

Verses for Introspection

Mā Gurupriyā

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No 11



The Best Way to Purify Your Heart

विद्यातपःप्राणनिरोधमैत्री-
तीर्थाभिषेकव्रतदानजप्यैः ।
नात्यन्तशुद्धिं लभतेऽन्तरात्मा
यथा हृदिस्थे भगवत्यनन्ते ॥

vidyā-tapaḥ-prāṇanīrodha-maitrī-
tīrthābhiṣeka-vrata-dāna-japyaiḥ ।
nātyantaśuddhiṃ labhate'ntarātmā
yathā hṛdisthe bhagavatyanante ॥

Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 12.3.48

Learning, austerities, breath-control exercises, friendliness to all, pilgrimages, religious bathing of idols, observing vows, charity and chanting of mantras – none can purify the inner being so wholesomely as does enshrining the Infinite Lord in our heart.



Narayanashrama Tapovanam

Points for Introspection

In order to realize God or Self, it is indispensable that one purifies one's mind and heart. In a vessel of clear transparent water, one's own face is seen very clearly. If the water is a bit muddy or has ripples, one is not able to see the face clearly through the veil of impurity. Similarly is our mind. The Self is ever-present within. It is ever-effulgent, ever-revealed. But, because of various impure traits - like attachment, hatred, intolerance, ambition - the mind undergoes the ripples of agitation. All the impurities are born of desires. Through these ripples of impurities, the Self, though ever-luminous, is missed by the seekers.

The question is, how to make the mind absolutely pure? The mind becomes pure in the absence of desires - gross as well as subtle. When a seeker keeps the infinite Lord in his heart, fills his mind with the thoughts of God alone, to the exclusion of all other thoughts - all his impure traits fade away. How does this happen? When a seeker thinks of the Lord unbrokenly, enshrining Him in his own heart, he starts seeing his beloved God everywhere and in everything. His mind is filled with pure one-pointed love for God. His love for the world becomes feebler. All his impure traits get sublimated making the mind calm and tranquil. In such a mind, which has become pure by virtue of devotion and love for God, and by dispassion towards worldly things, Self reveals Itself most naturally.

This śloka awakens us to the following Truth. It says: the mind does not really get purified by learning, by austerities, by breath-control, by benevolence to all, by going on pilgrimage and taking bath in holy rivers, by giving bath to idols, observing vows, giving charity, or by doing japa. Instead, the mind becomes wholesomely pure when the infinite Lord is seated in the heart in a beautiful throne made of love and devotion.

King Pareekshit sat in prāyopaveśa (waiting to shed the body without food and drink) after knowing about the curse that he had only seven more days to live. He asked Śukadeva as to how one whose death was imminent could contemplate on God unbrokenly and get absorbed in God, realizing Him within himself.

Śreemad Bhāgavatam is essentially Sri Śukadeva's teachings to King Pareekshit. At the end of his advice and instructions to the King for reaching the state of merger in God, Sri Śukadeva tells the King that the mind can attain supreme purity by simply keeping God in the mind and heart always.

Śukadeva tells: "Therefore O King, with all your mind and heart, strive to make the Lord a resident of your heart. For all mortals, this is the only way to salvation."

When we chant this śloka, we develop a great aspiration and inspiration to be in constant contemplation of the Lord. Eyes become moist when we try to think of the state where mind would become absolutely pure.

Word Meaning

विद्या-तपः-प्राण-निरोध-मैत्री-तीर्थाभिषेक-व्रत-दान-जप्यैः(vidyā-tapaḥ-prāṇa-nirodha-maitrī-tīrtha-abhiṣeka-vrata-dāna-japyaiḥ) = by learning, austerities, breath-control exercises, friendliness and benevolence to all, pilgrimages, religious bathing of idols, observing vows, charity, chanting of mantras; न = not; अत्यन्तशुद्धिं (atyantaśuddhiṃ) = complete purity; लभते (labhate) = attains; अन्तरात्मा (antarātmā) = inner being; यथा (yathā) = as, like; हृदिस्थे (hṛdisthe) = seated in the heart; भगवत्यनन्ते (bhagavatyanante) = the Lord infinite.

अन्वयः - (Prose order)

भगवत्यनन्ते हृदिस्थे (सति) अन्तरात्मा यथा अत्यन्तशुद्धिं लभते, (तथा) विद्या-तपः-प्राण-निरोध-मैत्री-तीर्थाभिषेक-व्रत-दान-जप्यैः (अत्यन्तशुद्धिं) न (लभते)।

bhagavatyanante hṛdisthe (sati) antarātmā yathā atyanta-śuddhiṃ labhate, (tathā) vidyā-tapaḥ-prāṇanirodha-maitrī-tīrthābhiṣeka-vrata-dāna-japyaiḥ (atyanta-śuddhiṃ) na (labhate).