

**Love, Human and Divine**


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: Love, Human and Divine. Love is an universal experience. It is an everyday experience, a common experience of life. But still, we have to differentiate different expressions of love, different manifestations of love, different grades of love, though seers tell us, rishis tell us that in the ultimate, love is one. All source of love is God. But that love is coming through many mediums. That is why in our normal experience we have to distinguish one love from another, though philosophically – spiritually -- the source of all love is God.

A man who has realized God, for him, there is no distinction between one type of love and another type of love. He knows it is that infinite love of God that is manifesting through many channels. A love which may be condemned by us, to God, to a seer, to a saint, that love is also divine love. So he has no occasion to distinguish between human love and divine love, selfish love and unselfish love. For him, all love is divine, because for him, this world, this universe is grounded in love, divine love. Reality for him is love!


“If at the back of things there had not been this universal love, that reality which is love, who could have breathed a single moment.” In other words, reality is love. Just as we are all the time functioning in space, wherever we go, there is space; there is time. So on the spiritual level, when our understanding becomes clearer and clearer and our heart becomes pure, we see that it is love that is pervading and permeating every movement of life. For him there is no distinction between human love and divine love.

We know about a saint in India who was a contemporary of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. His heart was so filled with love, not merely for God, but to everyone. Swami Vivekananda described him as the personification of love, this great yogi, his name was Pavhari Baba. Because he did not, nobody knew what he ate, so they said pav hari. Pav means in Hindi language air and hari means eat, he who eats. So they named him the yogi who lives on air. This great yogi, he would not see people, but Swami Vivekananda met him and he was very much impressed by his character, his attitude, and this yogi one night, there was a cobra. He used to live in a small hut. A cobra came and this yogi addressed the cobra, “Oh messenger of my Beloved.” He was not a bit troubled or afraid.
He thought it is the Beloved who is appearing in the form of the cobra. Maybe the Beloved’s last act of grace and love is a bite from this cobra. That attitude changes [things]. The man of God, the woman of God, whose heart fortunately has been, become, cleansed from all desires, selfishness, all attachments, then that love… He experiences that love, divine love and that divine love is manifested. For him, he sees the love in the animal kingdom, anywhere. It is a love that is moving this whole universe and he is amazed. He looks at the flowers, the blossoms, at the sky, at the sun, at the moon – and what he sees? He sees the smile of the Beloved. It is love spread over the whole universe. He does not want to shut his eyes anymore.

We read and Sri Ramakrishna used to speak of another holy man at the foot of the Himalayas. He had a hut but he would not… he would go retire to the hut only in the night. The whole day he would sing by the side of a spring and the spring is coming, flowing. He would just look at it and his heart was overflowed. And sometimes he would clap his hands. “How wonderful. How wonderful. How wonderful.” That means, it is not merely a material stream of water -- it is the conscious love of God, that is for him manifest in nature, in all human beings, in animals. So he is, he is in samadhi, in ecstasy, with open eyes. There are different types of samadhi: the yogic samadhi, samadhi when everything disappears. Everything has become one in your deepest contemplation. But the bhakta’s samadhi, a lover of God, his samadhi is open eyes. For him also there is no manifold. For him it is all love, it all sweetness, it is all “Rasa.”

But in our practical life as we grow, that divine love, that divine vision, does not come in one day. We have to slowly prepare ourself. We have to grow, step by step, by transforming human love slowly to divine love. Human love as we know in our practical life we have to love so many things. We love: our family, our children, our house, our property. Our hobbies are there. We love our books, [our] vocation. We love-- on the aesthetic level we love music, we love painting.

Human mind has an infinite capacity-- of love. Sometimes we are foolish. We starve that capacity. We say, “No, my mind! No, my heart! We’ll have to love only these two children. We have to love only these four walls of this house. We have to love only this!” The basic ignorance, the basic foolishness of life puts a restriction, does not allow the love to grow, does not allow the love to be purified, so that love becomes strangled. The love becomes starved and we live our ignorant life and we die. But the human heart has that great potentiality, has that great possibility of expansion. The love in us is always crying, “Expand me. Expand me. I want to go. I want to fly. I am not satisfied to live in just the little, limited things. Expand me!” That is the cry of love within us. Sometimes we hear it but we are so busy, we are so foolish, we do not give that love a chance. So love remains just an animal love.

Animal love sometimes is much superior to human love. But that love on the practical level is selfish. That ego is there; it is ego-centered. “I only love this body of mine, this face of mine. All the beauty is only this ugly face of mine.” I don’t call it ugly. For me it is a most beautiful face. That is why I appreciate that
inside my bathroom. There is a mirror… [Audience laughs.] I stand there, “Oh how beautiful, how beautiful, how beautiful.” Now a man of God, or a woman of God can do the same thing but with a different attitude. He or she can also go to the bathroom and look at it, his or her face, but he knows this beauty is God’s beauty. It is the divine, it is that Great Beloved who is peeping through my eyes, who is manifesting this thing: in this looks in this form. He also appreciates beauty, his own beauty – his or her – but, he or she also appreciates beauty in other faces, in other faces also. That is the experience of divine love.

When this human love is stripped off – selfishness—egotism – limitedness – hate – attachment, then the same human love becomes transformed into divine love. But a spiritual seeker in the beginning cannot experience this great love of God, the great love of God that is… that is being expressed everywhere. So, he has to pass, he has to pass through practices of love: how this limited selfish, human love can be transformed into divine love and make our life blessed.

A lover of God has no problem, has no doubt, has no fear. Swami Vivekananda was fond of comparing love to a triangle. Just as a triangle has three corners, so love really speaking, pure love, love as it should be, ideal love has three corners. In other words it has three great characteristics. The first corner, the first characteristic is: love does not know any bargaining. Love is always to give, never asks anything – true love, like the sun. Does the sun is always demanding money from us? Gratitude from us? You praise the sun, or you do not… Praise doesn’t matter. Like Saint Francis you write a canticle of the sun. [It] is all right. But if you would like, [you could write] another devilish poem of how [it is a] scorching sun, stupid sun. The sun won’t mind! [Audience laughs.] The sun is happy to give you light you need and the heat you need. That is the nature of a true lover, does not ask any return. His nature is to give. His nature is to love.

Sri Ramakrishna used to mention a story. There was a great Mogul emperor in India. His name was Akhbar – very generous man. He was very much known for his charity. So one day, a Muslim fakir, a mendicant who was conducting some works of… philanthropic works, serving people and all, he needed some money. So he came to the palace to ask [for] some money, from the emperor. The money was praying, not money the emperor. [Audience laughs.] The emperor was praying in his private mosque, but the emperor was very magnanimous. Anybody could see him at any time. There was no restriction. So this mendicant, this fakir, came and waited. And the emperor was praying. First he was praying for his subjects and all. Then he prayed for money. “Let my treasury be more, solidified.” Like that he was praying for money and this… and this man, this mendicant was listening. The emperor had noticed him, that a mendicant has come and by signs, wanted… told him, “Please wait.” So he was waiting. In the meantime, this mendicant heard the emperor praying for all this money, this and that. Then he walked away, was going, walking away. So the emperor saw that this… so he got up and called him and asked him, “Why are going away? And why did you come?” “Oh, I came for some money. I needed some money to help others.” “And why are you going away?” “Well, I found that you are as… a beggar also like me, though you
are an emperor; you have so much wealth.” Still he was begging money from God. “So, I thought, if I have to beg, let me go to God, instead of praying of a beggar.” [Audience laughs with him.] So, that is... faith in God, a love of God is a loose term we use, often without understanding its deeper spiritual implications and significance.

So love of God, in the true sense of the term, should not have any selfish motive. I love God because He is the Most Beloved. Do we love a little child – may not be my own child, that child walking there. My natural tendency, [the tendency] of everyone is to hold that child, and talk. Is there any bargaining? Do I expect anything from the child? When we look at a flower, a blooming flower, do we expect something? A natural spontaneous love flows to some objects at least – fortunately for us, in order to give us an idea of what unselfish love can be. So unselfish love is really this love, where – we love for love’s sake! We love because that object is beloved, worthy of love.

When we are ignorant there are only very limited things which we consider they are worthy of love: my sweet wife, my sweet wife’s sister, my two little children, our little house, my tv set, my gun, my car. Yes, we can catalog it! [Audience laughs.] That are the objects, which to me are worthy of love. Hmm? There are millions of things outside. “Oh, my love does not go there. They are not worthy of my love.” So, a person who wants to expand on the spiritual level, he has to start from there, push away the boundary of your objects of love. Just as you are loving your own children, try to love at least another child. Try to love another car -- not with the object of stealing. [Audience laughs.] Just as you praise your own car, see another car. Standing... Stand there, “Oh!” Feel a delight, say, “That’s a wonderful car. It must be belonging to someone. How happy he is. I congratulate him, that unseen owner. I congratulate him.”

In this way, we have to practice expansion of love, unselfish love – [there are] plenty of opportunities. There are so many children coming. Visit some children, children’s nursery school. There is no necessity, not a worldly necessity, but there will be a spiritual necessity. Visit the school. See these children. Some children are black; some are white. Some are sturdy; some are rickety. Stand there. Bring that idea of love. Try to feel that these are not adults –[but] little children. Their hearts are pure. Some are coming from [a] poor family. Some from [a] rich family. That is an opportunity of expansion: stand there. Look at those faces of the children. There is no guilt in these little children. Try to feel the presence of God. In this way, we have to practice love - expansion of love. Limited selfish love, slowly has to be converted into pure love, divine love.

Whenever love becomes unselfish, motiveless, the one in the first triangle, the first angle of that triangle is this: no bargaining. Love for love’s sake. Just as I love a flower, just as I love the sky, just as I love a little child’s face. These are examples of unselfish love. You can call it divine love. When a mother loves a child and holds a child, “My child... my child” it has ceased to be divine love. You can call it mother’s unselfish love but it is not divine love. When divine love is there, there is no feeling of my or mine. It is just love. It is... it can be directed to my child. It can be directed to any other child. It can be directed to my house,
to all houses. See, we go and [a] new construction area is going. Beautiful houses, are being built. He is filled with joy. “How wonderful! How many people will live there! How many people will enjoy their house!”

In this way, these feelings can be created: the great yoga book [of] Patanjali he prescribes this, “Practice expansion of heart.” When your mind is selfish and crooked and hateful you see some new car, your heart is filled with jealousy. “Aaaack.” [Audience laughs.] “I am driving a 1967 model, a junk[er] and this man whoever might be, he has… He is driving this ten thousand dollar car. “Aaack.” That is our normal feeling – of jealousy. Instead, if you are a yogi, if you want to expand your heart, stand there and practice these things. Don’t say my heart cannot… Our heart can. Our heart, our mind has infinite potentialities for expansion on the level of knowledge, on the level of love. This is on the level of love. Expand!

So in this way, slowly, bit by bit we have to purify our love, even within our family, even within my little family there are too much trouble and tension. Why? Because there is that selfishness -- self-assertion. That is why we quarrel with our wife, quarrel with our children. There is also, we have to start from our family. Love starts from our family, in this way, from our everyday practical life, where there is love. Love there is always. A man who has no love, who has nothing to love, is almost dead! Just as I quoted the Taittiriya Upanishad [“Raso vai sa,” Taittiriya 2:7]3, if there is no Rasa, if there is no sweetness anywhere in life, you cannot live. You cannot have… you cannot breathe.

There must be some level of sweetness in your life. If you have no wife, if you have no children, you may have buddies, you have some friends. If you have no human friends you may have friends in books, and friends in some sports. But if your life is totally devoid of any sweetness, then you are almost dead, because it is that rasa, which is that feeling of love and joy that is sustaining you. Now in the spiritual life we have to expand this love. This natural love for this body, for my possessions, on that level we have to purify it, knowing that it is… all this is really coming from God. Selfishness has to go. That is the first angle of that triangle of love, the love for love’s sake. We have to know that in our heart there is that force of All Love, which the Upanishads describe as our True Self, the Infinite Spirit in us. It is not a dead material. It is not a dim, dumb, and deaf material. It is the Light of Love, Light of Knowledge. It is the Infinite Self, Paramatman.

The Brihadarnyaka Upanishad describes that spiritual reality as love, the most beloved object of love. Through that beloved object, all other objects of love are becoming meaningful. My love for my money, my love for my possessions, my love for my wife or my husband, the children, just are little expressions of that infinite love which is within me. That love is not in heaven. It is within me, but I have choked that love. I have suffocated that love. I have buried that love. That foolishness has to go. So the Brihadarnyaka Upanishad says, “preyah putrat peryo vittat, preyo’nyastraint sarvasmat anatararam yad ayam atma.”4 [1:4:8] That inner infinite self of mine, which is dearer than a son, dearer than wealth, dearer than anything is that Infinite within me.
So we have to bring this contemplation and then project that experience of contemplation again when we come back from meditation. We should not forget what we meditated. Sometimes we do that. We think meditation is just for half an hour with closed eyes and when we come back we can do anything. We can think anything. That is why meditation does not become effective. What we meditate [on] with closed eyes have to brought within into the practical life. If in meditation we are using that verse of the Upanishads that here inside me in the depth of my consciousness is that Infinite Love, Who is lending all particles of love to all objects of love, if that is my meditation, when I come back we have to apply that in practical life. The first thing I see in the morning as soon as I open my door, a fellow is standing whom I hate most! Instead of just frowning, we have to say, “Hi. Good morning.” [Audience laughs.] And he is surprised – that every day he frowns at me and this day he is smiling. “What has happened to him?” He does not know I have read the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad! [More laughter.]

In this way, if you look closely, is a … you can see, plenty of opportunity – nothing to complain [about]. God is so kind – that infinite God, who is interested not merely in our material life. We read in the Bible as if God is interested just for our physical plane. That is why he created fowls that can be chopped on the Thanksgiving Day – millions of turkeys, you see, and he has given all this food as if for man, man’s body, man’s animal body. For the sustenance of man’s animal body, there must be some fellow who is God. That is a foolish attitude. God is most interested in our spiritual evolution. See, God has created us not to remain in these stages. [Transcriber note: Hard to hear this last phrase, probably “in these stages.”]. [If you] accept the theory of evolution, all things have not come simultaneously, but let us say by grace, by evolution. It does not conjure up the spiritual perspective. But, if God is at the back of all this evolution, His great intelligence, then when He creates man, naturally man’s superior brain and his configuration of his organs, so different from all animals, His purpose is not to keep man on the animal level. Man has to grow! The ancient sages of India saw that: the highest possibility of man’s growth.

The highest possibility of man’s growth is his spiritual discovery. More and more he has to – not that he has to starve his body, he has no care of his body. He should care, but his more care, his attention should be for his spiritual evolution. And, that is also God’s purpose. God has not only given us this earth where we can grow food, and this air which we breathe for our life, but in the scheme of this creation He has given man plenty of opportunities to expand his love and to discover Him. To discover God as the reality, or the knowledge of consciousness is more difficult than to experience Him as love, because love is a very natural experience with us. So when we say, “God is love” – the love that you are feeling in your heart every day through a specific … specific channels, that same love is spread everywhere and that is God. This, is understandable. We can believe this.

Now, a spiritual seeker has to practice this in life: not merely reading and not merely meditating, but in practical life where there are opportunities, where there are occasions of hate, we have to go first there, so that instead of hate, we
can practice love. That is what Jesus Christ said, “Before you go to pray, settle with your brother with whom you quarreled last night.” Settle that. Come to terms. Be at peace with your brother. Then meditate. Unless we are at peace with everything, we cannot go deeper in meditation. That is why when we read the Upanishads, you see before the Upanishads chapter begins there is [a] peace chant. Let the heart be in peace. Let the eyes be quiet. Let the ears be harmonious, all the senses be harmonious. Let the heart be peaceful – then God. So, we have to… a spiritual seeker, he remembers, “Oh, I hate that fellow. I was cruel to that fellow. I was selfish to that fellow. Let me correct this. Let me correct this.” See, that is… that is spiritual discipline. That is spiritual discipline, why? Because, that is training the heart to expand. From ordinary human love we have to go to the divine love, whose first characteristic is love for its own sake – no selfishness, no asking, no bargaining.

Then the second angle of love of this triangle, triangle of love is: love does not know any fear. Sometimes when we think of God, God is for us, a terrible being, with a rod of justice, always ready to beat us, you see. That kind [of God], the God [of] whom we have to [be] always afraid. Now when real, genuine love grows, love for God, then the devotee of God banishes from his heart, all ideas of fear… all ideas. He wants to come closer and closer. When a child loves its mother, is he afraid of mother? Sometimes he is afraid. Mother has to cause a little sternness, unless, because otherwise the child won’t learn how to brush his teeth everyday, how to… These are some necessary habits, daily habits. The child has to be taught. So sometimes the child… the mother has to feign frowning but really speaking there cannot be an element of fear, between the child and the mother.

This we see in our everyday life, the more our love becomes purer and simpler and deeper, fear goes [away] correspondingly. Fear goes. There are instances of families, where a servant of, it may be an aristocratic family— one servant he is employed in that house, in that household, a long, long time. The present owner of the house, when that owner was a little child, this servant was there. Now the father has died. This child, little child has become the master. But that servant has loved the house, loved the people, loved the children. He does not… sometimes he disciplines his present owner. I saw you as a little child; you want to now be my master. And he appreciates… the master, young master appreciates that. This servant, technically he is an employee, no doubt, but he is a lover, unselfish love. He is loving me, not as a servant, not that he is supported, but he has learned to love me. This kind of love is basically spiritual love. So love has no fear. Just as that servant is not afraid of the… this master, his master. If there is love, there is closeness, there is openness. There is no fear. So the same idea has to be developed with regard to our love to God. We love to God, not because we are afraid of God, not because we are afraid of his punishment. But I love Him, because He is my beloved. Just as I don’t care for any reward, so also, I am not afraid of Him. He is my beloved. I have nothing to fear. That is one… [the] second characteristic of love.

The third angle of this triangle of love, according to Vivekananda, is – Vivekananda of course quotes this from our ancient scriptures. It is not his
original presentation. A triangle of love! The third angle of love, the third great characteristic of love is: that love does not know any rival. When we have love [for] something or somebody, you have to give your full heart to that. Then love becomes divine. There is no calculation anymore. If you love something, then that something must occupy your whole heart. We could say, “How is that possible?” I love one dog. I love another cat. I love another thing. But we have to be, our love has to be dissected. That is not true. Man has the capacity of raising his love to the infinite with regard to any object, because love in the highest is indivisible – because love is God. Can you dissect God? The great lover, the spiritual lover knows it is unity -- that great Infinite, Who is loving everything. Does the sun calculate when its light and heat is coming? It is coming automatically, everywhere! If there is no obstruction, the whole sunlight will go there. So this is the highest objective of love: Whole! Totality! No rivalry.

So when you love God, He should be your highest [love]. There is no calculation, “So much I shall give to God.” See, the same is true with regard to other practical objects we love. If I can love with our whole being, my children, then the selfishness goes. We cannot. We think we are loving adequately some object. No. You examine your mind. You think you are loving somebody intensely. Carefully examine your heart, and you see so much of selfishness is there. So much of sense of possession is there. Your little self is reigning and ruling your love. So you are under the delusion that you are loving so much. You are really loving only [a] little. Your little selfishness has to go.

So this third angle of this triangle is called, “The love has to be raised to that level of infinite.” I love God without any rivalry. I love God completely. And for a spiritual seeker, this is possible to direct anywhere. When the person loves his child, he knows that: I am loving that Infinite God in this child, and this love need not be calculated. Just as to God I devote my whole heart, so I can love this child with my whole heart without any rivalry, because I am really loving the God in my child. I am loving the flower – the God in the flower. I am loving… Whatever I love, I am loving that Infinite, in those outward forms. So even when you… When you discover this secret of divine Love, your love really becomes infinite, really becomes total and there is no rivalry any more. You can love the flower. You can love the cat. You can love, love the dog. You can love your grandchild, your child. You can love your enemy. You can love everything with that totality of feeling, because you have known that it is God, that Infinite, who is present everywhere in every being. And I am loving Him! So that is the third great characteristic -- that love has to be transformed --when there is a totality of love, without any rivalry.

So in love there is no bargaining, no asking, love for love’s sake. There is no fear, because my beloved object is really me. When something is different from me, I may be afraid. I may be afraid of this little sheet of paper, because I do not know in my careless moments that it may cut and hurt my finger. If it is hurt, I may be afraid of this thing [paper]. He is my friend, but this friend can become [an] enemy. It can hurt me. If there is anything second from me, that second can be an object of fear. But if, everything at that stage of experience, when we find that really there is One, there is… There is God. It is God! That is
God: in my friend, in my enemy, in different… in the beautiful, in the ugly, in the saint, in the sinner. It is all God. In that state, there cannot any fear. Just as to that yogi, even the deadly snake did not evoke any fear. He thought it is God’s messenger. For such a person, even when death comes, he is not afraid. He know it is, it is God in the form of death.

There is again a very wonderful parable mentioned by Sri Ramakrishna. There was a monk. He was, one day, some rich man was coming with something… doing something on the road and this monk protested. “Now, why are you doing this?” What thing, I don’t remember -- something which is not right. He was tormenting somebody or something. So this monk protested that. And, this man, rich man, arrogant man became angry with this monk. “Oh, this fellow, this monk, he has the courage to protest [against] me and does not know who I am?” So he asked his servants to beat him, beat this monk. So the monk was beaten and left on the roadside. And that man went [away] with his party. And, somebody informed his brother monks in the monastery. “One of your brothers is lying unconscious. He has been beaten very badly.”

So these people, these brother monks came and took him away. And one of these… he was unconscious, but he was alive, not dead. So one of the monks was feeding him with a little milk. And, slowly he opened his eyes. Then they were, thought, well now consciousness has come. So they asked him, the monk that was feeding him asked him, “Do you recognize me, who I am?” “Well, yes I recognize you,” with a feeble voice, because he was severely beaten. “Who I am?” “Well, you are the same who had beaten me.” You had at one time, you had beaten me and now you are feeding me. You are God. “He who had beaten me and made me unconscious, is now feeding me with milk in order to bring back my consciousness.” It is only You-- that… that God! So he had that, it was so deeply engrained in his consciousness, he had practiced this: it is God who is present in every being, as a friend, as an enemy, as the beautiful, as the ugly. It is He. It is He. So his love had become then, divine love. He is experiencing the love of God even in that beating, even in death. That experience comes. It is not a poetical fancy. There have been people, men and women, who had transformed their life and experience to such a level, where their love has been freed from all selfishness, all ideas of difference, of hate. See? That experience of love… that experience of love, is called God experience.

Experience of God is not some… We think God experience is something different, [in] God experience, something strange will happen. We are mistaken. God experience is our everyday experience, when this experience has been freed from selfishness, greed, arrogance, egotism. The face of God is covered with an outward veil of maya. If we can lift this veil, at once we can see the face of God – in everything, in every being! So human love – and divine love – really are one. And we have, if we are interested in our spiritual growth, in the vision of God, slowly, bit by bit, steadily, patiently, we have to transform all aspects of our human love so that each aspect of the human love can be elevated to the divine: the love for my wife, the love for my children, even the love for my body, love for my vocation. Any forms of love that are being expressed in my character and
behavior, each of it can be transformed into divine love, and then there is real
spiritual fulfillment of my life.

Om saha na va vatu; saha nau bhunaktu; saha viryam kara vavahai. Tejasvi
nav adhi tamastu ma vidvi shava hai. Om. Shanti, shanti, shanti.

May Brahman, the Truth Eternal, protect and nourish us, both the speaker
and the listener. May we have the requisite strength and vigor for the pursuit of
self-knowledge. May our study of the Vedanta be fruitful in the realization of
Truth, and may we cherish no ill feeling toward anyone. Om. Peace. Peace.
Peace be unto us all.

1. Taittiriya Upanisad [2:7.1], in The Principal Upanisads, ed. by S.
accessed August 17, 2015.
3. Taittiriya Upanisad [2:7.1], in The Principal Upanisads, ed. by S.
4. Brihadaranyaka Upanisad [1:4:8], in The Principal Upanisads, ed. by