
Sahaj Marg Study Group

Man and God

Set 1, Handout 1 (From Principles of Sahaj Marg, Set 1, Page 22-24)

We are assembled in a house of prayer and every such house of prayer is a house of God. All over the world where human beings exist there are such houses of God to which people can go and reconcile themselves with the Ultimate. We have the institution of the confessional which is aimed at ridding man of the burdens of his conscience for his actions in the past, and also to offer the facility of communing with God and making his peace. Whatever be the religion, and however civilized or primitive society may be, such houses of God are necessary for our existence and for our peace of mind.

Now, religions have a very vital part to play in the bringing up of the individual. We believe, as most religions believe, that when the soul takes human birth, it in some way suffers a fall or a descent from its lofty status and severs its connection with God. It is, therefore, necessary for religion, or it is the purpose of religion, to re-establish this lost connection with the Ultimate, and thereby make it possible for a connection with God to be established again. This is what religions are supposed to do and this is what religion means. The word 'religion' is derived from the Latin word *ligare*—to connect or bind, and *religare*—to reconnect.

Therefore, religions start by taking the child into their fold and, by various rites such as baptism, communion, confirmation and so forth, they are supposed to train the individual until he reaches adulthood, by inculcating in him the idea of God, the idea of the need for God. Religions are thereafter expected to train him ethically and morally and to fit him into the social environment so that he emerges as an adult fully qualified to lead an ethical, moral and social life.

What comes after? This is the question. We believe that it is just where religion ends that this confusion of what to do further to strengthen this relationship with God comes in, and we find so much of the tragic lack of purpose in life, and the confusion of what life should mean or what life means, and what should be done about it. My Master teaches that it is precisely where religion ends that spirituality begins. All through religious training we are taught to worship the deity outside us, and to believe in the idea of His existence and to commune with Him as an entity external to ourselves. In India we believe—or at least in Hinduism we believe—that the Almighty God can manifest Himself primarily in three forms—the first one called the *Para* form where He is the Ultimate, and He is as He is, for Himself, in Himself. The second form we call the *Harda* or the *Antaryamin* meaning one who resides inside us, that is the spark of Divinity which exists in the heart of every created being, and of course in human beings, too. The third form is that with which we are all familiar, the *Archa*. It is the external form of the deity as we worship Him in temples, in churches, in mosques, and so on.

Now we teach, or at least our religion teaches, that by being trained to worship God outside us and reaching perfection in that form of worship, we must then

advance to the next stage which we call spirituality, where we start worshipping God inside us, the immanent deity. This is mysticism, which we call yoga in the East. Therefore a transfer of worship of the deity from outside ourselves to inside our own heart, and seeking communion with Him within ourselves is what mysticism or yoga really means. This is what my Master is trying to teach. The only way possible to achieve this communion is meditation.

We find that at the base of all religions is the existence of God, and we also find that at the summit of all religions is the same God. It is in between that religions diverge and teach various ways of approach to the Ultimate; but the beginning and the end being the same, we should try to follow this mystic path and seek the deity within ourselves, and the way, as I have already stated, is meditation. That is, by closing our eyes and sitting comfortably and in a sense, if I may say so, of relaxation, we put our thought on the Ultimate within ourselves and try to commune with Him by constant thought of Him. Meditation literally means to think continuously of one thing, or to hold one thought continuously in the mind. This is meditation. What my Master teaches is precisely this, and we call it raja yoga in India, meaning the king of all yogas.

By practicing this yoga we are able to slowly strengthen our association with the deity by constantly meditating on His presence inside our heart in the form of illumination. This is our system of yoga which we call Sahaj Marg or the natural way of realization. We sit in a detached or a relaxed way, comfortably, and have the thought or try to hold in our mind this thought that the heart is illuminated from within by the presence of the spark of the Ultimate deity that is present within us. This, in brief, is what my Master teaches and I hope it will be possible for you all to practice this and derive such benefit as exists in it.

We believe that this is the only way to reach the Ultimate consciousness or what you may like to call the cosmic consciousness or the supercosmic consciousness. That is, we start with external worship of the deity, transfer Him ultimately within ourselves, and by practicing this communion of the spirit with Him, we are able to at last realize what God is in Himself, for Himself, that is as He really exists and not as we would like to see him. Thank you.