

[Love and Be One with God](#)

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FROM THE VEDAS

Love and Be One with God

The Rishis paint a picture of the Supreme Lord of All

translations raimundo pannikar

Though 20th century Western scholarship has focused on the impersonal monism of the Upanishads, the Vedas are filled with theistic devotion, known as "bhakti." The modern academic classification of the bhakti movements as a latter day phenomenon belie Hinduism's holistic historical reality--the mystical vision of the immanent-transcendant Absolute and the heartfelt personal relationship with God as our Lord, are seamlessly interwoven in the Hindu heart and mind.

On all sides eyes, on all sides faces, on all sides arms, on all sides feet, He, God, the One, creates Heaven and Earth, forging them together with arms and wings. He who is source and origin of the Gods, the Lord of all, Rudra, the mighty sage, who produced in ancient days the Golden Germ--may He endow us with purity of mind! Without beginning and end is He; in the midst of chaos He is and brings forth all things. Creator is He, and sole pervader, of manifold forms. When a man knows God, He is freed from all fetters.

Svetasvatara Upanishad III, 3-4; V, 13

Of lords the Lord Supreme, of kings the King, of Gods the God, Him let us worship--the transcendent Lord of all worlds and wholly worthy of worship. In Him exists neither action nor organ of action; no one is found His equal or superior to Him. His supreme power is revealed in manifold forms; inherent to His nature is the working of His strength and wisdom. None in this world is His master, none His commander. He has no distinctive sign; He is the Cause. Himself unrulled, ungenerated, He rules the sense organs. He is the Creator of all, the knower of all things, the source of the Self, the Knower, the Author of time, possessor and master of all the qualities, omniscient, the Lord of both Nature and Spirit, the cause of liberation from this world's cycle and the bondage of earthly existence.

Identical with it, immortal, by nature the Lord, omnipresent and wise, the guardian and eternal ruler of the world is He. No other Ground can be found. In Him who in days of old created Brahma and imparted to Him the Veda, in this God, who is illumined by His own intelligence, I take refuge, longing for liberation. In Him who is undivided, inactive, peaceful, irreproachable, free from blemish, the supreme bridge to immortality, who resembles a fire whose fuel is wholly consumed.

Svetasvatara Upanishad VI, 7-9; 16-19

The sound that is uttered in the beginning of the Veda, the sound that is also established at its end, that which is beyond its absorption in Nature--that is the supreme Lord. [We adore] the God with a thousand heads, with an all-seeing eye, who grants peace to all, Narayana, universal God, supreme Word, imperishable, on every side supreme, eternal, Narayana, universal Lord. All this universe exists vivified by the Person. [We adore] the Master of all, the Lord of the soul, eternal, benevolent, immobile, Narayana, the mighty one to be known, the Self of all, the supreme goal. Narayana, Light supreme, the Self, Narayana the Supreme, Narayana, supreme essence of Brahman, Narayana, the Supreme! Narayana is both the supreme meditator and meditation itself, Narayana, the Supreme. Whatever moves in this universe, whatever is either seen or heard, whatever is inside or outside--all is pervaded by the Lord. He is therein established. This is the Lord of all, the Knower of all, the inner controller. This is the source of all, the beginning and end of all beings.

Mahanarayana Upanishad, 233-245

Commentary by Raimundo Panikkar

Salvation is not achieved by human effort alone, nor is it a spontaneous act of divine grace, as later theologies declare, but it is rather a unique act in which "God" and "Man" --for we cannot dispense with these two at this stage--coincide. To recognize the Lord is to be saved, certainly; but, in order to recognize Him, not only do I have to be united with Him but also He has to disclose Himself to me, so that it has little meaning to discuss at this point whence the initiative comes. The Upanishads constantly remind us that the universe, Man and the Lord are both united and separate; they are interrelated, but the link, being unique, cannot adequately be expressed by a simile.

The Upanishads proffer an invitation to a higher life of contemplation, to the enormous and risky adventure of finding the Lord, who can neither be spoken of nor identified with any objective or subjective reality.... The Upanishads attempt to resolve the dilemma by propounding the way of Self-Realization, the personal discovery of the hidden treasure. The Lord is within and without, personal and impersonal, moving and unmoving, "Being and Nonbeing." He is the Lord precisely because he is not limited by any one pair of opposites.

Raimundo Panikkar, 83, holds doctorates in science, philosophy and theology. His anthology, *The Vedic Experience*, excerpted above, is the result of ten years in Banaras translating with the help of Vedic scholars.

The Vedas are the divinely revealed and most revered scriptures, sruti, of Hinduism, likened to the Torah (1,200 bce), Bible New Testament (100 ce), Koran (630 ce) or Zend Avesta (600 bce). Four in number, Rig, Yajur, Sama and Atharva, the Vedas include over 100,000 verses. Oldest portions may date back as far as 6,000 bce.