

Devotion to god

[Experience](#), [Human Nature](#)



Devotion (bhakti) to God animates many selections from Hindu scriptures in our anthology (Fisher and Bailey, pp. 61-88). Devotion or bhakti is an enlightened and powerful path that would help an individual to mount the self realization and realization of God. Devotion and love is the route to the complete realization of non-dual reality of the infinite existence of God. Bhakti marga means the route of devotion in Sanskrit. The union of the devotee with God by means of extreme devotion is termed as bhakti yoga in Sanskrit.

Yet the style of devotion and the nature of the devotee's relationship to God may vary a great deal, depending on the manifestation of the divine being (god or goddess) that is being invoked. Hymn to Agni is a Sruti. Sruti is the poem that is heard by rishis. Smrti explain the hidden meanings of Sruti. All these constitute Vedas that were written during the commencement of Kali yuga (during 3102 BCE) by Ved Vyasa. Vedas were written in Sanskrit. The chapter of Hinduism in the An Anthology of Living Religions by Mary Pat Fisher and Lee W. Bailey includes various passages like Hymn to Agni, Hymn on Creation (from the text of Rig Veda).

The book has also included rich passages from Upanishads; What is the World but Spirit (Mundaka Upanishad) and You Are That (Chhandogya Upanishad). The passage ' Hymn to Agni' expresses the words of a devotee and also reveals the kind of relationship the devotee maintains with the ' Agni God'. Devotee adores Agni the god of the sacrifice and the richest source of treasure. The passage says about the popularity of Agni among old poets and new poets. Agni was the diety of their rites and the major source of power.

Ancient sages worshipped Agni and considered him as the provider of prosperity, nourishment and happiness. These devotees deemed Agni as the source of their progress and mentioned him as the most glorious and heroic God. According to the devotees Agni brought Devas to earth and his presence filled all sides, which goes to Devas. The hymn praises Agni as wise sage, invoker and the one with splendor and marvel. The hymn also says “ Whatever blessing, o Agni, thou givest to the worshipper, that, refulgent One, is thy truth. To thee, Agni, dispeller of night, we come with prayer day by day, offering thee our obeisance.

Thee who rulest our holy rite, Protector of Eternal Law, bright, waxing in thy own abode. Like father to son, thou Agni, be easy of access to us, be with us for a life of bliss. ” Agni was considered as the chief of the Vedic gods. Agni is the god of fire, the common acceptor of all divine sacrifices (transferring the sacrifice to other Devas). Agni was otherwise deemed as the messenger of the Devas. According to the traditional Hindu worship based on these Vedas, Agni was present in the heart of every individual, and is the vital spark of life. A part of him was believed to be present in all living things.

Agni was also considered as the fire or power which consumes food in the stomach of living beings. Agni also consumed the sacrifices that were offered to other gods. Agni was thought to be the fire of the sun. It was also considered as the power behind the lightning bolt as well as the smoke column that hold the heavens in their place. Devotees considered Agni was the source of the illumination of stars. Agni was a crucial element in ancient Hindu worship traditions. About two hundred songs in Rig Veda are

addressed to none by Agni. Out of the ten books of Rig Veda, eight of them start with the praises (worship) for Agni.

Part II

According to the passage ‘ Hymn to Agni’ devotee has a strong relationship with his God Agni. Devotee recognizes Agni as the source of all power and praises him for the happiness that he gives to him. Here the God is not found to be rewarding the devotee for his sincere worship and praises. The Agni God does not appear to be counting the devotion, reverence and worship of the devotee. The devotee however is voluntarily praising the Agni God because of his majesty, power and splendor. The devotee is praising Agni God for a natural cause and not because he blessed the devotee personally.

Here the Agni God does not seem to recognize and bless this individual devotee. The God is just being admired and worshipped for a common cause. The devotee is also just manifesting the power of Agni, the God and is praising him for his common goodness and not because of his personal love for him. The relationship that the devotee maintains with the Agni God is not personal. Devotee is impressed by the power and splendor of the God and is just acknowledging and praising it. No salvation, redemption or liberation happens here. The God no longer gives any special privilege to the devotee. Agni God just exists in his majesty and does not offer anything special like salvation.

Part III

The religious outlook mentioned in this devotion hymn is that of an adoration or worship. I do have a religious outlook that is based on ‘ Faith’ or ‘ Trust’ rather than adoration. My religious outlook is somewhat related to this

devotion methods as my devotion also includes praising, adoration and worship. However my devotion outlook is least similar to the above explained 'Agni worsip' as my devotion is characterized by faith and the salvation and redemption offered by my God.

Agni worship is missing faith, salvation and redemption. It just involves blind or baseless adoration that seldom makes the devotee close to the God. The teachings of Hinduism do not exemplify my definition of religion as it lacks the most crucial aspect, faith, which I deem as the backbone of any religion or worship. Moreover, devotees need to have a personal fellowship with God. The relationship of devotee to his God should not be just an adoration, it should instead be a strong personal relation based on faith. References Mary Pat Fisher and Lee W. Bailey (1999) An Anthology of Living Religions, Prentice Hall.