

BHAKTI YOGA - PART 08

SWĀMI DAYATMANANDA

Class begins with the chanting of the following Shanti mantra:

ॐ सह नावतु ।
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 ||

Continuing the discussion on Bhakti Yoga

We have been discussing Bhakti Yoga. The definition given by Swami Vivekananda quoting one of the greatest devotees India had produced, Prahlada. That tremendous attachment which people have towards the worldly objects, may I have the same type of attachment but with you. But nothing's changed here excepting the direction. So, how to attain that kind of attachment? Now you see, people like us think we are very much attached to the world. You know what they say about monkeys? They love their young ones very much. When a danger threatens, the mother monkey even does not hesitate to throw it's young one into fire and walk over it. You need not take it literally, try to understand. That is what most of us do. We are prepared to sacrifice anything, anybody that serves our own purposes. Everyday, how many divorces are going on; how much the partners have held each other in the beginning, they forget all those things. For a momentary unhappiness / grief, we become so ungrateful. It is not

that easy to become really attached to the world. Attachment requires a tremendous amount of Sadhana. There is a beautiful story, it might be true – there was a great poet in India, Jayadeva. We recite his hymns, Dashavatara Stotra, etc. He was one of the greatest devotees and his wife Padmavati was one of the chastest women. This Padmavati used to be in the palace along with the queen. Sometimes they used to have conversations. And during one of those chattings, a topic of chastity came and they had discussions, a heated argument on who is a chaste woman. Padmavathy, the wife of Jayadeva said she is a chaste woman. If she hears that her husband is dead, immediately she will fall dead. How many women might break a whiskey bottle for riddance? So the queen could not win in argument, she wanted to test so, she so arranged when the King had gone on hunt. And the queen arranged so that Jayadeva also went. While he went away, somehow she conveyed the news to Padmavathy, Jayadeva's wife, that her husband was dead in an accident in the forest while hunting, just to test her. They were talking and according to pre-arrangement, a messenger came, conveyed the news. As soon as Padmavathy heard the news, instantaneously she fell down dead. It is true some of the chaste men or women may not muse the long-term of marriage. One partner dies, the other partner likely dies. Don't you hear such cases? They develop such attachment. But even that is a selfish attachment. Chastity is a spiritual quality. There are many so-called chaste men and chaste women among you. But that does not mean many of you are spiritual. Why? Because a chaste woman is not merely following a physical faithfulness to the husband. It involves a spiritual outlook. Chaste woman is one who looks upon her husband as God. This has some connection with what we are discussing. So, even to be attached to a partner or to material things or for name and fame, a tremendous amount of spiritual practice is needed. We have a little bit of attachment, not worth being called attachment at all. An old couple was there, thirty years of marriage, one day they were sitting in the parlor. The husband shouted, "Mary, I love you very much", she said, "What?". He went a little bit nearer and again shouted, "I love you very much", she said, "What?!" He went a little bit nearer and shouted, "I love you very much" then she said, "It's alright. I too don't love you". There are examples and I bring Sri Ramakrishna's teaching, how to attain God. He has given a beautiful analogy bringing this topic. He said, "Three types of attachments, if one can develop and direct all of them towards God, then one will realize God: the love a chaste wife has, the love a mother has for her only child, and the love a miser has for worldly objects". There are examples of such loves. When anything happens to the husband, child, or to the property, the man would rather die rather than live, tremendous attachment! One example is Tulasidasa loved his wife. Another example would be Ratnakara (Valmiki), how much he was attached to his wife. There was in South India, a great singer poet / saint, Purandaradasa. He was so much attached to money, he was ready to kill his wife or allow his wife to be killed rather than lose his money. Tremendous attachment. The

mind is ready and no worldly object can contain that love. That is why it is said, even if you want to love anything worldly, go ahead, don't stop anywhere, go on loving, a time will come when the object self destructs itself, not in the physical sense, unable to contain the intensity of love. Necessarily turn the direction towards God. Start loving something so intensely and no worldly object can ever stand that intensity. Necessarily this force will have to be turned towards God. Symbolically, that is what Hindu mythology illustrates. One example, Ravana, he went and prayed to God, "Give me tremendous strength!". And tremendous strength was given to him. Who can stand him? Because God's power was working in him. So, he found all these human beings, not to speak of animals, unworthy of being fought over. So, he turned his attention to God. How to make God fight? Kidnap his wife. Hiranyakashipu, Prahlada's father, he also obtained a boon from Brahma, nobody in these three worlds will ever be able to conquer him. So arrogant, so proud, he was challenging. People came and fought with him. Immediately they were destroyed. After that nobody dared. Now, muscles started itching, so much of strength is there, what to do? Who is there to fight? God alone is there, worthy of being fought against. So, he started searching where is that God whom I can fight? That led him to God and he became liberated. You should not take Hindu mythological stories literally, concretely. They are all symbolical - everyone of those stories has something behind.

Coming back to our subject, we think we love our worldly objects. A little bit, yes but no more than that. We are frightened for our own puny lives - that is not going to help us. So, here also, a lesson we have to learn is, how do we develop attachment towards worldly objects? It looks as though it is very easy. You have sweets, you go on and eat sweets. If you go on eating so many sweets, you become disgusted with it. Try to love another human being. Then you see very soon, you find a lot of defects. It is not easy. So, how to love? You must become blind. Love is blind - Wonderful analogy. Blind means 'do not see anything unworthy, insignificant'. See only best. Sort of how a lover does - his or her beloved is the very best. It is an idea. It is an ideal to be attained just as a Guru is an ideal (to which point I will come soon). So, go on seeing, don't see the defects, see only the positive things. Where do we see it? In the imagination. Everything is in the imagination. That is what meditation is, develop the power of imagination but selective type of imagination. Only see the very great. One example I will give you, do we need to exercise selective imagination? Yes. You can understand worldly objects; no worldly thing is perfect. Therefore we need to have selective imagination to continually love.

What about God? God is a paragon of perfection. That is what we utter through our mouth; let some tragedy happen in the family, see what happens? What is this fellow God doing? He has no work. He should have been protecting my family. Why do we have these accidents, tragedies, unhappiness? Let others have it but not me. In the

Second World War, a generalist went to find out whether people still believed in God because London and other cities were being bombed. So, the generalist went to a woman who was living alone, a widow, and asked, "Do you still believe in God?" "I pray to Him everyday" "Then what is the result of your prayer?" "All the bombs fall only in the neighbor's houses". You see, her concept of God is, if she prays to God, it should not fall on her own house, let it fall on neighbor or anybody's house. So, this is our idea of God - if things are going on well, then we think God is there. Otherwise, no. But that is not true. We should have a selective type of imagination about God. What does it mean? It simply means, whatever happens God still loves us and whatever happens, it is for our own good and in fact, it is the only way He can bestow His grace upon us. Whatever happens is absolutely good, right and the best. If we can have this kind of selective imagination, then only we can really love God or any object. Otherwise, millions of people today have lost faith in God. One of the reasons is so many wars, so much bloodshed, so much suffering and even natural disasters like Tsunami, etc. and these make people seriously doubt God. In the past, they did not have that kind of problem. This History of religion is very closely allied to human history. In the Middle ages, before the period of Renaissance, the usage of reason means doubting, was not very much prevalent. It might have been there inside, at least they did not make it out as a physical expression. Freedom was not there, society did not allow it, and because of long tradition, they were in a way, their brain was completely hypnotized / washed. That is why doubts did not arise. The second important reason why doubts did not come was because this life was so miserable under the operation of landlords and fights. That they thought afterlife was far superior in their imagination than living. So, if a natural disaster occurs, it is best because immediately we go to heaven, go on enjoying there. Pious hope. That is what Churches have preached, that is what other religions so far have preached. But after the period of renaissance, Science began to rise. Science means directly related to reason. The first thing reason does is doubt. Doubt and we are all with that type of mind. That is what Swami Vivekananda (Narendranath), when he first met Sri Ramakrishna asked, "Have you seen God?" That was a very irrational type of question. Never put that question to anybody. Do you know why? Supposing you put this question to me, I say yes. How do you know? Is there any way you can prove to yourself that I have seen God? There are many fellows, on the Internet, Self-realized Souls 1008 so and so. Send 50 pounds and I will send initiation. How do you know a person has seen God? Suppose a person has really seen God and says 'No I haven't seen God'. How do you know? You have no way to prove or disprove. So, never ask that question. Reason makes us doubt things. Reason has its field, its realm. What is that realm? In this world, supposing you come to Vedanta Society and you ask somebody the way, he says 'Yes, yes I know. I will give you the directions'. Then, you find him moving in an intoxicated manner Even if he gives you direction, you will doubt very

much, that is absolutely correct. It should be like that. You find the person sober and knowledgeable, trust-worthy, then you have reasonableness, that is what he says not otherwise. But in the field of religion, no way you can prove or disprove.

So, coming back, even to attain that tremendous attachment to the worldly objects, we need a selective type of imagination. If so, it is exactly the same psychological process that is applied to God. We do not know anything about God. But we want to love God. How to attain that love for God. So, Swami Vivekananda having defined what is devotion, it is supreme attachment towards the Supreme Reality. Both. You have to understand it. It is Supreme devotion, on our part hundred percent of what we are capable of. And the object also must be Supreme Reality because what else is there besides Supreme Reality? Supreme unreality. Unreality is unreality, lost. So, your love will be wasted. Suppose you love somebody, and the person leaves you and goes away. This happened, you know - not exactly the same thing, here in England, there was a great famous minister, he served his king and the result was that for some reason, became enemical to him and ordered his head to be chopped off. Before his head was chopped off, he said "Lord! If only I had served God with as much devotion as I served you, I would have been better off". The result of serving king, earthly object, is, not only didn't gain anything, he was only losing his life. These are wonderful examples.

So, we need a selective type of imagination. That is where the relationship between Guru and Disciple comes in. In Hindu / Buddhist / Jain tradition, selective catholic traditions like Russian orthodox church, the place given to spiritual teacher, Guru, is only next to God. Many people, you see, Swamis when we go out, devotees bowing down to us and touching our feet, some of them who are not that devoted will feel odd - what! One human being touching the feet of another human being? He is also like us! And I know this Swami very well, he enjoys ice cream like us. What is his greatness? I heard people here commenting, they are afraid to do that. The point is why are devotees touching the feet? Are they touching the feet of another human being? Or is there something in their minds with which they are doing this action? The Swamis do not get anything excepting stretching their feet and wasting their time. Devotees, if they do it with the right attitude, get the benefit. So, here the Swami or even God is not benefitted. So this is a delusion, we have to remove from our minds. If you go to the Shrine room, bow down to Sri Ramakrishna, he does not get any benefit, that is why he goes into Samadhi. Who gets the benefit? We get the benefit. What benefit do we get? Even physically, if we do it, there are fifty Swamis and we bow down fifty times, we can see how it helps your digestion. Mentally, spiritually, it helps us because we slowly develop the right attitude of reverence. What is spirituality? Developing reverence for everything. Here is a clod of dust; here is a piece of does-not-matter-what-it-is. Everything in the universe has its own rightful place,

exactly its scheme. Nowadays, it is called holistic attitude, enlightenment. Everything is interconnected; everything is One. The most wonderful discovery made in the entire time is that the whole universe, the whole creation is one but with this caveat: it is made up of an infinite number of parts. But all these parts put together, something extra comes in, which is not there in every part. You see, here is a lot of pieces of alarm clock. Each part has its own value; it's valueless unless it comes but when it comes together, it is not merely the sum of all the parts, it is something else, a beautiful meaning comes. That is called a holistic attitude. By reverencing everything, slowly comes our ability to see things in a new light, in a better light, in a more beautiful light, in a spiritual light. And thereby, our consciousness is revealed, the world remains the same.

Swami Vivekananda says God grows along with the growth of man. When I was young, it took me sometime to understand what this statement really meant. How can God grow? Is He a human being or an animal or a plant? Slowly, from seed state he grows? What he meant was, our understanding grows along with our own growth. As long as we remain on a gross level, we understand God to be gross. As long as we understand him to be a moral being, only when we become moral, we understand God as the source of all morality. And incidentally, what is the source of all morality? Ideals of morality and the practice of morality should not be confused. Practice of morality like you help somebody, hold the truth, etc. this is practice. Ideal of morality is to consider there is no other. All that exists is only Me. For example, unselfishness. We do not say we are unselfish towards ourselves. Do we? Naturally, we are unselfish towards ourselves. We do everything for our own selves. We extend the same to whoever, human being, whatever it is. Then, we call it unselfishness. The idea of morality is that there should not be any distinction between me and others. This is what Martin Buber had advocated. Human beings usually have an I-It relationship. No - wrong thing to do. I-Thou relationship means equal relationship. I and Thou are two words but really, I am Thou; Thou is I. That is the idea of morality. Without some kind of spiritual understanding, we can understand otherwise it is not possible. We can do moral practice. So, Hinduism has divided morality into two types: worldly morality and spiritual morality. The word used for morality in Sanskrit is Dharma. Dharma has many meanings. One meaning is moral life, unselfish behavior. The other word of Dharma in the meaning of religion, Hindu dharma; Hindu religion. Here it is not merely referring to moral practice, it is referring to a spiritual state. Every religion has only one thing to do. It has something to do only with spirituality. Religion has nothing to do with anything else. Then why does religion deal with morality? Necessary precondition to take one to the spiritual path. One can be moral to some extent without being spiritual; one can never be spiritual without being moral. So, the second part of this morality is directed towards spirituality. What is spirituality? To see God everywhere. Is it not? What does it mean to see God everywhere? To see

everything as One, not as many. So, morality helps us in the beginning. Because slowly our mind becomes purified. But it stops there, then what happens? What is the result? According to Hinduism, people attain virtue, they acquire virtue. What is the meaning of righteousness? People do virtuous deeds, kind of morality is practiced. But the result is, they will be enjoying this world very much or they may go to heavenly worlds. But even heaven or this world, everything is considered as worldliness only, opposed to spirituality. Somebody may be there in the Himalayas, completely out of touch with any society; he will be just meditating, doing Japa, praying, spiritual practices. You may ask where is his morality? Because morality can be practiced only in society. Where is the question of truthfulness or unselfishness when you are the only person there? But still there is a spiritual morality. What is spiritual morality? He slowly acquires that vision of unity and oneness. The meaning of seeing God - you do not see a human being with four hands. I see that Hindus do not consider anybody with two hands as God. At least God must have four hands. Somebody asked an ant, "Do you believe in God?" "Of course, certainly" "And do you think God is a huge ant?" "Of course, that is God. But that is not the only thing. Huge sting." [laughter] That is what human beings also think. If an ant has got a small sting, it's God will be having a huge sting. If we have got two hands, God must have at least four if not more. If we have two eyes, God must have at least three eyes if not more. That is why Lord Shiva has got the third eye. We can only multiply whatever we know to be. We cannot escape it. So, what is this person doing sitting there? He is practicing spiritual morality, acquiring slowly the vision. Then he also will be able to come down and then see, not as how we see the world, but in a lofty way, spiritual way. That is why very often, these saints are forced to come to the society to complete their spiritual practice. It is very easy to go there, very peaceful in a cave, where there is nobody to disturb. Live in a place where there are selfish people, there are cruel people, there are wicked people, and then exhibit our spirituality, it is very difficult unless one has the vision. So, morality is nothing but seeing oneness in everything. Limitations, the vision has to start from within. Change the duality. Overcome the multiplicity. See the oneness. Go to the very root. See where we are completely equal. How to get rid of this differentiation and how to see that oneness, it is not possible that one morning we read some great spiritual book and we say, "Now, I am going to see everything as God". That is why most of us are disappointed when we go and sit for meditation. You are very happy; and when someone criticizes you, your blood pressure rises. Instead of spiritual pressure, blood pressure only will rise. So, it is very necessary to do preliminary things. We must start somewhere. Spiritual means to be able to see divinity somewhere in small things. You cannot take up anything and say, "Here is the lady's bag. I will start seeing God!" All pickpockets see only God there [laughter] That is why Hinduism has developed this system suited for various types of people depending upon their spiritual progress. This is where idolatry comes. What is

idolatry? Worshiping an idol. Every Hindu practically has a shrine, has some pictures, or idols, it could even be symolical idols (small stones: there are two types of such stones. One is called Shiva linga; the other is representative of Vishnu called Saligrama). And with what reverence a Hindu looks upon them! Or icons or even trees. Vaishnavas respect the small Tulasi (Basil) plant so much. And the followers of Shiva respect Bel tree. So certain types of flowers, plants, trees like Ashwattha, these are representative. It is not that they are divine, in fact everything is divine only, everything is God only but we do not have the vision. We are able to develop that, we must start somewhere. So, all these idols are created, an infinite number of idols, we are all idolaters only in fact. There are so many ignorant types of people who think "Oh! We are not idolaters! We are very enlightened people" One such person went to Ramana Maharishi and said, "Could you not teach people that they should not worship idols?" He laughed and said, "Show me one man who is not an idolater." What do you do from morning till evening? Ceremoniously wake yourself up, your alarm clock will be having Rock 'n' roll music; ceremoniously you drink bed coffee, tea; ceremoniously you bathe, nowadays visit the bathroom of anybody, hundreds of shampoos and creams and powder.. My God! There also, towels – His, Hers. What is it? And then ceremoniously eat to go to a Mark & Spencer. How all the shelves are filled with thousands of varieties of food materials !! Ceremoniously, you select them. For what purpose? Ceremoniously to feed ourselves. From morning till evening, what are we doing? Worship this idol called body. And these are the people who want to give advice to others not to be an idolater. Mostly, Muslims, how many beautiful images they destroyed, even now they would do it if there is an opportunity, they do not understand how much this helped people to become spiritual. Nobody is bowing down to a stone, to a tree, everybody is trying only. This is just a kind of peg for our devotion to develop "O Lord! Please help me so that the mind can be focussed, it can be concentrated". Swami Vivekananda starts his Bhakti Yoga, How to develop devotion. He divided devotion into two parts. One is the preliminary devotion, another is the mature devotion. One is the Vaidhi Bhakti and Raga bhakti. Necessarily we have to start with formal religion. Formality means you worship God, you go on pilgrimages, you go fasting, you do Japa, pray Guru, etc. Of all these, having a Guru is one of the most effective. Catholic religion – Russian orthodox, those of you who have read "Way of a pilgrim" remember how this man has sought a starrett, a Guru. This Guru is an ideal. As I mentioned earlier, a Guru is an ideal. I also have to tell you something – our life in this world is only a journey. Why do we develop so much love for husband, wife, children, friends? They are all idols for us so that we slowly develop the capacity to love. Attachment is nothing but misdirected love. Everybody is an ideal. Everybody is an idol – wife, husband, etc. So, we go on developing our muscles, devotional muscles, spiritual muscles, and develop our love slowly. The same principle applies to the Guru also. Who is the Guru? Guru is an ideal. A real Guru is Satchidananda. God only is the

real Guru. Knowledge is the real Guru. Realization is the real Guru. Everything else is kind of a help for us. Somebody is bowing down to a Guru, then he is not bowing to a human being, he is not bowing down to an object, he is not bowing down to a material thing. He is only exercising his spiritual muscles so that he can develop that tremendous love. What is it? Here is a Guru, we should be having selective imagination about the Guru, as I mentioned earlier. What is the selective imagination? Whatever is my Guru, even if he is a lecherous fellow, even if he is the most unworthy fellow, in Bengali there is a saying, even if my Guru goes to a toddy shop, he is for me, Satchidananda, Brahmananda. What is the idea here? The idea is not what the Guru is. The idea is how do I react towards the Guru? And why cannot we do the same thing towards the family members? That was the ideal. Chaste husband always considers his wife, and a chaste wife always considers her husband as God himself. This is called selective imagination. Does he not know that she likes to have more ice cream? Does she not know that he likes to sleep in his bed without doing anything? A couple was there, both of them were working in the office and the husband used to come and lord it over. One day he came, sat down in the easy chair, he expected his wife to unlace his boots, bring coffee, etc. and she also just came in, he said, "Prepare coffee" She said, "No, you prepare your own coffee". "No no, it is the wife's duty to do it" "No, it is man's duty, husband's duty actually" All over the Bible, it is written, "Man's duty is to prepare for the tea and coffee?" Can you show me? In many pages, he brews, he brews [as in Hebrews] [Laughter] So this kind of wife knows very well, all the defects, that is not the point. The point is, in spite of all those defects, how to consider him as the Supreme Divinity, manifestation? If the wife can do it, she does not need any other Guru. Moral of the story we have discussed many times, the chaste wife, the virtuous wife who taught a lesson to an ascetic by just serving parents or husband, people in the society, with a spiritual outlook, any person can become spiritual. That is what Sri Ramakrishna had really taught: the husband should look upon wife as part of Divine Mother and the wife also looks upon the husband as a part of the Divine Being. But you know, there is a psychological fact, familiarity breeds... You go and stay with somebody, and immediately you start, "Oh! I know all about this person" From outside, I thought he is such a great man. Now I know who he or she is. But that is not the point. The point is human beings will have human frailties. And even great people exhibit human traits. For example, Sri Ramakrishna loved ice cream. Swami Vivekananda loved ice cream. In fact, he died of Diabetes, the result of eating too much ice cream, just joking. He voluntarily gave up his body, but he became very fat, when he was giving an inspired talk, and by that time he ate a lot of ice cream. At the end of the lecture, some lady got up in America, "Swami! Have you realized God?" Swami smiled broadly and said, "Do I look like that?" We judge people from outside. Some great people assume these human frailties either voluntarily or just as a habit, we are incapable of seeing at what level their mind is living. Swami Brahmananda used to eat

Gopa ghappa, Moghalai, etc. If anybody sees, "Swami Brahmananda, when he was eating all those things, he is worse than me. Even I do not eat so much." So, selective type of imagination. That is where Guru plays a role. What is it? You select a Guru, but before selecting the Guru, you exercise all your intellect, but we do not do that. We do not do in many things, we do not do in marriage. Nowadays, marriages are breaking because we do not select the partners. We are emotional people, I feel good with you. But emotions are always unstable, it is like soda bottle foam. How long will it last? Real life starts only after the show is over. Films, the hero and heroin fall in love, then the villain comes, kidnaps and bangs the hero and all that. And after a lot of fight and all those things, the hero beats the villain black and blue, united with the beloved. Ever after, we do not show what happens. Real life starts only after that. That is because we are the living examples of what happens after. So, we need to select a Guru for whom we think we have the love and reverence. It needs tremendous sincerity, spiritual quality. Many of you have studied the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Ramakrishna Mission literature. Ultimately, if you have to squeeze the essence, there are two important Sri Ramakrishna's teachings: First is Realizing God is the only goal of life. And on the practical level he said, there are many ways, many pathways, it can take us to God, every pathway is called a Religion. All religions are true, valid. How? Many of us read these things, we might come to some wrong conclusion. We are free, we can do whatever we like, take any religious path, that our fancy takes us. There are five important points from Sri Ramakrishna's that we must always keep in mind. What are those? One religion. Only one religion. Select whatever religion you want. One Scripture, there are thousands of scriptures, modern and ancient, many thousands will come in future, there is no end. Take one scripture which would be your guide for your whole life. Then, one Guru. No question of changing the Guru and if anybody thinks "Oh! That Guru was useful for ten years. Now, a new model is required." No. Because it is an ideal. If you do that, you will become a spiritually prostitute. One Guru one mantra. Your Guru says this is your mantra, not only life but life after life and one form of God. God has many forms but we need only one form. These are the five things: One religion, One scripture, one Guru, One mantra and One form of God. Based upon this, you try to understand Sri Ramakrishna's teachings, Vedantic teachings or Swami Vivekananda's teachings. This is where the relationship between the Guru and the disciple is seen. Hindus believe in many lives, Hindus believe in the relationship between a chaste wife and chaste husband is not life, life after life. It is the same wife, similarly, it is the same Guru. Same disciple will have the same Guru. Eternal Guru. This is one of the major beliefs of Hindus. Once I accept a Guru, it says the same Guru will come in the next life, in the next life. It is an eternal relationship. How can there be an eternal relationship when we can go on changing? If the Guru changes his disciples or his disciples changes the Gurus. How can there be an eternal relationship? But then the doubt may come. How

can there be an eternal relationship when our bodies are changing? How do I know if the same Guru will come? Will he have the same face? The point is Guru is an ideal. Guru is a direction. Guru is a teaching. The same teaching will come, God will come in that form, in any form, and He knows that this person has advanced in this and now, the next lesson he needs is this particular one. There is only one Guru. Eternal relationship is possible only when there is one Guru. And who is that Guru? God is within each of us; He is the only Guru. Sri Ramakrishna used to tell, who is the Guru? Satchidananda is the Guru. Satchidananda means God. He is the only Guru. He comes in different forms, it does not matter to you. You also do not remember what happens in the next birth. But He will come right to you at the right time, pick you up where you are, and He will guide you. His duty ends only when a disciple attains liberation. That is why Guru is given so much reverence. This Guru cult has become almost a cult with all its good and bad points, which we will discuss in our next class which I think is on the twenty-eighth.

Om Shantih Shantih Shantih: ||