

## How Close are You to God?

This is a question that should tickle the fancy or imagination of practically everyone. This is a question that will always be daunting and evoking in our everyday lives. The question is not how close God is to you, for that, He himself knows but how close do you feel to Him?. Closeness to God is never easy to assess or evaluate unless one is able to feel it precisely and then one does not need anyone's endorsement or advise as such.

However there are several ways by which you can depict such closeness, and as a particular perspective, we will take it from the attributes of God that mankind has so majestically assigned to God.

God's attributes are in the thousands but we will take the measure from the soul promptings of Guru Nanak Sahib's *Japji Sahib*. The first *pauri* or chapter starts of with *Ek Om Kar* and then subsequently describes God being *nirbhav* meaning without fear and *nirvair* meaning without enmity.

It would then be safe to infer that as we human beings begin to exfoliate our fears and enmities as we get closer and closer to God.

God is without fear but our lives are laden with a variety of fears. Fear is generally associated with guilt, mistrust, our attachments and sense of survival, lack of knowledge and ignorance.

On the other hand, God is without any enmity while most of us are saturated with malicious feelings in varying degrees.

Enmity is associated with dislike, hatred, anger, envy, jealousy and vengeance.

"The darkness of fear can be kindled only by the flame of faith" – Dadu; as faith leads to submission to the Almighty and the experience of devotional ecstasy.

"The fire of enmity can only be extinguished by the fountain of love." – Dadu. Love has many facets as the facets of a diamond, such as compassion, mercy, friendliness, kindness, righteousness and so on. The brilliance or the sparkle of love is beyond words as there is no greater flow than love and no greater essence of religion than love. Fundamentally, faith and love are like ladders which uplift

one into a better understanding of life, meditative-ness, silence and ultimately – closeness or a feeling of oneness with God.

“Love is the only balm that creates emotional calm” – Dadu.

The purpose of all kinds of rituals, prayers, *satsangs* is to grow in faith and love. Without these two aspects, without the quiver of our hearts with such feelings, all our movements of the body in performing rituals are chalked to epileptic spells or senseless movements and the sounds of our prayers simply become the noise of an empty vessel.

This is how humanity goes on cheating itself into hypocrisy! How can hearts that have become dry and arid, barren as ever, ever hope to garnish themselves with green pastures as a tribute to human evolution?

We attend temples, mosques, churches, synagogues with an appearance of piousness but in our hearts we carry the thorns of enmity instead of the flower of love. Blessed are those who remain loving at the altar of worship as well as outside in relating with the world.

No matter, we keep Godly statues in our homes, read the scriptures and give citations and sermons and advise others, but if in our hearts we carry feelings of fear and enmity, then we have moved away from God.

As a start, we all have to realize that just as one factory makes several kinds of dolls i.e. Chinese, Mongolian, Indian, Spanish etc and adorns them with clothing, in a similar way, we all have come from that one factory of divinity. To the factory owner all dolls are of equal importance! He does not discriminate!

But mankind, unfortunately bent upon destruction, keeps on dividing, causing despair and endless animosity through endless strife.

The day that we have seen our hypocrisies – we have taken our first step towards Godhood. The day we begin to see that most of us have been victims of superstition and primitive thinking! The day mankind is able to see its follies in their actions that spell violence and war! The day we are able to see that we act more out of greed than our needs! The day we realize the transience of earthly life then and only then, we have truly begun our inner journey or inner pilgrimage.

Christ had said do unto others as you would have others do unto you, but we do just the opposite. Christ says love thy neighbor but we see them with suspicion

and apprehension. Christ said to forgive and keep on forgiving but we insist on hating! We backbite, gossip, slander, and trample on those who wronged us or appeared to have wronged us.

So in order to be close to God we should for certain emulate a few attributes of God in addition to whatever path or rituals that we might be following.

Let us see what Lord Krishna has to say in the *Bhagavad Gita*.

“He who does all actions for Me, who looks upon me as the Supreme, who is devoted to me, who is free from all attachments, who bears enmity towards no creatures, he comes to me O Arjuna” C11-verse 55.

Here again the key word “enmity” appears. So long one bears an iota of enmity in our hearts, God is as far than the furthestest of all horizons.

Is there any merit in our reading the scriptures or parroting the verses if we have been unable to banish this small word – enmity – with such universal implications? Of what use is our intelligence when we do not realize that the root cause of all ills on earth has its origin in this word. By removal of this word from our hearts, not only will we be fit for salvation, but we will be doing God’s work by promoting peace and at the same time become closer to God.

When families, societies, nations have sincerely worked to remove this curse of Satan who hides in the deep crevices of our minds, only then can global peace prevail, wherein the showers of universal brotherhood shall begin to pour upon all.

With the advent of peace shall arise harmonious interactions between people and nations and then will dawn a new-found economic prosperity and its new joys which we have all been waiting for. Without collective peace which our mother earth yearns for in tears, we will surely perish into oblivion.

Unfortunately, mankind has been banging its head against so many doors, books, scriptures that we keep on missing the point. And the point is that no matter the amount of knowledge you may have amassed, we all have to enter through one door first to commence our inner journey. Take any one word – compassion or mercy or love or forgiveness or *Ahimsa* etc and go deeper and deeper in its direction by thinking, acting and feeling. Sooner or later, all other doors will open up – doors of Godly attributes will be opened up for you to weed out all

impurities from your hearts and then peace shall surely radiate upon your consciousness!

To the soul personality that lives on earth without any enmity, my humble prostrations!

— *D.N Harjani aka Dadu*