

WHAT IS THE WAY?

GURURAJ: Good. What shall we talk about this morning?

RANDY: Beloved Gururaj, Ramakrishna's followers would often ask him, "What is the Way?" To which he would usually reply, "Women and gold." My question is, for us, your followers, in this time and place, "What is the Way?"

GURURAJ: Um hm. Ramakrishna's movement was a movement mainly composed of monks. And his immediate followers, the twelve, fourteen he had, like Swami Vivekananda, Swami Brahmananda, etc., Ramakrishnananda; he wanted a group of people that would be prepared to become monks. He wanted people to become celibates and not enter the householder's life, for he knew that once they would enter the householder's life their energies would be divided and he wanted their full attention to be concentrated not on money, which means finding work or starting a business, [kanchan?], gold. He did not want the attention to be divided towards, or directed towards achieving gold. And he did not want their attention to go to [kamini?], which is woman. So for his immediate monks, he wanted them to avoid gold and women. That was Ramakrishna's idea.

Ramakrishna himself found this through his own personal convictions, that this will take him away from Divinity. And he wanted to reach Divinity very quickly. So therefore he founded this ascetic order of monks. When Vivekananda came to America, the United States, he came as a monk, and was known to be a monk. He was known to be a monk. Fine.

Our organization is totally different. I am not a teacher for monks, or else I would be in the Himalayas. I am a teacher for the householder, where a person lives an ordinary householder's life: do well in their work and their businesses, not go into ascetic practices. For I have found that ninety nine percent of the world's population are household orientated, and only a fraction of the entire population of the world are ascetically minded. Now, if people are ascetically minded, then I would encourage them to follow the ascetic path because that is their temperament. But as the world goes today the temperament is to live a ordinary life: wife, husband, children, to look after their job, to better themselves. And when a person has such a temperament I encourage that. But I would add on one thing, that whatever you do always be aware of that Divinity that is within you. And this can be achieved through meditational and spiritual practices.

We do not believe in self denial. We do not believe in severe penances, for they are not necessary. They might be good for the monks, but not for householders. So they live an ordinary life, they procreate, they enjoy the little mundane things of life, which are neither here nor there. But what I do teach is this, that although enjoying all the mundane things of life

you sit down to a meal and have a glass of wine with your meal, I see nothing wrong with that. If I take a glass of beer, whatever toxins there are in there I will sneeze it out with one sneeze. So that is not the criteria of proper living with the remembrance of that which is Divine.

So with our spiritual practices automatically and spontaneously we develop within ourselves, or unfold within ourselves, a spiritual force that will permeate every action of ours. Now, on the surface an action might not seem right, but who knows the man's mind? Who is capable of really knowing the workings of the mind and body of anybody? That is why psychologists and various people they fail on this issue, for you are a unique entity. And how many are there in this world to be able to judge or evaluate that unique entity that you are? That is why, you know, judge not that ye be judged. That has always been said, because man is not capable of it. For example, to know Divinity you have to be divine yourself. If you stand down here and want to know what's on top of a ten story building, you cannot know. You will only have a very lopsided view of it. But if you can stand on another ten story building, then would you be able to see what is on top of that building. And that is why man's mind, not having the capacity or the spiritual force, does not need to indulge in these things whatsoever. What is important is this, is man himself, and not his brother man, as far as judgments are concerned. For when you start evaluating your brother what you are doing is you are only projecting your own thoughts, your own patternings onto your brother, and which is totally wrong. Which is totally wrong because... because the mind is not clear enough, the mind has not become a clear mirror to reflect that Divinity that is within everyone, and therefore, we do our spiritual practices. Therefore, we try and help ourselves onto the far greater and greater path that could lead us to the reality which is within us.

Now, in this world there is not a single person, and there never has been a single person, and I include all the greatest personages in the world, that have been one hundred percent perfect. They cannot be. For the very moment that perfection is reached, then the entire body disintegrates. So, while the universal spirit is still embodied, it will still have a trace of ego. Not in its dense form as most people experience it, but in a refined form. Yet the individuality is there. Man in his meditation can experience the total oneness with Divinity, but when he comes down from those heights and lives a practical life, he will still see and feel duality. But that duality the enlightened man feels would be on a surface level and not on a deeper level. For example, the Gita would say that be established in Self, the big S, and then perform, then act. Any action which man does, if he is established in himself, those impressions created by the actions does not stick to him in impression form. They are just on the surface value and blown away. It does not densify his ego. For that slight trace of ego of the illumined man will forever remain refined until he discards, willfully discards by will. He can prolong his life as long as he wishes to. But he can by will discard the body when he feels that, "I had so much to do and I have done it." See.

So when man is established within himself, for which our spiritual practices are made, when he is established within himself, then all actions of the body and mind has no effect on him because he has realized his true self. And that is the goal of each and every one of us. And when one reaches that goal it becomes so apparent to the observers around. The illumined man becomes so apparent, for he does not become deflated by blame and he does not get inflated by praise. That is the mark of the illumined man.

Now, all of us are wanting and doing our practices, trying to do the best we can with the lives we live, and thereby attracting that great force called grace. We are doing that to reach that stage of illumination. I gave an example during this course of the jackfruit, which has a sticky, milky substance in it. It is a lovely fruit, but it has a sticky, milky substance. So Ramakrishna said that if you dip your hands in oil and then break open the jackfruit, that sticky substance will not stick to your hands. Now, this means the same thing said in an analogy form, that be established in self and then act. And whatever you do, whatever performance there is does not have any karmic bondage upon you. Now, this is the ideal, this is the goal, this is the way to wipe out all our karmas.

Now, Ramakrishna was an enlightened man. I do remember reading an instance where a dog was feeding himself from his feeding bowl, and Ramakrishna went there and sat down with the dog and ate from the same bowl because he saw the Divinity in the dog. He saw the Divinity in the dog. He saw God in the dog. And funny enough if you spell it the other way around it is God: d o g; g o d. So he saw the Divinity in the dog. But if you and I should pass there, or even a top psychiatrist would pass there, oh, what would we say? "This is a madman." This is a madman.

He used to sit in a small room with twenty, thirty people. He never had large audiences. He used to sit in a room with twenty, thirty people and have discourses, questions and answers and things. And all of a sudden he used to go into a state of samadhi, and he used to stand up and start dancing and performing in that ecstasy. And if you and I were there, we would say, "Oh, he's really mad now." So how can we judge an illumined man?

Ramakrishna knew the limitations. Ramakrishna knew that he, his message is very profound, but he has not the means at the turn of the century... today we are fortunate in having tape recorders and all kinds of electronic gadgets where teachings can go forth in various parts of the world. He knew very well that that was not there, and his teachings were profound. So that is why he wanted those monks that would dedicate themselves totally without any worry of gold or women, so that they would one hundred percent go out and preach his teachings.

America only became conscious of these ancient truths through Ramakrishna. When Vivekananda came to this country he knew no one. He sat on the pavement thinking, "Now, what to do?" He wanted to attend the Parliament of Religions. And some people there, wealthy people, helped him with the fare, the boat fare, to come over. And as it should happen that he was sitting in front of a house where a lady lived I cannot remember the names now, I read this quite awhile ago

who saw him sitting, and she had some connections with the people who were involved in this Parliament of Religions. She asked him in and made arrangements for him to speak. The first words he uttered... at first he was nervous and he kept on postponing, postponing, postponing. But when he stood up in his stature, people could feel that there is a presence amongst us. And he did not start off by saying, "Ladies and gentlemen." No. He said, "My brothers and sisters of America, I come to you with a message of love and peace." And the whole hall roared with applause.

Do you know the difficulties Vivekananda had in America? His teachings started becoming very, very popular, because he was speaking basic truths. And entire talks of his... today newspapers don't need reports of talks, because there's too many politics and wars going about. They've got plenty of material for their newspapers. But those times these things were new. And in many newspapers entire talks of his were printed, and he reached a larger audience. And so established organizations started getting jealous, perhaps, of his teachings and his popularity. They tried to trick him in so many different ways. Some of them got together and hired a well known prostitute, went up to Vivekananda's room. You know, knocked on the door and says, "Swamiji, I have some problems. Would you help me?" And any person of any sort of spiritual calibre could never refuse. He says, "Oh, yes, please do come in." And he started discussing various things with her, her problems, showing her the way and things like that. And as time would pass... as it does pass, two hours went by. So the next day there were headlines in the newspapers: "Hindu monk spends two hours in hotel room with a convicted prostitute." Yes. How terrible. How terrible.

And this has happened in the lives of all the spiritual masters that lived, be they of small stature or big stature. Who was the most persecuted man on Earth? Jesus. The most persecuted man on Earth. If you study the life of even Ramakrishna that you mentioned, they wanted to throw him... the committee that ran the temple wanted to throw him out, regarding him to be a madman. You see. But in spite of him being regarded as a madman, in spite of him teaching his close ones "no women, no gold," and in spite of all the temptations in their paths, they were faithful to their master. Totally devoted and faithful, for they know what they have benefited. They know the glimpses they had of what is good and great, of what is Divine. Their lives were transformed. And if you still read the story, those young men, about a dozen of them, starved for months. They used to go out begging. They lived in a ramshackled little shack. But the determination was there. And that kept them going. So you see, at different times, different teachings are needed.

Now, Ramakrishna never said no woman, no gold for the entire world. That he taught to his very close ones, so that they could concentrate all their energies towards bringing spiritual knowledge to the world. And today after eighty, eighty five years that movement is established all around the world. And whenever someone asks me, "What literature should I start with?" I always recommend, read The Gospel of Ramakrishna, read the works of Swami Vivekananda, for they are great truths that were given.

There's only one difference of what we teach and Vivekananda used to teach. He was an in and out staunch Hindu, and his teachings were all angled from Hinduism or Vedanta. Our teachings differ in that aspect that we embrace all the teachings of all the great religions. And within all those teachings we try and find the basis, the basic truth on which all the teachings of all religions hang: the pivot. So by understanding the basis, by understanding the formula, if you'd like to use that word, that is behind every religion we find that all religions are but one in essence. That is the difference. Now, for householders I would not advocate no money and no gold. I would not advocate that. Everything within moderation. For it is true also that money means... money brings greed, and all those things connected with greed. And that could cause a lot of upsets in people's lives.

Ramakrishna, being a monk, he only referred to women. Why not refer to men also? Because men can be the source of a lot of trouble for women, huh. And women can be the source of a lot of trouble for men. So that was one sided. Why was Ramakrishna teaching to men only to men only, yes no women. Why? Why didn't he tell the women, "No men?" One sided. Male, what's that word? Chauvinism. [LAUGHTER AND APPLAUSE]

When I look around me, I see the outward shapes. Oh, this is a woman, yeah, because she's built in a certain way. And this is a man, he's built in a certain way. So on the surface value I see the differences. There's man. That's woman. But when I really look at you, then I see one spirit, for the spirit within all is but the same. It knows of no gender. It is one spirit.

Now, differentiations are made. And the woman plays just as great a role as the man does, perhaps even greater. Yes. I personally feel that women are more important in this world than men. [APPLAUSE AND LAUGHTER]

VOICE: [INAUDIBLE] [LAUGHTER]

GURURAJ: I'll give you my reasons for it. I'll give you my reasons for it. A woman is a mother of the world. Every woman. When the woman gives birth, the woman is the molder of the child, be it a girl or a boy. The father's out working. The woman is the molder. She is the one that molds the child in its very formative years. And what is implanted in those formative years will determine the character of the child when he grows up. It will determine his whole emotional being. It will determine every facet of his life. So, therefore, when woman... and naturally they are of a greater spiritual inclination than man, because built in within them they have far greater tolerance than the man. They have far greater patience than the man. They are far kinder than the man. And all these qualities are built into a woman because she is to be a mother. So without the tolerance and the patience and the caring ability she could never bring up a child. How many times, I mean

the mothers would know, that you could be fast asleep and the baby just whimpers and the mother wakes up. And yet, at other times a bomb can explode and she'll be fast asleep. You see.

So the caring is not only on the conscious level, but subconsciously too the woman is built that way. You see. So now God has made her to be a mother and given her these qualities. So when the mother trains her child, molds the child into a good person, a good citizen not only of America, but a citizen of the world then she has performed a great duty in life. You see. So women have to be more vigilant than the man. They have to be more vigilant.

So this "no woman" business does not apply in this twentieth century. It is okay for those that want to be monks. By all means, if they are born with that temperament, become monks. But our teachings are aimed at ninety nine point nine percent of the people, where they develop a different perspective, a different attitude towards life. An attitude that is filled with hope. An attitude that shows of optimism. An attitude that shows that I am potentially Divine. An attitude that shows that God is with me and in me. And who can harm me? Now, when these attitudes are consciously cultivated in our minds, then come what may, we can face it with strength. For if God is with me, who can harm me? Do you see.

All our problems in life they might stem from past karmas or whatever creates this negative feelings, and we feel as if the whole world is lost and the whole world is against me. That is not true. If I suffer, then there's only one person against me and that's me. The world is not against you. Someone robs you of your wallet. So what? Perhaps I'm doing a service by that. This man might have stolen my wallet and he might need that money to feed his wife and kids. Who knows? How do we know? You know the story of Les Miserables written by Victor Hugo, where he stole a loaf of bread to feed his children and suffered lifelong for that one loaf of bread. You see. So we can't just judge. We can't just jump to conclusions. If you jump to conclusions, remember, you will be concluded. [LAUGHTER] Yah. Yes. It is to your own detriment. For all the conclusions and all the judgments and all these things we think about of our brotherman is only a projection of our own minds, is because we lack the love. And when a person is devoted to his brotherman, when a person has love for his brotherman, he does not see the little wrongs of his brotherman, he sees the goodness, always. Because love itself is good, and how can good see bad. You know the three monkeys: see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil. I've got that on my mantelpiece at home. Always look at it. You see.

So what we have to do is to see always the good in our fellow man. Always. For there is no one so bad that has no good in him. There's a little poem on that. I can't remember it. So now by that who is gaining? Not our brother, but we are gaining for we are becoming more and more positive. And by becoming more and more positive, we are uplifting ourselves. We are uplifting ourselves in so many ways. We are uplifting ourselves towards a divine goal. And we are also uplifting, lifting ourselves up from our miseries. You see.

So Ramakrishna's teachings are good. That very "no woman, no gold" is very good for monks. And it is also very good for householders, if you really understand what he meant. What he meant was non attachment. That has been the theme this whole week through. He meant non attachment, if you understand him correctly. Have woman, have your gold, but don't be attached to it so that it hurts you.

You can love deeply and yet be non attached. Oh, yes. Then you know true love. If you are attached, then it is not real love. It is a dependency. It is a dependency. Now, if we have the dependency what do we do? What do we do? We proceed from dependency to interdependency, where a union is formed between two people. I was telling this young couple that got married, I said, "Before you used to walk, the two of you, with four feet. Two feet, two feet: four feet. Now you are joined in this holy matrimony, now you are walking with three feet." It's a three legged run through life.

[LAUGHTER] You are joined together. It's a three legged run through life. So that means interdependency. But that is not the end. That is fine. And the time comes where you become totally independent, totally reliant on yourself, totally fired by the fire, the spiritual fire that is within you. And, being so independent and yet so much in love. To be in the world and yet not of the world. Do you see how beautiful it works? It's very simple.

So when you read that passage again, [QUOTES IN HINDU], "Woman and gold," have the attitude that, fine, we need that we are householders. And as a matter of fact, all these... it's okay for monks that go through very, very severe practices twelve hours of the day, where they transmute their biological urges which are natural to man. If they were not natural to man, God would not have given them to you in the first place. They are natural to man. And then these monks go through at least twelve hours of practices whereby they convert, transmute, the biological energies into what is called orjas, spiritual light. You see. But that is for the ascetics. We don't want that. We want to have a normal, stable society, and to create that love amongst our fellow men in such beautiful harmony. That's what we want. And that is what this age needs.

Any teacher that is a true teacher will teach what the time needs, not that which is too futuristic or too far back. So teachings must always be geared to the level of where man stands today. And man requires a harmony amongst themselves and the way to achieve this harmony amongst others, amongst our brethren is to achieve the harmony within oneself first. Through spiritual and meditational practices we definitely do and can find the Kingdom of Heaven that is within. Do you see. So that is how it works. [LAUGHTER] Okay.

So we've got fifteen minutes left before lunch, and it would be nice, I think, to end off now. Because many of you might have met each other for the first time, perhaps. People coming from long distances. And I'm sure you want to exchange little thoughts together, spend some time together. Because I can go on and on, you know. [LAUGHTER] Yeah.

VOICE: [INAUDIBLE] [LAUGHTER]

GURURAJ: So spend some time together amongst yourselves, and last good byes, perhaps, until we all meet, I hope, in November again. It would be lovely. And I must really, really thank you all very much for all your kindness and the love you have showered upon me. It is never ever forgotten, for it is always firmly implanted within me. And by the way, I'm not leaving you, I'm taking you with me. [LAUGHTER] Okay? Thank you. [APPLAUSE]

[END SIDE ONE]

[LINES ARE MINE S.A.]

GURURAJ: Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace.

Where there is hatred, let me sow love,

Where there is injury, pardon,

Where there is doubt, faith,

Where there is despair, hope,

Where there is darkness, light,

Where there is sadness, joy.

Oh, Divine Master, grant that I may seek not so much

To be consoled as to console,

To be understood as to understand,

To be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive.

It is in pardoning that we are pardoned.

And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Amen

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