

My God, My All

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

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

The subject of my talk this morning is: “My God, my All.” Those of you who have read the life of Saint Francis will remember that one of his friends, close friends – in fact he was his earliest disciple—wanted to watch him, watch his life thoroughly, at day and night. So one night he asked permission from Saint Francis, that he would like to spend the night in the same cottage where Francis lived. And Francis readily agreed. So, his name was... He was a neighbor of a village of Assisi; his name was Bernard. He was a merchant and regarded as the first disciple of Saint Francis.

So they had an early supper, some whatever they said to be a very simple meal. Then they retired. Saint Francis was laying on [a] bed and this man was lying... It was a more comfortable bed, which was possible for this, this Francis to give him. So this guest, his friend, lay down and fell asleep. He was not really asleep. He wanted to see what he does in the night. So he was lying and sometimes he would... began to snore, [he chuckles], so that Saint Francis would be assured that there is nobody consciously watching him.

So he waited a little and Saint Francis seemed to be deep, sound asleep. Then after some time... There was dark in the room. There was no light. After some time this friend watched that slowly, without making any noise, very cautiously, Saint Francis got up and sat on his bed, and... he began to murmur something, almost inaudibly. Then, slowly this sound was audible and this friend, he distinctly heard that he was repeating, “My God, my All... My God, my All... My God, my All.” At first this sound was very low; then it became... began to be excited and then it began to [be] louder, as if Saint Francis did not mind whether one is hearing or not. And his body was very stiff. He was sitting like a stone and he was muttering, “My God, my All.” In this way the whole night passed on. It became early morning, maybe 3 o’clock or 4 o’clock, then he got up and he told his friend, “Well, friend, night is over. Now let us be ready for the morning prayer.”

So this account is a very fascinating account, and very impressive account of this Saint Francis. “My God, my All.” Now when he was repeating this, as all religions have a sort of discipline, some kind of repetition. In India, all sects of Hinduism have this repetition of the holy name or holy formula. See? It is considered to be a very effective way of developing love and knowledge of God. We find that by the study of the Indian scriptures, the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita, the Puranas, and the biographies of saints and seers. Repetition of the holy name is a wonderful way of feeling the closeness of God in our heart and

more than that, it is a practical demonstration of the high philosophy of the Indian religions.

In the Upanishads, we read that Om, Om is the holy word representing the name of God. We have that letter in Sanskrit on the top of our altar, you will notice. It is pronounced, “Om.” And in the Upanishads we find that this, such expressions that “Om is all.” “Om is all this.” In other words, there is a level of spiritual experience where we find the holy name of God is no longer an ordinary sound, but it is a **power**. It is an all-pervasive power that includes everything in it. It cannot be rationally explained. How is it possible? A sound becomes so pervasive that it includes everything.

Now here, Saint Francis was... when he was in the dead of night he was repeating this name of God, “My God, my All.” He was not cogitating on the philosophy or theology of this expression, “My God, my All.” But when, we can well assume... that when he would come back to his normal life, normal waking life, this expression, “My God, my All” will be the guiding principle of his actions, of his words, of his thoughts.

“My God, my All” means, when you try to expand this idea – “my.” My... Everybody understands what is meant by “my.” “I, me and mine.” These are ~~plural~~ [singular] number. This is the called in grammar, the first of the... just as they are three, “I”, “he” and “you.” Three persons. Now the “I”, the first person is most important, is most natural. All the time I have to, with me, I have to have my identity – who I am. So the feeling “I” is spontaneously coming to us at all times; at all times, “I” must be there. Whoever this “I” is, whatever this “I” is, we do not analyze or think about, but it is something spontaneous, spontaneously coming, “I.” As soon as I get up from my sleep, the first idea, the first thought that comes to my mind is this “I” – my identity. In other words, “Am I living, or am I dead?” This “I” is the bedrock, the strong rock as if to say [where] you are standing, and your functions, all the activities of your life will follow. The first thing would be the “I.”

Now in the scriptures, in the religious scriptures, in the religious philosophies, this “I”, they try to understand what this “I” is. The anchor... Connected with the “I” is “me” and “mine.” “I, me and mine.” “I” denotes my identity. I am somebody. Usually, normally, we identify this “I” with our body. We feel it is “I.” Yes. But that is a complex thing, it is not the... not the feeling of my body, but my **living** body. Had I been a stone and had I been a dead body, then this would not have come. Because I am living there is prana in me; there is life principle in me. So “I” combines this body and this life. And that is not enough. Along with this body of flesh and bones and other organs, there is this prana, this living. Every cell in our body is a living cell.

Along with my body ~~and mind~~, [and prana] there must be my mind, my thought. And my mind includes several factors: my hope, my fear, my love, my emotions, all these things, let us say are included in the word, “mind.” So when I say, “I” it is a complex experience, though we cannot further analyze. For further analysis, we have to come to meditation. Those who are in the habit of meditation, different ways of meditation, they discover what this “I” is.

This “I”, whatever this “I” is – I may be a man. I am a man or I am a woman. I am a young man, or I am an old man. See? These specifications of “I” come later. But this “I” is a combination of my body, my life principle/prana, and my mind, my thoughts, my aspirations. All these things together are “I.” That is a common situation for most of us. For most of us, we are carrying on our life with hope, with... sometimes with courage, sometimes with failure, sometimes with success, but it is... always there is hope of progress. We know, everyone of us has this “I” sense. This “I” feeling, the feeling of my identity, is not something everlasting. It will... It will last for fifty years or sixty years or one hundred years, and along with this “I” there are two other expressions, “my” and “me.”

So “I”, “me” and “mine” is that one principle in Vedanta we call the jiva. “Jiva” means the limited individual, that limited individual. And that individuality is changing from person to person. My individuality is not yours. You may be a professor and your thinking of yourself is different from my thinking [of myself] who am maybe a grocer. And so, this “my” in this holy word expression, “My God, my All.” The “my” is the first. And then when, a religious person, a religious-minded person, when we are awakened to religious life, not a common superficial religious life, but a deep religious life --where we are searching [for] God, we are searching the meaning of life. We are searching our past, our future. We want to know more about yourself and knowing about... more about ourselves is not possible by study, by intellectual study, by the study of book. One has to go to **deep** thinking. Deep thinking means meditation. So by meditation, people... religious and spiritual minded people have found another concept, which they think has to go, has to be linked with mine... my, me or mine.

My, me, or mine, has to be connected with God, because they... these meditators, these inquirers they find that I, myself, I am very little. I am subject to so many fears, so many crises in life, so many dangers. At the same time there are so many hopes; so much joy is there, but at the same time there is also from time to time there is affliction, particularly as we grow older. As we grow older, we know more of life. So they feel, in the state of meditation, when they are able to go deeper into themselves, they feel that I, to myself, if I am alone, that I am very unsafe. I may have disease. I may have poverty. I may have family crises. And I may have so many hopes, but many of the hopes are not attained.

So always the mind is restless. The mind is not at ease. But I feel, intuitively that there is a power-- there is a reality whom they call God. Whatever name you give to that reality is not important, but there is one reality, one big individual, a million, million, trillion times more powerful. And if our simple... for the sake of simplicity, we call that reality: God. So we find... he finds, that spiritual seeker, he finds that there is a God... “my God.” If “my” is alone, he is very helpless, he is full of fear: “From what corner, what danger will come upon me, I do not know.” But if you connect your “my” with God, then you are safer, because who is God? To an ordinary man, to a normal man, God does not mean anything. Many people... many of us are atheists. We do not believe in God. But some people do believe in God, but that God is mostly just a

word. We go to a church and we feel it is a holy place. This is a place where there is God, and we try to follow the routine of the church, which is a prayer, which is a song, which is a talk, the reading from some holy book or Bible, or the Gita. And finally, there is some collection of money [laughs] that is very important to run a church. And then there is the minister, who is the speaker that comes down and talks with the congregation. This is our normal experience of God. But, that won't do if we want to find that correct, that God who is mine – my God!

This “my God” is related to me very profoundly, not in a casual way, in a special way, just as one husband, one young man and young woman, they... before they were married, they were casual. One day they are going to Lake Tahoe, another day to Yosemite, or today to one restaurant or another, just the enjoyments of life. And both have to do hard work [thus] the casual life. But when they enter into matrimony, when they become husband and wife, the relation becomes more stable. The relation is no longer casual. It is a deeper relation. Each one feels that I love my... my companion. The wife feels that, “I love my husband.” The husband feels, “I love my wife.” And there has been established a relation which is not casual, which is going to last, if possible, forever. So like that, a devotee, an earnest spiritual seeker, he is not satisfied with the normal superficial activities of the church or temple, but he wants to find out deeply, “Who is God and who is God to me?” “My God?” “Who is my God?”

Then, in the course of deep thinking and deep meditation, the results of this meditation, which is also, you can call an adventure, is recorded in the scriptures, in the biographies of saints and seers. Many of them are women. And they found that this God, who I am trying to associate with, I am trying to come in closer relation with this God, this God is a principle who is everywhere, who is infinite.

Whatever I seek in life, whatever I hope for life, **is** in God. God cannot be excluded from anything in my life. If I have a life, if I have duties, if I have a home, if I have children, if I have anything, that anything... that something must be linked with God. See? There is nothing in this world, which can escape from God. God has pervaded, penetrated, every fiber of this world: not merely the outside world, but also the inside world – the world inside -- my mind. So his position becomes, “My God, my All.” He has developed by... through days of contemplation and prayer, as this great, Saint Francis of Assisi did, he wanted to develop love for God. And he found in course of time that, that God is with me... all the time! I can never lose God.

If I think of my power, the “my” power is my, is me, is just a little individual, independent individual, then I have many limitations. But if I am linked with God, if God is with me, then, just as a loving father, whatever he has... a house or whatever property he has, part of that, or whole of that goes to the children. So like that, this devotee of God, this spiritual seeker who is seeking more and more experience of God... who wants to know more of God: Who is God? And more and more he finds a love is growing and he's finding that God is everywhere. If he thinks of the sky, this vast universe outside us, he at once he feels, “It is God's. It is God's and it is also mine [chuckles]... because I am the child of God.

I am the inheritor of God...God's wealth. So if this vast sky is the glory of God, that is also my glory, because I am... I belong to God." So the whole mantra, as we call the holy word, which spiritual seekers repeat in their prayers and contemplation, so this mantra... it is called "mantra" in Sanskrit... the holy name of God, and here this devotee of God, he... This universe, for him, normally has so many attractions.

For us, a normal person, sees many wonders in this world, many wonders that man have created out of this world. See? And so he has desire. He wants to possess this thing, that thing. He sees a beautiful house and he wants to possess that house. And he thinks, well it will take many years. He sees a beautiful car and he wants to possess that car. He wants to buy it. He consults with his wife. [The] wife says, "We have not the money to buy this car." He says, "Why money? We shall pay in installments!" [He laughs with audience.] "And it will be paid off." Like this, our life goes. But for this man, this devotee of God who has found out that I am always linked with God, and whatever God has, also belongs to me, so he says, "My God, my All." It is a complex feeling, but not a dispersed feeling. It is a unitary feeling, where there is knowledge, spiritual knowledge and where there is divine love – not ordinary love.

Everyone of us knows what love is: love of the family, love of the children, love of relatives, love of house, love of properties, love... We know what love is. But this man, this saint... Every one of us can be a saint, and that is our goal of spiritual life. [The] goal of spiritual life is to become a saint! Saint means we must have a vision of God, God as the whole—God not as a judge, but God as my most beloved. Whatever love I can bestow on my wife or children or grandchildren or grand-grandchildren, whatever love I can bestow on my property, on my house, all that love is included in God's love.

By loving God, we love everything! That becomes ... slowly that becomes the natural feeling of a ... of a devotee, of a person who is meditating on God. So his secular life is no longer secular, as we normally understand [it]. His secular life is also a spiritual life, because when he was at deep night, when he was repeating the name of God, "My God, my All" -- all his thought and aspiration were condensed into an experience of God, which really cannot be described. When you want to describe the experience of God, it becomes un-understandable. An experience cannot always be conveyed by words. An experience is an experience! But that person when he comes outside and faces the world, the result of his spiritual experience stays with him. Then he finds that, "I have come into the world which belongs to God, and I myself, my body, my mind, my prana, life principle... if I have a house, that house, if I have some property, that property, everything that belongs to me, it belongs to God." There is no difference between... just as in a happy family, there is not that much difference between the father and the son, see? So, this person, this devotee of God, he feels, even when he is in the waking state he has to face so many problems, the experience of God is not absent from his mind. He feels that I am always with God.

God, in deep sleep state, when I was sleeping, and while I was meditating, then this multiplicity of experience was [not?] in my mind. We do not think of

many things then. Everything becomes condensed into unitary experience. But when I am facing this world in my waking life, we have to face varieties of experience. But if I have been able to establish my relation with God, then these experiences do not create trouble for me.

Normally our mind is restless. The mind has desires; the mind has tensions; the mind has conflicts. And so our life is not always a happy life. But with God, if I have developed love for God, then we see, nothing can disturb me, just as nothing can disturb God, because God is holding everything. He is managing everything: the natural phenomena that are happening, the rain, the sunshine, the storms, the hurricanes, all what is happening in nature good or bad is happening through the power of God, through the hands of God. This person feels that; so his world is a world of God as also world of him, who is God's. So when he says, "My God, my All," it includes a world ~~whē~~ [which] is out... a God who is outside and inside.

So God begins to show His many faces. And whatever face He shows, that is wonderful. So this man's life becomes a life of perpetual joy and peace and fearlessness, because he has nothing to fear. Whatever he was afraid of, now he knows and he feels and he sees that it is God. There is nothing else in this world, but God. That becomes his experience. And with this experience, he lives his daily life.

The daily routine life is not always very happy life, but for a person of God who has really experienced the love of God, he cannot keep that experience to himself. It manifests in his actions, in his speech. When he talks with people, when he meets with people, when he does anything in this world, there is always the touch of God. People see that. People see that this man is different. This man has experienced something, and if they ask him, "What have you experienced that has made you so calm and quiet and tranquil? You are not disturbed at anything. Even when there is a possibility of a death, you are not perturbed. What is his secret of his life?" And he would say, "The secret of life is nothing strange. My secret of life could as well be your secret of life, and that is God."

To say, "My God, my All... my God, my All" that means even in your body, you see with your eyes, you hear with your ears, and you breathe with your lungs, and you feel with your heart: whatever is going on in this body/mind combination. Don't think it's going on independently. No. There is an unseen God in every activity of your life and mind and body. The same is true of the outside world. The same is true of the whole world, animate or inanimate. Nothing is happening without God. So say, "My God, my All... my God, my All." At least have this feeling.

Now some people might ask, "Who is God? We have so many notions of God. Some people are calling God, Jesus. Some people are calling God, Allah. Some people are calling God, Rama or Krishna or Shiva." Then this man will say, "If you meditate deeply, without giving yourself to dogmas and other people's theories... because there have been so many books have been written about God and each book is ... is conflicting. So have your own book! Go deep within yourself and there you will find there is nameless God. God really has

many names. God, though He has no form, but He can have forms also. Just as the Hindus, they worship God with the help of an image, the help of a picture. And, you need not be disturbed by that because God's wonders, God's powers are infinite. So if somebody likes to worship in a particular way, let him do that, let her do that. If somebody says, "I will call God, 'Allah'." "All right, say 'Allah'." And he says, "No, Allah is the only God; there is no other name, only Allah. If you say Shiva or Rama, then I will kill you." [Audience chuckles.] Then this man, says, "Well you are wrong in that. You have only read books. You have not gone deep into your own personal religious life, the life of meditation. Then you'll say [see?], "Whom you call Allah, I call Him, Rama or Shiva, or Christ, or Krishna." You need not fight over these externals.

When you say, "My God, my All" you have gone to a truth which is universal, and in universal experience there cannot be any quarrel, any tension, any fight. In universal experience, there is all love and harmony and peace. If you can develop this kind of spiritual life, and knowing that God is everything – it is God's glory that is manifesting in this world, then you will be helping this world with peace, with goodwill. So that is the way. Otherwise if you go on fighting, you know that that is very superficial. That will harm you and it will harm the other party also. Instead of God, let God whom you... whose holy name you repeat, that God is an all-pervading, all-inclusive God. He is in beauty. He is in ugliness. He is in sickness and He is in health.

You cannot escape God. He is an eternal companion of your life. These become the normal experiences of this person, but this person spends a lot of time in deep contemplation. If there is no time in the day, he wakes up in the night, and when everything is silence, everything is quiet, and in this quietness he feels the experience of God. And that experience of God, is the experience of everything! He feels, "Now I am feeling the presence of God in my heart, and with that experience, I am feeling all that I have loved in life – all that at one time drew me outwards. There were so many desires, but all are quiet now. All have merged in God now. There is only God, and only me. And what is this "me?" This me becomes finally unified with God. See, these are the great truths we learn from the study of saints and seers like Saint Francis.

So we should, when we are interested in religion, that interest should not be allowed to remain superficial. That interest should go deeper and deeper by the practice of daily prayer and meditation and contemplation. And to help my meditation, we should read the books, holy books. There are revealed scriptures like the Bible, like the Gita, like the Upanishads. When we read these books, then we see great truths are revealed in the words, and those truths are also meant for me. I can experience those truths, even in this life. Even in this life, I can experience those truths. And what that experience will do to me...and that will purify my life. That will make my life complete. Without God experience, our life remains incomplete, and always fearful. We are always afraid of death. We are always afraid of so many things. But with God as my companion, I am safe. I am joyful. I do not care for anything. So this kind of religious life, a religious life in depth, not on the surface, is.. Surely it is a desirable... Not that many will be able to build up their life in this pattern, but there may be some who have been

interested in religion and interested in God experience. For them, it is very wonderful. They are the assets of human society: one Jesus Christ, one Saint Francis. They have enriched human culture in so many ways. There have been emperors in this world, writers, and poets and philosophers. But these persons who have found God through love, through meditation, their... their influence is much more powerful than any other influences we have in this life.

So let us say with St. Francis, "My God, my All." Thank you.

[Announcements not included in transcription.]

Om. 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.¹

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

1. [Transliteration of Rg Veda verse is taken from http://satsangh.tripod.com/pujatexts/satya_baskegar.html] accessed June 26, 2012.