

Siddha Marg



आत्मानुरज्यः

It is a wonderful teaching for each and every one of us to remember that love is the most important thing. Love is what each and every one of us seeks, wants, and wishes to have. We look for it outside ourselves. The sages tell us to look for it inside; it is there.

Baba's message is "Love your own Self." When we love our own Self, then what we share with everyone is that love. So I pray and wish that each moment of our life, every single day, is filled with love.

MAHĀMANDALESHWAR SWAMI NITYĀNANDA

The purpose of Siddha Marg is to communicate the teachings of Mahāmandaleshwar Swami Nityānanda as he shares with us the knowledge and practices of the sanātan dharma (universal law). This year, Gurudev has invited us to study the Bhakti Sūtras by Nārada, a scripture about devotion. This issue features excerpts from talks Gurudev has given over the years on the subject of love.

The Elixir of Pure Love

Good evening. Welcome to our fourth night of this celebration in worship of the divine Goddess.

In our times today, many different kinds of series take place in the world of sports. An avid fan sits in front of the TV or goes to the stadium to watch a game, and gets excited and carried away. In the same way, as we travel around the world, twice a year we celebrate Navrātra. We come together to experience the divinity, the Truth, that dwells within us.

As we sit here each day, we allow ourselves to go a bit deeper inside our own being. Some people find it fearful to go within. They don't know what they will find, what they might experience. But the philosophy of yoga says that unless we go within our own being, we will not find the answers we are seeking in life. We always think "outside, outside!" But yoga tells us, "No, look for it inside."

Many sages over time have expressed the joy of divine love through poems, hymns, and various other ways. They did that so people would realize that unless their love for God is alive, life will be insipid, life will be dry.

When people would chant or say something filled with divinity, the sage Rāmakrishna would automatically go into a state of trance. Even if he was standing, he would

The Elixir of Pure Love (continued)

immediately experience his oneness with divinity. If he was sitting, he would become absorbed in that experience for some time.

We can imagine what the teachings of a being who is able to so instantly merge with the experience of divinity might be. But Rāmakrishna tells us it is futile to try to understand God through the mind. He says to do that is to be like a mad person seeking treasure in a dark, empty room. The only way to understand God is through ecstatic love, by allowing yourself to become immersed in the joy and love that arise as you perform spiritual practices.

Most of us have been to school and attended science classes. Especially in chemistry, the theory and practical application are taught side by side. If you have theory today, you have the practical application tomorrow. At least in our school, that's what we did because the teacher wanted us to understand what she had taught. She didn't want us to simply think it might work.

Of course, we always tried a few more things than she told us. I'm sure one also does that on the path of yoga—a little bit more practice just to see what happens.

Rāmakrishna says that practice is the only way to experience the divine reality we seek. Unless we sit and allow ourselves to become immersed in love, he says, we will not discover the elixir of pure love, which dwells secretly within us.

A doctor says that to cure a sickness, you need medicine. Mostly, one trusts that what the doctor says is true. He gives you a prescription, you try it, and maybe it takes care of the sickness.

The best way to feel devotion is to chant.



The Elixir of Pure Love (continued)

The prescription of the sage is pure love. Yogis meditate for ages just for a drop of this pure love. A yogi wants his mind to become still so he can experience divinity.

How do you know when you are experiencing this love the sages talk about? One of the first things is that you find yourself in a state of what you might call happiness. There is no reason for it. Nothing has been said. Nothing has been done. Nobody has given anything to you, yet you find yourself happy. You feel a sense of contentment, and you think to yourself, why?

The sages say this contentment is one of the side effects of devotion, of *bhakti*.

We always think if we are happy, there must be a reason. How we feel is always related to an action. For example, we think, "If I sold something, I must have made money," which makes us happy. But in the experience of *bhakti*, nothing actually has been done, other than allowing yourself to become immersed in your own being, which allows this joy to arise.

Another effect many people experience is tears of joy. Often when people come to *satsaṅg* for the first time, they wonder why they start to cry. We always think we cry when we're sad, when we're in anguish, when there is a problem. But as you become immersed in the joy of chanting, you find tears of love, of joy, flow from your eyes.

Another thing that happens is sweating. You might think devotion and... sweating? But the sages say it happens because so much energy flows through the body. You can sit in a cool place, but warmth radiates from within.

Sometimes you tremble. I think the reason is that the ego is afraid that as divine love envelops the human body and mind, it will annihilate individual existence. The ego trembles at the fear of its own dissolution.

These are some of the signs, and there are many more. One that people always laugh at is horripilation. Your hair stands on end. When there is so much energy running through the body, there is a sense of excitement, and therefore there is the experience of horripilation.

In the *Bhakti Sūtras*, Sage Nārada gives eighty-four aphorisms on the experience of divine love. He describes what happens, exactly what you experience, and the stages you go through to experience this love.

Our celebration of devotion, of love, continues as we go around the world. Some people travel with us, and others meet us in different cities to participate. I began by mentioning avid sports fans. Just as avid sports fans follow their players, we follow the Goddess, we follow God. We continuously seek their blessings and grace in our life, and pray that everything always flows smoothly.



Yogis meditate for ages just for a drop of this pure love.

That Which You Already Have

As I grabbed my books, I said to myself, “Okay, I’ll say, ‘Let’s have some serious fun.’” Then I thought, “Why serious fun? Why not just ‘Let’s have fun?’”

We never simply say, “The state of bliss.” You hear, “The state of supreme bliss.” That means there is an ordinary state of bliss that then leads you to a state of supreme bliss. These are the kinds of word games we play.

Ultimately, in the experience of love, there is nothing to say, there is nothing to do. Nothing really happens, at least not externally.

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We think *darśan* means we bring our fruit, our flowers, our money, our offerings and put them in front of the deity, in front of the Guru. We do a salutation and say a few words, and we think that’s *darśan*.

The word *darśan* means “to see.” See what? Not the statue, not the person who is sitting there, but the state in which that being dwells.

When you say, “I want to go for *darśan*,” you have to remember that what you want to see and experience within yourself is how this being is simply sitting, witnessing, observing, and watching.

This is difficult for a normal individual who thinks, “How can I simply sit and watch? I can’t do that.”

Try it. Sit in Manhattan for a day, some place in the middle of nowhere, where nobody knows you—Union Square maybe—and watch the people.

Actually, you have two choices as you sit there. You can be upset about all the things you can’t do to fix these people or you can realize how silly you would look if somebody else was watching you. Of course, we don’t think like that. We think how silly people look, how funny they are. The same is true of us.

I love sometimes—I shouldn’t say this, it’s my secret—to watch from upstairs as people are going from Vishvakarmā to the kitchen, from the parking lot to here. Some people are trying to be serious. Some are looking: “Who’s there? Whom can I talk to? Whom can I be with? Whom can I enjoy?”

It is the same in Magod. I love sitting on my swing in the morning after the chant, after breakfast, when people are going to their various activities. Somebody’s going to school. Somebody’s going to the clinic. Somebody’s going to the office. Somebody’s going to the kitchen. The laborers come from outside. As they pass by, people decide whether they want to see me or not see me, acknowledge me or not acknowledge me. Some people think, “Oh, that orange one on the swing... I don’t think I see him right now.”

So many choices exist in that moment. Depending on where the mind is, even that which does not exist can be created into something. So, really, all you can do in that moment is just witness, and let it go.

Many of the great poet-saints, such as Rumi and Kabīr, shared their experience of love. We try to read and understand their poetry from a logical perspective, because that’s how we relate to things in general.

That Which You Already Have (continued)

See if you can allow yourself for a moment to get out of your logical mind and go to the place where there is simply the awareness of Consciousness, and read from that place. I bet every poem you read will be difficult to finish in one sitting. You'll read a line or two lines, and then you will find yourself in a place where you can do nothing but feel what Rumi is sharing. The poet is allowing you to have darśan through his words.

The direct experience we want to have of the teachings, of yoga, is not simply to believe in something somebody says, but rather to sit every day and experience that which is happening within. But the mind loves confusion. We say we want it to be clear, but when the scripture tells us to experience "I am That," we don't know if we can agree on what "That" is.

When people come to worship, to light incense, if you ask why they are doing it, they say, "My father told me to do it." Or "My mother told me." Or "Baba told me." Or "So-and-so told me." If you then ask, "But what do you think?" they will say, "Well, I'm getting there."

It sounds like they are carrying such a big burden. People sometimes come to satsaṅg out of guilt.

Sometimes a person comes to me and says, "I have done a million rounds of *japa*."

I want to feel a shift, a movement, a change, a greater understanding has taken place. But has it?

Our computer comes on every morning at 5:30 and plays the *Guru Gītā*. It comes on every morning without fail. Is my computer realized? Is the iPod realized? Does it realize it has been liberated from the idea of realization?

We have become a machine. We sit there every morning and tell ourselves, "I must do this because..." Or we sit for meditation and think, "When is this going to end?"

Baba used to say, "You have come to the Intensive thinking Muktaṅanda will give you something." He would laugh and say, "You're not going to get anything. I will simply show you that which you already have."

The understanding we want is that what we are worshiping on the outside is not different from ourselves, from the one who is worshiping, the one who is praying. Therefore, I always say never pray out of fear. Pray because there is joy in the praying.



**Never pray out of fear.
Pray because there is joy
in the praying.**

Just Dive In

Kabīr's poems touch on the secrets of bhakti. This is the kind of poem you have to sit and think about. He says, "The bhakti path winds in a delicate way."

I'm sure every individual here would explain that in his or her own way. Some might say, "I don't know what he means by 'winds in a delicate way.'" We have to be aware of what is happening. We have to feel it and know it.

Kabīr also says, "The joy... is so immense that you just dive in." When we just dive in, we become an observer, we become a witness.

Sometimes people come to satsaṅg and say, "Okay, I'm going to look at what these people are doing. I'm going to see what happens here."

When you do it that way, it doesn't work.

Imagine somebody puts a chocolate truffle in your hand and you say, "Okay, I'm just going to look at it. My mouth will water, my mind will have some thoughts, but I'm not going to eat it."

And when the person asks, "How is it?" you say, "I'm looking at it." You can't describe the taste or the sensory pleasure inside because you didn't, as Kabīr says, "just dive in."

In all the years of doing *sādhana*, of chanting, meditating, and contemplating, often we get caught in the external practices.

Of course, to a certain extent, all of those are important. Yet, at some point in life, we must realize all that is a vehicle. It

**"The bhakti path winds
in a delicate way."**



Just Dive In (continued)

takes you there. But when you arrive, as Kabīr says, all that remains is to just dive in.

We say, “I want to experience divine love.” But how do we want to experience divine love?

As Kṛṣṇa says to Arjuna, “Just as a tortoise withdraws its limbs into its shell, so must a seeker withdraw into himself.”

In the Indian tradition, when you go to a temple, you go into the sanctum sanctorum and have darśan. Then you come out into the courtyard.

If you are there with somebody from the older generation, he will say, “Sit for a minute.”

If you’re in an antsy and excited mood, you say, “Darśan’s over. I have to go now. I have to gather my shoes. I have to get something to eat.”

He says, “No, no, sit for a moment.”

You see, darśan is still happening. That which you experienced for a moment in front of the deity has to be imbibed. The prasād you received has to saturate your body before the senses venture out again. Right now, you’re a tortoise inside the temple who has just withdrawn for a moment. Let that state of withdrawnness remain before you go back out.

We have added so many adjectives to the word *love*—divine love, wholesome love, organic love, pure love. But when the sage talks about love, he means a state that is all-encompassing. It is a state, he says, in which even the birds come and drink

the tears from his cheek. He is not bothered, nor are the birds afraid, because these are tears of joy.

In movies, actors and actresses think about a sad situation so they can shed tears. Tears of bhakti are not like that. If you have ever experienced tears of bhakti, you know they bring an emotion with which nothing will compare, once you have truly tasted and experienced it.

Nothing external satisfies in the way that the love within satisfies.



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G L O S S A R Y

Arjuna

a warrior, hero of the *Bhagavad Gītā*

bhakti

devotion

Bhakti Sūtras

scripture on divine love

darśan

vision of the divine, experienced in the presence of a holy being

Guru Gītā

commentary on the Guru

japa

repetition of a mantra

Kabīr

[1440-1518] poet-saint and weaver

Kṛṣṇa

Hindu deity, Guru of Arjuna in the *Bhagavad Gītā*

Magod

village in Gujarat, India, where Shanti Mandir is located

Nārada

divine sage

Navrātra

nine-night celebration of the Goddess

prasād

blessed gift

Rāmakrishna

[1836-1886] devotional Bengali saint

Rumi, Jalalu'd-Din

[1139-1173] Sufi poet-saint

sādhanā

spiritual practices

satsaṅg

in the company of the Truth