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VEDANTA PHILOSOPHY

LECTURE

ON

“BHAKTI YOGA”

BY THE

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

DELEGATE TO THE PARLIAMENT OF RELIGIONS, CHICAGO, ILL., 1893

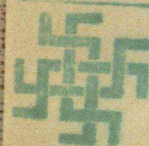
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BHAKTI YOGA—DEVOTION.

(1) Preparatory. (2) Supreme.

THE idea of a Personal God has obtained in almost every religion, except a very few. With exception of the Buddhist and the Jain, perhaps, all the religions of the world have had the idea of a Personal God, and, with it, comes the idea of devotion and worship. These two religions, the Buddhist and the Jain, although they have no Personal God to worship, have taken up the founders of their religions, and worship them precisely in the same way as others worship a Personal God. This idea of devotion and worship of some being who has to be loved, and who can reflect back the love to man, is universal. This idea of love and devotion is manifested in various degrees, and through different stages, in various religions. The lowest stage is that of ritualism, when man wants things that are concrete, when abstract ideas are almost impossible, when they are dragged down to the lowest plane, and made concrete. Forms come into play, and, along with them, various symbols. Throughout the history of the world we find that man is trying to grasp the abstract through thought forms, or symbols, and all the external manifestations of religions—bells, music, rituals, books and images—all come under that head. Anything that appeals to the senses, anything that helps man to form a concrete image of the abstract, is taken hold of, and worshipped.

There have been reformers in every religion, from time to time, who have stood against all symbols and rituals, but vain have been their attempts, for we find that so long as man will remain as he is, the vast majority of mankind will always want something concrete to hold on to, something around which, as it were, to place their ideas, something which will be the centre of all the thought forms in their minds. The great

attempts of the Mohammedans, and of the Protestants (among the Christians), have been directed to this one end, of doing away with all rituals, and yet we find that even with them, rituals creep in. They cannot be kept out; after long struggle, the masses simply change one symbol for another. The Mohammedan, who thinks that every ritual, every form, image, or ceremony, used by a non-Mohammedan is sinful, does not think so when he comes to his own temple at Kaba. Every religious Mohammedan, whenever he prays, must imagine that he is standing in the temple of Kaba, and when he makes a pilgrimage there, there is a black stone in the wall which he must kiss, and all the kisses that have been printed on that stone by millions and millions of pilgrims, will stand up as witnesses for the benefit of the faithful, at the last day of judgment. Then there is the well of Zimzim. Mohammedans believe that the sins of whomsoever draws a little water out of that well, will be pardoned, and he will have a fresh body, and live for ever, after the day of resurrection.

In others we find that the symbology comes in the form of buildings. Protestants hold that churches are more sacred than other places. This church, as it is, stands for a symbol. Or there is the Book. The idea of the Book, to them, is much holier than any other symbol. The image of the Cross with the Protestants, takes the place of the image of the Saint with the Catholics. It is vain to preach against the use of symbols, and why should we preach against them? There is no reason under the sun why men should not use these symbols. They have them in order to represent the thing signified behind them. This universe is a symbol, in and through which we are trying to grasp the thing signified, which is beyond and behind. This is the lower human constitution, and we are bound to have it so. Yet, at the same time, it is true that we are struggling to get to the thing signified, to get beyond the material, to the spiritual; the spirit is the goal, and not matter. Forms, images, bells, candles, books, churches, temples, and all holy symbols, are very good, very helpful to the growing plant of

spirituality, but thus far and no farther. In the vast majority of cases, we find, that the plant does not grow. It is very good to be born in a church, but it is very bad to die in a church. It is very good to be born within the limits of certain forms that help the little plant of spirituality, but if a man dies within the bonds of these forms, it shows that he has not grown, that there has been no development of the soul.

If, therefore, anyone says that symbols and rituals, and forms are to be kept forever, that man is wrong, but if he says that these symbols and rituals are a help to the growth of the soul, when it is low and very concrete, he is right. By the way, you must not mistake this development of the soul as meaning anything intellectual. A man can be of gigantic intellect, yet, spiritually, he may be a baby, or even much worse than that. You can experiment it just this moment. All of you have been taught to believe in an Omnipresent God. Try to think of it. How few of you can have any idea of what omnipresence means? If you struggle hard, you will get the idea of the ocean, if you have seen that, or of the sky, or a vast stretch of green earth, or a desert, if you have seen that. All these are material images, and so long as you cannot conceive of abstract *as* abstract, of the ideal *as* the ideal, you will have to grapple through these forms, these material images, either inside or outside the brain, it matters not. You are all born idolators, and idolatry is good, because it is in the constitution of the human nature. Who can go beyond it? Only the perfect men, the God-men. The rest are all idolators. So long as you see this universe before you, with its forms and shapes, you are all idolators. Do you get shapes in the brain? You get just a little sensation somewhere in the brain. Why do you imagine this universe with all these colors and forms and shapes, this immense symbolical universe? This is a gigantic idol you are worshipping. He who says he is the body, is a born idolator. You are all spirits, spirits that have no form or shape, spirits that are infinite, and not matter. Therefore, any one who thinks of himself as the body, as material, who cannot

grasp the abstract, cannot think of himself as he is, except in and through matter, is an idolator. And yet how these people begin to fight with each other, each calling the other an idolator; that is to say, each says his idol is all right, and the other's is all wrong.

Therefore, we will get out of these silly notions of spiritual babies, we will get beyond the prattles of men, who think that religion is merely a mass of frothy words, to whom religion is only a system of doctrines, to whom religion is only a little intellectual assent, or dissent, to whom religion is believing in certain words which their own priests tell them, to whom religion is something which their forefathers believed, to whom religion is a certain form of ideas and superstitions, to which they hold on because they are their national superstitions. We will get beyond all these and look at humanity as one vast organism, slowly coming towards light, this wonderful plant, slowly unfolding itself to that wonderful truth which is called God, and the first gyrations, the first motions, towards this, are always through matter, through ritual. We cannot help it.

In the heart of all these ritualisms there stands one idea, prominent above all the rest—worship of a name. Those of you who have studied the older forms of Christianity, those of you who have studied the other religions of the world, perhaps, have remarked that there is a peculiar idea with them all, the worship of name. A name is said to be very sacred. "In the name of the Lord." You read that, among the Hebrews, the holy name was considered so holy that it could not be pronounced by an ordinary man; it was sacred beyond compare, holy beyond everything. It was the holiest of all names, and all of them thought that this very name was God. That is also true; for what is this universe but name and form? Can you think without words? Word and thought are inseparable. Try, if any one of you can separate them. Whenever you think, you are doing so through word forms. Words are the inner part, and thought is the outer part, and they must come

together; they cannot be separated. The one brings the other; thought brings the word, and the word brings the thought. Thus, the whole universe is, as it were, the external symbol, and behind that stands the grand name of God. Each particular body is a form, and behind that particular body is its name. As soon as you think of your friend So-and-so, there comes the idea of his body, and as soon as you think of your friend's body, you get the idea of his name. This is in the constitution of man. That is to say, psychologically, in the mind-stuff of man there cannot come the idea of name without the idea of form, and there cannot come the idea of form without the idea of name. They are inseparable; they are the external and the internal sides of the same wave. As such, names have been exalted and worshipped all over the world; consciously or unconsciously man found the glory of names.

Again, we find that, in many different religions, holy personages have been worshipped. They worship Krishna, they worship Buddha, they worship Jesus, and so forth. Then there is the worship of saints; hundreds of them have been worshipped all over the world, and why not? The vibration of light is everywhere. The owl sees it in the dark. That shows it is there. But man cannot see it there. For the man, that vibration is only visible in the lamp, in the sun, in the moon. God is omnipresent; He is manifesting Himself in every being, but for men, He is only visible, recognizable, in man. When His light, His presence, His spirit, shines through the human face divine, then and then alone, can man understand Him. Thus, man has been worshipping God through men all the time, and must have so to worship, as long as he is a man. He may cry against it, struggle against it, but as soon as he attempts to realize God, he will find the constitutional necessity of thinking of God as a man. So, we find that these are the three primary points which we have in the worship of God, in almost every religion—forms, or symbols; names; God-men. All religions have these, but then you find that they want to fight with each other. One says, "My name is the only name,

and not yours, and my form is the only form, and not yours, and my God-men are the only God-men in the world, and yours are simply myths." In modern times the Christian clergymen have become a little kinder; so, they say that in all these older religions the different forms of worship were foreshadowings of what was going to happen; which of course is the only true form—their own. God tested Himself in older times; tested His powers, by getting these things in shape, but He really worked them out in Christianity, later on. That, at least, is a good step. Fifty years ago they would not have said even that; everything was nothing, except their own religion, and that was everything. This idea is not limited to any religion, or any nation, or any state of persons; people are always thinking that the only thing to be done, is what they themselves do, and that is where the study of different religions helps us. It shows us that the same thoughts that we have been calling ours, and ours alone, were present hundreds of years ago in others, and sometimes even in a better form of expression than our own.

These are the external forms of devotion, through which man has to pass, but if he is sincere, if he really wants to reach the truth, he gets higher than these, to a plane where forms are as nothing. Forms are simply the kindergarten of religion, the child's preparation. Temples or churches, books or forms, are just for the child's play, so as to make the spiritual man strong enough to take yet higher steps, and these first steps are necessary to be taken if he wants religion. With that thirst, that want for God, comes real devotion, real Bhakti. Who wants? That is the question. Religion is not doctrines, nor dogmas, nor intellectual argumentation; it is being and becoming; it is realization. We hear everybody talking about Gold and soul, and all the mysteries of the universe, but if you will take them one by one, and ask them "Have you realized God? Have you seen your Soul?" how many dare say they have? And yet they are all fighting! I remember once, in India, representatives of different sects got together, and began

to dispute. One said that the only God was Shiva; another said the only God was Vishnu, and so on, and there was no end to their discussions. A sage was passing that way, and he was invited by the disputants to join with them. He went there, and the first question he asked was of the man who was claiming Shiva as the greatest God; "Have you seen Shiva? Are you acquainted with him? If not, how do you know He is the greatest God?" He asked the same question of the other party; "Have you seen Vishnu?" And after asking this question of all of them it was found out that not one of them had known anything of God; and that was why they were disputing so much; had they really known, they would not have been disputing. When a jar is being filled it makes all sorts of noises, but when it is full it is calm and silent; it has known the truth. So, the very fact of these disputations and fightings among sects, shows that they do not know anything about religion; religion to them, is a mere mass of frothy words, to be written in books. Each one hurries to write a big book, to make it as massive as possible, to steal from everybody he can lay his hands on, and never acknowledges his indebtedness, and then he wants to launch this book on the world, to make one more disturbance in these already existing hundred thousand fights.

The vast majority of men are atheists. I am glad that, in modern times, another set of atheists has come up in the Western world, the materialists, because they are sincere atheists; they are better than these religious atheists, who are insincere; who talk about religion, and fight about it, and yet never want it, never try to realize it, never try to understand it. Remember those words of Christ—"Ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you." Those words were literally true, not figures, or fictions. They were ground out of the heart's blood of one of the greatest children of God who ever came to this world of ours, words which came as the fruit of realization, not from books, but from a man who had realized God Himself, and had felt God; who had spoken with God, lived with God, a hundred times more intensely than

you or I see this building. Who wants God? That is the question. Do you think all this mass of people in the world want God, and cannot get Him? That cannot be. What want is there without its object outside? Do you ever see men wanting to breathe and there is no air for them to breathe? Did you ever hear of a man who wanted to eat, and there was no food outside? What creates these desires? The existence of external things. It was the light that made the eyes; it was the sound that made the ears. So every desire in human beings has been created by something which already existed outside, and this desire for perfection, for reaching the goal, and getting beyond nature, how can it be there, until something has drilled it into the soul of man, created it, and made it live there? He, therefore, in whom this desire is awakened, will reach the goal. But who wants? We want everything but God. This is not religion that you see all around you. My lady has varieties of furniture, from all over the world, in her parlor, but now it is the fashion to have a Japanese something, and she buys a vase, and puts it in some corner. Such is religion with the vast majority; they have all sorts of things for enjoyment, and without just a little flavor of religion, life is not all right, because society would criticise. Society says something; so he or she has some religion. This is the present state of religion in the world.

A disciple went to his master and said to him: "Sir, I want religion." The master looked at the young man, and did not speak; only smiled. The young man came every day, and insisted that he wanted religion. But the old man knew better than the young man. One day, when it was very hot, he asked the young man to go to the river with him, and take a plunge. The young man plunged in, and the old man after him, and held the young man down under the water by main force. When the young man had struggled for a good while, he let him go, and, when the young man came up, asked him what he wanted most while he was under the water. "A breath of air," the disciple answered. Do you want God that way? If you do, you will get Him in a moment. Until you have that

thirst, that desire, you cannot get religion, however you struggle with your intellect, or your books, or your forms. Until that thirst is awakened in you, you are no better than any atheist, only that the atheist is sincere, and you are not.

A great sage used to say, "Suppose there is a thief in a room, and somehow he gets to know that there is a vast mass of gold in the next room, and there is only a thin partition between the two rooms, what would be the condition of that thief? He would be sleepless, he would not be able to eat, or do anything. His whole mind would be on that gold. How to drill a hole in that wall, and get at the wealth, would be his whole thought; and do you mean to say that if all these people really believed that the mine of happiness, of blessedness, of glory, God Himself, were here, they would again go and do just as usual in the world, without trying to get God?" As soon as a man begins to believe there is a God, he becomes mad with longing to get to Him. Others may go their way, but as soon as a man is sure that there is a much higher life than that which he is leading here, as soon as he feels sure that the senses are not all, that this limited, material body is as nothing compared with the immortal, eternal, undying bliss of the Self, he becomes mad until he finds this bliss out for himself, and this madness, this thirst, this mania, is what is called the "awakening" to religion, and when that has come, a man is beginning to be religious. But it takes a long time. All these forms and ceremonies, these prayers, and pilgrimages, these books, bells, candles, and priests, are the preparations; they take off the impurities from the soul; and when the soul has become pure, it naturally wants to get to its own source, the mine of all purity, God Himself. Just as a piece of iron, which had been covered with the dust of centuries, though it was lying near a huge magnet all the time, is not attracted, when by some cause or other this dust is cleared off, its natural attraction is aroused, and the iron is drawn towards the magnet. So, this human soul, covered with the dust of ages, impurities, wickedness, and sins, after millions of births, by these forms and cere-

monies, by doing good to others, loving other beings, becomes purified, and when it is purified enough, its natural attractions come, and it wakens up, and struggles towards God. This is the beginning of religion.

Yet, all these forms and symbols are simply the beginning; not love proper. Love we hear spoken of everywhere. Every one says love God. Men do not know what it is to love; if they did, they would not talk so easily about it. Every man says he can love, and then, in five minutes, finds out there was no love in his nature. Every woman says she can love, and finds out in three minutes that she cannot. The world is full of talk of love, but it is hard to love. Where is love? How do you know that there is love? The first test of love is that it knows no bargain. So long as you see a man love another to get something, you may know that it is not love; it is shopkeeper's love. Wherever there is any question of buying or selling, it is no more love. So, when any man is praying to God "give me this, and give me that," it is not love. How can it be? I give you my little prayer, and you give me something in return; that is what it is, mere shopkeeping.

There was a certain great king who went to hunt in a forest, and there he happened to meet a sage. He had a little conversation with this sage, and became so pleased with him that he asked him to accept a present from him. "No," says the sage, "I am perfectly satisfied with my condition; these trees give me enough fruits to eat; these beautiful pure streams supply me with all the water I want; I sleep in these caves. What do I care for your presents, though you be an emperor?" The emperor says: "Just to purify myself, to gratify me, take some present, and come with me into the city." At last the sage consented to go with this emperor, and he was brought into the emperor's palace, wherein were gold, and jewelry, and marble, and most wonderful things. Wealth and power were manifest in this palace, and there that poor sage from the forest was ushered in. The emperor asked him to wait a minute while he repeated his prayer, and he went into a corner and began to pray "Lord

give me more wealth, more children, more territory." In the meanwhile the sage got up, and began to walk away. The emperor saw him going, and went after him. "Stay, sir, you did not take my present, and are going away." The sage turned round to him and said: "Beggar, I do not beg of beggars. What can you give? You have been begging yourself all the time." That is not the language of love. What is the difference between love and shopkeeping, if you ask God to give you this, and give you that? The first test of love is that it knows no bargaining; it always gives. Love takes upon itself the stand of a giver, and never that of a taker. Says the child of God: "If God wants, I give Him even my threadbare coat, but I do not want anything of Him, I want nothing in this universe. I love Him because I want to love Him, and I ask no favor in return. Who cares whether God is almighty or not, because I do not want any power from Him, nor any manifestation of His power. Sufficient for me that He is the God of love. I ask no more questions."

The second test is that love knows no fear. How can you frighten love? Does the lamb love the lion? The mouse the cat? The slave the master? Slaves sometimes simulate love, but is it love? Where do you ever see love in fear? It is always sham. So long as man thinks of God, as sitting above the clouds, with a reward in one hand, and punishment in the other, there can be no love. With love never comes the idea of fear, or of anything that makes us afraid. Think of a young mother in the street and a dog barking at her; she flies into the next house. Suppose the next day she is in the street with her child and a lion is upon the child; where will be her position? Just in the mouth of the lion, protecting her child. Love conquered all fear. So also in love to God. Who cares whether God is a rewarder or a punisher? That is not the thought of a lover. Think of a judge, when he comes home, what does his wife see in him? Not a judge, or a rewarder, or a punisher, but her husband, her love. What do the children see in him? Their loving father; not the punisher, or a

rewarder. So the children of God never see in Him a punisher or a rewarder. It is all outside people, who have never tasted love, that begin to fear, and quake their lives out. Cast off all fear—these horrible ideas of God as a punisher or rewarder, though they may have their use in savage minds. Some men, even the most intellectual, are spiritual savages, and these ideas may help them. But to men who are spiritual, men who are approaching religion, in whom spiritual insight is awakened, such ideas are simply childish, simply foolish. Such men reject all ideas of fear.

The third is still a higher test. Love is always the highest ideal. When one has passed through the first two stages—when he has thrown off all shop-keeping, and cast off all fear—he then begins to realize that love was always the highest ideal. How many times in this world we see that the most beautiful woman loves the ugliest man. How many times we see one of the handsomest of men love a very ugly woman. Where is the attraction to them? Those that are standing aside see the ugly man, or the ugly woman, but not the lover, to the lover they are the most beautiful beings that ever existed. How is it? The woman who was loving the ugly man took, as it were, the ideal of beauty which was in her own brain, and projected it over this ugly man, and what she worshipped and loved was, not the ugly man, but her own ideal. That man was, as it were, only the suggestion, and upon that suggestion she threw her own ideal, and covered it, and it became her object of worship. Now this applies in every case where we love. Think how many of us have very common looking brothers or sisters; yet the very idea of brother makes them to us the handsomest of men, and the very idea of sister makes them the handsomest of women.

The philosophy in the background is that each one projects his ideal and worships that. This external world is only the world of suggestion. All that we see, we project out of our own minds. A grain of sand gets into the shell of an oyster. It begins to irritate the oyster and the oyster immediately cov-

ers the sand with a secretion of its own juice, and the result is the beautiful pearl. This is what we are all doing. External things are only the bits of sand which are making the suggestions, and over these we project our own ideals, and cover the externals. The wicked will see this world as a perfect hell, and the good will see it as a perfect heaven. Lovers see this world as full of love, and haters as full of hatred, fighters see nothing but fighting in the world, peacemakers nothing but peace, the perfect man sees nothing but God. So we always worship our highest ideal, and when we have reached the point when we love the ideal, *as* the ideal all arguments and doubts have vanished forever. Who cares whether a God can be demonstrated or not? The ideal can never escape, because it is a part of my own nature. I shall only question that ideal, when I question my own existence, and as I cannot question the one, I shall not question the other. Who cares whether science can demonstrate to me a God outside of myself, living somewhere, managing this universe by fits and starts, creating it for several days, and then going to sleep for the rest of time? Who cares whether God can be Almighty, and all Merciful, at the same time, or not? Who cares whether He is the rewarder of mankind, whether He looks at us with the eyes of a tyrant, or with the eyes of a beneficent monarch? The lover has passed beyond all these things, beyond rewards and punishments, beyond fears, or doubts, or scientific, or any other demonstration. Sufficient unto him is the ideal of love, and is it not self-evident that this universe is but a manifestation of this love. What is it that makes atoms come and join atoms, molecule, molecule, sets big planets flying towards each other, attracts man to woman, woman to man, human beings to human beings, animals to animals, drawing the whole universe, as it were, towards one centre? This is what is called love. Its manifestation is from the lowest atom to the highest ideal, omnipresent, all-pervading, everywhere is this love. What is manifesting itself as attraction in sentient and insentient, in the particular and in the universal, is the love of God.

It is the one motive power that is in the universe. Under the impetus of that love Christ stands to give up his life for humanity, Buddha for an animal, the mother for the child, the father for the wife. It is under the impetus of the same love that men are ready to give up their lives for their country, and strange to say, under the impetus of that same love, the thief goes to steal, the murderer to murder; for even in these cases, the spirit is the same, but the manifestation is different. This is the one motive power in the universe. The thief had love for gold; the love was there, but it was misdirected. So, in all crimes, as well as in all virtuous actions, behind stands that eternal love. Suppose one of you takes out a piece of paper from your pocket, and writes a check for a thousand dollars for the poor of New York, and at the same time I take a piece of paper, and I try to forge your name. The light will be the same for both; you and I are responsible for the manifestation; it is not light that is to blame. Unattached, yet shining in everything, the motive power of the universe, without which the universe will fall to pieces in a moment, is love; and this love is God.

"None, O beloved, loves the husband for the husband's sake, but for the Self that is in the husband she loves the husband; none O beloved, ever loves the wife for the wife's sake, but for the Self that is in the wife. None ever loved anything else, except for the Self." Even this selfishness, which is so much condemned, is but a manifestation of the same love. Stand aside from this play, do not mix in it, but see this wonderful panorama, this grand drama, played scene after scene, hear this wonderful harmony; all are the one manifestation of the same love. Even in selfishness, that Self will multiply, grow and grow. That one Self, the one man, will become two selves when he gets married, several, when he gets children, will become a whole village, a whole city, and yet grow and grow until he will take the whole world as his Self, the whole universe as his Self. That Self, in the long run, will gather all men, all women, all children, all animals, the whole

universe. It will have grown into one mass of universal love, infinite love, and that love is God.

Thus we come to what is called supreme Bhakti, supreme devotion, when forms and symbols have fallen off. One who has reached that cannot enter into any sect, for all sects are in him. What shall he enter? Such a one cannot enter into any temple or church, for all churches and temples are in him. Where is the church big enough for him? Such a one cannot bind himself down to certain limited forms. Where is the limit for unlimited Love, with whom he has become one? In all religions which take up this ideal of love we find the struggle to express it. Although we understand what this love means, and though we see that everything in this world of affections and attractions is but a manifestation, partial or otherwise, of that Infinite Love, the expression which has been attempted by sages and saints of different nations, yet we find them ransacking the powers of language until the most carnal expressions stand transfigured.

Thus sang the royal Hebrew sage, thus sang they of India. "O beloved, one kiss of Thy lips, one that has been kissed by Thee, his thirst for Thee increaseth forever. All sorrows cease, and he forgets the past, present, and future, and only thinks of Thee alone." That is the madness of the lover, when all desires have vanished. Who cares for salvation? Who cares to be saved? Who cares to be perfect even? Who cares for freedom, says the lover.

"I do not want wealth, no, not even health, I do not want beauty, do not want intellect; let me be born again, and again amid all the evils that are in the world; I will not complain, but let me love Thee, and that for love's sake." That is the madness of love, which finds its expression in these songs, and the highest, most expressive, strongest, the most attractive human love is that between the sexes, and it was therefore that language which they took up. It was the madness of sexual love that was the faintest echo of the mad love of the saint. These are they who want to become mad, inebriated with the

love of God; "God intoxicated men." They want to drink the cup of love which has been brewed by saints and sages of every religion, in which those great lovers of God have poured their hearts' blood, into which have been concentrated all the hopes of those who have loved without seeking reward, who wanted love itself. They wanted nothing beyond love; the reward of love is love, and what a reward it is! It is the only thing that takes off all sorrows, the only cup, by the drinking of which, this disease of the world vanishes. Man becomes divinely mad, and forgets that he is man.

Lastly we find that all these various systems, in the end, converge to that one point, that perfect union. We always begin as Dualists. God is a separate being, and I am a separate being. Love comes in the middle, and man begins to approach God, and God, as it were, begins to approach man. Man takes up all the various relationships of life, as father, as mother, as friend, as lover; he exists as all these, and the last point comes when he becomes one with the object of worship, that I am you, and you are I, and worshipping you, I worship myself, and in worshipping myself, I worship you. There we find the highest explanation of that with which man begins. Where we begin, there we end. At the beginning it was love for the Self, but the claims of the little self, made love selfish; at the end, came the full blaze of light, when that Self had become the Infinite. That God, who, at first, was a body somewhere, became resolved, as it were, into Infinite Love. Man himself was also transformed. He was approaching God, he was throwing off all vain desires of which he was full before. Vain desires, vanished selfishness, and, at the apex, he found that Love, Lover, and Beloved are One.

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