

GOSPEL OF SRI RĀMAKRISHNA - PART 17

SWĀMI DAYATMANANDA

ॐ जननीं सारदां देवीं रामकृष्णं जगद्गुरुम् ।
पादपद्मे तयोः श्रित्वा प्रणमामि मुहुर्मुहुः ॥

Jananim Saradam devam Ramakrishnam jagadgurum ।
Padapadme tayoh shritva pranamami muhurmujuh ॥

ॐ तव कथामृतं तप्तजीवनं
कविभिरीडितं कल्मषापहम् ।
श्रवणमङ्गलं श्रीमदाततं
भुवि गृणन्ति ते भूरिदा जनाः ॥

Om tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanam
kavibhir īḍitaṁ kalmaṣāpaham ।
śravaṇa-maṅgalaṁ śrīmad ātataṁ
bhuvi gṛṇanti te bhūri-dā janāḥ ॥

There are three important schools of philosophy in India. And all these three are talking exactly about the same thing but use three different words. What are these schools? One is called Puranas. Another is called Tantric system (Tantra). Another is Vedanta. Vedanta means, again we have to understand, there are three subdivisions in Vedanta – Dwaita, Vishishtadvaita and Advaita. Usually, when we use the word Vedanta, we really mean only Advaita Vedanta. But really, we have to understand these three schools are included in Vedanta only. Now, according to Advaita Vedanta, Brahman is divided into two categories:

1. The impersonal called Nirguna Brahma (nirguna, nirvisesha, nirakara Brahma).
2. Same Brahma when is seen as the creator, then He is called Saguna, sakara Brahma. Ishwara is another word. According to Bhaktas (Devotees), Narayana is another word.

Sri Ramakrishna is using from the Tantric word, Brahman, and Sakti. Brahman, it is exactly the same meaning from Puranic view, from Tantric view and also from the Vedantic view. But when we are talking about Sakti, we have to understand what Sri Ramakrishna, following the Tantric tradition is calling as Sakti, is exactly what Advaita Vedanta calls Ishwara, the creator, the sustainer, and the maintainer and whom the Puranas call as Vishnu. Always remember – Vishnu has got a navel, in that navel Brahma is depicted, he is sitting. So, Narayana has to be equated to Nirguna, Nirakara Parabrahma. Same Narayana, as a creator, he is called Brahma. Brahma dirgah! Brahma deva. Brahma loka! With this, you have to understand Sakti, Ishwara, what Puranas call Brahman are synonymous terms. Then, it will become clear. Further, Sri Ramakrishna used to say that Brahman and Sakti are exactly one and the same. Then, the question that comes is why do we use two different terms, two different names, why not use one particular name only? Sri Ramakrishna gave a beautiful example – Suppose there is a snake and it is coiled up. It is not doing anything. It is simply as if sleeping, meaning not doing anything, no activity. That is compared to Nirguna Brahma – there is no creation, maintenance, or dissolution. Same snake when it goes on moving, slithering here and there, is compared to Ishwara. So, Brahman and Sakti are one. Brahman – no creation, and nothing to do, no name, no form, He is the Infinite and He never undergoes any change, is not born, etc. But when the same Ishwara is seen as this world, and that world is called Sakti. So, we are talking about this particular question that is underlined here, from the Gospel. Brahman and Sakti are exactly the same thing. What is Sakti? Sakti means this world. Sakti manifesting as this world. But even though Sakti is manifesting as the world, let me also explain a little bit, we use in English language the Sanskrit word 'Srishti' as 'Creation'. Creation, maintenance, and dissolution – so, Creator, Maintainer, and Dissoluter – Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva. Now, take this example: there is a potter and he is creating a pot. Now, the pot is different, and the potter is different. The potter may create the pot, or he may do it half or he just starts but abandons and goes away, nothing happens to him, but there would be no pot. The idea is the creator and the created are completely separate from each other. They have no relationship. In this example, the potter is called Intelligent cause (Nimittha Karana) and the created is called the Material cause (Upadhana Karana). You do not need to get confused by these terminologies, but potter and pot is a crude idea, the lowest idea. The higher idea is, just as we see a rope and it appears as a snake, it may appear as a stick, it may appear as a garland, it may appear as some little water flowing in a crooked way on the ground so, any number of examples we can create. Rope appearing in semi-darkness, usually the example is a snake. So, here the rope has as it were, become a snake, not really has become a snake. How do we know? When light is brought, then we see there is no snake, it is only an appearance. So, this is the improved version of understanding what is creation. There is creation. What is creation? It is an appearance. How do we understand it in a better way? Every day, we are doing it. You go to bed and

you go to dream state. Even though you are lying in your own bed, you have gone into the M.G Road or you have gone to Chennai or you have gone to Australia and you flew, you did so many things – Time, Space, Causation everything is exactly like the waking state. But even though you are lying down, as if you have done so much of creation, sometimes you create something, and you also destroy something. In fact, you know, every day we create, and we destroy. Do you know what, every food material that we create, your breakfast, your supper, and your lunch, in between, everything, even a cup of coffee, what do you do? It was not there. You create it. Then, you swallow it. When you create it, that is when you are a creator. And you maintain it, and slowly with some amount of popcorn, go on watching your T.V and then slowly, that is called maintenance. And then, after some time, the coffee is over and the samosa is over, so who are you at the end? You are creator, you are the maintainer and you are the destroyer. If we take this example, every dream is a perfect example that Brahman has not really transformed Himself into this world, but He appears as if He is like that. This is the idea Sri Ramakrishna wants to convey to us.

We are all nothing but pure Brahman. Then, why do we not know that we are Brahman? So, we were Brahman, we are Brahman, and we will be Brahman, not the slightest change in our original nature has ever taken place. Then, why do we see this world? Now, that is not a world somewhere outside; this is how we are looking at Brahman, as if through a mirror. In the dream world, our own mind becomes a mirror and the entire waking world is distorted as though nothing happens. Supposing you go and beat your neighbor because he did some mischief in your dream, and you wake up. Does anything happen to your neighbor? Do police come and arrest you? Nothing happens. Why? Because it is only a make believe and just it is an appearance, and nothing takes place in the reality.

So, we have to learn two points: Brahman is manifesting means Brahman is appearing as this world, just as a rope is appearing as a snake or as many other things. Snake is only one example I told you; it could be a garland, a crooked stick, or it could be a small stream of water flowing in a crooked way, your imagination is your limit. So, what am I trying to convey to you? That Sri Ramakrishna is stating that from the beginning to the end, you are that pure Brahman; just as the rope never changes so also your Brahmanhood, your Divinehood never changes! So, that is the first point. Brahman does not change; He appears to change, that is called manifestation.

Second point is that the appearance, is it that the rope appears as a snake or the perceiver thinks that there is a snake? It is the fault of the perceiver; the rope never puts on another dress and says, “Now, I will frighten this man appearing like a snake”. Never! This rope, poor rope does not know what we are thinking about it. So, the problem is not in the rope. The problem is in our brain. So, what needs to be corrected

is not the rope, but it has to be corrected by ourselves. This is the greatest truth Advaita says, Brahma satyam. But that Brahma appears as Jagat, Jagat Mithya. Jagat Mithya means it is not a real snake, it is because of your fear, you are looking at the rope as a snake and you created that snake in your brain, you get frightened, you bring the light, and you see it, “Oh! How glad I am. I have killed the snake!”. As soon as light is brought, what do you do? You killed the snake as it were. That is an important point.

Third point is that simply by standing for any amount of time in semi-darkness, you are not going to get out of fear. You will have to make efforts to bring the light. How does that happen? When you are frightened, probably you are unable to move because of your fright but what do you do? You shout loudly, “Please help somebody! Oh God! Please rescue me from this fearful snake!” And that call is called longing for liberation and then, somebody comes, some neighbor, some passerby, he comes with a light. Who is that passerby? That is called Guru. God himself comes in the form of a Guru. Guru means who shows us the light. So, that is the third point, we have to do effort, not to change the snake into the rope but to bring light. Light means Knowledge.

Fourth point we have to learn from this passage is that we have to learn how to get frightened. Supposing you are not frightened of the snake. Or maybe you are a snake catcher and you enjoy keeping snakes in your garden, feeding them, fondling them, and if you do that, first of all, you will not have any fear, secondly, it gives you greatest joy, thirdly, the snakes will not bite you because they try to bite you only when they think that they are in danger. No animal will take revenge excepting either fear or because of sustenance, hunger, etc. Otherwise, no creature thinks... Same rule applies to us also. So, what are we talking about? So long as we think this world is not a frightening thing, it is absolutely fine, not only that, this is the only reality. So, how can we make this more and more, accumulate more money, and accumulate more wealth, more things, go on trying to live as long as possible, and try to enjoy more and more in this world, so long Guru will not come, the cry from within the heart will not come. So, these people are called Sleeping people. In the Bhagavad Gita,

या निशा सर्वभूतानां तस्यां जागर्ति संयमी ।
यस्यां जाग्रति भूतानि सा निशा पश्यतो मुनेः ॥ ६९॥

yā niśhā sarva-bhūtānām tasyām jāgarti sanyamī
yasyām jāgrati bhūtāni sā niśhā paśhyato muneh

For most worldly people, world is Brahman. Brahman means real. What is Sri Ramakrishna telling? This world, in reality, is Brahman and Brahman has not become the world. Brahman is only appearing as the world. And this worldly life is only there to

wake us up. So, worldly people take long time to wake up. Utthistata! Jagrata !! Arise! and Get awakened !! Most people, this call does not even enter, they are in deep sleep. But for those few who have become a little bit awakened, Sri Ramakrishna says Utthistata! Sit down because if you want to get out of suffering, you will have to make effort. Jagrata! Start thinking, how can I get out of this? How can I know what is my real nature? Get out of this fear, etc. You know, sometimes, small babies or small children, they are in such a state and they have never seen any snake, and they go near and want to catch the snake. All worldly people are like that, they want to live with the snake. What is this snake? Here, snake is compared to Mrtyu (Death). Death means Dhukha, misery. We are all playing with misery, the more we run after happiness, the more we accumulate this misery. But Sri Ramakrishna has come to our rescue and says, “You are never away from Brahman. In fact, Brahman is not even near to you. You are that Brahman. But Utthistata! Jagrata!!”. So, are we automatically aware that we are Brahman? No. Not automatically. We are aware we are Brahman, but we do not know.

Unconsciously, we are aware we are Brahman; consciously, we are aware we are non-Brahman. Let me explain, this is the most wonderful idea. Unconsciously, I said we are all Brahman. How do we know? Because our mind is extremely restless. And if you question yourself, why are we so restless? Why is our mind so restless? “Oh! I am not happy with what I have. I want more and more and more of all happy things, not unhappy things” Life is running away from unhappiness and running towards happiness. So, we want more security. So, we want to live longer time; we are frightened of ill-health; we are frightened of enemies, anything that can bring us unhappiness. So, our mind is restless. If you ask the mind, “Why are you restless?” “Oh! I am quite ok with the things I have but I want more things”. Alright, if you are given more things, will you be happy? Very happy. Give that person more things, more money, better health, long life, security. Will you be happy? Only for a short time and as soon as a short time is passed, “Oh! This is ok for now, I want more”. And give him more. I want still more. Give him more. What do you want really? This is the answer – unconsciously, our mind, that means ourselves, we know completely we are Brahman and until we achieve Brahman our mind will not stop being restless. So, if our mind is very restless, it is a very happy news because only a Tamasica mind will be what even cold food, untasty, unsavory food is ok. But an awakened mind says, “I want more. I want still more”. Baba, where will you stop? I want to have more and more until there can be no more. What is that state of no more? Purnam. Purnam adah Purnam idam. That is why this is a very important statement – unconsciously, we know. Our unconscious mind knows we are Brahman. And until we know we are Brahman consciously; our mind remains absolutely restless. And that restlessness, as I said, is an extremely positive sign, a very good sign. Slowly, life teaches how we can improve ourselves and from lower happiness to higher happiness and finally, Brahmaloaka, and finally we come to a conclusion – Brahmaloaka is limited. I want that state where I do not want to enjoy sugar, I want to

become sugar. I do not want to enjoy happiness; I want to become happiness. For that, our mind becomes restless. Restless mind requires a guidance. That guidance is called Guru. And this is how evolution goes on and on. This is the explanation Sri Ramakrishna, whenever people forget, how to make our mind completely restful, I am repeating because it is very important – Mind will never become restful until we know who we are, until we know we are Brahman, we are the Infinite, we are the unborn, we are AjaH, NityaH, PuranaH, SasvataH, divyaH, all those wonderful qualities, Brahman, until we become God. And when the mind becomes restless, we think having a little more will keep it quiet. But it will not keep quiet. In course of time, the mind itself realizes “I want Infinity. Until I achieve that Infinity, there is no rest”. Then, it starts crying, “How can I attain that Infinity?” In simple words, “How can I attain God-realization?” Then, if we are truly yearning for it, then God comes to us because only Infinity can give us Infinity. Infinity takes the form of a Guru, comes to us. What does this infinite form of Guru say? He says, “My child! You are Infinite. Tat tvam asi.” And then, He gives us crystal clear direction which he himself had been following, and he achieved the end and with authority he says, “I followed this path. Without doubt, it will take you to the same state”. Only then will your mind become completely restful, that means mind itself will die when it reaches its goal of Infinity. In Infinity, there is no being, there is no mind, there is no restlessness, there is no, nothing is there. So, we have to make efforts. This is the answer to this beautiful question. I have taken long time because if you have understood it, you have understood a great deal of the Truth. What is it? Unconsciously, we all know we are God. Consciously, we know we are NOT God. Now, the conscious mind has to go to the unconscious and say, “I am restless because I want only God”. If I want God, I need some guidance. That guidance comes from the Guru. And the Guru, in the form of an Avatara, and His teachings in the form of any human being, any spiritual person, comes to us invariably, is like a mother responding to even an unconscious cry of a baby. And then, He will hold our hand, not only He gives the teaching, he holds our hand all the time, and He takes us slowly through necessary steps, and until we reach God, the Guru will not stop. What happens then? ‘I’, the Guru, and Brahman become completely one. So, the answer is we are Brahman, we do not know it. The effort to know it is called Sadhana. And a Guru will come when we need, and he will guide and take us forth. So, automatically we will not attain to that state even though our unconscious knows we are God. We need conscious effort, that is called Sadhana and that is why we are holding this Gospel class. I hope this answer clarifies, it is a very important, best question I have come across and Sri Ramakrishna had cleared it.

Now, we will enter into our regular Gospel class. We are discussing the Fifth commandment of Sri Ramakrishna. What is it? Live like a maidservant. This is what Sri Ramakrishna is telling in answer to M’s question – Do all your duties but keep your mind on God. Live with all, with wife, and children, father, and mother, and serve them.

Treat them as if they were very dear to you but know in your heart of hearts that they do not belong to you.

And Sri Ramakrishna gives an illustration – A maidservant in the house of a rich man performs all the household duties but her thoughts are fixed on her own home in her native village. She brings up her master’s children as if they were her own. She even speaks of them as “My Rama” or “My Hari” but in her own mind, she knows very well that they do not belong to her at all.

This beautiful illustration, we have to understand properly. First of all, a maidservant is one who is in need of some sustenance. She finds employment in the house of a rich man. Perhaps, the rich man makes her live in his own house, giving a small room, servant’s quarter or somewhere, and day and night she is there. She is treated as if she is one of the family members. And she caresses, plays, looks after the children, everywhere. But what is Sri Ramakrishna telling? Every word in this teaching is an eye opener. A maidservant performs all the household duties, but her thoughts are fixed on her own home, in her native village. This is a very important sentence. That means, if we are living in this world, we are all like as if have come from our native village, from our own house. Where is our house? Where is our village? In Kannada, there is a beautiful song – Allide nammane illi bande summane. My house is there but I have come here. ‘Summane’ means for some purpose, just like that. Nobody comes to anywhere just like that. There is some work and we have come to this world. But only when we remember this is not our home, our home is somewhere else. Where is that home? With God, in God. God is our home. That is why when future Swami Vivekananda, Narendranath met Sri Ramakrishna, he bursts into two songs, beautiful songs – The very first song is ‘Mano chalo nija nicketane Samsara bideshe, bidesheri beshe Bhromo keno okarone?’ O Mind! Let us go where? Nija nicketane, to our own home. Samsara bidesha, this samsara is like a foreign country, videsha. Bidesher beshe, dressed up like a foreigner. Bhromo keno, why do you roam? Brahma means, there are two meanings – please keep it in mind. One meaning, Brahma means branthi, delusion but in Bengali, Bhrama means (and in Sanskrit also) Brahmana – Pari Brahmana, Teertha Brahmana, wandering, walking, going here and there. So, delusion in this delusional world, dressing up in a delusionary dress, why are you wandering in delusion? Oh, my mind! Utthistata! Jagrata!! Let us go back to our own home. But ordinary people think they are not like maidservants; they are like the rich people. What is the rich people? Everybody is rich people; even the poorest person is a rich person in his own eyes. How do you know? Go and say, “Hey, yours is an old house, dilapidated house, very holy (pun – full of holes) house, why don’t you move out of it? I will buy it; I will give you more money”. He says, “No. No. This is my house”. The moment he adds the word, “My”, it becomes the most precious house, richest house to him. And what is the house we are talking about here? These are not houses made up of bricks and mortar. He is talking about this

house which has nava-dvāre pure dehi naiva kurvan na kārayan. Bhagavad Gita speaks of it as a city having nine doors. What are the nine doors? Two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, 1 mouth, how many? (3 times 2) plus 1 mouth equals 7. What are the other two? The two lower holes through which what we call, the Sewage canals, both. So, these are seven doors and in this seven-doored city, thie Jivatma dwells. Why does he dwell? Because he wants to enrich his kingdom; he says, this city is ok for now; but I have tremendous aspirations, I want to become the emperor (Chakravarti) of this entire Universe. And for the moment, who is the emperor? Oh, there is a fellow, he is called God and I want to replace Him. I want to become that God. Unconsciously, we are all striving to become that God. And when I become God, what happens to the other God? Very strange thing happens. That God disappears. He, that word – ‘He the God’, disappears. I become the God. What does the Guru say? Tat tvam asi. You are that emperor. And after Sadhana, what do we reply to the Guru if we are asked? I am that Brahman. Aham Brahmasmi. What happened to the other Brahma you were worshipping? Well, I have replaced that He and I have become that Brahman. This is the process of Sadhana and Siddhi. This is what Sri Ramakrishna is telling, we are all living in a foreign country. What is that foreign country called? Samsara. What type of dress are we putting on? This Samsari dress, that means what is this house? Body and Mind. We are living in this.

Remember Katha Upanishad imagery? This body is compared to a chariot, and our sense organs are called the horses, the mind is called the controller (like the wheel of a car to control the car) and we are the driver, mind is also the buddhi, intelligence who drives the car is called the Driver. But who is travelling, for whose sake? It is the Atman in the form of Jivatma. Why did God give Jivatma this car? So that he can travel from this rich man’s house to his own house. As the maidservant is given this job so that she works. What is the purpose of the work? She realizes I have got my own home. So, when that awakening comes, she starts singing, means we start singing ‘Mano chalo nija nikatane. He man! Hum apna desh jayenge! Apna ghar hai! Apna admi hai vahan! Apna kutumba hai, parivar hai vahan! Kaun hai? Apna pitaji, mataji hai. Kaun hai pitaji, mataji? Bhagawan hai, Narayan hai, Lakshmi hai! Aur vahan kaun hai? Sab hamara bhai behane hai! Kaun hai bhai behane? Sab bhakta lok. Bhagawan ka bhakta jo hota hai, sadhak hota hai. Wo sab hamara bhai behan hai! Aur vahan apna mata pita ka saath, bhai bandhu behan ka saath apna logon ka saath, apna gaon mein, apna ghar mein bahuth nischinth hoke, bahuth anand se vahan har ek dhin chirakaal sashvath ke liye anand me rajayange! What am I talking about? This is a pretense, just like a maidservant, she brings up, she takes the children in her own arms into her lap, what does she say? My Hari, as if they are her children, as if they are all born out of her. But she knows in her heart of hearts, that I am only a worker here and as soon as I get my wages, I disappear to my own home. Yearly once, some maidservant / servants take leave of it. Maidservants does not mean only women, servants also. So much meaning

is hidden there! But she knows very well that none belong to her. This is the point we are discussing; that we have quoted in our last class. I hope you will remember.

According to Swami Vivekananda, life is defined in three ways: and in that particular order. What is that definition?

First definition is 'Life is a school'. A school is where we learn how to be intelligent, how to bring all our potentialities to the fore and when all these are honed to the finest point, all our skills, then we have to go to the gymnasium.

'Life is a gymnasium'. What is the definition? In a physical gymnasium, we go to strengthen our muscles. We go to this world called gymnasium to strengthen our physical, intellectual, moral, aesthetic and spiritual muscles. And it may take many many many lives, bahu kaala huye, bahuth janma huye, kithna janma huye? Bahu veera huye! Balavaan huye! Kithneena maheepath mana huye! Ab kaun kaha, kuch dhyan daro! Sab nashwara hai, math maan karo!! Sri Rama bajo dhukh mein sukh mein!! I hope you have heard this song, otherwise you go to YouTube, it is one of the most wonderful songs and it is one of my favorite songs. If you have not heard, please listen "Sri Rama bhajo dhukh mein sukh mein" - Search in that title. So, many lives it will take but ultimately, we are all journeying. A journey is from one point to another point. What is that journey? Life is a journey from a lower state of consciousness to a higher state of consciousness. It is a journey from a lower state of happiness to a higher state of happiness, from a lower state of knowledge to a higher state of knowledge. And what is the highest point? God. Satyam Jnanam Anantam Brahma. Pure existence, pure knowledge, and pure bliss. That is what we are. That is our home. That is our nature. That is what we have forgotten. We have not lost but we have forgotten. Every madcap has never become a Napoleon or a President Trump or anybody. But in his mind, the madcap thinks that he has become that. But if he is taken to the psychological Guru, he will remove that wrong notion. So, before he became mad, he was that particular person and during the time when he thinks, 'I am somebody else' also, he is that particular person only. But when the psychiatrist or psychologist, he helps him to get rid of that wrong notion. The psychiatrist does not make him a new person, he just removes the obstruction just as a neighbor comes with a light and focuses it on the so-called 'our snake'. And what happens? The light dispels the darkness and our idea that our perception that it is a snake disappears. The rope has never changed and the knowledge of the rope, this is called Adhishtana Jnana. The knowledge of the substratum that ever remains the same. So, our Ajnana is removed and that process is called 'bringing the light'. And as soon as Jnana destroys the Ajnana, Ajnana disappears; Jnana also disappears. Once we know this is the rope, even if it is dark also, we will not get frightened. So also, the purpose of knowledge is to destroy the Ajnana (darkness). When both of them disappear because we know what is there. So, when the Guru (Guru means

knowledge) destroys our ignorance that I am not God, I am a human being, etc. when he destroys, that particular given Jnana by the Guru also disappears because there is no need for Jnana to know who we are. Once we know who we are, all this terminology – Jnana, Ajnana they belong to the realm of the mind. Both disappear just as how as soon as dream disappears, we wake up exactly the way we are. So, this waking up from the dream does not change things, any change in the existing things. This is a wonderful point in Advaita, I will not confuse you with that. But so long as there is Ajnana, there is Jnana. When Ajnana is removed, Jnana also goes away along with that and we become pure consciousness. There is no need to bring another light to show that we are light because we are self-illuminating. It requires a little bit of thinking but let us come back to our subject.

So, as if they were her very own, Sri Ramakrishna is telling “My Rama, My Hari” but in her own mind, every maidservant knows very well that these children do not belong to her at all. What are the children we are talking about? We are talking about our family, our husbands, our wives, our children, our relatives, our friends, even our enemies, they are all real to us because if they are not real, they are not our enemies at all. I will give you a small illustration – Supposing two actors acted in a cinema. One had taken up the role of a hero, another had taken up a role of a villain, another girl had taken up the role of a heroin. The whole cinema is a fight between the hero, villain, and the heroin. And then the film has been taken, and preview comes, all the people who acted as the hero, villain, and the heroin, they sit together, and they are congratulating each other. Does the person who acted as a hero and person who acted as a villain, do they consider each other as enemies? No. That is only a pretense.

This beautiful teaching that if the world is real there are real friends, real enemies, and real birth, and real death. But if it is just like a drama or cinema, everything is a make-believe, but it gives immense enjoyment only when you are a spectator, not if you think that it is all real. Our Samsara is like that. Coming back to Sri Ramakrishna, what is he telling? That she knows very well that these children, this house, this rich person, everything there and everything in that city where the rich man is, or village does not belong to her at all. She has nothing to do with them. Then, she has her own village, she has her own home, her own family, her own people, which is compared to? What is the comparison? That God is our home; God people, people of God (Saints, Sages, Mahatmas, Sadgurus, all Bhaktas, Jnanis, Yogis, Karma Yogis), all of them are Bhagawan’s people, my people. And these are the people – my parents, my children, my husband, my wife, make-believe. Now, I want to talk a little bit on that make-believe. Swami, are you not telling ‘become hypocrites’? Make it appear as if you are loving, really you do not love. That is the impression that comes from this teaching – “as if they belong to us”. So, a Sadhaka, a Bhakta starts “Oh! I will pretend to my husband as if I love him. I know in my heart of hearts that I do not belong to him and he

does not belong to me". So also, the husband. So also, all the people whether children, neighbors, friends, enemies, India, China, USA, whatever it is, the whole world. We have to be completely clear on this point. "As if" means what? If you belong to God, you have come into this world to know that you are God. That is called "working in this world as a maidservant". What about the other people? What about that rich person? To whom does he belong? He also belongs to God. So, husbands belong to God. Wives belong to God. Family members, children, they belong to God. Grandparents, grandchildren, neighbors, friends, enemies, the whole Cosmos, everything belongs only to God. So, what does it mean? Love with all your heart but know the reality. What is it? "As if" means this is appearing as reality. In reality, it is not a reality; it is only an appearance.

Then, another question comes into our wise minds. What is the question? So, Swami, this whole world is Mithya. What does this Mithya mean? It has given rise to lot of wrong notions. Mithya first of all, means... Let me take up this example: Seeing the snake, that is Mithya, that is completely a wrong notion. The first point we have to understand is, if there were to be no rope, there would be no snake. So, the rope is real. A snake is partial knowledge of the rope. Partial knowledge – very important point because it has a length, and it is round, and it is little bit bent here and there, all these things are Sadhrshya (similarities are there). So, without that rope in that condition, the snake will not appear at all. That is why you cannot imagine an elephant; you cannot mistake a rope for an elephant; only something similar to that rope in semi-darkness. What is my point? My point is the snake is nothing but partial knowledge of the rope. First point. Why is that partial knowledge? Because of partial light. If there were full light, there would be no mistaking at all. So, this world is a partial understanding of Brahman. Why is this partial understanding? Because of partial knowledge. Why this partial knowledge? Because we are, as if in the twilight, something is visible but not completely knowable. And the meaning for that is called Avidya, Maya, Ignorance, Ajnana, various names we give. So, what is my point? My point is that my parents are real, not as they appear now to me. My husband is real, my wife is real, my children are real, my friends are real, my enemies are real, the entire universe is real, but I am unable to see its reality. When I have that knowledge in my mind with the blessings, instructions, and guiding grace of the Guru, suddenly as if light is thrown upon every single thing, that we call the world, and immediately it sheds its partiality and then we come to know that it is none other than Brahman. That means we see nothing but God. We see nothing but Him. Extreme Advaitic terms, our own selves reflected through various mirrors, some are mostly dirty, some are fifty percent dirty, some are ten percent dirty, and every mirror reflects us according to its condition. So, this variety that we see in this world is nothing but the Reality. The One who is standing in front of all these mirrors, how many persons are standing in front? Only one person. How many reflections? So many reflections. And the reflection depends upon the medium which is reflecting. What is that medium? Our body, our mind, etc. So, this entire variety that we

see in this world is nothing but the reflection in our minds of One God. Again, the illustration, the analogy of dream is very useful. We are one person who create that entire dream world. Each one of us is the only creator. And we create this world as millions of objects, plants, trees, birds, animals, insects, and even non-living things like mountains, lakes, and rivers, everything exactly as we see in the waking state. And when we wake up, what happens? As if we have broken our mind, as if our mind has splintered itself into a myriad mirror and in that dream world, we are looking at our own reflections and mistaking it as something other than us and acting and reacting. As soon as we wake up, everything becomes resolved in our mind. And that is what is called Siddhi, Perfection, Spiritual Realization, God Realization, Aham Brahmasmi state. So, that is what Sri Ramakrishna is telling, do not pretend, do not become hypocrite, showing as if “I will show to my husband, I love you but truly I do not love you”. No, it can be interpreted in two ways:

O my husband! O my wife!! You are none other than that Divine Lord. You are Rama. And husband says, “You are Sita”. And Shiva. And you are Parvati, Gowri, Kali, whatever name you want to give. God only is manifesting.

But at this stage of development, we have to say, “I do not wish to develop attachment to this temporary figure, I want to truly love who is within you”. And that is the purpose of marriage, the seven Saptha padi – Both bride and bridegroom address each other, “O Dear! Both of us are spiritual travelers. We join force so that we can help each other. If you fumble, I will hold you up, and if I slip you will help me to get up. And both of us travel until we become one in our family with God”. This is the idea.

“As if” should not give a mistaken idea that you pretend. Pretense is hypocrisy and that is not wanted. Either you say, this is a temporary relationship, I will love you, but I know you are temporary, I know I am temporary. How many births I had? How many births you are going to have in future? All this we have to understand properly. So, this is the beautiful idea Sri Ramakrishna is conveying through these simplest plainest words that any Guru, any spiritual person can give us. So, live like a maidservant. Live with all. Do all your duties but keep your mind on God. With wife, husband, children, father, mother, and serve them, treat them as if they were very dear to you, but know in your heart of hearts that they are not husbands, they are not wives, they are none other than God. This is a relationship temporary but it is there for two reasons: First, to exhaust our past karma; second, to aid us, to learn our lessons that these are all temporary relationships because bodies are temporary, minds are temporary, relationships are also temporary, everything is temporary. Let us identify with the Real which is permanent. Nityo anityanam chetano achetanam. As the Katha Upanishad says, which is eternal among the ephemeral things, that which is the only conscious thing among all the inert things. We are that Atman. We are that Brahman. But our path is

Bhakti. Our path is, we have to surrender to Guru and consider him / treat him as God. Gurur brahma Gurur vishnuh. Accept his teaching as the only teaching that can help us. And practice it diligently, steadfastly and one day, we realize the Sadhaka, and the Guru, and God, there absolutely is no difference, they are one and the same. And that is called “Living like a Karma Yogi”. This teaching illustrates the Karma Yoga. So, three points in this teaching –

1. One must perform one’s duties diligently, with reverence and love.
2. One must never forget that no one in this world belongs to him excepting God.
3. Without acquiring love for God and some amount of detachment, it is impossible not to be overwhelmed by attachments and cares.

There are other points, we will discuss in our next class.

Om tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanam

kavibhir iḍitaṁ kalmaṣāpaham ।

śravaṇa-maṅgalaṁ śrīmad ātataṁ

bhuvi gṛṇanti te bhūri-dā janāḥ ॥

May Sri Rāmakrishna, Holy Mother, and Swāmi Vivekānanda bless us all with bhakti.