

REMEMBERING THE SAINTS

by

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Today we have gathered here to observe All Saints Day—to remember the saints. It is the expression of our wish or ambition to partake of the nature of the saints, to grow into the nature of purity, of perfection—which are the constituents of the personality of the saints.

A saint is one whose consciousness has spread everywhere, whose head is in heaven and whose feet are on the earth. He walks on earth as a human being; but he is here before us as a representative of that which is beyond the earth. He combines in himself the mental and the supramental, the physical and the celestial, the visible and the invisible, the finite and the infinite. It is through him that the Infinite expresses itself. It is through him that we can behold the glory of the Divine Being. He embodies in himself all the qualities and attributes which are found in the Divine Being and which are the best, the highest, which the Divine Being expresses in the universe. He is the embodiment of virtue based on knowledge. That is the very meaning of the word 'saint'.

What is virtue? Virtue and righteousness are practically the same. We cannot have righteousness without knowledge. One cannot know what virtue is unless it is based on the highest knowledge. People can be partially virtuous, relatively virtuous; they may err at some time or the other.

But a man who is grounded on truth cannot err, because he is based on that which is absolutely right. Morality and ethics should be based on the knowledge of the Reality. Unless ethics is based on metaphysics, it cannot be perfect ethics. There should be an ultimate explanation of the behaviour of a saint, and that explanation is his own experience or anubhava.

We observe All Saints Day in order that we may understand these principles and apply them in our daily life and have direct experience of them. There is a great value in the adoration of saints. The mind is of such a nature that it imbibes the character of that which it thinks of. That is the psychology of worship and also of upasana. When the mind contemplates something, it grows into that thing and ultimately becomes that. We can, for example, adore the great sage Vasishtha. The moment the mind thinks of Vasishtha, immediately all desires, all base passions are brushed aside. It is impossible to have evil thoughts in the mind together with the thoughts of Vasishtha or Krishna or some other saint. I have heard it from many people here and have myself personally experienced that it is impossible to have an evil thought in the mind when we are sitting in the presence of our Gurudev—because he evokes in us only virtuous qualities. Since he is the embodiment of virtue, of love, of knowledge, of perfection itself, those qualities alone are evoked in us.

Similarly in the case of those whom we do not directly come into contact with, even if we think of them, it is enough. At the time of thinking of those personalities, the mind expands into the form of the qualities of which it thinks, and becomes pure. This is the value of meditation on the qualities of saints and their personalities. We should, therefore, adore the Great Ones—Vasishtha, Vamadeva, Vyasa, Suka, Dakshinamurti, Dattatreya, Risabhadeva and others—because they are our Gurus, they are our Masters, they give us knowledge. And, they give us knowledge even if they are not visible to us. That is very important to remember. Knowledge is not a gross thing. It is very subtle,

indestructible, incorruptible, and remains so always. It can be given to us at any time. It is eternal. The receiver (sisya) is eternal; the giver (Guru) is eternal; that which is given (knowledge) is also eternal. In the Kausitaki Upanishad, we have the illustration of how the Guru comes to help the disciple even after death—where it is said that before reaching Brahmaloaka, the aspirant comes in contact with the Guru. The Guru may be on earth, but he is not only there; he is beyond the earth also. The Guru is not confined to a body. Being a Realised soul, he pervades the universe and as he is like God Himself; and he can help the aspirant wherever he goes.

These saints do help us continuously and their grace is flowing to us even now. Therefore, we must be receptive to that descent of Grace. We must open our hearts when we worship the saints. We must remember that we must remove all those qualities in us which are obstacles to the reception of the knowledge which the saint gives us. It is no use trying to approach an emperor without the proper qualifications. When we try to do something, we must be sure that we would be able to do that thing, and the proper qualifications should be there.

It is said in the scriptures that the aspirant comes in contact with the particular kind of Guru who is suited to him at that particular stage of evolution. People frequently ask the question: “Why does not Lord Krisna move on earth even now? He can take a body, as He is omnipresent.” A similar question is: “We hear that obstacles are placed before the aspirant by the gods; for example we hear that Indra sends Menaka, Rambha and others to tempt him. Why are not such things experienced these days?” These things are not experienced always. Difficulties of that kind will be experienced by the aspirant in a different degree, not with the same intensity. When a person experiences a particular condition of his mind, he will come in contact with a Guru and an obstacle of the same kind. This is the psychology of sadhana.

The saints, the Risis and Avataras should be worshipped by us so that we can grow into perfection, to become that. When we worship God, we aspire thereby to come into contact with God, to realise God. We do namaskara; and we become one with That. When we say “Om Namo Narayanaya” and prostrate ourselves, it means we desire to become one with Narayana. This must be our constant attitude. We must feel it in our heart and contemplate it. Let us meditate on saints every day. Let us become pure in heart, though, word and deed. Let us become saints so that we can fulfil the goal of existence.