

Living Presence Chapter 24 Overcoming Self-Centeredness

Kabir begins the chapter by telling us we have a:

PROBLEM: WE THINK OF OURSELF TOO OFTEN AND IN THE WRONG WAY.

CAUSED BY: insecurity, need for attention, feeling of separateness, ignorance of the unity of life

RESULT: Self-importance and greed or Self-hatred

What does it mean to think of ourselves in the wrong way? We think we are better than others or that we are not as good as so and so; we think “I want” if only I had a boyfriend my life would be so much better.

Thinking differently is saying things like “my family needs this, my body needs this, my work needs this, help me meet those needs, help me to reflect your abundance.” This opens us to spiritual energy.

Again we are taken away from presence by greed, insecurity and self importance and into “identification.”

With what are we identifying with? THE EGO. All these things come from the ego which keeps us separate from God These things keep us from gaining knowledge and having presence.

So what do we do when we see we are thinking of ourselves too much?

TURN FROM GETTING TO GIVING

Here again, watching our thoughts is a valuable tool for Spiritual Development.

Kabir says that “True service is giving of ourselves, of what we naturally are.”

To be truly human is to learn how to give. Kabir says this is even more important than exercising the will or learning to meditate. These things are tools to decondition ourselves and undermine self-importance and greed.

We can't really see things as they are because we are so self-centered and egotistical.

Thus we suffer. Kabir connects us to a previous chapter when he says that the suffering we feel is really a mercy in disguise.

The suffering can push us toward the Divine and toward less involvement with the ego. Suffering is always pushing us toward knowledge of the SELF.

Kabir says we are always suffering because of this attachment and our separation from God.

Pain moves us to presence. We don't need to be angry about suffering. If we can accept it, we can use it as a tool to make us more aware of our identification with the Ego or the False Self and our separation from God.

In the last paragraph, Kabir is talking about consciously bearing pain without complaint. Kabir calls this the fire of Love.

This kind of suffering brings us closer to the presence of God. Kabir encourages us to take refuge in the Divine when we are suffering.