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JNANA YOGA – 23

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

Om Namah Sri yathirajaaya Vivekananda Suraye

Satchit sukha swarupaaya swamine taapahaariney

In our last class we have discussed a most wonderful idea that Swami Vivekananda had proposed before us – **How Maya is there to help us to go forward towards God.** This is a most wonderful idea if we really know what we are talking about. Until this time, even today, for Hindus Maya means something dangerous, something that is tempting, something that is a hell, but how Sri Ramakrishna had updated this idea, which was there originally in the Vedas and they called it Aparavidya. You must have heard, all **knowledge** is divided into 2 categories.

1. **Paravidya**
2. **Aparavidya.**

Now why does Veda give us the idea of Aparavidya and what is its function? First of all, what is Aparavidya? It is called Maya. What a marvelous freedom Hinduism had given to Hindu society. Everywhere in every religion it is idea of bondage. Society has given freedom to society, but bound religion. Fortunately for Hindus, Hinduism bound the society, it did not grow, but it gave complete freedom; however, crazy an idea. Just look at it, **Aparavidya means lower knowledge, secular knowledge.** What does secular knowledge include? It includes Yajur Veda, Sama Veda, Atharvana Veda. Where are all the Upanishads? It is in these Mayas. Then, why do they say that Upanishad is telling that all knowledge is divided into two and it is telling that there is the supreme knowledge. Who is telling? The Upanishads. Who is telling that I am also within the lower knowledge? It is the Upanishad again that is telling. It looks like a contradiction, but there is no contradiction.

What does the Upanishad mean to say? All teachings even if you byheart all the Vedas, if your life is not transformed by this, then it is totally useless. This simple statement has been so pithily and in the most novel way has been expressed by Sri

Ramakrishna. We call him, you know, Takur. What did He say? That an almanac predicts that there will be so much of rain in any given year and you take the almanac and squeeze it, what do you get, not a single drop of rain.

Another statement, the vulture soars very high, but where is its sight? On the charnel pit, rotting carcass. What does Sri Ramakrishna mean by this, who are the vultures? People who talk high and big that this world is Maya etc, etc. The fellows who say that this world is Maya, they prove that they are within Maya. Meaning that they are the lowest people who take a long time to evolve. Whereas, even a simple person, he might become very learned and wise person.

We discussed this point that **Maya is the most helpful force in this world**. How does Maya help us? By making us go through this treadmill of suffering, grinding us, roasting us, barbecuing us. When will you turn to God, when you are eating Rasagulla or when you are having terrible suffering? You know there are people who say we do not believe in God. They do not know what they are talking about. When they are enjoying that is when they talk we do not believe in God, but when suffering comes even then they might say verbally that we do not believe in God, but what are they doing practically? They are trying to escape suffering. What is God, what is spiritual life? Trying to escape suffering, trying to go beyond limitations. This is the idea Swami Vivekananda wants to bring to us.

Before we go to this new chapter Maya and the evolution of the concept of God, we have to keep in mind what is Maya's function. To take us beyond Maya. What takes us beyond Maya, if we are within Maya do we have any power to go beyond Maya by ourselves? We do not but if Maya helps us. How does Maya help us? By making us acutely aware. My child you are suffering so much. You know the psychology, when you are happy, you cease to struggle. If I ask you that question, when you are eating nice rasagulla did you ever struggle, why am I in this hell, why am I made to enjoy this beautiful sweet, would you ever question yourself? Absolutely no. but when you are in slightest suffering, what do you do? Even unconsciously you struggle to get out of that suffering. Now Maya becomes extremely gracious. How do we know? Because when we go through real hell that is the time when Maya is of greatest help to us.

In case we do not understand or we do not want to accept this idea, let me remind you. Many of our devotees know after the Kurukshetra war was over, Krishna Bhagavan was returning to Dwaraka, what happened then? Kunti went to bid farewell to Bhagavan Krishna. What was her prayer? Oh! Lord grant me more and more difficulties again and again. It is a beautiful hymn – Kunti's prayer to Bhagavan Krishna. Will any one of us pray to God grant me more difficulty, demote me? We never do that even by mistake. If we do by mistake, we do prayaschitta to get over it quickly before Bhagavan

could hear it, that email could reach. Yes, this is what we do. But Kunti deliberately did it.

There is a statement in Bhavatum which says when I want to bestow my greatest grace on man, the first thing I do is take away all that belongs to him and pour upon him the greatest grief. This is called the grace of Bhagavan. We are not evolved enough to understand this statement.

This is the essence of what Swamiji wants to say:

1. The mission of Maya is only one. It wants to take each one of us beyond Maya. That is the first idea
2. The second idea I would like to give you is, these are very important ideas we must always keep in mind. The second idea is Maya it looks as though is taking us to God who is different from Maya. No, Sri Ramakrishna used to say Brahman and Shakti are obverse and reverse of the same coin.

So, what is the purpose of Maya or what is Maya? Maya is the aparaprakruti, my lower nature. What is its function? To take us to the real nature of God. How does Maya do it? Slowly by giving us more trouble, more suffering, more misery, more pain. How does pain help us? Pain awakens our sense of discrimination, makes us think and slowly makes us practice discrimination and say this is not right. I am must get out of this place. **Uttishtata, jagrata.** It awakens us. In History, we have seen nobody has awakened by being happy, they go to sleep. Maya has this greatest function. It is the power of Bhagavan, power of Brahman. That was what we have understood. Two points again to remind you.

1. Function of Maya is to take us beyond Maya.
2. Second, Maya is none other than another form of Brahman.

Now, the fourth lecture on Jnana Yoga by **Swami Vivekananda – Maya and the evolution of conception of God:**

We are all the time evolving. Let me give you a brief introduction before we proceed. Maybe we have come to Sri Ramakrishna 20 years back or 30 years back. At that time, we read about Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, Holy Mother. Yesterday you read or today you read, is our understanding of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother, Swamiji, or anybody else or Upanishads or Gita, etc, is it the same? The understanding we had 30 years back or 40 years back? Every time we are discovering new meaning and how are we discovering? Because our mind is evolving. It is developing the understanding capacity. How does it develop the understanding capacity? By becoming finer and

finer. How does it become finer and finer? By developing one particular quality, what is that quality called? **Sattva guna**. So, slowly through happiness and unhappiness, through misery and bliss, we are slowly progressing from tamo guna to sattva guna. This progress from tamas to rajas to sattva is what we call as progress in life. We are learning all the time. So, also how did we come to the concept especially vedantic concept of the idea of God.

Finally, to summarize, what is the vedantic concept of God? There are **3 concepts of God** according to whether we are in tamo guna or rajo guna or sattva guna. **Three concepts of God:**

1. The lowest concept of God is – He is with form like us. He has different names and He has different qualities. This is the lowest concept of God.
2. When we evolve a little bit higher, we means our mind becomes more subtler, more capable of understanding, higher concept of God comes. What is that concept? God is without form, without name, but with qualities. I will give you an example also. If you ask an ordinary man if there is God, he may point out even a stone, a piece of wood. Any stone is alright, you know some of you may have gone to Kedarnath, Badrinath. Who is Kedarnath? Shiva's form. What is that form? Somebody found a huge rock, it is lying there and somebody said this is Lord Shiva himself. They started putting flowers and worshipping it and then somebody else came and somebody else came and a rich man came. He just put up the scaffolding and then now it became a regular temple. For Hindus it doesn't matter at all. For most people it is the stone. You remember, Jaipur Maharaja I think asked Swami Vivekananda, why Hindus worship idols? He said nobody worships idol. He said idol is just a representation for an ordinary human mind, he wants to think about God and this represents somehow. Nobody worships a piece of stone. The second higher concept is God is without name, without forms, but qualities. Why qualities? Because we are always looking for certain qualities. Very interestingly, what are the qualities we are looking for? I can tell you immediately:
 - a. The first quality we are looking for is peace. We never want our minds to be agitated.
 - b. The second quality we want is the assurance, the security that no danger is ever coming to us, no one is going to harm us/ hurt us/ rob us and deprive us of whatever we have.
 - c. The third quality is we want to be more and still more and still more happy. We want to be happy.

There are all thoughts/ideas in the mind called vrittis. I am unhappy, is it a thought or not? I am happy, is it a thought or not? I am peaceful, is it a thought or not? I am not peaceful, I am restless, is it a thought or not? These are all thoughts. So long as we

are at that level of the mind, we have only one idea – God exists in the form of qualities. What quality you may say. God exists in the form of the thought, idea of unhappiness. God exists in the form of thought of, idea of happiness. God manifests in the form of peace. God exists in the form of security. We want that idea of God with these qualities, these gunas, but we do not want negative qualities. We always want auspicious qualities – *ashesha kalyana guna sagaraha* – Ramanuja's description of Bhagavan Narayana. This is also a lower concept of God but higher than thinking God has form and name and therefore qualities. That means what? The man who think of the second concept of God has evolved much. It is not that God has evolved, it is the mind of this man that has evolved.

3. What is the highest concept of God? You cannot have any concept – that is the highest concept of God. He is beyond thought, mind, and description. *Namo prabhu vakya mana atita*. But these are not things intellectually we can reach there. These are things we have to evolve and experientially we must become those ideas. When our mind goes beyond this body concept, then ideas will remain. When our mind is attempting to go beyond the mind, then only this idea comes. This idea that God is beyond the thought and mind and description, mana vachana atita, then how do we understand God? We have to think about that God, we have not reached that God. How do we think about God? Really speaking, it is difficult, but our ancestors have given us a formula – sat chit ananda. What is the translation? **Existence, knowledge, bliss absolute**. Not manifested existence, not manifested knowledge, not manifested happiness but absolute. Means existence per se, knowledge per se, and bliss per se. when do we experience it? We get a glimpse of it when we are in deep sleep. You know, in deep sleep, why we are so happy? Because almost, I do not say exactly, but almost it is existence, knowledge, bliss absolute.

Let us keep this in the background. Swamiji starts with this idea in his fourth lecture – Maya and the Evolution of the conception of God. Everyone must be judged according to his own ideal and by that of anyone else's. We have seen how the ideas of the Devas came. Let me recollect what Swamiji was referring to. Our ancestors, means before we came to this present state of mind, people used to worship ghosts, spirits and then slowly the idea of the Devas came. Deva means one who shines. Why did the idea come, what can the ghost do? A ghost can enter into a closed room through the wall. That means what? They have more freedom, they have more power, and to have more power, they must be free from gross things which limit us. Through the body, we cannot enter through the wall. But if we are spirits, what is the spirit? Subtle body. Through subtle body gross wall, therefore gross wall is no obstruction for a subtle body, it can go anywhere. How much time will it take for a spirit to go to India and will it be paying any money? What a beautiful idea you know. What is the point here? Our

ancestors were acutely aware that we are bound, we cannot do much. Then they were thinking, what is it? They believed in spirits. Then slowly the idea of spirits frightened them. What is it? Ok, they had this power, but they are always waiting like tigers to pounce upon you, to eat you up, to cause harm to you. We like the idea of their freedom, but we certainly don't like the idea that they are going to eat us up.

Then came the idea – is there somebody who has at least that subtle power, but who only blesses, who only help us to fulfill our desires to make us happier people. Yes, that is how the idea came – Devas, Indra, Chandra, Varuna, etc. Then the concept came that these people as we are living on this earth, these people also must be dwelling in some place and what is that place where they dwell? It is called heaven, paradise, swarga loka, etc. If they are dwelling in that place, is there any way for me to go to that place and enjoy the same privileges that they are going to have. Our whole first part of the Veda has the way how to attain to heaven; yagnas and yagas are there.

You know the story of Nachiketa's father in Katopanishad. Where was he trying to go? You remember, he could not go. You know why he could not go? He wanted to take his cows also to heaven. He could not give up. What is this man going to do with these old cows? He has to give up his body, he has to change his mind because heavenly happiness requires what type of body and mind? Heavenly body and heavenly mind. The higher happiness is possible only for a refined body and refined mind. This is the idea Swami Vivekananda is going to give us also.

But point here is that this idea of the Devas came, but when we look at even vedic ideals of these Devas, some of the Devas like Indra, etc., they got drunk. They did so many immoral things. You know the story – Gautama Rishi was there, what was his wife's name? Ahalya. This Ahalya was a very beautiful lady according to whom? According to Indra. So, he came and he took the form of her husband to beguile her and they had an affair. Then Gautama Rishi came and he saw and he cursed Indra. Now we call him sahasraksha. The Indra was very much ashamed and went away. What is the point now? These are kinds of Gods that are there.

Another story you know – Mahabharata's story. Arjuna went to be with his real father Indra. Who came to tempt him? I think Urvashi, anyway one devakanya, she came to tempt him. He said "mother, my ancestor has married you." That lady you know what she said? "These are the rules on the earth, they don't apply here in heaven. Here there is no husband and wife business. Anybody comes as a husband and all of us are wives only." Then, he said "I do not accept it. I have reverence to my father. Therefore I look upon you as my mother." She cursed him as what? You will become a neutral gender, eunuch, and then this Arjuna was very sad. He came to heaven to enjoy. What was his fate? He was cursed. He was a very handsome man before going to heaven. This heavenly maidens fell in love with whom? With an earthly person. What does that

show, which quality of human being is better, heavenly pumpkin is better or earthly pumpkin is better?

This is the idea we get now. Swamiji is cautioning us. When these people wrote these epics, these puranas, when they are talking about these gods and goddesses, this conflict never arose in them because their minds were at that level where everything made perfect sense, perfectly rational. Therefore, when we presume to criticize, to judge others, Swamiji is bringing one of the most wonderful laws of happiness and **Jesus Christ** put it in the most wonderful way. **Judge not for thou shalt be judged as thou judge other people.** It is most wonderful and who repeated it in the most beautiful way? **Holy Mother – Do not find the faults of other people for thou shalt be found with the same faults. Stop finding faults with others and start finding fault with yourself.** It is a most wonderful psychological insight, do you know why? If I don't have that particular fault, can I recognize that fault in the others? If I don't know what is called thieving, can I say you are a thief? If I am not a generous person, can I find another person who is not generous? You see this is what we have to study and think over. If we do not have any fault, we cannot find any fault with others. This is the psychology. Even to recognize we must have those faults ourselves. When we focus our attention upon ourselves, what do we discover? We have got even more faults than the other people. That is the first step towards becoming more spiritual.

Swamiji is telling **everyone must be judged according to his own ideal and not by that of anyone else's.** If only this scientific psychological law is understood and practiced, would any follower of one religion criticize the other religion? Will Hinduism criticize anybody else? In fact, that is the greatness of Hinduism. It says God can be reached through any particular path provided the person is really sincere about it. This is the greatest contribution – **Ekam sat vipra bahuda vadanti.** **Bhagavan Krishna** reinforces that idea – **All are coming through various paths only to me. I am the only reality.**

Swami Vivekananda's beautiful language, poetic language. We have seen how the ideas of the Devas came. At the same time, we know that these Devas were only at first the powerful beings and nothing more. Most of you are horrified to find that the ancient Gods sometimes did things which to us are very repugnant. We entirely forget that we are the persons of the 19th century and these Gods were beings existing thousands of years ago. We also forget that the people who worshipped these Gods found nothing incongruous in their character, found nothing to frighten them because they were very much like themselves. I will repeat – These gods and goddesses were very much like whom? Like the people who created them because we can only create anything out of our own image.

Now I will stop here for a second and ask you one question – Supposing you have never come across Sri Ramakrishna's life, you have never come Sri Ramakrishna's worshipping Mother Kali. You know when I was a child, in the village, the very name Mother Kali used to scare us out. It was a nightmare. We would never go anywhere near. The first reason is that she is a blood-thirsty goddess. Secondly, most of the lower caste people only used to worship her and they used to give what we call 'bali', offering you know, killing of chickens, birds, goats, buffaloes, and sometimes they were reputed to even give human beings. In fact, that was practiced in Kolkatta Kali Ghat for a long time. Now it is rare, but even now they do it sometimes. Not in Kolkatta, there are certain sects, we call them 'Kapalikas.' But it is true that there are people who do this. Really they believe in all those things.

Now, what is the point? I am coming to my question – If Sri Ramakrishna had not given us the understanding of what Mother Kali is, what would have been our idea about Mother Kali even today? She is a blood-thirsty goddess and then it is very dangerous to go anywhere near her. We would have still been cherishing that idea. That means we are criticizing the goddess and we are criticizing the people indirectly who created that kind of goddess. It is not gone. If any other religion criticizes any other religion and says you are very undeveloped religion, ours is the only way, what are they doing really? They are only judging others by their own standards. That means they are not evolved beings at all. This is what Swamiji is telling that if we have to judge these gods and goddesses, means what? The ideas of these gods and goddesses came out from that kinds of minds which were capable of thinking of only that kind of ideas. What would be the correlation between the people's lifestyle and these ideas? What we are that would be our concept of God.

Why am I talking so much about these things? Because even today we have not gone out. You know Ravi Varma's painting of Sri Rama, Sita, etc., and all that, have you seen that? If it is a painting by North Indians, how does Krishna look like? Like a North Indian. We cannot get rid of it. You know if you go to Africa and look at the painting of Jesus, you know how he looks? Curly hair and big thick nose and the lips would be very thick. Unconsciously these ideas protrude because their idea of themselves only protrudes into the idea. What knowledge is that God should be only a human being, can God not be a mosquito? If a mosquito were to worship God or paint God or sculpt God, what do you think it will sculpt? A huge mosquito with such proboscis that even from here it can sting a person in Australia, that is the idea of a mosquito's God. Is it not a fact? We yet have not outgrown our human concept of God. Therefore, we have no right to judge those people.

Swamiji is coming to that point also. We entirely forget that we are persons of the 19th century and these Gods were beings existing thousands of years back. We also forget that the people who worshipped these gods found nothing incongruous in their

character. I may also remark that is the one great lesson we have to learn throughout our lives. In judging others, we always judge them by our own ideals. That is not as it should be. Everyone must be judged according to his own ideal and not by that of anyone else. We are always trying to judge other gods by our own, others ideals by our ideals, others motives by our motives. We must not take this stand to which we incline but we must ourselves into the position of thought and life of those early times.

What is the point, why Swamiji is bringing this? Don't forget the caption. What is the caption? As we grow, our idea of God also grows. As the idea of the previous people, our ancestors, so also their idea of gods and goddesses. But for them there is nothing contradictory or incongruous of their idea. They never thought this is wrong, this is not the right idea about gods, we must have some other idea of god. They never had this kind of ideas. But as the people slowly grew, their understanding has grown and said that there is something limited, there is something weak or even negative in the idea of gods and goddesses that we have at this present moment. They slowly resolve that conflict. Swamiji is poking fun at us and says – people in future may laugh at our ideas. Let me pass one remark. You know you ask Christians, you ask Jews, you ask especially the Muslims – Do you accept that the Hindus, the Christians, the Muslims, the Buddhists all are travelling towards the one and the same God? Most of them would not accept. How do we know? What is the proof? The proof is if anyone believed that every religion is a valid path to the same God, then there would be no conversion. What is the idea of conversion? That you will not reach your goal through your path, you have to come to our path. That means our path is right path, true path, real path and yours is not

Sri Ramakrishna had debunked all of them and said whatever path anybody is following is irrelevant. What is relevant? Are you sincere? Do you really want to go to God? Then God himself will catch your hand and He will slowly lead you very soon to the destination which is Himself. People in future may laugh at our ideas. So let us say after 1000 years, a great Christian saint comes and he looks at the idea of Christian people having now. He will laugh and tell, how stupid it is, is this what Jesus Christ had really taught, how these people have grossly misunderstood Christianity. Similarly a great Muslim saint, will he laugh at our ideas or not?

There was a science fiction story that I read many many years back. Our earth was completely destroyed and there were some alien people from some other planet say after 5 billion billion years and they were passing by and they found out this dead planet and they stopped their vehicle and then they dug a little bit and saw all these wonderful computers, our Vedanta Center, our audience and all those things. Then they came to an astonishing conclusion; how stupid these earthlings were to destroy themselves. It is true. It is terrible. We do not know what is God's will, but I hope it is not God's will. I am 150% sure it is not going to happen you know why? What is the basis of my so

much of optimism? Because **Swami Vivekananda** said “***I have given food for 1000 years.***” Nothing will happen for 1000 years. What right do they have to assume that the Jehovah of the ancient Jews must represent the conventional idea of the God of the present day? At the same time, we should not forget that there will come men after us who will laugh at our ideas of religion and God in the same way that we laugh at those of the ancient.

Yes, Sri Ramakrishna came for this purpose. Maybe after 200 years or 500 years, the **sarva dharma samanvaya**, every religion is a true valid path leading to the same goal will be accepted by everybody. Even now a great evolution has taken place. The present **pope** has said “***every religion is a valid religion in its own right.***” He has accepted it, but wholeheartedly they don't say that it is valid but ours is somewhat better. That idea they will come to. That also is a low concept of religion. What is the right concept of religion? We have to understand when **Sri Ramakrishna** says “***jato mat tato path***” What we have to understand is that the emphasis is not on the path, but emphasis is on the person who walks the path. If I am sincere, whatever I do is the correct path. If I am not pure and sincere even the most valid path also is of not much use really speaking. This is the right understanding of Sri Ramakrishna's ‘jato mat tato path.’”

Next, **the golden thread of unity**. There is a beautiful verse in the Bhagavad Gita. Bhagavan Krishna says echoing this idea that everybody's idea is good at the level of their growth and understanding, evolution.

mattah parataram nanyat kincid asti dhananjaya mayi sarvam idam protam sutre manigana iva

मत्तः परतरं नान्यत्किञ्चिदस्ति धनञ्जय । मयि सर्वमिदं प्रोतं सूत्रे मणिगणा इव ॥

Bhagavan Krishna gives a imagery. There is a beautiful garland, various flowers; small flowers, big flowers, fragrant flowers, beautiful varieties of colors, but what is it that is holding all these flowers? There is one thread and without that thread all these things would fall apart. What the Lord means to say is I am that thread. Who is supporting Christianity? That Lord. Who is supporting Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Bahaism, Jainism, Sikhism, or any ism? It is only that same Lord. Interestingly, we must not be so narrow minded. Who is supporting goodness? The same Lord. Who is supporting selflessness? The same God. Who is supporting wickedness and evil, who is supporting? It is the same God. Who is supporting unhappiness? It is the same God. Who is supporting utter selfishness? It is the same God.

Yes, then you may doubt we don't want a God with selfishness, we don't want God with this negative ideas. You know what is the point? These are not negative qualities.

When they are applied negatively, they are negative qualities. Let me give one example. Suppose, I say the idea of utter selfishness is manifestation of God. How could God be so utterly selfish? But if I use it in the proper way, I am so selfish that I want only one thing in life, I don't want to think about anything else or any other profit, I want only God. This is my selfishness. Is it good or is it evil? It is good. I will be very angry with whatever I do if that doesn't take me to God. Is it righteous anger or wrong type of anger? I desire only God. I want to embrace only God. I will become angry with God. I am terribly thirsty only for God. I am greedy only for God. So, is it a good idea or bad idea? Supposing somebody says I want to be very selfless and he goes on forgetting God. Is it a good idea? Everything has got what is called as positive aspect. Whether a quality is negative or positive doesn't depend upon the quality, it depends upon what is the aim towards which we are using it. Everything has got a positive side and a negative side.

Yet through all these various conceptions runs the golden thread of unity and it is purpose of the Vedanta to discover this thread. As Lord Krishna says "**I am the thread that runs through all these various ideas each one of which is like a pearl.**" It is the duty of the Vedanta to establish this connecting thread. Swamiji is giving us one of the most valuable ideas. Don't look at the variety of flowers, means don't look externally. Find out what is the thread, where is the unity. Go and ask a fanatic Muslim, what is your goal in life? He says "I want to go to God." Isn't it? Even to be more down to earth, he says "I want to be happy." Ask a Hindu, what he wants? He also says "I want to be happy." Who doesn't want to be happy? So, that is the connecting thread, unity.

We are all travelling towards God only. Having said this, Swamiji also indirectly expresses this beautiful idea – All the selfishness and unselfishness, good and evil, they have their own special function in the evolution of human mind. I am asking you one question, had there been no evil would there be evolution? Would we be where we are now? Just a simple example I will give. If we were all very happy walking, you know the idea of finding out something alternative to reach a place quickly or a horse/bicycle/car/train/airplane – all these came out of what? The desire to overcome limitations to reach whatever be our destination quicker, but this is all happening in the external field. It must also work on the internal field that is most important.

As we grow, God also grows – This is the next topic. The great mistake is in recognizing the evolution of the worshippers while we do not acknowledge the evolution of the worshipped. He is not credited with the advance that his devotees have made. That is to say, you and I, the representing ideas have grown. These Gods also as a representing ideas have grown. This is the most wonderful psychological insight. We are all committing the mistake. When you find out, for example, you know Da Vinci. He had made drawings for a flying airplane. When did he do it? At least 4 centuries back.

Now they have tested it and perfectly it works. What was the problem at that time? He was far ahead in his ideas, but the implements necessary to make that airplane, those things were missing at his time. The man who could conceive up such wonderful ideas, he must have evolved with his ideas. Not only that, our vedantic ideas of the absolute Brahman, the impersonal Brahman, how many of us have grown to that idea? While we do not acknowledge the evolution of the worshipped, we only recognize the evolution of the worshippers. He is not credited with the advance that the devotees have made. That is to say you and I, who are you and I, representing ideas. This is the most wonderful idea. I will come back to it.

We have grown. These Gods also as representing ideas have grown. We have grown? Who are you? You are an idea. Who am I? I am an idea. If I ask you what is your opinion about me. Will you talk about me or will you talk about your idea of me, what are you talking? Only your idea. You have formed certain idea; good, bad, wonderful, not so wonderful at all, boring, etc. How do I know? You are sitting and how do I know that you are thinking that I am boring? Does it require God to come and tell me? The moment you are nodding your head with whatever I am saying, that is a definite proof of what is your idea about me or at least about my talk. Is it not a fact? Yes, we are all growing all the time and we have to be extremely grateful for all our ancestors because we stand on the knowledge that they passed on to us. It is our duty to now to grow from where they gave us our starting point. That is how science grows. That is how arts grow. That is how everything grows including our body also. Your ancestors body was so different. You know what would have happened. So, as ideas we grow, so also our concepts about the world, about ourselves, and about God; about tattva, about hita, and about purushartha.

I will wrap up this talk with this remark. You know about 14 centuries before Indian schools of philosophy were six. Then they coalesced into three:

1. Purva mimamsa and uttara mimamsa
2. Nyaya and vaisheshika.
3. Sankhya and yoga.

They ruled the roost as we say until this Vedanta took over. Then Vedanta integrated, harmonized, and it grew in its own way. Now, this Vedanta had again split into 3 schools::

1. Dvaita (Dualism).
2. Vishishtadvaita (Qualified non-dualism).
3. Advaita (Complete non-dualism).

Then so much of quarrel was going on, who is right, who is real, whose concept is real. Then Sri Ramakrishna came and said, through Swami Vivekananda, He preached. You

know what he preached? There need not be any conflict at all because these 3 ideas are from 3 standpoints. Lowest is the dualism, that is the first step. Next higher step is qualified non-dualism. What is the highest step? It is not a step, it is the very ground, what is it? Complete non-dualism. This is how man grows from dualism to qualified non-dualism to complete non-dualism. It doesn't mean, it is very important for us to remember, all of us are growing from dualism to qualified non-dualism to complete non-dualism, no each one of us are at different stages of evolution. But what Sri Ramakrishna wants to teach? The lesson is all are harmonious, all are necessary, all are good. There is no need to be quarreling, conflicting with each other. You accept where you are and you move forward. One day, all of us will reach that goal. *Ekam sat vipra bahudha vadanti*. This is the idea Swami Vivekananda wants to bring in his 4th lecture – **As we evolve, our conception of God also evolves.**

Om shanti shanti shantihi.