

Saturday, 26 October 2024

Recognizing the Divine Within: Cultivating Sattvic Qualities

How many of you were able to be present during the fire ceremony this morning? Being present doesn't mean just looking around; it means truly being in the moment. As I mentioned yesterday, don't get lost thinking or worrying about something else. It's easy for the mind to wander, but there is divine energy in everything in this creation, and during moments like the fire ceremony, it becomes evident and tangible.

Feeling admiration is a natural human experience. When you see a beautiful flower, you can sense the divine within it. When you hear the song of a bird, it reveals the presence of a higher force. Are you able to feel that? I shared with the group a few days ago that my guru would sit for hours, simply observing the sunlight reaching plants and animals.

This idea represents one of the fundamental differences between Indian philosophy and Semitic religions like Christianity. In our view, the Creator transforms into the creation; the Creator does not stand apart from it. During the Agnihotra fire ceremony, we chant the Purusha Sukta towards the end. Purusha refers to the cosmic being, and in the mantra, it is said that one-quarter of the Purusha transforms into creation, while the remaining three-quarters become the governing, guiding, and protective force around the creation.

So, when asked if we have seen God, the answer is yes—everything is God. What we perceive in the world is part of the one-quarter of the divine that manifests as creation, and around every substance, there is a protective force, its energy or destiny, which is also divine. Every cell has this divinity, and its potential is infinite. In Ayurveda, we believe there is nothing in this world that is not medicine; even animal urine and feces have medicinal uses.

The time you spend here is an opportunity to feel this divine power within and around you, to recognize that it is all one. When you bring your attention and intention to a positive and divine state, the negative aspects of your body and mind begin to fade away. Admiration, or devotion, is a powerful tool for this transformation; it helps you become what you admire.

Consider the different deities: some, like Kali, embody a destructive force, wielding weapons and adorned with symbols of power and aggression. Others, like Saraswati, represent the sattvic quality, associated with purity and knowledge, seated on a lotus flower. These different forms serve different purposes. Even soldiers, who must take lives to protect others, have their place in the cosmic order. Sattva, rajas, and tamas must all exist for life to unfold. Some people naturally connect with Kali, others with Durga, and some with Saraswati, depending on their instincts.

When Saraswati is seated on a lotus, it symbolizes humility and lightness—she is so gentle that even a lotus stalk can support her. The lotus itself is significant because it seeks light, opening when the sun rises and following its path across the sky. In our tradition, the crown chakra is likened to a thousand-petaled lotus, a symbol of tuning into higher frequencies.

The goal is to bring your focus to a constant appreciation of the divine manifestations within and outside of you. At some point, the boundary between inside and outside dissolves, and you experience oneness.

You may wonder, "Is even that which we see as wrong or negative also divine?" Yes, even *tamas* (darkness) and *rajas* (activity) are divine. Nothing happens without the will of the divine. It is not easy to understand the purpose of destruction, but it plays a role in the cosmic balance. History shows us that India faced invasions and colonization, yet some spiritual masters did not resist these forces because they recognized them as part of the divine play.

Creation itself is an imbalance or a disturbance from the harmony of *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*. When these qualities are in perfect balance, there is only oneness. *Prakriti* (nature) and *Purusha* (consciousness) are fundamental concepts in our philosophy. *Prakriti*, the basic substance of the universe, consists of matter and energy, and it comes into being when *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas* are not in equilibrium.

As you grow spiritually, you may come to see even the most intense conflicts as the play of children, with nothing truly serious at stake. This realization helps you rise above the drama.

Ultimately, spirituality often begins with a question: "What is permanent, what is changeless?" Without this inquiry, spirituality may seem irrelevant. Yet, admiration and devotion are relevant at every level of spiritual development.

Today's message is to be drawn towards *sattvic* qualities and to cultivate a *sattvic* attitude within yourself.

Now, we'll turn our attention to the body. You can collect printouts of a checklist for assessing your physical constitution from the doctors. We'll begin discussing it on Monday and conduct a self-assessment of your physical constitution.

