

Swami Dayatmanandji - Jnana yoga - lecture 10

ॐ नमः श्री यति राजाय विवेकानन्द सूरये
सत्त्वित् - सुख स्वरूपाय स्वामिने तापहारिने।

**Om Namah Sri yathiraajaaya Vivekananda Suraye
Satchit sukha swarupaaya swamine taapahaariney**

We are studying, this greatest study of Swami Vivekananda's **Jnana yoga**. Why do we say that it is the greatest study? Swami Vivekananda himself said 'I have not spoken anything excepting the **Upanishads**.' And whatever came out of the mouth of Swamiji is nothing but *Upanishads*.

But if it is only *Upanishads*, then what is the point of Swamiji reiterating it? There is a special point

- 1) first of all, he wanted to prove that this is all a matter of realisation. It is the truth!
- 2) Secondly, it has to be re-emphasised and reinterpreted. Swamiji found out, what a great difficulty it is to summarise the teachings of the *Upanishads*, the philosophy of the *Upanishads* in simple English language, so that it could be understood even by a child.
- 3) Thirdly, I mentioned many times, whenever we speak of Swami Vivekananda - He was not different from Sri Ramakrishna. Always, we have to keep that in mind - Who spoke through the mouth of Swamiji? It was only Sri Ramakrishna! Not only that, I can also tell you, any Swami of the Ramakrishna order, any devotee of Sri Ramakrishna, provided he is sincere, when he talks, who do you think is talking? So all this knowledge that you seem to think, is coming from any Swami - actually the original source is none other than Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother, Swami Vivekananda and also beautifully interpreted illustrations, of all the other direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna! That's what we need to keep in mind always.

Swami Vivekananda did not simply re-echo in English language the teachings of the *Upanishads*. He wanted to make it suitable for this particular age. That's why the Vedanta preached by Swamiji was given, a new name. It is called **Neo Vedanta**. Neo Vedanta is not a new Vedanta. Vedanta interpreted according to the suitability of this particular age is called Neo Vedanta.

We have been studying only one lecture of Swami Vivekananda. Just imagine, how much he must have compressed, so that those ideas could be understood by many people in many different ways.

What is Utilitarianism?

In the past, especially, we discussed about what is the relationship between religion and utilitarianism. If you recollect Utilitarianism is the the philosophy that maximum pleasure for maximum number of people is the goal of life. That is called utilitarianism.

But, the only problem with that is many people misunderstood it, thinking that enjoying life, sensory enjoyment, by developing various physical external means, is the real meaning of Utilitarianism. But, of course, you know every idea becomes expanded, in course of time,

and we discussed, that a branch of this utilitarianism was also called **Living a balanced life**. That is one branch of Utilitarianism. Okay, If you want to enjoy life, if you want to derive the greatest pleasure from life, certain conditions need to be fulfilled.

What are those conditions?

Though probably not directly related to this talk ,when we see people in winter season, half clothed, jogging early in the morning, they are true Epicureans!

What is Epicureanism?

If we exercise, our health will be good, and when health is good, we can enjoy life - that is one. Many people are turning into what we call nowadays 150% vegans. Pure vegetarians - milk they will not touch! They are going to the other extreme!

That is not my point! Now, my point is that - Epicurus was the person who promulgated the idea, that deriving, squeezing maximum pleasure out of our life, is the only goal of life, but he added, unless you lead a balanced life, a controlled life, really speaking you cannot derive. (5:32 mins)

Look at any religion, particularly Hindu religion. **Ekadashi**, we are supposed to fast, any festival day, any holy day is a day of fasting actually. The feasting will come the next day. So it is a good way of controlling oneself. This is just an example I'm giving, this utilitarianism seems to have affected faith in religion, faith in God too much, and Swamiji had to deal with it in a most wonderful way.

These were the points we discussed in the last class.

What is Religion?

Life is a struggle! Swami Vivekananda's most marvellous definition of religion.

What is religion? It is struggle! Earlier we brought out the point.

What was the definition of Swami Vivekananda about man - '**Man is a man so long as he is struggling to transcend the limitations of nature.**'

There was an incident. Swamiji was at *Khetri*. *Khetri's* Maharaja as you know, was his initiated disciple. He was not only a devotee but initiated. He, especially, made him bring a telescope, a microscope etc. Swamiji's greatest wish was to introduce science.

Once the Raja of Khetri, He asked Swamiji - 'Swamiji what is life?'

'Life is the attempt of a being to unfold itself, under circumstances trying to smother it down'.

So what is life doing? The whole external world is trying to press us down so that we do not expand ourselves, but, then there is something within us which really wants to come up.

We also defined religion. What is religion?

It is an attempt to go beyond the limitations of the senses.

Senses means what? 'Beyond nature, beyond the world' that was the definition Swamiji gave. But the Raja of Khetri, could as well have asked, Swamiji, what is religion? Because religion itself is nothing but an attempt to go beyond the limitations, our body is a limitation, mind is a limitation - both are terrible limitations. **Tamas** is the greatest limitation, **Rajas** less limitation, **Sattva** the least bit of limitation - Nevertheless it is a limitation. Therefore one has

to go even beyond the *sattva*. If you have to believe the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna, - According to him all these three *Gunas* - *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas* – what did He label them as - robbers! This whole world is like a forest, and we each one of us, is like a pilgrim trying to pass through this forest of life. Three robbers are always chasing us.

Don't imagine that somewhere there is a forest, No, No, No! I'm not in the forest, I'm in the safest place, the Ramakrishna Vedanta Centre, no one is going to harm me, limit me, No! Here itself you can see the phenomena, already 10 minutes passed since I started the talk, and one robber, is already robbing me of what? Your attention!

Our mind becomes restless. Whatever it is, here is the topic - religion is the grandest struggle! Life is a struggle. When this struggle ceases life goes out, death comes! That's why Swami Vivekananda said, following *Ramanujacharya's* teachings 'expansion is life ; contraction is death '

Religion is the greatest struggle, apart from the comforts that we may gain from it. Religion as science, as a study is the greatest and healthiest exercise that the human mind can have. This pursuit of the Infinite. This struggle to grasp the Infinite. This effort is the grandest effort. To get beyond the limitations of the senses, out of matter, as it were, and to evolve the spiritual man. This striving, day and night to make the Infinite One, one with our being! This struggle itself, is the grandest and most glorious that man can make. These are the actual words of Swamiji (10:18 mins)

Now, one or two things I want to bring out to your notice.

What are these limitations of senses vis-à-vis matter? That means means what? When we identify ourselves with our body mind, we are identifying ourselves with what? Matter! But what are we really? Each soul is potentially divine! Divine means spirit! We are not identifying ourselves with the divine, but we are struggling to bring the divine, to make the divine manifest in our lives in the form of matter, that is why Swamiji had coined a beautiful word he said - '**spiritual materialism**'

What is spiritual materialism?

Materialism masquerading, deceiving us, that you really are a spiritual person. You are not a materialist, you are not a worldly person. I will give an example. A person is enjoying, comes to a temple, and there is a holy festival, wonderful music is going on and very tasty food is being offered, how does it appear to other people? Oh! this person is so wonderful. He is enjoying spiritual atmosphere. What is he really enjoying? It depends upon the motive of each person.

Let me give an example. *Rani Rasmani*, she adored, she was a fan of Sri Ramakrishna's beautiful singing, sweet singing, and she owned the temple, literally. One day she came, *Rani Rasmani* came to the temple. Whenever she comes she asks **Chhotto Bhattacharya**, the youngest priest, that you sing, because no one could sing like Sri Ramakrishna - Melodious voice, apart from his Bhakti, his devotion. You know if he had been born in this century, he would have been the richest person and he would have hundreds and thousands of adoring female devotees. *M* says, only next to Sri Ramakrishna it was Swami Vivekananda. That is a phenomena that had taken place. Whenever *Rani Rasmani* visits the temple she wants to listen to this gentleman, because it used to rouse her spiritual tendencies, which is a phenomena of whoever listens to his songs, not only from a musical

point of you, because he was not singing musically only, He was also absorbed himself. Now one day, she came, she sat and then, she was listening. What was she doing? She was doing three things at the same time. 1) The first thing, she was doing **Japam**, 2) second thing, she was listening to Sri Ramakrishna singing, 3) what was the third thing? Her mind was thinking a court case. This is called multitasked. Sri Ramakrishna somehow understood by the Mother's Grace, stopped singing, went and gave her a slap. Rest is a story all of us know. What is the point? Had not Sri Ramakrishna given her the slap, all the people who are witnessing that scene, - Rani Rasmani sitting and doing *japam*, what would have been their opinion about her? That, She was a very great devotee of the Divine Mother and she was absorbed. Most of the other people it's mechanical, *japam* becomes mechanical, everything becomes mechanical, talking becomes mechanical, listening becomes mechanical.

But, God also wants to help only those people. That's why He doesn't come to us. Why? Because He knows that we are not interested in Him and He knows!

That's why his philosophy is that if you are not interested in me, I am also not interested in you. As simple as that. That is not absolutely true, but take it for granted now. It will help. Religion is the grandest struggle! Anyone who doesn't struggle, any amount of struggle, to expand oneself and here is where Swami Vivekananda comes.

Swamiji did not define religion only in one particular field. It the greatest mistake people commit, That religion means only in spiritual field. What did Swami Vivekananda say?

Vedanta is very practical. By practical Vedanta, what did Swami Vivekananda mean? A student becomes a better student, a scientist becomes a better scientist, a housewife becomes a better housewife and a chemist becomes a better chemist, doctor becomes etc. etc. You go on applying it to any field, whatever you are doing. You are reading something become a better reader. You're listening to something, listen, in a better way. (15:25mins)

One of our Swamis, is telling, probably some devotee asked him, 'that why is it that we are not progressing in spiritual life?' That is the eternal complaint. The Swami replied, you see, you just now sat and I talked for one hour and you also heard for one hour, listened for one hour. If you had heard 60 minutes, totally paying attention, to what I am speaking, you are far far superior than many people. Just think of it. That is called practical Vedanta.

Practical Vedanta means not only meditation, whatever we are doing let us put our attention. That is called practical Vedanta, really!

Coming back. Religion is the grandest struggle. Scientists are struggling, financial advisors are struggling, business people are struggling, and every person is struggling. A child is struggling to grow up. A student is struggling to gain more knowledge. Everyone is struggling. Why not conduct that struggle in a spiritual way.

What does it mean? It means you go and pray to God and then attend the examinations or studies. No! What it means is ' Lord grant me that mind where I can focus, I can concentrate and absorb and remember. That is called practical Vedanta and that is what happens. Whether you keep your mind on a so-called worldly matter or on a so-called spiritual matter it is the same mind. The quality of the mind determines the quality of our attention etc. That is the greatest interpretation, Swami Vivekananda gave to Vedanta. Particularly after

delivering so many talks on *Jnana Yoga*, in London. At the end of these talks, he held a series of 4 talks, which today we know as Practical Vedanta.

It's a beautiful study. So, to get beyond the limitations of the senses means what? Out of matter!

Vedanta divides the whole universe into 2 - *jada and Chit ; chit and jada*

Chit means consciousness, spirit, Atman .

Jada means non-conscious matter.

So what is the struggle? If you are pure **chit**, you don't need to struggle but, if you are **a chit** identified because of long association, many many *Janmas*, lives association with the **jada**. You also have come to know that I am a **jada!**

Jada means what?

I am the body, I am the mind. Here also comes a little bit of a problem. The problem that comes is, because the body is functioning, because, the mind also is conscious , for some reason we think that the body mind is alive. Is also partaking the nature of **chit**, consciousness.

Many times during my classes, both here as well is in the Saturday classes, I mentioned 'as if the mind is borrowing consciousness, and forgetting that I am borrowing the consciousness, it behaves as though I am the consciousness. But unfortunately it identifies itself only with this body and mind and that's why it is bound.'

It's a wonderful subject. We'll understand it as we mull over it, think over it. Mulling over it is, what is called **मनन (Manana)**

Hearing with attention is called **श्रवण (Shravana)**

Mulling it over until all doubts are removed is called **मनन**

And transforming our lives thereby is called **निदिध्यासन (Nididhyasana)**

Ramunajacharya, uses three beautiful words about our Scriptures -

तत्त्व (tatva); हित (hita); पुरुषार्थ (purushartha)

- **तत्त्व** means What is the goal? What is the truth? God is the only truth.
- **पुरुषार्थ** - it God is the only truth, what should be the only goal of life? Only God! That is called **purushartha!**
- And if I have determined that this is my goal in life, I must have a way to getting to that goal. That is called **hita! Hita** means the path by which we reach. Such a beautiful division of philosophy. Every philosophy worth it's name must deal only with these three subjects
- What is **तत्त्व**?
- What is **पुरुषार्थ**?
- What is **हित**? (20:17minutes)

What is the truth and what should be our goal? And, what is the way to reach that goal? To get beyond the limitations of the senses means what? Beyond the senses what lies? Any limitation! Actually we are using many words-

Limitation means senses!

Senses means limitation!

Senses means matter!

Limitation means matter!

Matter means limitation!

Matter means body and mind!

Nothing else!

This whole world is nothing but body and mind. To get beyond the realm of the matter, as it were, and to evolve the spiritual man. This striving day and night to make the Infinite one with our being that is to say, to feel -

I am the Infinite!

I am the limitless!

I am not the matter!

I am the spirit!

This struggle, itself, is the grandest and most glorious that man can make.

What is Swamiji trying to convey to us? What message is he trying to convey to us? He says even if you are a materialist, what are you doing? I want to get the maximum pleasure, happiness out of life. Isn't it? And here you get unlimited pleasure!

I mentioned an incident. Swamiji met one agnostic called Robert Ingersoll and they fell to talking. Swamiji asked Ingersoll, 'What's your goal of life?' And he said, 'My goal of life is to squeeze the orange, called this world, and get as much juice out of it as possible! 'How many time do you squeeze the orange? Only once!' and Swami Vivekananda said, 'I know a way, how I can squeeze this orange any number of times. 'How could a person do so? Because if the world is finite you can squeeze it only once, but if you know that the world is nothing but another name for God, another name for infinite, then you can squeeze this orange how many times? As many times as possible.

That means what? Swami Vivekananda is telling: Look upon this world, deify this world as God and that is why for Hindus you know, in an indirect way - **Ganga is Devta; and Himalaya is Devta; Tulsi plant is Devta; Bilva Patra is Devta.** Every river in India is a sacred river. So this is what Swamiji is telling, since you want happiness, struggle to get so much happiness that you don't need to struggle!

That is the idea.

Next, utilitarian ground - highest pleasure! I already mentioned, what is utilitarianism? To squeeze, to get, as much of pleasure from life as possible. Swamiji says, even on the utilitarian ground, that man is to seek for pleasure, he should cultivate religious thought, for it is the highest pleasure that exists.

For religion as a study, seems to me to be absolutely necessary. What is it we are all seeking? Happiness, pleasure, joy! But when a person turns to God, what is he seeking really? More joy!

Every believer, who believes there is a God, meditates upon what? Infinite happiness! That's why the Sanskrit word **Sat Chit** and **Anand! Ananda** means unlimited, infinite joy is called **Ananda**. The only way to get that kind of **Ananda**, is not to fall into dualism at all, because dualism means limitation. To go beyond dualism means to go beyond all limitations etc. Even from the viewpoint of pleasure, religion means true spiritual practice. Spirit to become spiritual really, is the greatest joy.

Now these are all maybe theories, but really speaking, is there a proof for that? Yes! I will give you one instance for that. If you ask any devotee of Sri Ramakrishna or ask any devotee of any Saint, ask a devotee is your saint, is he experiencing the highest joy or does he experience only a little bit more than what we experience? No devotee will concede that my saint, whether it is *Krishna*, or Rama, or Ramakrishna or, *Raghavendra Swami* or *Purandaradasa*, or *Tyagaraja*, or *Meera Bai* - anybody!

Their very expression shows that even poison turns into nectar in the name of the Lord. The husband of *Meera Bai* - he sent pure poison, and she composed a song on it, afterwards, happily she drank it.

विष प्याला राणा ने भेजा , पिबत् मीरा हाँसी रे ।

हाँसी रे means what? She was saying this stupid fellow is he going to kill me? He cannot kill me! Poison cannot kill me! Poison could not kill *Krishna*. You know that **कालिया मर्दन (Kaaliya Mardana)** everybody was being killed. *Krishna* could not be killed. Why is it? Because *Krishna* is **अमृतस्वरूप (Amritsvaropa)**. Who gave that poison to that **Kalindi**? He himself has given to it and He is the owner, He is the master, He has rented it. God has lent our body and mind, it doesn't belong to you. But we behave as though our rented house is our own house and go on putting nails everywhere. (26:19 mins)

What is the point here? What can poison do? Poison can kill only poison! What does that mean? **विष** can kill **विषय**! Only material objects ! How can it kill the spirit? *Krishna* was he always happy or sometimes unhappy? You ask any devotee of *Krishna*? Is your *Krishna* sometimes unhappy or always happy!

परमानन्द स्वरूप स्मयमानम् मुखाम्बुजम्।

Paramanand Svaroop Smayamaanam Mukhaambujam.

Always smiling, even in the battlefield! Ask Sri Ramakrishna? In what state he was in ? **Samadhi!** what is *samadhi*? You have to be very clear about it. Don't think it is an unconscious state. Don't go on saying, He is in communion with God. It is true, but it doesn't make the idea clear. What is the idea? He is in bliss and his face used to be suffused in bliss. Even those who were there nearby, they would be uplifted. Why do you think they were going there again and again? To get a little bit of the dose. You know, once a peacock was given a little bit of opium at 4 o'clock in the afternoon and next day at 4 o'clock it came. That's not strictly true, because it started coming at all hours of the day because the dope, as it goes on taking, the dosage also needs to be increased.

About whom was he talking? About M himself and all the devotees, all of us! Slowly slowly if we get joy, and that is what happens if we really practice spirituality. Even from the viewpoint

of pleasure, religion is the highest pleasure. Because you know why? For getting pleasure in the world, here is the subject and here is the object and every object in the world is very limited, which is the object in this world which is unlimited? Only God! When a person tries to get that object called God, his pleasure also will be what? Unlimited! Infinite!

पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात्पूर्णमुदच्यते
पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥

(*Poornam-Adah Poornam-Idam Poornat-Purnam-Udacyate*
Poornasya Poornama Aadaaya Poornnam Eva-Avashissyate)

Beautiful *Shanti mantra*.

The next point says religion is the greatest motive power. It is true! I will give you a bad example first. You know the ISIS people- they are prepared to give up their life! What is it that motivates them? Usually, any one of us will be running away from the phenomena of death, and they are running towards what? Not only they are prepared to die, they are more eager to die than to kill also. Now, what is the motive power? Right or wrong, that's a different phenomena. I'm just very referring to the motive power. What is it? Religion? Fanatical belief in their religion!

That also Swamiji dips into- this first necessity of religion! The Christian missionaries, you know. There are thousands of Christian missionaries. Cheerfully, they went into the most inaccessible places, Cheerfully, gave up their life.

There was one Father Damien. He became, later on, very famous. He went to the Hawaiian islands and there he found out people suffering from leprosy. You know, in the olden days, leprosy means, practically they are thrown out into the valleys. Those who have seen this Ben Hur? You can see that the mother and sister of this Ben Hur. This man had to go into the valley. This man, this Father Damien, he went there, he lived with them, he suffered with them and he himself became infected with leprosy and then later he died.

Our point is, what made this man, who was completely healthy, who could have enjoyed his life like anybody else, what made him, what is the motivation? Religion! Christian missionaries! So many! Buddhist missionaries, they went to China, they were you know, so many people have quoted unbelievably torturous deaths.

Sri Ramakrishna, he offered his whole life, for what purpose? With what motive? It's religion! That's why we sing everyday- प्राणार्पण जगत तारण I (*Praanarpan jagata taarana*) He cheerfully gave up his life. For whose sake? For the upliftment of the *jagata taarana* - Humanity! (31:02 mins)

Swami Vivekananda, you know, He had the tremendous power. He could have become, one of the most enjoying persons in this world. What made him give up all these things and take up to the life of *Sannyas*? And you know how much he suffered! Even after he became famous. He suffered both, before and afterwards. He knew it. Not only that. There is something very very interesting phenomena. Swami Vivekananda was the most handsome person in this world, and if you are not devoted to Swami Vivekananda even from this point

of you, I pity you! Yes! Most of the saints, you don't want to look at them, except in your imagination. But, Swami Vivekananda was like a real मन्मथ (*Manmatha*). And, so many people, both in India, both in America, how many women approached him and said 'you only accept me!' What did he do? Cheerfully rejected them! What made him reject them? Was it God? No! Not God! Love of humanity! What is the motive power? I want to give up my life in the service of whose God? Not, when Swami Vivekananda says you are a wretched human being! No! He says you are The God in this शिव ज्ञाने जीवे सेवा! (*shive jnane jive seva!*)

He was a free person, He was a सप्तर्षि! (*Saptarishi*) Why did He come down? Why did Sri Ramakrishna come down and suffer so much. Why did he cheerfully suffer so much? What is the motive power? Religion! What is the religion here? The whole world is nothing but God! Everyone is suffering, and all those, who are suffering, who is suffering? I am suffering! Because if anyone suffers, who is suffering? It is me who is suffering. And I want to help. That is why it is called अवतरण (*Avataran*)

Out of infinite compassion He comes! Sometimes, they get a little disgusted also. Holy Mother says a phenomena. Holy Mother, One day she had a wonderful vision. She saw, that she went to such a beautiful place and Sri Ramakrishna was sitting on a beautiful throne. All his devotees were there. And she was made to sit by His side. It was an experience of bliss. And after sometime she looked down. Looked down at what? In Her words ' I looked at this disgusting rotten body. I didn't feel like coming, but then I remembered, my children are there, who need me'. With great difficulty she made up her mind and came down. What is the motive power? Religion! What is religion here? I am serving God!

This power in religion can be interpreted in two ways -

- 1) The first is - I want to reach God, is the greatest motive power.
- 2) What is the second one? I want to serve God, my God, in the form of everything in this world. Inevitably that's what happens in the end. We can see religion in it's effects. What is the effect? It is the greatest motive power that knows that the human mind! No other idea can put into it the same mass of energy as the spiritual.

But the world movers, men who bring as it were, a mass of magnetism into the world. Whose spirit works in hundreds and thousands. Whose life ignites others with a spiritual fire. Such men we always find, have that spiritual background. Their motive power came from religion. Religion is the greatest motive power for realising that infinite energy which is the birthright and nature of very man.

Next. Religion is the greatest motive power in building up character! Before I go into the subject, I want to mention an incident. There was a great psychologist. He was called the father of modern psychology - William James. He was an American and he used to call Swamiji 'my Master'. This William James had wonderful experiences, not spiritual but psychologically and he wrote a very very provocative and eye opening book - *Varieties of religious experiences*. I want to mention an incident I got from there.

How motivation can change a person. Motivation! In an ordinary motivation can change a person for life. Imagine how religious motivation can change a person - life after life.

Here is the phenomena. There was a very rich young man. His parents died. Filthy rich, what you call. Around him gathered all the fawning people, very stupid, selfish people and they have gone on buttering him and praising him, and doing all those things. And very soon, in drinking and in debauching, he lost every single penny. The moment he lost his money, all his so-called friends also left. This is a very common phenomena. Like, you know, as soon as the piece of flesh fell down from the kite, and all crows have left totally.

So this man, he suffered for a few days, and even people would not give him rotten crumbs, stale food. Few days passed. One day, he was passing through all the estates he owned before this ruin came. He sat down. He meditated and then something phenomenal has happened. He determined! This is called conversion, in the context of religious conversion, this incident was meant. It has nothing to do with religion. But, to illustrate what is religious conversion, William James gives this incident as an illustration. So this man determined, from today I will work in such a way, that I will get back all that I have lost, even if I die in this process, I am prepared to give up my life. That determination made him, immediately, he picked himself up, went, hired himself as a coolie and they were not willing to give him work. He said, you know, 'you don't need to give me any money. Give me a little bit of bread and water. I will be very happy' and like a miser, कंजूस, he started. After a few years, he got back all that he lost. Now William James gives this as an example. What happens when a religious conversion takes place, here he says. I was so much impressed by this analysis.

Religious conversion.

First of all let me clarify what is religious conversion! An ordinary person, suddenly something happens one day, and he becomes converted. In Hinduism we don't much talk about this type of conversion. But there are examples. For example *Bilva Mangala*, *Tulsidas* and *St. Augustine* etc. Suddenly, one day as if the whole life course has changed. This is what we call उत्तर वाहिनी (*Uttara Vahini*). The *Ganga* is flowing from the north to the south. Suddenly it starts moving, backwards going, as it were. And incidentally, wherever *Ganga* moves *Uttara Vahini* that becomes one of the most sacred places on Earth. According to some belief, Hindu belief! That is what happened in *Uttara Kashi* a little bit, but mostly it is *Varanasi*.

Ok, now coming back.

3 characteristics of conversion.

What are they? Three points

- 1) First of all this conversion is for life, because after seeing a cinema - *Ramayana*, or *Devi Bhagavatam* or anything, everybody becomes religious. For how many hours? For a few hours and then where are you? पुनर मूषिका भव। (*Punar mooshika Bhavan*). This is for life!
- 2) Secondly it is always an upward movement! Any conversion is always from a lower direction to a higher direction. From the world to God!
- 3) But The most important phenomena of this third point, is in every field of life, the man's mind is totally immersed in God. Whether the person eats, he speaks, he sleeps. Whatever he does his mind is fixed only upon one direction and that is God!
That is God!

These are the three points -

- **Conversion for whole life**
- **conversion from a lower state to higher state**
- **And the whole life is fixed, every millisecond of the life has only one phenomena.** (40:12 mins)

Now, look at the life of Sri Ramakrishna. You know, He was such a jolly, happy, cheerful person. Until He came to **Dakshineswar Temple**, until he took up the priesthood at **Kali Temple**. The moment he took up, you know, something happened, phenomenal something! Terrible conversion has taken place. After that, every single second, was spent only in how can I have the constant unbroken vision of the Divine Mother?

Now what is the point we are discussing? In building up character, if anybody wants to change the character, if anyone wants to acquire a new virtue, a new quality and give up the bad quality, all your so called psychological motivations are not going to work much. They help somewhat, but not really much. But, If anybody becomes really religious, spiritual, then character becomes absolutely fixed for life.

I'll tell you one simple example of that. You know *Tulsidas*. He was such a worldly man. He could not live without his wife, even for a single night. Such a man, He did not find his wife at home one day, and he went to his wife. At midnight he reached her room, somehow or other and then he was smelling in a very foul way. And then she Chided him. If you had possessed one hundredth of this love, you possess for this filthy body, towards *Rama*, your life would have been blessed. Those words acted as **Diksha. Mantra Diksha** for him. Immediately he saluted her. You are my first Guru, and then went away. Even in the forming of character, the highest motivation is religion. But, I have also to tell you. You know, there are many men, who became thoroughly converted for the love of a woman. But you can say, these are the examples we get, slowly building up. But, when a man turns towards God that will be the greatest character. Just I'm mentioning, even though it's not directly related with our subject.

Ramanujacharya's Life there was an incident. One day he was out, to witness what we call **Bramha Utsava ब्रह्म उत्सव**/ Great festival of God! And there was a man, who was head on heels in love, with a prostitute and he was holding an umbrella because it was very hot. He was not looking at the chariot, much less at God. He was looking only at the face of this woman. Somebody pointed out to *Ramanujacharya* 'look at this disgusting man, even today, when God has come, everyone is looking at the Lord and this man is only looking at this woman's face'. *Ramanujacharya* went there and tapped him. He became startled.

Ramanujacharya asked, "Can I ask you a question? Sir, you are looking at this lady's eyes. What is it you find so attractive in her?" He said, 'You know her eyes are so beautiful that I have no eyes for anything else in this world'. *Ramanujacharya* said 'Do you really love her?' He said 'No!' Then what do you love?' 'Her eyes!'

Ramanujacharya said, 'If I can show you more beautiful eyes, what will you do?' He said like this, 'I will give up anything'. Then *Ramanujacharya* touched him and said look, and pointed out towards the chariot and this man had one look! He left the woman for life. And because of that he became the personal **sevak** of *Ramanujacharya*, and the greatest conversion that took place was, from that day he never left the house of *Ramanujacharya*. Even to visit God. People used to say, 'God has come in front of your house', you know in

the Chariot festival God comes. 'Why are you not coming out of the house?' He said 'No! My God is *Rama*. It is he, who opened my eyes to the real beauty and I am eternally grateful.' My God is *Ramanujacharya*! I am here only to serve. My whole life I'll be serving.

Now, there's also a funny incident, you know. This gentleman used to look after *Ramanujacharya*'s personal service, body service, preparing his bed, cleaning his room etc. So the other disciples noticed a peculiar phenomena. Every day after preparing the bed, for his **Guru** and God, this man would strip his dress and roll naked on the bed on the bed of his *Guru*. And there are the other disciples thousand eyes, to find out what the others are doing, and then promptly report it to the *Guru*. This is what your disciple is doing. And *Ramanujacharya* knew about him. He called him in front of all the people asked, 'Is it true that you roll on my bed after preparing'. He said 'Yes!' 'But, why do you do that?' He said 'You are my God, and if I put my hands also, I may not know whether anything, any object is there, which will disturb your sleep. But, when I roll, then I know, it is properly done, there is nothing in this bed which can disturb your sleep. ' *Ramanujacharya*, naturally, must have looked at the other disciples and they must be looking where - At their feet, in shame! Yes! He was doing that, but for whose sake?

And, if you are thinking this is a cock and bull story, what was your *Ramakrishna* doing every night after worshipping the Divine mother. Taking her to go and put her to bed. What was he doing? '*Maa*, You want me to sleep on your bed? I am also lying down, and he will do a little bit of rolling down. What is the point here? In reforming the character, religion is the greatest motive power, then religious harmony.

We come to one of the greatest phenomena of Swami Vivekananda's *Jnana Yoga*! what is it? When Swamiji preached his *Jnana Yoga*, He was also trying, to give out to people, in the simplest possible manner, to make other people understand, what is the teachings of the *Upanishads*. Now, there are many problems in India itself. What is the problem? *Shankaracharya* interpreted what? *Upanishads*. *Ramanujacharya* interpreted what? *Upanishads*. *Madhavacharya* interpreted what? Same *Upanishads*. But, every *Acharya*, is interpreting the same *Upanishads*, in their own way, and even torturing them! Wherever dualistic statements come, *Shankaracharya* would rigorously exclude! Same with the other *Acharyas*, are also no less, they were also doing it. But, when Swamiji was giving this lecture, what was he saying? He has one Vedic truth, in mind, in the light of which he preached, he made *Jnana Yoga* very very simple, clear, acceptable, understandable. What is that Vedic truth?

एकम् सत् विप्राः बहुधा वदन्ति।

Truth is one but sages call it by various names.

The whole life of Sri Ramakrishna was nothing but a Parliament of Religions. You know, in *Kamarpukur*, his own father used to worship Lord *Shiva*, *Vishnu* in the form of *Rama* and the *Devi*, unconsciously! The Divine Mother unconsciously! See what a wonderful phenomena. Where did *Chandramani* conceive *Sri Ramakrishna*? In the *Shiva* temple! Where did *Khudiram* have the vision of Lord *Vishnu*? *Gaya Vishnu*. And, *Khudiram*, you know that phenomena? One day, he went out, and then he saw new leaves sprouting. ***Bilva leaves!*** Several hours walk! He came back with the *Bilva leaves*, and then only, he finished his *Shiva*

Pooja to his heart's content. This wonderful phenomena, is something extraordinarily great. That means he was a devotee of God. Whether God is in the form of *Shiva*, in the form of *Devi* or in the form of *Rama*. Any particular form!

This comes to most Hindus but they were also sectarian Hindus. *Vaishnavas* quarreling with *shaktas!* *Shaktas* quarreling with *Shaivas!* *Shaivas* quarreling with *shaktas!* etc. and the dualists quarreling with non dualists. Non dualists quarreling with dualists! This phenomena was the most horrible thing in the 19 century and Sri Ramakrishna came to uphold एकम् (**Ekam**) Truth is one, but it is called by various names.

But just imagine when Swamiji went, this is the condition of India. In India people quarrel, but they rarely kill each other. But the other religions, killing is the most common phenomena. If you want statistics - how many millions have been killed, all in the name of religion? Islam and Christians! Muslims and Christians - what they call Crusades. Religious Crusades! How much it has happened. Though we don't call it religious Crusades, What was the first and second world war? It was a fight between whom? Between Christians and Christians! This is what had happened. Even today they are not awake. I don't know.

A few days back, I was reading some news that CNN had showed about Hinduism, in the worst light that is possible. It is cannibalism, it is idol worship etc. No! They are not talking about Swamiji's time. They are talking about now. What is the point I'm trying to point out? These were the social circumstances, when Swami Vivekananda had to attend the Parliament of Religions and preach Sri Ramakrishna's spiritual experience. What is एकं सत् विप्राः बहुधा वदन्ति।

We will talk about it in our next class.

ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ।

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti!