

### **Eternal Pilgrim**

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 this morning's lecture is: The Eternal Pilgrim.

The word pilgrim has a religious association. It is a sort of holy word. Essentially a pilgrim is a traveler, but all travelers are not pilgrims. Those who attend churches regularly, or temples, they cannot be called pilgrims because that has been a kind of chore, kind of mechanical chore of life that on Sundays we have to go to church. And we go to church with different motives. That can also happen. But a person who has been living away from a temple or church for years maybe, maybe... not maybe, must be a very devout person, a religious person. And his heart is very eager to visit a place of God. He attends, he is a busy man, and he lives far away from any church or temple. So it becomes possible one Sunday for him to visit that church.

You can call this person a pilgrim, because there is that great craving to visit a place of God. There is an intensity. There is a desire, and no other motive is there: that in church I might [see] some friends and all. I might find some match for my daughter. [Congregation chuckles with him.] No such other motives are there. The great motive is to visit that place of God, after so many years. And coming to the church, there are other people also, but he is different. He is absorbed. Coming in front of the altar he is moved and tears roll away from his eyes and he feels an inner ... when the prayer, when the prayer is repeated, he feels an inner joy, an inner inspiration. And that visit does not go away. The memory of that visit he carries with him. He comes home and remembers what joy it was, though it was difficult to visit that church or temple. But an abiding aftereffect stays with him. This person may be called a pilgrim.

In the Indian spiritual tradition this visiting a special shrine, or in other words, the pilgrimage, is a very well known and highly coveted experience, a religious experience. It may not be an experience of deep meditation or prayer--but pilgrimage itself-- that I am going to a holy place, a holy temple, and in India there are many holy places, from one part to the other. So widows, particularly, who are through with their secular life, if they are of a religious temperament, they have a dream: Someday I will visit these holy places. So there have been women, aged women, who as they have been collecting money from year to year and then it is possible for her to find some company, other similar minded persons, and to begin a pilgrimage. They start from some holy place and start North and there are so many places, temples, Siva's temples, holy rivers also and all Divine Mother's temples and Krishna's temples. Each place there are opportunities to live a few days. Some people will go to a holy place and live there for one week or two weeks. There are opportunities [like this] also.

This pilgrimage does many things to the spiritual life of a seeker. It is not merely visiting the shrine or worshipping, offering there flowers or what other offerings they have brought, but it also gives them the opportunity of association. This Benares or this Haridwar, so many devotees through the years have visited this place. Their memory rushes in their mind.

There are places where from the ancient time we read in the books, Shankaraji visited, or other great spiritual leaders visited. So their memories are associated there. So it is a feast of spiritual remembrances. And there is opportunity also because they have left their familiar family surroundings and comparatively they are free to spend their time in the contemplation of God. So they spend enough time, much time, and in a place of pilgrimage there is not merely one principal shrine, but there are subsidiary, minor shrines. A place of pilgrimage, for example, Benares, from one end to the other, east to west, there are hundreds and hundreds of these temples, small temples, big temples. And there are many festive occasions. So, a pilgrim has the opportunities of seeing all these. And he carries with him, rich spiritual memories when he comes home. And people, neighbors would come and would like to hear stories about their pilgrimage.

We find in the persons of great spirituality, they do not ignore this. In itself the pilgrimage is not like deep meditation, or going to a place as passing days and months in meditation. There are the higher forms of spiritual life. It may not be so. But it has its great spiritual value, through its past associations, and, in the pilgrimage, place of pilgrimage, you usually meet other religious minded people. Maybe you meet a great yogi, a great sannyasin, and you will have the opportunity of coming in close contact with these great souls. So, this act of pilgrimage is never discouraged, though we could call it a minor spiritual practice -- not the high type of spiritual practice, but still it has great value. And from pilgrimage, you may ... at all... It sometimes happens: from pilgrimage you return home a different person. Some experience happens to you.

There is a familiar example of the life of Sri Chaitanya.<sup>1</sup> He had gone to a place called Gaya, where people go to offer worship for ancestors. There is a Vishnu temple, and there for the propitiation of the souls of the departed, they go there, spend some time and offer... do offerings and all. And Sri Chaitanya, who was a young scholar, young man, he had his mother and wife at home, but his father was dead. And he wanted to go to that place, Gaya, and offer these oblations in remembrance of his past ancestors. And there, a strange thing happened.

He was not normally a very religious person. He was a scholar, a Sanskrit scholar, very well known. People, students used to come from all parts of India to study under him. He met a sannyasin, very devoted sannyasin, and when he had gone to this temple of Vishnu and [was] offering oblations for his ancestors, a mental reaction came. And he felt that I... I have not [for] so long remembered God, Who is the Source of everything, Who is the master of all lives. And this sannyasin, this monk had discussions with him, and as a result of his company, he returned home almost a mad person! He was all the time uttering, "Krishna, Krishna. Oh Lord Krishna, where are you? Give me, bless me with your darshan." That means, your experience. Like that, he was crying and he could no longer attend to his Sanskrit classes. Students were coming but they found a

different teacher. A great change has come to his personality. And in that place there were also groups of religious people, who were Vaishnavas, because that was the period of Muslim rule, sixteenth century, and these people came and saw him and they were very happy that this proud young scholar, who was really a great scholar, now has come to religion. So they were very happy. And so his life, his religious life, we need not go into details into his religious life, later on he became a great teacher and he traveled all through India. So this is an example [of] how pilgrimage can bring great spiritual changes in your life. So it is not discouraged. As a spiritual discipline it has an important place in the life of a devotee.

Say, in the Christian tradition, there are dozens – why dozens -- hundreds of Christians, pious Christians – they go to church regularly, read the Bible. All these things are true, but they have a dream. Somehow they must go to the Holy Land, where Christ was born, Christ lived and worked, and finally died. That Holy Land! They have a dream in their life. It needs money. It needs time, but they are prepared to do that. And we read sometimes stories about how the poor devotee had collected some money through years and eventually went to the Holy Land. And when he was standing before the shrine, where Christ was born and that that was a festival. The people from many places had come, gathered there. And this person felt such a... an upheaval in his heart, that he was absorbed. He could not see what was happening outside. His whole mind went inside and there he had an experience, of God. When he came home, his neighbors and friends asked him, “What did happen? What did you see?” Then he said, “Well, when I stood in front of the... place, sacred place, I did not see the temple. I did not see the crowds. I did not see the altar. I saw only Christ... Not Christ. I only saw God. I felt God’s presence has overwhelmed me.” This happens.

So, Abraham Lincoln. We read in his life once he was remarking to his wife, “After this war is ended and I am relieved of this troublesome job of the presidency, when my...” He expressed two desires: that I want to visit the Holy Land, that is one desire. And another desire, I want to visit California! [He laughs with the Sacramento congregation.] And although California was involved in the Civil War, but California did not contribute much, besides some money – no soldiers. It was far off and there was [a] gap of other territories and it was difficult. But California was... people had a rosy picture about California. So Lincoln said, “I have the desire to visit the Holy Land, and California.”

[There are] the Muslims, the pious Muslims, whose lifelong desire is to visit Mecca -- Mecca, the birthplace of the prophet, Muhammad. And so, they collect money and through the years and go there. We have seen that [in] pictures in the t.v., how in all white dress, white pajama like pants and white shirt and white cap. Hundreds upon hundreds, about thousands of people are kneeling down before the mosque and sitting there and bowing down and praying. It is an inspiring sight to see. Now these people have come from different Muslim countries and they have the opportunity to make this, [what] they call the Hajj pilgrim[age]. And a person who has made at least one pilgrimage, Hajj [or possibly: “[is a] hajji.”].... There are some devotees who have made several pilgrimages to this holy place. That is pilgrimage. That is, there is no other desire but for the time being... He may not be ... he may not be a very

good man, but it's, is a, in his mind he had that idea: "If I visit that holy place." And they have... every place of pilgrimage has some rules, some rituals they have to go through. Here, in this case they have to... there is a big block of stone and there is a black piece of another stone. And every person, every pilgrim has to go there and kiss that stone. What is the meaning? Only the priests know. They don't care. But they know, "We have come to this holy place and our life... our life is blessed."

So, in... almost in all religions there is this practice of pilgrimage. And, a person who goes for this trip, he is a pilgrim. And this pilgrimage, in all places of pilgrimage there are also the other things. Namely, there is also the fear of being robbed, the fear of being misused. The priest... priest craft is there. The priest will come, "Take a bath here. This has this merit." And... "visit this place." So in all places there are priest craft. The priests use the honest and sincere pilgrims by devising several stories. And in the place of pilgrimage, a person loses his reason. [He laughs lightly.] He is in a mood of devotion, of submission. Whatever the priest says, in his heart of hearts he may feel, "This is not rational." Still, he does that, go on doing that and spends maybe a lot of money, lot of money... in doing useless things.

But he returns with the satisfaction and he is proud to tell his grandchildren... "You see when I... thirty years ago, I had gone to Benares, or Haridwar, in the Himalyas, in mountain Kailash, Mount Kailash.<sup>2</sup> And then the children would gather around him and hear stories, see? So this practice of pilgrimage has its bright side – more a bright side than dark side, and is a well known, is a well known practice in many religions.

But certain things should be... even in India those who are monks, who have renounced everything, they have an obligation to make, to [do these] journeys. In his lifetime he should visit the four holy places. Holy places. There are holy... They are in the north, in the south, in the east, and the west. There are four very important holy places. And a sannyasin, a monk, is encouraged to visit these places anytime in their life. There are sannyasins who are proud to say, "I have made four dhamas." Each place of pilgrimage is called a dhama, a place of god.<sup>3</sup>

In the north, in the Himalyas, is a place that's called Joshimath<sup>4</sup> [near Badrinath], and in the south there is a place called Rameswar. It is a temple of Siva, where we find even Rama and Sita. Rama and Sita... It was Rama who had installed that image of Siva there and Holy Mother also visited that place. Rameswar. And in the east coast of India, is... there is a place called Jagannath. Puri it is called, on the ocean. There also there is a... it is called a dhama. And in the west... west coast, there is place called Dwaraka, in the state of Gujarat, there is a temple of Krishna and that is also considered, the sannyasin is... should also visit that holy place. They'll say, "chadur" [Should this be char?] "dhama," four.. "These important places of pilgrimage for sannyasins, I have done."

Now those who go there, they may not be just in initial stage of spiritual life. Even great sannyasins cherish the desire. Why? They have no need to go there, because regular religious practices, religious meditation and worship can be done at the ashrama where they live. But if he is a wandering monk, that can be done anywhere. Why then it is an obligation to visit these particular places of

worship, these dhama, chadur [or maybe char] dhama? The idea is: the tradition is respected. They remember this, every sannyasin remembers, there have been sannyasins, monks -- hundreds and thousands of monks before me -- they have visited these places. So I should go and remember them. And when they are in such a place, they do not waste their time. They try to spend as much time as possible in meditation, in holy company. Like this!

Even Sri Ramakrishna. He was a perfect man, but still he wanted to go to pilgrimage and his guardian, Mathur Biwas[?] [Second word is not clear, but may be his surname.], the landlord who took care of him and made all arrangements for [him], he made arrangements for his pilgrimage. He did not go to many places, to Benares, and on the way, he stopped at another holy place called Deogarh.<sup>5</sup> There's a Siva temple [there], and there he found the people were very poor. And, so he asked his guardian, this rich man, rich landlord, Mathur Babu, "Well you must... you forget about pilgrimage now. First of all, you must... these poor people they have not eaten. They are unclean. You have [to], make them bathe and feed them nicely for a few days and give them some money and clothing." Then this guardian, Mathur Babu said, "That is... your demands..." He used to call him baba, though he was much older than Sri Ramakrishna, but he respected him as a great spiritual person and he used to call him 'father' – baba. "Eh, Baba, your proposal is very nice, but that would cost a lot...lots of money. We have to go to so many places." But Sri Ramakrishna says, "I don't want to listen to anything." [Swami laughs lightly at this comment.] "You must serve these poor people, [and] make arrangements."

In a way, historically speaking, you could say that that was the beginning of the... [of] our program of service in our order. You see, later on when Vivekananda founded the order of Ramakrishna, an important program was service to humanity, to establish hospitals, dispensaries, schools – where there is need, to start that -- and that is an important part of our life. Whoever joins as a monk in the Ramakrishna Order should know that this is not a place just for closing your eyes and meditating. You have to practice four yogas, with equal importance: bhakti yoga, the yoga of devotion, where you pray, where you worship, where you sing, where you dance before the image. That is called bhakti yoga. And there is raja yoga, the yoga of concentration, in silence, in quietude, you have to practice those – pranayama, meditation. And there is jnana yoga, you have to practice inquiry – into the nature of this world, nature of your own true self. That is called jnana yoga. And karma yoga is unselfish service to man.

Now we could say that it was Sri Ramakrishna who initiated this at this place, at that time of pilgrimage. He was going to a pilgrimage to have the visits [to] holy temples in Benares and Vrindavan, the place of Krishna. But on the way he stopped at Deogarh. That was also a place of pilgrimage and he found these distressed people and he started this work through his guardian. You could say that it was Sri Ramakrishna who was... In later days he encouraged this. He encouraged sympathy for the poor, service to the poor. He not merely talked about meditation and love of God and holy music, but he also encouraged [service] you see. So, we who belong to this order, we know well that pilgrimage... we do not ignore any part of the Hindu tradition, the ancient tradition.

So we ... though some of us....Though we are busy people, every month is busy -- busy with the work in the center where he is a worker. He has to study; he has to cook; he has to do gardening; he has to receive visitors; he has to be [a] builder. All sorts of work is there! But the point is, Sri Ramakrishna and Vivekananda taught, "Don't consider this, these types of work as secular. You are doing these things for God." So every work you do, is a yoga-- karma yoga-- and karma yoga is as important as bhakti yoga or jnana yoga. That is the ideal, formulated by Sri Ramakrishna and Vivekananda.

But, once we find that one devotee, who had been coming for some time to Sri Ramakrishna and he said that he wanted to go on a pilgrimage. Then Sri Ramakrishna said, "You are just coming and you are just learning the devotional practices and here... It is not the time for you to go for a pilgrimage. Why don't you wait for a few years?" In other words, effective pilgrimage should be done at a little [more] mature stage, when you have already experienced some devotion and you have developed faith in God, a strong faith in God. And you have read some scriptures. If you go to pilgrimage at that stage, then that pilgrimage becomes very effective. You really gain some spiritual insights. But if you go in an immature stage, even going to the holy places you do not see holy things. You see some beautiful women. You see a shopping area and begin to purchase this thing, that thing. It becomes a shopping trip, rather than a pilgrimage! You see?

So Sri Ramakrishna warned him, a pilgrimage for a sincere spiritual seeker has its own time. You must wait till that mature stage of your mind has come. Then if you go, you will benefit it immensely. You will have visions. You go to a temple, so many hundreds of people are visiting temples, but who is having a real vision? Who is really feeling a tangible presence of God? Not many! So Sri Ramakrishna encouraged, he did not speak against pilgrimage, but this particularly to this gentleman, he said, "You wait a little more," so that you become mature. At a mature stage, if you go for a pilgrimage, that will be immensely rewarding.

Now, this is all in relation to this... the practical life where we live. We live in a life, in a surrounding, material surrounding where there are places, where there are bad things and good things, religious things and irreligious things. And in this environment, the question of pilgrimage has a meaning and a value in one sense, which I have mentioned. But the word pilgrim can be extended to a higher level.

Each man is a pilgrim, in that higher spiritual sense. Each man is a pilgrim -- to God! As Sri Ramakrishna said and the Upanishads say -- [as] all holy scriptures say, the real purpose of human life... Human life is not an eternal life. Human life is limited. You... It is a stage, where you play your part for fifty years or sixty years, or one hundred years, or one hundred two! [He laughs with the audience.] But this is not a place where we can live for all the time. Yet in the human heart, there is a firm belief, unconscious belief, that we are not going to die. Death may come to other people, but not to me. See? We are so fond of life. Life is such a precious treasure to us.

We can see other people die and we could be crying, we may attend their funeral, all these things. But for myself, we could not think, "my passing away, my death" because we have been attached to so many things and each thing has

bound us. My house has bound me. My children have bound me. My grandchildren have bound me. My... whatever possessions I have, maybe a car, a house... Everything has put a fetter, a bondage so to say. And when you... when you think of death, you shudder. "But, how can I be separated from my dear things? How can I be separated from my car, from my gun? [He laughs with audience]... and from my children and from my wife. Maybe three wives. [He laughs with audience again.] At three different stages... But man cannot forget.

So this is called bondage – desire. Man... at any time man has so many desires. And so, because of these desires, we would love to stay here, however inconvenient or miserable our life may be. Maybe my income is very poor. I may have a big family. And still we want to live. We may be a victim of a very serious disease, but still we do not want to leave the scene. Now... but why it is so?

The explanation is in Vedanta.

Man's love for life is really not coming from life itself, because he knows fully well the life, life energy prana... Prana comprises the living principle in us, in our body and it is prana which brings up this... all this ... physiological, biological changes and reactions in our body. And so, from where [is] this deep urge for life coming, this great love for life? In other words, every man wants to be immortal. He never wants to die. He never wants to die! Now what is the source? Now Vedanta has inquired into this, and there are researches in this direction [that] are found in the Upanishads, in the vedantic books, in the Upanishads, in the Gita. A man is really a pilgrim. He is a spiritual entity. He is not a material entity. His body may be a material entity, subject to food and drink and sleep. His prana, life principle, is also a material entity. His mind is subtle no doubt, but it survives on knowledge.

But in the depth of the human personality there is a truth: his soul. Man's soul! And man's soul is immortal. Man's soul is not subject to disease or death, or any kind of change that may happen in our body or mind, or our prana. Now Vedanta says, the man's desire for immortality is coming from there. Man is always immortal! He has taken up a body due to his karma, past karma. And he is a pilgrim. He is on the way to different experiences. Each experience is called a birth. Now this birth, the present birth may last for sixty years. And it will bring plenty of experiences. It will bring three marriages, five children, and ten grandchildren... and a house and a car. Enjoyment! And it will also, it may also bring some sufferings: some diseases, some lows, some humiliation. Nobody can say that my life and all be a bright sunlight. Nobody can say [that]! Side by side with the sun, there is also the shadow, the shade.

Anyway, this is one stage of your pilgrimage. Then according to your karma, accumulated desires and the fruits of your actions, good or bad, you have to be born again. You have to go to another holy place! [Laughs.] From this standpoint, you consider each place a holy place. Each place is an experiment for perfection. See? Each place, the part we play, the works we do gives us experience. For a higher evolution! So man is a pilgrim.

Say in one birth, one such birth, he learns a lot. He gets plenty of shocks, plenty of suffering. Then his mind turns inwards. "Well, I have done this. I have played this game so many times and now another game I am playing. What for? What is the purpose of life?" Then they discover. See, it is not always possible to discover at once... And yet, he has to read scriptures. He has to meet

experienced person[s]... holy men, holy company. And from these sources, he learns that man is a spiritual being. He has a soul, and that soul is eternal. That soul does not die, and his ultimate place of pilgrimage is God!

His ultimate destiny is God, the Divine, because he, himself is divine. It is due to a basic ignorance of life, which in Vedanta we call "maya." This basic ignorance of life has kept us tied to so many desires, to so many things. And now this man, his conscience is awakened. Then, he comes to real, serious spiritual life. Then he says, "No. There is no good in traveling from birth to birth. I must do something, which will end this journey." This journey from birth to birth has its rewards, has its fascinations, but this does not solve the problem of life. The life's problem is ultimately solved when he comes to God, when he sees God! Then he experiences that really he is of divine nature, he is immortal. [More softly..] He is really immortal!

It is due to ignorance that he identifies himself with his body or mind or life principle or this or that, but his goal is God! Then he practices spiritual life very seriously. Seriously, he practices disciplines. He practices self-control. He studies the scriptures. He has recourse to holy company. A new life... A new life opens up. For such a person, the question of outside pilgrimage does not come. His pilgrimage is inwards. His journey is inwards, through contemplation, through meditation. Through inner search he finds wonderful, wonderful objects you see which have [been] described in the scriptures. He attains viveka, which is discrimination; vairagya, detachment; bhakti, love of God; then jnanam, knowledge of self. These are great treasures! These are great pilgrimages.

Now he goes through all those and it is possible, the scriptures say, if you are serious, that this journey may be over in one life. You may not have to travel from life to life. You will have moksha. Moksha means liberation. Hmmm? In the words of Lord, Jesus Christ, it is called "perfection." He says, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect. This perfection is not in the body, is not in the mind! You may store your mind with thousands of book knowledge, but that won't pay. You see? When death will come, nothing will pay. Only God will pay. So his sole aim is to reach God, to reach the feet of God. This is called the inner pilgrimage and in that sense, each man, each person is a pilgrim.

We are going through many experiences, good or bad. But we are eventually at every moment we are going to God. We are traveling "God-wards." So Swami Vivekananda said, "Every person, every human being will be free, one day." Maybe after one hundred lives! But the destiny of man is God. He is bound, just as the destiny of a river is the ocean. A river, like a very narrow stream, emerges from a spring in the mountain and traveling miles and miles of wilderness or desert, or cities, eventually it comes to the ocean. The river comes to the ocean. That ocean is God, for us. So man is really... man's, whatever man is doing spiritually speaking, he is proceeding to God.

There is one quotation from a... a well-known philosopher, he was called [Samuel] Alexander. He was the author of a very famous book called, Space, Time and Deity. He says, "the universe as a whole has a tendency towards deity." Deity means God, the Divine. Space, time and causality belongs to this material universe. But it seems... his thesis [is]: the whole universe is not just to remain a material universe. It has a tendency towards the deity, in which



everything at one time will become free. (There will not be the bondage of time, bondage of space, but he will come to deity.) That is the spiritual reality, which is free, which has no birth, which has no death, and so he says, not merely human beings, but everything in the whole universe has a tendency towards deity.<sup>6</sup>

That is a very significant utterance from a... a philosopher.

In one of the Upanishads, we read [about] the man's destiny with the river and the ocean. It is the Mundaka Upanishad. "Yatha nadyas syandamanas samudre [astam] gacchanti nama-rupe viyaya. Tatha vidvam nama-rupad viyaya [vimuktah] parat-param purusam upaiti divyam."<sup>7</sup> [3:2:9] "Just as rivers flowing from a distant place eventually goes to the ocean and becomes one with the ocean, when a river meets the ocean, he no longer is the river. He becomes the ocean. So a man of knowledge through his knowledge, he... he can meet God, Brahman, Who is the Greatest, the Greatest Treasure, the Greatest Value." He gives up his outside identity as a man or a woman.

We have to pass through several types of identity. Sometimes I may be an engineer. Sometimes I may be a teacher, a man, or a cook. But this is called nama rupa – names and forms. So a time comes when the jnani, the man of knowledge, he gives up all his other identities, nama rupa, and he is merged in that Infinite Consciousness, Sat-Chit-Ananda. That is called moksha. Moksha means, liberation. Just as Christ said, "perfection" so here the Upanishad says, it is "moksha," liberation. And that is the superior goal of human life. It is difficult to understand this goal, all at once. We have to pass through many experiences. Then there is a dispassion for this so called life in time-space. The inner desire, that is called spiritual desire. That is called the desire for freedom. A desire for freedom comes. And when that desire for freedom is followed, then it is possible that man can become free.

Gita says, this freedom cannot come to everyone. Maybe one... thousands of people are trying to see God, but of those thousands maybe one has come near God. Of thousands of such people, there may be just one who has really become free, understood the purpose of life. [Gita 7:3].<sup>8</sup> He has understood, I was never a body-bound... bound by body, bound by my mind. I was ever free. I was always free.

This superior knowledge, which is called Self-Knowledge, or if he is a bhakta, if he is a devotee of God, he is following the path of bhakti yoga, there is a duality there. He does not speak of "merging with God." His ideal is to remain an eternal servant of God. Even when he dies, he knows that I am not going to oblivion. God is my eternal companion. Just as in this life, in times of woe or in times of happiness, God was my companion, so after death, God will be with me. I can never be separated from God.

So in the path of bhakti, they would not speak of the ~~mergence~~ [merging] in the infinite, the river and the ocean, but he is also not less. His goal is not less impressive than what we call "self-knowledge." Through devotion, through love of God, he has attained a stage where he sees God everywhere. He finds that God has entered into my body. Every part of it is filled with God. Without God, I cannot see – God as consciousness. Without God, I cannot hear. Without God, I cannot think. You see? God is at the back of all my activities. This is not book reading for him. It is a direct experience with him. Such a man is a bhakta. So a bhakta, a devotee, whose path is the path of worship and prayer and love, he

can also attain... He is also a pilgrim. He will not have to be born again, but he will... In the last book of the Bible, we have a picture of a true Christian after his death, what is his condition. Well he is in the presence of God. There is no sun there. There is no moon there. But there is God.

We are accustomed to think in terms of time-space. We are accustomed to think in terms of the sun and the moon and the stars and the wind. Natural things. Natural forces. Material forces. But the Upanishads, the scriptures tell us that there are superior things than these material values: for example, this love of God. This love of God can take you to immortality, a stage where you are in the service of God.

So, man is really a pilgrim, and it is [through] those [stages]. And thinking in this line, really brings to us a spirit of detachment. I am not going to live here eternally. So, along with my other duties, let me try to seek God, to find God. So that is his ideal of life. And this idea of life, this is the end of his pilgrimage. Through different lives, whatever he is doing, he was really proceeding to God. He was making a long pilgrimage, lasting through thousands of births maybe. But eventually, he is bound to come to the end of his pilgrimage, namely the Divine, namely God.

[Swami Shraddhananda gives announcements about the guest speaker from New York Vedanta Society, summer recess and “end of pilgrimage” for the season. He mentions two other classes before the summer recess begins and the gatherings for Guru Purnima and birthday of Lord Krishna. These are not included in transcription.]

Madhu vAtA R^itAyate madhu xaranti sindhavaH.  
 mAdhvlrnaH santu auShadhIH..  
 madhu naktamutoShaso madhumat.h pArthivam.h rajaH.  
 madhu dyauH astu naH pitA..  
 madhumAnno vanaspatiH madhumAm.h astu sUryaH.  
 mAdhvlrgAvo bhavantu naH..  
 Om madhu madhu madhu.<sup>9</sup> [Rg Veda 1:90, 6-7]

Sweet blow the winds and the very oceans give forth blessedness. May the nights and dawns bring us health and happiness. 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, and Peace.

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1. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. [Verified spelling of terms] In Wikipedia [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chaitanya\\_Mahaprabhu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chaitanya_Mahaprabhu) accessed November 12, 2015.

2. Mount Kailash. [Checking spelling] in Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount\\_Kailash](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_Kailash) accessed November 27, 2015.

3. Char Dham [Checking spelling] in Wikipedia. [https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Char\\_Dham](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Char_Dham) and also Chota Char Dham in Wikipedia [https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chota\\_Char\\_Dham](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chota_Char_Dham) both accessed November 27, 2015.
- 4 “Joshimath.” <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/india/uttarakhand-uttaranchal/joshimath> “Gateway to Badrinath Temple.” Accessed December 7, 2015.
5. Books on Swami. Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna. [Pilgrimage to Vaidyanath] <http://www.vivekananda.net/BooksOnSwami/Gospel/Intro/26.html> and then Vaidyanath Jyotirlinga [to find spelling of Deogarh] <http://www.jyotirlingas.com/vaidyanath-jyotirlinga.html> accessed November 27, 2015.
6. Alexander, S. [Samuel]. Space, Time and Deity: the Gifford Lectures at Glasgow, 1916-1918. New York: Humanities Press, c. 1920. In two volumes. Reprinted 1950 by special arrangement with Macmillan Company. Volume 1 – <http://www.giffordlectures.org/lectures/space-time-and-deity-vol-1> volume 2 -- [https://ia801400.us.archive.org/22/items/spacetimeanddeit00alexuoft/spacetimeanddeit00alexuoft\\_bw.pdf](https://ia801400.us.archive.org/22/items/spacetimeanddeit00alexuoft/spacetimeanddeit00alexuoft_bw.pdf) Accessed November 28, 2015.  
 Quotes are possibly: preface to vol. 1, p. xxiii – “God as the whole universe tending towards deity does exist.” --or maybe p. 377 in vol 2. – “the whole world with its real tendency to deity.” or vol. 2, p. 402 “whole universe in its process towards the quality of deity”  
 –Second part quoted may be taken from vol 2 p. 327. “this fact is not peculiar to human determinism; but it arises wherever the change from one level of existence with its distinctive quality to another occurs...” [I wonder if Swami Shradhdhananda was quoting indirectly rather than word for word. After searching the PDFs of both volumes for specific words, I still could not find exact quotes.]
7. Mundaka Upanishad in: The Principal Upanisads, ed. by S. Radhakrishnan. New York: Harper & Brothers, c. 1953. p. 691. [There were a couple of slight variations as quoted verbally.]
8. Bhagavad Gita [7:3], Bhagavad Gita Trust, c. 1998-2009, <http://www.bhagavad-gita.org/Gita/verse-07-03.html> accessed November 28, 2015.
9. He gives a slightly shorter English translation of the prayer in this lecture. [Transliteration of Rg Veda verse is taken from [http://satsangh.tripod.com/pujatexts/satya\\_baskegar.html](http://satsangh.tripod.com/pujatexts/satya_baskegar.html)] accessed June 26, 2012. Alternate version of prayer with somewhat simpler spelling <http://www.sacred-texts.com/hin/rvsan/rv01090.htm>  
 madhu vātā ṛtāyate madhu kṣaranti sindhavaḥ |  
 mādhvīrnaḥ santvoṣadhīḥ || etc.