

Devotion – the double-edged sword

ASK YOUR GURU

Browse through the pages of the history of the human race and you will find that many truly scintillating human beings have happened. I want you to understand me correctly when I ask why it is that while some people shine brighter than the stars in the galaxy, there are other aimless millions who just come and go? My intention is not to draw a comparison or stand in judgment of people's capabilities, or evaluate their contribution to mankind. But ask yourself why some people have enormous capabilities and others struggle with even little things in their lives. Are these the gifted ones? Not at all. There is really no gift here - success at any level has to be earned. And you naturally have the choice to earn it either joyfully or miserably.

Wise men have always understood that there are a variety of sadhanas to earn success. But the simplest and the easiest way - and the most self-destructive - is devotion. When one talks of success, the word called Grace is invariably used. But what is Grace, first of all? Look at yourself as a machine for a while - you have brains, you have body, you have everything. But 'Grace' is the lubricant, without which you can have a great engine but you will get stuck at every point. That is why there are any number of capable, intelligent people on the planet who nevertheless get stuck in every tight corner in their lives; because whatever is considered as 'Grace', seems to pervade some people's lives, and for others, everything is a struggle.



But how does one become receptive to this grace? The easiest way is of course, devotion. But, this mind of ours is very cunning; it cannot devote itself to anybody or anything. You sing songs of devotion, but your mind teaches you its own calculation. The result? You think: 'All this is okay, but what has God done for me?' You should understand that calculating minds cannot be devout. Try as you might and it will only be a waste of time. I often hear these so-called devotional songs and music - and I can't tell you how calculated they sound. There is no devotion in them.

A devotee is not somebody's follower; his devotion is a quality - a certain single-pointedness that makes him constantly focused towards one thing. Once a person has trained his thought, emotion, and everything else towards one direction he becomes naturally receptive to grace. What or whom he is devoted to is not the issue. When you have understood things up until this point, your next logical thought would be, 'I want to be a devotee, but I have a doubt whether God exists or not.' Fret not, my dearest friend, for these are the predicaments of a thinking, analytical mind - and it is notorious for being allergic to devotion. Let me tell you a great and indisputable truth: Devotion does not exist because of God. On the contrary, because devotion exists, God has happened! Such is the power of devotion that it can create the Creator. Even when God is non-existent, at its very zenith, one's devotion can bring Him into existence!

Now why would I say that a thinking mind is inimical to devotion? Because when you try cutting the essence of

your existence and the nature and purpose of this world with the razor sharp knife of your intellect, you will be left thinking that you are worth nothing. Nothing is worthwhile if you analyse it with your thoughts, for they are all borrowed ideas handed to you by preceding generations of thoughts.

Only when devotion arises, does life gain depth. It is not about going to the temple and chanting 'Ram Ram' a thousand times. Anybody who is one-pointed; anybody who can absolutely give himself to whatever he is doing is a natural devotee. Such a man has no need or use for a deity to channelise his devotion.

Just knowing devotion as an emotional experience is one aspect. Knowing devotion as an overpowering dimension of life is a different issue altogether. The former makes your life sweet; but the latter is intended to completely demolish you the way you are. Becoming a little better is not the intention of devotion; for devotion means dissolution and only the one who is willing to dissolve himself completely can be a true devotee. In what and how is just not the point. ®

Visit www.ishafoundation.org

© Isha Foundation, 2005. All Rights Reserved.

Isha Yoga Centre, Velliangiri Foothills,
Coimbatore 641114, India Ph: 91 -422-2615345

Email: yogacenter@ishafoundation.org