

BHAKTI YOGA – PART 07

SWĀMI DAYATMANANDA

Class begins with the chanting of the following Shanti mantra:

ॐ सह नाववतु ।
सह नौ भुनक्तु ।
सह वीर्यं करवावहै ।
तेजस्वि नावधीतमस्तु मा विद्विषावहै ।
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

Om Saha Naav Avatu |
Saha Nau Bhunaktu |
Saha Viiryam Karavaavahai |
Tejasvi Naav Adhiitam Asthu Maa Vidvissaavahai: |
Om Shantih Shantih Shantih: ||

Meaning:-

Om May Brahman protect us both |
May Brahman bestow upon us both, the fruit of knowledge |
May we both obtain the energy to acquire knowledge |
May what we both study reveal the truth
May we cherish no ill-feeling toward each other |
Om Peace Peace Peace be unto all ||

So we have been discussing the *Bhakti Yogā* of Swāmi Vivekānanda. In our last class we discussed how important it is to have a right concept about God. And Hindus have 3 concepts about God.

- 1) The 1st is that **He is beyond mind. He is beyond imagination. And He is beyond any description.**

So about such a concept of God we cannot say anything. And yet, the scripture's have to teach us how to go towards that reality. And therefore they use several types of techniques, linguistic techniques. We discussed they are -

- **Paradoxical** way of putting it. It is this and it is also that; It is here, It is also there; It is near, it is very far; It is inside, it is outside; It just sits here, and it just goes everywhere, etc.
- Then there is a **negative type of language**. Not this. Not this.

- Then 3rd type of language is by **speaking something totally different, but indicating something else.**

These are techniques which have been used by the scriptures.

1) So, that is the 1st type of concept – **God is beyond both thought and speech.**

2) 2nd concept we said is **God is without form, with but infinite qualities.**

Normally, auspicious qualities. And I also had said Hindus believe not only in auspicious qualities of God, but also in the inauspicious qualities of God. If God is good, then who is evil? Must be God only! No Saturn there.

In fact, what *Vedāntā* tells is that good and evil are not 2 different types of qualities. But 2 different interpretations of the same thing from 2 different points of view. It's inevitable as long as we are in this dualistic world.

Even that concept – God is without form, but it doesn't mean... I also had warned that God is formless. What it means is that He is capable of taking infinite number of forms, but all those forms are unmanifested.

3) The 3rd and the lowest concept of God is **God is with infinite number of forms; with infinite number of names; and with infinite number of qualities, especially auspicious qualities.**

That is why Hindus worship God with so many forms. Very often the question comes – why do Hindus worship so many gods?

No, Hindus do not worship many gods. They only worship one God. But that One God with different forms, different names, different qualities.

How much ignorance is existing, even today, in this so called enlightened society. Even today so many schools, so many colleges, textbooks, if you look, 'Hindus are worshipers of idols. Hindus are worshipers of many gods and goddesses'. And for them to poke fun, you know, *Ganeshā*, with an elephant head, and He has got a *Vāhana* which is called a rat or a mouse.

Like this kind of... or *Mā Kālī*, *Mother Kālī*, such a ferocious form. This tells them that Hindus are very benighted fellows, unenlightened people. Of course Hindus have their own idea about these people. It is not politically correct to tell that.

So, based upon the experiences of our great *Rishis*, Hindus have evolved a right way of progressing towards God. Now, these are the 3 concepts Hindus accept.

But Hindus do not stop there. There is something very important. Hindus... you know, in other religions we have been taught God creates human beings. But in Hinduism we say Hindus create Gods!

(5:02 mins)

Yes, they have a tendency of creating Gods on every conceivable occasion, and without occasion also. First of all, anybody in whom they find extraordinary manifestations of saintly qualities like unselfishness, purity and unconditioned love, or tremendous power of awakening, or inspiring other people, they make them straight away into Gods. Like *Rāma*, like *Krishnā*, like *Chaitanya*, like *Rāmakrishna*.

Then they have the tendency also that for every disciple, his or her *Guru* is more than God. गुरुर्ब्रह्मा गुरुर्विष्णु (*Gurur Brahmā, Gurur Vishnu*) etc. And literally they mean it. If anybody challenges them, they will say let us find out whether it is true or not.

So this is Hindu's nature. And that is why so many forms are there. That one thing is there about Hindus, that every God or Goddess that they worship... And that is where the freedom of Hindus lies. And also the limitation of Hinduism.

They take up one particular God and elevate Him into the all pervading infinite Godhood. Take for example, *Ganesha*. *Ganesha*, you know, for many people *Ganesha* is what we call a minor Deity, you know, minor deity. But there are so many people for whom He is the chosen deity. He is the *Ishtha Devtā*, in Maharashtra, in Andhra Pradesh, etc.

So what the Hindus do is they start worshiping something in a smaller way. And as they progress in their understanding, their concept of God expands and expands, until that God or Goddess is equated with the Supreme Reality. शुद्ध ब्रह्म परात्पर राम (*Śuddha-Brahma-Parātpara Rāma*), सत्य सनातनी माँ (*Satya Sanātani Mā*)

You know, we all elevate, start, 'This is my *Ishtha Devtā*, my chosen deity'. And She is, He or She is not merely a particular power or quality of God. But She is the Infinite all pervading God, *Brahman* Itself. This is the speciality of the Hindus.

So why do we need, why are we discussing it at such length, this particular concept of God? It is because, you just look around, how Hindus used to fight... Hindus though they have great understanding. And this question whether there are Gods, or there is a God has been discussed since *Vedic* times.

In *Bṛihadāraṇyaka* there is a beautiful question. Somebody asks *Yājñavalkya*, 'How many Gods'? He says, '33 crores'.

'How many Gods'? '3 crores'.

'How many Gods'? '3000 Gods'.

'How many Gods'? '300 Gods'.

'How many Gods'? '33 Gods'.

'How many Gods'? '3 Gods'.

'How many Gods'? 'Only 1'.

What is the idea? The idea is he is not getting frightened and reducing the number. The idea is that as long as our mind becomes scattered, and our mind has no capacity to discriminate properly – There is a wind God, there is a tree God, there is a leaf God, there is an animal God. You know, for Indians, if he goes into a forest every tree is a God or Goddess.

That is at an uninvolved evolved stage. Then as the person goes on evolving, they all become less and less and less. How beautifully *Sri Rāmakrishna* puts it. He says, when a devotee starts seeing God, first he sees, you know, with 12 hands and all that. Then finally he sees only with 2 hands. And after that he sees only, no hands at all, because he has gone beyond all forms.

So, as man evolves, that means his capacity to understand properly evolves, his concept of God also evolves.

So here is the secret why we are discussing... The secret is that there is only one reality. If there is only one reality, whom are we worshipping all of us, whether they are Christians or Hindus, or Buddhists? We are only worshiping that one God, but with different names, different forms.

(10:14 mins)

If we have this understanding, then there is no need to quarrel much less to kill, in the name of religion. How many these, what do you call jihads? How many Christians they used to go and kill off the Muslims, Muslims used to go and kill up the Christians. And the *Shaivas* used to suppress the *Shāktās*, or the *Vaishnavas*.

You know, that in South India, *Rāmānuja*? There was a king, and he was a *Shaiva*. And he wanted to kill *Rāmānuja* because He was just preaching what is called *Vaishnavism*, devotion to Lord *Vishnu*. And one of the disciples of *Rāmānuja*, he puts on the dress of *Rāmānuja*, goes to the king. And his eyes were put out. This is a historical fact. We think, don't think Hindus were so liberal. Of course they have not gone and killed off outright in huge numbers.

You read the *Gospel of Sri Rāmakrishna*? Practically every page – *Vaishnava*, *Shāktā*, *Shaivas* do not need to quarrel. Because we are all worshipping the same God. Why *Sri Rāmakrishna* was teaching the same thing again and again? Because it was a necessity of the time. Not only the differences of opinions between Hindus, but between Hindus and non Hindus too.

This is an age when we are living together. Not only that, *Sri Rāmakrishna* was a Prophet. And a Prophet comes, not for the sake of just a few people at a particular time. For several hundreds of years His teachings would be useful.

So nowadays you see marriages, inter, what is called, religious marriages are taking place. And then, inter-sectarian marriages. *Vaishnavas* marrying *Shāktās*; *Shāktās* marrying *Shaivas*; South-Indians marrying North-Indians etc etc etc. Now, if they have to really lead a good life without any conflict, then they will have this correct understanding about this.

So that is why *Sri Rāmakrishna*'s greatest contribution, and through *Sri Rāmakrishna*, Hinduism's greatest contribution these days is, सर्व धर्म समन्वय (*Sarva Dharma Samanvaya*)Harmony of all religions.

Sri Rāmakrishna is considered as an incarnation of God by millions of people today. So on one side, He is fulfilling the spiritual needs of the age by giving an incontrovertible assurance that God exists; And there is afterlife; And the goal of life is God, etc.

But on the other hand, He also has to be practical. The practicality is, today practically in every country, there are people living side by side, practicing or at least professing various religions. And if they do not have a right understanding, there will be quarrels. This is not very important for our discussion of *Bhakti Yogā* today. It's by the way.

But what is important is, we must have the correct concept of God ourselves, otherwise we will not progress in spiritual life. I also had mentioned that **this concept of God is not a choice that we have** - I will just pick and say, 'I will think of the, what is called, impersonal God'. So I will just say, 'He is beyond speech, beyond mind'. No! **It depends upon our state of consciousness!** I have mentioned it already.

Sri Rāmakrishna gives this beautiful idea in the form of an example. *Sri Rāma* asks *Hanuman*, 'What do you think about, how do you look upon Me'? You remember?

देहबुद्ध्या तु दासोऽहं जीवबुद्ध्या त्वदंशकः।
आत्मबुद्ध्या त्वमेवाहम् इति मे निश्चिता मतिः॥

dehabuddhyā tu dāso'haṁ jīvabuddhyā tvadamśakaḥ |
ātmabuddhyā tvamevāham iti me niścitā matiḥ ||

'When I feel I am the body, then I look upon You as my master and myself as Your servant. When I think I am the individual soul, that I am a part of You. But when I think I am the real Divine Self, there is absolutely no difference between You and Me'.

Now, the point is, we must establish a special kind of relationship with God. What kind of relationship can we establish with God? If we are having body

consciousness, you cannot say I am God. You cannot say that I am part of God. You can only say, I am your servant.

(15:18 mins)

Of course, the word servant may bring unhappy memories into your mind. See, it's not a, what is called, duty bound relationship. It is a loving relationship. Every parent is a servant of their children. If you do not know I'm just telling you. And every grandparent is 100 times a servant of the grandchildren. Yeah, from morning... They are made in heaven specially to serve the grandchildren only.

So these are the 3 concepts of God. And then *Swāmi Vivekānanda* very beginning itself -What is the nature of *Īshwara*, God? He raises this question.

Now, there is an interesting question which is not very important for us, but *Swāmiji* raises. So I will also briefly mention it before we pass to the next stage.

When a person realises God, becomes one with God, so what happens to him? In the sense that God is the Creator, He creates, He maintains, and He destroys. So does the individual soul who realises God, also gets the power of creation, maintenance and destruction? And the emphatic answer by everyone is - No! Excepting the powers of creation or destruction, he enjoys all the other facilities of God Himself.

Now this question is absolutely silly according to my point of view. Because when a person has become one with God, where is the question of his standing outside God and say, 'Like you I will also sit on the same throne, and I will also exercise the same powers'. Do you think the individual soul who has become one with God, he can ever remain separate from God?

His will has become totally one with the will of God. And therefore, he will not even think that I am separate from God, why is this God so partial? He is enjoying all the good things, and He is excluding me from that. No! There is no separate individuality at all. He becomes one. But anyway, this question has been raised by some stupid fellows.

So *Swāmiji* raises that question and answers, 'Excepting for the powers of creation, etc'. Why? because if one realised soul says 'I will create'. And if the other realised soul say, 'No I don't like it I will destroy it'. Then there is going to be conflict.

So in *Purānās* we have, you know, this *Vishvāmitra Srishti*, it is called *Trishanku swarga*, have you heard about it? Anyway, this is irrelevant to our subject. Then we pass on to the next subject.

What is the next subject?

What is the goal of *Bhakti Yogā*? It is also not necessary for us to go on thinking about it, because the goal of every *yogā*... What does *Yogā* mean? *Yogā* means union! **That which joins us with God that is called *yogā*.**

- If work joins us with God, or through work when we become one with God, that is called *Karma-yogā*
- Through devotion if we become one with God, that is called *Bhakti-yogā*.
- Through meditation if we become one with God, That is called *Rāja-yogā*.
- And through knowledge we become one with God, that is called *Jnāna-yogā*.

The end, aim, goal of all these *yogās* is only one. That is joining with God. Even to use, *Vedāntā* hesitates to use the word joining.

Joining means what? There are two separate things. And somehow you bring a super glue and join them together. No, no, that's not the idea. The idea is we have forgotten our Divinity. **Through the practice of *yogā*, we just remember that we are That Divine being.**

In the *Bhagavad Gitā*, if you have read the *Bhagavad Gitā*, and I'm sure you read. And more importantly to remember towards the end The Lord puts one question only to *Arjuna* -

कच्चिदेतच्छ्रुतं पार्थ त्वयैकाग्रेण चेतसा ।
kaccidetacchrutaṁ pārtha tvayaikāgreṇa cetasā ।

Have you heard to My teachings with one pointed attention, O *Arjuna*?

And immediately, *Arjuna* replies. What does he say?

नष्टो मोहः (*naṣṭo mohaḥ*) My delusion is destroyed.

स्मृतिर्लब्धा (*smṛtirlabdhā*) I regained back my memory.

(20:27 mins)

See, what is *Māyā*? *Māyā* means forgetting what we are. Suppose you forget, you become very angry. You know what happens when you become angry? You forget yourself. Then you do things which you are not supposed to do. If we are possessed by any type of passion, that makes us forget what we are. You know, suppose a young man, he is possessed by lust. What do you think he will do? He will go and rush and embrace the woman he is longing for. Is it not?

I'll give an example. When *Rāmānuja* was alive, there was one man who was besotted, as they call in English, completely obsessed by a public woman. One day, there was a celebration going on. The Lord was being taken in a chariot, so that everybody can see Him.

You know, in India, we have two types of God, the desktop and the portable.

Desktop God is called मूल विग्रह (*Moola Vighraha*) He is never removed from there. Once प्राण प्रतिष्ठा (*Prāna prathishthā*) is done, He will always be there. The portable one is portable. He is taken to various places.

The idea is that there are people, in those days especially, they were not allowed into the temple. Nowadays government made a rule that everybody should be allowed. So what Hindus call, you know, untouchables etc. And that includes even the Westerners, the foreigners that go nowadays. Excepting a few temples everybody is allowed inside.

Okay, so there will be people who will be unable to go even if they are allowed to go, like old people, the suffering people, like suppose somebody is paralyzed, how is he going to go to a temple? So for the convenience of these people God Himself goes out. That means the priests take Him. So then huge celebration is there. Everybody can come there and have a *darshan* of the Lord.

So, one day this celebration was going on. And this man who was besought with that woman. And that woman also came out, public woman, and she was looking at the Lord. And this fellow was holding an umbrella over her head, because it is very hot.

South-India has only 3 seasons. You only have got, how many seasons? Here only 2 seasons, winter season and non-winter season, and demarcation is very less. Whereas in South-India we have 3; hot, hotter, hottest.

Very hot! And this man was holding an umbrella. And everybody was looking at the Lord, but this fellow was only looking at the lotus face of that woman, according to him. So somebody noticed it, with disgust, and drew the attention of *Rāmānuja*.

But *Rāmānuja*, He was a great teacher. So, He went to the man and asked him, 'Hello, Why are you looking so intently at this woman?' The man was very frank, he said, 'Sir, I have never seen such beautiful eyes as this woman's. I cannot take my eyes off her eyes'. Then *Rāmānuja* touched him and said, 'Have you looked there'? And pointed to the Lord. And this man took one look at the Lord, and all his obsession was destroyed in a second.

So, from that time onwards, he became a disciple of *Rāmānujāchārya*. And served Him, because He was the, in fact the *Guru* who removed the ignorance from his eyes, destroyed the darkness of ignorance. I will come to that.

So the point is when a person is obsessed with passion, then he forgets himself. He doesn't know what is right, what is wrong. When a person is angry, there are people who kill in a fit of anger. There are also people who die in a fit of anger. Yes!

Because these emotions create the, what is called, corresponding changes in our heart beat, blood pressure, etc. So these, these passions, they are very dangerous in that way. What happens then? We forget who we really are!

So now, because of this ignorance, we think we are men or women or this or that. But when we practice *yogā*, all that, what happens is we just remember who we really are. That's all that happens.

(25:39 mins)

Holy Mother used to say, very simple way, you know, 'When a person realizes God, do you think he grows 2 horns on his head'? What happens? He knows what he is. And that becomes liberation. We are all divine, that's what the *Vedāntā* says. So **the aim of *Bhakti-yogā* is to realize the supreme *Brahman*.**

Now there are some people, some followers of devotion who claim, and these include a lot of people, not few people, millions of people. Who say we do not become one with God, but we go to someplace where God is. And we remain near God, and enjoy God. This is beautifully expressed in Bengali *Āmi chinni hote chai nā, chinni kehte chai*. I do not wish to become sugar, I want to enjoy sugar.

Now that was a sentiment expressed by one disciple to *Swāmi Brahmānanda*. And you know what *Swami Brahmānanda* said. He said that is the case of the person who never tasted sugar. But once he tastes sugar, then he would rush forward and say I would like to be sugar.

Like a moth helplessly drawn into the fire, into the light, so also once we enjoy that divine bliss, we would not want to be separated, even for one second.

Curiously, this was put so beautifully by *Sri Rāmakrishna*. You know, once *Swāmi Vivekānanda*, *Narendranāth* was there. And *Sri Rāmakrishna* asked, 'Supposing you're a fly. And there is a big vessel of nectar. How do you drink it'? He said, 'I will sit at the edge, stretch my neck, and then stretch my tongue, and then I will slowly sip'.

You know what *Sri Rāmakrishna* said, 'My child, it is not ordinary sweet, it is the nectar of immortality. If you fall into it you won't die. You become immortal yourself'.

This is the idea *Sri Rāmakrishna* especially emphasized, '*Advaita Jnāna ānchale bendhe jā icchā tai koro*'. Tie the knowledge of non duality in the corner of your dress and do whatever you like. *Sri Rāmakrishna* was teaching the same *Vedic* teachings. He is not talking about ordinary things.

So what about the dualists who say, we would not like to become God, but we would like to enjoy the nearness of God.

According to *Vaishnavās* there are 4 concepts of what is called *Mukti*. You know what are those?

- सालोक्य (*sālokya*)
- सारूप्य (*sārūpya*)
- सामीप्य (*sāmīpya*) and
- सायुज्य (*sāyujya*)

That is, depending upon the amount of devotion, after death, the man enters into the world of God. And if he has more devotion, he will go a little nearer to God. If he has still more devotion, his whole form appears like that of God. And if he has still more devotion, practically he will be sitting next to God. But he would never become one like non-dualists.

But *Sri Rāmakrishna* had come to tell us that this is only because we have not tasted the bliss of that Divine God being. Once we taste, we would be helplessly falling.

You know when a small nail it encounters a huge magnet, what do you think happens to the nail? It is helplessly drawn, becomes one with the, it itself becomes the magnet.

So the aim of *bhakti yoga* is to realize the Supreme *Brahman*.

Now we have defined 2 things, 3 things rather, to recollect what we had discussed so far from the very beginning. What were those?

- 1) 1st, **What is *Bhakti*? *Bhakti* is supreme love directed towards the Supreme God.**
- 2) 2nd, we had discussed the right concept of God.
- 3) 3rd, **What is the goal of *Bhakti-yogā*? To realize the Supreme *Brahman*, Supreme Reality. There is only one reality.**

(30:30 mins)

And now we have to come to practicalities. What are the practicalities? *Bhakti-yogā*, like any other *yogā*, is divided into 2 categories.

- 1) **One is called *Gauni* or preparatory, secondary.**
- 2) **And 2nd, it is the *Parā-Bhakti*, or the Supreme devotion.**

These are the 2 categories - preparatory devotion and final devotion.

The distinction is **nobody can enter into the second part of the devotion, without going through these preparatory stages.**

And that religion, which has the greatest number of rituals, mythologies, stories, legends and the *pūjās*, and devotional songs, etc etc. They produce the greatest number of spiritual personalities.

Swāmiji makes a beautiful remark. There are some sects of some religions, which abhor these rituals, and they are dry. Absolutely there is only a shell, all the inside is gone, there is nothing there for them. Their faces also are very dry. But those religions, which have rich mythological lore, rich amount of festivals, as in Bengali they say, you know, *bāro māshe tero parbo*. Means in 12 months, not 13, that 333 celebrations are there.

For Hindus everyday is a celebration. Everyday is an occasion for putting new dress, for preparing special dishes and eating. Whereas for others, you know, once in Christmas Day, once in Easter holiday, once in New Year's Day. Rest of the days are absolutely dry.

So *Bhakti* is classified as preparatory and supreme. It is called *Gauni* or preparatory. Or also called *Vaidhi*. *Vaidhi* means according to the injunctions of the Scriptures. And the supreme devotion is called *Parā*. It is *Parā*, when a person reaches this *Parā bhakti*, he doesn't need any of these rituals. because he becomes as it were possessed.

Now we are pushing ourselves towards God. That is called preparatory devotion. But after some time what happens? That we will be pulled helplessly towards God.

Sri Rāmakrishna used to say this so beautifully. What was He saying? Suppose a boat wants to go across the sea, or a river. In the beginning, man has to go on rowing and rowing and rowing. How long? Until the breeze starts to blow. Once the breeze starts to blow, all that he has to do is unfurl the sails, and then just guide, so that it reaches the right direction. That's all he has to do.

Or if you have to use modern language, that you know, old types of... Even now, self starting ignition, you start. Once the car starts, then all that you need to do is only to guide it properly. And this self starting is not that easy. It takes a long, long time.

And of these preparations, or preparatory devotion, the most important thing, do you know what it is? The necessity of a *Guru*. According to Hindus the *Guru* has been praised. He has been given, sometimes secondary place only to the *Ishtha Devtā*, one's own chosen deity. But according to some, even *Guru* takes 1st place, God takes the 2nd place.

It's a bit funny, you know, there was a disciple of *Chaitanya Māhāprabhu* in *Brindāvan*. And he was a strict taskmaster. So, and you know, we all Hindus believe every holy place has a presiding deity. And who is the presiding deity of *Brindāvan*?

Rādhārāṇī! So the disciple of this *Chaitanya Māhāprabhu* used to scold, and sometimes even beat also, I will come to that shortly. No, no, not beating, but description of the beating.

(35:19 mins)

So, the disciples used to suffer. And they were praying to *Rādhārāṇī*, ‘O Mā, please save us from our *Guru*. He is too ferocious’. And one day She took pity upon them, and appeared in a dream to this *Goswāmi* and said, ‘Baba, don't discipline My children so much’. And you know what he said? ‘You are the daughter of a cowherd. What do You know how a *Guru* should discipline the disciple, get out of this place’. This is an extreme example, meaning that in Hindu tradition, *Guru* has been given the highest place for various reasons.

And this is what *Swāmiji* discusses it here. First what *Swāmiji* has got to say about it. Then, what we have got to discuss about it, I will come to that point.

“THE NEED OF A GURU.

Every soul is destined to be perfect, and every being, in the end, will attain the state of perfection.”

This is the summary of *Vedāntā*. All of us, whether we will or we do not will, we have to become perfect. Why? Because we are potentially divine. There is no choice. The only choice is do we want to become perfect now, or you want to become the next life.

“Whatever we are now is the result of our acts and thoughts in the past; and whatever we shall be in the future will be the result of what we think and do now.”

Swāmiji, He is bringing 2 beautiful ideas together.

- 1) One, We are destined to be perfect, but we are not perfect now.
- 2) Why are we not perfect now? Because we are the result of what we did in the past.

This is where the *Guru* comes.

“But this, the shaping of our own destinies, does not preclude our receiving help from outside; nay, in the vast majority of cases such help is absolutely necessary.”

“Vast majority of cases” means what? 90%, 95%, 99%, 99.999%. No! What *Swāmiji* means really is, without the help of a *Guru*, we can never attain perfection. Impossible.

But there have been some cases, for example, 2 examples come to my mind.

- One is *Ramana Mahārishi*. He has never been seen to have received any help from outside. But Hindus are great philosophers, you know, they have answer for everything. So the answer in this case is in the past life they had a *Guru*, they received instructions, they are continuing. This is the first example.
- What is the second example that we get? *Sri Rāmakrishna* Himself. He never had any *Gurus*, any guidance from *Gurus*. In the beginning of His *Sādhana* through His own intense yearning, He had realized all that the *Gurus* later on had to teach Him. Then the *Gurus* came later on. I will discuss that point why *Gurus* then are necessary, when He had already attained everything He had to attain in the very beginning, without the help of any *Guru* at all. That's a point which will come later on.

But now, here it is - without a *Guru* it's impossible. We have got so many *Gurus*. From the very beginning we have got so many *Gurus*.

And do you know what is the latest *Guru*? I call that *Guru*, *Sadguru*. You heard about this *Sadguru*, the latest *guru*? Without whom we get lost in the maze of London streets, or any other streets. Sat nav! Sat - S A T, sat - *Satguru*. When I was in Houston. Somebody was supposed to come. In Iowa, somebody was to come. Very near the house they came, they couldn't find out the house, they returned back after one hour of driving. Next day they came. Then I told them, 'Why all this, you know, you need a *Sadguru*, all that you need is buy for \$199. You get a *Sadguru*. And you will never miss your way again'.

(40:11 mins)

So, without *Guru* it's impossible. We have so many *Gurus*. And our *Gurus* - our first *Guru* is our mother, then our father, then our family, then our school teachers, then our neighbors. Everything is teaching us something.

Once you know some skeptical modern person asked a question to *Swāmi Brahmananda*, 'Is it necessary to have a *guru*'? In a funny way He told, you know, 'Even if you want to become an expert pickpocket you need a *Guru*. And in the arduous task of reaching *Brahman*, you think that you do not need the *Guru*'?

Without *Guru* it's impossible. You see, common sense also tells us something. Do you know what it is? You see you need not go to any college. There are so many ways of passing your examinations. You can study at home. But how easy it would be if you go to a college, if somebody who knows the subject is teaching you. So it's... supposing you can reach any place by what is called trial and error methods, but if you ask somebody who knows, 'How do I go to that place', that task becomes much easier, isn't it? Anything like that, even for cooking also, a *Guru* is necessary. Television *Gurus* are there nowadays. *Yogā Guru*, television *Rāmdev*, Saint *Rāmdev* is

now *Yogā Guru*, *Āstha* channel. How many Hindus you know they learn *Yogā* by seeing the television. These are all *Gurus*.

Avadhuta, How many *Gurus* he had? 24 *Gurus* he had. But here what I mean by *Guru* is one who has given in his kindly, graciously, initiated us into a *mantra*. That is a *Guru*.

So *Swāmiji* is telling that “in the vast majority of cases such help is absolutely necessary.” “This quickening impulse cannot be derived from books.”

You may say, ‘O, after all you know, if I meet *Sri Rāmakrishna* what is He going to tell me? Whatever He told in the *Gospel of Sri Rāmakrishna*, I will buy a *Gospel of Rāmakrishna* and go on reading it’. No sir!

Because when you are in the presence of a person... Take this example. See I'm giving a talk, and you're sitting here and listening. You see, you can buy a tape from here and you can listen to it. Especially when you are very busy driving a car, or cooking something. That is the best time for you to listen to my talk. Or the other important time to listen to my talk, when you are having sleeping problems. That's what most people do, you know, ‘While driving I listen to your talks *Swāmiji*’. Thank God you don't blame me if you meet an accident.

That's not... There is a difference. Your hearing here, now, in the presence – it makes a difference. How much difference does it make? You can read the lectures of *Swāmi Vivekānanda*, but if you sit in front of Him and listen to Him personally, it just changes lives. So, that impulse will not come from books.

“The person from whose soul such impulse comes is called the *Guru* — the teacher; and the person to whose soul the impulse is conveyed is called the *Shishya* — the student. To convey such an impulse to any soul, in the first place, the soul from which it proceeds must possess the power of transmitting it, as it were, to another; and in the second place, the soul to which it is transmitted must be fit to receive it.”

This is a very important statement *Swāmiji* makes. There are, there can be many realised souls. But every realised soul is not going to be a *Guru*. *Sri Rāmakrishna* uses a special word – authorisation. Have you been authorised? Every realised soul is not authorized by God. In the sense that unless God Himself takes possession of that soul, for a specific purpose, that particular enlightened soul will not be of much effect. He will not be effective. Because he realised the goal, he is free, but he cannot help other people. To help other people a special power is needed.
(45:05 mins)

That's why *Swāmi Vivekānanda*, you know, what power He had! Take this example *Swāmi Vivekānanda* and *Swāmi Abhedānanda*. Both were the disciples of *Sri*

Rāmakrishna. Both we consider as realized souls. But what a difference in the power between *Swāmi Vivekānanda* and *Swāmi Abhedānanda*.

So the soul from which this power proceeds must possess the power of transmitting it. Power is there, but the transmitting capacity must be there. That comes only from God.

There is a funny story, you know? There was a king, and he had a *Brāhmin* Minister. And the *Brāhmin* minister, he used to say that he was a *Brāhmin*, so he knows the *Gāyatri mantra*. He used to say that one must initiate people into *Gāyatri mantra*. Only when a person receives from an authorized person, the *Gāyatri mantra* becomes really effective. Not by taking it or lifting it from a book or from the internet.

So the king did not believe him. So one day, the Minister decided to teach a lesson to this dull King. Usually kings are very dull, everywhere! So one day, the Minister did not come, he was delaying coming to the palace. So the king himself went there and asked his servants, 'Where is the minister?' 'O sir, he is engaged in repeating the *Gāyatri mantra*'. He said, 'What *Gāyatri mantra*? What is there to repeat the *Gāyatri mantra*? Anybody can repeat. I can also repeat it'.

Just then the minister came out and said, 'Sir, you are not authorized to repeat it. You know it, you may know it, but you are not authorized'. The king poofed 'What is authorisation? All these priests go on putting so many things, authorization this ization, that ization. No nonsense, anybody can teach it to anybody else'.

The minister wanted to teach him a good lesson. The king came with his bodyguards. So the minister put an angry face, and looked at the guards and said, 'Arrest this king'! Of course, are they going to arrest the king? The bodyguards of the king? And the king didn't understand. He was stupid fellow, you see. So he became very angry at the words of the minister. He turned to his guards and said, 'Arrest this fellow'! And immediately they jumped up and arrested him.

Then the minister laughed and said, 'See, you never believed in authorization. See I uttered the same words, nothing happened. But the moment you uttered those words, immediately they took effect. Why? Because you are the authorized person. In a similar way, O King, unless somebody is authorised he cannot transmit *Gāyatri mantra*'.

So, both the *Guru* and the disciple, the teacher and the student must – one must be having the power of transmitting and the other must also have the power of receiving it. Otherwise even if God Himself comes to us, nothing is going to happen.

Many of us wish, you know, that only if we had been in the time of *Sri Rāmakrishna*. And in brackets I put, how many slaps we would have received? Then do you think we would be somebody very great people, just because we see *Sri Rāmakrishna*? Were there not people who lived with *Sri Rāmakrishna*? Were there not priests, were there not other people? How many *Brāhmo* devotees have seen *Sri Rāmakrishna*? What happened to them? We don't see that much happened to them. Why? Because the receiving power was not there.

So, "There are, however, certain great dangers in the way. There is, for instance, the danger to the receiving soul of its mistaking momentary emotions for real religious yearning. We may study that in ourselves. Many a time in our lives, somebody dies whom we loved; we receive a blow; we feel that the world is slipping between our fingers, that we want something surer and higher, and that we must become religious. In a few days that wave of feeling has passed away, and we are left stranded just where we were before."

(50:03 mins)

So *Swāmiji* is telling that we should never mistake certain emotional impulses for true religious yearning.

I told you one story, you know, I will repeat it. There was, you know, *Sri Rāmakrishna* used to, when He was practicing in the beginning, and He was yearning for the vision of the Mother. At the end of the day, He used to roll on the ground, weeping, 'O Mother, another day passed away, and yet it went away in vain. I did not see you, I did not have your vision'. So, one day *Sri Rāmakrishna* was sitting in the shrine, and He saw the sword in the hands of Divine Mother. And He said, 'I will put an end to my life, if I do not have the vision of Mother'. And at that moment, He had the vision of the Mother, otherwise He would have committed suicide.

Now this was read, we all read that incident, and this was read by a *Brahmachāri* in America, a white *Brahmachāri*. And one day he felt terrible, 'If I don't see *Sri Rāmakrishna*, I will give up my life'. So he went to the top of a building, 2 or 3 storied building, and said 'O *Rāmakrishna*, if you don't appear before me I'm going to jump down'. And *Sri Rāmakrishna* did not appear, so he jumped down, broke some bones, and afterwards he had to be hospitalized.

Why? Why because, you see, he was emotionally overcome, but he had not prepared himself for the vision. We think vision is seeing, like any other person. Even seeing things also is not that easy.

Suppose you see a snake, what would be your condition? Supposing a snake comes there, moving there, do you think you're going to listen to my talk? Even seeing a

snake, not to speak of a snake, some people I heard, even a cockroach is there, or a mouse is there, they will become jittery.

Seeing as is – if we see something which has no danger then we are all right. But if we see something very dangerous, a terrorist if you see, you know what happens? You may have a heart attack also.

If this is the effect of seeing even ordinary things, what do you think is the effect of seeing God? Is it some kind of object? Seeing, or having the vision of God means, even a higher vision, means that our nervous system can become shattered. If you hear some good news, can you meditate? Whether good news or bad news?

You know there was a fellow called Bill in America, an old man. And he used to buy lottery ticket. And of course, many days passed, and he did not have even \$1 also he didn't win. So he became old, he had heart problems, so he was hospitalized. He was slowly recovering. But before going to hospital he bought another lottery ticket. And this time the news came that he won \$1 million. Now how to convey that news to this fellow, because already he is having heart problems. So they approached his doctor and said, 'You convey the message to him'. So the doctor went, sat on the bed, 'Bill, how are we today?' 'O doctor, thanks to you I'm feeling great'. 'O wonderful'! So the doctor went on talking this and that, and said 'Bill supposing you get the news, you win, you have won \$1 million in lottery. What will you do? He said, 'No, no'.. the old man, he never had any hope. He simply said 'Doctor if it is true, I will give you half of that'. Hearing which the doctor fell unconscious.

So if we hear even news, good or bad, then you see, our minds will be so much restless, becomes excited, or becomes benumbed, and we cannot control it. If we have a higher vision of God, do you think it is possible to control it?

Our whole personality has to change, our nervous system has to become purified, refined. Without this refining... And refining means its a terrible austerity, *Tapasyā*, we call it.

(54:58 mins)

You know in this, what is called, coffee-tasters, you know, they are paid very highly? When a new blend of coffee mixture is given, then these coffee-tasters will taste and say whether it is worthy of being marketed or not. Or wine-tasters, wine-tasters never drink wine. Coffee-tasters never drink coffee. Tea-tasters never drink tea. Is it a fact or not?

So you see, it is only abstaining from drinking those things that their tongues become so refined... if you go on drinking tea everyday what happens? You know what happens?

There was in a village, one fellow was there. And he had diabetes, he was diagnosed as a diabetic patient. So, on a festival occasion his daughter-in-law was making some sweets. So this fellow, in order to pass time, he was sitting there in the kitchen and chit-chatting.

So the daughter-in-law was preparing; she prepared this, and wanted – how it is coming? So she gave a little bit to him. And said, ‘Father-in-law you taste it and tell me how is it?’ He tasted it and said, ‘It is more or less okay, but a little more jaggery is to be added’. So she added a little more jaggery, prepared it, gave it. ‘Now it is better than what you gave me last time. You add a little more jaggery.’ ‘Add a little more jaggery’. ‘Add a little more jaggery’.

And this lady got disgusted. She said, ‘Is there something wrong with my father-in-law?’ So she gave me a piece of jaggery for him to taste. He was also half blind. So he ate a little and said, ‘It is almost alright, but add a little more jaggery to it’.

You know when we are accustomed, addicted to these kinds of things we lose all sense of proportion. Yeah, whether it is hot chilies or sweets, or whatever it is.

So, how much discipline we need to refine our tastes, whether it is in music or in poetry or in art or in anything. If a scientist wants to discover some deeper truth, then he has to refine his instrument.

That’s what *Swāmiji* is telling that the disciple must undergo preparatory stages. So what are the qualifications the teacher must have; and what are the qualifications the student must have, in order for the lesson, or the power. Because ***Guru and Shishya, teacher and student relationship is not a verbal relationship. Guru, the teacher tells something, and the student listens to something – it is actual process of transmitting something very concrete.*** Even if the, sometimes the student doesn't know, sometimes even the teacher doesn't know. But the transmission nevertheless takes place. That is what makes the relationship between the *Guru* and the *Shishya*, the teacher and the student.

ॐ शान्ति शान्ति शान्ति:

Om Shānti Shānti Shānti

(58:31 mins)