

Path of Devotion or Delusion?



Love without knowledge is demonic.

Conscious faith is freedom. Emotional faith is slavery. Mechanical faith is foolishness.

— Gurdjieff

The path of devotion was originally designed to assist the opening of our spiritual heart. However, although it is a valid and beautiful path, to be truly beneficial it must be followed as an integral part of our holistic evolution; one cannot achieve self-actualization through devotion alone. For instance, a path of devotion that does not also include the evolution of consciousness cannot liberate one from suffering. In fact, opening one's heart without having established the essential foundation of the higher self can even make one more vulnerable and ultimately result in more, rather than less, pain and confusion.

Perhaps the most important thing to understand is that true devotion to god cannot exist unless we honor our own individual existence as well – devotion is not possible without our presence as the soul. To truly honor ourselves, we must seek and achieve the realization of our higher individuality. Then, devotion comes to represent the relationship of love and surrender between that integral individual consciousness and the universal reality. If we have failed to reach our higher individuality,



that relationship cannot be real. Praying, singing, or chanting bhajans in this context is empty and meaningless.

The concept of devotion should not be limited to the path of the heart, because the heart is too fragmented to walk the path of devotion on its own. Although the heart is the essence of our divinity, we must walk the path to the divine as a whole being; the practice of devotion to the divine must be rooted in the self-actualization of our complete existence. Moreover, devotion not only characterizes the soul's relationship with the divine, but also her relationship with her own subjectivity. Unless we venerate, love, and cherish who we are, how can we honor the divinity of which we are an individual expression?

True devotion is grounded in an awakened and solidified me and represents the evolutionary movement of surrender to the universal reality – toward samadhi and spiritual transformation. Samadhi is not merely a consequence of meditation or other special practices, but of the deep surrender of our existence – and not just from the heart, but from all the centers of the soul. In fact, the heart can never reach complete samadhi alone, because it is not a doorway to I am. Even though the original knowledge of I am is stored in the heart, it is there more as the seed of our divine potential than as a proper portal to the beyond.

Our heart must first become conscious; otherwise it will continue to be subject to endless emotional turmoil and suffering. A heart which is emotionally confused is too lost in its human drama to feel anything real. How can it become conscious if our consciousness is absent? How can those who follow the path of devotion hope to reach an abiding place in reality without achieving silence of the mind and continuity of presence? For the heart to become conscious, consciousness has to be awakened first and our identity transformed. Our very me has to evolve and establish a continuity of recognition and conscious presence. Only once our consciousness is thus illuminated can we enter our heart from a place of clarity and enduring intelligence.

When we then try to enter the heart, we might discover that it is still locked closed, like an iron door. Just as everyone uses consciousness without actually being conscious, they also use their heart without having true access to it. Some people are naturally more connected to the heart, but even they rarely experience its essence of pure subjectivity. The opening of the spiritual heart is a journey through which its frozen layers need to be melted away to reveal its spiritual depth. Along this journey, the heart's lower emotions need to be transformed or dissolved and its pain healed so that



the heart's presence can be established as the center of our existence. For our heart to become a gateway to and for the divine, rather than just a place from which we relate to the beloved outside of us, it must itself surrender into the beyond. This surrender happens through the portal of being, into the absolute, so that it can reach unity with the unmanifested.

Not only do all three centers of the soul serve as the doorways through which we can begin an actual relationship with the divine, they also need to be awakened as the three dimensions of our pure subjectivity. Our pure me has to embody consciousness, heart, and being for our soul to come into existence. Only our soul can offer true devotion to the supreme reality, for only she is the genuine child of the beloved – the perfect reflection of her light as the illuminated diamond of universal individuality.

It is only natural that some seekers are instinctively drawn to the path of devotion. Their heart yearns for the divine, and their spirit is tormented by living in the plane of forgetfulness and suffering. But the spiritual path must be traversed with wisdom, with an understanding of our evolutionary purpose. Even god cannot emancipate those who have not cooperated with the realization of their true selves, who keep forgetting themselves in unconscious devotion. The divine can heal and emancipate us only if we have done everything we can do ourselves to embody the light of our own soul. Those who are engaged in the pursuit of sentimental devotion instead of doing their inner work are refusing to use the most important gift they have been given by the creator – the capacity for transformation. They are living in a dream, lost in the worship of their imagined deity. They have chosen a life of denial and illusion over reality. Not only do they not get any closer to their true self, but they also refuse to be honest in acknowledging how lost they are. And although their heart seeks truth, their mind does not reflect this search in its understanding.

It is important to see that there is aspect of devotion that feeds on insincerity. The ego may hope to disappear in god through following unsound practices or praying to the divine that is as if outside of it, but this will only result in it being even more fragmented and lost. Unconscious devotion and various practices related to religious infatuation can open one up to the universal subconscious, an astral cesspool and snake pit, which makes one highly vulnerable to parasitic and psychically hazardous energies.

In the article about mystical states, we wrote about how darkness uses powerful pilgrimage sites to manipulate seekers. There are a large number of Western seekers who hide from reality under the



umbrella of Advaita and flock to ‘power places’ such as Arunachala; some of them even teach there. Most of these seekers strongly abide upon the idea of devotion or surrender to Ramana Maharishi or to Shiva, but is it real? Careful examination of these kinds of environments clearly shows that the majority of people not only do not evolve, but rather deteriorate more and more with each passing year. Often, they manage to find a variety ways to rationalize their spiritual stagnation and deep suffering. Instead of recognizing that an addiction to places of power is not a solution to the challenge of human evolution, they delude themselves that ‘amazing’ things are constantly happening to them, or even that they have experienced self-realization.

The same applies to the so-called satsang culture that proliferates in these places, Advaita “support groups” which offer a false affirmation of spiritual attainment and propagate unintelligent notions of enlightenment. Most often, the seekers who attend these satsangs are looking for false masters, sitting at the feet of those who make dishonest promises of enlightenment. Why do they keep going back? Because they need external reassurance of their own falseness. It is a game of insincerity in a dimension of ignorance and stupidity. One day they might even begin to give satsang themselves, furthering the cycle of darkness.

The more insincere seekers of low intention inhabit these places, the more the whole energy there becomes increasingly false and insincere. Then, when a new seeker who does not have clarity and integrity arrives, he can easily become pulled into the whirlpool of insincerity and himself become part of the collective falseness. The deep tragedy of this phenomenon is that darkness and the collective lie of non-duality lives by manipulating the idea of light and spiritual self-realization. Why would insincere people feel drawn to go to places that are supposed to serve as a bridge for the grace of enlightenment? It just does not make sense. Such people, who do not have the capacity to meet their pure subjectivity and surrender their lower tendencies, are the main propagators of the concept of instant enlightenment and shallow Advaita. They imagine that they are walking the path to self-realization, but before truly entering the path they first of all need to evolve on the human level and purify their minds. Those who are insincere in the heart of their very existence can easily become the doorways for evil to enter our innocent world through the mirage of spiritual path and the twisted concept of god or non-duality.

Many seekers who travel to places of power in the name of devotion are hoping to receive grace. But is there any real grace in these places, or it is actually just about clinging to a false hope? Again, if we look more deeply and more critically into these environments, we can see that they are more



about powerlessness than power. Many of the seekers that gather there are simply refusing to use their own power. They are misusing the concept of devotion to justify their laziness and intellectual lethargy. It is nothing but darkness monopolizing on a seekers' indolence by promoting an entirely imaginary concept of grace or salvation in order to ultimately disempower them, to take their lives away.

As an aside, it is interesting to contemplate why a real being of light such as Ramana Maharishi can, after his death, become a type of puppet for insincere seekers, a passive receptacle onto which people can project their false notions of devotion and superficial views of spiritual evolution. It is very easy to see from his pictures that Ramana was a special being, and his self-evident light and compassionate gaze make him an appealing figure for seekers to follow. However, this in itself does not explain how such a high degree of untruth has come to attach itself to him without being repelled and discarded. One thing that it could be attributed to is an over-simplistic teaching which remains ambiguous on the relationship between grace, self-knowledge and practice. This type of ambiguity or excessive mystery in the science of the path can leave gaps which may later be filled with misunderstanding and falsity. In addition, a certain absence of any confrontation with untruth in the teachings of Ramana presents no discriminative criteria, no obstacle over which seekers must pass in order to consider themselves his devotees. In some ways we could say that his pacifism as a soul inadvertently rendered him to prey to become a tabula rasa upon which people could draw their own distorted conceptions of devotion, grace and responsibility.

The path of devotion, as it is traditionally understood, is not a complete path, and any path that is incomplete must end in stagnation. This needs to be acknowledged, and one then has to identify what is lacking and seek a more holistic approach. Those who are called to walk the path of devotion must also awaken their intelligence and support the journey of the heart with more complete development. Only through the actualization of our whole being can the heart take us to the place of inner peace and illuminate our existence with true love and the fathomless beauty of the divine.

Blessings,
Anadi

For a full glossary of terminology please visit our website www.anaditeaching.com/glossary

