

GOSPEL OF SRI RĀMAKRISHNA - PART 25

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-jīvanaṁ

kavibhir īḍitaṁ kalmaṣāpaham ।

śravaṇa-maṅgalaṁ śrīmad ātataṁ

bhuvi gṛṇanti te bhūri-dā janāḥ ॥

In our last class, we had raised four questions. What are those four questions? Before we come to that, we will read a little bit from the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna:

Sri Ramakrishna, “Are you married?”

M, “Yes, Sir!”

Sri Ramakrishna [*with a shudder*], “Oh Ramlal! Alas! He is married”

Like one guilty of a terrible offense, M sat motionless, his eyes fixed on the ground. He thought, “Is it such a wicked thing to get married?”

The Master continued, "Have you any children?"

M, this time could hear the beating of his own heart. He whispered in a trembling voice, "Yes Sir. I have children". Very sadly, Sri Ramakrishna said, "Ah me! He even has children". Thus rebuked, M sat speechless, his pride had received a blow. After a few minutes, Sri Ramakrishna looked at him kindly and said, "You see! You have certain good signs. I know them by looking at a person's forehead, his eyes and so on".

This was the topic we have been discussing in our last class. So, four questions:

First, is marriage bad?

Second, why did Sri Ramakrishna scold M?

Third, why did Sri Ramakrishna keep Holy Mother with him even after taking sannyasa?

And fourth, what is the ideal of marriage, according to Hinduism?

We will discuss very briefly because each of these questions really require and can be taken as a separate class but it will be too much for most of us. Most important points, I will summarize.

Is marriage bad? Not at all bad. On the contrary, it is very good. But good for whom? The first answer that we get is: According to Hinduism, life is divided into four stages. Let us remember, every stage is a state of progressing towards our real destination, which is God. We are very familiar, I do not need to elaborate on them. First stage is Brahmacharya ashrama. Second is Garahastya ashrama. Third is Vanaprastha ashrama. And the fourth, Sannyasa ashrama. And why did Hinduism divide life? To rephrase these four stages in simple English language - first stage is learning stage; second stage, the experimental and experiencing stage; third stage, gradual withdrawal from attachments as well as likes/dislikes which otherwise, keep us bound to this Earth; and the fourth stage, complete surrender to God and complete abandonment of desires towards the limited, towards the temporary, towards what binds us. These are first of all, a very natural development. Even if you take the scale of the evolutionary system: inorganic becomes organic, organic slowly from one cell until it reaches human life. And in human life itself, according to the predominance of Tamas, Rajas and Sattva, from the lowest order to the better order which is called the caste system. And this system is there in every society. And ultimately a person must become a Brahmana. Even in the people who are born in a brahmin family, there are four stages of development. By birth, a child does not become a Brahmana. So many times I have quoted this one, by this time you must be very familiar with it:

Janmana jayate shudrah

By birth, every baby is a Shudra. Shudra means full of tamas. Why full of tamas? Because what does a baby do? He tries to beat Kumbhakarna. What does it mean? He is

full of Tamas but that is the best Guna at that stage of baby's development which is nothing but eating and sleeping. But growing up physically, strongly, then:

samskarat dwija uchyate

By the acquisition of good samskaras, both intelligence, concentration and right understanding of what life is about and striving to the level best with the help of the scriptures, with the examples that are supposed to be provided by parents, elders, sannyasins, etc. and then, lastly, trying to make a strong sankalpa (determination) that I would like to lead this kind of life. This is the learning stage. So, this is samskara.

Then, the person devotes himself, enters into the third stage. What is it? Deep study of the scriptures, both secular as well as spiritual. Secular for making life easier, for conserving time and energy so that his spiritual struggle becomes better. So, that is what is called Aparā Vidya and Parā Vidya (lower knowledge and higher knowledge). Then, if a person acquires right understanding of the scriptures, that is called:

veda dhyayanat vipro bhavati

He is entitled to be called a Vipra. And then, he strives his level best and then finally, knows the truth which is 'I am Divine', 'I am Brahman', 'I am God' and everything is nothing but Divine, everything is God.

Brahma jAnAti iti BrAhmana

The person who knows the highest reality, in other words, God, he is called a Brahmana. So, according to this development, society is divided into first stage, that means a Shudra is supposed to be in the learning stage; then, a Vaishya is supposed to be in the experimental stage; a Kshatriya has to become more unselfish and he is supposed to be in the third stage; and the Brahmana is supposed to be totally dedicated to exclusively, spiritual life. So again, as we discussed earlier, if you recollect, I go on saying many things, you have to keep in mind otherwise, I will be made to repeat them. In our Vedas, the four goals of life; they are called Purusharthas. Only a human being can deliberately set these goals: Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. A student's life is concerned with Dharma - to learn what is Dharma, what is the goal of life and how he should conduct himself, everything he should be taught by the teacher. Then, the next stage is experiment / experience because most of us are coming up as Tamas-oriented people, which means we have plenty of worldly desires. But not enjoying like animals, but through regulatory enjoyment as conditioned by the scriptures so that you enjoy after some mind-control. Simple example, a person wants to eat very nice food but first, earn the money, and then cook it nicely, and then offer it to God, offer it to those who are hungry, those who are poor, etc. and afterwards, to your heart's content, enjoy it yourself as prasada, everything as prasada. For that, 'Artha' means honest livelihood and 'Kama' means regulated

enjoyment. These are the two characteristics of the householder called Garahastya Ashrama.

Then, when the person does this, his mind becomes pure. Then, he will naturally progress towards the higher life, nearer to God. Semi-retired, semi-detached, somewhat attached also, slowly he is growing more towards God by moving away from worldly attachments. This is the main duty of the third stage of life which is called Vanaprastha (simply translated, 'trying to grow more detached to the world and more attached to God').

Finally, whether in one life or hundred lives or thousand lives, the person will have conviction that God alone is real, then he will renounce. In this ashrama called Sannyasa Ashrama, Moksha will be the only one. In the lower ashrama called Vanaprastha, we have not mentioned it, but it is included in brackets, which is called Upasana (deep contemplation upon God). Contemplation means in a householder's life, he is afforded an opportunity, he is young, he is strong, he can gather materials, he can do external worship. But the same worship, with deep understanding is done with mental contemplation. Mentally, he does exactly what this person used to do physically. That is called Upasana. 'Upasana' means slowly approaching God. 'Upa' means near, 'Asana' means approaching nearer to God and in brackets, towards one's own Self because God means one's own Real Self. He is the Soul of our souls. Slowly, naturally, he will cross the borderline and he will enter into the Sannyasa Ashrama which is the goal of every Hindu. I would say, knowingly or unknowingly, every human being because this is divine knowledge not ordinary knowledge. Divine knowledge applies to everybody. In fact, even worldly knowledge has got only one goal - how I can be healthy and live long - that is Sat, how I can have knowledge to escape danger and better myself - that is Chit, and of course, everybody's goal is only to be happy, happier and happiest. This is what is beautifully described.

Four states of life, four goals of life and that is how a householder's life is called Grhastha Ashrama. It is not called simply a householder's life. It is a spiritual stage. Ashrama means hermitage, a spiritual home. That should be our goal. Even if some people do not do it now, in course of time, they are going to learn their lesson but in the hard way but everybody will be made to turn towards God, become spiritual and realize. This is inevitable - why? Because each soul is potentially divine. Our nature will not permit us to become otherwise. And our nature is to grow towards God, like a plant, like a seed becomes a seedling and its face is always upturned towards the Sun: Heliocentric life, God-centric life. This is the answer to: "Is marriage bad?". Not only is it not bad but it is most necessary. Why is it most necessary? Because most of us have unfulfilled desires. Even these unfulfilled desires are also a spiritual discipline because when we are alone, we are likely to be very selfish. If we are married, nature will make us love the other person; we learn how to love, we learn how to tolerate, we learn how to live in harmony with others, we learn how to care and share and we consider the other person as our own. And this is called spiritual practice. So, desires

will be there, controlled desires always mean scripture-directed fulfillment of desires. The first means is Artha. Artha means the means for enjoyment; it could be money, it could be house, it could be clothes. So, naturally some worldly knowledge is needed. A person will get either his own business or a job but it should be honest which I will come to, quoting from Dharmashastra through Swami Vivekananda's Karma Yoga talks. So, this householder's life is not only not bad but absolutely it is an ashrama, it is a necessity for most of us. In fact, none of us just jump from birth to Sannyasa. If some people have become monks and have taken to sannyasa life, that means in previous births they have practised and have fulfilled all the conditions. Remember, until and unless we fulfill all the conditions, we pass the class, we cannot enter into the higher class. So also we cannot go into the next higher ashrama until we fulfill the desires. A little bit funny - Suppose there is a Sannyasi. And he has not learnt what is life, what is the goal of life and how to live a life. He is not a sannyasi, externally others may consider, he also may consider. Internally, he is still in the first stage of life, which is Brahmacharya Ashrama. And incidentally, Brahmacharya Ashrama has only partly to do with Brahmacharya. Brahmacharya means continence that means sex-control. The real meaning of Brahmacharya means 'Brahma' is another name for Veda meaning Vedachari, meaning one who is devoted to the acquisition of the knowledge of the Vedas that is all about life. What are the three things? What is the truth? And what is the goal of life? And what is the way to move towards that goal and reach that goal. Tattva, Purushartha and Hitha. That is the main purpose of Brahmacharya Ashrama or Brahmachari's duties. So, nobody can jump from one ashrama to another ashrama just as a baby cannot jump into youth immediately after birth. So, this is the answer.

Why did Sri Ramakrishna scold M? This is the second question.

First of all, we have to understand M was not an ordinary person. As I mentioned earlier, human beings are born in two ways: one way, most of us are born because of our Purva janma karma phala (Prarabdha Karma). We are called Karma Janmis. But there are a few people who have taken human birth deliberately with full consciousness for doing good to all of us. They are called Karana Janmis. An avatara is a Karana Janmi. God incarnates whenever dharma goes down and adharma increases, that means, whenever right knowledge is less and wrong knowledge is more, then God incarnates to correct this imbalance. What does he do? He again makes us understand what is right knowledge. Whenever God incarnates, he brings with him several people to help him in his mission. So, that is why our mission is called Ramakrishna Mission, Christ's mission is called Christian mission, Buddha's mission is called Budhdha's organization. So, they all come with different capacity people along with him, beings with him, so that they can help him or he himself will be practising and he will designate, "You will be my Chief preacher", etc. For example, Ananda was a chief disciple of Buddha, Arjuna was the instrument through whose medium the message of Bhagavad Gita is spread all over the world. According to Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Nityananda was the person. God had selected Mohammed as his messenger. And Sri

Ramakrishna had selected Narendranath. But there are many other jobs to be done. Sri Ramakrishna had designated Swami Brahmananda as the guiding light of this Ramakrishna Order. And the manager was Swami Premananda whose birthday, very fortunately, happens to occur tomorrow. So, they are called Karana Janmis. And one of them was M. He was not an ordinary person. What was his special mission? He was equipped with tremendous memory power. When he observes everything, he will be remembering everything. For this purpose, he was trained for fifteen years before he met Sri Ramakrishna. Often, M used to ask himself the question, "Why am I writing these diaries? Useless things. Today I went to school, I met this person, and he taught us this". And then the same day, on the way home he met somebody else. According to M, even at that time, these are all scraps of meaningless information. But then, Sri Ramakrishna indirectly or Divine Mother indirectly was training him so that he can remember, his memory power, his observation power will increase. He was given the gift of writing also. Not only observing, not only keeping it in memory, but ability to express it in simple but very telling words and we are all drinking the milk of Upanishads which was milked by Krishna and Arjuna was the only the starter point (sudhiH bhoktah), we are all sudhiHs because today we are studying this one. So, this was the reason why Sri Ramakrishna did not want any worldly thing to limit, to obstruct M and yet we see that the same Divine Being had made him a householder and he had children also. Why did he make him a householder? This is, of course, my understanding because the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna is mostly for householder devotees. It is not the exclusive property of the sannyasins. In fact, it is the other way around. A true genuine Sannyasi is one who has the intellectual equipment, he can go to the scriptures, already he understands the goal of life, he has progressed so much that he was able to reach the fourth stage of life. He does not really require the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna excepting in a few minor disciplines and for better understanding of the scriptures. One example I will give you, according to many religions, there is only one path, the path of that particular religion. It could be Christianity, Buddhism or Islam. But according to Hinduism, there are infinite paths to approach that Infinity; from any angle, one can approach God who is Infinite. Even though it was there and very well expressed in Rig Veda, **ekam sat viprAh bahudA vadanti** - Truth is One but sages call it by different names: Christianity, Islam, Vaishnavism, Shaktism, Shaivism, Ganapatyaism, etc. etc. and again, Devotionalism, Raja yoga, Karma yoga, Bhakti yoga, Jnana yoga, etc. etc. But people misunderstand, and the first thing they do is, "Which path is superior?" and they try to prove that my own path is superior not because my path is superior but I feel I am superior, so my path must also be superior. So, this terrible pride, egotism is the root cause of all these differences of opinions in religions, in worldly affairs, in yogas, and the conflict between the householder's life and the sannyasin's life, and Sri Ramakrishna was born to teach that whatever life is suitable for a particular person and that would be most natural thing to happen, we can never resist it, such a life is the best, not only best, it is the only path for that particular person. If we are emotional, Bhakti yoga is the only way. So, this M was married, why? Because the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna

are mostly meant for householders. Of course, they do give light to sannyasins. But you notice something very special - what is it? Sri Ramakrishna had sixteen direct disciples, and when he spoke to them about spiritual life, when others were absent, only these so-called would-be monks were present and that too, each one of them either singly or two, like that. And what Sri Ramakrishna taught to these would-be monastic members was practically, they never expressed except occasionally, putting them in a very simple way. That is why the whole Gospel, the dialogues, the conversations between Sri Ramakrishna and the sannyasin disciples, we don't get it practically. This is one reason. Of course, Sri Ramakrishna understood, recognized that M had to accomplish a purpose. How do we know? Because the other disciples like Ramchandra Dutta and Swami Shivananda (Tarak), they also started taking. Sri Ramakrishna pointedly told Taraknath that there is somebody else whose job it is to jot down, but it is not your job. By that time, he had collected a few of the conversations, teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and after hearing, he threw them away. And none others have done, like Swami Vivekananda, etc. Only other person who did was Swami Brahmanandaji. Long after Sri Ramakrishna's passing away, Swami Brahmanandaji felt, "I must put in book form, all the words of Sri Ramakrishna". So, he started collecting, he pinned it, and arranged it neatly. One night he had a dream, Sri Ramakrishna chided him, "I did not say this. I said this". Corrected him, as Sri Ramakrishna used to correct M. And Swami Brahmanandaji was very moved by that and he corrected that one, he was extremely careful. Fortunately for us, "Words of the Master " was the title of the book of the words collected by Swami Brahmanandaji. And a few others also have collected, but the main job and for that purpose, M was completely equipped with the necessary strength, with the necessary understanding, with the necessary memory, and everything. And even afterwards, we find every now and then, if M was absent somewhere, he would call him, "Come and sit here. Listen to what I am talking about." Afterwards, Sri Ramakrishna (even though he did not forget, this is not a question for Sri Ramakrishna to be reminded of what he spoke) used to ask M, "What did I speak of?". So, what was the purpose? To make M first of all, understand Sri Ramakrishna's words in the proper context, in the right way. Secondly, to reinforce his memory. For all these reasons, Sri Ramakrishna wanted M to be free from all these shackles. But of course, he also was married as I mentioned just now, there is a purpose. So, M could be in great empathy with all the householder disciples and how do we know? Because, as I mentioned earlier, M himself used to spend most of his time after the passing away of Sri Ramakrishna, with householder disciples and even monks, until his last breath. And his conversations, fortunately for us, were collected in sixteen volumes, and first of all, they were published in Bengali. Some lady translated them into Hindi. And now, somebody else has also translated into English language as "M, the Apostle and the Evangelists", Sixteen volumes - invaluable gems which we will not get in the Kathamrita (Gospel) or anywhere else. But we get from M. Everyday, I practically get something new and a new way of looking at what Sri Ramakrishna had done.

So, what are we discussing? Why did Sri Ramakrishna scold M, “Alas! He is married!” and “Alas! He even has children!”? Because he wanted to make him all his own and he did not want M to be distracted. Then, how can we reconcile his marriage? Only one way. It was necessary for him to go through that experience so that he could be more sympathetic, like Swami Vivekananda was made to wander all over the world. In fact, his father had to die so that Swami Viveknanda had to go through this torture of what it is to be a poor person, how the world will react towards a poor person, how unsympathetic it is; not to hate the world, so that Swami Vivekananda could develop tremendous sympathy and compassion towards the poor and suffering people. Even today, that torture is going on, sometimes directly as in some totalitarian countries and indirectly in the so-called boasted democracies. By the way, just my remark, these boasted so-called democracies, first of all, they are most hypocritical and secondly, they treated humanity in the worst possible manner and even now, they are doing it in so many ways, trying to control the whole world only in the name of freedom and democracy through what we call mega companies. Even if you don't know, you have to understand. Let them be, they are also doing tremendous good, Divine Mother is getting good work done through them, but the people themselves are ignorant and they are trying to control through these algorithms and AI and we do not know, somebody has written that at least now we are fortunate that we know that our brains are being washed. And in future, the generations may not even have the privilege of being aware that they have been brainwashed. Anyway, this is a side topic.

So, Sri Ramakrishna loved M, loved everybody and he wanted him all his own, not to be shared by his wife, by his children, or by anybody else. So, he scolded him. But then, he became very gracious. Third, very important question: What is the background? In the Hindu sanyasi tradition, once a man takes to Sannyasin's life (monastic life), he should never have any relationship with his wife. Why? For two reasons: Even if a sannyasi is a God-realized soul, he should not keep his wife because other less, unenlightened sannyasins may take that great sannyasi. He kept his wife anyway, so why not we also keep? What is the harm? So, whatever great people have done, we will follow their path, of course in the wrong way not in the right way. The second reason is, even if he has done, he must keep himself as an example. In the Hindu tradition, once a married person takes to monastic life, he cannot come back - this is one-way traffic. I gave examples of Janandeva who was married and became a monk. His Guru ordered him, "You have some mission to fulfill so, go back". And the punishment for sliding back to householdership is death, commit slow suicide. So, Jnanadeva's mother and father swam into River Godavari and have given up their lives; we do not call it suicide because they were only fulfilling the Hindu tradition. So, in this background, why did Sri Ramakrishna keep Holy Mother? Here are some answers. First, Sri Ramakrishna did not treat Holy Mother as a wife; he only treated her as a disciple and in fact, Holy Mother was the first initiated disciple of Sri Ramakrishna. Secondly, Sri Ramakrishna (God-incarnation) comes to uphold Dharma and how does he do it? by upholding the four Ashramas. Dharma cannot remain independent of

these four stages of life. There is no other fifth stage or sixth stage where somebody has got Dharma. Dharma is inseparably united with Brahmacharya ashrama, Grahasthya ashrama, Vanaprastha and Sannyasa ashrama. And Sri Ramakrishna has become an ideal to all the four stages. How, as a student, he was behaving? How, as a householder, he has to behave? How he has to behave as a Vanaprasthi? And how he had behaved as a monk? I will come to this detail as soon as I finish these points. So, why did Sri Ramakrishna keep Holy Mother? First of all, not as a wife but as a pure disciple. Secondly, to show how an ideal householder must lead his life. How do we know that he led an ideal householder life? Simply, this is the proof - A wife knows about the husband better than anybody else, I would say, even better than he himself knows. I repeat that joke - Once there was a tiff between a husband and wife and the wife shouted, "All men are dumb!". By men, she does not mean, of course, Sannyasins like me, but means that all husbands and that is why a wife is called Better-half always, that is the explanation! The husband was puzzled, "Why did you call me dumb?!" Because the wife retorted, "Because everything has to be repeated to them. They do not understand the first time, maybe more than once". He got so angry and said, "What did you say?" So, this better-half, how a wife understands a husband better than what he himself understands. The Holy Mother said about Sri Ramakrishna, "He never hurt me even by a flower!" This is the greatest certificate and if God says you did not lead a good householder's life, this husband should take this certificate signed by his wife and present / fling it to God and say, "Look for yourself! What my wife has given the certificate!" Then, God will bow down and say, "I accept!".

OK - coming back, this is how Sri Ramakrishna treated. About that, I will come back and give you some more details. Then, what is the most important reason why Sri Ramakrishna had kept? Everything that Sri Ramakrishna did has a divine meaning, divine purpose. So, what was the divine purpose? Sri Ramakrishna knew that he is an incarnation of God, he knew he had to establish an organization, he knew he had to establish an ideal and there must be somebody who has to manage that ideal and he was preparing Holy Mother to represent. Holy Mother as the Divine Mother. I earlier discussed it while discussing the divine motherhood of Durga. What are the seven characteristics of the Divine Mother? We are closer to the Divine Mother than to the Father. She is the source and She is the sustainer and She forgives everything. Her love towards all Her children will be equal. And She will bear with anything, we may commit an offense but She is always forgiving and She is the most forbearing person in the whole world as far as Her children are concerned; finally, we are all participants in the divine leela. Every ordinary mother has these qualities in her, more or less, sometimes less, sometimes more. But the Divine Mother has all these qualities to the hundredth percent completely. So, Sri Ramakrishna knew that for this particular age, it is the Divine Motherhood which is the most necessary. Why is it most necessary? I will come back to that point a little later on also. Now, the Motherhood had to be established and all the earnings of Sri Ramakrishna, after worshipping Holy Mother in

the month of May on a Phalaharini Kali Puja, he offered his earnings which is supreme Tapasya (Tapasya means tremendous power) and offered that power at the feet of Holy Mother, not at the feet of His wife Sarada Devi; he invoked the Divine Mother Tripurasundari. He said, "Mother! You reside in this lady and from now onwards, You will be manifesting in and through Her". And Sri Ramakrishna offered. Why did he offer? Because he knew that after his passing away, Holy Mother will be the ideal for all the children for the next future hundreds of years until the next incarnation will come. This is the only reason. What was the third point? To prepare Her as the future Divine Mother of the entire world.

Fourth, now we know how Holy Mother is influencing men and women, especially in the West. At this point, I will not deal in detail with that. I have lived in the West for twenty-seven years of my life and I have observed many times, so many people are deprived of Mother's love; they only know sometimes, what is wife's love but they very rarely tasted what a true Mother is like. Just to give you an example, as soon as a baby is capable, the first thing the parents do is keep the baby in a separate room but even on the first day, they will never keep the baby in their own bed. They will keep in a crib, next to the bed and do whatever they are supposed to do. After a little time, the baby is given an apron and a spoon, a fork and is taught. From the very childhood, the baby is taught to be completely independent and not dependent on parents, etc. That is one way of bringing up - it has its own merits, but it has its own demerits. Whereas in India, on the other hand, in my own case, until sixth or seventh year, I was only lying by mother's side. If mother is not there, I used to see darkness. This is Indian way of bringing up, at least in that time, now I do not know what people are doing. And if they are following the West, that is the greatest punishment given to the children. Why is it necessary? Very briefly I will give you, there develops a bond between the mother and child if the child is always clinging. Scientists have scientifically proved it by studying baby monkeys. Some babies are kept with mothers, some baby monkeys are kept with a doll instead of mother. And these deprived monkeys showed severe signs of depression, etc. later on in life. So, this bond grows between mother and child, through contact with the skin, and breastfeeding, and suckling, etc. In later time, the person develops sympathy, compassion, charity, the love that mother has for the children, only because that motherliness enters into the baby through this bond. And in spiritual life, it is this concept of motherhood that can be directed towards the divine and that would be easier for us to progress in life; not as a father, full of justice, full of equality but with a rod in the hand, this is how some religions (semitic religions) represent God; not as a mother or grandmother but as a strict, punishing father. And where this fatherhood is there, it is called patriarchal society, where motherhood is dominant, it is matriarchal society. And all the wars take place only in the patriarchal society, very few in matriarchal society - this was discovered by sociologists especially, some Russian sociologists, who proved it to the hilt by quoting history. Even today, we can see. If we open our eyes, we can see that the greatest conflict is between the followers of one semitic religion and the followers of

another semitic religion, not those who follow the matriarchal society. So, Holy Mother, as soon as a Westerner, I am talking mostly about men (applies to both men and women), the moment they read Holy Mother's life, that is what is called equal love and not considering the defects of the child at all and pouring herself into the welfare of the child. So, many people are more attracted to the Holy Mother. They feel fulfilled psychologically, by calling Her as Mother rather than calling Sri Ramakrishna even though they accept Vedanta and particularly, the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna. That is why, Sri Ramakrishna knew that for this particular age, why? This is an age of science. What has science got to do? Science means rationality; rationality means coldness; it is perfectly rational but most often it degenerates to rationalizing not rationality, that is the defect. Then, the second thing is, when a person goes beyond, he must become irrational or beyond rationality because life does not go by scientific principles only; it goes only through intuition. And intuition is directly opposed to scientific reasoning. Those who are slaves to reasoning can never develop intuition. And anything great can come only through intuition and rationality is a dead wood. That is why Bhakti Marga is more important than Jnana Marga. Even the great Sankaracharya says, even those who follow Jnana Marga, Bhakti is very necessary - Bhakti towards only the impersonal aspect of God. Bhakti is emphasized in his Vivekachudamani so much. He gives, in fact, two definitions of Bhakti. OK - so, the Holy Mother is now influencing, it is Vedanta - true, but through Vedanta, they ultimately come to Sri Ramakrishna and Holy Mother, of these two, their first choice is Holy Mother. And that is the reason why Sri Ramakrishna wanted to train / awaken the divine motherhood, surrender her completely to the Divine Mother, and make Her the divine Mother of the entire universe and through her, we will go ultimately to that highest ideal - Sri Ramakrishna means that Nirguna parabrahma but Sri Ramakrishna's divine motherhood is represented by Holy Mother. These are some of the reasons.

Now, very briefly, I have to answer the fourth question: What is the ideal of marriage according to hinduism so as i mentioned hinduism divides life into four categories: The learning stage, the experimental and experiencing stage, all the stages are meant only to grow and go beyond and then the semi retirement more towards God, less attached to the world is called Vanaprasta and finally complete abandonment into Godhood called monastic life. So, the Hindu dharmashastras deal elaborately with the ideals of the ashrama. Of these details, the householder's life is given the most importance and elaborate details are there, how a householder should really behave, what is the ideal way you should do, this requires wonderful discussion but briefly I will give you a pointer and then we will go into these things as you know, Hindu scriptures are divided into, then subdivided into many categories: first division is Shruthi. Shruthi means direct experience passed on through word of mouth to their disciples directly from those that experienced it. These disciples heard, they pass on through Guru Parampara system (GPS). But usually most of them are not realised souls or partially realised souls so they tried with all goodwill to elaborate what they

heard from these great souls which came to be known as Smriti i.e., works based on what they heard from their original masters. The original Shrutis are called Upanishads, the essence of these Upanishads is called Gita, as I mentioned the essence of the Gita is the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna and The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda is nothing but an elaboration of the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna. The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna is the essence of all Upanishads and it is more than one-thousand pages but there are several chapters and one of the chapters as we know it is the First Chapter and in that the Five Commandments come, which we discussed quite adequately. If anybody studies these five commandments and understands them, he understands the essence of all scriptures. So, these Smritis (Secondary scriptures) have been divided into Ithihasa, Purana, Tantra and Dharma shastras. The last is what concerns us here - Dharma shastra. These are also called Smritis but elaborate names are Manu dharma shastra, Yajnavalkya dharma shastra but shortly they are called Manusmriti, Gowthama smriti, Apasthambasmriti, Yajnavalkya smriti, there are many dharma shastras. In those dharma shastras, elaborate explanations of how a student must behave, what his duties are - if he does something, what is forbidden (Nishidha), same thing for the house holders, Vanaprasthas and Sannyasins also (what is good and what is not good). So, these Dharma shastras are many and mostly, they are all dependent upon one particular dharma shastra which is called Manusmriti or Manu dharma shastra. Now, Swami Vivekananda, as we know, has written the most marvellous work! I wholeheartedly, emphasizingly recommend you to read this Karma Yoga. And many of our what-is-called puzzling ideas will become clear. Therein, elaborately, he said that there is no superiority or inferiority - Brahmachari is great in his own place, householder is great in his own place, and a sannyasi is great in his own place, provided they follow that particular dharma. And there are so many chapters, and there is one particular chapter of the Karma Yoga of Swami Vivekananda - it is called "Each is great in his own place". And at the end of practically, most of the chapters, Swami Vivekananda quotes (inserts) stories and you have to remember Swami Vivekananda was a superb story teller! To such an extent that there were some people who were trying to take notes while he was speaking, that is how we got many of his teachings, most contribution was done by one Englishman called Goodwyn but there were some Americans long before Goodwyn came; some women started and one or two men also started to take short notes and then they expressed later on - when Swami Vivekananda, to illustrate a particular teaching, starts telling a story, it is so absorbing, it is so realistic that they simply forgot to take notes, later on, whatever they remembered they wrote. A few of them were learning shorthand and they could take down some details but as soon as Swami Vivekananda starts story-telling, everybody, the audience will be watching that story come alive as we are watching a cinema and this particular cadre of people who are trained in recounting these stories, in Mahabharata, etc., they are called sUthas, special people who have been trained like our modern Haridasas, like Achyutadasa, Kesavadas, etc. Harikatha speakers. Every chapter in the Karma Yoga of Swami Vivekananda, there is some story, so graphically

written, not only graphically but well-brought out its inner meaning. And that is what Swami Vivekananda inserted in this particular Chapter called “Each is great in his own place”, a story from Mahabharata. In the end, he gives what are the special dharmas / duties of a householder. This is what he says (I will just read that one passage and stop today’s class) in Swami Vivekananda’s Karma Yoga. I will read to you a few passages from Mahanirvana Tantra which treats this subject (Each is great in his own place) and you will see that it is a very difficult task for a man to be a householder and perform all his duties perfectly. Then, Swami Vivekananda goes on giving quite the very essential duties of a householder and also what is prohibited and what is his bounden duty to do. I think it will be very interesting because most of the devotees are only householders and we will talk about it in our next class.

Om Jananim Sāradam devam Rāmakrishnam jagadgurum |

Pādapadme tayoh shritvā pranamāmi muhurmuḥuḥ ||

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