

Spiritual Homage to Lincoln

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: Spiritual homage to Lincoln. Yesterday was the birthday of Abraham Lincoln so I thought it is proper for us to spend a day in remembrance of this great man who was not merely a politician, a man of great achievement, but also a deeply spiritual man. I shall begin my talk by reading a line from a book, *The American Presidents* by Donald E. Cooke. (1) "America has had her share of men who were great presidents. Some of these were also great men. Among the latter, Abraham Lincoln occupies a supreme place. Out of all the volumes written about Lincoln, it is difficult to form a true evaluation of the man. He was humble, shy, witty, dynamic, forceful, gentle, politically astute. He was understandably human and humanly puzzling. Occasionally he said or did something that appeared outrageous or unwise, yet he emerged from every political or personal encounter with a quiet dignity and a greater stature than before. He transcended himself and his own weaknesses."

Abraham Lincoln had so many sides in his character and personality that as this writer says, it is difficult to evaluate him. But one thing is striking: whatever side of his character you study – of course we have to study at depth—superficial study won't disclose to us the true evaluation of this aspect of his character. Whatever aspect you study and think, you feel that this aspect of his personality is not isolated. It is integrated into something we cannot define. And this feeling comes even from the study of his boyhood incidents. As we go on studying Lincoln, right from his boyhood, you feel that there is an integration in the man. He is growing no doubt; he is growing. But all this growth was stationed in something which cannot be described.

In a recent book which was published in 1969, *Lincoln Today*, by Victor Searcher, here he says in his introduction that up to that time, 1969, the number of books written about Lincoln is near about 5,000. Lincoln had many critics during his lifetime. You could say many enemies also. But after his death, suddenly the whole nation, of course at that time excluding the South, rose to an emotion about this great man. How great he was began to be felt and the expression of this feeling took shape in the books, articles, essays that began to be published. By 1939, this writer says, the number of books neared about... about 4,000. And now at 1969, we see that came to 5,000 and by now nineteen eighty, even new books have been published. Only recently there was a book, *The Two Mothers of Lincoln*.

So as days goes by this character, this great character is being remembered more and more and still people are trying to find the real basis of his personality. I have selected some passages about the different aspects of his life from different

books. And we shall see some writers say even describing this different facets, these great achievements: The Great Emancipator and the Preserver of the Union, his honesty, his truthfulness, his unselfishness, his compassion, his forgiveness, his equanimity, humility, humor, philosophy of man and of course religion and finally his spiritual evaluation. Even when you study all these, something is left we do not understand. As this writer says and some other writers have also expressed, one writer says, "Even those who had in come close contact with Lincoln, they felt there is one area which they cannot touch, one area of his character."

Several years ago I read a book, written by one Mr. Rice. He was a contemporary. He was giving his impressions of Lincoln. He said, he wrote that we found three levels of Lincoln's personality. One level he is meeting people, doing his duties and all encountering – understandable. Sometimes he is telling humorous stories. At another level, when he became the president, he had the authority. This writer says, "There you felt the power of the man." A man was so humble but when occasion comes, you feel his power. It is not the power of Hitler, it is a power that overcomes you with praise, with reverence. He says, this is the second level of his character we could understand. But there was a third level, which we could never touch, as if Lincoln at that level is diving deep into an inner center of his character. He says, "Probably that was the spiritual center of the man and you could not touch him. He was indrawn and he would not talk. He was as if he had gone into a deep meditation into himself." Several other writers also have expressed the opinion that there is one area, which we cannot understand. However, whatever literature we have now, it is really, we are really fortunate to study the character and to follow his growth from his boyhood until his end.

And, as I mentioned, whatever aspect you (read?), you find that that aspect is not an isolated happening. It is linked to some center in the depth of his personality. So Lincoln as a boy, his humor, his jokes, his telling stories it began from his boyhood. Now one thing you notice—any boy can tell a story or have some humor, but in his case when you read that incident, you feel, this boy is not an ordinary boy. His mother, both his mothers, his real mother, his own mother who died when Lincoln was only very young and his step-mother who was a second mother to him, in this book, *Two Mothers of Lincoln* [Lincoln's Mothers by Dorothy Clarke Wilson], we find that even his own mother, she is feeling that, "Who is this boy?" Outwardly he was awkward looking. He was very tall, and not a beautiful looking boy. You could say, ugly. Even his friends used to call him ugly. And Lincoln felt proud to be ugly. He was never sorry(?), you see. He used to make fun about himself. But there was something strange about that boy. His step-mother, also, in this book you find there are feelings, "Who is this boy?" For example, when he was a little older, say about nine or ten years old, he had a passion for study. Now, he belonged to a very poor family; there was no school. No books are available. But if some book, somebody brought some book, like the first book he encountered was Aesop's Fable, his mother used to read stories from that, then sometime later somebody gave him a copy of Aesop's Fable and he was so happy. And he had a passion for study. Aesop's Fable, and then Robin Hood, and then Life of... later Life of George Washington. These books. But his study was different. His mother found he... later on, a little later when he heard about the American in George Washington's that small book,

about the Constitution of America, and that line, “All men are created equal.” He was not satisfied, by just hearing the sentence. He wanted to understand deeply its meaning, and significance. Particularly this sentence. In the night he had no sleep. He used to sleep in the loft, a poor little log cabin. Sometimes there were fifteen people in that log cabin and to spend the whole night thinking about that sentence. He himself once mentioned that if some new word or expression I hear, I want to go to the depth of the meaning. Until I am satisfied, I do not give it up.

I shall read a passage from a remark about this point from one writer. “So that kind of concentration, a thirst for knowledge, accurate knowledge, real significant knowledge, his whole mind was eager for that.” One writer says that it is really surprising with so meager education – his total number of days he was... he attended school can be counted in fingers. No schooling, no books. Yet how this man came to that kind of education? His writings are master literature. His writings are master literature, his talks, everything. So this writer wonders if merely we cannot understand how he educated himself. Now when you study his boyhood and later days, you find the whole nature was a school. He learned from all over this world, from everything, every phenomenon, every event, every man he met, he learned something and even in boyhood, his analytic mind could see the fallacies of events, the fallacies of men. Sometimes in those days there were preachers who would travel from village to village and have those meetings and those preachers in those days were very—they always they would speak of hellfire and brimstone, you see, that kinds of preacher. And Lincoln would imitate them. A preacher is there, heard other friends, boys would come and they would go to some shade of tree and he would imitate that preacher, you see. Now this does not mean, you see, it is also coming from a depth of character, which was there even in his boyhood. Seeing the fallacies –a preacher is preaching about God, but his language, his manners, his ideas are going counter to what God usually means to us. And as a boy, he felt that and through a story, through a joke, he would try to make it clear even to his friends.

Later on whenever he would make a joke and whenever he would tell a story they are rooted in an experience of contradiction-- in man, in some event, in some character. And he would, sometimes he would tell a story. Those stories are based on some facts. He observed something. Thousands of people observe things, but this does not strike them, but [with] his penetrating mind he could see the self-contradictions of things. And instead of protesting directly, he would bring a story, bring a joke, and that made that point clear. He employed this in his legal practice. Even when later he was president with his ministers he could at once see the absurdities, the contradictions of human behavior and he would bring it out with the help of a story, with the help of a joke, something like that.

Now his honesty. Even as a boy, even [when] he was a young man, everybody knew that this person, this boy, this young man is really honest. But they would wonder: how could a man be so honest? That is the point, that if that question comes with every aspect of his character – how a man could be so truthful, how a man could be so honest. There are numerous incidents we read in these books. One incident is: once when he was running... as a young man he was running a shop in New Salem and one customer, one lady, the change she got was less than

she, that was due, maybe three or four cents. And Lincoln found it after this customer went, and he went four miles to return that five cents to this lady. And this was not uncommon with him. This kind of honesty, and similarly truthfulness and people wondered, "How is it possible to become... Is it just a... is it just a show, an exhibition?" No. He was sincere, but that question would come: how a person could be so honest, could be so truthful.

And then the question of humility comes. How a person can be so humble, you see. I shall read just two incidents, of course they are from later life, about humility. He was president and one day he had... the war was going on at the time and General McClellan was in charge of the Potomac army and one day Mr. Lincoln accompanied by his secretary, Hay and one of his cabinet members, Mr. Seward, one evening he went to see General McClellan, who was in charge of the army. And he was not at home. So they waited for one hour. One hour they waited and then the general came, coming to this room, he saw them waiting. He did not say anything, straight he went inside, not a bow, not nothing. Strange. He was a very egotistic [man] as you know, as he went inside. Then they were waiting half an hour. Then Lincoln called one servant, "Just go and tell the general that I have come to see him." The servant returned and said, "No, he has gone to his bed." Now we see, his secretary, Hay was furious when they came [and] spoke to him. And Lincoln seemed not to have noticed anything. Nothing affected him. Such an insult, an insubordinate general, and he is the Commander in Chief. He is the President, and Commander in Chief. But, he was furious, his secretary, but Lincoln seemed to have not noticed. He said, "It is better, not at this time, it is better not to making points of etiquette and personal dignity, at this hour, at this time. Forget [it]." See?

Another incident, this... it was a congressman, his name was Mr. Lovejoy, from Illinois. He procured an important order from Lincoln regarding exchange of prisoners, no not prisoners, soldiers – eastern and western front. And Lincoln gave him the permission. This was necessary for the effective, for reasons of effective action. Then this gentleman, this congressman, came to the War Secretary, Mr. Stanton, and told him about this. And then Stanton said, "Did Lincoln give you an order of that kind?" Then this congressman said, "He did sir." "Then he is a damned fool," the Secretary said. "Then he is a damned fool." Then this bewildered... congressman was bewildered by this remark, and he came to Lincoln and said that Mr. Stanton has said this. Then Lincoln said, "Did he say I was a damned fool?" (light laughter) And this congressman said, "He did, Sir." After a moment's pause, looking up, Lincoln said, "If Stanton said I was a damned fool, then I must be so..." (laughter from audience) "for he is nearly always right and generally says... what he means. I will stop over and see him."

Now you see similar kinds of encounters we find plentiful, and we wonder how can a man have so much humility. Here again we have to go to the depth of his character, the area which normally we cannot explain. If we can come to that area... Some writers have given a hint to that area – his spiritual depth. From that area all these manifestations of the different segments of his character can be merged: his sense of power, his humility, his... his compassion and his... all these different elements which we discuss when we study his character, all those things are centered in that core of his personality, which is really as we shall see, a spiritual

center. Lincoln never claimed, you see, that experience is so deep you cannot talk about it. You cannot talk about it, but if you are, but if you are really introspective and you are really analytical and if you have a deep knowledge of spiritual life, then you can find out. Then you can find out -- here is the real Lincoln. And from that real Lincoln, all these manifestations are coming: his power, his ability, his actions, his humility. All these things that [are] emerging from that source.

I shall [note] one thing [of] those in that book by Mr. Rice, he was a contemporary and he gives his impressions of Abraham Lincoln, in that book he says: "Those who follow his life must be impressed with the equal serenity of Lincoln's temper, in moments of the darkest adversity as in the hours of the greatest triumph." [Rice. Reminiscences of Abraham Lincoln, p. 8] That kind of serenity we read in the Bhagavad Gita, one very well known spiritual scripture of India, that a man, when he has spiritual realization, he develops this equanimity, in happiness or adversity he becomes equal sighted. See? Who is the friend or an enemy, or a poor man or a rich man? His outlook of life is changed. He remains, he maintains the same serene and equal attitude to everything. So this writer has found that. His equanimity of his temper, moments of adversity you see, when that war was going on, he was crying, he was crying, but he knew that God has placed him in that situation. He has to do that. So you could find him with that same calmness in all situations of life.

In many books, he is... how he is telling a simple story. He used to solve most critical situations, you see? You read story after story, incident after incident. And each story impresses you. Each such story impresses you. I shall read from one book, it is well known, one such. You see when Lincoln was running for the Congress and he had a rival, who was a religious minister. His name was Cartwright. And he was, one day, holding a religious meeting. And he was a great critic of Lincoln. He used to say this man, this lawyer, he does not believe in God. He is a heretic; he's atheist. He used to make very strong remarks against Lincoln. So it led to (?) a religious meeting and some of his friends said, "Why don't you attend? He is your rival. Why don't you attend?" And Lincoln did not want to go to that religious meeting, but they told him, "Why don't you go?" So he went.

I shall read. "This minister he has spread reports about Lincoln's disbelief of Christ. Both were running for the same Congress seat. In spite of warnings, Lincoln went anyhow to a religious meeting where Cartwright was to preach. In due time, Cartwright said to the congregation, 'All who desire to lead a new life, to give their hearts to God and go to heaven, will stand.' And a sprinkling of men, women and children stood up. Then the preacher exhorted, 'All who do not wish to go to Hell, will stand.' All stood up, except Lincoln. (laughter from audience) Then Cartwright in his gravest voice said, 'I observe that many responded to the first invitation to give their hearts to God and go to heaven, and I further observed that all of you, save one, indicated they you did not desire to go to hell. The sole exception is Mr. Lincoln, who did not respond to either invitation. May I inquire of you, Mr. Lincoln, where you are going?' (more laughter) And Lincoln slowly rose and slowly spoke, 'I came here as a respectful listener. I did not know that I was to be singled out by Brother Cartwright. I believe in treating religious matters with due solemnity. I admit that the questions propounded by Brother Cartwright are of great

importance. I did not feel called upon to answer as the rest did. Brother Cartwright asks me directly, 'Where are you going?' I desire to reply with equal directness, 'I am going to Congress.' (laughter from audience) The meeting broke up."

[The author of] one book, he is Mr. Ralph Newman, he was president of the Illinois State Historical Society and recipient of the Lincoln Diploma, an honor from [the] Lincoln Memorial Society, author of several books. He tries to formulate a personal philosophy of Lincoln. I shall read a passage. (*p. 415 Lincoln for the Ages*)

"In discussing the personal philosophy from which Abraham Lincoln developed his political credo and which governed his every official act, we must remember a phrase he liked to use. He spoke of the 'family of man,' not Northerners or Southerners, or Americans, or British or Russians, but the 'whole great family of man.' His faith was not in parties or armies, but in men, mankind itself. He was probably born with that faith as surely all great men are. But he found it epitomized in words, when as a boy in Indiana" ... in "the flickering light of crude fireplace studying and pondering over the Declaration of Independence which maintained that all men were created equal." That expression. He spent hours over [it] thinking, in the night without sleep he said, 'What is the real meaning of this: all men are created equal?' "Only out of the complete assumption of that tenet could have come the determination and the staying power to educate himself and literally pull himself up by his own bootstraps. From it came both his humility and his authority, and his ability to grow into whatever task was set before him. It sustained him through the terrible trials of war. For he saw the Civil War as the final testing of that mighty principle, 'All men are created equal.'"

Several authors have touched and discussed Lincoln's religious belief. One author [is] Reverend Richard E. Emerich, Bishop of the diocese of Michigan, Episcopal Church. He writes, "I would class the great emancipator, the savior of the union among the saints. He was not a professed member of the visible church, but we are not wrong in saying that he was a member of that invisible church so close to the Heart of God." Another writer, Elton Trueblood, he was a professor of Earlham College – he wrote, "Increasingly it is clear that the major key to Lincoln's greatness is his spiritual depth. It is his spiritual depth."

In a book, *Lincoln for the Ages*, and writer, Richard Paul Graebel (*p. 410*) he discusses the faith of Abraham Lincoln. He says, "No one has ever questioned Lincoln's familiarity with the Judeo-Christian scriptures. He read his Bible regularly and knew it well. He astonished visitors on more than one occasion with his ready knowledge of where certain passages could be found. Biblical allusions in his published papers and recorded conversations number almost four score and are taken from twenty-two different books of the Old and New Testaments.... (*p.411-12*) He believed in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. He believed in praising God as beneficent; and that His truth and justice are eternal.

"He believed that it is the duty of nations, as well as individuals to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God. That it is their duty to invoke the influence of the Holy Spirit. To confess their sins, and to be assured that genuine repentance will bring mercy and pardon... [some awkwardness in quote as he began this next section, so I just left it as it was in the book] He realized in his own life that

all human reliance is vain, 'Without the assistance of that Divine Being,' he told his friends in Springfield. 'I cannot succeed; with that assistance, I cannot fail.'

"Lincoln believed himself to be an instrument in the hands of God. He insisted that he had registered an oath in heaven to finish the work that he was in, fully cognizant of his responsibility to God."

(p. 413) "As his closest associates insisted, no one had a right to say he knew Lincoln intimately. There were areas of his life which he shared with no one [original quote = "man"]... Certainly Lincoln gave the world the impression and set the example of a man with a profoundly religious sense of responsibility and faith. A New England Congressman, Henry C. Deming of Connecticut, said that Lincoln was once asked why, in light of his obvious piety, he did not join a church. And Lincoln reportedly replied, 'When any church will inscribe over the altars as the sole qualification for membership, the Saviour's... statement for the substance of both law and gospel, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself,' that church will I join with all my heart and soul.'

One author, Willard Sperry, is dean of the Harvard Divinity School. He remarked, "He is one of the few men in history, our own history and all history whose religion was great enough to bridge the gulfs between the sects and to encompass... and to encompass us all."

Another well known quotation from Abraham Lincoln, "The Almighty has His own purposes," said Lincoln, "and wanted it known that he was on the side of God when he wrote, 'I am conscious of no desire for my country's welfare that is not in consonance with His will and of no plan upon which we may not ask His blessing.'... Lincoln belongs to the ages because he knew he belonged to the Eternal God." (*Graebel, p. 414*)

Lincoln's father was ill in the place where he lived and his brother and step-brother wrote to him but it was not possible at that time for Lincoln to go, so he wrote his brother this letter and there he mentioned: (*p. 81-82 Wolf, The Religion of Abraham Lincoln.*) "I sincerely hope father may...recover his health; but at all events tell him to remember to call upon, and confide in, our great and good, and merciful Maker; who will not turn away from him in any extremity. He notes the fall of a sparrow, and numbers the hairs of our heads; and He will not forget the dying man, who puts his trust in Him. Say to him that if we could meet now, it is doubtful whether it would not be more painful than pleasant; but that if it... be his lot to go now, he will soon have a joyous meeting with many loved ones gone before; and where the rest of us, through the help of God, hope ere-long to join them." He could not meet his father, but he sent this message through his brother.

Lincoln was very fond from his early days, even when he was a lawyer, of a poem, which was written by a young Scottish poet [William Knox]. He was very fond of this long poem and sometimes he would read this poem. The poem was called, "Why should the spirit of mortal be proud?" It is a long poem. It is in this poem, the poet tries to bring out the... the evanescence of life in every aspect. We think that everything is going to stay, everything is eternal, but really speaking, everything is passing away and everything is self-contradictory. Life. Death. Health. Sickness. Hope. Frustration. Side by side they are traveling. This idea is

described in this poem and he would very much like to read this poem and he had got this poem by heart. I will read just a few lines:

“Oh! Why should the spirit of mortal be proud?
Like a swift-fleeting meteor, a fast-flying cloud
A flash of the lightning, a break of the wave
He passeth from life to his rest in the grave.

The leaves of the oak and the willow shall fade,
Be scattered around, and together be laid;
And the young and the old, and the low and the high
Shall moulder to dust, and together shall lie.

The infant a mother attended and loved;
The mother that infant’s affection who proved;
The husband, that mother and infant who blest, --
Each, all are away to their dwellings of rest.”

Like this it goes on and he liked this poem very much.

Once it so happened during his lawyer days when he was traveling from circuit in court to court in different towns. Once he and some fellow lawyers had come to a place and they were staying in a hotel, and a troupe of musicians, a family – sisters, brothers and parents – all musicians, they came. They were also traveling from place to place and they also... and one of these girls, she liked Lincoln very much, his cheerfulness and his serene listening(?) and one evening, before going, before leaving, before this party of lawyers would leave they wanted the musicians to give them a concert. So they sang and they played their instruments. Then that girl, requested, “Mr. Lincoln, why don’t you sing?” (laughs) Mr. Lincoln said, “I cannot; I am not familiar with a single note.” And then one of his brother lawyers said, “No, no. He is modest. He is teasing. He has a wonderful voice. We have heard him in Sangamon County” – like that. But Lincoln said, “No I am saying, truly I cannot sing. But I will do one thing. I know a poem, and I will read that, recite that poem for you.” And it was this poem he recited. And when he recited, his appearance was changed, as if he was unified with the ideas of... of this poem: that don’t rely on the changing events of life. Rather, seek the eternal, which is at the back of the changing phenomena of life. He read this and they liked it.

Some of the girls were in tears. Then Lincoln said, “Well, if you have liked this poem so much, I will write it for you.” So late at night, Lincoln in his own handwriting, he wrote this whole poem. And they had to leave very early. Everybody was sleeping, so Lincoln left that paper at the door of their room and they... this girl found it later. Now this girl, later on in her later days, she cherished this as a precious treasure. But unfortunately after Lincoln, then Lincoln had died and all and the whole country was drawn to him and books were published and people were mad after getting some kind of memoirs or something. So this lady, she had become very poor. She was in very acute financial distress. And she thought, “If I sell this document, it will bring me five hundred dollars.” And against her will

she did that. She announced in the paper that I have an original document written by Lincoln himself, a poem, and I am ready – I don't exactly remember the figure --- about three hundred or five hundred dollars she got. And then that was sold again to another for a high price and that document is now in some Lincoln museum, I forget where. It's in original handwriting.

Another line from was from a poem was also, he was very fond of this expression. This was... "and this too will pass away." From the whole poem, this particular expression he especially liked very much. "This too will pass away." And the writer, one writer says this: "On many occasions when, because in his life, Lincoln had to face many difficult situations" you see, "he would repeat this, 'This too will pass away.' And that gave him that endurance, composure."

I shall now discuss that point, this... the spiritual depth. One writer has tried to... of course this writer is also a Lincoln, considered to [be an] authority. It is a French-American lady. She wrote three books, during the twenties, twenty-four, twenty-five, thirty like this. And these three books are later brought into one volume. The name of that volume was, The Great Captain. This author, of course it is her idea. As we have seen, many authors say the one side of Lincoln we do not understand, we cannot explain his different aspects of his character because they seem to be so unreal. We cannot really see how a man could be so truthful... so honest, so self-sacrificing, so humble. You see. And so the people have tried to give a philosophy.

As we have seen that one writer says, it is the philosophy of man. For him, he used to always think of humanity as one, forgetting the difference of race, color, creed. See? That feeling of unity – and that all mankind is one. Something in man is really universal. And for him it was not a fancy, for him it was really an experience. That is why he could look upon all men, even when the war was won, everybody was eager to punish the opposite side, but he said, "No." That kind of natural forgiveness and compassion. How could it have come? Because of that experience. That experience of the unity of all mankind. Eh? All mankind is standing, you see, on a Truth, which universal. This was for him an experience, so that writer tries to say that was his philosophy of life: the comprehension of the universality of mankind. Man is one – whether a Russian, or American, Black or White, he said. And any kind of injustice to man, for him was unbearable.

Now, this [French-American] author, she tries to give a spiritual philosophy to Lincoln. I shall read some passages. As is... This is also a historical fact, during the last years in [the] White House, when the war was... was still going on and he could not sleep. The whole night [he] would pace up and down and [had] very little sleep, because his heart was filled with this... anguish. Then one night he had a dream. He dreamt that had no sleep and he was pacing up and down the corridors of the... and he heard a cry. Some people were crying from somewhere. And so he was going and found that in one place there is a coffin, and surrounding the coffin there were some men and women that cried. And he asked them, "Who is dead?" And then one of them said, "The President." That means in dream, he saw his own death. You see, he saw that he was dead and people surrounded his coffin and they are crying. Now after this dream experience he was very much interested in man's immortality. What is man? Is there something in man that survives death? Is man

immortal? And what is that immortal principle in man? Is it just a solace? Is it just a fancy, or [is it that] there is some truth in this – there is some element in man, which is immortal? This question began to bother him very much and whoever would come, he would talk with him. General Grant came and he asked him, “General do you believe in immortality?” (laughs) General Grant was giving his war affairs. But the President is asking in his own way. He said, “Yes, men are dying before my own eyes and there must be some hope...” Like this.

A Christian preacher came, Reverend Beecher, and he asked him the same question. “Reverend do you believe in immortality?” And he was a Christian preacher he had to say, “Yes, the scriptures say we will go to heaven.” You see. It did not...his answer did not satisfy him. He was still... he was trying to in his own... And one day a young man, he was a Shakespearean actor, he came. He was a sort of philosopher, and he [Lincoln] asked him to quote some lines from Shakespeare and he quoted from he repeated, he acted from Shakespeare’s Hamlet, “To be or not to be...” Like this. And this was going and then Lincoln asked him, his name was Murdock... [author spells it this way, historically may be James Murdoch] “Mr. Murdock, do you believe in immortality?” He said, “Yes, I do.” “Why?” And then he said-- of course we should know that this writer is trying to build a spiritual philosophy for Lincoln. How far it is historical, I do not know, but that book it is in the form of a fiction, but based on, based on historical facts. But this part as several writers and authors have tried to find out that hidden Lincoln, the source of Lincoln’s character, so this writer in her own way has tried to. So, this story is there.

[The following quote doesn’t seem to be from the Morrow book, though the incident is mentioned there.] He asked this, Lincoln asked this actor, and this actor replies, “I believe in immortality because I feel that I cannot conceive of any point of time either past or future without somehow being there myself as the witness of that point of time. This is my experience. I try to imagine something which happened five years ago or one hundred years ago. My mind goes to that point of time and I feel that somehow I am present there, not in this body, but somehow. There is something in me who is, well I am there. I have to be there, the point in time cannot exist without a perceiver, without me as a perceiver of that point of time. And the narration said as soon as Lincoln heard this, he was... jumped from his chair, you see. And he said, “This is the philosophy I want. You see a philosophy of immortality that can be perceived here and know, a philosophy of immortality that is not in the books. An immortality which you can see for yourself, just as you see your body, just as you see your mind, your emotions, the outside world, so you can see, that in you there is an element which is the witness of everything. This changing world is passing on and on, but something is you is eternal witness of the present, of the past, of the future. See? This is the implication of saying that I cannot imagine myself to be to be absent in any point of time. And this narration, this writer says, Lincoln jumped from his chair and said, “This is the philosophy I want.” And it did not go from his mind. He was thinking of this. In other words, that point in us, is our soul. We hear of our soul in so many places. But what really the soul is? That is the point. And here there is an experience, which brings the soul within your experience. You try to be aloof from the happenings of life, and you feel that you are eternal. You are not as this body or the mind or the

ego, but at the back of the mind or ego there is something in you-- your soul --and that is, that is your spiritual center. And that spiritual center is immortal, you see.

If you can really perceive this truth, then you solve this question of immortality. And this book says that Lincoln went on and on feeling of this. And one night he woke up. He heard as if some sound, and he woke up and he thought some sound was coming from outside. He woke up and went outside to the night watch, who was sitting, a young man and asked him, "Was there somebody here or not?" Then he came back and again he lay down on his bed and then, I shall read:

Again he woke up, and that problem began to haunt his mind. "What is the core of the human personality, what is really our individuality?" I shall read: "What was individuality? A mere difference in brain folds? Was an identical force speaking through Grant and Lincoln, through Fred Douglas..." Fred Douglas was a Negro leader... and "Lizzie Keckley" she was the maid... she was in charge of the kitchen in [the] White House.... "through Jefferson Davis and Robert Lee and old John Brown, this question came. An identical" spirit is "working through all these different individualities." You see? This question suddenly came. "Suppose it were true, suppose this was the key to the scheme, a mighty conscious creative entity as subtle and as all pervasive as electricity, but possessed of every capacity men's souls and minds possessed: an entity which manifested itself through all forms of life... It looked, yes, by the eternal verities, it looked as if existence were a stupendously earnest game in which the creator had set himself the task of bringing all life to vivid consciousness of its complete identity with Him. Personality, depending on brain force which in turn depended on the original law, but within that personality, be it slave trader or Henry Ward Beecher, the creator himself, however hidden by the slaver's lusts or manifested by Beecher's poetic vision... And when as the aeons rolled, man became completely conscious that his soul and the creator's were one and the same-- Lincoln covered his eyes with his hand, giddy, breathless. For a moment he lay thus and then again he was conscious of being called, but he knew now that he heard not with his physical but with his soul's ear... And so, and so, if he could disassociate himself from this person, this Lincoln, if he could think of Lincoln as Lincoln thought of his hand or his foot, then death, oh where is thy sting?"

The meaning is, this idea came to Lincoln. The real Lincoln is that immortal spirit and this outside Lincoln, the Lincoln possessed of a body, a mind, Lincoln the Emancipator, Lincoln the President, if he could dissociate himself, his soul, from these outward phases of his personality, at once he knows that he is immortal. His spirit is one with that Universal Spirit which is working through each man, through each man, through each living [being], that same Universal Spirit, and what we call individuality. It also depends on your brain fold, the body and all. He has hinted [at] also what we call in Vedanta the law of karma, you see. It is the law of karma which is responsible for the variation of individualities. But the variation is there, but even through all these variations, there is that force of unity, the Soul, which is one in all beings, which is one with God.

So he is thinking, if he could dissociate himself from this outside Lincoln, from that true Lincoln that soul of Lincoln, then fate, oh death why is your sting? It is a quote from the Bible, as you know [1 Corinthians, 15:55].

“This call, heard with his spiritual ear, what was it but the wakening knowledge that he was not Abraham Lincoln, save for this moment of existence. Actually he was one with all life forever... And with an increasing wonder he realized that for the first time since conscious thought began with him, he was not lonely. Never to be lonely again. That which was imprisoned in the poor frame of Abraham Lincoln had envisaged its real identity, had sighted its true home. Happiness! This then was happiness--Its other name was God.”

This was presented in that book.

Om Madhu [chants in Sanskrit]

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.

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