

Internal Worship

By Sri Swami

The Self that illumines the mind and senses is the Supreme Reality behind all names and forms—the Self Who is to be worshipped, adored and propitiated by an aspirant. In this form of worship, the inner feeling of devotion is the oil, the understanding of the Reality behind all names and forms is the lamp, self-effacement is the burning of incense, and Divine qualities are the flowers offered.

Unlike usual forms of worship and meditation, this advanced form of internal worship does not require a special time and place. It can be practiced at all times and can envelop every action and experience of the worshipper who has developed a sublime attitude towards everything in this world. Every step the worshipper takes during the

daily performance of duties is considered an act of devout perambulation around the sacred shrine of God. Every action is performed in the spirit of serving the Supreme Beloved, Who is the Reality behind all names and forms.

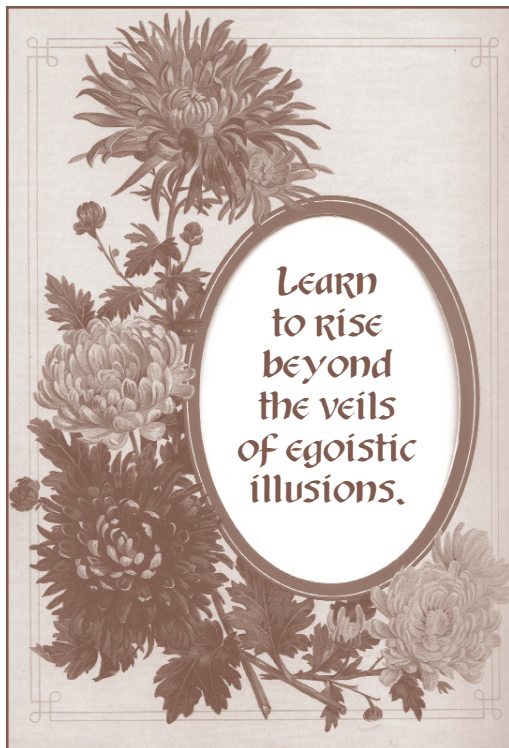
Permeated by this spirit of internal worship, an aspirant considers every experience in life, every development in the journey through the world-process, as an expression of Divine Worship. Even the experiences of pleasure and pain are offerings to the Supreme Divinity. Sleep and dream, birth and death, disease and old age are all viewed as spontaneous expressions of Divine Worship.

When your unconscious is filled with the lofty impressions of worship and devotion, you develop the vision that your entire being is ever involved in the glorious act of worshipping the Supreme. Your senses, mind, intellect, *pranas* and the five elements that compose your personality adore the Supreme Self at all times.

You learn the art of seeing the Divine Majesty in every part of your being. Your entire body, the subtle vital forces and their operations, the mind and its mysterious functions all defy human comprehension. You are awed by the vision of the Divine Self that is the sustaining Reality behind them all.

When your mind is engrossed in the thoughts of the body and material possessions, when your thoughts are centered on the objects of the world, when your mind flows towards the external world under the pressure of attachment and hatred, you continue to intensify your ego. The cloud of egoistic vision obscures the luminous reality of the Self.

But when you allow the mind to perceive the Divine Presence behind all objects of the



of the Divine Self

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world, behind all happenings in life, even behind every thought and feeling of the mind, you begin to view the world as a glorious expression of the Divine Self. Your vision is no longer stifled or obscured by the clouds of egoistic desires. Rising beyond the veils of egoistic desires and illusions, you commune with the Cosmic Mind.

A mind that is able to rise beyond the veils of egoistic illusions is indeed a truly religious mind. Out-stepping the plane of the ego, it swims and soars in the transcendental expansion of the Divine Self.

A truly religious mind is a source of boundless inspiration and creative activities. All that is good, beautiful and sublime proceeds from such an enlightened mind.

You see a crow painted on a canvas and feel it is ugly and unattractive. But when the artist gives a background of a branch, and beyond the branch a view of the distant sky illumined by the moon, the same crow becomes a part of an exquisite work of art. In the same manner, when a negative mood arises in the mind, it is as ugly and awkward as a crow. But by developing the mystic art of inner spiritual worship, you create a mystic background for a negative mood and direct your attention to the limitless horizons of the Self that stretch far beyond the negative mood. Soon the mind becomes so immersed in the grandeur of the Divine background that what was once negative or ugly now becomes transformed into a divine experience.

As such a worshipper, you see all your moods, thoughts and desires as you would view the clouds in the sky. Some clouds are silvery, some are dark, some shine like molten gold,

some seem to dance in joy, some seem to linger in a state of melancholy, and some gleam with flashes of lightning, rumble with thunder and pour down rain. All these clouds, along with the vastness of the sky and the luminosity of the sun or moon, form an enchanting atmosphere.

If you have developed the vision of the Divine Self underlying the various processes of the mind, you are ever immersed in a heavenly mystic environment. You have no need to fight with your mind, no need to drive the dark clouds of sorrows away, no need to supplement them with silvery clouds of positive thoughts. All you do is cast your gaze beyond the clouds, where you find your mental life transformed into a fountain of spiritual bliss and heavenly beauty!

