



Adorations to Lord Jesus! Adorations to the Divine Self!

In one of his central teachings, Lord Jesus says: “...love your enemies, bless them that curse you...” (Matthew 5:44) and further: “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect” (Matthew 5:48)

Lord Jesus reminds us how God allows the sun to rise on the good and evil alike. If God were sentimental, imagine how things would be. If He felt that you were not following His commandments, He might withdraw the sun one day and allow it to rise only for those whom He recognized as good. But it is not so; the sun shines on all. When those who condemn God open their windows in the morning, the sun floods in just as it does for those who praise Him. And the air tenderly enfolds everyone: oxygen goes through your nostrils whether you hate God or not. So, if such is the nature of God and if you are His devotee, then you must strive to be as perfect as He is.

Try to gain insight into the majesty of Lord Jesus’ teaching, a teaching that has three aspects: first, devotion to God; second, Universal Love; and third, nonviolence—which implies that you should not hurt anyone or anything.

People generally do not comprehend the true spirit of religion. If you comprehended it your mind would be thrilled; you would view every religion with great admiration. All religions of the world teach the same thing; but it is surprising how some people become restricted to the idea that their own religion is the only one that teaches the truth. Moreover, much time is spent in proving the superiority of one’s religion rather than in practicing it. When you practice religion deeply and sincerely, you will find every religion thrilling.

This can be understood if you think of it in another way. Suppose that you enjoy watching the blossoming flowers in your garden, and one day you happen to visit your neighbor’s

garden, in which you see some flowers that are different from those you have been growing. Being a lover of flowers, you would not frown at them and say “These are not the flowers that I am used to.” Rather, you would enjoy all flowers of different types. After visiting, you would go back to your own garden and enjoy what you had chosen to grow there.

Different religions are like those different flower gardens. If you develop the true spirit of being religious, you realize that so much mental energy is wasted in arguing about the differences among religions when the truth is always beautiful and always the same.

In this connection let me give you a simple parable. There was once in the Middle East a devotee of God who would pray at evening time. One evening, as shadows enveloped the earth and darkness gradually increased, a woman stumbled over his prayer mat as he recited his prayers. Furious at the disturbance, he shouted, “You there! Look what you’ve done! You have defiled this prayer mat by stepping on it with your muddy, soiled feet.”

Surprised by this outburst, the woman cried, “Who are you? Can you really be a lover of God? Is God so uninteresting that Divine Love does not engross your mind? In this worldly love, my mind is so engrossed with the thought that I shall meet my lover that I am unable to see anything. That is why I did not see you or your prayer mat. You who are supposed to be a lover of God see your prayer mat more than Him.” And then he realized that though the woman spoke simple words, there was great truth behind them.

If someone were to truly practice his religion, intense love of God would unfold within his heart. The love of God is a majestic achievement, an experience that one cannot easily imagine. Even a glimpse of that experience can make a person “mad”—not with an ordinary type of madness, but with a mystic intoxication belonging to Sages and Saints.

In order to love God, your movement must be twofold: internal and external. Internal disciplines, such as meditation and prayer according to your own religion or faith, must be practiced regularly. But equal importance must be given to the way you handle other people around you.

If you begin to feel that you are a great devotee of God and thus superior to other people—that you will go to the Kingdom of Heaven while they will go to hell—then you are not practicing love of God. If you love God, then your love of Him expresses itself through loving-kindness towards His whole creation.

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, to forgive, and to love; and ultimately the love within your heart will triumph. You will see negative people transformed into positive people, inimical into friendly, demoniac into Divine; and if you are able to contribute to that movement, then you experience a majestic revelation in your life. That experience makes your mind sublime.

Real perfection involves exploring your inner life and removing from your heart fear, insecurity, and the complexes that make you develop ill will towards others. These are the clouds that obscure the shining moon of Divine Love. When you enter your heart and begin to remove these obstacles, you are moving towards perfection.



But when you act on the basis of “an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth,” and long to see your enemy crushed, your mind becomes degraded. Perhaps you quarreled with another person and spoke harsh, inimical words. Later you hear that the person has slipped on a banana peel and broken his leg; so you say, “How wonderful!” That kind of reaction makes you imperfect. Such behavior leads you to a lesser, degrading state of existence.

If you go to the cinema or watch television, you see how the “hero” goes after his enemy seeking revenge—and he usually gets complete revenge. If the hero had one of his teeth broken, he goes after his enemy and breaks all his teeth. But that is not real heroism. If you follow that ideal, you become internally degraded. A true hero follows the advanced ideal of discovering tremendous patience, intense endurance, and unconditional forgiveness under all provocative conditions of life.

Faith in God and His Divine Plan is a great secret of spiritual advancement. Faith can move mountains. Great miracles are happening all about you—internally and externally. When you develop a mind that is steeped in Divine Love and aware of the sweetness of the Divine Presence, you begin to commune with the blessings of the Universe. In other words, you sense the workings of faith; you realize that Divine Grace works wonders. You experience the presence of God within you and others, like the sun pouring through a window.

That is what Lord Jesus meant when he said, “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect.” (Matthew 5:48) That perfection should be kept before your mind as your ideal.

Most people do not have that mystical grasp of the concept of perfection. There are many “perfectionists” in the world who throw aside or destroy their work if it does not come up to their expectations. The perfectionist writes a letter to his friend, only to tear it up because it is not good

enough. To such a person, it is better not to write anything than to write something imperfect. Of course one should always try to do one’s best, but too much involvement in being perfect in selected fields of life is not the mystic perfection of which Lord Jesus was speaking.

Real perfection has to do with exploring your inner life and trying to remove from your heart fear, insecurity, and the complexes that make you develop ill will towards others. These are the clouds that obscure the shining moon of Divine Love. When you enter your heart and begin to remove these obstacles, you are moving towards perfection.

To be perfect does not mean that you will be physically elegant. The physical body will age despite your spiritual perfection. To be perfect does not mean that in the material world you will always hold certain great positions or receive the appreciation of the masses. To be perfect implies that even if you are placed in an adverse situation, your mind will enjoy the sweetness of Divine Love. Though you may be treated wrongly, inwardly you are moved to bless the person who wrongs you.

In Vedic scriptures, the metaphor of sandalwood is often used. If you strike a sandalwood tree with an axe, you will find that the tree reacts by imparting to the axe a bit of its fragrance. Such is the saintly nature. That ideal must be kept before your mind so that your personality may bloom into perfection. But when you do not hold that ideal and live in a world of sentimental values—the world of ignorance—where revenge, ill will, and irrational hatred abound, then life becomes shallow, religion a mockery, and prayers hypocritical.

People wonder why their prayers are not answered. The fact is that if you pray to God while holding ill will towards the people about you, God will not accept your prayer. You must settle matters with your neighbors and relatives before coming to worship God; for if you hold a

grudge against them and come to God to worship, then that worship is least effective.

In other words, love of God does not consist in merely closing your door and repeating mantras or prayers. It implies an ability to express the Divine feeling within you towards others, an ability to assert the power of love over hate, 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:

“Where there is hatred, let me sow love. Where there is injury, let me sow pardon. Where there is darkness, let me sow light. Where there is despair, let me sow hope. Where there is doubt, let me sow faith...”

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.

The Path to Perfection

Foremost among the elements that will lead you to perfection is *satsanga*, or good association. Bring yourself again and again into a fellowship where people come together to pray, to learn, and to listen to the glory of God and the glory of scriptures.

Next is selfless service. Try to be helpful to others. If you are helpful to others and share your talents in their behalf, two things will happen: your talents and abilities will increase and you will discover an amazing spiritual dimension within yourself. The impurities of the mind that are based on egocentricity, such as selfishness, hypocrisy, jealousy, and so forth, dwindle when you begin to live a life that is dedicated to the service of others. Instead of asking yourself, “How will I be helped by this work?” ask, “What should I do to help others? What am I doing to allow my knowledge and talents to be shared by others?”

The next point is that you must learn the art of praying and meditating day by day. During your active hours, develop the spirit of surrendering to God and being vigilant. When you are tested, that is, when you are put into provocative situations, you should not be bitter and complain; rather, you ought to realize that by placing you in provocative situations, God is being more favorable to you than to those who are not placed in such situations. It is in the trying conditions of life that your faith is tested, that you turn your mind inwards to seek the Divine Hand. So, instead of developing bitterness towards adversity, develop a sense of sweetness towards it, and in time adversity will become a myth.

As your life becomes increasingly filled with Divine Love, you are as if assimilating God or moving towards Him. Like a river that enters the ocean, you are entering the Divine Self. To become one with the Divine Self, to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, to attain *Nirvana* or *Moksha*—that is the glorious destiny of every soul.

Om Shantih, Shantih, Shantih!

