

Choose That Which Unifies

The scriptures declare that, in spite of all appearances, there are no differences here. Ultimately, everything is discovered to be One without a second. Therefore, in the ultimate sense there is no such thing as good and evil; there is nothing that we should like or dislike. But is that the way that we are meant to live in this world? The answer is yes and no.

From an ultimate point of view, we should be aware that there is no such thing as good and evil, nor should we like or dislike. But from a relative and practical point of view, we have to make choices as to what is beneficial and what is not beneficial. Now the question comes, Do I make that judgment based upon what I think is in my own personal interests or do I make it on the basis that all is One? The answer is: Whatever leads us back to a feeling and knowledge of oneness is good. Whatever leads us towards division is not good.

For example, love of country is and can be a very good thing, as long as our love of country leads to try to improve the country, to make the citizens of the country feel a sense of oneness, not only among themselves, but towards all the nations of the world. But if love of our country puts us against other countries, then it is no longer a good, but a potential evil.

We are told that it is wrong to have desires: Desires are the cause of all our problems. They lead us away from ourselves; they lead us into fights and quarrels and to be against others. And that is true. But then, we are told that the most important thing in the spiritual life is to have aspiration for God, a desire for God. Indeed it should be a burning desire, almost an ambition for God. So both our desires. But if the desire is for our self and our own satisfaction, then it is a wrong desire; if our desire is for God, then it is good.

Even here we have to discriminate, because if our ambition for God is an ego ambition—that I am going to attain something—then it will not accomplish its intended result. We're still in the realm of selfish desire and competition. However, if our ambition for God is a burning desire to rid ourselves of all those factors within that see division, that are competitive, then that desire becomes *śubheccha* or good desire.

Thus we require a lot of wisdom in this world in order to know the right way to function. The basis is that all is One. Therefore, the test of any action we do is whether it leads to a greater sense of oneness or whether it is divisive. If it leads towards Oneness it is good. If it leads towards separation, it is not good. It is up to us to be wise enough to discriminate between the two, and to choose the good—that which unifies.