

Loving God in Daily Life

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Sancta Sophia Seminary
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I'm grateful to have this opportunity to be with you today. To begin, I will share this story with you:

There were four country churches in a small town. The Presbyterian Church, the Baptist Church, the Catholic Church, and the Methodist Church. Each church was overrun by squirrels.

One day, the Presbyterian Church called a meeting to decide what to do about the squirrels. After much prayer and consideration they determined that the squirrels were predestined to be there and they shouldn't interfere with God's Will.

In the Baptist Church the squirrels had taken up habitation in the baptistery. The deacons met and decided to put a cover on the baptistery and drown the squirrels in it. The squirrels escaped somehow there were twice as many there the next week.

The Catholic group got together and decided that they were not in a position to harm any of God's creation. So they humanely trapped the squirrels and set them free a few miles outside of town. Three days later, the squirrels were back.

But, the Methodist Church came up with the best and most effective solution. They baptized the squirrels and registered them as members of the church. Now they see them only on Christmas and Easter.

I've been attending a church in my hometown. For Christmas there were several extra services filled to capacity. At the midnight service I attended, I had to ask myself, who are all these people? Life is too precious to confine our spiritual life to attendance on church on holy days. Our task is to recognize the sacred in daily life.

There are as many paths to God as there are souls of men and women. We each walk our own unique spiritual path. We learn through life experience, study, from the each other, and from the masters and saints. Age after age the masters repeat the message again and again.

We each have our own sources of inspiration and guidance. Today I will share insights on loving God in daily life as presented by Meher Baba. Through the years, his teachings, and this one on in particular has been helpful to me. This teaching has given me a practical perspective on loving God in daily life. I have found similar messages from other spiritual teachers and we will reflect upon these this morning.

We are made of the same essence as that of God, which is love. We are a spark of God and we need to nurture that spark to become a flame.

If we are made of the same essence as our divine mother and father, then it should be natural to love, and to love God? The purpose of love is to express our Divinity. But sometimes we have forgotten who we are. Sometimes, maybe we have forgotten how to love. So how can we really learn to love God?

When we begin the spiritual path, we may move towards God as we have for the other things in our life. But, God is not another “thing”.

Perhaps, to love God should be simple, for it comes forth from being that which we really are. But, some how when we move towards living a more holy life, we can be pulled back by our habits and old ways of doing things.

Our challenge is to live the message of the wise ones.

Meher Baba stated that “we have asked for and have been given enough words, and it is now time to live them”.

Nicholas Roerich shares a similar thought; “The challenge of the Agni Yogi is to link the vision of the ages with the labor of daily life.”

Meher Baba’s sayings present some ideas of how to love God in our daily life. **To love God in the most practical way is to love our fellow beings.**

He makes clear,

- We are loving God when we feel for others in the same way as we feel for our own dear ones.
- We are loving God when instead of seeing faults in others, we look within ourselves.
- We are loving God when instead of robbing OTHERS to help ourselves, we rob ourselves to help others.
- We are loving God when we suffer in the sufferings of others and feel happy in the happiness of others.
- We are loving God when instead of worrying over our own misfortunes, we think ourselves more fortunate than many many others.
- We are loving God when we endure our lot with patience and contentment, accepting it as His Will.
- We are loving God when we understand and feel that the greatest act of devotion and worship to God is not to hurt or harm any of His beings.

Now, we will reflect upon each one of these sayings.

1. We are loving God, when we feel for others in the same way as we feel for our own dear ones.

As Krishna said to Arjuna, “The Lord dwells in the hearts of all beings.”

When we learn to see the spark of God in others, we will know that our fellow beings are God’s own dear ones.

This type of love comes from the soul. An emotional, attached love comes from the personality.

As we meditate, serve others and open to an impersonal love, we learn to love from the soul. As seminary students we learn that love is the Lots of Vital Energy, which is the flow of divine energy from the soul.

Be mindful that the heart center is the reflection of the soul within. As we grow in compassion and understanding of others, we can feel for others as we feel for our own dear ones.

2. We are loving God, when, instead of seeing faults in others, we look within ourselves,

When we see faults in others, it is actually God showing us the shadow side of our self. If we understand that the world is a mirrOR, we know that what we see outside our self, is a reflection of something within us. ***We need to*** learn to turn our attention within, and reflect upon why the other is making ***us*** react.

When we are content within our self, the behaviors of others do not trouble us. When we are troubled by others, remember that thinking ill of others only increases our load. When we speak or think ill of others, we remove their karma, and take it on as our own.

We can look within, and ask what ***our*** soul is showing ***us*** by giving a reflection of ***ourselves*** in the other. Do not waste our precious lifetime judging others.

The fire of Zoroaster is the symbol of the human soul. The ancient Zoroastrians taught that the flame of the soul kept alive by pure thoughts, pure words and pure actions. These sparks keep the fire of the soul burning.

Our thoughts are things that live on, and impure thoughts inhibit the expression of the soul. Today is the first Sunday in Lent. As we begin the Lenten season, it is a time of reflection. It is a time to turn our attention within, and ***nurture the*** fire of the soul.

3. We are loving God, when instead of robbing others to help ourselves, we rob ourselves to help others.

When we cease our selfish pursuits, and learn to selflessly serve others, we are serving God.

To paraphrase Alice Bailey's writings on service:

The Law of Service was expressed for the first time fully by the Christ, two thousand years ago.

Today, the world is slowly realizing that no man lives in isolation. Only when love finds its outlet in service, can man begin to measure up to his innate capacity.

Torkum Saraydarian explains that the nature of love is sacrificial. **Love is not taking**; love is giving. True love emanates from the Heart of the Sun. It is contacted through real acts of sacrifice.

We have a choice to serve each moment. Imagine this: A group of people at a table prepared to eat dinner. However, the spoons were too long, longer than their arms. They tried to feed themselves using the long spoons, and they could not. They could not gratify their person desires.

In another room, a group of people with a similar table prepared for dinner, had the same long spoons, but they were feeding each other.

In robbing ourselves to help others, we learn self-forgetfulness, and the light of the higher worlds can begin to penetrate our actions.

4. We are loving God, when we suffer in the sufferings of others and feel happy in the happiness of others,

A simple solution to our own suffering is to help someone else. We can forget ourselves in being with another in their pain.

Torkum expresses these thoughts:

- Conscious suffering is the result of an intense compassion and love.
- Conscious suffering increases the fires of higher centers and makes transmutation possible”.

When good things come to another, we should be happy for them.

Feel happiness when others are happy.

Meher Baba offers this little rhyme:

**LiFe in ignorance is a pest
LiFe for the aspirant is a test
LiFe at its best is merely a jest.**

5. We are loving God, when instead of worrying over our own misfortunes, we think ourselves more fortunate than many many others.

Worry is a hindrance to the spiritual aspirant. Worry is a product of the imagination in relationship to the past and the future. Nothing can ever be helped by worry, it hinders the experience of the JOY of life.

When worrying over our own misfortunes, be mindful that being more loving can clear our past debts.

Rather than dwelling on our misfortunes, Be grateful for what we have. We all know the power of thought, be grateful and acknowledge the good in our lives.

When we express gratitude, we radiate our blessings.

6. We are loving God, when we endure our lot with patience and contentment, accepting it as His Will.

Torkum says about patience, **“We must cultivate patience to continue our service in daring conditions; to carry on our service in spite of lack of recognition and appreciation, in spite of our weaknesses, failures, and health problems. We must have patience in our love and dedication, in our honesty and nobility, in our purity and striving, in our studies and meditation. It is through patience that the higher Cosmic Ethers replace our lower ethers and our nature passes through a process of transmutation, transformation, and transfiguration. Patience creates the electrical fire in the human nature to make this transfiguration possible.”**

The Yoga Sutras simply state, “As a result of contentment, bliss is achieved.”

When we accept our fate, we stop rebelling and fighting God. When we cultivate desirelessness, and free ourselves from attachment and longing for things, when we accept life as it is, contentment grows.

7. We are loving God when, we understand and feel that the greatest act of devotion and worship to God is not to hurt or harm any of His beings.

It is important to be mindful of our relationship with other kingdoms. When I shared this thought with a friend of mine, he felt this was an impossible task, for example, how could he never harm an ant when taking a walk?

The point is to consider our intention: harmlessness relates to the effect of our thoughts, words, and actions. When we harm another, it creates a debt to be repaid. To live in freedom, we must not harm others.

Torkum says this of harmlessness, “Harmlessness means that one does not hinder the spiritual or natural progress of any human being or living form. The disciple examines his motives, his thoughts, his feelings, his actions, and his creative expressions and stops them or changes them if he sees that they are harmful to living beings of any kind.”

The Yoga Sutras reminds us, “In him who has perfected harmlessness, all enmity ceases”.

When the seeds of enmity and hatred are eliminated, what is left is harmony and unity.

8. Meher Baba concludes: To love God as He ought to be loved, we must live for God and die for God, knowing that the goal of life is to Love God, and find Him as our own self.

Our love for God must draw us towards the source of love, just as the moth is drawn towards the flame. Eventually, the moth forgetting itself, in its final attraction to the flame, is annihilated as it is burnt in the fire.

Meher Baba states that “to get nearer and nearer to God, you have to get further and further away from “I”, “my”, “me” and “mine”. You have not to renounce anything but your own self”.

How can we learn to love god? We must do this in our daily life. Our life is the Ashram and our daily work our teacher.

Meher Baba reminds us: “All the meditations, yogas, concentrations do not teach what God teaches through everyday living: that is, to be kind to those who ill-treat you and to love those whom you dislike. This is the highest practice of yoga. When Christ was mocked, spat upon, beaten, He did not use His powers but He retaliated with love”.

”Spare no pains to help others. ”

”Love all because all are one. ”

”Seek no other reward than the gift of Divine Love. ”

Shanti