

By BK Brother Brij Mohan

Love is the energy that animates the world. God, it is said, is the ocean of love, and as His children, we are beings of love. This is a truth that many, including philosophers and ordinary people, have realised over the centuries — it does not require an epiphany to do so. Our everyday experiences teach us that love and kindness are not luxuries; they are essential virtues without which humanity cannot survive.

However, when we look at the world around us, we see so much absence of love. There is conflict within humans, among humans, and between humans and nature. Wherever there is sorrow, it is an indication of the denial of love.

This state of affairs has been brought about primarily because the majority of people do not love God or each other deeply enough.

We can love selflessly only when we are full of love ourselves. To love and have regard for others, we first need to feel complete. Otherwise, there are too many selfish motives within, which block the heart. The way to become fulfilled is to love God—the inexhaustible source of power and virtues.

God's cleansing love washes away the stains of old weaknesses and hurts, rejuvenating the soul to live a fulfilled life.

It is human tendency to emulate those we admire the most, so genuine love for God gives us the inspiration to be like Him. Pure and unqualified Divine love kindles the spirit of accommodation within us, leading to the benevolent realisation that everyone in this world is a part of His creation.

When souls bruised by pain and sorrow are comforted, healed and redeemed by God's love, they come to realise that they too need to be compassionate, and that every member of the human family deserves to be recognised and valued.

God shows us, by His own example, how to share love unconditionally—a love unadulterated with attachment or any other affliction, and which seeks not just one's own good, but the good of others as well.

It is such generosity that is enjoined on us by one of the loftiest religious commandments: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. All moral edicts are summed up in this one command.

Is it possible to love others as we love ourselves? What is it that stops us from doing so? Following such an exalted mandate requires faith in and deep love for the Divine, or the aim to live a nobler way of life. If there are questions such as, "How can this be possible...", "it is right, but...", there is surely lack of recognition of where the direction has come from, and its deep significance.

Loving others wholeheartedly is not as difficult as it seems. It simply means having the same consideration for their needs and desires as we have for our own. This calls for recognition that others are as worthy of God's love as we are.

But we fail to see this when we forget who we are: spiritual beings, composed of the energies of purity, peace and love. These qualities are innate to us, that is why we find them comforting and enriching. As babies we seem to know this secret, which is why a baby is a bundle of joy.

But as we grow up, we lose connection with this innate truth and start seeking fulfilment outside. We look for love, contentment and respect in people, places and objects, and start believing that we will be happy only when we achieve what we desire. Instead of enjoying the peace, love and happiness we can create with our own thoughts and actions, we start chasing rainbows.

We also compare—when we look at others and find that they are happier than us, we become discontented or jealous, and begin to covet what they have. This leads to ill feeling and friction.

It is an eternal law that we get what we give. Giving love and respect inspires a like response from others. When vibrations of peace and love radiate from us into the universe, they ultimately return to their source. Science, too, acknowledges this principle: Sir Isaac Newton's third law of physics says that every action has an equal and opposite reaction.

The ancients knew this fact, and that is why the Bible, Quran, Talmud and the teachings of Confucius, all contain what is known as *The Golden Rule*: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. Everyone likes to have the best for themselves, and when we make our own self the benchmark for how we treat others, we learn to empathise and respect our fellow humans. However, a critical attitude often comes in the way.

We are quick to notice others' faults and slow to appreciate their good qualities. This pollutes our feelings towards them, and once that happens, we cannot be truly loving. This is what hinders amity between individuals and communities.

Negative feelings act as an invisible barrier that blocks cooperation and harmonious relationships, even at the expense of shared interests. We may smile and say all the right things to someone, and even strike deals with them, but if we harbour animus towards them, our vibrations will reveal it. There is little honesty, trust or goodwill in such a relationship.

It is not selfish ambition or vain conceit that makes us superior, rather it is humility, which enables us to value everyone. Valuing others automatically brings us esteem. Humility naturally brings patience and tolerance, which encourage a sympathetic understanding of not just other people but all creatures and Mother Nature. This in turn leads to cooperation, which fosters cordial relations.

In essence, a loving relationship with the self, the soul, and God is the key to loving all our neighbours on Planet Earth.

