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DEVOTION IS THE KEY TO SPIRITUAL SUCCESS

Aghoreshwar Baba Bhagawan Ramji addressed the devotees assembled to listen to his words as follows:

Brothers and Mothers! In our practice, we need to have pure devotion. If our devotion is artificial, we will not be able to generate love and without love, our worship and practice will remain incomplete, unfulfilled. That is why our scriptures and the sayings of great saints have stressed that our devotion must be rock-stable and permanent.

Sometimes I see weaknesses arising within people. If things do not happen exactly as they

want, their faith and devotion are shaken, are turned into faithlessness, and lose continuity. If doubts arise even once, it is very difficult to fulfill the task at hand.

A devotee in Italy wrote me a letter in which she said, "I wanted to follow your words with unlimited devotion, but you are in a country very far away from me, and I cannot hear what you say." Someone told her, "Baba is not far away from you. In fact, he is very close to you."

It may seem that the Divine Mother, the Divine Soul, is very far away from us. But when we approach Her with faith and devotion in order to achieve Her love, affection and respect, She is very close to us. She is always close to us. We may look for Her in hymns, rituals and places of worship, but all the while She is standing right next to our bed.

Whenever we remember Her, that remembrance is expressed in words. Words are the medium through which we give and receive respect, affection and love. If we use words repeatedly that are polluted, tainted, superficial, or lack gravity, it takes away the feeling of closeness to the Divine Mother that resides within us in the form of devotion. Then it appears as if She is very far away, and it is impossible for us to reach Her.

Sometimes our loved ones, who are far away, seem close; their laughter and happiness, their habits and temperament, appear as if in front of our eyes and we actually feel their presence. When we learn that they are afflicted with some trouble or difficulty, we feel that also. We get to know ourselves in the same way; how we are feeling today, what kinds of things are arising in our minds.

With negative thoughts, our lives drag along shamefully. That is why all of us, regardless of who we are, should choose how we want to live our lives. We should live with such unlimited devotion that even if we are very far away from our loved ones, we will feel as if they are very close by. If we do not live like that, then despite being together we will be very far away from each other. Very, very far. Thousands of miles away! I tell many of my followers living right here in the ashram, "You are very far from me. So far away you cannot touch either me or my heart." I do not want to even think about their path, their direction, their way. It has been said that a pig loves grime, and a frog is fond of mud. You may take a pig to a nice, clean place but it will repeatedly go to a grimy pen. And even if you put a frog on a piece of soft cloth dabbed in perfume, it will not stay there. It will go to a muddy place. That is where it will feel good.

Without devotion, our spiritual practices do not take the right shape, because without devotion it is impossible to achieve the Divine Mother's creativity. If you think you can just sit at home and things will happen all by themselves, you are mistaken. For things to happen, you have to generate devotion. To achieve that divine creativity, to have devotion, we have to use our voice, because we do not have any other instrument that will express our devotion. This "voice" has been explained in the Rig Veda.

It is also said there that one should become like a deaf, dumb and blind person in response to hearing, speaking and seeing things in a negative way. One who can do this ultimately acquires devotion and becomes a saint. He achieves the category of a great being. Looking at other people's mistakes with our eyes, hearing about their misconduct with our ears, and then talking about those things to others with our voices will not bring us the devotion that we seek.

This body is a means to an end. With this means we can open the doors of liberation for ourselves. It has been said, "The body is an instrument of liberation, which can better this world and the next." With this body we can do everything. We can establish a relationship with that pure consciousness, get to know that pure consciousness. Otherwise, we may not be forgiven, again and again, and may be led into great pain and sorrow. That is why I humbly request the mothers and devotees here to lead a disciplined and controlled life. You never know when this candle of life will be snuffed out by a gust of strong wind. In this situation if we live like a deaf, dumb, and blind person we will experience great happiness, peace and prosperity within ourselves. We will not have quarrels, jealousy or hatred towards anyone. That will be the first fruit we will taste.

The rishis (learned, holy beings) say that it is only with devotion that we can search the heart of that Divine Mother who is standing beside us. This kind of devotion can provide us with a lot of security in today's world, can act as a protective armor for us. Words that are not light and superficial, are the words beyond any measure. Such words are described by the great rishis as "Guru-Vakya" (Guru's words). Guru's words are for you, for your well-being. Whatever the Guru has said is only for your well-being. Guru's words have never been said for your ill-being.

Guru is not the kind of friend to say misleading and meaningless words, or push you towards negative things. A Guru asks you again and again to control your sight, hearing, and voice, or you will not be successful. Whatever you do, may it be worship, prayer, rituals, meditations, bowing down in temples and churches, if you acquire a doubt about any of it, it is better not to do it. It is better to do only those things about which we have no doubt. Wherever you have doubts, that work will not be successful.

If you have the slightest doubt, find the slightest aberration in our Guru's behavior, you should close your eyes. Let your eyes be closed, let your ears not hear negative things. It is possible someone may use inappropriate words for our Guru. There it would be better to become deaf. It is better to ignore it. At that time it is not proper to react with your voice. Quietly, one should press his teeth upon teeth, press his lips upon lips, and not say anything. If we cannot do this, the results will not be positive.

The voice cannot do everything. We should practice devotion also through our behavior and character. How do we step upon the earth? What kind of company do we keep? What kind of people do we talk to? These also affect our prayers. When we have affection and respect for

even the smallest atom and the most minuscule vegetation, and do not regard them as separate from the Divine Mother, then we will begin to understand everything. When this happens we will definitely be able to see the Divine Mother and what we desire will be fulfilled.

It is not good to pay too much attention to the senses, or to use them repeatedly. By using them too much, it is possible we may keep burning. If so, we may not be able to find that divine being for whom we have prayed so hard. We will not have peace, the peace that makes us successful, nor will we have the success that gives us a knowledge of the divine being whose voice we can hear in the trees, vines, leaves, humans, birds and animals. To say anything worthwhile in front of sensually decrepit people, who find it hard to bear even a little weight and try to run away, is like crying in front of the blind and losing your own eyes in the process. I want to talk to you not just about our tradition, path and discipline, but about things that are appropriate in our own time, place and situation.

Cultivate your voices so they please the Divine Mother, and She will become favorable to us. If She becomes favorable, that divine creativity will come to us through devotion. If that devotion arises in us, and we begin to see Her in every human being, in trees, leaves, creatures and vegetation, we will not fail to achieve all that we desire. All these things are facilitated by this divine creativity when our Guru or a saint is pleased with us. No other divine being can do it for us.

On achieving such divine creativity, it is possible to become drunk with that power and become unbridled with it. We have to keep a very strict watch on it, and ask that Divine Mother for self control, for harmony between our minds and wisdom. When that happens and our voices become strong and able, She will, Herself, stand by us. Then we will not even like going to temples and churches, or singing hymns and prayers, we will be able to see Her everywhere, especially in the tears of the poor and oppressed. We will see Her in those poor huts where pain and cries abound. At that stage, there is no distinction of caste, class, creed or tradition. That is why it is said that one who becomes a real saint transcends such limitations.

Finally, we have to choose what kind of a life we want to lead. I hope you will become more favorable to yourselves. Everything will become easy for you. You will spend your lives on this earth without problems. You will not have any jealousy or hatred towards anyone. Your lives will be very wholesome. The reach of that Great Unknown is very long. How and by what means he gives a livelihood to people is a mystery in itself. Even that livelihood is a form of the Divine Mother.

May the divine creativity that you seek, be favorable to you, and may you become stable in it, for this I pray to that Great Unknown. May that Great Unknown appeal to your thoughts so you choose the right kind of life for yourself, and lead the rest of your life in a new way. May you find a new direction and have unlimited devotion. With this hope, I take leave from you.



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