



*Love
One Another
As I Have
Loved
You*

*An Excerpt from
Mystic Pathways through
the Bible*

by Swami Jyotirmayananda

***A new commandment I give unto you:
That you love one another, as I have loved you.
By this shall all men know that you are my disciples..... (KJV John 13: 34-35)***

The movement in Divine Love must be twofold: internal and external. Internal disciplines, such as meditation and prayer according to your own religion or faith, should be practiced regularly in order to awaken and nourish love for God. But equally important is the attention you give to how you interact with other people around you. If you truly love God, then your love for Him expresses itself through loving kindness towards His whole creation.

In other words, love of God does not involve merely closing your door and practicing your own personal spiritual disciplines. It implies an ability to express a Divine feeling within your heart towards others, an ability to assert the power of love over hatred, an ability to wait and watch, and an ability to do little things in day-to-day life that carry a fragrance from Heaven.

And what are those little things? In the words of Saint Francis of Assisi:

*Lord make me an instrument of Your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love.
Where there is injury, pardon.
Where there is doubt, faith.
Where there is despair, hope.
Where there is darkness, light.
Where there is sadness, joy...*

It is the little things that one does day by day that are like jasmine flowers. Though they are small and delicate, they carry a rich fragrance that sweetens your life. If your actions promote harmony, peace, and joy, then you are praising God and serving Him through your goodness to others. Even the smallest type of action, such as making another person more comfortable, or less afraid, or more cheerful becomes a form of prayer—prayer that is active and dynamic, prayer that has true depth and meaning.

When you express your love for God in this way you become a great practitioner of nonviolence. In spite of negative situations or external provocations, you continue to assert your goodness. As a result, you see negative people transformed into positive, inimical into friendly, demoniac into Divine. To the extent you are able to contribute to that movement you experience a majestic revelation in your life.

A Saint perceives all living beings as his neighbors and spontaneously performs actions for universal welfare. For you to grow in saintliness, the great ideal of loving your neighbor as your very self must always be kept before your mind.

Imagine the difficulties others must handle. Help them with sympathy and compassion. It is a great spiritual art to place yourself in the shoes of another person. As the heart becomes increasingly purified, your feelings are no longer cramped by anger, hatred and selfishness. Therefore, you understand people deeply and help them effectively.

When you cannot tolerate discomfort and pain within yourself, you find a remedy. Similarly, feel the pain in others and find a solution according to your capacity. Qualities such as charity and

compassion should not be limited to your family. Those qualities should be extended towards all. If your magnanimous feelings remain limited to your friends and relatives, then those feelings become polluted. Water that does not flow becomes stagnant.

Nothing purifies the personality as effectively as the performance of actions for the benefit of others. The Mahabharata states, “Virtuous deeds directed towards others are the essence of righteousness, while mistreatment of others is the essence of unrighteousness.”

Never procrastinate on following through on kind thoughts or ideas. Respond quickly from the goodness of your heart. On the other hand, postpone your negative reaction to circumstances. If you have suddenly developed some type of disension with another person, and your mind plans to sharply criticize, hesitate. Say, “Tomorrow I may write a harsh letter to that person, but for now I’ll just wait.” In this type of practice, mind gains amazing powers of forbearance and patience.

In normal human relationships, if someone does something good to you, you feel very joyous and in turn respond with kindness. That is only normal. However, the goal of spiritual movement is not mere normalcy, but a supernormal pursuit of Divine perfection. Thus, if someone has attempted to harm you or cause pain, reciprocate with sincere goodwill, and if the opportunity arises, do something that will inspire the person. That is the ideal aspiration. The moment you begin to follow that ideal, you are treading the path to becoming as perfect as God.

