

What Is Salvation?

Dr. M.W. Lewis

San Diego, 9-16-56

Subject this morning: "What is Salvation?" "What is Salvation?"

Well, we have a definition here of Salvation, we might read it: the sal, the saving of a person from sin or from punishment thereafter, especially in the light, or in the life after death. I think that last part interests people perhaps more than the first. But the first is the cause of the last.

Saving a person from sin; now that, that necessitates an understanding of what sin is. What is sin? Sin is nothing but delusion. It is called in the scriptures, "iniquity." But when you boil it right down, it's nothing but misunderstanding – wrong understanding – false understanding of what we really are and what this life, in which we find ourselves, and others living as we do, and all animate beings and organisms, constitutes. We have a false understanding of that. And that's the delusion, that's the sin, that's the ignorance, because from that we act; and because the understanding is wrong, all action is wrong. That's what sin is, nothing else.

Now to be saved from this false idea, which we have of life, that we are this body and that the life we live, and others live, is the reality, to be safe from that false understanding, is what constitutes Salvation. Realize, that if you have a wrong premise in your consciousness – that you are this body and that the life of this body and other bodies around you, and all living things – if you have an idea of what that existence is and a false one; then, you surely are in delusion, and the only way to get out of it is to know Reality. And therefore, knowing what you really are and what life really is, constitutes Salvation – nothing more or less.

And so, now comes the question, what do we think we are? What do we think we are? What do we think this existence, in which we find ourselves, is? Well, without question of a doubt, we think we are this body. We think we are this vehicle. And that the life we live in this vehicle, and the consciousness of that life, constitutes reality, real living. And as long as we are identified with that, as long as we feel that, and have a vague idea "Perhaps, there may be something beyond, I don't know," but as long as we have this idea that we are this body, and as long as we know and see that these bodies pass away, and the bodies of others pass away – all living things pass away – as long as we have that

consciousness, we are bound to feel – whether we like it or not – that we, too, will pass away.

Now that's the delusion, that's the sin. And whatever act is done with that consciousness – that we are this body and this life is, as we see it all around – that constitutes delusion. And whatever act, as I have said, we do in that, is the wrong action; cannot be right because the premise is wrong. We think we are this body. And why do we feel that? Because this idea that we are the body is deeply ingrained in us, not only from the beginning, when we began to look around and see ourselves in the mirror, not only from then; and every morning we look and have a good look, see if we're there, I guess. There we are. How can we get rid of the idea we are the body? It's almost impossible. But there is a way, which I'll come to later.

And so, this idea – we are the body – is so deeply impressed in us, from not only this incarnation, but many, many incarnations; that it's very difficult to eradicate it. And we keep on babying it, and looking at it, and saying, "Yes, I am the body." But when a saint comes, like our beloved Master, and says, "What's the matter with you? You're not the body, you're something far greater. Within you is the Soul, which always was and always will be. That's what you are, an Undying Consciousness." And, finally, he tells us that that consciousness which you have is your Father's Consciousness. As he has said, there is no difference between Bliss consciousness, which we feel – especially in moments of quietude and meditation – there's no difference between that and God's Consciousness. So then we begin to wake up and begin to look around and wonder, "Am I, am I this body?" "Is this all there is to it?" And you say, "Oh, I don't feel that way," but millions do.

Millions know, as the Master used to say, only "breakfast, lunch, and dinner; and then to bed; get up and work; breakfast, lunch and dinner; have a good time," as they say, at parties and so forth; "sleep; breakfast, lunch and dinner." That's life to them. But that's not reality, is it, because what's it end in? Nothing! Zero! And when they get to the "end of the trail," as the Master said, they have nothing – absolutely nothing – because the premise was wrong. They have not made the reality within them, God's Presence, dynamic to their consciousness, and so they have what they deserve. Nothing!

So, realize, that's the cause of delusion and sin – nothing else. And because of this, Patanjali has said, get rid of the idea, "the mental cancer" that you are the changeable, transient body. That's what Patanjali, the Father of Yoga said. And

yoga is what Self-Realization teaches – Raja Yoga – the best of yoga. And so, Patanjali said, get rid of the mental cancer, the idea, that you are the body. It's deeply ingrained, but get rid of it he said, through yoga, through following the teachings of Self-Realization, which the Master has left – right yoga, right teachings of yoga; right teachings of meditation and devotion. Get rid of the idea that you think you are this body.

And so – and this is important – Salvation means – now realize – Salvation means to be forever free from pain and suffering, which is the result of our thinking that we are this body. Now that's a simple statement of what Salvation is. Get rid of the idea, permanently. Not just for a year, or this life, even, and then have to come back to it again. No. Get rid of it permanently – the idea that you are this limited, transient, changeable vehicle and the life that goes with it. Get rid of, rid of it permanently. That's Salvation.

And so, this is all caused by a false understanding; a false understanding of what we are. Now this false understanding, or misunderstanding, is a very great and important Force of delusion. So much so that Swami Sri Yukteswarji said, he said: learn to understand and know the thoughts and consciousness behind man's verbiage.¹ How often we misunderstand people. They say things to us and we find they didn't mean that at all due to their telling us in the wrong way, using the wrong words, or more especially, from our misunderstanding. And so, we should realize that; to see the reality behind even the words which others speak, see what they really mean. If we do that, that will remove much misunderstanding – false understanding. And remember, false understanding of what we are, and life is, is the cause of our sin and the cause of our iniquity. If we knew what life really is and what we really are, we wouldn't sin, as they say. We wouldn't be in delusion. It's only because we stay in it that we do sin and stay in darkness and not in the Great Light of God.

And so, realize that false understanding, misunderstanding, is very important. Our misunderstanding takes on sometimes a, a humorous face. I'll tell you a little story that will, I think it's, express and point out clearly, false understanding – misunderstanding.

¹ Autobiography of a Yogi, by Paramhansa Yogananda, First release 1946 (may be downloaded Free from the Internet), Chapter 12, "Sri Yukteswar's wisdom was so penetrating that, heedless of remarks, he often replied to one's unspoken observation. "What a person imagines he hears, and what the speaker has really implied, may be poles apart," he said. "Try to feel the thoughts behind the confusion of men's verbiage."

There was a young man came from Spain. His name was Jose. And so he came from Spain – young fellow – arrived in America, and, of course, they're interested in baseball. So, he wanted to see a baseball game, a World Series game at the park in New York where the Yankees play. So, he went there and he couldn't get in. Place was filled up. He couldn't even get a seat; he couldn't get in even. But somehow, somehow, I guess God was with him, somehow, he got in and they hoisted up on the flagpole, and they let him sit on the top of the flagpole. So he had a wonderful seat. And so, Jose saw the baseball game.

And so, later when he went back to Spain, he was telling his friends about America, and they asked him all about it, and about baseball, and he told them. And he said that, told them how he couldn't get in, but somehow those Americans, Americano's, as he called them, were good and they let him in and he sat up on top of the flagpole. But he says, "Ya know," he says, "those Americano's are a real people. They not only let me sit up on top of the flagpole, but soon they all stood up and said, "Jose, Jose, can you see?"

So there you have...you remember that little story and you'll remember misunderstanding. But that was good, wasn't it? "Jose, can you see?" So, misunderstanding is the basis of much of our trouble, much of our delusion.

Now going on to the more serious side, and the question is, what must we know to be saved? What must we know to be saved? And the answer is, what you really are, what you really are – with this qualification – not in *theory*, but in actual Realization. That's important.

Now what are we? Truly, what are we? We are Eternal, Ever-present, Blissful Existence of God. That's what we are. That's our Consciousness. But we have forgotten it. We have lost that Divine Consciousness within us. We have forgotten our Divinity. Now, this consciousness always was and always will be. We read in all scriptures of the Unchanging Consciousness of the Soul within us; the Presence of God within us. It always was; always will be. If it were not so, it would not be Eternal. And so, that's what we are. And so, to attain Salvation, we must know this; we must once more reclaim it, our birthright, our Divinity; and we must not know it only in theory, but through Realization of what we are. We must know that we are not this changeable, transient body, but we must know that Presence of God within us, which always was and always will be.

And now, the scriptures, the scriptures attest to this Divinity which we really are, but which we have forgotten. And every night in sleep, every night in sleep, we

return to that Divinity. We return to God from whence we came, but in an unconscious way. Now to be saved, you must know God's Presence within you in a Conscious way. You must be able, by following one who had that Realization as our Master did, you must be able, to consciously know the Consciousness which we visit, and are one with in sleep. And it can be done, and it can be done right here on earth. It can be done by following one who had that, as our beloved Master.

Now the scriptures, as I have said, point this out, point this out that we had that Divinity and that we have lost it. And one reference I have is Ezekiel the 28th Verse, [2]8th Chapter – Ezekiel the 28th Chapter, where we read as follows. Listen carefully and see what you have had, but what you have lost. The 28th Chapter, 13th, 14th, 15th, and 16th Verses. I'll just point out the gist of it. "Thou hast been in Eden,"² the Garden of God. In other words, we had that Divine Consciousness. We had the Realization that we are God and that God's Consciousness is our own consciousness. We had that. But then it goes on to say that we knew everything.³ And then it says: "Thou wast upon the holy mountain of God,"⁴ which is none other than the Consciousness, the Spiritual Consciousness in the Thousand-rayed Lotus. We had that, that was dynamic to our consciousness, but now it isn't, is it?

And so, the scriptures say, "Thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire..." which means you had the Consciousness of the Centers of the spine – "stones of fire" means the Spinal Centers where God's Dynamic Presence is – and that is what governs us, functions, governs the functions of our body, and keeps us as we are in this Great Cosmic Drama of Life, which God has produced. We had that Consciousness of the Great Center of Spiritual Energy – the brain, the Thousand-rayed Lotus and the sub-centers, so to speak, of the spine – the seven Centers of the spine. We had that, that Consciousness was dynamic to us. That was our Divinity. But what has happened?

² Ezekiel 28:13, "Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created."

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid, 14th Verse: "Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire."

Then it says, “Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.”⁵ And so, when we were created, we were created with God’s Omniscient Consciousness. That’s why we are His children. “Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.” What’s iniquity? Delusion; false understanding crept in. We forgot what we really are, and so delusion entered in upon us.

Now, “By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned:...⁶” So, the only sin is to be in delusion – by the mult, multiplication of this delusion. Little by little we have added up until we do not know we are Divine; that’s iniquity, that’s delusion. And because of that, it goes on to say, “therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God:...and...from the midst of the stones of fire.”⁷

So, because of this, because we have allowed delusion to multiply within us until we think we are this little body, not realizing we are God’s children, we have allowed that to go on. What’s happened? We have lost our Divine birthright; our Divinity has fled. And so, God has thrown us out of heaven, so to speak. But He hasn’t thrown us out – we’ve locked ourselves out from His Great Consciousness and Love. Now that’s our Divinity; that is what we must reclaim.

And so, in Proverbs we also read the same thing in the 8th Chapter, the 22nd and 23rd Verses: “The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old.” People have an idea, a false under, understanding that they are not Divine, that there’s a great gulf between them and God. No. As it says in Proverbs, “Thou possessed me in the beginning before his works of old...I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, before the earth was.”⁸ (*Sic*)

And so realize, you must get the positive conception, if you’re gonna break this delusion, that God *is* in you, and that He created you from His Own Substance. Before creation we were with God, and we are with Him now. That must be understood before you can attain Salvation. Realize that’s the positive aspect. The other aspect is you must break the delusion.

⁵ Ibid, 15th Verse: “Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.”

⁶ Ibid, 16th Verse: “By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.”

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Proverbs 8:22-23, “The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old.” “I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.”

In the Bhagavad Gita,⁹ we read the same thing. We read the same thing as we read in our own scriptures in the 2nd Discourse, the 12th Line: “Nor at any time verily was I not, nor thou, nor these princes of men, nor verily shall we ever cease to be, hereafter.¹⁰” Isn’t that wonderful? We always were with God’s Consciousness; we always have had it, and we always will have it. Let us realize that.

And so, finally, how, how to regain, how to regain our birthright? How to regain the realization that we are not this body, but the Eternal Presence of God within us? Two things are necessary. If you’re gonna be like God you must merge in Him. If ya go, if you are gonna regain your birthright as God’s Consciousness, you must merge in it, and its right within us.

And so, the first thing to do is to merge in the Holy Vibration of God within. It is so simple. His Presence is in us in a definite way, but our way of thinking His Presence us within us, is entirely wrong. Think of the many ideas people have of what God is: Something far off, something inaccessible. No. God is in you. I say ye are God’s children of the most High.¹¹ God is in us as our own consciousness, and it is known as the Word, the Holy Vibration with its aspects of Light and Sound and especially of God’s Great Love. That’s the Presence of God within us.

Now, if you’re going to reclaim it, ya must be one with it. First you must hear it, or see it, or feel it. Then you have the one-pointed state of mind where we say, “Thou and I, O Father, never apart.” But that is not enough. You must be it; you must be one with it; you must merge in it. And so, the Master has said, “Long, continued concentration on the liberating Spiritual Eye...¹²” and he might have added, wherein is, or which is, the Great Cosmic Sound of Om, the Great Light of Christ Consciousness in it, and My Love. God would say you must merge in that continually – continually – until you not only see it, but you pass beyond the duality stage of “Thou and I,” into the one stage, “I am He, I am He, blissful Father, I am He.”

⁹ The Bhagavad Gita or The Lord’s Song, Translated by Dr. Annie Besant, 1936.

¹⁰ Ibid, 2nd Discourse, 12th Line, “Nor at any time verily was I not, nor thou, nor these princes of men, nor verily shall we ever cease to be, hereafter.”

¹¹ Psalm 82:6, “I have said, You are gods; and all of you are children of the most High.”

¹² Op. Cit., Autobiography of a Yogi, Chapter 30, “Long concentration on the liberating spiritual eye has enabled the yogi to destroy all delusions concerning matter and its gravitational weight; thenceforth he sees the universe as an essentially undifferentiated mass of light.”

In other words, instead of reflecting God's Light, instead of reflecting His Great Spiritual Light, you receive it, you receive it into you. It becomes, you become, one with it. The duality must go – the separation must go – between God's Light and His Love and you. You must be that, because you truly are that. But the suggestion is so strong, which God has given to us, that we are separated from Him. That's to keep the Play going, to keep this Drama going. We have to break that up. We have to break up that Play, so that we not only see His Light, which gives great inspiration, but we also receive it. We become one with it, and as it says in St. John, on whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining, it is they who baptize by the Holy Ghost.¹³ It is they who have broken the delusion and are Eternally saved. It is they who are one with their True Self and Soul, God's Presence within.

And so, that's what sal, Salvation is. Salvation means that those, who are one with God within, have permanently removed the false understanding that they are the body, and that this life is reality. That's all Salvation is. It's all right to know it in theory, but we have to know it in actuality. We have to, as the Master said, "taste the sugar, not talk about it." Not describe it. Taste it; make it your own. That's what Salvation is. Salvation means freedom from delusion, freedom from the idea that you are the body and that this life is reality.

And finally, the Vedas substantiate all that I have said, and all the scriptures have said. And the Vedas are given, especially, in the little booklet of the Master's Master, The Holy Science,¹⁴ a paragraph of which I will quote now: "When man understands even by way of inference, the true nature of this creation, the true realization existing between that creation and himself, when he further understands that he is completely blinded by the influence of delusion and Darkness, and that it is the bondage of Darkness alone that makes forget his real Self and brings about all his suffering, he naturally wishes to be relieved from all these things, these evils. This relief from evil, or liberation from the bondage of Darkness, or Maya, or delusion, becomes the prime object of his life."¹⁵ (sic)

¹³ St. John 1:33, "And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost."

¹⁴ The Holy Science, by Swami Sri Yukteswar Giri, First Published in 1949.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, Chapter II, Sloka 1, "When man understands even by way of inference the true nature of this creation, the true realization existing between that creation and himself, when he further understands that he is completed blinded by the influence of Darkness, Maya, and that it is the bondage of Darkness alone which makes him forget his real Self and brings about all his sufferings, he naturally wishes to be relieved from all these evils. This relief from evil, or the liberation from the bondage of Darkness, Maya, becomes the prime object of his life."

And so, when you begin to understand that you really are not this body – something else – and that you understand that it is this which makes you forget your true Self, and, therefore, you eliminate the ego, which is the tyrant in the matter of Salvation – the ego keeps making you think you are this body and this life. That’s why it’s so important to get rid of the ego. And so, when you wake up that this life is not as it seems, as the Master said, and that your ego has caused you all the trouble, and you eliminate it, then you’re on the road to Salvation. And, also, in St. John, in the 1st Chapter, the 12th Verse: “But as many as received him, to them gave he the power to become the sons of God...”¹⁶”

And so, in attaining Salvation, it means that you have simply, by understanding the Play of Life through the Forces which God has given you, the Intuition of your Soul, and then done something about it by merging in Him, it means that you have done that, and you have risen above the duality of consciousness and received God’s Power; and by so doing, you have changed yourself from a little, meager Son of man to the Great Divine Son of God, which you are – a ray of His Infinite Light.

And when you have that, then, you will have Salvation from delusion and all false understanding – not only for today and tomorrow; or next week and next year; or this life – but eternally. God is our own Consciousness. If we can but know that, actually know it – realize it – then we have Salvation. And if we have the Realization of God within us, know our Divine Nature, realize our Divinity, He is with us always. And when God is with us, who, who can be against us? We have Salvation.

¹⁶ St. John 1:12, “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:”