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Develop a Larger Heart : A Way to Cultivate Positive Emotions

Emotions determine the personality of a human being. Positive emotions make for a healthy, balanced, adaptable and happy personality. On the contrary, negative emotions make for an unhealthy, unbalanced and unhappy personality. Love, friendship, cooperation, harmony, fellow feeling, calm, peace and stability are positive emotions. Naturally, it is imperative for us to keep away negative emotions. Anger, hatred, jealousy, avarice, greed, calumny, etc. are negative emotions. While positive emotions exercise a salutary influence on our lives, negative emotions leave an adverse effect on our lives. There is need, therefore, to be governed by positive emotions and to shun the negative ones. If somehow negative emotions get hold of us, we would do well to cavalise them into constructive channels. In other words we should sublimate them or rationalise them.

The best means to do that is to develop a larger heart. All problems arise when our hearts shrink and shrink so much that there is left no room for others. We become selfish self-serving narrow-minded and constricted spirits. Expand your heart, have a concern for others, forgive people's faults, adopt merciful attitude, think beyond the narrow self and enlarge your vision to include in it all your fellow beings, all creation and all the sentient world. See then what happens, Note what William Shakespeare says about mercy, the superior one of all positive emotions, in his play *The Merchant of Venice* :

"The quality of mercy is not strained;

It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven upon the place beneath. It is twice blest;

It blesses him that gives and him that takes;

It is mightiest in the mightiest; it becomes.

The throned monarch better than his crown.

.....
*It is enthroned in the hearts of kings,
It is an attribute of God Himself;*

*And earthly power doth then show
likest Good's*

When mercy seasons justice."

Mercy is the supreme positive emotion which flows from a larger heart much in the same way as fragrance flows from a newly opened flower.

A larger heart and positive emotions go together. So be generous, large-hearted, magnanimous, kind, compassionate, merciful and forgiving. For, these are the attributes of God Himself, as Shakespeare means in the above quote.

Mark what Abraham Lincoln said in his second inaugural speech :

"With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right let us strive to finish the work we are in."