

From The Material To God-Consciousness

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To live a meaningful life, we need to balance our thoughts, words and actions. However, few are able to do this. Either we think too much or too little; in either case our actions are gravely affected. For those who think too much, action is wanting and for the thoughtless life turns out to be a casualty. Although harmonising thoughts and actions is desirable for acting wisely, there is a third element – speech – that needs to be present to make life wholesome. Unless all three – thoughts, words and actions – are in unison, you cannot strike a balance. For sure, the person whose speech belies his thoughts and actions has no worthwhile credentials to speak of.

Hence scriptures stress the need for unison in our “manasa-vachakarmana”, that is, thoughts, words and actions. Since the mind is the seat of our thoughts, words and actions, cultivation of mind is of paramount importance.

Perhaps the best method out of many recommended for mind-control is the one employed by Zen Buddhists. While engaged in an activity a Zen Buddhist will keep reminding himself, “Where is the mind when the body is here?” This kind of auto-reminder helps him to keep body and mind together. Then even simple activities like sipping tea or watching a television serial could add considerably to the joy of living.

Sometimes auto-suggestions are beneficial to keep body and mind together. For instance, when we sit down to meditate, there is every possibility of the mind wandering everywhere. The following auto-suggestion in the form of prayer can prove highly beneficial: “O God, I am happy to be

here...happy to be with You. And this is my only desire for now. I have no other desire. And there is nothing here that belongs to me. All is yours. Even this place, my body, everything is yours. So, take care of these, if you will. But let me be with you...I have no other desire...” And this simple exercise helps us in freeing our mind of desires that may be distracting us at the hour.

Though mind-control is important on our spiritual journey, that alone is not enough to attain God-consciousness. Swami Ram Sukh Dasji points out, we have to add to our activities – of karma, bhakti or gyan – ras or the very essence of life. By adding seva ras, the essence of service to our actions, we can make them selfless and free ourselves of the vices of doership.



THE SPEAKING TREE

Likewise, we can fructify our devotional service by adding to it, prem ras, the essence of love. Again, his study of scriptures is fructified only when vivek vichar or the essence of contemplation is added to it. Thus only by adding the essence of service, love and contemplation to our activities can we have our consciousness changed from the material to God-consciousness.

Once we have changed our consciousness – from the material to God-consciousness – we must strive to live the rest of our lives only in God-consciousness. Then we will run no risk of reverting to material consciousness. All our scriptures and saints recommend just this. As Ramakrishna Paramhansa put it: “First rub your hands with oil and then break open the jackfruit; otherwise they will be smeared with its sticky milk.” That is, equip yourself with the oil of divine love before setting yourself to the duties of the world.