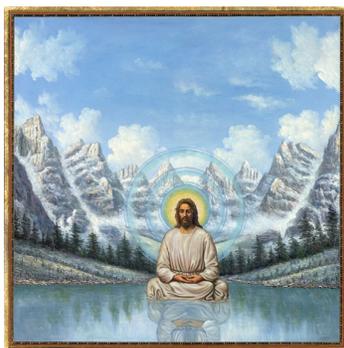


A Primer on Spiritual Emotions

Human beings have a range of emotional expression, ranging from reactivity to environmental triggers to the heights of rapture. This webinar will explore those emotions, and delve into what are the spiritual emotions, and how they can be harnessed to motivate spiritual progress. We will also explore how devotion can be warped in cults and terrorist groups, and how you can recognize and avoid these groups.

When we study the continuum of human emotions, we discern that they appear to take seven major forms.

- **Reactive emotion** – These emotional reactions arise based on the presentation of selective information. These are the common emotional reactions of grief, outrage, disgust, shock, terror, pride, envy, anger, and shame. These emotions can be readily manipulated through images, carefully chosen words, or musical and environmental backgrounds.
- **Sexual attraction and excitement** – these are the common emotions that arise during courtship and romance, and reach their peak in the experiences of falling in love, and the ecstasy of sexual orgasm.
- **Heightened optimism** – these emotions tap the sense that opportunity is limitless, that anything is possible and can be achieved if one sets their mind to it, and that one can achieve whatever one can dream.



- **Hysteria** – the intensified emotions of hysteria arise during states of fear, rage, or when one believes delusional or false beliefs. This is the emotional state that occurs when people are caught up in the collective emotions of a mob, the terrifying experience of trying to escape and survive during a catastrophe, the terror of a group panic, or the political or religious frenzy of a fanatical crowd.
- **Religious enthusiasm** – believers generate these intense reverential and devotional emotions through worship ceremonies, singing, and chanting. This may be caught as a contagion of the Spirit, like when individuals, who are in an altered state of consciousness, or when they are filled by a spiritual anointing of the Holy Spirit, lift others into the same trance-like absorption in communion with the form of the Divine that they worship.
- **Devotion** – the core of this emotion arises from the spirit as a yearning to be with God and to receive His Grace. When this pure emotion is filtered through the personality and directed to objects and other people, it gives rise to the different types of love and adoration we feel.
- **The ecstasy of spiritual love** – This highest emotion, which is called rapture, occurs when the spirit is caught up in the Nadamic current and progressively draws closer to God.



Awakening Devotion and the Spiritual Emotions

Music is a bridge through all of the levels of emotion. For this reason, singing and chanting are included in religious and spiritual worship ceremonies because of their powerful ability to evoke spiritual and religious emotions.

Devotion is the emotion that arises from the spirit when it has love for God. When devotion takes root in the spiritual heart, it becomes a compelling and life-absorbing passion. It is however, a positive passion, in that it leads the spirit to embark on its homeward journey.

There are several expressions of devotion through the personality. There is the devotion of

- Pet owners for their pet
- Parents for their children
- Men or women for their romantic partner
- Fans for the star or celebrity that is the object of their adoration
- Citizens for the leader of their religious party, or dedication to their country
- Religious believers for their religious leader or the spiritual Master described in their scriptures

These personal zone forms of devotion are based on your beliefs, values, assumptions, expectations, idealization, and projections. Your

- Beliefs build a foundation of trust and liking for someone
- Values rank someone's ability, goodness, or importance—when you value someone highly, you look up to them or admire them

- Assumptions are beliefs you make about someone's character or intentions, or their attitude or feelings towards you
- Expectations are your guess about someone's future behavior, or their feelings towards you
- Idealization occurs when you make someone larger than life, godlike, or special
- Projection is the cascade of wishes and desires that you place upon someone from your unconscious mind

Spiritual devotion begins when you rise above the personal zone forms of devotion. In spiritual devotion

- You develop a conscious, living relationship with God and your spiritual Master on the higher Planes
- You remove the filters of belief, valuing, assumptions, idealization, expectation, idealization, and projection, and see God and your Master as they are
- You experience the state of darshan, when your spirit is naked before God, and you behold the Divine as Infinite Love, Grace, and Beauty

The expressions of devotion through the personality channel your spirit's love; in pure devotion, however, you are lifted to the heights to behold the radiant countenance of the Divine Beloved—beyond all worldly objects.

When your spirit beholds this vision, it is pierced through with the arrow of love, and it is wounded. When this occurs, the spirit cannot rest until it is reunited with the Divine Beloved.

When the spirit is caught up in the current of the Nada, it experiences rapture. Rapture is the most sublime state of emotion.

People try to experience rapture through injecting drugs. They try to touch rapture through sexual orgasm. They try to reach rapture at the moment of peak sports performance.

But none of these can approach rapture. These things are euphoric and ecstatic. But rapture is consummate euphoria and ecstasy—you can only know it when the spirit travels in full consciousness back to God.

[Those of you who may be attending this webinar who have not studied with Mudrashram® should know that we teach the method for spiritual rapture in our meditation courses.]

What Factors Stimulate Devotion?

Excerpted from “Exploring the Depths of the Devoted Mind” in *The Winds of Adi Sat Guru Desh: the Discourses of Swami Prabhu Maharaj* © 2011

“If your attention is focused on your spirit, you will activate the love and virtue of your spirit, and may awaken its longing to go back to the Divine, and you may feel its devotion...”

“When we explore the development of deep spiritual devotion seen in the disciples of Great Initiates, we find that the suggestion given in Satsang first awakened many of these followers’ devotion.”

“They might have experienced this initial Satsang in person in the presence of the Initiate or one of their advanced disciples. They might have read it in a book written by the Initiate or an advanced disciple. They might have heard an audiotape of the Initiate giving a discourse. They might have seen the Initiate or an advanced disciple in a video.”

“These Great Initiates and their advanced disciples evoke devotion in those who listen through communicating their spiritual message by Satsang and letting the listener feel the tides of Light, Grace and Love that flows through their presence.”

“Their words and wordless presence have a profound influence on the beginning seeker of truth, the path-seeking aspirant, and the committed disciple, who has already chosen to follow the Initiate...”

Factors that Condition Devotion

“It is a general rule of thumb that those who are happy with who they are, with what they have, and what they do in their human life, generally do not look beyond that experience for spiritual solace.”

“It is the harbingers of misery, in its many forms, that often become the goads that spur the seeker to look for an answer in the inner life, and to take up the quest for spiritual progress and realization.”

“Among the unhappiness-promoting factors that can influence people to get into touch with their spirituality and fan the spark of devotion include:”

- (1) Loss of a beloved parent early in life
- (2) The experience of abuse or trauma in their early lives
- (3) Disappointment in attaining a core life dream
- (4) Being left behind by peers who move into careers and marriage
- (5) Protracted physical illness that makes leading a normal life impossible
- (6) Inability to form a stable sense of self and relatedness with others, leading to a sense of rootlessness and alienation
- (7) Frustration in attaining success in any life endeavor



“There are also positive factors that may lead to the development of devotion. These include:”

- (1) Reading scriptures and spiritual books, or books about the lives of saints
- (2) Awakening of spiritual tendencies (samskaras) from past lives, which were spent doing spiritual practices
- (3) Contact with a Saint or Master by hearing their discourse or spending time in their presence
- (4) Development of the practice of meditation to the stage where communion with the Divine becomes possible
- (5) A life-changing encounter with the Divine, which resulted in religious conversion
- (6) Receiving the “gift of devotion” from a spiritual Master
- (7) Experience of a miracle or apparent supernatural intervention that or saves your life or changes your destiny, which you perceive was clearly an act of Mercy or Grace

“Whether devotion will develop within you is conditioned by these positive and negative factors. Exposure to the teachings of Great Initiates through their discourses can bear the fruit of devotion both in those readied by the harsh edge of Fate, and also those who have been nurtured by the warm sun of Grace.”



What Inspires Devotion?

By George A. Boyd © 2002

“Idealization of another individual can inspire devotion. Devotion can be awakened when the other individual embodies:”

- An ideal that you aspire to become
- A victory that you desire to achieve
- Mastery that you seek to similarly attain
- Success that you choose to emulate
- Courage that inspires personal self-sacrifice and dedication.
- Spiritual perfection and Mastery of a Path to which you aspire to gain union
- Sublime creativity, beauty, purity, virtue or Grace that you wish to inculcate into you own nature and likewise embody

“Spiritual followers and devotees readily idealize those advanced Initiates and spiritual teachers, who identify with their ensouling entity, and who remain in that state of consciousness for long periods of time.”

“These followers no longer see their spiritual teacher as merely another person, but as an embodiment of Divinity or a Divine Incarnation.”

“Through perceiving their spiritual teacher in this way, the followers of that teacher develop powerful devotion, intense loyalty, and become willing to sacrifice their personal aims and ambitions to be with this teacher and to become like him or her. This devotion can become a transforming, life-changing force.”



“Devotion has reformed people’s characters. It has inspired great art and music. It has built great temples and cathedrals. It has fired up human hearts to embark on crusades and jihad, where they are willing to lay down their lives for their teacher and their teacher’s cause. It has imbued their spirits with a fiery zeal to meditate and make progress on the spiritual path.”

“Without devotion, spirituality is a dry, philosophical skeleton. With devotion, spirituality becomes alive and the spirit is filled with an irresistible longing to go home to its Divine Beloved. It will do anything, go anywhere and give up anything to be with its Beloved.”

Abuse of Devotion

“There are those who know how to inspire devotion; but they then abuse it. These are leaders of religious and political cults, terrorist organizations, and hate groups who use their ability to make others idealize and fear them, and control their followers’ lives.”

“They channel the powerful energy of their followers into destructive activities, into fanaticism and paranoia, into atrocities of violence and acts of terror. This need not be.”

Rightly Directing Devotion

“Devotion springs from the spirit within you. It arises spontaneously and effortlessly from the heart. Devotion inspires idealization and emulation of others, awe, and reverence—even worship.”

“Through devotion, you see the Divinity within another: they become transformed into a god or goddess, an angel, a hero or a mythological archetype—larger than life.”

To avoid giving your devotion to some one who is unworthy, consider:”

1. Your devotion ultimately belongs to the Divine Beloved, Who emanated your spirit out of Its own essence (be certain that your idealization of another does not become idolatry).
2. Idealization can inspire you to improve yourself and rise beyond your own shortcomings and perceived limitations. Realize that it can also become a means by which you torture yourself with continual envy, jealousy, frustration, and unrequited love at not being able to attain an unattainable ideal held out to you.
3. Determine what you get out of your devotion to this individual. Is it pleasure and entertainment? A sense of safety and security? A sense of belongingness and love? A way to feel special, powerful, and important? A means to actualize your inner potential? A window into the Divine World of Spirituality? Examine very carefully what the outcome of following these motives and how they will impact your life and personality, your family and loved ones, and the greater society in which you live.
4. Idealization can be blind. Are there any negative markers about the behavior of the leader and his/her followers that lead you to believe that this group may be cultic and destructive? Do any cloven feet appear beneath the sheepskin?



5. Also look at how this group's activities enhance or amplify your life. Does it enhance your personality functioning and promote personal growth, or does it have you continually remain in altered states of consciousness and suppress your personality? Are you asked to carry out your own goals and to aspire to your own dreams, or are you asked to sacrifice everything to the leader or his/her mission?
6. Are you experiencing emotional, physical, sexual, or spiritual abuse as a result of belonging to this group or following this teacher? That is a clear marker that the individual or group is destructive. Get up and leave!
7. Notice if you are being manipulated for another's personal gain and benefit. Are you being asked to volunteer long hours and renounce your own goals and dreams, while the leader lives in luxury and becomes rich off his/her followers?

Devotion is one of the greatest gifts that you can give to another. Make sure that you do not give this most precious of gifts to someone who is clearly unworthy to receive it.

[Devotion is one of the seven greatest spiritual gifts. They are:]

The Seven Greatest Spiritual Gifts
Trust in and Devotion to God (Bhakti)
Love for God and Humanity (Prema)
Faith in your Self and in God (Shraddha)
Compassion and Non-injury (Ahimsa)
Surrender and Obedience to the Divine Will (Hukum)
Loyalty to Your Soul's Purpose and Inner Truth (Dharma)
Keeping a Vow or Promise, Maintaining Your Integrity (Satya)

Thank you for attending our webinar today!

