

# THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS WITHIN US

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by

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The coming of God into the lives of people is the essence of what we call a divine incarnation. This intriguing phenomenon is, fortunately for us, a daily occurrence, notwithstanding the fact that it is always bypassed in our day-to-day routines and it is the only eventless event, we may say, which escapes our notice, since what attracts our attention in our daily life is just what is not this essential soul-filling, life-giving process of God coming into our lives.

The idea is that we remember everything and are conscious of everything except that God is with us. Not merely that; God is not just with us, He is within us and, much more than that even, inseparable from our very being – and the wondrous activity of this creation, this world, this entire life, is actually the work of God.

I mentioned that incarnation is the coming of God into our lives. How does God come into our lives? Eternity is the nature of God, because time is a kind of evolute that came after the act of creation. God created the heaven and the earth, we are told, and simultaneously He created time and space because time and space do not stand outside heaven and earth, and vice versa.

Where was God before time was created? He was not in time. This story of God coming in incarnation is explicable only in terms of the time process. Inasmuch as we cannot understand what is other than time, we use the word 'eternity' to designate that which we cannot understand – which really passeth understanding.

Timeless is what we say eternity is, but that is a negative connotation. It may be without time and, therefore, we call it timeless – but it must be something by itself, positively also. The positivity which is the content of that we call eternity is the being of God. Such a thing we say enters into human affairs; an incarnation takes place. That is, eternity ingresses into the time process. That which is not in time enters into time. That which is incapable of explanation in terms of time becomes the very soul of the time process. This is in another style, called the descending of the Kingdom of God into the lives of people. "Thy kingdom come." The word 'kingdom' appears many a time in different contexts. "The Kingdom of God is within you." "The Kingdom of God is at hand." And our aim is the attainment of the Kingdom of God – call it the Kingdom of Heaven.

The word 'kingdom' is significant in many ways. It is a large empire that is ruled by a potentate. This is how we understand the meaning of a kingdom. God may be said to be the king of this universe. There are many religions in this world who regard God at the Emperor, King Supreme, Potentate par Excellence. Generally, the king occupies the kingdom. In that sense we may say God occupies what we call 'the Kingdom of God'. Is this universe the Kingdom of God? Maybe. And He occupies His kingdom. It is inside us. Is this intelligible to us? Can a large kingdom be contained within us? Has anybody thought over this matter? How wide is our kingdom of this physical body? How wide is this mental realm of our daily operations? Is the Kingdom of God with His eternity, made explicit in time, capable of being contained within this six-foot frame?

Something of this nature seems to be implied in the great proclamation that the Kingdom of God is within us. That has to be told to us several times; and we had to be told by a competent master at a particular context in history. It has been told to us, and we have heard it. And where do we stand today, after having heard it? We see no such Kingdom anywhere. We have been told that it is very near us; it has already come. We may be under the impression that it is yet to come, but it has already come. That is the idea of eternity being involved in the time process. Eternity is not a tomorrow. There may be a tomorrow for the time process, but there cannot be tomorrow for eternity. Therefore, the Kingdom of God does not enter into us after some time, in the same way as eternity does not come tomorrow – not even the next moment.

The very notion, the very concept of God is to be clear before us. The more is this concept clear, the more also we may be said to be secure in this world and complete in our personalities. The only thing that can be said to be complete in every way is God-being; everything else is fractional, located, physical, isolated, perishable in its nature. Therefore, it has to be understood clearly as to what significance is there behind our notion of God coming into us. What do we expect from God? This, another question, is as intriguing to us as the very meaning of God Himself.

We have many difficulties even with God Himself, not merely with people in this world. Perhaps our trouble is with God only, not with people. We can understand our brothers, our sisters, our neighbours, people in this world, but we cannot understand that which seems to be more significant and more vital to us than all this social phenomenon we call human society or natural history.

We may be under the impression that the idea of God is clear to us and, therefore, we may also be convinced that we understand what incarnation is – how God helps us by coming to render succour – but this is not the case. Our psychophysical individuality, this bodily encasement which

we consider we are, has caught hold of us with such intensity that our interpretation of eternity, God coming or religion happens to be in terms of this perception through the aperture of the sense organs, which are the avenues through which our physicality operates. That is to say, physical perception, very unfortunately, can condition our religious awareness, and we may look at God through the fleshy eyes. It does not matter. We can say God can become flesh; let it be so. Yet, it is not an ordinary phenomenon, because it is a timeless eternity that is getting transmuted, as it were, into the time process.

All this amounts to saying that we are perpetually in utter proximity to God's existence if we can appreciate the meaning of eternity masquerading in the time process. Else, we cannot understand how a large kingdom can be within us. It is like saying that the whole ocean is in a drop. Here is a little analogy for us to make some sense out of this great declaration that the kingdom of God is within us. Is the ocean in the drop? We may say the ocean cannot be in the drop. But the ocean is in the drop. We can conceptually see the drops which constitute the ocean – conceptually, not physically, because there are no drops in the ocean, the ocean itself being a drop, a large mass.

The entry of eternity into the temporal personality and the social life of people is something like the ocean entering into the drop of which it consists. Even this analogy is not clear enough because our idea of drop is a fractional unit of a larger whole we call the ocean.

We are unable to conceive the nature of God; we have to accept defeat here. Therefore it is we are unable to know how God is perpetually with us, almost walking with us in the streets, and our breath that we breathe every day is made possible by His working within us. The heartbeat, the working of the lungs and circulatory system, the breathing process and everything that we seem to be made of is a standing example before us of activities that are beyond our control, processes which make us what we are.

The acceptance of God in our lives is the religious process. That God has entered us is to be accepted. This acceptance is religion. And that which is involved entirely in the time process – incidentally, in the process of cause and effect relation and objectivity through sense perception – cannot make this acceptance. We always have a reservation. This reservation that is deep-seated in our very unconscious will make it difficult to understand what will happen to us if God comes to us. We dread the very idea, for various reasons.

The reasons are, firstly, the tremendous contradiction that appears to be there between the conditions prevailing in the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of the earth. A total abnegation of all values that we consider as important here seem to be a precondition to the acceptance of the invitation to the Kingdom of God – abnegation, renunciation. We cannot imagine a greater renunciation than the great being whose birth we are celebrating today, who owned nothing. Foxes have holes and the birds have nests, but the son of God has no place to keep his head. The man of God has no place to live in this world. The world rejects him, because it has rejected God Himself. This situation many a time makes religions define the world in many ways, sometimes as the manifestation of God, as the creation of God, or perhaps the den of evil itself.

Spirituality at its height and renunciation gone to the extreme may be said to be a blend that we see in the personality of Christ. Religion is here at its apex – total fulfilment consequent upon total abnegation. The more we renounce, the more are we filled. “Empty thyself and I shall fill thee.” But what kind of emptiness is it that we experience in our own lives? We are already full. Are we not full? We are filled with the satisfaction that all is well with us. “But the hour has come,” said the great master at a particular juncture, which had many meanings which nobody else around him could understand.

What kind of hour has come for God to be seen? What happens to us when God receives us? For a few seconds we

can close our eyes and imagine that God is receiving us now, in a few minutes. We will shudder from the bottom of our hearts, not knowing what is going to happen to us.

We aspire for God, we love God, we crave for God, but we dread God at the same time. Even a mastermind like Arjuna, in the Mahabharata context, could not suffer the coming of God in the form of that extended eternity blazing like millions of suns before him. It was not at all required; it had to be taken away from before his eyes. May God withdraw Himself. Too much of God is difficult for us.

These are the difficulties of a spiritual seeker. We also have a problem with too much of God. This problem Arjuna had. "Oh, it is too much. Withdraw." How could it be? Could God be in such an excess, in a flooding overabundance that we cannot tolerate it anymore? Can we not tolerate God? Let this question be put to one's own self. Is God an intolerable existence? The ego which is flint-like, hard like rock, is the obstacle before us. It is awake to itself, but asleep to God.

When God comes, the soul awakes, but the senses sleep. Midnight is the birth of great masters – Christ or Krishna, as the case may be. Midnight is the utter negation of sense activity and physical consciousness – everything pertaining to that state of affairs. It is in the thick darkness of the senses that the light of the soul emerges and birth takes place of eternity in time.

When God comes, nobody knows. He may knock at the door any time. And it is not necessary for us to imagine that, after all, it may not be today, that He may knock tomorrow. I mentioned that there is no such thing as tomorrow for God; it is here and now, right at this moment. Lives of saint and masters, incarnations, are eye-openers for us to the fact that religion is not an easy affair. We cannot be religious in the true sense of the term if our acceptance of God in His true nature is inadequate and we are partially accommodative, but completely not.

In the coming of Christ we have an illustration of the requirements of a seeker who is prepared to receive God completely. It may end in the death of the body. But is it acceptable? Even the disciples, many of them perhaps, have been said to have fled from the place for fear of death. Death of what? Death of that which is very dear to us. What is it that is dear to us? Why is the devotee fleeing from the circumstance of the negation of that which we consider as the most beloved – this personality, this body, this life, this me? Here is the great problem before religion and spirituality. One cannot be a saint so easily, because one cannot accept God wholly.

In the life of Christ, which is briefly given to us in the Testaments, we have a wealth of details which will give us some insight into what religious life is. When we read it literally, from the point of view of linguistic understanding we appreciate it, are touched by it when we go through it, but we cannot wholly accept it. There is always reservation, because we cannot leave this world even for the sake of God. Here is a very crucial point before us. This world does not mean merely the world of nature, mountains and rivers, the world of values. We know what values of life we hold sacred, sacrosanct and dear to us these days. There is the industrial revolution, there is economic growth, and there is every blessed means to perpetuate the comforts of psychophysical existence and the socio-economic perpetuation of human life. This is pleasant indeed. When we are able to accentuate the relationship of space and time with this bodily existence, we feel comfortable. When we seem to be isolated from this association, we feel discomfort.

But the greatest discomfort is to be encountered by us, and we know what it would look like if we can deeply, with sincerity, contemplate the meaning of the last days of Christ's physical existence in this world. It is shattering even to imagine through the feelings. It would tear our ego. It would be like an earthquake which shakes the whole personality. One saint said that when God comes, it will be like a wild elephant entering a thatched hut. The hut will not be

anymore there. God invades the human personality, takes possession of it entirely, and the earthly kingdom ceases. It melts in the blaze of the divine light.

To emphasise once again, the life of Christ is a beautiful, inseparable coming together of renunciation and spiritual fulfilment. They are actually not two phenomena; it is one thing that appears as a twofold process. No fulfilment is possible until we renounce. We have all renounced something, of course. All of us here are seekers of God. Everyone who is in this hall now, in this audience, in this Satsanga, in this worship, everyone has of course renounced something. Attachments have been severed in some measure. But what is it that has been severed from us?

A very intensive check-up of personality may be required here. The renunciation that is required of a spiritual seeker who loves God and seeks God is actually the abandonment of everything that is anti God in us – the Antichrist. And what is it? It is everything that is not capable of accommodation with the eternity that is God's nature, and is a characteristic of the time process only – love of objects, craving for sensations and interpretation of the values of life in terms of society, economics and politics which have heyday at this moment in this world. Such values which are the greatest comfort to the ego-ridden individuality involved in space and time, such renunciation is what we require for the entry of eternity into us – Christ to come into us, God to be near us, with us and inseparable from us.

The scripture is the embodiment of this divine teaching. The vibrations of God get condensed into the word of the scripture; that is why the scripture is holy. The word is not ink and paper. It is a vibration. It is a concentrated pinpoint of a transcendent element that is operating in the world of the scripture. Therefore, scripture is very holy, sacred. We keep it on the head and worship it, and hug it, kiss it and adore it. This scripture is an alternative for us when actual masters are not before us. We would like to be with God Himself, or at least with the masters who incarnate

themselves for giving us the message of God. Otherwise, only the scripture is before us. But we should not dilute this process further down into a mere church or temple where a visible temporality once again manifests itself in brick and mortar, gold and silver, and all the variety and humdrum of social existence minus the power of the scripture, the greatness of the incarnation and the wonder of God.

These are some of the ideas that occur to my mind at this holy hour. Let us be seekers of God – I would say, let us be Godmen.