

The Role of Devotion in Spiritual Life

Devotion is a key motivator in spirituality. It inspires you to want to make spiritual progress and to perform selfless service to God and humanity.

Without devotion, meditation is a boring, mechanical process; with devotion, meditation comes alive, and you look forward to each meditation sitting as a way to draw closer to your Beloved.

Without devotion, service appears as a way to exploit others' wealth and labor; with devotion, service offers a way to share your love, compassion, and joy with those who are in need and who are suffering.

Without devotion, the environment is neglected and your surroundings deteriorate; with devotion, you renew your surroundings and make them into a shrine of love and beauty.

Without devotion, you think only about mundane affairs and seek to solve your personal problems; with devotion you remember the Lord and dedicate your life to moving closer to Him and serving Him.

Without devotion, your primary focus is your ego, and working to fulfill your desires and personal dreams; with devotion, your primary focus is on the three immortal principles—your attentional principle, your spirit, and your Soul—and you work to develop them.

Without devotion, you advocate for those things that improve your own life and enrich you; with devotion, you dedicate yourself to a cause greater than yourself, and seek to advance it, despite personal sacrifice and inconvenience.

Without devotion, you are content to remain in the waking state of awareness and to leave your inner life unexplored; with devotion, you seek to plumb the infinite depths within you and bring out the Grace and Power of God.

The Faces of Devotion

We see many faces of devotion; it expresses in a variety of ways.

- There is the devotion of a mother to her child.
- There is the devotion of a nurse for her patient, or a teacher for her student.
- There is the devotion of a music fan for his hero, or a sports fan for his team.
- There is the devotion of a citizen to his candidate and his political party.
- There is the devotion of the volunteer to support and obtain funding for a worthy cause that helps others.
- There is the devotion of the religious believer, who seeks to win the favor and blessings of the Divine in this life and after death, and to encourage others to adopt his faith.
- There is the devotion of the spirit, who seeks to be with the Beloved Lord; the attentional principle, who seeks to commune with the inner Guide and Master; and the Soul, which seeks to fulfill its spiritual purpose and ascend to Mastery and Liberation.

It is this last type of devotion that marks an aspirant or disciple. This is an inner drive that pushes them to transcend the personality and to ascend into the Presence of God.

Devotion and Your Personality Ray

One of the challenges of aspirants and disciples is to bring their personality into the spiritual work. While the 6th Ray Personality, with its devotional nature, makes this transition readily and is eager to be of service to the Soul, the Master, and to God, other Personality Ray types do find their way of expressing devotion and service. This is shown below.

Personality Ray	Ways It Expresses Devotion
1st	Removing the suffering of others; freeing others from oppression; defending others; mentoring, championing, and empowering others
2nd	Teaching or counseling others, imparting wisdom and encouragement to others, telling others spiritual stories and giving satsang, inspiring others
3rd Ray	Managing a project in service to God or the spiritual Master, developing a philosophical exposition or a scripture to expound spiritual teachings, clarifying spiritual ideas and assisting others to gain discernment of the spiritual essences and the stations of the path
4th Ray	Expressing the spiritual experiences of the attentional principle, the spirit, or the Soul as Art; immersion in the spiritual present as the Flow State or union with the Tao; experience of spiritual beauty, love, and bliss
5th Ray	Carrying out regular meditation practice (sadhana), doing important actions needed to advance the Mission of the spiritual Master, performing a job or volunteering to assist the day-to-day operations of the organization

Personality Ray	Ways It Expresses Devotion
6th Ray	Dedication of effort, energy, wealth, and time to serve the spiritual Master and God; active remembrance of God in daily life; consecration of life to God; expression of active worship and love for God through song and praise; creating altars or spiritual spaces for meditation; performing study with full attention and meditation with love; obedience and surrender to the commandment of the Master (Agya)
7th Ray	Aspiring to be a spiritual hero and to achieve targeted states of spiritual realization and Mastery; seeking to gain spiritual powers and secret knowledge; aiming for comprehensive understanding and full mastery of all states and stages of the Path; being an example or role model to others; achieving excellence and honor

Each of the Personality Rays has its way of expressing its devotion to God, even if it is less overt than that of the 6th Ray. Each of these types of devotion gives rise to important service done for the spiritual Master and his or her Mission.

Expression of Devotion in the Superconscious Mind

In the Superconscious mind, the central focus of devotion is through the spiritual heart, which seeks to gain union with the Divine through traveling back to God on the channels of the Nada. This creates the magnetic center, or the evocation, that draws the Grace and Aid of the spiritual Masters.

The attentional principle may also show devotion through its dedication to meditation, its aspiration to spiritual progress, and its willingness to receive guidance from its spiritual Master and to be of service to God and humanity.

These twin beams of aspiration move ever upward towards greater purity, clearer vision, and greater love and wisdom.

Devotion Contrasted with Fanaticism

Devotion and fanaticism are the positive and negative poles of spiritual emotionality:

- Devotion brings out the best in a human being; fanaticism draws out that which is base and ignoble—intolerance, hatred, arrogance, cruelty, injustice, ignorance, and blasphemy.
- Devotion is based on love and idealization of the loved one; fanaticism seeks to further its own ends and to destroy those who oppose its aims.
- Devotion sees the best, the good, and the holy in others; fanaticism sees only that others must believe and act as they do, and must obey the scripture and follow the God in which they believe.
- Devotion spawns altruism, helpfulness, charity, and service; fanaticism gives rise to violence, destruction, and war; injustice and oppression towards those that do not follow its beliefs and values.
- Devotion seeks to be in the presence of the Beloved and earn his or her favor; fanaticism seeks to make everyone believe the way they believe and act the way they do.
- Devotion arises from the personality, the attentional principle, and the spirit; fanaticism arises from the ego.
- Devotion, if it is given to one who is worthy, brings redemption and fulfillment; fanaticism tears down idols and destroys everything that is not like itself—fanatics vow to make everyone like them and destroy anyone who is not like them.
- Devotion is born from love; fanaticism stems from ignorance and fear.

Cultivating Conscious Devotion Instead of Blind Faith

Aspirants and disciples need to weed out their tendencies to fanaticism. They do so by cultivating **conscious devotion**.

Conscious devotion means that you understand the purpose of your spiritual development, where you are going, and who is the Master who supervises your spiritual development. You meditate with purpose. You understand why you do service, and want to do so out of your love. You seek to prepare yourself to minister the Light of God and to become an instrument of Grace, Love, and Healing.

In conscious devotion, you do not simply believe things because someone who is more advanced than you on the spiritual path tells them to you, or because the Master said it, or because you have read something in a book or scripture. Instead, you verify all things on the touchstone of your own experience: you see it, hear it, feel it, and touch it—so you know that it is true.

In conscious devotion, you discover truths through study and meditation, but you do not cling to them as though they are the final and ultimate truths that all men must believe and follow. Instead, you continue to refine your truths, so that you may understand them more clearly, and that you may gather new truths that amplify and expand the truths you have learned, and put them into context.

In conscious devotion, you are ever learning and growing. You do not hold the knowledge you have gained to be complete and comprehensive, but continue to strive for greater mastery and knowledge.

In conscious devotion, you base what you believe on what you have experienced and what you have been able to verify. You do not hold your belief as irrefutable and beyond challenge, without finding the source from which it comes.

How Devotion Changes Throughout Your Lifetime

In my teenage years and throughout my twenties, my devotion was centered in my spirit, and my main aim was gaining salvation and liberation. As those objectives were achieved, my devotion moved to my attentional principle and to my personality. As this shift occurred, my focus became ministry, bringing out the teachings of the Mudrashram® lineage, and service.

In many people, their devotion never reaches the state of tapping into their immortal essences—the spirit, the attentional principle, and the Soul. Instead, they express their devotion as idealization in relationships, and through symbols that represent their yearning and aspiration. For example:

- Children may idealize their parents, or certain of their friends.
- Teenagers and young adults may idealize their girlfriends or boyfriends, and may marry them and dedicate their lives to pleasing them.
- Teenagers may idealize musicians or sports teams, and be loyal fans their whole lives.
- Young adults may aspire to achieve wealth and material success, and may idealize those people who have achieved those aims—motivational speakers, writers, and celebrities—and may seek to be like them.
- Parents and grandparents may idealize their children and grandchildren, and invest their energy and love raising them.
- People seeking change in the world may idealize politicians, and support their candidacy for public office.

- Adherents of religions may believe in a spiritual teacher and God, and follow the dictates of that faith. They interface with God as a mystery through symbols and prayer. They maintain fervent, but blind faith that they will go to Heaven and prophecies of their scriptures will come true. They do not understand the meaning of their scriptures, but speculate upon them and draw out meaning and guidance from their symbolic truths as best they can.

This externalized devotion we call **extrinsic devotion**.

Those that have an inner awakening as the attentional principle, the spirit, or the Soul experience devotion that is not based on relationships, ambition, or symbols—they experience **intrinsic devotion**, devotion that directly arises from their spiritual essences.



How Does Devotion Express in You?

- (1) In what ways do you express your devotion at the level of your personality?
- (2) In what ways do you express extrinsic devotion through your relationships, ambition, and symbols?
- (3) In what ways have you experienced intrinsic devotion through your attentional principle or spirit?
- (4) When you focus on your magnetic center, the devotion of your spiritual heart, to what do you aspire?
- (5) When you focus on your attentional principle, what are you striving to become? What is your spiritual objective?
- (6) How do your personality and Soul interface with one another? Do they cooperate, or are they pulling in different directions? Do they work together seamlessly, or are you in inner conflict?
- (7) In what ways do you demonstrate conscious devotion? In what ways are you still clinging to blind faith?

Aspirants and disciples will benefit from cultivating conscious and intrinsic devotion, and rooting out their tendencies of blind faith and fanaticism.

Through this means they will shift from worshiping a symbolic and mysterious God to a real and knowable one; from fear and ignorance to love and wisdom; from being established in a world cut off from spirituality to abiding in Union; and from abiding in terrified mortality to conscious immortality.

Thank you for attending our webinar today!

