

God for Man and Man for God

Om. A-sa-to ma sad ga-ma-ya. Ta-ma-so-ma jyo-tir ga-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.

The subject for this morning's lecture is: God for man and man for God. There have been in this world exceptional personalities who have left behind them a great act. It may be an act, a phenomenon in history or it may be a wonderful act of creation and culture – a painting. These persons are very special persons. We may [not] remember the details of their lives but their act of creation survives.

Think of Abraham Lincoln. His life was full of so many episodes: joy and suffering, austerity and all these things. But nobody now remembers those things. All that we remember is that Abraham Lincoln who brought unity in this country and who was the promulgator of emancipation. Emancipation of the slaves and bringing this country which was breaking down into a stable unity. For these two things we remember this great man, Abraham Lincoln.

In India there is a very beautiful piece of ... building, a big building in memory of the wife of a great emperor. It is so beautiful that people from all over the world go to see that. The emperor was a Moghul emperor. His name was Shah Jahan. And this building is called Taj Mahal, which was built through several years as a memorial to his beloved wife, Ma Mumtaz. Now people forget Shah Jahan and his struggle with his sons, his struggles, his warfare, all these things. But nobody will forget his great work, Taj Mahal.

In Italy, there is a great piece of sculpture, called the Pieta. Jesus Christ after his crucifixion was held by his mother and this was the subject matter of the sculptor, Michelangelo. And nobody can forget-- even the name of the sculptor we forget-- but this piece of marble, which is in St. Paul Cathedral in Rome, the Jesus lying on the lap of the Madonna. Not the living Jesus, for Jesus had completed his life after his crucifixion, and the mother is holding her son.

In the same way, we could say, maybe not quite rationally, but we could say... Just as remembering Lincoln we say, "emancipation and the unity of this country." And for these great sculptors their act, their beautiful act is remembered. The person may be forgotten. In the same way, we may say... Don't think that to say this is sacrilegious. It might sound like so, but it is not so and I'll explain. We may say, that God's sole purpose of His existence was to create man. It was for man that God – God is never born so we cannot say that He was born, but God the Great Creator, His supreme purpose of existence was fulfilled in creating man.

This is described, not in this language, it is described that man is at the apex of God's creation. He created all objects and finally he created man in His own image. Similar statements we find in the Upanishads. God created the world, the elements, and finally a superman called Hiranyagarbha. First He got a lump of material and asked that Hiranyagarbha what.. First he brought a cow. Well do you want this form? "Ah, No." Then he brought a goat. Do you want this form? "No." Then after showing different forms, He finally brought a human form. Then Hiranyagarbha said, "Yes. This form I want." That was the beginning of man.

Now why [do] we call, why [do] we say that God's all His actions, all the purpose of His Life was terminated [culminated?] in the creation of man? Because man here does not mean a single man, but the whole human species. Through the whole human species how much glory through the ages would be found. So man is the symbol of God's wonders that were already here and are continuously coming before us and will continuously come in the future. This was possible only through a man. Man is intelligent. After creating a man, God put into man infinite potentialities for growth. As it has been said in the Bible. Jesus Christ tells his devotees, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect." So perfection, the word perfection includes all segments of existence. Now all segments of existence have been brought to His Perfection. So that possibility was in man.

The same idea we find in the Upanishads, that God put into man infinite potentialities of growth. And this growth will end when man achieves supreme perfection. Man becomes the same as God. Now in the Christian scriptures, this is presented not as God's glory, but God's danger. And God found that this first couple of human beings, Adam and Eve, have tasted the fruit that was the Fruit of Knowledge. And God was afraid that the Fruit of Knowledge will bring out his latent potentialities. And one day he will be same as Me. So God did not want any competitor. So he pushed both from heaven to this earth. See. Now, we can ignore this story, but the fact is, that man was born, man was created by God with infinite potentiality for growth and that we see even today and that we shall see tomorrow, day after tomorrow, after one century. See what man is doing, man is discovering. Man is showing his abilities.

When man discovers some astronomical principle unknown before – say the Black Hole. Now if God is God, if God Almighty is All-Knowing also, then did he not know that man would create one day, would discover one day the Black Hole? If we have faith in God, we have to say God knows the present, the past – and the future. Now God knew this: that man's achievement will go on. It may go on in the physical plane, the astronomical plane, in the atomic universe, in the moral universe, and in the spiritual universe. God knew that there will be great spiritual personalities, like Buddha, like Krishna, like Ram, like Jesus Christ, like our Ramakrishna. It was not unknown to God.

He knew that in man there is the possibility of growth and adventure and creation on different planes. On the spiritual plane he becomes in knowledge, he becomes one with the same reality which is God, the spiritual reality, Brahman. So we can say, we describe God in so many ways, because God's... there is no end to God's wonders. When we read a big book about the hummingbird we are amazed to see the masterpiece of God's painting. See? So we are amazed by studying creation, by studying nature. But that we... all that is true and God needs our adoration. When we see anything wonderful, beautiful. But when we think of man as the creation of God and when we examine man in his body, in his mind, in his intellect, in his desires, his ambitions, then we are bound to say that man stands at the apex of God's creation.

Somewhere Shakespeare mentions, "See how wonderful is man." His intellect. His different powers. So all these really speak about God's supreme creation: man, God's supreme creation. And though at one stage man is small; man is afraid of everything. He is a little animal. But God knows that this little animal can grow and bring out from him the Divine Personality. And so much so, one day he will become in knowledge and power, one with Me. Vedantic scriptures also describe this in various

analogies. So we say, "God for man" as if God's existence is justified, in the creation of man. Till man was ushered on the scene, God was doing all things. But he had not brought out his maximum talent and when man came, God was full. God had... A Ph.D. degree could be given to God. [laughter] Yes. He is a great architect. He is a great, great artist. He is a great philosopher. All greatness could be given to God because he created man --and who in himself will be a great creator. There is no end to man's potent possibilities. That we have seen through history. See.

So we say, God's ... man as... man related to God as God's maximum wonder. ... Now when we remember this, when a man remembers this, infinite and vast, he is bound to turn his attention to God. And then we could say that as we have mentioned in the title – what was the title, I forget? [laughter] God for man and man for God. Now we can see man for God. God for man has been described: the God's ultimate skill is in man. And now man for God. All men do not care for God, though all men must one day come to God. But those who care, they begin to build a new pattern of human life. They know that his life is justified, not by many other achievements that we speak about and we think about-- but man's existence, man's life is fully justified when we see he has been [given?] to understand God, to love God, to see God. That is what our spiritual scriptures say. The Upanishads, time and again say: the purpose of human life.

This man has lived many, many lives achieving many things, but a time comes when he is not satisfied in doing other things, achieving merits in other things, but his sole purpose is to see God, as Jesus Christ says in the Bible. "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God." Now seeing God is the most wonderful and supreme objective of human life. So the Upanishads also... we find in the Gita also... and through the mouths of many saints and seers also, that this human life may have achieved many things: name, fame, wealth, love, beauty, study, everything. But his life is not justified fully till he sees God, till he comes face to face with God, until he like St. Francis of Assisi can feel and say, "My God, my All." Because this man who has that intuition of God, that God is really the Supreme. God is really Brahman, as the Upanishads say. He is the Greatest in all respects. But he may be Greatest but still for man he can come nearer and nearer and nearer and it is possible to see God, to experience God, to be one with God.

So this man, we call him a spiritual man, a seeker – an earnest seeker. Other men are not to be ignored. Let them carry on this part of process, but if whatever he does is ultimately for this supreme purpose. When we are beginning to build a big building, now it goes on part by part. At one stage we see only a frame. At another stage we see only the other parts of this building. In this way slowly, maybe fifteen years or twenty years or even more, the building comes up. So Vedanta says, "Whatever man does is really for this supreme purpose." There will be many frustrations, there will be many failures. But eventually he will come to God. So his life really is full of sadhana. Whatever he is doing, maybe he is a carpenter. Maybe he is a teacher, but whatever he is doing, from the perspective of Vedanta is moving towards God. And he will eventually discover that he is one with God.

So this man goes on seeking God and then comes the question of religion, prayers, meditation. All that he does in order to per...perfect himself. He brings perfection to his body. He brings perfection to more and more – to his mind, to his intellect, to his emotions. And these are called spiritual practices. Each practice is .. is

important. Each practice gives him a push forward. But eventually he more and more as he goes on in his spiritual life finds, he finds that-- till I have seen God, till I have experienced God, till I have come out of this what I am experiencing now. (In Vedantic language it is called maya-- the perception of the manifold, losing sight of the basic unity of life.) Bhagavad Gita says, "Everything in this universe, far and near are strung together like a garland by God. So there is a supreme unity among everything in this world. Matter is linked with life in a spiritual unity. Life is linked with mind in spiritual unity. Life... Mind is linked with intelligence. In this way more and more in sadhana, in the process of seeking God we discover more and more our links, links in this universe. How wonderfully this universe is united! And we begin more and more to feel that unity in ourselves. That is called, knowing God. And the Upanishads have given us directions, how to find out God from His hidden places.

At first in our spiritual life, there is no God, though we are praying, though we are repeating the name. We are crying for God but God... There is no response from God. God has hidden Himself. But the Upanishads say that this is bound to be a little bit; it is little God's play. He knows that man will eventually discover himself. He is My Supreme Creation. God is the... we call God love, we call God beauty. Anything that is dear to us is in God. So God is the dearest, but in order to find that dearest we have to try a little. That is why the life of sadhana, the life of spiritual search for God is a very interesting study. Those who are doing that, we call them sadhakas, spiritual adventurers, spiritual explorers. And when they experience God in many ways, there are no ends to the ways in which man can find this unity in this world. In so many ways that experience of unity comes to man. This is called spiritual growth and finally when he is beginning to realize that unity, his life becomes filled with peace. He finds that the life he was living, the man lives on different levels.

Man is climbing the ladder. When he is at the foot of the ladder that is not to ignored. He is achieving something. But as he ascends the ladder, then more and more wonders of God are revealed to him. And finally as the Upanishads say, the seeker, the man the spiritual seeker finds that God has entered into every corner of this universe. There is not a single spot where God's existence is absent. And he finds that God's most beloved existence is in the human heart. In the human heart, God can be experienced with all His creation. So in the Upanishads we read that there are two, two types of abode. One is called external abode, the vast space and time. And when we call Brahman "the Greatest" we naturally sometimes... naturally we think of the vast outside existence. The Isha Upanishad says, "Pervade everything with God." (Sanskrit ... *sa paryagacchukramakayamavran?*) and then we try to, in the context of that vast, we try to imagine ourselves as a bird and just as a bird flies and flies everywhere so we fly with God. So in the Upanishads then God has been called Hamsa – Paramahamsa, the Great Swan. He's flying and flying and flying, covering all space.

When we read these descriptions we apply those descriptive principles to ourselves. The more and more we are freed from our physical passions we begin to forget our futile existence. Our identity with our body and mind is only ignorance, not complete knowledge. It is knowledge but a distorted knowledge. Our real identity is really finer and finer and finer, till we become a great bird like God and we cover everything. In this way we try to comprehend God in the outer world, in the outer universe. Then we discover that just as there is an outer space so there is an inner space.

Then we begin to fly in the inner space, and we begin to feel that the vast outer space is in the inner space. What we call vast physically speaking, externally speaking, is really a point in the internal space. That the space is so great that time, or in modern science we read the magnitude of time, the magnitude of space... It is really puzzling, we cannot conceive of that vastness of space and the vastness of time. But a spiritual man who is trying to discover God according to the truth described in the Vedanta Upanishads will find this vastness, this smallness, both are fictions.

In man's true nature there is neither far, nor near. So he, this spiritual person, seeker, more and more feels the whole creation in himself – in an inner core, core of his heart. Now when we say it is in his heart, that is a misnomer. There is no heart there. There is a consciousness, no doubt, but that is not a body. There is not even mind, but there is consciousness and in that consciousness, this external and internal, both are there. So this man, this person feels that God in all His Majesty is His. See? And I am... I am... my... the purpose of my existence just as the purpose of God's existence was to create me. And the purpose of my existence is to know God, to love God, to love this Creator Who is eventually one with me.

When that knowledge of the Supreme Unity comes, then our thinking and our speaking and our actions become different. There is nothing but God, then. That is why Jesus Christ says, "Love the Lord Thy God with all thy mind, with all thy heart and all thy soul." That man sees that: here is the most supreme treasure; here is the most supreme purpose of life, to find God, to know God, and to be unified with God. Just again to go to the Bible, "Seek and ye shall find it. Ask and it shall be given you. Knock and it shall be opened unto you." This is the range of spiritual sadhana. Spiritual sadhana means seeking the supreme purpose of my life. It can be in one life. It may take many lives. Doesn't matter. But the supreme purpose is to find that... to solve this mystery of life. Without solving this mystery of life we are helpless. We are like a shipwrecked person. We are floating in an endless ocean, of transmigration. So the spiritual seeker knows that, "I have done that too many lives. Now I am not going to do that any more. From now my purpose will be with Saint Francis of Assisi, "My God my All. My God my All." Whatever I see with my eyes, it is God. I must be bold enough to say it, "It is God." It may be a beautiful thing. It may be an ugly thing. It may be a dangerous thing. But I must be able to say, "It is all God."

In this way, this is the growth, this is called spiritual growth. Period. We have attained perfection. Perfection means complete unity with the Godhead. Godhead in Vedanta as you have heard many times, is called Satchitananda – Existence, Knowledge and Bliss. So we have to find that. That Existence Knowledge and Bliss is scattered all over, the Upanishad says, but we cannot find it. But when we have become sadhaka, an earnest spiritual seeker, we have begun to find it bit by bit, bit by bit. If I am a mother, one day I find it in the face of my child. On other days I used to say, "my child, my child, my child" but that fatal day in a moment of spiritual intuition I see that it is God. It is God who is appearing as my child. Now, this child looks a thousand times more charming and beautiful than before. Why is it? Because I have discovered God in this child. In this way our practices, our thoughts and actions and experiences begin to be transformed. Everything becomes connected with God: the things we see, things we hear, things we touch, minds, thoughts, notions. Everything begins to be. Everything begins to be connected with God.

In this way we go in our spiritual life and we should not be very impatient. If we follow the correct principles then we shall know what is God's nature, what is God's purpose, and what is – who we are and what is the purpose of our life. All these are from the spiritual perspective of life. Man is not just physical man, an intellectual man, a biological man. But man is also a spiritual man. And when we come to man's that level, slowly we discover the great truths of man. Then we are proud. A great pride comes to us. So much potentiality was in me. I thought that I could only read some books, get some degrees, do some crafts, give some lectures and that was the end of my life. Sufficient materials to write my biography. [laughter] But later he will find that is not so, that only little compared to the great possibility of me, the great possibility that I can find God, God can become my own.

Just as we said, competition I have got a medal and I cherish it with great care. So also when God comes to my life we find that it is the greatest treasure I can have, the greatest treasure. Medals. The life of a spiritual man. It is a progressive life. It does not happen in one day but we have to begin that life and more and more if we are sincere, God begins to show his wonders to us and the ultimate wonder is unspeakable because the Upanishad says, "God is [Sanskrit ?avam manasa gocharam?] beyond the reach of our words and thoughts. When we say God is Great, we tell a lie. See. In the Sanskrit, God cannot be described by words.

You can use many words. You can write many books. You can read many books but God will still be far, the farther away. So we have to more and more feel the presence of God, not merely in my body or mind, but in everywhere. Everywhere you have to feel the presence of the One – the One Unity. In that One, everything is in God. By accepting that One, by loving that One, we do not miss anything. See. Even like when we are traveling we carry two suitcases with us. And in those two suitcases many of my possessions are there. We are carrying all our possessions in those two suitcases. So a spiritual man knows that when I think of God in my heart, he **is** there; and with Him, the whole universe is there.

So by meditating on God, by repeating His Holy Name, we are not denying anything. We are accepting everything, because as one of the Upanishads says, Taittiriya Upanishad just "God is in every particle of this universe." Every particle of this universe! So a spiritual seeker begins to feel this and he becomes very proud. He says, "My God." My God is not just an idol. My God is all existence. All joy. All peace. And he feels that he... that experience of God. He repeats the Holy Name of God and he feels that the whole universe is with me. I am repeating the name of God, and the whole universe is repeating the name of God with me, because there is that ultimate unity in everything, in all actions. Whatever action goes on anywhere, it is God's music. Somebody is singing and somebody is disturbing the whole neighborhood by building something, (electrical sounds), but to a seeker it is all the same. It is all music. That is why man can say at that stage, that God is mine. I am for God. Man for God. That this might exist in any of my movements. Even when I am brushing my teeth it is for God. (He laughs.) Because I will show my teeth to God. [laughter] Not to bite Him, but to say [to] Him, He has given me this gift of teeth and I have taken care of it. Hmm. Any action. Any activity we do that is what the declaration of the Gita – whatever action you do, know that is God is the doer. It is His power that is working through your organs, through your hands, through your feet, through your intelligence, though your mind.

Your mind is all the time discovering and in mathematics so many finer regions that will solve so many problems.

Now a man of God should see this intelligence is coming from God. It is not in my power to do this. So he, he is very proud of his being a creation of God. But at the same time he has no vanity. He knows for all times, that it is God who is the Ultimate Power. In all the actions that we see, inside or outside, it is God. It is the presence of God. It is the Hand of God. So at that stage we see man... man – God for man. It has been experiences of some devotees (we have records in their lives) that they feel that it was for me that God was there. He created me, and that was the sole purpose of God's life, to create me, a devotee who will be able to understand Him. In that stage, God for man, and the first stage was man for God. The two ideas converge. The two ideas really converge when illumination comes, when great love for God comes. As Sri Ramakrishna says, "Don't be puzzled to think, which way to God?" No. Only have your faith in God, a child's simplicity and pray to Him for love, for faith, and He will take you to all these perplexities, all these manifold manifestations. He will take you to a goal, so that kind of self surrender a devotee of God practices.

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Instead of the Sanskrit chanting, I shall repeat a song written by India's great poet, Rabindranath Tagore. (English only here)

A devotee is speaking with God...

Oh Lord let all my love, I am full of Love, no doubt, but those loves are for different objects and different occupations. They're hiding in different corners in my heart. But my prayer is: Bring... may I be able to bring all those loves and direct the accumulated love to you.

I have many hopes but let all those hopes be directed to You, and let all those hopes reach Your ears. All those hope should be one spiritual hope, the hope for Thy vision.

My mind is scattered in different directions, but my prayer is that you call me and let all my mind scattered in different directions be collected together and all these various opinions with you melt away. When your call comes let my mind forget all other things and respond to your call.

...Something old words you suddenly forget. That is the sign of your... destination [laughter]... drawing nearer and nearer...

Oh Friend, dear Friend, dearest Friend and for whose residence in the deepest level of my heart, whatever is beautiful in this life, let all those beautiful experiences combine together into a melodious song and that song I'll sing to Thee.

If you'll permit me, I can try to sing this song, but remember that I am an old man of 81. [Sings in Bengali]

