

True Mission of the Churches

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The subject this morning is, "True Mission of the Churches," true mission of the churches.

Evidently, the true mission has not been carried out, as the subject suggests. But the "True Mission of the Churches" is to make religion scientific, that's all, to make religion scientific. That is, to supersede the acceptance of the outward form of religion, with its orthodoxy, to supersede that with the underlying Universality of Religion, or the Presence of God, in a dynamic conscious way. That's the "True Mission of the Churches." Not to carry on only the outward form, which is necessary, but to give people, God's children, a knowledge of the underlying Universality of God's Presence.

How is it done? Through the practice of yoga. I mean scientific yoga, such as is taught in Self-Religion Fellowship. I like to call it "Salvation Yoga," because those who follow it will attain the Presence of God. Attaining the Presence of God, then, if they will surrender to Him, they will attain Salvation. God must not only be known in His first manifestation as the Great Cosmic Sound of Om, but He must be known in totality. Then you will know yourself as a part of Him. You see the difference?

In ordinary devotion – what is it? It is you plus your Father, but when you merge with Him, there is One. And we are rays of the Great Light of God. Our Souls are atoms of Spirit. Now the "True Mission of the Churches" is to make that available for its members, not just the outward form of religion. And the science of yoga is the answer. And by that I mean Self-Realization Fellowship teachings, which are based on the highest form of yoga – Raja Yoga – Self-Realization Fellowship teachings; Self-Realization Fellowship meditation; and perhaps, greatest of all, Self-Realization Fellowship techniques, because they give you the ways and the means to do these things; and the greatest is, of course, Kriya Yoga.

Kriya Yoga – fastest known accelerator to the Presence of God that there is. And, if that is followed by self-surrender, full surrender to God, as the Great Lahiri

Mahasaya says, "Salvation will be yours¹" without question of a doubt. For those of you who have just attained the initiation of Kriya, realize this important thing. The ways and the means have been given to you, but you have to do it. And you have to do it faithfully, and you have to do it feeling that you want the Presence of God and not just as a technique. You will get some result if you do it as a technique, but, if you make it your own, and the goal of which will be the attainment of God, you cannot fail. So much for yoga.

Now, religion often consists, as you all know, of the outward form – untested truths, dogma – without those untested truths being followed by a scientific investigation of those things. That's where the churches fall down. They give us these truths, but they're untested. They must be tested and known to be actual truths through Realization by personal experience. That is what is not being done – of course, except in Self-Realization Fellowship. We do that. Why? Because our Founder knew God. How? Through the practice of these techniques, and therefore, he has passed on to us the ways and the means, and it makes it very much easier for us because he has done that. And those who practice sincerely, will, without question of a doubt, and have found, the Presence of God within as something, not in idea only, but in actuality, as a Living Conscious Force, which does something for you which nothing else can do. That's what the Presence of God will do for each one of us. And that's the "True Mission of the Churches."

And so, religion, or True Realization, means that instead of understanding God as an idea, you understand Him as something positive – as Bliss. Our Master has said, "Bliss consciousness is God Consciousness." Now, Realization will give you that attainment. And True Religion is that religion in which that is attained. Not just the outward form of religion. Let us not forget these things. We want God. And the underlying Unity is God. And the underlying Universality behind all religions is God. How will you know it? By the Bliss which you feel, by the Peace which you feel – not ordinary peace of mind – but Cosmic Peace, that positive thing, which lets you know that you are in the Presence of God. That's how you'll know. And that should be the "True Mission of the Churches."

¹ Autobiography of a Yogi, by Paramhansa Yogananda, First Release 1946 (may be downloaded FREE from the Internet), Chapter 5, "I myself consider *Kriya* the most effective device of salvation through self-effort ever to be evolved in man's search for the Infinite." Kealananda concluded with this earnest testimony. "Through its use, the omnipotent God, hidden in all men, became visibly incarnated in the flesh of Lahiri Mahasaya and a number of his disciples." – Lahiri Mahasaya

And so, Gandhi had this to say, wonderful words from one who is not of our religion – ordinarily spoken of the Christian religion. Gandhi said “Behind all religion...” behind Hinduism, behind the Vedas, behind Christianity, behind the eternal truths of the Bible, behind Zoroastrianism and Mohammedanism, “...is the same underlying Universality of Religion, the same eternal truth.”² Now that’s True Religion. No matter what cast or creed you belong to. If you feel, behind that creed, behind that church which you attend, if you feel the Presence of God, then you have it, then, your church is doing, or giving you, what it should give you. If it does not do that, it is not fulfilling its true mission. That’s the “True Mission of the Churches,” to investigate more in a scientific manner the underlying truths, eternal truths in religion. So Gandhi’s words, remember, he said that “behind all religion...” behind all of them is, or underneath, “is the same one goal.” There’s only one religion. There’s not several religions. There are many, many denominations. But there’s one religion, and that’s the Presence of God, which is behind and underneath all outward forms. It is the Bliss of His Presence. It is God’s Love. Let us understand that much.

Now, what religion, what should religion mean to us? Not doctrines and customs and outward forms – those things which go with the ordinary church activities – but primarily, it should mean God-communion. What, of what use are these outward forms unless underneath them you feel the Presence of God? Tell me. No use. And so, religion should give us God-contact and God-communion. That’s the first thing. And, if your religion does not give you that, it is not a, your True Religion; it is not taking you to the underlying Universality of God’s Presence.

Secondly, there must be something common to all religions, which can be Universalized. You go into any church – Methodist Church, that’s the church I came from – now, if in that church you find something there that can be Universalized, and can be felt by everybody, then that’s the true church. And the Universality is God – God as Peace and Bliss.

And so, that’s what our church should give to us, irrespective of color, race, or creed – irrespective of those things – there should be something, underneath, which is common to everybody; something which can be attained, and which will fit that person’s needs. Of what good is God unless He fits your need – unless you feel Him?

² “I believe in the fundamental Truth of all great religions of the world. And I believe that if only we could, all of us, read the scriptures of the different Faiths from the stand-point of the followers of those faiths, we should find that they were at the bottom, all one and were all helpful to one another.” – Gandhi

And now, I come to the third point. God must be, or the church must give you something which is necessary for your life. Unless you can feel God in everything you do, unless you can take Him with you in every little act, or great act – anything – of what use is He? He's not Universal then. But when you find that God is Universally necessary, that you find it necessary that you must take Him with you in every little thing you do, then, God becomes what He should be, He becomes the Real Religion, and you will know Him by the Peace and Bliss that you feel.

There are, as I have said, many denominations, but one, one Universal Religion. Now the mission of the churches is to point out that One Universality of the Presence of God isn't it? Now, I know that many of you people here, because you have been trained in knowing the Presence of God and getting into His Presence, can go in any denominational church, and, if you're strong enough, you can find God there. But how about the ordinary members? They're not schooled yet. And so the churches need to school their members more, in a scientific way, so that the Presence of God can be attained.

But, I know that, if you go into any of the churches, that if you sit quietly and meditate in the Inner Temple of God's Presence, you will find Him right in any church. But those who have not been trained cannot do that. Therefore, that's the mission of the churches – to train their people so that no matter what denomination you attend, or they attend, they will be able to feel the Presence of God as the underlying Unity – His Great Love and His Bliss.

Now, we are living in an age when science is showing the value of systematic investigation of many things. Take in electronics. We are all familiar with the great advances made in electronics; in radar; in television; and in such things; in atomic and nuclear fission. Why? Because they investigated it scientifically, these branches; and so, also, in medicine and surgery. You know there are many teams; there are teams of biochemists, who do nothing, all the time investigating, investigating the action, the physiological action, therapeutic action, of different drugs and combinations of drugs. For what purpose? To attain something which can alleviate this, the suffering in the outward form of living.

Of course, we know that they are doing good, but they are on the wrong track, because behind all biochemistry is the Great Presence of God, His Great Love. And in all healing, the greatest and foremost necessity is to be in tune with God. Therefore, if you can do that, then practice your biochemistry, or your scientific

investigation of electronics, that's wonderful. Then you will sooner reach the goal in which you are striving, because you will go to the Fountainhead of all sciences, which is the Science of knowing God.

Now, why not do this in religion? Why not scientifically investigate religion? They investigate everything scientifically – marriages and everything; they're investigated scientifically to see what's the matter with them. They call it – what is it – psychiatry. But it's nothing but scientific investigation. And it's a good thing, because there's plenty of trouble. But in religion, they do not do that. Why not do it in religion? Why not scientifically investigate the forms of religion to find underneath that what we're all striving for is freedom from pain – eternally – and to be conscious of our existence. That's what we want. That's what the churches are trying to do in their way. But it must be done more in a scientific manner to attain the results. And therefore, the churches should teach their people to scientifically approach the problem of perception of God and God-communion. Is that clear?

Two things, that's all: first, the perception of God, and secondly, communion. You cannot commune with God unless you perceive Him. Therefore, we must first attain the Presence of God. Get into the Presence of God, as Brother Lawrence said: "Practice the Presence of God." Then, getting into His Presence you can be one with Him; then you can know Him; then you can commune with Him. If I'm out in the street calling, you cannot see me can you? You may hear me, but you must come into my presence, I must come into your presence to commune with you. How much more so with God? We must first get into His Presence, attain the Presence of God, then, it is much easier to commune with Him. That's what the churches must do. And I know that's what we in Self-Realization are doing.

And so, we come to the next part of our talk. We must know God in a practical way. Do you see the difference? You go to church. You feel pretty good in church, because at least, for the time being, the people have left their ideas about worldly living somewhat aside. You feel pretty good. The minute you get out, you're back in it again. Now, that is not approaching the subject of God in a practical way, is it? We must do that. We must not approach God just as an idea. We can say, "God is wonderful. He gives me my family and all things. And He gives me a nice house, and an automobile, and all these things." And when things go bad, you begin to wonder whether He did that or not. Now, these are practical things. You begin to wonder, "Well I don't know about this God, as I was so sure of." Your karma was good, that's all. Things were coming

your way. But, when it turns the other way – can you feel just as happy? Well, that's good, if you can. Somebody said "Yes." Well, that's wonderful.

Now, if you can do that, that's fine. I hope you can do it, and I hope you will keep on. You can do it. Whoever spoke, spoke the truth. But we must learn how to do it. Therefore, we must approach God not in idea only, but in a practical way – something which we can feel, or handle, and love. That's how we must approach God. Just to say "God is wonderful. He's with me all the time." I've got to feel and know He's with me. So have you, to make God something practical; something real; something necessary to your existence.

Now, how to do that? You must feel God as a Force: something tangible, something real, something beyond idea. Now, the first manifestation of God which is, who is Consciousness, plus His Power – Cosmic Consciousness plus His Energy. That's what God is. And when that begins to manifest, it manifests first as one thing. And what is that one thing? You all know, you've heard it said many times. It is the Holy Vibration – The Holy Ghost – the Presence of God as Vibration, of which Jesus called it "The Comforter."³ Why did he call it "The Comforter?" Because in that Holy Vibration is God's Love; His Protection; His Solace; everything you need is in that. That's why Jesus called it "The Comforter." But it is something tangible and something real. It is called the "Word of God."⁴ Not just the word written in the Bible, but the Holy Vibration is the Word of God, from which all things have come. The primal vibration is the Word of God; and in that is His Great Love.

Now the Word of God is made up of three things:

1. First, the Light Vibration. God is Light.⁵ We read that in the scriptures many places. Next;
2. The Cosmic Sound. Sound of a trumpet.⁶ Sound of many waters.⁷ Those are referred to the first manifestation of God as the Word; and

³ St. John 15:26, "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:"

⁴ St. John 1:1, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

⁵ I John 1:5, "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all."

⁶ Revelation 1:10, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,"

⁷ Revelation 1:15, "And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters."

3. Lastly, and the greatest, is the Feeling in that Holy Vibration. The Feeling in the Word of God. Not the feeling when you read the word of God – “God is Light,” “God is this” – but the Feeling of God’s Love. That’s in that Holy Vibration. And that’s the most tangible thing, and that’s what we must attain, is that Great Feeling.

Now, in all religion, and that includes all the denominations of the various religions, there is one symbol of the Presence of God, and that is the Great Word underlying all religions. But who knows it? Who knows it? Now that’s the Universality. And that’s not an idea. That’s tangible. That’s the Force of God. It can be felt and it can be realized. In Christianity it’s the Great Amen, “the true and faithful witness, the beginning of the creation of God.”⁸ That’s in Christianity.

In Hinduism it’s the Om – the Om of the Vedas. “He who knows Om knows God.”⁹ If you want to know God, get into His Presence by getting into the Holy Vibration of Om – merging in it. And the greatest of all is to feel, feel God’s Presence in it as Love. In Zoroastrianism, it is called Ahunwar. In Tibetanism, or whatever religion they have there – Buddhism – it is called Hum, H-u-m, and in Mohammedanism it is called the Amin. You see, the vibration underneath that is the Universality. These are different expressions of different people of the same Presence of God in the Great Holy Vibration of Om, Amen, Amin, and Hum of the Tibetans.

Now, that’s the Universality, and that’s the Force we must contact to make religion universal. And everyone – I don’t care whether he’s a Methodist, or a Baptist, or whatever denomination he is – if he sits down, and goes into the temple within, and feels the Presence of God, he will hear the Cosmic Vibration of Om. Isn’t that something tangible? Isn’t that Universal? And if God’s Presence is in it, isn’t it necessary for your existence and mine? Absolutely so! So, that’s the first thing to make God practical, is to make Him so that you know Him as something tangible and real, a Force within you.

Now, do you know God as that? Answer yourself. Do you know God as that, tangible within you? If you do, you’re in His Presence. I said the most important thing about the Holy Vibration is the Great Feeling of God within us:

⁸ Revelation 3:14, “And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;”

⁹ Patanjali

Love; Bliss. Do you know that? If you do, you're in His Presence. So realize these things.

And finally, have you made God so necessary to your life that you find it necessary to take Him with you in everything you do? If you have, then you've found True Religion. It's as simple as that. If you find it necessary when you go to the café to eat – which you're going to do after this meet, this service – if you find it to take God with you and thank Him for giving you the ability to enjoy this food knowing that it came from Him, then you are in the Presence of God, even though while eating. Understand that.

Now, if you can do these things – especially the last – if you find it necessary to take God with you in every little thing you do – every little thing you do, from the greatest to the smallest; if you find it necessary to take Him with you, then you've got True Religion, and nobody can shake you from it. Now that's what the churches must give, that's what the churches must give to people – the ways and the means to scientifically investigate what is called religion, to know the underlying Reality, the Presence of God, and to make it their own. That's the "True Mission of the Churches." Let us realize that.

Now, our Master has put it much better than I can. I'd like to just read from, a few words from his writings to point out that it is so necessary to be able to do these things. From The Science of Religion,¹⁰ from page two – I give you the page, because I hope you'll all read it. It isn't perhaps called good etiquette to tell all about your religion and so forth, but I want you to read this, all of you. And read on. Master says, "If God is not conceived in such a way that we cannot do without Him in the satisfaction of a want, in our dealings with people, in earning money, in reading a book, in passing an examination, in doing of the most trifling or the highest duty, then it is plain that we have not felt any connection between God and life."

Isn't that wonderful? Now that's what we need. That will give you True Religion, if you feel God in that way. Don't be satisfied until walking down these steps, and going out, if you feel Him with you. Don't take it anything less than that. If you can do that, then God is something practical to you. And that's the greatest thing, to feel His Bliss and His Assurance with you, and His Satisfaction with you as you walk along and do anything. If you know He's

¹⁰ The Science of Religion, by Paramhansa Yogananda, 1953

pleased, then you have True Religion. There's no question about it. You will know it by the Bliss which you feel.

Now, we come to another part of our discussion this morning, I'll not keep you much longer. This is about church activity – church activity. The customary church activities are not bad, if the Divine Realization is not relegated to a secondary position. Understand that. You heard in the reading this morning that both are necessary – the hive and the honey. The organization is necessary. But we cannot afford to place Divine Realization of the Presence of God within us in a secondary position. But if you feel Him in everything you do, and in your church activities, that's wonderful. That's the first thing about church activities.

Now, church activities – some people come with the architectural design. It's unique in a great big church and all – the biggest one in the city. Sure, they all attend that church; wonderful pews, soft, and nice – wonderful pews, polished sermons – slick as a whistle. But, without the personal experience of the Realization of those parroted sermons, it's no good. There's no lasting Spiritual value. So church activities, remember, are good.

Speakin' about those pews, comfortable church pews, listen, I went to church once with the Master, when he first came. We were on the Atlantic coast, down, oh, about 40 miles from Boston. And there was a most wonderful church, but I didn't know it at the time. There was a big pier projecting – made of granite block – projecting out into the ocean. And, you know, in April – or perhaps you do not know, but I'll tell you – that Massachusetts is really rough in April. It's cold. That Atlantic east wind will chill you through and through and through. So, we were walking there, and the Master said, "Let us..." he didn't say go to church, but he meant that, "Let us meditate; a wonderful place, Doctor." And there was that big pier jutting out in the ocean. Great hard pews of granite block. And so, we went out there and sat down.

Well, the first hour I nearly died. I don't know how I lasted. Even the first ten minutes, I was...just had a great battle on my hands. Master was sitting there, you know, in God, and I wasn't at that point. So I said to myself, "If he can sit in this comfortable church, in these wonderful pews, so can I." So I hung on. Somehow, I don't know how – except by the Grace of God, He took pity on me – and somehow I got above the feeling of those pews – those granite pews. And you know how long we stayed in that church? I think I've told you. Five hours. Most wonderful pews you ever saw. But, the Grace of God came, and somehow I got through the first part. After that, I didn't care.

Now I won't tell you why I didn't care. I was half dead. I'll admit, admit that. But I did feel the Presence of God. And, do you know, sitting in that wonderful church, and enjoying those pews so much, with self-discipline, I was able at every other time to enjoy meditation. Now that's what the Master did to me by taking me into that church with comfortable pews.

Let us remember that story, that it isn't where you are or what you're doing, it's how you interiorize what you are doing, and attain the Presence of God. We must, we must see underneath, underneath, this outward form of religion. We must see the underlying Noumena – the underlying Unity. We must understand things through Realization. As the little boy said to his father, he said, "Dad," he said, "did you see the stork that brought me?" The father says, "No. Only his bill, son. Only his bill." So underneath – you were getting just a little fed up on that church business – so, underneath is the underlying universality of things, as the little story points out.

Now, going on just a little more; I won't keep you much longer, but it's wonderful to be here with you. It's wonderful because somehow, I feel Master's presence here, which is none other than God's Presence. God came here as our beloved Master and He gave us this church. That's why we consider our guru the Voice of God. And, if you always consider it that, and in God's Universality, in His Great Omniscient Presence, all the great ones are there, saints of ages, our own Great Gurus, Jesus and our own Great Gurus, and our Beloved Master – how can we miss? That's the Universality of Religion we must have. We must know God as that Universal Consciousness, Omnipresent, All-pervading. And we will know it as the Love which we feel.

And so, just to read you once more from Master, one of Master's books, The Master Said,¹¹ it is this, what will satisfy our Spiritual craving? I hope you know by now. But let us find, and read Master's words. What will satisfy our Spiritual craving? I've given you the answer – when you can find it necessary to take God with you in everything you do; from the least to the greatest; from the serious to the light. Because remember, Sri Yukteswarji's words "that religion is not a funeral procession."¹² Religion should be the happiest thing in the world, because the Bliss of God is in it. It supports it. It is the matrix of all True Religion. So in The Master Said, this is what we read, "The Lord cannot be

¹¹ The Master Said, Self-Realization Fellowship, 1957 (free download on the Internet).

¹² Op. Cit., Autobiography of a Yogi, Chapter 12, "To seek the Lord, one need not disfigure his face," he would remark. "Remember that finding God will mean the funeral of all sorrows." – Sri Yukteswar

bribed by the size of the congregation in a church, or by its wealth, or by well-planned sermons. God visits only on the altar of hearts that are cleansed by tears of devotion, and lighted with the candles of love.¹³ Only the Master can say it that way. And that's why we all feel within our hearts, the Presence of the One Father. Then he finally says, "By the practice of meditation," the Master said, "you will find that you are carrying within your heart a portable paradise." This is a fact. This is eternal truth.

Don't wait for just the right conditions – just the right church. Don't wait for that. Right now, tonight, when you go home, get into that Presence of God; get into that church which is within you. Get into that temple by meditation, and there worship God, and know Him. Make Him your own as the greatest necessity of your life.

Finally, there is a way wherein we all can attain the True Religion, and that's through the scientific practice of meditation and yoga. Yoga, as I have said before, takes us into the Presence of God. Right yoga, without question of a doubt, if you do it sincerely, wanting God, and only one thing, His Presence, will give you the Realization of His Presence as the Great Word. And in that Word is God's Great Intelligence, His Great Love. There's nothing greater than that. The practice of scientific yoga and meditation will give you that. Attaining God's Presence, you don't even have to ask for anything. He knows your need. That's the greatest thing. Master often said, "My slightest wish, God grants." And he also said, "Each of one of you is a child of God, and that Light which you see at the Christ Center is God's Presence."

So, each one of us is as dear to God as the greatest saint. Do not forget that. These are Master's words himself. And all the great saints will say the same thing. They will say, "I am nothing. The only reality is God and God alone." That's what we must have, and that's what we can have, if we scientifically follow the teachings of Self-Realization Yoga, Salvation Yoga, which will give us contact with God. And then, by fully surrendering to God, we will merge in Him, and there will be only one – not two, not you and God – but God alone. That's what the saints all speak of.

¹³ Op. Cit. The Master Said, Page 31, "The Master always stressed the necessity for absolute sincerity with God, and on one occasion he said: "God can never be bribed by the size of the congregation in a church, nor by its wealth, nor by well-planned sermons. God visits only the altars of hearts that are cleansed by tears of devotion and lighted by soul-stirring love."

And so, our Founder has said, “meditation is the missing link between religion,” outward form of religion, “and realization.” That’s the lesson this morning. Remember just this one thing I’m saying, the Master’s last words. If you forget all the rest, “the mission of the churches is to show the people that meditation is the missing link between orthodoxy and realization” – or religion and True Religion. It is the missing link between Soul and Spirit. It is the missing link between man and God. So yoga is a great thing. Yoga is the most wonderful thing. Why? Because it’s scientific. It’s scientific, and it’ll take you into the Presence of God.

And I’ll close by reading just what the Gita¹⁴ thinks of yoga so that you will not forget to practice your Yoga and your Pranayama, which takes you into the Presence of God. Then, once feeling His Love there, once feeling, feeling what He is, you’ll have no trouble saying, “Father take me. I’ve had enough of this outward existence. I want to play my part in the right way, but I want you, first, and always in everything I do.” It can be done by the practice of yoga.

And so, the *Gita* says, in the 6th Discourse, 46th line, “The Yogi is greater than the ascetics; he is thought to be greater than even the wise; the Yogi is greater than the men of action; therefore, become thou a Yogi, O Arjuna! And among all Yogis, he who is (*sic*) full of faith, with the inner Self abiding in Me, he (*sic*) adoreth Me, he is considered by Me to be the most completely harmonized.¹⁵” Why? Because he has attained the Presence of God. That’s the mission of the churches.

¹⁴ The Bhagavad Gita or The Lord’s Song, Translated by Dr. Annie Besant, 1939

¹⁵ Ibid, 6th Discourse, 46th Line, “The Yogi is greater than the ascetics; he is thought to be greater than even the wise; the Yogis is greater than the men of action; therefore become thou a Yogi, O Arjuna! And among all Yogis, he who full of faith, with the inner Self abiding in Me, adoreth Me, he is considered by Me to be the most completed harmonized.”