

Call of the Infinite

Om. A-sa-to ma sad gam-ma-ya. Ta-ma-so-ma jyo-tir gam-ma-ya. Mri-tyor ma a-mri-tam ga-ma-ya. Avir avir ma e-dhi. Rudra yat te dak-shi-nam mu-kham. Tena mam pahi nityam. Tena mam pahi nityam. Tena mam pahi nityam.

Lead us from the unreal to the Real. Lead us from darkness unto Light. Lead us from death to Immortality. Reveal to us Thy Resplendent Truth and evermore protect us, Oh Lord, by Thy Sweet and Compassionate Face, by Thy Sweet and Compassionate Face, by Thy Sweet and Compassionate Face.

The subject of my talk this morning is: The Call of the Infinite. Infinite really means God. The call of the infinite is the call of God. How this call of God comes to us, that we have to examine. If we are in a mood of loving God, experiencing God, then we can hear God's call in many ways from many directions. The man who is engrossed in this world, that man cannot hear this call. But when the heart is receptive, then this call comes from many, many directions and we are amazed to see and find how that infinite is calling us. The infinite is surrounding and interpenetrating everything that is finite. We see only the finite. We do not care to see: just close to the finite there is the infinite.

So we have to examine in a... sometimes in a philosophical mood, sometimes in a metaphysical mood, sometimes in an artistic mood, and maybe sometimes even in the worldly mood, even engrossed in worldly affairs we can sometimes experience the call of the infinite. In this talk, I will just take a few examples. It does not need a rational proof. We can find this call by ourselves, but if we are in a mood. If you are not in the mood of science, you cannot know anything of science. The mood, the receptiveness has to come. Religious experience depends much on this receptiveness. We have to be in a mood of inquiry. Then we can see; then we can find.

The first example I want to take is the experience of space, the sky. Now when we are living in a small room, then the outer sky, the vast sky, the vast space is shut for us. We are... maybe are working in a small office, a small room, a small table, a typewriter and two phones – both sides. It is boring. Sometimes we look at the windows: a section of sky we see. We say, "Oh how nice to see." Then when we are off the work we come outside. Then we see the sky and we are relieved. There is so much relaxation to see the sky. Now city, tall buildings and all, and all do not... enable to... Sometimes we go out but [don't] see the sky. If the day is too much clouded we are not happy. We want to see the sky.

Now when we study these books about space and hear the stories of the astronauts we know how vast is space. So space really is a symbol for the infinite -- infinite space. It is so vast that we cannot really think of it. The scientists give us scientific presentations of how vast is space. How vast! That is why in the Upanishads, the most important of Vedantic scriptures we are taught to meditate on Brahman, the Infinite God, with the symbol of space – akasha. Because naturally when we see the space, the vast sky, our mind goes to the vast. Though it is physical space, it is within the range of our sense

experience. The Upanishads know that. [They] say, “But what will we do, we are helpless man? Your mind is helpless. You have to have some symbol.” We have to have ...we have to have some sense experience. So this meditation is taught – [this] contemplation: meditate on Brahman as akasha, that space-- and that helps.

The mind normally does not want to expand. It wants to remain cramped [?] so when the time of contemplation comes, one meditates: God is as vast as infinite as space. He is not space. He is more than space; He is consciousness. Everything is coming from God, beginning from space-time. So the Taittiriya Upanishad says, Atmana: “Tasmad va etasmad atmana akasas sambhutah.” [2.1.1]¹ From that Self, (Self here stands for the God within us, our true nature), from that first came space, time.” But we cannot get hold of that infinite consciousness all at once. So we have to work through material experiences, experiences within our mind and body. So the idea of space is given – akasha. For some time try to think of infinite, just as space is everywhere. Space is within our bodies, outside our body. Space is today. Space is tomorrow. Stretch your mind back and back and back, millions of years ago. There was space. Stretch your mind in the future, farther, farther, farther. There is space. So space can well claim to be infinite, see, though really it is not infinite. Vedantic scriptures make it plain, consciousness, Brahman, or Atman, is more than space, more than time. But we cannot grasp that. It has to be an experience, slowly as the mind is more and more ready, we can have that experience of consciousness as the Self or Brahman.

So the call of infinite, now if we remember this everybody looks into space, “Oh how wonderful.” But a spiritual man must remember the other thing: The space is [a] symbol of God. Space is calling me. It is Brahman’s call. It is God’s call. God is calling me as space, “Come out of your narrow corridor and stand below me. Look east, west, north, south, and feel that it is me, Brahman, the conscious being where [there is] no beginning, no end, calling you as space, as akasha.” It is the call of God. It is the call of infinite God.

Next we come to time. Now we experience time in moments, in seconds, minutes, hours, days. One day [is] gone, another day come[s]. Within our normal experience, we take it for granted, for this procession of time-- the flow of time. But a spiritual seeker has to see something, has to bring something at the back of this flowing time. It is the infinite. Who can deny that time is there as an entity of what it is – back, back, back, back like space, there is time. There is time.

Scientists try to say the beginning of the universe, the beginning of this world, the age of the ark, those things. But really, time is timeless. Time is timeless – farther, farther you go back there is time. Farther, farther you go forward there is time. But that timeless time, is God. Who thinks of these things? But a spiritual seeker, a seeker of truth has to think of these things, has to feel the call of God as time. Then this person, this spiritual seeker is not so much entrapped by time. Every one of us is entrapped by time! Time... so the poet says, curse time. “You time, you fly away and one day will come and you tell me, ‘Your time is up!’ “You tyrant!” Shakespeare has called time tyrant in one place.

Indeed, [it is] a tyrant because we love ourselves. We love to do so many things and reach[?] so many things and time is essential. But time is so fast. Time does not wait for us. So we curse time. But we should not. Rather we should try to see our own foolishness. We should try to see that we are entrapped by time. We are rushing. We are jumping. Why? What for? This is an imprisonment.

Is there something called freedom, freedom from time, freedom from this bondage of time? And if that enquiry comes, then we do not curse time. We try to see the timeless time at the back of the fleeting time. And there is this eternal time. Who can deny that -- that moments, days, years go? But something remains, just as the Bible in one of the [books of] Old Testament, that one psalm says that God is timeless. Things ~~is~~ [are] always changing, but God is timeless. "Thou art God, from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God." That is the call of God, through time. And in contemplation we have to bring these thoughts, these feelings. When we try to meditate on God, try to feel that God is timeless, don't think at that time. Put a bar into the door of your mind and now no fleeting time. The fleeting events of life, let them stay outside. Now me and my timeless God. There is no time there. This is this type of meditation the Upanishad prescribes, see, and if through the practice of this contemplation the mind becomes calm, the mind tries... begins to feel the experience of freedom. Someday this drama of life will be over. It is certain, very certain. But we are not... we do not remember this. That is called imprisonment. That is called bondage. But the spiritual seeker, he is trying to get out of this bondage, so he has to sometimes think of God as the timeless time. So through time, God is calling us. The timeless God is calling us through time, as if God is saying that this is bound to happen in this world of yours. But this world of yours is not all [there is] to reality. There is something more at the back of this fleeting, changing world. And that is Me, God. I am timeless. So, this examination of time, and the contemplation of time as the timeless helps us to hear the call of God.

The next experience is the experience of mind. Everyone of us has a mind. I know what my mind is: so many thoughts, so many memories, so many hopes. I know that! I am always living with my mind. If I am an intellectual, all the books I have read are in my mind. My life is centered in my mind. We know that, but just as I have a mind, the person sitting next to me has also a mind. He is also living in a vast mental world, just as I live in a mental world. My... the person sitting next to me, his mental world may not be as picturesque as mine, because I have ... "I am a scholar, I am a poet... I have written so many things." And the other person's mind, different corridors are blank. But that person has also a mind. He has a mental world, [and] so also every person [has a mind].

Now in a mood of contemplation, if we think of hundreds, thousands, millions of minds, now what quantity [do] we get, what picture [do] we get? A cosmic mind: a vast mind, the summation of all minds, minds [of] persons that are living now! Persons that are dead they had also mind[s] – mind of a Shakespeare, the mind of a Milton, the mind of many great scholars of all countries. Think of their minds. So it makes a mood of examination. It is not a casual remark. [That] won't give us that spiritual experience. We have to spend

some time to hear the call of God, the call of the infinite. If you are in a mood, spend some time quietly and think of God as mind -- Mind as reflected in all little minds. All little minds are encompassed by the vast mind of God. And it is not a myth. It is true that each person is living with a mind and the persons that have been forgotten, they had [a] mind, so there is a vast mind, the summation of all minds, and that is God. That again is the call of God, call of the infinite, call of the infinite as mind.

Now take a practical case. Spend some time here. Now we have sixty or seventy persons present[?] here, and then a few children. Each has a mind. So let... for a few minutes let us think that all these minds together are praying to God. If you just limit yourself to yourself -- little mind, "I am praying to God. I am praying to God." Your mind will be restless: oh... whether God will listen or not, what my neighbor is thinking. My mind will be restless. But forget those things and try to bring this idea that all of us here, seventy or eighty of us are praying to God, are repeating God's name, are thinking of God. This very idea will bring a calmness, will bring a serenity to the mind. That is what the call of infinite does. When we are attached to the finite, then we are restless. We are insecure. But the more we can break our limits on any level, then we become correspondingly free. We become correspondingly vast ourselves.

So like mind, we have to examine another thing, which is called life. Everybody is fond of one's life. Life is the most precious thing on this earth. My life is more important than anything on this world. True. But just as I have a life, others also have lives. So there is a vast life-- the life is called prana. This prana in me is one part of the infinite manifestation of God as prana. God is manifest to me in this body, in this mind, in this little personality as individual life. So God is present in all individuals as individual life. But when we think of God, we can think of Him as that great Life Principle that prana, God as prana. This God as prana is present in all human beings, present and past, and future. So many lives have gone, disappeared from this field. So many others will come. Now in a mood of contemplation, our minds should think of God as life. That is again the call of the infinite, the call of the infinite God as life!

We can multiply examples and dozens and dozens. What is appearing as finite, as binding -- if we examine clearly if you go deeply, deeper then you can see: at the back of it is the infinite. So God as the infinite is with us. But we have to find time and the mood to examine... to hear that call of God.

Take another example: Love. Love is so familiar to us. Sometimes we are famished. We want... we are always hungry for love. And we find some love, fortunate people have abundant of life, abundant of love in their family. But there is no real absolute certainty. Young, two young people are married, a life of love and understanding continues for six to eight years. Then it breaks down. Life becomes dull. It may happen. You see? But however it may be, we are always seeking love. We know love from the very birth. We love our mother; we love our father. We love our playthings. In this way love comes to us and we live for love in this world. If for sometime we find there is nothing to love, there is no person to love, we want to die. A loveless life is like death. Everybody knows that.

So love is another tangible experience. But when we are in a mood of spiritual enquiry, we have to examine it in a deeper way. Now just as I have love, and maybe by misfortune I have lost that love and then my life for the time being may be dark. But there are other persons who are experiencing love. My house may be a dark old house because there are not many persons. I have lost my three grandchildren. Two daughters have run away. One uncle is dead, so that there is not complete light in my house, but in another house [it] is full. You always hear the children's voice, children singing, dancing. So, where do we know this fact? A spiritual seeker should examine all facts. So then [when] he is in a spiritual mood, then he tries to feel that love is really God. There is one, infinite love which is God. And God is calling us.

The infinite is calling us through love. It may not be through my little life, but other persons. If there is no life or love in men, there is love in nature. A tree in... a flower tree in bloom is calling us. So much love is there in that tree: green leaves, flowers. There is love in nature. See? The call of God, the call of the infinite as love can be heard, if we are in a mood to hear. If we are in a mood to hear the voice of God as love, it is available. Be we don't do that because we are selfish. We just want to stay in the small corridor, which is "me," this body, this mind, this ego. But a spiritual seeker should be free and if a spiritual seeker can bring that mood of contemplation and see, there is love! God has covered this life, this world with love: love of men, love of nature, love from natural forces. There is love: a tangible experience! That is the call of the infinite as love.

So we can multiply examples. We can multiply examples and we should remember that we have to have that mood of contemplation. Then we can see that God as infinite is always calling us in many, many ways. We cannot complain. We cannot complain. We complain when we are selfish, "Oh God ... why you have taken this from me?" God says, "I have taken that from you, but I have given to your neighbor many other things. Why don't you see the whole? You have come to see a drama, a play." If you look at one corner of the stage, you see only one thing. But we have to look on the whole stage! Somebody is crying. Some scene is crying. Some scene is laughing. Some scene is dancing. We have to watch the whole drama. So we have to watch the whole drama of life, then you will say, "Yes. God as infinite love is really calling me. He is not absent. His love is present."

Joy. Love and joy are closely related. Joy. Everybody wants to be happy. Everybody wants to [have] joy: the joy of eating, the joy of company, the joy of drinking, the joy of playing. This is called joy. This is called pleasure – very related to love. But joy is also not missing in life. It is missing when you look only to your little self. But you are... if you come before God to hear His voice, you have to forget you are little. You have to go examine the whole drama; then you will see there is no absence of joy in this world. There is joy – God's joy. God as joy is infinite and He is lending, He is giving little joys through many, many, many objects.

After the week of warm weather, hot weather, 103°, 110°, three days come that are cool weather and everybody is happy. "Oh, cool weather has come." When the night goes and we see the sun, we are joyful. The sun has

come. So there is joy! When we hear the song of birds, there is joy. A person who loves cats, he finds so much joy in the company of cats. Others say, “Eeee, Eeee, this person has ten cats, a zoo.” But for that person, the lover of cat [it] is joy. A person who loves dogs, he carries three dogs in his car. [Audience laughs.] Other people say, “What is this? How did that person... can tolerate this?” For that person is so much happy in the company of dogs.

So there is joy. God’s joy is not lacking. In many ways... So, if you are in a mood of enquiry, contemplation, we try to meditate on God as joy, ananda. So the Upanishad says, “Anandadd hy eva khalv imani bhutani jayante.”² [Taittiriya 3:6:1] All these beings are coming from Brahman as ananda, God. “Anandena jatani jivanti.” And all these beings sustained by joy, ananda. “Anandam prayanty abhisamvisanti.” And in the end all beings depart. Where do they go? They go to joy. They go to God as joy, ananda.

So God is calling us, the infinite God is calling us, in another costume, God is calling us in many costumes: the costume of space, the costume of time, the costume of love, the costume of mind, and now the costume of joy. So a seeker of God, finds that! As now he sees people, his heart is filled with joy. God’s joy, God’s ananda is revealed, is working in these persons. See? So a lover of God does not lack joy, because it is God’s joy. God’s joy is not absent. It is revealed in many ways, in many persons. In many sections of reality, God’s joy is there. So God as ananda, this is again the call of the infinite as ananda.

The idea is that God is vast. Infinite is a word. But the experience of vast is a fascinating experience, though normally in our busy life we have no time and mood for seeking the vast. We are satisfied with the little: with our little family, with our little warm body, with our little occupations. We are satisfied. But when we come to spiritual life in the search of God, this mood of this mind has to go. Another mood has to come: the desire for the vast.

When we go to a busy supermarket some people do not like it. But a spiritual person... For one, [his] interest should go with another kind of mood – not to hear. He hears the jostling of many persons, but his mind with the thought of detachment he should see, “Oh so many people. Hundreds of people are coming. Hundreds of people are going. Hundreds of people are transacting business.” So one man is insignificant. But many men are significant. Think of the total population of this world. Think for two minutes [of] all the men and women of all countries. That is a spiritual contemplation. Think of all the Russians, all the Muslims, all the Afghans, all the Spanish people, all the South American people, --not as a history or news – a spiritual contemplation. Think of the vast mankind. It is not a myth. It is true. And if you can bring this truth in your mind, you learn something spiritually – the vast.

So there is a vast everywhere. And whenever there is any opportunity of contacting this vast, of thinking of this vast, we gain spiritually. We gain spiritually. It is the infinite. Think of all the men and women who have appeared on the scene of this world, through centuries. They have lived through, through sixty years, seventy years, hundred years. In the history books you hear the account of kings and all kingdoms – all gone! Coming and going. Coming and going. And all the present human beings will also go, depart from this world and

other actors and actresses will come. This is not myth. This is fact. These facts have to be taken into account. Then we learn spiritually. We learn about God, the infinite. We begin to hear the call of God – the call of God through human beings. It is God who is functioning in each human being. Each human life, each human mind, each human hope is God the infinite God. So this experience of vastness, whenever there is any opportunity! So the Upanishads have pointed out some experiences for contemplation so that our mind gets an experience of the vast. One of the Upanishads, Chandogya Upanishad [7:23:1] says, “Nalpe sukham asti.” “Yo vai bhuma tat sukham.”³ “There is no sukam or happiness in little; that which is vast is the source of happiness.” And through analysis and successive presentations, ultimately that Upanishad points to that ultimate vast – man’s true self. At first God has to be God as the vast, as the infinite. First we contemplate it outside as space, as time, as hmmm... It is called objective meditation, meditation of God objectively. But then a stage comes in our spiritual life when we come to our own center and the Upanishad has pointed [this] out.

The man has a vast within himself. Normally when we are in ignorance we see only the little, only the limited. We see our own body, which is so limited. It is prone to disease. It is prone to pain and old age and suffering and death. This is my body. And this body has a little mind, has a little heartbeat. So man is bound to feel that he is limited, he is limited. As he goes on praying to God, “Oh God save from this, save me from this: save me from this toothache; save me from this poverty.” See, continuous prayer to God, because man is little, man is limited. But when spiritual enquiry comes man begins to understand that at the back of all these limitations there is a vast truth within us that is our true self, atman, atma. That atman is free. That atman has no body, has no limitation, and has not been imported. Every person is living with atman with his self. So here again is a vast field of investigation-- and that has been done in Vedantic... the sages. The ancient sages spent their time and energy to understand this true nature of man: man the body, man the mind, man the lover, man the intellectual. At the back of all these there is man –the Self, the consciousness, the immortal being.

Through contemplation, through yoga man can go within, [and] find that self, true self. When the true self comes to our experience we have then really grasped the infinite. We have then really heard the call of the infinite. The infinite is calling us from a very close region. Within the depth of my heart the infinite itself is calling me. It is that infinite who has become the space. It is that infinite who has become all love, all beauty, all power. It is that infinite! So the ultimate call of the infinite is coming from the self, our true self within.

So the Upanishads, the Vedantic scriptures tell us, “Know yourself!” If you know yourself, you know everything. You are everything. You become master of everything. It is difficult, situated as we are, with so many obligations, so many distractions. It is difficult to feel or think that we have such an infinite heritage. But there are many fortunate persons. There may be some fortunate persons who are ready to pay the price, who are ready to hear that call. They go within. They spend the time and energy to understand and discover one’s true nature. It is called self-knowledge. If you have self-knowledge, you have come to the

infinite. You have heard the call of the infinite and will go on hearing that call all the time. That true self, that innermost God, that ultimate God, which is my true self is calling me from outside, from inside, calling me through all human beings, through all plants, through all aspects of nature, all sections of this world. It is His call, the call of the Self, the call of Truth, the call of the Immortal. That is the final conclusion of Vedanta. It may not be possible in one life, but it is something which is really wonderful – the call of the infinite.

Spiritual fulfillment does not come all of a sudden. First we have to be ready for that. But listening to these things is also wonderful. All people, every person has not a... Every Christian... every Christian has not the opportunity of going to the Holy Land. But it is nice to hear of the Holy Land, to see the pictures of the Holy Land and to contemplate on the Holy Land. See? Like this, there are great spiritual truths, which can be realized -- and it may not be our good fortune to realize. We are...We can realize partly. That is also good. Whatever [even] partly we realize in our religious life, in our spiritual life, that is good for me too, no doubt. But, it is wonderful to know of these things. Sometime an opportunity will come -- a mood will come. So it is wonderful to read about such knowledge, to understand that there is something, which comprises everything. In common language we call [that] God, but that God as an experience can be approached through many phases of our experience. I mentioned some. But we should remember that ultimate God is within us, [in] the depth of our heart. Vedanta calls it our true self, our atman.

Thank you.

[Announcements about lecture of guest Swami from New York, visit of Swami Swahananda, summer recess and special Krishna birthday celebration are not included.]

Om. Madhu vātā ṛtāyate madhu kṣaranti sindhavaḥ |
 mādhvīrnaḥ santvoṣadhīḥ ||
 madhu naktamutoṣaso madhumat pārthivaṃ rajaḥ |
 madhu dyaurastu naḥ pitā ||
 madhumān no vanaspatirmadhumānastu sūryaḥ |
 mādhvīrghāvo bhavantu naḥ || Om madhu, madhu, madhu.⁴
 [Rg Veda 1:90, 6-7]

Sweet blow the winds and the very oceans give forth blessedness. May the herbs and plants bring us health and happiness. Sweet unto us be the nights and dawns. May every particle of mother earth be charged with blessing and may the heavens shower us with benediction. Sweet unto us be the noble forest trees. Sweet unto us be the shining sun. Sweet unto us be all living creation. Om. Sweetness, Harmony, Peace.

1. Taittiriya Upanisad in The Principal Upanisads, ed. by S. Radhakrishnan. New York: Harper & Brothers, c. 1953, p. 541.
2. Taittiriya Upanisad in The Principal Upanisads, ed. by S. Radhakrishnan. New York: Harper & Brothers, c. 1953, p. 557.
3. Chandogya Upanisad in in The Principal Upanisads, ed. by S. Radhakrishnan. New York: Harper & Brothers, c. 1953, p. 486.
4. Transliteration of Rg Veda verse is taken from <http://www.sacred-texts.com/hin/rvsan/rv01090.htm> accessed July 5, 2014.