

To Make God Real in Life (94-10-02)

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: To Make God Real in Life. When we say to make God real in life, we have to take into account the degrees of reality that we give to God. God is real in a certain sense. Then, as we progress in our life, God becomes real in other senses.

The highest sense of reality that can be given to God is that experience of God, which says that God is all in all. There is nothing else in this world, but God! That is the highest experience of God, the highest reality of God is to feel within ourselves in the waking state, in the dream state and also in the sleep state, that it is God that is in me and outside me. Saint Augustine had a beautiful composition. "I found thee not without, Oh Lord. I sought Thee without in vain. For Thou art within me."¹[Confessions 10:27] So, that is the experience of God, when God has become real, in the highest sense. That reality of God cannot be experienced from the very beginning.

Those who believe in God, for them God is real. But many other things also are real. So we have to start the search of God from wherever we stand. There are people who have nothing to do with God. We call them atheists. We call them nonbelievers. They think that we can pull on without God. But [the] time comes, even to an atheist when, because our life is a complicated phenomenon, life is not all security and all happiness and all joy.

We have to pass through many crises in life and some crisis may come which cannot be avoided by our friends and specialists, say doctors. I am in a serious condition of illness and I seek the help of doctors but the doctors cannot do anything. So there are moments of crisis in our life, when as an ultimate help we seek the grace of God. We have many examples in our literature [Probably literature... Sounded like 'late region']. A person who is an atheist, but in a certain moment of crisis, he felt that it is only, though I do not... never have prayed, or never have meditated, but I have heard that there is a Power which is above all powers in life. So he, in a moment of crisis, that person prays to the unknown God. "Oh God, I have never prayed. I have never meditated. I do not know whether You are or not, but in this moment of crisis, do please help me." So that is also a state.

But those who believe in God, they have to know that God's reality has degrees. We have to start from somewhere. We have normal faith in life and we come to a temple or a church. We listen to services and that is also... we are giving God a reality. We think that there is a God to whom this congregation is praying. The minister is talking about God. So, that person is [one who] gives a

reality to God as far as he can stand. He does not seek the highest reality of God... a God who is ... who is that Divine Power to help me in my life. I have my family. I have my job. I have many things to do. This world is very real to me. But God is also real to me. There is a God, and if I pray to Him, if I think, if I repeat His Name, that will be good for me. So, he is standing in that stage, and he does not seek too much of God.

But there are people who seek more and more the higher stages of Reality. The highest stage is, as I read from that verse of Saint Augustine, the highest stage, the highest reality of God is when we experience that God is everything. We read in the Upanishads in the Isha Upanishad, "Isavasyam idam sarvum." [1:1]² "Whatever you see, whatever you experience has to be covered by God." That was an experience, which was clear to the sage of the Upanishad, that we can cover everything with God. There is nothing else but God. Now that is a great experience, the highest experience.

We read also in the Upanishads, "Pranasya pranah caksusas caksur." [Kena 1:2]³ "God is the life of life, the eye of the eye." That means my sense experience is really coming from the God experience, the experience of consciousness. God is pure consciousness and that pure consciousness is at the back of all my sense experience. When I see, I think that I am seeing. I have an ego. That is a great hindrance to God experience. When I am...take ... "I" means the little "I." "I" means this body-mind combination. We use that "I" on every occasion of life. We do not know that at the back of this "I" there is the real "I", my true self, which is of the same nature of God.

The god in you, the pure conscious in you, is the Reality. So that experience came to the sages of the Upanishads so they could say, "Pranasya pranah caksusas caksur." "God is the life of my life, the eye of my eye." At each experience, sense experience, whatever I perceive, it is from God. God is the source of all my experience.

In another place of the Upanishads we read, "preyo vittat...preyah putrat." "He is... God is dearer than wealth, dearer than my children." [Bhad-aranyaka 1:4:8]⁴ Now, this is an experience of God, where that great love has come. God is no longer a word, but God is an experience.

Another place we read, "Raso vai sah." [Taittiriya 2:7:1]⁵ "God is rasa." Rasa means the joy, the sweetness. We are seeking joy through... through all our sense experience. We are seeking pleasure. But the search for this joy, the search for this happiness is really because of the existence of God as rasa. Rasa means sweetness, so that we have given reality to God as the All-Pervading Joy. See? His joy is really ruling in life. So these are degrees of reality that we can give to God.

The real seeker passes through these different stages of reality. Few, of course, can reach that stage where God has become all: everything is God. Everything is God's joy. That experience can come by a genuine seeker of truth. He has to begin some preparations. He finds his senses are wild. So he has to practice some disciplines. At that time he should have... God is real but he experiences the higher and higher stages of reality as he carries on these disciplines. These disciplines are: prayer, contemplation, holy company. We

have to... at once we cannot experience the highest reality of God, but God becomes more and more real as we carry on through these disciplines. One discipline is japa. Japa means the repetition of holy name. A repetition of holy name of God has a wonderful power of purification.

We have in our heart so many desires, so many complexities, but these have to be cleared. The heart has to be pure, as we read in the Bible, "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God." [Matthew 5:8]⁶ Seeing God is not a myth -- is not an idle idea!

For those who are seeking this highest reality of God, they should have great faith in the scriptures, in the words of saints and seers, those who have experienced God in the highest stage. So he has to, that person has to have faith in the words of the scriptures, in the words of the saints and seers, because from their words my faith will also grow. When we read these words of a saint, and seers, that gives me courage. That gives me hope that I too shall in one day, if not in one life, another life, but I shall not stop. My goal is to reach that end, where I will experience God through and through. God is outside. God is inside. So that reality of God, through these disciplines. And as I mentioned, japa, or repeating the holy name of God with faith and with love, is a wonderful way of cleaning the heart, making ourselves pure.

And so, in this life [it] is a life in maya. We are... we are born, not as perfect beings, but as beings we carry many impressions of the past. If we believe in reincarnations, we had lived many past lives and in those lives we had done good things, bad things... So we have a store of karma with us, and this karma has to be worked out -- this karma, even good karma. So this is called freedom, freedom from karma. When there is karma, you are bound. When you have... you can have faith in God. You can be religious, but the highest Truth of God cannot be revealed suddenly.

We are born in maya. That means we carry with us a lot of impressions and these impressions can be worked out by disciplines. So one has to have great patience, see. So, these disciplines make us pure, and when we are pure, the... the God's presence, God's reality is felt in the heart without any doubt. Without any doubt, we come to this highest experience of God, when God is outside and inside. We live with God from day to day. We feel this body is a temple of God. Whatever is happening in this body it is by the power of God. The great power and love of God is living in my heart!

So, through disciplines we carry on this purification and this purification has stages. And finally, the earnest spiritual seeker realizes the highest reality of God. And when we think of God, when we try to contemplate on God, many doubts come. One doubt is whether God is personal or impersonal. Sri Ramakrishna says, "God is both."

If you... Some people want to look upon God as Father or Mother or Friend or Companion, as if God has a personality, like human personality. Just as we have a human father or mother, and we enjoy the protection of the father and mother, so if God... some seekers want to establish a personal relation[ship]. Some people look upon God as Father or Friend or Companion or Master. "I am the servant and God is my Master." God is the ruler. But this

element of personal feeling gives a sweetness in the spiritual life. We feel that God is real; His Love is real.

If we are in a state of mind where we seek God as an impersonal Being, He's all-pervading Consciousness, all-pervading... Some people like to be in a philosophical mood, and in that philosophical mood, there is no room for personal attachment. The Muslims – the Islamic religion – see, they pray to God, their book, but they do not... for them the God is real! God listens to our prayers, but He has no form. So different religions speak of these different ideas.

You see, the Christian religion: the Christian religion has also, in a broad way the Christian religion does not believe in forms -- the Protestants, for example. They have faith in God. They pray to God, but they do not like to give any, like the Hindus or like the Catholics... the Catholics worship God through Jesus: the form of Jesus, [or] of the Madonna. For them, it is real. This form of Jesus, or the form of the Madonna is real. So they attach so much importance in the church or in the temple they spend time looking at the pictures or looking at the statues, the images, with great love. That is the personal. God is not merely personal, but He has a form.

Sri Ramakrishna said you cannot make an end to how God reveals Himself to you. There ~~is~~ [are] endless stages through which God can become real to us: through forms, and without form, through philosophical contemplation, or a personal contemplation. So, you cannot make any end to God's revelation.

So, whatever be my religious faith, if I am sincerely seeking God, surely we shall progress. But we should not, never be tired. Like any other objective in life, this great objective to realize the highest truth of God, we have to cultivate great patience and great courage. The spiritual seeker has to undergo those disciplines. He should not mind: the disciplines of prayer, contemplation, holy company. That is a great help. Holy company means company of those persons who are thinking of God, who are practicing meditation.

So you... Often, when we [seek God] in our spiritual life, we think that we are alone. A sort of loneliness or aloneness terrifies us. But if we see there are others who are carrying on this search, so their company gives us courage, gives us more strength and faith. Our faith is intensified -- by the company of holy persons, in holy company! Readings of scriptures, reading of the works and lives of saints and seers is also holy company. The human company is also, is of course very helpful, but when we don't have any holy men around, we should read the life stories of the saints and seers. That also is holy company and that also intensifies our faith.

We should not be tired of this preparation. Some people complain: we are practicing. We have received from a teacher a mantra, and we are... [practicing] repetition of japa. We are performing [this] and nothing is happening. This kind of thinking, you see, is not encouraged in our spiritual life. When we are repeating the Holy Name, something is happening even though we do not see. But, the Holy Name is doing its work, but we are not feeling that. So we should never be discouraged in our spiritual life. That is the great advice that spiritual teachers give us. Never think that you are alone and God is not listening

to your prayers. So you carry on your spiritual life with as much intensity and faith as possible and you will not be disappointed in the end.

If not in one life, in... there is... for a person has not one life, in other lives, this goal may be reached. In Vedanta [it] says, this idea of many lives is itself a ... is maya. So when a person reaches the Truth, when one has Self-knowledge then one feels that God is the Only Reality and really speaking, I am the spirit, and spirit is never born. So really speaking in truth, I have no life, no death. I am eternal, just as God is deathless. God has no birth or death. So I too, I am a reflection of God. I too have really no birth or death. These experiences come to a spiritual seekers.

So we have to pass through these stages with patience and courage and faith. We shall never be disappointed. So God's... to God will become ... to make God real in life is a... it happens in stages, and so we should always have great faith in this ideal that God reveals to us in different degrees, and according to my efforts, according to my feelings, God's revelation, God's experience is... is surely [going to] happen to me. This kind of faith, this kind of courage is very helpful in our life.

There is a song by a Sufi mystic, his name was Jafar and there, this song [says], "When I have joined my heart to Thee, all that exists art Thou." Once Swami Vivekananda was very impatient. See, he went to Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Ramakrishna asked him, "What do you want?" And Vivekananda said, "I want samadhi. I want cessation of all this experience of life. I want to go beyond and live in that state of highest experience." But Sri Ramakrishna said, "Your idea is very limited! Samadhi, or merging the mind in that Infinite, is not the highest truth of your religious life." And [to] Swami Vivekananda, that young man, he was barely twenty-three, he said, "You sing a song of that Muslim, that Sufi saint. You like that song, 'I have joined my heart to Thee. All that exists art Thou.' That is... that you have to practice. Not extinction, if you lose [yourself] in samadhi, that is weakness. That is [weakness]... but we should be brave. When we come down we should be able to see everything as God!"

So Sri Ramakrishna said that you... don't be impatient of this world. This world is really God, and more and more we have to try to see God in your actions. He said that you are... once he said, on one occasion, that I see that you are... that you have to do many things for the good of the world. You have to do a lot of Mother's work. So don't seek samadhi or extinction now. You have to have a long journey, and you must not be impatient, because really it is God who is present with you, even when you work, you are... you will be able to have your mind in God!

So that was a great teaching that Swami Vivekananda received from his guru, Sri Ramakrishna. And in his later life, we find, he worked so much. He came to this country [United States] and tirelessly, without... he worked. And when there was any kind of depression, he used to remember his teacher, what he had said. And that gave him courage. When final... he did not live for a long time, he lived only thirty-nine years. And his life was full of this. In India, from this time in Europe, and finally India, he had to do so many things, accomplish so many things. And, he always, in his teachings he always refers this work [as] we

should work for helping mankind, to know that all mankind is my friend. So that idea of love and friendship we have to spend our life, not seeking selfish ends, but to be as unselfish as possible. That is an ideal and one has to combine what we call the yogas. Karma yoga means unselfish action and bhakti yoga, the yoga of love or devotion; raja yoga, the yoga of contemplation; and jnana yoga, the yoga of reasoning.

So all these yogas have to be practiced. Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda both said that they can be practiced together. A person can be a great jnani, a man of knowledge, or a great bhakta, great devotion, or he can be a yogi. So all these yogas can be practiced together. So when we read these messages, we are really helped by these great teachers, and particularly now, our, in our, in Vedanta, we have these examples of these great teachers. And from [these examples] when we follow the life story of Ramakrishna, there is his spiritual companion, Holy Mother, Sarada Devi, and the great disciples, his messenger, Vivekananda, and his other disciples we... our mind becomes more and more attached to spiritual life. We have to feel great love for our spiritual life.

Then the spiritual life is gradually fulfilled. The vision of the Reality of God becomes clearer and clearer, till ultimately we have that experience of freedom, which we hear in the great sayings of the Upanishads and Gita. So with hope and courage, if we have come to seek the spiritual truth, we should never be depressed. Spiritual life is an accomplishment which comes to us, if we hold on to it with patience and courage.

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 madhu⁷ [Rg Veda 1:90, 6-7]

Sweet blow the winds and the very oceans give forth blessedness. May the herbs and plants give 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 and sweet unto us be all living creation. Om. Sweetness, Harmony, Peace.

1. Augustine, Saint. Confessions 10:27.
<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/110110.htm> accessed October 12, 2016.
2. Isa Upanisad [1:1] in The Principal Upanisads, ed. by S. Radhakrishnan. New York: Harper & Brothers, c. 1953, p.567.
3. Kena Upanisad [1:2] in The Principal Upanisads, ed. by S. Radhakrishnan. New York: Harper & Brothers, c. 1953, p.581.
4. Brhad-aranyaka Upanisad [1:4:8] in The Principal Upanisads, ed. by S. Radhakrishnan. New York: Harper & Brothers, c. 1953, p.167.

5. Taittiriya Upanisad [2:7:1] in The Principal Upanisads, ed. by S. Radhakrishnan. New York: Harper & Brothers, c. 1953, p.548.

6. Bible Gateway. Matthew 5:8. King James Version.
<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+5%3A8&version=KJV>
accessed September 25, 2016.

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

Alternate version of prayer with somewhat simpler spelling
<http://www.sacred-texts.com/hin/rvsan/rv01090.htm>

madhu vātā ṛtāyate madhu kṣaranti sindhavaḥ |
mādhvīrnaḥ santvoṣadhīḥ ||