

What Makes Men Neighbors?

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The subject this morning: "What Makes Men Neighbors?" What makes men neighbors?

I think we should start this little discussion by remembering the two greatest commandments, which are found in Matthew [22:37-40], and with which you are familiar. Jesus said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments, on these two commandments, hang all the law and the prophets." Therefore, the law, which makes us realize that all men are neighbors, is based upon that same underlying Love, which is behind every law.

And so, this question, this morning, can be answered, can be realized, if we realize that Love, the realization of the underlying Love of God's Presence in each and every one of us, is the law of true neighborliness. That underlying Love is the key, because in the scriptures it says, "By love all things are accomplished. This is the basis of all prophecy and all law¹." All law, and, of course, the law of making men true neighbors of one another is Love. Realize that.

Now, Kipling's statement, "East is east, and west is west, and neither...never the twain shall meet," is true, when we consider the customs and cultures of different nations – but only then. It is not true, when we look beneath the customs and outward forms of activity of nations, and see the underlying Unity of God's Presence and Love there. Then, this is not true. And those of you who have met many people, traveled throughout the world, know this to be so. And those of you, who meditate regularly, feel the underlying Presence of God in meditation. Where is the nationality? Where is the caste? Where is the creed, when you are meditating? It is not there. But there is something there which is universal to all nations; and that is what is spoken of in the two great commandments – "Thou shalt love." So love, love is the basis of understanding your neighbors, and being a true neighbor to everybody – everyone you meet. We must realize that.

¹ Quote may be from a translation of the Mahabharata. Jeannette Sanders

Certain customs and social regulations are necessary in different nations, and in different parts of this Nation. We cannot help that, and we have to abide by them for the sake of getting along with our neighbors. But, that does not mean that we do not feel the Love for your neighbor, even though you are respecting certain conditions, social, and otherwise. That's the only thing. The thing is to, within your heart, is to feel the One Eternal Love of the One Father.

And so, when nations put emphasis on the points of difference between nations, then there is trouble – much trouble. But when they just look beyond that – and that's what the world needs – they will find, and feel, the One Presence of God in every nationality, because that's the underlying Unity of God's Presence.

As I have said, when we put our attention, our nations put their attention on particular differences between nations, then we have wars, and more wars, and lack of brotherhood. But just, just behind those differences, is God's Presence in every nation – in every soul, in every nation. And, if men will but do that, instead of emphasizing the differences, emphasize the unity underlying all people and all nations, then brotherhood will come. And it will not come until it is done, because in duality there is not unity.

Unity means we have to go beyond, or behind, or underneath – whatever you call it – duality. There we will find it. When this is, when this is accomplished, when we see the Universal aspect behind the duality, behind the differences of convention and such things, then the Universality of God's Fatherhood will come. Not until then.

The Master has written, very nicely, about this one point, which I'd like to give you at this time. In the Autobiography [of a Yogi], he says, "He hath made one blood, of one blood, all nations of men. World brotherhood is a large term, but man must enlarge his sympathies, considering himself in the light of a world citizen. He who truly understands that it is 'my America,' 'my India,' 'my Philippines,' 'my Europe,' 'my Africa,' and so on, will never lack scope for a useful and happy life. It is simply, everybody likes a patriot."

That is, I'm sure, in America we do. There's no place like America. But still, underneath that, I'm sure most Americans feel for other people, and that's the great Spiritual quality which America has of feeling God's Presence in others. In spite of all the trouble we have here – and we have plenty of it – still there are many, many people who feel the necessity of seeing God in all, and being true neighbors.

Swami Sri Yukteswarji said, although he never left India – that was the Master of our Founder – he said, "The world is my homeland." And so, we should feel that way, and I'm sure we all here, do feel that way. And we should pray that others would feel the same way. Only then will we have lasting peace.

Now, the world of nations, like the body, is composed of different parts. We have the hands, and the feet, and the heart, and the stomach, and the head, and so forth, and the eyes. Now, each part is necessary for the perfect functioning of the body. And so it is with nations. America has certain characteristics, so does India, so does Germany, and I could go through all the nations, England, and so forth.

In America we're noted for our know-how, so to speak, and our ability to make material things, and do it in mass production, and such things. And we're noted, noted for our sanitation and things like that. While in India, it is just the opposite. There the conditions of sanitation are not what they should be. And there is famine, and drought, and so forth. But, behind all that in India is the one great Spiritual Treasure, which the saints have inculcated, and which remains there, and which can be perceived by those who go there. In Germany there is great scientific advancement and precision, just to mention one or two things. And in England, the English are noted for their stick-to-itiveness. Just a few qualifications of the different nations.

So, if we, as our Master used to say, "Can take the best of all nations and utilize it, that's what we should do." And we should also remember that as long as there's any part of our body that is not functioning properly, the body is in an inharmonious condition. And so it is with the world. And I think we all agree to that right now. There's great inharmony. Why? Because some of these nations are not functioning as they should. We must correct that. We will have to correct it sometime. But the thing that will correct it will be when nations turn to the underlying Unity of God's Presence and His Love. Only then will it happen.

As Master used to say, "India needs America and America needs the Spirituality of India." And I'm sure those who meditate understand that, and realize that. I think it was Swami Vivekananda who said, "I didn't come here to bring the society of India to you, or the customs, but I came here to see if I could obtain a little help for the poor of India." That's what he came for. And he says, "I don't want to take back necessarily your society," because I suppose it was so foreign to his – which is true. Some of our characteristics of our society do not please us,

I'm sure of that. But, the fact that the poor of India get help, that was why Swami Vivekananda came – one of his chief reasons – to invoke that environment of God's Presence, because having known it, you can have it again.

So from a material standpoint there are differences in nations. Just like in our body there are differences in the functions of the various parts of the body. But when they function harmoniously, then comes the underlying stuff, so to speak, and that stuff is God's Consciousness, His great Energy, and His Love. And as His children, made in His Image, each one of us has certain Divine attributes, and functions, which we must display to make this whole drama of life complete and successful. And so it is with nations. Every nation has a definite part to play in the whole picture, as each one of us has a definite part to play.

And so, different souls throughout the world have a little part to play in this great Cosmic Dream. So do the nations. And realizing that the Dream is of God, and the nations are of God, we must be reasonable enough to understand and realize that that's the universality upon which all nations can join; the underlying Presence of God within each and every nation, and in each and every soul. If you realize that, then this is not too difficult to be a true neighbor, to be a real neighbor.

I have a reference at this time, also found in Master's Autobiography, in which he clearly points out what I have just brought to you. He says, "The Divine purpose of creation, so far as human reason can grasp it, is expounded in the Vedas. The Rishis taught that each human being has been created by God as a soul, and will uniquely manifest some specific attribute of the Infinite before resuming its Absolute Identity." So here we are in this creation. The goal of life is to return to God, but we cannot return to Him until we play that specific role. So why not let's us get busy and do God's Will? Know Him. Do His Will. Then we'll be free. But until we play that part, we cannot be free.

That's why these two commandments are so wonderful. The first part is to know God. To realize God. Love Him with all your strength and mind. And the second is to feel Him in your neighbors. Until we do that, we cannot return to Him. This is a fact we must realize. Until we feel God in everyone...feeling Him first, is the greatest and our first necessity, then feeling Him in others. Until we do that, we cannot return to the Absolute and be one with God.

And so, going on, Master says, "All men endowed thus with a set of divine individuality are equally dear to God. . ." Sometimes we feel, "Oh, that person

from that other country, he's inferior." But, that's not right, because he is not inferior to God. He's a part of God, just like a part of our body is a part of us. Let us realize that. "Distinctions by race or nation are meaningless in the realm of Truth where the only qualification is spiritual fitness to receive. . ." And then the Master goes on in just a little vein. . .different vein. He says, the Master said, "He hath, therefore, committed no nation to be complete in itself. With the members of each race he has given some special aptitude, some unique genius, with which they may make a distinctive contribution to world civilization."

So that, you see, clearly points out what I have been trying, with my words, to point out to you. That everybody has a distinct part to play, and every nation has a distinct qualification, as a part in the great Drama of Life. If we realize that, if we still have a, a little prejudice, that will disappear. But, the greatest thing to take prejudice out, and make you a good neighbor, is to feel the Presence of God within. Feeling that, you will feel it in every one of His children, irrespective of color, race, of creed.

In nature there is a law of diversity. In God there is a law of Unity. By the force of arms, and regulations, and such things, we cannot carry out the two great commandments. You cannot do it. But, by turning to God, and being one with Him, they are easily carried out, because God is Love. I know it is necessary to have regulations in the world and in different nations, otherwise there'd be turmoil; there'd be no sense to anything. That is quite understandable. But, it should be for that purpose. Not for aggression or control of other nations.

As we consider this law of diversity in Nature, and in this Cosmic Dream, and apply it to the different nations, we can see that all the statesmanship in the world will not quiet down the trouble that we see in this world of ours. We stop one pot from boiling, and another starts boiling, and that goes on. Why? Because we do not understand, we simply need, nations need, the Presence of God, that's all. You cannot find unity in diversity. And you cannot control nations by the methods which we have been using, because it just doesn't work. As water will not mix with oil and vice versa, so we cannot control people that way. But, by Love, by Love, you can finally control people. But first, it seems that you cannot do that. But, if you do not give up, keep on giving Love, finally it will win.

But, in the meantime we must have law and order. I think we should understand that one point. Because this is so, men and nations need one thing, and that one thing is Love – God's Love. Having that, all things will come,

because the greatest Force in the Universe is Love. It is that Great Force, which has pulled, and is pulling all things back to God. It is holding the planets and the different universes as they should be. That's the great Force of Attraction of God's Love. And a little of that we feel in our heart, naturally implanted there by God. That's the greatest Force in the Universe. That's what is needed. People need one thing, God Alone. God Alone. That's why all the saints say, with all their understanding and realization they all say the same thing: God Alone. God Alone is the One, because He is the Doer.

I think the Master has a very pointed remark on this here fact about God Alone, and about how we cannot do things by statesmanship and regulation; I mean the final thing. So he says this, "Our armaments have failed already. Let us now be in search of something new. Let us try the Force of Love and God, which is Truth. When we have got that, we shall want nothing else." And so, to be a good neighbor, the first requisite is to know God, to realize that we are not separated from Him.

Even religion, even religion – which comes from the root which means “to bind, or to join together,” to join us with God, so to speak – even that does not work. It creates greater differences between peoples and between nations. Why? Because they follow the outward form of religion, and do not see the underlying Unity of it, which is God's Love. These facts must be considered.

And taking all the religions together, the people of all religions, if they will just follow the path, of course, the path in which they have been born, for instance, but not stop with the path, but see above the path, the underlying unity – then religion is of great value. But when they stop on the path, they do not reach the goal. And the goal is Unity with God's Love. And so, this trouble between the different religions is because we are seeing the outward form and missing the underlying Unity of God's Presence. So that applies to watching and taking care of people as true neighbors. If we felt God's Presence in them, which we can do, then other things will come along naturally.

And so, do not think your own religion – and that applies to SRFers – do not think your own religion is the only one. I mean the outward form of it. What SRF, or Self-Realization, gives you – the underlying unity as the reality – but not the outward form. There are other forms of religion. Perhaps, you can reach God that way. This is the way that appeals to each one of us here, I'm sure. But do not feel that that's the only way. There are many paths, but the goal is one. And in our religion we give the ways and the means whereby it is easier, I feel,

and I'm sure many of you feel, to know that Universality of God, and that's why we've followed it. But we must be tolerant of others. All paths lead to God, because we all came out of God, and we all will return to Him.

And so, Gandhi has said a wonderful thing about being tolerant and good neighbors as far as religion goes. He has said these words, "We must rise above the narrow dogmas of the different religions, and seek the truth." Then he says, "I believe the Bible, the Koran, the Avesta, to be as much divinely inspired as the Vedas." Hindu orthodoxism is very strict and deeply rooted, but there's the great Gandhi who says truth is in all religions; above the outward form is the underlying truth, the Presence of God.

And so finally, finally, we will know what makes men neighbors with one thing. And that is when we contact the Presence of God within us. Contacting His Great Presence we will feel in everyone, that universality of God's Presence as Love, spoken of in the two great commandments.

And so, to understand how to be a true neighbor, the first and greatest requisite, is to attain God contact, and know Him, know the Presence of God within. Realize that. That's the first requisite. And then, having that, having God contact, we will see that the life blood of all people, of all souls here in America, and all over the world. The life blood is God's Presence, His Great Love. And having that, having that, we cannot help but be truly a good neighbor to each and every one, and to all nations.

This is the greatest thing, is to find the underlying unity upon which all people can meet, and by which all people can feel the one God in each and every one of us. That's the key to the question this morning, "How to be a good neighbor?" Is to feel the underlying Unity which makes us neighbors, even though we do not realize it, and that's the Presence of God's Love within us. And so, the ultimate goal is for all souls to return home to God. That's the goal of life, by mutual Love for one another. It cannot be done any other way, because God is One and God is Love.

And I'll close by Master's last reference I'd like to give you at this time, when he says, "The Lord has created all men from the great Joy of His Being. Though they are painfully cramped in this body, God nevertheless, expects that men, made in His Image, shall ultimately rise above all sense identifications, and reunite with Him." God expects us to know Him, to attain God contact here, while living. Otherwise, we cannot have it when we're through with this place. And having

that God contact, we'll have no difficulty at all, realizing how to act toward one another as a true neighbor.

And so, the key to the question is, rise above this duality of consciousness, which makes men feel separate from one another. Feel the Unity of God's Presence. Realizing that, then you will know that everyone is your neighbor, and as such, you will treat him as a child of God, and as a true neighbor.