

# GOSPEL OF SRI RĀMAKRISHNA - PART 20

SWĀMI DAYATMANANDA

ॐ जननीं सारदां देवीं रामकृष्णं जगदगुरुम् ।

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:**

Today's class, we have three questions:

Could you please talk about the love that binds and the love that liberates?

Second question - If the growth of spirituality is to become a zero, then why do those who are observed to attain the state become our heroes?

Third question - What is the difference between faith and belief? If we say we believe in Brahman, is that faith or belief? Is this also subjective - believing in Brahman should be objective.

One by one, we will discuss. First question - **Could you please talk about the love that binds and the love that liberates?**

The very question should be phrased properly. The love that binds is not love, it is lust. I will explain very shortly. Only that love and love always liberates. Love gives freedom. Love gives joy. Joy means freedom. The question is a very beautiful question. I will deal with it slightly in a psychological way and then come back to the answer. Most people do not know that joy means freedom. What does that mean? That means here is a person who is completely free and he does not even think whether he should become free. Only a person who has got a headache feels that he should be free from headache. Do you ever think of your teeth? Only when there is toothache, when there is stomachache, when there is headache or any other ache, that means we have deviated from our most natural state which is to be free from being conscious, aware. Here also there is something very deep. Health is defined by great physicians - absence of the consciousness of the body. When we are conscious of the teeth only when we have aches. Similarly with stomach, head. Otherwise our attention is drawn elsewhere. That means not to be thinking about the body, etc. that is called health. That means freedom. When we are happy, we do not think about happiness. But when we are unhappy, we think about how to get rid of that unhappiness. What does this all lead to? That our natural state is to be healthy, to be free, to be not bound and always to think of the greatest thing i.e., God. To be God means to be free. To be free means not to have any limitation or bondage. So, I hope that makes sense. What is love? Love means most people think, I love another person, another object, another animal, a pet for example, or a painting or a sunset, sunrise. Anything that is other than me. Nobody ever talks about, I love anything because I love myself, because I love myself and I want to be always happy. Whatever object(s) help me to love, that object I love; really I do not love the object, I love what I derive from that object. The moment that object stops giving me what I like, that moment that object is dropped like a hot potato. So, with this background, you are intelligent people, you can understand. We should never use the word 'love' that binds. That is called Lust. In the Sanskrit language, there are distinct names for this - 'kama' and 'prema'. That feeling which binds us is called 'kama' and that feeling which liberates us is called 'prema'. In Bengali language, there is a beautiful saying, 'atmendriya priti iccha pari naam kaam, krishnendriya priti iccha dore prem naam'. If anyone of you understand Bengali language, you can enjoy it. **atmendriya priti iccha** - if a person loves something for the pleasure he derives from it and satisfies his indriya, then what is its name? Kama. **krishnendriya priti iccha** - I want to make my Krishna happy, God happy. It takes on 'prem naam'. It is called Prema. Whatever I love, I want that object, that animal, that human being happy.

And Sri Ramakrishna has very appropriate words. The same words used in this question, 'love', should be prema. But what Sri Ramakrishna says beautifully is Daya and Maya. These two peculiar words he had used. According to Sri Ramakrishna, there is a great deal of difference between Daya (Compassion) and Maya (Attachment). Daya is good but not Maya. Maya is love for one's own relatives, for one's wife, children, brother, sister, nephew, father and mother. But Daya is the same love for all created beings without any distinction. Again, Maya entangles man and turns him away from God but through Daya, one realizes God. The most marvelous definition. This word 'prema' is not used here. I will conclude the answer to that question after finishing this one. So, instead of prema, what we call in English 'love', Sri Ramakrishna had identified two words - Daya and Maya. What is Daya? Sameness towards every being. And what is Maya? That our intense attachment, intense attraction towards one's body, one's own happiness, of course family members, parents, friends, country, religion, language, one's own accustomed style of cooking, or dress, anything you can put it. So, what is the difference? Maya takes us deeper into bondage; Daya slowly releases us. When? Our first duty is to get out of Maya and develop Daya. Daya means sameness. Here Daya is not compassion, Daya is sympathy. Do you know the word sympathy? Samana Bhava pathi - same feeling simultaneously. If someone is suffering, I know how, I suffer. If someone is happy, I know when I am happy, how that person feels, same thing. So, this Daya and Maya is with regard to the world but there is hell and heaven difference; one binds and one takes us slowly towards God. When Maya is overcome by Daya, and Daya slowly takes us towards God, and we transcend Daya, that becomes Prema. Now I will give you the real definition of love. Love means feeling oneness with the other. And the final climax, Everest of this love is to feel 'I am God' 'Aham Brahmasmi'. That is the answer to the first question.

Now, the second question - **If the goal of spirituality is to become a zero, then why do those who are observed to attain that state become our heroes?**

There is an intimate connection between Zero and Hero. I do not know if I understood the question properly, but I will try to give the answer with what I understood. When a person becomes spiritual, practices spiritual sadhana, and ultimately what does he become? He becomes a Hero. The English word, 'Hero' is in Sanskrit language 'Veera', that means a great person. Who is a Veera? A virtuous person is a Veera, a person who is adorned with any number of best spiritual qualities, (what are the best qualities? Viveka, Vairaghya, Shama Dhama dhi shatka sampathi, mumukshutva, intense love and compassion and service to God) is called a Veera in Sanskrit language. And especially in Tantric language, since the topic came I will take this opportunity (since we are talking about Gospel only here). There is a Tantric system of spiritual sadhana and they have their own philosophy. Sri Ramakrishna had practised it and it is one of the most effective practices in the world. So, according to Tantra, all human spiritual aspirants are classified / divided into three categories: Pashu, Veera and Dhivya. All the three require Gurus to progress in spiritual life. The same Guru, when he comes across a raw spiritual aspirant, he labels him as Pashu. What is a Pashu? Viveka hinaH

- an animal / a being that does not have any power of discrimination. That is why most of you have been hearing this from me, and in books also you must be reading...

AhAra-nidrA-bhaya-maithunam cha

samAnam\_etat\_pashubhir\_narANAm |

There is absolutely no difference - we are all animals. Every creature in this world is a created being, is an animal. That is why Lord Shiva is called Pashupathi. Animal means Pashu. When a Guru encounters the lowest type of the disciple then he is categorized as Pashu. And a Pashu does not have discrimination. That means the Pashu is subject to temptation all round. At that stage, the Guru does not allow any temptation, any object which can tempt and take the disciple away from God. Strictly, whether it is eating or it is sex, whatever it is, completely away until the Pashu or Pashu bhav samanvita sadhaka conquers his lower tendencies which just now we mentioned as Maya and enters into the higher stage called Daya. As soon as a spiritual aspirant enters into the second stage, the Daya stage, he is by the same Guru classified as Veera. Veera means full of spiritual characteristics. What Bhagavad Gita Sixteenth Chapter terms as Daivee Sampathi.

abhayam sattva-samsuddhir

jnana-yoga-vyavasthitih

danam damas ca yajnas ca etc. etc.

At that stage, the Guru deliberately brings about every tempting object within the purview of this Veera. Why is it? Because how do we know he is a hero, he can conquer any enemy? This Kama (Lust), Krodha (Anger), Lobha (Avariceness), Moha (Delusion), Mada (Pride), Matsarya (Jealousy) are the only enemies, there is no other enemy. Every unspiritual quality can be brought under this broad classification called the Six-fold inner enemies of every spiritual aspirant. Matsarya (Jealousy) takes the highest step. That is why Swami Vivekananda defined Ahimsa as the absence of jealousy. He who is free from Matsarya bhava, he is really a hero. At this stage, the Tantrics, the Tantric Guru guides the hero. Here is a beautiful man, a beautiful woman, most mouth-watering dishes, etc. etc. and the hero is brought into very close proximity.

I am sure some of you have studied, maybe all of you I do not know, but I am recollecting a beautiful incident. Sri Ramakrishna had practiced Tantric sadhana under the guidance of Bhairavi Brahmani. And the penultimate sadhana, here let me insert - there are innumerable Tantric scriptures. Of them, there are supposed to be sixty-four main Tantric scriptures. This Bhairavi Bhramani, who of her own accord, came to Dakshineswar and Sri Ramakrishna accepted her as a Guru in two sadhanas - Vaishnava sadhana and Tantric sadhana. Vaishnava sadhana means adopting five distinct attitudes and forging a strong relationship with God. Every Bhakta, every spiritual sadhaka doing Saguna Upasana, devoting himself spiritually to a personally

Guru-chosen or family-chosen deity. God in a most likable, lovable form called Ishta Devata. But even with the Ishta Devata, one must forge a special relationship. Sri Ramakrishna gives an example - before marriage, a young marriageable girl can develop a loving relationship with purity, with any number of boys. But after she gets married, she develops a very special relationship only in the form of her husband. She serves everybody, brothers, the sisters, everybody with great love but her relationship with her Ishta Devata is something very special. These are most marvelous teachings and deep hidden spiritual secrets. These are not ordinary words. If we want to progress in spiritual life, we cannot think of God in a hundred different ways. What do I mean? For a Hindu, you know, if you take non-Hindu religions, usually there is only one aspect of God. Even though many sadhakas had different relationships, for example Child Jesus, Beloved Jesus in Christianity, we do come across them but it is neither explicit nor widely propagated. In Hinduism only, this is well propagated.

So, according to Vaishnava literature means devotional literature. A devotee, first of all, must choose a particular form of God. It could be Rama, it could be Krishna, it could be Narayana, it could be Shiva, it could be Jaganmatha, Durga, or Parvati, Saraswati, anyone but it will not do to worship a hundred-fifty deities. Every Hindu, greatness is, he or she will have a personal puja room. And in that, minimum a dozen images of Gods and Goddesses are there. Once some fellow asked a Hindu, "Why do you worship so many forms of God?" And then, the Hindu replied, "I am a very intelligent person. I do not like to put all my eggs in one basket. Even if one basket is gone, there will be something in at least one basket that is saved. Some God or Goddess will come to my rescue". Anyway, just a little bit of fun. But Hindu believe that God manifests in infinite forms, and every form of God has infinite names. That is why Vishnu Sahasranama, Shiva Sahasranama, Devi Sahasranama, Lalita Sahasranama, etc. So, the first requirement is that we must choose a particular form of God with a particular name appropriate to that form, with some particular qualities. That is called Ishta Devata Siddhanta (the law of a Chosen Deity). Now, that is only the first step. The next step will be we must forge an intense, a special relationship with that Chosen Deity. There are five such important Bhavas or relationships with varying degrees of intensity. They go like this: Shantha, Dasya, Sakhya, Vatsalya, and Mathura. The lowest degree of relationship is 'I love God in a general manner. I do love intensely'. But this is of the lowest intensity of relationship, lowest intensity in degree of attraction. But like Hanuman, a person chooses, 'I love God but I want to serve my God. I am the Dasa'. This is called Dasya Bhakti. And Hanuman is the greatest of that. Somebody who is even closer to God, he will develop closer relationship, he moves closer to God, this is called Sakhya Bhakti. God is not a awe-inspiring master with a Dhanda in his hand. If he gets angry, he can punish me, he can dismiss me - No! He is my most intimate friend. Arjuna, that is why, in Bhagavad Gita, 'Hey Krishna! Hey Yadava! Hey Sakheti! Prasavam yaduktam' O Krishna! Sometimes I called you 'Hey Yadava' because you are from Yadu vamsa. Hey Krishna! Not O Lord! But Krishna. Hey Sakha! My greatest friend! Now, I understand that you are the Supreme Lord, when

Arjuna got this Viswaroopa, he blurted out in the Eleventh Chapter of the Bhagavad Gita, that we have now started to discuss. This is the higher relationship with God. No formalities, both share everything equally. But higher than that is Vatsalya bhava (Parental attitude). In this parental attitude, there are two things, two attitudes where God is considered as my Mother or Father, if it is Devi, Kali, Parvati, Saraswati, Lakshmi, etc. she is my Mother. If it is Narayana, Vishnu, Krishna, Rama, Jesus, Buddha, etc. that is called Father attitude. I am a child. I am helpless. My parents are there; I have nothing to worry. I will be sporting, playing joyfully and God will take care of me, my mother and father will take care of me. No obligation, no thank you, in fact, I will weep if they do not take care of me. This is considered as a lower state of Vatsalya bhava. There is another bhava where the devotee becomes the parent like Kausalya, Yashoda, etc. he says 'If I do not take care of my child who is Krishna, who is Rama, then they will go to dogs'. So, I am superior. Twenty-four hours I must keep my eyes peeled whether this fellow is doing any mischief, whether he eats mud or he steals makhan, or whatever he is doing, I must punish him, I must discipline him, I must bring him up in such a way that he will not bring bad name for me. He is completely useless; unless I look after him, he will not even survive. I am the greater and this God is lower. And this is a higher aspect of the parental attitude. And incidentally, Sri Ramakrishna had practiced this one. This is higher than even Shanta, Dasya, Sakhya. Higher than that, we get Mathura Bhakti means the relationship that exists between the lover and the beloved. So, most often the sadhaka assumes the attitude that 'I am a woman. I am a little bit helpless. I only know how to love my beloved. Unless my hero takes care of me, I am not able to proceed further'. This is called Mathura bhakti. And in Mathura bhakti, there are two types: a lower type and a higher type. The lower type is like a chaste woman having tremendous attraction and love towards her husband. Sri Ramakrishna used to call such women as Vidya Maya. Maya but Vidya maya. Such a wife never allows her husband to be too attached even to her, goes on reminding 'God is there', and we will have to separate some time or the other, we will have to go to God, develop love for God. Until the wife succeeds in converting her husband, if he is not already a bhakta, into an ardent devotee of God, she will not feel very happy. This is called Vidya maya and this is the lower type. Her love for her husband is absolute but with one caveat. What is that caveat? She is a married woman and she has certain family restrictions, societal restrictions, moral restrictions, etc. but according to Vaishnava literature, there is a higher type. That is the attraction, the love, the ownership the mistress has towards her paramour. This is exemplified by, I will give you two illustrations. The lower type of Mathura bhava is exemplified by Rukmini and Krishna, Sita and Rama, but the higher type of Madhura bhakti is exemplified by Radha and Krishna. That is why Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's Vaishnavism is called Vaishnavism. Whereas South Indian Vaishnavism is called Sri Vaishnavism. Sri means Lakshmi, it could be Rukmini, it could be Sita, etc. What am I talking about now? These are the five, pancha bhavas and Sri Ramakrishna practiced every single bhava and succeeded in it.

Bhairavi Brahmani guided him, she herself had practiced this Bhakti, she herself was a master of this Bhakti, and then she, by Divine Providence, came to Dakshineswar, on her own accord as we know. Sri Ramakrishna only surrendered himself to the Divine Mother, 'Mother! I am a fool. I know nothing. I am like a child. You please make me speak; you please make me do what you make me speak, what you want me to do and how you want me to dance. I will dance only to your tune.' This Bhairavi Brahmani made Sri Ramakrishna go through tantric practices. She was an expert in Tantric practices and that is how I deviated so much; and it is of course, I am also like that. I am giving you a good deal of information on this sadhana. How many varieties Hinduism has developed; it is almost infinite; infinite paths to the infinite aspects of the One Divine which is called the Brahman, Supreme Reality. So, Tantras have developed these three stages of spiritual progress - Pashu, Veera and Dhivya. Of course, Sri Ramakrishna was never categorized as a Pashu. By the time Bhairavi Brahmani came, he was almost in a divine state. He was divine, called Dhivya sadhaka, not even veera sadhaka. But Bhairavi Brahmani guided him. I will tell you why that happened also. This Bhairavi Brahmani, at night, she used to go out, collect all the ingredients that were required by the scriptures for his practice of Tantric sadhana and at night, she used to call Sri Ramakrishna, make him sit on either a Trimundi asana (an asana beneath which earth is dug and either three human skulls or one human skull plus two different animal skulls had been buried). This is a very powerful sadhana according to Tantras. An even more powerful asana is called Panchamundi, either five different human skulls or at least one human skull plus four different animal skulls will be dug on earth after purifying it and an asana is established upon that. And that according to Tantra shastra is the most powerful seat. So, Sri Ramakrishna, according to the necessity, Bhairavi Brahmani used to make him sit either on the Trimundi asana or Panchamundi asana and make him practice different Tantric spiritual practices. Every night, this was going on and she made him go through all the sixty-four important Tantric sadhanas. But the penultimate or ultimate sadhana is to test him whether he had conquered lust. What does it mean? A person who has body consciousness can never conquer lust. Lust belongs to the body, pure physical desire to do something which nature wants man or woman to do for the sake of reproduction or propagation of species. That is called Kama bhava. Kama is condemned. Why? Because it brings us intense identity or consciousness of the body. And what is spirituality? To feel I am 'Mano Buddhi Ahamkaram Chitthani Naham'. I am not the body, I am not the ten sense organs, I am not the Chittha, I am not the mind, I am not the ahamkara, etc. We have to go beyond the Pancha Koshas (Five sheaths). Annamayakosha, Pranamaya, Manomaya kosha, Vijnanamaya, and Ananda maya. then, we do not need to do anything. The moment we get out of this body-mind identity, then we know 'Aham Brahmasmi'. Every spiritual sadhana is to get rid of this body-mind consciousness, get rid of the limitation, break the limitation and become infinite. From the finite to the infinite. So, one night, this Bhairavi Brahmani brought the most beautiful looking young woman and she called Sri Ramakrishna, then there were some preliminary rituals to be gone through. And before puja, sadhana, we have

to do achamana, purification, etc. And after the preliminaries were over, Bhairavi Brahmani, the Guru commanded, "My Child, now you sit in the lap of this naked woman and do japa". Sri Ramakrishna was horrified. And then he said, "Mother! What are you making me do? Will your child be able to withstand this?" This is like asking a man to jump into a roaring fire and stay there. Mother, I will not be able to do it. Sri Ramakrishna, remember, was a child of Mother, surrendered himself a while back completely to the Mother. And in this instance, he took refuge in the Divine Mother. And then suddenly, Mother made him completely forget his body and then he assumed a heroic attitude, just went and sat in the lap of that beautiful naked young woman, and then started doing japa according to the direction given by his Guru, Bhairavi Brahmani. Later on, he narrated, "As soon as I had hardly completed one mala, 108 japa, completely unconscious that he was the body, and that woman was also a body, and then he became unconscious. Deep samadhi, he entered into. And after several hours, when he came back to consciousness, he found his Guru in tears and said, "My Child, very very few people could complete this sadhana with success. By Mother's grace (that is important for us to note) you have completed your sadhana. By doing this, you have become divine now (Dhivya). Hence forward, nothing can ever touch you because you will not have any body consciousness at all". With that, Sri Ramakrishna said, "My tantric sadhana had come to an end". After a few days, another Bhairavi was brought to the Dakshineswar temple. And in the presence of everybody in the daytime, in the hall which is in front of the main temple, this is called Natamandir, Sri Ramakrishna worshipped the second Bhairavi, formally offered her a rupee, and with that, his Tantric sandhana had come to an end. [Explanation of Swami Saradananda according to his biography, Sri Ramakrishna The Great Master. Whatever I have told you has been taken bodily but with some interpretation] Sri Ramakrishna said, "Ever since that time, I ever remained in the bhava of a child, never a grown-up person". In the personality of Sri Ramakrishna, we get nothing but two bhavas, that of a child and that of the Divine Mother. When Sri Ramakrishna was not required to impart any spiritual discipline or upadesha, he used to be like a child - eating, drinking, playing, making majaa, telling jokes, singing, enjoying, etc. But when devotees come, who require help, the Divine Mother manifests in the form of a Guru and by touch, by wish, and by upadesha, by instruction, or by talking or singing, he used to impart spirituality to people. Remember one thing - whenever Sri Ramakrishna was talking, it is not mere talk like a scholar, but it is physically transmitting spirituality into the people who are attending him. And that was what Swami Vivekananda said, "I never lectured. I gave them something concrete. And they also know that I have given them something". You will have to excuse me for rambling for such a long time, but it is most important for all of us to know, what is the second question? It is to become a hero, not even a hero, but a Dhivya, a Divine Being. That is the reason why when any person attains God realization, he becomes our hero, we worship him, we adore him, we think of him so that we also follow his footsteps in whichever form, in the form of Gurunanak, in the form of Ramana Maharishi, in the



form of any of our Sadgurus, or incarnations of God, so that they continuously inspire us and we reach our goal.

**Third question - what is the difference between faith and belief?**

Many times I dealt with it. But in brief, I will answer today. Belief is a function of our mind. What we choose to believe because of our habit, because of the environment, because of family tradition, because of satsanga, what we cherish the feeling 'God exists, He is of that nature, and He is having these qualities'. For example, if we believe in Sri Ramakrishna, and we all belong to Ramakrishna sampradaya. Why? Because we are all attending the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna. So, our ideas, not like the fanatical followers of certain religions, not exclusivism, but complete freedom to everybody - many paths to the same God. **Jatho math thatho path.** What we cherish is called belief. Then, what are its characteristics? They can change; somebody can influence you, day after tomorrow, disease and weakness can come, or you pray to God and He has not fulfilled your desire, not only that, on top of it, he might heed through. So, you think He is not only listening to my prayer, not only answering my prayers, he may heap something more when I thought I already had enough. so, a belief may become weak, or sometimes if you think He answered your prayer, the belief may become strong. It goes on oscillating like a leaf in the wind. So, that which changes in any moment because of any reason is called belief.

What is Faith? The appropriate name for faith is called **Shraddha**. Shraddha is defined by Shankaracharya in the Vivekachudamani.

Shastrasya guru-vakyasya satyabuddhi-avadharanam

Sa shraddha kathita shadbhir-yaya vastu-upalabhyate

That is defined as Shraddha, complete faith. What is it? What the scriptures tell and what the Guru tells us. Sadguru never tells anything that is opposed to scripture. Any Guru who tells anything that is not found in the scripture, that is not approved by scripture is a sad guru, not Sadguru. Every Sadguru follows a sampradaya and that sampradaya is founded upon scripture only. So, when Shraddha comes, it is not in our control. Shraddha becomes like a demon, like a ghost, it possesses us like madness. If we become mad, what is a madman? He is not under his control. Some idea, that controls him - Good or bad. So, when Shraddha possesses us, we are controlled by Shraddha. In brief, what is the answer? That which is controlled by us is belief, and it is liable to change and it definitely changes. And that which controls us, we have absolutely no control over it - we have to do it, there is no choice for us, we have to do what the faith directs us to do, that is called Faith in English language. Obviously, the English word 'Faith' is very weak. This is the major difference. I will conclude this by summing up - when we go on doing our Sadhana, one day God enters into us in the form of right understanding. And when the right understanding comes, that becomes Shraddha. And once we have that Shraddha, we have no option but to do what it dictates us to do. And it is a very beautiful and interesting word. That is why I am

continuing in today's class. Supposing you come to know that this is a snake. You get fear as a result. That is the Jnana. So long as that jnana (knowledge) lasts, nobody can change you, thousand people may tell you that it is not a snake, it is a stick, a rope, but you cannot behave but according to your belief (that knowledge). But as soon as somebody brings light, and you see that it is a piece of stick, or a piece of rope, then this new knowledge overpowers the wrong knowledge that you have been cherishing for so long. Now, what is my point? As soon as this new knowledge comes, that becomes Shraddha. You may not be even seeing that rope but in your mind, you have that knowledge. What is that knowledge? It is the most harmless piece of rope or stick, and I can go fearlessly to it. So, this is an illustration that the belief is like cherishing the attitude that it is a snake. It can change - small snake, big snake, poisonous snake, poisonless snake, anything. But once right knowledge comes, that is called Shraddha. Then, you cannot pretend 'I am frightened'. Even if you try to pretend, you will definitely fail. In summary, what we control is belief, and what controls us is Faith. I am sorry I have taken a lot of time, but it is also part of our Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna. In his life, he was overcome with this Shraddha that time is passing, that life is meant only for God-Realization, human life is very rare as we saw both in the Katha Upanishad and also in Sadhana Panchakam. So, we should not waste even a single second. As soon as that Shraddha came, Sri Ramakrishna was reminiscing later on, something possessed me like a ghost, it did not give me freedom to do what I like, it made me go through all the spiritual sadhanas for twelve continuous long years. And that Shraddha finally was nothing but Divine Mother's grace, God's grace. With that I have completed. Anyway, I just remembered a joke, some of us like jokes. With this question, we do not become zeroes, we become heroes. Or the word zero can also mean something, we slowly get rid of ahamkara, when our ahamkara becomes completely zero, then we merge completely in God, we emerge as heroes. Here is a Zen joke - you know Zen buddhism asks us to observe our thoughts until we become masters of our mind. And we become thoughtless means we remain as ourselves, we do not think what our mind thinks. Two world's greatest Zen masters met at a reception party. As soon as one Zen master saw the other one, involuntarily he exclaimed, "In my whole life, I never met another man as thoughtless as He". I hope you get it.

### **Continuing the discussion on the Gospel**

Ok, let us come back. What did we discuss in our last class? We were discussing the Fifth Commandment of Sri Ramakrishna - Live like a maidservant in this world. With that regard, we also discussed that Sri Ramakrishna gave his devotees clear and definite guidance, one must discharge one's duties with great love and care. No one can attain that state of inaction except by going through the field of action. And I also mentioned that most of the spiritual aspirants in this world are householders having many duties, and of course, inevitable worries, anxieties, and plans, responsibilities, etc. If one does not somehow at least have some amount of detachment to some extent, it is impossible to focus the mind on God. Now, the one point only, very briefly

we will discuss in this connection. For most devotees, it is not possible to sit quiet. So, this great field, this world is the greatest field. A householder's life is the greatest opportunity to cultivate this field. And depending upon how a householder devotee cultivates his body, his mind, then the result depends upon how he does it. And very interesting thing for us, in the Bhagavad Gita, several times, this body and this world and this human life is compared to a Kshetra. In fact, the very first sloka of the Bhagavad Gita starts with this particular sloka -

dharmakshetre kuru-kshetre

samaveta yuyutsavah

Dharmakshetra and it is Kurukshetra. Life is a battlefield between non-spiritual and spiritual armies. So, Kshetra - what is the speciality of this kshetra? It means any field which is very cultivable, which can yield anything that we sow. It is the field and human life is such a field. Human life is an opportunity to use this field called this world for either reaping evil deeds or virtuous deeds; papa or punya and reap the consequence of either happiness or unhappiness. So, this also has been beautifully explained in the Thirteenth Chapter which is aptly named as Kshetra-kshetrajna vivagha yoga nama trayodasho adhyayaH. Kshetra - means this body, this mind, this complex is called Kshetra. Kshetrajna - the person who is given such an opportunity, who is separate from the kshetra; the field and its sower are completely different from each other; the seer and seen, the knower and the known, the witness and the witnessed - these are completely different. So, here is a great opportunity; this whole world is our instrument but it is meant to cultivate our knowledge. This is the ultimate result - if we sow the right seed, we get a good harvest. Good seed always gives good harvest, that means we get that knowledge that I have done dharma, that I have earned punya and I am a happy person. That is the result and that is called knowledge, right knowledge. The contrary is, I have misused my opportunity, I sowed the seeds of evil, I did papa, and I am a suffering person. This is the result of Kshetra. So, what we sow that we reap. This is the fourth pillar of Hinduism, the greatest pillar, also of Buddhism. So, for most people, they want to sit quiet but not possible. The field of action strengthens one's character. If the householder taking advantage of his particular opportunity to have the family, wife, children, and his relationship with them as well as with the entire external world, and that determines what he is going to do, good or evil, and that determines what he is going to reap; as a result of it, either happiness or unhappiness. And finally, that determines whether he is going to progress in spiritual life or regress into worldly life; whether he strengthens avidya-maya or strengthens vidya-maya depends upon it. As I elaborately discussed in my past Gospel classes, a householder's life is a wonderful opportunity to expand from selfishness to gradually, the man identifies with the wife, then with the children, then with those relatives, then with his village, with his city, with his country, and with everything, with the whole world, first with all living beings, and with the non-living too, and says 'I am', 'I am existence' and everything that exists is me. This

is how a person does not become a zero really but he becomes upon continuous expansion, until he says 'I am the Infinite'. This is why with the right attitude, concentration, tranquility and devotion, with these, every action is transformed into a spiritual practice. In the fourth chapter of the Bhagavad Gita, this is what is being mentioned - transform every action into a Yajna. I mentioned / defined what is Yajna. Transforming even breathing or eating or lying or sleeping, any action that we do through the mind, through the speech, and through the external sense organs, gradually, they will expand my consciousness, make me identify with a larger whole until I succeed in identifying myself with the entire universe; entire creation, and ultimately with the creator. And then I will spontaneously feel 'Aham Brahmasmi'. So, this is how, whether a householder, he expands until he realizes 'I am Brahman' or if he is a sanyasi, he expands and says, 'Aham brahmasmi'. Both these - householders and sannyasins are two lifestyles suited to two different types of mentalities but both are spiritual aspirants and both will attain, if they strive sincerely, to that same goal, which is to know 'I alone exist', 'Aham Brahmasmi'. This is what Sri Ramakrishna wants to convey - 'live like a maidservant' means live without any attachment, not to become callous, not to become indifferent, but to love not the limited, not to love the body and the mind, the wealth, etc. but to love the real wife, the real husband, the real children, the real servants, the real friends, real people. Reality behind everything that is existing in this world. That is what is called 'to live like a maidservant' and these wonderful points we will discuss further in our next class.

**Om Jananim Sāradam devim Rāmakrishnam jagadgurum |**

**Pādapadme tayoh shritvā pranamāmi muhurmuḥuḥ ||**

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