

Brother Ritananda
What Is Heaven?
Lake Shrine Temple
January 22, 2012

Brother opened by saying he'd read about a woman whose husband had gone to the eye doctor. He was thirty something and had just received his first pair of eye glasses. It was just to see at night he'd told her. Soon after he had to go to the DMV to renew his driver's license and as he was going through the eye test he felt that he was acing it until the examiner interrupted him saying: "Let me give you a hint, Sir, those are numbers, not letter."

Sometimes we may feel like that in life when there are difficult decisions that need to be made and sometimes when it's hard to see clearly whether it's letters or numbers. What is the right thing? How do we separate this grey area into black and white so that we know we are doing the right thing; that we've make the right choices?

We go through all these experiences in life to help us develop common sense, discrimination and good judgement but the only sure fired way to be sure we make all the right decisions is through soul intuition. As our inner calmness and silence deepens, our intuition grows. Meditation is the quickest, best and most efficient way to cultivate that inner calmness at will and, hence, heighten our intuition. Meditation is one of the cornerstones of Self-Realization Fellowship.

Brother thanked the announcers for the great job they do and said that he'd been public speaking since 1989 and that he still did not find it easy. In a poll taken years ago and the question was: what is your greatest fear? And the greatest fear was public speaking; death was number two. That's what prompted Jerry Seinfeld to say that for the majority of Americans if they have to attend a funeral, they'd rather be in the casket, than deliver the eulogy.

The topic for today's service is: *What Is Heaven?* Hopefully, after the service this morning, death will be way down on your list of fears because all true religions speak of an after life. Most of us, who grew up in the West, were taught that there was a heaven, a hell and maybe a purgatory where we'd kill time while God decided if it would be hell or heaven for us.

Most of us were probably brought up believing that if we didn't live our life rightly or didn't accept a certain teacher, we would spend eternity in hell. The truth is that no soul spends eternity in hell. There are hellish regions of the astral world that Brother said he address more about later.

Once a devotee asked Paramahansaji: "Is there a hell?" Guruji answered: "Where do you think you are?" This gross physical plane is about as bad as it gets. We don't have to spend eternity here.

All the scriptures say we are made in the image of God. We are souls, divine beings, and as such we have only one destination and that's to return to our home in God. That is the ultimate destination of all souls. We have to work hard to get back home. We don't become angels by virtue of death.

There are many realms in today's topic *What Is Heaven?* Astral heaven is where souls spend time between physical incarnations and it's a land of indescribable beauty, joy, wonder and glory. All the beauty, glory and freedom that we can experience, that we are aware of, is determined by the quality of life we lived here -- the quality of thoughts, words and actions we've harbored. If we give love, if we try to be the best that we can be, that will determine how much beauty and joy we will experience in the astral heaven.

Beyond that is the causal realm, which is an even finer, higher vibrational region. It's only thinly separated from God. Beyond that is oneness with God. That would be the highest heaven, so to speak. Brother said he would explore all that today.

We have to work hard to get there. Years ago and maybe many of you will remember that there used to be elevator operators in many elevators. They would do what was required and when the elevator stopped the operator would make sure it was level with the floor to prevent passengers tripping getting out. A woman passenger, who had a fear of elevators asked the operator during the ride, if they would go up or down should the elevator cable broke. The elevator operator quick response was: “Madame, it depends entirely upon the life you’ve lived.”

Brother said he didn’t think that was true for elevators but that it is true with regard to heaven and going “south”. In *Divine Romance* Guruji said in one of his talks: *“We don’t become angels merely by the instrument of death. If we are angels now, we will be angels in the hereafter. If we are dark, negative personalities now, we will be the same after death. Just as there are slums and beautiful parts of the country here, so it is in the other world. According to the way you have lived your life on earth, whether you have lived a good, pure life, or a mean, ugly one, you go to a better or a darker region in the astral world.”*

“Jesus spoke of these different regions when he said: ‘In my Father’s house there are many mansions.’ The astral planes are of differing atmospheres or vibrations and each soul that passes on from this earth is attracted to whichever atmosphere is in harmony with his own particular vibration. Just as fish live in the water, worms in the earth, man on the earth, and birds in the air, so souls in the astral world live in whichever sphere best suited to their own vibration. The more noble and spiritual a person is on earth, the higher the sphere to which he will be attracted and the greater will be his freedom and joy and experience of the astral beauty.”

That’s the truth and, yet, not everybody believes in heaven. There was one fellow who said: “I don’t believe in an after life, although I am bringing a change of underwear just in case.” He’s hedging his bets. We can say we don’t believe in heaven; we can say we don’t believe in

gravity but despite the absence of our blessings somehow it continues to go on. It continues to work and it's the same with the after life and heaven -- the truth of the existence of heaven. It is true and it is mentioned in all the true scriptures of the world.

From the Book of Genesis: *“And God said: ‘Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament and divided the waters, which were under the firmament from the waters, which were above the firmament, and it was so.’”*

And that firmament is ether or space. Not space as in distance. The astral world is just behind the physical. The firmament divides the waters from the gross physical realm from the waters of the higher vibrations of the astral realm. Similarly, the firmament divides the astral realm from the even higher vibrations, the causal realm.

From the Gospel of St. John, Christ said: *“Let not your heart be troubled. If ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house there are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you.”*

In Paramahansa Yogananda’s commentary he clearly identifies that we are attracted to the region that resonates with the vibration we’ve created through the quality of life we’ve lead. He said: *“In the kingdom of cosmic consciousness that is in the Father’s house, there are many mansions or regions of different vibrations where souls dwell according to their earth acquired good or bad vibrations.”*

In the following *Gita* passage, Lord Krishna talks about how we’re on this evolutionary path, the different *yugas* and that creation comes into existence and then it disappears for a time...God creates and dissolves and then creates again...and how that affects souls who haven’t reached the ultimate goal and then how to get to heaven. What is heaven and how to get there?

Lord Krishna said: *“All worlds, from the high sphere of Brahma (to the gross earth), are subject to (the finite law of) recurrence. But those devotes, O Arjuna, who become merged in Me are freed from rebirth.*

“They are true knowers of “day” and “night” who understand the Day of Brahma, which endures for a thousand cycles (yugas), and the Night of Brahma, which also endures for a thousand cycles.

“At the dawn of Brahma’s Day all creation, reborn, emerges from the state of nonmanifestation; at the dusk of Brahma’s Night all creation sinks into the sleep of nonmanifestation.

“Again and again, O Arjuna, the same throng of men helplessly take rebirth. Their series of incarnations ceases at the coming of Night of Brahma, and then reappears at the dawn of Day of Brahma.

“But transcending the unmanifested (states of phenomenal being) there exists the true Unmanifested, the Immutable, the Absolute, which remains untouched by the cycles of cosmic dissolution.”

Brother explained that’s God the Father; God beyond creation, untouched by the phenomenal world of creation.

Lord Krishna continues: *“The aforesaid Unmanifested, the Immutable Absolute, is thus called the Supreme Goal. Those who attain it, My highest state, undergo no more rebirth.”*

As we cultivate that state of God-realization, soul-realization, we are no longer compelled to this endless cycle of this rebirth and death.

Lord Krishna goes one: *“By singlehearted devotion, O Arjuna, that Supreme Unmanifested is reached. He alone, the Omnipresent, is the Abode of all creatures.”*

That is our divine home; we will all get there. In this stanza the Lord Krishna is explaining that souls who have not reached that supreme state are not lost nor free because there is still work to do. Creation is withdrawn but then at the dawn of the Day of Brahma, God creates again and those souls incarnate again to resume their evolutionary journey until that ultimate goal...oneness with God...is reached.

Commenting on the *Gita* passage Paramahansaji said: *“Through the Lord’s outwardly expressive principle, vibratory Aum, God is perpetually floating dream beings on waves of creation, preservation and dissolution. Though the cosmic dreams of the Divine are eternal processes, man [souls] is not eternally bound to them... The Wheel rotates forever, but, one by one wise men slip away from it, men of realization.”*

Then Paramahansaji commented on the single hearted devotion that Lord Krishna talked about: *“The sole gift a human being may present to the Infinite Giver is love. To bestow that gift on God, or miserly to withhold it, is man’s only private power. All else already belongs to the Maker of heaven and earth. By pure humble Bhakti (devotion) man becomes fit to enter even the ultimate have, the Immutable and Unmanifested.”*

Guruji says that there is a personal aspect to the search for God that is more important than mastery over the entire science of yoga. You know we emphasize meditation and Guruji gives a very simple formulae for us to achieve this goal, oneness with God. It is devotional meditation and right activity. Devotion is needed. The techniques themselves can get us 90% of the way...to the door of God...but to knock on the door and to get God to open that door requires devotion. It’s that balance -- devotional meditation plus right activity.

Brother summarized saying that God first manifested macrocosmically in the universe...in the realms of the causal world, the astral world and ultimately in the grosser physical world. Microcosmically God

manifested first as a causal body, an astral body and eventually a physical body. We have descended down this ladder of consciousness from God to this physical realm. We had no choice. We couldn't stop in the astral and say, "This is as far as I want to go." It's not part of God's plan, unfortunately. We're here and our purpose in life is to reascend that ladder of realization, that ladder of consciousness, from the physical, astral, causal and back to that oneness with God.

In Chapter 43 of the *Autobiography of a Yogi*, the resurrection of Sri Yukteswar, probably gave the first detailed description of the astral realm. From that "beautiful" description, Brother shared the following excerpts:

"There are many astral planets, teeming with astral beings," Sri Yukteswar said.

"The astral universe, made of various subtle vibrations of light and color, is hundreds of times larger than the material cosmos.

"The astral world is infinitely beautiful, clean, pure, and orderly. There are no dead planets or barren lands. The terrestrial blemishes -- weeds, bacteria, insects, snakes -- are absent. Unlike the variable climates and seasons of the earth, the astral planets maintain the even temperature of an eternal spring, with occasional luminous white snow and rain of many-colored lights. Astral planets abound in opal lakes and bright seas and rainbow rivers.

"The ordinary astral universe is peopled with millions of astral beings who have come, more or less recently, from the earth, all residing on different astral planets in accordance with karmic qualifications. Various spheric mansions or vibratory regions are provided for good and evil spirits. Good ones can travel freely, but the evil spirits are confined to limited zones.

“In the vast realms about the dark astral prison, all is shining and beautiful. The astral cosmos is more naturally attuned than the earth to the divine will and plan of perfection.

“The earth is dark with warfare and murder in the sea, land and air but the astral realms know a happy harmony and equality. Everything is vibrant with God’s creative light.

“Friends of other lives easily recognize one another in the astral world. Rejoicing at the immortality of friendship, they realize the indestructibility of love, often doubted at the time of the sad, delusive partings of earthly life.

“The astral world is free from unwilling death, disease, and old age. These three dreads are the curse of earth, where man has allowed his consciousness to identify itself almost wholly with a frail physical body requiring constant aid from air, food, and sleep in or to exist as all.”

The astral universe is just behind the physical...the three realms are interrelated. Everything in the astral universe is a manifestation of the *Aum* vibration. The manifestation in the astral is one of cosmic energy and divine light. It is that cosmic energy that enlivens us; that gives us life. We can give a cadaver food, water, sunlight and oxygen but it won't bring it back to life.

Jesus was able to resurrect Lazarus because he was able to introduce that life energy into Lazarus's body. So it is that the cosmic energy enters the body primarily through the medulla oblongata and Guruji talks about a river of energy flowing up and down the spine. Primarily in a worldly man, down the spine and then out the three lower *chakras*, the three spiritual centers. It's through the lower three *chakras* that we perceive matter. By self-effort, by learning to concentrate, and through *pranayama* techniques...controlling the life energy...we can withdraw the consciousness from the senses, the lower three *chakras*, back into the spine, up the spine to the higher three *chakras* where we perceive God,

our Father, Mother. That awakening is the purpose of life. Bring that energy within; realize God within...the love, the joy, the beauty...the peace of God is infinite. God is infinite and eternal so there's no end to the love, bliss, beauty and wonder that we experience.

Since we descended down this ladder of consciousness and the physical body. Guruji explains that when a soul enters a physical body there is an intense attachment and that's why we're oblivious to our true nature. We have to reverse that condition. Children often bring memories of the astral when they are reborn.

A family had just brought their newborn son home from the hospital. Their four year old daughter, Sachi, kept asking if she could be alone with the baby. The parents had heard that often times children of her age could be very jealous of a newborn baby in the house. They didn't know why she wanted to be left alone with her brother, so didn't allow it. As the weeks went on they saw that Sachi treated the baby with great love, kindness and gentleness. Her pleas to have some time alone with the baby increased in intensity. Finally they gave her permission. An elated Sachi entered the bedroom and closed the door or so she thought but it was still cracked a little bit. The parents were there watching and listening. What they saw was Sachi going over to the baby's crib and getting face to face with the baby saying: "Baby, tell me what God feels like, I'm starting to forget."

That's how we are. We did know the purpose of life but have forgotten it. We need to reestablish that oneness with God and climb that ladder of consciousness back to our home in God.

The only value of talking what is heaven, the *gunas*, and all these things is if we can make them practical. Yoga is a science that we must apply, not a philosophy that we talk about. It is a science that we apply and results in experience. We have to take what we learn from services like this or learn from when we read in Guruji's teachings or something and ask: "How can I made it practical because it is of no use if I can't use it

to draw closer to God, to my goal, to deepen my love for God, to draw closer to God.”

These things are useless unless we make it practical. We have this knowledge, we have this understanding and we may have even been blessed with an experience of the astral world but it is useless unless we make it practical. Brother said from what we’ve heard today, we can start making it practical and that we are not meant to live tortured lives with suffering and reiterated Christ’s words: *“Let not your heart be troubled.”*

There is the duality here. We all have pain in our lives but ultimately our nature is joy. We can use this knowledge of this great, beautiful, glorious astral heaven, and it even gets better from there, to banish fear and worry from our consciousness regarding death. Use this knowledge to help us process and eliminate the pain that arises from death and separation.

Henry Scott Holland wrote a poem entitled *Death Is Nothing At All* that Brother shared. It was also clear to Brother that this man had been blessed with an experience of the astral realm because he conveys many of the truths talked about today:

*“Death is nothing at all
I have only slipped away into the next room
I am I and you are you.”*

Brother interjected that’s exactly what the saints and Guruji tell us. The astral world is just behind the physical and that our loved ones are never lost. We are the soul with a physical body and we discard that but the soul is untouched.

*“I have only slipped away into the next room
I am I and you are you.
Whatever we were to each other
That we are still
Call me by my old familiar name*

*Speak to me in the easy way you always used
Put no difference into your tone
Wear no forced air of solemnity or sorrow
Laugh as we always laughed
At the little jokes we always enjoyed together
Play, smile, think of me, pray for me
Let my name be ever the household word that it always was
Let it be spoken without effort
Without the ghost of a shadow in it
Life means all that it ever meant
It is the same as it ever was
There is absolute unbroken continuity
What is death but a negligible accident?
Why should I be out of mind
Because I am out of sight?
I am waiting for you for an interval
Somewhere very near
Just around the corner
All is well.
Nothing is past; nothing is lost
One brief moment and all will be as it was before
How we shall laugh at the trouble of parting when we meet again!"*

Holland expresses many truths here and we can use these truths to make it practical to deepen our relationship with God. When we're full of fear, sadness or doubt it separates us. We can't hold on to grudge or a mood and the peace and joy of God at the same time. We have a choice. We can use these things to make them practical.

Grieving and sorrow at the death of a loved one is natural. We all go through it and we should. Over time it lessens, and maybe we've know someone or experienced it ourselves, when we've lost a loved one. We may have seen people who have been on the path for decades and they're devastated emotionally at the lose of a loved one. Why? It's not meant to be like that. We have this knowledge of the astral world and the beauty that fills souls that depart. Even in a tragic accident they are immediately, they are whole again. They are experiencing the beauty,

the glory and the indescribable peace and we're unnaturally sorrowful or attached. Again, we should not be.

What is death? Henry Scott Holland said that it is "but a negligible accident" and in a higher sense it's not an accident at all. It is the fulfilled of the law of karma. When the sands of our karma runs out we need an excuse to leave the body and go enjoy our divine pension in the astral, to get that rest, enjoy the beauty, come back and do it all again until we get it right. It's just like Groundhog Day. It's not an accident at all but merely a change of costume.

Again, out of the mouths of babes... A family living in Chicago boarded a train to their vacation destination in New Orleans. Somewhere along the line a truck stalled on the tracks. The train hit it at 80 mph. There was a horrible crash, a derailment and eleven people were killed, including the mother of this family. A few weeks after the crash, the eight year old daughter, who'd lost a foot due to the crash, found her father crying in front the her mother's clothes closet. She gently admonished him and he justifiably said: "There is nothing wrong with crying. I told you would." She answered: "But, Daddy, Mom's in heaven now. She's okay. Don't make her worry about us." There is truth in that.

Those who have read the *Autobiography of a Yogi* in which Paramahansaji shared the story of the pet deer at Ranchi. Guruji warned the boys not to overfeed the deer while he was gone for the day after feeding the deer earlier than usual. One of the boys feed the deer anyway and it was deathly ill when Guruji returned. He took it into his room and prayed intensely to God for hours to save the deer. When he finally fell asleep, the deer came to him in a dream asking to be released and Guruji released it. Due to Guruji's unnatural attachment, it wasn't able to do so in the waking state. It was time for the deer's soul to transition to a higher form.

We do the same thing with our loved ones when we have this unnatural attachment. They do worry about us; they don't make the transition

when held back by unnatural attachment. We delay their transition to the indescribable beauty and peace and joy. We don't want to do that, so we can use these truths in a practical way to help us process the pain of separation at death. We can use it to banish the fear of the unknown from our consciousness. Many people don't believe in an afterlife and they fear annihilation but Holland is saying that there is an absolute unbroken continuity. The saints and Guruji all tell us the same thing...use this!

Life is eternal; the soul is immortal. They are not lost; they are just behind this firmament of space or ether. We may not be able to see them with our physical eyes but we can open the spiritual eye through self effort and see it all and we're meant to. That's our divine birthright.

We can use these truths to motivate ourselves to be the best that we can be. Sri Yukteswar used the words: "*Learn to behave.*" Because as glorious and beautiful as the astral world is, if we haven't lived a good life but a very worldly life...selfish life, filled with anger, hate, etc., Guruji explained that souls will go to the other side and almost immediately fall into a deep slumber. They are totally unaware of the great beauty and glory. They have no freedom.

Not only that, but somebody who has lived a good life is aware of and gets to enjoy the beauty. They, also, get the rest. Then when the time is right, they start working out astral karma in the astral world. Guruji says that we can work out mental and emotional problems that we bring over from this physical life. We can work those out in the astral. We cannot work out any physical karma. That has to be worked out here on this gross earth but we can work out mental and emotional problems that we brought from this life. We can make great spiritual progress but not if we're in that deep slumber. We want to be the best that we can be; we want to learn to behave; we want to consciously practice devotional meditation, plus right activity.

Right activity is cultivated by the twenty-six noble qualities of the soul - giving kindness, giving love. When we do that and when we go to the astral world we're very aware of its beauty. We have the freedom to travel and enjoy it. We get that divine pension, that rest. Living in these physical bodies is very exhausting to the soul. There we can make the spiritual progress we're meant to -- to propel this evolutionary journey back to our goal -- oneness with God. This information, this understanding can be used to make peace in our lives. We will not become angels by virtue of death when we go to the astral.

When we come back we are attracted to that environment that our karma dictates. It is not just karma. As we progress spiritually, it is just like when we send a kid off to college or like when we went to college. We had choices over the courses that we chose. It's the same when we come back to this school of life. As we progress, we want to make certain changes. We want to overcome certain habits. We want to progress in certain way, so we may have chosen a lot of the tests and trials to work out, even the mode of death that we experience on this earth or sometimes it's a fulfillment of the law of karma or it's some choice we made but it is never an act of nature or God punishing us. It's all part of God's cosmogonia, the loving harmonious plan He has for creation. So when Great Ones like Sri Yukteswar admonish us to learn to behave it's not just guidance for one life. It is an investment for all future lives...physical, astral, causal and so forth. We are investing in our future. We are investing in greater joy, peace and freedom.

If we cultivate the right attitude toward life with the understanding that we have of the astral heaven, the causal heaven and the oneness with God, even though our lives here can take on mundane garb and don't seem so deep and meaningful, know that they do have great meaning and purpose.

Many of you have probably read Betty Edie's book. She was a Christian woman. She came from a broken home in which the father had deserted the family. The mother was unable to bring up the children and they

were placed in foster care. Ms. Eadie had a difficult childhood because the foster home she was placed in was not a warm and loving one. She grew up, got married and it turned out to be a very abusive relationship. She got out of that. Eventually, she married a second time to a good man; they had three daughters. She finally had this loving, healthy family that she'd always dreamed about. She thought she was going in for minor surgery but she died on the table, where she had this great comprehensive experience of the astral world.

If you've read accounts of near death experiences like hers, it wasn't time for her to go. God's trying to get us the truth of the heavens and that it is our birthright and not to fear death through the saints and scriptures. Also, in this awakening age, through our peers with all these accounts of near death experiences. The experiences are always very similar.

So Ms. Eadie in the astral was overwhelmed by the beauty, the peace, the glory, the love and she didn't want to go back. She finally had this perfect family that she'd dreamed of all her life but there free of the delusion of the body she knew that this home or closer to home. So she didn't want to go back. However, it was intimated that she was supposed to go back. Since God gives us free will she had a choice. She protested vehemently but ultimately through soul intuition she came to realize the right thing, *dharma*, that God's will was for her to go back. So that was the decision she made.

The second she made that decision the following was her experience. She said: "Suddenly thousands of angels surrounded me. They were exuberant. They were pleased that I had made the decision to return. I heard their cheering supporting me with love and encouragement. As I looked about for the love I felt from them, they began to sing. No music I had heard in my life compared to this. It was grand, glorious, awesome and meant especially for me. It was overwhelming. They sang spontaneously. Parts not so much memorized but instantly known, instantly felt. They were singing from soul intuition. Their voices were

pure and each note was clear and sweet. I wept opening, soaking in their love and celestial music, hardly believing that an insignificant soul like my own could be the center of so much adoration. And I knew then that no one is insignificant in the eternities. Every soul is of infinite worth.”

It is true. We are made in the image of God; we are a unique creation of God; we have the unique relationship to share with God; we have the unique contribution to make to God’s creation that nobody else can make. For the vast majority of us it is not to be played on a grand worldly stage but in humble obscurity. This does not reduce the meaningfulness and purpose of our lives. Our lives have infinite worth and deep purpose in spite of how mundane the garb that life can bring to us.

Brother closed by sharing a story written by a minister whose name was Brother Jim. The story is about a woman named Martha. She was one of the most senior, faithful and colorful members of the congregation. The Sunday School children called her Aunt Marty because she just seemed to ooze love, hope and faith and whenever you talked to her you went away uplifted. Every phone conversation put a smile on your face. Brother Jim received a call from her one day that had a very unusual tone. He didn’t know what it was. She asked to meet with him and it was arranged. They met and he found out why things were different from her usual norm. She said that the doctors had found a previously undetected tumor. She said: “He says [doctor] I probably have six months to live.” Brother Jim said that her words were certainly serious yet there was a definite calm about her. He started to say how sorry he was to hear but she interrupted and said: “Don’t be sorry. The Lord has been good. I have lived a long life. I am ready to go, you know that.” He said: “I know.”

Then she said: “I do want to talk to you about my funeral. I’ve been thinking about it and there are things that I know I want.” They talked about it for a long time. He’d done this many times with many families. They talked about the hymns that meant so much to her that she wanted

played and the scriptural passages that had inspired her deeply all her life that she wanted read. He thought they were finished and was about to excuse himself and leave, when Martha looked up with a twinkle in her eye and said one more thing preacher: “When they bury me, I want my old Bible in one hand and a fork in the other.” He said: “Why to you want to be buried with a fork?” She explained: “I’ve been thinking about all the church dinner and banquets that I attended through the years. I couldn’t begin to count them all. One thing sticks in my mind of those real nice get togethers. When the meal was almost finished, the server or maybe the hostess, would come by and collect the dirty dishes. At the best meals, the best events, somebody would lean over my shoulder and whisper: ‘You can keep your fork.’ You know what that meant? Dessert is coming! It didn’t mean a cup of jello or pudding because you don’t need a fork for those. It meant the good stuff, like chocolate cake or cherry pie.

“When they told me I could keep my fork I knew the best was yet to come. That exactly what I want people to talk about at my funeral. They can talk about all the good times we had together. That would be nice but when they walk by my casket and look at my pretty, blue dress, I want them to turn to one another and say: ‘Why the fork?’ That’s when I want you to tell them that she kept her fork because that the best is yet to come.”

That is the promise God gives us. The best is yet to come! This world is one of duality, much pain and suffering here, but beyond this, beyond when we release ourselves from these bodies, even if we’re not realized, the astral is much more in tune with God’s harmonious plan. We are aware of our soul nature and it gets better from there...the causal and ultimately oneness with God. **THE BEST IS YET TO COME!**

We can use that in a practical way in every day life. It will make our lives calmer and more peaceful by eliminating doubt, fear, discouragement from our lives and in addition to that as yogis, we’re not meant to wait until death for these experiences. We’re not special but

we've reached the stage of our lives that Lord Krishna calls the *kshatriya* stage where we're fighting this battle, swimming upstream against the stream of duality, delusion, making the spiritual effort. It is not easy but we're making it.

As *kshatriyas* we are making the effort through meditation plus right activity, cultivating the divine soul qualities...love and service...all the ways that we begin to experience the things in the astral now. We can go within and experience the joy, the beauty, the bliss. We can get to the point where it is not just an immobile state when we're sitting in meditation but where we can experience God's bliss, joy, love, beauty even in activity. That's our divine birthright. All the things we hear in these services and all of Guruji's teachings is to fulfill that purpose of life...realize our divine birthright.