

Living in the World with *Consciousness of God*

Rajarsi Janakananda (James J. Lynn) met Paramahansa Yogananda in 1932 in Kansas City, Missouri, where he was a prominent business magnate with extensive interests in oil, insurance, banking, and agriculture. His advancement in God-realization by following the Guru's teachings was so marked that Paramahansaji referred to him as "Saint Lynn." Whenever possible he visited the Self-Realization Fellowship ashrams at Mt. Washington and Encinitas for meditation and spiritual retreat, and the Guru sometimes asked him to speak at SRF gatherings. After the Guru's passing in 1952 he served as Paramahansa Yogananda's first spiritual successor as president and spiritual head of Self-Realization Fellowship/Yogoda Satsanga Society of India. The following is from a talk given by him at the second anniversary of the SRF Golden Lotus Temple in Encinitas (Paramahansaji's talk at the same event appears on page 4).

BY RAJARSI JANAKANANDA

Paramahansaji introduced his beloved disciple to the congregation with the following words:

I have never seen, in any of my beloved ones who have come to me, anyone like Saint Lynn—his humbleness and his constant oneness with God. He has led a balanced life. We can admire those monks who retire from activity in the

world to seek God in seclusion; but devotees who remain in the jungle of business life and yet keep their lives free from the tigers of greed, selfishness, and evil habits are divine ex-

amples that can be seen by all. In Saint Lynn I found a divine friend—one who has not only my love but the sanction of my heart, for he is one in whom I have seen the ideal spiritual qualities I have always cherished. Of all the gifts one can receive, the best is the gift of a friendship that is pure and untarnished by anything, based in mutual love for God. So this is the greatest gift I have received in America.

Whenever Saint Lynn comes to us he never bothers about food or anything. Instead of talking when we are together, we always meditate. Self-realization comes not through hearing about God from the lips of others, but through inner communion. And he has sacrificed so much for this cause. Suffering must be gladly received by all saints of God. I have seen that in his life. His noble sacrifice and his joy in doing for the work, I cherish; and above



all that his love for me has been unconditional, as is mine for him. And it isn't only what he has done for the work, but the way he has done it—for if he did it with pride I would never have accepted it. He has the blessings of my heart. All those who do for God receive His highest blessings; and Saint Lynn has been blessed by God and accepted by the Great Ones for his honesty and his simplicity. He has lived up to the standard I expected of him. I have the pleasure to introduce to you now our beloved Saint Lynn.

Saint Lynn then rose and addressed the gathering:

After what Paramahansaji said, perhaps you expected to see something, didn't you! Well, I feel this way: Of myself I am nothing. As Jesus said, "The Father that dwelleth in me doeth the works,"* and we do nothing. We like to think of ourselves and our individual accomplishments, but we must recognize that we are nothing more than what God works through us. If we came from God's being, made in His image, then we too must be gods. And since we are of God, we should not think of ourselves as separate individuals running around through this world independent of the Divine. So I feel that whatever I am or may be in your kind estimation is all the work of God. His light and consciousness, flowing through that humble spirit Paramahansaji, has done more for me than anything I could accomplish.

We have no consciousness of God as human beings. As human beings we are a bundle of emotions and sensations connected to matter. This makes us conscious of some of the gifts of God, but we are not aware of the Giver Himself. The "wire" of consciousness that would connect us directly with the source of all life-electricity—God—is dead. And when we are not connected with God, but are living only on sensations and matter, we are not truly alive. We don't know what life is. It is a mystery to us. We use that life every day—we manifest it through acting in the world—but we never think

*John 14:10.

about the Source of our power and intelligence or the reason for which we have it.

In the churches we have been told much about holy communion; I have heard about that ever since I can remember. But what is real communion with God? It is not a matter of merely believing that God exists, or that God is love. One can actually experience it. And that is truly holy communion.

I remember when this consciousness came over me. Paramahansaji had given his lectures in Kansas City and afterward he had organized a class series, which I attended. When the first class was over I found myself sitting in perfect stillness, something I had never experienced before. The whole room became filled with a wonderful white light, and I seemed to be sustained and soothed and filled with peace by that light. I looked toward Paramahansaji and saw that the light was strongest around him. I noticed him give me a little smile, and the light became brighter; and I felt myself become part of that divine light. Ever since that time I have been able to feel God. I know He is real. There is no longer any doubt. I don't have to depend on what anyone tells me; I *know*. If I didn't experience this for myself I would not speak about it.

Up until that time I was continually jumping from one pursuit to another, trying to find some joy, some happiness and peace. After all, we are all searching for something. But we don't know what it is. We want to bring to ourselves some joy, something that makes us feel happy. But we are never satisfied. We attain one desire and pass on to another, destroying our peace and health in all of them. The more wealth we have, the more it becomes a burden and the more unhappy we become. That was my life before meeting Paramahansaji.

When that Light and Peace came over me at his class in Kansas City, I could understand his definition of God. Before that I did not have any definition of God. If you were asked to explain God you would say, "He is a Supreme Being." But what is a Supreme Being? We do not know, nor are

we motivated to seek such a one. Paramahansaji's definition of God is ever-existing, ever-conscious, ever-new Bliss. If we can understand that God is this joy and peace and our very life itself, that He is the only intelligence we have, the only consciousness we have, then it stands to reason that God must be what we are seeking. He must be the answer to the continual search we have been making. After all, if we are ever-existing, ever-conscious, and ever-joyous, we have about everything we want! And that is exactly what we have if we find God.

Now, there is no conflict between living this life of God and living in the world. Many have come into my office and said, "How comfortable and peaceful it is to be in here. You don't have any problems in your business at all, do you?" Well, I think as long as we are alive we all have our problems and worries! That is the nature of life in this world. But if one has peace and power from contacting God within, and thinks things out as they come, and has the wisdom to calmly use one's intelligence to face these worries, one can certainly conquer them.

There isn't any worry that is not based on fear. We fear something and then we begin to worry about it, and we burn up our intelligence and energy in that state of fear and worry. But we can be free from that fear and worry by remaining in His love, allowing it to flow through us. Aren't we then able to accomplish more than the person who is in fear of everything that is going to happen, wasting himself away? One can certainly be more successful in that calm, peaceful state of God-awareness.

Remember that communion with God is real. It isn't some figment of the imagination. And how can we receive God? When we are in earnest about seeking Him, God sends us a messenger, a guru. The consciousness of God-communion comes to us through the guru. Guru is simply a messenger of God. It certainly is reasonable that one who has the blessing of God by virtue of having received Him through self-mastery,

self-overcoming, can be an instrument of God to bring that divine contact to us. God comes to us through the guru just as He came to the disciples through Jesus. We can receive that consciousness through our guru, as Paramahansaji received through his guru, and so on back through a chain of Masters. I would have no object in standing here before you if I did not know that this is so.

Communion comes to us after we receive the divine spark from a true guru. It is just like putting a spark into something flammable: The spark grows into a flame and it continues to spread and burn. In every human form dwells a soul, and that is what we want to reach. It has been submerged by this physical existence of ours. We want to kindle that individualized spark of God in our souls, that it may burn through the crust of our ignorance and expand to oneness with God again. That expanding and ever-increasing flame of divine consciousness is started in us by the little spark received from the guru. This is exactly what Jesus meant when he said, "Receive." He didn't mean to receive his physical self but the Spirit which was in him.

We know that God divided Himself into the many—that is, He used the law of repulsion to send us out from Himself into the material world; and now, like a magnet, He is drawing us back to Him again. We are in the middle of the road between God in one direction and the Evil Force in the other. We are free agents to choose in which direction we will go. We may choose to become closer to God or to let our soul wander through endless incarnations, until finally we develop the spiritual qualities innate in the soul through which we are drawn back into the bosom of God again. And it is not only by our own striving: As we make the effort to return to God, He will come to us. The more we live in the thought of God, the faster we race toward Him and the faster He races toward us.

The science of God-realization has not been developed here in the West, because we are too busy with material af-

fairs and advancements that will produce the things we need and want. India has given attention to the development of the spiritual. It has gone much deeper than we have in the West. We accept the gifts of God and forget God Himself—and of course come to grief because of that. Because someday each of us will come to a point where some experience will bring us face to face with the realization that no amount or form of material abundance is sufficient to sustain us.

My friends, I can assure you from my own experience that what we need is the consciousness of God, the melting or merging of the soul in God, for He gives us everything we need. When our consciousness is with God, we forget about ourselves as individuals. To think less about yourself makes you trustingly childlike, no longer nervous or tense. You become just peace itself. And that is what you want. But you can't have it by holding yourself apart from God. You have it by realizing that you are absolutely nothing, that He is everything.

Reflect for just a moment that someday you will be forced by death to give up this body that you think of as yourself. Then what happens? You are not conscious of God while you are here; will you be conscious of God after you leave this life? Let me tell you, that is why we have rebirth. We are coming back here again and again until we have worked out our desires and have found our true Self in God. That is exactly the meaning of yoga. India has given its attention to life itself: "What is life? Why is life? Where is life? What is God? Where is God?" India's sages went to work on these questions and they found God. In the West our scientists went to work to find out what atoms and protons and molecules are; but all of that knowledge and resultant power is just a tiny part of what God is.

The advancing yogi develops great power, but he doesn't employ this power for outward gain. It means nothing to him, because he has found that life itself is seeking union with God. Only when we have that union are we happy. And

we can have it even while living in the world. We don't have to tell everybody what we have; very few will believe us anyway! The experience of God does surpass the understanding of human consciousness. One who is content to live only in the consciousness of the world, focused on things he perceives through his senses, could never understand God, nor could he ever understand the spiritual meaning of the scriptures. I never understood the scriptures until I experienced through yoga the consciousness of life itself—Infinite Life, All-Pervading Life. That Life is God. *We* are of God, dwelling in the body like electricity in the bulb. We have to go beyond that which we know through the senses and reach a state of awareness of God. Through meditation we can reach that state: We can live in the world and enjoy all wholesome things and carry on a busy and productive existence, successfully meeting every problem of life, all the while immersed in the consciousness of God. □

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