

# GOSPEL OF SRI RĀMAKRISHNA - PART 24

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 ॥

In our last class, we had been discussing in some smaller details about the significance of Puja especially, of Durga Puja based upon Chandi. From today's class onwards, we will be resuming our Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna class. There was one question, why did Sri Ramakrishna connect with Keshab Chandra Sen? It looked as though Keshab Chandra Sen was a worldly person.

I think we will have to clarify some of our own understandings. Keshab Chandra Sen was not merely a social reformer but he was a great spiritual person. How do we know? We know it because Sri Ramakrishna went to meet Keshab Chandra Sen because the Divine Mother commanded him to go and meet him. Why did the Divine Mother

command him? Because most of the future disciples, both monastic and lay that were to be attracted by Sri Ramakrishna were earlier, because of better choice perhaps, with Keshab Chandra Sen. He did not attract people merely because he was a great orator with great personality. He was absolutely sincere to the core. He was one of the very sincere spiritual aspirants. How do we know? Because when Sri Ramakrishna, first time, went to meet him at the commandment of Divine Mother (because Sri Ramakrishna never did anything except at the direct bidding / commandment of Divine Mother), Keshab Chandra Sen was meditating, he was in a spiritual retreat. That means he was doing retreats even before Sri Ramakrishna met him, even before Keshab Chandra Sen and his followers really knew anything about Sri Ramakrishna. They knew there was such a person, little bit but nothing more than that. Sri Ramakrishna went and saw, then he remarked, "Of all the people sitting here in meditation, this is the only person who dived deep into meditation. He also recognized that Keshab Chandra Sen was one of the helpers, one who was destined to help Sri Ramakrishna's mission in life. The Divine Mother's mission in the form of the avatara of Sri Ramakrishna. How do we know? Because Sri Ramakrishna would have remained practically unknown, maybe excepting known only to a few people but for the write-ups and for the frequent visits of Keshab Chandra Sen. After Sri Ramakrishna met Keshab Chandra Sen, Keshab Chandra Sen had the insight to look and understand, "Here is one of the greatest personalities and he is like Jesus Christ, Buddha and such types of persons should be kept like most precious objects one keeps protecting inside glass cases". He was the only person who could understand Sri Ramakrishna that way and understand really which of course, was the grace of the Divine Mother and make such pronounced statements. So, by this we know that Keshab Chandra Sen had to play a special role. That is the first point - he was a sincere spiritual aspirant, he had a great role to play in the mission of Sri Ramakrishna. And what was the great play or part Keshab had to play? Because in those days, he was one of the most influential persons. And he was able to attract the cream of the society not only because of his tremendous oratory but also because of his spiritual insights which came through deep meditation. And then he had to propagate practically, he was writing up and inspiring people to go and visit a Paramahsa of Dakshineswar. He also used to come very often to Sri Ramakrishna and of course, he took little time, they had not learnt how to sit in front of a sadhu, how to salute them, and how to behave themselves. That was not his fault, it was what we call part of his earlier culture, samskara. And Sri Ramakrishna had changed the whole thing. Keshab Chandra Sen and others learnt how to bow down before sadhus, how to sit. Slowly, gradually, a tremendous change had come over Keshab Chandra Sen and from what we call, formless aspect of God, he became a devotee of the Divine Mother and before his passing away, he became a changed man. And one of his own disciples remarked to Sri Ramakrishna (we get in the Gospel itself), "Sir! Keshab, like you, nowadays takes only Divine Mother's name and he has changed a lot!" though Brahmo Samaj at that time was a kind of quasi-religious sect. But earlier people like Raja Rammohan Roy, Devendranath Tagore, guided. Devendranath Tagore was a great devotee of God but of the formless

aspect of God. After that, the greatest influence came from Keshab Chandra Sen. And he had changed after coming into contact with Sri Ramakrishna, they all accepted the form aspect of God, used to sing devotional songs, they learnt how to surrender to God, how to look upon God as the Mother. So, these were all the changes that had taken place. Above all, he was a very sincere spiritual aspirant. Sri Ramakrishna loved him very much. So, what is the answer? Keshab Chandra Sen was a special person, very sincere person, and a very sincere spiritual aspirant first, he had to come into contact with Sri Ramakrishna and he had to play a big role in the mission of Sri Ramakrishna himself and also of the Divine Mother. Thirdly, even though the beginning was very crude and not ripe, in course of time, he changed very much and he had the power to influence a large number of people, especially young people. Just to mention a few, the future Swami Vivekananda, future Swami Brahmananda, and many others had come under the deep influence of Brahmo Samaj and later on, they understood, for social reformation Brahmo Samaj was great, for spiritual reformation Sri Ramakrishna was the only way. And they became Sri Ramakrishna's most important sannyasin disciples. So, there was a deep connection between them. This is the answer.

Now, we will resume our Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna class. So, what did we discuss so far? In the last three classes, we discussed the symbolism of Durga Puja, especially the Motherhood of God. What is the essence? She is the sarva mangala mangalye, She is the most auspicious. She is auspicious of everything that is auspicious. And the greatest auspiciousness is that of Moksha. She alone can give Moksha. She has put everybody under bondage. This whole world is because of her. And it is maintained because of her. And it goes back into her. We have all come from our Mother not from our Father. Father can be compared to Nirguna Brahma, impersonal but it is the Mother who is the personal, saguna Brahma (Iswara) and that is the aspect that Sri Ramakrishna very much emphasizes throughout the Gospel. And that is the relationship between the Gospel and the Divine Mother. So, what is the way forward? Sri Ramakrishna says that it is by following the devotional path as advocated by Narada. And what did Narada advocate? Citing Prahlada's teaching in the Bhagavatam as the Nava-vidha bhakti (nine stepped ladder) as taught by Prahlada to his fellow students:

śrī-prahlāda uvāca

śravaṇaṁ kīrtanaṁ viṣṇoḥ

smaraṇaṁ pāda-sevanam

arcanaṁ vandanāṁ dāsyam

sakhyam ātma-nivedanam

Complete surrender to God - this was what is expressed in the three lined stotram which every devotee of Sri Ramakrishna, devotee of the Divine Mother sing/hymn to the Divine Mother:

sarva mangala mangalye...

saranagata dinarta sarvasya harti hare devi

narayani devi namostute

That we should surrender completely to the Divine Mother. Call her by Durga, or Kali or Parvati, Kamakshi, Meenakshi, Kanyakumari, Lakshmi, Saraswati, by any name you want. Not only that, whether you call the Divine Mother as Narayana, Vishnu, Shiva, Krishna, Rama, Ramakrishna, these are all synonymous with the Divine Mother. She is sarva deva devi swaroopini. Not only that, even Jesus, Buddha, or Parabrahma, everything is nothing but one of the thousand names of the Divine Mother. This is the greatest teaching of Hinduism or Vedanta, Ekam sat viprAh bahudha vadanti. That we should surrender completely to the Divine Mother and there is no other way, either for worldly happiness or spiritual emancipation; either for worldly progress or for spiritual progress. So, that is the message we have to take from the last three classes: saranagati and only the grace of God in the form of the Mother. Why Mother? Because Mother's grace is more easily flowing and obtainable than Father's grace. So, these are spiritual concepts.

Coming back to our Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, in our last class before the Durga Puja discussions, we had discussed how one should live like a maid servant in a rich man's house. This is part of the five commandments of Sri Ramakrishna, which is the essence of all the scriptures without any doubt. So, what is the essence of this? Live like a maidservant, that was the fifth commandment of Sri Ramakrishna. What does it mean, translated into Gita language?

Tasmad Yogi bhavarjuna

Become a Karma Yogi. What is Karma Yoga? You just be an instrument in the hands of God. So, let us recollect the last commandment. Live like a maid servant - A maid servant 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', 'My Hari', but in her own mind she knows very well, they do not belong to her at all. So, Sri Ramakrishna says, "Do all your duties in the world but keep your mind on God. One must perform one's duties diligently with reverence and love". Why is this necessary? Because the moment we hear Nishkama Karma yoga, all of us mostly come, whatever I am not interested in, that is called Nishkama karma yoga. There was one of our great Swamis, Swami Ranganathanandaji Maharaj - he was a great orator, perhaps next to Swami Vivekananda I would say. And he was a very learned person, and he was blessed by no less than by Swami Akandanandaji, "May Saraswati dwell on your tongue". And that

blessing proved to be true to the hilt. Now he passed away, but he was one of the most hypnotizing, mesmerizing orators I have ever heard. Anyway coming back, he used to say, "Every born Indian is a born karma yogi". What does it mean? It means he is not at all interested in his duties, he is interested in Cricket matches, in watching television, in cheating other people, in trying to escape his responsibilities saying that I am living like a karma yogi. That is how Swamiji used to make fun of these so-called Indians because they are disinterested. Karma Yoga is not a disinterested performance of activity. One has to perform as if that is what God had commanded him. And that is how he would obtain God's grace and that is the only activity he should be interested in, and that is what alone can save him from the jaws of death, unhappiness, etc. So, naturally one must perform one's duties diligently with great reverence because that has been given by God to him, and love, one must never forget.

The second point, that no one in this world belongs to anybody excepting God. This is a great truth. We may be living in a very intimate, loving close family - ourselves, our husbands, our wives, our children, our friends, and relatives, everybody. But nobody belongs to us. How do we know? Because when they go, perhaps they would not say even Goodbye to us, and when we go, we might not say Goodbye to any one of them. We join in this life for some reason, what is that reason? To work out our own Prarabdha karma, we exhaust their karma, and they exhaust our karma, that is all the relationship. And if anybody is happy or suffering, no credit or debit comes to us because each one suffers because of one's own prarabdha karma. So one must never forget, no one in this world belongs to anyone excepting everybody belongs to God, we also belong to God alone. That is the second point.

Third point, without acquiring love for God and some amount of detachment, it is impossible not to be overwhelmed by attachments and cares. So, only when we progress to some extent in spiritual life, how do we know we are progressing? Because then we get detachment, that means we have the mind control. So, whether we are happy or unhappy, we can quickly detach our mind and focus it on God with some little effort. As we progress, the effort becomes even easier and easier. So, it is impossible not to be overwhelmed by attachments and cares. I do not know whether you ever had any opportunity to read, there was a great soul, writer, he was called Somerset Maugham. He has written a number of stories, there is one particular story, it is called "The Rain". The summary of that story is there was a fallen woman, probably a prostitute, and there was a missionary who took it upon himself to reform her. Day and night, whenever he sees her, he will go on showing a picture, a vivid living picture of hell. And then, one day, thinking of her, he falls into the same trap and then, he comes out of her room after fulfilling his desire and then, this lady says, "Pigs! All men are pigs!!" A very meaningful statement. So, what is that? This was what Sri Ramakrishna was telling, "Do not go on attaching yourself even in the form of teaching, even in the form of spiritual discipline". Unless God gives anyone authority, that person will not be effective. On the other hand, where from this attachment comes and then overwhelms a person, only God knows! Only a surrenderful prayer, "O

Mother! I am weak. Please save me". This is the only way. That is what Sri Ramakrishna is telling that it is impossible without having love for God to become detached and not to be overwhelmed by attachments and cares. We may be thinking that our whole life we have been practising tremendous spiritual sadhanas but it can happen that even the slightest thing can completely upset our lives. There are many examples. But one example is the most famous example of Jada Bharata. He was almost on the cusp of God-realization. Somehow, we do not know why, God must have wanted to teach him a lesson. He saw a baby deer and he fell in love. And then he went on, his whole life, his whole thought, everything of his effort, action was only centered around that deer. And as a result, the last thought was that of a deer and he became a deer in his next birth. But he was a great soul. So, we should never criticize such great souls. Then, he understood, it was my fault, I should never have loved anything in this life, even in a spiritual way. Then, he determined that I will not fall into the same trap again. Next birth, he was born with full knowledge but he behaved like an idiot and the story, if you have not heard about it, look upon it on the internet, it is called the story of Jada Bharata. Jada means like an inert being. Everybody misunderstood him until he met one king who was in search of wisdom and Jada Bharata was made to carry his palanquin for a short time and then the king came to know somehow that this is one of the hidden yogis and the greatest wisdom from the conversation between Jada Bharata and that king. So, we have to be extremely careful. Only God's grace can save us from any type of attachments.

Then, there is also this saying, so long as the family is not provided with enough to maintain itself, one has to look after the family. That is the amount of responsibility. But when your children can support themselves, you have no more duty to them. You are not supposed to do what you call, go on accumulating millions and then leaving it to them and these people will be grateful. You go your own way, they go their own way, you are not a parent, they are not children, they do not even know who their parents are, in their next birth or you do not know who your children will be. That is to say that if there are people who deserve your help, help them, that is your duty but not only to your own children. Of course, you can show your love to them but be like birds, as long as their young ones are there, until they can fend for themselves, the parents sacrifice their very lives for feeding and caring for their small, young ones. But as soon as they grow up, the parents themselves slowly push them out of the nest, "Bye bye children!" And we have to learn a big lesson, that is why we have to become like Hamsas and slowly we will become Paramahamsas. So, M was asking, "Sir! Have I obligations to the family?" "Yes. So long as the family is not secure. If your children have not grown up, you have responsibility". What about the wife? Yes, for the wife, you have to provide and the same thing applies if the husband is not able to fend for himself and if the wife is able to do some job or whatever, that is something we have to learn. We learn this truth only after much suffering. Every being in this world is journeying towards God, the final destination of all. The journey comes to an end only when we reach God. Therefore, all the unions and separations in this world are only

accidental and meant only to help us develop detachment, devotion, and spirituality. Until we learn our lessons, we will be presented with the same situations and with the same problems and difficulties. Only when we learn our lesson, like a child cannot be promoted to the higher class until he passes the lower class. So, with faith in one's Guru and the teachings of the scriptures, one should carry on with regular practice, Japa, prayer and service. In course of time, the mind gets purified and the seed of devotion grows slowly. So, that is how we have to progress in spiritual life. In course of time, the mind gets purified. And the seed of devotion grows slowly. If one has devotion to God, then there is nothing to fear or worry about. Devotion itself takes possession and unerringly guides the devotee in all matters. Even under trying circumstances, devotees keep their balance. In fact, the more the troubles, the more will be their longing and reliance on God. The more they experience pain, the people feel the insubstantiality of this world. And any difficulties we experience will only increase our detachment to this world further. Thus, slowly but surely, they progress until they reach Him and become blessed. We have discussed the five commandments of Sri Ramakrishna in considerable detail. Please keep them in mind and often, recollect them because that is the essence of Sri Ramakrishna. And even if somebody has not studied any scripture or has not the good fortune to come across a living teacher, these five commandments will definitely unerringly take the person towards God slowly albeit, surely. So, anybody who sincerely tries to put into practice these five commandments will make spiritual progress and will definitely realize God. It is not whether we realize God or not. Definitely, surely, we will realize God. In fact, even worldly people will not be excepted because everybody is God's child, everybody is moving, maybe some people will go straight, some people will go in a zig-zag way. God knows best how to guide every one of us. But all of us are only evolving towards God.

Now, we will start a new subject from the Gospel. When M had started visiting Sri Ramakrishna, the topic of Keshab Chandra Sen came which I briefly discussed as an answer to a question. So, here is what we get in the Gospel:

Sri Ramakrishna: "I made a vow to worship the Mother with green coconut and sugar on Keshab's recovery. Sometimes, in the early hours of the morning, I would wake up and cry before the Mother, 'Oh Mother! Please make Keshab well again. If Keshab does not live, whom shall I talk with when I go to Calcutta? So it was that I resolved to offer her green coconut and sugar'".

Here is our greatest answer to this question. If an avatara and an avatara is God, is so anxious, and loves Keshab Chandra Sen so much then Keshab Chandra Sen must be a spiritual person to be loved. And that is how we have to understand. When God loves us, he bestows his grace upon us, what does his love mean? He wants to draw us near him. What does his grace mean? It means he will create situations so that we can pass or we can overcome our worldliness and slowly but surely progress towards him. As I

mentioned, Keshab Chandra Sen was a great soul, every day we have to bow down before him because he played a great role in the drama of Sri Ramakrishna's mission.

Now, the next topic would be very interesting and aptly to be misunderstood. What is the subject? Sri Ramakrishna on M's marriage. Sri Ramakrishna asked M, "Are you married?" He felt as if Sri Ramakrishna does not approve but M cannot tell a lie. We cannot tell a lie in front of Sri Ramakrishna, or Holy Mother, or Swamiji, or great sadhus because they know definitely, unerringly that we are telling a lie. Not because of that but M himself was a great spiritual aspirant. In fact, he was one of the inner circle, he was specially brought down with the Avatara exclusively for this purpose of chronicling or collecting the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna. This is the first time the teachings of any avatara are directly recorded and then published without the interference of one's personality intruding into them. That is why Swamiji said, unlike Plato who in Socrates' name, he only propagated his own ideas. But here, M was given that gift of tremendous memory so that he discussed with Sri Ramakrishna, he remembered everything, fifteen years of training was given to him, and when he went, as though he was watching a video, all that had taken place with Sri Ramakrishna either at Dakshineswar or elsewhere. With that vivid memory, he used to write. Not only that, Sri Ramakrishna used to goad him, "Are you listening to me?" And then, he used to question him, "So, what did you do? Did you hear me? What did I say?" Then, he used to correct and say, "No no! That's not what I said, this is what I said", etc. Not only that, Sri Ramakrishna used to ask M about the past events and if M had sincerely remembered them but did not interpret it properly, understand it properly, Sri Ramakrishna used to correct him. Not only that, M used to say later on, on every incident, on some of the incidents, I have meditated a thousand times and the whole thing used to come to me, and of course, all by His grace. And I have not put anything of mine. So, when we study Sri Ramakrishna's Gospel, we have to keep this fact in mind. First fact is that nothing belongs to M. It is exactly as it took place. And the style of presenting it, not in a third person, but M used to say, "Ninety-nine percent of my Gospel is first-class evidence". First-class evidence means I experienced it. Second-class evidence means he heard directly from the people in whose presence certain events have taken place. And third-class evidence is that third party who heard it from another party and who experienced it directly. So, he said ninety-nine percent was my own experience. And then, God had given him. How do we know further? When M, long after Sri Ramakrishna's passing away, he used to come to Holy Mother and then he used to read out and make Holy Mother listen. And then, you see, he got doubt, "Mother! Is it I who is writing?" Then Mother replied, "No Baba! Beautiful words!! All this time he kept this knowledge with you. Now, the time has come, he is opening to everybody through you". And then, she also said, "When I hear your words, I feel that Sri Ramakrishna is talking to me directly right now". Then, Swami Vivekananda said, "Well done! Bravo! You have accomplished what nobody could accomplish. M! He has specially endowed with this. Go ahead! This is a unique



document known in history; no such document is available in such graphic detail". All these things are not mere praise but is a statement of fact.

Anyway, Sri Ramakrishna asked M, probably on his second visit I think, "Are you married?" M felt as if he committed a great sin, "Yes Sir!" "Oh Ma!!" Then Sri Ramakrishna asks another loaded question, "Have you children?" This time, M could hear his heart beating but he replied, "Yes Sir!" "Ah me!! Oh Ramlala! He even has children!" Now, M was describing, "Is it after all such a terrible thing to get married?!" Why I am taking up this subject is because most of the devotees are Grihastas (married people). Is marriage against scriptures? Is marriage something Sri Ramakrishna disapproved of? Of course we have to remember he himself was married. Why did he marry? To show people that the real purpose of marriage is to join some other pilgrim on the way to a holy place, which for us, is nothing but God. If I fumble, I happen to be weak, then my partner / my spouse will give her energy, her advice and prop me up and I will do the same thing. This is what Sri Ramakrishna had done also. On his first meetings after a long time, when Holy Mother came to Dakshineswar to ascertain whether Sri Ramakrishna was really mad, the rumors were going on circulating in the villages, etc. So, to show the real essence of marriage, Hindu or non-Hindu does not matter. That is why in Christianity we get, marriages are made in heaven. What does it mean? You cannot break it. This particular partner is there to help you move forward and both of you help each other and come to Me. That is why divorce is frowned upon, it is considered that God himself made the marriage so, what God had made, you cannot unmake it. That was the idea.

Anyway, the first point is this householdership is not opposed to spirituality; on the contrary, the second stage of life according to Hinduism, remember Brahmacharya ashrama, Garhasti Ashrama, Vanaprastha Ashrama, and Sannyasa Ashrama. These are the inevitable stages of progress, Hindu or non-Hindu, whether others acknowledge or do not. So, Garhastya is the most wonderful stage, that is why it is called an Ashrama. But we have to remember what is the goal, what is the purpose, what is the way, and how to live. So, our dharmashastras have tremendous rules and regulations. In fact, it is very easy to become a monk but extremely difficult to live the life of a householder.

Now, what is the first point? By reading about M's marriage, the question that Sri Ramakrishna put to M, one should not mistake that Sri Ramakrishna was against marriage. Secondly, he himself was married and showed how the spiritual husband and wife should live. Thirdly, Sri Ramakrishna was not a fool; he was a source of wisdom. He knows everybody does not have the same control. So, he said husband and wife should live like man and woman until one or two children are born; no more than one or two children. Why? Because even from an economical point of view, family planning is the best route for both worldly happiness and spiritual happiness. After the birth of one or two children, both husband and wife should live according to the scriptures, that was what Sri Ramakrishna's teaching was, like two spiritual

co-pilgrims proceeding slowly towards God. It is not that one should go on whole life until old age, live like pigs. So, this is another point we have to note down. Then, husband and wife, both of them should respect, revere each other as a child of God. Then only, that is true marriage. The next point is that there is no such rule and many dharmashastras do that deliberately, wife only has to serve the husband and husband has no duty excepting looking after her and enjoying her and giving children and bossing over her and eating; she will become like a maidservant or children-bearing machine and is only for his delectment. No Sir! Both of them should respect each other and revere each other and serve each other.. This was demonstrated in Sri Ramakrishna's life. First time, when the Holy Mother came to Dakshineswar, they reached at night and the Holy Mother was with fever. And Sri Ramakrishna became so anxious and he said, "Ogho! You came so late! If only Mathur Babu was alive, he would have made all wonderful arrangements". Anyway, he spread the mat, and he gave a little food, what was left out, and then he made her lie down and said, "Now, you are having fever. You are tired, lie down". What did he do then? That is the most important point. Sri Ramakrishna started to massage Holy Mother's feet and she was startled! She was never taught that a husband should massage the wife's feet; it is the other way around. We always see only Lakshmi massaging Narayana's feet, not vice-versa. So, she said, "It is for me to serve you. What are you doing?" She was still in a very weak state but she uttered these words. Then Sri Ramakrishna uttered these scriptural words, whatever comes out of Sri Ramakrishna's mouth is a scriptural word, we have to understand. What did he say? "We are married together. If I need service, you will do service. If you need service, I will have to do service. So, let us serve each other whenever necessary". So, Sri Ramakrishna dispelled the idea that a wife is made only a bond-slave to cater to his whims and fancies. They are co-pilgrims that are traveling, helping each other, encouraging each other, supporting each other, and moving slowly towards God. And that is what Hinduism really teaches.

Then, Holy Mother started staying there. I will narrate some incidents during the course of our talks to properly understand the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna in the form of these conversations. So, Holy Mother, like any other young woman, and naturally she was very happy, the first thing she understood was, Sri Ramakrishna was not only not mad, he was one of the greatest people. No ordinary husband will do. And Sri Ramakrishna also worshipped Holy Mother on Phalaharini Kali Puja night which usually comes in the month of May. That is of great importance and that is where I explained, after worshipping the Holy Mother, ultimately he prayed to the Divine Mother, "O Mother Tripurasundari! You reside in the body of this lady and awaken her spirituality" and then he bowed and said, "Whatever I have earned in the form of spiritual life, I offer at the feet of this great lady, that is you Divine Mother". And then he hymned that Divine Mother but in the form of the Holy Mother, "Om sarvamangala mangalye", etc. That is why that hymn came to be part of our day hymns; everyday vesper service hymns. And also on special puja days, we go on hymning the Divine Mother in the form of our Holy Mother as sarvadevadevi

swaroopini. So, that is another point. But after sometime, one day Sri Ramakrishna called the Holy Mother and said, "Look here, we are married. So, I do not have exclusive rights over you. It is not that I command and you obey. Both of us have to serve and help each other. Now, I want only to think about God, to think of God as Mother and I want to move only in a spiritual path. But since we are married and you are my rightful partner / spouse, you have a right. Therefore, tell me. What is it that you want? Do you want me to lead this life that I have chosen? Will you help me? Or do you want me as a husband to fulfill your desires". Of course, like Yajnavalkya and Maitreyee, what conversation went, exactly in the same way, even though Yajnavalkya was married for a long time and led an ordinary householder's life he was one of the greatest sages India has ever produced. And Maitreyee also became one of the greatest enlightened persons by getting instructions not from her husband but from a realized soul. Their relationship at first was husband and wife, then it became a Guru and Shishya relationship, like Yamadharmaraja and Nachiketa or Yajnavalkya and Janaka. Yajnavalkya certified, "O Dear! You have attained the highest!" indirectly, not directly.

But coming back, Sri Ramakrishna confronted the Holy Mother. He did not say, "We are married, so I have every right. I will do whatever I like but you have nothing to say". Simply he said, "I shared my thoughts with you. You share your thoughts with me". And then, what was the reaction of the Holy Mother? Instantaneously, Holy Mother gives a reply, "I have not come here to obstruct your chosen way of life. I have come here to serve you. I have come here so that you can, with greater ease, progress in your chosen field of life. I also want to follow your footsteps. If you are walking this way, it is my duty to walk the same way". In normal life, if the husband is posted in Bangalore, then the wife has to come to Bangalore. If he is posted in Delhi, she has to go to Delhi. If he is posted in the USA, she has to go to the USA. So also, whatever the husband is doing, the wife is supposed to do. But the wife has no special rights. Even though the scriptures tell that, Sri Ramakrishna wanted to bring to the fore, that real essence of what Dharma Shastras are teaching, Then there is something very peculiar, I will deal with it right now. Holy Mother's reply highly pleased Sri Ramakrishna; he initiated Holy Mother. She was his first initiated disciple. And he took the responsibility of guiding her in spiritual life and secular life; how to have various relationships even in worldly relationships, how to behave, how to address people but at the same time how to be detached, how to progress in spiritual life. All these things we see throughout the life of Holy Mother also. When the occasion comes, I will be talking about them. But for now, what is important? Sri Ramakrishna did not take a unilateral decision, "I will tell you what you have to do". He said, "We are married - both of us have to talk to each other and come to a right decision and follow". That is how husband and wife have to behave with each other properly. Now, what was the special thing I was mentioning? Sri Ramakrishna was not merely an ordinary husband; he was married when he was twenty-three years old and Holy Mother was practically a five year old child. Now, she is almost eighteen years old. That means after thirteen years, she is the full blossom of youth and what is called Shodashi, a

sixteen years old girl with all faculties highly developed. With this grown-up wife, Sri Ramakrishna was having a conversation.

Now what happened was, long after that, when Sri Ramakrishna was practicing all devotional paths and he succeeded, then came to Totapuri Maharaj and Sri Ramakrishna was asked by the Divine Mother to become a sannyasi. Now, here is something which we will not find in Hindu tradition. No sannyasi must ever revert back or even mention that once he was married. And once only so far as we know, maybe other cases that father of Jnanadeva became a sannyasi because that was what he wanted; he received his Guru by saying that he was not married when he was asked. Guru made sure that this person did not run away from his householder responsibilities. But the disciple told a lie not because he wanted to cheat his Guru but he was eager from his heart to become a genuine sannyasin. Later on, the Guru came to know that he was married, then he blessed the wife unknowingly, "May you have many children and grandchildren!" That is how the wife started to weep and then he came to know that her husband renounced, ran away and he guessed that his disciple who came from this area and as soon as he went back, commanded to go back and resume the householder's life. But there is a law - A sannyasi who goes back to his wife and leads a householder's life (Grhastashrama) has to commit suicide. This is a one-way path. A householder can become a monk but a monk can never go back to householder's life. But Sri Ramakrishna, what is he telling here? He is telling, "If you wish, I will be your husband". That means we will be lying with each other, if you want children, it is my duty to provide children. In fact, Holy Mother later on says, "I want to be called Ma. I want one of the children". And then Sri Ramakrishna said very punnily, "Don't you see? People have children and many of them die also". In those days really, the infant mortality was high. Immediately, shy though Holy Mother was, she said, "Will all children die?!" "Oh Ma! I stepped on the tail of a cobra". Sri Ramakrishna never expected this kind of reply. After all, she is the Divine Mother. So, the Holy Mother wanted to be called a Mother. She asked Sri Ramakrishna, "I am completely for you. I want to lead a spiritual life. But I want to be called 'Ma'". Sri Ramakrishna assured her, "You do not need to have physical children. You will be called 'Ma' such a number of times for several centuries or aeons that your ears will become like a holed drum, you will be tired of hearing 'Ma Ma'. But you will not have physical children". Of course, Holy Mother understood, "I want to be called 'Ma'. It doesn't matter whether they are physical children or spiritual children`. Of course, they remain spiritual children. So, what is the unique event? No person who took sannyasa, whether he was married before or not married before, has no right to go back and ask his wife, "I would like to live with you but with your permissions. Do you want me to become like a normal husband? Or do you allow me, permit me to lead my sannyasi life?". This is a unique, deliberate denial of the age old rule 'No sannyasi can go back from it'. And even now it remains so. Why? Because Sri Ramakrishna's intention was not to be a normal husband but a spiritual husband. Moreover, he has a special mission. What that mission is, and how it is related to M's marriage, etc. we

will discuss three points: inner secret of Sri Ramakrishna's marriage, then why Sri Ramakrishna became so dumbfounded when he found that M was married. Thirdly, what was the ideal that Sri Ramakrishna wanted to maintain, even though he was a sannyasin, he allowed the Holy Mother to live with him. What is the special householder's ideal because 99.99999% of devotees are only householders. Not only that, the devotees of Sri Ramakrishna, but of any religion, any sincere spiritual aspirants most of them are only Householders. And how it is also related, Hindu's division of ashrama. These four points we will discuss in our next class.

**Om Jananim Sāradam devim Rāmakrishnam jagadgurum |**

**Pādapadme tayoh shritvā pranamāmi muhurmuḥuh ||**

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