

The Role of a Teacher in Spiritual Life

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

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

The subject of my talk this morning is: The Role of a Teacher in Our Spiritual Life.

The importance of a teacher, a guide in our spiritual adventure has been stressed in the Upanishads. We read in the Chandogya Upanishad [6:14.2] “evehacaryavan puruso veda.”¹ “A person who has been fortunate to meet and be instructed by an eveha (means a qualified spiritual teacher) veda (is able to attain self-knowledge).” Guidance, directions are necessary because the object we are seeking is not an ordinary object. It is not going to a place or learning something secular or worldly or philosophical, which can be done by the study of books. Reaching God, discovering our true nature is a difficult task. There are many hazards; there are many pitfalls. So we need a qualified teacher, a person who has **walked** in that path, a person in whom there is no longer any doubt, a person who has conviction of the spiritual goal. So that idea is expressed in this sentence in the Chandogya Upanishad, “evehacaryavan puruso veda.”

In the Mundaka Upanishad we find the Mundaka Upanishad begins with this topic of approaching a teacher. A student is very eager. He has read scriptures; he has read about Brahman, about the Infinite Consciousness, about man’s True Self, but he cannot comprehend. So he comes to a teacher. That is the first chapter of the Mundaka Upanishad. The name of the student is Saunaka² and he approaches a teacher and asks this question. That is everything. Approaching a teacher is also something which has to be learned. It is not like meeting a gentleman or meeting a police officer, “Hi.” You have to approach a teacher with great humility. In other words, when we read this literature, ancient spiritual literature about the relation of the teacher and the student, the gura and the shishya³ we find the shishya’s – the student’s -- responsibility is much more than that of the teacher. A student has to develop the right frame of mind, the right attitude, then going to a teacher and learning from him will be effective.

So in this Mundaka Upanishad is said, this student, Saunaka approached the teacher with great reverence. He brought some humble presents. In those days, in the vedic days, in the ashrama of the teacher there used to be all the time a sacrificial fire. See? And the students used to bring some... collect firewood and so the students, this student brings a bundle of firewood. Humble present does not cost much, does not cost anything at all, just a little physical labor and time. So with a bundle of firewood... that was the custom. When you

go a teacher, the teachers in those days used to live in forests and so this humble deed, is the students would bring sometimes maybe some fruits and a bundle of firewood which would be necessary in the ashrama, in the hermitage of this teacher. So this student, Saunaka approaches very reverently and then asks this question, “kasmin nu kalu[?] [“bhagavo” appears in source rather than kalu] vijnate sarvam idam vijnatam bhavati.” [1:1:3]² “I have read in books, that there is a knowledge by which you can have access to all possible knowledge. When you attain that knowledge your mind becomes **satisfied**, permanently satisfied – there is nothing more to know. I have got the secret the key to all possible knowledge. So I have heard these are available, this... Would you please instruct?”

And so the teacher goes on. First he classifies knowledge. One kind of knowledge is called “aparavidya” – secular knowledge – all that knowledge we read in schools and colleges, all the sciences, arts. These are classified as aparavidya. But the other kind of knowledge is called “paravidya” – the knowledge of spiritual truth. And so the teacher goes on, because he finds that this student was very keen. Keeness, sincerity, eagerness, these are the necessary requisites for the student, because it is not a... just an intellectual curiosity. You are going to attain something-- to practice for something which will fulfill a very basic craving of your heart.

There is in our heart a basic hunger, hunger for unchanging reality, hunger for a kind of peace that does not go, hunger for a strength that can stand anything. Sometimes our heart craves for these things. That is called spiritual life. In our spiritual life, we do not seek things which is available in other ways: health, prosperity, security, freedom from disease. All these things, there are other ways – or intellectual achievement -- these things are classified in the category of aparavidya. But spiritual knowledge is that by which your whole attitude to life will be changed. You will discover another dimension of your personality. The old limited individual will disappear and a spiritual personality will come – a peace, a strength, a knowledge that cannot be attained by any other way. That is spiritual seeking. So this teacher then, in Mundaka Upanishad we read, step by step he, seeing this student is very earnest and he has not much distraction, he is really keen to have self-knowledge, he instructs [the student in] the steps.

In another Upanishad, the Chandogya Upanishad we read another dialogue, the seventh chapter, one student he is... he has studied many things. Many branches of knowledge he has studied. But his heart is restless – no peace in the mind. He wants to know something which will eternally quiet his... calm down his doubts and confusions and distractions. So he comes to a teacher. In this case the name of the student is Narada and the name of the teacher is Sanatkumar. He comes, then the teacher first asks him, “Well let me know the background, your background, what you have studied, from where you come, how long this search has come to you.” Because that is important, the condition is the sincerity of the student. He must be really eager to have spiritual knowledge, to have experience of God. He is restless. Unless he has that, he feels that he will die. That kind of eagerness has to come and that kind of

eagerness does not easily come, because this world is continuously bringing before us so many attractions, so many values we are perplexed. The mind does not want to go deeper, to seek higher things. So the **real** student, the genuine student is one in a million. Even though there may be illumined teachers, but the right sort of student is very, very rare. If that kind of student comes, this teacher is very happy. The teacher has not to labor hard.

Otherwise the teacher is in trouble [he chuckles]. Every day this student will bring new problems. “Sir, I meditated five minutes and I felt a pain in the back.” “Sir, I meditated ten minutes; I began to see lights dazzling. I was afraid.” “Sir, I was trying to meditate after a full meal and I felt my heart is being choked.” So, all these problems and the teacher will be tired. [Audience laughs with him.] Not really genuine spiritual problems, just side problems, because that man, that student was not ready. He had a just casual curiosity. That won’t do.

If the student is a genuine spiritual seeker, if he has understood the value of spiritual life, if his spiritual life is not just an extension of his material life, which in many cases [it] is. Why [do] you seek God? Why [do] you want to meditate? Because it is a key to the enhancement of my material life. See? I need a job; I want to keep my health. All right, I want all my grandchildren to be alive. I want this and that, so I feel I have a permanent Bank of America card [he laughs with the audience]. I can face any situation. You see? If something happens, I can at once phone, “Well, dear God, I have this problem.” That is the state of things for many, many of us. Our God-seeking is just a joke, a frivolity, a self-contradiction.

A person who is seeking God, it is for God’s sake. I am not satisfied with the present state of my... of my life. I want something more; I want a vision of the spiritual reality. This changing flux of life, the contradictions of life, the insults of life, the humiliation of life, I cannot bear any more. Why...that is why I am seeking God. There should be a burning feeling for God-experience because he feels that God, it is God only can, who can remove all his doubts and confusions. God does not belong to this changing flux of life. God is the eternal friend and companion. He is Sat-Chit-Ananda, Eternal Life, Eternal Knowledge, Eternal Bliss. That is why I am seeking God.

If there is a student with this kind of eagerness, and attitude, this teacher, the meeting of the teacher and student will be a wonderful thing. The teacher will give him some simple directions and the student will dive deep. He will have faith in the teacher. His mind will not wander any more, because he has this faith: this man is not a bad [man], this man is not a fraud, a cheat. He is really compassionate; he is really wants to give me what he has learned without any selfish motive. That kind of faith he has in his teacher. So if this conjunction happens, the right type of student and the right type of teacher, then God-experience is not far. Knowledge, discovery of self, comes. So in that Upanishad we read, this teacher Sanatkumara is asking him, “What is your background, what things you have studied, why you are seeking this knowledge of spiritual reality?” Then he gives a long list of his studies. He has studied this, he has studied that, and why I am seeking: “by all these studies, my mind has all the more been distracted. I find no peace.” Then the teacher says, “That is bound to be so, because the words do not give you peace, by accumulation of

book knowledge, you burden your mind all the more. Spiritual knowledge is something different.” So step-by-step, this teacher prescribes to him simple meditations, simpler, a little heavier, a little more elaborate, ultimately he speaks of the true self of man and how to seek that. That truth has not to be sought in the heaven; you have to get rid of many of your superstitions and preconceptions, because by studying so much we have made our mind a garbage can. All sorts of worse things are there in our mind. We do not know how to dispose of that. So we have to get rid of many of our old ideas, old attitudes. Preparation is more important. When the mind is ready, mind is clean the self, the truth, the God, that is within us will surely raise His head. He will say, “Here I am. All the time I was here, but you have covered yourself with so many things that you are not able see Me.” That is the technique by which a spiritual teacher leads the... the student. We find a wonderful example in the Chandogya Upanishad, the dialogue between Sanatkumara, the teacher and Narada, the student.

In the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, we also find another example of the teacher-student relationship. In this case, the teacher is a great sage, Yajnavalkya and many students have come. Many people are asking him questions. And Yajnavalkya the teacher, a wise teacher, he at once understands the character or the attitude of the student. And he disposes one after the other, one after the other. He disposes [of] almost every one of them. Eventually a young lady comes. Her name was Gargi. And the teacher finds this lady, young woman is really ready for self-knowledge. So he begins through dialogues, he begins to lead her to that ultimate truth of the self. It was difficult, because every man has a kind of pride, has a kind of attachment. So these things through the dialogues we find how this able teacher is cleaning the mind of the student – her prejudices, her attachments, her pride, her vanity, one after the other, very strongly. Sometimes the teacher has to be a little stern. Sweet words sometimes do not work. So we find a wonderful specimen of this intercommunion between a teacher and the student, Gargi and Yajnavalkya.

And sometimes by scolding, sometimes by persuasion, eventually the teacher, Yajnavalkya, leads her to the highest truth. The “self” brings the idea of God, the God, the Infinite God from Whom everything is coming, Akshara. And then later on the teacher leads this student, “The God about Whom I spoke, the Akshara, that Akshara is your true self. You will be nervous to think of that.” “How can my true self be Akshara? That Infinite, this vast universe, is coming, is being projected from a god – outside god.” The human mind likes to accept this idea of God, because the human mind is weak, is superstitious. So if there is a god, a great god, the human mind is not bewildered. But if you tell the student: “This vast universe, if you can go within, if you can discover your true self, you will see that this vast universe is in you! It is you who are constantly projecting everything that you see. This whole universe can melt down and condense into you. It can come out from you and it can condense into you.”

Eventually when this young woman was ready, Yajnavalkya gave this supreme secret of self knowledge. It is the true self of man who is the ultimate ground of everything. If you think of creation, it is created by this true self of man

– not this outside individual, but at the depth of the human personality there is that infinite self. So we see there that this great teacher helped wonderfully-- helped this student, this young woman. And this young woman became a Brahma vedainena⁵, [on tape it sounds like vedaineni –possibly the feminine form?] a knower of Brahman [Brhad-aranyaka Upanisad 5:2:1]. She was respected as a knower of Brahman, but she had to go through this, through reverence, through patience, through strength, through courage and [being] bold enough to abandon all old superstitions. She was really ready. And when she was ready, this great teacher came and helped her to attain her spiritual goal.

So we see in the tradition of Vedanta, this necessity of a spiritual teacher and the necessity of the right equipment for the student is very much stressed. Spiritual life is not just a poetical fancy; it is a real life. It is a real life! Man can rise to the spiritual level and when he experiences spiritual truth and returns to his world, this world becomes different. The world which was so full of distractions, temptations, confusions, tensions, hate, greed, that world becomes a heaven. He develops a kind of patience and love and compassion and fortitude and knowledge that brings, opens a new life for him.

So for this first thing, one has to develop more and more a desire – not a flimsy desire. Sometimes desire comes occasionally. “Oh, I want to meditate.” Then there is a seven days gap. Then there is a one month’s gap. Then there is a six month’s gap. Then [we] say, “Oh, I have not done anything.” That kind of idle curiosity won’t do. One has to develop a genuine desire for spiritual experience. And this spiritual experience is so fundamentally related to me. Without that, I am really a poor soul. Just as Lord Jesus Christ said, “What shall a man profiteth if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?”

Soul-seeking, the seeking the soul, the spiritual nature of man, that is the goal of spiritual life. And a person who wants to practice should first look into his own mind, whether that eagerness has come or not, whether I am seeking God for some other thing. That won’t do. We have to seek God for God’s self...sake. God is the fulfillment of all our values. We seek life; we seek knowledge; we seek strength; we seek peace. By seeking God we are really seeking all these things. This kind of clear understanding and faith has to come. And then, if a person is seeking God in this way, God responds. God responds through some man. That man is our teacher. That man is our guru. See? And when the seeker meets such a teacher, an illumined teacher he has to... he has to know his teacher. He has to know that this man to whom I have come, whether he is perfectly unselfish, whether his life is in conformity with what we read in scriptures, whether this man is a personification of self-control, whether this man has developed a dispassion, detachment for these changing things of life, whether that man has really developed a genuine love for God. These things, just as the teacher has to test the student, the student as far as possible should try to test the... the teacher.

In the life of Sri Ramakrishna we find a very interesting phenomenon. The ideal student in this case was Swami Vivekananda, then a young college student. And Sri Ramakrishna was the sage who has realized truth in many ways: personal god, impersonal god, the different phases of Hindu faith, the Christian

faith, the Islamic faith. He had practiced all these things. And he was the master of all these different types of experiences. He was there. And the student, Narendra [was] his name, was a young collegian, but from his very boyhood his heart was for knowing God. He had gone to many places; he had gone to many people -- pundits, scholars, holy men—but nobody could satisfy him. Now he came to this sage, almost illiterate, who was living in that temple of Dakshineswar and he said... This young man asked him the question, "Sir, have you seen God?" Then he smiled, "Yes, my boy. I have seen God. I see God clearer than I see you. And if you are eager, I can help you to see God." There was no ornamentation in his word. It was so simple and it was so direct that Narendra, the young man was impressed. But he didn't just stop there. He came... began to come to him, but began also to examine him. You see? So this was going on between the two, and it is a very impressive phenomenon when you read the life stories of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda.

So this student, a spiritual seeker, does need a spiritual guide, because there are so... mind, our mind is really left to itself when it has not been disciplined, when it has not been guided in the proper way. The nature of the mind is constantly to bring confusions and doubts and distractions. So one cannot depend just on the mind. The mind, by reading a book will try to practice pranayama, five days, hmm, and something will happen. He'll give it up. Then he will open another book, attend another lecture. He will try something. In this way, point to point he will go and frustration will come. So just as we have do-it-yourself, it is applicable in many other things. Now do-it-yourself is also... it is a guidance. The man who has written that do-it-yourself book for you, see, how to build a portico, how to build a garden, like this... That fellow knows, so he is a guru! (He laughs.) He has, instead of his personal presence, his instructions are recorded in the book. That could be. But in spiritual life, a book recording or a tape recording is not adequate, because in the Indian spiritual tradition, an illumined man-- a man who has experienced God, is not an ordinary man. See, God's power is working in him. So the help that comes through the guru, through the teacher is really God's help.

God is the master of the whole universe. Now God is using so many tools to do so many things. He has devised so many different kinds of energy to do different specific things. He has devised so many kinds of shrubs and plants and vegetations and flowers for different purposes. Like that, so the moral and spiritual order of this world is also God's responsibility. A man cannot... man has been created, we read in the Bible, in the image of God. And man must discover that image some day. That is also part of man's responsibility, man's life. Man is not animal. Man must some day discover his true nature and return to God. That is the blueprint of man's structure. A dog's blueprint is different; a cat's blueprint is different. But man **has** to find God. So there is a responsibility on the part of God. So, God works through illumined persons, a person who has gone through this way, gone through... through this way of this world, this maya world, and reasoned about maya, a man who has developed love of God, purity of character, holiness. He is the **tool** of God. So through him, God works. So according to the Indian spiritual tradition, the real guru is God. You are praying

to God for light, for help, and God listens to you and works through a particular person – not an ordinary human being. He is [an] ordinary human being from the outside, but in him, God’s light has come, God’s love has come. So through him, God helps you. So in the Indian spiritual tradition, God **is** the ultimate guru – Sat-Chit-Ananda Guru, it is said.

So if a student is sincere, if a student is eager and patient, and has faith in the teacher, things will work out for him. Patience is the most important thing. He should not think that the guru, the teacher will do something miraculous and the third eye will be opened in two days. No. That does not happen. The main thing, just as in other cases, in other fields of knowledge – you go to a laboratory for a certain science, there is a teacher, there is a guide who shows you, but you have to do the experiment. You have to carry on the research. The same is true in the spiritual life. The guru gives you some directions, or meditation. He warns you for these pitfalls. He gives a general outline of the conduct of your life. And then you have to work it out. There will be in the process, there will be some doubts and confusions. You can ask the teacher. In this way, spiritual life goes. A relation, the communion has been established between the teacher and the student and the student should have **great** faith in the teacher.

There have been cases and stories of great sages and saints who developed such faith in the teacher and that faith worked wonders, more than his... more than his meditation, more than his practices, (spiritual practices, repetition of mantra, or worship.) These people have developed so much faith in the teacher and that faith worked out wonders. They... they literally believed that it is God who is working through my teacher and they had so much reverence, they developed so much reverence and love for the teacher. That itself became an... a peculiar, special discipline for them. It was, so to say, a parallel to meditation. There have been examples of students who have developed such love for the teacher and they’re in the spirit of service. Service. As the Gita says, “tad viddhi pranipatena pariprasnena sevaya, upadeksyanti te jnanam jnaninas tattva-darsinah.” [Bhagavad Gita 4:34]^o “So there are men of knowledge, people, who have risen above this ignorance, illumined people, jnani. Approach them.”

First, [you need] humility. Don’t think you are so and so, you are a successful lawyer or you are a successful businessman. You don’t want to bow down to anybody. That won’t do. You will be the loser. Approach them with great humility, “pranipat.”⁷ “Bow down” to them and ask them questions; don’t be afraid. Ask them your real questions of your life. And, do some service to them. In this way, a love will develop. Faith will develop, and when that love develops for the teacher, all the blocks of the mind melt away. The mind becomes clearer and clearer and cleaner and cleaner. And if the mind becomes cleaner and clearer, the truth that is within will raise its head. So, in the Indian tradition we read stories of such disciples. They developed such faith and spirit of service! That itself was parallel to their four hours of meditation. They did not seek their own selfish interest. “I want to be counted as a first class disciple.” Not that. A kind of spontaneous love and faith has grown: “If he is my teacher, it is God who is working through him” -- this kind of faith. You can criticize it as a blind faith.

Maybe! But it works. So in the Indian spiritual tradition we read many, many examples of such kind of disciples. They seek God; they seek spiritual knowledge. But they have that, so much in... faith in their teacher. Recently I read a book. A great man, a great illumined person. Now people ask him, "How did you attain this state? This, we read in the Upanishads, the true self of man and you speak of that all the time. You say that you are always conscious of that, how could you attain this state?" Then his answer was, "Because I believed my teacher." He did not mention his pranayama practice, this and this meditation. No. "I more and more, more and more had implicit faith in the words of my teacher. Whatever my teachers told me, 'do this,' I did not raise doubts. I did not allow my mind to raise any doubts and confusions. I did not want to argue [with] my teacher, 'Sir, how could it be.' No. I had that faith. My teacher is a man of illumination and whatever he has said-- he has said that not to deceive me. So implicitly I followed, and I found that worked wonderfully for me. More and more the gates were opened. One gate, second gate, third gate, fourth gate-- the mind – all the blocks were opened for me."

So, in the Indian spiritual tradition, this need of a spiritual teacher is very much stressed, because the ignorant mind cannot understand. It is... it is prone to fall into distraction, into confusion, so the guidance of a teacher is very much necessary. Not that there are not exceptions, there **can** be exceptions and that exceptions apply to special type of mind – a mind who... which has become very keen in understanding that truth. He does not care for philosophical discussions, this and that. He's very keen, so he gets a hint from something, maybe from [an] outside thing.

There are stories [like this] in the Indian mythological books. There was one wandering holy man. He was asked in a king's court and in the king's court, assembly, spiritual discussions are going on and this man appeared: Advadhuta, a wandering holy man. And they received him. The king welcomed him, "Sit down. Please tell us some of your experiences." The first question he was asked, "Who was your guru?" Then he said, "I had twenty-four gurus." "Who are they?" "A snake. A bird. A... this and that... all objects of nature, and one prostitute." One by one he began to describe his gurus and what lessons he learned from his gurus. It could be! A man can be illumined by seeing an example, something, some phenomenon from outside – maybe from a bird. His mind is so one pointed, is so keen, so eager he can attain illumination. That outside object or phenomenon becomes a guru for him. These cases also are there. See?

But normally in our spiritual life we need a teacher, and when we are going to a teacher we should examine that teacher. And before that, we should examine our own mind – whether I am really seeking God without any kind of other worldly motive. I am seeking God in order to fulfill the vacuum in my life, the emptiness in our life. One should examine himself and then if he meets a person, he is really very fortunate. He should not... he should not be impatient. He should not think, "Well where is the teacher is not coming? Teacher is not coming." He should not be impatient, because he should know that the real teacher is God. God is watching you! God is watching your spiritual thirst and

hunger. So it is His responsibility to send you a teacher at the right time. If you have not the patience, then you will be cheated, you see. You go to some place, there's a sign, "Twenty-five dollars." Hmm. "Samadhi, twenty-five dollars." "Oh, this is cheap." And you rush into that. That kind of thing won't do. You wait. You should have faith in God, because it is God who has sent us the sun, the moon, the time, the space, the life, everything, the ultimate. The ultimate agent is God. So also [in] our spiritual life, our moral life, one should have this kind of faith. One should pray to God, "Oh God, I need a guide. I am very keen for my spiritual life, so send us a guide if it is necessary. If you think, I don't need a guide [that is OK] so give us a sign. Give me a sign: I'll be happy; I'll be satisfied." So one should **pray** to God.

One should not forget the guru, the human guru is just a tool for the supreme guru, the supreme teacher who is God. And when this, this human guru disappears, dies, he should not run into the street crying, crying, crying, "Where you have gone, oh guru, oh guru?" That is foolishness, because the real guru is God. And there is... God's help will never be absent, even when the physical guru is living one thousand miles away or if he has died, one should carry on with patience and courage and faith and love that which was instructed by his guru, by his teacher. And the rest will... is God's responsibility. See? The spiritual teaching is very simple, how to med... there are hundreds of ways of meditation, so the spiritual teacher examines you, asks you, questions you, and prescribes a way of meditation and a way of life for you. And that is your lifetime job. That is your lifetime job! Hold onto that with courage and patience. Don't complain. There is nothing to complain. "Oh my mind is restless and I cannot meditate." Foolish. Impatience!

So one should examine one's own mind before one goes and seeks instruction from a teacher. And when he has found such a teacher and received his instructions, he should go on – carry on with patience and courage. If the teacher is available, if some questions, some doubts come-- ask him. But he should always remember that through my teacher I am really connected to God. And I am never helpless. The help that is coming to me from my teacher is really coming from God, is really coming from above. And if the teacher dies or is far away, it does not – it won't affect my spiritual life. If he has faith and love, even after the death of the teacher, the teacher may appear to him – appear to him in dream or some other way. So a person, a real genuine spiritual seeker can never be in distress, just as the Bhagavad Gita says, "na hi kalyana-krt kascid durgatim tata gacchati" [Bhagavad Gita 6:40] "Man who is seeking spiritual wellbeing can never come to grief." So spiritual life is really a wonderful thing. There is a stage of confusion and restlessness. But when we meet a teacher, that restlessness is calmed. And we have found a way. And one should feel very fortunate and should go on with patience and courage in that way, trying to develop more and more faith and love for the teacher, knowing all the time this... this help that is coming to me is really coming to [him from] God.

So that is a very wonderful relation between the teacher and the student and it goes on like this way. It goes on step-by-step, bringing more and more light and peace to the student, and also great satisfaction to the teacher. When

the teacher finds this fellow is really, really has listened to me, he is carrying on what he was instructed, and the teacher is very happy if a student really **listens** to him. Most students do not, you see. Most students, you see, they are coming to a teacher and it is just very superficial. Depth is lacking. So, in this relation, between the teacher and the student there should be that depth. There should be that eagerness and that patience, and that love, and that faith. Then it will work wonders. And we should remember: this is **God's** plan. God, since God is really compassionate to us – just as God we say – we thank God for our material needs. When there is [a] good crop, we thank Him. When there is a recovery from a disease, we thank Him. When there are so many fulfillments, material fulfillments in our life, we thank God. But we also should thank him for our spiritual happenings. So God is really guiding us, not merely in our material life, but also in our moral life, [and] our spiritual life. That is why in the Indian tradition, we say, “It is God...[Who] is working... Out of his compassion he sends these teachers, grades of teachers. Some teachers are avataras, prophets, like Christ, like Buddha, like Ramakrishna—great teachers. And sometimes other teachers, but it is God's power. It is God's knowledge, is God's love that are working through these teachers. We should remember that also.

[Closing chant not included on this lecture tape.]

1. Chandogya Upanisad in The Principal Upanisads, ed. by S. Radhakrishnan. New York: Harper & Brothers, c. 1953, p. 464.
2. Manduka Upanisad in The Principal Upanisads, ed. by S. Radhakrishnan. New York: Harper & Brothers, c. 1953, p. 672.
3. “Guru-shishya tradition” – Wikipedia. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guru-shishya_tradition accessed October 15, 2013.
4. Manduka Upanisad in The Principal Upanisads, ed. by S. Radhakrishnan. New York: Harper & Brothers, c. 1953, p. 672.
5. Brhad-aranyaka Upanisad in The Principal Upanisads, ed. by S. Radhakrishnan. New York: Harper & Brothers, c. 1953, p. 289.
6. Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 4, verse 34 as cited in <http://www.bhagavad-gita.org/Gita/verse-04-34.html> accessed October 26, 2013.
7. “Pranipat” definition as “prostration” – as cited in <http://www.babasaiofshirdi.org/2007/06/sai-baba-of-shirdi-explains-verse-from.html> accessed October 26, 2013.
8. “Advadhuta” Wikipedia. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Avadhuta> accessed October 26, 2013.
9. Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 6, verse 40 [Note: verse 6:40 is incorrectly numbered in hyperlink label as 6:35] <http://www.bhagavad-gita.org/Gita/verse-06-35.html> as accessed October 26, 2013.