

## Swami Dayatmanandji - Jnana yoga - lecture 22

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

***Om Namah Sri yathirājāya Vivekānanda Suraye  
Satchit sukha swarupāya swāmine tāpahāriney!***

We are discussing the third lecture of *Swami Vivekananda* on *Jnana Yoga*. In our last class we found *Swamiji* had made a tremendous statement, “*Those who help others to be happy, become the happiest*”. Several years back there was a prominent article in the Time magazine. And, there they have found out through research, that the person who may be a billionaire, but excepting for the basic necessities, his happiness will never increase, however much money he may possess, materials he may possess. Such a tremendous statement from worldly researchers is very rare. This research goes, and the conclusion is, those who work for the happiness of other people, to that extent their happiness will also increase.

I want to give you one or two examples. Suppose there is a mother and there is a child, her child, and the mother has a small amount of food. Now, will the mother be happy if she eats it, or even if she shares 50-50, or if she gives the whole lot to the child? What do you think? This is only an imaginary example, but we can understand it.

So also, if one friend helps the other friend then they become very happy. But, a real thing happened. You know, *Sister Devmata*, she had the great good fortune, of meeting several of the direct disciples of *Sri Ramakrishna*. And, once she was staying at *Udhbodhan*. And, that was the last of the mango season. Practically all mangoes are exhausted. *Sister Devmata*, always she used to go to *Holy Mother*. Whenever she visits, she will take some present. On that occasion, she had taken the best mangoes possible. Only she got two, and both the Mangoes she had taken to *Holy Mother*. She offered it to *Holy Mother*. *Holy Mother* after touching them, she gave them back to *Devmata*. But *Devmata* was thinking, ‘This may be the last mangoes that are available. If I can somehow make *Holy Mother* eat, she will be a very happy person’. But, she didn’t understand what *Mother* was thinking. So she again offered those mangoes to *Holy Mother* and said, ‘Mother I’ll be very happy if you eat them’. Then holy mother smiled very sweetly, and said, ‘Tell me, who becomes happier? If you eat do I become more happy, or if I eat do I become more happy? Then *Devmata* understands and then she gladly takes these and then she....

What a beautiful idea to think about. And, this is not philosophy. This is pure psychology. We don’t need religion, we don’t need spirituality, to understand this simple fact, that when we make other people happy we become very happy.

This topic suddenly brought to me, a novel, Telugu novel I have read almost 60-65 years back. *Haridas* is the name of that small novel. There was in a village, a few students and

they all appeared - in a college and they are all about to appear in an examination. Now there was a girl whom both of these loved. And these two were very close friends, but both of them were competing for the same girl. Then, this *Haridas* comes to know that, that girl made a vow - that 'whoever among both of you will come first in the examination, I will marry that person'. Then this, the other boy who knew that *Haridas* was brilliant, there is no question of competing with him at all. He becomes dejected and wants not to write the exams at all, because he lost all hope, 'What is the point of writing examinations, when I can't get a lady, whom I want to marry'?

*Haridas* comes to know, but he didn't say anything. Of course, the other person was persuaded to write the exams. He was not very bad in intelligence, but not comparable to *Haridas*. Both of them appeared in the examination. When the results came, the other man was very sure that *Haridas* would win and he would marry this girl. But, he was shocked to find *Haridas* got the lowest mark, and he himself, he got the highest marks in the class. But, only this much scene I clearly remember – that this girl and that boy, they get married, and *Haridas* stands at a long distance, watches them getting married, and quietly disappears from the village.

What is the moral? That he sacrificed his own life for the happiness of his friend. Of course, the friend did not know, we the readers of the novel know, that he deliberately did badly in the examination, just to give happiness to the other person. Very beautifully written novel. ( 5:03 mins)

*Swami Vivekananda* had declared this, 'If we want to be happy, then let us help other people also'. What is the psychology behind this? Usually, we get attached to only our family members. Our circle of attachment practically stops with our little bit of family - nuclear family. But the psychology is - if we really want to help other people, then we have to love them. Because, real help is not giving something, it is giving whatever we can give, with love. This great truth *Bhagvan Krishna* declares in the *Bhagvad Gita* -

**पत्रं पुष्पं फलं तोयं यो मे भक्त्या प्रयच्छति।**

***Patram puṣpam phalam toyam yo me bhaktyā prayachchhati.***

**"I accept whatever is given to me with devotion, be it water, a leaf, a fruit."**

Incidentally in the *Puja Tattvas*, you know we do *Pujas*, worship, it is written - *Pujas* can be done with 5 items called *Panchupchar*; 10 items called *Dashopchar*; 16 items called *Shodashopchar*; 32 items *Dvātriimshatopchar* or even 64, or even more, the more items you go on adding. But, suppose a person doesn't have any of these things, it is written in the scriptures - 'If a person has devotion, and if he can worship God with only flowers.' Instead of 64 items take 64 small flowers. Suppose 64 small flowers are also not there, take 64 petals. Suppose they are not there, offer a little bit of water. Will God accept? Gladly He will accept. That is the idea.

That was what we discussed in our last class. Then we are coming to the best point. ***The whole world as it exists, as it is - is called Maya. This is the greatest definition of Maya. Maya is not illusion, delusion but a statement of fact!***

**As we are!** I am sitting, you are sitting, I am talking, you are listening. You are talking, you are listening excepting in deep sleep. This is called *Maya*.

My sitting, your sitting - this is all like a sham, fake, dream, shadow, and yet we have been living in this world of *Maya* for such a long time. We do not have the foggiest notion that this is called *Maya*. I am the parent, you are the child. You are the friend, I am a friend. I am a man, I'm a woman etc etc.

Even *Advaita Vedanta* goes to the extent, your thinking that you are ignorant, is one of the greatest facts of *Maya*.

And by definition *Maya* means - **YA MA** ; that which - **ya** means ' that which ' **ma** means ' doesn't exist ' - That is called *Maya!*

So then, *Swamiji* puts this question - "*What then is the use of Vedanta, and, all other philosophies and religions, and above all what is the use of doing good work*"? This was the question we left in our last class.

If everything is *Maya*, and *Maya* cannot be remedied. You cannot remove *Maya*, you can go beyond *Maya*. This is a wonderful fact we have to accept, and understand, and learn. Learn to live with it. What is it? You cannot change *Maya* . You cannot overcome *Maya*, *But* you can go beyond *Maya!* That is the most marvellous statement.

What is the good of any religion? That means practically all the people on this Earth, nearabouts 7.5 billion people on Earth, would be terribly disappointed that their life is totally useless. That is what anyway, the *Charvakas* or materialists go on saying -

**भस्मी भूतस्य देहस्य पुनरागमन कुतः ।**

**तस्मात् ऋणं कृत्वा घृतं पिबेत ।**

***bhasmī-bhūtasya asya dehasya punar āgamanam kutaḥ***

***Tasmaat ṛṇaṁ kṛtvā gḥṛtaṁ pibet!***

Once this body is taken to the cremation ground and becomes ash, there is no question of any further existence. Therefore the highest philosophy is, even if you have to take credit, take it, if you can, enjoy it and die. Nobody can squeeze anything from you.

***ṛṇaṁ kṛtvā gḥṛtaṁ pibet!***

As I mentioned, you know, what is your credit card? Yeah.... So many banks have to write off so much money, those who know, they know it. Several billions they have to write off, because people take, borrow, but they do not have the capacity to return. What are you going to do? And, funny thing is the police know it, and they don't want to take them into jail also, because that will be even more expensive.

What is the use of philosophy? What is the use of religion?

The answer is, In the first place, that we must work for lessening misery. That is the only way to make ourselves. "*The Vedanta on the other hand says, that it is true that the Absolute or the Infinite is trying to express itself in the finite, but, there will come a time when it will find that it is impossible, and it will then have to beat a retreat. And, this beating a retreat means renunciation, which is the real beginning of religion*". This is a tremendous statement!

What is the use of *Maya*? *Maya* has a usefulness. Last class I mentioned -  
What is the purpose of *Maya*? To take us beyond *Maya*. That is the avowed mission of *Maya*. Like a loving mother, she takes every one of us, who are her children by hand, and gently or roughly, through happiness or unhappiness, takes us to the border land beyond her and says, 'My child, I have brought you up to here. I can't take you beyond. Now you go. Your home lies..... ( 10:20 mins)

When *Swami Vivekananda* started singing that song, '*Mana chalo nije Niketane*', what is He talking about? We have a home. Our home is God! And, God is beyond *Maya*. And that is our real destination. That is the destination of all!

What Vedanta says *Maya* has a tremendous function. You know what it is? To create *Vairagya*, dispassion, renunciation! Now this word brings many unhappy associations. Should we become monks, nuns? No! What is renunciation? *Sri Ramakrishna*'s essence of the *Bhagwad Gita*. If you repeat that word *Gita* fast some number of times, it turns into *Tāgi - Tyāga*. And, what is the meaning of *Tyāga*? Very simple translation would be, give up your unhappiness, give up your negativity give up your selfishness. Give up your individuality.

When do we become universal? When we give up our individuality. Look at the spiritual practice of *Sri Ramakrishna*. He had attained to the highest point any individual can attain - this is called *Kaalika aakar Vritti*. He could remove every thought.

And, by the way what is a thought? That which makes us think we are individuals is a thought. If there is no thought, there would be no individual. When we are in deep sleep, do you feel , that I am an individual? And when do you get the greatest amount of peace and happiness? When we get rid of this individuality, self conscience. So that is what renunciation is about, give up this false individuality. Become real individuals.

Swamiji makes pun of this 'Are you an individual'?

What is individuality? - That which cannot be divided. Indivisible! That is called individuality. We are always calling ourselves individuals, and thinking that I am the only one, everybody is different from me. We are identified with...

True individuality is, I am everything I am *Brahman* in other words. So, there is a beautiful biography of *Swami Vivekananda* in Bengali, '*Vishwa Mānava Vivekananda*'. -  
*Vivekananda* the universal man. He is identified with everyone else. Yet, it is true that, that *Vairagya* is the only path to religion.

*Swami Vivekananda*, categorically he states - *Vairagya*. The moment a person tries to go beyond his individuality, religion begins at that, not before. Renounce and give up.

What did *Christ* say. "*He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it*". Again and again did he preach renunciation as the only way to perfection. *Swami Vivekananda* quotes *Jesus Christ*.

There was the beautiful story in the *Bible*. There was a rich young man, and he heard *Jesus Christ*, and he understood what is the goal of life? To attain *Paradise* or *heavenly kingdom*. He goes and asks *Jesus Christ*, 'How can I enter into the kingdom of heaven'? And *Jesus Christ* says, 'Follow the 10 Commandments. Don't you know what your ancestors have given

you? Follow them'. The young man says, 'But *Jesus*, I have been following them from my very birth'. He thought he was following. Here comes the fun. *Jesus Christ* replies, In that case, in which case? If he had really been practising the 10 commandments, then you should be ready for the next step. What is it? 'Take up my cross and follow me. Go and sell all that you have, distribute it to the poor, take up the cross, and follow me'. And, you know what happened? The young man went away, returned back in sadness. Why? What was the commandment? Go and sell all that you possess, and give it to the poor. If he had been practising those 10 Commandments, what would have been the result? He would have gladly given up, not only his possessions, he would have given up even his very life for that. But he was not.

So, we talk so many things, but the results only tell us what we are, not what we talk, not what others say. This happened you know? Somebody came to *Jesus Christ* and said, 'You are a very good man'. You know, *Jesus Christ* instantaneously he reacts without batting an eyelid. He says, 'No man is good, only God is good'. That is the truth.

So, renounce and give up. What did *Christ* say? "*He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it, and who preserves life for his sake will lose it*".

Many such statements are there. One man went and asked *Jesus Christ*, 'How can I enter into the kingdom of heaven'? And, He says, 'Verily I tell you, unless you die and reborn, you will not enter into the kingdom of heaven! Immediately this man gets up, 'O, I have to die'. *Jesus Christ* had to explain, 'I do not mean your physical death, I mean your transformation'.

Shall we not work to do good then? Now comes, you know, renunciation means give up everything and go away. "*Shall we not work to do good then? Yes! With more zest than ever. But, what this knowledge will do for us, is to break down our fanaticism*". "*The power to work will increase from this idea. Knowing that this is the state of things, there will be more patience*". What a wonderful thought.

So, we think if we do good, then we are doing good. That means what? Someone is getting some benefit from us, and we are losing something. This is our idea. That means what? Even though a tiny bit, we changed the world, to some extent for better.

Re-collect all that we have quoted from *Swami Vivekananda*, "*The world is like the curled tail of a dog. It is not going to change*". I think, many of you are familiar with that fable, not everyone? Is a very favourite parable of *Sri Ramakrishna*. There was a poor man. He wanted to become rich. He was advised that you take *mantra* from a *Sadhu* and repeat. A devil will come under, a *Jinn* will come under your control, and then whatever you ask it to do, it will do it. So this man went, pestered the Monk till he got the *mantra*. The monk warned him, 'It's very dangerous'. He repeated it, and he got this *Jinn* to come. And, 'What do you want'? So 'Get this flat, a thousand acres of land and make it cultivable' - Done! Just by wish - Done! 'Build me a palatial home'. Done! 'Bring me that Princess, I want to marry her'. Done! Now he was left with no work. What was the warning? The *Jinn* said, warned him, 'If you don't give me work, I will wring your neck'. Now whatever this fellow is asking, all completely done.

Very beautiful story. What does this mean? How many desires you have? You think that if God is ready to give me, for eternity I can go on asking. Really - No! After one minute you will completely exhaust your ideas. Then you don't know what to ask.

So, this fellow was in that condition. The devil wanted to eat him up, and he was trying to run to the *Guruji* to save him. The thought did not occur, 'Take me, carry me to the monk'. In his agitated state, he forgets what to ask. So, he went to that place and then fell at his feet. And, then he asked, 'Why did you come'? 'O, this devil, *bhuta* is about to swallow me up. Save me'. 'I warned you, you did not listen'. 'Yes, yes! I was foolish. Now I understand'. So he says, 'There is a dog there, lying there. Quick, cut off its tail, and give it to the devil, and ask it to straighten it'. This fellow, immediately he did it. And, then 1st Time he did it, it was straight. The moment he let go, it became curly again. So, this went on for some time. Then he worked, the more he was trying, the more like your hair you know? Kinky hair, it goes on. So ultimately the devil got disgusted and said, 'I never encountered this kind of problem in my whole life. I will make a deal with you. Whatever I gave you, you can keep. Release me please'. This man said! 'Thank you. You can go away' This is the story. *Swami Vivekananda, Sri Ramakrishna*, they used this to great effect.

What it means is the world will never change. It will always be like this. But, does it mean that a thief will remain a thief? A murderer will remain a murderer? What it means is, a worldly person will not remain a worldly person. In course of time he learns his lesson. But, the *Maya* Will go and occupy somebody else. There will be always.... I

Infinite is the creation, and infinite is the time it goes on and on and... Then, what is the good of doing? Because, in the process we become straightened out. This is what *Swami Vivekananda* says, 'If you try to straighten the curly tail of a dog, it won't get straightened'. But, who becomes straight? You become straight. That is to say in simple words, we acquire *Chitta Shuddi*.

What is the meaning of straightening out the tail? Means do Good, be unselfish, try to help other people, and forget about your selfishness and individuality. That's what it really means.

Then, all this rushing, the whole universe is rushing towards freedom. Another name for freedom is God. This is a beautiful idea Swamiji is connecting. "*But, only one thing is certain; The mighty river is rushing towards the ocean, and all the drops that constitute the stream, will in time be drawn into that boundless ocean. So, in this life with all its miseries and sorrows, its Joys and smiles and tears, one thing is certain, that all things are rushing towards their goal, and, it's only a question of time, when you and I, and plants and animals, and every particle of life that exists, must reach the Infinite Ocean of Perfection. It must attain to freedom!*" What a tremendous statement!

( 20:24 mins )

There are so many religions which boldly go on proclaiming, and still go on proclaiming, that man is born sinner first. Secondly, some people are never going to attain to God. However good we do. And, even if they say everybody is potentially divine, most of us do not believe. We behave as though that is not true. Ok *Sri Ramakrishna* was Divine, that's fine. *Swamiji* was fine, *Holy Mother* is fine, some devotees - ok fine; ' But me! I think it will take a long long long time'.

Now, what is Swamiji telling? The whole universe, every atom in the universe is rushing towards freedom. That means what? What is the implication? Everybody will get freedom from *Advaitic* point of view. Very interesting statement. 'Will get freedom' means what? You are not free now, but given enough time, enough space, enough cause, one day you are going to become free.

*Advaita* says, 'No you are not going to get'. Any action that we do can only end, result in 4 things - *Uttapati, Aapti, Samskara, and Vikara*. Something is not there - you produce. It's available in London, and you have to go to London and get it. Something, a chair for example - a leg is broken, so you fix it up. There is a chair it is okay but it is become old - so polish it. Any action can do, can result only in these 4 things.

If liberation, freedom, God realisation is also the result of action, then it must start at some point. And, the law is, whatever starts in time must also come to end in time. By this logic if a person is bound, he's never going to attain to freedom. If by chance, by accident he attains, then he will be there for a short time, and then again he will be drawn back to his original state. That is the logic.

But, what does *Advaita Vedanta* say. Says, 'No, you never bound'. Even when you are thinking you are bound, you are never really bound. But you are thinking you are bound. *Ajnana* makes you think that you are bound. What is it? Obtaining freedom, getting freedom means what? Simply this, ignorance will vanish. When knowledge comes, it destroys the ignorance. What is the ignorance? I am not God! That is the ignorance, and that will be destroyed. This is called getting *Mukti*, liberation, this is called God realisation.

The whole universe is nothing but another form of God. God with name and form is the name for the world. World without name and form is another name for God! This is the simple truth. However many times we hear this truth, it seems as though it is impossible for us even to conceive of - 'Me! I'm God? Far from it'. But, a time will come, when we accept that idea, and that is the beginning of spirituality. That is what happens.

*"Let me repeat once more, that the Vedantic position is neither pessimism or optimism. It doesn't say that this world is all evil or all good. It says that our evil is of no less value than our good, and, our good of no more value than our evil. They are bound together. This is the world and knowing this you work with patience"*.

What is the implication of *Swamiji's* statement? It means that our unhappiness has a value, our happiness as a value, Life has a value, death has a value. Everything has a value.

My favourite comparison is like a train on a hill. You know, a small train, matchbox like, sometimes you can walk faster than the train. If you go to *Nilgiris*, you know? *Udhagamandalam* they call it. Really it is wonderful, even to have an experience of it. Now this train has got two engines, one at the front and one at the back. The front one what does it do? It pulls it forward. What does the engine at the back do? It pushes it forward. So, *Sukha* happiness is that which pulls us towards God. And, pain, suffering is that which pushes us towards God. And both have got value.

And, *Swami Vivekananda* in some other place asks this question, 'Which has taught you more lessons to you in life, is it suffering or is it happiness'? It is the suffering. Do we ever learn any lesson from happiness? Never! Simple fun you know? When you are eating *rasgulla*, what lesson did you learn? Nothing! But, when you go to the doctor, and he declares you are a very very sweet person, that gives you the greatest lesson. Then, you are there happily drinking, morning and evening if necessary, one cup full of bitter gourd, *karela* juice. Are you happy drinking? Few people are really happy. ( 25:24 mins )

What is the point? Both, so called evil has its value, both good also has its value. It takes a long time for us to learn the lesson. The evil that we see in this world is the greatest awakener. One of the greatest awakener. In fact, *Swami Vivekananda* has written a most marvellous poem, '**Blessed misery**'. Go on reading this one, you will understand it.

What are religions? Every religion is a way leading to that freedom. Mind you always, whenever I use the word freedom or *Swamiji* uses the word it means God. What we call God, *Swamiji* prefers to call as freedom.

"All religions are more or less attempts to get beyond nature - the crudest or the most developed, expressed through mythology or symbology, stories of gods, angels or demons, or through stories of saints or seers, great men or prophets, or through the abstractions of philosophy - all have that one object, all are trying to get beyond this limitation. In one word they are all struggling towards freedom". Which is another word name for *Satchidanandan*.

There is another word which is very useful, I find. Freedom means *Ananda*. Don't say happiness. Do you want happiness? We all say yes. But, better word is freedom. What is the happiness that we experience usually? So, you are hungry, you suffer, you eat food, and then you become happy. It is not food that has given you happiness. It is the removal of the hunger, then removal of thirst, removal of whatever. And, that removal is called freedom. I prefer to use the word *Ananda*. *Ananda* means freedom.

But, *Upanishad* uses another word. Really, this word *Ananda* is a word used mostly in the *Puranas*, mythologies. But the word used *Satyam*, *Jnanam*, *Anantam*, *Bramha*. *Ananta* means infinity. What is infinity? Absolute freedom! That is infinity - nothing to bind you. That is the... Is the most wonderful philosophical topic. I am not going to go into it. But, this word infinity means - don't think in terms of space. Huge space, unimaginable space. No, think in terms of complete freedom is infinity.

Then why do we worship Gods? Because religion starts with the worship of Gods. Why do we do that? "*The man who wants to worship the Gods sees in them, above all things, greater freedom than in himself. If the door is closed, he thinks the Gods can get through it and that walls have no limitations for them. This idea of freedom increases, until it comes to the ideal of a Personal God, of which the central concept is that He is being beyond all the limitations of nature*".

Another beautiful equation -

- *Maya* means nature!
- Nature means *Maya*.
- *Maya* means limitations!



We are all under the limitations. The body is a limitation, biggest limitation. Mind is the even bigger limitation, and so long as we are attached, embodied, then we are under the thralldom of *Maya*. What a beautiful way Swamiji is leading us from a lower idea to a higher idea.

Why do we worship God? Because, Not because God is somebody to be worshipped, because God is another name for freedom. So he gives an illustration. Even people worship Ghosts. Why do they? There is a law of worship.

You know worship? What is the word worship? *It is adoring or imitating somebody who has got more power than ourselves*. So, supposing a ghost has got less power than yourself, will you worship? Supposing God has got even less freedom, or less power than yourself, will you worship? Worship always is of whom we think, rightly or wrongly, they have more power than me.

Swamiji gives an illustration. So if I want to go outside this, I need a door I need an opening. But what does a ghost do? Whoosh it goes. If I want to go to India, I have to beg this British airways, what does the ghost do? After three days when you reach there, you find it there waiting for you. That is why there are lots of people who worship ghosts. And, Gods in ascending order of what is called freedom. You know, there is a higher world, still higher world, still higher. According to Indian mythology there are seven higher worlds, are there.

What is heaven? Where you get a lot of freedom. What is hell? You are much more limited. That is the idea. What does worship do? It makes us Godlike. So we hope, one day we become like God, and we obtain more freedom. That is how we arrive at this ideal of a personal God and our mind can reach only to that limit. ( 30:10 mins)

We cannot think of the impersonal. He is unimaginable, He is unthinkable and He cannot be expressed. Every day we are singing - ***Namo namo prabhu vākya-mana -atīta*** and we are saying ***vākya-mana-atīta*** - Is it thinking? It is thinking that we cannot that's okay.

And, in one of them, where even the oldest and the holiest fail to reach this solution, a young man stands up amidst of them and declares. This is one of the most beautiful inspiring *Mantra* in the *Vedas, Upanishads*. In fact *Swami Vivekananda* got up and recited it at the Parliament Of Religions.

So, we can go with great effort, only up to the personal God. Is that the solution to our problems? No, it is not the solution. That is the final doorway to something, that which is beyond.

But, one point I have to make you. According to *Advaita Vedanta* what we call *Ishwara* or personal God is within the realm of *Maya*. Why? Because He has got a name and He has got a form. Now, you read and try to understand *Sri Ramakrishna's* life. *Totapuri* came and said, 'Get rid of this idea of personal God'. *Maa Kali* means what? Not *Maa Kali*. *Maa Kali* means, idea of a personal God with name, fame, qualities, *Ananda. Sat-Chit-Ananda*. 'Get rid of it'. And, *Sri Ramakrishna* succeeded. How did He succeed? Very important! He could not have succeeded. It is the *Sachchidananda* which bestowed It's Grace and then removed that thought, as if.

What is this beautiful *Mantra* that *Swamiji* recited, at the Parliament of Religions? Unthinkable by most of the people, excepting few enlightened people. For example in Christianity there was this great sage called *Meister Eckhart*. He understood what it is. There were few people like that, Greek philosophers they were like that. But very few people understand even that idea, they are frightened of the impersonal idea of it.

शृण्वन्तु विश्वे अमृतस्य पुत्रा  
आ ये धामानि दिव्यानी तस्थुः ।  
वेदाहमेतमं पुरुषं महान्त-  
मादित्यं वर्णं तमसः परस्तात् ।।  
तमेव विदित्वाऽतिमृत्युमेति  
नान्यः पन्था विद्यतेऽयनाय ।।

*Shrinwantu vishwe amritasya putrā  
aa ye dhamani divyani tasthu,  
vedāhametam purusham mahāntam  
āditya varanam tamasā parastāt!  
Tameva viditvā atimrityumeti  
nānya pantha vidyateayanāya!*

This is the translation *Swamiji* himself has given

***“Hear ye! Children of immortal bliss  
Hear ye! Who live in the highest places  
I have found the way, by knowing him who is beyond darkness,  
We can go beyond death.”***

That is the rough translation. ***There is no other way.*** This is the only way. The highest freedom lies beyond all limitations. And, you cannot think of that, because Our thinking of freedom, is within the realm of bondage only. *‘By knowing him who is beyond darkness we can go Beyond death’.* *“This Maya is everywhere. It is terrible, yet we have to work through it. I will ford the river when all the water is running to the ocean. The way is not with Maya but against”.*

*Sri Ramakrishna’s* beautiful parable: There was a man, he wanted to take bath in the ocean. So, he went and sat on the shore, and he thought, when all the waves in the sea subside, then nicely, peacefully, I will go and take bath. You know, what is he doing? He is still waiting there. He is not waiting, his bones are waiting.

What does *Swamiji* mean by quoting this one. If any fool thinks let This *Maya* subside, then I am going to work for spiritual practice, it’s not going to happen for two reasons -

- 1) because *Maya* is eternal, it will be there.
- 2) The second reason is important. We are not being bound by *Maya* for the benefit of *Maya*. As I just now mentioned, *Maya’s* function is to take us beyond *Maya*.

And how does she take it? Only by taking us through pain and pleasure, happiness unhappiness, life and death, good and evil. This is the only way. That’s why *Maya’s* function is tremendous.

And, it is a concept that *Sri Ramakrishna* has brought back to us. The greatest contribution of *Sri Ramakrishna* to the modern *Vedanta* philosophy is turning this idea of *Maya* topsy turvy. Previously *Maya* is terrible. You have to run away from it. It tempts you. But *Sri Ramakrishna* said it, 'Don't run away, you can't run away. Pray, 'O Mother! I am your child'. The moment *Mahamaya* hears that, 'You are my Mother' , and then, She develops, suddenly, tremendous motherly affection. Then she takes the child, 'Yes I am your Mother. I will do the greatest good to you. I will take you to your Father which is the impersonal aspect'.

What is the use of *Maya*? So, that it helps us. That is why *Sri Ramakrishna* has divided *Maya* into two categories, if you remember. *Avidya Maya* and *Vidya Maya*! But, again we have got that misunderstanding, *Avidya Maya*'s purpose is to bring us to *Vidya Maya*. *Apara Vidya*'s function is to guide us to the, make us qualified to take up the *Para Vidya* - supreme knowledge!

These are marvellous concepts, otherwise there is great danger of misunderstanding. And, so many western scholars are drowning under the misunderstanding - Indian philosophy is nothing but desperation, dejection, negativity. They don't know anything about the higher. What do these fellows, wretched fellows know, what wonderful worlds Hindu philosophy is describing - if only we sacrifice and strive to attain to that *Maya* and freedom ultimately.

"We see then, that beyond the *Maya*, the *Vedantic* philosophers find something which is not bound by *Maya*". Most wonderful statement. When do you see that there is something beyond *Maya*. If you are beyond *Maya*, then there is no need to see. But, *Maya* helps us to see that there is something beyond this *Maya*, "which is not bound by *Maya*; and, if we can get there, we shall not be bound by *Maya*".

But, what is that which is beyond *Maya*? That is the next question that comes. Just now I mentioned, even what we call the personal God is within the realm of *Maya*.

What is the difference then, between us and God, personal God?

The difference is, He is the Lord of *Maya* - *Māyādhīsha*.

We are *Māyādhīna* - under the control of, we are under the control of *Maya*!

And, He is the controller of *Maya*. So, He can do whatever He likes.

In fact how does He release us - through *Maya* or through beyond *Maya*? If He wants to release us, if God wants to release us, if *Guru* wants to release us, how is He going to accomplish that? You know, how he does? It is a tremendous statement you need to think about it. If there is no mind, there is no realisation! *If there is no mind there is no realisation!* If there is no mind, you can't think of God. You can't think of anything.

Therefore that releasing knowledge *Mahavakya*, the *Guru* gives in the form of *Shravana*, *Manana*, and *Niddhidhyasana*. He gives that. What is that beautiful saving *Mantra* he gives, ***tat tvam asi!*** ***Thou art that!!*** And, the disciple has to do *Manana* and *Niddhidhyasana*, and finally understand himself. Make it his, and say, 'I am *Bramhan*' 'I Am that'.

But this, all this process has to take place where? Not beyond mind. If we are, we are eight hours a day we are beyond the mind, and when we get up, what do we see ourselves? The same miserable people. But a person has to go beyond this mind. That is called this - Going beyond mind and going into deep sleep are not the same. So, *Guru* also has to work through the mind. God also has to work through the mind. And, mind falls within *Maya* or outside *Maya*? Only within *Maya*! *“This idea is in some form or the other, the common property of all religions”*.

*“But, with the Vedanta it is only the beginning of religion and not the end. The idea of a personal God, the ruler and creator of this universe, as He has been styled, the ruler of Maya or nature is not the end of these Vedantic ideas; It is only the beginning’*. What a statement! Every religion practically is falling head over heels to establish that idea, that personal God is the highest reality. What does *Vedanta* say? It is only the beginning of *Vedanta* not the end of *Vedanta*.

And, I will give you something very interesting. Once *Swami Bramhanandaji* was asked about spiritual life, and he made such a statement, which we would not like to hear again. He made the statement, *‘Spiritual life starts after you experience Nirvikalpa Samadhi’*. I am not going to go into the details, but he is absolutely right. But, it doesn’t mean we are not so, we are slowly qualifying. It’s like saying, you know, when is a person awarded PhD, he has to go through this elementary school, middle school, high school, then college, then University, then only he is qualified for getting PhD.

The personal God is the beginning of religion or spirituality. What a tremendous statement Swamiji makes . The ruler of *Maya* or nature called *Ishwara* - that’s a technical word, is not the end of Vedantic ideas, it is only the beginning. But, beginning means still you grow. *“The idea grows and grows and grows, until the Vedantists find that, He who, he thought, was standing outside, is he himself and is in reality within. He is the one who is free but who through limitations thought he was bound”*. What is the statement? Let me read again, *He who thought he is standing outside is he himself*. ( 40:10 mins )

Every spiritual aspirant knows; ‘I thought God is....’ What does he come to? I thought he was there, but I know I am myself that God! And is reality. I am the reality’. He is the one who is free. But who through limitation, what a beautiful word *Avidya -Ignorance*; Ignorance means what, limitation, Through limitation thought he is bound. We are all thinking we are bound. In reality, thinking we are bound, and really to be bound are two totally different aspects. Simple example, in your dream you may be thinking that you are somewhere else, but in reality, you are not anywhere else but here. Upon waking up, what do you find? You are only here.

I’m sure you want to hear a nice joke. You know, there were three Indians, three Indian students and they were all struggling. You know, cooking, and their moms cooking and everything they were missing. They were all living in a room. One day, suddenly, a *Jinn* appeared and said, ‘I will give one boon to each one of you’. So, he asked one South Indian boy, ‘What is your wish?’ He said, ‘I wish I am with my parents in Madras’. ‘Done!’ The fellow disappeared. The second fellow is a Gujarati fellow, ‘What is your wish?’ ‘I wish I was in Gujarat with my parents. I am not happy here’. ‘Done!’ That fellow disappeared. And,

the *Jinn* turned to the last fellow and said, 'What is your wish'? 'I feel lonely without those two fellows'. 'Done'! They found themselves....

So, *Avidya* means limitations. *Maya* means limitation and the idea of limitation cannot be thought about, until its opposite thought, that I am unlimited. How do you know you are black? Because, you know what is white. How do you know you are a man? Because, you know what is a woman. How do you know this is daytime? Because, you know what is night time. This is a tremendous idea. Without thinking of the opposite we can never know what an idea is. That is the nature of this world.

So, what is the purpose of *Maya*? It gives you the idea you are bound. How do you know you are bound? Because, there is - behind there is an idea, you are really boundless, limitless. What a tremendous idea! And, that is the idea which makes us struggle. Everyone of us are struggling, every second we are breathing. What purpose? To get out of this limitation, binding, we want to attain to freedom. That is the most wonderful idea.

The essence of the entire, this third lecture of *Swami Vivekananda*, the title is '*Maya and freedom*'. *Maya* is that which makes us realise we are bound and it is not a happy state. And, it makes us, by kicking, or by persuasion, or by cajoling, slowly to get out of *Maya*. And, *Maya* is the one, which gives us the idea. *Maya* is the one which kickstarts. And, *Maya* is the one which gives us the guidance. And, *Maya* is the the one which bestows its Grace upon us, and slowly takes us out of *Maya*. And that *Maya*, by *Sri Ramakrishna* is called *Mahamaya*. *Maa Kali*, *Maa Saraswati*, *Maa Mahalaxmi*, any form of the Divine Mother is that *Mahamaya*.

What is Her function? To help Her children to get to Her real nature. Now, I used a word for the sake of talk - that function of *Maya* was to take each one of us beyond *Maya*. That should not give rise to the idea that there are two realities - One is *Maya* and one is something beyond *Maya*. No! One aspect of *Maya* is *Maya* - limitation. Another aspect of that *Maya* is complete freedom. That is what *Sri Ramakrishna* put in his inimitable words, "*Bramhan and Shakti are the obverse and reverse of the same coin*".

With this we conclude the third lecture of *Swami Vivekananda*, '*Maya and freedom*'. Without *Maya* we will not have any idea of freedom, and without the idea of freedom we won't struggle to go beyond *Maya*. The mission of *Maya* is to give us an idea that there is something beyond *Maya* and ultimately to take us to that idea of....

Once *Swami Brahmanandji* was asked, 'What is the function of the *Guru*'? You know, in India, Hindus consider *Guru* even greater than God. In fact the idea is, God only manifests in the form of the *Guru*. *Swami Brahmananda* replied. "*The function of the Guru is to catch hold, take hold of the hand of the disciple and through right wrong, up and down, hill and dale, slowly take him, guide him to his Ishta Devta or chosen deity. And, he points out - there is your chosen deity*". That was the statement made by *Swami Brahmanandaji*. Then the disciple asked him, 'Then what happens to the *Guru*'? Then *Brahmanandaji* made a tremendous statement, "*Guru reveals Himself as your Ishta Devta*". Not that *Guru* is taking you to your *Ishta Devta*. *Guru* is none other than your *Ishta Devta*!

But, you cannot understand your *Ishta Devta*, if He comes in that form. So, He will come in a form that you can understand, you can appreciate, you can follow, you can get inspired. And, He will slowly take your hand, and then take you, as though he is taking you, as though, as if He is, you are travelling, as if you are progressing. These are all ideas within *Maya*.

And in the end what is it? The progression is only in the mind, no geographical location is meant by that. That *Guru* Himself, when the disciple is ready, he disappears and appears as *Ishta Devta* and absorbs the disciple into himself, with the knowledge, we are not separate but we are one and the same.

Now, the next topic, the fourth lecture of *Swami Vivekananda* is - '*Maya and the evolution of the conception of God*'. All this time I've been talking about *Maya*'s function is slowly to evolve, and the highest concept of God is that which is beyond both *Maya*, mind and body. And how, this marvellous truth, How *Maya* helps us by helping us to grow, to evolve. That is the next topic of *Swamiji*'s beautiful idea of '*Maya and the evolution of the concept of God*'.

I'll just give you one sentence and stop this talk. *Swamiji* says, as man grows, God also grows and that is the central concept which he elaborates through this fourth lecture which we will discuss in our next talk.

ॐ शान्ति शान्ति शान्ति ।

***Om Shanti Shanti Shanti!***

( 46:55 mins )