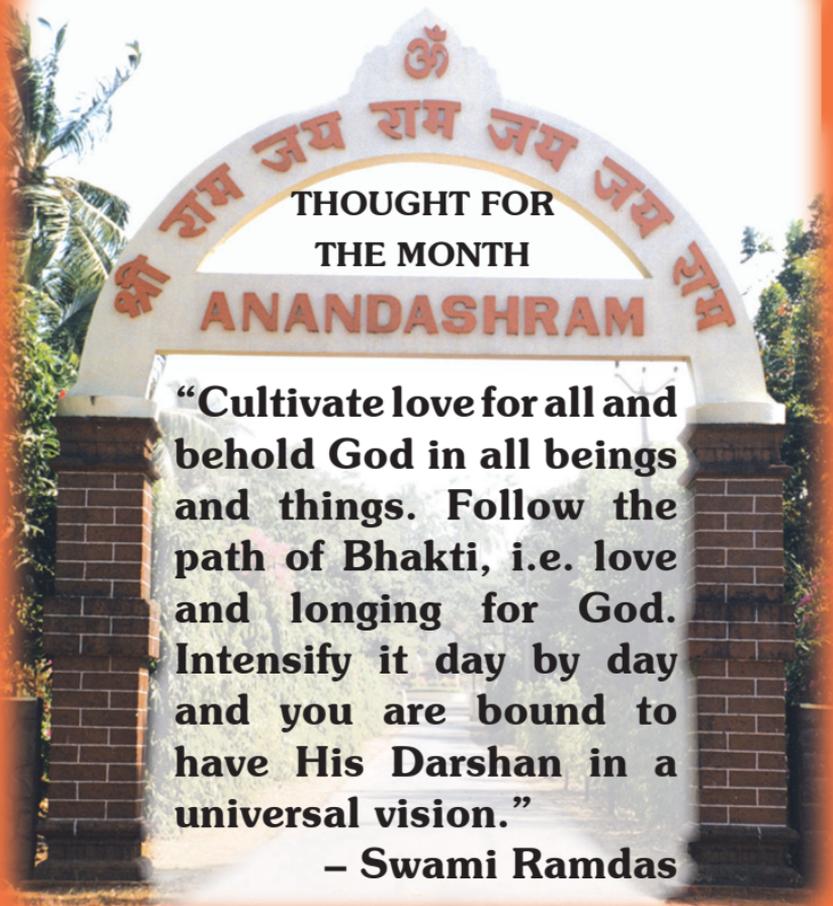
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3	Call of the Devotee	130
4	Dive Deep and Soar High	120
5	Gita Sandesh	30
6	Glimpses of Divine Vision	30
7	God Experience Vol. 1 & 2 Set	240
8	Guru's Grace	150
9	Hints to Aspirants	100
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“Cultivate love for all and behold God in all beings and things. Follow the path of Bhakti, i.e. love and longing for God. Intensify it day by day and you are bound to have His Darshan in a universal vision.”

– Swami Ramdas

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