



THE HOLY LIGHT ACADEMY



STEPPING STONES ALONG THE PATH



Worship

As devotion is your expression of love and yearning for the Divine, worship is a form of tangible enactment of this devotion.

Worship is the way to contact God within by opening your heart and soul to Him. In true worship you are learning to love God, God already loves you.

Although it is generally accepted to describe worship as a group event, where the assembly of a congregation participates together, worship should also be private, through your personal devotions, prayers, meditations, and so on.

Worship through prayer involves praise, glory, thanksgiving and adoration to our Beloved God. Supplication in prayer is secondary, but you must acknowledge God first before you express your own needs or the needs of others in prayer. Once you have opened your heart to God in prayer, having contacted the Divinity within to where you feel the Holy Presence, you have accomplished true worship through prayer. Contacting the Divine Being in your heart through prayer is experiencing real worship.

Worship through singing is an emotional uplifting of your heart and soul as you sing praiseworthy words to God, in glory and adoration to Him. The whole assembly singing hymnals is a glorious, heartfelt event, if the people's hearts and souls are expressing true enthusiasm in the Spirit, and hence true worship is being expressed.

Worship through meditation and contemplation is similar to prayer as you reach inward toward the Divinity and Holy Presence within your heart, for as you reach in, God reaches out. For He first called you to Him, that you might soon come back to Him. A divine relationship begins, a holy bond is formed, and this is the beginning of the whole path of Divine Union.

Sunday worship services incorporate the above items among other elements, as the whole assembly participates in uplifting their hearts to God, being filled with the Divine Presence through meditation, prayer, singing, receiving the message of the sermon, and scriptural readings, etc. As everyone in the congregation uplifts their hearts to God through these means, true worship is attained, and when the group expresses this in unison, as a whole body, no part being separate, then a true unity in God has begun. The harmony and unity of the whole uplifted assembly opening up God can be a very powerful and enlightening experience for all. Hence, true worship of God has been accomplished.

Worship involves practicing the presence of God, whether this is going out in nature, sensing or feeling a deeper reality all around you, or when you interact with people, knowing God is within them just as God is within you. However, practicing the presence of God through meditation, going deep within, this is truly a profound way of worship.

It is important where your heart is during worship. Therefore, worship is not true worship

unless your heart and soul resonate with divine love for the Creator.

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.” (Mark 12:30)

This commandment of love given by Jesus Christ is the most important key to worship. But realize, by doing this, you shall likewise experience God’s love for you, for He first loved you from the beginning, which inspires you to love Him in return.

Let us use some key quotes and passages from *Celebration of Discipline*, by Richard J. Foster, in his chapter called, “The Discipline of Worship”:

“Worship is the human response to the divine initiative.”

“Worship is our response to the overtures of love from the heart of the Father. Its central reality is found ‘in spirit and truth’.”

“We can use all the right techniques and methods, we can have the best possible liturgy, but we have not worshiped the Lord until Spirit touches spirit. . . Our spirit must be ignited by the divine fire.”

“To say that forms are secondary is not to say they are irrelevant. As long as we are finite human beings we must have forms. We must have ‘wineskins’ that will embody our experience of worship. But the forms are not the worship; they only lead us into the worship.”

“One reason worship should be considered a Spiritual Discipline is because it is an ordered way of acting and living that sets us before God so he can transform us.”

To sum it up, worship of God covers a broad range of spiritual avenues and connects to other disciplines as well. Hence, it is the key to divine intimacy and necessary for your spiritual journey into Divine Union.

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