

近与亲的比照

我们遇到一些人，宣称自己住在百善地尼乐园数十年与薄伽梵甚为‘接近’。有一些人宣称基于在组织内的职位，他们跟薄伽梵很‘亲近’。我们看到另一类人，他们因住在太远或住在外国，不能接近祂而感到伤心难过。我们还遇到另一些人，他们由于不能靠近或亲近祂而感到无助。

我个人认为，那些宣称自己与薄伽梵亲近的人是愚昧的，而那些感觉到自己与祂疏远的人是幼稚的。假如任何人公开宣称他和薄伽梵很亲近或很接近，毋庸置疑，他是自大的和自我的，而毁灭性的坠落很快就降临于他。在另一方面，如果一个人基于他不那么接近而耿耿于怀，那他可是愚蠢至极了。就灵性而言，两者的心态都是错误的。

在其中的一个讲道中，薄伽梵说，那所谓的接近或亲近纯粹是心理的而不是肉体的。祂举了一个例子：当邻居奄奄一息于病床上，你无动于衷。而当你得知你远在美国的儿子身体不适时，你就顿时感到不安了。邻居不影响你，为何？你的儿子虽远在美国，但心灵上是亲近的，而肉体靠近的邻居却影响不了你。

薄伽梵一再地告诉学院的学生，“蜜蜂从老远的地方到此地来吸取莲花的花蜜，而在池塘里的蜗牛、青蛙、鱼类虽如此靠近莲花却不知其价值。同理，许多信徒知道薄伽梵的价值而从远处来到这里。你则像是青蛙和蜗牛，不知价值为何物。你每天看到我却不知道价值。我谈论，我歌唱，我说笑，我进餐，我跟你一起走动并因此而迷乱了你在灯光下，你总是看到一个影子。同样的，你也处于影子之中。灯塔的光能照射到很远的距离，但在灯塔之下却是一片漆黑。

薄伽梵也说，“你到布达峇地来的次数不是关键所在。你瞧，巴士司机和售票员每天都来这里，他们看到我的神性吗？”

我想让你知道的是，‘接近’是不够的。它必须结合‘亲’才算完整。当你‘亲’时，接近才得以实践。接近的成效在于‘亲’并带来福乐。实际的灵性体验靠两者的结合才获得。一个父亲很爱他的儿子。他很亲儿子；然而那是不够的，假如儿子住在很远的地方。父亲也希望儿子住得靠近他。同样，一个人必须既‘近’且‘亲’神，以便受益于我们的神化身。

薄伽梵给了一个例子：当点燃两片柴薪时，柴薪着火焚烧。在燃烧当儿，若加以风扇或吹气，其火焰就更猛。两片柴薪应该置于相近之处，然后点燃。两片柴薪既‘近’（两片柴薪互相靠近）且‘亲’（吹气）就会导致至福的火焰。

取自《薄伽梵斯里沙迪亚赛峇峇普及和实用的教导》第1章

问题：

1. 你对那些自称跟薄伽梵很亲近的人有何感想？为什么？【顺序讲述】
2. ‘在灯光下，你总是看到一个影子’，有时人们对眼前的事物视若无睹。这样的事情在你身上发生过吗？请说明。【公开讨论】
3. 如何成为神所亲爱的人？【顺序讲述】
4. 一个人必须既‘近’且‘亲’神，以便受益于我们的神化身。为什么这么说呢？【公开讨论】

June 2018: SCA Study Circle

Nearness vis-à-vis Dearness

We come across people who claim to be very 'near' to Bhagavan, staying in Prasanthi Nilayam for decades. There are others who declare that they are 'close' to Bhagavan by virtue of their position in the organization. We see another category who feel sad for being far away from Him, living abroad or long distance away. Further, we encounter others who express their helplessness since they could not be near or close to Him.

I personally feel that those that say they are close to Bhagavan are ignorant, while those that feel they are distanced from Him are innocent. If anyone openly declares that he is very close or near to Bhagavan, undoubtedly he is proud and egoistic, with his fatal fall fast approaching. On the other hand, if one goes on feeling sad on grounds that he is not so near, he is foolish. Spiritually both the attitudes are wrong.

Bhagavan in one of His discourses mentioned that the so called nearness or closeness is purely psychological and not physical. He gave an illustration: When the neighbour is on death bed, you are not bothered or disturbed. Whereas, when you come to know that your son in U.S.A. is unwell, you are totally upset. The man next door has not affected you. Why? Your son, though in U.S.A. a long distance away is mentally near and mere physical nearness to the neighbour did not influence you.

Bhagavan repeatedly tells the college students, "Honeybees come from far off places to drink the nectar from the lotus flower, whereas, snails, frogs, fishes in the pond near the lotus do not know its value. Similarly, many devotees come here from distant lands knowing the value of Bhagavan. You are like frogs and snails and do not know the value. You see Me every day and so do not know the value. I talk, I sing, I joke, I dine and I move with you and therefore you are deluded. Under the lamp you always find a shadow. Similarly, you are in the shadow. The light from the lighthouse reaches long distances, but beneath the lighthouse it is dark.

Bhagavan also said, "It is not the number of trips that you make to Puttaparthi that matters. You see the bus drivers and conductors coming every day. Do they see the divinity?"

What I want to impress upon you is that to be 'near' is not enough. It has to be coupled with being 'dear' to be complete. When once you are 'dear' the nearness finds its fulfilment. Proximity is fruitful by being 'dear' and it confers bliss. The actual spiritual experience is obtained with the combination of these two. A father loves his son very much. The son is very dear to him; yet, is not enough if the son stays at a long distance. Father also desires that the son be near him. Similarly, one has to be both 'near' and 'dear' to God to be totally benefited by our Avatar.

Bhagavan gave an example; when two pieces of firewood are lit up they are consumed by fire. Added to this, when we fan or blow air, the flame increases. The two pieces of wood should be placed 'near', lit and be burning. These two 'near' (two pieces close to each other) and 'dear' (blowing the air) led to a flame of bliss.

Universal & Practical Teachings of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, Chapter 1

Questions:

1. How do you feel towards people who claim to be close to Bhagavan? Why? **【Sequential narration】**
2. 'Under the lamp you always find a shadow', sometimes people can't see what's right in front of them. Has this happened to you? Elaborate. **【Open discussion】**
3. How to become dear to God? **【Sequential narration】**
4. Why is it said that 'one has to be both near and dear to God to be totally benefited by our Avatar' ? **【Open discussion】**