

God's temple is within us

If we truly believe that God is most holy, then we should never speak for him. For God will speak to each of us privately, in our still moments, for our ears only. For each of us is a unique being, with our special issues; even our mind does not remain the same for a single moment.

The God that we speak about, especially to convince and convert others with, is a self-made God, a book-formed God. We have created that God in our own image. We are simply projecting, consciously or unconsciously, our own desire for power and domination onto him. The language of religious power only speaks for itself.

We are not sheep to be herded. We are not fish to be netted. We are thinking and loving beings. We can think for ourselves if we live in a nurturing environment that reminds us so. We stop thinking when we are repeatedly told otherwise.

We live in a tribe called society, but we live interdependently, each in some viable way interconnected with others. Whatever our faiths or beliefs, we are all capable of goodness and wisdom in proper circumstances. No one, no group, no religion, has the right or ability to shape such an open society.

To those who claim to alone hold God's truth and to be the only path to God, the Buddha simply asks them, Have any of you seen or spoken, that is, actually and personally met, God? Furthermore, those who claim to speak for God, do not themselves show the unconditional love, the great compassion, the boundless joy, and immeasurable peace that define Godliness.

In the Tevijja Sutta (D 13),¹ the Buddha declares that he knows everything there is to know about God and Godliness. Like a man who has lived in a town for so long that he is able to tell you at once, when asked, the way around the town. The Buddha then explains in detail on how we can actually experience Godliness, touch God, as it were, in our own being. God is not out there, but right here in our heart.

For a while, let us not covet any of the sense-experiences, simply letting all the senses be, not troubling them at all. We sit peacefully, in wordless prayer, watching the gentle flow of our breath. Whenever our attention wanders off, patiently and lovingly we bring it back to the breath. Then there comes a point when we are no more distracted by any of the senses, so that we are blissful like a successful merchant who has discharged all his debts and enjoying his profits with his wife.

Let us then reject any idea of anger or ill will so that we are blissful, as if we have completely recovered from an illness, enjoying our meals and strong in body.

We then gently make sure that our mind and body are relaxed and present, with neither sloth nor torpor, so that we feel as if we have been released from bondage, no more a prisoner, safe and sound, with no loss of property.

¹ See Te,vijja Sutta (D 13/1:235-252) = SD 1.8: <http://dharmafarer.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2009/12/-1.8-Tevijja-S-d13-piya-prot01.pdf>

We then free ourselves from past memories and guilt, and leave the future where it is so that we are not restless. We begin to feel blissful as if we have been released from slavery, we are our own master, not subject to others, free, able to go where we like.

We then show complete faith in ourself, having no doubt at all, in our ability to be calm and blissful, like a man, carrying money and goods, journeying on a road through the wilderness, and who then emerges, safe and sound, with no loss of property.

Now our mind is completely blissful and pure, simply attentive to itself, present and blissful, so that our whole being is filled with zest and joy beyond our bodily limitations. Let our mind enjoy this bliss and stillness for as long as it takes. Then, emerging from it, our heart is utterly calm and clear.

With this calm and clear heart, suffuse our front quarter, with all its beings (not just humans), plants and everything else, with unconditional love. Let our unconditional love pervade that quarter of the universe like the sound of one blowing a conch-shell.

Then we suffuse the right-hand quarter with unconditional love, to all the beings, plants and everything there.

Then we suffuse the back quarter with unconditional love, to all the beings, plants and everything there.

Then we suffuse the left-hand quarter with unconditional love, to all the beings, plants and everything there.

Then we suffuse the quarter above with unconditional love, to all the beings, plants and everything there.

Then we suffuse the quarter below with our unconditional love, to all the beings, plants and everything there.

Finally, we suffuse ourself with unconditional love, too, so that we continue to be full of unconditional love.

With such unconditional love, we empower ourselves to effectively limit the effects of our bad actions, so that they do not haunt us. The Buddha calls this beautiful experience, “living with God” (brahma, vihaara) or the divine abode. For, we are the temple of the living God, and his spirit dwells in us. So let us not talk of God, but truly feel him: let us look within.

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