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JNANA YOGA – 26

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

Om Namah Sri yathiraajaaya Vivekananda Suraye

Satchit sukha swarupaaya swamine taapahaariney

We are discussing Swami Vivekananda's Jnana Yoga lectures – **Maya and the Conception of God**. As man grows, means as man's understanding grows, his idea of God also grows. So, the ancient people, means we in our past lives many aeons back, we were in that state. We were worshipping various Gods and in course of time our idea of God is slowly growing. There is a very wonderful history of the growth of man. As man is growing, God grows, understanding about God grows, the ideas about God grow. As ideas about God grow, also the understanding about man also grows.

There has been a beautiful quotation. A Brahmin once met a Greek philosopher. There was a talk between them. The Brahmin asked "what is the goal of your life?" The philosopher replied "it is to understand God." The Brahmin retorted "how could you understand God unless you understand man." Such a beautiful reply. When we look at our idea of God, it is nothing but the idea of what we think about ourselves and about others.

So, let us intersperse Swamiji's lecture and go on discussing. Today, a very important discussion is going to come up - **How the idea of deva deva, the God of Gods, develop and why it developed, and what is the effect of this development.** Three ideas – How, Why, and its effect. First of all, when we look at the history of religions, let us take some examples.

Before Mosses came, there were various Jewish tribes. They were worshipping various Gods, tribal Gods, and each tribe is fighting with the other tribe. Mosses was an enlightened person, advanced person. He understood and he wanted to bring unity among the tribes. Because without unity politically they will become slaves. Why was India such a slave for so many centuries? For only one reason, lack of unity. You know, as I made many times fun. Mahatma Gandhi was an instrument in bringing about the political freedom of India, Independence of India from the British rule. How did he bring it about? If you remember, he said “cooperate,” they said “no.” He said “non-cooperation,” they said “yes.” Hindus were born with non-cooperation. Why was India, which is such a vast country and there were very brave people and very intelligent (even today, one of the most brainy people are Indians). All the software, unfortunately software will be useless without hardware. We lack in hardware. The west is full of hardware and less of software. A beautiful combination of these two would be a perfect machine and that is the ideal of Ramakrishna Mission. Ramakrishna Mission is often called Ramakrishna machine. From one end goes the uncultured man and from the other end comes out the realized soul – Ramakrishna Machine.

So, Mosses saw if I want to unite all these people, then all their Gods must be united, coalesced into one God, not various Gods. That is how the idea of monotheism had grown. Mono means one, one God. That is how there was fight, there was rebellion, because old ideas do not leave so easily. But he succeeded in it to some extent and slowly it has grown.

Look at Islam, what is the prayer you hear? I don't know what exactly it means – no Gods but God, not many Gods but one God. That is why they have this fanatical view that our idea of God alone is valid and nothing else is valid. That is fanatical, that is exclusivist view, but it did unite various warring tribes.

Swami Vivekananda said if Hinduism wants to become strong, if India wants to become strong, there is only one idea – You must hold on to the idea of impersonal. Because we have great ideas about Gods, going on fighting Vishnu and Shiva and Shakti and all those things. Very religious

people but never cooperate with anybody else. This is the idea. It has a good side and the bad side. The good side is infinite amount of freedom. Each man can worship God in his own way, but the negative side is that they have not brought the beneficial effect on the social side. Religious side, yes; social side, no. What do I mean? Every Hindu has a concept that the personality of the God that I worship, the idea of God that I worship is deva deva, he is parabrahma; Ganesha parabrahma, Durga parabrahma, Karthikeya Parabrahma. Any God is parabrahman and that parabrahman, the supreme reality, includes everything else. This is a wonderful idea, but when it comes to practical side which means the social side, people go on quarreling I am right, you are wrong etc. Only thing is they do not murder each other. It remains at verbal level and not murdering level. Whereas in other religions, it comes down to murdering level. Verbal level is very little, either you accept this or out. That is why Sri Ramakrishna came and preached the most important valid idea necessary for our present growth – Sarva dharma samanvaya.

Coming back to this, in Islam – No Gods, but God. How does this idea come about? We discussed in our last class what Swamiji brought out. He was such a great student of history. He said when man started he was practically alone. Then slowly he discovered the advantage, usefulness of living in groups. When people started living in groups, there would be lot of differences you know like strong man / weak man, there would be advantage / disadvantage. Strong man tries to take advantage of the weak man. They developed the idea if we have to live together we have to tolerate each other. His idea of God also has grown, let us worship many Gods it does not matter, but there need be no quarrel among these various Gods. That was the idea – you keep your God, I keep my God, but let us give and take, let us tolerate each other.

Hinduism you know how it tries to reconcile. This Durga pooja is a prime example. You have got this Durga, Kali, Chandi, Ganesha, Karthikeya, even Mahishasura. Hinduism is the only religion which worships buffaloes, Mahishasura. This is necessary, yes it is necessary. But for Hinduism, deify the whole universe, whatever you see the living, the non-living. Deify the rivers, the mountains, the trees, the plants, the animals, the insects;

everything you deify as though there is an element of divinity within them. That is a totally different subject, I am not going into it. What is important is when man looked at each other and said we have to cooperate; there would be differences. There would be strength and weakness, everything will be there. We have to develop the idea of toleration and once that idea comes, it is extended to the concept of God also, the toleration. But that was also not enough because some men seem to be very powerful and some men seem to be very weak. So, some gods seem to be very powerful and other gods seem to be very weak and that again doesn't solve the problem of cooperation. So, how to go about it?

Then, they found out that among men there would be one person who cannot be made equal to anybody else. He is the strongest person, wisest person, and most benevolent person. There are people like that. First man found such type of people in whom we call sages, wise people. Slowly, among them, the most powerful person who could do whatever he likes and yet like a grandmother very soft, very loving, very benevolent. Might it not be that God is also like that.

Swami Vivekananda, he also had found out, tracing the history of the growth of the concept of God from various gods warring, jealous, and incongruous type of gods into one God – Devadeva or Mahadeva. To have this idea of Mahadeva, 5 concepts/5 ideas are necessary. Even though we use the word Mahadeva/Devadeva, but we imply that there are at least 4 qualities inherent in that idea and the fifth quality is present in some religions and not present in the other religions. I will discuss it shortly.

Man expands by looking at society, at great men, especially an avatara. Swami Vivekananda used to say that we get the highest concept of God by looking at an avatara. Every avatara is the greatest idea about God. How do we get any idea about God? Only by looking at somebody whom we know. The greatest idea we get about man is by looking at an avatara. By understanding an avatara a little, we have a glimpse of the nature of God.

That is why Sri Ramakrishna used to give us an illustration; what is an avatara? There is a man and in front of him there is a huge maidan (plain)

and there is a huge curtain in front of him, what could the man see? Practically nothing. But there is a small hole and through that hole, he is seeing the outside maidan. How much could he see? A small amount. Then what happened? In course of time, he started enlarging the hole and as the hole becomes bigger and bigger, he was able to see what is outside also more and more and finally the whole curtain is rent asunder and he becomes one with the maidan. Now, we get an idea. Who is that hole? An avatara/incarnation. But if that is the hole, we look at the outside, what is that outside? God. What is our idea of God? When we look at any person, it is like a small hole. What is an avatara? A huge hole. As our understanding of avatara grows, our idea of God also expands and expands until we have the perfect idea of avatara, which means there is no difference between me and the avatara. Then there is no difference between me and God. Only then, the man understands “aham brahmasmi.” What a grand idea Sri Ramakrishna is telling about.

To understand this analogy of Sri Ramakrishna, we also need to take another example of Sri Ramakrishna because they are connected. Sri Ramakrishna quotes this in the gospel. Once Sri Rama asked Hanuman “how do you look upon me?” You know what answer he gave? He said “when I consider myself as the body, I consider I am your servant and you are my master. When I consider myself as the jeevatma (similar nature to you but I am small and you are big), then I am the part and you are the whole. When I consider myself as the atma/pure consciousness, there is no difference between you and me.”

देहबुद्ध्या त्वद्दासोऽहं जीवबुद्ध्या त्वदंशकः।
आत्मबुद्ध्या त्वमेवाहम् इति मे निश्चिता मतिः॥

*“Deha Buddhya tu Dasoham Jiva Buddhya Tvadaamsakah |
Atma Buddhya Tvamevaham iti me nishchita matih || ”*

This is a considered opinion because it is the truth. What is the connection here? When a man’s idea about himself or about avatara is small, he considers, I am the body and you are God. There is a vast difference. Later on, the hole expands, that means what? There is after all not that

much difference between you and me. You are the bigger one and I am the smaller one, but I am of the similar nature. A time will come when the hole is totally rent asunder. That means 'tvamevaham' – there is no difference between you and me. As man's worship of avatara grows deeper, his understanding of avatara grows deeper, and these 3 stages grow. First he develops devotion, then he develops a little bit of identity, finally there is no difference between the worshipper and the worshipped.

Now you understand how the concept of Devadeva, the God of gods comes. Let me first read and then we will discuss about it. When these ideas of religion came, a glimpse of something higher and more ethical dawned upon the intellect of mankind. The old gods were found to be incongruous. Therefore, the man gave up these gods or rather they developed higher ideas concerning them. Beautiful language, man gives up old gods means what? He doesn't really give up the gods, but he gives up his narrow ideas (limited ideas) about God and then slowly expands their idea. That is called giving up. Monotheists various tribal gods have been given up means they developed into one powerful God of gods slowly, monotheistic idea. These people took survey as it were of all actions and qualities of God and discarded those which they could not harmonize and kept those which they could understand and combined them and labeled them with one name 'Devadeva' – the God of gods. What happens then? There are no different gods, there is only one God. Then, what is his relationship with all the old gods? All the old gods were the same one God with different names and different forms.

The old Rig vedic idea – एकं सद्भिप्रा बहुधा वदन्ति (*ekaM sadvipraa bahudhaa vadanti*). Truth is one but the sages call the same truth by various names. What a beautiful development of the concept of God. The God to be worshipped to us is no more a simple symbol of power; previously it was power, but something more is required and power is not enough. What is that? He was an ethical God, he loved mankind, and did good to mankind, but the idea of God still remained. What a beautiful development. First the idea of power comes, why power comes? When I am helpless, what do I need? Power. Power alone will not do, the person also must have that sympathy,

that love towards me and that is where power is not enough and ethics is more necessary. What was the old idea of God? He is powerful, but he will protect only those people who butter him. This is the idea of contract. I worship you and you protect us and not protect anybody else, especially my enemies, finish them all.

This was the idea, but as man grew in understanding, he said they are also like me only. They also want to be happy, they also want to be secure, therefore O! lord extend the same protection to them. You protect me as well as you protect them also. Bring about an affinity, harmony, cooperation.

ॐ सह नावतु । सह नौ भुनक्तु । सह वीर्यं करवावहै । (Om Saha Nau-Avatu | Saha Nau Bhunaktu | Saha Viiryam Karavaavahai |). Sangachadwam samvadadwam.

Let us think alike, let us act alike, let us cooperate with each other. That was the idea with which man was slowly growing. What was that? God was an ethical God. What is ethical God? He loved mankind and did good to mankind, but still it is not very clear. These old people increased his ethical significance and increased also his power and he became the most ethical being in the universe as well as almost an almighty. Mind you I am not talking about an impersonal God, we are talking about the personal aspect of God - Saguna sakara ishvara.

So, man's idea made God the most powerful being in the whole world because if he is not most powerful, others will topple him. If he is not the most ethical being in the world, then he is of no use to me. That means what? If he is a capricious God, he is an impulsive God, he is an emotional God, he likes somebody, he says you may be good but I don't like you, this is called zealous/jealous God. You read old testament, God was jealous God, he does not tolerate any man worshipping some other. Means what he became the most powerful, so that he remains one God unchallenged forever.

At the same time you may have power, because we see in society powerful men but very cruel, very partial, making other people slaves. The whole history of mankind is nothing but trying to get power, take advantage and

especially the drug barons. They don't care how many thousands have been killed. Do you know how many thousands they kill, not the police record of how many people they kill. How many people they are killing by supplying this drugs and making the families the most hellish families on earth. No wonder their karma phala will catch up with them and they will suffer later on so much. We don't know the cause why some people suffer so much, indescribable suffering so many people go through. When we look at them, we feel the oppressor, why they are so much oppressed? No my friend, if you accept the idea of law of karma, you will have to accept if someone is suffering then definitely there is a cause behind it.

I said if there must be one God, there must be 4 qualities:

1. The first quality a supreme God must possess is that he must be **sarvavyapi**. He must be everywhere, **omnipresent**. Because if I am in Bourn End and he is at Maidenhead and if I am in trouble, then there is no point in it. By the time he comes, Ram naam satya hai. You understand. Ram naam satya hai means after a man dies, in North India, they go on chanting while carrying his pyre, Ram naam satya hai. Ram naam alone is the truth and everything else is ephemeral. So that is the idea there. So, he should be everywhere. That means he must be right besides, inside, outside everywhere at my beck and call. Will it do? No, it will not do. Yes he is here, but he doesn't know my condition, much less what to do with me and how to help me.
2. So, he must be what? **Sarvajna**. He must know my past, my present, my future and he must have all the remedies at hand. That is called Sarvajna. He is **all knowing,/omniscient**. Will that do? No.
3. He requires a third quality. What is that third quality? He may know everything but he may not have the power to do anything. So, he must have that power whatever he desires to do he should be able to do. This is called **omnipotence/all powerful**. Will it do? No, it will not do. Even then he cannot be the highest supreme God, you know why?

4. Because he may be everywhere, he may know everything, he may have all the power, but he doesn't feel like doing it. He must have that compassion. This is my child, my servant, my devotee and I have to do something immediately. That is called **kripasagara**, that is **all compassionate**.

He must be everywhere, he must know everything, he must have all power, and he must be all compassionate. This is the idea all of us have about that supreme God called Devadeva. But there is one fifth idea which is lacking in most of the religions. All saints will have that idea, but ordinary people have not reached that idea. Do you know what is that idea? Sarvamangala mangalye – Every day we sing. **Sarvamangala** means **all auspicious**. What does all auspicious really mean? It means if you are a devotee and the divine is going on doing only what makes me happy? No. The idea had developed, O! Mother whatever you do is auspicious. Sakali tumarhi iccha. Even if you push me down to the very patala. You know what patala means, the lowest place of suffering is called patala.

Indians are magnificent in imagination. You know hyperboles. There are 6 higher lokas, the world we are living in is the 7th one from that higher loka, Satya Loka. From Satya loka to Bhoo loka, Bhoo Loka is the 7th one. But below there are 7 – Atala, Vitala, Sutala, Talatala, Mahatala, Rasatala, and Patala. Patala is the lowest, the 14th, and that is the highest place of suffering. Even if the divine pushes me down to the Patala, for whose sake mother is doing that? It is for my good, that is called Sarvamangala. O! Mother whatever you do it only brings good to me. That is why Rudra had transformed and transfigured and had become Shiva. Shiva means all auspiciousness even though he doesn't look auspicious because his role is destruction, but he is considered all auspicious. He gives rest, he gives a new dress to me; new dress means what? In the next birth, he will give new dress to me. This is the idea propagated and to have this idea, Hinduism alone, I have to say, has brought the idea of worshipping God as not only as a benevolent father but as a benevolent mother.

Mother worship is a beautiful idea. Sociologists and anthropologists have been studying societies and they have come to the incontrovertible

conclusion that those societies which follow the matriarchal scheme of life, there would be no wars. Every other patriarchal society fights with each other. The first world war, the third world war, even your Genghis Khan, Honeyball, etc., they are all because of this idea of worshipping God as father and not as mother. Hindus worship God as mother. That is why they are so mild. Mother is soft and mother is compassionate. Whatever way you live, whatever crimes you commit, she knows this is my child and she takes us into her lap and she only protects and purifies us.

That is why ‘sarvamangala mangalye shive sarvartha saadhike sharanye trayambake gowri narayani namostute.’ But you take out this idea with you, what is the idea? God should be worshipped in the motherly aspect first. Secondly, ‘sarvamangala’ means even if you seem to be going through the most horrible suffering, it is for your good. Mother is holding you and making you go through at the present stage, so that your future will be absolutely wonderful. That is the idea of ‘sarvamangala’ and that idea has not yet spread in the world. That is what is creating present day atheism, non-belief, all sorts of negative ideas about God, about religion, about spirituality, etc., etc.,

This is what Swamiji wanted to say that the ancient people increased his ethical significance and increased also his power. He became the most ethical being in the universe as well as almost almighty; almost almighty and not almighty because there is one more hurdle one has to develop, what is the idea? The monotheistic idea of God is one of the most advanced ideas of God and at the same time it is the most dangerous negative idea of God. You know why? Because the people who follow such a monotheistic idea of God are the people ready to cut the throats of other people and to convert them thinking that we are doing good to the other people. Fanaticism stems from this idea that the God we worship is the highest God and the God you worship is not.

To counter this idea, one more development is necessary, which Swamiji will come to later on. We will discuss it later on. It is the idea of impersonal and the Vedanta actively propagates that idea of impersonal. Because when God is impersonal the first flower of that idea would be that you have

the freedom to worship God in any form, with any name, with any quality and there would be no conflict at all; if you understood the idea of impersonality of God. We will discuss it later on.

Now Swamiji is progressing; man has come to the idea that there is one God who is the supreme God. There are no gods but every God is only a different name, different form of that one particular God. Always remember the idea of impersonality has not yet crept in and so long as this idea doesn't creep, this idea of conversion, the idea of fight in the name of God will continue.

Now comes the idea of ethics and morality. We use these two words 'ethics' and 'morality' synonymously, but there is a big deal of difference between these two. The word ethics comes from the word 'ethos'. Ethos means individual idea/concept of what is good and what is right. The word moral comes from the word 'mores.' Mores means certain customs, certain beliefs believed by a group or groups of people and actively propagated by them. I will give an example: You will not tell a lie. Man should not tell a lie is a moral idea. Because if a society has to survive and if one particular person tells a lie, the other particular person also will tell a lie. Society is bound by certain rules and regulations. It is understood; may not be specified but understood by everybody. So, you should not tell a lie because it will break the unity of the society. You should not steal, etc., etc., that is called morals. Morals means what? They are the ideas believed and tried to be practiced by a group of people. What is ethics? There will be individually, yes I know what is the moral idea, but I will not practice it, I am immoral. That is why you call a person immoral. He knows what is morality, but he is unethical and so we call him – you are not an ethical person. When morality (what is right and what is wrong) is applied more to an individual, it is called ethics. When it is applied to the larger group or persons, it is called morality.

Now God being one God, he must be the highest ethical being in the world. That is why the idea of justice is there, idea of truth is there, idea of equality is there. These are the ideas that we automatically assume. Now as soon as this idea that smaller gods have coalesced into one God, smaller gods

have smaller idea of ethics but the one God must have the highest concept and he will never deviate from that idea of ethics. But the problem became too complex. Swamiji is putting in a funny way – the difficulty of Yahowa was very little besides the difficulty of the God of the universe and this question remains to the present day. What an insightful commentary that spontaneously came from the mouth of the rishi. Today, are we really beyond those ancestors' idea of ethical God? What does it mean ethical God? Ethical God means he is all good. If God is all good and if this universe is a creation of God, do we see all as good, everybody as good? There is so much of evil ; besides so much suffering so much of evil is there. We also distinguish between what is good and what is evil, what is suffering and what is evil. Even though externally/superficially we may not distinguish, but I am giving it to you.

Supposing it is severely cold and it brings suffering to all the people, then we do not call it evil, we call it as suffering. But if one particular person takes up a knife and kills 10 people and takes away all their warm clothing and dresses himself, then what do we call that person? Evil person. So, when it is applied to a personal aspect of a person when he is doing something wrong and we do not expect a person to behave in such a way, we call it evil.

Now, this world is believed to be creation of God and in this creation of God, we see suffering is there, okay; but there is suffering caused by natural events and suffering caused by particular persons like say Genghis Khan or Hitler, etc., etc,. Who created Genghis Khan, who created Hitler? So, if you accept the idea of God, who created Hitler? How can God who is such a good being, how could he create this Hitler who is doing so much of evil to millions of people? Is that question answered even today? It is not answered and nobody can answer. Because so long as we are in the realm of duality, the answer will not come and the answer will not be there.

But if progress by God's grace anytime to the idea of impersonal /non-duality, then will there be an answer? There would be no answer because there would be no problem. When you are in deep sleep, is there a

question of whether God is ethical, whether there is evil whether there is evil person? Do you have such a thing? No problem and no solution.

But so long as we are here, we must get a solution. How do we get a solution? Look at avatars, did they suffer or not? Did the so called evil people bring about untold sufferings on the avatars or not? For example, who crucified Jesus Christ? So long as we are in the dualistic world, this good and evil, happiness and unhappiness cannot be removed. Because if you remove one, you remove the other. That is a wonderful idea that even today most of us have not grasped, even intellectually if we have grasped we have not accepted it. But how do we cope with that? Look at the avatars, look at Sri Ramakrishna's life, did he suffer or not from cancer? Did he blame God? How did he cope with it? He said "O! mother whatever you do it is only good." That is the role model. They are all role models on how to live. Their role model is not willy-nilly, they are the only role models and there is no other way.

That is why Swamiji said so long as man remains, that question remains. Why? Because so long as man remains in the idea of duality, the question remains. Only when he goes beyond the idea of duality, then the question can be answered. Answered in the sense, there is no question and therefore there is no answer et all.

Then Swamiji comes to a most beautiful idea. Why under the reign of the almighty and all-loving God of the universe should diabolical things be allowed to remain, why so much more misery than happiness and so much more wickedness than good? We may shut our eyes to all these things, but the fact still remains that this world is a hideous world. Even today it is so. Why? Because we tend to judge our ideas and judge the world through the lens of our ideas. A very important point we have to understand is at any given time, there would be human beings at different levels of understanding. Therefore there are even those savages even today. That means what? Whose idea has not developed, their idea will be very low. There are slightly advanced people, their idea will be much better. There will be people whose ideas are highly advanced and they will have totally different view. There will be people whom we call

'jeevanmukta' – living free, realized souls, saints and their ideas will be totally different.

This is a point which we have to be very clear. It is not that uniformly everybody is developing the idea of the God of gods. No, when we are children, there will be different gods. When we grow up a little, there would be one particular God. When we grow even more, he becomes the most sarvamangala mangalye. Like that idea historically and within each one of our lives, we grow from a low idea to a higher idea. That is where the idea of yuga also comes in.

You know we hear in puranas of the idea – history is divided into 4 ages.

1. The age of truth – Satya yuga
2. Treta yuga.
3. Dwapara yuga.
4. Kali yuga.

From one point of view, many many thousands of years back Satya yuga was there, then in Treta yuga Rama came, then in Dwapara yuga Krishna came. This is Kali yuga, the age of iron. This is one idea from a time point of view.

Another idea Swami Vivekananda gave – Each one of us start from the Satya yuga. When we are babies we are absolutely truthful and as soon as we start growing up, we start becoming Treta yuga and then we become Kali yuga, Kamsa and all those things, and then this is Kali yuga. That is how we develop and again we become wise; from otherwise state we progress into wise state and then we ultimately progress in spiritual life and then we understand the truth. What is this progress? Not only universally and collectively, but also individually we progress in this idea. What is spirituality? A journey from unwiseness to wiseness. What a wonderful idea, keep it in mind.

Even today even though all of us are sitting here, we have different ideas. Not after hearing my talk you will have; because how you understand, how you accept, and how you react towards life that is most important.

We have got this question now, a big question mark – Why is there so much of evil in spite of scientific progress, etc., etc? Not only that, the biggest question that is hanging like the sword of Democles, do you know what it is? Our future. What is the future? Blank. What is the blank? The UI is going to take over us. We are going to become absolute slaves if it doesn't eliminate us totally like your Space Odyssey 2001. Then at least it will make us redundant, useless, valueless. This is the biggest fear scientists are warning including Steven Hawkins. He warned if you allow the UI to grow, one day it will harm all humanity. Be very careful, he specifically warned.

There are two warring groups. One group says because the machine becomes so intelligent and so wise, they will only do good to us. The other group says 'no', how do you know that they don't go wrong and they take into their heads to destroy humanity. That is the essence of this 2001 Space Odyssey. The biggest realistic scenario that we are going to see is as science is developing now, many many people would lose their jobs. Losing of jobs poses many problems, but two important problems. The first important problem is how are you going to earn money if you don't have jobs. Even more important problem is – if you don't have jobs, what are you going to do with your life? So, there is a beautiful saying in English – An idle brain is a devil's workshop. Already we are seeing these devils you know. These arrows of words are flying between North Korea and USA now. Who knows? But I don't believe that anything is going to happen because I have confidence in Swami Vivekananda. What do I mean? He said I have given food for 1000 years and 115 years have passed and therefore I am sure for 820 years at least there is not going to be a destruction at least wherever I am there would be no destruction.

So, we are living in a hideous world and the best Swamiji says – We are living in a hell of Tantalus. What is this hell of Tantalus? Have you heard about Greek mythology, Tantalus? Tantalus was a Greek mythological creature. He did something very evil and the gods cursed him. He will be always tied and put in a river underneath a tree laden with very tasty juicy fruits, let us say mangoes. Now, this man even though is in water, he cannot drink because the moment he puts his lips the water level recedes

and never is he going to reach one drop of water. The moment he lifts his hand, the fruit is hanging how far? Just 1 mm from the mouth and the moment he stretches his mouth, the fruit recedes, it goes away so, he has been trying to get to eat the fruits, to drink the water, but he can neither drink the water nor eat the fruit. This is called Tantalus hell and that is the hell we are living here. This is what is Swamiji's beautiful description of what is called the present state of human nature.

Tantalus was a Greek mythological figure most famous for his eternal punishment in Tartarus. He was made to stand in a pool of water beneath a fruit tree with low branches with the fruit ever eluding his grasp and the water always receding before he could take a drink. Here we are with a strong impulses and stronger craving for sense enjoyments, but cannot satisfy them. There rises a wave which impulses forward in spite of our own will. As soon as we move one step, there comes a blow. We are all doomed to live here like Tantalus. So, this is our state. Psychologists / psychiatrists are proving it to the hilt. One in three is mentally sick. In fact, all of us are mad; some people are little bit less mad and some people are more mad, this is the only difference.

Sri Ramakrishna says "I am also mad. I am mad after God. So, I think my madness is better than everybody else's madness." This is the truth. As we are advancing in scientific knowledge, our madness seems to grow because our capacity to enjoy remains the same if not receding, but our choice of the objects which we want to enjoy is ever growing.

Swamiji makes a beautiful statement, which we will discuss in our next class, but I will give you a small taste and this is the truth. **Unhappiness is the fate of those who are content to live in this world born as they are.** There are people whatever be difficulties, whatever be the constraint, they are quite content and say 'this is what God has given me or my karma phala has given me, I am quite content with it, I am not longing for anything else.' But the world does not allow them to be happy. **A thousand times greater misery is the fate of those who dare to stand forth for truth and for higher things and who dare to ask for something higher than mere brute existence here.** These are the statements. Those who are

content want to be content, but the world doesn't allow them to be. There are people who want to sacrifice their life; whether it is Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King, or Mahatma Gandhi or Sri Ramakrishna, Buddha, Jesus Christ – What is their fate? The society cannot bear them. If you are good, we are going to hang you because every goodness brings terrible animosity from those who are wicked people. We will discuss it later on in our next class, but what is important for us is that this is a fact of life. Why it happens? We do not know, but this is the fact of life.

Do we dare to become content first of all? Do we dare to even become better and say I will try to sacrifice my life for the sake of good of other people even though it prevails lot of unhappiness. The whole society is going to jump upon your shoulders and try to tear you to pieces because it cannot tolerate the idea. When I want to make you miserable, what right have you got to try to go and help them or protect them from my evil eye.

For example, there was one very good man, I forget his name. He was shot dead in Bombay, that T cassette series person, Gulshan Kumar. He was a religious person. He went to a temple and there were people who threatened him to take over his business or demand money, etc. He did not yield and they just went and killed. So, this is the fate of the people. So, either one has to suffer voluntarily or others will come and give so much of suffering to other people. Are we daring to imitate their footsteps? This is a beautiful topic Swami Vivekananda has brought in in this lecture – Maya and the conception and growth of God. We will discuss in our next class.

Om shanti shanti shanti.