

Aashirwad and Prasad

All of us wish that from time to time we get blessings from those we respect and worship. Blessings and *Prasad* have become an integral part of our lives. Receiving *prasad*; at temples, during devotional *bhajan-keertan* programs, during Durga-Pooja celebrations, on Tuesdays and Saturdays at Lord Hanuman's temple, when taking leave from Guruji etc., is considered auspicious.

One doesn't receive *prasad* because one is entitled to it or because one deserves it. If the giver has no intention to give, then one does not get it. Since it is due to the grace of the giver, there is no importance of the object that one receives as *prasad*. Whatever be the *prasad* (sweet, fruits, grains, flowers etc) is nothing but a blessing. If we look at how we behave in our day to day lives when we receive *prasad*, then we will realize that we pay more attention to the object. For example we are more eager to receive the *prasad* if it is *motichoor ladoos* when compared to *chana* or *murmura* 😊.

In short, the importance of the object in a *Prasad* has become more important than the '*prasad*' itself. The result of receiving *Prasad* is based on the ('*bhav*') feelings/ passion/ intentions of the receiver with respect to the *Prasad*. If the receiver feels the importance of the grace (*kripa*), then the result will be *kripa*. On the other hand if the object holds more importance, then the *kripa* becomes secondary and the importance of the object stands. Therefore Guruji sometimes says, "I had given *prasad* you made it a banana."

Now let us consider the subject of *Aashirwad* (blessings). We wish for blessings from our elders, people we respect and look up to, teachers etc and are eager to hear words such as, '*kalyan ho* (may you get Bliss)', '*Sukhi ho* (may you be happy)', '*Jeete Raho* (May you have a long and happy life)' etc. This is how the concept of *aashirwad* is prevalent in our society and it is one of our societal customs. Since all of us are a part of society and are a part of many such societal customs we wish for receiving such '*aashirwad*' from Guruji as well. A Guru is '*kalpavriksha*' (divine tree). Wishing for Him to utter the words of *aashirwad* prevalent in society is as hilarious and childlike as going to a tree and asking for shade! Other than well-being and bliss for others nothing else can come from a Guru. Guru, nature, God are nothing but synonyms. Based on my experience, association with a Satguru results in bliss...whether he says something or not doesn't matter. To just be able to sit in His presence and see Him is *aashirwad*.

Now if we try to analyse an *aashirwad*, then any *aashirwad* that is expressed only by words is limited to words. In such cases neither is there any *bhav* (feeling/ intention/ passion) in the person who is giving the *aashirwad* nor the person who receives the *aashirwad* holds it in great regard. An *aashirwad*, of true nature bursts from within and is pregnant with *bhav*. It is difficult to say which *seva* (service) or what action will result in *aashirwad* and when. Sometimes it does happen that an ordinary *seva* touches the heart and the *aashirwad* erupts from within and sometimes a much more elaborate *seva* fails to touch. In this subject it is my understanding that one must continue to perform acts of service. Some or the other *seva*, at some time or other will result in *aashirwad*. Another point to note is that when *aashirwad* is expressed through words then it is limited by words. On the other hand when *aashirwad* erupts from within and instead of being expressed by words remains unsaid, then in my opinion it will have no bounds. It will be infinite, not limited by words and will be more impactful. Therefore a seeker must persevere to do as much *seva* as possible and then move away so that if an *aashirwad* does erupt then it is not limited by words.

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