



The Path Of Devotion

This is the meaning of religion, and all practices of Yoga: re-establishment and the development into all its fullness your relationship with that one Reality. The central purpose of all religions, the central message of all saints and sages is to recall it to man once again, and to make the inner spiritual relationships into a dynamic and living fact in one's own life.

You belong to the Divine eternally, and in the Divine you have your all-in-all. In the Eternal alone you can find true joy. The Eternal alone can satisfy the Spirit, and you are the spirit. All association with non-eternal is ultimately fraught with sorrow. The great need in life, therefore, is to ever keep yourself closely related to that Divine.

How can you do it? The process of entering into a relationship through the emotional level of your being with Divine is called Bhakti Yoga, the Path of Devotion. Bhakti is a word that denotes love, intense attachment, a deep feeling of affection, of adoration. Love of God is a power that even as a little ripple upon the surface of a lake in the beginning, can assume the power of a great wave, and overcome all the lower attachments and bondages. But it should be cultivated. You have to work upon it with great care and devotion. You have to set up a link of pure love with the Divine, and diligently work to develop this love relationship into a state of perfection and completeness. This is the very essence of Bhakti Yoga.

You may feel: "God is a strange Being. He is remote. How can I love Him?" The answer is: "God is not remote. He is not far away. He is nearer to you than the nearest object in the universe. He is nearer to you than your breath. He is your own self. You don't have to lift a finger to point to Him. You have to look within. He is to be felt as your very own, very close to you."

God is full of graciousness, full of love and compassion, eager to have you to come to Him. He allows Himself to be approached with any vision. You may take the Divine object as your child or as your companion. So the keynote of Bhakti Yoga contains love, affection, attachment, intimacy, nearness, absolute humility, closeness, and also adoration and an element of worship.

God Bless You All !

■ *Swami Chidananda*