

GOSPEL OF SRI RĀMAKRISHNA - PART 18

SWĀMI DAYATMANANDA

ॐ जननीं सारदां देवीं रामकृष्णं जगद्गुरुम् ।

पादपद्मे तयोः श्रित्वा प्रणमामि मुहुर्मुहुः ॥

Jananim Sāradam devim Rāmakrishnam jagadgurum।

Pādapadme tayoh shritvā pranamāmi 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 ॥

Swami answering questions received from devotees:

We are studying the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna. We are very fortunate because this is the essence of all scriptures. There are two questions I will be first reading out one by one and we will be discussing it. First, *we talk about Freewill, but a lot of our actions are based on our Vasanas and our past inclinations. So, would you say Freewill is our determination to move towards the four requirements that we talked about: Viveka, Vairaghya, Samadi satsampathi, and Mumukshatvam? Our Freewill is the choice we make towards developing these or are these actions also determined?*

First of all, we have to have clear idea whether there is a freewill or there is not a freewill. From the ultimate point of view, there is no freewill. Once I went to a devotee's house, and at the top of the front door, there was a small plaque on which it was written, "I am the Master of my house, with the kind permission of my wife". So, does this man have freewill? Yes, he has a freewill, but his wife had granted him a little bit of that freewill. So, God also has given us a small amount of freewill. Let me quote from Sri Ramakrishna, how he solved this problem because this is one of the most wonderful questions we come across since ages together. Among the philosophers, there was this discussion whether man has freewill or everything is determined. Some argued that way, some argued this way and this question was put to Sri Ramakrishna and he solved it by giving a small example:

There was a farmer, he had a field, he had a cow, and the cow was taken to the field and there was a tree, the cow was tied with a length of rope to a tree. And there was some grass around the tree. And the cow has certain limited freedom. If that cow uses that freedom, that means it does not make nuisance of itself, but grazes on the available thing and pleases the master, then Sri Ramakrishna continues, he may lengthen the rope of the cow to any extent he wants or if he wants, he can completely remove the rope and let the cow roam freely in the field.

This is the answer. Is man free or is he completely bound? Everything is pre-determined. The answer is that God has created us and given us some amount of freedom. So, if we can use that freedom properly by obeying the injunctions of our scriptures which is the word of God. By the way, let us always keep in mind, God not only created us, like a scientist creates a machine and sells it, and along with that machine, they also give a manual how to operate that machine. Similarly, God along with creation of us, has given a manual. Who wrote that manual? God. And what is it called? Shashtra. And how is it to be understood? Always a manual, there are two ways to do that: One is just to know plain operation; another is if something goes wrong, how to repair it. The first part is for most of us. The second part is for more advanced people, mechanics, or experts. So, these experts are called Gurus. When we encounter any problem, we have to approach these Gurus and they tell us not only how to repair, sometimes out of kindness, they repair it and then give it to us for free. But at the same time, they will also encourage that there are so many secrets you can get much more rather than what little you know through your little intellect. And through that, you can gain a lot more. So, with this analogy, each one of us have been given this freewill and the question itself is answering the answers. I will read out so that you will know – *We talk about freewill. But a lot of our actions are based on our vasanas.* What are Vasanas? The strong habits, actions repeated again and again in the past creates strong samskaras. And how did we come to do those actions? Is it because of freewill or not? It is because of freewill, we decided to do an action and we carried it out and sometimes it was very pleasant, so we carried it out again and again. That is what is called Samskara or Vasanas. A small desire becomes a strong desire when we experience it again and again. That is what we call Vasanas and Samskaras. So, what

am I talking about? Even our Vasanas and Samskaras are created by us only, by sheer will-power, our own freedom that has been given to us. Here, we have to know a grand secret. That secret is, if we have no freedom and somebody forces us to do something by somebody, then the result goes to those people who force, not to us. Only when we do it voluntarily, that becomes our Samskara. And here is something, psychological secret – even the best thing that we like to do ourselves, if it is done forced by somebody, it creates terrible reaction, repulsion. Eat Rasagulla, otherwise I will blow your head off. And it creates fear, it creates revulsion, we cannot enjoy anything if it is forced. So, what are we talking about? That when we do something voluntarily with our own freewill and it is repeated again, it becomes Samskara. So, if you understand this one, what is spiritual life? It is nothing but, use exactly the same freewill but now, certain actions of ours created in the past lives, and even in the past in this very life, have created certain strong habits which now we realize are binding us. This is what we call Samsara. Now, we can use the same freedom of the will, do exactly the same actions, we do not even need to change actions, we can do the same actions but now, we turn them, connect them to God. That is called Sadhana. That is called progress in spiritual life. Nothing changes; we are for example, attached to our families, friends, family members, our children, husbands, parents, our country, our religion, etc., etc. Same thing, you do it more; become even more attached but only with one caveat – what is it? They do not belong to us; everybody belongs to God. It is wrong to think that anybody belongs to us. Even we do not belong to ourselves. Even we are creatures of God, created by God, and if God created us, He owns us. But this Ahamkara comes, of course, it is His Leela. So, whatever we have been doing, even so-called I will say evil actions, it may sound unsavory, but I will explain to you in second. Supposing previously, you killed somebody and that brought undesirable consequences. Now, after turning towards God, trying to do spiritual sadhana, use the same freedom of will, strengthen the will, do more killing. But now, what do we kill? First of all, as Sri Ramakrishna tells, kill lust, anger, etc. now but if there are some people who are doing harm to either us or our country, our family, it is our Dharma to counter that one. Only Sannyasins are exempt from these things, but every householder must do their duty to protect their family, their country, their religion. If we do not do, as we had not been doing as Hindus, and we are sitting ducks for every other fellow to come and kick us, for example, another country is spying upon us, trying to provoke us, trying to declare, create all sorts of problems for us, and it is also taking in other countries, we know what we are talking about. Whose fault is it? It is our fault because we have not strengthened ourselves. So, the answer to that is that whatever we had been doing for so long, which made us, we did it out of our own freewill. There was never a time when we did anything without any freewill, it is impossible. So, freewill is functional all the time, but this time we turn it towards God, we love everybody but with this caveat, everything belongs to God, everybody belongs to God and this turning from self to the over-Self, from our Ahamkara to God, is called Spiritual practice. Naturally, we have to also strengthen our Viveka, Vairaghya, Shamadhamadi Satkasampathi and all those things. In fact, we have been doing all those things in a negative way and that is what

increased our worldliness, and now those same things will help us to get rid of this worldliness. That is the answer I had to give you.

Then, I will come to the second question. It is a quotation from the Gospel: *The wave belongs to the ocean. As long as that covering remains, the vedantic formula 'I am He' that is, man is the supreme Brahman does not rightly apply. The wave is part of the water. But the water is not part of the wave. As long as that covering remains, Maya remains, one should call on God as Mother. Addressing God, the devotee should say "Thou art the Mother; I am Thy child. Thou are the Master; I am Thy servant"*.

What is the explanation although we understand this one? Very very important for us. There are mainly two sorts of spiritual aspirants: the Bhaktas and the Jnanis. The Jnanis say, "I am Brahman". They are initiated by the Guru into the Mahavakya, "Aham Brahmasmi", "Tat tvam asi", "I am Atma Brahma", "Prajnanam Brahma", these are called Mahavakyas. So, there are Jnanis, meaning they are not truly Jnanis; they are only intellectually Jnanis. They have Shraddha, they believe that we are Brahman but that is not a realization. What is the realization? I am Brahman. Once that realization comes, there is no Sadhana, there is no Siddhi, and nothing to do, the person is not aware I am in the world. Ok – until that time, that person is a Sadhaka. So, if a person does not have the idea that I am Brahman, he must have some other idea, identity. What is that identity? I am the body and the mind. I am a good person. I am a spiritual aspirant. But all these things belong to the body and mind. So, in this particular passage, what is it? When the wave gives up its identity as a wave, and identifies as water, [mind you, please listen carefully], the wave should never say, "I am the ocean" because the ocean is also bondage. What should the wave say? The wave should say, "I am not the wave, I am water". When it says, "I am the water", there is no ocean because what is the common thing between the wave and the ocean? Wave is also water but bound by small boundaries, limited by small boundaries. What is an ocean? Limited by a bigger boundary, that is all. So, the ocean is also bound and the fellow who says, "I am Brahman" is also bound. One who realizes Brahman should never say, "I am Brahman". That is a thought in the mind. When there is no mind, who is there to say "I am Brahman. I am Jiva". Simple example, when you are in deep sleep, do you say I am a Samsari? Or do you say, "I am Brahman"? You say neither. Why? Because to say / think, there must be a mind. And when there is no mind, there is no small or big, wave or ocean, Jiva or Brahman, Atma or Paramatma, everything disappears. So, until that direct realization comes, and the body-mind identities are completely destroyed, even the memory of them do not arise. At that time, the wave does not say, "I am a wave", neither it says, "I am the ocean". The Jivatma does not say, "I am a Jivatma and I did Sadhana and through God's grace, I now became Paramatma". It does not say that. All these words are for teaching us a lesson. So, this is what Sri Ramakrishna is telling, that so long as that covering means this Ahamkara means this identity, what identity? I am Jivatma remains, the vedantic formula, "I am He" that is, man is the Supreme Brahman does not apply at all. The wave is part of the water, but water is not part of the wave. Only as water, there is no difference between

the wave and the ocean. So, as long as Maya remains, Maya means Ahamkara, one should call on God as Mother. Why not as Father? Yes. Sri Ramakrishna's greatest advice for us is, most of us are nearer to Mother than to Father. Therefore, it is an intimacy; indication of unconditional love, unconditional forgiveness, unconditional giving of everything that belongs to Her, these are the qualities not male or female, not gender quality. So, it is better to call God as Mother, if you prefer you can also call Him as Father, Vishnu, Siva, Narayana, whatever you want. Until this Ahamkara is there, even the slightest bit, one should address, "Mother! I am Thy child". What is the understanding? Mother, I am a child. The child does not know how to protect itself. It only knows there is someone and I have nothing to fear. Even this thinking does not arise. Absolute thoughtless what-you-call identity with the Mother, complete natural reliance without any thought, that is the nature of the child. If we can rely upon God, and this state is called 'complete surrender'. Even to think that I have surrendered is also part of the Sadhana, not complete surrender. Having surrendered, Karpanye, like a child, totally depending upon its mother. When this Bhava is maintained, the Mother at the right time, she will do everything in the right way and that is the way to move forward towards God. I hope with this, many points are clear. And why I took time? If you carefully heard and understood, you have to think about it. In future, many such doubts will never come in our minds. That is why I have taken so much of time.

Continuing the discussion on the Gospel

OK, now we are going to go to our class, Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna. We are discussing the Fifth commandment of Sri Ramakrishna. What is it? Sri Ramakrishna says we should live like a maidservant in a rich man's house. Most marvelous analogy Sri Ramakrishna gives. By the way, I do not remember whether I have told, perhaps not in this class, that India had produced marvelous poets and of these poets, there was one poet who stands head and shoulders above everybody else. In fact, he is the world's greatest poet – he is called Kalidasa. And why was he called Kalidasa? Perhaps most of you know. He was born an absolute idiot. But by the grace of Mother Kali, in a twinkling of an eye, he became world's greatest poet. Mother can make a greatest poet into the greatest idiot and a greatest idiot into the greatest person, greatest scientist, greatest musician, greatest sculptor, poet, musician, cook, anything you choose to name it. Everything is the grace of God, the glory of God. That is what we had been discussing in the tenth chapter of the Bhagavad Gita called Vibhuti Yoga – Everything is the glory of God! In fact, there is no everybody. It is only God who is manifesting in the form of the body, in the form of the mind, and He is as it were, sporting with himself just as we create our dreams. From the waking state, when we enter into the dream state, our entire dream world, all objects including our own recreation as the dream body of ourselves, and as a witness of the entire scene, we divide ourselves into three: as the creator and witness, as the created, as me, and everything else. Everything is the manifestation of God. But while dreaming, we do not understand it. But upon waking up, we know that we were other people, we were the living things, we

were the non-living things, and at the same time, we were absolutely unattached Sakshi, witnessing and remembering whatever sports we have done in that dream state.

So, what is Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna telling us? Live like a maidservant. So, the maidservant in a rich man's house. Who is this rich man? This entire world is the Sampath, the treasury of Bhagavan just as the entire dream world is our Sampathi, our treasure. So also, this entire creation is the treasure of Bhagavan, who is the creator and we are all people working there. So, this is one analogy. There are also other analogies. Like that, God is the director, He is the script writer, and He is the stage, He is the actors and actresses, and He is acting in various roles and He is witnessing himself in all the roles, everything is He. That is why God has got the beautiful name, Ranganatha (Master of the stage). This whole world is a stage. Coming back, I was talking about, everything is a gift of God and Kalidasa is one of the greatest gifts of God. And this Kalidasa was famous for his similes. Similes, in Sanskrit language is called Upa-ma (comparisons). There were great poets,

उपमा कालिदासस्य भारवेरर्थगौरवम् ।

दण्डिनः पदलालित्यं माघे सन्ति त्रयो गुणाः ॥

upamā kālidāsasya bhāverarthagauravam ।

daṇḍinaḥ padalālityaṁ māghe santi trayo guṇāḥ ॥

There were four poets. All of them were famous: somebody was famous for the depth of meaning; somebody was famous for using the simplest but mellifluous words; and somebody was famous for these analogies. Of them, Kalidasa is the most famous for his analogies. Now, we see that Sri Ramakrishna probably tops even Kalidasa in his imagery, and this is one such an example: Live like a maidservant. Who is a maidservant? She does not own anything, but she is asked to work, she is paid the wages. So, all of us, everybody in this world is like that maidservant. Whoever God has created: the trees, the plants, the insects, the stars, the galaxies, men, women, animals, birds, rivers, mountains, everything is created by God, owned by God, and therefore, we have to realize that I am a creature of God and I have been given this marvelous opportunity where? To work in the workshop called God. This world is God's creation. That is why Swami Vivekananda categorically says, "This world is a hell so long as we are in ignorance. The moment we have knowledge that this is nothing but manifestation of God, the whole world becomes a Leela, Brahma leela, Narayana leela. The whole world becomes a mart of joy because who is my enemy? God. Who is my friend? God. Who is tormenting me? God. Who is giving me happiness? God. Everything is God, and God, and God, nothing but God. So, this beautiful analogy that says the maidservant also has a home. Where is her home? **Allide nammane illi bande summane** - My house is there - where? **Mano chalo nija nicketane** - O Mind!

Let us go back to our own home. Where is our home? God. God is our Father, our Mother, we have come for some work from our Father and Mother, and we have forgotten the fact, like Narada forgot, to fetch water to Bhagavan Krishna, and thought he got married, thought he had children, thought he had become a rich man, thought he was going to die, all like a dream but everything had taken place, entire lifetime has passed in just a twinkling of a second, and gently he hears the voice of Krishna, "Narada! Why are you delaying? I am thirsty. Please bring water" So, Narada went to fetch water, and stood knee deep in the river, and bent down to fill the tumbler with water, and by that time, he heard the voices, he just filled up the water. Within that twinkling of a second, entire lifetime had passed. I would not say entire lifetime but our entire history from the beginning of life in this creation until the end. Time is nothing but pure illusion that is why time is relative. That is the greatest truth discovered by Einstein. Ok, anyway, I should not fly into all these fancies. So, coming back...

M [humbly]: How ought we to live in the world?

Master: 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.

So, treat them means what? Not make-believe, not pretending, but treat them because God has given them to you saying, "My Child! You asked me that how I can serve you. And I am giving these people to you, you serve me by taking care of these people. But do not forget, they belong to me. They do not belong to you". There is a beautiful incident in the life of Sri Ramakrishna. Once a female cat had somehow taken shelter in the very room of Sri Ramakrishna. I do not know how much punya that cat had done in its previous lives to take shelter at the feet of Sri Ramakrishna. And Sri Ramakrishna had not the heart, whatever cats do, this female cat had done and within a few months, there was a brood of kittens, all running hither and thither and not fearing Moksha by the feet of Sri Ramakrishna. So, he got worried. One day he called one lady, a very close devotee lady, and then he said, "Look! Will you do something for me?" "Of course, I will do. But I will not do it freely. Who is going to do anything freely? If I do something, you have to give me back something. "Ok, what do you want?" "I want Bhakti, I want Viveka, I want Vairagya, and all those things I want" "Alright, I will give them to you". "What is it that you wanted me to do?" "Take care of these cats, they have taken shelter in me. Take them home, see that they are not harmed, and if anybody wants these kittens, you can give them away. Look after them for me because they belong to me, they have taken shelter in me" And of course, that lady gladly has taken the cats. And for that small service, what did she get? Bhakti, Viveka, Vairagya, ultimately leading to Mukti. Another incident comes to my mind. Once Sri Ramakrishna was at Kamarpukur, and there was a flood and there were so many tanks there. The tanks were overflowing with water, completely erasing the distinction between the land and the tanks. And there was a big fish, in Bengali they

call it Magur Mach (Big fish), in English it is called Catfish. Somehow, one huge fish happened to be near Sri Ramakrishna. I do not know what overcame it, it started going round and round the feet of Sri Ramakrishna. And Sri Ramakrishna, he could not kill. So, by pushing it by its feet, etc. he just guided it to the tank and pushed it inside and it disappeared. Sri Ramakrishna was a Rasika (a very joyful person). He came home and many villagers were catching fish, and Hriday (his nephew) was also trying to catch fish. When Hriday came home disappointed perhaps, [we do not know what the incident was] but Sri Ramakrishna started graphically narrating what is called blow by blow, “You know Hriday, what a huge catfish, magur mach!!” “Mama! Where is it?” “You see, it started going round and round me, very plump and big fish!” “But what happened? Where is it?” “Oh! I pushed it into the Haldarpukur Tank!” “Oh mama! Uncle!! What have you done?!” We were hoping some fish will come, we can catch. My God! What did you do?” That was Sri Ramakrishna’s nature. Consciously, he could not harm any creature in this world. So, there is no wonder the cat got saved. Anyway, these incidents keep coming into our mind. It is a meditation on Sri Ramakrishna for me and for you also, whether you like it or not.

Coming back, this whole world is God’s house and he is the richest man in this whole world. And we are all employed as maidservants. What for? We should get our wages and how do we get promotions or increments? If we can do our duties properly, nicely, please the owner then he can increase by any amount that he or she wishes. But if he wants, he will also give us complete freedom like the farmer gives freedom to the cow. Here, the maidservant we are talking about, what is the maidservant? She is a poor creature. We are what-is-called, we have poor knowledge, poor discrimination, poor mind control but this world is given to us to work in this huge house called God’s house. Then, if we do properly then wages will be given. What are the wages? The wages will be Bhakti, Jnana, Viveka, Vairagya, Shama Dama di Shatka Sampathi, mumukshutvam, and all the required spiritual qualities. And then, if we work hard then, God will give us pension. Then, we can go home. Where is our home? In God. And then, what is our pension? That Brahmananda. For how long? For Eternity. We will be living with God. This is a Bhakta’s way of description. We do not want to say we will become One with Brahman. But that is what really happens. We will enjoy, Brahma Jnani becomes Brahman Himself. **Brahmavid Brahmaiva Bhavati**. And he enjoys all the Ananda (Brahmananda) along with Brahman when He becomes One. So, we go to Brahman (not the Brahma loka we know about) but Brahmananda loka and go on enjoying for eternity. That is our wages. This is what Sri Ramakrishna is telling and then he is telling further – This maidservant, she brings up her master’s children as if they were her own. So, we also should deal, we are working everywhere, our family members also, our house belongs to God; everybody in the house belongs to God; our mother, father, and children, husband, wife, friends, enemies, everyone belongs only to God. With this attitude, we have to do what? Service; not work but service. This is called Karma Yoga. When we have that Knowledge, our work become Karma Yoga leading us gradually, to God. Then, Sri Ramakrishna says, she even speaks of them as

'My Rama, My Hari'. What does that mean? So long as she is working, she says this is God's child, this is my child because I belong to God. Everybody belongs to God. This is my Rama, my Hari, my God's children. And there is a beautiful incident how this can be really practiced. I am going to narrate it. Even if you have read about it, even if you have hundred-thousand times thought about it, still it is a good thing for us. This is devotee's work –

bodhayantah parasparam

kathayantas ca mam nityam

tusyanti ca ramanti ca

What do the devotees do? Naturally, without any force from outside, instinctively, when they are alone, they think of God, they pray to God, they sing of God, they taste of God, they hear of God, they smell of God, they touch of God. You may question, what is the Swami talking about? Ok, we can sing of God, we can think of God. But how can we taste God? When we offer something to God, what does it become? Prasada. When we eat, whom are we tasting? It is God. When we enter into our shrine room, a beautiful fragrance comes out, either of incense or something else, that is called smelling of God means what? Just as prasada reminds us of God, so this incense smell or good smell reminds us of God. And that is why, one single detail, very important detail – when we are talking about using a particular smell or incense, here is a suggestion. You use for the shrine room one particular type of incense which you will never use in any other room or any scent you want to spray, you just spray only in that room and not anywhere else. Why? Supposing you use the same spray in the puja room as well as in the toilet. When you smell that one, probably the thought of toilet also can possibly creep into our mind. But if this particular smell is associated only with the shrine room, as soon as we smell, unconsciously we remember only God. And so many incidents are running through my mind. See, supposing a young man loves a young woman. And that woman always uses a particular scent. And one day the young man is going somewhere, and suddenly somebody else who is using the same scent is passing by. And this man smells. Where do you think his thoughts would be? Upon his beloved. This is how the human mind, unconsciously works. This is called smelling God – means anything that associates our mind with God, that is the experience. So, hear about God, immediately it brings our thoughts to God. Tasting God means Prasada. Touching God means what? You go there, and probably there is a sacred book or sacred paduka of something belonging to our Guru and we touch it every day. Supposing your Guru has given you a japa mala and whenever you do japa mala, two things you do: First of all, you wash your hands very cleanly then only, touch that japa mala. And first, you touch it to your forehead, why? Because that has come into association with your Guru's sacred hands. If there is a paduka or a slipper belonging or a cloth belonging to your Guru, it is even better, you touch it with your forehead as if this reminds you, you are touching him directly. So, this is called coming in touch. Secondly, this japa mala, there are certain rules: it should never fall below the navel.

That is why many Hare Krishna people sell japa mala bag and if you put it around your neck, you will see that at best, it will come up to your chest. And japa mala lies there, it is a big bag so, without feeling cramped, you can do Japam there and keep it very carefully. So, anything belonging to the shrine room, anything that reminds us of God, that is called touching God. I told you one story – once Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was passing through a village, somebody reminded that this is a clay which is used on Khol, a percussion instrument. Immediately, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's association, "Oh! This clay is used on Khol, Khol is used in group singing, singing is of the name of Krishna" and immediately he went into Samadhi. This is a peculiar characteristic of our mind; we always do progress with associations. Everything association. My mother's voice, even now I can recognize it. My mother's smell, every animal recognizes its mother's smell. That is how babies and mothers, they never become separated. So, this is called touching God. Touching God means touching God's name, reminding God's name. So here, 'my Rama my Hari', there is a beautiful story – there was a Brahmo woman, very interesting story because Brahmo people, usually they are supposed to think of Nirakara Brahma, formless aspect of God. But this Brahmo lady had two qualities. First of all, she was the greatest devotee of Bala Gopala, Child Gopala. Second, she was a great devotee of Sri Ramakrishna. So, this lady was bringing up her nephew, probably the nephew had lost his mother or whatever it is. This lady had become his surrogate mother. But with all her heart, she loved the baby like Prajapati was bringing up Siddhartha (Gowthama). So, like that this lady was bring up but she was a great devotee of Bala Gopala. Now, she wants to meditate, she wants to think of Gopala, she wants to offer everything to Gopala, but she was forced to look upon (in a way forced). She had this dilemma how to think of Gopala and also, at the same time, how to take care of this nephew. So, she came to Sri Ramakrishna who was a master of all spiritual realm. Immediately, he understood her dilemma and said, "Where is such a thing as easiest thing. In fact, you are very fortunate that God has given you this marvelous physical toy; from now onwards, you think of this nephew, not this boy, not as your nephew, forget about that. But this is your Bala Gopala. Your Krishna came to you in this form, he voluntarily offered himself in this form so that you can progress thinking of him in spiritual life. Whatever you do with him, bathing, caressing, or feeding, or swinging the swing, whatever you do, you just think "There is no nephew, it is nothing but Gopala." And she did it, within a few months, she was blessed with many visions of Bala Gopala like Gopaler-Ma was blessed with the visions of Bala Gopala. There is another story, when the time comes, we will discuss. But the most important point I wanted to share with you is, really speaking who was this nephew? Just now, we were discussing, the whole world is God's family. Everybody belongs to God. Only in our ignorance, we think I am separate, and everybody is separate, and these are people nearer to me, dearer to me, other people are farther to me. In a joint family, everybody belongs to everybody. In a similar way, in this whole world, there is a saying, **Mata me Parvati devi, pita devo maheswarah, Bantavah siva baktascha svadesho bhuva natrayam.** All the Bhaktas, Shiva Bhaktas are my Bhaktas why? Because my mother is Parvati and my father is Siva. The entire

universe is their children. Therefore, “Bhantavah Shiva Bhaktasca” – Every Siva Bhakta means every devotee of God, not Shiva bhakta but Vishnu Bhakta, Jesus Bhakta, Buddha Bhakta, any Bhakta of God. What about non-Bhakta? He is also a Bhakta of God only. Everyone is a Bhakta of God only. So, they are all my relatives because we belong to the same join family. And then, what about bhuvanatrayam – three worlds. What are the three worlds? Swarga, Naraka and Bhooloka. Naraka belongs to whom? To Devil or to God. It is only God. Who are the people in Naraka? They are children, Shishus. Who are in the Swargaloka? They are a little bit grown-up people. And who are in this Bhooloka? Who are trying to go to either Swarga or Naraka. But when we grow, our understanding grows, God gives us buddhi and then, we all go back only to God. In fact, I am telling you something very deep, nobody is going anywhere. Nobody is going neither to Naraka nor to Swarga; everybody is traveling only towards God. Every millisecond, we are inching forward or centimetering or millimetering forward towards God. Why? Because we are all sitting or standing on the escalator called our re-union escalator with God. Then, what about Naraka? Oh! It is for a little bit, children are playing on the escalator, some will go to the right, some will go to the left, some are standing some are sitting, some are even lying down and sleeping. And everybody is being carried forward by God’s motion. So, Naraka also is a playground of God. Swarga is also an equally playground of God. It is difficult for us to understand. This truth was given to us by every sage, but specially by Swami Brahmananda ji who says that “You may not understand me. You may not believe me now. But I am telling you the truth. Everybody is advancing towards God. Even a murderer is also traveling towards God only”. He did not elaborate. But I dare to elaborate a little bit. If a murderer, who is a murderer? Who kills somebody is a murderer. And why was the fellow killed? If you believe in Karma siddhanta, the law of Karma, nobody can be killed unless he is deserved. Nobody can become better unless he deserves it. This is the strict inviolable law of Karma. So, if somebody killed, then did this person die because this somebody killed? Or this person would have died in the hands of somebody or the other? I am giving you a funny example – please do not mind, this is how we will continue our Gita class. So, supposing there is a murderer, he is running after somebody, and that somebody is running away, and he wants to hide, and he saw a deep forest and he enters into that forest and disappears. So, the murderer has searched here and there, could not get and frustrated, he turned back. But this fellow, for temporary, for a millisecond thinks, “Oh Thank God! I have been saved” Immediately, from behind a huge tiger jumps and catches hold of him and if it is a devotee tiger, it will do Brahmarpanam Brahma havihir and take nicely. So, you have to understand this truth – anything that happens to anyone of us is because of our Purva janma karma phala. So, even a murderer is also traveling because he mistakenly thinks that I will be happy person if I can kill this person. But if he also, first of all, nobody will be left behind. In course of time, he will also progress in life. But the important point is, if the person kills another person because it is his duty to do it, because this fellow is a spy, or it is enemy, or a terrorist trying to kill other people, “I am given the opportunity to serve my fellow people, to save them”, then

that very act will take him forward. So many beautiful things are there, but I will end up, as some of you love beautiful stories, I just mentioned there is a devotee tiger, I might have told you – I do not remember but these are enjoyable things any number of times.

There was a lifelong atheist. Once he happened to travel in a lonely forest area and then suddenly, he came across a place which is thickly laid and suddenly a hungry tiger happened to see him and started running after him, and fell him down and about to tear him up. Now, the atheist knew he was going to die. So, he thought “May be this is the time to test whether God exists”. So, he looked up and said, “Is there anyone up there?!” And immediately response came, “Yes, I am God, I am here. And how can I help you today?” [American accent] How can we serve you today? And this fellow thought, “So, God exists. But if I tell save me from this tiger, what will other people think of me? Because this fellow is in danger, he changed colors, whole life he was preaching and he was a coward, and he changed his ideas because of pure selfishness. No, no, no, I do not want people to think of me like that” So, he turned towards God, he thought he was very clear, “I do not want anything from you. I am quite happy. But you know, this tiger, why don’t you make it your devotee?” God said Tata astu, let it be so. And the moment God said, this tiger, which was about to tear him up with its paws, tears of joy and gratefulness started streaming down, and it folded its paws, and “Brahmarpanam Brahma havihir Brahmagnou...” uttered the mantra and finished the fellow off. So, do not try to be too clear, God comes, accept it gratefully. So, what did we discuss today? This simple saying of Sri Ramakrishna has tremendous meaning if we only meditate upon it. But what is the essence? The whole world is a family belonging to God and He is the head of the family, and we are all His children. It is a big big joint family, every country joins it, every galaxy joins it, and we should consider that everyone in this living, non-living belong only to God, to our Father, nothing belongs to me. I also belong to God only. So, let me lovingly serve everybody that I come across, father, mother, anybody and everybody, but at the same time, I should never feel that neither they are mine or I am theirs; they also belong to God, I also belong to God. It is a joyous playground as in a joint family, several children born of different grown-ups, married people, all join together and play happily, they eat together, let us also consider everything. Next point is, this joint family is given to us to learn our lessons because sometimes we get happiness, sometimes we get unhappiness – both are aids not per se (not by themselves) something is pushing towards; something is pulling us towards God. Every action in this life is giving Sukha, Dukha depending upon what we do, how we do. Sukha is pulling us towards God (more Sukha); Dhukha is pushing us towards Sukha; and little Sukha is pulling us towards more Sukha; more Sukha is pulling us towards All-Sukha and for all time, and until we reach that source of Ananda Sagara, our journey will not come to an end. This world is created by our own actions, for our own growth, and if we are spiritual Sadhakas, then let us take this opportunity and take every incident, every person as a help, as an aid for our spiritual growth and everybody is looked after by God only. Nobody belongs to

us, everybody belongs to God. So, it is God's responsibility to take care of everybody. Let us realize this truth, offer ourselves willingly into the hands of God and let him hold us like the kitten and slowly take us to God.

Om Jananim Sāradam devim Rāmakrishnam jagadgurum |

Pādapadme tayoh shritvā pranamāmi muhurmuhuh ||

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